



ZEITGEIST™

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION

PART
III

GORGED ON RUINS

FROM THE
PEN OF LIZ COURTS & RYAN NOCK



A FANTASY ADVENTURE FOR
CALAMITOUS HEROES OF LEVEL 19

COMPLETELY COMPATIBLE WITH THE
PATHFINDER® ROLE-PLAYING GAME

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INTRODUCTION

Wherein Things Fall Apart

Nicodemus and the Obscurati officially control the nations of Lanjyr, with the party's homeland of Risur the sole hold-out. However, in Adventure Ten, *Godmind* the party might have taken the first steps in eroding the Ob's total control by saving Cherage, the capital of Danor, from a horrible psychic monster that would have killed tens of thousands of people.

Nicodemus is mobilizing every military under his command to conquer Risur, which he erroneously sees as the chief obstacle to him creating his perfect world. Taking only military prowess into account, Risur will fall in a matter of weeks. But if the party saved Cherage, Danor's military will drag its feet. Three other great nations—Ber, Drakr, and Crisillyir—constitute the bulk of the Obscurati's military forces. If the party can change the minds of their people as they did the Danorans, Risur can be spared an invasion, and the domination of the Obscurati can be weakened.

Fortunately, those three nations are just as doomed as Danor was, each in their own unique way.

Calls for help come from Ber—to investigate a city from which no one is allowed to leave; from Drakr—to halt the advance of an army of mad men and frost giants led by warlords not seen for millennia; and from Crisillyir—to spare the capital Alais Primos from tearing itself apart in apocalyptic despair. And though the party might not realize at first, each doomsday holds the possibility to acquire items or knowledge that will help them in their upcoming mission to the Gyre in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you use *Gorged on Ruins* as a standalone adventure, you can simply use one of the three acts in a place that fits your campaign, or you'll need a unifying thread to tie them all together—one without all the baggage of ten previous adventures. The lost riders could have been released by the trials in Alais Primos, but what do the Gidim have to do with it? You might use that act independently from the others, or move Ursaliña to near Alais Primos, and have the Crypta Hereticarum as the secret under the city. The psychic invaders instead become monsters released from the vault, and once the party defeats them, a host of angels arrive to cleanse the rest of the vault.

MEANWHILE AT THE OBSCURATI?

This adventure challenges the party with little direct threat from the Obscurati—they're busy planning a vast military action and designing a way to fix the colossus to try to fix the Axis Seal.

Thanks to the spycraft of *El Extraño* of Ber, the party is mostly shielded from divinations by the Obscurati, so unless they go announcing their plans, the Ob won't be able to keep up with the PCs. In truth, Nicodemus's pool of mastermind henchmen has been seriously eroded by the RHC's efforts; with fewer geniuses suggesting clever ways to outwit their enemies, Nicodemus has to rely on cruder brute-force solutions like overwhelming military force.

As a baseline we assume the party has staved off the most serious threats to Risur, and so can count on their people's loyal aid. The main challenge is that time is tight before the world ends, not that Risur might fall into chaos. Of course, Risur might still be in trouble if the party actually failed in Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky* to stop the activation of the Ob's lighthouse in Flint.

However, we don't want the party to forget that the world is under the Ob's control, so during each act we'll highlight Obscurati activities. The Ob agents the party encounters won't be equipped to challenge high-level Risuri constables, and they're less concerned with fighting Gidim, eschatologists, or gods than they are with forcefully eliminating dissent.

MULTIPLE DAYS OF DOOM

Three great threats endanger different regions of the world, but each offers an advantage to the party in their overarching quest to undo the Obscurati's ritual.

Introduction

The party's allies and agents report a variety of threats to them, and it's up to the PCs to decide what is most important. Their ultimate goal—or at least the one advocated by the party's advisor Harkover Lee—is to travel to the Gyre and make bonds so they can connect this world with other planes. First, though, they must find out how to repeat the Obscurati's ritual. And it wouldn't hurt if they could stop three invading countries from conquering Risur while they're at it.

If the party decides to head straight for the Gyre, they'll have a hard time of it, and if they get back you can use this adventure as a starting point for all the catastrophes that gripped the world while they were gone.

High Power, or Epic?

The party is saving the world, their homeland is being invaded, and cosmic threats are afoot. But some groups will prefer a more down-to-earth play style, while others are fine with the PCs becoming the Justice League. For the former, we offer options for the party to take their time, understand the situation, interact with NPCs, and use alliances to win the day. For the latter, they have an airship. It's perfectly valid for them to fly in, attack from above, and ask questions later.

Act One: Shackled Thoughts

A Gidim leviathan—a ship that acts as a seed for colonization by the psychic race—has reached this world and taken root beneath the Beran city of **Ursaliña**. **Glaucia Evora**, a gnoll lawkeeper from Ber, calls upon the party to help discover why the city has gone silent. If the party can save the city, the ruler of Ber can be convinced to call off his part of the invasion of Risur. More importantly, the leviathan carries a *vortex array*, a type of living sensor that will help the party find the magical energies they need in Adventure Twelve.

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.

Sijhen was ancient compared to its people, and it was granted great power in thanks for the news it brought. When the Axis Seal was broken, they found easy ingress through the dead, stony plane of Ratios, which they stripped dry ages ago. While other Gidim coordinate the colonization of Ursaliña, Sijhen's mission is to proactively combat the party and others who might try to stop the consumption of their world.



Background—Gidim Harvesting

The Gidim—psychic entities from a far plane, which the party first learned of in Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*—were barred for millennia from this world. Now that the Axis Seal is open, they seek to claim it and use it as a psychic feeding trough for their sentient homeworld.

The Gidim are composed of thought that is capable of taking physical form. Just as normal creatures need to consume various nutrients for health, the Gidim need a diverse diet of thoughts and emotions. They have built an entire civilization around 'farming' other planes. Any world with animal life can produce simple thoughtfood like fear, satisfaction, or affection, but it takes other intelligent minds to produce delicacies such as ennui, schadenfreude, saudade, or agape.

They began their colonization in Ursaliña because its vibrant culture produced strong emotions that drew the leviathan like the scent of sizzling bacon. For a few weeks the Gidim stealthily infiltrated the structures of government, snaring the minds of leaders and killing trouble-makers. The people of Ursaliña have realized something is amiss, and they do their best to avoid attracting attention, but the Gidim-controlled leadership issue decrees to try to force the city to keep up its festivals and arts, to keep the 'nutrients' flowing.

The Gidim control is based in **Cadagyr Palace**, the city's seat of governance. They have a major operation in the **Jaula de Oso**, a prison that serves as public arena for sports and the city's famous bear duels, which they use as a breeding pit for Gidim warbeasts. And the leviathan itself materialized in caverns once inhabited by the Ancients, beneath the city's bardic college **Triunfo Vida**. Invisible creatures called *oculi* float above the streets looking for trouble, and the city police brutally crush anyone who publicly questions all the strange goings-on.

The Gidim leviathan is commanded by experienced infiltrators (or, more accurately, Gidim personality-constructs that have cloned the knowledge of previous colonists of other worlds), but they are advised by **Sijhen**, the same Gidim wayfarer whom the party contested against in Adventure Three and briefly encountered at the end of Adventure Ten. Sijhen waits for the PCs, but underestimates how much they have grown in power.

Liberty Calls for Help

Before the Obscurati enacted their grand ritual, they identified those with the authority and ideology to oppose their new world order. In Ber, that meant the *executores dola liberta*, an elite force of lawkeeping women who are charged with punishing those who would steal the liberty of others. The Ob assassinated a handful of high-ranking *executores*, leaving enough of a hierarchical vacuum that the remaining members haven't been able to keep Obscurati officers from taking control.

The one surviving executore of high rank is Glaucia Evora, a stern gnoll whom the party met and traveled with in Adventure Six. She's dispatched lieutenants across Ber, and a bit of foresight motivated her to send a couple subordinates over the Anthras Mountains and into Risur, one to Flint and the other to Slate. They keep in touch with Glaucia via *sending*, and so are able to relay a request for help.

Glaucia asks for the party to meet her in Seobriga where she can give them details in full. (Also, she's being hunted by Obscurati agents, and needs the party to stop them.) She worries the Obscurati are doing something foul in Ursaliña. No news comes out of the city, and the *executores*

she sends in never report back. She tempts them with the idea that if they can prove the Ob are hostile to Ber, she can convince the Bruse to call off Ber's invasion of Risur.

You Are Being Watched

It's only a matter of days before Ursaliña is consumed and a massive tendril rises up into the night sky, allowing the Gidim homeworld to begin to feed.

Any allies the party looks for in Ursaliña are either hiding or mind-controlled. The party's activities are being observed by oculi throughout the city, and if they are suspicious then the city police will try to bring them in to meet the local lord. Getting caught or causing enough of a commotion will bring them to the attention of Sijhen, who will do whatever it needs to kill the PCs, with no concern for casualties among the civilians, who after all the Gidim consider to just be chattel.

In the midst of this, a more secretive agent of the conspiracy operates in the shadows; **Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen** seeks specimens of the Gidim in order to understand their psychic physiology and report back to Nicodemus. His involvement foreshadows a dramatic development in the campaign's finale, when the Obscurati leader takes control of the hivemind and uses its power to dominate the entire world.

Events might progress slowly with the party carefully figuring out who they can trust, discovering the horrible truth of the Gidim invasion, and then launching a surprise strike to destroy the leviathan. Or the party might storm into the city, attract every Gidim warbeast and mind-controlled soldier into a quick massive brawl, and hope to survive long enough to clean up the aftermath.

In either case, once the party attacks the leviathan, Sijhen has the living ship tear its way out of the ground. It takes to the sky and begins to raze the city, prompting an aerial skirmish visible to an audience of tens of thousands.

Act Two: When Doom Came to Drakr

The fey titan known as the Voice of Rot once laired in the far north, what today is the nation of Drakr. With his gaze he could command the corpses of beasts and the spirits of men, but Ancient heroes drove him south after a battle in which they plucked out one of his eyes. Now he can only control the dead that rot, and has no sway over spirits and ghosts.

Now five comets—like white serpents in the black sky—streak out from the Gyre and crash into Drakr's frozen north, heralding the return of mythic warlords who seek a final battle. **Grandis Komanov**, a cult leader and follower of the Voice of Rot, will use their might, an army of radicals, and the recovered eye of her lord to murder all who would resist. Every death she claims for her lord will strengthen the white serpent as he waits in the Gyre for the end of the world.

Background—Doomsday Eschatologists

Politics in Drakr have long had a heavy philosophical component, where charismatic and erudite thinkers sought the support of open-minded lords. Recently the most dominant philosophy has been Heid Eschatol, based on the writing of **Vlendam Heid**, who advocated a focus on proper endings—and inherent in that, following through on complex tasks in order to achieve those good endings.



Grandis traces her bloodline to the oldest dwarven warlords from before Drakr, before the Clergy, and before even the Demonocracy. Raised a common metalsmith by her bitterly poor father, she studied magic so she could make her fortune.

Once, while trapped in a massive winter storm, Grandis read a book of the teachings of Vlendam Heid on the nature of endings. Her interpretation of his philosophy was markedly unorthodox, and she cultivated her own radical branch of eschatology based not on preparing for how things end, but in actively ending things.

By delving into forbidden lore over the years, what was once mere greed and narcissism has been corrupted into a genuine insane longing for the end of the world. She made contact with the Voice of Rot, a primordial entity who exists to witness the world's death. Since Grandis believes truly nothing is more important than her, and some day even she must die, it is merciful to kill everyone, lest they have to endure a world without her.

However, a radical faction of the eschatologists arose under the influence of Grandis Komanov, who wove old, weighty myths together with Heid's teachings, convincing many that the end of the world was nigh, and indeed that it was their obligation to bring about its conclusion. Unsurprisingly, the Great Eclipse caused by the Obscurati massively swelled the ranks of Komanov's followers, and now tens of thousands have been swept up in a crusade to provoke the fall of civilization.

Now the army besieges **Bhad Ryzhavdud**, the easternmost city of Drakr. Their forces far outnumber the defenders, but most of the soldiers are gripped with apocalyptic excitement, taking the 'end of the world' as an excuse for debauchery and sin. The 'hivemind' effect created by the Obscurati's new planar energies has linked the entire army together psychically. Bereft of free will and surrounded by a living blizzard, they slavishly obey the orders of Komanov, who stands aloof from her fanatical horde.

Drakran legends tell of the five Lost Riders, the **Vsadni**, warlords who pridefully set out into a blizzard to find a great battle, and disappeared after they refused to seek shelter or ask for directions. To aid his minion Komanov, the Voice of Rot called down five comets, each bearing a dark titan crafted from the matter of dying worlds. Grandis bound these enigmatic heralds of the Gyre to the souls of the Lost Riders, and ordered them to lead her army to the world's ultimate battle.

The army claimed part of the old city of Bhad Ryzhavdud, but then settled in for a siege. The doomsday army contents itself with a wild festival of costumes and drinking, and four of the Lost Riders simply patrol the city perimeter on their steeds, playing ancient songs of war to keep the soldiers in a frenzy. Meanwhile, the fifth Vsadni helps Komanov assemble her lord's lost eye into an arcanoscientific weapon that tears the souls from whoever it is aimed at.

Komanov could simply destroy the city, but when her weapon is ready, she'll be able to turn every one of its defenders into another soldier in her army.

Mystery Box

After spotting the comets crashing far to the north, the party receives a package out of thin air. Vlendam Heid, lured to Bhadr Ryzhavdud by agents of Komanov, was caught in the siege and realized what the Vsadni were. Unable to directly *sending* the PCs (Heid doesn't know the spell, and no one there who does knows the PCs), he used his novel understanding of post-Eclipse teleportation magic to send them a box containing a plea for help and a brochure about archaeological curios tied to the ancient tales of the Lost Riders.

The situation when they arrive depends on how long they wait to help. Komanov has nearly assembled her arcanoscientific weapon, but it takes her a week to work out the kinks and be able to safely use it. Then within hours the city falls, and her army is bolstered by tens of thousands. She captures Heid as a trophy, and then heads for Mirsk. They lay siege a week later, as Komanov retunes her weapon, and a few days later Mirsk is annihilated. Then Komanov turns her gaze toward Trekhom, capital of Drakr.

Even with their power level, the PCs aren't likely to be able to face an entire army themselves. They might defeat the Vsadni, which lowers the army's morale and slows their advance. Or they could sneak through the army and find Komanov tinkering, and try to cut off the head of the snake. But Komanov is empowered by her fanatics. Indeed, the best way to defeat a doomsday philosopher is to debate her. If the party can cut down the pillars of her ideology, the army will doubt her, which dispels the hivemind and breaks her power.

However they defeat Komanov, she pledges that her master the Voice of Rot will witness this world's end. But for now, stopping the radical eschatologists will make the PCs heroes to Drakr, which will convince the Drakran military to turn back from their invasion of Risur to defend their homeland.

Tasked with rooting out demonic influence, Vitus learned of the Obscurati's conspiracy and was captured trying to infiltrate it. After his escape (or rescue by the party), he discovered how deeply his religion's leadership had been twisted by the Ob's influence. With the Great Eclipse he has decided it is his destiny to cleanse his religion.

A *geneu credeto* (literally "spirit of belief," but more colloquially known as a "godhand"), Vitus's flesh and faith are one, and in battle his fists carry the weight of the combined devotion of tens of millions of adherents to the Clergy. He grew up in a monastery, then spent two decades traveling across Lanjyr defeating and capturing evil remnants of the Demonocracy.

Serene yet imposing, Vitus believes everyone has within them the potential to transcend mortal frailty and the temptations of sin, and he humbly strives to be an example of that path. Curiously, he has a great fondness for board games, which he justifies as being an encouragement for mental improvement. One of his bracers unfolds into a game board, which can be played with simple stones.

He will be wary of interference, even if the party saved him in Adventure Seven. If he was not rescued, he nevertheless could have escaped at a later time. If he died, another figure can fill his same role.



Act Three: Trial of the Century

The people of Crisillyir gather by the tens of thousands to place their gods on trial. Each execution kills not only the god, but all those who have remained devout despite the Ob's ritual, which has made people more rational and less faithful. And as those followers perish, the web of wards placed upon the nation to hold back dormant evil falter. Left unchecked, they'll unleash a fiery cataclysm on the capital city.

Before then, the party needs to gain access to a holy vault in the city's grand library. Only there can they find the details of the Ancient ritual the Obscurati used to open the Axis Seal and alter the world's link to the cosmos. If the library burns down, the party might never be able to undo the Ob's grand design.

Divine Trials

The Clergy of Crisillyir lost many of its hierarchs during the Great Eclipse. Those who weren't secretly part of the Obscurati the whole time were killed, and fake suicide notes were left wherein they recanted their faith. Now the public has turned resentful of the gods, and they have taken to putting them on trial.

This is not merely metaphorical. The old demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** long hid the secret *sacrament of apotheosis* ritual, and for refusing to share its power the Clergy imprisoned her in their Vault of Heresies. But the spells binding her weakened, and she was able to reach out via blood magic and share the ritual with a few people she knew would use it against the Clergy.

Adventure Overview

Morgan Cippiano, head of the Flint branch of the Crisillyir-based Family crime syndicate, asks to accompany the party to try to save his homeland. In the capital city of Alais Primos he introduces the party to **Donna Aneanya**, overall head of the Family.

The goal of finding the Axis Seal ritual leads the party to the Grand Library, which is across the square from the site of the ongoing god trials. The library's demiplane vault can only be opened if two people agree—the nation's secular leader **Arch Saecula Degaspere** and the godhand who is putting its gods on trial, **Vitus Sigismund**. Degaspere won't help unless the party can stop the trials and save her city, and Sigismund insists on finishing off his pantheon before he'll aid the party.

Sigismund knows the church was corrupt, but hopes that the 'tribunal of the people' will find the foundation of the church—the teachings of the beloved god Triegenes—to be true. Though he claims impartiality as a judge, his fanatic ally **Legate Tullius** incites bitter verdicts from the mob, and together they will likely doom the city.

One possible resolution to the madness that has gripped the city would be to put the god Triegenes himself on trial, and then to achieve a not guilty verdict. Degaspere suggests evidence might be found in the Vault of Heresies, and if the party has investigated the motivations behind the god trials they might want to confront Ashima-Shimtu on their own.

The moment they arrive at the vault, however, old wards placed by the Clergy call in a host of angels. Long forbidden by the Axis Seal from answering the Clergy's prayers, they come now to purge the vault. The party will find the celestial beings obdurate and unwilling to delay, so to find the evidence they need they'll have to rush, or perhaps attack the holy messengers. As for Ashima-Shimtu, the demoness has complex

AIRSHIP JOURNEYS

The party should have an airship courtesy of Benedict Pemberton, and if we assume an average speed, the ship should be able to travel about 300 miles in a day. Use the following baseline for travel time between major points in the adventure.

HOURS OF TRAVEL TO:						
FROM:	Flint	Seobriga	Ursaliña	Bhad Rhyzhavdut	Alais Primos	Sid Minos
Flint	—	56	40	74	42	48
Seobriga	56	—	64	100	34	30
Ursaliña	40	64	—	124	74	75
Bhad Rhyzhavdut	74	100	124	—	62	68
Alais Primos	42	34	74	62	—	8
Sid Minos	48	30	75	68	8	—

AERIAL ENCOUNTERS

Because of weak air mana, the world did not have flying creatures larger than albatrosses until a few months ago, so any monsters that might accost the party while they're flying would be new arrivals from other planes.

If you want to sic a random encounter on your players as they travel, you could have a storm roll upon them, but instead of thunder created by lightning, the storm roars with an open portal to another plane. As the winds buffet the party's ship, they can glimpse a hole in the sky, and beyond it what appears to be a world being ground to pieces by invisible gear teeth. Then the portal can collapse, spitting something out at the last second that can attack the party.

DOCKING AND DEFENSE

The enchantments Pemberton granted the party's ship means that it can hover, and the PCs can simply jump overboard and *featherfall* to the ground. Getting back on board is as simple as a fly spell or *dimension door*. Landing the ship probably isn't feasible.

Smart players will realize that, with a near pitch-black sky, it's possible to fly the ship over even an inhabited area and have it not be detected (though sailing ships work better for this than ones with steam-powered propellers). Most people don't look skyward, and if the PCs are careful they have amazing stealth options.

If the party gets discovered by enemies, enemy militaries have enough troops to slowly damage the ship with sustained small arms fire, and each force has some preparations against new flying threats. Drakrans have immense cannons that can wheel upward if needed. Crisillyir has plenty of trained priests capable of calling down pillars of flame, and a few who can summon actual angels. Beran druids are learning to adopt winged forms, and reckless skylancers are practicing with deployable backpack gliders so they can teleport straight into the air and land on the deck of the party's vessel.

desires, and though she wants to see the Clergy fall, a nascent empathy within her might lead her to aid the party in order to stop innocents from dying due to Triegenes's execution.

Back in Alais Primos the trial begins, with Morgan Cippiano standing in as a proxy for Triegenes. If Triegenes is found guilty, Morgan will be used as a focus for the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and then he'll be executed. The gathered masses jeer and shout for a guilty plea, but the godhand Vitus makes a show of letting the party offer evidence. But even should the party make a convincing enough argument to sway the maddened crowd, Vitus refuses to accept, and he uses himself as the focus of the *sacrament*, then kills himself.

This causes thousands of years of wards to crumble, foremost those around the volcano Enzyo Mons that looms over Alais Primos. It erupts, and the evil essence of every heretic and curse hurled into its maw takes the form of a titanic lava dragon, which sweeps toward Alais Primos. With little time, the party must decide whether to enter the library's vault and get the precious ritual, or try to fight the dragon and save hundreds of thousands of lives.

REWARDS

The party begins this adventure at 19th level, and should reach 20th level at the end. From that point on, the party's motivations should be how they can change the world, not how they can get more power.

WHAT COMES NEXT?

To help you manage your players' expectations, know that in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*, the party will receive a call for help from the Unseen Court in the Dreaming, which they can answer on their way to the Gyre.

When the spiraling cloud passes over Flint, if the party flies their ship to the peak of Cauldron Hill they'll be drawn to the edge of the Gyre, where the plane of Av and the mirrored worlds of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are being sheared free from each other. Meteors carrying warriors of the Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering pillage the planes, looking for treasure before the worlds are torn apart.

The party can try to evacuate the fey to the real world, and in so doing can form a link to the anima of the plane, which will give them the option to use the plane when they recreate the Axis Seal ritual. Their course takes them onward to the dying worlds being drawn into the Gyre, where they can find other planes to link with. All the while the Voice of Rot coils tightly around Reida, the plane of time that defines the fate of the party's homeworld, and in order to spare the world from destruction they must free it from his grasp.

That probably entails driving him into a black hole. So don't be afraid to go epic in this adventure; we've got crazier stuff still left ahead.



PROLOGUE: FORTRESS RISUR



After the party saves the day in Danor (or possibly left Cherage to be consumed by a horrid godmind), Principal Minister Harkover Lee requests they return to Risur for some necessary governance, and to speak with some couriers who request succor. If nothing else, their ship likely needs repairs and restocking. This gives the PCs an opportunity to use the royal coffers to acquire new magic items (detailed in the appendix of Adventure Nine), and to deal with personal plots in their homeland.

It's up to the players whether they'd rather return to Flint where they likely have the most allies, or to Slate, the official capital of Risur. In either case, time is short, since four nations are preparing to invade. Magic aids any repairs the ship needs, and it becomes the work of half the city to get the monarch and his or her allies what they need.

As soon as the party has had a chance to sleep and prepare for a new day, Harkover can arrange for a meeting of allies and supplicants. This is at least two or three days after the Forward Symposium in Cherage was attacked by the godmind.



GOOD TALK

Social. Real-Time.

The party and their allies get a briefing on a half-dozen global doomsdays.

At the place of the party's choosing, Principal Minister Harkover Lee, RHC Chief Inspector Stover Delft, and various royal advisors detail the international threats. Give out Player's Handout—Risuri National Defense, which explains the threats they face.

Harkover highlights the report on each army's "heroic dangers," and clarifies that they're so named because they will kill people who are too heroic. He waxes nostalgic about Queen Hibiscus of the Argent Rampant, who provoked the First Yerasol War when she—and allies from a military company she had served in before taking the crown—teleported to a Danoran shipyard in the Yerasol Archipelago, intending to raze it and claim the island.

Instead, she discovered Danor's secret weapon—firedust—when she set off a lightning bolt in a ship's magazine. The story only came out a decade later after one of her allies was retrieved in a prisoner exchange. The queen had warded herself and her group with layers of defense against arrows and tiefling fire, and grew overconfident in her supposed invulnerability.

After a moment to ponder that, Harkover produces three calls for help.

Glaucia's Courier

Mysana del Salvatia, an orc *executore dola liberta* from Ber, is missing an arm below the elbow, which she had to amputate after a snakebite she suffered in the High Bayou. (She had magic to neutralize the first poison's bite, but there were a lot of snakes.) Though exhausted, she still proudly wears the broken chain badge of her office.

Mysana explains that she hiked from Ber and has been in occasional contact with **Glaucia Evora**, who is the highest rank *executore* left. Her information is limited because of the brevity of *sendings*, but Glaucia suspects the Obscurati conspiracy is active in the western city of Ursaliña, which has had no contact with the outside world for several weeks. Glaucia can provide more information if they meet her in Seobriga, at Palacio Justicia de los Huesos del Tirania Widoreva (the courthouse which holds the bones of the dead dragon tyrant Widoreva).

While the fate of a single city may not interest the party, Glaucia has told Mysana that proof of hostile Obscurati acts against Ber would let her pressure the Bruse to postpone or even cancel his army's invasion of Risur.



The Titan Box

Harkover then brings out a mithral lockbox of sturdy design, big enough to hold a few books. Ornate carvings depict the fey titans of Risur. (The box belonged to the Risuri ambassador to Drakr, and technically had already been on Risuri soil since the Great Eclipse, which was enough of a connection for Heid to cheat a bit and teleport it back to its homeland.) Harkover explains that he set up teleportation interdiction to protect the party, and this item arrived just this morning. It contains the following items:

- ♦ A letter from Vlendam Heid (Player's Handout—Letter from the End of the World), begging for aid.
- ♦ A map of the city of Bhadr Ryzhadvut and its surroundings (Player's Map—Bhadr Ryzhadvut).
- ♦ A brochure for a museum exhibit and a holiday tour of the history of the Lost Riders (Player's Handout—Museum Brochure).

A wood carving on the tower's original drawbridge is depicted in the brochure. It shows five warriors on rampant steeds, with some sort of knot pattern in the background. Each rider's head is turned upward as if to look at something, but that piece of the carving is rotted away.

A Knowledge (history) check (DC 25) reminds a PC that old texts contain illuminations of that door, and the top was a serpent's head. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25) recognizes that the same style of knot is used in depictions of the Voice of Rot in Risuri art. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) recalls that the five Lost Riders were said to have offered souls of the defeated to their patron, known as Speaker of Snow, Heart of Black Ice, and the Warden of the Bleak Gate, who it is said had an eye torn out by an ancient hero.

A Favor That is Too Great to Ask

Finally, Harkover admits a petitioner—**Morgan Cippiano**, head of the Family crime syndicate's operations in Flint. He says the first ships since the starfall have begun to reach Risur from Crisillyir, and they bring stories of madness in the land his forefathers came from. The people have begun to put their gods on trial. Every trial ends with a verdict of guilty, and every sentence is death. Somehow this is not simply a show, but the gods themselves are present, and as each dies, so do many of his or her followers.

In the past, Morgan says, he's made deals with the party—helping them with some issue if they give him leeway in his business affairs. Today, he kneels with humility and removes his fishhook necklace—symbol of the Clergy. He has family who are dying in Crisillyir, and he's going to return to save them if he can. He has nothing to offer the party, but he also knows no one else who might be able to help as they can.

Quietly, Harkover Lee will remind the monarch PC that they'll need the ritual of the Axis Seal, which as best they can determine is being kept in the Grand Librarian in Alais Primos.

Other Affairs

After this adventure, the party won't have any more chances to deal with personal plotlines. Once they go to the Gyre and return, events will reach a climax very quickly. For narrative closure, we suggest you weave any ongoing storylines personal to the PCs into this adventure (or find a creative way to tie them to the dying worlds of the Gyre).

At this point, it's up to the party to decide what to pursue. Use the following acts as guidelines for stories personalized for them.



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.

MEANWHILE... AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to the briefings the PCs receive from their allies and advisors, the newspapers are running the following stories.

War! As news spreads of imminent invasions from the rest of the world, the people of Risur stand stalwart, and many are eager to volunteer for military service to defend their homeland. Fearful citizens are glad to have a concrete threat to prepare against, since so far there seems to be no solution to the strange dark skies.

What is It? Though the shipping lanes have been opened since Risur's monarch defeated She Who Writhes, sailors have sighted strange new leviathans, their skin slick and red as if with blood. Were these creatures always here and merely held at bay by the fey titan, or did they arrive after the stars fell from the skies? So far no one has reported any attacks by these bloody beasts.

Good. Clericists and adherents of the Old Faith are meeting in Dawn Square each day this month to debate the nature of goodness, and to discuss ways to increase overall prosperity in this dark time. Organizers have asked both Flint police and the Dockers Guild to volunteer watchmen with a mission to prevent hiveminds from forming. Local entrepreneur Morgan Cippiano lamented that there was so much will to effect change, but the dangers of hiveminds forces them to act slowly.

Four. Ambassadors from Ber, Crisillyir, Danor, and Drakr have all lodged formal declarations of war against Risur. However Methan du-Nadria, head of the Danoran consulate in Flint, states that the Danoran people are not committed to the invasion. Indeed, they feel a debt of obligation to the Risuri monarch and those allies who managed to slay a titanic hivemind that threatened their capital city of Cherage.

Absolutely Nothing. Asher Henton, Distinguished Professor of Otherworldly Physics at Kitham University in Shale has completed a detailed survey of the dark sky in search of new stars. What lies out there? "Absolutely nothing," he says, aside from a handful of readily visible planets and the swirling vortex that has been dubbed The Gyre. And what is the Gyre? Henton refused to comment until he has a clearer understanding, though he ominously stated that it comes more into focus every day.

TIMELINES

From the day the adventure starts, it will take about four weeks for Risur to fall to the invaders, barring PC involvement. Meanwhile, the threats presented in the following three acts progress even if the party isn't present. Details can be found in each act for Ursaliña (page 9), Bhadr Ryzhavdut (page 28), and Alais Primos (page 36).

NEVERMIND QUEEN HIBISCUS

If your party wants to go fight a war—four or five high-level PCs versus armies—there are too many variables for us to fit them into an adventure. Consider that in the real world, militaries have been able to deal with tank divisions, squadrons of fighter jets, and fleets of destroyers by knowing what to expect and preparing countermeasures.

The other armies can have high-level characters of their own (but they probably cap out at level 15). Ignore the rules a bit, and you can justify strange battlefield defenses produced by the interaction of bardic music and a thousand soldiers singing along. Crisillyiri war bells have a tradition of hedging out teleportation, and could be tuned to thwart various PC tricks. Don't forget, the other side has diviners too who can predict what threats are out there.

If the PCs turn invisible, fly, then teleport in with the intention of raining death from above, a teleportation beacon could shunt them into a wagon

loaded with iron maidens that automatically begin dispelling the party's magic. Once they escape from that (not if), they discover the army's banner redirects hostile magic cast from more than fifty feet away, and projects an aura that reveals invisibility, and it's guarded by mages poised to turn back any dispel attempts. Then there are the hundreds of warriors with muskets or rifles, bound outsiders, and a variety of amateur wizards who are just smart enough to point a *wand of magic missiles* and swarm whichever target looks like he can't cast *shield*.

Now, disrupting supply lines, killing a few hundred soldiers off on their own, aiding their own army in a major engagement? Sure, that works. But they aren't invincible enough to take on tens of thousands of soldiers by themselves. That'll have to wait until Adventure Thirteen.





ACT ONE: SHACKLED THOUGHTS

The Gidim have implanted a leviathan under the Beran city of Ursaliña, and Gidim influenced police have sealed off the city so no one will discover it. As the leviathan consumes psychic energy from this once-festive city, it begins to sprout into a feeding tendril for the Gidim homeworld.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

Ursaliña lies on the opposite side of Ber from the capital Seobriga, but the party will likely still reach out to the Beran government for help, or at the very least to parlay saving Ursaliña into the Beran military halting its invasion of Risur.

In Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the party probably saved Bruse Shantus from Benedict Pemberton's coup. But Shantus might have died, in which case the most likely successor would be Cavallo de Guerra, an orcish warlord with strong naval forces loyal to him. Either man will feel some sense of obligation to the party, but also either would have fallen under the sway of the new nature of the world, and will be loyal to the Obscurati.

Whoever is ruler of Ber, he isn't thrilled to be making an enemy of the party, and if the PCs unshackle Ursaliña, they'll be able to convince their people that Risur is a potential ally. Shantus is mostly paying lip service, as his main concern is living comfortably, and a war threatens that. Cavallo's family has deep-rooted disdain for the Cadagyr family that governs Ursaliña, but he's a strong believer in the ideals of Ber, and won't leave his fellows under psychic dominion.

SPYMASTER EL EXTRAÑO

What does Ber's kobold spymaster know of events in Ursaliña? Very little so far. He's working on sneaking in a mage who can suppress the city's teleportation beacon to let agents escape the city, but that won't happen fast enough.

TIME FOR A SAVAGE BEATING

Action. Tactical. Level 18.

Glaucia Evora comes out of hiding to meet the PCs, giving Ob agents a window to assassinate her.

If the party seeks Glaucia out, her *executore* messenger will *send* and relay that she wishes to meet in Seobriga, at Palacio Justicia de los Huesos del Tirania Widoreva (the courthouse which holds the bones of the dead dragon tyrant Widoreva). For the past few weeks Glaucia has been keeping a low profile, but she comes out of hiding to meet the PCs. At a pre-arranged time she will wait in front of the massive draconic skeleton that fills the courtroom.

She has a spell of *true seeing* active, and is suspicious of duplicants and other duplicity.

"Let us be brief. Here in Ber we thrash slavers, but most of the nation is blind to their new chains. I am not blind, and so enemies seek me. I made a blunder as I came to meet you." She smiles, all canines. "Some of them will be arriving soon. You wouldn't let me come to harm, would you?"

Indeed, within two minutes an Obscurati assassination squad arrives, easy pickings for the party. Glaucia nonchalantly keeps talking up to and even through any fight that ensues.

"Executore Salome Nieves is one of my enforcers. Loyal, and a foolish novice. But I am forced to work with who I have left. She's the second woman I sent to Ursaliña. The first reported an ambush on the road outside the city by 'tiny pink dragons' that killed her porter. She sounded addled, and never contacted me again.

"Salome managed to enter the city and *send* to me once. 'City unusually docile. Perfectly polite, but sad bearing. Feigned joviality. Except merchant Flida. Says she saw something glowing, flying over city days after stars fell.'

"I sent her with two *sending* scrolls because she couldn't cast it herself. As I said, she's a novice. We had an Executores Lodge in Ursaliña, but who knows what's actually there? Not a single other word has come out of that city in weeks. The Bruse only cares because he cannot launch attacks on your west coast from its port. But if our friendly new world rulers are harming the people of Ursaliña, I could convince him to stop his invasion. Risur has, after all, been a great ally this past year."

Around that point, the Obscurati assassination squad arrives. They are led by Obscurati Ambassador Shuman Larkins, a formerly-Risuri member of the ghost council who has found his magic empowered since the Axis Seal ritual. In an effable way, his presence reflects the will of the Obscurati and all those loyal to him, making him far more powerful than he would be alone.

Assassination Squad

- ♦ 1 Empowered Ghost Councilor
- ♦ 4 Great Eclipse Killers

Shuman Larkins, Empowered Ghost Councilor

CR 16

Male human ghost wizard 15

LE Medium undead (human, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22**Defense****AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +1 Dex)**hp** 140 (15d8+75)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation;**Immune** undead traits**Offense****Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** corrupting touch +10 (16d6; DC 21)**Special Attacks** malevolence, telekinesis**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +19)8th—*greater prying eyes*, *orb of the void*^{UM} (DC 24)7th—*finger of death* (DC 23), *greater arcane sight*, *power word blind*6th—*circle of death* (DC 22), *globe of invulnerability*, *unwilling shield*^{APC} (DC 22), *veil*5th—*quicken magic missile* x2, *sending*, *suffocation* (DC 21), *telepathic bond*4th—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *communal protection from energy*^{UC}, *fear* (DC 20),*greater invisibility*, *scrying*3rd—*dispel magic* x3, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19), *vampiric touch* x22nd—*locate object* x2, *see invisibility*, *steal voice* x3 (DC 18)1st—*magic missile* x5, *ray of enfeeblement*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *message***Statistics****Str** —, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22**Feats** Alertness, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness**Skills** Bluff +17, Diplomacy +21, Fly +9, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +22**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial**Special Abilities**

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, the ghost inflicts 15d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save (DC 21) halves the damage inflicted.

Malevolence (Su) Once per round, the ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (CL 15th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 21). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours.

Quicken Telekinesis (Su) The ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds (CL 15th). Three times per day he can do it as a swift action.

Great Eclipse Killer

CR 13

Male shadow-touched human slayer 12/shadowdancer 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17**Defense****AC** 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 138 (12d10+2d8+56)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny dodge**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** eclipse claw +18/+13/+8 (1d8+2+1d6 negative energy)**Ranged** +2 *human bane hand crossbow* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks slayer talents (assassinate [DC 17], fast stealth, hunter's surprise, lasting poison, poison use, swift poison), sneak attack +4d6, studied target (+3, 3 targets, swift action)

Statistics**Str** 15, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29**Feats** Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload

(hand crossbow), Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (eclipse claw)

Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +16, Climb +19, Intimidate +16, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +4, Sleight of Hand +19, Stealth +27, Survival +17

Languages Common, Primordial**SQ** hide in plain sight, shadow man, stalker, swift tracker, track +6

Combat Gear; **Other Gear** +2 *human bane hand crossbow*, 20 bolts, +3 *studded leather*, +3 *light steel shield*

Eclipse Claw (Su) One of a Great Eclipse Killer's arms has been transformed into a hideous claw. The claw acts as a natural weapon and deals an additional 1d6 points of negative energy damage on a successful strike. Once per round as a free action, a Great Eclipse Killer may extend his reach with the appendage to 15 ft. and attack with the claw.

Shadow Man (Su) A Great Eclipse Killer takes damage from positive energy and heals from negative energy damage as though he were undead. He is also affected by abilities that affect undead. As a move action, he may become an insubstantial mass of shadows. During this time, he is considered to be incorporeal, but cannot initiate any attack actions. He can only maintain his shadowy state for up to 5 minutes per day, though he may space these out into smaller groupings (effectively 50 rounds worth). Shifting back to corporeal form is a move action. If a Great Eclipse Killer is targeted by positive energy while in this state, he immediately shifts back to corporeal form and is dazed for one round.

Glaucia Evora CR 14

Female gnoll cleric 15

LG Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +13**Defense****AC** 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 natural)**hp** 129 (17d8+49)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +19**Resist** Aura of protection (+2 deflection to AC, resist 10 against all energy types, 15 rounds/day), enforcer (see below)**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +5 *merciful holy quarterstaff* +16/+11 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 nonlethal plus 2d6 against evil)**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (8d6, DC 19)**Domain Spell-like Abilities** (CL 15th, concentration +18)6/day—*resistant touch* (+2)At will—*aura of protection* (15 rounds/day), *freedom's call* (15 rounds/day), *liberation* (15 rounds/day)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +18)8th—*destruction* (DC 22), *shield of law*7th—*circle of clarity*^{UM}, *greater restoration*, *repulsion*6th—*blade barrier*, *greater dispel magic*, *harm*, *heal*5th—*break enchantment*, *flame strike*, *scrying*, *true seeing* x24th—*discern lies* (DC 18), *freedom of movement*, *restoration*, *sending* x23rd—*dispel magic* (2), *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*2nd—*enthrall* (DC 16), *shield other*, *silence* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*, *zone of truth* (DC 16)1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *forbid action* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*, *remove fear***Domains** Liberation, Protection**Statistics**

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

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21**Feats** Alertness, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Extra Channel, Iron Will, Selective Channel, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Sense Motive +22, Stealth +11**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Giant, Orc**SQ** aura**Other Gear** +5 holy *merciful quarterstaff***Enforcer (Su)** Attacking an *executore* is against the law, and crime demands a reciprocal punishment. Whenever a creature attacks Glaucia for the first time each day, it is affected by *power word stun*.**Tactics**

Shuman's *greater prying eyes* show up (well, they're invisible) at the end of Glaucia's explanation, and the four great eclipse killers slide in stealthily a minute later (Perception DC 37 to detect as they hide in plain sight).

Shuman will already have active *greater arcane sight*, *telepathic bond*, and *communal protection from energy* against an energy type the Obscurati are aware the party uses. Additionally, just before he enters he casts *unwilling shield* on a burly young man he keeps around for this contingency. The man's drugged and obedient, and can soak up to 40 damage for Shuman.

GLAUCIA EVORA

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

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

Shuman floats into the courtroom with a threat: surrender to him, or else even if they defeat him, he will rejuvenate in a few days and punish the populace of Seobriga for Glaucia's insolence. This is an idle boast, because he would rejuvenate with the core of the ghost council, a thousand miles away.

If he thinks the party won't oblige, Shuman telepathically orders his allies to strike. The Great Eclipse Killers—Berans who volunteered to be transmogrified into darkness—fight in pairs, each pair targeting a single PC, whom they will have studied carefully for potential assassination. Though they originally thought they were here for Glaucia, the PCs are a more tempting target.

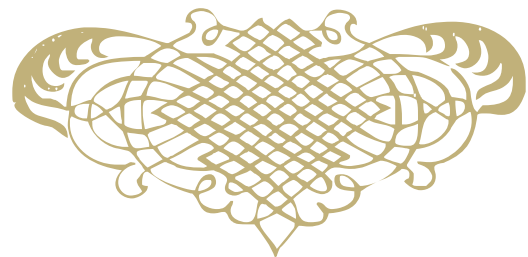
In a fight, Shuman creates an *orb of the void* that he sweeps through the party, then fires off the big guns to blind or or simply kill PCs. He picks one enemy as a primary target and focuses his quickened magic missiles and quickened telekinesis at them, flinging them into his void orb if possible.

For her part, Glaucia casts *destruction* on one killer, then fearlessly enters melee beside the PCs.

Aftermath

A defeated Shuman lingers as his form dissolves, giving the party a chance to talk. He displays an emotion rare for the undead—honest fear. He says that Nicodemus is furious at his repeated setbacks, and he dreads the mastermind's rage for failing to thwart the party.

