



Ignorance Is Bliss

Adventure 2: What Lies Beyond Reason
Adventure Path

An adventure for 4th level characters

by Micah Watt

Ignorance is Bliss

Adventure 2 for the What Lies Beyond Reason Adventure Path

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The Nature of Villainy

What makes a 'good' villain?

It's a difficult question, because villains can have varied roles and need to be appropriate for their intended use.

What Lies Beyond Reason relies very heavily on its villains, the dynamics between them as antagonists, and the dynamics between them and the heroes.

Ignorance is Bliss unveils all three major antagonists for the adventure path. Triast and Damien have been introduced in the prologue, playing only small - but pivotal - parts. *Ignorance* draws both out and into the spotlight. By the end of the adventure the players have no doubt that these characters have large roles to play in the over arching story. The Echo of Faith is revealed for the GM but not the players. She is the villain that the players get to slowly uncover in stages, hopefully culminating in a major 'plot twist' discovery that she's been hiding among them as a supposed ally.

What you might find unusual about this campaign is that for all the harm they cause, only one of the villains is truly evil, and all of them have complex and logical (albeit twisted) reasoning behind their actions.

Damien represents the downward spiral villainy in justifying actions for the 'greater good', where the ends justify the means. He sees himself as a hero, but is a villain by circumstance. His role is to be a cautionary tale to the heroes. He is what they could become. His is a story of redemption, or tragic sacrifice, depending on player action.

Triast represents the villainy in narrow minded dedication to an ideal, particularly when that ideal is pursued irrespective of the consequences surrounding it. Triast is loyal, trustworthy, honest and righteous - but ultimately misguided. His role is to be the 'obvious' villain, and can be brought to see the harm in zealous dedication, or pushed deeper into his fanatical devotion.

The Echo represents true evil. Not the shallow 'rampant, directionless destruction for the sake of destruction' evil, but the dangerous, cunning, patient and meticulous evil of a creature driven to atone for past sins at the expense of all else. The Echo doesn't care about consequence to herself or others so long as she can correct the great betrayal she perpetrated. Her role is to end the world unless she is stopped. There is no redeeming her.

What Lies Beyond Reason, as a story, holds up - I believe - only because the villains are complicated. If they were flat, oiled moustache twirling EVIL villains then the story would be one-dimensional and insipid. What makes a villain compelling is that they have reasons for their actions. The best villains are the ones the reader sympathizes (or at least empathizes) with. The best villains are justified, even if their justifications are warped.

The player characters are the most important characters in this story. They are the heroes. But the villains run a very close second. They give the heroes meaning, and provide them with the opportunity to be truly heroic.

Micah Watt

Pyromaniac Press

Adventure Background

The Echo of Faith

The Echo of Faith is the main antagonist of the entire Adventure Path *What Lies Beyond Reason*. Her history, motivation, suggested uses and statistics are covered in detail in the *Campaign Guide*, but some relevant information is provided here.

The Echo is the remnant spirit of Aether's high priestess, once called Liviana, who was present at his moment of his failure 300 years ago. In fact she was instrumental in his downfall. It was she who was corrupted by Asmodeus to betray Aether, she who arranged for the adventurers to disrupt the Machine ceremony, and she who struck Aether at the critical moment, causing the malfunction that nearly destroyed the city. In that instant, her body was annihilated by the energy release, but her spirit lived on.

The loss of her God, the anguish and guilt of her betrayal (and the consequences) and a healthy push from the madness that was released, broke her as surely and completely as the mad god she sought to stop. 300 years is a long time to reflect on Deicide. In her purgatory-like existence she has become convinced that if she can 'right her wrong' she can end her eternal suffering and be forgiven for her betrayal. She must complete what Aether started, and open the Gate to the Other Realm (as she has begun to think of it).

Though disembodied, she found she could influence objects and creatures of the material world in some ways, and over time that power has grown. She sought out and possessed women of her bloodline, influencing them to positions of power and good breeding, engineering not only a political and financial legacy, but also more powerful and receptive hosts. Her current (and final) host is Eiria Valdorn, Guildmaster of the Explorers Guild.

Over the last 300 years she has quietly and carefully worked in secret to rebuild the machine and make ready to complete Aether's vision. She has indoctrinated or drugged an army or servants to carry out her plans. It is the 11th hour and she is on the cusp of achieving her goals. However, forces work against her and she comes perilously close to being discovered.

The Echo and Eiria

The relationship between the two is a one way limited possession. Eiria is not aware of the Echo at all, though she suffers from dark dreams and odd impulses, Eiria is convinced that she is deep down a troubled person, but believes they are her own dark thoughts. She strives to suppress her 'dark' nature and do good in the world. The Echo on the other hand is fully aware of Eiria, and has access to all her thoughts and memories (and is secretly amused by her concerns). The Echo hides in Eiria's subconscious, pushing and nudging to get certain behaviours or choices. The Echo is able to fully possess and control Eiria, but does so very, very sparingly. While Eiria does not remember these events, any witnesses to odd behavior might erode the Echo's cover. Up until now the Echo has been content to influence, but is now being forced to take more of a direct hand.

The Echo is not visible, and is all but impossible to detect unless in direct control of Eiria. When she is, Eiria generates an evil aura, a slightly visible glow, and the Echo can be seen reflected in nearby surfaces, superimposed over Eiria's reflection. When the Echo is 'dormant', all forms of detection abilities or magic apply as if Eiria is the target. By the climax of the Adventure Path, the Echo will become a visible manifestation as her power and control grows to its peak. Of course by then the PCs should know who she is.

When running this adventure understand that Eiria is the person the PCs interact with, but anything she knows the Echo

knows. The Echo will 'push' or 'suggest' certain actions to Eiria, but these will always come with a logical 'justification' that allows Eiria to accept them as reasonable.

Current Events

The Echo's plans are moving apace. With a small army of controlled servants, the restoration of the Machine and the accumulation of the missing parts is reaching its 300 year conclusion. So far, her activities have gone mostly undetected, but as things reach a climax the secondary effects are more noticeable. One individual is close to uncovering the truth.

