

# CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

CAMPAIGN SERIAL ALPHA: TO SAVE A SOUL



MICHAEL MCCARTHY | BRYAN SYME

**PATHFINDER**  
ROLEPLAYING GAME COMPATIBLE

# CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

## DESIGN & GAME DEVELOPMENT:

Michael McCarthy and Louis Porter Jr.

## EDITING:

Joshua Yearsley

## GRAPHIC DESIGN, LAYOUT & LOGO:

Louis Porter, Jr Design

## COVER & INTERIOR ART:

Bryan Syme

## CARTOGRAPHY

Tommi Salama

Louis Porter, Jr Design  
5580 SW 97th Terrace  
Cooper City, FL 33328  
LPJDesign.com

*NeoExodus created by Louis Porter Jr.*

*For supplemental material,  
visit Louis Porter Jr. Design website: [www.lpjdesign.com](http://www.lpjdesign.com)*

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## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

All worlds are connected. Sometimes, the links are obvious—such as when a traveler from one world lands on another—but at other times they are more subtle: like the Common language, or the humanoid form that pervades nearly all worlds, seeded by some distant, shared ancestor.

This ancestor visited such worlds through a network of technological and magical gateways, spanning the vast distances between them, some places physical and others less so—for not all worlds exist on the Material Plane. They accomplished all of this from their home, now known as Atlantis: exploring, settling, and trading across the multiverse in the blink of an eye.

Yet, as they flourished on many worlds, their home languished. Each year, fewer remained in Atlantis, choosing instead to join one of their countless frontier colonies. Even the vespans, an insect-like race created to serve them, took the initiative to settle on other worlds, leaving behind their former home for greener pastures.

But what of Atlantis? As the best among the Atlanteans left to pioneer entire other worlds, the idyllic city became more and more a haven for the paranoid and amoral. The city's remaining inhabitants claimed the other worlds were too dangerous and began cutting themselves off from their network, moving what few connections they could not divest themselves from to another world, Exodus.

Exodus, for its part, has no idea as to the source of the gates so abundant across its surface. Its nations—fledglings compared to the Atlanteans—saw them only as a great and mysterious boon, capable of facilitating trade and diplomacy across their world, and a subtle danger: for the Nexus Gateways can just as easily be used to travel to Exodus as around it...and not all visitors are benevolent.

Cut off from the network, Atlantis devolved further into paranoia. Insistent that another world would bring about their own demise, its people built great engines of war and destruction to protect themselves. The vespans, once mere servants, became their eyes and ears of the Atlanteans on other worlds; their workers, diplomats, and soldiers.

And, on a world far from Exodus, on the very doorstep of one of the Atlantean colonies, a war fully capable of causing that very demise began to brew.

With the destruction of their world imminent, the vespans inhabitants of the colony turned to the long-dormant Nexus Gateways for help. It was a vespan called Sodan who rekindled the first gateway and returned to Atlantis for aid in the dawning apocalypse.

As afraid of this war as they were vindicated by its existence, the Atlanteans sent forth their full strength onto this distant world—only to discover in terror that their tools of destruction weren't enough. But, rather than admitting defeat, Sodan charged the Atlanteans with reactivating their entire network and seeking help on every world there was.



Overnight, Sodor became, very nearly, the leader of Atlantis, directing the war effort and the search across all worlds. Wherever he went, he recruited the strongest warriors, the most ambitious leaders, the sharpest minds he could in pursuit of something—anything—that could stop the end of his world.

With the peoples of Exodus oblivious to the growing danger, its Nexus Gateways have been more active over the past weeks, months, and days than they have in two thousand years; the many portals are used to transport materials, soldiers, and brilliant minds of all sorts to and from Atlantis. Yet Exodus won't remain oblivious for long—worlds of all sorts are being drawn into the conflict, and the Nexus Gateways are becoming easier to open, letting more and more unintended creatures through each day.

On one of many worlds, Sodor's soldiers have uncovered a wizard so ambitious and unscrupulous as to experiment on the souls of the dead, Pushae, who claims each spirit holds a near-limitless source of power within, and strives to bend reality so as to offer this energy to the world of mortals. Seeing this "animancy" as a great asset to the war effort, Sodor recently offered him salvation from the persecution of his own world—if he joins them, much to the dismay of those interested in the fates of souls he has mangled.

## WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN SERIAL?

Unlike an Adventure Path, which contains a number of adventures the PCs must play in order, a Campaign Serial contains only two adventures which must be played in a specific order—specifically, Adventure Alpha and then Adventure Omega—as well as a number of optional sidequests, which may be played in any order, or skipped entirely, so long as they are played between Adventures Alpha and Omega. This gives the players and GM a great degree of freedom in how their adventure plays out, allowing them to play more or less of the Campaign Serial as time and interest permit.

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

When the funeral for a respected wizard is interrupted by a psychopomp claiming Merlet's soul never passed on, the party is tasked with tracking down the man responsible. This leads them to a long forgotten ruin, abandoned on a wooded hillside.

There, the PCs must fight through the dangers of the ruin. After a time, they are confronted by a group of vespan warriors waiting for a powerful magic gateway to recharge. These strange, insectoid men claim Pushae has been recruited to their leader's great cause.

Passing through the portal, the party finds themselves trapped on a distant world: Exodus. Here, they make a new, if strange, ally in the sasori Large-Biter, who has been tracking the activity of the Nexus Gateways and attempting to identify the origin of the aggressive insect men that have suddenly appeared on Exodus.

With the promise of more information to come should they aid him, Large-Biter and the party descend the dangerous mountain on which they appeared, toward a small trade city where the sasori has been staying.

## SIDEBAR: RACES OF EXODUS

*While it is assumed that the players aren't particularly familiar with Exodus and its unique races, there's no reason the PCs can't start play as mysterious dalrean, a bestial enuka, or a mystical cynean. These races call Exodus home, but the Campaign Serial doesn't specify where it begins, so there's no reason that an Exodus race can't also exist on another world, alongside elves, halflings, dwarves, and gnomes.*

Along the way, not only must the group contend with natural dangers, but also with the greater and greater shows of power by the vespans, each intent on keeping the PCs from recovering their prize, the same wizard the heroes are attempting to bring to justice.

Finally, the party reaches Teryth, where Large-Biter offers them a deal: they help him answer a few questions, and he provides them with the information they likely need to find the source of this "infestation" and finally catch their wizard.

## CHAPTER I: DEPARTURE TO ANOTHER WORLD

This Campaign Serial can begin, quite literally, anywhere. The PCs could be fresh-faced explorers, celebrated heroes, or rank-and-file members of an international adventuring guild. Whatever their origin, however, it is shared in part by another: the necromancer Pushae.

Pushae is not just any necromancer, but an animancer: a wizard who specializes in the manipulation of souls. For the past several months, he has drawn the attention of the PCs, and many others, for his particularly unscrupulous actions: stealing the souls of the recently dead, then maiming them as he searches for a way to harness the limitless energy he claims they each contain.

Several days ago, Pushae crossed the line from local menace to personal enemy of the PCs by seizing the soul of one close to them, their recently deceased benefactor, Merlet Chem. Rich, powerful, and warm-hearted, Merlet was a friend to many, including the PCs, and even those from other planes.

In fact, Pushae may have escaped this recent theft unnoticed if not for the visitation of a psychopomp at Merlet's funeral, who revealed the absence of Merlet's soul and put the animancer at fault.