As for Ursaliña, Shuman is sincerely unaware of any special Obscurati operations there, though now he'll have to mention the oddity to his superiors once he reaches the ghost council.



URSALIÑA, THE CITY OF BEARS

Exploration. Montage.

People of Ursaliña maintain an eerily friendly façade and refuse to admit anything is wrong in case something is watching them.

Named after its traditional bear fights, Ursaliña lies along the rocky northwestern coast of Ber, where the sea meets the Anthras Mountains. Those peaks once made it a prize domain for the dragon tyrants, and like every Beran city their influence persists in the architecture. The city rises and falls in steep terraces on four main hills, each crowned by a major civic building. Poorer neighborhoods weave through the low 'troughs' between hills, and imposing bridges connect the terraces in labyrinthine combinations.

Fanciful fountains thread mountain streams along the terraces and bridges, and fierce gusts of winds in the troughs kick up mist that cools the cramped streets and alleys. The hills fall sharply near the coast, where ornately-carved staircases link the harbor to the different levels of the city.

Similar areas of steep hills and valleys dot the landscape around Ursaliña, and for centuries servants of the dragon tyrants bred and domesticated megafauna in these natural paddocks. Countless caves provided lairs for the famed local dire bears, allowing the predators to hide and survive despite fervent attempts to exterminate them.

Today, two centuries since the dragon tyrants fell, Ursaliña proudly claims a two-headed dire bear as the city sigil. Many of the civic buildings have been restored to their original splendor, straddling a line between glorifying a brutal past and patriotism for what the Beran people managed to build.

The population is majority orc, with minotaurs and half-giants the next most common races.

Coming and Going

Each of the hill-tops is ringed with a defensive curtain wall with only a handful of gates, all well-guarded and requiring tolls unless a traveler carries a city passport (which costs 5gp per year). Boards at each gate post the latest news (see Player's Handout: Ursaliña News). The low-lying areas are effectively undefended, though, and normally people could come and go as they please. Practically everyone must pass through the Troughs first before reaching the hills.

These days, though, the Gidim have established a perimeter around the city. Several rings of cerebral mesh run through every road and trail into the city, allowing the leviathan to sense creatures as they cross it. Anyone spotted trying to leave the city is deterred first by city police on the outskirts, and those who will not turn back are set upon by Gidim flying horrors (see Appendix One: Gidim Invaders and Beran Allies).

Arrival

Should the party fly in on an airship, as long as they stay out of range of the locals' darkvision they should remain unseen. If the PCs make a big show of arriving, see Breakin' the Law (page 16).

Like most large cities, Ursaliña has a teleportation beacon. Those who teleport more than a mile at a time and aim anywhere within three miles of the city are shunted to just outside a customs station in the western docks. However, the Gidim don't want people sneaking out, and so have also set up a planar net using the power of the cerebral mesh to hedge the city in. Any teleportation effect used within the city that would go more than a mile shunts back to the same customs station.

Cadagyr Estate

Northern District

Atop the northern hill of the city, broad gardens overflowing with aromatic flowers ring the manor house of Lord Winslow Cadagyr, orc governor of Ursaliña and the surrounding state. Wealthy Ursaliñans live here, with access to the freshest water from the mountains, and the most distance



from the fish stench of the docks. Streets teem with fountains and statues of statuesque orcish women.

The flowers here slightly mask the cloying scent of Gidim cerebral mesh. Lord Cadagyr and most of the other heads of household in this district have been deluded by psychic memory modification into becoming loyal servants of the Gidim. However the lord's son **Dieter Cadagyr** lives in his own house in the Triunfo Vida district, and has not been affected.

One eyesore in the district is the relatively new **Executores Lodge**, an unadorned, imposing cube of steel-gray granite, built thirty years ago as a reminder to the wealthy not to abuse their power. Normally it houses a detachment of a dozen executores and their house staff, and its only two public spaces are a training field where onlookers can gawk at women practicing brutal combat, and the stocks, which are seldom occupied.

By the time the party arrives, the lodge is empty and locked, with all the local executores taken to the psychovivisection chamber of the Gidim leviathan. Salome Nieves remains in hiding, though some of

her belongings still sit unmolested in a bedroom in the lodge; a half hour search turns up the second *sending* scroll Glaucia mentioned.

An oculus (see Appendix One: Gidim Invaders and Beran Allies) hovers over the lodge at all times, softly hissing and moaning as it watches.

Jaula de Oso

Southern District

Colloquially known as the Jaula or Cage, this arena's long and vicious history put Ursaliña on the map. Gladitorial games were held within the towering edifice for centuries, but since the unification of Ber the site has been limited to animal bouts, concerts, and the occasional formal duel.

Constructed of the same granite that coats the city in steel gray, Jaula de Oso consists of three upper levels for spectators and a lower level for combatants and administrative offices. A small villa nearby is the home of Arena Master **Pili Roque**. Maestra Roque is currently fuming because her Cage has been shut down for a week due to 'safety inspections.' In truth, the Gidim have been experimenting on the bears kenned beneath the arena, crafting warbeasts. Maestra Roque and a pair of staff still come

TIMELINE OF URSALIÑA

These days are relative to whenever the adventure starts, since normal calendars no longer seem to apply.

- ♦ **Day 1+:** Every day a few people go missing, their consciousness consumed to nourishing the feeding tentacle being grown in the Gidim leviathan. Lord Winslow Cadagyr mandates a curfew, orders the prisons opened, and has prisoners assigned as guards for all city gates to prevent anyone from exiting.
- ♦ **Day 5:** A protest outside Cadagyr Estate about missing people is brutally suppressed by the police. Lord Winslow Cadagyr threatens arrest of any shopkeeper who does not keep normal hours.
- ♦ **Day 10:** The streets are noticeably emptier than usual, though some are tempted out by the new bloodsports at the Jaula de Oso. People hear strange beasts during curfew.
- ♦ **Day 15:** Lord Cadagyr orders mandatory parades each day to force high spirits, but otherwise people almost never leave their houses.
- ♦ **Day 19:** Lord Cadagyr's son Dieter loads a backpack with potions of invisibility and attempts to sneak into the Jaula. He is captured and brought to the leviathan's psychovivisection chamber, then converted into a shock trooper.
- ♦ **Day 20:** Lord Cadagyr makes attendance of the daily bloodsport in Jaula de Oso mandatory. Executore Salome Nieves begins to rally marines at the city's docks.
- ♦ **Day 22:** Marines storm Cadagyr Estate, kill several Gidim, but then are overrun by Gidim warbeasts.
- ♦ **Day 23:** Sporadic looting begins and fires sprout, since most homes are empty. The Gidim openly unleash warbeasts in the streets to keep people from fleeing.
- ♦ **Day 24:** Gidim infiltrators go door to door, abducting children as final psychic sustenance for the tentacle.
- ♦ **Day 25:** The tentacle emerges, and nearly every thinking creature within 30 miles is slain. Thousands more Gidim begin to stream into this world, and they ride warbeasts toward Reo Pedresco.

DIVINATIONS AND GIDIM DEFENSES

The Jaula de Oso, Triunfo Vida, and nearly the entire northern district of Ursaliña are criss-crossed with threads of *cerebral mesh*, a Gidim thought-crafted material that enhances psychic abilities, provides structural support, and prevent detection through mental interference. Areas with the mesh exude a cloying floral scent, which conjures up nostalgic memories of some family gathering that's impossible to quite recall.

Each hour a character is in an area with cerebral mesh (or if a character specifically searches an area), have him or her make a Perception check (DC 30) to notice strands stretching along the ground and walls, like a cross between spider silk and ivy.

The mesh functions like lead for detection spells blocked by that material. Other divinations like scrying aimed at the area covered by mesh produce a psychically projected memory of reality when nothing suspicious was happening. The caster of the divination must make a Will save (DC 25) or receive a false, innocuous result.

Gidim are attuned with the material, and creatures standing within five feet of any of the mesh suffer a -4 penalty to Will saves against Gidim abilities. Additionally, as a standard action any Gidim can have up to a thirty foot length of mesh produce a psychic wall of repellant ideas. Any thinking creature that attempts to enter or pass through the wall takes 20 damage (Will DC 20 half). The wall lasts for five minutes, or until the Gidim who created it dismisses it or falls unconscious.

STRAY THOUGHTS

Finally, any magic that communicates or projects thoughts over a distance might be detected by the Gidim. *Sending* and *detect thoughts*, for instance, will cause the Gidim to send out an elite police squad (page 16), with orders to arrest whoever used the magic.

and go to feed and tend to the beasts, but Gidim psionics cause them to ignore the animals' deformities and the extraplanar beings operating around them.

An oculus hovers in or near the arena, but the building is too large for it to watch all at once, so it flies a slow circuit. The creature's sussurus is drowned out by a large sizzling brazier within the arena, whose flame has been kept alive for two centuries. The only people allowed into the arena aside from Roque and her aids are those who deliver shipments of wood and oil to keep the fire burning.

This district also is home to many prosperous restaurants that serve dishes thick with beans and cheeses, the best of which have high balconies with grand vistas.

Mercado Delicias

Western District

The primary market for Ursaliña, this plaza sprawls across nearly the entire top of the city's western hill. A dizzying array of foodstuffs can be found, from fresh fish hauled in from the ocean, to all manner of game meats, to even stranger fare such as the megafauna that inhabit Ber's interior. City ordinances, however, prevent the operation of restaurants in this district—a concession to the business interests of the Jaula de Oso district.

In addition to food, the Mercado also holds goods imported from all over the world, as befitting a coastal trading town. Of interest to many weary travelers is the assortment of brothels, like the high-class Vela Roja or the more affordable Cristal Azul that is popular with sailors and fishers.

Two obelisks of black diorite, polished to a mirror finish and pierced through in regular intervals, flank the east and west sides of the wide paved plaza, once served as timekeeping devices for merchants by tracing the sun's path along floor mosaics. Now they're just reminders of daytime the world will never have again. Both obelisks predate the founding of the city, and Jaula de Oso's records indicate that the monuments existed well before the current arena did.

Gidim oculi only make occasional passes over this plaza. Instead the city police keep watch, and arrest or beat anyone who starts to question what's going on.

Triunfo Vida

Eastern District

The traveling minotaur bards of Ber are the first to hear of any rumors in the nation, and capable of delivering scathing rhetoric to inflict lasting damage to reputations in all social classes. The Triunfo Vida is the local branch of the loosely affiliated bardic colleges within Ber, and this edifice of bright blue stucco walls, adorned with white marble statuary and fluted columns holds some of the most lavish pageants and shows in its grounds.

Bards that study at the Triunfo often make their living through dance and acrobatic performances, and the patronage of the wealthy Lord Winslow Cadagyr is hotly contested among the students and staff. Or it was. Now the college is closed to visitors due to 'renovations,' and most of the former occupants have scattered to other parts of the district.

The most active site for entertainment now is the **Red Peacock Café**, a fine restaurant with adjoining art gallery and fine clothier shop. Local working class citizens dress nicely and come here on special occasions to experience upscale life. All the staff are beautiful orc women in the finest fashion, or tiny goblins and kobolds who slink around practically unseen in drab hoods. At least one spy for El Extraño always works here.

Likewise, this district was home to Ursaliña's rudimentary industrial capacity, but with the city in lockdown these factories have run out of firegems for their furnaces. Like so many other cities, when things go bad the poor workers suffer first, protest first, and are punished first.

Dieter Cadagyr, son of the city's lord, keeps a house here. He often spends his evenings at the Red Peacock.

Resto del Pescador

Western Docks

The city docks are currently idle, and sailors tell tales of strange glowing albatrosses descending upon ships that attempted to leave the harbor. A contingent of two thousand marines on twenty frigates that were scheduled to sail up and assail the Risuri city of Shale are stuck in dock, and the soldiers get progressively rowdy as time goes on. Their orc commander, **Commodore Anjela Deinosa**, grits her tusks in frustration but still waits for orders from the Bruse that won't arrive.

New merchant vessels arrive until Day 10, after which rumors about the city deter further crews from coming here.

Just off the southwest docks and warehouses lies an expanse of lush green grass, dotted here and there with sprawling shade-providing trees. A popular destination for both the noon meal or to enjoy the cool breeze that wafts from the ocean, the Resto is a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of industry.

Many open celebrations are held at the city's public house, Casa dola Biches, and parades typically muster here then march through the city, weaving along the bridges between hilltop districts.

The Troughs

The low-lying areas between the high districts are crowded and dark. Executore Salome Nieves hides here, and travels without her badge of office to remain inconspicuous.

Cowed and suppressed by the city patrols, the populace runs about its daily business, knowing that people who act out of line disappear. It's become a quiet protest for people to sarcastically adopt repetitive speech patterns, especially when police are around. If standing out will get you arrested, then they'll just all say the exact same thing so no one stands out. Two of the most popular phrases are, "Come inside to shop and get out of that harsh sun," and "Fool's Day was even better than last year! Lord Cadagyr's patronage truly showed in the costumes. Such a variety of colors!"

From dawn to dusk, Ursaliña follows a regular schedule: merchants set up their booths, display their wares, and then close up promptly when the dim light of the Gyre sinks to the west. People are borderline brusque in their behavior, but in the presence of police they feign joviality. Most ignore the PCs even if directly addressed. A Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals that people are affected by some sort of psychic effect similar to hiveminds, but more restrained.

SECRETS AND PARANOIA

Aside from a few people who managed to resist the Gidim's pervasive psychic presence, everyone in Ursaliña is affected by constant low-level enchantment magic, similar to *charm person* except that it produces an unwillingness to be curious, rather than friendship.

People don't want to talk about what's going on, but if the party picks a bystander and presses them, something horrifying occurs. The Gidim leviathan is constantly sensing its environment for interesting energies and emotions, and the sudden spike of panic from the bystander causes the leviathan to try to establish a psychic link with the poor Ursaliñan citizen the party picked.

His demeanor will shudder through wildly disparate emotions: eager, despairing, violent, revolted, and finally white-knuckle horror. He begs or screams at the party to stop asking him questions, but if they keep pressing he bends over backwards, he clutches his head, and then with a solid crack that the PCs can feel in their skin, his skull splits open and his brain explodes onto the ground in a bloody mess.

This only ever happens once. If the party continues to harass citizens, the leviathan is able to sense the party's activities and dispatches the city police.

SPIRIT OF THE CITY

The Urban Empath prestige class has powers that make discovering the Gidim fairly trivial, so this scenario should be a perfect one for that PC to shine. Perhaps play up the oddness a bit, include a few hallucinations courtesy of the cerebral mesh throughout the city, but ultimately Ursaliña will tell its tales.

WHAT A LOVELY DAY

Social. Real-Time.

A handful of allies can be found in the city, trying to avoid detection by enemies they don't understand.

The party likely enters in the lowland Troughs and must then make their way to one of the hilltop districts. Before they go blundering in and getting discovered, a merchant named **Flida** will try to warn them.

Goblin Pickle Vendor

A few minutes after the party gets into the city, they're passing the stall of **Innwung**, a goblin pickle vendor, who sits grumpily atop his barrel of pickles, glaring out at the crowd. At the same time, a pair of orc police officers walk up and order him to open up for business.

Innwung mumbles that he's not going to play along anymore. The police ask him to repeat that, and the goblin yells out, "I'm not pretending everything is normal anymore! You should be looking for the people who are missing, not bothering me. No one gets any pickles until you fix this city!"

The police laugh, slug the goblin unconscious, and carry him away. They leave the barrel of pickles behind.

Flida's Finest

A thick faded blue canvas overhangs this booth, and piles of blankets, hand towels, rolls of unbleached rough-spun cotton, and other household linens form a wall of fabric. Behind the piles of goods, a lanky orc woman with a broad smile calls out, "Foreigners! You look like you've traveled a bit. Need any clothes mended, loves?"

She has stringy blond hair held in place by a kerchief decorated with rose patterns, and wears a well-tailored tunic and trousers. A pocketed apron holds a pair of small scissors, shears, a measuring stick, and a long length of twine knotted at intervals. Unlike basically everyone else in the city, Flida aggressively tries to get the party's attention. Should any PC acknowledge her, Flida gestures them closer, speaking in a hushed voice, "Let's get out of the sun. It's so bright today."

Am I the Only One Who Saw That?

Despite the dire situation, Flida is condescending because she expected help ages ago. She demands proper manners, and prods people in the chest with a measuring stick if they are rude.

Flida has previously met with Executore Nieves, and will tell the party as she told her that about a week after the stars fell from the sky many people spotted something large in the sky, glowing like maybe it had dozens of candles all over it. It was at least the size of a fishing boat, and after a few moments it simply disappeared. People talked about it for a few days, but then some of them started going missing, and those who asked questions were beaten and arrested. Now no one talks about it.

Then the Fool's Day celebration was canceled, and ever since then things have gotten steadily stranger and more dangerous. Flida had a customer in Cadagyr District—a housemaid for a wealthy house. Flida asked her to deliver a message to the Executores Lodge. She never saw her customer again, and it was weeks before an executore came by. The executore mentioned she was going to investigate the Jaula, but Flida never saw *her* again either.

Flida warns them not to get spotted by the city guards, who have a habit of arresting outsiders and taking them to the governor, Lord Cadagyr. Which reminds her of an odd rumor she heard of a masked vigilante. Apparently some police were accosting a young cripple girl who was out after curfew, and were about to arrest her, when a person in a mask swept in and killed the police. When another patrol arrived, their bodies were missing. Flida wonders if this might be Nieves, but the news she heard mentioned something about the bodies being cut apart, which doesn't sound like an executore. (It's actually Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, investigating on behalf of the Obscurati.)

Flida also mentions the factories shut down in Triunfo district because no raw supplies are coming in, and that the Lord's eldest son, Dieter Cadagyr, briefly made a ruckus about the odd goings-on—rumor was he got thrown off his father's estate. People say he's letting unemployed workers live in his own personal house.

Finally, she warns that the skies aren't empty. She sometimes hears things overhead—hissing and moaning, reminding her of her old grandmother's snores before she died. But she never sees anything.

Flida's Fate

A day after the party talks to her, unless they were particularly stealthy or they make a point to hide her, Flida vanishes. The police take her away, and she's fed to the bears in the Jaula. They might find her rose-patterned kerchief in a bear cage there.

Dieter at the Red Peacock

Should the party seek Dieter, the eldest son of Lord Winslow Cadagyr, they can likely find the twenty-something orc at the bar of the Red Peacock, putting on a show of being a rich dilettante. He wears a well-manicured beard and impeccable fashion, though he appears to have nibbled on the fingers of his calfskin gloves. He's quite the charming dandy, and drinks copiously.

Each night after the establishment closes, however, Dieter waits behind and meets with informants, spies, and the occasional factory worker who needs his help.

Dieter is convinced someone has mind-controlled his father, and he's trying to be inconspicuous so people don't come for him. A few days ago he made a public speech trying to rally support, but the police came and violently broke up the event. He went to confront his father, but was spooked, feeling like he was being watched all throughout the Cadagyr District. He fled to the Red Peacock, hoping for news from the outside world. It was there that Salome Nieves found him and warned him to be careful.

There's a rumor going around that the Jaula de Oso is going to have a big tournament. People say they've seen a few trouble makers arrested and dragged there, and Dieter wonders if his father will re-institute old blood sports. But even that doesn't make any sense, because Pili Roque—the arena master—would be buying beasts.

Other foul things are happening, but he's not sure how much is connected. He doesn't want to seem paranoid, but people talk of graves being robbed, fountains going dry for a few moments and voices coming out before the water restarts, and the police being brutally violent in pursuit of some masked vigilante who's vivisectioning criminals. He thought it might have been Salome, but she's more of a blunt instrument.

Dieter is wary of the party's help. He like most everyone else believed the Obscurati's claims that Risur was to blame for the Great Eclipse, but if they can change his mind he might be able to keep the fleet in Ursaliña's bay from invading.

BARDS' LAMENT

When the party enters the Red Peacock, an argument is ongoing between minotaur bard **Ganillo Ducera**, and half-giant bard **Tekla Sixeves**, over which of them gets to perform. Ganillo has a sonorous singing voice. Tekla plays a brisk guitar. But neither knows the other's music, and so their efforts to collaborate stumbled awkwardly. They bicker in the aftermath of a poorly received song about the end of the world.

If pressed, both complain that they've been locked out of the Triunfo Vida and can't get to their sheet music. A PC who makes a good enough impression (Diplomacy DC 20 to get them to cooperate, then Perform DC 30 to entertain as a trio, for instance) can convince the two to spill all they know about the Triunfo, including the Ancient ruins underground and how the night before they were kicked out everyone remembered having strange dreams about being stranded far from home.

The Hidden Enforcer

The executore Salome Nieves rents a back room in a cramped hillside house in the Troughs. Finding her shouldn't be hard with high-level magic, or the party can find Dieter, who knows a baker he can leave a message with. A few hours later a message reaches Dieter at the Red Peacock, agreeing to meet in a trash-filled gorge at the eastern edge of the city. There, near a burning pile of rancid refuse, they find Salome—tall, well-groomed, with short-cropped black hair and a physique built for smashing evil-doers with a staff.

She's grown paranoid and constantly glances skyward or hushes the party to listen for the hiss-groan of invisible observers. She says that she figured out 'they' don't like noxious fumes. She knew she was being followed one time, something floating above her, always watching, and for a while she tried hiding in tunnels. But she was only able to shake them when she fled through an open air alchemy market where strange smoke was always thick in the air.

She's also convinced that someone was able to listen to the *sending* she sent, because minutes after it officers came to arrest her. There was a fierce fight in the Executores Lodge, and after she and her sisters defeated the police she entreated them to flee, but they wouldn't. She dared not go back there.

She suspected the Obscurati, but she hasn't seen any of their agents, and elsewhere in Ber they acted openly. There are no hallmarks of Pemberton's duplicants—apparently those who act odd are still eating, which duplicants do not. She has detected no undead who might be possessing people. She doesn't know who these invaders are, but they have control of the Jaula, the Triunfo Vida, and Cadagyr's Estate. She suspects a stern thrashing with a stick won't deter them.

BREAKIN' THE LAW

Action. Tactical. Level 5 to 19.

Standing out and not blending in will cue up the guards, who will put you down.

Getting in trouble brings out differing levels of response from authorities. These groups are described below, and their stats are in Appendix One: Gidim Invaders.

If the party gets noticed at all by authorities—such as by random patrols or at the gate to a district—a Police Squad will ask to take them to Cadagyr Manor, where they'll need to remove their weapons to meet with the governor. See Cadagyr Estate, below.

If the party causes a commotion, gets spotted trespassing, or if any of the oculi or other Gidim have been killed, as soon as a patrol spots the PCs they'll try to blow trumpets to call for an Elite Police Squad. It typically takes three minutes for one to arrive, but stealthy parties might be able to hide.

If the party has breached any of the key facilities, the Gidim won't screw around. Any alarm from the police brings out a Warbeast Unit. An oculus and flying horrors arrive within a minute, almost invariably tracking the party unless they flee through stinking fumes. The rest of the squad arrives a minute later.

Talking Out

Small patrols can be intimidated or persuaded not to bother the PCs (Intimidate or Diplomacy DC 20), and simple lies (Bluff DC 15) are enough to make them decide not to harass the well-heeled foreigners.

Larger patrols require harder checks (+10 DC), and if the warbeasts come out, their accompanying police patrols are nearly impossible to deter (+20 DC).

Hostile Forces

Police squads pose practically no threat. Elite squads typically have a sergeant demand surrender. If the party doesn't oblige, a lawmage attempts to hold them, and if they resist the marksmen open fire while the sergeant bolsters with Ursaliña's peculiar brand of musical law enforcement.

Warbeast units typically engage when the oculus locates the party and creates psychic walls with the cerebral mesh in a bid to delay them. The flying horrors defend the oculus and prefer to remain incorporeal and evasive in order to buy time. Once the police squad arrives, they send the fleshwarped direbears in with orders to maul a single target, then lend focused musket fire and spells to try to down foes one by one. The lieutenant's bardic performance inspires even the gidim creatures, which thrive on the surging emotions of the poor humanoids.

Police Squad (CR 7)

- ♦ 4 Ursaliñan Riot Guards

Elite Police Squad (CR 10)

- ♦ 2 Ursaliñan Marksmen
- ♦ 1 Ursaliñan Lawmage
- ♦ 1 Ursaliñan Sergeant

Warbeast Unit (CR 19)

- ♦ 4 Ursaliñan Marksmen
- ♦ 2 Ursaliñan Lawmage
- ♦ 1 Ursaliñan Lieutenant
- ♦ 3 Fleshwarped Direbears
- ♦ 3 Gidim Flying Horrors
- ♦ 1 Gidim Oculus

Tyranny and Terror

If the PCs reveal themselves, Sijhen has Lord Cadagyr order the police to start rounding people up and drag them to the Jaula. As they do, they tell the populace to spread the news to 'the Risuris' that prisoners will be executed if they do not turn themselves in, unarmed and one at a time, to Lord Cadagyr.

The situation likely escalates very quickly thereafter, but if the party dithers, each day another hundred people are rounded up and executed. If the party removes Lord Cadagyr, instead Sijhen sends out spare shock troopers to simply cut swaths through the city.

WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN?

Social. Real-Time.

Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen is doing mad science for the Obscurati.

We've dropped a few hints that might tempt PCs to go looking for the so-called 'masked vigilante'—a person who slew some police who were accosting a cripple girl, then cut up their bodies. There's also talk of grave-robbing. If the party tries to find this vigilante, he's made sure to hide from the Gidim, but an old-fashioned manhunt can easily locate a foreigner.

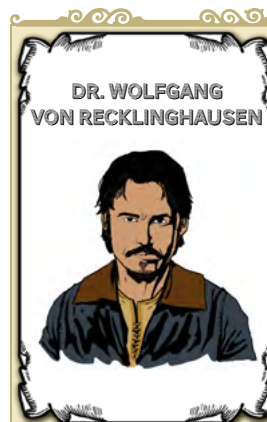
One possible lead would be alchemists mentioning an orc man who had a foreign accent and a very still face, who asked for suggestions about necromantic reagents that were available now that the Bleak Gate was gone. The man said he would come back, so the party could wait.

Alternately, they might find the cripple girl who was being harassed by the police. She now has a new, freshly-attached lower leg, recently exhumed and obviously too large for her body. If befriended, she can lead the party to a shack in the troughs which Wolfgang has turned into a laboratory.

Serendipitous Meeting

It's hard to script a meeting by happenstance with high-level PCs, who might come and go via teleportation, or by dropping in from an airship, or flying in as the wind itself. But at some point, try to have the party cross paths with Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, ideally after they've investigated Cadagyr Estate or the Jaula and have already fought the Gidim or one of their creations.

A short orc swoops in, wearing a hood, wielding a rapier in one hand and some strange arcanoscientific device that crackles with electricity in the other. He can point up at the air and fire it, and it swerves through the air, drawn to an invisible creature—an oculus or flying horror, perhaps. It strikes and the creature becomes visible, then quickly withdraws. This delights the good doctor, who pulls off the orc face he's been wearing as a mask. A spool mechanism on the device begins to rewind itself, and it pulls back a chunk of something semi-tangible, being constantly zapped with electricity. Wolfgang smiles, for he has been desperately trying to get a sample of these invaders' bodies.



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

After years of intense study and experimentation, with his marriage in tatters and his fortune nearly depleted, Wolfgang finally achieved his goal of combining medical knowledge with sorcery in order to restore a corpse to life. His creation drove him from his home, and Wolfgang remained in hiding for years. Eventually his 'son' was captured by the Obscurati, who tracked him down and recruited him for his excellent skills in magical necropsy.

CSI: URSALIÑA

In the unlikely event the party looks into the city morgues, they can find the bodies of five police officers who were viciously cut apart, their bodies dumped in an alley. Close examination (Heal DC 15) reveals that their bodies were cut apart after death, and that the killing blows were a few surgically-precise strikes that slit arteries or punctured lungs.

Each of the bodies had its organs removed and opened, and further incisions were made all across the bodies. One guard, an orc, had his entire face—from brow to tusked jaw—sawed off. The lead sergeant of the patrol had a peculiarly deep incision into the base of his neck. The skin is heavily torn and disturbed, as if someone had stuck fingers in the hole to probe it. A faint magic aura of abjuration lingers there.

Dr. von Recklinghausen used the orc's face (which he has kept alive) as a mask to let him travel inconspicuously. From the sergeant's neck he removed an *oculus prism* (see page 55), which makes him invisible to the Gidim warbeasts.

OTHER OBSCURATI

If your players are enjoying the sneaking about in Ursaliña, you might give them another factor to worry about: Obscurati politicians who arrive from Reo Pedresco, who are trying to rally the populace to their side. They might be a red herring to distract the party from the Gidim, potential allies against the invaders, or you might showcase the horror by having even the Ob panic when they realize they can't get out of the city.

Lies of Omission

When it's safe to talk, Wolfgang asks how the party has been doing. He explains—quite convincingly (Sense Motive DC 35 to notice that he's not being entirely truthful)—that he heard of trouble in Ursaliña and came to help. He managed to figure out the threats were psychic beings, and that they had police working for them, which suggested some way those police could be marked as safe.

He points out an incision he has made in the base of his neck, where he implanted an *oculus prism*. He says it makes the creatures ignore him. He has been studying the floating gas sacs for a while now—difficult, since they're invisible—but now that he has a sample of one's flesh he might be able to find a weakness.

Of course, the party's own experience in Adventure Three and the knowledge they got at the Ziggurat of Apet is quite sufficient for dealing with the Gidim. Wolfgang cannot really help here, though he's willing to remove his *oculus prism* and give it to a PC. It will keep the creatures from noticing that PC at first, but they'll still retaliate if attacked.

The Truth

Wolfgang has joined the Obscurati, and that conspiracy knew through copious divinations that this city would be where the Gidim would return. The doctor's job is to figure out how the Gidim work, and more importantly how their homeworld works. He won't be able to complete his mission until he gets a look at the leviathan, but he'll wait to do that until after the party leaves.

Dr. von Recklinghausen is in no way hostile to the party, and if he can help them figure out how to save the city without him personally having to get into battle, he'll oblige. But he'll report all he learns to the conspiracy, and eventually his research will give Nicodemus a way to exploit the Gidim's psychic nature to—with the aid of the *sacrament of apotheosis*—possess the entire species at once and gain immense power. But that's an issue for Adventure Thirteen.

Wolfgang's Ob ring is his original wedding band, which he wears in memory of his bride who died at the hands of his creation Andrei. The inscription on the inside morbidly reads *One Bride Gone*.

If the party finds him out, Wolfgang explains that all his mission consists of is to find out how to fight the Gidim. He's privy to no secrets the party doesn't already know. He knows the identity of a few Ob representatives throughout Ber, but they operate in the open now.

CADAGYR ESTATE

Social/Action. Real-Time. Level 20.

City police take the party to the mind-controlled governor of Ursaliña if they are detected.

Gidim infiltrators operate in Lord Winslow Cadagyr's estate, so it's likely they will identify the party from Sijhen's description if they come here. It's possible the party might come here without attracting attention, though.

Cadagyr's estate has a wide, poorly-guarded wall painted with ornate images of epic heroes. Within, gardens lead up to a three-story manor with various satellite buildings. The garden is thick with flowers, slightly withered due to the lack of sunlight and the absence of gardeners, but the thick scent masks the cloying presence of the Gidim. A meager detachment of four guards keep watch on the gate in the wall, with no patrols.

The estate grounds are thick with cerebral mesh, and if the party hasn't noticed it yet, grant them a Perception check (DC 30) to detect it as they near the manor. They can hear wheezing groans in the air above the garden, and dark figures watch their approach from unlit windows of the manor house. The front door, however, is open and illuminated, and a prim goblin butler named **Trugido** welcomes arrivals, checking for appointments in a heavy leather-bound book.

Meeting Cadagyr

Revealing their identity earns the PCs easy entry, though Trugido asks them to wait in the foyer so he can make sure his lord is decent. It also triggers an ambush.

Concocting a good excuse to meet with Lord Cadagyr without revealing themselves (Bluff DC 30 and Diplomacy DC 30) prompts a grumble from the butler. Lord Cadagyr comes out a few minutes later and invites the party into a drawing room to discuss matters. The room was moments earlier occupied by Gidim, and the seat cushions are still depressed (Perception DC 15).

Lord Cadagyr's primary goal is to get rid of undesirables, or determine if someone might be useful for the Gidim to dominate and put into their schemes. Large groups are dangerous, though, so he'll be pleasant for five or ten minutes, then ask everyone to leave but perhaps invite one PC back to meet one-on-one later. The Gidim would then plan to mind control that person when they return.

Bleak House

The whole manor house feels fairly neglected and untidy, but the PCs get the sense that there's always someone just around the corner. Lanterns feel warm to the touch though none are lit. A few rooms even contain house staff, but they aren't working; they just sit in chairs and act as if this is perfectly normal.

If the PCs manage to explore the manor (which is quite rude), the Gidim stay out of sight (Perception DC 35). A sneaky PC (Stealth DC 35) can catch five Gidim unaware as they're conferring telepathically in the kitchen, which they thought was safe.

Gidim Ambush

If the party doesn't hide their identities, the Gidim politely ask Lord Cadagyr to keep the party busy for five minutes, which is enough time for the invaders to set up an ambush. Unless they've already showcased their talents, the Gidim don't know how much stronger the party has become since Sijhen encountered them, so they won't use *unfairly* overwhelming force.

Stats for this encounter appear in Appendix One: Gidim Invaders.

Cadagyr Estate Ambush

- ♦ 4 Gidim Infiltrators
- ♦ Lilore, Gidim Overseer
- ♦ Gidim Oculus

The five Gidim abuse their powers. First Lilore, the overseer in charge of this manor, uses *greater invisibility* on itself. Then the four infiltrators each use the cerebral mesh to create psychic barriers (see page 13) to try to trap the party in a single room. They leave the ceiling and floor unblocked, however, allowing them to dangle through the ceiling in thoughtform to use *charm monster* on some of the party, *telekinesis* on the rest.

Overseer Lilore proceeds to enter the fray, using its claws to send enemies who aren't disabled into *mazes*, and pepper those who resist with *quicken magic missile*. The infiltrators converge on one foe, first using *ego whip* to stun, then overwhelming with sneak attacks. They wield jagged chains of living steel, composed of insectile creatures made of metal that cling together but bend and twist to their wielder's will.

The oculus hovers outside, and creates horrid illusions to try to deter the party from leaving the 'safety' of the building. If a PC gets out, though, it's not beyond grappling him and consuming his eyes.

The Unfair Version

If this isn't the party's first time facing the Gidim, Overseer Lilore needs Lord Cadagyr to stall for ten minutes, during which a pair of flying horrors fly in carrying seven shock troopers. The shaggy shock troopers storm the manor. The oculus hovers above it and occasionally deludes the party with illusions, but primarily waits for one or two PCs to exit. At that point the flying horrors will use their *sucking wind* to immobilize them, while Lilore creates psychic barriers using the cerebral mesh to trap the rest of the party inside. Stragglers are set upon by the infiltrators.

Aftermath

Defeated PCs are dragged to the leviathan's psychovivisection chamber, where they are taunted by Sijhen. The excruciating process of psychic flaying to make them loyal to the Gidim will take a few days.

If the party wins, they can free Cadagyr from control by removing the *oculus prism* in his neck and either dispelling his modified memories or simply sticking him in *magic circle against evil*. If they haven't discovered the invisible oculus, though, it might explode his brain first.

If he survives, he has a short breakdown, then warns that they must get away before the invaders send more monsters. But he knows all about the Gidim's operations, and can direct the party to the Jaula to rescue prisoners, and the Triunfo Vida to find the Gidim's main base of operations.

THE MYSTERIOUS CIRCLE

Exploration. Real-Time. Level 18.

The Jaula de Oso hides a Gidim facility for crafting warbeasts.

The party could avoid this place entirely, and if they do the warbeasts stored here will likely attack them elsewhere. However, exploring the empty arena and finding hideous beasts beneath it can make for an excellent scene of building horror. And it can easily shift into action as a single Gidim telekinetically opens all the monsters' cages.

Villa Roque

Arena master Pili Roque lives in a simple villa near the arena, observed intermittently by a Gidim infiltrator. A central courtyard features a fountain and a lush assortment of water lilies, ferns, and rushes, the pleasant trickle of water echoing off the tiled walls. A wrought iron gate decorated with the sigil of a collared bear swings on rusted hinges.

Roque is oblivious to the Gidim. Even though she sees it watching her all the time, her memory never recalls it. She is bubbly and excited about 'making the games perfect,' and is not bothered that the games are canceled and her arena closed. She refuses to let anyone see the arena. If the party tries to sneak in, an oculus spots them and calls in a warbeast squad.

Jaula Entrance

Numerous archways lead from a public courtyard to the arena's outer breezeway. Linked chains of iron stretch across the archways, forming a barrier that deter passage, but could be easily climbed through. Affixed to the walls with brass bolts, thick slabs of slate provide a list of times and dates for upcoming bouts, all of which are crossed off.

Around the breezeway, a handful of staircases lead up to the seating. Four barred wooden doors lead to stairs down to the Holding Cells.

Seating

Eight tiered rows of stone benches surround an enormous elliptical field of gravel and sand. Dark stains mottle the sandy floor, and a ten foot high wall separates the lowest seats from the floor itself. Enormous canopies hug the uppermost reaches of the arena, retracted and tied into position. On the northern side of the arena, portions of the seats are cordoned off into private seating, with colorful awnings stretched to cover them from sun and weather.



JUALA CAGES

Maestra Dais

Curling wisps of smoke rise from an enormous brass censer in the center of a raised platform at the east end of the arena. From here, the master of ceremonies would direct events.

The brass censer, covered in stylized flames and comets and consecrated to a god of pyrrhic victory, hearkens to an ancient custom. Many believe that the god's favor would be passed onto them by touching the edges of the censer when it was lit. The censer is now fed by an enchantment that keeps it smoldering at all times, and urns full of flower petals and other potent aromatics sit beside it. The oculus that watches the arena can be weakened substantially by tossing a whole urn into the censer while the creature is within 30 feet.

Holding Cells

The stench of sweat, blood, and rot overwhelms the senses in these dark corridors, which lie beneath the arena floor. A deep thrumming vibration ripples through the ground, inaudible, yet intense enough to make teeth rattle and bones shake. A maze of hallways (like, literally a maze—this country has minotaurs galore) has numerous side chambers for operations and storage, but signage points to one main chamber, which is lined with barred cells.

In that main hallway, a first section of this hall holds arena beasts—currently eleven direbears, which appear fairly normal but in truth have been modified by Gidim magic. They are well-fed, but press against their cages if they smell anyone moving past. One will even swipe at a passer-by, which is remarkable because the bars are certainly too narrow for the animal to have gotten a limb through.

Mechanisms beside each cell can—with the mere crank of a lever (swift action) open the ceiling of the cell, then lift a platform so the occupant can emerge into the main arena floor. Narrow aisles (three feet wide, so a squeeze for medium creatures) run behind the cells to allow access to the gearwork. Should the party shove any angry bears up to the arena floor, they'll spend a round tearing the lifting platform apart, and then can squeeze back into the basement.

The west wall holds various spear-like implements used for prodding the beasts. They poke out hazardingly, and a creature that shoves an enemy into its space can make a free attack at their highest base attack bonus, dealing 4d6 damage on a hit.

At the southwest end of the hall, a steel door leads to the abattoir, which might hold NPCs who have been abducted, if they haven't been fed to the bears yet. A thoughtlock seals the door (see page 55), and a ward hidden on the far side triggers a false memory for anyone who manages to breach the door.

Memory Trap

CR 11

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

Trigger visual (*darkvision*); **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** telepathically communicate the concept of a cup with a pineapple on it.

Effect spell (*modify memory*, DC 18 Will save to negate)

Detail creatures within sight of the door when it opens remember the room beyond as just being eight empty cells, but they found a note hidden in one cell which read, "If you find this, please retrieve the evidence and weapon I hid in my quarters in the Executores Lodge"

The purpose of the trap is to deflect suspicion from the arena and direct troublemakers to the lodge, where they can be spotted and attacked. It's likely at least one PC resists the effect, though.

Abattoir

Noticeably colder than the stone around it, this sixty-five foot by forty foot chamber has eight cages along the north wall, sized for livestock but sufficient to hold a prisoner in a pinch. The skinned carcasses of many different animals dangle from hooks in the ceiling throughout the room, and a pit at the north leads to an open sewer tunnel. The metallic smell of spilled blood mingles with the omnipresent stench of offal, and amidst it all is a constant bone-rattling vibration. A metal table holds a selection of knives and saws, along with a half-dressed carcass.

Upon closer examination, the carcasses are not cow and pig but rather minotaur and orc, their heads, hands, and feet severed and their skin and organs removed. A pile in one of the cages contains personal belongings of dozens of people, including many of the colorful costumes worn by bards at the Triuno Vida.

Eleven patches of brown mold cling to parts of the walls and floors, emanating cool air. Living creatures within 5 feet of the mold take 3d6 points of nonlethal cold damage. Fire brought within 5 feet of brown mold causes the mold to instantly grow into that space. Cold damage instantly destroys it.

Finally, in the far south end a fleshy orb like an eye is cemented to the wall with huge mats of cerebral mesh. This strange vesicle thrums with vibration, and acts as a channel of psychic power from the leviathan. The Gidim infiltrator who operates in the arena uses that energy to warp the dire bears.

Bear Trap

The sole Gidim infiltrator here will let the party reach the holding cells. It stays *invisible* to see if the *modify memory* trap catches them. If it doesn't, the Gidim waits for them to go into the abattoir, then uses *telekinesis* to open the cages of the warbeasts and telepathically commands the eleven horrid direbears to slither into the bloody, moldy room and attack.

Any battle will likely become very cramped very quickly. Though each bear is not much threat to the party, as they die they begin to merge with the remaining bears, granting them extra attacks which can be devastating if the party isn't able to keep its distance.

Oculus Prism

If someone bothers to hack up the strange vesicle, within it they can retrieve an *oculus prism* (see page 55), which can let at least one PC appear nonthreatening to the Gidim's beasts.

EMPLOYEES ONLY**Exploration. Real-Time.**

Bards of Triunfo Vida refuse entry to their college, in the tunnels beneath which lies the Gidim leviathan.

With the information gathered beneath Jaula de Oso or from Lord Cadagyr, the PCs should be ready to check out Triunfo Vida. When Sijhen selected a location for the leviathan to set down and begin a new Gidim colony, he selected a natural cavern beneath the bardic school. With easy access to minds of middling to extraordinary talent, Sijhen could build up the colony's strength slowly, using the infiltrators as needed to expand influence and identify potential problems.

While the extent of their control of the city varies based on how soon the party gets involved, the Gidim already have a solid position in the Triuno Vida.

