

Dungeon Module GP Fractured Phylactery

by John Ling

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS LEVEL 15-17



This Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible adventure contains background information, GM notes, six maps, and all the details necessary to run this high-level planar adventure! The adventure is designed to stand on its own, for four to six players with levels ranging from fifteenth to seventeenth.

If you find this adventure interesting and your characters survive or die memorably, please look for the Gaming Paper logo on future publications from The Guys Who Put Squares on Paper!



Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

JP
2012

Fractured Phylactery

JOHN LING



GAMING PAPER
WWW.GAMINGPAPER.COM

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

CREDITS

Designer: John Ling
Editor/Developer: Dan Comrie
Cartographer: Robert Lazzaretti
Front/Back Cover Artists: Jude Beers and Joel Biske
Interior Artist: Joel Biske
Graphic Design and Typesetting: David Burdette
Creative Director: Erik Bauer
Published by: Gaming Paper LLC
www.gamingpaper.com
©Gaming Paper LLC
Printed in the United States

All logos are the trademark of Gaming Paper LLC. All rights reserved. Published Under the SRD, OGL, and D20 (v 3) License ©2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

Compatibility with the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game requires the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game from Paizo Publishing, LLC. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG> for more information on the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game. Paizo Publishing, LLC does not guarantee compatibility, and does not endorse this product.

Pathfinder is a registered trademark of Paizo Publishing, LLC, and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game and the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility Logo are trademarks of Paizo

Publishing, LLC, and are used under the Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Compatibility License. See <http://paizo.com/pathfinderRPG/compatibility> for more information on the compatibility license.

DESIGNATION OF PRODUCT IDENTITY: Gaming Paper, LLC (GGP) company names and logos; the "All Stars Take on the Mega Dungeon" name and logo; all artwork, maps, backgrounds, and logos; all trade dress, and graphic design elements.

DECLARATION OF OPEN CONTENT: All game mechanics, proper names of classes, prestige classes, archetypes, feats, skills, spells, magic items, monsters, rituals, artifacts AND OR the names of abilities presented within this book are Open Game Content as described in Section 1(d) of the License.

OPEN GAME LICENSE Version 1.0a

The following text is the property of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and is Copyright 2000 Wizards of the Coast, Inc ("Wizards"). All Rights Reserved.

- Definitions: (a) "Contributors" means the copyright and/or trademark owners who have contributed Open Game Content; (b) "Derivative Material" means copyrighted material including derivative works and translations (including into other computer languages), potation, modification, correction, addition, extension, upgrade, improvement, compilation, abridgment or other form in which an existing work may be recast, transformed or adapted; (c) "Distribute" means to reproduce, license, rent, lease, sell, broadcast, publicly display, transmit or otherwise distribute; (d) "Open Game Content" means the game mechanic and includes the methods, procedures, processes and routines to the extent such content does not embody the Product Identity and is an enhancement over the prior art and any additional content clearly identified as Open Game Content by the Contributor, and means any work covered by this License, including translations and derivative works under copyright law, but specifically excludes Product Identity. (e) "Product Identity" means product and product line names, logos and identifying marks including trade dress; artifacts, creatures, characters, stories, storylines, plots, thematic elements, dialogue, incidents, language, artwork, symbols, designs, depictions, likenesses, formats, poses, concepts, themes and graphic, photographic and other visual or audio representations; names and descriptions of characters, spells, enchantments, personalities, teams, personas, likenesses and special abilities; places, locations, environments, creatures, equipment, magical or supernatural abilities or effects, logos, symbols, or graphic designs; and any other trademark or registered trademark clearly identified as Product Identity by the owner of the Product Identity, and which specifically excludes the Open Game Content; (f) "Trademark" means the logos, names, mark, sign, motto, designs that are used by a Contributor to identify itself or its products or the associated products contributed to the Open Game License by the Contributor (g) "Use", "Used" or "Using" means to use, Distribute, copy, edit, format, modify, translate and otherwise create Derivative Material of Open Game Content. (h) "You" or "Your" means the licensee in terms of this agreement.
- The License: This License applies to any Open Game Content that contains a notice indicating that the Open Game Content may only be used under and in terms of this License. You must affix such a notice to any Open Game Content that you Use. No terms may be added to or subtracted from this License except as described by the License itself. No other terms or conditions may be applied to any Open Game Content distributed using this License.
- Offer and Acceptance: By Using the Open Game Content You indicate Your acceptance of the terms of this License.
- Grant and Consideration: In consideration for agreeing to use this License, the Contributors grant You a perpetual, worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license with the exact terms of this License to Use, the Open Game Content.
- Representation of Authority to Contribute: If You are contributing original material as Open Game Content, You represent that Your Contributions are Your original creation and/or You have sufficient rights to grant the rights conveyed by this License.
- Notice of License Copyright: You must update the COPYRIGHT NOTICE portion of this License to include the exact text of the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any Open Game Content You are copying, modifying or distributing, and You must add the title, the copyright date, and the copyright holder's name to the COPYRIGHT NOTICE of any original Open Game Content you Distribute.
- Use of Product Identity: You agree not to Use any Product Identity, including as an indication as to compatibility, except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of each element of that Product Identity. You agree not to indicate compatibility or co-adaptability with any Trademark or Registered Trademark in conjunction with a work containing Open Game Content except as expressly licensed in another, independent Agreement with the owner of such Trademark or Registered Trademark. The use of any Product Identity in Open Game Content does not constitute a challenge to the ownership of that Product Identity. The owner of any Product Identity used in Open Game Content shall retain all rights, title and interest in and to that Product Identity.
- Identification: If you distribute Open Game Content You must clearly indicate which portions of the work that you are distributing are Open Game Content.
- Updating the License: Wizards or its designated Agents may publish updated versions of this License. You may use any authorized version of this License to copy, modify and distribute any Open Game Content originally distributed under any version of this License.
- Copy of this License: You MUST include a copy of this License with every copy of the Open Game Content You distribute.
- Use of Contributor Credits: You may not market or advertise the Open Game Content using the name of any Contributor unless You have written permission from the Contributor to do so.
- Inability to Comply: If it is impossible for You to comply with any of the terms of this License with respect to some or all of the Open Game Content due to statute, judicial order, or governmental regulation then You may not Use any Open Game Material so affected.
- Termination: This License will terminate automatically if You fail to comply with all terms herein and fail to cure such breach within 30 days of becoming aware of the breach. All sublicenses shall survive the termination of this License.
- Reformation: If any provision of this License is held to be unenforceable, such provision shall be reformed only to the extent necessary to make it enforceable.
- COPYRIGHT NOTICE

Open Game License v 1.0a Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
System Reference Document. Copyright 2000, Wizards of the Coast, Inc.; Authors Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, based on material by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.
Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook. Copyright 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.
Pathfinder RPG Bestiary. © 2009, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn, based on material by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, and Skip Williams.
Advanced Player's Guide. Copyright 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Jason Bulmahn
Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide, © 2010, Paizo Publishing, LLC; Author: Cam Banks, Wolfgang Buar, Jason Bulmahn, Jim Butler, Eric Cagle, Graeme Davis, Adam Daigle, Joshua J. Frost, James Jacobs, Kenneth Hite, Steven Kenson, Robin Laws, Tito Leati, Rob McCreary, Hal Maclean, Colin McComb, Jason Nelson, David Noonan, Richard Pett, Rich Redman, Sean K Reynolds, F. Wesley Schneider, Amber Scorr, Doug Seacat, Mike Selinker, Lisa Stevens, James L. Sutter, Russ Taylor, Penny Williams, Skip Williams, Teeuwynn Woodruff.
The Book of Experimental Might. Copyright 2008, Monte J. Cook. All rights reserved.
Tome of Horrors. Copyright 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Authors: Scott Greene, with Clark Peterson, Erica Balsley, Kevin Baase, Casey Christofferson, Lance Hawvermale, Travis Hawvermale, Patrick Lawinger, and Bill Webb; Based on original content from TSR.
Nabasu Demon from the Tome of Horrors, © 2002, Necromancer Games, Inc.; Author Scott Greene, based on original material by Gary Gygax.
Fractured Phylactery, Copyright 2012, Gaming Paper LLC, Authors John Ling



Fractured Phylactery

by John Ling

AN ADVENTURE FOR 15TH- THRU 17TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

Fractured Phylactery

AN ADVENTURE FOR 15TH- THRU 17TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

By John Ling

Leander d'Arstond, a lich driven insane by his centuries of unlife, regularly dares do-gooders to hunt and destroy him. Unbeknownst to most, though, is that d'Arstond is no normal lich; he has undertaken a profane ritual that divides his phylactery into four parts, and has stashed those fragments on the various elemental planes. The heroes must travel to each elemental plane and track down the shard — and overcome its current owner. As they successfully recover the fragments, d'Arstond sends assassins to thwart the heroes. To succeed in overcoming d'Arstond, the PCs will need to overcome a cruel fire giant duke, a cunning airship pirate, a fell aboleth sorcerer, and a powerful linnorm. Only then can they confront d'Arstond in his dangerous lair and send the vile lich to oblivion! **The Fractured Phylactery** is a 16th level *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game* adventure of extraplanar proportions!

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Many centuries ago, an evil wizard named Leander d'Arstond decided he needed eternity, and so undertook the ritual to become a lich. Leander's heart was darker than most, though, and so he didn't *just* become a lich. He underwent a perverse ritual that consumed the souls of four exceptionally good people, and in the process his phylactery split into four pieces, each capable of reviving him upon destruction.

Fascinated with the planes and planar creatures, d'Arstond concealed his four phylacteries on the elemental planes. For a few hundred years, the paranoid lich kept track of the fragments, always knowing where they were and how they were guarded. Eventually, though, he became complacent, and stopped following the fragments. Then, he became bored with eternity, realizing — too late — that humans were not intended to live for half a millennium.

Leander d'Arstond is now insane, his mind cracking under the pressure of an extraordinarily long life. He seeks release from the mortal world, but can't bring himself to find his phylactery fragments and destroy them himself. He relies on the one constant through his life and unlife — the sheer number of heroes in the multiverse. D'Arstond dares the adventurers to hunt his fragments, destroy them, and then bring about his demise. No group has had success in destroying any of the fragments, though a few were, at times, recovered.

THE FRACTURING RITUAL

Any evil spellcaster can perform the standard ritual to become a lich. The cost is steep — a hundred twenty thousand gold pieces — but for those seeking unlife, and who then expect to exist for eternity, the cost is a pittance. Choosing unlife is, in most cases, an evil act. It's enough to cause paladins and good clerics to seek out those who profane the natural order and attempt their destruction.

DESTROYING THE FRAGMENTS

Recovering the four gems is difficult; so is destroying them. Treat each gem as having hardness 50 and 50 hit points. The one exception is if the gem is being struck by a good-aligned bludgeoning weapon, in which case the hardness drops to 1.

If your players like an exceptionally hard challenge, you can include some plane hopping in the destruction, too. As an optional requirement, you could make it so that the gem can only be destroyed on a good-aligned plane, in addition to requiring the good-aligned weapon. This is a good option if your players already make frequent use of planar travel.

HOOKS

Ideally, whatever hook you select to involve the players — and characters — has a bit of personal feel to it. Here are some ideas to get you started. Each of these can be modified to fit the characters' background and the players' style.

RETRIBUTION

As part of his fracturing ritual, d'Arstond sacrificed four living paragons of good. While that vile act occurred centuries ago, the crime remains unpunished. A cleric, paladin, monk, or similar character who belongs to an organization devoted to good is tasked by elders to hunt d'Arstond and exact justice. Capture is insufficient; only his destruction can extract retribution for past crimes at this point.

Given the length of time that has passed since the ritual, characters likely need to do research and cast divination spells. See "Special Considerations" for more information regarding the use of divination magic within this adventure.

I DARE YOU!

d'Arstond has a perverted death wish. In the recent past, he's challenged high-level adventurers to hunt him — and won every time. Now, he's chosen the PCs as his next unwitting contestant in his mad game. This could be as simple as using a sending (or similar) spell to contact a PC, or sending a minion. Or it could be as vile as killing somebody close to one of the PCs — a spouse, child, parent, cohort, etc. If your players are the type to intentionally not forge bonds within the game ("My family is all dead, and I don't love anybody!") then an alternative is to have d'Arstond go on a killing spree in a nearby community — perhaps even wiping out a whole hamlet or village.

WE NEED A HERO!

If the PCs are especially mercenary about how they conduct their business, consider having a king, governor, or similar high-ranking official summon the heroes and hire them to perform the task of hunting and destroying d'Arstond. Such a transaction could have any sort of motivation behind it — including the previous two hooks. For example, you could have d'Arstond kill the queen or prince, sending the king into a deep depression. Only the destruction of the vile being that caused such grief has any chance of pulling the king out of his malaise — and, of course, such a task comes with appropriate recompense.



The truly debased, however, go a step further and include the fracturing ritual in their ascension to unlife. To take this step is rare, and expensive. In addition to the standard costs of building a phylactery, the fracturing ritual requires the spellcaster to provide at least two high-quality gems, each worth a minimum of 25,000 gold pieces. Each such gem provided becomes a fragment of the lich's phylactery upon the completion of the ritual. Over and above to the gems, the spellcaster must provide a living sacrifice, whose life energies are excruciatingly drained away over the course of the ritual. Not just any living creature will do for this sacrifice. Instead, the spellcaster must sacrifice a good-aligned cleric or paladin whose level is at least equal to his own caster level. Beings sacrificed in this matter cannot be raised or resurrected, even with powerful spells such as *true resurrection*, *wish*, or *miracle*, until the fragment powered by their life force is destroyed.

At the completion of the ritual, each gem becomes a part of the lich's phylactery. From that moment forward, the gems may be separated by any distance — including being placed on different planes. Should the lich be killed, his rejuvenation ability regenerates his body at any of the fragments, determined randomly by fate. As long as at least one fragment remains, the lich's rejuvenation ability works as normal. Only when all the fragments are demolished can the lich be permanently destroyed.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

As with all high level adventures, there are some special considerations to keep in mind as you work your way through the adventure.

TRAVEL

High level characters have access to myriad methods of instant travel. Rather than outright blocking it through various methods, this

adventure takes advantage of these resources. The characters need to travel to four different planes in order to accomplish the goals of the adventure. In addition, they'll likely want to take advantage of instant travel spells such as *teleport*. That's okay. If the characters opt to use *greater teleport* upon landing on the Elemental Plane of Fire as a means of popping right into Overthane Grosk's throne room, that's just one of the benefits of being 16th level. Having to slog through a dungeon crawl is something they can avoid. In some cases, direct access isn't available — intelligent NPCs and monsters have protections, just like the PCs. Don't be afraid to let the PCs hop hither and yon when the option presents itself. To do so, they must expend resources — resources they could use for other things, which will therefore be slightly more difficult.

In many cases, when it comes to travel spells, accuracy isn't possible. For example, the *plane shift* spell leaves them anywhere from 5 to 500 (5d%) miles off-target. Similarly, *teleport* has similar off-target rules, though *greater teleport* removes that. So instead of having a linear set of encounters crawling through a dungeon, this adventure has a hodge-podge of encounters to use while the characters travel the off-target distance. Again, if they find methods to skip those encounters that's okay. They're just taking advantage of one of the benefits of reaching 16th level.

DIVINATION AND RESEARCH

Divination magic is often at one extreme or another in campaigns — either it's used all the time or it's never used. This adventure assumes that your players will make use of divination magic. If your players are the type to avoid divination magic, you'll need to gently prod them in that direction. If they regularly use it this is your chance to make them work a bit.

PCs who aren't careful about how they go about doing their research are likely to run into some roadblocks and misinformation. The biggest is the False Leander, a graveknight beholden to d'Arstond (see the False Lair, room M13) who has taken up his name and serves as his proxy, intentionally drawing sloppy diviners to him rather than his master.

The other aspect of this adventure that's likely to trip up imprecise diviners is the location of the phylactery. Unlike most liches, d'Arstond has split his into four fragments. Divining for the location of the phylactery isn't going to turn up one good answer but either incomplete information or no answer at all, depending on the question.

You know your players, and so you have a bit of an advantage. Try to plan ahead a bit, and think of the divination spells they're likely to use and the questions they're likely to ask. If you can come up with good guesses, you can work ahead to provide fun, riddle-like answers where appropriate. Many divination spells — especially those that rely on contact with outsiders — don't give straight answers, but instead respond in short sentences with cryptic replies. This is your chance to have some fun and make your players work a bit to gain the information.

Don't be afraid to ask your players ahead of time what divination spells they might consider using, and what questions they may want to ask. If they're hesitant to give you that information, remind them that having that allows you to better craft the adventure to them, to personalize things a bit. If all else fails, don't hesitate to call a "time out" after they cast their spells but before you answer. Take five minutes to ponder what was asked, what the answer is, and what they get as their answer. Your players should be more than willing to give you a brief moment to gather your thoughts, if doing so improves their game experience.

NEGOTIATIONS

There are several scenes in this adventure where a “face” man could talk the players into gaining the fragment, rather than having to fight for it. If one of the players has taken the time to specialize her character as a master of Diplomacy, let that character shine. Remember, though, that the gems the players will be seeking are quite valuable. Even the best negotiator is going to find it impossible to convince an NPC to give up something of that value for nothing. Whether the NPC simply wants cash or needs a favor, chances are the characters need to give in order to get. And, of course, some NPCs simply can't be reasoned with — unless “reason” involves steel and spells, that is.

EXPANDING THE PLANES

Each of the elemental planes has its own scene, with encounters designed to focus on the plane. But in each case, we get right to the heart of the matter, and deal with encounters directly dealing with the phylactery fragment, and what the players need to accomplish in order to recover it. If you and your players wish to delve further into the plane, we've provided some ideas you can use to expand the material. We offer a plot hook or two that shouldn't be too difficult to flesh out. There's also a sidebar at the end of each scene listing creatures that are appropriately encountered on that plane. You can always opt to toss NPCs at your group, friendly or otherwise.

ACT I: THE PLANES

Act I requires the PCs to recover — and destroy — d'Arstond's four phylactery fragments, which are currently stashed on the four elemental planes. Whether PCs destroy the gems as they recover them, or opt to hold them until the very end is entirely up to them — it makes no difference to how the adventure plays.

Act I is interrupted in the middle by an assassin interlude — two cold-blooded killers sent by d'Arstond to take out the PCs.

The heroes can proceed at whatever pace they wish — unless, of course, you wish to add in your own time elements. They likely want to travel to d'Arstond's lair quickly after the fourth fragment, however, lest the lich further entrench himself behind even more defensive measures.

PLANE HOPPING, ACROSS THE MULTIVERSE!

The **Fractured Phylactery** requires characters to travel across multiple planes in order to accomplish their mission. PCs will need to travel to each of the elemental planes to recover a gem converted into a fragment of d'Arstond's phylactery. They can perform these tasks in any order; they don't need to progress in the order presented (Fire, Water, Earth, Air). Characters will need protection from some planar traits, whether from spells or magic items. Examples are provided within each scene to help the GM provide those tools to players. The following definitions are used to define the planes below. (Note: other potential traits exist, but are excluded from here for space considerations, as they don't apply.)

MAGICAL TRAITS

The following traits affect spells and spell-like abilities cast on the elemental planes.

- **Enhanced Magic** Particular spells and spell-like abilities are easier to use or more powerful in effect on planes with this trait than they are on the Material Plane. Natives of a plane with the enhanced magic trait are aware of which spells and spell-like abilities are enhanced, but planar travelers may have to discover this on their own. If a spell is enhanced, it functions as if its caster level was 2 higher than normal.
- **Impeded Magic** Particular spells and spell-like abilities are more difficult to cast on planes with this trait, often because the nature of the plane interferes with the spell. To cast an impeded spell, the caster must make a concentration check (DC 20 + the level of the spell). If the check fails, the spell does not function but is still lost as a prepared spell or spell slot. If the check succeeds, the spell functions normally.

GRAVITY TRAITS

The following traits affect how gravity works on the elemental planes. If a plane does not have a specific trait listed, assume it has gravity effects similar to the Material Plane.

- **Subjective Directional Gravity** The strength of gravity on a plane with this trait is the same as on the Material Plane, but each individual chooses the direction of gravity's pull. Such a plane has no gravity for unattended objects and nonsentient creatures. This sort of environment can be very disorienting to the newcomer, but it is common on "weightless" planes.

Characters on a plane with subjective directional gravity can move normally along a solid surface by imagining "down" near their feet. If

suspended in midair, a character "flies" by merely choosing a "down" direction and "falling" that way. Under such a procedure, an individual "falls" 150 feet in the first round and 300 feet in each succeeding round. Movement is straight-line only. In order to stop, one has to slow one's movement by changing the designated "down" direction (again, moving 150 feet in the new direction in the first round and 300 feet per round thereafter).

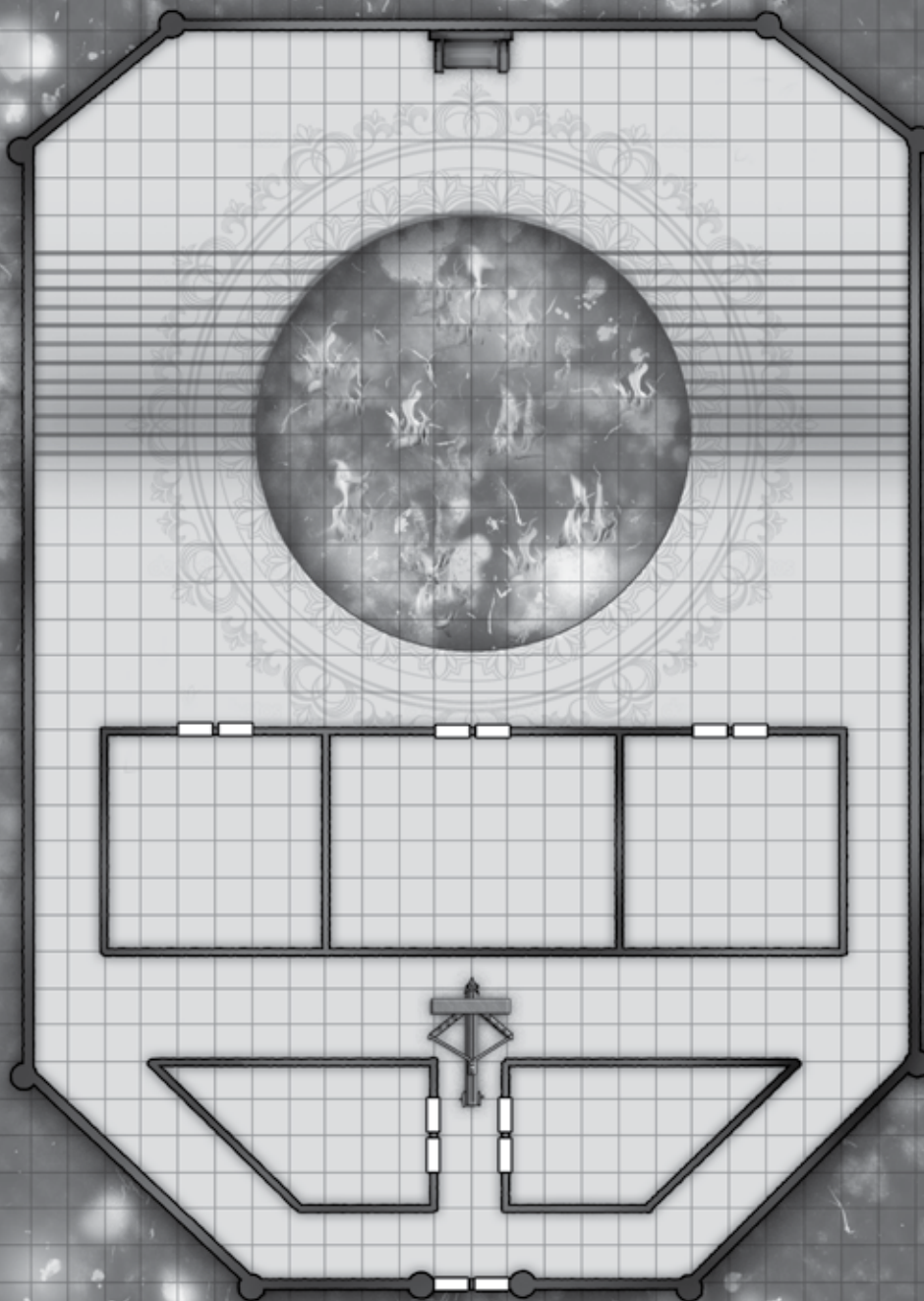
It takes a DC 16 Wisdom check to set a new direction of gravity as a free action; this check can be made once per round. Any character who fails this Wisdom check in successive rounds receives a +6 bonus on subsequent checks until he or she succeeds.

