





DemonSulfs The Lowest Left Hand of Nakresh

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Forty-Fingered Nakresh is the simian demon-god of wizards and thieves. His eight hands grasp all there is to take and hold. It is said he reserves his lowest left hand for the boldest and most daring of his thefts. Thus it is that this cult—a pentarchical assemblage of the region's most infamous scoundrels and their followers—revere their god by emulating this behavior. These five crime lords plot the most audacious and spectacular thefts in order to appease their god and outdo the other members of their organization.

NOTATIONS: This text refer to the following products: APG: Advanced Players Guide, DM: Deep Magic, by Kobold Press, MB: Midgard Bestiary for Pathfinder, UC: Ultimate Combat, UE: Ultimate Equipment, UM: Ultimate Magic.

Leaders, Organization, and Goals

The undisputed leaders of the Lower Left Hand of Nakresh are the Five Exalted, the five most devoted and larcenous members of the cult—the five fingers of the hand, as it were. Each has climbed to a position of power and will remain until such time as they are unable to properly bestow adoration upon the name of Nakresh. For the cult, adoration means theft. The bigger and more daring the heist, the greater the respect and admiration gained by the perpetrator. One of the five is chosen every eight years to be the Exalted, highest of the five and the one that may direct the cult in its activities.

On that occasion, the crime lords compete to see who can commit the greatest theft. Their efforts are judged on the value of loot (stolen magic is prized above all else), the infamy of the crime, and the style in which it was committed. Each crime lord is head of an ardent group of followers that carry out their leader's nefarious plots with zeal. These lesser cult members cast secret ballots to determine which of the five becomes the Exalted for the next eight years.

The Exalted Five are fiercely competitive and willing to do whatever necessary to beat their fellows in this contest. Sabotage and double dealing are expected parts of the proceedings. At times, two of the Five may join forces, usually when one who has little chance of winning throws in with another of the Five, expecting favors in return should their aid help achieve a win. The inviolate rule of the contest is that none of the members shall kill another or betray them to the authorities. In fact, should one be captured, then the others are duty-bound to attempt a rescue of their fellow if the possibility exists. When one of the positions of the Five becomes vacant whether due to death, expulsion, or capture without hope of rescue—the other four vote to raise a promising member of the cult to the position.

Note: Due to the quality and expense of their equipment, the leaders of the Lowest Left Hand of Nakresh have a higher CR than standard NPCs.

CR 10

LORD VERMIN

XP 9,600

Male roachling^{MB} sanctified rogue^{UC} 10 NE Small humanoid Init +4 (+6 in urban areas); Senses darkvision

60 ft., tremorsense 10 ft.; Perception +14 (+16 in urban areas)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+ 3 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +1 size) hp 78 (10d8+30)

Fort +6, Ref +11, Will +5; +2 vs. disease, poison Defensive Abilities divine purpose, evasion, improved evasion, trap sense +3; DR 5/piercing or slashing

Weakness light sensitivity

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. Melee +1 rapier +10/+5 (1d4+2/18-20), +1 dagger +10 (1d3+1/19-20), +1 dagger +10 (1d3+1/19-20), +1 dagger +10 (1d3+1/19-20) Ranged mwk hand crossbow +12 (1d3 plus poison/19-20) Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6 Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, concentration +12) 1/day—augury 2/day—ant haul^{APG} 3/day—mage hand TACTICS

Before Combat Lord Vermin uses a charge from his *wand of expeditious retreat* to increase his mobility and attempts to use Stealth to sneak attack opponents at the opening of combat. **During Combat** Lord Vermin prefers to attack with numbers, flanking to gain advantage of his sneak attacks, and to exchange witty banter with the enemy. He will flee at the first sign the odds are turning against him.

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12 Base Atk +7; CMB +7; CMD 26

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Gang Up, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse Skills Acrobatics +17 (+22 to avoid falling damage), Bluff +14, Climb +12, Disable Device +19, Escape Artist +22, Perception +14 (+16 in urban terrain), Sense Motive +14, Sleight of Hand +13, Stealth +23 (+25 in urban terrain), Swim +12, Use Magic Device +14; Racial Modifiers +2 Climb, +2 Stealth Languages Common, Aklo, Undercommon SQ divine epiphany, mutant, rogue talents (esoteric scholar^{UC} 1/day, fast stealth, rope master, terrain mastery: urban), trapfinding +5

Combat Gear +1 *daggers* (3), +1 *rapier*, masterwork hand crossbow and 20 bolts, giant wasp venom (5 doses), charlatan's cape^{UE}, *scrolls of message* (2), *wand of expeditious retreat* (25 charges), *wand of obscuring mist* (25 charges); **Other Gear** boneless leather^{UE}, *bag of holding* (type II), *ring of protection* +2, *rope of climbing*, masterwork thieves' tools, gold signet ring (250 gp)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mutant (Ex): Lord Vermin displays stronger insectile features than his roachling kin and sports an extra pair of functional arms. Only one is a primary hand; the other three are off-hands. The extra hands can be used for other purposes that require free hands.