College Campus

The Triunfo sits at the highest tier of its hill, and a path weaves through various gardens around the campus walls. The flowers are all withered from the lack of sunlight, but the cloying scent of the cerebral mesh still creates an oddly floral tone. Several archways lead through this wall to the inner garden, though wooden barricades block off all of them.

The grounds are officially closed, and an oculus serves as the first line of defense. It creates frightening illusions to deter trespassers: eerie music and creaking trees coming from thin air, angry figures with bloody blades just barely visible at the edge of darkvision but never approaching, and false archways in the wall that shudder with morbid moans if anyone comes close, then fade away.

If the party tries to enter one of the barricaded archways, an elderly voice from the other side demands to know who they are. He claims to be **Maestro Eusebio Telderón**, headmaster of the college. He refuses to let anyone in, saying the repairs are treacherous, and the remaining bards are quite busy playing for an exclusive audience. If a PC provides a virtuoso performance (Perform DC 35), the maestro is swayed to let them in and join the performance. The barricade shifts to provide a three-foot wide opening.

On the far side of the wall, there's no one to be found. If the party continues to explore, the oculus telepathically alerts the Gidim in the leviathan.

Ring Garden

Inside the wall, a simple farming garden takes up a large swath of the campus, with limestone walkways and the occasional tasteful topiary. The college hall sits in the center of the campus, a two-story building with a pair of single-story wings. There are no lights on in the building.

The whisper of silken banners fluttering lightly in the breeze disturbs the stillness. Off to the north wing of the hall—the dormitory—heavy wooden tables are set for a banquet. Empty carafes, pitchers, and platters remain, their contents long gone. Beneath one plate sits a stack of correspondence addressed to Maestro Telderón. (A postman was willing to come this far, then left in fright.)

Main Building

Orchestral string music is faintly audible coming from the second story window. Doors enter from multiple directions, but the most obvious approach is the front door, flanked by statues of bears playing cello and tuba.

Inside, doors lead to the north wing (for students), south wing (for classes), and back to the headmaster's salon. Stairs lead up to a second floor foyer outside the performance theater. The music gets louder the closer one gets to there.

Emotions—Aura of Doom. Throughout the building, different strains of music play, each producing a different emotion effect. It's unlikely the party will need to worry about this in battle; it's just to set an uneasy ambience. In the entry foyer, creatures must make a Will save (DC 20) or become shaken as long as they can hear the music, or until a different emotion affects them. A creature that saves is free of that particular emotion effect, but may fall under the music of another room. All of these are sonic, mind-affecting effects.

MUSIC SUGGESTION

I had Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in mind while writing this scene. While the traditional style fits for exploration, if a fight breaks out, you can kick it off with Vanessa Mae's *Storm*, a reinterpretation of "Summer: III. Presto"

Ladder to the Dig

In the foyer, a section of floor has had its wood removed, and is now covered with a tarp. This is the entrance to the Ancient archaeological site in a cavern under the college. Beneath the tarp descends a stone shaft with ornately-painted orc figures and fantastic acoustics, thirty feet wide. Forty feet down there appears to be a metallic floor, but it undulates like a muscle. This is actually living steel that has been grown out of the walls, centered on a sphincter-like aperture, blocking the way to the larger cavern below.

A creature that comes within 5 feet of the aperture receives a psychic impression of it being a door in need of a key. It is thoughtlocked, and trapped to boot. Maestro Eusebio has the mental combination to unlock it.

Electrified Aperture

CR 11

Type mechanical and technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 29

Effects

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic (1 minute)

Effect 10d8 electricity damage (DC 25 Reflex half) to anyone touching the living steel floor; only triggers if a creature fails to open the thoughtlock.

Headmaster's Salon

Inside the central part of the college hall, a first floor foyer leads to the headmaster's salon. Couched in opulent velvets, gilt-framed portraits, and brocaded settees, this room appears to function as a private performance hall. Enormous stained glass windows on the north wall depict performers of many different races, and an enormous mahogany desk and high-backed chair sits in front of it.

On the wall behind the desk hangs a painting of a stunning red-headed elf woman dressed in traditional Beran clothes. The placard beside it reads "Savina Tullius—Most Promising Student, and Most Beautiful." (This is just a small shout-out because Savina appears in Act Three.)

Emotions—Smug Narcissism. Though the music is the same, somehow the air carries it differently, like it's meant specifically for the listener. Creatures must save (Will DC 20) or be overcome by smug narcissism. This imposes a -2 penalty to all skill checks.

Dormitory

The north wing is a long hall dominated by workbenches, musical instruments, and bunk beds in various states of disarray. Clothes, bedding, and footwear lie scattered through the room, much of it blood-stained.

Emotions—Terrible Remorse. The music shifts into a dark minor key. Each round creatures must save (Will DC 20) or else deal 1d8 points of damage + its Strength modifier to itself using an item held in its hand or with unarmed attacks. If the creature saves, it is staggered for 1 round and takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class, after which the emotion passes.

Refectory

At the end of the north wing, this vaulted dining room has long, unadorned wooden tables with benches flank the length. An enormous hearth, filled with cold ashes and a half-empty cauldron graces the wall opposite the room's entrance. A small but efficient kitchen is tucked behind the hearth.

Emotions—Manic Glee. A lone figure is seated at a bench—or more accurately is cocooned from the waist down onto the bench by cerebral mesh. His upper body is exposed, and at first seems hunched over, fiddling furiously on a violin, trying to match the faint music from the performance theater but failing in fits and starts. In a moment it becomes clear the figure actually has no head.

Creatures here must save (Will DC 20) or be overcome with manic glee. The effect is similar to a barbarian rage, granting +4 to Strength and Constitution, a -2 penalty to AC, and a compulsion to never stand still. When the glee ends, the creature is fatigued.

Classrooms

In the south wing, stone debris and shattered wood litter the dim hallway between six small classrooms, with some of the interior walls completely destroyed. The smell of rot mingles unpleasantly with the scent of jasmine and plumeria, and a faint gusting sigh echoes through the corridor.

Emotions—Utter Contempt. Sharp notes raise hairs on the back of listeners' necks. Those who fail a save (Will DC 20) are driven to first slander, then abuse, and finally murder those nearby them. Each round the target takes 2 Wisdom damage and can attempt a new save to break free.

Performance Theater

The walls and floor outside the upstairs theater are so thick with cerebral mesh it's easily visible, and it vibrates like strung catgut. The pungent scent of summer flowers exudes from the doorway.

Within, tall windows on the far side of the room let in the dim glow of distant city light, faintly silhouetting the orchestra. Two aisles descend past sparsely-filled seats, leading to a stage where three dozen musicians play strings, a harpsichord, and percussion, but no wind instruments. Weeping comes from the audience, which consist of dozens of disembodied heads spliced into cerebral mesh, still attached to beating hearts and heaving lungs.

These are the bards of the Triunfo Vida who were not smart enough to leave, and their bodies are on stage, hollowed out with exposed rib cages, headless, playing from muscle memory. Only the conductor is still fully intact—the maestro Eusebio Telderón, his body wholly intact but his mind somewhere else.

Indeed, if the party stops to listen, a psychic image of Eusebio appears beside them to explain the nature of the piece, which he calls “The Contest Between Harmony and Invention.” In a whisper he says that each movement of the concerto is intended to evoke a different emotion, and their patrons positively drink up the reactions of the audience.

Eusebio has literally lost his mind, or rather his mind has lost his body, and he's unable to remember any idea that the college might be in trouble. If the party lets the concerto finish, though, he can be convinced to call for an interlude before ‘the three hundred and seventy-fourth encore’ in order to give the party a tour of the amazing archaeological site beneath the building. Why, this site has apparently been used for music-making since ancient times.

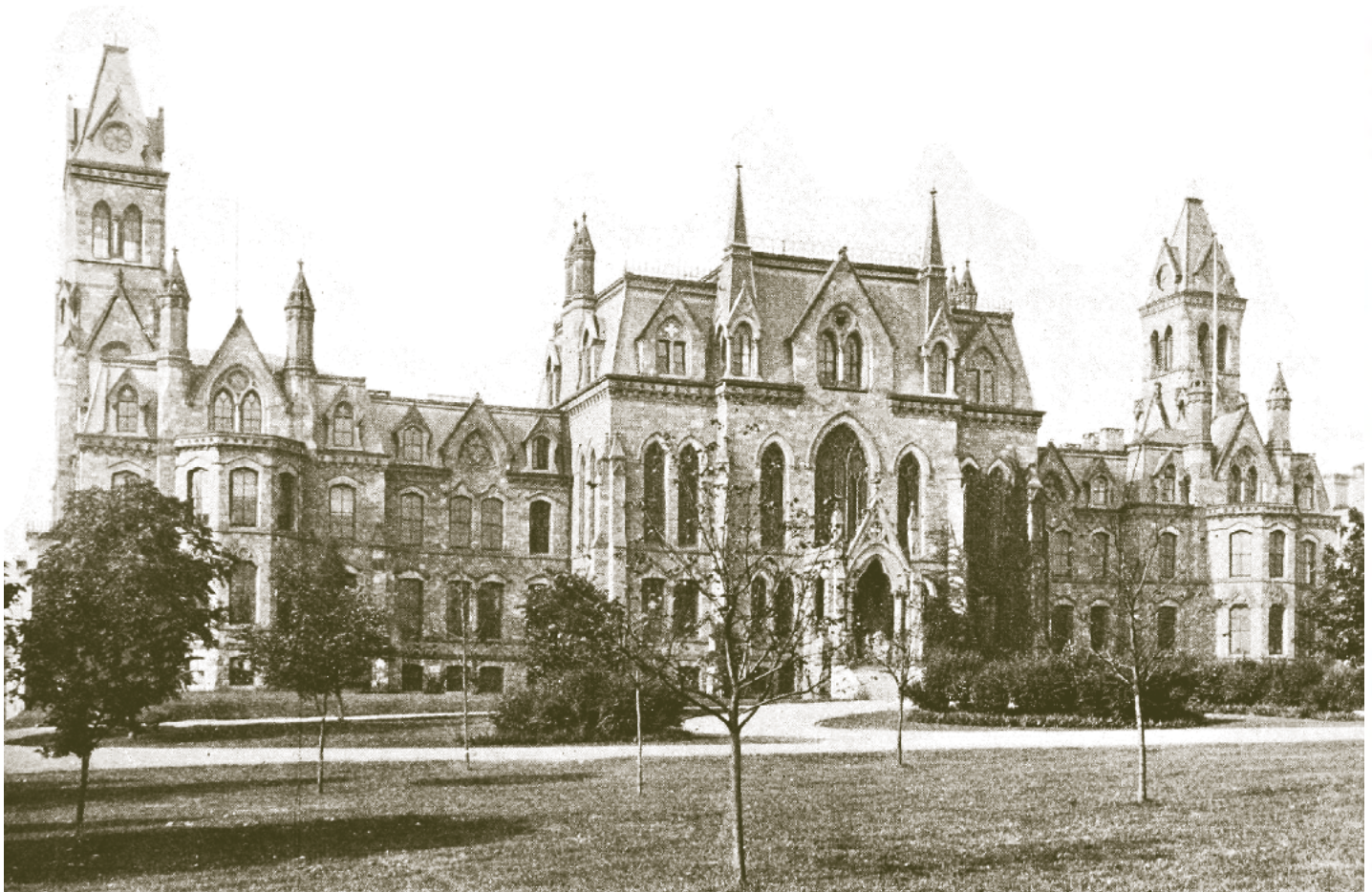
Emotions—Crushing Despair. Those who fail a save (Will DC 20) take a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls until the concerto finishes or they get out of earshot.

Proactive Attack

The Gidim can sense through Eusebio if the party looks to be affected by the emotion magic. If so, Sijhen sends forth an attack force, which charges the performance theater. The oculus that watches the Triunfo will smash in the window and join the battle, though the ceiling is only twenty feet high, so it cannot simply fly away. Any forces sent here aren't present defending the leviathan.

Concerto Attack Force

- ♦ 5 shock troopers
- ♦ 1 Gidim infiltrator



BELLY OF THE BEAST

Action. Tactical. Level 23.

A ship of living steel acts as the egg for a gestating psychic tentacle.

The most direct route into the Gidim leviathan is down from the college's main hall, into the cave, and through the electrified, thought-locked, living metal sphincter. Other methods of reaching the Gidim ship might involve burrowing, phasing, teleporting, or casting *earthquake* and clambering through the debris.

The cave around the leviathan has forty-foot-high ceilings riddled with stubby stalactites. The cavern extends outward and downward in many directions, but the Gidim haven't strayed beyond the leviathan.

Grown from living steel, the ship's overall shape is reminiscent of a squid, three hundred feet long and eighty feet wide, with fat eyestalks in place of tentacles, glowing with pale green bioluminescence as they extend a further fifty feet. A loading dock orifice opens at what would be the back of a squid's head or mantle, and a gaping maw splits its dorsal side, leading to an area called the flesh fens. The opening to the flesh fens lies forty feet directly beneath the living steel sphincter, so unprepared creatures that open it will fall in to be consumed and deposited into an incubation vesicle.

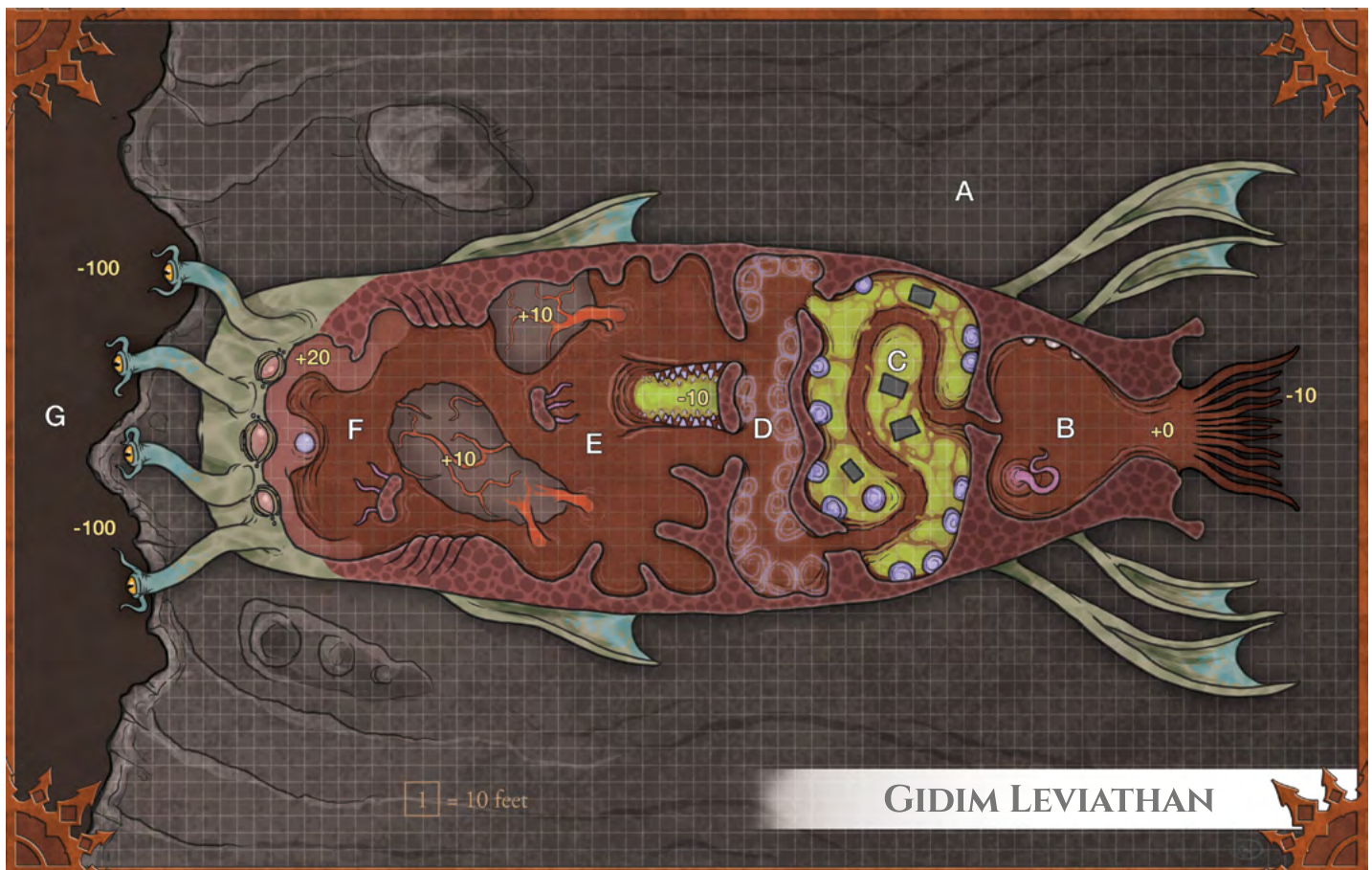
Take-Off

Sijhen wants the ship to remain in place long enough for it to create a link to the Gidim homeworld, but if it looks like the party is going to get into the ship, it directs the leviathan to tear free from the cave floor and fly above the city.

The moment any PC is detected in the ship's cavern, Sijhen orders a take-off. The cave begins to quake, the skin of the leviathan glows with bioluminescence as bright as daylight, and five rounds later the vessel rises from the cave floor. On the sixth round it slams into the ceiling of the cave and cracks it, crushing anyone caught between them (20d6 damage, Reflex DC 25 half). For the next three rounds it presses its way through the solid rock, until on the tenth round it smashes up from beneath the Triunfo Vida, obliterating the building.

During all this, the party might be fighting their way into the vessel or getting out of the way. Once the leviathan rises into the air, if the party's airship is anywhere nearby they'll likely fly in to examine this bizarre glowing and levitating squid monster.

The leviathan begins to thrum and warble and ululate, singing music that fills the entire city with waves of wild emotions. If left alone, every minute it telekinetically grasps a city block worth of buildings atop one of the hills and flings them into the troughs, killing hundreds and sparking fires that will eventually consume the city.



Battling the Leviathan

A ship to ship battle in the sky gives the party a chance to bring the ship down and kill some of its crew. Each successful strike should reduce 2 shock troopers or infiltrators to half their maximum hit points. The leviathan is neither fast nor maneuverable, but if it can hit with a *telekinetic rend* it holds on and tries to get close enough to ram. Then the battle can turn to a boarding action, albeit one where the leviathan will continue to attack every minute, while the party's crew might be distracted and unable to fire back.

If things look unwinnable, Sijhen activates the leviathan's self-destruct sequence and then joins the battle against the PCs to stall and try to take them out.

Gidim Leviathan		
Gargantuan Leviathan		
Level 24 Leviathan		
Hull Integrity 4	Defense 30	Command Rating +18
Maneuverability 6	Speed 16	Perception +12, blindsense
<i>Dimensions</i>		
Body 300 ft. x 80 ft. Tentacles 200 ft.		
<i>Leviathan</i>		
The leviathan is a living creature, acting on its own and requiring no crew. After an extended rest, it heals all damage as long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity. It can fly at any altitude.		
<i>Grasping Eyestalks</i>		
When the leviathan rams, it stops 25 feet from its target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the eyestalks take damage or the leviathan releases its grip.		
<i>Telekinetic Rend</i>		
The leviathan reaches out and tears apart enemies as a weapon with a +21 attack bonus that can attack in any direction, including up and down. If it strikes an enemy ship, the two ships cannot move farther apart from each other until either Sijhen chooses to release the grab, or this armament component becomes damaged. While the grab persists, the leviathan gains a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.		
<i>Psychic Invulnerability</i>		
The leviathan exists partially as mere thoughts and emotions, and its crew is shielded both by living steel flesh and a mighty psychic consciousness.		
Crew of the leviathan cannot be targeted from outside the vessel. Creatures cannot teleport into or out of the vessel, but they can move to and from the ship's skin.		
When in flight, the vessel's "loading orifice" is closed. A strike that damages the orifice opens it for one naval round; a second strike keeps it open permanently.		
<i>Emotional Flux</i>		
Those who hear the ship's ululation struggle to control their emotions.		
Enemy ships must make a ship saving throw (d20 + captain's Charisma bonus vs. DC 10). Those that fail are treated as having half as many crew, which may impose a penalty to Command checks (-5 for below Full Crew, or -10 for below Minimum Crew). Clever ideas might mitigate the emotions created by the leviathan.		

Layout

From the loading orifice entrance, a passageway threads through the psychovivisection chambers, where prisoners are mentally deconstructed and then retrained so they can become vital agents or shock troopers. Some are left so crippled they're only good for food, and they are delivered to the Jaula.

From there, crew quarters flank the hall, each filled with intense psychic energy to create pocket planes where beings of thought can exist without flesh. The hall splits to either side of the flesh fens and continues past various pulsing vital organs, then ends at the navigation chamber, just before where the eyestalks emerge.

The whole living ship has few hard corners, and instead its spaces sweep and circle into each other. Currently the flesh is transforming itself into the seed of a thoughtform tentacle that, when fully grown, will erupt through the surface and stretch away into the stars.

The interior of the ship is riddled with sensory organs, which allow anyone in the navigation chamber to observe anywhere in the ship.

Loading Orifice

Resembling the mouth of a whale shark, this passage can open as wide as forty feet across, or slowly clamp shut. A 'ramp' of fleshy tendrils rises ten feet from the cave floor. The muscular floor inside can create a sort of teleportation circle once per day, allowing anything on it to teleport to anywhere within 1000 feet that a Gidim oculus can see. Likewise, it can teleport willing creatures to it. This is how the flying horrors come and go, and they sleep here when not active.

Psychovivisection Chamber

Four metal slabs hang suspended from the vaulted ceiling, held in place by rigid cables and transparent tubing. Rusted red stains smear across the metal surface, and the acrid scent of chemicals hangs heavily in the room. Curls of white vapor wrap around brightly colored vials in a transparent glass sphere, and next to it a table filled with delicate and deadly scalpels, probes, and clamps.

This chamber is where the Gidim keeps high-value prisoners. The chamber also functions as a medical lab, should the PCs figure out how to make it function, and the living steel instruments can cast *cure critical wounds* once per minute (caster level 20th).

Prisoners are each held in transparent vesicles filled with oxygenated endoplasm, and each vesicle is thoughtlocked.

Mindscape Quarters

Gidim are naturally incorporeal, so they need special psychic quarters to avoid drifting away when they slip into a state that for them is equivalent to sleep. This area is divided into fourteen 'mindscapes,' rooms that only exist as mental constructs, each lavish and comfortable for thoughtform creatures. Other creatures perceive the walls and 'furniture' as unreal. Indeed, while thoughtform creatures treat these objects as real, normal creatures can move through them.

Flesh Fens

The overwhelming scent of flowers clashes horribly with the underlying odor of rot and blood within this circular chamber. Spherical niches along the floors, walls, and ceiling hold ragged bits of flesh. Grotesque remnants of humanoid bodies fused to the walls, and an inch-deep layer of unknown effluvia swirls in slow eddies along the floor.

The fens serve as both barracks and laboratory for the Gidim. When their victims have all their mental energies drained out in the Psychovivisection Chamber, their comatose bodies end up here for modification. The Gidim have mutated townsfolk into shock troopers. Fifteen shock troopers reside here, crouched in the corners. If the party has killed any, the Gidim can create five new ones per day.

Acid Bath. A central acid bath pool lies directly beneath the living steel sphincter that blocks off the shaft over the cave. A muscular flap can open and close over this bath, and if anyone falls inside it slams shut. Creatures in the acid bath take 6d6 acid damage each turn. The flap can be opened with a Strength check (DC 25) or by dealing 50 damage to it. It is immune to acid damage.

Navigation Chamber

Clustering together like enormous grapes, a sac of fleshy nodules ripples with purple electricity that courses and flows across the fine mesh that blankets the chamber in thick ropes and webs. The walls display vague images of areas of the ship. Touching one grants a full psychic connection with the sensory organs in that spot, and allows the ship's captain to use the leviathan internal defenses (see below).

Another creature in the navigation chamber can make a Use Magic Device check (DC 30) to also gain access to these powers. A creature capable of telepathy gains a +5 bonus to this check. If by some chance Xambria or her consciousness is still with the party, she automatically knows how to control the ship.

Vortex Array. Growing from a pillar in the floor, a circle of glistening metal, diamonds, and flickering energy projects a three-dimensional model of Ursaliña into the air. Some *thing* moves in the same space, representing the psychic idea of the feeding tentacle being grown within the leviathan.

The device projecting this image is known as a *vortex array*. It's not attached to the leviathan, but rather stands alone, for these arrays are complicated to craft, and are thus reused after the feeding tentacle has been birthed. The array consists of a living metal pillar that rises seven feet, around which floats a ring of metal rods. When the array is inert or has completed a scan, the rods link together into a solid circle, but when they detect magical energies they rotate to point toward it, lengthen or shorten to represent distance, and glow dimly or bright to indicate intensity. Each rod is attuned to a different type of energy.

A creature standing within arm's reach of the array is mentally linked to this device of living steel, and it will obey orders to search for specific types of energy. It can also produce three-dimensional psychic maps of areas that it scans.

SECOND ASSAULT

Should the party locate the leviathan but don't go down to it, the Gidim's goal is to survive until Day 25, when the tentacle will emerge. Sijhen, despite being granted great power by its race, is not a tactician, so it stays on the defensive. At most, the Gidim send out one warbeast unit to hunt the party in the city, but if the PCs survive that attack the remaining Gidim withdraw to the leviathan and only send out one or two infiltrators at a time, invisible, to try to maintain the sense of dread among the populace. With the use of illusions from oculi, Sijhen hopes to create the appearance of a much larger invasion force and draw attention away from the Triunfo.

Clever parties don't need to face the Gidim alone. Once they figure out the contours of the threat, simply explaining the enemy to the public is enough to get the police to stop serving them. It wouldn't be hard then to convince the marines stuck at the docks to help perform a 'boarding action,' potentially overwhelming the vessel before it can escape the cave.

Reactive Defenses

The leviathan is guarded by a small force, but the Gidim likely have some warning the party is coming. The total complement of Gidim forces are presented at the start of Appendix One: Gidim Invaders, but many of these will not be present when the party first arrives.

Cave Defense (CR 21). If the party takes more than ten minutes to go from entering Triunfo Vida to reaching the leviathan, two of the flying horrors and two oculi will lurk in the corners of the cave, having been recalled and teleported in. The oculi can produce false monsters with *persistent image* to distract the party while the flying horrors attack. Sijhen keeps five shock troopers inside the leviathan, but sends the rest (a maximum of ten) out to keep the party from getting into the ship.

Ship Defense (CR 23). If those defenders fail, Sijhen launches the ship. The openings atop the flesh fens and at the back of the loading orifice seal shut, and a ship-wide *dimensional anchor* effect manifests, trapping the party inside. Sijhen is unaffected by the dimensional anchor.

The five withheld shock troopers and seven infiltrators station themselves behind cover as best they can, trying to watch the entrances through the flesh fens and the loading orifice. When battle begins, the shock troopers keep their distance from the Gidim, so as not to electrocute them; they'll try to abduct a PC and drag him into the acid bath in the flesh fens—or throw him off the ship once it's airborne. The infiltrators try to stick to cover and abuse ego whip from range.

Meanwhile, Sijhen oversees the battle from the navigation chamber and makes use of the following powers as a standard action, targeting any space inside the ship. All these powers have caster level 25.

- ♦ Defensive—*dimensional anchor*, *dispel magic*, *fog cloud*, *mass cure light wounds*
- ♦ Offensive—*hold person* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 18)
- ♦ Spite—The ship begins a five minute countdown to explosion. See Self-Destruct, below.

Sijhen Showdown (CR 21). Once most of the other Gidim have fallen, or when a PC gets to the navigation chamber, Sijhen splits into two (see its ability *eightfold wayfarer*) and has one copy activate the ship's self-destruct sequence. The ship's song stops, but it begins to pulse slowly with light. The pulses come faster and are joined by a rising whine as the leviathan grows closer to detonation.

The ancient Gidim advances on the party, splitting into more and more copies until there are eight of it. Its bravado has faded compared to when it taunted them in the previous adventure, but it will briefly try to bargain.

"In the navigation chamber, you'll find a *vortex array*. If your mission is anything like what the Ancients did, you will need it to navigate the Gyre. This ship will destroy itself in a few minutes if I do not stop it, and you'll be lost. Consider a trade.

"I give you the array, and accompany you on your journey, operating the device and finding planes with the power sources you need, so you might have a chance to save your world. After all, if it dies it is useless to the Gidim. In exchange, you leave this ship. In days it will form a link to the Gidim homeworld. Not ideal for you, since the Gidim will begin to feed on the psychic energies of this city. But you must have a high estimation of your abilities. Perhaps you can sever the connection once you return."

If they decline, all Sijhen says is, "I was and always will be a soldier, and a servant of my homeworld. The will of the Gidim is unified, and I shall not flee."

Sijhen is lying, by the way. If it is confident it cannot prevail, it uses *greater teleport* to evacuate to the surface, and will go into hiding (though it likely never shows its face again in this adventure path). And the party doesn't actually need Sijhen's help to operate the *vortex array*.

Self-Destruct

If Sijhen (or a crazy PC) triggers the self-destruct, the ship begins the process of tearing apart its own living steel flesh to release the psychic energies gathered for the tentacle's birth. The ship pulses and begins to screech, and five minutes later finally explodes. Only in the last few rounds, as the ship begins to spasm, does it open up exits and let the *dimensional anchor* field end.

The explosion deals 24d6 damage (Reflex DC 25 half) to everything within five hundred feet, collapsing the cave and Triunfo Vida. Inanimate objects in a one-mile radius—ranging from pens to boulders to entire streets—acquire varying amounts of self-awareness and gain the ability to move and hunt on their own.

Sure, the creatures kill a few hundred people, but Ursaliña eagerly begins capturing these monsters for use in the arena.

The countdown can be aborted if Sijhen (or a creature with access to the leviathan's controls) commands it. Alternately, it can be turned inward, so the destruction only tears apart the leviathan. The idea of a tentacle tries to reach to the dark sky, but it dissipates and vanishes.

The Vortex Array

Aura overwhelming divination; **CL** 20th

Slot —; **Weight** 30 lbs.

Description

A crown made of cerebral mesh, diamonds, and living steel, the *Vortex Array* is a masterpiece of Gidim biotechnology. A ship equipped with one can scan regions as small as a single building (taking mere moments) or as vast as a thousand miles (which could require several hours), detecting all magic in it as per *greater arcane sight*. It also provides an overview of the general magical demeanor of a region, detailing any planar traits it might have.

If the Array is damaged, there is a chance that its readings will not be accurate when it is activated. The *Vortex Array* can be repaired with a Craft (metalworking) check (DC 30) by a character with the Technologist feat.

CONCLUSION

If all goes well, the PCs manage to halt the Gidim invasion in Ursaliña, though there is the chance that a few Gidim still lurk within the nation of Ber. Saving the day earns the party the *vortex array*, and if they manage to do it fairly quickly the citizens of Ursaliña spread word of their heroism, convincing the Bruse to call off his invasion of Risur.

Alternately, the city might fall, and a giant tentacle will erupt into the sky, stretching an infinite distance to the Gidim homeworld, which will begin converting the landscape around the city to its own biology. At that point, only renewing the ritual of the Axis Seal will stop the invasion.

A middle ground could see Sijhen pretending to aid the party, but in truth the Gidim will betray them in the most destructive way it can during the next adventure.



ACT TWO:

WHEN DOOM CAME TO DRAKR

The end times have come, and for the dwarves of Drakr this was no surprise. Grandis Komanov's army of fanatical doomsday eschatologists besiege the city of Bhadr Ryzhavdud, bolstered by five titans suffused with the souls of legendary warlords known as the Lost Riders. They seek the eye of their lord, once called the Speaker of Snow, Heart of Black Ice, and the Warden of the Bleak Gate. Today he is called The Voice of Rot.

TIMELINE

These days are relative to whenever the adventure starts, since normal calendars no longer seem to apply.

- ♦ **Day 0:** Vlendam Heid arrives in Bhadr Ryzhavdud, believing he'll be beginning a new, post-Eclipse political movement. He (and his bodyguard Kvarti) are trapped in the city when Komanov's army assaults it. The army breaks through part of the old wall and seizes a section of the old city, but then settles in for a siege. Heid teleports a lockbox to the party.
- ♦ **Day 1:** Komanov retrieves the lost eye of the Voice of Rot and begins to assemble her arcanoscientific weapon.
- ♦ **Day 7:** Komanov completes the weapon. Her army attacks and slays the entire city. She claims the souls of the dead for the Voice of Rot. The only person she spares is Vlendam Heid, taking him as a trophy.
- ♦ **Day 8:** After a night of sadistic revelry, the Vsadni conjure giant sleds of ice, which are blown by winds of the army's hivemind blizzard. These vessels travel scores of miles in a day, carrying the doomsday force toward Mirsk. Along the way they wipe out a few minor towns and settlements.
- ♦ **Day 15:** The army arrives in Mirsk. Komanov begins to prime her weapon again.
- ♦ **Day 20:** With the weapon ready, Komanov sacks Mirsk. She lets a few survivors flee by rail for Trekhom.
- ♦ **Day 22:** The army launches again across frozen ground, bound for the capital.
- ♦ **Day 31:** The army stops outside Trekhom for Komanov to prime the weapon once again.
- ♦ **Day 38:** Doomsday eschatologists attack Trekhom. The city actually holds off their assault for a time, but it falls the next day.
- ♦ **Day 39:** With nearly the entire nation of Drakr slain, Komanov orders all her followers to commit suicide and sends their souls to the Voice of Rot. She then heads to the Gyre to witness the end of the world.

THE SIEGE OF BHADR RYZHAVDUD

Exploration. Montage.

How will the party deal with a doomsday army?

One of the ancient bastions of Drakr's might lies under siege. The city of Bhadr Ryzhavdud and its famed tower fortress have for centuries guarded traffic along the Volgir River, where frigid mines in the Shawl Mountains feed ore to the eastern sea. The new rail lines that cross Drakr's frontier have stolen some of the port city's prosperity, but it still serves as a bastion against potential invasion by frost giants of the north.

Some twenty thousand people live in Bhadr Ryzhavdud, many in subterranean compounds dug into the hills alongside the river. The highest hill rises five hundred feet above the river, and from its peak rises a two hundred foot-high tower fortress. Several thousand more farmers who lived around the city have either fled or been slaughtered.

The 'Old City,' that section of Bhadr Ryzhavdud on the surface along the banks of the river, has been seized by an army, cutting the city off from supplies. Under the command of radical eschatologist Grandis Komanov, the besieging army consists of a core of a few hundred fanatics, tens of thousands more Drakran citizens who joined her cause after the stars fell, the occasional phalanx of skeletons, and a couple hundred frost giants who due to deception and language barriers think Grandis intends to conquer Drakr and give them a section to rule.

Most of the non-giants in the army are linked in a hivemind, which creates a perpetual winter storm around Bhadr Ryzhavdud. Low clouds hang two hundred feet above the ground, concealing the tops of the highest hills, though the highest levels of the fortress Tower Mekram rise above the storm. The cold has frozen the Volgir River, and the army surrounds the city on all sides.

Most in the army are dwarves, and likewise in the city, but enough of each group are humans so they keep braziers or bonfires burning to provide illumination.

APPEAL TO POWER

If the party contacts the leadership of Drakr, they are warned not to approach Trekhom or else they will be attacked, as they are a hostile force. The leadership—various politicians and plutocrats, influenced by Obscurati representatives and perhaps led by Dmitra Takhenova—are convinced Risur is the primary threat and will not be swayed. The only way they'd consider focusing on Komanov as a threat would be if the party surrendered and let themselves be executed.

Approaching the City

If the party flies above the low clouds, they can see the top floors of Bhadr Ryzhavdut's fortress rising out of the storm, lit with hearth fires and torches. This allows them to meet with the defenders before having to face the army and its forces. See Meeting the End with Dignity (page 31).

However, a ship breaking downward through the clouds will be noticed, because the hivemind's link to the blizzard will allow them to sense anyone approaching through the storm. See Anti Air Defenses (page 32).

Approaching on foot runs the more mild risk of the party being spotted by the Lost Riders, who patrol in circular sweeps around the city accompanied by frost giants. If the party is even slightly cautious (e.g., a scout moving forward to observe their pattern and succeeding Stealth DC 15), they can enter the city during the ten minute gap between the riders. The next rider through will spot their tracks, though, unless they conceal them.

There is no teleportation ward over the city, just a typical beacon that deposits people near the tower fortress, which is not controlled by Komanov's forces. The handful of Drakrans capable of teleportation were already recruited to aid the invasion of Risur. A few dozen people try to sneak out on foot every day, but their tracks are invariably spotted and they are run down.

The party might try to sneak into the army camp, which is practically unguarded. Unless the party is clearly hostile, the psychically-linked soldiers assume they're no threat, and might even invite them to join in the partying.

Camp Doom

Wispy tendrils thread from the backs of the soldiers' heads, floating up to the stormclouds that form their hivemind. The soldiers are busy fucking and occasionally eating their prisoners and each other, or drinking and dancing and performing every wild act of cruelty they'd ever heard of but never had been willing to try. Every few minutes a crowd will send up a toast, "To the end of the world!" The cheer rolls through the entire army and eventually becomes a guttural roar.

The warriors wear the dull expression that most people stuck in a hivemind have, but if engaged in a conversation many will admit that they are kind of disbelieving they're here. They all had families, goals, and morals, but if the world is going to end, they want to play a role.

Uncommitted

By contrast, the few hundred frost giants who accompany the army keep to themselves in four camps spaced around the city. They don't speak much Common or Dwarven, and so Komanov's dictats do nothing for them. They follow simply because they believe it will help them conquer a land for their own. Their leader, **Jarl Klar Pyaar of Clan Tundar**, has had her ego stroked by Komanov, but she could be convinced of the truth of the cult leader's plans, which would turn her against the army. Someone just has to explain things to her in Giant.

Riders Returned

After vanishing into the far north thousands of years ago, the Lost Riders known locally as the Vsadni were given new titanic undead bodies by the magic of the Voice of Rot. The frozen corpses of the long-dead dwarven warlords are held in the ribcages of massive skeletons crafted of the bones and stones of dead worlds. Their new bodies stand twenty feet high, with the rough body shape of an immense dwarf, wearing stylized stone plate armor covered with hundreds of skulls. Purple lightning crackles out of their hollow eye sockets and across their entire bodies.

Four of the Vsadni stay with Komanov's army, and at least two patrol around the city at any time, riding equally massive ice horses carved from a glacier. The fifth (Nebo) aids Komanov in excavating the Voice of Rot's eye from an older layer of ancient settlements buried beneath Bhadr Ryzhavdut.

The five Vsadni have distinct personalities.

- ♦ **Nebo**, the leader. Growly and competent at coordinating armies. His surrogate body is entirely clad in black adamantite armor, and tendrils of darkness form a huge beard that flows down to his knees. Fights with a long morningstar. He carries no instrument, but instead sings. Rides the frost worm Distemper.
- ♦ **Betel**, the vain axeman. Believes himself superior to all others, but likes the majestic destruction he can accomplish with his fellow riders. Yellow vapors flow around his jaw like a thick, coiled beard. The haft of his bone and brass axe functions as a primitive three-valve horn.
- ♦ **Yarost**, the naïve axeman. Always follows Betel's lead and fights beside him. Has no aspirations, but is just really good at slaughter and music. Jagged shards of ice dangle from his chin in a serrated beard. He also wields a horn-axe.
- ♦ **Tzertze**, the upbeat wardrummer. Acts 'down to earth' despite being a titanic doom warlord from the dawn of history. Selfish and looks for ways to help himself, but would never betray his fellow riders—at least not seriously. Cool red flames wreath his face. Wields twin picks and wears a huge drum at his hip; during combat he maintains a constant percussive mix of clanging metal and deep drumbeats.
- ♦ **Hamul**, the hateful scum. Mumbles and whines. Loathes everyone, even himself. The other riders despise him, but he's too mean to die, and their hate of him enhances their camaraderie. Craggy brown stone clings to his face like muttonchops. Shamelessly carries an immense harp, but when he snaps the strings it flips open into a thirty-foot long scythe.

The Vsadni all share a vulnerability; the icy shard in their chest that holds their original body can be destroyed, which will collapse the stone and bone body around them.

Dear Leader

Grandis Komanov, with the aid of the Vsadni Nebo and twenty of her loyal cultists, is busy magically excavating a collapsed tomb under Bhadr Ryzhadvut's Old City. At the end of Day 1, they recover the lost eye of the Voice of Rot, which the fey titan once used to command the souls of the dead. The eye is withered and calcified, but Komanov and her followers have designs to channel its power into a weapon.

When completed, *the cyclopean revelation* will be a twelve-foot-long contraption of cold iron and obsidian wrapped around the pale eye. Its shape is that of a slender cannon with twin handles reminiscent of a scythe. It weighs a ton but floats effortlessly in Komanov's hand.

It must be attuned in each location to connect to the Voice of Rot's own power; once moved more than three miles from where it was attuned, it loses its powers, and the fey titan will not renew them for anyone other than Komanov. Attuning it takes about a week.

When not attuned, it functions as a terrifying cannon, producing a 1000-ft. black beam, 20-ft. wide, that disintegrates anything in its path (Reflex DC 28 to dodge out of the path and fall prone; 40d6 damage, Fortitude DC 28 half if struck) and dispels any magic it touches (dispel check of d20+25).

When fully connected to the Voice of Rot, *the cyclopean revelation* further causes any creature slain by it to rise as a wraith loyal to the wielder. A few minutes of carving through castle walls and slaying those within will produce hundreds of new allies. A day after wiping out a city, all those souls will be drawn into the Gyre to power the Voice of Rot himself.

Hourly Sermons

At the top of every hour, one of the Vsadni will blow a horn, and the camp will quiet down. Then groups of Komanov's most loyal cultists weave through the army, handing out alcohol rations while loudly proclaiming their ideology:

"All must end. The world is all we know. The world must end. Let us witness that end. A serpent wraps its white coils around our destiny. Let our strength bolster his. Let our souls feed him. Let our glory be the last image seen by his cyclopean gaze. The battle is nigh."

The Carnage Parade

The cultists's benedictions occur twelve times per day. After the final such pronouncement, the four Vsadni make their way through the camps, playing doom-laden music while roughly reshaping the crowds into something resembling proper formation so they can have their evening meals. While the army feasts, the four undead titans gather at the head of a short parade, consisting of them, their steeds, and sleds bearing the core fanatics of Komanov's cult.

The fifth Vsadni—Nebo—then arrives from the excavation site in the Old City, along with Grandis, who has taken a break from preparing her doomsday weapon. She sits atop a throne on a huge sled of gold-highlighted steel, drawn by Nebo's steed. When the parade is about to begin, she stands, and thousands of men go silent.