EXTRAPLANAR SUBTYPE

It's important to remember the effects of the extraplanar subtype — the characters will gain it whenever they leave the Material Plane. Assume all creatures mentioned in each section are native to that plane, and therefore do not have this subtype, unless they're stat block says otherwise.

Spells such as *banishment* and *dismissal* force extraplanar creatures back to their home plane. While PCs likely make use of these spells to deal with outsiders and summoned creatures, while traveling they're viable targets themselves. While having to waste resources to return and finish their mission is annoying, the real danger is the 20% chance of being sent to another plane entirely. Characters who are unprepared for the harsh environment of whatever plane they land on can quickly find themselves dead (or worse).

The Obsidian Fortress



ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

SCENE I: ELEMENTAL PLANE OF FIRE

Leander d'Arstond hid the large ruby fragment on the Elemental Plane of Fire, then sat back and watched as the gem changed hands many times. Over the centuries, the gem has had scores of owners, including a red dragon and an efreeti prince. Currently, the gem adorns the throne of Overthane Grosk, a brutal ruler of a small duchy who rules his land from within his obsidian fortress. Players looking to recover the gem will need to pry it from Grosk's throne — a task he's not going to permit without a fight.

PLANAR TRAITS

- **Fire-Dominant** The Elemental Plane of Fire is composed of flames that constantly burn without consuming its fuel source. Unprotected wood, paper, cloth, and other flammable materials catch fire almost immediately, and those wearing unprotected flammable clothing catch on fire. In addition, unprotected individuals take 3d10 points of fire damage every round. Creatures of the water subtype are extremely uncomfortable; those that are made of water take double damage each round.
- **Enhanced Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the fire descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create fire (including those of the Fire domain or elemental [fire] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the water descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create water (including those of the Water domain, the elemental [water] bloodline, and those that summon water elementals or outsiders with the water subtype are impeded.

PROTECTIONS

Characters will need to find some way to protect themselves from the eternal flames of the Elemental Plane of Fire. Spells such as *resist energy* and *protection from energy* are effective, but have a short duration. Either spell could be stored within a wand to allow a caster to free up slots for the day, if necessary. The *endure elements* spell is insufficient for the task. A *ring of greater energy resistance (fire)* is the most effective protection available, as it provides enough protection each round to resist the maximum damage inflicted by the plane. The *minor* and *major* versions of the ring offer some protection, but characters will quickly find the Elemental Plane of Fire to be unforgiving and uncomfortable if they rely upon such insufficient protection.

Creation of a custom item that provides immunity to fire also isn't out of the question, particularly at such a high level. Assuming such an item uses up an item slot (such as a ring or amulet), a price of around 60,000 gp would be fair.

THE OVERTHANE'S FORTRESS

Built from obsidian and reinforced with magic, this polished edifice reflects the plane's ubiquitous flickering flame. The structure itself is gigantic, easily 50 feet tall. The walls show no seams, appearing to be built from one gigantic piece of obsidian. The magic used to reinforce the walls also provide a semblance of protection to the Overthane. Extradimensional travel into the structure is impossible — though travel within and outbound both function normally. This includes *teleport* (and all its variants), *passwall*, *dimension door*, and so forth. If the PCs want to get in, they either have to go the traditional route (through the front door) or they'll need to get creative and find some way to make a hole in one of the walls.

F1: OVERTHANE'S COMPLEX: ENTRANCE (EL 14)

The entrance to the Overthane's Fortress is heavily guarded. The doors are always closed, but unlocked unless the alarm is raised.

A fantastically large structure, seemingly built entirely from obsidian, rises from the flaming ground. Polished to an incredible sheen, the surface reflects the flames of the plane in an eerie display. Two fire giants, each with a massively large dog laying by his side, stand guard at the entrance to the structure.

SETUP

Once the guards notice the PCs (assuming they aren't trying to remain hidden), they'll command them to halt and ask their business. They speak initially in Giant, but if the PCs appear to not understand, they repeat the commands in Common. As the guard speaks, the dogs lift their heads and growl. How the encounter — and the rest of the fortress — goes down depends entirely on whether the PCs intend to fight or talk.



FIRE GIANT (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each
hp 142 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Giant, Fire")



NESSIAN WARHOUND (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each
hp 126 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Hell Hound, Nessian")

ACTION

If the PCs ask to gain entry, the guards question them for details about the reason for their visit, but ultimately arrange to allow them into the fortress. They're used to the Overthane having visitors call. In such a scenario, one guard opens the large doors and passes the PCs off to another fire giant standing just inside the entrance. This guard escorts the party back to the throne room, where they're granted an audience with Overthane Grosk.

Should the PCs instead opt to attack the guards, both hell hounds spring into action, anxious to tear flesh from bone. Both guards bellow a warning, allowing the guards inside the door to prepare the ballista and position themselves appropriately.

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs attacked and the alarm was raised, the guards stationed on the other side of the door prepare the ballista (see **F2: Main Corridor** below). They also rouse the sleeping guards, who are prepared to join combat in 1d4+3 rounds, and move out of the barracks (F3 below) and take up defensive positions around the fortress interior. One guard rushes to warn Grosk.

If PCs opted to approach peacefully — at least initially — they're asked to peace-bond their weapons, and spell casters are asked to remove their spell component pouches. PCs are then ushered along the right side of the fortress into the throne room and granted an audience with Grosk.

F2: OVERTHANE'S COMPLEX: MAIN CORRIDOR (EL 15)

If the PCs opted to enter peacefully (or they somehow managed to kill the front guards without raising the alarm), choose one of them at

PEACE BONDING AND SUBTERFUGE

Generally speaking, if your PCs are willing to go along with the giants' demands and actually peace bond their weapons, you won't need much in the way of rules. Simply assume it'll require 2 consecutive full round actions to unbind a weapon and you're all set.

If, however, your PCs want to make it seem like their weapons are peace bound, then here's a few quick rules to help you get through it quickly so you can return to the fun. A DC 15 Sleight of Hand check is sufficient to bind the weapon such that it looks well-bound, but can be released with a single full round action. A DC 25 Sleight of Hand check allows the PC to release the weapon as a move equivalent action. Finally, a DC 35 Sleight of Hand check allows the weapon to be released as a swift action — it wasn't bound at all, and just looked good.

Allow a DC 20 Escape Artist check to reduce the required action one step — from 2 full rounds to one full round; one full round to a move action; and a move action to a swift action.

random (we recommend whichever one has the itchy trigger finger) then read or paraphrase the following text.

As the giants open the monstrosity huge doors, a blast of hot air wafts out. Behind the door, you see four additional giants, joined by two large hell hounds. A crossbow built to fire what can only be described as tree trunks aims directly at the door.

No sooner do you walk into the complex and one of the large dogs bounds over towards your group. It seems to have a particular interest in <character's name>, and begins to feverishly snuffle its nose in the air all around him/her, a small shower of searing drool falling from its jowls as it does so.

Alternately, if your PCs attacked the outside group and the alarm was raised, read them the following description once they figure out a way past the door.

As you enter the complex, your eyes immediately fall upon what must be one of the main defensive tools of the giants. Sitting on the floor is a crossbow built to fire tree trunks. Several giants and dogs — like those out front — wait here. Upon seeing you, one giant grins menacingly and bellows, "FIRE!"

SETUP

This encounter runs one of two ways: either the giants were prepared for the PCs (the alarm outside was raised) or the PCs managed to get in (either peacefully or with subterfuge) without raising the alarm, and therefore have a chance to catch the guards unprepared. Two main dangers wait for the PCs in this hall, should they come in looking for a fight. The obvious threat is the ballista aimed at the door; that threat is only viable once, however — reloading it takes too long. The bigger, and less obvious threat, is the guards in the various side rooms, ready to pour forth and make things very difficult for the PCs.



FIRE GIANT (4)

XP 9,600 each

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Giant, Fire")

CR 10



NESSIAN WARHOUND (2)

XP 6,400 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Hell Hound, Nessian")

CR 9

Ballista: gargantuan siege weapon; 6d8 bludgeoning damage and threatens a critical hit on a 19 or 20. It has a range increment of 100 feet. Full round action to fire, 5 full rounds (and 3 Large or larger creatures) to load.

ACTION

IF THE PCS ENTERED PEACEFULLY/QUIETLY

As long as the PCs are escorted by a guard, the hell hound doesn't do anything other than sniff and drool. The giants point and laugh, but also do nothing unless the PCs make a threatening move.

IF THE PCS FORCED THEIR WAY IN

On the other hand, if PCs caused the front guards to raise the alarm, things are about to get rough. The giant operating the ballista has a readied action to fire the machine when the door opens unless the code word is spoken. After his readied action, the PCs and giants can roll for initiative, and the grand melee can begin. Odds are, this corridor becomes the scene of a great massacre.

DEVELOPMENT

If PCs decided to force their way into the complex, things in this area are going to potentially get out of hand quickly. At the start of the encounter, the barracks (area F3 below) contains eight additional fire giants. Assume that four of them run to join the fight as soon as it breaks out, and arrive in 2d3 rounds. This first "wave" of reinforcements is fully prepared and has all their standard gear and armor. The remaining four giants forsake donning their armor (as it would require several minutes), but do require some time to awaken, locate their weapons, and so forth. After the initial wave, one giant arrives every other round until all have joined the battle.

Additional giants aren't the only creatures PCs need to worry about. The hell hounds in the kennel (area F4 below) also rush to join the fight. The hell hounds respond faster; as soon as the alarm is raised, 1d3 (mixed sizes) rush out to join combat. After that, 1d2 arrive each round until all the hell hounds have joined the fray.

F3: BARRACKS

(EL 16)

This room is where all the guards throughout the complex eat, sleep, gamble, and otherwise spend their free time. At any given time there are eight fire giants here. Chances are that these guards all join battle elsewhere, unless the characters are exceptionally sneaky.

This large irregularly-shaped room is a complete mess, and smells of sweat, piss, and other scents you'd rather not contemplate. A dozen or so chunks of obsidian rock ring the outside of the room, a footlocker by each. The amount of trash and refuse on the floor is at least a foot deep, and covers the entire surface.

SETUP

Movement in this room for any creature Medium or smaller is considered difficult terrain. Should PCs enter this room while guards are still alive, those who aren't asleep immediately jump up and move to intercept, bellowing to wake their bedfellows. Most likely, however, this room is empty as the guards all rushed out to join the fray earlier.



FIRE GIANT (8)

XP 9,600 each

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Giant, Fire")

CR 10

ACTION

Guards fight ferociously in this room; they realize that if the PCs got this far, they're indeed dangerous. When only two guards remain, they surrender and beg for their lives, offering to leave the complex and never return.

Guards work together, flanking PCs whenever possible for the attack bonus.

TREASURE

The footlockers contain mostly mundane — and poorly kept — equipment and near-rotting food. However, there are some items of interest. Assuming PCs search all the footlockers, they find a total of 3,228 gp, five rubies worth an average of 1,000 gp each, and a half-keg of fire wine, a potent — and valuable — alcoholic beverage brewed from the nectar of silver-swords, a rare flower known for growing on active volcanoes. The container is about two-thirds full, making it worth 10,000 gp to the right buyer.

DEVELOPMENT

If the hell hounds across the hall are still alive, they immediately move to join a battle in this room.

F4: KENNEL

(EL 14)

The giants generally treat their hell hounds well, feeding them plenty of meat and keeping their kennel clean (relatively speaking at least). The hell hounds have free roam of the keep, but generally keep to this room when not on guard duty.

.....

This oddly shaped room is clearly used as a kennel. A straw-like substance covers the floor. Feces piles up in the far corner, a large shovel leaning against the wall.

.....

SETUP

A total of 15 hell hounds — 5 warhounds and 10 "standard" beasts — are in this room at any given time.



NESSIAN WARHOUND (5)

XP 6,400 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Hell Hound, Nessian")

CR 9



HELL HOUND "PUPS" (10)

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Hell Hound")

CR 3

ACTION

Smarter than the average dog, the hell hounds use pack-hunting tactics and work together to bring down one foe at a time. They're smart enough to know that spellslingers are likely the most dangerous foe, and focus on any PC not wearing armor as their primary target. Otherwise, they focus on the nearest target. They use their breath weapon freely, knowing they can't hurt each other with the super-heated flames.

TREASURE

The largest warhound in the room wears a leather collar adorned with adamantine spikes and embedded with diamonds. The odd piece of jewelry is worth 5,000 gp.

F5: CONSORT'S CHAMBER

(EL 14)

Overthane Grosk gave this opulent chamber to his consort. He's unaware that she's a devil in disguise, in cahoots with Shaman Ko to undermine the Overthane and bring Hell's influence into the Elemental Plane of Fire. Sabeen has been granted different powers by her mistress, to better serve in her current role.

.....

This large square room is opulently decorated, and presents a soft appearance — counter to every other room in the keep. Billowy draperies and tapestries adorn the walls and hang from the ceiling, flowing gently in an unfelt light breeze. Pillows — some as large as a giant, others only a few inches across — lie all about the room. Braziers in each corner burn hot and red with coals, and small flickering lights glow at the ceiling, slowly moving around and randomly changing colors.

.....

SETUP

Sabeen — the name she currently is using — isn't immediately hostile to the PCs. She currently is in the form of an attractive female fire giant, and she's willing to attempt to seduce the PCs to gain the upper hand. If she hears sounds of battle, she doesn't join in. She prefers to take her chances on her own here in her room rather than fighting alongside the man she was only going to betray in the near future.



HANDMAIDEN DEVIL

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 187 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Devil, Handmaiden Devil") except replace *spider climb* spell-like ability with *polymorph* (self only, Medium and Large humanoids)

ACTION

When the PCs enter, Sabeen begins to sing, putting on an act about how happy she is to be rescued. In actuality, she casts *enthrall*, hoping to get at least a few of the PCs under her grip. She keeps her act up for about a minute, if the PCs allow it.

After one minute, or when the PCs interrupt her, Sabeen springs into action. She starts off combat by casting *black tentacles* near the door (assuming at least two targets are still in range of the spell at that location; adjust otherwise). In the second round, she closes with the nearest target in light or no armor and attacks with a tentacle, hoping to grapple the target and remove him from combat. From that point forward, she makes vicious full attacks.

If Sabeen is dropped to 60% of her hit points (112 or less), she resorts

to using her *summon* ability to call three erinyes to aid her. If she drops to under 25% (46 or less) she uses her *teleport* spell-like ability to flee.

TREASURE

Most everything around the room has some value — silk pillows, elegant tapestries, gossamer draperies, and so forth. If the PCs strip the room bare (likely only possible if they've slaughtered every being here), assume they can eventually sell the trappings of the room for a total of 12,500 gp.

Sabeen does have a few specific items worth mentioning separately. She wears a ring (sized for a Large creature) made from brass and embedded with 13 amethysts, valued at 1,500 gp. In addition, she wears a bronze necklace with an amethyst pendant in the shape of a unicorn, valued at 5,600 gp. Tucked under the largest pillow is a +1 *keen silvered dagger* and 3 vials of *deathblood* poison (each worth 1,800 gp).

DEVELOPMENT

If Sabeen fled via her *teleport* ability, she will hold a deep grudge against the PCs. At some point in the future, when it's convenient for her, she seeks out the PCs, preferably using subterfuge to separate them and destroy them one at a time.

F6: OVERTHANE'S BED CHAMBER

Overthane Grosk clearly enjoys an opulent lifestyle. PCs are probably only in here if they've already slain everybody and are simply searching out loot. If that's the case, they've come to the right place.

This large chamber is clearly a bedroom, and given the size of the room it's safe to assume this is where the Overthane resides when not holding court in his throne room. An enormous mahogany bed sits against the far wall. Glints of metal and gems sparkle all around the room. Brass braziers around the perimeter of the room emit an odd red glow as well as give off heat beyond what is natural, even for this plane. Paintings and tapestries cover most of the wall. A large fresco of the Overthane slaying a red dragon appears on the wall over the large bed.

Juxtaposed with all the wealth and opulence in the room, filth and dirt are everywhere. Dirty clothes litter the floor, hunks of rotting meat lie scattered about, and a foul odor hangs in the air.

After rising to power — such as it is — Grosk decided he needed to like the finer things in life. So he brought in paintings, silks, tapestries, a magically-treated wooden bed, and more. And yet, despite his supposedly newfound love of life's fineries, deep down Grosk is still a pig. Fortunately for anybody looking to rescue these items, most of the fine art objects haven't been here long enough to be permanently affected by Grosk's slovenly nature.

PCs who make a quick scan of the room and grab what's readily apparent can lay claim to the following items:

- An oil painting of a red dragon sitting atop a huge pile of gold coins and gems, valued at 2,500 gp.
- A watercolor depicting an efreeti prince. The painting is slightly damaged. If restored, it has a value of 1,000 gp; currently, its value is reduced to 750 gp.
- 25 gems worth an average of 500 gp each.
- 3,236 gp

- 238 pp
- 38 silver bars, stacked in the corner but buried under dirty clothing. Each bar is worth 100 gp, but weighs 25 pounds.
- The bed — magically treated so as not to catch fire — is worth 5,000 gp, but weighs 500 pounds and takes up about 15 feet on each side.
- 20 brass braziers, each worth 50 gp

PCs who take a bit of time (at least 10 minutes) and make a DC 15 Perception check to search the room locate the following items of value:

- A +2 *arrow catching heavy steel shield*
- 10 gems worth an average of 1,000 gp each
- A +3 *longsword*
- 10 random potions

PCs who are willing to spend an hour combing through the room and make a successful DC 25 Perception check locate the following additional items:

- 13 (mostly) clean Large-sized silk shirts (average value of 25 gp each)
- 11 gems worth an average of 5,000 gp each
- A large ruby, worth about 25,000 gp. This is not the fragment, though PCs may have a hard time telling the difference.

F7: SEER'S CHAMBER

This room is Shaman Ko's personal chamber. She keeps the room spartan on purpose, believing such austere accommodations bring her closer to the spiritual world. A large wooden pallet, Ko's bed, rests along the back wall. A rickety trunk (unlocked) sits nearby, containing Ko's personal effects (clothing, some musty books about religion, and so forth).

In one corner of the room is a large-sized desk and chair, cluttered with paper, half-filled ink wells, and so forth. A PC who spends at least 45 minutes going through the papers can make a DC 25 Sense Motive check to ascertain the Ko and Grosk's consort are plotting his demise.

Sitting on one corner of the desk is *crystal ball* with a *true seeing* effect. Scattered elsewhere in the room is a silver mirror valued at 1,000 gp (the necessary focus for the *scrying* spell) and four uses of *true seeing* ointment (valued at 250 gp each).

F8: LAVA PIT

(EL 11)

Grosk built his fortress here specifically because of this lava pit. Since building the edifice, two mobs of mephits — fire and magma — have moved in. Grosk is greatly amused by the little creatures, and gives them special privileges.

A large pit of lava with 3-foot high obsidian walls dominates the room. The heat here is impressive — worse than anything you've felt since arriving on the plane. A dozen or more Small creatures frolic and play in the lava.

Carved into the floor is a series of steps leading down to the Overthane's throne.

SETUP

These creatures essentially serve as Grosk's court jesters. Treat them as precocious 3-year-olds — with dangerous spell-like abilities. Play up

their playfulness, but put a mean twist on everything they do. Whenever a mephit plays a prank — especially on the PCs — he laughs a deep, hearty laugh. The crueler the prank, the harder the laugh.



FIRE MEPHIT (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Mephit, Fire”)



MAGMA MEPHIT (8)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 19 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Mephit, Magma”)

ACTION

The action depends entirely on how well the PCs can serve as the butt of a joke. The cruelty of the jokes escalates over time, but as long as the PCs show an sense of humor and laugh along with the Overthane, nothing bad happens to them as a result of this encounter.

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs came to see the Overthane in peace and they endure the tortuous pranks of the mephit without causing a brawl, award them XP as though they had defeated a CR 12 creature.

F9: OVERTHANE GROSK’S THRONE

(EL 18)

.....

A large, heavily muscled giant sits upon a throne here. A female fire giant stands off to his left, her eyes staring far away. A pair of guards flank the giant in the throne, each guard joined by a warhound.

.....

SETUP

If the PCs managed to get this far without combat erupting, they have an opportunity now to negotiate with Overthane Grosk over the ruby in his throne. Grosk isn’t the sharpest tool in the shed — he rules by brute force — so PCs intent on negotiating their way to the fragment have a good chance of success. Still, despite his limited intellect, Grosk does know the gem is extremely valuable; he won’t just give it away. PCs will need to pay him for it, either with coins or a significant favor. Grosk has plenty of enemies, and he won’t hesitate to provide information to the PCs if they ask. After PCs do one favor, Grosk will attempt to get them to do a second — and then a third, and so on — in exchange for the gem. Still, PCs should be able to outwit the fire giant.

On the other hand, if the PCs have had any sort of confrontation prior to their arrival here, things aren’t going to go so well. Any thoughts of negotiating with the Overthane went out the window the moment combat erupted elsewhere in his citadel. At that point, if the PCs want the gem, they’ll need to pry it from Grosk’s throne — over his dead body.



FIRE GIANT (8)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Giant, Fire”)



NESSIAN WARHOUND (5)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Hell Hound, Nessian”)



OVERTHANE GROSK

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male fire giant barbarian 7

NE Large humanoid (fire, giant)

Init +0; Senses low-light vision; Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 7, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +8 natural, –2 rage, –1 size)

hp 339 (22 HD; 15d8+7d12+227)

Fort +27, Ref +11, Will +17; +3 vs spells, supernatural abilities, and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, rock catching, trap sense +2; DR 2/—

Weaknesses cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 *unholy greatsword* +35/+30/+25/+20 (3d6+24/17–20) or 2 slams +32 (1d6+15)

Ranged rock +17 (1d8+15 plus 1d6 fire)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks heated rock, rage (23 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, rolling dodge +2, superstition +3), rock throwing (120 ft.)

TACTICS

Base Statistics When not raging, Grosk’s statistics are AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26; hp 267; +2 *unholy greatsword* +33/+28/+23/+18 (3d6+21/17–20) or 2 slams +30 (1d6+15); Str 36, Con 25; CMB 32, CMD 42; Climb +14

STATISTICS

Str 40, Dex 11, Con 29, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 12

Base Atk +18; CMB +34; CMD 42

Feats Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Critical Focus, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Iron Will,

Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword)
Skills Climb +16, Craft (stonework) +7, Intimidate +21, Perception +18
Languages Common, Giant
SQ fast movement
Other Gear +3 breastplate, +2 unholy greatsword, cloak of resistance +4, ring of evasion

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Heated Rock (Su) Fire giants transfer the heat of their bodies to rocks as part of an attack action when they throw rocks. A heated rock deals 1d6 points of additional fire damage on a hit.



