

EDEN ODYSSEY

Requires the use of the Dungeons and Dragons® Player's Handbook, 3rd Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast®

AKRASIA THIEF OF TIME



BY DAVID CHART



AKRASIA THIEF OF TIME

A VIGNETTE SOURCEBOOK FOR CHARACTERS OF 2nd - 12th LEVELS

Requires the use of the **Dungeons & Dragons®**
Player's Handbook, 3rd Edition, published by **Wizards of the Coast®**

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First Printing • June 2001
Stock EDN7001 ISBN 1-891153-04-8

PART ONE

INVESTITURE

NORATIUS the engineer lay prostrate before the new King. Behind him, the incomplete piers of the Emerald Bridge rose from the water, unconnected by spans. The King spoke.

"My father assigned this project to you personally. It was a great honor. It has been twenty years and the bridge is barely begun. Explain."

NORATIUS trembled but forced himself to speak, never taking his eyes from the ground.

"My Lord, nineteen years ago we were ready to start work, but a fire destroyed all the plans. We prepared new plans and hired workers. Scarcely had they started when a preacher came and led them on a pilgrimage beyond the river. They . . . He faltered.

"They were traitors. They met their rightful death. Continue."

"My Lord, we recruited more workers, and began to build. But ANICIUS declared that the stone was unworthy of your Majesty. For three years, we sought a suitable quarry. We could return only after you executed ANICIUS for treason.

"We built the dam to divert the river, but it was sabotaged and the river washed away the site and many of the workers.

"Work proceeded for two years, but someone bribed the foremen -- the structures were unsafe and in the wrong place. We tore down the work, and buried the former foremen in the foundations.

"Over the next two years, the men came to believe the site was haunted and ultimately refused to work. It took us another year to find the wizard responsible, and again we had to find new workers."

NORATIUS swallowed, and tried to calm his voice. He was only half way through.

"I moved to the site to supervise everything personally. The piers rose from the water."

The engineer stopped again and took a deep breath.

"Then I met . . . FLAVIA. We were married after a year. Our marriage lasted four years, until I discovered that she was a follower of AKRASIA. Her allies had distracted the workers while she distracted me."

NORATIUS stopped. The Great King spoke.

"We know now she belonged to the cult. We have taken the appropriate steps. Your wife is dead. Continue."

"I . . . I came back to live on the site. Much of the work of the previous five years had to be undone. We are now ready to proceed, my Lord. In another year, the bridge will be completed. I swear."

Moments passed in silence while the engineer awaited the King's verdict.

"No. This bridge has cost the realm over 6,000 lives, millions of man-hours and enough gold to see the thing built a dozen times over. It was my father's colossal failure. I expect I shall spend the better part of my life repairing the damage this project has done to the realm. All work will cease on the bridge. Let it stand as a monument to folly." The King turned his head and spoke softly to a retainer.

The engineer looked up meekly. "Then . . . I'm free? I can work on something else?"

The King returned his attention to the engineer, who immediately bowed his head to the floor.

"Oh, no. You're retired. You'll receive a generous pension from the realm and be forced to live the rest of your life, alone, in your house by the bridge. After some time, its presence in your life may come to cause you some small fraction of the grief it caused my father and myself. Leave us now."

The engineer groveled his way out of the King's presence.

"Bring the captain of the guard. Let us discuss this cult of AKRASIA -- this Thief of Time."

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INTRODUCTION

Akrasia (a-KRAH-zee-ah), the Thief of Time, is a deceptive deity. She does not roar or thunder. She does not lead vast armies. She does not instill terror with a mere glance. Akrasia is a subtle, insidious presence. When she or her followers are about, no one action or event cries out for redress, no one injustice inspires the downtrodden. Still, great deeds are stymied, wondrous projects ruined and bold adventures wasted. Through it all, time passes and the Goddess and her followers grow stronger. In the end, she brings destruction to all -- even her own.

This book presents an evil unlike most faced by heroic adventurers. Intrigue and infiltration are the tools of choice, both for those in the cult, and for those who would challenge it. There is a place for battle, but it cannot be the first or only choice. Dungeon Masters and players be warned -- with Akrasia, discovering the nature of the evil and devising a means to combat it are as difficult as defeating it.

Akrasia, Thief of Time, is the first vignette sourcebook in the **Eden Odyssey** line of **d20 system** games! Here, DMs find everything they need to build quick adventures using the Cult of Akrasia and her followers. Players discover an evil cult, with an insatiable hunger, in a subtle but unmistakable war over time.

SECTION SUMMARY

Part One: Investiture contains these opening remarks.

Part Two: The Cult of Akrasia describes the Thief of Time, her doctrine, followers, and history.

Part Three: The Sheltering Shrine begins the vignettes. Dedicated to the Goddess years ago, this abandoned shrine features a haunting new monster favored by Akrasia. It is designed for 2nd- to 4th-level characters.

Part Four: Yaraemon the Bard details a wandering servant of the Goddess. Yaraemon possesses a new debilitating magic item. It is for 4th- to 12th-level characters.

Part Five: The Way Choice is a pleasant place to stay, but is run by a servant to Akrasia. Indeed, the temptations are so great at the Way, many have difficulty leaving. This section also sports a new monster and a new magic item. It is intended for 6th- to 8th-level characters.

Part Six: Until the Rains Come challenges the PCs to uncover a sinister plot. Four followers of Akrasia conspire to destroy a small town. It is written for any level characters.

Part Seven: The Temple of Present Delights presents a shire dedicated to the Thief of Time. In this vignette, the temple's inhabitants, two new monsters and a new magic item are discussed. It challenges 7th- to 10th-level characters.

Appendix: The new domain, spells, monsters and items descriptions are grouped here for easy reference. Also, a new prestige class, the distractor, is presented.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Akrasia, Thief of Time is a tome of vignettes. It describes the cult of Akrasia and provides tools to DMs to construct adventures of varying lengths. Unless expressly allowed by the DM, the information in this book should not be reviewed by players.

The five vignette sections of this book are not full-blown adventures. They are designed as small, self-contained, mini-modules. They can be quickly dropped between the larger sessions of a normal campaign to provide a change of pace, or to involve the PCs while other plotlines develop. Alternatively, the vignettes can be used as part of a larger campaign should the DM choose to interweave their one or more in a larger storyline.

A DM might also choose to string the vignettes together to make larger adventure. An adventuring group could encounter Akrasia's cult in the person of Yaraemon the Bard, avert the threat to Riverton, rest at the Way Choice Inn, and finally destroy the Temple of Present Delights. They may do these things in sequence, or the DM might drop other missions in between. Ties between the vignettes have been provided to ease this task.

The vignettes work best if the PCs have a chance to become attached to whatever it is that the cult of Akrasia threatens. To help tie events dealing with Akrasia to other events in a campaign, some of the vignettes are also linked to other books in the *Eden Odyssey* series. In this way, larger more intricate campaigns may be built quickly and easily.

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All in all, this material is provided to make the DM's task more fun, more entertaining and more pleasant. Use it or modify it as desired. And above all, game on!

GENDER

Every roleplaying game must decide what to do about third person pronouns and possessives. While the male reference (he, him, his) is customarily used for both male and female, there is no question that it is not entirely inclusive. On the other hand, the "he or she" structure is clumsy and unattractive. In an effort to "split the difference," the *Eden Odyssey* line varies between male and female designations when indicating a non-specific person or character.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Chart was born and raised in England, and currently lives in Cambridge, where he is successfully fighting off the need to get a real job. He has a Ph.D. in philosophy, which renders him unqualified for almost any serious labor. He has been roleplaying for many years, and his first game was *Dungeons and Dragons*. This is his first **d20 system** book, but probably not his last. No deadlines were harmed in the making of this product.

PART TWO

THE CULT OF AKRASIA

In the Beginning . . .

In the beginning the gods gathered in a grand council to divide the world among them. Each was assigned an area of responsibility, and each swore to rule that feature of the world, to create and sustain it. Akrasia was not at the meeting, as she was dozing by the river of the gods, and forgot the conclave until it was too late. She hurried to the Hall of Division, but found it empty. She called out to Fate.

"I am AKRASIA, a goddess. I have come to receive my domain."

In the emptiness of the meeting place, the voice of Fate rumbled. "There are no domains left. You were late for the gathering, and the world has been divided without you." Akrasia stood silent for a moment, shocked by this lack of consideration.

"I was asleep. It is not fair that I should be deprived of my rights."

"You were sleeping when you should have been here. There is nothing left."

"And to which god should I appeal for justice? Who is responsible for those who miss important meetings because they are asleep?" There was a pause.

"No one. You cannot appeal."

Akrasia laughed. "There is a domain left, then. It may be deemed of little value, but I declare myself the goddess of failures and lost opportunity."

"No. That is part of the domain of time."

Akrasia said nothing, but left the hall.

Now, the new god of time was fashioning his symbol, an enchanted hourglass that would measure the time of the world. Akrasia went to watch him, and offered some small comments on his work. At first, the god was suspicious, but he soon grew used to her presence, and worked on, ignoring her. At length, the project was finished, and the hourglass began to turn.

As the god of time turned to gather the materials for the finishing touches, Akrasia darted in and pierced two holes in the hourglass. She took the sand that leaked out and swallowed it. The god of time turned back to see his work ruined and brought to nothing, while Akrasia laughed.

"Now," she said, "I am the Thief of Time. I claim as my domain the loss of time, the ruination of ambition and the anguish of time spent for naught. Your hourglass is my first property."

The god of time cursed her, but she laughed at his curses, for they only sweetened her success. He picked up the leaking hourglass and cast it at the goddess, but she caught it and carried it away. Now that she had stolen a domain, she needed a symbol.

-- Excerpt from the Words of Ospace
from the *Book of Thirteen Prophets*

AKRASIA

Akrasia (a-KRAH-zee-ah) is the chaotic evil goddess of failed resolutions and weakness of will. Her titles include Thief of Time, Goddess of Distraction, Lady of Lost Dreams, Breaker of Promises, and The Delayer. She is the patron deity of the distractions that prevent people from fulfilling their potential, and of decisions that postpone accomplishment to enjoy the pleasure of the moment. When a fighter stays drinking in a tavern rather than training with his weapons, Akrasia is happy. When a wizard potters about with the spells he already knows rather than putting in the effort and discipline to create new ones, she rejoices. And when a whole nation puts short-term benefit ahead of long-term gain, she is delighted. She is associated with the domains of Chaos, Evil, Trickery, and Distraction.

Akrasia has more worshippers than most evil deities, but her cult is usually viewed as a harmless nuisance. In part, everyone feels the attraction of her creed -- a religion that encourages one more drink, for example, is very appealing. Furthermore, her followers rarely seem evil, because they encourage the baser desires of others, rather than imposing their own will. Finally, Akrasia and her followers spare no effort to make themselves appear as harmless and petty as possible. This is part of her evil.

Despite the opinion of most, Akrasia works great evil. She aims to prevent anyone from achieving the good they are capable of, and would bring society to ruin and misery. Even the majority of her worshippers look back over their lives with regret for wasted time and lost opportunities.

The Goddess has several symbols. The most common is an hourglass with a hole in the upper bulb from which sand is falling. The others include a golden net with gems at the nodes, a broken balance, and a forked road with one easy and one hard path.

DOCTRINE

The unholy teachings of Akrasia's faith is the *Book of the Thirteen Prophets*. This has twelve chapters, each written by one of her prophets. Fittingly, the chapters consist of disjointed notes, none more than a few sentences, and some reminders to delete earlier statements. For example, one instruction states, "Remember to describe the delights of the afterlife," but no details are provided. Akrasia herself inspired the texts, and personally commanded the prophets to write them up properly. Still, for one reason or another,



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er, the work was never completed. Some prophets claimed that Akrasia delights in the torture of her own, and credited their failure to complete their tasks to the Goddess herself. More than one scholar noted that these passages have not been directly disputed in the words of other prophets.

According to one prophet, a thirteenth prophet did produce a finished form of his chapter. Appalled at this act of self-discipline, Akrasia destroyed him and forbade her followers to read his text. At one point, she instructed that the name of the book be changed, but could not help herself from distracting the scholars. In the end, she left the name to add to her mystery.

The book describes the aims of the Thief of Time. She desires a world that spirals into ruin, where nothing great is achieved because people cannot summon the willpower to put aside temporary wishes or inconveniences. Her followers are to encourage such behavior throughout the world, but are warned not to show too much determination in doing so.

This is the central paradox of Akrasia's creed. Akrasia promises to reward those of her followers who lead others to ruin. She grants immortality and other benefits to those who dedicate themselves to her goals. At the same time, she emphasizes the inevitability of ruin and the hopelessness of ambition. Her prophets focus on one message or another, and sometimes combine the two. More than one notes the inherent conflict between them and attempts, unsuccessfully, to harmonize the doctrines.

Akrasia's commandments against strict discipline and overwhelming effort serve to undermine most of her own faithful. The prophets mention this, but claim it is part of Akrasia's design. Significant self-denial and discipline in the name of Akrasia directly contravene her ban against great works, and her hatred of order. Furthermore, passionate directions to create ruin, combined with warnings against pride and ambition leave guilt and self-loathing in the supplicant. Some prophets claim that this serves to sharpen the chaos within each Akratic, bringing them closer to their chosen deity, and bringing pleasure to the Goddess.

Despite her dictates against ambition, some followers are inspired by the passages describing Akrasia's desires for the world. They seek power and influence and choose to focus away from the warnings against discipline.

Some struggle with a middle ground. They point to prophets who crow that it is easier to prevent the completion of a major project than to corrupt all the people trying to undertake it, that it is easier to destroy than to build, and that it is easier to create obstacles than to overcome them. They note that corrupting the virtuous generally requires a plan, and determination in carrying it out, while hindering a project can be carried out in fits and starts. In one disjointed parable, the corruption of a disciplined wizard required finding out about her weaknesses, devising temptations based on them, and then slowly increasing the pressure until she cracked. Preventing her from inventing a spell, on the other hand, merely required a burglary. Many Akratics interpret these passages to promote small-scale, scattered evils that sap the will of many, rather than those that bring great destruction to a few in a short time period. Others feel that both are to be encouraged, as long as the latter does not consume the follower. The most revered are those who can do both with a minimum of effort.

The fragmentary, conflicting and obscure nature of the *Book of the Thirteen Prophets* encourages doctrinal disputes between Akrasia's clerics. These disputes consume time and energy, and prevent cult co-operation on a large scale. Clerics discuss the extent to which Akrasia's followers are permitted to indulge themselves, and just how much danger and suffering they are expected

to endure in bringing about corruption. There are also debates over what counts as wasting time, as the faithful would not want to risk leading others to spend their time profitably. A few carry on these disputes for no other reason than their own view of the desires of the Goddess. Bloodshed, particularly against innocents not directly involved, as a result of these disputes is not necessarily discouraged, as long as it is discreet enough not to bring ruin to the cult.

In the end, given the attraction of Akrasia's creed ("one more game of cards, then to work"), her conflicting message about goals and means may be the only thing preventing her followers from ruling the world.

FOLLOWERS

Akrasia's lay followers fall into two main classes. The first, and most important, consists of entertainers and service providers, such as bards, innkeepers, and gambling house proprietors. The members of this group serve the Goddess better the more ably they do their jobs, and thus can appear as valuable members of society. An Akratic innkeeper makes sure that the beds are comfortable, the food and drink tasty and inexpensive, and the entertainment diverting. Further, he deals honestly with his clients, to encourage them to return. However, his aims are still chaotic and ultimately evil: he wants his patrons to spend time at the inn, rather than attending to their jobs, families or other responsibilities, and thus bring ruin upon themselves. These people also advise against major projects, emphasizing the difficulties, and playing down the value of the potential achievements. They usually worship Akrasia in secret.

The second group is spread across many other occupations, and are generally less popular with their fellows. They try to ensure that any major projects are diverted into extended discussions of irrelevant minutiae. Thus, an Akratic town councilor might divert discussion of a major building project into careful consideration of the color scheme, the precise location, and the best way to compensate the people whose buildings must be demolished. An Akratic guard encourages her fellows to play cards and talk rather than patrol their wards or improve their skills. An Akratic scholar encourages many minor projects, and plays down the possibility of doing anything of significance. This group, unlike the first, may not seem particularly good at their jobs, but still they rarely seem evil or chaotic.

Any community strongly influenced by Akrasia tends to fall apart. Crops are ignored, damage is repaired in the shoddiest possible way with the poorest materials, arguments are endless, heated and unproductive. Many are overcome with drink or other debauchery. In all, passion is diluted and feelings hardened. Soon, the creeping evil becomes manifest and yet none can muster the will to fight back. As noted, the dictates against extreme dedication of task usually keep Akrasia's followers from completely destroying a society. Still, once it has been undermined enough, the damage perpetuates itself and the community dissolves without further Akratic input.