Damien, last scion of house Anthilas, is a driven man. Having seen and experienced the effects of a Machine component in his childhood, he struggles to uncover and thwart the machinations that threaten to destroy his beloved city. He has spent years, and suffered considerable personal losses, trying to combat this threat. Time is running out, and desperate times call for desperate measures. This once moral man has turned to questionable methods to glean the secrets he needs.

6 months ago (about 4 months before the Prologue Adventure) Damien made a discovery that he believes holds the key to unraveling it all. A drug addled vagrant, barely more than a shell of a man, was discovered wandering the city streets, whispering strange and alarming things about dark creatures, machines and following the instructions of something called the 'Echo of Faith'. Damien and his apprentices secreted him away before the other power groups (such as the Seekers) got to him. As the man was completely detached from reality, Damien was able to discern almost no useful information - the incoherent vagrant was simply unable to focus. He also showed signs of drug use, and had a drug in his possession, one that made the user highly compliant and stripped away their will. He was an addict, and that addiction was being used to control him. Was he a servant to the enemy, or was he just able to see things beyond the comprehension of most? Or was he both? At that point a dark thought took shape. Damien needed the man's memories, and justified his pursuit of them with the excuse of mercy, for surely the man would suffer less without such terrible experiences weighing on him. At that moment Damien crossed the line he'd been straddling so long.

He had the means to use the enemy's methods against them. With some assistance from an enclave of plant creatures (Ghorans) he concocted an alchemical solution that could strip the memories from a person, and created a process that could 'extract' these memories without killing the subject, though as a side effect it would leave them bereft of personality. Further to that, though, he needed a way of gaining information from more of these sources touched by darkness and he needed to do it unobserved. With the assistance of an alchemist specializing in plants (Luther Mendal), he created a creature (modeled on a dissected aberration in his possession) that could detect his alchemical drug, and crafted into it the extraction method.

Luther Mendal believed that he was creating a creature to be used to sniff out drug users and was innocent of its eventual use as a means of extracting the memories of discovered addicts. Damien persuaded Luther to work for him in exchange for a rare seed pod which he had acquired whilst investigating the origins of one of the Machine components, despite the fact that he had previously promised that pod to Amchitka and the enclave of Ghorans in exchange for their help with the alchemical drug. Luther is aware that Damien is acting a little outside the law but has been taken in by his supposed good intentions. Damien has asked Luther to be discreet about the matter and Luther has assured him that since he in any case intends to sequester himself away for weeks if not months studying the pod Damien doesn't have anything to worry about on that score.

Damien tasked his apprentice Argus with investigating the associates of this first man, sifting through them for others like him. As he located these drug addicts, and peddled them his drug, the creature could be set loose to stalk them and extract their memories. His solution allowed him to 'free' these slaves, deny the enemy its servants, gain valuable information otherwise unattainable by questioning them, and - if he played it just right - hide this activity from both

the city authorities and this 'Echo of Faith' under the layer of already strange occurrences in the city. An investigation might uncover the 'monster' which, given the connection with Luther, could easily be traced back to him. However should that come to pass Damien felt sure that he felt sure he could convince the authorities that the creature had been built as a means to reform addicts rather than harm them. Brief attacks of conscience were buried in the knowledge he was working for the 'greater good' and the ends justified the means. He convinced himself that these 'freed' slaves were better off.

He found a shady merchant who would peddle the drugs, and began with the vagrant's associates. The plan worked better than he'd hoped, as the victims came willingly to the trap. The hardest part was keeping it slow and quiet, so that the activities were not immediately noticed in the city. But as more information was gained and clarified from the stolen memories, the more alarmed Damien became. It was clear that the Machine was on the verge of completion, and that the unknown figure calling itself the Echo of Faith was close to completing its grand plan. But too much was still missing. Who or what is the Echo? Where is it, and the unaccounted for Machine pieces? Does it have them all? What will it do with the restored Machine? He needed more information, and he needed it now. Caution has been sacrificed for haste...

Why is this working so well?

It seems the Echo's paranoia and casual disregard for her servants is her undoing here. Thanks to 300 years of detachment, she simply doesn't see these wretches as anything more than 'worker insects' to be used up and discarded. Most are heavily drugged, indoctrinated or just so detached from reality now that they have lost all semblance of humanity or individual behavior. Between the drugs and the proximity to the madness inducing Machine they have become as she sees them. However, some are new enough, or strong willed enough, that they still retain a semblance of self, and in the case of Phineas (see below) his duties are not directly related to the Machine, so he has lasted longer than most. But the horrors they see take their toll. Some turn to drugs (other than that administered by the Echo) to escape or dull the pain, while others embrace the madness either to try vainly to connect with it, or to understand and make sense of the things they've seen. Recreational (or arguably medicinal) drug use is widespread enough that with Damien's meticulous spying and information gathering, he's actually uncovered a significant flaw in the Echo's control strategy.

There is a sub-sect within the Explorers Guild that believe that the philosophy of 'exploration' should not stop at the physical world, but extend to the individual - to explore one's 'self'. This is not an officially sanctioned group within the guild, and it's kept pretty quiet. This group consists of some serious philosophers, but mostly a "party" crowd, using it as a way to legitimize behavioral excesses. They have been colloquially called the Trippers. They are not directly affiliated with the Echo (any more than most of the guild is) but she allows it to continue because it acts as another layer of cover over any 'unusual' activity in the guild. Most of the drug using servants have fallen in with this group, and those that are very far gone are often simply mistaken for 'burn out' Trippers.

How it comes together

As the adventure starts, The Echo of Faith is aware its servant network is suffering failures as individual minions are becoming catatonic. She is not sure if it is some form of attack, or if they are just snapping under the strain. Up until recently she couldn't have cared less. All the 'blanks' she was aware of were low-level workers, and expendable (in fact many, many more have died by being worked to death). However, Phineas Amberwell is a significant servant with greater knowledge and insight to her plans. When word reaches her (either through the PCs or from the hospices) she concludes that it is an attack, assumes what he knows has been compromised and realizes the magnitude of the breach. She can't risk exposing herself or her activities further. So she turns to the methods that have served her well for years - obfuscation and manipulation. Presenting her guild as the victims of a villainous assault, she can have someone unconnected to her do the leg work and uncover her adversary. Now all she needs is to find some do-gooders unaligned

with the city's power structure. Some that are clueless to the subtleties of politics, are unaware of her, and would likely not look too deep once the 'villain' was revealed. She has some in mind...

