

CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

SIDE TREK: IN HIS BAD BOOKS



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PATHFINDER
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

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ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Nearly a decade ago, the party's ally Large-Biter was an adventurer. He would hunt for the kernels of truth hidden in whispers and rumors, setting out with a band of explorers to uncover treasure and truth alike.

Over the course of his adventures, he began to grow particularly close to one of his companions: the cynean Raxe. When Raxe didn't share the satori's feelings, Large-Biter felt defeated. Though there was no animosity between the two adventurers, the change in their rapport ultimately caused the party to split up and go their separate ways.

Raxe used his proceeds from adventuring to build a small cottage on the southern bank of Lake Skill. He lived and worked mostly alone, studying the supposedly dead remains of a Nexus Gateway to learn all he could about the strange artifact.

A month ago, the gateway flared suddenly to life. Concerned as to what this might mean, Raxe reached out to his peers for advice. The best suggestion, or so it seemed, was to speak directly to an Inevitable: a guardian of the passages between planes.

Performing the necessary ritual, Raxe found that he instead conjured a powerful devil. He only barely escaped alive by locking himself in a safe room until he came up with a plan to banish the infernal beast for good.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Large-Biter admits that attempting to follow the vespans without knowing how to use Nexus Gateways safely is utterly foolish. He sends the party to contact the best conjurer he knows: the cynean Raxe.

Unfortunately, when the PCs arrive, they find Raxe's cottage under siege by a small contingent of angels, who have failed to banish the devil that Raxe unwittingly bound just outside his front door.

The party must evade and survive the devil and his servitors for long enough to banish it, contact Raxe, and learn how to safely activate and travel through the Nexus Gateway.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure begins as all sidequests in the Chronicle of the Gatekeepers do: with Large-Biter approaching the party with an idea.

In His Bad Books



"The vespans have too many advantages over us," Large-Biter opens abruptly, "not least of which is an apparent knowledge of what the Nexus Gateways are, and how to use them without fear." He taps his finger beneath his jaw pensively as he pauses. "If we can understand what the gateways are, we can prevent them from being used against us, or maybe even turn them to our advantage."

He stops again and shakes his head. "There is nothing to be done about it. You should visit Raxe. He is an... acquaintance of mine: a conjurer and a philosopher. Over the last decade he has dedicated himself to studying a Nexus Gateway about a hundred miles north-west of here. He can tell us what we need to know about these gateways. At very least, he can teach you how to open them."

"Alas, I cannot join you. We had a... falling out, Raxe and I. I doubt he would appreciate me suddenly showing up on his doorway. But! I would be extremely grateful if you could deliver a letter to him on my behalf."

Though Large-Biter is normally prepared, contemplating sending the PCs to Raxe has left him off-guard. If the PCs agree to his request, he will scramble to get out a quill and paper to pen and seal a letter. Along with the letter he will write out directions from Teryth to Raxe's cottage and hand the bundle to the PCs. If the PCs open the letter, it reads:

Raxe, I hope you have been well. I was deeply saddened to hear that you, Kasim, and Troy all went separate ways after my departure. I would change the past in a moment if I could, but never the way I feel.

But let us not linger on the past; there is a mystery afoot. Surely you are aware of the Nexus Gateway activity of late. Wasp-faced men crawl the countryside caring nothing for the sanctity of what we have built.

These heroes who delivered you this message are seeking to cut the threat off at its source. To do that, they will need to know everything they can about the Nexus Gateways—especially how they are activated. With your help, we can unravel one last mystery, for old times' sake.

It is quite easy to reach Raxe's cottage from Teryth. It requires following the road for some sixty miles west and then a small trail a dozen miles north.

THE STATE OF TERYTH

Over the last few days, swords have been going missing from Steelwares, and the Imperial Janissaries responsible for watching the forge are embarrassed and worried. They're especially worried that the Janus Horde is stealing imperial steel weapons, and to try to locate them the Janissaries have stepped up patrols around town.