Given their doctrinal inhibitions, most of Akrasia's followers lack great, personal power, because acquiring such power requires discipline. For the most part, dedicated spell researchers are not found among her followers, and the average level of her clerics is lower than that of many other deities. Some de-emphasize the inhibitions, however, and push forward toward Akrasia's goals. They can amass great wealth and power, although some retain nagging doubts about their means and this keeps them from their ultimate potential.

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For those less able to ignore Akrasia's warnings, large amounts of experience may be garnered from numerous small adventures of little importance. Akrasia's followers frequently undertake such expeditions, although they usually claim that these little expeditions are merely preparation for some great quest they will undertake later. Characters with many classes are common among Akrasia's worshippers, as they explore all the ways of advancing rather than pursuing one agenda in a disciplined way.

CLERICS

Akrasia's clerics do not have any sort of formal hierarchy for two reasons. First, giving commands implies enforcement, and Akrasia doctrine opposes the discipline required. Second, too clear a career path encourages unseemly ambition.

Her priests spend a lot of effort building their own reputations within the cult, seeking influence over each other. In the absence of hierarchy and discipline, such efforts are of limited effectiveness. This infighting adds to the discord produced by doctrinal disputes.

As part of this struggle for reputation, Akrasia's clerics usually design and wear elaborate and expensive vestments. There is no fixed form for these clothes, but they invariably incorporate the symbols of the Goddess. The golden net is often worked into a cloak, while the leaking hourglass is commonly worn as a pendant. Sometimes, these symbols are enchanted to better display the characteristics of the Goddess, such as sand appearing to flow from the hourglass.

Some of Akrasia's clerics are open about their worship, secure in the knowledge that most consider them harmless. Many, however, keep their faith secret. Both overt and clandestine clerics run inns, gambling houses, brothels, and theatres, while only secret clerics practice other occupations. Almost all clerics have some secondary vocation, since Akrasia's faithful are not particularly generous in their donations to the church.

TEMPLES OF AKRASIA

Because she is chaotic evil, Akrasia's temples are usually hidden, either in the wilderness or underground. Sometimes, they are found in smaller settlements. Those settlements are not always evil. Many do not understand the Akritic goals and thus tolerate their activities.

It is possible, from scattered comments in the *Book of Thirteen Prophets*, to work out the details of an ideal temple to Akrasia. A large central hall houses major services to the Goddess. To each side, small chapels allow for smaller services. Accommodation for clerics and guests should be near the temple, connected by a corridor. On the other side of the main hall, feasting halls and theaters for various kinds of entertainment should be located. The whole structure should be set in carefully designed pleasure gardens.

Examples of completed Akritic temples are few and far between. Most temples of Akrasia are simply unfinished, and generally what is built is on a much smaller scale than the initial plan. All temples contain some form of main hall. Accommodation for the clerics is the next most common feature, as some servants of the Goddess do not have other quarters. The other features appear at random, depending on the interests of the builders, and which side of the central doctrine dispute they hold.

In addition to rather haphazard design and construction, the temples often suffer from lack of maintenance. They are rarely allowed to fall down, but it is common for parts to be propped up by temporary wooden beams, and for windows to be repaired with boards for a long period of time.

AKRASIA AS THE ENEMY

Akrasia's evil is subtle, but intense. It is easy to mistake her as the goddess of having fun. Akritics actively promote this belief to minimize the perceived threat. The Goddess sows chaos and ruins lives -- even those of her faithful. She does not command hordes to slaughter entire villages; she prefers to see the peasants starve to death because they failed to plant their crops or harvest them at the proper time. Neither does she deface or destroy glorious works of art; she ensures that the artists dither and procrastinate. She brings about as much harm as any evil deity, and leaves the victims blaming themselves. Akrasia's victims live feeling that they are wasting their lives, but cannot bring themselves to do anything about it before death takes them.

Akritics do not usually present a dire threat. They spend their time arguing, dallying or struggling to reconcile their desire to promote the Goddess' creed while observing it at the same time. Infrequently, one of the devoted reconciles his faith with his ambition and convinces others to follow him. More often, a group devises a means that satisfies both impulses. In those cases, the cult can be very dangerous. With their abilities, they can stop almost any project, bring ruin to any scheme, or undermine a community -- all in an extremely subtle manner.

Akrasia's cult almost never engages in a clear, major plot that the PCs can easily oppose. Proactively, the cult may be used on a small scale. Some adherents might corrupt people who are important to the PCs. If the party's wizard or sorcerer is used to getting spells from a particular researcher, he may become concerned when she stops researching anything new and has nothing to offer him. If an Akritic targets the party's home village and the peasants stop working in the fields, the risk of starvation should drive the PCs to action. The party could also be hired to deal with the mysterious saboteurs interfering with the construction of a new temple.

Large-scale use of the cult is a reactive opportunity. At some point, the PCs will undertake a great quest or project, such as seeking out a lost artifact, or founding a new nation in the barbarian wastes. Akrasia's cultists may band together and work toward stopping this manifestation of order and ambition. This campaign would not have a standard structure, as the climax would not generally involve the defeat of a central enemy. Rather, the culmination would be the successful completion of the project, despite the cult's interference.

Finally, cultists of Akrasia may be effectively combined with a more open, war-like cult or enemy. While the evil warriors or undead occupy the PCs attention, the Goddess can work subtly to undermine their ability to stand against the obvious evil. Of course, a truly dedicated cell of cultists would also seek to hinder the "bad guys" in a similar way.

THE LEAKING HOURGLASS AKRATIC LEGENDS

The *leaking hourglass* is a cursed artifact, the most sacred relic of Akrasia in the world. Most who know of it believe it has been lost for centuries. Rumors of its whereabouts circulate every couple of years. Some claim that Akrasia delights in the dilemma this creates in her faithful -- desire for the artifact and disgust at their own lack of ambition. The rumors sometimes inspire an Akrasic to put aside his own sloth, at least for a time.

The artifact is a large hourglass, two feet tall and eight inches across the bulbs, set in a golden frame. Sparkling silver sand constantly flows inside it, and the hourglass turns itself over when the upper bulb is empty. Both bulbs have a small hole near the waist, and sand constantly trickles out to land in a depression in the base of the hourglass. The depression fills in the time it takes one bulb to empty, which is slightly less than twelve hours, and the sand vanishes when the hourglass turns over.

The *leaking hourglass* can only be used by its owner, who must keep the artifact in a safe place. If the owner is not a worshipper of Akrasia, she gains five negative levels. These negative levels never result in permanent level loss, they remain as long as the *leaking hourglass* is owned, and cannot be overcome in any way (including *restoration* spells). The negative levels disappear if someone else becomes the hourglass's owner.

Three times per day, the owner may cast *haste* on herself at a caster level of 20, and once per day she may cast *time stop* on herself. The owner may also cast each of the spells on the Distraction domain list (see p. 28) once per day, at a caster level of 20. If the owner is a cleric with access to that list, these spells are in addition to her normal domain spells. The owner also gains the special abilities of a tenth level distractor (see p. 28). These abilities are available no matter how far the owner is from the hourglass -- even if the owner and hourglass are on different planes of existence.

The sand that leaks from the hourglass can be collected by its owner just before the glass turns over. This sand has magical properties. If sprinkled on someone, the victim becomes extremely prone to distraction for the following day. He achieves nothing on his own initiative, and becomes resistant to encouragement or compulsion. If encouraged by particularly impressive bribes or threats, he may make a Will save against a DC of 25. If this save succeeds, he may act productively. Only the owner of the hourglass may collect the sand, but it may be used by anyone. Collected sand does not disappear as the sand in the base does.

The *leaking hourglass* also comes with a curse, which cannot be avoided by any means. For as long as someone owns the hourglass, she is unable to successfully complete any major project. She may fail due to lack of application or external circumstances, but she always fails.

The artifact can only be neutralized if a superb craftsman who has devoted his life to the successful completion of a project worthy of legend repairs the hole in both bulbs. The hourglass would remain after the repair, but it would lose all its powers and no longer be an artifact.

The opening story of Akrasia's domain (see p. 4), and the following legends are detailed in the *Book of Thirteen Prophets*. They help describe Akrasia's creed and central dichotomy. They also serve as adventure hooks.

The King of Irrissia: Many years ago, there was a powerful king. He ruled the nation of Irrissia, and was determined to make it the greatest nation in the world. It would be an empire that would endure for centuries -- the marvel of all in splendor, achievement, culture, and might. As the king was a great man, so his nation grew in power. Just as the king began to set his mark on history, he came to the notice of the followers of Akrasia.

The distractors traveled to Irrissia with plans to bring the king's schemes to naught. One spoke to him of the glory and delight of an extensive harem of all races, and his idea found favor with the monarch. The king ordered him to gather the most beautiful women of Irrissia, and guard them in a fine palace, decked with silks and studded with gems. The king visited the harem, and took his delight in the women, but his energy was boundless, and his plans proceeded as before.

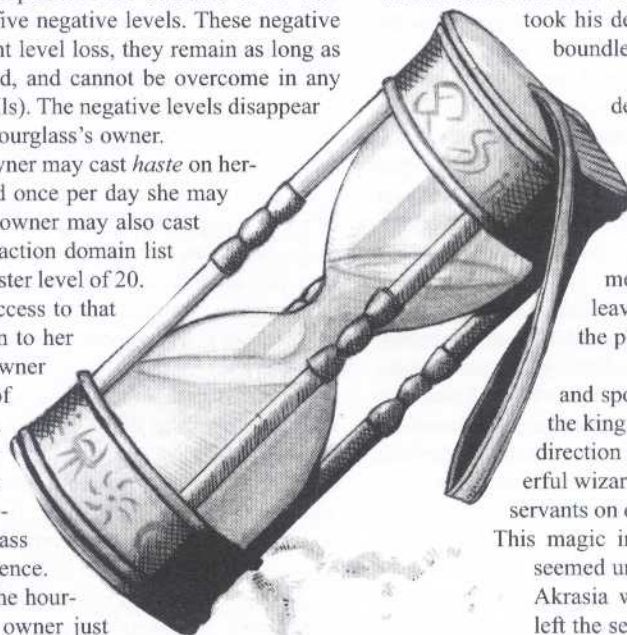
Another came, and expounded the delights of the table. Again, the king listened to her with favor, and placed her in charge of the kitchens. The cooks of the palace labored for days over every feast, and the king ate with delight. Yet he conducted business even during the meals, and for urgent matters he would leave the table to meet with his advisers. So the plans continued unhindered.

A wiser distractor came to Irrissia, and spoke of the uses of magical power. Again, the king listened with an eager ear, and under the direction of the distractor he began to gather powerful wizards and puissant items. He would send his servants on quests for the most renowned of artifacts. This magic increased his power, so that his empire seemed unstoppable, and many of the followers of Akrasia whispered that the wisest distractor had left the service of the Goddess.

But it was not so. When the king was confident that enchanted devices were of great use to him, the distractor spoke to him of the *leaking hourglass*, and of the use it would be in foiling the schemes of his enemies. He told the king tales of its location -- tales that he knew to be true because he had concealed the Hourglass before traveling to Irrissia. So the king sent his minions to recover the artifact, and they brought it back for the king's treasury.

On the next day, news came from the outer reaches of the kingdom that one of the governors had rebelled, and that aid was urgently needed. The king agreed, but found that he could not quite work out how best to organize the punitive expedition. Instead, he spent the evening in his harem. The feast took up too much time the following day and the plans were left unmade. On the third day, the king had to dispense justice to the citizens of his capital, and the troops still sat in their barracks.

On the fourth day, the rebel forces sacked the capital of Irrissia, and the dream of empire scattered to the winds. Those ruins lie undisturbed to this day, a testament to the power of Akrasia. The hourglass too lies among them, guarded by abominations.



AKRASIA: THIEF OF TIME

The Lucky Laborer: Philip was an ordinary laborer, working on many projects for the lord of his manor. One day, while he was digging the foundations for a wall, he struck something with his spade. At first, he thought it was a stone, but as he brushed the earth away he saw the glint of gold. At once, he covered it up again and hurried back to his home for a sack.

When he returned with the sack, he quickly dug away the earth from around the treasure, and found the *leaking hourglass*. He did not know what it was, and so marveled that the glass had not been more badly damaged as it lay in the ground. Putting it in the sack, he took it home and hid it carefully in his hut. Watching the sand flow, and the hourglass turn itself, Philip realized that he had found an enchanted item. He was sure he would be able to sell it for a large amount of money, but he also knew that he would have to think of a good plan if he was to avoid sharing the money with his lord. He headed to a local tavern to plot.

In the tavern, Philip bought a drink, and started talking to his friends. Before long, the talk came round to tales of people who had found buried treasure, and what they had done with it. Dawn broke while the group was still swapping stories, and Philip left them to go and gaze upon his discovery. As he looked at the hourglass, it occurred to him that more things might lie buried in the same place, so he took his spade and began digging. The hole was soon completely unsuitable for a foundation, but he found nothing, so he headed back to the tavern. Again, everyone stayed up until dawn with him, and Philip's plans to sell the hourglass went nowhere.

Before long, the lord of the manor came down to find out why his workers were spending all their time drinking. Philip found himself pushed to the front to talk to the lord. While being harangued, he quickly thought of a distraction that would please his Lord. He timidly suggested a round of cards, and, to the astonishment of everyone, the lord stopped in mid-flow and burst into laughter. The game lasted until the following noon, when everyone was drowsing over their hands. Philip returned home, his desire to sell his item still burning in his mind. Still, a black spot of self-loathing at his own delay had been born.

Through Philip, the hourglass brought the manor to ruin. Some say the artifact remains there to this day. Immortal and homeless, Philip wanders the land inspired to perform great deeds for his Goddess, but unable to muster the will to do so. Over time, his abilities have grown, and his heart become black.

Kanettrien the Sorcerer: Years ago, in a distant land, there lived a sorcerer named Kanettrien. His father was human, his mother an elf, and he was blessed with great talent for his chosen profession. His parents encouraged him to put his talents to good use, and so he set out on his adventures. In his early years, he restricted himself to defending his homeland and responding to threats. Over time, he became aware of an evil mastermind looming behind seemingly unconnected events, and he turned his attention to dealing with the great danger.

The first task was to gather more information. He needed to learn where the mastermind lived, and what his plans and his weaknesses were. For five years, Kanettrien devoted all his efforts to this task, and at the end of that time he believed he knew enough. But at that point a cleric of Akrasia, called Darien, came to him in disguise. He spoke to Kanettrien of his quest, and provided some additional information about the great evil. Kanettrien was mistrustful of this new cleric, and refused to tell him of his plans. Darien claimed to be hurt by this lack of trust, but still gave the sorcerer detailed information about the next attack the overlord planned to make.

The threat was too serious to ignore, and so Kanettrien set off to confront it. He took precautions in case it turned out to be a trap. In the end, things were just as the cleric had said, and Kanettrien was able to destroy the attacking force without much difficulty. Afterward, he met up with Darien again, and apologized for his lack of trust. Nevertheless, he would not share the details of his scheme for fear that the overlord would pull it from the cleric's mind by magic. Darien again claimed disappointment, and provided the information he had discovered about another attack. Again Kanettrien headed off, and again the attack was thwarted.

This continued for several years, and Kanettrien grew to trust Darien. But then, after he had thwarted another raid, he suddenly realized that he had been distracted into dealing with minor disturbances, and the evil overlord had been left alone to build his power. Furious, Kanettrien returned to confront Darien, expecting to hear apologies and explanations. Instead, he found a letter.

"This is exactly what I planned. I am a servant of Akrasia, the Goddess of Distractions, and through my agency you have been prevented from overthrowing the tyrant."

In his anger, Kanettrien turned his energies to seeking out and destroying all traces of the worship of Akrasia in his country. He found temples and tiny shrines, and even hounded lone worshippers to death or conversion. Still, signs of the cult kept appearing, inspiring Kanettrien to deal with them.

He only stopped when the tyrant, who again had been left alone to build his forces, invaded and crushed his country. Immortal Darien, using the name Kain, was a trusted advisor to the tyrant. Still, it was not long before that empire declined in strength and was destroyed by its neighbors. Darien's string of shattered empires, vanquished dreams and changing names continues to this day. Perhaps he sits at the elbow of a nearby conqueror.

LITARRA

The Akritic cult has developed a series of trainings to make certain talented adherents more effective. These worthies are called distractors (see p. 28). Litarra is a prime example -- she is a rogue who takes particular delight in disrupting the plans of adventurers.

APPEARANCE

Litarra is a halfling of average height and weight for her race. Her hair is long, jet black, and braided into elaborate patterns. She changes these patterns every day, sometimes spending over an hour fixing her hair. She usually seems cheerful, but perceptive people find her smile uncomfortable -- she cannot quite keep the malice out of it.