SHAMAN KO

CR 12

A female fire giant, attractive in her own way, stands tall and proud. Her breastplate is etched with acid depicting images of flames. Her fire-red hair seems fitting, given the location. Her brown eyes seem to look through you, as though discerning your inner-most mysteries.

XP 19,200

Female fire giant oracle 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, "Oracle")

NE Large humanoid (fire, giant)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+8 armor, +2 deflection, +1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 241 (21 HD; 15d8+6d8+147)

Fort +17, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Immune** fire

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. unarmored)

Melee +1 light mace +24/+19/+14 (1d8+10)

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

Special Attacks heated rock, rock throwing (120 ft.)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 6th; concentration +10)

3rd (4/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*, *locate object*

2nd (6/day)—*cure moderate wounds*, *death knell* (DC 16), *tongues*, *zone of truth* (DC 16)

1st (7/day)—*cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 15), *grace**, *identify*, *murderous command*** (DC 15), *weapon of awe**

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*, *read magic*

Mystery lore

* See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Players Guide*

** See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 13, **Con** 23, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 38

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Toughness

Skills Climb +13, Craft (stonework) +8, Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15, Perception +17, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +13, Survival +10

Languages Aklo, Common, Giant, Infernal

SQ oracle's curse (tongues), revelations (brain drain, lore keeper)

Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 light mace, ring of protection +2, brass torque etched with images of the Fire God (1,000 gp, plus serves as holy symbol for anybody worshipping the God of Fire), spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Heated Rock (Su) Fire giants transfer the heat of their bodies to rocks as part of an attack action when they throw rocks. A heated rock deals 1d6 points of additional fire damage on a hit.

ACTION

Grosk fights in a very straight-ahead manner. If he gets a chance to charge, he will. Otherwise, he willingly stands his ground and trades blows with the PCs, believing he's the strongest and toughest being in the battle. He uses his intimidating glare ability early in a fight, letting loose a bestial roar and pounding his chest with a clenched fist. If things aren't going well for Grosk, he'll attempt to sunder his foe's weapon, looking to make things a bit more advantageous.

Ko is a bit more strategic in her approach. She uses her spells wisely, but will not use her cure spells on Grosk, even if he orders her to do so. Ko sees the PCs' attack as her best opportunity to overthrow him without further consorting with devils. If Grosk falls before her in battle, she surrenders and begs for her life, offering the PCs whatever they want from the fortress in exchange.

DEVELOPMENT

Neither Ko nor Grosk understand the nature of the fragment, and simply view it as a highly valuable gem. If PCs accepted Ko's surrender she willingly allows them to pry the ruby from the throne. If PCs have slain all the giants, they're simply free to just take the gem at this point.

EXPANSION OPTIONS

Several interesting options exist for a GM looking to expand play on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Efreeti are well-known denizens of the plane, and characters seeking to play with their fortunes could seek one out to gain wishes in exchange for services. Efreeti also possess the ability to *plane shift* willing targets to any elemental plane, so characters who need transport to another plane could seek one out for such purposes.

Brass, gold, and red dragons all possess the fire subtype, and could make an interesting expansion while on the plane. Perhaps Grosk recently lost or traded the phylactery fragment to a dragon native to the plane, sending the PCs on a wild goose chase to capture the fragment. In such a scenario, the dragon should have a properly guarded lair, complete with minions and traps.

And, of course, the simplest way to expand the action is to simply increase Grosk's lair, adding in more fire giants and other lesser minions. Azers (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*) could serve as either willing minions or slaves. Good-aligned PCs who might normally be willing to negotiate a deal with Grosk may instead be put-off by the presence of slaves, and seek to free the creatures held by the overthane and his ilk. Other creatures with the fire subtype that could be used to expand Grosk's fortress are listed in the sidebar.

FIRE CREATURES

The following creatures have the outsider (fire) type or the fire subtype, and can be used to add additional encounters to this section.

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY

Brass dragon, efreeti, fire elemental, fire mephit, gold dragon, hell hound, magma mephit, nessian warhound, phoenix, red dragon, salamander, steam mephit

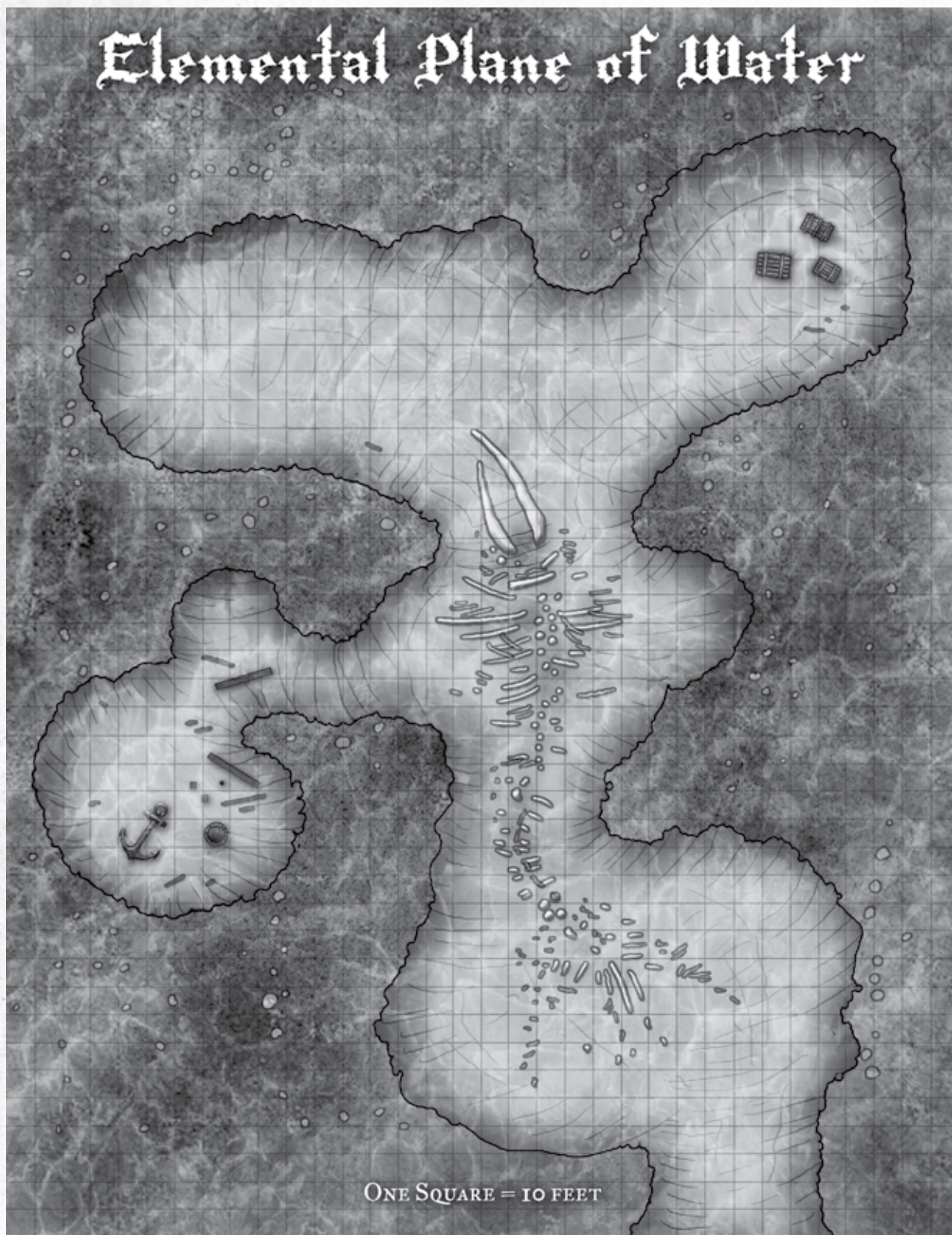
PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY II

Azer, jabberwock, magma dragon, magma elemental, magma ooze, rast, thoqua, thrasfyr

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY III

Fire yai, magmin, underworld dragon

Elemental Plane of Water



ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

SCENE II: ELEMENTAL PLANE OF WATER

The emerald fragment is currently in the possession of a particularly cruel aboleth. It keeps a coterie of slaves, and views the PCs' intrusion into his domain as a chance to add exotic creatures to his collection. As the PCs arrive, its minions greet the PCs and invite them in. It should be obvious, eventually to even the most obtuse players, that the aboleth collects slaves. What the PCs do depends on their moral compass. They could seek to free everybody, or they could simply execute their transaction and leave.

PLANAR TRAITS

- **Water-Dominant** Visitors who can't breathe water or reach a pocket of air likely drown. Creatures of the fire subtype are extremely uncomfortable on water-dominant planes. Those made of fire take 1d10 points of damage each round.
- **Enhanced Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the water descriptor or that use or create water (including those of the Water domain or the elemental [water] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the fire descriptor or that use or create fire (including spells of the Fire domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [fire] bloodline, and spells that summon fire elementals or outsiders with the fire subtype) are impeded.
- **Subjective Directional Gravity**

PROTECTIONS

Acquisition of water-breathing ability is key to surviving this plane. The *water breathing* spell is probably the most obvious solution, and has the benefit of an especially long duration. A *necklace of adaptation* is a very cheap solution as well, and offers a PC additional boons such as protections from inhaled poisons and spells including *cloudkill*.

UNDERWATER COMBAT

This is only a quick summary. For more details, see the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*, Chapter 13: Environment, "Underwater Combat."

Most creatures suffer penalties to attack rolls, damage, and movement while underwater. The best way to function underwater is to be under the effects of *freedom of movement*. As long as that spell is active, you take no penalties at all. The next-best option is to have a swim speed. Those creatures suffer a –2 to attacks made with slashing or bludgeoning weapons and only deal half damage, but otherwise function normally.

A successful Swim check allows a creature to make attacks as though they had a swim speed, but their movement is cut to one-quarter (as a move action) or one half (as a full round action). If you have firm footing (walking on the bottom, braced against a ship's hull, etc.), you can instead move at half-speed as a move action.

If a player has none of the previous listed benefits, he faces serious trouble. His character suffers a –2 penalty and deal half damage with all attacks (not just slashing and bludgeoning). He is also considered "off balance." A creature who is off balance loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and opponents gain a +2 to attacks made against that creature. In addition, such creatures cannot move.

Thrown weapons are completely ineffective underwater. Attacks with ranged weapons suffer a –2 penalty on attack rolls for every five feet of

water the projectile travels through. This penalty is in addition to the normal range increment penalties.

Normal fire — which includes alchemist's fire — does not function underwater.

A spellcaster who cannot breath underwater needs to make a concentration check (DC 15 plus spell level). This check is in addition to the checks needed to cast a fire spell (see "impeded magic" above).

THE OLD ONE'S GROTTO

The aboleth known simply as the Old One has existed on the Elemental Plane of Water for as long as anybody can remember. Some whisper that it created the plane, though scholars throughout the multiverse say that can't possibly be true. Whatever the case, the Old One has nested in this grotto for as long as anyone who is currently alive can remember.

Like many aboleths, the Old One has myriad slaves and minions at his disposal. Some despise their overlord, while others have come to respect —and even cherish — him. Regardless of how they feel about him, though, all his slaves have one thing in common: they all fear the Old One.

PCs are, of course, free to approach this any way they desire. The two most likely scenarios would be to come in fighting or to try and negotiate for the gem. Unlike the other fragment owners, the Old One knows exactly what he has in his possession. He also knows the location of the other three fragments and who possesses them. Finally, he knows that Leander d'Arstond uses a double, of sorts, in a false lair to try and protect himself. As word of the PCs' arrival on the plane reaches the Old One, he deduces they're interested in the fragment. He invites them in under the guise of cooperation, but his motives are far more sinister. The Old One is determined to enslave the PCs, adding them to his collection so he can boast about the unique treasures he has — humanoids from the Material Plane.

W1: GROTTO ENTRANCE

(EL 11)

The Old One has positioned a few more slaves than usual here at the entrance to his grotto, hoping to impress upon the PCs that they want to work with the aboleth, rather than raising a fight.

Four bizarre creatures seem to be standing guard here. Their bodies are covered in bony plates, and their four arms end in hands with hideous looking claws. Strings of black drool seep from the corner of their mouths. They look at you with cold, black eyes.

SETUP

Guarding the grotto entrance is four charda. They speak in Aklo, but also understand Undercommon. If the PCs don't understand them (that is, they don't reply), the charda become agitated and attack. Otherwise, read the following text.

Strangers. Here. Old One said you would come. You did. Old One wise! You meet Old One. Come! It has present for you!

How the PCs respond right now determines how the action for the entire scene flows. If combat breaks out — either because the PCs initiated it or because the charda became annoyed they weren't understood — the

PCs are in for wave after wave of creature. If PCs know the Old One is an aboleth, anybody with ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) may make a check, against DC 22. Success allows them to know that aboleths keep slaves and control them through magical compulsion, as well as one other fact of your choice. Once they can piece together that most creatures here are probably being compelled, it becomes a question of morality: do they attack, even if defending themselves? Do they find some way to subdue? Do they plow straight ahead? Keep a close eye on good-aligned PCs, especially paladins and clerics of good gods. Actions here could affect the PC going forward.

On the other side of the equation, if PCs go along with the charda things remain peaceful, at least for now. As they swim through the grotto, they notice several creatures peeking out to catch a glimpse of them — it's not every day humans and elves and so forth come through here.



CHARDA(4)

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Charda")

CR 7

ACTION

THE COMBAT PATH

If the PCs are itching for a big "bar room brawl" style fight, it's about to happen. The charda attack relentlessly, looking to sink their teeth and claws into tender Material Plane flesh. They take turns expelling their black bile such that they should be able to catch the PCs in it every round. They fight to death, knowing that running away will only cause the Old One to torture them for a very long time when he catches them.

In addition, if combat happens here, their chances of getting in peacefully are gone, and every encounter from here forward will follow the combat path. In 3–6 rounds reinforcements, from area W2, arrive.

THE NEGOTIATION PATH

If they opted to follow the charda, they lead the PCs through the grotto, speaking very little, until the group reaches the Old One's lair (see area W5 below). Once there, the Old One attempts to enslave them, under the guise of negotiating over the fragment.

W2: SKELETAL REMAINS

(EL 10)

The remains of a long-dead sea serpent litter the floor here. A pack of skum reside here.

As you swim through the grotto, the landscape is quickly dominated by the largest skeleton you've ever seen. It's easily 200 feet long, maybe even longer. Whatever it once was, though, it's now described with just one word: dead.

SETUP

If combat started at the entrance and the PCs blew past the guards, the pack of skum here at the skeleton of a long-dead sea serpent move to intercept. If the PCs are being escorted, the skum stay out of the way. Any PC who makes a DC 20 Perception check followed by a DC 15 Sense Motive check notices that the skum appear to be forlorn, depressed, or otherwise in a negative mood.



SKUM (10)

XP 600 each

hp 20 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Skum")

CR 2

ACTION

Individually, the skum aren't much of a challenge for the PCs. They know this, and so use gang tactics. Three or four skum attack as a group, looking to flank and aid another. The fight ferociously, knowing the wrath of the Old One falls on those who fail.

DEVELOPMENT

If combat erupted in W1, the skum moved to join the fray there and this area is devoid of slaves.

W3: SIDE CHAMBER

(EL 14)

A quartet of siyokoy — eel-like creatures with two humanoid arms — make this side cavern their lair. The Old One grants them the space in exchange for their serving as guardians, keeping an eye on the slaves to make sure none try to escape.

This dark side cavern is littered with debris, including a large anchor from a ship of some sort. Coral grows in patches along the wall, and the quantity of fish seems to be larger here than other areas of the grotto.

The siyokoy tend the coral here, helping it grow. As a result, the number of small reef fish is indeed higher here than elsewhere in the grotto.

SETUP

The siyokoy lurk at the edges of the cave. Even if they heard combat elsewhere in the grotto, they wouldn't move to investigate — while they appreciate the Old One granting them some space, they'd prefer to have the entire place to themselves. If the PCs spot them and attack or if they move into the cave, they defend their turf. Otherwise, they're content to let the PCs do all the dirty work so they can take over.



SIYOKOY (4)

XP 9,600 each

hp 136 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Siyokoy")

CR 10

ACTION

If combat does break out here with the siyokoy, they move in quickly and engage. They make use of Power Attack until such tactic proves detrimental. If they begin to take a pounding, they make use of their swim-by attack ability. While making swim-by attacks, they use their tail slap as their primary weapon, hoping to stun their foes.

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs leave the siyokoy alone and defeat the Old One, the quartet takes over the entire grotto as their lair. They quickly enslave whatever creatures are left behind, gather up anything of value, and set about tending the grotto as they've tended this cave.

TREASURE

Over time, the siyokoy have managed to pilfer odds and ends from the Old One, as well as other denizens of the plane. If you use items as plot hooks for future encounters, this is a great place to deposit one.

Otherwise, the PCs can find scattered around the room 27 gems worth an average of 1,200 gp each.

W4: THE SLAVE PENS (EL 10 [SEE TEXT])

This chamber contains a dozen or so cages of various sizes. The Old One keeps slaves who aren't yet "broken" here. Currently, most of the cages are empty — he recently made room for the PCs' arrival, assuming they wouldn't break right away. A few of his favorites remain, however.

.....

Several cages of varying sizes are scattered around this corner of the grotto. Most appear to be empty, but you spot movement in at least three.

.....

SETUP

Three cages still contains captives that the Old One hopes to convert. The cage closest to the skeletal remains contains a kelpie. She's used her captivating lure ability already today, in a futile effort to mesmerize the Old One. The second cage is roughly in the center of the room, dragon turtle. The creature is weakened, but agitated and ready for a fight. The third cage contains a trio of ceretioidi, a fish-like humanoid with bulging eyes and a dangling luminescent lure, reminiscent of an angler fish. They're immune to any mind-affecting abilities, but the Old One sees breaking them as a challenge worthy of his skills.



KELPIE

XP 1,400

hp 38 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Kelpie")

CR 4



DRAGON TURTLE

XP 6,400

hp 76 (normally 126) (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Dragon Turtle")

CR 9



CERETIOIDI (3)

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Ceretioidi")

CR 3

ACTION

All three prisoners can communicate with the PCs, though there might be language barriers in some cases. If PCs decide to open the cages, the kelpie and ceretioidi flee as fast as possible; the dragon turtle, however, is agitated enough to attack his emancipators, unless they've worked out arrangements with him before opening the cage. Convincing the dragon turtle to join them on their assault of the Old One is a very simple task, as he desires revenge.

DEVELOPMENT

PCs who wish to use Diplomacy against the dragon turtle receive a +5 bonus to their skill check if they speak to the beast in Draconic. They receive a -5 if it's clear that they speak Aquan or Draconic, but insist on using Common.

If the PCs make too much commotion here — either while fighting the dragon turtle or simply freeing the slaves — the Old One moves to investigate.

If the PCs freed the prisoners and spared the dragon turtle's life, word spreads among its kind of the good deeds done by the PCs on

the Elemental Plane of Water. Whenever they encounter a water-based dragon in the future, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on any Diplomacy checks made to influence the creature.

W5: THE OLD ONE (EL 17)

This is where the Old One makes his true lair. It fights ferociously, but isn't suicidal; he'd rather retreat and live than stay and die.

Unlike the other fragment owners, the Old One knows exactly what it is that's in his possession. Further, he knows who Leander d'Arstond is, and knows that the PCs are on the prowl to kill the crazy old coot. However, just because he knows all that doesn't mean he's about to turn over the fragment. He likes the idea of one less paladin or high-level cleric in the multiverse and doesn't care about the PCs or their mission. PCs would need to completely overwhelm him with an offer to convince him to exchange the gem.

.....

The water here is cloudy, and if possible the cavern seems a little darker. It takes you a moment to realize, but then it occurs to you: this cavern is entirely devoid of the signs of life you've seen elsewhere. No schools of fish, no coral, no deep sea plants. Not even any of the slaves you've encountered elsewhere.

.....

SETUP

The Old One wishes to capture the PCs and add them to his collection. To this end, he's instructed his charda guards to bring them here. He hopes their desire for the gem is enough to get them to go along with it. Even if combat erupts elsewhere, he stays here. The only exception to that is if the PCs interfere with his caged future-slaves.

ACTION

The Old One has a *persistent image* cast and ready for the PCs, if things are headed towards combat. As soon as they arrive here, a dozen sahuagin warriors clad in armor made of bone and shells and wielding tridents swim out of the back wall, bellow out a battle cry and make a beeline for the heroes. The Old One hopes the PCs know a bit about his kind, and that they'll believe the sahuagin were hiding behind an *illusory wall*. He doesn't expect this ruse to last long, but the sahuagin do react accordingly, just in case it is working.

While the PCs tangle with the illusory guards, even if only for a round or two, the Old One uses spells to support. He begins with *dominate monster* on a non-spellcaster. He follows up by casting *forcecage* on a character who appears to be an arcane caster (choosing the "solid wall" variety), with the intent of removing that target for at least a round. From that point forward, he uses his spells and melee attacks as appropriate.



THE OLD ONE

CR 17

The aboleth clearly has more power than usual. Arcane energy crackles around the creature, as a small stone floats slowly around its head. Oddly, it wears jewelry, almost as a mockery of humanity.

XP 102,400

Aboleth sorcerer 14 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Aboleth")
NE Huge aberration (aquatic)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +28

Aura mucus cloud (5 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -2 size)

hp 261 (22 HD; 8d8+14d6+176)

Fort +18, **Ref** +14, **Will** +24

Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +11 (1d8+4 plus slime)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +24)

At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 20), *illusory wall* (DC 22), *mirage arcana* (DC 23), *persistent image* (DC 23), *programmed image* (DC 24), *project image* (DC 25), *veil* (DC 24)

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 27)

Bloodline Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +22)

11/day—*dehydrating touch* (1d6+6 nonlethal)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 14th [15th for water spell]; concentration +22)

7th (4/day)—*forceage* (DC 25)

6th (6/day)—*control water*, *disintegrate* (DC 24), *mass suggestion* (DC 24)

5th (7/day)—*baleful polymorph* (DC 23), *cone of cold* (DC 23), *dismissal* (DC 23), *geyser*[†] (DC 23)

4th (8/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *enervation*

3rd (8/day)—*aqueous orb*[†] (DC 21), *fireball* (DC 21), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 21), *summon monster III*, *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *ghoul touch* (DC 20), *glitterdust* (DC 20), *hideous laughter* (DC 20), *slipstream*[†]

1st (8/day)—*chill touch* (DC 19), *hydraulic push*[†], *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights* (DC 18), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 18), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue*

Bloodline Aquatic[†]

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

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 16, **Con** 24, **Int** 15, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 33 (can't be tripped)

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Reflexes, Dodge^B, Eschew Materials^B, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Magical Aptitude, Silent Spell^B, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Skills Bluff +26, Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +28, Spellcraft +30, Swim +23, Use Magic Device +20

Languages Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Undercommon

SQ amphibious, aquatic adaptation, aquatic telepathy

Combat Gear *metamagic rod of lesser maximize*, *scroll of teleport*; **Other Gear** *band of resistance* +3 (as cloak, but worn around head), *pink and green sphere ioun stone*, *ring of counterspells* (greater dispel magic), *ring of mind shielding*, assorted gems and jewelry (4,000 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mucus Cloud (Ex) While underwater, an aboleth exudes a cloud of transparent slime. All creatures adjacent to an aboleth must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save each round or lose the ability to breathe air (but gain the ability to breathe water) for 3 hours. Renewed contact with an aboleth's mucus cloud and failing another save extends the effect for another 3 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Slime (Ex) A creature hit by an aboleth's tentacle must succeed on a DC 21 Fortitude save or his skin and flesh transform into a clear, slimy membrane over the course of 1d4 rounds. The creature's new "flesh" is soft and tender, reducing its Constitution score by 4 as long as it persists. If the creature's flesh isn't kept moist, it dries quickly and the victim takes 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. *Remove disease* and similar effects can restore an afflicted creature to normal, but immunity to disease offers no protection from this attack. The save DC is Constitution-based.