The various braziers and bonfires around the camp are snuffed, their flames replaced by a wavering blue light in the shape of Grandis Komanov's face so that each of her followers can see and hear her. She

THE SACRAMENT OF APOTHEOSIS

In Adventure Eight, *Diaspora*, Grandis may have learned the ritual for the *sacrament of apotheosis*. If the party let her get away with that, then in this adventure Komanov is perpetually adorned with the proper blood runes to activate the ritual at a moment's notice, and her mute lackey always has the components available to perform it.

The duration is short enough that she won't deploy it unless she knows she'll be facing a major threat, but even in the midst of battle, her lackey can activate the ritual in the span of just two rounds. If she can predict when a fight will take place, she'll use the ritual in advance.

Komanov's followers number in the tens of thousands, but their faith is relatively weak compared to what powered the same ritual during the Great Malice.

The ritual grants her the effects of *divine vessel* (APG), lasting for one hour (caster level 25th). Modified stats are presented in Appendix Two. If Komanov is slain, the backlash consumes all her followers in her army as well.

addresses them with a five-minute long speech, slow and intimate at first, reinforcing the bonds they share through recent suffering and a shared history of conflicts that never could bring peace.

Slowly, though, she ratchets up the intensity of her rhetoric, elucidating a condensed list of grievances in order to paint the leaders of Drakr in the darkest terms possible—as oathbreakers and cowards. She names the great cities of Drakr, landmarks in each, and with grandiosity proclaims that the monuments crafted by these corrupt leaders must be torn down.

As she speaks, the strands that link each warrior with the hivemind storm grow more solid, and some even glow. Tellingly, though, no such strand links Grandis to the hivemind; she views herself as above these people.

Finally she ends with:

"Warriors of the Final Army, the world's end is nigh. Its eyes? Dark! Its heart? Like a frozen river! Its breath? Crushed from it like a goat trapped in the coils of a serpent. None of us can be saved. All that remains is for us not to shrink in fear from the icy end of the earth, but to be brave, to stand like giants until the final light. The song of our people, the tales of our families, has lasted centuries, and now we shall give that song—that epic legend—the grand finale it deserves. We shall sweep across this land like a scythe, and our march shall leave no life behind to suffer a pathetic, whimpering death. Glory! That is what we bring! For if this world is to die, let it be in battle! Let it be in passion! Let it be at our hands!"

To thunderous applause, the five Vsadni gallop through the entire camp as they sing a rousing war song—they have a wide repertoire—to whip up frenzied adulation of Komanov. Dozens of people incidentally die during the parade, either trampled by the beasts or pulled up onto the sleds for gruesome sacrifice.

When the parade concludes, Komanov returns to her weapon, while the army begins the long process of debauching itself to exhaustion.

MEETING THE END WITH DIGNITY

Social. Real-Time.

Perhaps some boisterous debates will turn the tide.

Unlike the chaos outside, the twenty thousand citizens inside Bhadr Ryzhavdud are stoic and restrained. Though of course many are scared, Vlendam Heid has spoken publicly to encourage people to accept the possibility of their deaths. That accomplished, they can turn their minds away from dread and toward a solution.

They've been doing a proper *Magnificent Seven*-style training regimen, arming and practicing battle tactics, setting up traps and ambush spots, reinforcing walls, and occasionally scouting the doomsday army's forces. When the attack comes they plan to hold a fighting retreat back to the tower fortress. It's all for naught, though, because they're simply too outnumbered, and Komanov's *cyclopean revelation* will simply carve through any wall in its path. The defenders' morale is high, but they stand no chance.

Rally the Defenders

Despite his predilections for talking, Vlendam Heid won't waste time waxing philosophical with the party. He'll explain the situation as he knows. If the party hasn't scouted, Kvarti can take them to a low hill just beneath the clouds where they can observe the whole camp and witness Grandis's speech and parade.

We assume the party will be able to take on the army by themselves, albeit not all at once. However, if the party wants to involve the Bhadr Ryzhavdud militia, Heid can liaise with the city defenders for them. Of course, it's likely simpler to just have their effect be in the background, and adjust how many enemies the PCs have to face directly based on how well they deploy their allies. If you need stats, however, use these as a basis for a militia unit.

Bhadr Ryzhavdud Militia

CR 11

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf, troop)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 81 (6d8+54)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities troop traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee troop (2d6+4)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks rifle volley (DC 20)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 11, **Con** 28, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Ability Focus (rifle volley), Dodge, Toughness

Special Abilities

Rifle Volley (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).

Talking Philosophy

While the party considers what to do, Heid laments to them that Komanov's command over the army is wholly based on how she has framed the nature of the new age. He finds it a tragedy that so many are willing to throw their lives away in service to such a flawed philosophy. After all, he asks, the world *isn't* going to end, is it?

It's likely the party just goes after Komanov the old fashioned way, but they might come upon the idea of having a philosophy duel. If the army could be convinced that the world isn't ending, or if Komanov's rhetoric were undercut, her power would fade and perhaps even the hivemind would be destroyed.

If the party tries this, see Madness of Grandis (page 35)

CHOOSE THE FORM OF YOUR DESTRUCTOR

Action. Tactical. Level 20+.

A variety of threats await.

The party could tackle Komanov's army in many ways. Here are some potential combat encounters. Stats for all these foes are presented in Appendix Two: Doomsday Army (page 63).

Perimeter Patrol (CR 20)

Four of these patrols circle the city, with one passing through any given area around the edge every ten minutes or so. Three frost giants ride dire polar bears, while the Vsadni rides his fimbulwinter steed, a massive horse crafted from glacial ice. They're confident, but if things look bad, the Vsadni will blow a horn or beat a drum to call for aid.

- ♦ 1 Vsadni (Lost Rider)
- ♦ 1 fimbulwinter steed
- ♦ 3 frost giant riders
- ♦ 3 dire polar bears

Camp Brawl (CR 15)

Provoke a fight in the army camp, and a few hundred hivemind-empowered warriors will swarm the party, aided by a nearby phalanx of skeletons. If the PCs can defeat these, it takes a few minutes for reinforcements to gather in sufficient numbers to risk a follow-up attack.

- ♦ 3 doomsday army squads
- ♦ 1 skeletal phalanx

Duel with Death (CR 19)

The party might be able to enter the camp and goad one of the Vsadni into arrogantly fighting the party all by himself. Hurtful taunting (Intimidate DC 40) can provoke such a battle. Less severe insults (Intimidate DC 30) can either yield a two-on-two duel with Betel and Yarost, or a one-on-one duel against Tzertze or Hamul. A proper offering (Knowledge (history) DC 30 to realize a mammoth meat feast was beloved by the Riders) can grant a +10 bonus to the necessary Intimidate check.

•Anti-Air Defenses (CR 22)

Should the party fly in, the hivemind conjures a gargantuan blizzard elemental. Its roars alert the four Vsadni, who mount up and ride into the sky, their steeds' hooves creating solid platforms of ice in the air for them to gallop across. The party will be able to hear their blaring horns, rumbling drums, and—discordantly—light harping from the distance as they ride in from all directions.

On the ground, a dozen frost giants with barbed harpoons hurl them up at the party's ship. It takes some a few tries, but three manage to snag the party's ship each round and begin climbing. Distracted by the blizzard elemental, the party might not hear the harpoons' impact over the roar of the storm (Perception DC 30).

Assuming the party stays about 200 feet up, three frost giants clamber aboard the party's ship each round starting on the tenth round of combat. Two rounds later Vsadni Betel and Yarost are visible two hundred feet out, and the other two Vsadni arrive five rounds after them.

- ♦ 1 endtimes blizzard elemental
- ♦ 4 Vsadni (Lost Riders)
- ♦ 4 fimbulwinter steeds
- ♦ 12 frost giant hunters

•Assassination (CR 21)

Komanov is at her most vulnerable in the underground excavation where she crafts her lord's eye into a weapon. Defeating her out of sight of her army will cause the thousands of warriors to go mad and lay waste to whatever city they're nearest to, but they'll then lose cohesion and cease their march upon Drakr.

- ♦ Grandis Komanov
- ♦ Vsadni Nebo
- ♦ Frost worm Distemper
- ♦ 2 doomsday cultists
- ♦ 1 doomsday sniper
- ♦ 1 doomsday army squad

•Overwhelming Odds (CR WTF)

A public battle before the whole army is likely a losing proposition.

- ♦ Grandis Komanov
- ♦ Komanov's Lackey
- ♦ 5 Vsadni Nebo
- ♦ Frost worm Distemper
- ♦ 4 fimbulwinter steeds

The following units are also present, and would be replaced nigh infinitely the round after the last is defeated, so there are always this many such enemies attacking the party at once.

- ♦ 1 endtimes blizzard elemental
- ♦ 1 remorhaz
- ♦ 2 doomsday cultists
- ♦ 1 doomsday sniper
- ♦ 1 skeletal phalanx
- ♦ 8 doomsday army squads
- ♦ 12 frost giant hunters

•Showdown (CR 25)

If the party convinces the army not to interfere, they might have a shot at taking on Grandis and her loyalists all at once.

- ♦ Grandis Komanov
- ♦ Komanov's Lackey
- ♦ 5 Vsadni (Lost Riders)
- ♦ 4 fimbulwinter steeds
- ♦ Frost worm Distemper
- ♦ 8 doomsday cultists
- ♦ 4 doomsday snipers

Komanov's Tactics

Each day Grandis casts *foresight* and *divination*, which gives her enough forewarning to have the following spells active at the beginning of any encounter: *death ward*, *spell resistance*, *freedom of movement*, *greater spell immunity*, *mind blank*, and *true seeing*. She'll typically open battle by conjuring a dancing greatsword, then casts *implosion*. As she concentrates on that she'll cast quickened cure spells, or perhaps trade out spell slots for quickened inflict wound spells.

If she has prepared her doomsday weapon *the cyclopean revelation*, she'll use it at the start of combat, but then must wait 4 rounds for it to recharge. (Timing can go 1—cyclopean, 2—dancing, 3—implosion, 4—implosion, 5—cyclopean, 6—dancing, 7—energy drain, 8—destruction, 9—cyclopean, etc.)

Komanov's mute lackey opens by casting *invisibility* and he tries to use his bolster ability on each of the Vsadni. If he survives that long, he uses *finger of death* and *disintegrate* (modified with his enlarge metamagic rod), or might cast *wall of force* or *dimensional anchor* for utility.

She might also benefit from the *sacrament of apotheosis* if the party let her learn that in Adventure Eight.

Devout Devouring

If Komanov believes she is going to die, she casts *miracle* to call upon the power the Voice of Rot is consuming in the Gyre. She pleads, "Devour me, Voice of Rot, and take this world with me!"

A planar rift appears, causing reality around it to bend and swirl as if being pulled into a black hole. Grandis is slowly torn to pieces and drawn into it, screaming as she dies over the course of five rounds. During that time, the earth starts to break apart and intense winds pull creatures and objects toward the rift. Every Medium or smaller creature within a mile must succeed a DC 15 Strength check each round or be knocked prone, pulled 40 feet toward the rift, and take 4d4 nonlethal damage. A creature that is drawn into the rift takes 250 damage each round (Fortitude DC 28 half). At the end of the fifth round, the rift seals shut with a slow, rumbling sussurus.



THE OLD CAIRNS

Social. Real-Time.

One Vsadni offers to betray Grandis Komanov out of spite.

If the party attacks the army but doesn't finish the job within a few hours, Tzertze, the Vsadni wardrummer, creates a dozen ghouls and sends them out as messengers. They might find the party, or just be slain by city defenders and their messages brought to the PCs. Tzertze wants to betray Grandis.

Unlike his other kin, Tzertze does not believe that Komanov is a true speaker of the end times, and is not eager to resume the mantle of warlord under her. Unwilling to stand against his kin directly, Tzertze wants to help the party kill her. His message reads:

"I apprehend you to be unmatched warriors whom I could call peers. I welcome you to a place of negotiation. Let us set aside titles and honors and speak among the ancient stones. Much time has passed since I rode through these lands, and I will ask of you what has changed since the Three-Eyed Knight walked the Star Road. Perhaps the Speaker of Ice and Snow will perish before this world will."

A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or geography) check (Skyseers automatically know this) reveals that Tzertze refers to an ancient method of timekeeping using the constellations. A hilly region across the Volgir River is home to an ancient ring of plateaus—the Old Cairns. Centuries ago giants crafted these eight-hundred foot megaliths as an immense astronomical clock. Later, dwarves and humans buried their dead among the massive stones. Now the center of the ring, some thousand feet across, is filled with a snow-capped forest.

Friendly Traitor

Tzertze is old-fashioned but polite. He comes alone, save for his steed, and volunteers the essence of Komanov's plan: excavate the eye, craft a mighty weapon that will send souls to her master, then destroy every city in Drakr and order her army to kill itself. Tzertze is simply bored with the idea, because so far he doesn't see any real challenge or difficult battle.

Tzertze begins as Unfriendly to the party, and needs to be offered something for a Diplomacy check to have any chance of making him him Friendly or Helpful. If told of the Ob's ritual, he's offended by the arrogance needed to rewrite the cosmos. He could be enticed to fight alongside the party, either in the Gyre or currently against the armies invading Risur.

Generally, a DC 25 Diplomacy check makes Tzertze friendly enough that he'll stay out of any battle against the party, and will tell them the powers and personalities of his warlord brethren and the array of the army. A DC 30 check will make him helpful enough that he'll mark them with a symbol—a bloody-eyed skull with a green forked tongue—visible only to them and the frost giants, indicating they're not to be harmed. He'll also create an opening for them to get into the camp to challenge one of the other Vsadni, or even the tunnels under the Old City to assassinate Grandis.

It takes a DC 35 check to get him to agree to join the fight against his brothers.

Negotiating in Poor Faith

Only after the party thinks they have a deal does Tzertze start to add complications.

Oh, he adds, he also wants a harem. He'll figure out the specifics of how he'll actually have sex with his new body, but he wants twenty women from Bhadr Ryzhavdud to serve him. And he wants this city as his, so he can use the tower as his fortress. He promises he'll let the citizens live and do dumb farm stuff. Finally, he wants all his fellow warlords' magic weapons as trophies.

Refusing these requests imposes a -10 penalty to the party's Diplomacy check, but it's possible to convince him that the world isn't a place for such domineering tyranny. He is, after all, old-fashioned, and is just doing the sorts of evil things he thinks are right. He could be persuaded to be less direct in his villainy, and instead just attract lady followers.

Fighting Tzertze

If attacked, Tzertze first *dimension doors* away to the top of one of the plateaus, and curses at the party for being petty and mediocre. He hopes to goad the party into approaching, then calls down a *meteor swarm*. In addition to the normal threat, this also triggers an avalanche, as rocks and snow from all the plateaus fall upon the center of the ring, counting as the 'bury zone.' Anyone within a hundred feet of the plateaus but outside the ring is caught in the 'slide zone.'

Characters in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried. Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Those who fail their saves are buried, and are considered paralyzed.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Thereafter, he'll either try to flee on his steed if still outnumbered, or will descend to coup de grace buried foes or possibly give a stand-up fight to a PC if only one is standing.



EXCAVATING THE EYE

Exploration. Real-Time.

The radical eschatologist rants philosophically to her minions as she completes her doomsday device, giving the party a chance to catch her by surprise.

The planned site of Bhadr Ryzhavdud's rail station sits along the Volgir River, and while track has been laid to make transport of industrial goods easier, the actual station itself is just a hole in the ground for now. A well-guarded hole in the ground, patrolled by the frost worm steed (named Distemper) of Nebo, leader of the Vsadni, as well as a detachment of loyal soldiers with experience in mining glaciers.

Excavation Surface Guards (CR 14)

- ♦ Frost worm Distemper
- ♦ 1 doomsday army squad

Cranes around the site have dug out huge cubes of ice, allowing access to an ancient burial chamber in the bedrock. It is here that Grandis Komanov retrieves the eye of the Voice of Rot and crafts it into a doomsday weapon.

Sanctum Defenders (CR 21)

- ♦ Grandis Komanov
- ♦ Komanov's lackey
- ♦ Vsadni Nebo
- ♦ 2 doomsday cultists
- ♦ 1 doomsday sniper

The Sanctum of the Bleak Gate

This chamber was long-ago flooded by the river, then frozen each winter. Originally the chamber was effectively a two-hundred foot cube of open space, supported by columns of natural rock woven with calcified corpses of dead warriors. The top thirty feet of each column is still exposed, since the water did not flood the entire chamber. From that level, wide passages of ice have been cut out, each tall enough for the Vsadni Nebo to move through them, all the way down to the bottom of the chamber. Within the small glacier the eye glows, and every surface glistens with moisture and reflected light.

The eye itself was contained in a case of adamantite, then placed into a pocket dimension and sealed in cursed stone. Bypassing those defenses takes Komanov until the end of day one, at which point she retrieves the ancient eye. It takes her a further six days to build and attune her doomsday weapon. She sleeps each night in a *mage's sanctum* cast by her mute lackey.

The sanctum contains a small force, making it ideal for an assassination. More than that, though, it is here that Grandis feels comfortable boasting about her true goals, and those of her master. If the party is able to get down here without the surface guards sounding an alarm, they can easily listen from the top of the chamber as Komanov rants and rambles.

If your party is the type to enjoy stealth, you could have a few extra guards lurking around the sanctum, which the party can take out quietly as Komanov talks.

The Nature of the Apocalypse

As she works on the doomsday weapon, Komanov boasts to Nebo, mostly to hear herself talk:

"I should be angry. I hate warmth. I adore ice. It's what brought me my prosperity—you could ask my lackey, but he lacks the tongue to tell the tale. I was a caravan guide, and he and many other fat, chatty merchants were with me when a weeks-long blizzard trapped us in the mountains. It was my magic alone that protected them from freezing to death. Believe that, my magic, keeping those arrogant dragon-minded misers alive while I was being paid a pittance.

"My family always claimed we were descended from you or your brethren. We had the blood of warlords. But modern temperance had led us into pathetic poverty. I spent long evenings reading a book of philosophy—old man Heid's treatise—and I got to thinking of how my life might end. I would be damned if I would leave this world a failure. Well I say, I demanded my fair payment, and one of the merchants did not much appreciate that. I think it was when I ate his tongue that the others changed their minds.

"As I say, I adore ice. That blizzard made me rich, and killed everyone who could testify upon my sins. Warmth serves me little.

"But oh how it warms my heart to see the morbid desperation of our army. They see the death of the world and beg me for a way to have a twinkle of meaning before the end. And the Tundar? Ho ho, those giants believe anything. Thank their pride for keeping them from learning our tongue and realizing what jiggery pokery I've fed them.

"Eh, I do them a favor. If they die, their souls linger now, until such time as the plane of ruins passes between our world and the Gyre. No point to such a death. No afterlife, no value in a soul. The Ob, however they changed the world, they tore the plane of dreams from its place as our moon and cast it to the edge of the night. The undiscovered tomorrow which lies beyond the gate lies there no more. The green maze that traps those seeking their final end is itself dissolving in the starless sky.

"But these fools who fight for me, they pay the bill for my apotheosis. Our lord, as his coils tighten around the arc of time and draw it toward the Gyre, shall feast upon their souls. And he shall reward me with godhood. This frozen planet will be torn to dust, and I will walk forever on through the heavens.

"First, of course, we must win this war. I'm pleased to have you warlords, to finish the final battle. What greater reward could you desire than to be the last victor, standing atop a world of corpses?

"Godhood, I suppose. But that's just for me. Betray me and the Voice of Rot shall snap your soul back right away. As Heid said, we must design our affairs to achieve good endings. And now everything goes according to my plans."



MADNESS OF GRANDIS

Social. Real-Time.

The fullest victory will be to destroy not just her army, but the cause it fights for.

The party might challenge Grandis to a philosophical debate. Why not? Earlier they had a rap battle with a faerie and a pirate astronaut. If the party realizes how much Komanov disagrees with her troops, or how most of the troops are not truly committed to her ideology, just desperate, they could realize this is the easiest way to defeat her.

To attempt such a debate, however, the party would need to get everyone's attention, which would probably entail interrupting the daily carnage parade. This would prompt at least some fighting as the Vsadni tried to kill the intruders. But if they have a way to be heard by the whole army and can get a moment to talk, the PCs can attempt a Diplomacy check (DC 30) to convince Komanov's followers that their dear leader ought to debate them—for the honor of the army, if nothing else. Drakr's politics are tightly wound up in philosophical debates, so she won't dare refuse and lose the army's absolute trust.

Format

Drakran tradition divides such debates into five 'rounds' for each speaker, typically limited to ten minutes each. Given the short tempers and urgent matters of war, precedent exists to instead have brief exhortations of just a minute or so, with occasional interruptions from each side. A free-for-all is also fine.

Heid on their Side

Vlendam Heid might accompany the party, but he has no combat skills to speak of, and so the party would need to protect him from the Vsadni. Or he could coach them before they go out (or via *telepathic bond* or the like). If he's with the party, you can let him roll a Diplomacy check (d20+25) in addition to whichever PC speaks, and use the higher result.

Five Reasons

Komanov is more of a rhetorical speaker than a scholar, and so she crafts her arguments in a way to capture the emotions of her followers. She doesn't care so much about logic or consequences. The five key points in her speech are:

- ♦ The world is going to end, so personal consequences are immaterial. People should do what they want.
- ♦ The history and traditions of the world are personal and worthy of respect, and so she wants everyone to fulfill a great destiny to give the world a fine ending.
- ♦ The best way to do that is to tear down all the corrupt and weak who kept the world from achieving its highest greatness. In this case, that would be the political leaders of Drakr and their followers.
- ♦ To rile up the army, she details a half-dozen high profile actions by those in power, which offended the masses, some ancient, some recent.
- ♦ She ends by comparing the army to various mighty heroes from myth and legend, and comparing the party to cowards, tricksters, and the same politicians who they are out to destroy.

For each point, the party can attempt a specific check (DC 30) to recognize a flaw in her argument and figure out how to properly present it to the audience in a way they'll grasp. Then whoever speaks for the party can make a Diplomacy check (DC 40), with a +5 bonus if they identified her argument's flaw.

They gain a further +2 bonus to each Diplomacy check if they can repeat Komanov's insults about the army (or succeed a DC 30 Bluff check to make them up even if they didn't hear them). They take a -2 penalty if the speaker is both not from Drakr and not an eschatologist.

- ♦ **Knowledge (planes).** The world isn't assured to end. While planar mechanics are complicated, it's possible to explain what happened and how they intend to fix it.
- ♦ **Knowledge (history or nobility).** Taking a nihilist tack, the party can recount the stories of other once-great leaders or heroes, figures who fell from power and are nearly forgotten by history. This highlights that there never is a single narrative in world affairs, just a constant roil of different elements rising and falling.
- ♦ **Knowledge (religion).** Every religion, nation, and family has stories of martyrs who, when faced with an unavoidable death, chose to maintain their ideals rather than seek revenge. Comparing Grandis to historical traitors can show that her path is the wrong one.
- ♦ **Knowledge (local).** Naming a variety of positive influences in modern Drakr, as well as neutral groups who will suffer at the army's hand, will make them less fanatical.
- ♦ **Perform (any).** Komanov has the weight of myth on her side, in no small part due to her having musical warlords proclaiming her majesty. A grand performance by a PC can put them on the same footing as Komanov.

If the party succeeds three of the five Diplomacy checks, the army is divided and the hivemind destroyed. A handful of soldiers will still fight by Komanov's side, but others will fight against them, leaving the party to only really have to worry about the Vsadni and a few cultists.

Four successes, and the entire army stands aside. Five successes, and they turn on their former leader and help the party tear her apart. If she is slain, the Lost Riders (except for Tzertze, if he agreed to stay out of a fight) are pulled into the rift created when she calls upon the Voice of Rot, and they are annihilated.

CONCLUSION

If the party stops Komanov's army, word will spread naming the PCs as saviors and heroes, and within a week Drakr halts its invasion of Risur. If the party completely discredits her and pulls that off before Bhadr Ryzhavdut falls, the army stops immediately and aids Risur against the other invaders.

The eye of the Voice of Rot still functions as a mighty, destructive beam, but the party won't be able to use its wraith-creating power since the fey titan isn't a fan of theirs. However if they bring the eye with them to the Gyre, they'll dramatically improve their chances in a fight against the doomsday serpent.

If the party fails and Drakr falls to Komanov's army, the cult's leader will appear by the side of her lord in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven* as they await the end of the world.

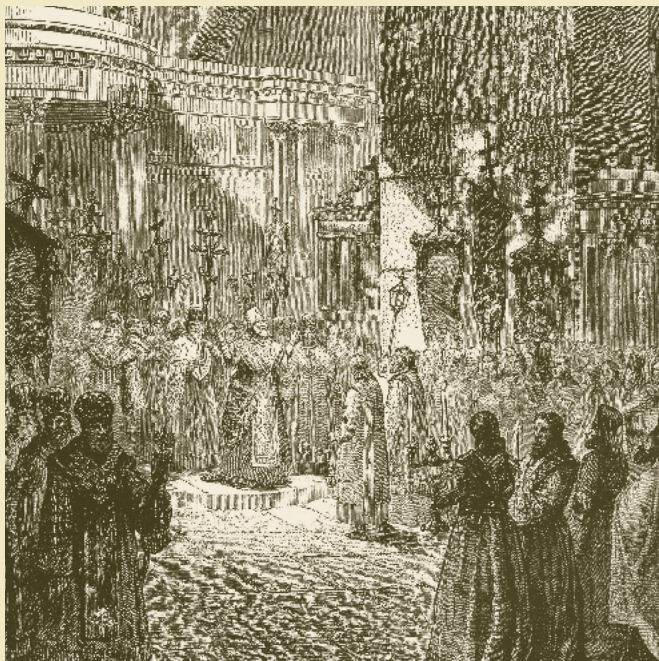


ACT THREE: TRIAL OF THE CENTURY

In the new world order, not even the gods are free from judgment. The *sacrament of apotheosis*, once a deeply buried secret, has fallen into the hands of former godhand Vitus Sigismund. He holds public trials of the various gods of the Clergy, which always end in a sentence of death, then uses the ritual to transform their high priests into avatars for the execution.

Amidst this chaos, the party comes seeking details of the Axis Seal ritual so they can undo the changes made by the Obscurati. The Ob kept a copy of the ritual in the Grand Librarium of Alais Primos, but to open the extradimensional vault that contains it, the party will need to make a deal with the devil.

Okay, technically a demon. Possibly a tanar'ri.



PYRES OF JUDGMENT DAY

Exploration. Montage.

Alais Primos is burning itself to death.

Morgan Cippiano, head of the Family in Flint, will want to accompany the party. If they do not bring him along, he'll arrange transportation on his own and will have a *sending* relayed through Harkover Lee, asking them to meet him at the Lamplano Pescateria restaurant near Vanale Cemetery when they arrive.

Welcome to Alais Primos

Alais Primos is framed by a crescent of verdant hills and low mountains, foremost among them the volcano **Enzyo Mons** which rises high to the south. Half a mile tall and three miles from the city center, Enzyo Mons is accessed by a trail of shrines and chapels, with one devoted to every god in the Clericist pantheon, no matter how minor. At the edge of the caldera stands the Cathedral of Triegenes, devoted to the founder of the Clergy who they claim ascended to godhood upon death.

A stained glass window above the cathedral's rostrum is continually back-lit by the glow of the lava in the caldera, and a broad balcony behind the cathedral overlooks that pit of fire. Traditionally, priests have held ceremonies to cast into the volcano any items believed to be possessed of evil. They also cast in offerings of gold and jewels, though they don't throw as far; a tier just beneath the balcony, out of sight of the public, catches these valuables, which are recovered later.

The mountain is not particularly tall in the grand scheme of things, but its obsidian black face stands out starkly, making the rolling green hills around it seem even more beautiful by comparison. Due to the prayers of the faithful it has not erupted in over 700 years.

City Layout

Aqueducts feed water down from the hills into canals, which flow through the city. Alais Primos is roughly divided into four sections: three sprawling harbors along the coast, the cathedral district which is circumscribed by the old city walls, the common neighborhoods that ring the cathedrals, and finally the sheltered farmlands that lie between the city and the hills. Beyond the semi-circle of hills and mountains many more small towns and farms lie scattered, while a few beautiful churches rise up from garden islands just off the coast.

Hundreds of small chapels dot the city, normally places for confession and prayer, but today the squares in front of nearly every chapel are filled with burning pyres. A constant stream of smoke rises from Enzyo Mons; this blocks out the sky, but the dull orange glow of the city's fires reflects off it, making it seem like the city is trapped inside of an oven.

Throughout the cathedral district and beyond, church windows are destroyed, shrines defaced, and black banners hang from rooftops. The bitter scent of funerary incense rides harsh on the wind, mingling with sulfurous fumes.

NAMES OF GODS

by Ryan Nock

In keeping with E.N. Publishing tradition, we generally don't name gods in our settings unless they play a prominent role that might not be filled by standard fantasy pantheons. *PATHFINDER* and *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* come with pre-assumed deities, so we let groups use whatever gods they are comfortable with. I've always been a fan of Wee Jas from Greyhawk and Calistria from Golarion, but when publishing for multiple systems it's easier if we just have the gods be vague.

For *ZEITGEIST*, that means we've only named Triegenes and Srasama. (We might've tossed in one or two other gods along the way, but nothing really significant.)

That now poses a small problem as we get to an adventure where specific gods are being executed. (Or more specifically, the human concept of that god is being killed, eliminating its psycho-socio-cultural power.) Since we don't know what deity names you're using, we just list gods in this adventure by their focus. You should probably have specific god names for each of them.

In this setting's metaphysics, it's never been clear whether gods are real, and all instances of witnessed divinity are actually due to the *sacrament of apotheosis* converting massed faith into godlike power. Divine spellcasters, at least in my mind, get their power by tapping into that shared faith, though it's certainly possible to access such magic simply by sharing morality without necessarily sharing a specific religion.

With that in mind, if you have a paladin or cleric PC, by all means, have the mob threaten a god the PC worships instead of Triegenes. If a PC's god dies, the PC is probably tough enough to survive the backlash, and come Adventure Thirteen might even take that god's place, ascending via the *sacrament* or some other transcendent power.



TIMELINE OF EXECUTIONS

Every other day a new god is executed, and each victim only empowers the burgeoning evil in the volcano Enzyo Mons. When it erupts, each god so slain grants it new powers and abilities.

In addition to the gods listed below, Velkali goddess of oases will be executed the first time the party goes to witness one of these trials, and the god of music will be executed a day later. Just bump the dates a bit to make room. If the party waits too long, Vitus eventually executes even Triegenes, and the god trials end as the city of Alais Primos is consumed in lava.

- ♦ **Day 0:** God of the night sky. **Blindsight** 120 ft.
- ♦ **Day 1:** God of beasts and magnolias. **Immune** poison, and hellhounds are birthed from the lava to chase down fleeing innocents.
- ♦ **Day 3:** God of sun and archery. **Sunburst** at-will (caster level 25th).
- ♦ **Day 5:** God of stone and pottery. **Senses** tremorsense 120 ft.
- ♦ **Day 7:** God of the sea and tidepools. A massive cloud of steam from the canals surrounds the dragon, providing total concealment beyond thirty feet. When the dragon takes any hostile action, this steam fades until it spends a standard action to recreate it.
- ♦ **Day 9:** God of storms and weddings. **Resist** electricity 15.
- ♦ **Day 11:** God of winds and mountain air. Fly 120 ft. (clumsy).
- ♦ **Day 13:** God of forges and evocation. **Aura** blistering heat 30 ft. Creatures who begin their turn in the aura are affected by *heat metal*, allowing no save.
- ♦ **Day 15:** God of the love and healing. Fast healing 15.
- ♦ **Day 17:** God of fortune. **Aura** shifting fortune 60 ft. All enemies in the aura roll twice for all d20 rolls and take the worse result until they get a 17 or higher on the lowest roll, after which they are immune to the aura for one day.
- ♦ **Day 19:** God of time and synthesis. Regeneration 10 (force). This replaces its fast healing abilities.
- ♦ **Day 21:** God of children's games. **The floor is lava.** All stone surfaces within 30 ft. of the dragon become molten. A creature that touches the lava takes 2d6 damage, and damage continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure. A creature that falls in the lava dies, no save.

Harbor Docks

While thousands have fled the city, even more have been drawn by news of the god trials, and so the docks are overflowing with ships. Nearly all the military vessels have already departed for the invasion of Risur, and the city doesn't have any forces strong enough to maintain order.

Common Neighborhoods

Tens of thousands of people live and work in the city, and they can take *regattos*—long rowed barges—down canals between neighborhoods.

The Family crime syndicate is spread among dozens of different mansions and businesses, but its leadership currently gathers at the Lamplano Pescateria, a canal-side restaurant specializing in seafood, which lies adjacent to the Vanale Cemetery. The location is not simply scenic, it's also a civic service; Family bravuras keep watch on the cemetery, which has spawned the occasional walking dead or possessed sepulcher, since the old *hallow* spells are fading.

Worse, grave-diggers are kept busy as hundreds of people inexplicably die each day. So far the public has not realized that the execution of their gods has been killing devout worshippers.

Cathedral District

Towering cathedrals with grand domes and black-veined marble loom as ominous landmarks between streets marked with shrines on every corner and at the edge of every canal. In the district center, the Plaza Hyperion connects four great civic buildings. Itself a wonder of architecture and landscaping, the plaza's mosaics depict the rise of Triegenes and his defeat of the demonocracy, with a central rosette displaying his ascendance to godhood encircled with the fish that the humble fisherman once caught. Arbors of grapes and honeysuckle lining a circular canal once provided shade from the hot sun, but now the plants have wilted.

At the plaza's north and south ends rise academies devoted to the study of war and to magic, while the eastern end is home to the ecclesiastical governmental palace known as Praetorio Urbis. At the western end squats the Jenevah Grand Librarium, the largest repository of written knowledge in the world.

Every other day at noon, Legate Savina Tullius holds god trials in the plaza, with thousands in attendance.

TOWN CRIER

Wherever the party first arrives in the city, they might hear a town crier shouting out the news.

"Open your eyes, citizens! The gods protect us no longer. Bear witness to their failures, for they are all around you. Behold the theft of our sun. Taste the bitter fruit of wilted vines. Smell the soot of the hells themselves, rising up to claim us!

"Bring these false gods to face the people's judgment for their crimes, and bring their snake-tongued priests to Plaza Hyperion. A generous bounty awaits champions of the people. The Prime Cardinal has fled justice, but every other bishop and hierophant must be brought forth to face their accusers.

"Even the Arch Secula, hidden away in the library, shall reap what she has sown. Though she claims distance from the governance of our religion, her hands reek of the same filth as the hierarchs. The greatest bounty of all shall go to those who bring her in.

"And if you cannot hunt the gods, fear not! You can still levy judgment. At the twelfth hour, join our march to the crown of Enzyo Mons, where all present can help decide the fate of the prophets who lied to us. Testify to their crimes, and we shall cast their evil forms into the maw of the mountain!"



WHEN THE SHEPHERD FLEES THE FLOCK

The nation of Crisillyir is an elected ecclesiastical monarchy, where church and state are one. Vitus Sigismund's ideal target for the *sacrament of apotheosis* would be Prime Cardinal Titus Banderesso, head of the Clergy (if he survived adventure ten). The godhand and his followers are armed with a mountain of evidence tying the prime cardinal to the Family criminal organization. But he has been smuggled out of the city, paying for his freedom with church relics and indulgences.

While the office of prime cardinal deals with matters of the faith, the arch secula keeps the nation of Crisillyir running, and until recent events, did so quite well. With Banderesso gone, Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere has become the primary target (and blame) for the nation's woes. She has taken refuge in the Jenevah Grand Librarium, since it is still a building that carries some authority, but doesn't have the strongly religious overtones of the main palace.

THE CRUX OF THE PROBLEM

Exploration/Social. Montage.

Saving Alais Primos is ultimately secondary to the goal of retrieving the ritual of the Axis Seal. That ritual is held in a pocket dimension vault within the Jenevah Grand Librarium.

Unlike the Crypta Hereticarum (Vault of Heresies), which contains magic, texts, and beings anathema to the faith, the vault of the Jenevah Grand Librarium simply contains magic of great power which the Clergy has tucked away for a rainy day. Much of its contents were released to arm the forces invading Risur.

The vault is directly beneath the central atrium of the library, a location normally visible to dozens of people on three floors. Reading desks surround it on ground level, and overhead balconies of the bookstacks look down upon it. Nine of the statues in the area directly face the atrium floor, magically watching it.

Normally if the Clergy leadership wish to open the vault they close and secure the library first.

Jenevah Grand Librarium

The main doors are watched by a pair of towering basalt statues of scholars, which each contain bound dread wraiths. Compelled by divine magic, their only duty is to subdue would-be thieves. Additionally, as honored employees of the library near a death by old age, many volunteer to have the wraiths extract their souls so they can be bound to the building as Bibliogeists. Serving as shelvees, guides, and janitors, they can sense the presence of living creatures, and will shriek an alarm if anyone moves invisibly through the library. Similarly, slivers of the souls of scribes who died as children have been woven into threads and placed in the binding of many of the more valuable books in the collection, so the bibliogeists can sense their movements as well.

Layers of anti-divination magic have been crafted into the building, which created a dull muffled hum. Readers praise the white noise for helping them concentrate, and it makes it less likely a spellcaster will accidentally discover the whole building is basically undead.

Atrium Floor

The green marble floor of the atrium is traced with gold filigree resembling stitching, and in the center of the floor is what appears at first glance to be a decorative keyhole pattern. However, a person can channel positive energy in order to transform it into an actual keyhole, after which a 3-ft. key must be inserted. The real key is kept in the government offices at Praetorio Urbis, though the guards watching it are short-staffed and nervous about the massive crowds outside. Priests who serve as librarians can conjure a *spiritual weapon* in the form of that key, or the lock can be picked, though this is difficult.

Picking the holy lock requires a Disable Device check (DC 40), though if a character happens to have huge lockpicks he gets a +5 bonus. Each failure triggers one of the following cascade of countermeasures. Each of these has caster level 15th and lasts for one hour.

- ♦ *Wall of force* shaped into a dome trapping anyone within 10 ft. of the keyhole.
- ♦ *Dimensional lock* affecting the area inside the dome of force. This does not interfere with the creatures summoned into the dome by the library.
- ♦ *Deeper darkness*.
- ♦ *Magic mouth* ordering you to cease your tampering or face your doom.
- ♦ *Insect plague* summons five wasp swarms.
- ♦ *Magic mouth* reciting a prayer for your soul.
- ♦ *Blade barrier*. This remains up for an hour, filling the entire dome.

From the Vault

When the vault is unlocked, the ‘stitching’ on the floor slowly breaks apart over the course of three rounds, at which point the floor folds away into some extradimensional space, revealing a ten-foot-wide opening with stairs spiraling down twenty feet. At the bottom of the stairs lies a room that contains the desired item. The floor remains open for five minutes, then stitches itself shut, trapping in stasis anyone still inside.

However, the greatest defense of the vault is that only one item is ever accessible at a time. Each item exists in a distinct demi-plane. Moreover, the vault will actually be empty if it is not opened in the presence of two people—one who must be the highest secular authority of the nation in Alais Primos, and one who is the highest religious authority in the city. Typically this is the Arch Secula and the Prime Cardinal.

Even if those two figures are present, and the vault is unlocked, the nine watching statues around the atrium sense whether either of those two are affected by charms, compulsions, possessions, illusions, and the like. As a countermeasure against effects like *mind blank* or *mislead*, each statue uses *detect thoughts*, and the two figures must each acknowledge that they are of sound mind and not coerced.

If the two figures are present but are not acting of their own free will, the stairs instead lead down to a prison plane. It’s merely twenty feet down, but upward travel loops infinitely, making it impossible to reach the exit without dispelling the effect or using some manner of planar travel.

Negotiations

While a heist is possible, otherwise the party will somehow have to convince both Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere and the godhand Vitus Sigismund to let them into the vault.

Sigismund will not allow it unless the party can prove trustworthy, and that at the very least entails helping him finish executing his pantheon, all the way through up to Triegenes. If they lie to him and manage to trick him into helping open the vault, they still need Degaspere’s approval.

Degaspere was a low-tier member of the Obscurati who was promoted after the great eclipse. She knows what the Axis Seal ritual can do, and realizes how important it is for the Ob’s goals to keep it out of the PCs’ hands. That said, she’s not eager to watch thousands of people die in the god trials. So far she’s kept her mouth shut and avoided attracting the ire of the godhand, but if she thinks the party has a chance to stop Sigismund, she would demand they save her city before she’ll help them.

Of course, if they come with Sigismund in tow and demand the ritual, the arch secula will perform some quick mental calculus, and will probably rat the party out, explaining to the godhand what the ritual really does. She pretends to be helping Sigismund avoid trickery, but she really hopes the party will be forced to fight him.

If the party kills Sigismund (and Legate Tullius and his other key followers), they can put pretty much any priest in charge of the religion, at least long enough to fool the vault. Likewise if Degaspere dies, a member of the Family can readily claim to be the secular authority. The watching statues around the atrium aren’t actually intelligent, so committing murder and taking someone’s office right in front of them isn’t a problem.

What is a problem is that Sigismund has already prepared the *sacrament of apotheosis* for himself, so as he dies he will take on the power of Triegenes, and his demise will cause the long-trapped evil in Enzyo Mons to awaken.

The Ritual of the Axis Seal

We’ll explain details of the ritual in the next adventure. For now, it should suffice to say that the ritual is recorded in a heavy tome, with notes in multiple languages, sheets of traced symbols from Ancient ruins, and a complex mix of instructions and suppositions that will take a week of effort to piece together.

HOLY FAMILY

Social. Real-Time.

The criminal organization known as the Family is once again breaking the law—this time by keeping their faith in a time of apostasy.

If he comes with the party, Morgan Cippiano advises they meet with the heads of the Family at the Lamplano Pescateria. If he isn’t with the party, he finds his own way to Alais Primos. (The Family has a lot of old wealth and contingency plans; a *wind walk* scroll gets a mage to Flint who can use a *teleport* scroll to get them both back in a jiffy.)

The three-story stone restaurant has a wide lawn on three sides and a canal on the fourth. Guards patrol the grounds, several of them divine spellcasters. Warm lanterns try to keep a pleasant air about the place, but the mood is wary. Eyes watch the nearby cemetery for disturbed graves. Approaching strangers are ordered to stop so a paladin among the guards can detect for evil; though the Clergy produces few paladins and they would normally never consort with the Family, this crisis makes strange bedfellows.

Donna Aneenya

A half-dozen heads of different Family households work out of the restaurant, but they defer to **Donna Aneenya**. A burly woman in her sixties, the Donna wears her white wedding dress and has adorned herself with silver chains and pendants devoted to various gods. Foremost among them is a malachite violin, holy symbol of the god of musicians; her late husband played the violin at their wedding. She is taking a stand for piety, and in a life where she’s ordered murder, theft, and violence, the closest she ever felt to her church was on her wedding day.

