



# ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

PART  
**6**

## REVELATIONS FROM THE MOUTH OF A MADMAN

FROM THE PEN OF RYAN NOCK



A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR  
ENLIGHTENED HEROES OF LEVELS 9-10

COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH THE  
PATHFINDER® ROLE-PLAYING GAME

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ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE





## ZEITGEIST Adventure Number 6

# Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman



A Fantasy  
Role-Playing  
Adventure by  
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# INTRODUCTION

## Wherein a Tiny Tinker can Topple a Tyrant

**W**elcome to the beginning of act two of ZEITGEIST: The Gears of Revolution. In the first arc of the campaign, the party discovered an international conspiracy tinkering with extraplanar magic and building a colossal golem in a plane that was the shadow of the real world. At the climax of the fifth adventure that colossus went out of control, broke free, and began trampling through the city of Flint. The party helped drive it away, and their king tasked them with finding a way to gain control of it before the conspiracy can.

Throughout the next three adventures, the party's mission will take them across the world to disrupt enemy plots, enlist allies, and fight for mastery of the mighty metal titan. Their first step takes them to Ber, a nation once ruled by dragons, now a struggling young land of orcs, minotaurs, gnolls, and other savage races trying to learn to be civilized. One of the colossus's creators has sought asylum with Ber's ruler, who considers the tiny gnome technologist a treasure not to be lightly traded.



## THE SHORT, SHORT VERSION

The party heads to Ber to find the gnome, named Tinker. On their way to meet Ber's minotaur ruler named Shantus, members of the conspiracy ambush the PCs, get the party's local guide arrested, and then attack the party with a stampede. The PCs might clear their guide's name and find allies among the locals, but to gain an audience with Shantus they must pass through a labyrinth obstacle course. The minotaur, it seems, likes to be entertained.

At the court of Shantus, a party allied with the conspiracy has already asked for access to Tinker. Shantus decides he'll give the gnome to whoever entertains him most. He proposes a contest between the PCs and the other party, consisting of two challenges: the under-construction railroad, and the disloyal ally.

At the railroad, two companies of workers compete to build the most miles of track, and the PCs can help their efforts, disrupt the efforts of the other company, and defend against the sabotage attempts by the conspiracy's party. With the disloyal ally, the PCs try to convince him to pledge fealty to Shantus while the other team tries to provoke him to attack the party's homeland.

Shantus forbids the two parties from harming each other directly, but subterfuge and cheating is encouraged. Once there is a winner, Shantus brings Tinker out of hiding, but then is betrayed. Under the magical compulsion of a megalomaniacal industrialist named Pemberton, Tinker and a gang of traitors try to kill Shantus and both parties.

The party learns that Pemberton, an old dragon ruler trapped in human form, seeks to conquer Ber. He has replaced Tinker and others close to the king with mechanical duplicants under his control, and has

## ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE.

If you're playing in a home campaign, you might replace the steampunk elements with more traditional forms of magic. Tinker might still be a master of machines, but he could surround himself with medieval siege weapons, cranes, and traditional golems. Instead of building a railroad, the Berans might be constructing an aqueduct; and instead of a factory, the climax might occur at an iron mine filled with Tinker's war machines.

To fit the adventure into your own campaign you can skip the introduction in Risur and start right away in Ber. Perhaps Tinker knows a secret or possesses a rare magic item the PCs need.

If you just want some inspiration for your own campaign, we have:

- a nation of normally savage races trying to civilize themselves,
- a stampede of megafauna provoked by tyrannosaurs,
- a labyrinth arena,
- a competition where two high-level parties try to sabotage each other,
- a battle with a gnome in a golem suit, and
- a dragon with steamtech prostheses.

Finally, if you like the Storm-Tossed Battle (page xx), you might want to check out our naval adventures book *Admiral o' the High Seas* for ideas on other shipboard action scenes.



put the real Tinker to work in his volcanic island lair, which he has converted to a factory building war machines.

Perhaps with the temporary aid of the conspiracy, the PCs must fight their way past a dragon-worshipping gnoll cult to reach the heart of the volcano, recruit Tinker, and defeat the last surviving dragon tyrant.

## BACKGROUND

The gnome engineer **Tinker Oddcog** was always a bit addled. Though most gnomes in Risur live hidden in the forests at the borders of the fey realm of The Dreaming, Tinker embraced technology, fascinated by tiny whirling gears and the ability to invent new tools and leave his mark on the world.

Then ten years ago, while excavating tunnels for a subrail project in Risur's capital city of Slate, Tinker stumbled upon a brass orb. He became obsessed with it, convinced he could hear whispers from it, and that its surface consisted of imperceptibly tiny interlocking cogs that

Machines talk. Most people are too big to hear them, and so the machines don't like them. But they like Tinker. Their tiny little voices tell Tinker their secrets, and he treats them nicely, so when he asks, the machines do what he wants. For a while what he wanted was to make a great big machine, one so loud that everyone would hear what it was saying. Then he wanted to become so small himself that no one would find him. But now maybe it's time for the machines to start yelling. If enough of them yell together, people will be sure to hear.

Tinker yelps and cowers in the presence of things bigger than him, though when he's in his mechanical battle suit he gets a bit megalomaniacal. His goals are mercurial, and he's easily nudged toward different projects, as long as he gets to work with machines. He possesses little actual malice, except to those who doubt his brilliance. Or those who want to kill him, like the Obscurati.

Part of Tinker's unhinged personality is because he hears whispers of every machine everywhere, and these whispers speak of maddening concepts, granting him glimpses of a world too large for his mind to cope with.



Shantus took over from Ber's previous ruler, Vairday Bruse, seven years ago. Though he was instrumental in the early growth of the revolution, after a few years of bearing the weight of a nation on his shoulders, and of seeing how slow and embarrassing progress was, Shantus has begun to slip back into the traditional patterns of power. Though he hasn't betrayed the principles of his predecessor, he has come to believe that Ber has made enough progress for one revolution.

Shantus thinks of himself as mischievous, using his power to force petitioners into silly situations to get what they want. He tells himself this endears his people to him, though in truth many see him as petty and decadent. He doesn't brook disagreement, though, and the handful of advisors who tried to explain how tone-deaf he was to the needs of his people were given assignments in Ber's swamps and deserts so they wouldn't bother him.



moved like they were alive. His obsession got him fired, and soon thereafter the head of the project was crushed by a crane that seemed to swing by its own volition.

After the tragedy, Tinker offered to take over the project, but was rejected. When the next project head died in a hideous train derailment, the aristocrats of Slate, already wary of technology, forbade any further subrail construction in their city.

Agents of the Obscurati, however, recognized that Tinker possessed the power to speak with and command machines. They recruited the gnome to help build their colossus. He earned the nickname "gear-builder," but after a friend of his—the "mindmaker"—died trying to escape the conspiracy, Tinker grew paranoid. He bided his time, and when the colossus broke free (see Adventure Five, *Cauldron-Born*), he fled and boarded a ship to Ber, his precious brass orb tucked under his arm. More importantly, he carried the secrets of the colossus in his head.

## Civilization in Ber.

Centuries ago, what is modern Ber was a patchwork of kingdoms ruled by dragon tyrants who kept savage races as their subjects. The last of those tyrants fell two hundred years ago, and an era of chaos and decline followed.

Then, forty years ago an orc named **Vairday Bruse** united the shattered cities, the squabbling warlords, and the roaming tribes under his banner, naming the new nation Ber. He negotiated with other countries, brought fresh wealth to his people, and developed a cult of adoration centered on advancing his people toward the civilized cultures of the rest of the world.

Throughout Ber, men and women whose parents lived in mountain caves or tents on the grasslands now struggle to adapt to fancy attire, refined etiquette, and enlightened education and philosophy. Some rebel or simply don't buy into Ber's cultural revolution, and indeed some of the most unwilling converts were those who had long lived in cities, slaves to the dragon masters. But most loved Vairday Bruse for the safety and dignity he brought them, and they see it as their duty to civilize themselves.

Eight years ago Vairday died and passed on his position to a minotaur, Shantus, who helped him in the founding of Ber. Taking his predecessor's name instead of the title king, **Bruse Shantus** has kept Ber stable and has negotiated for more foreign investment, though he is less devoted to cultural and social reforms.

## Races of Ber.

Orcs are the most common race, concentrated in the northeast. Gnolls dominate the south. Minotaurs are prominent to the west, while lizardfolk are prevalent in the thinly-populated central riverlands. Half-giants live in the Anthras Mountains, close to human lands. Other races like goblinoids, shifters, and half-dragons are rare. (Indeed, these days they're never half-blooded anymore, since they're ten generations from their original dragon ancestor.) Aside from the gnolls, every race in Ber grudgingly gets along with all the others.

Though humans stereotype all these races as savage, Berans have their own clichés about their neighbors. Orcs are drunkards who sing badly and are always trying to be clever and failing. Minotaurs are lazy, take credit for what others do, and have sex with anything. Lizardfolk are thieves and all look alike. Half-giants are all homosexuals, not to mention spies for Risur. Goblins have disgusting food that makes anyone else vomit, and they are confused by any technology more advanced than ropes. Gnolls, viewed most negatively in general, are seen as superstitious, uncivilized criminals who can never lead themselves, which is why they all miss their dragon tyrants.



### Asylum and Industry.

Tinker reached Ber on the 21st of Spring and quickly contacted **Glauca Evora**, a gnoll member of *Executores dola Liberta*, the “enforcers of freedom” who are tasked with maintaining the revolution. Tinker offered his technological know-how in exchange for asylum, and the Bruse accepted. Empowered by Ber’s rites of rulership, Shantus has cloaked Tinker from divination. The Bruse always knows the gnome’s health and status, and if anyone harms him, Shantus will be able to see it.

However Shantus does not automatically know who speaks to Tinker, or where he goes. So he is not aware that Tinker was soon met by **Benedict Pemberton**. Pemberton, an eccentric industrialist, inventor, and firebrand from Risur, proposed a new arrangement: Tinker could come work for him at his private island on Ber’s southern coast, he could still benefit from the Bruse’s protection, and he’d be building far more interesting things than railroads and steam boilers.

Pemberton provided Tinker with the schematic and material necessary to craft a “duplicant”: a mechanical body that can be controlled remotely. Each duplicant contains a small vessel of witchoil (see Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*), which holds a sliver of the soul of whomever the machine has imprinted. The machine becomes a near-perfect double of the original person, though it must obey Pemberton’s orders.

Tinker built his own duplicant, bonded to it, and left it behind to do modest work for the Bruse as he snuck off to Pemberton’s island, *Isla dolas Focas*. Iron mines riddle the island, and at its heart lies a dormant volcano, once a lair of one of Ber’s old dragon tyrants.

### The Last Dragons.

Starting five hundred years ago, it became popular for mighty heroes and would-be kings to slay dragons, and they descended upon the domains of the dragon tyrants, until finally in 300 A.O.V., according to common lore, King Boyle of Risur slew the last of the dragons. Though

### EXPECTED TIMELINE.

The adventure begins on the 1st of Summer, 501 A.O.V. (After Our Victory). The party can teleport to Ber the same day, or spend days sailing the 800 miles from Flint to Seobriga. An average ship could get there in 10 days, while Risur’s fastest ship could get there in 2 days with some magical help, and by having the crew toil through the night for every last scrap of wind.

Lya Jierre’s group is stuck trying to entertain the Bruse and curry favor until the party arrives and shakes things up. From there, it likely takes 20 days to finish the *Cantabrilla Railroad* challenge. The railhead is about 300 miles from *Citado Cavallo*, so even with fine horses it would take 6 days to get there. Only slightly faster is riding to Renza then taking the train, which shaves off a single day. This means the party will likely split up, or perhaps send their ship to *Marrajado de Oro* so they can teleport back and forth.

Once they get back to the Bruse’s summer court, a day passes before Tinker arrives and provokes a battle. Then it’s another 400 miles from Seobriga to *Isla dolas Focas* to find the real Tinker. Teleportation isn’t possible this time, and Lya’s ship *Lux Profectusque* will get there in 3 days. Even if the party dawdles during the Bruse’s game, they’ll likely finish the adventure in less than a month.

a few scattered legends tell of survivors, dragons are believed extinct.

In truth, a handful of dragons escaped this genocide. The dragons fought off most challengers until 295 A.O.V., when the world’s already tenuous connection to the plane of air was nearly severed (see Adventure One, *Island at the Axis of the World*). With their massive bodies now forced to obey the same physical laws as birds, most dragons were rendered incapable of flight. Their numbers rapidly dwindled.

But King Boyle of Risur saw more value in the remaining dragons than simply mounting their heads as trophies. He offered the last dragon tyrants refuge in Risur and vowed to protect them and even keep their hoards safe, as long as they pledged never to take hostile action against Risur. But for the pact to be secure, they would need to live 100 years in the form of a human.

Some dragons rebuked the king, and he slew them, but a few agreed to his terms. One, known then as **Inatch the Hex-Eater**, eventually became a loyal advisor to several kings of Risur, and today serves as Risur’s principle minister under the name of **Harkover Lee**.

Another dragon, **Gradiax the Lord of Steel** became human but avoided all contact with the leaders of Risur. He used his remaining treasure to invest in land, then invented a family line so he could assume new identities and inherit his own wealth. But after his century of waiting came to an end, he understood that even if he resumed his old form, he would just be another beast to be slain. He needed a power base before he could reveal himself.

Today, Gradiax goes by **Benedict Pemberton**, owner of **Pemberton Industries**,





The dragon Gradiax, Lord of Steel, has almost never resumed his true form for the past two centuries, and has grown accustomed to his eccentric alternate identity as a businessman and technologist. Though he only looks about fifty, and has the verve of a young man, he jokingly exaggerates his aged infirmities. He speaks slowly with a deep, country-accented voice, and often leans back and tucks his thumbs in his belt loops as he talks. (Imagine a more laid-back Foghorn Leghorn.)

Confident in his ability to win in the long run, Pemberton almost never loses his cool. He enjoys playing subtle power games; if he spies a loose thread on someone he's talking to, he'll draw out a short folding knife he always carries, flick it open, and without explaining what he's doing will walk over and snip the thread free, or if they flinch he'll chuckle at the person's nervousness around a harmless geezer like him.



which until recently manufactured experimental military technologies in Flint, the industrial heart of Risur. Harkover Lee and Pemberton both know each other's identities, and Lee has kept an eye on his fellow dragon's business, wary of betrayal.

But Pemberton has slowly been building a second path to power. He was in the process of negotiating to sell the Bruse golems for constructing his new railroad when he learned of Tinker Oddcog's arrival. Recalling rumors of the gnome's knack with machines, Pemberton was determined to turn the Tinker into an asset. The tiny little madman has performed far beyond Pemberton's dreams.

### Isla dolas Focas.

Pemberton secretly controls this fifty-mile long sliver of land off the south-eastern coast of Ber: the Island of the Seals, named for the massive population of seals that nest on its shores. Two centuries ago Pemberton—as Gradiax—ruled a small nation of gnolls from here. Though like all the

An ambitious tiewling in her late 20s, Lyra is the niece of Han Jierre, the Sovereign of Danor. She graduated top of her class from the prestigious academy of war, the *Jierre Sciens d'Arms*, and many students of other war colleges have read her thesis, *Field Study of Melee Effectiveness and Foe Debilitation through Focused Limb Severance Techniques Contrasted with Mainstream Opportunistic Techniques*, which she wrote near the end of the last Yerasol War.

She serves as Danor's Minister of Outsiders, giving her great leeway to travel and make alliances. After the peace talks with Risur fell apart three months ago, she has been more active in her clandestine role, as leader of the Obscurati's Golden Cell. Since the conspiracy's ritual (detailed in the *ZEITGEIST* Campaign Guide) is all but ready to go, Lyra has taken point on eliminating small, scattered threats to the group's plans.

Intelligent and open-minded, Lyra has her doubts about the conspiracy's plans. She insists on maintaining high moral standards for herself and her followers, to balance out the distasteful but—as she sees them—necessary deceptions and murders they commit.



dragon tyrants he oppressed most of his people, the gnolls of Isla dolas Focas he treated grandly, and when he left he promised he would return.

The gnolls refused to ally with the rest of Ber under Vairdy Bruse, and encouraged other tribes to resist. They call themselves the Cult of the Steel Lord, and for two centuries they have continued to excavate the iron mines, stockpiling ore for their lord's return. The one time Pemberton has returned to his true draconic form was seven years ago to slay the ruler of the gnolls and reclaim his domain.

The Cult of the Steel Lord believes humanoid races are unworthy to wield metal, and that if they are pure they will become as strong as steel. Indeed, as a blessing to his most faithful follower, Pemberton recently had Tinker construct a duplicant for a gnoll named **Pardo**, who he then sent as an emissary to Shantus. Now Pardo's machine body represents the unincorporated tribes of Ber at the Bruse's court. He has even earned the honorary title "Minister of Rebellion."

No one aside from the gnolls who worship him knows that Pemberton leads the cult.

### Father and Daughter

When Gradiax faked his death and abandoned the island, he left behind a clutch of eggs lain by his slain lover. The Cult tended these during his absence, and when Pemberton again took control of the island he dared to have them hatch one egg. Alas, the child who emerged was crippled, missing an eye, a wing, and most of one leg.

Pemberton raised his daughter, whom he named **Terakalir**, hoping he might still establish a dynasty. He abducted tutors to educate her, and she trained her mind because her body was weak. But when Tinker Oddcog arrived, the gnome excitedly crafted her steel prostheses to replace her missing flesh. Tinker became cherished by the Cult of the Steel Lord, and the gnolls grew only more fervent in their belief that they were blessed by this new half-dragon, half-machine.

### Draconic Machinations

Pemberton has slowly begun replacing high-ranking officials in the more distant areas of Ber with duplicants. The design of the devices requires that the original body remains alive, so that it can maintain a link to the mind and soul of the person it is mimicking. This connection also protects the duplicants from magical detection, because unless you know what you're looking for, they register as being the creatures they're mimicking.

Pemberton's gnoll minions keep the abducted officials imprisoned in their main caves, but he's wary of stretching too far and being discovered. His ultimate goal is to replace the Bruse and his advisors, then steer the nation to desire a new dragon overlord. Toward that end, he has had Tinker craft golems, which themselves helped craft more golems, as well other machines. His old lair has been fortified and transformed into a massive automaton factory.

Within a year, he'll have enough war machines and duplicant-enhanced gnoll soldiers that even if his plan to seize control of the Bruse fails, he'll be able to conquer Ber outright. Until he's ready, though, he continues to play the role of an eccentric industrialist from Risur, pretending that he just seeks to make money by building railroads.

### Obscurati Involvement

Pemberton is in no way affiliated with the Obscurati, and he only knows a little about them from what Tinker has mentioned.

The Obscurati want Tinker silenced. In the two and a half months since their colossus construction facility was raided they've fought with the RHC to try and tie up loose ends—by getting assets out of Risur



before they could be captured, or killing prisoners before they could reveal any information. Simultaneously, the party and other agents of Risur have chased down fringe members of the Obscurati, rooting out potential threats within their own nation.

Risur wants Tinker—to interrogate about the Obscurati at least, to become an asset if possible. The Ob, meanwhile, intend to kill the gnome. And though Tinker has done a good job hiding his tracks, both the party and their rivals manage to catch wind of his location at the same time.

The Ob leadership, understanding that Tinker is a valuable asset to Ber, have sent tiefling diplomat **Lya Jierre**, one of the top-tier members of the conspiracy. An experienced negotiator and expert swordswoman, Lya travels with two elite bodyguards—**Rush Munchausen** and **Merton Goncala**—as well as a ship full of Obscurati operatives.

Lya has nearly every resource she could need for this mission, but even the Obscurati aren't aware of Pemberton's identity, nor his plots. Though Risur and the Ob are at odds, neither side wants Ber to fall under control of a dragon, so the party might have reason to work with their enemies, at least in the short term.

### Tinker's Secrets

What can the party learn from Tinker if they capture or recruit him? First, he can fill in any missing pieces of information about the nature of the Bleak Gate construction site in Flint.

Second, he can intuitively track the path of colossus, even while it is exiled in the Dreaming. By the time this adventure starts the titan has wandered over the fey version of the Anthras Mountains into fey Ber, where it has incited much furor among the nature spirits. It's heading toward Seobriga to make crossing to Elfaivar at the narrowest spot. Tinker knows the machine is trying to find Kasvarina, which it thinks of as its mother.

Third, of the most interest to the party's bosses, he's a brilliant inventor, and can help design new arms and vehicles, perhaps even helping craft an airship for the party.

But most importantly, he knows how the colossus works. Its specifications called for it to be able to lift a flat object a hundred feet in diameter, weighing 43,000 tons, and hold it up with one side angled on the ground. (This is the 200-ft. diameter, 30-inch thick golden plate atop the Axis Seal.) It needed to be able to withstand truly extreme energy, equivalent to standing in a volcano, as well as resist kinetic injuries. (This is because the Ob don't know what sort of energy will be released when the Axis Seal opens.)

It needed to stabilize its own magical energies, without having to rely on power from other planes. (This because those planes would be changing.) Tinker notes that the last refit they made was to open a small hollow in the colossus's chest, about big enough to hold a pumpkin, which had a pipe that could feed in some sort of liquid fuel. (This was so that a replica of the Wayfarer's Lantern could be integrated into it, to infuse it with whatever planar energy was needed.)

It also needed to be able to function underwater for extended periods, at pressures seen only deep under the ocean. (This so that years of effort would not be ruined if case the ship transporting it to Axis Island sank.)

Tinker worked with experts in several fields to integrate the necessary components. He was particularly fascinated working with the mindmaker because the man insisted the colossus be capable of nuanced facial expressions so that it could interact and express itself. Tinker even mimicked elements of the little understood human endocrine and

## AVOIDING THE RAILROAD.

Players need to be free to drive the game in the direction of their choosing, so while we present a variety of possible scenes and challenges, don't feel limited to using them as presented. We endeavor to provide enough information about the setting and NPCs so that you can simply reveal what the mission is, let the party discover their rivals, and then leave it to the players to figure out how to thwart them.

If your group ditches Glaucia and hits up military contacts to find Tinker (or at least his duplicant) without going through Shantus's challenge, you should have enough insight into everyone's motivation to determine how Ber and the Obscurati will react. The party will still have to race to find the real Tinker under Pemberton's control, only they might be on the run from the Beran army and forced to take refuge with Cavallo or look for clues on the under-construction railroad.

Rather than let the plot constrain you, consider how to chop up and remix the adventure to give your players an adventure they'll enjoy.

vascular systems to grant the colossus physical feedback of its emotions, the idea being to help it form attachments to normal people and feel loyalty, rather than mere obedience.

Of course, working on huge versions of microscopically tiny anatomy just made Tinker more enthralled with the small, and nervous about the massive. But he can rattle off three dozen locations on the colossus that a precise application of force or a specific variety of magic could debilitate it. For instance, while its exterior has magically reinforced adamantine plating, for budgetary reasons many joint components—analogueous to ligaments—were made of traditional adamantine, which is vulnerable to rust magic. The witchoil furnace could be disrupted by a burst of positive energy, assuming a saboteur could get inside the colossus's torso. And the fuel feed piping to the lantern housing in the chest is insufficiently secure, so it could probably be breached by a 36-pound cannonball.

Tinker also has one final secret—this about the mindmaker and the steelshaper—which will set the course for Adventure Seven, *Schism*.

## ADVENTURE LAYOUT

The plot of *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman* has defined start and end points, but the route between them can take many different paths. We roughly divide events as follows:

- ♦ **Act One: A Civilized Country.** The party makes their way to Ber and earns an audience with the Bruse.
- ♦ **Act Two: Cheating Encouraged.** The party and Lya's group compete to get first access to Tinker. Then duplicants attack the court.
- ♦ **Act Three: The Dragon's Lair.** The party sails to Isla dolas Focas and frees Tinker from Pemberton's control.

### Scene Layout

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

**Scene Type:** Action, Exploration, Exposition, Puzzle, Social, 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.

Key Locations	Page
Abismo Condendado	34
Aigotsura	32
Cantabrilla Railroad	30
Citado Cavallo	36
Isla dolas Focas	49
Karch	49
Manhill	43
Negranha	33
Nimba	23
Pezarillo	12
Renza	28
Reo Pedresco	28
RHC Headquarters—Slate	10
Selestala Railroad	28
Seobriga	11
Slate	9
Summer Court	23

**Abismo Condendado:** Cursed wetlands near the Cantabrilla railroad. Source of odd wintry weather. Once domain of the white dragon Chesimox. Its lair is now defended by the ghoulish lizardfolk that served him, but they only appear if accosted.

**Aigotsura:** A “staging town” on the banks of a river 40 miles from the railhead of Liss Rail Construction. Surtan Liss manages from here. Supplies for the railroad are delivered on the river. Frontier town feel. Perfunctory amenities. Arid and hilly.

**Cantabrilla Railroad:** Route running 325 miles from Reo Pedresco, through the riverlands, to Renza. Nearly complete. Allows freight to bypass the south lands, where gnoll pirates are common.

**Citado Cavallo:** Walled hillside city on the shores of Marrajado de Oro (the riven sea of gold). Ruled by Cavallo de Guerra. Bastion of orc might, weak separatist desires against Bruse Shantus.

**Isla dolas Focas:** Iron-rich volcanic island. Once the domain of the red dragon Gradiax. Defended by gnollish Cult of the Steel Lord. Now controlled by Gradiax again, in the guise of Benedict Pemberton.

**Karch:** Gnoll city on the coast of Isla dolas Focas, with a population of ten thousand. Nestled amid a forest of short gnarled and spiny trees.

**Manhill:** Hillside fort on the Risur side of the riven sea. Still vigilant against orcish invasion, though none has happened in four decades. Peace has brought farms and villages along the coast.

**Negranha:** The “staging town” nearest to the Griento railhead. Homey and wooded. Griento’s wife and kids live here.

**Nimba:** Small town one mile from the summer court. Near an artillery testing range.

**Pezarillo:** Fishing village. Near a new naval base where Tinker Oddcog’s duplicant works. A few miles off shore are the ruins of the ziggurat of Mavisha.

## PACING AND LEVELING

The adventure can take many routes, and we discourage precise XP tracking. The party starts this adventure at 9th level. We recommend that they reach 10th level after finishing Bruse Shantus’s game, before they return to the court. They should reach 11th level by the end of the adventure.

**Renza:** Eastern end of the Cantabrilla Railroad. Small city originally ruled by dragons who warred with Seobriga. High walls. Key defense against unincorporated gnoll tribes to the south.

**Reo Pedresco:** Western end of the Cantabrilla Railroad. Ber’s second-largest city, and most racially-diverse.

**RHC Headquarters—Slate:** The national headquarters of the Royal Homeland Constabulary. Directed by Nigel Price-Hill, housed in an ornate building of the classic Risuri style. The party can communicate via *sending* and receive aid via teleportation.

**Selestala Railroad:** Route running 300 miles from Seobriga to Citado Cavallo. Construction delayed due to disputes between the Bruse and Cavallo de Guerra.

**Seobriga:** National capital of Ber. Its massive old buildings were sized for dragons, with high spires for them to perch. Factories lie on the western shore. Protests weekly by disgruntled citizens. Predominately orcish.

**Slate:** National capital of Risur, on the banks of the Great Delve River.

**Summer Court:** Fine royal land thirty miles north of Seobriga. Hundreds of petitioners wait outside the gates while Ber’s ruler vacations.

## NPC ROSTER

Detailed entries on the various NPCs are included throughout the adventure.

NPC Entry	Page
Alonsa Frolián, goliath beast trainer	36
Benedict Pemberton, industrialist	4
Brakken of Heffanita, minotaur negotiator	16
Bruse Shantus, ruler of Ber	2
Cavallo de Guerra, Adalid del Marrajado de Oro	36
Damata Griento	33
Glaucia Evora, Executore dola Libertà	16
Harkover Lee, Risur’s Principal Minister	10
Kenna Vigilante, Minister of Dragon Affairs	22
Lauryn Cyneburg, RHC Director of Infiltration	9
Lord Inspector Nigel Price-Hill	10
Lya Jierre, Danor’s Minister of Outsiders	4
Melissa Amarie, journalist	13
Merton Goncala	18
Pardo, Honorary Minister of Rebellion	22
Rush Munchausen	13
Stover Delft, Chief Inspector of the RHC	9
Surtan Liss, Chief of the Cantabrilla Railway	32
Tinker Oddcog, gnome technologist	2
Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, life-tinkering doctor	40
Zarkava Ssa’litt, vizier	22

## Recurring Characters.

Of the villains in this adventure, only one has a major role later in the series. Benedict Pemberton returns as a secondary antagonist in Adventures Nine and Twelve. We expect Lya Jierre, who has been a foe for several adventures, to not make it out of this alive, though the party might take her prisoner or perhaps even recruit her. The leadership of Ber can be allies in Adventures Ten through Thirteen, but it doesn’t particularly matter who’s in charge. If anyone important dies, though, you can replace them with someone thematically similar.



## 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
Altioro de Guerra, Cavallo's grandson	37
Babaro, Cavallo's second-in-command	37
Commodore Thrag Vidalia, patsy	37
Corta Nariz de Guerra, heir of Cavallo	37
Danovio, rich orc sea chief	37
Ejeka, Dabo, and Tarro, the Griento family	33
Foldero, orc witness	17
Heiliana, orc executora at Nimba	23
Inez, Lya's teleporter	27
Jacale, Lya's mercenary enchantress	37
Ludoso Alleron, orc mansion-chief	13
Perorrosos, orc druid sea chief	37
Rochero "Stone" Abormuerto, orc cop	12
Rodrigo Anthrasio, goliath protester	13
Rulio, orc witness	17
Ulrik, Lya's luggage porter	36
Willigu, Fuego goblin shaman	41

## REWARDS

The party's Prestige ratings likely won't increase during this adventure. However, if a PC keeps in touch with reporter Melissa Amarie, eventually his name, actions, and beliefs will become famous across the whole continent. This transforms the party's Flint Prestige into Populist Prestige, useful in any large population area.

The PCs should have each about 46,000 gp in equipment by the start of this adventure. Each PC gets a stipend of 16,000 gp after they have their briefing, then are granted a further stipend of 20,000 gp once they finish Bruse Shantus's game. Requisitioned materials can be delivered to the party's ship via teleportation.

## List of Magic Items as Treasure.

New items are presented at the end of the adventure.

- ♦ *Tyrant's teeth.*
- ♦ *Bracer of liberty.*
- ♦ *Skull of Cheshimox.*
- ♦ *Sonic staff.*
- ♦ *Lya Jierre's razorbust rapier.*
- ♦ *The Tyrant's Eye.*
- ♦ *Godmind urn* (artifact).

## FINAL WORD BEFORE WE START

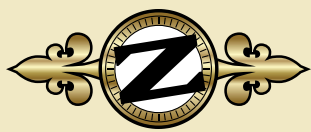
After making the PCs adhere to a tight schedule in Adventure Five, we've made an effort to present a more decompressed scenario, with more opportunities for the heroes to explore and for the heroes and their adversaries to harass each other in creative ways. Also, remember that at this stage the PCs have the clout to call upon significant resources from their country (which is one reason we're sending them overseas, so their allies don't do all the work). Let them flex their creativity and have fun with their power.

## CHARACTER THEMES IN THE ADVENTURE.

Adventures Six through Eight take the party far afield from Flint, so some character themes (detailed in the ZEITGEIST Player's Guide) have fewer obvious connections to the plot and setting. However, we plan to include several narrative threads that start to weave large social trends around the world into the cultural movements of Flint itself. We hope these will pay off when the party returns to Risur in adventure nine.

- ♦ **Dockers**—In Seobriga the party will be introduced to the Panoply, a similarly-colorful organization with sympathetic ideals but a stronger movement geared toward mobilizing other sectors of society and in multiple nations. Docker characters who befriend Melissa Amarie have an opportunity to gain influence and fame across the world.
- ♦ **Eschatologists**—In addition to the philosophical interests of the Panoply, an eschatologist PC will be sought out by the vizier Zarkava for advice on preparing for Bruse Shantus's possible downfall. Lya Jierre will try to enlist the character as a double agent. Also, the skull of the dragon Cheshimox will hint at a coming doom for Drakr.
- ♦ **Gunsmiths**—Tinker's lair is riddled with experimental powerful firearms. Additionally, Cavallo de Guerra will be interested in using a gunsmith PC as an avenue to acquire better guns for his military, while Kenna Vigilante will mock the character for promoting weapons that forsake traditional ideals of heroism and martial prowess, potentially complicating negotiations with the Bruse.
- ♦ **Martial Scientists**—The Panoply value education and seek to disrupt military dogma, so will try to recruit martial scientist PCs to be figureheads for the unlikely synthesis of social populism and realistic military strategy. Kenna Vigilante, who trained at the Ursaliña College of Military History, can teach the Vigilante Sprint ability, from her thesis *How not to be Shot*.
- ♦ **Skyseers**—Glaucia Evora seeks council about the future from a skyseer PC. Above Isla dolas Focas floats an island that contains a portal to the plane Avilona, hidden in an ancient ziggurat. Merely approaching the island will grant a vision of its role in later adventures.
- ♦ **Spirit Mediums**—Medium PCs will discover that they can notice the spiritual connections between duplicants and their imprinted person, though at first they won't know what it is they're sensing. They'll also be best-equipped to control the *godmind urn*.
- ♦ **Technologists**—Both Shantus and Cavallo would love the aid of someone who could help improve their industrial might. Tech-savvy PCs will have a chance to test their wits against Tinker and perhaps turn his devices against him. Plus in the aftermath they'll have the chance to spearhead new research for Risur.
- ♦ **Vekeshi Mystics**—Wary of the resurgence of tyranny, the Executores dola Liberta have sought divine guidance to find contacts with the Vekeshi Mystics. Glaucia Evora offers an alliance between their groups, giving a vekeshi PC access to powerful agents and, in later adventures, a strong resistance force against the Obscurati.
- ♦ **Yerasol Veterans**—Military veterans will, like martial scientists, be drawn in two possible directions: they might support the Panoply as it pushes for international de-escalation, or they could aid either the Bruse or Cavallo's military endeavors.





# ACT ONE

## A CIVILIZED COUNTRY

In this act, the party deals with Beran civil unrest as they pursue Tinker Oddcog.

### MEANWHILE IN THE NEWS...

While the party is in Ber, what's happening everywhere else?

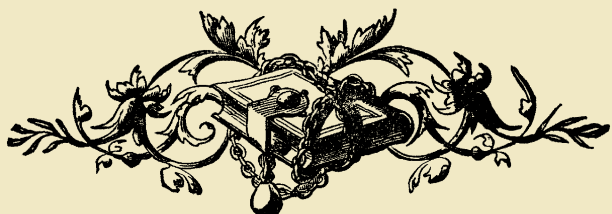
**Colossus.** The world reacts to news of the colossus attack in Flint. Arch-missionary Cornelius Eboracum of the Clergy offers exorcism aid for evil spirits unleashed from Cauldron Hill. The Drakran military has ordered the production of extremely massive cannons to repel the colossus if it should make it to their shores. Beran peasants report local nature spirits wreaking havoc and mysterious massive footprints tracing a path from the Anthras Mountains toward Seobriga. The sovereign of Danor continues to express hope for peace with Risur, but in light of widespread accusations that his nation is to blame acknowledges that negotiations are indefinitely delayed.

**Curses.** Cauldron Hill has been interdicted by the Risuri military. The side of the mountain is in flux, sometimes showing a hole that leads to the Bleak Gate, sometimes solid rock. Soldiers have been equipped with magical weapons from the nation's vaults to combat spectral monsters that emerge each night.

**Sedition.** Sparse reports come from Danor of university students filing formal petitions against the government and even talking of repeating the riots of a generation ago. These protests come in response to a crackdown on broadsheet journalism. The leadership in Cherage has forbidden publication of conspiracy theories that link Danor to the colossus in Risur, and several writers have been thrown into oubliettes for undermining the sovereign's denials.

**Shipwrights.** The city of Shale, once governed by the king's sister Ethelyn, has ordered a rapid increase in ship construction in preparation for possible war with Danor. Heightened logging activities throughout Risur have been stymied by fey activity. The city of Bole is suffering an encroachment of trees, which have been walking into the streets when people aren't looking.

**Sibilance.** Colonists in Elfaivark talk of eerie whispers in the woods. Near the Sharavathi Falls, a site claimed to be sacred to the fallen high elf empire, several caravans have disappeared except for a single survivor each. All have reported their compatriots vanishing, hearing only whispers and seeing only foot prints of mighty jungle cats.



### OPERATION PAPERCLIP

#### Exposition/Social. Real-Time. Level 13.

*The RHC preps the party to track down and recruit an agent of the enemies.*

More than two months have passed since the colossus rampaged through Flint. The RHC headquarters has had its security dramatically increased, and the party and other constables have been busy chasing leads and wrecking various Obscurati plots throughout Risur. All of them have been fairly minor—miners paid to smuggle adamant, druids using magic to keep local fey content and out of the real world, glaziers hired to craft replicas of the wayfarer's lantern (see Adventure Four), a collection of scholars recruited to collate every scrap of information on the fey titans, and so on.

Most groups were fairly forthcoming once word got out that the conspiracy gave its low-ranking members rings engraved with particular patterns as a means of identifying them. People who had no idea the Ob existed offered to help investigate, and the patriotic spirit is high after the catastrophe in Flint. Of course a few groups were leaning in opposition to Risur, such as cells of erudite soldiers preparing to take over from their more traditional commanders. But enough people were shocked at news of the colossus that they ratted out their allies, rather than be part of some group hostile to their homeland.

#### Leaving in a Hurry.

On the morning of the 1st of Summer, 501 A.O.V., Stover Delft calls the party to the RHC headquarters. The place is thick with heightened security. When the party arrives at Delft's office, he's chit-chatting with Lauryn Cyneburg, whose first words to the party sound like an insult.

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"No one else will tell you this," she says, "but we're all kinda disappointed you let the colossus escape. Are you ready to clean up your mess?"

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Delft smiles politely at the awkwardness. While he explains their mission, Lauryn begins studying coordinates on a map in preparation for teleportation.

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"Being in a bit of a hurry: constables, this is Lauryn Cyneburg, Director of Infiltration. Lauryn, the constables."

Delft puts a hand to the side of his mouth, as if speaking in confidence, and whispers, "She doesn't care about your names."

Smiling again, Delft continues. "I figure you have about five minutes before she's ready to teleport us to Slate. A carriage is waiting to take us to the main headquarters. We'll be meeting with the Lord Inspector and a few others to plan this mission, but I imagine before sunset you'll be in Ber."

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He hands over a sheet of newspaper.

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"This was published a few hours ago in Seobriga. We'd had the word out that we're looking for this gnome, Tinker, and a Beran contact got this to one of our agents. A few spells later, and I have a copy here. I wouldn't be surprised if the Ob have a copy in their hands too."



## FASTER OPENING.

We want to bring the party to Slate so they'll be more familiar with it for events in Adventure Nine, and to make it clear that they won't be sticking around Flint much anymore. But if you want to get the party to the mission sooner, you can just have Delft brief them. We suggest you have Harkover Lee present, to increase the likelihood they'll ask him later about Pember-ton. Then they can teleport straight to Ber.

## KEEPING THINGS MOVING.

Make sure to give the players an opportunity to offer suggestions and ask questions about the mission, but don't let the game bog down with over-planning. Make it clear that most of the work will be done once they get to Ber, and that anything they need will be provided for them. It's important for the players to have a sense of what they'll be doing, but we also want to get them to the part of the adventure where they're being challenged.

"Constables, we've been spending the past two months cleaning our own house, and it's good to feel safe we don't have any more traitors or secret plots in our midst." He raps his cane against the wood of his desk. "But this is our first real chance to figure out what in the hell they were planning to do with that 300-foot-tall wind-up toy. Tinker Oddcog helped build the thing, and when everything went crazy he didn't run to the Ob. He ran away. I hope that means he might be willing to talk, but we're going to need to find him before they do.

"Now grab anything you need from the quartermaster and be back in five. Anything you need later we'll ship with express delivery."

Show the party **Player Handout—Beran News Clipping**. When the party is ready, Lauryn teleports herself, the party, and Delft to Slate, the capital of Risur.

### The City of Slate.

For people used to living in the bustle of Flint, the city of Slate appears stately, calm, and perhaps a bit doddering. The Great Delve River, with its steep banks turning it almost into a man-made channel, generally separates the city into the noble west bank and the common east bank.

Six antique castles sit along the inside of a wide bend on the river's west bank, arranged in a pattern originally designed to defend against invasion. These castles act as nexuses of communities of elite gated villas, and here live the nobles descended from the many kings and queens Risur has had throughout history. Today the district resembles an overly-manicured flower garden, more pretty than practical.

Across the shore lie dozens of less affluent neighborhoods surrounding the Grand Weft, a massive square where three highways intersect. Wealthy businesses clump along the Lowland Highway, which leads from the square to docks along the river. The king's residence, Torfield Palace, sits atop a broad grassy hill a mile south of the weft. It is symbolic of the government of Risur that the king lives with the people, and only once he steps down or dies does his family move to the west bank.

### Teleportation Circle.

Banhaman Academy, Slate's foremost martial school, straddles the river north of the city center. Military barracks and a small base of river warships protect the city, though it has not been attacked in over

STOVER DELFT



A local Flinter in his early 40s, Delft handles the logistical and political drudgery so the party can perform their heroics without too much backlash. Though normally rather easy-going, he gets squinty and condescending when people obstruct important affairs because of politics.

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

LAURYN CYNEBURG



Though over seventy years old, as a half-elf Lauryn only betrays her age with the weariness of her eyes. She has traveled, almost literally, everywhere on the continent of Lanjyr. As the RHC's Director of Infiltration, her expertise in teleportation has seen her delivering agents to missions around the world, and she's tired of seeing them not return when things go wrong.

