

# THUNDERSCAPE™ THE WORLD OF ADEN



## The Lost Lexicon

Part III of VI - Through Plague and Fire

An adventure for 7th to 10th level characters

**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE





THE WORLD OF ADEN ORIGINALLY CREATED BY SHANE LACY HENSLEY

# THE LOST LEXICON

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## Part III of VI: THROUGH PLAGUE AND FIRE

An adventure for 7th to 10th level characters

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Written by Rich Wulf



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# THUNDERSCAPE

## THE WORLD OF ADEN

### The Lost Lexicon, Part 3 of 6 - Through Plague and Fire

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# INTRODUCTION

## INTO THE RUINED KINGDOM

*Through Plague and Fire* is an adventure intended for four characters of roughly 7th level. If you are using a different mode of experience progression, the exploration of Aramyst is designed so that it can be extended or truncated to your particular needs. Shortly before the final encounter, the party should reach 10th level.

This adventure, like the others in this Path, places a high priority on exploration. The story that began in Urbana and continued in Arasteen now leads into the shattered lands of Aramyst. Here, the players will see the ruination of the Darkfall firsthand. They will be forced to use all of their wit and talent to survive as they venture into the nocturnal-ravaged wasteland on a quest to save the last remaining cities of Aramyst from destruction.

Players are encouraged to seek out challenges on their own initiative and may resolve much of the plot at a time and manner of their own choosing. As the plot unfolds, the party becomes involved in a war that will determine the future of Aramyst. It will fall to them to turn the tide by seeking out allies, finding long-lost artifacts, and defeating the Darkfall's champions.

In the previous installments of this adventure path, the player characters were inexperienced adventurers seeking to build a reputation. At this point in the story, powerful individuals have begun to take notice of them. No longer are they a band of unlikely heroes thrown into conflict by random circumstance. They are on the cusp of something greater. They are well on their way to earning a place among Aden's legendary heroes.

If the players have completed the previous volumes of this Adventure Path, *Through Plague and Fire* picks up immediately from the end of *Radiant Demise*. You may want to give the players a few weeks of downtime to rest, recover, and resupply from the grueling Battle of Murdoch's Cove, but otherwise the King is prepared to launch the next leg of their adventure whenever they are.

If your players have not completed the previous adventures and you wish to begin with this volume, you need only prepare a bit of back story to get them on the right track. Perhaps the party had previous encounters with the Cult of Shermazza and are known to be its enemies, attracting King Corben's attention. Perhaps they lost loved ones to the Weeping Death and seek a cure. You might even start the player characters as a group of adventurers based in Refuge or Mossburg, working to save their home from the Svarog Horde, skipping King Corben's involvement entirely. In this latter scenario the party need not have any prior personal contact with the cult - the fact that they are inhabitants of Aramyst will mark them as its enemies.

## - RECAP - THE STORY SO FAR

While *The Lost Lexicon* follows a central storyline, the party might have followed a number of different paths to reach the current point in the plot. The following section is meant only to summarize the most likely course of events, which the adventure text will assume to have taken place. Following the summary, a few suggestions will provide alternative courses for parties whose stories have turned out a bit differ-

### Adventure Summary

This story begins right where *Radiant Demise* left off. In return for their deeds at the Battle of Murdoch's Cove, the heroes are granted an audience with King Corben of Arasteen. The King requests the party's help dealing with the Weeping Death. This strange epidemic has swept across northern Arasteen and seems, somehow, to be connected to the mysterious Cult of Shermazza.

Using ancient magic, Corben transports the party to the opposite end of the continent, right into the heart of the Ruined Kingdom. They discover that the cult has a strong presence here, but it has allied with a vast horde of salamanders and nocturnals led by a terrifying salamander fiend named Baleth the Righteous. His army, the Svarog Horde, stands poised to wipe out the only remaining cities - in Aramyst Mossburg and Refuge.

In their quest to learn more about the cult of Shermazza, the party meets the fallen knight, Caspegar. He reveals to them Baleth's objective - to destroy Refuge so that he can claim a Seer Lexicon. This powerful magical artifact that was used to defeat the demon once before and is now sealed in the Celestial College vault beneath Refuge. By claiming the Lexicon first, the party can unleash its power against Baleth. However, to properly harness its potential they will need the aid of either Mossburg or Refuge. Their choice will influence which city becomes the reigning power in the Ruined Kingdom.

As they follow their quest, the party begins to discover what the demon Shermazza truly is and what it wants. They discover that their adventures to this point have merely scratched the surface of this dangerous cult, and that they will inevitably be drawn ever more deeply into Shermazza's malevolent designs.





ently. Of course, there's no way to account for all possibilities, so feel free to diverge from the text presented as required to remain true to the story of your own campaign.

## Heart of the Machine

The party started their adventuring career as members of the Cogwheel Irregulars, a group of mercenary lawmen operating out of the city of Mekanus, capital of Urbana. In the course of their adventures, they drew the attention Dennison Walcroix, curator of the Urbanan Museum of History and executor to the estate of Lord James Dex. Because Dex's controversial political opinions had soured the local authorities against his legacy, Walcroix was forced to employ the Irregulars to protect his deceased mentor's estate until the items could be properly auctioned. The party protected these treasures despite the attempted predations of various determined thieves.

Afterward, the party came into conflict with the cult that had employed most of these thieves - the Circle of Fire and Steel. These zealots, secretly working for the Cult of Shermazza, kidnapped Walcroix and attempted to force him to open Lord Dex's secret vaults deep in the accursed Lost Ghetto. The party came to Walcroix's rescue and defeated the Circle, as well as their ally, an ally of Terablix the Autonomous. They found little of interest within the vault except for a strange amulet - the *Heart of Tarello*.

## Radiant Demise

A few months after the Circle's defeat, Walcroix was visited by Sir Trask Calder, a knight of the Radiant Order. Calder hailed from Murdoch's Cove in Arasteen. This remote village was threatened by a strange new form of undead known as manikins. Following a costly battle with these creatures, the knights discovered a curious encoded journal bearing the symbol of Lord James Dex. Sir Calder set out for Mekanus to find this scholar.

Calder failed to find the late Dex, of course, but Walcroix was willing and able to decipher the journals. Walcroix requested that the party accompany him on the journey, a suggestion that Trask agreed with due to his village's need for additional protectors. Due to some unspecified crisis in northern Arasteen, reinforcements had been in short supply. After a difficult journey, the party arrived in the village.

From Dex's writings, the curator revealed that village had been constructed was a site of phenomenal power, once inhabited by the Formori giants. Some unidentified individual had been drawing on the magic of the Formori Empire to create horrifying mechamagical abominations. So began a race between the party and their unknown enemy, as each sought to unlock a series of magical nexuses before the other.

The party's nemesis eventually revealed himself as Karloff Radool, a mad alchemist who used the nexuses to build an army of mechanized undead and could seemingly defy even death itself. In a desperate

gambit to reach the final nexus, Radool's army attacked the village of Murdoch's Cove. There, the party finally defeated the alchemist once and for all. From Radool's remains, the party retrieved religious icons that linked him to the Circle of Fire and Steel. Though they do not realize it yet, both Radool and the leaders of the Circle are members of the much more dangerous Cult of Shermazza.

Following their victory, the party was unexpectedly visited by high-ranking members of the Radiant Order. Their presence has been requested for an audience with King Corben of Arasteen.

## PICKING THINGS UP

The above summary covers the most important results of the Adventure Path so far, but there are a number of other things to consider. Player characters are creative and unpredictable. The open world nature of this Adventure Path makes it difficult to account for every possible result of the previous volumes, but the following attempts to address the most likely results. In the end, be creative and try to roll with the story as it unfolds rather than enforcing specific results or making the path seem predetermined.

## Who survived?

The Battle of Murdoch's Cove was a dangerous and complex encounter, with a lot of chances for important NPC's to perish. You should alter King Corben's speech appropriately to account for these final events (a touch less bravado and a touch more grief, for example, if the village saw heavy losses). If Dram Hollister did not survive, Trask Calder is promoted to Captain and given command of the knights in the village. If neither of them survived, Sir Kirkstaan is assigned as the new commanding officer of the village.

## What happened to Murdoch's Cove?

It is possible that the player characters lost the battle but survived. If they failed to save the village but defeated Karloff Radool, King Corben is still interested in meeting them. If the party lingered in the ruined village, Corben's knights arrive to investigate and detain the party until the King can question them. If they left after defeating Radool, some other villager managed to escape (perhaps Old Willem or one of the knights) and reported the party's involvement to the Radiant Order. In this case, the King will dispatch his knights to bring the party to Sea Reach for questioning. The knights are not aggressive and make it clear they do not blame the party for the village's destruction. They do, however, inform the party that the King wishes to know what happened

## Starting From Scratch

If you did not play *Heart of the Machine* or *Radiant Demise* and are starting the Adventure Path with this volume, you'll need to do some preparations so that it makes sense when King Corben asks the party for help. If you don't mind skipping the first part of the adventure, you could also simply start things in Aramyst itself. Just be warned that if you do so, you'll miss out much of the party's incentive - a cure for the Crystal Grief. At the same time, their quest to save Aramyst from the Horde will become much more personal.

First, assume that the Battle of Murdoch's Cove still happens - the player characters just didn't participate. Without their help, the village was destroyed and Karloff Radool was absorbed by the Final Nexus. When the Radiant knights arrive to investigate, they employ local adventurers to help them scour the area for Radool's many hidden laboratories. The party is one such group. As an introductory encounter, arrange for them to stumble over a ruin containing an appropriately difficult group of monsters, something dangerous enough to impress the Radiant Order. Among the remains, they discover *amulets of Shermazza* among the remnants of one of Radool's abandoned laboratories.

The Radiant Knights recognize the connection between these items and the Weeping Death. They alert King Corben, who soon arrives to oversee the investigation personally. The King summons the player characters so that they may report their findings to him, after which the adventure proceeds more or less as written, with appropriate adjustments to the king's dialogue as needed.



and that, in return for their time, he may be able to help them determine who Radool was truly working for.

If the party failed to defeat Radool altogether, the result is essentially the same. Because Radool vanished into the Final Nexus, the Radiant Order assumes he must have perished and that the party killed him. Whether the party chooses to take credit for his death makes no difference - for now, at least.

### What Alliances Did the Party Make?

The player characters have had the opportunity to ally themselves with several powerful factions over the course of the adventure thus far - the Ghosts of Columbey, the Eye, the Radiant Order, and the Underground. Such alliances are not without value in Aramyst. Individuals sympathetic to these groups (secretly or overtly) can be found throughout this volume of the adventure. As the party begins to reach levels where they can traverse Aden with ease (through the use of *teleport* and other such abilities) they can more easily draw aid from their distant allies.

### What happened to Dennison Walcroix?

Though he is one of the party's closest allies, Walcroix does not play a part in this volume of the adventure. Whether he (or his successor, Amara Dex, if he perished in *Heart of the Machine*) survived the Battle of Murdoch's Cove is unimportant. With his work in Murdoch's Cove complete, he returns to Mekanus to attend his duties at the Urbanan Museum of History. He will return to play a part in later volumes.

### Where is the Heart of Tarello?

This magical item, the titular artifact of *Heart of the Machine*, may still be in the party's possession. The players will have a chance to discover the Heart's significance during this adventure.

## A Note on NPCs

You may notice some unusual features on the NPCs in this adventure, such as traits and favored class bonuses. Though these options are usually the domain of player characters, we have chosen to give them to many NPCs as well. We feel this is a good way to offer more variety as well as a slightly greater challenge.

### Italics

Several sections of this adventure, mainly NPC exposition, are written in italics. These sections are intended to be read aloud. Obviously this doesn't need to be a stiff verbatim speech. Incorporate these events into natural interactions and invite the players to participate, as long as the general gist of the information gets through.





# ARAMYST, THE RUINED KINGDOM

## THROUGH PLAGUE AND FIRE - TIMELINE -

The following timeline focuses mainly on creating context for this adventure as well as previous volumes. Though the events here are presented truthfully, many details (including Shermazza's ulterior motives and ultimate objectives) will be elaborated upon in later volumes of this Adventure Path when they are of greater relevance. Most of these items here are not known to the player characters, unless they have a high rank in Knowledge (history). Even then, many will remain obscure. Use your discretion in what you choose to reveal.

**Year 1** - With the end of the Great War, many ancient magical artifacts are distributed to throughout the Known Lands for safekeeping. Among these are the Rosengates, mystical gateways that can teleport matter instantaneously between one another regardless of distance. The amulets that control these gates are distributed among Aden's leaders so that they may maintain peaceful contact with one another.

A handful of extremely powerful artifacts, known as Lexicons, are also recovered from the ashes of the Great War. For those who know how to properly utilize them, the Lexicons grant extraordinary wisdom. When improperly used, they can cause great destruction. To protect Aden from their use, the Seer Order hides the Lexicons in secret vaults throughout Aden. One is entombed beneath the mines of the small Aramystian village of Cipere.

**Year 10** - Though peace has returned to Aden following the Great War, much of the continent's historic and scientific knowledge has been lost. High Arcanist Quintus, ruler of the nation of Aramyst, fears that the Known Lands will fall into a dark age if nothing is done. He gathers a coalition of the most brilliant mages in Aden.

These individuals are invited to become the founders of an institution Quintus calls the Celestial College, a body dedicated to seeking and preserving knowledge for the good of all the Known Lands. So confident is he in the order he has assembled, Quintus abdicates his position as monarch of Aramyst and appoints the Elder Ministry - the leaders of the Celestial College - as the nation's new ruling body. He is immediately elected to a position on the Elder Ministry by his peers and remains an influential member of the Aramystian government for decades to come.

The Celestial College creates many magical wonders. One of the greatest of these is also one of their best kept secrets - the Corridor. This is an artificial pocket dimension that allows those who know the proper spells to quickly transport themselves across the breadth of Aramyst in an instant.

**Year 328** - An army of salamanders emerges from Mount Svarog. They are intent on conquering the Celestial College and using its magical resources to open a massive portal to the hellish realm of Infernus. Their leader, Queen Kais, intends to transform the countryside into a volcanic wasteland and allow her people to establish a climate from which they can comfortably expand her empire across the surface. As the Aramystians have no standing military, she anticipates no resistance. The salamanders cut a swath across Aramyst before the College can agree upon the best way to stop them.

As the salamanders besiege the capital of Regorra, the Elder Ministry combines their arcane talents to create the *frost pylons*, arcane weapons that can unleash a blizzard in the heart of midsummer. Kais' titans die within hours, drained of life-sustaining heat. Many fiends die over the next few days. The survivors flee into the depths of Mount Svarog. Though the invasion is crushed, the unnatural weather blights crops throughout central Aden and the following famine results in nearly twice as many casualties as the invasion. Aramyst's allies chide the Elder Ministry for reckless reliance on magic rather than conventional troops. College historians refer to the tragic sequence of events as the Svarog Blight.

In the wake of the Svarog Blight, the Celestial College establishes treaties with Carraway and Vanora, drawing upon mercenary troops from both nations to help defend its territory against future threats in return for the services of their wizards.

**Year 332** - Octavia Belua, a brilliant Aramystian enchanter, embarks upon a bold experiment to create life. Her creations combine the best aspects of man and beast. These creatures are intended to serve as warriors so that Aramyst can protect itself from future threats without the need for reliance on foreign troops.

She calls her creations ferrans.

**Year 336** - Octavia Belua realizes that the ferrans have become highly intelligent and capable of complex emotions on par with humans and other advanced races. She recants her desire to force these sentient beings into a life of servitude. Belua's opportunistic son, Contentus, is not so compassionate. He declares his elderly mother mentally unsound and has her committed to an asylum for the last few years of her life.

Contentus seizes control of ferran production and creates large numbers of the creatures to serve not merely as soldiers, but as slave labor. Ferran breeding is strictly controlled. All newborns are subjugated to torturous mental conditioning to diminish their intelligence and suppress their will.

**Year 340** - Though many Aramystians are uneasy with the idea of a magically-created slave race, Contentus Belua uses widespread fear of another Svarog Blight and desire for independence from Aramyst's foreign mercenary protectors to win support within the College. The Elder Ministry bows to his efforts to officially declare the ferrans non-sentient creatures with no more rights than common animals.



Combat-ready ferran troops are drafted into a military force known as the Beast Legion. Over the coming years, the Celestial College carefully controls all ferran breeding. At first, all ferrans are bred either to serve the Beast Legion or work as laborers in service to the government.

In time, these restrictions loosen. Many wealthy Aramystians come to own ferrans as personal guards, servants, and even pets. Aramyst comes to rely primarily on the Beast Legion for protection; most Carrite and Vanoran troops withdraw to their homeland. Only those sections of Aramyst that refuse to rely upon ferran slaves (generally remote areas far from Regorra) continue to employ mercenaries.

**Years 341-415** - As the ferran population grows, it becomes more difficult to completely control them. Many ferrans escape either through random chance or conscious effort. Attempts to control ferran fertility prove unreliable. Free-born ferrans are collected for conditioning when possible, but not all are found. Free ferrans demonstrate greater intelligence than their enslaved brethren without Belua's conditioning to handicap them.

The Belua family embarks upon a propaganda campaign, claiming that free-born ferrans are prone to demonic possession due to their magical origins. Any demonstration of unusual intelligence or independence is indicative of demonic influence and should be immediately reported for everyone's safety. Despite these efforts, many wild ferrans find allies among the other civilized races and begin making plans to free their exploited brethren. They begin secretly spreading dissent through the enslaved ferrans and helping them reverse Belua's conditioning in preparation for an eventual revolt.

**Year 416** - After nearly a century of oppression, the ferrans rise up against their masters. The Celestial College is unable to take decisive action to stop the uprising as many of its prominent members are sympathetic to the ferran plight. Beast Legion soldiers, still controlled by their magical conditioning, take up arms against their ferran brothers and sisters. The uprising is as swift as it is violent, though no one suffers more than the ferrans themselves. The War of Beasts begins.

**Year 422** - Luesti Belua, current patriarch of the Belua family, searches for a way to crush the renegade ferrans. Drawing upon tomes of demonic lore, he communes with an ancient plague demon named Shermazza. Luesti brokers a deal with the demon, offering to create a golem vessel for Shermazza to inhabit in return for its aid in destroying the ferran race. Belua secretly plans not to uphold his end of the bargain and has prepared a spell that he believes will permanently banish Shermazza's consciousness from Aden once the ferrans are dealt with.

Shermazza bestows knowledge of a terrible ritual upon Belua, a ritual that requires the power of a Lexicon to complete. As an influential member of the Celestial College, Belua appoints himself as the

custodian of the Cipere Lexicon. He uses the device to complete the demon's spell.

Once completed, the ritual summons a virulent plague that spreads only among ferrans, known as the Weeping Death. Reptilian, amphibian, and avian ferrans are almost entirely wiped out. Mammalian ferrans appear mostly immune. The surviving ferrans suspect that the Celestial College is responsible. Many College wizards perish in the coming weeks as enraged ferrans lash out in retribution. Though the wizards are individually quite powerful, the ferrans are more numerous and have spent half a century honing their ability to evade magical detection. Unlike the Svarog salamanders, this is an enemy that knows the land and has no obvious weaknesses. Heavy losses ensue on both sides.

Dissatisfied that the plague only succeeded in causing more suffering, Belua demands answers. Shermazza gloats that it predicted Belua's treachery; once the promised vessel is provided, the demon promises to deliver what it owes. Belua breaks the pact and attempts to banish Shermazza's consciousness back to Infernus, but his spell fails. Shermazza takes advantage of Belua's weakness and possesses the treacherous mage. The possessed Belua unleashes his demonic power against Aramyst, altering the Weeping Death so that it infects humans, dwarves, and elves (the original civilized races, for which Shermazza possesses the greatest spite) as well as mammalian ferrans.

August Lancell, a Celestial College researcher, confirms his theory that the Weeping Death stems from an identical supernatural origin. As a ferran sympathizer, he fears the College will ignore his findings. He instead takes this information to the Seer Order. The Order entreats their allies in the Radiant Order to intervene. Arasteen dispatches a band of jurak and rapacian knights (both of which are immune to the plague) through the Rosengate into Aramyst. They are led by a Templar, Sir Charvid. Once in Aramyst, they join several Seers and College mages on a mission to find the plague's source.

They discover that the plague is strongest in areas where the College keeps its supplementary libraries. They find that these libraries have been systematically looted by an unknown individual with great arcane power. Though they do not realize it yet, the possessed Belua has been targeting these libraries in hopes of finding clues to the locations of the remaining Lexicons.

**Year 423** - After months of hunting the culprit behind the Weeping Death, the investigators track the possessed Luesti Belua to the village of Cipere. After a pitched battle, they capture Belua alive and use the Lexicon to exorcise Shermazza, trapping the demon in a crystalline prison. Tormented by the experience, a repentant Belua confesses his crimes and returns to Regorra to face trial. He dies three weeks later from unknown causes.

The Lexicon is returned to its vault in Cipere. This time it is sealed so that the Celestial College cannot access it. The Seers bestow the responsibility of protecting the vault upon the Radiant Order. A small group of knights remain in Cipere to guard it.


**Year 424** - Details regarding the systematic torture and subjugation of the ferran race, as well as Luesti Belua's crimes, become known throughout Aden. The resulting public outrage compels the Celestial College to free the ferrans. The War of Beasts ends. The ferrans are recognized as a free and sentient people. Ferrans are now free to pursue whatever lives they choose. The Beast Legion remains Aramyst's standing army, though its members are now paid a fair wage for their services.

Though technically equal, resentment for the ferran race never truly dies in Aramyst. Ferran members of the Celestial College are rare, and no ferran ever sits on the Elder Ministry. Seeking freedom from prejudice and discrimination, many ferrans emigrate to other nations in the following centuries.

**Year 960** - After five centuries, Shermazza detects a flaw in its prison that allows the demon to subtly influence the dreams of individuals with a predilection for mania or obsessive tendencies. It reaches out to Skadra Radool, an ambitious but unexceptional student of the Celas-







tial College. The demon promises Radool knowledge and power in return for freedom. Following Shermazza's instructions, Radool steals the demon's crystal from the Regorra dungeons and replaces it with a convincing copy.

**Year 970** - The Celestial College expels Skadra Radool for unethical mechemagical experiments. The College is unaware that Radool possesses Shermazza's prison. Radool wanders Aden for months before arriving in Arasteen and discovering the dormant power in Loireag Marsh, near Murdoch's Cove.

**Year 977** - Unhinged by years of blasphemous experiments and his alliance with Shermazza, Radool raises an army of golemoid undead, attacks Loireag Monastery, and burns it to the ground. The Radiant Order defeats Radool and destroys his golemoid minions.

Shermazza's crystal is discovered among Radool's possessions. Though the Radiant Order does not know the crystal's origins they recognize it as a dangerous artifact suffused with demonic power. The item is returned to Sea Reach for study along with many of Radool's other personal effects. Though the demon had tired of Radool's lack of ambition and drove him to madness hoping to find a new host, it finds itself unable to gain influence over any of the paladins that confiscate the crystal.

**Year 980** - Sergius Proditus, a talented young mechemage, arrives in Arasteen. Though he claims to be a Celestial College scholar, he is secretly an agent of the Cielan Exarches sent to weaken the bonds between Arasteen and Aramyst. Proditus wheedles his way into the good graces of King Brihann's court. He is invited to study various magical items in the Radiant Order's private collection.

As a scholar of Aramystian history and arcana, the Cielan spy recognizes Shermazza's crystal as an ancient item of College design. Shermazza discovers that it can communicate with Proditus and offers the spy power in return for freedom. Proditus steals the crystal and slaughters several Radiant knights during his escape from Arasteen. He flees back to his homeland. No longer content to serve the Exarches, Proditus siphons the power of Le'Ciel's Veil and shatters Shermazza's crystal. He allows the demon to possess him in hopes that he will gain immortality.

Sergius Proditus and Shermazza, now unified in body and mind, refer to their union as Avatar Proditus. Proditus begins recruiting followers from the disenfranchised and downtrodden of Cielan society. The Avatar preaches that organizations such as the Exarches, the Seers, the Radiant Order, and the Celestial College have used ignorance to manipulate and subjugate the masses. Only by violently toppling such regimes can true freedom ever be known. His message is infectious. In the shadows of Le'Ciel, the Cult of Shermazza is born.

Over the next few decades, the Cult of Shermazza extends its reach throughout Aden. They are cautious during this time, gathering influence but rarely acting overtly. In time, they have agents within every major nation. Their primary goal is the acquisition of information, especially in regards to Aden's prehistory and places of ancient power such as Loireag Marsh.

In the meantime, Avatar Proditus instructs his followers that a time is swiftly approaching when the cult will no longer need to hide in the shadows. When their time comes, it will be obvious to all.

**Year 1090** - Based on successful prototypes developed over many decades in Columbey, Aramyst begin to plan construction of a national rail system. An elven engineer named Jerek proposes a design that is far superior to anything the Celestial College's mechemages can offer. Aramyst's allies in Columbey's Mithral Consortium agree to supply materials at a reasonable cost.

Many members of the College are outraged by the idea of granting such a prestigious honor to a non-College member. When it is discovered that Jerek possesses minor magical talents, College officials exploit the technicality to grant him an honorary professorship. Though Jerek chafes at such political chicanery, he is proud to spearhead such an important project and reluctantly accepts the title. He begins construction at Quintus Station, destined to become the heart of the new railway network. The Aramyst Rosengate is relocated to Quintus Station so that materials can be transported directly from Tarello.

**Year 1105** - A salamander fiend calling himself Baleth the Infernal emerges from Mount Svarog at the head of a small force of titans and fiends. Seeking retribution for the humiliation of his ancestor, Queen Kais, the army destroys the village of Nobilus. These salamanders carry crude mechemagical devices that they believe will protect them from the College's cold magic. Unfortunately, modern Aramyst does not need to resort to such tactics. His forces are overwhelmed by Beast Legion soldiers.

Baleth is captured alive and imprisoned in Regorra. As he is not a citizen of any recognized nation nor a member of any civilized race, the College is uncertain what to do with him. His cell is later discovered empty, breached by magic. Though a search is conducted, he is never found. Meanwhile, low-ranking College mages loyal to the Cult of Shermazza transport the fugitive salamander to Le'Ciel. Avatar Proditus sees potential in an alliance between his cult and the Svarog salamanders, so he offers to teach Baleth the secrets of mechemagic so that he can create golemoid salamander troops. To insure Baleth's loyalty, Proditus performs depraved mechemagical experiments upon Baleth and spends years brainwashing him to Shermazza's cause.

**Year 1111** - The Darkfall begins; seers throughout Aden are assassinated by nocturnal monsters. The Celestial College's Elder Ministry convenes to determine the nature of this new enemy. Galvanized by tragedy, the normally slow and disorganized council organizes within hours of the first attacks. Just as the final members of the Elder Ministry arrive, the capital city of Regorra is consumed in an explosion of magical flame.

This maelstrom, dubbed the Burning, quickly expands to devour Aramyst's coastline. The fire destroys all living creatures in its wake but leaves inanimate objects untouched. Total casualties are difficult to determine, but conservative estimates place the death toll in the millions. More fires continue to erupt throughout Aramyst, drawn to any place where people gather in large numbers.

As if this catastrophe were not enough, murderous nocturnals invade Aramyst. Because so many of these nocturnals are born from the nightmares of Aramyst's large spellcaster population, most are highly resistant to magic. The surviving Celestial College wizards are woefully unprepared. Entire cities are transformed into depopulated ruins overnight. The once great kingdom of Aramyst becomes a wasteland. Within a year, less than one third of Aramyst's original population remains; the rest have either perished or fled to other nations.

Though the Burning has not unleashed its power in such a dramatic fashion since the Burning Coast's destruction, lesser outbursts persist. Aramystians learn not to gather in large groups or linger in one place for too long for fear of attracting these punishing flames.

Jerek, who was at Quintus Station during the Burning, is now the only surviving member of the Elder Ministry. Suspecting the Corridor to be the catalyst for the fire plumes that now ravage Aramyst, the engineer rallies as many survivors as he can and marches to the small mining village of Cipere, which he knows lies beyond the teleportation network.



Meanwhile in Cipere, nocturnals assault the village, intent on claiming the Lexicon from deep in the mines. The Radiant Knights and miners fight valiantly, but are overwhelmed. Fortunately, the nocturnals are unable to breach the Lexicon's vault and are soon ambushed in turn when Jerek and his followers arrive. After a fierce battle, Jerek's survivors are victorious. They name their new home Refuge.

Shortly after Jerek flees Quintus Station, a unit of thirteen Radiant Knights, led by Templar Caspegar, travels through the Rosengate intent on aiding their brethren in Cipere. When they arrive, a large band of Shermazzan cultists led by Avatar Proditus ambushes them. Caspegar fights valiantly and nearly manages a successful retreat but Sir Thacken, his second in command, betrays the group's location to the cultists. After his capture, Thacken requests that he and his knights be released as reward for his treachery. Avatar Proditus tortures and kills all of them, including Thacken, to fuel a ritual that severs Caspegar from the Templar brotherhood and transforms him into a fallen.

Only a single junior knight survives the disastrous battle. In truth, Thacken's betrayal was a ruse intended to distract the cultists long enough for one knight to escape to Cipere. None know the truth, save Thacken and Caspegar.

**Year 1114** - Lord Urbane's Shadow Army assigns Captain Gentor, a brilliant dwarven explorer and mechamage, to lead a Shadow Army contingent into in Aramyst. He is to determine the status of the Celestial College. If he finds the College beyond hope of recovery, he is to secure their surviving resources to strengthen Urbana's campaign against the Darkfall.

After several months, Gentor concludes that the situation is even worse than expected. With only one surviving city and the Burning eliminating any hope to establish more, he concludes there is no hope of restoring civilized life in Aramyst. The large amounts of College lore and assorted salvage left behind are of extraordinary value, if he can only establish a secure base of operations. He knows that Jerek and his College remnants will not afford him the freedom to operate as he wishes, so he sets out to find his own solution.

Gentor and his apprentices soon devise two incredible inventions - electrified boats that can harvest food from the Great Moss Lake, and *infernal convectors*, devices that can harmlessly disperse the Burning's energies. He founds the city of Mossburg on the lakeshore and begins the difficult task of picking through the Ruined Kingdom's bones.

The people of Refuge are wary of Gentor's motives. However, after three lean years of scraping by on what little they could grow in the mountains, they reluctantly enter a trade alliance with Mossburg, exchanging salvaged materials for food.

**Year 1120** - In preparation for an invasion of Aden, Avatar Proditus draws upon Shermazza's power to recreate the Weeping Death and unleash it in Arasteen. Arastinians call the mysterious malady the Crystal Grief as it seems to originate in the Crystal Forest. The Sylfanus elves seal their city gates to protect themselves. Though the Radiant Order does what it can to contain the Grief, no reliable cure can be found. The disease spreads quickly through northern Arasteen thanks, in part, to Shermazzan agents secretly distributing plague-infected bodies.

**Year 1121 (The present day)** - Baleth returns to Svarog and confronts his brother, Prince Rashom, current ruler of the Svarog Horde, defeating him in single combat for leadership of the tribal council. With the Cult of Shermazza's support, he creates mechamagical devices known as *balefire cauldrons*. These items channel the heat of the Burning directly through the Corridor, allowing salamanders to maintain their full strength hundreds of miles from their home volcano.

Baleth christens himself Baleth the Righteous, King of Svarog. He raises an army of salamanders with the objective of wiping out Refuge, Mossburg, and any Aramystian nomads that remain. His forces are bolstered by the Shermazzans and their nocturnal allies.

Early in the conflict, a group of Shermazzan agents infiltrate Cipere Mine in a failed attempt to steal the Lexicon. Though they are slaughtered by the Beast Legion, they hide a teleportation stone in the mine before they are defeated, allowing the cult to continue monitoring the mine as they search for a way to infiltrate the Seer vault.

## Pathfinder and Outsiders

Angels and demons exist in many forms in Thunderscape. However, the distinctions and divisions between various stripes of outsiders (such as demons, devils, angels, and archons) that exists in the default *Pathfinder* setting do not exist in Thunderscape. While you should still feel free to use the countless outsiders in the various *Pathfinder Bestiaries*, they require minor adjustment. Most good-aligned extraplanar outsiders are considered angels and dwell in Paradise while most evil-aligned extraplanar outsiders are considered demons and dwell in Infernus.

Though finer distinctions, such as devil or archon, remain in place to describe specific sorts of creatures, they are all generally unified as the forces of good and the forces of evil. Most neutral outsiders are simply extraplanar beings that have no innate allegiance due to their origins.

There are a few significant differences in how Thunderscape's demons interact with the physical realm. Though these rules will be expanded upon as Shermazza comes to play a greater role in the story, the important parts to know are as follows:

- 1) Demons are spirits of evil that naturally originate in the realm of Infernus. Though they existed prior to the Darkfall, most demons (such as Shermazza) count themselves as allies of nocturnals and corrupted. Nocturnals tend to fear and respect demons. Many will instinctively obey their commands.
- 2) For all their evil, demons are creatures bound by their word. They can magically compel loyalty from their subordinates, forcing them to obey even when they do not wish to. They can likewise be compelled to serve mortals through the use of carefully worded summoning spells and pacts. In Aden, a *summon monster* spell is an extremely temporary example. Demons are notorious for following the strict letter of their commands in a constant attempt to seek greater freedom and power.
- 3) Under normal circumstances, a demon cannot physically leave Infernus unless summoned and cannot remain outside that realm for long unless it possesses a vessel. Outside of Infernus, a demon is effectively immortal. If killed, its body vanishes and the demon is returned to Infernus in an extremely weakened state. Though demons cannot truly die, they fear death, as it not only causes great pain but leaves them vulnerable to the ambitious schemes of fellow demons.
- 4) Demons can mentally project part of their consciousness into the mortal realm in areas where the boundaries between Aden and Infernus are thin, or with the aid of a mortal summoner. Once their consciousness has a foothold on reality, they can attempt to possess a vessel to remain there indefinitely. Most demons find possession more palatable than entering the realm physically, as it allows their physical form to remain safe in Infernus. The destruction of a vessel is not nearly as unpleasant as physical death, though it does weaken a demon and prevents them from influencing the mortal world again for some time. Demons that can possess more than one vessel at a time are exceedingly rare.
- 5) A demon that possesses a living creature must constantly vie for control with its host, and its power is limited in many ways by the host's abilities. If the host dies, the demon's consciousness returns to Infernus.
- 6) A demon that possesses an inanimate object will find its ability to perceive and interact with the outside world is severely limited. Some materials are natural prisons for a demonic consciousness, preventing the demon from withdrawing to possess another vessel until its current vessel is destroyed. (Many cursed magic items are such objects.)
- 7) A mobile inanimate object - such as a golem - is a perfect demonic host. Unfortunately for demonkind, most golems are constructed with innate wards that forbid exactly this sort of thing from happening. Terablix is an excellent example of what happens when those protections are omitted.



# A TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE RUINED KINGDOM

## Old Aramyst

Until the Burning, Aramyst was a magocracy, though its rulers defined it as a geniocracy - government ruled by the educated elite. The Celestial College served not only as Aden's foremost institute of learning but also as the nation's leadership. Any individual could apply for membership in the Celestial College, regardless of race, class, or nation of origin (though ferrans were not admitted until the year 1047). The only consistent bias the College demonstrated was toward those without magical ability. The nature of that magic - arcane, divine, natural, psionic or other - was irrelevant so long as the applicant possessed talent.

This is not to say that Aramyst refused to educate those without magical gifts. If an applicant possessed no magic but otherwise demonstrated potential, the college would arrange for him to be enrolled in a lesser institution. These were collectively known as the Schools of the Mundane. Though the educational standards of these colleges were not quite equal to the Celestial College, they still surpassed most of Aden's other schools. Particularly noteworthy mundane students could aspire toward associate status with the Celestial College, allowing them to study at College facilities.

Though one could progress in standing within the College's ranks, gaining various degrees and professorships, there was no true 'graduation' as practiced by other institutes of learning. An individual who had acquired at least one degree was officially considered a 'member' rather

than a 'student' but membership was for life. Aramystians believe that knowledge is not a destination, but a never-ending journey. Thus it was the duty of all College members to constantly seek new knowledge.

The Celestial College was surprisingly welcoming to outsiders. Just as it sought to incorporate the learning of foreign nations into its own, so did it share its intellectual bounty with members from foreign lands. In Vanora, Columbey, and Arasteen, membership in the College was seen as a mark of high status. It was often said that a wizard was not truly a wizard unless he wore a College stole.

The College bore deep respect for the Seer Order, who they saw as brothers in a search for unity and understanding. Seers were welcomed in the College's halls and libraries and treated as honorary members.

## The Elder Ministry

The Elder Ministry served as the ruling council of Aramyst. This council consisted of thirty-two Aramystian citizens, each of whom represented a specific district of the nation. These ministers - more formally known as Elders - were chosen via democratic elections every four years, staggered so that one election cycle took place each year.

While Aramyst boasted that its leaders were wise men fairly chosen by their subjects, this system was not without flaws. Only Aramystian citizens who were Celestial College members could hold government office. Only those with significant influence in the College could gain the support required to win a nomination for election. Professors of controversial schools of magic, such as necromancy or mechamagic, rarely saw nomination. Further, only citizens with a formal education at the College or a School of the Mundane were allowed to vote. As certain rural regions of Aramyst boasted only weak magical bloodlines, it was not uncommon for them to be represented by ministers who had never lived in the area and knew nothing of their constituents.

Though ministers endeavored to be wise and just, this system often lent itself towards corruption and nepotism. The Ministry was notorious for its inability to respond to a crisis decisively. Though one member of the Ministry was internally elected Minister of State, this person held no special authority. He only served to moderate Ministry gatherings and break the rare tie vote.

## Relations with Other Nations

Aramyst's primary export was, not surprisingly, magic. The Celestial College traded for most of Aramyst's necessities, exchanging the services of their members either as spellcasters or, more often, teachers. Most nations were on good terms with Aramyst. With the exception of that dark chapter of their history known as the War of Beasts, the Known Lands considered Aramyst the pinnacle of civilization. To support Aramyst was to support the Celestial College, eternal symbol of progress and intellect. To stand against them was to embrace the ignorance and savagery that predated the Peace of the Rose. The destruction of Regorra signaled the beginning of a dark age for all of Aden.

## The Corridor and the Burning

Prior to the Darkfall, Aramyst was a land of magical wonders. Some were famous. Some were well-kept secrets. Among the greatest of these secrets was the Corridor, an artificial pocket dimension that overlaps the nation of Aramyst, creating a vast teleportation network. In times past, the Celestial College used it to quickly transport themselves throughout their homeland.

The College came to rely heavily upon the Corridor over the centuries. Just prior to the Darkfall, a handful of wizards began to cite the deleterious long-term effects of Aramyst's subtle erosion of the boundaries between planes. They warned that the Corridor should be dismantled or demonic incursions and other disasters were likely. Due to the College's dependence upon the Corridor, these critics were largely

### College Colors

A Celestial College degree was formally indicated by a silken stole. An official College stole was considered an appropriate accessory for formal dress throughout most of Aden, an item of great esteem within social circles. These days, the reception can vary. Though many still respect College members, some regard them as relics of a lost era. It is also not unusual for those who wear a stole to be decried as an imposter, as outside Aramyst there is a widespread belief (especially outside large cities) that the College was wiped out.

The color of a stole indicates one's area of expertise, as listed below. An individual with multiple areas of expertise can either wear multiple stoles or decorate the stole signifying his primary focus with pins and medals featuring the other colors.

**Alchemy** - bronze  
**Architecture** - burnt orange  
**Art** - gold  
**Demonology and the planes** - blood red  
**Divination** - bright green  
**Engineering** - navy blue  
**History** - light grey  
**Literature** - scarlet  
**Mechamagic** - cobalt blue  
**Medicine and healing magic** - sky blue  
**Music** - violet  
**Necromancy and spirituality** - indigo  
**Natural sciences** - deep green  
**Philosophy** - canary yellow  
**Politics and Government** - white  
**Warfare** - black



## Finding the Corridor

The boundaries between dimensions are thinner in Aramyst due to the Corridor's influence. This is not common knowledge and the players should not even be aware of the Corridor's existence when they first arrive. Given that the player characters are now powerful adventurers, there's a good chance they might discover the Corridor without anyone's help.

Any time a character uses teleportation spells or abilities in Aramyst, let them make a Knowledge (arcana) check vs. DC 50. If this fails, simply tell them there was something 'strange' about that teleport. Each time thereafter, the DC of this check decreases by 2. If they teleport in the immediate presence of a fire plume or a balefire cauldron, it decreases by 5. If multiple characters that can teleport share their observations, the DC decreases by an additional 5, once, for all such characters. When this check finally succeeds, the character catches a brief glimpse of the Corridor. This manifests as a plane of infinite fire between heartbeats, as well as an overwhelming feeling of dread.

It's possible that, during their adventures, the party might find an intact spellbook from before the Darkfall. Such a spellbook could contain a spell called *traverse Corridor* (described in the Appendix). If learned and cast, the spell does not function due to Baleth's influence over the Corridor. However, it allows an immediate Knowledge (arcana) check, as above reducing the DC by 10 each time it is cast.

ignored. The only concession was the creation of "Corridor islands," areas that were beyond the Corridor's reach. These were usually libraries, storage vaults, or other locations of great significance to the College. Cipere, where Refuge stands today, is one such location.

When the Darkfall came, the Corridor's dimensional boundaries frayed. The pocket dimension was suffused with hellish flames from Infernus. This inferno quickly escaped into Aramyst. Fires burned without need for fuel, but consumed only living things. Plants and living creatures were reduced to ash. Everything else was left untouched. Anything unliving, including items that were normally combustible, was left unharmed. Creatures with resistance to fire and heat were likewise not damaged by the blaze, nor were automatons and undead.

This disaster struck most heavily along the eastern coast. Flames consumed the capital city of Regorra as well as all other coastal settlements. Lesser blazes (relatively speaking) erupted throughout the rest

of the nation, ravaging the land and incinerating entire cities. These infernal geysers were attracted to population centers; only those who fled had a chance to survive. Towns became graveyards, or worse, the lairs of undead, demons, nocturnals, and opportunistic salamanders.

This nightmarish event was called the Burning. It continues to this day. The eastern coast of is now the Burning Coast for the hellish flames that constantly seethe there. The land up to fifty miles from the coast is plagued by extreme heat in addition to constant flaming geysers. Such eruptions of magical fire are occurring sporadically throughout the rest of Aramyst. Though sometimes these incidents are random, any congregation of living souls will inevitably attract disaster. If too many linger in one place for too long, the Burning will always strike.

Popular rumor suggests that these fires are directed by a malevolent intelligence. This could be a demon or elemental intent on destroying civilization. The few surviving members of the Celestial College who

## The Burning - Game Mechanics

Within roughly 50 miles of Aramyst's eastern coastline, travelers are close enough to the Burning's constant fire plumes to be subjected to their heat. The temperature in these areas is considered to be severe heat (see Chapter 13, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*), though at night this is reduced to very hot conditions unless one is within 300 feet of a lingering fire plume. Use of fire salve, *endure elements*, or other effects that negate extreme heat will protect a character from this effect.

All major cities on the coast are constantly besieged by exploding fire plumes, manifestations of the Burning. Up to a dozen plumes are usually visible from any given location. The capital city of Regorra is constantly eclipsed by a single enormous plume of fire, miles in diameter. Throughout the rest of Aramyst these plumes can erupt anywhere but within a mile Mossburg or in the mountains near Refuge. (They technically still occur in Mossburg but are channeled by the *infernal convectors*.)

A fire plume always occurs when a group of more than a dozen intelligent living creatures lingers in one place for longer than a week (they are not attracted to creatures with innate fire resistance or immunity). However, they can potentially happen anywhere. As GM, feel free to have a fire plume occur whenever you want to make an encounter more interesting, though be careful not to overuse them lest they become more tedious than terrifying. The average plume ranges from 30 to 200 feet in diameter, extend up to 1000 feet directly up, and last anywhere from hours to days. Though they erupt upward from the earth, they leave no vent or crater behind. The plumes pass harmlessly through all known materials, even manite.

The eruption of a new fire plume is always heralded by an ominous rumbling and a sudden surge of heat lasting from 3 rounds to 1 minute before the plume finally erupts. The longer the warning surge, the larger the resulting plume will be. Experienced scavengers learn to sleep lightly and don't stop running until the rumbling is far behind them. No sense in worrying about the camp or the tools - just save the livestock and yourself. Everything else will be unharmed where you left it when the fire is gone.

The plume inflicts 6d6 fire damage per round to any living creature or plant life caught within it. The damage is doubled for fire plumes near the Burning Coast and tripled for the plume in Regorra. Fire immunity and resistance apply normally. A creature who is close enough to the edge of a plume to escape on the turn the plume erupts is allowed a DC 16 Reflex save for half damage as they jump clear, but otherwise the effect allows no save. Inanimate objects, constructs, and undead creatures are completely immune to this damage. The items carried by an affected creature are unharmed. A creature killed by a fire plume is reduced to a charred skeleton.

Fire plumes are considered extradimensional entities and can be affected as such. Any effects that bar teleportation or extradimensional travel in an area will likewise protect that area from the Burning. A fire plume is not affected by *dispel magic*, but effects that purge extradimensional entities (such as *banishment* or *dismissal*) can target a plume as if it were a living creature. Fire plumes have a +10 bonus to all saves vs. such effects and are considered to have 10 hit dice (fire plumes on the Burning Coast have a +15 bonus and are considered to have 15 hit dice).





know of the Corridor suspect this is probably accurate. Fortunately, as terrifying as the Burning may be, its power does not extend beyond Aramyst. Some scholars (ignorant of the Corridor's existence) theorize that the chaotic energies are contained and diffused by bodies of water and the minerals within the Knuckles mountain range. The truth is that it merely follows the Corridor.

In recent months, Baleth the Righteous has claimed the Corridor as his domain. He has shielded the pocket dimension from within, preventing anyone from accessing it without his permission. At the same time, he has used the source of the Burning to fuel his *balefire cauldrons*, allowing his troops to venture much further from their volcanic homeland than would normally be possible.

## Climate and Natural Hazards

Under normal circumstances, Aramyst tends toward hot, dry summers and cold, wet winters. Snow is uncommon except in the high mountains and northern reaches of the country. Strong winds are common in the summer, known as the venti. Prior to the Darkfall these winds brought cool air from the sea and were a welcome relief.