DEVELOPMENT

If the Old One ever gets reduced to less than 1/4 his normal hit points, he uses his *scroll of teleport* and leaves the grotto. In this case, he'll maintain a long-burning grudge against the PCs, and will seek revenge at some point in the future.

TREASURE

Aside from the fragment and his personal items, the Old One has several items here of value. PCs who spend a little time searching the chamber locate twenty-seven pearls worth an average of 100 gp each, three sapphires each worth 500 gp, and a leather sack that upon inspection turns out to be a *bag of holding* (type IV). Inside the *bag of holding* is 1,988 pp, 2,075 gp, and seventy-nine gems of various sizes and types, worth an average of 150 gp each.

WATER CREATURES

The following creatures have the outsider (water) type, the water subtype or the aquatic subtype, and can be used to add additional encounters.

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY

Aboleth, black dragon, bronze dragon, chuul, crab swarm, dire shark, dragon turtle, giant crab, giant leech, giant moray eel, giant octopus, giant squid, kraken, leech swarm, marid, merfolk, octopus, ooze mephit, sahuagin, sea hag, sea serpent, shark, shoggoth, skum, squid, water elemental, water mephit

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY II

Agathion (cetaceal), angel (monadic deva), bunyip, brine dragon, charda, charybdis, daemon (hydrodaemon, piscodaemon), daugr, demon (omox), devilfish, gar, giant amoeba, giant gar, giant jellyfish, giant nymph dragonfly, grindylow, hippocampus, ice elemental, locathah, manta ray, mud elemental, nereid, reefclaw, scyllia, stingray, triton, water orm

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY III

Adaro, ahvizotl, cecaelia, ceratoidi, death's head jellyfish, deep sea serpent, fjord linnorn, ghawwas, giant sea anemone, globster, grodair, fuath, iku-turso, kappa, lukwata, mobogo, nixie, nuckelavee, river drake, rusalka, sapphire jellyfish, sargassum fiend, sea dragon, sea bonze, seaweed leshy, shark-eating crab, shipwrecker crab, siyokoy, thalassic behemoth, tojanida, vodyanoi, voonith, water naga, water yai

EXPANSION OPTIONS

As with the other planes, water has room for expansion, allowing the PCs to further explore the vagaries of the plane. Perhaps the dragon turtle insists the PCs escort it home, either due to injury or because he needs the PCs to meet an elder. From there, the PCs can be vetted as the heroes they are for abolishing the great evil of the Old One.

A proverbial page could be ripped from the Elemental Plane of Air chapter, and the PCs could encounter a magical underwater sailing ship. Such an encounter would allow for a very Jules Verne-esque series of encounters, including pitting the characters and the ship against a sea serpent or even an advanced kraken.

INTERLUDE: ASSASSINS!

AMBUSH!

(EL 17)

Run this encounter after the PCs have tracked down and destroyed two fragments. While d'Arstond has his death wish, he has standards about who's going to kill him, and about how powerful they'll have to be. As such, he has paid a tidy sum of gold to this oddball assassin team and tasked them with finding the PCs and inflicting death upon them.

SETUP

The setup for this encounter is very much up in the air, and is determined entirely by your players and their characters' actions. Specifically, it depends on what manner of daily preparations and precautions they take. If your players don't use resources such as *mind blank* and *dimensional lock*, then your job is simple. Sophina can locate them with divination magic, use *greater teleport* to transport her group to their location, and then pop them back out again a few rounds later, hopefully with a few dead bodies in their wake.

If the characters do take precautions, however, your job gets harder. It's important to avoid using "GM fiat" to make this encounter work. There's a good chance the ambush ends with at least one PC dead, and your players will resent it if all their defenses were simply hand-waved away. There's likely a hole somewhere in their defenses, so it's important for Sophina and Jannis to make use of that hole. They were paid sufficiently that they're willing to sub-contract, so to speak, the divination aspect of locating the PCs if necessary.

Once the duo have located the PCs, Sophina casts *haste* on the group, followed by *fly*, *protection from arrows* and *true seeing* on herself. She then casts *greater teleport*, starting the action.



JANNIS

CR 15

The human before you stands about 5'8" tall, and can't weigh more than 175 pounds. His black hair is cropped short, and his green eyes burn with a deep malevolence. His dark grey tunic covers a chain shirt, a tight black cloak hangs from his shoulders, and he wields a dagger in each hand, the blades clearly coated in some sort of poison.

XP 51,200

Male human rogue 6/Assassin 10

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +11; Senses Perception +18

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 108 (16 HD; 6d8+10d8+38)

Fort +10, Ref +20, Will +9; +5 vs. poison

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, improved uncanny dodge

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 dagger +18/+13/+8 (1d4+3/19-20), +1 dagger +17/+12/+7 (1d4+1/19-20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow +19 (1d8+1/19-20)

Special Attacks angel of death, death attack, quiet death, swift death, sneak attack +8d6, true death

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 24, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 10

Base Atk +11; CMB +18; CMD 31

Feats Agile Maneuvers^B, Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved

Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Stealthy, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse^B

Skills Acrobatics +26, Appraise +12, Bluff +19, Climb +9, Disable Device +26, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (local) +21, Perception +18, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +20, Stealth +30

SQ hidden weapons, hide in plain sight, poison use, rogue talents (bleeding attack +8, finesse rogue, surprise attack), trapfinding +3

Other Gear mithral +2 chain shirt, +2 dagger, +1 dagger, +1 light crossbow, with 20 bolts, ring of protection +2, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of resistance +3, belt of incredible dexterity +4, handy haversack, 4,311 gp



SOPHINA

CR 15

The old woman looks human at first glance. Her slightly pointed ears, hidden under her long blonde flowing hair, betray her elven heritage, however. Her blue eyes sparkle. Dressed in simple linen slacks and cotton shirt, it's clear she wears some sort of armor under her clothing. A simple silver circlet with a small sapphire wraps neatly around her head.

XP 51,200

Female old half-elf summoner 16 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*, "Summoner")

NE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor)

hp 91 (16d8+16)

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +14; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities greater shield ally

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +10/+5/+0 (1d4-3/19-20)

Summoner Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +24)

11/day—*summon monster* VIII

Summoner Spells Known (CL 16th; concentration +24)

6th (2/day)—*mass planar adaptation*[†], *maze*

5th (4/day)—*greater rejuvenate eidolon*[†], *greater teleport*, *plane shift* (DC 24), *true seeing*

4th (6/day)—*acid pit*[†] (DC 23), *baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *hold monster* (DC 22), *insect plague*, *magic jar* (DC 22)

3rd (7/day)—*aqueous orb*[†] (DC 22), *black tentacles*, *fly*, *spiked pit*[†] (DC 22), *tongues*

2nd (7/day)—*blur*, *create pit*[†] (DC 21), *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *glitterdust* (DC 21), *haste*, *protection from arrows*

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *grease* (DC 20), *reduce person*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*

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

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 11, **Con** 9, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 19

Feats Alertness, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Focus (conjuration), Toughness

Skills Fly +19, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Perception +11, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +22, Stealth +16, Use Magic Device +27; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Perception

Languages Aklo, Common, Elven, Ignan, Orc

SQ aspect, bond senses 16 rounds/day, eidolon, life bond, life link, maker's call, merge forms, transposition, elf blood

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (27 charges), *wand of lesser rejuvenate eidolon* (38 charges), *bead of force*; **Other Gear** *light fortification* +2 *studded leather*, *mwk dagger*, *cloak of resistance* +3, *handy haversack*, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of sustenance*, spell component pouch, ointment (true seeing component) x2, tuning forks (elemental planes, astral plane, negative energy plane)



PHEN

Eidolon (serpent form)

NE Large outsider (extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +15

CR —

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 16, flat-footed 11 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, -1 size) **hp** 138 (12d10+72)

Fort +9, **Ref** +14, **Will** +10; +4 vs enchantment

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **Resist** acid 15; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +20/+15 (1d6+8 plus poison), tail slap +14 (1d6+4)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon (30 ft. cone, 12d6 acid damage, Reflex DC 21 half, usable 1/day), constrict (1d6+8), poison

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 22, **Con** 20, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +21 (+25 grapple); **CMD** 38 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics +21 (+17 jump), Climb +16, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +17

SQ link, share spells, devotion, multiattack, evolutions breath weapon, (bite, constrict, energy attacks, grab, large, reach, resistance, spell resistance, tail, tail slap)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *frequency* 1/round for 4 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str drain; *cure* 1 save.

ACTION

Upon arriving, Jannis immediately attacks, hoping to take out an arcane spell caster (if one exists). If the pair were unable to study the group before attacking, Jannis makes use of his swift death ability on this initial attack. Otherwise, he saves swift death for the second round — effectively allowing him to make a death attack in back-to-back rounds. Jannis would obviously prefer to make a full attack, and relies upon Sophina's eidolon to provide him a flanking partner. If flanking simply isn't possible, though, Jannis will feint as a move action— one sneak attack a round is better than none.

Sophina orders her eidolon to join the battle, well aware that her pet greatly increases Jannis's combat ability. If outdoors or someplace else where space is abundant, she takes flight, looking to make it as difficult as possible for the PCs to engage her in melee. She supports Jannis and her pet with spells such as *baleful polymorph* and *hold monster* to remove individual targets from the battle. She keeps at least one 4th level spell slot unused, so the group can make an exit.

Phen simply attacks with his natural weapons, seeking to lay as much hit point damage upon his target as possible. In the final round of combat Phen uses his breath weapon, positioning himself in such a way as to catch as many of the PCs as possible. He doesn't take any precautions to avoid Jannis, relying on his high Reflex save and evasion ability.

The trio stays for no longer than three rounds (plus the surprise round). During the third round, Jannis takes a 5' step away from his target after making his last attack and Sophina moves to his location, and then casts *greater teleport*. If their ambush quickly turns bad, Sophina decides to call for an early retreat, issuing the agreed-upon phrase "For the master!" as the signal for the other two to disengage.

DEATH?! BAH, IT'S BUT A MINOR INCONVENIENCE!

For high level characters, death usually isn't permanent unless the player chooses it to be so. Clerics have access to raise dead starting at 9th level, and at 13th level they gain resurrection. At 17th level, true resurrection, miracle and wish completely change how characters relate to death, since they can be brought back to life even if nothing at all of their remains exists. The only limitation on these spells is the expensive material component.

Assassins add another round of hoops players must jump through, but even the assassin's toolkit doesn't make death permanent. True death essentially requires the cleric to cast remove curse before attempting to bring the character back to the world of the living. Angel of death forces the cleric to use true resurrection — and this is the one ability that might make things difficult for players of this adventure, since they likely don't have access to this spell yet. And that's OK. The point of this encounter is twofold. The first goal is to inconvenience the characters a bit, by causing them to expend some resources. The second goal is to motivate the players, to further ensconce them into the plot of the adventure, and to make the hunting of d'Arstond more personal.

So don't pull punches with this encounter. Mercilessly slaughter the characters! They'll recover.



DEVELOPMENTS

During combat, Jannis lets slip who their employer is while (hopefully) adding a new orifice in one of the PCs. Hopefully, it lights a fire under both the players and the characters. Give the group time to lick their wounds, raise their dead, and re-fortify for the remainder of the adventure. If the PCs take precautions such as the ones mentioned earlier, be prepared for them to ask how those defenses were bypassed. Let them examine it themselves, such that they discover the weakness you used. Be cooperative, but don't just give them the info; make them work for it a bit. And, of course, if they hadn't taken any precautions at all up until now, this ambush should serve as a very powerful reminder that they have enemies, and those enemies have the resources to kill them — or worse.

Elemental Plane of Earth



SCENE III: ELEMENTAL PLANE OF EARTH

A powerful crag linnorm who only goes by the name Fang resides deep in a cavern on the Elemental Plane of Earth and possesses the diamond fragment. She's unaware of the true nature of the exquisite gem — she just knows it's sparkly, and it's hers. Highly territorial and very possessive of the items in her hoard, there's little chance of the PCs negotiating their way out of this; they're going to have to prepare to fight.

PLANAR TRAITS

- **Earth-Dominant** Travelers who arrive run the risk of suffocation if they don't reach a cavern or other pocket within the earth. Worse yet, individuals without the ability to burrow are entombed in the earth and must dig their way out (5 feet per turn). Creatures of the air subtype are uncomfortable on earth-dominant planes because these planes are tight and claustrophobic to them, but suffer no inconvenience beyond having difficulty moving.
- **Enhanced Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the earth descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create earth or stone (including those of the Earth domain and the elemental [earth] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the air descriptor or that use or create air (including those of the Air domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [air] bloodline, and spells that summon air elementals or outsiders with the air subtype) are impeded.

PROTECTIONS

The biggest issue for the characters to contend with on the Elemental Plane of Earth is the composition of the plane itself — most of the plane is solid rock. Given *plane shift*'s inaccuracy, chances are the characters arrive on the plane in a location that, quite frankly, means they'd be encased in rock. Two methods exist within the rules to help: becoming incorporeal or gaining a burrow speed. Assuming the characters intend to use *greater teleport* (or similar) to get close to the crag linnorm, they'll only need one of these methods for a short period of time. If they intend to just wander the plane until they get where they want to be, they'll need something with a longer duration.

No standard spells or items grant a burrow speed. A few methods exist to gain the earth glide ability, including the *elemental body* spell line, the 15th level ability of the deep earth sorcerer bloodline, and a druid's wild shape ability are a few of them. None of these, however, allow a caster to bestow the power to another creature. Allowing a caster to research such a spell is permissible, but be careful about the end result. Granting a burrow speed (or the earth glide ability) for any length of duration is powerful. One good option would be to allow a caster to research — or find — a variant of the *elemental body I* spell that allows the spell to be cast on another creature. Assuming everything about this spell is the same as *elemental body I* except the target entry, placing it as a 4th level spell is reasonable.

The *dust form* spell (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*) allows the caster to become incorporeal for a very short period of time, but the caster can only target herself. As a 6th level spell, it's probably unreasonable for the characters to research a greater version of the spell that targets others; a magic item is a possibility, though it would, by necessity, be extremely expensive.

Characters who don't plan ahead are going to find things slow-going, as they'll only be able to move five feet per round. In that instance, they're best option very well might be to go back to the material plane and try

again after preparing. However, once they're prepared to move through the environment, they should find the Elemental Plane of Earth to be about as hospitable as their home plane.

THE CAVERNS

Fang considers the area with about five miles of her main cavern to be her lair. Of course, she can't defend that much territory. In fact, Fang has recently grown — a result of a combination of simply aging, eating well, and fighting a lot (thereby building muscle) — and she no longer easily fits through the tunnels of even her closest chambers. Content to stick mostly to the large chamber, others have moved in and taken the smaller caverns of Fang's territory as their own. For now, she's willing to accept this arrangement. What she's not willing to accept is a bunch of PCs trudging into her cavern looking to steal her gem.

E1: MINIONS! (SORT OF)

(EL 13)

A pair of carnivorous crystals has moved into this cavern. They're content to hang here and dine upon the mineral-rich rock in this cavern. The PCs' arrival changes that plan, though. Sensing a veritable feast of minerals, the oozes set upon the intruders shortly after they enter the chamber.

.....|
A low, almost imperceptible humming noise, fills this chamber. The walls are pocked and pitting, as though something ripped chunks of rock right out of the wall.
.....|

SETUP

A pair of carnivorous crystals resides in this cavern. As soon as they're aware of the PCs (likely via their blindsight ability), they attack.



CARNIVOROUS CRYSTAL (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 136 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Carnivorous Crystal")

ACTION

As mindless creatures, the oozes don't use any real tactics. They simply plow ahead and look to engulf the PCs as quick as possible, so they can begin feeding.

E2: NEW NEIGHBORS

(EL 12)

Four xorn — two mated pair — have moved in here. They intend to slowly torment Fang over time, hoping to drive her from the cavern so they may make the place their permanent home.

.....|
This wide cavern opens after a short tunnel. Bones lie scattered about on the floor, the remnant of some creature's recent meal.
.....|

SETUP

The bones are from a pack of kobold strip miners who, not that long ago, stumbled through here looking for rare metals and gems. All they found was their quick demise.

The xorn that reside here are more ornery than is typical.

**XORN (4)**

XP 2,400 each

hp 66 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Xorn")**CR 6****ACTION**

The xorn are defensive of what they perceive as theirs, but not to the point of being suicidal. If two are slain, or if all four are reduced to less than 1/4 their hit points, they use their earth glide ability to flee.

TREASURE

The kobolds had some gear that is still lying about the chamber. If the PCs are willing to sift through the bones, they find a suit of +2 *leather armor*, +3 *corrosive burst light pick*, a *lantern of revealing*, and a mostly dissolved leather satchel that contains 23 pounds of mithral. (Note: the *corrosive burst* weapon property can be found in the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Advanced Player's Guide*.)

E3: UNSTABLE CAVERN**(EL 8)**

This chamber is completely unstable. All the creatures in the area have abandoned it.

Loose dirt and stone cover the floor here. You hear a faint sound from the back of the chamber, not unlike the sound made by mewling kittens.

The sound is simply a trick of the wind blowing through a crack in the ceiling.

SETUP

When the PCs reach roughly the middle-point of the tunnel between the **E3a** and **E3b**, the cave-in occurs. If the PCs are careful and examine the caverns as they move, a DC 20 Knowledge (engineering) or Craft (stonemasonry) check reveals the unstable nature of the tunnel. Remember that Craft checks can be made untrained, and also that a dwarf (or other character with the "stonecunning" ability) gets to make the check simply by passing within 10 feet of the bottleneck. If any of the characters are successful, they can raise a warning and possibly avoid the cave-in.

ACTION

As soon as the middle PC in the "marching order" reaches the midpoint of the tunnel, read them the following text.

As you walk through the tunnel connecting the two chambers, bits of loose dirt and small pebbles fall from the ceiling. A half moment later, a loud rending noise rips through the chamber, and larger hunks of rock begin to rain down!

Immediately at this point, call for Reflex saves from everybody. The PC who "triggered" the cave in, and any creature within five feet, is in the "bury zone." All other characters are in the "slide zone."

BURY ZONE

Creatures in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage, or half if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Regardless of whether they succeed or fail the

saving throw, they're buried under the cave-in.

SLIDE ZONE

Those in the slide zone take 3d6 point of damage, or no damage if they succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save. Characters who fail this save are buried, while those who were successful avoid being buried.

BEING BURIED

Any creature buried, regardless of whether it was from the bury or slide zone, takes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If any of these creatures fall unconscious, they must make a DC 15 Constitution check each minute. On a failed check, the character takes 1d6 points of lethal damage.

Any creature who is not buried can begin digging. In 1 minute, using only hands, a character can clear rock and debris weighing five times her heavy load limit. The amount of loose stone and debris that fills a 5-foot-by-5-foot area weighs one ton (2,000 pounds). Appropriate tools (picks, crowbars, shovels, etc.) can clear debris twice as fast. And, of course, plenty of spells could be useful in this situation.

A buried creature can attempt to free itself with a DC 25 Strength check.

DEVELOPMENT

After the ceiling collapses, the "mewling" noise ceases.

E4: ROCK TROLLS**(EL 11)**

Five rock trolls make this cavern their home. Fang despises these disgusting humanoids, but she's too large to make her way into the tunnel to eradicate them. The trolls may be dumb, but they know enough to stay away from a dragon — even a lesser dragon — that despises them.

A foul stench assaults your nostrils as you make your way down the passage. Bones of varying sizes litter the floor. A few boxes and crates are laid about the room, almost like furniture.

SETUP

All five are present, unluckily for the PCs.

**ROCK TROLL (5)**

XP 2,400 each

hp 80 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Troll, Rock")**CR 6****ACTION**

The trolls begin by trying to demoralize the PCs with Intimidate checks. Whether or not that's successful, they fight ferociously, hoping to sink their claws into the PCs' tender flesh and rip it off their bones. Any troll that successfully rends a PC will take a move equivalent action the next round to eat a chunk of the PC's flesh.

The trolls use Power Attack, every round whether or not it was successful the previous round. Basically, their tactics are: "Bash! If that doesn't work, bash harder!"

DEVELOPMENT

The trolls assume the PCs are minions of Fang, and fight to the death to defend their home from the beast.

PCs who don't overcome the rock trolls' regeneration properly are in for a nasty surprise, as the trolls will join the battle in the fight against Fang (if that fight happens after this one), making for an interesting three-way battle.



E5: BOSS LADY (EL 16)

This is the lair of Fang, an advanced engorged crag linnorm. She's extremely territorial and protective of her lair, but too large to move comfortably beyond this large cavern.

The cavern here is quite large, the ceiling soaring to at least 100 feet over your head. The northeast corner of the room is covered in debris — dirt and rocks, mostly. The remainder of the room is clear.

SETUP

Fang wants no parts of negotiation. This is her lair, and that diamond is hers. And that's that.



FANG

This massive dragon has no wings, but does possess powerful talons and an odd-looking triple tail. It has a distinctly feral look, and her body scales sport jagged ridges.

CR 16

XP 76,800

Female advanced crag linnorm

CE Gargantuan dragon (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Linnorm, Crag," *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Advanced Template")

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent, true seeing; **Perception** +24

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+6 Dex, +21 natural, -4 size)

hp 279 (18d12+162)

Fort +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement; **DR** 15/cold iron; **Immune** poison, curse effects, mind-affecting effects, magic paralysis and sleep, dragon traits; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +29 (2d8+14/19-20 plus poison), 2 claws +28 (1d8+14), tail +23 (2d6+7 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon, constrict (2d6+21), death curse, poison

STATISTICS

Str 38, **Dex** 22, **Con** 29, **Int** 9, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +36 (+40 grapple); **CMD** 52 (can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Climb +27, Diplomacy +20, Fly +18, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +24, Spellcraft +7, Swim +35

Languages Aklo, Draconic, Sylvan

ECOLOGY

Treasure triple standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, a crag linnorm can expel a 120-foot line of magma, dealing 15d8 points of fire damage to all creatures struck (Reflex DC 28 halves). This line of magma remains red-hot for 1 round after the linnorm creates it. Creatures that took damage on the first round take 6d6 fire damage the second round (Reflex DC 28 negates), as does any creature that walks across the line of magma. If the magma was expelled while the linnorm was airborne, it instead rains downward during the second round as a sheet of fire no more than 60 feet high that does 6d6 damage (Reflex DC 28 negates) to any creature that passes through it. On the third round, the line of magma cools to a thin layer of brittle stone that quickly degrades to powder and sand over the course of several hours; magma that's turned to a sheet of fire is consumed entirely during the second round, leaving behind only a stain of smoke in the air that swiftly disperses. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Death Curse (Su) When a creature slays a crag linnorm, the slayer is affected by the curse of fire. *Curse of Fire*: save Will DC 26; *effect* creature gains vulnerability to fire. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Freedom of Movement (Ex) A crag linnorm is under the constant effect of *freedom of movement*, as per the spell of the same name. This effect cannot be dispelled.

