



Digging for Lies



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After prehistoric artifacts turn up alongside modern contraband at an arms fair, the party pursues a cadre of archaeologists trying to unearth ancient, deadly magic.

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INTRODUCTION

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Wherein Archaeology Answers Modern Mysteries.

The climax of the first ZEITGEIST adventure occurred in a Danoran observatory, gazing upward at the stars on an island where one could glimpse flashes of other worlds. The second adventure entailed protecting a Risuri prophet who foresaw the future in those stars, and at its conclusion the party discovered a conspiracy hiding within the Bleak Gate, a shadowy plane that parallels the real world.

Now, in the third adventure, the party will find the connection between those seemingly unrelated threads. By investigating why modern inventors and arcanoscientists are interested in prehistoric relics, the party can discover the name of an international conspiracy—the Obscurati—and hints of its ultimate goal. But before they can track down the conspiracy's head, they first will have to protect their homeland from an otherworldly invasion held at bay for thousands of years.

Before you run this adventure you'll want to be familiar with the Synopsis and the NPC Roster. Additionally, we've provided a Dramatis Personae hand-out, which you can give to the players at the start of the adventure.

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BACKGROUND

Thousands of years ago, long before King Kelland defeated the fey titans and founded Risur, monsters and beings from other planes tried to claim this world as their own. Only the most obscure stories provide clues of this time, but occasionally truly ancient ruins were discovered, first by adventurers and more recently by archaeologists.

The current prevailing theory holds that the continent of Lanjyr was briefly home to a civilization of orcs who enslaved goblinoids and minotaurs. None of the ruins have any sort of writing, so scholars use various names—Hill Kings (for the mounds found by most of their ruins), Lithians (for their use of stone tools), or even simply PKPs (for Pre-Kelland People). But most simply call them the Ancients.

All anyone knows about the Ancients is that they built stone and wooden structures, had at least a rudimentary grasp of magic, and possessed no metalworking skills, with the strange exception of goldsmithing. The Ancient ruins found so far have been troves of jewelry, religious totems, and even weapons, all made of gold. Scholars struggle to explain how these primitive people, living in a wilderness supposedly dominated by mighty fey creatures and capable of only simple mining, were able to craft so elaborate (or so many) golden artifacts.

The true nature of the Ancients is unknown to modern scholarship. But the secrets of the Ancients are not entirely unkown; in fact, the Ancients' true nature is a secret carefully protected by a conspiracy of philosophers known as the Obscurati (or "Ob"), because the Ancients once shaped the fate of the world, and now the Obscurati wish to repeat the feat.

In their exploration of the Ancients' history and magic, the Obscurati have funded archaeological expeditions throughout the continent of Lanjyr. Usually these digs, if they uncover anything, are quickly hidden through a mix of murder and recruitment. But now a dig has gone awry.

> ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE.

All the lower level ZEITGEIST adventures assume the PCs are agents of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. If your players are free agents, they were probably let go after adventure two by Chief Inspectress Lady Margaret Saxby, supposedly because keeping them employed would be politically tricky.

Now they might have been hired to work security at the Kaybeau Arms and Technology Exposition, or a Gunsmith, Martial Scientist, or Technologist PC might have a friend with an exhibit there, or have a booth of his own. When the party discovers the relics of Apet, they're approached by Xambria to investigate what happened at her dig in the High Bayou.

If you plan to run this adventure not as part of the ZEITGEIST adventure path, the arms fair can be less technological, and more of a magical bazaar. You can simply spin Apet as a deadly sliver of a far off alien plane that was sealed off ages ago.

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Modern scholars have a flawed view of ancient history. Those long millennia ago, the first mortal races had just begun to develop cultures when the world was discovered by alien entities.

The Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering marched from Hell to use this world as a staging ground in an eternal war. Agents of so-called gods contacted their chosen people while dragons and titanic beasts staked out their territories. The hordes of strange creatures that found their way into this world were beyond count, and were only growing more numerous by the day.

The meager villages and tribes of mortals could not fight back the intruders through force of arms, but a handful of clever heroes devised a plan to cut off the pathways to this world. At first they just found portals between planes and sealed them, but then they learned how to lock off a whole plane at once, using a golden plate as both a physical seal and as the focus of the magic. To protect portals from those who would re-open them, the Ancients constructed elaborate ziggurats full of traps and undying guardians.

In an infinite multiverse, these seals were only temporary solutions. Clever foes would always find a new route to a world with such precious resources. But this was part of the Ancients' plan. The invaders eventually abandoned the dead-end worlds, giving the Ancients an opportunity as well as a buffer of safety. The Ancients performed the mighty ritual of the Axis Seal, cutting off all of the planes except for a handful of these dead ends, which they knew were free of invaders.

The planes that are still accessible are detailed in the *Player's Guide*. Apet in particular plays a prominent role in this adventure.

A FATAL FLAW IS REVEALED.

The Ancients made one great mistake. The Gidim, a semi-humanoid race from a far off realm, hid an invasion force on the world of Apet, which the Ancients thought was abandoned like all the other dead-end worlds. Once the Axis Seal was in effect, and they had no competition from other planes, the Gidim struck.

The Ancients managed a hurried revision to the Axis Seal ritual, which turned Apet into a prison plane. While the massive world still orbits the sun and shares its mystical energies, it cannot be reached. The strike by the Gidim devastated the burgeoning Ancient culture, however, and with their heroes dead, the mortal races reverted to their previous primitive state for millennia.

THE COMMON LORE OF APET.

According to modern scholarship and the lore of the skyseers, the massive planet of Apet is the farthest visible world in the star system. The few legends of mages who actually traveled to Apet claim that its surface is just a blasted wasteland of blinding sand and that no creatures live there, though sometimes foreign thoughts poke at your mind from other places or times.

These same legends claim that Apet has no landmarks that allow a traveler to navigate, except for a silvery arc high above in the sky. The ring is said to be the arc of time. Interestingly, it's not a solid ring; about a 30-degree segment is empty. Scholars have theorized for centuries what this might indicate about the nature of the past and future.

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Obscurati Archaeology.

The Obscurati have been searching for the original seals in preparation for opening the Axis Seal. To maintain secrecy they first sponsored adventurers, and more recently archaeological expeditions, all of whom have as their liaison a tiefling benefactor, **Caius Bergeron**. Caius reports to Lya Jierre, head of the Golden Cell (see the *ZEITGEIST Campaign Guide*).

One archaeologist, **Dr. Xambria Meredith** of Slate's Mitchell University, led an expedition that discovered the Apet ziggurat in the High Bayou. In Spring earlier this year she reported to Caius and sent back many minor relics from the dig site. In mid-summer, Caius sent a team of experts to open the seal. That's when disaster struck.

Pocket Dimensions.

When the Axis Seal took effect, small slivers of the worlds already sealed by the Ancients were trapped between the two magical bans, like bugs caught by a double-pane window. A handful of creatures survived in stasis, and in the Apet seal that included a Gidim wayfarer called Sijhen. While the rest of its kin were left trapped without sustenance on Apet, Sijhen was only dimly aware of the dreamlike passage of time.

When Xambria's expedition opened the Ancient's first seal to the plane of Apet, Sijhen was freed. Afraid and surrounded by humans, it was drawn to Xambria, who was carrying the *golden icon of Apet*. Sijhen slithered into Xambria's mind and guided her to escape the onslaught of Gidim war-beasts that slew the rest of her dig crew. Then, once she was safe, it coiled in the recesses of her subconscious to observe and learn.

Sijhen realized countless years had passed, but it saw no history of its own people. It tried to use the same old rituals that millennia ago would have let it travel to and from Gidim, but they failed. Unaware of the power of the Axis Seal, Sijhen was left to try to solve a mystery.

It remained hidden in Xambria's body, wary of discover. It hopes to return to the dig site to seek clues, but Xambria's too traumatized and still has too much control to be willing to return. So now Sijhen contents itself with wriggling deeper into her mind, and teasing at clues connected to who hired Xambria for the dig in the first place.

Macbannin's Fallout

In Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*, the PCs took down Reed Macbannin, a district mayor in the city of Flint, and a high-placed member of the Obscurati conspiracy. Macbannin believed himself working on a military research project for Risur's king, but the royalty denied any such plot. Macbannin died in his cell before any more information could be uncovered.

Macbannin had many subordinates working in his laboratory. When they realized they had been working for a traitor, some turned themselves in, but many fled, taking whatever valuables they could get hold of. One of these is **Kaja Stewart**, one of the head researchers developing the soul-burning fuel called witchoil.

Macbannin had also been in league with local crime boss **Lorcan Kell**, who had been making a tidy profit helping smuggle raw materials to the Obscurati's construction facility in the Bleak Gate. Macbannin had been the middle man, and without him, Kell had access to a lot of material, but nowhere to sell it. He had his people track down Kaja Stewart, and in the past few months has set her up as head of a custom magic armaments business.

Finally, Macbannin managed to keep all his illicit activities secret for so long because he had several law enforcement heads in his pocket. This included **Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby**, the director of the Flint branch of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. She got nervous

Digging for Lies 🚓 Introduction

when the PCs took down Macbannin, so she moved quickly to get hold of any suspicious evidence from Macbannin's manor, including several obscure texts and ancient relics, which she keeps locked in a trapped safe under her office desk.

Next, she made a point to take the PCs off the case. While there were plenty of leads to follow, she claimed it would look bad for the PCs, who had already been involved with the defeat of Duchess Ethelyn of Shale (see Adventure One, *Island at the axis of the World*) to be tied to the disgrace of another popular politician. Lady Saxby has a reputation for being politically savvy, so word around the RHC office is that she's just worried the PCs will get more popular than her.

In the intervening few months, Lady Saxby has put the party on unrelated assignments, and has let a different squad follow up on the Macbannin case. These other constables are more interested in covering their asses than solving any crimes, and Saxby has encouraged their slow pace.

None of Macbannin's former associates—Lorcan, Kaja, or Lady Saxby—knows of the Obscurati plot, but by piecing together clues that each has, the PCs will be able to outwit the conspiracy going into Adventure Four, *Always on Time*.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The PCs' immediate boss **Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft** orders them to provide extra security for the Kaybeau Arms and Technology Exposition. The PCs are present when strange monsters unknown to modern scholarship appear and attack fair-goers. After killing the monsters, the party learns that the creatures were summoned by an ancient magic staff made of solid gold, which a fair-goer had purchased on the black market.

Only a day into their investigation, the party learns that **Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill**, national director of the RHC, is coming to Flint to oversee an audit of the local branch. PCs who have been cutting corners, breaking the law, or failing to hand over evidence so they could keep it for themselves will have to scramble to avoid punishment.

Through a string of contacts, the party tracks the sale of the staff to Kaja Stewart, who stole the relic and several others from Macbannin's manor. If arrested, she dies soon thereafter, the victim of a fake suicide in jail. Crime boss Lorcan Kell pursues the PCs for harassing his business partner, and various minor threats from the expo keep them busy, but eventually the party connects the relics to Pardwight University.

Hans Weber, the curator of Pardwight's natural history museum, is planning a gala of artifacts of the Ancients, and he can put the PCs in contact with Dr. Xambria Meredith.

Xambria recalls finding the staff at the site of her last expedition, but she claims she was away when disaster struck and all of her cohorts were killed. She suggests the party find Caius Bergeron, who sponsored her dig, then vanished after the disaster. When Caius claims to be a harmless philanthropist, however, the PCs have few options left other than to head to the dig site and scour it for clues.

At the ancient ziggurat, the party must avoid dangerous traps and battle strange creatures from another world. They find the bodies of Xambria's expedition, as well as a group of specialists who had been sent by Caius Bergeron. The golden seal is missing, and a map in the ziggurat points to another possible dig site.

Their presence draws the interest of a long-slumbering fey titan, the serpentine **Voice of Rot**, who believes the lands around the ziggurat are his domain. He tells the party that an interloper from another world

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Several aberrations in the adventure are so bizarre that they tax a character's sanity.

MIND STRAIN.

The monsters of Gidim are foreign and horrifying. Creatures who view them struggle to grasp their precise location, and that uncertainty creeps into their minds, slowly eroding their sanity. Several monsters in this adventure can cause the disease Distant Madness.

Distant Madness

Type disease, varies; Save Will DC 14

Onset 1 day; Frequency 1/day

- Effect –2 penalty on all future Will saves after the first failed save. Random insanity following the second failed save (See the *Pathfinder** *Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*** for Sanity and Madness rules). All subsequent failed saves increase the will save penalty in increments of –2.
- **Cure** 2 consecutive saves, all will penalties are immediately removed following the curing of the disease as well as any acquired insanities.
- **Special** If a player willingly proposes a detrimental course of action appropriate to an acquired insanity, the GM may also reward him with the following special ability.

Insane Insight

Your allies thought you were acting crazy, but in that moment of self-peril, you saw reality from afar and understood your situation with an inhuman clarity.

Training

- **Requirement:** You must have followed a detrimental course of action related to your insanity during this encounter.
- **Description:** Once in the next 5 minutes you gain one of the following benefits:
- Take an additional standard action on your next turn.
- Treat any single d20 die roll as a natural 19.
- Cast one spell without it using a spell slot or being expended. A character cured of Distant Madness is cured of any insanity he is suffering.



escaped the ziggurat, and that he will punish the mortals in his realm if they do not deal with the intruder for him. The party can use magic to track the foreign planar energy trail left by the creature, which leads them back to Flint.

The trail of planar energy criss-crosses itself and leads to several red herrings, but also goes to Xambria's home, where there are signs of a struggle, but no sign of the woman. The trail also points to Caius's inn, where the PCs find that he has been murdered, and his brain has been devoured. While searching his room for evidence, they learn that Caius sent an expedition to the dig site marked on the map in the ziggurat, off the coast of Ber, several hundred miles away.

Chasing the second expedition, the PCs reach Ber and find three ships in a stand-off. One is owned by Caius, and it tries to protect a group working to open the seal, which is underwater. The second is a Beran archaeology vessel, while the third is a boat Xambria chartered. She claims she was attacked back in Flint, and that she headed for this site, hoping to stop Caius's team before they unleashed more monsters.

The energy trail points to Xambria, though she can explain this away because she has been wearing the *golden icon of Apet*, which she recovered at the first dig site. She plays the frightened innocent, but in truth she has fallen under control of Sijhen. After the party defeats Caius's team, Sijhen bides its time, then distracts the party by summoning monsters. During the disturbance, Sijhen devours the brains of any prisoners, steals the ritual book they used to open the seal, and flees via teleportation.

Xambria was a rising star in the academic world of archaeology, and at 28 she's the youngest professor at Mitchell University in Slate. She has always had a particular interest in Ancient relics, since the golden treasures were so wondrous to behold.

Xambria preferred a hands-on approach to unearthing the secrets of history, and frequently put her life in danger, either on digs in hostile lands, or because the excavations themselves were filled with traps. She enjoyed nothing more than exploring ancient ruin, using a canny mix of caution and daring to avoid curses and traps, or survives the ones she didn't see in advance.

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But a month ago something went terribly wrong at one of her digs. For months she had been excavating and exploring a ziggurat of the Ancients, a truly legendary find. She had taken all the proper precautions—careful probing for traps, magical auguries, prayers and supplications to appease the spirits of the land being disturbed. To her dismay, there is a hole in her mind, and she does not know what went wrong.

She remembers leaving for supplies, then returning and finding dead bodies, mangled and mutilated. After that, her memory is a blur. She took a train to Flint, sought shelter with peers at Pardwight University, and struggled to cope with the horrors she'd seen.

Despite her trained athleticism, Xambria dresses conservatively, more comfortable displaying her mind than her body. Now, though, she takes care to cover as much as possible—sometimes when she thinks about what she saw at the dig she can almost feel something trying to wriggle out of her skin.

Though traumatized, Xambria has devoted her life to uncovering mysteries. She wants to find out what killed her dig crew, but somehow she knows that if she goes back to her dig, it will not end well for her.

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When the PCs get back to Flint, Pardwight curator Hans Weber asks them to protect the Ancients gala. Xambria attacks the event with a host of monsters, and she tries to steal relics from the ziggurat of Apet. Even if she obtains them, however, she lets the PCs defeat her and quickly surrenders.

This is part of Sijhen's gambit. To get home, it hopes to open a portal to Gidim. But to properly aim that portal, it needs an Ancient star map. Lady Saxby just happened to confiscate one after the downfall of Macbannin, and she keeps it locked up in her office in the RHC headquarters.

Xambria stages her own capture so she'll be brought to the headquarters, and so Saxby will be present. Before her capture, Xambria sends word to the Obscurati that Saxby is planning to turn on them, and so the Ob sends assassins to silence the Chief Inspectress.

Sijhen wants to consume Saxby's brain, as well as those of the assassins, since it plans to return to this world eventually, and wants more knowledge about the Obscurati. It isn't afraid of the mere mortals who stand in its way, but it doesn't realize that the Axis Seal will utterly thwart its attempts to go home.

Shortly after the PCs lock up Xambria in an RHC jail cell, she springs her trap. Using a makeshift portal, monsters and reality-warping energies from Apet pour into the building, letting Xambria escape. She heads for Saxby's office as assassins make their move, all while the other staff of the headquarters are driven mad and turn on each other.

The party must rush to avert several catastrophes, and when they confront Xambria at her portal, a mishap unleashes a massive warbeast, long ago bred by the Gidim and trapped on Apet. To kill it or drive it back, the PCs might have to form a temporarily alliance with Sijhen itself, or else they'll all be killed.



TIMELINE.

Xambria discovered the ziggurat in Spring, and the seal around the 15th of Summer. The seal was opened around the 45th of Summer, and Xambria made it back to Flint on the 51st. On the 75th, Caius Bergeron sent another team of Obscurati experts to the dig to bring back the golden seal. They return on the 85th. The team leaves for the sunken ziggurat of Mavisha on Summer 91 (the last day of summer).

The adventure begins on the 1st day of autumn. The PCs will likely spend a few days investigating leads from the arms fair, then take about a week exploring Xambria's dig site and returning. Xambria kills Caius Bergeron on Autumn 7, breaks into Saxby's home on the 8th, and leaves for Ber on the 9th. She arrives at the sunken ziggurat on the 15th.

The PCs likely get back to Flint on the 12th of Autumn, and probably spend a day or two following leads before they set out for the sunken ziggurat. Sailing to the ziggurat in Ber requires at least three days, most likely a week, but Xambria and the Obscurati experts will both still be there.

The Ancients Gala opens on the 31st of Autumn, though curator Hans Weber waits to put the three Ancient relics (amulet, blade, and staff) on display until the PCs are available to provide protection. Xambria, likewise, waits to strike until the PCs are present, because she wants her arrest to be convincing.

Feel free to adjust the timeline to give the adventure a tense pace. In particular, if your PCs would refuse to let the case sit fallow for the long term, you might move the adventure's start to a just a week or two after the end of *The Dying Skyseer*.

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ADVENTURE LAYOUT

Digging for Lies is more episodic and less web-like than Adventure Two: The Dying Skyseer. At the end of the adventure we will include a GM Conspiracy Guide, with a checklist of information you need to make sure your party has by the time they finish Act Three. Without it, the party won't have the right clues to start Adventure Four, Always on Time.

Each scene is presented in a format of Title, keywords, and tag-line. Keywords include:

Scene Type: Action, Exploration, Exposition, Puzzle, Social, or Hybrid.

Duration: Montage (a few hours or days), Real-time (a few minutes), or Tactical (round-by-round).

Key Locations.

Use this list to keep track of locations the PCs might visit.

Location	Page
Kaybeau Fairgrounds	9
Pardwight University	19
Lanternwood Subrail Station	15
Silver Swan	21
Bole	22
Agate	22
Ziggurat of Apet	23
Seobriga	37
Pezarillo	37
Ziggurat of Mavisha	45
RHC Headquarters	54

RHC Headquarters: The headquarters of the PCs' employer, the Royal Homeland Constabulary. The PCs visit this often to receive mission briefings, report their findings, hold prisoners, and turn over evidence. The party will be called to report for an audit during Act Two, and monsters from beyond will invade the headquarters during Act Three.

Kaybeau Fairgrounds: The Kaybeau Arms and Technology Exposition takes place in a large public park in the Central District, two miles from the RHC headquarters. The fair lasts until the end of the month, so after the PCs' initial investigations, they might revisit it later purchase equipment or talk to NPCs.

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OBSCURATI NOTE.

Why did Macbannin have items from the dig site? Macbannin was part of Colossus cell, and normally had no contact with Golden Cell, which handles the digs. But Macbannin was an expert in defending against dark magic, so Caius got special permission to have the mayor examine a few relics to ensure they weren't dangerous. Macbannin was defeated before Caius could recover them.

A NOTE ABOUT WEATHER.

Autumn is the start of the rainy season in Risur. The first week usually just has rainy afternoons, but by the end of the month it's almost always at least drizzling. The weather is worse in the High Bayou, location of the Ziggurat of Apet, where flooding will be imminent by the time the PCs arrive. Temperatures hover between 70 and 90.

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Lanternwood Subrail Station: Located a stone's throw from the fairgrounds, this construction site will one day be part of Flint's subrail network. Now it's mostly just a pit in the ground surrounded by a high fence, filled with stacks of iron and brick pallets.

Pardwight Unversity: The "campus" of Pardwight University weaves through many streets and occasionally shares buildings with other offices in Central District. Despite being less impressive than Mitchell University in Slate, Pardwight has prospered from generous donors in the burgeoning economy of Flint. The Pardwight Museum of Natural History is a recently completed new building in the North Shore district. Dr. Xambria Meredith has been staying in one of the nearby apartment buildings, only a few blocks from the beach.

Silver Swan: The Silver Swan, the most elegant inn in Flint, fronts the beach in the North Shore district. Wealthy visitors come here for unmatched comfort and anonymity, including philanthropist and Obscurati operative Caius Bergeron.

Bole: The nearest large city to the High Bayou. The PCs likely pass through here on the way to Agate.

Agate: A small town located on the eastern edge of the High Bayou, at the end of the rail line that leads to the Anthras Mountains. It mostly services miners, but it is the closest piece of civilization to the Ziggurat of Apet.

Ziggurat of Apet: A ziggurat constructed by the Ancients to seal and guard a portal to the distant plane, Apet. Xambria explored these ruins, and a group of Obscurati opened the seal of Apet, unleashing Sijhen and a host of other aberrations.

Seobriga. The capital of Ber, which the PCs might teleport to on the way to the sunken Ziggurat of Mavisha. Seobriga plays a larger role in Adventure Six, Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman, but basic details of Beran society can be found in the ZEITGEIST Player's Guide.



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A semi-humanoid being of the Gidim race, Sijhen was poised thousands of years ago to invade this world from a vanguard in Apet. Though only a novice at controlling the minds of beasts and mortals, Sijhen was one of his race's experts in planar travel. It was studying the Apet side of a golden seal when the greater

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The Gidim can possess corporeal creatures, but in their natural forms they can waver between wholly physical and existing only as barely-visible thoughtforms. Normally they assume the appearance of gray-skinned bipeds with tentacled heads.

Axis Seal took effect, and so was trapped in a timeless

They subsist on thoughts, not physical food, and their own sentience is dependent on consuming enough complex ideas as sustenance. Their homeworld is itself a thinking being, but the Gidim could only expand by keeping mortal races as slaves.

space between worlds.

Barely conscious in stasis, Sijhen dreamed of finding its way home. Then, when the Seal of Apet opened, Sijhen and a small horde of Gidim warbeasts were expelled into this world. Panicking, Sijhen hid in the mind of the first being it sensed, Xambria.

The two minds occupy the same body, and while Xambria retains control most of the time, Sijhen is capable of taking control for short periods of time, or "editing" what Xambria remembers or says. Sijhen is careful not to make his host seem crazy, and luckily the two minds have a shared purpose of discovering what happened at the dig site.

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🗧 NPC ROSTER. 📁

Because of the large number of NPCs the party will meet, we've compiled two hand-outs to help you keep track of their various statuses, mannerisms, and role in the adventure. A GM handout lists keywords and traits to help you portray the NPCs, while a player handout will help the players keep track of whom they've met. More detailed entries are included throughout the adventure close to the characters' first appearances.

NPC Entry	Page
Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby	2, 60
Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft	3, 48
Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill	64, 65
Kvarti Gorbatiy	11
Rock Rackus	13, 36
Morgan Cippiano	14, 15
Kaja Stewart	15, 17
Lorcan Kell	61
Dr. Xambria Meredith	4, 20
Sijhen	5, 53
Caius Bergeron	21
Captain Rutger Smith	37, 46

Recurring Characters. Stover Delft, Nigel Price-Hill, Kvarti Gorbatiy, Morgan Cippiano, Rock Rackus, Lorcan Kell, and Captain Rutger Smith are all scheduled to appear in future adventures. The Gidim survivor, Sijhen, likely will return even if the PCs defeat it, because its alien biology makes it hard to permanently kill.

Incidental NPCs. The following NPCs probably only show up for a single scene, but if the PCs latch on to anyone, you can refer here to remind yourself who is who.

NPC	Page
Sergeant Sara Lockheart, expo police	8
Benedict Pemberton, industrialist	9
Timothy Lammers, gun range owner	10
Alfonse Irongut, ammunition seller	10
Alforb Irongut, good-for-nothing son	11
Nock, goliath gunmaker	10
Fildi and Dilfi, gnome badger fans	10
Alloquicious, halfling mechaneer	10
Simon Langfield	11
Colonel Sebastian Harlock	14
Isaac Randal	15
Gunter Inskeip	18
Carlao, RHC knight	59
Dima, RHC cleric	60
Serena, RHC assassin	60
Hans Weber	3
Diego Dolorosa, captain of La Inspiración	37
Paco de Los Loros, goblin archaeologist	37
Jack Glassmaker, captain of the Dagger	38
Bernardo Molinelli, captain of Il Draçon de Mer	38
Finona Duvall, tiefling summoner	42
Krano, half-orc sea druid	42

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Pezarillo: A small fishing village on the coast of Ber, near the sunken Ziggurat of Mavisha. The PCs may have to stop here to repair their ship.

Ziggurat of Mavisha: The third and final ziggurat the party can find this adventure, which was destroyed centuries ago in a massive earthquake that cast it into the sea. A team of specialists sent by Caius Bergeron attempts to examine the seal to Mavisha, the plane of water, but only if something goes awry will anything dangerous come through.

REWARDS

At the start of this adventure, the PCs should be 4th level. They should reach 5th after Act Two, and 6th level after the climax.

At the end of this adventure, the party's Prestige with Risur should increase by 1 rank if they save the RHC headquarters, though that might be mitigated if the party is found guilty in the audit. Unless the party makes fools of themselves, their Prestige with the Obscurati will increase by 1 rank.



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Their Prestige with Flint, the Clergy, or the Unseen Court will not necessarily increase, since the core events of the adventure are not important enough to those groups. Certain side-plots might yield a Prestige increase of 1 rank, however.

At the start of the adventure, the PCs each receive 2,500 gp. After the first act they receive another 2,500 gp, and then 3,000 gp after the second act. This represents a mixture of salary and stipend for their investigation. However, The Audit (see page 64.) may adjust what the party gets so that they end up with the appropriate resources for their level.

If the PCs are free agents instead of members of the RHC, you'll need to make sure they receive the appropriate amount of treasure. One possible mix would be:

- Start of Adventure. Four magic items possessed by NPCs, and 500 gp apiece payment for providing security at the arms expo.
- At 4th Level. Three magic items possessed by NPCs, and 1,000 gp apiece in golden jewelry and artifacts from the ziggurats.
- At 6th Level. Three magic items possessed by NPCs, and 1,300 gp apiece as reward for saving the RHC headquarters.

OTHER CONSTABLES

Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*, presented a group of six constables you could use as coworkers of the PCs, to establish friendships or rival-ries. With the PCs off the Macbannin case, three of these constables were given the task.

Carlao, human cavalier.

Dima, dwarf cleric.

Serena, human rogue.

Carlao is the obedient leader of the group, always willing to do what Lady Inspectress Saxby asks. Serena is the brains and face, while Dima has a bizarre joy for filing paperwork.

These three constables will be in the RHC headquarters at the end of Act Three, and depending on the PCs' relationships with them and how persuasive they can be, the group might act as allies or enemies.

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GHARACTER THEMES IN THE ADVENTURE

Each ZEITGEIST adventure includes one or more scenes that bring the PCs' character themes (detailed in the Player's Guide) to the forefront.

- Dockers have a chance to influence their sub-culture's fate. Rising star Rock Rackus can help turn the dockers into either a powerful popular movement or a short-term flashy trend, all based on how a PC steers the buffoonish performer (page 37).
- Eschatologists meet a kindred spirit in the assassin Kvarti Gorbatiy, who has a weapon crafted from an old Drakran relic with clues to the end of the world (page 11). Also, Xambria will try to talk to any eschatologists about the unknown end of the Ancient civilization (page 20).
- + Gunsmiths have plenty of toys to play with at the arms expo, and can also talk shop there with Kvarti Gorbatiy (page 11).
- Martial Scientists will be called upon by their old teachers or colleagues to acquire a specimen of the warbeasts of Apet for study (page 34), and will be pointed toward an obscure martial thesis that will come in handy (page 14).
- Skyseers receive visions of the future at the two ziggurats (pages 31 and 45).
- Spirit Mediums have the best chance of saving Xambria (page 61), and can always recover clues from the many dead bodies they'll come across.
- + Technologists, like gunsmiths, have a lot of hooks at the arms expo (page 9), and in the final act they might make use of confiscated inventions in the defense of the RHC Headquarters (page 56).
- Vekeshi Mystics have the flip side of the docker dilemma, where a rogue element in the cult might cause public outrage by ordering the death of Rock Rackus (page 66).
- Yerasol Veterans will be singled out for possible promotion by Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill (page 64), and will be at an advantage in naval combat at the sunken seal (page 40).

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ACT ONE: ROM FAIR TO FOUL

n this act, the party stakes out a fair, captures a fence,

and learns that their enemies have an interest in

archaeology.

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MEANWHILE, IN THE NEWS.

If you want to give a little extra life to the city and the world beyond, you can occasionally drop mentions of the following current events. People murmur about these in cafes, gossip on the streets, or read about them in papers. Only a few have even a tangential connection to this adventure's plot. You might spin some of these into side quests, but be careful that your players don't latch onto the wrong ones and run off chasing red herrings.

War and Peace. The Kaybeau Armament and Technology Exposition dominates the main festival grounds of Flint this month, but the city is already preparing for a summit between Risur and Danor. Scheduled for early next Spring, the summit will see the rulers of the two nations meet and discuss a long-lasting peace. The famed minotaur arbiter from Ber, Brakken of Heffanita, will moderate the negotiations. Security is expected to be high.

Weird Illness. Goodson's Estuarial Reformatory has become home to a growing population of demented people, now numbering nearly thirty. All suffer from a condition doctors are calling Distant Madness. Suspected to be a magical affliction, perhaps fallout from the events on Cauldron Hill in the summer, the condition causes victims to feel physically displaced and unable to tell how far away things are. The mad men and women hail mostly from Parity Lake. A few cases were reported in North Shore, but the wealthier victims have the resources to afford magical alleviation.

What Horror! Police are investigating a new bizarre serial killer in Central District, who first struck in the middle of summer. The authorities are unsure of a connection between the five victims, save that all of them had their brains removed through the palates of their mouths.

Wicket Gates Coming. Enthusiasm in the city is mixed concerning the burgeoning subrail tunnel system. While the well-to-do are willing to put up with the hassles of large construction projects, poorer Flinters worry that they won't be able to afford this new travel system. Proposed fees at the toll booths—called wicket gates—will be 3 cp per juncture.

Worsening Corruption? In the wake of Reed Macbannin's downfall, more people are claiming politicians, nobles, and even police officers are part of a culture of corruption. Flint City Governor Roland Stanfield commented to say, "Corruption is a constant in any large city. What has changed is the growing voice of the people who support our great modern nation. We must listen to those voices, because opportunities to truly improve society are rare."

Wunderbahn. A bill in Parliament is being considered to levy a salary tax on the entire nation to fund construction of a wider railroad network. The city governor of Shale, Catherine Romana, has proposed a counter bill that would fund what she calls the Dream Road, "a roadway more in keeping with Risur's traditions." The Dream Road would involve hundreds of magical portals connecting every village, town, and city, but the magical reagents required to activate the portal cost over 100 gp to transport just a handful of people. Romana's opponents in Parliament call the idea preposterous.

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THE FAIR COMES TO TOWN

If you want to give your players a brief overview of the situation, read or paraphrase the following.

After the climactic defeat of Macbannin and his mysterious suicide in custody, smart investigators might rightfully conclude that the case isn't closed. That was certainly the opinion of your supervisor, Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft, who wanted you turning over every stone to get to the bottom of the mystery.

Unfortunately, *his* boss, Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby, is head of the Royal Homeland Constabulary in Flint, and she has ordered you off the case. She claimed she had missions "more suited to your talents," but all she's done is assign you banal investigations and busy work.

Delft grumbled and fought for you, but everyone knows what motivates the Lady Inspectress. She has her eye on politics, and she's ended the careers of more than a few constables who got too much positive press too fast. Lady Saxby's in charge here, and you're just supposed to take orders. When reporters show up, you're to politely suggest they talk with the Lady Inspectress.

Don't worry. Delft assures you that it will all blow over in a month or two.

No use arguing, anyway. Another squad is on the Macbannin case. Your job, for the next month, is to be a gang of glorified security guards.

The Kaybeau Armament and Technology Exposition has come to Flint. The outdoor festival showcases amateur inventors and giants of the new industrial revolution as they display their creations with great pomp and spectacle. Everywhere you turn there's another pavilion boasting of the latest miracle of technology, from precision ballistics, to steam-powered armor, to clockwork pianos that play themselves. Vendors and fair-goers of all nations and races cram the aisles to see wonders once limited to the workshops of wizards and the vaults of kings.

It is hot, crowded, and littered with experimental weapons. What could possibly go wrong?

The police are charged with mundane concerns, like pickpockets and rowdy drunks, but it's up to you constables to look for greater threats, such as arms smuggling, espionage, and foreign spies, all of whom may use the fair as cover for their activities.

You're to coordinate your efforts with Sergeant Sara Lockheart, lead officer on site from the Flint Police. Each day, from the crack of dawn until the afternoon rains disperse the crowds, your job is to make sure everything is orderly. The Chief Inspectress never explicitly gave the order, but Delft recommends you try your damnedest to keep out of the papers.

MARCHING ORDERS

Social. Real-Time.

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The PCs get acquainted with the expo.

Sergeant Sara Lockheart meets with the party the morning the expo opens and gets them acquainted with its general layout and make-up, detailed below. She's generally professional, though she acts somewhat cold if the PCs have a Flint prestige of 1, and dismissive if they have a prestige of 0.

The sergeant does not have any concrete leads to offer, but does suggest that they spend the whole first day at the fair looking for trouble. The subrail station and the center of the expo are more heavily watched, so while her police can handle the rabble and any sort of petty theft or vandalism there, she suspects anything more major would go on in the peripheral tents and booths.

Kaybeau Arms and Technology Exposition.

Two miles southwest of the RHC Headquarters, in the largest public park in Flint, the expo resembles a small tent city. Dozens of small booths, a score of modest tents, and a trio of huge pavilions house the various vendors.

Pavilions.

In the center of the park, these semi-permanent structures are near the recently completed and lavishly appointed Kaybeau Subrail Station.

Military Tent.

Here the Risuri military demonstrates its technological grandeur. Officers guide guests through small models of famous battles, each with progressing levels of technology. A small museum showcases weapons and armor, trying to win propaganda points by presenting firearms as if they're a natural development, while offering only brief mentions of magic in combat.

One massive installation displays the cross-section of a scaled-down *R.N.S. Coaltongue*. For a gold piece, a visitor can fire a cannon into the outer hull. A small field is littered with flattened cannonballs.

Rail Tent.

The conglomerate of businesses who coordinate with the Royal Rail Ministry give visitors here only one path through their exhibit. First, models show the mechanics behind steam engines. Then a somewhat ominous hallway has a relief map of the Avery Coast, with a model train constantly running the length (powered by magic). Flags mechanically rise and fall as the train passes through foreign nations, and a guide helpfully points out that the rail line, funded mostly by Danorans, is almost ten times as long as Risur's own railroad.

But the exhibit climaxes with a huge room thrumming with the sounds of trains. Here a scale model of Risur shows five majestic rail lines criss-crossing the country, while guides tout how much the nation will prosper from the faster travel.

Industry Tent.

Completely ignoring the civil unrest over the past half year, this pavilion highlights how much industry and the factories of Parity Lake have improved life in Flint, and presents a vision of the city of the future. A steamboat adorned with gorgeous women cruises around an indoor lake (subtle fans in the ceiling clear out the soot and steam). A model of the city is enchanted with an illusion showing "heroic" smokestacks sticking up from the Cloudwood, and steel towers rising everywhere.

Major Tents.

In a ring around the main pavilions, twenty large tents anchor the swaths of smaller booths of individual vendors. These tents belong mostly to local factories, with a few national and international arms manufacturers. The PCs aren't here to shop, but they can find any sort of non-magical weapon, armor, or technological invention here, as well as a few magical ones.

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ALTERNATE BEGINNING

The plot of *Digging for Lies* quickly diverges from the PCs' initial assignment to protect the Kaybeau Arms and Technology Exposition. The PCs should recognize that Caius Bergeron and the disaster at the excavation site are connected to the Macbannin case, and the plot assumes they'll pursue these leads on their own.

However, if you wish to make the puzzle simpler, or if you think your party might not disobey Lady Saxby's orders, you can have the PCs assigned to investigate the missing relics from the Pardwight Museum. The adventure can start with them talking to Hans Weber and Xambria, then proceed to tracking down the staff at the arms fair. This leaves the expo as background color, and makes it more obvious that the relics are the main focus.

Apex Tower Construction.

A local construction firm has no tent, just an open patch of ground, and throughout the expo they build a tower. Starting on the first day they dig a bit to lay a foundation of stones and steel. Using techniques fairly advanced for Risuri society—including primitive welding—they will manage to reach 50 ft. high by the end of the month.

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Colleen Fuel Prospectus.

Funded in part by Risur's military, this company has been experimenting on using different fuels for mechanical engines. The party might discover, amid barrels of traditional oil, one barrel of witchoil, the soulinfused oil that Macbannin was refining in Adventure Two. The research group's owner, Colleen, bought the barrel from Lorcan Kell's people.

Gonzel's Cannery.

A half-orc culinary entrepreneur is showing off his canned foods. People can buy a can full of food, which his cooks will prepare. Then, in a rough mockery of the Apex tower, he begins stacking empty cans on a table. By the end of the month, he has to stop because his tent isn't high enough.

Liontamer Mechanical Orchestra.

The tall, wise-cracking owner of this tent builds crank-powered musical instruments that play themselves, from simple music boxes to his showpiece "orchestra," which has a piano, four violins (each playing just one string), a small drum set, bellows that pump through bassoons and oboes.

Pemberton Industries.

The wealthy **Benedict Pemberton** hosts exclusive parties here for aristocrats and high-ranking members of government and military. Wiry guards keep away the uninvited. There is no sign of what exactly Pemberton Industries produces, and if you have to ask, they're not going to tell you.

Sechim's Alkahest and Alchemicals.

If the party saved Heward Sechim's factory in the previous adventure, the alchemist is riding a wave of popularity and selling intricately-edged glass and weapons to fair-goers. He also lets people play a game of "Taste the Acid," except the acid is just really strong liquor. He offers the party all the free drinks they want.



Swords of Tomorrow.

A misguided attempt at a business model, and with an easily-mocked acronym, this tent touts various bladed weapons that are precision-made with high-quality steel refining techniques on a large scale. In truth, the weapons are just cheaply mold-cast, then sharpened in sweatshops. They'll bend or snap after a few hits, but the price has a lot of excited factory workers throwing down coins for what they see as a status symbol.

The Trinket Stand.

This tent is a cooperative venture by several trinket sellers. They offer various knickknacks that seem out of place at a technology fair, but do brisk business because people are already here with money to spend.

Anybody who goes to the "jewelry booth" in the back of the tent, and says they are looking for "an anniversary gift for my wife Ethel," is sold a small but ornate jewelry box. The box contains slip of paper that gives a time and place where they characters can meet Kaja Stewart to discuss buying fenced goods (see page 15).

Stage Area—Gun Alley.

On the northern edge of the park, a stage hosts daily performances of local orchestras, international celebrities, and the occasional military reenactment. **The Incident** (page 11) occurs here, so we've included a thick knot of strange booths and NPCs that might draw the party's interest so they're present when the event occurs.

Area I. Gun Alley Stage.

Backed by a wooded hill, the stage is shaded by a large canopy. A broad field in front of it is often full of audiences.

Area 2. Rock Rackus's Tent.

Famed explorer and musician Rock Rackus is scheduled to perform on the stage in the afternoon, followed by a lecture about his journey to the moon, then a book signing. When the PCs arrive he's alternately yelling or laughing at his stage crew as they set up massive moon-themed props. At the moment he is too busy to meet with the PCs unless they have obtained Prestige rating 3 in Flint, in which case he'll jump at the chance to talk to them. See **Jailhouse Rock** (page 37) for details of Rock's stories.

Area 3. Shooting Range.

Using a reinforced hill as a safety backdrop, **Timothy Lammers**, an enterprising war veteran missing half his lower jaw, lets people test fire weapons sold by nearby vendors. In exchange, the vendors give him a tiny share of the profits.

