

# CRISIS

## OF THE WORLD EATER

ALPHA: IMMORTAL WRATH OF THE ARMAGEDDON ANGEL



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**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE



# CRISIS

## OF THE WORLD EATER

### CAMPAIGN SERIAL ALPHA: IMMORTAL WRATH OF THE ARMAGGEDON ANGEL

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# IMMORTAL WRATH OF THE ARMAGEDDON ANGEL

A Pathfinder-compatible adventure for a party of four 6th-level characters by Michael McCarthy. By the end of the adventure, the PCs should reach 8th level.

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The universe is not eternal. It stretches imperceptibly far both forward and back, but it does have a beginning and an end. And beyond that, there are other universes. Or at least, as far as it can be figured.

Born near the dawn of the universe were not gods, but greater and lesser physical entities: Beginning, Ending, Change, and Continuation. These four great powers each influence the entire universe, guiding it toward different ends. Their actions are rarely direct, but when they are, they can challenge entire pantheons of gods. When they do act, these entities are so far beyond mortal comprehension that few are even aware that they exist, let alone recognize their influence for what it is.

More often, these powers act through agents. Among them is the Entropy: agents of Continuation. Hailing from the Shadow Plane, Entropy is a race of creatures without physical form who devour the energy created when the Material Plane changes, slowing change until it stops completely.

Ultimately, the Entropy desire to grind all the universe to a halt. To create a world where there is no change, no creation or destruction. Where the power they follow, Continuation, is the only great power remaining.

The greatest among the Entropy calls itself Omega. It reaches out to the greatest sources of change in the multiverse—living planets—and snuffs them out one at a time. Like most Entropy, Omega lacks a physical form, and instead grants deific power to dozens of proxies across the planes: the Omega Force.

On the Material Plane, Omega's agent is the astral titan Saitan. Already an immense being with incredible power, with the Omega Force at her command she can shatter planets and defy death itself.

And shatter planets she does, gladly, after consuming their very life force. She sees mortal life as a parasitic infection: a mistake of the gods. With Omega's help, she intends to punish the gods for abandoning her race, and for creating mortalkind—by destroying each and every planet they inhabit.

Yet, as powerful as Saitan is, she cannot be everywhere at once. So, she offers a tiny sliver of her power to a herald of her own. Asa the Seeker, an entity who long ago traded his eternal servitude for the life of his planet, travels the vast gulf of space in search of worlds for Saitan to devour and destroy.

Occasionally, Saitan's destruction is not absolute. A survivor might escape a shattered planet by might or magic. One of these rare survivors was the Chronicler. An astronomer and explorer





turned refugee, she took it upon herself to warn worlds of Saitan's approach. Worlds began to fight back and, at times, even drove the titan away.

So Asa tracked the Chronicler down and, above Neyth, struck her with the Kray Comet. Unconscious but not quite dead, the Chronicler fell to the surface of Neyth, where she remained comatose for the better part of a century.

As she recovered, the Confederate of Nations—the empire in which she landed—examined her and her ship. They tapped into the technology they found, and with it created the first super-powered warriors. Yet, as they drew power from technology they didn't understand, every one of them either died or went mad in short order.

Years later, the Chronicler finally awoke and screamed out a warning to the world: Saitan was coming, and with her the end of the world. Thousands take their own lives as the psychic message invades their minds, but finally the world knows the dawning threat. Yet even the greatest nations brush the warning off as mere doomsaying.

Only a select few—the soldiers who tracked the broadcast to its source, and the secret society of the Onyx Cabal—heeded the warning. A warning that the Confederate of Nations went to great lengths to dismiss. A warning that, if believed, might have saved the empire.

Without time to mount a defense, only one chance remains: The Seed of Change. It is the energy from the Seed that founds empires, that allows planets to grow into the very targets Omega seeks to destroy. The Seed holds enough power to suppress the Omega Force and to allow even immortals such as Asa and Saitan to be destroyed forever.

But the Seed of Change carries a heavy cost. Not designed for mortal hands, to call upon its power is to risk being forever undone.

But when the alternative is the destruction of one's entire planet, it seems a small risk to take.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PCs have been invited to the Nations Summit, a meeting of leaders from the Confederate of Nations in its capital, Shonawing. Just before the summit begins, in a flash like a meteor strike, Asa the Seeker falls from the heavens. When the dust settles, the Capitol Building, the heart of the Confederate of Nations and home of the emperor, has been reduced to so much dust and ash.

Moments later, the city hears the same voice they heard a decade before, that of the Chronicler. She laments that the herald of Saitan is here! Only by striking him down immediately can disaster be averted.

Yet heeding the Chronicler's warning is not as easy as heading in the opposite direction of so many fleeing civilians. The Entropy have begun to press themselves into the city, and the Onyx Cabal has chosen this moment to topple the empire which they hate so severely.

## THE FATE OF AN EMPIRE

Throughout this adventure, it is revealed that for all it's good, the empire in which the PCs live is a flawed place. At the conclusion of this adventure serial the party will have a chance to change that, for good or for ill. They will, quite literally, choose the fates of the empire and their world.

There are no points to track, but GMs are encouraged to stress discoveries about both the empire's virtues and flaws. It is an empire that rewrites its own history and cannot function without the tiny fraction of its population who make decisions for everyone. And those in control refuse to accept that they might ever be wrong.

After fighting tooth and nail to wind their way through the city, the party finds the Nations' Army engaged in a firefight with Asa in the crater that was once the Capitol Building.

Their assistance tips the scales in the favor of the Nations' Army—but Asa doesn't balk at physical death, and mere hours later he returns to torment the party once again, mocking them even as the Chronicler arrives to lend her own aid.

She will explain the situation now, more plainly than in her previous broadcasts. Saitan cannot be more than days away, and there is no time left to mount a defense. Only by harnessing the power of the Seed of Change, the very item Saitan is coming for, does Neyth have even a chance of survival.

Major Marco DePompa, the commander of the group who met the Chronicler a decade before, knows the Seed. It was harnessed long ago by the Confederate of Nations, and currently lies in Vault II beneath the PCs very feet, where the Capitol Building once stood.

As Asa once again begins to reform, the Chronicler and Major DePompa rise to the city's defense as the PCs delve into the vault. This time, Asa isn't so easily deterred, and it becomes a race against the clock as the party must fend off Asa, the Entropy, and the guardians of the vault to find the Seed of Change.

The Seed lies within, and its latent power alone allows the party to defeat Asa for good (or at least, until Saitan resurrects him in *The Devourer of a Thousand Worlds*). In doing so, they draw the attention of Omega, who pulls them into the Shadow Plane. There, they are frozen in time and watch, powerless to do anything, as Omega reaches out and scorches the Seed.

The Chronicler is disheartened at the damage to the Seed, lamenting that all is lost, but Marco refuses to give up hope. If it can be damaged, perhaps it can be repaired. If not here, then perhaps on other worlds, worlds whose Seeds have not been scorched or destroyed. Perhaps there is still a chance after all.

## STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs are citizens and soldiers of the greatest empire of the world: the Confederate of Nations. Life isn't always perfect, but the leaders of each nation—collectively known as the Forty



Families—work together under the watchful eye of Emperor Boam. Working together, they have established the safest and richest group of countries in the world.

The Confederate of Nations is protected by the Nations' Army, an international force composed of thousands of dedicated men and women who risk their lives to defend the people of their nation. The threats they face on a daily basis are wide-ranging—from monsters and natural disasters to threats of invasion—and so too are their members. Seasoned warriors stand as equals with wizards and craftsmen, each using their own skills on the empire's behalf.

As this campaign begins, the PCs (and the rest of the empire besides) are preparing for the Confederate Summit: a meeting of the leaders and great minds of every nation in the empire. Over the next ten days, the greatest questions and concerns facing each nation will be addressed. It ends every year on the eighth day of the second month, which is celebrated across the empire as a day of togetherness and accomplishment.

The characters are lucky enough to count themselves among the elite invited to the summit. They might be ambassadors, researchers, or guards; to represent this, each PC takes one of the following campaign traits:

**Nations' Elite:** You're a crack soldier in the Nations' Army. You've had years of combat training, and have been asked to attend the conference to show military support for the event. Pick ranged or melee; you gain a +1 trait bonus to hit on all attacks of that type. In addition, pick one type of weapon (such as longswords or light crossbows); you gain a +2 trait bonus on all damage rolls made with that type of weapon.

**Technical Specialist:** You're an expert in your field, and you've been asked to join a panel at the conference discussing your subject of expertise. Pick any skill; that skill is always a class skill for you, and you receive one extra skill point per level that can only be spent on that skill. In addition, you gain a +2 trait bonus to that skill.

**Private Protection:** You're a professional guard or soldier for hire. The Confederate of Nations has put you on retainer during the conference to provide extra security in case anything happens. You've already received the advance for your work: you begin play with an additional 5,000 gp in wealth.

**Magical Researcher:** You're at the forefront of your field in magical research, and you've been asked to speak on one of your breakthroughs at the conference. Pick any two cleric or wizard spells that aren't on your spell list; they are considered to be on your list of spells known for all spellcasting classes you have, and you can always prepare them, even without a spellbook, familiar, or holy symbol.

**Animal Expert:** You excel at handling animals of all kinds, and have an exceptionally dedicated animal companion to show for it. You have been hired to help manage the thousands of mounts and beasts of burden that are already flooding the streets during the conference. Choose one class that would

grant you an animal companion; that class is considered to be two levels higher for all purposes related to your animal companion.

## CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Characters continuing to this adventure from *A Warning Too Late* are the same ones who visited the Complex to discover the Chronicler a decade before. Such characters also gain the following trait:

**Warned:** You aren't sure how you got invited to the conference. For years after your encounter with the Chronicler, you've been under strict surveillance, so you couldn't so much as talk about the event, let alone pursue your career. You discovered a truth about worlds beyond your own, as well as how far your empire would go to cover things up. You've begun to feel that something about the empire needs to change, and your deep-seated desires make you naturally resistant to the powers of Entropy. Whenever you make a save against an Omega effect—such as the Omega Force aura or Omega Resurrection (page 31)—you roll twice and take the better result.

## CHAPTER I: ASA STRIKES

The PCs awaken on the first day of the conference as they expect to: early, at the Great Hearth Lodge. The Great Hearth Lodge is a massive white marble building, holding nearly two hundred rooms, only a few short miles south of the Capitol Building itself. Though the PCs are each here on their own, when it comes time to catch one of the countless carriages outside departing for the Capitol Building, they all end up in the same one. Give the players a moment to introduce themselves, then read or paraphrase the following:

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*Only a minute after boarding the carriage, your ears are assaulted by a keening wail. The horses pulling you run in opposite directions, jolting your carriage sideways and nearly toppling it to the cobblestones below before they break free and run off.*

*From your new vantage, the source of the sound becomes obvious: high in the sky is a blinding light, coming steadily closer. Like a spear a mile long, it falls unerringly, and the closer it gets, the more obvious the destination: the Capitol Building.*

*When it strikes, miles distant, the ground beneath the carriage leaps. The heat of the spear's impact is warm on your skin, sending a chill down your spine. Then comes the wave of dust, smelling of fire and blood. Screams of the scared and confused echo around you for only a minute, muted by an overwhelming static.*

*The smoke clears almost as quickly as it set in, revealing the chaos around you. People are fleeing in every direction. Carriages have overturned in the streets in both directions, and your own horses are missing entirely. Where the Capitol Building had been, there is now a plume of smoke.*

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## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

With Asa's arrival and Entropy's attack, the streets of Shonawing are full of chaotic activity. On the streets, between each of the encounter areas below, there is a 30% chance of the party having a random encounter. In addition, should the PCs stop to rest (such as to regain spells), there is a 50% chance of having a random encounter.

Die Roll	Die Roll	Average CR
1–40	2d4 Entropy pods (page 26) manifest out of thin air in front of the party and immediately attack.	6
41–60	A mob of panicked citizens charge pass. Each PC must make a DC 13 Fortitude save, or a DC 15 Diplomacy or Intimidate check, or take 2d4 damage from the mob.	2
61–80	An aftershock quakes, causing a nearby building to collapse atop the party. Each character must make a DC 16 Reflex Save or take 4d6 damage from falling rubble.	4
81–100	A pair of Onyx Cabal supporters (human expert 7) confront the PCs, urging them to turn around. They claim that the collapse of the empire will be the best thing that could happen to it. If the PCs don't agree to their demands, they resort to force.	7

## CHARACTER PROGRESSION

The PCs begin this adventure at 6th level.

By the time they enter Vault II, they should be 7th level.

By the end of the adventure, the PCs should be 8th level.

When the party extracts themselves from the carriage, they will find that the other carriages nearby are missing both driver and horses, but in the chaos of people filling the streets and overturned carriages, it wouldn't be a practical means of travel.

Most of the people streaming through the streets are civilians or politicians, though a small number of soldiers attempt to stem the chaos.

The party has a little time to gather their wits about them, aid the injured, and generally take stock. Once they begin to take any real action, the static that has persisted in the background will resolve into words. It is the same voice from ten years ago, crying out in anguish far more clearly than ever before: the voice of the Chronicler, lamenting Asa's arrival. Read or paraphrase the following:

*A voice rings out, not in your ears but in your mind. "The Seeker has arrived! The end is nigh! It must be stopped, destroyed immediately, or else your entire world will be lost!" The voice pauses a moment, and though you cannot hear it you get the impression of a ragged sigh. "The Angel of Armageddon has landed in the heart of the Confederate of Nations. If you have any desire to save your world, go there now. You cannot let him call for the Deliverer of Omega!"*

After the message ends, chaos breaks out on a grand scale. The streets had been filling with curious or scared civilians, and they now begin to flee in every direction. Mostly, they take to the main roads to try to get as far away from the Capitol Building as they can. A rare few heed the Chronicler's message and instead push toward the center of the city.

Politicians and soldiers bark orders to try to keep some measure of control over a deteriorating situation. None of them anticipate that Asa is far from the only attacker.

Moments after the chaos erupts, trails of dark smoke begin to appear in the sky, gracefully twirling down into the city. The city is no longer merely dealing with a disaster, but actively under attack. There is no organized defense; everyone who might have mounted one quickly was killed in Asa's strike on the Capitol Building.

These trails of dark smoke are manifestations of the Entropy. The barely corporeal figures resemble humanoids in tattered shawls from a distance, but closer examination will reveal that they more closely resemble giant squid cloaked in thick folds of webbing. Rather than flesh, their bodies are made of dark, sticky smoke that writhes as it tries to hold itself together.

Hopefully, the PCs will be among the brave few to answer the Chroniclers call, to push against the stream of people fleeing the scene of the impact. If they do not, then try to prompt them to act by describing one of the trails of smoke crashing into a large building just down the road, followed by a blood-curdling scream that cuts short—The Voice of the People is under attack by strange creatures!

## A. THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE (CR 6)

The Voice of the People is a grand marble building overlooking the wide People's Road as it runs toward the Capitol Building. It is a national symbol of unity and justice, where laws are upheld and revised.

*Sitting atop a set of grand marble steps, The Voice of the People flies flags of all forty-one nations of the empire: one atop each pillar that supports the roof of the massive structure.*

When the PCs arrive, a terrified elderly man named Alan Smith is standing on the landing leading into the courthouse, clutching his bleeding arm. He calls weakly for the help of passersby, but nobody is paying enough attention to listen. If approached, he





will immediately tell the PCs that, right after the earthquake, ghosts started coming out of the walls of the courthouse. They sliced up his friend, and nearly himself, but he managed to get away as they went after the rest of the custodial staff. He will beg the PCs to help—maybe someone is still alive inside?

### KNOWLEDGE ON THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

**Local DC 15:** Though it officially exists to uphold the empire's laws, in reality The Voice of the People is mostly focused on revising and updating laws. Typically, shortly after each Confederate Summit they release an updated constitution for the empire, including any major changes discussed over the prior year.

