



# ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

PART  
**10**

# GODMIND

FROM THE  
PEN OF RYAN NOCK



A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR  
REBELLIOUS HEROES OF LEVELS 17-19

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**From the Pen of** Thurston Hillman  
**Evocative Cover Illustration by** ShenFei  
**Stunning Cartographic Displays by** James Hazelett,  
Jonathan Roberts  
**Masterful Interior Illustrations by** Claudio Pozas,  
ShenFei, and  
artists of history

**Creepy Poems by** Jamie Isfeld  
**with Layout and Graphic Design by** Frank Michienzi  
**Ably Produced and Facilitated by** Russell Morrissey

**Special Thanks** to my mother Brenda. Because you'll never be  
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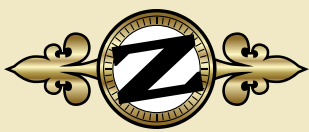
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# INTRODUCTION

## Wherein Everyone Actually is Out to Get You

The centuries-old Obscurati conspiracy has completed its masterstroke. By altering the world's cosmology they have shifted the nature of reality, and local rituals in each nation have made all of civilization loyal to them. All except the nation of Risur, where the party thwarted the local ritual. While the Risuri populace is still affected by the metaphysical shift—which guides people to be more rational, agreeable, and empathetic—they are still loyal to their homeland, and are the sole bulwark against the Obscurati's global domination.

The great change has created widespread turmoil, however. The sun has vanished, replaced by a gyre-shaped nebula barely brighter than the old moon, and the moon itself is black, visible only for the hole it cuts when it passes in front of the Gyre. Magic functions slightly differently, and it takes weeks of trial and error for spellcasters to regain their previous powers, but even then some magic like teleportation and long-distance communication have to be rediscovered. Nature itself begins to revolt as the fey titans who held sway over Risur

in the ancient past awaken and vie for control. And while the citizenry endure all these changes with excellent—almost frightening—calm, psychic manifestations start to appear wherever groups of too many like-minded people gather.

Meanwhile across the sea, Nicodemus, leader of the Obscurati and now tacit ruler of the world, has called the leaders and greatest thinkers of the various nations to gather in Cherage, capital of Danor. He plans to unify them to create his vision of a utopia, and the first step on the agenda is the conquest of Risur. If the party can stabilize Risur in time to reach this gathering, they might have a chance to undo what the conspiracy has wrought, but they'll find that other forces are already eyeing their newly-vulnerable world.

## BACKGROUND

Three elements are at play in this adventure—the Ob's ritual to change the world, the awakening of the fey titans, and the Ob's efforts to consolidate control of the world.

### The Great Eclipse

The world is fed by eight planes, providing energies of fire, air, water, earth, space, time, life, and death. The Obscurati's ritual has changed which planes this world is linked to, and so has altered the nature of reality itself.

Two years ago, the Ob's research into the planes accidentally roused the fey titan known as the **Voice of Rot**, and he has plotted ever since. A primordial manifestation of death, the Voice of Rot sensed the approaching reality shift, and realized it would give him a chance to actually witness the world's destruction. He subtly influenced agents and long-dormant cultists around the world to disrupt the Ob's ritual on Axis Island. Their interference prevented the Obscurati's colossus Borne from closing the Axis Seal, which has left the world drifting away from its sun, pulled toward **The Gyre**.

The Gyre is visible in the charcoal-black sky as a churning cloud of flickering stars, moving like a pair of immense gears. Over the coming months it will grow alarmingly close, and within a year the world will be pulled into that vortex. In truth, the Gyre is a graveyard of the multiverse, where dead or abandoned worlds are drawn in, ripped apart, and scattered in order to create new planes. In later adventures the party will have to go there to recover the planes this world was once linked to – or choose new planes from among the dying remnants – in order to undo the Obscurati's designs.

For now, the nature of magic has notably changed. See Appendix One: Reality Shift for full details, but the most pressing one for the party's interests likely is that, unless you can see your destination, it's impossible to teleport somewhere if you have not been there since the Ob's ritual occurred. Similarly, long-range communication like *sendings* only can contact people you have interacted with since the world changed. For at least the immediate future, if the party is curious what's going on somewhere in the world, they will need to trek there the old-fashioned way.

## ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

As a stand-alone adventure outside the ZEIGIST campaign, you'll want to strip away most of the background of *Godmind* and focus on the present. Have the awakening fey titans be a consequence of the same psychic phenomena that are creating the hiveminds. In this way, the adventure deals with 'titans' of forest and field, mountain and sea, and then civilization itself. The Axis Island elements don't fit cleanly into this abridged adventure.

Alternately, if you just want to mine this adventure for your own high-level campaign, the fey titans could show up as reawakened primordial entities or extraplanar invaders. The Axis Island events could be a rescue mission for an inventor who is using the island's strange magic to craft an airship, and who's being pursued by a hostile army. The titular godmind could be summoned by an eldritch ritual, or the result of a person's psychic powers activating and going out of control.

## KEEP AN OPEN PLOT

At this point, your players have access to ridiculous powers and resources, and so expecting a particular outcome for any given challenge is foolish. The temporary limits on teleportation and long-distance communication at the beginning of the adventure allow us to at least encourage a starting position, but we expect the PCs to come up with myriad courses after that. Throughout the ZEIGIST campaign we've enjoyed crafting complex, interlocking series of scenes, but we recognize that at this high level it's best to just throw up interesting obstacles and let the PCs figure out their own path.

We suggest you keep an open mind, and not get worried if they win a few encounters too handily. We'll push them to their limits eventually.

## The Fey Titans

The fey titans have over the centuries since Risur's founding occasionally risen up one at a time to vie for control of their domain—the **Ash Wolf's** forests, the **Father of Thunder's** fields, **Granny Allswell's** mountains, **She Who Writhes's** seas, and the Voice of Rot's swamps. Not since the nation's founding have all the titans awoken simultaneously, but the Voice of Rot's battle with the party in adventure nine, combined with the sudden reality shift, has roused their ire.

Traditionally the monarch of Risur has been responsible for subduing any rebellious titans, typically using some mix of physical might and a canny abuse of fey quirks to trick them into defeating themselves. After any such defeat, the titan is compelled to offer a boon and then return to its slumber.

Much of the first act of this adventure occurs in and around the city of Bole, located south of Flint, in more a fey-friendly region of the nation. In the farmlands west of Bole, the gazelle-like fey titan Father of Thunder rampages. Attracting an ever-growing herd of animals to his side, he devastates Risur's breadbasket and will cause a famine if not dealt with.

In the Antwalk Thicket east of Bole, important lumber-providing forests have been caught in rampant blazes. While locals blame the fires on the Ash Wolf, the truth is more complicated. Salamander hunters from the plane of fire, Jiese, came through a portal and killed one of the lupine titan's pups. The titan mistakenly blamed the loggers, and so the Ash Wolf hunts in the infernos to punish them. The fires themselves are the salamanders' doing, since they hope to claim this land as their own.

In Anthras Mountain mines south of Bole, tremors and quakes herald raids by gremlins, minions of Granny Allswell, who desires children to raise as her own. With the mines forced to shut down, Risur is threatened by a shortage of ore for industry.

The party might be willing to leave those problems alone to deal with more urgent threats, but they will need at least to defeat She Who Writhes before they can access the rest of the world. The tentacled titan madly lashes out at any vessel attempting to travel the seas around Risur. Her sheer size, speed, and ability to detect intruders in her waters make any sort of naval travel nigh impossible. While this titan's attacks effectively land-lock the party and the Risuri navy, it also keeps Danor and other nations from attacking. The party might be best-served to deal with all the other titans before confronting the she-kraken.

By contrast, though, the Voice of Rot avoids the party. Indeed, he has already traveled through a portal, and is making his way through the Gyre toward its center, feeding off all the death around him. He will pose a great threat to the party in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

## Obscured No More

During the Obscurati's ritual on Axis Island, the conspiracy's leader **Nicodemus the Gnostic** watched as the great colossus Borne opened the hundred-foot diameter golden Axis Seal, which unleashed devastating magical energies from across the multiverse. The forces damaged the colossus, but Ob mages were present to mitigate some of the destructive power, and the industrial titan it was able to rearrange enchanted stone pillars buried beneath the seal. This adjusted which planes the world was linked to, bringing about the new world the Obscurati desired.

To complete the ritual, Borne needed to lower the seal back over the ritual ground, which would protect the world from extraplanar incursion. At this critical juncture, though, cultists of the Voice of Rot





who had infiltrated the Ob set off explosions that killed most of those present and slew the body Nicodemus inhabited. Borne was blasted by waves of planar energy that tore him apart before he could close the seal. The three-hundred-foot tall colossus collapsed in pieces at the edge of the ritual valley, and the Axis Seal fell upon him, pinning the crippled construct.

Nicodemus's spirit form remanifested in Methia where he first died centuries earlier, and it took him several days to find a new host body and reach Cherage, the capital of Danor. Since then he has fumed, not knowing what went wrong with his ritual but suspecting Risur was responsible (which, by a small technicality, it was). The predations of She Who Writhes thwarted his first attempt to reach Axis Island (and cost him another body), and so he is forced to wait and turn his attention to other affairs.

Recognizing Risur and the PCs as a threat, Nicodemus has sent out word to the leaders and the most enlightened thinkers of Danor, Drakr, and Crisillyir, as well as the various smaller nations north of the Avery Sea. He has invited them to Cherage for the Forward Symposium, where he will explain what has happened, and use their mutual worries to unify them into a global government. With the new reality making people more reasonable, he can actually accomplish this goal with relative ease, after which his plan is to launch a massive invasion of Risur in order to wipe out any resistance. Then he'll turn his attention to fixing whatever went wrong at the Axis Seal.

What he doesn't realize, though, is that one of the planes he chose to link the world to, Ratios, had been assimilated by an extraplanar race known as the **Gidim**. These creatures, formed of psychic energies manifested into physical form, tried to invade the world thousands of years ago, but the Axis Seal cut them off. Now they return, and they find the mix of psionic energies the Obscurati have woven into the new reality a handy tool. While the **Gidim** will play a more prominent role in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, a familiar one of them—the wayfarer **Sijhen**—will attend Nicodemus's conference and help provoke a devastating psychic manifestation.

### The Wildcard

In Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the party thwarted a plot by **Benedict Pemberton** to conquer the nation of Ber. The former dragon tyrant, long disguised as a human industrialist, might even have lost a daughter to the party. But despite his megalomaniacal desire to conquer an entire nation, Pemberton realized the threat posed by the Ob, who were trying to conquer the *whole* world.

In the immediate aftermath of the Axis Seal ritual, Pemberton and his minions invaded Axis Island and defeated the defenders, who were panicked by the failure of the colossus. Expecting a counterattack by the Ob, he had his minions seize the Axis Fortress. But when no attack came (thanks to defense by She Who Writhes), Pemberton began to repurpose the fortress's factories to produce his own inventions.

More importantly, Pemberton can actually see the aftermath of the Obscurati's ritual, and while he doesn't have the acumen to undo it himself, he is inspired by the PCs' perspicacity in discovering his own plot. He intends to contact them and propose an alliance against the Obscurati.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The first act is contained to Risur, which the party will likely not be able to leave until they defeat She Who Writhes. If the party does this early without handling the other fey titans, they can handle that threat as they see fit later. In the second act, an ally encourages them to visit Axis Island, and then they'll have a chance to interrupt an effort of the Obscurati to consolidate power, but the party could deal with these two challenges in the other order.

### Act One: Against the Titans

The party finds themselves in charge of a changed Risur, where there is no sun and the rules of magic have changed, forcing them to spend at least a few weeks reinventing the wheel, as it were, to regain access to necessary magic. During that time they start to learn about the new nature of the planes, hear reports of the fey titans causing trouble, and witness people's behaviors change toward cooperation and reason.

This last one wouldn't seem so bad, except when a protest against inhumane work conditions turns into bedlam when the unified psychic will of the protesters manifests as a tentacled 'hivemind.' The party has to handle these troubles while cut off from news of the outside world.

In order to get beyond Risur's shores they must subdue She Who Writhes, but allies offer to help, including the mighty eladrin dreadnought **Asrabey Varal** and the archfey of the sea **Beshela**, who believes she can convince She Who Writhes to fight for them if the party can get her close enough. But when the party sails out to confront the fey titan, Asrabey betrays them and tries to kill Beshela and take control of the kraken. Swayed by the power of the new reality, he has decided to ally with the Obscurati.

### Act Two: The New Conspiracy

A blood tide rises after the battle with She Who Writhes. The blood carries a message from the demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** (see Adventure Four, *Always on Time*), offering them cryptic advice to investigate Axis Island, deal with their most pressing problems, and then rescue her in due time (detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*).

At Axis Island, the party sees a massive bloom of uncontrolled planar flux erupting into the sky from the island's central valley. Pemberton invites them to explore the Axis Seal for clues on how to undo the Ob's ritual, and if they agree to cooperate on defeating the new rulers of the world, he offers to share one of his innovations with them—airship technology. They'll need it to cross the world quickly and round up allies against the conspiracy. In fact, Pemberton styles himself leader of a *new* conspiracy, since after all he and the rest of the party are now the underdogs fighting against the global order.

Divinations and other clues alert the party to the upcoming Forward Symposium, where dignitaries will discuss plans for a world government founded with Nicodemus's ideology. Pemberton wants to send a sleeper agent in—**Brakken of Heffanita**, a telepathic minotaur and the former ambassador from Ber to Risur. He can form a psychic link with the party so they can see what he sees inside the symposium, and then decide how to respond.

The Ob launch an attack to reclaim Axis Island. Recognizing he can't sustain a prolonged assault, Pemberton invites the party to board their newly-upgraded airship, blow the joint, and fly the hell out of there. The party can then land and hide out near Cherage, since they need to stay within range of Brakken's link.

### The Forward Symposium

Heads of state, military leaders, and great thinkers arrive in Cherage, including familiar faces from previous adventures. Nicodemus espouses a prosperous new world of cooperation, and paints Risur and the PCs as villains who will try to stop them. He succeeds in getting an agreement from several nations to unify and attack Risur, and orders are sent out to begin preparations for an attack within a week. But when Nicodemus opens the floor to discussion of other ways to improve the world with the benefits of newfound cooperation, the group's aligned thoughts start to manifest a hivemind, like the one in Flint.

Philosophers suggest ways to improve the quality of life, economists recommend improving labor efficiency, and politicians propose a solution they've always secretly wanted but never have been able to voice: kill everyone who doesn't pull their weight. The normally abhorrent idea is greeted with near-unanimous approval by the assembled group. Possessing a clear purpose, the hivemind grows a tentacle cocoon around the thinkers and sets out to cull the city of Cherage of all undesirables. It has become the Godmind.

Nicodemus flees in horror, but Brakken—trapped inside the cocoon yet able to resist having his consciousness subsumed—is able to communicate with the party and guide them should they try to save the capital of the nation that has long been Risur's enemy.

While the party can totally sit back and let Cherage be consumed by the psychic vortex of murder-philosophers that value economic efficiency over human life, if they swoop in on their airship and save the day, they'll have planted the seeds for Danor to break free from the Ob's control. Now all they have to do is stop every other country's armies, but that's for Adventure Eleven.

## REWARDS

The party begins this adventure at 17<sup>th</sup> level, and should reach 18<sup>th</sup> level after act one, then 19<sup>th</sup> level at its end. The appendices at the end of Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky* provide guidelines for what resources the PCs have access to, now that they're basically in charge of an entire country. For that reason, we don't provide specific treasure, though the party can acquire various boons. Any miscellaneous 'loot' is probably better used by lesser subjects of Risur, and as usual, count any such gear the PCs keep against their monetary resources.

## CAMPAIGN VARIETY

This far into a campaign, different groups may have very different webs of allies and enemies for the PCs. Consider how each of these NPCs will fit into the campaign from here on.

**Alexander Grappa.** The mindmaker was likely killed in Adventure Seven, though he has enough mind magic to possibly have survived by burrowing into the subconscious of another Obscurati officer. If the party had a close bond with him, he might fill in the role of Brakken of Heffanita.

**Amielle Latimer.** The tiefling ghost gunsmith might have flown back to Danor and could be spying on the Obscurati. If she was found out, though, she'll want to stay in Flint to help protect it. However, she doesn't want to be privy to any secrets, because if she's destroyed and rejuvenates among the ghost council, they'll be able to compel her to talk. It might be best to keep her off-stage until the campaign climax, when she can make a pivotal sniper shot to save an endangered PC.

**Copperhat the Headless.** If he survives, Copperhat remains in the Dreaming, spying for the Voice of Rot and poised to cause chaos in Adventure Twelve.

**Kasvarina Varal.** If she rejoined the conspiracy, she's with Nicodemus running things. Her focus is on military and defense, and she'll direct the multi-pronged assault on Risur in Adventure Eleven.

If she helped the party escape at the end of Adventure Eight, she likely ended up in Elfaiivar, where she and Athrylla Valanar prepare the eladrin enclave Sentosa to resist the Obscurati's world dominion. If the party visits her, they can call upon her loyal dreadnoughts for minor missions throughout the world.

**Lya Jierre.** Likely a member of the ghost council, Lya adopts the role of chief of staff for Nicodemus, which also keeps her by his side as a bodyguard. Nicodemus intends to place her in charge of Risur once the nation is conquered.

**Terakalir.** If Pemberton's daughter she survived adventure six, she is present on Axis Island, polymorphed to resemble a teenaged human with a mechanical prosthetic arm and eye. She doesn't have a significant role, though.

**Tinker Oddcog.** If he lives, either as an ally of Risur or of Benedict Pemberton, it would be smart to get him onto Axis Island in Act Two (he might ask to go along, or stow away—since he's so, so tiny—on their ship) so he can put the finishing touches on their airship. He could then disappear in the chaos of battle and show up again to help the party deal with the colossus in the campaign's finale.

**Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill.** Viscount Price-Hill still runs the RHC, but will operate 'off-screen' for the rest of the campaign unless your party responded to him favorably. His main role is to provide a foil for the party if they decide to ally with the conspiracy. In that case, he assumes leadership of Risur and tries (likely futilely) to defend the nation.





# PROLOGUE:

## THAT WAS ONE HELL OF AN APOCALYPSE

The party is assumed to begin *Godmind* in the city of Flint immediately following the end of Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*. Before the real ‘adventure’ begins, the party needs time to settle in after the climax of defeating Governor Stanfield and disrupting his ritual. A montage of scenes highlights in what ways the world has changed.

### WORLD OF RUIN

#### Exploration. Montage.

*The world has been shattered. Things are forever changed.*

While the PCs witnessed the effects of the ritual firsthand during their conflict with the emergent Obscurati forces, only as the adventure begins does the full breadth of the Obscurati’s grand scheme become obvious. The world has changed; the balance of the planar cosmology is upset and new planes of existence align themselves with the world. As the adventure begins, the PCs should have some opportunity to learn about these changes.

#### Magical Mishaps

One of the Risuri soldiers tries to give a healing potion to an injured comrade. The man swallows, coughs and writhes, then suffocates dies. His throat sealed shut with new flesh, blocking his windpipe.

Any magic the PCs attempt above cantrips and orisons either fails outright or goes awry (10% chance of mishap per spell level; it fails if it

### MEANWHILE — AROUND THE WORLD

Other adventures have started with news of events in Risur and beyond, but now the party is cut off. They might discover this information by divination, but due to She Who Writhes cutting off Risur’s sea lanes, the PCs don’t get any firsthand news for months.

**Stable Transition.** Unlike Risur, other nations have strong cells of Obscurati agents who made sure their local brands of ancient monsters didn’t wake up and start causing trouble. (Even if the party killed some of the Ob’s officers in Adventure Seven, *Schism*, their underlings probably could have taken over.)

Magic now functions normally in Danor and the Malice Lands.

Danor is firmly in league with Nicodemus the Gnostic, who reveals himself and pens letters to several newspapers to explain what has happened (in layman’s terms) and encourage cooperation. He does not assume an official government position, but supported by **Sovereign Han Jierre**, Nicodemus lets the people of the world know that he has answers to their many questions, and invites the leaders and most prominent thinkers of these nations—all except Risur and Ber, which cannot be reached because of She Who Writhes.

**I Knew This Was Coming.** The eschatologist movement in Drakr prevents almost any chaos, as many simply accept what they’ve seen as another step towards the End Times. In the far north of Drakr, though, **Grandis Komanov** encourages her radical eschatologist sect to raise an apocalyptic army of the dead to sweep across the world. Komanov’s doomsday army is further detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

**Damned Lies.** Crisillyir’s ruling hierarchs have long been subtly swayed by the Obscurati, but the nation sees the greatest turmoil of any. All those who would have resisted were visited in the hour of transition and killed. They left behind

cleverly-forged suicide notes, confessing that their faith was a lie, and that they used myths of gods only so they could hold onto power over the common people.

Meanwhile, the demon **Ashima-Shimtu**, imprisoned for over a thousand years in the *Crypta Hereticarum*, uses blood magic to manifest around Crisillyir and disseminate the *sacrament of apotheosis* (see Adventure Eight). As she hoped, desperate people caught in crises of faith use the ritual to call forth their gods and put them on trial. The fallout of the *sacrament of apotheosis* and its use is further detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

**Wait and See.** The nation of Ber suffers small upheavals as Obscurati agents attempt to seize control, but they are brutally quashed by Bruse Shantus. Sensing the precariousness of his position, he charismatically proclaims that the darkening of the sky heralds that this is Ber’s time to prosper. Since many of the Beran races possess darkvision, the nation of recently-savage people actually remains mostly orderly. Bruse Shantus is wary of Nicodemus, but plans to attend the conference in hopes of maintaining his rule without unnecessary war.

**Old Wounds, New Wounds.** Even the eladrin living in the colonies that have overtaken Elfaivar respond positively to Nicodemus and the Obscurati. However, those eladrin who hid for centuries in the fey enclaves—which existed between this world and the Dreaming—begin to stream into colonial cities, telling of their enclaves splitting apart and disintegrating. Thousands died. Only one enclave survived; **Athrylla Valanar**, matriarch of the Sentosa enclave, managed to pull her city back into the real world as the Ob’s ritual cut the Dreaming off from the rest of reality. She urges her people not to be tricked, but her voice is mostly drowned out by optimism for reconciliation.



A centuries-old eladrin warrior, Asrabey became one of the many husbands of Kasvarina Varal. For years he trained, and undertook many daring raids until he became famous as one of the greatest eladrin warriors in the world. Two centuries ago Kasvarina sent Asrabey to Risur to offer his services to the Unseen Court, and he unwittingly acted as a critical source of information and influence for the Obscurati.

Stern and unsympathetic to outsiders, Asrabey displays few emotions other than righteous fury. Even with his wife he felt not so much love as intense devotion. After Kasvarina lost her memories, Asrabey rescued her and protected her. However, his foremost loyalty was to the woman he'd married, and *that* Kasvarina was co-running the Obscurati. In the new world order, Asrabey decides that he must serve the Obscurati, which means betraying the party.



An eladrin woman just over 100 years old, Hana can fly at will, control winds, and speak with birds, plus since she received the favor of a member of the Unseen Court she can wield offensive weather magic. Bitter for her treatment by her Danoran 'foster family,' she originally used her powers to sabotage Danor-owned industry, earning the moniker "fey terrorist." After the Great Eclipse she puts aside her political aspirations in order to help Flint defend itself from the Obscurati, though her ultimate loyalty lies with the common people and the followers of traditional druidic faiths.



## WHAT'S UP WITH CAULDRON HILL?

The cursed mountain once had a close connection to the Bleak Gate, which was a dark reflection of the real world. That reflection was created by Av, the plane of life with traits of Dreams and Reflections. The Obscurati shifted Av to fill the role of plane of death, which put it at the edge of the 'solar system' of planes that feed energy into the real world.

This has the effect that the old Bleak Gate and Dreaming have been cut off from the rest of the world. They were pulled into the mass of doomed planes around the Gyre. With no specific plane for the dead to linger in, their spirits remain on the real world and are drawn toward places like Cauldron Hill where they can find passage to Av, since it is the new plane of death. Most of these spirits are invisible, but can be seen in reflections.

But Av is still metaphysically linked to the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate, and so every time the Gyre passes above Cauldron Hill (and similar places where 'the veil is thin'), all the spirits collected there are pulled into their appropriate afterlife. Some pieces of the physical world are also torn away and sucked across the cosmos into the Gyre. Within a few weeks, the peak of Cauldron Hill is bald, stripped of all its trees.

Going there during 'noon' when the Gyre is overhead is perilous. PCs would probably just suffer some negative energy damage and feel vertigo. Weaker people might be sucked bodily into the Gyre, lost forever.

doesn't mishap). Activated magic items have a similar chance of failure. Permanent magic items function mostly normally, though perhaps with odd side-effects. Simple *detect magic* reveals that magical auras are almost the same, but most spells are suffused with subtly unfamiliar magic.

Any spellcaster feels that with enough time they could figure out how to use this new mana safely, but it would take days. Likewise, old magic items could be used safely with a bit of training, but unsuspecting people will suffer a lot of accidents in the coming days.

## Gyre-Rise

The night sky is black, or rather closer to slate gray. Close observation (Perception DC 24) reveals a darker disk of pitch black where the moon used to be, and only four stars are visible. Skyseers immediately sense that this isn't the same moon, and recognize that three stars are in the location previously held by the planet Apet (and its ring Reida), while the other is where Mavisha used to be. But they aren't the same planets.

A Knowledge (the planes) (DC 34) check recognizes that the energy of the moon matches an obscure star known as Mojang. This was actually the same purple star that the Danoran telescope was pointed at on Axis Island two years ago (see Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*), though that star was only ever a dot, not the size of the moon's disk. The other planets match stars known as Fourmyle, Baden, Illocus, and Ostea.

After a few hours, when the sun should rise, instead the Gyre ascends into view. The churning Gyre provides as much illumination as a full moon used to, so the new 'day' is bright enough for people to see dimly. Nevertheless, people around Flint panic at the missing sun and start fires. If the party organizes firefighting efforts they can contain most of the blazes, but left alone 10% of the city burns over the next three 'days.'

Stormclouds begin to form over Cauldron Hill, but when the Gyre is directly over the city, no rain falls. Instead, with cracks audible even from the Governor's Island, trees are torn from the stone and carried into the sky. Any Spirit Medium in the party gets a lurching sense of a lot of spirit energy leaving the long-cursed mountain. A Skyseer looking at those clouds recognizes that they are somehow tied to the planet Av, once plane of Life. Indeed, someone with a telescope might spot a tiny dark speck nearly motionless in front of the Gyre. This is the plane of Av, ripped from its old orbit and planted where Nem, the old plane of death, used to be.

Throughout the rest of the day another three planets wheel across the sky in the positions normally held by Jiese, Avilona, and Urim. Jiese is actually still the same; the others are again obscure stars: Perlocus and Ratios.

If the party doesn't figure out what these stars are, a royal astronomer will eventually contact them in about a week with the information.

## Fey Affairs

Asrabey Varal and Gale find the party and inform them that it's still not possible to reach The Dreaming, and that their natural eladrin teleportation ability doesn't work anymore. Gale has brought a small mirror with her, and she asks them to attend the body of someone who died in the fighting. She looks in the mirror for a bit, then shows that spirits of the dead are reflected in the glass. Also, she and Asrabey (and any other eladrin) can slightly affect the spirit's reflection by moving their arms through the air where it would be if it were visible.

Gale offers to help the city however the party thinks she can. Asrabey excuses himself, saying he is only useful in battle, and that he will return when his sword is needed again.

Beshela, Archfey of the Sea who brought She Who Writhes to attack the Danoran fleet, vanished into the sea at the end of that battle.

## No News is Bad News

Without teleportation or sending magic, at least for now all news must be delivered on foot. Couriers dispatched now by train could get word back from Bole in two days. News from Slate will require horseback travel, and take two weeks or more. News from distant Shale would take over a month to arrive, though by then Risuri mages will have figured out how to cast *sending* and *teleport* again.

The party likely dispatches a ship, perhaps the swift *Impossible*, to get news. Less than half an hour after the messenger ship leaves port, a fire is visible far out to sea. Gale, likely the only person capable of flight, heads out, and returns a couple hours later carrying a single survivor—the ship's young cabin boy, the only person she could physically carry. The boy says they were set upon by She Who Writhes.

Any further attempts to sail through the seas of Risur meet with similar fates if the vessels go into water deeper than thirty feet. The fey titan is able to sense intruders into her domain for hundreds of miles, and the new nature of teleportation magic allows her to catch even the fastest ships.

## Who's in Charge Here?

Roland Stanfield is dead. Depending on the events of the previous adventure, Flint could be left without a governing body. **Principal Minister Harkover Lee**, advisor to the monarch, notices that people are confused who to report to, and suggests that whichever PC is now king or queen name at least an interim governor of Flint.

Possible options for a new governor include:

- ♦ **Captain Dale, Guardian of Cauldron Hill:** A likely staunch ally of the PCs, Dale makes for a good military head during the crisis. He focuses on preparing for supernatural threats, and he pursues a personal project of forcibly evacuating squatters from Cauldron Hill, which keep the various monsters in the woods and atop the mountain from causing trouble. However, he neglects more mundane concerns like maintaining infrastructure and paying people.

The city is safe but the people are discontent, and the imminent refugee flood from the south angers the wealthy since Dale won't let them shove the newcomers into slums on Cauldron Hill.

- ♦ **Stover Delft, Head of Flint Royal Homeland Constabulary:** The PCs have likely grown beyond needing Delft's guidance, and far outclass him in terms of power. Delft will keep Flint stable and is a good moderate contender for the governor position.

He has a great head for logistics, has been in the streets enough to sympathize with the working class, but has done enough politicking to keep those in power happy. But Delft is just a safe choice, and he has no vision for the city. Nothing gets worse, which might be good enough for now.

CHIEF INSPECTOR  
STOVER DELFT



The party's former boss now obeys their commands. Delft handles the logistical and political drudgery of the Royal Homeland Constabulary, and will deploy his constables throughout the nation and world to get the party whatever information they need (though the new world's changes in magic will make some intelligence slow in coming). He's damned proud of the party, and is fully confident their heroics will save the nation.

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. After several unpleasant run-ins with mimics (including losing a chunk of his leg seventeen years ago), he walks with a cane, which he'll bang against inanimate objects before he gets too near to them, in case they're waiting to get him.

PRINCIPAL MINISTER  
HARKOVER LEE



Perhaps the most powerful mage in Risur (aside from any PC spellcasters), 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. He was once known as the dragon tyrant Inacht the Hex-Eater, but he has abandoned that identity and is now loyal to Risur.

THAMES GRIMSLEY



A grizzled sailor, still with a full head of hair in his early 50s, Grimsley heads the dock workers guild in Flint and advocates for worker interests in general. He took a gash from a policeman's knife on the side of his face in the last big docker riot. A couple of months working at a theater as a child gave him a very stylized public speaking voice, one full of unnecessary, melodramatic pauses.





- ♦ **Thames Grimsley, Head of the Dockers Union:** Thames takes an active role in reorganizing the city and putting more power in the hands of the people. His governing style rubs major business owners the wrong way, but it does keep the citizens content during the crisis. He and a bunch of his friends will become very rich, but eventually he'll become beholden to the existing power groups, both legal and criminal. During the campaign's final adventure, Obscurati agents might blackmail him into betraying the party.
- ♦ **Hana "Gale" Soliogn, Alleged Fey Terrorist:** Nearly everyone would hate the idea of Gale becoming governor, but that pervasive distrust and fear would motivate her to never waver in pursuing what is best for Flint. She's sympathetic to working people, but was raised in Danor to handle high society. She has fought for her life a few times and has no fear of organized crime, and her own unexplained magical flight drives her to understand how the magic of the new world could benefit the city.  
A Gale governorship would be marred by early protests and conflict, but if the party steps in and offers regular shows of support, she overcomes these obstacles, earns the trust of disparate groups in the city, and pushes for transformative leadership. The city will begin training youths in simple magic (while including more broad education to improve their value to the economy and their understanding of how the world works), and if given enough time the city of Flint will become a progressive beacon.
- ♦ **Catherine Romana, Obscurati Traitor:** Catherine Romana might have survived and escaped after attempting to assassinate the king in Adventure Nine. If so she disguises herself with illusions and adopts the identity of **Dextra Adienne**, an orphan noble (who Romana murders as part of her cover story). 'Dextra' is firmly on the side of existing power groups, but she promises to keep industrialists and financiers happy so that Flint will cheaply provide supplies for what she expects is an imminent war with Danor. Romana is a consummate opportunist, and only ever joined the Obscurati because she thought it would bring her more power.

- ♦ **Other Choices:** The party could come up with a myriad of alternate solutions to the leadership conundrum. Most other NPCs who might be qualified aren't Flint locals. (Morgan Cippiano is, but would decline if offered.) Appointing an outsider, organizing a council of representatives, or waiting to hold elections don't give the city solid leadership quickly enough, so for a time chaos will grip the city.

If none of the PCs wear the crown, whoever is the monarch chooses Captain Dale.

## And Risur is my Nation

Late in the day, a courier named **Gully Foyle** finds the PCs and frantically asks for help. He's been teleporting. A few times when he was in a rush and he tried to weave through a crowd, he found himself simply stepping straight to a spot he could see. He doesn't know if this is safe, but he can't stop doing it.

By doing a bit of testing, the party can find out he can teleport anywhere he could walk or climb to, even across small bodies of water like Parity Lake or the Stanfield Canal (Delft recommends they should probably rename that). He can't teleport through a fence, through bars of a cell, or onto the roof of a stranger's house, but he can teleport anywhere public or that he has permission from the owner. He also can't cross Flint Harbor or jaunt to the Ayres Islands. (This is because he cannot teleport into claimed territory, and She Who Writhes claims the seas as her own.)

Most creatures can only use this ability once per day as a standard action, and they need 8 hours practicing, after which they must succeed a Dexterity or Wisdom check (DC 20) to learn how to use this ability. Any character with the Run or Mobility feats (or otherwise with a focus on rapid movement) doesn't need to practice to pick up the skill, and can use it once every five minutes.

Most common people hear rumors of this new power but its use takes months to become widespread.

For her part, **Lauryn Cyneburg**, the RHC's minister of infiltration, jokingly offers to give Gully her job, then less-jokingly suggests they lock the man up in a lightless cell so he can't share the secret. She proposes building thin towers across the nation, separated by miles but tall enough to be seen from the next nearest tower, to allow rapid teleportation by approved forces.

## Bakers Gone Wild

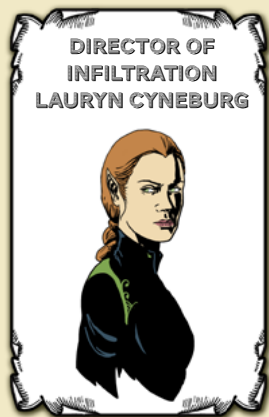
That night Delft reports of the first outbreak of violence, which was an odd one. A baker's guild meeting somehow led to two dozen bakers roaming the streets, marching in odd lockstep, breaking into businesses and taking various baking ingredients—flour, butter, sugar, and the like. When police tried to arrest them, the bakers fended them off with exceptional teamwork. The police were forced to withdraw, and they say the perpetrators returned to their guildhouse and have been baking all day.

If the party goes to them, the bakers mostly ignore them unless attacked. The two dozen men and women move with eerie unity, and if asked questions about baking they respond in unison.

The next day, the party will get word of a larger protest forming in Parity Lake, where newly-emboldened factory workers have invited the entire district to come find the factory owners and force them to provide better pay and safety conditions. Delft worries there might be a riot, and thinks the party has the best chance to stop bloodshed.

Though over seventy years old, as a half-elf Lauryn only betrays her age with the weariness of her eyes. 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. 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.



## MECHANICS OF A BROKEN AGE

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual. Trial and error are the best manner for a PC to discover these mechanical changes, while some high level divination magic may assist in ascertaining the exact changes to the world.

We suggest you let the players discover this information through trial and error, then give them the handout Appendix One: Reality Shift as a reminder. Alternately, a few weeks after the Great Eclipse the PCs get a report from **Asher Henton**, Distinguished Professor of Otherworldly Physics at Kitham University in Shale. In any event, Professor Henton will seek out the new monarch and offer his expertise in understanding the new cosmos.

**Applied Astronomy:** Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed in Appendix One: Reality Shift.

**Black Hole Sun:** Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

**Blood of Ostea:** All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

**Death is Death:** Slain deva no longer reincarnate.

**Flight of the Fey:** Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.

**Magic Mishaps:** As detailed above, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1<sup>st</sup> level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

**Reign of the Rational:** All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a –5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

**Impossibly Distant:** Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

**Teleportation and Communication.** Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

**Fourmyle Jaunting.** Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

**Three Miles is so Last Age:** Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.

**Wings of Liberty:** Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.



## FORMATION OF A HIVEMIND

### Social/Action. Tactical. Level 18.

*A protest turns riotous, then far more dangerous when a monster appears.*

Not one to let a little world-altering-event threaten her profits, factory owner **Jaya Isfeld** has instituted a lock-in. Similar to the events in Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*, factory workers have been forcibly incarcerated within their workplaces, and only allowed to leave when a replacement staff member comes to take their shifts.

### Unforeseen Consequence

The Obscurati spent years scanning the heavens for stars that carried the right mix of magical energies. Then they wove magic to pull planets from around that star into orbit with this world, so it could share its energies. The plane of Ratios was selected because it would lead to calmer and more logical discussion. Tests using artificial demiplanes found the world was a barren, lifeless husk, which meant it would be safe to link to our world, though a few researchers mentioned hearing whispers in their mind.

What was left undiscovered by the Ob was a lingering taint of the Gidim, an extraplanar alien race composed of thoughts, which must feed on a diverse diet of sentience to survive. The Gidim had long-since found Ratios and stripped the world bare. Removing its original inhabitants, and siphoning their thoughts away, the Gidim left the world, but also implanted a latent strand of their hive psyche on the world. It lay dormant until the thoughts of large groups began to feed it.

With the new cosmology established, the Gidim have become aware of the presence of a whole civilization of thinking minds, ripe for consumption. It will be a few weeks before the Gidim begin actually arriving on this world, but for now the latent Gidim consciousness on Ratios has crept into the material world. When large groups of like-minded individuals group together, they start to think in unison. The more focused the thoughts of the group are, the stronger the bond. This is called a **gestalt**, and is mostly harmless.

When emotionally charged, though, gestalts can generate **hive-minds**—thoughtform physical entities whose powers and strength are commensurate with the number of thinking minds. As the PCs arrive at Parity Lake to deal with the mob, one of these hiveminds manifests.

### Rabble Rabble Rabble

By the time the PCs arrive, the mob has grown to encompass almost five-hundred angered workers; including family, friends, and people who just want to shout against the injustices of the new world. The mob is led by Thames Grimsley who is fed up with the governing system and is finally ready to let his mob loose and forcibly enter the factories to free imprisoned workers. He's busy shouting threats of how if the crowd finds the owners, he can't be held responsible for any bloodshed.

A group of several dozen police officers form a loose blockade between the Isfeld Drilling Cortège and the growing mob. As the PCs arrive, the mob is pushing against the police line, and the officers are shaken and firing off repeated warning shots into the sky. Thames Grimsley shouts at the officers to abandon their posts so no one will get hurt.

Unless the PCs take drastic action against the mob, the situation quickly escalates. A stray rock strikes a police officer and as another officer moves to help him up, a second rock strikes. The downed officer responds with a shot into the crowd, which strikes one of the worker's wives in the gut. From here the mob makes a full push against the police officers, only to be repelled by a volley of gunfire.

Immediately, the mob begins to stamp their feet in unison and chant, "Let our people out! Let us out! Let us out!" The air feels thick with intention. The people in the mob don't notice anything amiss, but the party can spot something huge moving inside the windows of the drilling factory, which flicker with turquoise light. The mob grabs the officers and start dragging them into the center of their mass, yanking at their limbs and breaking bones as the cops scream in panic.

Three rounds after this, the Labor Hivemind bursts out from the inside of the drilling factory, collapsing the entire facing wall onto the police and mob.

### Calming and Dispersing

Before the hivemind attacks, the party can attempt Diplomacy or Intimidate checks (DC 35) to either calm the escalating violence or panic some protesters into fleeing. Specifically focusing on Thames Grimsley and succeeding a check snaps the man out of the psychic gestalt, and thereafter the party gets a +5 bonus to the other checks to stop the crowd.