Lauryn carries herself with an odd mix of stiffness and informality. She'll never let her guard down or expose her own emotions, and she hates jokes because she hates laughing. But she's used to dealing with uncannily powerful individuals, and she has a knack for saying things that seem like insults, but only to people

who fight monsters for a living and think they should be able to accomplish anything. Nigel Price-Hill enjoys keeping her around to remind him that his constables are real people, not mythic heroes.

Though she shows little respect for anyone, not even her superiors, she long ago decided that she had to pick something to care about, or else she'd just end up teleporting around to no purpose. So she chose Risur, because its people don't take themselves too seriously.

five hundred years. The city's teleportation circle lies on the east side of the river, between the military base and the academy, inside a fortified bunker guarded by a dozen soldiers and mages. Spells alert the base whenever people teleport in, and the base's wardmage immediately knows of any injuries or attacks made in the teleportation chamber.

In the event of a suspected invasion, four quick axe-swipes can release a 3-ft. thick suspended wooden disk. The disk covers the teleportation circle, preventing anyone from traveling through it.

Non-hostile visitors are briefly searched, have to show papers (including teleportation passports if they are foreign), and then interviewed by a customs officer. If nothing looks suspicious they are cleared to leave the bunker, where carriages await to take them wherever they need to go. It is assumed that anyone who can afford to teleport is a V.I.P.

When the party arrives, everyone recognizes Lauryn Cyneburg, who comes through with great regularity. But it's likely the guards also recognize the party from news stories, and they're excited to meet the heroes of Flint. They're through the checkpoint with minimal hassle, and then a carriage takes them across a bridge, passes two castles, and stops at the gated compound of the national RHC headquarters.



### Mission Briefing.

In an ornate conference room, the head of the RHC **Lord Inspector Nigel Price-Hill** awaits the party, and with him is the king's principle minister **Harkover Lee**, who is commonly believed to be the most powerful mage in Risur. A handful of aides handle maps and any necessary documents.

After introductions, the Lord Inspector explains that their mission is to go to Ber's capital Seobriga, find Tinker Oddcog, and get all information he has about the colossus and the Obscurati. However it would be even better if the party could recruit the gnome. Anyone who could design the colossus would be an immense asset to the nation, and the king is willing to offer quite a lot to secure Oddcog's talent.

### Expected Complications.

Harkover Lee expects two main complications. Firstly, the Berans won't want to hand Tinker over, and Bruse Shantus has used his power as ruler to extend protection against divination magic to the gnome. Lee suspects that any hostile action taken against Oddcog would alert the Bruse and might damage relations between Risur and Ber. They both think it is smarter to directly petition the Bruse and negotiate a trade, rather than waste time trying to find Tinker themselves.

Secondly, the Obscurati have also been searching for Oddcog. Shortly after the newspaper clipping was delivered to the RHC, spies reported that a Danoran warship, *Lux Profectusque*, had docked in Seobriga the day before. The party might recall that this was the ship that transported

Viscount Price-Hill'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.

The viscount is disdainful of corruption, but has been through enough to understand how men are tempted to it. He has on several occasions managed 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.



Perhaps the most powerful mage in Risur, Lee acts as bodyguard and chief of staff to the king. Straight-backed and virile despite being in his 60s, Lee speaks crisply and passionately in a slight Ber-tinged accent, and was said to be quite the ladykiller in his youth. He always dresses in reds and golds and carries a solid gold orb tucked into his robes. He never eats or drinks in public.

Harkover Lee was once known as the dragon tyrant Inacht the Hex-Eater, but he has long since abandoned that identity and is now loyal to Risur, serving its king as Principal Minister.



## TELEMARKETING.

Harkover mentions that they tried *sending* to Tinker, to which he responded: "Twenty-five words? Three, four, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-four, *thirty!* Behold, base five! I have thwarted your numerical orthodoxy!" And then there was a fit of laughter for a few seconds, which apparently counts as a single word.

Lya Jierre when they handed control of Axis Island back over to Danor. The RHC has only the thinnest ideas of what the Ob's resources in Ber might include, but it appears they have a head start on the party.

As a final snag, the public in Seobriga has been staging weekly protests—called Civilized Progressive Rallies—and there's one happening today.

### Resources.

Harkover Lee explains that the party's ship is being equipped with an experimental teleportation beacon. Normally such beacons must be stationary, but recent research in the wake of the Gidim incursion (see Adventure Three) has helped make this new device possible. The beacon will eliminate the chance of a mishap when teleporting to the ship, though they'll need to contact their crew first to find the ship's precise coordinates. Through teleportation, equipment and personnel can be delivered to and from their ship.

The RHC will provide the party with eight scrolls of *teleport* and thirty scrolls of *sending*.

The installation of the teleportation beacon should be complete in a few hours, and then their ship will sail with haste to Seobriga. The party will already have teleported there, so hopefully they won't need a ship for at least a few days.

### Knowing the Right Person.

To have a chance of reaching the Bruse, the party must be escorted by someone with connections to the court. Toward that end Harkover Lee has contacted **Brakken of Heffanita**, the Beran ambassador to Risur, and asked him to meet the party at the Seobriga teleportation circle this morning.

Unbeknownst to Lee or the RHC, Lya Jierre's bodyguard Rush Munchausen has a small web of spies in Seobriga watching for the inevitable involvement of the RHC. Magical surveillance alerted him to the sending message, so he arranges for a pair of local orcs to get the ambassador arrested, which should slow the party up long enough for Rush's ally Merton to concoct a more dangerous roadblock.

### Leads.

Before the party leaves Seobriga and seeks out the Bruse, the Lord Viscount suggests they talk to the journalist, **Melissa Amarie**. They're less sure about actually trying to get access to the military facilities mentioned in the article and find Tinker's trail. There are dozens of military installations in Ber that might benefit from the gnome's talents, so simply stumbling across him is wildly unlikely.

If the party wants to ask around in Slate before they leave, such as to talk to some of Tinker's old contacts, the Lord Viscount doesn't recommend it. He could have some local constables handle that task, then pass along the information. Once they're ready, Lauryn Cyneburg begins studying maps in an adjacent room for another teleport, and they'll be in Seobriga ten minutes later.

## CALLING IN FAVORS

Though the party's Prestige with Risur likely grants them a lot of leeway to call in favors, they're operating in foreign territory, so increase the effective level of any favor by 2. They can still get help, but it will take longer.

We haven't planned any particular allies for the party to contact, but feel free to trot out whatever old spy movie tropes you'd like. Perhaps when they need a ride in a hurry, a sympathetic half-giant named Carlos Diego can get them mighty stallions. And when they need someone to spy on the Ob group, they learn that the famous agent Lady Green is actually a quintet of green-skinned goblin women skilled at stealth and, believe it or not, seduction.

### Upgraded Ship.

Before the party teleports away, make sure they know that they have a ship that will back them up. If you're using the *Admiral o' the High Seas* rules for ship-building, the party should decide what sorts of upgrades they want to get their ship to Level 14. The total cost of the ship should stay under 50,000 gp.

If you are running this adventure as a standalone, the party can simply use the ship below.

<b>R.H.C. Corvette</b>	Level 14 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	46,000 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> 3	<b>Command</b> captain's Int, Wis, or Cha modifier
<b>Defense</b> 15	<b>Full Crew</b> 16
<b>Maneuverability</b> 8	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 4
<b>Speed</b> 14	<b>Total Complement</b> 60
<b>Design</b>	
Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Three decks.	
<b>Armaments</b>	
A full gun deck of thirteen cannons to each broadside, with two enchanted chase cannons on the prow and stern.	
Crew: 40. Attack: +14 to broadsides, +10 forward or aft.	
<b>Eldritch Defenses</b>	
The enchanted figurehead creates an invisible shield that deters attacks from afar. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 28 less damage to targets within that area.	
<b>Total Cost</b> 46,000 gp	
Hull (base level 6, sails, improved speed x6, improved maneuverability, Level 14): 21,000 gp	
Armaments (large, boards and chasers, Level 14): 21,000 gp	
Eldritch defenses (shield defense; Level 10): 5,000 gp	

## WELCOME TO SEOBRIGA

### Exploration. Montage. Level 9.

*The party might be in for some culture shock.*

Usually when a nation falls it is after much war and bloodshed, but under the dragon tyrants most of the power was possessed by the rulers themselves. So when Widoreva, the female blue dragon who was the last ruler of Seobriga, died, the city was left mostly intact. Today the city is much as it was two centuries ago, full of massive squat buildings with dramatic spires that dragons once perched on. Where before a single dragon might treat several such buildings as his lair, now most of the old buildings serve as homes for multiple families.

The poor camps and hovels that surrounded the city were abandoned when the former subjects of the dragons realized they could move into their masters' abodes. Because the dragons preferred stone structures, even the worst of the riots and fires did relatively little damage. Only recently has there been a need for new construction, which the wealthier families have seen as a means to demonstrate their civility, hiring Danoran and Risuri architects and gardeners to create beautiful homes.

Of course, this has left the city center mostly to the poor, and as they have grown frustrated with the slow improvements they have reverted more to old tribalism. Though the area around the city center is still safe and well-patrolled, there are pockets of neighborhoods where skull and hide totems mark territory that should not be violated unless you're willing to fight.

The city's harbor on its western shore has a few dozen factories, the most of any city in Ber but a pittance compared to Flint. The city is blessed by favorable winds, and since Berans were already so good at building spires, their smokestacks keep the soot and other foulness high above the city.

Industrial traffic keeps most docks busy, and Seobriga was never much for fishing anyway. Huge farms and ranches to the east, filled with five-foot-tall goats and bison the size of a small house, feed the city. Since Seobriga's lush peninsula has relatively few streams or freshwater wells, wine is the drink of choice, and vineyards are common to the north, where fog rolls through the hillside forests. The dragons trained their humanoid subjects to cultivate multiple levels of plant-life, so shade-grown berries share soil with massive sequoias that were grown for lumber. The greatest wooden structures are long gone now, but they rivaled anything men have ever built for sheer size.

Dotted through the city and the surrounding landscapes, monuments to the dragons remain, some defaced but many restored. The late Vairday Bruse likened it to mounting the heads of bears and deer, a pretty decoration and nothing more.

### Panoply of Protests.

Ber's teleportation beacons are not defended like those in Risur, since they were originally built for dragons to greet and impress visitors. Those who teleport into Seobriga arrive in the center square of the city,





surrounded only by a simple gazebo-like pavilion, guarded by a handful of soldiers. Lauryn Cyneburg is familiar with these details and typically disguises herself when she goes to Seobriga; she recommends as much to the party.

## WHERE IS TINKER?

Players are notoriously curious about things that don't actually matter to the plot. Of course, they don't know what is important and what isn't. So while the point of the adventure is meant to be "compete with the Ob to get the right to talk to Tinker" and not "find Tinker's hiding place," it's likely that the players will try to find him.

Of course the real Tinker is on Isla dolas Focas working for Pemberton. About half his time he spends controlling his duplicant, through which he works in a military base two hundred miles north of Seobriga on a dry strip of land along the coast, near the village of Pizarillo. A recently uncovered portal to the plane of water (see Adventure Three) led to the establishment of a new naval base.

Tinker's job there is to oversee the development of new warships, which then do their field testing in the waters over the portal. The area has been labeled a hazard and is thus avoided by merchant traffic.

He only works about four hours a day, is idle for eight, then "sleeps" for twelve, during which he's actually busy in Pemberton's lair. During his idle time he plays with the desert foxes that have free run of the naval base.

## PANOPLY PHILOSOPHY.

The Panoply started with professors who wondered what other cultures Ber should emulate in its revolution. Their nation wanted to become "civilized" and wanted to know what that meant, so the professors discovered numerous different ways to be civil, drawn from around the world. But as the leadership of Ber gravitated primarily toward a Danoran style of fancy clothes and regimented etiquette, these professors promoted a broader approach.

Perhaps what contributed most to their popularity was that they also looked to the traditions of Ber's own cultures, and they drew parallels between supposedly "primitive" customs and similar behaviors in the nations Berans were supposed to look toward. Many who were disgruntled with the accusatory tone of the core of the revolution were drawn to the Panoply's inclusiveness, which helped keep many people at least within the fringe of the revolution when they might have been tempted to avoid it altogether and cling to their old ways.

The implicit center of the disparate Panoply philosophies is that almost all customs and cultures have some merit, but that many social norms are not in their ideal form. Leading figures of the Panoply look to improve people's lives by examining their cultures and suggesting improvements, often in the form of integrating aspects of other cultures. Those within the movement might be receptive to such recommendations, but many outsiders view the Panoply as meddlers.

More subtly, though, the Panoply also argues that some cultural norms are value-neutral, neither making life better or worse but simply give it flavor. Brave swordfighters in Crisillyir might wear gold jewelry as badges of honor, while minotaur warriors scar their faces in ornate patterns, and though the former might think the latter barbaric, as long as each is pursued of one's own free will they are equally valid varieties of the same drive to have an identity. And in the view of the Panoply, variety is valuable in and of itself.

The party likely arrives in the mid-morning, and they appear in full sight of hundreds of orcs, minotaurs, goblins, and half-giants out in protest against their ruler. People react with intense curiosity and invitations to join the protest.

This is your opportunity for a heavy "culture shock" moment, since despite the sweltering summer heat the protesters are almost all wearing wigs that were in vogue in Danor ten years ago, and some are dressed in fancy, uncomfortable attire. Minotaur and half-giant students sweat into their frilly white collars while nearby a small herd of orc women in hoop skirts pump axes in the air to the beat of a protest song. The large swaths of orc men who make up the bulk of the protest shout to other orcs in swings that dangle off the roofs around the edges of the square, crooning out songs as they paint vibrant murals along the walls of buildings that were built for the proportions of dragons, not men.

The unifying force of the protest is the Panoply. While the middle of the square is chaotic, at its edges self-styled intellectuals talk to people as they arrive, figure out what their grievances are, and give them color-coded flags to wave. Poverty is black, violence is red, corruption is yellow, and so on. The most common color is white, meant to protest apathy of officials who should be promoting the revolution. Anyone clever enough to question the symbolism of hundreds of protesters waving white flags gets invited to more high-brow Panoply events later that evening.

## Being Watched.

Starting the moment they arrive, the party is being watched by agents working for Lya Jierre. The two dozen orcs and half-giants are dispersed, some tailing the party while others report back to Rush Munchausen, Lya's *immovable-rod-wielding* bodyguard.

The party might notice the tails (Sense Motive DC 29 in crowded areas, DC 20 once they move away from the city center) and possibly follow them back to a small (by local standards) house where Rush is waiting. The man has nine Obscurati allies present, and someone is always listening to a crystal totem, marked with some of Brakken of Heffanita's fur, that intercepts any *sendings* that include him. They have others primed, waiting for the chance to grab personal items of the PCs.

The tails have strict orders not to interact with the party, and to pretend to be pickpockets if they're confronted. Rush plans to ambush the party, and he expects they'll go to the journalist. If he gets word they're on the way to her, he and his men pack up and prepare an assault.

Lya's group has many more people on *Lux Profectusque*, but the ship is moored a half mile off shore. If the party decides to go after it, see Appendix One.

## Testimony Requested.

Brakken is not present to greet the party, having been arrested a half hour earlier. When the party teleport in they're spotted by an orc policeman named **Rochero "Stone" Abormuerto**. Bedecked in a fine blue suit trimmed with gold epaulets and crowned by a grandiose feathered helmet, Stone shouts and waves for them to come over. If made to wait he pulls out a heavy iron rod—the Beran equivalent of a billy club—and shoves people out of the way to get to the party.

Stone has orders to wait for any visitors to come through the circle, then bring them to Glauca Evora's "courtroom." A muscular, intimidating orc, Stone is used to bossing around common workers and will treat the party with rude suspicion. He demands they come along, no questions, or else he'll throw them in jail. The crowd nearby responds with jeers and tries to get the party to join the protest.

## WILD GOOSE CHASES.

Ber has dozens of other military facilities the party could search. Be careful not to give them pointless “leads” to people or places that don’t add anything to the mystery. There’s a difference between a red herring—clues that lead to a false conclusion, sometimes laid by the villain to cover his tracks—and a wild goose chase—which is just a waste of time. If the party goes looking for Tinker at a dozen different military bases, it’s probably best to relate the investigations as a montage unless you want to use the opportunity to forward some side plots or even invent useful leads applicable to the main mission.

If things get violent, a half-giant who was near the teleportation beacon comes by and yells in a booming voice for people to stop. The man, **Rodrigo Anthrasio**, realizes that the party could use some guidance and offers to show them around. He can answer any of their questions about the protest and the city.

Of course the party is free to go as they please. If they don’t go with Stone, eventually Glaucia herself will find the party.

### Checking Tinker’s Trail.

Following the info in Melissa Amarie’s article, the party might check Drumalio Shipyard and the foundries in Piria Quarter. People there recollect the gnome’s visit, but have no clue where he is now. At the shipyard, they recount him snapping at a crane to make it move more smoothly. At the foundries he crawled along the floor near the bellows whispering and sniffing, then gave a detailed report about everything in the building that was improperly assembled, broken, or fixing to break.

He also complained about a steam engine schematic, saying it was primitive and would work better powered by lightning than coal. When the foreman explained that they could not just produce lightning on command, Tinker glared at him like he was lying, then said nothing more. A week later a package arrived with detailed blueprints for a device that apparently can produce lightning, but would be too expensive for Ber to produce.

## INVESTIGATING FOR THE PEOPLE

### Social. Real-Time. Level 3.

*Journalist Melissa Amarie provides leads on Tinker Oddcog, plus other troubles afoot in her nation.*

Whether by getting a guide, doing some footwork, or using divination magic, the party can find Melissa Amarie’s room in a huge mansion a half mile from the central square. She lives there with two dozen other members of the Panoply, many of them current or former students of the city’s nascent colleges. The “chieftain” of the building, who manages everyone’s affairs as if they were a wilderness clan, is **Ludoso Alleron**, a bespectacled orc who insists on greeting people at the door and handing them abridged copies of the writing of philosopher William Miller.

When the party arrives, the little bohemian clan is debating the merits of going out to the protest. Melissa doesn’t want to, but Ludoso says that she has a role to play in eliminating ignorance and spreading knowledge, a classic if somewhat simplistic overview of Millerite philosophy.



MELISSA AMARIE

A droll half-orc woman with mismatched eyes—one red, one green—Melissa operates independently as a journalist. The educated daughter of an orc sea captain who raided Risur for a wife across the Marrajado de Oro (see *Cavallo de Guerra*), Melissa attended the Dyal Revolutionary Institute in Seobriga and quickly found a home with the nascent Panoply movement. With their support she finds and interviews unusual individuals and delivers her reports to several newspapers around her country. Her dark sense of humor and casual writing style earned her an audience among common laborers, who will often gather when one of their literate coworkers

gets a copy and reads it to the group.

Melissa lives prosperously and always has one or two boarders at her home, but never for more than a month at a time. She encourages people never to become static in their social interactions, but in truth she just doesn’t have much patience for others. She loves to learn about personal stories and the reasons why people act how they do, but that doesn’t mean she actually likes people. When she gets bored in conversation, she’ll start writing in a notebook.



RUSH MUNCHAUSEN

Wiry and scrappy with huge forearm muscles, Rush fits many classic adventurer clichés. An orphaned half-elf from Drakr, he got into constant fights growing up and was harassed for the discolored birthmark on his forehead. When he was old enough to swing a sword he signed on to monster hunts in the Malice Lands for quick cash, then parlayed that skill into expeditions to the trap-laden dungeons of Beran dragon lairs and Crisillyyiri demon tombs.

In one of those tombs he found a damaged *immovable rod*. Intrigued, he commissioned the crafting of a pair of weapon-ready *immovable rods* that he can easily activate or deactivate, and which can extend to be as long as staves. He developed his own unique fighting style and eventually stumbled into work with the Obscurati while exploring the Ancient ziggurat of Nem. He was transferred around a few times until being assigned as Lya Jierre’s bodyguard.

Rush practically breathes snark, and he loves nothing more than humbling people with big opinions of themselves. He self-deprecates easily and with much vulgarity, but is quite content despite realizing what a thoroughly awful person he is.

### Melissa.

The night before (the 91st of Spring), Melissa was approached by Lya Jierre and her two bodyguards. They found her at a nearby winehouse and expressed interest in her article on Tinker, even though it had not yet even gone to press. Though suspicious, she shared everything she had about the gnome, which wasn’t much. The article on Tinker was incidental to a larger article she’s working on to reveal the cronyism of Bruse Shantus.

When the party shows up, Melissa is initially wary, but if they aren’t hiding their identities she quickly recognizes them, since she studied their exploits when researching Tinker. Her opinion of them depends more on their social connections than their combat prowess. She generally assumes authority figures are dangerous and corrupt, but people with sympathetic philosophies intrigue her.



Melissa tries to gauge whether they're intelligent and well-spoken. She knows the Panoply organizers of the weekly Civilized Progressive Rallies, and knows they've been looking for foreign guest speakers. She's most curious to talk with docker PCs, who she thinks would be popular and good for the movement. After that, martial scientist or Yerasol veteran PCs get her attention, because the Panoply wants to entice more soldiers to join their movement.

Other PCs might interest her too if they seem possessed of reason and novel ideas, though she's leery of eschatologists since she shares the common misconception that they're obsessed with death.

If any PC seems suitable, she offers to arrange for them to speak at next week's Civilized Progressive Rally. If they're amenable, she can get the Panoply organizers to promote the event with grandiose portraits of the character painted on walls around the city, which should garner the PC an audience of thousands.

### Let's Talk Tinker.

Aside from what she put in her article, she heard that Tinker carried a metal orb with him everywhere he went, though she couldn't find out what it was. She got a sense from everyone who interacted with Oddcog that the gnome simply was happy to be given tasks to solve, not that he was particularly wedded to the idea of working for Ber. And she got some rumblings from a contact in the court (she won't mention it, but she knows one of the Bruse's servers) that Shantus is receiving a lot of complaints about the gnome from the soldiers at whatever facility he's hidden in.

If treated nicely Melissa might also share her insight that Lya Jierre and her bodyguards were dressed for state business, which she thinks means the tiefling was headed to the summer court. Also, Lya gave her an address here in the city where she could find them if she got any more information. The address is the house where Rush is set up, though unless the party was very sneaky the man and his crew are already on the way.

## NEW FEAT

### Immovable Object (Combat)

You have trained extensively in a strange fighting style, wielding an *immovable rod* in each hand. As such, the rods have almost become extensions of your own arms.

**Prerequisites:** Int 13+; Two-Weapon Fighting, proficiency in clubs or light maces

**Benefit:** You can activate or deactivate an *immovable rod* as a free action. By quickly pressing the buttons on two rods, you can effectively gain a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect) as you brachiate through the air. You gain Fly as a class skill.

If subject to an effect that forces you to move while you have an *immovable rod* in hand, you may choose to ignore it. As a swift action when you hit an opponent with an *immovable rod*, you can anchor the target to the rod, preventing it from moving away from the rod. The target is not entangled or paralyzed; it simply cannot move from its location without first destroying the rod or making a successful DC 30 Strength check as a full-round action to move with the rod up to 10 feet. The rod remains motionless and cannot be used to attack while it is anchoring a creature. You cannot use this ability against amorphous or incorporeal targets.

**Normal:** Activating or deactivating an *immovable rod* is a move action.

### Keeping in Touch.

Melissa doesn't play a key role in the rest of the adventure, but she offers an in for parties that want to find allies overseas. Similar to the way Thames Grimsley could help link the party to the docker movement in Flint, Melissa can be important or completely ignored after this point. But if the party protects her during Rush's attack (see below), she might tag along with the party for the sake of reporting what she expects to be momentous events.

In the long run, if a docker, martial scientist, or Yerasol veteran keeps in contact with her, she'll keep them in the news, first in Seobriga, then throughout Ber, and finally in publications across the continent. Random strangers in cities might recover the PC and either commend their opinions and actions or argue with them. This makes it difficult to be inconspicuous, but converts the party's Flint Prestige into Populist Prestige, useful in any large population area.

## BUM RUSH

### Action. Tactical. Level II.

*Rush and Obscurati henchmen attack the party.*

Rush won't attack until he knows the party will be at a given spot for long enough for his men to get into position. Most likely he strikes at Melissa Amarie's residence, but he'll also move if it looks like the party is trying to catch a boat out to *Lux Profectusque*. He'd prefer to avoid the hassle of fighting anywhere with a lot of witnesses, but he has no qualms killing a few bystanders if necessary.

To be clear, Rush is making a bad decision here. He underestimates the party and hasn't considered the long-term consequences of giving the RHC a chance to save the life of a journalist. The narrative intent of the scene is to present Rush as an antagonist who can recur, giving the party more satisfaction as they compete against him in Act Two.

### Rush's Forces.

Rush Munchausen  
Obscurati Ambush Mage  
8 Obscurati Skulks



### Terrain.

It varies based on where the party goes, but if Rush attacks at Melissa's home it's a fairly open building, a hundred feet square and forty feet high, with a 60-ft. wide open-roofed inner courtyard. Stairs lead up 20 ft. to a second floor balcony, then up another 20 ft. to the roof. The courtyard is full of furniture for casual gatherings. A twenty-foot wide spire on the

## NEW ITEM

### Contingent Gatecrasher Charm

This one-use token triggers automatically when the bearer drops below half of his hit points, or can be activated as a standard action. It transports its holder most of the way into the Bleak Gate, effectively removing them from the real world. Unless special magic completes their transition to the Bleak Gate, five minutes later they return to the real world, but they have time to move to a safer location. When activated, and again if he's pulled back to the real world, the traveler takes 5d6 negative energy damage.



front of the building rises another sixty feet and is adorned with vines and flowers.

### Tactics.

Once the party is inside, Rush sneaks to the front door and plants a one-use *immovable rod* to hold the massive double doors shut (Strength DC 30 as a standard action to push the doors open enough to slip through.)

Then he and the rest of the team scale up to the roof and prepare ropes to descend through the courtyard's open ceiling (Perception DC 29 to hear them). They drink their *potions of darkvision* and wait for the mage to cast *darkness*, then descend in the confusion. Four skulks each target a single PC, while Rush drops beside whoever he thinks is the most dangerous melee opponent. The mage remains on the roof, targeting anyone who escapes the darkness.

Melissa and her two dozen innocent housemates run in a panic, trying to open the door and get out, hammering helplessly in the darkness. Some who were upstairs come out at the commotion, then cower in their rooms.

#### Rush Manhausen

CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male half-elf fighter (cad) 9

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

##### Defense

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 81 (9d10+36)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantment

##### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** *immovable rod* +12/+7 (1d6+6, 19–20/x2) and *immovable rod* +12/+7 (1d6+4, 19–20/x2)

**Single Weapon** *immovable rod* +14/+9 (1d6+6, 19–20/x2)

**Special Attacks** cad combat, combat expertise

##### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12 (+6 dirty trick, +4 disarm); **CMD** 28 (34 dirty trick, 32 disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Greater Dirty Trick, Improved Disarm, Improved Dirty Trick, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Immovable Object\*, Quick Dirty Trick, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (light mace), Weapon Specialization (light mace)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +5, Fly +16, Intimidate +7, Perception +1, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common, Elven, Primordial

**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** two +1 immovable rods, mwk chain shirt, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, belt of incredible dexterity +2, contingent gatecrasher charm

##### Special Abilities

**Cad Combat (Ex)** Rush wields a pair of *immovable rods*, which have been additionally enchanted as +1 *light maces*.

Rush gets a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls against any creature that attacked him since his last turn. When he hits an enemy who is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, he can make a dirty trick combat maneuver as an immediate action. He can also use a normal attack to make a dirty trick attempt (at a –2 penalty to his CMB if he's fighting with two weapons, and an extra –5 if using an iterative attack).

His dirty tricks, if successful, can inflict a negative condition, which lasts for 1d4 rounds, plus 1 round for every 5 he beats his opponents CMD. Possible conditions include: blinded, dazzled, deafened, entangled, shaken, or sickened.

#### Obscurati Skulk

CR 4 • XP 1,200

Male human rogue 5

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +9

##### Defense

**AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 40 (5d8+15)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

##### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** masterwork short sword +7 (1d6+3/19–20)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6

##### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Acrobatic, Dodge, Weapon Focus (Short Sword), Stealthy

**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +11, Escape Artist +12, Fly +5, Intimidate +7, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +12, Swim +11

**Languages** Common

**SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth, peerless maneuver), trap-finding

**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** mwk short sword, mwk studded leather armor, mwk buckle

#### Obscurati Ambush Mage

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Male human illusionist (shadow) 7

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +9

##### Defense

**AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection)

**hp** 43 (7d6+21)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

##### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th, concentration +11)

7/day—*binding darkness*

**Illusionist Spells Prepared** (CL 7th, concentration +11)

4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *shadow conjuration* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *invisibility sphere*, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* x2 (DC 16), *darkness*, *ghoul touch* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *spectral hand*

1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shocking grasp* (2), *vanish*

0 (at will)—*bleed*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close*

**Opposition Schools** enchantment, transmutation

##### Statistics

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

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Toughness

**Skills** Appraise +14, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (planes) +14, Perception +9, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +7

**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Primordial

**SQ** arcane bond (dagger)

**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1





### The Cops!

If the party refused to go with the police officer Stone earlier, Glaucia Evora decides to take matters into her own hands, and goes to find the party. Her timing coincides closely with Rush's group. Indeed at the start of the third round, the mage (if he is on the roof) spots the approach of Glaucia and a cadre of police. The mage shouts down that the cops are coming, but Rush orders his team to keep fighting.

On the tenth round, Glaucia arrives. It takes half a dozen police officers to yank the *immovable rod* from its spot so they can open the door. Glaucia banishes the darkness with a *dispel magic*, then orders everyone to drop their weapons. The officers with her begin manacled everyone present, while Glaucia tries to save the lives of those dying from their wounds.

There are plenty of witnesses who will support that the PCs were defending themselves against an ambush. Glaucia will send word to the police to try to investigate more, then will take the party to her courtroom. She is a judge, after all, not a detective, and her job is meting out justice, not running down criminals.

A female gnoll from the unincorporated southern tribes, Glaucia joined Executores dola Liberta fifteen years ago after gnolls in the Cult of the Steel Lord attacked her village and tried to kidnap the children to convert them. Her mate died in the fighting, and she was cornered with her pups. When the leader of the raid party reached out for her youngest son, Glaucia stabbed the boy in his heart and vowed that her family would die before it would be made slaves. As the raid leader tried to decide what to do, she placed the knife to her next child's throat. The raiders let her family go with the justification that she would tell of the cult's might.

Instead, she trained herself and her surviving children to defend themselves. She pledged herself to the Executores and was bestowed with divine power. Among the notoriously hierarchy-adverse sisterhood of the Executores, Glaucia is one of the most respected, famous for her piercing blue eyes and her lack of sympathy for those let themselves be controlled.



The minotaur from Ber to Risur, Brakken was tapped by the rulers of Risur and Danor to mediate their peace talks, which ultimately failed. Canny yet outgoing, his mere presence tamps down on people's worse tendencies. He once even got a raging bear to back down with a single disapproving glare.

Brakken secretly is a telepath, and has had such success in negotiations because he can hear the surface thoughts and, if necessary, nudge people toward compromise. He's genuinely driven by a desire to help people live in harmony, though raising his own prestige is certainly a bonus.

He dresses in simple tribal clothing and refuses to travel without his most trusted friend, a dire bear named Feroz.



### Aftermath.

Only Rush has an escape plan; his one-use *contingent gatecrasher charm* pops him into the Bleak Gate when he drops below half of his hit points, giving him five minutes to get distance from the party and treat his wounds, after which he'll return to the real world and hurriedly find a horse. He'll ride to the summer court and link up with Lya, alerting Merton along the way to have his own ambush ready. If he lasts long enough for Glaucia to show up, he triggers the charm himself.

Captured Ob members don't know anything the party already doesn't, except perhaps the resources aboard *Lux Profectusque*. They're loyal to Lya, though, and are willing to die for the mission.

## JUDGE, JURY, EXECUTORE

### Social. Real-Time. Level 9.

*Glaucia Evora wants the party involved with the trial of Brakken.*

The party might find their way to Glaucia on their own or in the company of the orc police officer Stone, or they might be tracked down by an impatient Glaucia, likely at Melissa Amarie's residence. The unforgiving gnoll is dressed for her judge's duty, wearing gray robes and a coppery stole adorned with rearing dragons. The broken-chain badge of an Executore dola Liberta shines on her chest, and six gold rings adorn a single of her ears. She carries an unadorned staff with fresh blood stains. She is slow to move and speak, and her blue eyes watch inscrutably those with whom she speaks.

If the party provokes a fight with Glaucia, her stats are listed in Appendix Two: Berans. She's respected enough that the party will find the whole city turning hostile.

### How Often Do Adventurers Get Subpoenaed?

Glaucia introduces herself and explains that during the Bruse's absence for summer, she has taken it upon herself to act as extemporaneous judge in Seobriga for complaints of sufficient merit. This is an unusual role for an Executore, but permitted by her powers. Those familiar with Beran culture (Knowledge: History DC 20) or its legal system (Diplomacy DC 20) recognize that in this context she is performing a role normally required of the Bruse, which is in a way an indictment of the Bruse's behavior. The party would be well-served to be careful of the politics here.

She tells the party that she requests they come and testify at the trial of Brakken. She understands that as outsiders they aren't familiar with Ber's system, so she clarifies that the trial will be fast, and that the request is just being polite, because if they refuse they'll be held for contempt for a day, at least.

Glaucia assumes the party is here for international business reasons, and has no inkling they're interested in Tinker Oddcog. But she does know that a Danoran warship arrived yesterday, and that Lya Jierre is at the summer court now. She has a hunch that this situation is trouble for Ber, and so after the trial she offers to accompany the party to the court, assuming they have not given her reason to arrest them. Again, this offer is just being polite; they cannot legally decline.

### Expedited Trials.

Glaucia's "courtroom" is an old building missing most of its roof and parts of its walls. It was at this spot that the dragon Widoreva collapsed when she died. The people of Seobriga have treated the building as a monument of their victory, maintaining the damaged structure and guarding the bones of the dragon.

Glaucia uses the snout of the dragon's skull as her desk, and the entire face is covered in layers of old candle wax. The suspect on trial is required to stand in a cage made of the dragon's ribs. Soldiers guard the perimeter of the skeleton, and hundreds of people pack the room to watch the trial, shushing each other so they can hear witnesses speak.

A few other trials have occurred today, mostly tenants complaining about their landlords or workers about their bosses. The floor just outside the rib-cage is spattered with blood from the beatings of those found guilty.

### Favorable Treatment

Impartiality is Glaucia's foremost goal in her duty as judge, but if any PCs are Vekeshi mystics she feels a bit of kinship. Before the trial she spares a moment with the PC to discuss how she expects to rule, and what the party will have to do if they want to help Brakken. She hopes the PC won't disappoint her.

Indeed, if a Vekeshi PC comports herself well—or mentions that the party defeated two known criminals from Ber (the lizardfolk arsonists, see Adventure Two)—Glaucia will encourage continued contact and collaboration between their two groups. She personally finds the fey affinities of the Vekeshi distasteful, but she'd be willing to exchange information and work toward common goals. This only really pays off in later adventures, and can be easily ignored if the PC is not interested.

### The People vs. Brakken.

When the party arrives, they're directed to benches at the front of the audience. Brakken is brought out from a cell in another part of the building and escorted to the cage. Glaucia takes her seat and explains the proceedings for the sake of the outsiders.

The plaintiffs will provide their side of the story. The defendant will state his. Physical witnesses will testify. Then character witnesses may speak. Then each group can have a few minutes of discussion and argument—without, she stresses, any physical contact or violence—after which she'll lay her sentence.

Brakken is a man of high rank, but unlike in most countries, here that actually affords him fewer protections rather than more. The common folk love the opportunity to see a powerful figure brought low, and Executores go out of their way to ensure authority figures don't abuse their powers. The trial, brief though it is, has drawn a large crowd. Vendors at the edges offer dried meats and roasted corn dipped in butter and cheese.

### Trial by Fire.

There is one additional element, a power Glaucia possesses that makes her one of the most prized judges. She traces a ring of brimstone on the ground and whispers to it, causing it to flicker with dim fire. Anyone who testifies is required to stand in the ring. If they tell a lie within the ring, the flames flare and they take 1 point of fire damage.

When each person stands in the brimstone, Glaucia asks them their name, asks them what day it is, then asks them to answer what day it is again, but to lie this time. This test shows to the audience and Glaucia that the magic is active, and deters superfluous witnesses from testifying.

### Unruly Folderol.

Brakken's arrest happened after a small scuffle this morning. Hired by Rush Munchausen, a pair of orcs named **Rulio** and **Foldero** concocted a fight. Knowing they'd have to answer truthfully they even devised a reason for the fight. They waited for Brakken to pass by on his way to the teleportation circle, and then Rulio spilled a jug of wine on Foldero's shirt.

Foldero yelled, they started pushing each other, and then Rulio shoved Foldero into the ambassador. Foldero elbowed Brakken in his snout, knocking out a tooth, and then grabbed him and tried to shove him at Rulio, who was planning to aim a punch at Foldero then "miss" and hit Brakken.

Brakken possesses psychic powers, and so rather than be pummeled he simply manifested a calming aura and told the men to stop fighting. He's done this dozens of times, and people never realize they've been magically influenced. But Rush warned the two orcs of Brakken's power, and so while they did indeed stop fighting, they still had the presence of mind to shout that Brakken had used magic on their minds.

Mind control is seen as one of the worst possible crimes in Ber, where stealing someone's freedom is anathema to the revolution. The accusation whipped up a frenzy in the crowds gathered for the day's protest, and a small mob dragged Brakken to Glaucia, threatening to slit his throat if he used his magic on them.

### Testimonies.

Rulio and Foldero take turns telling about the same story. They got into a fight after Rulio spilled his wine, and while they admit they didn't need to fight, they claim that Brakken's crime is far, far worse than the minor ruckus they caused. Rulio adds that everyone's heard of how Brakken stared down a bear once, and he thinks Brakken used magic then too, making him a fraud.

Brakken tells the story from his perspective, which was just that these two men started fighting and fell into him, and then he was getting hit, so he yelled at them to stop. Glaucia presses, asking if he used magic. Brakken glares at her, since they both know his admission might ruin his career. Then he answers, "I did no harm to them. In fact, I spared them further injury. But yes, I used magic to calm them. Once I passed they would have been free to keep fighting. I did not steal their liberty."

The audience jeers. Glaucia asks for a list of powers he possesses, and follows up by asking if he left any out. Then she asks who he has used these powers on; he refuses to answer, saying that he only ever used his power to bring peace.

Two witnesses corroborate the orcs' story of the fight, and they make an effort to talk up their role in dragging the minotaur to justice. Then Glaucia gives the party an opportunity to defend Brakken's character. She asks if they were aware of his psychic power, what their past history is with them, and why they were meeting him. Law-savvy PCs can tell she's fishing for information, which is not pertinent to the current trial.

### Cross-Examination.

Rulio and Foldero think the case is settled, so they don't bother to ask any questions. Glaucia doesn't suspect any sort of foul play, so she doesn't press the two. But the party can fairly easily cut through their stories with the right questions, especially if they think the timing is a little too convenient. If they can force the two orcs to admit they were put up to the fight by a foreigner, it will help things for Brakken.

If the party wants Brakken to be spared ridicule and ostracization, they can try to defend the morality of what he did and convince the crowd that he's innocent. While Berans in general hate being told what to do, the party might compare what Brakken did to a musician singing a calming song, or a shaman rallying his people with a rousing sermon. If they can earn enough good will from the audience, they might be able to then point out that the goal of the revolution is to civilize the nation of Ber. It's risky, but with the right build-up it's possible to turn the audience's loathing of Brakken into admiration.



## CONSEQUENCES.

An intelligent defense of Brakken earns Glaucia's respect, which she will mention to Bruse Shantus and his advisors in Act Two. If they can pin the fake accusations on Rush, it will also hurt Lya's standing when it comes time for the Bruse to vote on who should get access to Tinker.

### Sentencing.

If the party doesn't make any headway in defending Brakken, Glaucia sentences the minotaur to a moderate beating, and instructs the audience to spread the word of their ambassador's abuse of power. She orders Brakken to come forth, then proceeds to wallop him with her staff for thirty seconds. This knocks him to the ground and leaves him broken and bleeding, but he'll heal eventually. With a glance at the party, she tells the guards to hold Brakken in a cell until he's well enough to leave on his own. She then adjourns the court and walks over to the party, ready to accompany them.

If the party discovers that the orcs were put up to this, Glaucia only sentences Brakken to a light beating, lasting a few seconds. Brakken's reputation might still be ruined, but he'll be able to accompany the party. Glaucia still tags along.

If the party clears Brakken's name, Glaucia sentences him to a perfunctory beating, because he did break the letter of the law. He has to hold his hands out, and she strikes him painfully across the knuckles. But she tells the audience to speak no ill words about the ambassador. He maintains his honor in Ber, but word will eventually spread, making foreign dignitaries unwilling to work alongside him. He'll have to find a new position.

As for Rulio and Foldero, if their ploy is uncovered, Glaucia sentences them to at least a light beating, and possibly a moderate beating if it's clear their goal was to harm Brakken. No one here has done anything worthy of a savage beating.

This half-deaf half-orc has taken an odd course in his life. After serving briefly in the military as a beast-trainer, Merton one day saw a Danoran performer showcasing various acoustic tricks, including shattering a wine glass with her voice. Fascinated, Merton offered to travel with the woman and take care of the horses that pulled her carriage in exchange for lessons. He slowly moved from tutor to tutor, acquiring a variety of novel skills until five years later he assembled a sonic weapon. Though Ber's military was interested, it could not afford to produce the weapon, so Merton went to Danor, where he caught the attention of Lya Jierre.

Today Merton, who has lost most of his hearing from his experiments, travels with Lya as bodyguard (and occasional animal handler). He comes across a bit dim-witted, but he's just absent-minded. He occasionally questions Lya's orders when she requires him to harm people, but he trusts her judgment.