**History DC 20:** The Voice of the People was first established by one of the founders of the Confederate of Nations, Saul Silver. He firmly believed that laws exist to serve the people, so if they aren't reviewed and revised in the face of the people, they're little better than no laws at all.

### INSIDE THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

The interior of The Voice of the People consists of an atrium, one large hearing room, two smaller courtrooms flanking it, and a mess of smaller rooms around and beneath them. In the early hours, only the overnight custodial staff is normally here, polishing the floors.

*The atrium of The Voice of the People is eerily quiet, the noise outside smothered by the thick stone walls and something else that lends a chill to the air. In the middle of the room, two robed figures are crouched over a half-dozen corpses sprawled out on the marble floor. Everything about the pair is unsettling: their forms don't quite seem to be resting on the floor, and you think you can see through them, if only a little. Strangest of all is the way they bend—like beneath those cloaks isn't something that resembles a human in the slightest.*

These figures, which are Entropy pods, will slowly turn to survey the party. They will not respond to any attempts to communicate, and any attempt to get within twenty feet of them will cause them to attack immediately.

**Development:** PCs who succeed on a DC 14 Perception check during the first round of battle will detect two more Entropy pods as they coalesce from out of the floor behind the party, attacking on the second round.

### ENTROPY POD (4)

**CR 2 — 600 XP**

hp 19 (page 26)

**Development:** The people sprawled out on the floor are not all dead—four of the six are merely unconscious. Succeeding on a DC 10 Heal check reveals those who are still alive, and



each additional success on a DC 10 Heal check returns one of them to consciousness. All being members of the custodial staff, they cannot provide any additional details on their attackers. Further exploring the courthouse takes one hour, but uncovers 2d4 more injured staff members, who can be saved in the same way. For each civilian rescued in this way, award 150 XP to the party.

## B. CARVER BRIDGE

The largest and most trafficked bridge in Shonawing, Carver Bridge is a huge arch of expertly engineered stone, some fifty feet up in the air, that crosses over both four-hundred-foot spans of the Thahumbe River.

*You can hear the rush of the Thahumbe River as you arrive at Carver Bridge. Where you had expected to see a wide bridge teeming with people, you are met instead with a quarter of an arch that ends abruptly, and the powerful river is already reclaiming even that. Huge, jet black predatory birds fly above, swooping down to pick the dead from the water.*

The birds are Entropy vultures; carrion-feeders brought by the Entropy from the Shadow Plane. Despite their origin, they are similar to mortal birds in nearly all ways, though extremely aggressive. The first time the PCs approach the edge of the bridge, one will fly down and attempt to grab one of them as a meal.

### ENTROPY VULTURE

CR 3 — 800 XP

hp 26 (as giant eagle; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)

**Development:** It is a sheer twenty-foot cliff from the edge of the bridge down to the river below. Swimming in the powerful 400-foot-wide river requires a DC 20 Swim check on each round. Further, on every other round that at least one character remains in the water, they draw the attention of an entropy vulture looking for an easy meal, up to eight at once.

Any attempt to take to the air immediately draws the attention of four birds, a CR 7 encounter. Every other round, one more bird joins the combat. There are twenty entropy vultures in all.

Should the PCs cross the river despite the vultures, award the party a bonus of 3,200 XP, in addition to any experience gained fighting the vultures.

### KNOWLEDGE ON CARVER BRIDGE

**Geography DC 10:** While it is the best bridge for crossing the Thahumbe River, it is not the only one. The next nearest bridge is the Liberty Bridge, a quarter mile to the south, on the other side of Fort Nero. There is also the Carter Bridge two miles north.

**History DC 10:** While this bridge is named after the first empress, Geraldine Carver, it was engineered by William Issac III. It was not built until nearly fifty years after the later of their deaths.

## C. FORT NERO

A holdover from the foundation of the empire, Fort Nero is a squat, easily defensible building that now protects the south face of the Capitol Building.

*The sound of ballista-fire and steel on steel is audible even from outside the heavy walls of the fort. Smoke rises from within, and the northern gate is wide open.*

Fort Nero normally houses some two hundred of the capital's greatest soldiers, but the main barracks collapsed in Asa's strike. There are twenty surviving soldiers left in the fort, all manning four ballistae along the western edge of the fort, firing towards the Capitol Building.

Asa, in turn, has sent the Entropy here. Anything that moves, they tear down.

### KNOWLEDGE ON FORT NERO

**History DC 15:** Fort Nero was built just before the founding of the empire, in anticipation of retaliation from a southern nation, which has since been subsumed by the empire.

**Geography DC 10:** Fort Nero protects the shortest separation of the banks of the Thahumbe River for nearly fifty miles, a mere two hundred feet. It used to protect the empire's only bridge over the river, but that was taken down after the Geraldine Carver and Liberty Bridges were built.

## E1. ROYAL MEMORIAL GRAVEYARD (CR 5)

The actions of the Onyx Cabal have disturbed the dead in Royal Memorial Graveyard, and the Entropy's persistence has only riled them up further. Clad in ragged uniforms of the Confederate of Nations, they will attack anything nearby.

### SKELETON (12)

CR 1/3 — 135 XP

hp 4

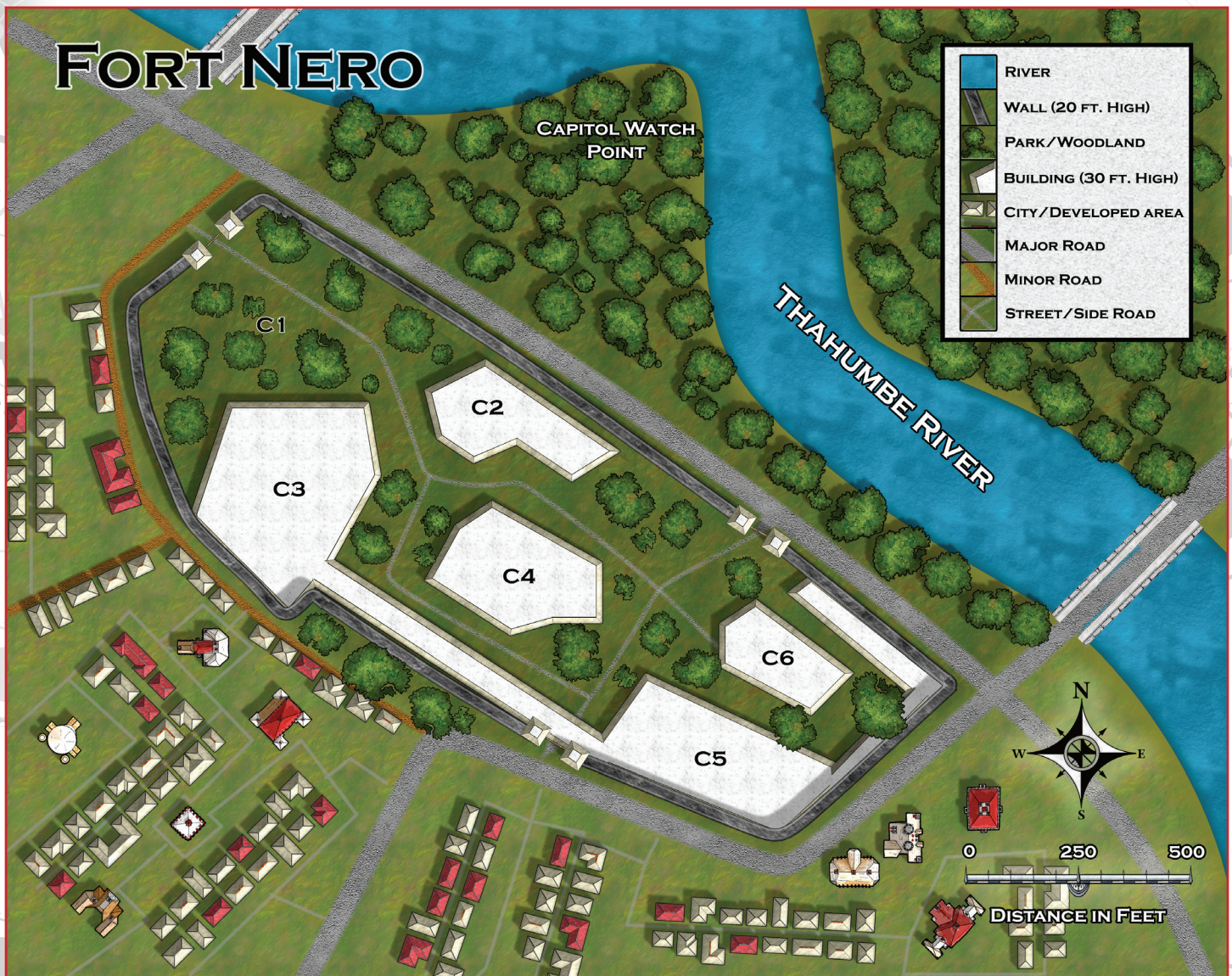
**Treasure:** The skeletons were buried in uniforms with ceremonial weapons. While the weapons aren't fit for combat (imposing a -2 penalty if used), they are elaborate and worth 100 gp each.

**Development:** The skeletons will reform every 2d4 minutes unless both the Entropy and the Onyx Cabal have been banished from the Fort. PCs only gain XP from defeating the skeletons once.

## E2. BARRACKS

The two-story barracks has mostly collapsed, though nearby buildings remain intact. A DC 18 Perception check reveals a large meteorite amongst the rubble: some four hundred pounds of iron. A DC 10 Knowledge (engineering) check confirms that the meteor strike was far too precise to be random.





### C3. BATTLEMENTS (ER 5)

The battlements along the western end of the fort proper is a pitched battle between Confederate forces and the Entropy. Four ballistae are each manned by three soldiers, while eight more attempt to fend off the Entropy pods encroaching on them.

When the PCs arrive, three Entropy pods will split off from the main battle to attack them. The remaining pods will fight the soldiers one-on-one. Until the PCs engage, assume that in each round engaged in this combat, each soldier takes 6 damage, while each Entropy pod takes 3.

#### ENTROPY POD (11)

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (page @@)

#### NATIONS' SOLDIER (20)

CR 1 — 400 XP

Human warrior 3 (as guard)  
hp 22

**Development:** If at least 10 soldiers survive the fight, award the PCs an additional 2,400 XP. If fewer than 10 but more than 5 soldiers survive, award the PCs an additional 1,200 XP.

**Development:** Once the Entropy pods have been defeated, the surviving soldiers explain what they know. They are the night watch, the only survivors in the fort from the unexplained meteor strike. They received a message (from forces at the Capitol Building) that the meteor itself was a hostile force and that they should open fire on it.

After a moment to breathe, the soldiers will ask the PCs to check into the fate of their commanding officer. Normally Captain Edwards isn't the sort to go missing, but when she didn't come to the defense of the fort, they suspected that something happened to her.

### C4. ARMORY (ER 4)

The armory has supplies for two hundred soldiers—masterwork armor, longswords, and longbows. There are also two *wands of cure light wounds* and two *scrolls of lesser restoration*. If the PCs



have already saved the soldiers in C3, they will encourage the PCs to take at least one, if not both, of each as thanks—because none of them are magically capable.

### **E5. PANTRY**

The fort's kitchen and pantry are well stocked, though currently deserted. Most of the food here is fresh, but there are enough preserved foodstuffs to create 50 trail rations.

### **E6. OFFICERS HALL (E6)**

This small building is where the commanding officers of Fort Nero live, plan, and organize the activities of the fort's soldiers. Since the fort hasn't seen active use in a long time, however, only one officer is normally stationed here: Captain Natasha Edwards.

She lies dead on the floor of her bedroom, but not dead from the meteor strike, or even because of the Entropy. The Onyx Cabal jumped at the opportunity to go through the records kept here, and moments after the meteor struck, several operatives broke in here, killed the recently awoken Captain Edwards, and began searching the place.

These practiced covert operatives are still in the hall, disguised via *disguise self*, and they know they are being clearly suspicious. The three of them will order the PCs away, insisting they are not to be disturbed. Seeing through their thin bluff requires a DC 18 Sense Motive check, while identifying that they are in disguise requires a DC 25 Perception check.

### **ONYX OPERATIVE (3)**

**CR 3 — 800 XP**

Human rogue 4 (as charlatan; *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*)  
**hp 21**

### **WHO IS THE ONYX CABAL?**

The Onyx Cabal is a secret society that lies in the dark corners of the Confederate of Nations. They see the empire not as the great establishment that it claims to be, but as a device which the rich and powerful use to control the masses.

For nearly a century, they have worked to slowly undermine the power of the empire. In the last decade, since the Chronicler's scream, the group has steadily gained power in the shadows. They have been infiltrating higher and higher levels of the government, and have been seeking a way to disassemble the empire all at once, without having to resort to great violence.

For more details on the Onyx Cabal, see *Crisis of the World Eater: Inheritor of the Entropy Heart*.

### **D. LIBERTY BRIDGE (CR 7)**

Liberty Bridge is smaller and narrower than Carver Bridge to the north, but also much newer. It being a more recent construction is all that saved it from completely collapsing like many other buildings closer to the impact site.

*The railing on one side of this huge bridge has collapsed, but the majority of the structure remains intact. Dozens of people shuffle out of the heart of the capital, carefully guided by members of the Nations' Army.*

The soldiers guiding civilians will stop the PCs and ask if they have come to help. If the PCs agree but are vague, they will be assigned points to direct traffic toward. Once the PCs are clear that they are trying to get to the crater, the soldier they are speaking with will pale, but then shout to clear a way for them to pass.

Should the PCs attempt to cross the bridge without a path being cleared, they must succeed a DC 20 Diplomacy check or DC 15 Strength check to move against the crowd coming from the other direction.

Once the party is about halfway across the three-hundred-foot-long bridge, the entire structure will suddenly tilt as one of the bridge's supports gives away. Dozens of civilians will be thrown to the ground, and each PC must make a DC 13 Reflex save or be knocked prone.

Moments later, the cause of the collapsed support comes twisting over the edge of the structure: a hundred-foot-long tentacle of inky black smoke. The tentacle will wrap itself around the length of the bridge, pulling itself up—and the bridge into the water.

These tentacles belong to one of the most enormous manifestations of the Entropy, a colossus pod. Fortunately, as it is occupied with tearing down the bridge, it isn't currently concerned with the PCs.

Avoiding the initial grasp requires a DC 12 Reflex save (made with a –5 penalty if already prone). Anyone failing this save takes 4d6 damage and becomes grappled (CMD 22 to escape). Six civilians are trapped by the pseudopods, unconscious but not dead.

### **COLOSSUS POD PSEUDOPOD**

**hp 40; DR 10/slashing**

After the first round, four tentacles begin to work up through cracks in the bridge. They actively fight to keep creatures away from the otherwise defenseless pseudopod.

### **COLOSSUS POD TENTACLE (4) CR 3 — 800 XP**

**hp 30 (as medium water elemental)**

**Development:** After 5 rounds, if the colossus pod's pseudopod is not detached, the middle 40-foot section of the bridge will collapse into the river below. The fall is 30 feet, and the damage is sufficient to kill any NPCs who are still trapped. Further details on the river are discussed along with the Carver Bridge (page 8). With the bridge collapsed, the colossus pod will move on, looking for more easy targets.

If the colossus pod's pseudopod is destroyed, the colossus pod falls back into the river below, and will swim away looking for easier targets.



Every civilian the PCs save before the end of combat grants an additional 150 XP.

### KNOWLEDGE ON LIBERTY BRIDGE

**History DC 10:** Liberty Bridge is a relatively new construction in Shonawing. It had eased congestion over the Carver Bridge greatly.