HISTORY

Litarra's parents were both adventurers, and they dedicated their lives to great quests. This left little time for their daughter, who was shunted between friends and relatives whenever her parents set off to right some great wrong. Whenever they had time between adventures, she lived with them and was greatly spoiled. As she grew up, however, she looked forward to her parents' visits less than she resented their absence when they were away.

During her late teens, she finally told her parents what she thought of their great schemes, and their heroism. They were shocked and wounded, and Litarra enjoyed her first revenge. She left the next day, and has had no contact with them since.

AKRASIA: THIEF OF TIME

She spent the next few years as a wandering rogue, dabbling in many things rather than mastering a few, and taking malicious delight in spoiling the grand plans of adventurers. She stole and destroyed the vital object they uncovered. She passed information about their plans on to the people they hoped to confront. Most of the time she just tried to convince them their schemes were worthless, and that they should enjoy themselves instead.

A number of years ago, a cleric of Akrasia noticed Litarra's activities, and realized that she would be a fine servant of the Goddess. He approached the halfling, explaining Akrasia's ideas to her. She was immediately enthralled, and began studying as a cleric of the Thief of Time. She has maintained her delight in shattering the dreams of adventurers, but now thinks that she ought to corrupt them rather than simply interfere. She usually settles for stealing their supplies or setting traps for them.

Within a few years she earned quite a reputation in Akritic circles, and the distractors invited her to become one of their number. This suited her perfectly, and she now wanders as a distractor.

ROLEPLAYING LITARRA

Litarra enjoys seeing adventurers involve themselves in petty matters, and fail to complete the quests they have accepted. She will do anything she can to hinder their schemes short of physically attacking them. She might hire thugs to harass them, plant stolen items to incriminate them, or spread stories of their incompetence and evil to undermine them. She might steal from them, or even have their family and friends kidnapped. If she can convince the adventurers that sitting in a tavern is a better way of spending their time, she will. Because she is ultimately the cause of all their troubles, she particularly enjoys commiserating with them over a drink or twelve.

HOOKS

Litarra latches on to the player characters, trying to undermine their schemes. Until they figure out who is responsible, and stop her, they are unlikely to be able to get anything useful done.

Litarra decides to frustrate the plans of a particularly effective group of evil adventurers. These adventurers are the player characters' enemies, so Litarra serves as a mysterious ally. The characters may even come to think of her as a friend, which makes it all the more distressing when the evil group is defeated, and the distractor turns her attentions to the PCs.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

Litarra and Yaraemon the Bard (see p. 12) have met in the past, and the distractor tried to undermine the bard's activities. As a result, they are not on friendly terms.

Litarra occasionally visits the Temple of Present Delights (see p. 21), and uses it as a base when she needs one.

LITARRA AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Use the version most appropriate to the level of the party encountered.

Litarra: Female halfling Rog3/Clr3/Distractor3; CR 9; Small humanoid; HD 3d6 + 6d8; hp 37; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 16; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d6-1, short sword), +12/+7/+2 ranged (1d4+1, hand crossbow); SQ clerical domains (evil, distraction), drinking companion, evasion, rebuke undead 5/day, sneak attack +2d6, steal time (one action), tempter's insight, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +6; Str 7, Dex 18 (20), Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14. Height 2 ft. 10 in., weight 29 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise* (3) +4, Balance (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Bluff (6) +8, Climb (6) +6, Concentration (2) +2, Diplomacy* (3) +5, Disable Device (6) +7, Disguise (1) +3, Gather Information* (3) +4, Hide (6) +14/+16 with gloves, Knowledge (religion) (6) +7, Move Silently (6) +12/+14 with gloves, Open Lock (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Pick Pocket (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Sense Motive* (3) +5, Spellcraft (1) +2, Swim* (2) +0, Tumble (6) +10/+12 with gloves (an asterisk indicates a distractor class skill); Alertness, Blind Fight, Dodge, Mobility.

Possessions: *Gloves of dexterity* +2, *hand crossbow* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *short sword* +1, good mundane gear and money.

Spells Prepared (4/4/3): 0 -- *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *resistance*; 1 -- *command* (2), *divine favor*, *indolence*; 2 -- *enthrall*, *hold person*, *summon monster II*.

Litarra: Female halfling Rog6/Clr4/Distractor4; CR 14; Small humanoid; HD 6d6 + 8d8; hp 57; Init +4; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6-1, short sword), +16/+11/+6/+1 ranged (1d4+1, hand crossbow); SQ clerical domains (evil, distraction), drinking companion, evasion, rebuke undead 5/day, sneak attack +3d6, steal time (two actions), tempter's insight, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +17, Will +8; Str 7, Dex 18 (20), Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15. Height 2 ft. 10 in., weight 29 lbs.

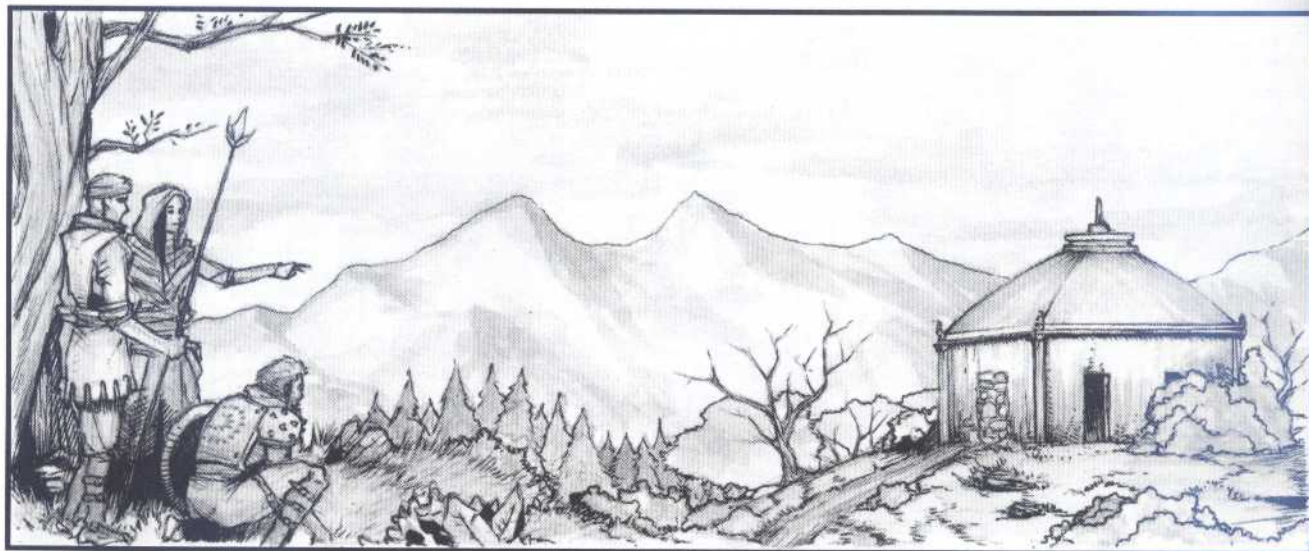
Skills and Feats: Appraise* (3) +4, Balance (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Bluff (6) +8, Climb (6) +6, Concentration (2) +2, Diplomacy* (6) +8, Disable Device (6) +7, Disguise (1) +3, Escape Artist (4) +8/+10 with gloves, Forgery* (3) +4, Gather Information* (3) +4, Heal (3) +5, Hide (6) +14/+16 with gloves, Innuendo* (3) +5, Intuit Direction* (3) +5, Knowledge (religion) (6) +7, Move Silently (6) +12/+14 with gloves, Open Lock (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Pick Pocket (6) +10/+12 with gloves, Read Lips (4) +5, Search (2) +3, Sense Motive* (3) +5, Spellcraft (3) +4, Swim* (4) +2, Tumble (6) +10/+12 with gloves (an asterisk indicates a distractor class skill); Alertness, Blind Fight, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility.

Possessions: *Bag of holding* (type 1), *bracers of armor* +3, *gloves of dexterity* +2, *hand crossbow* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *ring of sustenance*, *short sword* +2, *wand of summon monster IV* (27 charges left), good mundane gear and money.

Spells Prepared (5/5/4): 0 -- *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1 -- *command* (2), *divine favor*, *indolence*, *obscuring mist*; 2 -- *enthrall*, *hold person*, *silence*, *summon monster II*.

PART THREE

THE SHELTERING SHRINE



INTRODUCTION

Centuries ago, a proud civilization ruled the lands. They called themselves Merithians and scholars still marvel at their abilities. Their arrogance and decadence proved to be their undoing however, and they were overwhelmed by the barbarians they had once conquered.

In these ancient times, a group of renegade Merithians began constructing a temple to Akrasia beside a main road. It was never finished, and over time trade routes changed and the road became less traveled. The Goddess sent one of her creatures to watch over it. At present, the shrine is a tempting shelter for travelers, but given its gloomholt inhabitant, few are able to leave.

HOOKS

The characters, pursued by a band of enemies, find the shrine as night approaches. It is an ideal place to defend, so they stop.

A group of merchants, traveling a little known route, has disappeared. They took shelter in the shrine, and have not yet been able to leave. The characters are asked to find them, and when they do the traders seem to be in good health, but refuse to leave.

THE SHRINE

The shrine is a rectangular stone building, twenty-five feet long and fifteen feet wide. The ceiling is high, reaching twenty feet from the ground, and the roof is vaulted. Foundations for other rooms around the main building are hardly visible through the undergrowth. It appears to be truly ancient -- the stonework is in a style few craftsmen know anymore.

Originally, there were to be six doors into the main hall of the temple, two in each long side and two in the shorter side nearer to the road. The doorways in the side have been crudely walled up,

and one of the two facing the road is completely blocked by a dense thorn bush. Thus, there is only one usable entrance. The main walls of the shrine are sturdy, and even the crude walling in the doorways is quite strong, making the building easy to defend. It is still waterproof, and is large enough for a fire to be built inside without inconveniencing the characters with smoke. Further, a well in one of the back corners contains potable water. The whole shrine is dark and full of shadows.

The back wall of the shrine is roughly carving, and an altar stands just in front of it. The carving appears to be of a woman holding something, but it is very old and was never completed so it is not possible to make out the details.

Creatures (EL 3): The shrine is inhabited by a gloomholt, hiding in the darkness.

Gloomholt: hp 18 (see p. 29).

THE MERITHIANS

There is, as noted above, little remaining evidence of the Merithians. However, they did leave behind an item that may be of use to the characters. Hidden under the rubbish in one corner is a Merithian scroll -- a clay cylinder with symbols impressed into it. If it is read with a *comprehend languages* spell, it gives the route from the city of Derimos, capital of Merithia, to one of the border fortresses. This clue may be used as a lead-in to another adventure involving an ancient fortress -- perhaps a group of goblins has established a bandit camp there. The area around this fortress is described in some detail, and this should provide the characters with an advantage over the defenders. One version of this fortress, its dangerous inhabitants and the wondrous treasure inside may be found in the vignette "The Lost Merithian Fortress" from *Eden Odyssey Wonders Out of Time*. The directions in the scroll can, with some effort, be followed in reverse, leading the characters to Derimos, which would cause quite a stir among archeologists and scholars throughout the lands.

PART FOUR

YARAEMON THE BARD



INTRODUCTION

Yaraemon (YAIR-e-mon) is an itinerant worshipper of Akrasia. He tempts people to spend too long listening to his performances, and discourages those who want to undertake great things. However, he is prone to weakness of will, and thus is unlikely to be a major threat to the characters. Yaraemon is a typical lay follower of Akrasia -- he could cause the PCs some minor trouble, merely provide background color, or be a small part of a larger conspiracy.

APPEARANCE

Yaraemon is a tall half-elf, standing five feet eleven inches, and weighing one hundred and eighty pounds. He is good looking, but shows the signs of over-indulgence in alcohol. His clothes are expensive and well-cared for, despite his wandering existence. His hair is black, and cut rakishly. He cannot grow facial hair, a result of his elven heritage, but grows his hair long at the temples so that he appears to have sideburns.

HISTORY

Yaraemon's father was an elf, and left soon after Yaraemon was born. His mother preached the virtues of reliability and discipline incessantly as Yaraemon grew up, assuring him that he could achieve anything he wanted if he put enough effort into it. At the same time, he could never be trustworthy enough, never work hard enough to satisfy her. By the time he reached adolescence, Yaraemon was felt worthlessness, sure that his elven blood was responsible for holding him back.

When he was seventeen, his father returned, wealthy and living the high life. When Yaraemon's mother demanded assistance, he laughed, mocking them for their disciplined poverty. On the

way home from the unsuccessful plea, Yaraemon listened to a long speech about his father's evils, a sentiment he agreed with. Unfortunately, he saw his mother's approach as being just as bad. He left home within a week, and soon apprenticed with a traveling bard.

Since then, Yaraemon has wandered the lands. He encountered Akrasia's cult several years ago, and was quickly converted. The idea of spoiling others' dreams appealed to him, as did the cult's emphasis on lack of discipline. He acquired the *harp of distraction* (see p. 32) after killing its previous owner while she slept in a drunken stupor. He is a little worried that her friends may have raised her from the dead, and that she might come after him, but has done little to plan for it.

ROLEPLAYING YARAEMON

Yaraemon seems open and friendly. Few people spend enough time in his company to learn the truth. Inside, he feels contempt for most people. They either waste their lives in idleness, often at his urging, or are driven by meaningless ambition. There is, for Yaraemon, no middle ground.

His music is his main tool in this. He is an able bard, and the *harp of distraction* makes him even more effective. He often gives performances lasting the whole night, leaving those who attend far too tired to do anything useful the following day. When adventurers ask him for information about their goals, he creates a plausible lie, exaggerating the danger and minimizing the rewards of the mission. If possible, he makes it sound so dangerous that no one would risk it.

Complementing his contempt for others, Yaraemon despises himself. He has failed to achieve anything of note, unlike his father. His service to Akrasia is half-hearted, and he drinks more than he should, occasionally revealing his lies. If sufficiently drunk, he even commits himself to great plans of reform.

AKRASIA: THIEF OF TIME

HOOKS

The PCs are caught by one of Yaraemon's performances, and miss an important appointment. This serves as a complication in some other adventure, but later they encounter the bard again, and are caught by his music again. They suspect magical influence, and decide to investigate.

The PCs consult Yaraemon for information about an adventure. He exaggerates the danger and minimizes the reward, as normal. Being PCs, they go ahead anyway, discovering his lies. Later, they meet another group of adventurers, who passed up a quest because of Yaraemon's descriptions. The PCs may decide to try their luck, and may discover the pattern in Yaraemon's deceit.

One or more of the PCs meet Yaraemon in a tavern, and they drink together. Yaraemon gets very drunk, and his state brings on a foolish honesty. He expounds his plans to corrupt the world in the service of Akrasia. This is a good way to introduce the players to the details of Akrasia's cult, and also sets them the problem of what to do about the drunken bard.

The bard from whom Yaraemon stole the *harp of distraction* has been raised from the dead, and is hunting him. She is extremely dedicated and disciplined, almost to the extent of risking the loss of her chaotic-based class. Although not malicious to others, she is hard-hearted and generates little sympathy if she crosses the party's path.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

The bard knows the legends of the *leaking hourglass* (see p. 8), and will recount them if asked.

Yaraemon has met Litarra, the distractor (see p. 10). She messed up one of his plans and they are now hostile toward each other.

Martin Aleholt (see p. 16) hired Yaraemon to provide the entertainment at the Way Choice on several occasions and both innkeeper and bard were very pleased with the results. It will happen again.

He has an ongoing sporadic love affair with Fressenia in Riverton (see p. 18). He knows that she follows Akrasia but does not know about the other worshippers in that town.

Yaraemon stays away from the Temple of Present Delights (see p. 21), because the monsters guarding the building make him nervous.

YARAEMON AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Use the version most appropriate to the level of the party encountered.

Yaraemon: Male half-elf Brd5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d6+5; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11; Atk +4 melee (1d8, longsword), +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SQ Bardic Music (countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage), Bardic Knowledge +7; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16. Height 5 ft., 11 in., weight 180 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (4) +5, Bluff (8) +11, Decipher Script (2) +4, Diplomacy (8) +11, Disguise (6) +9, Escape Artist (4) +5, Gather Information (4) +7, Intuit Direction (2) +1, Perform (8) +13/+20 with *harp of distraction*, Sense Motive (6) +5, Use Magic Device (2) +5; Dodge, Skill Focus (perform).

Possessions: Good clothes and traveling gear, *harp of distraction*, light crossbow (masterwork), longsword (masterwork), 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*.

Spells Prepared (cast 4/4/2): 0 -- *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1 -- *charm person*, *hypnotism*, *sleep*, *summon monster I*; 2 -- *enthrall*, *misdirection*, *suggestion*.