Area 4. Al's Ammo.

A Drakran dwarf named **Alfonse Irongut** sells a variety of magical ammunition at this huge tent-booth. These include specialty ammunitions found in the *Adventurer's Armory* and *Ultimate Combat*. Alfonse is impressed by those who know the trade, and Gunsmiths receive a 10% discount, as does anyone who can bullseye a target on the short shooting range (ranged attack vs AC 20).

Area 5. Badger Gun.

A pair of gnome twins named **Fildi and Dilfi** decided to combine their two favorite things: badgers and guns. They do not understand why not everybody is as excited as they are. (See **New Magical Items**, page 70). They will even offer a special 20% off the gun if the PCs have a Prestige rating of 3 with the Unseen Court.



Area 6. Nock's Gun.

Nock, a half-giant from Ber, had a brilliant idea. If a gun that shoots one bullet is good, one that shoots seven bullets is better! Unfortunately current gun barrels aren't strong enough to survive the shot without magical girding, so the weapon's prohibitively expensive. And the gun has some recoil issues for people shorter than about 7¹/₂ feet. But that doesn't stop him from selling the weapon (see **New Magical Items**, page 70).

Area 7. Steam Powered Armor.

A group of human and tiefling engineers from Danor, led by a strawchewing halfling named **Alloquicious**, have constructed a prototype of a new kind of armor, one that uses steam power to enhance the wearer's strength, speed, and resilience. Unfortunately it's experiencing technical difficulties, but Alloquicious is itching to test out the arm-mounted flame-spewer.

A character with the Technologist theme can easily diagnose the problem, while other PCs must succeed both a Knowledge (Arcana) and Disable Device check (DC 21 each). If the PC shares the solution, the Danorans get the device *almost* ready by the time The Incident occurs.

Miscellaneous Tents and Booths.

Several other vendors sell more mundane arms, or offer gun-themed accessories like holsters, bandoliers, paintings, and ten-penny novels about gunslingers.



Dwarven Philosopher.

A dwarven mercenary named **Kvarti Gorbatiy** roams the tents and booths in this region. He is legitimately intrigued by the variety of weapons on display, but his main purpose is observing Rock Rackus, whom he has been hired to assassinate. See **Radical Vekeshi Plot** (page 66).

Kvarti might strike up a conversation with the PCs, whom he recognizes from the papers, especially anyone with an interest in guns. If any PC is an eschatologist, he'll gladly discuss philosophy, asking with black humor if Reed Macbannin seemed content with his life at the end.

THE INCIDENT

Action. Tactical.

Monsters appear from nowhere to attack the fairgoers.

This event occurs when the party is in the stage area, preferably on the first day. It might happen after the PCs have gotten independent word of Kaja's fencing operation, so they could be looking for Simon Langfield as a former client. When battle begins, read or paraphrase the following.

Screams erupt from a crowd of fairgoers not far from the stage as they run in panic. As they pass, horrid monsters that could only exist in nightmares pursue them. One massive creature is nothing more than a ring of flesh and bone, with teeth pointed inward, and lashing tentacles extending outward. The tentacles have already grasped one bystander—a young dwarf—and he dangles in the air. It looks like it could swallow a man whole, though it has no throat, just a gaping maw.



Two smaller monsters buzz about the sky, like fleshy dragonflies the size of a man, with sleek bodies and elephant-like trunks that end in sharp beaks. The skin of all three monsters shifts from a brown-dappled ivory to a glassy translucence, as if they can't decide whether they're solid or not.

A human male with long blond hair stands amidst the chaos, holding a solid gold staff in his right hand. He fires a magic missile from the staff, and a moment later a third dragonfly-beast materializes beside him.

The human is **Simon Langfield**, a rich but novice mage who purchased the *staff of the ancients* from Kaja Stewart. He was trying to get the discount at Al's Ammo by hitting a bullseye with his *magic missile* spell, but accidently summoned monsters from the planet Apet. He has no control over them and is just as shocked to seem them as the PCs.

Monsters from beyond the mortal world are rare enough, but even educated PCs have never heard of anything like these before.

- ♦ 3 flying things
- ♦ 1 worm maw
- + Simon Langfield

Tactics.

Simon Langfield starts at Al's Ammo, and the monsters cluster nearby. The panic causes the crowds to clear out, but a few bystanders huddle behind cover to watch.

The party might note (Perception DC 15) that Rock Rackus cowers at the edge of the scene, but he is quickly loading his gun like he wants to help. The dwarven "philosopher" Kvarti Gorbatiy makes a tactical withdrawal to the top of the stage. Starting on round 2, the two men make their own contributions to the battle.

The worm maw has already grabbed one bystander, **Alforb Irongut**, drunken son of shop-owner Alfonse. The monster never bothers to eat the boy, since he falls unconscious after the first round. He dies three rounds later unless freed and stabilized.

Simon Langfield, for his part, tosses a *magic missile* each round at whichever monster is closest.

The monsters have only animal intelligence, and they're in wholly unfamiliar territory, filled with thoughts for them to eat. The worm maw has a taste for determination, so it is attracted to the PCs (likely the only



A dwarven locksmith-turned-mercenary, Kvarti never was interested in the philosophy of Heid Eschatol until he found a book on the subject in the hands of a man he had assassinated. Now, though he presents a weary face to maintain his reputation, he goes through life content. He has all his affairs in order, and while he hopes to find a cause worth dying for, he would not be angry if his life was cut short.

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When Kvarti is hired to kill someone, he knows he won't be close for the final shot, so he likes to at least brush past his victim, perhaps even make some small talk so he can better understand the context of the person's death.

Kvarti is more of a gunsmith than a philosopher, though. He has several custom-built firearms, including an enchanted, rifled musket. The stock is carved from the thigh bone of a giant, pulled from a glacier in Drakr's far north. Words are engraved into the bone in the long-forgotten abyssal language, but Kvarti claims the femur was already carved when he found it. The words read, "Cry out / for at the end of time / I rise."

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Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 الله Act One: From Fair to Foul

people who aren't looking for a way to escape). It tries to "devour" its preferred victim, and will just randomly attack away anyone else who gets too close. Have it devour a bystander in the first round of combat so the party can see the consequences for getting caught.

The flying things hunger for confusion and desperation, so they focus their attacks on Langfield. If the party can get him to drop or hand over his staff, though, they'll turn their attention on the PCs. They snipe thoughts from the air, then swoop in, all against the same target to force creatures to fight.

Like all creatures from Apet, these monsters exist naturally as thoughts, and only become solid if they're eating another creature's mind. Their fluctuating nature makes them tough to hurt until the party figures out their weakness.

Terrain.

Spaces inside the booths are usually difficult terrain.

Flying Thing	CR 2
N Medium aberration	XP 600
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7	
Defense	
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)	
hp 19 (3d8+6)	
Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4	
Offense	
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)	
Melee beak +3 (1d6+1)	
Special Attack ray of dark and light (+3 ranged touch)	
Statistics	
Str 13 Dex 13, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 12	
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15	
Feats Dodge. Improved Initiative	
Skills Fly +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	
Ray of Dark Light (Ex): A flying thing can produce a magical ray with a range	e of 60
feet Every 1d# rounds, it can fire the ray as a standard action. A ray deals	146.1

feet. Every 1d4 rounds, it can fire the ray as a standard action. A ray deals 1d6+1 points of negative energy damage to any target struck. Every round after being struck by a ray, the target suffers 1 additional point of negative energy damage (DC 13 Will save negates). While a target is taking damage from the ray, the flying thing loses its thoughtform trait. Firing a ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity.



Worm Maw	CR 4
N Large aberration X	P 1,200
Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
Defense	
AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, -1 size)	
hp 39 (6d8+12)	
Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6	
Offense	
Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (average)	
Melee 4 tentacles +3 (1d6+2 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attack constrict (tentacle, 1d6+2), swallow mind	
Statistics	
Str 18 Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	
Base Atk +4; CMB +9 (+13 grapple); CMD 19 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Alertness, Toughness, Weapon focus (tentacle)	
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +2	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	
Swallow Mind (Ex): After successfully grappling an opponent, on the subsequ	uent

wallow Mind (EX): After successfully grapping an opponent, on the subsequent round, a worm maw may swallow the mind of its target if it maintains the grapple. The target is immediately knocked prone with the grapple ending and must make a Will save (DC 14) or be staggered and suffer 2d6 points of damage from psychic shock. A successful save halves the damage and ignores the staggered condition. If the save is failed, the target must make a save on subsequent rounds to remove the staggered condition. While the target is staggered in this way, the worm maw loses its thoughtform trait.

Use the following three stat blocks for bystanders who might contribute to the fight.

Simon Langfield	CR 2
Male human wizard 3	XP 600
NG Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +7; Senses Perception +1	
Defense	
AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge)	
hp 15 (3d6+3)	
Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee staff of the Ancients+2 (1d6+1)	
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +5)	
2nd—resist energy, scorching ray	
1st— shield, sleep (DC 13), comprehend languages	
0 (at will)—resistance, read magic, light, mage hand	
Statistics	
Str 12 Dex 16, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 10	
Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 16	
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Mastery	
Skills Acrobatics +4, Appraise +6, Diplomacy +2, Heal +0, Knowledge (Arca	na) +8,
Knowledge (History)+7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Perception +1, Spellcraft	t +8,
Survival +0	
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan	
SQ Empathic Link with Familiar, Hand of the Apprentice (5/day), Share Spells	s with
Familiar	
Other Gear staff of the Ancients*	
* See New Magical Items (page 70)	

Digging for Lies 🚓 Digging for Lies

Kvarti Gorbatiy

Male dwarf gunslinger* 6

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

XP 1,600

CR 5

CR 4

XP 1.200

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +7

* See Pathfinder[®] Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat[®]

Defense

AC 17, touch 15, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +2 dodge) **hp** 53 (6d10+18)

Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +4

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Ranged +1 rifle +10/+5 (1d10+4/x4)

Statistics

Str 10 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 15, Cha 10

Base Atk +6; CMB +6; CMD 19

Feats Far Shot, Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (Rifle)
Skills Appraise +1, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (History) +1, Knowledge (Local) +4, Perception +7, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +7

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ Deadeye, Deeds, Greed, Grit, Gun Training +3: Rifle, Gunslinger Initiative, Gunslinger's Dodge, Hardy +2, Hatred, Pistol-whip, Quick Clear, Slow and Steady, Stonecunning +2, Utility Shot

Other Gear +1 rifle, leather armor

Rock Rackus

Male human bard (celebrity*) 5

CG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; Senses Perception +5

* See Pathfinder[®] Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic[®]

Defense

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 39 (5d8+10)

Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +4

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mw rapier +5 (1d6+1 / 18–20)

Ranged Diamond Encrusted Piece+6 (1d8+1/x4)

Special Attacks Bardic Performance (standard action) (16 rounds/day): Countersong,

Distraction, Fascinate (DC 16), Inspire Competence +2

Bard Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +9)

- 2nd (3/day)—silence (DC 16), suggestion (DC 16), invisibility
- **1st (5/day)**—silent image (DC 15), cure light wounds, ventriloquism, hideous laughter
- **0 (at will)**—daze (DC 14), flare (DC 14), dancing lights, detect magic, prestidigitation, unwitting ally

Statistics

Str 12 Dex 14, Con 13, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 18

Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17

Feats Dodge, Skill Focus (Perform[Act]), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +1, Bluff +15, Climb +0, Diplomacy +9, Disguise +15, Escape Artist +6, Fly +1, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Nature) +5, Perception +5, Perform (Act) +15, Perform (Sing) +12, Ride +1, Spellcraft +4, Stealth +8, Swim +0, Use Magic Device +11

Languages Common

SQ Bardic Knowledge +2 , Bardic Performance: Gather Crowd , Famous +2: Flint, Versatile Acting +15 , Well Versed

Other Gear diamond encrusted piece*, masterwork rapier, studded leather * See New Magical Items (page 70) _ରର୍ଗ୍ତର୍ଚ୍ଚ

SUMMONED MONSTERS AND THE AXIS SEAL.

Planar travel is extremely difficult in the world of ZEITGEIST. A sufficiently skilled spellcaster with the right ritual and focus can reach any of the worlds in the orbital system, and creatures can remain indefinitely. The exception is Apet, which cannot be traveled to or from without use of Ancient magic. Only a handful of people have done so since the Axis Seal, and their spells are lost to history.

It is much easier to summon a creature for a few minutes, which rather than bodily transporting the being, just temporarily creates an aspect of it in this world. Even entities from worlds beyond the Axis Seal can be called forth this way. Again, however, Apet was especially sealed.

Simon Langfield's *staff of the Ancients* was actually used in the ritual to close off Apet, so it has the unique power to bypass the lesser seal. Its extreme age has damaged it slightly, though, and if precautions are not taken, whenever the staff is used a tiny rift to Apet opens, long enough for a creature to slip through. These monsters have permanently crossed into the material world and are stuck here.

Note that these creatures aren't native to Apet. The Gidim brought warbeasts there millennia ago, and they lingered near the sealed portal, subsisting on bare diets of thoughts that filtered through. All the sentient Gidim mentally starved, and either degenerated into savages, or were devoured by their own beasts.

A THOUGHTFORM

Creatures with this trait are similar to incorporeal creatures. Thoughtform creatures are immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Thoughtform creatures take half damage (50%) from magic weapons, spells, spell-like effects, and supernatural effects. Also, they ignore difficult terrain and can move through obstacles and other creatures, but they must end their movement in an unoccupied space.

Under certain conditions, some thoughtform creatures will lose their thoughtform trait (see "Mind Over Matter" below)

Thoughtform creatures take normal damage from psychic attacks.

MIND OVER MATTER S

The Ancients learned to fight the warbeasts of the Gidim by wielding thought as a weapon. The PCs are unlikely to try *thinking at* their enemies in their first encounter, but they have a chance to learn this technique from certain sources later in the adventure.

A PC within 30 feet of any creature with the Thoughtform special quality can spend a move action to try to influence the creature with its thoughts. The PC makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check (DC 10), and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC 16 for each). A character can only attempt this once per round.

Fortitude. If the save is failed, the creature loses incorporeal until the start of the PC's next turn. If it's flying, it must land on its turn or fall.

Reflex. If the save is failed, the PC can move the creature 10 feet in any direction. This move provokes attacks of opportunity.

Will. If the save is failed, the PC is invisible to the creature until the start of the PC's next turn.

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Aftermath.

Panicked shouts die out slowly, and a crowd quickly grows in a wide, nervous ring. Someone calls out that a man is dead, killed by a stray bullet. The shot came from Rock Rackus, and if the bullet is removed, it's made of gold, as are all of Rock's bullets.

Four police arrive within a minute, by which point accusations are already flying. The chaos is cut short when Kvarti Gorbatiy, standing atop the stage, fires his rifle into the wood of the stage to get everyone's attention. He says that he had a high vantage point, and he saw Rock Rackus fire the stray shot. Gorbatiy views this as a way to save the performers's life. He was hired to assassinate Rackus, but he saw the man help out when strangers were imperiled, so he hopes for Rackus to be arrested long enough that people will stop calling for his head.

Unless the PCs intervene, the police arrest Rackus, with all the aggressive enthusiasm cops usually show dockers.

Monsters and Staff.

The dead monsters bizarrely do not disappear the way summoned creatures should. A Spellcraft check (DC 15) can determine that the magical energies of the monsters match energy stored in Simon Langfield's staff. A Knowledge (History) check (DC 15) can connect the design to the Ancients.

Alforb Irongut, if he survived, is in a stupor, but his father Alfonse can explain how the monsters appeared when Simon cast a spell with his staff. The staff is gold, but Simon insists it was made of wood when he got it. Over the following minutes, it reverts to its normal wooden appearance.

Assuming the heroes saved Simon Langfield, he is extremely grateful and tells them all he knows. Simon honestly has no idea how the monsters came into being, and does not connect it to the staff, though if PCs make that connection he will grudgingly turn it over to the RHC (see *staff of the Ancients*, page 71). Langfield further admits that he purchased it at a steep discount from a merchant matching Kaja Stewart's description, after setting up an appointment at the Trinket Stand (page 10).

Langfield's meeting took place in an alley beside a furniture store a block from the jewelry store Kaja's based in. If the party looks for Kaja there, though, they risk tipping off her spies that someone's on her trail.

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Morgan Cippiano came over from Crisillyir a few years ago with instructions to foster Family interests by recruiting Crisillyiri immigrants and any local Risuri followers of the Clergy who had a similar ideology. Though gruff-voiced and cocky, Morgan has an unusual fascination with fashion. He rejects trends, but has a good eye for classical styles that people of any culture can appreciate.

A devout Clericist (follower of the Clergy), Morgan strives to keep a moral code while running a branch of a powerful criminal organization. He hopes some day to be seen as a father figure to his community, but for now he's willing to smash a few heads and order a few throats slit in order to clear out the competition.



Take It to Evidence.

Low-ranking RHC officers come by the site of the battle and begin to confiscate huge swaths of items. Standing orders for the RHC state that any previously unknown magic requires a thorough investigation. Mages come by and sense for magical auras they don't recognize, and they take anything that looks suspicious. The steam-powered suit, the various unique guns, and a lot of the mundane merchandise get taken away and locked up in the evidence room at the RHC Headquarters.

Many of the owners complain, but this is by orders of the king. The purpose of this event is to give you an excuse to show off the map of the RHC Headquarters, and to give the PCs some interesting resources to play with in the climax of the adventure.

THE AUDIT

Social. Montage.

The party is held to account for any law-breaking or corruption.

A subplot runs throughout the whole adventure. Starting the evening of the first day, the head of the RHC, Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill, arrives at the Flint headquarters. A large retinue accompanies him, and his mission is to root out possible corruption, in the form of the PCs.

This plot thread is detailed in Appendix One, at the end of the adventure.

THAT'S CLASSIFIED

Social. Real-Time.

A military academy requests the PCs hand over corpses of the strange monsters.

If any PC is a Martial Scientist, he is contacted by **Colonel Sebastian Harlock** the next morning. Though highly decorated, the man has never made the papers. He requests the PC recover the bodies of the unusual monsters and deliver them in iced crates to The Battalion, a martial academy in Flint's western bayou.

Harlock emphasizes the importance of Risur's military studying any newly discovered creature or magic. He can arrange for boat transport of the remains, but he needs the PC to actually take the bodies, which otherwise will go into the RHC Headquarters' morgue. The PC can come along if he wants to be sure this is a legitimate military operation, and the crates are delivered to the Battalion, where they're received by old men in military mage uniforms.

Harlock offers no compensation, but says that anything they learn that might be useful in dealing with future similar threats he will pass along, as long as he has clearance to do so.

If the PC goes along with this, then when the PC returns from the Ziggurat of Apet, he will find waiting for him in the mail a copy of a thesis, *Methods of Extricating Warriors from a Variety of Tentacled and Tendriled Monsters*. This grants a bonus ability (page 71). Also, if no PC receives the vision of **The Sealing of Apet** (page 29), the PC will also receive a brief treatise on how conscious thought affects the creatures.

INVESTIGATIONS

Puzzle/Social. Montage.

The PCs search the fair for leads to the whereabouts of a dangerous black market.

The PCs have plenty to do at the fair, but after "The Incident," their main goal should be to apprehend Kaja Stewart. She has been using the expo to find buyers and fence rare or illegal magic items, including three relics from the ziggurat of Apet. These magic items eventually lead the PCs to Pardwight University's Museum of Natural History, where Dr. Xambria Meredith can point them to her dig site in the High Bayou, and the shady philanthropist Caius Bergeron who funded it.

For the duration of the expo, Kaja uses a jewelry shop near the Lanternwood Subrail Station as her base of operations. Each day she chooses a new spot to conduct business, usually within a few blocks. She has runners deliver messages to and from the Trinket Stand (page 10), so she knows who might be coming and what they'd be interested in. She always travels with a construct bodyguard, and when she gets a bad feeling, she'll bring along back-up.

There are plenty of routes to the arcanoscientist criminal, and most lead to the under-construction Lanternwood Subrail Station, unless the PCs push extra hard to move the location. It's even possible that if the PCs are proactive, they might locate Kaja before The Incident occurs. We include two possible routes below.

Common Criminals.

A ring of young children pick the pockets of festival goers. Characters who spend an hour observing the crowds can make a Perception check (DC 20) to they track these young thieves back to their source. The ring was set up by a middle age woman who calls herself "Mama." If the party doesn't spot them, they might find out about the ring by asking the police about criminals they've arrested.

The pickpockets themselves are fairly unimportant, but amongst the stolen items the PCs discover an amulet matching the sort used at Macbannin's laboratory to gain access to the lower levels. If pressed, the young thief describes the man who carried the amulet as a short human with dark hair and a goatee, wearing a striped gray shirt, a gold bow tie, and violet pants. The party can use this description to locate Isaac Randal.

Isaac Randal was a researcher working for Macbannin on the witchoil project, and he fled when the earthquake struck. Now that his source of funding has been cut off, Randal is selling off equipment and technology that he scavenged. If PCs confront him, he tries to flee. If captured he admits selling everything he took from the lab to his former associate, Kaja Stewart. If suitably threatened or plied, he can be convinced to set up a meeting.

Randal knows that Kaja's started working with some criminal gang, and that they're interested in finding out who Macbannin was working for. He will send a message through the Trinket Booth (see above) claiming that he found a lead. Kaja will respond back, suggesting a meeting later in the afternoon, when the rain has cleared out the construction workers at Lanternwood.

A Friend in the Family.

Fey pepper (see the *Player's Guide*) is not illegal, just heavily taxed. The Family is using the expo, and all the extra dock activity that comes with it, to move a large shipment of fey pepper into the city. The Bosum Strand docks are far from the expo, but if the PCs think to scout there for

suspicious activity, they might hear talk about the shipment (Diplomacy DC 20), or notice the activity surrounding it (Sense Motive DC 20). The PCs' informants might also tip them off.

If the PCs make a move on the smugglers, one of the Family bravuras recognizes the PCs and suggests they talk to Morgan Cippiano before they try arresting anyone. Alternately, the PCs might spot Morgan Cippiano from a distance as he attends the expo.

If the PCs talk to Morgan, he offers them a deal. Rather than stopping the shipment, they can just accept a small gift-a month's supply of fey pepper. And in exchange, Morgan will point them to somebody they'll find more interesting: a fence outside of the Family who is accompanied by a construct powered by black oil. If they take him up on the deal, Morgan tells them how to find Kaja Stewart through the Trinket Booth.

KAJA AND HER TOYS

Action. Tactical.

The heroes find the fence, and she doesn't go down without a fight.

The following battle assumes that the PCs pose as potential weapon buyers for Kaja's fenced goods, and meet her in the Lanternwood Subrail Station construction yard. If your players try a different approach, alter the details to suit your needs.

When the PCs reach the construction yard, read or paraphrase the following:

The afternoon rains have sent home the construction crews, and the guards have conveniently left the premises. A gate in the wooden fence hangs open to the construction yard, and within you can see the massive pit dug for the future train station. A few steel and stone columns rise to suggest the skeleton of a future building, with only a flapping tarp stretched between them as a makeshift roof to keep the pit from flooding.

Stacks of lumber, bricks, and girders provide plenty of hiding places, and the fence is feeble enough to offer numerous escape routes. But you spot someone on the far side of the pit, a woman with a high-collared coat and a huge coif of hair. Beside her towers a man, seven feet tall, draped in a black coat, his face concealed with a wide-brimmed hat.

- ✤ Kaja Stewart
- ♦ 1 iron bodyguard
- ♦ 4 walking turrets
- ✤ 2 Kell-Guild pistoleers (maybe)

Kaja waits on the other side of the pit from the obvious entrance to the construction yard, guarded by a construct similar to the bleak golem the PCs faced in Adventure Two, poorly disguised (Perception DC 15) as a human. In addition to her iron bodyguard, Kaja has brought several walking turrets, constructs that are little more than guns with legs. They hide amid the construction supplies, resembling nothing more than inert pieces of metal (Perception DC 20) until Kaja gives the word, at which point they animate and attack.

If the PCs talk to Kaja, she has them wait on the far side of the pit, where they must succeed a Bluff check (DC 15) to convince her they are legitimate buyers. Then she'll wave the party to come across the wooden bridge, while her golem opens a chest to reveal a variety of guns (including some exotic gun-blade mixes), plus the blade of the ancients and amulet of the ancients, and any other magic items that you might wish to include. She asks for market prices, but might be haggled down to roughly 80%.



In any circumstance, Kaja refuses to answer any questions about how or where she obtained the items, or how the staff summoned the monsters. If the PCs ask too many questions, or otherwise rouse her suspicions, she suggests they leave quickly. She conjures a musket out of thin air, and begins to withdraw toward her secret exit.

Possible Ambush.

If the PCs tipped off Kaja even before the meet-up, she brings two Kellguild pistoleers as back-up, who hide under tarps to the west of the main entrance (Perception DC 22). Also, Kaja has rigged the bridge so she can drop it as a move action. She hopes to drop the PCs into the pit as they cross, then shoot them like fish in a barrel.

Tactics.

Kaja tries to keep her distance from the PCs, shooting from cover when possible, and using *create pit* spell to punish any enemy that doesn't use cover too. If given time to prepare, Kaja casts *blur* and *protection from arrows* to increase her defense. Following that, if the PCs seem overwhelmed with targets or getting close to her, she throws out a *slow* to hinder their advance. If anyone reaches her, she orders all her allies to focus on that foe. Otherwise, she'll order the iron bodyguard forward, and will support it. If her bodyguard is destroyed and she is reduced below half health, she tries to flee. She surrenders when reduced to 3 or less hit points.

Terrain.

Most of the ground is soggy, but covered in sawdust. Squares marked with mud are slick. If a creature enters one of those spaces and leaves it in the same turn, it must make an Acrobatics check (DC 12) or fall prone.

Some spaces contain iron reinforcing bars pointed upward, meant for future construction. These spaces require a Strength check to vault, or Acrobatics check to weave through (DC 20). A creature forced into one of these squares takes 1d4 damage from piercing metal.

The muddy walls of the pit make climbing out difficult (Climb DC 15). The steel pillars in the pit have more handholds (DC 11), but the walkways are 40 ft. above the pit.

A tarp stretches between the various columns, acting as a makeshift roof, 50 ft. up. Ropes tying down the tarp roof down are scattered all around. Encourage the PCs to do weird things, like snapping a rope and riding the backlash across the pit, or cutting a few to cause the whole tarp to fall and pin people beneath it.

Walking Turrets: Walking turrets are simple constructs (15 ft. movement, treated as firing a pistol [+4 to hit], AC 15, and HP 20).



Kaja Stewart	CR 5
Female human summoner* 6	XP 1,600
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +1; Senses Bond Senses (6 rounds /day); Perception +3	
* See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide [®]	
Defense	
AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +1 Dex)	
hp 40 (6d8+12)	
Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5	
Defensive Abilities Shield Ally (+2 AC/Saves)	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Ranged Pistol +5 (1d8/x4)	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th ; concentration +9)	
(6/day)—summon monster III	
Summoner Spells Known (CL 6th ; concentration +9)	
2nd (4/day)—slow (DC 15), blur, create pit (DC 15), protection fro	om arrows
1st (5/day)—shield, grease (DC 14), expeditious retreat, ray of sic	kening (DC 14)
0 (at will)—resistance, open/close, read magic, light, detect magic	c, mage hand
Statistics	
Str 8 Dex 12, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 17	
Base Atk +4; CMB +3 CMD 14	
Feats Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Rapid Reload (Pistol)	
Skills Acrobatics –3, Appraise +5, Climb –7, Craft (Weapons) +8, Di	iplomacy +8,

Escape Artist –5, Fly –5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Arcana) +9, Knowledge (History) +9, Perception +3, Ride –5, Sense Motive +2, Spellcraft +8, Stealth –2, Swim –7, Use Magic Device +10

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

SQ Eidolon Link, Life Link, Maker's Call (1/day), Share Spells with Eidolon Other Gear pistol, *bracers of armor +2*

Iron Bodyguard (Eidolon)	CR 5
LN Medium construct	XP 1,600
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +7	
Defense	
AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +12 natural)	
hp 45	
Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +4	
DR 5/adamantine; Immune construct traits	
Defensive Abilities Evasion	
Offense	
Speed 15 ft.	
Melee slam+9 (2d6+6)	
Special Attacks grab	
Statistics	
Str 18 Dex 14, Con 16, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 11	
Base Atk +5; CMB +9 (+13 when grappling); CMD 21	
Feats Improved Natural Armor, Toughness	
Skills Acrobatics +7, Intimidate +5, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Survival +	3



Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 الله Act One: From Fair to Foul

If the two pistoleers are present, they are loyal to Kaja.

Kell-Guild Pistoleer	CR 1/2
Male or female human fighter 1	XP 200
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +6; Senses Perception +0	
Defense	
AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)	
hp 11 (1d10+1)	
Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –1	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee short sword+3 (1d6+2/19–20)	
Ranged broken pistol+1 (1d8–1/×2)	
Statistics	
Str 14 Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12	
Base Atk +1; CMB +3; CMD 15	
Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot	
Skills Acrobatics +2, Disguise +2, Escape Artist +2, Perception +0	
Languages Common	
Other Gear broken pistol with 5 bullets, studded leather armor, short sw	vord



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Kaja was recruited as an arcanoscientific researcher by Reed Macbannin. When she realized she might be arrested for her involvement in his project, she hid, taking a collection of magic items from a laboratory located away from Macbannin's primary manor.

An expert in theoretical planar physics, Kaja devised the way to refine witchoil from the veil between the real world and the Bleak Gate. She now works for Lorcan Kell, and in the intervening months since her flight she has focused on crafting pocket dimensions for the purpose of concealing weapons and contraband. But unlike most of her cohorts who worked for Macbannin, Kaja is looking for a way to go back to work on her old project. Together she and Kell are trying to get in touch with the Obscurati, though they don't even know that's the group's name.

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Aftermath.

Assuming the PCs leave Kaja alive, she won't answer questions in the short term, but the party may be able to get a few answers out of her with a longer interrogation back at the RHC headquarters. Encourage them to take her in for questioning, and mention that the basement jail has a few cells suited for magic-using prisoners. You want the players to be familiar with the layout of their HQ before the events of Act Three.

Kaja genuinely has no idea how the staff summoned the monsters. She simply fenced the items, and even when she worked for Macbannin all she knew was that the items came from some archaeological site. She did not get a chance to examine them for danger before she stole them and ran.

She does recall a tiefling showing up at the laboratory when the items arrived, and Macbannin being upset, saying something about it "compromising protocol." She can describe Caius Bergeron, though she has no idea about the man's name, location, or affiliations.

The iron bodyguard was carrying a chest filled with contraband, including the *blade of the Ancients* and *amulet of the Ancients*. Characters who examine the sword or amulet can make a Knowledge (History) check (DC 15) to connect them with the Ancients. They appear fairly primitive, but if their powers are used they briefly transform to solid gold.

KAJA'S END

Social. Montage. Level 5.

The Obscurati moves to silence a leak.

If the characters take Kaja into custody, she unfortunately does not remain well for long. Informers get word of the arrest to Caius Bergeron, who recruits Obscurati agents hiding in the Bleak Gate to kill Kaja.

As part of her duties working with Reed Macbannin, Lady Inspectress Saxby allowed a work crew to perform "repairs" in the basement jail cells of the RHC headquarters. One of these repairs hid a ring of rusted iron under a layer of paint behind the staircase, which the Obscurati can use as a focus to slip in from the Bleak Gate. The magic does not let them step fully into this plane, but they exist here enough to carry out an assassination. During the night, when the few prisoners present are asleep, an assassin slips in through the ring. He magically disguises himself as an RHC guard, uses magic to put the guards on duty to sleep, then uses a poison dart through the cell door to make sure the sleeping Kaja doesn't awaken. He opens the cell door, pulls out a belt he brought along, and arranges a fake hanging suicide.

By the time the real guards awaken and discover the suicide, the assassin has slipped back out. Should the PCs dig a little deeper they notice clues that suggest it was not a simple suicide. The PCs do not remember Kaja having a belt. The guards claim they were distracted because one of the other prisoners, a dwarf named **Gunter Inskeip**, began raving about "shadows and some such nonsense" and they were trying to quiet him down.

Gunter is a half-mad follower of Heid Eschatol, arrested for several murders and assembling a makeshift bomb for unknown target. He claims that he saw "shadows foretelling the end and coming for death," which is about a lucid as he gets, though if the party contains a character with the Eschatologist theme, Gunter recognizes the kindred spirit and says, "The shadows will soon come for you too."

Characters who examine Kaja's body can make a Heal or Perception check (DC 22) to notice a small puncture wound that suggests a needle injection or dart. A Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 22) detects a hint of energy familiar to them as coming from the Bleak Gate.

Saving Kaja.

If the party are cautious and detect the rusted ring in advance, or if they keep her under house arrest (probably a bad idea, because she has innate magical abilities), the assassin might still make a move, but is less likely to succeed. A living Kaja doesn't provide much extra information about the Ob's structure, but she could perhaps be a useful resource because of her knowledge of witchoil. If she knows the Ob tried to kill her, she could be convinced to work against them.

MANGLED GOLEM

Puzzle. Real-Time.

This mysterious murder scene won't be solved any time soon.

This scene does not tie directly into the current adventure, but it lays key groundwork for events in Adventure Five, *Cauldron-Born*. It's intended to be an unsolved mystery for the party which they can return to later to get a break in their case.

Shortly after the PCs track down Kaja Stewart, they get a request for help from the constables who have been assigned to the Macbannin case (see page 2). They've heard about the party's fight with Kaja and her golem, and they think the party might have some helpful insights on a scene they're investigating. They ask that the party keep it quiet, since Lady Saxby would not like the two groups collaborating.

The Scene.

The body was discovered in the basement of a steel mill in the thickest factory cluster of Parity Lake. The burning steel and firegems concealed the stench of decomposition, but workers found him just yesterday. The man had to have been dead for weeks at least.

What got the case kicked over to the RHC was the presence of two strange things: a ring of rusted iron, and a slender golem which is torn to pieces.

What Happened.

During the climax of Adventure Two, an unwilling member of the Obscurati conspiracy tried to escape their compound in the Bleak Gate. He died in the attempt.

Alexander Grappa, known as the Mindmaker, had been working for the Ob under the the direction of Leone Quital, known as the Steelshaper. Grappa designed the consciousness of the colossal golem called Borne, whom the PCs should have little or no inkling of. Grappa developed doubts about the project, then eventually overheard a meeting between three high-ranking members of the conspiracy. Too valuable to kill, Grappa was locked up, which angered the colossus, leading to the minor tremors throughout Adventure Two.

Eventually Grappa arranged for his golem handservant to invite Kasvarina Varal, the high elf mage who shared leadership duties of the Obscurati, to come speak with him. He interrogated her, then managed to catch her by surprise and wipe her memories. He hoped that by giving her a second chance to see the world she might turn against the conspiracy.

Using a mind controlled Kasvarina as cover, Grappa left his cell, snuck to the giant construction bay where Borne was being assembled, and then extracted the colossus's consciousness. The now-mindless golem strained against its bonds, provoking the massive earthquake that struck as the party attempted to defeat Reed Macbannin. During the chaos, Grappa fled the Obscurati compound, bringing his golem and Kasvarina with him.

He hoped to reach the Flint harbor and sail to Elfaivar, where he could work with Kasvarina to rebuild her memories and defeat the conspiracy. But Leone caught up with him in the basement of this steel mill.

Leone easily overpowered Grappa, then tried to slowly torture him to death by pouring a vial of witchoil down the Mindmaker's throat. Grappa managed a desperate spell to transfer his consciousness to his golem handservant, then immediately used his new body to crush his original skull with a bronze fist to end his suffering. Furious, the Steelshaper tore the golem apart.

Leone took the confused and wailing Kasvarina back to the Ob compound, and in an act of spiteful carelessness he left Grappa's body to rot, thinking no one would find it.

The Victim.

The victim's wrists were bound together by a twisted steel bar, as were his ankles. It would take either magic or great strength to bend the steel, and this was done very precisely.

He had some sort of necklace, because links remain near his body, but most of it is missing. The chain matches the amulets used at Macbannin's manor to slip partially into the Bleak Gate (Perception DC 15).

The dead body is highly rotted, but the PCs can determine the date of death to be some time early in the Summer (Heal DC 15). The apparent cause of death is a shattered skull, and the size of the wound (Heal DC 11) matches the fist of the damaged golem in the corner. A cursory look determines the man was human, in his fifties or sixties. He has an old gunshot wound to his leg (Heal DC 15). His teeth suggest he received dental care from a Risuri army doctor (Heal or Knowledge (History) DC 23).

Probing the throat or closely examining the body reveals nearly a pint of witchoil, some of which was swallowed (Heal or Perception DC 23). However there is no soul energy trapped in the oil (Spellcraft DC 11); if the man had died while the oil was anywhere nearby, his soul should have been sucked in.



The victim had 5 platinum pieces and twenty gold pieces in his pocket, as well as a bundle of papers with ship schedules, berth numbers, and mentions that passengers were welcome, all of which were set to depart between the 5th and 15th of Summer. All of them were bound for Elfaivar. His socks have the initials "A.G." stitched into them (Perception DC 15).

The Golem.

The golem is in a hundred pieces. Its chest is torn into four components, while its face cracked apart into countless tiny pieces. The main bulk of the golem's head looks intact, though, and it feels quite heavy, which suggests a finely-crafted internal structure appropriate for containing an advanced intelligence (Knowledge (Arcana or Engineering) DC 15).

The body is unimposing. Before it was smashed to bits it probably stood about 5½ feet tall, slender, and mostly bronze. But its internal structure is of the finest quality, with miniscule gears in the hands that would have allowed nuanced movements. The face, shattered though it is now, could once have displayed fantastic expressions. Even a Technologist has never seen such wondrous craftsmanship. It looks too fragile to use as a warrior, though.

There are a few chain links amid its wreckage, just like the necklace the victim was wearing.

Oddly it looks like the golem wasn't hit by an object; it was torn apart, almost like it exploded along every major seam and joint (Perception DC 15). The head of the golem still possesses an aura of magic (Spellcraft DC 11), suggesting the thing might still be conscious, just blind and mute.



Other Clues.

Looking around the scene, everything has a fine layer of ash, which just drifts onto everything in the factory, even in the basement.

The party can find several inches of torn fabric by the rusted ring (Perception DC 11). It's several layers stitched together of cotton and dyed silk, and if the party asks around to clothiers (or perhaps talks to Morgan Cippiano, a fan of fine attire), they discover it's likely from a high elf woman's dress, the sort made before the Great Malice. The threads have residual magic on them (Spellcraft DC 11), which, given how long they've been removed from the garment, suggests the enchantment was very powerful to begin with.

A few ingots of iron stored on nearby shelves have fallen onto the ground, and a few are below the victim's body. The ingots were shaken free (Perception DC 23), probably during the earthquake in the summer, but there's no sign of ash on top of them, which suggests the victim died very soon after the quake.

What Now?

The other constables will take it from here, but they thank the PCs for their help and promise to inform them of any breaks. They will have the body buried, but plan to take the golem remains to RHC Headquarters, in hopes of perhaps reassembling it and getting it to talk.

The party might take an interest in fixing the golem, but it's a daunting project that would take even a skilled technologist several months. If the PCs try any clever spells, its memories are muddled from the combination of Grappa's mind with the golem's. In Adventure Five, the golem becomes active, either by the party's actions, or other RHC operatives. It can provide critical clues at that time, but until then, it's just a riddle.

PARDWIGHT UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Social. Real-Time.

The PCs search for answers amid academics.

After confiscating the staff, sword, and amulet of the Ancients, the most logical place to go is Pardwight University. Asking about the artifacts, they are quickly directed to **Professor Hans Weber**, Professor of Antiquities and curator of the Museum of Natural History.

Professor Weber, a human originally from Drakr, believes himself smarter and more capable than just about everybody in the world, and he gets along well with anybody as long as they don't challenge his beliefs. Weber is busy preparing for the coming museum exposition featuring many wonders of the Ancients.

Professor Weber is born lecturer who loves the sound of his own voice, and he quickly rattles off some of the Ancient's astounding accomplishments, including their understanding of astronomy, magic, and goldsmithing that were unheralded and unmatched for centuries. Weber is happy to answer any questions the party has, though like all mainstream scholars he has no idea about the Axis Seal.

Recovered Relics.

Most of the museum's Ancient artifacts come from older digs, but when Weber heard rumors a few months ago of the discovery of an Ancient ziggurat in the High Bayou, he extended an offer to the young archaeologist who was heading the excavation: Dr. Xambria Meredith. Xambria sent back a detailed list of items recovered, with the caveat that her sponsor would have final say on their placement.



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PRICELESS ANTIQUITIES.

In the real world, it's amazing enough for a museum to have a gold-decorated sarcophagus or a gem-studded crown worth millions of dollars. In a fantasy setting, how does government deal with museums wanting to display artifacts that might actually possess perilous magical powers?

Museums must allow royal inspectors to check relics for magic, and then to examine magic items for possible danger. A large stodgy body of bureaucrats determines what's safe enough to display, what's so dangerous it must be confiscated, and what is something the government might want to lay claim to, but allow on display for the time being.