## E. MEMORIAL HILL

Memorial Hill is a gentle, grassy hill covered in memorials to those lost in the many wars the Confederate of Nations has fought since its inception.

*The hill is eerily quiet. You can hear the sounds of combat in the distance, but here the air is still. The statues and monuments are undamaged by the attack—unscathed even by the debris.*

Memorial Hill represents perfection as far as the Entropy is concerned: no movement, no change, just silent and still memories forever. Dozens of sated Entropy pods drift listlessly around the hill in groups of twos and threes.

When they encounter the PCs, they will move to prevent the PCs from advancing on the monuments, but will not immediately attack. They would prefer to preserve this place rather than defeat their enemies.

### ENTROPY POD (3)

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (page 26)

### KNOWLEDGE ON MEMORIAL HILL

**History DC 10:** Memorial Hill has a monument for every major battle fought by the empire, inscribed with the names of every soldier who fell in the battle.

**History DC 20:** One of the hill's largest memorials, the Tomb of Forgotten Heroes is said to house a complex graveyard beneath it, with a grave for every warrior of the empire who didn't return after a war—or whose names were forgotten.

### A QUICK BREATH

*The following sections assume that the PCs are at least close to fighting shape when they reach Asa. If the party is beginning to flag, when they arrive at Confederate Park the army will assure them that the creature in the crater is already dead, and insist that they rest.*

*In this case, give the party time to rest and recover, after which Asa's Omega Resurrection kicks in. He will erupt from the crater, kill the nearest dozen soldiers, and begin to dig. After that, you can continue with the adventure as written.*

## F. CONFEDERATE PARK

This large, idyllic park surrounds the Capitol Building, giving it a sense of tranquility despite the increasingly busy city that surrounds it.

*Carefully trimmed grass and manicured bushes have been trampled by hundreds of booted feet. Soldiers of the Nations' Army rushes about, preparing weapons and tending wounded. You can see from here that where the Capitol Building once stood is nothing more than a smoking crater, surrounded by Confederate soldiers firing at something within.*

Characters attempting to approach the crater will be stopped by one many soldiers in the area. They will claim that the Nations' Army has the matter well in hand, but anyone who makes a DC 15 Sense Motive check knows that the soldier is merely trying to put on a brave face. The PCs must succeed on a DC 18 Diplomacy check to convince the soldier that the party is capable of helping. PCs with the Nations' Elite trait grant a +4 circumstance bonus on this check.

Succeeding on the check by 5 or more will get another piece of information out of the soldier as she waves the characters past:

- Emperor Boam, the heads of the Forty Families, and the marshals of the Nations' Army were all inside the Capitol Building at the time of the attack. So far, they have all proven impossible to resurrect. Without leadership, the army—and the empire—is in chaos.
- Not only did the creature in the crater survive a fall from the heavens, but it is healing as fast as the army can harm it. Nobody is willing to get in close and engage it directly.

The PCs will be stopped three times by three different soldiers, all with the same concerns and knowledge. Anyone they had talked to previously is lost in the crowd. Each stop prompts another Diplomacy check.

**Development:** Once the party has passed the three checks, they arrive at the ruins of the Capitol Building. For each passed check, award the PCs 1200 XP.

If the PCs have not passed three checks after attempting six, Asa will fire another pulse of energy at the massed soldiers, sending them scattering. Whomever the PCs are talking to at the time tells them they can risk their lives if they want, then runs off to tend to the wounded.

## CHAPTER 2: BATTLE FOR THE CAPITAL

By the time the party arrives at what remains of the Capitol Building, the Nations' Army is already in a pitched battle against the fallen angel Asa. He is generally unimpressed with the constant fire he is under; arrows and bolts alike shatter harmlessly against his dark form. Every now and then, he turns to the soldiers assembled on the lip of the crater and fires a pulse of energy at them to keep them from coming too close.

Asa is almost casually picking through the debris of the crater, looking for the Seed of Change. The Seed is the reason he chose to strike here, assuming that it would be within the Capitol Building. He will soon realize that the Seed is instead beneath the building, but for now he simply sifts through the debris.

## KNOWLEDGE ON THE CAPITOL BUILDING

**History DC 15:** The current Capitol Building is only a few decades old. Before that, a larger and more defensible fort stood here, the northern counterpart to Fort Nero. After nearly a century of alliance with Raccan to the immediate north, the fortress was dismantled and ultimately replaced with the building that has stood until today.

## G. THE RUINS OF THE CAPITOL BUILDING

Once, the Capitol Building was a grand structure. Two stories tall and capped with a gleaming dome, the sprawling building was open to the public and served as a reminder of everything the Confederate of Nations represents: freedom, justice and (albeit unintentionally) wealth. Now, however, it is a smoldering crater hundreds of feet across.

*No trace of the gleaming white Capitol Building remains: it is all dust and splinters in the wind. Where the pinnacle of the empire stood only hours ago, there is now nothing more than an enormous smoking crater. Around it, hundreds of soldiers stand, periodically firing into it with all manner of weapons; more rarely, something within fires back, with bright flashes of violet energy.*

*Within the crater is a ten-foot-tall humanoid shape, with enormous wings sprouting from just below his shoulders. He is shrouded in darkness except for the light he emits from hundreds of tiny flecks throughout his form. He makes grand gestures, crumbling stones and debris into dust with a flick of his wrist, digging the crater he stands within ever deeper. Arrows, bullets, and even ballista bolts lie discarded around him, though he seems undamaged and thrums with heat and energy.*

As the PCs approach the lip of the crater, another man comes up calmly just behind them. A sandy-haired human of average height and build, he wears the uniform of an officer of the Nations' Army. But the uniform is a disguise—unknown to everyone around him, the man is actually the Onyx Commander, disguised in his anonymity. A keen judge of character, he could immediately tell that the PCs would be useful pawns in his plans.

If the party hesitates in entering the crater, he will clear his throat politely and introduce himself as Colonel Korric. He will explain the situation plainly: the “angel” within the crater appears to be all but immune to ranged fire. The army needs someone willing to go into the crater to face it toe-to-toe—but more importantly they need someone able. Most of the soldiers here, he explains, wouldn't last six seconds in such a confrontation. As the PCs appear to be relatively powerful warriors, he hopes they might lead the charge. With the creature distracted, the army should be able to defend the perimeter from the “fog creatures” and otherwise provide assistance.

Only a few elements of “Korric's” story are fabrications, so a DC 30 Sense Motive check is required to sense that something is off about Korric or his instructions. If called out, he will claim to be exaggerating for purpose of effect, then shrug and go off to find some “actual heroes.”

When the PCs descend into the crater, read or paraphrase the following:

*The figure stops its digging and turns to face you, towering nearly ten feet tall. Your ears begin to ring, then fill with static as if a thousand voices were talking over one another, until finally a rich baritone rings out above them all. “Someone finally willing to stand up to me? I was beginning to think this planet wouldn't serve the master's needs after all.” Though as rich as butter, the voice is calm and full of malice. “I can prepare the Seed for her arrival after I deal with you.”*

## ASA THE SEEKER

CR 10 — 9,600 XP

hp 136 (page 31)

Much like “Colonel Korric” said (though not because he said so), the Confederate forces will continue a steady stream of ultimately useless fire upon Asa as the PCs fight. There will also be clerics along the edge of the confrontation, capable of casting cure spells on injured PCs, though none will come within fifty feet of the fight.

**Development:** When the PCs defeat Asa, a thunderous cheer will rise from the assembled crowd, and dozens of soldiers will descend upon the party, cheering them as heroes.

There will be time for a brief rest, but after only two hours Asa will return to life in an explosion of violet energy. Now the Armageddon Angel is in a much worse mood, having been slain at the hands of mortals. Immediately his sword, the Omega Blade, is back in his hands.

It will take him two rounds to cut a swath through the assembled soldiers to reach the PCs. As he raises the Omega Blade to strike, he will be countered by a blast of green fire from the sky. The source of the shot is a large, silver disk floating a hundred feet in the sky—and until Asa is again defeated, it will not come any closer, flitting about in total silence with eerie grace. Each round, it will fire another lance of plasma at Asa (plasma lance +16 touch; 6d6 plasma damage).

Asa will shout furiously about at the orb that Saitan is already on her way, alternating between attacking the floating disk and the nearest PC. If the disk is able to hear Asa, it doesn't acknowledge him.

## ASA THE SEEKER

CR 10 — 9,600 XP

hp 136 (page @@)

After Asa's second defeat, the silver disc will touch down, revealing a small dome atop it. The dome unfolds like a lotus flower as a ramp stretches down to the ground, allowing the tall feminine creature within to emerge and survey the area with her own eyes.

The woman is ten feet tall, and her lithe but featureless body is made almost entirely of a golden orange metal. The exceptions are her left arm, made of pale green light, and her eyes, which seem





almost human. She doesn't introduce herself, and instead begins explaining that, like before, Asa isn't dead. He is protected from true death by the power of the Omega Seed.

Worse, she continues, Asa isn't the true threat. Soon, the world will be visited by the source of the Omega Force itself—Saitan. (This isn't entirely true, but she doesn't know that Omega itself is a separate and deific entity.) Saitan visits planets that teem with life, devours their vital essence, and then shatters the broken husks that remain in her wake.

She had been hoping that stopping Asa would mean Saitan might bypass this world, but this does not seem to be the case. In weeks or even days, the Deliverer of Omega will arrive, and without having prepared the defense she recommended a decade before, the world is all but forfeit.

The only thing with the power to save the world now is the Seed of Change—the very thing whose energy Saitan is coming to devour, the source of life energy on this world. The Seed puts the power to reshape entire worlds in the hands of its wielder to make even Saitan hesitate, enough power to utterly destroy anyone who might channel that power carelessly.

At this point, Major Marco DePompa, one of the commanders of the Nations' Army to overhear this exchange, explains that the Force is known. It was harnessed long ago by the Confederate of Nations, and currently lies in Vault II, beneath the very ground where they stand. He votes that a capable group—such as the PCs—breach what remains of the vault to collect the Seed. And with the Seed, do whatever it takes to save the world.

Marco would sacrifice anything to protect his nation, even his own life. But, he would sacrifice even that nation if it means saving the world. The surrounding soldiers are divided over his plan, but with the Chronicler supporting the Major, there are no substantial objections.

Having spent a great deal of time here over the last year, Major DePompa knows exactly where the entrance to the vault is—only a few hundred feet from where Asa had been excavating. Mere minutes after the decision is made, the stairwell leading down into Vault II is open.

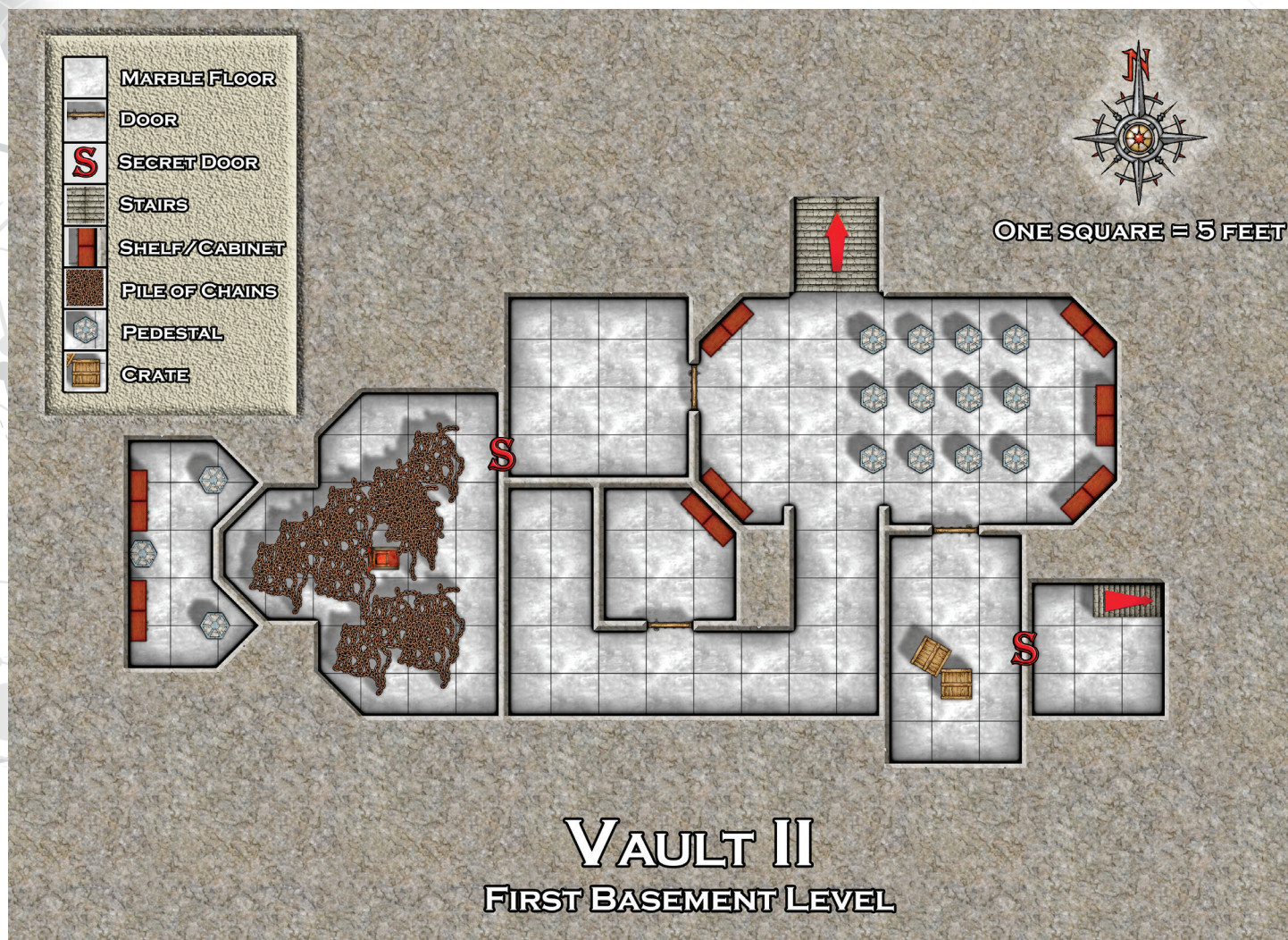
**Development:** Any mention of Colonel Korric will be met with only confusion—nobody has heard of him. A PC who succeeds on a DC 20 Diplomacy check on the matter, will discover that while nobody knows who he is, others did see someone of that description during the commotion. Succeeding the check by 5 or more also discovers that some also recall seeing him around the Capitol Building for several months prior, though not in uniform.

## CHAPTER 3: VAULT II

As the party prepares to descend into the vault, the Chronicler warns them that she does not have the power to hold the immortal Asa at bay forever. She will do what she can, but the party should make haste into the vault—Asa could awaken and be after them at any moment.

Though not the most senior officer present, Major Marco DePompa quickly takes charge of the Nations' Army. His confidence, decisive action, and the support of the Chronicler





cause the remainder of the army to fall in line behind him. He authorizes the PCs to take anything within the vault they might need, and do anything required to get hold of the Seed. This is not the time to be frugal when the empire, and the very world, hangs in the balance.

He will establish a perimeter here, and keep the surrounding area as secure as possible. The Entropy, however, are already inside the vault. They are not interested in destroying it, but in preserving it like the unchanging monument it is.

#### KNOWLEDGE ON VAULT II

**Geography DC 20:** While Vault III is a publically known fortress, said to be overflowing with the wealth of the Confederate of Nations. The locations of Vaults I and II, however, are unknown to the public. Most suspect that both lie somewhere beneath Shonawing.

**History DC 25:** Vault II is said to have been constructed by William Issac III, a genius but somewhat eccentric man. Anything secured within will likely be hidden in a maze of secret passages and secured with nefarious traps. Just as likely is that there will be ways around them.