Now, the venti bring scorching heat all year long, parching the lands and blighting crops. Temperatures in Aramyst are always considered to be at least very hot conditions (see Chapter 13, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*) occasionally venturing into severe heat during summer.

Because of these searing winds, much of Aramyst's once fertile land is desolate and blighted. Most trees and other vegetation are dead, with the exception of ruinweed, a tough fire-resistant scrub covered with sharp thorns that exude a poisonous sap on contact. Many Aramystians believe that ruinweed is a product of the Darkfall, if only because it makes existence in the Ruined Kingdom just a little bit more intolerable. The high temperatures, arid soil and lack of vegetation also make it more difficult than normal to find fresh water. These combined conditions make it much more difficult to live off the land, increasing the DC of all Survival checks to survive in the wilderness by 10.

## Aramyst after the Darkfall

The destruction of the Celestial College has transformed this once great nation into a bleak and hopeless place. Obviously the loss of their greatest minds has left the land vulnerable to attacks from nocturnals and corrupted, but the damage extends beyond that. Aramyst relied heavily upon magic for many aspects of daily life. Without magic, many Aramystians have been forced to adapt their approach to travel, trade, and communication.

The constant threat of the Burning has forced survivors outside of Refuge and Mossburg to either live in very small groups or adopt a nomadic lifestyle. Most of the nomads stick to a certain territory, traveling over the same circuit throughout the course of each year. Nomad bands occasionally visit the cities or trade with one another but otherwise mind their own business, distrust strangers, and keep moving.

Nocturnals and the Burning are not the only dangers in Aramyst. While some survivors try to honor the laws of their fallen homeland, most feel such idealism is impractical. Might makes right here. It has become a land of desperate scavengers and lawless bandits.

The overall mood is despair. Though some cling to hope that the Celestial College will rise again, most believe that their nation will never recover. Large numbers of Aramystians have fled to other nations. Depression and suicide are all too common among those who remain.

## Relations to Other Nations

Aramyst was once greatly respected and on good terms with most nations. Things have changed since the Darkfall. A large portion of the outside world does not even realize people still live in the Ruined Kingdom, or assume it is a wasteland populated solely by bandits and nocturnals. They're not far from the truth. Urbana obviously shows great interest, as is apparent in the city of Mossburg, but their presence is arguably rooted more in self-interest than compassion.

Of its neighbors, only Carraway still interacts with Aramyst and regularly lends aid and support, mostly through trade with Mossburg. The Rhanate is largely oblivious towards Aramyst's plight; they have their own problems. Vanora ranges from cold to outright hostile. The samurai of the south are known for isolationist tendencies, and have made it consistently clear that desperate refugees are not welcome in the Empire of the Ten Beasts.

## The Infernal Front

For the first time in years, an army of organized salamanders has risen from the depths of Mount Svarog. Led by a megalomaniacal mechamage named Baleth and bolstered by the Cult of Shermazza, these brutish creatures have crushed everything in their path. Dozens of nomad bands have been wiped out or enslaved. Most of the lands east of Refuge are now under the control of the Svarog Horde. Non-salamanders who are not members of the cult are enslaved or killed.

Though the salamanders' hatred of the surface world is nothing new, past invasions were limited due to their dependence upon heat and the Celestial College's access to powerful weather-controlling magic. Through the use of *balefire cauldrons*, magical artifacts that tap into the heat of the Burning, they have expanded their territory.

The people of Mossburg and Refuge have been pushed to their limit keeping the Svarog Horde at bay. The vigilant defenders of Aramyst have fought well thus far, but each day the salamanders extend their grasp deeper into the Ruined Kingdom. Unless someone can tip the scales to break the Horde's advance, the last vestiges of Aramystian civilization will soon pass violently into memory.

## Random Encounters in the Wasteland

The scorched wastes are incredibly dangerous. Each day that passes, the characters have a 50% chance of witnessing at least one enormous fire plume in the distance. In addition, roll 1d8. A result of 1 indicates a random encounter that day. Proceed to roll on the table appropriate for their location - "Aramyst Wastes" if they are west of the Infernal Front, "Baleth's Domain" if they are east of this border. Past the infernal front, most enemies are allies, if not soldiers, of Baleth's monstrous army. Such enemies tend to be more intelligent and guided by Baleth's malevolent leadership, whereas creatures in the rest of Aramyst tend to be wandering predators (except for nomads and other survivors, of course).

As with all encounter tables, these are meant only to be a tool. Feel free to reduce or increase encounters as desired and tailor the results to your own tastes. For example, though undead are technically common in Aramyst, we've made them a rarer encounter this time around because

## Travel Times

Aramyst is a massive kingdom, covering a great deal of ground. For ease of reference, here are some approximate travel times between major points of interest for a group of characters on horseback or with access to an unmodified steamwagon, traveling for eight hours per day. See the world map in the *Thunder-scape Campaign Setting* for exact distances.

Quintus Station to Refuge - 2 days

Quintus Station to Mossburg - 9 days

Refuge to Mossburg - 10 days

Refuge to Nay - 3 1/2 days

Mossburg to Nay - 8 days

Reduce these travel times appropriately if the party has access to faster transportation or foregoes rest. Extend them for slower parties or those who travel cautiously or indirectly.



## Random Encounters

d100	Aramyst Wastes	Baleth's Domain
01-05	2 medium fire elementals (CR 5)	scouts - 2 salamander myrmidons (CR 5)
06-10	natives (rabble) - 3 experienced soldiers (CR 6)	4 cacklers (CR 6)
11-15	3 nocturnal shadowcats (AWJ1) or 4 imps (CR 6)	scouts - 3 hell hounds (CR6)
16-20	2 large fire elementals (CR 7)	scouts - 3 gargoyles (CR 7)
21-25	natives (scouts) - 2 novice steamwrights and a rifleman (CR 7)	patrol - 4 salamander myrmidons (CR 7)
26-30	floating brain (AWJ1) or large nocturnal fire elemental (CR 7)	floating brain (AWJ1) or hill giant (CR 7)
31-35	2 red ursax, mated pair (CR 8)	patrol - 1 war priest, 1 elite soldier, 2 experienced soldiers (CR 8)
36-40	nocturnal wyvern (CR 8)	erinyes (CR 8)
41-45	Terablix's minions - 2 terabits (CR 8)	Terablix's minions - 2 terabits (CR 8)
46-50	2 nocturnal flame drakes (B2) or 2 huge fire elementals (CR9)	patrol - 1 salamander warlord, 1 salamander titan, 3 salamander myrmidons (CR 9)
51-55	natives (war band) - elite soldier, 2 novice mages, 3 experienced soldiers (CR 9)	bone devil (CR 9)
56-60	huge nocturnal elemental (CR 9)	efreeti (CR 9)
61-65	2 bodaks (CR 10)	war band - 1 elite sorcerer, 1 war priest, 1 elite assassin, 4 experienced soldiers (CR 10)
66-70	smoke demon (AWJ1) or nocturnal gorgon (CR 10)	1 fire giant (CR 10)
71-75	Terablix's minion - 1 terabot (CR 11)	1 terabot (CR 11)
76-80	2 nocturnal behirs (CR 11)	barbed devil (CR 11)
81-85	natives (large war band) - 3 elite soldiers, 2 riflemen, 2 novice steamwrights, 2 novice mages, 6 experienced soldiers (CR 12)	war band - 2 salamander titans, 1 salamander warlord, 4 salamander myrmidons, 1 war priest, 4 experienced soldiers, 1 elite soldier, elite sorcerer (CR 12)
86-90	nocturnal tyrannosaurus (CR 12)	2 fire giants (CR 12)
91-95	2 elder fire elementals (CR 13)	ice devil (CR 13)
96-00	nocturnal elder fire elemental (CR 14)	3 fire giants (CR 14)

*Radiant Demise* was chock full of undead and we thought perhaps the players might like to face something different. If you like more undead encounters in your game, add them in.

Characters in this adventure are expected to be between 7th and 10th level, so encounters range from CR 5 (a trivial encounter) to CR 14 (dangerous even for seasoned combatants). Aramyst is a dangerous place; the party should be prepared to withdraw from or avoid a foe that they cannot handle. On the same note, remember that most denizens of Aramyst simply want to survive. Not all encounters necessarily involve combat. Even bandits or nocturnals might avoid an unnecessary fight if they think they may find easier prey elsewhere (or a party of innocent nomads might attack due to pure desperation).

Refer to the appendix for statistics on NPC types or new monsters. Monsters with sources other than this volume, the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting*, or *Pathfinder Bestiary 1* have their sources listed in parentheses. (AWJ1 indicates *Aden Wildlife Journal, Volume 1*.) Alternate results are offered if these sources are not available.

### Encounter Notes

**Nocturnals** - Nocturnals in Aramyst have a 50% chance to possess an additional nocturnal special ability. This ability is always energy resistance (fire) or spell resistance.

**Natives** - These NPCs could be bandits, merchants, scavengers, soldiers or nomads. Military personnel only appear within three days' travel of Refuge or Mossburg unless on some manner of urgent assignment. Bandits will try to ambush the party or flee, depending on whether they have the advantage; some groups may demand tribute and leave without conflict if paid. Nomads and merchants regard the party with suspicion at first, but may be willing to trade information and supplies. Sometimes banditry is merely a product of a group's current level of desperation. All groups except soldiers usually include 2d4 unarmed dependent noncombatants without class levels (children, elders, and sick or injured), though they are sometimes hidden in a nearby camp.

**Fire Elementals** - These outsiders come in both standard and nocturnal varieties. Normal fire elementals are extremely aggressive against intruders in their territory but otherwise take no interest in living creatures. Nocturnal fire elementals are chaotic evil and actively seek to kill living beings and burn their possessions.

**Terablix's Minions** - These are golems dispatched by the King of the Lost Ghetto to hunt the player characters. This encounter ceases to occur if the party destroys or seals the Quintus Station Rosengate.

**Scouts** - These results indicate the Svarog Horde's forward scouts. These individuals possess ranks of Stealth equal to their hit dice and will attempt to evade detection if possible. If they spot the party, they will attempt to flee or set off a smokestick to alert any of Baleth's other troops in the area. If they are successful, a war band will arrive in the area within an hour.

**Patrols** - These results indicate smaller groups of Baleth's soldiers. They will engage if the party is outnumbered or disadvantaged, otherwise they will withdraw and attempt to signal a war band.

**War Bands** - These are large, powerful units of Baleth's soldiers. They will attack the party on sight unless outnumbered. Any war band that includes salamander titans will have one *balefire cauldron* in its possession, usually carried by 2d4 slaves. Any time a war band is encountered, there is a 25% chance that the party encounters a much larger regiment of the Horde, at least four times the size indicated. Most of the time, these groups are easily noticed at long range, giving the party a chance to avoid combat. Though these larger war bands will attack the party if given the opportunity, they will not pursue for long. Such large units are always under orders to guard or patrol a specific resource or strategic area.

**Outsiders** - Evil outsiders (such as efreeti and devils) are allies of the Svarog Horde. They have been summoned by Shermazzan clerics and allowed to roam Aramyst freely, causing whatever havoc and destruction they desire so long as they bring no harm to the Horde.



**Giants** - Like the outsiders, evil giants are not officially members of the Horde, but have been granted freedom to do as they please. Giant-kin possess a seething hatred for the civilized races, especially the Celestial College mages who often experimented upon their kind and defiled giant ruins in their search for knowledge.

## Camping in Aramyst

In the wasteland of Aramyst, there is a 25% chance that the party finds some sort of useful shelter each day. Without shelter, the party must make camp on their own if they wish to rest in the wild. Keep track of any locations that they discover, as they may wish to use them again if they pass through the same territory.

Roll 1d10 each time they sleep in the wasteland. On a result of 0 or 1, they attract something's attention (roll on the appropriate encounter table). This does not necessarily mean combat, or that the party is even aware that they were discovered. The creatures may merely be curious, or may see the party's well-defended camp and move on. Friendly creatures may ask to share the party's shelter or move on, looking to avoid trouble.

A character with the Survival skill can spend two hours of searching and make a skill check to find shelter. The DC of this check is DC 14 + 2 per each additional Small or Medium sized creature requiring shelter. A result of 14 or more is always successful, but will only accommodate the indicated number of people at one time. This natural shelter has a 50% chance of being inhabited. In the case of inhabited shelter, roll on the encounter table to determine the current inhabitants.

### Finding Shelter in the Wasteland

d100	Result
01-15	Natural shelter
16-30	Natural shelter (inhabited)
31-45	Ruin
46-70	Ruin (inhabited)
71-80	Nomad Camp (friendly)
81-95	Nomad Camp (guarded)
96-00	Nomad Camp (hostile)

**Natural Shelter** - This can be a cave, box canyon, or a rocky outcropping that provides a bit of shade, protection from the elements, and defense on at least two sides.

**Ruins** - All too common in the Ruined Kingdom, these are the remnants of buildings abandoned since the Darkfall. Roughly 10% of such ruins are commonly used by nomads and include functioning amenities such as stoves, beds, wells, or even plumbing. Some nomad bands even leave supplies behind as a gift for the next band of travelers. These nomads practice an unspoken rule that such luxuries should be well cared for by those who use the shelter, leaving them as they found them. The Burning may force everyone to keep moving, but that's no reason why anyone should live in discomfort.

**Nomad Camp** - This is a temporary shelter constructed by a wandering nomad band, currently occupied. In addition to the band's defenders (see encounter table for some example groups) this camp has at least 3d6 noncombatant dependents in the form of children, elderly, and the sick or injured. Friendly camps will gladly offer travelers a space by their fire, some water, and perhaps even some food. Guarded camps will trade goods and information at a distance but otherwise expect travelers to find their own shelter. Hostile camps warn strangers to keep their distance and attack if pressed. Player characters can attempt to influence the disposition of such groups through the application of Diplomacy or Intimidate.

# MOSSBURG AND REFUGE

Due to the inherent danger of remaining in one place for too long, most Aramystian settlements are now abandoned. Only two cities remain - Mossburg and Refuge. Both locations are well fortified and protected from the Burning. Mossburg uses *infernal convectors* to absorb and harmlessly disperse the flames while Refuge is protected from the Burning by its location in a Corridor island. Though rough and dangerous by the standards of most cities, these areas are a relative haven for weary travelers in a land of chaos. They are also a constant target for nocturnal predators. A handful of other small settlements persist in corridor islands, such as the village of Syldan and other nomadic trading posts. However, none of these boast a population anywhere near as large as Refuge or Mossburg. Due to the constant dangers of the wasteland these villages are frequently wiped out by nocturnals or bandits only to later be rebuilt by new inhabitants.

Though Mossburg and Refuge are trading partners and allies in the battle against the Svarog Horde, it is no secret that theirs is an alliance born purely of necessity. The people of Refuge view Mossburg as a haven for thieving scavengers, pawns of Lord Urbane and his boundless lust for conquest. The people of Mossburg view Refuge as a self-destructive mess, a dumping ground for those too deluded to admit that their homeland is a lost cause.

Unlike the factions presented in previous volumes, the heroes can easily support both cities in this adventure. This is encouraged. Mossburg and Refuge both need help and both are willing to employ freelance adventurers. However, once the party has located the Cipere Lexicon, both Jerek and Gentor will be quick to try to curry their favor as the two rulers have mutually exclusive ideas of how to use the artifact to defeat Baleth the Righteous. How the party chooses to help the cities will determine which leader extends his influence over the Ruined Kingdom and which becomes a footnote to history.

This section serves as a faction primer as well as a location guide for these important locations.

## Mossburg

**Population:** 45,000

**Current Leader:** Captain Gentor of Smult

**Exports:** food (moss-weed)

**Imports:** salt, ore, cultural artifacts and other salvage

The city of Mossburg did not exist prior to the Darkfall. It was founded three years after that event by the Urbanan mechamage Gentor and a platoon of Shadow Army soldiers under his command. In the years since it was established, Mossburg has grown into a thriving settlement that offers sanctuary to thousands of Aramystian survivors. Despite its prosperity, the city's existence is founded on a single pessimistic belief - Aramyst is dead. All that's left to do is sift through the bones for anything of value.

This is not to say Captain Gentor and his men are not without sympathy for the Aramystians. If not for Mossburg's presence, many survivors in the Ruined Kingdom would be in even more dire straits. However, helping the Aramystians is no longer the Shadow Army's primary assignment here. Gentor abandoned all hopes that Aramyst could be rebuilt when he learned that Regorra had been consumed by fire and Refuge, the only surviving settlement, was a motley assortment of haggard survivors. That the Celestial College Remnants are now led by a hedge mage mechanic only adds insult to a mortal injury, as Gentor is a former student of the College himself. The captain finds it ludicrous that any true wizard would take orders from a man like Jerek, who lacks the pride to even wear his official title as High Minister.



Mossburg thrives, at least by modern Aramystian standards, due to two incredible inventions - the mossboat and the *infernal convector*. The convectors are certainly the more dramatic of the two. These towering iron spires rise high above Mossburg and function as magical lightning rods, absorbing the Burning's thermal energy from the Corridor and projecting columns of flame harmlessly into the sky. Their construction is a well-kept secret, known only to the Shadow Army. All they will reveal is that the convectors were created at great expense using materials available only through his Urbanan connections. While they are practical for securing a single settlement and a few outlying camps, Gentor knows they are not a long-term solution for the Burning.

Though simple in design, moss-boats are crucial to the city's survival. For as long as anyone could remember, the Great Moss Lake has been a habitat for carnivorous moss-weed, a swiftly growing poisonous kelp that chokes everything it touches. Though edible and highly nutritious, it has a foul taste and is difficult to safely harvest. For centuries, the Aramystians considered moss-weed a nuisance. A few mages would periodically visit the lake and use spells to exterminate the plant so that the waters could be safely fished. After the College was destroyed, the lake was overrun in a matter of months. Due to moss-weed's natural fire resistance, the Burning does not scour it away as it does other plants.

With most other food sources destroyed by the Burning, blight, or nocturnals, Gentor recognized the potential in moss-weed as a virtually unlimited food supply. Rather than exterminate it, he wished to harvest it. After several disastrous experiments, his men discovered that the weed could be paralyzed with the application of electricity. Specialized fishing boats outfitted with electrified hulls could harvest the moss-weed quickly and safely. After proving that the nascent settlement could survive in the Aramystian wastes, Gentor requisitioned several more fishing boats and a larger compliment of soldiers from Urbana. The city now produces much more moss-weed than it requires. The excess is used for trade, employing mercenary scavengers, or shipped back to Urbana for use as the sort of military rations that even hungry soldiers avoid eating until they have no other option.

## Mossburg Goals and Methods

Though moss-farming is important to Mossburg's survival, scavenging is its main industry. The Shadow Army conducts salvage operations throughout the wasteland and constantly employs independent contractors to do the same. Mossburg will pay a fair price for weapons, tools, or items of cultural or historical significance (half the base sale value). Manite, Celestial College texts, and magic items are worth a great deal more (sixty-five percent of the base sale value at the very least - more if the item is very rare).

Salvagers are paid in bricks of dried moss-weed but can take payment in Urbanan gold if they prefer at a ten percent fee. Because food is often more valuable than gold in Aramyst, most scavengers choose the former. As carrying such large amounts of rations can be dangerous and impractical for nomadic scavengers, the Shadow Army has devised special reimbursement coupons that can be exchanged for moss-weed rations in the city. Ranging in denominations from half a ration to 500 rations, these distinctive green coupons - fondly referred to as moss-bills - have swiftly become the dominant local currency.

### Strangled Trade

Though the Svarog Horde has crippled trade between Mossburg and Refuge, it hasn't completely eliminated it. Captain Gentor and Atticus Caesar have stepped into the breach, using their magic to conduct some small measure of trade between the cities. Both mages know the *teleport* spell and have attuned to a *teleportation stone* in both their home and allied city. Each day, Gentor and Caesar both load a *portable hole* with as much salt or moss-weed as they can, teleport to the other city, exchange their cargo for the other city's resource, and return. While this is a mere fraction of the usual trade and nowhere near enough to sustain the cities, it's better than nothing.

In recent months, Mossburg has seen both its trade and scavenging operations severely disrupted. After losing three Shadow Army scavenging crews to the Svarog Horde, Captain Gentor refuses to place his men in any more danger. With the lack of salt from Refuge he can't produce enough dried moss-weed to meet demand. Dissent among the troops grows, as many soldiers feel they should not be risking their lives against the Horde for the benefit of foreign wastelanders.

For the time being, Gentor holds his ground. While he has little hope for Aramyst, he refuses to abandon the people who have turned to Mossburg for protection. The captain has forbidden his soldiers to speak of deserting Mossburg. After the first three public floggings, the dissent has at least become less vocal. Gentor has even gone as far as to drastically understate the danger the Horde presents in his reports. He knows that if the Shadow Army knew the truth of the danger here that he would very likely be recalled to Urbana - and many innocent Aramystians would die.

Ultimately, Captain Gentor has given up hope for Aramyst's recovery and remains intensely loyal to the Iron Tyrant. If he were ordered, he would abandon Mossburg and return to Smult, though he would attempt to bring as many of Mossburg's residents with him as were willing to come and would try to leave the city in a state where the remaining residents could have some meager chance at survival. Without his soldiers to protect them, Gentor knows even that would be an empty gesture.

Despite rumors to the contrary, Gentor does not wish to transform Aramyst into an Urbanan protectorate. This is purely practical. He knows that Jerek would never bow to Urbanan rule and does not wish to conquer a band of desperate refugees by force. He knows that though Refuge boasts fewer highly-trained troops than Mossburg, it occupies a highly defensible position, its people vastly outnumber Gentor's soldiers, and - most importantly - they have nothing to lose. Despite his personal distaste for Jerek, Gentor is content to continue peacefully trading with Refuge as long as possible. In the end, Gentor knows his opinion on the matter is largely irrelevant and dreads the day that Lord Urbane commands him to extend Urbana's grasp across the wasteland.


## Points of Interest in Mossburg

Mossburg is a place of precisely regimented order. The city is designed with mechanical precision, a product of the soldiers and mechanics who designed it. Small but efficiently designed homes pack streets that radiate outward from the northern docks and business district. Urbanan flags fly on every corner and other staples of Urbanan life, such as shrines to the Sixteen, are common.

Though Mossburg was founded by Shadow Army explorers, that original populace is dwarfed by the many Aramystian survivors who have settled here. For the most part, the Mossburgers idolize Gentor and his soldiers. Though the Urbanans may be foreigners and scavengers,







they've done more to help Aramyst than the Celestial College ever did. If the soldiers want to sift through some old ruins in return for the food and protection they provide, they're welcome to do so.

Sturdy stone walls surround the city. A mixed guard of Shadow Army soldiers and volunteer citizens patrol the walls at all times. Though an attacker could conceivably circle around the walls by water, they would quickly be entangled and consumed by carnivorous moss. Harvesting moss near the walls is forbidden to maintain the city's security.

Visitors in Mossburg are stopped at the gates and inspected carefully to make certain that they are not nocturnals. The Shadow Army guards will sometimes ask for a spontaneous joke, poem, or song. This serves both to provide amusement and to insure that whoever they're speaking to isn't a thinly veiled monstrosity.

### Mossburg Docks

The Mossburg docks cover the northern border of the city. This area houses several dozen meamagical fishing boats (mostly sea stars and squalls with a handful of assorted other vessels) all outfitted with *moss-shockers* (see appendix) for harvesting moss-weed. These vehicles are the city's most prized possessions. Stealing or intentionally damaging one of the Shadow Army's moss-boats is punishable by death. The water immediately surrounding the docks must be farmed regularly or the moss-weed will inevitably creep in and choke the area.

### Mossburg Depositories

A half dozen warehouses butt up against the docks. Freshly harvested moss-weed is dried, salted, and stored here. Any living soul that reports to the depositories is given two pounds of fresh moss-weed per day,

#### Moss-Weed

This strange aquatic foodstuff is a staple of Aramystian cuisine since the Darkfall. It resembles stringy broccoli, with a dense, bitter shoot in the middle of each stalk. This stalk contains the moss-weed's poison, though it loses its toxicity seconds after the plant is harvested.

Moss-weed is extremely bitter and spoils within days of harvesting. It can be preserved indefinitely by drying it out and packing it in salt. This unfortunately makes it taste even worse. Most moss-weed based dishes are elaborate attempts to hide the natural flavor. The process usually involves boiling it until it the flavor is less noticeable, adding spices to overpower any remaining bitter notes, and then adding some sort of filler to distract from the unsettling texture.

A six pound brick of dried moss-weed can keep an adult fed for a week if properly rationed. In Aramyst, these bricks are frequently used (along with the aforementioned mossbills) in place of currency. They have an equivalent value to about five gold sovereigns, though naturally someone desperate for food might place much higher value on them.

Though unpleasant, moss-weed is extremely nutritious. An individual can survive on a diet of nothing but moss-weed and water, though those who consume the plant exclusively begin to lose their sense of taste. For this reason, many Aramystians are desperate for any other types of food, no matter how awful, to break the monotony. Gentor once paid a Carrite merchant a "king's ransom" for a load of half-rotten cabbages, only dole them out to his scavenging teams for what resulted in a huge profit for Mossburg.

Gentor and his moss-farmers pride themselves on their harvesting techniques. They are quick to remind others that it only took only a few weeks for them to learn how to harvest moss-weed, a feat the Celestial College never accomplished. This is, of course, mostly local pride. The Celestial College never harvested moss-weed because they had no need to do so. Moss-weed is disgusting.

enough to keep an adult well-fed and relatively healthy. The depositories offer more food in return for various goods or services, especially for those willing to work the moss-boats or defend the walls.

The depository area permanently reeks with the stench of rotting moss-weed (especially lately, with the shortage of salt). Between the brimstone stink of the *infernal convectors* and the rotten stench of dead moss-weed, travelers with sensitive noses can detect Mossburg from miles away.

### Mossburg City Hall

This foreboding structure, constructed in the severe and angular style of Urbanan architecture, is the largest building in Mossburg. Rightly so, as it serves as Gentor's home, the Shadow Army barracks, armory, courthouse, and Mossburg's center of government. Here Gentor, along with a council composed of both Urbanan advisors and Aramystian locals, make decisions regarding trade, construction, and defense.

Mossburg enforces a variation of Urbanan law with Shadow Army officers (sometimes Gentor himself in the particularly important cases) serving as judge. The accused has a right to trial for any transgressions, though conflicts with outsiders are almost always judged in favor of the city's residents. There are no prisons in Mossburg save for a few holding cells. Minor offenses are penalized via forced labor on the moss-boats, flogging, or public service. More serious offenses are punished via exile or execution. The primary means of execution is to be bound and cast into the lake to be devoured by moss-weed.

### Little Smoketown

This busy cluster of workshops and storage houses surrounds the city hall. From here, a small but skilled crew of engineers conducts constant maintenance on the moss-boats, *infernal convectors*, and other critical machinery. The experts in Little Smoketown also collect and categorize scavenged materials for transport back to Urbana. Every six months, these goods are loaded into three of the city's heavily armored cargo ships and ferried across the lake to St. Lucca in Carraway. From there, they are transported to Urbana by Thunder Train.

### The Kelping Hand

One of the largest structures in city, the Kelping Hand serves as the city's only inn, tavern, and theater. The food and music here are of surprisingly high quality for such a remote settlement. Gentor learned early on that maintaining morale in bleak surroundings was of utmost importance and uses a large part of his profits to transport talented chefs and musicians from Urbana. Though the food is still mostly moss-weed, as the name suggests, it's the most palatable moss-weed in all of Aramyst. Nander, the proprietor, is quite proud of the place and frequently boasts that he is "the greatest moss-weed chef in all of Aden" - a claim that others are unlikely to dispute.

### Important People in Mossburg

#### Captain Gentor of Smult

Gentor is a grizzled, pragmatic dwarven meamage who prefers a grimy workshop to the sterile cleanliness of a library. This Shadow Army officer is both the Captain of the Urbanan expedition in Aramyst and the de-facto mayor of Mossburg. While his primary loyalty is to his homeland, he is proud of what he has built here and glad that his men have done something to help the survivors of Aramyst. Though Gentor is a busy man, he will make time to meet the player characters once they have proven themselves.

**Relevant Skills:** See appendix for full stats.

#### Lieutenant Elisif

Elisif is Gentor's second in command. Though born and raised in Carraway, she is a naturalized Urbanan citizen through her service to the Shadow Army. Elisif is an expert on law, history, and diplomacy. She is the only agent of the Eye present in the expedition, or at least the



only one that makes her affiliation known. Though technically Gentor's subordinate, her service to the Eye supersedes her duties to the Shadow Army. Thus far there has been no conflict of interest, which makes her job easier. She often serves in the capacity of a prosecuting attorney during important trials.

She is blunt, curt, and readily speaks her mind when she feels she knows best, which is often. Elisif believes that the Celestial College is responsible for the Burning and perhaps even the Darkfall. As a result, she is extremely disdainful toward Aramystian survivors and prefers to keep the company of Urbanan soldiers. At the same time, she has repeatedly proven herself a devastating combatant in the face of nocturnal attacks and a fearless defender of the city. She is one of the most respected warriors in Mossburg, having single-handedly rooted out and slain nocturnal infiltrators on multiple occasions.

Despite her reservations about the locals, Elisif admires Captain Gentor and considers him a good friend. She knows that he has misrepresented the threat of the Svarog Horde to his superiors in Mekanus, and has not disputed these claims in her own reports. While she does not share his compassion for the locals, she has faith in Gentor and feels that Urbana has too much to gain in Aramyst to abandon their operations here.

**Relevant Skills:** See appendix for full stats.

### Sergeant Marcus Shivek

This pale, weedy young man has a chronic cough due to an illness he contracted from living in the smog-fouled city of Mekanus. He covers his mouth with a silk kerchief when traveling the streets because the smoke from the *infernal convectors* irritates his lungs. Shivek constantly complains of how poorly suited he is to a field assignment in such a harsh climate. Though nervous, jumpy, and somewhat cowardly, he has a photographic memory and a keen mind for numbers. Thus he acts as primary liaison between the Shadow Army and its various civilian salvage crews, managing their claims and documenting all materials that they recover from the Aramystian ruins. If the party is looking for work in Mossburg, he is likely to be their first point of contact.

**Relevant Skills:** Appraise: (+14), Diplomacy: (+7), Knowledge (engineering, history, nobility): (+14), Perception: (+12), Sense Motive: (+12)

### Hollis Rain

This grizzled old jurak has served Gentor as a scout since before Mossburg was even built. He was the first to pilot the prototype moss-boats and, in the years since, has become the captain of his own boat - the *Sludgeburner*. He is a soft spoken fellow with a grim, dry sense of humor. Though there is no official chain in command among the moss farmers, he has been doing the job the longest and the others follow his lead.

Rain and his crew of six also happen to be members of the Underground, and occasionally use their boat to smuggle goods to and from St. Lucca on the other side of the lake. Many of the local soldiers are aware of Hollis' activities but turn a blind eye. He keeps them well bribed and the contraband he brings into Mossburg (typically alcohol and recreational drugs) is good for morale. His exports are mostly scavenged jewelry and other valuables recovered from the Aramystian ruins that were of no military value, but that scavengers otherwise have no way of transporting beyond Aramyst for resale. He will not export magical items or College texts, as he knows such items are Gentor's primary objective in Aramyst. He prefers to stay on the Shadow Army's good side, considering how they punish thieves.

**Relevant Skills:** Appraise (+10), Bluff (+9), Stealth (+12), Survival (+12), Perception (+10), Sense Motive (+10)

### Jacef Nander

This cheerful young pixie-blood faerkin is the proprietor of the Kelping Hand. Though she is not a soldier, she is Urbanan, having accompanied Gentor's expedition as a civilian contractor. After helping the Shadow Army build Mossburg (she's quite a talented architect),

Gentor rewarded Nander with ownership of the city's largest inn. Jacef enjoys her duties greatly and knows a surprising number of the city's residents on a first name basis.

Jacef is secretly a member of the Ghosts of Columbey. Her true name is Elra, though she changed it when she fled Mekanus after her outspoken political views began to draw attention from the authorities. She tries to be a bit more careful about things here, though she maintains cautious contact with her fellow rebels back home. For the time being, the Shadow Army seems to be doing a great deal of good in Aramyst, though Jacef is fearful that they may become bolder once the Svarog Horde is no longer a threat.

**Relevant Skills:** Bluff (+13), Diplomacy (+13), Knowledge (engineering, local) (+11), Perception (+10), Profession (architect, chef) (+10), Sense Motive (+10), Stealth (+16)



## Refuge

Population: 160,000

Current Leader: Jerek

Exports: salt, ore, crafted items

Imports: food

The city of Refuge was founded by a band of survivors from Quintus Station led by a steamwright named Jerek. Though his magical talents were meager, Jerek's knowledge of arcane theory was keen enough to immediately recognize the connection between the Burning and the Corridor. He knew that the village of Cipere was located in a Corridor island, so he led a group of survivors aboard one of his prototype trains and drove it into the Knuckles.

The village had already been wiped out by nocturnals but was safe from the Burning, as Jerek expected. After fighting off the invaders at great cost, Jerek's group dismantled their train and used the parts to construct temporary fortifications. After a few weeks, they realized that no help was coming and their fortifications became more permanent. Small groups began to scout out into the wasteland, searching for other survivors.


When word spread that a safe haven existed, survivors began to flock to Refuge and the nascent settlement quickly expanded. Most noteworthy among these was Atticus Caesar, a retired High Minister who had rescued several other students and members of the Celestial College. A large contingent of Beast Legion soldiers also arrived, led by a fearsome warrior known as Seven-Fourteen. Though both of these factions greatly bolstered Refuge's strength, the people still turned to Jerek for leadership.

Jerek finds his authority ironic, considering that his title was a political technicality that allowed the Ministry to save face when they appointed a hedge mage to a high-profile project. He has no delusions about his magical ability, but he is an eminently practical man. He uses his influence to give the College remnants and Beast Legionnaires the direction they require while keeping old prejudices buried. He knows he will need to keep the people united if they are to defeat the Svarog Horde and restore the Ruined Kingdom.

Refuge is a hectic mishmash of a city; what used to be a small mining town of less than a hundred people has expanded into the mountains to house thousands of displaced survivors. Unlike Mossburg, Refuge was not constructed with a long-term plan. It is a chaotic, crowded, claustrophobic place whose narrow streets are lined with shoddily constructed buildings. Though the outer walls are sturdy enough, the rest of the city is an absolute disaster. Permanent housing space is at a premium, with many settlers living in crowded tents huddled just inside the walls or taking their chances in the surrounding hills as the hills and mountains behind Refuge are likewise safe from the Burning.

Crime is a serious problem. Pickpocketing and petty theft are common and there is no official system of law in place to punish offenders. In areas controlled by the Beast Legion or the Circle Remnants, officials do their best to maintain Aramystian law. In the rest





of the city, the people are left to their own devices. Vigilante justice is the norm, with citizen volunteers banding together to seek retribution against offenders.

## Refuge Goals and Methods

Refuge is founded out of a desire to survive. Its residents are unified only by their refusal to wander the wasteland as nomads and their unwillingness to serve the Shadow Army in Mossburg. While it has become a haven for the desperate, for many it is also a symbol of hope. While Jerek may not be a perfect leader, he has kept Refuge safe in the nightmarish hellscape of modern Aramyst for over a decade. Unlike Gentor, he believes Aramyst can be saved. To that end, all are welcome in Refuge - though some survivors, upon getting a taste of the crime-ridden chaos that is the flops, return to the wasteland to take their chances as nomads.

Though the hills near Refuge are dotted with small farms, their output is not nearly enough to feed the city's growing populace. Refuge relies on trade with Mossburg, exchanging ore and salt recovered from Cipere Mine in return for dried moss-weed. In desperate times, Refuge sometimes offers copies of Celestial College texts it has recovered as well. This is always done with great reluctance, as Jerek does not trust the Urbanans and dislikes Gentor personally.

Jerek's main priority is to find a way to dismantle the Corridor and end the Burning. Unfortunately, that has proven to be a difficult task given that only the Celestial College knew that the Corridor even existed, let alone how it truly functioned. For the time being, all he can do is pay salvagers for any sort of College texts or artifacts they can recover and hope that the material is of some use. (Jerek doesn't have Urbana's resources so he can't pay quite as well as Captain Gentor. He offers only base resale value for such materials, usually in the form of goods or services.) Jerek believes that once the Burning is ended, Regorra and other Aramystian cities can be reclaimed. The many countrymen who fled to other lands will return, and Aramyst will be reborn.

Though rumors abound that the College is somehow connected to the Burning, the truth about the Corridor is, for the most part, only known by Jerek and the College Remnants. If the connection could be proven to the populace at large, many (including the Beast Legion) would turn on Jerek and the Remnants. Refuge would be consumed by civil war.

Though Jerek does his best to see that the people are given what they need to survive, the recent disruption of trade has left many residents on the brink of starvation. In addition, few competent troops can be spared to keep order in the streets with the Svarog Horde on the horizon. If something is not done soon, the Cult of Shermazza won't need to destroy Refuge. The city will destroy itself.

## Points of Interest in Refuge

### Beast Legion Barracks

Though named after the army of enslaved ferrans that once protected Aramyst, the modern Beast Legion is free and comprises members of all the civilized races. That being said, the majority of its soldiers are ferrans, as military duty is one role where ferrans faced no social stigma. Because of this, many Beast Legion barracks were built around close-knit ferran communities. The barracks in the city of Nay was one such community.

When the Darkfall came, Captain Seven-Fourteen mobilized her unit and began evacuating as many civilians from the city as possible. With a few hundred soldiers and survivors behind her, the objective was to move everyone to safety. They moved toward higher ground, which brought them into the Knuckles - and Refuge. The Beast Legion soldiers and former residents of Nay have since constructed a large barracks at the northern end of the city. The Legion enforces order here and, as a result, it is by far the cleanest and safest part of town.

Most of the Beast Legion resented the Celestial College for their mistreatment of the ferrans even before the war. Widespread suspicion that they might have somehow brought about the Darkfall and the

Burning has only deepened the divide in Refuge. Seven-Fourteen has maintained order for the time being, though even she has been quite outspoken in her criticisms of Jerek's idealism. She feels if the city were run more strictly, as Mossburg was, it would not be the chaotic mess that it is.

Though the people of Refuge are all expected to contribute toward the city's defense, the fact is that a very small percentage of them have any martial training. It is one of the duties of the Beast Legion to train all city residents for combat. Each permanent resident must periodically report to the barracks for classes in swordsmanship, siege weaponry, and archery. Most of the students perform abysmally by Legion standards, but well enough that they might not be a complete liability when war comes to Refuge.

### Jerek's Workshop

This name is given not to just a single building, but rather a large cluster of smithies and mechatmagical workshops in the center of Refuge. The train tracks from Quintus Station lead directly to this district, ending at the massive closed doors of Jerek's personal workshop, the Tower. This massive iron structure at the center of city serves primarily as a home workshop for Jerek and his engineers. Jerek also uses the high balcony of the Tower as a vantage point to address the people of Refuge when he needs to make official pronouncements or motivational speeches. This area is off limits to all but Jerek and his trusted inner circle, for it is here that the lord of Refuge has been hard at work secretly constructing his new steam train, the *Burning Engine*.

If the party needs anything built, crafted, or repaired, this industrial district is where they'll find it. Though Refuge's engineers are currently quite busy shoring up the city's defenses, they'll make time for paying customers, especially if they're paying in food.

### Cipere Graveyard

Funerary rites in Aramyst always involve cremation out of sheer practicality. Safe living space is at a premium and the Darkfall has a way of animating unprotected corpses. As such, in place of a graveyard, Refuge has a small park containing several large stone obelisks on which have been carved the names of the dead. The largest of these is tall enough to be seen from almost anywhere in Refuge. It is engraved with a dedication that reads: "*Never forget the brave fallen of Cipere; from their ashes our Refuge arose.*"

The monument stands not only as a stark reminder of the tragedies that Aramyst has endured, but its presence can also nudge the party in the right direction if they are having trouble figuring out that Refuge is built on the ruins of the village they seek.

### Caesar's Menagerie

Atticus Caesar, leader of Jerek's College Remnants, is also one of the world's most renowned zoologists. Caesar has constructed a small menagerie at the southern end of the city, consisting of several magically reinforced enclosures housing artificial environments and wildlife from throughout Aramyst. Caesar and his wizards spend much of their idle time here, caring for the animals and taking notes on their behavior.

Though some find the menagerie an arrogant extravagance, Caesar insists that his work is of the utmost importance. The animals of Aramyst suffer as much as anyone else. Specimens of native wildlife must be protected so that they may be released back into the wild once the wasteland is safe again.

### The Celestial Enclave

This is a circle of small buildings on the eastern edge of city, enclosed by a tall wooden privacy fence. This area is home to the College Remnants, a group comprised of Celestial College members and students who survived the Darkfall. Under the direction of Atticus Caesar, these assorted spellcasters have turned their efforts toward finding a way to stop the Burning so that Aramyst can be settled once more.

Unfortunately, roughly two thirds of the College members who survived the Darkfall and gathered here are inexperienced students. As



such, the Remnants spend as much of their time teaching their number the basics of magical theory as they do conducting serious research.

While the Remnants are reluctant to venture beyond the walls of their enclave, they are always eager to collect any bits of Celestial College lore or magical artifacts and will pay for anything that the party can bring to them. They prefer to supply payment in spellcasting services and will pay twenty percent more than the standard amount if it is in the form of spells or item crafting services.

## The Flops

Space is at a premium in Refuge and travelers are rare, so precious building space isn't wasted on luxuries such as inns. Instead, visitors are instructed to find a clear space (preferably out of traffic) and pitch a tent. The western wall in particular is crowded with these shelters, some of which serve as permanent homes for the less fortunate denizens of Refuge. The people of Refuge call this area the Flops. It is by far the most dangerous section of town, plagued by pickpockets and opportunistic thieves.

## Cipere Mines

In the days before the Darkfall, Cipere was a mining town. The upper tunnels of the mine are rich in salt, while the lower tunnels give way to iron and trace amounts of manite. The mine has been a boon to the people of Refuge, both for their own use and for maintaining trade with Mossburg. The entrance is just outside the city's eastern wall, guarded at all times to prevent any nocturnals from nesting in its depths.

Upon exploring the mine, the settlers discovered that the deepest levels hold a strange tunnel marked with symbols of the Seers, Celestial College, and Radiant Order. The tunnel ends in a pair of large doors which proved impervious to all attempts to breach them. Atticus Caesar is convinced that the tunnels contain something of value, but after years of failing to gain entry he has turned his attention to more pressing matters.

## Important People in Refuge

### High Minister Jerek

The leader of Refuge is a humble yet brilliant man who has been thrown into a position of command by circumstance. His engineering skills have transformed Refuge into a well-fortified city that has survived countless nocturnal attacks. Unfortunately, his reluctance to lead sometimes causes problems. While Refuge is much safer than the wasteland, it is a wild and chaotic place.

Jerek reasons that the situation is only temporary, and that once Aramyst has returned to some semblance of stability he will pass leadership to someone more qualified. With each day that passes that dream becomes slightly harder to believe.

Jerek spends much of his time planning new fortifications for the city, laboring in his workshop, or settling squabbles between his followers. However, once the player characters have proven themselves, he will gladly grant them a personal audience.

**Relevant Skills:** See appendix for full stats.

### Atticus Caesar

This elderly human wizard is one of Aden's leading experts in biology and nocturnal lore. He leads the College Remnants, a contingent of several dozen much younger Celestial College survivors. Caesar is the only one to ever have held a position in the High Ministry - and the only High Minister, past or present, known to have survived the Darkfall besides Jerek. Though he has a great deal of wisdom and experience, and the College Remnants would follow him if he declared himself the leader of Refuge, Caesar is an old man in failing health. He sincerely believes that Jerek - regardless of his lack of magical talent and his relative inexperience - is the sort of man that can lead Aramyst into the future.

That is not to say that the two have no differences of opinion. Caesar is the sort who teaches by challenging and often provokes arguments with Jerek when he wishes to prove a point. He also becomes irritated when Jerek wastes their time battling nocturnals or securing fortifications. In Caesar's mind, the Remnants should be focusing their efforts on finding a way to dismantle the Corridor and end the Burning.

While Caesar represents the lost wisdom and power of the Celestial College, he also represents its unfortunate prejudices. He can be dismissive and condescending toward ferrans, particularly the Beast Legion. He privately feels that ferrans are not nearly as civilized or intelligent as many believe and should never have been granted their freedom - a sentiment all too common among the Remnants.

**Relevant Skills:** Diplomacy (+12), Knowledge (arcana) (+20), Knowledge (dungeoneering, history, local, nature, planes, religion) (+17), Linguistics (+20), Perception (+19), Sense Motive (+13), Spellcraft (+17)

### Captain Seven-Fourteen

Seven-Fourteen takes her name from a great rebel hero from the War of Beasts, a time when most ferrans had no names - only numbers to tell one apart from the next. Though small in stature, this badger ferran's combat prowess is renowned throughout Refuge. She has led her troops to victory against incredible odds on numerous occasions, and is revered as one of the greatest heroes of the city. There are many among the populace who feel that she, not the reclusive and indecisive Jerek, should be the ruler of Refuge.

Unfortunately, despite her military acumen, her leadership would likely end in disaster. The College Remnants detest Seven-Fourteen and she returns the favor. She is an outspoken proponent of the belief that the Celestial College was responsible not just for the Burning, but for the Darkfall itself. Given their lack of any useful solution for the *balefire cauldrons* that allow Baleth's salamanders to prowl the surface, she has begun to wonder if they are secretly in league with the Svarog Horde as well.

She grants Jerek some leeway despite his membership in the College, as she knows he is not a true wizard. She respects all that the engineer has done to fortify Refuge, and finds it amusing that the Remnants are obligated to obey the man by the same meaningless title they bestowed upon him. She often acts as Jerek's personal bodyguard and his liaison with outside petitioners. As such the party will encounter her if they attempt to arrange a meeting with Jerek.

**Relevant Skills:** See appendix for full stats.

### Kliptyn Berk

Berk is a blind mouse ferran who has lived in Refuge since its founding. Before the Darkfall, he was a laborer at Quintus Station. Since losing his family to the Burning and his eyesight to a goblin's blade, he's become bitter and angry at the world. As Refuge grew, Berk became a fixture of the community. He has contacts among all of the major nomad bands and every major gang in town. He knows a little something about everyone and everything, and will reveal it for the right price. Berk's agents may approach the party if they're clearly having trouble figuring out what to do in town, offering a few leads or tips in return for any interesting information they can spare. Kliptyn will also accept food or gold in exchange - preferably dried moss-weed. It never loses value in Refuge.