While it's impossible to fully disperse the crowd by talking or intimidation, use of these skills lowers the conviction of the mob. For every success the party has against the mob, the Labor Hivemind gain a negative level, to a maximum of three.

Using magic to calm them is likely ineffective (both because the party probably has no more than 1<sup>st</sup> level spells available right now, and because the crowd uses the hivemind's Will save, below). Attacking the crowd just improve their conviction and causes the hivemind to attack early.

### Mind Strike

The Labor Hivemind manifests inside the factory. A shell of thought-form flesh forms around the workers trapped inside, and massive tentacles smash through walls to help the people be free. Afterward the hivemind is driven to find the owners of the factory and kill them, but it will kill anyone who gets in its way.

The mob remains oblivious to their psychic construct, and attempts to convince them of its presence only irritate the mob and its leader, who see the PCs as trying to make them look simple.

Three rounds after the gunshot triggers the hivemind's creation, it smashes through the factory wall in a flash of blue light. Characters standing with the police can attempt to get out of the way (Reflex DC 24), or be crushed by the falling wall for 5d10 points of damage.

The clearing dust reveals the labor hivemind, a translucent blue mass of brain matter with eight tentacles that end in crude, fleshy hammers and sickles. Eyes twitch along the surface of the orb, and where they look, people's flesh dissolves into ash.

## Labor Hivemind

CR 17

XP 104,400

N Gargantuan aberration (extraplanar)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifestense, *true seeing*; Perception +35

### Defense

**AC** 31, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+6 Dex, +19 natural, –4 size)

**hp** 325 (26d8+208)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +21

**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 28

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect, elevation limit 20 ft.)

**Melee** 8 tentacles +23 (3d6+8/19–20/x3 plus grab)

**Ranged** 4 psychic bolts +20 ranged touch (6d6 plus conduit)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.

### Statistics

**Str** 27, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27, **Int** 28, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 26

**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +29 (+33 trip); **CMD** 45 (cannot be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Exhausting Critical, Flyby Attack, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Snatch Arrows, Staggering Critical, Tiring Critical, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

**Skills** Acrobatics +35, Bluff +34, Diplomacy +34, Fly +39, Knowledge (arcana) +35, Knowledge (engineering) +35, Knowledge (local) +35, Knowledge (nature) +35, Knowledge (nobility) +35, Knowledge (religion) +35, Perception +35, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +38

**Languages** telepathy 200 ft.

**SQ** thoughtform

### Special Abilities

**Mental Overdrive (Su)** Whenever the hivemind sustains a grapple, it begins rewriting the target's brain. The target must make a Will save (DC 31) or take 2d4 points of Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom damage. If a creature with 10 or more hit dice has any of these stats reduced below 0 by the drain, the labor hivemind grows an additional tentacle, heals 26 hit points, and may make an additional attack as a full attack action.

**Psychic Bolts (Su)** The hivemind can produce up to 4 psychic bolts of force each round with a range of 100 feet. A creature struck by one of the labor hivemind's psychic bolts must make a Will save (DC 31) or become a conduit for the hivemind. A conduit acts normally, but is outlined in a halo of turquoise light. At the end of a conduit's round, it can make a Will save (DC 31) to shake off the effect.

During its turn (including the turn it created new conduits), the hivemind can do one of the following through all creatures currently acting as its psychic conduit:

- Make an attack using one of its tentacles (reducing its normal number of attacks by one), centering the attack on the conduit instead of itself. A tentacle attack from a conduit can still grapple an enemy and acts as though it were from the hivemind, though it falls off if the conduit moves out of range or breaks free of this effect.
- Cast any spell or spell-like ability currently available to the conduit. Using this spell does not prevent the conduit from using it during their action.

**Slavery of Thought (Su)** Half of the labor hivemind's tentacle attacks are physical, while the other half are a psychic attempt to ensnare the target. Because of this, creatures targeted by a CMB check from the labor hivemind do not fully benefit from *freedom of movement*. Creatures gain a +10 bonus on their CMD and a +10 bonus on CMB checks to gain control of a grapple instead of the normal effects of *freedom of movement*.

**Thoughtform (Su)** A creature within 30 feet of the hivemind can spend a move action to try to influence the hivemind with its thoughts. The creature makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check (DC 15), and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC 31 for each). A character can only attempt this once per round.

- **Fortitude:** If the save is failed, the hivemind loses incorporeal until the start of the PC's next turn. If it's flying, it must land or fall.
- **Reflex:** If the save is failed, the creature can force the hivemind drop all of its grapples (including those from conduits), and move the hivemind 10 feet in any direction.
- **Will:** If the save is failed, the creature can cause any number of creatures affecting by the hivemind's conduit ability to cease being conduits. Additionally, the creature cannot be perceived by the hivemind for one round.

## Tactics

The hivemind has all the knowledge of its creators, so it understands the PCs are the immediate threat. It begins combat by unleashing a series of psychic bolts at any PC it can see, preferring to target those in the middle of the group first. From then on, the hivemind tries to use conduits and its own tentacles to grapple every single PC, then use of its Mental Overdrive ability to consume them.

What the hivemind does not expect is that the PCs might be familiar with its Gidim nature. As the PCs have likely had experience with thoughtform creatures in previous adventures, they may think to use thought against the creature.

Any PCs reduced to 0 hit points are dropped and left to die (though the new world traits for healing prevents that), while PCs who are reduced to 0 in a mental ability score are absorbed. Since the party is likely operating without most of their spells, this fight might be overwhelming, forcing them to fall back and find new ways to deal with the monster—cannons, rifle fusillades, or explosives.

Finally, the party can substantially weaken the hivemind if they're willing to attack the crowd of protesters. In this grim scenario, the protesters are effectively noncombatants with 4 HP. Every twenty who are killed impose a negative level on the hivemind.

## Aftermath

Slaying the hivemind unleashing psionic boom. Everyone in the crowd that created the thoughtform creature suffers temporary backlash (1d6 points of damage to Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom), leaving them dazed and confused for the next several days. After 3 days of rest, Thames Grimsley (if he survived) approaches the PCs and apologizes to them for the display, though he reinforces that something needs to be done as the people are scared of this new world.

If the party is defeated, eventually the rest of the city manages to kill the creature, and any PCs who were absorbed can be rescued, though without magical healing they'll need many days to fully recover.

In either case, people notice a few other incidents of telepathic gestalts linking together groups of people. Without guidance from the PCs, the city suffers a few other attacks by hivemind monsters, and people become paranoid of going out in public or gathering in groups larger than 3 or 4. If the party offers reassurance and explanation, they can convince people not to panic, and can train the public to recognize the early signs of a gestalt and how to break free of it. Nevertheless, police break up groups larger than a dozen (though they realize the problem this causes when prisoners start forming gestalts).



## SMALL THINGS

### Social. Montage.

*Various things that happen in the coming days and weeks.*

Some time after the hivemind rampage, Morgan Cippiano politely requests an audience. In the past he's been used to inviting the PCs to meet him, but he respects their authority. Regardless of whether the party has been friendly or antagonistic with his branch of The Family, he has the same proposal. He suggests that some persistent opposition from the city's criminal element will help keep things unsteady; whoever Governor Stanfield worked for wanted everyone to get along, so perhaps some discord will be good for the soul.

Morgan Cippiano heads the local branch of the Family crime syndicate, based out of Crisillyir. Indeed, he's a devout Clericist, but has to act without guidance from the hierarchs now that communication is cut off. Though gruff-voiced and cocky, Morgan has an unusual fascination with fashion. He rejects trends, but has a good eye for classical styles that people of any culture can appreciate. He hopes someday to be seen as a father figure to his community, but isn't above ordering some throats slit to keep the right people safe.



Each of the four fey titans detailed in the next act prevents some part of Risur's economy from functioning right.

The fires in the Ash Wolf's forest starves Risur of lumber, now in high demand as people hope to drive back the perpetual gloom. Wood is also needed for ship-building, paper, and even cooking. The first effects get noticed after two weeks. If the party doesn't deal with the titan within a month, there will be major shortages, and after two months people start chopping down Flint's own forests en masse.

The Father of Thunder's stampede disrupts Risur's crops and harvests. After two weeks there's still plenty of grain and vegetables, but meat basically disappears from shops. After a month people start to hoard food, and after two months famine grips the nation.

Granny Allswell's gremlins wreak havoc with mines in the Anthras Mountains. After two weeks every industry reliant on steel or stone slows to a crawl. After a month people start having to cannibalize existing items to perform basic repairs, and after two months mass riots occur in Flint as factories close and leave families unpaid and unable to support themselves.

All sea trade is blocked by She Who Writhes, so after two weeks prices spike for foreign luxuries like Elfaivaran fruit, high-quality Drakran firedust, or leaf of Nicodemus from the Yerasol Isles. After a month, Risur depletes its own reserves of spell and ritual components, since it imports heavily from Crisillyir; magic items that normally cost under 2,000 gp have their costs doubled. After two months, every spell with a material component costs at least 5 gp to cast.

If the party completely dallies, in three months the Obscurati organize a fleet action to kill She Who Writhes, and then they invade Risur.





# ACT ONE: AGAINST THE TITANS

Legendary forces from ages past stir across the nation. Awoken by a shared sense of unease at the changes to the world, the Fey Titans of old have each risen from their long torpor and have begun to wreak havoc. All but the Voice of Rot – who is oddly absent – damage the stability of the country, complicating the party’s ability to stand against the Ob.

In this act, the city of Bole is hub of fey titan activity, with the Ash Wolf threatening the Antwalk Thicket to the east, the Father of Thunder tromping through croplands to the west, and Granny Allswell’s gremlins disrupting mining and dams to the south. The party must also deal with She Who Writhes in the seas around Risur, but advisors suggest they wait to subdue that titan last, because at least she’s keeping the Danorans at bay.

Rather than follow a pre-set order, you should read each of the Fey Titan encounters listed below. Each encounter begins with a description of the effect the titan has on Risur. PCs should judge which of the threats they deem to be highest priority, and deal with those encounters in order. Cautious PCs might wait a week or two until their spellcasting allies regain use of their magic, but doing so risks letting the titans run amok.

## REFUGEE CRISIS

### Exploration. Montage.

*News travels slowly once again, and most is delivered by refugees fleeing devastation around Bole.*

The first word of trouble in Bole arrives as the Gyre sets, less than 24 hours after the Obscurati’s ritual. **Tad Hilly**, owner of the Thinking Man’s Tavern in Flint’s Bosum Strand district, has old family ties to Bole, and so in the weeks after the Great Eclipse, many refugees congregate there. The party only hears vague rumors unless they assign someone to check out the tavern, or if they personally go.

The first night, porters who came in on the railroad spread rumors that Bole’s druids sensed something amiss, that storms of unheard-of power are brewing to the west, forest fires were spotted over the horizon to the east, and that a dozen men dressed like miners were found floating dead in the Slywater River, a tributary of the Great Delve River. A Knowledge (local) check (DC 20) recalls that the Slywater was dammed upstream in the Anthras Mountains a few decades ago as part of new mining operations.

On the second day, hundreds of refugees arrive. They’d heard rumors that, somehow, Flint still had a sun. In any case, they’re happy to be in a bigger city, away from the eerie woods that surround Bole. Ominously, people actually haven’t seen *any* fey in the forest, as if they knew something bad was coming and fled.

On the third day, the trains from Bole are overloaded with a thousand refugees. The people have no doubt that a great disaster will soon befall their city, though there are only a few eyewitnesses with useful information. By chance—or perhaps by a sympathetic, psionic link—they’ve congregated in Tad Hilly’s tavern.

### First-Hand Accounts

With a bit of digging into the arrivals, the PCs find a few outspoken refugees telling their stories in the Thinking Man’s Tavern.

#### Ash Wolf in the Antwalk Thicket

**Barnaby Krist** is something of a folk legend in Bole, a hunter of repute with a strong stomach for drinking and a stronger mouth for telling stories. Almost seven-feet tall and seemingly made up of scars and body hair, Barnaby speaks with a heavy accent that he says is the by-product of ‘true forest folk.’

He explains that he saw distant fires and climbed to an overlook to see the extent of the blaze. From miles away he noticed that the fire was spreading outward in a ring, which isn’t how forest fires travel. They follow the wind. Something was lighting the fires. He then asks for a drink to loosen his tongue before he shares his big reveal.

“On m’a way oout of de forest, I saw a black pup runnin’ at me. Naw, pup is a bad word, cause it was the size of that stuffed bear I used ta have in me home. I thought it was getting’ away from dat big fire, cause der was smoke coming off da beast’s back. No flame, just smoke. It was like



they may'a been on fire afore, and dem eyes still glowed, ya see? Still burned from within. I hollered at it and it turnt off, but I seen it prancin' in front o' dat fire?"

The legends about the Ash Wolf (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell of the Smoldering Wolves, akin to dire wolves with an aura of perpetual smoke that follows them. When wounded or enraged, they burst into flame and viciously fight to the death. Some stories say they can speak, but they only ever seem concerned with hunting, or with driving off those who threaten their father. They dance when near flames because their mother was caught in a forest fire and let herself become the flames. Their father only ever stirs when there are mighty blazes, in hopes of seeing his lost mate again.

As a hunter, Barnaby is quite familiar with the local terrain, and can point out the exact area the encounter occurred at on a map—start at Bole, follow the rail line to the east, and when the tracks turn north go another twenty-three miles east-northeast, in the craggy woods near 'dat ol' layer-cake ruin.' (He's referring to the Ancient ziggurat of Av.)

### Father of Thunder in the Weftlands

**Slim Chance**, a rancher living fifty miles west of Bole, plays harmonica with the tavern's band (headed by Jered Lawman, whom the PCs might recall from Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*). Slim's dog **Hank** sits with him, howling along occasionally to the music.

Slim was out on a drunken bender in the cattle pasture (Hank had been chewing silage and was a little drunk too) when all the stars fell away a few days ago. He spotted a massive bolt of lightning strike a few miles away, but the bolt didn't fade. It just kept flashing and rumbling for minutes. The cattle around him all turned and stared at the spectacle, and Slim just enjoyed the light show, too out of it to really worry. An hour later the lightning stopped, and he heard the loudest roar in the world from where the bolts had been striking, and then every single cow around him starting making a ruckus and walking in that direction.

Figuring it was his boss's problem, Slim kept drinking until morning (such as it was, with only the Gyre and no sun). He woke with a blistering hangover, made worse by Hank barking and snarling constantly. He realized the dog was keeping him from getting trampled; hundreds of cows, some with brands from other ranches miles away—as well as the occasional deer or goat—were all heading in the same direction.

So Slim went the other way as fast as he could. On his way back to the ranch he thought he heard a whole mounted procession of knights in plate armor riding out in the middle pasture, blaring on trumpets, but that *definitely* was his boss's problem. He got his horse, his leaf of Nicodemus, and enough food for him and Hank and rode like hell toward Bole. He basically kept running until he got to the edge of the sea, and now he's still drinking.

Legends of the Father of Thunder (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell that his presence is heralded by great storms and great drinking, for the king of herd beasts is an uncontestable lush. He calls a mighty herd to surround him, impregnates many mares and sows and does, and imbues the offspring his boon, transforming them into wondrous steeds for any who can capture them. The Great Hunt—who is stranded in the real world after they annoyed the Voice of Rot and were banished from the Dreaming—traditionally take all their horses from among these blessed steeds.

## NEWBORN FOR A NEW WORLD

Long-time customer and occasional musician **Jered Lawman** is at the Thinking Man's Tavern with his girlfriend, celebrating the birth of their daughter Alice. Since the world has so suddenly changed, he's nervous about things that might endanger her, so he gets his band-mates to practice modern versions of classic lullabies that are supposed to keep away fey. While the party is present he performs a jaunty remake of *All's Well*, a tune miners drink to after a day with no mishaps in the mines.

Later in this adventure if the party gets the miners of Favela to sing this song, they can weaken Granny Allswell and make it easier to fight her.

### Granny Allswell in the Anthras Mountains

**Grandma Goudada**, a hang-lipped crone who isn't shy about knowing a few hexes, came into town with a gang of Fortunad nomads—basically the Risuri equivalent of gypsies, mostly half-elves of muddled ethnicity forced to wander because they don't fit in anywhere except with other misfits. She's happily terrorizing the various children in the tavern; refugees see an old lady, assume it's safe to leave their kids with her while they drink, and wonder later why little Timmy is having nightmares.

Grandma Goudada and her gang were at a small mining town in the Anthras Mountains called **Favela**, and she was trying to show some government lady (**Kaitlin Eisner**, see page 25) to have her fortune read, to know what fate awaited in this starless world. Goudada got as far as pulling three cards before doing the unthinkable—she gave the woman her money back, hobbled away, and told her family they had to get as far from the mountains as possible. Her grand-nephew **Emilian** got them on a train to Bole, then to Flint, which seemed like a good idea until Goudada saw Cauldron Hill.

If properly flattered (or paid), Goudada explains with great portentousness that the cards showed the King wanting to trap and kill a grandmother under a mountain. She glares at the PCs, warning them that if they're with the king, they should know better than to come after *this* old granny.

Legends of Granny Allswell (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell that the grandmother of gremlins was last defeated by Queen Zidi Wheatling in the year 218 A.O.V. After brawling failed, Zidi took some of her royal treasure and buried it inside three elder earth elementals, which left bits of themselves like a trail of breadcrumbs into a deep mountain cave. While the fey titan tried to pull the 'owies' from the elementals, Zidi tricked the granny's gremlin minions into breaking the wooden supports that kept the cave entrance from collapsing, sealing Granny Allswell away for nearly three centuries.

## CITY OF BOLE

### Exploration. Montage.

*The RHC branch in Bole is dubious of Risur's new monarch.*

Bole was capital of its own nation in ancient times, and it still maintains its grandeur today. Historically rich from lumber and from fertile forest gardens cultivated with the aid of fey, in recent years it has boomed as a hub of trade. The **Barret Damworks**, a network of mill dams and locks completed three decades ago, tamed several tributary rivers from the Anthras Mountains, allowing the Great Delve river to flow smoothly westward, all the way through Slate and on to Shale. The concurrent development of steamships fostered traffic of great barges traveling up and down the river, while the railroad linked it to Flint. Today raw materials pass through Bole to and from nearly every corner of Risur.

For the purposes of this adventure, the main features of Bole the party needs to be aware of are the **forest gardens** which stretch out from it miles in every direction, the **logjam** along the Great Delve river where lumber is collected and processed after it flows in from logging sites upstream, and the **theater district** which is home both to the local RHC headquarters and to several famous distilleries and breweries.

### The RHC in Bole

The Chief Inspectress in Bole, a viperous half-elf named **Shaiaila Lundquist**, is uncomfortable with the party's ascent to power, and just a little bitter that no one under her watch had as meteoric a rise in prestige. She can't help but think of the PCs as just normal constables, and in particular she has a deep-seated respect for the fey and Unseen Court, and naturally assumes anyone from Flint would disagree with her.

She'll send a letter asking them to see her before they get personally involved in local affairs. She prefers to meet in her office across the street from a playhouse which has been closed, out of fear that audiences might manifest hiveminds. (This is a horrible violation of protocol; indeed, she should be arranging royal accommodations and ensuring the party's safety, meeting them wherever they need her.)

Shaiaila has several theatrical posters hanging on the walls of her office, and a primitive phonograph in the corner is loaded with recordings of several famous opera singers. Her one accommodation to the party's prestige is to offer them some whisky and beer, made just down the street.

### Titanic Problems

Shaiaila explains that the refugee situation is straining the city, but having fey titans—which most people thought were just tall tales—wreak havoc is at least giving people something immediate to try to deal with, since no one has any idea what the sudden disappearance of the sun and stars means. Her local agents have collected a lot of eye-witness sightings of the Father of Thunder to the west, but only a few of the Ash Wolf in the east, and none of Granny Allswell, though miners to the south report an unprecedented uptick in gremlin sightings, equipment breaking, and items made of metal going missing.

She's looked into the old records, and it's been seventeen centuries since all the titans were active at once. And never before did multiple seem to be focused on destroying one city. Shaiaila pours herself a stiff whisky, throws herself into her chair, and asks what the hell the party intends to do now.

### Personnel Management

If the party just tries to order Chief Inspectress Lundquist around or if they have a reputation for being hostile to fey interests, Shaiaila agrees to follow whatever orders they give, but then works against them behind their backs. She thinks Bole can solve the fey titan problems on its own, and that the party's plans will spell disaster in the long run. After all, they were the ones who failed to stop the colossus in Flint from being activated, or stop the Obscurati from changing the whole world in one fell swoop. She's suspicious of them, and thanks to the new world order, her subordinates readily follow her lead.

However, if the party is attentive to the Chief Inspectress's concerns, and if they respect the fey titans or at least don't immediately propose attacking them, she offers her agents to help scout and coordinate any odd plans they might come up with. She'll still second-guess them, but it will be to their face.

### The White Tongue in Bole

Before the party leaves, the Chief Inspectress advises they speak with **Ochran Eisner**, the city's Minister of Fey Affairs. A classically-trained druid, Ochran's duties include appeasing the fey spirits in the forest gardens and along the railroads to deter attacks. Only a meager few fey are still in the real world—they were stranded when the Dreaming was cut off by the Ob's ritual—but Shaiaila thinks Eisner might have useful information about how to keep the fey titans from attacking Bole directly.

Ochran is not personable, is uncomfortable with eye contact, and only responds to people if directly addressed multiple times; he's usually too involved thinking to himself to pay attention to the outside world. These days he is busy directing a citizen volunteer unit, painting archaic sigils on trees and stones in the woods around Bole. He claims these wards will keep the titans at bay, though he cannot guarantee their minions won't enter the city. If the party examines the sigils, a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) recognizes them as obscure icons that are anathema to fey titans. However, if the same PC also succeeds a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25), he realizes the sigils are being deployed in exactly the wrong way.

Ochran has placed sigils facing outward, explaining they will drive back the titans. In truth, these sigils will just anger the titans, drawing them toward the city. If the sigils faced the city, any titans who entered would be goaded away and back out into the wilderness.

In truth, Ochran is a servant of the Voice of Rot, who offered the druid eternal solitude on a world bereft of civilization. If confronted with his mistake, Ochran struggles to come up with an excuse (Sense Motive DC 15). When he realizes the jig is up, he hisses at the party, revealing a forked white tongue, then attempts to flee by *wildshaping* into an air elemental.

He's no physical threat to the party, but if not caught he sabotages efforts to protect Bole. He desires to guide the fey titans into the city to destroy it. If interrogated, he'll eventually confess to his allegiance to the Voice of Rot, but say that he hasn't heard from any of his lord's messengers since the sun disappeared. Intense interrogation can also get him to reveal that his sister, **Katlin**, is working at similar purposes in the mining village Favela (see page 25).



## THREAT ONE: THE ASH WOLF

*Rise and flicker, red and white,  
A howling fire burns this night.  
Awaken hunter, warrior beast!  
The flames have risen—time to feast!*  
- Hunters' chant

Salamanders have lit fires and killed one of the Ash Wolf's pups, but the titan blames Risur. Either the fey titan or the interlopers from Jiese must go.

## FLAMES FROM THE EAST

### Exploration. Montage.

*When the great forests burn, the Ash Wolf stirs and will reclaim his domain.*

The fires in Antwalk Thicket actually don't burn out of control; Risuri foresters have done a good job of allowing small burns each year to limit the amount of brush for fuel. But day by day the flames advance, and by the third day after the great eclipse, over a thousand people from villages in the woods have fled to Bole.

The truth of the forest fire's origin does not begin with the Ash Wolf, but is actually the byproduct of the Obscurati's reorganization of the planes. Long ago the Ancient civilization built a ziggurat here linking to the plane Av, but the Ob's ritual caused the magic to go awry and link instead to Jiese, the plane of fire.

Jiese itself was once part of the true plane of fire, but was cut off by the Ancients into its own separate world. Only a few families of salamander miners who lived on the frontier of the great efreeti empire came along, and just a single efreeti was trapped on the plane. She was eventually enslaved, and the family who controlled the efreeti's power styled itself after the princes and generals of the great City of Brass. While lesser salamanders hunted the fierce elemental beasts that roamed Jiese's surface, or mined out precious gems of solid fire, the princes built palaces to celebrate their uncontested dominion.

A century ago the enslaved efreeti tricked the ruling sultan into making a wish that led to the salamander royal family splintering. The factions began constructing massive siege engines and fought horrific wars. Finally one salamander claimed control of the efreeti, and he proclaimed himself **Sultan Kuyler**, though he ruled over only a few thousand surviving salamanders.

In the grand scheme of things, the salamanders are basically inbred yokels—especially the royal family. Supernaturally-powerful, incredibly-skilled-at-battle, able-to-control-fire-with-a-thought yokels. They might have access to arcane siege weapons, but their manners are atrocious.

### Salamander Invasion

Sultan Kuyler immediately sensed when the Axis Seal opened, and his scouts found a portal that led to the ruined Ancient ziggurat in Risur's Antwalk Thicket. Within a day Kuyler had marched through with his 'army' and started burning all the wonderful trees around him. This attracted the attention of the recently-awoken Ash Wolf, who sent forth one of his pups to investigate. The wolfling came into conflict with the salamanders, who slew it, then magically erased traces of their presence before retreating to the ziggurat.

When the Ash Wolf discovered the death of his son, he went into a seething rage, believing the humans of Risur had committed the act. He has begun hunting on the edges of the forest fires, feeding on villagers to regain his strength after a long sleep. In a few weeks the fires will reach Bole, at which point he intends to slay every child so that he can have his revenge.

Kuyler wants his people to colonize a new bountiful land where there are always things to burn, but he's content to watch the Ash Wolf spread terror through the woods. He sends his men to spread the fires and lure the massive wolf into human territory, using the magic of his bound efreeti to keep his warriors hidden from the fey titan.

### Ancient Ziggurat

Barnaby and many other woodsmen of Antwalk Thicket know the general location of the old ruins that once were the ziggurat of Av. Due to a wish by Kuyler, the last mile of forest around the ziggurat is still burning, and the trees—though dead—don't crumble away. He likes the aesthetic, and it keeps interlopers away.

### I Dream of Liesi

Salamanders are not the most intelligent of creatures, and neither Kuyler nor any of his warlords, viziers, or dervishes understand the meaning of the sun's disappearance. But one of his minions does.

**Liesi**, the bound efreeti whom Kuyler's family has controlled for millennia, senses that she could return home finally. She suspects something is amiss with the sky, and has implored her master to *wish* for an explanation. The petty Kuyler prefers to waste the daily wishes she grants on dalliances and frivolous comforts. Already he has wished for the boring ziggurat of Av to be transformed from stone into brass, as befits a sultan.

Liesi knows Kuyler will never release her, and hopes she can warn someone of at least moderate intelligence of the threat she sees in the stars. When she meets the party she'll try to persuade them into finding the *efreeti bottle* that controls her, then releasing her so he cannot use her *wishes* against them.

### The Wolfpack

The Ash Wolf's long dead mate spawned countless pups as she perished, though normally only a few are active. They guard a great mossy cave where the Ash Wolf slumbered for centuries. Only when forest fires break out do the other smoldering wolves appear, and if the fires are great enough their father awakens so he can go hunt for his lost love in the ashes.

### The Den of the Wolf

The Ash Wolf's lair lies some forty miles from Bole, in a mossy cave beside a river bank, seventeen miles from the ziggurat of Av. It's practically impossible to stumble upon, but tracking the smoldering wolves (a DC 30 Survival check for every five miles) or using divination magic can lead the party to the fey titan's cave. The forest fires have cut swaths through the area, though patches of woodland remain unburnt.

If the party intends to fight the Ash Wolf, their best chance is to corner him in this cave so he cannot use his speed to his advantage. But his pack might detect the party's approach.



### Heralds of the Ash Wolf

The Ash Wolf's strongest children, known as Smoldering Wolves, can share their senses with their father. If the party is exploring the forest on foot, these scouts can sense the touch of greater magic on them. The party

might spot one several hundred feet away in the woods, but initially the wolves don't attack, and will flee if approached.

## PACK TACTICS

### Action. Tactical. Level 25.

*The Ash Wolf intends to kill the party, but can be reasoned with.*

This battle might occur anywhere in the forest fire, but we suggest you have the Ash Wolf make its first appearance while the party is near a Risuri town that's endangered by fire.

One such town is **Mulshoe**, population four thousand, located twenty miles east of Bole. It lies in a valley clearing, surrounded on all sides by forest. Many have fled the forest into Bole, but townsfolk plead for help to fight the fires and evacuate those too weak to make the long journey. Lumberjacks are desperately trying to clear the trees nearest the town, and the forest fire is almost upon them when the party arrives.

(Yes, whether the party comes here 3 days after the great eclipse or 30, Mulshoe is just lucky that way. If the party doesn't come, the following encounter can happen anywhere in the forest, but we thought the setting of a town surrounded by a forest fire would be interesting, given how the scale of the Ash Wolf would contrast with houses and streets.)

Whichever PC is the monarch feels a surge of power, which he or she will come to recognize as the sign that a foe of great strength is nearby and about to contest for control of the land. See the Rites of Rulership in Adventure Nine for details.

(Since the party is 17<sup>th</sup> level, the monarch should get a +8 bonus to AC, attack rolls, and saving throws; a +9 bonus to Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based checks; fast healing 8 in addition to the normal fast healing 10 the monarch always has; and can interact with the titan as if he or she were also colossal.)

### **Wolf Pack** (see Appendix Two: Fey Titans)

- ♦ 24 Smoldering Wolves
- ♦ The Ash Wolf

### Terrain and Environment

Smoke from the forest fire wafts through the town, providing concealment to creatures beyond 60 feet, and total concealment beyond 120 feet, though the general shapes of trees can still be seen when backlit by the forest fire.

The town's buildings are only one or two stories tall, and the streets are narrow enough that the large wolves could only fit through one at a time. The Ash Wolf treats the town as difficult terrain, crushing buildings if he walks across them. However, he prefers to stay at the edge of town, charge in, and jump *over* the buildings, using Spring Attack to snap up a PC and carry him off into the smoke.



The forest fire stops about sixty feet outside the edge of town, where lumberjacks have cut a firebreak, but a PC might be tricked out into the woods or carried out there by the Ash Wolf. Breathing the air inside the forest fire causes a character to take 1d6 points of fire damage per round (no save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 rounds (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. A character who holds his breath can avoid the lethal damage, but not the nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor take a -4 penalty on their saving throws. Those wearing metal armor or who come into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell.

The smoke is not thick enough to be debilitating.

### Tactics

The Ash Wolf approaches within a half mile of Muleshoe and sends his pack of two dozen smoldering wolves out to surround the town. They howl, but the smoke and soot conceals them until they're within 60 feet of the party (Perception DC 30). Any townsfolk would be well-served to flee indoors, but a few remain outside and will be attacked by the pack. These wolves attack at the edge of the PCs' vision, in an attempt to split them up.

Four of the wolves are empowered by the titan's *pack bond* power, and if the party splits up they engage someone at the edge of the group. Otherwise they circle the party through the town streets for about a minute, waiting for their father to give the signal. Before having the pack attack, the Ash Wolf says, "Risur has slain my child. Burnt my home. By the old rites, I demand blood and flesh." His voice seems to come from all directions, as the roaring forest fire itself speaks for him.

The pack then charges in. The Ash Wolf, able to see through their eyes, uses *fire storm* to burn the party and ignite the buildings around them, or perhaps *transmute metal to wood* if the party is at the edge of the town near the fire.

The four empowered smoldering wolves focus their attention on a single target, while the other twenty stay about a hundred feet away, watching. If any of the empowered wolves are reduced below 50 hit points, the Ash Wolf has that child withdraw from battle and shifts its power to another, which then charges in.

After two rounds of this, or if any of his pups is reduced to 0 hit points, the fey titan uses *hunting surge*, howling loud enough to shake

the ground and trees. With his speed briefly increased to 300 feet, he charges in and will try to snatch a spellcaster (and can jump high enough to easily clear rooftops, bite someone beneath him, then clear 110 feet horizontally) and carry him off. If possible he rips off a leg, dumps the victim a hundred and fifty feet away in the forest fire, and circles around the edge of the battle, staying far enough away to remain unseen.

Generally he'll attack every other round, and will punctuate his assaults by condemning the hunters who speared his son, recounting how his mate died thousands of years ago and he'll never have more children, and threatening to burn the whole nation until he has his revenge.

### Aftermath

The Ash Wolf should be fairly terrifying, a predator that can kill any PC in a round or two, but he initially assumes the party is not a threat. He'll try to wound several and scatter the group, and will only focus on killing them one-by-one if he's reduced below 207 hit points, which triggers the arrival of his long-lost mate, a titanic wolf spirit composed of smoke and ash. If reduced below 0 hit points he will yield, offering to serve them if they at least spare his children.

The party might instead convince the fey titan to break off his attack if they offer to find out who slew his son. He'll be distrustful (i.e., you have an excuse to get in a few terrifying strafing runs before he relents), but then he'll agree to give them one day before he resumes his hunt.

### Mourning a Lost Child

If the party reaches the Ash Wolf's cave—by sneaking in or by parlaying with him, they find the body of a Smoldering Wolflying on its side, smoke pouring out of various wounds.

Examining the deceased wolf reveals odd wounds not common among Risuri weaponry (Heal DC 20). Further investigation reveals the weapons were made of obsidian and radiated an extreme amount of heat (Heal DC 30).

The Ash Wolf will offer to have one of his children accompany the PCs to the site where the body was first found. However, due to a *wish* by Liesi, the salamanders left not physical trail, and magic to pursue them yields no information unless the caster succeeds a DC 22 caster level check. Brute force searching takes several days (though it goes faster if the party splits up or brings help), and eventually they'll find a patch of forest still burning long after it should have died.

## THE FLAMING ZIGGURAT OF AV

### Action/Social. Real-Time. Level 18.

*Meet your new neighbors, the Salamanders of Jiese!*

A one-mile diameter swath of forest burns perpetually around the old Ancient ziggurat, which has been transformed into brass. Several dozen wormlike thoquua roam the woods near the building, and they screech if they detect any intruders (Perception +10). Two falcion-wielding salamanders guard the entrance of the ziggurat, and within Sultan Kuyler and some of his best buddies from Jiese spend most of the day doing nothing.

Kuyler is a foul-mouthed, illiterate alcoholic, who peaked long ago when he took control of Liesi the efreeti. He's been living the easy life on wishes ever since. But with a new world suddenly available—one a damn sight more fun to burn than his own 'sultanate'—the salamander

sultan sees an opportunity to give his no-good children something they can conquer, so they can be as great as their father.

For now he just has a small expeditionary force, and he's sending out scouts to find out who he'll have to fight to conquer this place. He's only recently seen humans for the first time, and had his men capture a few. He keeps them in a pit in the ziggurat, and is trying to figure out how to get them to fight for his amusement.

The Jiese-end of the portal is fairly far from his palace, so no reinforcements will be readily forthcoming. For now, Kuyler's forces are limited. Forty or so rank-and-file salamander soldiers scout the woods, while only a dozen guard the ziggurat itself. Since so far they've only encountered panicked, harmless townsfolk, the initial reactions of the invaders from Jiese when they see the party will be reminiscent of a

hunter spotting a deer. They're excited, not worried, and will coo at the party like they're talking to a dumb animal that doesn't realize they're about to kill it.

### Salamander Invasion

- ♦ Kuyler, Salamander Sultan
- ♦ Liesi, Bound-Efreet
- ♦ 4 Salamander Viziers
- ♦ 8 Salamander Dervishes

### Environmental Effects

The immediate area outside the Ziggurat is considered severe heat, while the inside of the ziggurat is considered to be an area of extreme

heat. This heat lasts as long as the ziggurat maintains a connection to the plane of Jiese.

### Walls of Flame

Repurposed by the salamanders, the ziggurat's interior is fairly stark. With a few *wishes* Kuyler created a plethora of permanent *walls of fire* to break up the monotony of the ziggurat's interior. While harmless to the salamanders, these walls are extremely effective defense mechanisms.

Each wall (marked on the map) is treated as a *wall of fire* (caster level 11th) with the *permanency* spell added. These walls do not radiate heat in a specific direction, so creatures will only take damage from passing through the wall.



### Ziggurat Interior

Interior walls of the ziggurat were once weathered stone with barely visible carvings, now transmuted into polished brass. The only light sources are the walls of fire and the portal to Jiese itself. The constant fire actually mutes sound fairly well, and a battle probably wouldn't be heard more than 100 feet away.

1. **Entrance.** Two more dervishes and one vizier guard here, though for them guarding consists of boasting about the monsters they've slain back home.
2. **Prisoner Pit.** Kuyler keeps a dozen humans down here, and has placed walls of fire at the doors to keep them from leaving. A dervish stands guard outside either entrance.
3. **Map Room.** An ancient world map on the floor has attracted Kuyler's interest, and he's set up tiny firegem carvings of warriors on shelves here. He expects to plan an invasion, fight maybe a few thousand humans, and conquer the world. He has no idea of the scale of the map.
4. **Throne Room.** Kuyler and three viziers party here, drinking and dragging in various trophies from outside so they can burn them for fun.
5. **Bare Halls.** The walls and floor show signs of once having had traps installed in them, which were long ago destroyed or disabled, and then more recently transmuted into brass.
6. **Dervish Quarters.** The dervishes sleep here on huge stone beds.
7. **Boring Spot.** Kuyler makes Liesi stand here and do nothing when he's used up his wishes for the day but hasn't finished drinking out of her home.
8. **Portal to Jiese.** Two more dervishes stand guard here.



**Kuyler, Salamander Sultan**

CR 16

XP 76,800

M Salamander Fighter (polearm master<sup>APC</sup>) 10

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22**Defense****AC** 34, touch 13, flat-footed 31 (+14 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)**hp** 253 (18 HD; 8d10+10d10+154)**Fort** +25, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 15 ft.**Melee** +4 *cold iron halberd* +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d10+18/19–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +20 (2d6+3 plus 1d6 fire and grab),**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** pole fighting –2, steadfast pike +2, polearm training +2, flexible flanker, constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Statistics****Str** 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 26, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 40**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Greater Vital Strike, Greater Weapon Focus (halberd), Improved Critical (halberd), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack, Stand Still, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +17, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +22, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +13;**Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Ignan**Other Gear** +5 *mithral full plate*, +4 *cold iron halberd*, *belt of physical perfection* +4, *cloak of resistance* +4**Special Abilities****Contingent Wishes (Su)** Kuyler's indentured genie servant Liesi has honored countless *wishes* for her master, and as such, Kuyler has a plethora of *wish*-based personal effects. Each *wish* effect is a one-time use ability and is described below. Each contingent *wish* counts as cast by an 11th level caster.

- **Back Up:** If there are no friendly allies within 60 feet of Kuyler, the salamander warlord can expend this wish as a free action. Doing so summons 1d4 salamander dervishes or viziers within 60 feet. These salamanders can immediately act and are loyal servants to Kuyler.
- **Expert Wrassler:** If Kuyler fails a CMB check against an opponent (such as with his constrict ability) he can immediately re-roll the attempt with a +10 bonus. If the opponent is under the effects of a *freedom of movement* or similar effect, it is suppressed for 1 minute.
- **Uh Oh:** If reduced below 100 hit points, Kuyler is immediately targeted by a *heal* spell. Any ability that impairs his ability to act (dazed, stunned, grappled, pinned, etc), ends and he gains the benefit of *freedom of movement* for one minute.

**Liesi, Bound Efreet**

CR 8

XP 4,800

LE Large outsider (extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +15**Defense****AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –1 size)**hp** 95 (10d10+40)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9**Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 slams +15 (1d8+6 plus 1d6 fire)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** change size, heat (1d6 fire)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +13)Constant—*detect magic*At will—*plane shift* (willing targets to Jiese or Material Plane only), *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray*3/day—*invisibility*, quickened *scorching ray*, *wall of fire* (DC 16)1/day—grant up to 3 *wishes* (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18)**Statistics****Str** 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (scorching ray)**Skills** Bluff +19, Disguise +10, Fly +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (The Planes) +14, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +8**Languages** Auran, Aquan, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** change shape (humanoid or giant, *alter self* or *giant form I*)**Special Abilities****Bound(Ex)** Several pacts and unique *wishes* bind Liesi in service to Kuyler. For game effects, she cannot willingly attack Kuyler and must defend the salamander to the best of her abilities. This effect can be dispelled with three successful dispel attempts. The caster level to dispel the associated magical binding is 20th level.**Change Size (Sp)** Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A DC 13 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Charisma-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.