#### ASA RISING

After being defeated, Asa returns to life 2d12 hours later. Immediately he summons the Omega Blade to his side, and then clashes with the Chronicler to try to win his way into the vault. There is a 50% chance he will be able to push his way past, taking 50 damage in the process, and begins to track down the party, and then the Seed.

#### ASA THE SEEKER, INJURED

**CR 8 — 4,800 XP**

hp 86 (page 31)

#### H. THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE VAULT

The first floor of the vault is the oldest, though only by a few decades. The ceilings are fifteen feet high, and the floor is made of impressive granite tile. Throughout it is lit by sterile, flameless blue lights mounted in the ceiling every twenty feet.

The walls are all smooth stone, three feet thick. The doors are good wooden doors (hardness 5, 30 hp, break DC 18) and are all locked (DC 20 Disable Device to unlock).



## H1. VAULT ENTRANCE (CR 6)

*The vault's entrance looks like a museum lobby: clean and sterile. Lining the walls are windows through which you can see small historical artifacts.*

Small shelves with glass doors are placed about every two feet along the walls of the atrium. These items are of small historical significance—such as the bullet that was used to kill Saul Silver, and a single scale from a dragon who attacked the empire on the first anniversary of its formation—but have little monetary value and no practical use.

If the PCs begin open any of the shelves, they will draw the ire of four Entropy pods, which have already begun seeping into the more museum-like rooms of the vault. They will emerge from the floor in the center of the room and immediately attack.

### ENTROPY POD (4)

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (page 26)

## H2. VAULT OF THE CONSTITUTION

*Sitting in the center of this room is a single short shelf, with hundreds of tiny shelves. In each one there are a few slips of paper, and nothing more.*

The empire of the Confederate of Nations was officially founded when the founding nations signed a constitution, naming Geraldine Carver as their first empress and agreeing to stand together against all odds. It has been revised dozens of times since, and the original copies of each revision are stored here.

While the original copies of the constitution are of great historical significance to the empire, they would only be worth money to a collector on the black market, as there are thousands of copies of each revision all across the empire.

**Treasure:** In a drawer at the base of the shelf is the Xoric Replicor, which has been used to protect every page of every iteration of the Constitution.

**Development:** A character who succeeds on a DC 25 Perception check can discover a secret door in the back of the room, leading to area H6.

## H3. TREASURE VAULT

*Two crates of gold bars sit in the center of this otherwise empty room.*

The empire of the Confederate of Nations has incredible wealth, but most of what isn't reinvested into the empire is stored in Vault III. There are 80 gold bars sit in this room, split between two wooden crates on the floor. Each bar weighs 1 pound and is worth 50 gp, for a total of 4,000 gp.

The gold occupies only a small fraction of the space in this room, because the original construction didn't account for the creation of Vault III. There are no signs that anything has been added to or removed from the room in a long time.

**Development:** Anyone who succeeds on a DC 28 Perception check will discover a sealed door along the back wall that leads to area H4. It can be opened with a DC 30 Disable Device check. Discovering and opening the secret door is worth 2,400 XP.

## H4. SECRET STAIR

This tall spiral stairwell is used to quickly access the deeper parts of the complex from the upper levels. Not only is it secret, but also protected by a powerful trap. Anyone descending to the middle of the stairwell without the empire's scepter (which was destroyed alongside Emperor Boam in Asa's strike) triggers the trap, causing flames to cascade up the entire length of the stairwell.

### FLAMING STAIRWAY TRAP

CR 6

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** descending stairwell; **Reset** automatic (1 minute)

**Effect** spell effect (*flame strike*, 8d6 fire damage, DC 17 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in stairwell)

## H5. EMPTY ROOM

This room has several empty shelves along the walls.

## H6. SAUL SILVER'S GRAVE

This room is the final resting place of one of the Confederate of Nations' founders: Saul Silver. His body sits comfortably in a tall chair, surrounded by broken chain links. When the PCs enter the room, he will turn to observe them. Read or paraphrase the following:

*The floor of this room is littered with thousands of torn and broken chains, manacles, and locks. At the center of it all is a tall wooden throne, on which sits an even taller man, with a tall hat as rail-thin as he is. Though he's obviously dead—his eyes are glassy and his skin is pale and drooping—his head turns to observe you, and his mouth opens to speak.*

*"I know why you are here, and you are not permitted to pass. Taking the Seed will destroy all that we have worked so hard to establish. We will fall once more into the barbarism and slavery I gave my life to defeat. The empire can stand against any threat without sacrificing itself. Abandon your plan, or die by my hand."*

Not only does Saul firmly believe that taking the Seed from its position beneath the empire will result in the empire's collapse, but he also fully believes that it will make no difference in the empire's ability to defend itself from any threat, no matter how dire.

**Chain Floor Hazard:** The floor of the room is covered with millions of broken chain links. It is considered difficult terrain for anyone who doesn't succeed a DC 17 Strength check when

attempting to move. In addition, moving here imposes a –10 circumstance penalty on all Stealth checks made to move quietly.

## SAUL SILVER

CR 8 — 4,800 XP

Male vampire inquisitor 7

LE Medium undead (augmented, human)

**Init** +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

**hp** 52 (7d8+14); fast healing 5

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, undead traits; DR 10/silver; Resist cold 10, electricity 10

**Weakness** vampire weaknesses

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** Saul's axe +15 (1d6+6+1d6), slam +14 (1d4+5 and energy drain)

**Ranged** Saul's axe +11 (1d6+6)

**Special Attacks** bane, blood drain, children of the night, create spawn, energy drain (2 levels, DC 14), judgment (3/day), smoke strike, solo tactics

**Inquisitor Spells Known** (concentration +9)

**3rd (1/day)**—*invisibility purge, speak with dead*

**2nd (3/day)**—*calm emotions, hold person, inflict moderate wounds, lesser restoration*

**1st (4/day)**—*bane, command, inflict light wounds, shield of faith, true strike*

**0th (at will)**—*acid splash, bleed, detect magic, detect poison, guidance, virtue*

**Domain** Liberation

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Saul fights in close quarters, using his axe at range against spellcasters and clerics.

**Morale** Saul Silver fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 19

**Feats** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (throwing axe), Toughness, Outflank,<sup>B</sup> Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Strike,<sup>B</sup> Quick Draw

**Skills** Bluff +23, Diplomacy +11, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nature) +14, Perception +20, Sense Motive +23, Stealth +22

**Languages** Common, Sylvan

**SQ** change shape, detect alignment, discern lies (7 rounds/day), gaseous form, liberation (7 rounds/day), shadowless, spider climb, monster lore

**Gear** Saul's axe, scale mail

**Smoke Strike:** As a full-round action, Saul can transform into gaseous form to move up to 10 feet through an opponent's space, enveloping it in his dark, smoky form. That creature must make a DC 14 Fortitude save or be sickened until the end of Saul's next turn. After moving, Saul returns to physical form and makes a single melee attack against that same target.

### KNOWLEDGE ON SAUL

**History DC 10:** The man on the throne is Saul Silver, one of the founders of the Confederate of Nations. He advocated freedom and honesty in all things, and fought in particular against slavery of all kinds.

**History DC 15:** Saul was assassinated relatively early in the empire's history by slavers. Rather than toppling his cause, however, it made him a martyr, and slavery has been outlawed in the empire ever since.

**Religion DC 20:** Saul is said to have run a covert operation against a coven of vampires who supported the slave trade. Despite this, there were also rumors that he was at least partially a vampire himself. Either way, he is a vampire now.

**Development:** When Saul is defeated, he will reform on his throne, which functions as his coffin, though he will remain dormant for 24 hours before reawakening. The throne itself sits atop a large trap door, which leads to a ladder descending into area I1. Discovering this requires a DC 20 Perception check and 1 hour to clear away enough chain links to open it.

## H7. SAUL SILVER'S MEMORIAL (CR 5)

*A large portrait of Saul Silver is mounted on the wall, flanked by smaller paintings, books, and curios.*

This room is a memorial to Saul's life. It contains several thick biographies and detailed paintings of him. It also contains the preserved body of a small child; a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check will reveal that Saul had a son who was killed by slavers when he was only six. People suspect this is why Saul hated them such.

The room also contains a number of Saul's letters to his wife. They discuss all manner of things, but often focus on the early days of founding the empire.

Finally, there is Saul's wife's wedding ring. It appears to be a plain silver band, but it functions as a *ring of protection* +1.

**Development:** If the PCs attempt to take anything from this long-sterile room, three Entropy pods emerge from the walls and attack.

## ENTROPY POD (3)

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (page 26)

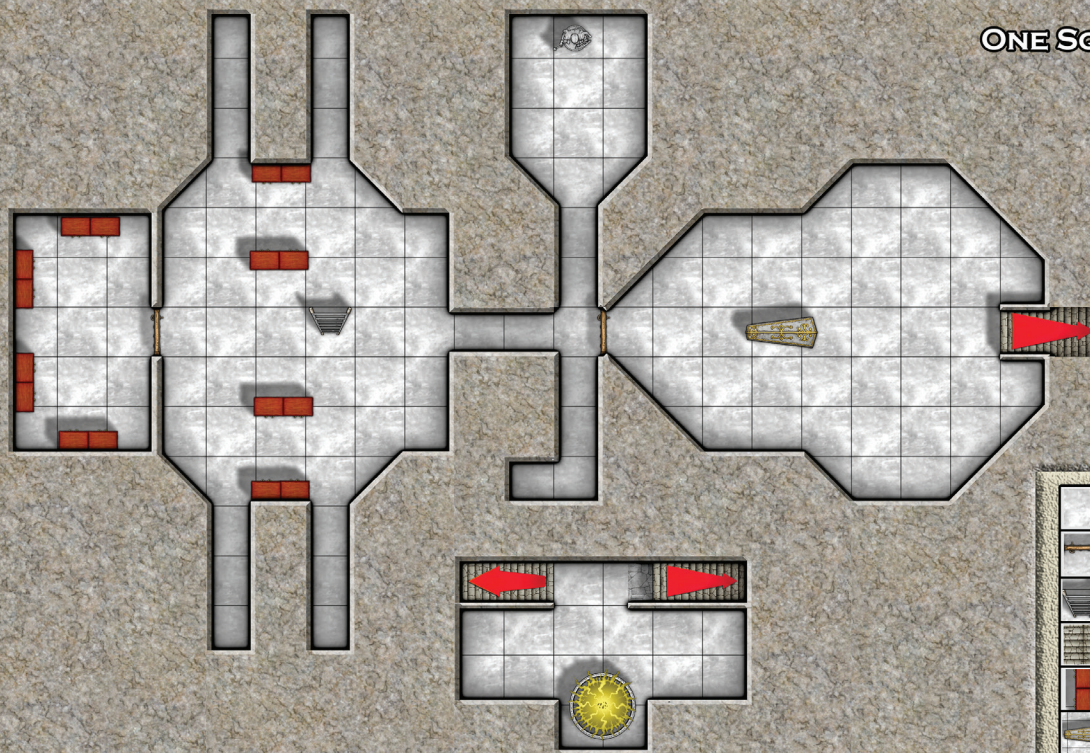


# VAULT II

## SECOND BASEMENT LEVEL



ONE SQUARE = 5 FEET



	MARBLE FLOOR
	DOOR
	LADDER (Up)
	STAIRS
	SHELF/CABINET
	SARCOPHAGUS
	STATUE
	MAGIC CIRCLE

### I. THE SECOND FLOOR OF THE VAULT

The second floor of the vault is newer than the first, but only by a few years. The ceilings are somewhat shorter—only ten feet in most places—but the construction on this floor is otherwise of the same high quality as on the first floor.

### II. THE HISTORY OF THE EMPIRE (CR 5)

*Tall wooden shelves run in long rows, filled to the brim with thousands of color-coded leather-bound books. Glass doors close off each shelf so no dust settles within.*

Though holding only a few long rows of texts, this library contains a detailed history of the empire, as well as its conquests and alliances, and those of its constituent countries. This library gives a +4 circumstance bonus to any Knowledge (history, geography, or local) checks made regarding the empire.

A DC 18 Perception check made while referencing these books to make a Knowledge check will reveal a number of deviations from the commonly taught and accepted path of history. These are places where the Confederate of Nations’ “adjusted” history to make themselves look better to the eyes of the future:

Downplaying their losses, upselling their victories. Attributing old war crimes to known turncoats instead of men who would otherwise be heroes.

**Development:** Like elsewhere throughout the vault, the Entropy has come to relax in the stillness of the library and drift listlessly through the books. They won’t attack anyone who browses, but if anyone takes any of the books, Entropy pods will burst from out of the shelves to attack.

### ENTROPY POD (3)

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (page 26)

**Treasure:** The books, which collectively weigh 150 pounds, would be worth 2,000 gp as a historical reference. If someone calls out the “deviations” in their contents, the set triples in value to 6,000 gp—though the Empire would clearly be upset if this information found its way into the wrong hands.

### 12. WAR MEMORIAL

*Racks of weapons line the walls, each weapon carefully labeled with a name and date. In the center of it all is a polished suit of plate armor in a glass case.*



These weapons are memorials to important warriors who fell in battle in service of the empire. The warrior to which a weapon belonged and the battle in which they fell can be identified with a DC 15 Knowledge (history) check.

The suit of armor was most recently worn by one of the empire's great war heroes: John Amas. John died of old age forty years ago after serving on the front lines of countless battles.

**Treasure:** The armor is a suit of +1 *adamantine full plate*. In addition to its typical properties, John's armor automatically fits itself to any Medium character. The weapons include 50 mundane weapons and 12 masterwork weapons of various types.

### 13. THE SHRINE

*Here the granite walls of the vault are replaced with white marble, surrounding an alabaster statue of a young woman holding a jeweled bowl filled with red wine.*

While the Confederate of Nations isn't a monotheistic entity, all of the founders worshipped the same deity: an ascended human and goddess of humanity and law, Maroen. Her divine tenets of justice, equality, and personal growth have been worked into the every law of the nation.

After her ascent, many items to which she was closely connected became artifacts. The most eagerly sought of these artifacts is the Deities' Chalice. This golden bowl was the last thing she drank and ate from before her ascension. The Chalice is the bowl held by the statue, which is recognizable as Maroen with a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check. Any attempt to touch or take it summons the bowl's guardian in a flash of smoke and lightning.

#### DIVINE GUARDIAN TRAP

CR 7

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** touching the Deities' Chalice; **Reset** none

**Effect** spell effect (*summon monster VI*, summons a lillend azata)

### THE FAITH OF MAROEN

Though nearly every aspect her divinity has been argued over by dissidents, she unquestionably was a powerful miracle worker during her lifetime. For more details on her faith, see page 34.

### 14. THE TOMB OF GERALDINE CARVER (CR 8)

This tomb is the final resting place of the first empress of the Confederate of Nations, Geraldine Carver. She was mummified and interred here in a chamber covered in elaborate memorials detailing her great achievements. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

*Each wall of this huge hexagonal room contains an elaborate floor-to-ceiling mural of a powerful and proud woman, leading armies and a nation to greatness. The only furniture is a huge*

*stone sarcophagus standing at the room's center, emblazoned with her likeness: Geraldine Carver, the First Empress of the Confederate of Nations.*

*Slowly at first, the stone lid of the sarcophagus lifts itself, and is shifted aside by a single powerful arm. The woman who steps out is unquestionably Geraldine Carver, her skin shriveled and dried, and her eyes wrapped in layers of white bandages.*

*"Stop your quest," she rasps as she steps over the edge of her sarcophagus. In one hand she still carries the slab of stone like it were nothing. "It is pointless. Your fears that anything could threaten our world, let alone our nation—they are unfounded. We are unstoppable, save for one thing: the Seed. If the Seed is stolen from us, so too is our strength. Your very quest will destroy what you wish to save."*

Geraldine Carver hears the Chronicler's messages, but feels them to be nothing more than doomsaying. She is completely convinced that, despite the weakness of Emperor Boam, the empire is strong enough to stand against any threat. She cannot be convinced otherwise.