Poison (Su) Bite—Injury; save Fort DC 28; frequency 1/round for 10 rounds; effect 1d4 Con drain; cure 2 consecutive saves.

True Seeing (Ex) A crag linnorm has constant *true seeing*, as per the spell of the same name.

ACTION

Fang opens combat by breathing on as many PCs as possible. In subsequent rounds, she makes full attacks until her breath weapon is recharged. While she doesn't have a death wish, she also has no place to retreat. So unless the PCs offer her quarter, she'll fight to the very end.

DEVELOPMENT

PCs who search through the rubble pile locate Fang's hoard (see sidebar), which includes the diamond they seek.

EXPANSION OPTIONS

Earth can be expanded in a few ways. Perhaps the kobold miners aren't all dead, and PCs stumble into their camp. Similarly, the rock trolls could easily be expanded to fill several more caverns.

Another option to expanding this area is slightly widen the tunnels and fill the region with various crag linnorm. Give Fang a mate, for example, and apply the "young" simple template to produce offspring.

You also don't necessarily need to expand the existing map; finding any map of a cavern complex should suffice. Perhaps the PCs need to *teleport* more than once after they arrive via *plane shift*, and they encounter whatever you want to throw at them during one of these intermediary steps. Or go the other direction, and have the PCs arrive to find Fang dead and her hoard looted. Now they need to track down who killed

her, find them, and get the fragment. This option is especially nice if you're looking to "teach" your PCs a bit about divination magic, and the power it can provide. *Locate object* and similar spells may prove helpful in finding their way to the fragment's new owner.

TREASURE HOARD

The crag linnorm gets a "triple standard" treasure hoard. Here's one such treasure pile you can use. IF the PCs are beginning to feel weighed down with gems at this point, feel free to swap them out for equivalently costed magic items.

- 5,027 gp
- 1,091 pp
- Potions of lesser restoration, shield of faith (+2), darkvision, and cat's grace
- Arcane scrolls of summon monster II and burning hands
- Universal solvent
- +1 shock scimitar
- Staff of defense
- 3 gems worth 50 gp each
- 3 gems worth 100 gp each
- 2 gems worth 500 gp each
- 2 gems worth 1,000 gp each
- 7 art objects, worth an average value of 1,540 gp each

EARTH CREATURES

The following creatures have the outsider (earth) type, or the earth subtype, and can be used to add additional encounters.

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY

Blue dragon, copper dragon, earth elemental, earth mephit, gargoyle, salt mephit, shaitan, xorn

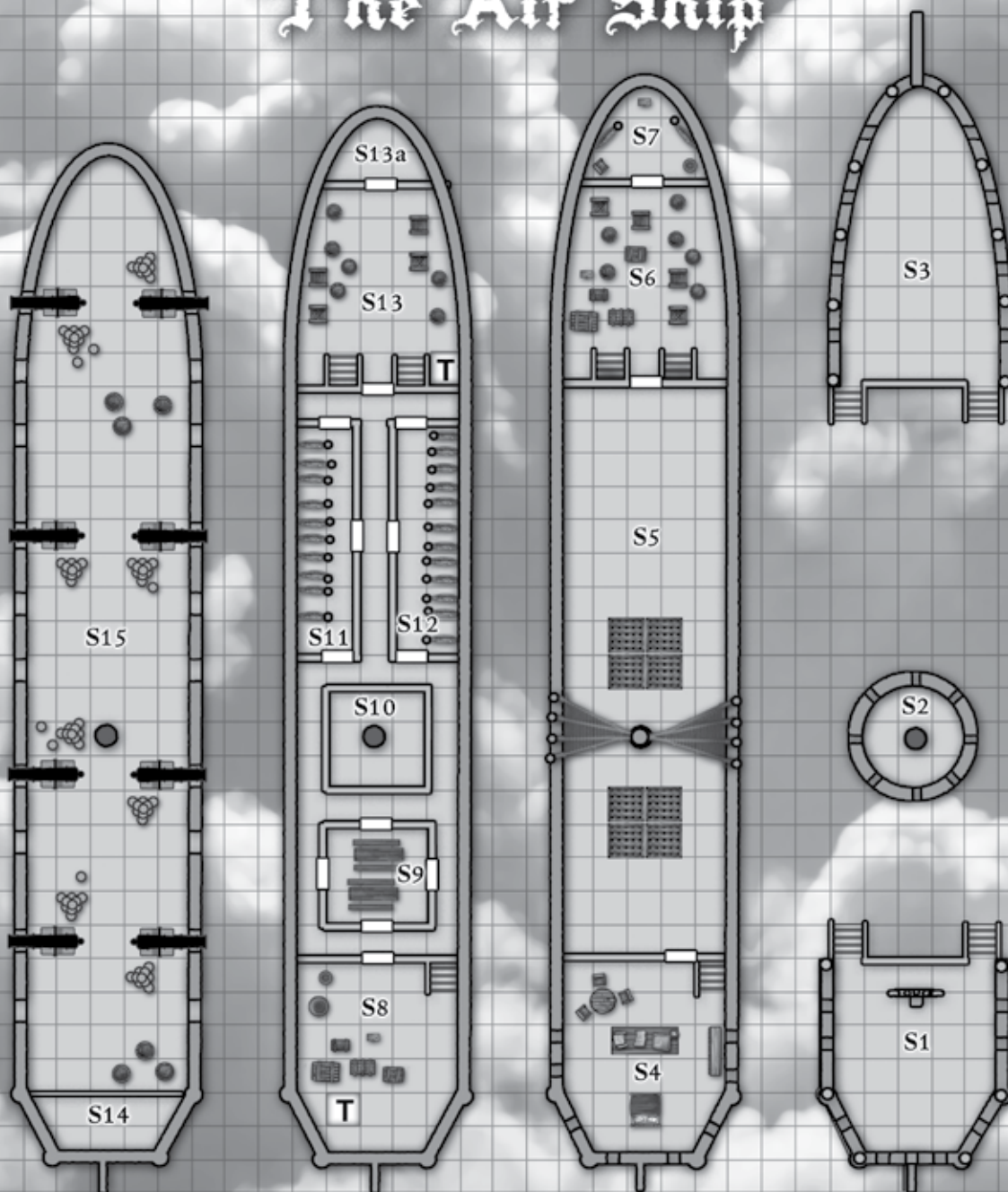
PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY II

Crysmal, crystal dragon, forest drake, magma elemental, mud elemental, pech, rock troll, sandman, thoqqua

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY III

Carnivorous crystal, desert drake, forest dragon, Guecubu, Jinushigami, rift drake, thunder behemoth

The Air Ship



ONE SQUARE = 10 FEET

SCENE IV: ELEMENTAL PLANE OF AIR

The huge sapphire fragment that Leander d'Arstond tucked away on the Elemental Plane of Air currently adorns the big wheel of Captain Julian Rascal's magical airship, *The Skydragon*. Captain Rascal is the most level-headed — and friendly — of the gem owners. Characters looking to use their wily charms instead of their steel and spells will find Captain Rascal a suitable encounter. Convincing the good captain to surrender his prized accoutrement, however, will not be easy.

Whether the players opt to attack or negotiate, their time on the airship is interrupted by a marauding band of demons, intent on capturing the airship and enslaving all aboard — including the PCs. If the characters opted to attack Captain Rascal and his band, this turns into a chaotic three-way melee. On the other hand, if the PCs approached the captain as friends and they assist in repelling the attacking force, he'll thank them by turning over the gem.

PLANAR TRAITS

- **Air-Dominant** Consisting mostly of open space, planes with this trait have just a few bits of floating stone or other solid matter. They usually have a breathable atmosphere, though such a plane may include clouds of acidic or toxic gas. Creatures of the earth subtype are uncomfortable on air-dominant planes because they have little or no natural earth to connect with. They take no actual damage, however.
- **Enhanced Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the air descriptor or that use, manipulate, or create air (including those of the Air domain and the elemental [air] bloodline) are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic** Spells and spell-like abilities with the earth descriptor or that use or create earth (including those of the Earth domain, spell-like abilities of the elemental [earth] bloodline, and spells that summon earth elementals or outsiders with the earth subtype) are impeded.
- Subjective Directional Gravity

PROTECTIONS

The Elemental Plane of Air is the most hospitable of the four elemental planes. A creature native to the Material Plane can survive on the Elemental Plane of Air without any special protections. The ability to fly, whether natural or from magic, makes movement on the plane a little easier, but isn't entirely necessary. Characters may want to find a way to boost their Wisdom score, so as to take better advantage of the subjective directional gravity. The ability to hit the DC 16 check consistently is crucial to fluid movement.



THE SKYDRAGON

Aura strong abjuration, conjuration, evocation; CL 20th

Slot none; Price 400,000; Weight 250 tons

DESCRIPTION

This magnificent vessel uses magic to "sail" the air as a standard sailing ship uses wind to sail the oceans. Designed to be operated by a crew of 75–100, the Skydragon has many features that set it apart from other airships.

Foremost among those differences is the ship's power source. Trapped within a room in the center of the ship are two elementals — one fire, the other water. The two elementals are in constant combat with one another, producing steam and arcane energy which the ship then uses to power the sails. Indeed, while most ships of this size are barques (a ship with 3 or more masts and complex rigging systems), the Skydragon sports a single mast. This power source gives the Skydragon a maximum speed of 15 knots.

All aboard the Skydragon, and within 20 feet of the ship in all directions, are protected as though under the effects of a dimensional anchor spell.

The ship's galley is capable of producing 350 meals per day.

Finally, the ship's brig (see area S13a below) is protected by an antimagic field.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, antimagic field, create food and water, dimensional anchor, gust of wind, summon monster IX; Cost 200,000

THE SKYDRAGON

The Skydragon is the most magnificent airship known to sail the eddies and drafts of the Elemental Plane of Air. One hundred feet wide and a breathtaking 700 feet from prow to stern, she's also one of the largest ships in the sky.

S1: THE POOP DECK AND SHIP'S WHEEL

This large wooden wheel steers *The Skydragon*, as well as controlling her pitch. The sapphire fragment adorns this wheel, embedded in the center. Captain Rascal liked the way the light radiated through the gem's cut, and opted to add it as a decoration to the wheel. A lever to the right of the wheel controls how much steam from the engine room (see S10) powers the magical sails.

Two flights of stairs — one on either side of the deck — lead down to the main deck.

There is a 60% chance Captain Rascal is present here at any given time. There is a 40% chance of his first mate being here, as well as a 40% chance of his navigator being present. In addition, 3–6 (1d4+2) crew members are always present on this deck.

S2: THE CROW'S NEST

At least three crew members are always present here keeping watch. Those standing within the crow's nest receive the benefits of *invisibility* spell as well as a +5 circumstance bonus on Perception checks, courtesy of the ship's magic. Climbing the ropes and rigging to

gain access to the nest requires a DC 10 Climb check — though given the nature of the plane, it's also possible to simply fly up.

S3: FRONT DECK

This large deck surface is usually empty, though when the ship is hauling an especially large load, some containers may be stored here. Generally, one or two crew members mill about up here, swabbing the deck and keeping an eye on things. Five large bitts are here, used to tie the ship up when in dock.

S4: CHART ROOM

Large maps cover the four walls of this room, and an oak table in the center of the room is covered with charts and other maps. Several sextants, compasses, and other navigational tools lie scattered about the table as well.

If the navigator is not on the wheel deck, there is a 30% chance she can be found here. If Captain Rascal is not on the wheel deck, there is a 20% chance he is present here. If the first mate is not present on the wheel deck, there is a 20% chance he's in this room.

A single door leads out to the main deck. The door is typically kept open, though it can be locked and barred from this side to prevent entry if necessary. A flight of stairs leads down to S8: The Captain's Quarters.

Locked Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 20; Disable Device DC 35.

Locked and Barred Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 30; Disable Device DC NA.

S5: MAIN DECK

This large wooden deck bustles with activity constantly. At any given time, 7–12 (1d6+6) crew members are present on this deck, either working or simply enjoying the majestic scenery.

S6: STORAGE

This room is used for storage of food and equipment necessary for the smooth operation of the Skydragon. While the mess hall (see area S9 below) is capable of making food for the crew, Captain Rascal likes to keep some non-perishable food on hand, just in case. First Mate Marcus keeps this room well organized, and mentally maintains a thorough inventory.

A single door leads to the main deck. This door is typically left open, though it can be locked and barred if necessary. Two flights of stairs lead down to S13: Something on the deck below. Another door leads to S7: First Mate's Bunk.

Locked Deck Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 20; Disable Device DC 35.

Locked and Barred Deck Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 30; Disable Device DC NA.

S7: FIRST MATE'S BUNK

This is the living quarters of First Mate Oscar Marcus and Chief Navigator Henrietta Sams. A large bed is bolted to the floor on the port side, covered in luxurious pillows and quilts. A chest of drawers contains halfling-sized simple clothing — mostly linen pants and tunics. A sturdy armoire contains several fancy dresses and a formal suit — again, halfling-sized. Two sturdy footlockers sit on the floor at the foot of the bed. Finally, a large desk sits on the starboard side, under a portal.

Locked Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 20; Disable Device DC 40.

S8: THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

Captain Rascal makes this chamber his home, such as it is. The room's décor is a hodge-podge of styles, mixed and unmatched all around.

A flight of stairs leads down from the chart room, with a locked door blocking access to the room. A door grants the captain access to the mess hall (see S9 below). Captain Rascal splits his living quarters into two distinct areas. The area near the bow of the ship is treated as an office; the captain keeps a desk with a comfortable chair, as well as a small conference table surrounded by a half-dozen chairs.

The aft area of the room serves as the captain's bedroom. Captain Rascal has a large four-poster bed, with gauzy curtains hanging around all sides. An oak armoire and chest of drawers round out the furniture.

A trap door, hidden under a throw rug in the corner of the room, leads down to a secret smuggling chamber (see area S14 below). The door sits flush with the floor, and when unlocked it swings downward.

Several trophies hang from the walls, including the head of a red dragon and silver longsword mounted on a plaque.

Locked Door: hardness 5, 45 hp; break DC 20; Disable Device DC 40.

Hidden and locked Trap Door: hardness 5, 20 hp; break DC 20, Perception DC 20, Disable Device DC 30.

S9: THE MESS HALL

At any given time, this large room contains 10–40 (1d4x10) crew members, generally in a rowdy mood. Numerous long tables and benches occupy the majority of the room. Each corner contains a small contraption that is capable of generating basic food on command. The food produced is generally bland, but nutritious and filling.

If the Skydragon is under attack, the crew members located here are generally the first to arrive at battle stations.

S10: THE POWER ROOM

(EL 13)

The Skydragon draws all its power from this room. Trapped within, kept alive, in part, by the magic of the ship, are two elder elementals: one fire, the other water. The two are in constant conflict, and constant agony. The steam generated by their steady conflict powers the ship.



ELDER WATER ELEMENTAL

CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 152 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Elemental, Water")



ELDER FIRE ELEMENTAL

CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 152 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Elemental, Fire")

This room has no entry points, by design. The walls contain a thin layer of lead, preventing many detection and other spells. Should PCs find a way into this room, the two elementals — enraged and insane from their decades of captivity — immediately attack, relentlessly lashing out.

Should PCs find their way into the room and slay the elementals, the Skydragon loses its source of power, and becomes adrift.

S11 & S12: CREW'S QUARTERS

These two long rooms contain over 80 hammocks strung at all manner of angles. An equal number of chests (locked, DC 20 Disable Device to open) encircle the room. Several tables with sturdy chairs adorn the middle of the room. At any given time 10–30 (1d3x10) crew members are here, either sleeping or just relaxing.

S13: STORAGE

This large room is used for storage of the ship's cargo. Currently, the *Skydragon* is hauling several tons of wheat and barley.

S13A: BRIG

(EL 12)

This chamber is the ship's brig. The entire room, all its walls, and its door are under the effects of an *antimagic field*. The chamber currently houses a valkyrie named Ormagaarda. She arrived on the *Skydragon* intent to claim the soul of Captain Rascal. The captain, recognizing the beautiful warrior, had her thrown in the brig — as much for her protection as anything else. In truth, the valkyrie was correct about Captain Rascal potentially falling in battle, but through confusion and poor timing, arrived about a day before the battle.



VALKYRIE

XP 19,200

hp 168 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary* 3, "Valkyrie")

CR 12

S14: SMUGGLING CHAMBER (EL 16)

Captain Rascal uses this chamber to secretly transport items. Most times, even his first mate doesn't know what's in this chamber (though he does know of its existence, and it's method of entry). Currently, Rascal is using this chamber to smuggle two items for the Sun God. The first is a large crate containing diamonds, intended to be used as material components for life-granting spells. The contents of the crate are valued at about 50,000 gp.

The second "item" being smuggled is far more important to the church. Two astral devas currently occupy the room. This pair of angels is key to breaking a siege at one of the Sun God's temples by the forces of the Abyss, and they hope to be able to make their way across the Elemental Plane of Air undetected.



ASTRAL DEVA (2)

XP 38,400 each

hp 172 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Angel, Astral Deva")

CR 14

S15: LOWER DECK

The lower decks of the ship house the *Skydragon's* biggest defense — eight cannons. Each cannon has a crew of three that is always present, placing a minimum of 24 crew members down here at all times.

Cannon: 6d6 bludgeoning and piercing damage, x4 on a confirmed critical; range increment 100 ft.

THE CREW

The *Skydragon* has a crew of ninety, all loyal to their captain.



CAPTAIN JULIAN RASCAL

CR 14

Suave and handsome, the captain appears to be the sort of person with a persistent grin upon his face. He wears billowy clothing that appears to cover some sort of thin metal armor. A rapier is sheathed at his side.

XP 38,400

Male human rogue 15

CG Medium humanoid (extraplanar, human)

Init +10; Senses Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 17 (+7 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 86 (15d8+15)

Fort +6, Ref +15, Will +6

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *flaming burst rapier* +17/+12/+7 (1d6+2/18–20 plus 1d6 fire), +1 *sickle* +16/+11/+6 (1d6+1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +18 (1d8/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +8d6

Rogue Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th, concentration +16)

3/day—*mage hand*

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 16

Base Atk +11; CMB +17; CMD 28

Feats Acrobatic, Agile Maneuvers, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Persuasive, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +28, Bluff +16, Climb +13, Diplomacy +20, Disable Device +19, Escape Artist +19, Fly +8, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (engineering) +6, Knowledge (local) +9, Linguistics +7, Perception +17, Perform (oratory) +11, Sense Motive +15, Sleight of Hand +21, Stealth +24, Survival +11, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Auran, Common, Elven, 2 more

SQ rogue talents (fast stealth, finesse rogue, ledge walker, minor magic, opportunist, slippery mind, surprise attack), trapfinding +7

Combat Gear wand of lightning bolt (21 charges); **Other Gear** +3 *mithral chain shirt*, +2 *flaming burst rapier*, +1 *sickle*, mwk light crossbow, with 50 bolts, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *headband of alluring charisma* +2



FIRST MATE OSCAR MERCUS

CR 7

The halfling appears smaller than typical. A cap upon his head bears a large colorful plume. A sling staff dangles from his belt.

XP 3,200

Male halfling bard 4/ranger 4

NG Small humanoid (extraplanar, halfling)

Init +4; Senses Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 17, flat-footed 15 (+2 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 size)

hp 60 (8 HD; 4d8+4d10+16)

Fort +7, Ref +13, Will +8; +2 vs. fear, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +2 *halfling sling staff* +11/+6 (1d4+3)

Ranged +2 *halfling sling staff* +14 (1d6+3/x3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 11 rounds/day (countersong,

distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +1), favored enemy (chaotic outsiders +2)

Bard Spells Known (CL 4th; concentration +5)

2nd (1/day)—*blur, cat's grace*

1st (4/day)—*animate rope, comprehend languages, identify, summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*detect magic, light, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, resistance*

Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 1st; concentration +3)

1st—*entangle* (DC 13)

STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 23

Feats Alertness, Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +17 (+13 jump), Bluff +5, Climb +10, Diplomacy +5, Escape Artist +8, Handle Animal +5, Heal +9, Perception +17, Perform (oratory) +12, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +15, Survival +9; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ bardic knowledge +2, versatile performance (oratory), favored terrain (elemental plane of air +2), hunter's bond (companions), track +2, wild empathy +5

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*;

Other Gear masterwork leather armor, +2 *halfling sling staff* with 20 sling stones, *ring of protection* +2



NAVIGATOR HENRIETTA SAMS

CR 7

The beautiful halfling woman dresses in practical but colorful clothing. She has a small dagger on her belt, though it looks to be more for show than use.

XP 3,200

Female halfling diviner 8

CG Small humanoid (extraplanar, halfling)

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

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size)

hp 46 (8d6+16)

Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8; +2 vs. fear

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d3–2/19–20)

Ranged light crossbow +7 (1d6/19–20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

7/day—*diviner's fortune* (+4)

Diviner Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +12)

4th—*arcane eye, confusion* (DC 18), *dimension door, rainbow pattern* (DC 18)

3rd—*arcane sight, dispel magic, haste, hold person* (DC 17), *slow* (DC 17)

2nd—*acid arrow, detect thoughts* (DC 17), *invisibility, see invisibility, touch of idiocy*

1st—*comprehend languages, color spray* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 15), *mage armor, protection from evil, unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand, read magic*

Opposition Schools Evocation, Necromancy

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 19, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

Feats Brew Potion, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [geography]), Spell Focus (divination)

Skills Acrobatics +4 (0 jump), Climb +0, Craft (alchemy) +11, Fly +11,

Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +10, Knowledge (engineering) +10, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +8, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +3, Spellcraft +15;

Racial Modifiers +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +2 Perception

Languages Auran, Common, Draconic, Halfling

SQ arcane bond (hawk), forewarned, scrying adept

Combat Gear *potions of cure light wounds* (2), *wand of identify* (21 charges); **Other Gear** mwk dagger, light crossbow, with 20 bolts, *headband of vast intellect* +2, charts and maps, mwk navigator's tools



HARDEY

XP —

Male hawk familiar

N Tiny animal (extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +2 size)

hp 23 (4 HD)

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities improved evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee talons +9 (1d4–2)

Space 2.5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks deliver touch spells

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 13

Feats Weapon Finesse

Skills Fly +7, Perception +14; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception

Languages empathic link, speak with animals of its kind, speak with master

SQ share spells



CREW MEMBER (90)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Male or female human expert 6

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+3 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 42 each (6d8+12)

Fort +4, **Ref** +3, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +8 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +6 (1d4+3/19–20)

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 11, **Int** 9, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18

Feats Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Climb), Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +15, Heal +4, Knowledge (engineering) +4, Knowledge (geography) +3, Perception +12, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +10, Survival +9

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds, potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, mwk daggers (2), daggers (4), 2d6 gp, 1d6 sp, 3d8 cp

NAUTICAL TERMS

Sailors have a language all their own. When roleplaying any of the crew aboard the *Skydragon*, you can add a degree of verisimilitude by lacing this language into their speech. Here are a few quick terms that you can use to help build the mood a bit.

- **Bitt:** A post mounted on a ship for fastening ropes.
- **Bow:** The front of the ship. Sometimes called the “prow.”
- **Figurehead:** Symbolic image at the head of a traditional sailing ship.
- **Hull:** The shell and framework of the basic flotation-oriented part of the ship.
- **Keel:** The central structure basis of the hull.
- **Mast:** A vertical pole on a ship which supports sails or rigging.
- **Poop Deck:** A high deck on the aft super-structure of a ship.
- **Port:** When facing forward, the left side of the ship.
- **Rigging:** The system of masts and lines on ships to propel the vessel via wind.
- **Starboard:** When facing forward, the right side of the ship.
- **Stern:** Back of the ship.