## MONUMENT ROAD

### Exploration. Montage. Level 3.

*The lands outside Seobriga, dotted with relics of the dragon tyrants, are generally safe.*

The days are long in summer, and if the party finishes the trial before mid-afternoon they should have enough time to complete the thirty-mile journey to the Bruse's summer court by nightfall. Glaucia can see to them receiving sturdy horses and if necessary a carriage.

The highway that leads to the summer court is known as Monument Road for the hundreds of statues that line it, each representing a different ally of Vairday Bruse at the founding of Ber. The five nearest to the gates of Seobriga each have a shaded park surrounding them, and depict the leaders who unified the five major races of Ber.

- ♦ Cavallo de Guerra, who united the orcs.
- ♦ Shantus, who united the minotaurs.
- ♦ Aitch, who united the lizardfolk.
- ♦ Llanachita, who united the half-giants.
- ♦ Geeba, who united the goblins.

Right beside the city gates is, of course, Vairday Bruse, who united the nation.

### Local Color.

Further from the city, the party passes farmland and pastures, and they can see herds of huge short-haired goats as big as bison being wrangled by ranchers. The goatherds ride on normal-sized horses, but rely on trained bears to keep their stock under control.

The terrain gets rougher and rolling, and the road heads uphill into a forest of truly massive sequoias. This was once a hunting ground of the dragon tyrants, where workers tended to vineyards and tried not to be eaten by the tyrants' pets that roamed the woods. The forest is mostly uninhabited now, though ranchers sometimes roam here and let their herds graze in the shade.

### Petitioning a Vision

Glaucia will talk if the party engages her, but she's content to ride in silence at first. When the horses take a break after an hour or so, she poses a question to the group.

Risur's skyseers are famous for predicting the future. Glaucia is curious about the nature of prophecy, and whether future events are predetermined. She believes they cannot be, or else no one would have free will. She expresses that she would like someone to tell her a vision of her own future, just so she'd be able to prove her freedom by denying that future.

In particular, she wants to know whether she will ever have her revenge against the gnolls that attacked her village, and what dangers await her. This provides an opportunity to work in Glaucia's own backstory, which establishes the Cult of the Steel Lord to telegraph their later involvement in the plot.

If the skyseer PC obliges Glaucia's request, we leave it to you to determine what vision to share, since some groups are more amenable to having NPCs tag along than others. By default, though, we assume Glaucia will want to be involved in the fight against the cult, perhaps leading forces on Isla dolas Focas, even if she's not present in battle with the party.

## REXES IN THE VINEYARD

### Action. Tactical. Level 12.

*A tyrannosaur provokes a stampede of megafauna toward the party.*

Lya Jierre's second bodyguard, Merton Goncala, has word of the party's travel. If they take the direct route to the summer court, he prepares an ambush. His custom-built sonic staff helps him drive and command animals by creating noises audible only to them.

He has managed to get under his control a pair of tyrannosaurs, giant reptilian predators bred by the dragon tyrants as pets and symbols of might. This breed of tyrant lizard has some mild magical powers due to their affinity with their long-dead draconic masters. The beasts are rare, especially so close to major cities, but Merton has a knack for finding and befriendng dangerous animals.

### Bestial Ambush.

The road here weaves through a sequoia forest. The trees, which grow 200 feet or higher, make it difficult to see much beyond 100 feet. Hedge-rows, 10 feet high, separate the road from an abandoned vineyard. One tree has fallen across the road, but it was sawed in two, so the way ahead passes between the two 20-ft. wide cross-sections of its rings.

Just before the tree are a pair of arches marking a crossroad. Merton has magically excavated and masterfully concealed pit trap between them (Perception DC 25). Enough creatures entering the area at once causes the whole 20-ft. by 20-ft. area to collapse. This is caused by a single large creature like a horse, or three or more medium creatures. The pit drops 20 feet, enough to slow the party down but not threaten their lives (Climb DC 15 to climb out). It also probably breaks the leg of a horse that falls in.

As soon as someone falls in the pit, or when it becomes apparent they won't fall for the trap, the party's horses begin bucking and flailing their heads as if in pain. Simultaneously a pair of monstrous roars erupt from the north, and suddenly the ground begins to tremble.

Merton hides in the branches of a toppled sequoia, 50 feet south from the road (Perception DC 31), and he has used his sonic staff to panic the horses with noises inaudible to most humanoids. The noise is also the cue for his two pet tyrannosaurs to spook a nearby herd of large goats, driving them toward the party.

Each round a PC must either dismount or spend a move action to try to stay on their horse. Those PCs who wish to stay mounted are flat-footed, they take a -2 penalty to their attack rolls, and they must succeed a Ride check (DC 5) or be flung off and fall prone. A horse with no rider bolts down the road.

A PC can make a Handle Animal or wild empathy check (DC 20) as a standard action to calm a horse so it will behave normally, even in the face of the soon-to-arrive danger.

The party might be accompanied by Glaucia or Brakken, whose stats are in Appendix xx.

### The Stampede.

Merton Goncala  
2 king-bred tyrannosaurs  
Stampede of Beran goats



### Merton Goncala

CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male half-orc fighter (unbreakable) 9

LN Medium humanoid (orc, human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### Defenses

**AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor)

**hp** 90 (9d10+45)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6; +2 vs. mind-affecting, +2 vs. sonic

Defensive Abilities orc ferocity

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** sonic staff +15/+10 (1d6+6)

#### Statistics

**Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13 (+17 trip); **CMD** 23 (27 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Diehard, Endurance, Felling Smash, Greater Trip, Heroic Recovery (2/day), Heroic Defiance, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Power Attack, Tripping Staff, Toughness, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)

**Skills** Craft (acoustics) +12, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +9

**Languages** Common, Giant, Orc

**SQ** armor training 2

**Combat Gear** resonance bomb; **Other Gear** sonic staff, +1 full plate, belt of mighty constitution +2, padded helmet (+2 circumstance bonus on saves vs. sonic effects), contingent gatecrasher charm

#### Special Abilities

**Unbreakable Combat (Ex)** Twice per day Merton can spend a standard action to make a new save against a harmful condition or affliction that required a Fortitude save. Once per day as an immediate action he can delay the onset of a harmful condition or affliction until the end of his next turn.

**Felling Staff (Ex)** Merton can use an attack action to make a single melee attack at his highest base attack bonus while using Power Attack. If he hits an opponent, he can spend a swift action to attempt a trip combat maneuver against that opponent.

Whenever he trips an opponent, that creature provokes attacks of opportunity.

**Resonance Bomb (Ex)** Merton can throw this bomb in a similar manner as making an attack with a splash weapon. The bomb has a range increment of 20 ft. It explodes on impact, dealing 4d6 sonic damage in a 20-foot radius (Reflex DC 15 for half). This damage ignores the hardness of objects, most likely annihilating any trees in its area of effect.

**Sonic Staff (Ex)** This metal polearm has complex flanged baffles along its haft, and it ends with a faintly glowing two-tined cap, like a tuning fork. When struck, it reverberates near-deafeningly, and by adjusting its components Merton can tune it to the destructive resonance of an object.

The staff is a +1 *thundering quarterstaff* that constantly emits a high-pitched whine that is uncomfortable to animals. Animals do not willingly approach within 10 feet of the staff, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check. The staff also provides a +2 bonus on Strength checks to break a door or other object.

Once per day, the wielder of this staff can slam it against the ground as a standard action to create a wave of thunder and force, either in a 10-foot radius burst centered on the wielder or in 30-foot cone-shaped burst. Creatures in the area take 3d6 points of sonic damage and are pushed away as if bull rushed. The staff makes a combat maneuver check (CMB +17) and applies its results to each creature in the area. This effect cannot penetrate a silence spell or any similar magical silence.



**King-Bred Tyrannosaurus**

CR 9 • XP 6,400

N Gargantuan animal

**Init** +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +37**Defense****AC** 21, touch 7, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +14 natural, -4 size)**hp** 153 (18d8+72)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10**Offense****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** bite +20 (4d6+22/19–20 plus grab)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** elemental affinity, swallow whole (2d8+11, AC 17, hp 15)**Statistics****Str** 32, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 39**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)**Skills** Perception +37; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception**SQ** powerful bite**Special Abilities**

**Elemental Affinity (Su)** If a king-bred tyrannosaurus takes energy damage, its attacks deals an additional 1d6 points of energy damage of the same type for 1 round. If it is damaged by multiple energy types, it only deals bonus damage of the most recent type.

**Powerful Bite (Ex)** A king-bred tyrannosaurus applies twice its Strength modifier to bite damage. A critical hit with its bite inflicts 2d6 bleed damage each round thereafter.

**Stampede.**

If you're using a battle map, get 100 **goat tokens** handy. Each goat token should be Large size, so if you're using coins just place them on the central vertex of four squares.

At initiative count 0 on the first round, the party spots the first of the panicked goats to the north, at the edge of the map. Place 16 **goat tokens** at the northern edge of the map, roughly in a 2 across by 8 tall shape. So they'd fill 20 feet west-to-east and 80 feet north-to-south.

These goat tokens are an abstraction, representing the area through which stampede is flowing, and in a given round a dozen goats might move through each occupied space. Other goats are certainly running about as well, but they aren't clumped together, so they can dodge out of the way of obstacles like PCs.

**Adding Goats**

Each round thereafter at initiative count 0, place additional goat tokens at the rate listed below.

Each new goat token must be placed near another goat token. Focus first on completing a line across the whole map from north to south, but keep the herd at least 2-tokens wide. Then use any spare tokens to thicken the herd or branch off in new arteries. Since the tyrannosaurs are driving the herd toward the party, you should aim the herd at the group.

- ♦ **Round 2.** Add 24 goat tokens.
- ♦ **Round 3.** Add 40 goat tokens.
- ♦ **Round 4.** Add 20 goat tokens. Place the two tyrannosaurs on the map.
- ♦ **Round 5.** Remove 16 goat tokens, starting from those closest to the tyrannosaurs.
- ♦ **Round 6.** As above, but remove 24 goat tokens.
- ♦ **Round 7.** As above, but remove 40.
- ♦ **Round 8.** Remove 20.

The goats avoid trees, but they plow through vines and hedges. Don't place any goats within 10 feet of where Merton is hidden.

**Trampling and Deflecting.**

If a goat token is placed in a space that a Large or smaller creature occupies, that creature takes 1d6 damage. Whenever a creature ends its turn in a space with a goat token it takes another 1d6 damage; then make a CMB check at +12. On a hit, the creature is knocked prone and takes 2d6 damage.

Goat tokens can be attacked, and have AC 10 and save at +0. Spells and effects that affect an area do half again as much damage (+50%). If an attack does 30 or more points of damage, remove that goat token entirely. An attacker that does insufficient damage can instead remove the goat token and place it in some other space adjacent to the edge of the herd. The open space is safe for this round; do not refill it at the next initiative count 0, but the turn afterward it will probably fill back up.

Spaces with goat tokens are considered difficult terrain.

**Terrain.**

The fallen tree's branches are dense, requiring an Climb check (DC 16) to climb through. The hedges are effectively impassable terrain, and the vine bushes difficult terrain. The standing trees are not readily climbable (Climb DC 20) since the lowest branches are at least 50 feet up.





# Sequoia Vineyard





While Shantus is the head of state and final arbiter, most of the daily affairs of Ber are run by this female lizardfolk. She has a cool reptilian demeanor, and pursues her duties with no tenderness or sympathy. However, she neither feels any great pride or ambition, and so she holds fairly stark views on the role of Ber's government, believing its foremost role is to protect the citizens from death.

She cares not for workers' comfort, for landowners' wealth, or for tribes' honor, except in how these encourage or discourage the security of the nation. However, she thinks Bruse Shantus is a poor ruler liable to provoke apathy and slow the growth of Ber's might, so she'd like to see him either re-energized toward the revolution, or replaced.

ZARKAVA SSA'LITT



A half-dragon general in the Beran army, Kenna assumed the political position of Minister of Dragon Affairs with Shantus's rise to the Brusedom. Her ministry was originally tasked with handling groups who still identified with the dragon tyrants, but over four decades it has morphed into a responsibility for the treasures of rediscovered dragon lairs, and today is mostly just the nation's official bank. Still, all members of the ministry are given ceremonial training in historical dragon-slaying tactics.

Kenna still has close ties to the military and is pushing Shantus to make military service more encouraging. She admires the structure and loyalty it instills. She would like to acquire military trainers from either Risur or Danor, as well as modern cannons and firearms. Every morning she and several of the court's bodyguards go for fitness runs outdoors, from the summer court to the nearby military base. She's still somewhat plump because she constantly grazes on the court's various fine foods.

KENNA VIGILANTE



The current leader of the Cult of the Steel Lord, this gnoll teaches his followers that mortal flesh is weak, and to achieve the strength of the great dragons of old they must live pure. Though he fervently believes his own faith, Pardo is a consummate liar and manipulator, which he sees as just another example of having inner strength despite outer corruption.

Pardo wears simple clothes with no decorations. He refuses to use metal tools, and carries a handkerchief for things like door knobs. He represents the unincorporated tribes as honorary Minister of Rebellion, and so often has secretive meetings near the court with people from around the country. Though everyone expects him to scheme, the court views it as a mark of their openness and opposition to tyranny that they promote their own enemies.

Pardo secretly is a duplicant—his real body is on Isla dolas Focas—and so he is incredibly strong and resilient. He waits for a chance to strike against Bruse Shantus, but until then sticks to talking, not fighting.

PARDO



## Timber!

If Merton uses his *resonance bomb* to annihilate part of the base of a tree, the tree makes a Fortitude save (DC 10) each round at the start of Merton's turn. The tree has a save bonus of +0, with a -1 penalty for each square it is missing from its cross-section as viewed from above. On a failure, the tree topples. Determine the most likely direction for it to fall, then roll 2d4 to determine scatter:

- 2—45 degrees clockwise
- 3—30 degrees clockwise
- 4—15 degrees clockwise
- 5—on target
- 6—15 degrees counterclockwise
- 7—30 degrees counterclockwise
- 8—45 degrees counterclockwise

Creatures in a 20-square long path of the falling tree take 8d6 damage and are knocked prone, but can make a Reflex save (DC 15) to reduce the damage by half. At the GM's discretion, certain types of obstacles can adjust the fall. If you're standing beside a 20-ft. tall T-Rex that gets thwomped, for instance, the tree won't be able to hit you.

## Tactics.

Once the tyrannosaurs spot the party, they work as a pair if possible. Once one has a PC bitten and grabbed, the other will try to also get a hold. If a PC is grabbed by both tyrannosaurs, and one of the creatures succeeds in a "swallow whole" attempt, the PC is instead ripped in half. He must make a Fortitude save (DC = bite damage dealt). On a success, the victim loses the arm or leg of its choice. On a failure, it takes 20 extra damage and loses two limbs at random.

If forced apart, the tyrannosaurs trample small foes, pin them to the ground with a foot, then reach down and start crunching.

If the party looks like they might manage to keep their horses under control and escape, Merton appears and tries to lure them into attacking him long enough for the tyrannosaurs to close. He's confident his *contingent gatecrasher charm* will get him to safety. But if the party is scrambling to hide from the stampede, he'll wait for his pets to engage the party, and then he'll attack stragglers. He prefers to push foes into the stampede.

If the party tries to hide from the rexes in the pit, Merton happily tosses his bomb in with them.

As long as he has his sonic staff, the stampede swerves around him without harm, though he still treats the spaces as difficult terrain.

## Allies.

Glaucia shouts for people to take cover, and she moves into the fallen tree's branches. If Brakken is present, it's marginally safer to stay nearby him because he will use *calm emotions* to give the goats within 20 feet of him a -4 penalty on their CMB checks, but he also tries to run and hide behind a tree.

## Aftermath.

Unless the party can thwart his planar travel, Merton likely makes good his escape once bloodied, or he activates his charm manually if both tyrannosaurs go down. If captured, Merton suggests the party talk to Lya before they do anything rash like killing him.

If the party manages to kill a tyrannosaur, after combat Glaucia insists they wait long enough for her to rip numerous teeth out of the mouth of one of the reptiles. She explains that these beasts are as close as one can get to a dragon these days, and their bodies are valuable. During the rest of the trip to the summer court she crafts a heavy, primitive-looking necklace, then offers it as a gift to the party. See *tyrant's teeth* (page xx).

She keeps just one of the 6-inch teeth for herself.

## SUMMER COURT

### Exposition/Social. Montage. Level 9.

*Bruse Shantus tries very hard to enjoy his vacation from running his country.*

It is likely near nightfall when the party reaches the summer court. Lines of tents stretch down the highway for half a mile from the court to the nearest village, **Nimba**. Citizens wishing to petition the Bruse have camped out for weeks, with only a handful being seen per day. Mostly they get along, and people play music throughout the day as they work alongside the local townsfolk in the farms and ranches.

Occasionally fights break out, and sometimes soldiers from the court cause trouble when the Bruse complains about noise ruining his vacation. Every day at noon local military test ordnance at the artillery range at the edge of the town's farms, but no one wants to be out farming at the hottest part of the day anyway.

A low-ranking orc executora, **Heiliana**, helps keep the peace and makes sure that trouble-makers are efficiently banished.

### Court Facilities.

The Bruse stays in a small fort with a hedge maze on the side (see Adulthood Challenge, below). Beautiful if somewhat arid wilderness sprawls out for miles, dotted with cottages and tents, and everything is patrolled by soldiers and bloodhounds. There are fields for sport, a river with lush artificial-waterfall-fed ponds, and countless other amenities of the fabulously wealthy.

At any given time a few dozen VIPs reside in these buildings, plus hundreds of retainers and courtiers and as many soldiers. A nearby military base can field another few thousand, and the vizier, **Zarkava Ssa'litt**, can easily view any location on the grounds unless the Bruse chooses to shield it. In an emergency, elite guards can defend the Bruse's location long enough for Zarkava to teleport him to safety.

### The Labyrinth.

Shantus sees petitioners at his leisure, and prefers to spend his days riding fine steeds, hunting in the wilderness, and watching plays put on by foreign troupes. But he makes exceptions for the Adulthood Challenge.

Ber has many traditions of proving one's worth through violence. One of Shantus's few popular reforms once he came to power was to encourage the creation of Adulthood Challenges—mazes with obstacles and some tough but non-lethal animals, against which would-be warriors could pass from childhood to adulthood without having to cave in the skull of someone from the next valley over.

The nation's grandest such maze is at the Bruse's summer court, and Shantus has proclaimed that anyone who passes the challenge can have an audience with him. He has courtiers who make rounds through the crowds outside, looking for people who either have truly urgent requests or who would make for a good show. Those petitioners are encouraged to undertake the test, and the rest of the gathered petitioners are invited to watch.

Challenges are always attempted at night. The Bruse, his attendants, and the audience watch from bleachers that rise 40 or more feet above the ground, accessible by stairs. (Guards, of course, keep the commoners from getting close to the members of the court.) Those taking the test are required to wear brightly glowing crowns so their locations in the maze can be tracked by those in the bleachers. And the trained bears, which make up the primary threat of the maze, have red crowns.

The bears have had their claws filed down, and they wear muzzles and are trained just to knock down and pin people, not maul them. But they don't react well to being stabbed. The number of bears varies based on how hard the Bruse wants to make it for a petitioner to get through, and sometimes he just sends a person in with a glowing red crown to pose as a bear, but avoid the petitioner. No one likes seeing kindly grandmothers be mauled.

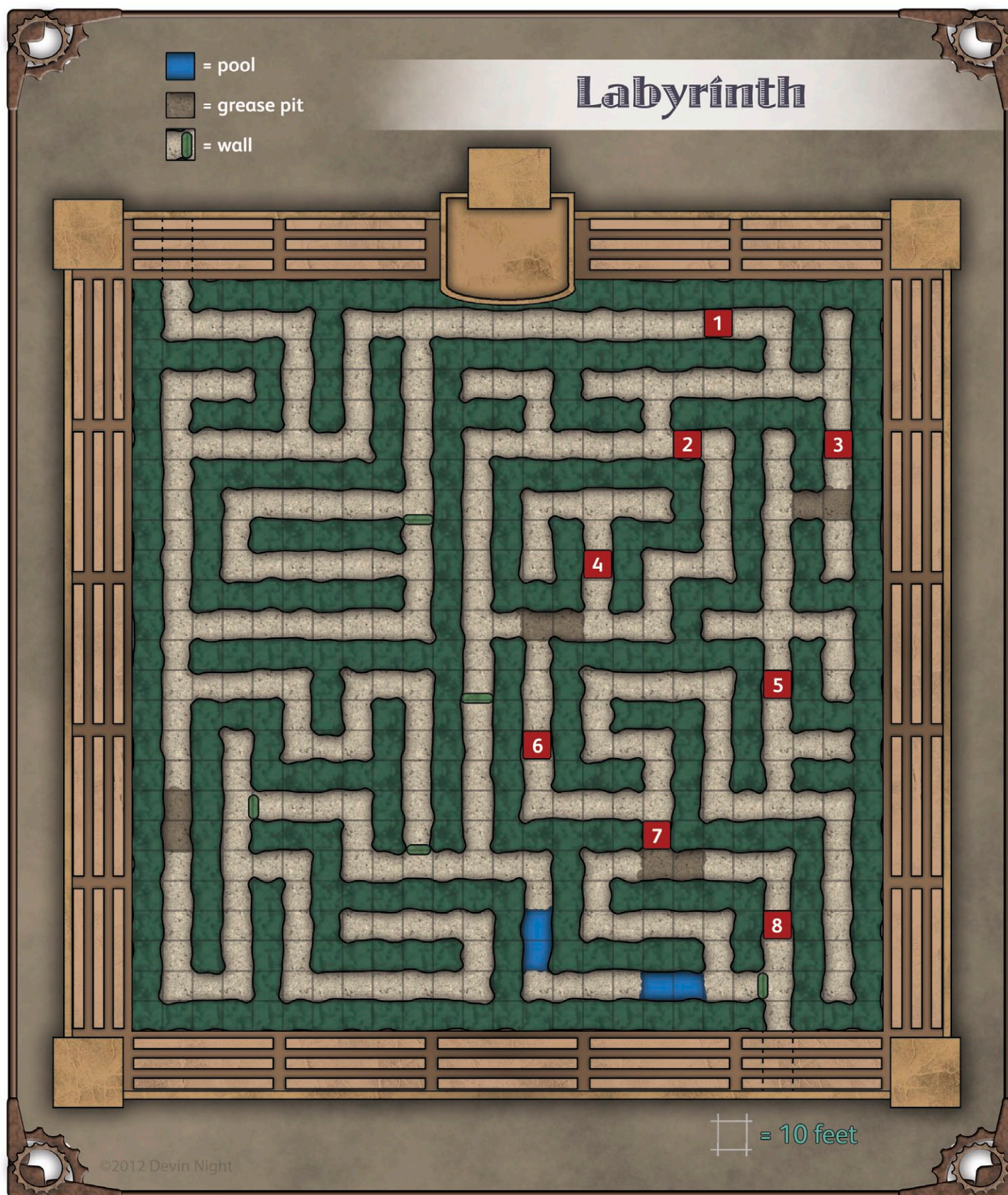
### Seeing the Bruse.

Glaucia or Brakken can direct the party to the right courtier, and then they can ask to take the Adulthood Challenge to gain an audience with Shantus. Both Glaucia and Brakken already have access to the Bruse, but the party's entrance to the court grounds will be barred until they prove themselves.

The Bruse is already hosting Lya Jierre, who has warned that others might come seeking Tinker Oddcog, so he's initially opposed to letting the party in. They'll have a chance to face the maze, but he intends to offer an insurmountable challenge, not realizing the party's prowess. If the party goes through the right channels, they can get their crack at the maze tonight.











## ADULTHOOD CHALLENGE

### Social. Real-Time. Level 12.

*The party must brave a rigged labyrinth game to meet the minotaur.*

Word goes out among the petitioners that a gang of foreigners have come to see the king, and rumor is the king isn't happy to see them. That means a good show, so hundreds of common folk leave the makeshift camp on the highway and tromp up the stairs to the bleachers around the labyrinth. A space is reserved atop the south wall for the PCs to stand, but etiquette requires they say nothing to the dignitaries. They can talk to the crowd all they want, though.

Around 8 PM, the Bruse's guests file into the northern edge of seats. These include Lya Jierre, plus Merton and Rush unless the party managed to thwart their escape. Then the Bruse comes out, along with two of his current concubines. He is flanked by his vizier Zarkava Ssa'litt, his minister of dragon affairs **Kenna Vigilante**, and the honorary minister of rebellion **Pardo**.

An announcer proclaims the names of the PCs and what matter they wish to bring before the Bruse. Then the PCs are ushered downstairs to the south entrance while the announcer reads out the rules of the challenge.

### Rules of the Game.

- Crowns.** Each petitioner (PC) must wear a crown that glows a different color—orange, yellow, green, blue, violet, or white. Defenders of the labyrinth wear red crowns. To pass the challenge and enter the Summer Court, a petitioner must have a crown on as he passes through the northern gate of the maze. (The glow keeps the petitioner from hiding, but its light is projected upward. It can easily be seen by people in the bleachers, but it just provides dim illumination in a 1 square radius.)
- Exits.** A petitioner who passes through the south gate of the maze admits defeat, as does any petitioner who climbs high enough to see above the hedge walls. Since the hedges are 40 feet tall, this is hard to do accidentally.
- Magic and Technology.** This is a test of bravery and cunning, not of power. Using magic or technology to pass through hedge walls or other obstacles may be grounds for disqualification. The Bruse and the audience are arbiters of what is acceptable.
- Security.** Do not attack anyone in the audience. Do not attempt to approach the Bruse. *Do not set the labyrinth on fire.*
- Risks.** If a petitioner becomes too injured to move on his own, he will be retrieved eventually once the danger from any creatures within passes. He assumes the risk that he might die. If a co-petitioner carries him through the north gate, he can still count as a victor as long as he has his crown.
- Complaints.** This is the Adulthood Challenge. Children complain. Adults solve their problems.

When the rules have been read, courtiers fit the PCs with their crowns, which are made of copper. Then the portcullis at the south of the labyrinth raises, and the party may enter. The gate remains up in case they wish to leave. Overhead they hear the announcer shout, "Release the bears!"

### Labyrinth Defenders.

10 Beran bears

B.E.A.R. (Battle Enhanced Animalistic Robot)

8 teleportation pit traps



#### Beran Bear

CR 5 • XP 1,600

N Large animal

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +6

#### Defense

**AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 42 (5d8+20)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +7 (1d6+5 nonlethal plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

#### Statistics

**Str** 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 19, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 20 (24 vs. trip)

**Feats** Endurance, Run, Skill Focus (Survival)

**Skills** Perception +6, Survival +5, Swim +14

**SQ** filed claws

**Other Gear** muzzle (prevents bear from making bite attacks)

#### Special Abilities

**Filed Claws (Ex)** A Beran bear's claws have been clipped, and it has been trained to knock down and pin its foes. As a result, its claw attacks deal nonlethal damage.

#### B.E.A.R.

CR 10 • XP 9,600

N Large construct

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +21

#### Defenses

**AC** 23 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 114 (12d10+42)

**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +9

**DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +20 (1d6+8 plus grab), bite +19 (1d8+8)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

#### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +21 (+25 grapple); **CMD** 33 (37 vs. trip)

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

**Skills** Perception +21

**SQ** superior design

#### Special Abilities

**Superior Design (Ex)** As a full-round action, B.E.A.R. can leap into the air with a mechanical clank and a burst of steam. B.E.A.R. can leap 20 feet vertically and up to 20 feet horizontally and can make a single claw attack at any point during this movement. B.E.A.R. may use this ability once every 1d4 rounds.



### Terrain.

The hedge walls are 40 feet high. Climbing the stiff branches is possible (Climb DC 15), but does 1 point of damage each round to those not wearing gloves and shoes. Pressing through a hedge is impossible, but a narrow passage can be hacked through by dealing 200 points of damage.

### Hazards.

Stone walls, 20-ft. high and painted green, offer some shortcuts but are practically sheer, making them nearly impossible to climb (Climb DC 30). Smart petitioners climb the adjacent hedge, then hop down.

The two pools of water stretch 20 feet long, and are only 10 feet deep. The other pools have a 1-foot deep layer of water on the surface, then 9 feet of grease beneath. A creature must succeed an Swim check (DC 22) to swim through the grease, albeit at half speed. Failing by 5 or more causes a creature to sink chest deep into the viscous substance. It's too thick to fully sink and drown in unless you fall in face first.

### Pit Traps.

The numbered spaces are complex pit traps, cunningly hidden (Perception DC 25 to notice before stepping on it). Each pit has two counter-weighted flaps linked by chains that run through a rolling mechanism along the side of the pit wall. If a Medium or smaller creature moves across the pit, the flap beneath it drops and the ground behind it tilts up, dumping it into the pit. If a Large creature moves across it, it distributes its weight enough so that each flap only opens a little. The pit covers just count as difficult terrain to the creature, and it won't fall in.

The pits are 20 feet deep, and enchanted with bright light spells at the bottom, so when they open a column of light rises into the night sky. The crowd usually cheers, knowing what the light means. A creature that falls in triggers a teleportation spell that sends it to a random pit. Roll 1d8 to determine which pit it ends up, possibly even the same pit. Creatures get no obvious indication that any magic has transported them. Creatures wearing gold rings or loops are not teleported.

Ladders lead up from the pit floor, and the flaps can be pulled open from below.

### Resetting Teleporting Pit Trap

CR 4 • XP 1,200

**Type** mechanical and magical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### Effects

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 20-ft. deep pit (2d6 falling damage) and teleported to a random pit; DC 20

Reflex avoids; multiple targets (all Medium or smaller targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

### Endless Loop.

A creature that goes through the north gate without wearing a crown teleports to the south entrance. The translocation is obvious, but goes only one way. Some petitioners try to head back the way they came and end up exiting the maze, forfeiting.

### Tactics.

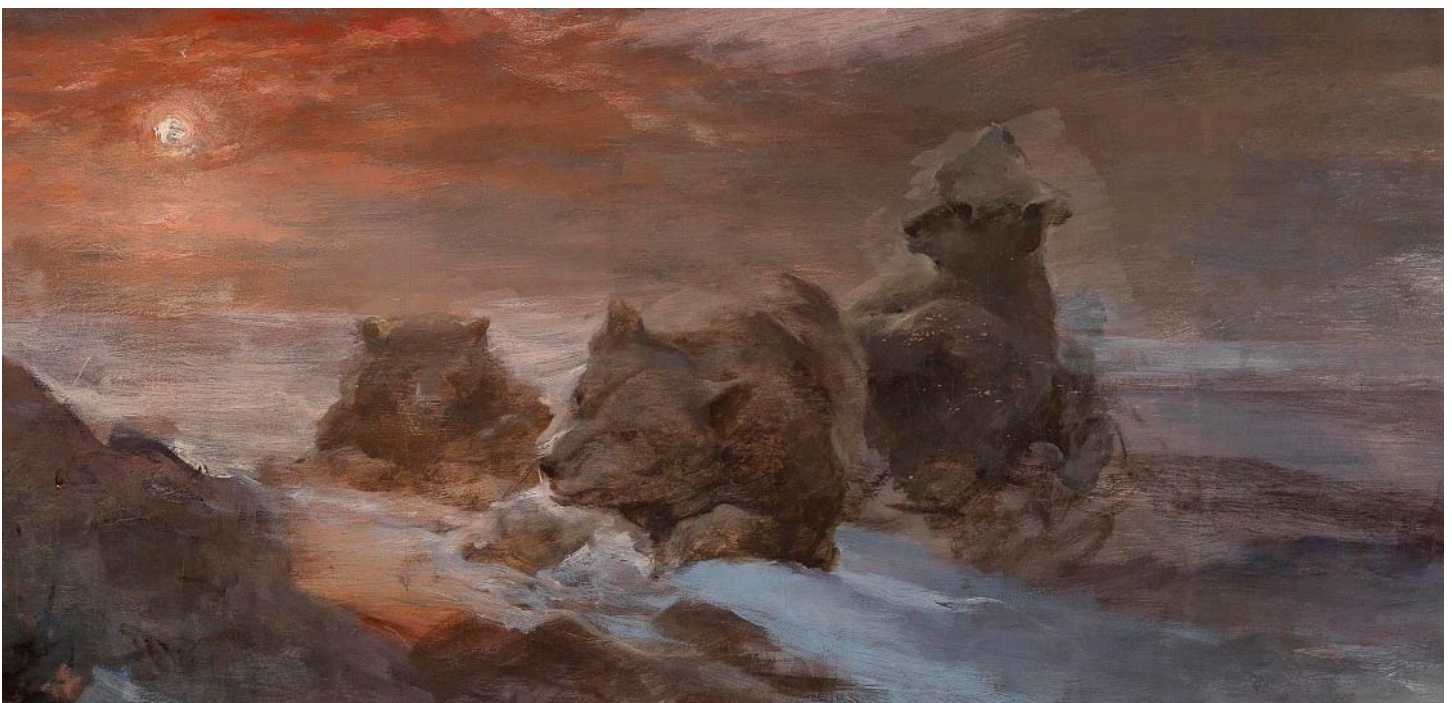
Two bears enter the labyrinth each round, and they generally head in different directions, looking for prey. Once all ten bears are inside, the mechanical B.E.A.R. (a gift from Benedict Pemberton) emerges and waits near the north exit. Its superior design lets it leap high to drag down clever climbers who try to bypass all the maze's challenges.

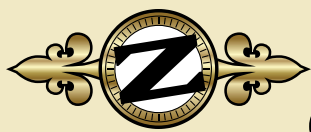
If the party looks, Lya's group watches nervously, but Lya keeps her bodyguards from trying anything rash.

### Aftermath.

If the party breaks the rules or fails, the Bruse has them escorted out. The next afternoon he'll bring them into his court and give them the rules of his little game (see Act Two), but the Obscurati will have a half-day's head start.

If at least one PC makes it through with his crown on, the Bruse is suitably impressed that he decides to give the party a fair crack at Tinker. He drags them to his temporary throne room while they're still messy from the challenge, and grants them an audience with him while the audience outside is still cheering.





# ACT TWO

## CHEATING ENCOURAGED

In this act, Bruse Shantus challenges the party to compete with the Obscurati for the right to meet Tinker, not realizing that his gnome guest will betray him.

### LYA AT COURT

Lya Jierre has been at the court about a day by the time the party has arrived, and she has charmed the Bruse with light gossip regarding the events in Risur. She has a pair of noncombatant attendants with her—a female wizard named **Inez**, and a male porter named **Ulrik** who carries the luggage needed by a prestigious tiefling woman.

She always wears her weapons, and has a small case of syringes tucked into her coat. This is *needlewire*, a magic serum. When the silvery fluid is injected in a person it allows the head of the Obscurati, Nicodemus the Gnostic, to remotely take control of that person's body for anywhere from a few minutes to a few hours. Lya only uses it if she has a vital lead and wants to pass it along to the Obscurati so urgently that she cannot spare the time for a normal *sending*.

The serum only grants Nicodemus control and sensory information. He cannot manifest any of his powers. Lya's porter has volunteered to take any needed injections, but it can work on any willing (or unconscious) subject. If the party gets their hands on this and uses it, Nicodemus recognizes the party and talks with polite caution, but he sees no reason to stick around.



### RULES OF THE GAME

#### **Social. Real-Time. Level 12.**

*Bruse Shantus explains the game he wants the party to play.*

The party receives their audience with the Bruse, and he spends a long time on small talk about the job of RHC agents or their adventures on the Avery Coast Railroad (he has halfway decent spies of his own) before he gets down to business.

He gives the party a chance to plead their case, then explains that Lya Jierre also is interested in Tinker Oddcog, and that she is offering him a state of the art Danoran warship and Danoran engineers to aid in building railroads and future warships. He'll try to wheedle some equally lavish offers out of Risur through the PCs, then eventually laughs and admits that he has something more interesting in mind.

#### **Meet the Judges.**

Shantus introduces his vizier Zarkava and his minister of dragon affairs Kenna.

He also briefly introduces the honorary minister of rebellion Pardo. If Glaucia is present, she snarls and visibly bristles at the other gnoll, who is from the tribe that destroyed her home years ago. The Bruse asks if she's alright, then laughs as he remembers how the two know each other.

Zarkava and Kenna, Shantus explains, will be helping him decide which team is a better choice to grant access to Tinker. Zarkava is concerned about the nation's prosperity and security, while Kenna has a clear handle on its finances. Shantus sees himself as the heart of the country. Head, heart, and purse-strings will each have one vote, based on their opinion of the two parties.

But to give them time to make their judgment, Shantus has two challenges for the foreigners. The winner of each will earn one vote. So out of the five votes, two are from the winners of the challenges, two from the Bruse's advisors, and one from the Bruse himself.

#### **Fair Play.**

Before he goes any further, he demands the party promises to wait until sunrise so he can explain the rules and ensure a fair start for the two groups. (Unless the party failed the Adulthood Challenge, in which case the Ob already have a head start.)

First, neither group may leave the grounds of the summer court before sunrise on the next day.

Second, if any member of either group or anyone affiliated with them attempts to locate or contact Tinker before the end of this contest, the offending group will receive the ire of Shantus and his nation. No cheater shall be allowed to meet with the gnome, and anyone who acts in bad faith will be named an enemy of Ber.

Third, if any member of one group attacks anyone in the other group, the attackers will forfeit. Shantus grins and admits he's open to a bit of interpretation. A little friendly disruption via third parties is fine, but we're all civilized here, and he won't abide killing someone from the other side.

If the party is inclined to quibble, Shantus says that the protection applies to an equal number of people on each side, so it includes likely five PCs versus Lya, Merton, Rush, and Lya's two attendants Inez and Ulrik.



### First Challenge.

The Cantabrilla Railroad will connect the nation's east and west coasts so that freight won't have to travel along the southern coast, which has its share of hostile territory, such as the unincorporated gnoll tribes. The entire length will come to three hundred and twenty-five miles, stretching between the cities of **Reo Pedresco** and **Renza**.

To motivate its fast completion the Ministry of Dragon Affairs hired two companies: **Griento Railways** out of Renza, and **Liss Rail Construction** out of Reo Pedresco. Whenever a company completed twenty-five miles of the railroad on schedule it earned a bonus, and as the two groups near the central linkage point the Bruse is offering even greater bonuses for whichever company lays the most track.

Currently the heads of the two lines are separated by thirty-six miles, and each side can lay one or two miles of track per day. Going is rough because the route passes through the central riverlands, rugged terrain full of steep gulleys carved by numerous rivers and streams.

The Bruse will award one vote to whichever group gets their railroad to lay eighteen miles first. He assigns the PCs to help Liss Rail Construction and Lya's group to Griento Railways.

### Cronyism.

The party may have already had dealings with the head of Griento Railways, **Damata Griento**, and if the PCs ask to switch, they can try to persuade the Bruse. Lya likely doesn't know of the party's association with the half-orc, but she assumes the party wouldn't ask if it wasn't advantageous, so she counters their arguments. If necessary, simple opposed Diplomacy checks might suffice.

### Logistics.

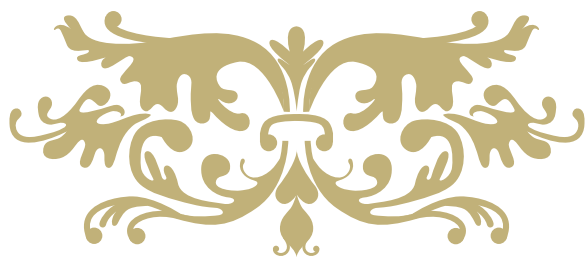
Give the group **Player Handout—Cantabrilla Challenge**. It explains the costs of building miles of track, some of the options they have to accelerate things, and the consequences of various forms of sabotage. See *Running the Challenge* (page xx) for the full rules.

### Second Challenge.

The "Riven Sea of Gold," *Marrajado de Oro*, forms part of the border between Risur and Ber. For centuries Risur had to defend against naval attacks from fleets of the dragon tyrants and later by orcish warlords. But times have been peaceful since Vairday Bruse united the nation.

However the current executive authority there, **Cavallo de Guerra**, is a thorn in Bruse Shantus's side. He's refusing to pay a fair share for the construction of the Selestala Railroad, which will link his capital city Citado Cavallo with Seobriga. This is just the latest dispute.

The Bruse tasks the PCs with convincing Cavallo to make a public pledge of loyalty and agree to pay for his share of the Selestala route. And he tasks Lya's group with discrediting Cavallo, by convincing him to launch an attack on Risuri territory, specifically the fort **Manhill**, which has long defended against orcish attacks. Whichever happens first earns its team a vote.



## COURTLY AID

### Social. Montage. Level 9.

*Before departing, the party can get help from Shantus's ministers.*

The Bruse offers cottages on the grounds to each group, but doesn't want to spend much time clarifying rules because he's going out stargazing with a fine telescope Lya gave him as a gift.

The party might wish to retire so they can scheme in private. Some PCs might offer to accompany the Bruse, but unless a PC has made a good impression he doesn't want some stranger hanging around ruining his evening. The Bruse heads out, leaving a harpsichordist playing in his court until the place clears out.

Other PCs might seek to bend the ears of Zarkava and Kenna (metaphorically, since reptilian ears don't bend so well), either to get advice or to bargain for their vote. Glaucia can provide some insight, and curious PCs might also speak with Pardo, though neither of them have any influence over the game. The party might also try to spy on Lya's group; they're certainly spying on the party.

### Competitive Guys.

After Shantus announces his game, Merton and Rush approach the party. Rush is amused at the chance to taunt enemies since the Bruse is protecting them, and he drags along Merton, who is annoyed at his partner's levity. Rush snidely congratulates the party on evading their ambushes, and then asks their honest opinion: which one was better?

He explains that his friend Merton sent some giant monsters after them, whereas he had their guide arrested and just tried to kill them himself. Rush tries to rub in any actual damage he might have caused, and demonstrates a callous disregard for any of his allies who might have died.

After a bit of trash-talking, Lya snaps at Rush to stop being so discourteous. Then the three of them depart to a guest cottage.