Yaraemon: Male half-elf Brd5/Rog3; CR 8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 8d6+8; hp 36, Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d8, longsword), +8/+3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SQ Bardic Music (countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage, suggestion), Bardic Knowledge +7, Sneak Attack +2d6, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16. Height 5 ft., 11 in., weight 180 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (4) +5, Bluff (11) +14, Decipher Script (2) +4, Diplomacy (8) +11, Disguise (6) +9, Escape Artist (6) +8, Gather Information (4) +7, Hide (6) +8, Intuit Direction (2) +1, Move Silently (6) +8, Open Lock (6) +8, Perform (11) +16/+23 with *harp of distraction*, Pick Pocket (2) +4, Search (2) +4, Sense Motive (6) +5, Use Magic Device (2) +5; Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (perform).

Possessions: *bracers of armor* +2, good clothes and traveling gear, *harp of distraction*, light crossbow (masterwork), longsword (masterwork), 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds*, *wand of summon monster II* (12 charges left).

Spells Prepared (cast 4/4/2): 0 -- *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1 -- *charm person*, *hypnotism*, *sleep*, *summon monster I*; 2 -- *enthrall*, *misdirection*, *suggestion*.

Yaraemon: Male half-elf Brd7/Rog4; CR 11; Medium-size humanoid; HD 11d6+11; hp 50; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d8, longsword), +11/+6/+1 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); SQ Bardic Music (countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage, inspire greatness, suggestion), Bardic Knowledge +9, Sneak Attack +2d6, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 16. Height 5 ft., 11 in., weight 180 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (4) +5, Balance (2) +4, Bluff (14) +17, Climb (2) +4, Decipher Script (2) +4, Diplomacy (8) +11, Disable Device (4) +6, Disguise (6) +9, Escape Artist (6) +8, Gather Information (4) +7, Hide (6) +8, Innuendo (2) +1, Intuit Direction (2) +1, Jump (2) +2, Move Silently (6) +8, Open Lock (6) +8, Perform (14) +19/+26 with *harp of distraction*, Pick Pocket (4) +6, Search (4) +6, Sense Motive (6) +5, Tumble (4) +6, Use Magic Device (2) +5; Dodge, Mobility, Skill Focus (perform).

Possessions: *Bracers of armor* +2, good clothes and traveling gear, *harp of distraction*, *heward's handy haversack*, *light crossbow* +1, *longsword* +1, *rope of climbing*, *wand of cure moderate wounds* 15 charges left.

Spells Prepared (cast 4/4/3): 0 -- *daze*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*; 1 -- *charm person*, *hypnotism*, *sleep*, *summon monster I*; 2 -- *enthrall*, *misdirection*, *suggestion*, *summon monster II*.

PART FIVE

THE WAY CHOICE



INTRODUCTION

The Way Choice is an inn run by a follower of Akrasia. He is very good at his job, and the village suffers even as the inn prospers. The PCs may stay at the inn, and might notice its baleful influence and try to do something about it.

HOOKS

The Way Choice could become one of the PCs' usual stopping places. The service is good and the prices are reasonable, and if they tend to spend a bit longer there than they should, they likely do not notice it for some time. In this case, the characters should slowly become aware of the degeneration of the village as described below. By the time they decide to do something about it, it may be too late.

A contact of the PCs fails to keep an appointment. The characters manage to track him down to the Way Choice, where he seems surprised, because he thought he had plenty of time to have another drink and still make the meeting.

The PCs spend so long at the Way Choice that they miss an important appointment. This results in a more difficult adventure, a lost opportunity or damaged political relationship.

The PCs simply come across the Way Choice during their travels. Martin's plans are far advanced, and the village is visibly sinking into decay. The houses are in poor repair, crops stand untended in the fields, and everyone is in the tavern, desperately trying to enjoy themselves. They are willing to talk to strangers, and complain about the troubles besetting their home. They claim that there is some sort of curse afflicting the settlement, making it impossible to work the fields and perform repairs. This is not true, but it has become a popular excuse among the population.

The characters may try to recruit assistance from the villagers in the tavern, but they find it very difficult. Everyone is willing in principle, but everyone also has an excuse. They have another drink to finish, or the weather is bad, or they are scared of the curse. The characters may try to investigate the curse themselves.

This is difficult and frustrating, because no actual curse exists. If the characters can prove this to their own satisfaction, they can tell the villagers.

The commoners profess not to believe them, and commiserate with them on their failure to find the source of the trouble, suggesting that they should have a drink. The characters may, at this point, suspect the inn. After all, almost the entire population of the village is here, and they seem to spend their entire lives here, handing out rumors to passing strangers. If the characters find Martin's shrine to Akrasia and reveal it to the villagers, the innkeeper is banished, and the village starts to recover. If the PCs simply kill Martin, things also get better, but their reputations suffers -- everyone believes they killed an upstanding and popular citizen.

THE INN

The inn is a large, three-story building. The sign shows a traveler at a fork in the road, contemplating a choice between two paths, one noticeably easier than the other. Martin Aleholt, the innkeeper, follows Akrasia and constantly strives to honor his Goddess in subtle ways. The Way Choice is built in the classic timber-frame manner, and the fill between the structural beams is painted white. A couple of partially complete murals cover the walls (not surprisingly, the painter got distracted before he could finish either job). The building is well-constructed, but there are small jobs that need doing -- a broken window, perhaps, or a badly sticking door.

The Way Choice does not close and its staff is always on duty. There are, of course, quiet periods in the early hours of the morning, but a late traveler can always get in and at least buy food and drink, even if he cannot book a room. The inn does a lot of business, but does not make much profit. Martin wants people to visit, so he keeps prices down and quality up. His use of Akritic magic to ensure that people spend longer in the inn than they might otherwise ensures him a comfortable living, but no more.

A map of the Way Choice Inn appears on page 17.

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FIRST FLOOR

The first floor of the inn contains the public rooms, where patrons eat and drink. It is always open, and usually busy. Unless specified, Martin charges slightly discounted prices (see Core Rulebook I, p. 108).

1: KITCHEN

Martin keeps the kitchen well stocked. One or more members of the kitchen staff are always on duty. The supplies come from local farmers and businesses.

2: PERFORMANCE ROOM

This room contains a stage in one corner where better than average performers entertain the patrons. There are many small tables, with stools for people to sit on, and a bar in the corner by the entrance to the kitchen.

3: COMMON ROOM

This room is designed to be quiet and sedate. There are large tables, comfortable chairs, and some areas are partitioned into booths for some degree of privacy. It is usually less full than the performance room, and the bouncers ask noisy parties to move from this room to the performance room. Martin sometimes allows poor travelers to sleep here, near the fireplace (0-1 sp per night), as long as they buy a meal.

SECOND FLOOR

The second floor consists mainly of rooms for customers. Most of Martin's staff live in their own houses in the village.

1: THE PRIVATE HALL

This large room is well furnished, and may be hired for private parties. Martin provides almost any entertainment the occupant might ask for, the more sordid the better.

2: PRIVATE ROOMS

The furnishings vary in quality, as do the prices (1-3 gp per day), and Martin rents them out by the room, not by number of people staying in them. Thus, a party of adventurers could rent one room among them, although it might be a bit crowded.

3: COMMON DORMITORY

Furnished with bunks, this is where poorer travelers sleep (4 sp per day). Martin is strict about theft here, and he will investigate with the help of his bouncers if any accusations are made. He is careful of the inn's reputation as a safe place to stay.

4: SMALL ROOMS

These rooms are used by the inn's prostitutes for their business. They are well furnished, and Martin does his best to ensure they do not seem cheap or tawdry.

THIRD FLOOR

The third floor contains Martin's personal quarters.

1: VAULT

This room holds Martin's valuable personal effects in strong boxes, and has no windows. The room is furnished with strong boxes, and has no windows. The narrow and steep spiral staircase leads to the secret cellar shrine and is housed in a stone turret built onto the side of the inn.

Treasure: Most of the strong boxes in the vault are empty. Martin uses his income to buy nice things for his rooms. One of the chests contains 500gp in coins, mostly gold and platinum pieces. The strong boxes are hardness 5, with 15 hit points, and a break DC of 22. Their locks are DC 27 to pick.

2: BEDROOM

Martin's bedroom is furnished with tasteful, well-made furniture and fine fabrics brought from across the land. Only the large bed is crude, because Martin cannot commit to buy a better one. It is a favorite subject in the taproom, and regular travelers swap their impressions of the latest installment in the saga of his new bed.

3: RECEPTION ROOM

This is where Martin entertains his personal guests. It is well-furnished, and the cabinet against the north wall contains the best wines and spirits the inn has to offer. Also locked in that cabinet is a fine set of crystal goblets. There are only five -- a servant dropped and broke one several years ago. The innkeeper killed the servant, spreading the story that she ran away. Since then, Martin has cleaned the goblets himself, using them only with respected visitors such as priests of Akrasia.

DOORS

Most of the inn's doors are simple wooden doors with hardness 5, 10 hit points, and a break DC of 13. They have simple bolts on the inside, but no locks. The doors in Martin's private quarters are better, with hardness 5, 15 hit points, and a DC of 18. They have locks (DC of 20 to pick). The door to his strong room, and the door from the strong room to the staircase, are even better, with hardness 5, 20 hit points, and a DC of 23. Their locks are DC 25.



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THE SHRINE

Martin has a shrine to Akrasia in his basement. The only access is by the spiral staircase from his vault; no one else in the inn knows about it. If they did, it would undermine his popularity. People often expect an innkeeper to give a nod of respect to the Thief of Time, but the discovery that Martin is a devout follower would shock many of his patrons.

The spiral staircase leads into a stone-walled storeroom. This room contains five treasure chests, all empty.

The secret door to the shrine has a Search DC of 20. It is stone, and pivots opens. There is a small latch next to it, which does not open the door, but rather drops a block of stone on anyone operating it. (CR 5; +15 melee (6d6); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 25)) The door is opened by a button on the other side of the room, also DC 20 to find.

The shrine contains an altar, with two candle clocks standing on it. Behind it is a painting of the Goddess, showing her carrying the net and hourglass.

Creatures (CR 7): A life-reft guardian makes its home in the shrine.

Life-reft: hp 60 (see p. 30).

Treasure: Six night candles (see p. 32).

THE STAFF

MARTIN ALEHOLT

Appearance: Martin is short and fat, with wild brown hair. He constantly tries to get his hair in some sort of order, smoothing it down while talking to people. He is cheerful and friendly. He wears old clothes with an apron, because he likes to seem involved in the practical matters of running the inn. He keeps several fine outfits for entertaining important guests. He is fond of rings, the heavier and gaudier the better, and normally wears at least one on each finger.

History: Martin was born in a large city, the son of a tavern-keeper who also followed Akrasia. He eagerly took to the family trade, but as a younger son he could not inherit the tavern. This suited Martin, who felt there was more scope for his talents in a small village, where he would have a monopoly on passing trade. His father disagreed, and encouraged him to set up in the city, spreading the Goddess's influence there. Martin initially caved in, rather than make trouble, and set up a tavern near one of the gates.

This establishment quickly became a success and Martin displayed a natural talent for the trade. Within a couple of years his cynical father decided his successful son should indeed establish himself somewhere a long way from the family tavern, and generously allowed Martin to set up in a village somewhere. Martin was delighted, and spent a couple of years wandering the countryside "looking for a good site." In the end, he settled on the village he had in mind right from the start, and bought the struggling tavern.

That was ten years ago, and the tavern has flourished since then.

Roleplaying Martin: Martin is primarily concerned with the prosperity of his tavern, and its effectiveness as a tool of the Goddess. He is popular in the village and with travelers, since he combines reasonable prices with excellent food and drink, good accommodation, and superior entertainment. He has plans to open more inns along the same route, and discusses his plans with anyone he thinks might be willing to invest. These plans have not gone very far, as Martin always finds something to do instead.

Martin Aleholt: Male human Exp4; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d6+4; hp 19; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9; Atk +2 melee (1d6-1, club), +2 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 9, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14. Height 5 ft. 2 in., weight 152 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (7) +7, Bluff (7) +9, Diplomacy (7) +11, Gather Information (7) +9, Knowledge (local) (7) +7, Profession (innkeeper) (7) +10, Sense Motive (7) +10; Skill Focus (diplomacy), Skill Focus (profession (innkeeper)), Skill Focus (sense motive).

Possessions: The Way Choice, and the property in his rooms. Altogether, these are worth about 5,000 gp.

THE BOUNCERS

The Way Choice has six bouncers, at least two of whom are on duty at any time. Furthermore, at least two stay at the inn while off-duty. Their names are William, Martin-not-the-boss, Big Seuran, Kallumo (a foreigner), Teresa, and Semmeram. They usually have little to do -- the patrons like the inn and Martin bans persistent troublemakers. The bouncers limit themselves to occasionally dropping obnoxious drunks in the horse-trough.

Bouncers: Male humans War5; CR 4; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d8+8; hp 27; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 13; Atk +7 melee (1d3+2 subdual, unarmed strike; 1d6+2, club); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 7, Wis 9, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb (4) +6, Handle Animal (4) +4, Intimidate (8) +8; Improved Bull Rush, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

Possessions: Leather armor, club, 6 gp in small change.

THE PROSTITUTES

Martin does not manage prostitutes. Instead, he makes it very easy for people to prostitute themselves in the Way Choice. There are rooms available, cheap if hired for an hour at a time. The bouncers are instructed to make sure the tarts can practice their trade without interference, and the bar staff make sure that patrons are not unduly harassed.

Elsa is typical of the inn's prostitutes. She is in her mid twenties, married with two children. Her husband, James, spends most of his time gambling in the inn. Elsa, at first, merely accompanied him, but as they spent more time there and neglected their fields, money got very tight. A year ago, Elsa began prostituting herself to pay the bills, and now, although she wishes she could do something else, she is stuck with it unless she can make a major effort to break out.

The prostitutes are commoners of low level (see Core Rulebook II, p. 38).

THE ENTERTAINERS

Martin hires traveling players to entertain his guests. This ensures a constant turnover, and thus novelty for the residents of the village, as well as for frequent travelers. Worshippers of Akrasia often direct each other to this inn, so many of the entertainers are servants of the Goddess. Martin always auditions potential entertainers, but he has odd tastes. The quality of the entertainment is generally good, but sometimes off-beat.

The entertainers are experts of varying level (see Core Rulebook II, p. 39).

THE GENERAL STAFF

Martin is extremely fussy about his staff. He insists that they are well-presented, cheerful, knowledgeable, and good at their jobs. He also pays well, because he is aware that it can be difficult to retain staff of the requisite quality. The head chef is excellent, and the assistant cooks could easily get jobs in charge of the kitchens at other taverns. Martin has promised them such posts in his other inns, when he finally gets around to setting them up. The staff of the inn are not evil, and do not realize that Martin has nefarious aims.

The head chef and assistant cooks are experts of moderate level; the remainder are commoners of low level (see Core Rulebook II, p. 38-39).

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

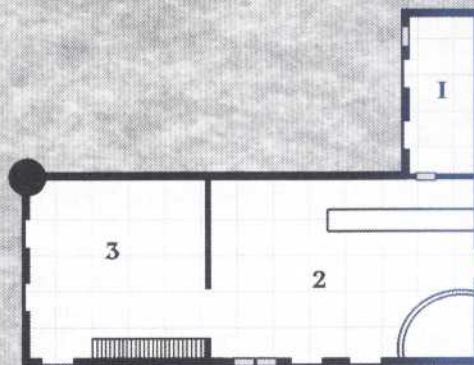
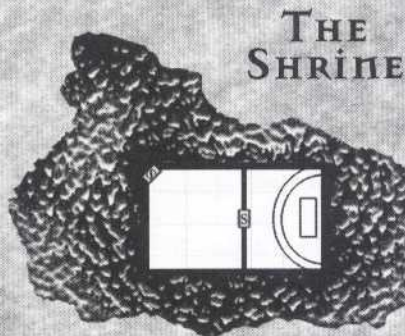
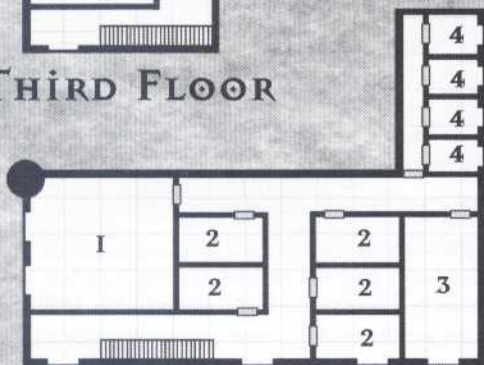
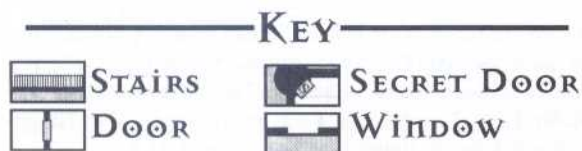
If the characters can demonstrate to themselves that there is no curse on the village, they deserve an experience point award. There is no real threat, but proving that is certainly a challenge. Defeating the life-reft is worth a normal experience point award.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

Martin has hired Yaraemon the Bard (see p. 12) to provide entertainment on several occasions. Each knows the other worships Akrasia, although Yaraemon has not been told about the secret shrine.