**Relevant Skills:** Appraise (+10), Diplomacy (+13), Intimidate (+13), Knowledge (local) (+10), Perception (+11, blind), Profession (merchant) (+11), Sense Motive (+11, blind), Stealth (+11)

### Jennis Arai

Arai is an Arastinian thunder scout who has found an unlikely home in Refuge. She leads a gang of mercenaries known as the Lost Souls, widely respected as the best wilderness guides in Aramyst. Arai and her gang are known for inflicting vigilante justice upon the local criminal element. Lost Soul justice is swift and merciless. Thieves have their



hands severed at the wrist. Rapists and murderers are executed and their heads left spiked on the city walls as examples to others.

Depending on the sort of reputation the characters accrue, Arai may approach them with an offer of an alliance (or a fist full of justice if they're being terrors). At the very least, she'll wish to thank them for a job well done if they've been helping the locals.

**Relevant Skills:** See appendix for full stats.

## OLD ALLIES

In previous volumes of this Adventure Path, the party had the opportunity to ally with a variety of other factions. As Aramyst is quite far from Urbana or Arasteen, the amount of help those factions can offer during this volume is limited. However, there are a number of opportunities for the party to further the causes of their old allies.

### The Ghosts of Columbey

The Ghosts of Columbey have a strong presence in Mossburg. While Gentor considers himself an Urbane loyalist, many of the soldiers in his contingent are Ghost sympathizers. These men and women were assigned to Mossburg as punishment for their political views or volunteered out of a desire to be as far from Lord Urbane as possible. They are loosely organized by Jacef Nander, proprietor of the Kelping Hand.

Allied characters can rely on the Ghosts in Mossburg for supplies or information, particularly regarding the long-term plans of the soldiers there. If asked their thoughts on the matter, the Ghosts will encourage the party to throw their support behind Refuge instead of Mossburg, in hopes of preventing the Iron Tyrant from extending his rule into Aramyst. If the party learns the *Heart of Tarello's* true origin and purpose, the Ghosts are willing to pay up to 10,000 gold crowns for it. (Though Nander has no resources to do so; they'll need to return to Mekanus to collect.)

### The Eye

The Eye has a minimal presence in Mossburg, limited to a single agent who has been assigned to Gentor as an advisor. Lieutenant Elisif's official duties are to document nocturnal activity in Aramyst and monitor the Captain for any signs of disloyalty toward Urbana. She focuses primarily on nocturnals; she has a great deal of admiration for Gentor and considers him a model Shadow Army officer, unworthy of suspicion. If the party informs the Eye of their intent to visit Aramyst, they will be given a coded phrase they can use to inform Elisif of their allegiance when they arrive.

Elisif will pay the party a fair amount for any new information they can uncover regarding local nocturnals or cult activities (though it will have to be something significant; she's already quite well informed). She is interested in obtaining a sample of manite ore from the mines beneath Refuge. Her superiors in the Eye feel that Gentor should expand into Refuge and Elisif has thus far been unable to convince the captain of the necessity of such an action. If the Eye learns how pure Refuge's manite is, they will amend Gentor's orders and issue him the reinforcements he needs to annex the city by force. Gentor will attempt diplomacy first - and will not make such an attempt at all until the Svarog Horde is no longer a threat. Depending how the characters complete the adventure they might make such an expansion much easier or entirely impossible.

### The Radiant Order

The Radiant Order is obviously interested in what's happening in Aramyst - they're the ones sponsoring this mission, after all. Communicating with Caspegar is a great deal easier if the party can prove that they are knights or knight-brothers to the Order. If the party can convince Caspegar to return to Arasteen, the Order will be extremely grateful. If the Order finds out that Caspegar lives and that the party did not ask him to return, they'll dispatch their own search party to retrieve the fallen Templar immediately.

The Radiant Order has no other presence in Aramyst. However, if the party looks to Sir Elion Omren or other knights for advice, they will encourage the player characters to support the people of Refuge. King Corben does not trust Lord Urbane's motives in the Ruined Kingdom and does not wish to see the Aramystians fall under the Iron Tyrant's rule.

### The Underground

Hollis Rain represents the Underground black market in Mossburg. If the party informs Rollimus Torth of their plans to visit Aramyst, he will tell them where to find Rain. Rain can supply the party with all manner of information about the area, and even help the party spread rumors in Mossburg if they have a need to do so.

The Grounders have no long-term objectives in Aramyst other than profit. If the party asks Rain for advice regarding which city to assist, he will encourage them to aid Mossburg. His motives are selfish; Mossburg is his home and it's stable enough to support organized smuggling. However, he does sincerely feel that the Urbanans have a better chance to restore Aramyst to some semblance of order than the people of Refuge do. While the Underground values freedom, Jerek's mob are simply too disorganized and destitute to offer any long-term security.

## Where There's Heat There's (Not Always) Fire

Considering that the Burning does no harm to inanimate objects, some have wondered why its flames produce any heat at all. One might rightly conjecture that such heat would be the product of combustion but - unless a living being is caught within the fire - there is no combustion taking place at all.

Atticus Caesar and the College Remnants have one theory. It is known that the Burning originates in the hellish realm of Infernus, conducted into Aramyst via the Corridor. Infernus and its demonic inhabitants exist solely to inflict pain and torment upon mankind. As such, Caesar believes that the Burning produces extreme heat not as a byproduct of the fire, but as an additional means of inflicting misery and pain.

If this is the case, it means that the Burning is motivated by a form of intelligence beyond our current comprehension. This bears a chilling symmetry with many leading theories about the Darkfall. Are the Burning and the Darkfall produced by the same unknown and vastly powerful entity or by two lesser malevolent powers working in unison? Either scenario seems equally terrifying for the people of Aden.





# THROUGH PLAGUE AND FIRE

## ACT 1 – TO ARAMYST

### AN AUDIENCE WITH KING CORBEN

At the end of the previous adventure, the party was in the village of Murdoch's Cove, awaiting an audience with King Corben of Arasteen. Over the next few days, a flurry of activity sweeps the village. Word has spread how a nocturnal army attacked and was defeated by the humble cove's defenders. Travelers from across Arasteen have flooded the area. Pilgrims have arrived wishing to meet the Heroes of Loireag (as the party is now being called). Merchants have arrived seeking to ply their wares as the village rebuilds. Other adventurers have come hoping to explore the mysterious marsh and perhaps find their own measure of fame. And of course, the Knights of the Radiant Order are here, helping to restore order and sift through the rubble for clues about the strange events that took place.

Sir Kirkstaan, a paladin of the Radiant Order (the same one who informed the party of the king's impending arrival) stays as close as he can to the party. He and his knights do their best to protect the newly famous player characters from curious or potentially dangerous visitors. Though he wouldn't be so rude as to say so, Kirkstaan is also here to discreetly keep an eye on the party and insure they don't slip out of town before the king arrives. Adventurers can be mercurial, after all.

If asked why the king wishes to speak with them, Kirkstaan shrugs in resignation. *"I'm just a soldier. Kings and Templars don't explain these*

*things to me,"* the gruff knight admits with a dry chuckle. *"Word has it that he took an interest in what the lads found out there in the swamp. Apparently no one knows more about Loireag than you, so he wants to talk to you about it himself. If I were to guess, you've impressed him. If he just wanted to learn about these old ruins, he'd talk to your scholar friend, Walcroix. I'd wager he has something far more interesting in mind for you."*

If the party seems nervous or afraid of meeting the king, Kirkstaan offers them reassurance. *"You've got nothing to fear from His Majesty, friends,"* he says. *"He's a good man. One of the best, though as a man of the Order, I may be biased. If His Majesty thought you played a part in that mad alchemist's plans, he wouldn't be coming to meet you. I'd be bringing you to the Sea Reach dungeons."* He gives a wry smile. *"To tell the truth I prefer things this way; I hear you lot are quite formidable."*

How long the King takes to arrive is ultimately up to the needs of your game. You may give the players a few weeks to unwind, enjoy their newfound fame, and perhaps craft some new equipment. If you prefer to keep things moving, then have King Corben appear almost immediately. During the interim, the players should hear rumors of an outbreak of plague in the north. Even if they already heard such rumors in *Radiant Demise*, more details have begun to circulate. The illness is named the Crystal Grief for its alleged origins in the Crystal Forest. The elven city of Sylfanus has closed its gates to shield itself from the plague, which has already overwhelmed the port city of Great Rock. Great Rock is the largest city to experience an outbreak, as well as the closest to the capital city. Though the Radiant Order claims to have the situation contained, the people are becoming worried.

When the king arrives, he does so with little fanfare. He is accompanied by only a dozen knights and appears to be nothing more than an ordinary patrol until he raises the royal banner just outside the village walls. Murdoch's Cove urgently scrambles to prepare for his arrival. Knights secure the area, travelers rush out to spectate, and villagers hurry to make their home presentable for the King of Arasteen. The large complement of knights already present in the village converges with the king's party. They stand at attention as the king addresses his people on the steps of the old church.

King Corben is a tall, broad shouldered man with short, salt-and-pepper hair and piercing blue eyes. His face is weathered with many cares but he smiles easily. The king's armor is functional and well-worn, not the gilded armor of a noble. He wears a thin golden crown, small enough that it would not interfere should he need to don his helmet.

*"People of Loireag Marsh,"* Corben says in a bold voice. *"Your king salutes you for your bravery and for your victory against the Dark-fall. You are a glorious example of the Twin Virtues. Through Love, you found the courage to stand against inconceivable darkness. Through Justice, you found the strength to vanquish that darkness. Thanks to the valor of our steadfast friends from Mekanus, Murdoch's Cove stands, greater than it was before. A new garrison of the Radiant Order shall be constructed in this place, under the command of your Captain Dram Hollister."* The king draws a blazing silver sword and salutes the dwarven captain.


#### Friends and Allies

If the party played through *Radiant Demise*, they almost certainly have a few loyal allies who survived the Battle of Murdoch's Cove. What happens to them? For the most part, they return to their own lives and duties. Dennison Walcroix thanks the party for their aid and their friendship but tells them that he wishes to stay in Murdoch's Cove and continue studying the ruins and James Dex's journal. If the party is uneasy about leaving Walcroix unguarded, Kirkstaan assures them that the Radiant Order has a vested interest in Walcroix's studies and will ensure that he is well protected.

The player characters may have built a particularly strong friendship with an NPC who has no strong ties in the village (such as Redclaw or Old Willem) and wish to invite them along on their adventures. Feel free to allow this if you feel it is appropriate, as long as the party does not become congested with sidekicks. Now that the party is of an appropriate level, consider allowing player characters to adopt such NPC allies as permanent cohorts through the use of the Leadership feat, if you permit that feat in your campaign.







Captain Hollister drops to one knee and wordlessly accepts the honor with his typical gravity. Those who know him well will recognize that the old soldier is quite moved as the assembled knights echo the King's salute. King Corben waits for the villagers' raucous applause to fade and continues.

*"For now, the war against the Darkfall continues. To that end, I beseech an audience with the saviors of this village, the mighty Heroes of Loireag. If they would be so gracious, I ask one more boon of them. Please meet with me in the village chapel presently."*

Without another word, King Corben turns and marches into the church. Several of his knights follow while the rest take up positions outside.

Anyone with Knowledge (nobility) or Diplomacy should realize the unspoken import of the King's words. He has requested - not demanded - their counsel. Socially adept characters (DC 15 for either of the previously mentioned skills) can surmise that they should not keep the king waiting to avoid offering insult, especially in a village filled with dozens of his knights. All the same, King Corben has shown respect for the party's abilities and given them the opportunity to leave if they wish.

When the party enters the church, they find Corben in the tower, studying the dormant blackstone obelisk that is the Final Nexus. If the player characters never opened the sealed door to the tower, the knights breach it themselves during their investigations. The king is accompanied by a rapacian wearing a heavy black cloak with a blood red Celestial College stole. King Corben greets the party with a grim nod as they arrive.

*"So this grim horror is what drew such trouble here?"* he says with a frown. *"An ancient blasphemy from the empire of giants, if I have my guess. Such remnants litter the highlands of my kingdom, though I've never seen one quite like this. Even dormant I can feel its power, but I can only imagine its purpose. I suppose it's no surprise that agents of the Darkfall would have interest in it. Arasteen is fortunate that you were here to stand against them. Though I doubt this relic can be destroyed, my knights will see that it is contained and properly guarded."*

Corben goes on to thank the party members directly, mentioning some of their more noteworthy exploits from the final battle. He may also mention some of their significant achievements as Cogswheel Irregulars, demonstrating that he is well-informed of their history. He is particularly friendly if the party includes members or knight-brothers of the Radiant Order. He is slightly more guarded if the party is known to be affiliated with Urbane's Shadow Army, the Eye, or the Underground, but he acknowledges their heroic deeds nonetheless.

*"My advisors think it reckless to meet you personally,"* he says. *"As Cogswheel Irregulars you serve the Iron Tyrant. It is no secret that relations between Urbane and Arasteen have grown strained in recent years. I say that is irrelevant. I do not care if you serve Lord Urbane, Emperor Dyok, the Theocrat, or yourselves. All that matters is what you stand against. We are all comrades in this war against the Darkfall."* He gestures to the rapacian beside him. *"This is my friend, Elion. He serves the Rectory of Purification, a sect of the Radiant Order charged with the destruction of nocturnals and corrupted. He is one of the most talented wizards I have had the privilege of knowing."*

Elion steps forward, withdraws a small leaden box from his pocket, and opens it. *"Do you recognize these items?"* he whispers in a sibilant voice. Within the box rests a pair of blackened coins, each engraved with the image of a stylized spider. If the party recovered any amulets of Shermazza in previous volumes of this adventure, they recognize these items immediately. The king presses one finger to his lips, cautioning silence while the box is open. Elion carefully closes the box and puts it away again.

*"If you have seen anything like this,"* the rapacian asks, eyeing the party shrewdly. *"I caution you to tell me now. These amulets are the eyes and ears of our enemy. If you carry any, we must safely contain them before we speak further."*

If the party admits to having any amulets of Shermazza, Elion gives them another leaden box to store them in and encourages them to dispose of the accursed things where they will not be found. If the party

has amulets but refuses to admit it, then Shermazza continues monitoring them (which will cause considerable difficulty at the very least when they enter the cult's territory later).

*"For the last several months, a plague has ravaged northern Arasteen,"* the king says gravely. *"It has been named the Crystal Grief, as it was first seen in the Crystal Forest and its victims weep uncontrollably as the disease takes hold. The Grief has proven difficult to treat. Healing magic prolongs the inevitable but it cannot cure this ailment permanently."*

*"Elion believes that it is supernatural in origin. Several weeks ago, there was an outbreak in Great Rock. Our knights discovered a band of suspicious individuals smuggling infected corpses into the city. Those men died rather than allow themselves to be captured. One of them was wearing that amulet. My investigators discovered the second one in one of the mad alchemist's abandoned laboratories here in Loireag Marsh."*

*"This amulet is a symbol of Shermazza the Plague-Bringer,"* Elion adds, *"It is an ancient demon, bringer of sickness and disease. Creatures like this predate the Darkfall but have gladly aligned themselves with its evil. Shermazza is believed to have created the Weeping Death - a magical plague that nearly destroyed the nation of Aramyst seven hundred years ago."* Elion pauses uncertainly. *"According to what records we could find, the Weeping Death's symptoms are identical to Crystal Grief. I believe they are the same malady. I theorize that some foul cult has allied itself with this demon to some unspeakable end - the same cult you have named as enemy on multiple occasions."*

*"We have no record of how the Weeping Death was cured,"* Corben adds. *"But we know that Shermazza was defeated once before, in a small mining village named Cipere in the mountains of Aramyst. We know because Radiant knights were there. So deadly was this demon that the Seer Order called upon my order to help defeat it. If the Plague-Bringer is behind this, we may find answers in Cipere. Unfortunately Cipere's location is not marked on any of our maps."*

*"Which only raises more questions,"* Elion adds excitedly. *"Only the Celestial College could have arranged for an entire town to vanish from Aramystian records. There must be something worth learning there, something relating to Shermazza's defeat long ago."*

Corben pauses for a moment to hear the party's reactions. He will answer their questions as best he can before continuing (and the following is likely to address their most likely concerns).

*"The connection is, I admit, highly circumstantial,"* King Corben says. *"Our records of the incident are sparse. The Radiant Order is stretched thin due to the Crystal Grief and other threats. Our past attempts to explore the Ruined Kingdom have gone poorly. The Templar Council feels that dispatching a contingent of knights on the trail of a seven hundred year old rumor would be...what did they call me, Elion?"*

*"Unwise,"* the mage replies. *"Reckless. Irresponsible. 'Unforgivably rash,' I believe was the term Sir Beclain used..."*

*"Yes. I think that will do,"* the king replies with a chuckle. *"The Templars are not wrong to be cautious. Yet I cannot ignore such a promising lead. I had intended to hire thunder scouts to explore this mystery. Then I learned what happened here and your part in it. I feel certain that Shermazza is active and has dark designs for us all. I believe we can help one another. I can send you directly to Aramyst, circumventing a journey through thousands of miles of dangerous wasteland in a matter of moments. From there - just do what you do best. Find the truth about this Plague-Bringer. Help me save my people."*

If the party inquires whether there will be a reward, the king nods. *"Naturally,"* he says. *"I am willing to pay your group ten thousand gold crowns in return for any information that can help us end the plague - or 5,000 if you can at least confirm that Shermazza is connected so we know how to begin fighting it. Further, you will have the gratitude of the Radiant Order and all of Arasteen as well as the friendship of an unwise, reckless, irresponsible, unforgivably rash king."*

Though this reward may seem large, keep in mind that the player characters are expected to be 10th level by the end of this adventure. Adjust this amount accordingly for your preferred distribution of



wealth, so long as the king's bounty is impressive enough that the party would have difficulty refusing it.

If the party accepts (see the *But Thou Must...* sidebar), they may be curious how King Corben intends to transport them to Aramyst. Though Corben has many powerful spellcasters under his command, Aramyst is thousands of miles away. Transporting an entire party across such a distance would be a daunting (or at least time consuming) task for all but the most powerful wizards. This is to say nothing of the mounts, vehicles, and supplies they will require in the forsaken wasteland.

*"Travel to the village of Hammlish," the king instructs. "It is roughly 240 miles southeast of Murdoch's Cove. Report to the Radiant Order garrison there and ask for Sir Omren. He will arrange your journey. It is best if you do not know the full specifics until then. Omren will know you when he sees you. I advise you to be discreet. If you must tell others of this journey, tell only those that you trust implicitly. We have no idea how widespread this cult's agents might be, but we must assume that they are watching."*

*"Once you arrive in Aramyst, all I can advise is to prepare for the worst. Our intelligence reports indicate that there are only two major settlements in the entire nation - Refuge and Mossburg. Refuge is a gathering place for survivors of the Celestial College and Aramyst military. Mossburg is an outpost for Urbanan explorers, though they've apparently granted sanctuary to a large number of locals. Uncharacteristically altruistic for the Iron Tyrant's servants, but I suppose they are not without compassion."*

*"Everyone else in Aramyst maintains a nomadic lifestyle these days. The rest of the major cities are completely abandoned. I would advise a visit Mossburg or Refuge first, if only to get a better idea of the situation. Of course, that's up to you. I haven't been an adventurer in many years now; you know your trade better than I."*

## PREPARING FOR THE JOURNEY

King Corben has made arrangements in Murdoch's Cove to supply the party with two weeks' supply of water and rations, as well as mounts (riding horses for each party member that needs one plus 1-2 additional pack horses), tents, camping gear, and climbing kits for each party member. Any supplies beyond this are the party's responsibility. Information about their destination is more difficult to come by.

Aramyst is a troubled and chaotic place. All major cities and its government have been destroyed. Research on this forsaken wasteland can be difficult. This is especially true in Arasteen, separated from Aramyst by the vast deserts of the Rhanate. In Murdoch's Cove, only Old Willem has visited Aramyst since the Darkfall. He has visited Mossburg and Refuge and may be able to provide items from the Aramyst rumor table if the party is on good terms with him (or gets him drunk enough). Willem can't provide more than a few bits of old information - he doesn't know anything about the Svarog Horde, for example. His information is otherwise firsthand and reliable.

In Hammlish, the party can use Diplomacy (vs. DC 20) to gather more rumors. Unfortunately, few travelers know anything useful. Make this roll secretly, as a failed roll will result in inaccurate information. Even an accurate rumor will probably be accompanied by large amounts of hearsay and nonsense.

### But Thou Must...

Any time a party of player characters is offered the option to do something, there's a chance they'll refuse. This is fine; a real adventure should never feel predetermined - though it can be a bit of a problem when you've got a published campaign module that you'd like to use.

So what if the party refuses to help King Corben? If the gold reward and the gratitude of a king are insufficient motivation, there are a few ways to convince them. This can be a delicate balance of keeping the campaign on track without completely removing the element of choice. Consider why the player characters might refuse and adjust Corben's offer to make such refusal less likely. There are a number of good reasons a player character might say no (beyond just being contrary).

**LOYALTY TO ARASTEEN** - Party members who are knights of the Radiant Order may be reluctant to defy the Templar Council, even at King Corben's request. Presumably any such player characters are knights-errant or assigned to the party as part of a larger mission. In these cases, helping the king does not pose a conflict. Failing all else, the king foresees such a difficulty and makes efforts in advance to gain the Council's approval for the character to participate in this mission. Approval for a large expedition into the Ruined Kingdom is a difficult task; permission for a sole wandering knight is much simpler.

**PRIOR COMMITMENTS** - The players may be eager to return to their duties as Cogswheel Irregulars. In this case, the king invites Dennison Walcroix to the discussion as well. As an Elder of Mekanus, Walcroix can assign bounties to the Irregulars. Though it is unorthodox for the king of a foreign nation to do so, nothing explicitly forbids it. As the Cult of Shermazza has threatened Mekanus in the past and the Crystal Grief could devastate Urbana if it spreads further, Walcroix agrees that the mission is worth the Irregulars' time and officially approves the party's participation.

**IT'S NOT OUR PROBLEM** - Some characters may dislike the nation of Arasteen or the Radiant Order and feel no inclination to aid them. Some may not want to take such a long journey. For them, you can always make the job personal. Perhaps a friend or family member has contracted Crystal Grief. If this seems too contrived, after the end of *Radiant Demise*, some of the party's friends from Murdoch's Cove might have traveled north and contracted the Grief. Even the most rebellious player might accept such a duty to save his friends. In this scenario, Corben promises to assign talented healers to care for the party's loved ones, delaying the disease's progress via healing magic until their mission is complete.

Of course there are some player characters that rebel just for the sake of rebellion. If you are worried that they won't choose to help then don't bring the element of choice to the table. The various factions the party might have allied with so far - including the Cogswheel Irregulars - all have a vested interest in making sure the Crystal Grief does not spread. Even the Eye and the Underground would be willing to help King Corben to prevent such a disaster. These groups could simply command the party to help. Use this only as a last resort; the party is about to take their first step into a larger world. It's better if they make that step of their own accord.



Characters with the Knowledge (history or local) skill might already know something about Aramyst. The DC of this check is at least 25, possibly higher for obscure information (reduce this DC by 5 for a character who has visited Aramyst or one of its neighboring countries since the Darkfall). A failed roll results in inaccurate or untruthful information.

The following rumors can potentially be learned.

**Aramyst Rumor Table**  
(roll 1d20 or choose as appropriate)

**d20 Result**

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 1  | Aramyst is a desolate land where little grows other than poisonous ruinweed. Make sure to bring plenty of food. (true)   |
| 2  | The Celestial College is responsible for the Darkfall. That's why they died. They unleashed this evil, so it killed them first. (hearsay)                          |
| 3  | The Burning Coast is consumed by magical fire that only burns living creatures. (true)   |
| 4  | Aramyst is cursed. At any point, the ground can burst into flames. (true)  |
| 5  | Most Aramystians are nomads. There are only two stable settlements - Refuge and Mossburg. (true)   |
| 6  | Aramystians are so desperate for food that many of them have resorted to cannibalism. (false)  |
| 7  | Mossburg is governed by Urbanan treasure hunters. (true)   |
| 8  | They say that Lord Urbane is preparing to send his Thunder Trains to Aramyst and conquer it. (false, at least for now)   |
| 9  | Most towns and cities are abandoned. Some are occupied by nocturnals or opportunistic bandits. (true)  |
| 10 | The fires in Aramyst turned the place into a desert, with no fresh water. (mostly true; though not quite a desert water can be hard to find)                       |
| 11 | Refuge is the largest city in Aramyst. (true)  |
| 12 | The Celestial College made a deal with nocturnals, sacrificing the people for their own lives. If you wear a College stole, nocturnals won't attack you. (false)   |
| 13 | Many nocturnals in Aramyst are resistant to fire and magic. (true)   |
| 14 | The Celestial College survivors have gathered in Refuge. (true, but there aren't many of them)   |
| 15 | The nocturnals in Aramyst are resistant to fire and magic. (true in many cases)  |
| 16 | With most of the people gone, the wastes have become a breeding ground for drakes the size of houses. (inaccurate - there are a few drakes but they aren't common) |
| 17 | Aramyst is ruled by ghosts; anyone who goes there risks being haunted for the rest of their days. (no more or less true than the rest of Aden)                     |
| 18 | The Ruined Kingdom is a dream, if you're bold. Vast wealth and magic was left behind, just waiting to be claimed. (partially true)                                 |
| 19 | Roll twice, ignoring a result of 19-20.  |
| 20 | Roll three times, ignoring a result of 19-20.  |

Unfortunately, no one in Murdoch's Cove or Hammlish knows anything useful about Cipere. The village was an obscure mining town prior to the Darkfall, intentionally omitted from maps to protect the Seer Order's secret vault there. Its original population perished during the first days of the Darkfall. Learning Cipere's fate is the party's first challenge, so they should only discover its location in advance if you wish to move things along more quickly.

## CORBEN'S GAMBIT

The Templar Council has been particularly divisive of late. Attempts to contain the plague have been hampered by bureaucratic ineptitude to the point that Corben has begun to suspect that there is more than incompetence to blame. He suspects that someone is influencing the Templar Council against Arasteen's best interests. He hopes to flush out his enemies and to that end he has an ulterior motive in approaching the party..

That is why he has met publicly with heroes who have already proven to be enemies of the Cult of Shermazza. The only people who knew the purpose of the meeting in Murdoch's Cove are Elion (one of Corben's closest friends) and the Templar Council. If the cult attacks the party on the road to Hammlish, the king will know he has a greater problem.

Fortunately, the players don't need to deal with a corrupt Templar Council today. They will, however, have to deal with the cult's ambush.

### Ambush on the Road to Hammlish

The party is left to find their own way to Hammlish, which shouldn't be particularly difficult given that it's a decent-sized town clearly marked on any map of Arasteen. Traveling from Murdoch's Cove to Hammlish could take anywhere from several days to a week, depending on the party's mode of transportation. Use the Highlands of Arasteen random encounter table from *Radiant Demise* to determine any other encounters they may find along the way (if you do not possess *Radiant Demise*, simply use the encounter tables from this book. Replace any bandit or nomad encounters with merchants or travelers and reroll anything else that would be inappropriate outside of Aramyst).

The cult has dispatched a number of its agents to Murdoch's Cove to monitor the party's activities. They are led by a jurak thunder scout named Ogani Veyan and a ferran sorcerer named Pang. These cultists normally operate in the guise of traveling merchants. They were instructed to keep watch but avoid drawing suspicion - which Pang accomplishes by using his bat familiar to spy on the party. (As a ferran, Pang can use his *feral speech* ability to communicate more efficiently with his familiar than a normal sorcerer.) If you'd like this encounter to have more punch, consider having the party first encounter the bandits in their merchant disguises while they are still in Murdoch's Cove. Perhaps the player characters even purchased supplies from them.

Shortly before King Corben arrives, they receive additional instructions. They are to monitor the party and, if they meet with the king, follow and kill them. They are to take a prisoner for interrogation if possible. Shermazza was unable to monitor Karloff Radool in his final moments and does not know exactly what happened to him. When the party departs, Pang's familiar will try to keep the party in sight and wait for the most opportune time to strike. Failing that, Ogani tracks them using Survival. The cultists plan to wait until the party is a few days away from Murdoch's Cove before they strike, to reduce the chances that the Radiant Order might interfere. There are a number of ways the eventual ambush could occur.

1) If Ogani's steamwagon is faster than the party's transportation, the cultists go off road, outdistance them, and set up an ambush using trees or a canyon as cover.

2) As above, but if Ogani and Pang know the player characters they may pretend that their steamwagon has broken down in the road and call out to them for help, encouraging the party to drop their guard and give up details regarding the purpose of their trip. The other cultists hide nearby and wait for a signal to strike.

3) If the party has a reputation for altruistic behavior, the cultists might kill a small group of travelers and lie among the bodies and wrecked wagons (or simply create illusions of a wrecked caravan using *minor image*). They to be injured victims and call out for help until the party approaches to assist them.



4) If the party is faster than the cultists, they are forced to be more spontaneous. Ogani tries to catch up when the party camps for the night. If they camp in the wild, the cultists ambush their camp. Otherwise, they ride ahead and attempt to prepare an ambush as above (but the party may notice their tracks if they are cautious).

5) If the player characters are so paranoid that they avoid the main roads and have faster transportation than Ogani, they may avoid the ambush altogether. Ogani and the others will follow the party into Hammlish, hoping to attack them if they rest in an inn for the night. This is purely a desperation move. The cultists don't really want to attack the party in a village full of Radiant knights, but they don't want to fail Shermazza either. If the party immediately journeys to the *Rosengate* and leaves for Aramyst, they will the cultists without ever even realizing that they did so.

In any case, the cultists avoid ambushing the party if they are outnumbered, especially if any Radiant knights are present. Ogani and Pang know that the player characters have already killed several prominent members of the cult. They don't want to take unnecessary risks.

### Shermazza Cultist Ambush \* Total CR 8



**CR 5 - XP 1,600**

**Male ferran sneak (bat) sorcerer (arcane bloodline) 6**

**Medium humanoid (ferran)**

**Init +2; Senses low-light vision; Perception +1**

#### Defense

**AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16** (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 size, +1 deflection)

**hp 32** (6d6+6) plus 11 temp hp

**Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7**

#### Offense

**Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.** (average)

**Melee 2 claws +2** (1d3 -1)

**Ranged masterwork pistol +6** (1d8+1)

#### Sorcerer Spells Known

**0-Level** – *detect magic, light, mending, message, prestidigitation, ray of frost, read magic*

**1st Level** (7/day) – *color spray* (16), *ear-piercing scream* (DC 14), *identify, mage armor, vanish*

**2nd Level** (6/day) – *false life, invisibility, minor image* (DC 17)

**3rd Level** (4/day) – *lightning bolt*

Pang has cast *mage armor* and *false life* on himself prior to the encounter. This is accounted for in his stats.

#### Statistics

**Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 16**

**Base Atk +3; CMB +1; CMD 13**

**Feats** Still Spell, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Focus (illusion), Weapon Finesse

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill), folk magic (bonus spell added to spells known)

**Skills** Bluff 6 (+15), Fly 6 (+11), Stealth 6 (+15)

**Languages** Western Common

**SQ** arcane bond (bat familiar), eschew materials, feral speech (rodents), Guile of Shermazza, metamagic adept (1/day)

**Equipment** 10 standard pistol ammunition, *amulet of Shermazza*, dagger, *feather token* (bird), masterwork pistol, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *ring of protection +1*, *wand of mount* (27 charges), 123 gp



**CR 4 - XP 1,200**

**Male jurak thunder scout 5**

**Medium humanoid (orc)**

**Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Perception +8**

#### Defense

**AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14** (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp 50** (5d8+10)

**Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +2**

**Special defenses** hardy, scout's mobility

#### Offense

**Speed 40 ft.**

**Melee masterwork battleaxe +8** (1d8+3)

**Ranged masterwork pistol +9** (1d10+1)

**Special attacks** blood frenzy

#### Thunder Scout Spells Prepared

**0-Level** – *everheat rune, light*

**1st Level** – *longstrider, repair vehicle*

Pang has cast *longstrider* on himself prior to the encounter. This is accounted for in his stats.

#### Thunder Scout Techniques

expert gunner, high speed attack

#### Statistics

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

**Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 20**

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Expert Gunner, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Reload (Pistol)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Bluff and counts as class skill), grease monkey (bonus vehicle feature)

**Skills** Bluff 5 (+12), Craft (machinery) 5 (+10), Disable Device 5 (+12), Knowledge (geography) 5 (+10), Knowledge (local) 5 (+10), Perception 5 (+8), Stealth 5 (+10), Survival 5 (+10)

**Languages** Earthtongue, Jurakti, Lowland, Western Common

**SQ** Guile of Shermazza, orc blood, wastelander

**Equipment** 30 standard pistol ammunition, dagger, driving goggles, engineer's toolkit, *eye of Shermazza*, *Iron Guard Field Guide* (enhanced, grants one technique for 24 hours), masterwork battleaxe, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork pistol (with silencer), masterwork thieves tools, *potion of cat's grace*, 54 gp

#### Ogani's Signature Vehicle – Steamwagon

**Huge Manite-Powered Vehicle**

**Caster Level 5th**

**AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 16** (+8 armor, +2 dodge, -2 size)

**Hit Points 42** (4d10+20)

**Speed 60 ft.; Speeding 20 ft.**

**Space 15 ft. X 20 ft.**

**Str 16, Dex 10**

**CMB +5, CMD 15** (+8 vs. trip)

**Crew Stations** pilot, 2 gunners

**Weapons** 2 gunner tripods

**Cover** partial

**Engine Type** basic

**Bonus Features** (one feature spent to remove ponderous disadvantage), all-terrain, armor (medium), high speed (6 X speed when rushing), increased hauling,



## Shermazzan Cultists (x4)

(see appendix, use Experienced Thug statistics)

CR 2 each - XP 600 each

hp 32 each

In combat, Ogani tries to remain in his steamwagon and attack with his pistol, running down any party members who attempt to flee or attack at range. Pang uses his natural flying abilities to stay out of the party's reach, perching to cast spells or using Still Spell to cast while flying if necessary (he possesses the new *ferran wings* racial ability described in the appendix). The cultists are zealots who fight to the death. If captured alive, they say little other than that they serve Shermazza and the cult has marked them for death. Pang, leader of the group, receives his instructions directly from the demon in dreams. (He loses his ability to do so if his *eye of Shermazza* is taken away).

Pang and Ogani are ambitious but relatively expendable members of the cult. The two often squabble over who is the leader of their cell (technically it's Pang, but the cultists respect Ogani more). Pang considers Ogani to be a brutish savage, only worth keeping around for his vehicle. Ogani considers Pang an arrogant fool, and can never resist the urge to taunt the sorcerer for his small size. It's entirely possible that the two might squander a momentary advantage to squabble among themselves, especially if a clever party member encourages the obvious rift between them.

## HAMMLISH

After the party has finished dealing with the cultists and whatever other troubles they find on the road, they arrive in Hammlish. It is a quiet town surrounded by sturdy walls and policed by Radiant knights. Though not a major metropolis, it is a great deal larger than Murdoch's Cove (population 2,000) and thus a better place for the party to pick up whatever supplies and information they might still need.

Whenever they're ready, the party can report to the Radiant Order (they're easy to find) and ask for Sir Omren. The resident knights are polite and friendly, if a bit guarded around foreigners. They inform the party that they're in luck, as Sir Omren just returned from a special assignment. The knights are happy to escort the party to meet the commander - who turns out to be King Corben's rapacious friend, the wizard, Elion.

Sir Elion Omren is pleased to see the party and amused at any possible confusion regarding his presence. The mage tells them that he teleported ahead to wait for their arrival, and admits that they were sent without escort as both a test of their abilities and in hopes of flushing out any Shermazzan spies. (It wasn't a totally heartless move; Omren is not quite powerful enough to have teleported an entire party as well as their equipment, steeds, and vehicles.) If the party reports the ambush, he is deeply concerned and asks about the attackers in detail. He's delighted if they captured any of the cultists alive, paying a bounty of 100 gold per cultist they surrender to the city guard.

Sir Omren assures the party that they are safe in Hammlish under the Order's protection and encourages them to take their time preparing to leave for Aramyst. While the situation in the north is dire, he sees no sense in sending the party into the Ruined Kingdom unprepared. He warns them that they will not be able to return to Arasteen easily. When they are ready, he escorts them to a fortified bunker on the southern end of town, under constant guard by Radiant knights. The entrance is large enough to admit the party, their mounts, and even a vehicle as large as a steamwagon. Several guards escort the party as they enter the bunker.

"This is the Hammlish armory," Sir Omren says. "It's also a storehouse for a certain magical artifact that is too potentially dangerous to keep in the capital. Though I like to think I'm a skilled wizard, even I

can't transport all of you to Aramyst in a single day. But the relic we've got sealed away in here can do it. Don't worry, it's perfectly safe for our purposes. As safe as old Formori magic can be, at any rate, but you already have experience with that."

The armory's spacious interior is lined with unlabeled storage crates, most of which have not been disturbed in some time. A Perception check vs. DC 15 may note patterns in the dust that indicate several crates have recently been moved away from a pair of large steel doors. The guards open the doors to reveal a cavernous interior room. Several Radiant knights, three of them wearing robes similar to Elion's, wait inside. A large blackstone archway dominates the center of the room, twenty feet high and nearly thirty feet across. Faintly glowing runes cover the entirety of its surface, intricately carved in a strangely alien hand.

The guards are heavily armed, alert and ready for a fight. They pay little mind to the party. All of them are focused upon the archway, as if something might spring out at any moment.

"Don't mind them," Elion assures everyone. "We don't take any chances with the Rosengate. As far as we know, nothing can come through unless we allow it, but no sense in taking risks."

### The Heart of Tarello

This magical amulet can be found in the first volume of this Adventure Path, the eponymous *Heart of the Machine*. The *Heart* was once a priceless heirloom of the Tarello dynasty of Columbey, but that was not its original purpose. It was originally created to control the *Rosengates*.

If the party still possesses the *Heart*, cracks in the amulet's golden surface begin to shine brightly, as if a light were trapped inside. It becomes noticeably warmer in the presence of the Hammlish *Rosengate*. The runes on the gate's surface pulse and throb brightly in a rhythm that matches the amulet's light. If Elion sees this, he is intrigued. He asks if he might borrow the amulet while they are in Aramyst so he can study its properties (and will even offer to purchase it for 3,000 gold crowns). He will not press the issue if they refuse. He will explain that the amulet seems to be similar in design to the one he uses to control the Hammlish *Rosengate* (though his own amulet does not provoke such a dramatic reaction).

(Note: more information on the *Rosengates*, the *Heart of Tarello* and how they function can be found in the Appendix.)

"This," Sir Omren says as he steps toward the platform, "Is a *Rosengate*. It is a powerful artifact from ancient times - like the one you found in Loireag, though not built for such malevolent purposes. There were seven of these gates, once. They were used as weapons during the Great War, spiriting entire armies across the continent in the blink of an eye. When the war ended, the Seer Order gave one these gates to each of the nations that helped forge the Peace of the Rose. We used them to communicate, occasionally to aid one another when our cousins were threatened. Now... well, now times have changed."

"Over the centuries, most of the *Rosengates* were lost or destroyed. The Silent One's undead legions destroyed the Carrite gate in the Sixth Century. In the Eight Century, the Vanoran gate was shattered to keep foreigners from aiding the Emperor during one of their many civil wars. The Yzeemite gate was lost at sea seventy years ago and Justice only knows what the Kyanites did with theirs. The Columbey gate was lost during the Darkfall. The other gate is in the heart of Aramyst, relatively intact."

"Just before the Darkfall, the Celestial College had moved the gate as part of some grand project. They were using the *Rosengate* to transport raw materials from Urbana. The Aramyst *Rosengate* is too damaged to send anything anywhere anymore but it still functions as a point of arrival. That is where you will be going. Here's a map, by



the way. It's old, but I've updated it as best I can with a few points of interest."

Sir Omren gives them a pre-Darkfall map of Aramyst, with the locations of Mossburg, Refuge, and Quintus Station (the location of the Rosengate) added in a newer hand.

"You'll probably want to visit one of the two remaining cities, if only to resupply. Of the two, Refuge is larger and closer to your point of arrival," he continues. "However, Mossburg is governed by Urbanan explorers. Given your past service to the Iron Tyrant, they may be more welcoming."

The mage regards the party solemnly. "I have scribed upon your destination and the point of arrival seems safe enough, but it's still Aramyst. Even the wastelands of Urbana do not compare to the dangers you will find there. This is not the first time we have attempted to use the Rosengate to reach the Ruined Kingdom. Shortly after the Darkfall, when we lost contact with the Celestial College, King Corben sent a Templar and a dozen of our bravest knights through the Rosengate. They did not return."

"Let me be entirely clear," Elion continues. "Caspegar was a Templar, one of the greatest of us. All such knights are bound to one another by ancient ritual. When a Templar dies, his brothers can sense it, no matter the distance. When a Templar becomes lost, his brothers can find him. But no one knows what became of Sir Caspegar. Hours after arriving in Aramyst, he ceased to exist. That's the sort of danger you will face. Even magic cannot trace him. It is as if he never existed. That is why the Council refuses to send another force of knights through. Where the King is concerned, you are unfortunately a very rare mix of formidable and expendable. We are desperate, but not without honor. We would have you know what you face."

"You won't be entirely alone, however. I will check in on you periodically via magic, but I cannot directly aid you at such a great distance. Once you step through, there will be no turning back."

Elion will attempt to contact the party seven days after their departure, at dawn, via use of a *sending* spell (he picks the party leader or whatever player character seems the most reliable as the target). He will continue to contact them once per week afterward. A *sending* offers only limited communication (25 words or less in either direction) but it's enough to give a general sense of the party's progress. If the player characters have some other means of communication that they prefer to use, they should make arrangements now.

When the party is prepared to return, Elion will make his way to Aramyst to retrieve them. He warns them that the process of transporting everyone back from Aramyst should not be attempted until they are certain that there is nothing left to accomplish there.

When everyone is ready to go, Elion draws a shimmering blackstone amulet and begins chanting in an ancient tongue. Skilled linguists (Linguistics vs. DC 25) recognize this as an archaic dialect of Giant, a prayer entreats unknown powers to split the boundaries of time and space. The gateway erupts with brilliant red light in response. Elion gestures at the party, encouraging them to step through.

## QUINTUS STATION

As the characters pass through the *Rosengate*, they are filled with a sense of dizziness. Swirling gray mists surround them. They float in this nebulous state for an uncertain amount of time. Vague, indescribable shapes pass through the mists around them, giving the sense that they are moving at incredible speed. A vast rumble, somewhere between thunder and the moan of an impossibly large slumbering creature surrounds them and increases in volume as they gain speed.

As quickly as the bizarre process began, the ground becomes solid beneath their feet and they find themselves standing in the center of a shattered blackstone archway in the center of a rocky canyon. Stone walls rise sixty feet high on each side. If it is daytime, the sun blazes

hot above them. Deeper in the canyon, roughly a quarter of a mile to the north, they can see a large ruined structure. The area is littered with scrap metal and hunks of rusting machinery.

Strange, hulking figures move about near the ruins, reptilian humanoid seemingly hewn from red-hot stone. These are obviously not humans, but can be identified as salamanders with a Knowledge - planes skill check vs. DC 12. The southern end of the canyon opens up to blighted Aramystian wasteland.

Four pairs of steel tracks run from the depths of this building through the canyon and off into the distance. Player characters may recognize these (with a DC 12 Knowledge - engineering check or a DC 17 Knowledge - History check) as tracks for a steam engine - smaller, less advanced variants of the enormous Urbanan Thunder Trains that (like real world trains) are bound to fixed tracks. The tracks look to be in surprisingly good condition.

Prior to the Darkfall, this was Quintus Station, the central hub of Aramyst's future railway network. The Aramyst *Rosengate* had been relocated here so that materials could be quickly transported from Columbey. In recent months, the station has become a forward position for Baleth's army. In a surprising coincidence, an old enemy of the party is also present - Terablix the Autonomous, Lord of the Lost Ghetto (who the party first encountered in *Heart of the Machine*).

Years ago, the Golem King conquered Tarello's noble district and claimed Columbey's *Rosengate*. After Lord Urbane took the city back and rechristened it Mekanus, Terablix began experimenting with the gate in hopes of using it to transport more nocturnal reinforcements into the city. He sent two of his minions through the gate - golems animated by independent fragments of his demonic consciousness, much like the constructs the party faced before. When the golems discovered that they could not return through the gate, Terablix lost interest and allowed his minions to fall dormant. For years they sat motionless amid the ruined machinery in the canyon, watching the gate.





When Baleth's troops arrived, Terablix's avatars awakened and prepared for battle. To their surprise, the golems were approached by emissaries from the Cult of Shermazza. Before he bound himself to a golem army, Terablix was an ancient demon, a brother-in-arms to Shermazza. Out of respect, Terablix permitted the Svarog Horde to occupy the station in return for the cult's aid in repairing the *Rosengate*.

These events occurred just prior to the Circle of Fire and Steel's arrival in the Lost Ghetto and were, in part, why the golem king was willing to tolerate the cult's presence in his territory. Terablix's golems have resumed their silent vigil over the broken *Rosengate*, immovable as statues, waiting for the Shermazzans to repair the artifact. Terablix has been growing impatient with the cult's failure to keep their end of the bargain and has begun to consider purging the salamanders from Quintus Station. He puts these plans aside when the party arrives.

Terablix's avatars attack immediately. If the party fought his minions before, they recognize the player characters (and are particularly vindictive toward whoever killed their brethren the last time). Though surprised to see them here, Terablix is eager to settle the score. Even if the party has never met Terablix, the golem king is enraged that someone else has discovered a way to use the *Rosengates*.



### Terabits (x2)

CR 8 - XP 4,800

hp 75 each (see *Heart of the Machine*, p. 46)

(If *Heart of the Machine* is not available, you can substitute one terabot from the appendix of this adventure, but be aware that this monster presents a substantially more difficult encounter.)