### Stargazing.

The Bruse heads out to a high field with a loose cadre of twenty guards plus a few courtiers who are enthusiastic about looking at the planets. Tonight red Jiese is passing above the edge of the full moon, but with a telescope Jiese's flaming surface appears to shine through the moon's glassy skin, creating a faint red nimbus around a fraction of its edge.

Shantus and his courtiers spend the night drinking and talking about how Ber would fare in a war. Then they get some of the guards to headbutt each other, betting on who lasts longest. It's unseemly for respectable, civilized folks like the Bruse and his courtiers to actually fight themselves, but they'll gladly use common folk as entertainment.

### Zarkava.

Zarkava will gladly talk philosophy of rulership with the party, but she isn't looking for them to do favors for her. She's coolly offended at any inference that she cannot handle her own affairs without some "heroes" coming in and showing the primitives how to get things done.

The lizardfolk vizier's intention is to vote based on the best interest of Ber. The Bruse's game embarrasses her, and she hopes it doesn't cause damage to any vital infrastructure.

If there is an eschatologist in the party, however, Zarkava will ask a moment of their time, and their impression of the Bruse. She worries that her ruler's distance from the common people—traditionally a fine stance for a king—is angering Berans, who want to see themselves as part of a movement, not merely subjects. She wonders whether it might be best to have another sitting in Shantus's place.

### Kenna

Kenna is more excited about the game, and will gladly offer to exchange tips for promises of aid for the Beran coffers or military. Since Lya has offered to provide Ber with five Danoran warships (valued at 500,000 gp total), Kenna makes a personal visit later in the evening. She'll tip off the tiefling to the lair of Cheshimox at Abismo Condendado (see page xx).

If the party can promise similar aid (or at least convince her they can deliver), she might gossip about Cavallo de Guerra's history with the Bruse, and drop the secret that an illness spreading through the region has afflicted some of Cavallo's grandchildren. She won't give the party the same tip about Cheshimox, since doesn't want to betray Lya and risk losing the warships, though if the PCs offer a ridiculous price, she might change her tune.

Make a point to emphasize that Kenna grazes as she chats, constantly nibbling on whatever's available. When the party returns at the end of this act, she will have been replaced by a duplicant which still keeps up the pretense of eating, but does so with intentional effort that might be noticed by canny PCs.

Also, she invites any fit-looking PCs to join her for a pre-dawn jog. Every day she and a few of the court guards jog to the nearby military base. Then new guards join her for the jog back. It will be on one of these jogs, several days from now, that Kenna gets abducted and replaced by a duplicant. Her actual body will be delivered via the military base's secret teleportation circle to Isla dolas Focas.

Kenna does not like guns, since they are unheroic. She particularly does not like gunsmiths. Martial scientists, however, are kindred spirits. If one goes jogging with her, she'll take them by the local army shooting range and practice dodging bullets. This lets martial scientist PCs learn the Vigilante Sprint technique (see New Magic Item, page xx).

### Glaucia and Pardo.

Glaucia glares daggers at her fellow gnoll Pardo for a while, then departs shortly after the Bruse. She goes to the gathered petitioners outside, preferring their company. If the party seeks her counsel she'll offer it freely: no matter how valuable this gnome might be to Risur, it is better to stick to one's honor than to dance for Shantus's amusement.

She knows they'll be tempted to sabotage the efforts of Lya, but she warns them that if that extends to harming any of the citizens of Ber, she will find out.

Pardo ignores Glaucia and simply stands at the edge of the room, observing. He is eerily silent, and if spoken to he turns any conversation toward the topic of his cult's beliefs. He says the court is weak, and if the head of a beast is feeble, the beast can easily be slain. When the conversation grows boring he excuses himself, drawing a kerchief so he does not have to touch a metal doorknob as he leaves.

The gnoll should really radiate untrustworthiness, ideally so much that the party assumes they know he's trouble and so won't suspect him of anything actually surprising. The Bruse, after all, keeps him around as a sign of how open and progressive he is, and how little he fears the gnolls.

### Spirit Medium Senses.

Any spirit medium PC senses something odd with Pardo's soul, like it's stretched out and pointing to the south. It's common knowledge in Ber that Pardo comes from an island to the south, Isla dolas Focas.

### Cottage Espionage.

The party's cottage is the epitome of rustic comfort, albeit with a private

chef and maid. Lya's equally fine cottage is a quarter mile away. The Bruse stations three guards (Sense Motive +11, Perception +11) around each cottage to deter shenanigans, but spying can be fruitful.

Merton, for his part, calls a handful of small local birds to him and uses a bit of magic to get them to watch the party's goings on. It's unlikely (Perception DC 29, or DC 27 if trained in Knowledge: Nature) that the PCs realize that these birds, of all the ones flitting about the grounds, are watching them. At dawn the birds return to Merton and report what they overheard.

Rush arranges a small bit of sabotage. He expects the party will try teleporting away first thing in the morning, so he manages to pass a message to the maid of the PCs' cottage. A lavish bribe of 500 gp gets the maid to look for a way to sneak a loop of gold thread into the clothes of one or two PCs. Since even paranoid PCs likely take off some of their clothes to sleep in such a comfortable setting, the maid might be able to slide the thread in the rolled up cuff of a coat, pant-leg, or high boot. The sabotage is practically unnoticeable unless a character explicitly looks for something so innocuous.

If the party does teleport away in the morning, anyone whose clothes were sabotage this way will get left behind, splitting the party awkwardly. The nearest teleportation circle is back in Seobriga.

### Having Doubts.

If a PC manages to eavesdrop on Lya's cottage, he can hear her expressing her uncertainty about the Bruse's game. She reminds everyone that what they're doing is for the greater good of the whole world, so if they must harm people to get to Tinker, it's justified.

Rush snarkily tries to change the subject by going outside and yelling at one of the guards to get them some wine. He makes a thorough circuit of the cottage (forcing hiding PCs to make a Stealth check DC 25), then goes back inside and suggests they start planning.

### Dropping Eaves.

Lya's group will come up with more plans later, but for the next few minutes they talk of their goals, and decide they'll use *sending* to order their ship *Lux Profectusque* to Citado Cavallo. In the morning they'll use Inez's teleportation magic to hop first to Renza, so they can get more information about the railroad. Lya suggests focusing on solving problems to get things done faster, but Rush scoffs and argues for sabotage and disruption of the other railroad company.

After a day at the railroad, Lya (with Inez and Ulrik) will teleport to Citado Cavallo. She makes a suggestion that impresses Rush: just use enchantment magic to convince some of Cavallo's sea captains to launch an attack, and trust that Cavallo will be too proud to admit the men acted without his orders.

At this point (after about 10 minutes of talking) the guard returns with wine, and Kenna Vigilante is with him (Perception +12). She gives her tip to Lya about the lair of Cheshimox, and they share a drink. Once Kenna leaves, Lya's group spends the next hour devising methods to trick the ghouls in the swamp to attack the party, or at least the workers of the Liss railroad.

### May the Best Team Win.

Before it gets so late that people start heading to bed, Lya makes a point to visit the party and talk to them. She trusts them to act honorably unless they've shown otherwise in the past.

If given the chance, she talks straight with them. Well, she pretends to, at any rate.



She explains that while the Obscurati, of which she is a member, has by necessity used secrecy and subterfuge, she is not comfortable with these tools. (This is a lie. She's a politician, and moreover a Jierre. Subterfuge is practically genetic. Oh, and her Bluff check is +21.)

She says that she was raised to value reason, progress, and the power of words over arms. Toward that end, she wants to explain why she's doing what she's doing, in hopes that the party will agree that her motives are honorable.

She admits that her organization lost control of its colossus, and that they want it under control again. She claims the colossus was meant to be a peacekeeping weapon, to deter Risur from attacking, capable of defending even against assaults in the Dreaming or the Bleak Gate. She encourages them to recognize that it is a threat that would never have been deployed, because it would provoke a backlash from every country, afraid they might be next. Yes, it is powerful, but it can't be everywhere at once. The moment it attacked, it would assure Danor's destruction.

With such absolute deterrence, there wouldn't be a need for further wars. Oh, armies would continue to train and prepare, but no one would dare fight. There would be peace.

But now it's loose, and damaged, and acting out of control. Luckily it seems disinclined to raze any cities, but it is safest if the colossus is not roaming. She implores the party to step aside and let her find Tinker. She says Tinker will let them gain control of the colossus. (This is a lie. She has orders to kill the gnome so he cannot reveal the vulnerabilities or specifications of the titan, which might let the RHC figure out its purpose and thwart the Obscurati.)

In exchange, she promises that she won't play along with the Bruse and try to get Cavallo to attack Risur. She dislikes the minotaur ruler, and won't shed innocent blood just to entertain him.

### Party Reaction

If they accept, she hides her surprise well, and thanks them. I guess the party can stick around and eventually help save the day against the duplicants at the end of this act.

When they inevitably decline, she asks to hear their motivation, then makes it clear she views them as rivals, not enemies. She wishes them luck, and says may the best team win.

### Obscurati Recruitment

Though not necessarily while at court, Lyra is willing to extend an offer to any PCs she suspects might be sympathetic to the Ob's goals. In particular, she keeps an eye on eschatologists. If she can get a private moment she opens with the question, "What would the world be like if everyone agreed with you?"

Lyra will not—and indeed, due to a *geas* cannot—tell the PC what the Ob's actual plans are, but she can explain that the Obscurati are enlightened thinkers who want to make the world a better place. She'll argue that a philosopher would be better served joining them than spending his days fighting and bleeding.

If the PC is legitimately interested (or feigns interest; Lyra's Sense Motive skill is only +11), Lyra asks him to throw the game, so that Lyra's group gets first shot at speaking with Tinker. In exchange, Lyra will arrange for the PC to be invited to meet others in her cell and learn more, and will devise a suitable cover story that will get the PC out of the country, allegedly investigating some lead, but with enough time to decide whether to fully join the Obscurati. If he does, Lyra is sure that the conspiracy could make use of his help as a double agent, disrupting the RHC's investigation.

## WINNING VOTES.

You win the Bruse's vote by being entertaining. Alternately, if you are incredibly persuasive and upstanding, you *might* be able to convince him to actually like you as opposed to seeing you as fun. But you still have to show that you have a sense of humor about the whole game.

You win Zarkava's vote by doing the most for the stability and defense of the country. She actually seeks the advice of Glaucia, so if the party has impressed her, they might win the vizier's vote.

You win Kenna's vote by appealing to her personally. She likes making deals, and will vote for whoever she thinks she can have the best business relationship with.

## OVERVIEW: CANTABRILLA RAILROAD.

The total line will be 325 miles, and when complete a train will be able to travel from Reo Pedresco to Renza in a day. There aren't any major cities along the way yet, just a few towns and numerous villages, but Ber expects new growth.

Liss Rail Construction has built 128 miles of track from Reo Pedresco. Griento Railways has built 161 miles from Renza. The camps of the two companies are 36 miles apart at the start of the challenge. You'll want to refer to the DM handout "Cantabrilla Route" (page xx) to track progress from day to day.

If neither side got involved, Liss would cover his 18 miles in 22 days, slowed down by rivers and low cash on hand. Griento takes 21 days, plagued by bandits and rough terrain but benefiting from higher morale.

### Traveling to the Challenge

It's about 300 miles overland from the Summer Court to Renza, and of course another 325 to Reo Pedresco. Sailing the thousand miles from Seobriga to Reo Pedresco might take a fast ship only three days under ideal conditions. But the fastest option is to teleport. The cities at both ends of the railroad have teleportation beacons, and the existing rails can get to their respective camps in 8 hours.

### Construction Procedure

Each company has a home city (Reo Pedresco or Renza) and two "staging towns" along their route. Though the railroads are normally just one set of tracks, to allow for two-way traffic these staging towns have small stretches of tracks where trains can pass.

Typically a train leaves the home city shortly before noon, gets to the railhead just before dusk, and then stays overnight. The next day it rolls alongside the workers, bringing supplies with them as they build more track, and then departs in mid-afternoon, making room for the next day's train. It returns to the home city in the middle of the night and is reloaded. This provides enough material for the railroad to build about a mile per day, with a little left over.

The workers create the grade, a long mound of dirt covered in a layer of crushed stone ballast. They place 8-ft. long wooden railroad ties (sleepers, in non-American parlance) into the ballast, then secure the rails to the ties with iron spikes. The company works in stages, with some men laying the grade at the front, then behind them those placing ballast, then the ties, then rails, and finally the spikes.

The hammering of the spikes resounds across the whole railhead, reminding the crews to keep working. Those who can hammer consistently for long stretches of time are paid much better than the average worker, because they help keep everyone else focused.

## TEN-MILE DAY.

In the real world during the construction of the First Transcontinental Railroad in the United States, one company managed to lay ten miles of track in one day. If your party wants to replicate the feat, they'll need to handle complex logistics.

An extra-long train will leave the home city at 4 AM laden with supplies, with an engine on both ends. It reaches the first staging town at 8 AM, where it waits for a train headed back to the home city to pass. It continues to the second staging town, gets there at noon, and lets a second train pass it. It reaches the railhead at 4 PM, delivers its supplies, and then heads back as quickly as possible. It passes the same trains as before, at 8pm and midnight, and then it returns to its home city at midnight.

In this way, three sets of supplies are delivered each day, each carrying three times the normal supply size. Of course, doing this is hugely taxing on the workers loading and unloading the trains, not to mention those building the railroad. See the player's handout "Cantabrilla Challenge" (page xx) for the rules.

## Camps.

A total of over two hundred workers are present in each camp, plus a dozen armed guards and a variety of specialists like engineers, mages, and a circulating roster of doctors, entertainers, and *executores dola liberta*. The camps keep a few dozen spears and bows handy for the workers to use, just in case some savage megafauna beast attacks.

Typically there are three shifts of workers, one resting, one assembling the railroad, and one tending to camp—and moving the camp, which is usually necessary every two or three days. Each shift works for four hours, then switches, so the whole work day spans twelve hours.

## Obstacles.

The region has many rivers, and at this point both camps have gotten the construction of bridges down pat. Each camp has at least two spellcasters who can cast *stone shape*, so laying the pilings goes very quickly. Assembling the wooden truss of the bridge is comparably easy, and the rivers are typically less than 100 feet wide, so an entire bridge can usually be finished in about five days.

The terrain also has intermittent spire-like mountains ridges, called *serra*. Though seldom higher than five hundred feet, they're too steep to go over so the railroad must tunnel through. Most of these tunnels are completed well in advance by combinations of magic and explosives, but Griento Railways still has a few days of clearing ahead of them for an obnoxious mile-long series of tunnels.

Bandits sometimes attack, but the camps have plenty of guards, so mostly they're left alone. Partnerships with locals living in nearby towns alert the companies of any possible megafauna that might cause trouble.

## Liabilities.

If one desired to disrupt the railroad construction, the key targets would be the mages, the existing bridges, and the trains themselves. How much trouble is possible is only limited by how evil one wants to be.

The mages are closely guarded in camp, but by necessity have to operate ahead of the main group sometimes, leaving them exposed. They're not great combatants, and the camp guards are poor matches for attackers of the PCs' level. If murder's not acceptable, kidnapping, infection, cursing, or bribery might work. Of course there are other mages available in Ber or beyond, though they can be expensive to replace.

## OBSCURATI SCHEDULE.

We suggest the following timeline for Lya, Merton, Rush, and their allies' activities in these two challenges.

**Before Dawn on Day 1.** Lya arranges via *sending* for fifty Crisillyiri mercenaries to teleport to Renza and ride the train to the Griento railhead. A group of five Obscurati specialists teleport to Reo Pedresco and start making contacts and allies. She also *sends* to the Obscurati leadership details of her plan for Cavallo de Guerra, which will require them to hire a mind mage.

*Lux Profectusque* sails for Marrajado de Oro.

**Day 1.** Lya's aide teleports her to Citado Cavallo at dawn. She contacts Cavallo de Guerra and warns him of the Bruse's game so he'll be suspicious of the PCs.

Merton, Rush, and the two aides teleport to Renza. They arrive at the end of the day at the railhead of Griento Railways. Merton explains that as a favor for the Bruse they'll be here helping finish the railroad sooner, and that spies have learned that a group of hostiles, possibly in the employ of Surtan Liss, are targeting the railroad. Damata accepts their help. The Obscurati give him 10 Money.

**Day 2.** Lya's mercenaries split up to defend the Griento bridges from sabotage, so any bridge has ten defenders (5th-level warriors). Merton and Rush coordinate. A powerful enchantress from the Malice Lands named **Jacale**, hired by the Ob, teleports to Citado Cavallo. She contacts **Commodore Thrag Vidalia**, and arranges to take a trip on his ship the next day.

**Day 3.** Merton and Rush set out on horseback to scout the wastelands to the north, looking for the lair of Cheshimox. *Lux Profectusque* arrives at Citado Cavallo. Jacale magically compels Thrag Vidalia to attack the Risuri fort at **Manhill**. Lya departs aboard her ship *Lux Profectusque*, hoping to be out of the region before Cavallo de Guerra learns of the trickery.

**Day 4.** Merton and Rush find Cheshimox's lair. The Ob agents in Reo Pedresco make contact with bandits along the Liss railroad line, and provide the proper bribes to get them to attack the Liss line.

**Day 5.** the bandits start attacking Aigotsura, the staging town nearest the Liss railhead. They return intermittently, hopefully drawing the party's attention. Meanwhile, Merton and Rush ride to the Liss railhead.

Merton, as a native Beran, tries to sow distrust of the PCs among the workers. If not stopped, the crews become unfriendly, and might refuse aid or even attack the Steam Crew.

Rush sneaks onto one a supply trains and plants single-use *immovable rods* in the undercarriages of each of three cars, so that the train won't move any faster than human walking pace, no matter how hard the engine tries. Until the rods are removed, Liss cannot receive new Materiel.

The two men try to avoid the party, and leave before nightfall.

**Day 6.** Merton and Rush reach the Griento railhead and wait to react to the party.

**Variable.** Once the party gets within 8 miles of their goal, if it's uncertain who will win, Merton and Rush ride to near the Liss railhead, then to the lair of Cheshimox. Rush sneaks in, strikes down the head of the undead lizardfolk, then flees. He and Merton use magic to cover their trail as they return to the Griento railhead. The lizardfolk follow their "arrival" trail and find the Liss construction team. They attack under cover of night.

**Variable.** Once the party gets within 4 miles of their destination, if the outcome is still uncertain, the Obscurati skulks in Reo Pedresco arrange for a supply train to derail while crossing a bridge, which counts as a mishap. The damage to the bridge shuts down deliveries of Materiel for a day.



Sufficient explosives could take out a bridge, completely stopping forward progress until the bridge could be replaced. Worse, all the workers are on one side of the river, and the supplies will be coming from the other side of the river. If such egregious destruction is not desired, simple sabotage might just make the bridge unstable, deterring the train engineers from going over it until it's fixed.

Finally, a derailed train (or better yet, a train plunging into a river when the bridge beneath it explodes) is a huge setback, particularly if other engineers fear it wouldn't be safe to keep working. Less severe options include tearing up track (the train stops and has to fix the track, throwing off everyone's schedule), sabotaging the boiler in a way the engineer will notice so he can stop it before it explodes, or blowing up the spare set of tracks in the staging towns so only one train can use the track at a time.

### Running the Cantabrilla Challenge.

The DM Handout—Cantabrilla Route shows you where key locations are, and what they entail. The Player Handout—Cantabrilla Challenge gives an overview of the basic rules.

To win, a side needs to build 18 miles first. Additionally, bridges require extra building, and each bridge is equivalent to 5 miles of track.

Resources used to build are abstract. You have Money, Materiel, and Morale. 1 Money is roughly equivalent to 25,000 gp. 1 Materiel is enough supplies to build a mile of track. 1 Morale is needed for each extra mile you want your workers to build beyond the first in a given day.

You can acquire more resources for your side, take away the other side's resources, or try other tactics that are more up to GM adjudication. In general, if the party spends a day on a plan, it should add 1 or 2 extra resources. The challenge is coming up with useful tactics, and thwarting the Ob's own efforts, while not neglecting the Marrajado de Oro Challenge.

### Building.

Each day you can build the first mile of track for 1 Materiel. Each mile thereafter costs 1 Materiel and 1 Morale.

Bridges count as five miles of track. They're just easier to destroy and control than a wide swath of track.

### Profiting.

Each day you get 1 Money for each mile you built the previous day.

Though this lizardfolk entrepreneur lacks any talent for technology, he is drawn to it and has the money to afford it, inherited from his late father, rumored one of the greatest bandits of Ber's riverlands.

Surtan bucks Beran standards—both traditional tribal beliefs and newer culture that looks to Danor or Risur. He's rude, smug, and spends great effort to appear weird and novel. He has had small garnets set along his cheekbones, which sparkle in the light, a permanent adornment like tattooing but far more expensive. He's also learned to waggle his crest, and he likes to swallow small animals like mice whole, pretending to be a snake. Surtan can afford all these peculiarities because he's a canny businessman. Currently he has the contract from Bruse Shantus to construct the western end of the Cantabrilla Railroad.



### Supplying.

You can spend 1 Money to order 1 Materiel. The next day it arrives. If you order more than 1 Materiel in a single day, there is a 5% chance of a mishap. A mishap causes 1d4 of the Materiel you ordered not to arrive. The delivery train might derail, dock workers might riot, and so on.

### Good Spirit.

You can pay 2 Money to gain 1 Morale. You might hire entertainers, provide a pay raise, or invest in comfier living accommodations.

### Starting Resources.

Griento starts with 0 Money, 1 Materiel, and 6 Morale. The Obscurati provide 10 Money.

Liss starts with 2 Money, 2 Materiel, and 2 Morale. Pemberton wants to sell Liss a Steam Crew, at the cost of 10 Money. The crew can build 1 extra mile per day without costing any Morale. Liss can't afford 10 Money, but the party might be able to get him to reduce his price to 1 Money now and 9 later, or offer some other payment.

## LISS RAIL CONSTRUCTION

### Social. Real-Time. Level 9.

*Will a lizardfolk businessman cooperate with the party?*

The Bruse assigns the western end of the railroad to the PCs. The lizardfolk in charge of the operation, **Surtan Liss**, is staying at the staging town called **Aigotsura**, 40 miles west of the railhead. When the party arrives the town is in a tizzy, with most of the residents out gawking at a group of golems, ten strong, as they busily assemble a mock length of track. Steam puffs out of their backs as arcane boilers provide the power to their work.

The golems are products of Benedict Pemberton, and he's trying to sell them to Liss. Pemberton claims they're made in Flint, but his operation in Flint has been shuttered for a few months due to the machinations of Harkover Lee. The golems were actually made in his factory on Isla dolas Focas, and Pemberton had them shipped hurriedly to Liss, hoping to take advantage of the lizardman's desperation.

### Tough Sell.

Surtan Liss's construction company is lagging behind Griento Railways. Liss's crews don't have the same high morale as Griento's, and Liss doesn't have the cash to pay them to work harder. Some bad weather and an unfortunate derailment forced Liss to take out a loan for 200,000 gp, and if he doesn't make it to the 150 mile marker before Griento, he'll end up losing on the whole venture.

(Don't worry. He's still rich.)

Pemberton is trying to show Liss that his "Steam Crew" can work faster and, ultimately, cheaper than a normal living crew. Liss and Pemberton are out enjoying drinks—a guaro sour for Liss, and distilled water with a celery stick for Pemberton—as they watch the Steam Crew cart dirt, crush rocks, and lay ties and track.

Liss is impressed, but Pemberton is asking 250,000 gp (10 Money, in terms of the Cantabrilla Challenge) for the whole crew of ten steam workers. Liss can't afford it. The lizardman is hoping to show enough enthusiasm to get Pemberton expecting a deal, then offer to pay 10% up front (1 Money), and the rest upon completion of the railroad.

The party might interject themselves into the negotiations, offer another way to aid Liss to drive the price down, or perhaps challenge a

golem to see who can hammer spikes faster. (Make five opposed Strength checks and total the results; the golem has Strength 20 and takes 10 every time, for a total of 75.) Success could provide a bargaining chip to help Liss get Pemberton to agree to an installment plan.

If the party helps out successfully, Liss can get his Steam Crew for the cost of 1 Money. Otherwise Pemberton won't sell. He departs and shows up four days later at the Griento railhead.

### Ultior Motive.

Pemberton is hoping to raise the profile of these machines, to get them spread around Ber at various work sites. He's planning to attempt his coup next year, at which point the golems would become a distributed army he can use to wreak havoc. However, he's also a businessman, and even aspirations to rule a nation of his own won't let him accept a massive loss.

While he's here, make sure he interacts with the party and makes a big impression. He's not really all that bad a gent. If the party proposes to Liss that they might sabotage the other side, Pemberton disapproves, because he thinks it's more impressive to create than destroy.

If he gets wind the party is trying to track down Tinker, he plays it cool and wishes them luck, but asks if he can help in order to get a sense of how the party's mission is coming along. He'll definitely want to kill them later so they won't get in his way.

### Helping Out Liss.

As long as the party is respectful and doesn't ask him for money, Liss will take whatever help they can offer.

### Further Developments

As detailed in Overview: Obscurati Schedule, eventually the Ob has bandits attack Aigotsura to try to distract the party. If they don't drive off the attack, it costs 1 Morale. Shortly thereafter Merton shows up to show discontent, costing Liss 1 Morale and possibly making the workers distrust the party, while Rush sabotages a train with one-use *immovable rods*. This prevents further arrival of Materiel until the sabotage is undone.

If things get close, Merton and Rush trick a nearby cult of undead lizardfolk who guard a dead dragon's lair, and convince them Liss railroad is trying to drive them out, provoking an attack on the Liss railhead. This attack costs between 1 and 4 Morale, depending how severe it is.

If all else fails, Ob agents derail a train while crossing a bridge, costing 1d4 Materiel and possibly preventing further Materiel delivery.

Much of what happens in this challenge is up to the party. Use your best judgment to determine how the Ob react.

## GRIENTO RAILWAYS

### Social. Railroad. Level 9.

*Can the party outmaneuver Lya Jierre's influence?*

Lya's Obscurati group gets assigned the eastern end of the railroad. She decides that she's more valuable in the court of Cavallo de Guerra, so she sends the rest of her team to work with Damata Griento while she goes alone to Citado Cavallo.

Unlike Liss, Damata Griento stays with his workers at the railhead, and he only goes to the nearby staging town, **Negranha**, once a week to spend time with his wife **Ejeka**, daughter **Dabo**, and son **Tarro**. The town is more comfortable, but it's good for the crew's morale to have the boss around.

## UNLIKELY ALTRUISM.

We anticipate most groups will pursue tactics that fantasy heroes are typically good at—fighting, stealth, and short-term trickery or deal-making. But your players might try a different approach.

They might do what's best for Ber, rather than for Risur. At the Cantabrilla Railroad, they could offer to help Lya's side by giving aid to Damata Griento's construction crew. By avoiding conflict with the Ob they help the railroad finish sooner. Simple good intentions aren't sufficient, of course. To benefit from their altruism, the party would need to advertise it properly. Perhaps a journalist could help.

If they can get the public on their side, Shantus will be pressured to award them the point for the railroad challenge to save face. The move fits with Kenna's sense of decency, likely earning her vote.

When Merton and Rush show up, they spin a lie that the party is working with Liss to sabotage Damata. Though Damata is a little wary of trusting outsiders, the Obscurati operatives tell him he doesn't need to give them anything; the Bruse is paying them for their service. Indeed, they hand over promissory notes worth 250,000 gp (the equivalent of 10 Money) to help fund Damata's project. He has a little spare materiel and high morale among his crew, but money is tight.

Merton and Rush head off the next morning to try to find Cheshimox's lair. Inez and Ulrik stick around to keep an eye out for the party, and to report via *sending* so Lya can keep in touch with Merton and Rush.

### Visit by the Party

If you played Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, Damata is thrilled to see the party again. He gladly explains the situation with Merton and Rush, and is confused as to whether the party—who after all *are* foreign agents—are here to sabotage his railroad. But he trusts them.

If the party has never met Damata before, he is suspicious but friendly and open-minded. It is, though, hard to trust someone if they try to convince you not to accept a whole chunk of money.



A middle-aged half-orc family man and would-be railroad tycoon, Damata nearly ruined his whole clan's livelihood when he was tricked by conmen into taking out a massive loan he could not repay for a railroad through the Anthras Mountains. Desperate to avoid his debtors, he stole his clan's stash of magic weapons and would have delivered them if not for the unlikely intervention of dwarven philosopher Vlendam Heid and a group of strangers who helped him instead kill his debtors (see Adventure Four, *Always on Time*; depending on the party's actions, you might need to replace Damata with another orc).

Married with two kids, Damata returned home with a renewed bravery. To prove his trustworthiness to his clan, he aggressively pursued new business, and now is in charge of building the eastern branch of the Cantabrilla Railway, stretching from Reo Pedresco to Seobriga. He is beloved by his workers, and he makes an effort to find out what troubles them, then encourage them to find solutions by allying with others.

(If your party let Damata die in Adventure Four, he is replaced by a more dour, officious railroad bureaucrat named Venicio Brunaldo.)



## THE KEEPERS OF CHESHIMOX.

The white dragon Cheshimox originally hailed from north of Drakr, but six hundred years ago he flew to what is today Ber, seeking to prove himself against the other dragon tyrants. He brought with him ice carved from a glacier surrounding one of undead giants that once ruled the tundras, and he deposited that perpetual ice in a lakeside cave five miles north of where the Cantabrilla Railroad runs now, called **Abismo Condendado**.

With a dragon's patience he slowly transformed a few square miles into his own private icescape in the middle of a tropical badland. He conquered the lizardfolk servants of another dragon and transformed them into undead so they could resist the unearthly chill. When he was eventually slain, his servants endured and preserved his skull, hoping some day to return their master to unlife.

For a few decades the undead terrorized the Rio Gelado, sweeping along it at night in icy chariots, killing anyone foolish enough to camp along its shores. But treasure hunters sought dragon gold, and slowly attrition whittled down both their numbers and their treasure. Today only a few dozen remain. When Rush destroys their leader, they decide they are ready to end their existence, and they set out for a final battle.

## PROACTIVE ASSAULT.

Should the party venture forth to eliminate the ghouls, they might find them preparing for their assault. The undead lizardfolk have reverently placed the skull of Cheshimox atop its sled, and perform rituals to call forth deadly cold weather. Frigid winds create a sheen of ice beneath the sled, even though the storm never gets quite cold enough for any snowfall to stick.

If the party engages at the frozen lake, the whole cult attacks en masse, using the terrormasks to drive the party close and conjuring walls of ice to block them if they try to escape. Alternately, if your players seem to expect they'll be doing a dungeon crawl, you might change the focus to stopping the weather ritual. If the group seems eager for a direct assault on Cheshimox's lair, they can fight through multiple cave chambers coated with ice, with cultists attacking from every direction.

### Calling in a Favor

The party might try to convince him to slow his crews. Unfortunately he's not solely in charge, and after his erratic behavior last year the elders of his family are watching closely. Several family members visit the construction camps, cycling through each week.

If his crews, which have worked excellently so far, suddenly started slowing down, his family would grow suspicious and might punish him. They would assume he had been paid by Surtan Liss, keeping a fat bribe all for himself instead of sharing the normal reward with the whole family.

Damata needs a convincing excuse if he's going to help the party. Perhaps the best one is provided by the Obscurati. When a small army of ghoulish lizardfolk attack the railroad (see *Burning the Midnight Oil*, page xx), Damata can claim that he's withdrawing to protect his company's investment. It would be even easier for him to justify if the party simultaneously has managed to persuade Cavallo to allow work on the Selestala Railroad, because the Grientos already have that contract.

## BURNING THE MIDNIGHT OIL

### Action. Tactical. Level 13.

*Ghouls are tricked into attacking the party's camp.*

As detailed in the Obscurati Schedule (page xx), this attack occurs shortly after the Liss railhead gets within 8 miles of the goal. Dark clouds appear on the horizon. Temperatures drop rapidly and Surtan Liss, who grew up on his bandit father's stories of the Keepers of Cheshimox, fears some dread force is coming. If the party isn't present he quickly contacts them with a *sending*, begging them to come protect his workers.

Of the many possible ways the Ob can disrupt the party, this one is perhaps the most devastating. You might want to allow a little wiggle room to decide when this occurs so that the party is present.

If the party doesn't have anyone at the camp, they run the risk of Liss's camp being devastated. Worse, if the party is split up they might get into a fight they cannot win. If only part of the party is here, you might have the other players take on the roles of guards, with 8 Cantabrilla Guards per PC. See Appendix Two: Berans for stats.

### Cheshimox Forces.

4 Priests of Cheshimox

2 Cheshimox Terrormasks

40 Fast Lizardfolk Zombies

The Skull of Cheshimox

Variable Number of Cantabrilla Guards



### Terrain.

Most likely the undead strike at the worker camp, where scores of tents sprawl in a hundred foot radius near the actual railhead. The terrain is fairly flat aside from the railroad itself, but the tents and piles of construction materiel create obstacles and hiding places.

If the party sallies forth to meet the attackers, they might instead battle away from the camp on craggier terrain, with towering cactuses and patches of spiky lechuguilla plants dotting the landscape.

### Tactics.

The Cheshimox priests send the two terrormasks ahead to widely circle the camp and approach from the south. These ghouls have peeled away the skin on their faces and wear masks of tanned orc and lizardfolk faces harvested from other intruders.

The main body of ghouls waits out of sight to the north. Two wings of twenty ghouls each flank the sled upon which the four Cheshimox priests ride. A pair of ghostly beasts pull the sled; these are purely a magical creation and can neither attack nor be harmed.

When night falls, the ghouls to the north begin to howl and roar for a minute as they advance into view. They crest a hill at a range of 400 feet, then charge. At that moment the terrormasks begin attacking from the south, hoping to cause a panic and split any defenders.

The terrormasks rush into the midst of a group of enemies, trying to paralyze as many foes as possible. If they can get a single target alone, they try to flank and tear them apart with sneak attacks.

The four priests direct the horde to sweep through the camp, killing anyone they can reach while keeping their same general formation. They launch a barrage of spells and icicles from a distance, relying on their spears and breath weapons against enemies that venture too close. As a move action, one of the priests can either move the cart carrying the skull of Cheshimox 40 feet or turn it 90 degrees.



The priests can also use the following power of the skull of Cheshimox, which is mounted on a swivel atop the sled. Activating it multiple times just changes its orientation, and doesn't create multiple swaths of cold.

**Freezing Blast (Su)** Freezing cold fills an area extending from the skull in a straight line to a distance of 60 feet. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in that area takes 4d6 cold damage. The spray continues until the start of the activator's next turn, at which point, if the skull's cold has not killed a creature during this activation, the skull deals 4d6 negative energy damage to the activator.

### Cheshimox Terrormask

CR 7 • XP 3,200

Variant dread ghoul lizardfolk rogue 5

CE Medium undead

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

#### Defense

**AC** 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+7 natural, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 61 (7d8+19)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge; **Immune** undead traits

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft., swim 15 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +10 (1d4+4 plus paralysis), bite +10 (1d4+4 plus paralysis)**Special Attacks** bleeding attack +3, command ghouls, create spawn, paralysis (DC 14), sneak attack +3d6

#### Statistics

**Str** 18, **Dex** 18, **Con** —, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 23**Feats** Dodge, Mobility, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite), Weapon Focus (Claw)**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Bluff +8, Climb +22, Intimidate +11, Perception +13, Stealth +14, Swim +22**Languages** Draconic**SQ** creepy skin mask, rogue talents (bleeding attack, combat trick), trap-finding

#### Special Abilities

**Creepy Skin Mask (Su)** A Cheshimox terrormask wears three-foot high mask of tanned, stitched-together humanoid faces. As long as it wears this mask, the terrormask does not detect as undead and is under the effects of a constant *hide from animals* spell

**Command Ghouls (Su)** A Cheshimox terrormask can automatically command all normal ghouls within 30 feet as a free action. Normal ghouls never attack a Cheshimox terrormask unless compelled.

**Create Spawn (Su)** Any creature killed by a Cheshimox terrormask that lies undisturbed until the next midnight rises as a dread ghoul at that time. The new dread ghoul is not under the control of its creator. A protection from evil or gentle repose spell cast on the corpse prevents this.

**Paralysis (Ex)** A creature damaged by a Cheshimox terrormask's natural attack must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 14) or be paralyzed for 1d4+1 rounds. Elves are immune to this effect.



### Priest of Cheshimox

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Zombie lord lizardfolk cleric 4

CE Medium undead

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12

#### Defense

**AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +2 natural, +2 Dex)**hp** 52 (6d8+22)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10**DR** 5/slashing**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **Immune** undead traits

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 15 ft.**Melee** mwk spear +8 (1d8+3), bite +3 (1d4+1)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 5/day (2d6, DC 14)**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th, concentration +7)6/day—*icicle* (1d6+2), *venomous stare* (1d6+2 nonlethal, DC 15)1/day—*dragon breath* (15 ft. cone, DC 12, 3d6 cold)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 4th, concentration +7)2nd—*dread bolt* (DC 15), *fog cloud*, *resist energy*, *spiritual weapon*1st—*command* (DC 14), *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *magic fang*, *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *resistance***Domains** Dragon, Water

#### Statistics

**Str** 15, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Spear)**Skills** Acrobatics +1, Perception +12, Spellcraft +6, Swim +7**Languages** Draconic**SQ** aura**Other Gear** mwk spear, breastplate, holy symbol

### Fast Lizardfolk Zombie

CR 1 • XP 400

NE Medium undead

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +0

#### Defense

**AC** 17, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+2 natural, +2 shield)**hp** 18 (3d8+3)**Fort** +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3**Immune** undead traits

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft., swim 15 ft.**Melee** morningstar +4 (1d8+2), bite –1 (1d4+1), slam –1 (1d6+1) or claw +4 (1d4+2), bite +4 (1d4+2), slam +4 (1d6+2)**Ranged** javelin +3 (1d6+2)

#### Statistics

**Str** 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15**Feats** Toughness**SQ** quick strikes

#### Special Abilities

**Quick Strikes (Ex)** Whenever a fast zombie takes a full-attack action, it can make one additional slam attack at its highest base attack bonus.

### Aftermath.

The undead fight to the last. If they manage to scatter the workers and defeat any defenders, they take any lizardfolk who were slain—such as Liss—and transform them into ghouls, refilling their ranks. Then they arrange the other dead with various rail supplies into a totem resembling



a dragon. Then, from the information provided by terrified wounded workers, they head east, intending to do the same to the Griento camp.

If the lizardfolk fall, the party might recover the skull of Cheshimox. An eschatologist PC feels an odd affinity to the skull, and can sense the way to the distant Frozen City of Knütpara, which makes an appearance in Adventure Seven, *Schism*.

Anyone who examines the skull or the sled finds multiple carvings in the same unknown language: Abyssal. Perceptive PCs might recognize characters they saw once before on the bone-carved rifle owned by dwarven assassin Kvarti Gorbatiy. “Cry out / for at the end of time / I rise.”

### Consequences for Construction.

If the party defeated the lizardfolk before they could attack the work camp, Surtan Liss can add 1 Morale, and the meager loot left at the dragon’s lair totals 25,000 gp (1 Money) if the party is looking to help out.

An orcish warlord and self-proclaimed Champion of the Riven Sea of Gold, Cavallo de Guerra joined the first king of Ber, Vairday Bruse, in kickstarting the revolution toward civilization. He worked alongside Shantus, the current ruler, but Cavallo always thought the minotaur wasn’t willing enough to simply kill those who stood in the way.

When Vairday Bruse chose to pass the crown to a minotaur rather than an orc, Cavallo refused to pledge fealty. Though he hasn’t actively opposed Shantus, he continually snubs the minotaur’s overtures.

At sixty-three years old, Cavallo is ancient by orc standards and wary of being deposed. He uses propaganda to portray himself as still youthful and vigorous; and throughout his region one can find statues of him astride bears, and murals of him trampling the bones of dragons. He often violently harasses visitors, much to the delight of his counselors, to see if they have the strength to stand up to his abuse.

Despite his aggression, he usually has several of his grandchildren by his side when in public, and he dotes on them with comical gentleness. If any of them start to act bratty or entitled, though, he’s been known to literally throw them through walls, to show them that they have to earn their place in the world. Above all else he hates presumption.



Alonsa’s half-giant tribe controls parts of the Anthras Mountains on the border of Risur and Ber. After distinguishing herself as a beast trainer, she and Chupacabra, her trained dire mountain lion, went to work as liaisons to Cavallo de Guerra. She has the ability to lend her strength to others, and it is one of de Guerra’s most closely guarded secrets that he relies on Alonsa to maintain his bold vigor in public. Oddly for someone so highly ranked, Alonsa cares little for political power; she simply wants to be best at anything she applies herself to. The incongruous image of this towering woman reading small books of Danoran philosophy elicits some mockery from de Guerra’s other advisors, but Alonsa laughs it off.



If the camp gets attacked but the lizardfolk are defeated in less than 10 rounds, the camp suffers no Morale loss. For every 10 rounds the fight persists, though, the camp loses 1 Morale, to a maximum of 4. Alternately, you might track casualties if you want to clutter a battle map with scores of panicking NPCs. For every 20 workers killed, the camp should lose 1 Morale.

## CONNECTING THE RAILROAD

### Social. Real-Time. Level 1.

*Sometimes people just want to celebrate.*

If the party spares time to witness the connection of the railroad, it’s an all-day affair, with workers hammering out the last few hundred feet while dignitaries arrive by train. A drum-heavy mariachi-style band performs and everyone drinks as they wait for the last bit of track to be laid.

Eventually only five spikes are left, all along the same side of the railroad. The two heads of the respective companies—Surtan Liss and Damata Griento—expect a group of five dignitaries from various cities to do the honors, but they have colluded to give everyone a bit of entertainment. When it is time for the ceremony, the dignitaries hand Liss and Damata a sledgehammer, and challenge them to race to see who can drive in the middle spike first.