Martin has close links to the Temple of Present Delights (see p. 21), particularly with Hincmar, and it is from them that he gets his supply of *night candles*.

THE WAY CHOICE INN



SCALE: ONE SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET

PART SIX — UNTIL THE RAINS COME

INTRODUCTION

Four lay followers of Akrasia live in Riverton, a town which has grown up on both sides of a relatively large river. They meet together for secret worship, and have recently begun a scheme to stop the town from building embankments along the river to control floodwater. Without the embankments, floods will continue to damage the town from time to time, costing lives and money.

HOOK

Riverton can be any medium-sized or larger town, as long as it is on a river prone to flooding. Thus, the best way to get the PCs involved is to transfer the vignette to a town which already exists in the campaign world, and which the characters have already visited.

The PCs might acquire property in the low-lying areas of the town, either by simple purchase or as a reward for some previous adventure. They might also have loved-ones who live in these areas. Whatever the reason, they should want to protect the town, and see the embankments built.

THE AKRATICS

FRESSENIA HIGHBARGE

Appearance: Fressenia is a slight and beautiful human woman, with long red hair and striking green eyes. She wears fine robes, cut to show off her figure, and rarely dons the same thing twice. She dislikes jewelry. She appears to be in her late twenties, although she is more than a decade older.

History: Fressenia is the younger sister of Marcus Highbarge, the richest merchant in the town. Their father was extremely wealthy and both children grew up in luxury. While old Highbarge raised Marcus to follow him in running the firm, Fressenia was allowed to do whatever she wanted. Her father could see no evil where she was concerned and she quickly became spoiled.

She grew accustomed to having everything in life provided for her. Godric Landseer (see next) was employed as her tutor, and he saw her as a potential convert. Once he was sure that she would not betray him, he introduced her to the worship of Akrasia. The young woman began spending most of her time and money satisfying her various whims and throwing wild and decadent parties. These soon became an essential fixture on the social calendar of Riverton. Marcus, her brother, developed into a serious young man and did not approve of his sister's activities. He was, however, unable to make their father see her faults, and the old man's will gave both of his children enough money to live well for the rest of their lives.

Once her father was dead, Fressenia began supporting wild and extravagant schemes to beautify and improve Riverton. Of course, she never followed these through, but she could usually manage to involve a number of important people in her plans, which would ultimately come to nothing. Her physical appetites remained undiminished, and once Malister (see p. 19) became the

hero of the town, she seduced him. This proved easy, and she was delighted to discover that he was also willing to become a follower of Akrasia.

Roleplaying Fressenia: Fressenia still lives for parties and paramours, but she also spends a significant amount of time and money on preserving her youthful good looks. There are always a couple of charlatans leeching off her, but she cannot be bothered to get rid of them. She found a few genuine wizards through Godric's contacts, and they have ensured her continuing youthful appearance.

Fressenia is playfully malicious, being unable to take other people's suffering seriously. She delights in dropping her lovers abruptly, and watching them trail after her. She occasionally gives them hope, to keep them hanging on, but usually makes sure to dash it again. She finds Akrasia to be the perfect goddess for her, and has grand schemes to bring the whole of Riverton under her influence. These schemes are, of course, unlikely to ever come to anything.

Fressenia Highbarge: Female human Ari4; CR 3; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d8; hp 18; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12; Atk +2 melee (1d4, dagger), +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 17. Height 4 ft. 8 in., weight 91 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (7) +7, Bluff (7) +10, Diplomacy (7) +12, Gather Information (7) +10, Sense Motive (7) +6; Dodge, Endurance, Skill Focus (diplomacy).

Possessions: Rich clothing, houses, and other mundane things. She can get hold of any item with a market value of less than 1,000 gp within a week. She does not normally have any enchanted items.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

Yaraemon the Bard (see p. 12) is one of Fressenia's occasional lovers. She enjoys the opportunity to talk about the Goddess, but has not told him about the other Akraties in the town. She wants to keep him for herself.

GODRIC LANDSEER

Appearance: Godric is a stooped, elderly man with a long tangled beard and similar hair. He rarely bathes, and his clothes are usually in need of a wash. He is highly intelligent, and peppers conversations with astute, but discouraging observations.

History: Godric always knew he wanted to be a scholar. In his youth, great things were predicted for him and his natural talent carried him easily through all the tests set for him. He was attracted to number of different subjects, but lost interest when in-depth was required. He gradually evolved a strange philosophy of scholarship: any knowledge you have to seriously work for is inherently tainted. His knowledge became broad, but never very deep.

Inevitably, that attitude caused him problems, and his teachers began to talk sadly of wasted potential. Annoyed, Godric left, offering his services as a sage to those who were willing to pay. His breadth of knowledge stood him in good stead, and he found that he was able to make a fairly comfortable living in Riverton.

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He came across the cult of Akrasia in his reading, and noted the appealing similarities between the Goddess's views and his own. At first, he felt no particular need to worship her. A few weeks later he had a dream in which the Goddess herself called him to be her servant, speaking once again of his great potential. Godric eagerly obeyed.

He began offering his services as a tutor, raising the children to be dabblers in a wide range of subjects, but discouraging them from working too hard on any one subject. Since his pupils could usually impress their parents with the breadth of their knowledge, he rarely faced any recriminations. Fressenia was his greatest success, as she displayed a natural talent for procrastination. He took the risk of introducing her to the worship of Akrasia.

Roleplaying Godric: Godric continues to offer his services as a tutor and as a sage. His information is usually reliable, but it is often late, since he has little regard for deadlines. Further, he usually produces analyses advising against any important undertaking. As a tutor, he advises strongly against disciplined study, which makes him popular with his pupils, and discourages any high ambitions they might have.

Godric Landseer: Male human Exp 6; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d6; hp 17; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk +3 melee (1d4-1, dagger); AL CN(E); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 10, Con 9, Int 20, Wis 9, Cha 8. Height 5 ft. 6 in., weight 140 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy (4) +9, Appraise (4) +9, Decipher Script (4) +9, Diplomacy (4) +3, Gather Information (4) +3, Heal (4) +3, Knowledge (arcana) (9) +16, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) (9) +14, Knowledge (geography) (9) +14, Knowledge (history) (9) +16, Knowledge (local: Riverton) (9) +16, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (9) +16, Knowledge (the planes) (9) +16, Knowledge (religion) (9) +16, Profession (scribe) (8) +7; Skill Focus (knowledge (arcana)), Skill Focus (knowledge (history)), Skill Focus (knowledge (local: Riverton)), Skill Focus (knowledge (nobility and royalty)), Skill Focus (knowledge (the planes)), Skill Focus (knowledge (religion)).

Possessions: House, clothes, lots of books, and the tools of his trades. He has a number of alchemical items, but no enchanted ones.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

Godric knows all of the legends about the *leaking hourglass* (see p. 8), and occasionally toys with the idea of organizing a search for it.

MALISTER DRAGONSLAYER

Appearance: Malister is a tall, burly human in his late thirties, now running somewhat to fat. He wears fine clothes or, if he wants to make an impression, magical armor. He is going bald, but wears a full beard. His clothes all bear the device of a dying red dragon.

History: Malister is a hero. He really did kill a dragon single-handed, and saved Riverton from likely destruction. The dragon was somewhat younger and smaller than most people thought, but it was still a great achievement, and Malister barely survived.

Malister was born in Riverton, and turned to adventuring at a young age. He was successful, but never managed to find a group he belonged in. As a result, Malister was a powerful but lone adventurer when the dragon came to Riverton, and the responsibility for defeating it fell on his shoulders.

He set out with an escort from the militia, but left them a safe distance from the dragon's lair. He used all his cunning to get inside the lair without being noticed, and was lucky enough to surprise the dragon in a confined area. He still has nightmares about the fight that followed, and he is not entirely sure how he won. He was burned by the dragon's breath, wounded by its claws, and then somehow managed to get his sword lodged in its throat, before losing consciousness. He woke as the dragon thrashed out its death agonies; he barely managed to avoid its final fiery blast.

The dragon did have a treasure, but it was small and disappointing. Further, Malister suffers from recurring nightmares about the fight, and refuses to talk about the actual combat in any detail. He knows that he came very close to being killed and incinerated.

He was enthusiastically received back at Riverton, but he had been put off adventuring. The risks no longer seemed worth the rewards. This disenchantment made him an easy target for Fressenia (see p. 18), who introduced him to Akrasia's teachings. Malister found the suggestion that he should not take such risks appealing, and soon became a worshipper. Since then, he has been in constant touch with the other Akraties in Riverton, and become an important part of the group.

Roleplaying Malister: Malister is the head of the town militia, a post he was given for life after killing the dragon. He rarely leads it on drill and is ready to grant leave to anyone who asks for it. As a result, the militia is weak, and probably could not repel any sort of assault. Some people are worried about this, but most do not take kindly to anyone finding fault with their hero Malister.

Because he is disenchanted with risk, not with people, Malister finds the more malicious aspects of Akrasia's cult distasteful. He is not sure that he wants to remain a worshipper of the Goddess, but changing would require a significant amount of effort, and he cannot summon up the necessary will.

Malister Dragonslayer: Male human Ftr10; CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d10+10; hp 65; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24; Atk +17/+12/+7/+2 melee (1d8+6, longsword), +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d10+1, heavy crossbow); AL CN; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 12. Height 6 ft., weight 200 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Jump (13) +17 (-7 armor check penalty), Swim (13) +17 (-16 for armor and gear); Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: +2 full plate armor; +1 large steel shield, +1 heavy crossbow, +2 longsword, high quality mundane gear.

MILDRED CAPSA

Appearance: Mildred is a small, mousy, middle-aged woman who dresses to fade into the background. She looks like a stereotypical civil servant, which is exactly what she is. Her one distinguishing feature is a stutter.

History: Mildred is the hereditary town clerk of Riverton, a post that has been passed down in the female line for six generations. Her mother did not do the work herself, employing a deputy to deal with the duties of the office while she enjoyed herself. Since Mildred was, as a child, also a hindrance to her mother's entertainments, she found herself left with the deputy clerk.

During those years Mildred discovered a genuine talent and love for pettifoggish details of bureaucratic red tape. Somewhat to her mother's surprise, she took a job with the deputy clerk as soon

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as she was old enough, and before long she had been appointed deputy. When her mother died, she became clerk in her own right. That she does the work herself gives her a great deal of credit with the town, as neither her mother nor her grandmother did.

Mildred loves paperwork, and has tied up most of the civic activities of Riverton in red tape. She insists on having explicit regulations for everything. The tolls and duties are posted on the town gates, and the sheets of parchment cover half of the surface with small writing. (The guards usually collect an amount that seems about right, rather than trying to work out the correct fee, but Mildred is trying to stamp that out.) A number of years ago, she decided that Godric (see p. 18) needed to be licensed to continue teaching and giving out advice. She produced extensive and detailed regulations for this, and pestered Godric with repeated letters seeking clarification of incredibly minor points. Godric nearly decided to leave the town, but instead went to see Mildred and introduced her to the worship of his Goddess.

The clerk was delighted. She really enjoyed forcing people to waste their time filling in pointless bits of paper, and providing witnessed statements to back up their assertion that they were, for example, alive. The discovery that there was a goddess who positively encouraged forcing people to waste their time in this way gave her a new sense of purpose.

Roleplaying Mildred: Mildred spends most of her time making it impossible to do anything in Riverton. She convinces the town council to require licenses for every activity she can think of, and then makes the application procedure so complex and unwieldy that no one can face the thought of applying. If people act without the proper license, she pursues them through the courts forcing them to spend their time defending themselves. She has an erratic supply (2d4) of magical Red Tape (see p. 32) supplied by a distractor, that she uses on important documents.

Mildred Capsa: Female human Exp2; CR 1; Medium-size humanoid; HD 2d6+2; hp 9; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9; Atk +0 melee (1d4-1, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +1, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 9, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 11, Cha 10. Height 5 ft., weight 120 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Appraise (5) +7, Bluff (5) +5, Diplomacy (5) +5, Forgery (5) +9, Gather Information (5) +5, Knowledge (local: Riverton) (5) +7, Profession (bureaucrat) (5) +7, Profession (scribe) (5) +5, Sense Motive (5) +5; Skill Focus (forgery), Skill Focus (profession (bureaucrat)).

Possessions: Ordinary clothes and gear. She has access to as much bureaucratic material as she is ever likely to need, and could mobilize the town's resources given a week or so.

Mildred is in charge of the practical arrangements. She is drawing up a horrendously detailed schedule of charges and wages, requiring all laborers to sign on and off, and record the precise amount of work done. Her schemes require the council to hire numerous extra people to gather the information that she is asking for. If they accept her proposals, nothing will get done. If they do not agree on a way to carry out the work, nothing will get done.

Godric is speaking against the whole scheme. He has drawn up estimates of the cost, and of the necessary tax increases. He has also drawn up estimates of the cost of repairing flood damage, and points out that this cost would not be borne by citizens living away from the river. He has also produced an outline plan for evacuating the low-lying areas in the event of flooding. He has managed to convince some people, and thus re-open the debate on whether the project should be undertaken at all.

Fressenia enthusiastically supports the idea, but wants to see the river diverted rather than merely tamed. She has grand plans for a splendid civic hall, where she can host marvelous parties, on a plot of land that, at present, has the river running through it. She is refusing to support any other scheme, and some of her lovers support her. Of course, diverting the river would be vastly more expensive than simply reinforcing the current banks, and Fressenia's scheme would require the demolition of a number of homes.

Between them, the Akraties have brought the scheme to a halt. It is still being eagerly discussed, but no one is doing any work on it. If this situation persists for long enough, the citizens will become fed-up with the whole idea, and give up. Ultimately, there will be a flood, and the town will be badly damaged.

If the PCs try to prevent this, they find themselves involved in a primarily political adventure. It is vital to realize that the Akraties are working together, and they shift their positions to take account of any change in city sentiment. For example, if the PCs offer to pay for the extra expense of Fressenia's schemes, Godric produces a study showing that the new course of the river would be unstable. Mildred starts work on the regulations for authorizing consideration of applications to forcibly demolish dwellings while Malister tries to have the new course of the river named after him.

Discovering the co-operation may not be easy, and could require the use of magic. Simply denouncing the plotters does not help, as they are all popular and influential in the town. Malister is the weak link, and could be convinced to stop trying to frustrate the scheme. He could successfully denounce the others, especially if the PCs provide him with a good cover story and some supporting testimony. This would make them three enemies, but they might not get around to vengeance.

THE EMBANKMENTS

The citizens of Riverton have been aware of the need for embankments for some time. Recently, minor flooding has brought the issue into focus, and many people now want to see the work done. The four Akraties have decided that this project should be stopped. Each of them has adopted a different tactic.

At Fressenia's urging, Malister is going about the town proclaiming that the embankments should be named the "Malister Dragonslayer Embankments." Everyone thinks that this is a ridiculous idea since he already has a statue, but few people want to insult him. The conspirators know this; that is the plan. The other citizens have to spend some time working out how to avoid this title without offending him.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

This adventure involves little or no combat, and thus experience must be awarded for non-combat activities. Since the PCs have a great deal of control over the course of the adventure, it is not possible to give detailed outlines. The events should be broken down into encounters, and each given a Challenge Rating equal to the average level of the party. One possible breakdown follows:

Learn that the Akraties are working together.

Convince Malister to reform.

Denounce the other Akraties, and make the charges stick.

Get the town to agree on, and undertake, a plan to build the embankments.

PART SEVEN

THE TEMPLE OF PRESENT DELIGHTS

INTRODUCTION

The Temple of Present Delights is a large, old temple of Akrasia, established more than two centuries ago. The clerics there are in contact with many worshippers of the Goddess in the surrounding areas, and occasionally even try to coordinate grand schemes to glorify the Thief of Time (doctrinal disputes allowing).

HOOKS

The PCs can learn of the temple as they deal with the other followers of Akrasia detailed in this book. Alternatively, the temple may learn of them.

In the first case, the characters are likely to want to eliminate the temple before it does too much damage to the surrounding area. A simple assault would be very dangerous, as the residents would coordinate their defense in a rational manner. Much more safe and effective would be a plan of infiltration. The temple is looking for a cook, and a neutral character with some cooking ability would be able to get a job inside. He could then supply information, and even let the other characters in, allowing them to deal with the residents in smaller, less-organized groups. The PCs may be able to convince Maerwen (see p. 23) to betray the temple, particularly if they offer to help with his study of dragons. If the characters have Maerwen on their side, things are much easier, as he can control many of the monsters.