Whether for justice, for a reward offered by Merlet's estate, or at the urging of their psychopomp visitor, the PCs soon find themselves tracking Pushae across the countryside, to a long-forgotten ruin on a secluded wooded hillside.

### A. THE GATEKEEPER RUIN

The Gatekeeper Ruin is ancient structure, magically maintained until little over two thousand years ago, when it was suddenly abandoned and left to be overtaken by nature.





### SIDEBAR: MERLET CHEM

*Though he was the uniting force in motivating the PCs to chase down Pushae, Merlet doesn't have any other real role to play in the Chronicle of the Gatekeepers Campaign Serial. If you're including this Campaign Serial as part of an ongoing campaign, feel free to replace him with any other NPC whose death and desecration might similarly unite the PCs.*

Despite its excellent construction, the years have not been particularly kind; windows have cracked and walls have collapsed, the floor is almost entirely overgrown by weeds and rubble, and entire trees have sprouted up through the remains.

What exterior walls remain are solid stone, two feet thick, or tempered, though clouded, glass (hardness 8, 10 hp). The original doors are missing, replaced by crude wooden constructions (hardness 3, 5 hp) added by the goblins living in area A2.

Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings average 20 feet high, slightly higher toward the center of the ruin, and a series of girders

mark where a second story might have once stood, 10 feet off the ground.

All areas except A4 and A7 are open to the outside and lit only by sunlight.

### A1. WOODED HILLSIDE

*For all the trouble he has caused, it's hard not to expect something grander, or at least more ominous, for the lair of an accomplished necromancer. Certainly the omnipresent and somewhat sticky black stone that peers out between every blade of grass is a little unnerving, but the abandoned building lurking on the hillside ahead of you is anything but imposing.*

*Despite its reclaim by the forest around it, the ascetic curves the building once boasted are still visible—even though much of the roof has fallen in, and the building's glass façade is filthy and cracked.*

*Yet, as you draw near, the ground suddenly shakes, and a muffled explosion comes from within.*

The explosion is the sound of the Nexus Gateway in A7 being realigned so as to allow Pushae to pass through, into Exodus.

While the PCs are approaching the building from the southwest, making A2 the most obvious route of entry, circling the building reveals easily accessible entrances to A3, A5, and A6.

A **DC 10 Survival** check identifies the prints of many Small humanoids; a **DC 20 Survival** check identifies that most of these tracks are goblinoid, but about a dozen pairs— belonging to some other race—go along with a single human-sized set of tracks.

## A2. GRABFINGER GOBLINS (CR 4)

*Once a wide-open room, this area now serves as an enclosed forest, with grass, brush, and small trees growing in a tangle from between the cracked tiles that were once the floor. Ramshackle huts have been built on either side of the area, on one side near a metal-lined trench, and on the other by a simple gate barring entrance to another room. Between them, a wide stairwell overgrown with brambles climbs up to a circular room ahead.*

The Grabfinger goblin tribe made their home here, though the vespans' passage through the area with Pushae nearly exterminated them. Six goblins lie dead between the door and the stairwell, impaled by dozens of small metallic spikes.

The few of the tribe who didn't die or flee hide in the trenches on the western side of the room, though they can be detected with a **DC 18 Perception** check. They will attack if approached, but otherwise remain in hiding.

### GOBLIN (4) CR 1/3 — 135 XP

**hp** 6 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

### GOBLIN COMMANDO CR 2 — 600 XP

**hp** 24 (goblin fighter 3; *Pathfinder Resource Document*)

A **DC 25 Perception** check, or any check specifically searching the trenches, reveals a narrow passage leading back into A4. Small creatures can squeeze through this space with minimal difficulty, but Medium creatures must make a **DC 15 Escape Artist** check.

The briars covering the stairs are annoying, but harmless— though the already unstable stairwell was rigged by the vespans to collapse if stepped upon.

### COLLAPSING STAIR TRAP CR 2

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

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** climb stairs; **Reset** none

**Effect** collapsing stairwell (2d6 falling damage); multiple targets (all targets on stairs)

**Treasure:** Most of the tribe's valuables were taken by those who fled. However, in the chief's hut, a masterwork warhammer serves as a stand for a human skull.

## A3. GOBLIN KENNEL (CR 3)

*The ground here is littered with fragments of bone, with only two patches of ground remaining clear. What might have been a window at one end of the room is missing entirely.*

This room serves as a kennel for the Grabfinger tribe's goblin dogs, which will attack any non-goblin who enters the room on sight.

### GOBLIN DOG (2) CR 1 — 400 XP

**hp** 9 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

**Treasure:** There is a masterwork longbow, with a pair of severed hands clutching it, and three +1 arrows. A single *potion of cure light wounds* lies forgotten nearby.

## A4. GOBLIN TROVE

*Despite the cramped quarters, a large stone gate dominates one wall of this room.*

Once a Nexus Gateway, the gate on this side of the room has been deactivated by the Gatekeepers. The Grabfinger goblin tribe now uses it to store their ill-gained goods.

This room is unlit.

**Treasure:** Scattered about are pouches of coins containing 653 cp, 715 sp, and 135 gp, alongside a *wand of protection from law* (41 charges) and a suit of banded mail armor.

## A5. THOROUGHFARE (CR 3)

*The ceiling of this huge circular chamber is entirely missing, as is the eastern wall, which has been reclaimed by a copse of trees and thorny bushes. To the west, stairs ascend to an empty door frame leading into a dark chamber.*

A month ago, an injured minotaur found this ruin and lay down to recover from his injuries, only to be killed in his sleep by the Grabfinger tribe. Pushae took a moment passing through here to animate the heavily decayed corpse as a skeleton.

Though the minotaur is a skeleton, it remains covered in rotting, bug-infested flesh. A **DC 15 Heal** or **Knowledge (religion)** check is required to identify it as a skeleton, not a zombie.

This room is littered with fist-sized rocks and shards of glass, making the entire chamber difficult terrain.

### SKELETAL MINOTAUR CR 3 — 800 XP

Skeleton Minotaur (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

NE Large undead (giant)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +0

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 17, touch 10, flat-footed 16 (+1 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 27 (6d8)



**Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +5**  
**DR** 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** cold, undead traits  
**Weakness** —

## OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.  
**Melee** 2 claws +7 (1d6+2), gore +2 (1d6+2)  
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

## TACTICS

**Morale** the skeletal minotaur fights to the death

## STATISTICS

**Str** 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10  
**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 20  
**Feats** Improved Initiative

The passageway from here to A7 is heavily obscured by trees and foliage, and a DC 22 Perception check is required to notice the passage without searching through the foliage directly.

**Treasure:** Lodged inside the minotaur's chest is the source of his original injuries, a +1 *adamantine crossbow bolt of seeking*.

## A6. BAT ROOST (CR 2)

*The northern wall of this room is missing, replaced by an enormous weeping willow that blocks nearly all light from entering in the room—though even the missing wall doesn't do anything to abate the distinct, acrid smell.*

The smell is a combination of bat guano and alchemical supplies, and it can be identified as such with a DC 25 Survival or DC 15 craft [alchemy] check. One of the Grabfinger tribe had been attempting to tame the giant bat that roosted here.

The goblin had even mostly succeeded, and a PC making a DC 17 Handle Animal check can soothe the bat and prevent it from attacking, which it will otherwise do once disturbed.

Very little light reaches this room, and even at midday it is never brighter than dim light.