The two men start at the outer spikes, then hammer in the inner spikes, and then good-naturedly jostle for a chance to swing at the middle spike. They end up in an overly polite back-and-forth insistence that the other puts the spike in until finally Damata’s wife sighs and pushes them aside so she can do it. The crowd cheers and then take turns signing a pair of huge posters that will travel around the country to promote the new railroad.

### OVERVIEW: CAVALLO DE GUERRA.

Part of the idea of this challenge is to pull the rug out from under the party. We provide an array of possible ways to earn points with de Guerra, likely making the party expect a fair fight. Then, when Lya simply wins via mind control, it should shake up the game and show that the Obscurati are still a threat, even if the party has managed to thwart them so far.

To convince Cavallo de Guerra to pledge fealty to Bruse Shantus, the party needs two things. First, for him even to consider it, they have to do him a major favor so he owes them. And second, so he won’t face a revolt by his sea chiefs, they need to offer him something politically or militarily useful in exchange.

### Arranging a Trade.

The second step is actually simpler, since the party has leeway to contact Risur and make deals. A discreet alliance with Risur would give de Guerra leverage over the Bruse, especially if they can get him the blessing of Beshela, the Risuri archfey of the sea; this would allow his fleet to travel more widely, both for military and for mercantilism.

The party might instead get Cavallo steam-powered warships, or could try to ensure his legacy by getting his eldest daughter **Corta Nariz de Guerra** named as Bruse Shantus’s chosen successor. Corta Nariz has overseen the logistics of the Beran navy, and though she has no combat experience she has maintained Ber’s strength at sea with efficient management. Cavallo thinks she’d be an excellent Bruse, and even Shantus actually likes her.

### Doing a Favor.

Cavallo has many concerns, but if the party can solve any of the following problems for him, it will earn his trust.

- ♦ **Find a Cure.** Cavallo's grandson **Altioro de Guerra** has become infected with dragon worm—the eldritch equivalent of the real-world parasite guinea worm. It is a disease of paupers and savages, and it resists magical treatment. The story is a disgrace, but a bit of public health work can restore the boy's good name while helping thousands dealing with the painful white worm.
- ♦ **Good Old-Fashioned Bug Hunt.** A few months ago Cavallo kicked a clan of goblins off of lands surrounding the volcanic caldera Lago Fuego, since he wanted to dredge up the hoard of the long-dead dragon tyrant Furioso. Ever since, outlying towns have been getting raided by strange monsters coming out of the mountains—ankhegs, cythillipedes, giant ants, and the like. What might seem like a quick side-quest gets complicated when the party learns that the goblins who control the bugs are just trying to reclaim their old land.
- ♦ **Halt Lya's Tricks.** If the party manages to stop Lya's mind control scheme and avoid a fight with Risur, Cavallo would be appreciative. If they manage to capture Lya, he'll even show his appreciation by bringing in Glauca Evora to savagely beat her. Of course, give the party leeway if they have other clever ideas.

### Welcome to Marrajado de Oro.

When Ber was founded, Cavallo was already a powerful warlord, commanding dozens of orcish warships in Marrajado de Oro, the sea that separates eastern Ber and Risur. Though mostly a rural mix of cliffs and coast, the region had been held together by Cavallo and his forebears after the fall of the dragon tyrants. Since he had the only real naval fighting force in the country, Cavallo profited greatly when Vairday Bruse made him admiral of the new nation's fleet.

Cavallo presided over more naval victories than losses during Ber's first few years, helping keep away would-be conquerors and establish vital shipping lanes that brought trade from other nations. He appreciated the prestige and was able to pay his followers enough that they would follow the nation's civilizing policies. But after years of mutual snubbing with the new Bruse, his region's income has slowed to a trickle, and there are calls by his lieutenants to return to the old ways of raiding the coasts of Risur and Elfaivar.

The region is less industrialized than Seobriga, but wealthier than most other parts of Ber, with lush hillside farms and some of the most temperate weather in the country. In the local capital Citado Cavallo, average orcs work as fishermen or farmers, while the wealthy profit from controlling sea trade around Ber. The city is particularly famous for its beautiful bath houses, fed by an aqueduct from the nearby volcanic caldera Lago Fuego.

## CASTLE OF THE SEA CHIEFS

### Social. Montage. Level 9.

*The party looks for ways to convince an orc warlord to change his mind.*

When the party arrives at Cavallo's seaside castle, he personally shouts down at them from the battlements, calling them dogs who lap at the hooves of Shantus and threatening to have his men kill them for having the audacity to dirty the ground of his city with their filthy paws. If the party stands up to him and appears bold, Cavallo gives a quiet signal

## SHORT-CUT TO VICTORY.

The party has a very limited window here. Lya Jierre plans to just mentally dominate Thrag Vidalia and have him launch an attack on the Risuri fort at Manhill, fulfilling the challenge Shantus set for her.

Because Lya doesn't have anyone among her crew with sufficient mind control magic, she has to wait a few days for the Obscurati to round up a reclusive purple-skinned enchantress from the Malice Lands, named **Jacale**. But by the end of Day 3 of the challenge, unless the party interrupts Lya's plans the orc sea chief will already have attacked Manhill. It will take a day for the news to filter back to Shantus's court, and so the party will have only until dusk on Day 4 to get Cavallo to contact Shantus and pledge loyalty.

The party might act quickly, or they might thwart Lya's plan. They might even decide to still help out Cavallo de Guerra once Lya has already won, just to get the orc warlord on their side. But if they fail, the blatant unfairness of Lya's tactics impresses Zarkava Ssa'litt, who will be tempted to vote for the tiefling.

## SEA CHIEFS.

Four chiefs serve Cavallo, and they coordinate their patrols of the Riven Sea of Gold through Cavallo's daughter Corta Nariz de Guerra. Successful captains go on to serve in the general Beran navy, where they try to make names for themselves so they might return to their home sea and succeed when a chief steps down. The current sea chiefs include:

- ♦ **Babaro**, Cavallo's second-in-command. He wears a minotaur-skull helmet.
- ♦ **Thrag Vidalia**, who has a cold vendetta against Risur for the sinking of his first ship.
- ♦ **Perorroso**, a druid who deploys sea creatures in combat.
- ♦ **Danovio**, who has great wealth from gold mines and seeks to acquire ironclad ships.

to his advisor **Alonsa Frolián**, who suggests they be let in as foreign dignitaries. This lets Cavallo maintain the appearance of a bitter old man, when honestly he appreciates the attention.

He barks at his men to give the party a room next to Lya Jierre, and that he'll talk to them later; right now he's going to teach his granddaughter to wrestle.

Alonsa escorts them to their lodgings, which overlook the sea. The location is partially so they'll see his mighty navy, and partially because the view is beautiful, free of the smog of Flint or Seobriga.

The castle also hosts representatives of the Sea Chiefs, orc commanders with their own flotillas of warships who operate out of various coves along the coast. A few of the representatives come to the party between their arrival and the next major meal, hurling insults and questioning their bravery, or eyeing their more valuable possessions and asking how much they think their lives are worth.

### Chatter.

The talk of the castle is the huge dragon's hoard that was recently recovered from near Lago Fuego, a volcanic caldera a few miles from the city. It hasn't even been fully appraised yet, so Cavallo keeps it under constant guard in his dining hall, and has had to move the dining room table out to the courtyard.



### Mealtime Negotiations.

Cavallo will speak with the party at the next major meal. A large table is set up in the castle's courtyard, near a sunken pen where Alonsa's dire bear undergoes battle training against magical summoned monsters. As the party is being seated Cavallo's daughter Corta Nariz starts to bring out some of her children (Cavallo's grandkids), but when he spots his ill grandson Altioro, Cavallo glares and waves them off. Corta notices the guests, has a handservant take Altioro away, then brings the rest of the family.

The party can easily spot a bandage on the child's leg, and might recognize (Heal DC 15) a wound-up splint as the sort used to extract dragon worm.

The meal gives the party an opportunity to pitch their case to Cavallo and get a sense of what the orc desires. Lya Jierre is here until Day 3, when she boards *Lux Profectusque*, and she'll likely be present at any of the party's interactions with Cavallo. She tries to counter their arguments, to make them think they're competing for de Guerra's support. In truth, she's just stalling for time.

### Specific Interests.

The party can get de Guerra's attention by offering Risuri ironclad ships, or at least steam engines. Cavallo knows about the Bruse's new pet gnome, and rumor is that he's busy designing a new shipyard—no one will say where, though. Cavallo wants to make sure he's not weakened by this development.

A particular boon he desires is to have the Risuri archfey of the sea, Beshela, grant her blessing to his ships—both military and merchant. He'll gladly arrange the appropriate offerings to keep her favor, since normally only a few safe sea lanes are available near the Risuri border. With Beshela's blessing, his ships could take faster routes without fear of attack by merfey and sea monsters.

Both those two the party could potentially wrangle with a few quick *sendings*. More difficult is convincing Shantus that Cavallo's daughter Corta Nariz should succeed him as Bruse. The amount of horse-trading required to pull it off is probably beyond the scope of this adventure, but this is one of those possibilities that players might manage if they have a crazy brilliant idea.

### Gunsmithery.

Though Cavallo's an old-fashioned warlord, he appreciates a good weapon, even something newfangled like a firearm. He'll want to see the guns of any gunsmith in the party, and will segue into asking whether Risur could help set up factories in his region to produce arms and ammunition. While a PC might not have the connections for that, a simple way to get on the man's good side would be to give him a gun as a gift.

### Getting Him to Like You.

Cavallo explicitly states that he owes the party nothing. While yes he'd appreciate the aforementioned deals, there's no time pressure on him. He then suggests they might help him kill the "dangerous" goblins (see Bug Hunt, page xx); his best people are all naval-oriented, and hunting vermin in the mountains is beneath them.

The party might accept, or might offer to help young ill Altioro (see Masters of Public Health, page xx). And while it isn't enough to make a huge difference, the party can earn some good will if they can impress Alonsa Frolián in battle (see below).

### Hostage Letter.

After bringing up the issue of the goblins, Cavallo sends a servant, who returns with a greasy, wrinkled letter. The note arrived a few days earlier from, as de Guerra puts it, "a foreign hostage being held by the goblins."

This is **Player's Handout xx: Hostage Letter**.

The letter is signed as "Dr. Elias Malapropism," a pseudonym being used by **Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen**, whom the party may have met in Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*.

### Bear Battle.

If a PC challenges Alonsa, she'll pit her dire bear in a fight against that PC's pet. First she'll want to see how the animal does against a lesser foe, and she'll summon a creature for it to fight in the pit. She offers the group some time to tend to any wounds on the pet, and then she's ready for the main match. Alternately, if no one in the party has an animal companion or the like, she'll let a PC enter the pit blind-folded, unarmed, and unarmored.

The castle staff gathers to watch the spectacle. Perceptive PCs might notice (Sense Motive DC 20) that while Alonsa is focusing on her bear, Cavallo looks weaker.

### Terrain.

The pit is an obstacle course for large creatures, and so stretches 100 feet on a side, and is 20 feet deep with ramps accessible by gates. The walls are lined with inward-facing spikes. A creature forced into a wall takes 1d6 damage.

A 10-foot wide moat cuts the pit in two. It can be crossed by a narrow bridge (Acrobatics DC 20 for a large creature to balance), or by a 10-ft. long wood-and-leather tunnel. Medium creatures can move through the tunnel normally, but a large creature must squeeze (Escape Artist DC 20 or become stuck in the middle). The pit can also be jumped (Acrobatics DC 10 with a running start), or swum across and climbed out of (Swim DC 10).

A few other obstacles dot the area, like foliage for difficult terrain and concealment, and iron fences that creatures can swipe their claws through (counts as improved cover) but cannot move through.

### Monster Fight.

The first foe is a hoard spirit, a kind of elemental being that dragons would use to animate their treasure and protect it from thieves. Without a treasure handy, it simply resembles a skinless giant vulture with veins of fire and bones of marble. It tries to smash the PC's pet into the spikes. Alonsa can keep it summoned for up to five minutes.

Using magic or similar powers to enhance one's pet is allowed, but not to attack the other pet.



**Hoard Spirit**

CR 5 • XP 1,600

N Large outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11**Defenses****AC** 16, touch 8, flat-footed 16 (–1 Dex, +8 natural, –1 size)**hp** 60 (8d10+16)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2**DR** 5/—; **Immune** fire, elemental traits**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft.; earth glide**Melee** 2 slams +11 (1d8+4 plus burn)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** burn (1d6, DC 14), lava puddle**Statistics****Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 15, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 22**Feats** Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack**Skills** Climb +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +9, Perception +11, Stealth +6**Languages** Ignan**SQ** earth glide**Special Abilities****Burn (Ex)** A hoard spirit's burn DC includes a –2 racial penalty, as their fires don't burn quite as hot as true elemental flames.**Earth Glide (Ex)** A burrowing hoard spirit can pass through stone, dirt, lava, or almost any other sort of earth except metal as easily as a fish swims through water. Its burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole, nor does it create any ripple, though the area it passes through feels warm for 1 round afterward and often retains a strangely smooth texture, as if the stone had been polished. A move earth spell cast on an area containing a burrowing magma elemental flings the spirit back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save.**Molten Puddle (Su)** Once per day as a full-round action, a hoard spirit can vomit forth a puddle of molten rock or metal that fills its space to a depth of 2–3 inches and counts as difficult terrain. Any creature that moves through this puddle of lava takes 2d6 points of fire damage. This damage continues for 1d3 rounds after the creature leaves the lava pool, although then it only inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage per round. The molten puddle solidifies and is safe to touch after a number of rounds equal to the spirit Hit Dice. At the GM's discretion, this puddle could start secondary fires.**Cock Fight.**

The second foe is Alonsa's dire bear, Chupacabra. But for this battle, the goal is more complex than simply fighting each other. In addition to the two combatants, Cavallo's staff also release six roosters. The roosters run all over the place, trying to stay away from the battling creatures. Neither animal is allowed to attack the other until it has captured or killed at least 2 roosters. A rooster has AC 14 and 1 hit point.

If anyone complains about animal cruelty, Cavallo says that in his father's day they used to play this game with humans.

During the fight, Alonsa uses her magic to enhance Chupacabra, first with *longstrider* but then with *bear's endurance*. She has to touch her companion, though, so she has to move around the edge of the pit or order her bear closer.

**Chupacabra**

CR 7 • XP 3,200

Male dire bear

N Large animal

**Init** +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +12**Defense****AC** 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +8 natural, –1 size)**hp** 95 (10d8+50)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4**Offense****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +13 (1d6+7 plus grab), bite +13 (1d8+7)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Statistics****Str** 25, **Dex** 13, **Con** 21, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 26 (30 vs. trip)**Feats** Endurance, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)**Skills** Perception +12, Swim +19**Aftermath.**

Winning the monster duel impresses Alonsa, which earns the party Cavallo's grudging respect. He'll give them a little leeway on any odd requests they have, and will generally assume they're well-intentioned, rather than acting on orders from Shantus to cause him trouble. If the party fails or doesn't try this fight (or at least some way to earn the old orc's respect), Cavallo will try to keep the party from talking to his grandson, and he'll be more inclined to listen to Lya's suggestions to make the party's life difficult.

**MASTERS OF PUBLIC HEALTH****Puzzle. Montage. Level 9.**

*The party seeks the source of a disease afflicting Citado Cavallo.*

A parasite known as the "dragon worm" has infected Cavallo's grandson Altiro, of a type highly resistant to simple magic curatives. The dragon worm occasionally flares up in remote villages, but recently it has afflicted people in poor districts of Citado Cavallo. Public opinion views it as a physical manifestation of impurity and villainy, since it is most common among the goblin tribes who were allied with the region's long-dead dragon tyrant Furioso. It would discredit Cavallo's daughter Corta Nariz if the public learned her son was "impure."

The true source of the infection is a public bath house. The nearby volcanic caldera Lago Fuego has long supplied the city with slightly sulfurous waters, but it was rumored that the late dragon tyrant's hoard lay beneath its waters. Cavallo de Guerra had it pumped and drained to find the treasure, and when that failed he expanded his search to other stagnant pools in the pock-marked mountainside. All these waters were shunted into the aqueduct that feeds the city, and though indeed the treasure was found, the pool that contained it was infested with dragon worm eggs.

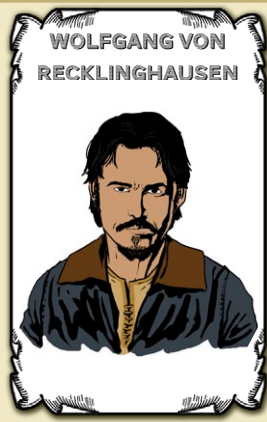
Only a handful of people, mostly children who see no problem with drinking from bathwater, caught the worm from the bathhouses, but as the water trickled down to poorer neighborhoods it made its way to wells and shared cisterns, and now the city has a small epidemic.

Unlike real-world guinea worm, dragon worm can enter a victim's system and burrow through the body in a matter of days, and once it lays its eggs it traces a new thread across the body as it eats its way toward different exit points.



A distinguished, intelligent, and poised gentleman in his late 30s, Dr. von Recklinghausen speaks elegantly with a hard-to-place accent. He appears fairly innocuous, though his sharply-groomed goatee and the rapier at his hip give him a hint of menace.

After years of intense study and experimentation, with his marriage in tatters and his fortune nearly depleted, Wolfgang finally achieved his goal of combining medical knowledge with sorcery in order to restore a corpse to life. His creation drove him from his home, and Wolfgang has been running or hiding since then, not aware that his “son” has given up his quest for revenge (see Adventure Four, *Always on Time*).



### Investigating the Disease.

The party might (Heal DC 20) be familiar with the disease profile of dragon worm, giving them the clue that they should check water sources. Examination of an extracted specimen can determine (Knowledge: Nature DC 14) the growth and movement rate of the worm, and (Knowledge: Arcana DC 14) that this particular strain is infused with elemental fire energy. Even closer study (Knowledge: Arcana DC 29) can match the energy specifically to the magic that grants dragons their might and resilience.

Asking around in poorer neighborhoods can find people willing to admit (Diplomacy DC 20) locations where people have caught the worm, though Altioro never went to any of these places. Careful inquiries (Diplomacy DC 29) can learn that a few other wealthy families also secretly have children suffering from dragon worm. Their children generally don't socialize, but they know each other from a particular high-society bath house.

If the party knows the worm's growth rate, it's possible after surveying a few dozen people with the affliction (Heal DC 29) to determine when the parasite was introduced to the water system; the last week of Spring. Even a cursory search for likely associated events at that time turns up the pumping of one of the flooded pits near Lago Fuego.

### Goblins of Lago Fuego.

Cavallo de Guerra drove the goblins away so he could look for dragon treasure, but locals can note the interesting fact that the goblins, who have suffered from dragon worm as long as anyone can remember, don't seem to have it anymore. If the party tracks down the goblins (see Bug Hunt, page xx), they might learn that the tribe spoke of a human shaman who helped drive the worms from their bodies.

### Return of the Good Doctor.

The party likely helped save Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen from the clutches of the Obscurati. A brilliant surgeon who melds magic and medicine, von Recklinghausen fled his home in the Malice Lands to avoid his creation Andrei (see Adventure Four, *Always on Time*), whom he cobbled together from dead body parts and returned to life. After the party rescued him, he eventually found his way to Ber, wandering for a few months before finding the poor Fuego goblin tribe who all needed treatment for dragon worm.

If the party goes to the Fuego tribe, they might meet Dr. von Recklinghausen and enlist his aid in helping the orcs of Citado Cavallo. In the process, they might spare the goblins from a slaughter, if they're up for it.

### Devising a Cure.

While it's possible to extract the worm the traditional way, magical cures are ineffective and in any case don't prevent the parasite from spreading. Dr. von Recklinghausen can share his cure if the party finds him. Otherwise, if your party is scientifically inclined they can try to research a custom spell to deal with the parasite.

This research requires three successful skill checks—Knowledge: Arcana, Heal, and Knowledge: Nature (each DC 29)—each of which requires a character to spend 8 hours working. Different PCs can make each check and collaborate on the results.

If the party has access to a proper medical laboratory (you never know what PCs might stick on their boat), reduce the DCs to 20.

### Casting out Wyrms.

The dragon worms are infused with fire energy, and seek to lay their eggs in water. Treatment requires multiple pebbles taken from a fast-moving stream bed, and a simple box containing one gold coin, in addition to a *remove disease* spell. The dragon worm counts as a disease with of DC 13, but without these special components the spell fails.

The patient has to swallow one pebble, and while the spell is cast, the other pebbles are run along the patient's skin. When they pass over the tip of the worm they hum and cause the worm to burrow rapidly and painfully to the surface. But then the worm is drawn into the pebble, which must be quickly placed into the box with the coin. Once all the worms are removed from the victim's body, the coin can be removed from the box, which is then sealed and can be disposed of. Wolfgang just burnt the case to impress the goblins, but the worms are harmless and petrified.

### Avoiding Reinfection.

The harder part is keeping people from reinfecting themselves by drinking contaminated water. While the mundane method of “don't drink out of water that isn't clean” works eventually—the eggs can only survive outside a humanoid host for about a year—the worm is only resistant to magic while inside a host. A body of water can be cleansed with the *purify food and drink* orison (using multiple applications if necessary), and then all that is necessary is to remind anyone who manages to get infected not to dip their worm wounds in the water.

## BUG HUNT

### Action/Social. Montage. Level 10+.

*The Fuego tribe of goblins has a small army of bugs under their control.*

This section of the adventure is a bit optional, and so we just provide general details of the goblins, plus offer a few possible permutations of monster and goblin foes.

The Fuego tribe once served the dragon tyrant Furioso, and after his death they settled near his abandoned lair—a flooded caldera surrounded by dozens of old flooded lava tubes. Cavallo de Guerra booted the tribe off their lands a few months ago and started draining the tubes until he finally found the dragon's hoard.

A goblin shaman named **Willigu** led his people into the wild mountains thirty miles from Citado Cavallo. There they lost many of their tribe to monstrous attacks until Willigu discovered the magic that would let him control these beasts (i.e., he tore the head off a dead queen ant and put it on a pike). Bitter at the orcs, Willigu directed his tribe to capture and train as many giant insects as they could.



## THE REAL GUINEA WORM.

In the real world, dracunculiasis—literally “affliction with little dragons,” caused by the “guinea worm”—has vexed humanity since prehistory, though today it is endemic only to four countries in Africa.

When a person drinks contaminated water, eggs hatch into the worms, which slowly burrow through the victim's body over the course of weeks or months. They usually head downward toward feet, but can emerge anywhere, including eyes. The emergence of the worm burns like fire, and victims seek relief by placing the injured body part in water. The worm ejects eggs into the water, continuing its life cycle.

The worm can be removed by carefully wrapping its end around a stick and methodically twisting the stick to pull the worm out. This must be done over the course of days to prevent the worm from snapping and decomposing inside the victim's body. Even when properly treated, the pain prevents many people from attending school or work.

Eradication efforts rely on training people to soothe their injuries in buckets of water which can be disposed of away from drinking sources, and to filter water taken from possibly infested pools. Thanks to efforts spearheaded by the Carter Center, guinea worm is likely to soon be the third infectious disease completely eradicated (after smallpox and rinderpest).



During this time they were found by Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, who had heard of their pervasive dragon worm affliction. Wolfgang doesn't speak the goblin's language, but he's figured out that the tribe has been attacking the outskirts of orcish territory. Willigu fears the doctor will lead the orcs back to him, so he's had his warriors detain Wolfgang whenever he's made moves to leave.

### Outer Patrol (Level 10).

8 Fuego tribe riders mounted on giant bombardier beetles  
2 fiery ankhegs

### Inner Defenses (Level 10).

24 Fuego tribe goblins  
15 giant ant swarms  
4 fiery ankhegs

### Final Stand (Level 12).

Willigu, fuego shaman (has an ant-queen head on a stick)  
2 Fuego tribe riders mounted on giant bombardier beetles  
1 cyttilliped  
24 giant ant swarms

### Noncombatants.

Approximately 100 children and elderly goblins  
Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen

### Willigu, Fuego Shaman

CR 8 • XP 6,400

Goblin druid 9

N Small humanoid (goblin)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

#### Defense

**AC** 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 armor, +2 shield, +4 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 81 (9d8+36)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9; +4 vs. fey and plant-targeted effects**Immune** poison; **Resist** fire 10

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk club +7 (1d4–1)**Ranged** sling +11 (1d3–1)**Special Attacks** wild shape 3/day**Druid Spells Prepared** (CL 9th; concentration +12)**5th**—*fire shield*, *stoneskin***4th**—*cape of wasps*, *wall of fire*, *vermin shape II***3rd**—*call lightning*, *fireball* (DC 16), *greater magic fang*, *poison* (DC 16), *protection from energy***2nd**—*accelerate poison*, *barkskin*, *produce flame*, *stone call*, *summon swarm* ×2**1st**—*burning disarm* (DC 14), *burning hands* (DC 14), *charm animal* (DC 14), *cure light wounds* ×2, *faerie fire***0 (at will)**—*detect poison*, *know direction*, *mending*, *resistance*

#### Statistics

**Str** 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18**Feats** Craft Wondrous Item, Combat Casting, Natural Spell, Toughness, Vermin Heart**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Knowledge (nature) +15, Perception +15, Ride +20, Stealth +12, Survival +17**Languages** Common, Goblin, Orc**SQ** nature bond (Fire domain), nature sense, trackless step, wild empathy +7, woodland stride**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, +1 light wooden shield, mwk club, sling, diamond dust worth 250 gp (for *stoneskin*), ant-queen-head on a stick

### Giant Ant Swarmer

CR 1 • XP 400

N Medium vermin

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +5

#### Defense

**AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; (+5 natural)**hp** 18 (2d8+9)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +0, **Will** +1**Immune** mind-affecting effects

#### Offense

**Speed** 50 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** bite +3 (1d6+2)

#### Statistics

**Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** —, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13 (21 vs. trip)**Feats** Toughness**Skills** Climb +10, Perception +5, Survival +5



**Fiery Ankheg**

CR 3 • XP 800

N Large magical beast (fire)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +8**Defense****AC** 16, touch 9, flat-footed 16 (+7 natural, –1 size)**hp** 28 (3d10+12)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2**Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., burrow 20 ft.**Melee** bite +5 (2d6+4 plus 1d4 acid and grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** spit acid**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +7 (+11 grapple); **CMD** 17 (25 vs. trip)**Feats** Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness**Skills** Climb +8, **Perception** +8**Special Abilities****Spit Acid (Ex)** Once every 6 hours, a fiery ankheg can spit a 30-foot line of acid.

Creatures struck by this acid take 4d4 points of acid damage (Reflex DC 14 halves).

Once a fiery ankheg uses this attack, it must wait 6 hours before using it again. Additionally, during this time period, its bite attack does not inflict any additional acid damage. As a result, a fiery ankheg does not use this ability unless it is desperate or frustrated, most often spitting acid when reduced to fewer than half its full normal hit points or when it cannot not successfully grab an opponent. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Cytillipede**

CR 6 • XP 2,400

N Large magical beast

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +7**Defense****AC** 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+1 Dex, +11 natural, –1 size)**hp** 84 (8d10+40)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +2**Immune** mind-affecting effects**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.**Melee** bite +13 (2d6+7 plus poison)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** cytillesh flash, poison**Statistics****Str** 21, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 2**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** 14; **CMD** 25 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Ability Focus (cytillesh flash), Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Climb +20, **Perception** +11**Special Abilities**

**Cytillish Flash (Su)** Once per day, a cytillipede can cause the cytillesh patches that grow along its body to release a bright flash of blue light that provides bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light in a 40-foot radius. All creatures within the area of effect must succeed at a DC 22 Will save. Those within the area of bright light are stunned for 1d4 rounds. Creatures within the area of dim light are confused for 1d2 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

**Cytillipede Poison (Ex)** Bite— injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d3 Dex and dazed; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based and includes a +2 racial bonus.

**Fuego Tribe Warrior**

CR 3 • XP 800

Goblin warrior 5

N Small humanoid (goblin)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +4**Defense****AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 37 (5d10+10)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk spear +9 (1d6+3/x3)**Ranged** mwk spear +9 (1d6+3/x3)**Statistics****Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat**Skills** Perception +4, Ride +11, Sense Motive +1, Stealth +10**Languages** Goblin**Combat Gear** tanglefoot bags (2); **Other Gear** mwk studded leather armor, mwk spear (2)**Giant Bombardier Beetle**

CR 2 • XP 600

N Medium vermin

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +0**Defenses****AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 natural)**hp** 19 (3d8+6)**Fort** +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +2**Immune** mind-affecting effects**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** bite +4 (1d8+3)**Special Attacks** breath weapon (10-ft. cone, 2d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 13 half, useable once every 1d4 rounds)**Statistics****Str** 15, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14**Fuego Tribe Goblin**

CR 1/3 • XP 135

Goblin warrior 1

NE Small humanoid (goblinoid)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** –1**Defense****AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +2 Dex, +1 shield, +1 size)**hp** 6 (1d10+1)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** –1**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** short sword +2 (1d4/19–20)**Ranged** short bow +4 (1d4/x3)**Statistics****Str** 11, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +0; **CMD** 12**Feats** Improved Initiative**Skills** Ride +10, Stealth +10, Swim +4**Languages** Goblin**Other Gear** leather armor, light wooden shield, short sword, shortbow

### Encountering the Tribe.

Tracking them back from any of their various attacks is fairly easy. They now reside in a stretch of caves in a horseshoe-shaped valley, where the tunnels wind and intersect from many directions so warriors can flee or reinforce each other with ease.

If approached openly they'll talk to non-orcs. Sneaking up requires passing one or two outer patrols. The main tunnel entrances have a few scattered guards who'll respond to the sounds of trouble. Then further back is a defensive bastion, a cave piled with giant insect carcasses to use as a chokepoint. Here Willigu and his pet cytillipede can put up a last line of defense before the living chambers. Magical totems in this cave protect the goblins from the cytillipede's cytillesh flash attack, rendering them immune to its effects. Dr. von Recklinghausen has limited free roam in the caves, but is always escorted if he goes outside.

In a fight, the goblins scatter and attack from surprising directions if possible, while the insects typically just swarm. They think Willigu is their queen, but if his ant-queen-head staff is destroyed, the insects panic and try to flee, attacking anyone that gets in their way.

### Negotiation.

The happiest solution might be to convince the goblins to let Wolfgang go so he can treat Cavallo's grandson, earning the tribe enough good will that Cavallo won't want to destroy them. The goblins could make a living trading the hides and acid of the various giant insects, and occasionally using the burrowing critters to help with excavation and plowing.

Cavallo might even be convinced to give them their lands back, now that he has the dragon's treasure hoard. But he'll want the goblins civilized and brought into the revolution that Bruse Vairday started. If the party's going to get him to accept the goblins, they'll need to make Willigu presentable, perhaps with some sort of extreme shaman makeover.

### Obscurati Complication.

While Lya Jierre doesn't care about the goblins, if she learns about the presence of Dr. von Recklinghausen, she might try to abduct him. The Obscurati leadership have acquired his creation, Andrei von Recklinghausen, and they're fascinated with the good doctor's work. Lya won't go out of her way or risk a fight with the party, but she tries to get Wolfgang alone by mentioning his creation, then suggesting they talk more in private, over a meal away from Cavallo.

## TIEFLING TRICKERY

### Action/Social. Montage. Level 9.

*The party might have a chance to stop Lya's hired enchantress.*

The purple-skinned enchantress Jacale teleports to Citado Cavallo on Day 2 of the Bruse's challenge. By this point she has already performed various divinations on Commodore Thrag Vidalia, and when she arrives she rents a horse and hires a guide to take her to the naval yard.

She locates Thrag and presents him with a forged and enchanted letter, allegedly from Cavallo's wife, which purports that she is a friend. The letter goes on to say that Jacale has an interest in ships and would like to take a ride aboard Commodore Vidalia's vessel, a light frigate named *Bonita Cheryce*. Thrag makes his ship ready to depart at first light, intending to sail to the mouth of Marrajado de Oro and back.

At the dawn of Day 3, Jacale boards the frigate and it sets out for a

casual day cruise. Shortly thereafter, Lya Jierre departs from Cavallo's castle, boards her own ship *Lux Profectusque*, and departs with haste.

### False Memories.

About two hours later, Jacale and Thrag take brunch in his suite, and she pours an elixir into his glass, causing him to fall under her command. She tells him that once she leaves, he will remember that she tried to kill him. He even lets her inflict a small gash into his back, nothing life-threatening, but enough to sell the story. He'll remember being paralyzed by poison, only able to watch as Jacale cast a spell and taunted him. This false Jacale claimed that with him dead, Risur will be able to strike. Then, in his false memory, he fought free of the poison and killed her.

Jacale opens a bag of holding and produces a dead body that has been altered to resemble her. She has Thrag deliver what would be a killing blow to that corpse, then tells him that he must attack Risur before they can strike. Then she uses a teleportation spell to flee, leaving Thrag convinced he narrowly escaped assassination. He immediately leads his crew on an assault against the fortress at Manhill, on the Risuri shore of Marrajado de Oro.

### Returns the Raider.

Thrag launches a cannon bombardment of the fort at two in the afternoon, then sends a small landing force to raze parts of the town outside the fort. The orc raiders hustle back to *Bonita Cheryce* and sail off before the Risuri are able to mount an effective counter-attack.

Thrag returns to Citado Cavallo an hour before dusk, and he sails in boldly with the fake Jacale's body lashed to his ship like a figurehead. He orders everyone to spread the word that he struck Risur before they could attack first. But he warns them to be ready, because he didn't see the Risuri fleet at Manhill, so they might already be on their way.

Within an hour Thrag is summoned to the castle, where Cavallo strips him of his command. Cavallo assumes Thrag was just looking to get revenge for his old grudge, but magical examinations might detect a faint enchantment still upon him. If the false memories are dispelled, he realizes he was tricked. The body, similarly, was transmuted, and that would show up if checked.

### Thwarting the Plot.

If the party gets wind of Jacale's plan, she's not threatening in a fight, since all of her magic relies on potions, elixirs, and rituals, rather than spells fast enough to use in combat.

Lya tries to keep the party's attention focused on her, and since she won't ever meet Jacale, the party's only good chance to learn about the plot was to have eavesdropped back at the Bruse's summer court. Divinations might help too, and if the party asks in the right places—at the naval yard, at the teleportation beacon—people definitely remember the purple-skinned woman. But they still only have a small window, from the afternoon of Day 2 to dawn on Day 3.

When Commodore Thrag's ship departs, the party—whose rooms look out over the sea—might notice. If they happen to bring it up, no one at the castle knows about it, which might raise a red flag. The party would have about eight hours to catch up with Thrag and stop him.





## RETURN TO THE COURT

### Social. Real-Time. Level 10.

*Bruse Shantus determines who gets to talk to Tinker first.*

Upon completion of the Cantabrilla Railroad Challenge, news reaches Bruse Shantus, who has Zarkava use *sending* to communicate with the party and Lya, summoning them back to his summer court. When both groups arrive he throws a banquet for them, and tells them that Tinker will be arriving within an hour to speak with the winning group. Elite orc and lizardfolk court guards watch over the meal to make sure no one attempts anything violent.

The constables might notice (Sense Motive DC 20) that Kenna Vigilante is only making a token effort to eat. If asked, she lies and says she's feeling ill.

Shantus promises not to stake any further claim to the gnome, so the winning team is free to do as they please. He intends to tell Tinker that two groups want to speak to him, so he leaves it to the winning team to be convincing enough that Tinker won't want to hear the other side. Of course, it won't surprise the Bruse if the winners just try to abduct the gnome.

He gives one final warning, though, that he won't abide any fighting at his court. He'll have Zarkava prepare a teleportation spell to the winners' destination of choice (likely Flint for the PCs, Vendricce for Lya). He cannot abide sore losers.

Then he, Zarkava Ssa'litt, and Kenna Vigilante cast their votes, and Shantus announces who is the winner.

### Tinker's Approach.

Tinker's simulacrum, still shielded by the Bruse's favor, has been alerted via *sending* to prepare to teleport to the summer court. The nearest arrival teleportation beacon is at a nearby military base, which houses over two thousand soldiers. After the banquet finishes, Zarkava *sends* again for Tinker to take the teleportation beacon. Ten minutes later he's at the military base, where twenty soldiers escort him.

All of these soldiers are duplicants, seeded at the military base over the past months by Pemberton. The base commander himself has been replaced by a duplicant, as have numerous members of the artillery brigade. Pemberton has long planned to kill the Bruse, but Tinker's arrival seems the perfect opportunity to know exactly when to strike. In the court itself, five elite guards have been replaced by duplicants, as has Kenna Vigilante.

The soldier escort reaches the Summer Court (using the main entrance, not the labyrinth), and they march the jittery Tinker upstairs to

## WHY ASSASSINATE THE BRUSE?

If the party and the Obscurati hadn't come to take Tinker away, Pemberton would have been able to build up his army of war machines for another six months, at which point he'd confidently be able to conquer Ber. But he knew attention on Tinker would inevitably reveal the existence of duplicants, so Pemberton is making the best of a bad situation by trying to decapitate the nation.

If he succeeds, it will take longer for the new ruler (likely Cavallo) to mount a counter-attack against him at Isla dolas Focas, Ber won't be quite as friendly to Risur, and Pemberton will have more mechanical defenders for his island, but it doesn't change the challenges the party face unless they decide to join the Beran marines in besieging a city.

the Bruse's throne room, which has a balcony that leads to the bleachers that overlook the labyrinth.

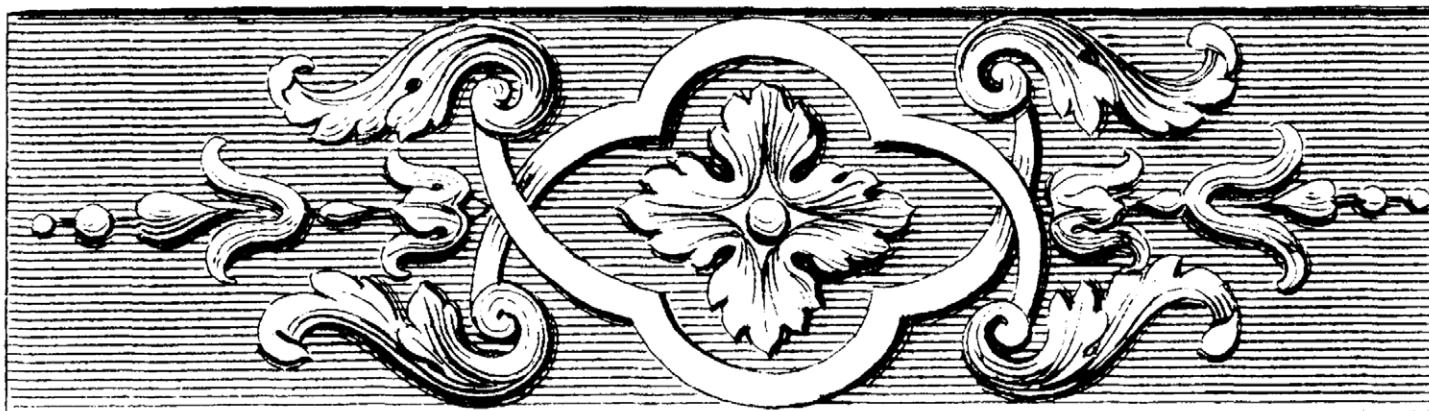
The losing team is asked to remain in the lobby outside the throne room, watched by the twenty-two escort duplicants. The winning team meets Tinker in the throne room, while Shantus, Zarkava, Kenna, and the five court guards look on.

### Meeting Oddcog.

Shantus makes brief introductions, and then sends Zarkava away to prepare transportation for whoever convinces the gnome to go with them. He then offers the winning team a bit of privacy by stepping away to the balcony, where he can look down at his labyrinth. Kenna Vigilante stands with him.

Tinker assumes the Ob have come to kill him, but he might remember the PCs from when he briefly crossed their path at the Cauldron Hill facility in adventure five. If he recalls the group, he listens to their pitch, then gets nervous and apologetic, saying that he doesn't have a choice in what happens next. If, though, he's speaking with the Ob or thinks the party is a threat, he parades around the room boasting that he's glad they showed up, because he is tired of being small and cowering.

Tinker calls for Bruse Shantus, and when the minotaur comes over the gnome announces that he's refusing to go, wants everyone else to leave, and will give them to the count of ...—and he pulls out a pocket watch—sixteen. He starts counting upward from 0, and at the ten-count the party might hear (Perception DC 28) the doppler whistling of an incoming artillery shell.



## COUP EX MACHINA

### Action. Tactical. Level 15.

*An overwhelming force targets the Bruse. Will the party help save him?*

Roll initiative. Tinker acts at 16.

On Tinker's turn, he pokes himself on his chest with an audible click. A panel pops open, revealing him to be hollow and made of metal, and he reaches in, producing a comical black bomb. As he pulls it out, the fuse lights, and Tinker grins and giggles as it burns down to an imminent explosion.

Getting the bomb away from Tinker likely requires a successful disarm or steal attempt against a CMD of 25. At the start of Tinker's next turn, the bomb explodes, dealing 10d6 bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage in a 50-foot radius (Reflex DC 20 for half). Any creature adjacent to the bomb takes double damage.



The blast annihilates Tinker's duplicant body unless the party knocks it away from him. In any event, he'll soon thereafter sever his connection to this duplicant.

### Artillery and Breach.

Immediately after Tinker's bomb explodes, the building shakes as an artillery shell strikes the roof. Walls crack, bits of the ceiling collapse, and eye-searing yellow smoke fills the air. This is Agony Gas, a chemical weapon that sears mucous membranes and can cause debilitating pain and blindness.

At that moment, the court guards—actually duplicant terminators—spring into action. Two open the doors to the room, providing access for the twenty soldiers outside—duplicant swarms. Kenna Vigilante, also a duplicant, knocks the Bruse down and focuses on killing him first.

### To the Rescue.

If the party won the challenge and got to meet with Tinker, Lya and her bodyguards are stuck in the outer room with the duplicant soldiers. Lya's group will aid in the destruction of the duplicants, and they try to protect the Bruse.