Fortunately, the truth is mostly innocent. The children of several of the Janissaries encountered a young rust monster not far from town. One of the children, Travis Mash, wanted to tame it and maybe use it to defend the town. He and his friends have been

A SAFE JOURNEY

While this adventure doesn't introduce any trouble on the road to Raxe's cottage, that doesn't have to mean the trip has to be dull. The PCs could encounter traders traveling to or coming from the Caneus Empire; they'll stop for a brief chat about how the latest coming-of-age trials have been far too easy. Alternately, the PCs could come across a group of Men-at-Arms: highly trained imperial soldiers keeping the roads clear of "the wasp-faced men."

feeding it over the past few weeks, but having run out of easily accessible metal, they've begun pilfering the local shops—and the forge.

A. THE COTTAGE

Raxe's cottage is built into the side of a grassy hill overlooking Lake Shill. The hill allowed him to build his home in tiers, giving each room a view of the lake, and let him build a panic room beneath his library, where he is hidden away.

Unless noted, all doors in Raxe's cottage are simple wooden doors without locks, though they can be barred from the inside. All walls are six-inch-thick wooden walls, with stone foundations one to two feet high.

THE IMP (CR 4)

Xazum isn't the only devil on the premises. He has called upon his ally, Jeppash, to search the building for a way to free him from the binding circle.

Jeppash moves about the cottage haphazardly, randomly moving between rooms 1–6 every 2d4 minutes. Whenever he is in a room adjacent to the PCs, he can be detected with a DC 18 Perception check. Similarly, whenever he changes rooms, he makes a Perception check against the PCs to try to determine if they are in an adjacent room.

If he detects the PCs, he will turn invisible, observe the party for a moment, and then attack. No matter how many times the PCs encounter Jeppash, whether they defeat him or not, they only gain experience for defeating him once.

JEPPASH

CR 4 – 1,200 XP

Imp fighter 3 (*Pathfinder Reference Document*)

LE Tiny outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect good, detect magic;