The terabits fight fearlessly with no concern for their safety. If the party has fought Terablix's avatars before, the golems promise that there will be no escape from the Immortal King's vengeance. The golems fight recklessly. They are expendable pawns and their destruction will only quickly reunite them with Terablix's consciousness, informing him of the party's presence in Aramyst.

The Terabits try to delay the party while the salamanders in the train station mobilize. They make as much noise as possible (considering they are steam-powered metal giants - that's considerable). If the party can't keep things quiet and does not leave the area within three rounds, a trio of salamander myrmidons arrives to assist the Terabits.



### Salamander Myrmidons (x3)

CR 3 (each) (see appendix) - XP 800

hp 38

If the party continues fighting, a salamander warlord and two titans arrive three rounds later.



### Salamander Warlord

CR 5 (see appendix) - XP 1,600

hp 47



### Salamander Titans (x2)

CR 6 (each) (see appendix) - XP 2,400

hp 77

If they continue to stubbornly stand against the salamander camp, the rest of the entrenched salamanders (four more titans and a dozen myrmidons) emerge in an all-out assault four rounds after that. Additionally, if either of the golems has been destroyed, Terablix dispatches a terabot through the *Rosengate* (see appendix). If the party somehow

manages to defeat this vast and powerful enemy force, congratulations! They have won a significant victory against the Svarog Horde.

Except for the initial golem ambush, none of these attacking waves come as a surprise. The player characters can see the salamander forces coming. It should be clear that the party has been dropped in the middle of extremely hostile territory and faces a vastly superior force. Fortunately, assuming the party took mounts and/or vehicles through the gate with them, they should be able to easily outdistance the salamanders and golems.

Failing that, a character that makes an active Perception check (vs. DC 20) looking for a way out will notice that many of the rocks at the top of the canyon look unstable. Inflicting at least 30 damage (or 15 damage with an area effect) against the rock wall will cause an avalanche that collapses into a twenty foot long area surrounding the impact, stretching the width of the canyon. This avalanche inflicts 8d6 crushing damage on anything caught in this area, Reflex save DC 15 for half damage. The avalanche leaves a wall of rubble roughly 10 feet high in the center of this area, as well as transforming the earth within 30 feet on either side into difficult terrain. Unless timed exquisitely, even this avalanche probably won't do much more than thin the enemy numbers, but it will slow pursuit enough to offer a chance for retreat.

The salamanders won't pursue the player characters far. They've been ordered to hold the station and are likely to interpret the party's sudden appearance and retreat as a feint intended to lead them away from their post. Terablix, however, is not content to simply let the party escape. He will pursue them relentlessly until his avatars are destroyed and send more of them to Aramyst as soon as he can (see the following chapter).

If the party succeeds or returns to scout the area via stealth or invisibility, they find that Quintus station is an abandoned, dilapidated ruin full of abandoned train cars long since picked clean by scavengers. The salamander camp is the only sign of life. It houses a *balefire cauldron* and stacks of the salamanders' strange mineral rations (worthless, unless you're a salamander). There isn't much else in the camp of use, though it's a solid structure with great natural defenses. A victory against this overwhelming force also gives the party easier access to the Quintus *Rosengate*, should they endeavor to destroy or repair it (see appendix for details).

## EXPLORING THE RUINED KINGDOM

Once the party has escaped (or liberated) Quintus Station, they are free to explore Aramyst. Their primary objective is to find information regarding Shermazza and the Weeping Death. Barring any other rumors they may have accumulated, the only clue they are guaranteed to know is that Shermazza was defeated in the remote mining village of Cipere. Chances are, they'll follow Corben and Elion's advice and head for one of the two cities.

One set of train tracks from Quintus station leads to Refuge. The others branch out in other directions (toward Regorra, Lora and Nay) before abruptly stopping a mile from the intersection. The tracks don't end due to damage (though they are severely damaged in some areas) and they don't seem unfinished. They just intentionally end in the middle of nowhere roughly a mile or so after branching off.

Though the players don't know it yet, these trains were intended to travel through the Corridor, making tracks necessary only near their intended points of arrival. Cipere once provided some of the materials required for the network's construction, so tracks were laid all the way to the village so that said materials could be transported in a conventional fashion while the network was being built. As fate would have it, these were the same tracks that Jerek and his followers followed to their eventual sanctuary over a decade ago.



### Gathering Information (Again)

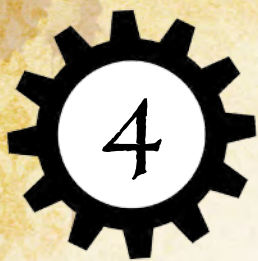
The players can dig for more information on the current situation in Aramyst in Mossburg, Refuge, or even from friendly nomad groups. They can find any of the rumors listed on the earlier table and can verify the accuracy of some of the wild things they've heard. Almost all locals know that Aramyst is currently threatened by the Svarog Horde, an army of salamanders that rose from the depths of Mount Svarog. The attack was terrifying and unprecedented, as salamanders normally grow much weaker or even die when they linger too long on the surface.

The Horde is supported by the mysterious Cult of Shermazza; little is known about them other than that they worship an ancient demon and that any survivors left behind by the Horde are enslaved and taken by the cult to provide labor for the Horde or meet other unknown fates. As many of the cultists appear to be Cielan in origin, most assume that the cult's presence is just the latest incarnation of Le'Ciel's ancient grudge against Aramyst.

The locals also offer tips on how to survive in the wasteland, especially how to recognize when the Burning is about to strike and how to avoid it.







# THROUGH PLAGUE AND FIRE

## ACT 2 – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Once the characters are in Aramyst, the sequence of events becomes looser and more organic. Initially, the characters are only here to find information about Shermazza and, hopefully, a cure for the Crystal Grief. However, their investigations cause them to become embroiled in the conflict between the survivors of Aramyst and the Svarog Horde. What course their adventures take depends on the pace of your campaign and your player's decisions. A general sequence of events might be as follows.

- 1 – The party arrives in Aramyst.
- 2 – The party journeys to Refuge and/or Mossburg searching for information.
- 3 – The party either begins exploring the wasteland, performing heroic deeds to gain the locals' trust, or seeking information by fighting the Horde directly.
- 4 – After the characters have gained some notoriety, they learn about the Seer vault beneath Cipere Mine from either Jerek or Gentor.
- 5 – The characters are approached by Prince Rashom of Svarog, deposed ruler of the salamanders. He tells them when and where to rescue the lost Templar, Caspegar, in return for future considerations once is brother his deposed.
- 6 – The heroes rescue Caspegar and learn the truth about the vault beneath Cipere Mine, leading to Act III.

The following section details a variety of potential encounters the party may find during their adventures in Aramyst. Insert these into the adventure as appropriate, along with random encounters and the like, to suit the pace of your campaign.

### SEEKING REFUGE

#### Location: Refuge

When the party first visits Refuge, they receive a lukewarm reception. The residents are too concerned with their own troubles to worry about another band of strangers. Even if the player characters claim to have been sent by King Corben, it has little impact. The citizens either don't believe them or don't care. Even if the players prove they are emissaries of the Radiant Order, Jerek and the College Remnants are relatively unmoved. They are not without sympathy for victims of the Crystal Grief but they have more urgent problems. Aramyst is far away and the Radiant Knights haven't done much to aid them the last decade; why should they concern themselves with a plague on the far side of the continent?

On a more positive note, finding information about Cipere is easy. Though none of the original residents survived the Darkfall, Refuge's original name is common knowledge. Beyond that, little is known about Shermazza other than that it is the same demon worshipped by Baleth and his cultist allies. Where the history of Cipere is concerned, the only

residents that know more are Jerek, Atticus Caesar, and Seven Fourteen, none of whom will tell the party everything they know until they establish themselves as local heroes.

In addition to the previously listed ways in which the characters can demonstrate their worthiness, the leaders of Refuge will appreciate the following deeds:

- ✦ If the party drove the salamanders out of Quintus Station. (If they wait too long after clearing it to announce their deed, Baleth's Horde will retake the area or another band of adventurers will take credit for the deed.)
- ✦ If any member of the party is a member of the Celestial College and can prove it. Atticus Caesar will provide a short test of one's credentials requiring a Knowledge (arcana) check vs. DC 15 (DC 40, in addition to a successful Bluff check vs. Atticus Caesar, if the character is lying). Caesar detests Celestial College imposters and will advise Jerek against trusting the party if this attempt fails, requiring two additional heroic deeds.
- ✦ If the party can capture a truly unique wildlife specimen of at least CR 9 and safely deliver it to Atticus Caesar for study in his menagerie. Caesar accepts only truly unusual creatures, such as Ragewood the mad treant. (For lesser creatures, see the *Caesar's Menagerie* encounter.) Caesar does not collect nocturnals.
- ✦ If the party delivers a large shipment of food to the settlement (at least 2000 rations worth; using magic to help trade food between Mossburg and Refuge counts separately from this deed).
- ✦ If the party rescues Sergeant Korak (see *Korak's Standoff*).

### ARRIVAL IN MOSSBURG

#### Location: Mossburg

If the party has completed *Heart of the Machine*, they feel a sense of déjà vu upon their arrival in Mossburg. Unlike the battered ruins that fill so much of Aramyst, Mossburg is reminiscent of an Urbanan military base. Though smaller than Refuge and built in a less defensible position, it is orderly, well-fortified, and protected by Shadow Army soldiers.

The gate guards inspect the party to insure they aren't obvious nocturnals or carrying dangerous contraband. If the party seems well-armed and tough (which is likely) the soldiers recommend that they check in with Sergeant Shivek to see if anything needs to be done to assist in the war effort. They don't ask if the characters are interested in helping - it's generally assumed that everyone who can contribute to Mossburg's survival is wise enough to do so.

Much like Jerek, Captain Gentor will not make time for the party or share information with them until they gain his attention. This can be done in a number of ways, in addition to those previously listed:



## Proving Themselves

Though the player characters may be regarded as heroes in Mekanus and Murdoch's Cove, they have to start from scratch to prove themselves in the wasteland. Neither Jerek nor Captain Gentor willingly make an audience with an unknown band of adventurers; both of them are terribly busy and have underlings that deal with those sorts of things. Between managing the defense of their cities and attending to the numerous other duties of leadership they have little time to spare. Even were this not the case, it wouldn't be the first time that a disguised assassin pretended to have an urgent message.

If the heroes want to be accepted, they'll have to prove that they're trustworthy and competent. This can be done in a number of ways. You can either spell these out specifically or leave the players to discover how to win Aramyst's trust on their own. The party should accomplish at least four of the deeds on the following list. Except for the bounties and where otherwise noted, each of these deeds only counts once.

The party's reputation precedes them, either via rumor carried by merchants and other travelers or through direct conversation during Gentor and Caesar's daily visits to the other city. Any deeds accomplished for either city count toward their overall reputation with Aramyst.

◦ If the party possesses a functioning *balefire cauldron* and are willing to give it to Gentor's apprentices or the College Remnants for study. This can be done once per city.

◦ Some extremely smooth talking - Diplomacy vs. DC 30 on top of a reason persuasive enough to convince Seven-Fourteen (Refuge) or Sergeant Shivek (Mossburg) to take the risk. If the characters haven't accomplished any other deeds, completing this one will also convince the respective liaison to give the players a clearer idea of what else they need to do.

◦ If the characters are capable of using *teleport* and agree to assist the cities by transporting salt and moss-weed between Refuge and Mossburg. If they agree to do this, they are supplied with a *bag of holding* with which to carry cargo and a *teleportation stone* (see appendix) for each city. Though the bag is merely a loan while they transport the cargo, the stones are theirs to keep. The party must make at least one round trip per day for a week for this to count as a heroic deed. As the party is unlikely to have access to *teleport* until this adventure is almost complete, this may be difficult to accomplish while it still matters. Regardless, the Aramystians appreciate such invaluable assistance and may compensate the teleporting player character with minor scrolls or potions for their trouble.

◦ Mossburg and Refuge each have specific worthy deeds that can be performed, listed in their respective encounter sections.

Use common sense in arbitrating the progression of these deeds so that it feels realistic. If the party has finished three deeds and four bounty missions for Refuge, having Gentor refuse giving them the time of day only to invite them to his home after they knock off a bountied smuggler may feel a bit abrupt and artificial. As the players begin to prove themselves, they should gradually gain the Aramystians' attention and learn more about the area. In truth, they aren't really working toward impressing Gentor or Jerek. They're working toward proving themselves a threat to the Cult of Shermazza. Once they've established themselves, Prince Rashom, Balet's rival, will approach them. (See *The Traitor Prince* encounter for details).

Naturally this isn't the only course the players can take. Through random exploration they may stumble over Sir Caspegar or learn how to open the vault beneath Cipere without him. Rashom will still take advantage of the situation and attempt to steal the Lexicon from the party - it just won't have the same sting of betrayal when he does.

- ❖ If the party is allied with the Eye and give Lieutenant Elisif an appropriate coded phrase to indicate such.
- ❖ If the party has captured a live salamander warlord, Shermazzan priest, or Shermazzan sorcerer and delivers the prisoner to Elisif for interrogation.
- ❖ If any member of the party is a member of the Shadow Army and can prove it. Lieutenant Elisif will verify the character's knowledge of Shadow Army tactics and history requiring a Knowledge (history) or Profession (soldier) check vs. DC 15 (DC 40, in addition to a successful Bluff check vs. Elisif, if the character is lying). Impersonating military personnel is a serious crime in Mossburg. If Elisif catches a player character in such a lie, she will have them arrested and executed. She will, however, warn any person claiming to be a Shadow Army soldier of this policy, giving them a single chance to back out of the lie.
- ❖ If the party completes several bounty missions (see the Bounties section later in this chapter). The number of missions should vary depending on the pace of your campaign, from a minimum of five to a maximum of a dozen. Consider making this deed mandatory so that the players will need to explore and adventure in the wasteland.
- ❖ If the party donates masterwork weapons, masterwork armor, or magical items to the Shadow Army (at least 1000 gp worth).
- ❖ If the party delivers the *frost pylon* to Captain Gentor intact (see *Weathering the Storm*).

## CARAVAN DOWN

### Location: Refuge

If the players spend time in Refuge seeking information or don't know what to do next, they may be approached by a rather nervous little merchant named Lucanus. Originally from Urbana, Lucanus now lives in Mossburg and makes his living transporting salt and moss-weed between the cities. On his last trip, the Svarog Horde attacked his caravan. Lucanus barely escaped alive. His surviving guards deserted after he arrived in Refuge.

If the players are having trouble getting an audience with Jerek, Lucanus approaches them with an alternate offer. Lucanus assures the party that things are much safer in Mossburg, where food is in ample supply and Shadow Army soldiers stand guard. Though he has no money to pay them, he offers to help arrange an audience with Captain Gentor, who he assures the party is much more reasonable than Jerek.

If the party agrees, Lucanus insists on bringing his steamwagon so that he can make one more delivery to Mossburg. The vehicle bears a heavy load of salt and has no room for anyone but Lucanus and one other passenger. While so overloaded, the vehicle can only travel at half its normal speed. (If the characters have another steamwagon or other way to haul a half ton of salt, this penalty is removed.)



Lucanus uses the novice steamwright statistics found in the appendix (instead of the Knowledge (nature) skill he has equal ranks in Bluff with a +7 bonus). Though he helps defend the caravan if attacked, he prefers not to participate in any other distractions the player characters involve themselves in during the journey unless given no other choice. If the situation seems dire, he won't hesitate to abandon the scene in his vehicle. (This is the sort of behavior that made his guards desert him the last time).

When the party finally arrives in Mossburg, they discover that Lucanus is not quite as popular with Gentor as he made out. He is unable to help them gain an audience, but is very apologetic about it. He offers to give them each 200 gp worth of dried mossweed once he can sell off his shipment of salt.

## KORAK'S STANDOFF

### Location: Wasteland near Refuge

This encounter begins anywhere within three days' march of Refuge. After hearing the distant sounds of gunfire, the party comes upon a bloody clearing, littered with dead salamanders and Refuge soldiers. Investigating the remains and succeeding at a Perception or Profession (soldier) skill check vs. DC 20 reveals that the Beast Legion soldiers were clearly outmatched and withdrew deeper into the hills, and that someone has already looted the bodies of anything of value. Following the tracks is easy enough (Survival vs. DC 10).

In the neighboring valley, the party finds a mob of salamanders and hell hounds surrounding the ruins of an old farmhouse. Several haggard Refuge soldiers take cover in the ruins, flying a defiant banner featuring the black fleur-de-lis of Aramyst. The defenders are outnumbered, but prepare to make their final stand. The salamanders hesitate to press the final attack; despite their advantage they have already taken heavy losses.

The party arrives just as the salamander warlord dispatches two scouts to the east, away from the siege, moving at a hurried pace. The salamanders then take cover from the defenders' ranged weapons while they await reinforcements.

The Refuge troops are led by sergeant Korak of the Beast Legion, a skunk ferran. His unit was ambushed while on a long-range patrol. The salamander warlord is a cowardly brute named Rhjool. He prefers to hide in the shadow of his titan bodyguards, Deshek and Kazun. He only picks fights he knows he can win, and is already humiliated by the losses that this inferior force has inflicted upon him. He now intends to wait until he can crush the Refugees completely.

The respective groups are composed as follows (see the Appendix for statistics for minor NPCs and new monsters):

### Besieged Refuge Soldiers (total CR 9)

**1 Novice Mage** (Arthur Voss, an elven College Remnant; has already cast 3/4 of his prepared spells)

**1 Elite Soldier** (Sergeant Korak)

**2 Experienced Soldier** (Beast Legionnaires; both ferran brutes)

**3 Aramystian Riflemen** (assorted Refuge soldiers)

There are also three more soldiers and four more riflemen, but all are badly injured and currently stable with negative hit points. Korak refuses to leave these soldiers behind. If the party can heal them, they'll gladly join the fight.

### Salamander Forces - Outside Farmhouse (total approximate CR 12)

**2 Salamander Titans** (Deshek and Kazun)

**1 Salamander Warlord** (Warlord Rhjool)

**8 Salamander Myrmidons**

**5 Hell Hounds**

### Salamander Scouts - total CR 5

**2 Salamander Myrmidons**

### Reinforcements - in nearby camp - total CR 9

**War Priest** (Rigen Vasto, Priest of Shermazza)

**4 Experienced Soldiers** (Shermazzan cultists; 2-handed fighters)

**1 Elite Soldier** (Sergeant Shagen, Vasto's bodyguard)

Obviously the party is in for a difficult fight if they charge in, but they can resolve this standoff in a number of ways.

✦ If the party ignores the conflict and leaves without being detected, the Refuge troops are slaughtered a few hours later when their cultist reinforcements arrive. Obviously this is not an optimal resolution.

✦ If the party attacks the salamanders, Korak and his men hold their ground and don't assist. For all they know, the party could be bandits or worse. However, they will fire off occasional shots to finish off weakened salamanders or hell hounds.

✦ If the party contacts the Refuge troops via magic or by slipping someone into the ruins to speak with them, they can enlist their help via a Diplomacy check vs. DC 15 or by claiming that the party have been sent by Refuge or Mossburg (whether it's true or not; they don't need a lot of convincing in their current situation). Korak and his soldiers assist the party against the salamanders to the best of their ability.

✦ If the salamanders notice the party's approach, Rhjool assumes they're here to aid the Refuge soldiers. The cowardly warlord orders them to keep their distance; if the party ignores his warning, he orders an attack. However, if they stand their ground and parley, the party can potentially influence Rhjool.

If the party bluffs Rhjool into believing they aren't allies of Refuge, he attempts to recruit them (this fails if the party wears any Celestial College raiment, Shadow Army uniforms, or any other gear obviously connecting them to the cities). The salamander promises them great wealth and the blessings of Shermazza if they slaughter the Refuge forces.

This is a lie (Bluff +9). Rhjool intends to attack the weakened survivors once one group is eliminated. However, the party can use this as an opportunity to approach the Refugees and rush to join them in the farmhouse before Rhjool realizes what's happening. If the player characters instead approach Rhjool's forces, he suspects they've seen through his lies and attack.

If the party tries to convince Rhjool that more Refuge or Mossburg troops are coming, they may intimidate him into retreating. This requires an Intimidate check vs. DC 35, but is reduced by 10 if multiple members of the party are wearing Shadow Army uniforms, Celestial College raiment, or are ferrans.

If the party presents an *amulet of Shermazza* they can use Bluff to impersonate cultists, allowing them to approach Rhjool's troops without immediately arousing suspicion. When they draw close, Rhjool asks them the name of his cultist advisor, as surely the cult would not have sent them without knowing which of their members was already assigned to this region. If they do not know the correct name, the salamander immediately orders an attack. If they can maintain the ruse (perhaps they already interrogated Rigen or use *detect thoughts* on Rhjool to learn the name) they can use Diplomacy to convince Rhjool to withdraw. (As long as he believes the ruse, treat him as indifferent rather than hostile.)

✦ The party can ignore the standoff and follow the scouts. If they can eliminate the scouts without being noticed, reinforcements never arrive. The Shermazzans in the camp wait twenty-four hours before assuming that Rhjool died in a foolhardy skirmish and then return to the rest of the Horde. This could buy the party time to bring reinforcements from Refuge, if they wish, or simply wait for Rhjool leave the scene as well. He's too cowardly to fight without reinforcements and his titans can't survive indefinitely without their *balefire cauldron*.



The scouts are headed to a camp in a cave five miles away. If they realize they are being followed, they run for the cave as quickly as they can, splitting up if possible. A scout that is captured alive and interrogated reveals the camp's location (Diplomacy vs. DC 23, Intimidate vs. DC 15, or a simple Bluff check if the party presents an *amulet of Shermazza* and pretends to be members of the cult).

If the scouts are killed or escape, the party can follow the tracks Rhjool's salamanders left to find the camp (Survival vs. DC 15). The Shermazzan soldiers take turns keeping watch outside, two at a time. The others spend their time either sleeping inside or scouting the surrounding area, depending on the time of day. The Shermazzan priest, Rigen Vasto, never leaves the cave. The cave also contains a steamwagon bearing several weeks of supplies (food for the cultists and assorted minerals for the salamanders) and a *balefire cauldron*.

When engaged in combat, the Shermazzan cultists fight with manic zeal and do not surrender. The salamanders are less reckless - they aren't zealots, though they are loyal to one another. If things look bad, Rhjool will retreat or even surrender and beg for his life. The salamanders allow themselves to be taken prisoner on the non-negotiable condition that their titan (if he lives) is given enough heat to survive.

Any surviving Refuge soldiers are grateful for the party's help - doubly so if the party heals their wounded or transports them to back to Refuge. The soldiers are outraged if any player characters loot their dead comrades - unless it is done with the intent of returning their weapons and armor to Refuge. They approve if the player characters loot the salamanders or cultists (and will take anything the party doesn't want).

## RADIANT REMAINS

### Locations: Wasteland near Quintus Station

You can place this encounter anywhere you like in the wasteland, though it makes the most sense closer to Quintus Station. It serves to remind the characters of the Radiant Knights who were sent to Aramyst years ago and hints at their fate. As the party travels through a particularly desolate section of the wasteland, they hear a faint sobbing in the distance. If they follow the sound to its source they find a small tunnel leading to a large underground chamber.

The cavern has not been disturbed in some time. Various terrifying instruments lay rusting in the corners - torture devices of every description, caked with old blood and crumbling from years of neglect. Strange, spidery runes cover the walls, radiating lingering traces of abjuration magic if *detect magic* is employed. Several gibbets hang from the ceilings, just barely large enough to hold an adult human. Long dead skeletons lay within these cages (eleven of them, if the party takes time to sift through the remains). There are no articles of clothing or other personal items to identify who these people were.

If the characters take some time to study the runes - a few hours at least and a Knowledge (arcana) or Linguistics check vs. DC 25 - they discern that these runes were created to draw upon the power of Shermazza via the power of mortal sacrifice. Unfortunately, many critical parts of the spell were purposefully defaced before the site was abandoned, so the ritual's exact purpose is a mystery. It still conveys a general sense that it was created to sever some powerful magical entity from a greater whole.

This cave served as a temporary prison for the Templar, Sir Caspegar. After Caspegar and his knights were captured at Quintus Station, they were brought here by Avatar Proditus. Shermazza's dark magic hid Caspegar from detection while they tortured his fellow captives. The priests harnessed the dark energies they harvested from their pain and death to transform the Templar into a fallen. Though the process did not force Caspegar to willingly serve the Darkfall as they hoped, it was sufficient to permanently sever him from the Templar Council's senses.

Using *speak with dead* on the assorted remains could reveal fragments of the tragic tale that ended here.

First, however, the party has to deal with Sir Thacken. The sobbing originates from a spectral figure huddled in a corner of the cavern. This is the restless spirit of Thacken, the Radiant knight who was thought to have betrayed his brothers at Quintus Station. Thacken's spirit still wears the armor of a Radiant knight, now rusted and decayed. His eyes are blackened, hollow depths and his hands constantly drip with blood. The ghostly knight kneels in the dirt and sobs until he senses the party's approach, at which time he rises and moves to attack. Twisted by madness and despair, he now reacts to all living things as if they were Shermazzan cultists.

"Our mission was everything!" he roars as he hovers toward them. "Great than our lives! Greater than my honor! And yet we still FAILED!"





### Sir Thacken (specter)

CR 7 - XP 3,200

hp 52 (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

Thacken continues ranting unintelligibly about his failure until his spirit is defeated. A successful speak with dead (either cast on Thacken or in the vicinity of the area he haunted) can potentially reveal not only that Caspegar is still alive (and in the cult's custody) but that there was one survivor of the Arastinian group - a novice knight named Jennis Arai.

#### The Truth About Sir Thacken

Thacken never truly betrayed the Radiant Order, though he died surrounded by comrades who believed that he did. Thacken turned against his Caspegar at the Templar's own order, hoping that the dissent and confusion among their party would create enough of a distraction for one novice knight to escape and carry on their mission. Jennis Arai was that knight. Thacken died in agony, hated by his brothers who believed him a traitor. The knight's tormented spirit became anchored to the cavern as a specter. Even once the party lays him to rest, his apparent treachery taints his legend forever.

#### The Traitor (Thaumaturge Legend)

You can draw upon the legend of Sir Thacken, knight of the Radiant Order. Though his loyalty to his allies was great, his traitorous deeds permanently taint his legend.

**Requirements:** If you ever knowingly permit a member of the Cult of Shermazza to live when it is within your power to kill them, Sir Thacken withdraws until you redeem yourself in his eyes. Killing another Shermazzan cultist is the easiest way to do this. A cultist who escapes does not trigger this effect, only one that you purposefully show mercy. Thacken will not even allow a cultist to be captured for the purposes of interrogation. They cannot be trusted and must be exterminated.

**Base Attack:** High

**Good Saves:** Fortitude, Will

**Weapon Proficiencies:** One martial or exotic weapon proficiency of choice

**Armor Proficiencies:** Medium armor, heavy armor, all shields except kite and tower shield

**Feats:** Iron Will

**Spirit Points:** 4 + 2 per level after 1st.

**Special:** You gain ranks in the Bluff skill equal to your level.

When you draw upon this legend, you may name up to three individuals as your allies. They must willingly accept this boon. Your allies gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC when standing adjacent to you, and a +1 bonus to attack rolls when flanking with you.

Any time you take damage, you may consume one of your aspects to reduce the damage by half. The damage that you would have taken is instead inflicted upon an ally of your choice, so long as they are within a mile of your current location. This damage cannot be reduced or negated by any means (though it can be healed later). The chosen aspect is completely consumed, even if it is an aspect that can normally be consumed multiple times per day. This ability may be used once per day per five levels you have gained, minimum one.

If you are channeling Sir Thacken, you immediately recognize Sir Caspegar and Jennis Arai as knights of the Radiant Order when you meet them.

There is nothing of value left in the cave, but any thaumaturge in the party will immediately sense a powerful aura in the cavern once Thacken's spirit is defeated. The dusty prison resonates with the knight's anger, his remorse for sacrificing his honor, and his grief that their mission to Aramyst remains incomplete. If a thaumaturge uses his importune legend class ability here, he can convince the legend of Sir Thacken to assist him in his adventures.

## WEATHERING THE STORM

#### Location: Wasteland

The characters might find this peculiar encounter anywhere in the wasteland. A band of Mossburg scavengers has located one of the Celestial College's *frost pylons*, the ancient weapons used centuries ago to blanket Aramyst in snow and defeat the Svarog salamanders. Unfortunately the unique properties of the *pylon* attracted a pack of malevolent will-o'-wisps, who slaughtered the scavengers and are now amusing themselves with the artifact.

It begins with a sudden darkening of the sky. Clouds form overhead and the air grows noticeably cooler. Minutes later, pale blue lightning crackles in the sky, striking a single point some distance away, repeatedly. Strange lights flicker from the earth in reply.

If the party moves toward the lightning, they find a wrecked steamwagon. Several dead bodies lie on the ground around the vehicle. A thirty foot tall mechanical pylon stands in the back of the wagon, around which dart a trio of flickering lights. A Knowledge (dungeoneering) check vs. DC 11 recognizes these as will-o'-wisps - dangerous nocturnals. Every time one of the wisps touches the pylon, lightning strikes the ground somewhere nearby.

If the wisps notice the party, they turn invisible and wait for them to investigate the area before attacking. One remains near the wagon to play with the pylon. Once per round, a will-o'-wisp can attempt to attack the pylon with its shock attack. If this attack is successful, a bolt of lightning strikes a target of the wisp's choice within 200 feet of the pylon. This lightning bolt inflicts 6d6 cold damage (yes, cold damage; Reflex save vs. DC 16 for half damage). The pylon has AC 25 vs. the wisp's attack.

### Will-o'-Wisps (x3)

CR 9 - XP 7,200

hp 40 each (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

The wisps will not pursue the party if they move out of the lightning's range; they don't want to leave their fascinating toy behind. If the player characters prove capable of attacking the wisps from outside this range despite the wisps' invisibility, they flee, follow the party invisibly from above (sneaking among the cloud cover), and attack the party in their sleep.

Though the will-o'-wisps have no treasure, the party can loot the dead scavengers once the nocturnals are vanquished. The dead include a novice mage, a novice steamwright, and three experienced soldiers. They carry a total of 1,400 gold crowns and have three weeks' worth of dried moss-weed rations in the steamwagon. The steamwagon is damaged beyond repair, though a skilled mechanic who tinkers with the wreck for an hour and makes a Craft (mechanics) check vs. DC 10 can scavenge 10d10 gp worth of spare parts from it.



On the body of the dead mage, they find a letter that reads as follows:

*Marcus*

*I've had my crews looking for those accursed frost pylons for years, so believe me when I tell you that there aren't any more. I don't care what you heard. Only three have been found since the Darkfall, and that nitwit Caesar destroyed two of them.*

*That being said, if you think you can find another one in Nay, by all means go fetch it. Those old relics may turn the tide if we can find a way to power them. Bring it back to Mossburg and I'll pay you what we agreed. Just be careful. Those damn things are a magnet for nocturnals when they aren't properly warded.*

*Whatever you do, don't take it to Refuge. I don't care if it's closer. The Remnants would forget these things ever existed, even if it costs us this war.*

*Captain Gentor of Smult  
Shadow Army*

If the players attempt to transport the *frost pylon* (see the appendix for its statistics; it's a large and ungainly item to be sure), they discover that Gentor's warning was true. Roll an additional encounter check once per day with quadruple the normal encounter chance. The resulting encounter is always a nocturnal. If a nocturnal strikes the pylon with any sort of energy damage, it creates a frosty lightning bolt in the same manner as described above. Other energy attacks do not produce this effect.

If the party brings the *frost pylon* to Mossburg, they don't even need to ask for an audience with Gentor. The gate guards recognize the item immediately and send word to the captain. Gentor is saddened to learn the fate of Marcus and his crew (they were some of his favorite scavengers) but elated to see an intact *pylon*.

*"The Celestial College used these to stop the Svarog Blight centuries ago, you know," he says. "Raised up a blizzard that slaughtered thousands of those wretched stoneskins. I've got one already, but this one seems to be in much better shape. Now we just need to figure out a way to power it. And how to compensate you for your remarkable service, of course."*

Gentor negotiates out of courtesy. Once he sees the *pylon*, he's not letting it out of his sight. He'll have his soldiers take it by force if he has to. However, he's already lost one scavenger crew and would prefer not to kill the party now that they've shown such promise. He offers the party 7,000 gold crowns for the *pylon* and haggle as high as 10,000.

If the players bring the *pylon* to Refuge, Seven-Fourteen arranges a brief audience with Atticus Caesar to deal with what is clearly, as she puts it, "an ancient College terror."

*"An old weapon built by old fools," Caesar growls as he examines the pylon. "This is one secret that should have stayed lost to history. My ancestors used this accursed pylon to unleash genocide upon the salamanders and themselves. You were right not to bring this to Gentor. Urbanans seek only victory at any cost."*

He offers to pay the party 5,000 gold crowns for the *pylon*, but no more. He sternly disapproves if they decide to keep it, but does not press the matter. If they sell it to Gentor after refusing to sell it to Caesar, he orders the Remnants to cease offering spellcasting or item crafting services to the party. He does not do this if they sell the *pylon* to Gentor without consulting him first; he is petty enough to punish them for being greedy but won't punish them for what he perceives as ignorance.

If the party sells the *pylon* to Caesar, he promptly destroys it. If Gentor learns that they played a part in the *pylon*'s destruction he refuses to speak to the party again until the war council shortly before the end of this adventure. (He doesn't hesitate to gloat over their change of heart if they go with his plan over Jerek's, either.)

## DESPERATE MEN DO DESPERATE THINGS

### Location: Refuge

This encounter occurs when the party enters one of the rougher neighborhoods of Refuge. It is most likely to happen if the players have had some manner of public success but have not been fully accepted into Jerek's inner circle. It's also more likely to happen at night, or to player characters who wander the city alone.

When passing through the alleys of Refuge, a large gang of armed locals surrounds the party. Their leader, a rapacious tough named Vivrik, draws a scattergun and addresses them.

*"Hey look here, lads," the rapacious growls. "More outsiders, come to pick the Ruined Kingdom's bones. That's what you call this place right? Our home? The Ruined Kingdom? Did you come to pick our bones like those Urbanan vultures? Or are you like those Carrite missionaries that prance through now and then? How do they put it? 'Our ancestors demand that we render aid to our desperate neighbors.' Well it looks like you've got an awful lot of aid to render. And we're very desperate. So give us everything you've got."*



**CR 6 • XP 2,400**

**CN Rapacious fighter 4 rogue 3**

**Medium humanoid (reptilian)**

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +9

### Defense

**AC** 1, **touch** 1, **flat-footed** 1 (+ armor, +1 natural, + Dex)

**hp** 72 (4d10+3d8+35)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

**Special Defenses** bravery +1, evasion

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *greataxe* +11/+6 (1d12+10), bite +4 (1d6+1)

**Ranged** masterwork scattergun +10 (3d4+1)

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +2d6, bleeding attack

### Statistics

**Str** 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 22

**Feats** Furious Focus, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*greataxe*), Weapon Specialization (*greataxe*)

**Traits** ruffian (+2 hp), reactionary (+2 initiative)

**Skills** Climb 6 (+10), Disable Device 6 (+11), Intimidate 6 (+8), Knowledge (local) 2 (+5), Perception 6 (+9), Stealth 6 (+10)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** trapfinding, trap sense +1

**Equipment** +1 *breastplate*, +1 *greataxe*, 20 standard scattergun ammunition, masterwork scattergun, masterwork thieves tools, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of enlarge person*, 12 gp

Vivrik's gang includes an elite soldier, 2 riflemen and 4 experienced soldiers (nearly the equivalent of a CR 10 encounter). They are former nomads that took shelter in Refuge to escape the Svarog Horde. Though none of them are evil men, they haven't eaten in days and several have families to feed. After watching their former homes ransacked by scavengers, none of them have much love for adventurer and feel little remorse for shaking a strangers down for food and supplies.



That being said, these men aren't murderers. While they don't mind roughing up the player characters to show them who's boss, they try not to kill any of them, and even attempt to stabilize any that are injured during combat. If they can subdue the party, they'll steal whatever gold and food they're carrying but leave the party's other possessions intact. These men know the dangers of the wasteland and realize that taking the party's weapons is no better than killing them.

Vivrik is not unreasonable (he counts as unfriendly, not hostile) and can be persuaded to back down with a successful Intimidate or Diplomacy check. Offering at least 200 gold or 30 rations is also an adequate compromise to make his men back down without a fight. Food is worth more than gold in Refuge these days. If combat begins and the characters kill one of Vivrik's men, Vivrik flies into a rage and fights to the death. His other associates have an equal chance of doing likewise or fleeing in terror.

If you want to make things more complicated (and if the party hasn't met Jennis Arai), Jennis Arai and three of her Lost Soul vigilantes (two elite soldiers and a novice mage) arrive on the scene before the party can resolve the conflict.

"What's going on here, Vivrik?" Jennis demands.

"None of your business, northerner," the rapacian snarls. "Your king's Love and Justice hold no power here."

Arai smiles faintly and draws her rifle, pointing it directly at Vivrik's head. "I think that they might hold a little. Now give these people back what you've stolen, scum."

Unless the party acts quickly to defuse the situation, it explodes into violence with the party caught in the middle.

If Vivrik didn't actually get anything out of the party, all it takes is some quick diplomacy to sort things out. Arai backs down, warning Vivrik that she's keeping an eye on him.

If Vivrik wheedled any gold or food out of party, Arai demands that the rapacian drop his weapon and face her or the Lost Souls will hunt every last one of his followers. The two then square off, each willing to fight until the other is dead. If the party interferes, both gangs jump in as well. Jennis Arai is deeply insulted if the players interfere in her duel, even if they saved her life.

If prevented from executing her brand of violent street justice, Arai becomes frustrated and angry, but backs down. "Next time you'll wish we were here to help," Jennis growls to the party as she climbs back onto her bike. "Stay clean, Vivrik. We'll be watching."

## HUNTED

**Location:** Wasteland, far from Refuge or Mossburg

The golem king of the Lost Ghetto has been patiently waiting for a chance to even the score with the player characters since his defeat during *Heart of the Machine*. When the terabits see the party emerge from the Quintus Rosengate, revenge is their only objective. However, after the characters escape Quintus Station and the golem king has a chance to brood upon this development, he conceives a new plan. Terablix decides to search for the player characters, capture at least one of them, and torture them into revealing what they know about the Rosengates.

Each week when Terablix's Rosengate recharges, he sends golems into Aramyst. Each time he sends three terabits (80% chance) or one terabot (20% chance). These constructs immediately head west into the wasteland, searching for the party. Terablix does not search east, as he assumes the player characters are intelligent enough not to go into the Horde's territory. Likewise he does not approach the cities, as he knows that both Refuge and Mossburg are well defended.

## Minions of Terablix



**CR 9 - XP 2,400 each**

**hp 75 each** (see *Heart of the Machine*)

— or —



**CR 11 - XP 12,800**

**hp 131**

His golems attack any intelligent creatures they find except for nocturnals, Shermazzan cultists, or salamanders. When possible, Terablix prefers to take a captive to interrogate about the party's current location before killing them.

Even if the characters don't encounter these golems right away, they may begin to hear rumors of bizarre new automatons prowling the wasteland. Witnesses might overhear one of the golem's interrogations and recognize the party as the object of Terablix's obsession. The party might encounter the remains of Terablix's victims or otherwise encounter the repercussions of the golem king's obsession and realize that something has to be done.

Though the King of the Lost Ghetto is too powerful and too distant to deal with directly, his rampage in the Ruined Kingdom can be stopped in a number of ways, including:

- ✦ If the party confronts a minion of Terablix and offers to surrender the *Heart of Tarello*, the golem king will accept and end his vendetta, for now. He may hunt the party again someday, but he'll be busy figuring out the amulet's secrets for some time.
- ✦ If the party possesses the *Heart of Tarello* and learns how to control it, they can seal the Quintus Rosengate so that Terablix can no longer send his minions to Aramyst.
- ✦ If the party destroys the Quintus Rosengate, Terablix can likewise no longer send his minions into Aramyst.
- ✦ If the party defeats several of the golems and subsequently confronts one of Terablix's minions they can convince the golem king that they don't know how to control the *Rosengates*. He *might* listen to reason. While it's not altogether likely, it's not impossible. Terablix is a ruthless and vindictive monster, but he isn't stupid. He isn't about to keep throwing his minions away if he has nothing to gain. He can find some easier way to seek revenge against the player characters later.

## CAESAR'S MENAGERIE

Before he became one of Refuge's most prominent citizens, Atticus Caesar found a measure of fame as one of Aden's most knowledgeable zoologists. Given his advanced age and his current responsibilities he has precious little opportunity for field study, but he is always looking for new specimens for his menagerie.

If the party is adamant in their wish to prove themselves to Refuge, Seven-Fourteen will offer them a list of at least six creatures that Caesar is interested in obtaining. These could be ordinary fauna such as birds or wildcats, or even something as dangerous as an ursax or dinosaur. Caesar will pay roughly 300 gold crowns per CR of the beast or 1000 gold crowns, whichever is more. He will pay up to triple this amount for extremely rare varieties. The specimen must be alive and in good health and returned safely to Refuge.





These missions always include a few notes from Caesar on where to start looking or what behavior to expect from the creature (the equivalent of a monster lore skill check made with Caesar's skill bonuses). Once delivered, the animal will be secured in one of the sealed environments in Caesar's menagerie. Once the entire list is delivered, this heroic deed is considered complete, though Caesar will continue to pay the party for rare specimens.

Under no circumstances will Caesar ask for or accept nocturnal creatures; keeping such beasts in Refuge is far too dangerous. Naturally, it can sometimes be difficult to tell the difference between a normal creature and a nocturnal variant. If the party accidentally brings back a nocturnal, Caesar is willing to pay a lesser fee (2/3 normal price) if the characters dispose of it. (He's quite skilled at telling a nocturnal creature apart from a natural specimen.)

## ARAMYST BOUNTIES

The wasteland of the Ruined Kingdom is filled with danger, but also filled with opportunity. Criminals and predators of every stripe flourish in the darkness, confident in the notion that there are few to stand against them. Though Captain Gentor has made attempts to restore some Urbanan sense of order to Aramyst, he has a great deal of work left to do and too few good soldiers with which to do it.

If any good has come from the fall of the Celestial College, it is that Aramyst is now a magnet for fortune seekers and adventurers. Gentor has chosen to emulate the success of Mekanus' Cogswheel Irregulars and institute a similar system of organized bounty hunting in Aramyst. The practice has been extremely successful; Mossburg is safer and every adventurer hunting bounties is one less turning to banditry.

Mossburg's bounty system is not as formal as that of the Cogswheel Irregulars, where specific missions are granted only to specifically char-

tered groups. These bounties are free to anyone who wishes to fulfill them, posted on a board in Sergeant Shivek's office. Thus it may be in the characters' best interests to note as many bounties as they can. This way, they can deal with any targets that they stumble across during their long journeys across the wasteland.

Payment is collected from Sergeant Shivek in Mossburg upon proof of completion. He prefers to pay in dried moss-weed or equipment from the Mossburg armory, but will arrange payment in Urbanan gold if pressed (this may take a day or two to arrange if it's a large amount).

If the characters mention that they are Cogswheel Irregulars, they gain a nod of respect from Shivek. (*"Ah, yes, you know how this works then. Nice working with professionals."*) They do not receive any other special treatment or considerations.

While Refuge does not employ a standing bounty system, they may offer an occasional bounty on a particularly dangerous criminal or unique beast. These can be found on notice boards throughout the city, and rewards can be collected from Seven-Fourteen. Refuge prefers to supply payment in the form of magical services or traded goods.

The types of bounties offered are less complex than those found in Mekanus, as Mossburg's needs are simpler (survival, mainly). These jobs almost invariably involve the elimination of dangerous targets. There is rarely any need to bring a target back alive; if Gentor wished for a target to be treated delicately he wouldn't rely on bounty hunters to do it.

Rewards for a bounty mission are roughly equal to 200 gold X the bounty's CR. The bounty hunters are allowed to keep any loot they claim from the victims. Vary these rewards so that they do not appear too formulaic and to match the appropriate pace of progression for your party. These values are calculated for a medium experience progression campaign. Random bounty missions never offer a target lower than CR 6 or higher than CR 9.

While some specific examples of notorious bounties follow, use these tables to determine random targets.

### Random Bounty

d20	Mission Type
01-45	Criminals
46-80	Beasts
81-00	The Svarog Horde

### Healthy Competition

Because Mossburg bounties are not specifically assigned, the party will inevitably have to deal with competition. Roll 1d10 for each mission the players undertake; on a result of 1, a rival party of bounty hunters is seeking the same target.

This could lead to many interesting wrinkles. The rivals might deal with the bounty before the party arrives, leaving the player characters to decide whether or not to jump their claim. The rivals might fail, serving as a cautionary tale or even an opportunity for a rescue mission. The rivals might attack the party at an inopportune moment. They might approach peacefully and offer to join forces in return for a share of the reward. If the players have built enough of a reputation, the rivals could choose to simply watch, hoping to learn something from their idols. The choice is yours, and will obviously be influenced by what sort of reputation the party has been building.

A typical party consists of 4-5 nps and should use the minor npc templates in the appendix. Typical example: 1 novice steamwright, 1 rifleman, 1 experienced soldier, 1 novice mage (effective total CR 7).



**Criminals** - These missions can involve hunting a single criminal, but more frequently involve hunting a small group of bandits. Solitary criminals are more likely to be found incognito in one of the cities or hiding incognito among a nomad band. Groups are almost always found roaming the wasteland.

Clues regarding the target's location tend to be sparse; the player characters are left to their own devices. If Gentor knew how to find these criminals, he'd send his own soldiers to deal with them.

Bounty hunters are expected to bring back proof that their target has been slain, usually in the form of a severed ear or hand (one of Gentor's clerics will use speak with dead to verify the body's identity). Justice in Mossburg is as grisly as it is swift.

**Beasts** - These missions involve hunting dangerous predators in the wasteland. Most missions of this type do not target a specific creature, but rather a general type of troublesome monster. Some examples: ursax, wasted, floating brains, wyverns, barghests, bodaks, drakes, giants, assorted nocturnals. Proof of the kill must be delivered to collect the bounty.