Anyone who attempts to pass her or continues to push the subject is immediately attacked.

### THE MUMMY OF GERALDINE CARVER CR 9 — 6,400 XP

Female mummy fighter 4

LN Medium undead (augmented human)

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +13

**Aura** despair (30 ft., DC 17)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+2 Dex, +10 natural, +5 shield)

**hp** 100 (8d8 +4d10 +48)

**Fort** +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +9; +1 vs. fear

**DR** 5/—; Immune undead traits

**Weakness** vulnerable to fire

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** Unbreakable Geraldine Carver +20/+15 (1d4+8) or Unbreakable Geraldine Carver +20 (1d4+8), slam +20 (1d8+4 plus mummy rot)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Geraldine Carver will rely on her high defenses and DR to weather attacks, even if surrounded. If anyone attacks her with fire, she will overrun nearby opponents to close with them.

**Morale** Geraldine Carver believes herself to be as unbeatable a combatant now as she was in life, and fights until destroyed.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17 (+19 for overrun) **CMD** 27 (29 vs. overrun)

**Feats** Fleet (2), Power Attack, Improved Overrun, Improved Shield Bash, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shield bash, slam), Missile Shield



**Skills** Perception +13, Intimidate +14

**Languages** Common

**Gear** Unbreakable Geraldine Carver (page @@), embedded into the top of her sarcophagus.

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### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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**Despair (Su):** All creatures within a 30-foot radius that see Geraldine Carver must make a DC 17 Will save or be paralyzed by fear for 1d4 rounds. Any creature who makes this save, whether successful or not, cannot be affected again by Geraldine Carver's despair ability for 24 hours. This is a paralysis and a mind-affecting fear affect.

**Mummy Rot (Su):** Curse and disease—slam; save Fort DC 17; onset 1 minute; frequency 1/day; effect 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha; cure —. Mummy rot is both a curse and disease and can only be cured if the curse is first removed, at which point the disease can be magically removed. Even after the curse element of mummy rot is lifted, a creature suffering from it cannot recover naturally over time. Anyone casting a conjuration (healing) spell on the afflicted creature must succeed on a DC 21 caster level check, or the spell is wasted and the healing has no effect. Anyone who dies from mummy rot turns to dust and cannot be raised without a resurrection or greater magic.

**Shield Sweep (Ex):** As a standard action, Geraldine Carver can sweep her shield through up to three consecutive squares within her reach. She rolls a single attack and applies it to each creature within range; a successful hit deals shield bash damage and sends the targets flying 30 feet directly away from her. Characters who strike a solid object take damage as though falling and fall prone. Characters who don't strike something can land on their feet if they succeed on a DC 17 Reflex save or DC 15 Acrobatics check.

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### KNOWLEDGE ON GERALDINE CARVER

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**History DC 15:** Geraldine Carver was one of the founding members of the Confederate of Nations. She advocated for both physical and spiritual strength. She was not only the first empress, but also the leader of its armies.

**Local DC 20:** Geraldine Carver had a fondness for building monuments, and as a result there are hundreds of them in and around Shonawing. Some people suspect that the monuments had some meaning beyond celebrating the greatness of the empire, but none have discovered what it might be.

**History DC 25:** Geraldine Carver was a devout follower of Maroen. Though a great deal of the goddess's teachings remain in legislature, Geraldine Carver pushed for worship of the goddess to be mandatory. Only Saul's insistence on allowing religious freedom stopped that from being made law.

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### 15. GERALDINE CARVER'S MEMORIAL

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*A ship's figurehead is prominently displayed here, alongside dozens of broken oars, rusty anchors, and tricorn hats.*

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One of Geraldine Carver's greatest achievements was the conquest of the island nation Waihai. It is said that she stood upon the figurehead of her ship and blasted her opponents with fire and lightning, allowing her fleet to make landfall. That very figurehead is enshrined here, along with the very wands that Geraldine Carver used.

**Treasure:** The *wand of lightning bolt* has 3 charges, and the *wand of fireball* has 4 charges. In addition, the figurehead is an emboldening mermaid.

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### 16. SECRET LANDING

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Halfway down the secret passage through the vault is a large landing. Carved into the floor and ceiling are elaborate runes. Anyone who makes a DC 20 Spellcraft check will recognize that these runes are focusing runes that help channel a great deal of indistinct energy upwards. One character can stand in the circle at a time; any who stand within regenerate, healing 1d4 hit points each minute.

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### J. THIRD FLOOR

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The third floor is much newer than the first two floors. Constructed nearly fifty years after the rest of the vault, and heavily modified since, it feels like a totally different structure. The walls and floors are made of hammered sheets of metal, and the ceiling, only seven feet overhead, is rough-cut stone. Unlike the floors above it, this floor is unlit.

All doors on this floor are secret doors; discovering any of them requires a DC 20 Perception check unless otherwise noted. All unlabeled rooms on this floor are empty.

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### J1. HALL OF INVENTION (CR 6)

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*Evenly spaced throughout the room are display pedestals, showing small items carefully mounted within glass cases. Behind the rows stands a six-foot-tall clockwork construction that resembles a man.*

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The items in the display cases are the originals of the greatest inventions discovered in the Confederate of Nations. They include the first composite longbow, blueprints for the first double-hulled ship, the original recipe for alchemist's fire, and detailed blueprints for the now-destroyed Capitol Building.

The mechanical man is a clockwork soldier. Having been built by William Issac III after his internment here in the vault, it doesn't fit into the decor of the room, but protects it all the same. When the PCs enter the room, it will observe them without the slightest movement, but it won't attack unless the party opens the door, touches it, or tries to take an item from its case.

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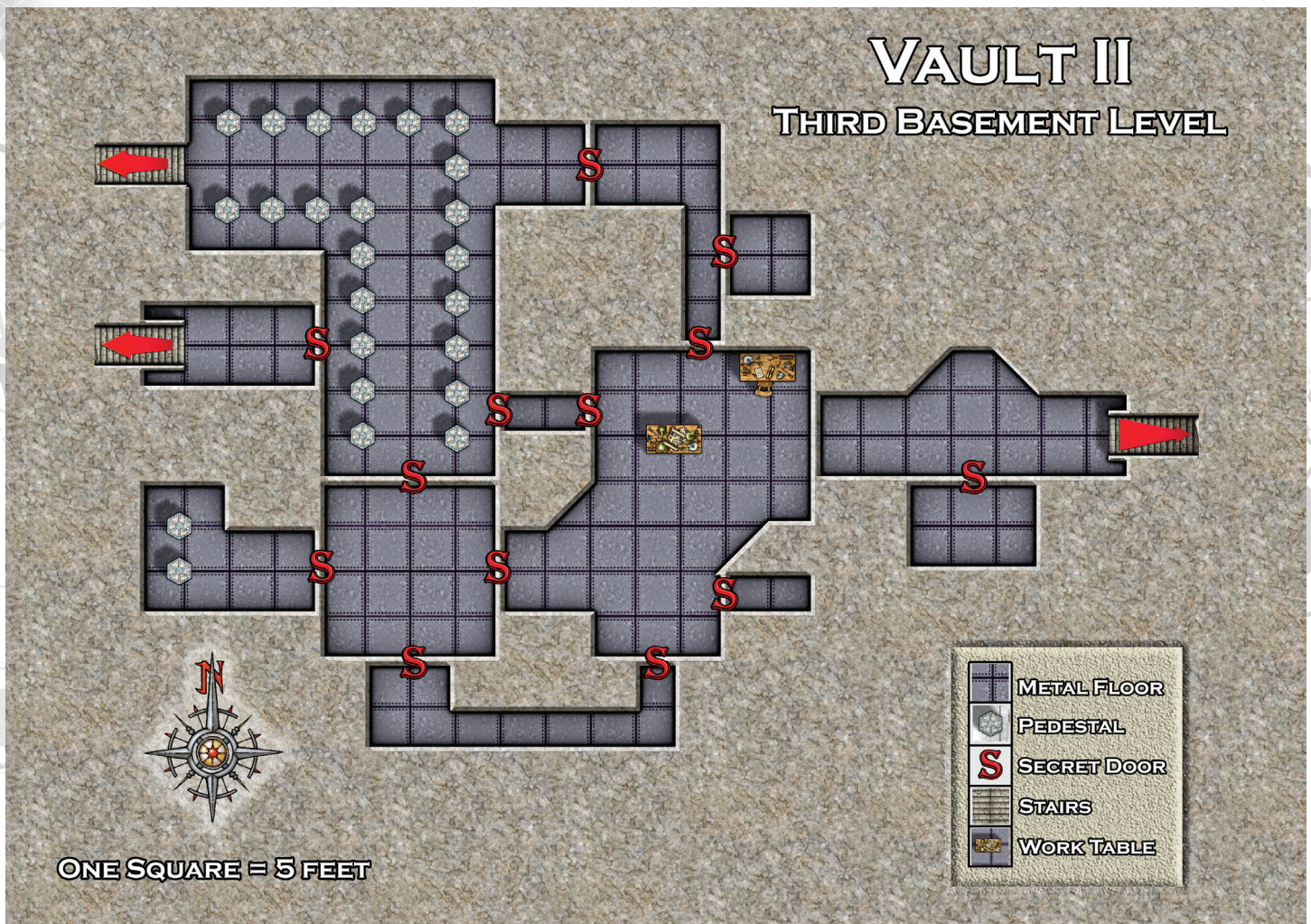
### CLOCKWORK SOLDIER CR 6 — 2,400 XP

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hp 64 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)

**Treasure:** An active search of the room reveals that while most of the items interred here aren't inherently valuable, one is: the first handheld firearm. Ben has tinkered with and upgraded it over the years, and it now functions as a +1 *pistol*.





**Development:** Anyone who succeeds on a DC 25 Perception check will discover a secret door leading to area J2.

### J2. SECRET STAIR

This stair leads up near the entrance of the vault, through area H4 without having to pass through its other guardians and wards. Though the trap remains active, it doesn't trigger if characters are climbing up the stairwell.

### J3. WILLIAM ISSAC III'S WORKSHOP (ER 9)

Fifty years after founding the empire, William Issac III was old and dying. He insisted on being interred here with the other founders of the Empire before actually passing away. In a stroke of mad genius, in his last days he transferred his mind into a clockwork construct so he could live forever. While he succeeded, he didn't manage to capture the spark that made him a brilliant inventor, and he hasn't been able to concentrate long enough to finish a project since.

When the PCs enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

*Fragmented clockwork constructions are piled on every available surface of this large workroom. Ranging from incomplete timepieces to large headless automatons, everything*

*is in a state of disarray. In the center of it all, a mechanical man scurries about, haphazardly moving pieces from one device to another.*

*"Who are you?" It demands, adjusting a pair of spectacles that have been welded to his nose. "What are you doing here, and why are you doing it?" He pauses. "Are you here for the Change? Because you can't come up with a better solution? How stagnant your minds must be. Go away and do some brainstorming, talk to me tomorrow."*

Asking the construct who he is results in him replying "William Issac III, father of innovation. And also very busy, thank you very much". Alternately, he can be recognized with a DC 10 Knowledge (history) check.

Though he requests for the PCs to come back the next day, William Issac III instantly forgets them as he returns to his work. He will make similar requests, for ideas and prototypes that might solve their problem without the Seed of Change being moved.

If the PCs can hold his attention, he refuses to agree that the Seed is the only way, or even the best one, to save the world. He believes that given time—which he won't believe the empire doesn't have—someone will come up with a better solution.



No matter how many times the PCs present Ben with a possible solution, he will request additional research, more ideas, or elaborate prototypes, never actually allowing the party to pass.

### WILLIAM ISSAC III

CR 9 — 6,400 XP

**hp** 102 (As clockwork mage [evocation], *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 4*)

#### SPECIAL ATTACKS

**Innovation (Ex):** William Issac III has regeneration 10 while within his workroom, as his body constantly absorbs the scrap projects around him, changing his form as it does. At the beginning of each round, roll 1d4 to determine his advantage for the round.

**1:** William Issac III's arms combine into one massive limb. He loses his slam attacks and gains one that does 2d12+12 damage instead.

**2:** Each of William Issac III's arms is replaced by firearm, whose attack does 1d6+1 damage with no misfire chance.

**3:** William Issac III pulls a huge scrap of metal into his body, increasing his natural armor by 10.

**4:** William Issac III grabs only tiny devices, which grant him no additional benefit.

**Development:** On the first round of combat, William Issac III will spend a standard action to activate two clockwork servants lying in the debris around him.

### CLOCKWORK SERVANT (2)

CR 2 — 600 XP

**hp** 31 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*)

**Treasure:** Even incomplete, the clockwork constructions in the workshop might be worth tens of thousands of gold pieces, though collectively they weigh over ten thousand pounds. A DC 15 Appraise check can pick out the smallest and most complete devices: a pair of nearly complete clockwork spies (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary 3*). Completing the construction of either requires a successful DC 20 Craft (clockwork) check and an hour of work.

#### KNOWLEDGE ON WILLIAM ISSAC III

**History DC 10:** William Issac III was one of the original founders of the empire, and an icon of innovation. He ensured that the empire would always encourage up-and-coming innovators by establishing large funds and grants in many fields.

**History DC 20:** William Issac III's true fate is unknown to the public. Officially, he retired away from public eye, but rumors of defection or madness are popular. Less popular is a story that, out of the blue one day, he decided one day to be buried alive with his inventions.

**Engineering DC 15:** William Issac III was an innovative genius responsible for thousands of inventions, many of which are still used today. He also wrote countless scholarly papers, some of which are still not fully understood despite decades of study.

### J4. THE DAWN OF THE ELECTRICAL AGE

*The only item in this room is a small golden key, hanging from the ceiling by a single string of twine. Even when you look at it, every hair on your bodies begins to stand on end.*

The *lightning key*, which hangs from the string here, was intended to be the literal key to a new age of the Confederate of Nations. By harnessing a lightning elemental to a metal key, it could provide magical and electrical power in whatever way it was needed. Unfortunately, while the elemental was bound to the key, it couldn't provide enough power for a long-enough time. The project was abandoned, and the key locked in the vault here.

**Treasure:** The key is the *lightning key* (page 25).

### J5. LONG-DISTANCE COMMUNICATION

*Two pedestals stand in this room; atop each sits a matching silver mirror.*

Though they appear to be two distinct items, the two mirrors are halves of the very first set of *whispering mirrors* (page 25), the empire's first foray into reliable long-distance communication.

### J6. THE FINAL DESCENT

*These wide marble steps, leading deep into the vault, are covered in dust of long disuse.*

Ten feet down the fifty-foot descent is a loose step, which causes a boulder to drop from the ceiling at the top of the stairwell. It will crash down the stairs and eventually come to rest in the doorway at the bottom.

### CRASHING BOULDER TRAP

CR 5

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** a step, ten feet down the stairs; **Reset** none  
**Effect** Atk +15 melee (5d6); multiple targets (all targets in stairwell)

In addition to bowling down any characters on the stairs, when it hits the bottom of the stairs it will fit perfectly into the doorframe there. To pass, a DC 23 Strength check is required to move the boulder aside or destroy it (hardness 8, 150 hp).

### J7. CONSTRUCTION HOLDOVER

Near the top of the final descent is a hidden door, which can be discovered by a DC 22 Perception check. Within are a collection of mundane excavation tools originally used to construct the very vault below.

**Treasure:** Amongst the pickaxes, shovels, and hammers is an elaborate scroll case worth 100 gp. Inside the case is a *scroll of transmute rock to mud*.