Morgan can introduce the party to the gathered Dons, and he emphasizes the mighty foes the PCs have defeated. One wiry old Don, **Don Stoyan**, mutters that they sound as preposterous as stories about Triegenes pulling the sea a thousand miles inland so his navy could attack a demon's tower.

Donna Aneenya shushes him, and she points out that her grandson can teleport now; it's a damned hassle since he'd only just started toddling before the great eclipse. Now he keeps bursting into the kitchen and bothering her when she's cooking. If a wee one-year-old bambino can do that, she'll believe what Morgan says of the party.

Things Got Dark

The Dons have fingers in every part of the city, and they've been coordinating ways to keep order, using generosity when possible, broken noses when necessary. Donna Aneenya can give the party a brief synopsis of Crisillyir's woes, and what is beyond their control.

The stars vanished, many hierarchs killed themselves and left suicide notes claiming they had lied about the gods, but the military was able to keep order. Then Prime Cardinal Titus Banderesso left for Danor to meet with this Obscurati group that claimed they were trying to save the world from Risur. Things became unstable, and the high priest of the goddess of the night sky claimed that he would call forth a miracle to fix the heavens. That, of course, did not work, and he was dragged out to Plaza Hyperion by a mob. They were about to just kill the man, but then a godhand appeared.

The man, Vitus Sigismund, explained that the gods may have failed them, but the people of Crisillyir should not follow the gods' lead. He said they should not punish the priest, but the goddess herself. He stalled the mob's anger for a day, and it seemed like perhaps he was trying to make peace. But he demanded the remaining ecclesiarchs send a lawyer to defend the goddess, and anger rose. Riots were just starting when Legate Savina Tullius came to the plaza and announced that the government was silent and offered no defense for the goddess, but she would advocate for the people.

They held that first trial in the square, and Legate Tullius made a case that the goddess must have been negligent in letting the night sky go dark. The high priest said the accusations were a lie, and that some evil force had overpowered his goddess, but that she would return. That was when Sigismund spoke to the crowd. He claimed he could call the god down and deliver the people's judgment. The crowd cried out that the goddess was guilty, and should be executed.

Sigismund then called for the crowd to follow him and bring the priest to the top of Enzyo Mons. Vitus said he would use the power of Triegenes—the man who became a god—to transform the priest into his goddess. And to the crowd's astonishment, after an hour-long hike up the mountain to the edge of the caldera, he did just that. He slaughtered some animals, painted the priest with their blood, then performed a spell.

The priest transformed, grew, and where shadows fell across his body stars could be seen through him. Then he fully became the form of his goddess, but was still reeling in confusion. The godhand pronounced that the goddess had been found guilty and was sentenced to death. And then he struck the huge woman and hurled her over the ledge into the volcano. The crowd looked down as she fell into lava and vanished. For a moment a beam of holy light rose up to the clouds, but then it guttered and died.

OBSCURATI INFILTRATION

One of the Dons, a scheming cleric of the god of time named Don Stoyan, is working with the Obscurati. He reports to them with *sending*, but he's not going to make any hostile move against the party. He dies on Day 19 if the party lets his god be executed.

His only real role is that if the Family is in a position to assign leaders of the new Crisillyir, he'll campaign for one of his allies, **Elva Bentoni**, who will follow Ob orders and refuse to cancel the invasion of Risur. Elva is a popular and beautiful half-elf athlete and celebrity, chosen to act as a figurehead, but she desires to have actual power. If she rises to power, she might come to the party looking for boons from Risur in exchange for outing Don Stoyan and others whom she knows are in with the Ob.

And Then Things Got Worse

The very next day, the military got orders to launch for the shores of Risur, to aid the other nations in an invasion. (The Prime Cardinal may have returned briefly, if he survived Adventure Ten, but has since been smuggled out.) With no military to keep the peace and no head of state to try to control the mob, the city became gripped with a mad desire to punish more gods.

Just how many gods have been killed depends on when the party shows up, but typically one has been executed every other day since the start of the adventure. (See the sidebar *Timeline of Executions*, page 37.)

The Family can help those people who are afraid of the chaos, but those who revel in it are mostly beyond their power to control. The crime syndicate doesn't have enough strength to fight back. They considered assassination, but they know Sigismund shared the spell he cast with others who are loyal to him. Removing him would just incite the mob more.

To make matters worse, there seems to be some strange plague or curse afoot. People are dying without rhyme or reason. The prevailing theory is that as the gods die, spells their priests had cast have ended, and so old wards that held demonic forces and evil ghosts locked away have faltered. (The second part is basically accurate, but most of the deaths are being caused by backlash against devout followers of those gods who have been executed.)

A Friend in the Family

Donna Aneenya isn't used to talking to heads of state, but she has a bold proposal. There is close to no government in Crisillyir now. If the party can help save the city, the Family will be well positioned to either run the country, or decide who does. And they would owe a huge debt of gratitude to Risur.

On a more pressing matter, if the party wants to get the Axis Seal ritual, the Donna would be quite willing to lend a helping hand. Give her a day and she's sure *someone* in her extended family has detailed knowledge of the Grand Librarium, since rare spellbooks can be quite a fine heist. See Library Heist (page 44) if the party goes this route.

Saving the City

How to save Alais Primos? The dons are in disagreement. Before they share their possible plans with the party, the Donna asks if the PCs have any ideas.

After the party proposes, Aneenya lists the three main contenders they have come up with:

- ♦ **Coordinated Strike.** Audacious plan to get close to the godhand Sigismund, his main ally Legate Tullius, and a half dozen other priests who allegedly can cast the godhood ritual, and then kill them all at the same time.
- ♦ **Evacuate to Sid Minos.** This would require rescuing dozens of high-ranking priests who are in hiding so Sigismund wouldn't have anyone to use as the focus of his spell, and then fleeing to Sid Minos which apparently is more peaceful than here. The hope is that the fervor will peter out.
- ♦ **Not Guilty.** So far the populace has found every god guilty of doing more bad than good. This risky plan would encourage Sigismund to place the god Triegenes—the most beloved and respected god of the pantheon, who is nearly above reproach—on trial. And then they'd have to manage to win a not guilty verdict, which won't be easy, considering how much of a firebrand Legate Tullius is.

If the party goes for Coordinated Strike plan, they would be expected to handle Vitus Sigismund, who will probably have allies close at hand, as well as divine intervention on his behalf. However, Donna Aneenya won't approve this plan until someone goes to try to talk the godhand out of continuing the trials. He is an honorable man, and it is bad etiquette to kill a decent man without looking him in the eyes and trying diplomacy first.

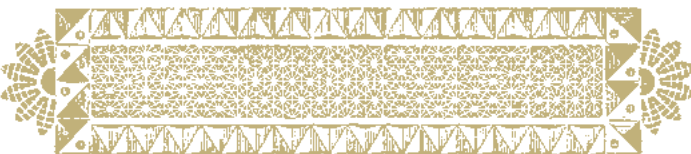
The Evacuate plan is not particularly dramatic itself, but it would necessitate a heist in the Grand Librarium since the Sigismund would not approve the opening of the vault.

The Not Guilty plan is the one we presume as most likely, and its main snags are that the PCs would need solid evidence to defend the history of Triegenes, and that someone would have to stand as proxy for the god. The former can be found in Triegenes's biography in the Crypta Hereticarum (which the Arch Secula knows about). For the latter, Morgan Cippiano will volunteer.

In Exchange

Normally a huge angry crowd surrounds the Jenevah Grand Librarium. The Family can smuggle the party into the building through secret underground tunnels, avoiding the supernatural defenses at its main entrances. Beyond that, they have the layout of the library and know some of its defenses.

During their time in the city, god hunters seeking bounties on priests might accost the party. While the PCs probably don't need the help, Family bravuras who are shadowing them will come out to scare off the god hunters.



Later Developments

As detailed in *The Whole World in His Hand* below, the first god trial the party witnesses should be that of Velkali, a goddess of travelers and oases. We want there to be low stakes, a god no one is particularly invested in, so it's more likely the party will witness what's happening and then talk to Vitus Sigismund afterward, instead of jumping into battle. (If they fight early, though, so be it.)

However, the day after Velkali's trial, word reaches them that the mob plans to execute the god of musicians. If the party doesn't avert it, the backlash causes the Donna to suffer a heart attack (effectively she drops to -1 hit points and dies a few rounds later unless healed). This should be enough to make it obvious that the death of the gods also kill the followers, in case the party hasn't realized that yet.

THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HAND

Social. Real-Time.

The god trials are run by godhand Vitus Sigismund and his allies.

Huge crowds gather in Plaza Hyperion to seek news of the god trials or to bring in priests for bounties. Others simply beg for aid, since many basic civic functions of government have fallen apart. Even amidst the fervor there are brave souls who come to the plaza to lend aid however they can.

The plaza is generally overseen by **Legate Savina Tullius**, an elf orator from Risur who trained in Ber then came to Crisillyir and converted. She recently renounced the formal religion, and her skill at keeping a crowd's attention is sufficient that no one questions any inconsistencies or hypocrisies in her statements. Her goal is to ride out the current upheaval and emerge on top, so she's trying to arrange for Vitus Sigismund to become leader of whatever remains of the nation of Crisillyir once the god trials are over. He has entrusted her with the details of the *sacrament of apotheosis* so she can continue his work if he dies, but she's a politician, not an idealist.

Hiveminds are a concern, but Savina has hit upon a novel solution. Since only those of like mind are caught up in hiveminds, she ordered a dozen non-Clergy foreigners who were in the city's jails released. In exchange for her keeping them safe from the mob, they are tasked with looking out for nascent hiveminds. Every couple hours one will begin to form as the crowd gets too excited, at which point she'll order the plaza cleared.

Testimony Against Oases

The dull roar of a crowd in Plaza Hyperion can be heard from over a mile away. When the PCs get to the Plaza, they are treated to the spectacle of a makeshift stage assembled from toppled marble masonry, rising ten feet above the rest of the plaza. Atop it, eight armored priests, their platemail doused in volcanic ash, hold the ends of chains. Together they watch a feeble manacled prisoner—an old deva woman wearing tattered priest robes.

Legate Savina Tullius paces around the accused. Tall, beautiful, and endowed with spells to fascinate the crowd, Savina is making a grand show for her audience.



ANGELIC ONLOOKERS

Old spells cast centuries ago called for the aid of angelic hosts. The priests who cast them did not expect actual angels to come; unbeknownst to them, the Axis Seal prevented such long-term aid. But the spells did work. They were just delayed. Now that the seal has opened, centuries of magic compels these divine messengers to serve the highest authority of the Clergy, which today is Vitus Sigismund. They are newcomers and don't understand the politics of this world, and so they assume the punishments being meted out are just. If the magic binding them could be dispelled, they could be persuaded to see the madness for what it is, and might turn against Sigismund.

INTERRUPTIONS

Nonviolent interruptions cause the crowd to grab the trouble-maker and drag them out of the cathedral. Anyone resisting that causes the clerics and monks to approach and threaten to lock up anyone who opposes the will of the tribunal. Actual violence causes the proceedings to pause as angels swoop in at Sigismund's command.

"You have all gathered here to bear witness and hear the crimes of Velkali, the goddess who shelters travelers and offers rest at oases. What oases? I note from an epistle of the ecclesiarch Stella Amphora, who wrote in the year 157 B.O.V. that Velkali was welcomed into our pantheon by the request of the people of the northeast. Any traveler who has gone there knows that land is dry and parched, its people dead. Today that waste has spread throughout our country, and aside from this sheltered garden that *people* have crafted, our nation is unsafe.

"What did this god do when the great calamity struck our people? Nothing! Not a finger was raised to provide succor to her people in the hour of their need.

"I quote from the holy poem of Agraman, sacred to Velkali, 'And she said to the desert folk / let this pledge be never broke / that in your lean and hungered days / your suffering I shall assuage.'

"I ask that this tribunal take this as evidence that Velkali has forsaken her core vow. She is derelict in her duty."

The elf makes a sweeping gesture towards the crowd. "Who would bear testimony for Velkali? Any?"

None of the assembled crowd step forward. The deva priestess who stands in for her goddess doesn't bother to defend herself, since she's heard enough of these trials to know they're a farce. Provided the PCs don't make any attempts, the trial proceeds. Should the party intervene, the crowd jeers them. You can use the guidelines in *Advocatus Piscatoris* (page 50) to handle the defense, but without supporting evidence the crowd will almost certainly find the goddess guilty.

March to Execution

"And thus it is so," says Savina. "The god has not done was she was pledged to do. Even the humblest tailor can complete their task given to them. Should we not expect any less of gods? Take her. We march for the mountain."

The crowd parts as the armored guards drag the chained priestess down from the stage. The whole mass of several hundred people heaves out of the plaza and onto the road that leads to Enzyo Mons. Many sing an old song that prays for condemned men as their souls head to the afterlife. (Of all the gods in the Clergy pantheon, no one disputes that the god of death is doing his job.)

The trek takes a little over an hour. On the path up the mountain various shrines and small chapels have been toppled or burned down, and crude wooden grave markers erected with the names of dead gods. Between these, beggars huddle under blankets and hide their faces as they hold out pleading hands for alms.

The cathedral of Triegenes looms at the edge of the volcanic caldera, and shining forms circle in the sky above—angels, called to serve Vitus Sigismund, their armor and blades reflecting the hellfire light of the lava.

The Final Authority

The crowd marches through the open doors of the cathedral, where priests in soot-dappled armor and monks in funereal robes watch for signs of dissent. The monks intone low hymns, slowly repeating parts of the chant for the *sacrament of apotheosis*.

Ten-foot wide fluted columns rise eighty feet to support the ceiling, from which statues of holy figures hang, their eyes turned skyward. Some of them have been recently cracked and removed, their white marble pristine beside the ash-coated surfaces of the rest of the ceiling.

Rows of pews stretch the length of the building, which is constructed with a slight downward slope akin to stadium seating. Aisles flank the pews, lined with ornate statuary that depicts the life and ascendance of Triegenes. Grand stained glass windows beyond the rostrum permit crimson light, but where a traditional cathedral would have a back wall behind the pulpit, here the building opens to a wide balcony with pitted and burnt stone tiles. Grandiose fountains lie on either side of the balcony, each consisting of stone sailors on boats, holding silver chains that end in harpoons and fishhooks, the symbol of Triegenes. A railing encircles most of the balcony, but leaves a fifteen foot wide section open, perilously overlooking the burbling molten rock in the mouth of the volcano.

From the moment one enters the cathedral, a single figure is visible all the way down the length of the building, standing at the precipice. Bald, silhouetted by the fiery haze, Vitus Sigismund raises one hand and beckons the mob and the condemned to meet him on the balcony.



Sermon on the Volcano

The crowd fills the cathedral and many flow out onto the edge, though priests stop the group before a dangerous number press through. The onlookers form a half-ring around Sigismund as Legate Tullius and her priests guide the priestess of Velkali to the edge. Ritual components have been set up, identical to what the PCs witnessed in the memory event at the climax of Adventure Eight.

Sigismund begins to speak, and as he does, his fellow monks bring out vials of blood and begin to paint symbols on the priestess.

"I understand," Sigismund says, "that the tribunal of the people has found the goddess Velkali guilty of forsaking her pledge to protect us in our time of suffering. Before you lay sentence, heed this sermon, children.

"I have faith. I know you do. Say, do you have faith?"

The crowd murmurs in agreement.

"Do you have faith! Don't lie."

A louder, pleading response from the crowd cries yes.

"I hear your uncertainty. I feel it too. I do not wish to see those who I pray to be shown as liars. I pledged my life to the gods, foremost of all to Triegenes. The core of our faith is this. A man can overcome adversity to become anything he chooses. A hero. A king. A god.

"But too many of us choose the wrong path. We become braggarts. Blackguards. We swagger and slander and become tyrants over whatever small world we can grab.

"And this new world, this dark and damned world we see around us? I tell you it has changed because those who once led us were lying to us for years. They did not trust us. I tried to find the truth, and they killed and cursed righteous friends who would have pulled their schemes into the light. And their scheme, I tell you, was to decide what we would be. They decided what they thought was right. And they did not give us a choice. They did not let us test ourselves. If the meaning of life is to choose what you become, they tried to eliminate it. That's as good as killing us all.

"Our hierarchs betrayed their vows to us. I'm sure the king and philosophers and sovereigns of the rest of the world did the same to their people. They should be punished, and we, the children, should retake a world they have stolen from us.

"I say to, none of us is different. Our leaders abandoned us. The gods? They abandoned us! And you, each of you! You know you have abandoned your brothers and sisters. Do not think we are better because we sit in judgment. We are all weak.

"But we are all strong too, in that any man can rise above his frailties. Any ruler can be just. Any god can obey his pledge to this world. I shall ask you to lay sentence, but know when you judge, you judge yourselves as well. Have you, children, risen to what you could be?"

He pauses for a long moment of silence.

"This goddess, Velkali, is guilty! She has forsaken us, and like a soldier who leaves his post, her crime cannot be forgiven. Tribunal, what is your sentence?"

As one, the crowd roars, "Death."

Godfall

With swift confidence, Vitus begins to chant. He grasps the priestess's head and somehow compels her to intone with him, "Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god."

The monks remove the chains on the prisoner, who falls over, gasps, and begins to swell in size. Blue-white energy arcs off of her body in fiery blazes, and she staggers to her feet, fifteen feet tall, with long blue-green hair flowing and rippling like water. She looks down at her hands, then lifts her gaze to the crowd.

She opens her mouth to speak, but beside her Sigismund has planted his feet solidly, and he lunges into her, pressing with one hand. The blow hurls the goddess off the edge of the balcony. The crowd holds its breath. Sigismund draws himself up straight. The red haze flashes bright orange for a moment just as a heavy impact and splash sound reaches the crowd. A column of blue-green light lances into the sky, the mountain rumbles, and in an instant the light is gone.

Some in the crowd seem to faint. (Actually they were worshippers of Velkali who have died in the backlash.)

Sigismund says to the crowd, "Go home and pray. Pray that the gods witness us and know that they will be held to account. It is not too late for them to live up to the faith we have placed in them."

After that the crowd disperses and heads back to Alais Primos. Legate Tullius and a few dozen priests and monks remain behind to confer with Vitus. The angels who circled above land and silently pick up the bodies of those who perished. They carry them to a side chamber where they will receive last rites and then be brought down to the city for burial.

Meeting the Godhand

It takes a bit of clout to get a meeting with Sigismund, but if the party is willing to give him five minutes to pray after what he has done, he'll listen readily. If they force the issue, he distrusts them, even if they saved him on Mutravir Island.

Sigismund prefers to speak in the presence of **Advorel**, the leader of the heavenly host he called down to serve him. While the other angels are 'traditional' winged humanoids, Advorel towers eighteen feet high, its body composed of androgynous armor. Its lower body resembles a four-legged lion crafted from steel, its upper body that of a humanoid, with two massive wings of steel with sapphire feathers. Divine light glows out through the joints of the armor.

Advorel must obey the commands of the highest religious authority of the Clergy, which currently is Sigismund. It never speaks; Sigismund has commanded it to keep its words to itself except when he speaks to it, because he doesn't want it planting doubt in others. Its face is expressionless save that the light from the eyeslits of its helmet flares with disapproval at some of Sigismund's hubris.



Catching Up

Sigismund is interested in the events of the wider world, and he's sympathetic to efforts in opposition to the Obscurati. But he views it as his sacred duty to continue the god trials, and he will not be swayed from his path. Even if he finds his own god Triegenes wanting, he will fulfill the duty that the gods will not. He might like to help the party, but will only do it once every shirking god is cast down.

He also is hesitant to let them access the Axis Seal ritual from the vault in the Grand Librarium until he can be more certain about their intentions. He is long past blindly trusting those who claim to share his beliefs. He'd ask that they help him finish his task with the trials, and then if they have demonstrated the proper character he'll agree to help them.

They might just lie to him, perhaps saying they want something else from the vault. Due to the nature of the vault's magic, though, unless they explicitly request the Axis Seal ritual they won't get it. They'd need to come up with an explanation for what the ritual is that would convince Sigismund that he needs it to complete the god trials.

Triegenes Trial

Sigismund is planning to save the trial of Triegenes until the end of his inquest, but he could be convinced to move it up if the party has someone (like Morgan Cippiano) who will stand for the god. He admits that he wants to find his own god innocent, but he will abide by the decision of the tribunal of the people. He advises the party to compose a good defense.

Discovering the Sacrament

Sigismund is guarded about where he learned the *sacrament of apotheosis*, but if they share their own knowledge of the ritual he will tell his tale of how he learned it. A boy came to him—the son of a butcher—saying that he'd seen a woman in the canal outside their slaughterhouse. The woman had said there was a man with the hand of a god who had escaped an island in shadows, and after some prodding the kid had realized it must be Sigismund, who had recently made a name for himself by claiming he had found a cabal of villains on an island, and that the island needed to be exterminated.

The boy said the woman wanted to speak to him, so he went. They had to slaughter a pig and let its blood drain into the canal, and then she appeared. She was clearly a being of the low planes, and she never spoke in the first person. They had a long conversation about the nature of just leadership, wherein she implied that she had once known Triegenes. Then she explained to him the nature of the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and suggested he use it to become a proper leader of his faith.

He did not trust her, and suspected somehow the power would corrupt him. But instead of using it for himself, he had the idea to wield the ritual as a weapon to tear down the false gods. Once he is done orchestrating his trials, he intends never to use the ritual again. It is too powerful and dangerous.

Getting Aggressive

Sigismund suspects the party disapproves of his trials, but if he senses a coming altercation he entreats them to take time to reconsider. He might very well lead this country when it recovers, and they will need allies, even if they don't agree on all accounts.

However, if he thinks a physical confrontation is imminent and unavoidable he'll make the first move. See *Fire is a Living Thing* (page 52).

LIBRARY HEIST

Exploration. Real-Time.

The party might attempt to break into the grand librarium's vault.

The Family can inform the party of the following elements of the defenses of the grand librarium's vault.

- ♦ **Specters and Geists.** Undead spirits roam the library and sound the alarm if anyone is invisible. And horrid spirits lurk at the main entrance to catch thieves. Somehow they know if any book crosses the threshold. However, the tunnels that lead into the building's cistern are just watched by the lesser bibliogeists, which can be banished. If one of these spirits spots a thief, though, it can alert the whole building with its shrieks. The librarium has plenty of guards, especially now since the Arch Secula resides there.
- ♦ **Vault Lock.** The entrance to the vault is on the floor of the main atrium. It's clearly extradimensional somehow, because tunnels pass directly under it, so there's no physical space it could occupy. Stories say that the lock motif on the floor has to be affected by positive energy, turning it into an actual lock. The librarian-priests can use *spiritual weapon* to summon the key, but perhaps it could be picked if you are willing to risk whatever traps are there. A couple centuries ago someone tried to break in at night; his body was found sliced to bits and chewed up as if by ants.
- ♦ **Observation.** At least five of the statues around the atrium are enchanted to watch the vault. *Greater arcane sight* might reveal what they look for, but no one in the Family could cast such a high-level spell.
- ♦ **Opening the Vault.** Whoever opens the vault says the name of what he or she wants, and only that item is present. The biggest problem, though, is that the vault is only ever opened in the presence of two people. One must be the head of the religion, and the other is the highest secular authority in Crisillyir. Short of regime change, the Family doesn't know how to avoid that defense.

Sneaking In

In the current environment, only dignitaries and guards are allowed into the librarium. Arch Secula Degaspore would of course meet with representatives of Risur, which could be a good way of luring guards away from the atrium and the vault. A PC who can do a convincing Crisillyir accent might even be able to get assigned as a guard.

Sewer tunnels lead into the library, but a bibliogeist lurks in each of the four tunnels that lead in. They mechanically are CR 5 wraiths, and must be dispatched before they know they've been attacked (Stealth DC 20) or else they'll sound an alarm.



From there, shapeshifting or teleporting can get you up into the bath rooms in the basement. The bibliogeists in the main library don't actively patrol, but rather tend to the collection. Anyone who looks like a presentable library patron (Bluff DC 20) can move about freely and reach the atrium. A handful of scholars read in the atrium, so they'd either need to be convinced to leave somehow, or the PCs would have to find a way to open the vault in plain sight without being detected. Illusionists should love this.

Pop a Lock

As mentioned earlier, opening the lock requires channeling positive energy, then either getting a *spiritual weapon* key or the actual key in the Praetorio Urbis. Alternately, the lock can be picked (Disable Device DC 40), but failure traps the thief and leads to a series of unfortunate events.

Even if the lock is opened, it will lead to an empty extradimensional space if the two proper dignitaries aren't present. That, however, can be spoofed if someone's clever enough. *Misdirection*, while technically only supposed to work on a limited set of spells, will function here to confuse the watching statues if the party is able to cast it on both Sigismund and Degaspore and get back here before it wears off. Alternately, each PC pretending to be someone else can make a Use Magic Device check (DC 30) in front of each of the statues to fool them. However, the Family only knows of five of the statues; they'll need to discreetly *detect magic* to recognize the statues overhead are also watching.

Finally is the challenge of *detect thoughts*. If the party has used *greater arcane sight* or perhaps some good auguries and divinations to learn about this layer of defense, the two PCs posing as Degaspore and Sigismund just need to think that they're acting of their own free will and let the statues detect their thoughts. It's a matter of keeping one's cover (Bluff DC 20 or Will DC 20) to not let any other thoughts ruin the ruse.

An alternate arcanoscientific solution could be to get next to the vault and activate the lock with positive energy, but instead of opening it try to scan the planar energy coming off it in order to find the right demiplane. If the PCs schlep the whole Gidim vortex array into the library, this only takes a minute, and then they can just target a *greater teleport* or *plane shift* spell to get in and another to get out. Barring that, let your party be imaginative in what magical lock-picking looks like—maybe it's *clairvoyance* and *locate object* combined with DC 40 Knowledge (arcana) and (planes) checks; maybe it involves turning ethereal and summoning monsters into the vaguely-visible demiplanes, then using telepathy to figure out which room has what you want.

Results

Should the party pull off all those things, they can get into the vault and retrieve the leather-bound tome that contains the ritual of the Axis Seal. If they mess up, they might get trapped in a wall of force and chopped to bits, or simply open an empty vault, or be stuck in a demiplane they can't escape from that will trap them in stasis after five minutes. As with any good heist, it might be best if something goes awry at the last minute, forcing a dangerous exit from the building.

The Secular Authority

Arch Secula Natalia Degaspore should play into this scene in some way, either as someone the party can use as a distraction to lure guards and onlookers away, or as the first person on the scene when they screw up.

A PC might talk to her and she could ask them straightforward for help retrieving the biography of Triegenes, to use as proof to avoid the execution of the most important god of their pantheon. She has no allies who can reach it, since it lies in the damned Crypta Hereticarum.

Or, if the party pulls off the heist without a hitch, perhaps use her to plant a seed of doubt as to whether the party should just get out of dodge and leave the city to die. They might overhear her talking with some of the scholars, begging them to search faster for a solution that won't require going to the Crypta.

If the party screws up sneaking in, Degaspore arrives with wraiths and geists and a half-dozen guards, but quickly surmises the party is beyond the power of her and her allies, so she asks to talk instead of fight. She ultimately wants something from the party before she'll help them, but with a library full of scholars at her disposal she has figured out a possible way to avoid execution for Triegenes.

The point I'm getting at, there are a lot of ways things can go down, but if the fact that a demoness gave the *sacrament* to Vitus isn't enough to get them to check out the vault, *someone* ought to suggest the party go there.

PRAYERS ANSWERED

Action. Real-Time. Level 20.

Wards on the Crypta Hereticarum finally summon angels who have long been barred from offering aid. They proceed to destroy heresies the party needs.

Tucked away among all the dangerous artifacts in the Crypta Hereticarum is Triegenes' autobiography, filled with the life of the man before he led a massive rebellion and gathered an army to topple the demonocracy.

Triegenes was aided in this legendary task through the power of the *sacrament of apotheosis*. Originally used by the demons themselves, the ritual was given to him by Ashima-Shimtu, whose motives even she does not clearly remember. Triegenes knew that over time, the *sacrament* would corrupt even the purest of heart, and the potential backlash against the faithful was not worth its price. His death was mourned across the nation he founded, and with his death, the knowledge of the *sacrament* was lost.

With the horrors of demonic rule still fresh in many minds, the Clergy demanded that Ashima-Shimtu hand over the details of the rite to them. She refused, and for that, the immortal demon was imprisoned. For centuries, the hierarchs of the faith performed rituals around the vault of heresies to ensure those within could never escape. Among their prayers were pleas to servants of their gods to come and defend the vault should any intrude. The nature of the Axis Seal prevented angels from answering those summons, but now those restrictions have lifted. When the party comes to the vault, a backlog of centuries of prayers calls down a vast heavenly host.

Island Arrival

As the last time the party visited, the island's coast of rusted and pitted metal beckons. As before, if they wait until sunset undead rise from the seas to attack. The lighthouse that rises above the entrance to the Crypta Hereticarum is as forlorn and hollow as ever.

A voice whispers into the party's minds, "Deceptions and foul deeds were long the domain of Ashima-Shimtu. Perhaps the visitors to her prison wonder if she enjoys the suffering and death of the pious in Alais Primos. The religion that imprisoned her is shattered. She senses as blood flows through the city's canals, but though she provided the hammer, it is not her hand that swings it.

"Alas, it seems all of Ashima-Shimtu's plots to ensure her release have come to naught. Should the doors to her prison be opened, her sentence of the oubliette shall become the scythe. Execution awaits her, yet these visitors might prove her salvation. Though it may be revealed as hypocrisy, she demands a favor be repaid. She beckons her visitors, come and speak in person."

If long ago in adventure four any PCs had their blood enter the well beneath the demoness, she can now compel them, like a *geas*, to enter the vault and reach her quickly. Any magic that could block this compulsion is repeatedly affected by *greater dispel magic* (caster level 15), once each round. Characters so affected are not dominated nor compelled to act recklessly, but their foremost goal becomes reaching Ashima-Shimtu so they can speak to her in person.

Angel's Herald

As Ashima-Shimtu finishes speaking, a single figure appears atop the lighthouse, a trumpet archon named **Aezusat**. He proclaims, "None shall attempt to enter the vault, lest they face the wrath of the gods. All

within is suspect. We cannot allow the evil here the leave, so if you open those doors, we will not stop until this isle is cleansed. Do you come here as thieves and looters, or do you also wish to purge the unholy?"

Aezusat doesn't stop the party from trying to open the vault, but if they go down toward its doors—or if they claim they want to help cleanse the vault—the archon blows his trumpet, and the sky glows brighter than it ever did when there was a sun.

Blessed Reaper

Lances of light plunge into the surface of the island, each a divine creature—angel, archon, and the like. First to arrive is **Hezophiel the Reaper**, a black-clad planetar who wields a scythe. Moments later an astral deva lands beside him, and then in a ring arrive a pair of trumpet archons, four movanic devas, and eight legion archons. The lances of heavenly light continue for a minute more, each bringing a flock of critics—swarms of angels, each small enough to fit on the head of a pin. Hezophiel invokes a holy *forbiddance* across the island, preventing any further creatures from teleporting or being summoned onto or off of the island. Then he orders the heavenly host to destroy everything within the vault.

Angelic Host (CR 20)

- ◆ Hezophiel the Reaper
- ◆ 1 astral deva
- ◆ 3 trumpet archons
- ◆ 4 movanic devas
- ◆ 8 legion archons
- ◆ Effectively limitless critic angel swarms

Feigned Alliance

If the party claims to be allied with Hezophiel, he asks to speak with them for a minute. He explains that he knows not the context of this vault, only that centuries of prayers have suddenly ascended to the heavens. He has seen that the wards that once made this place nearly impregnable have failed, so he has been charged with eliminating the evil within before it can escape. He cannot open the doors himself, though; that must be done by a mortal. But first he wants to know he can trust the party. He asks their business.

Hezophiel has *discern lies* active (Will DC 20), and even if a PC can avoid that, it still takes a Bluff check (DC 37) to convince the angel that the party will aid him. If he realizes they're lying he pretends not to have noticed, so that the party will open the vault doors for him. Thereafter, if he ever sees them trying to take anything out of the vault he will order his host to attack. Alternately, a Diplomacy check (DC 42) can explain a context around the angel's orders, enough for him to agree to let the party perhaps examine and catalog items within the vault before they are destroyed. In either event, he will insist on purging everything—even the innocent but tormented angel Linia, the trapped lillend Somnia, and the demoness Ashima-Shimtu.

Quick thinking—or mere speed to reach parts of the vault ahead of the angels—can let the party grab items without the angels seeing it. Whether the party rushes into the vault with angels on their heels, or tries to cooperate, they are on a clock as the hosts complete a thorough sweep of the place.

FINDING THE BIOGRAPHY

We figure the party will use divination magic to get a clue where the book is—in the demiplane painting representing the vice Envy, in chamber four, blasphemous artworks. Without that, the party might manage to ask around and get the cursed priest **Orhalder Skarathi** who took the book to admit he has it, in exchange for a promise to save him from the angels. Failing that, the angels who find the book aren't able to destroy it due to strong divine magic shielding it. Their leader Hezophiel will bring it and a handful of other items into the final chamber, where he intends to destroy them all—and Ashima-Shimtu—at the same time.

If all else fails, the demoness herself knew Triegenes in life and can testify in his trial if the party can rescue her.

ALREADY EMPTY?

If your party already cleared this place of danger, there's no need to repeat old encounters, but you could have the angels literally pull evil spirits out of the walls and floor, showing that whatever the party might have defeated previously still lingered here, and has enough malevolence to fight back as the celestials banish them to a proper final fate.

Vault Redux

Rather than reprint the entire vault, we encourage you to refer to the Crypta Hereticarum appendix in the Act One compilation. Alternately, you can purchase the standalone version of the vault of heresies from various online vendors, or download it as an EN World subscriber.

We leave it to you how the angelic host interact with the party, but here's a chance to revisit any NPCs the party enjoyed previously, or to give the PCs a chance to get revenge against any foes they didn't stand up to the first time they came here. We assume the party will prefer to outrun the angels rather than fight them all.

(If you had the vault be mostly empty and deserted when the party visited, you can just skip to the end, in Ashima-Shimtu's chamber.)

Angelic Progress

The critic angels lead the way, fluttering through the vault in one huge swarm that splits apart so scores can scout each of the vault chambers. They fly at 120 feet per round, easily crossing the entire half-mile

complex in about two minutes. Over the next ten minutes the miniscule angels pick up items and destroy them with their magic, or carry off items beyond their power so Hezophiel can shatter them.

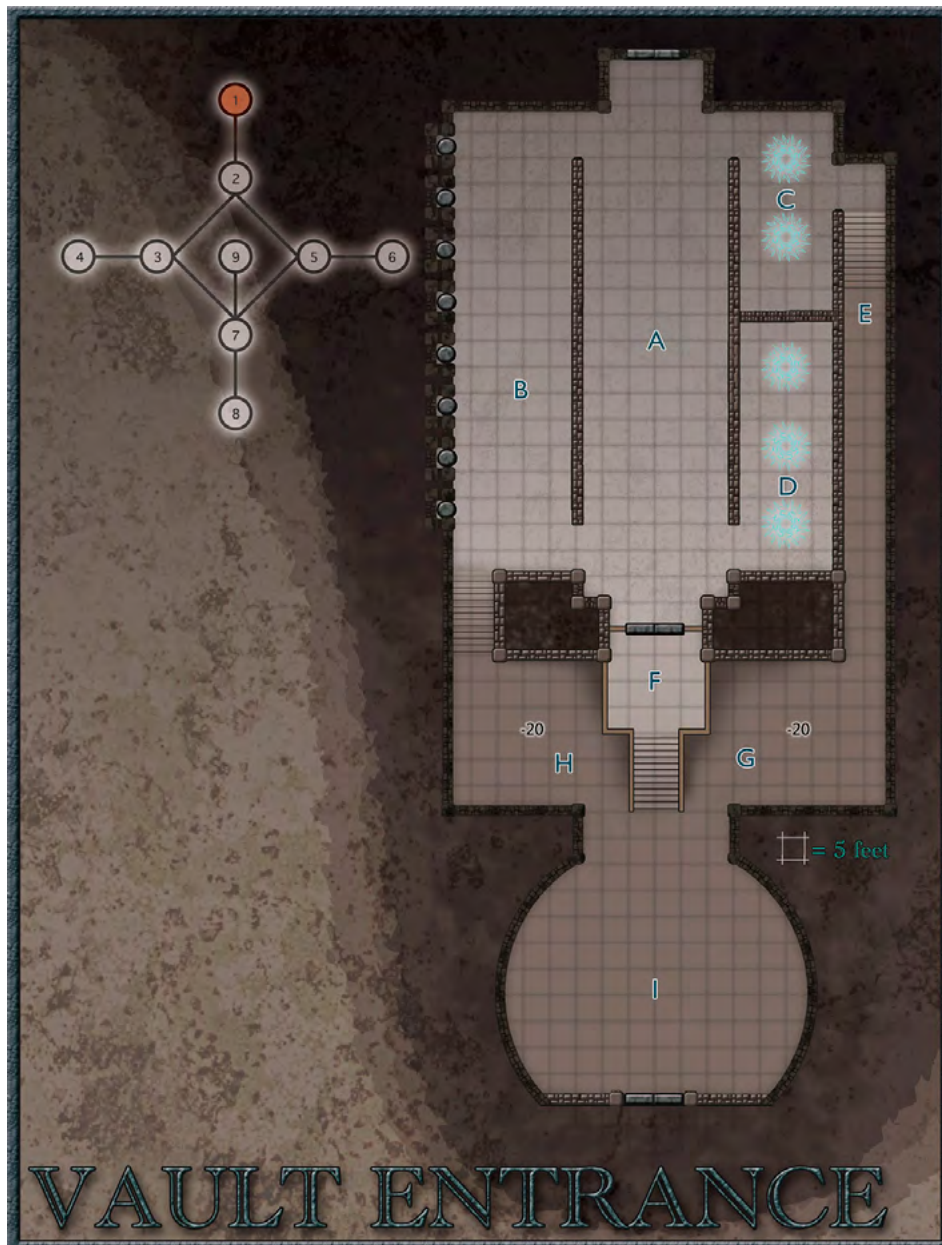
The trumpet archons are the second rank, advancing in a methodical march. Every round they blare their horns, which shatter the bones that coat the hallways and strip away traps and wards. Once they pass, skeletons will no longer reanimate when blood is spilled on the floor. Then the movanic and astral devas shatter anything more sturdy, while Hezophiel watches. The legion archons seem to merely 'stand guard,' but in truth are performing critical efforts perceptible only in a metaphysical realm, as they guide the evil essences trapped here away from this world and on to a proper plane in the multiverse.

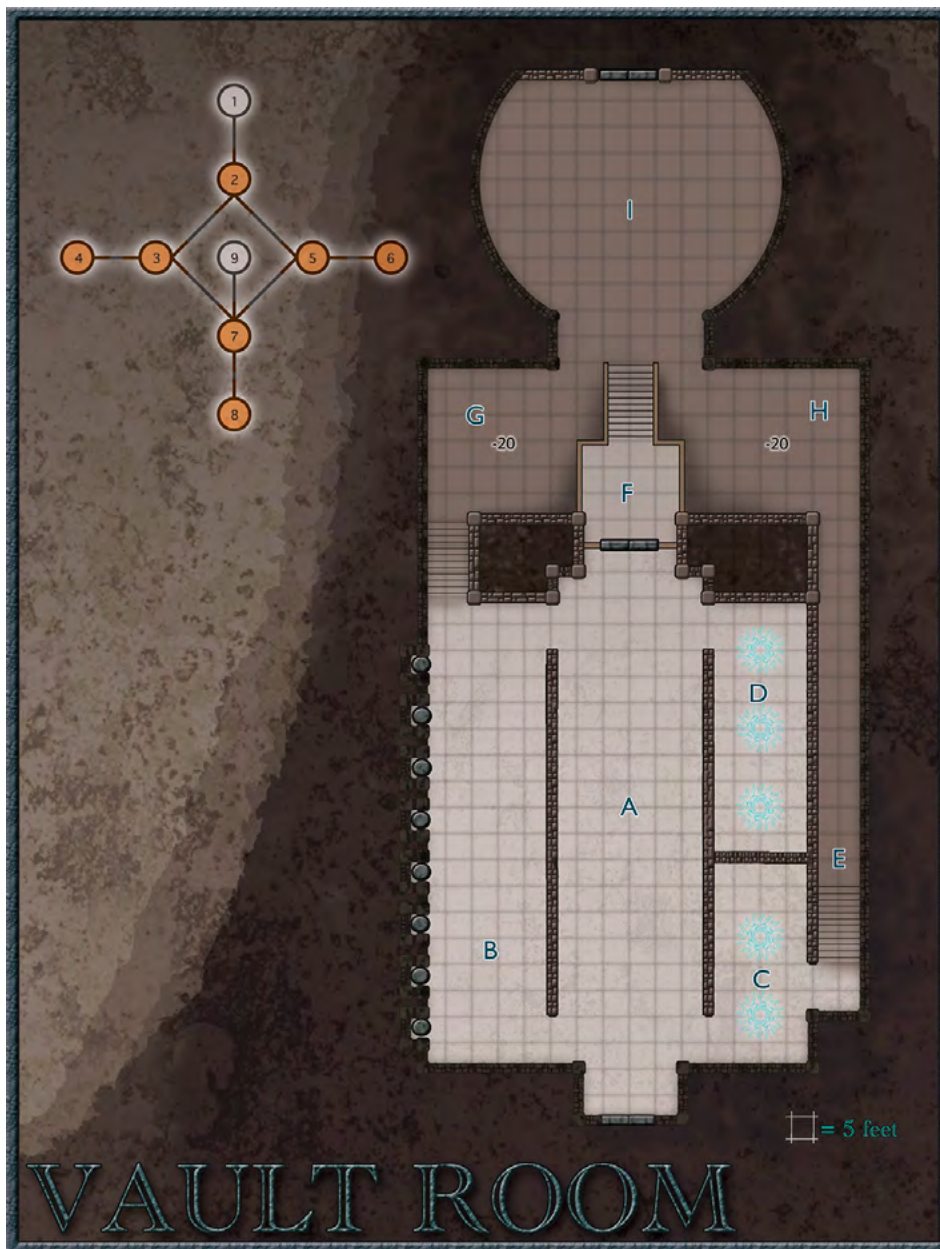
The angels move through the chambers in numbered order, purifying one every two minutes. Only a handful of things (noted below), are too resilient for them to destroy, and Hezophiel carries them with him. He intends to destroy them all in the vault's final chamber.