## DIRE BAT CR 2 — 600 XP

**hp** 22 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

**Treasure:** In addition to the riding harness worn by the bat, there is a portable alchemist's lab, a bandolier holding five flasks of alchemist's fire, two tanglefoot bags, and 50 feet of silk rope.

## A7. DEPARTURE GATEWAYS (CR 3)

*The air in this room is electric, and the source is obvious: while three arches that fill the walls are nothing more than cold stone, the fourth dances with blue energy that shimmers across its threshold like silvery liquid.*

*Before the arch, two figures are crouched: men wearing insectoid masks, fiddling with curved blades mounted on their forearms.*

Having been inert for so long, this recently reactivated Nexus Gateway can transport only a handful of creatures at once. These vespan were selected to wait behind until the portal recharged.

They will turn to inspect the PCs when they enter, but make no aggressive movements unless the PCs make threats or move to attack. If addressed in the Common tongue, they will stand and then reply almost in unison.

One of the promises they made to Pushae to recruit him was freedom for persecution, and they assume that anyone following him is a bounty hunter or vigilante. They will be frank about their purpose here: they came to this world through the portal to recruit Pushae for "the great cause," and there is nothing the PCs can do about it. If asked who they answer to, their response is instant: they serve the Gatekeepers. If the PCs make a **DC 15 Diplomacy** check, they will further expand that the great cause is "the war against the end," the name of their leader is "Sodan," and they came "from the world beyond all portals," but that is the limit of their knowledge—like all vespan, they are not the sort to inquire as to the reasons or details of a plan.

Though there is no sunlight in this room, it remains lit by the blue energy filling the Nexus Gateway.

## VESPAN WARRIOR (2) CR 1 — 400 XP

**hp** 17 (page 13)

PCs who attempt to step through the portal before it reactivates will disappear, momentarily seeing a brown ruin amid brown mountains, before reappearing back in the square they had departed from, at the beginning of their next turn.

**Development** About five minutes after the encounter ends, the portal is reactivated from the other side: the blue energy suddenly grows taught, allowing the PCs to see a brown ruin amid brown mountains, as though through the surface of a pond.

When the PCs step through the portal, read or paraphrase the following text.

*The blue-silver surface of the portal flickers and reveals another landscape beyond: jagged brown mountains overlook a valley and a lake, beyond which a thriving metropolis reaches high into the sky. The distance between you and the other world's landscape seems no further than through a doorway—until you step through.*

*It lasts only an instant, but you sense some great vertigo: a distance nearly incomprehensible crossed in an instant. And then, the portal is behind you instead of ahead.*

**Story Award:** For passing through the portal to Exodus, award the PCs a bonus of 1,600 XP.

### SIDEBAR: WHERE ON EXODUS ARE THE PCs?

*The Grit Mountain Ruin stands almost precisely at the shared border of the Imperial Alliance, the Caneus Empire, and the Janus Horde, with the Imperial capital of Aremyhk visible a scant 150 miles to the north as the crow flies—though the main road travels around Lake Shill, fully tripling that distance for those on foot.*

## CHAPTER 2: WELCOME TO EXODUS

### B. GRIT MOUNTAIN RUIN

The story of this ruin is the same as the one on the PC's home world, though it was abandoned in a much more hostile environment. Now, only the Nexus Gateway remains standing more than a foot above the ground.

There is a crude path winding down the mountain from the gate cleared by the vespans, but for the PCs it is neither wide nor easy to traverse. Except where noted, a 5-foot wide path of hewn stone descends along the mountainside, surrounded by natural stone.

#### BI. GATE EXTERIOR (CR 2)

The vespans have cleared most of the rubble from a 30-foot square area, distinct amid the ruins, in front of the portal. One vespan, holding a Nexus Key, staggers away from the portal at the PCs' emergence before launching forward to attack without hesitation.

#### VESPAN LIEUTENANT

CR 2 — 600 XP

Advanced vespan (advanced template: *Pathfinder Resource Document*)

hp 21

**Treasure:** The vespan holds a *Nexus Key* (which won't see precise use until *Dawn of a Thousand Wars*), which he used to open the *Nexus Gate*. Once a PC takes hold of it, however, the gate snaps shut.

**Travel:** It takes about 20 minutes to travel from the ruin to the vespan base camp at B2.

#### B2. VESPAN BASE CAMP (CR 5)

*Silvery tents sit in a series of cleared squares on the mountainside. Spaces cleared of dust indicate whoever was staying here left recently.*

This had been the vespan base camp, though most of them had been through to clear out an hour ago, leaving only the three rearguards to collect their things.

A local predator, the manticore Zyraz, saw the vespans depart without taking everything, and swooped in to see if there was anything valuable left. When the PCs arrive, he is in one of the tents, and takes 10 on Stealth (for a 12) until one of the PCs is

### SIDEBAR: DOWN THE MOUNTAIN

*The remainder of this adventure focuses on the PCs descending the Grit Mountains from the Gatekeeper Ruin to the city of Teryth.*

*Each encounter area lists the distance, in travel time, to the next location the PCs will visit, assuming they use the vespan trail to descend the mountain at least.*

*The travel times assume the PCs travel overland at 30 feet per round or about 3 miles per hour (or about half this until the PCs reach B6). For parties moving consistently faster or slower than this, modify the travel times accordingly.*

close enough for him to attack or it sounds like someone is going to attack him.

#### ZYRAZ

CR 5 — 1,600 XP

Manticore (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

hp 57

On the second round of combat, Large-Biter (wearing a heavy cloak) appears over the nearby hill, firing at Zyraz. The sasori has been waiting for the manticore to leave for some time, but the new arrivals are too curious of an issue to pass up.

#### LARGE-BITER

CR 5 — 1,600 XP

hp 21 (page 13)

Once the battle has concluded, Large-Biter will make small talk with the PCs for a moment about the battle before asking what sorts of creatures they are, and then if they came through the Nexus Gateway, and if they are with the strange bug-men. Once the PCs have introduced themselves, Large-Biter will introduce himself in turn, then draw back his hood and proclaim that the PCs are very far from home.