**The Svarog Horde** - These missions do not involve specific targets, but rather areas. The characters will be asked to patrol or guard a minor strategic location in the wasteland. There may already be (40% chance) a small watchtower or fortified ruin in this area that they may use for shelter and defense. The party is assigned to this area for a number of days, and is randomly visited by Shadow Army scouts to collect their reports. Payment is doubled if the party kills any members of the Svarog Horde while assigned, tripled if they capture any salamander officers or Shermazzan cultists for interrogation.

## Specific Bounties

### Ragewood

This unfortunate creature is a product of some forgotten mecha-mage's unspeakable experiments. Ragewood is a treant, augmented by golemoid modifications. While it's not clear whether the normally peaceful creature was driven mad by the destruction of plant life across Aramyst or the pain of having manite fused with its body, the only thing that matters is that now it's a danger to everyone.

The treant is known to prowl the trade routes between Mossburg and Refuge. It has a particular hatred toward those who pilot mecha-magical vehicles. It tends to linger in copses of scorched trees. It pretends to be one of them until its victims draw close, whereupon Ragewood animates the blackened husks of its brethren and attacks.

The bounty for Ragewood is 3,000 gold crowns.

### Ragewood

**CR 9 - XP 6,400**

**Golemoid Treant** (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

**CE huge plant**

**Init +1; Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +12

#### Defense

**AC** 23, **touch** 7, **flat-footed** 23 (-1 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 126 (12d8+72)

**Fort** +14, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

**Defensive Abilities** +2 vs. poison and disease

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +18 (2d6+10/19-20)

**Ranged** rock +7 (2d6+13)

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

**Special attacks** rock throwing (180 ft.), trample (2d6+16, DC 26)

### Manite Implants (Steam Points: 12)

**Implants:** Combustion Breath (10d6 fire damage, Reflex vs. DC 22 half)

#### Statistics

**Str** 31, **Dex** 8, **Con** 23, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 13

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Alertness, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Perception +12, Sense Motive +9, Stealth -9 (+7 among trees)

**Languages** Eastern Common, Arcadian

**SQ** animate trees, double damage against objects, treespeech

### The Hungerer

This terrifying beast is a legend in modern Aramyst. The nomads say it is an unimaginably huge reptile. Its jet black hide is scarred and pitted from countless battles. A mane of broken swords and spears protrudes from its scaly back, macabre trophies of warriors it has destroyed. Its eyes gleam with a merciless blue light and constantly weep tears of steaming blood. Despite its enormous size, it can move with the silence of a hunting cat and even disappear without a trace. The beast is wracked with hunger for living flesh - a hunger that can never be sated.

Many doubt that it exists, as surely even the Darkfall could not create such a horrifying beast. Though confirmed sightings are sparse and reliable sightings are nonexistent, Captain Gentor has nonetheless placed a bounty on this creature's existence. If the Hungerer is real, then it must be destroyed.

While not exceptionally intelligent, the Hungerer is cunning, cruel, and patient. It has no permanent lair, but migrates in an aimless path through Aramyst's many ruins. The creature is a great deal stealthier than one might expect, and is content to stalk its prey for days, waiting for the best time to strike.

The bounty for the Hungerer is stated at 5,000 gold crowns, but once it's clear how enormous the creature actually is, Sergeant Shivek is willing to increase that amount to 7,500 gp.

### The Hungerer

**CR 12 - XP 19,200**

**Nocturnal Tyrannosaurus** (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

**CE Colossal animal**

**Init** +7; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft., scent; **Perception** +38

#### Defense

**AC** 26, **touch** 5, **flat-footed** 23 (+3 Dex, +21 natural, -8 size)

**hp** 225 (18d8+144)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

**Special Defenses** +4 vs. mind-affecting effects, disease, and poison, DR 10/magic, fire resistance 10

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** bite +22 (4d8+34/19-20 plus grab)

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

**Special attacks** swallow whole (2d8+17, AC 20, hp 22)

#### Statistics

**Str** 44, **Dex** 17, **Con** 27, **Int** 4, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +38 (+42 grapple); **CMD** 51

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Perception +38, Stealth +12

**Languages** Nocturnine

**SQ** hide in plain sight, powerful bite, trackless step, vanish (swift action, up to 18 rounds per day)



## Jurasco's Salvagers

The Salvagers are a gruesome order of mechamages and body thieves who conduct operations throughout Aden. They are notorious for hunting golemoids and stripping their manite implants, after which the inert machinery is transported to hidden laboratories and somehow restored so that it can be implanted into new hosts.

This particular group is led by a mechamage named Jurasco. He was one of Gentor's most promising apprentices until he was caught smuggling vital Shadow Army supplies into Carraway for personal profit. After fleeing execution in Mossburg, he joined the Salvagers and gathered a like-minded group of bandits to help him harvest manite implants.

Though Jurasco is not high-ranked enough to be privy any of the Salvagers' secret restoration techniques, he is intimately familiar with Shadow Army protocols. He has used this knowledge to ambush Gentor's patrols, strip the soldiers of their manite implants, and leave them to bleed out in the wasteland.

Jurasco's crew uses a stolen moss-boat in a hidden cove several days west of Mossburg to smuggle their salvaged implants into Carraway, though they periodically abandon their hideout to avoid the Burning and hunt for new prey.

Jurasco's crew are cowardly bullies, confident in their superiority until the tide begins to turn against them. Though the others may surrender if outmatched, Jurasco will fight to the death if he cannot escape. He knows the hatred that Gentor holds for him and that the only fate that awaits in Mossburg is death.

Gentor's personal hatred of his fallen apprentice is such that he has offered a bounty of 5,000 gold crowns for the ferran's head or 6,000 for his capture (so that he can be publicly executed). If the stolen moss-boat is returned intact, Gentor permits the party to keep it as acknowledgment of their service (though they will probably need to clean the gruesome scavenged implants - worthless without Scavenger restoration techniques - out of the hold).

### Jurasco's Salvagers \* Total Encounter CR 9



XP 2,400

Male ferran (pangolin) sneak mechamage 7

NE Medium humanoid (ferran)

Init +6; Perception +0

#### Defense

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 18 (+4 armor, +1 shield, +1 natural, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 size)

hp 51 (7d6+21) plus 1d10+7 temp hp

Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6

Special Defenses leathery hide

#### Offense

Speed 40 ft., burrow 10 ft., climb 25 ft.

Melee 2 claws +3 (1d3)

Ranged masterwork target pistol +7 (1d4+1)

#### Mechamage Spells Prepared

**0-Level** - *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *everheat rune*, *ghost sound*, *prestidigitation*

**1st Level** - *grease*, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (x2, DC 16)

**2nd Level** - *false life*, *ghoul touch* (DC 17), *golemrush*, *golemshield* (+5 AC to golem for 24 hours)

**3rd Level** - *berserker minion* (golem gains +6 Str, +3 temp hp per hd, +3 will and continues fighting until it has -20 hp, though it is staggered at 0 hp or less), *haste*, *vampiric touch*

**4th level** - *fear* (DC 19)

Jurasco typically casts *golemshield*, *mage armor* and *false life* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in his stats.

#### Statistics

Str 10, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 8

Base Atk +3; CMB +2; CMD 14

**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Golem Conduit (golem can deliver touch spells if within 60 ft.), Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Inspiring Mechamage, Spell Focus (necromancy), Weapon Finesse

**Traits** hearty minion (+2 hit points to golem), resilient (+1 Fortitude)

**Skills** Escape Artist 7 (+14), Heal 7 (+12), Knowledge (arcana) 7 (+13), Spellcraft 7 (+13), Stealth 7 (+16)

**Languages** Fundamental, Lowland, Nocturne, Western Common

**SQ** call minion (distress, intercede), feral cunning, tinkering

**Equipment** 20 standard pistol ammunition, *cloak of resistance* +1, healer's kit, masterwork surgical tools, masterwork target pistol (+1 to hit vs enemies in first range increment; damage reduction is doubled), mithral buckler, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, *ring of protection* +1, *scrolls (enlarge person, haste)*, *wand of mend construct* (12 charges remaining), spellbook (contains all prepared spells and writs plus *chill touch*, *construct servant*, *construct servant III*, *dimension door*, *identify*, *mend construct*, *repair construct*, *steambreaker*, *unseen servant*, and the *steadfast*, *stead*, and *swift* writs). 330 gp



### Jurasco's Corpse Golem Minion

N Medium construct

Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

#### Defense

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 58 (6d10+22)

Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 +1 slams +12 (1d6+7/19-20 plus 1d6 cold)

Special defenses construct traits, evasion, share spells

#### Current Writs (Loyalty 7)

*agile*, *elemental*, *enchanted*, *mighty*, *reinforced*, *subtle* (golem gains stealth and can run while sneaking with no penalty), and *talented* (already added into stats)

#### Statistics

Str 18, Dex 14, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +6; CMB +; CMD 1

**Feats** Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (slam)

**Skills** Perception 6 (+9), Stealth 6 (+11)

**SQ** link, powerful blows, share spells

**Equipment** golem turret (allows rider to use weapon while keeping hands free)



## Other Salvagers (see appendix for NPC stat blocks)

### Novice Steamwright

XP 1,200

hp 38

### Experienced Soldiers (x4)

XP 800 each

hp 46 each

## GAINING AN AUDIENCE

When the party finally performs enough heroic deeds to gain a reputation in Aramyst, they are granted a full audience with their chosen ruler within three days. (They can visit both cities to gain the perspective of both Gentor and Jerek.) At this point, both rulers are willing to believe that the player characters are there to help, and are willing to help them in return. Gentor and Jerek each have a certain amount of insight to shed on the current situation, though a great deal of it is peppered with their personal biases and opinions.

Though Gentor is not Aramystian, he knows much of the nation's history. Not only is he a former student of the Celestial College, but he has collected a substantial amount of secret College lore over the years via his scavenging crews. Both leaders know that the Weeping Death was originally created by the demon Shermazza, working in concert with a member of the Celestial College's High Ministry named Luesti Belua.

The plague is not actually a disease but rather a powerful curse, resistant to both mundane and magical treatments. Normally such a curse is impossible even for the most powerful demons, but this one was created by an ancient artifact known as the Lexicon, believed to be one of the weapons that caused the Great War. While the Lexicon's true origins and purpose are unknown, it functions as a powerful arcane engine, capable of researching extraordinary spells and empowering magical items. It was used not only to create the plague, but also to dispel it, and to exorcise Shermazza from his mortal host. The Lexicon is currently sealed in an ancient Seer vault beneath Cipere, but attempts to access it have been unsuccessful.

While Baleth wishes to avenge his ancestors and conquer Aramyst, the Cult of Shermazza's goals are much simpler. They wish to gain access to the vault in Cipere Mine; Jerek and Gentor know this because cult infiltrators attempted to break into it several months ago, just after the Horde appeared. Fortunately, their attempts failed and the Beast Legion slaughtered the invaders. After that incident, the Horde began to march in earnest. Jerek fears that once Refuge is out of the way, the Cult can strip the vault's protections at their leisure and begin their true plans.

Neither ruler knows how Shermazza returned to Aden, or how it unleashed the plague again. (Though Atticus Caesar has his suspicions, see below.)

If the party speaks with Gentor, he can reveal any of the following:

- ✦ Aramyst is dead. Even if the Horde was defeated and the Burning stopped today, Aramyst doesn't have the population or the infrastructure to become a functioning nation again, certainly not with indecisive leaders like Jerek in charge. Jerek is a brilliant man, but he's too weak to lead a nation.
- ✦ The Celestial College created some sort of pocket dimension called the Corridor so that they could travel across Aramyst easily. When the Darkfall came, the Corridor ripped open and Infernus spilled

in. That's where the Burning comes from. Gentor encourages them to ask the Remnants about this; he knows they prefer to keep the Corridor secret because they're terrified of being blamed for the Burning.

- ✦ Gentor has a plan to destroy the salamander armies, but it's not quite ready. If the party has completed *Weathering the Storm*, he confirms that he intends to use the *frost pylons* to unleash a blizzard and kill the salamanders. Unfortunately, he's had difficulty finding out how to activate the old artifacts. He believes that the Lexicon could provide the necessary power.

If the party speaks with Jerek, he can reveal these bits of information and opinions:

- ✦ Aramyst is not as defeated as it appears. The people have largely fled to other lands. If the Burning could be brought to an end, they would return.
- ✦ If Jerek trusts the party, or if they ask about the Corridor, he will acknowledge the Corridor's existence and its link to the Burning. Jerek believes that Baleth's *balefire cauldrons* are attuned to its infernal heat and that the salamander king must have created some manner of stronghold within the pocket dimension. He and the College Remnants have been working on a device that can pierce the dimensional barriers and allow them to strike Baleth directly, but it needs an extraordinary amount of mechemagical power. Atticus Caesar theorizes that the Lexicon can supply the power they need.
- ✦ Caesar knows that Shermazza was never banished from the mortal plane. Instead, it was sealed in a crystal prison. That prison was last seen in the vaults of Regorra. Given that the Burning now consumes the capital, it comes as no surprise that Shermazza is free. (Caesar does not know that Shermazza was rescued from the dungeon decades before.)
- ✦ Atticus Caesar believes that he knows how Shermazza unleashed this new plague. Though the Seer texts are ancient and written in a strange dialect of Fundamental, they refer to the item in Cipere Mine as "a" Lexicon, not "the" Lexicon. If the demon already possesses a Lexicon, then it could have recreated the plague. With two such artifacts, its power would be unimaginable.

## THE TRAITOR PRINCE

Once the players have earned a substantial reputation in Aramyst, word of their exploits spreads to the Svarog Horde. Baleth's treacherous older brother has a number of spies in Refuge and Mossburg, human slaves whom he coerces into loyalty by threatening their captive families. During their idle time in Mossburg or Refuge, the party is approached by a haggard looking survivor who greets them with an awkward bow.

"Greetings, great heroes of Aramyst," the man says as if he carefully recites a prepared greeting. "Prince Rashom, rightful ruler of the Svarog Horde, sends his regards. My master extends to you the offer of parley so that a mutually beneficial solution to this conflict can be determined for all parties. Time is of the essence, but His Infernal Highness has agreed to meet in a neutral location of your choice three days from now. He wishes to meet only with you, for he fears the rulers of Mossburg and Refuge would draw too much attention and expose his plans to his hated brother."

If the characters question the messenger, he is nervous to respond, insisting that he must return to Prince Rashom with their answer. The party can calm or threaten him (depending on their disposition, Diplomacy or Intimidate vs. DC 15) to make him reveal more about himself. The man's name is Oken and he was a nomad until the Svarog Horde captured his band. Now he, his wife, and his son are slaves in service to Prince Rashom, one of Baleth's officers. "And rightful ruler of the Svarog Horde," Oken is quick to add, as if he fears what may happen if he forgets Rashom's title each time he is mentioned. Oken says that



if he does not return, Rashom will kill his loved ones; that's the punishment for slaves operating as spies in the cities.

If they allow him to return, Oken tells them to inform no one of the meeting before he departs. Oken is a competent ranger (use the rifleman stats in the *appendix*) who has been instructed to avoid letting anyone follow him. If the party follows and he notices, he will attempt to lose them or, failing that, he begs them to let him go for his family's sake. If they follow without drawing attention, he marches to a secluded camp thirty miles to the east. Rashom's party and Oken's loved ones await him here. If Rashom's group notices the player characters, the prince is impressed by the party's tenacity and is even more convinced that he has made the correct choice. He attempts to begin the parley meeting immediately. As a show of good faith, he releases Oken and his family. (*"For his failure, his brood should burn, but your unexpected competence brightens my mood, heroes. Go, Oken. The mercy of Svarog is a rare gift. Pray we do not meet again."*)

If the players ignore Oken's warning and ask around about Rashom, it doesn't really matter. Though Rashom fears that Gentor or Jerek will counsel the party against this meeting, he won't fail to appear unless he notices that the party hasn't come alone. If the player characters gather information among Beast Legion or Shadow Army soldiers (Diplomacy vs. DC 20) or ask any of the prominent leaders of either city, Prince Rashom is a familiar name. Rashom is a brilliant and ruthless officer in the Svarog Horde, known to have marched with Baleth since his invasion of Nobilus, years before the Darkfall. No one can confirm whether he is indeed the rightful ruler of the Svarog, but that isn't the sort of information salamanders share.

If the party agrees to the meeting (Rashom is willing to meet them just about anywhere but Mossburg or Refuge), Rashom arrives several hours in advance with two salamander titans (his bodyguards, Amash and Ziten) and his second in command, a salamander warlord named Keesh. Oken, his wife Nara, and their seven-year-old son, Brev are present, looking equal parts terrified and hopeful. Rashom is a tall, thin salamander dressed in shining obsidian armor that seems to be fused with his body. Several gleaming ornamental stones are mounted directly into his stone flesh, a sign of prestige among his kind.

Rashom's warlord has a scroll of *traverse corridor* in hand and will teleport the group away if Rashom gives the signal or if he suspects duplicity. If the player characters don't come alone, if they attack

Rashom, or if they attempt to cast spells or act suspiciously during the meeting, Rashom gives the signal. If he escapes, he'll deposit the mangled bodies of Oken and his family where they will be found and send another slave to request another meeting. *"The Prince insists that he has a matter of great importance to discuss. Perhaps we can avoid another unfortunate incident like last time,"* this slave adds to the original invitation.

At the second meeting, Rashom brings double the usual guards and teleports away at the first sign of trouble. He will not attempt to parley a third time. If the party manages to capture Prince Rashom alive, he'll still attempt to make a deal with them, exchanging knowledge of Caspegar's location for his release if his advice turns out to be true.

If the player characters don't attempt to attack or bring guests, Rashom is as good as his word (for now). He immediately releases Oken and his family as a show of good faith and greets the characters warmly (no pun intended). Once the formalities are out of the way, he presents his offer.

*"The first thing you should know,"* the salamander prince says, *"is that you can trust me. You can trust that I will forever be an enemy of Aramyst and its people. I will not lie about that. However, you can also trust that I will do what is in the best interests of my people. This war, this alliance with corrupted lunatics, this reliance on artifacts that draw upon the magic of our enemy to survive. None of these are the way of Svarog. We salamanders belong in the depths, not on the surface. My brother is a fool and he must be stopped. I must be... I will be... restored to my rightful position as ruler of the Svarog. I hope that we can aid one another."*

When the party asks for specifics, the prince chuckles. *"An army like the Horde cannot be stopped overnight, of course,"* he says. *"It will take a concerted effort from both of us. And you must learn to trust me, for if you are as competent as I've been led to believe, surely you do not trust me yet. Let us begin with something small. As you know, the Horde often captures slaves from those we defeat in battle. Like little Oken and his brood. An unseemly practice, though those who can endure this frigid cold have their uses on the surface."*

*"I have heard there is a particular prisoner who is due to be moved within the next week. I do not know who he or she is, but I know that they are of great value to the Shermazzans. My brother has dispatched one of his most powerful lapdogs, Firesoul Zecrietus, to deliver this*

## Rashom's Treachery

The prince's true goal is rather elaborate. Though he intends to betray his brother, he also hopes to curry favor with the Shermazzans and replace Baleth as leader of the Horde. He then intends to finish the war as planned, wiping out Refuge and Mossburg. Only after his ancestors have been avenged does he intend to return to Mount Svarog.

Lady Vissarin, leader of the Cult of Shermazza in Aramyst, has grown impatient with Baleth's siege of Refuge. She's tired of salamanders. She's tired of dealing with the Burning. She just wants the Lexicon so that she can return to Le'Ciel. To that end, she has met with Rashom in secret, fanning the prince's flames of ambition and helping him concoct this plan.

For the last several years, the cult has held Sir Caspegar in a secret dungeon beneath the ruins of Nay. This dungeon was once used by the Celestial College for the storage of magical artifacts (long since scavenged) and is located in a small Corridor island. Both torture and magical manipulation proved ineffective in prying out the secrets of the Seer vault. She hopes that by allowing Caspegar to escape, he will open the vault for the cult. By arranging for the player characters to free him, perhaps they'll be inclined to assist him and eliminate the vault's protectors for her. Once the party has the Lexicon and are sufficiently weakened by the vault's guardians, she will kill them and avenge the many offenses they have committed against the Plague-Bringer.

At the same time, this arrangement gives Rashom the opportunity to arrange the death of Zecrietus, one of his brother's strongest supporters. When the party eventually opens the vault and claims the Lexicon, Rashom's servants will be watching via the teleportation stone hidden within the mine, ready to teleport into the mine, defeat the party, and claim the Lexicon.

Like any complex web of lies, this plan is vulnerable to failure, especially when an unknown factor like the player characters enters the equation. What if the party kills Prince Rashom, ruins the meeting, or simply refuses to act on the prince's advice? If any of these things happen, Vissarin arranges for bandits to ambush Zecrietus' caravan. During the chaos, the Templar is allowed to escape and makes his way to Refuge. After Refuge soldiers find Caspegar, Jerek contacts the player characters immediately. They're emissaries from Arasteen, after all, surely they can help him decide what to do with a fallen Templar.

This arrangement is far from optimal, as far as Rashom and Vissarin are concerned. There is a great risk that the party will become suspicious that the prisoner they were intended to rescue happened to escape on his own, but they're tired of waiting. It's time to take some risks.



slave from his current location in a former Celestial College sanctuary in the ruins of Nay. If you can claim this slave for yourself, perhaps he would be of as great a value to you as he is to the cult. If not, I do not care, so long as the Shermazzans do not get what they want."

Though Rashom intends to ultimately betray the characters, most of what he says is true. Successful Sense Motive checks will only reveal that the Prince is very guarded and knows more than he says. Attempts to divine more information via the use of magic are unlikely to succeed due to the prince's general paranoia and his ring of mind shielding.

If pressed for more information, the prince shrugs and replies "Do your masters in Refuge and Arasteen tell you everything? I sincerely doubt it." The salamander angrily thumps his chest and hisses. "I am the one taking the risk here. Do you know what my brother would do to me if he knew that I plan to betray him? Do you know what he has already done? I defied him once and he transformed me into this mechemagical abomination. I've given you enough, flesh-kin. Take what I offer or do not. I will have my throne with or without your aid."

Rashom doesn't have much more to offer the party at this time and will teleport away with his bodyguards once he feels his business is complete.

### Prince Rashom's Party \* Total CR 11

(see appendix for full statistics)

#### Prince Rashom of Svarog

XP 9,600

hp 104

#### Amash and Ziten

Salamander Titans (x2)

XP 2,400 each

hp 77 each

#### Keesh

Salamander Warlord

XP 1,600

hp 47







# THROUGH PLAGUE AND FIRE

## ACT 3 – BREAKING THE HORDE

### THE CAPTIVE TEMPLAR

This development stems directly from Prince Rashom's parley. If that exchange goes poorly and you still want to have the players participate in Caspegar's rescue, just arrange for the Prince's information to be corroborated by some other, more reliable source like Shadow Army or Beast Legion scouts. As Nay is a considerable distance from both cities, it makes sense that these groups may turn to reliable independent troubleshooters like the party to investigate what the Horde is doing there.

Until recently, Caspegar was held in a prison in the ruins of Nay by Shermazzan cultists. Lady Vissarin recalled her cultists weeks ago and transferred the responsibility of monitoring the prisoner to Firesoul Zecrietus. Vissarin has been planning to engineer Caspegar's rescue for some time and would rather sacrifice Baleth's minions than her own to do so. As the Svarog Horde prepares for an assault upon Mossburg and Refuge, valuable personnel like Zecrietus have been ordered to rejoin the larger force. Zecrietus does not know why Caspegar is a valuable prisoner; he's bringing the knight back alive because Baleth commands it.

Caspegar is being transported from Nay to the Svarog Horde's territory along with Zecrietus' personal guard. The caravan originates in a ruin deep in the city of Nay and makes its way across the wasteland to the east, taking a path roughly halfway between Refuge and Mossburg. The players have two obvious choices of how to deal with the situation; wait for the caravan and ambush it or rescue Caspegar from the prison before Zecrietus leaves. Ambushing the caravan is much safer, attacking the prison directly affords a chance to rescue more prisoners as well as remove the Horde's foothold in Nay.

### Finding the Prison

Tracking down a single prison in the depths of a ruined city poses considerable difficulty. Days of searching and incredible luck mixed with high Survival skill checks or some powerful magical assistance are required at least. As Seven-Fourteen once led the guard in Nay, she can suggest several locations that were once significant to the College and potentially simplify their search, but only if she is on good terms with the party. Alternately, if the characters encounter one of Zecrietus' patrols, they can capture a soldier and interrogate him.

If they locate the prison, it's nothing more than a large abandoned basement divided into two general areas. The eastern section of the basement comprises living quarters for the guards while the eastern section consists of several cells and a torture chamber. Everything the Celestial College once stored here has long since been stripped away. The entrance is well concealed among the rubble and locked (Perception vs. DC 28 to find, Disable Device DC 30 to open the lock) with two salamander firesouls keeping watch from a nearby rooftop. Stumbling over these guards is probably the best clue to the prison's location. The salamanders also have a steamwagon hidden in a nearby ruin.

The prison's lock is warded with a trap designed to trigger an *alarm* spell. If the lock is disturbed, it triggers a magical trap that launches a *fireball* into the narrow stairwell.



**CR 7 - XP 3,200**

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 28; **Disable Device** DC 28

**Trigger** proximity (alarm); **Reset** none

**Effect** spell (*fireball*, 10d6 damage, DC 16 Reflex save for half damage)

Zecrietus commands a large number of salamanders in the prison, presenting a potentially difficult battle if the party attacks recklessly. However, as long as Zecrietus is unaware of the party's presence (i.e. they haven't alerted him and none of his soldiers are missing) he will occasionally send a scouting party (a titan, a warlord, and two myrmidons) to patrol the ruins. Given the large number of nocturnals in Nay, it's also possible (albeit incredibly dangerous) that the characters could try to lure one to the prison and thin out the salamanders' numbers.

The rest of Zecrietus' troops spend their idle time sleeping, sparring, or torturing the prisoners. Two myrmidons stand on constant watch just inside the door and the rest can be ready for combat within a round or two at most. In addition to their various other treasure, a *balefire cauldron* is stored within the prison.

Caspegar is locked in one of the cells (Disable Device DC 35), as are roughly a dozen other slaves harvested from local nomad bands. Barring patrols and exterior guards, Zecrietus and his soldiers will all be present in the chamber until they begin their march back to rejoin the Horde.

### Tracking the Caravan

If the party waits until Zecrietus leaves Nay, things become slightly easier. Zecrietus brings the two titans, one warlord, two myrmidons, and four firesouls with him, leaving the other salamanders behind to guard the prison. Caspegar is manacled and loaded into the wagon, along with the *balefire cauldron*. The salamanders prefer to travel during the day, hiding in ruins or caves at night. Though the soldiers are cautious and alert this deep in enemy territory, this is the party's best chance for a surprise ambush.

The best opportunity to spot the caravan involves staking out the eastern part of the city and waiting for it to pass. There are several high vantage points (buildings within the city or hills outside) and the area outside the ruins is otherwise flat and void of vegetation. By this point in the adventure, the player characters should be at least 9th level and have significant resources available to track such a large group of travelers - they'll come up with something.



## Combat

The salamanders fight until half of them are defeated, at which time the remaining survivors will surrender or flee, fighting to the death only if cornered or if the players have a reputation for not leaving their enemies alive. Zecrietus is particularly cowardly and will not hesitate to threaten hostages, demanding that the party release him in return for their lives. He will not harm Caspegar, though he may bluff, as he fears what Baleth will do to him if he harms the knight.

### Firesoul Zecrietus

CR 9 - XP 6,400

Salamander fiend sorcerer (sage arcane bloodline) 10

Medium outsider (native)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

#### Defense

AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 62 (10d6+20) plus 10d10+10 temp hp

Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +11

Special Defenses fire resistance 5, cold resistance 20

#### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee bite +6 (1d4+1)

Ranged javelin +7 (1d6+1)

Special Attacks arcane bolt (touch attack, 30 ft. range, 1d4+5 force damage, 8/day), slow burn

#### Sorcerer Spells Known

**0-Level** – *arcane mark, dancing lights, bleed, detect magic, everheat rune, ghost sound, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance, touch of fatigue*

**1st Level** (8/day) – *alarm, grease* (DC 17), *identify, mage armor, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement* (DC 16), *shield, shocking grasp, vanish*

**2nd Level** (6/day) – *false life, fog cloud, glitterdust* (DC 18), *invisibility, mirror image, resist energy, scorching ray*

**3rd Level** (6/day) – *dispel magic, fireball* (DC 18), *fly, haste, lightning bolt* (DC 18), *stinking cloud* (DC 19)

**4th Level** (5/day) – *confusion* (DC 19), *dimension door, enervation, improved invisibility, summon monster IV*

**5th Level** (3/day) – *elemental body II*

Zecrietus typically casts *false life, mage armor* and *resist energy* (cold) prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in his stats.

#### Statistics

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 9

Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 18

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Reach Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration)

Traits cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), folk magic (*vanish* added to spells known)

Skills Bluff 10 (+12), Fly 10 (+15), Knowledge (arcana) 10 (+20), Knowledge (nature) 10 (+18), Perception 10 (+14), Spellcraft 10 (+20), Use Magic Device 10 (+12)

Languages Eastern Common, Firespeech, Fundamental, Giant, Lowland, Nocturnine, Planar

SQ fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), +1 spell save DC when using metamagic

Equipment +1 mithral buckler, 2 *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 3 javelins, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of vast intellect* +2, *ring of protection* +1

### Zecrietus' Salamanders (total CR 13 if all are encountered at once; CR includes Zecrietus)

- Firesoul Zecrietus
- Salamander Titans (2)
- Salamander Warlords (2)
- Salamander Firesouls (8, two are posted as exterior guards)
- Salamander Myrmidons (4)

## Rescuing Caspegar

Even if found among the other prisoners, Caspegar is obviously an unusual individual. Though barely in his early forties, he looks twenty years older. His face is gaunt and his hair long, grey and haggard. His eyes have been gouged out and bandaged over, but he has no trouble perceiving his environment. The empty sockets grow with a pale blue radiance, visible even through the bandages. Native Arastinians or anyone who succeeds at a Knowledge (religion) check vs. DC 20 recognizes this as the distinctive magical radiance of a Templar's eyes, though much brighter than normal. Caspegar's body radiates a supernatural aura of mild cold, a side-effect of the cult's experiments. The Cult of Shermazza has not only robbed the Templar of his eyes and his health, but they have transformed him into a fallen.

While their efforts did not succeed in forcing Caspegar to willingly become corrupted, they have had a great toll on his health and sanity. When first rescued, Caspegar is confused, disoriented, and obviously weakened from years of torment. He currently has 5 hp remaining, 6 points of Constitution and Wisdom damage, and is permanently exhausted until he receives at least two weeks of nourishing food and bed rest. He is prone to disturbing nightmares, during which time he occasionally lashes out at anyone around him, instinctively using his fallen abilities. (He is horrified and apologetic if he learns that he hurt anyone while doing so.)

The tortured Templar is unable to distinguish fantasy from reality at first. He suspects that his freedom is another cruel illusion created by the cultists. They've teased him with freedom before in attempts to break his will. There is an equal chance that Caspegar will collapse mumbling incoherently or attempt to fight his way to freedom, attacking any player characters that get in his way. Though he is currently unarmed, he has full use of his fallen abilities and can still be quite dangerous (especially for characters trying not to harm him).

## The Death of Caspegar

If Caspegar dies during the battle, at the hands of a startled player, or due to his own confused actions, all is not necessarily lost. Even if the players do not recognize Caspegar as a Templar, Jerek or Gentor will make the connection once the situation is described to them. From their perspective, it suddenly all makes sense.

Jerek remembers finding the bodies of Radiant Knights in the town when he discovered Cipere, but never knew why they were there. He reasons that, following Shermazza's last defeat, the knights must have been charged with protecting the vault. The Horde have already tried to breach the vault once, but failed. Perhaps this Templar was to somehow help them find a way inside. Maybe all the vault requires is a Radiant Knight to open it.

If there are no Radiant Knights in the party, Jennis Arai is technically still enough of a knight that she can open the vault's inner chambers. Though she no longer wears a knight's colors, she has never abandoned her vows. If they cannot find her, or if she is dead, the party can wait until their next contact with Sir Elion Omren and entreat him to send another knight to Aramyst.



The players can calm him either by healing his Wisdom damage or by mentioning King Corben and succeeding at a Diplomacy check vs. DC 25. *Charm person* or *calm emotions* can potentially coerce him into calming down, though if Caspegar resists the magic he'll only become enraged (the cult frequently used magic to condition his behavior). If a Radiant Knight is present and wearing the symbol of his order, the Diplomacy check required to calm Caspegar is reduced to 15. If all else fails, the party can use nonlethal attacks to knock him out and restrain him until he listens to reason.



## Caspegar's Recovery

Once the Templar has time to recover from his ordeals, he grows more lucid. He thanks the player characters for his rescue and introduces himself.

The old knight stares through you, his empty eyes focused on nothing but perceiving everything around him. *"I am..."* He pauses. *"Or, I was, Sir Caspegar, a Templar of the Radiant Order. I can still sense my fellow Templars in Sea Reach but, it is as if through a haze. My torture and imprisonment has damaged my connection to the Council. There have been other effects, as well, obviously."*

He holds out one emaciated arm. Veins of dark energy pulse faintly beneath his skin, woven through the fiber of his being. *"They tried to break me, but I never submitted. No matter what horrors they inflicted, no matter who..."* He shudders and trails off. *"Though there were many times when I came close. Thank you for coming when you did. What year is it?"*

If the players answer, Caspegar is horrified.

*"So many years lost... though at times it felt like it had been much longer."*

Eventually the players may want to know why the cult held him so long and went to such great efforts to torture him. He has some useful insight on that.

*"When I came to Aramyst a decade ago, it was not to save the College. We knew it was already lost. Our mission was to retrieve the Lexicon. I was the Rector of Infernal Defense, leader of a sect of knights charged with protecting Aden from demonic incursions. This vault was one of several places known only to a handful of knights - those who protected it and those who followed me. Unfortunately, we were ambushed in Quintus Station."*

*"We were captured by a monstrous creature named Avatar Proditus. Though he looks human, I knew him for what he is. He is the earthly vessel of Shermazza the Plague-Bringer, an elder demon of unimaginable power. He murdered my brethren and tortured me, damaging my bond to the Templar Council by dark means I still do not comprehend. He sought to compel me to reveal what I knew about the Lexicon, and when I was not forthcoming, he turned me over to his henchmen. For years, they subjected me to unspeakable torment. They turned me into this. I never broke, but demons are extremely patient."*

If asked about the vault, Caspegar's disoriented demeanor becomes focused.

*"Yes,"* he says. *"I must complete my mission. We must deliver the Lexicon to King Corben's hands. Only there will it be safe. You helped me, my friends, and I can never repay you. So it pains me to ask of you so much more. I cannot trust myself, not after what those monsters did to me. I feel that I am in control, but I cannot be certain. Though I can open the vault, I must not wield the Lexicon. You must be the ones to deliver it to Arasteen and protect it from Shermazza's clutches. Can you do this?"*

By this time the players are probably eager to get their hands on the Lexicon so they can use it to cure the plague, so getting them to agree should not be difficult. If the players mention that they intend to let Jerek or Gentor use the Lexicon, Caspegar trusts their judgment as long as the artifact is delivered to Sea Reach afterward. (If the Templar were aware of the current tensions between Urbana and Arasteen he might be reluctant to let Gentor use the Lexicon, but he's not exactly up to date on current events.) Before they begin, Caspegar has one final warning.

*"When we enter, be cautious,"* the old knight says. *"The Seers placed lingering wards and guardian constructs within the vault. They were intended only to become active if its other protectors were incapacitated. After so many years, surely they have awakened - and the Seers who knew how to disable them are long dead."*



## CIPERE MINES

The tunnels outside of Refuge were originally a salt mine, though in later years manite veins were discovered in the lower depths. The city did a brisk trade in salt with Mossburg, but that has ground to a halt due to the war. A few locals still work in the mines to satisfy Refuge's needs, but it is less than half of the usual traffic. The manite ore within the mine forms a natural shield against teleportation and a similar field protects the vault, preventing anyone from teleporting in or out of the mine or the vault. This barrier is not absolute. Teleportation from place to place within the mine or within the vault works normally. Teleportation with the aid of a *teleportation stone* is also possible (as the players will soon discover).

The mines are a honeycomb network of tunnels that lead gradually deeper into the earth. These tunnels are easy to get lost in but there are no dangerous inhabitants or unusual hazards. An eastern tunnel diverges from the main mine 300 feet below the surface and transitions from rough-hewn tunnels into a corridor of polished white stone. The walls are engraved with symbols of the Seer Order (the three-eyed rose), the Radiant Order (the Beacon of Arasteen) and the Celestial College (Aramyst's black fleur-de-lis). This area is well lit by magical lights mounted permanently into the walls and ends in a pair of ancient blackstone doors. A small wooden guard post has been constructed just in front of these doors. Beyond this point, the vault's interior is shielded against all attempts at divination (such effects simply fail). Once inside, these spells can be used normally as long as they do not target an area outside the vault.

Guards are posted at the entrance of the mine and at the post near the vault doors (usually one elite soldier, a novice mage, and a novice steamwright). The guards at both stations demand written permission that Jerek has authorized their presence in the area. Jerek has no problem granting the party permission to explore the vault on the condition that the party use the artifact to help save Aramyst from the Horde (he doesn't care if they intend to give it to Gentor; the dwarf's plan is better than no help at all).

If the player characters don't want to deal with Jerek, they'll need to deal with the guards. The exterior guards are easy to fool as long as the party disguises themselves as salt miners or simply distracts them long enough to sneak into the cave. The interior guards are more difficult;

they have explicit orders to let no one pass and they'll certainly notice the blackstone doors opening even if the party were to approach invisibly. If the party is set on entering without permission, these guards will need to be either distracted or incapacitated.

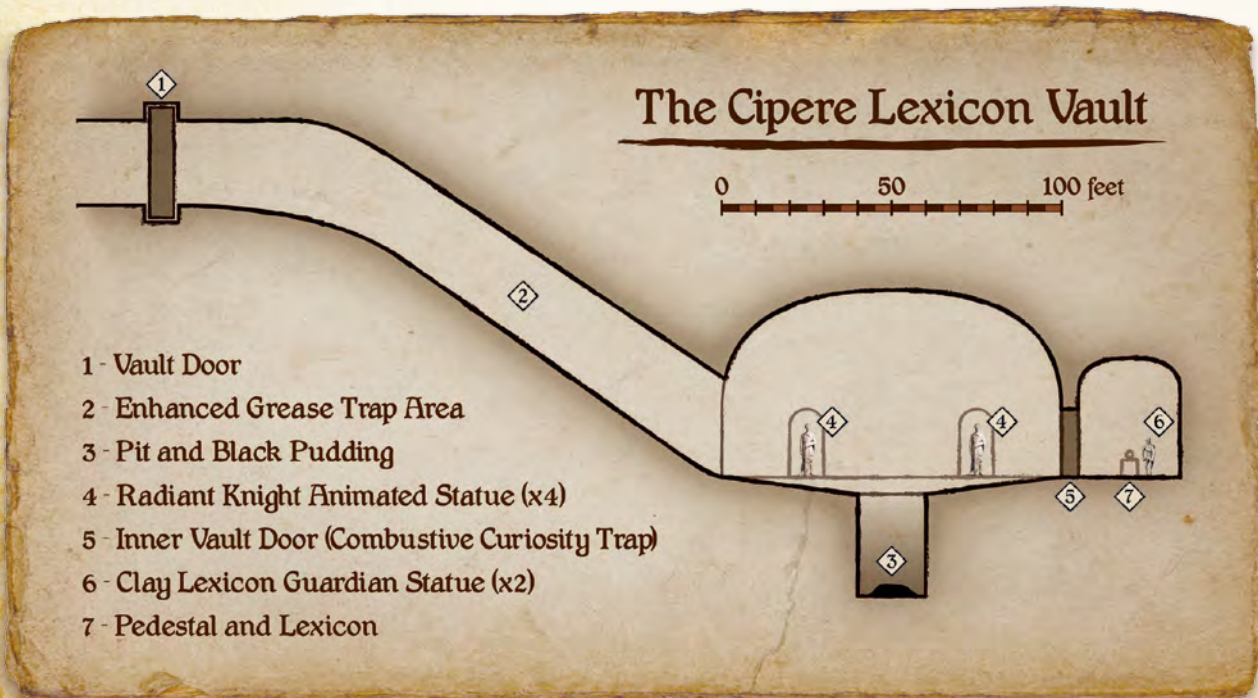
The guards do not attack the player characters if they're well-regarded in Refuge. Though they find the party's presence unusual and will send word to Jerek if they can't prove they have permission to be here, they aren't about to attack Refuge's heroes (in part because they realize they're probably no match for the party).

The massive doors are solid and virtually indestructible, absorbing any magic directed against them. If a member of the Radiant Order places a hand on each door and pushes gently, the doors recede into the walls with deep rumble that reverberates through the entire mountain and can even be felt in Refuge. Upon opening, a wave of stale air rolls out of the long-sealed vault. Other than that, there is no sign that the interior has been disturbed in recent memory. The white stone walls and floor are covered in thin dust. Magical illumination lights the tunnel as the player characters approach.

If Caspegar or Jennis Arai is here, they offer to accompany the party into the vault. Though Caspegar does not trust himself with the Lexicon, he feels obligated to help the party acquire it. Jennis merely wants to complete her mission and make certain that whatever the Order was protecting down here is safe. If the party refuses their aid, they return to Refuge to wait with Jerek and Atticus Caesar.

Beyond the doors, the passage is thirty feet wide and slopes downward at a gradually increasing decline, eventually proving quite treacherous as the marble floor offers little traction. After sixty feet, the slope becomes so pronounced that the characters must make a Reflex save vs. DC 14 or slip and fall, sliding down the tunnel at a rate of 80 feet per round. Characters who succeed on their save can attempt to grab adjacent characters who fail or can automatically grab any character if they had the foresight to tie ropes to one another or make similar preparations. However, the character attempting to catch a comrade must make the save again at +2 to the DC per each failed character in the current chain. If he fails this save, he gets pulled along for the ride (though someone can attempt to save them, leading to a potential chain reaction where one clumsy party member drags the entire team down the slope).

To make things worse, this precarious area is enchanted with an enhanced *grease* trap, set into the floor. Once someone steps on the floor here, the slope for thirty feet in every direction becomes dangerously slick.





### Enhanced Grease Trap

CR 7 - XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

Trigger touch; Reset automatic (1 hour)

Effect spell (*grease*, DC 20 Reflex)

If someone falls in this section of the tunnel, they begin sliding down the hall at 80 feet per round. The floor and walls are exceptionally slick and offer no handholds to slow one's descent. The hall continues onward for another 120 feet after the trap before ending in a domed chamber, 100 feet across. In the center of the room is a 20 X 20 X 30 foot circular pit. A large, sealed door leads deeper into the vault on the far side. Four twelve foot tall statues of Radiant knights stand in alcoves to either side of both the tunnel entrance and the opposite door. The floor is slick enough that falling characters will continue to slide for one round after entering the room, dumping them directly into the pit. Such characters may make a Reflex save vs DC 16 to before they go in, which leaves them dangling over the edge.

The walls of the pit are too smooth and sheer to climb without someone tossing down a rope, use of a *spider climb* spell, or other extraordinary means. A black pudding waits at the bottom of the pit. It is unable to leave the pit but will gladly devour anyone that falls inside.

### Black Pudding

CR 7 - XP 3,200

hp 105 (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

After at least one character enters the large chamber (either falling or intentionally) the statues animate and move to defend the vault. Though mindless, they have been instructed to make good use of the pit. Two will rush to the pit and trip anyone dangling on the ledge (or bull rush anyone near the edge). The others climb back up the tunnel (they are sure-footed and immune to grease) and begin attacking any characters on the slope, attempting to trip them so that they slide down the tunnel into the pit. If all characters are safely clear of the pit and the slope, the statues simply attempt to kill everyone.

### Animated Statues (x4)

Huge animated objects (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

CR 11 (total) - XP 3,200 each

N huge construct

Init -2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -5

#### Defense

AC 16, touch 8, flat-footed 15 (-2 Dex, -2 size, +10 natural)

hp 78 (7d10+40) plus trip

Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -3

Defensive abilities hardness 8; Immune construct traits, spell immunity (*grease*)

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +15 (4d6+15)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

#### Statistics

Str 30, Dex 6, Con -, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1

Base Atk +7; CMB +19; CMD 27

Once these protectors are dealt with, the players can progress further into the vault. The next barrier is a large steel interior door, which is

protected by an *arcane lock* as well as a good quality lock (Disable Device vs DC 40). The door is also, of course, trapped.

This bizarre magical trap consists of two separate spells. The first effect is a *flame strike* spell centered on the person opening the door. The second effect is a *modify memory* spell which targets the person who disturbed the lock, causing them to forget their attempt to open the lock or their discovery of the trap. As the trap immediately resets, this means that the person opening the door may trigger the trap repeatedly without realizing what he's doing unless he makes his save or someone else in the group realizes what's going on and drags them away from the door.

### Combustive Curiosity Trap

CR 9 - XP 6,400

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

Trigger proximity (alarm); Reset none

Effect spell (*flame strike*, 8d6 damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); 10 ft. radius cylinder around target; *modify memory* DC 16 Will negates

Once past this final barrier, the characters find themselves in a smaller chamber, about thirty feet in diameter. The walls are even more intricately carved with ancient Seer runes. (Hours of study and a Linguistics check vs. DC 40 reveals that these runes seem to refer to the horrors of the Great War and how the Seer Order must protect the order from future tragedies, but nothing more specific.) The Lexicon, a pure sphere of sheer white metal, rests upon a pedestal in the center of the room. Two eight foot tall statues carved of rough clay stand guard on either side of the pedestal. When the door opens, their eyes ignite with a pale white light and they speak. While these golems are not truly intelligent, they have been programmed to reply to a variety of specific inquiries and stimuli.

"Hold," the statues command in unison. Their toneless, hollow voices reverberate through the marble tunnels with an unearthly echo. "Who dares disturb what the Seer Order has put to rest?"

If the party enters the room or makes any threatening gestures or statements, the statues attack. There are two options to avoid fighting the Lexicon's guardians.

### A Seer

If a player character claims to be a seer (truthfully or otherwise), the golems focus their attention on that person.

"Step forward, Seer," they say. "Prove yourself."