Lord Vermin stands four feet tall, and his skin and carapace are an oily, tan color. Glittering black eyes sit beneath long antennae and an unusual thick mop of black hair, which he keeps coiffed in fashionable style. He dresses in the fashion of a dilettante nobleman, eschewing all ornamentation except his signet ring and the silver and ebony scabbards for his weapons.

Lord Vermin is the most recent ascendant to the Five. A young and ambitious cult member, he rules in a subterranean lair beneath a large city, leading a contingent of larcenous roachling followers. His initial crimes were perpetrated by invading sites through sewers, moats, cellars, and other such entrances. Boiling up from below, Lord Vermin and his followers would scuttle in and loot whatever they could, disappearing back down the dark holes from whence they came loaded with ill-gotten gain.

When the wealthy became wise to this approach barring sewer grates, sealing tunnels, and placing cellar guards—Lord Vermin switched tactics and came in from above. His crew scaled walls and went in windows and skylights. When this tactic was guarded against, he simply went further afield, finding new targets in foreign cities. If these new targets had ever heard of him it was usually in exaggerated tales and hearsay. They learned soon enough, and Vermin's name became a curse on the lips of the wealthy.

Lord Vermin may be the most ambitious of the Five. His heists are always grand in scale. He is determined to win the next contest and become the Exalted. At 15 years he is nearing middle age, given the short lifespans of his folk. If he misses this opportunity, he may not receive a second. He is determined to succeed.

MASTER KIPRAK

XP 12,800 Male kobold alchemist 11 LE Small humanoid (reptilian) Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10 DEFENSE AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 18 (+ 5 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 size) hp 53 (11d8) Fort +6, Ref +10, Will +3 Defensive Abilities discoveries (lingering spirit, mummification) Immune cold, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep OFFENSE Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (10 min/day) Melee +2 dagger +7/+2 (1d3+1 plus poison)

CR 11

Ranged bomb +11 (6d6+5 fire or cold) or +1 sling +12 (1d3 plus 6 acid, cold or fire) or masterwork blowgun +12 (1 plus poison)

Special Attacks bomb 18/day (6d6+5 fire or cold, DC 18)

Alchemist Extracts Known (CL 11th)

4th—stoneskin

3rd—arcane sight, cure serious wounds, displacement, haste

2nd—alter self, bear's endurance, bull's strength, invisibility, see invisibility

1st—ant haul^{APG}, anticipate peril^{UM}, bomber's eye^{APG}, detect secret doors, expeditious retreat, reduce self TACTICS

Before Combat If forewarned, Master Kaprik takes the time to imbibe his *bear's endurance, bull's strength*, and *bomber's eye* extracts, as well as an appropriate mutagen.

During Combat Master Kaprik prefers to keep his minions between himself and opponents, using his bombs liberally to take out enemies. Enemy spellcasters are usually his first targets.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 9, **Int** 20, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8 **Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18 (22 vs. overrun and trip)

Feats Brew Potion, Extra Bombs^{APG}, Extra Discovery^{APG} (×2), Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Throw Anything

Skills Craft (alchemy) +21, Disable Device +17, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +17, Spellcraft +19, Use Magic Device +13

Languages Common, Kobold, Undercommon SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +5, identify potions), discoveries (frost bomb, precise bombs [5 squares], smoke bomb, tanglefoot bomb, wings), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 110 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning

Combat Gear +2 dagger, +1 sling and 12 alchemist's bullets^{UE} (4 acid, 4 alchemist's fire, 4 liquid ice), masterwork blowgun and 10 darts, giant wasp venom (4 doses), oil of taggit (4 doses), shadow essence (4 doses); Other Gear +2 balanced stanching^{UE} studded leather armor, boots of escape^{UE}, cloak of resistance +3, elixir of truth, formula alembic^{UE}, handy haversack, headband of vast intelligence +4, hybridization funnel^{UE,} insistent doorknocker^{UE}, *ring of protection* +2, alchemy crafting kit, masterwork thieves' tools, portable alchemist's lab, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as the following: 1st-cure light wounds, enlarge self; 2nd—spider climb, undetectable alignment; 3rd—thorn body^{APG}, water breathing; 4th—echolocation^{UM}, vitriolic mist^{UM}), gold signet ring (250 gp)

Standing three and a half feet high, Master Kiprak is an unassuming figure, his form emaciated and thin, wrapped tightly in ashen scales and loosely in the well-tailored but stained robes of an academician. Deep-set, bright eyes show a keen intellect and miss nothing of their surroundings. A belt hangs heavy with pouches and equipment of his trade.