At the same time Damien is just discovering pivotal information uncovered from the last victim - Phineas Amberwell. Not only has he finally got a few of the missing pieces, but he has a sense that his methods are close to being uncovered. When the ongoing rumours of 'random blanking' begin to shift to theories that Explorers are being targeted, and an investigation has been launched, he quickly moves to silence his drug dealer Ezekiel. In addition, his relations with the Ghoran enclave are beginning to fracture, since they're slowly beginning to realize that he will not hand over the pod as promised. Plans are afoot to silence them next, though the timely intervention of the PCs will forestall this for now.

Adventure Summary

Citizens are turning up in the city in catatonic states, the apparent victims of illness or attacks. The party is drawn in when they encounter a recent victim. From clues on his body, they can discover who he is, some of his history, and the cause of his state at several locales around the city.

Pursuing an investigation, either at their own behest, or that of one of the city guildmasters, the party discovers a sinister plot to steal memories through the use of drugs and a psychic monster. At a tent in the Great Market they discover the drug distribution method and confront the creature.

Slaying, capturing or following the memory thief, eventually they determine the culprit is an acquaintance of theirs, someone thought to be a good man. Battling their way through an alchemist's lab, the final confrontation brings the characters face to face with two opposing villains, and a difficult moral dilemma of which represents the "lesser of two evils".

Advancement Track

Ignorance is Bliss is an adventure for **4th level** characters. The module uses the Medium advancement track. Actual XP gained might vary based on the number of encounters the GM uses, but on average the player characters should receive enough experience to advance into **5th level** during, or by the end, of the adventure.

You might recognise that this is the first adventure where the recommended level is higher than where the last adventure finished. This is because there is an assumption that the campaign is being expanded with side treks, driven either by the GM, or by the players themselves. Expanding the experience is covered in the *Campaign Guide*.

If the GM has chosen **not** to run a campaign side-trek or other adventure in the interim, the adventure can be run with 3rd level characters with only a little effort to adjust (or not). The challenges represented in this adventure are for 4th level characters, at a moderate to hard difficulty. It would be a very difficult adventure for 3rd level characters, bordering on extremely challenging toward the final encounter. If the players are very experienced, with highly optimized characters, this may be a way to challenge them.

If the adventure is being run for a **3rd level** party, and the GM would like to adjust the difficulty, make the following adjustments;

- All skill challenges should have their DCs lowered by 1
- All creatures and adversaries should have their Hit Points reduced from average to 1/3
- The treasure found in the adventure should be left as is. It might represent a greater than expected Wealth By Level

total, but the PCs would have really *earned* it.

Of course, the adventure can be adjusted upward as well. If the adventure is being run for a **5th level** party simply make the following adjustments;

- All skill challenges should have their DCs raised by 1
- All creatures and adversaries should have their Hit Points raised from average to maximum
- The treasure found in the tower (or on the adversaries) should include a small jar of diamond dust (500gp), a 1st level *boro bead* (carried by Grigg), +1 *shadow leather armour* (replacing Grigg's current armour), +1 *keen battleaxe* (replacing Argus' current axe), a *cauldron of brewing*, and a pot of *marvelous pigments*.

A Note on Running the Adventure

The investigation is set up to be as flexible and freeform as possible. It is assumed the PCs will chase down some - but likely not all - of the leads made available. The GM will notice that many give the same or very similar information. This is to ensure the PCs have several avenues of access to the same information without getting too many different clues causing confusion.

The GM is free to add or remove clues or avenues of investigations as they please, but caution is suggested when adding clues as this can serve to prolong and confuse the investigative process. Allowing several sources to have effectively the same information means that it is likely that the players will have access to it at some point, and multiple discoveries of the same clue will serve to confirm it as relevant.

The key information to be found should first lead the PCs to Ezekial's tent, where they can see the actual gears turn in the mechanics of Damien's plan (ie the 'How' of the plot). This should then lead on to discovering the connection to the tower, the apprentices or Damien himself (ie the 'Who' of the plot). Finally, the confrontation with Damien at the base of the tower should draw the adventure to a close (and reveal both the 'Why' of the plot, and the hook to the next adventure).

A Note on Alignments

The adventure antagonists are almost entirely not evil aligned, despite undertaking villainous acts. Even the 'monsters' are either constructs, driven by primal instinct, or subject to the will of others. The Adventure Path is heavily focused on 'shades of grey' villains rather than evil ones, and often they are opponents based on conflicting interests rather than being downright destructive or unscrupulous. Additionally, many of the villains are intended to straddle a 'moral line' that the PCs can influence one way or another.

Of course in many ways this is simply splitting hairs, and many of the game mechanics - particularly certain class abilities or spells such as *smite evil*, *protection from evil* and the like - assume that adversaries will be evil. Characters that rely heavily on these abilities may in fact severely be disadvantaged when presented with a lack of such targets.

If the party has a paladin, or other class with heavy alignment based mechanics, feel free to alter the alignments of Argus and Grigg from Chaotic Neutral to Neutral Evil, and the Crinisphaer to Chaotic Evil. In this case the NPCs are more sinister than amoral, and this particular Crinisphaer specimen has a cruel streak beyond the basic drives of its kind. This should help balance the combats.

State of Vigilance

Damien (with his apprentices Argus and Grigg) is undertaking activities that are both illegal and likely to invite repercussions from his enemy if and when they are uncovered. Damien is also aware that too many people know about his activities, at least in part. The Ghoran enclave know about his drug (they are assisting with components) and the horticulturalist Luther knows about the Memory Thief. Luther believes that the Memory Thief is beneficial and is in any case right now busy investigating the pod that Damien gave him (secretly, fortunately, in the nature of academics everywhere who think they might be close to some great discovery). The Ghorans, however, who desire that same pod almost with a religious fervor, are becoming increasingly unpredictable. Should they ever discover that the pod is no longer in his possession then things could get pretty nasty. Not to mention that the 'blanks' are piling up fast, and rumours are already beginning to spread. Sooner or later their activities will be revealed, and Damien is gambling he can gain the information needed before this occurs. He is prepared for reprisals but does not know if and when they will occur. Thus he (and apprentices) are in a somewhat ready state, but the tower (and alchemy business) continues to operate, so not all defenses are fully active all the time.