At this point, the individual claiming to be a seer must demonstrate their abilities, which the golems are specially attuned to perceive when used within the chamber. Any use of a skill enhanced by second sight, any offensive fatebender aura which targets the golems, or any spell unique to the seer spell list will satisfy the golems. Failing this, if a seer touches the Lexicon, it immediately begins to glow bright blue due to the thaelium used in its construction. The golems immediately cease combat with no concern for their own safety and react as below. If the player character fails to convince the golems that he is a seer, the golems attack (targeting the liar first).

### The Hard Truth

If a player character claims that the Seer Order has been destroyed, the golems focus their attention on that person.

"Lies," the golems reply. "The Order stands vigilant."

A combination of Knowledge (history or religion) vs. DC 25 and Diplomacy vs. DC 30 are required to convince the golems of the truth. These checks need not be made by the same character; one can provide the information about the Order's destruction while the other phrases it in a manner to soothe the vault's guardians. If either of these checks



fails, the golems decide that the party is lying and immediately attack. If they succeed, the golems bow their heads for a long moment of silence, then speak again.

*"For what purpose do you require the Lexicon?"* they ask.

Any sort of remotely positive response is acceptable here. If the player reply that they need it to cure the plague, to protect Aramyst, or to hide it from Shermazza, they acquiesce. If the characters state that they intend to do something selfish or senselessly destructive with it, even as a joke, the golems attack. They were not created with a sense of humor.

### Lexicon Guardians (x2 clay golems)

CR 12 total - XP 9,600 each

hp 101 each (see *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary*)

## Taking the Lexicon

When a player character steps forward to claim the Lexicon, the golems speak again.

*"You, who would claim the Lexicon, listen to our words,"* the golems reply, kneeling in perfect synchronicity. *"Know that there is danger here."*

The golems make no further attempt to stop the party, though they will respond to further questioning as follows:

If the party insists that they need the Lexicon, or that it must be moved, the golems nod gravely. *"Take it, then. Protect it, as is our oath. Good fortune to you in your path."*

If the party asks what danger the Lexicon presents, they shake their heads solemnly. *"It is no danger to you. You are a danger to it. It is pure and without guile. It does what it is commanded to do. It reflects the whims of those who use it, and alters the world to satisfy them. If your motives are noble, then so shall be its issue. If your motives are cowardly, then let the world tremble. So has it always been."*

If the party asks if there is more than one Lexicon, the golems nod, but do not reply further.

Taking the Lexicon may be a bit disappointing, initially, as it doesn't seem to do anything. (See the Appendix for details regarding the Cipere Lexicon.) The first player character to touch the Lexicon becomes bound to it - something that the golems don't inform the party in advance.

There is nothing else of interest in the chamber, but as the characters turn to leave, the golems speak again.

*"Know that there is danger here,"* they repeat.

Though the golems seem to be repeating themselves (they aren't terribly creative), they are not. They are uniquely attuned to the vault and its environs, and though they cannot leave they can sense what is transpiring outside. No matter what the players reply, the golems look past them, toward the vault's exit.

*"There is danger here,"* they say again. *"And it is coming for the Lexicon."*

## RASHOM'S BETRAYAL

Though the Horde's original attempt to invade these tunnels was repelled, one loyal firesoul had the foresight to stash a *teleportation stone* amid the debris near the vault entrance before he escaped, intending to eventually use it to infiltrate the mine again once they knew how to penetrate the vault.

Once he receives word that Caspegar has been rescued, Rashom has his minions constantly *scry* on the tunnels via the *teleportation stone*, waiting to see when the player characters pass through. After they do so,

Rashom, Lady Vissarin, and a small war party will *teleport* to the mines to set up an ambush (the sorcerer in Rashom's group knows *traverse corridor* instead of *haste*, which he uses to transport them).

If there is no one above except the usual guards, Rashom and his men immediately kill them. If any of the party's more powerful allies were left behind to guard the door, the characters emerge to find a battle already in progress. (If Prince Rashom is dead or captured, Vissarin brings two elite soldiers and a war priest instead.)

Due to the limitations of the *teleportation stone*, only a relatively small force could be dispatched into the mine.

### Rashom's Betrayers (see appendix for NPC statistics) \* CR 12 total

Prince Rashom

Lady Vissarin

Elite Sorcerer (Shermazzan cultist)

Elite Assassin (Shermazzan cultist)

2 Salamander warlords (Rashom's lieutenants)

2 Salamander myrmidons (Rashom's bodyguards)

Rashom's group fights to the death; at this point they have risked too much to back down. Any other surviving invaders were to be left behind and cause as much damage to Refuge as possible; once the Lexicon is secure their only duty is to die as gloriously as possible.

As unlikely as it may be, Rashom is willing to command his men to stand down if the party offers to surrender the Lexicon. Once it is secure in his hands, he withdraws, pausing only long enough to collapse the tunnels behind him and seal the party underground. (Nothing personal, he just can't have them following him.) Though the party may find some way to free themselves, this otherwise bring Through Plague and Fire to an ignominious end as they will be unable to save Refuge and Mossburg from the Horde's vastly superior force.

## Romancing the Stone

The Svarog *teleportation stone* is hidden in the debris near the area where the tunnel begins to transition to polished stone. As there is no mining in this part of Cipere Mine and the stone is nearly indistinguishable from an ordinary rock, it has gone unnoticed by the people of Refuge. It's unlikely, though not inconceivable, that the players will find the *stone* before the ambush occurs. Though it can be sensed with *detect magic* and similar effects, the players would need to search an otherwise innocuous section of the vast tunnel system to discover it. As difficult as it may be to find the *stone* (as there is no reason to even suspect it is there), neutralizing this advantage makes the later encounter with Prince Rashom considerably easier.

If the players find and neutralize the *teleportation stone*, Rashom is forced to conduct his eventual ambush more recklessly, as he can no longer *teleport* directly into the mines. If this occurs, he dispatches an invisible imp scout to monitor the mine entrance while Rashom and his group wait in the nearby mountains. When the party emerges from the mine, the imp signals Rashom and he, Vissarin, and their war party *teleport* to the mine entrance and attack. The imp scout joins the combat.

In this scenario, Rashom fights desperately, seeking to take the Lexicon and escape before Refuge can move to crush his forces. The mine's outer gate guards assist the party. There is a 10% chance that 1d4 miners will also help the party. Treat these as experienced soldiers armed only with leather armor and light picks. After five rounds of combat, reinforcements from Refuge begin to arrive at a rate of 2d4 soldiers per round. These are a mix of experienced soldiers, elite soldiers, novice mages, riflemen, and novice steamwrights. Ten minutes later, Jerek and Seven-Fourteen arrive at the head of a large group of three dozen Refuge soldiers.



However, if Caspegar has survived, he knows enough about the Lexicons that the players may be able to continue the adventure with the next volume, Isles of Chaos, and might even still be able to cure the Crystal Grief when they reclaim Avatar Proditus' Lexicon... and the one they just lost.

## USING THE LEXICON

Now that the characters have the Lexicon, they must decide what to do with it. Though it has a great deal of potential, it is a complex and cryptic artifact. It serves primarily as a source of power for other forms of magic or as a source of knowledge for those who peer into its depths for extended periods.

Unfortunately, the players don't have much time left, as Vissarin's contingency plan now goes into effect. Knowing that if she failed, the Lexicon would be taken beyond the cult's grasp, Lady Vissarin left instructions for her followers to withdraw from Aramyst if she did not return. Upon realizing that the cult and his brother have betrayed him, Baleth redoubles his efforts and marches upon Refuge in a savage final assault. He knows that many of his people will die, but that Refuge will ultimately fall. Once Jerek and his followers have been destroyed, Baleth will march on Mossburg. He will not stop until the two cities lie in ashes.

The attack begins within twelve hours of the players' recovery of the Lexicon. Jerek instructs Caesar to contact the party and Gentor via a *sending* spell, calling them to an emergency war council. If the player characters have already left Aramyst, he will send the wizard to retrieve them, if possible. Gentor responds to the summons immediately, teleporting to Refuge with Elisif. He is eager to speak with the player characters as well.

If the party never consulted with Jerek or Gentor and retrieved the Lexicon without their knowledge, then obviously they are not summoned. However, Sir Elion cannot retrieve the party immediately. While they wait in Aramyst, they learn of the Horde's final attack. It may dawn on them that such a powerful artifact could turn the tide in this final battle, and that perhaps Jerek or Gentor could help them use it effectively.

The following dialogue summarizes Jerek and Gentor's plans, though feel free to present it more organically and let the players interject their questions and opinions. They have the largest part to play in this, after all.

*"Our situation is dire," Jerek says somberly. "The Svarog Horde marches on Refuge. Until now, Baleth has been fighting conservatively in hopes of starving us out. No doubt he wished to conceal his true numbers to prevent an intervention from Urbana or Carraway. What seemed to be patient cruelty may have been a mercy; Baleth's forces are greater than we ever anticipated."*

*"So we fight them," Gentor replies. "The Shadow Army stands beside you, High Minister. I can have Shadow Army reinforcements here within the month."*

Jerek winces at the sound of his official title, but continues. *"A brave notion, Captain, but we do not have that much time. The Horde numbers in the tens of thousands. Though the Shermazzans have abandoned Baleth, the salamander king claims titans, demons, and all manner of nocturnals under his banner. Against this force, Refuge will fall before the Shadow Army can leave Urbana."*

*"Can we evacuate?" Atticus Caesar asks.*

*"We could try," Jerek says, "but where would we go? We would be forced south, directly through the Knuckles. The slowest would die to the Horde. We would lose countless more pushing our way through the mountains. Whoever survived would be left to the mercy of Emperor Dyok's samurai. I fear that we only have one option."*

Caesar frowns. *"The Lexicon."*

Gentor's eyes widen and he looks at the party with newfound respect. *"So you found it, then?"* he asks.

*"They must have," Jerek replies. "That would explain the Shermazzans' absence. All they ever wanted was the Lexicon. They must know it was recovered. Presumably, they assume that our friends have taken it away from Aramyst - but perhaps you can use it to save us, my friends. I have a plan."*

*"By the Sixteen, not this again," Gentor replies, irritated.*

*"The plan is sound," Caesar replies. "The magic is sound. The engineering is sound. We have studied the cauldrons that allow the salamanders to survive outside of their volcano. They rely on an extradimensional power source, and we have traced that source to the Corridor. The Corridor is not large - that's the entire purpose of a pocket dimension. Once there, we find Baleth, kill him, and destroy the machine that powers his cauldrons."*

Elisif sighs. *"You plan to drive a train into hell and kill the salamander king. Do you know how mad that sounds?"*

*"The trains were always intended to traverse the Corridor," Jerek explains. "We've been unable to travel there since Baleth claimed it. The Lexicon can provide the power we need to pierce his barriers and allow the train to function as it was designed to do. Once Baleth and his cauldrons are no longer a factor, the Horde will be weakened. Many of them will be unable to survive on the surface. They will be forced to retreat."*

*"I prefer my plan," Gentor says. "We use that Seer bauble to recharge my frost pylon. Summon a blizzard to wipe the wasteland clean. Kill every stonewalker that marches against us. Knowing that we have that kind of power, they won't be back in a hurry."*

*"If you knew your history, you'd know that using the pylons had a grave impact upon the world," Caesar replies.*

*"The world is already in terrible shape," Lieutenant Elisif says. "Aramyst is overdue for winter. You speak of history? Our plan has won this sort of war before. Your plan is ridiculous."*

*"What purpose would killing Baleth serve?" Gentor adds. "Won't other fiends just take his place?"*

*"Without the cauldrons, they cannot survive on the surface," Caesar says. "Once we purge him from the Corridor, we can take measures to prevent anyone else from claiming it."*

*"And I'm to trust the College for that?" Gentor asks. "You were the ones that created the Corridor in the first place."*

*"Friends," Jerek interrupts. "We could argue all night to no end. The choice, ultimately, is not ours." He looks to you. "Will you aid us my friends? Will you use the Lexicon to save Aramyst?"*

It's time for the party to make a choice. Realistically, they have only three options here, as the Lexicon's power is limited. Once it is used, it will not recharge in time to be used again before Baleth destroys Refuge.

**Option 1:** The player characters allow neither party to use the Lexicon.

**Option 2:** The player characters teleport back to Refuge with Gentor and use the Lexicon to charge his frost pylon.

**Option 3:** The player characters use the Lexicon to empower Jerek's Burning Engine.

If the players choose either of the latter two options, the patron of whichever plan they did not choose will make one last attempt to persuade them, but will ultimately accept whatever decision they make.



### Option 1: No one uses the Lexicon

If the players choose not to help, Gentor and Jerek are shocked. They make another attempt to persuade the party to see reason. If this fails, Gentor attacks the party, reasoning that once the current holder of the Lexicon is dead, someone more reasonable can claim it. Elisif aids her master without hesitation. Jerek and Caesar hesitate, but quickly realize



they have no other choice to save their people. Though the guards outside are hesitant to interrupt at first, they flood the room two rounds later. The party is powerful enough at this point that they may be able to kill the rulers of Mossburg and Refuge and escape, but someone will almost certainly survive the siege to spread word of their actions.

This isn't to say you should prevent them from making this decision. Choosing not to use a mysterious artifact to fuel untested and potentially dangerous magical devices is not unwise, but none of those choices are without consequence. In this case, the consequence is that a city full of desperate, doomed Aramystians will forever view them as villains. (If the players did not intend to help, they probably should have skipped the war council. They'd still be viewed poorly by the survivors but at least they wouldn't be forced to fight their leaders.)

## Option 2: Gentor's Plan

If the players agree with Gentor's plan, he immediately agrees to *teleport* all of them to Mossburg. He will use the *portable hole* that he uses to transport cargo between Mossburg and Refuge to carry them if he cannot *teleport* everyone and Elisif with one spell. Though Jerek and Caesar have misgivings about Gentor's plan, they wish the party good fortune and depart to begin organizing Refuge's defense.

They arrive outside a large warehouse at the northern end of Mossburg, guarded by Shadow Army soldiers. The interior is open to the sky and contains Gentor's *frost pylon*. If the characters recovered the other *pylon* and brought it to Gentor, that one is here as well. Gentor is not certain how to use the Lexicon to empower the *pylon*. Fortunately the artifact grants some instinctive knowledge of its use upon its owner.

Once the player empowers the *frost pylon*, it's just a matter of waiting while Gentor communes with the device. Gentor warns the party not to disturb him once he has begun to command the *pylon* or its power will be wasted. The *pylon* will recharge once per day indefinitely now that the Lexicon has restored it, but Refuge may not have a day to waste.

Of course, this is where things become more complicated. The Horde has spies in Mossburg, a group of brainwashed human slaves under the command of Baleth's spymistress, a steamshadow fiend named Azimuth. She is also attended by a band of firesouls specialized in disguise and misdirection. When something as large and distinctive as a *frost pylon* entered the city, she reported it immediately. The salamander king recognized the *pylon* by its description, though he became less concerned when Gentor proved unable to make the weapon function. Baleth considered having his saboteurs destroy the device, but feared that if he did so, future agents would have greater difficulty infiltrating Mossburg. For the time being, Baleth commanded Azimuth to monitor the *pylon* but do nothing until it seemed as if Gentor might repair it.

When Gentor and the party enter the warehouse, Baleth's spies immediately act to destroy the *pylon*. They know this is a suicide mission, but Azimuth's loyalty is absolute and the slaves only obey. Once Gentor straps himself into the device, he falls into a deep trance as he communes with the ancient weapon. It is at this time that Azimuth and her saboteurs attack. The frontal assault gains a surprise round as they open on the guards from an alley across the street while the rear infiltration group scales the walls from the rear using climbing gear. If the party has stationed their own guards around the warehouse, the saboteurs will be forced to adjust their strategy accordingly.

Gentor is catatonic, but Elisif and the two guards outside (experienced soldier NPCs) aid the party. Gentor's golem minion defends its master but otherwise will not act unless Gentor commands it. If someone spends a full round action to awaken Gentor, he will also help, though he will be upset that the *pylon's* power was wasted. 3d4 rounds after combat begins, a band of Shadow Army reinforcements arrives to help (2 experienced soldiers, 1 elite soldier, 2 novice steamwrights and a novice mage). Three more identical squads arrive 3d4 rounds after that. Despite these overwhelming numbers, the saboteurs have a simple goal - to destroy the *frost pylon*. They will go to any lengths to do so. The firesouls are particularly devastating opponents due to their *invisibility* and *scorching rays*.

The party must successfully defend the *pylon* or Refuge is lost. (If the second *frost pylon* was returned to Mossburg and it survives the battle, the Lexicon will recharge in time to use it to defeat the Svarog Horde and save Mossburg, but Refuge will still be destroyed.)

## Azimuth's Saboteurs - CR 13

### Frontal Attack Group

2 salamander firesouls

2 elite soldiers

2 riflemen

### Rear Infiltration Group

Azimuth

2 salamander firesouls

2 elite assassins

1 elite soldier

These firesouls know *spider climb* instead of *fog cloud*, *disguise self* instead of *ray of enfeeblement* and *endure elements* instead of *shocking grasp*. They have the Disguise skill (+6) rather than Intimidate. These firesouls have cast *spider climb* and *endure elements* on themselves in advance (the latter was not for the fight, but simply to alleviate the frigid discomfort of the surface world).

These salamander fiends have been separated from a *balefire cauldron* long enough that they do not possess the usual advantages and disadvantages conferred by one. Azimuth has charged her *manite stunner* so that she can bite and stun the first person who gets in her way. The saboteurs fight only to eliminate obstacles - the *pylon* is their first and only objective. After it is destroyed, they attempt to escape or surrender, whichever is easier.

## Aftermath

If the party defends the *pylon* successfully, a fierce blizzard rolls over Mossburg one hour later (this counts as a powerful storm, see Chapter 13, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*). The storm spreads south across Aramyst and lasts for an entire week, caking the land in ice, snow, and bitter sub-zero temperatures. The intense cold is such that the Burning cannot affect Aramyst during this time, causing all *balefire cauldrons* to cease functioning.

Baleth's armies fall into panicked retreat, returning to Mount Svarog. Over half of the salamanders perish in the intense cold, including all of the titans. If the players found the improved *frost pylon* and returned it to Mossburg, the storms are even more intense. Only those with magical protection survive. The rest are left frozen in the icy wasteland, their stony corpses a testament to the Lexicon's incredible power. Assuming the Svarog can recover from their losses, it will be centuries before they threaten the surface again.

Though the people in Mossburg and Refuge weather the storm, others are not so fortunate. Many nomad groups are killed by the unforeseen blizzard. After years of life in a scorching wasteland, they are unprepared for the sudden cold and have neither the knowledge nor the equipment needed to survive.

Following this embarrassing defeat and the departure of the cult, Baleth loses influence over the Svarog Horde. He flees his home mere hours before a bloody coup slaughters his remaining supporters. He makes his way to Le'Ciel, where he takes refuge with his master, Avatar Proditus. Though rejoining the cult that abandoned him is a bitter pill for the salamander to swallow, he has no other option. He consoles himself with the knowledge that Proditus will be forced to deal with the party eventually. When he does, Baleth will be there to have his revenge.

In the meantime, Gentor and the player characters are celebrated as heroes of Aramyst. Though many disagree with his severe methods, none can deny that his *frost pylon* won the day. In a show of good faith from Jerek, a Shadow Army garrison is constructed in Refuge and Urbanan mechemages are invited to work beside the College Remnants to find a solution for the Burning. Pleased at Gentor's success, Lord



Urbane dispatches more Urbanan troops to Aramyst over the following months. Soon enough, a garrison is stationed in Refuge as well. Lieutenant Elisif is moved to Refuge to act as an advisor, but only for a few weeks before Jerek abdicates leadership to her completely. The Aramystian fleur-de-lis is removed from the city walls, discarded as a symbol of a dead past. The Iron Tyrant's Gauntlet now flies on Refuge's flags, and the Ruined Kingdom becomes an Urbanan vassal state.

At least it's safe.

### Option 3: Jerek's Plan

If the players agree with Jerek's plan, he quickly escorts them to his workshop. He opens the garage, revealing a mechatrain engine. Though much smaller than the Thunder Trains the party has seen before, the design is quite similar. While the Aramyst train system was originally intended to teleport through the Corridor in an instant, this vehicle is designed to physically enter that pocket dimension and remain there.

Jerek and Atticus Caesar had been working on designs for years, intending to use the engine to find a way to stop the Burning. When Baleth sealed the Corridor, they put those plans on hold until they realized that the Burning was being used to empower Baleth's *bailefire cauldrons*.

For the vehicle to cross into the Corridor, the Lexicon must be used to boost its power. Unfortunately, Refuge and the nearby area are outside the Corridor, so the engine will have to follow the tracks north — directly toward the advancing horde. If everything goes well, the train will vanish before the Horde can stop them.

Naturally the Lexicon's controller will need to be aboard for the plan to work. Jerek will offer to pilot the vehicle. If the party has a better

pilot, he at least asks to come along to join the fight against Baleth. If the party refuses, he will reluctantly agree to remain behind. Atticus Caesar does not offer to accompany the party (he's too old for that sort of thing), but he gives each party member a *potion of resist energy* (fire 20).

"Drink these just before you make the transition into the Corridor," the old mage instructs. "The Burning is strongest there. Even these potions will not protect you for long, and without them your trip will end very quickly."

"Stay near the train at all times," Jerek adds. "Living creatures aren't supposed to remain in the Corridor for more than a fraction of a moment. Baleth is using his master cauldron to break that rule, so we're using the Burning Engine to do the same. If you wander away from the train for longer than a minute or so, you'll pop back into Aramyst like a cork floating back to the surface of water. The Darkfall only knows where you'll end up. At the same time, don't use any teleportation magic; you'll sever your connection to the train and pop back to the real world. Though keep that in mind if we need to make a hasty retreat."

Once preparations are made and everyone is aboard, the train sets off immediately. By the time the *Burning Engine* makes its way through the gates of Refuge, a thick pall of smoke chokes the skies above, making the entire area dark as night. This not only serves to signal the Svarog Horde's advance and demoralizes the people of Refuge, but strengthens many of the nocturnals that march beside Baleth's troops. Terrified people rush to and from the gates, seeking shelter or trying to flee the city. Jerek (if piloting) blows the train's whistle in frustration and the vehicle moves at an agonizingly slow pace as he waits for the crowd to part. Though Beast Legion soldiers do their best to clear the way, some well-placed Intimidation checks or anything else the party can do to move the crowd aside can help immensely here.





Once the train clears the mob and begins to descend from the mountains, it quickly picks up speed. The wheels glow with unearthly light and a stream of brilliant white steam pulses from the smokestack. Cheers rise from the walls for the heroes who ride against the Horde. While this makes for a dramatic and inspiring display, it also attracts the attention of Baleth's nocturnal scouts. Once the train is out of range of the city's archers and siege engines, they swoop down from the mountains to pursue the engine.

### Shadow Demons (x4)

CR 11 Total - XP 3,200 each

hp 59 each

These shadow demons operate at full strength due to the supernaturally overcast sky. Once the demons realize that the *Burning Engine* is speeding directly toward the Horde, they assume the train is a weapon and do their best to disable it, using *telekinesis* to hurl rocks at the vehicle or even leaping aboard and attacking the pilot.

Though the demons are powerful, the party doesn't need to defeat them. They just need to disable them or protect the train until it can reach the Corridor. This takes seven rounds of moving at full speed from the time the train leaves the gates of Refuge, or four rounds if the party successfully dispersed the crowd earlier. Once the train has reached this distance, the Lexicon may be used to empower the vehicle, instantly transporting the train directly into the Corridor. If any of the shadow demons are still aboard at that time, they come along for the ride and are instantly driven mad by the bright, burning lights of the Corridor, whereupon they flee into the flames and aren't seen again.

The Corridor is unlike anything the party has seen. It resembles Aramyst, but wildly distorted and seething with constant plumes of brilliant red and yellow fire. Space ripples and distorts around them in a world that only remains stable around the *Burning Engine*. The vehicle begins to move at incredible speed, following a set of tracks that appear in front of it and vanish once more just behind. On the horizon, a pillar of enormous fire erupts steadily from the ground, shifting by the moment from blue to red to pure white.

The heat within the Corridor is stifling, equal to extreme heat (see Chapter 13, *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*), so the characters may wish to use any fire salve they have with them. Though the *Burning Engine* is immune to the Corridor's heat, all passengers take 4d6 fire damage every round they are within this realm. Caesar's potions should protect from the worst of this, but it's immediately clear that the party can't stay here forever. Fortunately, in a world of compacted and distorted space they don't have far to go.

"The flames are hottest there," Jerek says, pointing to the burning pillar. "That's where we'll find him, I wager."

The train arrives at the pillar in 6 rounds, giving the player characters time to prepare for the final battle. The train cruises over the lip of an enormous crater, from which the fire pillar erupts. As the engine approaches its destination, a pair of burning eyes appears in the sky.

"Jerek of Refuge," rumbles a gravelly voice, seeming to emanate from all directions at once. "And now you hide behind (he calls the player characters by name, or by the name of their group, if they have one), the meddling mercenaries who slaughtered my brother. Even they cannot protect you, High Minister. Refuge will BURN. And you would dare attack me HERE? In MY realm? Here, I see all. Here I AM all." The ground rumbles and fire plumes erupt around the Burning Engine. "Come, if you have the mettle. Let us finish this."

The train climbs the lip of the crater and descends into the valley beyond. The crater is roughly three hundred feet in diameter. Baleth the Righteous, Lord of the Svarog Horde, waits at the bottom. He oversees the destruction of Refuge from a scrying mirror mounted in a rocky outcropping. Behind him stands a huge mechamagical engine, roughly similar in design to the balefire cauldrons, but fifty feet in diameter. It is from this device that the flaming pillar rises.

If the players comment that it's strange that Baleth is alone, Jerek grunts in agreement. "Strictly speaking, our presence here isn't physically possible," he replies. "I can't fault him for being overconfident."

Whether or not this exchange occurs, Baleth continues threatening the characters as they enter the canyon. "I am not alone," he says. "I am well prepared. You are not the only one who knows his enemy, nor are you the only one who knows your enemies. May I present my ally, Terablix the Autonomous, Champion of the Darkfall, Sunderer of Mekanus, King of the Dark City!"

With that, the massive figure of a terabot steps from the flames within Baleth's Cauldron.

"There is no room for creatures of flesh in a world of glorious fire," the Golem King says in its hollow, mechanical voice.

The golem aims its cannon at the *Burning Engine* and fires as combat begins.

Baleth has been aware of the party's incursion since their arrival in the Corridor, and has had ample time to cast many of his defensive spells. In addition to his prepared spells, he has used his scroll of *mirror image* to provide additional defense in the final battle and used *construct servant IV* to animate a large boulder. He takes to the air as the engine approaches, using his *overland flight* spell to his advantage.

Note that due to Baleth's attunement to this pocket dimension that his spells stack with the ambient damage inflicted each round by the Corridor. As such, his fire-based spells can easily overwhelm the fire resistance afforded by Caesar's potions. This includes the burn damage inflicted by his *construct servant*.

Each round during combat, 2d4 fire plumes erupt in random locations throughout the crater. One third of these (round down) will appear beneath a randomly selected player character's (or Jerek's) current position. They will not appear beneath the *Burning Engine*, due to its immunity to fire. These plumes warn their arrival at the beginning of each round with a surge of heat and ominous rumbling in a 5-foot radius. At the beginning of the next round, the plume erupts for the duration of that round and all plumes from the previous round disappear.

These plumes inflict 6d6 fire damage which, like Baleth's spells, stacks with the ambient fire damage of the Corridor (DC 16 Reflex save to halve this damage). Any metal objects that take damage from a fire plume are subjected to a *heat metal* effect that lasts for 3 rounds. This includes Terabot, who is empowered by *heat metal* and will do his best to move into the plumes when possible. The pillar of flame emanating from Baleth's Cauldron inflicts 20d6 fire damage per turn to anything unfortunate enough to enter it. This also stacks with the Corridor's fire damage.

Any teleportation-based abilities cause the user to disrupt his connection to the Corridor, ejecting him to a random location in Aramyst somewhere between Refuge and Mount Svarog. Going longer than one minute without touching the *Burning Engine* also has this effect. Characters who are ejected while adjacent to one another will appear 1d100 feet apart in the real world.

Baleth fights viciously and takes full advantage of his immunity to the fire plumes during the battle. If his defeat seems imminent or Baleth's Cauldron is destroyed, the cowardly salamander attempts to use his *teleport* spell to escape, immediately flying north toward Le'Ciel after he arrives. Players who have any form of *teleport* spells prepared and *teleport* from Baleth's last location can pursue him into Aden.

### Showdown in the Corridor \* total CR 14

(the CR of this encounter is slightly increased due to the unfavorable conditions)

### Baleth the Righteous

CR 12 - XP 19,200

hp 143





## Terabot

CR 11 - XP 12,800

hp 143



## Large Animated Boulder

(construct servant)

hp 52 each

**construction point abilities** burn (1d6), stone (hardness 8, +1 natural armor), additional slam

(The *Thunderscape Campaign Setting* contains premade stat blocks for animated objects.)

## Aftermath

It doesn't matter whether or not the party kills Baleth, as long as they destroy *Baleth's Cauldron*. Once it's been destroyed, the Svarog Horde is stranded and weakened far from home. His titans, unable to survive for long on the surface, immediately flee. Many of them die before they can reach safe haven. Some surrender, begging for enough heat to sustain their lives.

Between this sudden disarray and the Shermazzan desertion, most nocturnals lose faith in the salamander king and abandon him, though some of them remain to attack anything unfortunate enough to be nearby, including their former salamander allies. A small fragment of desperate salamanders attempts to press the attack and lays siege to Refuge, but the Beast Legion holds them at bay until Gentor's Shadow Army arrives from the north, crushing Baleth's last remaining loyalists.

Though it is a hard battle and many of the salamanders survive to potentially threaten Aramyst another day, their power base is shattered.

### Restoring the Templar Council

The other significant development to consider is Sir Caspegar's fate. Following the Darkfall, twenty-six members of the Templar Council vanished and, like Caspegar, cannot be tracked or confirmed dead. Until they are found, they cannot be replaced, and without three quarters of the council in agreement, the Radiant Code cannot be amended to select new members. (See *Thunderscape World Book One: The Radiant Order, Defenders of the North* for more details on the Templars' current crisis.)

Caspegar's return would change all of that. Even were the Council to reject him as corrupted, he could retire and a replacement could be chosen. The Council could begin to heal.

Caspegar does not wish to return. He does not trust himself. He suspects that if he is returned to the Council in his current state that the Darkfall would drive him to unleash evil upon Arasteen. The party can attempt to convince him otherwise, if they wish, with either a Diplomacy check vs. DC 30 or a Knowledge (nobility or religion) check vs. DC 25 to remind Caspegar of his vows to the Order. If a fallen player character speaks to Caspegar, no check is necessary. Witnessing an accursed individual accomplish great deeds despite the Darkfall's influence is enough to convince the Templar that he must return and help his people. If the Council is truly being manipulated by its enemies, as King Corben suspects, who better to find the culprit than a fallen?

Whether the party decides to send Caspegar back to Arasteen or allows him to live out his life in obscurity will impact future volumes of this Adventure Path. No matter what they choose, Caspegar is grateful and warns them to beware of Proditus, Avatar of Shermazza. By claiming the Cipere Lexicon, they have marked themselves as his enemies. Their fight isn't over yet.

Even if Baleth survives, the Svarog Horde loses faith in him. Knowing that nothing waits at home except an inevitable coup, the salamander king flees to Le'Ciel, where he joins Avatar Proditus and waits for his chance to gain revenge upon the heroes who defeated him. Unless they killed him, of course. Then Baleth doesn't do much of anything.

Jerek and the player characters are celebrated as the saviors of Aramyst. Though many disagree with his methods (you can't please everyone) and wonder when the salamanders will rise again, none can deny that without his ingenious invention, Aramyst would have fallen. Jerek gains confidence and begins to rule Refuge more decisively, making hard decisions and drafting new laws to bring order to the wasteland.

The unexpected victory draws attention from neighboring lands. Carraway and Vanora each send ambassadors to Refuge, recognizing Jerek as High Minister of the Ruined Kingdom. Though Jerek is reluctant to accept the title, Caesar encourages him to finally accept his position. It may have been a political convenience at first, but Jerek has now earned his rank more decisively than any High Minister in memory.

With increased trade from Vanora, the Refugees become less dependent on trade with Mossburg, allowing them to cease scavenging the ruins of their homeland to feed the Iron Tyrant's hunger. Lord Urbane is disappointed by the reduced flow of Celestial College treasures and recalls many of Gentor's soldiers, considering Mossburg a 'failed experiment.' To keep Mossburg secure, Gentor is forced to request aid from Jerek's Beast Legion. Within a year, Gentor bids Mossburg a bittersweet farewell and returns to Urbana, transferring the city's leadership to Atticus Caesar's capable hands.

The Shadow Army's departure means that the Beast Legion are spread even more thinly than before. This leads to increased bandit activity throughout the wasteland. Aramyst becomes a haven for smugglers, scavengers, and criminals. It's all that Jerek can do to keep order as he struggles to create new laws for the unprecedented needs of his unique kingdom. The Svarog salamanders, bitter at their defeat, continue to plague the surface with occasional guerilla strikes, forcing some nomad bands to flee for safer lands. The Svarog Horde is no longer a threat, but Aramyst remains an unpredictable and dangerous place.

At least it's free.

## RESOLUTION

Now that the players have reclaimed the Lexicon and finished their business in the Ruined Kingdom, their next goal should be to return to Arasteen and cure the Crystal Grief. If they can *teleport* by now, then they can return to Arasteen under their own power (albeit gradually, it's over 2000 miles away). If Captain Gentor lives, he's happy to *teleport* them to Smult in Urbana (he has a *teleportation stone* there) and draw upon his Shadow Army contacts to arrange transport on the next Thunder Train to Sea Reach. It's the least he can do for their service to Aramyst.

Alternately, they can call Sir Elion to come get them. He requires 24 hours to prepare appropriate spells, but can transport up to five medium-sized creatures or an equivalent amount of cargo back to Sea Reach each day.

If the players have the *Heart of Tarello* and have learned how to use it, they can use the *Rosengate* in Quintus Station to return home under their own power. The gate will need to be repaired first. Potential methods of restoring the *Rosengate* are described in the Appendix. Using this method of travel is worth doing if only to see the surprised looks on the faces of the guards in the Hammish bunker when the party arrives. (Luckily they recognize the party and do not attack.)

Once the party has returned to Arasteen with the Lexicon, King Corben assigns an honor guard of knights to protect them on their journey to Sea Reach, if necessary. It will take some time to commune with the Lexicon and find a cure for Shermazza's curse. In the meantime, the players can enjoy a nice rest for a change.





# APPENDIX

## - APPENDIX A - WHO'S WHO IN ARAMYST

### Heroes of the Ruined Kingdom

#### ⚙️ Jennis Arai

Jennis Arai is a polarizing figure in Refuge; people either adore her or detest her. She is the leader of the Lost Souls, a gang of wandering scouts and mercenaries who usually work on behalf of the city, hunting down criminals and protecting nomads from bandits and other dangers. She is a cold and uncompromising vigilante who sincerely believes that making an example out of one criminal today is the best way to prevent two more from rising up tomorrow. Arai does not make friends easily, even among her gang, and never speaks of her past.

Jennis Arai is the sole survivor of Caspegar's expedition to Quintus Station. She is a former knight of the Radiant Order and served as Sir Thacken's squire. Arai does not know that her master's actions were a feint, intended to distract the enemy so that she could escape. From her perspective, her last memory of the Order is watching the man that trained her betray everything he stood for to the Darkfall. Now, she has absolutely no idea how to complete their mission. She doesn't know what a Lexicon is or where it was hidden, other than that it was somewhere in Cipere. She carries a tremendous amount of survivor's guilt and channels that energy into punishing those who would prey upon the weak in Refuge.

Arai no longer wears the armor of a knight. She feels she is no longer worthy. Despite her sense of failure, she has never abandoned her vows of charity, chivalry, and courage. Though she does not realize it, she remains enough of a knight to open the vault beneath Cipere Mine if needed to do so.

#### Thunderscape Sourcebooks

Many of the characters in this book take advantage of feats, spells, implants, and various other character options introduced in various Thunderscape Sourcebooks, especially our character class guides. While we love all of our products and encourage you to collect them all, we understand that not every play group has access to every resource. To this end, character options from these sources are briefly summarized in parentheses wherever possible.

Seriously, though, check them out. They're great.

If Jennis Arai encounters Caspegar, she recognizes him immediately and begs his forgiveness, revealing her mysterious past to the party. In return, Caspegar reveals that Sir Thacken never truly betrayed the order, which goes a long way toward restoring Arai's faith in her beliefs.

#### Jennis Arai

**Female human thunder scout (lone rider) 8**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init** +4; **Perception** +11

#### Defense

**AC** 21, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 17 (+7 armor, +4 Dexterity)

**hp** 67 (8d8+24)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +3

#### Offense

**Speed** 50 ft.

**Melee** masterwork cold iron greatsword +11/+6 (2d6+3)

**Ranged** +1 rifle +13/+8 (1d10+2)

**Special Attacks** scout's mobility

#### Thunder Scout Spells Prepared

**0-Level** (3/day) – *detect magic*, *overheat rune*, *prestidigitation*

**1st Level** (2/day) – *longstrider*, *vanish*

**2nd Level** (2/day) – *blur*, *protection from energy*

Arai typically casts *longstrider* on herself prior to combat. This is accounted for in her stats.

#### Thunder Scout Techniques

*arcane knight*, *avored terrain* (desert/wasteland), *killing fields* (+2 to attack/damage in favored terrain), *swift as lightning*

#### Statistics

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

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Gutshot, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (rifle), Rapid Shot

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Knowledge (religion) and counts as class skill), grease monkey (vehicle gains bonus feature)

**Skills** Acrobatics 8 (+14), Craft (machinery) 4 (+11), Disable Device 8 (+15), Knowledge (engineering) 8 (+13), Knowledge (geography) 4 (+9), Knowledge (local) 8 (+13), Knowledge (nature) 4 (+10), Knowledge (religion) 4 (+10), Perception 8 (+11), Stealth 8 (+14), Survival 8 (+11)

**Languages** Western Common

**SQ** expert handling, pilot training

**Equipment** +1 mithral breastplate, +1 rifle, 20 armor piercing rifle ammunition, 20 standard rifle ammunition, 20 holdout ammunition, *cloak of resistance* +1, dagger, masterwork cold iron greatsword,



masterwork holdout, masterwork repair tools, masterwork thieves' tools, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 220 gp

## Jennis Arai's Signature Vehicle – Thunder Cycle

### Large Manite-Powered Vehicle

#### Caster Level 5th

AC 24, **touch** 16, **flat-footed** 173 (+8 armor, +4 dodge, +3 Dex, -1 size)  
**hp** 63 (7d10+21)

**Speed** 80 ft.; **Speeding** 30 ft.

**Space** 10 ft. x 10 ft.

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16

**CMB** +2, **CMD** 15 (19 vs. trip)

**Crew Stations** pilot

**Weapons** alchemy drop, pilot ram

**Cover** zero

**Engine Type** basic

**Bonus Features** all-terrain, armor (medium), evasion, hardened chassis, high speed, illuminators, impact resistant, maneuverable, sidecar, superior materials (+1 hp per hit die)

## Atticus Caesar

When the Darkfall came and Aramyst burned, Atticus Caesar was far from home. Though once a member of the High Ministry, he had been retired for many years and used his retirement to embrace his love of zoology. While on safari in the jungles of Kyan, Caesar heard the news of Aramyst's fate. He returned to Regorra to find only fire and ash. Undaunted, he made his way to as many other sites of learning as he could, rescuing any College wizards he found there.

Atticus Caesar hoped to rebuild the College, or at least try. Unfortunately the men and women he found were too few, too young, or too weak to make much of a difference. The College was a shadow of its former self. Disheartened and defeated, Caesar followed a trail of rumors whispered by various other survivors. Eventually, he found Refuge.

Though a great wizard, Atticus Caesar is also a sour-tempered, crotchety old man who complains about everyone and everything. He is rude, impatient, and utterly convinced that most problems can be resolved through the application of magic. This often causes loud and prolonged arguments with Jerek, who prefers to rely on more concrete scientific methods. Caesar can be arrogant, stubborn, and at times completely oblivious that the world as he knew it has changed.

Caesar knows his flaws. In his mind, they don't matter. He doesn't need to change. He's an old man, a tired man, and he knows he doesn't have much time left. Jerek, on the other hand, is the future. Atticus Caesar will supply him with guidance for as many years as he can - whether that stupid boy is wise enough to appreciate it or not.

Though he is by far the most powerful wizard in Refuge and knowledgeable in military tactics, Atticus Caesar detests combat. He avoids it whenever possible, considering it an unseemly endeavor for a scholar.



**Male human wizard (divination/scriber) 10**

**LG Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init** +5; **Perception** +19

### Defense

AC 20, **touch** 15, **flat-footed** 19 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex, +3 deflection)

**hp** 52 (10d6+10)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** cold iron dagger +4 (1d4-1)

**Ranged** masterwork Carraway crossbow +7 (1d8)

### Typical Wizard Spells Prepared

**0-Level** (6/day) – *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*

**1st Level** (6+1/day) – *alarm*, *color spray* (X2, DC 17), *identify*, *mage armor*, *unseen servant*, *vanish*

**2nd level** (6+1/day) – *detect thoughts* (DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 18), *locate object*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*, *summon monster II*, *web* (DC 18)

**3rd Level** (5+1/day) – *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *magic circle vs. evil*, *slow* (DC 19), *tiny hut*

**4th Level** (4+1/day) – *charm monster* (DC 20), *detect scrying*, *illusory wall*, *scrying*, *summon monster IV*

**5th Level** (3+1/day) – *prying eyes*, *sending*, *teleport X2*

Caesar typically casts *mage armor* and *detect scrying* on himself prior to encounters. This is accounted for in his stats.

### Statistics

**Str** 9, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 22, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

**Feats** Brew Potion, Cosmopolitan (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus - Knowledge (arcana), Skill Focus - Linguistics, Studied (X2), Spell Focus (divination)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), resilient (+1 Fortitude)

**Skills** Diplomacy: 10 (+14), Knowledge (arcana): 10 (+22), Knowledge (dungeoneering): 10 (+19), Knowledge (history): 10 (+19), Knowledge (local): 10 (+19), Knowledge (nature): 10 (+19), Knowledge (planes): 10 (+19), Knowledge (religion): 10 (+19), Linguistics: 10 (+22), Perception: 10 (+21), Sense Motive: 10 (+15), Spellcraft: 10 (+19)

**Languages** Arcadian, Earthtongue, Eastern Common, Fundamental, Giant, Jurakti, Kyall, Lowland, Misari, Nocturine, Planar, Rapacian, Sylfanic, Vanoran, Western Common

**SQ** arcane bond (ring), arcane school (divination/scriber), barred schools (necromancy, evocation), forewarned, send senses (9/day), scrying adept

**Equipment** 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +2, cold iron dagger, *eyes of the eagle*, *handy haversack*, *headband of vast intellect* +2, masterwork Carraway crossbow, *mithral buckler* +1, *ring of protection* +3 (arcane bond ring), *portable hole*, scrying mirror, spell component pouch, 230 gp. Between his personal library and his apprentices, Caesar has a vast collection of spellbooks in his library, granting the potential to prepare virtually any common spell.

## Lieutenant Elisif

On the surface, Elisif is every bit the stereotypical Eye agent. She is cold, formal, and rational. In combat, she is merciless and disciplined. She displays no emotional attachment to anyone or anything. She hates the Darkfall with resolute passion and is a vocal supporter of Lord Urbane. (She has personally flogged several soldiers for calling him "the Iron Tyrant.") The Mossburgers call her "the Iron Elf" as a reference both to her demeanor and to the distinctive helmet she wears at all times. Elisif secretly adores the nickname.

Though most would not know it, Elisif's time in Mossburg has softened her. She has come to value what these people have built. She sees potential in this place as a symbol of how courage can overcome any adversity the Darkfall can muster. Sometimes, she questions whether her ultimate loyalties lie with her masters in the Eye or with Captain Gentor, the only person she has ever truly considered a friend.

Elisif hopes she will never need to make that choice.



### Lieutenant Elisif

Female elf arbiter 9

LN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +5; Senses low-light vision, Perception +19

#### Defense

AC 25, touch 21, flat-footed 20 (+3 armor, +5 shield, +1 natural, +5 Dex, +1 deflection)

hp 86 (9d12+18)

Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +14

Special Defenses elven immunities, shieldwarden's stance

#### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 rapier +16/+10 (1d6+9/18-20)

Ranged +1 pistol +15 (1d10+2)

Special Attacks honed mind, shield defense

#### Strategic Maneuvers

adept judgment, evasion, keen eyes, sage resistance (Will), shielded stance

#### Statistics

Str 13, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +9; CMB +14 (+18 trip); CMD 25 (27 vs. trip)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Extra Maneuvers, Greater Trip, Improved Trip, Weapon Finesse

Traits indomitable faith (+1 Will), interrogator (+2 to Diplomacy/Intimidate when interrogating)

Skills Diplomacy 9 (+14), Intimidate 9 (+18), Knowledge (dungeoneering) 9 (+16), Knowledge (local) 9 (+16), Knowledge (nobility) 9 (+16), Perception 9 (+19), Sense Motive 9 (+17), Survival 9 (+13)

Languages Western Common, Lowland, Nocturnine, Rapacian, Sylfanic, Vanoran

SQ envoy (alternate racial trait: gains comprehend languages, read magic, detect poison, and detect magic each 1/day as spell-like abilities)

Equipment +1 leather armor, +1 pistol, +2 kite shield, +2 rapier, 20 standard pistol ammunition, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of incredible dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +2, pocketwatch, ring of protection +1, spyglass, 450 gp  
Elisif's helmet is seemingly forged from a solid piece of steel with no sign of a visor. Despite its appearance, Elisif can breathe, see, and hear clearly. The helmet provides a +2 bonus to saving throws against gaze attacks and functions as a circlet of persuasion.

### ✧ Sir Caspegar

Sir Caspegar is the former leader of Arasteen's Rectory of Infernal Defense, a small sect of knights charged with preventing demonic incursions in Aden. After his capture at Quintus Station, Caspegar was subjected to years of torture and humiliation in an attempt to learn how to pierce the vaults beneath Cipere Mine. Though he never acquiesced to the cult's demands, the experience changed him mentally and physically.