THE LOWEST LEFT HAND OF NAKRESH IN MIDGARD

The cult has its home in Nuria Natal, their main temple hidden within the sprawl of the capitol. An honor guard comprised of some of the best followers of each of the Five defends it against intruders. This includes a group of crackshot gnoll archers, kobolds loaded with alchemical weapons, a cadre of rogue/wizards, a gang of roachling rogues, and a pack of derro. At most times, the main temple is not in regular use, as each of the Five worships in the holdings of their own domain, traveling to Nuria only when they convene for business or high holy days.

The main sanctum of the temple is guarded by a hoard golem (see *The Collected Monsters of Sin*), which lies in wait—a glittering pile enticing interlopers to their doom. Mognyr Dunestalker claims Per-Kush, though he and his gnolls are normally abroad, stalking the caravan lanes, ready to relieve merchants of their goods. Master Kiprak holds sway in Per-Xor. Per-Bastet is normally the home of Zheita the Magicmonger, but recently, she has moved her operations out to the ruins of Per-Set, becoming even more secretive and paranoid concerning her recent plans.

Corremel is where Sister Starkfeather plays out her complex and many-layered cons. Lord Vermin plies his trade in Nuria itself. During the year of the contest, it is not uncommon for the Five to seek plunder outside of their homeland. Lord Vermin goes abroad from Nuria Natal regularly, especially when the authorities are pressing for his capture. His nefarious heists have been reported in Harkesh and the islands of Marea, once as far away as Reth-Saal in the Ruby Despotate. Master Kiprak is a kobold of great intellect and high ethical standards within his alchemical profession. Outside of that profession, however, he is completely immoral and unscrupulous. It was his outrageous acts of larceny to fund his research that attracted the attentions of the Lowest Left Hand.

Master Kiprak is the only member of the Exalted Five to have been brought into their ranks from outside the brotherhood of the cult. For his part, Master Kiprak is happy to play by the cult's rules, and he finds the challenge of the octennial contest stimulating and a fine venue in which to test new alchemical experiments or apparatus.

Kiprak is the most open of the Five, accepting anyone of the proper intelligence, devotion, and criminal demeanor into the ranks of his followers except for loathsome gnomes. Master Kiprak does have some standards.

MOGNYR DUNESTALKER

CR 10

XP 3,200

Male gnoll ranger (trapper^{UM}) 10 NE Medium humanoid (gnoll) Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9 DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+ 6 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 natural) hp 89 (10d10+30) Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +4 Defensive Abilities evasion OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 frost falchion +14/+9 (2d4+5+1d6 cold/×3) **Ranged** +2 distance composite shortbow +13/+13/+8 (1d6+5/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (humans +6, magical beasts +2, animals +2), launch trap, trap 6/day (DC 16; freezing, snare, swarm)

TACTICS

Before Combat Mognyr takes the high ground, if possible, and prepares to barrage enemies with ranged attacks.

During Combat Mognyr stays on the move, peppering opponents with arrows. If unable to keep them at a distance, he draws his falchion and has Kerrshek charge the nearest opponent.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10 **Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

Feats Endurance, Improved Precise Shot, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Ride-By Attack, Shot on the Run

Skills Climb +10, Handle Animal +14, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Perception +9, Ride +19, Stealth +15, Survival +14

Languages Common, Gnoll

SQ camouflage, favored terrain (desert +4, urban +2), hunter's bond (Kerrshek, dire hyena), swift tracker, track +5, wild empathy +10, woodland stride **Combat Gear** +2 distance composite shortbow (+3 Str) and 50 arrows, 5 searing arrows^{UE}, 5 sizzling arrows^{UE}, +1 frost falchion, 6 javelins, potions of cure serious wounds (2), antitoxin (2); **Other Gear** boots of striding and springing, efficient quiver, equestrian belt^{UE}, hat of disguise, ring of ferocious action^{UE}, ring of protection +2, rhino hide, animal harness, exotic military saddle and saddlebags, gold signet ring (250 gp)

Mognyr Dunestalker stands nearly seven feet in height, his lean frame covered in fur the color of wet sand. A thick scar on his muzzle pulls up his lip on the left side, leaving him with a permanent snarl. He is rarely seen without Kerrshek, his hyenadon companion and mount.

Mognyr is the most recent recruit into the ranks of the Five, having been a devoted follower of the cult for many years, plying his trade raiding caravans traveling the deserts between settlements. It was his steady flow of plunder that caught the attention of the leadership and their consideration for filling the vacant seat. Whether Mognyr is able to vie for the position of the Exalted remains to be seen. His success cannot be denied, but while a cunning raider and master of ambush tactics, he tends to pluck at low-hanging fruit, bringing in steady but unremarkable gains.