As the PCs investigate, the group may become aware of their exposure, particularly if the PCs do not act with stealth, or if the investigation is protracted. Certain actions will draw attention to the PCs, and heighten the state of vigilance at the tower. It is irrelevant if the PCs take precautions to hide their identity. The act of investigation alone puts the tower on defensive, even if the identity of the actual investigators is not revealed. Of course, if the PCs act openly, there is every chance that Damien will know exactly who they are by the final encounter.

This is represented by a simple 'State of Vigilance' point system, where every point 'earned' raises the defenses and difficulty of the final encounter. A note at the end of each Chapter (or at each location Scene in Chapter 3) indicates where points can be incurred or avoided. The GM is free to raise or lower these appropriately based on character actions that might increase or decrease scrutiny.

The final tally will determine the challenge level of the final encounter.



Chapter 1 – Pest Problems

The adventure begins as the party is traversing from one place to another through the Trade Ward. If they have taken up residence here it can be as simple as any daily activity. If not, they could be seeking out one of more of the campaign NPCs that work or reside here (Lysenese or Adam for example), on an errand for (or trying to locate) Thaddeus or returning from a side-trek adventure.

Walking through the Trade Ward is always a unique experience. It the pulsing heart of the city, with its constantly moving human traffic and almost carnival-like atmosphere. There is always something new and interesting to see as the wheel of commerce turns, and traders come in and out, bearing goods from across the world. The sounds and smells are rich and varied, and there is a hum of excitement in the air, and the heady sense of possibility and wonder.

It is also where you find the widest range of the city's population, where nobles and vagabonds can walk shoulder-to-shoulder and races of all kinds mix and interact. Above the general murmur of the crowd, voices in dozens of languages can be heard, bargaining, arguing and spruiking. Even children run loose in the streets, exuberant calling and laughter piercing the general din.

A shriek of surprise does catch your attention though. Off to your left you see several urchins recoiling from a sewer grate built into the foundations of a ramshackle structure. A Psychic Mote hovers erratically, weaving in and out of the drain, its hue an ugly orange colour. Lone motes are a fairly common sight in the city, particularly in the densely populated areas, and more a pest than a threat. As the urchins retreat to a safe distance most of the locals shrug and return to their own thoughts.

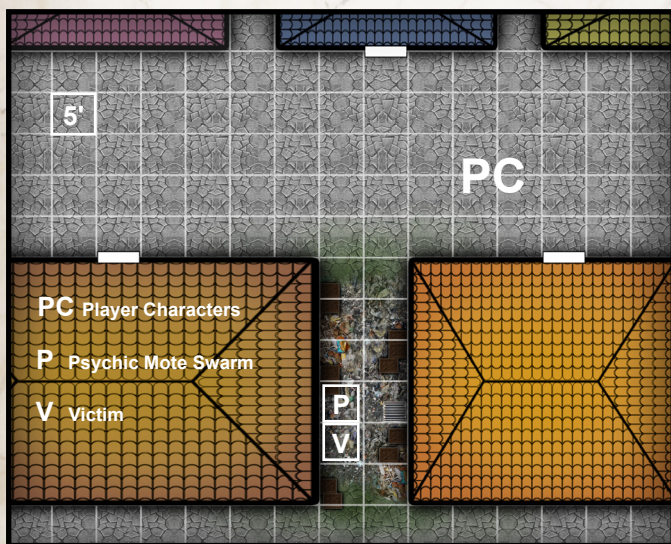
However, a second later an entire swarm of Motes boil from the drain, and streak across the street in purposeful and coordinated motion. Locals scatter from their path, true fear in their eyes. In swarms the pests are far more fearsome, and often aggressive to the point of predation. You've never seen or heard of motes acting with precision. As the crowd scatters in all directions the motes cut down an alley to the right, some twenty feet from your position. You see a few beggars hastily stagger from the lane, but no further disturbances or cries are emitted. After a few moments of murmuring, the locals begin to return to their own activities

If the party chooses not to investigate, move on to **Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting**. If they do investigate, continue below;

Following the path of the motes, you find yourself in an alleyway, ten feet across and filled with all manner of garbage. The swarm has stopped about 15 feet away, at approximately the middle of the lane. They surround the body of a fairly well dressed individual, milling in agitation, but seemingly without purpose. Their colour has turned to a faded mustard. As you look on, you see the man's foot twitch. He appears to be alive, at least for now.

The mote swarm should provide a reasonable level of resistance, but will melt away when it has taken significant damage, or is psychically dispersed. It's important to bear in mind that the alley is not ideal for fighting (10 feet wide) and that the body of the man is essentially in the same square as the mote swarm.

Psychic mote swarm - Hp - 24. The statistics for this psychic mote swarm can be found on page 44.



As the last of the motes scatter into the air and lazily weave away, you are able to approach the man. He is human, appearing in his late forties or early fifties, with short black hair going to grey. His clothing is of reasonably expensive quality, and he has a sheathed dagger on his belt, next to a reasonably full money pouch. He has no obvious wounds but a small trickle of blood drips from his nose. The expression on his face is blank, his eyes are rolled back and spittle drips from his open mouth.

The Victim

The man has been 'blanked', and the psychic motes were drawn to the residual psychic aura left behind by the process, essentially lapping at the last traces of mental

energy remaining to the man, like a dog laps up spilled beer.

There is no means the PC's possess to help the man. Aside from superficial blood loss from the nose he seems unharmed, just 'gone' mentally. He still breathes and twitches, but is unresponsive to pain or other stimuli.

His name is Phineas Amberwell, and he is a mid-level functionary of the Explorers Guild. While not particularly important, he is well known enough that his description and personal possessions might lead to identification in the right quarters (Guild Headquarters or the Drunken Pixie).