The three Ancient relics the PCs have recovered, while very valuable and powerful, do not pose a significant threat. Anyone who might use the staff to cast spells would be able to use magic anyway, and likewise the sword is only as dangerous as its wielder. The amulet is wholly defensive. The only concern is that they might summon more monsters. To protect against that, Professor Weber offers to wrap the relics in gold thread. Additionally, as part of the Ancient exhibit, the entire gallery has an inlaid band of gold in the floor. Summoning in the relic room is impossible.

If the party wants to requisition any of the relics, they can get at most two; Weber has enough pull with people in power that he will at least hold onto one item. He's worried the constables might lose them and ruin his exhibit. They'll actually be safer at the museum than in the RHC headquarters. And the party does not have enough authority to prevent Weber from hosting the Ancients exhibit and showing off the relics.

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When Xambria returned a month ago as the sole survivor of her expedition, Weber arranged for her to stay at a Pardwight University apartment, both out of sympathy and out of a hope she would support his claim for the artifacts, should they ever be recovered. If the PCs mention finding them, Weber is at first ecstatic, then subdued.

Weber can set up a meeting between the PCs and Xambria, but he warns them that the tragedy placed a tremendous strain on Xambria. They should be gentle when speaking to her. As for the relics, he'll quickly produce paperwork from his office which shows he has a legal claim to the amulet, staff, and sword. He says he tried finding Xambria's sponsor, but couldn't. With him missing, ownership falls to Pardwight University.

He will keep the relics in a royal safehold until shortly before the exhibition. Royal guards will protect the items from thieves, while mages ascertain whether the items are a hazard to the nation.

As For Caius.

Weber has met Caius Bergeron in the past, and says the tiefling has been very generous to the university, but he was secretive at the best of times. He appears to have vanished at the same time as Xambria's tragedy.

XAMBRIA

Social. Real Time.

The party gets critical clues from someone who wants answers as much as they do.

Dr. Xambria Meredith, originally of Mitchell University in Slate, is currently recuperating at Pardwight, where she has been given a temporary office and living quarters. She jumps at the chance to talk to people who might help her find answers about what happened to her dig.

Xambria speaks politely to the PCs, and does her best to answer their questions. Though naturally charming and gregarious, she has fits of odd behavior. She might suddenly ask the group to stop talking so she can listen to sounds that nobody else can hear, or when asked directly about her dig she might get a distant look and insist, "I told you I don't remember."

In truth, much of Xambria's "trauma" results from the alien entity Sijhen, which has merged into her mind, and her odd behavior is often a result of the PCs asking questions that Sijhen does not want her to answer.

Foggy Recollection.

Xambria's story of the doomed expedition goes something like this. After discovering the ziggurat in Spring, she sent news and several artifacts to her sponsor, the wealthy philanthropist Caius Bergeron. Bergeron wanted to be kept apprised, especially if she found something he called a "golden seal": a large golden disk bearing astronomical symbols, which would radiate powerful protective magic.

The dig cleared through traps and collapsed passages, but in early Summer Xambria sent word that she had found a seal. A few days later she went to the train station in Bole to meet a group of specialists sent by Bergeron: three tieflings who were obviously spell casters (a rarity among Danorans), and a pair of human guards. She recalls this was a little while after she got news of some big scandal in Flint, but she doesn't remember the exact day.

She led the specialists to the dig, brought them to the seal, and then left at their request. The next day the specialists were still working at the seal, so she left to pick up supplies she was expecting to arrive by train. The round trip took a few days, and when she returned to the dig site, she discovered the bodies of her colleagues. They all lay dead either at the base camp or just inside the ziggurat. There was no sign of the specialists, but she dared not venture inside. She fled in a daze, boarded the train back to Flint, and reported the deaths to the police and the University.

She's convinced that Bergeron's specialists had something to do with the death, and she asks the PCs to return to the ziggurat and uncover the plot. As for Caius, Xambria thinks he knew there were dangers at the ziggurat. She tried to track him down when she got back to Flint, but the ways he had told her to get in touch were dead ends. She doesn't have the resources to find him, but she hopes the PCs might.

The Truth.

Xambria's version of events is mostly true, with a few edits imposed by Sijhen. Xambria was there when the specialists opened the Ancients' seal, and while they took precautions and set up a magical ward, one of Xambria's diggers panicked and disturbed the ward, unleashing the monsters. A host of Gidim warbeasts glided through the portal, and only thanks to Sijhen bonding with her was Xambria able to resist their psychic energy and escape.

Details of the Ziggurat.

If the party asks Xambria for a map of the ziggurat, she apologizes. Her memory is muddled, and though she remembers that there were traps, and some sort of indoor rainbow, she can't recall specifics. She suggests they look for her journal, which she probably left at camp, and which should detail everything they need to look out for.

Unfortunately for the PCs, Caius Bergeron sent a follow-up expedition about two weeks ago, and they have already ransacked the camp for all useful documents. They also carried off the golden plate that sealed the portal to Apet.

Ancients and Other Evening Conversations.

If the party spends a long time talking with Xambria, she'll inevitably go off on tangents about her study of the Ancients. She has a theory of how their civilization ended. Excavations of Ancient sites turn up tons of gold relics, but scholars have never found actual gold mines or the forges necessary to make such items.

She suspects that the Ancients might not have made the relics themselves, but either traded for them or looted them from another group that was more advanced. This foreign group could have come from another world, using magic that is impossible now. She theorizes that either these foreigners' method of travel was destroyed, or the Ancients actively fought them away. Perhaps Ancient culture collapsed without the presence of their foreign allies, or maybe the Ancients were too weak after fighting off invaders to sustain their culture.

She cites other examples of extinct entities that were once commondragons in Ber, or the demons of Triegenes's time. She also claims that old Clericist scrolls in Danor make mention of the "Egal the Shimmering, lord of the golden legion" among a list of demons and other heresies. She thinks perhaps Egal was the source of all the Ancients' gold.

Her theory happens to be partially right, but to most people it sounds like a crackpot idea, like ancient astronauts on earth. The PCs might, however, have kept the *wand of Egal the Shimmering* from the smugglers in Adventure Two, which happens to be made of solid gold.

The idea here is to present Xambria as a prospective ally in solving the deeper mysteries of the campaign, and to get the party to like and trust her. Tricking players is tough, but if you pull it off, the revelation that Xambria is carrying the adventure's villain around in her head will make a huge impact.

CAIUS BERGERON

Social. Real-Time.

A tiefling noble is surprisingly unhelpful.

Finding Bergeron can be quick if the PCs have contacts among the elite in Flint. Otherwise, the party has a long process of several Diplomacy and Streetwise checks to find someone who might know him.

The tiefling has a room at the Silver Swan Inn in North Shore, and can be found there most afternoons. He's far too refined (and too well guarded) to flee at the threat of law enforcement presence. He'll even offer to buy them a meal and discuss business with them.

At first Bergeron acts the part of the history-and-art-loving philanthropist. He is open to any questions about his philanthropic works, though his answers are often vague. He pretends to be simply interested in history and selling antiquities, and says that digs are often dangerous. He claims Xambria contacted him, and he offered compensation and aid. She said she wanted nothing to do with him, and so he assumed their arrangement was over. He plans to send another expedition, but the weather is turning foul up in the High Bayou, so it will have to wait until Spring.

If the PCs make any accusations, Bergeron asks them to leave until his lawyer can be present. If they arrest him, he won't even be processed into a cell before word comes in to let him go. Saxby tells the PCs to leave Bergeron alone.

If PCs manage to examine Bergeron's room at the Silver Swan, it is similar to how it's described on page 35, with a few exceptions. The map on his desk contains only the location of Xambria's dig site, and the pages torn from his books are present and describe discoveries made by Xambria's expedition (including the golden seal).

With no other leads in Flint, the party's next step for answers lies at Xambria's dig site.



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Caius Bergeron comes from a wealthy Danoran noble family with a reputation for philanthropy. His great-grandfather founded the expedition that first discovered the Axis Seal, and members of his family have been recruited into the Obscurati ever since. He was a potential next-in-line to take over Golden Cell after the Duchess attacked Axis Island, but he prefers the academic side of the project.

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His current stay in Flint lets him check up on several of his sponsored digs. He also has been tasked by the Ob top tier to keep an eye on possible loose ends from Macbannin's defeat. In particular he's watching Lorcan Kell and Kaja Stewart, evaluating whether to leave them alone, recruit them, or kill them.

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Caius is constantly reading, either books or correspondence from archaeologists who benefit from his philanthropic donations. He keeps his fingernails and tail tip sharpened, and tends to leave deep scratches in furniture when he's impatient. He has a love for the Crisillyiri dish *polip alla infanti*, or live octopus, sliced and eaten while the tentacles still squirm.

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ACT TWO: **YSTERIES OF THE ANCIENTS**

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for 6 n this act, the heroes explore ancient seals for for

clues to the conspiracy.

RAIL TRAVEL IN RISUR.

Trains in the ZEITGEIST setting had a slightly different genesis than in the real world. The first Danoran and Drakran innovators used a wider track gauge for their rail cars, so a track is typically 7 feet across (instead of the 4 feet, 8.5 inches on Earth). Wider railroads led to larger, albeit slower trains.

A typical train car anywhere on the continent of Lanjyr is 12 feet wide and 60 feet long, and most trains have 10 to 20 cars. A usual mix is one engine, one firegem car, one or two sleeper cars, one dining car, three to five passenger cars, and three to ten freight cars.

The PCs likely travel in sleeper cars, each of which has two luxury suites 9 feet wide by 30 long, with a 3 foot wide hallway down the length.

Stretches of the railroad that pass through wilderness are usually lined with recently-planted trees from which red flags hang. These serve as both appeasement and distraction for fey who might be tempted to sabotage the tracks.

CITY OF BOLE.

The streets of Bole weave confusingly through a tangle of rolling hills, neighborhoods, and old thickets. The city center lies in the lowlands where most of the trees have been cleared to make way for riverside factories, lumber mills, and the last large station of the Risur railroad.

Bole is an old, relaxed city in contrast to the booming speed of Flint. The local RHC headquarters don't have much crime to worry about, and mostly serve to resolve disputes between loggers and the forest fey.

AGATE.

A town of barely two hundred people, Agate sits at the where the foothills of the Anthras Mountains meet the marshlands of the High Bayou. It mostly serves as a nexus for gem miners in the hills, as well as silk trappers who collect threads from huge spider nests in the swamp. A small cadre of veteran monster hunters guard the town from giant spiders and the eerie alligators that crawl from stream to stream amid the web-shrouded hills.



P TRAVEL TO THE RUINS

Exploration. Montage.

The heroes trek through Risur's High Bayou.

The PCs can take the train most of the way to the dig site, at the cost of 50 gp per person. The closest stop to the dig site is the city of Bole, which the PCs can reach within a day. From there it's a one-day trek through hills to the small town of Agate, and then another day through the High Bayou to the dig site.

If the PCs ask around in Agate (Diplomacy DC 15), people corroborate the broad details of Xambria's story. It was the talk of the town that a bunch of city folks got themselves killed in the High Bayou, and that the only survivor was a young woman. But that was nearly two months ago.

More careful investigators (Diplomacy DC 22) learn that two weeks ago another group of outsiders came through in the night, equipped for monster hunting. They returned a few days later and placed an object in the back of a wagon for transport. It was wrapped in cloth, about as large as a dinner table top, but much heavier than wood.

High Bayou.

Read or paraphrase the following.

Dr. Xambria Meredith provided a detailed map and directions. In the town of Agate you acquire pole-boats and set out into the High Bayou, a landscape unlike anywhere else in the world.

Though trees and other plant-life poke out of the slow waters, the land beneath is not coastline but rolling hills. Streams from the Anthras Mountains snake down to the bayou, but instead of flowing freely they are trapped by berms of massive spider webs. The giant ground spiders of the High Bayou have coated huge swaths of terrain with their nests, made of silk much like beavers craft dams of wood.

You have to travel slowly to avoid the dangers of the swamp. Swarms of biting insects flock to the scent of blood, and pale crocodiles blend into the white, silkcoated hillocks that peek out of the waters. Cypress trees shelter you from the sun, but you have to navigate carefully to avoid drifting into titanic walls of web, as large as a hundred feet across, stretched between trees.

And the rain. Always the rain. It cuts visibility, soaks everything, and dulls your ears to the movements of predators. Sometimes, through the calls of birds and croaks of toads, you imagine you can hear a slithering whisper, indecipherable beneath the drone of the rain.

Have the party choose one PC to be in charge of following Xambria's maps and directions. He must succeed three Survival checks (DC 15) to get the party to the dig site. Each attempted check takes four hours of travel.

Additionally, every four hours in the swamp, each PC must make a Constitution check (DC 12) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from insect bites and fatigue. Also, every four hours have each PC make a Perception check (DC 22). If no PC succeeds, the party falls prey to an ambush monster. Let each PC propose a plan to mitigate the threat, and then make an appropriate skill check. Those who you deem don't have a good enough plan must handle an extra combat encounter.



Groups forced to fight in the high bayou can expect to deal with spiders and ettercaps, perhaps with crocodiles or bats as opportunists. The majority of terrain is shallow water, with some deep water, some hills coated with sticky webs, and walls of trapping silk stretched between trees. GMs should feel free to design their own combat encounters in the swamp to challenge their PCs as appropriate.

Offering of Decay.

If the PCs think to provide an offering to the Voice of Rot, the fey titan said to sleep in the High Bayou, they can make a Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 22) to come up with an appropriate offering. Such an offering would consist of an additional pole-boat, filled with 100 gp worth of livestock that have been slaughtered and left to rot. If the PCs bring the boat along with them for at least four hours, the native creatures of the bayou will not attack them.

THE ZIGGURAT OF APET

Exploration. Real-Time.

The heroes examine the remains of the fallen expedition.

As the PCs draw near the archeological site, they start to feel things going amiss. Characters trained in Survival or Knowledge (Nature) notice that small animals are acting oddly, and those with the Skyseer theme feat experience a strange sense of dissonance.

The ziggurat has numerous traps and several areas where bestial creatures might attack them. If they reach the center of the ziggurat and aren't careful, they'll trigger a trap that forces them to flee in a hurry while dead guardians of the ruin try to kill them. When the characters reach the site, read or paraphrase the following:

A golden strip of fabric flutters in the rainy breeze. Woven around the trunk of a tree, it marks the first clear sign you're getting close to Xambria's dig site. Beyond in the distance you spy another golden marker, and far past it, hidden in the drizzle, perhaps a third.

A patch of land cleared of webs near the tree also sports a hitching post of sorts for your boats. You tie them up, then follow the trail a few hundred feet up a slight grade. The sparse trees of the swamp thicken to a tangle of greenery, studded with golden markers to show that civilization was once here.

Then before you the wall of trees open onto a vast flooded plain. A large stone ziggurat looms at the edge of your rain-obscured vision. Three tiers of aged stone, their ancient carvings all but dissolved by time, rise up out of the forest to a sixty-foot high peak.

Or is it farther? Sudden vertigo strikes you all, and for a moment you can't tell which is closer—the top tier of the ziggurat, or your own hand. But when you look back down the sensation passes. You spot the remains of a camp site ahead, right beside the ruin's entrance. Three limp humanoid figures lie amid toppled tents and archaeological supplies.

Just beyond the camp and the remains of the dead, a fifteen foot high mouth yawns open in the stone side of the ziggurat's first tier. Vines that once hid it have been hacked away, and somewhere inside the ancient ruin, faint light glows.

Background.

These hills were once dry and full of caves. The golden legion of Egal the Shimmering found a path to this world through the plane of Apet, but Ancient heroes sealed that plane. The invaders abandoned Apet, and the Ancients built a small mound over the seal. A small camp defended the mound for a decade until the Axis Seal ritual was completed.



Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 الله Act Two: Mysteries of the Ancients

Soon thereafter, forces from Gidim entered the world and attacked the Apet seal, hoping to discover how to undo the Axis Seal. The guardians of the seal barely fended off the attackers, but by the time they could alert their allies to alter the Axis Seal to cut off Apet entirely, the invaders from Gidim had killed most of the leaders of the Ancients.

After the remaining Gidim were killed, the three guardians of the ziggurat of Apet built improved defenses and traps, then had themselves mummified and entombed upon death.

Several thousand years later, Xambria discovered the tomb. With great caution she and her team bypassed the traps, solved the puzzle of the rainbow bridge, and reached the golden seal. Soon thereafter specialists sent by Caius Bergeron carefully opened the seal, but a panicked digger damaged a ward. Monsters trapped in a timeless void beyond the seal killed everyone within except Xambria.

Xambria fled, and Caius sent another team who were prepared to fight monsters. They used the journals of Xambria's dead team to reach the seal safely. Using magic more powerful than that which the PCs have access to, they avoided triggering the final trap. Then they removed the actual golden plate itself and brought it back to Flint in relative secrecy.

Environmental Effects.

Several conditions are pervasive around the ziggurat.

Mind Strain.

When the PCs see the ziggurat, there is an immediate chance, that character contracts Distant Madness (see page 3), saves for this should be made in secret if at all possible. A PC already affected by the disease makes an additional save as though another day had passed. Keep rough track of how long the PCs take. Every half hour they remain within 100 ft. of the ziggurat, repeat this effect.

Bad Omens.

Characters with the Spirit Medium theme feat who enter the campsite see a quick vision of three researchers clasping their heads as if in pain, and then collapsing. They died too long ago to speak with their spirits, but the traumatic nature of their deaths has left an impression in the area. As the mediums encounter more bodies within the ziggurat, they'll sense similar deaths.

Those with the Skyseer theme feat feel constantly as if they are on the verge of receiving a vision, though they have not stared at the night sky. If they look upward, they feel as though worms are crawling inside their heads. Once they enter the ziggurat, they recognize the energy here as matching that of the planet Apet, as well as something else they've never sensed before in the sky.

Hallucinations.

The residual influence of Apet affects PCs' minds while they remain within the ziggurat, which they experience as fear-inspiring hallucinations. Each PC should experience at least one hallucination that is personalized to them at some point before they reach the portal to Apet .

These hallucinations should involve the PC thinking he's someplace else, or seeing someone far away, but who is somehow closely linked to the PC. A docker, for instance, might think he's on a stage, surrounded by a crowd. It should not be obvious to the characters whether they're hallucinating, or if they're actually seeing or traveling somewhere else.



Investigating the Scene.

Three bodies—two men, one woman, all humans—lie dead in the camp outside the ziggurat. They died while sitting, eating, and working near the campfire and a small folding table. Even without approaching, characters might notice how odd it is that none of the bodies of the dig team have been cocooned, eaten, or carried off.

The bodies have been decaying in the heat and rain for at least a week by the time that PCs reach them, and so are well decomposed. Examination (Heal DC 10) reveals no sign of wounds or trauma, but an autopsy (Heal DC 15) detects strange tumor-like bulges within each of the corpses. They all died from the psychic blast that the seal unleashed.

More noteworthy, however, is that the bodies have already been examined. PCs who check out the bodies can tell automatically that they were previously shifted about, and that their clothes were rifled through.

The camp site has a good amount of mundane gear, including rope, climbing kits, sunrods, and thieves' tools. There are also several journals, logs, and other notebooks, most of them carelessly tossed onto the ground. These contain no useful information. The journals with anything useful were taken back by the follow-up team sent by Caius two weeks ago.

Ziggurat Interior.

Various Encounters.

Unless otherwise noted, interior walls of the ziggurat are weathered stone with barely visible carvings. There is light in Areas 1 and 7, but nowhere else.

I. Entrance.

When the PCs enter the ziggurat, read or paraphrase the following:

A pattern of seven concentric rings surrounding a central white stone is prominent above the entrance to the ziggurat. A dot lies on the sixth ring from the interior

You have to marvel at the Ancients who built this place. While the ziggurat rose sixty feet above the ground, you descend what feels like fifty feet down rough stone stairs, to a room forty feet across, with a twenty foot ceiling adorned carvings. Stone amulets on golden chains hang from the carved mouths of jaguars and dragons all along the ceiling.

Two more bodies lie sprawled on the floor of this entry room, a man and a halfling woman. A toppled wooden tripod leans against one wall near the base of the stairs, and a cracked amber lantern on top of it emits dim but endless magical light. The light gleams off metal in alcoves along the walls, and a second glance reveals three tusked humanoid faces, their eyes closed, blindly watching all who enter.

When you glance back, you realize the stairs you came down were only ten feet long.

A Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15) identifies the entrance symbol as matching the star system. The sixth ring would correspond with Apet.

The two corpses here were more of Xambria's students, managed to flee this far before the monsters caught them. They show actual physical wounds of claws and necrotic burns.

The faces belong to the orc mummies who guard the ziggurat. They were preserved in bog acid thousands of years ago, and then placed standing in alcoves. Ropes lash their bodies to the stone, and golden bracelets marked them as great warriors. Close examination reveals that the hands of one mummy appeared to have been holding a sword, now missing. Another held a staff crossed over its chest. The third wore a necklace. All three were jostled a bit to remove the relics, which eventually found their way to Flint.

A note nailed to the wall reads, in Xambria's hand-writing, "The mummies are worth more than all your tuition. Don't touch them."

These mummies-as well as others throughout the complex-are destined to rise after the PCs trigger the ziggurat's final trap (page 31). However, until then they are harmless. Particularly paranoid PCs might destroy the mummies the first chance they get. If they completely destroy the mummies, remove them from the final encounter. Burning or determined hacking works, though each mummy takes at least 5 rounds to destroy. Simply hitting the mummy a few times has no effect.

Carvings on the walls depict a humanoid figure struck by a beam of fire and then burning. The beam came from some object that was set into the wall. Now only an empty rectangular nook, about a foot around, remains. It once held a small golden replica of the seal, but was taken by Caius's second team.

Two hallways lead away from this room. Though they're actually fairly short, characters passing through them feel like they're much longer, like their sense of time and space are being stretched out.

2. Spear Traps and Mummies.

Spear traps are scattered throughout the ziggurat. As the PCs approach the first of these traps they spot a lank mummy wearing a gold necklace. The inert corpse hangs from a wooden spear that has impaled it from behind.

The spear traps are not mechanical. Each hides a small cubby in the wall, where a mummy waits. Normally they just thrust their spears at passers-by, but when the final trap in Area 10 is triggered, the cubbies grind open and the mummies emerge. The mummy the PCs spot was, a few thousand years ago, a tomb-robber who fell victim to one of these traps. Now he has joined the ranks of the dead that guard the ziggurat.

CB 3

Wall Spear Trap

Something shifts in the wall beside you, and a spear thrusts toward your chest. Type special (living); Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 15 (20*)

Effects

Trigger location; Reset automatic reset after 5 minutes

Effect Atk +8 melee (1d8+6)

Special Targets ducking or under 4 feet tall are automatically missed. Asking permission to pass in the Ancient language will save the target from being attacked.

* A DC 20 Disable Device check finds a seam in the stone which can be pried

open as a move action, revealing the mummy within (see page 32), which immediately attacks.

3. Fire Burst Traps.

Two pillars in the hall explode into flame when any creature draws near.

By making a DC 15 Perception check, PCs notice the familiar pattern of seven concentric rings surrounding a central white stone that marks two spots, one just before and one just after each pillar (marked with red dots on the map). A dot lies on the innermost ring. (Knowledge (Religion) DC 15 identifies this symbol corresponds with Jiese, the plane of fire, which is closest to the sun).

PCs who score 20 or more on their Perception check notice, a 10-ft. pole leans against the wall beside the symbol, a convenient 10 ft. from the pillar. All but the last foot of the staff is blackened by fire. On the ground beneath the symbol sit several torches, oil, flint, and steel.

Fire Burst Trap	CR 2
As you get near the pillar, the air around you bursts with fire.	
Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26	
Effects	
Trigger location; Reset automatic (lasts 5 minutes then shuts down for 1 hour)	

Effect pillar of flame (3d6 fire damage, DC 14 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 10 ft. by 10 ft. area).

Special A character who presses fire against the ring symbol, such as reaching in with a torch or attacking with a fire spell, suppresses both traps for five minutes.

Mine Bypass.

Xambria's team dug a tunnel from the pillar trap in the southeast. They hoped to find a way to avoid the crushing force trap in Area 4, but to their dismay found another fire pillar trap at the end of their tunnel. This just provides an alternate route for the PCs.

4. Crushing Force Trap.

A powerful force crushes any creature that enters as if pressed beneath tons of stone.

By making a DC 15 Perception check, PCs notice the familiar pattern of seven concentric rings surrounding a central white stone decorates the floor up at three points near the edges of the trap (marked with yellow dots on the map). A dot lies on the fifth ring from the interior. (Knowledge (Religion) DC 15 identifies this symbol corresponds with Urim, the plane of earth, which is fifth from the sun.)

PCs who score 20 or more on their Perception check notice, tiny shards of rock lie scattered all over the floor, as if a small boulder was crushed to pieces.

Crushing Force Trap

CR3

As you step into the area, an immense pressure pushes you down from above. Type magic; Perception DC 24; Disable Device DC 24

Effects

Trigger location; Reset automatic

Effect crushing force (2d6 damage plus a trip attempt at CMB +14); multiple targets (all targets within the marked areas in this room).

Special A character who places a stone weighing at least 20 pounds on the ring symbol suppresses the trap for five minutes.

5. Hall of Needles.

When the characters enter this hall, read or paraphrase the following.

Wall carvings of this long hallway feature rows of orc, goblin, and minostaur soldiers wielding spears and obsidian blades against an army of horned humans with swords of gold.

A human body lies face-down in the hall, several weeks rotted.

The hall is warded with three hail of needles traps. The needles are magical conjurations. The trap never runs out of needles, and all needles fade away after five minutes.

By making a DC 15 Perception check, PCs notice the familiar pattern of seven concentric rings surrounding a central white stone decorates the ceiling at two points, at either end of the hallway (marked with orange dots on the map). A dot lies on the second ring from the interior. (Religion DC 15 identifies this symbol corresponds with Avilona, the plane of air, which is second from the sun.)

PCs who score 20 or more on their Perception check notices tiny pinholes among the wall carvings, and that the floor looks like it could give.

Hail of Needles Trap	CR 2
Tiny needles fly through holes in the wall.	
Type magic; Perception DC 20; Disable Device DC 20	
Effects	
Trigger location; Reset automatic	

Effect Atk +12 ranged (4d4); multiple targets (10 ft. wide by 20 ft. long)

Special A character who blows through a reed or similar pipe, aimed at the ring symbol, suppresses the trap for five minutes.

A character can jump the trapped area (Acrobatics DC 20, or DC 10 with a running start).

6. Hallucinatory Floor Room.

When the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following.

Aberrations like what you witnessed at the arms fair have claimed this room as their home. Two fleshy orbs covered with dozens of eyes float a few feet above the ground. Other creatures crawl along the walls and ceiling like massive spiders, except they have only four legs, and long barbed tongues protrude from their mouths. Their forms all waver from solid to translucent. The aberrant creatures in the room are obvious, but the greater danger of the room is the sliding floor trap. It activates when one of the PCs first goes halfway across the room. At this point thick walls of vines grow across the doorways, blocking entrance and exit. Any PCs adjacent to the doorway can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to jump to the other side as an immediate interrupt, before being sealed in or out. Then the floor starts retracting into the wall.

An actual sliding floor was far beyond the Ancients' engineering talents. This trap is an illusion, intended to drive intruders to the spear traps along the walls.

- ♦ 2 eyes of madness
- ♦ 8 crawling spikers
- ✤ 1 hallucinatory floor trap
- ♦ 8 spear traps

Tactics.

The monsters believe the illusionary trap is real. The eyes of madness use their eye beams, and try to goad one or two targets to enter their *paranoia* auras, or into the pit or spear traps. The crawling spikers simply try to drag prey away to feast on them.

Terrain.

The vine walls blocking the exits have 25 hit points per square. The ceiling here is 15 feet high.

By making a DC 15 Perception check, PCs notice the familiar pattern of seven concentric rings surrounding a central white stone lies in the center of the room's floor, marked with a green dot on the map. A dot lies on the third ring, and an even tinier ring surrounds that dot. This symbol corresponds with Av, the plane of dreams, which is the moon of this world (Knowledge (Religion) DC 15). This world is third from the sun.

PCs who score 20 or more on their Perception check notices a seam running down the center of the room, north to south

Trap Description: On the trap's turn, every creature on the floor slides 5 ft. toward either the east or west wall, whichever is nearest. If there is no free space for the creature to enter, it remains in place.

Any creature pressed into an area adjacent to either wall triggers a spear trap, if the trap has not already gone off.

On the trap's first turn, a 10-ft. wide strip running north to south in the middle of the room pulls apart over an apparent bottomless pit. Each round thereafter, the strip extends outward 5 ft. to the east, and 5 ft. to the west.

A creature that cannot slide and is stuck over the pit, or who moves or is moved over the pit, hallucinates that it falls. Other creatures see the same hallucination. It can make a Reflex Save (DC 15) to grab the ledge and hang on. Otherwise the creature falls prone and takes ongoing 1d6 points of damage each round until it falls unconscious. The creature can act as normal, but it believes it is hundreds of feet away from the battle

Once the floor has retracted into the wall, the floor moves back out into the room at a rate of 5 ft. per turn until the pit is again covered. At this point the vine doors open up. The trap will not trigger again for 5 minutes.

Trap Countermeasures: A character who tries to disbelieve the trap can spend a move action once per round to make a Will save (DC 10). If successful, the trap no longer affects the creature, even if it later resets. Any damage already dealt remains, however. If an allied creature has already successfully disbelieved and acts in a way that shows it's just an illusion, the creature gets a +5 bonus to its save.

Wildly unlikely, but if someone places a flower on the ring icon in the



center of the room's floor, the trap is deactivated for five minutes.

A PC can modify the trap so that it does not open on its next turn (Knowledge (Arcana) or Disable Device DC 20).

The walls have enough decorations that climbing is feasible (Climb DC 15). Simply holding on is easier (Climb DC 10), and a creature gains a +5 to its Climb check if it sticks to spaces either adjacent to the vine barrier, or where spear traps have already triggered, since they offer good hand-holds.

Sliding Floor Trap

CR4

CR1

Stones grind in the walls, and suddenly the floor begins to split apart over a bottomless

Type mechanical; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

Effects

pit.

Trigger location; Reset automatic (5 minutes)

Effect infinite pit (1d6 per round)

Special Will save (DC 10) on following rounds to disbelieve)

Crawling Spiker

XP 400

N Medium aberration

Init +6: Senses darkvision 120 ft.: Perception +1

Defense

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural) hp 15 (2d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4 Offense Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft. Melee bite +2 (1d6+1), or harpoon tongue +2 touch (1d3+1 plus grab) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (15 ft. with tongue) Special Attacks pull (harpoon tongue, 5 feet)

Statistics

Str 12 Dex 15, Con 16, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 11

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +9, Stealth +10*; Racial Modifiers +8 Climb **Special Abilities**

Harpoon Tongue (Ex): A crawling spiker's tongue is a primary attack with reach equal to three times the crawling spiker's normal reach (15 feet). A crawling spiker's tongue deals damage on a hit in addition to being able to grab. A crawling spiker does not gain the grappled condition while using its tongue in this manner.



Eye of Madness	CR 4
N Medium aberration	XP 1,200
Init +2; Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13	
Aura paranoia (DC 16)	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)	
hp 45 (7d8+14)	
Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +10	
Offense	
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)	
Ranged eye beam +7 touch (2d6 force damage)	
Special Attacks burst of terror	
Statistics	
Str 15 Dex 14, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 17	
Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 19 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes	
Skills Fly +4, Perception +13	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	

Burst of Terror (Su): Once every 1d4+1 rounds an eye of madness can emit a burst of psychic energy as a standard action that affects all living creatures within 5 ft. of the Eye. Creatures in the burst take 4d6 points of damage (Will DC 16 halves). Those who fail their save contract Distant Madness (see page 3). This save DC is Charisma-based

Eye Beam (Su): An eye of madness can make one eye beam attack per round as a normal ranged touch attack. This attack deals an automatic 2d6 points of damage to any target struck as they are overwhelmed with psychic visions of dark waking nightmares tailored to the specific target.

Paranoia Aura (Su): If an enemy ends its turn within 10 feet of an eye of madness, it makes a Will save (DC 16); if it fails, it immediately charges a target of the eye of madness's choice as a free action. The eye of madness cannot make the enemy enter any sort of hazardous terrain during this charge. This save DC is Charisma-based.

7. Rainbow Bridges.

The Ancients constructed this room as a puzzle to keep outsiders away. Normally an elaborate ritual performed by priests would solve the "puzzle" and open the exit into the map room (Area 8). From there, the priests could deactivate the defenses of the ziggurat. Unfortunately, the second team sent by Caius Bergeron removed the control stone, so the ruin's defenses cannot be turned off.

Monsters freed from the seal have taken up residency in this room, turning a puzzle into a death trap.

- ♦ 2 flashing orbs
- + 2 mutated centipedes
- ♦ 8 implanters

When the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

A leathery curtain blocks your view of the next room, but a slowly shifting spectrum of light peeks through on the floor.

Within, most of the vast room before you has no floor. A brief plateau of stone stretches fifteen feet before dropping away perilously. A chasm in the center of the chamber separates you from several other plateaus around the room's edge. On the far side you spot a doorway out, but the path is blocked by seven dull veils of colored light.

Two wooden stands on the entrance plateau hold a pair of large white stones, marked with paint, one blue and one orange. The paint is recent, covering a faded symbol of seven concentric circles. You can spot two similar stands and stones on other plateaus.

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If you look down, a rough sea of stone spikes stare back at you from the floor, thirty feet down.

The base of the pit has flooded with marsh water, and something moves down there. The horrid things might once have been centipedes, but now their flesh fades in and out, from solid to translucent.

A new light flares from one of the far plateaus, and a pair of flashing orbs begin to float toward you, their light screaming through all of your senses. Below you, the centipedes begin to crawl upward.

The puzzle consists of a series of walls and bridges of force, colored red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and violet. To reach the exit, you must drop the walls one by one. When the puzzle starts, all the bridges are down, and the walls are up.

The bridges and walls are tied to stones throughout the room, which Xambria's team marked with paint to make it easier for them to keep track of which was which. Each time a character touches a stone (move action) it toggles all of the walls and bridges of the corresponding color. However the stones are paired such that they deactivate another color at the same time. A creature who is on a bridge when it is toggled off falls into the pit, unless they are on the portion where yellow and violet overlap). To determine the effects of the stones, consult the following table.

- /			0
Crystal Color	Activates	Deactivates	Planetary Correspondance
Red	Red	Green	Jiese, plane of fire
Orange	Orange	Blue	Avilona, plane of air
Yellow	Yellow	Violet	Urim, plane of earth
Green	Green	Red	Av, plane of dreams
Blue	Blue	Orange	Mavisha, plane of water
Violet	Violet	Yellow	Nem, plane of ruin

The puzzle solution requires teamwork, and at least four PCs working together. If you have fewer than four PCs, they'll need to make use of flight, teleportation, or simple jumping. Or you can let the six walls in the center of the room stay deactivated once the PCs touch the appropriate stone, instead of toggling up and down.

The puzzle resets after five minutes of no activity.

Tactics.

The monsters here were either native bayou creatures mutated when Gidim warbeasts fused with them, or are free-floating thought-forms attracted by the light. They do not coordinate attacks, and seek only to feed on the first sentient thoughts to arrive in weeks.

The mutated centipedes and six of the implanters begin in the pit. Four of the implanters managed to get themselves trapped behind the yellow light veil, and will fly out when the veil goes down. The flashing orbs hide amid the veils of light (Perception DC 20).

Terrain.

The lower level of the room is 30 feet deep (3d6 falling damage). Additionally any creature that falls is attacked by the spikes at the bottom. Treat spikes at the bottom of a pit as daggers, each with a +10 attack bonus. The damage bonus for each spike is +1 per 10 feet of pit depth (in this case +3). Each character who falls into the pit is attacked by 1d4 spikes.

If a character makes it through the puzzle and presses the white stone on the floor by the exit, all the bridges activate and all the walls deactivate. A bright white flashes, and any remaining monsters are knocked unconscious. The creature who presses the stone witnesses The Sealing of Apet vision, below.

Flashing Orb	CR 4
N Large aberration	XP 1,200
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
Defense	
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)	
hp 51 (8d8+16)	
Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6	
Offense	
Speed fly 20 ft. (perfect)	
Melee tentacle of light +8 (1d6+3 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attack chaos storm, vicarious strike	
Statistics	
Str 16 Dex 12, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	
Base Atk +4; CMB +8 ; CMD 18 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Ability Focus (chaos storm), Toughness	
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +3	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	
Vicarious Strike (Su): After successfully grappling an opponent, the next tim	ne the

- flashing orb takes damage before the end of its next turn, the grappled target takes 1d6 points of damage of the same damage type (fire, cold, etc, etc). Until the end of its next turn, the flashing orb loses its thoughtform trait.
- Chaos Storm (Su): Once every 1d4+2 rounds, a flashing orb can conjure forth a storm of memories and sensations made reality. The storm has a 5-foot radius and can be created within 100 feet of the orb as a standard action. The storm lasts 1 round. All targets within the storm must make a Reflex save (DC 13) or take 3d6 points of random damage. Roll 1d6 and consult the following list to see what kind of damage the chaos storm deals: 1. Acid; 2. Cold; 3. Fire; 4. Electricity; 5. Negative; 6. Force.

Mutated Centipede	CR 3
N Medium vermin	XP 1,200
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)	
hp 29 (4d8+17)	
Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3	
Immune mind-affecting	
Offense	
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.	
Melee bite +6 (1d6+1 plus poison)	
Statistics	
Str 13 Dex 19, Con 20, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 6	
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 17 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Weapon Finesse	
Skills Climb +12, Perception +6, Stealth +12, Swim +4	
Special Abilities	
Poison (Ex): Bite—injury; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 ro	unds; effect 1d3
Dex damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based and inc	ludes a +2 racia
bonus.	

Teleporting Retreat (Su): Whenever a mutated centipede is hit by a melee or ranged attack it can immediately teleport up to 30 feet as a swift action. This ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity.



CR 1

XP 400

Implanter

N Small aberration Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1 Defense AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size) hp 13 (2d8+4) Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4 Offense Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft. Melee touch (+4 attach) Special Attacks implant, death burst Statistics

Str 12 Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11 Base Atk +1; CMB +2 (+10 grapple when attached); CMD 14 Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +11

Special Abilities

- Attach (Ex): When an implanter hits with a touch attack, an ovipositor materializes solidly and attempts to burrow into the target's ear. The implanter loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 13, but holds on with great tenacity and inserts its dark thought into the grappled target's mind. An implanter has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached implanter can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself-if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the implanter is removed.
- Implant (Ex): An implanter implants an idea into its target at the beginning of its turn if it is attached to a foe. The target is immediately affected by the Distant Madness disease (see page 3). If already infected with the disease, the disease is considered to take effect immediately and the target must make another save as though an additional day had passed.
- Death Burst (Ex): Upon successfully implanting an idea into a target, an implanter explodes in a flurry of psychic energy instantly killing the implanter. All creatures within 5 feet of the implanter take 1d6 points of force damage, though they may make a Reflex save (DC 12) for half damage.

8. Map Room.

When the characters enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

The room is dominated by a large stone map on the floor. Above the map, a brass fixture hangs from the ceiling. Ropes support a brass plate which holds a white stone. From that plate, another larger plate hangs, also suspended by the ropes. Finally the ropes stretch down to the floor, where they're looped through brass rings at the edges of the map.

The brass plates appear ancient, but strange modern contraptions of steel are attached to them, with complex gears and notches, like something you'd use to calibrate a scale.

A large icon of seven concentric circles is carved into the west wall. Tiny nooks sit in the wall intersecting each circle, but they're empty.

The floor map depicts the continent of Lanjyr as it existed during the time of the Ancients. While vaguely familiar, major natural and magical disasters have since reshaped the land. Most notably the Yerasol Archipelago is a solid landmass that connects modern day Risur to Danor. Many other borders of land and sea have also shifted.

The bronze fixture above the map consists of several parts. Four ropes loop through a ring in the ceiling. The ropes pass through modern contraptions, a sort of clamp crossed with a belay. The clamps hold the top brass disk, which has a slot in the center that contains a white stone.

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THE SEALING

A character who finishes the solution of the rainbow bridge puzzle is briefly flooded with light, during which he experiences a vision of the three mummified guardians of the ziggurat, back when they were alive, at the sealing of the portal to Apet.

The three orcs, dressed in primitive hides and armed with their iconic relics-staff, sword, and amulet-stand in a bare cave surrounded by semi-translucent creatures similar to the tentacled monsters the PCs have recently encountered. They form a blockade in front of a golden plate set in the wall, and the monsters hesitate to attack.

The sword wielder barks something in his Ancient language, and the PC understands his words: "Warbeasts of Gidim! Toteth's seal failed."

"A trick," growls the amulet-wearer. "They're from Gidim, but I smell the dust of Apet on them."

"Sniff them later," says the sword wielder. "Think at them so I can cut them."

The staff wielder closes his eyes as if in meditation. One of the monsters nearest the sword-wielder turns solid, and the warrior hews it in two with his obsidian-edged greatsword.

The PC gains the ability to speak and understand Ancient (a benefit which is, honestly, pretty useless until much much later in the campaign), and also learns that he can focus his thoughts to influence creatures of Gidim, as detailed on page 13.

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Further down the ropes, a second set of clamp-belay contraptions hold a second brass plate in place. Finally the ropes loop through rings on the floor.