Perception +11

DEFENSE

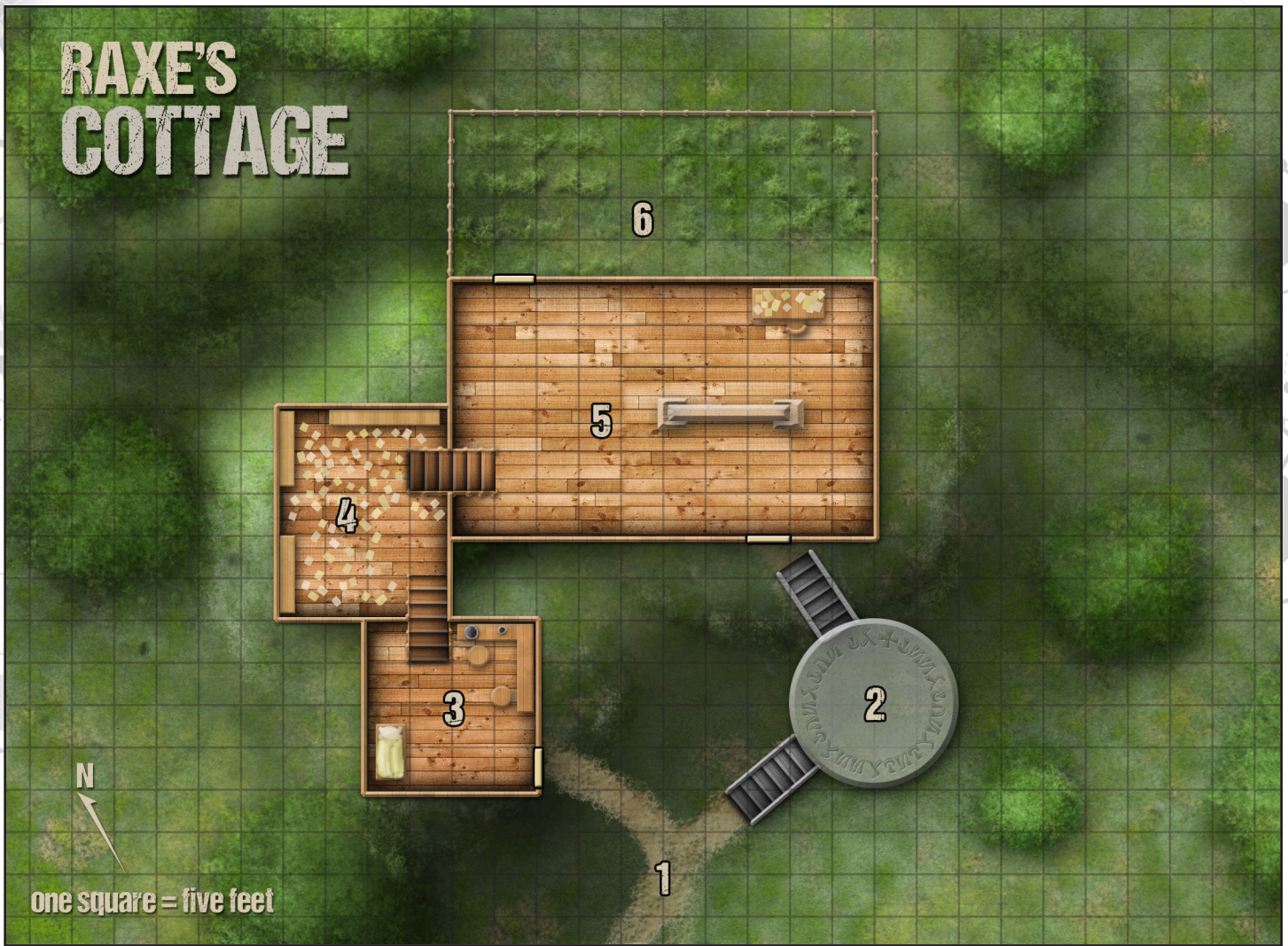
AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 38 (6d10+6); fast healing 2

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +6; +1 versus fear

Defensive Abilities bravery +1; **DR** 5/good or silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10

RAXE'S COTTAGE



OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., **fly** 50 ft. (perfect)
Melee sting +14/+9 (1d4+2 plus poison)
Ranged javelin +13/+8 (1d2+2)
Space 1-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)
Constant—*detect good, detect magic*
At-will—*invisibility (self only)*
1/day—*augury, suggestion (DC 15)*
1/week—*commune (6 questions, CL 12th)*

TACTICS

Before Combat If he expects to enter combat, Jeppash goes *invisible* to give him the upper hand.
During Combat Jeppash throws javelins for a few rounds before charging in and attempting to poison at least one target before being defeated. He uses *Lunge* to avoid provoking attacks of opportunity that he normally would when entering a target's square.
Morale Jeppash fights to the death, knowing he was only summoned to the Material Plane and can't be permanently killed through combat.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 12
Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 22
Feats Dodge, Lunge, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sting)
Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +10, Fly +23, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (planes) +7, Perception +11, Spellcraft +7
Languages Common, Infernal
SQ armor training 1, change shape (boar, giant spider, rat or raven, *beast shape I*)
Combat Gear 10 javelins; **Other Gear** Tiny full plate

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex): Sting—injury; *save Fort DC 14; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; effect 1d2 Dex; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based, and includes a +2 racial bonus.*

I -- OUTSIDE THE COTTAGE

"Mortals, hold!"

A booming voice echoes around you just as you see the cottage roof crest the hill ahead of you. "This area is unsafe. You should withdraw."

DEAL WITH THE DEVIL

Though Xazum is angry at being bound, he doesn't let that anger overcome his desire to escape. At least until the PCs first interact with (or ignore) the devil, he is interested in seeing whether the PCs want to make a deal. If they are willing to destroy the binding circle, he will reward them with a head-sized golden orb worth 2,500 gp. He'll even be more than willing to agree not to harm either Raxe or the party after being freed—though he won't suggest it without prompting.