## K. THE INNER VAULT

The lowest level of the vault is truly a vault. The walls are made of foot-thick lead-iron alloy, carefully engraved with tiny magical runes that block any sort of magical sight or even knowledge of the chamber. A PC who makes a DC 25 Spellcraft check can determine that the vault is intended to channel great amounts of energy upwards and outwards. The entire floor is brightly lit by a sourceless ambient light.

There are three final doors protecting the Change, each designed by one of the founders of the empire: Geraldine Carver, Saul Silver, and William Issac III.

### K1. THE FIRST DOOR

*The innermost sanctum of the vault is chilly and impersonal. Despite the obvious care put into its construction, every aspect of the cold, hard walls tells you that you aren't supposed to be here. Twenty feet in front of the base of the stairs is a massive lead door, blank except for a set of equally massive tumblers.*

The first door was designed by Geraldine Carver, though after her death it was further secured by the eight-digit tumbler currently visible. The combination lock on the door can be deciphered with a DC 28 Disable Device check. A DC 20 Knowledge (history) check grants a +5 circumstance bonus to this check by providing a number of famous dates significant to the empire. Passing the Knowledge (history) check by 5 or more provides the exact combination: the date of Geraldine Carver's death.

With the correct code entered, the lock mechanism swings open to reveal two small indentations. The keys for this are Geraldine Carver's wands, interred in area I4. This lock can be tricked with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check. Even unlocked, though, the door weighs hundreds of pounds, and swinging it open requires a DC 26 Strength check.

**Development:** Upon opening the first door, award 2,400 XP to the PCs.

### K2. THE SECOND DOOR

*The second vault door is encircled by thousands of half-inch-thick iron rods, each tightly wedged into place to keep the door firmly closed.*

The second door was designed by Saul Silver. It is held in place not by a typical lock, but by thousands of iron rods along its perimeter. Removing each pin manually takes eight hours (divided by the number of characters working), but allows the locking mechanism within to be revealed. Spells like *knock* reduce the time required by four minutes per caster level per casting (at the PCs' current level, each casting reduces it by roughly 30 minutes).

Inside is an eight-inch-tall keyhole. It isn't designed for a key, but for Saul's axe, from area H5. Alternately, it can be opened by succeeding on a DC 30 Disable Device check.

**Development:** Upon opening the second door, award 2,400 XP to the PCs.

### K3. THE THIRD DOOR

*The third vault door is covered with thousands of complex dials, levers, and switches. At the center of it all is a brass wheel.*

The final door was designed by William Issac III, who wanted the Seed to never be removed from the vault. A DC 20 Intelligence check or a DC 28 Disable Device check over the course of an hour will reveal that none of the many dials and levers is connected to the door's locking mechanism. Only magic can open this door from this side. Encourage the PCs to be creative: for example, someone in gaseous form or a summoned elemental (such as from the lightning key) can squeeze through the gaps in the door and unlock it from the other side. Alternately, the knock spell will automatically open the door.

**Development:** Upon opening the third door, award 2,400 XP to the PCs.

### K4. THE INNER VAULT

When the PCs open the door to the inner vault, read or paraphrase the following:

*The energy in the room washes over you like a spring breeze, warm and refreshing. In the center of the room is a small pedestal, on which sits a fist-sized silver orb. Though it is not impressive to behold, you know instantly that it is the Seed of Change: the very life force of your world and the empire.*

The excess energy within the vault is almost overwhelming. Upon entering, the party is immediately refreshed as if they had just rested. Afterwards, nothing happens until someone picks up the Seed.

### IT WAS IN MY POCKET

*The Seed of Change is a powerful magical artifact, which resists any attempt to remove it from the Material Plane. If anyone attempts to put the Seed into any sort of extraplanar space, like a handy haversack, the Seed suppresses the magic of the container for the duration, allowing it to be stored, though on the Material Plane. Removing the Seed from the container safely restores it.*

When someone picks up the stone, the room shakes violently. Omega can sense that the Seed has fallen into the hands of someone other than Asa, and so it immediately fills the fallen angel with power, resurrecting him. He tears down into the vault, intent on catching the PCs, arriving after only 1d6 rounds. When he does, read or paraphrase the following:





*Like a man possessed, Asa's chest heaves and his eyes glow with violet energy. He looks like he is coming apart at the seams and he nearly growls as he talks: "That is mine! You cannot have it!" As he staggers closer, you see the aura around him come up against an invisible barrier and begin to peel away. "This world was doomed long ago. Do not doom further worlds as well. If you give me the Seed now, your world will die so that others might live!"*

Asa is delirious with the power of the Omega Force surging through him more intensely than ever before. And yet, the Omega Force has never been able to directly touch the Seed of Change. Within reach of the Seed, Asa is mortal, no matter how much power Omega pushes into him.

Asa understands this, and furthermore he knows he doesn't truly have a chance to win against the PCs this time. So he tries a different tactic: he tries to trick the party into simply handing him the Seed.

He will claim that Saitan is unstoppable, and that only by giving him the Seeds of other worlds can he save his own. By taking the Seed to use against Saitan, the PCs will doom both his world and theirs—and surely others as well.

While his argument holds truth, it is only half. Just as he knows he is mortal in the presence of the Seed, so too does he know Saitan is as well. Or at least as mortal as the titan could possibly be.

Anyone who succeeds on a DC 24 Sense Motive check will identify that Asa is twisting the truth. Asa's world is safe no matter what; only the world of the PCs hangs in the balance of these events.

### ASA THE SEEKER

CR 10 — 9,600 XP

hp 136 (page 31)

**During Combat** Asa's Omega Force aura and Omega Resurrection are suppressed while he is within 50 feet of the Seed. During the first round of combat, Asa will attempt to sunder the Seed of Change with the Omega Blade. This will shatter the blade but leave the Seed unharmed.

**Development:** When Asa is defeated, all the energy from Omega is released in a planar ripple. It draws the PCs, and much of the vault, briefly into the Shadow Plane.

### L. OMEGA'S SHADOW

When the PCs are pulled into the Shadow Plane, read or paraphrase the following:

*All color has drained from your surroundings, and even from your own skin. In stark black and white around you, you can see vague shapes of interlocking shadows, circling slowly.*

*One of these shapes, a tall rectangle of black and grey, drifts toward you. It reaches out almost languidly toward you, an arm forming from nothing, stretching towards the Seed of Change in*

*your hands. Despite your desire to fight, or even to run, you are frozen in place. Even the dust in the air waits patiently for the eternity until a single finger reaches out and touches the Seed.*

*And then, as suddenly as it began, it stops. You are back in the vault, though it has been blackened by a great explosion. The Seed in your hands is intact...except for a smoldering black dot where it was touched.*

Whichever PC is holding the Seed can tell that, whatever happened, the Seed has lost a great deal of power. The entity that touched the Seed was, in fact, Omega itself. As powerful as it is, it cannot destroy the Seed entirely, though it can disable the Seed for long enough for Saitan to arrive and devour its energies.

### KNOWLEDGE ON WHAT HAPPENED

**Planes DC 15:** You were transported, briefly, to the Shadow Plane, where space and time flow differently and color doesn't exist.

**Planes DC 20:** Creatures of the Shadow Plane do not always follow the same rules as those on the Material Plane; the black rectangle was some sort of extremely powerful outsider.

**Religion DC 20:** The entity you saw in your vision had the same aura as Asa did. You suspect that it is whatever possessed him when you fought.

**Arcana DC 15:** The entity you saw was as opposite to the Seed as possible. Their touching seems to have shorted both of them out. Since it didn't outright destroy the Seed of Change, you suspect the damage only temporary. Though that could take days or even years you do not have.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs have the Seed and Asa has been defeated, the adventure is over. The defenses of the vault go dormant, the Entropy flee entirely, and Asa will not resurrect again without outside influence.

Returning to the surface is a somber affair. Despite the PCs' aid, the city has taken incalculable damage. Most critically, Emperor Boam and the leaders of the Forty Families were inside the Capitol Building when Asa struck. None survived, and their souls cannot be contacted so they might be resurrected.

Worse, the Seed of Change has been damaged by the touch of Omega. The Chronicler is at a loss. Her barely capable ship was again damaged by Asa's unexpected resurrection, trapping her here on Neyth for good. With the Seed damaged and Asa claiming that Saitan is already on her way, she doesn't know what can be done.

Major Marco DePompa refuses to abandon home. He asks if, perhaps, the Seed can be restored. Perhaps by Seeds on other worlds that the Chronicler has visited or will visit. The Chronicler has never considered having worlds join forces, or even bringing a Seed from one world to another, but if there's time to try something extreme, it is now.

Over the next few days, while the party recovers, the Chronicler partially dismantles the engine of her ship. What she produces is a square gateway, ten feet across, made of stone and metal and covered with runes and dials. She explains that it was originally an artifact known as a Nexus Gateway, and it holds the power to leap across the galaxy in an instant. Her people had long ago learned to harness its power in a limited way, using it to create faster-than-light engines for their ships. With the power of the Seed, it might be possible to reconnect to the long-forgotten network between distant stars.

Indeed, it is—though it is not the power of the Seed that makes such travel possible. In the last few years, the creators of the Nexus Gateways, the Gatekeepers, have rekindled the network, allowing for travel in a way that's been impossible for thousands of years. The Chronicler is able to quickly establish connections to many other worlds she knows of whose Seeds might be powerful enough to be of aid the PCs.

The adventures the PCs might have on these worlds are detailed in the first set of side quests for this adventure serial. Once the PCs are level 12, or should they simply wish to proceed to the next adventure, they should proceed to the Delta Adventure, Crisis of the World Eater: Devourer of a Thousand Worlds.

## TREASURES OF THE CONFEDERATE OF NATIONS

The Confederate of Nations is the largest and most powerful empire on Neyth, and also one of the wealthiest. Ever since it was established, it has made a point of constructing great and powerful items for its constituents to rally around. Below are a number of such items that appear throughout this adventure.

### SAUL'S AXE

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 6th

**Slot** —; **Price** 10,308 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

This long-hafted throwing axe has a head made of mithral, carved into which is an elaborate sunburst.

This +1 returning mithral throwing axe burns with Saul's long-burning hatred of the undead, and vampires in particular. Despite his access to more-powerful weaponry, Saul Silver used this weapon exclusively during his lifelong campaign against vampires of all kinds.

Whenever it damages a vampire, it burns deeply into the vampire's flesh. Saul's axe continues to do damage to the vampire each round until removed, which requires a DC 14 Strength check. As a swift action, the character who threw the axe can take to return it to their hand.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Arms and Armor, *disrupt undead, telekinesis*; **Cost** 5,308 gp



## EMBOLDENING MERMAID

**Aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 3rd  
**Slot** —; **Price** 6,000 gp; **Weight** 125 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Carved from dark hardwood, this life-size mermaid figurehead depicts a beautiful yet ferocious woman pointing onwards as though leading a charge.

Designed to be mounted on a sailing vessel or warship, this large mermaid emboldens its vessel's crew, granting them a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls for the first minute after they board another ship or are boarded by a hostile target. In addition, its magic reinforces the ship it is mounted to, increasing the ship's hardness by 5, and reducing the damage it takes while performing a ramming maneuver to only 1/4 of the damage it deals to the other ship.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *bless*, *ironwood*; **Cost** 3,000 gp

## LIGHTNING KEY

**Aura** faint evocation and conjuration; **CL** 3rd  
**Slot** —; **Price** 8,400 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

This small golden key has a large hoop on one end, on which is tied a simple loop of twine. Touching it makes skin tingle and hair stand on end.

The key is constantly charged with static electricity, and it can be swung as a one-handed simple melee weapon that does 2d6 electricity damage on a successful touch attack. Alternately, it can be bound to a metallic weapon to increase the damage that weapon does by 3 electricity damage.

Once per day as a standard action, the elemental bound to the key can be summoned forth (a small lightning elemental). For three rounds the elemental obeys the command of whoever holds the key, and then for three more rounds the elemental does whatever it likes (typically attacking whatever is nearest) before vanishing as it returns to the key. While the elemental is summoned, the key no longer does electricity damage.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *shocking grasp*, *summon monster II*; **Cost** 4,200 gp

## UNBREAKABLE GERALDINE CARVER

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 7th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 7,680 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Taller and wider than a man, this shield's face is emblazoned with the image of Geraldine Carver at the height of the empire's power. In the image, she has her arms crossed over her chest, standing proud and tall.

This +1 *adamantine tower shield* was Geraldine Carver's in life. From behind it she led armies, directed sieges, and even stood toe-to-toe against assassins and beasts of terrible power. Unlike with normal tower shields, the bearer of the shield can see through Unbreakable Geraldine Carver entirely unobscured—and even cast spells through it, so long as they don't require line of effect.

After bearing the shield for 24 hours, your appearance takes the place of Geraldine Carver's on the shield. When you take cover behind the shield, onlookers more than 10 feet away must succeed on a DC 15 Sense Motive check or else not realize the presence of the shield and that you have taken cover behind it.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *invisibility*; **Cost** 5,180 gp

## WHISPERING MIRRORS

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd  
**Slot** —; **Price** 8,000 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs

### DESCRIPTION

These handheld mirrors are inlaid with amethysts around the mirrors' edges in a pattern that resembles a swirling maelstrom.

First created to coordinate troop movements throughout the Nations' Army, the whispering mirrors were ultimately abandoned in favor of more traditional long-distance communication magic. Upon activating a whispering mirror, its bearer can whisper a message to its surface. The bearer's reflection then disperses into a wisp of smoke and travels up to five miles to its partner mirror. Regardless of distance, this travel always takes exactly one minute. Whoever holds the other whispering mirror can then listen to the message, which is spoken aloud by the sender's reflection in the mirror. After ten minutes, or once the message has been relayed, the smoke instantly returns to its original mirror. A whispering mirror can be used any number of times per day, but not before the smoke has returned from the other mirror.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *whispering wind*; **Cost** 4,000 gp

## XORIC REPLICOR

**Aura** moderate transmutation; **CL** 7th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 10,000 gp; **Weight** 4 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

Only a few inches long and wide, this flat plate is coated with a resin of some kind on one side, with a handle on the other.

When the Xoric Replicor is run over the surface of paper or parchment, it coats that page in a clear yet flexible resin. This increases the page's hardness by 5 and protects it from water and other minor environmental effects. The Xoric Replicor can coat up to 50 pages per day in this way.

Once per day, when the Xoric Replicor used to protect a magical scroll of 3rd level or less, the user can choose to bind the magic to the page as well. The first time that scroll would be cast in the next 24 hours, the scroll is not expended and can be cast again. A scroll can be protected by a Xoric Replicor any number of times, but no more than once per day.

### CREATION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, *mnemonic enhancer*; **cost** 5,000 gp

### DEITIES' CHALICE, MINOR ARTIFACT

**Aura** moderate conjuration; **CL** 15th

**Slot** —; **Weight** 1 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

This golden bowl is roughly beaten into shape, with a small stand at the bottom. It is warm to the touch, and smells faintly of incense at all times.

Any liquid poured into this chalice is immediately transformed into a rich, dark-red wine. This wine functions as holy water and is always safe to drink. Once per day, by asking Maroen for a blessing and drinking wine from the Deities' Chalice, the drinker gains the benefits of *lesser restoration*.

### DESTRUCTION

The Deities' Chalice transforms into a simple wooden dish if submerged in unholy water for a year and a day.

### OMEGA BLADE, MINOR ARTIFACT

**Aura** moderate evocation; **CL** 20th

**Slot** —; **Weight** 3 lb.

### DESCRIPTION

The blade of this huge sword doesn't look like it would be tangible—within the blue-black space that it should occupy, stars and galaxies slowly spin.