(Definitions courtesy of Wikipedia and <http://phrontistery.info/nautical.html>)

DEMONS STRIKE!

(EL 20+)

While the PCs are in the vicinity of *The Skydragon* — whether as friends or foes — a powerful band of demons attacks. The demons seek to prevent the delivery of the astral devas currently in the smuggling chamber, and they’d also love to get their hands on the *Skydragon* itself. However, they’ll willingly scuttle the valuable ship if it enables them to acquire the angels.

This is a very tough encounter, whether the PCs initially approach the *Skydragon* as friends or enemies. Detailed round-by-round tactics really aren’t feasible, as so much of what happens depends on your players and how they initially approached this scene, as well as how they react once the demons strike. Some general notes about tactics and goals, however, are provided below.



MARILITH (2)

XP 102,400 each

hp 264 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Demon, Marilith”)

CR 17



GLABREZU (4)

XP 25,600 each

hp 186 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Demon, Glabrezu”)

CR 13



BABAU (4)

XP 2,400 each

hp 73 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Demon, Babau”)

CR 6



SCHIR (8)

XP 1,200 each

hp 37 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, “Demon, Schir”)

CR 4



DRETCH (20)

XP 600 each

hp 18 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, “Demon, Dretch”)

CR 2

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER AS ALLIES

If the PCs approached the *Skydragon* in a friendly manner, they have a chance to aid their new friends to fend off the demon horde. Leave the crew of the ship to handle the dretches and schirs; assume every round that two of the lesser demons and one crew member dies, and narrate the events appropriately. Captain Rascal, First Mate Mercus and Navigator Sams join the PCs in dealing with the stronger demons. Mercus takes advantage of his hunter’s bond ability, granting all crew members and the PCs a +1 favored class bonus against the demons. Sams does her best to support with her spells, though her daily choices aren’t especially effective in the given situation. Rascal, for his part, seeks to flank the most powerful demon possible, looking to skewer the target quickly and move on to another target. If he flanks with a PC, he’ll use his opportunist ability whenever a PC strikes their shared target.

When running this encounter, it’s important to keep a few things in mind. First and foremost, the PCs need to be the heroes at the end of the day. Narrate events during the chaos to make this clear. For example, even if Rascal deals a deadly round of sneak attacks, give the PC a round to act. Then narrate the events so the PC gets the killing blow, all the while making it clear that without the aid of the PC, Rascal wouldn’t have been effective.

Second, it’s important that the players act as they desire. Even though the crew members can likely mop up the lesser demons, if a PC wishes to wade into the middle — perhaps a fighter with Great Cleave sees an opportunity — then let her do so, and make her actions especially heroic. For example, before the PC arrives the band of demons manages to surround a crew member, and it’s clear that without the PC’s aid, that crew member would’ve been ripped to shreds.

Finally, keep the chaos factor high. This combat involves a lot of moving parts — demons, PCs, named NPCs, and anonymous crew members. Find opportunities to make the players feel slightly overwhelmed, if only for a round or two. Let the battle move back and forth; even though you’ll want to eliminate two lesser demons and a crew member every round, that doesn’t mean you use those exact numbers every round. Maybe in the first round, two crew members die — perhaps two of the three spotters in the crow’s nest — while the demons suffer no losses. The next round, however, the crew rallies and they take down six demons while only suffering minor wounds. Move the action back and forth, keeping the groups moving and the combat flowing. Focus dice rolls where they truly matter, with the named NPCs and the powerful demons.

In this scenario, if the PCs and crew manage to drive off the demonic forces, Captain Rascal is extremely grateful to the PCs, and agrees to pry the sapphire fragment out of the wheel and hand it over to the heroes. In addition, even if the PCs are unaware of the valuable cargo, the Sun God takes a special interest in them and their quest. During the final encounter with d’Arstond, the Sun God grants each PC one of the following boons. During that encounter, allow the PC to select the boon — but keep this list secret until that battle starts.

- Spell Resistance 100 for 1 round
- +20 caster level to overcome SR for 1 round
- The ability to make a full attack as a standard action instead of full-round action once
- Reroll one saving throw as an immediate action
- +20 deflection bonus to AC and CMD for 1 round
- +20 to a single melee or ranged attack. This can be part of a full attack, but only applies to a single attack in the sequence.
- +50 circumstance bonus to any single skill check.

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER AS FOES

If the PCs decide their best way to acquire the sapphire fragment is to attack the *Skydragon*, then things will get more chaotic than they ever anticipated. As the PCs attack, crew members should flood out from the lower levels, ready to take on the aggressors. Three rounds after combat with the crew starts, the demons arrive. You're now running a three-way combat, with the demons on one side of the triangle the ship's crew on the second, and the PCs on the third.

As under the "running as allies" scenario, let the crew members and lesser demons pair off and fight one another, with narration of the effects as combat continues. Stick to running the named NPCs and major demons. Mercus grants all the crew his hunter's bond ability, aiding them in their fight against the demons. Captain Rascal seeks any opportunity to flank, and isn't too fussy about who his flanking partner is. For example, if one of the PCs is engaged with a marilith, the good captain slips in and flanks whichever of the pair is easiest to target.

Play up the true chaos only a three-way encounter can provide. Alliances form and break within rounds, and it's truly every man, woman, and demon for themselves. In the end, the best chance for the PCs to gain the fragment is to win the battle. They can attempt to form a pact with the demons, but there is a 65% chance (secret roll) that the demons break the pact and attack the PCs. If the astral devas are captured or slain, the Sun God looks unfavorably upon the PCs. Any cleric or paladin of the Sun God immediately loses all spells and class abilities until she can receive an *atonement* spell (and appropriate quest). In addition, all PCs — including fallen clerics or paladins seeking *atonement* — are unable to benefit from any spells cast by a follower of the Sun God for 30 days. Any such attempt simply fails.

EXPANSION OPTIONS

As the most hospitable of the four elemental planes, it's entirely reasonable to encounter just about anything here. NPCs looking to safely explore another plane very well might choose the Elemental Plane of Air. Flying creatures a-plenty could also make interesting one-off encounters, or whole side plots.

Perhaps after the demon fight, Captain Rascal and most of the crew are dead. It's up to the PCs to see the ship into port and deliver the all-important creatures hiding in the smuggling chamber. In such a scenario, it's quite likely that several of the surviving crew members challenge the PCs' authority to take control of the ship. A potential mutiny needs to be put down before things spiral out of control. How far they have to travel to make the delivery is up to you, but the longer they travel the more likely they are to bumble upon random encounters.

AIR CREATURES

The following creatures have the outsider (air) type or the air subtype, and can be used to add additional encounters.

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY

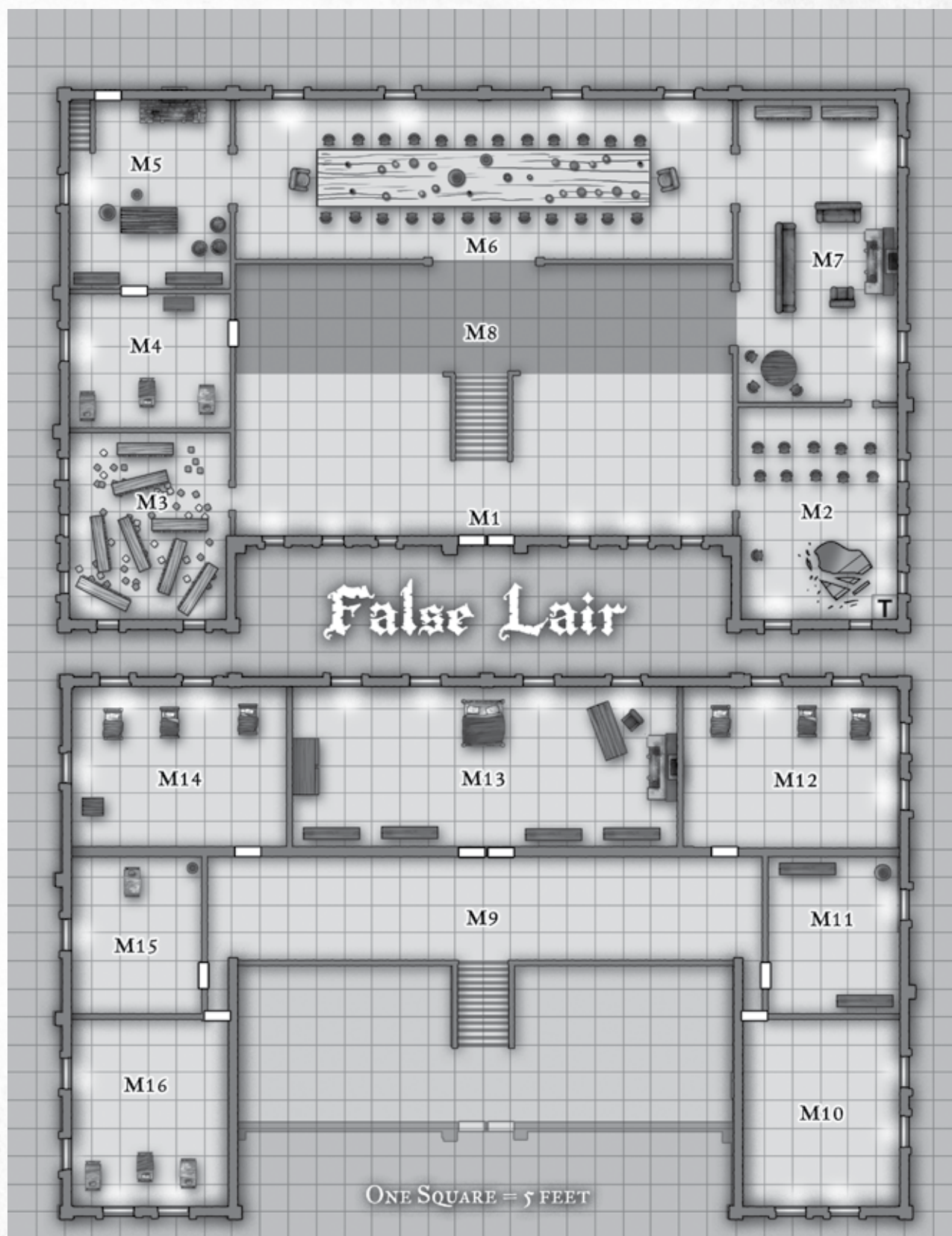
Air elemental, air mephit, djinni, dust mephit, invisible stalker, green dragon, will-o'-wisp

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY II

Belker, cloud dragon, dragon horse, ice elemental, lightning elemental, jabberwock, mihstu, vampiric mist

PATHFINDER ROLEPLAYING GAME BESTIARY III

Kirin, sky dragon, tempest behemoth



ACT II: LICH HUNTING

Once the PCs have captured and destroyed all four fragments, it's time to hunt down the lich. Barring extraordinary effort, all divination magic points the PCs to a dilapidated mansion in a swamp, the former home of a bard who desired to settle the region — back before it was a swamp. This information is a ruse, of course; a plant that d'Arstond took great efforts to build over the centuries. Only by defeating the false lich can the heroes gain access to the *teleportation circle* that leads to the true lair of the lich.

SCENE I: THE FALSE LAIR

This foreboding mansion stuck in the middle of a marshland was once a magnificent manor house of an aging bard intent upon retiring and starting a new community. The land here was lush, and traffic along the road was steady. Leander d'Arstond, shortly after ascending to lichdom, set his sights on the region as an ideal location for his lair. He laid low the manor and the surrounding region, making frequent use of *control weather* until the entire region was flooded. He murdered those left behind after the terrible storms, including the bard — a human named Jameson Bondser.

Jameson was so distraught by the shattering of his dream community that his spirit refused to move on to the afterlife, and he became a powerful ghost haunting his former demesne. d'Arstond found this to be deliciously ironic, and built his main defenses around the ghost. He let word get out that the region was cursed and haunted, and brought in

additional undead minions to protect his new false-lair.

Over the ensuing years, d'Arstond has taken great pleasure in thoroughly tormenting poor Jameson. d'Arstond has destroyed the ghost at least three dozen times, only to cackle madly when the ghost manifests due to its rejuvenation ability. Jameson has rejuvenated so often, in fact, that he now manifests 1d3 minutes after being destroyed, rather than the standard 2d4 days.

Experiencing death so often has driven Jameson thoroughly insane. While he still remains good at heart, his mind is cracked and he furiously fights whoever enters his mansion — intent on one day destroying d'Arstond himself.

When the PCs arrive at the mansion, determine Jameson's current location randomly from any of the available rooms. Once he is aware of the PCs' presence, he moves to attack, perhaps making life more difficult for the PCs as they fight one of d'Arstond's minions. Once PCs destroy Jameson, keep careful track of in-game time. The ghost rejuvenates much faster than PCs have any right to expect, and his reappearance is likely to come as a shock. Allow a DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check to any PC with ranks in the skill to know that sometimes, when a ghost has been tied to a single location for centuries, it rejuvenates much faster.

In addition to Jameson Bondser's spirit as a general defense, d'Arstond also casts *guards and wards* daily on the entire mansion. For convenience, the description of the spell is reproduced in the sidebar. d'Arstond chose to place the *stinking cloud* effect, one just inside the front door (see area M1), the other in the master bedroom (see area M13).

Unless otherwise noted, all windows depicted on the map are broken and all doors leading to rooms are broken — hanging off hinges, swollen from moisture, etc.

EFFECTS OF GUARDS AND WARDS

Fog: Fog fills all corridors, obscuring all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet. A creature within 5 feet has concealment (attacks have a 20% miss chance). Creatures farther away have total concealment (50% miss chance, and the attacker cannot use sight to locate the target). Saving Throw: none. Spell Resistance: no.

Arcane Locks: All doors in the warded area are arcane locked. Saving Throw: none. Spell Resistance: no.

Webs: Webs fill all stairs from top to bottom. These strands are identical with those created by the web spell, except that they regrow in 10 minutes if they are burned or torn away while the guards and wards spell lasts. Saving Throw: Reflex negates; see text for web. Spell Resistance: no.

Confusion: Where there are choices in direction—such as a corridor intersection or side passage—a minor confusion-type effect functions so as to make it 50% probable that intruders believe they are going in the opposite direction from the one they actually chose. This is a mind-affecting effect. Saving Throw: none. Spell Resistance: yes.

Lost Doors: One door per caster level is covered by a silent image to appear as if it were a plain wall. Saving Throw: Will disbelief (if interacted with). Spell Resistance: no.

A stinking cloud in two places. The vapors appear in the places you designate; they return within 10 minutes if dispersed by wind while the guards and wards spell lasts. Saving Throw: Fortitude negates; see text for stinking cloud. Spell Resistance: no.



JAMESON BONDSEER

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male middle-aged human ghost bard 14

CG Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+7 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 178 (14d8+112)

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +10; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic;

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +11 (15d6)

Special Attacks bardic performance 43 rounds/day (swift action, countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, frightening tune, inspire competence +4, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, soothing performance, *suggestion*), corrupting touch, draining touch, haunting melody, malevolence, telekinesis

Bard Spells Known (CL 14th; concentration +21)

5th (3/day)—*greater dispel magic*, *mind fog* (DC 23), *song of discord* (DC 23)

4th (5/day)—*dimension door*, *dominate person* (DC 22), *hold monster* (DC 22), *shout* (DC 21)

3rd (6/day)—*charm monster* (DC 21), *confusion* (DC 21), *crushing despair* (DC 21), *haste*, *summon monster III*

2nd (7/day)—*animal trance* (DC 20), *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 20), *sound burst* (DC 19), *tongues*

1st (7/day)—*grease* (DC 18), *hideous laughter* (DC 19), *identify*, *silent*

image (DC 18), *unseen servant*, *ventriloquism* (DC 18)
0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *lullaby* (DC 18), *prestidigitation*, *summon instrument*

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 28

Feats Alertness, Extra Performance, Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform [sing]), Skill Focus (Perform [string]), Spell Focus (enchantment), Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +9, Fly +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +17, Knowledge (engineering) +17, Knowledge (geography) +17, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (local) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (nobility) +20, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +18, Linguistics +10, Perception +22, Perform (dance) +18, Perform (keyboard instruments) +15, Perform (oratory) +15, Perform (sing) +30, Perform (string) +21, Perform (wind) +18, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +19, Stealth +13;

Racial Modifiers +8 Perception, +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, 6 more

SQ bardic knowledge +7, jack-of-all-trades (use any skill), lore master 2/day, versatile performance (dance, sing, string, wind)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Touch (Su): All ghosts gain this incorporeal touch attack. By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, the ghost inflicts a number of d6s equal to its CR in 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 (DC 24) save halves the damage inflicted. The save DC is Charisma-based

Draining Touch (Su): The ghost gains a touch attack that drains 1d4 points from any one ability score it selects on a hit. On each such successful attack, the ghost heals 5 points of damage to itself. When a ghost makes a draining touch attack, it cannot use its standard ghostly touch attack.

Haunting Melody (Su): The ghost died in the throes of crippling terror. It can sing a haunting melody as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a Will save (DC 24) or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the melody cannot be affected by the same ghost's moan for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Malevolence (Su): The ghost's jealousy of the living is particularly potent. 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 (caster level 14th), 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 24). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Rejuvenation (Su): In most cases, it's difficult to destroy a ghost through simple combat: the "destroyed" spirit restores itself in 1d3 minutes. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. The only way to permanently destroy a ghost is to determine the reason for its existence and set right whatever prevents it from resting in peace. The only way to lay Jameson Bondser to rest is to recover his remains — kept safe in d'Arstond's true lair and provide him a proper burial on his property.

Telekinesis (Su): The ghost's death involved great physical trauma. The ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds (caster level 14th).

M1: MAIN ENTRYWAY

This grand double-door entryway is now derelict and ill-maintained. Both doors hang off their hinges, the lock long ago sundered. A *stinking cloud* effect hangs in the air just inside the door, an effect from

d'Arstond's *guards and wards* spell. Treat the *stinking cloud* as a trap, but do not award XP for overcoming it.



STINKING CLOUD

CR —

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device NA

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** 10 minutes;

Effect spell effect (*stinking cloud*, 20-ft. radius spread, nausea while in cloud plus 1d4+1 rounds after leaving, Fortitude DC 26 negates)

M2: GRAND CHAMBER

Jameson used this room to compose his music as well as to entertain.

The remnants of a baby grand piano litter the floor. Even shattered and decayed, it's obvious the instrument was once a fine specimen. Somebody has gone to the trouble of arranging 10 chairs in two neat rows, as though a concert is to be performed here soon. The chairs look uncomfortable but functional. The remainder of the room is a mess — papers, debris, and other items clutter nearly every inch of the floor.

Anybody with at least one rank in Perform (keyboard instruments) may make a DC 25 check to determine that this piano was once one of finest crafted pianos ever built. A bard gains a +5 on the check, and may make the check unskilled. The instrument is beyond manual repair, though magic could certainly restore it.

Searching through the rubble of the room turns up a few interesting things. Scores of pages of sheet music lie strewn about the room. Any PC with at least one rank in a musical-themed Perform skill can make a DC 30 check to piece together that many of the pages are part of the same piece of music. Jameson was working on an opera about his adventuring days when d'Arstond murdered him. Much of that music is lost to the elements, though a PC who goes to the trouble of gathering the fragments discovers what surely would have been a masterpiece.

Two books in the room have somehow managed to avoid destruction, and each can be found if the PCs searching the room succeed on a DC 30 Perception check. The first book contains handwritten music and lyrics, mostly to bawdy bar songs. The book belongs to Jameson during his adventuring days, and he recorded any songs he heard during his travels that struck his fancy. The second book has a worn leather cover with a title of, "Influencing Crowds with Music." This book is actually a *tome of leadership and influence* +3. Jameson had plans to read this book, but kept putting it off. Now it sits, buried here in his grand chamber.

In addition to the books, several broken musical instruments — other than the piano — can be found here. With a half-hour of time and a DC 20 Perception check, characters can find the remnants of a masterwork viola and a masterwork oboe. Both can be repaired with spells such as *make whole*.

Finally, d'Arstond has left a "present" for those who seek him. Behind the husk of the piano, barely hidden under a moldy throw pillow is a *symbol of pain*. The Perception and Disable Device DCs are 30. The saving throw DC is 28.

M3: STUDY

Jameson used this room as his sitting room. It contained a comfortable sofa and large, overstuffed sitting chair, and a large number of books. The entire room is trashed now, though, the result of vandals. Nothing of value or interest is in this room.

M4: SERVANT'S QUARTERS

(EL 11)

This room was where Jameson's three servants — a male and two female humans — lived when not working. Now, those servants are undead who serve d'Arstond.

Based on the clues quickly observable, this room was probably some sort of living quarter. Three simple beds and two sturdy but simple armoires fill most of the room. The shadows in this room seem to dance and flicker with a life of their own.

SETUP

The former servants are now three greater shadows. They mostly stick to this room, but will pursue victims elsewhere in the mansion if given the chance.



GREATER SHADOW (3)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 58 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Shadow, Greater")

ACTION

Given their level, the PCs likely have little trouble with this encounter. The shadows prefer to attack from cover, remaining hidden within a solid object such as the wall or floor whenever possible. As they are tied to the location, they fight to the death.

M5: KITCHEN

This room was the kitchen. Any foodstuffs, obviously, have long ago rotted. Cabinets are ripped from the walls, crates lie smashed on the floor, and rusted pots, pans, and utensils litter the room. A DC 15 Perception check made to search the room turns up a cleaver that, when cleaned and repaired, could be used as a masterwork handaxe.

A flight of stairs leads down to what was a combination root and wine cellar. Nothing of value remains, however.

M6: DINING ROOM

(EL 13)

Leander d'Arstond has a fragment of his sense of humor left. What he's done with the dining room is the result.

Faint chamber music fills the room. A large oak table dominates the center of the room. Twenty-four chairs — 12 to a side — flank the table, with one additional chair at each end. Rotting, putrid food covers the table, the smell detectable even from your location. The table is occupied by undead humans, who seem to be consuming the food and engaging in "conversation" — actually just grunts and gestures. All are dressed in silk tuxedos and elaborate gowns.

SETUP

The 24 seats along the long side of the table are each filled with a human zombie. At each head of the table is an advanced wight. The music, food, and stench come from a *programmed image* cast by d'Arstond to activate whenever a living creature comes within 25 feet of the dining room table.



ADVANCED WIGHT (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, "Wight," *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Advanced simple template")

LE Medium undead

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 152 each (16d8+80)

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +13

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; Immune undead traits

Weaknesses resurrection vulnerability

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +16 (1d4+4/19–20 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks create spawn, energy drain (1 level, DC 22)

STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 16, Con —, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 19

Base Atk +12; CMB +15; CMD 29

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Climb +11, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +28, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +30; Racial Modifiers +8 Stealth

Languages Common, Elven, Ignan

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Create Spawn (Su) Any humanoid creature that is slain by a wight becomes a wight itself in only 1d4 rounds. Spawn so created are less powerful than typical wights, and suffer a –2 penalty on all d20 rolls and checks, as well as –2 hp per HD. Spawn are under the command of the wight that created them and remain enslaved until its death, at which point they lose their spawn penalties and become full-fledged and free-willed wights. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Resurrection Vulnerability (Su) A *raise dead* or similar spell cast on a wight destroys it (Will negates). Using the spell in this way does not require a material component.