He has no identification or useful personal information on him, but he does have a masterwork adamantite dagger, a money pouch (containing 12pp, 43gp and 22cp) and the following miscellaneous objects in his pockets and on his person;

- An Explorers Guild badge (numbered - 0023712)
- a ball of twine
- a scrap of paper with the letters E and R on it
- a quill
- a full vial of ink
- an empty vial (similar size and shape to above)
- a spoon
- a bronze key
- a bone (small - bird)
- a needle and thread
- a wrapped hard candy (strawberry)
- a glass eye (good workmanship)
- a carved wooden coaster from the Drunken Pixie
- a pamphlet for 'the Soothing Stream' (a sauna and bath house) with the words 'ask for Berris, he's just amazing' scrawled on the back.

Almost all of these are red herrings, but several can be of use later on;

The Explorers Guild badge is important, but likely only become apparent closer to **Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting**. It is numbered, so a trip to the Explorers Guild is the fastest way to identify him.

The key will allow access to the poor victim's home once they establish his identity.

The coaster or pamphlet will lead them to locations of import to the adventure, where clues may be discerned.

The Drunken Pixie and the Soothing Stream are both interesting locations (detailed in **Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings**), and Berris (a masseur) is fantastic at his job (which is what the scrawl refers to). A Knowledge (local) DC 10 check, or asking around will allow the PCs to recognize and find these locations.

The scrap of paper is pertinent, the initials E R being those of Ezekiel Ravel, the peddler of the drug in question, but the party is likely to lack any means to discern this early.

The empty vial is the item of most consequence (once containing Bliss), but it's likely that the PC's will simply assume it's an empty ink vial or maybe an empty potion bottle. It certainly may be more apparent after a visit to the Phineas' house or the tent of Ezekial.

Asking around the local area won't help them. The Ward is too changeable and eclectic for anyone to really pay much attention to individuals unless they reside within a few streets. None of the people close by know who he is. The transients that were in the alley can tell the PCs that the fellow came stumbling in a few minutes ago, disorientated, and collapsed where the party found him. Another figure in a cloak approached the man and bent over him for a few moments, but they were unable to see any detail. They assumed he was either rendering assistance or robbing the guy. After a few moments the other fellow left in the other direction. They were just working up the nerve to see if the sod had anything left worth taking when the motes poured in.

Once the PCs get this deep in, it's likely they will take one of two actions - take the victim to the nearest clinic/sick house or to the Explorers Guild headquarters. It is possible as players that they might try to find a temple as it is deeply ingrained into the psyche of players, but in this campaign temples (and religions) are few and far between in the City. There are a number of clinics run by the 'Healing Hands' in the city, and two of those are in the Trade Ward. Almost any of the locals can point the party to the nearest one.

The next step in the adventure can take place in any one of these locales, simply by altering the backdrop - go to **Chapter 2 - Rendering Assistance**.

The Attacker

As well as investigating the man they find, the party might also try to track and investigate the attacker.

Despite being gone by the time the PCs arrive, there is some evidence and information to be gathered.

A Survival (tracking) DC 12 check will reveal that amongst the scuff marks near the victim's body, there are several unusual claw marks, and an odd scale of moss covered chitin (insect exoskeleton) on the ground. A Knowledge (nature) DC 20 will reveal it to be insectoid and plant matter 'growth', but not anything natural in origin. This is certainly beyond anything the party is likely to have experience with, but a successful Knowledge (local) DC 10 check (or alternatively just asking around) will have them recall that there are several sources available for either general research (Celestial Scriptorium or another library) or that specialize in such things (The Botanical Society). Desperate PCs might even think outside the box (the Entity). All of these options are covered in **Chapter 3**.

Questioning the vagrants - who did see the attacker - the PCs can find out that it seemed like a 'man in a cloak', but was kind of hunched, and made a scraping sound when it walked. They saw 'him' crouch over the victim and reach out, but then they fled from the Motes and saw nothing else. They did not see where he went as he left.

State of Vigilance

The gossiping citizens of Anduria will definitely discuss this event, and if the PCs openly question the vagrants or canvas the local citizens concerning the event add +1 Vigilance Point. If the PCs are circumspect in their questions, or merely help the poor victim from the scene will not draw such attention.

Troubleshooting (Pest Problems)

In the unlikely event the party may not choose to follow the motes, or they may not choose to investigate the victim or render assistance, have a couple of the vagrants be overheard;

"Do you think that guy is dead?"

"Well if he wasn't before, those ornery motes will do 'im for sure!"

"And then what's his is ours, I say!"

If that still isn't enough to pique their curiosity, allow the Party to move on, and have them contacted a few days later by an Explorer's Guild representative, having been tracked them down by reputation as a mercenary band

(from the exploits of the previous adventures) – and move on to **Chapter 4 An Auspicious Meeting**.

Chapter 2 - Rendering Assistance

Irrespective of where they take the poor man, the following action takes place and certain information is imparted.

Turning up at any place of health or healing and stating their business triggers the following;

A stick thin man with a shock of wild white hair greets you as you enter. He is garbed in stained yellow robes and looks at you suspiciously as if you are behind the condition of your charge. After a long moment he says "Another one eh. That makes three this week. Bring him in, we'll find a bed for him". He steps aside and gestures you in

The specific description of the locale will vary based on where the PC's take him. Local hospices tend to be low affairs of stone and dim lighting. There is a smell of soap and rot, and constant cleaning crews, and the motion of corpses being carted away. As a non-magical healing house, they are more or less rudimentary hospitals.

A shrine or temple is likely to be very small and unassuming on the outside, though it will reflect the trappings and values specific to the church internally. They will also expect payment for services, or direct those that cannot pay onto the hospices (above).

The Explorers Guild headquarters is in the Council Ward (a fair distance from where they are in the Trade Ward), and is far less likely to be the PCs destination. If they do choose to go that far, they will be stopped before they reach the main entrance, but directed through a side entrance to the compound that leads to an on-site hospice (there is a reasonably consistent number of Explorers suffering from unfortunate experiences or misadventure). Their hospice condition reflects the greater wealth they have, but generally is only open to guild members.