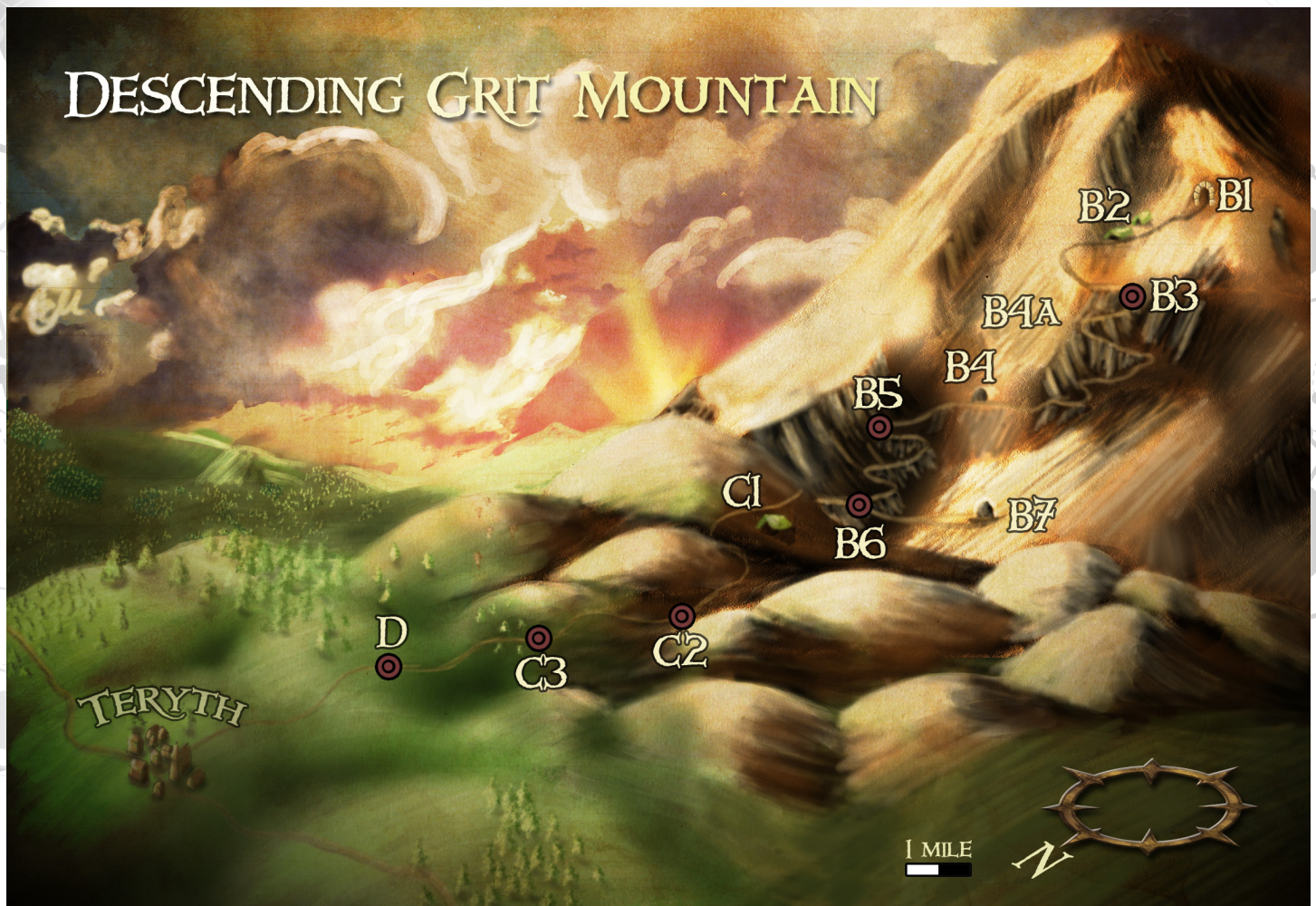
He will explain that he has climbed this mountain in an attempt to study the creatures who have been coming through, the bug-men, who appeared suddenly several months ago and have been causing trouble across Exodus as they hijack nearly every Nexus Gateway known, at least for a time.

Having missed his opportunity here, he suggests the party come back to the town where he is staying, to regroup—and perhaps to work together.

**Treasure:** The remains of the camp include three masterwork backpacks <sup>UE</sup>, four folding chairs <sup>UE</sup>, two sets of common manacles with keys, an everburning torch, three medium tents <sup>UE</sup>, and a campsite kit <sup>UE</sup>. Inside a locked (DC 30 Disable Device) chest is a collection of a hundred gold chits, individually wrapped in thin fabric, worth a total of 900 gp.

**Travel:** There are two routes available to the PCs from the base camp: straight down the cliff to B4 through area B4a, which might take as little as a single round, or the longer yet safer route





### SIDEBAR: WHERE DID PUSHAE GO?

Though the PCs are expected to make the journey by foot, like the vespans would, Pushae and his advance group simply *teleported* to the next Nexus Gateway, leaving no trail to follow or chance to catch up.

jackknifing down the mountain through area B3, which takes about two hours to reach area B4.

### B3. MOUNTAINSIDE DESCENT (CR 2)

*As the trail switchbacks down the mountainside, you note that the ground here is covered with immense, flat stone slabs.*

Basking in the heat here is a brown shocker lizard. It, along with several of its kin, lives in the crags nearby, surviving by hunting insects and rodents.

The lizard will hiss menacingly and crackle with electricity upon the PCs approach, but a PC making a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) will identify that the creature only wants to be left alone, and that it will not pursue unless attacked. A DC 15 Handle Animal check will calm the creature down for long enough to pass safely.

### SHOCKER LIZARD

CR 2 — 600 XP

hp 19 (Pathfinder Resource Document)

### B4A. CLIFF DESCENT

The cliff here is sheer, blasted smooth by the perpetual grit storm. Climbing up or down the 120-foot-tall cliff requires a DC 25 Climb check.

### B4. GRIT STORM (CR 4)

The Grit Mountains are known for their distinctive brown color, and so too for their unpredictable weather, even more volatile than most of Koryth. The mountains are prone to vicious dust storms, capable of picking up fist-sized stones and hurling them about like leaves.

While they range in duration, direction, and intensity depending on the season, a storm is brewing just down the mountains from the PCs, and it is climbing. A PC succeeding on a DC 15 Survival check can identify its approach, giving 2 rounds of warning before it takes effect.

*Almost without warning, winds begin whipping up the mountain, creating vortices filled with sand and rubble.*

There is a cave suitable for the party to take cover in approximately 200 feet down the trail from the point the grit

storm picks up, which can be spotted with a **DC 12 Perception** check. Like all trails on the mountain, the path here is uneven, making running impossible.

A DC 20 Survival check can create a makeshift shelter to guard the PCs from the bulk of the storm, protecting them from the first 3 points of damage each round.

On the first round, a cloud of dust sweeps over the party, doubling the DC of the Perception check and inflicting 1 subdual damage.

On the second round, the winds continue to pick up, doing 1d6 bludgeoning damage to all exposed characters.

On the third and fourth rounds, the party is at the heart of the dust storm, which pelts them with pebbles about an inch across. Moving more than 10 feet requires a **DC 15 Acrobatics** check, and exposed characters take 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

On the fifth round, there is a momentary lull in the storm.

On the sixth and seventh rounds, the party is again assaulted by the sandstorm, doing 1d6 damage and 1d6 nonlethal damage to each exposed character.

On the eighth round, the storm has moved past, and the winds subside.

For surviving the grit storm, the PCs gain 1,200 XP.

**Travel:** From this point, it will take the PCs one hour to descend to B5. Alternately, a DC 25 Perception check made while within the cave, described before, identifies an open mineshaft, which will lead after three hours of travel to B7.

## B5. SUSPICIOUS GIFT (CR 2)

*Sitting in the middle of the trail up ahead is a suspiciously clean silver case, about two feet on each side.*

The vespans are cunning; they have been aware almost since the moment the PCs emerged from the ruin that they are being hunted. Rather than engage them here in this disadvantageous terrain, they instead have left the PCs a small “gift” in the form of a large locked chest.

The chest itself is made of paper-thin metal (hardness 10, 50 hp) and is secured with an average lock (**DC 25 Disable Device** to open). Inside are small wrapped blocks of bread and dried meats. Opening the chest triggers a timer, and two rounds after it is opened it will explode.

### EXPLODING SUPPLIES TRAP

CR 2

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 26; **Disable Device** DC 26

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** open chest; **Reset** none

**Effect** explosion (2d6 fire damage, DC 11 Reflex save for half damage); multiple targets (all targets in a 15-ft. radius burst)

**Treasure:** If the PCs manage to disarm the trap before it destroys the cache, they can recover 10 rations. Either way, the chest remains undamaged and functions as a *bag of holding type I*.