ZOMBIE (24)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 12 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Zombie")

ACTION

For five rounds after the illusion activates, the zombies remain seated and consume their "meal" regardless of anything else that happens. D'Arnstod finds this idea terribly amusing. Any zombies remaining after the five rounds rise in unison from their seats and attack the nearest PC.

The wights, on the other hand, rise as soon as they become aware of the PCs' presence. They work in tandem whenever possible, hoping to rip hunks of delicious — and real! — flesh from a victim, to sate their eternal hunger.

M7: LOUNGE

Jameson used this room to entertain guests after a meal. The room contains a large fireplace, long cold. The once comfortable sofas and chairs in the room now molder, broken long ago and left here to rot. Bookcases and tables lie smashed, with books ripped apart and scattered about the room.

M8: FOYER AND OPEN FLOOR (EL 5 [SEE TEXT])

Jameson designed his mansion to have this large open area to serve as a dance floor and general reception area.

This grand foyer must have been marvelous when the building was intact. Now, the wood floors and plaster walls are rotted and pocked with rotted or damage areas. The stairs leading up to the second floor balcony are choked full of spider webs. The area by the door is a full two stories high. The room continues under the balcony and second floor, with several doors and archways leading off throughout the mansion.

The webs on the stairs are an effect from the *guards and wards* spell. Remember that if the PCs burn them, they return 10 minutes later. Dispelling the webs leaves the other effects of *guards and wards* functioning as normal.

This area has no planned encounters, though it's very likely that encounters from other areas overflow into this room. Before you run the adventure, randomly choose 3 different squares in this area; the floorboards in each of those areas are rotted and collapse if more than 15 pounds is applied. Treat each of these as a trap, with the following stat block.



COLLAPSING FLOOR TRAP

CR 3

Type mechanical; Perception DC 20; Disable Device NA (though avoidable if known)

EFFECTS

Trigger location; Reset none

Effect trip attack (CMB +9) plus if trip successful become stuck in place for 1d2 rounds

Odds are, the PCs won't have much trouble with these traps. However, be sure to play it up a bit. Describe the groaning of the floor as they move around, focus in on the sound of the wood snapping when the trigger the trap, allow them to see termites here and there, and so on. With a bit of narrative license, this very simple room could leave them paranoid and afraid to move!

M9: HALLWAY

In life, Jameson loved standing up here and watching the activity below whenever he hosted a party.

A thick fog fills the hallway, limiting sight to only a few feet in front of you. In that short distance, you can see that the railing that used to protect those in the balcony from falling to the foyer below is mostly gone — destroyed by vandals or monsters. Splinters of wood litter the floor. You think you hear a mixture of mad cackling and a baby crying, but it's hard to be sure.

The fog is an effect of the *guards and wards* spell. Remember that it limits all vision, including darkvision, beyond five feet.

The crying heard as players ascend the stairs is one of the *magic mouth* effects from *guards and wards*. A DC 25 Perception check allows a PC to determine the sound is coming from the nursery (see are M10 below). The cackling is real, coming from the master bedroom (see area M13 below).

M10: NURSERY (EL 15)

This room was the mansion's nursery, and Jameson's three young children all lived in this room before d'Arstond arrived. Actually, they still live in this room — just as murderous undead now.

As you enter the room, it's clear that this room was once a nursery. Three cribs of various sizes are scattered around the room — now broken and unusable. A porcelain doll, pristine and seemingly well-maintained, sits on one of the tattered mattresses.

SETUP

D'Arstond took exceptional glee at the prospect of killing Jameson's three young children in front of the distraught bard. The lich never expected the children, filled with fear and negative energy, would rise as blood urchins. But he quickly adjusted. He places a *magic mouth* in this room to draw hearty (or foolish) adventurers here, so that his "children" may feed on their life energy.

Three blood urchins live in this room. They never leave, instead wailing as though in pain if anybody flees the room.



BLOOD URCHIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

CE Small undead

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 19, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +5 natural, +5 profane, +1 size) hp 152 each (16d8+80)

Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +11

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, DR 5/magic and silver; Immune cold, undead traits; SR 23

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +16 (1d3–2 plus energy drain), bite +16 (1d4–2/19–20 plus energy drain)

Special Attacks child's lament, energy drain (2 levels, DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 6, Dex 17, Con —, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 21

Base Atk +12; CMB +14; CMD 27

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Stealth), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +7, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +11, Perception +20, Sense Motive +16, Stealth +28

Languages Common

SQ profane shield

ECOLOGY

Environment urban

Organization solitary, pair, flock (3-6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Child's Lament (Su) Whenever a blood urchin takes physical damage, it cries out in pain. The sounds made sound exactly like a real child crying. Any living creature within 30 feet capable of hearing the blood urchin must make a Will save (DC 23) or become shaken for 1 round. Child's lament is a sonic mind-affecting ability, but is not a fear effect (unlike most other abilities that inflict the shaken condition). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Profane Shield (Su) When created, a blood urchin is infused with powerful necromantic forces. It adds its Charisma bonus (minimum +1) to its armor class as a profane bonus.

ACTION

The blood urchins attack relentlessly, seeking to feed on the life energy of any foolish enough to come into this room. As they attack, they babble phrases such as, "Why won't daddy feed us?" "I'm not tired!" and "I'm lonely! Wanna play?"

DEVELOPMENT

This is the one room in the mansion that Jameson will not enter — at least, not as long as his children remain animated as undead abominations. Should the heroes defeat all three blood urchins, Jameson immediately appears before them, sane and lucid. He thanks them for freeing the spirits of his children, and implores them to slaughter Leander d'Arstond so that he may join them for eternity. Then he once again goes insane and attacks the PCs.

In one of the cribs is a tiny porcelain doll. The doll has minimal value, maybe 5 gp. Should a PC take it, however, Jameson relentlessly focuses on that PC whenever he spawns. He has an innate ability to know which PC has the doll, even if it's stored in an extradimensional space such as a *bag of holding*.

M11: NANNY'S ROOM

This room was originally intended to house the children's nanny. Now it's simply full of debris. If the PCs are willing to spend 15 minutes searching the room, a DC 20 Perception check locates an arcane scroll jammed into a gap between two floor boards under a moldering throw rug. The scroll contains *dream*, *nightmare* and *song of discord*.

M12: GUEST BED CHAMBER

(EL 12)

Originally designed as a guest bedroom, this large room now contains four mohrgs. Unlike many of the undead here, d'Arstond controls these mohrgs. They're under strict orders not to leave this room.

A terrible stench fills the air in what was clearly once a bedroom. The remnants of three beds remain, and an oak chest of drawers in the corner seems to have weathered the test of time (and the undead in the mansion). A fireplace, long cold, sits against the far wall.

SETUP

The mohrgs are poised to attack as soon as the door opens.



MOHRG (4)

XP 4,800 each

hp 91 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Mohrg")

CR 8

ACTION

The mohrgs all look to strike in the surprise round, as soon as the door opens. They pair off, with each group focusing on one victim. They've had plenty of time to refine their tactics; each readies an action to strike when the other does, and they use Spring Attack effectively to gain a flanking bonus and move away without staying in range of melee combat. (Note, this sort of coordinated strike isn't normally allowed within the rules; bend 'em a bit here.)

TREASURE

The oak chest of drawers is worth 500 gp, but weighs 75 pounds and is quite bulky. One mohrg wears a platinum chain with a ruby pendant in the shape, ironically, of the Sun God's holy symbol. This necklace once belonged to a pious fighter who was long ago killed by the undead guardians, and is worth 3,500 gp. In addition, PCs who take the pendant to a temple of the Sun God and tell the story of where it was found will receive a reward, depending on the size of the temple visited. This reward is up to the GM. It should be meaningful, but within the means of the temple (free healing and lodging from a small shrine, cold hard coins from a large complex in a major city, etc).

M13: MASTER BEDROOM

(EL 18)

Surprisingly, the false lich in this room has fooled more than one adventuring party, much to d'Arstond's amusement. The current occupant of this room is the third graveknight d'Arstond has employed in this manner. He's also the toughest.

.....|

This room must have been magnificent back before the building was ransacked. Now it reeks of death and decay. An imposing skeletal figure sits upon a shoddy throne, a large diamond embedded at the top. It wears banded mail armor that's very well maintained. A greatsword rests across his lap, and a longbow is slung over his back.

.....|

SETUP

Once the false lich is aware of the PCs' presence, read the following text.

.....|

The skeletal creature points a bony finger your way. "So, the would-be heroes have finally arrived, have they?" His voice is raspy, as though choked with the dust of a thousand years. "You think you can march in here and defeat me, do you? Well, only one way to find out! Defend yourselves!" He then springs up, much more nimble than you would expect, its sword dripping with some unknown liquid.

.....|



FALSE LEANDER D'ARSTOND

CR 18

The skeletal figure wears gleaming mail, and a greatsword dripping with a foul-looking black liquid sits in his bony hand, ready to swing into action. Beyond its armor, the creature wears very little — a few tattered pieces of cloth that were probably once clothing hang from his shoulders.

XP 153,600

Male human graveknight fighter 11/rogue 6 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Graveknight")

NE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +35

Aura sacrilegious aura (30 ft., DC 25),

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 16, flat-footed 29 (+10 armor, +3 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 188 (17 HD; 11d10+6d8+96)

Fort +17, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14; +3 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +3, channel resistance +4, evasion, rejuvenation, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, undead traits; **SR** 29

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 *greatsword* +34/+29/+24 (2d6+24/17–20 plus 4d6 acid) or slam +27 (1d4+17 plus 4d6 acid)

Ranged +2 *composite longbow* +22/+17/+12 (1d8+15/x3 plus 4d6 acid)

Special Attacks channel destruction, devastating blast (10d6 acid, DC 27), sneak attack +3d6, undead mastery (DC 25), weapon training (heavy blades +2, bows +1)

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 41

Feats Ability Focus (devastating blast), Alertness, Bleeding Critical, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword), Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative^B, Improved Sunder, Intimidating Prowess, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Mounted Combat^B, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack^B, Toughness^B, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +20, Intimidate +40, Knowledge (local) +10, Perception +35, Ride +21, Sense Motive +25, Sleight of Hand +15, Stealth +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Intimidate, +8 Perception, +8 Ride

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ armor training 3, phantom mount, rogue talents (bleeding attack +3, fast stealth, surprise attack), ruinous revivification, trapfinding +3

Combat Gear *potions of inflict serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +3 *banded mail*, +3 *greatsword*, +2 *composite longbow*, with 20 arrows, *ring of protection* +3, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +4, *belt of giant strength* +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Channel Destruction (Su): Any weapon a graveknight wields seethes with energy, and deals an additional 1d6 points of damage for every 4 Hit Dice the graveknight has. This additional damage is of the energy type determined by the ruinous revivification special quality.

Devastating Blast (Su): Three times per day, the graveknight may unleash a 30-foot cone of energy as a standard action. This blast deals 2d6 points of damage for every 3 Hit Dice a graveknight has (Reflex for half). This damage is of the energy type determined by the graveknight's ruinous revivification special quality.

Phantom Mount (Su): Once per hour, a graveknight can summon a skeletal horse similar to a *phantom steed*. This mount is more real than a typical *phantom steed*, and can carry one additional rider. The mount's powers are based on the graveknight's total Hit Dice rather than caster level. A graveknight's mount looks distinctive and always appears the same each time it is summoned. If the mount is destroyed, it can be summoned again with full hit points 1 hour later.

Rejuvenation (Su): One day after a graveknight is destroyed, its armor begins to rebuild the undead horror's body. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the armor merely starts the process anew. After this time has elapsed, the graveknight awakens fully healed.

Ruinous Revivification (Su): At the time of its creation, the graveknight chooses one of the following energy types: acid, cold, electricity, or fire. This energy type should be relevant to the graveknight's life or death, defaulting to fire if none are especially appropriate. This energy type influences the effects of several of a graveknight's special abilities.

Sacrilegious Aura (Su): A graveknight constantly exudes an aura of intense evil and negative energy in a 30-foot radius. This aura functions as the spell *desecrate* and uses the graveknight's armor as an altar of sorts to double the effects granted. The graveknight constantly gains the benefits of this effect (including the bonus hit points, as this aura is part of the graveknight's creation). In addition, this miasma of fell energies hinders the channeling of positive energy. Any creature that attempts to summon positive energy in this area — such as through a cleric's channel energy ability, a paladin's lay on hands, or any spell with the healing subtype — must make a concentration check with a DC equal to 10 + 1/2 the graveknight's Hit Dice + the graveknight's Charisma modifier. If the character fails, the effect is expended but does not function.

Undead Mastery (Su): As a standard action, a graveknight can attempt to bend any undead creature within 50 feet to its will. The targeted undead must succeed at a Will save or fall under the graveknight's control. This control is permanent for unintelligent undead; an undead with an Intelligence score is allowed an additional save every day to break free from the graveknight's control. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same graveknight's undead mastery for 24 hours. Leander d'Arstond is immune to this graveknight's undead mastery ability.

The False Leander is compelled to serve d'Arstond until either is permanently destroyed.

ACTION

The False Leander plays up his role. Throughout combat, he taunts the PCs over the fact they were expecting a lich rather than a graveknight.

If False Leander gains a surprise round, he charges the nearest foe and looks to bury a sneak attack with his greatsword through the target's vital organs. During the first full round, he makes use of devastating blast, looking to catch as many PCs as possible in the cone of acid. If the ability was effective, he'll use it again two rounds later, opting to swing his sword in between cones of acid.

When attacking with his greatsword, False Leander makes use of Power Attack, until such time as he determines that doing so hinders his ability to hit his target. If one of the PCs is doing consistent damage, False Leander attempts to sunder that character's weapon. If he somehow gets close enough to a spellcaster, he attempts to feint that PC in order to deny that character her Dexterity bonus to AC — and therefore make her vulnerable to a sneak attack.

DEVELOPMENT

This encounter is a potential turning point, for a few reasons. First and foremost, if the players (and their characters) buy into False Leander's role, they'll potentially leave here after destroying the graveknight. If that happens, d'Arstond takes time to lick his wounds and rebuild his defenses. Assuming PCs found, recovered, and destroyed all the fragments, Leander d'Arstond knows he's severely weakened and so takes appropriate precautions going forward. While he's insane, he's certainly not stupid. Still, he can't help giving in to his death wish, and so after some time he's likely to reach out and taunt the PCs.

Hidden under the throne is a *teleportation circle* that leads down to the true lair. Whenever d'Arstond uses it, False Leander slides the throne back into place. Locating the *teleportation circle* requires a DC 34 Perception check.

If your PCs are completely stuck and you want to throw them a bone, you can have Jameson whisper something cryptic about the circle during one of his encounters with the PCs.

PLAY IT UP!

Take this opportunity to play up The False Lich as the true, final encounter. Any rituals you have at your gaming table related to end-of-adventure battles should be observed. You need to make the battle intense, and let the players think this really is the end. False Leander assumes PCs are smart enough to know he's not a lich — the sword and armor are a giveaway. He hopes to convince them through his taunts, and so it's important that you play it up. Make it worthy of an award!

Be sure to remember to taunt them about "following false leads" to chase down the gems and destroy them. Let them feel they wasted their time on the elemental planes — it'll pay off in the end.

M14: BED CHAMBER (EL 11)

This large bed chamber was another guest room. Now the only guests residing here are a quartet of Totenmaskes, brought here by d'Arstond and left behind a locked door. The creatures are desperate to feed. Once PCs get the door opened, read them the following description.

.....

This room appears to have once been a bed chamber of some sort. The pieces of at least three beds remain here, shattered and unusable. Other furniture pieces are also identifiable — a table, chairs, an armoire — their pieces scattered across the room. Four creatures squat in the corner, their grotesque bodies completely naked, displaying their desiccated flesh for all to see. They rise in unison, chanting, "Food!"

.....

SETUP

Leander d'Arstond captured these totenmaskes and trapped them in this room. They haven't fed in quite some time, and are desperate to eat human flesh and dreams again.

Arcane Locked Wooden Door: Disable Device DC 35.



TOTENMASKE (4)

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Totenmaske")

CR 7

ACTION

The totenmaskes spring forth as soon as the door opens, looking to sink their teeth and claws into any victim — likely whoever stands in the doorway. They fight in a very straightforward manner, attacking whoever is closest. They're intelligent enough to work together under most circumstances, but their hunger drives them to take risks they wouldn't normally, and to set aside strong tactics in exchange for simply burying their teeth and claws into flesh once again.

DEVELOPMENT

Hunger consumes these creatures. Unlike many of the other undead in the mansion, the totenmaskes pursue the PCs outside the room.

TREASURE

Two things of value can be discovered in this room. The easiest to locate is a ring worn by one of the totenmaskes, a *ring of x-ray vision*. The more hidden item requires a PC to search the room and make a DC 25

Perception check. If successful, the PC finds a loose stone in the fireplace that hides a leather pouch — since rotted — that contains 33 pp, a red garnet worth 75 gp, and a black pearl worth 500 gp.

M15: BED CHAMBER (EL 4 [SEE TEXT])

At the time d'Arstond arrived, Jameson's aunt and uncle were residing in this room. The elderly couple had arrived not a week before the disaster to assist their nephew in getting things settled. Like everybody else, they perished and suffered a terrible fate in their death. Their spirits are stuck here in this room, haunting it as poltergeists.

SETUP

While this encounter won't prove to be any challenge at all to the PCs, it should remind them of the terrible things that happened here.



POLTERGEIST (2)

XP 600 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Poltergeist")

CR 2

ACTION

When they first enter the room, each spirit uses its telekinesis ability to fling debris at the PCs. Immediately after, both poltergeists reveal themselves to the PCs, and moan out the word "revenge!"

DEVELOPMENT

Unless Leander d'Arstond is slain permanently, the spirits are bound to this room, and the poltergeists will reform. If PCs are successful in defeating d'Arstond, a week after one of the PCs finds the following note. Either it was slipped under their door at the inn or it happens to be under their table while getting a meal or some other surreptitious method of delivery.

.....

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts. That monster destroyed our family, but you've given us rest and peace. At last, rest and peace. May the light forever watch over you! Sincerely Jarvis and Mabel Bondser.

.....

After the note is delivered, the elder Bondser family members do their part to aid the PCs by providing a bit of luck. For each PC, allow a reroll on the next natural 1 they roll or reroll the next natural 20 rolled by an opponent. When this happens, describe the action as almost certain failure on their part (or success on the part of the opponent), but then... something happens. Allow that PC — and only that PC — to hear a whispered, "Thank you!"

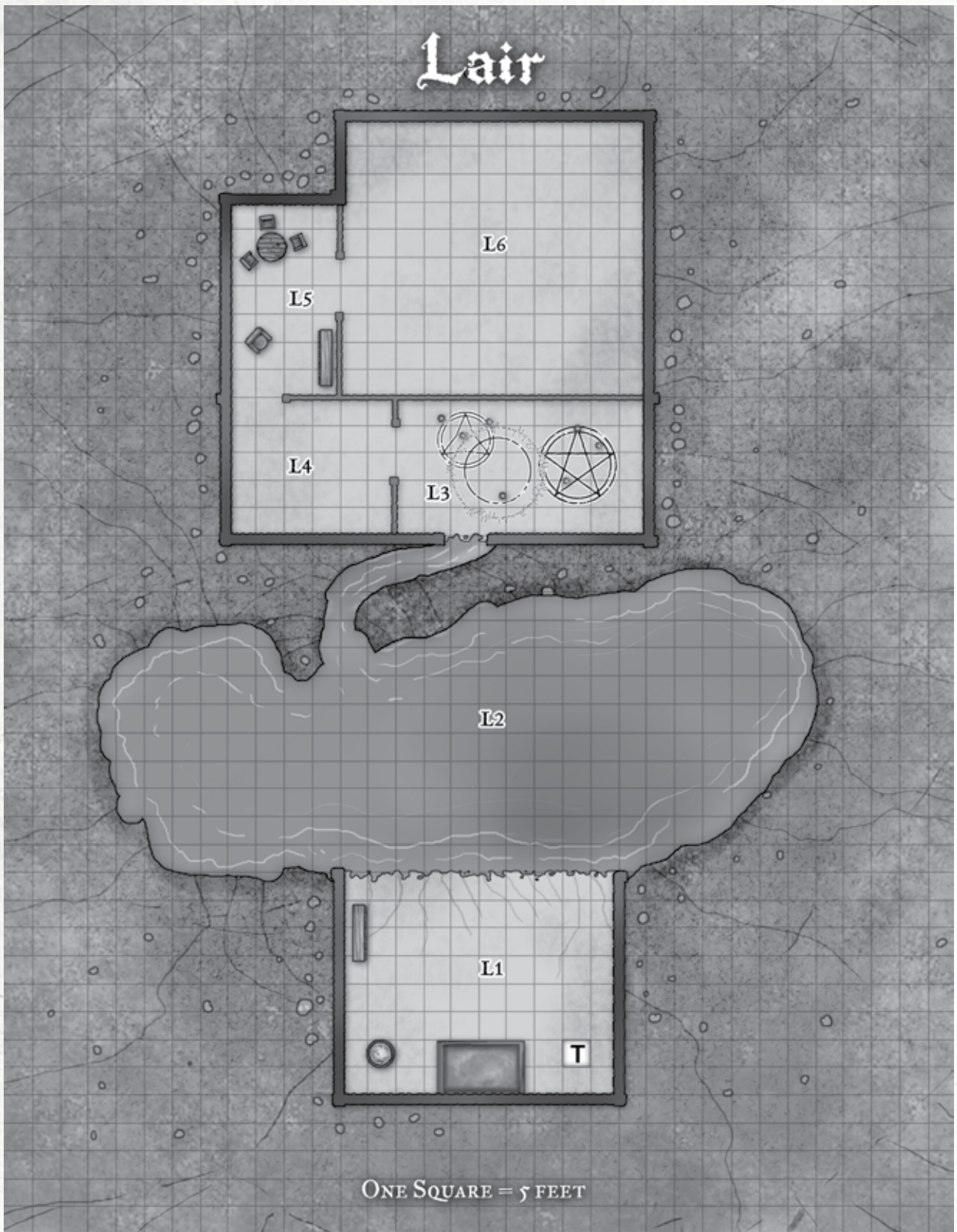
M16: BED CHAMBER

This room was once a bedroom, but is now empty. Feel free to add some flavor — shattered furniture, tattered clothing, etc.

MAKING “OLD” PARCHMENT

You can lend a bit of flavor to the note from the Bonders by actually giving the piece of paper to the PC who finds it. And you can go a step further — you can easily make the paper look like an old piece of parchment. You’ll need a cookie sheet, some pieces of paper, some cold coffee or tea, and a cookie cooling rack.

Take the cooled coffee or tea and pour it onto the cookie sheet. A thin layer is fine. Take a sheet of paper and crumple it into a ball; unfold it, then crumple it again. The idea is put creases, slight tears, and so forth. Once you’ve got wrinkled paper, place it on your cookie sheet. Get it complete wet, and let it steep there for about a minute. The cracks and crevices on the paper should become darker. Carefully remove the wet paper from the cookie sheet and place it on a flat surface you don’t mind getting wet — your kitchen table or a counter top is perfect. Using your thumb, pull at the edges of the paper. The idea is to give it a rough look, as though it’s been frayed over time. Once you’re done that, set it aside on the cooling rack. You can use a hair dryer to speed up the drying process; otherwise, let it sit for about 24 hours. Once it’s dry, you should have a piece of paper that looks old and worn, and can be fed into your printer or used for handwriting a note — such as the one from Jarvis and Mabel!