Regardless of the location, the victim will be taken in and the PCs asked to sign admission paperwork with as much detail as they can provide. They will also be grilled

by the old man as to where the victim was found and the circumstances. Discussing it with him they can glean the following information;

- There have been a number of victims. The exact numbers are sketchy but it appears to be as many as 3 dozen across the city.
- They are all alive but non-responsive. The hospice staff have taken to calling them 'blanks'.
- The Explorers Guild has put word out that they are looking into it, as a number of the blanks are their own. They've asked all the hospices to be on the lookout for Explorer blanks, and to transport them to the Guild headquarters when possible.
- The Explorers are also willing to pay for information about this mysterious illness striking down its members.
- No other Guilds have commented as yet.
- If the encounter is at a local hospice, the old man indicates that they will be transporting this victim and 1 other by wagon to the Explorers shortly, and the PCs are welcome to tag along.

If it is at the Explorers Guild headquarters, the orderly will render the above info, and indicate that the PCs should see one of the Factor's inside and make a statement.

State of Vigilance

Bringing sick or injured to hospices, shrines or even guild houses is not uncommon, and those that are there (staff or the ill) mostly have more pressing matters to worry about than eavesdropping on the issues of others or carrying tales. No Vigilance Points are incurred in this Scene.

Troubleshooting (Rendering Assistance)

The best outcome is for the PCs to progress onto the Guild Headquarters. However, they may decide to investigate on their own, or even decide to move on.

If they do investigate, move on to **Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings**. If they choose to step away from the adventure, have them contacted by an Explorers Guild representative, having been tracked down by reputation as a mercenary band that can get the job done – and move on to **Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting**.

Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings

At some point in the adventure the Party is likely to do some investigation or information gathering of their own – following whatever clues they have gleaned. This is encouraged, and should be allowed to proceed to their satisfaction. In most cases this will allow the PCs to reach their own conclusions, or gain confirmation for their suspicions. If they do reach a dead end, **Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting** should put them back on track. While most leads are destined to fizzle out or point them back towards the Explorers, there's certainly opportunity for getting a broader picture of events. If you are running the ongoing campaign it's also an opportunity to meet some potentially useful NPCs, visit some locales and add some colour to the story.

Scene 1 - The Drunken Pixie

Phineas had a carved wooden coaster from the Drunken Pixie in his possession. The Drunken Pixie is a large tavern in the Artisan's Ward, situated on a corner of two major thoroughfares. The two story building is constructed entirely from wood, and bears intricate carvings on its walls and furniture. It is a rowdy place, alive with music and mirth at all hours. It has a warm and welcoming atmosphere, and its major draw card is its namesake, a small colony of pixies that inhabit the place, drink, carouse and generally make light-hearted trouble. The inn is owned and run by a family of elves, and draws a more 'sylvan' crowd than most. It also draws members of the Trippers as it suits their philosophy nicely. While the place is bounced by a 'small' Treant (relatively speaking), the atmosphere is maintained by the regulars, who ensure any trouble makers are abruptly shown the door. There is more than enough magical prowess around the place to make anyone think twice.

Phineas was a regular and reasonably well known (a few bar staff and patrons would know him by description and name). While all are saddened to hear of his condition, the patrons here are carefree and capricious, so they'll toast to his life and deeds, philosophize about his downfall and renew their own affirmations to "live life to the fullest while you still can", but not offer any real help. They know he was an Explorer, a good tipper, and they are full of opinions about this mysterious

'plague' affecting Explorers. If it is not yet known that it is primarily or exclusively affecting Explorers Guild members the patrons gleefully jump to this conclusion without evidence – and unfortunately just happen to be right, adding fuel to their wild theories;

- "It's a disease that one of them brought back from exploring parts unknown. The entire guild is infected and it's only a matter of time" (False).
- "I heard it was a curse on the guild from a dark deity that their Guild master once cheated. Her hubris has damned them all!" (False – though tantalizingly close to an unrelated truth)
- "There's only a finite number of places to explore in the world and the blanks are the result of having seen them all. Without anything left to explore they are having mental breakdowns!" (False)
- "It's a new fad in the Guild. A number of them are 'exploring' comas. Once they've had enough they'll all wake up and go about their business." (False)
- "They've cracked it! They've uncovered the deepest secrets in the universe and it's worked them over. Some things mortals just aren't meant to know" (False, and yet surprisingly astute in the context of current events)

The Bar patrons are some of the most unreliable 'witnesses' the Party is ever likely to meet. The most valuable information from the patrons here is that the PCs can learn Phineas' name if they do not already have it by describing his appearance and possessions. Actually having his possessions without a very good explanation (ie seeking to identify him and cure him) may result in some fairly hostile reactions reserved for thieves (the encounter below the exception).

The Thief

The taproom is crowded at all hours so there is much noise and movement, and the occasional jostling as people go by. One of the elves (Arindel, a young adolescent male) that serves as a waiter is also a kleptomaniac, and collects 'souvenirs' from various patrons. Often this is less a valuable object as it is one that is interesting.

Whilst the PCs are talking to the patrons Arindel takes a liking to something carried or worn by one of the PCs. He has a Sleight of Hand skill of +8, and brushes past the PC in question to lift the item. Needing a DC 20 for

success, Arindel will attempt the lift up to three times, each time the PC gets a Perception check (vs Arindel's Sleight of Hand check) to notice the attempt (or actual theft if he succeeds), and each subsequent attempt past the first, the victim gains a cumulative +2 circumstance bonus to their Perception check. The rest of the Party gains a single Perception check to notice that Arindel seems to come out of his way between drink deliveries to brush past the chosen PC.

If sprung in the act, Arindel vehemently denies any wrongdoing, and tries to flee, only to be collared by one of his larger brothers. The barkeep (Celindel, Arindel's father) approaches the PCs for a quiet word, asking that they allow him to handle the matter internally rather than getting the Watch involved, and in return he might have something of use to them. If they agree, in addition to receiving his gratitude, he hands over a small iron pendant in the shape of a six pointed star, indicating that Arindel lifted it from Phineas the last time he was here. Celindel was going to return it the next time he saw Phineas, but as that isn't possible it might be of use to the PCs in some way (It is the key to Phineas' safe – See **Chapter 5 – Residence of Phineas Amberwell**).

The PCs are within their rights to get the Watch involved, but if they do they will not receive the pendant, and will automatically receive a hostile reaction from the patrons, who are very protective of the linn and its proprietors. The PCs are not welcome back at the Drunken Pixie in the future, and if using optional Reputation Rules the GM should consider the implications of this act.