If the temple becomes aware of the characters, Hincmar (see p. 22) tries to do something about them. He hires mercenaries or sends agents of Akrasia to attack and harass them. The PCs will probably want to find out who is behind their problems, and this leads them back to temple. This time, however, a program of infiltration is not likely to work, as the Akraties are already aware of them and will treat them as enemies.

HISTORY

The temple was the brainchild of Penser Alfeston, a cleric of Akrasia from a temple in a distant city. He talked to his colleagues at great length about the potential of this area in the service of the Goddess, and drew a number of plans of the temple for them to inspect. He even began gathering resources on a couple of occasions, but he was always distracted from his goal, and the temple was not begun during his lifetime.

After Penser's death, temple politics forced one of his closest followers, Natyell Skyy, to leave due to an excess of ambition. Carrying her mentor's plans, she decided to build the temple. Fueled by indignation with the short-sighted clerics of the older fane, she marched straight to the site Penser had picked out, cleared a great deal of ground, and marked out the ground plan of the new temple with pegs and string. At this point, her burst of energy ran out, and worked slowed precipitously. Indeed, the process might have stopped entirely, had Natyell not needed somewhere to live.

The need for a roof over her head drove her to complete one of the residential wings, and start on the main hall of worship. However, Penser had never decided on the best way to decorate the main hall, and Natyell was plagued by similar indecision. Construction languished while she tried out different schemes on paper, and in the end she died before it was finished.

Penser's original plan called for the temple to offer hospitality, feasting, and entertainments of many sorts. For its first few decades, it offered accommodation to clerics of the Goddess, and worship in an area covered only by canvas and other make-shift shelter. Eventually, a lay follower of the Goddess became completely fed up with the situation, and organized workmen and resources to complete the main hall. When the hall was completed, he stood inside, admiring it, and enjoying the feeling of satisfaction. At that moment, he realized no longer believed in Akrasia, and he renounced her worship.

Subsequent clerics have made additions to the temple, often as the first stage of a grander plan that they were unable to accomplish. The most important member of the temple was Giles of Frankwine, a cleric who undertook no grand projects, but did finish all the additions begun before his time. In some cases, this involved building staircases so doors on a high level were accessible again. In others, it involved roofing areas left open to the elements. In late life, he came to realize that no part of the temple had escaped his influence, and that he had, in fact, achieved something great. Stricken with remorse, he hanged himself.

CURRENT INHABITANTS

At present, the Temple of Present Delights is home to five clerics of Akrasia, half a dozen lay followers, and a number of monsters. The monsters all serve the clerics at the Goddess's orders, but not all of the inhabitants are comfortable with their presence. The head of the temple is Allarra, a high-level cleric. Although Allarra is the nominal leader, the organization in the temple seems devoted to little more than taking out the trash and bringing in supplies. All the inhabitants pursue their own agendas.

ALLARRA

Appearance: Allarra is a full-figured human of medium height. Her hair is short and pale blonde, while her eyes, easily her best feature, are a piercing blue. She wears elaborate robes, as befits an influential cleric of the Goddess, and has ceremonial plate armor that she dons in the event of an attack.

History: Allarra always knew she would be an important cleric of Akrasia, which makes it all the more remarkable that she is. Her parents were worshippers of the Goddess living unremarkable lives in a large city, and it seemed that Allarra would live out her days as an unknown. Yet Allarra's life has been characterized by one piece of amazing luck after another. She was taken on by the first cleric of Akrasia she approached, and her desultory adventuring has been exceptionally productive.

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She has also managed to spread the doctrine of the Thief of Time with remarkably little effort. People seem naturally inclined to waste time with her.

She traveled widely, and arrived at the Temple of Present Delights five years ago. At first, she planned to leave and continue her wanderings, but now she has plans for the temple. She also began re-reading those passages of the *Book of Thirteen Prophets* that encourage great deeds for the Goddess. With her as the temple head, she dreams of dominating the surrounding region.

Roleplaying Allarra: Allarra's main concern is maintaining her authority over the other inhabitants of the temple. She has big plans, but they are somewhat ill defined at present. Indeed, she has no definite plans outside the internal politics of the temple.

Allarra: Female human Clr8; CR 8; Medium-size humanoid; HD 8d8+8; hp 44; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d8+2, morningstar), +5 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); SQ clerical domains (distraction, evil), rebuke undead 4/day; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 12, Height 5 ft. 2in., weight 148 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Concentration (6) +8, Diplomacy (5) +6, Heal (5) +8, Knowledge (religion) (5) +5, Listen (1.5) +4, Spellcraft (5) +5, Spot (2) +5; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Run, Toughness.

Possessions: full plate +1, morningstar of delay (see p. 32), good mundane gear.

Spells Prepared (6/6/5/5/3): 0 -- cure minor wounds (2), detect magic, guidance, light, resistance; 1 -- bane, cause fear, command, divine favor, indolence, protection from good; 2 -- aid, cure moderate wounds, enthrall, hold person, spiritual weapon; 3 -- bestow curse, blindness/deafness, contagion, prayer; 4 -- cure critical wounds, fascination, summon monster IV.

HINC MAR

Appearance: Hincmar is a tall and broad-shouldered half-orc male. He wears his hair cut short, and his face is marked with numerous scars. He dons chain-mail armor nearly all the time, changing into plate if he thinks there will be an attack.

History: Hincmar was raised among humans, but has retained a fair bit of orcish inclinations. He is significantly more intelligent than typical members of his race. He realized that a life spent killing people would most likely get him killed. He set about raising his status and influence. Hincmar started his career as a fighter, and encountered Akrasia's cult when one of its members tried to corrupt his mercenary unit. The half-orc found the Goddess's philosophy very appealing, and became a worshipper. Before long, he became a cleric as well.

Since then, he has drifted from place to place, always filled with great plans for the glory of the Goddess, but never managed to put them into practice. He decided that travel distracted him too much, so he settled at the temple with the aim of using it as a base from which to spread the Goddess's doctrine. He has made some minor progress, but he spends most of his effort on political infighting.

Current Concerns: Hincmar has been in touch with Martin Aleholt (see p. 16) at the Way Choice, and is encouraging him in his plans for expansion. He wants to set up a network of such inns under the control of the temple, but is unable to persuade the other clerics to support this scheme.

Hincmar: Male half-orc Ftr4/Clr5; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 4d10+5d8+9; hp 53; Init 0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22; Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d12+5, greataxe), +7/+2 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); SQ clerical domains (distraction, evil), rebuke undead 1/day; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6. Height 6 ft. 4 in., weight 240 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Climb (3) +6, Concentration (2) +3, Diplomacy (2) +0, Handle Animal (2) +0, Heal (2) +4, Jump (3) +6, Knowledge (religion) (2) +2, Ride (3) +3, Spellcraft (2) +2, Swim (3) +6; Blind Fighting, Cleave, Combat Casting, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (greataxe).

Possessions: full plate armor, greataxe +2, large steel shield +2, other mundane gear.

Spells Prepared (5/5/4/2): 0 -- cure minor wounds, guidance, resistance, virtue (2); 1 -- divine favor, entropic shield, indolence, magic weapon, shield of faith; 2 -- aid, bull's strength, enthrall, spiritual weapon; 3 -- bestow curse, blindness/deafness.

FILBERT, ALICIA AND FENNERAN

Appearance: Filbert is an elderly male human with an impressive white beard. He does not wear armor since he cannot fight effectively in melee, and prefers highly elaborate robes. Alicia is a tall, thin female human, with long brown hair and a perpetually nervous demeanor. She normally wears elaborate robes, but changes into armor if given warning of an attack. Fenneran is a male dwarf, stocky even by that race's standards. He braids his black beard, and equips armor whenever he can.

History: These three clerics have been associated with the temple for years, decades in Filbert's case. They all have plans to do great things for the Goddess, but none have amounted to much.

Roleplaying the Three Clerics: These minor clerics are only concerned with their place in the temple. Filbert, in particular, feels that he ought to be in charge, and conspires constantly against Allarra. Alicia and Fenneran are still loyal servants of Akrasia, but Filbert feels great bitterness that he has not risen higher in her favor. The habits of a lifetime have a strong hold, however, and he cannot summon the willpower to leave her worship.

Filbert (male human), Alicia (female human), Fenneran (male dwarf): Clr5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoids; HD 5d8+10; hp 33; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9; Atk +4 melee (1d8, heavy mace), +3 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); SQ clerical domains (distraction, evil), rebuke undead 4/day; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 12. Height 5 ft., 8 in., weight 170 lbs. (Filbert), height 5 ft. 11 in., weight 139 lbs. (Alicia), Height 4 ft., 2 in., weight 165 lbs. (Fenneran).

Skills and Feats: Concentration (4) +6, Diplomacy (4) +5, Heal (4) +6, Knowledge (arcana) (4) +4, Knowledge (religion) (4) +4, Spellcraft (4) +4; Combat Casting, Run, Toughness (Filbert, Alicia). Concentration (3) +5, Diplomacy (3) +4, Heal (3) +5, Knowledge (arcana) (2) +2, Knowledge (religion) (2) +2, Spellcraft (3) +3; Combat Casting, Toughness (Fenneran).

Possessions: Mundane gear and armor.

Spells Prepared (5/5/4/2): 0 -- cure minor wounds (2), guidance (2), resistance; 1 -- bane, cause fear, command, indolence, random action; 2 -- aid, enthrall, hold person, resist elements; 3 -- bestow curse, summon monster III.

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MAERWEN

Appearance: Maerwen is an elfen man of average height and weight. He is a wizard, and wears green and gold robes to indicate this. He is rarely seen without his staff, or without elaborate decorative face paint.

History: Maerwen is by far the oldest individual in the temple, although he arrived recently. He has been fascinated by monsters of all sorts since he was young. In his early years, he undertook quests to find and understand new monsters, but after a few years he realized how much remained to be learned about the most familiar creatures. He kept getting distracted by investigations into the eating habits of local monsters, or their social structures, or similar trivia. Some years ago, he was noticed by a cleric of Akrasia, who supplied him with more monsters to do minor studies on, ensuring that he never became sufficiently bored to leave and do something important.

Maerwen came to the Temple of Present Delights a year ago, accepting the offer of a post giving him ample opportunity to study monsters. Around the same time, he became a half-hearted worshipper of Akrasia, mainly out of a sense of obligation to the clerics who had provided him with support and so many subjects of study.

Roleplaying Maerwen: Maerwen is the temple's monster wrangler. He looks after the creatures, makes sure they do not kill anyone they are not supposed to, and studies their habits and interactions. He does not really see himself as a worshipper of Akrasia, however, and he has recently realized that he would have achieved more if he had never got mixed up with the cult. He has come to rely on the steady income and easy study opportunities, and although he dreams of a grand project studying the dragons, he cannot summon up the determination to leave his comfortable position. As time passes, he feels more and more guilty about this.

Maerwen: Male elf Wiz9; CR 9; Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d4; hp 25; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14; Atk +4 melee (1d6, quarterstaff), +7/+2 ranged (1d6, short bow); SQ Summon familiar; AL CN; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +7; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 11, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 8. Height 5 ft., weight 110 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy (6) +9, Concentration (12) +12, Knowledge (monsters) (12) +17, Scry (12) +15, Spellcraft (12) +15; Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (knowledge (monsters)), Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Penetration.

Special Qualities: Maerwen does not have a familiar. He wants his familiar to be perfect and cannot decide which magical beast is best for him.

Possessions: ring of protection +1, staff of charming (30 charges remaining).

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/4/2/1): 0 -- daze, detect magic, mage hand, read magic; 1 -- charm person, magic missile, sleep, summon monster I (2); 2 -- detect thoughts, levitate, summon monster II (2), summon swarm; 3 -- clairaudience/clairvoyance, fireball, summon monster III (2); 4 -- charm monster, summon monster IV; 5 -- summon monster V.

Spells Known (16 /7/5/5/4/2): 0 -- all cantrips; 1 -- charm person, hypnotism, magic missile, mount, sleep, summon monster I, unseen servant; 2 -- detect thoughts, levitate, see invisibility, summon monster II, summon swarm; 3 -- clairaudience/clairvoyance, fireball, phantom steed, suggestion, summon monster III; 4 -- charm monster, locate creature, scrying, summon monster IV; 5 -- hold monster, summon monster V.

TREMNATA

Appearance: Tremnata is a female gnome, tall for her race. She wears her light brown hair short, and dresses in plain and practical clothes. She tries not to draw attention to herself, and hangs back in social situations.

History: Tremnata has a malicious streak, enjoying watching people storm around in anger and irritation. She trained as a rogue, and discovered that she could easily provoke extremely satisfying displays of emotion by stealing things that were important to someone's major project. Thus, she would take an artist's brushes, or a lawyer's carefully written case notes. She moved the marker pegs for building projects, and took vital cogs from elaborate clocks. Of course, she made sure to take money as well, because she needed to live.

As a result of these activities, she deems it wise to not stay in any one location for too long. During her travels she came into contact with followers of Akrasia who were doing similar things, and she quickly realized that worshipping the Goddess would provide her with a ready source of allies and support. Recently, she got herself into a lot of trouble in a major city, when she was identified as the culprit in a series of important thefts. She headed to the Temple of Present Delights to wait until the heat dies down.

Roleplaying Tremnata: Tremnata simply wants to stay in the temple until she can safely wander around once more. She finds it a boring place, as none of the other inhabitants have important schemes for her to disrupt. Her religion is not meaningful to her, but her recent experiences have confirmed the usefulness of the cult in her mind, so she has no plans to leave it.

Tremnata: Female gnome Rog7; CR 7; Small humanoid; HD 7d6+14; hp 38; Init +7; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14; Atk +5 melee (1d6, short sword), +8/+3 ranged (1d4, hand crossbow); SQ evasion, sneak attack +4d6, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, cannot be flanked); AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8. Height 3 ft. 6 in., weight 42 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Balance (10) +13, Bluff (10) +9, Climb (10) +13/+23 with ring of climbing, Disguise (10) +9, Escape Artist (10) +13, Hide (10) +13, Jump (10) +10, Listen (10) +12, Move Silently (10) +13, Open Locks (10) +13; Alertness, Improved Initiative, Run.

Possessions: amulet of natural armor +1, 3 potions of cure moderate wounds, 2 potions of invisibility, ring of climbing, standard gear.

PIANNAN

Appearance: Piannan is a human man with broad shoulders, standing well over six feet tall. He always wears at least light armor, using heavier armor if there is any risk of combat. His graying hair is cut very short, while two prominent scars mark his face. One crosses his left cheek, twisting his mouth somewhat, while the other barely missed his right eye, passing down the outside of his face.

History: Piannan was born in a frontier town, where the inhabitants needed to defend themselves constantly against orcs. He had a talent for combat equaled only by his talent for drinking and playing cards. After gambling his way through the approach and arrival of a significant orcish force, he was required to leave the town and seek his own fortune elsewhere.

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He joined a band of mercenaries, and found their life-style to be much more congenial. The next few years were spent traveling from one battle to another. In this period, he came across the cult of Akrasia, and found them to be a sympathetic group. Thus, when a new commander took over his mercenary company and started imposing discipline, he left with a few like-minded individuals, seeking service with a temple of Akrasia. As a result, he is now in charge of guarding the Temple of Present Delights.

Roleplaying Piannan: For Piannan, guarding the temple is just a job. He risks his life when required, but he has no deep emotional attachment to the temple. As long as the clerics continue paying him, and continue to turn a blind eye to his rather excessive gambling and drinking, he remains loyal.

Piannan: Male human Ftr5; CR 5; Medium-size humanoid; HD 5d10+10; hp 37; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d8+6, longsword), +6/+1 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8. Height 6 ft. 3in., weight 200 lbs.

Skills and Feats: Handle Animal (8) +7, Ride (8) +9, Swim (8) +11/-5 with all gear, +1 in armor; Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword).

Possessions: full plate +1, longsword +1, large steel shield, mundane gear.

YSABEAU, HAROLD, AND TOSTIG

Appearance: Ysabeau is a short, ugly woman, of great strength. She is always armed and armored. Harold is a tall, gangly man, with unkempt hair. He only puts his armor on if he is sure a fight is offering. Tostig is Harold's equally tall but less gangly brother. He carries his shield everywhere, in part to annoy his brother, but also because he believes an attack might come at any time.

History: Ysabeau, Harold, and Tostig are Piannan's mercenaries. They found their way into the mercenary life by various routes, enjoying it for the violence, money, and lack of discipline. When the new leader joined their old band, they found the stricter regime as distasteful as Piannan did, and left with him.

Roleplaying the Three Mercenaries: Harold and Tostig are serving in a job that they enjoy. Both are brave, and risk their lives, but are unlikely to fight to the death. Ysabeau, on the other hand, is a worshipper of Akrasia, and is delighted to be serving the Goddess directly. She is much more enthusiastic about her duties, at least in theory, and talks constantly about the need to set off on patrol in the next few minutes.