The lower plate has two holes in it. The white stone in the top plate is the same variety seen in the concentric ring designs throughout the ziggurat. A character who succeeds a Knowledge (History) check (DC 15) recalls that the Ancients used white stones to represent the sun in their iconography.

The intent of the apparatus is to use a magic light spell on the white stone, or otherwise place a light source there. Once they have done that, the light shines through the two holes in the disk, and drops two points of light on the map that correspond with this ziggurat and the ziggurat of Mavisha.

The Ancients were secretive, and while they wanted allies to be able to find other ziggurats, they only left clues to the locations of a few, in hopes that, if enemies succeeded in breaching this ziggurat, they would still have to face other defenders to find all the seals.

Xambria's team used the more modern contraptions because the original ropes and wooden loops had decayed, so they had to try a variety of heights and positions to find the correct alignment. It's fine now, and all the PCs have to do is provide a light source.

There is no requirement that the PCs solve this puzzle. The PCs can follow other clues to find Caius's second team as they work to open the sunken seal of Mavisha.

Control Stone.

The star system icon on the west wall was originally used to disable the traps throughout the ziggurat. Colored stones could be placed in nooks to turn on or off traps affiliated with specific planes. Caius's second team took the stones with them.



Mine Bypass.

Xambria's team dug through the wall in Area 9 to reach this room, so they wouldn't have to solve the puzzle in Area 7 every time they wanted to come in.

9. False Seal Room.

When the PCs enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of the room feature more mural carvings that depict orc in elaborate head-dresses performing a ritual beneath a sun and seven planets. Everything in the murals draws attention to a six-foot high rectangular indentation in the west wall. Both the huge indentation and smaller nooks in the walls sit empty, but dust within them suggests their contents were removed relatively recently.

Another concentric ring icon sits on the floor in the center of the room. On this one, the fourth ring is marked.

A Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 15) identifies that the symbol represents Mavisha, the plane of water, which is the fourth planet from the sun. If the PCs place a bowl filled with water on top the icon, they'll disable the toxic flood portion of the Final Trap (see page 31).

This room once held the false seal that Ancients created to fool potential raiders, as well as magic weapons and other relics. Caius's second team removed the false seal, and placed it in true seal's place in Area 10.

10. The Portal to Nothing.

The entrance to this room was originally a hidden door, but Xambria's team dug through. Now the door sits open. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following.

Iron poles jammed into a primitive stone mechanism hold open a secret door. On the floor just inside the threshold, someone placed an ironic rug woven with the word "Welcome." A pair of dead bodies lie just past it.

The room beyond does not look like it should belong in a swamp. Dry gray stone, roughly cut apart by primitive tools, stretches away in the dark. Your light gleams faintly on something golden at the far end of this cave.

As your eyes adjust, you spot five more bodies on the floor near that golden gleam. Two are humans, three are tieflings. Their bodies have sprouted additional eyes, tentacles, and small vestigial limbs. One of the bodies lies fallen across a circle of symbols drawn on the ground, with an empty brazier nearby. The circle intersects the wall, and it would have formed a protective ward, but it looks damaged and broken.

In the far corners of the room, two stone pillars are carved to look like coiled feathered serpents. Between them, set in that far wall, is the source of the reflection: a plate of gold that must weigh a ton. The plate is carved with a scene of orcs, minotaurs, and goblins battling beneath a constellation of stars.

This was once the resting place of the true seal. A Knowledge (Religion) check (DC 20) recognizes the constellation on the seal as the Alesia the Wayfarer, said to influence the planet Apet, which affects teleportation and divination magic.

The two bodies by the door were some of Xambria's team, mangled by Gidim warbeasts. The bodies at the center of the room are the remains of the Obscurati group who opened the seal. Like the bodies outside the ziggurat, they have been disturbed and their possessions searched.

Characters who examine the ritual around the golden seal might realize (Knowledge (Arcana) DC 15) that there were actually two rituals. The first was a warding circle, meant to hold back creatures. The second was intended to suppress a powerful abjuration magic.



Obscurati Trick.

The seal in at the back of the room is actually the false seal from Area 9, though Caius's second team placed it in the true seal's location. They suspected others might come to investigation the ziggurat, and they wanted to cover their tracks. The rug just inside the room covers a concentric ring icon, on which the outermost ring is marked, representing Nem, the plane of ruin.

When Xambria's team breached this room, they carefully studied the Nem symbol until they figured out how to disarm it. Placing an orc skull on the icon (don't ask where they got the skull) disarmed the Dead Rising portion of the Final Trap.

Caius's second team, using journals from the camp as guidance, figured out how the trap worked, placed a rug to cover the symbol, and hoped other interlopers would be careless enough to go up to the seal and trigger the Final Trap.

The false seal is just granite covered in a thin layer of gold. A character might notice cracks in the gold coating (Perception DC 15 if within 10 ft., or DC 11 if adjacent). It does not radiate magic. The whole block of stone weighs about three hundred pounds.

Beyond the Seal.

If a character moves the false seal, he reveals a portal to nothing. Prior to the creation of the Axis Seal, the portal led to the plane of Apet, however now that the Axis Seal has closed off the planes, the portal leads to a void between the planes. There is no light, no matter, and no gravity in the void, though it has invisible edges and only is about 100 feet across.



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SKYSEER VISION OF APET

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Though the Axis Seal prevents creatures from physically traveling from Apet, the plane's power pours invisibly through the portal in this room. When a Skyseer sees the false seal, she instantly senses that it is not really sealing anything, because she can feel Apet's intense energy.

If you have any personalized character plots, now is an excellent time for a skyseer PC to witness events anywhere in the world to provide clues or drive those plots forward. In addition, a Skyseer has the following vision, which alludes to events in the last five adventures.

"The planet Apet drifts through the stars. You see it closer than ever: an orb of swirling gray clouds, and around it a silvery ring. When skyseers peer into the heavens, they believe this ring shows the past and future.

"But the ring is incomplete. An arc has been snapped out of the circle. Your own reflection on its surface stands mere feet from the end of time.

"You step into your reflection, stand upon the edge of the ring. Cracked shards of icy silver crunch under your feet. You can look down and see the endless dust storms of Apet, look out and see the heavens wheeling about you. And when you look forward, thousands of miles away, you can see the other end of the snapped ring. If you looked long enough, you could see the dawn of history."

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A human body floats in the void. Its face was torn off by some Gidim beast, but it has not rotted at all.

Serpent Pillars.

The pillars with the feathered serpents are part of the ziggurat's final trap. A Spellcraft check (DC 23) indicates that they are enchanted with some sort of defensive magic. A Perception check (DC 23) notices that the serpents' eyes seem to move to follow whichever creature is closest to the seal.

If any creature crosses between the serpent pillars, the Final Trap is triggered. This trap is subtle, so the party might continue to explore the room and search for clues as their doom approaches.

The Final Trap.

Action. Tactical.

The party flees deadly waters while the dead try to drag them to their deaths.

When you decide it is time to activate the final trap, read or paraphrase the following:

You hear a faint trickling sound coming from the door. Some dark fluid is slowly pouring into the room, just an inch deep now, but swelling to ankle deep with an alarming speed. As the water crosses over the threshold it carries away the rug, revealing a glowing icon of concentric rings beneath.

At the same time, the corpses on the ground twitch, open their eyes, and fix them on you.

This encounter takes up the entire ziggurat, and does not end until the PCs escape. The constant factor of the encounter is the toxic flood trap. Flowing 4 squares in all directions each round, the flood will fill the ziggurat knee deep in less than two minutes, and then completely overflow it within five.

Toxic Flood Trap

Dark green waters pour through the halls, growing deeper by the moment. Type special

Effects

Effect On the first after being activated, the toxic flood fills every space in Area 9. These areas are ankle-deep.

At the beginning of each round thereafter, the flood spreads 20 feet in every direction, making those areas ankle-deep. All squares already ankle-deep become knee-deep.

Spaces within 40 feet of the ankle-deep waters have an inch of water, which is harmless but warns creatures of the oncoming flood.

Knee-deep water is difficult terrain.

Any creature who ends its turn standing in a knee-deep square, or prone in an ankle-deep square, takes 1d6 points of acid damage.

Special Run.

The Dead Rising.

As they run, the PCs have to worry about any monsters they haven't already killed, as well as the traps that are still active, since they might not be able to spare time to carefully disable them.

A compound threat, however, comes from the mummies throughout the tomb, and any other dead bodies scattered about. When the trap of Nem activates, those bodies animate and wait to block the PCs' escape. As specialized undead, these creatures are immune to the toxic flood's damage.

Area 10.

✤ 7 zombie shamblers

Hallways.

+ 12 mummy harriers. The mummies in the spear traps remain hidden until a creature comes within 10 squares. Then they emerge (spending 2 squares of movement to exit the cubby) and attack.

Area 6.

+ 8 mummy harriers. The mummies ignore the sliding floor, intuitively realizing it's an illusion.

Area I.

- ✤ 1 Ancient mummy warrior
- ✤ 1 Ancient mummy spellcaster
- ✤ 1 Ancient mummy brawler



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Zombie Shambler	CR 1/2
NE Medium undead	XP 400
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0	
Defense	
AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 natural)	
hp 11 (2d8+3)	
Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3	
Defensive Abilities ferocity	
DR 5/slashing; Immune undead traits	
Weakness light sensitivity	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee slam +4 (1d6+4)	
Statistics	
Str 16 Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10	
Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 15	
Feats Toughness	
SQ Staggered	
Special Abilities	
Staggered (Ex) Make only a single move or a single attack action each	round.
Mummy Harrier	CR 1
NE Medium undead	XP 400
Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +0	AI 100
Defense	
AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural)	
hp 13 (1d10+2)	
Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +0	
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4	
DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undea	nd traits;
Resist fire 10	
Weakness light sensitivity	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee longspear+8 (1d8+6) or slam +9 (1d6+6)	
Statistics	
Str 16 Dex 17, Con —, Int 3, Wis 11, Cha 8	
Base Atk +1; CMB +4; CMD 17	
Feats Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Ic	ongspear)
Skills Climb +11, Intimidate +3	
Combat Gear longspear	
Ancient Mummy Warrier	CR 3
Ancient Mummy Warrior NE Medium undead	CH 3 XP 800
Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5	AF 000
Defense	
AC 15. touch 12. flat-tooted 13 (+2 Dex +3 natural)	
AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+2 Dex, +3 natural) hp 33 (3d12+6)	
hp 33 (3d12+6)	
hp 33 (3d12+6) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1	ncanny Dodøe
hp 33 (3d12+6) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity, Trap Sense +1, Ur	
hp 33 (3d12+6) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1	
hp 33 (3d12+6) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity, Trap Sense +1, Ur DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, <i>magic missile</i> , undea Resist fire 10	
hp 33 (3d12+6) Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity, Trap Sense +1, Ur DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, <i>magic missile</i> , undea	

Salisitics Shi 23 Dex 15, Con —, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12 Base Atk +3; CMB +9; CMD 21 Feats Cleave. Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5 SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DB 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Stril Boex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defensive AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Evasion, Ferocity
Str 23 Dex 15, Con —, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 12 Base Atk +3; CMB +9; CMD 21 Feats Cleave. Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5 SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DB 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, <i>magic missile</i> , undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Sty 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Attk +1; CMB +5; CLMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 Lie Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Base Atk +3; CMB +9; CMD 21 Feats Cleave. Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5 SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spelicaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Initi +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DB 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 Et Medium undead XP 800 Inti +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Feats Cleave. Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5 SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 fL, Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR S/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 fL. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speed 30 fL. Speed 30 fL Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speed 30 fL Boodline Abernant Statistics Statistics Statistics Statistics Statistics Statistics Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Pe
Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +14, Intimidate +6, Perception +5, Stealth +4, Survival +5 SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speedal Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +4) 1st (6/day) — shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will) — resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6, Senese darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
SQ Fast Movement +10, Powerful Blow +1, Rage (9 rounds/day) Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 fL, Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 fL. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 fL. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Att +1; CMB +5; CLMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 XP 800 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 fL, Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 nat
Ancient Mummy Spellcaster CR 3 NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speed 30 ft. Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)— shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 <
NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speed 30 ft. Soccerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Accient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dod
NE Medium undead XP 800 Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Speed 30 ft. Soccerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Accient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dod
Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1 Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1 st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Defense AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 natural) hp 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
he 18 (3d6+6) Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing: Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) For t+3, Ref +7, Will +4
Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +3 Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Ferocity DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, magic missile, undead traits; Resist fire 10 Weakness light sensitivity Offense Speed 30 ft. Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1 st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
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Melee slam +5 (1d6+6) Special Attacks Acidic Ray (4/day), Long Limbs +5 ft. Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 3rd ; concentration +4) 1st (6/day)—shocking grasp, mage armor, enlarge person, ray of enfeeblement 0 (at will)—resistance, daze (DC 11), open/close, light, spark (DC 11) Bloodline Aberrant Statistics Str 18 Dex 16, Con —, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13 Base Atk +1; CMB +5; CMD 18 Feats Arcane Strike, Eschew Materials, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness Skills Acrobatics +5, Climb +12, Diplomacy +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +5, Perception +1, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +4 Ancient Mummy Brawler CR 3 LE Medium undead XP 800 Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +5 Defense AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
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AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 Dex, +3 natural, +1 dodge) hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
hp 22 (3d8+6) Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4
Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, Evasion, Ferocity
DR 5/magic or slashing; Immune cold, electricity, <i>magic missile</i> , undead traits;
Resist fire 10
Weakness light sensitivity
Offense
Speed 40 ft.
Melee Unarmed Strike +5 (1d6+6)
Special Attacks Flurry of Blows +1/+1
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Statistics
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Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 الله Act Two: Mysteries of the Ancients



FACING DOWN DEATH

Social. Real-Time.

A fey titan thinks the PCs are agents of the king, and demands tribute.

The PCs likely emerge from the ziggurat with only moments to spare, but they are not safe. From the mouth of the ruin they spot shapes moving beyond in the rain, advancing from all directions. The three corpses from the camp stand nearby, reaching out to attack them, and out in the swamp it seems as if every dead creature within a mile has risen and is shambling toward them.

The deadly flood makes going back beneath the ziggurat impossible, and there must be thousands of creatures—peat-coated skeletons, zombified crocodiles, hollow carapaces of spiders, and swarms of centipedes, bats, and blood-thirsting birds. Beneath the cries of the throng, they hear a deep sound, like a growling voice.

It seems the only safe path is to climb the ziggurat. If the PCs hesitate, they hear a slithering whisper urge them, "Climb."

When the horde is within charging distance, a massive shape moves in the rain, almost as if the swamp itself is rising up, alive. Swaths of the hungry dead are pulled beneath the surface, and then the head of the marshy shape snakes out of the rain from the side and cuts off the approach of the undead. A titanic serpent, its half-rotted skull 20 feet long, snaps its teeth down upon the front line of the horde, and as it devours the dead it locks one enormous, milky gray eye on the party.

This is the Voice of Rot, fey titan of the High Bayou, who has slumbered for centuries without disturbance by man. But when the warbeasts of Gidim broke free, his rest was disturbed, and he has waited for representatives of Risur to come and answer his demands.

With a few brief thrashes of his coils, the titan—who is so large that

the party can hardly make out the scale of his body through the haze of rain—destroys the gathered undead. Then he withdraws into the drizzle, partially hidden. The party can only make out his general silhouette, but the dull light from a single eye shines like a beacon.

An entity of this power has little time for conversing with mortals. He makes his demands known, perhaps clarifies one or two things, then vanishes into the rain. The voice of the titan is at once both guttural and sibilant.

"My slumber is disturbed. You, agents of King Kelland, shall redress this offense. "Most that fled your mortal trap were mute beasts. One had reason. It can be judged.

"Follow the scent of its homeland's blood. Find it. Cut its flesh, then do as you please.

"Kill it, and it will rot. Send it home, and it will despair. Either, and I shall be appeased."

Tracking the Escapee.

Every spellcasting PC in the party becomes capable of casting the *detect planar energy* spell (page 71), if they did not already acquire it from Gale in adventure two. Their time in the ziggurat counts as contact with the plane of Apet, so the party can track the energies of Sijhen, who spent a great deal of time there.

The party can return safely from the ziggurat, with no danger from the bayou's inhabitants.

If the party does not obey the titan's wishes (i.e., deal damage to Xambria/Sijhen at some point), then at the end of the adventure each PC experiences a vivid dream in which the Voice of Rot floods the town of Agate and leave the villagers' bodies to feed the beasts of the bayou.
Forced Resurrection.

If anyone in the party died in the ziggurat, the Voice of Rot controls the waters of the marsh to pull their bodies to the surface, then restores them to life as if through the *raise dead* spell. Until the creature completes the mission from the Voice of Rot, it cannot stomach any food that has not been left to rot for at least three days.

Characters resurrected this way become unwitting agents of the Voice of Rot. Whenever the character is at or below o hit points, but not dead, his body will remain limp, but his head will jerk about and his eyes strain to see what's going on. All he sees while in this state, the Voice of Rot knows. When he dies or regains consciousness, a half-rotted snake will slither out of his mouth.

This revolting condition can be dispelled by a *break enchantment*, *remove curse*, or *restoration* spell, treating it as a cast by a 10th level caster.

PLANAR TRAILS

Puzzle. Montage.

Energy from Apet smells like a distinct memory you've forgotten. If the PCs plan to use *detect planar energy*, they can come to a few useful conclusions.

- Spellcraft DC 10. Tracking the trail in the wilderness is fairly easy, but in a city it'll be harder. Numerous minor energies from magic items and spellcasters will muddle faint trails, but strong bursts of planar energy should be easy to locate. Those might lead to useful trails, but also could produce false leads left by people who just happened to come in contact with the energy.
- Spellcraft DC 15. Some magic exists to block planar energy. Reed Macbannin had purification rituals. Certainly whatever magic originally sealed the portal in the ziggurat could conceal or erase a trail.
- Spellcraft DC 20. Apet is the source of magical energy used in divination and teleportation, so practitioners of such magic might be false leads.

In the most basic sense, the trail leads to Agate, to Bole, then back to Flint, where it branches because several creatures were also exposed to the energy. Along the way, depending on when and where the party uses the spell, they might find some other information.

 Ziggurat. (Perception DC 15) One entity left here over a month ago, trailing a lot of Apet energy. Some time between then and now a group left here, trailing lesser amounts of energy. Several other creatures have left the ziggurat, but they have very faint trails of Apet energy.

If a PC tries the spell to detect Bleak Gate energy and succeeds the Perception check, he notices that the second group did leave traces, suggesting they might be affiliated with Macbannin's allies.

- + Agate. (Perception DC 10) A boat has a large amount of Apet energy. This was the boat rented to Caius's second group. As above, the party might detect Bleak Gate energy here.
- ★ Bole. (Diplomacy DC 22) The PCs might get a lead at the train yard about one railcar that was used by a secretive group of people transporting a large wrapped object (the golden seal). The PCs can use the spell on the trains to find the right car. Then, by speaking with the train and station staff (Diplomacy or Sense Motive DC 10) they can get descriptions of the travelers—a tiefling woman, two unarmed humans, and two dwarves with weapons and armor. See Finona's group (pages 43-44) for details.

Flint. (Diplomacy or Sense Motive DC 20) At King's Station, if the party got a description of the team Caius sent to the ziggurat, they might learn from the staff that the group came met up with a tiefling matching Caius's description, then departed in a pair of carriages.

From the Flint train station, the energy trail is impossible to follow precisely, because it doubles back on itself many times. Clearly the entity has been in town for a while. The best the party can hope to do is perform the spell in interesting places and hope they detect a strong trail nearby. A few likely spots include:

Arms Fair. Starting near the stage where the PCs first fought Gidim warbeasts, the PCs find two local sources of Apet energy. The first is the stage equipment of Rock Rackus, stored under the stage after the performer was arrested. Rackus travels by teleportation regularly on his adventures, and one of the pieces of his stage show—a sacrificial dagger—was stolen from an Ancient ziggurat. The PCs might suspect he's involved with the Ob. If they talk to him, see Jailhouse Rock (page 36).

Additionally, gnomish weaponsmiths Fildi and Dilfi have been modifying their *badger gun*, using a pair of Gidim-mutated badgers. They've been keeping the critters in a secret cage under their expo booth. This is just a red herring.

- Pardwight Museum. None of the relics of the Ancients on display
 possess any energy from Apet except the *staff of the Ancients*. The
 staff is overcharged with energy and risks summoning monsters
 when used, but the other two relics the PCs recovered in Act One
 were removed from the ziggurat before the seal was opened.
- + Caius's Inn. This location is detailed in the next encounter.
- Xambria's Apartment. The spell detects strong energies here, but by the time the PCs arrive, Xambria has already left the city. If the PCs enter the place, they find signs of a struggle between Xambria and some attacker, but no sign of forced entry. The apartment was locked up, and there's no indication of where Xambria is.
- Saxby's Manor. A trail leads from Xambria's apartment to the back fence outer wall of Saxby's manor, and a similar trail leads away. The guards won't let the party in, but if the party asks convincingly (Intimidate DC 15) they learn there was a break-in on the night of the 9th. Saxby, if asked, denies any such thing happened.

The break in was when Sijhen/Xambria tried to find the Ancient star map. Saxby handled the matter internally, and found nothing missing.

Stanfield Canal. In the unlikely event the party uses the spell along Stanfield Canal, they can trace Apet energies to a small locked (Disable Device DC 22) warehouse rented by Caius Bergeron. A bloody, wheeled cart sits outside, suggesting perhaps a meatlocker inside. Instead, the interior is empty except for a few pallets, and one huge crate that has been opened up and its contents removed. Swaths of blood and scrambling footprints on the ground (Perception DC 15) indicate at least three people were killed, and then one person—either a woman or a slight man dragged the bodies away.



MARTIAL SCIENCE.

As detailed in That's Classified (page 14), if a Martial Scientist PC delivered a corpse of a Gidim warbeast to the Battalion military academy, he receives a packet of useful information when he returns to Flint.

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The Docks. If the party got the description of Caius's second team, by inquiring in Bosum Strand they might (Diplomacy DC 23, one check every four hours) be able to learn that a tiefling woman, two humans, and two dwarves boarded a ship named *Il Draçon de Mer* (see page 38 for more details).

If the party uses the spell, they can sense Apet energies came through here and headed out to sea. Cross-shecking the pier the energy was strongest on with the port authority's records yields information that a small ship named *Dagger* set out from that pier on the 9th. Some dock workers (Diplomacy DC 23) recall seeing a woman matching Xambria's description.

THERE GOES THE MAIN SUSPECT

Puzzle. Real-Time.

The party finds Caius Bergeron murdered.

Either the party tracks down Bergeron themselves, or they're called to the Silver Swan when the police learn of his death. Caius dies on the 7th of Autumn, but he valued his privacy and asked not to be disturbed, so his body might go undiscovered for several days.

When the PCs investigate the scene of the crime, read or paraphrase the following.

The room is in startlingly good condition for the scene of a grizzly murder. The dead tiefling lies on the bed. Blood trails from his mouth onto the sheets below. His desk is covered with ledgers and loose papers. A large bureau stands in the corner, and a traveling trunk sits next to it.

The only openings other than the door are two glass-paned windows on the wall. They must be very tightly insulated, because the stench of the dead body didn't seep out.

Both the door and windows of the room were locked. Bergeron still has his copy of the room key, as does the innkeeper, who insists that the key was secure at all time. The windows each have a secure latch with a lock, and the frames are lined with a thread of gold to prevent teleportation.

Looking through Bergeron's possession locates several interesting items. A map of the continent of Lanjyr is unrolled on his desk. Somebody (Bergeron) recently drew two stars within circles on the map. The PCs recognize the location of one star as the ziggurat in the swamp that they already visited. The other is in the water off the coast of Ber. Precise coordinates are written onto the map.

Beside the map sits a book containing notes on the Ancients, but nothing they don't already know. The drawers contain all the journals of Xambria's dig crew, which were recovered by Caius's second team. Xambria's own journal is not present.

The wardrobe is unlocked and contains fine clothes, but little of interest. The trunk is locked (Disable Device DC 22) and contains a variety of coin, gems, and jewelry, plus ten *scrolls of sending*. The chest has a false bottom (Perception DC 22) which is locked in such a way that it only can be opened when exposed to fire (Disable Device DC 28, or DC 22 for someone, like a spellcaster, who can produce fire), though the hidden compartment below is empty. (It held Bergeron's ciphered notes about his various projects.)

Anybody who examines Bergeron's body automatically notices that this lower jaw has been unhinged. A closer look finds a gaping hole torn through the soft palate, and that the brains have been completely removed. There are no other signs of injury on Bergeron.

Among his clothes, he wears a gold ring on his right pinky (Perception DC 22). An inscription on the interior reads, "Old Bergeron Gold."

Characters who search for witnesses find (Diplomacy DC 12) several regulars of the Silver Swan who remember that the night before the murder, Caius had an animated discussion with a woman who matches Xambria's description. They remember her raising her voice to say something about a "star map," and he hushed her, then had his bodyguards escort her out forcibly.

How She Did It.

The truth behind the murder is that during the night Sijhen waited for Xambria to sleep, then detached its thoughtform from her body. It scaled the outer walls of the inn, used psychic power to turn briefly incorporeal, and glided through the wall into Caius's room. Sijhen hit Bergeron with a psychic blast to keep him incapacitated, then devoured his brain. It searched the room and found the map and several interesting notes about Xambria's dig site and the sunken ziggurat off the coast of Ber. It took the notes and Xambria's old journal.

The most information came from Bergeron's mind. In the process of devouring it, Sijhen absorbed many of Bergeron's memories. It learned that Bergeron's society calls itself the Obscurati, and that prominent members wear a ring with markings along the inside that designate their rank and role in the organization. It knows Bergeron's general mission to find out about the seals, but a *geas* placed on Bergeron applied even in his death, hiding the most revelatory information about the Ob's goals.

Sijhen did, however, learn the location of the warehouse where Caius's people brought the Golden Seal of Apet (see Stanfield Canal, above). Shortly thereafter it found the seal, killed the guards, and tried to perform a ritual to return home to Gidim, using the seal as a focus.

When the ritual failed, Sijhen disposed of the guards' bodies in the canal, then loaded the seal onto a wagon and hid it in a sewer tunnel. The nature of the seal meant it was not marked by the energy of Apet, so the PCs cannot use their ritual to track it down.

Follow-Up.

The coordinates on Caius's map bear investigating. If the party doesn't think to look into it themselves, they might simply stumble onto it by following the trail of Apet energy out to sea. You can nudge them in the right direction through Stover Delft, if they seem lost.

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BERGERON'S RING.

Prominent members of the Obscurati wear rings with secret codes, so other agents of the Ob can identify them, if they know what to look for. Sometimes cell leaders give rings to their underlings as gifts, not revealing their purpose.

Each ring has a three word inscription. The first two words can be anything, as long as their initials are O.B. The number of letters in the third word indicates what tier of the conspiracy the wearer is in. A gold ring indicates the wearer is part of Golden Cell; a silver ring denotes Lantern Cell; and a bronze ring signifies Colossus Cell. Other cells use the wood of some local tree to fashion rings.

Lady Saxby was told by Macbannin to keep an eye out for prisoners wearing rings, and to report to him if they had the initials O.B. If she sees Caius's ring, she knows it's important, but doesn't know what it means.

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JAILHOUSE ROCK

Social. Real-Time.

The party tries to get useful information from a buffoonish performer.

If the party traces Apet energy to Rock Rackus, or otherwise wishes to contact him, he's in jail in Central district. A small crowd of dockers constantly protest outside the jailhouse. As the PCs make their way through the crowd, gathered dockers stop them to give these "government stooges" a piece of their minds. Parties with Prestige 3 for Flint are treated much better, however, and encouraged to get Rock released.

The crowd is full of protesters and rabble-rousers, and a dozen chants and slogans fill the air as people call for justice in Parity Lake, help for the poor in the Nettles, freedom in Bosum Strand, and better pay all around. Just after the party gets into the police station, someone throws a flaming bottle of liquor at the cops, which kicks off a small riot outside.

People in the crowd see Rock as a figurehead of their movement, unjustly arrested, and they expect that when he's released he'll lead them, somehow, somewhere. Due to his quirky personality and rapid rise as a celebrity, everyone knows who he is, but few know about his political positions. The police are close to releasing him on bail just to get rid of the crowds, and the dockers might be in for a rude surprise. Rock Rackus is not a leader of men.

Entitled Prisoner.

Rock has gotten his own personal cell with some decent amenities, and the party probably finds him tapping and humming tunes as he works out possible new songs. Unlike the rest of the prisoners, he's cleanlydressed and has on plenty of jewelry, with no less than eight monocles to choose from tucked into his pockets.

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Rock Rackus has stumbled his way to national celebrity. A one-time dock worker, he signed up for a tour on a merchant ship, crashed in the Malice Lands, found treasure on his way back to civilization, and got marginally famous selling his story. He would open for curious audiences before operas and symphonies, and venues loved using his street-born flavor to lure in people who would normally never attend.

Then, a year ago, he made an impromptu cameo in an opera, upstaging the lead actor and skewing the plot to one much more raunchy and violent. The public was fascinated, and he was asked to repeat the performance. For four months he ruined an excellent

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show, and brought in record ticket sales. Before the novelty wore off, he left, saying he was going on a new adventure, and that he would bring back treasure for "his people in the streets."

He returned a month ago, armed with a diamond-encrusted gold pistol and claiming he had traveled to the moon, met the Unseen Court, and cuckolded the fey king. He began performing a bevy of sexually vulgar songs in taverns throughout Bosum Strand, and financed the works of dozens of other dockers with money allegedly stolen from the temple of a god Rock left bleeding from a gunshot wound.

The dockers love his wild new style. Scholars dismiss his tale of interplanetary travel as obvious fabrications, pointing to his most preposterous claims, like his having visited a forest that is on fire and has never burned out. Most in Flint and throughout Risur see him as an idiot at best or a blasphemer at worst. The controversy has only made him more popular.

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He'll gladly talk, mostly about himself and his own travels, but he constantly interjects how eager he is to get out of here. His tales include:

Meeting Caius Bergeron.

Rock claims that in the Malice Lands he found a burnt-out library full of magic scrolls. He took a few, and when he started selling them back in Flint to get quick cash, he was rounded up and brought to a tiefling, Caius Bergeron. The man offered him better money to get the rest of his scrolls, and to keep quiet, but Rock kept a few that he particularly liked because they had some "real deep philosophy" written in the margins.

These scrolls were plundered from the ruins of Pala, a short-lived nation of enlightened thinkers eventually brought down by the Clergy. The quotes Rack found were written originally by the nation's founder and famed philosopher William Miller (who secretly is the campaign's main villain, under the name Nicodemus the Gnostic). And the scrolls were a type of *teleportation* spell, aimed at very old teleportation rings near Ancient ruins.

Ziggurat? Yeah, I Did that Once.

Caius hired him to go on a bit of an expedition to some old ruin in Crisillyir, which had been built over centuries ago. Once it had been an Ancient ziggurat of Jiese, the plane of fire. He took some trophies from there, but he didn't like the attitudes of the people he worked with, so he declined to work with them again. They got past a bunch of fire traps, did some work, stole some giant golden plate, and then he came back to Flint.

Going to the Moon.

One night, when he had grown bored with his first bout of celebrity, Rock decided to go adventuring again. He cracked out one of the scrolls he'd kept, performed the ritual, and ended up deep in a forest. Following the sounds of music and women's voices, he stumbled upon a gathering of high fey. They fled, and he chased them through a silver mirror. Suddenly it was daylight, and up in the sky he saw the world.

He claims he was brought before the Unseen Court as a criminal, but he claimed his right of trial by combat, then shot the fey who challenged him. After that it was sort of a blur-lots of sex and debauched parties. Then he woke up back in the woods, and found his gun was turned to gold and covered with diamonds.

I've Got Places to Be.

Rock has gotten very good at teleportation magic, but it's not cheap, and he has expensive tastes. He's been jaunting all over the continent to sample the finest fresh cuisine, sleep with women, and pick up new fashions. Now he needs some more cash, and he's got an offer for the party.

If they get the charges against him dropped, he'll owe them one free round trip by teleportation. And he'll let them come along with him on a fund-raising expedition, using the last scroll he has from the Malice Lands ruin. He hired a skyseer once to do some divinations, and though the guy said he saw no future in the scroll, Rack doesn't trust old charlatans like skyseers. He thinks there'll be a ton of great treasure there, and he'll give the party one-fourth of whatever they find. Unfortunately, Rock has misplaced the scroll, but when he finds it, he'll let the party know right away.

This scroll leads to the ziggurat of Avilona, which plays a critical role in Adventure Twelve, The Grinding Gears of Heaven. The PCs' mission will take them there with or without Rock, but mentioning it now will make its impact later more meaningful.



Civic Duty.

Rock has a vague sense that people think he's important, but right now he's just looking out for himself. When he's released from jail he intends to milk his celebrity for all it's worth: bed some women, land some new performance gigs, and make some extra cash. He might even write a song about killing monsters with the party. For a while, people will rally behind him, and he'll be talked about in the papers and on the streets, and when he turns out to be just another self-centered asshole, the docker movement will be discredited.

The party should have no trouble telling that this man is not worthy of the dockers' respect, at least not as is. The PCs might be able to convince him to lay low, or convince some other leaders in the docker movement to lower people's expectations, to mitigate the fall-out. But if they make an effort to steer him another direction, he might become a force for positive change.

Give the party a chance to talk politics and philosophy with Rock Rackus. He'll interrupt a lot, and mostly wonder how it will help his reputation, but the party might be able to inspire him (or just trick him into saying what they want him to say). Rock might decide that he could actually help the people who are in the same position he used to be in. If he shows up at the Gala of the Ancients, you've got a fine opportunity for him to get in trouble and have to be rescued by the party, to help provoke a change of heart.

If the party succeeds in helping the docker movement, they'll increase their Prestige with Flint at the end of this adventure. If they do nothing, though, Flint will have no strong defenders against some of the great dangers in later adventures.

JOURNEY TO THE SUNKEN SEAL

Exploration/Social. Montage.

Race by sea before another portal unleashes monsters into the world.

The PCs have a ship assigned to them, which is fast enough to reach the northeastern coast of Ber, where the sunken seal lies, in seven days. If the party calls in a Level 6 Favor from Risur, they can instead enlist the *R.N.S. Impossible*, the RHC's fastest ship, and its able commander **Captain Rutger Smith** (see page 46). The *Impossible* can make the journey in three days, but getting clearance to use the ship would take longer than the time saved sailing.

The *Impossible* does, however, have a larger crew, handy as back-up. If the party doesn't try requesting the larger ship, Stover Delft might recommend they bring along back-up. He suggests they request four soldiers to sail with them for a week, a Level 5 Favor. If they're in a rush, they might get a single soldier as a Level 4 Favor.

The party might have discovered that Caius's team set out on a ship full of mercenaries. Without at least some help, the party risks getting over their heads.

See page 80 for updated stats of these ships and page 76 for quick-play naval combat rules. See page 71 for Allied Risur Soldier stats.

MERASOL EXPERIENCE If any PC is a Yerasol Veteran, before the PCs set out, refer to the scene A

Possible Promotion in Appendix One (page 64), which might result in the party's ship being better equipped for their journey.

Situation.

The sunken seal lies a half mile off the coast of a small fishing village, Pezarillo, a couple hundred miles northwest of Ber's capital city Seobriga. The waters between Flint and there are fairly well patrolled, so once the PCs set off, the journey is uneventful. When they near the site, however, they see three boats have already beaten them to the location.

Two of the ships stay close to each other. A small unarmed vessel, *La Inspiración*, flies a Ber flag. Near it floats a tiny cutter named *Dagger*, flying under the flag of Risur. This is the ship Xambria chartered.

Third is a tall and impressive clipper, *Il Draçon de Mer*, flying a Crisillyir mercenary flag and clearly armed with a gunnery deck of a dozen cannons. As the PCs' ship draws near, *Il Draçon de Mer* signals with flags for them to keep their distance or they will be fired upon. The ships begin outside Long range (as detailed in the quick-play naval combat rules, see page 76). If the party moves to Long range, *Il Draçon de Mer* fires warning shots. Any closer, and they attack.

If the PCs decide to simply wait, Caius's specialists feel a bit of pressure from the presence of a new ship. Their *sending* spells to Caius are failing and they don't know why, and they don't know who else to contact. (That's one drawback of a compartmentalized secret society.) They speed up their careful preparations, and finish their business one day later, removing the golden seal with no catastrophe.

They leave wards in place to hold at bay the creatures trapped in the void between the lesser seal and the Axis Seal. *Il Draçon de Mer* hoists the golden seal aboard, and they try to warily depart. At that point, Xambria will implore the PCs to act. It's likely, however, the party will intercede well before then.

La Inspiración.

La Inspiración is a relatively small Beran sailing vessel, with a total crew of six sailors and three passengers, captained by an orc veteran of the Beran navy named **Diego Dolorosa**, who is none too happy about *Il* Draçon de Mer.

If Diego is angry, his passenger, a goblin archaeologist named **Paco de Los Loros**, is livid. Paco was hired by Caius Bergeron early in the summer, after Xambria's expedition found her ziggurat's map room. Caius provided funding and promised Paco would be famous as the first Beran archaeologist to unearth Ancient ruins, connecting the old culture with Ber's modern aspirations.

Shortly after Caius's second team of specialists returned from the ziggurat of Apet, Paco discovered a golden disk that radiated powerful magic. Bergeron demanded Paco cease his activities, then dispatched his specialists here to prevent a repeat of Xambria's disaster. The specialists arrived in *Il Draçon de Mer* on the 7th of Autumn. They ordered Paco and his team to keep their distance by threat of force. Every day since a group of five has dropped below the waters and not returned for several hours.

Paco initially believes the PCs are also foreign agents, but if befriended he shares his story and is willing to help out. Though intelligent and educated, Paco's goblin upbringing leads him to suggest various gruesome punishments for Bergeron's team of specialists.

Paco's Excavation.

The ziggurat slid into the sea ages ago, and most of its structure collapsed, probably due to an earthquake. Unlike Xambria, Paco could not simply outwit traps and kill monsters, he had to dig out tons of rubble. He was aided in this by a winch and crane on *La Inspiración*, but most of the work entailed long hours underwater.

Rather than rely on traditional *water breathing* spells, which do nothing to keep aquatic predators at bay, Paco used expensive *diving bell lanterns*, magical items custom created with Bergeron's coin. These crystal lanterns, mounted on iron poles about the size of a hatrack, hold water at bay in area of 10 ft. If the lantern is moved, the area of air moves with it. The enchantment cycles fresh, breathable air out of the surrounding water.

The lanterns can last indefinitely, but have to be custom made for a particular depth and water temperature, and if they're moved far from their designated location, their enchantment breaks. (In effect, the PCs might reverse engineer them, but they cannot be looted.)

Paco originally had a larger team, but all of them are staying at the nearby village of Pezarillo, waiting in case they're needed. They spent several months determining the contours of the ziggurat, divining for possible danger, and eventually digging out the central chamber that houses the golden seal. He has no idea what the specialists are up to now.

Dr. Meredith, I Presume?

Xambria's ship, *Dagger*, arrives at the sunken seal on the 15th of Autumn, so she is probably present when the PCs arrive. She has convinced the captain of her ship, a drunken lout named **Jack Glassmaker**, to stay within sight of *Il Draçon de Mer*, only taking occasional trips inland to resupply. She's paying well enough for him and his crew of three to sit and wait, but they have no desire to risk their lives for a crazy university professor.

Xambria is happy to speak to the party. She learned from Caius that another seal had been discovered, and she tried to convince the tiefling not to open it. Shortly afterward, she claims she was attacked by something horrible that she fled from in a panic. She only recalls tendrils and eyes, but everything else is a blur. When she came to her senses, she had run to the docks. Wanting to avoid the creature pursuing her and to stop another seal from being opened, she chartered the *Dagger*. She was not prepared for ship combat, and is in holding pattern, trying to decide how best to proceed.

Xambria is capable of casting spells, and brought along scrolls for *water walk* and *water breathing*. She tried sneaking underwater once already, but luckily before she got too close she spotted the bodyguard for Caius's team: a druid with loyal sharks and octopi.

Xambria also has a secret spell book that contains a teleportation spell and the gate key to reach a portal in Flint near a military garrison in the bayou west of Pine Island. Sijhen is nervous someone like the PCs might figure out it is possessing Xambria, but as long as it can get ten minutes of solitude it can escape in a hurry.

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SIMPLE ASSAULT

If you don't want to slow the game down to teach your players the naval combat rules, you can simply resolve that the PCs take fire as they approach *Il Draçon de Mer*. If the PCs are in a steam cutter or excise cutter, their ship is hulled at Short range. It begins to list and flood, and risks sinking as the mercenaries attempt to board.

If the PCs are aboard the *Impossible*, they suffer some rigging damage and enough Hull Integrity damage for the ship to start listing, which prevents the party from retreating once combat begins.

Sijhen's Goal.

The Gidim wayfarer followed Caius's specialists here in hopes of acquiring a clearer understanding of how the golden seals work. Sijhen was originally helping head the Gidim invasion of this world, so it already knows how to open a portal to another plane, but its several attempts to do so in Flint all failed.

After consuming Caius Bergeron's brain, Sijhen theorized it needed an Ancient star map to compare stellar positions between then and now. Sijhen thinks the PC's boss, Lady Saxby, has such a map, but it is wary of attacking the RHC headquarters. Looking for additional information, it wants to acquire whatever information Caius's specialists have, whether in the form of documents or brain tissue.