Vault Layout

As a refresher, the vault has haunted hallways connecting nine main chambers. The leaden curse is still active—turning any gold taken beyond the end of chamber one into lead—but the gold and various wards built into the island's bedrock no longer block teleportation. Instead, Hezophiel's *forbiddance* blocks planar travel, though it can be dispelled (caster level 20th).

- A. Vault Entrance.** Here the chained angel Linia begs for mercy. The wards holding her have ended, but she is too weak to escape on her own. A *heal* and *greater restoration* cures the long torment she has suffered, restoring her as a fully-powered astral deva—one who owes a great debt to the party.
- B. Heretical Texts.** The biography of Triegenes was here, but was carried off to chamber four, and now resides in the painting of the vice Envy. The angels dispel abjurations that kept the books from burning, then ignite the whole chamber. The scrap of the *Book of Lorem* survives, and they bring it along.
- C. Unholy Arms and Armor.** The angels sunder everything here to bits.
- D. Blasphemous Artwork.** Crackles of electricity drive back the critic swarms, and it takes an actual battle for the angels to destroy this chamber, as Giovanni the painter is able to hurl lightning bolts out of the storm in his painting. The angels step into each of the paintings' pocket dimensions and pull out the actual people within before they burn the frames and canvases.





- E. Accursed Items.** Angels can manifest new weapons if theirs rust, so the giant rust monsters here fall swiftly. Hezophiel brings along the *cursed rod of negation* if it's there for later destruction.
- F. Afflicted Innocents.** The angels release the architect, purge the ice devil that is possessing him, then kill them both (though they show a bit of compassion for the old man, at least).
- G. Damned Souls.** The leaden legion of the bearded devil Belcamp puts up a pathetic defense. The angels pause for a few minutes to let the lillend Somnia sing a dirge for herself, and then Hezophiel beheads her. He takes the *first blade of Srasama* if it's there, to destroy later.
- H. Beasts of the Infernal Horde.** The bloody juggernaut and hell hounds manage to kill one of the legion archons, but then they fall.
- I. Final Vault.** The angels smash the doors down, and the rattling of Ashima-Shimtu's chains sound through the entire vault.

The Hammer and the Hook

As the party arrives in her chamber, Ashima-Shimtu speaks to them. Any compulsion the PCs previously had ends

"This island is to be cleansed, but is that salvation or oblivion? Ashima-Shimtu forswears her past, but is still so vain as to desire her last words. She speaks of the hammer and the hook.

"This final moment matters not in the life of the one known as Seneschal of the Demonocracy, the Last of the High Fiends. She has reflected, and believes a tale bereft of choice is unworthy of the telling.

"She asks, is a hammer that crafts a cathedral good? Is a hammer that shatters a skull evil? Ashima-Shimtu was not wielded. She chose her path, a long story that she might never have opportunity to tell. If she is to be shattered, she shall accept this long-forbeared punishment.

"But this execution is not the act of evil men, nor good angels. It judges nothing, for the hand that hefted this hammer has vanished. It falls unguided. Where it strikes is no more a choice than where a pebble rolls in a stream.

"A choice did matter once to the Lady of the Forked Tongue. Like a fish in a stream she was snared by a hook, plucked from the world she was born to trawl. Perhaps the fisherman desired a wish in exchange for Ashima-Shimtu's life, but she thinks not. He spoke these words, 'Challenge yourself.'

A priest named **Orhalder Skarathi** sold his soul in order to become a hierarch, but ended up imprisoned here, and he stole the biography of Triegenes because he felt himself better than the founder of his faith. The angels seize and slay him, but they cannot destroy the book. The biography itself is a small foolscap with a weathered vellum cover, locked with a leather band ending in a crude fishhook, noteworthy only for the intense smell of sea and salt. (See Player's Handout—The Biography of Triegenes, page 85.)

Under assault from lighting bolts, Hezophiel slices the frame of Giovanni's titanic painting, rupturing its demiplane and casting the painter into some unknown realm.

“For an age and more, Ashima-Shimtu has hung, chained, voiceless. She had none to corrupt or tempt. What challenge was there, then, but herself? She is not as she was when condemned to this vault.

“If there is to be an end to her story, let it be that as once a fisherman granted her a gift of change, so has she given a choice to the faith he inspired. Their tongues have become as forked as hers, but they might challenge themselves. Such as she can, she prays that the hand that swings the hammer chooses wisely.”

With that, she speaks no more unless someone removes her from her chains. If Hezophiel witnesses her speech, he lets her finish, then replies, “This is oblivion.” He decapitates her with his scythe if given a chance.

Ashima-Shimtu could possibly compel some PCs to defend her. It’s up to you whether she has orchestrated all of this to have them be the judge of if she deserves rescue—in which case she will not compel them—or if she intentionally has destroyed the Clergy in order to weaken the wards holding her so she can escape—in which case she’ll force them to fight off Hezophiel and his host.

Freeing the Fiend

Releasing Ashima-Shimtu is as simple as breaking the hooked chains that hold her, or just tearing her free. She’s been kept at basically the brink of death of centuries, so is in no condition to fight, and she’s conflicted as to whether she’d want to if she could.

If the party just wants to escape, they could dispel the *forbiddance* then teleport away, or they could swim out the well, which no longer has any wards to dispel water-breathing effects. Or Ashima-Shimtu could, with a gallon or so of blood, create a conduit in the water to teleport herself and the party anywhere they want to go—probably Alais Primos.

If they’re sneaky, the party can get away; the planetar will merely be confused where they went and finish obeying the letter of his orders. However, Hezophiel will pursue the party if he sees them flee the vault with anything, even so far as interrupting at a critical moment elsewhere in this adventure.

EVIL DEMON

We have Ashima-Shimtu as sympathetic and complex. If you want to have her as a villain, though, we’ve included a stat-block for her in Appendix Three: God Trials. In the main version of things, though, she’s a non-combatant.



ADVOCATUS PISCATORIS

Social. Real-Time.

A stirring defense of the god Triegenes can put an end to the god trials, but a defeated godhand will still try to destroy the faith he feels betrayed him.

Returning to Alais Primos, the PCs see plumes of smoke curling from the caldera of Enzyo Mons, lit up from below in lurid reds and oranges. Over the Plaza Hyperion, dark grey storm clouds flicker with ripples of black lightning, a sure sign of ominous portent obvious to even amateur skyseers. The amount of time passed since the PCs last left the Plaza should be noted, as it's possible that more gods have died in their absence. Returning to Legate Tullius, the PCs find her writing and signing more warrants for arrests of hierarchs, high priests, seers, acolytes—any who worshipped deities.

Call Your Witnesses

With the biography in hand, the party can attempt to provide a defense for Triegenes. The city is given a day's notice, and more than ten thousand people fill Plaza Hyperion. At the tolling of the twelfth hour, Legate Tullius takes the stage, along with whichever PCs intend to act as defense, and whoever stands in for the accused (likely Morgan Cippiano). Since this is the first time someone has offered an actual defense in a god trial, Legate Tullius shouts for the crowd to listen as she explains the procedure.

Here in the plaza they will hold the trial—she will present her accusations and evidence, the defense will do the same, and they're allowed to briefly ask questions of each other—and angels shall oversee it, using their magic to ensure no one can lie. Then the crowd will march the accused to the top of Enzyo Mons, where each side shall give their closing remarks to Vitus. The godhand will then ask for a verdict. Should the god be found innocent, his surrogate shall be released and none shall harm him. But if the tribunal of the people find him guilty, he shall join the myriad objects of evil before him, and be thrown into the volcano.

Legal Tactics

Morgan Cippiano has plenty of experience with legal systems, and Crisillyir's is not as advanced and scientific as Risur's. The party will mostly need good rhetoric, and should play the crowd while discrediting each of Savina's accusations. Unlike Drakr and its philosophical debates, the tribunal of the people are a mob, and they'll be swayed by emotions, not logic.

Evidence is secondary, best revealed for a dramatic conclusion. Since the PCs will be watched by the angels, lying will likely be discovered, which will ruin their credibility. Deceptive phrasing works, though. And luckily no one will question their statements, no matter how outlandish they may be.

In a 'trial' of this sort, since there is basically no physical evidence, what matters is precedent, dogma, and scripture.

Mechanics

The two angels each have *discern lies* active (Will DC 20 to lie without being detected), and before anyone can speak they will each cast *dispel magic* four times to try to remove spells that might bypass their truth-saying (like *misdirection* or *glibness*).

If your group isn't much for courtroom bloviation, you can just present the accusations in three bullet points, then once Tullius finishes give the party a chance to compose a counter to each and make skill checks to determine how well they craft a defense. Or you can roleplay it all, allowing skill checks to give the PCs clues of ways to improve their argument, then use a skill check to arbitrate how well their actual arguments are received.

Prosecution

Legate Tullius doesn't know how persuasive the party is, so she reserves her rhetorical flourishes for her closing statements. She is, however, determined to tear down Triegenes, and wouldn't mind having the mob turn on the party as well. She initially presents her accusations in a subdued fashion, especially compared to her normal firebrand style. The crimes of Triegenes consist of:

Firstly, he created a nation that stretched from Danor to the edge of Elfaivar, making him responsible for hundreds of thousands every generation. He proclaimed that he created the Clergy so that every person would be able to pursue their own path without punishment or enslavement. But when the Great Malice rendered half the nation uninhabitable, cursed the nation's holy leaders, and left the remaining half of the nation vulnerable, Triegenes did not intercede. This most noble nation was once the greatest in the world, but its power has been surpassed by heathenous fiends in Danor, and primitive animists in Risur. (A Risuri speaker who is aligned with the Old Faith suffers a -2 penalty to his or her Diplomacy check against this point.)

Secondly, he has been prayed to by millions, but his blessings have only gone to the hierarchs of his religion. Tullius predicts a possible counter-argument that, since Triegenes promoted self-growth, perhaps only the hierarch performed acts of sufficient merit. To counter this, she enumerates many examples of hierarchs achieving their positions through politics, and of martyrs and heroes suffering despite grand deeds they accomplished. The Legate accuses Triegenes of showing hypocritical favoritism.

Thirdly, he gave no warnings of the Great Eclipse, and so let the world fall into chaos. She paints a grandiose picture of all the death, destruction, and despair visited upon Crisillyir, and quotes scripture for each that suggests it was within the duty of Triegenes to stop it from happening.

This finishes her accusations. The party has a few minutes to make a plan and offer their defense.



Defense

For each of the Legate's three arguments, one Diplomacy check represents the counter argument, and closing arguments require a Perform (oratory) check. For each of these, the PCs can attempt up one of the following checks to improve the party's Diplomacy check. Time constraints limit each PC to only one bit of aid on each of the primary checks, and none of the following options can be used more than once to assist a given check.

- ♦ **Bluff.** If the party can manage to outwit the angels' lie detection, a speaker can make a Bluff check (DC 37 or higher, depending on the scope of the lie) to gain a +5 bonus to a primary check. A failure means one of the angels gets suspicious and they repeat their *dispel magics*.
- ♦ **Diplomacy.** A DC 30 check lets the party take advantage of pauses in the Legate's rhetorical flourishes to interject and throw off her pacing, but to do so politely and with the right decorum so it does not upset the crowd. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Intimidate.** A DC 30 check is able to slightly turn the angry crowd against Legate Tullius. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (history).** A DC 20 check dredges up an obscure fact about Clergy history, granting a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (local).** A DC 20 check injects a bit of local culture that the crowd responds to well, reducing their skepticism of the party as foreigners. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (nature).** Savina's first point criticizes Elfaivar and Risur, but a DC 15 check can cite elements of the faiths of those nations to show they are not actually inimical to the Clergy. This grants a +2 bonus to the Diplomacy check to oppose the Legate's first point.
- ♦ **Knowledge (religion).** Legate Tullius is a master scholar of her religion, but a DC 35 check shows the PCs as equally familiar, granting a +5 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Linguistics.** If the speaker makes a DC 15 check, he or she gains a +2 bonus to the primary check by using the proper language for this trial.
- ♦ **Profession (barrister).** Any lawyer on the party (3 or more ranks in an appropriate Profession) automatically grants a +2 bonus to all the checks the party makes, both the main Perform and the checks to aid. This doesn't count as that PC's one aid per round.
- ♦ **Sense Motive.** The crowd wants blood, true, but more importantly they want this all to have meaning. A DC 30 check forms a rapport with the audience and helps get them on the side of the speaker. This can be attempted once per primary check, and each success grants a cumulative +2 bonus (so potentially a +8 bonus on the final Perform check).

Once the party has pooled their ideas, articulated the general structure of their rebuttal, and made their checks to aid, have the main speaker make a Diplomacy check (DC 41, which is the Legate's check) for the three points of the prosecution. You might grant a modifier of up to +5 or -5 depending on the quality of their ideas, and if they actually bring Ashima-Shimtu along, they get a +2 bonus to their checks. If they don't have the biography of Triegenes, though, that's a -5 penalty.

Finally, the party has an odd ace up their sleeve that the biography reveals Triegenes never became a god. Revealing this is deathly risky, though, because the crowd will respond in denial and anger. The threat of such a reaction should be made obvious to the party, and if they bring up that fact during any of the counter-arguments against Legate Tullius's three accusations, it provokes a mad riot as tens of thousands of people attempt to attack the party.

The only safe time to bring up this revelation is in the closing remarks, when the solemnity and intensity of the moment will make people actually listen.

Meditative Ascent

Once both sides have finished their arguments, Legate Tullius directs the crowd to follow them to "the Cathedral of the accused" where they will make final closing remarks. She suggests this time is for reflection on the arguments. For the first time since the god trials began, the mob's climb to the mountain top is hushed, rather than raucous. People suspect this will be the last trial.

Vitus waits at the balcony, watched by templars, monks, and angels. The thousands who come cannot fit inside, but magic carries the voice of the party and the priests to all. Legate Tullius briefly whispers to Vitus the general state of the trial so far, and then he asks for closing statements.

Closing Statements

The prosecution goes first, and Legate Tullius spends three minutes repeating the highlights of her accusations, criticizing the arguments of the PCs if they failed any of their checks, and then looking up to the top of the cathedral as she finishes.

"All of these failures," she says, "are symptoms of this god's original sin. He has lied to us. He promised us divinity, said he would guide us to godhood. But in the thousand years since his ascendance, no other mortal has become a god. The closest to that are these very trials, wherein we the people's tribunal have bound the gods to mortal flesh so they could be punished for abandoning us.

"Like the corrupt hierarchs and cardinals, Triegenes rose high, and he looked down at us and sniffed in disdain. In his arrogance, he decided his lofty position was for him alone. We could be gods, he said. But he kept that secret for himself.

"We have executed many of our deities for abandoning the pact they made with us. As founder of our faith, Triegenes is responsible for all those beneath him. As we found them guilty, so we must do for him. This liar god must be punished. To the fires with him. Burn away his evil so he may no longer lead us astray."

The Final Word

As above, the party can aid the speaker, but now he or she makes a Perform (oratory) check (DC 41 again) for a closing argument.

There are two main ways this might go. A straightforward defense could focus on Legate Tullius's overwrought demands, as if nothing is ever allowed to go wrong; indeed, in the teaching of Triegenes, this time could be a great trial to challenge the faithful.

Or the party could go for the dramatic revelation that Trigenes never was a god, that it was the hierarchs that lied, and that all they were ever praying to was their own idea of a god. The proof is written in the man's own hand in his biography. These trials haven't been accusing actual gods, but have been accusing the people of Crisillyir themselves. The gods only have ever been what the people made of them. A vote to execute Trigenes is a damnation upon them all.

This, of course, angers people, but if the PC speaker succeeds his or her check, the mob is enthralled enough to consider the world-changing revelation. If they try this gambit but fail the check, any previous successes they made are moot; the mob cries out for an execution, both of Trigenes and the PCs.

Consequences

It depends how well the party lawyered up.

Denial. If the party tried to reveal the truth about Trigenes and failed the final Perform check, or if they failed two or more checks out of the four total (three accusations and the closing statements), then the crowd is unswayed, and they cry a guilty verdict and demand an execution. Vitus tries to perform the *sacrament of apotheosis* on the surrogate for Trigenes (likely Morgan). Trigenes takes the form of a lanky and lean human male in his fifties, dressed like a fisherman and stooped as from a great weight. If anyone interferes Sigismund will attack. See Fire is a Living thing, below, for battle details.

Agnostics. If the PCs succeeded three of the four checks, the crowd is uncertain and divided. Legate Tullius is shocked and looks to Vitus for direction, but the godhand refuses the tribunal's verdict. He orders his templars to perform the ritual, and then haltingly tries to explain that with an undecided verdict, it is his duty to lay sentence. As above, he'll stop anyone who tries to interfere, but if a fight breaks out his allies are less unified, and they'll quickly abandon him if the party is dangerous.

Pride Before a Fall. Should the party pull off a perfect defense and succeed all four checks, even Legate Tullius accepts when the crowd shouts 'innocent,' 'mercy,' 'release him,' and the like. Vitus looks at the mob in disbelief, then shoves the surrogate of Trigenes to them. A moment later he yells for everyone to back away, and even his allies and the angels give him room. Then he pulls open his shirt to reveal that he has already painted himself with blood for the *sacrament*.

He roars, "They've tricked you, as I suspected. You're all impure! Deceived by pleasant lies. Trigenes, you have failed me, and I have failed my people. I shall become you, and together our failure will burn away the lies and reveal a glorious truth!"

After that monologue he begins the chant for the *sacrament of apotheosis* ("Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god."). If he completes it, he flings himself over the edge of the balcony, into the lava.

It takes about five rounds from the verdict for him to make this move, and the party might have one last round to intervene and arrest his fall (ideally by flinging one of the lovely giant fishhooks and chains that decorate the cathedral to snag him just before he hits the lava). If they do, Vitus-as-Trigenes collapses and sobs, a shell of a man with no purpose left. Congratulations, the PCs have averted a catastrophe, and they never have to face that lava dragon on the cover.

But if Vitus (or any surrogate for Trigenes) hits the lava, the *sacrament* takes hold of him just as he is dying. His body glows with holy light, which then beams into the sky, spirals, collapses back into the caldera, and finally explodes outwards.

The backlash of an avatar of Trigenes dying will either kill tens of thousands or merely leave them reeling. It depends on if the PCs revealed to the crowd that Trigenes was never truly a god (and succeeded their Perform check). In that case, their doubt is enough that the *sacrament* never truly takes hold; it's enough to dissolve the wards around the volcano, but not enough to kill the faithful. But if the city thinks their god is dead, over half the people across Crisillyir fall over and begin to die as their hearts fail.

That Other Problem. If a Trigenes avatar dies, the entire volcano heaves and the cathedral begins to tumble. An earthquake begins, lasting nearly a minute, after which the lava in the volcano begins to rise like a living thing. A dragon with a body of lava claws its way out of the caldera, stretching three hundred feet from molten teeth to searing tail. It smashes the cathedral to bits, then makes its way for Alais Primos. It would seemingly take a miracle to stop it.

FIRE IS A LIVING THING

Action. Real-Time. Level 25.

A titanic lava dragon erupts and consumes Alais Primos. Will the party fight it, or use the distraction to acquire the ritual they need?

If the party interferes with the execution of Trigenes (or if they attacked Vitus much earlier in the adventure), they only have to deal with mortals and angels, which they might succeed against. The lava catastrophe dragon is practically invincible.

Godhand and Allies

How loyal Sigismund's allies are depends on the circumstances. They'll fight to the death normally, but if the party did a convincing job in the trial, they'll start abandoning their leader, one or two every round after the first of their group goes down. Statblocks are presented in Appendix Three: God Trials.

Godhand and Allies (CR 23)

- ◆ Godhand Vitus Sigismund
- ◆ Legate Savina Tullius
- ◆ 4 divinely-sanctioned templars
- ◆ 2 divinely-sanctioned monks
- ◆ 2 planetar of the clergy
- ◆ Advorel, heavenly emissary



Tactics

Sigismund will open by sprinting up and striking with *quivering palm*, causing his right arm to glow with divine light as he attempts to simply snuff a foe with a single strike. Thereafter he generally uses a flurry of blows each round, lobbing a couple power-attacked stunning fists (attempting to first stun then paralyze) before using flying kick to leap 60 ft. and hit another enemy. This provokes an attack of opportunity, but that's moot if the enemy is stunned (and his AC is insane anyway). If no enemy is adjacent at the start of his turn he can flying kick to get adjacent, then make a full attack (and possibly flying kick away to another enemy).

Critically, though, he will try to use the threat of the volcanic caldera and his Bull Rush Strike feat to knock enemies off the balcony whenever he crits them. He'll always try to maneuver so he's got his enemy between him and the ledge.

Legate Tullius casts *brilliant advice* on Sigismund (letting him roll twice and use the better result on all d20s, until he rolls a 20), then shouts a bardic performance of a war hymn, inspiring courage in her whole side (granting a +4 competence bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls). Thereafter she uses *mass cacophonous call* to nauseate the party, *greater shout* if she can hit multiple foes without striking any allies, and *greater dispel magic* to undo any tricks the PCs pull.

The templars use *summon monster VII* to call forth four greater elementals (one of each type—benefiting from Augment Summoning), then stand within 30 feet of each other, cast *flame strikes* and *searing light*, and horribly abuse their ability to channel positive energy as a move action (though each such use counts as 2 of their daily allotment of 7). They'll use *reach heal* (range 55 ft.) to heal Vitus at range if necessary.

The monks initially use a ki point to cause their fists to glow with fire for 6 rounds, then keep out of melee range while they hurl flurries of their fishhook shuriken. If they can snag an enemy they try to yank them near the edge of the balcony and kick them into the lava. Otherwise they wait until a foe is alone or already endangered, and then they sprint in, use a ki point to turn their strikes into touch attacks, and each deliver a stunning fist.

The planetars each pick an enemy and try to fight an honorable duel. Advorel uses *greater invisibility*, mostly for style, then stomps through battle striking each foe with claws in order to affect them with *weight of conscience*. It hopes the battle can be ended with one side surrendering, and if Sigismund is defeated it will be free to speak to the party of its disapproval of the god trials. Indeed, Advorel will willingly fail Will saves against the party's effects if it knows the magic would give it leave to speak out.

Aftermath

Should the party be defeated, Sigismund has them stabilized, then has his templars cast *quest* on them so they will not interfere in the god trials. He'll keep them around long enough to witness the execution of Triegenes (though the party might shirk the compulsion before then).

Deliverance

Each morning Legate Tullius meets with Sigismund and casts *getaway* on him, herself, the monks, the planetars, and Advorel; if things look untenable she'll cry, "Deliver us!" as a swift action, which teleports the group to the storage basement of the Cathedral of Triegenes. Even if the fight is happening just upstairs, the sudden disappearance should confuse the PCs, and give Sigismund enough time. If he doesn't think he'll win the fight, he'll complete the *sacrament of apotheosis*. Then he'll climb up to the balcony overlooking the caldera and throw himself to his death.

Similarly, if the party manages to defeat Sigismund, the latent power of the *sacrament* keeps him conscious enough to mutter the ritual words. He'll likewise try to kill himself to destroy his god.

The death of an avatar of Triegenes causes an eruption, unleashing the living catastrophe.

The Living Catastrophe

The three-hundred-foot long lava dragon is not the first immense foe the party has faced, but unlike the fey titans the party will (likely) not be able to invoke Risur's rites of rulership to aid their fight. (If they can get someone in charge to cede Alais Primos to become part of the territory of Risur, though, the rites apply. After the trial, a little more legalese sure comes in handy.)

They do have an airship this time, though.

Ravenous, driven by centuries of evil urges that were poured into the caldera, the beast clambers out of the caldera of Enzyo Mons, smashes the Cathedral of Triegenes, and breathes gout of flame to consume hundreds of onlookers. It perches high and roars into the dark sky, and all who hear it know its name: **Esurientes, the Hungering.**

The Dragon's Hunger

The molten monster descends the mountainside toward Alais Primos. It is drawn to Plaza Hyperion, where the greatest crowds have gathered, and where hundreds of old spells hum in the buildings. The screams of the dying are sweet music to this unnatural creature, and it will often pause in its euphoria of ruin to listen to the citizens of Alais Primos as they die. A hellish cloud of soot follows it out of the mouth of the volcano, and lightning constantly flashes overhead. An aerial approach is perilous but possible.

It takes the monster half an hour to reach the outer edge of the city, at which point it tramples homes, conjures firestorms in every direction, and sets alight nearly every structure within a quarter mile. It pauses for a bit to stalk panicked innocents and devour them, then surges toward Plaza Hyperion, creating a wake of destruction. An hour after the trial concludes, it reaches the center of the city. Most have already fled, but desperate scholars who are trying to carry books from the Grand Librarium to safety have a front-row view as the dragon simply stands atop the Praesidio Urbis and turns the stone liquid from its presence. A few minutes later it notices the activity at the library and proceeds to annihilate the building.

With the heart of the city a cinder, Esurientes revels for another hour, slaughtering all it can—including anywhere like the Family's restaurant that the party might care about—before finally tearing itself apart from within. Its body jerks and spurts, and it staggers through the city, shedding parts at every canal until it finally collapses into inert lava. The glowing stone flows through the canals, consuming the rest of the city before flowing into the harbor and hardening.

If not stopped, Esurientes takes the lives of hundreds of thousands and leaves Alais Primos a dead city cloaked in poisonous vapors.

Fighting Hunger

The party might attack Esurientes as soon as it appears, but truly defeating it likely requires a bit of preparation and clever thinking. Or they might ignore it and race ahead, hoping to retrieve the Axis Seal ritual before the city is destroyed.

Tactics that might help include magically conjuring a rainstorm, which could harden its skin and slow it to half speed as long as the storm persists; driving it into a canal, which could deal 2 Constitution damage for every round it is substantially submerged; firing upon it with cannons, which deal 50 damage per strike (though after day 7 the dragon can call up a shield of mist to make it impossible to spot and target from long range); having an eschatologist call forth the *icy end of the earth* to create a wall the beast basically cannot enter; or performing the *sacrament of apotheosis* on Morgan Cippiano to get an allied Triegenes, who then does *miracle* to draw the ocean up into the city, which immobilizes the monster, and stabilizes any dying believers. “Take on that creature,” he says. “I shall attend to my family.”



A stand-up fight would probably be lethal, but if the party goes for it, let them tear the evil thing to pieces with whatever ridiculous attacks they have at their disposal. Considering the size of the thing, you'd probably need to climb onto it to reach anywhere vulnerable.

Aftermath

If Alais Primos survives, the people of Crisillyir owe their lives to the party, and they recall their army from invading Risur. If the city falls, even if the party saved figures in power, none have the authority to call back the army, and indeed the Clergy's forces become fanatical, believing they must now claim Risur as their new home.

As long as the party recovered the Axis Seal ritual, they can return to Flint and make their way to the Gyre, where they can find what they need to undo the Ob's dominion over the world. Without that ritual, a last-ditch possibility would be to head into the Gyre and reach Reida, the plane of time, where they might witness the original Ancients performing the ritual. Unfortunately, the Voice of Rot has wrapped himself about that plane, and intends to pull it—and with it the destiny of the whole world—into oblivion.

WHAT'S NEXT?

In Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*, we expect the party to take their airship and fly through the planar rift above Cauldron Hill in Flint. This transports them to the Dreaming, floating at the edge of the Gyre, as it is about to be crushed and shattered by colliding with other dead worlds. The party can save some of the fey of the Dreaming, but must press on and explore the Gyre in order to find planes that possess the proper magical energies necessary to stabilize their world.

For each world they must craft a *golden icon*, which links that world to this one. Then they just need to bring those icons back to this world and perform the Axis Seal ritual on Axis Island. This will alter the nature of reality again, setting a new fate for the world as the PCs decide. Two complications, though:

First, the Voice of Rot has hold of the world's former plane of Time, and if the party doesn't defeat him, the world is automatically doomed and will be pulled into the Gyre itself.

Second, Nicodemus has a plan to get this world back under his control, and it involves the Gidim. While the party is gone, he uses knowledge of the creatures' thoughtflesh physiology and begins intentionally triggering hiveminds around the world, which he is then able to possess and gain control of—effectively turning the entire world into a single gestalt consciousness under his control. If the party did well in this adventure and saved the other nations, Nicodemus has not yet managed to enact this plan; but if they let chaos and despair grip the world, they'll return to find it solidly under Nicodemus's control. The handful of people who resist hide in desperation, and unless the party can ignite a spark of revolution, free will shall be no more.

Effectively, if the party 'won' this adventure, they just need to hit the Gyre and defeat the Voice of Rot, then fly back home and battle Nicodemus. If they 'failed' this adventure, they will have another chance to heroically unite the people of the world. Ideally without resorting to mind control.

APPENDIX ONE:

GIDIM INVADERS AND BERAN ALLIES

While the Gidim have effectively unlimited police officer allies, they have relatively few infiltrators and warbeasts. If the party is clever and judiciously kills enemies then withdraws, they might leave the leviathan depleted of defenses.

Local forces include:

- ♦ **Ursaliñan Guard (CR 3).**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Marksman (CR 4).**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Lawmage (CR 6).**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Sergeant (CR 6).**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Lieutenant (CR 8).**
- ♦ **Lord Winslow Cadagyr (CR 12).**

The Gidim also have the following resources.

- ♦ **Eleven fleshwarped direbears (CR 12).** These stay in cells beneath Jaula de Oso.
- ♦ **Five flying horrors (CR 15).** Two typically patrol the inland borders around the city, and three the water routes. They remain invisible unless they attack.
- ♦ **Seven oculi (CR 17).** There's always one at the executores lodge, Triunfo Vida, Jaula de Oso, and Cadagyr estate, while the rest drift between the districts and the troughs, looking for trouble or occasionally stalking suspicious characters.
- ♦ **Fifteen shock troopers (CR 11),** created in the leviathan under Triunfo Vida. If some troopers die, the Gidim can create another five in a day, but they only have area to keep fifteen active at a time.
- ♦ **Twelve infiltrators (CR 15).** Four of them manipulate Lord Cadagyr, one watches Pili Roque at the arena, and the other seven operate in the leviathan.
- ♦ **Overseer Lilore (CR 18),** who directs the political machinations in the city from Cadagyr manor.
- ♦ **Wayfarer Sijhen (CR 21),** who is in charge of the whole expedition but typically stays in the leviathan.



GIDIM EQUIPMENT

Whatever event first spurred the Gidim to venture from their original home, it created mindcrafting: a process where raw materials are shaped into a desired form by pure thought. While the Gidim prefer more indirect methods of combat, their servitors highly prize the living steel weapons that are provided, grown from special vesicles within a Gidim colony.

Gidim living steel only differs from the living steel presented in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Equipment* in how it is harvested; it is otherwise the same (reprinted here).

Living Steel. This glossy green metal slowly repairs itself. An item made from living steel repairs damage to itself at a rate of 2 hit points per day, or 1 hit point per day if it has the broken condition. Items not primarily of metal are not meaningfully affected by being partially made of living steel.

Armor and shields made from living steel can damage metal weapons that strike them. Whenever the wielder of a metal weapon rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll against a creature wearing living steel armor or wielding a living steel shield, the item must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or gain the broken condition. If the weapon already has the broken condition, it is instead destroyed. Living steel cannot damage adamantite weapons in this way.

Gidim who are in thoughtform can benefit from living steel weapons and armor as if they had the ghost touch quality.

Living steel has 35 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 15.

Thoughtlocks. Some Gidim structures are keyed only to allow Gidim entry, functioning like locks but requiring a proper twist of mind rather than a physical key. Each lock has a special mental pattern that can open it, but these can only be used by creatures capable of telepathy. Any other creature who touches the thoughtlock can make an Intelligence check (DC 10) to sense the psychic contours of its structure, and can then attempt to unlock it with a Bluff check (DC 30), representing an effect to outwit the lock's primitive but wary consciousness. Each attempt requires a standard action.

Oculus Prism. Formed in much the same way that Gidim weapons are crafted, an oculus prism allows select non-Gidim to pass as Gidim within strongholds or without alerting the various sentries employed within their bases and ships. Oculus prisms are not merely an item to be carried: these parasites graft themselves to a living host, subtly influencing their mental signature so that a Gidim oculus and various warbeasts will not view them as a threat, unless one attacks them. A DC 20 Heal check can safely remove an oculus prism, while implanting it merely requires 1 minute of time.



URSALIÑA FORCES

The average police officer in Ursaliña is an orc with some military training, though they recruit many bards and sponsor lavish contests with other cities to push their high-ranking officers to greatness.

Ursaliñan Guard

CR 3

Orc fighter 2/rogue 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 34 (2d10+2d8+14); ferocity

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1, evasion

OFFENSE

Melee mwk khopesh +7 (1d10+3/19–20)

Ranged pistol +5 (1d8/x4, misfire 1)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness,
Weapon Focus (khopesh)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Perception +10,
Profession (guard) +5, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8

Languages Draconic, Orc

SQ rogue talent (combat trick), trapfinding +1

Combat Gear potion of cure light wounds, potions of stabilize (2); **Other Gear**
masterwork chain shirt, pistol, masterwork khopesh, guardsman uniform

Ursaliñan Marksman

CR 4

Female orc ranger 3/fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +3 (+5 in urban terrain); **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +7

DEFENSES

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 41 (5d10+10); ferocity

Fort +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork short sword +9 (1d6+3/19–20)

Ranged masterwork musket +10 (1d12/x4, misfire 1–2)

Special Attacks favored enemy +2 (Humanoid, orc), Point Blank Shot, Deadly Aim

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18

Feats Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon
Focus (musket), Deadly Aim

Skills Climb +11, Knowledge (geography) +6, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Swim +9;
Modifiers +1 to Survival checks made to follow tracks; +2 bonus on Knowledge
(geography), Perception, Stealth, and Survival when in urban terrain

Languages Draconic, Giant, Orc

SQ wild empathy +2, favored terrain, bravery

Combat Gear wand of cure light wounds (34 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded
leather armor, masterwork musket, masterwork short sword, 125gp



Ursaliñan Lawmage

CR 6

Goblin Abjurer 7

LN Small humanoid (goblin)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 41 (7d6+14)

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

Defensive Abilities energy absorption (21/day), resistance; **Resist** cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)

Abjurer Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +11)

4th—*black tentacles* (2), *charm monster* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *gaseous form*, *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (3, DC 16), *see invisibility*

1st—*alarm*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*, *unseen servant*

0th (at will)—*detect magic*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Opposition Schools illusion, necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 15, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration
Skills Appraise +9, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +14, Linguistics +14, Perception +5,
Spellcraft +14, Stealth +12, Survival +7

Languages Abyssal, Ancient, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant,
Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Terran

SQ arcane bond (ring), protective ward (4 rounds, +2 deflection, 7/day)

Combat Gear potion of cure moderate wounds, scrolls of dispel magic (2, CL 7th),
scroll of haste, scrolls of mage armor (2), wand of magic missile (CL 7th, 15 charges);
Other Gear masterwork dagger, cloak of resistance +1, headband of vast intel-
ligence +2, ring of protection +1, spell component pouches (2), spellbook, 98 gp

Ursaliñan Sergeant

CR 6

Orc Bard 7

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 49 (7d8+14); ferocity

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee masterwork bastard sword +11 (1d10+6/19-20) or mwk dagger +10 (1d4+6/19-20)

Ranged dagger +6 (1d4+6/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 20 rounds/day (move action; countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +11)

3rd (1/day)—*confusion* (DC 17)

2nd (4/day)—*cure moderate wounds* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16),
eagle's splendor, *silence*

1st (5/day)—*charm person* (2, DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *unseen servant*

0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform [comedy]), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (bastard sword)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcane, geography, history, local) +7, Linguistics +7, Perception +10 (+12 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (comedy) +17, Perform (sing) +14, Sense Motive +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Orc, others

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (comedy, sing)

Combat Gear elixir of vision; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, masterwork dagger, belt of giant strength +2, 198 gp

Ursaliñan Lieutenant

CR 8

Orc Bard 9

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 62 (9d8+18); ferocity

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *living steel bastard sword* +15 (1d10+8/19-20) or +2 *dagger* +14 (1d4+8/19-20)

Ranged +2 *dagger* +9 (1d4+8/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 24 rounds/day (move action; countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion, dirge of doom, inspire greatness)

Bard Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

3rd (4/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *confusion* (DC 17), *invisibility sphere*

2nd (5/day)—*cure moderate wounds* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16),
eagle's splendor, *silence*

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (2, DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *unseen servant*

0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform [comedy]), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (bastard sword)

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcane, geography, history, local) +7, Linguistics +7, Perception +12 (+12 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (comedy) +19, Perform (sing) +16, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Orc, others

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (comedy, sing)

Combat Gear elixir of vision; **Other Gear** +2 *living steel bastard sword*, +1 chain shirt, +2 dagger, belt of giant strength +2, 198 gp



GIDIM WARBEASTS

Flying horrors resemble pale, mammoth-sized fleshy dragonflies, with sharp beaks at the tip of a nimble elephantine trunk on their head, and a tail that seems to consist of independent floating segments ending in a sharpened hammerhead stinger.

An oculus is a floating mass of gas-filled sacs from which hang pulsing multihued and faceted eyes, but normally is entirely invisible. A gentle exhale of air causes this horror to float above the ground, and the audible wheeze-groan are normally the only clue to its presence. It typically hovers twenty feet up, where its long tendrils can feel everything with a feather-light touch. Even creatures with the ability to see invisibility detect light bending and shimmering around it.

Fleshwarped direbears are grizzlies the size of a large shack. Their fur hides most of the mutations the Gidim have inflicted upon them, but in battle their necks stretch out a dozen feet, and they can squeeze through tight spaces like an ooze.

Shock troopers are created from humanoid stock, granted massive shaggy fur coats that contain intense electrical energy. They lumber about like apes, and are designed to sow confusion and distract foes so the Gidim can get into better position. Occasionally a shock trooper snaps out of his conditioning and turns against his masters, but they seldom last long against a pack of their fellow warbeasts.

Fleshwarped Direbear

CR 12

N Large animal

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +20

Defense

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)**hp** 207 (18d8+126)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7**Immune** critical hits, precision damage

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** bite +22 (2d6+10), 2 claws +23 (2d6+10 plus grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 30, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 34 (38 vs. trip)**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Survival), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claw)**Skills** Perception +20, Swim +25**SQ** fleshwarped

Special Abilities

Fleshwarped (Ex) The Ursaliñan warbeast's limbs and neck are elongated, granting it a reach of 10 feet. It can move through spaces as small as a foot wide without trouble. They are immune to precision damage and critical hits.

When a fleshwarped direbear is knocked unconscious, its body continues to twitch until reduced to -25 hit points. Before that time, if another fleshwarped creature moves within 10 feet of the corpse, it integrates the dying flesh with its own body. The creature gains extra attacks in the form of all the dead creature's natural attacks, and its space and reach increase by 5 ft. each.

Flying Horror

CR 15

N Huge aberration

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26**Aura** frightful presence (90 ft., DC 24)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -2 size)**hp** 207 (18d8+126)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16**Defensive Abilities** thoughtform, deflecting winds, partial invisibility; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 70 ft. (good)**Melee** beak +21 (1d8+15/19-20), 2 wings +21 (1d8+5), stinger +21 (1d8+10 plus poison and bull rush)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attack** ray of dark and light (+13 ranged touch), sucking wind**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +19)At-Will—*gust of wind* (DC 19), *wind wall*1/day—*whirlwind* (DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 15, **Con** 24, **Int** 2, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 bull rush); **CMD** 42**Feats** Combat Reflex, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (beak), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike**Skills** Fly +27, Intimidate +6, Perception +26, Stealth +15**SQ** Thoughtform (see below)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Deflecting Winds (Su) The flying horror's mastery over wind and air allows it to surround itself with blasts of precisely aimed gusts, granting the creature a +5 deflection bonus to its Armor Class and a +4 resistance bonus on Reflex saving throws.

Partial Invisibility (Su) A flying horror's body constantly flickers and shifts, passing from visibility to invisibility in a seemingly random pattern and often not wholly at once, leaving the creature's body in what appear to be multiple sections. This ability makes it difficult to target the creature, granting it a 20% miss chance against all attacks. By concentrating, a flying horror can become fully invisible.

Poison Stinger (Ex) The tail of the flying thing slams into a creature, pumping it with poison and then hurling it away.

Sting—Injury; *save* Fort DC 26; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

Ray of Dark Light (Su) A flying horror can produce a magical ray with a range of 1000 feet. Every 1d4 rounds, it can fire the ray as a standard action. A ray deals 10d6+10 points of negative energy damage to any target struck. Every round after being struck by a ray, the target suffers 10 additional point of negative energy damage. It makes a Will save (DC 24) at the start of its turn to end this effect. While a target is taking damage from the ray, the flying thing loses its thoughtform trait. Firing a ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Sucking Wind (Su) This attack allows the flying horror to send an eerie wind out to slow and eventually stop a creature's escape. The wind itself isn't particularly strong, but it creates a peculiar sucking sensation as if it were attempting to pull creatures back toward the flying horror. Activating this ability is a full-round action, and it must concentrate each round to maintain the effect. The sucking wind manifests as a 100-foot-radius spread, with the flying horror at the center. Each round the horror maintains concentration, the sucking wind's radius increases by 100 feet, to a maximum radius of a mile. A flying horror can detect creatures within this area via tremorsense.

As a free action, it can increase the effects of the sucking wind on up to five different creatures within the area at one time. Each targeted creature must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save each round it remains in the area of the sucking wind or it is slowed until it leaves the area. A creature already under the effects of any slowing effect (such as from this sucking wind or a *slow* spell) that fails this save is held in place for 1 round. It is not helpless, but cannot move via any means. *Freedom of movement* protects against the effects of the sucking wind, and *control winds* negates its effects in the area of effect of the spell. Natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect on a sucking wind. A flying horror can activate a sucking wind once per day, and can maintain concentration on the effect for up to an hour.

THOUGHTFORM

Creatures native to the Gidim homeworld have the thoughtform trait.

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

Thoughtform creatures take normal damage from psychic attacks, and from the attacks of other thoughtform creatures. Their own attacks can affect corporeal enemies normally, though they have trouble with fine manipulation of matter.

Intelligent Gidim (as opposed to their warbeasts) can choose to become corporeal at will. Most also have the ability to dominate a creature, and if a Gidim has a sufficiently intelligent person dominated, it can hide wholly within that creature's mind. If the creature dies or the domination ends, the Gidim reappears beside the creature's body.

THINKING AGGRESSIVELY

Under certain conditions, some thoughtform creatures will lose their thoughtform trait, and mental attacks can force them to be corporeal. A creature within 30 feet of any creature with the Thoughtform special quality can spend a swift action to try to influence the Gidim with its thoughts. The 'thinker' makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check with a bonus equal to his or her level, and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC equal to the check's result).