If the party was stuck outside, the situation might be reversed, though they might not want to get involved in a fight. If they sit on their hands long enough, Lya orders the Bruse to come with them, and they leap over the balcony into the labyrinth.

Glauca Evora, Zarkava Ssa'litt, and any other defenders at the court are too far away to arrive in time to make a difference in the battle.

### Late Reinforcements.

The gnoll Pardo is not present for the initial attack, but he's on the court grounds. Have him appear after four or five rounds, perhaps intercepting the party if they're trying to get the Bruse to safety. If it's safe he'll target Shantus, but if challenged he focuses on enemies with ranged attack options, separating himself from melee foes with *wall of fire*.

### Hostile Forces.

20 duplicant swarms  
5 duplicant terminators  
Kenna Vigilante  
Pardo  
Agony Gas Hazard



### Potential Allies.

(See Appendixes One and Two for stats.)

Bruse Shantus  
Lya Jierre  
Merton Goncala  
Rush Munchausen



**Duplicant Swarmer**

CR 4 • XP 1,200

Male and female duplicant half-orc warrior 5

N Medium humanoid (human, orc)

**Init** +1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1**Defenses****AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 20(+6 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 45 (5d10+15)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** constructed, orc ferocity; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, *sleep***Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** battleaxe +11 (1d8+6/x3)**Ranged** musket +6 (1d12/x4)**Statistics****Str** 22, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Stand Still, Step Up**Skills** Profession (soldier) +9, Intimidate +9**Languages** Common, Orc**Other Gear** battleaxe, musket, mwk breastplate, heavy steel shield**Duplicant Terminator**

CR 7 • XP 3,200

Male duplicant half-orc fighter 7

N Medium humanoid (human, orc)

**Init** +1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., Perception +1**Defenses****AC** 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 72 (7d10+28)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3; +2 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, constructed, orc ferocity; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, *sleep***Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk bayonet +15/+10 (1d6+10) or unarmed strike +14/+9 (1d3+7)**Ranged** mwk musket +9 (1d12/x4)**Special Attacks** weapon training (close)**Statistics****Str** 22, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +13 (+17 grapple); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. grapple)**Feats** Brutal Grappler, Greater Grapple, Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (Musket), Toughness, Vital Strike**Skills** Profession (soldier) +11, Intimidate +11**Languages** Common, Orc**SQ** armor training 2**Other Gear** mwk musket with mwk bayonet, mwk breastplate**Kenna Vigilante Duplicant**

CR 10 • XP 9,600

Female duplicant wingless half-dragon human ranger 8

LN Medium dragon

**Init** +0; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12**Defenses****AC** 23, touch 12, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +6 natural, +2 deflection)**hp** 94 (8d10+48)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5**Defensive Abilities** constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, fire, *sleep*, paralysis**Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +19 (1d4+10), bite +17 (1d6+10)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (dragons +4, gnolls +2)**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +6)2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*1st—*longstrider*, *resist energy***Statistics****Str** 27, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 29**Feats** Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Run, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite, Claws)**Skills** Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +12, Profession (soldier) +12, Survival +12**Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant**SQ** favored terrain (mountains +4, plains +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track, wild empathy +10, woodland stride**Other Gear** *amulet of mighty fists* +2, +1 *chain shirt*, *ring of protection* +1**DUPLICANT TEMPLATE.**

"Duplicant" is an acquired template that can be added to any living, corporeal creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature). A duplicant retains all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

**CR:** Same as the base creature +1.

**Armor Class:** Natural armor improves by +2.

**Special Qualities and Defenses:** A duplicant gains blindsense 30 ft. and darkvision 60 ft. A duplicant also gains the constructed and metal shell abilities.

**Constructed (Ex):** For the purposes of effects targeting creatures by type (such as a ranger's favored enemy and bane weapons), a duplicant counts as both its base creature type and a construct. A duplicant gains a +4 racial bonus on all saving throws against mind-affecting effects, paralysis, poison, and stun effects, is not subject to fatigue or exhaustion, and is immune to disease and sleep effects.

**Metal Shell (Ex):** A duplicant has a hard metallic exoskeleton that protects it from harm, but when badly damaged, it cracks open to reveal the creature's sensitive inner machinery. A duplicant gains DR 10/adamantine. When reduced to less than half of its total hit points, the duplicant loses this DR and takes a –2 penalty to its AC and saves.

**Abilities:** Str +4.

**Pardo**

CR 12 • XP 19,200

Male duplicant gnoll oracle 10

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** –1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +2**Defenses****AC** 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (–1 Dex, +4 natural)**hp** 118 (12d8+58)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, sleep; **Resist** fire 10**Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** unarmed strike +12/+7 (1d3+4)**Special Attacks** burning magic, fire breath 2/day (15-ft.cone, DC 19, 10d4 fire)**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +14)5th (3/day)—*mass inflict light wounds* (DC 19), *slay living* (DC 19), *summon monster V* (fire elementals only)4th (6/day)—*divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 18), *wall of fire*3rd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*, *inflict serious wounds* (DC 17), *fireball* (DC 17), *magic vestment*2nd (7/day)—*augury*, *death knell* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 16), *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 16)1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *doom* (DC 15), *inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *murderous command* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *stabilize***Oracle Mystery** flame (burning magic, fire breath, molten skin); **Curse** wrecker**Statistics****Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 19**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness**Skills** Bluff +22, Diplomacy +17, Knowledge (history) +11, Intimidate +19, Linguistics +2**Languages** Common, Draconic, Gnoll**Special Abilities****Burning Magic (Ex)** When a creature fails a saving throw and takes fire damage from one of Pardo's spells, that creature catches on fire. The fire lasts 1d4 rounds, doing 1 damage per spell level. The character can spend a move action to make a Reflex save (same as the spell's original DC) to put out the flames.**Wrecker (Ex)** Pardo's attacks against inanimate objects ignore up to 10 points of hardness, and his attacks against constructs ignore any non-epic DR. Objects he holds gain the broken condition for as long as he holds them.**Terrain.**

The throne room has a balcony that overlooks the labyrinth. The losing team and the duplicant swarmer guards wait in the lobby outside the throne room. Once the artillery lands, the throne room and lobby are suffused with toxic agony gas, leaving the safest escape route out onto the balcony and into the labyrinth.

Additional shells fall every 2 rounds thereafter, so if the party flees to the labyrinth and you want to keep the confusion high, perhaps a shell strikes there and blinding gas falls upon them.

The thick gas grants concealment to creatures more than 1 square away, and total concealment to those more than 2 squares away, but the duplicants all have blindsense. Any living creature that needs to breathe feels its mucous membranes burn. Such creatures take 1d6 acid damage each round until they exit the area. Creatures that fall unconscious due to this damage are permanently blinded.

**Tactics.**

This is a deadly combat, balanced by the presence of several possible allies. Taken all together it can be complicated to track all their stats, so we encourage you to be prepared.

The duplicant Kenna tries tear apart the Bruse with her claws and teeth. Two duplicant terminators move to open the doors to the lobby, while the other three attack whoever else is present with the Bruse.

The duplicant swarmer can, if necessary, bash down the door to the throne room. After one round they can crack it, and after a second they can break it enough that it merely counts as difficult terrain. Once they have access to the Bruse, they try to overwhelm him. They always try to keep a line one- or two-deep between the Bruse and any possible allies.

If the group can get out of the labyrinth, they can make a run for the gathered petitioners, who outnumber the duplicants to slow them down and give the Bruse a chance to escape. Ber's ruler is glad to flee rather than fight.

If the fight spills out to the labyrinth, the duplicants pursue, but are unaware of the pit traps. Wherever the fight heads, Lya and her allies try to help protect the Bruse, and Pardo eventually shows up as a final foe.

In the very likely event that the party takes this opportunity to take out Lya Jierre, she fights intelligently, gauging how the odds look before deciding whether to flee. Her *gatecrasher charm* can help her escape, and in a pinch she can cling to Rush's back as he brachiates away through the air. Her preference, though, is to call for a cessation of hostilities since they might need to work together to defeat whoever was behind this attack.





**Aftermath.**

Should the duplicants overwhelm the party, eventually loyal soldiers from the nearby base defeat them, though the death toll is devastating, and several duplicants escape into the wilderness to wreak later havoc. Petitioners might find dying PCs and stabilize them.

If the Bruse perished, Zarkava takes temporary control, but she immediately uses divinations to assure herself that Cavallo de Guerra was not responsible, then *sends* for him to succeed as the new Bruse.

An examination of Tinker or any of the other duplicants reveals their basic nature: a metal endoskeleton with a metallic shell that takes on the shape of whomever it's bonded to, linked to a small vial of witchoil in its chest that holds a piece of the bonded person's soul.

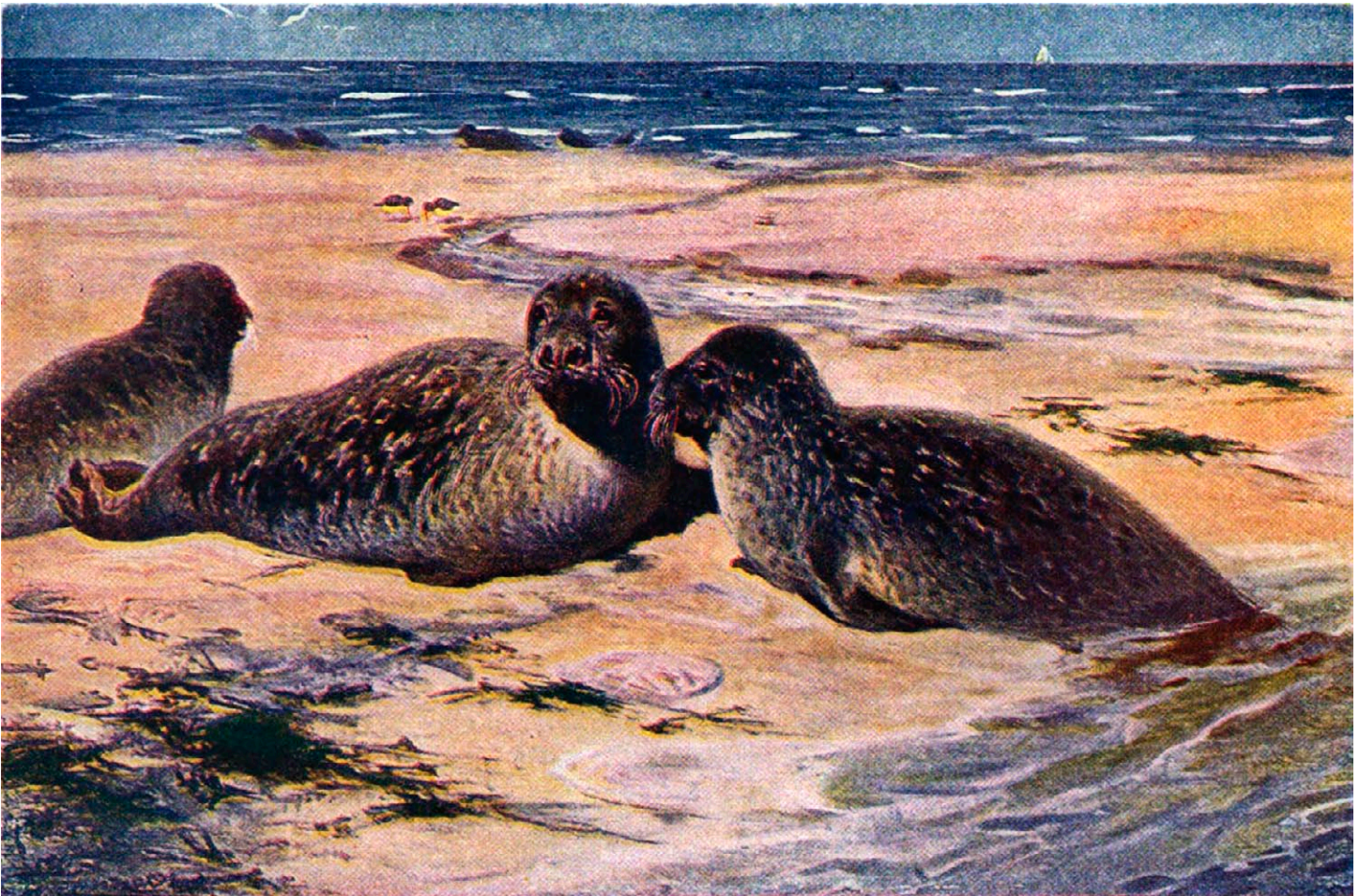
Let the party take the lead on investigating if they want, but if they're unable, Zarkava can provide the necessary divination magic to trace the attack to Isla dolas Focas. The gnolls there have a fleet—sizable enough to defend their shores, if not enough to truly threaten the Beran navy—so reaching the island will be difficult.

Whoever rules Ber now—Shantus or Cavallo—declares war on the Cult of the Steel God and all who reside on Isla dolas Focas. Within a

**KENNA WITH CLARITY.**

Once sufficiently injured—or if she has killed the Bruse—Kenna Vigilante manages to break free of the control imposed by the duplicant bond. If the party gives her a chance to switch sides, she'll aid in the fight. Afterward she can briefly report being abducted from the military base a few days earlier. She feels like she's in two places at once, and wherever she is she hears gnolls getting closer, and other voices calling for help, voices of soldiers who were also abducted. Then her body falls down like a ragdoll. The transformation that gave the duplicant her appearance fades, leaving just an inert metal body.

week a fleet will be readied to assault the island, with a mission to conquer that land, annex it, and seize whatever facility constructed these duplicants before more can be made. Lya Jierre, of course, suggests an alliance: she and the PCs wait until the Beran navy is distracting the gnoll defenders, and then they work together to reach Tinker, with whoever reaches him first having first chance to recruit him.







# ACT THREE

## THE DRAGON'S LAIR

In this act, the party must extract Tinker Oddcog from an industrialized, gnoll-ridden dragon's fortress.

### BERAN FLEET

A large contingent of the Beran fleet attacks Isla dolas Focas. This will be the first battle in which the Berans deploy their handful of steam warships. Their forces consist of forty ships:

- Six ships of the line—250-ft. grand frigates with over 100 cannons apiece and hundreds of marines.
- Sixteen frigates—175-ft. warships with 50 cannons apiece and dozens of marines.
- Ten corvettes—90-ft. schooners with 20 cannons apiece.
- Eight steamships—85-ft. steam-powered iron-hulled ships with 2 turret-mounted heavy cannons apiece.

### GNOLL FLEET

Aside from incidental fishing boats and merchant ships, the entire gnoll fleet consists of twenty-four ships:

- Four frigates.
- Seventeen corvettes.
- Three caravels.

The gnoll's chief advantage is that many of their larger ships have druids on board who have trained to control the waves and winds of the Silent Storm (see below), letting them capsize small ships, still the sails of large ones, and deny rains to vessels that have caught fire. They also have more magical armaments than the Berans.

Still, they are quite outnumbered, so barring PC involvement, the Berans will only lose two corvettes and several dozen sailors, while the gnolls will lose their entire fleet.



### OVERVIEW: BERAN REACTION

Cavallo de Guerra—either at the command at Shantus or as Bruse himself—gathers a Beran fleet to attack the fifty-mile long Isla dolas Focas. The ultimate target is the old lair of the (allegedly deceased) dragon Gradiax, an active volcano with several cave entrances. Divinations reveal that somewhere underground is the factory complex that built the duplicants that attempted to assassinate the Bruse.

A small city of ten thousand gnolls, called **Karch**, lies along the coast, five miles from the peak of the mountain. The Beran military plan is to use a portion of their naval force to circle around the island and feint a landing south of Karch. When the gnoll fleet moves to intercept, the rest of the Beran fleet will pincer them. Since the cult is known for its disdain of metal weapons, Cavallo is confident that Beran cannons will provide great tactical superiority.

Once the nautical defenses are crushed, marines will make landfall twenty miles from the city and set up a base of operations. Detachments of the fleet will return to Renza to pick up more troops, making multiple trips over the course of three weeks while the fleet's ships of the line bombard Karch. Eventually a force of ten thousand will march on Karch and offer the gnolls a chance to surrender. When the offer is refused, they'll raze the city and depart. It will soon thereafter become official Beran policy for settlers to claim land from the gnolls along the southern coast, which will slowly whittle them down the mostly nomadic people.

### Enemies and Hostages.

One hole in Ber's knowledge is who exactly is in charge of the gnolls. Their last great chieftain, **Rachi the Silver**, was said to have been slain several years ago. Divinations reveal that some powerful figure has united the gnolls of Isla dolas Focas, sufficient that he has powers akin to a proper ruler. He has forbidden teleportation onto the island without his consent, and divinations have trouble identifying him.

It is known, however, that Tinker is there, as are Kenna Vigilante and likely a host of other soldiers who were bonded with duplicants, and who are now hostages. Cavallo considers it an acceptable loss if they die while defeating the gnolls, but if possible he'd like to rescue them.

### The Silent Storm.

Another challenge is an odd weather phenomenon that floats near the island. On the west coast, stretching between the island and the mainland, there is a constant storm system that produces incessant rain and erratic winds but, eerily, never any lightning or thunder.

Thousands of years ago, this was the site of the Ziggurat of Avilona, where the Ancients protected this world's connection to the plane of air. That connection was damaged two centuries ago—the white pillar on Axis Island containing the *golden icon of Avilona* was exposed to the elements and cracked—which resulted in the downfall of the dragon tyrants. Isla dolas Focas still hosts a few Ancient structures and the party might come across megaliths and primitive carvings of flying beasts.

As for the ziggurat itself, it's several thousand feet overhead, on a floating island hidden in the stormclouds. In Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*, the party will find a path there to the graveyard of the multiverse.



## SKYSEER VISION OF AVILONA.

Skyseers feel constantly as if they are on the verge of receiving a vision, similar to when they were at the ziggurat of Apet (in Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*). If they look upward at the storm, they feel as though they cannot breathe, but can sense the unique energy of the planet Avilona in a precise point in the sky.

When the party reaches the island, any skyseer gets a faint, brief vision:

"The stars that surround you stood here over two centuries ago, so this is a vision of the past. You float, the constellation Draco beside you, and beneath you the planet Avilona is balanced on a pin of white stone. Dense, swift clouds cover its face, and where they part you see glimpses of majestic towers.

"Unseen waves batter you, and the white pin shatters. Its head plunges into a hungry black gyre below, and with no noise, no grand cataclysm, the clouds of Avilona slow, thin, and vanish. You see ruined spires falling to the surface of the lifeless world. To your side, the stars of Draco plummet, and then you too are falling, with no wind to hold you aloft."

## DRAGON AFFAIRS.

Contacting the RHC with news about a threat from the Cult of the Steel God will get Harkover Lee to share the secret identity of Gradiax, though he still tries to keep his own draconic nature hidden.

Sharing information that there might be an actual dragon tyrant still alive dramatically alters the mood of the Beran retaliation, shifting it from a civilized response against a strategic threat to an emotionally-charged battle for the identity of the nation. The royal vaults are opened to fund the creation of *dragon-bane balm*, short-lived enchanted oil that when applied to a weapon or implement makes it more deadly against dragons. Up to ten are available for purchase.

### Dragon-Bane Balm

**Aura** moderate abjuration and conjuration; **CL** 8th; **Weight** —

**Slot** none; Price 800 gp

#### Description

When applied to a weapon, this balm gives the weapon the *dragon bane* property for 8 rounds. In addition, the weapon's wielder gains resist 10 against damage caused by the breath weapons of dragons for the same duration.

#### Construction Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster I*, *resist energy*; Cost 400 gp

## Cult of the Steel Lord Defenders.

Two dozen ships—mostly cutters and caravels, with a few galleons—defend the island. Tinker's technological innovations have not been directed at ship-building, so the cult uses traditional sailing vessels. However, the wealth of Gradiax has equipped them with eldritch fusils, magically-charged weapons with as much destructive power as cannons (but that aren't metal, so the cult's taboos don't forbid them).

The city of Karch is unwallled, having never needed to defend against a land assault. The city provides little tactical value for the PCs, and it is easy to bypass. Should they attack, though, the streets have hundreds of warriors, plus several dozen constructs recently crafted in Tinker's forge (CR 6, or thereabouts; the clockwork soldier from *Bestiary 3* is a good fit).

Dozens of caves dot the volcano face, inhabited by families of gnolls or odd megafauna, but it's easy to spot which cave holds the factory. A well-traveled road leads to it, and two long pipes run into and out of the cave. One pipe brings from a small dam uphill the water needed to replenish the factory's magma-heated steam turbines and cool manufactured items. The other pipe carries out excess water to a toxic sump further down the mountain.

Packs of gnoll warriors patrol the volcano, but they're "unaugmented"—normal gnolls, not duplicants, and thus not a significant threat for the party at this level. They carry horns, though, and might alert other defenders if not quickly neutralized.

## Factory Facility.

Gradiax converted his old lair in the underground volcano caldera into a factory for Tinker. The entrance tunnel slopes down gently into the mountain. One water pipe runs on each side of the wall, which is smoothly carved, hung with tapestries, and lit by scented, oil-filled lanterns. A grand carpet, over 100 feet long and enchanted not to rip from casual use by a taloned dragon, covers the ground.

At the tunnel's end, a pump station controls the water flow as well as a hydraulic hatch that leads downward to the factory. A detachment of augmented gnolls guard this checkpoint.

South of the pump station lies an iron mine, where hundreds of minor constructs toil to bring raw materials to the factory. A few side tunnels right at the start of the mine contain a warren of gnoll warriors. They guard the hostages whose duplicants have been destroyed, as well as those still actively connected to a duplicant.

Down through the pump station hatch, a golem-guarded rail track leads to a massive foundry and factory that sits over the volcano's magma caldera. Rows of completed but inert duplicants line the walls of the track. In the factory, improbable machines toil at Tinker's direction, crafting more metal soldiers. Tinker himself sits inside a massive mechanical suit, while Terakalir, the daughter of Gradiax, watches from a perch above the lava.

A room to the south of the foundry holds Tinker's discarded inventions that he crafted without Pemberton's approval. At the back of the factory, a room with fans to circulate cool air holds schematics, as well as Tinker's real body in a seated harness while his duplicant works outside. Pemberton also works here, sifting through stacks of reports on troop allocations and political activities so he can concoct how to conquer Ber.

This is not the real Pemberton, of course, just a duplicant. His actual body rests in a mansion on a Yerasol island, hundreds of miles away and guarded by elite minions.

## Foreign Aid.

If Lya and the party are offering their assistance, Cavallo would like them to act as a strike force, targeting the duplicant-production facility. When the main Beran fleet is luring the gnoll ships away from the city of Karch, the party and Lya should be able to make landfall. From there it's just a five mile hike to the volcano, where they should be able to find Tinker.

## STORM-TOSSED BATTLE

### Action. Montage. Level 12.

*A small gnoll fleet defends Isla dolas Focas.*

To reach the island, the party likely must take a ship, and the island has enough diviners that the gnoll fleet will be able to intercept any attackers. How many defenders the party must face depends on whether they attack alone, where they try to land, and whether they wait for the Beran fleet to draw off the bulk of the gnolls.

We present here stats for a variety of potential foes. For full naval combat rules, check out our other book *Admiral o' the High Seas*, or you can use the free quick-play rules available at EN World.

### Terrain and Weather

The naval encounter consists of multiple “stages,” areas of the sea roughly a half-mile across—distances are roughly defined to make naval combat simpler to track. It might be optimal to let battle start when the party is two stages away from landfall. They might try to rush to shore, but doing so likely means leaving the rest of their crew in a dangerous situation as enemies try to beach them.

After determining where the battle takes place, sketch out a rough map of the nearby seas with the party's ship in the center of a loose 5×5 grid of different stages. The whole battle will have choppy seas, but each stage should have its own mix of terrain to provide tactical options. Bear in mind that the coastline near Karch has gentle beaches, while the farther away you go the steeper the coast gets, making landfall potentially challenging.

### Chop and Rain.

Every stage should have choppy seas, reducing ships speed and maneuverability and posing the risk of waves swamping the deck and washing crew overboard. Rain likely cuts visibility, forcing ships to roll twice for Command checks and take the worse, though a good look-out can negate this penalty. The rain might be worse in some areas than other, perhaps changing round by round.

### Catch Hazards.

This is Isla dolas Focas, the island of the seals, and the coastline is packed with bleating aquatic mammals, sometimes so thick that ships trying to reach shore might run into a rookery of seals.

### Crash Hazards.

Many small rocky islets lie within a few miles of the coastline, often hidden just under the waves. Crashing can damage a ship and possibly even beach it until the crew can push free.

### Strike Hazards.

A thin stretch of coastline has spigots of lava that dribble out into the sea. Brash PCs might try to drive an enemy warship against the cliff face and set the ship aflame with lava.

### Possible Foes.

Since there can be a great variety in how much your players enjoy naval combat and how skilled they've been in previous naval engagements, we give you a lot of range for possible defenders. Each gnoll schooner or frigate has a druid on board, granting it the following trait:

#### ► Druidic Weather Magic

A gnoll druid stands chanting at the ship's prow, the deck beneath him glowing with a ring of blue runes. The runes flash and dim, and the weather suddenly changes.

This ship gains a +5 bonus on Command checks to resist the dangers of choppy seas. Each naval turn during the Terrain phase, this ship can choose its own stage or an adjacent stage and can increase or decrease by one step the intensity of choppy seas or poor visibility caused by weather.

### Easy Defense

If the party has a good plan to avoid defending ships—like if they land far away from Karch after the main fleets have engaged—you might just have them face a light patrol of a gnoll caravel backed up by four gnoll cutters. The fight won't be too challenging. If the party is racing *Lux Profectusque*, this fight could serve as an incidental complication when the PCs and Lya Jierre's ship are finally forced into combat to see who lands first.

### Moderate Defense

If the party goes for a quicker route to the volcano, they can expect a stronger defense. The above patrol might spot them and launch *pyrotechnics* to call for reinforcements. Three naval turns (about fifteen minutes) later, a pair of gnoll corvettes that stayed behind to guard Karch arrive at long range. A typical party likely can survive this fight, but their ship runs a chance of being destroyed.

### Daunting Defense

If the party is reckless and attacks before the Berans draw off the gnoll fleet, they'll likely be spotted by the “easy” patrol, which sends up *pyrotechnics*. Two naval turns (ten minutes) later, two gnoll frigates arrive at long range, with a further two gnoll corvettes arriving at long range a turn later. If the party is backed up by *Lux Profectusque*, they might be able to survive this onslaught together.

<b>Gnoll Cutter</b>	Level 10 Vehicle
Small Vehicle	10,800 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> 2	<b>Command</b> +8
<b>Defense</b> 10	<b>Full Crew</b> 4
<b>Maneuverability</b> 10	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 1
<b>Speed</b> 8	<b>Total Complement</b> 10
<b>Design</b>	
Length 30 ft. Beam 15 ft. One mast, 40 ft. high.	
<b>Arcane Fusil</b>	
A single gnoll at the prow of the ship aims a swivel-mounted wooden spar, tipped with a dimly smoldering red crystal.	
Crew: 1. Attack: +6 to forward or broadsides.	





<b>Gnoll Caravel</b>	Level 12 Vehicle
Medium Vehicle	21,400 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> 3	<b>Command</b> +9
<b>Defense</b> 10	<b>Full Crew</b> 8
<b>Maneuverability</b> 8	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 2
<b>Speed</b> 10	<b>Total Complement</b> 30

**Design**

Length 60 ft. Beam 15 ft. Two masts, 60 ft. high. Two decks.

**Fiery Brand of the Cult of the Steel God**

*On the deck, a handful of gnolls aim swivel-mounted fusils, but the real threat flies atop the mainmast. The symbol of a coiled draconic serpent shines a fiery red on the caravel's topsail. Three gnolls atop the mast pull at ropes to adjust its aim, while on deck a warpriest chants to empower it. The brand flashes a brilliant red, then unleashes a blast of flame.*

Crew: 15. **Attack:** +8 to forward or broadsides. Attacks can inflict the burning condition instead of immediate damage.

<b>Gnoll Corvette</b>	Level 14 Vehicle
Large Vehicle	46,400 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> 3	<b>Command</b> +11
<b>Defense</b> 15	<b>Full Crew</b> 16
<b>Maneuverability</b> 6	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 4
<b>Speed</b> 14	<b>Total Complement</b> 60

**Design**

Length 90 ft. Beam 25 ft. Three masts, 70 ft. high. Two decks.

**Three Brands**

*Three fire-breathing topsails pose a great threat. A dozen gnolls aim them while more on the deck chant praises to their dragon god and fire with fusils.*

Crew: 40. **Attack:** +12 to forward or broadsides. Attacks can inflict the burning condition instead of immediate damage.

<b>Gnoll Frigate</b>	Level 17 Vehicle
Huge Vehicle	153,000 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> 4	<b>Command</b> +12
<b>Defense</b> 25	<b>Full Crew</b> 32
<b>Maneuverability</b> 4	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 8
<b>Speed</b> 14	<b>Total Complement</b> 200

**Design**

Length 170 ft. Beam 35 ft. Three masts, 100 ft. high. Four decks.

**Bound Fire Spirit**

*An actual serpent of fire circles the ship, conjured by glowing sigils on the ship's masts and figurehead. Gnoll warmages direct scores of crewmen to bark eldritch cries that send it forth and attack.*

Crew: 100. **Attack:** +16 in any direction, even directly up. Attacks can inflict the burning condition instead of immediate damage.

**Eldritch Defenses**

The ship gains a +5 bonus to saving throws against the burning condition. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 34 less damage to targets within that area.

**Boarding Actions.**

Each ship has enough gnolls to pose a threat. Due to numbers and the character level disparity, it's easier to just treat the normal sailors as background: brief obstacles the heroes can force their way through. Crewmen never take actions. Each crewman occupies a 5'x5' space, which counts as difficult terrain for hostile creatures. Whenever a creature enters the space of a hostile crewman, it takes 5 damage.

Gnoll crewmen have AC 10 and saving throw bonuses of +2; if a crewman takes any damage, it is taken out, which leaves its space clear.

An officer can spend a standard action to order any four allied crewmen within earshot to move (each can move up to 30 feet). If two crewmen from opposite sides move adjacent, they each deal 5 damage to the other, taking each other out.

Additionally, the gnoll crews usually have a few officers who pose at least a slight threat to 10th-level PCs. Cutters usually have one gnoll officer, caravels have two, schooners four. A gnoll frigate has eight, plus a veteran captain. Remember not to scrimp on roleplaying during this massive sea battle—enemy captains who get close enough to shout or at least make vulgar hand gestures might be alternately savage or fanatically praising of their steel lord.

Finally, the fleet has a handful of seal scorpions, giant elemental beasts that lurk beneath the waves. Shortly after the party engages the gnolls, two of these scorpions fly onto the deck of the party's ship and cause havoc, though they likely pose a threat mostly to the crew, not the PCs.

**Gnoll Officer**

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Male gnoll rogue (pirate) 5

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

**Defense**

**AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural)

**hp** 61 (7d8+26)

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear and mind-affecting

**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny dodge, unflinching +1

**Offense**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk spear +8 (1d8+5)

**Ranged** mwk bolas +7 (1d4+3 nonlethal)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6, swinging reposition

**Statistics**

**Str** 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas), Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quick Draw, Sea Legs

**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Climb +14, Escape Artist +11, Intimidate +10, Perception +9, Profession (sailor) +9, Sleight of Hand +11, Swim +16

**Languages** Gnoll

**SQ** rogue talents (rope master)

**Other Gear** mwk spear, mwk bolas (5), mwk studded leather armor (all with bone and stone instead of metal)

**Seal Scorpion**

CR 7 • XP 3,200

N Large outsider (air, elemental, extraplanar, water)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11**Defense****AC** 20, touch 16, flat-footed 13 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, –1 size)**hp** 76 (10d10+20)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +4**DR** 5/—; **Immune** electricity, elemental traits**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +15 (1d8+3 plus 1d6 electricity plus grab) and sting +15 (1d6+3 plus 1d6 electricity plus poison)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+3), metal mastery**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 23, **Con** 14, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 31**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Escape Artist +17, Fly +12, Knowledge (planes) +9, Perception +11**Language** Auran**SQ** broken seal**Special Abilities**

**Broken Seal (Ex)** When reduced below half of its hit point total, a seal scorpion's body darkens, hardens, then turns to stone, traced with glowing threads of lava blood where it has been wounded. It loses the air and water subtypes and gains the earth and fire subtypes. It loses its fly and swim speeds but gains a climb speed of 30 feet. It loses its metal mastery ability. Its attacks deal fire damage instead of electricity damage.

**Metal Mastery (Ex)** A seal scorpion gains a +3 bonus on attack rolls if its opponent is wearing metal armor, is wielding a metal weapon, or is made of metal (such as an iron golem).

**Poison (Su)** Sting—injury; save Fort DC 17; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d3 Dex damage; cure 2 saves. A creature reduced to 0 Dex by this poison is petrified.

**Veteran Gnoll Captain**

CR 11 • XP 12,800

Male gnoll fighter (corsair) 10

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0**Defense****AC** 20, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +1 natural, +2 deflection)**hp** 118 (10d10+2d8+58)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3**Offense****Melee** +1 battle axe +20/+15/+10 (1d8+11, 19–20/x3)**Ranged** mwk spear +18 (1d8+5, x3)**Special Attacks** weapon training (pirate weapons +2, spears +1)**Statistics****Str** 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +15 (+17 bull rush); **CMD** 26 (28 bull rush)

**Feats** Cleave, Cleaving Finish, Furious Focus, Great Cleave, Greater Weapon Focus (Battle-Axe), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (Battle-Axe), Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (Battle-Axe), Weapon Specialization (Battle-Axe)

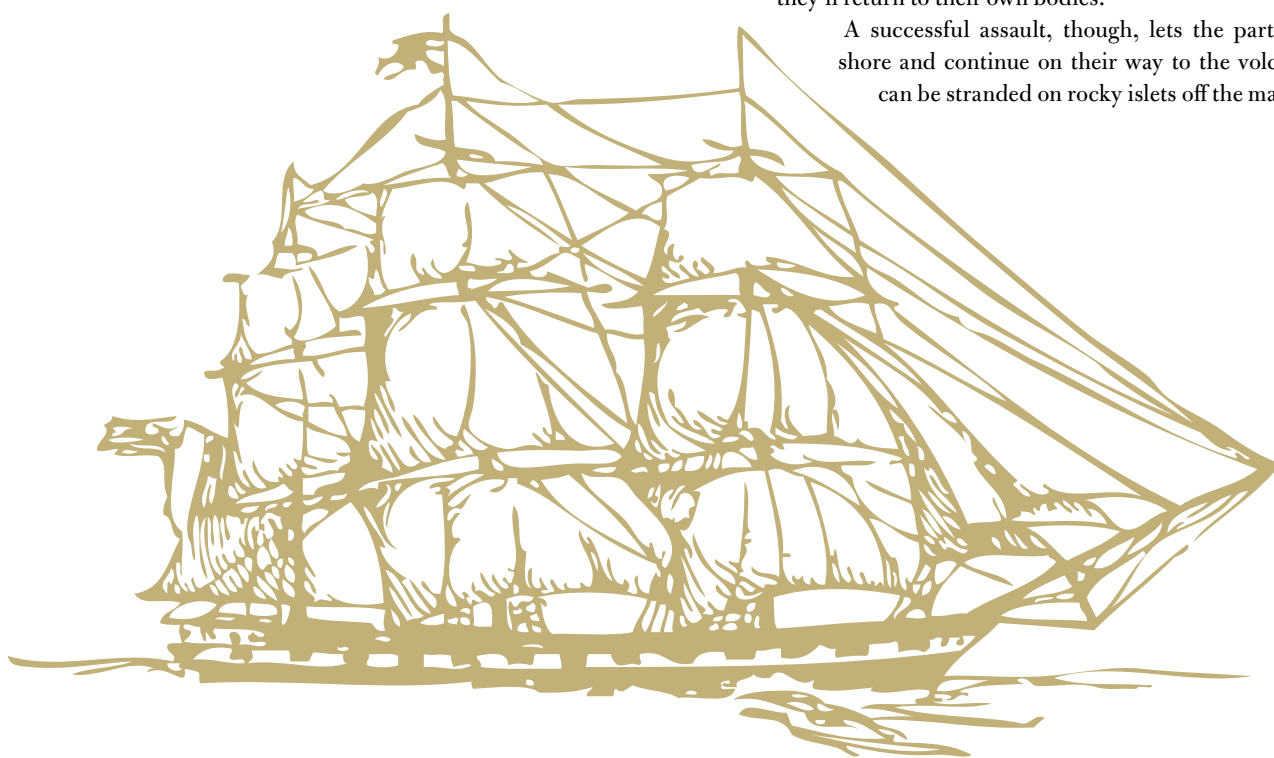
**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Intimidate +14, Profession (sailor) +15, Swim +19**SQ** armored pirate, improved deck fighting

**Combat Gear** *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure moderate wounds* x2 **Other Gear** +1 battle axe, mwk spear, +2 hide armor, ring of protection +2 (all with bone and stone instead of metal)

**Aftermath.**

If the party's ship is crippled, gnolls board it and take prisoners. They'll deliver those of high value to Pardo, up at the factory in the volcano, so they can be replaced with duplicants. The party might still have a chance to pull off a victory, or might even be implanted into duplicants, then reject Gradiax's control, granting them extra defenses while they're in their mechanical bodies. The bond is not stable without Gradiax's consent, though, so after a few hours their duplicants will collapse and they'll return to their own bodies.

A successful assault, though, lets the party take longboats to shore and continue on their way to the volcano. Captive gnolls can be stranded on rocky islets off the main island.







## PUMP STATION

### Action. Tactical. Level 13.

Gnolls prepare a deadly ambush and trap at a hydraulic pump station that controls the entrance to Tinker's foundry.

A magic *alarm* at the mouth of the tunnel that leads to the duplicant factory alerts Pardo, who readies his augmented guards to ambush the attackers. The gnoll priest then quickly heads to the warren (the tunnels in the southwest).

This facility has something the party has probably never seen before: electric lighting. A turbine in the foundry beneath the pump station provides alternating current to the pump station. But since Tinker has not invented light bulbs yet, the lighting comes from dozens of tiny spark gaps. As electrical currents jump the gap, they buzz and spark and create an eerie flickering white light from the ceiling.

The gnolls plan a trap. Massive tanks hold water for powering the facility's machines, and have been rigged with explosives. Once the party has engaged in combat, the gnolls plan to explode the tanks, flood the room, and cut the cable providing electricity that runs up from the ground. Once cut, the cable will fall limp into the water, electrocuting anyone who steps into it.

### Pump Station Opponents.

- 10 gnoll cultist archers
- 16 gnoll cultists
- 2 duplicant cult-priests
- Pardo the Lesser



### Tactics.

One duplicant cult-priest leads the archers, who lie in wait in the pump room, perched on the catwalks. The priest prefers to hide in the southwest corner, just north of the west-most tank, so he can attack from cover on the catwalk.

The second cult-priest leads the cultist packs—groups of gnolls sworn to defend the lair of their lord. They wait in the gnoll warren to the southwest, guarding both the hostages and whatever parts the PCs would need to effect repairs of the pumps after the gnolls sabotage them. They stay in Area B and fall back to Area C to try to string the party out. Pardo the Lesser hides in the side tunnels, invisible and prepared to strike PCs in the back ranks.

### Pacing.

The party might be tempted to rest after dealing with the pump room, before moving on to the mines. To motivate them to keep things moving, start with one group of gnoll cultists on the south raised platform near the mine entrance. When the party gets near, let them overhear the cult-priest shout, "We'll hold them off. Be ready to kill the hostages if we fail."

Then the cultists run off, which should ratchet up the challenge and tension. If the party chooses not to risk their own lives for those of strangers, they can rest, but they'll be giving up a lot of potential good will among the Berans.

## PARDO, PEMBERTON, AND RECURRING VILLAINY.

Pardo's previous duplicant body was custom-made for him, which was why it was so much stronger than typical duplicants. If it was destroyed, he's now stuck in a weaker model, and so won't pose as much of a threat the second time around. However, he'll likely return in later adventures as Pemberton's loyal aide.

Likewise, Pemberton is present in the factory only in duplicant form, and is not threatening as a combatant. As soon as Pemberton learned the Berans were planning to attack, he and Pardo teleported their real bodies (as well as a few other trusted minions) to his mansion in the Yerasol Archipelago. There the dragon is shielded from divinations, and he'll bide his time until later in the campaign, when the shifting balance of power gives him an opportunity to make another power play.

However, Pemberton's prideful daughter Terakalir insisted on staying behind, since she wanted to ensure the island's defenses. Also, current duplicant technology would not let her bond while in dragon form, and she has not yet learned to polymorph into human form.

### Duplicant Cult Priest

CR 7 • XP 3,200

Male duplicant gnoll sorcerer 6

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception

#### Defenses

**AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +4 natural, +1 dodge)

**hp** 66 (6d6+2d8+32)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, sleep; **Resist** fire 5

**Weaknesses** metal shell

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +4 (1d4 + 1d6 fire, count as magic, 6 rounds/day)

**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 6th; concentration +9)

3rd (4/day)—*fireball* (DC 16)

2nd (6/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *resist energy*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *resistance*, *spark*, *touch of fatigue*

**Bloodline** draconic (red)

#### Statistics

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 16

**Feats** Dodge, Eschew Materials, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +9, Perception +10, Spellcraft +7

**Languages** Gnoll

**SQ** bloodline arcana (fire spells deal +1 damage per die)

**Other Gear** cloak of resistance +2

**Gnoll Cultist Archer**

CR 4 • XP 1,200

Male and female gnoll ranger 3

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11**Defenses****AC** 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +1 natural)**hp** 41 (3d10+2d8+13)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk battleaxe +6 (1d8+3/x3)**Ranged** mwk composite longbow +7 (1d8+2 plus poison)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (orcs +2)**Statistics****Str** 15, **Dex** 16, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18**Feats** Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Focus (Longbow)**Skills** Climb +8, Perception +9, Stealth +11, Survival +7**Languages** Gnoll**SQ** favored terrain (underground +2), track, wild empathy +2**Combat Gear** vial of Large scorpion venom (2); **Other Gear** mwk battleaxe, mwk composite longbow (+2 Str), mwk studded leather armor (using bone or stone, not metal)**Special Abilities****Large Scorpion Venom (Ex)** poison (injury); Fortitude DC 17, 1/round for 6 rounds; 1d2 Str damage; cure 1 save.**Gnoll Cultist**

CR 1 • XP 400

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2**Defense****AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 natural)**hp** 11 (2d8+2)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** +0**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** spear +3 (1d8+3/x3)**Ranged** spear +1 (1d8+2/x3)**Statistics****Str** 15, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 8, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +1; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 13**Feats** Power Attack**Skills** Perception +2**Languages** Gnoll**Other Gear** studded leather armor, spear (using bone or stone, not metal)**Pardo the Lesser**

CR 9 • XP 6,400

As Pardo (page xx), but with two negative levels

**Terrain.**

The pump station is illuminated by the ceiling spark-gaps, which buzz quietly above the deep thrumming of water pumps. However, shortly into the combat the gnolls intend to drop the room into darkness.