State of Vigilance

It is impossible to keep the patrons of the Drunken Pixie quiet, and any PC action at this location will add +1 Vigilance Point. If the PCs call in the Watch, rumours spread like wildfire through the community, and generate another +1 Vigilance Point.

Scene 2 - The Soothing Stream

Phineas was also carrying a pamphlet for the Soothing Stream, with the words 'ask for Berris, he's just amazing' scrawled on the back.

The Soothing Stream is a bath house and massage parlor

(therapeutic) in the Artisan's Ward. It is an open and airy marble bath house, with a main public bath, private bath and gym facilities as well as steam rooms and massage facilities. Its name comes from the main public bath, which is fed by a plumbed fountain in the form of a spring trickling down a rocky stream into the main bath.

Phineas was a new customer, and the pamphlet is a recommendation by a friend. He did indeed visit Berris (a half orc masseur) who is as skilled as the recommendation boasts. A 1 hour session with Berris (Booking required and going for around 10gp) will leave the individual so physically relaxed and restored they gain a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and physical skills rolls for 4 hours after the session.

None of the staff (including Berris) would be able to identify Phineas through description or possessions, but if the Party already has his name, a look in the guest register will indicate he was here 3 days ago, his name, guild association (guild members get 5% discount), services (bath and massage) and he used a palanquin service the establishment provides. It has the address (taken to determine correct charge for the trip) he travelled to after the massage. The address is actually his home address.

Once his identity is established, the attendant (and Berris if asked) put a face to the name, but don't have any further useful information. Phineas was simply a random customer to them.

The Shady Dealer

Perceptive PCs (Perception DC 14) will notice a mousey looking man watching them carefully from one of the darker corners. Saravel by name, he is a self-styled 'fixer' and claims to be able to 'make connections between people' for the right price. This is a reasonable boast, and should the PCs need to make criminal connections he can facilitate it. He has known Phineas for years as an associate, if not a friend (the pamphlet came from him, as a way of using this place as a contact point).

If approached (either in the bath house or at a later time), the PCs might be able to glean some potentially useful information for a price (10gp, or Diplomacy/Intimidate/Bluff DC 12 to get it for free). He has on occasion put Phineas in contact with the odd drug dealer

over the years, and can direct the PCs to The Lion's Den (below). He knows that Phineas was a Tripper, the a sub-sect within the Explorers that take the exploration philosophy to the extremes of 'internal and emotional' exploration (essentially the 'party' crowd). He believes Phineas' increasing drug habit is what finally killed him, and he can tell the party over the last six months the once upbeat and carefree Phineas had become more erratic, secretive and even slightly unhinged, and Saravel has seen him (on more than one occasion) partake of a strange substance in a vial. Saravel casts no aspersions ("each to their own vices" he quotes obsequiously). When asked about it, Phineas evaded the question. Saravel believes that Phineas' vices must finally have got the better of him.

Saravel would be very interested in getting his hands on whatever that is (he suspects it is Bliss), and would be willing to pay the PCs 100gp if they happen to find a sample and give it to him. If pressed he says he'd like to know what's in it, and has the means to do so at his disposal ("For purely intellectual purposes you understand"). A Sense Motive DC 10 suggests that his motives are more likely to be profit driven replication.

Note that the vial of substance described above is not the elixir that Damien is peddling (otherwise Phineas would have been 'blanked' long ago), but is instead a secretion from an aberration that the Echo of Faith uses to addict (and effectively enslave) her servants. It will put the party on the right track however.

Saravel does have a means to identify the drug Bliss (not exactly, but he's aware that the Ghoran enclave, with whom he has some connections, helped in the creation of Bliss and figures they should be able to identify it sufficiently well by recognizing the component that they contributed to it). This may be of use to the PCs later in the adventure, and if approached to do so on their behalf, he will do it for them for 100gp (curiously the same amount as he was offering for a sample), and they'll 'owe him one' (See the side trek - "Favours Called In").

State of Vigilance

Visiting the Soothing Stream and talking to the staff there does not arouse any unwanted attention, but speaking to Saravel certainly does. Unashamedly mercenary, Saravel immediately turns around and sells the subject of their discussion to underworld figures. If the PCs discuss Phineas with Saravel add +1 Vigilance Point.

Scene 3 - The Lion's Den

The PCs might find themselves at the Lion's Den after a conversation with Saravel (Soothing Stream above), or after investigating the other Explorer victims and turning up the tavern's name. Despite the proud sounding name, the Lion's Den is a basement tavern in the Trade Ward, denoted by a faded and chipped wooden sign (depicting a gold Lion rampant on a red background) hung above an otherwise unremarkable stairway.

A dank set of stairs leads down to this basement establishment. The hinges squeal as you push the weathered door open to reveal the dark den beyond, every bleary eye turns to assess you with suspicious glares. The tavern is a low beamed one room affair, with candles and torches barely illuminating the area in shadowy gloom. The rough looking patrons return to their low conversations, occasional wary glances thrown your way

The tavern has fairly poor quality ale (for an almost criminal 1sp a mug), and a range of low quality inhaled or ingested drugs (mild euphoria or hallucinogens lasting 1d2 hours, no chance of addiction, Fortitude DC 14 or sickened for 1d2 hours afterward) that go for 1sp through to 1gp a 'hit'.

While adventurers can be rough sorts, the PCs are not regulars, and not trusted. Gaining any information at all requires a Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 20, though this can be reduced to DC 15 with a round of drinks (or other offerings), or if the PCs are seen to partake of the establishment's less than legal fare.

If successful, the PCs can learn that a number of the names on the list given by the Explorer's Guild were regulars here. If they don't have the list, they can still get a few names of regulars that have gone missing (and can compare to the list later if they obtain it). The patrons don't know (and don't particularly care) what happened to them.

The other thing the PCs can pick up is that there are rumours of a new street drug called Bliss, which is supposed to be amazing, though none of them have - or know anyone who has - tried it. Now that they think about it, a number of the missing men were the ones talking about it. They heard about someone called Ezan or Ezial or Eric was selling it in the Great Market. If the PCs move on to the great market, even with limited information go on to **Chapter 6 - Tent in the Great Market**.