## B6. ROAD

Here, the trail out of the mountain meets a wide, relatively well-maintained road. It hasn't been used in a few weeks (as the mine at B7 that it leads to has collapsed).

From this point onward, the path is normal ground.

**Travel:** Following the road into the mountains will lead the PCs to B7 after an hour and a half. Taking it out of the mountains and into the Corpselands toward C1 requires the same amount of time.

## B7. COLLAPSED MINESHAFT

There was once a small mining operation here, run by the Nelfasar and Nelfasar Mining Group in Teryth. However, to draw activity away from the Nexus Gateway, the vespans destroyed it about a week ago.

A DC 25 Perception check will discover three crates of raw ore amid the rubble, each weighing 20 pounds, caught in the collapse of the mine. They could be sold for 50 gp each, or turned in at the Nelfasar and Nelfasar Mining Group for 200 gp each.

## C. CORPSELANDS

The foothills of the Grit Mountains are known as the Corpselands, home to countless tombs, graves...and their protectors. Some wards are magical, some mechanical, but most common among them are the tomb's own residents, protecting the sites of their eternal rest as undead guardians.

The road winding through the Corpselands to Teryth is a dirt path that runs a mostly flat, and thus meandering, route through the hills. It doesn't approach any known tombs too closely, but that doesn't protect the trail from wandering dead.

## CI. GRAVE ROBBERS (CR 4)

*A group of armed figures ahead sit around a blazing fire, singing boisterous songs of victory.*

Despite the danger to themselves and others, there are always those brave enough to raid the tombs of the Corpselands. The group camped on the side of the road is an example of such, having recently raided a nearby tomb and returned the richer for it.

When the PCs approach, the group of tomb raiders will invite them, and even Large-Biter, to join them for a celebratory drink—even offering each PC a platinum coin from their sizable haul of a hundred similar coins.

Large-Biter will decline, suggesting such baubles are cursed as often as not, and any PC succeeding a **DC 15 Knowledge (religion)** check agrees.



The grave robbers refuse to admit their plight, and should the PCs remain for longer than 1d4 minutes, the camp will be attacked by 6 skeletons and 4 zombies.

### **SKELETON (6)** **CR 1/3 — 135 XP**

**hp** 4 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

### **ZOMBIE (4)** **CR 1/2 — 200 XP**

**hp** 12 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

Thankful for the help, the grave robbers offer the PCs some of the tools they had been using to clear out the ruins so far: a *wand of cure light wounds* (27 charges), and a *wand of hide from undead* (22 charges).

### **TEN-FINGER TOM** **CR 1 — XP 400**

Human rogue 2 (as skulking brute, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*)

**hp** 19

### **SANDRA LOBAN** **CR 1 — XP 400**

Human cleric 2 (as war priest, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*)

**hp** 21

### **PETR BAZAROV** **CR 1 — XP 400**

Human fighter 2 (as daring bravo, *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game NPC Codex*)

**hp** 21

Each cursed coin the PCs have with them attracts the unquiet dead. Each hour the party remains in the Corpselands, roll 1d4 for each coin. For each 4 rolled, the PCs are attacked by a skeleton or zombie risen from nearby.

Declining to take a coin avoids the curse, and discarding a coin is sufficient to rid oneself of the curse. Doing either grants 600 XP minus any XP earned from defeating attracted skeletons or zombies.

**Travel:** From here it takes only 20 minutes to reach C2.

### **C2. SKELETAL HAND (CR 3)**

*Lying in the center of the road ahead is a severed skeletal hand. Normally, such a thing wouldn't even be worth noting, were it not for the ink-black stain on the ground surrounding it.*

Though most assume each undead creature wandering the Corpselands was once a whole individual, the necromantic energy here is so strong that it can transform even a single stray bone into an entire walking skeleton.

This hand once belonged to a skeleton struck down by the grave robbers at C1, and it has become sufficiently charged with energy so as to animate itself.

The PCs get a single round to strike at the hand (AC 8, 1 hp) before it sinks into the ground, after which the skeletons that the bones become burst from the ground and charge.

### **SKELETON (5)** **CR 1/3 — 135 XP**

**hp** 4 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

**Travel:** Continuing along the road, the PCs will reach area C3 in only 30 minutes.

### **C3. WANDERING DEAD (CR 2)**

*A lonely man in a tattered purple robe strides purposefully toward you.*

The Corpselands not only serves as a graveyard for the ancient dead, but also as an often-revered burial site for those who can afford to be interred here. As a result, undead hunters of dead flesh aren't particularly uncommon, drawn here by the scent of fresh death.

### **GHAST** **CR 2 — 600 XP**

**hp** 17 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

**Treasure:** The ghastr wears an amulet in the shape of an open hand made of dull green metal, with purple veins. It functions as both a *hand of the mage* and a *golembane scarab*, and occasional wordless whispers can be heard from within.

**Travel:** Following the road northward, the PCs will meet the vespan at area D after about two hours.

## **CHAPTER 3: A HERO'S WELCOME**

### **D. KORYTH STEPPE (CR 6)**

Most of Koryth is a steppe—flat grassland stretching for many miles in each direction without interruption by more than the occasional cliff or river—and the land just below the Corpselands is no different.

By the time the PCs exit the Corpselands, the vespan will have already brought Pushae to safety and returned to confirm the fate of their rearguard, whom they assume to have gone missing.

Like those in the Gatekeeper Ruin, these vespan are fairly confident there is danger coming from those who directly oppose Pushae's actions in his original world. Unlike the rearguard, though, they are certain that the PCs are dangerous, and they intend to put an end to the threat they pose to Sodor's grand effort.

*In the distance, a cloud of dust rises into the sky: the sign of a mounted party riding at a high speed—directly toward you. As they draw nearer, their features sharpen: large, insectoid eyes and antenna, strange wrist-mounted blades, and glowing armor segments. They stop a hundred feet away, and a single one*

dismounts, causing his horse to vanish into the air as he does, and begins to approach on foot.

A DC 17 Sense Motive check will reveal that though the approaching vespan gives the impression of parley, those in the back are readying weapons, as though they intend to open fire the moment their leader reaches the party.

### VESPAN LIEUTENANT CR 2 — 600 XP

Advanced vespan (advanced template: *Pathfinder Resource Document*)

hp 21

### VESPAN WARRIOR (4) CR 1 — 400 XP

hp 17 (page 13)

**Travel:** From the point where the PCs are attacked by the vespans, it is about 2 hours of travel to reach Teryth.

## ARRIVING IN TERYTH

Despite several harrowing days on the road, the PCs will eventually arrive in Teryth, a small trade town resting on the northern edge of the Grit mountain range.

As the party approaches, Large-Biter will stop any non-humans among them and recommend a disguise, even something as simple as a hooded cloak. As Teryth is one of the closest Imperial towns to the Janus Horde, tensions here always run high, and tolerance of non-human races are even lower than normal.

## TERYTH

NG small town

**Corruption** +0; **Crime** +0; **Economy** +0; **Law** +0; **Lore** +2; **Society** +0

**Qualities** Pious (Sanguine Covenant), Rumormongering Citizens

**Danger** +0

**Demographics**

**Government** autocracy

**Population** 849 (99% human, 1% tiefling)

**Notable NPCs**

Mayor Artur Cormac (NG male human aristocrat 6)

Mother Leanne (NG female human cleric of Makash 7)

**Marketplace**

**Base Value** 1,000 gp; **Purchase Limit** 5,000 gp; **Spellcasting** 5th

**Minor Items** 3d4; **Medium Items** 1d6; **Major Items** —

Though there is little trade between the Imperial Alliance and the Janus Horde, individual border cities do not share the same simmering hostility as their host nations. Though cross-border trade of weapons and magic is prohibited, brave merchants interested in trading more common goods and crafts are typically left unmolested by the soldiers that patrol the borders between the two nations.