KERRSHEK

N Large animal

Init +2; Senses low-light vision, scent; Perception +10
DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 51 (6d8+24)

Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3; +4 vs. enchantment spells/effects

Defensive Abilities evasion

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +8 (2d6+6 plus trip)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 2, Wis 13, Cha 6 Base Atk +4; CMB +8; CMD 20 (24 vs. trip) Feats Skill Focus (Perception, Stealth), Toughness Skills Perception +10, Stealth +11; Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth in tall grass

SQ link, share spells, tricks (combat training, fetch, seek, track)

SISTER STARKFEATHER

XP 25,600

Female tengu cleric 13

CN Medium humanoid (tengu)

Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+ 6 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 75 (13d8+13)

Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +11

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. Melee +1 anarchic scimitar +9/+4 (1d6/18-20) and bite +2 (1d3-1) Ranged +2 light crossbow +13 (1d8+2/19-20) Special Attacks channel negative energy 9/day (DC 20, 7d6), hand of the acolyte 8/day (+14 ranged) Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th, concentration +16) 2/day—dispelling touch 8/day—copycat 13 rounds/day—master's illusion (DC 21) Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th, concentration +16) 7th—bold errantry^{DM}, spell turning^D

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6th—heal, holy chance^{DM}, mislead^D

5th—*cure critical wounds, curse of magic negation*^{UC} (DC 20), *false vision*^D, find treasure^{DM}, *flame strike* (DC 20), *symbol of sleep* (DC 20)

4th—baleful conjunction^{DM}, confusion^D (DC 19), cure serious wounds, spell immunity, spell trap^{DM}, spiritual ally^{APG}

3rd—blessing of the mole^{UM}, dispel magic, nondetection^D, prayer, protection from energy, wind wall

2nd—bull's strength, enthrall, find traps, invisibility^D, mantle of trust^{DM} (DC 17), silence (DC 17) 1st—comprehend languages, entropic shield, find traps, identify^D, obscuring mist, remove fear,

sanctuary (DC 16)

0—detect magic, detect poison, light, read magic Domains Magic, Trickery

TACTICS

Before Combat Sister Starkfeather casts *invisibility* to get the drop on her enemies, and *spell turning* for her own safety.

During Combat Sister Starkfeather prefers to keep enemies at a distance and off balance, using her spells to incapacitate or hinder foes while helping her allies. If forced into combat, she casts *spiritual ally*.

STATISTICS

CR 13

Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 17
Base Atk +9; CMB +8; CMD 19
Feats Channel Smite, Combat Casting, Extra Channel, Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Selective Channeling, Spell Penetration
Skills Knowledge (religion) +10, Linguistics +10, Perception +16, Spellcraft +10, Stealth +20; Racial Modifiers +4 Linguistics, +2 Perception, +2 Stealth
Languages Common, Tengu, Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnoll, Gnome, Goblin, Infernal, Orc, Sylvan, Undercommon*

SQ aura

Combat Gear +1 anarchic scimitar, +2 light crossbow and 20 bolts, potion of see invisibility, rod of thunderous force^{UE}, wand of bear's endurance (25 charges), wand of cure serious wounds (25 charges), antitoxin; **Other Gear** +3 glamered spell storing mithral shirt (bestow curse), amulet of natural armor +2, chime of opening, dust of tracelessness, headband of mental prowess +4 (Cha, Wis), muleback cords^{UE}, philter of love, portable hole, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +2, treasure hunter's goggles^{UE},



traveler's any-tool^{UE}, universal solvent (2), platinum holy symbol, platinum signet ring (500 gp)

*In a Midgard campaign, Sister Starkfeather knows the following languages: Trade Tongue, Huginn's Speech, Aklo, Darakhul, Draconic, Dwarvish, Elvish, Enochian, Gnomish, Infernal, Khandirian, Minotaur, Morphoi, Northern Tongue, Nurian, Umbral

Standing five feet, ten inches in height—though her hunched posture makes her seem shorter—Sister Starkfeather's albinism is plainly seen in her pure white plumage, ivory beak, and pinkish-red eyes. She dresses in plain but well-cut clothing of comfortable fit and dark colors that contrast with her pale feathers.

Sister Starkfeather runs her portion of the cult much like a thieves' guild. Those that pay tribute and respect to Nakresh are protected. Thieves and practitioners of magic that venerate the demon-god are left alone. All others are fair game to the tengu and her followers—competent rogues and wizards all—and a healthy tithe of all wealth taken is given to the temple.

Sister Starkfeather is the current Exalted of the Five and has been so for the last 16 years. The only true cleric among a group of lay priests, Sister Starkfeather considers her position a sign of favor from Nakresh for her more ardent devotion. She crafts her plans and executes her thefts with as much zeal as flourish, always leaving a calling card—an ivory holy symbol of Nakresh-to let her victims realize the hand of her profane lord is behind their misfortunes. Sister Starkfeather has no intention of losing the position of the Exalted to any of her fellows. They may vie for the seat after she dies of old age, as far as she is concerned. To this end, she constantly works to turn her compatriots against one another, using off-hand remarks and seemingly innocent reminders of wrongs-real or imagined-to reignite old feuds and start new ones.