## LIESI'S BETRAYAL

Liesi is bound to a bronze bottle that Kuyler carries at all times. Indeed, whenever he deigns to let Liesi out of the bottle, he proceeds to fill it with fiery alcohol so he can mock her all day long by drinking out of her home.

Liesi has been forced to serve the salamanders for thousands of years, though she hasn't been aware of all the time. The arrival of the PCs presents her with a unique opportunity to arrange Kuyler's assassination and her freedom. Of course, she's still evil, and derives pleasure out of tricking people into miswording wishes to their own detriment. Trusting her is a bad idea.

Kuyler has forbidden Liesi from leaving the ziggurat without his permission, but if the party comes inside she'll seek them out and hide them from the salamanders long enough for her to make her pitch. Alternately, if the party attacks and withdraws, she'll convince Kuyler to send her out to scout

invisibly. He agrees, but forbids her from talking to anyone while she's out. So she bends the letter of the order, and has a *permanent image* talk for her.

Liesi probes the PCs with various questions about the world, specifically about the Gyre and whether it's possible to go to other planes. In exchange, she offers detailed descriptions of Kuyler's motivation and his forces. In addition to the pittance here, he has several thousand warriors back on Jiese.

If the party doubts her, Liesi swallows her immense pride and tells the PCs that she merely wishes to leave this world, so she needs the party to free her from Kuyler. She knows she's risking that she's just trading one master for another, and so she might avoid even mentioning her discontent if she thinks the party is worse than a drunken salamander.

### Salamander Vizier

CR 10

XP 9,600

M Salamander Evoker 8

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

#### Defense

**AC** 28, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural, +4 shield)**hp** 160 (16 HD; 8d10+8d6+88)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +2 *spear* +16/+11/+6 (1d8+5/x3 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire and grab),**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** intense spells (+4 damage), constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

At will—elemental will (8 rounds/day)

8/day—*force missile* (1d4+4)**Evoker Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +13)4th—*fire shield*, *dimensional anchor*, *obsidian flow*<sup>UC</sup> (DC 19), *shout* (DC 20)3rd—*fireball* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *slow* (DC 18)2nd—*blur*, *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *shatter* (DC 18)1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (3), *protection from law*, *shield*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *resistance***Prohibited Schools** divination, necromancy

#### Statistics

**Str** 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27**Feats** Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Greater Spell Penetration, Iron Will, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perception), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Bluff +20, Craft (weaponsmithing) +20, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perception +28, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran**SQ** arcane bond (+2 *spear*)**Other Gear** +2 *spear*, cloak of resistance +2

### Salamander Dervish

CR 10

XP 9,600

M Salamander Inquisitor of the Unremitting Conflagration 8

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +29

#### Defense

**AC** 24, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)**hp** 184 (16 HD; 8d10+8d8+104)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +2 *falchion* +22/+17/+12 (2d4+9/18–20 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+2 plus 1d6 fire and grab)**Ranged** +2 *composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+7/x3 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+2 plus 1d6 fire and grab)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** bane (8 rounds/day), constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +9)7/day—*fire bolt* (1d6+4 fire)At will—*detect alignment***Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +9)3rd (3/day)—*burst of speed*<sup>UC</sup>, *dispel magic*, *heroism*2nd (5/day)—*hold person* (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 16), *see invisibility*, *spiritual weapon*1st (5/day)—*command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 15), *inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *true strike*0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *daze* (DC 14), *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

#### Domain Fire

#### Statistics

**Str** 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 33**Feats** Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Back to Back, Coordinated Maneuvers**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Bluff +18, Craft (weaponsmithing) +16, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +29, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Common, Ignan**SQ** cunning initiative, judgment 3/day, monster lore +4, solo tactics, stern gaze, track +4**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 *composite longbow*, +2 *falchion*, bracers of armor +3, +2 *flaming arrows* (20)



### Tactics and Talking

The salamanders are well-trained in fighting animalistic monsters, not people. They tend to rely on brute force or cruel tricks rather than actual tactics. Once Kuyler figures out the party won't go down easily, he'll *wish* for Liesi to teleport him and all his allies in the ziggurat to the top level of the room with the prisoner pit. From there he'll threaten to kill his prisoners unless the party talks.

With a break in the fight, Kuyler tries to figure out whether killing the PCs will let him rule the world. If it becomes clear it won't, he offers instead to get a few thousand of his men to help them kill the giant furry

critter that's running amok in these lands. Then he and his people will control this region and sell weapons and magic to Risur. He promises not to try to invade for at least a few years.

At that, Liesi loudly suggests to Kuyler that in a few years the world might not be here, because of that odd thing in the sky. Again she'll suggest he wish for her to find out more about it. He yells at her, swigs the last of his ale from her bottle, then orders her back into it, but he'll call her back out if the fight renews, in which case he uses his remaining wishes fairly simply, like wanting his halberd to be *human-bane* or to dispel any fire resistance the party has.

## RECONCILIATION

### Social. Montage.

*Risur might ally with the salamanders, or earn the favor of the Ash Wolf.*

There are multiple ways the PCs can handle the salamander's intrusion. The most likely outcome is that Kuyler is defeated or forced out of the world and back to Jiese. In this situation, the PCs can inform the Ash Wolf what has happened, and the fey titan will have a Smoldering Wolf inspect the ziggurat, then order his pack back into the woods. The forest fires burn out naturally before they reach Bole.

If the Ash Wolf is appeased by having the salamanders driven off, he owes the PCs two boons—one for helping him get revenge, and one for showing him the error of his aggression. For the former, he offers to aid Risur in one battle within the coming year. For the latter, he offers to tell one PC how to find a perfect mate and lover. If a PC accepts, the Ash Wolf instills in that character the identity and general location of someone who would be whatever they want and need in a companion.

In the event that the PCs negotiate with Kuyler, the exact nature of the salamander's offer is met to the letter. If the Jiese natives are allowed to stay, Kuyler brings further reinforcements to secure the eastern forestlands of Risur; standing with the PCs against the Ob should they attack. While Kuyler believes he can eventually take the humans of Risur, he lives a long time and won't be a problem in the near future.

If the party kills Kuyler or drives him away, the salamanders won't risk another incursion.

If the party gets hold of Liesi's *efreeti bottle*, they can call upon her one time to get three wishes, after which she's able to *plane shift* back home thanks to the change in the Axis Seal. Alternately they can keep her around to aid in more mundane ways, though each time they call her there's a 10% chance she simply *plane shifts* away for good. If the party was kind to her, there's no chance she attacks the party.

## THREAT TWO: FATHER OF THUNDER

*Please bless our land, o Father,  
Give rains and summers warm.  
Grant much in fall, o Father  
And bless with every horn.*

*Please bless our herds, o Father,  
That they may graze our fields.*

*Please bless our home, o Father,  
And bless our evening meal.*

- Prayer to the Father of Thunder

Storms and stampedes ravage Risur's breadbasket, but with the aid of the Great Hunt the party can ride down the fey titan. He's stubborn, and won't listen to reason unless someone can defeat him in battle. He just so happens to equate carousing to battle, however.



## THE DRUNKEN STAMPEDE

### Exploration. Montage.

*There's a giant gazelle-bison-rhinoceros running around the countryside, trampling all the crops, impregnating all the mares and sows, and drinking all our liquor!*

The Father of Thunder stands fifty feet tall at the shoulder, with horns jutting and curling and curving out of his back and head and shoulders in myriad odd angles. His mere presence sires children in female herd animals—horses, cows, sheep, and more—and those children possess supernatural speed, might, and resilience. Harvested

grains he sets his gaze upon ferment into alcoholic silage. Massive herds surround him and follow him wherever he goes. The huge horned beast loves nothing more than getting drunk and tromping across the countryside in a constant celebration.

His bacchanalia is ruining Risur's ability to grow crops and raise livestock, not to mention he occasionally stampedes through towns, crushing buildings under his hooves. For now he stays near Bole, tempted by its whisky distilleries, but it will be a few months before he's gathered a large enough herd for him to risk entering the city to get at that fine liquor.



### Do You Hear Thunder?

The Father of Thunder's rollicking herd roams somewhere between twenty and fifty miles from Bole. High-level magic or old-fashioned tracking can pinpoint them fairly quickly, but finding a way to actually deal with the problem will take longer.

Empowered by the fey titan, the stampede moves at a ludicrous speed (300 ft. per round, or over 30 miles an hour), utterly destroying everything in its path. The sheer speed of the herd makes it next to impossible to successfully engage or disrupt it. Reckless attempts by the party to close in likely end with the party being simply outrun, or trampled into the ground, or shot out of the sky by the Father of Thunder's lightning bolts. Even if the party can get close enough and actually hits hard enough for him to notice, the titan has enough disposable herd animals that he can order a few hundred to knock away any enemies.

If the PCs' plan seems reasonable, give them a chance, but most likely they'll need the Great Hunt's help. The riders can lend fast enough steeds to the party, and will kill creatures of the herd that try to interfere with the party's assault.

### Talking to the Titan

The Father of Thunder assumes any non-herd animal is a threat, and won't even consider talking unless he's exhausted 'attacking' and 'running away' as options. Even trying to magically communicate with him won't turn out well, due to his Stormy Presence ability.

He hates people who interrupt his fun by wanting to talk, though he might respond to a challenge or insult by attacking and trying to trample the offending party-pooer. Exceptionally good music (Perform DC 35) can entertain him enough to let someone get within a hundred feet, though the sight of weapons and armor will spook him into fleeing.

### The Clever Option

The Father of Thunder loves drinking, but his binges out in the wild never go deep enough to really slow him down. If the party lures him into Bole's theater district (a mighty challenge itself), they can let him wreck a couple distilleries while chugging to his limit, and he'll be far easier to handle. Getting him that drunk effectively gives him 5 negative levels and weakens his defenses.

Alternately, the party might leave a trail of whisky barrel breadcrumbs, lure him into Bole, and then trick him into chasing them across the logjam in the Great Delve River. He can swim, but isn't anywhere near as fast as on foot, and his herd is mostly harmless when they're panicked and trying not to drown.

### The Great Hunt

During the events of Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*, Riffian—a bold fey knight clad in silver plate—accompanied the PCs back into the material world, along with the other riders of the Great Hunt. Traditionally the Great Hunt pursues the grandest game, and upon learning that the Father of Thunder had awakened, Riffian led his riders to Risur's heartland so they could hunt the fey titan's magical offspring.

Riffian has bivouacked his riders just outside of Bole. He knows that by themselves the Great Hunt can only manage to get the offspring, but he will gladly aid the party in an effort to bring down the titan himself.



## Riffian's Camp

Less than ten miles outside of Bole, Riffian and his assembled riders wait and prepare for their hunt against the Father of Thunder. Mounts are left untethered, allowed to wander the forest gardens as they see fit, with riders having no fear of losing their steeds. Dire mastiffs patrol the edges of the camp. If the PCs rode with Riffian in Adventure Nine, the hounds remember their scent, with some even giving forceful but playful head-butts.

Each rider is humanoid with the stature of an elf, but their whole bodies are hidden beneath supple mithral plate armor. Each knight's mask is decorated with different static expressions, many resembling roots digging into the ground. Few of the riders speak, only performing basic actions like feeding their mounts or sharpening weapons. They save their voices for singing during meals or while on the hunt.

Riffian works at the center of the camp, singing to sooth a pair of colts recently captured from the Father of Thunder's herd. Riffian explains that they're less than a month old, and already are nearly grown to be fit to bear a rider on the hunt.

Riffian's not much for planning, but his advice for subduing the fey titan would be to ride in disguised under bison hides to appear innocuous, get close, then have the party attack while he and his knights keep the herd at bay.

## Cut 'em Out, Ride 'em In

Riffian first asks for hides for the PCs and each of his dozens of riders. With the size of the fey titan's herd, and the exceptional skill level of the PCs and the Great Hunt, you can easily reduce this to a few Handle Animal and Ride checks, or Stealth and Survival checks, representing cutting off a few bison at a time, or sneaking in and killing a few animals discreetly that will be left behind when the Father of Thunder moves on.

## RIDE OUT, AND MEET THEM

### Action. Tactical. Level 25.

*Riding out to take down a fey titan—all in a day's work.*

Riffian's men take a few days to treat the hides and give them minor enchantments. When the party is ready, Riffian offers them each a steed and has everyone bundle under their hides. Disguised as somewhat lumpy bison, the party and a couple dozen fey huntsmen can weave into the midst of the herd. Have each PC make a simple Stealth check (DC 10) four times, with each check representing a quarter-mile worth of herd they've passed through.

After a single failed check the Father of Thunder sniffs, stands up, and watches where the PCs are, looking for signs of trouble. He drops a lightning bolt nearby, just enough to spook the party. Then he returns to partying. A second failed check, though, causes him to bellow and get the herd moving. If the party gets closer, he likely spots them when they come within 100 feet. Once the titan becomes aware of the threat, the PC who is the monarch feels a great strength flow into him, as detailed in the Rites of Rulership (see Adventure Nine).

### The Grand Stampede (see Appendix Two: Fey Titans)

- ♦ The Father of Thunder

## STEEDS FROM THE GREAT HUNT

We intentionally designed the Father of Thunder to mostly ignore the party's steeds. Even his lightning bolts don't affect them. However, in case it matters, treat the steeds the Great Hunt provides as a heavy warhorse with a base speed of 150 ft., enough to keep up with the Father of Thunder, and grant the steed a +48 bonus to Acrobatics checks to jump. (This encounter likely calls for a few long jumps, though the onus is on the PC to direct the steed properly with a Ride check.)

Additionally, each horse has 35 temporary hit points, renewed at the dawn of each day.

## Battling the Father of Thunder

See the Father of Thunder's stats in Appendix Two: Fey Titans. His herd is an environmental hazard, which the Great Hunt protects the party against, allowing the PCs to focus on the fey titan.

His likely course of action is to flee while dropping lightning bolts on those who give chase and stomping or goring anyone who rides too close. Once injured enough (to about 2/3 his maximum HP) he stumbles, which triggers an earthquake and gives him a chance to break away over uneven terrain full of perilous chasms. When he's desperate (reduced to about 1/3 hit maximum HP), he stops running and calls down a tornado that draws enemies close for him to crush.

Raucous and bawdy, the Father of Thunder will yell at the party during battle, demanding they let him have his fun and keep bringing him more ale and mares if they don't want him to demolish their cute little cities. If while fleeing he can manage to get at least 400 feet from the party, he'll roar, "We feast tonight in the woody city! Run fast or there won't be any whisky left for you!"

Then he sprints straight for Bole. With speeds fairly evenly matched, he'll slowly draw farther and farther away since rough terrain doesn't slow him down. A huge storm sweeps into the city ahead of him, and he starts tearing into buildings looking for liquor. When the party catches up, he'll call down his tornado and proclaim that he is master of this land. If he wins, his herd ends up trashing the city and he lingers for a few days and finishes off all the alcohol before heading back into the wetlands with a massive hangover.

## Can't We All Just Get Along?

The Father of Thunder surrenders when reduced to 0 hit points, and the stampede comes to an abrupt halt. Full of braggadocio, the fey titan pretends he was just confused, and that he was game to talk all along.

A victorious party can simply demand the Father of Thunder return to his slumber, at which point he'll walk out into the wilderness, pull a hillside over himself, and grumpily take a nap for a few centuries.

Or the party can make a deal with him. Like a rowdy neighbor, he'll agree to temper his parties and stay away from farmland that is marked by fences decorated with lightning bolts. He demands monthly offerings

of alcohol – several hundred gallons at least. And he wants to have sex with any women in the party, promising them mighty children (though he can be dissuaded from this). In exchange, he'll provide three favors.

First, he promises to ride into battle to defend the weftlands should the Obscurati dare to tread on Risuri soil. (The Obscurati don't have any interest in invading the heartland of Risur, though, so it's kind of useless.)

Second, he'll use his storms and his manure to bless the crops of

Risur. For the next year, everyone who eats from those crops gains 5 temporary hit points each day. Individually it's not much, but should war occur thousands will survive wounds that normally would have killed them.

Third, he'll grant one PC unmatched virility (with facial and body hair to match), plus the ability to call down a 5d8 lightning bolt (per *call lightning*) once per day as a swift action.

## THREAT THREE: GRANNY ALLSWELL

*Bedtime, children. Please, please hush.*

*You don't want granny waking up.*

-Common Risuri Nursery Rhyme

In mines near a mountain town, Granny Allswell has abducted children and murdered miners. An agent of the Voice of Rot is trying to goad the fey titan into destroying a dam that will kill thousands in Bole, and revealing her tricks might make Granny angry enough at her fellow titan to actually ally with Risur.

## MOUNTAINSIDE MADNESS

### Exploration. Montage.

*Favela is in turmoil.*

After the great eclipse, earthquakes began to shake Risur's Anthras Mountains, focused around an iron-rich peak known as Redcap. At first the miners waited for the tremors to stop, but then children started going missing in the night, tools and machines started to break, and shiny objects of all sorts disappeared in droves. The Fortunad nomads, normally to blame for such troubles, started doomsaying and fled en masse. The superstitious miners recognized all the hallmarks of the fey titan known as Granny Allswell. Those miners who could afford to leave and who had not already lost their children to the gremlins in the mountains followed the Fortunad, and now only the most desperate remain.

With most of the miners and local officials evacuated, the most respected authority figure left in town was **Katlin Eisner**, illusionist proprietor of a brothel and sister of the druid **Ochran Eisner** from Bole. Like her brother she is a minion of the Voice of Rot, and she imagines herself as a future sorceress-queen once the serpentine titan destroys most of Risur civilization.

### Town Background

Favela was once a community of outcast Risuri and former slaves from Ber who lived on the steep hillside outskirts of a long-gone town. When Risur built the Barret Damworks thirty years ago to tame the flow of the Great Delve River, the old town was flooded, but the slums were above the water line. The steadier river flow made the town an attractive central point for mining operations in the area, since ore and precious metals could be easily barged downstream to Bole. More and more settlers came in, crowding into the already-cramped community.

### The White Tongue's Goal

The Voice of Rot tasked Katlin with directing the malice of Granny Allswell toward a specific purpose. Katlin intends to goad Granny and her gremlins into destroying the massive dam that holds back Favela's lake.

Toward this goal, Katlin has been placing *magic mouths* around Favela to make the sounds of playing children. When the gremlins emerge from the mines at night seeking shinies for their Granny, the sounds attract them. There aren't any children left in the town, so Granny grows frustrated at being unable to find these phantasmal youths. She's considering going out herself, but she still has a few abducted kids to keep her occupied. In the meanwhile, she has her gremlins break everything that can clank, rumble, and squeak so they might better hear where the kids are hiding.

Whenever Granny does emerge, she'll hear children singing from *inside* the dam. If the party doesn't intercede, two months after the great eclipse she'll futilely destroy the dam, thousands in Bole will drown, and each death would provide another small boost in the Voice of Rot's power.

### WHERE DO GREMLINS COME FROM?

Folk tales tell of a child who disobeyed his parents and kept breaking plates, windows, and everything else he could. His parents, on the edge of poverty and unable to keep replacing the destroyed property, took their son into the woods and told him to play a game: close his eyes and sing a song about breaking dishes, down from ninety-nine dishes until there were none left.

While the boy counted, the parents snuck away, hoping the boy would die and they'd never have to replace another broken item. But his singing attracted Granny Allswell, who loved his voice and adopted him to sing for her forever, along with all the other children who had been abandoned in the woods. He became a gremlin, and on his birthday the next year, his parents found everything they owned cracked and shattered.





### Bem Vindo ao Favela

When the party arrives, the town is mostly abandoned, but three hundred miners have gathered at the docks on the lake, where ‘Mayor Eisner’ is hosting the daily lottery. Huge braziers of firegems burn throughout the favela – a dangerous fire hazard, but the townsfolk are horribly afraid of the dark.

Everyone is terrified of the gremlins and the fey titan, but since without the mines everyone here would go hungry, the remaining handful of mining foremen have a rule: anyone who wants to stay in the town and not abandon their abducted children must put their

name into the lottery, and every evening five people must go into the mines and play folk songs that are said to sooth Granny Allswell.

The miners believe that the songs keep the gremlins away, so that the next day whatever tunnels they sang in will be free of damage or traps. Those miners whose names come up in the lottery risk their lives at night to make the mines safer during the day for the rest of the men and women.

Katlin draws out names from a hat, eliciting despairing outbursts from those chosen. The mass of people and their combined dismay begins to manifest a small glowing seed of a hivemind over the crowd, which none of them notice. If the group is interrupted, the hivemind fades away. Katlin, not realizing who the PCs are, asks with a stutter if anyone in the party wants to take the place of the lottery winners.

Soothing Granny hasn’t actually worked so well, and every day there’s a small chance the gremlins snatch one of the miners, either the night-time singers or the day-time workers. But a Perform check (DC 35, including +2 bonuses from each assisting musician) keeps the gremlins from murdering any townsfolk. It won’t, however, keep Granny from demanding the children be given to her.

### Royal Aid

The town is completely unprepared for a royal visit, and Katlin tries not to panic when she finds out who the party is. The miners are both totally obsequious and desperate for help, throwing themselves at the party’s feet to beg they rescue their children. Katlin, beautiful but surprisingly timid for the proprietor of a brothel, gingerly suggest the party talk to her indoors. She takes them to her place of business, where the ‘Oremongers’ sign has been hastily covered with one that reads ‘City Hall.’

She discounts people’s fears that an actual fey titan is here, and she says she’s confident it’s just gremlins being bolder because it’s darker than usual. She worries for the children, of course—why, one of her employees, **Natalie Distaff**, is due to give birth any day now—but she’s confident as soon as the sun comes back people are going to be mining here again, and she’s not going to abandon her business just

because of some bad weather.

Katlin deals in deception and seduction, so is a much better liar than her brother (Sense Motive DC 30). If caught, though, she claims that the world is doomed anyway, so why shouldn’t she stand highest atop the ruins?

If the party takes more than a couple days to resolve affairs in Favela, young Natalie gives birth, but Katlin forbids her from leaving. That night a dozen gremlins ambush the brothel and steal the baby.

### Local Rumors

With a few purchased drinks and greased palms, multiple survivors can confirm the existence of ‘rather polite’ fey in the Redcap mines. (These are the gremlins Glower, Guffaw, Pout and Tremble, servants of Granny Allswell.)

The miners can provide some rough and often-contradictory maps of the mines, but all of them remember that there’s a large section that has been abandoned for a few years. They broke through some debris and found a much-older section of tunnels, then went in and started setting up cranes, a rail car, and a steam engine to drive them, but then a representative of King Aodhan showed up and ordered that section of the mine closed. Checking with the bureaucrats back in Slate reveals that they were pretty sure that section of tunnels was where Granny Allswell had been buried.

### Long-Term Gremlinery

Favela’s miners operated in dozens of mines in the area, with Redcap just being the most prominent and profitable. These mines’ outputs fall off rapidly after the Great Eclipse, and then other mines farther away start having trouble. Granny’s old joints take a while to limber up, so she hasn’t gone out personally, but she’s using her witchy magic from beneath the earth to create gremlins all throughout the Anthras Mountains. Given enough time, bands of the little buggers will start marching into Redcap carrying children and shinies nabbed all along the mountain range.



## GATHER ‘ROUND CHILDREN

### Action. Montage. Level 19.

*Servants of Granny Allswell lure intruders to the mines of the Redcap into traps.*

Unless the party wants to wait for Granny to come out (and endure Risur’s mining operations being disrupted for two months), they’ll need to enter the Redcap mines and find her.

Granny’s witchy magic has given her a general description of each PC, and she has told her favored children to be on the lookout for them. Soon after receiving these instructions, the gremlins had a series of mistaken identity situations, bringing random miners from the Favela lottery to see Granny. The miners that met the fey titan were driven mad and fed to the kidnapped children as stew. The gremlins took the resultant scolding of Granny to heart and opted to craft a series of tests for those who entered the mine.

### Redcap Peak—Above Ground

The entrance to the Redcap mines is a lonely grouping of temporary dwellings spaced between shafts leading into the mountain. The buildings were once the homes of dozens of miners, as well as support shops, meeting areas, recreation, and lavatories. All of the buildings are abandoned; their interiors stripped clean, with goods transported back to Favela or dragged into the mines by the gremlins.

No metal remains here. Doors have hinges crudely removed, fences picked clean save for the wood mounts, and even the handles on the latrines are missing. Each of the entry shafts save one are broken beyond mundane means of repair. Crashed elevators and broken cabling tell stories of destruction for each, while the sole working elevator has a crude wooden sign post erected at the entrance. Written in haphazardly splashed blood is the following:

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This mountain is ours. Come and play. Play and be ours too.

---

A 15-ft. square platform acts as the elevator, with support ropes on every corner and a central rope that connects to a pulley 20 ft. above the entrance. The elevator can be turned on – sending the cart down at a rate of 30 ft. per round – from a lever on the platform. The shaft descends 350 ft. into the mountain and ends at a juncture of several horizontal tunnels.

**Trap:** A single gremlin waits 100 ft. down the shaft nestled in a small cubby. For the most part, the gremlin spends its days sleeping and lazing about in its hole, but is woken by the sounds of the elevator if it is activated. The creature hides in the darkness (Perception DC 30) waiting for the elevator to pass, at which point it comes out and cuts the support cables.

Creatures on the platform who fall from this height take 20d6 points of falling damage along with 6d6 points of piercing damage from broken debris. PCs on the platform can attempt to grab onto the wall though they need to make a quick jump and find a handhold on the smoothed shaft walls (Reflex DC 28 followed by a DC 20 Climb check).

### The Greatest of Gremlins

A group of four gremlins are considered to be the favorite of Granny Allswell’s rambunctious children. Named **Glower**, **Guffaw**, **Pout**, and **Tremble**, these gremlins take great joy in acting as ambassadors for those who dare travel into the mines. Having a very twisted sense of diplomacy and proper manners, these gremlins are not immediately hostile and do their best to act as guides for the PCs.

The posse of four waits at the exit of the elevator, expecting visitors the moment the elevator activates. They’re initially hostile but feign friendship, unless the party is playing music (Perform DC 20) in which case they’re unfriendly. They’ll still try to trick the party into danger unless the PCs make a genuine effort to befriend them. If made helpful, they’ll explain that there are traps up ahead, but that Granny only wants survivors to make it to her, so they have to endure the traps to prove they’re not just more boring miners.

The four gremlins are:

- ♦ **Glower:** A stunted (for a gremlin) blue-skinned creature with a perpetual look of frustration on his face. He wears a finely tailored suit that is clearly sized for a child along with an appropriately sized bowler hat. Glower spends his time talking about how nothing impresses him, and acts bitter towards everyone and everything that is not him. The inside lining of his jacket is filled with hooks that dangle dozens of tiny children toys, which he occasionally pulls out and plays with to illustrate his ennui. The only time Glower shows any emotion beyond his irritation is when questioned on the origin of his toys, to which he simply responds with a rictus grin and no answer.



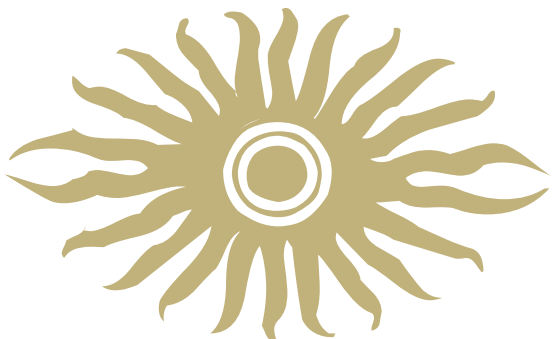
- ♦ **Guffaw:** A humorously obese gremlin with orange-tinged flesh riddled with freckles, Guffaw has the drooping ears of a basset hound. He begins every sentence with a chortling “Huh huh huh!” and ends with a simple “Eh?” Guffaw dresses in rags that are a patchwork of quilts and blankets each of which is inscribed with a different name. When mocked by his siblings, Guffaw’s most common response is to nervously break wind and begin crying.
- ♦ **Pout:** The only female of the group, Pout is garbed in an elaborate crimson dress and acts like a meek teenager talking to her first crush. Her purple hued skin meshes with the dress, but a close inspection of the fabric reveals it to be originally a white dress now covered in blood. Pout rarely speaks, but often has moments of seemingly random disagreements with her siblings. Most of these disputes turn into savage mauling as Pout attacks those who disagree with her after she puts her foot down.
- ♦ **Tremble:** A gray-skinned gremlin with a full set of disheveled white hair, Tremble eternally shakes as his name suggests. One of his two eyes is milky white, while the other is slit like that of a cat, constantly blinking open and closed. Tremble is the most talkative of the group, often initiating conversation with an odd twinge of movement, probing newcomers with endless questions about the foods they’ve eaten, the places they’ve visited, their favorite color, why they chose the weapons they chose, who their favorite celebrity is (for the record Tremble’s is ‘Rock Rackus, the greatest of all humans’), and continual questions about why they’ve entered the Redcap mines. The gremlin’s only other quirk is his need to stab things with his rusted kitchen knife, an addiction he considerably fills on the local insect life.

## GODS VS. GREMLINS

Let’s take a look at this objectively, shall we? The PCs are 17<sup>th</sup> level at this point and have the ability as a group to bring armies to heel with concentrated spell casting and martial prowess. Standing against them in the Redcap mines is a gaggle of disorganized gremlins with only 4 of them having any notable abilities.

Not a fair fight.

Mischievous as they are, the gremlins don’t pose a threat against the PCs. What make Granny’s children an annoyance are the traps that fill the mountain, and the plethora of passive abilities Glower, Guffaw, Pout, and Tremble present. Used together, these could pose a major hindrance to the PCs, weakening them before they meet the fey titan herself.



### Glower, Guffaw, Pout, & Tremble

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Gremlin rogue 9

NE Tiny fey

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

#### Defense

**AC** 24, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 size)**hp** 77 (10 HD; 9d8+1d6+30)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +15, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +3**DR** 10/cold iron; **SR** 20

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +3 *dagger* +18/+13/ (1d2+1/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +5d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9<sup>th</sup>)At-Will— *quicken* *mage hand*

#### Statistics

**Str** 6, **Dex** 24, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 20**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +14, Climb +11, Craft (traps) +12, Disable Device +22, Escape Artist +20, Intimidate +10, Perception +18, Ride +8, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +32**Languages** Common, Primordial, Sylvan**SQ** rogue talent (bleeding attack, fast stealth, powerful sneak, stand up), trapfinding +4**Other Gear** +3 *dagger*, *bracers of armor* +4

#### Special Abilities

Each gremlin has an aura that is a mind-affecting effect that does not work on animals, or other gremlins.

**Angry Aura [Glower Only] (Su)** Glower radiates an aura of anger to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area gains the confused condition anytime it misses with an attack or fails a skill check. This condition lasts for 10 rounds, during which the subject always counts as rolling ‘Attack Nearest Creature’. Once the confusion effect ends, the creature can be affected by this ability again.

**Incompetence Aura [Guffaw Only] (Su)** Guffaw radiates an aura of incompetence to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area must roll two d20s whenever a situation calls for a d20 roll (such as an attack roll, a skill check, or a saving throw) and must use the lower of the two results generated.

**Timid Aura [Pout Only] (Su)** Pout radiates an aura of timidity to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area who initiates an action (full-round/move/standard/swift) has a 20% chance of not performing that action. The creature cannot select a new action in the place of the one they failed to act on; the action is considered spent.

**Twitching Aura [Tremble Only] (Su)** Tremble radiates an aura of uncontrollable shaking to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area can move up to double their normal speed as a move action. Anytime a creature moves in this aura, they must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

## Trouble in the Dark

The caverns of the Redcap mines are filled with twisting turns and narrow passages, necessitated by Risur's druid-overseen mining practices, which favor appeasing nature spirits instead of strip mining. Each section of the mine is reinforced with wooden struts and every 100 feet or so there's a secured bunker complex where miners could seek shelter in the case of a collapse. There are no lights, and the winding tunnels are typically 4 feet wide and 5 feet high, with only occasional openings into larger chambers that once contained profitable veins.

Simple wooden tracks for mining carts weave through the mine, though a few sections are missing where the tracks were metal. These are typically nearby dismantled steam engines, which were used to propel heavily-laden carts up slopes.

The nature of the path allows the gremlins to take the PCs through a variety of traps and tricks to 'test' them before they meet with Granny Allswell. If the party disarms a trap, the gremlins might reset it using *quicken mage hand* (Perception DC 42 to notice). If the party doesn't go with the gremlins, they still encounter the traps since they're along the route to Granny.

The gremlins pretend to be dumbfounded about how all these traps got here, and they blame the miners for having unsafe working conditions.

### Trap One—No Sleeping in Mine

A ladder that descends thirty feet has several long wooden slivers coated with poison. Initially only one ladder run has these poisoned splinters exposed, but the gremlins can use *mage hand* to trigger different traps for each PC. If any PCs fall unconscious, the gremlins want to strip them naked, scatter their gear in nooks around the mines, and then eat their flesh.

#### Poisoned Quills

CR 8 per PC

XP 4,800

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 23**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair**Effect** Atk +15 melee (2d4+2 hp plus blue whinnis poison);**Blue whinnis poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 14**Frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds**Initial Effect** 1 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** unconsciousness for 1d3 hours;**Cure** 1 save

### Trap Two—Please Use Handrail

Wooden planks form a simple bridge over a 10-ft. long ravine. Bundles of mining supplies dangle from it, include coils of rope with swinging hooks. The gremlins have the bridge collapse when the third PC is on it, and the ropes snag and pull victims down into a 15-ft. deep pit filled with stone spikes pointing in many odd angles. The spikes are coated in purple worm venom.

#### Footgrabber Pit

CR 12

XP 19,200

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 27; **Disable Device** DC 25**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** Reflex DC 25 avoids fall into pit full of spikes. Atk +15 melee (1d4+2 spikes for 1d6+1 damage each plus entangle plus purple worm poison); an entangled creature cannot move from its space, but can make an Escape Artist or Strength check (DC 20) as a full-round action, which deals 2d6 additional damage whether the check is successful or not.

**Purple worm poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 24**Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds**Initial Effect** 1d3 Str damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

### Trap Three—Deadly Supply Bunker

Ladders, ropes, and wheelbarrows fill this 20-ft. wide, 100-ft. long chamber. Racks of picks and other metal implements fill the walls. This place looks really dangerous—Perception (DC 25) determines that any large force would cause a lot of sharp things to fly through the air—and it takes a separate Disable Device checks (DC 25) to make any given 10-ft. square safe. (Even if the party does this, the gremlins discreetly reset everything when they're not looking, using *mage hand*.)

Surprisingly, though, nothing bad happens here the first time the party comes through.

### Trap Four—Don't All Miners Stow Giant Boulders at the Tops of Slopes?

Shortly after the deadly supply bunker room, a 60-ft. long, 10-ft. wide passage has a few nooks along the ground (Perception DC 30), each big enough for a Tiny creature to stand safely in as a boulder rolls past. The end of the passage slopes up, and as soon as anything heavier than thirty pounds steps there, a huge boulder clunks loudly, falling from the ceiling 60-ft. further ahead (120 ft. from the deadly supply bunker).

Roll initiative; starting at initiative count 24 and again at each next initiative count until count 0, the boulder advances 5 ft. down the hall, back toward the deadly supply bunker. It careens for two rounds until it hits the end of the bunker room, and as it moves it triggers the flinging metal traps.

#### Rolling Boulder

CR 10

XP 9,600

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 20**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual

**Effect** rolling boulder (12d6 bludgeoning damage and knocked prone; Reflex DC 25 for half); targets all creatures whose space it enters.

#### Flinging Metal

CR 11

XP 12,800

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20**Trigger** location; **Duration** 4 rounds; **Reset** manual

**Effect** sharp metal (Atk +18 ranged, 1d4 darts per target for 1d4+1 damage each plus wasp swarm poison); flying picks (Atk +18 melee [1d12+1/x3]); multiple targets (all targets within room)

**Wasp swarm poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 13**Frequency** 1/round for 4 rounds**Initial Effect** 1 Dex damage; **Cure** 1 save



## ALLSWELL DOWN HERE

### Social. Real-Time.

*Granny Allswell seems too crazy to be a real threat, but she's as malevolent as the Voice of Rot and cleverer than anyone gives her credit.*

After being suitably led through the mine by their gremlin guides, the PCs hear a murmur of dozens of tiny voices, accompanied by the hearty but somehow off-putting smell of a stew cooking. The tunnel grows taller, and a scaffolding on the left leads up to a small air vent. Beyond it, the passage opens up into a vast chamber, lit only by a dim fire-light emerging from a pit to the north. Magical fire runes around the pit keep warm the stew cooking 30 feet below.

The chamber is filled with various lesser fey gremlins, most of which stand less than a foot tall in height, though their coloration is that of a sickly rainbow. In all there are over a hundred gremlins of differing sizes and shapes who cower in front of the wall at the opposite end of the chamber.

The wall the gremlin horde stands in front of is actually a trio of powerful earth spirits sent under Redcap Mountain by Queen Zidi centuries ago. Zidi had tricked the elementals into absorbing some of her gold royal treasure, which kept them from simply earthgliding through the stone. Granny Allswell was trapped with them, and she made them her pets, nursing the wounded elementals back to health and extracting all the shiny metal from their owies.

As the PCs enter the chamber, the elementals have taken the form of a wall and only Granny's head is visible, poking out of the stone some twenty feet above the ground. Suspiciously, the stone of the wall doesn't quite match that of the rest of the mines (Perception DC 35), and has a lot of tiny holes. At the foot of the wall lies a pile of tons of shiny (and not-so-shiny) metal doodads acquired by the gremlins. The mining cart rails run directly into the pile, but any miner could tell that the tracks seem out of place stopping at the wall (Knowledge [engineering] DC 20).

On the right side of the room, a mass of makeshift metal cages hold dozens of children, ranging between infants and twelve years old. Behind the cages sits a huge pile of red barrels marked with a fiery icon to warn of explosions; these hold firedust used for blasting. Several of the children have their wrists tied to the bars of the cages with twine, and wooden signs hang around their necks, painted in blood with the word 'Naughty.'

### Don't Take Granny for Granite!

Tremble steps forward to address Granny, whose eyes—previously pointed in different directions, spin to lock onto the party, then twitch independently to examine each PC.

Granny calls for her children to calm down. At first the gremlins around the chamber don't seem to listen, but a forceful shout of "BE QUIET NOW!" causes them gremlins to freeze in their tracks and slowly slink to the edges of the room. Even the four named gremlins retreat back in response to Granny's outburst. Once the gremlins are settled, Granny calls for the PCs to come closer so she can "get a better look at them."

Granny Allswell knows the PCs are indeed powerful and tries to gently ply them for information, starting with, "Why don't cha tell Granny what this is all about now?"

### Fey Demands

Hearing about a sunless world makes Granny grin and chortle, but then she demures and coos that Risur's children must be so scared of the dark. At that point she looks into the corner of the chamber that holds the children in cages. "Look how safe they are in there."

Granny wants control of the Anthras Mountains, and she wants a steady stream of children – just the naughty ones, though – to make part of her family. She even has a proposal: have all the miners move out of the mountains, and instead send her all the children old enough to sing a song or swing a pick. She'll keep them until they're twelve, teaching them obedience if she can, or making gremlins out of the ones who won't behave. Then on their thirteenth birthday she'll send them back to civilization with whatever they mined.

Before all that, though, she wants all the children the people of Favela are hiding from her. Her gremlins have heard kids playing, so she knows there are more they're keeping from her, and she does not appreciate the rudeness.

Of course, there are no such children; it's just a trick by Katlin Eisner to get Granny to destroy the dam. It also gives the party an opportunity to avoid a fight, if they're perceptive.

### Think it Over

If she's denied, Granny suggests the PCs take a night to think about it. Would they rather have her protecting their nation's children, or snatching them away? If the party does leave, overnight Granny weaves a spell – the mountain is limed in red faerie fire, and quakes cause buildings to collapse in Favela. After an hour there's a crescendo of thunder and then a rancid stench wafts outward and covers the entire nation. All the milk that touches the lips of children that night curdles, terrifying thousands of mothers and causing thousands of children to become sick.

However, the great expenditure of power imposes a negative level on Granny for the next week, a consequence the party might realize (Knowledge [arcana] DC 30). Heartless PCs might goad her into repeating the curse for several days to weaken her.