Teryth also serves as a way station on one of the few safe routes between the Caneus Empire and Koryth, driving the bulk of the

city's traffic. Interested parties can travel directly north to one of several small ports that ferry across the lake to the city directly, or they can take the main, yet more circumnavigating, road around Lake Shill.

Though Teryth's main commodity is hospitality—there are dozens of inns, as many taverns, and small shrines to each of the branches of the Sanguine Covenant—the city is surprisingly lacking in diversity. Almost daily it sees members of Exodus's other nations and races, but with the constant pressure from the nearby Janus Horde, its human inhabitants have unusually low tolerance for non-humans. No members of other races have permanent residences within the city itself, though some do live nearby.

Yet, while they have little interest in allowing non-humans to live among them, Terythans are welcoming enough not to openly harass anyone but the most alien or off-putting of other races, including the rat-like cavians (for more details, see *Not of the Same Mind*).

## NOTABLE LOCATIONS

Though Teryth offers a variety of inns, taverns, and stores, a handful of locations are likely to draw more attention from the PCs than others.

**The Bookmark:** A cozy library and inn far from the main thoroughfare, this is where Large-Biter is staying, and where he recommends the PCs join him. The rooms are small but well kept, and there is no in-house dining (though two competing restaurants have sprung up directly across the street), but other than Large-Biter and the owner, Alyssa Eland (female old human wizard 2), the PCs will be alone in the inn, a rarity in the trade city.

**The Drinking Pit:** A large, ramshackle building near the center of town, it is not only one of the more successful drinking establishments in town, but it also serves as a safe place for people to blow off steam through bare-knuckle boxing matches. Its owner, Lydia Steelheart (female human brawler 8), claims there has never been a serious injury in her establishment, despite regular investigations inquiring into people who go missing after the matches are over.

**Sametian Horses:** With an outpost on both east and west ends of town, Sametian Horses is a stable that offers precisely what its name says: some of the highest-quality horses on Exodus. Run by an exile from the Horde, Mikak (male human expert 3) began his business here three decades ago with only two stallions to his name, and has grown to become a respected member of the community and successful horse breeder.

**Nelfasar and Nelfasar Mining Group:** Owned by Dominion-native brother and sister Moham (male human expert 4) and Shamim (female human commoner 6), the “N and N mining group” has had passable success mining in the Grit mountain range for the rare metals and stones that are more common there than elsewhere. Recently, however, an act of sabotage collapsed their most successful mineshaft (located at B7), forcing them to reevaluate if they should leave their business here open.



If the PCs have visited B7, Moham will pay them 300 gp for updated information on the site. If the party discovered the crates there, but didn't bring them back, Moham will instead offer them 600 gp. If the PCs even went so far as to bring the crates with them from the mining site, Moham will pay 400 gp for each crate, as well as the reward for updated information. Informing the mining company of the state of the mine earns the party 400 XP.

**Market Dome:** Though there are a number of all-goods stores in Teryth, none rival the market dome. Built as a single freestanding stone dome, so as to better withstand the country's unusual weather, this market packs a dizzying array of temporary stalls, manned by merchants passing through the city, who buy and sell with one another as well as with interested inhabitants of Teryth. There is no real leader of the dome, and other than the bans on the sale of weapons and on outright violence, most laws are enforced irregularly at best. Some people like to compare the market dome here in Teryth with the Frost Stone far to the west in the Grit Mountains, even going so far as to claim that long-faded glyphs once covered its surface.

**Steelwares:** As trade of weapons across the border to the Janus Horde is strictly illegal, the production and sale of weapons is carefully monitored by a small, dedicated unit of Imperial Janissaries. Here the PCs will likely come under the closest scrutiny and have their racial identities closely questioned.

Non-humans have to pay an additional 15% mark-up to purchase weapons here, and races not native to Exodus must pay an additional 15% atop that.

**Church of Makash:** An otherwise modest building with a three-story-tall bright green roof, the Church of Makash is the dominant church of Teryth. Lead by Mother Leanne (NG female human cleric of Makash 7), the church fosters familial bonds within the community. This is one main reason why non-humans are less welcome in Teryth: for those of other races have other families of their own, and they are not part of the Teryth community.

Interestingly to all, Leanne's own son isn't truly human—but a tiefling. She refuses to speak of the circumstances of his birth, claiming that he was sent as a test for the community.

Mother Leanne's acolytes serve as healers and midwives for the inhabitants of the city, while Mother Leanne oversees the maintenance of the church, daily services, and political matters, including overseeing the churches of the Sanguine Covenant's other six venerated.

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Once the PCs are settled into Teryth, Large-Biter will propose a deal: they want to find their missing soul-mangling wizard, and he wants to figure out what his abductors are doing with the Nexus Gateways. If the PCs do some footwork for him, they can learn some things—which he will pay for with more information of his own.

From this point, the next adventure is up to the GM. The PCs can play any number of the sidequests for this Campaign Serial: A



*Chill Wind; What Comes Before the First; Not of the Same Mind; In his Bad Books; To Not Serve Man; or Speaking the Same Language.* These are all optional, however, and while they reveal a great deal about both the Gatekeepers and Exodus, they can be safely skipped if the PCs are more eager to move the plot forward than to explore this strange new world.

If the PCs are eager to jump to the end of this Campaign Serial, the GM should proceed to Adventure Omega: *Dawn of a Thousand Wars*.

## VESPAN

*This insectoid creature stands with the rough shape of a man, though there could be no mistaking it for one, with its segmented body and exposed musculature strung between chitinous plates.*

*Two independent sets of eyes, one large and one small, glow with some internal light from the front of a pointed face, just above a pair of sharp mandibles.*

### VESPAN WARRIOR

CR 1 — 400 XP

LE Small monstrous humanoid

**Init** +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +4

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

**hp** 17 (2d10+2)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

**Weakness** vulnerability to compulsions

#### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** trophedon +1 (1d8), parvatrophedon +1 (1d6) or bite +2 (1d4)

**Ranged** string rifle +5 (2d4; range 20 ft.)

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## STATISTICS

**Str** 11, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 9

**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 13

**Feats** Two-Weapon Fighting

**Skills** Climb +5, Craft (weapons) +7, Intimidate +4, Perception +4, Stealth +11, Survival +4

**Languages** Common

**SQ** glowing segments

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## ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, squad (4–6), or colony (30–80)

**Treasure** NPC gear (trophedon, parvatrophedon, string rifle, other treasure)

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## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Glowing Segments (Ex):** All vespans glow with an internal bioluminescence, typically affecting their eyes, chest, and shoulders. As a swift action, they may increase the intensity of this glow in any combination of their segments to that of a torch, or suppress it entirely, for a number of rounds equal to their Intelligence modifier.

**Vulnerability to Compulsion (Ex):** Vespans are hard-wired to follow instructions put to them, regardless of their source. They can be affected by mind-affecting spells and effects as though they were members of any race, and they do not receive an additional save when instructed to perform an obviously self-destructive task unless such a task also directly endangers another vespan.