ZHEITA THE MAGICMONGER CR 15

XP 51,200

Female derro sorcerer 12

CE Small humanoid (derro)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception –3

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 insight, +2 natural, +1 size) hp 118 (12d6+3d8+60)

Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +19

Defensive Abilities 25% chance to ignore critical hits and sneak attacks, entropic shield, madness; Immune insanity and confusion effects; SR 26 Weakness vulnerability to sunlight

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee *shrieking aklys* +8 (1d6+2) or *luck blade* +11/+6 (1d4+3/19–20)

Ranged *shrieking aklys* +10 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks long limbs (10 ft. reach), sneak attack +1d6

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th, concentration +16)

6th (3/day)—tar pool^{UC} (DC 25) 5th (5/day)—absorb toxicity^{UC}, feeblemind (DC 24),

teleport

4th (7/day)—black tentacles, calcific touch^{APG} (DC 23), confusion (DC 23), greater invisibility

3rd (7/day)—fireball, fly, mad monkeys[™] (DC 20), scattered images*, tongues

2nd (7/day)—alter self, detect thoughts (DC 19), ghoul touch (DC 19), glitterdust (DC 19), scorching ray, see invisibility

1st (7/day)—enlarge person, expeditious retreat, floating disk, grease (DC 18), ray of the eclipse^{DM}, vanish

TACTICS

Before Combat If she has time, Zheita casts improved invisibility on herself before engaging foes.
During Combat Zheita is unpredictable. She either attacks at range with spells like tar pool and black tentacles to take out as many foes as possible, or she moves into combat using her long limbs to deliver touch spells. She may also drive her clockwork siege crab into combat, wreaking havoc with its claws.

^{0—}acid splash, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, message, ray of frost, read magic, slap^{DM}, touch of fatigue (DC 17) Bloodline aberrant

STATISTICS

Str 12, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 5, Cha 24
Base Atk +6; CMB +5; CMD 18
Feats Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Greater Spell Focus (transmutation), Improved Initiative, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (transmutation), Spell Penetration, Weapon Finesse
Skills Fly +12, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Stealth +11, Spellcraft +7, Use Magic Device +14
Languages Common, Aklo

SQ bloodline arcana, poison use

Combat Gear *luck blade* (0 wishes), *shrieking aklys*, clockwork siege crab*, *orb of utter chaos*, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *scroll of polymorph*, *scrolls of stone shape* (2), *wand of meld into stone* (20 charges), blue whinnis poison (2 doses), ghast wretch flask^{UE}; **Other Gear** *bag of holding* (Type II), *bracers of armor* +6, *dusty rose ioun stone*, engineer's workgloves^{UE}, *headband of alluring charisma* +6, *ring of protection* +3, *spectacles of understanding*, gold signet ring (250 gp)

*see the New Materials section

A derro savant, Zheita stands nearly four feet tall. She keeps her white-blonde hair shaved on the right side, where strange glyphs are tattooed in an arch over her ear. Her pale blue skin is covered with self-inflicted scars. She is always garbed in a high-collared robe of spidersilk, tie-dyed in a dizzying mixture of mauve, olive green, and yellow.

Zheita the Magicmonger is obsessive in her pursuit of arcane objects, spells, and components.

FOR MIDGARD CAMPAIGNS

Zheita has received an epiphany this year, the result of either a premonitory dream or research into a rare book of lore, depending on which version of the tale she's telling at the time. This allowed her to uncover an ancient engine of magic from deep underground, a lost artifact from another age. This year Zheita believes the position of the Exalted is certainly hers. None of her peers can match her claims because she plans to steal magic itself. She has discovered a device that can steal ley lines. Whether such a crazy and far-fetched scheme will work remains to be seen. Her heists pull in as many of these things as she can, from potions to more powerful items. With a band of derro at her command, along with a few stray troglodytes and loyal but insane human thralls, she commands enough power and prestige to have a seat with the Five. Her insanity, however, has kept her from claiming the position of the Exalted. Her hauls during the last contest were too esoteric and lacking in monetary value to win her the title. Still, her madness often spawns inspired crimes, and she has the power and resources to accomplish them.

CULT ACTIVITIES AND ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are several methods of introducing the Lowest Left Hand of Nakresh as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be adversaries for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against the growing threat of the cult as its members boldly increase their depredations to please their god and outdo one another.

APL 1-3

- The warehouses of the dock district have suffered a rash of robberies. A nervous merchant who recently brought in a shipment of rare spices and ivory from the south is worried. He hires the PCs as guards to prevent any theft before he can get them sold. In the night, three of Lord Vermin's roachling followers infiltrates the warehouse to sneak past the PCs and make off with whatever they can carry.
- The caravan the PCs were hired to guard on its journey south is attacked by a band of gnolls. If the gnolls threaten to overwhelm the PCs and their allies, have a patrol of soldiers (use stats for the caravan guard in the *Gamemastery Guide*) arrive to aid the party and drive off the attackers. Otherwise, the patrol shows up after the gnolls have been defeated, having noticed them and diverted from their normal patrol to pursue them. This turns out to have been a ruse. While the patrol was diverted, another richer caravan was attacked and robbed by a second band of Mognyr's raiders. If the PCs succeeded in defeating the gnolls, they may be asked to assist in tracking these bandits to their source.