The hatch that leads down to the foundry below is raised 5 feet off the ground, and its operation is handled by the control panels around the room.

A platform to the south leads to the mine and the gnoll warrens. The other platforms of the room are connected by catwalks. The gnolls here wear shoes and gloves so they will not touch the metal.

The room's southwest contains three metal tanks that hold water, which provide hydraulic power to operate the hatch and other devices. Three pipes from the tanks flow to the blue control panel, from which one pipe flows to the red control panel, and a second flows to the Archimedes Screw in the northeast. The screw helps carry water out of the facility, and its top is uncovered.

A creature that falls into the Archimedes Screw is churned by its rapidly-spinning mechanism. It takes 4d6 damage at the start of its turn and must make a Climb check (DC 25) to climb free of the device. Each round the creature is pushed 1 square toward the outflow pipe, and if it reaches the east end of the screw, intense pressures will squeeze it through the pipe, dealing 10d6 damage per round.

**Control Panels.**

There are three control panel stations, marked with blue, red, and green dots. The green panel controls the electricity, and can toggle the overhead lights and the pumps, or turn the power off entirely. The blue panel can turn on or off the flow of water down each of the two pipes—to the Archimedes Screw and to the red panel. The red panel, if it is receiving water and if the pumps are on, can open and close the hatch.

When the party arrives, the green panel has been set to have the lights and pumps on. The blue panel has set the flow so that the water only flows out to the Archimedes Screw, not to the red panel.

**Bomb Trap.**

A bomb is attached to the back of the central tank, and if it takes any fire damage it explodes, shattering all three tanks and flooding the room to a depth of 6 feet. Each creature within 3 squares of the back of the tank takes 4d6 piercing damage and 4d6 fire damage and is knocked prone and pushed 2 squares. Creatures can make Reflex saves (DC 20) to halve the damage and avoid the push and prone effect.

After a few rounds of combat, preferably when a few of the PCs are on the ground floor of the pump room, the cultist priest uses *scorching ray* to ignite the bomb, destroying the tanks and flooding the room. The lack of water flow means the Archimedes Screw won't push creatures down the pipe, but it still spins. And since the electrical cable's insulation has been removed, the entire flooded area becomes electrified.

Thereafter, each creature standing in the water takes 4d6 electricity damage at the start of its turn. The power can be turned off at the green station as a swift action.



### Mine.

Through the south exit one finds an iron mine. The mine itself is abandoned, and aside from a few mine carts and some impressive mining machinery, there's nothing of value. Indeed, 20 feet south of the start of the mine cart rails, there is a trap of sorts. Two levers (marked by brown icons on the map) can activate or deactivate a latch on the floor. If any significant weight is placed on the rails in the space between the levers, the ground splits open and dumps the victim fifty feet down a shaft and onto a conveyor belt, which feeds into the grinder in the Foundry Access Chamber (Location A on the map on page xx).

The conveyor belt moves 1 square per round. A creature that moves adjacent to the grinder's space takes 4d6 damage and is knocked prone. A creature that enters the grinder's space takes 20d6 damage.

### Gnoll Warren.

A side tunnel off the mine entrance leads to a gnoll warren that once held miners before Tinker replaced them with steam-powered machines. Now the area is filled with dozens of gnoll warriors who guard the hostages. This whole area is lit by small firepits with smoldering coals, providing dim light with patches of darkness.

**Area A.** Four cultists linger here, ready to shout a warning and then flee. The walls are adorned with educational cave paintings, telling the history of Gradiax the Steel Lord and his cult. This area is used for communal gatherings, cooking, and prayer.

**Area B.** The remaining cultists wait here, with the second priest behind them. The tunnels here are lined with more paintings of famous members of the cult, including a primitive depiction of Tinker standing atop a giant cog. Pardo lurks in the side tunnels to the west, which have no illumination. These are the sleeping chambers.

**Area C.** The wall here is painted with a grand mural of Gradiax's treasure hoard surrounded by a ring of lava. The painting conceals (Perception DC 25) a secret door.

**Area D.** The hostages are kept here—Kenna Vigilante, several dozen soldiers, and a handful of other important Berans. If you have any personal NPCs that perhaps the party has allied with that you want to have been replaced, perhaps they're here, or just one of their personal effects, so you can still have the ally act as an enemy.

### Tactics.

Shortly after the party arrives, a gnoll archer at the green panel kills the lights, dropping the whole area into darkness. Then the gnolls scatter

## GETTING THE HOSTAGES TO SAFETY.

The hostages lie on cots, adorned with shamanic beads and ritual paint. Each wears a blindfold and on their chest sits a small flat piece of stone that holds a drop of witchoil. They have no weapons and only rags for clothes, but Kenna Vigilante, once awakened, can rally them to pick up fallen gnoll weapons and prepare to either march for the sea or fight alongside the party.

Those useful in a fight consist of Kenna and 25 soldiers. Stats for these makeshift allies are presented in Appendix Two, with the soldiers equivalent to Cantabriglia guards. By rights, though, they won't be much use against the enemies the party is about to face.

and ready actions to attack. The cultist priest will use *glitterdust* to illuminate a target, and the gnolls will all fire at anyone who is caught in the spell's area of effect. They keep this up until the PCs introduce some light.

That's probably the point when the cult-priest blasts the bomb at the water tank, flooding the place and electrocuting those on the ground.

When the fight ends, or if any PC goes to the south platform that leads to the mine, a cultist in the warren shouts, "They're coming! Quickly, kill the hostages!"

The gnoll cultists try to swarm anyone who comes into the area, and to form living shields between the PCs and the cult-priest. Pardo, meanwhile, will emerge from invisibility, use *murderous command*, then drink another potion to become invisible again and move into darkness, perhaps only attacking every other round. If forced into combat he uses *inflict critical wounds*, then promises he will forever be at his master's side.

### Aftermath.

Before the party can open the hatch to the lower level, they must make sure there is water and power. If the gnolls blew the tanks, components sufficient to jury-rig repairs exist in the gnoll warren, though repairs likely require about an hour, by which time gnoll patrols will have noticed something amiss and run to Karch. If the party dallies much longer, a small army will arrive.

Impatient or careless parties might just fall into the pit trap at the entrance of the mine and bypass the hatch entirely.









## WELCOME TO MY VOLCANO LAIR

### Social. Real-Time. Level 13.

*Tinker speaks with the party as they approach.*

The room at the bottom of the hatch is unoccupied, but a mining cart sits on the rails, and a tiny steam engine attached to it putters happily, as if waiting to give the party a ride. The severed head of a duplicant, mostly featureless aside from eyes and an articulate mouth, sits in the cart.

The rails lead to a massive metal door on the north wall, currently closed. When the party arrives, the duplicant head activates and begins to speak in Tinker's voice. The duplicant's appearance shifts to match Tinker's face.

---

"I wondered when I'd see you again. Please, please, get in the cart. It will be a pleasant ride, and my subterranean domicile is far, far too large for you to have to walk all the way. So, so vast. You could get lost in it. Certainly your mind could. I have an inkling you're going to get quite violent toward me, and our previous interactions were much, much too brief. So please, please: into the cart."

---

If at any point the party gets into the cart, the door starts to grind open, controlled from afar by Tinker. The cart then starts to roll along, moving just a bit faster than walking speed. It travels down a long, winding tunnel, sloping gently downhill and growing hotter as it goes. Occasional spark-gap lamps on the ceiling provide spotty lighting. After a few hundred feet the walls start to have small nooks, each filled with an inert duplicant.

The pathway is at least a quarter-mile long, but feel free to stretch it for as long as the conversation is interesting. Tinker can hear them, so this is an opportunity for them to negotiate for him to join their side.

If the party walks, the cart follows them, and the head keeps talking. If they destroy the head, eventually the duplicants along the route continue the conversation, though Tinker is a bit more irked. Use the following text as a template for Tinker's erraticness and Pemberton's politeness.

---

"You're here about Borne, yes? I'd love to tell you all about him. His design, his structural flaws, and his personality. Such a nice boy. Smartest one of the lot. Not like you. You, if you'll pardon me, are fools. You've walked into a trap.

"Not that I wanted to trap you. It's odd to be affected by a type of mind control you built. Built when no one else could, I'd remind you. I can tell someone else is in charge, but I don't mind so much. Much better than to be mind controlled and not remember. Remember what I said about not wanting to trap you? You upset my employer, and as long as I'm still in this—I remind you—quite masterful invention, I won't be agreeing to any of your overtures, short or brief or long or huge.

---

"You should meet my boss. Gnomes and dragons are natural allies. We gnomes love to speak to burrowing animals, burrowing animals love caves, and who loves caves more than dragons?! Well . . . dwarves, I suppose. And they do have more hair. And they are smaller. I wish I had a pet dwarf."

---

A new voice butts in now, the memorable deep tones of Risuri industrialist Benedict Pemberton. The duplicant's head transforms to match his face.

---

"Alright there. That's quite enough of that, son. Time to let the people with functional minds have a conversation.

"Greetings! Some people used to call me the Steel Lord Gradiax, but these days I do prefer Benedict Pemberton. Welcome to my volcano lair. Now if you don't mind, kindly either leave the premises or put your weapons away so we can talk in peace."

---

Pemberton is fiercely angry and nervous, but he restrains it and covers with genteel politeness, for a moment at least. He's worried that he cannot protect his daughter, and he's furious that all his plans might be ruined after years of planning.

Pemberton tries to convince the party that they'll profit more by aiding him than fighting him. He clarifies that he has no affiliation with the Obscurati, but as long as this factory remains in production he'll be able to produce war machines which could help against them. In exchange for the party agreeing to back off, he'll let them speak to Tinker and get whatever information they want about the Obscurati and the colossus.

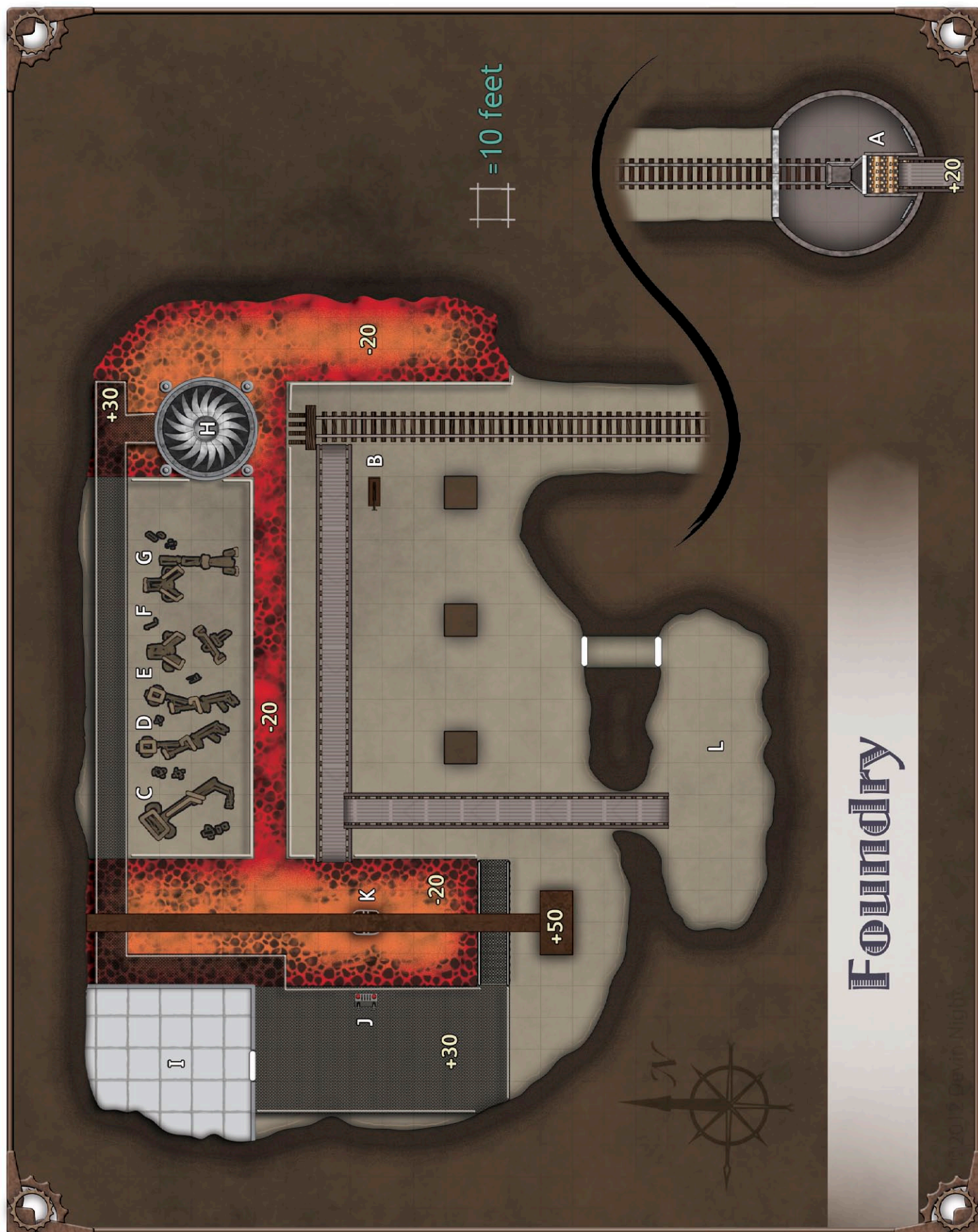
If they want to actually take the gnome with them, Pemberton needs more. Simply to balance they already did to his forces, he needs their aid to attack the Beran fleet. He suggests the party wait until the first detachment of soldiers have landed, then attack the transports *en route* back to mainland Ber. By delaying reinforcements and stranding the Beran soldiers, Pemberton thinks he'll be able to crush the attackers and hold the island. Ber would treat that as an act of war, but Pemberton assures them the war would be brief since he'd complete his conquest within the year.

Strategically it's probably worse to get Risur a war-torn Ber under Pemberton's control than to have a united Ber that feels it owes the PCs a great favor. And there's no guarantee Pemberton won't eventually turn his eye to Risur or choose to ally with the Ob. Smart parties will decline Pemberton's offer.

At that point Pemberton snarls, then laughs once. He's glad actually, because he was hoping he'd get to kill them. As the mine cart finally reaches the foundry, Pemberton orders Tinker to seal the exit and to kill them all.









## ODDCOG'S MAGMA EMPORIUM

### Action. Tactical. Level 14+.

*Step into the gnome's parlor.*

The foundry lies in a magma chamber, which contains run-off from the molten heart of the volcano. The ceiling is about 120 feet high, and tiny fissures circulate air, but there are no paths large enough for creatures to find their way to the surface. A few stony perches lean out from the walls high above, clearly having been carved by massive talons.

The whole area is dramatically lit by the glow of a vast pool of lava. Metal columns hang from the ceiling, supporting several grated metal platforms upon which sit various industrial machines. A conveyor belt runs past a series of giant metal limbs, and eventually into a small side chamber. Higher up at the far end of the room, a building with darkened windows watches over the whole area.

- ♦ **Grinder Entrance.** Normally a mine cart waits here to receive ground up ore delivered from the mine. The conveyor belt moves 1 square per round. A character that moves adjacent to the grinder takes 4d6 damage and is knocked prone. A creature pulled into the grinder takes 20d6 damage. During the trip down the mine tunnel, normally the cart is unloaded into smelters and then reloaded by duplicants, but Tinker has deactivated these for now.
- ♦ **Rail Cart Trap.** Here the rail cart reaches the end of the line. Normally a solid barricade on a hinge stops the cart, but Tinker has unlocked the hinge. If the party remains in the cart all the way, it slows down toward the end, but when it hits the barricade it doesn't stop. Characters in the cart can make an Acrobatics or Climb check (DC 20) to jump out and grab onto the ledge. Otherwise the cart falls off the edge. Creatures in the cart take 2d6 falling damage and have one round to get out or else they are submerged in lava.
- ♦ **Assembly Line.** These articulated metal arms operate under Tinker's control, using enchanted hammers, clamps, and blades to shape, grasp, cut, and assemble raw metal rolling down the conveyor belt into components for Tinker's various inventions. On their own they do nothing, but Tinker can attack with them. This area is difficult terrain. The conveyor belt moves 2 squares west each round, but a lever at the east end can be adjusted to toggle it to stop or move backwards. At the west end of the conveyor belt, arm C pushes completed projects onto a second belt, which deposits them in the south cave (Area L). Projects with flaws are instead tossed into the lava.
- ♦ **Steam Turbine.** Pipes from above feed water into a cistern just above the lava, which produces massive clouds of steam that spin this turbine fan. Large swaths of the walls and ceiling above the turbine have total concealment, but air currents sometimes shift, reducing it to normal concealment. Cables run from the turbine to the upper facility, providing electrical power.
- ♦ **Schematics Room.** Pemberton waits here, watching over Tinker's real body and observing the battle. The walls and tables are covered with schematics and charts of potential supply chains necessary for more advanced devices.
- ♦ **Beam Cannon Controls.** Currently the cannon points directly down into the lava. A character standing at these controls can use a standard action to aim the beam cannon that hangs from the nearby beam to attack. The beam can target a 5-foot radius burst within 150 feet, dealing 3d6+6 force damage (Reflex DC 20 for half). Until someone changes the cannon's targeted area, creatures

## GUNS ON THE FLOOR.

Tinker is not the tidiest of technologists, and so the floor of the area is littered with a bizarre array of firearms. In any given square one can likely find a pistol or rifle, though they're often strangely-designed. Also scattered about are some experimental weapons which might come in handy (see Appendix Three: Technological Revelations).

A lightning gun might be built into the length of a discarded bicycle, six grenades might be set around a wheel that looks like it was intended as a gear, and a pair of experimental rocket launchers are integrated into the pauldrons of a half-assembled breastplate.

Gunsmith PCs can use these weapons proficiently. Other PCs take a -4 penalty to their attack rolls with them.

that end their turn in the area take 3d6+6 force damage (no save).

- ♦ **Beam Cannon.** Why is there a giant ray gun in a foundry? It's actually the vile third eye of a fallen dragon tyrant, which was said to slay whoever saw it. (See "The Tyrant's Eye" in the ZEITGEIST Player's Guide for more details.) Pemberton recovered it long ago and finally found a use here, attaching it to a gimbal and focusing its power into a perpetual stream of destructive energy that keeps the lava in this chamber molten. This both provides heat for Tinker's turbine, and just pleases Pemberton's aesthetic sensibilities.
- ♦ **Invention Storage.** Assembled devices are stored here for finishing touches. Currently the chamber is mostly empty, since everything even remotely dangerous was sent to Karch to help drive off the Beran invasion. Four inert duplicants lacking their witchoil reservoirs sit here, posed as if they're having a conversation across a table. The table is actually a small scale model of a zeppelin. Alas, Tinker has not managed to make one that flies.

### Finale Opponents.

Tinker Oddcog's suit  
Terakalir, steam-augmented dragon  
Tinker Oddcog  
Pemberton's duplicant



### Tactics.

Tinker, riding in his metal suit, waits atop the west platform that overlooks the foundry (Area J). Terakalir perches on a ledge high up above the turbine (Area H), hidden in the steam (Perception DC 31).

Pemberton watches over Tinker's actual body, which lies on a cot in the schematics room (Area I). He's in a fairly weak duplicant body (AC 10, hp 5), not useful in a fight, but if things are going badly, or if the party is close to killing his daughter, he'll threaten to slit Tinker's throat.

If destroyed, Pemberton's duplicant doesn't become an inert piece of metal like the others. It maintains Pemberton's face, and though he's in no condition to fight, he hoists himself up on what limbs he still maintains control over and glares at the party. Try to make it clear to the party that Pemberton is not a threat in this fight. Hopefully they won't smash him to bits, because that prevents him from making villainous promises after the fighting ends.

Tinker wants to keep the party at range. He fires down from the western platform with his suit's chain guns and uses his own ray gun to throw someone into the arms of the assembly line. He uses time bomb launchers to force the party to stay on the move, ideally after pegging someone with the entangling option of his ray gun.

## SHOWDOWN WITH LYA.

For optimal drama, the party will have had détente with Lya Jierre until this point. She, Rush, and Merton join the party in the assault on Pemberton's factory, but once they see Tinker their focus is on finding the gnome's actual body. They try not to draw the attention of Tinker or Terakalir, but will fight to defend themselves. None of them dare use a *gatecrasher charm* here, because the platforms over the lava do not exist in the Bleak Gate, but the lava certainly does.

If they can locate Tinker, Rush straps the gnome to his chest and brachiates away with his *immovable rods*. Lya and Merton try to make a fighting retreat, and if cornered Merton will throw his sonic bomb, which shatters the platform and causes it to slowly crumple into the lava. Barring some grand persuasion by the party, Lya fights to the end, though if she goes down first her bodyguards abandon their mission.

Should Lya be captured, eventually the leader of the Obscurati, Nico-demus the Gnostic, seeks her out and makes her an offer similar to what he offered Macbannin at the end of adventure two: die and become part of the ghost council, so that whatever secrets she knows will not be discovered by the RHC.

If dangerous warriors get close he'll shrink them, and if snipers lurk in cover he'll use his caustic shot to either destroy their cover or dissolve the ground beneath them. He's not afraid of a brawl, though, especially since his suit can easily hurl foes into the lava.

Terakalir watches from on high, waits for a round to see what tactics the party deploys, and then descends to disrupt them. She might swoop in, breathe on a group of enemies, then try to knock a foe into the lava with her steam-powered claw. Alternately, she might simply use her breath weapon and normal attacks to deal as much damage as possible, forcing the party to split its attention.

Tinker probably stays up on the western platform, and Terakalir probably harries PCs who stay on the lower east platform, occasionally withdrawing to the concealment of the steam over the turbine. In a pinch, Tinker's suit has enough jumping distance and reach to leap from the platform, grab the bar that the beam cannon hangs from, and then swing over to the lower platform, though it would take quite a lot of falling damage in the process.

If it is clear the party is going to win, Pemberton offers to spare the gnome. He asks that the party let his daughter leave the facility. When he's confident she's safe, he'll release Tinker.

### Saving a Dying Gnome.

If the party won't relent, Pemberton uses a folding pocket knife to slice open Tinker's throat, which ends his link to his duplicant. This renders both the duplicant and his suit inert. At this point, Tinker is at -10 hp, giving the party a short window to save him with magical healing or a Heal check (DC 20).

### Terrain.

The whole area is hellishly hot. Outside of the Schematics Room and Invention Storage, creatures in this area suffer from the effects of extreme heat (see the *PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME CORE RULEBOOK*).

Edges that overlook the lava have railings, which grant a +2 bonus to saves to avoid being pushed off the ledge. A creature that fails its save can attempt an Climb check (DC 15) to grab onto the edge and be left dangling over the lava.

### Tinker Oddcog's Suit

CR 12 • XP 19,200

N Large construct

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

#### Defense

**AC** 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+16 natural)**hp** 127 (15d10+45)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5**DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +22 (2d10+8)**Ranged** 2 integrated chain guns +14 (4d6)**Special Attacks** combined arms, time-bomb launchers

#### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 34**Feats** Awesome BlowB, ToughnessB**SQ** escape launch, power armor, technological quirks

#### Special Abilities

**Combined Arms (Ex)** When taking a full attack action, Tinker's suit can attack with melee and ranged integrated weapons simultaneously.

**Escape Launch (Ex)** When destroyed, the suit's torso hatch pops open. Tinker's seat launches into the air and deploys glider wings. Tinker may fly up to 50 ft. as an immediate action. He gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity triggered by this movement, and he must land at the end of this movement. The destroyed suit begins to emit a rapid ticking noise. One round later, the suit explodes. All creatures within 30 feet of the suit take 10d6 fire damage (DC 17 Reflex for half).

**Integrated Chain Guns (Ex)** These advanced firearms have a range increment of 200 feet, automatically reload as a free action, and never misfire. The suit's core can process scrap metal into ammunition, effectively giving these weapons infinite ammo. The suit treats these weapons as natural attacks and not manufactured weapons attacks, and cannot make iterative attacks with these weapons. These guns can still be targeted by effects that target manufactured weapons (such as magic weapon spells or sunder attempts), but they are destroyed once the suit is destroyed. These guns do not provoke attacks of opportunity when fired in melee combat.

**Power Armor (Ex)** Tinker controls this machine's actions from inside it. When the suit moves, he moves with it, and he cannot otherwise move on his own without exiting the machine. He can exit it as a move action, opening a hatch and emerging in any space adjacent to it, and can continue to control it even while not inside it. The sealed hatch grants Tinker total cover from attacks, but Tinker can still see normally. When the suit is reduced below 60 hp, the hatch cracks open partially, so Tinker only has improved cover.

**Technological Quirks (Ex)** A magical attack that deals at least 5 points of cold damage slows the suit (as the *slow spell*) for 1 round, with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the suit and increases its speed by 10 feet for 1 round. Tinker's suit is affected normally by electricity damage. In addition, Tinker takes half the damage the suit takes from electrical effects.

**Time Bomb Launchers (Ex)** Once per day as a swift action, Tinker's suit can launch two time bombs from its torso at two separate targets. The suit can automatically hit any inanimate object within 100 feet. It can also target any construct or creature wearing metal armor within 30 feet, but it must succeed on a ranged touch attack to hit a creature. If it misses, the bomb lands in the creature's space. The bombs begins ticking loudly once per second. After one round they begin ticking twice as fast, and after two rounds they tick four times per second. At the end of the third round the bombs explode, dealing 10d6 bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage in a 30-foot radius burst (Reflex DC 17 for half). Before it explodes, a time bomb can be detached with a Strength check (DC 20), and the countdown can be stopped with a Disable Device check (DC 25).



**Terakalir, Steam-Augmented Dragon**

CR 11 • XP 12,800

Female unique young red dragon

NE Large dragon

**Init** +5; **Senses** dragon senses, smoke vision; **Perception** +15**Defense****AC** 22, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+1 Dex, +12 natural, –1 size)**hp** 115 (11d12+44)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +10**Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)**Melee** bite +17 (2d6+10), claw +17 (1d8+7), steam-powered claw +17 (2d6+7/19–20 plus push), 2 wings +12 (1d6+3), tail slap +12 (1d8+10)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)**Special Attacks** breath weapon (40-ft. cone, DC 19, 6d10 fire), push (steam-powered claw, 20 ft.)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th)At will—*detect magic***Spells Known** (CL 1st, concentration +2)1st (3/day)—*shield*, *true strike*0 (at will)—*mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic***Statistics****Str** 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 30 (34 vs. trip)**Feats** Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike**Skills** Appraise +15, Bluff +15, Fly +9, Intimidate +15, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +11**Languages** Common, Draconic**Other Gear** *gem of seeing* (embedded in left eye socket)**Special Abilities****Smoke Vision (Ex)** Terakalir can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by pyrotechnics).**Steam-Powered Claw (Ex)** Terakalir's left arm and claw have been replaced by a prosthesis of steel and steam. This claw attack deals damage if she were one size category larger and threatens a critical hit on a 19–20. She also gains the push ability with this claw attack, as the arm hammers her opponent like a piston on a successful attack.**Experimental Prostheses (Ex)** Terakalir's prosthetic claw and wing are prone to malfunctions as she takes damage. Terakalir has two HP thresholds. When her HP falls below each threshold, a malfunction triggers as an immediate action.**Threshold 1** Once Terakalir is reduced below 80 HP, Malfunction 1 triggers.**Threshold 2** Once Terakalir is reduced below 40 HP, Malfunction 2 triggers.**Malfunction 1 (Ex)** The skin around Terakalir's prosthetic wing tears. A failsafe triggers, and a jet of fire blasts out beneath her wing, rocketing her across the battlefield. Terakalir flies up to 50 ft. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Any creature that she flies over during this movement takes 6d10 fire damage (Reflex DC 19 for half). Hereafter, whenever she flies, she must land at the end of her movement.**Malfunction 2 (Ex)** Terakalir's two metal limbs crack from the stress of combat, and searing steam pours out from the devices. Terakalir gains an aura of searing steam out to a range of 15 ft. The steam provides concealment to creatures in the aura, and any creature that begins their turn in it takes 1d6 points of fire damage. Hereafter, the dragon cannot fly, cannot attack with her steam-powered claw, and moves at half speed.**Tinker Oddcog**

CR 11 • XP 12,800

Male duplicant gnome expert 12

CN Small humanoid (gnome)

**Init** +1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** –2**Aura** the gun whisperer (30 ft.)**Defense****AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+2 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural)**hp** 108 (12d8+48)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6; +2 vs. illusions**Defensive Abilities** constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, sleep**Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** wrench +8/+3 (1d4–1)**Ranged** experimental ray gun +11 touch (special)**Special Attacks** experimental ray gun, friend of machines**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +13)1/day—*dancing lights*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*, *speak with animals***Statistics****Str** 9, **Dex** 12, **Con** 16, **Int** 24, **Wis** 7 (currently 3), **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18**Feats** Craft Construct, Magical Aptitude, Master Craftsman, Skill Focus (Craft [technology]), Skill Focus (Knowledge[engineering]), Taunt**Skills** Appraise +21, Bluff +16, Craft (technology) +29, Disable Device +17, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (engineering) +28, Knowledge (nature) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Perception –2, Sleight of Hand +16, Spellcraft +23, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +20**Languages** Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Giant, Infernal, Orc, Primordial, Sylvan**SQ** gnome magic, master tinker**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility* x2; **Other Gear** wrench (treat as club), *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +4, *godmind urn***Special Abilities****Experimental Ray Gun (Su)** Tinker has crafted a special carbine that fires glowing bolts of chaotic magical energy to a range of 100 feet. While in his suit, he can fire this ray gun through a special nozzle on the machine's arm. He must succeed on a ranged touch attack to hit his target. A successful hit deals 3d6 damage, and Tinker can choose from one of the following effects. The save DC for each effect is Intelligence-based.**Caustic:** If the target fails a Reflex save (DC 23), it takes 3d6 acid damage each round for 3 rounds. This damage ignores the hardness of objects. This damage can be prevented if the target spends a full round washing the acid off with water. A 5-ft. space beneath the target starts to melt, and one round later any grating there falls away.**Entangling:** The target becomes entangled and must make a Reflex save (DC 23) or be glued to the floor, unable to move. A creature that is glued to the floor can break free with a Strength check (DC 21) or by dealing 15 points of damage to the goo with a slashing weapon. The goo becomes brittle and fragile after 2d4 rounds, cracking apart and losing its effectiveness.**Gravity:** The target must make a Will save (DC 23) or be hurled 30 ft. in a direction of Tinker's choosing (even vertically), as per the violent thrust version of the *telekinesis* spell.**Shrinking:** The target must make a Fortitude save (DC 23) or be reduced in size for one minute, as per the *reduce person* spell.**Friend of Machines (Su)** As a swift action, Tinker can command one of the machines in the foundry to attack the target of Tinker's choice:



**Assembly Line (C, D, E, F, G on map)** One of the arms makes a grapple attempt against a target within 30 feet (CMB +15, CMD 25). On a success, the target takes 2d6+6 damage. While the target is grappled, at the start of Tinker's turn, the arm moves the target 10 feet west into the grasp of the next arm. That arm repeats this attack, and if it succeeds, the previous arm lets go of the target. If arm C attacks the target, it instead makes a push attack (CMB +15) to push the target 15 feet south off the edge of the assembly line.

**Beam Cannon (Ex)** The beam targets a 5-foot-radius burst within 150 feet of the cannon. All creatures in the area take 3d6+6 points of force damage (Reflex DC 20 for half). Until Tinker has the cannon change its targeted area, creatures that end their turn in the burst take 3d6+6 points of force damage (no save).

**The Gun Whisperer (Su)** The firearms of enemies in the aura are more difficult to reload. Increase the reload time by one step, from free to swift action, to move action, to standard action, to full-round action.

### Aftermath.

The party's ultimate goal should be to take Tinker alive, which means either negotiating with Pemberton or killing his daughter. If the former, Terakalir flees to Karch, boards a merchant ship, and makes her way to the mainland. From there she links up with another tribe of gnolls who hide her until Pemberton can get a wizard there and teleport Terakalir to Pemberton's island. It might even be possible eventually for Pemberton to aid the party against the Obscurati later, though until things get truly desperate, Harkover Lee will advise the king against any such offers.

If the latter, Pemberton in his duplicant is powerless to protect her. If she dies, he seethes with anger and quietly explains to the party that he has lived for centuries, and so his wrath will not be swift, but it will be absolute. Then he severs his connection to his duplicant, and begins plotting to destroy everything each PC cares about.

Tinker, for his part, will gladly let himself be recruited by the party, though he's sad to leave behind his damaged steam suit. However, he insists on bringing his *godmind urn* with him.

### Defeat?


Should the party fall to Pemberton, he holds any survivors hostage and exerts leverage through Risur and the RHC to get Ber to slow their assault long enough for him to evacuate a few vital resources. The surviving PCs spend a few months in a gnoll prison camp, then are freed when Ber finally takes Isla dolas Focas.

## CONSEQUENCES

As long as the PCs don't intentionally sabotage the Beran military, they defeat Pemberton's forces sooner or later. The aid the PCs lent earns Risur the favor of Ber's ruler, whoever that may be, and they might become heroes to the nation as a whole.

Pemberton, having been forced from his volcano lair, settles instead for a secret island base in the Yerasol Archipelago, plotting revenge against the newest addition to his long list of those who have earned his ire. After his anger cools down, his attention turns to the Obscurati, and their colossus, and how he might seize it to use as the tool of his vengeance.

A live Tinker aids Risur's military industry; a dead one leaves behind schematics that engineers will obsess over for decades. And if he lives he explains, in his erratic demented way, the powers and weaknesses of the colossus. (See Tinker's Secrets, page xx.) Then he shares his most guarded secret, the true coup of this mission: he has been contacted via *sending* by the mindmaker, Alexander Grappa, who after dying in adventure five implanted his consciousness in the steelshaper, Leone Quital.

Grappa's consciousness lurks—so very, very small, and only able to surface occasionally—but if the party can find and rescue him he'll be perfectly placed to let them infiltrate the heart of the conspiracy. 





# APPENDIX ONE

## LIGHT AND PROGRESS

Herein we present the stats for Lya Jierre's group, and her ship *Lux Profectusque*.

<b>Lux Profectusque, Danoran Steam Frigate</b>	Huge Vehicle
Level 17 Vehicle	129,000 gp
<b>Hull Integrity</b> +4	<b>Command</b> +18
<b>Defense</b> 29	<b>Full Crew</b> 32
<b>Maneuverability</b> +4	<b>Minimum Crew</b> 8
<b>Speed</b> 12	<b>Total Complement</b> 200
<b>Saves</b> +4	

### Crew

The crack crew is of peak morale, which grants the captain, Lya Jierre, a +7 bonus to Command checks and the ship +4 to Defense, already factored in above. Most of the crewmen are trained musketeers.

### Design

Length 170 ft. Beam 35 ft. Conning tower, 30 ft. high. Four decks. Its metal hull and components are resistant to fire, granting the ship a +5 bonus to saves against the burning condition. Its hull is resistant to passwall and similar effects.

### Armaments

A pair of massive two-barrel turrets lie forward of the ship's conning tower, staggered atop each other like steps of a staircase

Crew: 100. Attack: +16 to forward or broadsides.

### Stones of Methia

White stones line the edge of the ship's hull, creating a field that weakens magic.

Any spell that originates more than 50 feet away from the ship has any damage it deals to creatures aboard the ship reduced by 34. If two ships enter each other's protective auras (i.e., they get within short range), they effectively merge into one larger aura. The two ships can then affect each other, but are still protected from without.

### Total Cost 110,000 gp

Hull (base level 11, engine, improved speed x4, Level 17): 65,000 gp

Armaments (huge, forward turret, Level 16): 45,000 gp

Hull (greater fire charm, Level 12; copper sheathing, Level 5): 14,000 gp

Shield defense (Level 10): 5,000 gp

## Crew Complement.

Rush Munchausen, bodyguard

Captain Lya Jierre

Merton Goncala, bodyguard

Inez, ritual mage (noncombatant)

Ulrik, porter (noncombatant)

150 expert crewmen (Lux musketeers)

15 Obscurati ambush mages

30 Obscurati skulks

## Notable Equipment.

**Contingent Gatecrasher Charm.** This one-use token triggers automatically when the bearer becomes bloodied, or can be activated as a standard action. It transports its holder most of the way into the Bleak Gate, effectively removing them from the real world. Unless special magic completes their transition to the Bleak Gate, five minutes later they return to the real world, but they have time to move to a safer location. When activated, and again if he's pulled back to the real world, the traveler takes 5d6 negative energy damage.

Lya, Merton, and Rush all have one of these charms. We expect the players to get the hint after their encounters with the two bodyguards that if they want to actually capture or kill Lya, they'll need to thwart her charm. Various spells could do this, as could pickpocketing, or destroying the charm. It has hardness 10 and 40 hp.

### Rush Munchausen

CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male half-elf fighter (cad) 9

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +1

### Defense

**AC** 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +4 Dex)

**hp** 81 (9d10+36)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3; +2 vs. enchantment

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** *immovable rod* +12/+7 (1d6+6, 19–20/x2) and *immovable rod* +12/+7 (1d6+4, 19–20/x2)

**Single Weapon** *immovable rod* +14/+9 (1d6+6, 19–20/x2)

**Special Attacks** cad combat, combat expertise

### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +12 (+6 dirty trick, +4 disarm); **CMD** 28 (34 dirty trick, 32 disarm)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Greater Dirty Trick, Improved Disarm, Improved Dirty Trick, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Immobile Object\*, Quick Dirty Trick, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (light mace), Weapon Specialization (light mace)

**Skills** Acrobatics +16, Bluff +5, Fly +16, Intimidate +7, Perception +1, Stealth +12

**Languages** Common, Elven, Primordial

**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** two +1 *immovable rods*, mwk chain shirt, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *contingent gatecrasher charm*

### Special Abilities

**Cad Combat (Ex)** Rush wields a pair of *immovable rods*, which have been additionally enchanted as +1 *light maces*.

Rush gets a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls against any creature that attacked him since his last turn. When he hits an enemy who is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC, he can make a dirty trick combat maneuver as an immediate action. He can also use a normal attack to make a dirty trick attempt (at a –2 penalty to his CMB if he's fighting with two weapons, and an extra –5 if using an iterative attack).

His dirty tricks, if successful, can inflict a negative condition, which lasts for 1d4 rounds, plus 1 round for every 5 he beats his opponents CMD. Possible conditions include: blinded, dazzled, deafened, entangled, shaken, or sickened.

**Lya Jierre**

CR 12 • XP 12,800

Female tiefling fighter 6 (tactician)/duelist 6

LN Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +16**Defense****AC** 31, touch 22, flat-footed 19 (+9 armor, +6 Dex, +6 dodge)**hp** 92 (12d10+24)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +7; +5 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** parry, infernal wrath of the Jierre bloodline**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +2 *razorburst rapier* +22/+17/+12 (1d6+12, 15–20/x2) or**Melee** +1 *dagger* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+8, 19–20/x2)**Special Attacks** duelist combat**Statistics****Str** 12, **Dex** 22, **Con** 14, **Int** 20, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 35**Feats** Broken Wing Gambit, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (Rapier), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Bluff), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (Rapier), Weapon Specialization (Rapier)**Skills** Acrobatics +14, Bluff +21, Climb +9, Diplomacy +18, Escape Artist +14, Knowledge (nobility) +20, Knowledge (planes) +11, Perception +16, Perform (oratory) +18, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +11, Swim +9**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *potion of haste*, *potion of remove paralysis* (2), *potion of magic circle against evil*, *potion of remove blindness/deafness*, etc.; **Other Gear** +3 *razorburst rapier*, +3 *mithral chainmail*, +1 *dagger*, belt of constitution and dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +4, *seducer's bane bracelet*, *handy haversack*, *contingent gatecrasher charm***NEW FEAT.****Immovable Object (Combat)**

You have trained extensively in a strange fighting style, wielding an *immovable rod* in each hand. As such, the rods have almost become extensions of your own arms.

**Prerequisites:** Int 13+; Two-Weapon Fighting, proficiency in clubs or light maces

**Benefit:** You can activate or deactivate an *immovable rod* as a free action. By quickly pressing the buttons on two rods, you can effectively gain a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect) as you brachiate through the air. You gain Fly as a class skill.

If subject to an effect that forces you to move while you have an *immovable rod* in hand, you may choose to ignore it. As a swift action when you hit an opponent with an *immovable rod*, you can anchor the target to the rod, preventing it from moving away from the rod. The target is not entangled or paralyzed; it simply cannot move from its location without first destroying the rod or making a successful DC 30 Strength check as a full-round action to move with the rod up to 10 feet. The rod remains motionless and cannot be used to attack while it is anchoring a creature. You cannot use this ability against amorphous or incorporeal targets.