Though freeing Xazum would remove the devil from the adventure, doing so is an obviously evil action—and it should have negative repercussions for the party. For instance, after being freed, Xazum might teleport to Teryth for a short killing spree before vanishing into the wilds of Exodus.

Making a deal with Xazum with the intention of breaking it isn't an evil action—but deals with devils are forever binding, even beyond death, and may haunt the deal-breaker far in the future.

A young man, only three feet tall with glowing white wings, descends from the sky before you. Shortly after, he is joined by five others. "The conjurer beyond has summoned a devil beyond his ability to bind. We are here to put an end to it."

A PC who makes a **DC 17 Knowledge (planes)** check identifies these as cassisian angels (*Pathfinder Reference Document*), low-ranking angels. Only a few minutes after confronting the PCs, they will fly in formation toward the summoning circle and engage in a brief but deadly battle with Xazum, who is bound there. Unfortunately, the battle does not go in their favor, and after only a few minutes all six angels have been destroyed entirely.

2 -- THE DEVIL'S PRISON

A ten-foot-wide marble slab is inlaid with an elaborate pattern of iron and silver—a powerful summoning circle.

Like many of the more powerful enchantments around his cottage, the binding circle outside of Raxe's cottage was not his own construction. Rather, he paid a more experienced wizard to construct it here for him.

However, powerful as it is, the binding circle isn't the only protection a conjurer needs when binding outsiders. So, when Raxe's latest summoning ritual unexpectedly called up the relatively powerful devil, Xazum, the devil was left free to do as he wished, so long as he remained in contact with the circle itself. This technicality gave Raxe the time he needed to retreat to his safe room, where he has remained trapped since.

Before Raxe managed to escape, he dropped the ritual book he was using for the ritual, and Xazum's ally, Jeppash, has brought

it to the devil. Unfortunately for Xazum, the book doesn't detail how to undo this particular binding spell—or its original source. All Xazum has been able to discern from the book is how to reverse the spell binding him, so he wants to keep it on hand in case he can't determine how to undo only the part which keeps him bound to the circle.

XAZUM

CR 11 – 12,800 XP

Barbed Devil (*Pathfinder Reference Document*)

hp 138

TACTICS

During Combat Xazum will rely on his DR to protect him from weak attacks, and he will cast *produce flame* to attack any characters who strike at him from beyond his reach.

Development: Banishing Xazum would be simple—if he were either willing or correctly bound. Since he is neither, the devil will actively try to stop anyone attempting to dispel or reverse the part of the ritual that binds him to this plane. Dispelling him requires a DC 22 dispel check, while undoing the ritual requires two consecutive **DC 30 Spellcraft** checks: one to determine what needs to be done, and the other to actually reverse the ritual. The second check must be made adjacent to the binding circle.

Either check is likely impossible without assistance, but Raxe can automatically pass the first Spellcraft check and grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the second. Clues to the ritual can be found in Raxe's library and laboratory, and each provides a +2 circumstance bonus to both Spellcraft checks. The dispel check can be easily accomplished by using the *scroll of greater dispel magic buried in the garden*, which Raxe can use without fail.

Regardless of how the PCs deal with Xazum, once he is no longer a threat to the party, grant them 1,200 XP.

3 -- LIVING AREA

It's clear the bed, kitchen, and washbasin that make up this quaint cottage are normally kept in good order, though something has gone through the place and made a mess of it.

It's clear whatever made a mess here was searching for something, though it's unclear what. A PC who makes a **DC 22 Perception** check will reveal an arcane glyph on a switch along the side of the stairwell. A PC who makes a **DC 17 Spellcraft** check identifies the rune as a *protection from evil spell*, making the switch invisible to conjured evil creatures.

Flipping the switch causes the wall to the left of the stairwell to slide open, revealing a stairwell down to area 7, the bolt hole.

4 -- LIBRARY

Thousands of loose papers litter the floor, while fully ten times as many are neatly stacked on shelves on the walls.