• A rise in thefts of alchemical reagents and equipment has the Alchemists' Guild worried. The PCs are offered a substantial reward to guard a fake shipment of goods on a river barge and kill or capture the thieves responsible for these crimes. The guild leaks information to entice the thieves to attack. A group of kobolds serving Master Kaprik, outfitted with various types of alchemical gear, attacks the barge by night.

APL 4-6

- Sister Starkfeather feels her deity has been slighted by other local religions. Outrage strikes the city in response to a rash of thefts targeting clerics and temples. Clerics have their holy symbols pick-pocketed, the altars of temples are laid bare, poor boxes are emptied in the night. The faithful clamor for justice. The final outrage is when a symbol of Nakresh is painted in white on the main street in the temple district. The PCs are approached by either the local government or representatives of whatever gods they worship and asked to seek out the perpetrators. Several clashes with Sister Starkfeather's loyal cultists can result. (A group of burglars led by a conjurist would be appropriate. See the Gamemastery Guide.) The final result is either Sister Starkfeather herself or her representative approaching them under a flag of truce to resolve the situation. Good negotiation could result in much of the stolen goods being returned in exchange for some token offering to placate Sister Starkfeather. A bad result could lead to the PCs being marked as enemies of the cult of Nakresh, to be targeted at a later date.
- The PCs are hired to watch over the egg of a magical monster until it hatches. This egg is targeted by Zheita the Magicmonger, who sends a group of her followers to steal it. The PCs must contend with a mob of insane cultists (use the stats for the village idiot from the *Gamemastery Guide*) and troglodytes, led by a pair of derro overseers.
- The city watch, unable to keep up with a rash of crimes in the city, suspect spies or corrupted officials are tipping the thieves off to their tactics. They want the PCs to conduct an informal investigation of their ranks to find the problem. The PCs may uncover the doppelganger that has replaced a captain of the guard on behalf of Sister

Starkfeather, a trio of watchmen who have been leaking information to keep hostages taken by Mognyr from being harmed, or both.

APL 7-9

- The year-long contest between the Five to determine who becomes the next Exalted is underway. Master Kaprik has been outshone by Lord Vermin in recent months. He decides to even the odds and plants evidence at one of his own crime scenes to lead the PCs to Lord Vermin's hideaway. The PCs have to work their way through a trapped and guarded maze of subterranean tunnels to reach the crime lord. During his typical battle banter, Vermin may realize he's been set up (or if the PCs are defeated, he may have a chat with survivors). He'll make a deal with the party to send them after Master Kaprik instead, offering them what he can to convince them (such as, avoiding targets the PCs want protected, making small amounts of restitution to victims, or leaving the city to work elsewhere).
- The PCs are hired to go undercover, infiltrating the cult to ascertain their numbers, assets, and locations and reporting their findings. They must somehow make contact and offer their services to one of the Five. This mission is secret, and once ensconced in the cult, they are considered enemies by law enforcement and others that are set against the cult of Nakresh. They will, of course, be required to prove themselves worthy before being initiated into the cult. A test of their abilities will be applied, and they will have to perform a noteworthy theft against a target of their potential patron's choice.
- As part of a task force assigned to defeating the cult, the PCs stumble across information that leads them to the current lair of one of the Five. If the PCs are victorious in their battle against the crime lord, they discover that their target is merely a *simulacrum*. Zheita acquired several scrolls of the spell in a recent theft and made copies of each of the Five to act as decoys. While the PCs have cleared out part of the cult, they have also made themselves known to the Five as enemies, who respond accordingly.

APL 10-12

- Zheita develops a strange romantic obsession for one of the PCs. She showers that PC with gifts stolen ones of course—in an attempt at wooing. Things escalate over time. She closely observes the PC's habits, acting off of whatever clues are given. If the PC shows an enmity toward a particular enemy, Zheita attack said enemy and delivers it, dead or alive, to the PC. A favorite drink or style of dress will be delivered by the barrel or crate. If allowed to further escalate, Zheita determines that it is the other PCs keeping them apart, so she stages a kidnapping to bring the PC to her so they can be alone.
- Master Kaprik is envious of Zheita's clockwork siege crab and wishes a similar vehicle of his own. He enacts a plan to have his own built. First, he steals the plans to the alchemical engine that powers the clockwork siege crab. Then he begins stealing the various materials and components necessary to construct the engine and the vehicle. Finally, Kaprik kidnaps the dwarf engineer responsible for building the crab in order to force him to craft another such vehicle. The crime spree comes to the notice of the PCs somewhere along the way. They must piece together the clues to figure out where Master Kaprik will strike next, or they might end up as the first test subjects of his new clockwork monstrosity.
- Guilds and governments alike have had enough of the depredations of the Lowest Left Hand. An ostentatious reward has been put forward to anyone able to break the power of the cult and either slay the Five or bring them to justice. The PCs must set out to track down the Five in the midst of their crime sprees as part of the contest for the seat of the Exalted. One by one the crime lords either fall or flee, culminating in an invasion of the temple of Nakresh, where any of the Five still at large make a last stand to defend their religion against the interlopers.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Who needs skill when such incredible magical items are around?