Ysabeau (female human), Harold (male human), and Tostig (male human): War5; CR 4; Medium-size humanoids; HD 5d8+8; hp 28 (Ysabeau), 22 (Harold), 24 (Tostig); Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Atk +7/+2 melee (1d8, longsword), +6/+1 ranged (1d8, heavy crossbow); AL CE (Ysabeau), CN (Harold, Tostig); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8. Height 4 ft., 8 in., weight 108 lbs. (Ysabeau), height 6 ft., 3 in., weight 160 lbs. (Harold), height 6 ft., 3 in., weight 185 lbs. (Tostig).

Skills and Feats: Intimidate (8) +7, Ride (8) +9; Cleave, Power Attack.

Possessions: Chainmail, large steel shields, weapons.

PLOT INTERSECTIONS

Hincmar and Allarra are both in contact with Martin Aleholt (see p. 16), and encourage him in his plans and activities. They also supply him with *night candles* (see p. 32), many of which are made by Maerwen.

Litarra the Distractor (see p. 10) often visits the temple, and sometimes stays.

The decoration of the main hall of the temple depicts the "In the beginning ..." legend (see p. 4), and also makes reference to the legends of the King of Irrissia (see p. 8), and the Lucky Laborer (see p. 9).

THE TEMPLE

The Temple of Present Delights lies unfinished in the wilderness. It was intended to have extensive, landscaped grounds, and the stones that were used to mark the proposed boundaries can still be found in the undergrowth. The inhabitants keep the paths to the doors clear, and stop plant life from damaging the temple structure, but that is about it. As a result, there is plenty of cover from all directions.

Given the proclivities encouraged by the Goddess' worship, the mercenaries are less than absolutely dedicated to their tasks. The are often found loitering in the kitchen, or playing cards in the partially sheltered alcove near the main hall (location 10). Piannan periodically attempts to impose some discipline and regularity to their patrols, but he lacks dedication himself and succeeds only in making security somewhat arbitrary. When the PCs approach the temple, roll d6. On a 1-2, two mercenaries are alert and patrolling the grounds. Otherwise, they are sleeping against some shady tree, playing cards in the alcove, or filling thier faces in the kitchen.

GROUND LEVEL

1: THE MAIN HALL

This is the main location for worship of Akrasia. It is a spectacular room, with a vaulted stone roof supported by pillars along the walls. Stained glass windows depict scenes from Akritic legend, while a giant statue of the Goddess stands behind the altar at the far end.

Creatures (EL 9): One of the clerics is present here at all times, with two saphards providing backup in case of emergency.

Saphards (2): hp 74, 65 (see p. 31).

2: VESTRY

The clerics put on ceremonial robes in this location before conducting services in honor of the Goddess. Most of the time, the opulent vestments hang from hooks on the walls. Both doors are locked (DC 25 to pick).

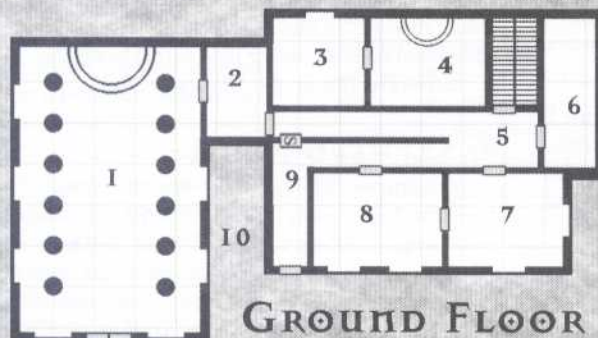
3: ALLARRA'S BEDROOM

This room contains an elaborate four-poster bed, wardrobes of clothes, and a privy in a separate cubicle in the corner. The floor has a large number of rugs scattered across it, making footing somewhat treacherous (rapid movement requires a Balance check against a DC of 10).

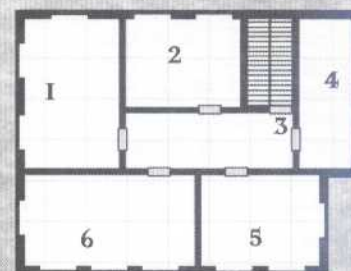
THE TEMPLE OF PRESENT DELIGHTS



THE TEMPLE OF PRESENT DELIGHTS

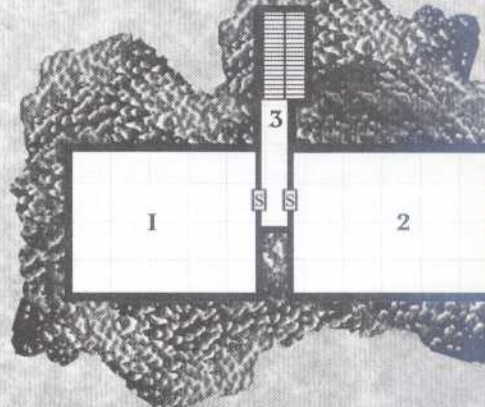


GROUND FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR

BASEMENT



SCALE: ONE SQUARE EQUALS 10 FEET

4: ALLARRA'S RECEPTION ROOM

Here Allarra meets with the other inhabitants of the temple, and imposes her authority. There is a dais along the outer wall, with a throne raised on several steps. Allarra sits on the throne, and the suppliant must stand or, preferably, kneel on the floor in front. Tapestries depicting Akrasia, one of which bears more than a passing resemblance to Allarra herself, flank the throne.

Creatures (EL 10): Two saphards always accompany Allarra.
Saphards (2): hp 71, 69 (see p. 31).

5: STAIRS

Creatures (EL 7): They are normally guarded by a life-reft, which makes most of the temple inhabitants nervous.

Life-reft: hp 50 (see p. 30).

6: STOREROOM

This room contains mundane supplies, such as food, cloth, and repair materials. There is nothing of great value, but the place is in such chaos that almost anything could be hidden here for long periods of time without any of the temple's inhabitants realizing.

7: KITCHENS

Meals for the inhabitants are cooked here. This duty rotates among the junior clerics, none of whom are good cooks. All agree that the temple should hire a competent cook, but no one can agree on where they should look, nor does anyone want to be saddled with the responsibility. The kitchen is usually a mess, but Allarra forces the other clerics to clean it properly once a week.

8: DINING HALL

This is the common dining room of the temple. It is austere, furnished with a single long table with benches running down either side. There is a single chair at the head of the table, reserved for Allarra alone. Most of the temple's inhabitants attend meals, with the exception of the monsters and the cleric on duty in the main hall. These meals tend to go on for some time, as no one wants to leave and get back to work.

The walls of the room are marked with outline sketches for decorative wall paintings. These sketches are very old, and none of the current inhabitants know who was responsible for them. They are quite impressive sketches, however, so there is occasional talk of finishing the project.

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9: CORRIDOR

The corridor links all the rooms. The secret door allows the inhabitants to cut the corner, and thus sees frequent use.

Creatures (EL 7): The corridor is guarded by a phanera. It attacks any unaccompanied strangers.

Phanera: hp 60 (see p. 30).

10: OPEN AREA

The builders planned to put a room here, and the foundations were laid for that purpose. Thus, the ground is clearer more level here than in other areas around the outside of the temple. The area is somewhat sheltered, and cannot be seen from anywhere inside the temple. The gurads have taken to sitting play cards here, instead of patrolling the grounds.

SECOND FLOOR

1: HINCMAR'S ROOM

This room is a complete mess. Hincmar never picks anything up off the floor. A bed is visible, but the rest of the furniture is recognizable only as things with stuff piled on them. A variety of standard weapons may be found here, as well as 25 gp in loose coins.

2: CLERICS' DORMITORY

This room accommodates the other clerics and lodges guests of the temple. Tremnata currently sleeps here. The room is furnished with several bunk beds, most of which are unused because the temple does not have as much staff as originally planned. It too is a mess.

3: STAIRS

Creature (EL 7): These stairs down are guarded by a life-reft.

Life-reft: hp 59 (see p. 30).

4: PRIVIES

Directly above the food stores, this room shows that advance planning has never been the strong suit of Akrasia's clerics. This area also contains baths. The privies are cleaned regularly -- Allarra has created schedules for who cleans when. The schedules vary depending on who is in Allarra's favor.

Creature (EL 3): A gloomholt lives here, and while it usually restricts its attentions to unwanted visitors, anyone who falls asleep in the bath has to be enticed out by the other residents.

Gloomholt: hp 17 (see p. 29).

5: BARRACKS

This room accommodates Piannan and his mercenaries. There are bunk beds, tables, and cupboards, but the room is usually a mess. The mercenaries not on guard duty are present here, usually sleeping. When not out guarding or imposing discipline, Piannan may also be found here.

6: MAERWEN'S ROOM

The wizard has his own large quarters. In marked contrast to the other living quarters, it is neat and orderly. The most notable feature is the rack of pigeonholes against one wall. Every slot is filled with scrolls, which summarize Maerwen's observations of various monsters. He plans to collect them together into a book, but he has yet to do anything about this.

Creature (EL 7): A phanera lives in this room, where Maerwen can study it more easily.

Phanera: hp 50 (see p. 30).

BASEMENT

1: LIFE-REFT ROOM

Creatures (EL 9): This chamber contains two life-refts. They may be used as replacements if anything happens to those currently on guard upstairs.

If all four life-refts are killed, the temple will replace them quickly, as this requires petitioning the Goddess for her support. Indeed, the disorganization of the clerics means a staged assault against the temple has some chance of success. If the party gets in trouble, it can retreat, heal and return. Unless the PCs wait longer than a month, the clerics will spend time arguing the best way to strengthen defense, rather than acting to do so.

Life-refts (2): hp 60, 58 (see p. 30).

2: SAPHARD ROOM

Creatures (EL 9): This chamber contains a pair of mated saphards. Maerwen is trying to breed them so that he can study the development of their young, but so far they are not cooperating. He *charms* the monsters most days, and treats them well, so they are very loyal to him. However, they will not reproduce while they are kept underground.

Saphards (2): hp 66, 62 (see p. 31).

3: STAIRS

Creature (EL 7): The staircase is guarded by a phanera (see p. 30) with instructions to attack anyone apart from Maerwen or Allarra who comes down. Hincmar is pushing for a similar exemption, but so far without success.

Phanera: hp 55 (see p. 30).

DOORS

Most are simple wooden doors with hardness 5, 10 hit points, and a break DC of 13. They have bolts on the inside, but no locks. The doors to the outside are reinforced, with hardness 10, 20 hit points, and a break DC of 25.

The secret door on ground level is used so often that the DC to find it is only 13. The secret doors in the basement are better concealed, requiring a DC of 20 to discover.

NEW SPELLS

AKRASIA'S BLESSING

Transmutation
Level: Distraction 7
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 hour
Range: Long (400 ft. + 40 ft./level)
Target: One community
Duration: Instantaneous
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

Those in the target community lose interest in their long-term goals. This interest may return with time, but things that motivated them no longer do so. A community is any group of one thousand or fewer living together. Assume that an average number of people make the save. On a DC of 20, 5% succeed. On a DC of 19, 10% save, and so on. The DM should make individual rolls for characters who are important to the game. Those who retain their interests may bring people back round; the spell does not change the targets' personalities. Such a rallying is fairly easy and purely a matter of roleplaying.

DEPTH OF TRIVIALITY

Transmutation
Level: Distraction 8
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One person
Duration: Permanent
Saving Throw: Special
Spell Resistance: Yes

When the spell is cast, the target may make a Will save to negate its effects entirely. If the spell takes effect, the target must make a Will save, as if resisting the spell, every time she wishes to undertake an important action. If the saving throw is failed, she instead wastes her time. This spell can only be removed by a *limited wish*, *miracle*, or *wish*, not by *remove curse*.

FASCINATION

Enchantment (Compulsion)
 [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Clr 4, Distraction 4
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature
Duration: 1 hour/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The target becomes obsessed with a particular activity, and cannot stop until the spell duration expires. If the activity becomes impossible within the duration of the spell, the target still tries to carry it out, and refuses to admit its impossibility. Apart from this, the target carries out the action with some consideration. Deadly or extremely dangerous actions are not undertaken. The action has to be something the character could plausibly find fascinating. A rogue might be fascinated with the workings of a lock or trap, but a barbarian probably would not be. On the other hand, a barbarian might be obsessed with practicing his long jump, but a wizard would not. The target rests if necessary, and responds sensibly to immediate threats, such as combat occurring around him. The enchantment can be dispelled, or removed with *remove curse*.

INDOLENCE

Enchantment (Compulsion)
 [Mind-Affecting]
Level: Clr 1, Distraction 1
Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: 50 ft.
Area: All creatures within 25 ft.
Duration: 5 minutes/level
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

All victims of the spell suffer a -1 distraction penalty to all Will saves. They must also make further Will saves (at the -1 penalty) to take any decisive action (including attacking or casting a spell in combat) for the spell's duration.

STEAL ACTION

Transmutation
Level: Distraction 5
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One creature per round
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: Will negates (see below)
Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster may steal one action from another creature every round. This gives the caster a full action, and it takes place at the target's initiative position in the round in which the action was stolen. The target loses the action, and is flat-footed for the rest of that round. The caster may take any kind of action (not a full-round action); not just what the target intended. The caster may select a different target every round, and a successful saving throw or spell resistance check negates a particular theft, not the whole spell. Stealing an action does not take an action. If the target fails his save, the caster gains two actions for that round.

STEAL TIME

Transmutation
Level: Distraction 9
Components: V, S, DF
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Personal
Area: 50 feet radius
Duration: 1d4 + 1 rounds
Saving Throw: Will negates
Spell Resistance: Yes

The caster gains the actions of creatures in the area of effect. The spell affects up to one target for every two caster levels. Affected targets cannot act during the spell duration (flat-footed), while the caster may use all their actions in each round. The spell affects characters in the area of effect, working out from the caster. Thus, if an 18th level caster (nine targets) is surrounded by 12 fighters, and the nearest three make their saves, the other nine must also save. If the first three failed their saves, three of the group would not have to make a save as the spell can only affect another six.

AKRASIA: THIEF OF TIME

Unwill

Transmutation

Level: Clr 6, Distraction 6

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One creature

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: Will negates

Spell Resistance: Yes

The target loses all independent will. He takes a -5 distraction penalty to all Will saves, and obeys any order given, by anyone, as if the instruction had been given through a *suggestion* spell. This is a curse, and thus cannot be dispelled, but can be removed by *break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish*.

Distraction Domain

Deity: Akrasia

Granted Power: Once per day the cleric may convince a character to take a course of action that he is already seriously considering. A Will save against a DC of 10 + cleric level + cleric's Charisma negates, but this save should be subject to a penalty of between -2 and -10, depending on how seriously the character is thinking about the action. If a penalty of at least -2 seems inappropriate, the character is not considering the option sufficiently seriously for the power to work.

Distraction Domain Spells

- 1 **Indolence** (see p. 27). All targets get -1 to Will saves.
- 2 **Enthrall** (see *Core Rulebook I*, p. 200). Captivates all within 100 ft. + 10 ft./level.
- 3 **Bestow Curse** (see *Core Rulebook I*, p. 177). -6 to one ability; -4 on attacks, saves, and checks; or 50% chance of losing each action.
- 4 **Fascination** (see p. 27). Target becomes obsessed with a particular activity.
- 5 **Steal Action** (see p. 27). The caster can take another action every round.
- 6 **Unwill** (see p. 28). The target loses all willpower.
- 7 **Akrasia's Blessing** (see p. 27). All targets cease to be interested in their ambitions.
- 8 **Depth of Triviality** (see p. 27). The target must make a Will save to work on anything significant.
- 9 **Steal Time** (see p. 27). All creatures within 50 feet lose their actions to the caster.

NEW PRESTIGE CLASS: THE DISTRACTOR

Distractors are the most dedicated followers of Akrasia. When they are not wasting their time doing things of relatively little importance, they actively encourage others to do likewise. In theory, they are an organized religious order, but in practice this ideal falls by the wayside. All new distractors must be sponsored into the order by a high level distractor.

Distractors must be able to cast divine magic, and must have a wide assortment of skills. Distractors work best alone, convincing people to waste their lives in trivial activities or preventing the completion of major projects. They do not make good leaders. All temples of Akrasia provide hospitality for a distractor who asks for it, but they are usually encouraged to move on to use their influence on people who are not already converted.

Hit Die: d8

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a distractor, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Chaotic evil, chaotic neutral, or neutral evil.

Religion: Follower of Akrasia.

Skills: At least ten different skills with a bonus of at least +6 in each.

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 2nd-level divine spells.

Special: Be presented to a cleric of Akrasia, in one of her temples, by another Distractor.

CLASS SKILLS

The distractor's class skills are any ten skills that the character does not already have. All skills already possessed by the character count as exclusive from the distractor class, so she may not use the skill points she gains from distractor levels to improve them, nor do her distractor levels affect their maximum level. Any skill claimed as a distractor class skill is likewise exclusive to all other classes the character has.