Forged by Saitan as a tool for his herald, this +6 longsword adjusts itself in the blink of an eye to the size of its wielder, transforming into a shortsword, longsword, or greatsword depending on the bearer's whim. On command, it can also shift its energy to phase into a number of different planes, becoming a +4 *ghost touch sword*, a +1 *brilliant energy sword*, or back to its "dormant" +6 longsword state.

### DESTRUCTION

**Requirements** The Omega Blade is destroyed instantly if it is touched by a Seed of Change.

*Shrouded in a tattered grey shawl, this creature's black form is difficult to discern. The way it sways and floats just above the floor suggest that despite its somewhat bipedal form, the creature within doesn't resemble a man at all.*

### ENTROPY POD

**CR 2 — 600 XP**

LN Medium aberration (incorporeal)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +3

**Aura** entropy (DC 13, 10 ft.)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 deflection, +1 Dex)

**hp** 19 (3d8+6)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +2, **Will** +5

**Defensive Abilities** limited incorporeality

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., fly 10 ft. (good)

**Melee** 2 slams +3 (1d4+1)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 14

**Feats** Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception)

**Skills** Escape Artist +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +3

**Languages** none; telepathy 30 ft.

**SQ** compression

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** Shadow Plane

**Organization** solitary, shoal (2–8), or squad (16–32)

**Treasure** half

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Aura of Entropy (Su):** The manifestation of the Entropy makes every motion harder. All attacks within 10 feet of the aura take a –1 penalty, and all movement within that area requires twice as much movement. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Will save as a swift action is immune to the effects of that Entropy pod's aura for 24 hours. A character who fails this save can make a new one as a free action at the end of their turn. The effects of multiple auras of entropy do not stack.

**Limited Incorporeality (Ex):** When Entropy presses itself into the material world, its forms aren't entirely solid. Entropy pods are in most ways considered incorporeal, but are not immune to nonmagical attacks. Instead, they take half damage from sources of nonmagical damage.

The Entropy isn't a race that is easy for mortal minds to comprehend. They don't have true physical forms, and they don't have the same needs or desires as mortal creatures do. Rarely do they act on the Material Plane, and when they do it is usually at times of great loss and destruction, when great chapters of history are coming to a close. When things are ending.

## ENTROPY



For that is truly what the Entropy are: a race whose only want is for things to end, and for those endings to persist for all time. They care little for how this happens; they seem equally content with ends caused by dramatic war or agonizing decay.

Lacking a physical form even on their home plane, the Entropy do not manifest or act in ways typical to outsiders. Rather, they shape the stuff of the Shadow Plane into whatever form they need. When the need arises to act on another plane, the Entropy press these shadowforms into the very planar fabric between worlds, manifesting in any plane they desire with relative ease, bringing along any tools they need made from the same shadow.

These manifestations on other worlds are not indestructible, but their deaths mean little to the Entropy. To them, the destruction of a manifestation is akin to a light dispersing one's shadow. It does not harm them any more than it startles them, and they will reform as new Entropy pods in due time.

Yet, all this pushing of the Shadow Plane against the material weakens planar space, often dramatically. In places where the Entropy travel in great numbers, the walls between planes grow thin and easy to cross. After their visits, it sometimes becomes possible to even step between the Material Plane and Shadow Plane in the dark corners of these places, making the long-term effects of their visits exceptionally dangerous for the unprepared.

## ECOLOGY

When the Entropy do manifest, they do so by guiding half-real shadow material from their home onto the new plane, coalescing it into a form of their choosing. They often appear as churning, cloud-like entities, neither entirely solid nor entirely incorporeal, which feel like cold and slightly sticky mist.

As clouds are inefficient for acting on any plane, the Entropy most often shape their manifestations into something that roughly resembles a bipedal creature. These "pods" often have an orb-shaped body with two long tentacle arms and seven shorter legs that trail behind almost like wisps of smoke. Others more closely resemble humanoids, but are no less supernaturally flexible than their counterparts. These pods are wrapped in swaths of web-like grey fabric that

clings to their cloud bodies like shawls or robes, giving even the most inhuman among them a less monstrous appearance. A typical Entropy pod is four to five feet tall, but weightless.

It is unclear what, if anything, the Entropy draw sustenance from. The most common theory is that they derive their energy from the still spaces of the universe, as befits their role as creatures of pure law. However, the fervor with which they act has led many to believe that they are instead guided, created, and sustained by some higher power.

## HABITAT AND SOCIETY

While their actions on the Material Plane are typically limited to near-mindless destruction, in reality they are merely single-minded. Some manifestations of the Entropy—or, some argue, other similar species that we do not have the capacity to distinguish—are incredibly intelligent and powerful. They slip

into material worlds and guide kings and sometimes even gods to terrific catastrophes in the name of their cause, guided by the abstract power known as Continuation. Only when all is still, never again to change, will they be satisfied.

The Entropy have few allies, even amongst outsiders who are focused on pure law or destruction. Angels and devils alike attempt to guide the Entropy toward aiding their own ends and destroying their opposite, while agathions and aeons strive constantly for their destruction. Demons and daemons prefer to



avoid the Entropy's path, not because they are afraid of what the relatively weak entities might accomplish, but simply because their own goals differ so widely.

Inevitably, despite their relatively similar goal of an ordered universe, typically oppose the Entropy when they come into contact, seeing the means by which the Entropy go about fulfilling their ends as needlessly destructive and chaotic.

On the Material Plane, the Entropy are almost universally despised. They tear down nearly everything that mortal races attempt to establish, and strike out against groups of every size and kind.

Rarely, conjurers will attempt to contact the Entropy, seeking to make use of their ability to weaken the planar fabric around them. While occasionally a summoner does get the better end of this deal, Entropy's very presence often leads even the best-laid plan astray.

## OTHER TYPES OF ENTROPY

While Entropy pods are the Entropy's most common manifestation, they are far from the only one. Below are some additional forms Entropy is known to regularly take.

**Dark Hound (CR 3):** These roughly wolf-like shapes have too many legs and two long sinuous tails. Unlike Entropy pods, which often exist in small squads of three or four, dark hounds often run in large packs of ten or twenty.

**Nightmare Spider (CR 5):** These Large ten-legged creatures have no obvious torso—only a joining of many long limbs. They leave traces of shadowstuff behind them wherever they go, fusing objects together with a cement-like tar.

**Colossus Pod (CR 16):** These Colossal creatures are similar in appearance to Entropy pods, but enormous, with each of their tentacles able to stretch nearly a hundred feet out from the main body. When injured, colossus pods draw nearby creatures and objects into their wounds, using material essence to mend their semi-physical bodies.

## MAJOR MARCO DEPOMPA

*This man is tall, strongly built, and incredibly handsome with dark, flowing locks—even with the scars across both his eyes. While his right survived the ordeal intact, his left is covered by a heavy satin eyepatch.*

### MAJOR MARCO DEPOMPA CR 9 — 6,400 XP

Male human aristocrat 5 / paladin 6

LG Medium humanoid (human)

**Init** +0; **Senses** Perception +15

**Aura** courage (10 ft.)

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +2 shield)

**hp** 92 (5d8+6d10+33)

**Fort** +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

**Immune** disease, fear

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 20 ft.

**Melee** +1 longsword +13/+8 (1d8+3/19–20)

**Ranged** mwk longbow +9/+4 (1d8+1/x3)

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

**Special Attacks** channel positive energy (DC 15, 3d6), smite evil 2/day (+2 attack and AC, +6 damage)

**Paladin Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 6th; concentration +8)

**At will**—*detect evil*

**Paladin Spells Prepared** (CL 3rd; concentration +5)

**1st**—*bless weapon, cure light wounds*

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** He typically directs forces from the sidelines, using his *wand of cure light wounds* to support his troops. When engaged in direct combat, Marco smites evil and then charges in to cover his allies, saving his lay on hands for an emergency.

**Morale** Marco begins a tactical retreat if reduced to 50 hp, and surrenders if reduced to 20 hp.

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21

**Feats** Cleave, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

**Skills** Diplomacy +16, Ride +9, Perception +15, Sense Motive +11

**Languages** Common

**SQ** aura, code of conduct, divine bond (weapon +1, 1/day), lay on hands (3d6, 5/day), mercies (fatigued, staggered)

**Combat Gear** *wand of cure light wounds*; **Other Gear** +1 longsword, +1 full plate, masterwork longbow with 40 arrows, *all-seeing eyepatch*, 200 gp

Marco has been in the Nations' Army for the majority of his forty-seven years, and has proven himself time and again. Ten years ago, for his many successes he was selected to lead a group into the Kray Wasteland in search of the worldwide psychic scream.

While the operatives under his command discovered the truth of the scream, they also unintentionally uncovered the conspiracy protecting it. He and his operatives were shipped off to remote "punishment" details across the empire in an attempt to stop them from talking.

But Marco would have none of it. He had always implicitly trusted the empire. He saw the corruption he had experienced as an example of people using the noble empire for their own ends, and not as representative of the empire itself.

He doubled his efforts, working his way up and out of what seemed to be an endless string of dead-end assignments. He banished evils where he was meant to guard their wards. He expanded borders where he was meant to oversee meaningless expanses of desert. He forged alliances with some of the empire's fiercest foes.



It was Emperor Boam himself who saw Marco's pattern of exemplary work and summoned him to Shonawing. With the ear of the utmost power in the empire, Marco began to unravel the conspiracies of the upper echelons of the Nations' Army. Over the past year, Marco and Emperor Boam worked together tirelessly to disassemble the very groups who sought to cover up their activities in the Kray Wasteland, rooting out corruption within the empire which had hidden it for so long.

Despite the personal loss they have caused him, Marco does not feel those who punished him were truly evil. In his years in the army as a paladin of Maroen, Marco has come to accept many things about human nature. He accepts that people will work toward what they think is best, though they may disagree on what that is. He accepts that the greatest evils are perpetrated when the few see themselves as more important than the many. And, most of all, he accepts that even those with the best intentions can make mistakes.

Marco was unaware, but the emperor had a deep and growing respect for him, and he intended to name Marco the General of the Nations' Army at this year's summit. Boam cleared the names of the operatives who had worked with him during the Psychic Scream Incident, and invited them to the summit to witness Marco's promotion and to hear his own public apology to them all.

Marco is a strong, handsome man who's aging quite gracefully. His dark hair is flecked with white, and his uniform is always pressed and polished. He is always polite, sometimes to a fault, though slightly less so to men than to women.

Despite his eyepatch, Marco isn't actually missing an eye. He took the scar during a mission, but got ahold of an enchanted eyepatch that allowed him to see, even in the dark or, in the rare case, through solid walls. Even once his eye was regenerated he kept the patch, which he wears nearly all the time.

### ALL-SEEING EYEPATCH

**School** strong divination; **CL** 12th  
**Slot** —; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** —

### DESCRIPTION

This heavy satin eyepatch is embroidered on the inside with a gold and silver eye.

The all-seeing eyepatch fits firmly over one eye, no matter how big or small the wearer is. It allows the wearer to see out of the covered eye, making them immune to the blinded condition. After 24 hours, it attunes itself to the wearer, granting them the ability to see invisible or glammered creatures in their true forms within 90 feet. It also grants them the ability to see through up to 30 feet of supernatural darkness. Finally, once

per day for one minute, the wearer can see through up to 50 feet of solid matter, regardless of lighting conditions.

### CREATION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, true seeing; cost 15,000 gp







## ASA THE SEEKER

*Ten feet tall and clad in silver armor, this angelic figure gives no appearance of being any sort of angel. Not only does he not have a face, only a blank faceplate, but his right arm is wrapped in a black and almost liquid malevolence.*

### ASA THE SEEKER

CR 10 — 9,600 XP

LE Large outsider (lawful, omega)

**Init** +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +21

**Aura** Omega Force (15 ft., DC 19)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +11 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 136 (13d10+65)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

**Defensive Abilities** omega resurrection

**Weakness** soulless

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** Omega Blade +20/+15/+10 (2d6+7, 19–20/x2), 2 wings +10 (1d6+2)

**Ranged** 3 astral wing feathers +14 (6d6, range 120 ft.)

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

**Special Attacks** astral wings, omega blade

### SPELL-LIKE ABILITIES

**constant**—protection from arrows

### TACTICS

**Morale** Asa knows he is immortal, and always fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 14, **Dex** 15, **Con** 21, **Int** 13, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 30

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

**Skills** Fly +26, Knowledge (astrology, planes) +17, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +17, Use Magic Device +19;

**Racial Modifiers** +8 Fly while in space

**Languages** telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** interstellar flight

**Gear** Omega Blade

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Astral Wings (Ex):** Made of pure force, Asa's wings can fire bursts of energy in a 120-foot cone, doing 3d6 damage (DC 14 Reflex for half). Alternatively, they can fire more-concentrated blasts of energy at up to three targets in a 120-foot cone as a ranged attack for 6d6 damage.

**Interstellar Flight (Ex):** While between worlds, Asa can reach incredible speeds. Travel between worlds in a system typically takes 1d6 hours; between star systems in a galaxy 1d6 weeks; and between galaxies 1d6 months. Travel to a location unknown or unfamiliar at the start of the journey takes twice as long.

**Omega Blade (Su):** As Saitan's current herald, Asa can call the Omega Blade to his hand from anywhere in the multiverse as a swift action.

**Omega Force Aura (Ex):** Asa radiates the power of the end of all things. Living creatures within 15 feet must make a DC 19 Will save each round or become fatigued. If already fatigued, the creature instead loses 2 charges of a daily ability or spell levels (or their one lowest-level spell). Any creature unable to lose daily charges or spell levels instead gains a temporary negative level that persists for 1 hour.

**Omega Resurrection (Su):** Rather than a soul, Asa's body is empowered by the Omega Force, which does not depart his body upon his death. Unless this ability is suppressed by the Seed of Change, when slain, Asa returns to life after 2d12 hours as though resurrected by true resurrection.

**Soulless (Ex):** Asa's life force is tied to the Omega Force. He is incapable of emotion, and he cannot receive any morale-based bonuses or penalties.

Centuries ago, Asa was a mortal. He lived upon the planet of Gruenweld, where he was an accomplished hero and warrior. Yet all that changed with the arrival of Saitan. The world began falling apart around him, and the greatest heroes of his world fell in battle against the titan.

So Asa took up his own arms and approached the titan. Yet he did not attack. He knew that hundreds more powerful than he had already fallen in this fight. Instead, he merely spoke. He offered his eternal, unwavering servitude in exchange for his world's life. He would travel the stars in search of other worlds for the titan, if only his own would be spared.

Intrigued, Saitan accepted the deal. He filled Asa with the Omega Force, burning away his soul in exchange for immortality and incredible power. What little morality Asa had, it burned away in an instant. His noble intent vanished. He was left only with the same burning desire as that of Saitan himself: the want for the end of all things.

He betrayed his former self immediately, offering to Saitan the life force of the very planet he moments ago had desired to save. Saitan, however, upheld his deal: he would not destroy Gruenweld unless Asa ceased to serve him.

For the past several centuries, Asa has served Saitan well. He finds worlds with powerful Seeds for the titan to consume, and calls upon the titan to devour them. With every new world he visits, he grows more callous—and more careless. Rather than infiltrating the worlds he visits in seeking the Seeds, he begins an outright assault when he arrives.

When he is occasionally struck down in his duty, Saitan merely resurrects him upon her arrival. Lacking a soul, she can simply recreate Asa from the Omega Force on a whim. Each time she does, he comes to life larger, stronger, and more powerful: a more efficient servant.

Asa cannot even truly remember his original form, and recalls very little of his home world. He doesn't care for Gruenweld any longer, but he retains a faint memory of caring—just enough that he remembers who he is. Just enough to make those who strike him down hesitate when he tells them of the sacrifice he had to make. Just enough that he can use it as yet another weapon in his already powerful arsenal.

## NON-VANCIAN WORK DAYS

Adventuring is a grueling, dangerous affair. Even so, adventurers make use of magic, luck, supernatural skills, and sheer fortitude to survive otherwise impossible odds.