LEY LINE ABSORBER/DWEOMER Absorber (Major Artifact)

Aura Strong universal; CL 20th Slot none; Weight 4,000 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This strange and ancient device of bronze appears as a raised platform surmounted by a horseshoe-shaped console of levers, buttons, cranks, and dials. Arcane diagrams and words are etched into the metal in strange glyphs and runes. When activated, panels open in the back of the console, releasing two twisted, branching antennae that rise to either side of the console to a height of 10 feet and crackle with energy.

In the Midgard campaign setting, this device feeds upon and absorbs ley line energy. The operator of the *Ley Line Absorber* is considered as having all ley line feats (see the *Midgard Campaign Setting*) while standing on the platform. When active, the absorber can draw upon the power of any ley line within a mile of its location. Those with the ability to see ley lines actually note them bending toward the location of the absorber, drawn in by its reality-warping powers.

Ley lines may still burn out if overtaxed, but the backlash is absorbed by the device and no ill effects are suffered by its operator. If such backlash occurs, then the device is inoperable for 24 hours until it repairs itself. By manipulating the controls on the console, the operator of the ley line absorber can produce the following effects:

- Once per week, the operator of the *Ley Line Absorber* can draw upon the powers of the machine and use ley line energy to restore personal casting ability. As a full round action, any spent prepared spells or spell slots are restored as if the operator had rested and/or prepared new spells for the day.
- The operator may "trap" a ley line with the absorber, making it inaccessible to anyone but the operator of the artifact. This remains in effect until the operator releases the ley line. To trap or release a ley line is a procedure that takes 10 minutes.

• The operator may teleport him- or herself and the *Ley Line Absorber* to any location by sending them along the flow of energy to the desired destination. This takes a minute of preparation, after which the device and the operator vanish in a white flash of energy. This method of travel is imperfect, and all locations are considered "seen casually" no matter how familiar the operator is with the location. On a "mishap" roll, in addition to the usual effects, the absorber shorts out and cannot be used for 24 hours.

In other settings, this device is known as the *Dweomer Absorber*. When activated, it draws magic from numerous sources within a one-mile radius of its location. While on the platform, the operator casts spells as if his or her caster level were two levels higher and is under the effects of *arcane sight*. Using the displays and sensors of the console, the operator may apply a +10 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge (arcana) and Spellcraft checks. In addition, by manipulating the controls of the console, the operator can produce the following effects:

- By manipulating the flow of arcane energies, the operator can use any one metamagic feat for the next 24 hours. If the operator prepares spells, this feat can be applied the next time she prepares. If a spontaneous caster, the operator may apply this feat as normal.
- The caster can use the absorber to interfere with the manipulation of magical energies. When in effect, any spellcaster, with the exception of the operator, within 500 feet of the absorber must make a concentration check when casting (DC 20 + spell level) or lose the spell.
- Once a year, the operator may draw upon massive amounts of magical energy in the nearby region and concentrate them with the absorber to accomplish amazing wonders. This takes one hour of operation to accomplish. At the end of the hour, the area within a quarter mile of the absorber is affected as if a *mage's disjunction* had been cast. The remaining area out to a mile from the absorber is affected as if by a *greater dispel magic*. The operator may then utilize the magical energies to cast a *wish*. Using the *wish* to produce greater effects than described in the spell is especially dangerous using the absorber, and the GM should feel free to pervert the effects as appropriate.

The presence of the absorber has undesirable effects upon magic in an area up to a one-mile radius. Roll on the following chart to determine what sort of problems are experienced due to the absorber's effects.