If the party arranges for a hundred people to sing the song *All's Well* (see page 14), they can stop the grand hex from affecting the nation, but Granny Allswell is still weakened.

### Titan Against Titan

If the party finds out what Katlin is up to and drags her to Granny, she compels the woman to speak the truth. Upon learning the Voice of Rot tried to trick her, Granny offers a new deal: Risur can keep its children, but she wants the Voice of Rot's tongue, delivered within a year. Until then, any miners in 'her mountains' will need to sing as they dig, or else she'll collapse the tunnels on them.

### Changeling Option

The party might be able to negotiate her to let miners still operate and leave Risur's children alone if one of them offers his or her own child, who will be raised among the gremlins. Granny then lets the PC pick among Tremble, Guffaw, Glowder, and Pout to have as a new child.

### The Old Fashioned Way

Or the party can fight. Whenever battle begins, a PC who is monarch feels the loyalty of the Risuri people flow in and empower him or her.

## FIGHTING THE OLD HAG

### Action. Tactical. Level 25.

*Granny Allswell is smart enough to have allies of her own—hordes of gremlins and three corrupted earth spirits.*

If the party attacks, the collected gremlins start to swarm in from the edges of the room, and the wall Granny's head emerges from breaks apart, transforming into three huge earth elementals with a bitter grudge against the Risuri monarchy. They attack the party, revealing Granny herself—warty green skin, sixty feet tall, her arms unnaturally long and gangly compared to her body, and her eyes twitching in different directions.

### Granny's Gremlin Gang (see Appendix Two: Fey Titans)

- ♦ 3 Corrupted Elder Earth Spirits
- ♦ Granny Allswell

### Terrain

We include two maps—a full map here (and the back of the adventure), plus a player map (at the end only). As the PCs enter they can't see the far chamber or the side tunnel 'air vents.' The 'air vents' that run along the north provide a hiding spot, though Granny can send her gremlin gangs in, or just *wall of stone* them shut if she's really annoyed.





The small pit full of stew deals 1d6 fire damage to a creature caught in it each round.

If the firedust casks take more than 10 points of fire damage, they'll explode, dealing 20d6 damage to each creature within 30 ft. This kills the children.

The steam engine and cranes in the eastern half of the room are all damaged, but *make whole* or similar magic could make them available if PCs get clever ideas about dragging Granny into the big pit or something similar.

The piles of shinies are difficult terrain, and mostly worthless.

### Tactics

Granny uses her *hordeling outburst* to control nine gangs of gremlins at a time, and the little bastards run all across the PCs, trying to disarm or disrobe them. While the earth spirits provide beef and initial melee damage, Granny starts by using her two *evil eye* powers to disrupt the party, then uses her exceptionally long reach to attack. She prefers to focus on spellcasters so she can steal magic they might be using.

If she can, she'll use her hurl foe ability to knock PCs into the stew pit. If enemies get behind her, she'll instead throw them into the massive mining shaft.

### KOOKY TALK

"Aww, look what'chu you gone done now. Those little rocks was just needing a few more kisses from ol' Granny."

"Ho ho, nice spell you cast wee one. Nice, tasty spell. Granny thinks she wants it."

"Don't cha be hurting my children... well, don't cha hurting them too much, I know kids'll be kids and all."

"Hehehe, dat tickled ol' Granny a little bit. Maybe after this rough'n'tumble you can come scratch me back a little."

Once she has used each evil eye power on each PC, she starts using her swift action to cast *bestow curse*, or *quicken hostile juxtaposition* (which lets her swap positions with an enemy whenever she'd be attacked or affected by a damaging spell, causing the enemy to become the target instead).

### Bringing Down the Mountain

When Granny is first reduced to 0 hit points, she'll spit in defiance but stops fighting. She'll agree to return to her torpor, but makes one last offer: give her Redcap Mountain to be her personal playground, let her remain awake, and in exchange she'll send nightmares into sleeping minds of the party's enemies. She'll cast thirteen *nightmare* spells (Will DC 25) each night for a year, targeting whoever the party desires.

If the party continues to attack her, the fey titan's face contorts into a visage of tension and anger, almost comical since her eyes roll in their sockets. The hilarity ceases soon after, when the entire mountain begins to tremble. Two rounds later Granny's cave collapses around them, dealing 5d6 damage per round (Reflex DC 20 negates). If the party moves at a quick pace out of the mines they can outrun the cave-in, but the four named gremlins—who avoided the previous fight—show up along the way to stymie the party.

Fleeing out of the mountain requires backtracking (Survival DC 20 to avoid getting lost, each failed check incurs another 5d6 damage from falling rocks). This takes the party through all four of the gremlin's traps, which have been reset. Once up past the splinter-trapped ladder, another Survival check (DC 20) is necessary to reach the elevator. At that point, use your judgment as far as how much time the party has to make its way up the 350-ft. shaft before the hole mine falls in on itself.

If you think it adds to the climax, Granny can appear beneath the party (the old witch polymorphed herself to navigate the tunnels), and she starts climbing up after them. All it takes is one good hit or clever idea to stymie her ascent, and then the shaft collapses on her as soon as the party makes it to the surface.

## THREAT FOUR: SHE WHO WRITHES

Lady Beshela serves as steward of the domains of the fey titan She Who Writhes. With armies of sea creatures at her command, the beautiful fey was like a queen of her own land, but since the Great Eclipse her kraken mistress has wrought havoc upon those people.

Four decades ago Beshela was saved from captivity by Ethelyn, the sister of Risur's former king. Her pride and eagerness to help Ethelyn in a coup made her an enemy of Risur for a time, but she has come to realize the real threat was the Obscurati. Now she humbly hopes to aid the party in defeating her mistress She Who Writhes, both to save her own domain and to repay her debt to Risur.



*Arms of thousands make men weep,  
She lurks in depths of murky deep.  
Brave souls gone without a trace,  
Grasping ships with sweet embrace.  
Fishers, merchants, pirates, each  
Will tremble when they see her breach.  
When sailors wail 'neath stormy skies,  
It's time for dinner, She Who Writhes.*  
-Risuri Sea Shanty

## WAVES OF RAGE

### Exposition. Montage. Level 17.

*No ship is safe from She Who Writhes!*

She Who Writhes may have assisted the party in Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*, but only accidentally. She sees all intruders on the seas as enemies, and so now no ship can come within thirty miles of Risur's shores without being attacked.

As the PCs race around Risur dealing with threats, Beshela the Archfey of the Sea searches for her fey titan mistress to try to calm her. By the time the PCs are ready to deal with She Who Writhes, Beshela has returned, and has the rough outline of a plan.

Eladrin dreadnought Asrabey Varal offers to aid the party in Beshela's plan to soothe the rampaging fey titan. However, Asrabey—already doubting his opposition to the Obscurati, since it was co-founded by his wife Kasvarina—has decided in light of the Ob's ritual to switch sides. He intends to betray the party and weaken Risur so the Obscurati can more easily accomplish its goals of dominating the world.

### AN EXCESS OF CAUTION

Asrabey does not underestimate the party. While they are out of Flint, he secretly acquires numerous *elixirs of glibness* (granting a +20 bonus to Bluff checks to conceal the truth). Unless the party put a tail on him, by the time they come back to deal with She Who Writhes, Asrabey will glibly avoid dropping any hints of his betrayal (Sense Motive DC 30).

The only real hint the party might easily notice is that he has acquired an enchanted crown. This item hides the magical aura of his elixirs, both while they're on his person and after he has drunk one. If asked about it, he claims it makes him more personable, but with the gruff eladrin it doesn't seem to make any difference.

### Fey in Water

At an appropriate point (likely after the other three fey titans are defeated), Beshela makes herself known to one or more of the PCs. She uses an effect similar to *programmed image* spell, enchanting the bathwater at the party's likely residences. The next time one of them bathes or shaves, her image seems to rise out of the water to address them.

"The fey titans contest with Risur, but none will cause more damage than my mistress, She Who Writhes. When you are ready to grapple with this menace of the seas, you may find me by placing a bouquet of white lilies on the water at your docks."

If the PCs contact her, the archfey Beshela rises from the water atop the head of a giant octopus which emerges from the water. As the octopus rises, a half-dozen merfolk mounted on the backs of armored oversized seahorses appear, acting as the archfey's escort. Beshela's demeanor depends heavily on her previous interactions with the party. This time, though, she operates mostly on bluster, and the forces with her are all the aquatic allies she could muster. Most of the marine denizens have fled to deeper retreats.

If the party declines to work with Beshela, about two months after the Great Eclipse Asrabey approaches her with Gale as back-up. The three they sail out in a small ship, and Beshela is able to contact the fey titan, but Asrabey's betrayal goes off without a hitch. Gale is horribly wounded by manages to fly away so she can tell the party what happened.

### Beshela's Plan

Beshela says she knows a way to calm She Who Writhes. They must head out to sea and force the titan to rise, then trap her in a temporary storm, at which point Beshela will need to maintain physical contact with the titan for a minute to cast a spell that would charm her. Beshela could then explain the situation with the Obscurati and open up negotiations between the party and her mistress.

She suspects She Who Writhes would agree to aid the party for a year if Risur abandoned use of steam engines and made regular offerings of virile men and golden treasure. If the party cannot come to terms with She Who Writhes, at least the titan would be in a vulnerable place so the party could defeat her, driving her back to sleep. Beshela would regret having to betray her mistress in that way, but she recognizes the greater stakes to the world.

Depending on their relationship with Beshela, the PCs may not trust her. After all, Beshela tried to sink the party's ship during Adventure Seven, *Schism*, and before that she assisted in an assassination attempt against King Aodhan. If questioned on her previous actions, Beshela has no regrets, reminding them that had Duchess Ethelyn of Shale been allowed to complete her coup, it is quite possible the Obscurati would have been stopped much earlier.

Asrabey offers to stand by Beshela and protect her while the PCs handle subduing the fey titan. In truth, he plans to use an eladrin ritual from the high age of Elfaivar to steal Beshela's powers and become an archfey himself. He intends to strike while Beshela is bonded to She Who Writhes, granting him both magical power and temporary control of the titan.

### Important Warning

Beshela warns the party that She Who Writhes has the power to unleash a deadly ululation that drives people so mad that they kill themselves in order to not have to hear it anymore (effectively, this is *wail of the banshee*). She suggests that whatever the party decides to do, they be ready for that threat.

### I'm on a Boat!

The first part of Beshela's plan requires luring She Who Writhes from the ocean into shallow water. This should not be difficult for the PCs to arrange, as the fey titan has been attacking pretty much any vessel of notable size that ventures into water deeper than thirty feet. The party's advisors suggest taking the *Coaltongue*, the *Impossible*, and any Danoran ships that were seized at the end of adventure nine (since Flint's own fleet was mostly sunk). As for how to get to She Who Writhes, several options are possible.

First, the party can use illusion magic to shout challenges underwater, drawing the titan's attention. They'll linger close to a wide sandbar that is hidden at high tide, and if possible they'll simply goad the titan into beaching herself.



Second, each ship will have its cannons adjustable so they can aim downward into the sea. Special enchantments will be needed to allow the projectiles to travel more than a few feet through the water, costing 25,000 gp per ship.

If that fails, the third option is to have the other ships harpoon her or drop jagged anchors to try to snag her. If at least three ships get hold they can try to drag her onto the sandbar.

As a back-up, a fourth option is to have several dozen spellcasters on board with *control water* scrolls. If cast simultaneously they can simply pull the water out from under She Who Writhes, even if she won't come into the shallows.

The party will discover that She Who Writhes can teleport (just like everyone else). They might try to break her line of sight, but since she can see through water their best bet would be to churn the seas, such as with a tornado or hurricane created by *control weather*. An unprepared party is liable to lose many ships and perhaps a few PCs just trying to get close enough to She Who Writhes to talk.



## SHE'S WRITHING ALRIGHT!

### Action. Real-Time. Level 19.

*The queen of the sea tries to kill intruders to her domain.*

The battle against She Who Writhes is divided into three phases; the first phase being the party's effort to beach the titan so they can climb atop her without her simply submerging and teleporting away. The second phase of the battle has the party defend Beshela for a minute as she attempts to charm her mistress. The final phase of the encounter begins when Varal stabs Beshela, then takes her power to become an archfey himself.

If your campaign does not use the *Admiral o' the High Seas* rules for naval combat, the first phase of this encounter can be mostly handled narratively. The party just needs to figure out how to thwart She Who Writhes's teleportation, perhaps taking a few crashing waves across their deck in the process.

### Part One: Battle at Sea

Let the party pick where they want to confront She Who Writhes. There is plenty of nautical terrain within a few miles of Flint harbor, or they might even engage her in The Ayres. Once they set out, it's only half an hour before the waters grow turbulent, and a look-out spies something approaching under the waves.

The first naval round occurs when She Who Writhes reaches long range, and she attempts to make the party's boat list with *waves and whirlpools*. The following round she teleports (since after all, any creature can teleport now) to the opposite side of the party's fleet and tries to capsize the ship by hitting it with waves again. The party might not be prepared for her amazing mobility, and unless they can stop her from teleporting or have very long-range weapons, she'll keep jaunting around until the party's whole fleet is drowning.

She stays in water that's at least 30 ft. deep, but if the party has their allies use a massive number of *scrolls of control water*, they can drop She Who Writhes into a watery depression, too shallow for her to teleport out of. The party will only have one naval round to close the distance (which entails piloting into a whirlpool with steep sides), after which She Who Writhes manually crawls her way out of the area of lower water and continues her attack.

The party might instead try to goad her into attacking them and leaving

## SIMPLER ENGAGEMENT

Since the big twist of this encounter is battling Asrabey, you might simplify the scene. If your group isn't into the naval combat rules, just skip that part of the encounter.

The party can sail out, and when She Who Writhes approaches the water starts to heave around them, but Beshela performs a ritual to conjure a hurricane and pull the fey titan to the surface. The party then has to reach the 'face' of She Who Writhes, where Beshela needs a minute to commune with her mistress. If the party can keep Beshela alive that long, She Who Writhes stops fighting them. Beshela starts to explain the threat of the Obscurati, but then Asrabey stabs her in the back with his flaming sword. He draws out her power and orders the kraken to destroy the party, while he grimly explains why he has betrayed them.

## TRUE TENTACLED HORROR

She Who Writhes manifests as a creature akin to a giant squid, her body a hundred feet long and her tentacles stretching hundreds more. However, most of her body is a not solid mass of flesh, but rather thousands upon thousands of smaller tentacles—some suckered like an octopus, some scaled like a shark, others leafy like kelp or covered in jagged golden rasps trawled up from ancient sunken treasure.

Her 'face' has two massive eyes—capable of charming those she sees and luring them to a drowned death—but those are merely her most prominent. Dozens more eyes probe out from her body attached to pseudopods, granting her near perfect awareness of her surroundings. Masses of tentacles along the crown of her head defend the primary eyes, and if they grapple creatures they pull victims *through* the titan's flesh into her body's interior. Likewise, creatures bitten and swallowed by her are drawn to this churning organ.

Therein, the figure of a beautiful woman glows with bioluminescence, while around her writhe the mindless but still-alive bodies of hundreds of previous victims, their expressions rapt with physical ecstasy. Creatures who can resist the psychic onslaught here can see the true formlessness of She Who Writhes, for even this female figure is just a ruse, like the tempting orb of an anglerfish. Up close she is nothing more than dozens of wriggling tentacles, slick with bloody mucous.







their allied ships alone, though pulling that off is challenging (some appropriate show of force, plus Intimidate DC 35). Or they might have their allies flying for the duration – an expensive undertaking, but possible. In this case, She Who Writhes waits until she capsizes the party’s vessel, then closes to devour them, at which point the *control water* spells can strand her long enough for the party to climb aboard her.

We imagine your party will think of other clever solutions.

### She Who Writhes, Fey Titan

Gargantuan Leviathan

Level 28 Leviathan

**Hull Integrity** 4

**Command** +14

**Defense** 30

**Maneuverability** 8

**Speed** 14

**Perception** +13,

Blindsense

#### Dimensions

Body 100 ft. x 40 ft. Tentacles 110 ft. Feeding tentacles extend an extra 160 ft.

#### Tentacles

*The kraken lashes out with two feeding tentacles, then pulls herself close and grasps with the other eight. Slowly, unstopably, it crushes, until even steel bends within its coils.*

When She Who Writhes rams, she stops 50 feet from her target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the tentacles take damage (treat as a component that can be targeted) or the titan releases her grip.

#### Crush and Bite

*Crunching from beneath the water line is followed quickly by an alien ululation from belowdecks. Crew members issue horrified screams about a massive beak, inhuman eyes, grasping tendrils lined with barbs, and snapping jaws.*

She Who Writhes bites and crushes only at short range, but acts as a weapon with a +25 attack bonus (effectively +30 due to range).

#### Waves and Whirlpools

*She breaches for a moment to fix an eye on your vessel, and then the sea beneath it begins to churn.*

In addition to her *crush and bite* attack, She Who Writhes can afflict any one ship within long range with heavy chop. She can only affect one ship this way at a time. This requires a Command check (DC 25) or else the ship is struck by a wave. Each creature on deck must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid being washed overboard. Failing the command check by 5 or more causes the ship to list from the wave’s impact. If the ship is already listing, instead the ship is capsized.

Additionally, regardless of the result of the captain’s check during the Terrain phase, a ship in heavy chop has its speed and maneuverability ratings reduced by half.

#### Titanic Resilience

*Cannonballs simply bounce off the massive creature.*

Reduce all damage She Who Writhes takes by 1 strike. If her ‘hull integrity’ is reduced to 0, she submerges and teleports away. If she cannot submerge (or is otherwise prevented from teleporting), she is unable to take any actions other than to slowly crawl toward deep water. She heals to her full health after about five minutes.

#### Mistress of the Sea

*She can teleport anywhere she in her seas.*

Due to the new nature of the planes, She Who Writhes can teleport around the battle as long as she can submerge fully, unless magic is used to stop her. She can choose not to make a Command check during the Location or Bearing phases, and instead to simply teleport to any stage she wishes with any bearing she desires.

## Part Two: Beshela’s Ritual

Once the PCs have managed to stop She Who Writhes from playing keep-away, they have to climb aboard her. The map is just a static image of her body, but in truth her tentacles are constantly flailing about. Creatures on her outer tentacles must succeed an Acrobatics check (DC 20) each round or else fall into the water, and those who fall into the water must succeed a Swim check (DC 20) each round or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage from mighty waves and more submerged tentacles.

Tentacles sprout all over the titan’s body, and these try to pull PCs into her interior, where she can *dominate* them and have slow, viscous congress with them until she grows tired of such carnal pleasures. The larger tentacles try to knock away melee threats, or simply crush them. If no enemies have reached her main body, She Who Writhes can use whirlwind attack to strike every enemy within 160 feet of her main body.

While the party figures out what to do, Asrabey guides Beshela to She Who Writhe’s face. There he readies actions to attack any tentacles that threaten Beshela, but he suggests the party target other parts of the kraken to distract her attention. If Beshela can survive ten rounds on the titan’s face, she completes her communion, and the titan stops attacking.

## Beshela’s Communion

Amidst the chaos of battle and the continuing torrent of water, the spot where Beshela touches the titan’s face begins to glow. For a moment, the contained storm calms, and the tendrils that make up the face of She Who Writhes part, revealing the interior and the titan’s feminine avatar.

“Mistress!” Beshela calls out. “You have awakened to a world in peril. We are not your enemies! We need your aid to save all our lands from the threat of a great power. Please listen to my-”

The moment is shattered. With a single lightning fast movement of his blade, Varal impales the archfey Beshela through the back. He rapidly intones the syllables of some eladrin curse, and the dreadnought undergoes a hideous transformation.

His skin shifts from its usual brown tan to a blighted green, and his cloak of smoke peels away as shadowy tentacles erupt from his back. He shrugs Beshela’s body off his sword, dropping her body into She Who Writhes’ interior. Then he sweeps his flaming blade as a challenge to the party and proclaims:

“I am Asrabey Varal, Archfey of Obedience and loyal ally to the rulers of this new age! After centuries of spilling blood in vengeance, now I see the path of justice is one of order and control. We must obey the Obscurati! Champions of Risur, we have been allies, and I respect your devotion, but you walk the wrong path! You shall either abandon your rebellion, or you will taste my blade.”



### Part Three: Seriously...You're Betraying Us?!

Varal now has control over She Who Writhes, and he directs her attacks to keep him from being overwhelmed by the PCs. Let the party's past interactions with Varal determine who he targets first; he might be loyal to the Obscurati, but he's still emotional and will gladly repay any past slights with bloodshed.

Varal's goal in this combat is to escape with the fey titan under his control. To do so, he needs to get She Who Writhes back into open water so she can teleport them away, after which he'll present the titan to the Obscurati as a new weapon. First, though, he needs to kill the PCs, or at least knock them off She Who Writhes, and the titan needs a few minutes to crawl into deep enough water. If there are any ships within reach, Asrabey could command She Who Writhes to grasp the vessel and threaten to kill all aboard if the party doesn't surrender. Mostly, though, his plan is just to defeat them in battle.

Beshela teeters on the brink of life (-1 hp), but is disregarded by Varal. She can be brought back to consciousness by concerned PCs, at which point she will try to use her actions to re-commune with She Who Writhes, immediately making her a prime target for Varal. If she can spend three rounds uninterrupted at this task, she manages to calm the fey titan and convince it to turn against Asrabey. Of course, rescuing Beshela likely entails entering the interior cavity of the kraken, where She Who Writhes can dominate intruders.

### Screaming Titan

If She Who Writhes hasn't already used her deadly ululation (*wail of the banshee*), she unleashes it now. Asrabey is immune to this effect, as is Beshela. If the party guesses Asrabey's intention to betray them and stops him, instead have She Who Writhes wail halfway through Beshela's attempt at communion, since it can create a nice moment of desperation.

### Back to the Bottom of the Ocean

When either Asrabey or She Who Writhes is reduced to 0 hit points, She Who Writhes sags in exhaustion and coughs blood into the sea. She gurgles out that she yields, and asks to be allowed to return to her slumber. A moment later her entire body seems to unravel into millions of smaller tentacles, which dissolve into the sea.

If the titan's retreat was caused by saving Beshela and having her complete her communion, She Who Writhes punishes Varal. As her form departs she grasps him in her tentacles and drags him along screaming.

After she is gone, the sea is darkened with blood. The party has a few minutes' reprieve before another challenge presents itself, detailed in Act Two.

### Rewards

If the party has dealt with the four fey titans—Ash Wolf, Father of Thunder, Granny Allswell, and She Who Writhes—they should go up to level 18.

## THREAT FIVE: VOICE OF ROT

*Whosoever ventures near,  
Be forewarned that Death lives here.  
If you should note the smell of death,  
Then soon shall come your final breath.*  
-Sign outside the High Bayou

The Voice of Rot is not present in the High Bayou. Much like how the Ziggurat of Av in the Antwalk Thicket relinked to the plane of fire, Jiese, the Ziggurat of Apet relinked to Baden, a ghost moon that was once in the Gyre. The Voice of Rot slithered through the ziggurat and emerged on Baden, and from there found his way to the Gyre. He awaits the end of the world there, and likely will confront the party in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

In the meanwhile, the party finds nothing here. The fey titan moved the swamp around the ziggurat and caused it to sink into the mire after he traveled to Baden. Barring intense excavation efforts, the party won't be able to get inside the mud-flooded ruin to pursue the white serpent.

However, coming here is not worthless. Strange magic summoned the spirit of a long-dead orc druid **Toteth Topec**, original architect of the Axis Seal ritual. Only a small sliver of his consciousness survives after so long, but the party can find him near the ziggurat, drinking a citrusy alcoholic beverage while leaning against a tree.

Toteth vaguely answers questions posed about the original Axis Seal ritual, but the information he provides comes down to just three main facts.

- ♦ They needed to find eight safe worlds to link to, worlds that didn't have hostile forces that could invade. Orcs did all the hard work fighting invaders, and he's kind of disappointed that humans ended up taking over most of the world.
- ♦ They needed a proper balance of energies – air, earth, fire, water, life, death, space, and time. A bad mix could have made the world uninhabitable or completely stolen free will. It took them years to find the right worlds, because they had to journey to each on foot. It was easier to travel between planes back then; kids these days wouldn't appreciate it.
- ♦ The golden seal itself linked the world to a star. Back in his day, you see, there wasn't a sun. He came up with the idea of having one. Well, alright, he saw it on another plane and thought it was a good idea. It kept the monsters away for half the day.

Also, he shares the recipe for a long-forgotten orc beverage: the margarita.





# ACT TWO: THE NEW CONSPIRACY

Wild magic from around the cosmos continues to pour out of the ground in the center of Axis Island, rising in glowing tendrils toward the sky. From his secret lair just a few islands over, **Benedict Pemberton** (AKA Gradiax the Steel Lord, former Dragon Tyrant) couldn't skip a chance to find out what happened.

Shortly after the completion of the Obscurati's ritual, Pemberton's forces assaulted Axis Island. Managing to wrest control of the island from the Danoran military stationed there, Pemberton was fascinated at the technology he discovered. But he was isolated, and worried that soon the Ob would regroup and invade from mainland Danor.

Once the seneschal of the old Demonocracy, Ashima-Shimtu was captured by the Clergy and would have been executed like thousands of other fiends, tossed into the volcano Enzyo Mons. But she knew the *Sacrament of Apotheosis*, a ritual which could give physical form to a belief, and the Clergy hierarchs greatly desired the secret. She was unwilling to share, and they were unwilling to lose a chance to learn the ritual, so they imprisoned her in the *Crypta Hereticarum*, a vault of curses and heresies on the isle of Odiem, where she has remained for a thousand years.

Initially vengeful, she has turned to meditation and detachment to endure her endless incarceration. She speaks as if narrating events, never referring to herself in the first person. Now that she senses a chance to be free, she hopes to convince the party to release her, after which she wants to roam the multiverse. But centuries of torture have convinced her that the Clergy must be destroyed so it can harm no one else, so before she departs she intends to give the followers of that faith the tools to tear it down.



The Ob forces remaining on Axis following Pemberton's strike fled into the mines (the same mines the PCs used in Adventure One to sneak onto the island). There, the group seethed with a unified rage, eventually bringing a hivemind into existence. The Ob hivemind nested into a disabled battle construct and attempted to kill Pemberton, but was easily repelled by the dragon industrialist's forces.

Meanwhile in Danor, Nicodemus and Sovereign Han Jierre prepared a strike force against Axis using Danoran naval assets, but have been forced to wait until She Who Writhes is no longer a threat. Pemberton, likewise, can't get off the island, so he has fortified his position and put his fanatical gnoll servants to work building weapons for war, using the Obscurati's own factories.

During all this, a stowaway on the island revealed himself to Pemberton. The ruler of Ber had feared another coup attempt by the old dragon tyrant, so **Brakken of Heffanita**, a telepathic minotaur diplomat, volunteered to infiltrate Pemberton's forces. In light of the world having changed, though, Brakken offered to work with Pemberton for the common goal of thwarting the Obscurati. Together, the minotaur and the dragon have tried to figure out a long-term plan against the Ob. The conclusion they've come to is that they need Risur's help.

The act begins just after the PCs have defeated She Who Writhes.

## FROM THE BLOOD OF A DEMON

### Social. Real-time. Level 17.

*An old demonic friend sends an informative message in a bloody sea.*

Far from the party's battle with She Who Writhes, the cursed island of Odiem lies off the coast of Crisillyir. Its *Crypta Hereticarum* (Vault of Heresies) acts as prison to the sole surviving member of the ancient Demonocracy—Ashima-Shimtu. The demon resides in the lowest levels of the Cypta, suspended above a pool of holy water, and all but forgotten beneath the weight of history. The new planar cosmology brought forth by the Ob has weakened the wards that hold her. Though she is still trapped, her magic can reach far, carried on currents of her blood that has for centuries dripped into the holy water well.

Ashima-Shimtu studied many of the intricacies of blood magic during her role as seneschal of the old demon empire, and now feels the new connection with the plane Ostea. She initially sought to tempt mortals to free her, but her escape plan was thwarted by a group of extraplanar visitors on the surface of Odiem; a choir of angels.

The Axis Seal had kept servants of gods away for thousands of years, but it did not stop them from hearing people's prayers. With the seal now open, the angels knew the vault was a source of great evil that the Clergy could no longer protect, so they came to guard it. The various demon-worshippers and heretics who responded to Ashima-Shimtu's summons were killed almost as soon as they stepped on the shore.

## BOND OF BLOOD

In Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, we asked you to note any PCs whose blood might have entered the holy water pool beneath Ashima-Shimtu. In Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, the party will learn that the demoness has used the same sort of projected image she contacted the party with to speak to religious dissidents throughout Crisillyir. In this way, she spread the *sacrament of apotheosis*, a powerful ritual that can conjure an avatar of a god by drawing upon the power of the faithful. In the Ob's new world of rationality, doubting followers put those gods on trial for failing to uphold their duties to mortals, and as each in turn is executed, the followers who remain loyal and fervent die as well.

Ashima-Shimtu might not desire revenge *per se*, but she has come to see the Clergy as exploitative of the worshippers, and so she wants to watch it destroy itself. If the party learns of her involvement and tries to attack her, any PCs whose blood she was able to get a sample of will be magically compelled to defend her. To lay the narrative foundation for this, we suggest when the demoness appears here that you tell the appropriate PCs that they feel an unusual heat in their skin and a quickening of their pulse.

Thusly trapped, the demoness has used her blood magic to observe the world as best she can, since her vantage point is limited to waters where blood flows. She witnesses Pemberton's invasion of Axis Island, and suspects that the party would be interested. Of all the people she has had contact with, she thinks the PCs are the ones most likely to release her, so she tries to earn their good will by telling them what she knows.

### Bloody Tidings

A few minutes after She Who Writhes has been defeated, spots of the sea begin to glow red wherever blood touched the waves. The glowing blood drifts and begins to coalesce in a single spot, from which rises a bloody female figure – Ashima-Shimtu's *projected image*. (She might even appear during the conflict, such as to rescue a drowning PC, though she lends no offensive power to the battle.)

Once Ashima-Shimtu summons her bloody duplicate, read or paraphrase the following:

From the pool of blood emerges a form of pure crimson, feminine but with jagged edges. As the figure rises, a dozen bloody chains strike out from the pool, trailing from hooks in her arms and back and legs as she approaches.

"Long did the seneschal of the Demonocracy wait in her prison, roiled with bitterness and hungry for her revenge. As she bled into the sacred well, Ashima-Shimtu found she could see through the seas and glimpse the tide of history. But centuries tempered her anger, and a foreign power — empathy — began to stir within her.

"In this new age, her bonds are weakened, and the red waters of a world named Ostea grant her the power to do more than simply watch. Yet Ashima-Shimtu seeks not to use these powers for herself. She remains a prisoner, and places the decision to free her in the hands of foreigners. She wishes to show good will, however, and so offers tidings that may be of interest.

"First, a glimpse. Philosophers and politicians of several nations travel west, but toward what end Ashima-Shimtu cannot see.

"Second, a warning. When Ashima-Shimtu gazed upon the western shore of the land of beastman and fallen dragons, something gazed back. She had not seen its like in this world.

"Third and final, an opportunity. The island at the axis of the world, much contested these past decades, fell to invasion shortly after the heavens rained and the sun departed. A fleet of gnolls under the banner of a steel dragon conquered the island, and may have prevented the one called Nicodemus from completing his grand design. Retaliation was attempted by the navy whose flag bears scroll and sword, but the kraken queen drove them back.

"Now the titan's dominion has passed, and the seas reopen. Soon the axis may shift again, and whatever secrets lie there will once again be obscured. Ashima-Shimtu entreats her heroic jurors to reach the island while they still can. Her own liberation on another mysterious island can wait."

The PCs have only a few rounds before Ashima-Shimtu's *projected image* ends, which is displayed as the edges of her body dry to scabrous powder. In that time she might answer one or two questions. (The party can just cast *sending* to her if they want more information, though she's verbose, and might need a few allotments of twenty-five words to really convey anything useful).

If the PCs decide to go meet directly with Ashima-Shimtu, her prison has new jailers in the form of an angelic host. This is described in more detail in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

### Timeline Options

The timeline following the defeat of She Who Writhes is left intentionally vague, letting you ensure the PCs reach Axis at an appropriate point. Danor's attempt to retake the island should take just long enough to give the party a day or two on the island before it comes under attack.

If there are still fey titans rampaging around Risur, the PCs should not be punished for handling those threats, but it should be clear that Danor is readying to retake the island, and the PCs' window to investigate is short.

### Accessing Axis

We assume the PCs take a ship to Axis Island, since we intend to give the party an airship, retrofitted courtesy of Benedict Pemberton. Teleportation is out (since the PCs have not visited Axis since the reshaping of the world), but the party might use other means to reach the island without taking a boat. In that case, Pemberton has a ship already in production which he offers to the party.

As the party nears the island, they spot debris drifting on the sea, remnants of wrecked ships the Danorans sent that were ravaged by She Who Writhes.

The party can simply sail into the walled harbor of Axis Fortress, but if they're cautious they might use the same insertion method as in Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*: an underwater tunnel that led to an abandoned mine shaft. The complication there is that the Obscurati agents who escaped Pemberton's assault have all holed up in those mines. Most have died of starvation, but only after their consciousnesses manifested a hivemind, which persists even now after the original bodies have withered away. Only a single Ob agent survives, and if the party enters this way, see Needlewire Parlay (page 44).





Alternately, they might make a beach landing, which triggers magical alarms. Pemberton sends gnolls to invite the party in, but before the gnolls arrive, the hivemind finds them. It attacks, occupying the body of a damaged golem. See Golem Smash (page 42).

## PEMBERTON INDUSTRIES AXIS DIVISON

### Social. Real-Time. Level 18.

*My esteemed nemeses, welcome to my factory. I must apologize for the state of repair.*

Following the events of Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the industrialist Benedict Pemberton all but disappeared from the public spotlight. The PCs have doubtless had encounters with the Industrialist since, though his exact location was a mystery. In truth, Pemberton retreated to an island lair in the Yerasol Archipelago.

Since taking control of Axis Island, Pemberton has come to terms with the changes to the cosmology in the wake of the Ob's actions. While not as studious as his fellow dragon Inatch the Hex-Eater (AKA, Harkover Lee, principal minister to the monarch of Risur), Pemberton correctly assumes his ability to fly has been restored. Still, the industrialist is not ready to reveal his true form, and works beside his fanatical gnoll worshippers to reinforce the island while he also searches for clues on what the Obscurati's end game is with the world so drastically altered.

### The Island Fortress

Pemberton claimed the old Danoran fortress as his main base of operations, but was quick to make alterations to the site. His gnolls tirelessly worked at removing the remnants of the old hedge maze, replacing it was a defensible trench line surrounded by manned turrets and small bunker emplacements. The former central keep was repurposed to be a personal study for Pemberton, while the external buildings were redesigned into small factories and production facilities.

Perhaps the greatest of changes enacted by Pemberton and his minions was reinforcing the docking ring of the fortress. He lined the outer wall with cannon turrets. Dozens of sniper nests and bunkers line the wall, making the fortress a deathtrap for all but the most determined of military assaults.

When Pemberton assailed the island, he temporarily took to his draconic form, swam up to the wall, and breathed fire into the various bunkers, cooking the defenders. As part of cleaning up that damage, the gnolls have adorned the fortress with a giant logo of Pemberton Industries.

### A Dragon's Trust

Pemberton is no fool, and keeps the PCs at arm's length until he is sure they are not here to kill him. If they arrive by boat, he is confident of the outer wall's ability to blast them out of the water; he negotiates a parlay by means of a megaphone from the upper ramparts. Whenever he does go to meet them, he comes in a duplicant, and is escorted by his highest advisor, the gnoll **Pardo** (also in a duplicant; his real body is on Pemberton's original island lair a few dozen miles away). Only once the Obscurati attack the island (see page 49) will he appear in person.



## DUPLICANTS

If you're not familiar with the events of Adventure Six, Pemberton had genius gnome inventor Tinker Oddcog design **duplicants**. These humanoid constructs — which normally resemble metal husks with finely articulated plates for their skin — are linked to a particular person via rare substance called witchoil. A duplicant completely resembles the creature it is linked to, even to the point of detecting as it would to various divinations.

The duplicant can then be controlled remotely, either by the linked individual (if Pemberton trusts them), or by one of his gnoll minions, a select few of whom have been trained as expert infiltrators. Even if Pemberton does let a person control his own duplicant, he has final say over its actions, and can command it as if the person were dominated.

Physically, most duplicants are mass-produced and thus no stronger than a normal person, but Pemberton has produced a variety of them, some of which are quite battle-ready. Most of the time when Pemberton is out and about, he is actually controlling a duplicant, and his real body is hidden away in the central tower of Axis Fortress, under heavy guard and with magical alarms so he won't be caught by surprise when he's paying attention somewhere else.

## CULT OF THE STEEL LORD IDEOLOGY

Taught centuries ago by their lord Gradiax that flesh must be stronger than steel, the cult avoids touching metal. Of course Pemberton needs his minions to be able to fire cannons and work factories, so his gnoll followers all wear heavy gloves and carry scarves or kerchiefs if they need to have fine handling of something metal. Pemberton's most-trusted minions get duplicants of their own, though even then they prefer not to touch metal, not quite seeing the hypocrisy of their actual bodies being metal.

As always, Pemberton is a paragon of genteel charm, offering the PCs to have his gnolls deliver some fine limeade to accompany their discussions (Pemberton prefers lemonade, but the limes in the archipelago are good for the occasional beverage). He questions them about what has happened outside of Axis in the time he's been trapped on the island.

If the PCs mention defeating the fey titans, Pemberton boasts that 'In my youth, I once heard the Father of Thunder was up and about, and I thought, Grady, it'd be a damned shame not to take a crack at the old son of a gun before whichever king was in charge of Risur put the titan back to sleep. I tell you, that hairy bastard did *not* appreciate me strafing his herd. Zapped me good.'

If the cosmology change is discussed, Pemberton can't help but give a wide smile, knowing his ability to fly has truly been restored.

Unless the PCs attack Pemberton, or are outrageously rude, the dragon is willing to talk. Even if the PCs slew his daughter Terakalir, Pemberton realizes the threat and power of Ob eclipses his own; he needs allies to win against them, and the PCs have proven themselves. He invites the party to 'lay down their burdens' for a few days, and to meet with him and Brakken to discuss a little shindig he has in mind. But he asks they not come to the central keep, saying that his followers are very protective of what they deem to be his 'lair.'

If the party balks at taking that much time, Pemberton winks, and says that wherever they're headed, Pemberton Industries is building something to get them there faster.

## Let's Take a Trip

Pemberton invites the party to come with him to see the remains of the Obscurati's ritual, and to link up with another of his honored guests — Brakken, who is out with some of the gnolls, using his psychic powers to try to track down the Obscurati loyalists who are hiding somewhere on the island.

He's confident there's nothing on the island that can threaten the party, but there are odd planar fluctuations and he doesn't want to risk his loyal subjects. He just wants this trip to be the PCs, him, and Pardo. It's a few miles to where Brakken is searching, but handily the Obscurati built roads, so Pemberton will be driving them in his still-experimental steam-powered road car. The vehicle has a very industrial aesthetic with lots of exposed metal; Pemberton hasn't gotten around to gussying them up yet, but of course for public production they'll have fine upholstery and leather seats. They have no roofs or windows.

Since each car only seats 4, he'll probably need to show one or two PCs how to drive a second and possibly third one — the transmission is a little awkward right now, but it just takes a few minutes to get the hang of it — and they'll caravan.

BENEDICT  
PEMBERTON



The dragon Gradiax, Lord of Steel, has almost never resumed his true form for the past two centuries, and until recently when he was outed by the party he maintained 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.)

Though he likely disdains the party for thwarting his plans in adventure six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, Pemberton is devoting his resources — advanced constructs and fiercely loyal gnoll worshippers — to fight the Obscurati, which he sees as a greater threat.

PARDO



The current leader of the Cult of the Steel Lord, this gnoll teaches the followers of Gradiax 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. However, he typically wears a duplicant body — metal itself — which he sees as his true flesh. He serves his lord Pemberton with religious zeal, and believes in time his people will transcend their flesh and all become steel.



## GOLEM SMASH!

### Action. Tactical. Level 18.

*A hivemind spawned by Obscurati agents attacks the party.*

The four-mile drive to the island's central valley only takes a few minutes, but as the two or three cars near the village marked D on the island map, trouble strikes at a sort of parking lot for industrial machines. The PCs hear a lumbering crash of metal and feel a presence in their minds. They're a few hundred feet out when they spot a 17-ft. tall construct lumber into view from behind a crane, headless but with some wispy tendrils trailing upward from the cracked hole between its shoulders.