Raxe collected every fact and rumor he could regarding the Nexus Gateways and filed them away here. Even in normal

circumstances, the contents of this room would be hard to reference: the cynean mostly relied on his excellent memory to keep track of everything. With the damage Jeppash has done while searching it, the room is nearly useless to anyone who doesn't spend hours re-cataloguing it.

Development: A PC taking 5 minutes to make a DC 17 Perception or Knowledge (planes) check while searching the room can come up with enough basic information from the room to grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Spellcraft checks made regarding conjuration. If at least an hour is spent organizing the library, the bonus increases to +6.

5 -- NEXUS GATEWAY

Standing alone in half the room is a massive arch of stone that you recognize immediately—a Nexus Gateway. The other half of the room is a tangle of desks and chairs, shattered glass, and shredded paper.

Raxe's main laboratory, this room has been entirely trashed by Jeppash looking for anything to help him free his master. Of course, as the binding ritual wasn't of Raxe's devising, there was nothing here, and the imp destroyed most items of value in anger.

Raxe had been studying this "inert" Nexus Gateway for years, until it was reactivated by the Gatekeepers just a few months ago. Despite its reactivation, it hadn't been reconnected to the Nexus Pathways that bridge the gateways together, and any attempt to activate it will instead open a passage to the void (see *To Save a Soul* or *Speaking the Same Language*), drawing forth a voidworm protean. While not hostile, this newborn voidworm will listen to the PCs and appear to follow instructions before rocketing off into the sky when first left unattended.

VOIDWORM PROTEAN CR 2 – 600 XP

hp 16 (*Pathfinder Reference Document*)

Development: A PC who makes a DC 20 Perception check or concentrates on a *detect magic* spell for at least 2 rounds in this room will locate a strange red needle tossed into the corner. This narrow horn actually belongs to Xazum, and Jeppash took it here to see if severed pieces of the devil could clear the summoning circle. They can, though it hasn't yet helped him any. A PC holding it gains a +2 circumstance bonus on checks to banish the devil.

6 -- GARDEN

Between rows of cabbages and carrots grow more-esoteric magical components, like monkshood, foxglove, and holly.

This simple garden allows Raxe to grow fresh food and simple magical components, though any character with knowledge of poisons will recognize that all the magical components happen to be poisonous. Jeppash has taken out some of his frustration on the vegetables, but has left the garden mostly untouched.

Development: Raxe has hidden a *scroll of greater dispel magic* here for emergencies—which this certainly qualifies as. It is buried just beside the back door, only six inches underground, but wrapped in lead foil to avoid detection by *detect magic*. A PC who makes a DC 22 Perception check in the garden will identify the clear patch near the door as a site where something is likely buried.

7 -- BOLT HOLE

Raxe's bolt hole is a narrow, thirty-foot-long corridor leading into the hill. The entire floor is covered with a variety of runes. These runes target each creature inside the bolt hole with *dismissal once each round*. Though a potent defense against outsiders, it will likely go entirely unnoticed by the PCs.

However, halfway down the corridor is a more mundane trap, which triggers if anyone other than Raxe passes it.

CONJURED ACID TRAP CR 3

Type magic; Perception DC 26; Disable Device DC 26

EFFECTS

Trigger center of hallway; **Reset** automatic (24 hours)
Effect acid rain (2d4 acid damage, DC 18 Reflex save for half); multiple targets (all targets in hallway)

At the very end of the passage is a heavy lead door (hardness 5, 120 hp, Disable Device DC 25) that leads to the panic room.

Raxe won't respond to simple knocks on the door, though he will respond with a "leave me alone" if addressed by name. Unless the PCs tell him that the devil outside has been defeated or that Large-Biter sent them, he will remain sealed in his panic room.

8 -- PANIC ROOM

This ten-by-ten room is lined with lead: floor, walls, and ceiling. A bedroll is rolled up in one corner, along with a collection of iron and silver weapons, while in another sits a small table holding only a bowl and a spoon.