**Normal:** Activating or deactivating an *immovable rod* is a move action.

**Special Abilities**

**Tactician (Ex)** Once per day, Lya can spend a standard action to grant herself and all allies within 30 feet the following ability, which lasts for 6 rounds: "Whenever you make a melee attack and hit your opponent, you can use a free action to grant that opponent a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls against you until the end of your next turn or until your opponent attacks you, whichever happens first. If that opponent attacks you with this bonus, it provokes attacks of opportunity from your allies."

**Duelist Combat (Ex)** Between her Mobility feat and her duelist training, Lya gets a +8 bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity she provokes by moving. She can also charge across difficult terrain.

Her rapier attacks against living creatures with a discernible anatomy deal +6 damage, which is factored in above. Remove this damage against creatures with no proper anatomy.

Whenever she takes a full attack action, she can elect not to take one of her attacks. At any time before her next turn, she can attempt to parry an attack against her or an adjacent ally as an immediate action. To parry, she makes an attack roll, using the same bonuses as the attack she chose to forego. If her attack roll beats the roll of the attacking creature, the attack automatically misses. She also takes a –4 penalty when attempting to parry an attack made against an adjacent ally.

When she successfully parries, she can make an attack of opportunity against the creature whose attack she thwarted.

**Obscurati Magic Items (Su)** Lya's *seducer's bane bracelet* grants her a +5 competence bonus on Sense Motive checks, and a +5 resistance bonus on Will saves against enchantment effects. If she makes a successful Will save against an enchantment, the caster of that spell incorrectly senses the effect has succeeded. Additionally, Lya wearer knows an enchantment targeted her and the enchantment's source. The bracelet creates an aura on its wearer, visible to *detect magic*, matching the failed enchantment spell or effect, and lasting as long as the intended enchantment's duration. However, if Lya attacks the caster or its allies, or otherwise acts in a way that's contradictory to the failed spell's effect, the caster of that spell immediately realizes the enchantment was ineffective.

Her *decoy ring* allows her to, whenever she takes the withdraw action or becomes helpless (including falling unconscious), instantly become invisible for 3 rounds. The ring creates four illusory duplicates that either run off in opposite directions or perform other plausible actions that could draw enemy attention away from her. The duplicates last for 3 rounds before disappearing, but they instantly pop out of existence if struck by an attack (AC 10) and can be disbelieved (Will DC 19). Lya's allies always know her true location and can freely provide aid or assistance to her.

Finally, her *razorburst rapier* can cut people's limbs off. If a target is reduced to 6 HP or below, it must make a Fortitude save (DC = damage dealt). On a success, the target loses an extremity of its choice—hand, foot, arm, or leg. On a failure, the attacker chooses which extremity the target loses.

**Infernal Wrath of the Jierre Bloodline (Su)** Once per day, when Lya Jierre fails a saving throw against a spell, as a free action she may have that spell's caster takes 2d6 fire damage and then catch on fire, taking an additional 1d6 damage per round. If the spell is dismissable, the caster cannot put out the flames until he or she dismisses the spell. The caster is aware of this condition as soon as his spell takes effect.



**Merton Goncala**

CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male half-orc fighter (unbreakable) 9

LN Medium humanoid (orc, human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10**Defenses****AC** 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20 (+10 armor)**hp** 90 (9d10+45)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6; +2 vs. mind-affecting, +2 vs. sonic**Defensive Abilities** orc ferocity**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** sonic staff +15/+10 (1d6+6)**Statistics****Str** 18, **Dex** 10, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +13 (+17 trip); **CMD** 23 (27 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Diehard, Endurance, Felling Smash, Greater Trip, Heroic Recovery (2/day), Heroic Defiance, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Power Attack, Tripping Staff, Toughness, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff)**Skills** Craft (acoustics) +12, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +9**Languages** Common, Giant, Orc**SQ** armor training 2**Combat Gear** resonance bomb; **Other Gear** sonic staff, +1 full plate, belt of mighty constitution +2, padded helmet (+2 circumstance bonus on saves vs. sonic effects), contingent gatecrasher charm**Special Abilities****Unbreakable Combat (Ex)** Twice per day Merton can spend a standard action to make a new save against a harmful condition or affliction that required a Fortitude save. Once per day as an immediate action he can delay the onset of a harmful condition or affliction until the end of his next turn.**Felling Staff (Ex)** Merton can use an attack action to make a single melee attack at his highest base attack bonus while using Power Attack. If he hits an opponent, he can spend a swift action to attempt a trip combat maneuver against that opponent.

Whenever he trips an opponent, that creature provokes attacks of opportunity.

**Resonance Bomb (Ex)** Merton can throw this bomb in a similar manner as making an attack with a splash weapon (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 202). The bomb has a range increment of 20 ft. It explodes on impact, dealing 4d6 sonic damage in a 20-foot radius (Reflex DC 15 for half). This damage ignores the hardness of objects, most likely annihilating any trees in its area of effect.**Sonic Staff (Ex)** This metal polearm has complex flanged baffles along its haft, and it ends with a faintly glowing two-tined cap, like a tuning fork. When struck, it reverberates near-deafeningly, and by adjusting its components Merton can tune it to the destructive resonance of an object.This +1 *thundering quarterstaff* constantly emits a high-pitched whine that is uncomfortable to animals. Animals do not willingly approach within 10 feet of the staff, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check. The staff also provides a +2 bonus on Strength checks to break a door or other object.Once per day, the wielder of this staff can slam it against the ground as a standard action to create a wave of thunder and force, either in a 10-foot radius burst centered on the wielder or in 30-foot cone-shaped burst. Creatures in the area take 3d6 points of sonic damage and are pushed away as if bull rushed. The staff makes a combat maneuver check (CMB +17) and applies its results to each creature in the area. This effect cannot penetrate a *silence* spell or any similar magical silence.**Obscurati Ambush Mage**

CR 6 • XP 2,400

Male human illusionist (shadow) 7

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +4; **Senses** Perception +9**Defense****AC** 15, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+4 armor, +1 deflection)**hp** 43 (7d6+21)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th, concentration +11)7/day—*binding darkness***Illusionist Spells Prepared** (CL 7th, concentration +11)4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *shadow conjuration* (DC 18)3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *invisibility sphere*, *vampiric touch*2nd—*blindness/deafness* ×2 (DC 16), *darkness*, *ghoul touch* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *spectral hand*1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shocking grasp* ×2, *vanish*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close***Opposition Schools** enchantment, transmutation**Statistics****Str** 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12**Feats** Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Toughness**Skills** Appraise +14, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (planes) +14, Perception +9, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +7**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Primordial**SQ** arcane bond (dagger)**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1

**Obscurati Skulk**

CR 4 • XP 1,200

Male human rogue 5

N Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** Perception +9**Defense****AC** 17, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 shield, +2 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 40 (5d8+15)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +2**Defensive Abilities** evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** masterwork short sword +7 (1d6+3/19–20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +3d6**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Acrobatic, Dodge, Weapon Focus (Short Sword), Stealthy**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Climb +11, Escape Artist +12, Fly +5, Intimidate +7, Perception +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Stealth +12, Swim +11**Languages** Common**SQ** rogue talents (fast stealth, peerless maneuver), trap-finding**Combat Gear** *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear** mwk short sword, mwk studded leather armor, mwk buckler**Lux Musketeer**

CR 4 • XP 1,200

Male and female human gunslinger 5

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +6; **Senses** Perception +10**Defense****AC** 18, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 40 (5d10+10)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mwk bayonet +6 (1d6)**Ranged** mwk musket +10 (1d12+4/x4)**Special Attacks** gun training (musket)**Statistics****Str** 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 13, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 19**Feats** Extra Grit, Far Shot, Gunsmithing, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (Musket)**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Intimidate +7, Perception +10, Profession (sailor) +10, Survival +10, Swim +8**Languages** Common, Infernal**SQ** deeds (deadeye, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, pistol-whip, quick clear, utility shot), grit**Other Gear** mwk musket, mwk bayonet, mwk studded leather



# APPENDIX TWO

## BERANS

Herein the stats of NPCs the party might end up fighting or having on their side.

### Glaucia Evora

CR 9 • XP 6,400

Female gnoll cleric 8

LG Medium humanoid (gnoll)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception

#### Defense

**AC** 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

**hp** 70 (10d8+20)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +4, **Will** +13

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *merciful quarterstaff* +7/+2 (1d6 plus 1d6 nonlethal)

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (4d6, DC 16)

**Domain Spell-like Abilities** (CL 8th, concentration +11)

6/day—*resistant touch* (+2)

At will—*aura of protection* (8 rounds/day), *freedom's call* (8 rounds/day), *liberation* (8 rounds/day)

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +11)

4th—*discern lies* (DC 17), *freedom of movement*, *restoration*

3rd—*dispel magic* x2, *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*

2nd—*enthrall* (DC 15), *shield other*, *silence* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*, *zone of truth* (DC 15)

1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *forbid action* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*, *remove fear*

**Domains** Liberation, Protection

#### Statistics

**Str** 10, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Alertness, Extra Channel, Iron Will, Selective Channel, Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

**Skills** Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +8

**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Giant, Orc

**SQ** aura

**Other Gear** +1 *merciful quarterstaff*, bracer of liberty

### Brakken of Heffanita

CR 5 • XP 1,600

Male unique minotaur aristocrat 1

LG Large monstrous humanoid

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### Defense

**AC** 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (+5 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 52 (6d10+1d8+14)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** natural cunning

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** quarterstaff +8/+3 (1d8+4) and gore +3 (1d6+1)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** powerful charge (gore +10, 2d6+4)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 16)

3/day—*calm emotions* (DC 15), *charm person* (DC 14)

#### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 20

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy)

**Skills** Bluff +13, Diplomacy +18, Handle Animal +11, Intimidate +19, Linguistics +7, Perception +6, Sense Motive +12, Survival +6

**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Giant, Orc, Primordial; telepathy 100 ft.

### Bruse Shantus

CR 8 • XP 4,800

Male minotaur fighter 4

LG Large monstrous humanoid

**Init** –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

#### Defense

**AC** 20, touch 8, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +5 natural, –1 Dex, –1 size)

**hp** 94 (10d10+34)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11; +1 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** natural cunning

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *earth breaker* +15/+10 (3d6+8/x3) and gore +8 (1d6+2)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** powerful charge (gore +15, 2d6+6)

#### Statistics

**Str** 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +15 (+19 bull rush); **CMD** 24 (26 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Minotaur's Charge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Earth Breaker), Toughness, Weapon Specialization (Earth Breaker)

**Skills** Bluff +16, Climb +10, Diplomacy +16, Intimidate +23, Sense Motive +12, Survival +11

**Languages** Common, Giant, Orc

**SQ** armor training 1, bravery +1

**Other Gear** +1 *earth breaker*, +1 *chainmail*, circlet of persuasion

**Kenna Vigilante Actual**

CR 9 • XP 6,400

Female wingless half-dragon human ranger 8

LN Medium dragon

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +12**Defenses****AC** 14, touch 10, flat-footed (+4 natural)**hp** 94 (8d10+48)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5**Immune** fire, sleep, paralysis**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +15 (1d4+6), bite +15 (1d6+6)**Special Attacks** favored enemy (dragons +4, gnolls +2)**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 5th; concentration +6)2nd—*barkskin*, *cat's grace*1st—*longstrider*, *resist energy***Statistics****Str** 23, **Dex** 10, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 25**Feats** Endurance, Iron Will, Power Attack, Run, Toughness, Weapon Focus (Bite, Claws)**Skills** Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +12, Perception +12, Profession (soldier) +12, Survival +12**Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant**SQ** favored terrain (mountains +4, plains +2), hunter's bond (companions), swift tracker, track, wild empathy +10, woodland stride**Rescued Soldiers**

CR 3 • XP 800

Male and female various warrior 5

LN Medium humanoid (varies)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9**Defense****AC** 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10**hp** 45 (5d10+15)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** unarmed strike +8 (1d3+3 nonlethal) or**Melee** scavenged battleaxe +8 (1d8+4/x3)**Ranged** scavenged bow +5 (1d8/x3)**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 11, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18**Feats** Alertness, Outflank, Toughness**Skills** Perception +9, Sense Motive +1**Languages** Common**Cantabrilla Guards**

CR 3 • XP 800

Male and female various warrior 5

LN Medium humanoid (varies)

**Init** +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9**Defense****AC** 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+6 armor)**hp** 45 (5d10+15)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** bayonet +5 (1d6)**Ranged** musket +8 (1d12/x4)**Statistics****Str** 11, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 18**Feats** Far Shot, Point-Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (Musket)**Skills** Perception +7**Languages** Common**Gear** chainmail, musket, bayonet



# APPENDIX THREE

## TECHNOLOGICAL REVELATIONS

By defeating, capturing, or enlisting Tinker, Risur gets access to many possible technological innovations that might otherwise takes decades to be developed. If you don't want to introduce advanced technology to your campaign, you might re flavor his innovations as completely magical, or can instead assume that any aid Tinker offers Risur comes over the course of years or decades, not months.

### BUILDING THE FUTURE

Tinker is demented, and even if given orders he'll draft tons of possible designs, not all of them viable for mass-production. The party might want long-range communication via spark-gap radios and antennae, but Tinker's first design would attach the transmitter to a lightning gun, and use the signals to control exploding three-legged clockwork robots. It takes a more rational mind to ratchet down his grandiose ideas, making Technologist PCs invaluable.

Similarly, if Tinker dies and the party merely manages to collect his mad scribblings of schematics, it will take another genius to figure out which designs should be pursued. Even with his eccentricities, though, Tinker is valuable alive.

Areas of innovation include vehicle tech, personal weapons, and various types of groundwork science.

### Seeking Breakthroughs

At the end of this adventure, have the party choose one of the following innovations for Tinker to pursue. At the start of adventure seven, the party must make an Intelligence check and a Wisdom check (DC 20). The result determines whether the innovation is fully operational, or if there remain some kinks to work out.

One PC can make both checks, or two different PCs can make them. A Technologist PC can roll twice and take the better result. If Risur doesn't have access to Tinker, the PCs take a -5 penalty to these checks.

At the end of adventure seven, have the party choose another innovation, which will be ready by the start of Adventure Eight; and likewise choose an innovation at the end of eight that will be ready at the start of nine. When the party rolls for the effectiveness of a new innovation, they may also roll again for any unfinished prior innovations.

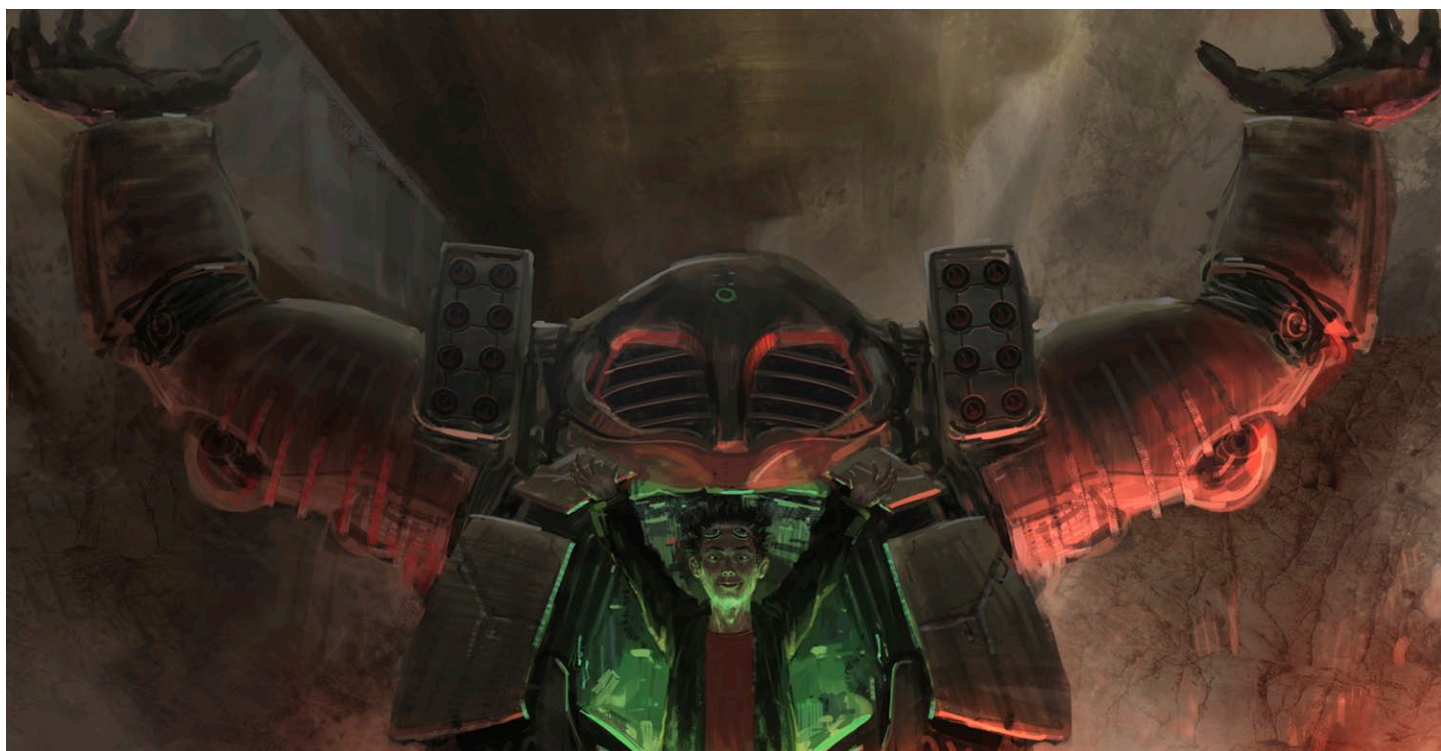
Some innovations have mostly background flavor effects. For instance, the Advanced Explosives innovation simply mean that Risuri ships will have higher-powered (and thus higher-level and higher-cost) gunnery components than Danoran ships. It doesn't lower the cost, though it offers the chance for secondary innovations.

- ♦ Advanced Explosives.
- ♦ Analytical Engine.
- ♦ Battle Armor.
- ♦ Electrical Breakthrough.
- ♦ Magic Interference Breakthrough.
- ♦ Rockets.
- ♦ Spark-Gap Communication.

### Advanced Explosives.

Risur can load its ships' cannons with explosive rounds (i.e., increase the attack bonus of Risuri ships by +2, with attendant increases in cost). Additionally, PCs can get access to advanced grenades, rocket-propelled grenades, and demolition charges.

**Failed Int.** The poorly quality-controlled ship weapons sometimes explode before they reach the target. Instead of adding +2 to their attack bonus, roll each round to add 1d6-4.



**Failed Wis.** The overly elaborate advanced personal weapons instead have a 25% chance of blasting three rounds in a row, each time doing half the normal damage. Each time they explode, they bounce 2 squares in a random direction.

### Analytical Engine.

Requires Magic Interference Breakthrough. Computers would normally be impossible because magic interferes with such small-scale technological operations, but with the proper research that problem is eliminated. These heavy machines take up 4 squares, but can quickly calculate extreme range weapon trajectories. Risuri ships gain the Extreme Range gunnery enhancement, with attendant increases in cost.

**Failed Int.** The device fails to take into account the rocking of the firing ship, and so attacks at Long range suffer a penalty of -5 or the ship's speed for that round, whichever is worse.

**Failed Wis.** The device is massive, taking up 25 squares and requiring a staff of 20 crewmen to operate.

### Battle Armor.

Similar to Tinker's own battle armor and the experimental steam suit in adventure three, these suits make foot soldiers resilient and dangerous. See the Battle Suit, below.

**Failed Int.** The suits easily break down. It takes a -5 penalty to the saving throws required after it takes damage.

**Failed Wis.** The viewport is suitably located for a gnome. Medium creatures take a -5 penalty to Perception checks while inside the suit, and Medium or smaller creatures adjacent to them benefit from concealment.

### Electrical Breakthrough.

In addition to allowing electrical lights and the production of wired power, this innovation gives you lightning prods, lightning guns, and Tinker coils.

**Failed Int.** If the attack misses, the weapon instead discharges into its wielder, dealing 1[w] damage.

**Failed Wis.** The weapon requires a 20-pound backpack capacitor that crackles with harmless but awesome looking threads of electricity, like carrying a Tesla coil.

### Magic Interference Breakthrough.

Precise measurements reveal that ambient magical energies interfere with the operation of complex technological devices (i.e., "gremlins"). Very fine instruments are thus capable of detecting the presence of magic due to the increased failure rate of simple machines. This effectively creates magical detectors, and allows for anti-magic mines.

**Failed Int.** The devices sometimes register false positives, about once every ten rounds. Fine for detectors, bad for mines.

**Failed Wis.** The detectors have a magical light to make them easier to read. This light is integral to the design, and removing it requires a complete rework.

### Rockets.

Requires Advanced Explosives. Risur gets access to rocket weaponry. It is far too large for personal use, but allows for ships to bombard from much farther away than cannons. Warfare is forever changed.

**Failed Int.** The rockets tend to explode on launch.

**Failed Wis.** The chemical propellants are unstable, and can only be mixed within half an hour of the launch. If you mix and then don't launch, the rocket explodes.

### Spark-Gap Transmitter.

Requires Electrical Breakthrough. Risur gains access to radio communication, albeit limited typically to one-way messages, since receiving can be done without electricity, but transmitters need a power station. Distance is currently limited to about 50 miles under average conditions, but weather and terrain can greatly reduce that.

The party also gains access to remote-detonated explosives if they have the Advanced Explosives innovation.

**Failed Int.** Transmitters cannot be used for more than 1 minute at a time before the spark-gap generator overheats and has to cool off for 5 minutes.

**Failed Wis.** Broadcast frequency is exceedingly hard to change, so no more than one transmitter can be active in a given area without causing interference.

### New Weapon Properties.

**Charged:** If the target is wearing metal armor or carrying a large quantity of metal, the attacker gains a +2 bonus to his attack roll. After firing, the weapon is depleted and takes a standard action to "reload" by cranking a mechanism to generate sufficient charge.

### New Weapons.

**Advanced Grenade:** This device appears to be little more than a metal cylinder tapering to a handle containing a spring-loaded lever. To detonate the device, you disengage the safety pin while depressing the handle's lever, which releases the firing pin when thrown. Making an attack with a grenade is similar to throwing a splash weapon. The device detonates at the beginning of your next turn, hopefully in the area you targeted. The device relies on a concussive blast to deal damage, and all creatures within a 20-foot radius take 3d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 15 for half).

**Advanced Rocket-Propelled Grenade Launcher:** This launcher fires advanced grenades at much greater speeds. Unlike thrown grenades, those fired from the launcher detonate immediately upon impact. Reloading an advanced rocket-propelled grenade launcher is a standard action.

**Lightning Prod:** This is a two-handed martial melee weapon about the same size and shape of a spear.

**Lightning Gun:** This is a one-handed advanced firearm.

### New Items.

**Anti-Magic Mine.** Cost 50 gp. When a creature with any spellcasting ability, magical powers, or magic items steps over the mine, it detonates. A creature using magic in any space adjacent to the mine likewise triggers it, as does a spell that affects a space adjacent to the mine. Some extremely powerful magical manifestations might detonate the mine from farther away.

The mines are inert normally. They must be activated as a standard action. One round later the mine is active, so spellcasting mine-layers are encouraged to move quickly.

When the mine detonates it deals 3d6 bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage in a 5-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 15 for half).

**Demolition Charge.** Cost 1,000 gp. These can be timed precisely for detonation, anywhere from a few seconds to an hour. (Specialized ones can instead range from an hour to four days.) Each charge can blow up most materials in a 30-ft. radius. Creatures in the area take 10d6 bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage (Reflex DC 15 for half). Preparing them for detonation requires three Dexterity or Intelligence



New Weapons	Cost	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Capacity	Weight	Type	Special
Lightning prod	100 gp	2d8	x2	—	—	5 lbs.	Elec.	charged
Lightning gun	100 gp	2d10	x2	50 ft.	—	8 lbs.	Elec.	charged
Advanced grenade	50 gp	3d6	x2	20 ft.	—	1 lb.	B	See description
Advanced rocket-propelled grenade launcher	1,000 gp	3d6	x2	60 ft.	1	10 lbs.	B	See description

checks (DC 10), each made as a standard action. If all succeed, the charge detonates exactly as desired. Failing one or two causes the device to detonate slightly early or late (in a range of 25% of the intended time). Failing three in a row detonates the charge immediately.

**Magical Detector.** Cost 10 gp. This remarkably simple device is integrated with a pocket watch. By tracking how much the precision of the clockwork is maligned, it can detect and locate magic. A silver triangle on a track around the perimeter of the clock face spins to point like a compass at the strongest source of magic within 30 feet. If there is no magic present, it simply turns in alignment with the clock's second hand.

The item is fairly useless to high-level adventurers, but it will quickly become a common item in households, shops, and government checkpoints, often taking the shape of ornate clocks.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

In the final four adventures of the campaign, the party will gain access to arcanoscientific innovations not listed above, including an airship and limited instantaneous communication. By the end of the campaign, though, the party's actions at the Axis Seal will determine whether technology will continue to advance as it has in reality, or if the world will adopt a different set of physical laws.

**Tinker Coil.** Cost 1,000 gp. If linked to a power source, this 10-ft. tall pylon hums with electrical energy. A conductive surface on the ground within 10 ft. causes creatures that enter the area to complete a circuit. Any creature that enters the area or ends its turn there takes 4d6 electricity damage (but no more than once per round).

### Battle Suit

*The techs assure you they've got all the kinks worked out, and that the thrum of the steam engine strapped to your back is meant to be reassuring.*

**Aura** none (pure technology); **CL** —; **Weight** 1,000lbs

**Slot** —; **Price** 5,000gp

### 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.

# APPENDIX FOUR

## NEW MAGIC ITEMS

### Bracer of Liberty

*Dozens of links from the chains of slaves were shattered apart and half-melted into the shape of this bracelet. If you lose control of your own will, the links sear with heat and bring you to your senses.*

**Aura** faint abjuration; **CL** 9th

**Slot** wrists; **Price** 16,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

#### Description

If the wearer of this bracer uses an effect with the charm of compulsion descriptor, he takes 4d8 points of fire damage. Once per day, when the wearer or an ally within 60 feet fails a save against a charm or compulsion effect, the wearer may activate the bracer as an immediate action. The wearer takes fire damage equal to one-quarter of his maximum hit points, and the charm or compulsion effect immediately ends. The creature responsible for the effect takes 4d8 points of fire damage.

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *magic circle against evil*; **Cost** 8,000 gp

### Godmind Urn (Minor Artifact)

*Did it change shapes when you picked it up? You think . . . perhaps it looked different when the gnome possessed it. But no matter. It looks perfect now, just like you would want. And its whispers are oh so soothing.*

**Aura** strong divination and transmutation; **CL** 20th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 5 lbs.

#### Description

If no creature owns this urn, when you touch it choose the type of creature, object, or action you are most interested in, such as death, fey, guns, machines, music, revenge, ships, snakes, or writing. This becomes your domain. If you lose possession of the urn for at least a day or if you die, you are no longer considered its owner.

While you own the device you constantly hear barely-perceptible whispers telling what occurs related to your domain throughout the world. You gain a +5 bonus to skill checks directly related to your domain.

Ownership of the urn slowly drives you insane, and as you are drawn closer to your domain you develop delusions and withdraw from the rest of the world. A player who is not roleplaying his character slowly going crazy has managed to shake free of the urn's influence and can no longer use it. A spirit medium can communicate with the urn without needing to go crazy.

The owner of the urn can control unattended inanimate objects and non-hostile creatures with Intelligence 2 or less that are related to her domain, as long as they are Huge or smaller. She spends her own actions to direct them (standard action to attack, move action to move, etc.). GMs are encouraged to adjudicate this broadly.

### Razorburst Weapon (weapon property)

*Pairing Drakran magic and Danoran science, this weapon's blade is edged with hovering, jagged teeth that glint in the light. Upon activation these teeth saw back and forth in a keening blur, liable to sever something vital.*

**Price** +1 enhancement bonus.

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 8th; **Weight** —;

#### Description

When the wielder of a razorburst weapon damages an enemy that has fewer hit points than double the weapon's enhancement modifier (the GM should inform the player when this is the case), the weapon shrieks as its bladed teeth saw back and forth as a mechanism near the hilt unspools. The target must make a Fortitude save (DC = damage dealt by the attack). On a success, the target loses an extremity of its choice—hand, foot, arm, or leg. On a failure, the attacker chooses which extremity the target loses. Creatures without extremities are unaffected.

A severed arm or hand prevents use of anything that they were holding or carrying. A severed foot slows the target. A severed leg renders the target prone.

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *keen edge*; **Cost** +1 bonus

### Skull of Cheshimox

*This six-foot skull freezes the skin off anyone who touches it. Bone hinges hold its jaw on, and a bone crank can force its maw open, unleashing a blast of frost.*

**Aura** moderate necromancy and evocation; **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Price** 45,000 gp; **Weight** 40 lbs.

#### Description

Any creature that touches the skull takes 4d6 cold damage each round. Prolonged contact destroys most organic materials, so the skull is best mounted on a scaffold made from the dead dragon Cheshimox's own bones. Typically it is then carried on a sled which can be turned 90 degrees as a move action.

The crank to activate the skull can be touched without risk. Putting the skull in a *bag of holding* or similar container will just ruin that container.

The skull can be activated as a standard action. Freezing cold fills an area extending from the skull in a straight line to a distance of 60 feet. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in that area takes 4d6 cold damage. The spray continues until the start of the activator's next turn, at which point, if the skull's cold has not killed a creature during this activation, the skull deals 4d6 negative energy damage to the activator.

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *animate dead, cone of cold*; **Cost** 22,500 gp





### Sonic Staff

*This metal polearm has complex flanged baffles along its haft, and it ends with a faintly glowing two-tined cap, like a tuning fork. When struck, it reverberates near-deafeningly, and by adjusting its components you can tune it to the destructive resonance of an object.*

**Aura** faint necromancy, moderate evocation; **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Price** 22,700 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

#### Description

This +1 *thundering quarterstaff* constantly emits a high-pitched whine that is uncomfortable to animals. Animals do not willingly approach within 10 feet of the staff, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check. The staff also provides a +2 bonus on Strength checks to break a door or other object.

Once per day, the wielder of this staff can slam it against the ground as a standard action to create a wave of thunder and force, either in a 10-foot radius burst centered on the wielder or in 30-foot cone-shaped burst. Creatures in the area take 3d6 points of sonic damage and are pushed away as if bull rushed. The staff makes a combat maneuver check (CMB +12) and applies its results to each creature in the area. This effect cannot penetrate a *silence* spell (or any similar magical silence effect).

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blindness/deafness*, *discordant blast*; **Cost** 11,500 gp

### The Tyrant's Eye

*You get only a glimpse of this pale scarred orb—a giant, withered eye—and then your whole body feels like it's burning away.*

**Aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Price** 45,000 gp; **Weight** 6 lbs.

#### Description

To be used safely, this orb must be kept tightly wrapped and covered with a rune-stitched black cloth at all times. It seems to twitch while held, as if the eye is looking for enemies. Uncovering the orb is a swift action. Covering it securely is a standard action.

While being held, the eye can be used an additional focus for any spell with the force descriptor. Using the eye in this way causes the spell to function at +1 caster level and deal an extra 1 point of damage per die.

If the eye's wrapping is uncovered or even loosened, intense magical force blasts out and tears the covering away, making it nigh impossible to "aim." Any creature that starts its turn within line of sight of the uncovered orb takes 3d6+6 points of force damage. The eye cannot affect creatures it can't see, so darkness and hiding can protect creatures. The eye has a +10 bonus on Perception checks.

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *arcane eye*, *magic missile*; **Cost** 22,500 gp

### Tyrant's Teeth

*Dagger-sharp fangs ripped from the skull of a tyrant lizard clatter around your neck. When you attack, a ghostly reptilian head appears and snaps down on your target.*

**Aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 9th

**Slot** neck; **Price** 24,000 gp; **Weight** –

#### Description

This item only functions if the wearer has survived being bitten by a Huge or larger reptile or dragon. While wearing this item, the wearer's footsteps make the ground tremble slightly, imparting a –5 penalty on Stealth checks.

If the wearer takes energy damage, his attacks deal an additional 1d6 points of energy damage of the same type for 1 round. If he is damaged by multiple energy types, he only deals bonus damage of the most recent type. Once per day, when the wearer hits an opponent with a melee attack, he may use a swift action to cause a spectral tyrannosaur to appear and bite the target. The tyrannosaur deals 4d6 points of force damage to the target.

#### Crafting Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *draconic reservoir*, *spiritual weapon*; **Cost** 12,000 gp

### Vigilante Sprint

*Run straight at the guy with the gun. Well, not quite straight.*

#### Training

**Requirement:** Characters with the Martial Scientist theme who spend time jogging with Kenna Vigilante can learn this ability. Alternatively, those researching her thesis, *How Not to be Shot*, can learn this technique.

#### Description

While running, you retain your Dexterity bonus to your Armor Class, you gain a +2 dodge bonus on AC against ranged attacks, and you gain a +2 dodge bonus on Reflex saves against area effects.

## CANTABRILLA ROUTE

### Mile Markers and Points of Interest.

Locations include number of miles from Seobriga. Parentheticals list miles to the mid-point of the 36-mile range used in the Bruse's challenge.

- ♦ **Mile 128 (-18).** Starting point for Liss Rail Construction.
- ♦ Mile 127 (-17).
- ♦ Mile 126 (-16).
- ♦ Mile 125 (-15).
- ♦ **Mile 132 (-14).** Rio la Heffa. River requires a bridge.
- ♦ **Mile 133 (-13).** Serra Malex. Small mountain ridge. Tunnel already completed.
- ♦ Mile 132 (-12).
- ♦ Mile 131 (-11).
- ♦ Mile 130 (-10).
- ♦ **Mile 137 (-9).** El Fuerte Toro. Military garrison, fort, and walled village. +2 Morale.
- ♦ **Mile 138 (-8).** West edge of Cheshimox territory.
- ♦ Mile 139 (-7).
- ♦ Mile 140 (-6).
- ♦ Mile 141 (-5).
- ♦ Mile 142 (-4).
- ♦ **Mile 143 (-3).** Rio Gelado. River requires a bridge.
- ♦ Mile 144 (-2).
- ♦ Mile 145 (-1).
- ♦ **Mile 146 (±0).** Target point for each team, in an open field.
- ♦ Mile 147 (+1).
- ♦ Mile 148 (+2).
- ♦ Mile 149 (+3).
- ♦ **Mile 150 (+4).** 10 Money bonus to whoever reaches here first.
- ♦ Mile 151 (+5).
- ♦ Mile 152 (+6).
- ♦ Mile 153 (+7).
- ♦ **Mile 154 (+8).** East edge of Cheshimox territory.
- ♦ **Mile 155 (+9).** Rio dola Lapis. River requires a bridge. Lizardfolk bandits prowling river demand a bribe worth 2 Materiel. If not bribed, they attack each day, costing 1 Morale. Bridge construction goes at half speed.
- ♦ Mile 156 (+10).
- ♦ Mile 157 (+11).
- ♦ Mile 158 (+12).
- ♦ Mile 159 (+13).
- ♦ **Mile 160 (+14).** Serra Degaspere. Small mountain ridge, requires two days for grading. The route calls for several tunnels totalling a mile in length, but ritualists performing *stone shape* are just three days away from completion.
- ♦ Mile 161 (+15).
- ♦ Mile 162 (+16).
- ♦ Mile 163 (+17).
- ♦ **Mile 164 (+18).** Starting point for Griento Railways.

### Starting Resources.

Griento starts with 0 Money, 1 Materiel, and 6 Morale. Lya provides 10 Money.

Liss starts with 2 Money, 2 Materiel, and 2 Morale. Pemberton might sell a Steam Crew, at the cost of 10 Money. The Steam Crew can build 1 extra mile per day without costing any Morale.



## CANTABRILLA CHALLENGE

Liss starts at Mile 128 (-18). Griento starts at Mile 164 (+18). They're competing to reach mile 146 (+0).

- ♦ **Miles:** To build a mile, you must expend 1 Materiel. Each mile after the first in a given day also costs 1 Morale.
- ♦ **Money:** Each day you acquire 1 Money per mile made the previous day. (You can spend 25,000 gp as if it were 1 Money.)
- ♦ **Materiel:** Each day you can expend Money, and the next day you acquire an equal amount of Materiel. For each 1 Money spent beyond the first on Materiel, there is a 5% chance of a mishap. A mishap causes 1d4 of the Materiel you ordered not to arrive.

- ♦ **Morale:** Certain events add or subtract Morale. If Morale goes below 0, you cannot build. You can buy 1 Morale for 2 Money.
- ♦ **Obstacles:** Bridges are required at miles 132, 143, and 155. Bridges cost (and earn) as much as 5 miles of track.
- ♦ **Disruptions:** A delayed train keeps Money and Materiel from arriving. A destroyed train eliminates the Money and Materiel. Rebuilding a destroyed bridge is equivalent to building 5 Miles of track. Attacks cost 1 Morale per day (or more at the DM's discretion, if they're very disastrous). Key personnel typically cost 1 Money to replace.







DAY		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Starting	Mile										
	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Spent	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Acquired	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Ending Mile Count											
Miscellaneous Notes											

DAY		11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Starting	Mile										
	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Spent	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Acquired	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Ending Mile Count											
Miscellaneous Notes											

DAY		21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Starting	Mile										
	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Spent	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Acquired	Money										
	Materiel										
	Morale										
Ending Mile Count											
Miscellaneous Notes											



## BERAN NEWS CLIPPING

(Translated from Beran)

...en, though, construction continues apace, with Oriento Railways commanding a solid lead over Liss Rail Construction. It remains to be seen if Mr. Pemberton's "steam drivers" will make a difference fast enough to justify their exorbitant expense, or if the lizardfolk of the Doches Swamp will listen to their scaled brother who joked, "My father always said his two favorite foods were manflesh and orcflesh. I bet the two taste great together."

—Hermesto Novahombre, *Cantabrilla Railroad staff writer*

## Bruse Bringing Bad News to Ber?

BRUSE SHANTUS HAS A NEW SECRET PLAN TO IMPROVE BER'S INDUSTRIAL competitiveness, say reliable sources in the army. This plan is to hand over leadership of our military research to a gnome named Tinker Oddcog, said to be a genius with machines. But our investigation shows that this gnome might have *dangerous connections* that could spell trouble for our nation.

On the 15th of Spring, the ship *Shore Thing* departed from the Risuri city of Flint, and it arrived in Seobriga on the 21st of Spring. Witnesses report seeing the gnome at the palace as early as the 26th, traveling in the company of Enforcer of Freedom Glaucia Evora who is currently acting as extemporaneous judge in Nakkard Quarter.

The gnome has not appeared publicly since, but sources report him visiting several *military installations* over the past two months, including the Drumalio Shipyard and the foundries in Piria Quarter. By all accounts, the gnome's visit yielded marked improvements in the functioning of those facilities' production machinery, and word is that the gnome can *magically speak to technology*.

So what worries us? Astute readers might have noticed that the date of Mr. Oddcog's departure from Flint was the same day as the release of a giant metal creation that *rampaged through the city*. Moreover, before that very day Tinker Oddcog had not been seen since nearly ten years earlier. And that last appearance was marred by *disasters* that included the deaths of two coworkers: one was crushed by a crane that witnesses said "came alive and moved on its own," the other was a victim of an unlikely train derailment that killed twenty.

While we will not posit the gnome is bad luck — for it is against the spirit of our glorious revolution to indulge in such superstition — we intend to keep investigating this gnome for evidence of malice or negligence.

As other recent stories have reported, members of Risur's military claim that the rampaging metal "colossus" was the work of a conspiracy that posed as legitimate military activities *endorsed by the king of Risur*. Might this gnome be attempting a similar subversion in our own nation?

Unfortunately we were unable to contact Mr. Oddcog for an interview, as the Bruse is keeping his location and movements a *state secret*. We sent a request to the Bruse's summer court, but at last report our messenger is 1,465th in line for an audience.

—Melissa Amarie, *freelancer*



## HOSTAGE LETTER

A Desperate Plea for Assistance, to whosoever may read this:

I trust that my goblin captors' literacy is insufficient to comprehend the contents of this missive. I bade them deliver this correspondence under the ruse that I require additional medical supplies for treating an epidemic they are suffering. Indeed, if you could kindly trade with this courier and pay him in gold coins, it would help maintain the deception and stave off what I fear is my inevitable execution should my usefulness to his tribe falter.

Thereafter, I heartily implore you to pass this letter along to the proper authorities so that they might effect my extraction from imminent bodily harm.

These goblins, which I understand to have been recently relocated from the caldera of Lago Fuego, reside some forty-eight kilometers from Citado Cavallo, compass heading 317 degrees. Alas, I lack a sextant to provide more accurate coordinates, but I believe once one nears the area, the confluence of insectile traffic should act as sufficient guidance to locate the  $\Omega$ -shaped valley they control.

While I am currently bereft of the ability to offer pecuniary compensation, I trust that as gentlemen and ladies of the Revolution, you will appreciate the debt of gratitude and service I shall owe to my rescuers.


Please come with the swiftness of the Avery Coast Railroad, for I dread what may befall nearby Beran settlements if the goblins continue to pursue satisfaction of their grievances.

—Dr. Elías Malapropism, visitor from Rísur



## Labyrinth

-  = pool  
 = grease pit  
 = wall

 = 10 feet

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# ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

## REVELATIONS FROM THE MOUTH OF A MADMAN

### The Clarity that Arises from Madness

The mad gnome inventor Tinker Oddcog is a wanted man. The colossus he crafted has gone berserk, and while the Royal Homeland Constabulary wants to know how to stop it, the conspiracy he built it for wants him silenced.

Tinker has fled to Ber, a nation of savages trying to make themselves civilized. Its minotaur ruler needs the gnome's inventions to keep his orc, gnoll, and lizardfolk rivals at bay, and he thinks it'd be a fun game to have the constables and conspiracy compete for first shot at their quarry. But there's another game afoot in Ber, and machinations at work only a madman can perceive.

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