Pemberton claps his hands once with excitement and guns the car's engine, driving straight for the golem. "This damned monster killed some of my subjects. Now I hate to ask a favor of my guests, but I'm about to drive *very close* to it, so if you would be so kind to do what you're good at?"

### Hybrid Monster

- ♦ 1 Obscurati Golem
- ♦ 1 Axis Hivemind

### Tactics

This hivemind-powered golem was one of several prototype golems used to facilitate the excavation of the Axis Seal. The party might have encountered this same machine in adventure one, after it lost its head in a battle with Duchess Ethelyn's forces. Now the hivemind formed by the hiding Obscurati agents has taken over it.

The hivemind has already used *fireball* to deal fire damage to the golem, granting it the benefits of *haste* for one minute (included in its statblock). The golem tries to close in and make melee attacks, which allows the hivemind to also make tentacle attacks, but the hivemind's *eerie strike* power lets them target foes who try to fly out of reach.

If the hivemind can trip a PC, it can pull them out of the car, though the driver gets a +4 bonus to his CMD because the steering wheel makes it harder to yank him free. The golem also releases witchoil discharges, creating hazardous terrain and an incentive not to stand still.

Initially the hivemind uses its psychic powers to create *mind fog* and a *quicken rainbow pattern*. Then it creates *black tentacles* (CMB +22) around enemies who aren't affected by the pattern, and attempts to steer fascinated creatures into the area. It can also use *mass suggestion* or *dominate monster* to turn enemies against each other. Remember that its Deflect Arrows feat applies even to firearms.

The hivemind benefits from improved cover inside the golem's body. The hivemind can exit if it wants and still control the golem, but once the golem is destroyed the hivemind must emerge, at which point it mostly relies on tentacle attacks.

The entity normally lurks near the Axis Seal, but it came out to hunt Brakken. If the party doesn't defeat it here, it might harass them later.

### Driving a Roadcar

On the driver's turn, the driver of each car sets the car's speed for the round. The speed can be **reckless** (300 ft.), **fast** (200 ft.), **moderate** (150 ft.), **slow** (100 ft.), **idle** (50 ft.), stationary, **reverse** (50 ft. backwards), or **reckless reverse** (100 ft. backwards). The car then moves a distance that must be between its current max speed or the next slowest speed. So if you are driving at reckless speed, the driver has leeway between 205 and 300 feet.

The driver can adjust the speed up to 1 step in a given turn without spending an action, or up to 2 steps by spending a move action.

If there is no driver, the vehicle continues to move on the previous driver's initiative. If a new person becomes the driver, he must delay to the previous driver's initiative count before he can take control of the vehicle.

**Steering:** The driver must spend a move action if he wants to steer; otherwise the car travels in a straight line. When steering, in order to turn 90 degrees the car must travel at least 5 feet for every step of speed above stationary. For example, if you're driving at reckless speed (five steps above stationary), the car must travel at least 25 feet before it can turn 90 degrees; if you only want to turn 45 degrees, it takes half as much distance.

If the driver spends a standard action to drive instead of a move action, whenever he turns he can make a Dexterity check (DC 5) to steer the car as if it were moving one step slower. For every 10 points he beats the DC by, he can steer one step better—for example, a check of 25 can have a car at reckless speed only need 10 feet to turn.

**Collisions:** If the car runs into a solid object it takes 1d6 damage for every 25 feet of its maximum speed for this turn, as do the creatures in the vehicle (Reflex DC 15 half). If it runs into the jungle at the edge of the parking lot, reduce the damage by 1d6. Colliding with a creature deals an equal amount of damage to that creature and functions as a bull rush (CMB +10 plus the vehicle's speed divided by 5).

**Stats:** Each car has 150 hit points, hardness 10, and AC 10. The cars are 15 feet long by 10 feet wide, with the engine in front and four seats.

### Pemberton and Pardo

Pemberton focuses on driving (+0 Dexterity check), and in any event doesn't know any useful combat magic. Pardo's not particularly useful in this fight (though his punches ignore the golem's DR), and so he leaps out of Pemberton's car to try to distract the monster. He spends most of the combat casting spells at the golem to no effect. His stats are presented below, though, just in case.

### Terrain

The industrial parking lot is a wide swath of cleared jungle, more than 200 feet to a side, scattered with a dozen various machines like cranes, drills, and excavators, each the size of a huge creature. The golem moves at a surprising speed of 60 feet, but Pemberton's roadcars have a top speed of 30 miles an hour.

**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 10<sup>th</sup>; concentration +14)5<sup>th</sup> (3/day)—mass inflict light wounds (DC 19), slay living (DC 19), summon monster V (fire elementals only)4<sup>th</sup> (6/day)—divine power, freedom of movement, inflict critical wounds (DC 18), wall of fire3<sup>rd</sup> (7/day)—blindness/deafness (DC 17), cure serious wounds, inflict serious wounds (DC 17), fireball (DC 17), magic vestment2<sup>nd</sup> (7/day)—augury, death knell (DC 16), hold person (DC 16), inflict moderate wounds (DC 16), resist energy, shatter (DC 16)1<sup>st</sup> (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:** 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:** 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.**Obscurati Golem**

CR 17

XP 153,600

N Huge construct

**Init** -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0**Defense****AC** 33, touch 8, flat-footed 32 (-1 Dex, +25 natural, -2 size, +1 dodge)**hp** 226 (23d10+100)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7**DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic**Weakness** vulnerable to positive energy**Offense****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +33 (2d12+22/19-20 plus 1d6 negative energy) plus 1 hasted slam (as normal slam)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** powerful blows, witchoil discharge**Before Combat****Spell Effects** *haste*, *heat metal* (heals 1 or 2 damage per round and negates *slow* for the first 3 rounds of combat)**Statistics****Str** 40, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +23; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 49**SQ** hivemind house**Special Abilities****Immunity to Magic (Ex)** The golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function differently against it, as noted below.A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows an iron golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

- A magical attack that deals fire damage ignites the witchoil fuel leaking from the golem. This breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it does not go above its maximum, but instead is hasted for one minute. The golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.
- The golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as those of a rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

**Hivemind House (Ex)** The minds of the former Obscurati survivors has formed a hivemind which inhabits the golem. The hivemind benefits from superior cover until the golem is destroyed or it is shunted out (see hivemind statblock below). Until the golem is rendered inactive, both the golem and hivemind act separately in combat.

If the hivemind is destroyed before the golem is, the golem is blinded and mostly loses interest in combat.

**Powerful Blows (Ex)** The Obscurati golem inflicts one and a half times its Strength modifier and threatens a critical hit on a 19–20 with its slam attacks.**Witchoil Discharge (Su)** As a free action once every 2 rounds, the Obscurati Golem can create a 10-foot cube of discharged witchoil within 100 ft. This cloud persists for 5 rounds; any creature within the area when the golem creates it (as well as any creature that passes through the cloud while it persists) is exposed to the concentrated witchoil's poisonous effects. This poison is magically created each time the golem uses this power.*Witchoil Poison*—inhaled; save Fort 22; frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; effect 1 Constitution damage and dazed for 1 round; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.



**Witchoil Infused Construct (Su)** The golem's body leaks witchoil from most orifices. The substance splashes onto targets hit by the golem and deals an additional 1d6 points of negative energy damage on each attack that hits the target. This substance also gives the construct vulnerability to positive energy as though it were undead, though negative energy will not heal it.

### Axis Hivemind

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Large aberration (extraplanar)

**Init** +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifestense, *true seeing*; Perception +35

#### Defense

**AC** 32, touch 15, flat-footed 26 (+6 Dex, +17 natural, -1 size)**hp** 275 (22d8+176)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +19**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 28

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 4 tentacles +24 (1d6+8/19-20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17th; concentration +23)At will—*greater dispel magic*, *mind fog* (DC 21), *quicken fireball* (DC 19)5/day—*black tentacles* (DC 20), *dominate monster* (DC 25)3/day—*mass suggestion* (DC 22), *quicken rainbow pattern* (DC 20)1/day—*power word stun*

#### Statistics

**Str** 27, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27 **Int** 28, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 22**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25 (+29 trip); **CMD** 41 (43 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Deflect Arrows, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Staggering Critical, Tiring Critical, Weapon Focus (tentacle)**Skills** Acrobatics +31, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +37, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Knowledge (local) +31, Knowledge (nature) +31, Knowledge (nobility) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +31, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +34**Languages** telepathy 200 ft.; *tongues*

#### Special Abilities

**Double Agent (Su)** Whenever the Axis hivemind uses one of its mind-affecting spell-like abilities against a target, that creature must make a second save if the first is failed. Failing the second save allows one of the Obscurati minds to graft itself onto the creature. Anytime the creature makes an action that would counter the aims of the Obscurati that requires a dice roll, the creature must roll twice and take the lower result. This effect can only be broken by a *break enchantment*, *miracle*, or *wish*.

**Eerie Strike (Su)** The hivemind is a being of thought and ideas, and so it is particularly powerful against foes who are not physically grounded. The hivemind and the golem's attacks can ignore the limits of their normal reach when targeting enemies who are flying or who otherwise are not touching a contiguous path of solid objects between them and the target. The attack is an incorporeal touch attack, bypassing armor, and if it hits, the target is unnaturally teleported to a space adjacent to the golem, as if it had always been that close.

**Hivemind House (Ex)** The Axis hivemind inhabits the Obscurati Golem. Effectively, the Axis hivemind shares the same space as the Obscurati golem, but takes separate actions during a combat round. This joining imparts the golem with additional powers as long as the hivemind is not separated from it:

- The golem begins combat *hasted* since it has taken fire damage.
- Anytime the Obscurati golem hits with a slam attack, the Axis Hivemind can make an attack of opportunity against the struck target with one of its tentacle attacks. This attack counts as having the trip universal monster rule.

**Thoughtform (Su)** A creature within 30 feet of the hivemind can spend a move action to try to influence the hivemind with its thoughts. The creature makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check (DC 15), and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC 31 for each). A character can only attempt this once per round.

- **Fortitude:** If the save is failed, the hivemind loses incorporeal until the start of the PC's next turn. If it's flying, it must land or fall.
- **Reflex:** If the save is failed, the creature can move the hivemind 10 feet in any direction.
- **Will:** If the save is failed, the creature can force one creature affected by any of the hivemind's ongoing spell-like abilities to make a new save against the effect. Additionally, that creature cannot be perceived by the hivemind for one round.

## Aftermath

Once the commotion of battle dies down, Brakken and a squad of gnolls emerge from the nearby jungle. Brakken is mentally exhausted, having been focusing all his psychic powers to keep the hivemind from sensing them. He spares a happy smile to the party, then rushes to the body of the monster. He holds a hand out to it and thinks, then announces that he has a sense of where it came from—one of the mines a quarter mile up the mountain. He guesses the Obscurati hold-outs are there.

Brakken is pleased to see the party, and takes some time to catch up on recent events. He also makes a point of explaining that while he and the Bruse of Ber were nervous about Pemberton's ultimate motives, he's sensed enough of the dragon's emotions to trust that he actually does want to cooperate against their mutual enemy, the Obscurati.

## NEEDLEWIRE PARLAY

### Social. Real-Time.

*The party returns to the same mines they once used to sneak onto Axis Island.*

**Cosette Arianne** has survived in the old mine since the completion of the Ob's ritual on Axis. She fled there with the rest of the Ob agents who sought shelter while waiting out Pemberton's siege. When reinforcements did not come, the other Ob agents began to act strangely, often speaking at the same time with the same sentences, or eerily completing each other's thoughts. Cosette was protected due to her *ring of mind shielding*, and when the hivemind fully manifested, the thoughtform being fled the mines leaving Cosette alone with dozens of catatonic companions.

In the intervening weeks Cosette resorted to cannibalism, but now her food supply is running low, and she's worried that eating too many of her cohorts will bring the hivemind back. The only thing keeping the junior Ob agent going is a small spool of Needlewire she found on another agent's body. She is vaguely aware that she can inject it into herself to contact the Ob leadership, but has been holding off, hoping for conventional reinforcements.

## Party Arrival

Since there's not a handy road up to the mine, Pemberton and Brakken stay behind with the cars and some of Pemberton's gnoll followers who were injured fleeing from the golem. They're about a ten minute hike away. Pemberton offers to send Pardo along with the party.

When the PCs enter the cave, Cosette likely hears them when they first discover the bodies of some of her comrades. She assumes they are not allies, and uses the Needlewire to call for Nicodemus. It takes mere moments for Nicodemus to possess her body. His first action is to survey the dead bodies of his former agents. Though the context of their death is lost on him, he hopes to find out information of what went wrong on Axis Island. He hears the PCs' approach and quickly hides the Needlewire syringe.

When Nicodemus sees the PCs, he pretends to be just an average agent of the conspiracy (Sense Motive DC 42). Posing as Cosette, he bargains, asking for food and drink. In exchange he says he'll show the party the colossus and explain whatever is left of the ritual. His goal is to get them to take him to the central valley so he can see the state of Borne and the Axis Seal. He tries to act somewhat delirious, and wants to get away from 'all her dead friends.' Nicodemus can concoct a convincing backstory for who Cosette is and what happened, though he has no idea the dead Ob agents created a hivemind, so he just answers honestly that he doesn't know how they died.

If the party doesn't realize 'Cosette' is a fake, as they leave the cave a *magic mouth* appears on a nearby rock and says, with a Beran accent, "The woman you are with is actually Nicodemus, head of the conspiracy. Do not allow him to learn anything useful."

(This is a sort of narrative contingency we've put in, to help avoid the party revealing to Nicodemus that they're allied with Brakken at the Forward Symposium. The in-game explanation is that Beran spymaster El Extraño divined that this encounter would occur, and was clever enough to warn the party before Nicodemus sees Brakken.)

Whenever the party figures out who he is, Nicodemus asks to talk for a moment, and for some leaf of Nicodemus to smoke.

## No More Use Pretending

Nicodemus is courteous, but is subtly more on edge than the last time the party met him. He laments the death of his agents and his own inability to protect them. And he asks the party how they managed sabotage the ritual. The mastermind, who has had to deal with the party's interference for two years now, assumes they were responsible for the explosion that killed him and many of his allies. Divinations performed to find out what happened reported that the saboteur's orders came from Risur (technically true, since the Voice of Rot is from Risur).

If the party denies their involvement, he's wary, assuming they have some trick up their sleeves. He assures them that if they'd only cooperated with him, the ritual would have been safely completed. The world would still have a sun, for one thing!

He promises that the Obscurati will try again, and this time they won't allow any resistance. Even after five hundred years, he had still hoped a gentle hand could guide people to the right path, but now he will have to take more forceful measures. Fortunately, Risur is the only nation holding out against him. He is proud to announce that leaders of many nations are *en route* to attend his Forward Symposium, where he will advise them to rally against the rebellious Risur. Perhaps the ensuing war, while tragic,



Nicodemus's history and motivations are detailed in the *Campaign Guide*. He seldom reveals his true ghostly form, preferring to wear the bodies of others. Since the Great Eclipse and his failure to secure the world he long dreamed of, his desire to be benevolent has fallen away, and he's increasingly obsessed with achieving his goals, no matter the cost.

will help cement the bonds forming now between the obedient nations of the world.

After a bit of back and forth, Nicodemus thanks the PCs for dealing with the threat of She Who Writhes, informing them that it will be much easier to conquer Risur now. Once the conversation reaches a natural close, Nicodemus asks the party to make sure this woman survives, and then he vacates her body.

If the party brings her back to the cars, Pemberton has her sent away with his gnoll minions to be kept prisoner in the fortress. Then, unless the party pays close attention, he just kills her when they're not looking.

## DISASTER ZONE

### Exploration. Montage.

*What is the Axis Seal, and what happened here?*

After seeing the mine and determining there aren't any significant Obscurati hold-outs left on the island, Pemberton sends the gnolls who were with Brakken back to the fortress, then brings the minotaur and the party with him to the island's center. Tendrils and arcs of planar energy trail hundreds of feet upward from here, where a modest lake has been drained and its tributaries dammed and diverted.

Pemberton stops at the shore. Off to the right of the road are stone bunkers, once covered in protective wards, which have been exploded from within.

Up ahead the flashing energy rising from the ground makes it hard to see quite what happened in the dry lakebed, but a quarter mile away the colossus has clearly collapsed in several pieces, and some huge metal disk lies atop it.

### The Axis Ritual in Detail

The ritual actually involves the entire island, but it is centered on the Axis Seal—a hundred-foot diameter disk of gold. That seal lies atop bedrock, the center of which is a twenty-foot diameter hemispherical depression, ten feet deep. It is from this depression that intense blasts of energy from across the multiverse flare out. If the seal were properly seated atop this bedrock, it would focus that energy and create the sun



Around that depression, carvings of primitive orc runes form seven rings, each ten feet farther out. Spaced somewhat irregularly around these rings are vertical pits. The rings represent, in order outward:

- ♦ The plane of fire.
- ♦ The plane of air.
- ♦ The world itself, which has no pit, but is surrounded by a smaller ring that does have a pit, representing the plane of life.
- ♦ The plane of water.
- ♦ The plane of earth.
- ♦ The plane of space, which is surrounded by a smaller ring that has its own pit, representing the plane of time.
- ♦ The plane of death.

Each pit is about five feet in diameter and contains the fifty foot long white stone shaft of a petrified tree. Halfway down that shaft, a small alcove holds a golden icon that represents a particular plane—those icons are marked with symbols representing a constellation associated with each plane, and are enchanted with powers linked to that plane's energy. (The Ob bent the rules a bit, and in the alcove of the shaft for the plane of space they shoved a second small icon representing Baden, the ghost moon with a Flight trait.)

The hundred-foot disk of the seal lies atop the legs of the toppled three-hundred-foot colossus Borne. The colossus has suffered immense damage across his body, which has cracked his torso and has blown apart half an arm and one-and-a-half legs. The witchoil furnace in his chest burst, leaving him with insufficient strength to move, so he collapsed into stasis.

Arcs of energy from the central depression mostly crackle upward, but every minute or two one will slice out laterally to a distance of several hundred feet. The force is enough to blast back anyone who tries to come too close, though if the party wants to try their luck the first strike should only *nearly* kill them. No form of defense the party has access to now can protect them from the deadly energy.

Sometimes where one of these arcs strikes, a sliver of a world appears—a forest, a crackling lava field, a waterfall—only to vanish a few seconds later. Sometimes even creatures are visible in these slivers.

## Investigation

Hidden among the rubble of the bunker by the road, the party can easily spot that the burn marks from the explosion have a strange arcane pattern. A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) identifies the pattern as being fey, and a slightly better check confirms that yes, the power of the explosion was provided by the Voice of Rot, who transmuted the flames to not just burn flesh, but to consume life force and dispel magical defenses.

It's not possible to get close enough to the ritual to actually interact with it—and long-distance magical attempts to use *telekinesis* or *clairvoyance* act as a conduit, channeling the destructive energy from the seal directly into the caster if he or she maintains the spell for more than a minute or so.

Pemberton, though, has had a few months to examine this, and he thinks he grasps the basics enough. Standing at the lake's shore within sight of the seal and the seemingly uncontrollable energy leaking out it, he asks the party to listen to his and Brakken's proposal.

## FOUNDING THE REBELLION

### Social. Real-Time.

*It's time to plan how to save the world.*

Eventually the party might want to teleport back to Risur to bring in other allies, but for now Pemberton just wants to hear their thoughts. Best to keep the foundations of a conspiracy as secret as possible, he reminds them. It's only Pemberton, Brakken, Pardo, and the party.

If the party hasn't already used divination magic to find out news of the world, Pardo explains the basics, as detailed in *Meanwhile... Around the World* (page 5). They don't have perfect knowledge, but a dozen divination spells every day for a month or more add up.

Brakken steps in and emphasizes how global the Obscurati's support seems to be. Most people are just naturally loyal to them, and only a few who had dealt with the group before were able to resist being so swayed. Risur is, simply put, outnumbered. A direct fight won't succeed.

"We have to work," Pemberton says, "like a conspiracy. Our mission is to figure out how the Ob pulled it off, and then put it back on. That might not be the right metaphor, but nevermind. They're sucking the life and fun out of the chaotic mess I liked living in. I don't want to turn into a cog in their machine, but they basically rule the world now. Fortunately for us, I have experience with fighting authority and concealing my intentions. We have to be discreet, be brilliant, and then be gone before they catch us."

Pardo interjects. "Given the name of the Obscurati, if we're opposed to them, I think we should call ourselves the Illuminati."

Pemberton scoffs, then tells Pardo to explain the colossus and ritual.

Pardo briefly explains that the Obscurati performed a ritual in this central valley. Someone set off an explosion that killed numerous mages involved in the ritual, and the colossus was damaged before it could close the Axis Seal. They were able to interrogate a mage who survived, and learned that the original plans for the ritual were stored in a vault somewhere in Alais Primos, the capital of Crisillyir. A necrotic curse took the man in the end, though.

### Redoing the Ritual

Pemberton says this is mostly where he needs the party's help. If they want to redo the ritual themselves and fix the world, someone needs to break into that vault.

The specific incantation to perform the ritual would need to be recovered, but the larger hurdle is that it seems each of the eight shafts in those pits has a golden icon that is infused with energy from a specific world. In the various mines around the island, the gnolls have discovered similar petrified trees and golden icons, which appear to have directed the magic of the ritual outward into the rest of the world.

The best Pemberton can reckon, to undo the ritual they just need to get icons linked to the same planes the world used to have. Or, if they're being clever, they could make icons linked to new planes, and do what the Ob did: make the world the way they want it to be. Of course, he's not going to hold his breath and expect that the party will agree with him on how the world should be.

Pardo explains that in order to create those icons, it seems necessary to travel to the worlds they'll be linked to. The Obscurati used an eldritch telescope on this island to aim at planes. But now the night sky is starless. Even if Pemberton Industries could create a colossus of its own—a machine strong enough to withstand the energy coming out of the open seal—it would be useless without the appropriate icons. And they're not sure how to get those.

(The party might have access to the Golden Icons of Apet, Avilona, Nem, and Urim, and the island already has an icon of Jiese, but Av, Mavisha, and Reida's icons are unavailable. Finding appropriate replacements is the party's main goal in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.)

### The Cherage Conference

Brakken says that the 'golden icons' point is something they're stuck on, which is why he's been busy trying to plan the other key part of the conspiracy: not getting caught and killed.

Brakken reiterates that the Obscurati is now no longer hidden. In Crisillyir, Danor, Drakr, and even the states of the Malice Lands, the Obscurati openly work side-by-side with the local governments to establish new laws set forth by the Ob's leadership. Most governments seem open to cooperating with the Obscurati, and Nicodemus has called a conference in a few weeks in the Danoran capital of Cherage to decide the future of the world.

Brakken wants to infiltrate the conference, learn the Ob's plans, and possibly delay hostile actions against Risur, Pemberton, and anyone else involved in this rebellion. Pemberton laments that the Obscurati have caught onto his use of duplicants, so that option's off the table.

If the party proposes to stop the conference, Pemberton and Brakken warn against that. Trying to stop 'an open discourse' will make it easy for the Ob to paint Risur as enemies.

Let the PCs consider their options, but as a baseline, Brakken has a plan.

### An Offer of Mind

Since the Great Eclipse, Brakken has expanded his psionic abilities. Now he can form a minor gestalt consciousness with other willing creatures. While others inhabit his mind, Brakken can use their abilities and skills as an extension of himself. Brakken is confident he could house several minds in his body; effectively allowing a group like the PCs access to the conference, with him as their eyes and ears.

Pemberton insists on his own 'ticket' to the Cherage conference, willing to share headspace with the PCs. Brakken assures them that there's no sharing of actual thoughts; people have to intentionally communicate within the gestalt, so it's not like anyone's going to be controlling anyone else's mind.

### Endgame

Pemberton and Brakken's overall plan, then, is first to infiltrate the Forward Symposium and get information to help this new conspiracy avoid being tracked down by the Obscurati. Second they need to retrieve the details of the ritual from Alais Primos. Third is finding a way to relink the lost planes, or to find new planes to link to. Fourth will be redoing the ritual. Somewhere in there, they need to figure out how to destroy the Obscurati and Nicodemus himself once and for all.

## HOW TO DESTROY NICODEMUS

Nicodemus is sustained by his certainty that he can make the world a better place, and that things would be perfect if not for all the power structures that kept idealists like him from effecting change. To defeat him, he must see his ideology be rejected by the people he wants to help. We will present an opportunity for this in Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*.

Failing that, the party can just alter reality so undead can't exist. That's also a possibility.

A PC might be able to reason out (Knowledge (religion) DC 20) that normally ghosts are tied to the location where they died, and linger on if they have unfinished business; but Nicodemus can roam, which could be because (as discovered in Adventure Eight) his death occurred at the moment of the Great Malice, which affected the whole world. He's certainly more cogent than a typical ghost, and there are clearly some parallels in his rejuvenation and the reincarnation of devas, so perhaps his power is tied to the death of Srasama.

As for how to destroy him, some divinations might be in order. Some ghosts can be 'brought peace' so they pass on, but that would probably entail letting Nicodemus win, so Pemberton discounts that.

### Appropriate Compensation

Pemberton claims there's a good foundation here. Obviously some details need to be worked. For instance, what he gets out of this for helping the party instead of just joining with the conspiracy. He's not looking to conquer Ber anymore, but once the Ob are gone Danor might be in sore need of a leader. Failing that, he wants at least a large swath of Elfaivar to establish his own nation, since the place is mostly empty now. And he wants the party's promise that, whatever they agree on, they'll be friendly after this is all over.

Give the party here time to discuss plans, both short-term and long-term. They might decide to try to deal with the Obscurati themselves, or to prioritize Alais Primos over the Forward Symposium (in which case, see Adventure Eleven). We can't begin to guess what your PCs might want at this stage of the campaign.

### Caveat

Once discussions are coming to what seems like a decent stopping point, Brakken raises a concern he has about his infiltration plan. His psychic link can only be maintained within a few miles; he's not sure quite how far. The PCs will need to be somewhere close to Cherage at the time of the conference in order to properly maintain their link with Brakken. Given the increased military and Obscurati presence in Danor, this could be exceptionally difficult.

Pemberton shrugs, and says he has an invention that will help with that. Before he can explain more, though, an intruder interrupts them: the Beran spymaster El Extraño.



The spymaster of Ber is always known as El Extraño (The Strange One), and traditionally they adopt bizarre personalities so that their true intentions are harder to intuit. Indeed, some say the actual spymaster only works behind the scenes, and that El Extraño is just a mask he hides behind. (The rumor's false, though El Extraño thinks that *would* have been a great idea.)

The current spymaster is a kobold wizard with uneven eyes, finely-tended fleshy whiskers, and exceptional skills at legerdemain. He casually mentions ridiculous and unlikely events that he participated in, and will legitimately expend powerful *teleportation* magic to make dramatic exits. He prefers to give directives, or at most offer two options that he will pursue, and is no fan of actually discussing things, at least not until someone can actually surprise him. He has a bit of dragon blood in him, and smokes pipes of cinnamon-laced cloves.

El Extraño's motivation is to do his job excellently, and to maintain the honor of his title. A contingency will annihilate his body in fire should he die, to maintain the uncertainty to his true fate.



That was not an assassination attempt. I had a better surprise appearance planned, but I had to abandon it because a fleet of Danorans is about to attack the island, and it is in our mutual interest for you to evacuate. You should get to the fortress now, but not to defend. The facility was never designed to resist an attack with the current nature of magic."

He throws a large bag out of the car in front of you, then shifts the vehicle into gear.

"Use these scrolls to reach the fortress. Once you are there, Pemberton will show you what he thinks is a great surprise." He scoffs at the idea. "Do not be impressed."

With that, he drives away into the jungle.

He has left behind enough *scrolls of teleport* to get the party, Pemberton, Brakken, and Pardo back to the fortress. If the party tries to thwart El Extraño's dramatic departure, it only serves to annoy him, and he teleports away. The kobold spymaster will return in a later adventure.

## Airship Factory

Back at the Axis Fort, Pemberton sends Pardo to make his loyal cultists ready for a fighting retreat, then hurries to show the party one factory which he has repurposed to produce light-weight steam engines that are enchanted with flight magic. He thought that he might as well take advantage of the world's new arcane physics. Whether the party is surprised or not, he does hope they appreciate his gift.

## Dragon Fliers

He has a few prototype flying machines parked on the roof. Unlike his roadcars, he *has* gotten around to decorating these: each flier's nose has a draconic face with twin autocannons at the sides of its mouth, its two-level wings are framed with mithral resembling dragon scales, and the stabilizing tail boasts a proud Pemberton Industries logo. The wings are covered with glowing white glyphs, and the engine crackles with lightning when it revs. The two seats – for a pilot and a spotter – are even comfortably upholstered.

They are basically enchanted biwings. They have limited ammo, and they can only carry enough fuel to fly for about twenty minutes, but their top speed is eighty miles per hour (800 feet per round).

**Piloting:** Piloting a flier functions much the same as driving one of Pemberton's roadcars, though their speed categories are **reckless** (800), **fast** (600), **moderate** (450), **slow** (300), and **idle** (150). The plane needs to go at speed 300 or higher to take off and maintain its flight; any slower than that and the plane stalls and falls. (Idle is only really used while on the ground.) The planes need 20 feet of turning space for each speed category.

It can ascend by no more than 60 feet per round.

**Weapons:** Each flier has three hundred rounds (thirty bursts' worth) of ammo for its autocannons. *Range Increment* 120 ft. *Damage* 2d8. *Critical* x4. *Misfire* 1-2.

(An autocannon attacks all creatures in a line. Make a separate attack roll against each creature in the line. Each attack roll takes a –2 penalty to account for recoil, and its attack damage cannot be modified by precision damage or damage-increasing feats such as Vital Strike. Effects that grant concealment, such as fog or smoke, or the blur, invisibility, or mirror image spells, do not foil an automatic weapon's line attack. An automatic weapon misfires only if all of the attack rolls made misfire.)

## Do Not Be Impressed

El Extraño turns on one of their cars and honks the horn to get their attention, having appeared out of nowhere. When the party comes out, he has some information for them.

"I am here to save you, despite this dragon's attempt to conquer my homeland. We, of course, defeated our overlords long before you even considered defeating this Obscurati. The noble line of El Extraño can keep a secret, and just like the enlightened people of Ber, we shall cooperate with those who are unlike us, no matter their flaws."

The kobold points at Pemberton and snarls, "Do not interrupt! My operatives traversed the ocean by hiding inside of undead whales, which your kraken could not detect. I am amazed you did not consider this option. They then spread across northern Lanjyr and have reported to me critical intelligence. They have already located a location near this Forward Symposium where you will be able to hide. It is large enough."

Again he points at Pemberton, his face severe, and cuts the man off just as he's about to interrupt. "Failed usurpers will wait their turn to speak!"

"The Obscurati have placed a divination beacon that disrupts information in a factory complex in Cherage, where they are slowly constructing a second colossus. My people discovered it by granting hivemind consciousness to the rats of the city and establishing two competing spy guilds, which we reward with pepper cheese. These rats have excellent taste. We regrettably have not refined their fashion sense.

"Without being detected they have inscribed the names of Pemberton, Brakken, and the Risuri constables into the beacon's stone obelisk. Now you shall be protected by the same anti-divination wards the Obscurati ring-bearers had. Their preparations for the symposium will likely keep them from detecting our sabotage, but do not rely on it in the long term. My eyes will handle the mundanities of your mission to this symposium, and will report any information they discover in the city.

El Extraño glares at Pemberton and twitches the scaled tendrils of his moustache. "You will want to remove the pyrotechnics I hid inside your bedchamber.

**Stats:** Each flier has 300 hit points, hardness 10, and AC 10. The fuselage is twenty feet long by five feet wide, with a twenty-five foot wingspan.

### *Piece de Resistance*

Inside the factory, though, is the main attraction. The gnolls are putting the finishing touches on a collection of retrofits that can be installed onto an existing seafaring vessel to grant it flight capability. (Alternately, if the party didn't come by boat, he's just built his own airship, which can exit through the roof, which opens up.) The key is that the party has access to a ship to get off the island and fly to Danor for the Forward Symposium.

As part of the retrofit, Pemberton can also equip the party's ship with docking arms. These allow the dragon fliers to both launch and dock at the side of the vessel with a Dexterity check (DC 5), as long as the airship is flying at least 150 feet per round.

It will take a couple hours to install the flight components on the party's ship (or to finalize the airship for launch). The timeline will be cutting it close, and the Danoran navy will arrive when the gnoll workers need just a few more minutes.

We leave the aesthetics of these flight components to you. Do you prefer industrial, a more gizmo-based steampunk aesthetic, something truly magical like whirling rings of fire, or an understated 'winged keel' and 'wingsails' that lift and stabilize?

## DANOR'S ASSAULT

### **Action. Montage. Level 20+.**

*The Danoran navy moves to attack Axis. They're supported by elite Obscurati agents, a fleet of war ready ships, and a doomsday super weapon.*

With She Who Writhes no longer a factor, the Danoran fleet massed under orders of Sovereign Han Jierre. Instructed by Nicodemus to retake Axis Island at whatever cost necessary, Han has redirected all of the forces poised to strike at Risur to the capture of Axis. This includes a massive naval element, supported by fully loaded transport ships, as well as the flagship of the Danoran fleet—*La Lux du Raison*.

The fleet departs from the docks at Cherage, making its way towards Axis Island. By the time El Extraño delivers the warning of the Danoran fleet movement, the fleet is mere hours away. During this time, Pemberton prepares his defenses, while the Danorans ready for a brutal assault.

Knowing of Pemberton's true draconic nature, Jierre's military has retrofitted several escorts and warships with 'upwards facing cannons,' allowing the Danoran fleet to properly engage flying targets. For larger

targets such as a transformed Pemberton, or even the Axis Fortress gate, the Danoran flagship is equipped with an experimental weapon, the Lantern Cannon.

### **The Stratagem Must Advance**

Han Jierre's plan to retake Axis is straightforward; he'll send the entire might of the Danoran military against Pemberton and his followers, then smash them aside. His forces outnumber Pemberton's twenty to one, and the Sovereign knows even a dragon can be defeated, so he's not bothering to consider a siege. The Obscurati want Axis Island back, and they want Pemberton and the party dead.

**Stage 1 (Insertion & Chaos):** The navy pushes towards the Fortress's Sea Wall but remains out of reach of the cannons in the sea wall bunkers. Submersibles blast a submerged section of the fort's main gate and enter underwater. They surface, and now that they are inside the fortress, Obscurati-augmented strike teams of the *Porteurs de Mort* teleport directly into the bunkers along the eastern side of the sea wall, fighting gnolls in close combat. They light chemical flares to illuminate whichever bunkers they're inside.

One group of Obscurati agents take the lighthouse, then place a custom magic item, a *wayfarer's jaunter*, on the house's beacon. This magical device disrupts teleportation that would arrive within 200 feet of the lighthouse, redirecting it to where the light shines. The Obscurati agents aim the beam out into the middle of the Danoran fleet, so anyone who attempts to teleport in and aid the battle will end up splashing in the sea.

**Stage 2 (Landing):** Half of the fleet approaches at full steam, firing forward turrets at any bunkers along the eastern line of the sea wall that aren't illuminated by flares. After about half an hour of bombardment, five ships pull up beside the wall, while others form lines behind them, connected with bridges. Troops climb onto the wall. A few escort ships stay at the edge of this formation, watching the skies in case Pemberton appears.

The other half of the fleet heads for the sea gate, which is damaged when the submersibles detonate at its hinges. The gate dangles loose, which might hold, but at the same time the eastern fleet is making landing on the wall, *La Lux du Raison* engages its Lantern Cannon. A blinding flash of light strikes the gate and vaporizes a twenty-foot wide span. The beam travels far enough to also singe parts of the docks on the other side of the sea wall harbor. It takes the beam two minutes to recharge, and then it fires again. It's at this point that a hivemind begins to form (which is not part of the Sovereign's plans). See *Mind for War*, below.

**Stage 3 (Raze):** The Danorans take no chances and thus no prisoners. Scout squads sprint through the fortress with orders to locate Pemberton or the party, then light flares and teleport away. Once flares are lit, the fleet launches mortars at those locations.

Additionally, lookouts who inserted earlier on the island outside the fortress watch likely escape routes. They light flares if they spot large groups heading inland, which brings in more mortar fire.

### **A Mind for War**

When the Danorans finally reach the fortress, their combined desire to conquer Axis and begin a fifth Yerasol War has unexpected effects. High above the battlefield, a growing cloud of protoplasmic energy roils. Starting as a small mote, this tiny spark of energy represents the nascent form of a hive mind in the making.

## ASRABEY AND HIS MISTRESS?

If Asrabey got away with She Who Writhes under his control, the two of them join the attack on Axis Island. Asrabey's less gung-ho than he was in Adventure One, since he fears the party. Mostly they provide support and defend the fleet from any aquatic counter-attacks



The PCs can recognize this manifestation for what it is almost immediately. The Danoran troops are oblivious to their growing creation, while Pemberton's forces consider it another Danoran weapon, sending them into further panic and disarray. Unlike other hive minds, though, this one doesn't get a chance to act, because Sovereign Han Jierre targets it with the Lantern Cannon. This gives the party a window to escape before the cannon can shoot them down.

## The Stakes

The attack on Axis is a critical part of the Obscurati plan, since Nicodemus intends to try the ritual again. As such, the Danoran forces under Ob supervision will stop at nothing to reclaim Axis Island.

Allowing Axis to fall to the Ob is not necessarily a major setback for the PCs, though, as there's little the conspiracy can do here in the near future. There are several worldwide events that paralyze forces the Ob thought they could call upon for assistance, and soon enough events in the Danoran capital of Cherage will spiral out of the Ob's control. It won't

be until Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*, that the Obscurati are ready to attempt the ritual again.

The party can achieve a victory by just getting away, or a major victory by delaying the landing and breach until Pemberton's gnoll followers can escape.

If on the other hand the party manages to stop the assault and keep control of the island, that's an impressive victory, and it causes Nicodemus to overreact in anger. Instead of sending the navies of the world to invade Risur, his first goal is to retake and secure Axis Island, which gives the party about a month of extra time before Risur comes under attack in Adventure Eleven. It's basically impossible to hold Axis Island in the long run, though.

## From the Party's Perspective

The party is high enough level to deal heavy blows to the Danoran forces, but eventually the thousands of soldiers and their elite allies will prove too much.

The party's primary mission should be to protect their ship as its retrofit is finalized; secondary to that will be saving Pemberton's gnoll forces so they can evacuate – either by piling onto the party's ship or fleeing into the island mainland. If the party can cast *teleportation circle*, that can get a great deal more to safety, though the gnolls will have to abandon their posts, so it's critical to wait until the last few minutes before ordering an evacuation.

## The Retrofit

Pemberton disappears for a bit to plan the fortress's defense. He shucks his duplicant body (and has some gnolls carry it into the party's ship if they'll let him), then returns in his own actual body, still polymorphed into human form. His focus is on getting the airship ready to launch. He keeps Pardo nearby coordinating the fortress defenders, and has Brakken waiting somewhere safe on the party's ship, since he is critical to infiltrating the symposium.

A couple hours after work begins, the party hears look-outs shouting warnings, and some sporadic cannon fire. Give the party a chance to go up on the wall and see the dozens of ships coming for the fortress, dimly visible by the lights on their decks.

Pemberton says they need about another half hour to finish the retrofit. It's shortly afterward that a small explosion disturbs the water near the sea gate (Perception DC 20), and a minute later two submersibles surface. The *Porteurs du Mort* emerge, then teleport in and attack the bunkers.

## Porteur Assault

Four squads of five *porteurs* each teleport to the eastern sea wall bunkers. One squad arrives near the party. They light flares and dispatch the gnolls in the bunkers within two rounds. Then they use the bunkers (simple twenty-by-fifteen stone rooms with a door facing the harbor and holes for cannons to shoot outward) as a defensive location.

Meanwhile, Danoran ships start bombarding the sea wall, blasting the bunkers that the *Porteurs* aren't in.

Every minute the *Porteurs* abandon one bunker and assault another. There are a total of sixteen bunkers along this side of the sea wall—two rows of eight. If not interrupted, they clear them out in less than five minutes.