Absorber Effects on Nearby Magic

01–10	Magical traps (including <i>glyphs of warding, symbols</i> , and similar spells) have a 50%
	chance of not functioning when triggered.
11-25	Casters find their bonds to magical energies weakened. All casters must make successful
	concentration checks (DC 15 + spell level)
- 10 1	when casting or lose their spells.
26-35	All spells in the area are effectively cast
	at one caster level lower. (1st level casters
	have a 50% chance of spell failure.)
36-50	Magic item function is affected. All wands
	expend two charges per use.
51-65	Magic item function is affected. All
	weapons and armor with pluses function
	as one less than normal (for instance, a
	+2 longsword functions as a +1 longsword;
	+1 weapons or armor are considered
	masterwork and nonmagical).
66-75	Magic item function is affected. All
124.75.2	wondrous items with pluses function as one
1.2.4	less than normal (for instance, an amulet
the second	of natural armor +2 functions as an amulet
C.M.	of natural armor +1; items of +1 power are
	considered nonmagical).
76-85	Spells cast from scrolls have their effects or
	durations halved.
86-00	Potions have their effects or durations
	halved.
0.197	

DESTRUCTION

Midgard Campaign: The *Ley Line Absorber* must be set on a feedback loop while sitting on a titanic ley line, and then be targeted with a *mage's disjunction*. This destroys the artifact and also burns out the ley line causing the caster of the *mage's disjunction*, as well as all other spellcasters within 100 feet, to suffer backlash.

Other Campaigns: The *Dweomer Absorber* must be targeted with a *mage's disjunction*, followed by a *wish*, and then touched with a *sphere of annihilation*.

MONKEY'S PAW OF FORTUNE Aura strength type; CL 8th Slot neck; Price 5,000 gp; Weight —

DESCRIPTION

This preserved monkey's paw hangs on a simple leather thong. The wearer can use its magic to alter his or her fate. Whenever a die roll for an attack, saving throw, skill check, or ability check is failed, the wearer can use one charge from the mo*nkey's paw of fortune* as an immediate action to reroll the die with a +10 luck bonus to the roll. The results of the second roll must be taken. When this ability is used, one of the paw's fingers curls tight to the palm. When all five fingers are curled tightly into a fist, the monkey's paw loses all magical ability.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *divination*; Cost 2,500 gp

SHRIEKING AKLYS

Aura faint necromancy; CL 7th Slot none; Price 9,305 gp; Weight 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This +1 returning aklys has holes drilled through it and makes a keening wail when thrown. The target of the *screaming aklys* must make a successful DC 15 Will save or become shaken for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *doom*, *telekinesis*; **Cost** 4,805 gp

NEW SPELL

Now you see me, now you don't.

SCATTERED IMAGES

School illusion (figment); Level bard 3, magus 3, sorcerer/wizard 3 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S Range personal Target you Duration 1 round/level

When you cast this spell, you create illusory doubles that move when you move but in different directions, distracting and misdirecting your opponents. When *scattered images* is cast, 1d4 images plus one image per three caster levels (maximum eight images total) are created. These images remain in your space, acting as *mirror image*, until you move. When you move, your images also move the same distance, mimicking your movements, sounds, and actions exactly. However, they move in different directions, determined randomly. If a figment encounters a solid object or wall in its path, it changes direction to avoid the obstacle. The figments can be attacked and destroyed in the same manner as *mirror image* figments.

An attacker must be able to see the figments to be fooled. If you are invisible or the attacker is blind, the spell has no effect (although the normal miss chances still apply).

NEW VEHICLE

Clockwork siege crab!

CLOCKWORK SIEGE CRAB

Gargantuan land vehicle

Squares 16 (20 ft. by 20 ft.; 20 ft. high); Cost 50,000 gp DEFENSE AC 6; Hardness 10

hp 320 (159) Base Save +3

OFFENSE

Maximum Speed 60 ft.; Acceleration 20 ft. CMB +4; CMD 14 Ramming Damage 4d8

DESCRIPTION

This massive fabrication of brass, iron, and glass resembles nothing less than a giant crab. The prototype of a dwarf artificer for machines to work the city's river docks, this vehicle was stolen years ago by Zheita on a whim. She now considers it her personal chariot, unwieldy though it may be, and uses it when a large cargo needs to be absconded or when she needs additional offense. It costs 100 gp in alchemical reagents to fuel 1 hour of activity. Creatures in the clockwork siege crab gain either total cover (in the lower deck) or improved cover (on the upper deck). Only the upper deck has view ports, allowing those inside the clockwork siege crab to look out. **Propulsion** alchemical (8 squares of alchemical engines; hardness 8, hp 200)

Driving Check Knowledge (arcana) or Craft (alchemy) +10 to the DC

Forward Facing one side of the square vehicle space

Driving Device two levers used to move the legs

Driving Space a single 5-ft.-by-5-ft. square that contains the two levers that serve as the steam giant's driving device; these levers are located on the second (top) deck of the vehicle

Crew 4

Passengers 4

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Decks 2 The upper deck contains the controls for the driver and arm operators, as well as room for additional passengers. The lower deck allows access to the alchemical engine, where an additional crewman maintains the engine. The lower deck also has cargo space equal to a heavy wagon.

Weapons 2 clockwork pincers located on the arms, used by two operators to attack or to load cargo into the first (bottom) deck of the vehicle; 2 pincers +8 (2d6+15 plus grab; CMB +20)

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