On a perfectly average adventuring day, the PCs will face one or two encounters equal to their CR, four or five encounters two CRs lower, and sometimes one that's higher. As the day goes on, a party slowly uses up their resources: spells, abilities, magic items, and even hit points. When they start running low, they'll retreat to a safe place to rest and recover so they'll start the next day of adventuring refreshed and refilled.

Roughly speaking, this style of play is Vancian: styled after the works of Jack Vance. It assumes that characters (specifically spellcasters) can prepare a finite number of spells (or spell slots, or other abilities) and can call upon each preparation exactly once before it must be prepared again. Since characters have to rest eight hours to re-prepare these spells and other abilities, they're typically considered daily in nature.

While this functions reasonably well as a means of keeping your physics-defying wizards somewhat more in line with melee warriors, it's less good when it comes to letting players feel heroic for more than ten minutes into the day.

Changing how recovery works so that characters have non-daily allocations of their powers is, by extension, non-Vancian. Typically, this means that the characters have limitless uses of their special abilities—or at least have limits that aren't based on preparing abilities once each day and then expending them as the day progresses.

The following optional rules give GMs and players ways to speed up their game by recovering much more quickly, whether by making magic recover faster or by simply allowing characters to recharge a few abilities without having to spend the whole day doing so.

### THE BRIEF REST

A brief rest is a period of about ten minutes, which lets characters catch their breath, bind their wounds, and focus their minds, undertaking no action more strenuous than casual conversation.

After taking a brief rest, a character chooses one of the following benefits:

- Recover a number of uses of daily abilities equal to half their Hit Dice (rounded up)

- Recover a number of expended spells or spell slots whose total spell levels equal their caster level

Recover a number of hit points equal to half their Hit Dice (rounded up) multiplied by their Constitution modifier

Recover from the fatigued condition or reduce the exhausted condition to the fatigued condition (unless, of course, those conditions are caused by an ongoing effect like thirst or heat)

A character cannot gain the benefits from more than one brief rest per hour, and cannot benefit from more brief rests per day than they have Hit Dice.

### HOW IT AFFECTS PLAY

If you're using the rules for brief rests, the PCs will almost always be in top form, at full hit points and using their most powerful abilities in nearly every fight. Characters can handle more challenging encounters more often than normal, increasing the party's effective level by one or two, depending on the types of characters in the party. Magical characters and those with many special abilities will find themselves with a greater advantage than more mundane characters.

### HOW TO BALANCE IT

GMs, if you're using brief rests, you can keep the game roughly as challenging by making enemies slightly more powerful, without increasing the rewards for defeating them. The easiest way to do this is to apply the advanced template to all enemies, but to leave their XP values the same.

To prevent spellcasters from entirely overpowering non-spellcasters, you can also restrict each character's recovery of spells to only those of one level lower than the highest spell level that the character is able to cast. At 11th level and beyond, a character cannot recover the top two levels of spells they're able to cast in this way. So, during a brief rest, a 5th-level spellcaster could not recover their 3rd-level spells during a brief rest, even though they would recover enough spell levels to do so, but they could recover their spells of 1st or 2nd level.

Alternately, you could remove the limits on the number of brief rests a party can take per day, or per hour. In this variant, parties will likely always be at or above full strength, letting them reliably handle any number of encounters at their level or lower, or three or four encounters up to three levels higher than them.

### RECHARGING MAGIC

Recharging magic allows spellcasters and other characters with supernatural abilities to recover them more often than daily. A character who's used their abilities can use them again in seconds or minutes rather than needing to wait until the next day. Rather than having a certain number of abilities available each day, a character must wait a number of rounds between using abilities.

Under these variant rules, when a character casts a prepared spell, they cannot use that spell slot again for a number of minutes equal to that spell's level. They also cannot cast another spell of the same level for a number of rounds equal to half the cast spell's level (rounded up). So, if a wizard casts the fireball spell they prepared earlier that day, they can cast fireball again after



only three minutes, and they can cast another 3rd-level spell they prepared (even a second fireball, so long as they prepared it twice) in two rounds.

Characters with other limited-use abilities have faster recharge times as well. After a character uses an ability, it cannot be used again for a number of rounds equal to 10 minus the number of daily uses that the ability would have. For example, a paladin who could lay on hands 3 times per day could instead use it every 7 rounds; a bard who could use bardic music for 10 rounds per day could instead use it every round.

### HOW IT AFFECTS PLAY

Recharging magic dramatically increases the PCs' power, increasing the level of the encounters they can easily handle by two or three, depending on the party makeup. After every encounter they'll always return to full resources nearly instantly, and encounters of their CR or lower will be extremely easy.

GMs, you'll need to be wary, though. Encounters with CRs that are four or more above the party's level typically make assumptions about party ability that even characters with recharging magic won't meet. Creatures in these encounters might inflict conditions that the party can't cure (like ability drain), have damage or spell resistance that the party can't bypass, or simply deal a great deal more damage overall.

### HOW TO BALANCE IT

When using recharging magic, the line is thinner between an encounter that is easy and one that is overwhelming. The party is either at full power or dead. It results in a high-power, high-stakes, and fast-paced game.

GMs, to keep the challenge similar to before, you'll want to either double the number of creatures that the party encounters (if space permits), or double the number of hit points that each creature has and the number of actions it can take in a round. Either approach would roughly increase the CR of each encounter by 2. Like with the brief rest rules, if you improve monsters in this way, don't increase the experience or treasure they grant.

If you wish to reduce the power of recharging magic somewhat, make it so spellcasters using recharging magic can only prepare half as many spell slots as they normally would, rounded down (minimum 1).

To allow fighters, and other characters without limited-use abilities, to keep up with spellcasters, you can give them similar benefits to monsters: double their maximum hit points and give them another standard action each round.

### RECHARGING WARRIORS

No matter how you handle it, reducing the daily limits of special abilities will mean characters without limited powers begin to fall behind. While the alternate rules above for brief rests and recharging magic provide options to help warriors stay halfway competitive, they still lose out rather dramatically compared to their magical counterparts as they increase in level.

Rather than merely making such characters unplayable, GMs, you might consider offering them some enhanced and fantastic benefits of their own.

Hero Points (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Advanced Players Guide*) are an excellent means for non-magical characters to do fantastic things. You can offer characters who normally have no limited abilities this powerful, versatile resource: 1 hero point plus 1 hero point per 5 Hit Dice. Then, by having 1 hero point recharge on a brief rest, or 1 hero point recharge per minute, these characters use their hero points roughly as often as magical characters recover their spells.

Enhanced Equipment will be very useful to equipment-heavy characters like fighters. You might simply make any gear that grants a numerical bonus give such characters a higher enhancement bonus than it would normally: +1 greater for brief rests, or +2 greater for recharging magic. This numerical increase isn't particularly glamorous, but you can also or instead grant these characters thematic bonuses, such as making all swords that a character picks up becoming flaming.

Faster XP Gain is a dramatic change back to older versions of the game, but no more so than giving spellcasters the ability to cast any spell at any time they'd like. If you move magical characters to the slow experience track or non-magical characters to the fast experience track—but not both—the most powerful characters will gain new abilities more slowly than their less powerful counterparts.

## THE CONFEDERATE OF NATIONS

The Confederate of Nations is a bountiful empire, unlike any seen in Neyth before. Founded 239 years ago by the alliance of Shonawing, Vestar, and Naal, it exploded in size, power, and wealth for close to a century before reaching the size at which it remains today, hemmed in by the frosty Raccan to the north and the narrow strait of Xomoci to the south. With outward expansion halted, the empire focused on infrastructure and internal growth to great success. In the past twenty years alone, the total population of the empire has nearly doubled, to the 58 million it is today.

Yet while life is good for citizens of the empire, nothing is perfect. The nation's rich have incomparably more sway in the governance of each nation, a fact which seems obvious to all but those same people and Emperor Boam. The Nations' Army allows all citizens to carry weapons of many sorts for protection against lawlessness and monsters, but it turns a blind eye to the great violence perpetrated by their own people as a result.

The leaders of the forty-one nations are collectively known as the Forty Families.

Wahai is an archipelago of islands fifty miles off the western coast of the Confederate of Nations. Unlike most nations in the empire, it was conquered rather than subsumed, and remains under military occupation to this day. The natives, who live more in tune with nature, refuse to worship Maroen. Instead, they sacrifice to nature spirits, dominant among them Ohao, spirit of the volcano at the heart of their nation.

Shonawing, the heart of the empire and its northern peak, has become the center of administration and military force for the entire Confederate of Nations. The emperor lives within the Capitol Building, a palace that more resembles a modern estate than a stuffy castle. The Capital of Shonawing, which shares the nation's name, straddles the Thahumbe River, facilitating trade and travel for nearly a thousand miles south.

## THE FAITH OF MAROEN

Two thousand years ago, a new prophet rose: Maroen, born from divine conception to an invalid mother; even as Maroen came into this world, her first divine act was to return her crippled mother from death's door.

Once she was old enough to travel, merely eight years old, she did. She claimed to channel the powers of all gods in equal measure—that no single deity was right or wrong, only aspects of greater divine sources beyond true mortal understanding.

Most established religions took great offense to her radical ideals. They fought against the concept that the gods they knew and from which they drew powers were no more than reflections of greater entities. They persecuted her, hunted her, and tried to have her shamed and assassinated. Yet despite her radical claims, her divine power was unquestionable. She healed the sick, provided for the poor, and even raised the dead. And never did she force her beliefs upon others, always stating that kindness and inner strength were the true way.

As her life continued, she became the center of a holy war. Some entire faiths, and smaller sects of others, agreed in whole or in part with her teachings. They rose to her defense against the churches of deities whose teachings opposed hers. But she was persecuted by members of faiths who valued personal gain or strict order, as they conflicted directly with her teachings of generosity and equality. Throughout it all, she maintained her calm, cool demeanor. She insisted that any way—so long as it guided toward the betterment and happiness of the people—was a good way.

Before she was thirty, she had gathered a large following that spanned a dozen small nations. Foremost among them were the Nine Apprentices, the leaders and shepherds of her growing faith. Yet one night she stunned the Nine when she declared that she would be dead before sunset the following day.

The events of the next day have been interpreted and retold in countless ways in the years since. Most say that one of her apprentices, Jacob, struck her down in the streets, though his motives remain a mystery even to this day. He is commonly vilified amongst Maroen's faithful, who see him as representing everything selfish and wrong in the world. More radical sects believe that she was alone with Jacob when her mortal form suddenly gave away like a cocoon, giving birth to her current deific form.

Regardless of how that day is interpreted, on the next she returned to the Nine as an angel. She told them not to give up faith, for she was still with them in spirit. In the years since, her followers have only continued to grow in number.

## RELATIONSHIPS

Unsurprisingly, Maroen has good relationships with most deities, especially those with good and lawful alignments. She actively supports them and their agendas, and encourages her followers to do likewise. While she doesn't actively support evil deities, demon lords, or similar evil powers, she does accept them for what they are—much to the frustration of her allies that oppose them.

## APPEARANCE

Maroen appears similar to how she did in life—as a plain woman in her early thirties, with olive-brown skin and shoulder-length black hair. Since her ascension, she also bears enormous white wings resembling those of a dove, a golden aura, and a large halo behind her that depicts scenes of the miracles she performed and prophecies she made during her life.

## PROVIDENCE

Maroen shows her blessing by granting her followers halos of light, or by transforming their food and drink into more bountiful, richer fare. She tends to allow many minor digressions before invoking her wrath, but once her disfavor is warranted she delivers dramatic retribution. Those whose suffer her wrath find themselves unable to slake their thirst or hunger, while the worst offenders are blasted to dust by pillars of fire and lightning.

## THE CHURCH OF MAROEN

Maroen accepts any and all into her church, which often leads to disorganization, miscommunication, and disagreement among her faithful. The leaders of the church are kind, generous, and faithful people, but often must spend more time and energy organizing the faithful and their efforts than they do actively practicing.

Unusually, the Church of Maroen does not shun or forbid the worship of other deities, and even encourages prayers made to any and all deities or powers. However, a key factor in the worship must be that all deities, including Maroen herself, are but reflections of a higher power.

Hers is the national religion of the Confederate of Nations, but she is also worshipped to a greater or lesser extent in nearly every nation on Neyth.

## CLERGY

Maroen's priests are almost entirely human, and all of her clerics are female. Male followers are allowed, but are relegated to non-clergy positions such as paladin or inquisitor. Commonly, the priests of a shrine subsist on donations from their own congregation, but as the faith has spread to include many wealthy patrons they have become able to encourage sizable donations outside of their own parishes, aiming to establish some level of equality throughout the Church.

For convenience, worship of Maroen is common at dawn, but lesser services are held at all hours of the day. Large masses and announcements are held immediately following the evening meal.



While Maroen's faithful are not forbidden from carrying arms or armor, her message of peace and understanding encourages faithful in active duties to wear plain robes and travel unarmed. When provoked into combat, they use magic to invoke the wrath of Maroen—and other gods besides.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Most temples of Maroen are spacious affairs, often with multiple floors and dozens of multipurpose rooms around a circular main worship hall. Depending on the needs of its congregation, Maroen's churches use these rooms as shelters for the homeless, hospitals for the sick, and donation centers for the poor.

## HOLY TEXT

The Nine Scrolls are the holy texts of Maroen, each written by one of her Nine Apprentices. The original Nine Scrolls have long since been lost, replaced by a bound version entitled Maroen's Word, which features the writings of eight of the Nine Apprentices (seeing the writings of Jacob as heretical and blasphemous). Each scroll discusses the events of Maroen's life, interpreted differently in importance and meaning by each of her apprentices.

## HOLIDAYS

Maroen's church has two holidays. On the winter equinox, the Church celebrates the Mass of the Dawn, which celebrates her birth. On the summer equinox, they celebrate the End of Life, which celebrates her mortal death and ascension to the divine.

**Titles:** The mother, the firstborn goddess, the prophet of all

**Adjective:** Maroite

**Home:** Heaven

**Alignment:** Lawful good

**Portfolio:** Humanity, women, equality, peace

**Followers:** Humans, layfolk, the poor

**Domains:** Community, Good, Protection, Strength

**Subdomains:** Freedom, honor, purity, resurrection

**Favored Weapon:** None—clerics of Maroen instead gain Diplomacy as a class skill.

**Symbol:** A golden circle inlaid by a simple halo

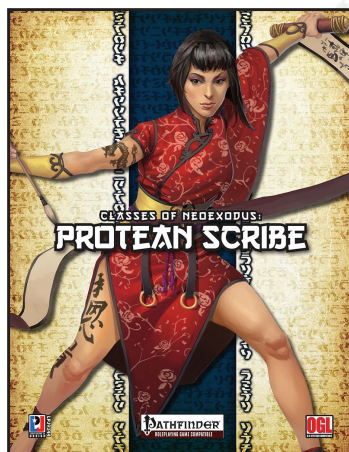
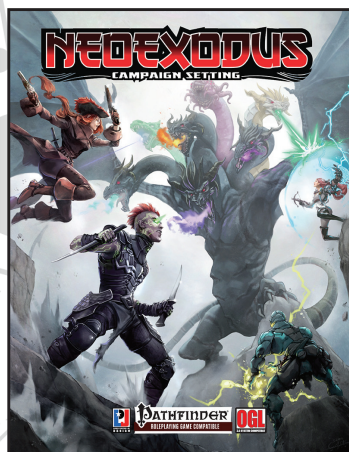
**Sacred Animal:** The lamb

**Sacred Colors:** White, gold

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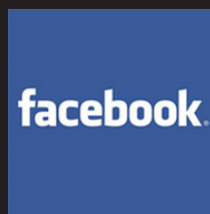
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