## ENEMY FORCES

Several different types of Danoran troops and Obscurati agents are involved in the attack, which you can use to create encounters if the party sticks around or goes looking for trouble out in the fleet. Their statistics can be found in Appendix Three: Danoran & Obscurati Forces.

- ♦ **Porteur Du Mort Alchemist:** Geniuses in their field, these battle alchemists work to enhance fellow Danoran soldiers. Any group of Danorans including one of these alchemists is likely under the benefits of a *communal stoneskin*, as well as various other available extracts. Using tiny technologist devices, these alchemists can effectively deliver their extracts at range, while otherwise standing far away to toss acidic or maddening bombs at their enemies.
- ♦ **Porteur Du Mort Murderer:** Handpicked members of the Danoran military, these tieflings were chosen at birth for their masochistic tendencies. During the assault on Axis Island, these rogues maneuver in pairs to try and ventilate opponents who stand against them. When engaged with multiple opponents who outclass them, these murderers use their ability to cast *deeper darkness* to facilitate an escape route and sneak to strike again from a better position.
- ♦ **Porteur Du Mort Revelation Sniper:** Armed with state of the art magically enchanted weapons, these snipers number less than a handful in all of Danor. Each of them uses enhanced and unique ammunition that required years of training and specialty craftsmanship from arms manufacturers in the Malice Lands. These snipers hide and take advantage of their Deadly Aim feat and various grit abilities while shooting *lander rounds* to bring down flying PCs.
- ♦ **Obscurati Divinist:** Hailing from Drakr, these dwarven oracles have long served the Obscurati in small numbers. During the attack, these diviners use their powers to ensure the Danorans don't fall into ambushes, and that they can locate the party, who are primary targets.
- ♦ **Obscurati Master Builder:** Tasked with assisting in repairing of the world's cities following the Ob's ritual, these engineers have dedicated themselves to constructive magic. They secure tactical locations for the Danoran forces by walling them off and using offensive magic to keep intruders at bay.

### Porteur Assault Squad (CR 18)

- ♦ 1 Porteur du Mort Alchemist
- ♦ 3 Porteur du Mort Murderers
- ♦ 1 Porteur du Mort Revelation Sniper

The party might notice (Perception DC 25) that one squad has attacked the lighthouse near the sea gate, and that they've moved the lighthouse beam to point out to sea. From this point on, within 200 feet of the lighthouse anyone who tries to teleport will get redirected to the middle of the Danoran fleet. If things look bad for a *porteur* squad and at least five minutes have passed so they can teleport again, they'll flee and rejoin the fleet.

### Attacking the Fleet

Summoned water elementals, swarms of meteors and fireballs, destructive weather magic—all these things can ruin the Danorans' day. So of course the Danorans have prepared for them. Enchantments on the ships protect those on board from the first 50 damage that would be dealt to them by any spells unless the attack originates from within 50 feet. Other wards deal fire damage to creatures who attack from underwater, and the ships have experimental depth charges. The Danorans have even brought along a loyal druid who is concentrating on her own *control weather* spell, to keep the party from just wiping out the fleet with a hurricane.

Make sure the party sees that their high level magic is effective, but that there are enough enemies who have mid-level magic that they can't win through sheer brute force.

If the party does try to engage a ship, rather than handling the crewmen as singular creatures, use the Danoran Frigate Crew stats, which represent the combined might of two hundred sailors and a few elite mages and technologists.

The party can still delay the Danorans, though, and strafing runs with the dragon fliers would go fast enough to avoid cannon counterattacks, though small arms might still be a threat. If the PCs don't pilot the biplanes, Pemberton has some gnolls fly them, and they'll dock with the PC's ship as it takes off.

Industrious PCs might seek out the capital ship, *La Lux du Raison*.

### La Lux du Raison (CR 22)

- ♦ 2 Danoran Frigate Crew
- ♦ 2 Obscurati Master Builder
- ♦ 2 Obscurati Divinist
- ♦ Sovereign Han Jierre

In addition to those enemies, the party will likely have to contend with at least 4 other Danoran Frigate Crews on nearby ships. As for the sovereign, despite having focused his life on politics rather than warfare, Han Jierre has learned how to use new magic to tap into the psychic gestalt that latently links all the soldiers under his command. This allows him to call in attacks from many directions with just a thought.

If Han is knocked unconscious, a *contingency* teleports him back to Cherage.

### Breach and Evacuation

After half an hour, it's possible to hear steam engines of the Danoran ships close on the other side of the sea wall. The Danorans use siege machinery to surmount the wall and unload hundreds of soldiers. Almost

simultaneously, a blinding flash of light tears through the sea gate and scorches the far side of the bay. Everyone present is blinded for a minute (Fortitude DC 15 each round to shake off the effect).

At this point, the hivemind appears in the sky over the harbor. Pemberton orders his gnolls to evacuate and flee inland, though he hopes the party will permit a few on their ship. That ship, handily enough, is ready to fly.

## BLASTING AWAY

### Action. Real-Time. Level 18.

*The airship ascends, but the Danorans have prepared for a flying target. Luckily, they weren't expecting TWO flying targets.*

Waiting on the deck of their newly upgraded vessel is an incensed Pemberton. The sheer gall of the Danorans—as well as their use of overwhelming force—has soured the dragon's typically generous mood, and he angrily paces the deck of the PCs ship. In truth, Pemberton's seething is more a result of his inner turmoil, as he prepares to make a life altering decision to try and save face.

### Airship Complete

Pemberton will have already explained how to pilot the flying vessel. If you're using the *Admiral o' the High Seas*, the vessel is now equipped with the Skyship piloting component. This upgrade effectively allows the vessel to fly at any altitude, as well as generating a 30 foot bubble where creatures within move with the ship and gain the effects of a *fly* spell. Once a creature passes outside the 30 foot bubble, they fall as normal, but with the benefit of a *feather fall*.

Given the deteriorating situation, Pemberton aggressively suggests that everyone 'gets a move on' and prepare to launch the ship. The Danorans should be just cresting the sea wall and streaming through the sea gate when the party's ship takes off.

### Kill the Mind

While the PCs ship ascends, the Hivemind growing over Axis continues to expand, seemingly ignored by the Danorans below. As the growing incorporeal mass seems ready to burst into proper reality, *La Lux du Raison* fires a single shot from the Lantern into the air, dissipating it in seconds. Unaffected by the malaise affecting other Danorans, Han Jierre recognizes the threat of the hivemind and opts to destroy it.

Luckily, this shot from the Danoran superweapon renders it ineffective for some time as it recharges, but it alerts the party that the Danorans are prepared to shoot upward.

### GET OVER HERE!

As the airship ascends into the sky, Pemberton moves to the back of the ship—or side depending on what has a better view—staring out at the assembled Danoran fleet. The destruction below causes smoke plumes to rise, and the shouting and yells become an inaudible sound as the ship continues to rise.

Once the ship has reached 200 feet in altitude, several Danoran escort craft fire specialty bolts up at it. Each shot is a magically reinforced set of chain with a specialized drilling tip. Meant to pierce the hide of a dragon and leave it vulnerable to standard fire, these shots are quickly repurposed by the Danorans to bring down the first airship of the era.



### Evasive Maneuvers

If a PC was acting as lookout and succeeded a Perception check (DC 25) to detect the harpoons being aimed upward, the captain can make a Command check (d20 + half-character-level + Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier), and if there is a devoted PC pilot the captain can add the pilot's Dexterity modifier to this roll. If the result beats DC 15 the ship is able to dodge one shot. If it beats DC 25 it can dodge two, at which point the sole remaining chain isn't strong enough to hold the party's ship. It snaps and the party can escape without any more trouble.

### Grabbed

Up to three harpoons impact the hull, ripping into the PCs' ship and chaining it in place. The chains begin to slowly retract. The angles of the various ships and the slow mechanisms cause the PCs airship to descend at a rate of 5 feet per round.

Within a minute, the Danoran fleet will be able to reclaim their weapons at the party's ship and blow it out of the sky, unless drastic action is taken.

### Pemberton Handles Things

With the airship stuck in place, Pemberton's mind becomes set on a drastic course of action. Unless the PCs have come up with a particularly inventive solution, Pemberton decides to take the fight to the Danorans and give the PCs some time to deal with the chains holding them in place.

Read or paraphrase the following:

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Benedict Pemberton turns away from his scrutinizing of the Danoran fleet, his arms lowered and his thumbs locked through his belt.

"Well now, this is one hum dinger we have here. By the looks of things, our friends down there came with toys to use against me. I so hate to disappoint them, and more, I'd hate to lose this fine ship I spent so much time on. I do believe it's time to join the rodeo."

Turning his back to the party, he strips off his gentleman's coat and his pants, then hands them to Pardo to fold. "I'll leave it to you fine folk to get this new-fangled ship unstuck. I'll deal with these ruffians below."

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With that, Pemberton leaps from the side of the ship, assuming his draconic form while falling. The following round, Gradiax the Lord of Steel flies once more, leading a vicious assault on the Danoran fleet.

The exact description of the fight between Gradiax and the Danorans should be left to the GM, as it is meant to be a backdrop to the PCs freeing their vessel from the chains that reel it in. Pemberton's move forces the Danorans to retrain their guns on the dragon, and gives the PCs time to properly remove the chains and escape. Every few rounds he strafes one of the ships holding a chain in order to kill the soldiers who are preparing to ascend the chain.

If you need stats for him, treat him as a very old red dragon.

### The Chains That Bind

Spread the three chain strikes at roughly equidistant points across the hull of the PCs ship. Each point becomes a breaching site for the Danorans, who have specially designed the chains to convey teleportation magic to the point of impact.

**Obscurati Assault Golem:** The round after Pemberton dives overboard, the first attackers teleport in. Knowing the original Danoran

commandos would be quickly defeated by the forces onboard, the Obscurati step in and instead use the chains to teleport over golem defenders for the impact points.

These golems stand ready to fight against the PCs, but have specific instructions not to move beyond the impact points. Effectively, this ensures each of the breaching points has one golem defender.

The next round troops start pouring in, appearing in huge masses near the edge of the spikes. These are Danoran Boarding Squads (a somewhat oddly-designed enemy meant to be threatening to the party despite being comparably low-level). A new one appears each round.

**Breach Points:** Following their initial impact into the hull, the shells at the end of the chains bloom into a metallic flower that clamps onto the hull. Each of these points is effectively an inanimate object that must be destroyed in order for the PCs ship to escape the Danoran fleet.

The impact points cover a 10 x 10 foot area and have 300 hit points with hardness 15.

For every 100 points of damage suffered, the breach point emits a blast of fire throughout the area. All creatures within 20 feet of the breach suffer 10d6 points of fire damage. A successful DC 16 Reflex save allows creatures in the area to take half damage. The Obscurati Assault Golems automatically fail this save and gains a number of hit points per its Immunity to Magic rule.

Destroying one impact point keeps the ship from being reeled in any lower, while destroying two gives the ship enough lifting power to snap the third chain and escape.

### Failure

If the party takes so long that their ship gets pulled down to surface level, the whole Danoran fleet will be able to target it with cannons, and it will be blown to pieces. The attendant explosions likely kill the party. If they defeated She Who Writhes but made friends, it is possible she might be obliged to rescue them from the sea. Later adventures get more difficult without an airship, though.

### Into the Sunset (if there was a sun anymore)

With the chains destroyed, the PCs can effect a proper escape from the Danoran fleet. Pemberton continues a few last strafing runs on the Danorans.

If the party did not spend any effort to help Pemberton, then he gets struck by a grappling chain, then blasted by the blinding beam of the Lantern Cannon, which seems to annihilate him utterly. In truth, a magical contingency teleports him away at the last moment, though his various divination wards make it difficult to determine his fate.

Should the party bother to aid Pemberton, he makes it out of the fight bloodied but alive, and he flies away from Axis Island alongside the party's airship. The Lantern Cannon strikes him a glancing blow, and he manages to crash land onto the deck of the party's ship as he polymorphs back into human form. The weapon has scrambled his magical energies, making him unable to be aided by healing magic for a few weeks. He'll be present to contribute his thoughts during the Forward Symposium, but won't be in any shape to fight, and will make a point of getting teleported out before any more fighting occurs.

Still, the party's ship flies far faster than the Ob fleet can pursue. It's a straight shot for them to reach Danor.

## FORWARD THINKING

### Social. Montage.

*The party has a few days to breathe.*

Nicodemus has called a great conference in the Danoran capital of Cherage. He seeks to unify the leaders of the world, design a path forward for guiding the world into an enlightened age, and stoke anger for the worldwide change towards Risur.

With the aid of Brakken, the party can enter the conference by sharing a mental link with the Beran ambassador. The party has the unique opportunity to overhear the Obscurati plans, and can potentially turn the tide of opinion back in favor of Risur.

Unknown to either side, the Gidim—alien creatures of living thought who threatened the world ages ago—have begun a new invasion, and one of their scouts is in Cherage. The new psychic resonance that makes the hivemind phenomenon possible gives the Gidim great power. Though Nicodemus and the Obscurati anticipated hiveminds and have procedures in place to keep them from developing, the Gidim will be able to nudge a nascent hivemind formed at the Forward Symposium and cause it to manifest into a sort of psychic singularity—a Godmind.

The godmind will consume all thinking creatures around it in an insane pursuit of one goal. In this case, that goal will be ‘improve the world,’ which for the godmind is best accomplished by killing all but the ‘best’ people. If the party does not intervene, Cherage and most of Danor will fall before the surviving Ob members are able to bring enough force to bear to destroy the monstrosity.

In Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, five invading forces will threaten Risur—the armies of Danor, Drakr, Crisillyir, Ber, and the various minor nations of the world. If they save Cherage here, Danor will begin to doubt Obscurati propaganda and so will delay their invasion; offering further aid to Danor in the next adventure can actually stop the invasion.

Likewise, saving other world leaders and helping their nations deal with doomsday threats next adventure can stop those nations from invading, and get them on the party’s side for the showdown in the campaign’s finale.

### Regroup and Prepare

With access to the world’s first airship, the PCs have a great mobility advantage over the forces of the Obscurati. Returning to Risur following the events at Axis is possible, as the PCs may want to stock up and prepare for the upcoming conference in Cherage. Alternatively, the PCs might decide to start using their airship as a base of operations, teleporting allies to them to determine the plan on infiltrating the Forward Symposium.

The party can go straight to Danor, or wait, but given how much trouble high-level PCs can get into with even a single day to spare, it might be best to tell them that the Symposium is only a couple days away, to keep them from flying to Alais Primos for the next leg of the adventure.

We focus mostly on the events of the conference. If your players seem interested in ‘sneaking into Danor,’ ‘sabotaging Cherage,’ or ‘disrupting the Obscurati,’ you can make things complicated enough to satisfy them. Our assumption, though, is that high-level PCs will be able to get into the country undetected, and that all the interesting things happen at the symposium.

## The Conference

Set to take place in the Congressional Hall of Danor, the Forward Symposium has put the career politicians of Danor out on the street, with only a few allowed to attend. With the recent changes in the world, the congress has been relegated to a lesser role while Sovereign Jierre and Nicodemus temporarily take direct control of matters of state. Characters familiar with architecture know that the Congressional Hall of Danor is famous for its retractable metal plated roof, a device that is opened on days of fair weather in the Danoran capital city.

Through political connections, divinations, or asking El Extraño’s spy network, the party can learn that the following dignitaries will be in attendance. Each dignitary also has a small gaggle of attendants and aides, bringing the total number of people present to over a hundred.

- ♦ Nicodemus the Gnostic (Obscurati representative)
- ♦ Sovereign Han Jierre (Danor government representative)\*
- ♦ Minister of War Eloise Duffet (Danoran military representative)
- ♦ Brakken of Heffanita (Beran government representative)
- ♦ Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso (Crisillyir government representative)
- ♦ Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova (Drakr government representative)
- ♦ Sagu Jacksdotter (League of Malice States government representative)
- ♦ Lord Kulp (Nalaam economic representative)
- ♦ Betronga Sidhon (Eladrin survivor representative)\*\*
- ♦ Vlendam Heid (Eschatologist philosophy representative)
- ♦ Various military and opposition political representatives from each of the major nations.
- ♦ Various locally-notable politicians and philosophers from Border States, Malice States, and colonies in old Elfaivar.

*\*While Han Jierre is scheduled to attend, he will be absent as he directs the retaking of Axis. His wife Gelsey stands in for him.*

*\*\*If Betronga died in Adventure Eight, another non-weretiger eladrin attends in his place.*

## Brakken’s Plan

The assumed method of getting the PCs into the Forward Symposium involves Brakken entering the conference and acting as the Beran representative. He’ll be linked telepathically to the PCs (and Pemberton if he is here), though the party will have to stay within ten miles. El Extraño’s spies have found a secluded valley their ship can land in that is within range, and they have secured the perimeter so the party will be safe.

Once Brakken has entered the conference, he intends to stay long enough to learn the Obscurati’s plans and the goals of other national leaders, and perhaps to put in a few words against invading Risur. He tells the party that while linked to him, they’ll have the ability to direct his actions—they can basically act as if they were in his body—though he asks them to promise not to do anything rash and get him killed.





## Brakken's Bond

Brakken is willing to test his abilities on the PCs to ensure the joining works, and that the PCs are familiar with the effects. Treat Brakken as having a Charisma modifier of +8 for purposes of the bond. The following is a summary of rules while the PCs are linked with Brakken:

- ♦ All members of the bond (including Brakken) gain the benefit of *telepathic bond* as per the spell.
- ♦ By concentrating (a move action) any member of the bond can shift their senses of hearing and sight between Brakken's perspective and their own. The bond persists even if a character resumes his own senses, and he can go back into Brakken's later if he desires.
- ♦ While viewing the world through Brakken's eyes, the PCs can attempt to speak through the minotaur. Unless Brakken or another linked member resists the words being spoken this happens automatically. If Brakken or another linked member attempts to resist, have them make opposed Charisma checks to see who wins.
- ♦ While viewing the world through Brakken's eyes, the PCs can attempt to take control of the minotaur's movements and actions. Brakken prefers to be asked and then follows directions, and normally will resist this (as above). But he will let a PC do it if his life is in danger. A character controlling him in this way can use all her own personal skill and prowess.
- ♦ Brakken can attempt to eject a PC from the mental bond as a full round action. He must succeed three consecutive opposed Charisma checks to do so.

All of the mental bond's abilities work within a maximum range of 10 miles. While normally not an issue, this prevents the PCs from sitting in Risur while Brakken travels to Cherage.

## Cherage, Capital of Progress

Cherage is built upon several hills around the Bay du Violette, a bay named after the violet hue it gives off during sunsets. Small islands in the bay each support immense artillery batteries—weapons installed after a brazen Risuri attack forty-two years ago.

The city builds upon itself in layers, with the more affluent citizens residing on hilltops, while the common folk reside in an almost literal 'melting pot' between the hills and the bay. North past the hills, great fields of industry churn out smoke and soot, which can faintly be tasted on the air even in the finer parts of the city. Small surface rail moves citizens between the industrial sectors and the central city, while traditional carts and carriages are required to navigate up to the hills.

Obscurati enforcers walk side by side with Danoran police in protection of the city. The increased enforcement, coupled with the subtle shift in behaviors since the Great Eclipse, has led to fewer acts of disobedience or direct sabotage. As a result the Danorans have cancelled their previously mandated curfew in the city.

The industrial district of Cherage (technically located out of city limits to the north) is abuzz with new job opportunities. Folks from all over Danor are flocking to the capital city for well-paying work churning out improved firearms, war equipment, and revolutionary constructs. Many people are fascinated by the possibility of learning magic, long unavailable in Danor, even if in truth not many people will find a teacher.

Warehouses along the docks of Cherage have stockpiled with war materiel, and despite attempts to maintain some security, gawkers are

fascinated by the steady arrival of man-sized constructs dressed in Danoran military uniforms.

## A Nation Changed

People in Danor do not work against the Obscurati or see them as any sort of evil conspiracy; instead, they see the Ob as a group on the cusp of bringing about their salvation.

Indeed, the people of Cherage are predisposed to hating Risur. Obscurati propaganda has informed the populace that all the positive changes of the Great Eclipse—magic returning to Danor, improved healing, people being less prone to violence—are the Ob's doing. And all the faults with the ritual—hiveminds, the sun disappearing, and She Who Writhes disrupting shipping—were due to Risuri meddling.

## THE ONE PERCENT, THE ONE MIND

### Social. Real-Time.

*The leaders of the old world meet. The Godmind comes.*

The Obscurati don't do anything to interfere with Brakken's plan to enter the Forward Symposium. Elite military guards watch the entrances to the event, and corridors are patrolled by large golems that can see through most magic. Security screenings check for illusions, polymorphing, mind control, possession, and being a duplicant, but Brakken's link with the PCs is not detected.

The Congressional Hall of Cherage rests atop the highest hill in the city. The massive metallic structure of the domed roof is currently open, which traditionally allows for an impressive view of the sky, though now the black heavens are fairly underwhelming.

## Arrival and Mingling

Prior to the official start of the conference, a brief gala in the hall provides an opportunity to mingle with the other attendees. The Obscurati guards stay out of the way to ensure the attendees don't feel pressured by the Ob's watchful eye. However, Nicodemus is actually present, possessing a new body and serving as a waiter so he can eavesdrop.

Delegates have arrived in the city over the past few weeks, and they come to the hall with their aides and attendants. The government representatives from Crisillyir and Drakr—**Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso** and **Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova**—are already here, talking with **Gelsey Jierre**, wife of Sovereign Han who sadly will not be in attendance.

**Sagu Jacksdotter**, the representative of the newly-formed League of Malice States, is giddily telling stories of horrible magical mishaps she has seen, which she will never have to experience again thanks to the Obscurati. **Betronga Sidhon**, head of the eladrin contingent from Elfaivar, talks with representatives of the various colonies who have taken their land warily trade tales of violence they each perpetuated, but their mood is one of relief that such warfare might be no more.

Brakken makes a bit of a stir by arriving alone, and attendees from various minor states gather around him. Despite Ber being a large nation, the minor states see it as a kindred spirit since Danor, Drakr, and Crisillyir have long treated it as inconsequential too. Many people express concern that Ber might have been in danger because it shares a border with Risur.

Give the party a chance to converse and sway people's opinions if they want. Being politicians with personal ambitions or philosophers with something to prove, most attendees are eager to talk. Only one person, **Lord Kulp**, the master of games from Nalaam (and — the party might know — a Vekeshi Mystic), keeps to himself.

### Big Players

Brakken's conversation with the other representatives is interrupted when the lead attendees from Drakr and Crisillyir step in. Brakken quickly fills in the party telepathically to who they are.

**Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova**, an obese dwarf woman who wears a robe woven with tiny runes that convey her core philosophy, is nearing the end of her six-year stint as leader of Drakr, having been appointed by a council of philosopher-politicians. She's been ruthless in using security forces to hunt down internal dissidents, though she was recently dealt a humiliating defeat when some of her supporters were bombed by followers of Grandis Komanov, the radical eschatologist. She also made a few public statements blaming Risur for the high-profile destruction of a railyard in Mirsk last year.

**Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso**, rail-thin and sporting an impressive moustache, is rumored to be the highest-ranking member of the Clergy who did *not* commit suicide during the Great Eclipse. He's a powerful divine spellcaster, and his public statements have always been fairly traditional and positive, but Brakken wouldn't be surprised if he's an elitist, like most of the Clergy hierarchs were.

Dmitra asks if Brakken has any first-hand knowledge of the disasters that have befallen Risur since the sky changed, and then she rattles off the various accusations the Ob have made about how Risur nearly doomed the world.

The Cardinal opines that the Risuri people must be truly bereft of leadership, and that the noblest thing to do would be to 'kill the wolves who rule them, so that the sheep might live the simple lives meant for them.'

Dmitra says she'd sooner see the savages of Ber return Risur to a land of beasts than to let the Clergy's classical brand of delusion take root there.

It's about this time that **Minister of War Eloise Duffet** joins in, admonishing the two to save their anger for Risur, not each other. They all agree Risur must be conquered.

Dmitra asks if they think it will be a long war. Trying to hide her enthusiasm, she suggests that it would be risky to change leadership in the middle of an ongoing conflict.

The Minister of War offers to give them a preview of her presentation about the invasion plan. She even has prepared letters of intent that the Chancellor and Cardinal can sign if they agree. They can send those letters out immediately so preparations for the invasion can begin.

### Invasion Plans

If the party wants to listen in, they'll need to have Brakken convince Eloise Duffet, since she recalls Brakken in Flint (in *Adventure Five, Cauldron-Born*) and thought he was too friendly with Risur. They'll need to form some sort of rapport with her or the other two leaders, then offer an argument for being involved in the early discussions.

For example, they could pretend that Brakken has reevaluated Risur in light of the new world order. Plus Ber is one of the nations best poised to invade Risur, so the two other leaders would want to be take the Beran perspective into account before signing on to any plans. Or you

## PARTY INVOLVEMENT

As with any large social event, we can only guess how your players might choose to interact here. We present the situation as it occurs barring PC interference, and leave it to you to adjust in response to their actions.

In particular, they might dramatically reveal their identities. Nicodemus would denounce them in front of the audience while stalling for reinforcements to arrive. If they just engage in debate, pretty much everyone except Heid, Kvarti, and Lord Kulp already have their minds made up to invade Risur, but excellent diplomacy from the party can make a few of them start to doubt. Eventually, though, the delegates from Crisillyir and Drakr steer the discussion toward culling the inferior, triggering the hivemind.

If a fight breaks out, though, the hivemind is driven by a desire to destroy Risur (instead of an economic desire for everyone to 'contribute'). It rapidly grows into a Godmind and goes out of Nicodemus's control, at which point it begins consuming people across the city in order to gather an 'army.'

The party might instead just murder the attendees without talking. Good job. Risur gets blamed for the assassination, Nicodemus will get a new body, and the Obscurati will be able to lead fervent armies against the party in a matter of weeks.

They might instead wait for the hivemind to begin forming, *then* kill attendees in order to weaken it. This actually is a pretty solid idea, except that by the time it starts to form, Brakken will be caught in it. They'll only manage to harm a few of the dozens of attendees before Brakken is paralyzed, but they should be able to tell that killing parts of the 'brain' did actually weaken the hivemind.

We've loaded the symposium with enough sympathetic NPCs that hopefully the party won't just abandon them to die. If they do, though, the Godmind consumes the population of Cherage and expands westward until the Danoran and Drakran armies annihilate it with immense firepower. The Ob will blame Risur for it.

can just simplify things to a Sense Motive check (DC 25) to figure out what to say to establish rapport, a Bluff check (DC 25, or 30 if they failed the Sense Motive check) to actually earn their trust, and then a Diplomacy check (DC 25) to be given the chance to listen in.

The details of the plans don't specifically matter that much; it's more important just that the PCs know the plan and can prepare for it, which will increase Risur's National Defense rating in the next adventure.

### Two-Pronged Strategy

The general strategy, however, is for Danoran soldiers and golems to take the Avery Coast Railroad to Trekhom and Sid Minos, where they'll board ships from Drakr and Crisillyir, since the Danoran navy is depleted. Additional forces from those two countries will launch two invasion fleets.

The Drakran fleet will target Flint, but instead of a frontal assault the fleet will drop off its soldiers 10 miles to the east. Though there's no suitable harbor, the soldiers will be trained to teleport to make landfall from a safe distance. Then the fleet will begin bombarding Flint proper while the army advances through the Cloudwood.

Meanwhile, the Crisillyir fleet will make landfall in southeast Risur, on the northern shore of Marrajado de Oro (the riven sea of gold), near Ber. Minister Duffet had hoped the fleet could assist a bridging action



What can be said about the world's most famous philosopher that has not already been written in hundreds of other books? Born into a family of well-to-do thinkers and soldiers, Heid's interests focused on mythology and how people perceive the world. His famous "On the Proper Endings of Things" had a grand effect on the cultural identity of Drakr.

Since the Great Eclipse Heid has quit making money on speaking tours, and instead has tried to prepare the people of his homeland for possible imminent disaster. He called upon Kvarti Gorbatiy to help him in case his words fail and firepower proves necessary. Unlike the sniper, however, Heid is strongly suspicious of the Obscurati. While he finds their public statements of ideology reasonable, his core ideal is that discourse between philosophies is necessary, and he disapproves of one group dictating how everyone must think.



A dwarven locksmith-turned-mercenary, Kvarti found a book of Heid

Eschatol philosophy in the hands of a man he had assassinated. Though he presents a weary face to maintain his reputation, he tries to go through life content. All his affairs are in order, but he has repeatedly managed to survive missions he thought might have spelled his end. Now he has pledged himself as bodyguard and 'operator' for Vlendam Heid himself, for both men would prefer they not leave the world in its current condition.

Kvarti is honestly uncertain whether he should cooperate with the Obscurati or resist it, and we leave it to the PCs to help him decide.



to march Beran forces into Risur as well. The two armies would have a hundred-mile march to reach Bole, where they would cut off the rail supply lines to Flint.

The western Risur city of Shale, though it has great symbolic prestige from past wars with Danor, will only be harried by a token fleet to keep them from sending reinforcements to Flint. Most of Danor's remaining navy will be needed to protect Cherage, where they'll be constructing a new colossus. That ordeal will take perhaps a year, so it won't be available for the invasion.

Once Flint and Bole are captured, they'll take a few months to rebuild industrial facilities, and then they'll invade down the Great Delve River to capture the capital Slate.

### Blind Spots

Some flaws of the minister's plan are, first, the fey titans might be allied with Risur. Danor has been designing depth charges to use against She Who Writhes, but it would take a month for Drakr to build cannons of sufficient size to threaten the Father of Thunder and the Ash Wolf. Granny Allswell isn't useful in direct battle, though her curses could send foul weather at the force trying to take Bole.

Second, taking military forces out of Drakr will make it easier for Grandis Komanov's radical eschatologists to attack. Though

Chancellor Takhenova is concerned enough about them to leave behind some defenders, she doesn't know that Komanov is raising an army of undead and frost giants to annihilate civilization.

Third and fourth, similar doomsday threats will strike Crisillyir and Ber, namely the god trials using the *sacrament of apotheosis* and the invasion of the Gidim. While the invasion of Risur would succeed within three months, the rest of the countries would be devastated.

Fifth and finally, no one predicts the Godmind that is about to threaten Danor.

### Where Do I Sign?

Unless the party effectively raises concerns about the plans, the Chancellor and Cardinal agree and sign expedited orders, which the Obscurati will deliver to the respective military leaders of Drakr and Crisillyir. A teleporting courier is waiting out in the foyer.

If the party gets the two leaders to hesitate, or if they manage to stop the courier somehow without being discovered, then the Godmind will strike before official orders can be sent out. This will cause a significant delay, and next adventure the party will have a comfortable buffer before the invasion begins.

### Familiar Faces

Everyone's attention turns when **Vlendam Heid** teleports in with his bodyguard **Kvarti Gorbatiy**. Heid makes a point of using the new nature of magic in his arrival, because he intends to speak out against the changes and wants to do all he can not to be labeled as reactionary and afraid of change.

Dmitra Takhenova sees him and says, "Vlendam, I'm glad you finally arrived. I know you appreciate endings, so why don't you leave and come back when we're done?"

"Dmitra," Heid says with a chuckle, "I hear you're taking to heart my advice to plan for the end of your chancellorship. Invading Risur, very good idea! I wager if you could out-debate the dockside poets in Flint, they'll gladly let you be in charge of a shipping guild or something."

"Guilds," scoffs Cardinal Banderesso. "Just common people trying to get a taste of real power. I am not impressed by the ability to make a high-quality shoe."

He chants a prayer, and conjures a shining angel. The crowd gasps, few having ever seen a true celestial. It bows to the cardinal. (Yes, this is a planetar, named Adimel. Banderesso had already summoned it with *greater planar ally*, and his spell was just to call it to his side.)

"Go fetch me some shoes," he tells it. "Red leather, please."

The angel stands, glances at the gathering with a hint of disapproval, then flies out of the open roof.

Chancellor Takhenova claps. "We should give it a rifle instead of a sword, but still, good. I'm glad to have such magic on our side for the war against Risur."

Heid says, "Now come, we've all gathered together here in peace. Can't we make peace with Risur too? I say let's not *jump* so hastily to conclusions, and I just teleported here from a mile away. I'm getting quite good at it, don't you think?"

Standing beside him, his bodyguard Kvarti shrugs. "Yes, but now we cannot flee quickly. You must be prepared for your life to end here."

"I always am, my friend," Heid says. "Well, perhaps not before I get a drink. Chancellor, Cardinal, I look forward to our discussions. Ambassador Brakken, please allow me to get you something as well."

Heid wants to talk for a bit with Brakken, mostly to mention the synchronicity that his current bodyguard was unwittingly part of the terrorist group that nearly blew Brakken up in Flint a year ago. He's curious what the minotaur thinks of the Risuri people. During the conversation he drops hints that he doesn't trust the Obscurati. If Brakken (i.e., the party) agrees with him, his bodyguard Kvarti offers a counter-argument, and explains that he's not made up his mind yet.

After a few minutes to talk, a waiter (Nicodemus) whispers something to Gelsey Jierre, who politely calls the delegates to take their seats around the chamber. The keynote speaker will be arriving momentarily.

## Enter Nicodemus

Once he gets a chance to swap bodies, Nicodemus—now wearing a bald, somewhat heavy-set man whose face looks eminently friendly and trustworthy—enters from a side door, flanked by any major Ob players still active, such as Kasvarina, the ghost of Lya Jierre, and any loyal officers the party might recall from Adventure Seven, *Schism*.

Once Nicodemus reaches the center of the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

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"It's heartening to see so many gathered in one place, meeting in peace and willing to discuss how we can work together and set aside old differences. Before I get into the meat of things, I want to take a moment to thank you for showing me that my long faith in people's capacity for good was not misplaced.

"My name is Nicodemus." He pauses to light up a cigarette and smiles. "An old nickname from my monastery days. More recently, though, I devoted myself to leading an organization on a dangerous path. We hid most of our actions because we knew our ultimate goal would be opposed by many people in power. People like you, if I may be honest. It would be easy for governments to assume that our aim was to take power for ourselves. It's a sad fact of the world that it's hard to believe that someone's intentions are benevolent.

"But I knew that once we accomplished what we set out to do, it would place before the world evidence of the common sense of the matter. Already changes are happening that are so positive that they must command the assent of those who witness them.

"You've no doubt read by now the generalities of how we enacted this change, and I'll be glad to give you more technical specifics later if anyone has any questions. But I want you to understand that our ritual was sabotaged just before we could finish it. Operatives on order from Risur detonated a bomb that killed many of my friends and could have had catastrophic consequences. One particularly brave friend named Borne was able to continue with the ritual, but he was killed before he could secure it.

"It's a flaw of my character, I feel, that I empathize with the leaders of Risur. I can understand why they'd fear to lose their power. For two centuries they waged war with Danor and tried to crush this nation before its industry could be strong enough to challenge their magic. But I wish Risur's ruler were here today so we could show that cooperation will benefit us all.

"My organization tried to save the world, and Risur nearly doomed us all. It will be months before we'll be able to fix their sabotage—and I assure you we will; I miss the sun as much as you—but between now and then our foremost goal should be eliminating the threat Risur poses. I have personally met some of the agents of Risur's Homeland Constabulary, and they're dangerous people.

"Danor's navy, sadly, is very depleted, but thankfully Risur's is as well. I'll call upon Minister Duffet in a few minutes to explain the invasion plan, but I hope we can count on your nations to lend their ships for a full-scale invasion of Risur in one week's time.

"I don't want to focus on the specter of war. This symposium is for looking forward, and I'd like to propose a comprehensive agenda where we talk about positive changes. We can determine how our nations and philosophies will best cooperate to deal with international challenges such as long-standing grievances, constant military build-ups, and territorial disputes, as well as local challenges like alleviating poverty, negotiating with and integrating rebellious populaces, and most intelligently making use of natural resources.

"I think you'll find that in the new world we have brought forth, it will be much easier for us to agree on paths that are a net benefit for everyone."

At this moment, an advisor leans in and whispers in Nicodemus's ear, then backs away.

"Right," he says with a smile. "We've all heard or even seen the worrisome 'hivemind phenomenon'—an unfortunate consequence of Risuri sabotage of our ritual. We understand the mild risk we'd have with everyone focusing on solving the same problems, but don't worry. We have guards and magical wards set up to detect any precursor energies that could lead to a hivemind. You're all perfectly safe. Unless an element of risk is intellectually stimulating, in which case by all means, panic a bit.

"Again, it is an immense honor to stand here among you, and to see the first steps toward a better, united world. Before I call up Minister Duffet for her invasion presentation, does anyone have any questions?"

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## Good Intentions

Unless the PCs urge Brakken to speak immediately after Nicodemus's speech, the first reply comes from Chancellor Takhenova. The large dwarf voices Drakr's support for the Obscurati, and talks about how she looks forward to a new future alongside them. She admits that she will be glad to rally her nation's military might to use against Risur.

Nicodemus seems pleased, smiling calmly.

Prime Cardinal Banderesso is the next to address the crowd, citing Crisillyr's current turmoil and the need for immediate order. The Cardinal states that he was worried that there was some plot against his religion; he found it suspicious, after all, that so many of his colleagues recanted their faith and killed themselves at the exact moment the Obscurati took power. However, he agrees the invasion plan for Risur should benefit the Clergy—and the Crisillyri people, he adds somewhat sheepishly. He is willing to direct his people to work with Obscurati, but he is concerned that not all of his nation will recognize the clear logic of this war.

He offers to contribute to the war effort if the Obscurati are willing to work with his nation in quelling the more rebellious elements of society, particularly the lower class.

Nicodemus seems slightly taken aback, but before he can reply, the Drakran chancellor voices her support. She already has agreements with other leaders in her nation to undertake grand industrial projects, but there were concerns that they would meet opposition from the working classes. She's sure the war effort against Risur would be more efficient if these dissidents could be...persuaded, rationally of course, to contribute.

Nicodemus interrupts and says that the Obscurati changed the world so that everyone could prosper. Yes, military production will need to increase, but people will be more enthusiastic to work the factories if they can share in the prosperity. Rather than maintaining existing power structures, he believes that the overall quality of life could be improved if those gathered here were willing to consider more unorthodox social structures.



A semi-humanoid being of the Gidim race, Sijhen belonged to an invasion force that was trapped for thousands of years by the Axis Seal. Obscurati meddling released it, and it eventually found a way back to its homeworld.

The Gidim can possess corporeal creatures, but in their natural forms they can waver between wholly physical and existing only as barely-visible thoughtforms. Normally they assume the appearance of gray-skinned bipeds with tentacled heads. They subsist on thoughts, not physical food, and their own sentience is dependent on consuming enough complex ideas as sustenance. Their homeworld is itself a thinking being, but the Gidim could only expand by keeping mortal races as slaves.

Sijhen was ancient compared to its people, and it was granted great power in thanks for the news it brought. The Gidim have watched the world for an opening, and when the Axis Seal was broken, they found easy ingress through the dead, stony plane of Ratios, which they stripped dry ages ago.

In this adventure Sijhen merely cameos, but it will be a significant antagonist in Adventure Eleven.



Lord Kulp from Nalaam asks if he means communal ownership and wealth redistribution.

Betronga of the eladrin scoffs and says of course not. He heard rumors about the Obscurati conspiracy, and they would kill those who got in their way. That's why he and the eladrin representatives came. He wanted to show that they were willing to change, and to help however they can to make life better for those willing to contribute.

Sagu Jacksdotter of Orithea agrees, and vigorously. She came because she hoped to get help with violent warbands who roam what were once the Malice Lands. It's too great an issue for Orithea to tackle on its own, but eladrin hunters and Drakran soldiers could make quick work of them, if they would contribute.

Chancellor Takhenova clenches her fist in support. Those who will not contribute will be destroyed, she says. They're ultimately just a net drag on society anyway. This new world only wants people who contribute.

Nicodemus clears his throat and calmly starts to admonish people that they're starting to sound like a hivemind. He is ignored. Vlendam Heid tries to speak up too, but is cut off.

A representative from a minor state asks if this is the sort of unorthodox social structure Nicodemus was suggesting. Nicodemus said to share the prosperity, and obviously some people don't have much prosperity to contribute.

Cardinal Banderesso agrees. Some people are just inferior. They're a net drag on society. We could easily remove them. This is a cause to which I could gladly contribute.

Contribute, murmur a dozen people in unison.