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier

CLASS FEATURES

All the following are class features of the distractor prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Distractors are proficient with all simple weapons. Distractors are proficient with all types of armor and shields.

Tempter's Insight (Su): After talking to someone for a few minutes, the distractor knows how best to waste his time. This knowledge increases the save DC for uses of Silver Tongue by +1 to +5, depending on how tempting the target finds the suggested activity (use +3 if the conversation is not roleplayed).

Steal Time (Su): The distractor may steal time from people. She does this by convincing them to waste an hour in the distractor's company. The distractor must persuade the target without using any magical abilities. At the end of the hour, the distractor may steal enough time to take an extra action in combat. These actions can be saved until needed. The number of actions that can be stored equals the distractor's class level. Each stolen action can be up to a full

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round action, and may be taken at any point in a combat round, but only one such additional action may be used in a single round.

Drinking Companion (Su): If a group of people voluntarily begin a time-wasting activity with the distractor, they cannot stop before the distractor does. No saving throw exists against this effect, and the distractor may use silver tongue (see p. 29) to convince people to join in. Suitable activities include drinking and talking, gambling, fishing for pleasure, and so on. Characters may stop the activity if something very serious or life-threatening occurs. For example, if a fire broke out in the inn where they were drinking, they could leave, or they could respond to someone rifling their belongings. If they stop the activity for such a reason (even to go to the bathroom), they may choose to start again. If they start again, the effect returns as long as the distractor is still involved. Characters may not stop the activity to deal with things that do not immediately interrupt them.

At seventh level, the distractor may force people to continue wasting time even after she has left. The other participants must continue for one more "round" (another round of drinks, another hand of cards). After that, they may make Will saves to leave. The initial DC is equal to the distractor's character level, dropping by two for every further "round" of the activity the targets indulge in. If the activity cannot be carried on alone, a lone character may automatically stop.

Silver Tongue (Su): The distractor can urge a character to yield to a temptation to waste time. The target must make a Will save against a DC of 10 + the distractor's class level as a distractor + the distractor's Charisma bonus. If this save is failed, the target must waste time in the way suggested. If it succeeds, the target may decide for himself. The distractor need not waste time with the target.

Unimportance (Su): If the distractor tries to persuade someone of the unimportance of a project, the target must make a Will save against a DC of 10 + the distractor's class level as a distractor + the distractor's Charisma bonus. If the save fails, the target comes to believe that the project in question is completely unimportant, and not worth pursuing. Persuading him to the contrary is difficult.

Steal Life (Su): The distractor may steal part of someone's life. She does this by convincing him to waste time. She may not use magic to convince him, but once he is convinced, any time he wastes as a result of this persuasion is added to the distractor's life. The distractor does not age further while benefiting from this extension. As a result, high level distractors are effectively immortal. The target does not live for less time than he would have done beforehand; Akrasia steals time from people by making them waste it. High level distractors are simply allowed to keep the time that they have stolen.

TABLE A-1: THE DISTRACTOR

Base					
Class Level	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+2	+0	Tempter's Insight
2	+1	+3	+3	+0	Steal Time, 1 action
3	+2	+3	+3	+0	Drinking Companion
4	+3	+4	+4	+0	Steal Time, 2 actions
5	+3	+4	+4	+0	Silver Tongue
6	+4	+5	+5	+0	Steal Time, 3 actions
7	+5	+5	+5	+0	Drinking Companion
8	+6	+6	+6	+0	Steal Time, 4 actions
9	+6	+6	+6	+0	Unimportance
10	+7	+7	+7	+0	Steal Time, 5 actions; Steal Life

NEW MONSTERS



GLOOMHOLT

Small, Medium-size, Large or Huge Outsider (Evil, Chaotic)

Hit Dice: 3d8 (13 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 18 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)

Attacks: None

Damage: None

Face/Reach: Variable

Special Attacks: Suggestion (Su)

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft. (Ex), incorporeal (Ex)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +13, Will +4

Abilities: Str --, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 8

Skills: Hide +20, Listen +20, Spot +20

Feats: Improved Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Any, as commanded by Akrasia

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 3

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: 4–9 HD (same size range for all)

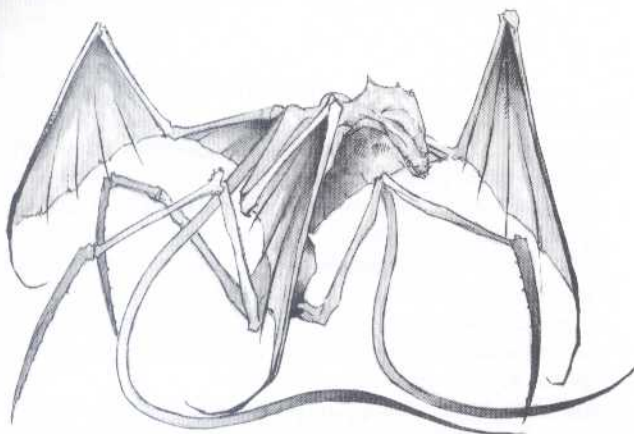
Gloomholts are outsiders that serve Akrasia. They appear as ten-legged spider-like creatures made of shadow or dark smoke. They vary in size from a minimum of three inches across to a maximum of thirty feet from the tip of one outstretched leg to the opposite one. Gloomholts are incorporeal, but have the magical ability to move physical things. This ability is of very little use in combat, but allows them to alter their surroundings to better suit them.

Gloomholts mainly assault sleeping characters. They crawl inside the character's head and implant a suggestion. Thereafter, they can manipulate this suggestion as long as the character does not go too far from the creature. These suggestions are limited: they can make a dangerous area seem safe and welcoming, or increase the apparent danger of safe areas. They cannot make a character walk into a pit of molten lava, but they can make him think that it is possible to get across such a pit with simple precautions. More importantly, they can make it very difficult for someone to leave a place, because the world outside seems so much more threatening.

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The influence can be ended either by killing the gloomholt, or by getting far enough away from it. "Far enough" is not purely a matter of distance. If the character moves, she must go outside the "safe" area, and keep moving until going back in quickly is not an option. This usually means going further than she can sprint in five rounds. If the gloomholt moves, it must go more than a mile before the effect wears off. Otherwise, a character might starve to death rather than leave the safe place.

A character must make a Will save against a DC of 16 to resist the initial suggestion. Failing this, the character may make further Will saves against a DC of 21 to shake off the suggestion if it requires particularly dangerous actions. Thus, someone enticed into a lava pit would get another save, as would someone about to die of thirst because he could not bring himself to leave the room to go to the well.



LIFE-REFT

Medium-Size Outsider (Evil, Chaotic)

Hit Dice: 8d8+24 (60 hp)

Initiative: +5 (+4 Dex, +1 natural)

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 20 (+4 Dex, +6 natural)

Attacks: Bite +12 melee; 3 tentacles +7 melee

Damage: Bite 2d6+3; tentacle 1d8+3

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Grapple, life-reft (Su)

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 10/+1 (Ex), darkvision 60 ft. (Ex)

Saves: Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +6

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 5

Skills: Balance +15, Escape Artist +12, Hide +10, Jump +20, Listen +13, Spot +15

Feats: Combat Reflexes

Climate/Terrain: Any, as commanded by Akrasia

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

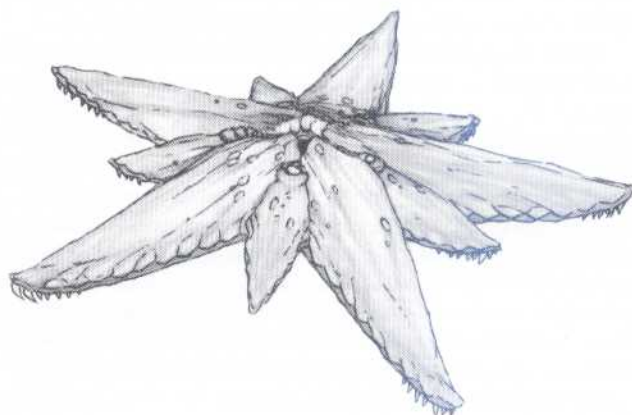
Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: 9–13 HD (Large), 14–20 HD (Huge)

The life-reft is a creature of Akrasia, which she sends to help guard her more devoted followers. The life-reft is an outsider and does not need to eat or drink. It is a dirty white color, with

a roughly cylindrical body about one foot across and six feet tall. On top of the body is a head on a flexible neck two feet long. The head resembles that of a crocodile. It has three legs, each like a spider's, about six feet long when fully extended, which are spaced evenly round the base of its body. On the body itself it has three "wings." These membranes are not used for flight, and are primarily used to obstruct its opponents. Between the "wings" are long, flexible tentacles, with which it can grab opponents. Anyone hit by a tentacle must make a Reflex save against DC 16, or become grappled.

The life-reft can inflict serious damage with its jaws, and some crushing damage with its tentacles. Its most dangerous power, however, is its ability to steal the actions of those it has struck. Anyone struck by a life-reft must make a Will save against DC 21. Those who fail are vulnerable to having their actions stolen for the next round. Each round, the life-reft may steal up to two actions, deciding which to steal when they are announced. If the action is stolen, the life-reft gets to act at that time instead, and an image of the character performing the intended action appears on the life-reft's wing.



PHANERA

Large Outsider (Evil, Chaotic)

Hit Dice: 8d10+16 (52 hp)

Initiative: +8 (+4 improved initiative, +4 natural)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 20 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural)

Attacks: 4 limbs +10 melee, darts +15 (special, see notes)

Damage: Limb 2d6+3

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Dream illusions (Su), invisibility (Su)

Special Qualities: Create decoy, damage resistance 10/+1, darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 17, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8

Skills: Listen +18, Move Silently +22, Spot +14

Feats: Awareness, Improved Initiative

Climate/Terrain: Underground or indoors

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: 9–13 HD (Huge), 14–19 HD (Gargantuan)

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PHANERA DECOY MONSTER

Medium-Size Construct

Hit Dice: 3d8 (13 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft.

AC: 12 (+1 Dex, +1 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +5 melee

Damage: Claws 1d6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +3

Abilities: Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis —, Cha —

Skills: None

Feats: None

Climate/Terrain: Underground or indoors

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 2

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement Range: None

The phanera is an outsider in the service of Akrasia. It looks like a giant starfish, but is usually invisible. The monster clings to ceilings, waiting for intruders to pass by. When they do, it unleashes a cloud of darts, some of which are almost certain to strike the targets. The darts need only touch the characters to have an effect, and there are too many to dodge. Thus, armor and dodge bonuses to AC should be ignored. The phanera then generates a false opponent, which drops down from the ceiling and attacks the victims. The hope is that the victims blame the false opponent for the shower of darts. The appearance of the fake varies, but it is usually roughly humanoid, with spongy and slightly rotting skin. It rarely has any sort of defined face, and attacks with claws.

After the decoy has been defeated, the phanera follows the victims, keeping to the ceiling. Meanwhile, the darts start to affect the characters' perceptions, so that they come to believe that they are in an environment where they can fulfill their most cherished ambitions. A Will save against a DC of 20 negates this effect. (Characters who were not struck by the darts are not affected.) This may involve dreamlike changes in the environment, but the magic ensures that they are not questioned too closely. The magic also drives the characters to try to manipulate this environment to fulfill their goals. The phanera may control the illusions, using them to drive the characters into dangerous situations, or it may attack while the victims are dis-

tracted. It becomes visible when it attacks, but those creatures in the grip of its illusions cannot see it.

The limbs of the phanera are lined with razor-sharp claws. It attacks by flailing with them, as if they were whips. Only four of its nine limbs can attack since it needs the other five to grip the ceiling.



SAPHARD

Large Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 9d10+18 (67 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 18 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +5 natural)

Attacks: Bite +13 melee; 2 claws +8 melee

Damage: Bite 1d10+5; claws 1d6+2

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake

Special Qualities: Distraction (Su)

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +4

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 5, Cha 12

Skills: Listen +15, Move Silently +15, Spot +15

Feats: Alertness

Climate/Terrain: Any land, occasionally underground

Organization: Solitary or Pair

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually chaotic neutral, sometimes chaotic evil

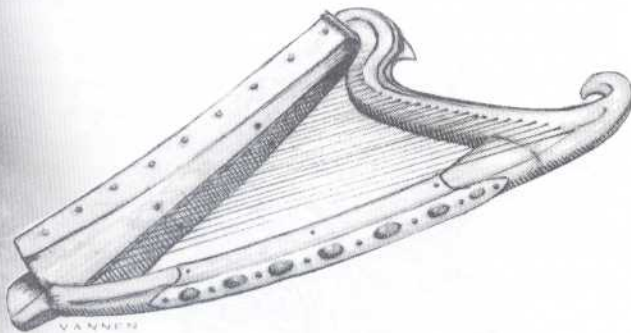
Advancement Range: 10–15 HD (Huge), 16–20 HD

(Gargantuan)

The saphard is a magical beast often associated with the worshippers of Akrasia. This large feline stands about four feet tall at the shoulder, and moves with extreme grace. Its fur shimmers in many colors, and its neck is ringed with an elaborate and beautiful mane. Its main magical power is channeled through its gorgeous appearance; those who see it are so distracted by its appearance that they are unable to take any other action. Anyone who sees a saphard must make a Will save against DC 19 or be dazed. This save must be repeated every round; success on an earlier round does not grant immunity later. The saphard is a predator, attacking those who are so distracted. In the wild, it stores food, as it can survive on quite rotten meat without suffering undue harm. Thus, it is willing to kill even when it is not hungry.

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NEW ITEMS



HARP OF DISTRACTION

This harp is a masterwork instrument, granting a +2 circumstance bonus to all Perform checks using it. It is also enchanted to give a +5 competence bonus to Perform checks, for a total bonus of +7. Further, anyone who hears the performance must make a Will save against a DC equal to the artist's Perform check or be forced to stop and listen. Anyone listening must make a similar Will save to leave before the performance ends. (A pause between pieces does not count as the end of the performance, as long as the player is merely accepting the applause.) Imminent danger negates this effect.

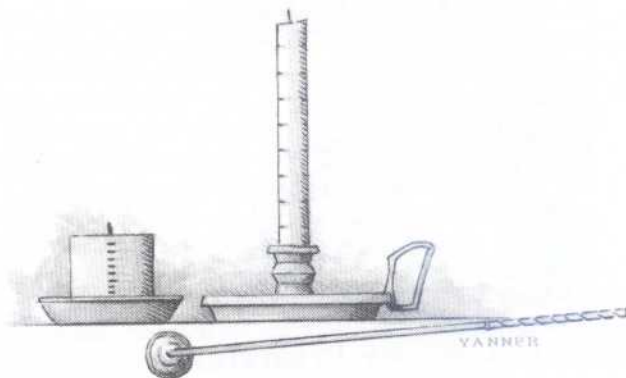
Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, charm person; *Market Price:* 2,500 gp.



MORNINGSTAR OF DELAY

The *morningstar of delay* is a +1 weapon, with a special effect. Anyone struck by the weapon with a successful touch attack must make a Will save against DC 14 or be dazed for one round.

Caster Level: 10th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magical Arms and Armor, daze; *Market Price:* +1 bonus.



NIGHT CANDLES

Night candles appear to be candle clocks, with eight marks. They are of uniform width, marked with lines at equal intervals. A normal candle clock burns down one mark in one hour. *Night candles* are enchanted so that it takes seven hours for the first two marks to burn down, while the last six burn over the course of an hour. Anyone in a room with one of these candles must make a Will save against a DC of 18 or fail to notice the passage of time. Possession of an alternative means of telling time gives a +2 circumstance bonus to the saving throw. During the day, everyone gets this bonus, as the position of the sun is a fairly obvious clock.

Caster Level: 6th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, suggestion; *Market Price:* 500 gp.

RED TAPE

Red tape should be wrapped around a document. Whoever unwraps it must make a Will save against DC 17, or be forced to read through the document and carefully fill it in if it is a form. This effect has limits similar to a *suggestion* spell; it does not force anyone to do things strongly against their alignment or beliefs. A single piece of *red tape* only works once.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Brew Potion, suggestion; *Market Price:* 500 gp/document's worth.



A temple in disrepair looms out of the mist. As you approach, you notice that the debris results not so much from ruin as disinterest. It appears that grandiose plans have dissolved due to insufficient money, time or will. It seems a shame; the structure could have been so beautiful.

A nagging thought crosses your mind. Could this be the work of Akrasia, the Goddess of Distraction? Many do not see her as a threat. Still, her agents have brought down empires, and her influence saps the life from communities until they fall, rotten within, to the slightest threat.

Ah, but who cares? There is no doubt little of value or threat within. Might as well find a comfortable spot and turn in early tonight. There's always tomorrow for great deeds...

Akrasia, Thief of Time, is a vignette sourcebook that can be used in parts or in total to enrich any fantasy campaign using the d20 game system:

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