By the time the PCs find him, Raxe has been shut up in his panic room for a few days—which is a few days longer than he has ever had to use his panic room before. He has spent the time thinking, reviewing the events leading up to Xazum's summoning. He has a clear idea of what happened, but not how to dismiss the demon without getting himself killed.

He, of course, knows about the *scroll of greater dispel magic* buried in the garden, but the scroll is expensive enough that he wants to save it as a last resort. If the PCs don't have a wizard braver than he is, he admits that such a time has come.

Though Raxe will let the PCs rest in his panic room, he is deeply focused on the problem at hand and won't talk at length about anything other than possible ways to get rid of the literal devil on his doorstep.

Treasure: The weapons Raxe keeps here are a masterwork cold iron longsword, spear, and heavy mace, as well as a masterwork silver longsword and light mace. Raxe offers them to the PCs to

help him stop the devil. The spoon is a *sustaining spoon*, but Raxe isn't eager to part with the expensive item unless the PCs are particularly persuasive.

CYNEANS

As creatures made from living crystal, cyneans are easily mistaken for constructs or outsiders. However, their huge crystalline bodies function similarly enough to typical living matter that in most cases it makes no difference.

Cyneans are incredibly intelligent and endlessly curious, especially when it comes to magic. Yet their constant contemplation leads many to consider them slow or uninterested. Cyneans have a particularly strong tendency to overthink every possible response rather than replying promptly to a situation.

CRYSTALLINE CURIOSITY

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 9th
Slot implant; **Price** 10,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.
Implant DC 21

DESCRIPTION

This translucent red slime is soft to the touch—until it is struck, at which point it feels as hard as stone. Once *crystalline curiosity* has been injected beneath a creature's skin, it spreads out throughout the bearer's body in a delicate pattern of flexible crystal.

While implanted, *the crystalline curiosity* grants a +1 racial bonus to natural armor or improves the bearer's existing racial bonus to natural armor by 1. Most forms of *crystalline curiosity* also create a resonant energy within the bearer's mind, granting a +2 racial bonus to Intelligence. Blue crystalline curiosities also exist, which grant the same bonus to Charisma instead of Intelligence.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *fox's cunning*, *stoneskin*;
Cost 5,000 gp

RAXE

CR 3 – 800 XP

Male cynean conjurer 4 (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Bestiary*)
LN Medium humanoid (Cynean)
Init +0; **Senses** Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+3 deflection, +3 natural)
hp 16 (4d6)
Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** +6
Defensive Abilities mystic body
Weakness crystal skin

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk quarterstaff +3 (1d6)
Ranged acid splash +2 (1d3 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (concentration +7)

2nd—*fog cloud*, *summon monster II*

1st—*mage armor*, *summon monster I*, *unseen servant*

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

Opposition Schools illusion, necromancy

TACTICS

Before Combat Raxe casts *mage armor* if he expects a fight where he will have to enter melee.

During Combat Raxe casts *summon monster II* to summon a small air elemental, then *summon monster I* to summon a dire rat to protect him.

Morale Once damaged in melee combat, Raxe casts *fog cloud* to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 10, **Con** 13, **Int** 17, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +2; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 12

Feats Augmented Summoning, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjunction)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (planes) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +10

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Cynean, Draconic

SQ arcane bond (locket), arcane school (conjunction) unusual build

Combat Gear *potion of protection from evil* (2), *potion of protection from chaos* (2), *potion of sanctuary* (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** masterwork quarterstaff, locket with picture of adventuring party worth 500 gp, 250 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crystal Skin (Ex): Raxe's crystalline skin grants him a +3 natural armor bonus to AC. The cellular structure of a cynean's body is particularly vulnerable to force and sonic damage, though: Raxe automatically fails any save from an effect with the force descriptor. Raxe is vulnerable to sonic energy, taking half again as much damage (+50%) from sonic energy, regardless of whether a saving throw is allowed or if the save is a success or failure.