Nicodemus steps away, looking concerned, and he confers with his fellow Obscurati members. While the rest of the crowd continues to speak in synch, he shouts to Heid, Brakken, Kulp, and a few others who seem unaffected.

"We took precautions! There should not be a hivemind here. Can anyone see it forming? We need to destroy it!"

## Psychic Meddling

A hivemind is indeed forming, but its presence is being hidden by the psychic powers of a Gidim scout. The being has created a psychic blind spot in the minds of those present, and is masking the floating tendrils of the hivemind with an illusion. The former effect fools *true seeing* by making creatures simply not notice what they've seen, and the latter makes it so someone protected by magic like *mind blank*—who would be immune to the blind spot—still can't just easily see the hivemind. Normally only a creature with both effects active would notice the forming hivemind.

Brakken's own psychic talents give him a special perception unlike the other attendees, so grant each PC a Will save (DC 25). Those who succeed can make a Perception check (DC 28) to pierce through the blind spot and the illusion. Overhead they spot a swirling hivemind—a fleshy ball of tentacles pulsing with brilliant blue-white light as the fervor of the delegates begins to empower it.

## Evacuation

Brakken says with complete calm that he feels something taking control of his thoughts, and he is being compelled to contribute to the discussions. He'll only be able to carry out actions on behalf of the PCs for one round, after which he's paralyzed. Across the room, Heid falls to his knees and clutches his head. Lord Kulp struggles to cast a teleport spell, but he fumbles the words.

Nicodemus starts to back out of the room, shouting to his fellow Obscurati officers—who are protected from mental intrusion by Ob magic—to flee. But Eloise Duffet stands still, and even as Nicodemus shakes her she does not respond.

"You sons of bitches," Nicodemus says to the room. "I give you the chance to do something wonderful, but *this* is what unifies you? This is who you really are, ha? Am I the only one power hasn't corrupted? Let this madness take you! You're a cancer upon civilization, and I'll cut you out like I should have from the start."

At the urging of Lya Jierre's ghost, he leaves the room right as the hivemind begins to surge.

## Thoughtflesh Horror

Vicious white light flashes through the room, but Brakken doesn't even blink. The air itself seems to peel open like the petals of a flower at dawn. Tendrils appear throughout the hall, growing outward from random points and then connecting the people caught up in the hivemind. Each tendril is thick, fleshy, and segmented, like an arm at an elbow, but with a new joint every few feet. When they finally connect two people, their eyes begin to glow blue, and tiny arcs of energy stream up and down the tendrils connecting them.

As more and more connections form, the arcs and glowing eyes grow brighter, and the speech of the assembled delegates fades out into a thrum and drone that heaves across the room like waves. The web of skin and nerves begins to spread across each person in the hivemind, rooting them to the ground and leaving only their mouths and their glowing, catatonic eyes exposed. Guards begin to walk in from outside the chamber, and they too are consumed.

The open roof is covered by a spreading mass of thoughtflesh, and the entire building begins to heave upward. There is a sensation of swaying, lumbering steps, which shake the entire structure. Faintly in the distance, people begin to scream.

Otherwise, the chamber is still. Then, in the blue glow from arcing thoughts and the victims' eyes, a figure reveals itself, casting aside a psychic cloak that made it impossible to perceive. The creature—a blue-gray semi-humanoid with tentacles floating around its head and four slits of black eyes—steps into Brakken's field of vision.

A thought reaches into Brakken's mind:

*I can sense you there. The role-reversal—you in another body, trying to learn secrets so you can get back your world—it is a complex, ironic, and delicious thought. Whatever was done to this planet, it has made you so wonderfully vulnerable. You have seen a hivemind, but now you shall witness a Godmind. I urge you not to despair. The Gidim shall consume your world, but I will savor the challenge of defeating you.*

With that, the Gidim, whom the party should recognize as **Sijhen** from Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*, reaches his hand into Brakken's face. Brakken begins to spasm and a psychic pain begins to drive the party out of his mind. Before they are forced back into their bodies, though, they see Sijhen step away and vanish in a flash of blue-white light.

From their parked airship, they can just barely see, a few miles away, the top of the hill of the Danoran Congress. The entire building is moving, crawling along on massive tentacles that flicker with blue-white light. After a moment it disappears behind the hill, heading toward Cherage's poorer districts.

## GODMIND

### Action. Real-Time. Level 25.

*The murder philosophers have birthed a terrifying entity, a psychic singularity that draws in all conscious thought and assimilates all flesh.*

Unlike previous hiveminds the PCs have encountered, the Godmind has united several existing latent psychic gestalts. People of different nations and philosophies naturally look to their leaders, and so nearly all the attendees of the Forward Symposium were already stewing in psychic energies. Once Sijhen thwarted the Ob's defenses against hiveminds, the different gestalts rapidly collapsed into one of immense power. Now any weak-willed creature that sees the thoughtform flesh of the Godmind will be compelled to contribute to it, or to let it kill them if it deems them unworthy.

In order to defeat this threat, the PCs will need to destroy the psionic mass within, but that is being continually strengthened by the acquisition of new minds. To mitigate that the party can damage the Godmind's outer shell of flesh, which immobilizes it for a time. They might be able to do that from their airship, or could put the nearby Danoran artillery to use in attacking the creature. They can also influence the entity through their psychic link with Brakken, though they might be driven mad.

Of course, the party might simply decide it's not worth it to them to get involved. They could just fly away and let the Obscurati handle it.

### A Minotaur on the Inside

Brakken maintains his mental connection with the PCs. He is in constant pain because he's struggling to resist having his personality subsumed, and if any PCs attempt to share their senses with him, they feel this pain too, and must make a Will save (DC 20) each round or be shunted back to their own senses.

Brakken can sense the general thoughts and goals of the Godmind and can relay them to the PCs. This primarily translates to Brakken giving PCs updates on the hourly mark as to how the Godmind proceeds. After eight hours, he loses his battle with the entity, and his mind is destroyed.

Until then, though, he can let the party know if their attacks are affecting the monstrosity. In addition, he thinks he might be able to let them enter into mindscape—a psychically-created mental construct where they could engage in a metaphorical battle with the Godmind, to weaken it from the inside. However, it would need to be distracted from outside first, or else the psychic pain would make it difficult for the PCs to stay in the mindscape for long.

### The Godmind's Weakness

When the party is about to launch any sort of attack on the Godmind, Brakken telepathically explains that he's figured out why the Godmind is so strong. Each person here is head of a latent hivemind formed from all the people who see that individual as a leader. If those people could be killed in the real world, it would weaken the Godmind, but just as effective would be finding a way to remove someone from the gestalt in the mindscape.

How? Brakken suggests that someone come into the mindscape and debate with the members who make up the Godmind, while the rest of the party deals with the monster in the physical world. Influencing the attendees' opinions could actually affect the outside body. He just warns them to not mention him, because he's busy hiding from the Godmind, and if it realizes he's not 'contributing,' it might kill him.

### Spreading Like Insane Ivy

Unless stopped, the Godmind proceeds in methodically overtaking the people of Cherage. Most citizens stand in awe at the creature as it looms over them, or they actively approach it. A few strong-willed individuals manage to recognize the danger and flee.

The central body of the creature is a hundred foot high mass of flesh and stone that surrounds the Congressional Hall, with tiny bits of the metal dome visible at its "head." The entity crawls along on massive tentacles, but it doesn't so much move its limbs as grow its tentacles outward and then pull the body along. Tendrils spread out in every direction that they sense conscious thought, and they gradually encircle the Danoran capital to cut off escape.

These fleshy vines twitch and occasionally blossom with black flower-like petals. Those petals can fire beams that disintegrate nearby creatures, though it only targets those it deems unworthy.

**Hour 1:** The roots of the Godmind spread through the district surrounding the Congressional Hall. Hundreds of Danorans are joined into the growing hivemind, struck immobile by psionic tendrils. Due to the noble demographics of the district, most people are spared upon their joining with the Godmind, though a handful of invalids and less common servants are slowly burnt to ash by the black flowers.

**Hours 2-3:** The roots grow around the borders of Cherage, spreading through the hillsides and sparing the more populous areas below. The added influx of nobility and highborn minds increases the criteria for acceptance, and disintegrations among those touched becomes far more common. Thousands die, and black ash of those bodies begins to float across the city. Following these two hours escape becomes impossible for the people in the city proper, with only the boats on the docks providing any sort of refuge from the growing mass of psychic energy.



**Hours 4-5:** Spreading into the city of Cherage, the roots of the Godmind move through the lower class districts. The massed belief of the noble class deems them unworthy, and hundreds of thousands are disintegrated. Its final act before turning northward is to knock over an orphanage and kill the children inside.

**Hours 6-8:** Having consumed the city proper, the Godmind heads north to the industrial district. Luckily by now most people have been evacuated, but anyone left behind is consumed.

**Hour 8+:** After its first eight hours of existence, the Godmind fully overruns the city of Cherage and the surrounding hills. Less than a tenth of the populace manages to flee. Luckily, the lower volume of people outside the city limits inhibits the Godmind's growth, and it will take days to reach the next major inhabitable city to the west.

## Breaking the Shell

On their airship just outside of Cherage, the PCs should be able to reach the city within the first half hour. From their aerial vantage, the PCs can assess the situation, but if they come any closer than a thousand feet they start to feel a tug to contribute to the Godmind's mass. While the PCs can readily resist this, the ship's crew won't hold out for long.

The party can probably pilot their airship with a skeleton crew, or they might come up with a way to protect the minds of their crew. *Magic circle* spells work, and a stirring speech might bolster them enough to resist for a couple minutes, enough time to strafe and get to a safe distance.

Mechanically, the Godmind does not have a statblock. It's the size of a small mountain, and the shell of flesh is too massive and amorphous for normal attacks to kill the Godmind. Damaging it requires narrative solutions, not high attack bonuses.

## Godmind Counterattacks

The Godmind is lumbering and slow, but it does not rely on physical might to defend itself. It can affect creatures that come within 800 feet with *mass suggestion* (DC 28), typically compelling them to approach and either be consumed by tendrils or annihilated by the disintegrating blooms.

Against creatures within 250 feet, it can sprout a fleshy black blossom and fire one *disintegrate* each round, with a +20 attack bonus, caster level 25<sup>th</sup>. The blossom only has 50 hit points and AC 20, and once it is destroyed it takes a minute for the Godmind to grow a new one.

Against creatures that come within 100 feet, it can swing a massive tentacle, equivalent to a naval attack of +30, or a normal attack with a +50 bonus that does 100 damage, and can target everything in a huge sweeping arc.

Finally, since the Godmind controls Cardinal Banderesso, it was able to command the planetar Adimel he summoned to approach, at which point it was dominated. The angel struggles against the domination of the Godmind, and if the party can free it, it will serve them. It recognizes the flawed morality of its summoner, but still must protect him.

## Aerial Bombardment

If the party's airship was retrofitted from the R.N.S. *Coal tongue*, its brand has sufficient power to blast a hole in the shell. Otherwise, a normal broadside of cannons is equivalent to a single battery of artillery — enough to distract the monster, but not open its skin.

However, when the ship comes into range, the Godmind targets the ship with *disintegrate* in an attempt to disable its flight support. If the party hasn't prepared countermeasures, the ship begins to spiral out of

control. PCs acting as engineer and pilot can keep it aloft long enough for it to land safely, but then the Godmind will slowly advance. Perhaps the ship crashes amid tendrils, and while they rush to repair the levitationals, the party must kill disintegration flowers that keep sprouting up.

The party could ram the Godmind, but it would cripple the ship and likely doom the crew. They might also pick up munitions from barracks and the artillery batteries, and then bomb the Godmind.

## Artillery

Some PCs may realize the potential of using the Danoran artillery batteries on the islands in the bay. The Danorans assume the party is hostile and fight to defend the installation, possibly even firing at the party's ship if they stand still long enough. Getting the artillery's aid requires subduing the defenders (equivalent of a Danoran Frigate Crew, page 76), then finding the commander and convincing him to go along with the plan (Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 30) to turn their weapons on their own city.

If the party just kills everyone, it takes them half an hour to set up the battery to fire. If they don't kill the defenders, the crew can be ready to fire in ten minutes, and the commander will be willing to talk to the other battery commanders, to avoid more combat. At least three of the four batteries must be trained on the Godmind for its outer shell to break, though a single battery is enough to distract the entity enough for a mindscape attack.

## Boarding Action

The party could land and hack through the skin over the dome, spending a minute or so creating a big enough hole for the party to squirm through. Each round the skin on the surface pulses with blue-white energy, and PCs must make a Will save (DC 25) or be teleported somewhere that the Godmind has tendrils; basically this scatters the party around Cherage. They'll need something like *dimensional lock* to keep from being driven away, or else they'll have to succeed Escape Artist checks (DC 30) to squeeze through without being touched by the writhing tendrils around the hole.

It might seem like the most direct approach is to teleport into its brain and start cutting up 'neurons' (i.e., the symposium attendees). But like with a boarding action, creatures that try to teleport inside must succeed a Will save (DC 25) or be redirected to somewhere else the Godmind's flesh reaches.

## Clash of the Titans

What do you get when a PC uses *teleportation circle* to bring in one of the fey titans, who might have agreed to defend Risur? You get an amazing battle between colossal monsters. This certainly counts as a distraction so the party can engage the Godmind in the mindscape, and if they lend some aerial aid to the battle their titan ally can tear a hole in the Godmind's face so the party can physically attack its 'brain.'

## Mindscape Debate

If the party distracts the Godmind with heavy damage — airship broadside, artillery bombardment, etc. — Brakken alerts them that there's an opening for them to confront the gestalt in charge of the creature.

Any PC who shares Brakken's senses for the next minute appears in a shimmering version of the Congressional Hall, except that the walls have become windows that look out upon the devastation the Godmind

is wreaking. Psychic constructs of the major attendees are present, while the other attendees' faces press out of the walls and floors.

Initially, all the attendees are immobile and do not notice the PCs, but if a minute passes without the Godmind being distracted, it does a sort of 'mental security sweep.' Each PC sharing Brakken's senses must succeed a Stealth check (DC 20) each round to hide as the attendees lazily look around the mindscape for intruders. If a PC is spotted in this way, the Godmind assaults him with psychic pain, forcing him to make a Will save (DC 25) each round or be expelled from the mindscape.

Should the PCs try fighting in the mindscape, this demiplane is just a mental construct, so no injuries suffered here carry over to the real world. However, psychic effects function, and within the odd logic of the mindscape other magic can be effective. *Invisibility*, for instance, can hide one's presence, even though the Godmind isn't using real eyes to see you.

### Influencing the Mind

Some options include:

- ♦ **Rescue.** Cast *invisibility* on an attendee, then *restoration* to restore Wisdom damage done to them, and *protection from evil* so they won't be affected again. This frees their minds to act in the mindscape (perhaps aiding the PC in any other debate tactics), though their bodies will still be physically trapped by fleshy tendrils in reality.
- ♦ **Defame.** Argue that a particular member of the symposium is unworthy, perhaps by bringing up economic comparisons of their nation's contributions versus other nations (Knowledge [history or local] DC 20 and then Diplomacy DC 30). At your discretion, a successful argument could cause the Godmind to disintegrate one of the minds making up its gestalt, which removes one of the mindscape ectoplasmids from the Inside the Brain battle.
- ♦ **Impeach.** Untether a particular member of the symposium from his followers. This requires convincing the person that he is unfit to lead the group, or that the group is unworthy to follow him. This requires forming a rapport with the person (Sense Motive DC 25), then either a challenging deconstruction of the person's identity (Diplomacy DC 40) or a severe personal attack (Intimidate DC 40). Success here removes one of the mindscape ectoplasmids from the Inside the Brain battle, but does not kill the affiliated attendee.
- ♦ **Reframe.** Reframe the debate, in an attempt to turn the goal of the Godmind away from economic efficiency and instead toward moral magnanimity. This is difficult, and first requires showing oneself as an equal in the Godmind's eyes (Knowledge [local or nobility] DC 25 and Sense Motive DC 25 to know what to discuss, then Diplomacy DC 30 to form an intellectual rapport). Next the PC has to make a compelling morality argument (Knowledge [religion] DC 25 and Diplomacy DC 30). While this isn't enough to defeat the Godmind, it gets it arguing amongst itself for a few minutes, enough time perhaps for the PCs to get into its brain.

For any of these options, a Bluff check can stand in for a Knowledge check, but increase the DC by 10 in order to spout sufficiently convincing academic babble.

### Inside the Brain

Once the PCs manage to find a way inside the Congressional Hall, they discover over a hundred people trapped inside knotty thoughtflesh that pulses with arcs of energy. The only real clear space is up near the speaking dais, since most of the Ob officers who were up there managed to avoid being trapped. Otherwise it's a thick tangle of trunk-like tendrils with only narrow paths between them.

Sixty feet up near the roof and relatively hidden are two of the black disintegration 'flowers' (Perception DC 34). They remain coiled up, but will blossom and begin attacking if the party takes any hostile actions.

The eyes of the trapped attendees glow. Three of those attendees in particular—Dmitra Takhenova, Tito Banderesso, and Eloise Duffet—have enough sway over the gestalt that they have manifested ectoplasmic bodies that defend the brain of the Godmind. These resemble the original people, but are white-green slime.

### Mindscape Core

- ♦ 3 Mindscape Ectoplasmids
- ♦ 2 Black Blossoms

#### Mindscape Ectoplasmid

CR 17

XP 102,400

LE Medium ooze

**Init** +7; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft.; Perception +25

#### Defense

**AC** 32, touch 32, flat-footed 28 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +28 profane)

**hp** 270 (20d8+180); **regeneration** 10 (chaotic spells, chaotic weapons)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, DR 15/—; **Immune** acid, bludgeoning damage, electricity, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits, piercing damage; **Resist** cold 30

#### Offense

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

**Melee** slam +20 (6d6+7 plus 1d3 Wis drain)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17<sup>th</sup>; concentration +22)

At will—*charm person* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *telekinesis* (DC 20)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *quicken charm person* (DC 18), *mind fog* (DC 20)

#### Statistics

**Str** 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** 26, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 34 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Ability Focus (charm person), Dodge, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (charm person), Spring Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +3, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana, history, religion) +25, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +25

**Languages** Celestial, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Primordial; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** compression, corrupt ally, no breath

#### Special Abilities

**Corrupt Ally (Su)** Any creature charmed by the mindscape ectoplasmid takes 1 points of Wisdom damage per round. When a charmed creature's Wisdom damage equals its Wisdom score, it becomes completely subservient to the Godmind (as *dominate monster*, except it even obeys self-destructive orders) and loses the Wisdom damage it has taken from this ability. Killing the ectoplasmid frees the creature.



**Black Blossom**

CR 10

CN Large aberration

**Init** +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft.; Perception +25**Defense****AC** 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (-1 size, +11 natural)**hp** 50**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +12**Offense****Speed** 0 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 25<sup>th</sup>; concentration +30)At will—*disintegrate* (DC 21)**Special Abilities**

**Concealed Thoughtflesh (Ex)** Due to the sheer amount of fleshy matter around the Godmind, it's challenging to spot the black blossom until it unfurls, revealing the dark insides of its 'petals.'

**Regenerate (Su)** One minute after a black blossom is destroyed, the Godmind grows another one.

**Terrain**

The Congressional Hall is a roughly two-hundred foot diameter room in a much larger building, with a southern dais and a horseshoe of seating on three levels, each five feet above the next. Dozens of fleshy trunks grow up from the ground where symposium attendees were trapped, and aside from the dais there's not more than ten feet of open space in any given area.

One section near the north wall of the hall has enough tendrils to effectively form a cage that traps any creature larger than Tiny. The tendrils are easy to strike and it takes 50 hit points of damage to clear an opening.

Many of the thoughtflesh trunks leave narrow gaps that function as difficult terrain and require an Escape Artist check (DC 15) to weave through without touching either trunk. If a creature touches one of the trunks – either from failing this check or being forced into it – it must succeed a Will save (DC 20) or be teleported to any location in the hall. Typically it will send creatures to the 'cage.'

**Tactics**

The three ectoplasmids pursue the PCs through the tendril forest. One starts by creating *mind fog*, and the others close in to attack. They use spring attack if possible to strike and slip away; as oozes, they don't have to slow down to squeeze through the forest. Each round they also sling *quicken charm persons* to try to make some enemies stop fighting so they can focus on the others.

Their regeneration might make them unkillable, but if the PCs either kill or free the people whom the ectoplasmids are based on, the oozes lose their regeneration.

Meanwhile, the black blossoms fire *disintegrates* each round, though they're easy to destroy.

**Free Your Mind**

The hundred or so people trapped here can be freed if the tendrils holding them are destroyed (about 50 damage frees one victim), though most of them are comatose from extreme Wisdom damage. Area attacks can take out many at once, but will kill the people inside.

If the party simply kills the three ectoplasmids, they basically have free reign of the brain to cut it to pieces. But if the fight is ongoing, once thirty people are killed or freed, the Godmind's outer body stops moving and begins to shake in agony. The tendrils' pulsing turns from blue to red, and the entire Congressional Hall topples sideways, upending the battle and forcing creatures to climb or fly through a web of tendrils. From now on, creatures who touch a tendril are not teleported, but instead are targeted with *greater dispel magic* (caster level 25<sup>th</sup>).

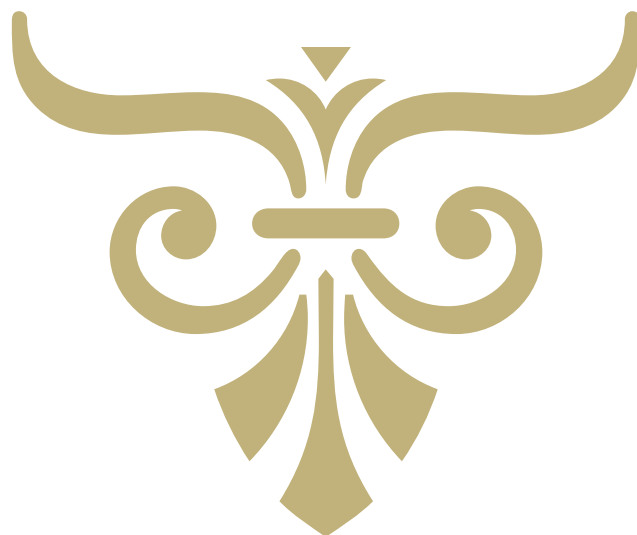
Once either all the ectoplasmids are destroyed or at least sixty of the victims are freed or killed, the Godmind gives out a psychic whimper, and its entire thoughtflesh mass begins to dissolve. Over the next minute the Congressional Hall tumbles to the ground, but the building survives with enough integrity that the people inside can be rescued with time.

Around the city, every person who was trapped by the Godmind knows that it was the party who saved them. Though wary of forming a new hivemind, the population begins to surge toward them to thank them for saving the city, and an impromptu parade is arranged if the PCs will have it.

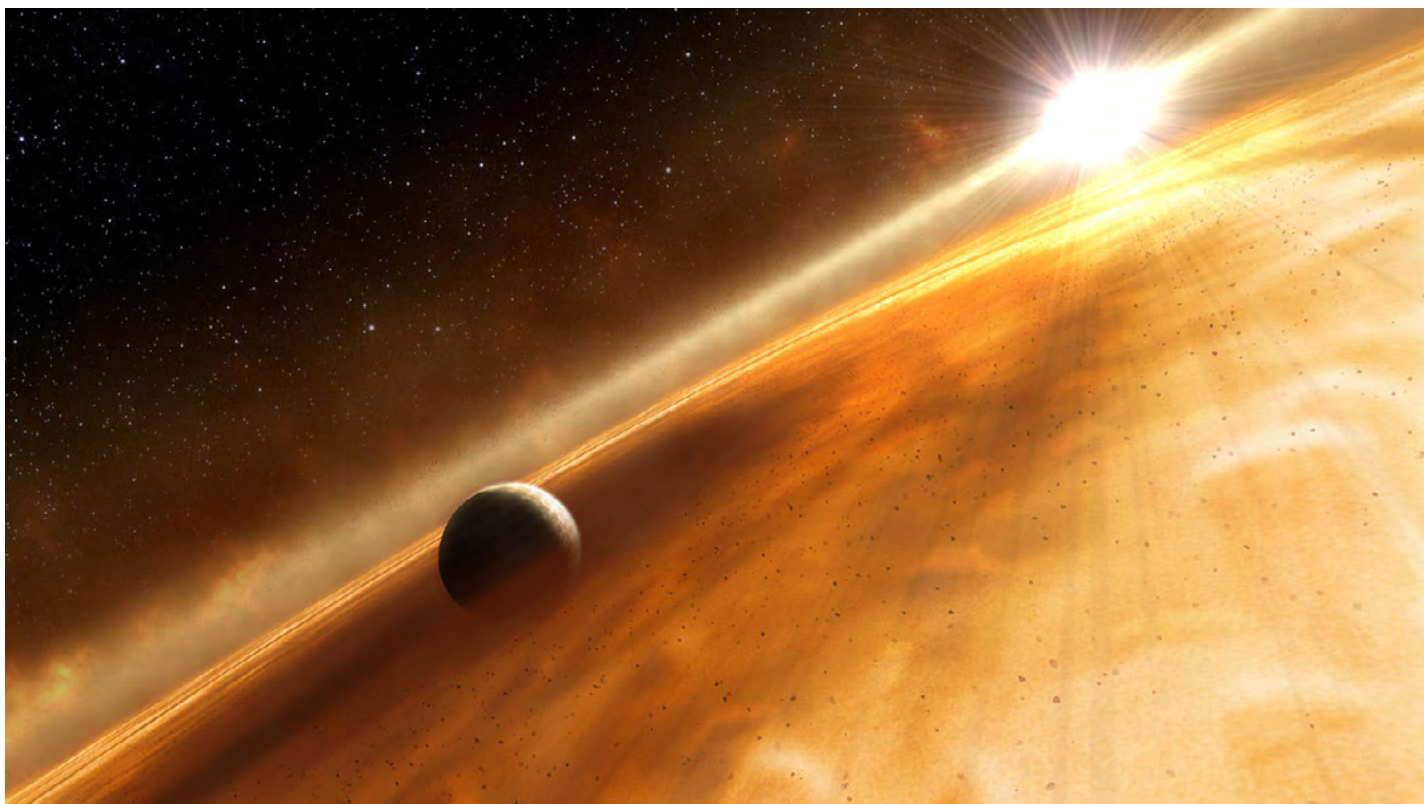
**Aftermath**

Well, the PCs have stopped the Godmind from consuming the world. Nicodemus and the Ob—who abandoned the city at its hour of need—will try to paint the Godmind as a result of the party's meddling. But the survivors of Cherage will actually speak out in favor of the PCs' heroism, and will slow Danor's march to war against Risur.

Still, Drakr, Crisillyir, Ber, and the other nations will be steered toward war by Nicodemus. And as the party has just seen, there are threats from other planes threatening this world. Things aren't as bleak as they might have seemed when the sun and stars vanished, but the victory is not won yet.



# APPENDIX ONE: REALITY SHIFT



In Adventure Seven, *Schism*, the Obscurati voted on how they wanted to design the new world. Though Nicodemus deemed the actual vote to be illegitimate since spies cast ballots, the ultimate decision closely resembled the MAP proposal—a combination of Miller’s Pyre, Panarchists, and the Arboretum, with a token effort to appease the Sky League by including flight.

## New Solar System

Planes that exist following the Great Eclipse are:

- ♦ **Av.** The plane of life now turned to the plane of death, still with a Dreams and Mirrors aspect, drifting far from the sun, nearly unseen.
- ♦ **Baden.** Small spectral moon around Fourmyle with a Flight aspect. It is a ghost moon, as if it was once dead. Skyseers sense energy on it that is sympathetic to the Gyre itself.
- ♦ **Fourmyle.** Plane of space with an Empowerment aspect. Allows you to teleport wherever you can see, or where a place is your ‘domain.’ This plane is filled with craters of warm air, habitability scattered across a desolate surface.
- ♦ **Illocus.** Plane of time with an Expression aspect. Arguments build and cascade, since people do not revert to their normal status quickly. This plane burns with fire in a ring around Fourmyle.
- ♦ **Jiese.** Original plane of fire with a Cunning aspect. Unchanged from the previous plane with the same name.
- ♦ **Mojang.** Unlikely plane of life with Craft and Artifice aspects, which has a faintly purple surface. The terrain on this world is wildly varied, though only a handful of animals exist—such as yellow frogs—that exist seemingly independent of an ecosystem.
- ♦ **Ostea.** A bloody plane of water with a Healing aspect. People heal faster, but blood empowers magic in unusual ways.
- ♦ **Perlocus.** Plane of air with a heavy Speech aspect. Words will carry more weight to sway people’s opinions. This plane is surreal; when you say something it has a physical influence.
- ♦ **Ratios.** Plane of earth with a Logic aspect, leading people to use reason in their arguments. The planet is bland and static rock, though strange whispers can be heard from nowhere.

There is no sun. The planets orbit a nexus, but the sun is missing. Instead, dim light is granted by a cloud of stars that seem to be pulled into the Gyre. Skyseers sense that the world is slowly drawing closer to the Gyre, and predict within a year or two the world will be pulled in.



## MECHANICS OF A BROKEN AGE

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual.

- ♦ **Applied Astronomy:** Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed below.
- ♦ **Black Hole Sun:** Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

- ♦ **Blood of Ostea:** All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

- ♦ **Death is Death:** Slain deva no longer reincarnate.
- ♦ **Flight of the Fey:** Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.
- ♦ **Magic Mishaps:** At least initially after the Great Eclipse, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1<sup>st</sup> level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

- ♦ **Reign of the Rational:** All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a -5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

- ♦ **Impossibly Distant:** Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

- ♦ **Teleportation and Communication.** Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

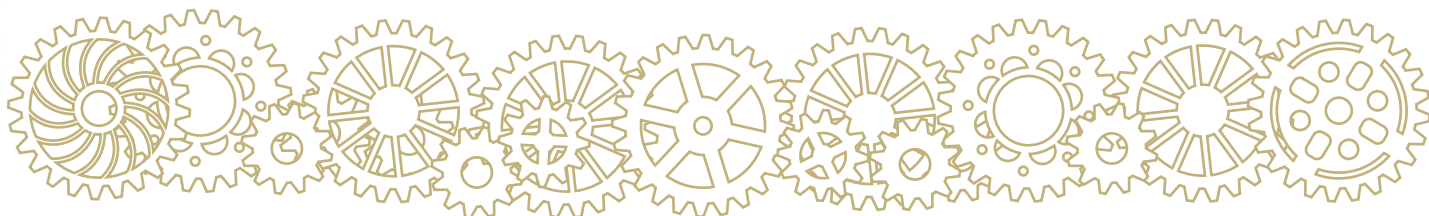
What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

- ♦ **Fourmyle Jaunting.** Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

- ♦ **Three Miles is so Last Age:** Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.
- ♦ **Wings of Liberty:** Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.



## Applied Astronomist Prestige Class

The new stars grant new powers, since each world heralds a different fate.

**Touching the Wheel of Heaven (Su)** You can connect to the new planes, but most of the old ones are no longer accessible.

### Table: Planar Connections

1d8:

1. **Jiese**, plane of fire.
2. **Perlocus**, plane of air.
3. **Mojang**, plane of life.
4. **Ostea**, plane of water.
5. **Ratios**, plane of earth.
6. **Fourmyle**, the plane of space.
7. **Illocus**, plane of time and Baden, the ghost moon.
8. **Av**, plane of death.

**Heavenly Flare (Su)** The effects of the new planes for this ability change.

Plane	Additional Effect
<b>Jiese</b> , plane of fire	2d6 fire damage per round for 1d4 rounds.
<b>Perlocus</b> , plane of air	The target is affected by a suggestion you say for the next 1d4 rounds. (This requires a Will save instead of a Fortitude save.)
<b>Mojang</b> , plane of life	The target cannot heal for 1d4 rounds, and the damage from this attack does not respond to magical healing. Instead, a Craft (any) check functions as a heal check.
<b>Ostea</b> , plane of water	If the target has blood, you can distribute an amount of healing equal to the amount of damage you did among other creatures who have blood (including yourself) within 50 feet of you.
<b>Ratios</b> , plane of earth	The target is stunned for one round, during which time it must briefly answer the first question posed to it.
<b>Fourmyle</b> , plane of space	Teleport the target up to 30 ft.
<b>Reida</b> , plane of time and <b>Baden</b> , the ghost moon	The target has a fly speed of 60 for 1d4 rounds, but at the start of each of those turns it takes damage equal to however much damage it took the previous round.
<b>Av</b> , plane of death	2d6 negative energy damage and the target is confused until the end of its next turn.

**Space Travel (Su)** The movement modes are relatively unchanged.

Plane	Movement Option
<b>Jiese</b> , plane of fire	She can take a second 5-foot-step each round as a swift action.
<b>Perlocus</b> , plane of air	She gains a fly speed equal to her base land speed, with good maneuverability.
<b>Mojang</b> , plane of life	She gains a burrow speed equal to half her base land speed.
<b>Ostea</b> , plane of water	She gains a swim speed equal to her base land speed.
<b>Ratios</b> , plane of earth	No new movement mode, but she can treat any creature she can see that is flying as if it were adjacent.
<b>Fourmyle</b> , plane of space	She can teleport 30 feet as a move action.
<b>Reida</b> , plane of time and <b>Baden</b> , the ghost moon	+10 foot enhancement bonus to base land speed. If she runs, she can pass through 5 feet of solid material as if she were a ghost.
<b>Av</b> , plane of death	She hovers slightly above the ground and seems to pass through small obstacles, allowing her to ignore difficult terrain.

**Cataclysmic Conjunction (Su)** The manifested planes' abilities are:

Plane	Area Effect
<b>Jiese</b> , plane of fire	As a swift action, the astronomist can create an object composed of solid firegem, of any rough shape, up to 15 feet across in any unoccupied space in the area. The object is as durable as wood, but vanishes when the effect ends.
<b>Perlocus</b> , plane of air	Creatures in the area are affected by charm monster.
<b>Mojang</b> , plane of life	Objects lose hardness and creatures lose DR.
<b>Ostea</b> , plane of water	Area fills with blood to the depth of astronomist's choice, either calm (Swim DC 10) or choppy (DC 20).
<b>Ratios</b> , plane of earth	Creatures in the area roll 1d10+5 in place of 1d20, and any emotion-based effects end.
<b>Fourmyle</b> , plane of space	Astronomist becomes master of the area, and can prevent creatures from entering and/or exiting. As a swift action she can teleport any creature in the area to the edge of it.
<b>Reida</b> , plane of time and <b>Baden</b> , the ghost moon	Creatures in the area gain a bonus standard action each round, but they can only use it to perform one of the standard actions they performed the previous round.
<b>Av</b> , plane of death	Enemies in the area take a -2 penalty to their Fortitude and Reflex saves and AC. Allies gain a +2 bonus to theirs.



# APPENDIX TWO:

## FEY TITANS

Herein are the stats of the fey titans, their minions, and Asrabey Varal.



### Titan Traits

All fey titans have the following abilities, unless otherwise noted.

**Ferocity (Ex)** The fey titan remains conscious and fighting even when below 0 hp. It is staggered, loses 1 hit point each round, and still dies when it reaches negative hp equal to its Constitution score.

**Fey Link (Su)** A fey titan exists simultaneously in the real world and the Dreaming, and can see and affect both worlds. It is vaguely aware of any large-scale actions occurring within an area it deems its native terrain (generally, this is forests, mountains, swamps, plains, or seas); it could sense a massive mining operation, but not a handful of burrowing creatures.

When in its native terrain it can transport creatures it can see between the real world and the Dreaming, as per *plane shift* (at-will, caster level 20<sup>th</sup>). It can only affect unwilling creatures if those creatures have contested its authority and been defeated.

When a fey titan is killed, its animating spirit dissipates into its native terrain, and in the following years new creatures will be empowered by that energy. It might take centuries, but eventually one creature will defeat all contenders and consume their energy, becoming the new fey titan of that area.

**Hurl Foe (Ex)** When a fey titan damages a Huge or smaller foe with one of its natural attacks, it can try to hurl the foe as part of that attack by attempting a combat maneuver check. On a successful check, the foe is knocked back 10 feet in a direction of the titan's choice and falls prone. The distance the foe is hurled increases by 10 feet for every 5 points by which the titan's check exceeds the foe's CMD. If an obstacle stops the hurled creature before it travels the whole distance, the hurled foe and the obstacle struck each take 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet of distance remaining and the foe is knocked prone in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

**Titanic (Ex)** Because fey titan are so massive, uneven ground and other features that form difficult terrain generally pose no significant hindrance to their movement, though areas of forest or settlements are considered difficult terrain. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by a fey titan, or vice-versa. A fey titan can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. A fey titan gains a bonus for being on higher ground only if its entire space is on higher ground than that of its target. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb a fey titan—this generally requires a successful DC 30 check, and unlike the normal rules about fey titan and attacks of opportunity, a Small or larger creature that climbs on a fey titan's body provokes an attack of opportunity from the monster.

**Recovery (Ex)** Whenever a fey titan fails a saving throw against any mind-affecting, paralysis, petrification, polymorph, or immobilizing effect (including binding and temporal stasis but not including imprisonment), it can attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn to remove the effect. Doing so takes no action. A fey titan can attempt a new save to end the effect as often as it wishes, but can attempt to remove only one such effect per round. Once per year, if a fey titan takes an amount of damage that would normally kill it by reducing its hit points to a negative amount equal to its Constitution score, the damage instead heals the fey titan of twice the amount of damage—but this healing leaves the fey titan disoriented and demoralized. At this point, the creature becomes nauseated and seeks only to return to its lair. Any amount of damage dealt to it by an external source before it reaches its lair, though, immediately negates the nauseated effect and allows the fey titan to end its retreat and attack.

### EPIC DAMAGE REDUCTION

As a reminder, per the *Mythic Adventures* rules, any magic weapon whose total bonus is +6 or higher can bypass DR -/epic. So a +5 flaming sword, a +3 dancing scimitar, or a +1 ghost touch holy keen shock bohemian earspoon could hurt a fey titan. Mostly, such DR is just an excuse for why you can't have a thousand peasants kill a titan with slings.



### The Ash Wolf

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

**Init** +18; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., *true seeing*, scent; Perception +38

#### Defense

**AC** 44, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+14 Dex, +1 dodge, +27 natural, –8 size);  
+4 vs. opportunity attacks

**hp** 413 (25d8+300); fast healing 30

**Fort** +26, **Ref** +28, **Will** +20

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** fire 50, acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

#### Offense

**Speed** 100 ft.

**Melee** bite +36 (6d12+40/17-20 plus grab or trip)

**Space** 60 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** carry off, critical hits, hurl foe, hurl tree

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +35)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *pass without trace*, *true seeing*

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *pyrotechnics*, *transmute metal to wood*

3/day—*commune with nature*

1/day—*fire storm* (DC 27)

#### Statistics

**Str** 48, **Dex** 38, **Con** 34, **Int** 15, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 24

**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +52 (+56 grab); **CMD** 76 (80 vs. trip)

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dismembering Critical,\* Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack

\*Yeah, we made that one up

**Skills** Acrobatics +14 (+42 to jump), Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +38, Perform (sing) +32, Stealth +29

**Languages** Primordial

**SQ** fey link, pack bond, smoky mate, titanic

#### Special Abilities

**Carry Off (Ex)** Due to his immense size and incredible speed, the Ash Wolf's preferred tactic is to dash out from the smoke of a forest fire, bite and grab a foe, then sprint away to separate his victim from his allies. To accomplish this, the Ash Wolf uses *hunting surge*, then spring attacks in, jumps over the party, makes a bite attack (typically against an unarmored foe), and takes a –20 penalty to his combat maneuver check to grapple the target. If he succeeds, he does not gain the grappled condition himself and can carry the creature off

**Critical Hits (Ex)** Due to his critical feats, when the Father of Thunder confirms a critical hit with his bite, he inflicts 2d6 bleed damage, and the target must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 35) or lose a limb. He has a +4 bonus on all critical confirmation rolls.

**Hunting Surge (Su)** As a swift action, the Ash Wolf releases a howl that focuses his predatory might. Until the end of his turn he gains a +200 bonus to his speed (granting him a total of +122 to jump checks, so he can easily clear 30 vertical feet). He cannot use this power again on his next turn.