He can be savage and unhinged at times. He is plagued by nightmares and paranoia, frequently imagining enemies where there are none. Even yet, he is still a knight and finds comfort in the heroic deeds of the player characters. With their help and support of the player characters, he may yet become a hero again.

If the player characters aren't the heroic types, Caspegar still learns from their example, embracing the pain and madness within on a quest to seek violent retribution against all who have wronged him.

### Sir Caspegar, Fallen Templar

Male human paladin 4, fallen (horror stigma) 5

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +2

#### Defense

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 89 (4d10+5d8+36)

Fort +13, Ref +6, Will +16 (+18 vs. mind affecting)

Special defenses aura of courage, divine health, toughened, tormented mind, shared pain (3 damage to tormented enemies who damage him)

#### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee longsword +11/+6 (1d8+3) (+3 damage vs. tormented),

Ranged dagger +8 (1d4+3)

Special attacks smite evil - 2/day (+3 to hit, +4 damage vs. evil), torment (DC 18), suffering (DC 18, 5/day)

#### Paladin Spells Typically Prepared

1st Level (1/day) – bless

#### Statistics

Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 16

Base Atk +7; CMB +10; CMD 21

Feats Greater Tormentor, Iron Will, Terrible Charge (may spend suffering to full attack on charge), Tormentor, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Traits indomitable faith (+1 Will), folk magic (shield, 1/day)

Skills Intimidate 6 (+18), Knowledge (religion) 4 (+7), Stealth 9 (+8), Survival 9 (+14)

Languages Western Common

SQ dual talent (alternate racial trait), aura of good, detect evil, lay on hands (heal 2d6 damage, 5/day), mercy - cures fatigue, channel positive energy, scourge

Equipment none; once returned to civilization he scrounges the following: longsword, light shield, breastplate, 3 daggers, hemp rope and grapple. If Jerek or Gentor are aware of his status as a Templar, they supply him with masterwork versions of these weapons and armor.

### ✧ Seven-Fourteen

This hot-tempered ferran warrior serves Refuge as its military general, city watch captain, and liaison between Jerek and the various factions constantly seeking to curry his favor. Though constantly overworked, she wouldn't have it any other way. Seven-Fourteen thrives under pressure and, though she regrets the tragedies that have befallen Aramyst, secretly prefers the new world to the old one.

Before the Darkfall, Seven-Fourteen was just a Beast Legion soldier. Though highly skilled and accomplished, she was forced to constantly endure the prejudice and derision of her Celestial College superiors. On her naming day, she selected the name of a hero from the War of Beasts, renowned or slaughtering mages in personal combat. The wizards barely even seemed to notice, so busy were they assigning her the next trivial task.

Now, Aramyst is a world where things happen. Courage and loyalty matter. Everyone is finally - for better or worse - equal. The Ruined Kingdom could do with a few less hungry nocturnals and fire plumes, to be sure, but otherwise Seven-Fourteen feels that the wasteland is a much more interesting place to live.



## Seven-Fourteen

Female ferran predator (badger) fighter 8

CG Medium humanoid (ferran)

Init +1; Perception +14

### Defense

AC 26, **touch** 14, **flat-footed** 24 (+11 armor, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +2 deflection)

hp 70 (8d10+18)

Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +7

Special defenses leathery hide

### Offense

Speed 30 ft., **climb** 30 ft.

Melee +1 *greatsword* +19 (2d6+14), bite +10 (1d6+3)

Ranged masterwork pistol +9 (1d8+2)

Special attacks berserker (+1 to hit enemies who have damaged her this combat, +2 if she has lost more than half of her hp)

### Statistics

Str 24, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +8; CMB +15; CMD 26

Feats Dodge, Furious Focus, Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword), Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

Traits indomitable faith (+1 Will), ruffian (+2 hp)

Skills Intimidate 8 (+11), Perception 8 (+14), Sense Motive 8 (+14), Survival 8 (+12)

Languages Eastern Common, Lowland

SQ feral insight

Equipment +1 *Chandrey armor*, +1 *greatsword*, +4 *belt of giant strength*, 20 heavy pistol ammunition, *cloak of resistance* +1, masterwork pistol, *ring of protection* +2, 124 gp

## ♣ Captain Gentor

Captain Gentor was a poor dwarf from a humble family of copper-smiths in the city of Smult. His parents were extremely proud when, upon demonstrating an innate talent for mechemagic, he was accepted into the Celestial College in Aramyst. By pure luck, he happened to be on semester leave visiting his family in Columbey when the Darkfall occurred.

He set out to join Urbane's armies just a few weeks later. After fighting bravely at the Fall of Tarello, he volunteered to lead an expedition of Shadow Army soldiers into the heart of Aramyst. He hoped to determine the Celestial College's fate and perhaps find out if his old friends had survived. In ten years, he has found none of his former classmates.

Gentor chafes at the common accusation that he is merely a scavenger who does not have Aramyst's best interests at heart. He considers himself an Aramystian as much as an Urbanan - if not more, as he spent little time among Urbane's new regime before embarking on this mission. That said, he is a blunt, pragmatic fellow who values order and security above all else. His loyalty to his brothers in the Shadow Army is unbreakable and he would go to any lengths to see Aramyst purged of the fiends that threaten her.

Though Gentor's wealth and influence is such that he could eat only imported foods if he desired, he eats moss-weed as a show of solidarity with those under his command. He has developed several personal recipes which he describes, with some pride, as "not quite terrible."

Gentor's golem bodyguard, Tribute, is sculpted in the visage of a mighty granite dwarf. Upon its stone flesh, Gentor has engraved the names of every Shadow Army soldier and Aramystian volunteer who has died in service to Mossburg.

## Captain Gentor

Male dwarf mechamage 10

LG Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

### Defense

AC 17, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 17 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +1 deflection)

hp 62 (10d6+20)

Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +9

Special Defenses hardy

### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee masterwork warhammer +8 (1d8+2)

Ranged masterwork scattergun +6 (3d4+1)

Special Attacks hatred

### Typical Mechamage Spells Prepared

0-Level - *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *detect mechemagic*, *everheat rune*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

1st Level - *alarm*, *enlarge person*, *mage armor*, *obscuring mist*, *true strike*, *unseen servant*

2nd Level - *glitterdust* X 2, *golemshield* (+5 AC to golem for 24 hours), *resist energy*, *see invisibility*

3rd Level - *construct servant II*, *dispel magic*, *fly*, *shrink item*, *stinking cloud*

4th Level - *black tentacles*, *construct servant III*, *dimension door*, *fear*

5th Level - *sending*, *teleport* X 2 (Gentor prepares these spells to maintain trade and communication with Refuge; if he knows he will not require this, he will prepare *teleport*, *construct servant IV*, and *golembreath* (DC 20))

### Mechamage Writs Known

Agile, Capacious, Durable, Hardy, Heaving, Mighty, Slayer, Steadfast, Swift, Tactical, Talented, Warrior

Gentor typically casts *mage armor* on himself and *golemshield* on his golem prior to encounters. This is accounted for in his stats.

### Statistics

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 17 (21 vs. bull rush or trip)

Feats Cosmopolitan (Diplomacy, Sense Motive), Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Cunning Constructs (golem and construct servants have enhanced intelligence), Improved Initiative, Inspiring Mechemagic, Scribe Scroll, Superior Servants (construct servants gain +4 Str, +2 hp per hit die, and 2 construction points)

Traits cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), polyglot (+2 languages)

Skills Craft (alchemy) 10 (+18), Diplomacy 10 (+13), Heal 5 (+11), Knowledge (arcana) 5 (+13), Knowledge (engineering) 10 (+18), Perception 10 (+15), Sense Motive 10 (+14), Spellcraft 10 (+18), Use Magic Device 10 (+13)

Languages Arcadian, Earthtongue, Eastern Common, Fundamental, Lowland, Nocturne, Planar, Rapacian, Sylfanic, Vanoran, Western Common

SQ call minion (distress, intercede), craftsman (alternate racial trait), stonecunning, improved tinkering

Equipment +1 *mithral buckler*, 20 standard scattergun ammunition, *cloak of resistance* +1, dagger, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, healer's kit, masterwork scattergun, masterwork warhammer, *portable hole*, *ring of protection* +1, *wand of mend* construct (35 charges remaining), spell component pouch, 450 gp, and a traveling spellbook (contains all prepared spells and known writs plus *ant haul*, *comprehend languages*, *grease*, *mout*, *protection from evil*, *screying*, *unseen servant*, *bull's strength*, *fox's cunning*, and *explosive runes*). Due to his extensive contacts Gentor can potentially access any spell



he needs; these are merely what he has at hand.) Gentor also carries a suit of plate mail carrying a longsword in a locked gauntlet, affected by shrink item; he keeps this on hand in case he needs something useful to animate with *construct servant* spells.

### Tribute - Gentor's Rock Golem Minion

**LG Large construct**

Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +10

#### Defense

**AC** 25, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 23 (+5 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 86 (7d10+44)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

**Special defenses** construct traits, evasion

#### Offense

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Melee** +1 *large halberd* +15/+10 (2d8+13) or 2 slams +13 (1d8+8)

#### Typical Writs (Loyalty 10)

Agile, Capacious, Durable, Gigantic, Mighty, Sentinel, Swift, Tactical (trip), Talented, Warrior  
(already added into stats)

#### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 14, **Con** -, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 23

**Feats** Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (halberd)

**Skills** Perception 7 (+10)

**SQ** link, share spells

**Equipment** +1 *large halberd*

### ⚙ Jerek of Refuge

The ruler of Refuge likes to claim that he is no one special. He's just an engineer who happened to be in the right place at the right time. He was a pawn of the Celestial College's political games that, entirely by accident, gave him the authority he needed to make people obey him. It was pure chance that he knew the way to Cipere, pure happenstance that he had the skills required to fortify the village. Each time someone points out one of his heroic deeds or ingenious breakthroughs, he is quick to list the random circumstances that made it possible or five more times when his inventions failed. He refuses to accept his official title, High Minister, as he resents the shallow political games that granted a simple mechanic complete authority over Aramyst's survivors.

It is this humility that Jerek's closest friend, Atticus Caesar, finds terribly infuriating. Jerek is hardly an ordinary man. Wizard or no, he's brave, resourceful, perceptive, and highly intelligent. Circumstances may have helped things along but he's quite confident that no matter where Jerek found himself during the Darkfall, he would have risen to greatness. Aramyst couldn't ask for a finer leader.

Unfortunately Jerek's lack of confidence has crippled Refuge's growth. Though Jerek has the education and influence required to be a great statesman, he fears making mistakes so much that he hides in his workshop while his city crumbles. Caesar prays that Jerek will have another chance to prove himself, and that he will rise to the challenge and become the man he needs to be. If Jerek of Refuge can push past his wounds, his regrets, and his weaknesses then there truly is hope for anyone in the Ruined Kingdom.



### Jerek of Refuge

**Male elf steamwright 10**

**NG Medium humanoid (elf)**

**Init** +2; Senses low-light vision; **Perception** +15

#### Defense

**AC** 23, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 21 (+9 armor, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 deflection)

**hp** 73 (10d8+20)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

**Special defenses** elven immunities

#### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** masterwork longsword +9/+4 (1d8+1)

**Ranged** masterwork pistol +10 (1d10+1)

**Special Attacks** overload, technical tap

#### Steamwright Inventions (4d8 Firepower)

##### Primary Inventions

*Belcher* - 5d4+6 cold damage in 25 ft. cone (Reflex DC 23); Mods: freeze ray (DC 23), master mod: concentrated/projectile (permanent upgrade), master mod: potent X 2, master mod: efficient X 2, Uses/day: 27.

*Optimized Armor* (mithral breastplate can be worn as if proficient, incorporates three inventions that can be used hands free) - Mods: accessorized, master mod: enhanced armor (+3)/mobile (permanent upgrade)

*Portable Generator* (charges can be spent to recharge other inventions) - Mods: efficient X2, inductive charge (need not be held in hand), rapid recharge (can be used as swift action); Uses/day: 27

##### Secondary Inventions

*Hazard Detector* (incorporated in armor's right gauntlet) - Mods: antimagic; Uses/day: N/A

*Keensight Goggles* - Mods: darkvision, ultravision; Uses/day: 9

*Paralyzer* (incorporated in armor's torso, DC 21) - Mods: potent, ranged; Uses/day: 9

*Patchgun* (incorporated in armor's left gauntlet) - Uses/day 9

*Rocket Harness* - Mods: efficient, enduring; Uses/day 9

#### Statistics

**Str** 13, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 22, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +7, **CMB** +8; **CMD** 20

**Feats** (Jerek gains 1 additional secondary invention and 5 mods from his various steamwright feats) Extended Firepower (can forego firepower for one round to double the range of one invention, +1 mod), Intense Firepower (can forego firepower for one round to increase an invention's save DC by 1), Invention Mastery (allows advanced mods to be placed on belcher and optimized armor, +1 mod), Tactical Firepower (can forego firepower for one round to exclude squares from instantaneous invention effects or inflict subdual damage with an invention), Tinkerer (+1 secondary, +1 mod),

**Traits** inventive (+1 invention mod) folk magic (*everheat rune* 3/day)

**Skills** (Skills marked with an asterisk count as trained and benefit from Jerek's handy class ability.) \*Craft (alchemy) 0 (+19), \*Craft (machinery) 0 (+19), \*Craft (masonry) 0 (+19), Appraise 10 (+19), Disable Device 10 (+21), Fly 10 (+14), Knowledge (arcana) 5 (+14), Knowledge (dungeoneering) 5 (+14), Knowledge (engineering) 10 (+19), Knowledge (history) 5 (+14), Knowledge (local) 5 (+14), Knowledge (nature) 5 (+14), Knowledge (planar) 10 (+19), Knowledge (religion) 5 (+14), Perception 10 (+15), Sense Motive 10 (+13)

**Languages** Arcadian, Earthtongue, Fundamental, Lowland, Nocturine, Sylfanic, Vanoran, Western Common

**SQ** envoy (alternate racial trait - can use *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, and *read magic* each 1/day), booby trap, jury-rig, masterworking

**Equipment** +3 *mithral breastplate* (optimized armor invention), 20 standard pistol ammunition, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of vast intellect* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, dagger, engineer's kit, masterwork longsword, masterwork pistol, masterwork thieves' tools, *ring of protection* +1, other inventions, 326 gp



## Villains of the Ruined Kingdom

### ❖ Spymistress Azimuth

Azimuth was one of Baleth's first supporters and the first to voluntarily endure mechemagical augmentation. Given the fiend's propensity for subtlety and misdirection, Baleth made her into a steamshadow. Fearful that the Shadow Army could become an even greater threat if Gentor ever summoned reinforcements from Urbana, Baleth assigned her to Mossburg with instructions to assassinate the dwarf if she felt it necessary. She has also been ordered to monitor Gentor's *frost pylon* and destroy it if she sees any indication that it can be restored to working order.

Azimuth lives in Mossburg in the guise of a rapacious fisherman. She is the most highly placed and dangerous of all of Baleth's agents, so she knows her cover cannot be thrown away lightly. For now, she merely waits...

### Spymistress Azimuth

CR 9 - XP 6,400

Salamander fiend golemoid (steamshadow) 10

LE Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +13

#### Defense

AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 16 (+5 armor, +1 natural, +5 Dex)

hp 84 (10d10+20) plus 7 temp hp

Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +6

Special Defenses fire resistance 5

#### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +16/+10 (1d6+8/18-20), bite +10 (1d4+3) or bite +15 (1d4+8)

Ranged +1 pistol +16/+10 (1d10+2)

#### Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 13)

**Steamshadow Combat Specialization** (can spend one steam point to cast *disguise self*. Adds one and a half times Dexterity modifier to damage rolls with light or one-handed weapon. Can spend a steam point to make a Stealth check even when observed. Can squeeze into spaces 1/4 normal size)

**Minor Implants** - *adrenaline booster* (spend steam to reroll initiative), *automated breakfall jets* (spend steam to gain feather fall), *climbing hooks*, *internal toolkit* (masterwork thieves tools), *internal heat control* (permanent *endure elements*), *skill booster* (+2 Stealth)

**Basic Implants** - *combat precognition*, *filter vents* (spend steam to become immune to harmful gases for 2 rounds), *fortified flesh*, *manite buffering system*, *manite injector* (potion of invisibility), *manite stunner* (spend steam; charges next bite so target must save or be stunned 1 round, Fort save DC 17 negates)

**Advanced Implants** - *advanced focuser* (spend steam to cure dazed, exhausted, frightened, nauseated, staggered), *advanced resistance generator* (Will), *combustion breath*

#### Statistics

Str 12, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 9

Base Atk +10; CMB +11; CMD 26

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Extra Steam, Gutshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (pistol), Weapon Finesse

**Traits** indomitable faith (+1 Will), steam-powered (+1 steam point)

**Skills** Climb 10 (+14), Disable Device 10 (+16), Disguise 10 (+12), Perception 10 (+13), Stealth 10 (+24), Survival 10 (+13)

**Languages** Firespeech, Eastern Common, Lowland

SQ fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), steamshadow combat specialization (basic, improved), interchangeable parts (minor, basic)

**Equipment** +1 mithral chain shirt, +1 pistol, +1 rapier, 20 standard pistol ammunition, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, 129 gp

### ❖ Prince Rashom of Svarog

Though all salamanders are born of the mountain, Baleth and Rashom were particularly close in their youth. They were born at the same time and instructed together. If there is a salamander equivalent to 'brothers' then they are exactly that. When Baleth marched on the village of Nobilus, Rashom marched beside him without hesitation, only narrowly escaping when the tide turned against them. When Baleth was captured, Rashom mourned. He became King of Svarog only at the tribal council's insistence.

Then Baleth returned and brought his insane cultists with him. He challenged Rashom, defeating and crippling him in a duel for the throne. Afterward, he healed Rashom's injuries using cruel and heretical manite implants. Rashom broke under the torture, or seemed to, eventually wearing fealty to the Svarog Horde's terrible new leader.

Rashom has never forgiven Baleth. He despises his brother and despises the cult even more for transforming him into what he is. He secretly works with Lady Vissarin, for now, hoping to turn the cult and his brother against one another. Once he leads the Svarog, he plans to use his influence over the Shermazzans to learn more about them, find their weaknesses, and eventually make them pay for what they've done to his people.

### Prince Rashom of Svarog

CR 9 - XP 6,400

Salamander fiend golemoid (harrier) 10

LE Medium outsider (native)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft., Perception +14

#### Defense

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 27 (+11 armor, +4 shield, +1 natural, +1 deflection)

hp 104 (10d10+40) (can gain 24 temp hp for one hour by spending 1 steam as standard action)

Fort +10, Ref +3, Will +7

Special Defenses fire resistance 5, cold resistance 5

#### Offense

Speed 25 ft.

Melee +1 flaming longsword +17/+12 (1d8+6 + 1d6 fire), bite +10 (1d4+2)

Ranged javelin +10 (1d6+5)

#### Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 14)

**Harrier Combat Specialization** (can make running leap from standing start, can spend steam to activate jets and gain the following for one turn: +10 speed, +2 dodge to AC, provokes, no attacks of opportunity for moving through threatened squares, +2 attack and damage rolls if he moves at least half his speed, and can leave a fog cloud or stinking cloud in squares he passes through, or in a five square radius if he spins in place as a standard action.)

**Minor Implants** - *adrenaline booster* (spend steam to reroll initiative), *automated breakfall jets* (spend steam to gain feather fall), *chest spikes*, *iron grip*, *momentum manipulator*, *skill booster* (Acrobatics)

**Basic Implants** - *combat precognition*, *fortified flesh*, *integrated armor* (+1 Chandrey armor), *manite injector* (loaded with haste



*potion*), *manite speed boost*, *polyinduction energy dampener* (cold resistance)

**Advanced Implants** - *advanced resistance generator* (Will), *blazing thrusters*, *manite invulnerability system*

### Statistics

**Str 21, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10**

**Base Atk +10; CMB +15; CMD 25** (35 vs. disarm)

**Feats** Heavy Armor Proficiency, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Shield Focus, Steamhead (regain 1 steam point if he moves 80 feet in one turn or drops an enemy while his harrier jets are active), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Traits** indomitable faith (+1 Will), steam-powered (+1 steam point)

**Skills** Acrobatics: 10 (+12), Intimidate: 10 (+13), Perception: 10 (+14), Survival: 10 (+14)

**Languages** Firespeech, Eastern Common

**SQ** fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), harrier combat specialization (basic, improved), interchangeable parts (minor, basic)

**Equipment** +1 *Chandrey armor*, +1 *flaming longsword*, +1 *steel shield*, 6 javelins, *belt of giant strength* +2, *haste potion*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *ring of mind shielding*, *ring of protection* +1, 327 gp

## ❁ Lady Vissarin

When Baleth the Righteous was dispatched to Aramyst to incite the Svarog Legions to war, Lady Vissarin was sent along to keep an eye on him. Though she revels in the destruction she has witnessed at the Svarog Horde's hand and gleefully accepts the slaves that the salamanders deliver to her, she has grown impatient of late. Baleth is content to wait for Refuge to destroy itself, but Vissarin is not.

Every day that they wait increases the chances that some Refugee fool will open the vault and use the Lexicon against them. And why must they wait? To preserve the lives of cannon fodder salamanders that can barely survive on the surface? It is untenable. The priestess has begun to make her own plans.



**CR 9 - XP 6,400**

**Female ferran brute (buffalo) Cleric 10**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init +4; Perception +5**

### Defense

**AC 20** (22 vs good), **touch 10**, **flat-footed 20** (+12 armor, +1 natural)

**hp 93** (10d8+40)

**Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +14**

**Special Defenses** leathery hide

### Offense

**Speed 20 ft.**

**Melee** +2 *large dwarven waraxe* +13/+8 (2d8+6), *gore* (1d8+1), or *gore* +10 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** masterwork Carraway crossbow +8 (1d8)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy (5d6, DC 21, 5/day), channel smite, feral charge (double damage when charging with gore attack, suffers additional -2 AC from charge)

### Cleric Domains

war, liberation

### Domain Powers

**battle rage** (+5 damage, 8/day), **freedom's call** (30 ft. radius, 10 rounds/day), **liberation** (10 rounds/day), **weapon master** (gain a combat feat for 10 rounds/day)

### Cleric Spells Prepared

**0-Level** (6/day) – *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*

**1st Level** (6+1/day) – *bless*, *command* x2 (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *remove fear*, *sanctuary* (DC 16)

**2nd Level** (5+1/day) – *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 17), *resist energy*, *sound burst* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*, *summon monster II*

**3rd Level** (4+1/day) – *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic circle vs. good*, *magic vestment*, *summon monster III*

**4th Level** (4+1/day) – *dismissal* (DC 19), *divine power*, *greater magic weapon*, *summon monster IV*

**5th Level** (3+1/day) – *flame strike* x2 (DC 20), *slay living* x2 (DC 20), *summon monster V*

Vissarin casts *magic circle vs. good*, *magic vestment*, and *greater magic weapon* prior to combat. This is accounted for in her stats.

### Statistics

**Str 16, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 20, Cha 14**

**Base Atk +7; CMB +10; CMD 20**

**Feats** Channel Smite, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe)

**Traits** indomitable faith (+1 Will), sacred conduit (+1 channel DC)

**Skills** Diplomacy: 10 (+15), Knowledge (religion): 10 (+13)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** beloved of Shermazza, massive, spontaneous casting, domains, favored weapon: dwarven waraxe

**Equipment** 20 bolts, masterwork Carraway crossbow, masterwork Chandrey armor (affected by *magic vestment*), masterwork dwarven waraxe (affected by *greater magic weapon*), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, spell component pouch, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *belt of giant strength* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, 235 gp

## ❁ Baleth the Righteous

Since his defeat at the village of Nobilus, his imprisonment in Regorra, and his ultimate brainwashing, humiliation, and defilement at the Cult of Shermazza's hands, the great salamander warlord once known as Baleth the Infernal has become a broken soul. His idealistic drive to avenge the genocide of his people has been replaced by numb, smoldering anger. He is an empty husk, driven only by a desire for destruction. He will go to any lengths to see the people of Aramyst suffer. Once that is accomplished, then what? Where will he turn his rage next?

Even Baleth does not know. All that he understands is that the world must share his pain.

(Baleth's prototype archetype, introduced in the *Goreaux's Guide to Golems and other Manifold Machinations*, exchanges a mechatage's standard golem minion for increased spellcasting ability and manite implants.)



**CR 12 - XP 19,200**

**Salamander fiend mechatage (prototype) 13**

**CE Medium outsider (native)**

**Init +6; Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision.; **Perception +18**

### Defense

**AC 22**, **touch 13**, **flat-footed 20** (+4 armor, +3 shield, +2 Dex, +2 natural, +1 deflection)



**hp** 143 (13d6+65), 10 + 1d10 temporary hit points

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12

**Special Defenses** fire immunity (with volcanic link), cold resistance 30, fire resistance 5

### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft., **fly** 40 ft. (good)

**Melee** adamantite ripfangs +7 (1d6)

**Ranged** +1 *target pistol* +9 (1d4) (+14 to hit with *pistol rune - slaying* bullet)

### Mechamagic Spells Prepared

**0-Level** – *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

**1st Level** – *grease* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *smog cloud* (DC 18)

**2nd Level** – *construct servant*, *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 19), *pyrotechnics* (DC19), *resist energy*, *see invisibility*

**3rd Level** – *dispel magic*, *fireball* (X2, DC 20), *haste*, *stinking cloud* (DC 20)

**4th Level** – *dimension door* (X2), *fear* (DC 21), *fire shield*, *wall of fire* (DC 21)

**5th Level** – *construct servant IV*, *overland flight*, *quickened protection from good*, *teleport*

**6th Level** – *chain lightning* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *summon monster VI*

**7th Level** – *pistol rune - slaying* (charges a pouch of bullets with a total of 12d4 hit dice, creatures with 10 HD or less must save vs. death or perish, subtracting their hit dice from the pool, Fort DC 24)

Baleth casts *false life*, *mage armor*, *overland flight*, *pistol rune - slaying*, *resist energy* (cold) and *see invisibility* prior to combat. This is accounted for in his stats. He also has a contingency in place to cast *fire shield* (warm version) if enemies draw arms against him. During the final encounter, he casts *haste*, *construct servant IV*, and *quickened protection from good* as the party approaches.

### Manite Implants (Steam Points: 15)

**Minor Implants** *adrenaline booster* (spend steam to reroll initiative), *arcane codex* (functions as spellbook), *nocturnal vision enhancement* (low-light vision), *skill booster* (+2 perception), *spell fortification circuits* (spend steam to gain +2 spell penetration for one spell)

**Basic Implants** *filter vents* (spend steam as swift action, protects vs. harmful gases for 6 rounds), *fortified flesh*, *metamagic engine* (spend steam equal to double the level adjustment to spontaneously apply metamagic)

**Advanced Implants** *advanced focuser* (spend steam to negate dazed, exhausted, frightened, nauseated, or staggered conditions), *spell retrieval capacitor* (spend steam equal to double the level of a spell to recall as per *pearl of power*)

**Superior Implants** *manite proximity sensors* (spend steam point to gain blindsight 30 for 13 rounds)

### Statistics

**Str** 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 22, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

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

**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Empower Spell, Extra Steam, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Focus (necromancy)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 perception and counts as class skill), steam-powered (+1 steam point)

**Skills** Disable Device 13 (+24), Fly 13 (+18), Heal 13 (+16), Knowledge (arcana) 13 (+22), Knowledge (engineering) 13 (+22), Perception 13 (+18), Spellcraft 13 (+22), Use Magic Device 13 (+15)

**Languages** Earthtongue, Eastern Common, Firespeech, Fundamental, Giant, Lowland, Nocturine, Planar

**SQ** firespeech (half range), fire sensitivity, lava walk (with volcanic link), obsidian flesh, self-modification, smoke breather (with volcanic link), smokewalker, improved tinkering, true golemoid, volcanic link

**Equipment** +1 *target pistol* (+1 to hit within 40 feet but doubles DR of targets), +2 *mithral buckler*, 30 standard pistol ammunition, *amulet of Shermazza* (acts as *amulet of natural armor* +1), *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, masterwork thieves tools, *ring of protection* +1, *scrolls* (*mirror image*, *repair construct*, *vampiric touch*), spell component pouch, 460 gp

Baleth's arcane codex implant contains the following spells: *grease*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *obscuring mist*, *protection from good*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *smog cloud*, *true strike*, *construct servant I*, *false life*, *glitterdust*, *pyrotechnics*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *haste*, *slow*, *stinking cloud*, *dimension door*, *fear*, *fire shield*, *scrying*, *wall of fire*, *construct servant IV*, *overland flight*, *sending*, *teleport*, *wall of force*, *chain lightning*, *contingency*, *greater dispel magic*, *summon monster VI*, *delayed blast fireball*, and *pistol rune - slaying*.

## - APPENDIX B - PRE-GENERATED MINOR NPCs

Many encounters in this adventure, particularly random encounters, involve the participation of unnamed civilians, bandits, and assorted minor villains. *Heart of the Machine* and *Radiant Demise* contain stat blocks that can be used for many of these individuals. The following stat blocks introduce even more stock characters appropriate for the Ruined Kingdom. As the dangers of Aramyst are much greater, higher level NPCs are prevalent in this area.

Alignments are not listed in these statistics, as they vary depending on the particular NPC. Citizens of Refuge and Mossburg are usually good or neutral in alignment. The Cult of Shermazza and Baleth's army soldiers are almost always evil. Nomadic survivors can be any alignment.

### Novice Steamwright

These clever inventors are mainly ranged combatants but are more effective as support personnel for other troops. They are most commonly found in the service of Refuge or Mossburg, but can occasionally be found in the wasteland working as scavengers, tinkers, or bandits.

### Novice Steamwright

**CR** 4 - **XP** 1,200

**Steamwright** 5

**Medium humanoid** (human)

**Init** +3; **Perception** +9

### Defense

**AC** 17, **touch** 13, **flat-footed** 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp** 38 (5d8+10)

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

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** gearspanner +4 (1d8+1)

**Ranged** +1 *thundershot rifle* +8 (1d10+2)

**Special attacks** booby trap



## Steamwright Inventions (2d8 Firepower)

### Primary Inventions

*Thundershot* - Mods: elemental shot (cold), enhancer, quick reload;  
Uses/day: 5

*Inertial Interference Field* - Mods: hardened energy

### Secondary Inventions

*Balance Inhibitor* - Mods: potent, DC 15; Uses/day: 5

*Magnet Glove* - Mods: none; Uses/day: 5

*Vocalizer* - Mods: long range

(If there is more than one steamwright in the group, only one will have a vocalizer. The rest will select the following invention: *Insulated Overcoat (fire)*: Mods: enhanced protection; Uses/day: 5)

### Statistics

**Str 12, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8**

**Base Atk +3; CMB +4; CMD 17**

**Feats** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (rifle)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill), deft dodger (+1 Reflex)

**Skills** Craft (machinery) 5 (+12), Craft Alchemy 5 (+12), Disable Device 5 (+14), Knowledge (dungeoneering) 5 (+10), Knowledge (engineering) 5 (+12), Knowledge (nature) 5 (+10), Perception 5 (+9), Stealth 5 (+11)

**Languages** Lowland, Eastern Common, Fundamental

**SQ** handy (alchemy), jury-rig, masterworking, technical tap

**Equipment** +1 studded leather, 20 armor piercing rifle ammunition, 20 heavy rifle ammunition, 30 standard rifle ammunition, 3 alchemist fires, 2 tanglefoot bags, dagger, gearspanner, masterwork thieves' tools, masterwork toolkit, thundershot rifle

## Wasteland Demographics

The lands of Aden are not ruled by a single race, and Aramyst is no different. The Ruined Kingdom's population skews heavily toward races traditionally considered to possess arcane talent and toward ferrans. Though the following NPCs are presented as a typical representative race (usually human), feel free to use the following table to change their race for a more varied and realistic representation of the wasteland. (Salamander NPCs should remain salamanders.)

*Radiant Demise* contains an equivalent table for use in Aras-teen if you want a more accurate representation of the Radiant North's demographics in the beginning of this adventure. The Urbanan military demographics table from *Heart of the Machine* is likewise applicable to Shadow Army troops in Mossburg. Or just use this table for everything if you want to keep things simple.

d100 Roll	Aramyst (civilian)
01-20	Human
21-25	Dwarf
26-40	Elf
41-45	Half-elf
46-50	Jurak
51-60	Ferran (sneak)
61-70	Ferran (brute)
71-80	Ferran (predator)
81-85	Goreaux
86-95	Faerkin
96-00	Rapacian

## Rifleman

This stat block represents the tough and self-sufficient scouts that roam Aramyst. Many of these individuals have adopted manite implants, gladly assuming the risks of golemization to gain an edge against the merciless wasteland. Roughly half of these individuals have the companions hunting bond rather than the animal companion bond, and thus have no animal companion. For those that do have companions, vary the animal type for diversity.

### Rifleman

**CR 4 - XP 1,200**

**Human ranger (mechanized ranger) 5**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init +5; Perception +7**

### Defense

**AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14** (+4 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp 44** (5d10+10)

**Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +3**

### Offense

**Speed 30 ft.**

**Melee** climbing hooks +6 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** masterwork rifle +9 (1d10+1)

**Special Attacks** two favored enemies (+4/+4 to first, +2/+2 to second)

A Rifleman's favored enemies can vary. Elemental, undead, magical beast, and outsider (salamander) are the most common choices.

**Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 4/4)**

**Minor Implants** climbing hooks, skill booster (survival)

### Statistics

**Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 8**

**Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 19**

**Feats** Deadly Aim, Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (rifle)

**Traits** ghost (-3 stealth penalty when moving), reactionary (+2 initiative)

**Skills** Climb 5 (+10), Heal 5 (+12), Knowledge (geography) 5 (+8), Knowledge (nature) 5 (+8), Perception 5 (+10), Stealth 5 (+10), Survival 5 (+12)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** favored terrain (desert/wasteland), hunter's bond (animal companion), track (+2), true golemoid

**Equipment** 20 armor piercing rifle ammunition, 30 standard rifle ammunition, climbing kit, healer's kit, rifle, shortsword, +1 studded leather armor, *potion of cure moderate wounds*

### Rifleman's Golemoid Dog Companion

**N Small animal**

**Init +3; Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception +5**

### Defense

**AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 17** (+2 armor, +3 Dex, +1 size, +4 natural)

**hp 27** (3d8+12)

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

**Special Defenses** +2 vs. poison/disease

### Offense

**Speed 40 ft.**

**Melee** bite +7 (1d4+2)

**Manite Implants (Steam Reserve: 4/4)**

**Minor Implants** momentum manipulator



### Statistics

**Str 15, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6**

**Base Atk +2; CMB +3; CMD 16 (18 vs. trip)**

**Feats** Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

**Skills** Perception 1 (+5), Stealth 1 (+11), Survival 1 (+2, +6 while tracking)

**Tricks** attack, attack any target, come, guard, heel, stay, track

**SQ** +4 to Survival when tracking by scent, true golemoid

**Equipment** leather barding

## Experienced Soldier

This stat block can be used for individuals who are a cut above ordinary conscripts and inexperienced soldiers, but otherwise possess no exceptional abilities. This stat block should be used for Shermazzan cultists, soldiers from Refuge or Mossburg, bandits, or nomad camp guards. These individuals wield a variety of weapons; when given options between one set of stats and another, either choose all of the first option (two-handed fighters) or all of the second (sword and shield fighters). Replace the greataxe or longsword with other weapons for more variety.



## Experienced Soldier

**CR 3 - XP 800**

**Human fighter 4**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init +7; Perception +0**

### Defense

**AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16** (+6 armor, +1 Dex) or 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19 (+6 armor, +3 shield, +1 Dex)

**hp 46** (4d10+18)

**Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2** or +4

**Special Defenses** bravery +1

### Offense

**Speed 30 ft.**

**Melee** masterwork greataxe +9 (1d12+6) or masterwork longsword +9 (1d8+5)

**Ranged** pistol +5 (1d8+1)

### Statistics

**Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10**

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

**Feats** Furious Focus, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe)

- OR -

Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Traits** reactionary (+2 initiative), ruffian (+2 hp)

**Skills** Intimidate 4 (+7), Survival 4 (+7)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** armor training

**Equipment** 20 standard pistol ammunition, breastplate, pistol, two 1st level potions (usually *enlarge person* and *cure light wounds*) and either a masterwork greataxe or a masterwork longsword and heavy steel shield

## Novice Mage

These statistics are primarily intended to represent relatively low-ranking mages found throughout Aramyst. These are typically College remnants, Shadow Army spellcasters, Shermazzan cultists, or adventurers who have come to Aramyst seeking the Celestial College's lost secrets. Vary the specialization and available/prepared spells of these individuals as desired.

## Novice Mage

**CR 4 - XP 1,200**

**Human wizard (evocation) 5**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init +8; Perception +9**

### Defense

**AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15** (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 deflection)

**hp 23** (5d6+5) plus 1d10+5 temporary hp

**Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7**

### Offense

**Speed 30 ft.**

**Melee** cold iron dagger +1 (1d4-2)

**Ranged** masterwork Carraway crossbow +5 (1d8)



### Typical Wizard Spells Prepared

**0-Level** – *dancing lights, detect magic, message, prestidigitation, read magic*

**1st Level** – *burning hands* (DC 16), *mage armor, unseen servant, color spray* (DC 15), *vanish*

**2nd Level** – *darkness, false life, glitterdust* (DC 16), *see invisibility*

**3rd Level** – *fly, lightning bolt* (DC 18), *haste*

Novice mages typically cast *mage armor* and *false life* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in their stats.

### Statistics

**Str 7, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 12, Cha 10**

**Base Atk +2; CMB +1; CMD 13**

**Feats** Cosmopolitan (Diplomacy, Perception), Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill), reactionary (+2 initiative)

**Skills** Diplomacy: 5 (+8), Fly: 2 (+7), Knowledge (arcana): 5 (+12), Knowledge (history): 5 (+12), Knowledge (local): 5 (+12), Linguistics: 3 (+10), Perception: 5 (+9), Spellcraft: 5 (+12), Stealth: 5 (+11)

**Languages** Arcadian, Eastern Common, Fundamental, Giant, Lowland, Nocturne, Planar, Sylfanie

**SQ** arcane bond (ring), arcane school (evocation), barred schools (enchantment, divination)

**Equipment** 10 bolts, cold iron dagger, masterwork Carraway crossbow, mithral buckler, *ring of protection +1 (arcane bond)*, scholar's outfit, spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus 1d10+10 levels of other assorted appropriate spells).

### Elite Soldier

This stat block represents extraordinary soldiers. Such formidable individuals are typically Shadow Army officers, Beast Legionnaire commanders, or Shermazzan berserkers. They may also be found leading groups of exceptional bandits in the wasteland.

### Elite Soldier

**CR 6 - XP 2,400**

**Ferran predator fighter 4 / barbarian 3**

**Medium humanoid (ferran)**

**Init +8; Senses** low-light vision; **Perception +10**

### Defense

**AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 19** (+7 armor, +2 Dex) (17, touch 0, flat-footed 17)

**hp 73** (4d10+3d12+23) (87)

**Fort +9** (+11), **Ref +4, Will +2** (+4)

**Special defenses** bravery +1, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge

### Offense

**Speed 50 ft.**

**Melee +1 greatsword +13/+8** (2d6+9) bite +6 (1d8+2); when raging +1 greatsword +15/+9 (2d6+12), bite +8 (1d8+3)

**Ranged** javelin +9 (1d6+4); when raging (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** pack mentality (+1 to hit when flanking, +2 if flanking with a ferran), rage (16 rounds/day – stats when raging are given above in parentheses), reckless abandon (can take -1 AC for +1 to hit while raging)

### Statistics

**Str 18 (22), Dex 14, Con 14 (+18), Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8**

**Base Atk +7; CMB +11** (+13); **CMD 23** (+25)

**Feats** Extra Rage, Furious Focus, Improved Initiative, Lunge, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)

**Traits** reactionary (+2 initiative), ruffian (+2 hp)

**Skills** Climb 6 (+11), Perception 7 (+10), Survival 7 (+10)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** armor training

**Equipment** +1 greatsword, 1 potion of cure moderate wounds, 4 javelins, +1 breastplate

### Elite Assassin

These statistics should be used for extremely powerful combatants that rely on stealth and subterfuge, such as bandit leaders or Shermazzan assassins. If you do not have access to *Ultimate Combat*, treat these characters as rogues, replacing their ninja tricks with rogue talents.

### Elite Assassin

**CR 6 - XP 2,400**

**Ninja 7**

**Medium humanoid (human)**

**Init +9; Perception +10**

### Defense

**AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16** (+3 armor, +3 Dex)

**hp 52** (7d8+14)

**Fort +3, Ref +8, Will +2**

**Special Defenses** uncanny dodge

### Offense

**Speed 30 ft.**

**Melee +1 wakizashi +8** (1d6+2), +8 (1d6+1)

**Ranged** shuriken +8 (1d2+1)

**Special attacks** sneak attack +4d6

### Ninja Tricks (Ki pool: 5)

*fast stealth, flurry of stars, vanishing trick*

### Statistics

**Str 13, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14**

**Base Atk +5; CMB +6; CMD 19**

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Two Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (wakizashi)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Survival and counts as class skill), reactionary (+2 initiative)

**Skills** Acrobatics 7 (+13), Bluff 7 (+12), Climb 7 (+11), Disable Device 7 (+12), Disguise 7 (+12), Escape Artist 7 (+13), Perception 7 (+10), Stealth 7 (+13), Survival 7 (+11)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** light steps, no trace +2, poison use

**Equipment** 50 cold iron shuriken, disguise kit, +1 wakizashi, masterwork wakizashi, myrmidon's bracers (+1 wakizashi), +1 studded leather, masterwork thieves' tools



## Elite Sorcerer

These individuals are usually found as wandering adventurers or Shermazzan cultists. Shermazzan cultists possess an *amulet of Shermazza* that functions as a *cloak of resistance* +1 and bear the *scourge of Shermazza* blessing.

### Elite Sorcerer

**CR 6 - XP 2,400**

**Faerkin sorcerer** (fey bloodline) 7

**Small humanoid** (faerkin)

**Init** +9; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +1

#### Defense

**AC** 22, **touch** 16, **flat-footed** 18 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 size, +1 deflection)

**hp** 40 (7d6+10) plus 1d10+7 temporary hp

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6



#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** alchemical silver dagger +3 (1d4-1)

**Ranged** masterwork pistol +8 (1d8+1)

**Special Attacks** laughing touch, 7/day

#### Sorcerer Spells Known

**0-Level** – *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

**1st Level** (7/day) – *charm person* (DC 17), *endure elements*, *entangle* (DC 15), *grease* (DC 16), *hydraulic push* (APG), *mage armor*, *true strike*, *vanish* (APG)

**2nd Level** (7/day) – *false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 17), *hideous laughter* (DC 20), *mirror image*, *summon monster II*

**3rd Level** (5/day) – *deep slumber* (DC 21), *haste*

Elite sorcerers typically cast *mage armor* and *false life* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in their stats. Shermazzan sorcerers sometimes know *traverse corridor* instead of *haste*.

#### Statistics

**Str** 9, **Dex** 16, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Augment Summoning, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus (enchantment)

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Stealth and counts as class skill), reactionary (+2 initiative)

**Skills** Stealth 7 (+18), Use Magic Device 7 (+16)

**Languages** Arcadian, Eastern Common

**SQ** natural magic (+1 enchantment dc's), woodland stride

**Equipment** 20 standard pistol ammunition, alchemical silver dagger, masterwork pistol, +1 mithral buckler, *ring of protection* +1, *potion of fly*, explorer's outfit, spell component pouch.

## War Priest

Evil versions of these divine casters are usually found in the Cult of Shermazza and channel negative energy. Urbanan chaplains of the Sixteen and some healing-focused College Remnants also use this stat block. Most of them channel positive energy.

Shermazzan priests bear the *fervor of Shermazza* blessing and carry an *amulet of Shermazza* that acts as an *amulet of natural armor* +1.

### War Priest

**CR 5 - XP 1,600**

**Human Cleric** 6

**Medium humanoid** (human)

**Init** +5; **Perception** +13

#### Defense

**AC** 21, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 20 (+10 armor, +1 Dex) (+2 deflection vs. good)

**hp** 39 (6d8+12)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8

#### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** masterwork greataxe +7 (1d12+3)

**Ranged** masterwork Carraway crossbow +6 (1d8)

**Special Attacks** channel energy (3d6, DC 17, 4/day), channel smite

#### Cleric Domains

war, liberation

#### Domain Powers

battle rage (+3 damage, 6/day), liberation (6 rounds/day)



### Cleric Spells Prepared

**0-Level** (5/day) – *create water, detect magic, guidance, light, mending*

**1st Level** (4+1/day) – *bless, command* (DC 14), *divine favor, obscuring mist, remove fear*

**2nd Level** (4+1/day) – *hold person* (DC 15), *resist energy, sound burst* (DC 15), *spiritual weapon, summon monster II*

**3rd Level** (3+1/day) – *dispel magic, magic circle vs. good/evil, magic vestment, summon monster III*

War priests typically cast *magic circle vs. good* and *magic vestment* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in their stats.

### Statistics

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

**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 17

**Feats** Channel Smite, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), sacred conduit (+1 channel DC)

**Skills** Diplomacy: 6 (+10), Knowledge (religion): 6 (+9), Perception: 6 (+13)

**Languages** Eastern Common

**SQ** spontaneous casting, domains, favored weapon: greataxe

**Equipment** 10 bolts, masterwork Carraway crossbow, masterwork full plate, masterwork greataxe, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, spell component pouch

## Salamander Myrmidon

These are Baleth's crack troops. Though weaker than titans, these fiend soldiers are much more intelligent, numerous, and do not require *balefire cauldrons* to survive. These heavily armored troops are the backbone of Baleth's army.