Vespans are, many would say, the perfect servants. They are clever while lacking true sentience, small without being feeble, and adept at moving about underfoot without obstructing. Others say, however, that their bipedal shape mixed with drastically insectoid features, or their tendency to unnerve natural animals, make them unpleasant servants at best—but excellent soldiers.

Typical vespans are no more outwardly different than two ants: there is very little variation in their two-jointed legs, clawed humanoid fingers, or wasp-waisted torsos, and absolutely no visible difference in their four-eyed insectoid faces. Yet, between different castes of vespans, the differences are so staggering that it can be hard to believe they are members of the same race.

The Gatekeepers bred each caste for a particular task: typical vespans exist for simple manual labor or front-line fighting. Goliath vespans, who can stand nine feet tall and weigh over a ton, are for heavy labor and breaking down an enemy's fortifications. Hiveminder vespans are unlike their kin in that they are truly self-aware, to better lead colonies, coordinate their kin, and plan assaults that involve more than simple brute force or overwhelming numbers.

While they are a servile race by nature, purely vespan cities do exist, typically founded by hiveminders who have been released from service or rebelled from it. These colonies are architectural and bureaucratic wonders, and extend as far belowground as they do above. Each member of such a colony knows its place, even the hiveminder, and any breach of protocol is subject to an immediate and critical evaluation.

When a vespan loses its superior, it typically lashes out at everything around it. The duration of such “tantrums” varies from hours to months, suggesting a greater degree of independent thought than most consider vespans to have, but they always end with the vespan seeking some new superior. It is not unheard of for a vespan who loses its superior on a world distant from its home to become enamored with a cause or charismatic individual, and begin to worship them fanatically.

## NEW EQUIPMENT

Vespans make use of a number of unique weapons to wage war on behalf of the Gatekeepers.

**Trophedon:** Mounted to a bracer instead of to a hilt, this long, slightly curved blade runs along the outside of the bearer's arm, from the knuckle to about eight inches beyond his elbow. A trophedon requires two rounds to draw and don, but while so equipped it leaves the wielder's hand free for simple manual tasks such as opening doors. More complex tasks can be performed while wearing a trophedon, but doing so imposes a –2 circumstance penalty, as does holding anything in the same hand while using the trophedon to attack. A trophedon cannot be disarmed.

**Parvatrophedon:** This thinner, lighter version of the trophedon has a blade that doesn't extend beyond the wearer's elbow.

**Sting Rifle:** Though the resemblance to a small rifle is more obvious than a large beetle, sting rifles are actually highly specialized living creatures. When a sting rifle is pointed and its trigger squeezed, it fires a blast of tiny, almost metallic quills. A typical sting rifle, so long as it is fed, regenerates one unit of ammunition per day, and it can store up to five shots worth of ammunition. Any character proficient with firearms is proficient with sting rifles. Though sting rifles are living creatures, they can be enchanted and enhanced as though they were weapons.

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## NEXUS GATEWAY, MINOR ARTIFACT

**Aura** Strong conjuration; **CL** 20th

**Slot** —; **Weight** 3,000 lbs.

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## DESCRIPTION

A massive arch of stone is etched with complex markings and small metallic dials, a *Nexus Gateway* is a portal capable of opening a passage through the Nexus Pathways to anywhere in the multiverse.

To activate a *Nexus Gateway*, a creature must be holding a *Nexus Key* or succeed a DC 25 Spellcraft check, while identifying their target location.



## NEW WEAPONS

Exotic Light Melee Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
Parvatrophedon	2 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20	—	2 lbs.	S	—
Exotic One- Handed Melee Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
Trophedon	5 gp	1d6	1d8	19–20	—	4 lbs.	S	—
Exotic Ranged Weapon	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range	Weight	Type	Special
Sting Rifle	400 gp	2d4	2d6	×3	20 ft.	6 lbs.	P	—

To see how well the gateway works, roll d% and consult the following percentile table, referring to the following information for definitions of the terms on the table.

Travel between gates on the same planet grants a +25 circumstance bonus on the activation roll, as does the target location being another *Nexus Gateway*.

**On Target:** You appear where you want to be.

**Off Target:** The *Nexus Gateway* opens elsewhere, typically a different *Nexus Gateway* on the same planet as the target.

**Wrong World:** The *Nexus Gateway* opens to another world, somewhere else in the multiverse entirely.

**The Void:** Something has gone wrong, and the portal opens to the void between places. This can lead to any manner of unpleasant side effects, including blasts of freezing vacuum or unnatural creatures stepping through.

1–20%	21–45%	46–95%	96–100%
The void	Wrong world	Off target	On target

While active, a successful DC 20 Use Magic Device check can adjust the portal by 20 points in either direction, though doing so duplicates the effect of opening into the void for that round.

### DESTRUCTION

A Nexus Gate can be permanently disabled only through a special ritual carefully guarded by the Gatekeepers.

### NEXUS KEY, MINOR ARTIFACT

**Aura** Strong conjuration; **CL** 20th  
**Slot** —; **Weight** 2 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

A foot-wide brass ring, crossed by a handle wrapped in leather, and encircled by dozens of irregular outcroppings, a *Nexus Key* is a powerful focus for teleportation—and *Nexus Gateways* in particular.

Each *Nexus Key* is bound to a particular pair of *Nexus Gateways*, and when used to connect those two particular gateways makes travel always on target.

Similarly, when used as a focus for any spell with the teleportation subtype, it eliminates the chance of appearing off target or suffering a mishap; instead, the affected creatures land on target or in a similar location, respectively.

Finally, once per day a *Nexus Key* can be used as a melee weapon to strike a conjured creature, affecting it as per *banishment*.

### DESTRUCTION

If a *Nexus Key* is used to open a portal between its attuned gates, then placed inside and the connection is severed, the *Nexus Key* is destroyed.

## RACIAL IMPLANTS

Implants are special type of magic item that doesn't require a slot, but instead must be surgically implanted into a character for its magic to function. Like most magic items, the magic of an implant interferes with that of others; while a character has multiple implants, none of them work.

To attach or remove an implant, a character must make a Heal check against the implant DC of the implant. Failing this check does 1 Constitution damage to the target and causes the attempt to attach or remove the implant to fail. Attempting to install an implant on yourself imparts a -5 circumstance bonus to the Heal check.

### SASORI PLATE

**Aura** faint transmutation; **CL** 12th  
**Slot** implant; **Price** 12,000 gp; **Weight** 2 lbs.  
**Implant DC** 20

### DESCRIPTION

Roughly ovoid, this rough brown scale is about a foot across and is implanted into the back or chest.

A *sasori plate* embodies what the sasori are. It grants the bearer a +2 racial bonus to Wisdom, increases their natural armor by 1, gives the ability to speak Sasori, and grants a +2 racial bonus on all saves made against poison. If the wearer already has a racial resistance against poison, it instead increases that resistance by 2.



## CREATION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, barkskin, owl's wisdom;  
**Cost** 6,000 gp

## LARGE-BITER

No stranger to Koryth, or any other region of Exodus, Large-Biter is as ambitious as they come, giving any mystery he comes across his entire focus and dedication for as long as it takes for him to solve, earning himself a reputation for taking on, and occasionally even solving, problems thought far too large for a single person.