Uncomfortable Questions.

If the PCs question Xambria about her activity in Flint while they were away, she claims Caius dragged her to his inn, and wanted to know if she had found a "star map" at the ziggurat. She told him she didn't remember, and he threatened her. Then he said the star map had been sent to "Macbannin," and she recognized the name from the news. She asks the party if they know about any "star map."

Afterward, she remembers being accosted by some strange creature, and fleeing her apartment in a panic. In truth what happened was that Sijhen detached its thoughtform from Xambria's body so it could kill Caius, and when it returned and tried to merge back with Xambria, she had a moment of clarity and fought back. Sijhen is mostly in control now, though.

The star map question is a ploy by Sijhen. Xambria did indeed recover a star map from the ziggurat back in the Spring, and sent it along to Caius, who delivered it to Macbannin for examination. The star map ended up in the possession of Lady Inspectress Saxby after Macbannin's downfall.

Sijhen needs the star map to aim its portal ritual back to Gidim, and it learned from Caius's mind that Saxby was a patsy for the Ob. On the night of the 9th it had Xambria break into Saxby's home, but they didn't find the star map. (It is hidden in a safe in Saxby's office.)

Should the party ask about anything Sijhen wants to keep secret, such as the theft of the golden seal or Caius's death, Xambria's memories of those events have been hidden away.

The party might try detecting planar energy of Apet on Xambria, which turns up a strong hit. She explains away the energy, showing off the *golden icon of Apet* she has had with her since leaving the ziggurat.

Despite the early Autumn heat, the good doctor does not expose any more skin than necessary. She has her own private quarters, and though Captain Jack has hit on her, the crew respects her privacy.

IL DRACON DE MER

Action. Real-Time.

This Crisillyiri mercenary vessel protects the Obscurati specialists.

Captained by **Bernardo Molinelli**, *Il Draçon de Mer* is prepared for a fight. Only professional courtesy from Caius's specialists are deterring the mercenary crew from attacking the archaeologists sharing its waters. When the PCs arrive, the ship starts to prowl wary circles. Any approach by the party provokes a flurry of activity as *Il Draçon de Mer* arms for battle. If they are spotted going overboard, the Crisillyiri mercenaries do their best to ensure the party has no ship to return to.



The party's ship is likely unarmed, but it's not safe to go after Caius's team before first dealing with the hostile vessel. Three main routes present themselves: rush *Il Draçon de Mer* at top speed, sneak up aquatically, or misdirect the mercenaries and attack while they're distracted.

Il Draçon de Mer has a crew of 30, dramatically outnumbering the PCs, but with the right plan they have a chance to succeed.

Into the Mouth of the Dragon.

As detailed in the quick-play naval combat rules (page 76), the encounter begins at Long range. The PCs must maneuver closer each naval turn, taking fire from *Il Draçon de Mer*. There are several crew roles the party can fill, allowing them to help close the distance, avoid damage, and possibly attack back once close enough.

If the party's ship is sunk or crippled before then, *Il Draçon de Mer* closes in to kill and plunder. This still leads to tactical combat, but with the party at a major disadvantage. Most likely the party reaches Short range with some amount of damage, then boards the enemy vessel.

Naval Terrain.

Three locations are likely to matter for this scene.

+ **Open Water.** *Il Draçon de Mer* stays tries to stay in the deeper, open water north of the dig. There are no hazards here.

◆ Above the Seal. The sea directly above the dig site has turbulent water due to the energies of the ziggurat of Mavisha. At the end of the Location stage, each captain must make a Command check (DC 13) or else the ship is struck by intense waves. It takes a −5 penalty to Command checks for the rest of the turn, and creatures in area burst 1 somewhere on the main deck must make a save or be swept overboard.

During tactical combat, there's a 10% chance each round that a wave hits the encounter area from a random direction, forcing every creature on deck to make an Acrobatics check (DC 10) or be knocked prone and pushed 2 squares.

• Tropical Rocks. South of the dig and closer to shore, jagged shards of stone dotted with foliage and palm trees stick out of the water. At the end of the Location stage, each captain must make a Command check (DC 18) or else the ship hits rocks. The ship suffers 1 point of Hull Integrity damage, and it is immobilized for the rest of the turn. It automatically fails Command checks, and during the Bearing stage the opposing ship can approach at any angle.

During tactical combat, scatter the sea with five or six 2-square rocks that might block ship movements and provide stepping stones for characters.



Enlisting Allies.

The *Dagger*'s captain is horrified of the thought of battle, but might be convinced if he's told he's just a diversion and in no real danger (Bluff DC 23). Paco and Diego are easier to recruit (Diplomacy DC 15), as long as Paco's assured he'll get access to the dig once the party is done here.

By coordinating with allies, the PCs can confuse the Crisillyiri mercenaries. One PC can spend his naval turn directing the other ships. Once per turn he can make a Bluff check and let the captain use it in place of a Command check. He gains a +5 bonus to this Bluff check if both ships are allied with the party.

If the party's ship is crippled or sunk, however, *Il Draçon de Mer* will pursue the other ships and bombard them with cannons for a few minutes before returning to finish off the party.

Amphibious Alternative.

The party might try using *water breathing* spells to swim up and catch their foes by surprise. If the party decides to set out from beyond Long range, they must each succeed a Stealth check (DC 11) or else look-outs on *Il Draçon de Mer* see them go overboard, which provokes a naval attack and makes it much harder for the party catch up with a moving ship.

If undetected, they then must succeed a Swim check (DC 20) or else become fatigued from the long swim, which either passes through the turbulent waters over the seal, or entails a much longer route to go around.

If they depart at Long range, the Stealth check is harder (DC 16), but the Swim check easier (DC 16). Getting any closer provokes an armed response by the mercenaries.



When the PCs near the ship, each must make a Stealth check (DC 16) or else be spotted by look-outs when they're 30 ft. away. At night, hiding from the look-outs is easier (Stealth DC 11), but the druid Krantos sends one of his sharks to circle the ship and deter any tricks (Stealth DC 22).

Look Over There.

By enlisting allies, the party might create a distraction. They could try sailing away, then returning under cover of dark. Meanwhile, an ally might rig lights along its deck to give the impression of being a different ship, drawing attention. If the party comes up with a convincing plan, at each range (Long, Medium, and Short) one PC must make a Bluff and Stealth check (DC 23), or two PCs can each make one of these checks. If both checks are successful, *Il Draçon de Mer* is unaware of their approach and will not fire back. If the party makes it all the way to Short range, the mercenaries are caught unawares when the party attacks.

BOARDING ACTION

Action. Tactical.

The decks will soon be awash with blood.

This is a daunting encounter for the party, but if they have surprise or allied Risur soldiers on their side, they can triumph. Simply charging in without a plan will likely get them captured and ransomed back to Risur several months later.

- + Captain Bernard Molinelli
- ♦ 2 mercenary crossbowmen
- ♦ 31 mercenary sailors

Tactics.

Captain Molinelli of *Il Draçon de Mer* plans to ransom the party back to Risur. He tries to close the distance, then his crew stay the sails and drop a 20-ft. long hook-tipped ramp across the gap between the two ships.

Sailors try to stream across the ramp, while crossbowmen 50 ft. up in the crow's nests try to take out anyone blocking the way, or target PCs making ranged attacks. Occasionally Captain Molinelli will order a contingent of crew to leap across the gap between the ships if there's clear space on the other ship's deck.

Molinelli constantly shouts at the party to surrender before he changes his mind. Should the PCs be overwhelmed by the crewman, Molinelli can toss some gold onto the deck as an in-battle reward to his crewmen, who bicker over it at the GMs discretion. If he's reduced below half hp, however, he tries to withdraw, using his men as cover. If Molinelli goes down, his crew becomes increasingly nervous and might eventually surrender.

Terrain.

If the ships are adjacent, moving between them just counts as difficult terrain. Conditions will vary greatly based on the results of naval combat.

A ship that is suffering fire has a 5-ft. area filled with flames. Creatures that enter or end their turn in the flames take 1d6 fire damage. On a ship suffering from smoke, anyone fighting on deck has reduced visibility. Any creature more than 5 ft. away has concealment.

A ship that is listing is tilted, one side sloping toward the sea. Creatures that can't hold onto a railing or other support treat all movement on board as difficult terrain, and a creature knocked prone slides 10 ft. toward the water.

If a ship is flooded, at the end of the ship's turn each round, the ship has a 50% chance of descending. Once, it begins to descend, it moves 5 ft. per round. If the roll is under 10%, the ship stabilizes, floating but perhaps partially submerged.

Aftermath.

In the quarters of Caius's team, the party finds a map of the dig site below, scrolls of comprehend languages, knock, open Ancient seal, and water breathing, plus sufficient sufficient extras of water breathing for the party to each be able to breathe water and descend to the seal. A lengthy note found in the book also explains the nature of the seals and the general purpose of the excavation (see pag 75).

Perhaps more impressively, the PCs might claim Il Draçon de Mer as their own, though they'll have trouble sailing it back unless they enlist extra sailors. The mercenaries might be be convinced to work for a while, but the RHC would want to replace them with loyal crew once the party returns to Flint.

Alternately, they might some of the larger brigantine's cannons to their own ship. A small vessel can carry at most 6 cannons, however, gaining a +5 attack bonus.

The complications of dealing with prisoners are detailed in Back to Flint (page 47).

The party will have to descend to the seal below to deal with Caius's team. Xambria would prefer to stay on the surface. She asks to have a chance to read the documents found on Il Draçon de Mer, since they deal with the magic of the Ancients.



Bernard, Mercenary Captain	
Male human rogue (swashbuckler*) 6	

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7: Senses Perception +9

* See Pathfinder[®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide

Defense

B

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 46 (6d8+18)

Fort +5, Ref +10, Will +2

Defensive Abilities evasion, uncanny dodge

Offense Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 shortsword +7 (1d6+2/19-20) and dagger +5 (1d4+1/19-20)

Special Attacks offensive defense, positioning attack (1/day), sneak attack +3d6 Statistics

CR 5

XP 1,600

Str 12 Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 13

Base Atk +4; CMB +5; CMD 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Sea Legs, Weapon Focus (Shortsword) Skills Acrobatics +16, Bluff +7, Climb +3, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist +9, Intimidate

- +10, Knowledge (Geography) +3, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Nature) +2,
- Perception +9, Profession (Sailor) +9, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +9, Swim +12 Languages Common

SQ stand up

Combat Gear +1 shortsword, dagger, masterwork leather

Manage and Charles have an	CD 0
Mercenary Crossbowmen	CR 2
Male dwarf warrior 4	XP 600
CN Medium humanoid (dwarf)	
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +3	
Defense	
AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +2 Dex)	
hp 33 (4d10+8)	
Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +2	
Defensive Abilities defensive training	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft.	
Melee shortsword +4 (1d6/19–20)	
Ranged mw heavy crossbow +7 (1d10/19–20)	
Statistics	
Str 11 Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 7	
Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 16	
Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot	
Skills Acrobatics +3, Climb +4, Perception +3, Profession (Sailor) +	6, Stealth +4
Languages Common, Dwarven	
	eather



Mercenary Sailor

Male or female human expert 1
NE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +1; Senses Perception +0
Defense

AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11 (+1 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 8 (1d8) Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +1

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee shortsword -3 (1d6+1/19-20)

Statistics

Str 12 Dex 12, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 9

Base Atk +0; CMB +1; CMD 12

Feats Athletic, Skill Focus (Profession [sailor])

Skills Acrobatics +2, Climb +4, Escape Artist +2, Knowledge (geography) +2, Knowledge (local) +2, Perception +0, Profession (sailor) +6, Stealth +2, Swim +4

Languages Common, Elven

Other Gear padded armor, shortsword



THE WRECK AND THE RUIN

Action. Tactical.

CR 1/3

XP 135

The specialists defend their excavation.

From the turbulent water above the seal, the PCs can look down and see an eerie light glowing on the rocky seabed, fifty feet below.

A tiefling summoner, **Finona Duvall**, leads the specialists at the dig site. She bribed a mercenary druid, the half-orc **Kranto**, with a promise to defend his territory if he helps them avoid being attacked while excavating the golden seal. For the PCs to reach the dig site they'll have to avoid the patrols of Kranto's animal companions.

- ♦ 2 sharks
- ♦ Kranto, half-orc druid
- ♦ 2 octopi
- ♦ 2 specialist bodyguards
- ♦ 2 specialist wizards
- Finona Duvall, tiefling summoner

Patrol.

Kranto swims a slow ring around the dig site, taking occasional breaks in an overturned shipwreck. At night he normally ascends to *Il Draçon de Mer*, bringing one shark to watch the ship and leaving the other shark and two octopi by the dig site.

If the sea creatures notice any intruders, they rush to alert Kranto, who then hurries to warn the specialists. Finona has no idea who the PCs are or what their agenda is, but no one is supposed to be coming down here unless *Il Draçon de Mer* asks first. Finona's clever and will respond to entreaties to talk, but she's worried of a trick and ready for a fight.

As the PCs approach they can each make a Stealth check. If they fail, the specialists have at least a minute to prepare and take cover. If they all beat DC 16 they get close enough that the specialists only have 5 rounds to prepare. If they all beat DC 23 they can arrive without being spotted. There is not much terrain to hide behind during the approach, but clever ideas, such as using a ship's shadow to conceal their movement, could grant bonuses.

Consequences of Inaction.

If the party takes out *ll Draçon de Mer* and then simply waits for the specialists to come up, they're in for a surprise. After realizing their allies on the surface are defeated, Finona concocts a ritual to tap the power of Mavisha. An hour later the water for miles around becomes rough, and it only grows in danger as time goes on. Before the party can get a chance to take a rest, strong currents threaten to beach their ships or capsize them.

If left alone for six hours, Finona manages to create a safe channel of easy water, and she and her team are able to reach land. Thanks to *send-ing* scrolls, within a few days they'll rendezvous with a trio of Crisillyiri mercenary ships to come back and try again to claim the seal.

Tactics.

Kranto tries to wait for the PCs to approach, hiding with his sharks within the wreckage of the ship, while the octopi hide on the other side of the dig, relying on their camouflage to hide them. The PCs might spot Kranto if they look inside the wreck (Perception DC 16), and they might see the octopi if they pass within 25 ft. (Perception DC 23).

Kranto and his creatures try to strike as soon as the PCs pass by, in hopes that they'll be able to pincer them and drive them to Finona's team. He uses his *hydraulic push* spell to keep foes away. He commands the octopi to focus on melee fighters and orders the sharks to attack softer looking

Digging for Lies 🚓 📿 🐎 Act Two: Mysteries of the Ancients

targets particularly spellcasters. If the druid is slain, the animals continue to attack until they are reduced to half their hp, at which point they flee.

The specialist bodyguards do their best to pin down melee warriors and keep them away from Finona. The specialist wizards focus their attacks on injured foes. None of the specialists can breathe water at this time.

Terrain.

Swimming here requires a Swim check (DC 10) to move at half speed, though the higher up you go, the more severe the current becomes. The ground here is a crumbly mix of stone and shells, so in areas cleared of water by the *diving bell lanterns*, there is no mud. Climbing the loose rock is difficult (Climb DC 16).

The specialists have set up a tent and winch near the golden seal, all of which are inside the magic shells of the *diving bell lanterns*. The bells' initial locations are marked by "**B**"s on the map, but they can be easily moved. It takes just a move action to pick one up, and they weigh only 10 pounds. Water moves away without disturbing the surroundings, but creatures might find themselves suddenly transitioning from water to air or vice versa.

The lanterns also brightly illuminate everything in their radius. During the day, everything else is dimly lit, while at night it is too dark to see.

The golden seal is protected by a glowing warding ring. The specialists are using careful magic to remove the golden plate while keeping the warding magic in place long enough to just bury the portal, but in the thick of combat, disaster might strike. If any creature enters the area within the ring (including any space up to 15 ft. above it), the ward is broken, and the seal opens. See Seal of Mavisha, below.

In the southeast corner, a bright blue orb glows as a beacon so the Crisillyiri mercenaries could easily find the site.

Aftermath.

If the PCs disturb the wards around the golden seal (or if, say, a dying shark were to conveniently swim through the edge of a *diving bell lantern's* aura and fall into the ring), the portal opens.

Shark	CR 2
N Large animal (aquatic)	XP 600
Init +5; Senses blindsense 30 ft.; Perception +8	
Defense	
AC 14, touch 10, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)	
hp 22 (4d8+4)	
Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2	
Offense	
Speed swim 60 ft.	
Melee bite+5 (1d8+4)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.	
Statistics	
Str 17 Dex 12, Con 13, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 2	
Base Atk +3; CMB +7; CMD 18	
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative	
Skills Perception +8, Swim +11	
Special Abilities	
Keen Scent (Ex): A shark can notice creatures by scent in a 180-foot radius u	underwa-

ter and can detect blood in the water at ranges of up to a mile.

Kranto	CR 3
Male half-orc druid 4	XP 800
CN Medium humanoid (orc)	
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7	
Defense	
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +1 shield)	
hp 32 (4d8+12)	
Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +9	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee Masterwork club+5 (1d6+1)	
Druid Spells Prepared (CL 4th; concentration +7)	
2nd —barkskin, flaming sphere, fog cloud	
1st— faerie fire, hydraulic push*, cure light wounds (×2)	
0 (at will)—resistance, purify food and drink, create water, sta	abilize
Domain Water	
*See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide [®]	
Statistics	
Str 12 Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 12	
Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 15	
Feats Iron Will, Toughness	
Skills Acrobatics +2, Climb +0, Escape Artist +0, Fly +0, Handle	Animal +5, Intimidate
+3, Knowledge (Geography) +5, Knowledge (Nature) +7, Perce	eption +7, Ride +0,
Spellcraft +4, Survival +9, Swim +5	
Languages Common, Druidic, Orc	
SQ Nature Sense, Orc Ferocity, Resist Nature's Lure, Tackless Ste	ep, Wild Empathy, Wild
Shape, Woodland Stride	
Other Gear leather armor, masterwork club, light wooden shiel	d
Octopus	CR 1
N Small animal (aquatic)	XP 400
Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +1	
Defense	
AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)	
hp 13 (2d8+4)	
Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1	
Defensive Abilities ink cloud	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft., swim 30 ft., jet 200 ft.	
Melee bite+5 (1d3+1 plus poison) tentacles +3 (grab)	
Statistics	
Str 12 Dex 17, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 3	
Base Atk +1; CMB +1 (+5 grapple); CMD 14 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Multiattack, Weapon Finesse	
Skills Escape Artist +13, Stealth +20, Swim +9; Racial Modifiers	s +8 Stealth, +10
Escape Artist	, -
Special Abilities	
Ink Cloud (Ex) An octopus can emit a 10-foot-radius sphere of i	ink once per minute as
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Jet (Ex) An octopus can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 200 feet. It must move in a straight line while jetting, and does not provoke

attacks of opportunity when it does so.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; save Fort DC 13; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1 Str; cure 1 save.

Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 الله Act Two: Mysteries of the Ancients

CR1

Defense

Offense

Speed 35 ft.

hp 33 (5d6+10)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

XP 400

Specialist Bodyguard

Male dwarf fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +3

Defense

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+5 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex)

hp 26 (2d10+9)

Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +2

Defensive Abilities Bravery +1, Defensive Training

Offense Speed 20 ft.

Melee mw dwarven waraxe +5 (1d10+2/x3)

Statistics

Str 15 Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 6

Base Atk +2; CMB +4 (+6 bull rushing); CMD 15 (17 vs. bull rush)

Feats Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics -3, Climb -3, Escape Artist -4, Fly -4, Intimidate +3, Perception +3, Ride -4, Stealth -4, Swim -3

Languages Common, Dwarven

Other Gear masterwork shield, heavy steel, masterwork dwarven waraxe, scale mail

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REMINDERS CONCERNING AQUATIC COMBAT.

Aquatic combat is fairly similar to land combat with a few exceptions, as summarized in the Underwater Combat section of the PATHFINDER® ROLEPLAY-ING GAME CORE RULEBOOK". Some important things to remember:

Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater, even when launched from land. Attacks with other ranged weapons take a -2 penalty on attack rolls for every 5 feet of water they pass through, in addition to the normal penalties for range.

Nonmagical fire (including alchemist's fire) does not burn underwater. Spells or spell-like effects with the fire descriptor are ineffective underwater unless the caster makes a caster level check (DC 20 + spell level). If the check succeeds, the spell creates a bubble of steam instead of its usual fiery effect, but otherwise the spell works as described. A supernatural fire effect is ineffective underwater unless its description states otherwise. The surface of a body of water blocks line of effect for any fire spell. If the caster has made the caster level check to make the fire spell usable underwater, the surface still blocks the spell's line of effect.

Casting spells while submerged can be difficult for those who cannot breathe underwater. A creature that cannot breathe water must make a concentration check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell underwater (this is in addition to the caster level check to successfully cast a fire spell underwater). Creatures that can breathe water are unaffected and can cast spells normally. Some spells might function differently underwater, subject to GM discretion.

Finally, aquatic combat allows characters to travel in three dimensions. One simple way to track this is to place a die next to each creature, and use the face up side of the die to track how many feet above the surface the creature swims. Remember that the air bubbles from the diving bell lanterns clear water out from ground level, plus 10 ft. above.

Specialist Wizard	CR 1
Male human wizard 2 X	P 400
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +1; Senses Perception +3	
Defense	
AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10	
hp 13 (2d6+4)	
Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +4	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee Quarterstaff +1 (1d6)	
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; concentration +4)	
1st—reduce person (DC 13), cause fear (DC 13), true strike	
0 (at will)—read magic, light, detect magic, mage hand	
Statistics	
Str 10 Dex 10, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 12	
Base Atk +1; CMB +1; CMD 11	
Feats Arcane Strike, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [Planes])	
Skills Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Knowledge (History) +7, Knowledg	(e
(Planes) +10, Perception +3, Spellcraft +7	
Languages Common, Dwarven, Giant	
SQ bonded object	
Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, scroll of mage armor	
Finona Duvall	CR 4
Female tiefling sorcerer 5 XP	1,200
LN Medium outsider (native)	

1/day—darkness

Melee +1 flaming dagger+2 (1d4 plus 1d6 fire /19-20)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 5th ; concentration +6)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +2

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 10 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge)

2nd (5/day)—summon monster II, scorching ray, shatter

1st (7/day)—protection from good, magic missile, comprehend languages, color spray (DC 13), summon monster I

0 (at will)—ray of frost, read magic, message, detect magic, prestidigitation, spark (DC 12)

Bloodline Infernal

Statistics

Str 8 Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 13

Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 15

Feats Dodge, Eschew Materials, Fleet, Skill Focus (Knowledge [Planes])

Skills Bluff +7, Diplomacy +5, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Knowledge (History) +4, Knowledge (Planes) +7

Perception +2, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +5, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

SQ Fiendish Sorcery

Combat Gear +1 flaming dagger

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SEAL OF MAVISHA

Action. Tactical.

Neither side wants what's behind the seal getting out.

If the warding circle around the circle is disturbed, read or paraphrase the following.

The golden seal flashes brightly, then it clatters to the ground. A wave of pain courses through your body as though something were trying to rip you apart from the inside. Where the seal had been, a hole in the rock pours out water and fishlike creatures. Some of the water seems different from the rest, visible because of it's pure of grit and dust. The massive being lashes out with tentacles made of pure water.

A deep thrum of movement sounds from every direction as the whole sea around you comes alive. Rocks tear free from the sea bed and begin to spiral in a huge arc around the dig site, the makings of a titanic and destructive whirlpool.

Power of the Plane of Water.

Each creature within 50 ft. of the seal must make a Fortitude or Will (DC 15) to resist being infused with hydromantic energy. If the creature fails, it is staggered until a successful save is made (each subsequent round allows for a save). NPCs take damage equal to one quarter their maximum hp. If this damage would kill a creature, it dissolves into a puddle of



SKYSEER VISION OF MAVISHA.

When a Skyseer sees the golden seal of Mavisha, she instantly knows what plane it is attuned to. If the portal is opened, she has the following vision, which alludes to the events of Adventure Seven, *Schism*.

"You break the surface of the waves, under a weary night sky. An isthmus, defined by the oceans to its either sides, lies ahead of you, but the masses of people framed by the sea are blinded by high walls and dark paintings, and they cannot perceive the shifting tides outside.

"Inside now. Rains streak glass along this hall of portraits. A face looks down at you, canvas and frame and watercolor dyes. And down the center of the face, a schism appears, like a river trying to flow two ways at once. Paint runs and flows free of its borders, leaving one face on the canvas, and another struggling, bereft of form, to find a home or else swirl away and die."

water mixed with blood.

If the creature's check beats DC 20, not only does it resist the energy, but it manages to use the power to its advantage. It regains 2d6 hp and can immediately make a free standard action.

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- ♦ 6 fishmen of Mavisha
- ✤ 1 Mavisha elemental

Terrain.

The fishmen emerge and, insane with an eternity trapped behind the seal, they charge whoever they can see. The elemental, due to special planar restrictions, cannot move through the spaces in the aura of the *diving bell lanterns*, but it can lash out with watery tentacles, pushing the lanterns away. When it moves them, the water from the seal fills in the vacated space instantly.

Teamwork.

If any of Finona's team are present, they'll panic for a moment, then shout for the PCs to help close the seal.

To close the portal, first the magic must be primed. To do this, creatures must spend a standard action to make Spellcraft checks (DC 20) within 25 ft. of the portal. After succeeding three such checks, the edge of the portal starts to glow with faint gold light. Within 10 rounds, the portal must be shut, or else the checks must be made again.

While the magic is primed, if any sort of gold is put into the space of the portal, it forms a temporary block. Nothing can pass through the portal for one round, and so the elemental cannot attack through.

To completely shut the portal, it simply needs to be covered entirely. This might be done by collapsing part of the rock wall above it, if the party has the capability. Alternately, the original seal could be put back in place, using the winch on the ledge above. A creature would have to stand beside the golden seal and spend a standard action to hook up the winch, and then another creature could spend a standard action to control the winch and move it into place.

Of course, the PCs might just kill the monster first.

Failure.

If the party leaves without sealing the portal, they're caught in a maelstrom and dashed against rocks until they are dead. The elemental gets free and harasses the shipping lanes for a few months.

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The bold and idealistic captain of the R.N.S. Impossible, Captain Smith earned his first command five years ago. Now 37, he has never led his ship into battle. That, combined with his fondness for the Malice-era philosophical writings of the monk William Miller, has made him the target of mockery by more established naval officers. Smith seems content to just drill his crew twice as hard, encouraging them with philosophical aphorisms between puffs on a cigar.

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Captain Smith only appears in this adventure if the party recruits the Impossible in Act Two, instead of taking their own ship.





Success.

Resealing the portal merely resets the status quo, but it means the next time the PCs have to seal a portal to another world, they'll know what they're doing.

Fishmen of Mavisha	CR 1/2
N Medium humanoid (aquatic)	XP 200
Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +3	
Defense	
AC 13, touch 11, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 natural)	
hp 9 (2d8)	
Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +1	
Offense	
Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.	
Melee longspear +2 (1d8/x3)	
Statistics	
Str 10 Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 11	
Base Atk +1; CMB +1 ; CMD 12	
Feats Weapon Focus (longspear)	
Skills Craft (alchemy) +6, Perception +3, Survival +6, Swim +8	
Languages Aquan	
SQ amphibious	
See locathah in Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2 [®]	
Mavisha Water Elemental	CR 5
N Large outsider (elemental, extraplanar, water)	XP 1,600

N Large outsid	ler (elemental, extraplanar, water)	XP 1,600
Init +2; Sense	s darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
Defense		
AC 18, touch 1	2, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, –1 size)	
hp 68 (8d10+2	24)	
Fort +9, Ref +a	8, Will +2	
DR 5/-; Immur	ne elemental traits	
Offense		
Speed 20 ft., s	swim 90 ft.	
Melee 2 slams	s +12 (1d8+5)	
Space 10 ft.; R	leach 10 ft.	
Special Attac	ks drench, vortex (DC 19, 10–40 ft.), water mastery	
Statistics		
Str 20 Dex 14,	Con 17, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11	
Base Atk +8; C	CMB +14 ; CMD 27	
Feats Cleave,	Dodge, Greater Cleave, Power Attack	
Skills Acrobat	tics +9, Escape Artist +11, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception	n +9, Stealth
+5, Swim +2	4	

Languages Aquan

Special Abilities

- Drench (Ex) The elemental's touch puts out non-magical flames of Large size or smaller. The creature can dispel magical fire it touches as dispel magic (caster level equals elemental's HD).
- Vortex (Su) A water elemental can create a whirlpool as a standard action, at will. This ability functions identically to the whirlwind special attack, but can only form underwater and cannot leave the water.
- Water Mastery (Ex) A water elemental gains a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls if both it and its opponent are touching water. If the opponent or the elemental is touching the ground, the elemental takes a -4 penalty on attack and damage rolls. These modifiers apply to bull rush and overrun maneuvers, whether the elemental is initiating or resisting these kinds of attacks.



ACT THREE: **KAMBRIA'S MADNESS** A1010

BACK TO FLINT

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n this act, the party returns to Flint to stop the villain

from opening another deadly portal.

SIJHEN AND THE GIDIM.

Sijhen's people, the Gidim, come from a world that was itself sentient. Like a magnetic field that points north on most worlds, on the Gidim homeworld, fields of psychic energy surrounded the physical landscape.

Eventually the world's stray thoughts evolved to be able to manifest physical forms, using psychic energy as a food source. Most of these thoughtforms were anchored to the ground where they could feed on psychic vents. More advanced creatures developed the ability to control their metabolism, so they keep parts of their bodies only semi-corporeal, letting them float and drift to other food spots.

Slowly, predators and herd entities developed, and finally sentient beings appearaed, though they could only maintain their consciousness for as long as they had access to a broad enough diet of thoughts from lesser creatures. These people, the Gidim, worshiped and served the world, calling it their Elder Mother. They traveled between worlds finding new thoughts to consume, both for themselves and for their mother.

Though weak at the time of the Axis Seal's creation, the Gidim today have taken whole planes as slaves. They harvest wild and delicious thoughts, which are fed into titanic tendrils that weave through portals to dozens of worlds, all finally back to their homeworld. They play a notable role during mythic level play, once the Axis Seal opens.

OTHER SEALS.

If interrogated, Finona has explored four ziggurats—Mavisha in Ber, Apet in Risur, Jiese in Crisillyir, and Nem in the dead magic zone of Danor. None of these play any sort of prominent role elsewhere in the campaign.



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Social. Montage.

Sijhen seeks an opportunity to strike and escape.

This scene must be planned carefully. Sijhen wants to get as much information as possible, then escape, but details depend on the PCs' actions.

The party should have figured out that Caius's organization is interested in these seals. Make sure they recover the memorandum to Finona, which reveals that Caius was supposed to attend a meeting in Vendricce in a few months. If nothing else, have Finona reveal that information in interrogation, because it provides the PCs' link to Adventure Four, Always on Time.

The party's next course of action likely is returning to Flint to look for more information. They have some issues to deal with first, and shortly after they set out the sudden departure of Xambria will reveal that the escapee from the ziggurat of Apet has been with them all along.

Prisoners.

The party might have prisoners from the dig site, as well as the mercenary sailors. Legally, constables are not supposed to kill prisoners, and even if all their foes died when reduced to 0 hit points, there are still a lot of bodies to dispose of. Feel free to gloss over this if you want, but the party should want to take at least some of the specialists as prisoners.

Not Worth the Hassle?

As for the mercenary sailors, the party has three likely options: to make arrangements to deliver them to mainland Ber, perhaps into the custody of local law enforcement; to let them and their ship go; or to recruit some of them for the journey back. The third option might even be necessary if the party wants to take ownership of Il Draçon de Mer.

The Important Prisoners.

Unless they came on the Impossible, the PCs likely have no brig on their ship. The party might try keeping the specialists on Il Dracon de Mer, but if they've enlisted any mercenaries, it might be too great a risk of them being set free.

Xambria offers a solution. The Dagger has a hold that can be easily secured, and she has convinced Captain Jack to keep the prisoners. In exchange, they'll be able to sail back with the PCs, preferring safety in numbers.

In order to transport magic-using prisoners, the official technique is to bind their hands with mage cuffs (see the ZEITGEIST Player's Guide), as well as a gold thread to prevent teleportation. For added security, a locking hood can be added, to blind the prisoner.

Loose Ends.

La Inspiración might help with offloading mercenary prisoners, but Paco is eager to get back to his dig and see what has been damaged. He would prefer if the PCs let him take the golden seal, which he claims is the heritage and property of Ber. After seeing them fight, though, he's not going to press the point.

Interrogation.

Of the operatives at the dig site, only Finona is aware that Caius Bergeron worked for an organization with secret goals. Finona wears a golden ring inscribed with "Original Brave Ideas," marking her as a fifth-tier member of Golden Cell. She is tight-lipped and demands to meet with her employer. If interrogated, she can recount visiting several other buried seals, including one with Rock Rackus. She's got a sense Bergeron's superiors want to expand the possibilities of planar magic, but she understands that Bergeron had to keep her in the dark.

She will explain, though, that she had explicit orders to make sure nothing got out of this ziggurat. If the party hasn't yet found the memorandum to her from Caius, she'll ask for leniency in exchange for the location of the document.

Sijhen's Departure.

Sijhen wants as much information as possible, and to kill anyone who knows about its presence in this world, but it's wary of the party.

Ideally, if the party does not suspect Xambria at all, Sijhen will wait for the PCs to bring any prisoners from the dig site to the surface. Preferably they would be berthed on the *Dagger*. The evening the two ships set back for Flint, Sijhen would discreetly kill the crew of the *Dagger*, then eat the prisoners' brains. It then creates a planar portal to Mavisha, sends the summoned monsters (see Snatchers in the Night, below) to swim and attack the PCs' ship, then uses a scroll to teleport to Flint. Right before leaving, it sets fire to all the ship's lantern oil, which causes the vessel to burn to a husk in under half an hour.

If the party travels in either the *Impossible* or *Il Draçon de Mer*, and they have the prisoners below decks, Sijhen uses a bit of clever distraction. Again it kills the *Dagger's* crew, then sends monsters to attack the PCs. Sijhen detaches its thoughtform from Xambria's body, and uses the distraction of the monsters to sneak aboard the PCs' ship, phase through the hull, and nibble on prisoner brains. Meanwhile, Xambria will be reeling and confused. With the utmost wariness to avoid combat with the party, Sijhen would glide back to the *Dagger*, re-merge with Xambria, set fire to the ship, and use the *teleport* scroll.

If the party travels in an excise cutter or steam cutter (see page 80) and keeps the prisoners on their own ship, they'll have to keep them on the main deck, since the ship has no lower deck. Sijhen won't be able to get to the prisoners without being seen. Likewise, if the PCs are truly vigilant, Sijhen won't risk taking on more than one PC.

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A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft is generally goodnatured to his subordinates, but has a penchant for grousing about people behind their backs. He gets squinty and condescending when his authority is questioned, but he can recognize talent and good work. A much better manager than investigator, Delft has advanced this far in the Constabulary by finding good agents, supporting them on difficult missions, and sharing the accolades from their successes.

Delft chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen years ago. He has a habit of poking

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inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure.

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ASST. CHIEF INSPECTOR STOVER DELFT Sijhen still wants a head start on the party, so if it can't feasibly get the prisoners' brains, it will simply teleport away, and hope to finish the job when it attacks the RHC headquarters in Act Three.

If the PCs think that Xambria is acting oddly and lock her up, she might break free during the PCs' descent to the dig site, and be gone before they return. Sijhen's ability to exit Xambria's body and remove her bindings means it will be very hard for the party to keep them both captive.

SNATCHERS IN THE NIGHT

Action. Tactical.

Monsters from Apet distract the party while Sijhen escapes.

After several experiments with various planar portal rituals, Sijhen has figured out how to summon monsters. It still has trouble connecting to Apet for very long, but the proximity to the seal of Mavisha makes it easier for it to call upon aquatic monsters. They only linger in this world as long as the portal is open and for a few minutes afterward, but that's long enough to cause a distraction.

- ♦ 1 hydra
- ♦ 8 slime walkers

Tactics.

The night after the party leaves the seal of Mavisha, their ship is attacked. The hydra climb onto the ship, and attacks as a distraction. The slime walkers clamber onto the deck, three per round, and try to keep PCs from aiding their companions.

If Sijhen has to sneak aboard the PCs' ship, it waits for a patch of clouds to provide extra darkness to block moon and starlight. It sends the monsters ahead and leaves the *Dagger* the round they attack. It takes two rounds for Sijhen, gliding above the surface of the waves, to get to the PCs' ship and phase through a lower deck. Sijhen will be invisible for the approach, but any character who is on the maindeck might notice its departure (Perception DC 28).

On round three Sijhen mentally stuns the prisoners. It spends rounds four through seven eating the brains of four prisoners, then withdraws and is back on the *Dagger* by round ten. On round fifteen, Sijhen merges with Xambria, sets fire to the ship, and teleports away. The monsters from Mavisha vanish after round twenty, and the fire on the *Dagger* becomes visible then.

Terrain.

The *Dagger* is traveling a hundred feet to port of the PCs' ship. The monsters generally stay on the starboard side of the party's ship, and very canny PCs might realize the creatures are trying to keep them from looking in the *Dagger*'s direction.

Aftermath.

The *Dagger* catches fire, but if the PCs hurry over and work to battle the blaze, they can keep the ship from sinking. Alternately, they might rush aboard to look for clues. The small ship's crew are all dead, but Xambria is missing.

If Sijhen managed to kill the prisoners, their jaws are all dislocated and their brains missing.

Sijhen's Way Home.

Sijhen likely beats the party back to Flint by several days. It plans to stay in Xambria's body long enough to open a portal to Gidim, but it has already tried and failed to create such a portal twice before.

By this point Sijhen has the golden seal of Apet stashed in a sewer tunnel off Stanfield Canal, plus either documents or the devoured knowledge of Caius's specialists. Sijhen knows it cannot use the same ritual that worked thousands of years ago, but it has figured out a way to create a tentative portal to Gidim.

First, it plans to open a portal to Apet. Normally this is impossible, but since Xambria has the golden icon of Apet, she can bypass the Ancient's extra seal on the plane. Once this portal is open, energy from Apet will pour through, which Sijhen can gather and harness. Apet provides the magical power needed to teleport, and a huge influx will power a portal that reaches much farther than is normally possible.

The portal will also release monsters, the mutated descendants of old Gidim warbeasts, which will intuitively serve as Sijhen's reinforcements.

Hydra	CR 4
N Huge magical beast	XP 1,200
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; low-light vision, scent; Perception +10	
Defense	
AC 15, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +6 natural. –2 size)	
hp 47 (5d10+20); fast healing 5	
Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft., swim 20 ft.	
Melee 5 bites +6 (1d8+3)	
Special Attacks pounce	
Statistics	
Str 17 Dex 12, Con 18, Int 2, Wis 11, Cha 9	
Base Atk +5; CMB +10; CMD 21 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes	
Skills Perception +10, Swim +11; Racial Modifiers +2 Perception	
SQ hydra traits, regenerate head	
Special Abilities	
Fast Healing (Ex): A hydra's fast healing ability is equal to its current num	per of heads

- (minimum fast healing 5). This fast healing applies only to damage inflicted on the hydra's body.
- Hydra Traits (Ex): A hydra can be killed by severing all of its heads or slaying its body. Any attack that is not an attempt to sever a head affects the body, including area attacks or attacks that cause piercing or bludgeoning damage. To sever a head, an opponent must make a sunder attempt with a slashing weapon targeting a head. A head is considered a separate weapon with hardness 0 and hit points equal to the hydra's HD. To sever a head, an opponent must inflict enough damage to reduce the head's hit points to 0 or less. Severing a head deals damage to the hydra's body equal to the hydra's current HD. A hydra can't attack with a severed head, but takes no other penalties.
- Regenerate Head (Ex): When a hydra's head is destroyed, two heads regrow in 1d4 rounds. A hydra cannot have more than twice its original number of heads at any one time. To prevent new heads from growing, at least 5 points of acid or fire damage must be dealt to the stump (a touch attack to hit) before they appear. Acid or fire damage from area attacks can affect stumps and the body simultaneously. A hydra doesn't die from losing its heads until all are cut off and the stumps seared by acid or fire.

Second, Sijhen will alter the existing portal ritual to point to Gidim. To aim the portal accurately, Sijhen needs the Ancient star map Lady Saxby has in her safe in the RHC headquarters.

Sijhen knows that physical matter cannot travel safely to worlds other than the few local planets, but it hopes that by detaching from Xambria and going through the seal as a thoughtform, it will be able to survive.

An Evil Genius's Plan.

Sijhen still sees itself as a scout and spy. It wants to get as much information as possible, report home, and make sure its presence goes unnoticed. It expects that soon after it returns home, the Gidim will attack this world, and it doesn't want the native races preparing for invasion. Confident in its genius intellect, Sijhen concocts a plan that will take it home and at the same time silence its enemies.

It needs the Ancient star map, but it fears Lady Saxby is taking extra precautions after Sijhen's failed break-in at her home. It wants Lady Saxby to let her guard down. So Sijhen plans to let the PCs capture it.

Plot's Timeline.

The morning of the 31st of Autumn, Sijhen kills workers excavating a subrail tunnel that passes near the underground jail of the RHC headquarters. It sets up the golden seal of Apet there as a focus, scribes various wards, and prepares a planar portal ritual.