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

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

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

Gidim Oculus

CR 17

NE Large aberration

Init +9; **Senses** all-around vision, *true seeing*, watchman; Perception +60

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+5 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 221 (26d8+104)

Fort +12 (-5 vs. gases, contact and inhaled poisons), **Ref** +15, **Will** +20

Defensive Abilities amorphous, refractive shield, thoughtform

Weaknesses breathing skin

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 tentacles +24 (2d6+5/19-20 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Con), consume eyes

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +22)

Constant—*greater invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *true seeing*

At will—*alarm*, *arcane mark*

5/day—*mirage arcana*, *persistent image*

3/day—*quickened invisibility purge*

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +25 (+29 grapple); **CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Casting, Death From Above^{UC}, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quickened Spell-Like Ability (invisibility purge), Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Penetration, Stealthy

Skills Acrobatics +5, Escape Artist +7, Fly +44, Perception +60, Spellcraft +29, Stealth +48

Languages telepathy (1 mile, other Gidim only)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breathing Skin (Ex) A Gidim oculus takes a -5 penalty on Fortitude saves vs. gases, contact poison, and inhaled poisons. In areas of any strong stench or unpleasant gas, the oculus's *true seeing*, *refractive shield*, and *watchman* powers cease to function, and it treats enemies as having total concealment.

Blood Drain and Consume Eyeballs (Ex) A Gidim oculus that has an opponent grappled deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage at the end of its turn. Its tentacles wriggle for the creature's face and ephemeral suckers slurp sinus fluid through its eyeballs. Each turn when the oculus maintains the grapple, the grappled creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or have an eye gouged out. If it fails by 5 or more, it loses two eyes.

Whenever the oculus consumes an eyeball in this way, it loses its thoughtform and refractive shield traits for one round (regardless of how many eyes it consumes), and it learns everything those eyes have seen in the past three days.

Refractive Shield (Su) A Gidim oculus can activate a shield that absorbs and redirects light and magic around it. While the shield is active, the oculus can change the target of any ray effects that target it (effectively bouncing the ray), and it is immune to any light effects.

Watchman (Ex) Designed and engineered for a singular purpose, a Gidim oculus gains a +20 racial bonus to Perception checks.

**Gidim Shock Trooper**

CR 11

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +17**Defense****AC** 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +12 natural)**hp** 162 (12d10+96); **DR** 5/non-metal**Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13**Immune** electricity, sonic**Defensive Abilities** crackling cascade**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +23 (1d6+12 plus grab), gore +23 (2d6+12)**Special Attacks** abduct, roar**Statistics****Str** 35, **Dex** 19, **Con** 26, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 38**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lunge, Mobility⁸, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Acrobatics +5 (+17 to jump), Climb +20, Perception +17, Stealth +27, Survival +8**Languages** Giant, Orc**SQ** snap out of it**Special Abilities**

Abduct (Ex) When a shock trooper successfully grabs a Medium or smaller opponent, on that turn it can spend a swift action to move up to its speed. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. A shock trooper that succeeds at a second grapple check against the opponent can move up to its full speed as a swift action instead of up to half its speed.

Crackling Cascade (Su) A creature that ends its turn adjacent to the shock trooper takes 5 electricity damage. A creature also takes this damage every time it hits the shock trooper in melee, or the shock trooper hits it. The shock trooper can turn this power on or off as a standard action.

Every time the shock trooper takes damage, its anger rises, and the amount of damage this ability deals increases by 5, to a maximum of 20. As the energy crescendos, its fur rises more and more on end.

Roar (Su) When a shock trooper spends a standard action to turn off his *crackling cascade*, the energy begins to glow inside his mouth. He draws in a deep breath. At the beginning of his next turn, the shock trooper can let out a savage roar as a free action, like *greater shout*. Creatures in a 60-ft. cone must make a Fortitude save (DC 24) or take 10d6 sonic damage and be stunned for 1 round and deafened for 4d6 rounds. A successful save negates the stun and halves the damage and duration of the deafness.

Snap Out of It (Ex) A shock trooper who fails a Will save against an effect created by an enemy of the Gidim temporarily breaks free of the creature's psychic conditioning. It turns on its masters, and if it can spend an hour without coming into telepathic range of another Gidim or oculus, it permanently regains control of its mind. Such poor creatures often lose their minds anyway when they realize what freakish monsters they have become.

GIDIM INVADERS

These humanoid creatures spend most of their time in thoughtform, where their appearance shifts based on mood and intention. But generally Gidim have lanky bodies with four-digitated limbs, four-eyed faces, and four sensory tendrils off the back of their heads. The colors of their flesh run the whole spectrum, but tend to blue, red, and purple.

Gidim Infiltrator

CR 15

NE Medium aberration, rogue 10/fighter 2

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25**DEFENSE****AC** 29, touch 13, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +10 armor)**hp** 182 (17d8+2d10+95)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11**Resist** thoughtform**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft.**Melee** +2 living steel spiked chain +20/+15/+10 (2d4+5) plus claw +15 (1d6+3 plus grab)**Ranged** ego whip +16 touch (5d6 plus stunned [DC 25])**Special Attacks** ego whip, mind grasp, sneak attack +5d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th, Concentration +15)At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 20)1/day—*charm monster* (DC 19)**STATISTICS****Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +17 (+19 disarm, +21 grapple); **CMD** 30**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Disarm, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus & Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Disable Device +9, Fly +4, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Perception +25, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +25, Survival +13, Use Magic Device +10**Languages** telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** thoughtform, rogue talents (befuddling strike, canny observer, fast stealth, hide in plain sight [urban], survivalist)**Equipment** +4 living steel breastplate, +2 living steel spiked chain**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Befuddling Strike (Ex) When the Gidim infiltrator deals sneak attack damage against an opponent, that opponent takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls against the infiltrator until the infiltrator's next turn.

Ego Whip (Su) The Gidim infiltrator can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip takes 5d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 22) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.

The ego whip cannot deal sneak attack damage.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which the Gidim successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

**Gidim Overseer**

CR 18

LE Medium aberration

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., hive mind; Perception +35**DEFENSE****AC** 32, touch 6, flat-footed 32 (–3 Dex, +26 natural, –1 size)**hp** 252 (24d8+144)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +20**Resist** thoughtform**OFFENSE****Speed** 35 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +27 (4d8+10 plus maze)**Special Attacks** ego whip, maze claw, mind grasp, telepathic feedback**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17th; concentration +24)At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *magic missile*, *invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 21)1/day—*greater invisibility*, *modify memory* (DC 21)3/day—*hold monster* (DC 22), *empowered cone of cold* (DC 22), *permanent image*, *quicken magic missile*, *repulsion* (DC 23)**STATISTICS****Str** 6, **Dex** 5, **Con** 20, **Int** 19, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 35**Feats** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell-Like Ability (cone of cold), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (magic missile), Spell Penetration, Toughness**Skills** Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana, nature) +28, Knowledge (dungeoneering, engineering, geography, local, planes) +12, Perception +35, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +28**Languages** telepathy 200 ft.**SQ** hivemind**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Ego Whip (Su) The Gidim overseer can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip takes 5d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 25) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.

Hivemind (Sp) Allied Gidim within range of the overseer's telepathy are affected by *haste* and *telepathic bond* (caster level 17th). The Gidim overseer's initiative at the beginning of an encounter is equal to whichever allied Gidim has the highest initiative.

Maze Claw (Sp) A creature struck by the overseer's claw must make a Will save (DC 30) or be affected by *maze* (caster level 17th). Once a creature escapes one of these psychic mazes, it is immune to the overseer's maze claw ability until the overseer has time to sleep and dream a new maze.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which the Gidim successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

Telepathic Feedback (Su) As a standard action, the overseer can unleash debilitating telepathic feedback. Non-Gidim creatures within its telepathic range must succeed at a DC 29 Will save or take a –2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks for 1 minute. A creature that succeeds at the save cannot be affected by telepathic feedback for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Lord Winslow Cadagyr

CR 12

Male orc bard (court bard) 13

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1**DEFENSE****AC** 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)**hp** 62 (13d8)**Fort** +4, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic**OFFENSE****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +4 brilliant energy living steel longsword +13/+8 (1d8+4/19-20)**Special Attacks** bardic performance 33 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, glorious epic, inspire greatness, mockery, satire, soothing performance, suggestion)**Bard Spells Known** (CL 13th; concentration +18)5th (2/day)—*greater dispel magic*, *ki shout*^{UM} (DC 20)4th (4/day)—*denounce*^{APG} (DC 19), *hold monster* (DC 19), *modify memory* (DC 19), *truespeak*^{APG}3rd (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *confusion* (DC 18), *discharge* (DC 18), *glibness*, *haste*2nd (6/day)—*enthrall* (DC 17), *focused scrutiny*^{APG}, *honeyed tongue*^{APG}, *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *sound burst* (DC 17)1st (7/day)—*adoration*^{UC}, *charm person* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *memory lapse*^{APG} (DC 16), *negative reaction*^{UC} (DC 16)0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *lullaby* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 15)**STATISTICS****Str** 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 10, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20**Feats** Ensemble^{UM}, Improved Initiative, Lingering Performance^{APG}, Persuasive, Rhetorical Flourish^{UC}, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Voice of the Sibyl^{UM}

Skills Bluff +22, Diplomacy +38, Disguise +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (engineering) +7 (+12 to understand technology), Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (local) +24, Knowledge (nobility) +24, Linguistics +6, Perform (dance) +21, Perform (oratory) +22, Perform (sing) +21, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +11

Languages Ancient, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc**SQ** heraldic expertise, versatile performances (dance, oratory, sing)**Equipment** oculus prism embedded in the back of his neck

Special Abilities

Bardic performance Winslow has the following bardic performances. Winslow's bardic performance abilities may affect targets in an 80-foot cone or a 40-foot radius (instead of a 30-foot radius). The benefits and penalties from his performance linger two rounds after he stops performing. Bardic performance is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability that relies on audible components.

- ♦ **Glorious epic (Su)** Winslow can weave captivating tales that engross those who hear them. Enemies within 30 feet become flat-footed unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 21). A save renders them immune to this ability for 24 hours.
- ♦ **Mockery (Su)** Winslow can subtly ridicule and defame two individuals at a time. The bard selects one or two targets who can hear his performance. They take a –4 penalty on Charisma checks and Charisma-related skill checks as long as the bard continues performing.
- ♦ **Satire (Su)** Winslow can use performance to undermine the confidence of enemies who hear it, causing them to take a –3 penalty on attack and damage rolls (minimum 1) and a –3 penalty on saves against fear and charm effects as long as the bard continues performing.

Heraldic expertise (Ex) Three times per day, Winslow can add +6 to Diplomacy, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), and Knowledge (nobility) checks.

Orc Ferocity (Ex) Winslow remains conscious and can continue fighting even if his hit point total is below 0. He is still staggered and loses 1 hit point each round.

Sijhen

CR 21

NE Medium aberration

Init +11; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

Defense

AC 38, touch 23, flat-footed 30 (+7 Dex, +5 deflection, +15 natural, +1 dodge); +4 against opportunity attacks

hp 297 (22d8+198)

Fort +21, **Ref** +19, **Will** +21

DR 15/special (see Gidim boons); **SR** 32 (special, see Gidim boons)

Resist thoughtform; **Immune** forced teleportation

Offense

Speed 40 ft., teleport 40 ft. (see eightfold wayfarer)

Melee 2 claws +29 (3d6+12 plus grab)

Ranged ego whip +23 touch (6d6 plus stunned)

Special Attacks ego whip, mind grasp

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22nd, Concentration +27)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *protection from good*

At will—*dimension door*, *telekinesis* (DC 27)

1/day—*invisibility*, *greater teleport*

Statistics

Str 25, **Dex** 24, **Con** 29, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 45

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (claw), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+10 to jump), Bluff +32, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +11, Fly +22, Heal +27, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (planes) +33, Perception +34, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +30, Stealth +31, Survival +20, Swim +14, Use Magic Device +20

Languages telepathy 100 ft.

SQ eightfold wayfarer, Gidim boons, thoughtform

Special Abilities

Ego Whip (Su) Sijhen can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip take 6d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 27) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.

Eightfold Wayfarer (Su) On its turn, Sijhen can make two simultaneous move actions, moving its speed from the same original but ending in different locations. While split, Sijhen can make attacks and be targeted as if in either location. When attacked, if Sijhen is split it can choose to no longer be in the threatened location, and that copy of it vanishes. However, on its next turn, it can continue to split each of its previous versions into another two copies, to a maximum of eight copies of itself. It can also have some of its previous copies disappear if it no longer needs them and wants to create a new one.

If an effect stuns, dazes, or otherwise disables one of the copies, that copy of Sijhen vanishes (as long as there is another spare copy of Sijhen). Likewise, all the copies must remain within 100 feet of each other; any that is forced beyond that range vanishes.

On each of its turns, Sijhen can take a single standard action for each copy of itself.

This ability is mentally exhausting, however, and Sijhen can only use this power 22 rounds per day.

Gidim Boons (Su) Empowered by the sentient homeworld of the Gidim, Sijhen has a +5 enhancement bonus to saving throws and its claw attacks, and is constantly protected by *freedom of movement* and *protection from good*. It cannot be forced to teleport anywhere against its will.

Sijhen has DR 15, which can only be bypassed by weapons that have traveled to another plane (the Dreaming and Bleak Gate count; simply slipping through the astral plane while teleporting does not). Additionally it has SR 32 against spells and spell-like abilities that originate from more than 30 feet away.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which Sijhen successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

Prismatic Whirlwind (Su) When Sijhen uses the Whirlwind Attack feat (which it can do with every copy of itself), a synaesthetic whirlwind of blinding light and psychic screams surrounds it. Sijhen cannot grab enemies during a whirlwind attack, but instead each foe adjacent to it must make a Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save (DC 27). Each failure has one of the following effects.

- ♦ **Fortitude.** The creature takes an additional 5 sonic damage, is deafened for one round, and is knocked prone.
- ♦ **Reflex.** The creature takes an additional 5 electricity damage and is blinded for one round.
- ♦ **Will.** The creature takes an additional 5 force damage and Sijhen can teleport it adjacent to any other copy of itself.

APPENDIX TWO:

DOOMSDAY ARMY

Grandis Komanov has a few hundred cultists, ten thousand soldiers, a half-dozen skeletal phalanxes, two hundred frost giants, the five Lost Riders, and a hivemind-generated blizzard that can produce effectively limitless blizzard elementals.

SOLDIERS, CULTISTS, AND THE HIVEMIND

Most of the warriors are no threat. A few experienced fighters might provide a speedbump, but typically the snipers will use covering fire to aid one of the Vsadni. The real danger comes from the massed units and the blizzard elementals that emerge from the hivemind storm that hovers above the army.

Doomsday Sniper

CR 9

Male dwarf fighter 10

CE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2, **Senses** darkvision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +10 (1d8/x3)

Ranged +1 *unholy rifle* +15 (1d10+3/19-20/x4, misfire 1)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Far Shot, Greater Weapon Focus, Improved Critical, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (rifle), Weapon Specialization (rifle)

Other Gear scoped rifle with 200 metal cartridge rounds, warhammer

Covering Fire (Ex) The sniper can use the aid another action with a ranged attack against an opponent, regardless of whether the opponent threatens an ally.



Doomsday Cultist

CR 9

Male dwarf rogue 3/cleric 7

CE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1, **Senses** darkvision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 armor)

hp 75 (10d8+30)

Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +7 (1d8/x3)

Ranged shotgun +11 (1d8/x2 in a 30-ft. cone, misfire 1-2)

Special Attack sneak attack +2d6, channel negative energy (4d6, Will DC 11 half, 1/day)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +9)

4th—*divination*, *inflict critical wounds*

3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *seek thoughts*

Domains loss, thought

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shotgun)

Doomsday Army Squad

CR 11

CN Medium humanoid (dwarf, troop)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 81 (6d8+54)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities troop traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee troop (2d6+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks shotgun volley (DC 20), suicide grenades (DC 18)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 11, **Con** 28, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Ability Focus (shotgun volley), Dodge, Toughness

Special Abilities

Shotgun Volley (Ex): The squad can fire a rolling volley of shotgun blasts as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to two 30-ft. cones originating from the squad. All creatures in one of these cones' areas of effect take 3d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 20 for half).

Suicide Grenades (Ex): The squad is equipped with grenades, and their hivemind willpower animates even dead or dying warriors enough for them to pull their pins. When the squad is reduced to 0 hit points, all the squad members pull grenade pins. One round later an explosion of shrapnel and body parts fills the squad's space and every square within 10 ft., dealing 7d6 points of piercing and slashing damage (Reflex DC 18 for half).

Skeletal Phalanx

CR 15

NE Medium undead (troop)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +28**Defense****AC** 32, touch 20, flat-footed 22 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, +2 shield);

+4 vs. opportunity attacks

hp 116 (21d8+21)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +10**Defensive Abilities** troop traits, curse-filled breasts**DR** 10/bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits**Offense****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** troop (6d6+12)**Space** 40 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** javelin volley (DC 23)**Statistics****Str** 34, **Dex** 29, **Con** -, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +31; **CMD** 46**Feats** Ability Focus (javelin volley), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack, Toughness**Special Abilities**

Javelin Volley (Ex): The phalanx is equipped with several javelins each. As a move action, it can target up to four squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of hurled spears. A volley deals 15d6 points of piercing damage in a 10-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 23 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage. It can use this attack three times before it must recover its javelins.

Curse-Filled Breasts (Su): Various items of anathema have been hung amidst the ribcages or shoved into the skulls of these skeletons. Whenever a creature deals damage to the phalanx, the attacker must make a Will save (DC 20) or be affected by *bestow curse*. The most common curse is a -6 decrease to Constitution. If a character is affected by a second curse, it grants a -4 penalty to attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks.

**Endtimes Blizzard Elemental**

CR 19

NE Gargantuan outsider (elemental, extraplanar, time)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +39**Defense****AC** 32, touch 22, flat-footed 22 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 insight, +10 natural, -4 size)**hp** 324 (24d10+192)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +25, **Will** +26**Defensive Abilities** foresight; **DR** 15/special;**Immune** elemental traits, temporal magic; **SR** 28**Offense****Speed** fly 100 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 slams +27 (2d8+16 plus icy end)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** freeze time (DC 21)**Statistics****Str** 34, **Dex** 28, **Con** 26, **Int** 14, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 66**Feats** Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse**Skills** Fly +38, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (history) +33, Perception +39, Sense Motive +33, Stealth +28, Survival +33**Languages** Auran, Dwarven**SQ** winter native**Special Abilities**

Foresight (Su) The elemental can see a few seconds into the future. This ability prevents it from being surprised, caught flat-footed, or flanked. It also grants the elemental an insight bonus to AC equal to its Wisdom bonus. This ability can be negated, but the elemental can restart it as a free action on its next turn.

Freeze Time (Sp) The elemental can create an effect similar to a *time stop* spell once per day (caster level 24th). The air itself freezes, and every other creature within 1000 ft. must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or be held in place and unable to act for 1d4+1 rounds. Creatures so affected cannot be harmed or interacted with in any way, but they are aware of events transpiring around them.

Icy End (Ex) Damage dealt by the elemental's slam attack does not heal naturally (but it can still be healed magically). A creature slain by the elemental can only be raised through the successful casting of a *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish* spell.

Additionally, a creature hit by the elemental must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or age one aging step (from adulthood to middle age, from middle age to old, from old to venerable, and venerable to dead). If a character ages, he takes all the effects to his physical ability scores, but does not gain any of the bonuses to his mental ability scores. A venerable creature affected by this ability dies and cannot be restored to life by mortal magic.

This effect can be reversed with *break enchantment*, *greater restoration*, or *regenerate*.

Special Damage Reduction (Ex) The elemental has DR 15 which can only be bypassed by flaming weapons or weapons that have been in contact with fire in the past minute.

Winter Native (Ex) The elemental is not slowed by snowy air, and can see perfectly fine through even white-out conditions.

FROST GIANTS

Tundar Rider

CR 14

Frost giant cavalier 5

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

Defense

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural, +1 shield, -1 size)**hp** 204 (14d8+5d10+114)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** rock catching; **Immune** cold**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** +1 cold iron warhammer +23/+18/+13 (2d6+9/x3) or mwk cold iron lance +23/+18/+13 (2d6+12/x3) or 2 slams +17 (1d8+4)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** banner +2, cavalier's charge, challenge 2/day, greater tactician 2/day (Intercept Charge, 5 rds), rock throwing (120 ft.)

Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 23, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +24 (+26 overrun or sunder); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. overrun or sunder)**Feats** Animal Affinity, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Intercept Charge^{ACG}, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Climb +10, Handle Animal +19, Knowledge (geography) +1, Knowledge (nature) +1, Perception +13, Ride +20, Stealth +10 (+14 in snow), Survival +9; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in snow**Languages** Giant**SQ** expert trainer +2, keeper, mount (mammoth)**Combat Gear** *potion of resist fire 10*; **Other Gear** +2 *restful mithral chain shirt*, *mithral light steel quickdraw shield*, +1 cold iron warhammer, mwk cold iron lance, bedroll, belt pouch, flint and steel, hemp rope (50 ft.), mess kit, pot, saddlebags, soap, trail rations (5), waterskin

Special Abilities

Banner (Ex) Allies who can see a Tundar rider's banner gains +2 save vs. fear and +1 to hit while charging.**Challenge** A Tundar rider can make a free bull rush or trip combat maneuver anytime he takes the full-attack action against the target of his challenge. This free combat maneuver does not provoke an attack of opportunity.**Intercept Charge** When an opponent charges an ally, as an immediate action the Tundar rider can move up to 40 feet toward any square in the path of the charge. If the Tundar rider ends its movement in the path of the charge, the opponent must stop when it becomes adjacent, and then attack the Tundar rider instead of the rider's ally. The movement from using this feat counts towards movement on your next turn.

Dire Polar Bear

CR 10

Giant advanced dire bear

N Huge animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +20

Defense

AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19 (+11 natural, -2 size)**hp** 207 (18d8+126)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** bite +21 (2d6+10), 2 claws +22 (2d6+10 plus grab)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 31, **Dex** 11, **Con** 25, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +25 (+29 grapple); **CMD** 35 (39 vs. trip)**Feats** Cleave, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (Claw), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (Claw)**Skills** Perception +20, Swim +25

Tundar Hunter

CR 12

Male frost giant fighter 3

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +11

Defense

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 31 (+11 armor, +9 natural, -1 size, +2 Dex)**hp** 213 (14d8+3d10+125)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9; +1 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** rock catching; **Immune** cold**Weaknesses** vulnerability to fire

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** mwk heavy pick +25/+20/+15 (3d6+18/19-20/x4) or 2 slams +23 (1d8+11)**Ranged** rock +14 (1d8+16), harpoon +14 (3d6+16/x3)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** rock throwing (120 ft.)

Statistics

Str 33, **Dex** 14, **Con** 26, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +25 (+27 overrun or sunder); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. overrun or sunder)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Critical Focus, Impaling Critical, Improved Critical, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Climb), Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Specialization (heavy pick)**Skills** Climb +24, Intimidate +16, Perception +11**Languages** Giant**SQ** armor training 1, bravery +1**Impaling Critical (Ex)** The frost giant gets +4 to critical hit confirmation rolls. If he crits with a pick, he can impale his target. At the start of each of the victim's turn, the creature takes another 3d6 damage. The giant can pull the weapon out as an immediate action, and must do so when the victim moves beyond his reach or else let go of the weapon. The victim can remove the weapon as a move action. When the weapon is removed, the creature takes another 3d6 damage.

THE LOST RIDERS

If you haven't figured it out yet, they're basically Dethklok. The Lost Riders all share the same general stats, but each have personalized traits.

Vsadni, "Lost Rider"

CR 19

NE Gargantuan undead

Init +9; **Senses** greater arcane sight, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +31

Defense

AC 35, touch 11, flat-footed 30 (+5 Dex, +24 natural, -4 size)**hp** 319 (22d8+220); **fast healing** 15**Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +19**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, light to dark; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and good; **Immune** cold, undead traits; **Resist** acid 15, lightning 15; **SR** 30

Offense

Speed 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** bite +26 (2d8+14 plus 3d6 electricity and energy drain), 2 claws +27 (2d6+14/19-20 plus 3d6 electricity)**Ranged** eye beam +17 touch (10d6 electricity and 10d6 force)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** eclipse, energy drain (2 levels, DC 31), song of the doomsday**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +29)*Constant*—greater arcane sight, fly*At will*—bestow curse (DC 24), deeper darkness*3/day*—animate dead, contagion (DC 23), dimension door (self plus mount if present), haste*1/day*—create undead, polar ray

Statistics

Str 39, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 30**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +29; **CMD** +4**Feats** Awesome Blow, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (various), one other**Skills** Fly +35, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +30, Perception +31, Spellcraft +23, Survival +21, Use Magic Device +30**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Dwarven**SQ** icy remains

Special Abilities

Eclipse (Su) Anytime a Vsadni casts deeper darkness, any creatures in the area of darkness when it is created take 8d6 points of cold damage (DC 31 Fortitude for half). Any creature that takes damage from this effect becomes staggered as long as it remains in the area of darkness and for 1d4 rounds after it leaves that area.**Eye Beam (Su)** As a standard action, a Vsadni can fire a glowing beam of force from its eyes at a range of 100 feet as a ranged touch attack dealing 10d6 points of force damage and 10d6 points of electricity damage.**Light to Dark (Su)** As an immediate action up to three times per day, a Vsadni can convert a positive energy effect within 30 ft. into negative energy. If channeled positive energy, a *cure* spell, or similar would affect a creature within the area, it becomes negative energy instead.**Song of the Doomsday (Su)** As a swift action for up to twenty-two rounds per day, a Vsadni can perform a doom-filled song. Enemies within 60 ft. who hear the song must make a Will save (DC 31) or become shaken for as long as it can hear the song, even if it leaves the area. A creature who succeeds a save against any Vsadni's song cannot be shaken by it again.

These songs stack differently than normal fear effects. An enemy that hears two Vsadni playing at once must make a save (even if it resisted being shaken) or else become frightened. An enemy who hears all five Vsadni performing must make a save or become panicked. The fear effect lasts for as long as the victim can hear at least one of the Vsadni's performances.

Only Nebo, the leader, sings. Betel and Yaros can use their greataxes like massive horns, Tzertze can bang his picks like drums, and Hamul can fold his scythe into a harp.

Icy Remains (Ex) In the hollow of the Vsadni's titanic ribcage sits a chunk of glacier containing the original body of the Lost Rider. A creature may attempt to target that chunk of ice if the Vsadni is helpless, or if the attacker is in control of a grapple against the gargantuan monster. (Nebo, the leader, wears plate armor which protects his chest.)

The glacial chunk has the same defenses, resistances, and damage reduction as the main Vsadni, but has vulnerable to fire and 100 hit points. Damage to it also damages the Vsadni. If the chunk is reduced to 0 hit points, the lost rider's corpse falls to the ground and shatters. This destroys the rider's massive stone and bone body.

Critical hits against the Vsadni count their damage against the ice chunk.

Individual Riders (Ex) Each of the Lost Riders has his own unique powers.

Nebo, the Leader

AC 43, touch 11, flat-footed 38 (+5 Dex, +24 natural, +8 armor, -4 size)**hp** 343; **fast healing** 15**Melee** +5 gargantuan morningstar +31/+26/+21/+16 (5d6+19)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +29)*1/day*—wail of the banshee**Feat** Toughness

Betel, the Vain Axeman

Melee +5 gargantuan greataxe +31/+26/+21/+16 (6d8+26/x3)**Feat** Improved Initiative**Paired Resilience (Su)** If Yarost fails a save against an effect that either doesn't affect Betel or that Betel saved against, Yarost can make an additional save to break free at the start of his next turn. (If one was paralyzed with *hold monster* and the other was stunned by a *power word*, it's the GM's discretion whether the two effects are similar to count as the same thing.)

Yarost, the Naïve Axeman

Melee +5 gargantuan greataxe +31/+26/+21/+16 (6d8+26/x3)**Feat** Improved Initiative**Paired Resilience (Su)** As per Yarost's ability, but vice versa.

Tzertze, the Upbeat Wardrummer

Melee +3 gargantuan heavy pick +25/+20/+15/+10 (5d6+19/x4) and +3 gargantuan heavy pick +25 (5d6+19/x4)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +29)*1/day*—meteor swarm**Feat** Two-Weapon Fighting

Hamul, the Hateful Scum

Melee +5 gargantuan scythe +31/+26/+21/+16 (3d8+26/19-20/x4)**Feat** Improved Critical (scythe)**Too Mean to Die (Su)** Hamul cannot be reduced below 1 hit point unless either the icy chunk holding his body is destroyed, or he is affected by a magical emotion that puts him in a positive mood.

Frost Worm Distemper

CR 15

Giant plague bearer frost worm (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 2*
 “Frost Worm,” *Advanced Bestiary* “Plague Bearer”)

N Colossal magical beast (cold)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

Aura disease cloud (bubonic plague, leprosy, 30 ft., DC 28)

Defense

AC 23, touch 4, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +19 natural, -8 size)

hp 248 (16d10+160)

Fort +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Immune cold, disease

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +21 (8d10+18 plus 4d6 cold plus disease)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60 ft. cone, 15d6 cold, Ref half, 1/hour),
 death throes, disease (blinding sickness, mindfire, DC 28), trill

Statistics

Str 35, **Dex** 14, **Con** 31, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 48 (can't be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack,
 Skill Focus (Perception), Stand Still, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +17, Stealth -3 (+5 in ice, snow); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in ice, snow

SQ carrier, cold, diseased flesh (mummy rot), quick incubation

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Carrier Distemper carries infections even though it is immune to disease.

Disease Natural attacks inflict two diseases, blinding sickness and mindfire
 (DC 28 Fortitude).

Disease Cloud (Ex) Distemper spreads two diseases in a 30 foot radius around it,
 bubonic plague and leprosy (DC 28 Fortitude).

Diseased Flesh (Ex) Distemper's flesh carries mummy rot (DC 28 Fortitude).

Quick Incubation All the diseases Distemper carries have an immediate onset.

Death Throes (Su) When killed, a frost worm explodes in a 100-foot-radius burst
 that deals 12d6 cold damage and 8d6 piercing damage (DC 23 Reflex half).

Fimbulwinter Steed

CR 13

N Colossal outsider (air, cold, elemental, water)

Init +2, **Senses** darkvision, snow vision; Perception +27

Defense

AC 30, touch 0, flat-footed 30 (-2 Dex, -8 size, +30 natural)

hp 372 (24d10+240)

Fort +24, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

Immune cold, elemental traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 80 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

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

Melee two hooves +35 (3d8+19/19-20/x2 plus 3d6 cold) or bite +30 (3d12+27 plus
 3d6 cold)

SA numbing cold (Fort DC 32), trample (2d8+28)

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 6, **Con** 31, **Int** 4, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +51; **CMD** 59 (63 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (hoof), Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Fly +25, Escape Artist +22, Perception +27, Stealth +6

SQ icewalking, massive

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Massive (Ex) The steed can only make opportunity attacks against foes that are
 Huge or larger (unless the creature is climbing the steed), and can be flanked only
 by Huge or larger enemies.

Numbing Cold (Ex) When a fimbulwinter steed deals cold damage to a creature, that
 creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 32) or be staggered for 1 round.



DEAR LEADER

If the party confronts her after day one, Grandis Komanov has at least a functional doomsday weapon—the *cyclopean revelation*. If they attack her on a day when she has managed to attune the weapon to the Voice of Rot, she can use its full power to turn those it kills into wraiths.

She is accompanied at all times by her lackey, whose tongue she tore out many years ago. The emotionally-crippled man is hideously loyal to her, and his body is covered with self-inflicted scars.

Komanov's Lackey

CR 13

Male dwarf necromancer 14

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., life sight (20 feet, 14 rounds/day); **Perception** +1

Defense

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex)**hp** 65 (14d6+14)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14; +2 vs. poison, +4 vs. spells and spell-like abilities**Defensive Abilities** defensive training; **SR** 18

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +1 adamantine battleaxe +9/+4 (1d8+2/x3)**Special Attacks** hatred (+1 bonus on attacks against orcs and goblinoids)**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 14th; concentration +18)7th—*finger of death* (DC 23), *mass hold person* (DC 21), *prismatic spray*6th—*analyze dweomer*, *disintegrate* (DC 20), *eyebite* (DC 22), *legend lore*5th—*mage's private sanctum*, *symbol of pain* (2, DC 21), *wall of force*4th—*bestow curse* (2, DC 20), *dimensional anchor* (2), *enervation*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fireball* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (2, DC 17), *tongues*, *vampiric touch*2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *flaming sphere* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand* (2)1st—*color spray* (DC 15), *identify*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17)0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)**Opposition Schools** Conjunction, Transmutation

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. bull rush, 28 vs. trip)**Feats** Arcane Blast^{APG}, Command Undead, Cosmopolitan^{APG}, Craft Wondrous Item, Fast Study^{UM}, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Prodigy^{UM}, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Steel Soul^{APG}, Undead Master^{UM}**Skills** Acrobatics +2 (-2 to jump), Bluff +6, Craft (glass) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +17 (+19 on checks that pertain to dwarves or their enemies), Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +1 (+3 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (oratory) +22, Profession (teacher) +12, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +21; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Knowledge (history) on dwarves or their enemies, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework**Languages** understands Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc, Primordial (mute)**SQ** arcane bond (*staff of many rays*), bolster, power over undead, mute spellcasting**Combat Gear** *lesser enlarge metamagic rod*, *potion of cure light wounds* (3), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *black robe of the archmagi*, *staff of many rays*; **Other Gear** +1 adamantine battleaxe, bookplate of recall, engineer's workgloves, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +4, 4 pp

Special Abilities

Bolster (Sp) As a standard action, this mute lackey can touch an undead creature and infuse it with negative energy 7 times a day. It gains a +3 profane bonus on all attack rolls and saving throws, as well as 3 temporary hit point per Hit Die and a +6 bonus to its turn resistance. These bonuses last for 7 rounds. The bonuses and temporary hit points are immediately dispelled if the creature is within the area of a consecrate spell.**Lessons of the End** The lackey's spellbook is no minor tome, but is an artifact created by the reworking of the world. Made of supple midnight blue leather with silver and onyx gussets, this spellbook contains every necromantic spell that was ever known in the world. The owner of this book can command this artifact to absorb a standard, non-magical spellbook as a way to keep an entire library's worth of spells while traveling. The lackey has attached the *bookplate of recall* to *Lessons of the End*.**Mute Spellcasting (Ex)** Due to his prolonged lack of a tongue, the lackey has learned how to cast spells without requiring verbal components, and instead scrapes patterned steel against stone to create sparks and sounds to call forth the magic.

Grandis Komanov

Female dwarf cleric 20

CE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +9**Defense****AC** 28, touch 14, flat-footed 27 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex)**hp** 193 (20d8+100); diehard**Fort** +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +26**Immune** death effects (death ward), mental effects (mind blank), paralysis (freedom of movement); **Resist** cold 10; **SR** 32**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +5 dancing frost greatsword +24/+19/+14 (2d6+8 plus 2d6 cold/17–20)**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 4/day (DC 23, 10d6), aura of forgetfulness**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 20th; concentration +29)9th—energy drain^o (DC 28), **foresight**, implosion (DC 28), mass heal, miracle, quickened breath of life8th—greater spell immunity, mass inflict critical wounds (2, DC 27), **mindblank**^o, quickened cure critical wounds, stormbolts (DC 27)7th—destruction (2, DC 26), greater restoration, power word blind^o, quickened cure serious wounds, regenerate6th—banishment, find the path^o, greater dispel magic, harm, heal (2)5th—break enchantment, flame strike (2, DC 24), slay living (DC 24), **spell resistance** (2), **true seeing**^o4th—blessing of fervor, **death ward**, divination^o, **freedom of movement**, inflict critical wounds (DC 23), restoration, **spell immunity**3rd—bestow curse (DC 22), daylight, dispel magic (2), inflict serious wounds (DC 22), magic vestment, speak with dead^o2nd—detect thoughts^o, lesser restoration (2), silence (2), spiritual weapon, status1st—bane (2, DC 20), doom (DC 20), inflict light wounds (3, DC 20), obscuring mist^o, shield of faith

0 (at will)—bleed (DC 19), create water, mending, stabilize

D Domain spell; **Domains** Loss, Thought**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32**Feats** Combat Casting, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greatsword), Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Perform), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (greatsword)**Skills** Bluff +23, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perform (oratory) +23**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Primordial**Combat Gear** potions of cure serious wounds (2); **Other Gear** +5 frost-resistant full plate, cloak of resistance +3, headband of mental prowess +6 (Charisma and Wisdom), belt of physical might +6 (Constitution and Strength), ring of protection +3, +5 dancing frost greatsword**Special Abilities****Aura of Forgetfulness (Su)** Grandis can activate this aura as a swift action. Each round, enemies within 30 ft. of Grandis must make a Will save (DC 29) or when they leave the aura they forget the events that transpired while within it. Additionally, spellcasters who fail this save lose one prepared spell or spell slot of 1st level or higher. Grandis can maintain this aura for up to 20 rounds per day.**Dancing Greatsword (Su)** As a standard action Grandis can conjure a sword out of jagged ice, which functions as a +5 dancing frost greatsword, and starts attacking immediately. She must spend another standard action to renew this every four rounds.**The Cyclopean Revelation (Su)** As a standard action, Grandis can use this arcanoscientific weapon to fire a 1000-ft. long beam with a 10-ft. radius, which disintegrates all inanimate objects in its path, cutting a 20-ft. wide swath out to its maximum distance. Creatures in the path may make a Reflex save (DC 28) to dive free of the path, moving to the nearest edge of the beam and falling prone. Those caught in the area take 40d6 damage (Fortitude DC 28 half). Additionally, it makes a dispel check against any effect in that area (caster level 25).

Creatures slain by the beam rise as wraiths 1d4 rounds later. The next time the Gyre passes over the world at noon, all such wraiths are drawn to the Voice of Rot.

After firing this weapon, it cannot be used for the next four rounds.

Sacrament of Apotheosis (Sp) Komanov's lackey can activate the ritual in only two rounds, which modifies Grandis's stats as follows. This change lasts for one hour.**Size** Large; **Perception** see in darkness**Defense****AC** 30, touch 13, flat-footed 29 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)**hp** 223 (20d8+130); diehard**Fort** +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +26**Immune** death effects (death ward), mental effects (mind blank), paralysis (freedom of movement); **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10**DR** 10/good; **SR** 37**Offense****Speed** 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** +5 dancing frost greatsword +28/+23/+18 (2d8+14 plus 2d6 cold/17–20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Statistics****Str** 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** 24, **Int** 12, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 16**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37

APPENDIX THREE:

GOD TRIALS

Few in Crisillyir would be a threat to the party, but those that are possess immense divine power.

GODHAND'S TEAM

Sigismund always has angels, monks, and templars nearby. Legate Tullius just has templars nearby unless she happens to be near Vitus, and if she gets in trouble she'll use *getaway* to link up with the godhand.

Godhand Vitus Sigismund

CR 20

Human Unchained Monk 20

LN Medium outsider (human, native)

Init +12; **Senses** Perception +28

Defense

AC 42, touch 34, flat-footed 33 (+8 armor, +5 deflection, +8 Dex, +5 monk, +5 Wis, +1 dodge)

hp 150 (20d10+40)

Fort +19, **Ref** +25, **Will** +16; +2 vs. enchantments

DR 10/chaotic; **Immune** disease, poison, paralysis (*freedom of movement*)

Defensive Abilities improved evasion, flawless mind (roll twice and take better on Will saves)

Aura halo of menace (20-ft., enemies must save Will DC 20 or take -2 to attack rolls, saves, and AC until that enemy hits Vitus or affects him with a spell or ability)

Offense

Speed 90 ft.

Melee +5 unarmed strike +34/+29/+24/+19 (2d10+9, 19-20 critical style) or flurry of blows +34/+34/+34/+29/+24/+19 (2d10+9, 19-20 critical style)

Ranged +5 brilliant energy seeking sling +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d4+4 brilliant energy) or flurry of blows +33/+33/+33/+28/+23/+18 (1d4+4 brilliant energy)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (20/day, DC 25)

Statistics

Str 19, **Dex** 26, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +28 (+34 bull rush); **CMD** 58 (62 vs. bull rush)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Bull Rush Strike, Critical Focus, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Exhausting Critical, Extra Ki, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Tiring Critical, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +31 (+55 when jumping), Bluff +23, Climb +14, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (religion) +27, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28; Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perform (oratory) +23

Languages Common, tongue of the sun and the moon

SQ fast movement, ki pool (24 points, adamantite, lawful, magic, cold iron, silver), purity of body

Other Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +5, *belt of physical perfection* +6, *bracers of armor* +8, *cloak (stole) of resistance* +5, *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection* +5, *jaunt boots*^{UE}, *gauntlets of the skilled maneuver* (bull rush)^{UE}, *halo of menace*^{ARC}, +5 brilliant energy seeking sling



Special Abilities

Ki Power (Su) Vitus can spend a ki point to:

- Grant himself a fly speed with perfect maneuverability, as a swift action, lasting one minute. If he doesn't end his turn on a surface that can support his weight, he falls.
- Grant himself a +4 dodge bonus to AC until the end of his next turn, as an immediate action.
- Add one extra attack on a flurry of blows, as a swift action.
- Add 1d6 fire damage to his unarmed strike, as a swift action, lasting one minute.
- Release a 30-ft. cone of fire, dealing 20d6 damage (Reflex DC 25 half) (costs 4 points).
- Become ethereal for one minute, as a swift action (costs 3 points).
- Grant an ally within 30 ft. a reroll on an attack roll or save, as an immediate action (costs 2 points).

Cause his hand to glow, then make an unarmed attack as a standard action that is a touch attack. He gains a +20 bonus to damage on this attack.

Activate his godhand (mechanically, this is *quivering palm*) and make an attack as a standard action. If he hits, he plunges his shining arm through the target's chest and pulls out their soul. At any point in the next 20 days, he can as a free action will the creature to die. It perishes unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 25). (Costs 4 points).

Stunning Fist (Ex) Twenty times per day Vitus can declare he is attempting to stun a foe. If he hits with his next unarmed strike, the target is stunned unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 25). Alternately, he can choose to fatigue the target, sicken it for 1 minute, stagger it for 1d6+1 rounds, permanently blind or deafen it, or paralyze it for 1d6+1 rounds.