### Salamander Myrmidon

**CR 3 - XP 800**

**Salamander fiend fighter 4**

**Medium outsider (native)**

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +1

### Defense

**AC** 20, **touch** 11, **flat-footed** 19 (+6 armor, +3 shield, +1 Dex)

**hp** 38 (4d10+16)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

**Special Defenses** fire resistance 5, bravery +1

### Offense

**Speed** 15 ft.

**Melee** masterwork longsword +9 (1d8+5), bite +2 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** javelin +5 (1d6+3)

**Special Attacks** slow burn

### Statistics

**Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8**

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

**Feats** Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Shield Focus, Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

**Traits** ruffian (+2 hp), armor expert (-1 acp)

**Skills** Climb 4 (+6), Survival 4 (+8)

**Languages** Firespeech, Fundamental

**SQ** fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), armor training

**Equipment** 6 javelins, heavy steel shield, masterwork breastplate, masterwork longsword

## Salamander Firesoul

Ranged combat is not the horde's forte; bows and crossbows cannot survive in their volcanic homes and bringing firearms there would be disastrous. However, they do field the occasional sorcerer. These sorcerers prefer fire-based spells but gravitate, surprisingly, toward arcane bloodlines rather than elemental ones, allowing them to draw upon their race's innate cunning to fuel their spells.

### Salamander Firesoul

**CR 4 - XP 1,200**

**Salamander fiend sorcerer (sage arcane bloodline) 5**

**Medium outsider (native)**

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

### Defense

**AC** 18, **touch** 12, **flat-footed** 17 (+4 armor, +2 shield, +2 Dex)

**hp** 35 (5d6+5)

**Fort** +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

**Special Defenses** fire resistance 5

### Offense

**Speed** 20 ft.

**Melee** bite +3 (1d4+1)

**Ranged** javelin +4 (1d6+1)

**Special Attacks** arcane bolt (touch attack, 30 ft. range, 1d4+2 force damage, 6/day), slow burn

### Sorcerer Spells Known

**0-Level** – *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, everheat rune, light, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic, resistance*

**1st Level** (7/day) – *alarm, identify, grease* (DC 15), *mage armor, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement* (DC 15), *shocking grasp, vanish*

**2nd Level** (5/day) – *fog cloud, invisibility, scorching ray*

Firesouls typically cast *mage armor* prior to an encounter. This is accounted for in their stats.

### Statistics

**Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 7**

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

**Feats** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Reach Spell

**Traits** cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), folk magic (*vanish* added to spells known)

**Skills** Intimidate 5 (+6), Knowledge (arcana) 5 (+14), Perception 5 (+9), Spellcraft 5 (+14), Use Magic Device 5 (+6)

**Languages** Eastern Common, Firespeech, Fundamental, Lowland, Nocturne

**SQ** fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), +1 spell save DC when using metamagic

**Equipment** 3 javelins, +1 mithral buckler, *potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll* (one 2nd level spell, typically *levitate*)

## Salamander Warlord

These shrewd fiends serve as Baleth's field commanders. They can be found directing the dim-witted titans or leading crack units of myrmidons. Though their light armor initially leaves them more vulnerable than their myrmidon troops, a warlord can become an unstoppable menace if given time to properly gird himself with combat spells. (If *Ultimate Magic*, which details the magus class, is unavailable simply convert Elite Soldiers to salamander fiends and use them in place of these npcs.)



## Salamander Warlord

CR 5 - XP 1,600

Salamander fiend magus 6

Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

### Defense

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

hp 47 (6d8+20)

Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +5

Special Defenses fire resistance 5

### Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee masterwork scimitar +9 (1d6+3 / 18-20), bite +2 (1d4+1)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d6+3)

Special Attacks slow burn, spell combat, spellstrike

### Typical Magus Spells Prepared (Arcane Pool: 6/6)

0-Level (6/day) – *arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation*

1st Level (5/day) – *enlarge person, shield, shocking grasp* (x2), *vanish*

2nd Level (4/day) – *bull's strength, glitterdust* (DC 15), *mirror image, web* (DC 15)

### Magus Arcana

arcane accuracy

### Statistics

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

Base Atk +4; CMB +7; CMD 18

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Focus (rapier)

Traits cosmopolitan education (+1 Perception and counts as class skill), ruffian (2 hp)

Skills Climb 6 (+12), Knowledge (arcana) 6 (+12), Perception 6 (+10), Spellcraft 6 (+12), Use Magic Device 6 (+8)

Languages Firespeech, Fundamental, Lowland, Nocturine, Western Common

SQ fire sensitivity, steam mastery, volcanic link (gains titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk within one mile of home volcano), spell recall

Equipment 6 javelins, masterwork chain shirt, masterwork scimitar, spell component pouch, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, spellbook (contains all prepared spells plus 6 total levels of other 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> spells)

## - APPENDIX C - NEW MONSTERS AND HAZARDS

### Ruinweed

CR 5 Hazard - XP 1,200

This barbed, poisonous weed is the only wild plant that still thrives in Aramyst's ruined landscape. Though it predates the Darkfall, it has become such a dangerous nuisance in the last decade that many Aramystians swear that it must be some form of nocturnal flora. Ruinweed is completely inedible, though it does have practical use in the creation of fire salve and fire resistant magical items.

Ruinweed grows everywhere, even in places devoid of light. If left unchecked, it forms thick bramble walls that choke off entire areas. Ruinweed is a carnivorous plant that supplements its nutrient intake by slowly constricting creatures that wander into its brambles. It also happens to be venomous - a rare sort of flora that actively injects poison into its prey.

Any creature that falls into or attempts to move through a ruinweed bramble takes 20 damage per round minus their AC, to a minimum of zero. Dodge and Dexterity bonuses do not apply to the creature's AC. Any creature that takes damage from the brambles is subjected to ruinweed poison. Ruinweed senses blood and will slowly constrict around an injured living creature, inflicting 1d8 damage per round (and potentially poisoning the target) even if the creature remains still. (Creatures with 20 or higher AC without Dexterity or dodge bonuses are immune to this damage.) A creature in the brambles can make a Dexterity check vs. DC 15 to avoid the constriction damage, with the DC increasing by 1 each round he remains within.

Creatures can force their way through a ruinweed bramble by making a Strength check as a full round action. For every 5 points by which the check exceeds 10, the creature moves 5 feet through the brambles.

A five foot square of ruinweed effectively has 200 hit points, though it is immune to fire, crushing weapons, and piercing weapons. Ruinweed takes double damage from cold and electricity.

Ruinweed venom can be extracted and its poison potentially used as a combat poison with a market cost of 150 gp per dose.

### Ruinweed Poison

Type poison (injury, ingested); Save Fortitude DC 14

Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds

Effects 1d2 Dexterity damage

Cure 1 save

### Moss-weed

This tenacious carnivorous plant grows throughout the Great Moss Lake in northern Aramyst. Moss-weed is actually a mutated strain of ruinweed, though it shows a crude intelligence and has evolved to survive in an aquatic environment. Despite its dangerous nature, moss-weed grows quickly and is extremely nutritious, making it a staple of survival in the Ruined Kingdom.

Mossweed grows in colonies of plants that share a primitive hive mind, directed by a moss-weed heart. Moss-weed's only instinct is to eat and reproduce. With the exception of other moss-weed



hearts, a heart sees any moving object in its territory as prey. The plant grapples anything that moves and drags it underwater until it stops moving due to poison or drowning. Moss-weed is stupid enough to constrict and poison vehicles, only realizing that the passengers are the true threat if they attack the plant first. Many an unfortunate fisherman has escaped death by leaping into the water and swimming for shore while a moss-weed patch stubbornly wrestled with his engine-powered boat.

Fishermen harvest moss-weed using electrified mossboats to stun the plant's heart into senselessness before hauling it into containers. These are sealed until the plant's heart asphyxiates. The heart makes a shrill, keening wail during this time. Fishermen insist this is a product of air escaping from the plant's floatation bladders and otherwise try not to think about it.

### Moss-weed Heart

**CR 5 - XP 1,600**

**N Huge plant (aquatic)**

**Init** -4; **Senses** tremorsense (120 ft.); **Perception** +0

#### Defense

**AC** 16, **touch** 4, **flat-footed** 16 (-4 Dex, +12 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 60 (7d8+28)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** -2, **Will** +2

**Weaknesses** vulnerability to electricity, stunshock

**Special Defenses** Resist fire 20

#### Offense

**Speed** swim 10 ft.

**Melee** sting +11 (1d8+8 plus poison and grab)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+7), tangling moss

#### Statistics

**Str** 26, **Dex** 2, **Con** 18, **Int** -, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 19 (can't be tripped)

#### Special Abilities

✧ **Tangling Moss (Ex)** A moss-weed heart is surrounded by a much larger area of aquatic moss, up to 30 feet in every direction from the central plant. This vegetation is actually immature moss-weed that will eventually break off and form a new heart. The moss-weed can, as a free action, cause this immature moss to animate, grasping at anything in the area. This is identical to the effects of an *entangle* spell (DC 11) covering the area of the moss. The save DC is Wisdom-based.

✧ **Poison (Ex)** Sting - injury, ingested; Save Fortitude DC 14; Frequency 1/round for 4 rounds; Effects 1d2 Dexterity damage; Cure 1 save

✧ **Tremorsense (Ex)** Moss-weed's tremorsense is attuned to disturbances in the water's surface, though it can also detect creatures on vehicles in the water.

✧ **Aquatic Dependence** Moss-weed becomes blind, deaf, and helpless if removed from an aquatic environment and will die within an hour.

✧ **Stunshock** If subjected to any amount of electricity damage, a moss-weed heart becomes stunned and helpless for 3 rounds.

#### Ecology

**Environment** aquatic (freshwater lakes)

**Organization** solitary or cluster (3-8)

**Treasure** none

## Salamanders

(Note: A great deal of information regarding salamanders, their culture, and their history can be found in *Aden Wildlife Journal Vol. 1*. What follows is an abbreviated version of that information, though it is sufficient for utilizing the Svarog Horde in this adventure.)

Salamanders are asexual mineral-based creatures with a distinctly reptilian appearance, native to volcanic environments. They subsist on a diet of minerals. Though they are capable of speaking, they communicate with one another via silent heat emissions known as Firespeech.

There are two distinct variations among salamanders - titans and fiends. Fiends are six and a half feet on average while the rarer titans stand up to twenty feet tall. While fiends are extremely intelligent and able to survive far from their volcanic homes (albeit with some discomfort), titans require regular exposure to intense heat or they will perish.

Salamander society revolves around loyalty toward their brethren and intense distrust toward all those born outside. Titans are dull-witted and driven entirely by their desire to serve their rulers. While fiends are more intelligent and ambitious, they rarely show disloyalty to one another. A salamander tribe is ruled by a circle of oracles born with the ability to commune with their volcanic parent. In some tribes that circle is directed by a single individual who also commands the mountain's military, referred to as King or Queen. Baleth, Rashom, and their ancestor Kais are examples.

Under normal circumstances, the concept of mechamagic is anathema to the salamander. The Svarog Horde are an exception, wherein Baleth has used the legacy of his ancestors, the lure of his *balefire cauldrons*, and the strength of his Shermazzan allies to force his people to accept mechamagic. He has even gone as far as to augment several of his lieutenants with manite implants, including his own brother, Rashom. There are many among the Svarog Horde that quietly resent these heretical changes and wait for the day that their king shows weakness.

### Salamander Fiend Racial Traits

**+2 Intelligence, +2 Constitution, -2 Dexterity:** Fiends are cunning and hardy, but their stony flesh limits their mobility.

**Type:** Salamander fiends are outsiders with the native subtype.

**Medium:** Though fiends are thickly built, they are still Medium-sized creatures and receive no bonuses or penalties due to their size.

**Slow Speed:** Fiends have a base speed of 20 feet, due to their mass and ungainly stature.

**Darkvision:** Fiends can see in the dark up to 60 feet.

**Natural Attack:** Salamander fiends possess a natural bite attack that inflicts 1d4 damage. This is a secondary weapon.

**Fire Resistance:** Salamander fiends possess fire resistance 5.

**Firespeech (Ex)** A salamander fiend may use thermal fluctuations to communicate soundlessly to all creatures with the firespeech ability within 100 feet. Areas of extreme cold (below 32° F / 0° C) reduce this range by half.

**Fire Sensitivity:** While not as vulnerable to cold as titans, salamander fiends are much more sensitive than other creatures. They are affected by cold environments (see *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*, Chapter 13) as if the temperature was 40° lower than normal. A fiend can negate this affect with *endure elements* or by carrying at least one torch-sized flame in contact with his body.

**Slow Burn:** As a full round action, a fiend can cause the heat within his body to intensify. After doing so, the fiend's body glows with the intensity of a torch for one hour and does 2 fire damage to all objects the fiend touches (and adds this damage to natural attacks, unarmed attacks, and melee attacks with a light weapon). While this ability is in effect, the fiend gains cold vulnerability. A fiend can end this affect prematurely as an additional full round action.

**Volcanic Link:** A salamander fiend who has not been exiled from his tribe possesses a salamander titan's fire immunity, smoke breather, and lava walk abilities while within one mile of his home volcano.



## Salamander Titan

**CR 6 - XP 2,400**

**LE Large outsider (elemental, fire, native)**

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +8

### Defense

**AC** 20, **touch** 10, **flat-footed** 19 (+1 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 77 (8d10+32)

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

**Special defenses** smoke breather; Immune elemental traits, fire; lava walk

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

### Offense

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +12 (1d8+5 plus burn), bite +7 (1d6+5 plus burn) or large masterwork trident +13 (2d6+7 plus burn), bite +7 (1d6+5 plus burn)

**Ranged** masterwork trident +8 (1d8+5)

**Special Attacks** burn (1d8 DC 18)

### Statistics

**Str** 20, **Dex** 12, **Con** 18, **Int** 6, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 6

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 25

**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Vital Strike

**Skills** Climb +13, Perception +8, Stealth +5 (+9 in rocky environments), Survival +8 (+12 in rocky environments); Racial Modifiers +4 Stealth, +4 Survival in rocky environments

**Languages** Firespeech

**SQ** fire dependency, firespeech

### Special Abilities

✧ **Burn (Ex)** A salamander titan deals fire damage in addition to damage dealt on a successful hit in melee. Those affected by the burn ability must also succeed on a Reflex save or catch fire, taking 1d8 damage for an additional 1d4 rounds at the start of its turn. A burning creature can attempt a new save as a full round action. Dropping and rolling on the ground grants a +4 to this save. Creatures that hit a salamander titan with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take fire damage as though hit by the burning creature and must make a Reflex save to avoid catching on fire. A salamander titan can apply the burn effect to any metal weapons it wields in melee.

✧ **Fire Dependency (Ex)** A salamander titan is dependent on extreme heat. When exposed to temperatures below 80° F (26° C), it must make a Fortitude save once per hour (DC 15+1 per previous check) or take 2d8 points of nonlethal damage. This damage increases to 3d8 (with a save every 10 minutes) in conditions below 32° F (0° C). If this subdual damage exceeds the salamander titan's current hit points, any additional damage done by this effect is lethal damage. Spending ten minutes within a large fire or huddled with at least six other salamander titans will negate this effect for thirty minutes, but only in temperatures above 32° F (0° C).

Any damage inflicted by this effect cannot be recovered until the salamander titan returns to an environment of extreme heat (above 80° F). Immersing oneself in lava will immediately heal all damage done by this effect.

Salamander titans may use the Survival skill to gain bonuses to fire dependency saves as if they were a severe weather effect.

✧ **Firespeech (Ex)** A salamander titan may use thermal fluctuations to communicate soundlessly to all creatures with the firespeech ability within 100 feet. Areas of extreme cold (below 32° F / 0° C) reduce this range by half.

✧ **Lava walk (Ex)** A salamander titan can walk on lava as if it were a solid surface, or pass through lava as if it had the earthglide ability.

✧ **Smoke Breather (Ex)** A salamander can breathe normally in smoke or volcanic fumes. Their vision is attuned to smoky environments, allowing them to ignore concealment due to smoke, fog, or similar effects within 30 feet.

### Ecology

**Environment** volcanic mountains

**Organization** solitary or pack (3-8) led by 1-2 salamander fiends

**Treasure** standard, plus masterwork trident

## Terabot

Unlike Terablix's smaller minions, this massive robot is sleek, well crafted, and strangely beautiful. It moves with a precise elegance, eerie silence, and unchecked malevolence. Terabots are the field officers of Terablix's mechanical army. Far more intelligent and powerful than Terabits, these creatures are dispatched to address serious threats against the Golem King. Terablix is careful not to use these constructs too openly in the Lost Ghetto, lest the Shadow Army become aware of the true extent of his power. One day, when his golems are ready, all of Mekanus will bow to the King of the Dark City. The terabots will lead his legions to victory.





## Terabot

CR 11 - XP 12,800

CE Huge construct

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

### Defense

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 26 (+1 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 131 (14d10+54)

Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3

DR 10/adamantine; Immune construct traits, magic

Weaknesses vulnerable to cold

### Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +22 (2d10+9)

Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

Special Attacks cannonfist, steam charge

### Statistics

Str 28, Dex 12, Con -, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 1

Base Atk +14; CMB +25 (+29 bull rush); CMD 36 (40 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Perception +17, Stealth +10

### Special Abilities

**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** A Terabot is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, with the exception of spells and spell-like abilities that have the cold descriptor, which affect it normally. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

\* *heat metal* superheats the terabot's steam engine, supercharging it (as the *haste* spell) for 1d6 rounds and immediately recharging his *cannonfist* ability.

\* *rusting grasp* affects the Terabot as it normally affects metal creatures.

\* *steambreaker* partially quenches the terabot's internal furnace, slowing it (as the *slow* spell) for 2d6 rounds and removing its ability to use *steam charge* or *cannonfist* for the same duration.

**Cannonfist (Su)** Once every 1d3 rounds, a terabot can fire a blast of searing hellfire from the massive cannon mounted on its right arm. This blast does 12d6 damage in an 80 ft. line (DC 20 Reflex save halves). Half of this damage is fire damage, while half is pure infernal energy and not subject to resistance of any kind. Any mechatmagical vehicles damaged by this ability are subject to the effects of a *steambreaker* spell as if cast by the terabot and any damaged targets with a steam reserve lose 1d6 steam points. A terabot may make a free ranged bull rush combat maneuver against any target that fails their save vs. its *cannonfist*.

**Steam Charge (Su)** As often as every other round, a terabot can ignite its engines for a sudden burst of speed as a swift action. This grants the golem a base speed of 60 ft., so long as it only moves or charges in a straight line during that round.

**Searing Flesh (Su)** Any creature that strikes a terabot with a melee weapon, unarmed strike, or natural weapon takes 1d6+6 points of fire damage. Melee weapons with reach do not harm their user in this manner. Nonmagical metal weapons (except those made of manite or manite derivatives such as adamantine or mithral) immediately melt upon striking a terabot's flesh, inflicting 1d8+6 additional fire damage on their wielder.

**Terrible Focus (Ex)** All Terabots are part of the terrible demonic consciousness known as Terablix the Autonomous. Though they are fully functional even when completely separated from Terablix's domain, they are at their strongest when surrounded by their fellow golems. A Terabot gains a +4 enhancement bonus to Strength and

Dexterity when within 100 feet of another one of Terablix's golem minions (any other construct with this ability).

As a full round action, any construct with this ability can commune with Terablix the Autonomous regardless of distance, even from another plane. This communication can be maintained for as long as necessary, but requires the construct's full concentration.

Terablix the Autonomous can assume direct control of any construct with this ability at will, superimposing its own Intelligence (16), Wisdom (16), Charisma (18), and knowledge over that of its new host. Any time this construct communes with Terablix, all of its current knowledge and memories are permanently added to those of Terablix the Autonomous. This also occurs if the construct is killed.

### Ecology

Environment urban

Organization solitary, pair, or small patrol (1 terabot and 2-3 terabots)

Treasure none

## - APPENDIX D - NEW MECHANICS

### Special Equipment in Aramyst

\* **Moss-weed Rations:** Food is scarce in the Ruined Kingdom. As a result, rations cost 10 to 20 times the normal amount listed in the *Pathfinder Core Rulebook*. Though there are a few farms scattered in the hills around Refuge, the main source of nutrition is moss-weed. Though it has a bitter taste, this plant is extremely nutritious. Fresh moss-weed spoils within 24 to 48 hours. If dried and packed in salt, requiring a simple Survival or Profession (cook) skill check vs. DC 10, moss-weed remains edible indefinitely but tastes even worse.

In Mossburg, any individual may report to the Mossburg Depositories and receive a free 2 lb. ration of fresh moss-weed per day.

#### Fresh moss-weed

**Cost** (per ration) free or 5 gp (in Mossburg), not available in Refuge; **Weight** 2 lbs.

#### Dried moss-weed or other preserved rations

**Cost** (per ration) 10 gp (in Mossburg) or 20 gp (elsewhere); **Weight** 2 lbs.

\* **Raw Fire Salve:** Synthesized from ruinweed, raw fire salve is much cheaper than the standard variety. When applied, it grants its user the effects of *endure elements (heat)* for 12 hours. Raw fire salve expires within weeks unless boiled and distilled. Anyone with the Craft (alchemy) skill can distill five doses of raw fire salve into a single dose of regular fire salve. Most craftsmen who sell fire salve in Aramyst sell only the raw variety, as it is typically used long before it goes bad.

**Cost** (in Aramyst) 2 gp per dose.; **Weight** 1 lb.

### Magic Items and Artifacts

#### Teleportation Stone

**Aura** faint (conjuration); CL 9th

**Slot** none; **Price** 2,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

This smooth grey stone occasionally bears a mark indicating its previous owner. Before it can be properly used, a *teleportation stone* must be attuned to its owner. This requires the new owner to cast *arcane mark* upon the stone, engraving it with his personal symbol. This removes any marks previously engraved upon the stone.



Once so marked, the character who owns the stone can use *teleport* or *teleport without error* to teleport to the stone's current location with no chance of failure, regardless of distance, and ignoring any effects that prevent the owner from arriving at its current location as long as there is sufficient space for him and his passengers to arrive there.

It does not prevent the effects that specifically prevent the target from teleporting, such as dimensional anchor, only those that affect areas. The owner need not know the stone's current location to teleport to it. If he owns multiple stones, he chooses the one he teleports to. The owner of a teleportation stone can use *scrying* or similar effects to sery upon the stone as if it were a willing creature.

#### Construction Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, arcane mark, teleport; **Cost** 1,000 gp

### Moss-Shocker

**Aura** moderate (evocation); **CL** 6th

**Slot** vehicle weapon; **Price** 4,500 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

Moss-shockers were devised by the mechemages of Mossburg to be used in moss-fishing. Boats equipped with these devices make their way into the Great Moss Lake, continuing forward until completely entangled in carnivorous moss-weed, then use this weapon to stun the plants. The crew then spends the next several hours carving the tangled mess off of the boat and packing it into containers for later preservation.

This device consists of two long metal prongs attached to the front of a mechemagical vehicle, usually an aquatic vehicle. A *moss-shocker* must be wired to a manite engine to function. Once in place, the vehicle's pilot can command the shocker to release a burst of electricity between the two electrodes.

When used with a ground vehicle, this inflicts 2d6 electricity damage on any target between the prongs (DC 13 Fortitude save negates this damage). This can be done as part of a ram attack, but has a 20% chance of causing an immediate mechanical failure (see Chapter 9 of the *Thunderscape Campaign Setting* for vehicle rules). This failure causes the *shocker* to cease functioning until the vehicle is repaired. This failure has no other effect besides increasing the chance of future mechanical failures. A vehicle with a ram of any type equipped reduces this chance of mishap to 10%.

When equipped to a water vehicle, the *moss-shocker* is a great deal more effective. Any time the *shocker* is activated, it releases a burst of static in a 20 foot radius around the vehicle, inflicting 2d6 electricity damage (DC 14 Fortitude save halves this damage). This electricity is confined purely to the water and does not harm the vehicle or anything not touching the surface.

Each time a *moss-shocker* is used, its vehicle's engine is disabled as if a successful *steambreaker* spell were cast upon it. A *moss-shocker* can only be used three times per day. A spellcaster can renew one of these charges by expending any spell with the electricity descriptor of up to 4th level into the vehicle's manite engine, or all of them by expending any spell with the electricity descriptor of 5th level or higher.

#### Construction Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *steambreaker*, lightning bolt; **Cost** 2,250 gp

### Portable Infernal Convectore

**Aura** moderate (abjuration); **CL** 6th

**Slot** none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 100 lbs.

This device resembles a small, squat engine with a tall exhaust pipe. The word "portable" is relative here, as this device is heavy and unwieldy.

An *infernal convectore* stabilizes dimensional boundaries in its immediate area, preventing the Burning. If a fire plume occurs within 100 feet of the convectore, it instead erupts from the convectore, which projects it harmlessly through the exhaust pipe. (The plume still does its usual damage if something enters this area.) The devices in the city of Mossburg are larger than the one described here: ten times the weight, size and range and costing triple this amount. These smaller versions are sometimes granted to Shadow Army patrols assigned to important

strategic areas. If the party gains Gentor's trust, he will allow the party to purchase one or perhaps even teach a party spellcaster how to craft one to protect their camp in the wasteland.

An *infernal convectore* has no effect while in the Corridor.

#### Construction Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *protection from evil*, *resist energy*; **Cost** 2,500 gp

### Frost Pylon (minor artifact)

**Aura** strong (evocation); **CL** 18th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 1500 lbs.

These massive artifacts were created by the Celestial College to stop the salamander armies of Queen Kais. Though they were extremely effective, their powers had disastrous long-term effects on Aden's climate and agriculture. To prevent them from being used again, the Celestial College drained their magical energies and distributed them to hidden vaults throughout Aramyst for safe storage. They were, however, left intact on the off chance that they were needed again. It is not known how many survived the Darkfall, but at least one has fallen into the hands of Captain Gentor in Mossburg.

The *frost pylons* are now inert, though for unknown reasons certain nocturnals can produce strange and random effects when they interact with these artifacts. To restore them to power would require the concentrated effort of at least a dozen high level spellcasters over the course of several weeks - or a Lexicon's *empower artifact* ability.

Once per day, an arcane spellcaster can step into the *pylon* and attempt to commune with it. This requires ten full rounds of undisturbed concentration, during which time the user is helpless and unaware of his surroundings. If the user is disturbed, the *pylon* cannot be used again for 24 hours. At the end of this time, all the user's remaining prepared spells or spell slots for the day are consumed and a winter storm proportionate to the amount of power used sweeps across the area. If used repeatedly over the course of several days, the storm continues to grow in size and strength. While the storm is active, all effects of the Burning cease within its area (including all effects bestowed by *balefire cauldrons*).

These sudden storms invariably have deleterious effects on natural weather patterns, causing a chain reaction of lesser storms, droughts, and other disasters across the continent.

#### Destruction

Though very powerful, the *frost pylons* are relatively fragile. They have hardness 8 and 150 hit points. Though immune to frost and electricity damage they take double damage from fire.

### The Burning Engine (minor artifact)

This steam powered vehicle is based upon Jerek's original designs for the Aramyst railway system. These vehicles were intended to transport large amounts of cargo and passengers directly through the Corridor to distant points in Aramyst in an instant. Now the Burning Engine only has one purpose - to breach the Corridor and destroy Baleth's Cauldron.

#### Colossal Manite-Powered Vehicle

**Caster Level** 15th

**AC** 12, **touch** 0, **flat-footed** 12 (+12 armor, -2 Dex, -8 size)

**Hit Points** 140 (12d10+80) hardness 5

**Speed** 60 ft.; **Speeding** 10 ft.

**Space** 60 ft. x 20 ft.

**Str** 40, **Dex** 6

**CMB** +23, **CMD** 37 (45 vs. trip)

**Crew Stations** pilot, co-pilot, seven gunners

**Weapons** extended ram, light cannon (front mounted), six gunner tripods (3 per side)

**Cover** improved total

**Engine Type** perpetual

**Bonus Features** fortified (light), hardened chassis, heavy armor, high speed, illuminators, impact resistant, increased hauling, stability



### Special Features

**Incombustible:** Though its name may suggest otherwise, the Burning Engine is immune to all fire damage and all environmental effects of the Corridor.

**Extremely Ponderous:** Outside the Corridor, the Burning Engine treats all terrain as difficult terrain except for specially made rails. When traveling through the Corridor, it creates rails as it travels; these rails vanish after the train passes over them. When in the Corridor, the Burning Engine cannot change direction more often than once every three turns, and cannot alter its course by more than 45 degrees. The Burning Engine continues to coast half its speed from the previous turn for two turns after it brakes.

**Whistle:** The Burning Engine has a steam whistle that can be heard up to a mile away.

### Rosengates (artifacts)

**Aura** powerful (conjunction); **CL** 20th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 5,000 lbs.

Another artifact of ancient times, these blackstone gates were designed to allow transportation across vast distances. Due to their materials and unique construction, they are believed to have been created by the Formori giants. Of the original seven, only three are known to still exist. One is located in the village of Hammlish, in Arasteen. One lies outside the gates of Quintus Station in Aramyst in a severely damaged state. The third is in the Lost Ghetto of Mekanus, currently in the possession of Terablix the Autonomous.

*Rosengates* require a *Rosengate key* to activate and control and cannot be used at all unless the target gate is still functional and allows transport. Once per week, a *Rosengate* allows up to three tons of cargo (living or dead) to pass through, arriving at the current destination gate nearly instantaneously.

#### Destruction

Though extremely durable, *Rosengates* can be destroyed by mundane means. The gates have 20 hardness, 2,000 hit points, and SR 30 against all magical effects.

### Rosengate Key

**Aura** faint (conjunction); **CL** 4th

**Slot** none; **Price** 500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

### The Quintus Rosengate

The *Rosengate* at Quintus Station is functional, albeit dangerous. If a new key can be created for it (or the players possess the *Heart of Tarello*) it could potentially be activated, but it has a 45% chance of sending its user to a random location somewhere in Aden rather than the intended destination.

A character that studies the gate for at least an hour and makes a Knowledge (arcana) check vs. DC 25 can determine that the gate is not irreparable. The process is identical to that required for crafting magic items. This requires the Craft Wondrous Item feat, 5,000 gp worth of blackstone, and 10 days of labor. For each day of labor, the craftsman must expend one *teleport* spell (either of his own casting or from another individual or magical item). At the end of this period, the craftsman must make a Spellcraft check vs. DC 30. The *Quintus Rosengate* will then be fully restored.

Jerek or Gentor, if informed of this process, are both willing to transport the gate back to their respective city and see it repaired. However, neither of them have access to sufficient supplies of blackstone (found mainly in Arasteen in the form of Formori ruins and relics, which the Arastinians are notoriously reluctant to trade). Any assistance the party could provide, whether in the form of transport, repairs, or materials, would be appreciated.

The *Rosengate* can also be fully repaired by using the Lexicon's empower item ability upon it.

A *Rosengate key* can take many forms, but is usually an amulet or small figurine. This item glows brightly in the presence of a *Rosengate* and allows its user to seal or open the specific gate for which it was created. A sealed gate ceases to function until opened again. This key cannot seal a gate against specific other gates - it must be completely sealed against all gates or completely accessible to all. At the time of this adventure, both the Hammlish and Lost Ghetto *Rosengates* are sealed, though Sir Elion Omren opens the Hammlish one temporarily to send the party through. Terablix's gate is currently sealed, though he occasionally opens it to send his minions to Aramyst or to test whether any of the other gates have become accessible.

#### Construction Requirements

Craft Wondrous Item, *teleport*, creator must be in the presence of the *Rosengate* he wishes to control or this item cannot be created; Cost 250 gp

### Greater Rosengate Key (minor artifact)

**Aura** moderate (conjunction); **CL** 8th

**Slot** none; **Price** 5,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

These items are the original keys to the *Rosengates*, minor artifacts created by the same unknown entities. They have the standard functions of a normal *Rosengate key*, but affect all *Rosengates* and offer much greater control. The user can seal a gate against specific other gates, while leaving it open to those he chooses. Further, the user can open or seal a gate remotely, as long as they are in the presence of one gate and have a clear image of where the other gate is (either by having seen the location personally or via abilities such as scrying). A gate thus sealed cannot be resealed or opened again without another *greater Rosengate key*.

A *greater Rosengate key* can command a *Rosengate* to open to 'nowhere.' Anything that passes through the gate will vanish permanently, removed from the known boundaries of reality.

*Greater Rosengate keys* are often disguised as other magical items and their true purpose cannot be determined via magic. Though they are always crafted of blackstone, many are concealed within other materials. The *Heart of Tarello*, for example, was plated in gold and marked with the Tarello house seal. The key within is a featureless blackstone disc. Only by meditating on the key within the presence of a gate for at least one hour does the item's true function reveal itself.

The *Heart of Tarello* (potentially discovered by the party in *Heart of the Machine*) is a *greater Rosengate key* disguised as an *amulet of natural armor* +1.

#### Destruction

*Greater Rosengate keys* are difficult to destroy (one clue that they are not ordinary magical items). Only powerful magic such as a *miracle* or *wish* can destroy them. Alternately, a user can command a *Rosengate* to open to "nowhere" and throw the key through, causing it to disappear forever.

### Balefire Cauldron (minor artifact)

**Aura** moderate (conjunction); **CL** 10th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 250 lbs.

This device resembles a large metal cauldron that glows red hot and contains a substance similar to bubbling lava. Anything placed in the *cauldron* takes 6d6 fire damage per round. Items destroyed by the *cauldron* disintegrate into ash. The *cauldron* is red hot, inflicting 2d6 fire damage on any who touch it.

If a salamander drinks from the cauldron, he loses the fire dependency and the fire sensitivity abilities for the next 24 hours and functions as if he were within a mile of his home volcano.

Most of the salamander fiends and titans in this adventure have access to one of these items and use it regularly.

#### Destruction

A *balefire cauldron* has an AC of 20, 10 hardness and 100 hit points. It is immune to fire and nonmagical weapons, but takes double damage from cold.



If the *cauldron* is overturned, it spills its boiling contents on the ground in a 10 foot cone. The lava ignites flammables and continues to burn intensely for one minute before cooling into solid stone. An overturned *cauldron* permanently loses all magical abilities.

### Baleth's Cauldron (artifact)

**Aura** powerful (conjunction); **CL** 20th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 12 tons

This enormous artifact exists in the depths of the Corridor and channels the power of the Burning into Aramyst, allowing all *balefire cauldrons* to function. In addition to the abilities it grants Baleth during the final encounter of this adventure, *Baleth's Cauldron* grants Baleth command over the Corridor. This allows him to enter and leave the pocket dimension via any *teleport* spell and bar others from entry unless he permits it, or unless they use an equally powerful or more powerful artifact (such as the Lexicon). It also allows Baleth to create one *balefire cauldron* per week.

#### Destruction

Though great in power, *Baleth's Cauldron* is surprisingly fragile. It has an AC of 24, 200 hp, hardness 20, and inflicts 6d6 fire damage on anything that touches it. Cold or water based effects inflict quadruple damage on the cauldron. If *Baleth's Cauldron* is destroyed, all *balefire cauldrons* cease to function and any effects they have bestowed immediately cease.

### The Cipere Lexicon (major artifact)

**Aura** powerful (divination); **CL** 20th

**Slot** none; **Weight** 3 lbs.

The Cipere Lexicon is a perfectly smooth sphere of shiny metal. It is composed of an alloy of thaelium and manite. Due to its thaelium content, the Lexicon glows a bright blue color when handled by anyone with the gift of prophecy (such as a seer).

The Lexicons are relics of a more ancient time and their full potential is not fully understood. They were recovered from the ashes of the Great War, where they were believed to have caused much of the destruction but also made it possible to restore the world to peace. A Lexicon is known to possess the following properties.

**Bear Witness:** By communing with the Lexicon for hours each day over the course of several days, the character can gain visions of the past and future. For most individuals, the details of this vision cannot be controlled. They may get a glimpse of a few inconsequential hours of a man tending his garden or witness a climactic scene from a historic battle. Seers have greater control, and can expend their second sight to attempt to control this affect. This requires a great deal of practice, though within a few weeks a seer can at least learn to compel the Lexicon to view a general period of history, with greater success the more recent that period is. Not even a seer can compel the Lexicon to view the future - it does that when it chooses.

**Celestial Wisdom:** A spellcaster who communes with the Lexicon can use it to research magic. He must commune with the Lexicon for at least four hours a day for one week per level of the spell he wishes to research. At the end of this time, the user may add that spell to his spellbook free of charge. If the user is a prepared spellcaster, he may forget one of his known spells and prepare it with the selected spell.

### Amulets of Shermazza

These magical items were introduced in earlier volumes of this Adventure Path and appear on many cultists in this adventure. They are essentially minor magical items, no more than 2,000 gp in value (typically either *amulets of natural armor* or *cloaks of resistance*). Shermazza can scry upon anyone wearing such an amulet as well as communicate information to them via dreams. This effect can be blocked by storing the amulet in a metal container.

This can be used to create unique spells, such as the curse that unleashed the Weeping Death - or the ritual to reverse it. Such unique rituals count as 10th level spells for the purposes of research, regardless of the resulting spell's level.

**Energize Item:** Once per day, the Lexicon can be used to restore the energies of a magical item. By touching the Lexicon to the item, it restores up to 1d6 charges. This affects only items with charges (such as a wand or staff) or a limited number of uses per day (like a *cloak of the mountebank*). It does not affect single use items (like a *scroll* or *feather token*) or items composed out of multiple single use items (such as a *necklace of fireballs*).

**Empower Item:** Once per week, the Lexicon can be used to restore the properties of a magical item. If touched to a broken magical item, it restores it to proper function. If touched to a cursed magical item, it permanently transforms that item into a normal item of its type. This function has many other unpredictable effects, especially when interacting with other artifacts, from restoring them to full function (as with the *frost pylons*) or infusing them with energy to function beyond normal expectations (such as allowing the *Burning Engine* to enter the Corridor). It is ultimately the GM's decision if the Lexicon has such an effect on a particular item and, if so, what it is.

The Lexicon attunes itself to the first person that uses it, and remains so attuned until that person dies and someone else touches the artifact. The Lexicon's current owner is bestowed with knowledge of the above abilities and always knows the artifact's current location.

Ownership of a Lexicon can be transferred through the intervention of a seer or skilled diviner. A seer who touches the Lexicon and spends five uses of second sight can transfer ownership of it to himself or to anyone else currently touching the Lexicon. Expending a divination spell of 6th level or higher into the Lexicon also produces this effect. Knowledge of how to transfer ownership is not innately passed to its owner.

#### Destruction

The destruction of a Lexicon will be addressed in later volumes of this Adventure Path.



## Other Mechanics

### The Weeping Death aka Crystal Grief aka Curse of Shermazza

Though the characters do not directly encounter the plague during this adventure, it plays a vital role in the plot. As such, it is useful to know its effects - especially if the GM inflicts it upon the party's loved ones to give them incentive to seek a cure.

**Type** disease (enhanced curse), contact; **Save** Fortitude DC 16

**Onset** 6 weeks; Frequency 1/week

**Effect** 1d3 Int damage and Con damage, upon suffering any amount of ability damage from this disease the target gains the exhausted condition until cured

**Cure** special

The Curse of Shermazza is particularly contagious due to its long onset period. By the time a victim realizes he is infected, he has likely spread the affliction to many others via proximity. Once the curse fully manifests, the victim's eyes constantly water. Victims with 6 or less Intelligence due to the affliction become insensible and begin to lose memories. In the final stages, victims wander confused, forgetting who they are and weeping tears of blood.

There is no permanent cure save for powerful magic. A *wish* or *miracle* cures a single individual, but does not restore lost memories or protect them from becoming infected again. Magical effects that remove diseases or curses can slow the disease's progression for one week (the equivalent of a successful save) but do not cure it.

Once cured, a victim of the Weeping Death permanently bears scars upon their cheeks, as if tears burned their way through the flesh.



Once researched, the spell that cures the Weeping Death/Crystal Grief/Curse of Shermazza is as follows:

### The Weeping's End

**School** abjuration; **Level** cleric/oracle/seer 2

**Casting Time** 10 minutes

**Components** V, S, DF

**Range** 20 ft.

**Target** all creatures in a 20 ft. burst, centered on you

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** no

This spell immediately cures all targets of the Curse of Shermazza and renders them permanently immune to its effects. Lost memories are also restored, though lingering ability score damage is not (though that can be restored by the standard methods).

An individual who knows how to prepare this spell can teach any cleric, oracle, or seer how to cast it via an hour of consultation and can consult up to twenty individuals at a time. The creator of this spell can teach it to others even if they cannot cast it.

### Traverse Corridor

**School** conjuration (teleportation); **Level** magus 3, mechamage/sorcerer/wizard 3, summoner 3, witch 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V

**Range** personal and touch

**Target** you and touched objects or other touched willing creatures

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** none and Will negates (object); **Spell Resistance** no and yes (object)

This spell functions as teleport but only within Aramyst, specifically in areas overlapped by the extradimensional Corridor. Its range is unlimited within Aramyst but other restrictions of teleport apply.

Prior to the Darkfall, this spell was known only to elite members of the Celestial College. Since Baleth the Righteous has taken command of the Corridor, this spell no longer functions save by his permission. For Baleth or for salamanders that have recently drunk from a salamander cauldron, it functions normally, even allowing its user to teleport directly to the Corridor.

After Baleth's Cauldron is destroyed, this spell regains its original function (allowing teleportation within Aramyst but not to the Corridor). However, this teleportation inflicts 10d6 fire damage on all living creatures that use it (no save). If the Burning is brought to an end, this effect ends as well.

### Blessings of Shermazza

As in previous volumes of this Adventure Path, many followers of Shermazza bear unique abilities granted by their demonic patron. The following are examples that appear in this volume. Feel free to add any of the other blessings introduced in *Heart of the Machine* to particularly dangerous Shermazzan cultists.

✧ **Beloved of Shermazza** - This blessing is rewarded only to Shermazza's high priests. The bearer's DC when channeling negative energy is increased by 1. In addition, they can prepare an additional spell of the highest divine spellcasting level they can cast each day. The bearer of this blessing projects a shadow shaped like an enormous spider, rather than their own.

✧ **Fervor of Shermazza** - This blessing is usually rewarded to Shermazza's field commanders and other military personnel. The bearer can project the benefits of this blessing onto a number of other Shermazzan followers (but not to himself) equal to his level. So long as the bearer of this blessing is visible, alive, and has not surrendered to the enemy, all followers affected by this blessing gain temporary hit points equal to the bearer's hit dice. The bearer of this blessing speaks with a hollow, unnatural timbre as if his voice were projected through the bowels of a deep cavern.

✧ **Guile of Shermazza** - This blessing is granted to spies and infiltrators. When speaking to anyone other than a follower of Shermazza, the bearer of this blessing gains a +3 bonus to all Bluff skill checks. This bonus is doubled if the lie is an attempt to deny connection to the cult or interfere with their discovery. Unlike most blessings of Shermazza, this one has no obvious physical side effect.

✧ **Scourge of Shermazza** - This blessing is reserved for Shermazza's most powerful mages. Any spells cast by the bearer of this blessing are more powerful, increasing their save DC's by 1 against all enemies of the cult. The bearer of this blessing radiates a crackling dark energy from their hands and eyes every time they cast an offensive spell.

### New Bestial Nature Traits

As the birthplace of ferrans, Aramyst once had the highest population of ferrans in all of Aden. Though that's not the case since the Burning, the Ruined Kingdom still boasts a higher percentage of ferrans than other nations. Use the following bestial nature Traits to add flavor and uniqueness to ferran NPCs. (Several of the NPCs in this adventure already possess them.) These traits can be chosen in place of any of the ferran bestial nature traits listed in the Thunderscape Campaign Setting. A new ferran racial feat has also been included for ferrans who wish to embrace the beast within.

✧ **Berserker** - Ferrans with this trait gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls against any target that has damaged them during the current combat. This bonus becomes a +2 if the ferran has lost at least one quarter of his maximum hit points during this combat. This trait can only be selected by ferran predators.

✧ **Feral Charge** - Ferrans with this trait can inflict double damage when they make a gore attack at the end of a charge but suffer an additional -2 penalty to AC from the charge when they do so. This trait can only be selected by ferran brutes with a gore attack.

✧ **Natural Climber** - Ferrans with this trait gain a climb speed equal to their normal land speed minus 15 feet. If they already possess a climb speed, it is instead increased by 10 feet, to a maximum of their normal land speed.

✧ **Wings** - Ferrans with this trait possess a flap of skin between their arms and body which they can extend to allow winged flight. This grants the ferran the ability to fly at a speed of 40 feet with average maneuverability. However, these wings burden the ferran with an awkward, hobbling gait while on the ground, reducing their land to 20 feet. While in flight, the ferran cannot perform skills that require use of his hands or cast spells requiring material or somatic components, though they can still hold a small object and wield light melee weapons or one-handed ranged weapons. This trait can only be selected by ferran sneaks and replaces the predatory mobility racial trait in addition to requiring one of the ferran's bestial nature traits.

### Beast Blood (Feat)

You have harnessed the potential of your feral blood, granting you additional ferran abilities.

**Prerequisite** ferran

**Benefit** You gain one of the following:

✧ An additional bestial nature trait.

✧ An additional movement type, as listed under your race's predatory mobility racial ability. Ferran brutes may instead select one predatory mobility type as listed under the ferran predator racial description. The speed of this movement type is reduced by 10 feet. You may not choose the ferran sneak's ability to move at full speed and run with no penalty to Stealth checks via this feat. You may select this option once per character.

✧ If you have a base attack bonus of +6 or higher, you may select an additional ferran natural weapon. This must be a type listed in your race's description. The honed and razor sharp bestial nature traits do not apply to this attack. This natural weapon counts as a secondary natural attack.

**Special** You may gain this feat multiple times, to a maximum of once per five levels (rounded down), barring the above noted exceptions.



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# The Lost Lexicon

Part III of VI - Through Plague and Fire

A hero's work is never done. Fresh from their victory at Murdoch's Cove, the party is called upon to seek a cure for a devastating plague. Their search takes them deep into the bleak nation of Aramyst. Once a land of magical wonders, the Darkfall has twisted this land into a ruined shadow of itself. But amid the ashes of this scorched land, two embers of hope survive - Refuge and Mossburg. To find what they seek, the party must make new allies, unravel an ancient riddle, and defeat an unstoppable army.

Will they become the Ruined Kingdom's saviors or will they hasten its destruction?

Through Plague and Fire includes the following:

- ⚙ An open world adventure for 7th to 10th level characters.
- ⚙ A detailed history of Aramyst and the Celestial College.
- ⚙ A guide to the cities of Refuge and Mossburg.
- ⚙ New artifacts, monsters, hazards, and character options.
- ⚙ And much more!

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