CR 1

Slime Walker

Slime walker	CHI
N Small outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, water)	XP 400
Init –1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; tremorsense 30 ft.; Perception +5	
Defense	
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (–1 Dex, +6 natural, +1 size)	
hp 13 (2d10+2)	
Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0	
Immune acid, elemental traits	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., swim 20 ft.; earth glide	
Melee slam +5 (1d6+3 plus entrap)	
Special Attacks entrap (DC 12, 10 minutes, hardness 5, hp 5)	
Statistics	
Str 14 Dex 8, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 11, Cha 11	
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 12	
Feats Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack	
Skills Climb +6, Escape Artist +3, Knowledge (planes) +1, Perception +5,	, Stealth +7,
Swim +10; Racial Modifiers +8 Swim	
Language Aquan	
Special Abilities	
Earth Glide (Ex): A burrowing slime walker can pass through dirt, grave	l, or other
loose or porous solid matter as easily as a fish swims through water. It	cannot use
this ability to pass through a solid barrier such as a stone or brick wall	. Its burrowing

- this ability to pass through a solid barrier such as a stone or brick wall. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple or other sign of its presence. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing slime walker flings the elemental back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.
- Entrap (Ex): The mud from a slime walker's entrap ability can be washed away in 1d3 rounds of immersion in water.

See mud elemental in Pathfinder® Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2



That afternoon, using knowledge gleaned from Caius Bergeron, Sijhen sends a message to the Obscurati, warning that Lady Saxby will be meeting with the PCs at 9:30 this evening to reveal the conspiracy's secrets. Caius already had a contingency plan in place if the Saxby talked or the PCs learned too much, so Sijhen knows what to expect. It hopes the Ob agents will distract the PCs, or better yet kill them and cover the evidence of its presence.

Finally that evening the gala of Ancients will open at Pardwight museum at 7 PM. At 8 PM Sijhen, in Xambria's body, will attack. After pretending to be interested in retrieving the three relics—amulet, blade, and staff—Sijhen will give Xambria back control so she'll surrender. Sijhen expects to be arrested and brought to the RHC jail, which should take no longer than an hour. The jail is separated from the location of Sijhen's ritual by only 50 feet of stone.

At 9:30 PM, a clock timer will place the final component of the portal ritual. Waves of energy from Apet will flow out and flood the RHC headquarters, causing living creatures to cycle from solid to insubstantial and back.

Monsters will emerge from the portal and attack the RHC headquarters, providing a distraction. By moving in time with the energy waves, Sijhen will be able to escape its cell. It will head for Lady Saxby's office and threaten her so she'll hand over the Ancient star map. Then it will head back down to the basement, through the wall, and into the subrail tunnel. It tries to avoid a fight, letting the monsters and the Obscurati keep the PCs busy.

With just a few minutes of concentration, Sijhen will be able to reaim the portal to Gidim. It will shuck itself from Xambria's body and fly through the portal.

The Thing From Beyond.

Sijhen lacks the resources to ensure that the PCs will die, but it hopes its monsters will keep them from ruining its plan. If they find the ritual, though, Sijhen has special back-up.

From Sijhen's previous experiments opening portals to Apet, it knows that a massive monster lurks near the site of the old Gidim staging grounds. This is the mutated creature that formed after the soldiers of Gidim went mad from thought-starvation and began to eat each other. The Thing disturbs even Sijhen, so while it knows the creature will be loyal, it will only release the beast if the situation is dire.

What Could Go Wrong.

There's the chance the PCs might not take Xambria to the RHC headquarters after being captured. If Sijhen's plan goes off as it intends, it'll look like an evil genius. If the PCs decide to hold Xambria elsewhere, Sijhen will nudge Xambria to tell the party all she knows, hoping that the revelation about Lady Saxby will convince them to go to the headquarters.

If they simply kill Xambria, Sijhen can survive independently. It will hide in Xambria's body in hopes that they bring the corpse to the RHC. If the PCs won't even take the body there, Sijhen can slip away as an invisible thought-form. A courier might deliver a warning to get the PCs to the RHC headquarters just as strange things start to happen.



BACK IN FLINT

Exposition. Montage.

The party tries to find the exile from Apet.

Home in a Hurry.

It takes the party 3 to 7 days to sail back to Flint, but if they're clever and willing to call in favors, they can shave this down. The party should not yet be able to teleport unless they purchased a scroll, but they can sail to Ber's capital, Seobriga, in about a day. There they can find a spellcaster who, for 750 gp, will teleport them to the the bayou west of Flint. Alternately, the party might use *sending* to contact Stover Delft, who could arrange for a government spellcaster to teleport in and pick them up for the lower price of 250 gp.

They might have to abandon their ship in Ber, which they'll be on the hook for. If their ship sank, they'll either have to charter one back, teleport, or spend a month hiking across the Anthras Mountains.

Report In.

When the PCs return to Flint, a messenger finds them at the docks with a request from Stover Delft to meet him as quickly as possible at Pardwight Museum of Natural History. Delft is there with curator Hans Weber and a dozen police officiers providing security. Delft asks to hear the PCs' story, then fills them in on strange occurrences he thinks are tied to their investigation.

There have been cases of the Distant Madness condition cropping up, mostly in Parity Lake, and every day they've found another innocent victim missing a brain. Hans Weber reported receiving a disturbing letter from Xambria, which warns that the relics of the Ancients might be targeted by whatever is behind all of this (see page 74).

Since recovering the relics, Weber has kept them at a royal safehold, but he'll display them at the opening gala of the Ancients exhibit. Weber can't afford to cancel the gala, so he hopes the PCs can provide security.

Also....

Before Delft leaves the party, he tells them that Lady Saxby wants to see them as soon as possible. See **Consequences**, page 65.

Looking for Xambria.

The gala opens the evening of the 31st of Autumn. If the PCs have time to kill, they might look for Xambria. Sijhen is very wary of being caught, though, so it has gone to great effort to cover its trail. It has performed test portal rituals and killed victims, but never in the same place twice. When going out during the day, it has concealed Xambria's appearance by dressing her as a hooded druidess.

Still, rather than simply frustrating your players by having no leads, you can instead showcase Sijhen's cleverness by having it leave a false trail. The golden seal of Apet keeps the party from locating Sijhen's lair via *detect planar energy*, but Sijhen might gather energy from Apet, contain it in an amberglass vessel, and place it on a barge that travels up and down Stanfield Canal and even to Pine Island. To add extra insult, Sijhen even picks a barge operated by a red-haired woman, so after the PCs follow the fake leads, find the amberglass vessel leaking Apet energy, and meet the barge owner, they'll realize that Sijhen was toying with them.

If you really need to keep the PCs busy for a while, maybe Sijhen lets itself be noticed in the turf of Lorcan Kell, so if the PCs go in they'll risk being attacked by hostile gangs. Alternately, you might just move up the opening date of the gala.

Digging for Lies 🚓 Act Three: Xambria's Madness

GALA OF THE ANCIENTS

Action. Tactical.

Sijhen attacks the gala as an excuse to be arrested.

Weber allows the PCs to access the museum gallery at any point before the gala, and asks them to be present when the relics are removed from the royal safehold, an hour before the event starts. Weber does his best to accommodate security related requests, though some requests (such as removing the sword, staff, and amulet) he simply cannot abide.

The museum exhibit includes many Ancient items, most from Xambria's dig: gobs of gold jewelry, primitive decorated pottery, weapons, household tools, two large stone statues, and dozens of statuettes.

The gala begins at 7 PM, though most of the guests do not show up for half an hour. The guests are primarily other academics and generous patrons of the arts. Feel free to include NPCs the PCs have met before, such as Nathan Jierre, Professor Lynn Kindleton, or Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen. Rock Rackus also shows up, much to Weber's chagrin. The assembled archaeologists can't resist critiquing the man's methods, but the more lay guests respond well to Rock's theatrics.

Museum Locations.

- 1. Entrance. Bones of a gargantuan dragon, posed in the entrance, are the pride of the museum.
- 2. Plaza. A common area for mingling. On a curtain along the north wall is stitched "The Ancients: Magic of a Forgotten Golden Age." Behind the curtain is the door to the loading dock.

- 3. Gift Shop. Full of furniture and shelves.
- 4. Gala Hall. Spaces marked A, B, S (for amulet, blade, and staff) are 15-ft. high glass cases displaying the most prominent relics.
- 5. Ancients Gallery. Four gold sarcophagi, and tables with jewelry and stonework.
- 6. Cave Men Gallery. A diorama of wax figures depicting the supposed appearance of typical Ancients, similar to the clothing of the mummies in the ziggurat of Apet, except as humans instead of orcs. (Yes, the museum is a little racist.)
- 7. Risur's Founding Gallery. Another diorama, this is a permanent exhibit of painted stone statues of King Kelland and his two greatest companions, plus other relics.
- 8. Hall of Kings. As above, but depicting famous and obscure kings over the seventeen centuries of Risur's existence.
- 9. Offices. Desks and cubicles mostly used for paperwork.
- 10. Map Gallery. Various maps of Risur and the world, including a framed canvas rubbing of the floor map from the ziggurat of Apet.
- 11. Loading Dock. Various materials needed for the museum.
- 12. Archives. Shelves of history books and scholarly papers.
- 13. Gem Gallery. Permanent exhibit of geodes, cut gems, and jewelry.
- 14. Dragon Gallery. A popular permanent exhibit, with a wall painting of the dragon tyrants of Ber, with a diorama of battling dragons in front.
- 15. Beast Theater. Illusions here show various monsters. Candles burn along the wall, and subtle incenses in the wax provide the magical energy to keep the illusions active.



- 16. Titan Gallery. A centuries-old fresco depicts (inaccurately) the fey titans She Who Writhes, Father of Thunder, Ash Wolf, Granny Allswell, and the Voice of Rot.
- 17. God Gallery. Recovered frescoes from Crisillyir and Danor showcase popular foreign gods.
- 18. Demon Gallery. A lightless room with paintings and a diorama related to the now-defunct demonocracy. Guests have to bring their own light sources.
- 19. Curator's Office. Fancy couch, carpet, desk.
- 20. Employee Lounge.
- 21. Ancient Druidic Shrine. Recovered hengestones believed related to proto-primalist religion.
- 22. Ancient Ships. Three reconstructions of Ancient sailboats, based on ceramic paintings.

Each of the large rooms-Areas 2, 4, and 15-has large skylights. During the gala, elegant oil lanterns along the walls provide light.

The Attack.

Sijhen attacks promptly at 8pm, right as a nearby belltower chimes the hour.

- ♦ Sijhen/Xambria
- ♦ 10 implanters
- ♦ 1 worm maw

The skylight above the Ancient gala hall shatters, and a woman in black leather descends on a silk rope amid the crashing glass. She flicks her head to adjust a braid of red hair, revealing Xambria's face. But something in her eyes is different-cold, calculating, alien.

She carries Xambria's old miner's pick, but does not wear the golden icon necklace you've seen her with every time before.

A security guard takes a step toward her, but she pulls back her miner's pick as a threat, and the man pauses. A hush falls over the crowd.

"You know," Xambria says as she glances at a diorama depicting Ancient dress, "they really didn't look like that. You all clearly don't know what you're dealing with, so just give me what I want and none of you have to die."

If not stopped, Sijhen will use telekinesis through Xambria to retrieve the relics from their cases. Then, with an apologetic smile, she attacks the nearest PC. Simultaneously a swarm of six Gidim implanters clamber in through the skylight and attack the bystanders, and then a worm maw flies in after them. The swarm also enters as soon as anyone attacks Sijhen.

The remaining four implanters move to block the outside exits, two at the front, one at each side. The loading dock exit is safe, but if anyone opens another door they'll be blocked by monsters.

Bystanders.

Scatter the museum with thirty random bystanders, plus curator Hans Weber. They count as difficult terrain, and flee toward the nearest exits, where they get clumped up and fight to escape first. If a monster attacks a bystander, don't bother rolling; just remove the bystanders targeted by the attack. They're either dead or unconscious.

Rock Rackus, if present, comes to the PCs' aid (see page 13).

Tactics.

Sijhen fights until Xambria reaches half hp, at which point it relinquishes control of its host body. A sudden look of astonishment and fear comes over Xambria, and she surrenders to the PCs. The monsters attack indiscriminately, but they won't harm Sijhen in Xambria.

If Sijhen gets hold of the amulet of the Ancients, it gains resist 2 against acid, cold, fire, and electricity.

Aftermath.

When Xambria surrenders, she believes she has fought free of Sijhen's control.

Xambria drops her weapon, falls to her knees, and screams. She yanks and tears off one of her leather sleeves, revealing three human eyes poking out of her skin. All these eyes twitch and look in every direction, then stare straight back at Xambria. She reels in horror for a moment, then shakes her head.

"That is bloody strange."

She looks away from her mutated limb at the madness in the gala, as if seeing it for the first time. Then she looks to you and leans forward, desperate.

"Don't kill me! I'm fighting it back. I can stop it. But cuff me, just in case. Lock me up somewhere it can't escape. I know things it knew, and that you need to know!"

Of course, a battle might still be raging, and if the PCs need help, Xambria might lend brief aid. She nervously stays away from the PCs, though, worried she'll hurt one of them. If pressed, she can start sharing information detailed in The Interrogation, below.

When combat ends, though, Xambria grows nauseous and goes into shock. Even if the PCs tend to her, it takes a while for her to have the will to delve into Sijhen's mind to look for more answers. She says she's afraid to go poking around until she's locked up somewhere safe, just in case the thing in her head gets free.

Stats for monsters that have already appeared in the adventure are collected in the GM's Handout Gidim Warbeasts (see page 67).

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DYNAMIC DUO

Sijhen's possession of Xambria allows the Gidim to act through the archaeologist in strange ways. Due to their special bonding, whenever Sijhen is possessing Xambria, use the following special rules to represent her increased power:

- + Xambria gains an additional standard action each round. This action must be spent using any one of Sijhen's spell-like abilities or his ego whip.
- + Sijhen may choose to leave Xambria's body, or can delay to take this action on a later turn. If it does, Sijhen's natural thoughtform body manifests adjacent to Xambria's body. It may use its invisibility spell as part of this action so it won't be seen.

In addition, when possessed, Xambria gains the following supernatural ability.

Twinmind Wayfarer (Su): Sijhen/Xambria can make two simultaneous move actions, moving her speed from the same original but ending in different locations. When Sijhen/Xambria is attacked she can choose as a free action to only be in one of those locations; the other copy vanishes. Sijhen/Xambria must choose to end this effect at the start of her next turn. Until that time, Sijhen/Xambria can make attacks and be targeted as if in either location.

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Digging for Lies 🚓 Act Three: Xambria's Madness

Xambria	CR 6	Sijhen
Female human bard (archaeologist*) 7	XP 2,400	NE Medium aberration
CG Medium humanoid (human)		Init +6; Senses all-around vision,
Init +5; Senses Perception +10		Defense
* See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Ultimate Combat [®]		AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2
Defense		hp 59 (7d8+28)
AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)		Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8
hp 39 (7d8+7)		Immune Mind-affecting, cold; Re
Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +5		Offense
Defensive Abilities Evasion, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge		Speed 40 ft.
Offense		Melee 2 claws +7 (1d6+2 plus gra
Speed 30 ft.		Ranged ego whip +7 touch (2d6 p
Melee +1 heavy pick +5 (1d6/x4)		Special Attacks ego whip, mind g
Bard Spells Known (CL 7th, concentration +10)		Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, cor
3rd (2/day)—dispel magic, see invisibility		At will—dimension door, teleki
2nd (4/day)—heroism, silence (DC 15), suggestion (DC 15), shatter (DC 15)		1/day—invisibility
1st (5/day) —know direction, read magic, light, detect magic, mage hand,		Statistics
prestidigitation		Str 15 Dex 14, Con 19, Int 20, Wis
Statistics		Base Atk +5; CMB +7 (+11 grapple
Str 8 Dex 13, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 10, Cha 16		Feats Combat Expertise, Combat
Base Atk +5; CMB +4; CMD 16		Skills Disable Device +9, Fly +4, H
Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficie	ency	Spellcraft +15, Survival +13, Swi
(Heavy Pick), Skill Focus (Knowledge [History])		Languages telepathy 100 ft.

- Skills Acrobatics +9, Appraise +10, Climb +6, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +8, Heal +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +16, Knowledge (Geography) +16, Knowledge (History) +19, Knowledge (Planes) +16, Knowledge (Religion) +12, Linguistics +9, Perception +10, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +9, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +11
 Languages Aklo, Common, Daemonic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Orc
- SQ Archaeologist's Luck +2, Bardic Knowledge +3, Clever Explorer +3, Fast Stealth, Lore Master

Other Gear +1 heavy pick, +1 studded leather

Sijhen	CR 6
NE Medium aberration	XP 1,600
Init +6; Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)	
hp 59 (7d8+28)	
Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +8	
Immune Mind-affecting, cold; Resist fire 10	
Offense	
Speed 40 ft.	
Melee 2 claws +7 (1d6+2 plus grab)	
Ranged ego whip +7 touch (2d6 plus stunned)	
Special Attacks ego whip, mind grasp	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, concentration +15)	
At will—dimension door, telekinesis (DC 20)	
1/day—invisibility	
Statistics	
Str 15 Dex 14, Con 19, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 17	
Base Atk +5; CMB +7 (+11 grapple); CMD 19	
Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Initi	ative
Skills Disable Device +9, Fly +4, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Po	erception +13,
Spellcraft +15, Survival +13, Swim +20, Use Magic Device +10	
Languages telepathy 100 ft.	
SQ thoughtform	
Special Abilities	
Ego Whip (Su): Sijhen can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as	a ranged touch
attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targe	ets struck by the
ego whip must make a Will save (DC 17) or be stunned for one roun	d.
Mind Grasp (Sp): At the beginning of a round in which Sijhen success	sfully maintains

Mind Grasp (Sp): At the beginning of a round in which Sijhen successfully maintains a grapple (either using his grab ability or *telekinesis*), he can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 20 negates). Sijhen can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from his control.

INTERROGATION

Social. Real-Time.

Xambria reveals everything she knows to the PCs, and then Sijhen makes its jail break.

Most likely the PCs take Xambria to the RHC Headquarters jail. Once she feels safe enough that she won't harm anyone, she's willing to tell the PCs everything she knows.

Pacing Note.

The climax is a complex combination of multiple encounters. If you have to end a session some place, do it here, before the final action starts.

"So forgive me if this comes out a little non-chronolinearly; I think I've gone several shades of crazy. Getting everything out is more important than getting it clear. You might want to write some of this gibberish down.

"The thing in my head, its name is Sijhen. It's a Gidim. They're some sort of race from another world, and it was trapped behind the ziggurat's seal for thousands of years. Real lookers, from its memories.

"Do you know what brain tastes like? I do now. I'm not a fan. Imagine being brought by a friend you don't really like to the same restaurant that only serves—. You know, nevermind, you don't want to know. Never with my own mouth, thank you, though.



Digging for Lies 🚓 🔁 Act Three: Xambria's Madness



"It got out, got into me, made me forget. I'm still not sure what I don't remember, but it definitely was interested in the Obscurati. It only figured that name out later, after it ate old Mr. Bergeron's brain.

"You lot, you stopped Macbannin. He was with Bergeron. There are these cells, keep them all secret from each other. Only a few people at the top know how it all fits together, and Caius wasn't at the top. But the Obscurati-. That's a long name. The Ob. Sounds less ominous. Ob.

"So the Ob, they want to find out all about the Ancients and these seals. Caius was paying for us to do that for them. He reported up. I think he had a spell put on him to keep anyone from finding out who 'up' was from him.

"Oh, and he's going to ride the train. Sijhen didn't care about that, because it's months from now, but I think it's important. Whoever is 'up' will be there.

"Sijhen kept opening these portals, but it could never go through. Something stopped it. Portals instead of trains, hmph. He's just like Catherine Romana. Even a madwoman can read the papers, you know."

Sounds of commotion come faintly from the other end of the jail, beyond the common prisoner cells.

"Damn. There was something else I just remembered that was important, but it's fighting. It made me forget. Your boss! Your boss, Saxby has something it wants. Saxby wasn't up, wasn't down, but was sideways. She worked for Macbannin. You probably ought to deal with that."

The commotion grows louder, and then follows a scream from some dying prisoner.

"Oh, I got it! Sijhen doesn't care about the train because it plans to leave, and bring an invasion back. It *planned* to get captured, and I'm not really in control. Oh, bloody—"

A sudden wave of extraplanar energy washes over you, pouring out of the stone walls to the south. You stagger at the sudden sense of dislocation, and as you struggle to regain your senses, every inanimate object around you not carried or worn turns impossibly translucent. You can see through stone, down to the sewer, out to the under-construction subrail tunnel, sideways to the band of black-clad murderers sneaking into the basement, up to the ground floor and all your equally confused coworkers.

And then the world turns transparent, nothing but contour lines and faded textures. The sight is too much for your mind to grasp, and vertigo drops you to your knees. But you do see one thing clearly. Xambria stands, jumps into the ceiling, digs fingers into invisible handholds, and pulls herself up through solid stone to the ground floor.

Your vertigo passes, and the world has started to darken back to translucence, and further still to solidity. But you can feel another wave coming, and for a moment, when everything was transparent, you saw monsters flying through the building above. ൟ൭ൕൟ

HEADQUARTERS LAYOUT.

Some locations have bystanders when the building falls under attack, most of them clerical or janitorial staff, couriers, or security guards. Unless stats are provided for them, they are non-combatants. As at the gala, don't bother rolling attacks against bystanders. If a monster attacks a bystander, the bystander is either knocked out or killed. Keep track of how many bystanders survive, however, in case the PCs succeed and Rally the RHC.

FIRST FLOOR: A total of 17 bystanders start here.

- 1. Entrance. Five bystanders.
- Lower Hallway. Lit with gaslights on the ceiling. Three bystanders.
- 3. Western Stairwell.
- 4. Eastern Stairwell.
- 5. Interrogation Rooms. Two bystanders.
- Quartermaster Office. One bystander. Keys to rooms 7 and 8 are locked in desk (Disable Device DC 15).
- 7. General Supplies. Door locked (Disable Device DC 20).
- 8. Evidence. Door locked (Disable Device DC 20).
- 9. Secretary Pool. Four bystanders.
- 10. Guard Room. Two bystanders in each.
- 11. Morgue. One bystander.

SECOND FLOOR: A total of 10 bystanders, plus three constables, Stover Delft, and Lady Saxby.

- 12. Inspector's Desks. Three bystanders each in the two west rooms. The northeast room has constables Carlao, Dima, and Serena, who Saxby recruits as bodyguards.
- 13. Delft's Office. Stover Delft is here.
- 14. Support Offices. Empty.
- 15. Break Room. One bystander.
- 16. Upper Hallway. Three bystanders.
- 17. Saxby's Office. Saxby is here. Saxby's safe is concealed under her desk, and trapped (Perception DC 25). The safe has a tumbler lock (Disable Device DC 25), and a concealed keyhole to disarm the trap (Disable Device DC 25). If it's opened without being disarmed, a small explosive blasts upward, dealing 2d6 points of fire damage to all within 10 ft. (DC 16 Reflex save for half). In addition to the Ancient star map, the safe contains large amounts of gold and documents for three fake identities. Saxby is ready to leave in a hurry.

BASEMENT: A total of 8 bystanders here, though the PCs might not risk releasing them.

- 18. Holding Cells. Eight bystanders, all of them prisoners who are locked up. Two guards were here, but they are killed by the Obscurati Kill Squad the moment they enter.
- 19. Magic Cells. Spellcasters are kept here. The cells are enchanted to function like mage cuffs; any attempt to use magical powers sounds an alarm and does 2d6 damage to the prisoner. A golden ward also blocks teleportation and summoning. Two columns glow with pale white light, which grants everyone within 25 ft. Resist 10 against all energy types.
- **20. Under Construction Subway Tunnel.** This section is separated from the jail cells by 50 ft. of stone, but the energy of Apet makes it possible to sprint between the two areas.

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THIS JUST GOT REAL

Various Encounters.

The RHC Headquarters are flooded with energy from Apet, and most of the staff goes mad.

The party has multiple crises to deal with. We provide a rough timeline of the actions of the enemies, but that may change based on the party's efforts. Handily, the phasing of reality gives you an excuse to track everyone's location on a map even if the PCs couldn't normally see them.

Of the many possible paths, perhaps the most satisfying would see the PCs start to chase Sijhen upstairs, rescue a group of RHC workers beset by monsters, then be cornered by the Obscurati kill squad. After that major battle, the party would need to relocate Sijhen and Saxby and try to reach them, but Saxby will likely have handed over the star map to Sijhen in order to avoid death. Sijhen heads back to the basement, while Saxby tries to escape the building with her bodyguards. The party could capture Saxby, notice Sijhen at the portal, and then rush to stop the Gidim from getting away.

Planar Phasing.

Waves of magical energy from Apet, affected by the psychic energy of the Gidim warbeasts gathered on the far side of Sijhen's portal, pour into this world. When these waves hit, creatures within a few hundred

Royal Homeland Constabulary Office \bigcirc Subrail Tunnel One square equals 5ft.

feet of the portal briefly become thoughtforms. They perceive the world to be fading in and out, but in truth the world stays the same, while they become alternately solid and phasing.

Keep track of rounds in cycles of 5, switching over at the start of every round.

✤ Round 1—Normal. Reality is normal and opaque.

- + Round 2-Translucent. Creatures can see through terrain as if it were cloudy glass, and have a general awareness of the locations of other creatures that are only separated by one or two walls.
- + Round 3-Transparent. Creatures can see through terrain, though they're still aware of its locations and contours. They gain the phasing trait, which allows them to move through solid objects and ignore difficult terrain, but they cannot end their turns inside a solid object.
- ◆ Round 4—Translucent. As per Round 2.
- + Round 5-Normal. As per Round 1. After this round, start a new cycle, back at Round 1.

During Round 3 of the cycle, all creatures effectively have the Thoughtform trait (see page 13). However, since attackers and targets are in synch with each other, attacks deal deal normal damage to incorporeal creatures, not half damage.

If the PCs learned how to use thoughts to affect thoughtform creatures, they can use those techniques on any creature during Round 3 of these cycles.



Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 Act Three: Xambria's Madness

Digging for Lies 🚓 📿 🐎 Act Three: Xambria's Madness

Most of the enemies in this scene don't realize they can move through walls and floors. The PCs have a mobility advantage because they saw Sijhen do it, but their enemies might cue in to the trick if the party does it often enough.

Encounter Overview.

This scene contains several smaller encounters. They can occur independently, or possible combine into one deadly encounter if the PCs aren't careful. The design of the RHC Headquarters and the planar phasing provide avenues for the PCs to get a reprieve from a dangerous situation.

- Monsters of Opportunity. At random intervals, additional monsters might swoop in and attack whoever looks vulnerable, perhaps even aiding the PCs. Normally, though, the PCs will need to save their coworkers.
- Obscurati Kill Squad. Ob operatives search for the PCs and try to kill them.
- **Rally the RHC.** By snapping Stover Delft out of his temporary madness, the party can turn their allies from imperiled bystanders to a small army.
- Saxby's Flight. Lady Saxby tries to get away, and has RHC members protecting her.
- Sijhen at the Threshold. The Gidim wayfarer flees back to its homeworld, and unleashes a monster to cover its tracks.

Stats for monsters that have already appeared in the adventure are collected in the GM's Handout—Gidim Warbeasts. Other enemy stats are presented in the appropriate scene.

Climax Timeline.

Time is the main limiting factor to the PCs' actions. Barring PC intervention, events occur as follows.

When the portal to Apet opens, everyone except Sijhen is stunned. Sijhen climbs via phasing through the ceiling and up to the second floor. It then runs east through the hallway and kicks open the door to Saxby's office right at the moment the PCs recover from their vertigo. On Round 1, Sijhen threatens to kill Saxby unless she opens her safe and hands open the Ancient star map. It takes until Round 5 for Saxby to agree.

On Round 6 and 7, Saxby disables the safe's trap, opens the safe, and hands over the map. Then she tries to attack Sijhen while it's distracted, and she shouts for help. But in Round 8 reality becomes transparent again, so Sijhen turns invisible and dives down through the floors, back to the basement.

Starting on Round 9, Saxby shouts for back-up and corrals three constables to be her bodyguards—Carlao, Dima, and Serena.

On Round 13, when reality is transparent, Sijhen glides invisibly through the basement wall and into the subrail tunnel where its ritual is active. Sijhen has to lets its invisibility lapse, but is hard to spot even when reality is transparent. For the next few rounds it prepares the portal ritual to change targets, and spends the rest of its time making sure with the Ancient star map that it is picking the right star.

On Round 14, Saxby and her bodyguards warily head down the eastern stairwell to the ground floor. Dead bodies and overturned examination tables block the morgue exit, so they head for the front entrance. If not hindered, they get out the front door at the end of Round 20. Saxby's bodyguards volunteer to head back in and try to get other people to safety. Saxby says she'll alert the police, then runs away and tries to hide. _െഞ്ഞം__

GEAR UP!

The PCs are outnumbered, but they're on home turf. If they raid the General Supplies (Area 7), they can retrieve up to twenty *potions of cure light wounds*. The supplies also contain various mundane weapons, armor, and equipment. Perhaps more useful, the PCs might head to the Evidence room (Area 8), where the experimental weapons recovered from the Arms Fair await, including the *nock gun* and the *steam suit*.

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If the PCs take a rest at any point, then somewhere around Round 80 (8 minutes after all hell breaks loose), they feel the waves grow stronger, and can easily pinpoint the source of the energy. They have 20 rounds to reach Sijhen's portal in the subrail tunnel before Sijhen escapes and catastrophe strikes.

Monsters of Opportunity.

RHC staff are scattered throughout the building, most of them gripped by Distant Madness and unable to move. The first time the PCs come upon a group of their coworkers, they find them under attack by a few Gidim warbeasts. Additionally, every time Round 3 in the cycle comes up, a few new monsters appear in the building, phasing through walls and going after vulnerable targets.

Monster Groups.

Choose one of the following combinations. Unless the PCs go looking for monsters, they should be attacked no more than four times during this scene.

- Option One—Hanging Lights. The spikers pinion people and pull them off the ground while the orb shoots the immobilized targets.
 - 3 crawling spikers
 - 1 flashing orb
- Option Two—Seven Bad Ideas. The monsters just swarm.
 4 implanters
- Option Three—Crazy Eyes. These monsters favor large crowds, which will be driven to attack each other.
 - 2 eyes of madness
- Option Four—Don't Go Outside! The monsters set upon anyone who leaves the building.
 - 2 flying things

Obscurati Kill Squad.

The kill squad enters through a rusted ring in the wall of the stairwell, but they're only mostly in this world. After five minutes, or if they pass back through the ring, they return to the Bleak Gate. Until then they can interact with the PCs normally, but they appear dark, as if viewed through a black veil.

The stalker is in charge, and has the creepers and pistoleers fan out in pairs, staying within shouting distance. They all have detailed descriptions of the PCs, and the moment any of them spot the party, they attack. The stalker and slayer are too professional to worry about the energies from Apet, and the others assume this is some side effect of traveling through the Bleak Gate.

- + 1 Obscurati dark stalker
- ✤ 1 Obscurati dark slayer
- + 2 Obscurati dark creepers
- ♦ 2 Kell-Guild pistoleers (see page 17)

Not So Professional.

One of the pistoleers, a member of Lorcan Kell's thieves guild, taunts the party, saying "Lorcan Kell sends his regards. Do you like our new friends?"

The dark stalker snaps back, "Quiet! We have a strict no-gloating protocol."

Tactics.

The stalker's first action is to cast *deeper darkness* to encompass as many PCs as possible. The creepers advance and look to sneak attack the PCs, while the slayer attempts to daze or inflict moderate wounds as appropriate. This encounter would be challenging on its own for the party, and amid all this chaos could be overwhelming if the PCs don't think to make tactical withdrawals.

If the slayer and stalker are defeated, the remaining agents will strongly consider fleeing.

Obscurati Dark Stalker	CR 4
N Medium humanoid (human)	XP 1,200
Init +4; Senses see in darkness; Perception +8	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +4 Dex +2 natural)	
hp 39 (6d8+12)	
Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +2	
Weakness light blindness	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee 2 shortswords +6/+6 (1d6+2 plus poison / 19–20)	
Special Attacks death throes, sneak attack (+3d6)	
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)	
1/day—deeper darkness, detect magic, fog cloud	
Statistics	
Str 14 Dex 18, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 13	
Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 20	
Feats Double Slice, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse	
Skills Climb +10, Perception +8, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8	
Language Common, Primordial	
SQ Poison Use	
Special Abilities	
Death Throes (Ex): When a dark stalker is slain, the magic keeping	him in this world
ruptures in a flash of white-hot flame. This acts like a fireball that o	deals 3d6 points o
fire damage to all creatures within a 20-foot-radius burst. A DC 15	Reflex save halve
this damage. The dark stalker's gear, treasure, and body are pulled	d into the Bleak
Gate. This save is Constitution-based.	
Poison Use (Ex): Dark stalkers are skilled in the use of poison and r	never risk ac-
cidentally poisoning themselves.	

Black Smear—injury; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Str; cure 1 save. The poison DC is Constitution-based.

See in Darkness (Ex): A dark stalker can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by deeper darkness.



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N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; Senses detect magic, see in darkness; Perception +4 Defense

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+4 Dex)

hp 22 (4d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +1

Weakness light blindness

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee kukri +8 (1d4 plus poison)

Special Attacks death throes, sneak attack (+2d6), soul harvest

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th; concentration +6)

3/day—bleed (DC 12), chill touch (DC 13), darkness, daze monster (DC 14), death knell (DC 14), inflict moderate wounds (DC 14), spectral hand

CR 3

XP 800

Statistics

Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 15

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 15

Feats Skill Focus (Use Magic Device), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +3, Perception +4, Spellcraft +7, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +12

Language Common, Primordial

SO poison use **Special Abilities**

Death Throes (Ex): When a dark slaver is slain, the magic keeping him in this world ruptures in a crack of thunder. All creatures within a 10-foot-radius burst take 1d8 points of sonic damage and must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be deafened for 2d4 rounds. The dark slayer's gear, treasure, and body are pulled into the Bleak Gate. This save is Constitution-based.

Poison Use (Ex): Dark slayer are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves.

- Black Smear—injury; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Str; cure 1 save. The poison DC is Constitution-based.
- See in Darkness (Ex): A dark slayer can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by deeper darkness.
- Soul Harvest (Su): When a dark slayer damages a flat-footed foe or a foe it is flanking with a melee touch spell or spell-like ability that deals hit point damage, the spell does an additional 1d6 points of damage and the dark slayer gains an equal amount of temporary hit points. These temporary hit points last for a maximum of 1 hour.

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OBSCURATI ACTIVITY

While the PCs have been investigating the Obscurati, crime boss Lorcan Kell has made contact with their branch in the Bleak Gate. With the death of Caius Bergeron, Leone Quital the steelshaper is desperate for allies in the normal world. He has made an arrangement with Lorcan to use the man's gang as muscle when necessary.

On this evening, experienced Obscurati operatives are leading several Kell-Guild thugs on a mission to take out the PCs. All of them have been enhanced by Obscurati rituals so they can slip into this world, though the magic is experimental and prone to dramatic failure. They enter the basement of the headquarters, using the rusted ring, moments before the portal to Apet opens.

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Obscurati Dark Killer

CN Medium humanoid (human) Init +3; Senses see in darkness; Perception +4

Defense

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +3 Dex) hp 19 (3d8+6)

Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

Weakness light blindness

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee dagger +6 (1d4 plus poison / 19–20)

Special Attacks death throes, sneak attack (+2d6)

Statistics

Str 11, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 14

Feats Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand), Weapon Finesse

Skills Climb +8, Perception +4, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +8

Language Common, Primordial

SQ poison use

Special Abilities

- Death Throes (Ex): When a dark killer is slain, the magic keeping him in this world explodes in a flash of bright white light. All creatures within a 10-foot burst must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d6 rounds. Other Obscurati operatives within 10 feet are automatically blinded for at least 1 round, due to their light blindness. The dark killer's gear, treasure, and body are pulled into the Bleak Gate. This save is Constitution-based.
- **Poison Use (Ex):** Dark killer are skilled in the use of poison and never risk accidentally poisoning themselves.
- **Black Smear**—injury; *save* Fort DC 15; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Str; *cure* 1 save. The poison DC is Constitution-based.
- See in Darkness (Su): A dark killer can see perfectly in darkness of any kind, including that created by *deeper darkness*.

Rally the RHC.

When the dimensional disturbance first occurs, Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft grabs his sword-cane, ready to fights the monsters. But a group of implanters manifest just inside his office and manage to afflict him with Distant Madness. In his delusional state Delft manages to escape an approachin worm maw, but he locks himself in his room, and when the next wave hits he loses grip on reality. He becomes convinced that everyone in RHC has been replaced with doppelgangers, and he is next on their list.

Delft barricades himself in his office, and fires his pistol at anybody who comes near, shouting, "I see you doppelgangers! You won't steal my brain."

- ♦ 1 worm maw
- ♦ Stover Delft

Tactics.

CR 3

XP 600

The worm maw waits outside his office door, and on every Round 3 of the cycle it tries to phase through, but Delft's attacks keep it at bay. When the PCs reach the second floor, they likely find the monster smashing at the door.

Delft's madness interferes with his ability to employ advanced tactics. He prefers to stay at range with his pistol. If forced into melee he reveals a thin sword hidden within his cane and attacks whoever looks the most threatening.

No, Slapping Him Isn't Enough.

Convinced that the doppelgangers will kill him no matter what, Delft fights until he is reduced to 0 hp, at which point he'll be defenseless but conscious. At this point, or if the PCs manage to kill the worm maw, then grab Delft and show that they mean him no harm, it's possible to talk him out of his delusion (Diplomacy or Heal DC 20).

At that point, he is restored to at least 1 hit point, and he acts as a rallying point for any surviving bystanders. Bystanders who see Delft get their wits and start to fight back.

Stover Delft	CR 5
Male human rogue (investigator*) 6	XP 1,600
LG Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +2; Senses Perception +11	
* See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide [®]	
Defense	
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 armor, +2 Dex)	
hp 28 (6d8)	
Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +4	
Defensive Abilities Evasion, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft. (due to leg wound)	
Melee +1 sword cane+5 (1d6+1)	
Ranged mw pistol +7 (1d8/x4)	
Special Attacks Sneak Attack +3d6	
Statistics	
Str 10 Dex 14, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 14	
Base Atk +4; CMB +4; CMD 16	
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (Swo Persuasive	ord Cane),
Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +11, Escape Artist +8, Intir Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +8, Knowledge (Engineering) +5, Kn phy) +7, Knowledge (History) +7, Knowledge (Local) +10, Knowled	owledge (Geogra-
Perception +11, Sense Motive +13, Stealth +11	
Languages Common, Primordial	
SQ Canny Observer, Coax information, Follow Clues, Follow Up	
Combat Gear +1 sword cane, masterwork pistol, masterwork leather	er



Saxby's Flight.

Unless the PCs are very fast, they likely reach Lady Saxby after Sijhen has gotten the Ancient star map. Saxby, unsure of how much the PCs know, tells three other constables that people might be driven mad, and that they need to protect her. Her goal is to get out of the RHC, reach a safe house in Bosum Strand, and flee the city the next morning.

- ✤ Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby
- ♦ Carlao, RHC knight
- + Dima, RHC cleric
- + Serena, RHC assassin

Tactics.

Carlao stays beside Saxby at all times, with Serena scouting a few feet ahead and Dima bringing up the rear. They fight to cover Saxby's escape, but if Saxby sees an opening, she'll try to take out a PC to slow pursuit.

Saxby's three constable bodyguards are wary of the PCs, but openminded. If the PCs accuse Saxby, she'll try to ignore them, saying they're lying as she continues fleeing. If the party attacks, the other constables defend her, but will ask the PCs to stand down and explain themselves.

Aftermath.

If the PCs are convincing, the constables might turn on Saxby and attempt to subdue her. Afterward, they prefer to rescue trapped staffers and civilians in nearby buildings, while letting the PCs handle Sijhen, but if the PCs press the point, there's no reason to deny them allies in the final encounter.

Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby	CR 6
Female human fighter (two-weapon warrior*) 4 / rogue 3	XP 2,400
LE Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +7; Senses Perception +9	
* See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide [®]	
Defense	
AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 shield, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)	
hp 51 (4d10+3d8+14)	
Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +3	
Defensive Abilities Bravery +1, Defensive Flurry, Evasion, Trap Sense	e +1
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee +1 longsword +6/+1 (1d8+2/19-20); +1 dagger +8/+3 (1d4+1/1	9–20)
Special Attacks Positioning Attack (1/day), Sneak Attack +2d6	
Statistics	
Str 13 Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8	
Base Atk +6; CMB +7; CMD 21	
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Mobility,	Two-Weapon
Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse	
Skills Acrobatics +9, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +7, Escape	e Artist +8,
Intimidate +4	
Knowledge (History) +5, Knowledge (Local) +10, Knowledge (Nobility)	+7, Perception
+9, Sense Motive	
+9, Stealth +10, Use Magic Device +5	
Languages Common, Elven	
SQ Trapfinding +1	
Combat Gear +1 dagger, +1 longsword, +2 studded leather; Other Gea	n potion of
barkskin, potion of cure moderate wounds	

Carlao	CRS
Male human cavalier* 4	XP 80
LG Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +2; Senses Perception +6	
* See Pathfinder [®] Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide [™]	
Defense	
AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+8 armor, +2 shield)	
hp 41 (4d10+12)	
Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +4	
Offense	
Speed 20 ft.	
Melee +1 longsword +8 (1d8+3/19-20)	
Special Attacks Cavalier's Charge, Dragon's Challenge	
Statistics	
Str 15 Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10	
Base Atk +4; CMB +6; CMD 16	
Feats Iron Will, Outflank, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Longsword)	
Skills Acrobatics –3, Climb –5, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist –5, Fly –5,	Heal +3,
Knowledge (Local) +0, Knowledge (Religion) +0, Perception +6, Ride	+0, Sense
Motive +7, Stealth -5, Swim -5	
Languages Common	
SQ Aid Allies, Animal Companion Link (horse named Valiant not prese	nt), Expert
Trainer, Tactician	
Combat Gear +1 longsword, masterwork half plate, masterwork shield	, heavy steel;
Other Gear potion of cure moderate wounds	
Dime	(D)
Dima	CR
Male dwarf cleric 4	XP 80
LG Medium humanoid (dwarf)	

Init -1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

Defense

AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +3 shield, -1 Dex)

hp 40 (4d8+16)

Fort +7, Ref +0, Will +7 Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mw warhammer +4 (1d8/×3)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th, concentration+5)

2nd—sound burst (DC 15), cure moderate wounds, hold person (DC 15), zone of truth

1st—entropic shield, cause fear (DC 14), comprehend languages, detect evil, sanctuary (DC 14)

0—create water, detect magic, resistance

Statistics

Str 10 Dex 8, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +3; CMD 12

Feats Shield Focus, Toughness

- Skills Acrobatics -6, Climb -5, Diplomacy +6, Escape Artist -6, Fly -6, Heal +7,
- Knowledge (History) +7, Knowledge (Nature) +6, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Ride –6, Spellcraft +5, Stealth –6, Swim –5

Languages Celestial, Common, Dwarven

SQ Channel Positive Energy 2d6 (4/day)

Combat Gear +1 chainmail, masterwork shield, heavy steel, masterwork warhammer; **Other Gear** scroll of cure serious wounds, wand of cure light wounds (20 charges) CR 3

XP 800

Serena

Female human rogue 4

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; Senses Perception +6

Defense

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 24 (4d8+4)

Fort +2, Ref +8, Will +0

Defensive Abilities Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge

Offense Speed 35 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +8 (1d6+3/18-20)

Special Attacks Powerful Sneak, Sneak Attack +2d6

Statistics

Str 14 Dex 18, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12

Base Atk +3; CMB +5; CMD 19

Feats Fleet, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +11, Bluff +7, Climb +8, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (Local) +7, Knowledge (Nobility) +4, Perception +6, Sleight of Hand +11, Stealth +11

Languages Common

SQ Surprise Attacks, Trapfinding +2

Combat Gear +1 rapier, masterwork studded leather; Other Gear belt of incredible dexterity +2, potion of spider climb

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A former superstar investigator who cracked many famous cases in her time, Saxby was promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector and transferred to take over Flint operations a decade ago. Lady Saxby was a darling of the public when she married a much younger veteran knighted during the Fourth Yerasol War, but the move was intended merely to improve her standing. Lady Saxby is highly intelligent, and her confidence borders on megalomania.

Despite her power and authority, Saxby grew bored with the role of an administrator, until Reed Macbannin recruited her in a clandestine project. She believed she was providing coverage for a critical

LADY INSPECTRESS MARGARET SAXB'

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secret military project, and she foresaw great rewards from the king when the project was complete. When Macbannin fell, she became far more concerned with maintaining her position than in rooting out threats to the nation.

While she now nears fifty, Lady Saxby remains quite fit and retains much of her youthful beauty. She demands authority wherever she goes, and uses many subtle reminders to let people know who is boss. For example, there is only one (expensive, comfortable) chair in her office: hers.



SIJHEN AT THE THRESHOLD

Action/Social. Tactical.

While no match for the party by itself, Sijhen has a monstrous ally should they try to interrupt its ritual.

When the PCs find Sijhen's ritual, the Gidim wayfarer might be too busy to notice them, especially if they approach from farther down the subrail tunnel. Sijhen wears the golden icon of Apet, and holds the Ancient star map-a masterfully-crafted disk of gold, two feet in diameter, consisting of concentric rings with colored stones for the planets, and relief patterns representing constellations and distant stars.

Sijhen stands just outside a ring of eight lanterns glowing with harsh silver light, each inscribed with a sigil in the Gidim language. The lanterns hum and screech, and monstrous growls coming through the portal can cover the sound of the party's movements (Stealth DC 13). On the eastern wall sits the golden seal of Apet, shining in the lantern's glow. Sijhen has opened a portal in the wall behind the seal, but the seal is not flush with the wall, so energy leaks through.

Two 10-ft. wide sets of tracks run along a 5-ft. deep notch, then deadend at wooden barricades mere feet from Sijhen's ritual. A 15-ft. long rail car sits parked on each track, at the west edge of the north track, and in the middle of the south track. These combination steam engine/cargo pallets were used for moving supplies and workers.

- + Sijhen
- + The Thing from Beyond

Talking and Tactics.

Unless the PCs attack on sight, Sijhen attempts to stall. It takes a moment to set the ritual into its final stage (see below), and then it asks for the party to simply let it go in peace, and it will not bother them anymore.

If the PCs don't buy this lie, or if they attack on sight, Sijhen warns them that if they kill it, they'll kill Xambria too. Even if Xambria's body is dead, her consciousness survives as part of Sijhen's thoughtform. Sijhen offers to transfer Xambria to one of the PCs if they'll refrain from attacking.

Sijhen might still wear Xambria's body. In a fight, it uses Xambria's tactics until her body is mortally wounded, then feigns death for a moment before manifesting invisibly. The PCs might notice Sijhen's presence with Perception checks, but if not, the Gidim wayfarer waits for its chance to dash through the portal at the rituals' completion.

If Sijhen is about to lose, or if the PCs are close to ending its ritual, it moves beside the golden seal and pulls it away from the wall, which unleashes The Thing From Beyond.

The Trains.

Because they can move, the train cars are not shown on the map, but they are both 2-by-3 square objects that count as difficult terrain. The engine car has a parking break, which can be disengaged as a move action. It can then be pushed as a standard action (Strength DC 13), which imparts it a speed of 5 ft., or increases its speed by 5 ft. Alternately, if the steam engine is targeted with an attack that deals at least 5 fire damage, the engine jolts to life and accelerates the train to a speed of 15 ft., then to a speed of 30 ft. on its next turn. The train moves its speed on initiative count 0.

Once the train reaches the barricade, it can no longer accelerate, but its momentum carries it one final turn. Any creature in its path is pushed forward, and takes 10 damage, plus 2 damage for every 5-ft. square of

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the train's speed. If the creature is crushed against the wall, it takes an additional 25 damage.

If the golden seal is still next to the portal, hitting it with the train slams it fully shut, with the same effect as a safe closure.

Sijhen's Ritual.

If the PCs have arrived before Round 80, monstrous tentacles try to poke through the gap between the golden seal and the stone. Sijhen adjusts the rings while chanting words that echo off both the walls and the PCs' subsconscious minds. A Spellcraft check (DC 18) determines that Sijhen is adjusting the star map in an attempt to lock the portal onto some targeted world. A skyseer automatically senses this.

At this stage, the portal is stable, and attacking Sijhen won't affect the portal. The party's actions, however, might close, collapse, or rupture the portal (see below).

It only takes Sijhen a few moments examining the Ancient star map to be fairly confident where Gidim is, but it's being careful. Should the PCs attack, however, Sijhen spends a move action on its first turn to change the portal's target to the Gidim homeworld. A 20-round countdown begins, tracking each round at initiative count 0.

If the PCs don't get here fast enough, Sijhen targets Gidim on round 80 of the previous encounter. The 20-round countdown starts the moment the PCs become aware of the change in energy, and that it's coming from the subrail tunnel.

The Final Countdown.

During the 20-round countdown, the golden seal shudders as streaks of light strobe out of the portal, like stars flashing as you fly past them in the heavens. A skyseer intuitively knows that the portal is sweeping through stars in the constellation called The Flood. Unless stopped, the portal connects to Gidim at the end of the countdown.

When the countdown finishes, the golden seal is blasted away from the wall, and for the briefest moment the PCs can see an alien world where pulsating thoughtform flora cling to red stones and a titanic purple tendril of psychic light sways into the sky from beyond the horizon. They are convinced that the world beyond has *noticed* them.

Sijhen, if still alive, shucks its corporeal flesh and flees through the portal as a thoughtform. Then the portal ruptures.

Stopping the Ritual.

The eight lanterns are the key to controlling the ritual, but they're just as fragile as normal lanterns. Any attack that hits a lantern destroys it.

TRANSFERRING XAMBRIA.

Sijhen may transfer Xambria's consciousness to a willing humanoid creature as a standard action. Likewise when Sijhen dies, Xambria's consciousness flies to the nearest (or most interesting) PC in an attempt to survive. The character can refuse to let the consciousness enter, but if he allows her in, he must make a Wisdom check (DC 11) to avoid being knocked unconscious for 1d4 rounds by the mental strain.

If Xambria's body dies, a spirit medium can sense her mind trapped in Sijhen's body. If the spirit medium uses his power, Xambria's mind manifests into her original body for a round, long enough that perhaps healing can restore her to life. Failing that, her mind can slip into one of the PCs.

If a character merges with Xambria, he gains the benefits of the Xambria's consciousness boon (see page 72).

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Now in his fifties, the grizzled Kell grew up an enforcer for local gangs, then eventually murdered his way into a position of leadership. He does, however, possess a great knack for instilling loyalty in intelligent minions who can run operations for him. Now he feigns gentility, dressing in elegant clothing that conceals no less than eight blades at any time.

Kell is unpredictable and hot-headed, confident he can kill anyone who's a threat, and when people try to stand up against him he takes it as an opportunity for entertainment. For him, nothing's better than taking self-righteous do-gooders down a few pegs by showing off his power.

Kell does not personally appear in this adventure (unless the PCs go looking for him, which will end badly), but his minions make his influence known.

The golden seal of Apet is the ritual's focus, and it also holds hostile creatures at bay. A PC might get the bright idea to move the golden seal of Apet away from the portal. This has the poor consequence of letting The Thing From Beyond into this world.

Closure.

As long as all the lanterns are intact, a character can attempt to gain control of the ritual. To do so, a character must stand beside a lantern and spend a move action to make a Spellcraft check (DC 25). A character holding the Ancient star map gains a +5 bonus. A success causes the lantern to glow gold instead of silver. After all 8 lanterns glow gold, if the golden seal is next to the portal, the ritual ends.

If the seal is not beside the portal, the ritual can still be safely completed by moving the two ton gold plate adjacent to the portal.

Collapse.

If any of the lanterns are destroyed, a safe closure is impossible, but a dangerous collapse can be achieved. After all 8 lanterns are destroyed, if the golden seal is next to the portal, the ritual ends. As above, the ritual cannot end if the seal is not next to the portal.

Additionally, if The Thing From Beyond hasn't already escaped, it emerges right as the link to Apet ends.

Rupture.

If the portal ritual manages to connect to Gidim, the power of the plane of ruin, Nem, manifests in an effort to stop travel across the Axis Seal. Immediately the entire eastern wall begins to disintegrate into frozen charcoal. The portal's edges crack and shatter, and then everything goes dark and the world turns silent except for a single bell's toll. Truly catastrophic magical energy of Nem sweeps outward, the portal distintegrates, and when the light returns everything has been laid to waste.

Repeat the attack from Collapse above, except it affects every creature and object within a thousand feet. The RHC headquarters and every building for several blocks is cast into ruin, as if a thousand years had passed in an instant. Most creatures die and collapse into dust.

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Thing From Beyond

N Huge aberration	XP 4,800
Init +5; Senses low-light vision, dark vision 60 ft.; Perception +8	
Aura from a distant plane (30 ft.)	
Defense	
AC 19, touch 9, flat-footed 18 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size)	
hp 115 (12d8+60)	
Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +7	
Weaknesses vulnerable tethers	
Offense	

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +16 (2d6+9), 2 tentacles +14 (1d6+4 plus grab) Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacle) Special Attacks constrict (tentacle, 1d6+4), shredding mouths (2d6, AC 13, 12hp)



Statistics

CR 8

Str 28, Dex 13, Con 21, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3

Base Atk +9; CMB +20 (+24 grapple); CMD 31 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Stealthy

Skills Escape Artist +17, Perception +8, Stealth +13; Racial Modifiers +10 Escape Artist, +8 Stealth

Special Abilities

- Vulnerable Tethers(Ex): Anybody that attacks The Thing From Beyond with a melee or ranged attack can try to free a creature caught in its tentacles. To do so, the grabbed creature must be within range of the attack. If the attack hits, it has its normal effect, plus the grabbed creature can make a CMB or Escape Artist check to escape as a free action.
- Horrid Amalgam (Ex) The Thing From Beyond has two HP thresholds. When its HP falls below each threshold it gains some powers and loses access to others.
- Threshold 1: Once the Thing from Beyond is lowered below 80 hp it can only use the following abilities marked as Stage 2.
- Threshold 2: Once the Thing from Beyond is lowered below 50 hp it can only use the following abilities marked as Stage 3.
- From a Distant Plane [Stage 1 & 3] (Su): Creatures outside the 30 foot aura cannot affect creatures inside the aura with attacks, spells, or other powers, as if they were too far away. Attacks made with golden weapons or implements ignore this restriction. Creatures inside the aura cannot move outside the aura on their own, though they can leave due to forced movement, or if the Thing's own movement leaves them outside the aura. The Thing does not have this trait in its second form.
- Shredding Mouths [Stage 1] (Ex) If the Thing From Beyond begins its turn with an opponent grappled by a tentacle, it can attempt a new combat maneuver check (as though attempting to pin the opponent). If it succeeds, it swallows its prey, and the opponent takes bite damage. Being swallowed causes a creature to take 2d6 psychic force damage each round. Once the Stage 2 threshold has been met, any swallowed creatures are immediately ejected in an adjacent area. In all other cases this ability functions as the Swallow Whole universal special rule (including the ability for a swallowed creature to cut their way out).
- **Cracked Shell [Stage 2] (Ex)** Upon reaching its Stage 2 hp threshold, the Thing from Beyond's shell begins to crack open. All terrain within 5 feet of the Thing is considered difficulty terrain for the remainder of the battle, and any creature (aside from the Thing) that ends their movement within this terrain takes 1d6 points of negative energy damage from the tortured spirits that emerged from the wounds.
- Prismatic Scream [Stage 2] (Ex) Once every 1d4+1 rounds, the Thing From Beyond can emit a blinding burst of beams accompanied by tormented psychic screams. These beams strike together and create a 15-foot radius burst centered on any area within 50 feet. All creatures within the burst must make a Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save. Compare their results to the following:
- *Fortitude (DC 14)* Creatures who fail this save take 2d6 points of sonic damage, these creatures are also knocked prone and deafened for 1 round.
- Reflex (DC 14) Creatures who fail this save take 2d6 points of electricity damage, these creatures are also blinded for 1 round.
- *Will (DC 14)* Creatures who fail this save take 2d4 points of force damage, these creatures are also dazed for 1 round.
- Join With Master [Stage 3] (Ex) As a final effort, the Thing teleports Sijhen (even if dead or inside another creature) into its form. Sijhen's consciousness now controls the thing (meaning a likely change in tactics) but the Gidim no longer gains his old abilities. Any negative effects or conditions affecting the Thing from Beyond are immediately ended.

Digging for Lies 🚓 🖉 Act Three: Xambria's Madness

MEET THE NEW BOSS

Social. Real-Time.

Word has come down from management: give them whatever they need.

Even if the PCs avert the destruction of the RHC Headquarters, it takes some time for the place to return to normal. With Saxby out of the picture-if not dead, then on the run-the constabulary needs leadership. In a ceremony attended by dozens of reporters, most of Flint's nobles, and more than a few concerned criminals, Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill charges Stover Delft with the office of Chief Inspector.

The Lord Viscount commends Delft in his opening remarks, and Flint's Governor Roland Stanfield briefly congratulates the PCs for their actions. Then it is time for Delft to speak. His words have been written for him, and they're only noteworthy for how little is actually said. The official story is that a monster got free from an Ancient ruin, came to Flint, and killed people in an attempt to recover old relics.

No one says anything about any creatures from other worlds, or of Saxby's betrayal, and certainly nothing about any secret conspiracies.

Delft has always trusted the PCs, and now that he's in charge he's going to give them everything they need to get to the bottom of this "Obscurati" conspiracy. With more care and caution than he has ever mustered before, Delft makes sure before the big ceremony to speak to each PC

individually. He warns them not to share anything they know with anyone aside from him, no matter how trustworthy they might seem.

A day later, the new Chief Inspector asks them to meet him aboard their ship. Delft points out that the conspiracy doesn't know how much they've learned. It seems like they're overconfident in their ability to keep secrets, but the PCs have a time and place where they know this "Obscurati" will be gathered: the 20th of Winter, in Vendricce. It's time to plan their next move.

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AXVISION OF GIDIM. If a skyseer witnesses the portal connect to Gidim, she knows this is not a world the skyseers have any knowledge of. In an instant before the portal closes, she glimpses a completely different starscape above the Gidim homeworld. The next time she sleeps, she has the following vision.

"You lie back on the sentient grass. It sways around you in a gluttonous breeze. You ponder the heavens, and your curiosity satiates the grass.

"Above you float flames and waves and wind and stone, but not the same you saw when you looked up as a child. They trace foreign paths and hum with impossible futures. You cannot read their fates. Beneath this alien sky, nothing is written."



LORD VISCOUNT

Social. Real-Time.

The head of the national RHC arrives to oversee an audit of the party.

Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill wants to meet the PCs face to face. Lady Saxby, worried about them making her look bad, holds the meet-and-greet in her office, where the lack of chairs makes long conversations awkward, thus keeping things brief. The Lord Viscount congratulates the party for their work in bringing down Macbannin, but he says that after finding one incident of such egregious corruption, he thinks it is critical to be on watch for more.

After that, Saxby takes over and gives the PCs their marching orders. They're to stay on their normal case and simply cooperate with any requests from the Lord Viscount's staff. Delft will handle the majority of the paperwork.

Give the PCs a few minutes to speak with the Lord Viscount if they're interested. He's especially interested in any Yerasol Veterans, since it's always good publicity for a veteran to be promoted. Before long, though, Lady Saxby politely reminds her boss that there are other teams of constables to meet, and she glares at Delft as if to say, "Now get them out of here."

A POSSIBLE PROMOTION

Social. Real-Time.

Yerasol Veterans always get first crack at promotions.

During Act Two, any Yerasol Veteran PCs get invited to the guest manor where the Lord Viscount is staying, on the island of the governor's mansion. There's a formal ball, and the Lord Viscount is giving the PC(s) a chance to make a splash amid the nobility.

Though the nobles are generally distinguished and polite, Risur is a tropical country, so they party well. Energetic music, lavish choreographed dances, and heated arguments fill out the night, culminating in a drunken general throwing a pie out a window for reasons that aren't quite clear.

At some point during the night, the Lord Viscount chats with the PC on a balcony, watching the sea while smoking a cigar. He wants to know if the PC has any interest in politics or higher stations, perhaps in the RHC, the army, or the navy. If the PC comports himself well, the Lord Viscount says he's not comfortable sending important future leaders on missions without assistance. With the PC's permission, he'd like to send along some crack sailors on the party's mission to Ber.

If the PC agrees, the party will have five Allied Soldiers on their side, and the ship's captain will receive a +5 bonus to Command checks.



DIGGING FOR DIRT

Social. Montage.

Will the party set aside solving the mystery so they can cover their asses?

Morgan Cippiano. Gale. Locan Kell. Various fugitives, drug dealers, and other unsavory types. Make a list of anyone the party has had dealings with that might make them look bad. Investigators are sent to speak with them, or to look into their interactions with the PCs. If Delft is aware of any particular indiscretions by the party, he'll suggest they try to get to these people first to get stories straight and cover their asses.

Of course, the Lord Viscount Inspector has done this before. He's got people watching the PCs, tailing them. Noticing the tails is tough (Sense Motive DC 22, one check every four hours), though it might be easier in some areas where hiding in a crowd is harder. Shaking a tail is up to player ingenuity, and should consist of more than just a single skill check.

The tails start the morning of the 1st of Autumn, even before the PCs are told they're being audited. They persist whenever the PCs are in Flint, until the Lord Viscount is satisfied.

HARASSMENT

Social. Montage.

Crime boss Lorcan Kell harasses the party from afar.

When Kaja's smuggling operation is brought down, Lorcan Kell is furious at the PCs. Kell won't move directly against the PCs, since he's not sure what reaction that would provoke. But he's testing them for weakness, gathering intelligence, and looking for a way to take them down.

The morning after they arrest Kaja, the PCs each receive a letter, delivered to their homes, telling them to release her or suffer the consequences. By that point, though, Kaja's likely already dead.

The next day, the PCs' neighbors mention seeing tough-looking men watching the PCs' homes.

By the time the PCs leave for the ziggurat of Apet, Lorcan has learned that the PCs are being audited. He decides to frame one or more of them while they're out of town by planting evidence at their homes.

Fake Evidence.

Lorcan has no shortage of people he wants to kill. So he picks one of them, has the man killed in a way consistent with what the PCs would do, then leaves a letter identifying the target at one PC's house, as well as thanking the party for taking over the smuggling operation from Kaja. He tries to paint it such that he and Kaja had a falling out, and that he is bringing the party into his operation. A sizeable payment, about 400 gp, awaits discovery on a table.

It's somewhat sloppy, but Kell isn't the cleverest crime boss. If the PCs are careful, they might have a friend watch their place. Otherwise, when they get back from the ziggurat the audit has turned up the evidence. The PCs will have to answer for it, and if they make a bad show of defending themselves they might be punished.

CONSEQUENCES

Social. Real-Time.

Lady Saxby shares the Lord Viscount's report with the party.

When the party returns to Flint early in Act Three, Lady Saxby has Delft tell the party to come to her office. She is not patient, and will send local police to escort them if they dally. When they arrive, though, she has them wait for half an hour while the Lord Viscount is summoned. Shortly before he arrives, Saxby brings the party into her office and goes through the report.

The report has three main sections. She's not the yelling type; her comments a dismissive tone. She's never disappointed, because she never had high expectations for the PCs in the first place. Even if they've done well, she paints it instead as being passable. Only if they've done really terrible things does she get emotional: amused, though, rather than angry.

Inappropriate Actions on Job.

If the PCs have been roughing up witnesses, killing criminals instead of capturing them, or causing unnecessary property damage, Saxby lists what they've done wrong.

Unseemly Affiliations.

Here she highlights suspected corruption, kickbacks, or strong-arming, as well as friendships with criminals or people whom the press could write articles about. If any PC is really corrupt, she might later recruit him to be on her side and protect her interests.

Excessive Expenditures.

At the end of this adventure, each PC should be 6th level, and have wealth roughly equivalent to 16,000 gp (assuming they are 6th level when the audit occurs). If a PC has much more, Saxby lists what the character will have to hand over. Much less, and she'll sigh and remind them they have spare money for requisitions, and that if it doesn't get spend, the politicians will cut their budget next year.

Also, if a PC was hiding any items that should have been turned into evidence, and that PC did not take action to hide it, he will have been discovered. Saxby demands the PC hand the item over to the quartermaster downstairs before leaving, and she'll consider pressing criminal charges. The hand-over should be done, or else the PC won't be let out of the building, but the criminal charges won't get anywhere before Saxby's driven out at the end of the adventure.

Final Word.

The Lord Viscount arrives then, and gives the PCs either a quick congratulatory speech, or a wise, fatherly reminder that they've shown themselves possessed of better natures than most people, and that they shouldn't waste themselves on petty pursuits. If any PC was particularly egregious, he'll make sure to take him aside afterward for a one-on-one chat.

Before departing, he says he has high hopes for them, and will see them again in a few months when the peace summit comes to Flint.



The Lord Viscount's family owns lands around the capital of Slate, so he could have lived in court, but he trained in the martial academies and fought in the Third Yerasol War. His career as an investigator began by rooting out profiteering during the war, and he later helped thwart several plots to embarrass the new king Aodhan. His most famous success, however, was defeating a group of Drakran necromancers who were trying to animate dragon corpses in the Anthras mountains.

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The Lord Viscount is disdainful of corruption, but has been through enough to understand how men are tempted to it. He has on several occasions managed

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to catch low-level investigators taking their first steps toward abusing their power, and turn them back on the right path by giving them a second chance.

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APPENDIX TWO: RADICAL VEKESHI PLOT

Rock Rackus has angered many who support the Unseen Court and traditional Risuri values. Most people just complain, but the Vekeshi Mystics are quite comfortable with killing those who offend their worldview. Now a member of the cult has called for Rackus's death, but he does not speak for all the movement's adherents.

Just a Little Misunderstanding.

Rear Admiral Morris Dawkins presides over the naval defenses of Flint, but a convenient illness kept him from the launch ceremony of the *R.N.S. Coaltongue* in Adventure One.

He also is one of the most respected leaders of the Vekeshi Mystics, and often attends celebrations and ceremonies. Dawkins wears an antlered mask, and no one knows his identity, so mystics can only identify him by voice, and by his distinctive hands, which are marked by scars and calluses. They call him the **Old Stag**, both for his mask. He is sometimes seen in the company of a beautiful faerie woman, a representative of the Unseen Court.

In Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*, the Old Stag asked a Vekeshi PC to recruit the fey terrorist Gale to their cause.

Shortly after the events of *The Dying Skyseer*, Dawkins attended a celebration in the Cloudwood that any PC Vekeshi Mystics would have been at. The topic of Rock Rackus came up, and Dawkins off-handedly suggested the man deserved to be killed, if not for his insults to the Unseen Court, then for his terrible music. Most present simply laughed at the comment, but one witness, **Tyler Starke**, took it as a serious decree.

A Crazy Misunderstanding.

Starke is one of the bad seeds who make it easy for the public to decry the mystics as madmen and killers. The idle son of Flint's Attorney General, he styles himself a writer and scholar with a particular fondness of maritime law, and his interactions with other mystics are rare enough that most do not realize how unstable and petulant he is.

His induction to the mystics occurred after he murdered a Crisylliri priest who was a guest in his father's house. He claimed he was striking a blow against oppressors, but he just killed the priest because the man had mocked him in front of his father. Though weak-minded, he survived the initiation ritual into the Vekeshi Mystics by losing grip with reality and constructing an ever-wilder web of delusions.

A few months ago, Starke began to spread word that Rock Rackus was marked for death, and due to the secretive nature of the Vekeshi Mystics and the large gaps between their group gatherings, no one has been able to disabuse him of this notion. He gathered funds to hire Kvarti Gorbatiy to assassinate Rackus, and when that fails, Starke tries to recruit a PC Vekeshi Mystic to finish the job.

Recruiting for Murder.

Starke, who somewhat misses the point of being in a *secret* society, mails a letter to the PC's home a few days after Rackus gets arrested at the arms fair (see page 74). The letter has the remnants of a wax seal affixed, as if the writer were so used to signing and sealing his letters that he almost mailed it with his name affixed. There is no return address, but a trained investigator should be able to trace it, if he wants. The PC might get help from Kvarti Gorbatiy, if he needs the aid. This is mostly a test of the character's morals, and an opportunity to protect the reputation and secrecy of the mystics.

Rock Is Dead.

If a PC kills Rock but does not implicate the mystics, the dockers treat the fallen performer as a martyr and blame the government for his death. Starke is not nearly as discreet as the PC, though, and word spreads through the mystics that the PC did the deed. Shortly after the resolution of the adventure's main events, the PC is summoned in the night to a ship in Flint's harbor.

The Old Stag and several attendants berate the PC for his foolishness, then drag out a panicked and piss-stained Starke. The Old Stag explains that this man is more objectionable to their beliefs than Rackus ever was, and he offers the PC a chance to redeem himself by killing Starke. Despite the misunderstanding, the PC is still valuable to the cult's leadership, and they will have more important tasks for him in the future.

Terror in Flint.

If a PC botches the assassination and either fails or implicates the mystics, Rock's celebrity causes the story to fill the headlines for weeks. Kell's guild manages to off a few difficult politicians and pin it on the mystics, and within a month, half the city is afraid the Vekeshi are plotting countless wild attacks on Flint.

Similar to above, one night the PC is drugged and abducted. He awakens in a ship's hold with Starke, and they are dragged out before the Old Stag, who says they both deserve to die for what they have done to the movement, but he is merciful. He hands a dagger to the PC, and Starke cries out in terror.

A Constable's Job.

A PC might decide to reject Starke's directive and prevent him from killing anyone. If confronted, Starke threatens to reveal to his father the Attorney General that the PC is a member of the Vekeshi. In a fight, Starke is no threat to a PC by this point, but getting to him when he is not protected by bodyguards and household security is a challenge.

After dealing with Starke, the PC is summoned to meet the Old Stag, who thanks him and suggests they can use his skills in the future. The party's Prestige with the Unseen Court increases by 1.

Not My Problem.

If no PC is a Vekeshi Mystic, or if a PC refuses, Starke eventually tries to go after Rackus himself. Rackus shoots him, and Starke is arrested. In interrogation he gives up the identities of every mystic he knows, perhaps forcing a PC to lie or face harsh questioning. The Vekeshi issue a letter to denounce Starke as not speaking for them, but public outcry and political fearmongering leads to arrests and witch hunts.

Future Vekeshi Plots.

In Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, the Vekeshi Mystics ask the PC to uncover a secret about the fall of Srasama, hidden in a prison island along the Avery Coast railroad. If the PC has not yet revealed his affiliation with the Vekeshi to the rest of the party by then, the discovery will spill the secret and force the group to question the goals of the mystics.



APPENDIX THREE: GM OUICK REFERENCE

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NPC QUICK REFERENCE

Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby. Head of local RHC office. Treats party like they're not there. Refined. Political aspirations. Overbearing. Gets others to fight for her.

Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft. Party's boss. Chews tobacco. Cane. Spits. Good-natured.

Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill. In charge of the RHC overall. Pitted and scarred face. Opposes corruption. Understands human frailty, tries to inspire others to be better.

Kvarti Gorbatiy. Dwarven sniper and gunsmith. Old military uniform. Rifle's stock carved from giant bone, with ancient engraving. Contentedly philosophical.

Rock Rackus. Celebrity explorer and musician. Permanent sneer-smirk. Diamond-encrusted gold pistol. Unbelievably arrogant. Makes ridiculous claims. Doesn't know what to do with his fame.

Morgan Cippiano. Leads Flint branch of Family. Bald. Gravelly voice. Wears hook pendant of the Clergy. Talks fashion. Very reasonable and friendly. Wants to trade favors.

Kaja Stewart. Arcanoscientist. Planar theorist. Summons guns. Affects a "common" accent despite education. Fascinated by the possibilities of technology.

Lorcan Kell. Leader of thieves' guild. Ugly face. Fancy clothes and top hat. Lots of hidden knives. Torments "good" people by threatening to harm them if they try to stop innocents being tortured. Not too clever. Relies on minions to run his guild.

Dr. Xambria Meredith. Archaeologist. Fearless. Slightly traumatized from recent disaster. Slightly unhinged. Miner's pick, various tools. Athletic, but dresses conservatively. Driven to solve mysteries. Strong moral code.

Sijhen. Gidim wayfarer. Wary of discovery. Confident in own intellect, and for good reason. Naked. Tentacles. Four eyes. Smells like dust. Would be fascinated if a local tried to talk to it, since it views locals as food animals.

Caius Bergeron. Tiefling philanthropist. Funds archaeology for the Obscurati. Maintains plausible deniability. False graciousness. Ring-Old Bergeron Gold. Sharpened nails and tail. Scratches when irritated. Eats live octopus.

Captain Rutger Smith. Bold. Idealistic. Loves philosophy. Smokes cigars.



GIDIM WARBEASTS

Gidim monsters appear throughout the adventure, and many make a second appearance at the climax. We collect all their stats here for ease of reference in later encounters.

CR1

XP 400

Crawling Spiker N Medium aberration

Init +6; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +1

Defense

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 15 (2d8+6)

Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4

Offense

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +2 (1d6+1), or harpoon tongue +2 touch (1d3+1 plus grab)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (15 ft. with tongue)

Special Attacks pull (harpoon tongue, 5 feet)

Statistics

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Str 12 Dex 15 Con 16 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 11

Base Atk +1; CMB +2; CMD 14

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Acrobatics +6, Climb +9, Stealth +10*; Racial Modifiers +8 Climb **Special Abilities**

Harpoon Tongue (Ex): A crawling spiker's tongue is a primary attack with reach equal to three times the crawling spiker's normal reach (15 feet). A crawling spiker's tongue deals damage on a hit in addition to being able to grab. A crawling spiker does not gain the grappled condition while using its tongue in this manner.

Flying Thing CR 2
N Medium aberration XP 600
Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +7
Defense
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
hp 19 (3d8+6)
Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +4
Offense
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)
Melee beak +3 (1d6+1)
Special Attack ray of dark and light (+3 ranged touch)
Statistics
Str 13 Dex 13, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 12
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 15
Feats Dodge. Improved Initiative
Skills Fly +6, Intimidate +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)
Special Abilities
Ray of Dark Light (Ex): A flying thing can produce a magical ray with a range of 60
feet. Every 1d4 rounds, it can fire the ray as a standard action. A ray deals 1d6+1

points of negative energy damage to any target struck. Every round after being struck by a ray, the target suffers 1 additional point of negative energy damage (DC 13 Will save negates). While a target is taking damage from the ray, the flying thing loses its thoughtform trait. Firing a ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

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Eye of Madness	CR 4
N Medium aberration	XP 1,200
Init +2; Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13	
Aura paranoia (DC 16)	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 natural)	
hp 45 (7d8+14)	
Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +10	
Offense	
Speed 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)	
Ranged eye beam +7 touch (2d6 force damage)	
Special Attacks burst of terror	
Statistics	
Str 15 Dex 14, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 16, Cha 17	
Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 19 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes	
Skills Fly +4, Perception +13	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	
Burst of Terror (Su): Once every 1d4+1 rounds an eye of madness can	emit a burst
of psychic energy as a standard action that affects all living creatures	s within 5 ft.

- of psychic energy as a standard action that affects all living creatures within 5 ft. of the Eye. Creatures in the burst take 4d6 points of damage (Will DC 16 halves). Those who fail their save contract Distant Madness (see page 3). This save DC is Charisma-based.
- Eye Beam (Su): An eye of madness can make one eye beam attack per round as a normal ranged touch attack. This attack deals an automatic 2d6 points of damage to any target struck as they are overwhelmed with psychic visions of dark waking nightmares tailored to the specific target.

Paranoia Aura (Su): If an enemy ends its turn within 10 feet of an eye of madness, it makes a Will save (DC 16); if it fails, it immediately charges a target of the eye of madness's choice as a free action. The eye of madness cannot make the enemy enter any sort of hazardous terrain during this charge. This save DC is Charisma-based.



Flashing Orb	CR 4
N Large aberration	XP 1,200
Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
Defense	
AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)	
hp 51 (8d8+16)	
Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +6	
Offense	
Speed fly 20 ft. (perfect)	
Melee tentacle of light +8 (1d6+3 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attack chaos storm, vicarious strike	
Statistics	
Str 16 Dex 12, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	
Base Atk +4; CMB +8 ; CMD 18 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Ability Focus (chaos storm), Toughness	
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +3	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	

- Vicarious Strike (Su): After successfully grappling an opponent, the next time the flashing orb takes damage before the end of its next turn, the grappled target takes 1d6 points of damage of the same damage type (fire, cold, etc, etc). Until the end of its next turn, the flashing orb loses its thoughtform trait.
- Chaos Storm (Su): Once every 1d4+2 rounds, a flashing orb can conjure forth a storm of memories and sensations made reality. The storm has a 5-foot radius and can be created within 100 feet of the orb as a standard action. The storm lasts 1 round. All targets within the storm must make a Reflex save (DC 13) or take 3d6 points of random damage. Roll 1d6 and consult the following list to see what kind of damage the chaos storm deals: 1. Acid; 2. Cold; 3. Fire; 4. Electricity; 5. Negative; 6. Force.

Mutated Centipede	CR 3
N Medium vermin	XP 1,200
Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +6	
Defense	
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 natural)	
hp 29 (4d8+17)	
Fort +8, Ref +5, Will +3	
Immune mind-affecting	
Offense	
Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.	
Melee bite +6 (1d6+1 plus poison)	
Statistics	
Str 13 Dex 19, Con 20, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 6	
Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 17 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Weapon Finesse	
Skills Climb +12, Perception +6, Stealth +12, Swim +4	
Special Abilities	
Poison (Ex): Bite—injury; save Fort DC 15; frequency 1/round for 6 m	ounds; effect 1d3
Dex damage; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based and in	cludes a +2 racial
bonus.	
Teleporting Retreat (Su): Whenever a mutated centipede is hit by a	melee or ranged

attack it can immediately teleport up to 30 feet as a swift action. This ability does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Digging for Lies 🚓 Appendix Three: GM Quick Reference

Implanter	CR
N Small aberration	XP 40
Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1	
Defense	
AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)	
hp 13 (2d8+4)	
Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +4	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft., climb 20 ft.	
Melee touch (+4 attach)	
Special Attacks implant, death burst	
Statistics	
Str 12 Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 11	
Base Atk +1; CMB +2 (+10 grapple when attached); CMD 14	
Feats Weapon Finesse	

Skills Acrobatics +6, Stealth +11

Special Abilities

- Attach (Ex): When an implanter hits with a touch attack, an ovipositor materializes solidly and attempts to burrow into the target's ear. The implanter loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 13, but holds on with great tenacity and inserts its dark thought into the grappled target's mind. An implanter has a +8 racial bonus to maintain its grapple on a foe once it is attached. An attached implanter can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself—if its prey manages to win a grapple check or Escape Artist check against it, the implanter is removed.
- Implant (Ex): An implanter implants an idea into its target at the beginning of its turn if it is attached to a foe. The target is immediately affected by the Distant Madness disease (see page 3). If already infected with the disease, the disease is considered to take effect immediately and the target must make another save as though an additional day had passed.
- **Death Burst (Ex):** Upon successfully implanting an idea into a target, an implanter explodes in a flurry of psychic energy instantly killing the implanter. All creatures within 5 feet of the implanter take 1d6 points of force damage, though they may make a Reflex save (DC 12) for half damage.

Worm Maw	CR 4
N Large aberration	XP 1,200
Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9	
Defense	
AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, -1 size)	
hp 39 (6d8+12)	
Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +6	
Offense	
Speed 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (average)	
Melee 4 tentacles +3 (1d6+2 plus grab)	
Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.	
Special Attack constrict (tentacle, 1d6+2), swallow mind	
Statistics	
Str 18 Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6	
Base Atk +4; CMB +9 (+13 grapple); CMD 19 (can't be tripped)	
Feats Alertness, Toughness, Weapon focus (tentacle)	
Skills Perception +9, Stealth +2	
SQ Thoughtform (page 13)	
Special Abilities	

Swallow Mind (Ex): After successfully grappling an opponent, on the subsequent round, a worm maw may swallow the mind of its target if it maintains the grapple. The target is immediately knocked prone with the grapple ending and must make a Will save (DC 14) or be staggered and suffer 2d6 points of damage from psychic shock. A successful save halves the damage and ignores the staggered condition. If the save is failed, the target must make a save on subsequent rounds to remove the staggered condition. While the target is staggered in this way, the worm maw loses its thoughtform trait.




NEW MAGICAL ITEMS

Amulet of the Ancients

This stone amulet is engraved with ancient pictograms depicting a tree surrounded by the primal elements of earth, water, wind, and fire. When you are attacked, the amulet turns briefly to gold.

Aura faint (minor) or moderate (major or greater) abjuration; CL 3rd (minor), 7th (major), or 11th (greater)

Slot neck; Weight —; Price 12,000gp (minor), 28,000gp (major), 44,000gp (greater).

Description This amulet continually protects the wearer from elemental damage

types—acid, cold, electricity, or fire. Each time the wearer would normally take such damage, subtract the ring's resistance value from the damage dealt.

A minor amulet of the Ancients grants 2 points of resistance. A major amulet of the Ancients grants 4 points of resistance. A greater amulet of the Ancients grants 6 points of resistance.

Badger Gun

You pull the trigger, and a badger springs forth to attack your foes Aura faint conjuration; CL 3rd

Slot none; Weight 9lbs.; Price 5,000gp.

Description Despite a deceptively "regular" appearance, this +1 musket has unique ties with the realm of the Dreaming. Three times per day, the wielder of the weapon may (as a free action) summon a badger conjured from the Dreaming after hitting a target. The badger appears in an adjacent space and is treated as a summoned creature (per the summon monster I spell) under the control of the wielder for 1 minute.

See *Bestiary 2* for stats on a badger. Alternatively, use the weasel stats presented within the *Bestiary*.

Blade of the Ancients

This sword is a macahuitl, a shaft of wood that encased saw-toothed obsidian blades long its edge. Within the crystals, energies from countless worlds crackle. When you attack, the wood turns briefly to gold.

Aura moderate conjuration; CL 8th

Slot none; Weight 8lbs.; Price 32,350gp.