Mystic Body (Su): Raxe has learned to manipulate the energies that course through his body to further protect himself from harm. Raxe adds a deflection bonus to AC equal to his Intelligence modifier (normally +3).

Unusual build (Ex): Cyneans are much bulkier and more heavily proportioned than most humanoids. As a result, Raxe must purchase armor and equipment (but not weapons) as though he were one size category larger.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

One Xazum is released or imprisoned, and Raxe is free, this adventure is over. Assuming he still lives, Raxe will explain the circumstances of his situation: how he awoke one morning to find his “dead” Nexus Gateway thrumming with power; how he asked his contacts for help and had someone send him a ritual used to summon the devil the party met.

Raxe will eagerly reward the PCs with a detailed ritual to safely open a Nexus Gateway—to another Nexus Gateway here on Exodus. He will warn the PCs that attempting to open a portal anywhere else will produce, at best, mixed results. If Raxe didn't survive, the ritual can be extracted from the remains of his library after 2d6 hours of research—but without Raxe's warning.

While Raxe doesn't have much of monetary value left, he will arrange to cash in a number of his investments. Several days after the PCs return to Teryth, a courier will visit town to deliver them a chest with 1,200 gp.

In regards to Large-Biter, Raxe is hesitant to speak of their past relationship, even to those who saved his life. He admits they have a history, and that one day Large-Biter said something that

caused them to go separate ways. Unless a PC succeeds a DC 25 Diplomacy check, he won't reveal that the statement was Large-Biter professing his love. Either way, Raxe admits that he misses the sasori and that it would be nice to see his good friend again after so long.

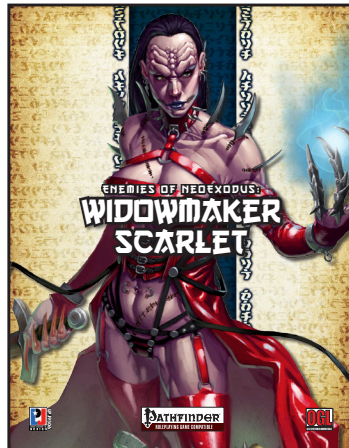
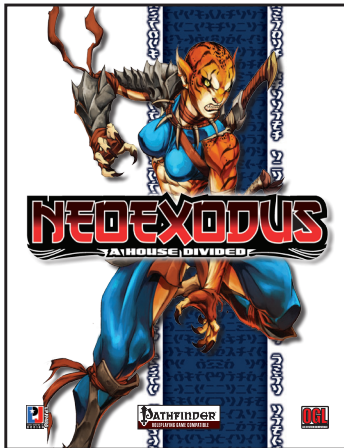
Back in Teryth, Large-Biter will be waiting with bated breath for the party to return, eager to hear Raxe's reaction to his letter. He will be shocked to hear that someone tried to sabotage the cynean and that nobody has any idea who the culprit might be. Once he hears of all the trouble the PCs went through on his behalf, he goes to get the group a gift: two each of *potions of protection from energy* (cold), *protection from energy* (fire), *protection from energy* (electricity), and *protection from energy* (acid).

The next adventure is up to the GM. The PCs can try one of the other sidequests for this Campaign Serial: *A Chill Wind*; *What Comes Before the First*; *Not of the Same Mind*; *To Not Serve Man*; or *Speaking the Same Language*. If the party is already level 4, or they're eager to move on, the GM should proceed to the omega adventure: *Dawn of a Thousand Wars*.