SCENE II: THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

The only feasible way for PCs to get here is for them to have found and activated the *teleportation circle* in room M13 in the mansion. This is it — the final showdown. Keep the tension high, and don't pull punches. Let the heroes earn their victory the hard way!

The entire lair, other than L1 is protected by a *dimensional anchor* effect. Anybody attempting to use *teleport* and similar effects within the lair is shunted to L1 instead. None of the rooms in this section are lit. Note that this puts d'Arstond's slaves at a disadvantage in combat; the lich frankly doesn't much care. He assumes that the PCs will be bringing light, and if not he simply laughs at the fallibility of the living. All rooms in this area, except L2, are worked stone; the floor, walls, and ceiling are all smooth. The sides and lake bed are rough, unworked stone.

L1: THE WELCOMING PARTY (EL 16)

The *teleportation circle* in the master bedroom (Area M13 of the False Lair) travels to this room.

One moment, you're in what was likely the master bedroom. The next you're in a cavern. Three iron statues all seem to animate at the same time, and focus on you.

SETUP

Guarding this room are two iron golems and a clockwork golem. They attack any creature in this room not accompanied by d'Arstond. The golems will not pursue creatures into the subterranean lake (area L2), nor will they pursue creatures that use the *teleportation circle* to return to the master bedroom.



IRON GOLEM (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 129 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*, "Golem, Iron")



CLOCKWORK GOLEM

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 118 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 2*, "Golem, Clockwork")

ACTION

The first PC through the *teleportation circle* better be good at evading or be able to take a bit of a pounding. The golems move to intercept as soon as the first PC arrives. They fight in a very straight forward manner, seeking to bash in the skull of whatever arrived. If the trio of golems arrive at the first arrival before the second PC comes through, all three continue to beat on that target until the PC is dead. If multiple PCs arrive before the golems intercept, the golems attack the nearest target, and focus on that single target.

L2: THE LAKE (EL 12)

When he originally built his lair, d'Arstond found this underground lake by accident. He quickly decided to take advantage of the defenses it offered, and incorporated it into his plans. While the lake is home to a dangerous undead predator, perhaps the biggest risk to the PCs is the environment itself—between the lack of air and the extremely cold temperature, the lake has claimed more than its fair share of those attempting to assault the lair. Read the following text after the PCs move

a few squares away from the shore.

The water is ice cold! You can't help but notice, however, that you aren't the only thing taking a swim in this subterranean lake.

SETUP

D'Arstond went to great trouble to bring these creatures here.



ZOMBIE MEGALODON (3)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

NE Gargantuan undead (aquatic) (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, "Shark, Dire," *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*, "Zombie, Fast")

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +7 natural, -4 size)

hp 115 each (21d8+21)

Fort +7, Ref +10, Will +12

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +22 (4d10+11), slam +22 (2d8+11)

Space 20 ft.; Reach 20 ft.

Special Attacks quick strikes

STATISTICS

Str 32, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10

Base Atk +15; CMB +30; CMD 42 (can't be tripped)

Feats Toughness^B

Skills Swim +19

SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

The water temperature is naturally around 50 degrees. PCs who are unprotected from cold quickly find themselves suffering damage from the conditions here.

ACTION

The zombies, being the mindless critters they are, attack without care or tactics. They rush in, and seek to sink their extraordinarily large teeth into their victims. They fight remorselessly and without a care for any damage sustained.

Odds are, PCs have no trouble dealing with the zombie sharks. The cold water is another matter, however. Any living creature not protected against cold damage suffers 1d6 damage per round of exposure. Once the creature has lost one-third of its hit points to this damage, hypothermia begins to set in. The creature must make a Fortitude saving throw every round, starting at DC 10 and increasing by 1 every time the save is failed. Each failed saving throw doubles the damage. Note that this check only applies to damage sustained from the cold water. For example, if a PC has 60 hit points when fully healed, he does not need to make the saving throw if he sustains 18 points of damage from the cold and 2 points of damage from the zombies. Only when the total amount of cold damage sustained is equal to or greater than one-third the normal hit point total does the PC need to make saves.

DEVELOPMENT

The exit from the lake requires a bit of maneuvering. PCs must swim downward 150 feet in order to find the tunnel that leads to the shores of L3. This tunnel slowly glides back up until the PCs emerge at about the same level as they started.

L3: READING MATERIAL

(EL 16+)

D'Arstond was kind enough to provide the PCs with a bit of reading material before the final encounter. This large room is laden with symbol spells, making it difficult to navigate across.

This rectangular room emerges from the lake, with an archway just off to the left that leads deeper into the complex. On the far right hand side of the room, you spot a heaping pile of coins and gems. The pile easily fills an area about 15 feet on a side, and you estimate it to stand about 3 feet high.

SETUP

D'Arstond went to great lengths to cover every square of this room with some sort of glyph or symbol. Each time a PC moves, randomly choose from the following:

- 1 *Explosive runes* (level 3)
- 2 *Symbol of death* (level 8)
- 3 *Symbol of fear* (level 6)
- 4 *Symbol of insanity* (level 8)
- 5 *Symbol of pain* (level 5)
- 6 *Symbol of persuasion* (level 6)
- 7 *Symbol of stunning* (level 7)
- 8 *Symbol of weakness* (level 7)
- 9 *Symbol of vulnerability* (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*) (level 9)
- 10 False Symbol (no effect)

For a roll of 1–9 on a d10, consult the rulebooks and apply the appropriate symbol spell to that square. In the case of rolling a 1 on the table, it's important to place some form of text on the square. We recommend avoiding, "I prepared *explosive runes* today" and instead going with less subtle options such as, "Boom!" or "Watch your step!"

In the case of rolling a 10, the PCs see a "symbol" on the floor, but it's inert and has no effect.

The Disable Device DC for each is 25 plus spell level (and the spell level is given for quick reference).

ACTION

Each symbol emblazoned upon the floor is set to trigger whenever it's looked at, read, or passed over, and only trigger for living creatures. The PCs can close their eyes, which avoids the "looked at" or "read" conditions, but still causes trouble when they walk across the room. If PCs opt to close their eyes, apply the blinded condition.

In the far right corner of the room, d'Arstond has placed some bait to encourage PCs to walk around the room as much as possible. The pile of coins is valuable, but not nearly as much as it seems on first glance. At the bottom of the pile is a rock that covers most of the area. Heaped over the rock is a mountain of copper coins (17,983 cp). On top of the copper is gold coins (1,127 gp) and a few handfuls of cheap but very sparkly gems (thirty-seven gems of various colors, each worth 10 gp). D'Arstond hopes that at least one PC can't resist the lure of the gold coin.

L4: WORKROOM

D'Arstond has recently developed a fascination with the creation of golems, of all sorts. This room serves as his workroom for such endeavors.

SETUP

Several work tables are here, with a variety of golems in various states of construction. Three golems are actually complete, though they appear to still have parts missing. As soon as the PCs inspect them, they spring to life and attack.



BRASS GOLEM

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 150 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Golem, Brass")



BONE GOLEM

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 90 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Golem, Bone")



ALCHEMICAL GOLEM

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 96 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary II*, "Golem, Alchemical")

ACTION

As the PCs begin to inspect the room, the golems awaken, and attack the intruders. They do not pursue into the library (unless d'Arstond commands them to do so, obviously), nor do they travel into the glyph room.

None of the golems fights with any semblance of tactics, instead just attacking the nearest foe.

TREASURE

PCs can recover a masterwork alchemist's lab from this room, as well as 10 alchemist's fire, 7 tanglefoot bags, 3 thunderstones, and 27 tindertwigs.

L5: LIBRARY

Some habits break harder than others. Despite his centuries of unlife, d'Arstond still enjoys sitting in a large overstuffed chair next to a fire while reading. As such, even down here in these dank caves, he set up a library with just that. D'Arstond voraciously reads whatever he can get his hands on, and has quite an extensive collection here. The ceiling here is 20 feet high, and the book shelves extend the entire length of it.

DEVELOPMENT

D'Arstond isn't going to just sit in his throne room and allow PCs to rifle through his library. At the first sign of a PC appearing here in the library, d'Arstond will take action by casting an attack spell (see Tactics

in L6 for potential options) and he'll send his Manananggal and slaves to confront the PCs, hoping that allows for a nice barricade between the heroes and himself.

TREASURE

The fireplace is magical, and gives off both light and heat without generating soot. It's worth 10,000 gp if the PCs can get it out of here.

D'Arstond has tens of thousands of books collected here and his main room. Most are simple stories, but collected among them are several that PCs may find interesting. Included among them are books detailing the planes, treatises on religion, theories on magical craft, and so forth. If your PCs have an outstanding plotline that needs resolving, you could have a hint towards that resolution in one of the many old dusty tomes here. Most of the books are worthless, simple 2 sp paperbacks that can be picked up in any small town. But around 100 books or so of the books are valuable, with an average value among them of 400 gp. Finding them, however, requires 2 hours of searching and a DC 25 Appraise check.

L6: THE LAIR

(EL 18+)

The PCs are likely softened up a bit — just the way d'Arstond planned it out in his insane mind. Just how many resources they have left at this point likely determines the outcome of this massive final battle. As soon as d'Arstond confronts the PCs, whether here or in the library, read the following text.

.....

So, heroes, you think you can best me just because you tracked down some baubles on the elemental planes and beat some lackeys? You've not experienced *anything* yet! So be it, a battle to the death. Exactly as nature intended — only the strongest survives!

.....

SETUP

The ceiling in this room is 90 feet high, giving room for d'Arstond and his minions to take flight, if that provides a better tactical advantage.



LEANDER D'ARSTOND

CR 18

The juxtaposition of the human skeleton dressed in the finest silk robes and adorned in expensive fancy jewelry is quite the sight. Its empty eye sockets contain unnatural red lights that flicker and burn with hatred. Resting atop his boney skull is an exquisitely crafted diadem made of platinum, with easily a dozen small gems dangling from delicate chains.

XP 153,600

Male venerable human lich wizard 17

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +32

Aura fear aura (60 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 147 (17d6+85)

Fort +12, Ref +12, Will +18

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, *moment of prescience*, *nondetection*, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee touch +9 (1d8+8 plus paralysis)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (16/day), metamagic mastery

(5/day)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 17th; concentration +30)

9th—*energy drain* (DC 33), *mass suffocation*[†] (DC 33), *weird* (DC 32)

8th—*horrid wilting* (DC 32), *irresistible dance* (DC 31), *moment of prescience*[‡], *polar ray*

7th—*finger of death* (DC 31), *forcecage* (DC 30), *grasping hand*, *insanity* (DC 30), *power word blind*

6th—*disintegrate* (DC 29), *enemy hammer*[†] (DC 29), *flesh to stone* (DC 29), *guards and wards*[‡] (DC 29), *greater dispel magic*, *unwilling shield*[‡] (DC 30)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 28), *cloudkill* (DC 28), *feeblemind* (DC 28), *icy prison*[‡] (DC 28), *wall of force*, *waves of fatigue*

4th—*acid pit*[‡], *bestow curse* (DC 28), *crushing despair* (DC 27), *dimension door*, *enervation* (DC 27), *greater invisibility*, *extended nondetection*^{*}

3rd—*displacement*, *explosive runes*[‡] (DC 26), *fly*, *hold person* (DC 26),

ray of exhaustion (DC 27), *stinking cloud* (DC 26), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 26), *compassionate ally*^{*} (DC 25), *glitterdust* (DC 25), *hideous laughter* (DC 25), *scorching ray*, *touch of idiocy*, *web* (DC 25)

1st—*ear-piercing scream*[‡] (DC 24), *expeditious retreat*, *hydraulic push*[‡],

grease (DC 24), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 25), *ray of sickening*[‡] (DC 25),

silent image (DC 24), *touch of gracelessness*[‡] (DC 24)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

^{*} already cast and included above (where appropriate)

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

[‡] See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Ultimate Magic*

STATISTICS

Str 4, Dex 12, Con —, Int 37, Wis 18, Cha 17

Base Atk +8; CMB +5; CMD 19

Feats Ability Focus (paralysis), Combat Casting, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Persistent Spell[†], Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Appraise +28, Craft (alchemy) +33, Disguise +16, Fly +19, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +26, Knowledge (engineering) +26, Knowledge (geography) +26, Knowledge (history) +28, Knowledge (local) +31, Knowledge (nature) +26, Knowledge (nobility) +26, Knowledge (planes) +33, Knowledge (religion) +33, Linguistics +21, Perception +32, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +33, Stealth +29; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Sylvan, Terran

SQ arcane bond (headband)

Combat Gear *potions of inflict serious wounds* (3); **Other Gear** *ring of protection* +3, *cloak of resistance* +4, *bracers of armor* +6, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *headband of vast intellect* +6, 15,000 gp worth of fine jewelry and silk clothing

^{*} Includes +5 inherent bonus

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

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear Aura (Su): Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at the lich must succeed on a Will save or become frightened. Creatures with 5 HD or more must succeed at a Will save or be shaken for a number of rounds equal to the lich's Hit Dice. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same lich's aura for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Paralyzing Touch (Su): Any living creature a lich hits with its touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude save or be permanently paralyzed. Remove paralysis or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim (see the *bestow curse* spell description, with a DC equal to the lich's save DC). The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead, though a DC 20 Perception check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive.

Rejuvenation (Su): When a lich is destroyed, its phylactery (which is generally hidden by the lich in a safe place far from where it chooses to dwell) immediately begins to rebuild the undead spellcaster's body nearby. This process takes 1d10 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the phylactery merely starts the process anew. After this time passes, the lich awakens fully healed (albeit without any gear it left behind on its old body), usually with a burning need for revenge against those who previously destroyed it.

D'Arstond keeps several slaves and minions, to serve as the proverbial meat shield. In general, he doesn't expect his minions to last long. He just needs them to get in the way for a round or two. His slaves, on the other hand, have the potential to last a while — especially if the PCs are hesitant to apply a lethal beat down to a soldier of the forces of good.

MINIONS



ALLIP (5)

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Allip")

CR 3



MANANANGGAL (4)

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary III*, "Manananggal")

CR 7

SLAVES

Not too long ago, a band of good-aligned heroes stumbled into d'Arstond's lair. Amused at the opportunity this presented, the lich subdued the group rather than killing them and used *dominate person* on all of them. The most powerful of the band managed to fend off the spell's effect, so d'Arstond killed them. The remainder now serves as his slaves and bodyguards. D'Arstond has layered several *dominate person* spells, such that even if they make a saving throw or the spell somehow becomes dispelled, another is in place to keep the do-gooder under the lich's control. Each slave is currently under the effects of *dominate person* three times — so freeing them requires dispelling each.

LIN TAI



MONK WARRIOR

XP 38,400

hp 112 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*, NPC Gallery, "Fighting School: Master" except change alignment to LG)

CR 14

At one point a promising candidate for abbot of his moanstery, Lin Tai felt that his talents could be put to better use in the world abroad, and so conducted his own pilgrimage across the planes, seeking to learn what he could and spread everything that he learned. He met Janina Kerfex and the rest of her adventuring party in a planar nexus overrun with demons, and after assisting them in fighting off the evil outsiders, began to travel with them.

JANINA KERFEX



HOLY WARRIOR

XP 12,800

hp 92 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game GameMastery Guide*, NPC Gallery, "Crusaders: Saint")

CR 11

PREPARED SPELLS AND SPELLBOOKS

Leander d'Arstond has existed for half a millennium. It is entirely reasonable to say that his spellbooks contain nearly every spell in existence. If you're looking for an opportunity to introduce a new, rare spell, then this is a perfect opportunity to slip it in. Be warned, though. Giving a PC wizard a pile of spellbooks and declaring she now has access to any spell she wants is a very powerful boon to a class that's already quite high on the power scale. Giving the character cool new spells is a great reward, so by all means do so. Just be careful not to make it so great that her power level spikes higher than expected.

Don't forget that d'Arstond knows who the PCs are, and chances are — through various divinations — he knows quite a bit about them. He knows they're coming for him, in a final showdown worthy of the greatest bard's tale. Don't be the least bit afraid to tailor his prepared spells to better suit the PCs abilities and defenses. For example, if your players regularly have immunity to fire due to spells, magic items, or abilities then by all means replace scorching ray with something more useful. As long as the information is something that d'Arstond could glean through a divination spell, it's fair game.

The youngest and least beautiful daughter of a noble family, Janina's marriage prospects were not bright, so her family sent her to a temple for a better education. Rather than taking cloistered vows, as her parents had hoped, Janina sought out the opportunity to adventure. The temple, glad to be rid of the troublesome firebrand, gave their blessing immediately. More than her comrade-in-arms Lin Tai, Janina chafes at her servitude to the lich d'Arstond. She struggles against his control daily, and this refusal to give up amuses the him.

ACTION

D'Arstond orders his *dominated* minions to take up defensive positions. He's careful with the orders he gives, knowing that pushing them too far will break the spells that control them. He allows them to use nonlethal means, as long as they ultimately hinder the PCs. How the PCs respond to them is, perhaps, another interesting look into their morality. Let the players make their decision, and react accordingly. The NPCs, for their part, do only nonlethal damage and avoid using their most dangerous abilities.

The manananggal hunger for flesh, and their superior fly speed allows them to quickly close on the PCs. They seek to use their *touch of fatigue* spell-like ability, hoping to weaken the PCs before they reach the lich. Otherwise, they seek to latch onto a PC and drain blood. If they take a lot of damage, they switch tactics and make use of Flyby Attack, biting hunks of flesh from the PC and then flying away to a safe distance.

The allips are instructed to attack any PC that looks like a divine spellcaster, with the hopes of draining away a bit of Wisdom before they're dispatched. Remember that any sane creature within 60 feet must save versus the allip's babble ability. For the purposes of this ability, consider d'Arstond to be insane, but the two NPC slaves to be sane and therefore valid targets.

Leander d'Arstond knows this is his last stand. He longs for release from his unlife, but isn't about to make things easy for the heroes. Choose his spells accordingly (see the Sidebar), and lay into the PCs with everything he has. Start with his 9th levels spells and work down the list, choosing single target and area spells as needed. If the PCs manage to quickly close ground with him, d'Arstond can lay a few single target spells such as *baneful polymorph*, *hold person*, and *irresistible dance* to remove one

or more targets for a while. Another option to remove a single target is his paralyzing touch ability.

Early in combat, d'Arstond tries to avoid catching his slaves in area effect spells, knowing that doing so has the chance to allow them to break free of his control. As the battle wears on — and his desperation level rises — he begins to make use of spells such as *cloudkill* regardless of the location of his minions and slaves.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the PCs manage to dispel or suppress the *dominate person* effects on the minions, they very quickly join the PCs in fighting the lich and his undead minions. In fact, if the PCs are heavily resource depleted, this might be their best tactic. Remember that to dispel the effect completely, PCs must remove three spells from each NPC. Perhaps the best way to release them is to simply cast *protection from evil* or *magic circle against evil*. Both spells will suppress the *dominate person* effect and allow the NPCs to join the PCs.

If the PCs free the minions — either by subduing them, dispelling the *dominate* spells, or suppressing it long enough to take down the lich — they'll have earned powerful allies. Reward them with a boon that's specific to your campaign — a clue to a long-standing mystery, for example. It's likely the NPCs will need to deliver this boon at some point in the near future. PCs should enjoy their moment when the NPCs return, placing them once again in the spotlight. If there is no such boon appropriate to your campaign, instead have the NPCs, and perhaps a higher-up from their temple, deliver an appropriate reward to the heroes. A new good-aligned weapon, coins and gems, stat-boosting tomes, and so forth are all appropriate options. The key is to make it as personalized to the PCs as possible, and tailor it to your campaign.

TREASURE

In addition to his personal gear, Leander d'Arstond has amassed quite a personal fortune, and it's scattered about this room. PCs who take a half-hour to search the room and succeed on a DC 20 Perception check locate the following items:

- An ornately decorated +1 *longsword*. The weapon's hilt and scabbard are encrusted with gems and gold-plated, giving it a value of 20,000 gp.
- A large urn filled with 18,372 gp.
- A small oak box (worth 10 gp), with 3 diamonds inside. Each diamond is worth 5,000 gp.
- A finely crafted music box, featuring a lithe dancer who twirls to the music. This item is worth 8,000 gp.
- An oil painting depicting Leander d'Arstond in life, when he was a young man of about 30 years old. The painting is worth 1,000 gp an art collector, or 2,000 gp if the PCs can track down a long-lost relative of d'Arstond.

PCs who are willing to spend an hour searching and succeed on a DC 25 Perception check find the above items, as well as the following:

- A loose flagstone in the floor opens to reveal a small cache of items. Contained inside on 4 *potions of inflict serious wounds* (labeled as "healing potions"), a +1 *magical beast bane dagger*, a *lesser metamagic rod of extend spell*, and a *horn of Valhalla*.
- A throw rug near the center of the room is actually a *carpet of flying* (10 ft. by 10 ft.).
- 20 gems scattered about the room, each worth 1,000 gp.

In addition, if there's an item you need to give your PCs this is a good place for them to find it.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, the PCs survived. If so, they've likely made several new allies — and even a few enemies, too. Most importantly, they defeated a serious threat to the world, and maybe even beyond. Such an important task does not go unnoticed by the most powerful forces on the side of Good. Give your PCs plenty of time to lick their wounds, and boast appropriately. If you've been looking for a way to hook your PCs into the outer planes, this is a good opportunity. Perhaps a powerful angel, or even a minor deity, took notice of the PCs' accomplishments and summons them to her plane so she can reward them — and give them another near-impossible task to accomplish.

It's possible that Leander d'Arstond was simply a minion of another, more evil — and more powerful — being. Whether he knew it is, at this point, immaterial. PCs are starting to push the upper limits of the level system by this point; it's not unreasonable to continue their plane-hopping ways, perhaps to take down Evil on alternate material planes. Or maybe go to Hell itself to slay a powerful pit fiend.

Or maybe Leander d'Arstond and his minions got the best of the PCs, and there's now a wake of dead bodies. In that case, it's time for a new campaign. The PCs are just the latest in a long line of victims who have succumbed to d'Arstond's magic. New heroes are needed, to rise up and fight off oppression. Perhaps the PCs' jaunt into his very lair invigorated Leander d'Arstond; with new-found zeal, the lich could easily take over kingdoms. His power continues to grow — even researching a method of replacing his missing fragments isn't out of the question. The players could be thrust into the world a decade into the future, where d'Arstond oppresses the people, intent to make sure paladins and priests no longer are able to recruit new ranks. Heroes must rise; do the new PCs have what it takes to accomplish what their predecessors could not?

Want to talk about the **Fractured Phylactery** with other GMs, to devise new plot twists? Or did your PC die at the bony hand of Leander d'Arstond? Like Gaming Paper on Facebook, and join the discussions!



Centuries of unlife do strange things to a lich's mind. Leander d'Arstond is no exception; driven insane by his long unlife and past brushes with destruction, the brilliant wizard challenges do-gooders to hunt him down. D'Arstond is no ordinary lich, however, and those who treat him as such are in for a dangerous surprise.

In order to bring the lich down forever, characters must undertake an extraplanar journey of epic proportions before finally confronting the evil-doer in his lair. Failure is not an option for the characters, as the lich will then continue his evil machinations against the forces of good.

This Gaming Paper Adventure Includes:

- A stand-alone adventure for 4–6 players, levels 15–17.
- 6 maps.
- Numerous illustrations to help immerse you and your players in the adventure.

The *Fractured Phylactery* is an adventure for 15th–17th level characters. Written by John Ling, maps by Robert Lazzaretti, and with stunning artwork by Joel Biske this adventure is compatible with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game*.