Description An exotic +1 aberration bane greatsword, the blade of the Ancients is capable of summoning forth additional elemental power. On a successful critical hit, the blade deals an additional 1d6 points of elemental damage. This damage can be acid, cold, electricity, or fire, as chosen by the wielder prior to rolling damage.

Diamond Encrusted Piece

Your enemies seem dumbstruck at the sight of a gun of solid gold, encrusted with diamonds. Every time you fire one of its 24-karat bullets, you throw away enough money to feed a family for a month. Who but an unrepentant jackass would own such a thing? **Aura** faint enchantment; **CL** 3rd

Slot none; Weight 4lbs.; Price 4,300gp.

Description This extravagantly decorated +1 pistol is so gaudy and impressive that anytime it is fired, all creatures within 30 ft. that see the wielder suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls against any creature other than the wielder until the wielder's next turn.

Experimental Steam Suit

Who wants to be the first to strap a steam engine onto your back and wade into battle in a two ton suit of burnished steel?

Aura none (pure technology); CL —

Slot -; Weight 1,000lbs; Price 35,000gp

Description A Medium sized creature can climb into or out of this suit by spending two move actions. The suit is normally inert and too heavy to move, causing the creature to be treated as helpless. However, the creature gains a +10 bonus to armor that stacks with their regular armor bonus. Even though the suit is effectively super-heavy armor, you can use it without needing proficiency.

Once per day, the inhabitant of a suit can activate it as a standard action. When the suit is activated, it can pick up and wield weapons and implements as easily as the wearer. The wearer can walk and run, but cannot climb, jump, or swim. The wearer's lifting capacity is quadrupled, and the wearer gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with melee attacks.

Whenever an attack hits the wearer, the suit must make a Fortitude save (DC 18). If the suit fails 3 saving throws in this way, the steam suit breaks down and must be repaired before it works again. Repairs can be done over the course of 8 hours.



Golden Icon of Apet

This primitive gold medallion has symbols of the planet Apet. Minor Artifact

Aura faint transmutation: CL 10th

Slot Neck or Held; Weight 1lb; Price Unique.

Description Once per day, before the end of your next turn you can spend a move action to teleport yourself or a creature you can see up to 30 ft. from its current location. Unwilling creatures can make a Will save (DC 18) to resist).

Staff of the Ancients

This wooden staff is covered in a spiral of symbols that denote the primal elements of air, earth, fire, and water. When you attack, it turns briefly to gold.

Aura moderate abjuration; CL 11th

Slot none; Weight 5lbs.; Price 40,000gp.

Description This smooth wooden staff allows use of the following spells:

- + Magic missile (1 charge)
- + Burning hands (acid, cold, electricity, or fire damage; 1 charge)

+ Dimensional anchor (2 charges)

The staff may be used as a weapon, functioning as a +1 quarterstaff. On a successful critical hit, the staff deals an additional 1d6 points of elemental damage. This damage can be acid, cold, electricity, or fire, as chosen by the wielder prior to rolling damage.

NEW FIREARM

Nock Gun.

The blast from the seven barrels of this heavy gun tears its targets to shreds. Each barrel may be fired individually or all may be fired at once (a single barrel deals 1d4 or 1d6 damage depending on the weapon's size). When all barrels are fired at once, the wielder suffers a -6 penalty to the attack roll, but the shot requires only one attack action instead of seven. After firing all barrels at once, the wielder must make a Fortitude save (DC = damage dealt) or be knocked prone following the attack. If the save is failed by 5 or more, the wielder is dazed and deafened for 1 round.

Two-Handed Firearm Cost: 10,000 gp Damage: 7d4 (x4) (S), 7d6 (x4) (M) Range Increment: 10 ft. Misfire: 1-4 (10 ft.) Capacity: 1 Weight: 30 lb. Type: B and P

NEW TRAINING

Tentacle Technique

Recalling a thesis you read, Methods of Extricating Warriors from a Variety of Tentacled and Tendriled Monsters, you shout for an ally to aim at the ideal spot on a limb that has him grabbed.

Training

Requirement: If a character with the Martial Scientist theme presents a corpse of one of the Gidim beasts to The Battalion martial university, he'll receive a copy of the thesis mentioned above, and gain this power.

Description As a move action, once per combat you can direct any ally within 30 ft. against a grappling opponent. The ally can immediately make one melee attack roll (with no weapon modifiers). If the attack hits, the ally gets a +5 bonus on her next check to break the grapple.

NEW SPELL

Detect Planar Energy

The energy drifts to you like a fragrance on a breeze. You spin and locate the strongest source of the smell, then set out.

School divination; Level bard 1, cleric 1, druid 1, sorcerer/wizard 1

Casting Time 1 standard action

Component: V,S

Range 1 mile

Duration: 1 hour

Saving Throw none; Spell Resistance no

Choose a plane you have visited, or otherwise have had contact with. For the spell's duration you can sense the direction to and intensity of energies from that plane, to a maximum range of one mile. These energies tend to fade after a few hours or days, but it is possible to track creatures native to other planes by following their trails. The spell can be foiled by strong sources of energy from the same or other planes. For instance, Cauldron Hill in Flint is a powerful beacon of shadow energy, so you would be unable to pinpoint any sort of foreign energy there, not even fey or elemental energy.



HELPFUL NPC

Allied Risur Soldier CF	1
Male or female human fighter 2 XP 40	00
LN Medium humanoid (human)	
Init +1; Senses Perception +1	
Defense	
AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge)	
hp 19 (2d10+4)	
Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +3; +1 vs. fear	
Offense	
Speed 30 ft.	
Melee baton (club)+4 (1d6+2)	
Ranged pistol +4 (1d8/x4)	
Statistics	
Str 15 Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10	
Base Atk +2; CMB +4; CMD 16	
Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Point Black Shot, Weapon Focus (pistol)	
Skills Acrobatics +0, Diplomacy +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (local) +2, Sense Motive	
+2, Stealth +0	
Languages Common	
Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds; Other Gear chain shirt, club, pistol	



NEW BOON

Xambria's Consciousness.

If one of the PCs chooses to accept Xambria's mind, she floats in the back of the character's consciousness, able to sense what he senses and communicate with them mentally. She functions in many was as through she were an artifact that does not take up an item slot.

Xambria's Consciousness

As you struggle to pick the lock, Xambria walks into your field of vision, crossing her arms impatiently. "Don't mind me. Take your time." You shift over a bit to give this hallucination room, and she kneels and guides your hand. With a click the lock springs open.

Boon

Property: You gains +2 bonus to Acrobatics, Knowledge (Arcana and History), and Disable Device checks.

Power (At-Will): You can use the wizard cantrip mage hand.

Xambria's Goals.

- + Discover the secrets of the Obscurati and exact revenge.
- + Learn all she can about the nature of the Ancients.
- + Get a body of her own.

Roleplaying Xambria.

Free of Sijhen, Xambria's natural personality returns. Intensely curious, she would often put herself in danger, and so she encourages the PC to be bold. She is extremely well read on many topics, including history, magic, and culture, but surprisingly ignorant about others, especially modern technology.

Xambria's long time fusion with Sijhen has left marks on her psyche however, making her prone to rapid mood swings. She is obsessed with bringing down the Obscurati, who she blames for the deaths of her dig team and many others.

Xambria constantly observes her hosts surroundings, and offers advice when she can. She may sometimes ask to take control of the host body, especially when trying to connect to the remnants of her past life. If concordance is low, she may even take primary control of the body by force.

Concordance.

Starting Score	5
Host gains a level	+1d10
Host is trained in Knowledge (History)	+2
Host defeats an Obscurati plot	+1
Host discovers new information about the Ancients	+1
Host aids the Obscurati	-2
Host destroys historical artifacts	-1



Pleased (16–20).

"Together we can defeat the—is that a real Tarkash dynasty vase?" Xambria has formed a close bond with her host. The two personalities may start to merge. Xambria's spirit can briefly manifest in the physical

world.

Xambria flickers before you and shoves the air, sending enemies flying.

- Property: The bonus to Acrobatics, Knowledge (Arcana and History), and Disable Device checks increases to +3.
- Power (1/day): As a standard action, all enemies within 15 ft of you are targeted by a trip attempt using your CMB.

Satisfied (12–15)

"Yes, there's a voice in my head, but she's very helpful."

Xambria gets along well with her host, and has become accustomed to the new body. She discovers that even while she is not in primary control, Xambria can aid in a fight.

Power (1/day): As a free action, Xambria manifests for a moment within 50 ft. She can take a move action to manipulate an object or do something similar.

Normal (5-11)

"We're going to spend a lot of time together. It's best we establish some ground rules."

Xambria is still adjusting to her new body, and the personality she shares with it. While she almost certainly prefers the character to Sijhen, she is not entirely sure she can trust her new host.

Unsatisfied (1-4)

"It wasn't me! It was the archeologist in my head!"

Xambria is unhappy with many of the PCs choices, and tries to take control of the body by force. Once per day the PC must make a will save (DC 10+ PCs level) or have Xambria take control of the PC's body. The GM may dictate the PCs actions during this time. Every time Xambria takes an 8 hour rest, the PC may attempt a saving throw to regain control.

Angered (0 or Lower)

"I think you're mistaking me for somebody else. My name is Xambria."

The PCs actions so frequently diverge from Xambria's that she tries to permanently rest control away from the PC. At the beginning of every combat encounter the PC must make a Will save (DC 10+ PCs level) or have Xambria take control of the PC's body. The GM may dictate the PCs actions during this time. Every time Xambria takes an 8 hour rest, the PC may attempt a saving throw to regain control. If concordance is less then zero, the PC takes a penalty to the save equal to the concordance value.

Moving On.

"Everything's so.. quiet."

Xambria might move on in either of two ways. If she is gets along especially well with her host, the two might slowly merge together into they form a single personality that combines elements of Xambria and her host.

If a PC wants to be rid of her, certain rituals and spells make it possible, but Xambria will argue destroying her is murder.

Finally, Xambria may grow tire of living as a passenger in the host's body, and yearn for a life of her own. In Adventure Seven, Schism, she'll have an ideal opportunity to find a new body.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE





years ago. He has a habit of poking inanimate objects with the cane before he gets too close to them, and spitting on them when he wants to be extra sure. Lady Inspectress Margaret Saxby. A former superstar investigator who cracked many famous cases in her time, Saxby was promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector and transferred

Assistant Chief Inspector Stover Delft. A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft is your direct superior. He chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. He walks with a cane because a mimic tore a chunk out of his leg fifteen

mous cases in her time, Saxby was promoted to the rank of Chief Inspector and transferred to take over Flint operations a decade ago. Lady Saxby was a darling of the public when she married a much younger veteran knighted during the Fourth Yerasol War. People say the marriage was meant simply to improve her standing, and Lady Saxby's fierce emphasis that she be the face of the RHC is well known among constables.



Lord Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill. The Lord Viscount fought in the Third Yerasol War, and served as an investigator by rooting out profiteering during the war. He later helped thwart several plots to embarrass the new king Aodhan. His most famous success, however, was defeating a group of Drakran necromancers who were trying to animate dragon corpses in the Anthras mountains. Publicly disdainful of corruption, the Lord Viscount has outed several subordinates for putting personal greed ahead of the needs of their country.



Thames Grimsley. The head of a new dock workers union in Flint, Grimsley is working with Governor Stanfield to improve dockers' conditions. Grimsley is alleged to be negotiating with Parity Lake factory workers to develop a union for them. He is courting the support of docker celebrity Rock Rackus.



Rock Rackus. A one-time dock worker, Rackus stumbled his way to national celebrity through his wild stories and rowdy behavior. He claims to have looted treasures in the Malice Lands, traveled to the moon, and cuckolded the fey king of the Unseen Court. Conservative elements in society view him as a menace, while the dockers see him as a rising star, but no one knows his personal politics. He will be performing at the Kaybeau Arms Exposition.



Hana "Gale" Soliogn. The public face of fey terrorism against Risur's industrial rise, the high elf Gale escaped her keepers in Danor and found a home in the Cloudwood east of Flint. With allies among the fey and locals, Gale has led acts of sabotage, theft, and murder. She supported the treason of Duchess Ethelyn of Shale, but was instrumental in the investigation that revealed the crimes of District Mayor Reed Macbannin early in the summer.



Lorcan Kell. Head of a thieves' guild based out of a "theater of scoundrels" in eastern Parity Lake. The Kell guild is said to be responsible for industrial smuggling, petty theft and extortion, burglary, and murder for hire. Kell was somehow affiliated with Reed Macbannin, but the people in his district are loyal, and his enforcers are too dangerous for Flint police to confront him.

Morgan Cippiano. Apparent head of the Flint branch of the burgeoning "Family" criminal syndicate, which is based in Crisillyir. Fond of fashion and fine foods. The Family is attracting a reputation of primarily targeting more violent criminal groups, winning the support of previously oppressed locals who then look the other way as the syndicate smuggles and gains footholds in police and politics. Digging for Lies 🚓 📿 🐎 Player Handout

A LETTER

A letter sent to a Vekeshi Mystic PC shortly after The Incident which occurs at the Kaybeau Arms Fair.

By Decree of the Old Stag:

You, servant of Srasama, have been chosen to strike a blow for our order. The swine Rock Rackus has insulted us for the last time. At our latest secret gathering, the Old Stag said he thinks the man deserves to die, and we must carry out his desires, because he speaks for the Unseen Court. The pig deserves to die, and you are to do the deed!

Do it however you want, but make sure it makes the news, so we can verify that you did it. Your actions will earn us both favor.

- A Fellow Hand of the Goddess

A STRANGE LETTER

Hans Weber received this letter shortly after Xambria disappeared by the seal of Mavisha.

HANS -	
HELP ME	
TFOLLOWED N	e from the dig
T HAS ME	
I ONLY HAVE A MO	MENT
TWANTS THE TI	Aree relics
WARN THE CONS	TABLES.
TTALKS IN MY MI	ND
I KNOW THINGS	s I COULDN'T
TSNAME 15 SIJ	HEN
HEAR THE WOR	DGIDIM
GIDIN GIDIN?	GIDIN
A PEOPLE? A W	10717?
ANOTHER NAME, A	NAME IT'S CURIOUS ABOUT
OBSCURATI	
	OBSCURATI?
OBSCURATI	

Digging for Lies 🚓 📿 🐎 Player Handout

A FOUND NOTE

A note within a spellbook aboard *Il Draçon de Mer* provides insight into the goals of Caius Bergeron and his associates. The following is translated from the Common dialect of Danor.

Memorandum for Finona Duvall,

I was impressed by the flawless professionalism of your clean-up at the High Bayou excavation. The previous expedition was staffed with cavalier fools, but you emerged unscathed from peril, which highlights your intellect and acumen. I think you have the potential to benefit my associates greatly, and if your work continues to be of this masterful caliber, I shall recommend you be brought in more fully.

To wit, I trust you will handle this your fourth dig site with the same skill. However, for your new Drakran bodyguards, this will be their first time opening a seal. I am confident neither is so loutish and disruptive as Master Rackus was at the ziggurat of Jiese. Nevertheless, it is imperative that we avoid a disaster like what occurred at the bayou ziggurat.

The magic and defenses at these ruins are complex and secretive, so while I thoroughly trust your familiarity with the dangers, we need take no unnecessary risks.

Firstly, each of the golden seals were crafted by the Ancients specifically to close a portal to another world. Examination of the relief images on each suggests hostile creatures had been entering our world through these portals, and that the Ancients used the seals to slow an invasion. The creatures were not of any known modern race. Be certain your allies are forewarned, and keep close eye on their mental stability. At least once disaster has struck because someone panicked at the revelation that the world was much larger than their current conception.

Second, the peculiar nature of the seal magic appears to have trapped a small mote of the other world on the far side of the portal. I suspect that this somehow redirected the existing portals to this pocket dimension, and that perhaps simply closing the portal was beyond the skill of the Ancients. Though ages have passed, and we can only assume the invasion forces were stopped somehow, each time we have opened one of these seals, creatures have survived within. Make sure everyone is armed at all times and ready for battle.

Third, the hostile creatures appear to have belonged to different factions, as the seals of Jiese, Nem, and Apet depict distinct sorts of creatures. The Ancients clearly dealt with threats from worlds beyond those known to us today, since the beings that emerged from the ziggurat of Apet do not match any of the current lore of that world. Indeed, the strange beasts were not even the same sort as portrayed on the seals. Do not presume that simply because you are opening a portal to the plane of water that any creatures beyond must share the same elemental affiliation. Use multiple warding circles in your initial explorations; we can afford the expense.

Fourth, either time or magic has had the effect of concentrating the inherent planar energy within the mote beyond the seals. When the Mavisha seal is finally opened, expect intense energy to pour out. This will probably just be elemental water energy, but as always, precautions rule the day. Make sure first to know the nature of the energy, and set up appropriate wards. If possible, do not be nearby when the seal opens.

Finally, while we have endeavored to maintain a certain discretion in our activities, we have attracted the unfortunate attentions of an RHC squad, and I fear we might be being watched by agents of the Unseen Court. Be prepared for attack from without as well as within when you're at the dig. Afterward, maintain the greatest discretion in transporting the golden seal. If necessary, abandon it so you can make sure to reach me with your research. While a ton of gold is valuable in its own right, we're fairly certain any gold suffices for these seals, so your examinations of the abjurations are more valuable than the physical artifact.

Please try to enjoy your journey. Seobriga in Autumn is lovely, and I trust the more rustic charms of the land around the ziggurat of Mavisha will provide a pleasant respite from the stress of avoiding ancient curses and otherworldly carnivores. I await your return with an admitted enthusiasm, and I insist you recount your journey with the utmost detail while enjoying the finest wines from my family's vineyards.

Do be safe, Finona.

Your benefactor and cohort, Caius Bergeron

P.S., If complications arise, do try to wrap up before Winter. It would be a treasure if you could accompany me by train from Beaumont on the 11th. I have a meeting to attend on the 20th in Vendricce, after which I plan to stay in Crisillyir for a few months. I would love the company of a vivacious young woman, since my host is somewhat too aged and philosophical for my tastes.



NAVAL QUICK PLAY

The philosophy of these naval combat rules is that the *Pathfinder Role-Playing Game* is designed for folks to fight face to face. So the goal of this system is not to accurately model ships maneuvering and shooting each other. It's to get ships close enough for combat to begin using the normal rules. Along the way, though, horrible things should happen to the ships so that the combat environment is interesting.

For more detailed naval combat rules, see our upcoming sourcebook, Admiral o' the High Seas.

Naval Combat.

There are three ranges—short, medium, and long. At short range, ships are within 25 ft. of each other, close enough to board or ram. Ships outside short range but within 150 ft. of each other are at medium range: ranged attacks are possible, but imprecise. Ships farther apart than 150 ft. but within 400 ft. of one another are at long range; at this range attacks are ineffective, at least during this era of technology. Most naval encounters start at long range.

Each turn is about a minute long, and consists of four steps—**location**, **range**, **bearing**, and **attack**. Most basic ship actions require the captain to make a **Command** check (d20 + his Command score). Sometimes enemy ships make Command checks too, but usually the PC captain makes a check against a DC equal to 10 + the opposing ship's captain's Command score, as if the enemy decided to Take 10.

During the turn, each PC chooses how to contribute to battle, such as by acting as **captain**, directing the crew as **bosun**, aiding maneuvers as the **pilot**, aiding attacks as **gunner**, repairing damage as **engineer**, or warning of danger as **look-out**. Characters might also spend their turn to attack, but few PCs can muster as much destructive force as a cannon volley.

Because of their size, ships do not have hit points like creatures. Rather, attacks can damage **components** (weapons, sails, crew compartments, etc.), damage **crew**, or damage **hull integrity**. Damaged components usually change the environment when tactical combat begins (smoke and fires, collapsed rigging, listing deck, etc.). Enough hull integrity damage can sink a ship outright.

At the end of a naval turn, if the ships are at short range, either side can choose to move to normal tactical combat. Once tactical combat begins, the mundane crew of the two ships function more like terrain than actual combatants, because the hassle of tracking 40 NPCs doesn't add much to the play experience. Characters might still spend their turns to direct the crew instead of acting on their own, and could even deploy shipboard weapons as devastating area attacks.

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COMMAND SCORE.

A character's Command score is equal to half his level plus the highest bonus among his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. So a 6th level character with an 18 Intelligence would have a +7 Command score. Different ship and crew traits can grant bonuses to Command in specific circumstances.

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Set-Up.

The GM should have maps of all ships, stats for the vessel, and details of the crew. The GM should describe the environment and starting location, then list notable locations the encounter might move to.

Naval Turns.

Action in naval combat is focused on the party's actions. There is no initiative, and all actions resolved "simultaneously" in the same oneminute turn. An entire naval encounter can usually be resolved in just a few minutes, leaving the lion's share of time for tactical combat.

One PC acts as captain throughout the whole turn. The other PCs can choose during the course of the turn which crew roles they want to fill, as needed.

Turn Stages.

Each naval combat turn has five phases. All ships involved in combat act simultaneously, but the focus is on what the PCs do.

Location.

During this stage, the PC captain makes a Command check. If he succeeds, he can stay in the current sea location, or move the encounter to a different location, such as a deadly whirlpool, or a crowded ship graveyard. Failure means the enemy ship makes that choice.

If the winning ship wants to move, the losing ship can refuse to move. In this situation, the winning ship can choose to end the encounter by sailing away, or to continue. If the encounter continues, the losing ship takes a -5 penalty to Command during this turn's Range and Bearing stages.

If the ships move into a sea location with dangerous terrain, resolve those conditions now.

Range.

During this stage, the PC captain makes a Command check. If he succeeds, he can stay at his current range, or move one range step closer or farther away. If he fails, the enemy ship makes the decision.

Bearing.

During this stage, the PC captain makes a Command check to see how good a bearing he can achieve. He can get a critical success (natural 20), succeed (beat the DC), tie (equal to the DC), fail (below the DC), or critically fail (natural 1). How well he rolls determines what angle the two ships end up at.

There are 5 angles.

- **23. Side to Tail.** The ship picking its bearing can fire broadside, and the other ship can only use rearward weapons.
- 24. Side to Point. The ship picking its bearing can fire broadside, and the other ship can only use forward weapons.
- **25.** Point to Tail. The ship picking its bearing can fire forward weapons and/or ram the other ship if the two are at Close range.
- 26. Point to Point. Both ships can fire forward weapons.
- 27. Side to Side. Both ships can broadside.

On a critical success, the PC captain can pick any bearing. On a success, the PC captain can choose from 2 to 5. On a tie, the PC captain chooses either 4 or 5. Failure means the enemy captain can choose from 2 to 5 (so they could fire broadside against your point, or ram you from behind). Critical failure lets the enemy captain pick any bearing.

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Attack.

For each of its firing arcs, a ship can make one attack against a target in that arc (d20 + its attack bonus against the enemy ship's Defense). A successful attack causes one **hit**, plus an additional hit for every 5 points by which the attack roll beats the target's Defense.

Attacks at Close range use the full attack bonus. Attacks at Medium range take a -10 penalty. Attacks at Long range are normally impossible.

For each hit, roll on the table below to determine the location struck. If the rolled component is already destroyed, or if the ship doesn't have the listed component, the ship takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage instead. For instance, hits to weaponry deal Hull Integrity damage if the ship has no weaponry, or at least no weaponry on the side of the ship that was hit. Roll 1d10 on the following table to determine the hit location.

- 1d10 Location
- 1–2 Rigging or Engine
- 3–4 Main Deck
- 5–6 Miscellaneous
- 7–8 Gunnery Deck
- 9–10 Hull

Effects of hits are detailed in Ships and Crews, below.

Ramming Speed: If the ships are at Short range, the captain who won the Command check during the Bearing stage can choose to ram. His ship must be oriented with point toward the opposing ship. The PC captain makes a Command check to aim well, or to reduce damage from a hit.

Ramming deals 2 points of Hull Integrity damage to the target, plus an additional 1 for every size category the attacking ship is larger than the target. The attacker takes 1 point of Hull Integrity damage. If the attacker fails his Command check, halve the damage to the target and double the damage to the attacker.

Result.

If two ships end up at Short range, begin tactical combat. Place the ships on the battle map in an orientation determined during the Bearing stage. The ship with the higher Command check determines the starting distance, from adjacent to 25 ft. apart.



Ships and Crews.

Ships are like characters, but have a few rules of their own.

Ship Locations.

Ships have 5 main locations.

- Rigging. On a steam-powered ship, this is replaced by an engine room.
- Main Deck. The exposed upper deck, this also includes fore- and aft-castles on typical sailing ships, or command bridges on steam ships.
- Miscellaneous. This section includes a variety of internal components below the main deck, like brigs, sick bays, laboratories, crew quarters, or holds.
- Weaponry. On small ships, the main deck might double as a gunnery deck. On magically powerful ships, a gunnery deck might be supplemented by a Brand, a supernatural weapon that must be operated by magic-user. This section also includes the ship's magazine—the ammunition stores for cannons, or the charged energy for Brands, both of which can explode if disturbed.
- + Hull. This is whatever element of the ship keeps it from sinking.

Crew Locations.

Because ship weapons can damage crew based on where they hit, it is useful to have a map for each ship, especially the main deck. Before attack rolls are made each naval turn, every PC should have chosen where he is. Crew usually keeps to the same location unless the bosun directs them otherwise.

Crew Roles.

Every turn, each PC can take one action to aid the ship. Someone must act as Captain, or else the ship automatically fails all Command checks.

- + Captain. Decides ship's movement. Must be on main deck.
- Navigator. Plots courses to grant bonuses for maneuvers. Must be on main deck.
- Look-Out. Helps avoid hazards and tricks. Must be in rigging or on main deck.
- Gunner. Aims shipboard weapons, or uses own ranged attacks. Usually on gunnery deck, but varies based on ship's weapons.
- Engineer. Repairs damage, or adjusts ship components to improve performance. Must be in whichever location he's fixing or modifying.
- Bosun. Manages the crew and can grant small bonuses in various roles. Must be in whichever location he's directing crew.

Characters might also attack an enemy ship, or try some other task. It's impossible to cover every tactic, but usually you can rule that an effort grants a bonus or penalty to some other aspect of the rules already detailed. Weather magic might aid a Command check in the Range stage, while feigning damage to lure an enemy in might aid a Command check in the Bearing stage. Digging for Lies 🔫 📿 🐎 Naval Quick Play

Captain.

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The captain's Command score is equal to half his level plus the highest ability modifier out of his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. He must be able to communicate with his crew. During naval combat, a captain can hand off this role to another character between turns.

Other crew roles can grant the equivalent of rerolls on specific actions. This typically represents the difference between the captain giving specific orders ("Set a course at 15 degrees North Northeast at twelve knots") and the captain providing general goals and trusting his crew to carry them out ("Cut them off so we can bring our port guns to bear").

Navigator.

One PC can act as Navigator at a time. Once per turn, after the captain makes a Command check, the navigator can make a Dexterity or Intelligence check. The ship uses the better of the two rolls.

The Navigator can instead try to use evasive maneuvers. This increases the ship's Defense by the navigator's Dexterity or Intelligence modifier.

Look-Out.

One PC can act as Look-Out. Whenever the captain would make a Command check to avoid the danger of sea terrain, the look-out can make a Perception check. The ship uses the better of the two rolls. Opponents attempting a trick must beat both the captain and the look-out's Passive Sense Motive.

Gunner.

One PC can act as Gunner per firing arc. A gunner lets the ship roll twice for its attacks. Also, the gunner can choose the location of the first hit each turn.

Engineer.

Multiple PCs can act as Engineer, but each needs crew to help him, based on the size of the ship, which might leave certain aspects of the ship under-manned. An engineer can choose one damaged component and make a saving throw (or roll an unmodified d20 vs. DC 10). On a success, the component is repaired.

The engineer can instead try to repair 1 point of Hull Integrity damage, but in a given encounter, no more than half the ship's Hull Integrity (round up) can be repaired. Repairing damage can halt listing or sinking.

Bosun.

One PC can act as Bosun at a time. By efficiently relaying the captain's orders, he can grant a +2 bonus to any one Command check, or to an attack roll, after the check or attack has been rolled.

Personal Attacks.

For ease of gameplay, we try to limit the use of personal attacks before tactical combat begins. However, a character can spend his turn to use a single ranged or area attack power against an enemy ship. Assume that during the other 9 rounds worth of time, conditions of waves, winds, and visibility make attacking pointless or ineffectual.

The attack must be able to reach 800 ft. (160 squares) at long range, 150 ft. (30 squares) at medium range, or 25 ft. (5 squares) at short range. The PC can aim the attack anywhere he normally could. Most attacks do nothing against a ship, and are only useful for injuring crew.

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Non-Player Ships and Crew Roles.

Usually ships controlled by NPCs cannot take advantage of crew roles. Each ship will have a captain who determines its Command score, but for ease of play the GM generally won't have any NPCs trying to improve the performance of the ship. In special circumstances, however, the GM might have a prominent NPC perform a crew role.

Damage and Hull Integrity.

Ships do not have hit points the same way normal creatures do. Instead they have a Hull Integrity score. Attacks can deal multiple hits, and each hit can either damage components, damage crew, or damage hull integrity.

Component damage is detailed in the appropriate sections below. Hull Integrity damage is detailed under hull.

Crew Damage. Whenever an attack hits a location where crew are active, it also causes some collateral damage from splinters and debris. Whenever a hit causes crew damage, the attacking captain or gunner chooses an area burst 1 somewhere in that location. Each creature in the area makes a saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 3d6+7 damage. On a success, the creature takes half damage, or no damage if it is a minion.

Rigging/Engines. One hit damages the rigging. A second destroys it. Damaged rigging incurs a -5 penalty to the captain's Command score. Destroyed rigging means the captain automatically fails Command checks, and the ship is immobilized. When the rigging is destroyed, creatures in the rigging and on the main deck suffer crew damage. Add some quantity of blocking terrain from fallen masts, and mark locations with fallen rigging, which count as difficult terrain.

Engines work much the same as rigging. However, a destroyed engine fills the ship with smoke and does crew damage to everyone near the engine. This damage is fire damage. Damage to an engine might also represent disabled rudders or screws, with the same mechanical effects.

Main Deck. Hits here only cause crew damage. The main deck is never destroyed, though sufficient hits might create difficult terrain or even holes in walls and floors.

Miscellaneous. Each round, choose one component that can be damaged by a miscellaneous hit. This prevents ships from stocking up on fancy galleys and luxury pool halls to defend themselves from sinking. One hit to a given miscellaneous component destroys it. Creatures inside suffer crew damage.

Weaponry. One hit damages a ship's weapons in that firing arc, and causes crew damage to some of the crew operating the weapons. When tactical combat begins, the ship is affected by smoke. Damaged weapons take a -5 penalty to their attack rolls, and they cannot fire if that same firing arc fired last round, due to difficulties in reloading and reaiming.

A second hit destroys the firing capabilities in a given firing arc, and deals additional damage to crew in that area. In tactical combat the ship is affected by fire as well as smoke.

Hull. Every hit to the hull, or hits to an already destroyed component,



deal 1 point of Hull Integrity damage. When a ship's Hull Integrity is reduced below half its full value, it lists. If it is reduced to 0 or below, it is flooding and may sink.

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Listing.

During a naval encounter, a listing ship cannot change locations, and it automatically fails all Command checks unless it can be repaired.

During tactical combat, a listing ship has one side sloping toward the sea. Any creature that cannot hold onto a railing or other support treats all movement as difficult terrain. A creature that is knocked prone slides 2 squares toward the water.

If the ship's hull integrity is repaired above half, the ship rights itself.

Flooding and Sinking.

During naval combat, a ship reduced to o hull integrity is immobilized. It automatically fails Command checks, and during the Bearing stage the opposing ship can approach at any angle. It sinks two turns later unless repaired.

During tactical combat, at the end of the ship's turn each round, the Captain rolls a percentile, with a 50% chance of success. Once the ship has failed three saves in this way, it begins to descend 5 ft. per round. On a natural 20, the ship stabilizes, floating but perhaps partially submerged. As with listing, the ship might be stabilized by repairs.

Ships in Tactical Combat.

In tactical combat, ships are basically giant pieces of terrain that can be moved if enough characters spend their actions to do so.

Initiative.

To represent the simultaneity of multiple ships maneuvering at once, all ships act at Initiative count o. Each ship's captain has a Command score, equal to half his level plus the highest modifier among his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. The ships move in order of lowest Command score to highest, giving the canniest and most commanding captain an advantage.

Speed.

When a ship takes its turn, it moves up to its speed. If there is no one in command or if the ship lacks sufficient crew to pilot, the ship drifts the same number of squares it moved last round. The ship can only move forward or diagonally forward.

Close-combat maneuvers force ships to move at less than their full speed, so a ship's speed entry does not accurately reflect how fast it travels over long distances. These ship-based tactical combat rules assume that ships are moving at less than their full speed in order to be able to better avoid obstacles and engage their foes. (Also, a ship traveling at speed 20 would go off the edge of a typical battle map in a round or two.)

If a ship is stationary and fully crewed for two consecutive turns, it can switch between moving forward and backward. Ships move backward at half speed.

OVERVIEW.

Ships in these quick-play rules require 2 crew to pilot (15 for a big ship, half as many for a steam ship). Being crew takes a standard action. It helps to have minions. Ships require a captain. Being captain is a free action. Declaring an ally to be the new captain is a move action.

At initiative count 0, all ships move, but only forward or diagonally forward. If there's no captain, or if not enough crew work to pilot, a ship drifts at the same speed it moved last round. Ships can turn 90 degrees after moving forward 3 squares (7 squares for a big ship).

When two ships first move adjacent, their movement stops and neither can move the following turn.

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Turning and Maneuverability.

When the captain decides to turn his ship, the vessel must move a number of squares equal to half the ship's length, after which it will rotate 90 degrees. For instance, a cutter that is 35 ft. long (7 squares) would have to move 3 squares before it could turn, while a barquentine that is 75 ft. long (15 squares) would have to move 7 squares before it could turn.

Very long or slow ships might have to move for several rounds before they can turn. Movement during turns when the ship is short-manned don't count. A ship's axis of rotation can be any square along the aft line of the vessel's space. If the arc of the turn would hit an immobile object, it cannot turn. (In the advanced rules, such turns will be possible, but will count as collisions.)

Some ships have maneuverability traits that adjust how they turn.

Ship Terrain.

Many spaces on a ship will be difficult terrain, crowded with spare lines, barrels of supplies, and the various tools used to keep ships in working order. Characters should be encouraged to use these in improvised attacks.

Rigging can be entered from any space adjacent to the edge of the ship, or adjacent to any of its masts. Most rigging can be climbed with an Acrobatics or Athletics check (DC 10). For ease of play, assume that characters can occupy any space above the ship, up to the maximum of the rigging's height.

Falling overboard is a great risk, so most ships have railings along their edges. If forced movement would take a creature through the railing and off the ship, that creature gets a +5 bonus to its saving throw to avoid being thrown overboard.

Climbing up the side of a ship in steady waters requires an Athletics check (DC 10).

Boarding.

When two ships first make contact they are immobilized on their next turns as hull grinds against hull. Thereafter the two ships can move normally, though intrepid sailors might toss grappling lines to hook the vessels together.



SAMPLE VESSELS

The PCs have access to either the Excise Cutter or Steam Cutter as their starting ship, though they may be able to requisition the *Impossible*.

Rowboat.

Most Huge or larger ships have at least one rowboat. The length of a rowboat ranges from 1 to 3 squares.

Excise Cutter.

The traditional fore-and-aft rig of a cutter has a single mast supporting a mainsail and two or more headsails attached to a bowsprit. Excise cutters—which often serve as harbor patrol and law enforcement—add a topsail for extra speed.

Excise Cutter	Level 3 Vehicle
Tiny Vehicle	Cost 680 gp
Hull Integrity 1	Space 3 square by 7 squares
Defense 10	Attack Bonus n/a
Speed 4	Crew Required 2
Command Rating by PC	Total Crew 10
Armaments	
None	

Fore-and-Aft Rigged

An excise cutter's rigging is 40 ft. high.

An excise cutter can turn in place. In tactical combat it must spend 3 squares of movement before it can turn, but it only needs to actually move 1 square forward. It can use any square in its space as its axis of rotation.

Runner

In naval combat, if the excise cutter has 3 piloting crew, it grants its captain +2 to Command checks during the Distance stage.

Steam Cutter.

Designed to fill the role of sailing excise cutters, steam cutters can more easily travel against the wind, but are louder and must rely on fuel, which somewhat limits their long-distance uses.

Excise Cutter	Level 3 Vehicle
Tiny Vehicle	Cost 680 gp
Hull Integrity 1	Space 3 square by 7 squares
Defense 10	Attack Bonus n/a
Speed 4	Crew Required 1
Command Rating by PC	Total Crew 9
Armaments	
None	

Steam Powered

Carries fuel for 500 miles.

In tactical combat, the captain of a steam cutter gets a +5 bonus to his Command Rating to determine initiative.

A steam cutter must spend 3 squares of movement before it can turn.

Runner

In naval combat, if the steam cutter has 3 piloting crew, it grants its captain +2 to Command checks during the Distance stage.

R.NS Impossible.

This clipper, captained by Rutger Smith, is the fastest ship available to the Royal Homeland Constabulary. Its crack crew is capable of outrunning any foe, which is handy, since this ship carries no weapons. It primarily serves as a courier or transport for secret missions.

RNS Impossible, clipper	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	Cost 5,000 gp
Hull Integrity 3	Space 7 square by 32 squares
Defense 20	Attack Bonus n/a
Speed 10	Crew Required 30
Command Rating +10, or by PC	Total Crew 60
Armaments	

None

Rigging Three masts, 70 ft. high.

The Impossible can turn in place. In tactical combat it must spend 16 squares of movement before it can turn, but it only needs to actually move 4 squares forward. It

can use any square in its space as its axis of rotation.

Swift Runner

In naval combat, the captain of the Impossible gains a +5 bonus to Command checks during the Distance stage.

If the Impossible has 45 piloting crew, it grants its captain an additional +2 to Command checks during the Distance stage.

Il Draçon de Mer.

An older generation of warship, this sloop-of-war served the Risuri navy before being captured by Crisillyiri pirates ten years ago off the coast of Sid Minos. After changing hands several times, it was claimed by Bernard Molinelli, who sought commission as a privateer by the clerical council of Crisillyir. Now *Il Draçon de Mer* serves as a mercenary warship, giving it leeway to carry cannons, which are forbidden in the formal Crisillyir navy.

Il Draçon de Mer, sloop-of-war	Level 10 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	Cost 5,000 gp
Hull Integrity 3	Space 7 square by 32 squares
Defense 20	Attack Bonus +10 broadsides, +5 forward
Speed 6	Crew Required 15
Command Rating +8	Total Crew 31
Armaments	

Gunnery deck with 6 cannons each to port and starboard. Two forward cannons on the forecastle. Each cannon requires 2 crew to operate, so typically 12 are on the gunnery deck and 4 on the forecastle.

Rigging

Three masts, 70 ft. high, require 15 crew to operate. Command checks are at -2 with between 8 and 15, or at -5 with between 4 and 7. The ship simply cannot be sailed effectively with fewer than 4 crew.

Il Draçon de Mer can turn in place. In tactical combat it must spend 16 squares of movement before it can turn, but it only needs to actually move 4 squares forward. It can use any square in its space as its axis of rotation.







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Digging for Lies 🔫 🌮 Player Maps

Royal Homeland Constabulary Office



FIRST FLOOR

- 1. Entrance.
- 2. Lower Hallway. Lit with gaslights on the ceiling.
- 3. Western Stairwell.
- 4. Eastern Stairwell.
- 5. Interrogation Rooms.
- 6. Quartermaster Office. Keys to rooms 7 and 8 are locked in the desk.
- 7. General Supplies. Door locked.
- 8. Evidence. Door locked.
- 9. Secretary Pool.
- 10. Guard Room.
- 11. Morgue.

SECOND FLOOR

- 12. Inspectors' Desks.
- 13. Delft's Office.
- 14. Support Offices.
- 15. Break Room.
- 16. Upper Hallway.
- 17. Lady Saxby's Office.
- BASEMENT
 - Holding Cells.
 Magic Cells. Spellcasters are kept here. Any attempt to use magical powers sounds an alarm and does damage to the prisoner. A golden ward also blocks teleportation and summoning. The two white glowing columns grant everyone within 5 squares Resist 10 against all energy types.



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Rowboat





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Royal Homeland Constabulary Office



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Royal Homeland Constabulary Office



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Subrail Tunnel

One square equals 5ft.

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Prehistoric Artifacts of Power!

In the wake of a villain's defeat, his accomplices flee into the seedy underbelly of Flint. The party tracks down an arcanoscientist selling illegal arms and magic developed in labs owned by the fallen villain, and discovers a curious collection of ancient artifacts. These primitive weapons contain powerful spells capable of conjuring alien monsters never seen in modern times.

To unearth why shadowy forces are collecting these relics, the party travels into the High Bayou, lair of the dread fey titan called the Voice of Rot. There, beneath an ancient ziggurat, the party finds the remains of a doomed archaeological expedition, and learns that a powerful alien entity has escaped its ancient prison and entered this world.

The party has tugged into view one thread of the conspiracy, but to reach its heart and see how deep the threat goes, they're going to have to dig.



A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR ENTERPRISING HEROES OF LEVELS 4-5

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