**Hurl Tree (Ex)** If the Ash Wolf attacks a tree (or other massive object) it can uproot it and hurl it up to 400 feet. The area affected varies slightly based on the projectile, but creatures in a roughly 40-ft. radius take 20d6 damage (Reflex DC 30 half). The hurled object likely knocks down a swath of other trees in its path, and at the GM's discretion creatures in a 40-ft. wide line out to the destination take 5d6 damage (Reflex DC 24 half).

**Pack Bond (Su)** If the Ash Wolf is within a mile of his children, he can sense through them and share some of his prowess. At any given time he can bestow this power to

up to four smoldering wolves. They gain a +10 sacred bonus to AC and attack rolls, as well as their father's DR, resistances, and immunities, but when any damage dealt to them an equal amount of damage is dealt to the Ash Wolf.

As a free action once per round he can switch which four wolves he empowers in this way; typically when one of his empowered children is reduced below 50 hit points, he has that child withdraw from battle and grants his power to another.

**Smoky Mate (Su)** When first reduced below 207 hit points, the Ash Wolf's desperation calls forth the spirit of his long-dead mate, who emerges from the forest fire somewhere within 100 feet. Her body resembles a similarly-titanic wolf composed of ash and smoke.

She starts with 207 hit points, and has the same stats as the Ash Wolf, except she has a fly speed of 80 (perfect) and is incorporeal. Her natural armor bonus is +0, but she has a +7 deflection bonus, making her AC 24. As is normal with incorporeal creatures, she is immune to nonmagical damage and takes half damage from magical attacks. Force attacks affect her normally, and due to her nature so do cold attacks.

The smoky titan's attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields. She cannot grapple or trip her foes.

### Smoldering Wolf

CR 12

XP 19,200

N Large magical beast (fire)

**Init** +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., keen scent, low-light vision; Perception +11

**Aura** choking smoke (10 ft., DC 23)

#### Defense

**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –1 size)

**hp** 168 (16d10+80);

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +6

**Immune** fire

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

#### Offense

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +23 (2d8+12/19–20 plus burn and trip)

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

**Special Attacks** burn (2d10 fire, DC 23)

#### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 26, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 44 (48 vs. trip)

**Feats** Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Wind Stance

**Skills** Perception +11, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +20, Survival +5

**Languages** Common, Primordial

**SQ** pack hunter, raging burster

#### Special Abilities

**Choking Aura (Su)** A smoldering wolf is surrounded by an aura of smoke that clings near its body. This haze grants the smoldering wolf 20% concealment, or a +20% bonus on other forms of concealment. All other creatures within 10 feet make a DC 23 Fortitude save at the beginning of their turn or be sickened.

**Pack Hunter(Ex)** A smoldering wolf can always use the aid another action in combat as a free action when aiding another wolf engaged with the same target.

**Raging Burster (Su)** When reduced below half its starting hp (84 hp or less), the smoldering wolf erupts in a blast of fire. Every creature within 15 feet of the smoldering wolf takes 8d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 23 for half). After this, the smoldering wolf gains the benefit of the *haste* spell and its burn damage increases to 3d8. These effects last until the smoldering wolf is slain or an hour passes, at which point it returns to normal until it next suffers damage.



**The Father of Thunder**

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +44**Aura** stormy presence (1200 ft., DC 30)**Defense****AC** 43, touch 1, flat-footed 36 (-1 Dex, +44 natural, -8 size)**hp** 563 (25d8+450); fast healing 30**Fort** +32, **Ref** +13, **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** electricity 50, acid 30, cold 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30**Weakness** susceptible to booze**Offense****Speed** 150 ft.**Melee** gore +36 (6d12+27/19-20/x3), 2 stomps +36 (2d12+19/19-20 plus trip)**Space** 60 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** critical hits, herd crush, hurl foe, tromping attack, toppled quake**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +40)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *true seeing*At will—*bestow curse* (DC 28), *greater shout* (DC 33), *plant growth*3/day—*commune with nature*1/day—*heroes' feast***Statistics****Str** 48, **Dex** 8, **Con** 46, **Int** 10, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 40**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +52 (+56 bull rush); **CMD** 61 (63 vs. bull rush, 65 vs. trip)**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Critical Mastery, Improved Critical (gore), Improved Critical (stomp), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (gore), Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical**Skills** Acrobatics -1 (+47 to jump), Intimidate +40, Perception +44**Languages** Primordial**SQ** fey link, titanic**Special Abilities****Critical Hits (Ex)** Due to his critical feats, when the Father of Thunder confirms a critical hit with his gore, he stuns the target for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 35 reduces the effect to staggered) and inflicts 2d6 bleed damage. When he confirms a critical hit with a stomp, he only stuns, and doesn't inflict bleed. He has a +4 bonus on all critical confirmation rolls.**Herd Crush (Ex)** A herd encircles the Father of Thunder in a quarter-mile radius. When the herd is in motion, any hostile creature the fey titan is aware of within the herd must succeed a Reflex save (DC 24) at the start of its turn or else take 10 damage from the crush of animals. Herd animals such as horses are not in danger of this crush.

A creature unable to keep up with the herd (such as if he's dismounted or his steed is knocked prone) must instead make a Reflex save (DC 30) or else take 40 damage from being trampled. (It typically takes 4 rounds of trampling for the herd to move past an immobile creature.)

Note that in this encounter, the Great Hunt's assistance grants the PCs each a +10 bonus to these saves.

**Stormy Presence (Su)** Lightning constantly strikes in a 1200-ft. radius around the Father of Thunder. Normally it lands harmlessly, but when a creature angers the fey titan the lightning expresses his displeasure. As an immediate action when a creature in the area targets him with a spell that affects his mind or grants a Will save, or when a creature tries to engage him in conversation, the Father of Thunder can cause a bolt of lightning to fall from the sky (as a maximized *call lightning storm*) and strike that creature. He cannot target any creatures that are directly underneath him, as such bolts redirect to his horn.The bolt deals 50 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 30 half) and makes a dispel check (caster level 25<sup>th</sup>) as *greater dispel magic* against each creature damaged this way. The lightning does not injure herd animals or minotaurs. Horns alone aren't enough, though; tieflings are fair game.The Father of Thunder can also direct this lightning to strike as a swift action on his turn, usually aiming it at people who dare to try to fly over his herd. And as an odd corner case, he can cause this lightning to strike creatures even hundreds of miles away in response to them casting *sending* or similar communication to bother him, responding with lightning instead of words.

If the Father of Thunder is not standing on ground above an open sky, he cannot use this power.

**Tromping Attack (Ex)** Due to the mobile nature of the fey titan and his herd, on his turn the Father of Thunder can take a full attack while also taking two move actions. If his foes aren't also moving at his pace, he can only make a single attack against any given creature. But we assume the party will engage him while mounted.

To represent the mobile herd and battle, place the Father of Thunder in the middle of a battle map. Each mounted combatant can direct his or her steed to adjust his position relative to the titan by up to 30 feet by spending a move action and succeeding a Ride check (DC 10). For every 5 points he succeeds by, the rider can adjust his steed another 10 feet. A rider can take a -15 penalty to this check to accomplish it as a free action, allowing him to take his full turn.

On his own turn the Father of Thunder can adjust 30 feet as a free action. Additionally, three times per round, after a foe completes his or her turn, the fey titan can adjust himself 10 feet without spending an action. If the Father of Thunder falls prone, all of this movement and adjustment stops until he can stand back up again.

Assume that all creatures in the encounter keep the same general heading, and it doesn't particularly matter *where* the herd as a whole moves, except as detailed below.

Due to his immense size, the Father of Thunder doesn't turn very quickly. He can only make gore attacks against creatures roughly within his forward reach, and stomp attacks only against creatures not in reach of his gore attack.

As a standard action, a character riding within 30 feet of the Father of Thunder can make a Handle Animal check. (We recommend you be generous with bonuses if the character comes up with a good excuse, like if there's an illusion of a giant dragon to cause the herd to turn away.) The Father of Thunder then makes a Will save against a DC equal to that check's result, representing his control over the herd. If he fails, the character can direct the herd to move in a particular direction for the next round. The fey titan will likely turn his ire against that character, though, and of course the herd doesn't pivot on a silver piece.

**Toppled Quake (Su)** When the Father of Thunder is first reduced below 376 hit points, he stumbles and trips. On his next turn he will attempt get up and move 150 feet (instead of his normal movement of 300 feet). He'll still be able to make a full attack, but this perhaps gives PCs who fell behind a chance to catch up.

The first time per day that the Father of Thunder trips (whether due to the above damage or because of enemy attacks), his collision with the ground creates a massive earthquake. The landscape within 1200 ft. buckles, and deep fissures and jagged hills appear in the area.

For the following four rounds, unless the Father of Thunder is unable to move or a character's Handle Animal check lets him take brief control of the herd, each round the fey titan guides the herd through one of these hazards.

- ♦ **Small Chasm.** Each rider must succeed a Ride check (DC 15) to coax their steed to leap across a twenty foot gap. Failed checks mean the steed balks and instead swerves around the gap, causing the rider to fall back 60 feet relative to the Father of Thunder. Because some members of the herd fall in, reduce the DC for Herd Crush by 2.
- ♦ **Vast Chasm.** Each rider may attempt a Ride check (DC 20) to get their steed to leap a fifty foot gap. Forgoing the check means the steed falls back 120 feet relative to the Father of Thunder. Attempting the check and failing means the steed and rider take 10d6 falling damage and need to find a way out of a 100-ft. chasm in order to rejoin the battle. This removes a huge amount of the herd, reducing the DC for Herd Crush by 5.

**Stubborn Tornado (Su)** When the Father of Thunder is first reduced below 188 hit points, he stops running and engages the party in close combat. A tornado manifests around him, creating 200 mile per hour winds. The tornado remains centered on the Father of Thunder as he moves, though he is big enough to be clearly visible through the dust of the funnel cloud. It lasts until the Father of Thunder is reduced to 0 hit points, at which point the titan sags and yields.

Ranged weapon attacks become impossible. Creatures Large or smaller must succeed a Strength check (DC 15) each round or else be knocked prone and pulled 1d4x10 feet toward the fey titan, taking 1d4 damage per 10 feet. Those who end up adjacent to him are picked up by the tornado and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d6 points of damage per round from debris and the occasional flying cow, before being violently expelled (falling damage might apply).

**Susceptible to Booze (Ex)** If allowed to consume truly epic amounts of alcohol, the Father of Thunder's intoxication affects him as if he had 5 negative levels. The herd's also a bit drunk. In addition to the normal effects of negative levels, reduce the DCs of all saves prompted by the Father of Thunder's abilities by 5, except for the tornado.





**Granny Allswell**

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal fey (fey titan)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +10**Defense****AC** 44, touch 6, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +10 deflection, +17 natural, –8 size)**hp** 563 (25d6+475); fast healing 30**Fort** +27, **Ref** +18, **Will** +26**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30**Offense****Speed** 80 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +29 (d20+19)**Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.**Special Attacks** evildest eye (no more tricksy & not so impressive now), hurl foe, steal spell**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +35)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *true seeing*At will—*bestow curse* (DC 25), *quicken charm monster* (DC 26),*quicken hostile juxtaposition*<sup>UC</sup> (DC 27), *stone shape*, *wall of stone*3/day—*commune with nature*, *polymorph*1/day—*maze***Statistics****Str** 48, **Dex** 18, **Con** 48, **Int** 30, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +45; **CMD** 49**Feats** Greater Spell Focus (conjunction, enchantment, necromancy),

Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (various), Spell Focus (conjunction, enchantment, necromancy), Spell Penetration

**Skills** Bluff +35, Disable Device +32, Heal +38, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (all) +38, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +38**Languages** Common, Draconic, Primordial, Terran**SQ** fey link, titanic, scattered spellbooks**Special Abilities****Evildest Eyes (Su)** Granny's eyes can spin in different directions. This lets her use both No More Tricksy and Not So Impressive Now as a single swift action. (Usually she'll aim the former at a magic-user and the latter at a warrior.) If she would be blinded, she loses sight in one eye but can still use the other effect.At the end of each of the creature's turns he can attempt a new save to break free of each evil eye effect on him. *Remove curse*, *break enchantment*, and similar powers can also end one of these hexes. Once the effect of a given hex ends, the creature cannot be affected by that same evil eye power again.**Hordeling Outburst (Su)** At any time Granny Allswell can control up to nine gangs of gremlins, born out of the mountain and powered by her life force. Each gang fills the space of a large creature and has AC 40 (flat-footed 26, touch 24), Fort +19, Ref +24, Will +19, CMB +32 (+36 to steal), CMD 47, and the same immunities and resistances of their granny. Each gang starts with 27 hit points, and damage dealt to them deals an equal amount of damage to the Granny (though if a single effect damages multiple gangs, damage is only transferred once). Because they consist of multiple creatures, area attacks do double damage, and single-targeted attacks do half to them.

At the start of Granny's turn, each of the nine gangs acts, and if any gangs have been dispersed by previous damage, another gang appears somewhere that is at least 30 feet away from any hostile creature, burrowing out of the ground if necessary. Each gang has a movement speed of 50 ft., and a burrow speed of 20 ft.

On its action, each gang can either attack or steal.

**Melee Attack:** slam +32 (2d8+5).**Steal:** Make a CMB check. If successful, the gang steals every unattended item the character is carrying or has in a pack (basically everything not held or worn, including spell components). If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the target must make a Reflex save (DC 25) or else his armor gains the broken condition.

The gang holds the stolen gear and uses it to beat on the PCs, and if a gang is reduced to 0 hit points the survivors disperse, dropping their loot in their space.

**No More Tricksy (Su)** As a swift action, Granny Allswell cocks her left evil eye at a creature she can see and admonishes him for not playing fair. Unless that creature succeeds a Will save (DC 30), the creature is limited in many ways to only things a normal person could accomplish without magic. His speed cannot be higher than 30 feet, he cannot have any alternate movement modes, and he cannot cast spells or use spell-like or supernatural abilities.**Not So Impressive Now (Su)** As a swift action, Granny aims her right evil eye at a creature not affected by her other evil eye. Unless the creature succeeds a Will save (DC 30), whenever he would roll a d20, he instead rolls a d6. If he fails to break free of the hex on his next turn, he can start rolling d8s. If he still fails the next round, he can roll d12s. The hex automatically ends after affecting the target for 3 rounds.**Scattered Spellbooks (Ex)** Granny has hundreds of old scrolls and spellbooks in various states of disrepair, scattered throughout the Anthras Mountains. Give her a couple days and she can get access to any wizard spell written in the last two thousand years.**Steal Spell (Su)** Once per round when Granny hits a creature with a fist, she can choose a single spell active on that creature and end it, then cast the same spell herself as a free action. She cups her hands as if holding an adorable kitten, cuddles it close to her face, then shoves it in her mouth. She's particularly fond of *haste* and *prayer*.

### Corrupted Earth Spirit

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +23

#### Defense

AC 23, touch 7, flat-footed 23 (-1 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)

hp 230 (16d10+120 plus hampering blow)

Fort +18, Ref +5, Will +12

DR 10/—; SR 20

**Special Attacks** wasting strikes

#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide

**Melee** 2 slams +20 (4d8+12/19-20)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** earth mastery

#### Statistics

**Str** 34, **Dex** 8, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +34 (+38 bull rush, +38 overrun, +36 sunder); **CMD** 43 (45 vs. bull rush, 45 vs. overrun, 45 vs. sunder)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Overrun, Improved Awesome Blow,<sup>ACG</sup> Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

**Skills** Appraise +23, Climb +35, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Perception +23, Stealth +14

**Languages** Terran

#### Special Abilities

**Hampering Blow (Su)** A creature struck by the slam attack of a corrupted earth spirit is subjected to some of the latent sympathetic energy from being trapped underground so long. A struck creature is prevented from moving more than 10 feet per round, and cannot be the subject of any teleportation effect. A DC 24 Fortitude save negates this effect. The DC for this save is Constitution-based.

**Wasting Strikes (Su)** The damage of a corrupted earth spirit's slam attacks counts as adamantite for the purposes of ignoring hardness and damage reduction. An object damaged by the slam attack of a corrupted earth spirit takes 1d6 points of additional damage bypassing all hardness for the following 6 rounds.

### She Who Writhes

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

Init +18; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., *true seeing*, scent; Perception +30

#### Defense

AC 44, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+14 Dex, +1 dodge, +27 natural, -8 size); +4 vs. opportunity attacks

hp 563 (25d8+450); fast healing 30

Fort +32, Ref +28, Will +14

**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 140 ft.

**Melee** bite +36 (3d12+40/19-20 plus grab), three tentacles +36 (1d12+9 plus grab), one huge tentacle +31 (6d12+60 plus grab)

**Space** 100 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (bite or tentacles) or 160 ft. (huge tentacle)

**Special Attacks** controlling tentacles, hurl foe, swallow whole (see below, AC 23, 56 hp), whirlwind attack (huge tentacle)

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +35)

Constant—*detect thoughts*, *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *quicken charm monster* (DC 24), *control water* 3/day—*commune with nature*

1/day—*control weather*, *wail of the banshee* centered on her mouth (DC 29)

#### Statistics

**Str** 48, **Dex** 38, **Con** 46, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 30

**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +52; **CMD** 76

**Feats** Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*charm monster*), Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Bluff +35, Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +38, Stealth +29, Swim +45

**Languages** Primordial, telepathy

**SQ** fey link, titanic, unavoidable grasp

#### Special Abilities

**Controlling Tentacles (Ex)** Numerous 10-ft. long tentacles can sprout from anywhere along the fey titan's body, up to three of which can attack per turn. Of her dozen or so primary tentacles, only one can attack per turn, though they're all always in motion. Typically she takes a -20 penalty on grapple attempts since she's just using one part of her body, though if necessary she'll devote her whole action to swallowing someone whole. Because of her structure, she can grapple an effectively unlimited number of creatures at a time. However, the smaller tentacles only have 20 hit points; damage dealt to them also wounds She Who Writhes, and a destroyed tentacle releases its victim.

As a free action at the start of her turn, She Who Writhes can make a combat maneuver check to move each creature grabbed by one of the small tentacles up to 20 ft. along her body, or to move a creature grabbed by a huge tentacle anywhere within reach. Typically she does this to pull them toward her main body. Once a creature is on her main body, she can use Swallow Whole on the next turn to pull them through her flesh into her interior cavity.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** The interior cavity of She Who Writhes is roughly twenty-five feet in diameter, with a glowing female figure in the middle. Creatures inside are affected by *dominate monster* at the start of each of their turns (DC 29), and those who fail are compelled to fight their allies. Once the battle is over and She Who Writhes is no longer in danger, she orders her playthings to strip naked and join the orgy within her.

A creature who resists can try to cut a path out (and isn't restricted just to light weapons). Alternately, if the glowing figure is destroyed (AC 23, 56 hp), the *dominate* effect is suppressed for one minute until a new one grows in to replace it. In the meanwhile, though, She Who Writhes floods her internal cavity with digestive juices, dealing 10d6 acid damage per round.

**Unavoidable Grasp (Su)** Effects like *freedom of movement* that would let a creature avoid being snared by She Who Writhes' tentacles are weakened in her proximity. Instead of granting immunity to being grappled and allowing automatic success at Escape Artist checks to escape a grapple or pin, the recipient receives a bonus equal to the spell's caster level.



**Asrabey Varal, Archfey of Obedience**

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male eladrin fighter 20

LN Medium humanoid (eladrin)

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13**Defense****AC** 35, touch 16, flat-footed 31 (+12 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +5 shield)**hp** 214 (20d10+100); **DR** 5/—**Fort** +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9**Immune** charm, compulsion, fear**Defensive Abilities** bolstered will, bravery +5, freedom of movement**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** *Vekeshi Blade* +35/+30/+25/+20 (1d8+17/17–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

Always confirms critical hits.

Or *Vekeshi Blade* with vital strike +35 (4d8+17/17–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

Always confirms critical hits.

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +4, light blades +3, natural +2, thrown +1); weapon mastery (longsword), disruptive (+4 to Concentration DC to cast defensively in his threatened area), compelling strike\***Statistics****Str** 22, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 43**Feats** Cleave, Critical Focus, Disruptive, Great Cleave, Greater Vital Strike, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Staggering Critical (DC 30), Step Up, Stunning Critical (DC 30), Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Climb +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +5, Sense Motive +6, Swim +10**SQ** armor training 4, armor mastery, fey step**Languages** Elven, Primordial**Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical perfection* +4, *cloak of smoke*, *glamered plate*, *lion shield*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *crown of aura masking* (conceals his *elixirs of glibness* from magical detection and instead detects as providing a bonus to Charisma), twenty *elixirs of glibness***Special Abilities****Compelling Strike (Su)** Whenever Asrabey hits a creature with an attack, that creature must make a Will save (DC 30) or be affected by a *command* of Asrabey's choice. If the attack is a critical hit, Asrabey may instead affect the target with *dominate monster* (DC 30); the dominated creature may make a new save at the end of each of its turns to break free.**Critical Hits (Ex)** Asrabey's longsword attacks that are critical threats automatically confirm, and if he chooses not to dominate the victim, he can instead stun them for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 30 reduces it to staggered for 1d4 rounds).**Elite Gear (Su)** Asrabey possesses the following items.

- ♦ **Vekeshi Blade** Normally a +3 *Flaming Longsword*, the Vekeshi Blade wielded by Asrabey Varal is a potent artifact tied to the fall of the goddess Srasama. The wielder of the Vekeshi Blade can transform the weapon into a whip-like form that has 15-ft. reach and can be used to make trip attacks, but which still deals damage as a longsword. The blade shifts and reverts as a free action at the wielder's control.



- ♦ **Lion Shield** A specially crafted +3 *Heavy Wooden Shield*, the Lion Shield can also be loosed to attack on its own. It fights for 4 rounds using the base attack bonus of the one who loosed it and then drops. For combat purposes, the Lion Shield is treated as having a 2d6 damage bite attack with the Grab special rule (CMB equals the CMB of the wielder). While attacking, it cannot make attacks of opportunity, and the person who activated it is not considered as having the shield equipped. The shield is considered wielded or attended by the creature for all maneuvers and effects that target items. While attacking, the shield shares the same space as the activating character and can attack adjacent foes. The shield accompanies the person who activated it everywhere, whether she moves by physical or magical means. If the wielder who loosed it has an unoccupied hand, she can grasp it while it is attacking on its own as a free action; when so retrieved, the shield can't dance (attack on its own) again for 4 rounds.
- ♦ **Cloak of Smoke** An ornate cloak from the lands of the Unseen Court, this cloak fills the air around the wearer with a constant roil of smoke, causing enemies to take a 20% miss chance due to concealment. The wearer can see through the smoke without trouble, and can dismiss or invoke the smoke as a free action. In addition the wearer receives a +2 deflection bonus to AC.
- ♦ **Glamered Plate** Woven of a distilled essence made from stories of warriors dodging deadly blows, this cloth tunic protects its wearer as well as +3 *full plate*, but does not hinder his movements or skills.
- Freedom of Movement (Sp)** As long as Asrabey is in command of She Who Writhe, he benefits from *freedom of movement* (caster level 25<sup>th</sup>).

## Beshela, Archfey of the Sea

CR 14

XP 38,400

CN Medium fey (water)

**Init** +10; **Senses** low-light vision, ripplesense; **Perception** +21

### Defense

**AC** 25, touch 25, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +8 deflection, +1 dodge)

**hp** 162 (16d6+96)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

**DR** 10/cold iron; **Immune** poison, **Resist** acid 20, cold 20

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +15 (1d6+8 plus push)

**Special Attacks** corrosive tempest, kraken tentacle strike, push (slam, 20 ft.), summon the kraken

**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 16<sup>th</sup>, concentration +24)

At will—*control water*, *cup of dust* (DC 19), *hydraulic push*

3/day—*summon nature's ally VII* (aquatic creatures or water elementals only)

### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 22, **Con** 20, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 26

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 41

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Knowledge (geography) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Intimidate +24, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Swim +35

**Languages** Elven, Primordial, Sylvan

**SQ** fey dive, unearthly grace

### Special Abilities

**Corrosive Tempest (Su)** When Beshela is first reduced below half of her hit points, she can conjure dark clouds overhead, which spew forth black rain in a quarter-mile radius centered on her. Any creature that ends its turn without some sort of cover from the rain takes 1 point of acid damage. The clouds move with Beshela and last for five minutes.

**Fey Dive (Su)** As a move action, Beshela can teleport from one area covered in water to another area covered in water within 50 feet, as long as there is a contiguous path of water between the two spaces.



**Kraken Tentacle Strike (Ex)** If Beshela has summoned kraken tentacles, as a swift action, she can command one or both to move up to 20 feet through areas covered in water and make an attack against any adjacent target.

♦ Kraken Tentacle +15 (3d6+8 plus grab); CMB +20; constrict 3d6+12

**Ripplesense (Su)** Beshela perfectly knows the location of any creature within half a mile if there is a contiguous path of water between its space and hers.

**Summon the Kraken (Su)** Once per day, Beshela can conjure a massive tidal wave in a quarter-mile radius burst centered on herself. All creatures hit by the wave must make a Fortitude save DC 26 or be knocked prone and pushed away 20 feet. Water floods the quarter-mile radius to a depth of two feet, though it may flow away quickly based on terrain. In addition, Beshela summons two kraken tentacles made of seaweed within 50 feet of her. Each tentacle is a Large creature with Beshela's AC and save bonuses, and 40 hit points. If a tentacle is ever completely out of water, it is destroyed.

**Unearthly Grace (Su)** Beshela adds her Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus to her AC and her CMD.





# APPENDIX THREE:

## DANORAN & OBSCURATI FORCES

### Porter Du Mort Revelation Sniper

CR 13

XP 25,600

Human gunslinger 14

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +19

#### Defense

**AC** 28, touch 23, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +5 dodge)

**hp** 137 (14d10+56)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** nimble +4, mobility

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** rapier +15/+10/+5 (1d6/18-20)

**Ranged** rifle +23/+18/+13 (1d10+8/19-20/x4)

**Special Attacks** grit (2), gun training (rifle, revolver, shotgun, +5)

#### Statistics

**Str** 10 **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 36

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Far Shot, Gunsmithing,<sup>UC</sup> Improved Critical (rifle), Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Stealth), Snap Shot,<sup>UC</sup> Weapon Focus (rifle)

**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +19, Perception +19, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +25

**Languages** Common, Danoran

**SQ** deeds (bleeding wound [5], dead shot, deadeye, expert loading, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, lightning reload, pistol-whip, quick clear, startling shot, targeting, utility shot), gunsmith, gun training (rifle, revolver, shotgun, +5)

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 studded leather, belt of physical might +2 (Dex, Con), smokestick (2)

#### Special Abilities

**Adaptive Ammo (Ex):** When firing their rifle, a Porter De Mort Sniper can select a specialty type of ammunition used with each shot for the round. This is a unique ability partly based on training, and partly due to specialized Danoran ammunition.

- ✦ **Acid Grinder Shot**—The shot deals an additional 4d6 points of acid damage, as well as an additional 2d6 points of damage on the following round.
- ✦ **Chillflame Shot**—The shot deals an additional 6d6 points of damage, half of which is cold and the other half is fire.
- ✦ **Electromagnetic Shot**—The shot deals an additional 2d6 points of electrical damage, and the target is staggered for one round if they are wearing any metal armor.
- ✦ **Lander Rounds**—Made of a laden material, this shot causes any creature flying above ground to descend 30 feet each time they are struck by a round. Such movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

### Porter De Mort Murderer

CR 13

XP 25,600

Tiefling fighter 7 / rogue 7

LN Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +18

#### Defense

**AC** 25, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

**hp** 118 (14 HD; 7d10+7d6+49)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear

**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, mobility

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.,

**Melee** longsword +20/+15/+10 (1d8+9/17-20)

**Ranged** pistol +16 (1d6+1/x4)

**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1), sneak attack +4d6

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th, concentration +12)

1/day—*darkness*

#### Statistics

**Str** 16 **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 12 **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Lunge, Mobility, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Bluff +0, Climb +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Perception +18, Stealth +21, Survival +18

**Languages** Common, Danoran

**SQ** armor training 2, rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, stand up, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds (2)*; **Other Gear** +3 mithral breastplate, belt of physical might +2 (Str, Con)

#### Special Abilities

**Murderers-At-Arms (Ex):** Porteur de Mort Murderers have trained together and work best when standing side by side or flanking. A Murderer who stands beside another marine engaged with their target counts as flanking. If a marine flanks their enemy, they gain an additional 3d6 points of sneak attack damage.

**Shots in Shadows (Ex):** At the end of any full attack, a Porteur De Mort Marine can fire their pistol in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity. Following this shot, the pistol becomes the target of a *deeper darkness* spell as from a 14<sup>th</sup> level caster.

## Porteur du Mort Alchemist

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Human alchemist 14

LN Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** Perception +24

### Defense

**AC** 24, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

**hp** 108 (14d8+42)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7

**Immune** poison

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 short sword +10/+5 (1d6/19–20)

**Ranged** +2 pistol +15 (1d8+2/x4)

**Special Attacks** bomb 20/day (7d6+4 fire, DC 21)

**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 14th)

5th—*elemental body II*, *communal stonesskin*<sup>UC</sup>

4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *dragon's breath*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 18),  
*freedom of movement*, *spell immunity*

3rd—*burst of speed*<sup>UC</sup>, *communal darkvision*<sup>UC</sup>, *displacement*, *heroism*,  
*protection from energy*

2nd—*ablative barrier*<sup>UC</sup>, *aid*, *alter self*, *bullet shield*<sup>UC</sup>, *invisibility*, *see invisibility*

1st—*bomber's eye*<sup>APG</sup>, *enlarge person* (DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *longshot*<sup>UC</sup>,  
*shield*, *true strike*

### Statistics

**Str** 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26

**Feats** Feats Brew Potion, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Extra Bombs<sup>APG</sup>, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Skill Focus (Perception), Throw Anything

**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Craft (alchemy) +27, Disable Device +20, Heal +18, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (engineering) +18, Perception +24, Spellcraft +21, Use Magic Device +17

**Languages** Common, Danoran, Dwarven, Primordial

**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +14, identify potions), mutagen (+4/–2, +2 natural, 14 hours), discoveries (acid bomb, dispelling bomb, fast bombs, infusion, madness bomb [–2d6 hp damage, +1d4 Wisdom damage] precise bombs [4 squares], smoke bomb, ), persistent mutagen, poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

**Other Gear** +3 studded leather, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +3

### Special Abilities

**A Round for All! (Ex)** A Porteur du Mort Alchemist can use his infusion ability to share communal extracts with multiple targets and not just a single individual. The infusion requires each recipient be within 5 feet of the alchemist, and each recipient is considered to drink the extract.

**Technologist Delivery (Ex)** As a swift action, a Porteur du Mort Alchemist can activate a tiny-sized construct which can deliver a single potion to a willing target within 30 feet. The construct loses power and gracefully self-destructs after delivering the potion. This can be used with the Porter's infusion ability so they can effectively deliver potions at range.

## Obscurati Master Builder

CR 15

XP 51,200 each

Half-elf conjurer 16

LN Medium humanoid (elf, human)

**Init** +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

### Defense

**AC** 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

**hp** 122 (16d8+64)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13; +2 vs. enchantments

**Immune** sleep

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 quarterstaff +10/+5 (1d6+2)

**Ranged** +1 pistol +12 (1d8+1/x4)

**Special Attacks** bomb 20/day (7d6+4 fire, DC 21)

**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +22)

At will—dimensional steps (480 feet/day)

9/day—acid dart (1d6+8 acid)

**Conjurer Spells Prepared** (CL 16<sup>th</sup>; concentration +22)

8th—*polar ray*, *quicken acid pit*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 21), *wall of lava*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 25)

7th—*phase door*, *prismatic spray* (DC 24), *quicken fireball* (DC 20),  
*summon monster VII*

6th—*freezing sphere* (2, DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *wall of iron* (2, DC 23)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 22), *extended wall of fire* (DC 21), *icy prison*<sup>UM</sup> (DC 22),  
*wall of force* (2), *wall of stone* (DC 22)

4th—*acid pit*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 21), *dimensional anchor*, *wall of fire* (2), *wall of ice* (2, DC 21)

3rd—*spiked pit*<sup>APG</sup> (2, DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *fireball* (2, DC 20), *wind wall*

2nd—*bullet shield*<sup>UC</sup> (2), *create pit*<sup>APG</sup> (2, DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 19), *shatter* (2, DC 19)

1st—*alarm*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*

**Opposition Schools** divination, illusion

### Statistics

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 22, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus (Conjuration), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration

**Skills** Appraise +25, Craft (alchemy) +25, Craft (stonemasonry) +25, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Perception +18, Spellcraft +25

**Languages** Common, Danoran, Elven, Primordial

**SQ** arcane bond (amulet), summoner's charm (8 rounds), elf blood

**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *scrolls of summon monster VIII* (2); **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical might* +2 (Dex, Con), *bracers of armor* +5, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +4, *ring of protection* +1



**Obscurati Divinist**

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

Dwarf oracle 15

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

**Init** -1; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +3**Defense****AC** 24, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +2 deflection, -1 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 131 (15d8+60)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +2 *frost flail* +13/+8/+3 (1d8+2 plus 1d6 cold)**Special Attacks** hatred**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 15th; concentration +19)7th (4/day)—*dictum* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21), *vision*,*mass inflict serious wounds*6th (6/day)—*find the path*, *greater dispel magic*, *harm* (DC 20), *mass owl's wisdom*,*mass inflict moderate wounds*5th (6/day)—*breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *scrying* (DC 19), *true seeing*,*contact other plane*, *mass inflict light wounds*4th (7/day)—*blessing of fervor*<sup>APG</sup>, *death ward*, *divination*, *freedom of movement*,*legend lore*, *inflict critical wounds*3rd (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *continual flame*, *searing light*, *speak with dead*(DC 17), *locate object*, *inflict serious wounds*2nd (7/day)—*death knell* (DC 16), *find traps*, *hold person* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16),*sound burst* (DC 16), *tongues*, *inflict moderate wounds*1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *comprehend languages*,*cure light wounds*, *deathwatch*, *identify*, *inflict light wounds*0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*,*mending*, *read magic*, *stabilize***Mystery** lore**Statistics****Str** 10, **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. bull rush, 26 vs. trip)**Feats** Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Extra Channel,

Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll

**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (geography) +22, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nobility) +22, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +22, Linguistics +19, Perception +0 (+2 to notice usual stonework), Spellcraft +22**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Gnoll, Halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon, Danoran, Primordial; *tongues* (understand only)**SQ** oracle's curse (tongues [Infernal]), revelations (arcane archivist, brain drain, focused trance, mental acuity, sidestep secret)**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility*, *scroll of greater glyph of warding* (2), *wand of cure serious wounds* (25 charges); **Other Gear** +3 *breastplate*, +2 *heavy steel shield*, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of mental prowess* +2 (Int, Cha), *ring of protection* +2**Obscurati Assault Golems**

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Large construct

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0**Defense****AC** 31, touch 11, flat-footed 29 (+2 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)**hp** 181 (18d10+60)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** magnets...bitch!; **DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, immunity to magic**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +32 (2d10+16/19-20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Statistics****Str** 32, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +22; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 46**Special Abilities****Reinforced Hull (Ex)** Due to specialist construction methods, an Obscurati Assault Golem gains an additional 30 hit points.**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** An Obscurati Assault Golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function different against it as noted below.

- A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows and golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds with no saving throw.
- A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. An Obscurati Assault Golem gets now saving throw against fire effects.
- An Obscurati Assault Golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as those of a rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

**Magnets...Bitch! (Ex)** The metal that comprises the Obscurati Assault Golem is partially magnetic. While not enough to impede movement, any metallic weapon striking the golem is immediately subject to disarm attempt by the golem as an immediate action. If the weapon is successfully disarmed, it sticks to the body of the golem and can only be removed by a disarm check against the CMD of the assault golem.**Danoran Frigate Crew**

CR 15

XP 51,200

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +28**Defense****AC** 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)**hp** 226 (21d8+131)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10**Defensive Abilities** troop traits, embedded spellcasters**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** troop (6d6+12)**Space** 40 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** fusillade (DC 25), grenade volley (DC 23)

**Statistics**

**Str** 34, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +31; **CMD** 40

**Feats** Ability Focus (fusillade), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Focus & Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness

**Skills** Climb +24, Craft (firearms) +4, Knowledge (engineering) +1, Perception +28, Profession (soldier) +6, Stealth +10, Survival +8

**Languages** Common

**Special Abilities**

**Fusillade (Ex):** The crew can fire a fusillade of rifle bullets as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to four lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 6d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 25 for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based, and includes the bonus from the troop's Ability Focus feat.

**Grenade Volley (Ex):** The crew is equipped with grenades. As a move action, it can target up to four squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of fragmentation grenades. A volley deals 15d6 points of piercing and slashing damage in a 30-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 23 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage.

**Embedded Spellcasters (Sp):** A handful of mages in each crew let the unit cast four spells from the following list each round as a single swift action, at caster level 5<sup>th</sup>. The unit can use the same spell multiple times or cast a mix: *magic missile*, *silent image*, *fog cloud*, *gust of wind*, *see invisibility*, *resist energy*, *hold person* (DC 15), and *dispel magic*.

If assaulted by flying enemies out of range, they produce clouds of fog. If the unit uses all four of its spells to dispel, they effectively aid each other, making a dispel check with +11 bonus.

**Danoran Boarding Squad**

CR 11

XP 12,800

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

**Init** +3; **Senses** Perception +10

**Defense**

**AC** 20, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 63 (6d8+36)

**Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

**Defensive Abilities** troop traits

**Offense**

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** troop (2d6+4)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Special Attacks** fusillade (DC 23), grenade volley (DC 21)

**Statistics**

**Str** 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Ability Focus (fusillade), Dodge, Toughness

**Special Abilities**

**Fusillade (Ex):** The squad can fire a fusillade of rifle bullets as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to two lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 3d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 23 for half).

**Grenade Volley (Ex):** The squad is equipped with grenades. As a move action, it can target up to two squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of fragmentation grenades. A volley deals 7d6 points of piercing and slashing damage in a 15-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 21 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage.

**Sovereign Han Jierre**

CR 20

XP 307,200

Male unique tiefling

LN Medium outsider (native)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., all-around vision, Perception +39

**Defense**

**AC** 36, touch 22, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +5 deflection, +5 natural armor, +1 Dex, +6 dodge)

**hp** 357 (34d8+204)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +22; one reroll per day of each save

**Defenses** slippery mind; **Immune** paralysis and effects that limit mobility

**Resist** fire 30

**Offense**

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)

**Melee** n/a

**Ranged** rifles +35 eight times (1d8+9/x4)

**Special Attacks** gestalt commander, infernal wrath of the Jierre bloodline

**Statistics**

**Str** 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 22, **Int** 22, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 26

**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 41

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** many and various

**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial

**Other Gear** *ring of freedom of movement*, *headband of mental perfection* +6, +5 *mithral shirt*, *ring of protection* +5, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *boots of flying*

**Special Abilities**

**Gestalt Commander (Su)** As a standard action, Han can call upon the combined force of the navy to attack targets of his choice. Other soldiers fire, but use his attack bonus and trace range as if from him. This allows him to make eight rifle attacks.

This is only the most obvious use of his psychic connection to the navy. Many others are possible, at your discretion.

**Infernal Wrath of the Scion of the Jierre Bloodline (Su)** Once per round as an immediate action when hit by an attack or targeted by a spell, Han can cause the creature who attacked him to take 5d6 points of fire damage. The creature must make a DC 34 Reflex save or catch on fire, taking an additional 5d6 points of fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished.



## MECHANICS OF A BROKEN AGE

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual. Trial and error are the best manner for a PC to discover these mechanical changes, while some high level divination magic may assist in ascertaining the exact changes to the world.

**Applied Astronomy:** Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed in Appendix One: Reality Shift.

**Black Hole Sun:** Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

**Blood of Ostea:** All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

**Death is Death:** Slain deva no longer reincarnate.

**Flight of the Fey:** Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.

**Magic Mishaps:** As detailed above, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1<sup>st</sup> level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

**Reign of the Rational:** All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a -5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

**Impossibly Distant:** Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

**Teleportation and Communication.** Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

**Fourmyle Jaunting.** Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

**Three Miles is so Last Age:** Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.

**Wings of Liberty:** Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.









## GREMLIN MINE

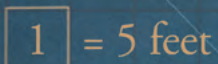


# THE FLAMING ZIGGURAT OF AV



One square equals 5ft.







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