Style Strike (Ex) When Vitus uses flurry of blows, he can declare two attacks to also be style strikes. For each strike he can choose:

- Defensive spin.** If he hits, he gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC against attacks from the target until the start of Vitus's next turn.
- Flying kick.** Before the attack Vitus leaps 60 ft., and can do this even between different attacks. He typically uses this at the end of a flurry to withdraw from a dangerous melee foe.
- Knockback kick.** If the attack hits, he can make a free combat maneuver check. If he succeeds, he pushes the foe 10 feet away, plus an additional 5 ft. for every 5 he beats the defender's CMD by. He'll attempt this if he can maneuver an enemy between him and the balcony over the lava.
- Shattering punch.** The attack ignores any damage reduction the target has. This attack is most useful against summoned creatures or mages with *stoneskin*.

Critical Fighting Style (Ex) Vitus's unarmed attacks crit on a 19 or 20, and he gains a +4 bonus on rolls to confirm his hits. If he confirms a critical hit, the target becomes exhausted. Additionally, he compares his confirmation roll against the target's CMD and if he succeeds he bull rushes the target. A target bull rushed this way provokes opportunity attacks from Vitus's allies.

Legate Savina Tullius

CR 18

Female elf bard (demagogue^{UM}) 19

LN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17**Defense****AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)**hp** 89 (19d8)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11 (+5 resistance vs enchantment); +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic**Immune** sleep**Aura** rallying armor (allies within 30 ft. gain +6 on saves against fear)**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Ranged** +3 *seeking sword cane pistol* +19 (1d4+3/x3)**Special Attacks** bardic performance 44 rounds/day (swift action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate [DC 23], frightening tune [DC 23], gather crowd, incite violence [DC 25], inspire competence +6, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, righteous cause [DC 23], soothing performance)**Bard Spells Known** (CL 19th; concentration +23)6th (4/day)—*brilliant advice*^{APG}, *deadly finale*^{APG} (DC 20), *getaway*^{APG}, *greater shout* (DC 20)5th (5/day)—*mass cacophonous call*^{APG} (DC 19), *greater dispel magic*, *mind fog* (DC 19), *shadow walk* (DC 19), *mass suggestion* (DC 19)4th (6/day)—*denounce*^{APG} (DC 18), *hold monster* (DC 18), *legend lore*, *serenity*^{UM} (DC 18), *truespeak*^{ARG}3rd (6/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *lesser geas* (DC 17), *phantom steed*, *see invisibility*, *terrible remorse*^{UM} (DC 17)2nd (6/day)—*ghostbane dirge*^{APG} (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *misdirection*, *communal share language*^{UC}, *silence* (DC 16)1st (6/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *hypnotism* (DC 15), *identify*, *undetectable alignment* (DC 15), *unprepared combatant*^{UM} (DC 15)0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *lullaby* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *sift*^{APG}, *summon instrument*, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 14)**Statistics****Str** 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26**Feats** Ability Focus (bardic performance: incite violence), Antagonize^{UM}, Breadth of Experience^{APG}, Discordant Voice^{UC}, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms)^{UC}, Expanded Arcana^{APG}, Persuasive, Prodigy^{UM}, Spellsong^{UM}, Voice Of The Sibyl^{UM}**Skills** Bluff +26, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (history) +36, Knowledge (local) +22, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +22, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +36, Linguistics +7 (+12 to Linguistics checks to identify forgeries), Perception +17, Perform (comedy) +26, Perform (dance) +26, Perform (oratory) +31, Perform (sing) +26, Profession (barrister) +28, Sense Motive +31, Spellcraft +16 (+18 to identify magic item properties), Stealth +10**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome**SQ** bardic knowledge +9, elven magic, famous, jack-of-all-trades, masterpieces (the requiem of the fallen priest-king^{UM}), sacrament of apotheosis, versatile performances (comedy, dance, oratory, sing)**Combat Gear** *potion of blur*, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of protection from chaos*, *potion of protection from evil*, *potion of resist fire* 10, *potion of sanctuary*;**Other Gear** +4 *glamered rallying*^{UE} *mithral chain shirt*, +3 *seeking sword cane pistol*, alchemical cartridge (dragon's breath) (5), alchemical cartridge (entangling shot) (3), firearm bullet (10), *boots of the cat*^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1, *ring of sustenance*, *seducer's bane*^{UE}, *spectacles of understanding*^{UE}, *stole of justice*^{UE}, signet ring, leatherbound journal, 4 pp**The requiem of the fallen priest-king (Su)** If Savina has performed a god trial in the past week, she can convert the fame she garnered into a burst of power. She can expend five rounds worth of her bardic music to gain a bonus standard action, which she can only use to perform non-magical actions like attacking or moving.**Divinely-Sanctioned Templar**

CR 12

Human Cleric 13

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +15**Defense****AC** 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 shield)**hp** 90 (13d8+32)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +18**Defensive Abilities** unity (2/day)**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** mace +8 (1d8–1)**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (DC 18, 7d6)**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +20)

10/day—calming touch, inspiring word (6 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; spell penetration +2, concentration +20)7th—*reach heal* (range 55 ft.), *refuge*^P (DC 24), *summon monster VII*6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *heal* x2, *quest*^P5th—*breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 22) x2, *telepathic bond*^P, *true seeing*4th—*air walk*, *dimensional anchor*, *discern lies*^P, *greater magic weapon*, *order's wrath* (DC 21), *tongues*3rd—*create food and water*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*^P (2), *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*2nd—*aid*, *calm emotions* (DC 19), *enthrall*^P (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*, *status*1st—*command* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*^P, *hide from undead* (DC 18), *protection from chaos*, *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic***D domain spell; Domains** Community, Nobility**Statistics****Str** 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18**Feats** Augment Summoning, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Channel, Quicken Channel, Reach Spell, Selective Channeling, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Penetration**Skills** Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +16, Linguistics +10, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +16**Languages** Common, Elven, Primordial, Sylvan**Combat Gear** lesser metamagic rods (extend, silent), wand of eagle's splendor (50 charges), wand of silence (50 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 buckler, cold iron dagger, light crossbow with 10 cold iron bolts, belt of mighty constitution +2, cloak of resistance +3, eyes of the eagle, headband of inspired wisdom +4, incense of meditation**Quick and Selective Channel (Su)** The templar can channel positive energy as a move action by expending two uses, and can choose not to affect up to two creatures in the area.

Divinely-Sanctioned Monk

CR 12

Human Unchained Monk 13

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +20**Defense****AC** 23, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +3 monk, +5 Wis)**hp** 107 (13d10+32)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10; +2 vs. enchantments**Defensive Abilities** improved evasion; **Immune** disease, poison**Offense****Speed** 70 ft.**Melee** +1 unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 (2d6+4) or flurry of blows +18/+18/+18/+13/+8 (2d6+3)**Ranged** fishhook shuriken +16/+11 (1d2+3) or fishhook shuriken flurry of blows +16/+16/+16/+11/+6 (1d2+3)**Special Attacks** flurry of blows, stunning fist (13/day, DC 21)**Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +19 (+21 trip); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Extra Ki, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lunge, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shuriken, unarmed strike)**Skills** Acrobatics +15 (+43 when jumping), Climb +11, Knowledge (geography, local) +4, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Linguistics +3, Perception +20, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +15, Swim +7**Languages** Common, tongue of the sun and the moon**SQ** fast movement, ki pool (13 points, lawful, magic, cold iron, silver), purity of body**Combat Gear** potion of cure light wounds, potion of mirror image; **Other Gear** fishhook shuriken (20), amulet of mighty fists +1, belt of giant strength +2, bracers of armor +2, cloak of resistance +1, headband of inspired wisdom +2, ring of protection +1, 46 gp**Ki Power (Su)** The monk can spend a ki point to:

- Add one extra attack on a flurry of blows, as a swift action.
- Add 1d6 fire damage to his unarmed strike, as a swift action, lasting 6 rounds.
- Become ethereal for one minute, as a swift action (costs 3 points).
- Grant an ally within 30 ft. a reroll on an attack roll or save, as an immediate action (costs 2 points).
- Cause his hand to glow, then make an unarmed attack as a standard action that is a touch attack. He gains a +12 bonus to damage on this attack.

Stunning Fist (Ex) Thirteen times per day the monk can declare he is attempting to stun a foe. If he hits with his next unarmed strike, the target is stunned unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 21). Alternately, the monk can choose to fatigue the target, or sicken it for 1 minute, or stagger it for 1d6+1 rounds.**Style Strike (Ex)** When the monk uses flurry of blows, he can declare one attack to also be a style strike. He can choose:

- **Flying kick.** Before the attack the monk leaps 40 ft., and can do this even between different attacks. He typically uses this at the end of a flurry to withdraw from a dangerous melee foe.
- **Knockback kick.** If the attack hits, the monk can make a free combat maneuver check. If he succeeds, he pushes the foe 10 feet away, plus an additional 5 ft. for every 5 he beats the defender's CMD by. He'll attempt this if he can maneuver an enemy between him and the balcony over the lava.
- **Shattering punch.** The attack ignores any damage reduction the target has. This attack is most useful against summoned creatures or mages with *stoneskin*.

Shuriken Reel (Ex) The monk's fishhook shuriken are attached to threads of adamantite that stretch up to fifty feet. If the monk hits with a shuriken, the hook snags the target's flesh or clothes. Removing a hook is a swift action. The monk may replace an attack with a combat maneuver check against a target snagged by one of these hooks, gaining a +2 bonus for each hook snagging the creature beyond the first. If the check succeeds, the monk can pull the creature 5 feet closer and knock it prone. If the check fails, all hooks snaring that creature snap their threads. Clever use of this ability combined with fulcrums might let the monk yank a foe in all sorts of odd directions.**Planetary of the Clergy**

CR 16

NG Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; **Perception** +27**Aura** protective aura (20-ft. radius, *magic circle against evil*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, and +4 resistance bonus to saves against evil foes)**Defense****AC** 32, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +19 natural, -1 size; +4 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (evil weapons and effects)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +19; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil**DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)**Melee** +3 holy greatsword +27/+22/+17 (3d6+15/19-20) or slam +24 (2d8+12)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th)Constant — *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*At will — *continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 21), *invisibility* (self only),*lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear* (DC 18),*speak with dead* (DC 20)3/day — *blade barrier* (DC 21), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*1/day — *earthquake* (DC 25), *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion***Spells Prepared** (CL 16th)8th — *earthquake* (DC 25), *fire storm* (DC 25)7th — *holy word* (DC 24), *regenerate* (2)6th — *banishment* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds* (DC 23)5th — *break enchantment*, *dispel evil* (2, DC 22), *plane shift* (DC 22), *righteous might*4th — *death ward*, *dismissal* (DC 21), *neutralize poison* (DC 21), *summon monster IV*3rd — *cure serious wounds* (2), *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *summon monster III*, *wind wall*2nd — *align weapon* (2), *bear's endurance* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *eagle's splendor*1st — *bless* (2), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*0 (at will) — *detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*, *virtue***Statistics****Str** 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 40**Feats** Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +24, Craft (any one) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** change shape (*alter self*)

Advorel, Heavenly Emissary

CR 18

LG Huge outsider (angel, good, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +28**Aura** protective aura (20-ft. radius, *magic circle against evil*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, and +4 resistance bonus to saves against evil foes)**Defense****AC** 36, touch 15, flat-footed 29 (+7 armor, +7 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)**hp** 297 (18d10+198)**Fort** +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13, +4 resistance vs. evil**DR** 10/evil and silver; **Immune** cold, dismissal, electricity, fire, poison, sonic; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 29**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)**Melee** 2 claws +28 (1d12+12 plus weight of conscience), 2 slams +26 (1d12+6), wing buffet +26 (3d6+6)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** weight of conscience**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +23)

At will—gaseous form, greater invisibility, scorching ray (from its eyes), whispering wind

3/day—dispel magic, ethereal jaunt, fireball (DC 20), harm (DC 23), heal (DC 23), hold monster (DC 22), wall of stone

1/day—greater scrying (DC 21), hallow

Statistics**Str** 34, **Dex** 25, **Con** 30, **Int** 23, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +32 (+36 bull rush); **CMD** 49 (51 vs. bull rush, 53 vs. trip)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Flyby Attack, Greater Bull Rush, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatic +25 (+29 when jumping), Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +24, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana, planes, religion) +27, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +20; Racial Modifier +4 Acrobatics when jumping**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**Weight of Conscience (Su)** The angel's assaults leave cause the target to recall flashes of past actions every time he is struck. These memories of evil or cowardly acts weigh the creature down, perhaps causing them to relent from battle and surrender.

Advorel's claws inflict an extra 2d6 points of nonlethal damage with each hit, and each round thereafter. This weight of conscience deals further 2d6 damage each round (non-cumulative) until the creature falls unconscious or is affected by magic that creates or calms emotions. If Advorel is defeated, the damage ends, and it can end the effect as a free action if it wishes.

THE VAULT OF HERESIES

Angels guard the fiends of the Crypta Hereticarum. In total they consist of:

- ♦ **Hezophiel the Reaper**, a planetar
- ♦ **1 astral deva**
- ♦ **3 trumpet archons**
- ♦ **4 movanic devas**
- ♦ **8 legion archons**
- ♦ **Effectively limitless critic angel swarms**

Hezophiel the Reaper

CR 16

NG Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +27**Aura** protective (20 ft.)**Defense****AC** 36, touch 17, flat-footed 32 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +19 natural, –1 size)**hp** 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (evil weapons and effects)**Fort** +23, **Ref** +15, **Will** +23; +4 vs. poison**DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)**Melee** +3 *ghost touch* *keen cold iron scythe* +27/+22/+17/+12 (2d6+15/19-20/x4) or slam +19 (2d8+4)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +23)Constant—*detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*At will—*continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 21), *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*, *speak with dead* (DC 20)3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 23), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*1/day—*earthquake*, *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion***Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 16th; concentration +23)8th—*dimensional lock*, *holy aura*7th—*destruction* (DC 24), *dictum*, *mass cure serious wounds*6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *heal*, *mass bull's strength*, *undeath to death* (DC 23)5th—*break enchantment*, *dispel chaos*, *dispel evil*, *flame strike* (DC 22), *righteous might*4th—*dimensional anchor* (2), *dismissal* (DC 21), *order's wrath* (DC 21)3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *invisibility purge*, *locate object* (2), *remove curse*, *searing light*2nd—*consecrate*, *gentle repose* (2, DC 19), *make whole* (2), *status, zone of truth* (DC 19)1st—*bless*, *bless water* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending***Statistics****Str** 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +26 (+28 sunder); **CMD** 44 (46 vs. sunder)**Feats** Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +24, Craft (books) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** change shape (*alter self*)**Other Gear** +3 *ghost touch* *keen cold iron scythe***Special Abilities**

Protective Aura (Su) Hezophiel has a +4 deflection bonus to its AC against attacks or effects from evil creatures. Hezophiel's aura also grants a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws to those within 20 feet of the angel, and also grants the effects of a *magic circle against evil* and a *lesser globe of invulnerability* (CL 17th).

Astral Deva

CR 14

NG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26**Aura** protective aura**Defense****AC** 29, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+4 Dex, +15 natural; +4 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 172 (15d10+90)**Fort** +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil**Defensive Abilities** uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification;**Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 25**Offense****Speed** 50 ft., fly 100 ft. (good)**Melee** +2 disrupting warhammer +26/+21/+16 (1d8+14/x3 plus stun) or slam +23 (1d8+12)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th)At Will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *detect evil*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *dispel evil* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *holy aura* (DC 24), *holy smite* (DC 20), *holy word* (DC 23), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 23), *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*7/day—*cure light wounds*, *see invisibility*1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 22), *heal***Statistics****Str** 26, **Dex** 19, **Con** 21, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 23**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37**Feats** Alertness, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (warhammer)**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Craft (any one) +22, Diplomacy +24, Fly +26, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Stealth +22**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** change shape (alter self)**Special Abilities****Stun (Su)** If an astral deva strikes an opponent twice in one round with its warhammer, that creature must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.**Trumpet Archon**

CR 14

LG Medium outsider (archon, extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +22**Aura** aura of menace (DC 22), magic circle against evil**Defense****AC** 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +14 natural; +2 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 175 (14d10+98)**Fort** +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14; +4 vs. poison, +2 resistance vs. evil**DR** 10/evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **SR** 25**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)**Melee** +4 greatsword +23/+18/+13 (2d6+11/19-20)**Special Attacks** trumpet**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th)

Constant—magic circle against evil

At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *detect evil*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *message***Spells Prepared** (CL 14th)7th—*mass cure serious wounds* (2)6th—*banishment* (DC 21), *heal* (2)5th—*dispel evil* (DC 20), *mass cure light wounds*, *plane shift* (DC 20), *raise dead*4th—*dismissal* (DC 19), *divine power*, *neutralize poison* (DC 19), *spell immunity*3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment*, *protection from energy*2nd—*bull's strength*, *consecrate*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *lesser restoration* (2), *owl's wisdom*1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds* (3), *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield of faith* 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*, *virtue***Statistics****Str** 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 16, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 32**Feats** Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack**Skills** Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +17, Fly +24, Handle Animal +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Perception +22, Perform (wind instruments) +20, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +20**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**Special Abilities****Trumpet (Su)** All creatures except archons within 100 feet of the trumpet's blast must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based. The archon can also command its trumpet to become a +4 greatsword as a free action. Out of the archon's hands, it is a chunk of useless metal.

Movanic Deva

CR 10

NG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect evil, low-light vision; **Perception** +26**Aura** protective aura**Defense****AC** 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +11 natural) (+4 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 126 (12d10+60)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil**Defensive Abilities** nature's pacifism, protected life force; **DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, fire, death effects, energy drain, petrification; **SR** 21**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** +1 flaming greatsword +17/+12/+7 (2d6+7/19-20 plus 1d6 fire)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +12)Constant—*detect evil*At will—*aid*, *discern lies* (DC 18), *dispel evil* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 18), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 19), *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear* 7/day—*cure serious wounds*1/day—*antimagic field*, *awaken*, *holy aura* (DC 22)**Statistics****Str** 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 17, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29**Feats** Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike**Skills** Diplomacy +19, Fly +22, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +26, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +18, Survival +18**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**Special Abilities****Nature's Pacifism (Ex)** Animals and plant creatures do not willingly attack a movanic deva, though they can be forced to do so by magic. If the deva attacks a plant or animal, its protection against that creature ends.**Legion Archon**

CR 7

LG Medium outsider (archon, extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft. detect evil, low-light vision; **Perception** +13**Aura** aura of menace (DC 17)**Defense****AC** 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural; +2 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 76 (8d10+32)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8; +4 vs. poison, +2 vs. evil**DR** 10/evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **SR** 18**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (average)**Melee** +1 flaming burst greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+5/17-20 plus 1d6 fire)**Ranged** +1 flaming javelin +10 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 fire)**Special Attacks** flames of faith**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +11)Constant—*detect evil*, *magic circle against evil*At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *message* 3/day—*align weapon*, *mirror image*, *versatile weapon***Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Whirlwind Attack**Skills** Diplomacy +14, Fly +12, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +13, Sense Motive +9, Survival +9**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** second skin**Special Abilities****Flames of Faith (Ex)** A legion archon can manifest a +1 flaming burst greatsword or +1 flaming javelin as a move-equivalent action. The legion archon's sword vanishes if it leaves its hand, and its javelin vanishes after striking or missing its target.**Second Skin (Ex)** A legion archon is proficient in all forms of armor. It takes no reduction to its speed or any armor check penalties from wearing any sort of armor. Most legion archons wear full plate armor. Where shield archons are the bulwarks of the armies of Heaven, legion archons are the swords, sent in file after file to match evil's boundless hordes.

Flock of Critics

CR 5

NG Fine outsider (angel, extraplanar, good, swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +5**Aura** lesser protective aura (5 ft.)**Defense****AC** 26, touch 23, flat-footed 23 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 natural, +8 size)**hp** 13 (2d10+2)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4; +4 vs. poison**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **DR** 5/cold iron or evil; **Immune** acid, cold, critical hits, flanking, petrification, precision damage, staggered; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10**Weaknesses** vulnerable to area effects**Offense****Speed** fly 60 ft. (perfect)**Melee** swarm (2d6)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 12)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +3)Constant—*detect evil*, *know direction*At-Will—*shatter* (DC 12)1/day—*aid*, *daylight*1/week—*commune* (six questions, CL 12th)**Statistics****Str** 1, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —**Feats** Iron Will**Skills** Diplomacy +2, Fly +19, Knowledge (planes) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2, Perception +5, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +23**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** change shape (dove, dog, *polymorph*), perfect memory**Special Abilities****Distraction (Ex)** A creature with this ability can nauseate the creatures that it damages. Any living creature that takes damage from a creature with the distraction ability is nauseated for 1 round; a DC 12 Fortitude save resists this effect.**Lesser Protective Aura (Su)** The flock has a lesser form of the protective aura possessed by more powerful angels. This protective aura grants the flock a +2 deflection bonus to its AC against evil foes, and a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against evil effects or spells cast by evil creatures. This aura extends to a radius of 5 feet, but can only benefit one additional creature other than the flock at any one time. A flock's protective aura is fragile, and as soon as an evil creature successfully strikes it, or as soon as it fails a saving throw against an evil source, its protective aura fades away and is no longer applicable. The flock can reactivate its protective aura by spending 1 minute concentrating upon the task.**Perfect Memory (Ex)** Angelic critics have perfect memories and remember everything they see or hear. They can faultlessly recite conversations they heard hundreds of years before. They also have the power to erase portions of their own memories, which they do (usually under orders from superior angels) to protect sensitive information.**Swarm Attack** Creatures with the swarm subtype don't make standard melee attacks. Instead, they deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Swarm attacks are not subject to a miss chance for concealment or cover.**Vulnerable to Area Effects** The flock of critics is vulnerable (+50% damage) to spells and effects that damage an area.**CATASTROPHE DRAGON**

The dragon, composed of lava and all the evil forces hurled into the volcano, heads for Plaza Hyperion, and will incinerate the library (and tens of thousands of people) if it isn't stopped.

Esurientes Draco in Ruinam

CR 25

CE Colossal dragon (earth, evil, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft., dragon senses; Perception +45**Aura** frightful presence (300 ft., DC 28); ash cloud (300 ft., DC 28)**Defense****AC** 43, touch 0, flat-footed 43 (-2 Dex, +43 natural, -8 size)**hp** 558 (36d12+324)**Fort** +28, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** negative energy affinity; **DR** 30/good; **Immune** emotion, fear, fire, paralysis, sleep; **Resist** acid 30; **SR** 36**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** bite +45 (3d6+16/19-20 plus 4d6 fire), 2 slams +44 (3d6+16), tail slap +42 (2d6+8)**Space** 100 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (200-ft. cone, 24d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 36 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), magma breath, pyroclastic vomit, rend (2 claws, 3d6+24), swallow whole (AC 31, 52 hp)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 29th; concentration +29)Constant—*fire shield* (warm)At will—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 32), *firestorm* (DC 33)5/day—quicken empowered *wall of fire*, quickened *scorching ray***Statistics****Str** 42, **Dex** 7, **Con** 26, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 41**Base Atk** +36; **CMB** +60; **CMD** 68 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Ability Focus (pyroclastic vomit), Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*wall of fire*), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*wall of fire*), Skill Focus (Perception), Snatch, Spell Penetration, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Acrobatics -2 (+10 to jump), Climb +16, Fly -10, Knowledge (geography) +23, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (local) +39, Knowledge (nature) +19, Knowledge (religion) +39, Perception +45, Spellcraft +39, Survival +23**SQ** death throes, devouring essence, impure flame, superheated**SPECIAL ABILITIES****Ash Cloud (Su)** A cloud of ash and tephra swirls above the dragon's head, covering a 300-ft. radius, but only in regions between one hundred and three hundred feet above the ground. Any creature that ends its turn in the ash cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or be nauseated for one round by the poison gases and noxious fumes. Additionally, it must make a Reflex save (DC 28) or take 5d6 electricity damage from the constant crackle of lightning in the cloud. Basically, flying above the dragon is a bad idea.**Death Throes (Su)** When killed, Esurientes explodes in a blinding flash of magma that deals 60 points of damage (half fire, half unholy damage) to anything within 60 feet (Reflex DC 36 halves).



Pyroclastic Vomit (Ex) As a standard action, Esurientes can vomit forth a ball of molten rock that explodes upon striking a target, showering the target and adjacent creatures in magma. This attack has a range of 1,200 feet, and deals 3d6 points of fire damage and 3d6 points of unholy damage (Reflex DC 38 half) to the primary target and 1d6 points of fire damage to any creatures within 20 feet of the primary target. The magma continues to burn for 1d3 rounds, dealing the same damage each round that it initially did.

Ferocity (Ex) The dragon 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.

Hurl Foe (Ex) When the dragon 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 dragon's choice and falls prone. The distance the foe is hurled increases

Devouring Essence (Su) Esurientes is a damned creature. Lacking any true soul of its own, it hungrily devours all living creatures, trying to sate its emptiness. Esurientes cannot be resurrected, raised, or otherwise brought back to life—once the unholy energies holding it together are dispersed, it is truly dead.

However, a creature swallowed by it has unique access (however briefly) to the dragon's evil essence. Attacks from within bypass the dragon's DR, SR, and various resistances (but not its immunity to fire). Positive energy damage dealt to it from inside is doubled. If a creature frees itself from inside the dragon after being swallowed, Esurientes is stunned for one round.

Impure Flame (Su) Half of any fire Esurientes deals, either through natural attacks, special attacks, or spells, is converted into unholy damage.

Magma Breath (Su) Three times per day, Esurientes can breathe of lava instead of fire. In addition to its normal damage, the breathe weapon entangles any creature that fails its Reflex save against the attack (Strength or Escape Artist DC 20 as a move action to escape). The area of the attack becomes superheated, and any creature that starts its turn in the area for the next hour takes damage equal to half the breath weapon's normal damage.

Water or extreme cold can cool the magma and stops it from dealing ongoing damage, but doesn't free creatures, since they're now trapped in solid basalt instead of molten lava.

by 10 feet for every 5 points by which the 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 the dragon is so massive, uneven ground and other features that form difficult terrain generally pose no significant hindrance to its movement, though areas of forest or settlements are considered difficult terrain. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by the dragon, or vice-versa. The dragon can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. The dragon 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 the dragon—this generally requires a successful DC 30 check, and unlike the normal rules about dragon and attacks of opportunity, a Small or larger creature that climbs on a dragon's body provokes an attack of opportunity from the monster.

Recovery (Ex) Whenever the dragon 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. It 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.

VARIANT ENDING

If the party wants a fight with Ashima-Shimtu, here are some stats. She wields the same chains that held her as weapons.

Ashima-Shimtu

CR 25

NE Medium outsider (daemon, demon, devil, evil)

Init +11; **Senses** bloodsense 240 ft., darkvision 120 ft., scent, see in darkness; Perception +41

Aura fear (30 ft., DC 40), unnatural aura (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 51, touch 36, flat-footed 40 (+11 Dex, +15 natural, +15 profane)

hp 449 (31d10+279); terrible rejuvenation

Fort +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

Defensive Abilities shield of lies; **DR** 20/cold iron and good; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** cold 30; **SR** 36

Weaknesses vulnerable to positive energy

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee +5 planar^{UE} unholy cold iron spiked chain +42/+37/+32/+27 (2d4+14 plus 2d6 vs. good) or 2 claws +32 (1d6+3 plus blood drain)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Con)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 31st; concentration +48)

At will—*animate chains*, *blood in the water*^{MC}, *detect thoughts* (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self only plus 50 lbs.), *suggestion* (DC 29)

5/day—*blood crow strike*^{UM}, *boiling blood*^{UM} (DC 27), *discern lies* (DC 28)

3/day—*blood biography*^{APG} (DC 28), *bloody claws*^{APG} (DC 29), *misdirection*

1/day—*magic jar* (DC 29), *blood of the martyr*^{PFCSDR} (DC 28), *dominate monster* (DC 31), *transmute blood to acid*^{UM} (DC 34)

Bard Spells Known (CL 31st; concentration +48)

6th (8/day)—*dance of a thousand cuts*^{UM}, *permanent image* (DC 33), *project image* (DC 33), *veil* (DC 33), *waves of ecstasy*^{UM} (DC 31)

5th (8/day)—*false vision*, *mislead*, *nightmare* (DC 32), *shadow walk* (DC 32), *song of discord* (DC 33)

4th (8/day)—*hallucinatory terrain* (DC 31), *greater invisibility*, *modify memory* (DC 29), *rainbow pattern* (DC 31), *shout*, *utter contempt*^{UM} (DC 29)

3rd (9/day)—*confusion* (DC 28), *displacement*, *glibness*, *illusory script* (DC 30), *smug narcissism*^{UM} (DC 28), *vision of hell*^{UM} (DC 30)

2nd (9/day)—*blur*, *delay pain*^{UM} (DC 27), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 29), *mirror image*, *reckless infatuation*^{UM} (DC 27), *silence* (DC 29)

1st (9/day)—*adoration*^{UC}, *innocence*^{APG}, *lesser confusion* (DC 26), *memory lapse*^{APG} (DC 26), *unnatural lust*^{UM} (DC 26), *ventriloquism* (DC 28)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 25), *ghost sound* (DC 27), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 25)



Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 32, **Con** 28, **Int** 24, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 40

Base Atk +31; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 73

Feats Ability Focus (suggestion), Antagonize^{UM}, Combat Casting, Deceitful, Demonic Possession^{PFCSDR}, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Greater Spell Penetration, Hover, Improved Possession^{PFCSDR}, Penetrating Possession^{PFCSDR}, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Uncanny Concentration^{UM}, Voice Of The Sibyl^{UM}

Skills Bluff +68, Diplomacy +54, Disguise +42, Fly +26, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (planes) +41, Knowledge (religion) +38, Perception +41, Perform (act) +35, Perform (oratory) +36, Sense Motive +41, Sleight of Hand +34, Spellcraft +38, Stealth +45, Use Magic Device +46;

Racial Modifiers +8 to Bluff

Languages Abyssal, Common, Daemonic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Infernal, Orc, Undercommon; *telepathy* (1 mile), *truespeech*

SQ change shape (*alter self*, Small, Medium, or Large humanoid), sacrament of apotheosis

Special Abilities

Bloodsense (Su) Ashima-Shimtu can sense the presence of living creatures within 240 feet (as blindsight).

Demonic Possession Ashima-Shimtu can use *magic jar* as a spell-like ability once per day. If she possesses a creature in this way, she vanishes and is not physically present until she leaves the creature's body.

Improved Possession When possessing a host, Ashima-Shimtu can activate a host body's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, as well as spells known or prepared. In addition, the duration of the possession increases to 24 hours.

Penetrating Possession If a host that Ashima-Shimtu attempts to possess has *protection from evil* or similar spells, Ashima-Shimtu can attempt to dispel the spell (as if she had cast *greater dispel magic*).

Shield of Lies (Su) Deception is Ashima-Shimtu's armor, granting her a +15 profane bonus to her AC. If she fails her saving throw against a *zone of truth* or similar effect, this ability is suppressed until she leaves the area of effect or the duration expires.

Terrible Rejuvenation (Su) While a creature within 30 feet of Ashima-Shimtu is affected by a fear effect, or has the confused, dazed, or fascinated condition, she gains fast healing 40.

RISURI NATIONAL DEFENSE



Four large nations prepare to invade Risur, and incidental forces from border states and the eladrin enclaves in Elfaivar supplement them. While the monarch and company pursue matters of planetary salvation, it is nevertheless necessary to prepare for our national defense.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The total Risuri standing military consists of some twenty thousand soldiers. We believe a further eighty thousand citizens could be meaningfully armed and readied, but this would require immense social and economic upheaval.

Our best estimates of the invading forces' military numbers are as follows, and include conscripts and 'soldier-equivalent' monsters. Each hostile nation can certainly field additional forces, but we believe these are the limit of what could be rapidly deployed.

- ♦ **BER.** Thirty thousand. Heroic dangers include immense beasts and druids that can turn into them, plus potentially-unknown weapons designed by Tinker Oddcog.
- ♦ **CRISILLYIR.** Forty-five thousand. Heroic dangers include summoned hosts of angels and powerful divine spellcasters.
- ♦ **DANOR.** Fifty-five thousand. Heroic dangers include elite hivemind-controlled small arms fire and lantern-derived energy weapons.
- ♦ **DRAKE.** Seventy-five thousand. Heroic dangers include giant arcano-scientific artillery and forbidden curses of the old Demonocracy chanted by entire armies.

Military history of course shows that mere manpower is not a key determinant in victory, but it cannot be ignored. Even at our peak, we are outnumbered two-to-one. In a siege a defending force can typically resist an aggressor up to three times their numbers, but of our major cities, only Shale is substantially fortified.

LIKELY OBJECTIVES

Risur has five key centers of power, which the invaders would need to target to defeat us.

- ♦ **SHALE.** Naval power. Fortified, with the largest standing army. Navy based out of Shale is first line of defense against sea invasion.
- ♦ **FLINT.** Industrial production. Limited physical defenses, but significant military presence.
- ♦ **BOLE.** Raw materials. Accessible from the southeast, but poorly defended.
- ♦ **SLATE.** Economic and political center. Difficult for invaders to approach, reasonably fortified. However, traditional defense pacts with the fey are likely no longer active.
- ♦ **WEETLANDS.** Food and manpower. Very broad area, hard to defend but also hard to attack.



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RISURI NATIONAL DEFENSE

ARCANE AND TECHNOLOGICAL STANDINGS

New inventions of magic and technology are hard to predict, but we should assume Han Jierre wouldn't launch an attack unless he had a trump card for our primary defenses. We know the Danorans have advanced firearms with munitions enchanted to deter flight and other magic. Drakr has in the past deployed immense cannons capable of leveling yards-wide swaths with a single shot. Ber is renowned for its trained warbeasts, and Crisillyir's long tradition of divine magic might even be bolstered with actual entities from the other worlds they've long claimed they believe in.

Finally, the new hivemind phenomenon might create unusual options for large-unit tactics. We are operating in uncharted territory. If we have any luck, it is that the confederacy arrayed against us do not have a three-hundred-foot-tall golem.

PREDICTION

If they follow the strategy that seems to best exploit our weaknesses, Drakr and Danor could link with a fleet from western Ber and focus on Shale. They could attack within a week, and together they could defeat our naval defenses, albeit at great cost. A new beam projectile witnessed at Axis Island would defeat our walls and make the city's centralized defenses pointless. If the invaders did not worry about casualties, they could seize the city within a week. Three weeks is more likely if they are cautious. Success here gives them relatively uncontested access to our seas.

Simultaneously, eastern Ber could unite with Crisillyir to target Bole. A full defeat is unnecessary; all they need to do is stop shipment of raw materials to Flint, which would slow the beating of our industrial heart.

We predict that, barring providence on our side, the nations arrayed against us could be in a position to assault Shale in as little as six weeks.

A PATH TO VICTORY

However, the situation improves marginally if even one country refrains from invasion. If two refrain, we can likely avoid defeat, though we would assuredly lose territory. Danor alone would be unable to take and hold territory by itself.

We believe our best strategy is a holding action, focused on defense, to stall the enemy while our monarch persuades those who remain in the nations of Ber, Crisillyir, and Drakr that they should abandon this invasion. Fortunately, the new nature of the world appears to have produced grand perils for those three countries, which we can use as leverage to shift their positions.

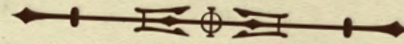
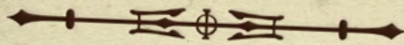


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URSALIÑA NEWS

Several colorful playbills and official notices adorn corner signposts in Ursaliña, all affixed with the two-headed bear that is the city's seal. All news is written in Draconic and Giant (translated here for your convenience).



Keeping You Safe!

Criminals prey upon the unwary—don't give them a target! Due to the absence of a sun, 'day' is officially declared to run from the sixth hour to the eighteenth. Listen for the clocks!

Outside of daytime hours, it is illegal to be outside of your homes, with the exception of travel to and from the festivities at the public house in Resto del Pescador and its surrounding parks.

Foreign visitors who cannot see in the dark will be taken into protective custody and issued travel visas at the cost of two ounces of gold coins if their visit is approved.

Be Mindful But Not Too Mindful!

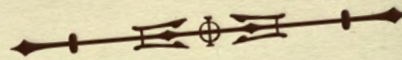
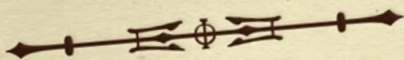
Thinking too much like your neighbors causes the dangerous hivemind threat. Please report possible hiveminds to city police. Remember, Ursaliñans cherish their diversity and unique personalities! Stand out from those around you, and you'll be helping keep us all safe!

Set Your Feet Up!

Fashion-minded and sharp-eyed couriers recently arriving from Seobriga should refresh themselves at the Red Peacock Café in Triunfo Vida district. The fashionable ladies of Ursaliña crave the latest news first—and are willing to pay good money for it! Rooms and baths available.

Fool's Day

Come One, Come All! The jongleurs of Triunfo have turned everything topsy-turvy, and have a show of such acrobatic skill that must be seen to be believed! Performance provided with Cadagyr's generous...



Closed for Renovations

Take heart, lover of the arts! Triunfo Vida's halls will be silent for only a little longer as the Grand Hall is renovated to what Ursaliña deserves: a true marvel of the performing arts! Funds generously provided by the Jesters of Providence and the Local Whaler's League.

Closed for Safety

Centuries of bold action has taken a toll on the Jaula de Oso, and without sun new lighting must be installed so all spectators can witness the action on the field! Inspections will only take a few days, and when it reopens, Maestra Roque promises a spectacle never before seen in our fair city.

LETTER FROM THE END OF THE WORLD

I, Vlendam Heid, son of Anisim Heid, son of Modya Bohm, dictate this letter to professional stenographer Dema Derellova, whose keen fingers won't type on anything but a mastercraft Unalako-brand mecha-typograph. It was personally delivered courtesy of a novel understanding of the teleportation mechanics of this new world, which was crafted by the least-secret conspiracy of our age.

May you have the wisdom and calm to face your coming end.

In a previous correspondence I alerted you to the threat of Grandis Komanov, a radical who had perverted the intent of my philosophical writings and in the process acquired a following of depraved and disgruntled ne'er-do-wells. She inspired a variety of religious devotion among those whose lives were in such a state that they would welcome the end of the world. You might be imagining now what the recent changes in the cosmos could have done for her recruitment efforts, but I assure you you have underestimated her success.

My people have had centuries to refine our fascination with the bleak and gloomy, and though many doomsayers have come and gone, our current situation has rather captured the imagination of a nation. I say this as I look out upon an army of what I wager is twenty or forty thousand souls. If I may get to my point, I am in the city of Bhadravdut in the far east of Drakr, and we are under siege.

I have included in this box materials from Bhadravdut's museum of pre-Demonocracy history. It may seem idle fantasy to you, but it appears our besieger is aided by the reanimated (and rather enlarged) bodies of five ancient warlords, who were prophesied to be present at the final battle of the world. Scouts report she is digging for something in the Old City, and we suspect she will transition from siege to slaughter once she has whatever she is excavating.

Already several thousand citizens of this small city have defected, enticed by Komanov's promise of unadulterated freedom to follow their most base urges. She claims the end of the world is nigh, and I admit it is hard to dispute her. As you appear to be the foremost experts in averting calamity, I write to you in the hope you will make this your problem to address.

Should you decline, I have witnessed your heroics and, with the assumption that your absence is for honorable reasons, I shall not begrudge you. But humbly I entreat you to not let this madwoman lead my nation to an ill-deserved end. Wherever your duty takes you, prepare yourself that your best efforts may fail, and that you might perish in undertaking your duty.

Your friend at the end of the world,
Vlendam Heid



MUSEUM BROCHURE CLIPPING



Музей времён до империи демонов
(Museum of the time before the demon empire)

**На фото: барельеф на изначальном
подъёмном мосту привратной башни крепости**
(Pictured: Carving on the original drawbridge of the tower fortress.)

SYNOPSIS OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF TRIEGENES

Triegenes's autobiography, much like the mortal man himself, is simple and unassuming. Its nine chapters are less than two hundred hand-written pages, and could be easily read in a couple hours. A fish hook made of crude iron keeps the leather band around it in place. He originally composed it as a long epistle to his followers, wanting them to know who he was since he was expecting to die in his battle against the leadership of the Demonocracy.

He discusses the ups and downs of his early life, referring to events involving cultures and politics long since vanished from the world. One day he was caught in a storm at sea and barely survived. Though he couches it in compelling metaphor, the core of the story is that he nearly died, realized that he was nearly forty, wife dead and he with no child, and he didn't think he had been kind enough to others, so he vowed to challenge himself to do better. Due to local events, he ended up leading people into battle against conquerors from across the sea.

Several chapters are devoted to lessons he learned leading people in a war to establish a nation. He spends an entire page extolling the importance of getting enough sleep. A recurring theme is knowing that the purpose of power is not simply to gain more power. After several great victories he had his own nation, but he wanted to defeat the Demonocracy. He was worried that perhaps his ambitions were arrogance, but he defends himself as being motivated to help the slaves of the demons, people who were denied a chance to make more of themselves.

From the writing, it is clear that Triegenes did not trust some of his closest advisors during the campaign against the demons. Some suggested he take a more authoritarian and rigid approach towards ruling the lands they conquered. One passage includes a section that is underlined: "Their desires for power and comfort cannot come at the expense of the people, and I will not allow a new Demonocracy to rule in my name, no matter how pretty the clothes it wears or the masks it hides behind."

The final chapter explains that he has learned how to gain the power of a god, but that if he dies with that power, so too will die those who believe in him. He has always challenged himself to become greater, and this would be the pinnacle of that goal. But if he has this power he fears he'll become a tyrant, and he doesn't want to risk the lives of his followers. He ends with what reads as fatalistic humor. "I have the greatest catch on my hook, but I'm not sure I want to eat it. After all, I'm only fighting horrors from the Abyss. I probably won't need it. If I die in this battle, better it be as a man, not a god. I suppose I have enough power already."

The revelation of his biography, then, is that he never used the *sacrament of apotheosis*. He defeated the Demonocracy with his own power, and died in the process. Tales of his ascension to divinity were mere stories told by those who took power after him.



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GORGED ON RUINS

The World is Falling Apart

After the stars fell and the sun vanished, a new world order arose, controlled by a group known as the Obscurati. Now four nations are poised to assault the party's homeland, Risur. The only hope to avoid defeat is to convince the invaders that they have been tricked, for it was the Ob who truly cast the world into darkness.

It will take a great show of heroism to make them listen. But in a mix of fortunes, the departure of those vast armies have left the invading nations vulnerable to a series of great disasters back home—doomsdays the party might be able to avert. A wintry apocalyptic cult slaughters and brings anarchy. Cities go mad with eerie paranoia. An entire religion puts itself on trial for the sins of its god.

This is how the world ends: not with a whimper, but with multiple bangs and a giant lava dragon birthed from an erupting volcano.

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