### LARGE-BITER

**CR 5 — 1,600 XP**

Male sasori empiricist (investigator) 5 (*Pathfinder Resource Document*)

N Medium humanoid (sasori)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

### DEFENSE

**AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

**hp** 21 (5d8–5)

**Fort** +1, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7 (+9 to disbelieve)

**Defensive Abilities** unfailing logic

### OFFENSE

**Spd** 30 ft.

**Melee** unarmed +4 (1d3+1)

**Ranged** +1 shortbow +7 (1d6+1)

**Special Attacks** analyze opponent, inspiration (8), studied combat +2, studied strike

**Investigator Extracts Prepared** (Concentration +8)

2nd—*alchemical allocation*, *alter self*, *undetectable alignment*

1st—*crafter's fortune*, *endure elements*, *expeditious retreat*, *keen senses*, *shield*

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Large-Biter drinks his extracts of *expeditious retreat* and *alchemical allocation*.

**During Combat** Large-Biter withdraws to fight at range, but keeps a close eye on his allies so he can heal them with potions if need be.

**Morale** Large-Biter aims to avoid combat unless he has a distinct advantage. If forced into combat, he flees once he takes melee damage—and then plots revenge.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 8, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 18

**Feats** Dodge, Extra Inspiration, Improved Unarmed Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Craft (alchemy) +16, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Perception +11, Sense Motive +11, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +11;

**Racial Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics, +4 Stealth

**Languages** Common, Cynean, Exodite, Prymidian, Sasori

**SQ** alchemy, ceaseless observation, investigator talent (effortless aid, expanded inspiration), keen recollection, trapfinding +2, vermin affinity

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure light wounds* (4), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of nondetection*, *potion of tongues*, *potion of water breathing*, *scroll of detect magic*, *scroll of detect poison*, *scroll of stabilize*; **Other Gear** +1 short bow, +1 chain shirt, cloak of resistance +1, handy haversack, hand of the mage, trail rations (4), everburning torch, 280 gp

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Analyze Opponent (Ex):** Large-Biter specializes in studying individual opponents. As a swift action, he may make a Perception check against a target within 30 feet, with a DC of the target's CMD. If successful, Large-Biter gains +1 to attack and damage rolls against that target. This bonus lasts for a number of minutes equal the sasori's Wisdom modifier (minimum 1). If the check fails, the sasori cannot attempt to analyze the same opponent again.

**Vermin Affinity (Ex):** Sasori get a +2 racial bonus on all saves and skill checks involving creatures of the vermin type.

**Wealthy (Ex):** Large-Biter is particularly well equipped. He has equipment as a PC of his level, instead of as an NPC. This increases his CR by 1.

To a human, Large-Biter's most distinguishing features are those of his sasori heritage. Resembling a cross between a man and a giant scorpion, he is covered with brown chitin, has two clawed fingers on each hand, and sports beady red eyes, which peer out from beneath the natural carapace that crests his front-facing head.

For those with more intimate knowledge of sasori biology, there are subtle differences in Large-Biter: he is tall and stands unusually straight for a sasori, so he looks to tower over most of his kin. And while he is covered with the tribal markings of his family, they are further inscribed with mathematical equations



and verses of poetry, which he feels describes his journey through life, not just where and to whom he was born.

He considers his youth, spent under his given name Ko'sk T'kart, to be fairly typical for his race: born into a small clan in the Wildlands of Bal far to the north, he received tutelage in dozens of subjects, from math and language to history and astronomy. When he came to age at 14, he volunteered to travel Exodus to learn what he could of the world, and was sent out into the world with a small book of secrets—the sasori equivalent of a pack full of trade goods—to make his way.

For the first few years away from his clan, he traveled from community to community, learning small things from them, but more about the nature of such travel: it was dangerous. And so he joined a group of traveling merchants for the safety in numbers it would provide.

He immediately realized something was wrong with his caravan, and even before they had made a single stop, he had discovered why: under their innocent guise, they were transporting weapons and military secrets from the Imperial Alliance to Sanat, in the Janus Horde.

As he was preparing to confront the caravan master about the secrecy, they were set upon by a band of Men-At-Arms, elite Imperial soldiers, who had been hunting this group of smugglers for some time.

Ko'sk surrendered immediately, and doing so saved his life, for the other members of the caravan were slaughtered to a man. He was taken prisoner and interrogated for what he later discovered was eight days, just to ensure he hadn't been party to the secrets the others had been slain to protect. Eventually, he was released alone and unarmed into the wilderness.

Yet rather than take the event as a personal insult, or even hold it against the Imperial Alliance or those who imprisoned him, Ko'sk's outlook on the world was revolutionized. He had seen first-hand how valuable even a little piece of information could be, and he learned the dangers of aligning too closely with any one group, or even one ideal.

He adopted the view that one must spend information to make information, for people are more willing to share if they receive something of value in return: a strategy that could only work with an information broker, as a secret only loses a fraction of its value when it is told.

Yet while this approach brought him great success in the information trade, it did not satisfy his search for greater truths. Whenever he would hear of a great mystery that needed to be unraveled, he would drop everything to go explore the mystery, even if it was dangerous.

To aid him in his grand schemes, he made an alliance with a group of adventurers as a patron and fellow explorer. They were the ones who gave him the name Large-Biter, after months of grander and grander mysteries that he brought them to help him unravel.

As the years passed and they saw adventure and failure together, Large-Biter began to feel a deeper connection to one member of the group, only to have his romantic advances spurned.

Rather than endure the shame of continuing to work with the group—especially as in his heart he truly knew his paramour never felt the same way—he parted ways and set off once again on his own.

### **CAMPAIGN ROLE**

Large-Biter will serve as a patron and guide for the PCs in the Chronicle of the Gatekeepers. In fact, each of the sidequests involves the PCs performing some task for Large-Biter in exchange for information about their current predicament.

Much of the information he shares with the PCs is particularly valuable, but he knows full well that these trades serve his pursuit of answers to questions that have existed for as long as civilization has on Exodus. He even offers to help bodily, if such help is truly required, to best aid the PCs in determining the true origin of the Nexus Gateways—and the truth of what is going on.

# **NEOEXODUS**

## **CAMPAIGN SETTING**

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**THE WORLD OF EXODUS NEEDS HEROES...**







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# CHRONICLE OF THE GATEKEEPERS

## CAMPAIGN SERIAL ALPHA: TO SAVE A SOUL

In the search for the soul-mangling wizard to bring him to justice for his crimes, the adventurers track him to a long-forgotten ruin, only to discover that their quarry has fled not just the kingdom, but their world entirely!

Learning that his escape was made possible by a race of militaristic wasp-men, who insist that his freedom from persecution serves the greater purpose of a group known as the Gatekeepers, the heroes follow the wizard through the portal and find themselves trapped on a distant world, abounding with new opportunities, allies, and dangers.

Yet, even as the adventurers work their way across the dangerous landscape to a slim chance at safety, the Gatekeepers begin to array themselves against the party with greater and greater shows of power, raising far more questions than they answer.

This adventure is the beginning of the Chronicle of the Gatekeepers Campaign Serial, and includes:

- An introduction to the world of Exodus, home of the NeoExodus campaign setting.
- Three new weapons: the wrist-mounted trophedon and parvatrophedon, and the long-distance sting rifle.
- Two new artifacts: the Nexus Gateway and the Nexus Key.
- A new type of magical item, the racial implant, which allows PCs to infuse themselves with the qualities held dear by members of another race.
- Stats for the wasp-like vespans, whose cunning and cruelty are matched only by their willingness to serve their mysterious masters.