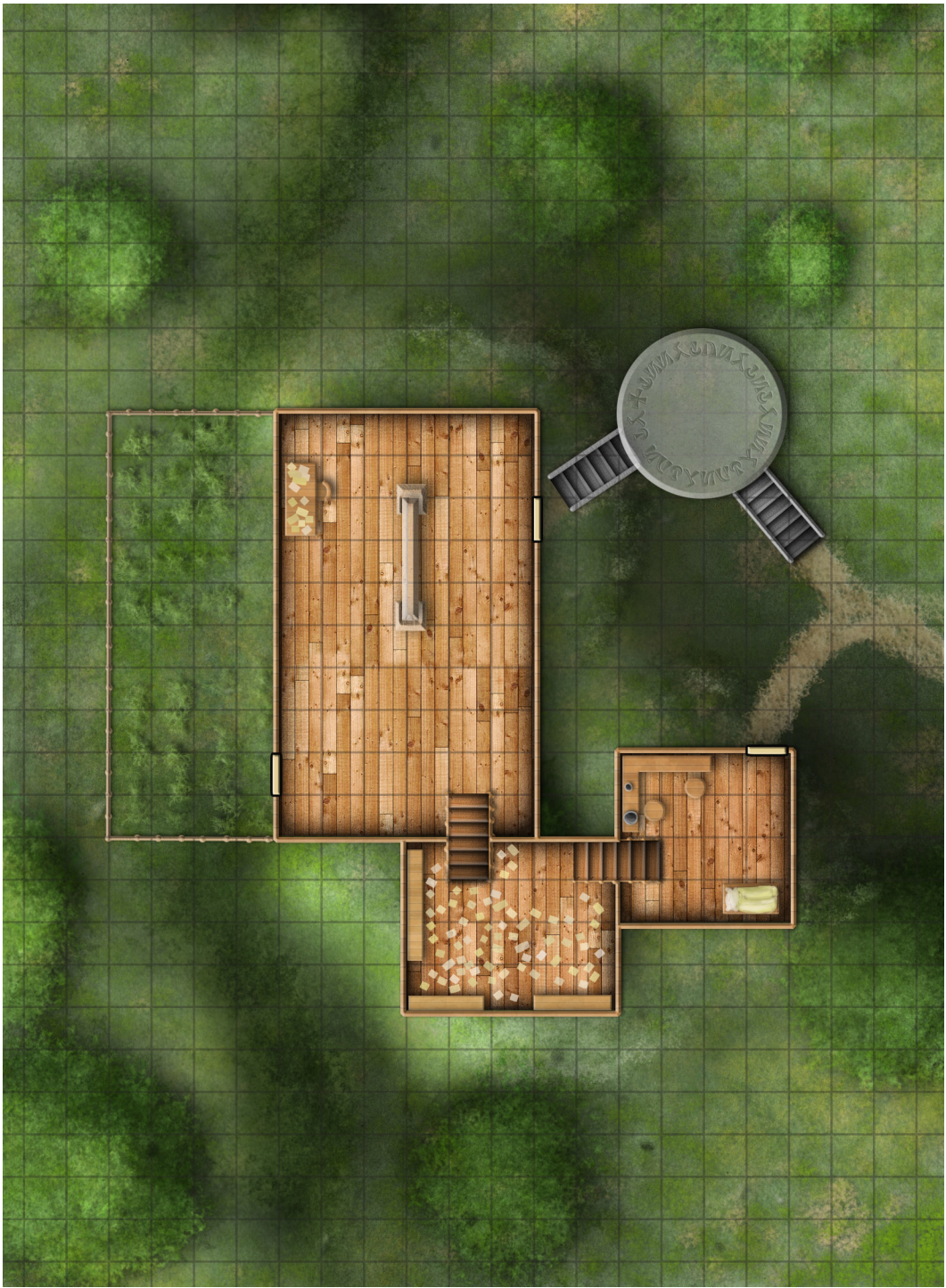
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CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

CAMPAIGN SERIAL SIDE TREK: IN HIS BAD BOOKS

The conjurer Raxe has made a terrible error, and now a powerful devil is bound to his home, trapping him inside! The party will have to work out how to banish the devil and his minions, then free the cynean from his panic room so they can finally ask him the questions they went there for in the first place.

This sidequest is the last in the Chronicle of the Gatekeepers Campaign Serial, and includes:

- An introduction to cyneans, huge crystalline humanoids who are masters of magicA new racial implant for cyneans, the crystalline curiosity