State of Vigilance

Damien has people keeping tabs on the local drug trade. If the PCs go to the Den as part of their investigations they add +1 Vigilance Point.

Scene 4 - The Botanical Society

Following up on the origin of the chitin and moss scale found at the crime scene may lead the party to the Botanical Society, a small faction with ties to the Guild of Peace and Healing that – as their name would suggest – specializes in plant life of all kinds.

The Botanical Society is based out of the Academy of Natural Magic in the Artisans Ward (further detailed in the side-trek *The Gourd*, by Richard Develyn).

The leader of the Botanical Society is the horticultural alchemist Luther Mendel who, in fact, helped create the creature in question. Luther is currently unavailable, investigating a strange pod and cannot be contacted at this time (detailed further in Richard Develyn's side trek adventure). The rest of the botanists in the society, however, unaware of Luther's part in all this, will be excited at the prospect of examining the unusual specimen, but after a time of examination and consulting books, scrolls and diagrams fall into complicated bickering at its potential origin and meaning. Once the PCs are able to calm the agitated scholars they can definitively tell the party four things;

1. It is not moss, but a fungus (like mushrooms)
2. This is some sort of unnatural (possibly magical) fusion of insect and plant where both are 'living' specimens (ie it's not a scraping of fungus on a scale, it's a scale made of fungus and chitin).
3. The fungus is equipped with 'sensory' organs, and they surmise whatever creature this specimen belongs to has supernatural sensory capabilities (though they cannot determine what they are)
4. This fungus is almost certainly not of terrestrial origin (it matches nothing known to this world, and they are the foremost experts), though they can't determine where it is from.

They would very much like to keep the specimen for further scholarly 'investigation', though they hint this process could take years.

It is unlikely that this information assists in the identification or tracking of the creature, but alludes to

its origin and purpose.

State of Vigilance

While the new specimen will quickly become the 'talk' of the Botanical Society, except for Luther, at least during the time of this adventure, their circle is very small and plants generally don't make for good local gossip. No Vigilance Points are incurred in this location.

Scene 5 - The Celestial Scriptorium

The Celestial Scriptorium is only likely to be considered as a potential source of information by players that have previously completed the adventure *A Simple Job*.

The specialist that deals in Knowledge (nature) will be able to offer the same information as the first three declarations from the Botanists (above), but not the fourth. Also the cost is higher (20gp) and the enthusiasm level lower.

Lysenesse, who is the specialist that deals in Knowledge (local), tends not to deal in gossip or unsubstantiated current affairs, so has nothing useful on the attacks.

If the PCs have made a good impression on the proprietor Radiant Soul (either with their handling of the events of *A Simple Job* or if they have developed that relationship in another way) she will take them aside for a drink at the bar, and then indicate that she has heard 'some bar talk' concerning the recent events that the PCs might find interesting. She has heard that the victims are all Explorers and there are rumours that it is some form of illicit drug causing overdoses. She has heard the name 'Ezekial' attached to this (though not what his connection is). She has not heard anything about attacks or an attacker, and can give no insight to that.

Radiant Soul's information is free of charge (this time) because she has concerns the attacks will escalate and be disruptive to the city. She isn't driven by sentiment. City disruptions are bad for business. She does ask that the PCs let her know 'how it all turns out'.

State of Vigilance

The Celestial Scriptorium has very effective protections against spying – both magical and physical – and are very discreet. The party incurs no Vigilance Points from this location.

Scene 6 - The Entity (Alternatively Divination)

Similar to the Celestial Scriptorium (above), only players that have previously completed the adventure *A Simple Job* might consider approaching the Entity for information.

The Entity is a strange immortal creature that does not think or act as mortals do. What it does have is spies all over the city in the form of its rat servitors (and other creatures, though the rats make the best far ranging spies). It has perhaps the most accurate – and most cryptic – information, though it is very unlikely the PCs will make much sense of it at this time.

The GM is free to decide what the Entity wants for its information. It might ask for nothing, or it might want something mundane (i.e. seven chicken hearts, a glass eye, or a tile from the walls of the City Council Chambers) or something abstract (i.e. the ‘laughter of a small child’, the ‘memory of lost love’ or the ‘soul of a poet’). How the PCs meet abstract requirements (and if they do) is up to the GM. As a psychic creature it can ‘read’ memories and thoughts PCs choose to share, though unlike the Memory Thief it can’t take anything unless it is ‘offered in conversation’. If its price (if any) is met, it can tell the PCs the following;

The root of chaos in man’s mind;
Those who seek in there will find;
Drugs to command and drugs to steal;
Dark plans the thoughts of men reveal;
The echo of divinity;
Repeating over Eternity.

This is a cryptic reference to the fact that someone is seeking dark plans in men’s minds by using drugs to steal their memories. It also foreshadows the Echo’s plans to repeat Aether’s choice to open the gate to chaos, and the fact that Aether’s soul is doomed to eternally relive his failure (See the adventure *World in Shadow*)

Alternatively this can be given if the PCs use divination type magic that offers cryptic answers

If the GM/players are not a fans of cryptic prophecy, simply remove this encounter, or replace this information with something more forthright.

State of Vigilance

No one knows about the Entity, and even if they did, no one could or would make sense of the PCs visit or the information imparted. The party incurs no Vigilance Points from this location.

Scene 7 - Investigating the Other Victims

There are 38 victims in total, almost all of them now residing within the hospice at the Explorers Guildhall. One was snatched up by the Seekers before anyone came for him from the Explorers Guild (his fate is detailed in a later adventure).

Whether it is a matter of following up on other victims from the hospice (where very little is known about them) or the list from the Explorers Guild (**Chapter 4**). It is also possible that the PCs simply ask around long enough that they get some information. The PCs can glean that there are connections between the victims other than guild membership, that many were friends or associates of each other. In fact, it is possible to determine that while each of the 37 known victims did not know all other 37, they are all connected to each other by associations. It can also be discovered that several of the other victims had a common activity of frequenting a dive bar on the fringe of the Trade Ward called the Lion’s Den.

State of Vigilance

‘Asking around’ about previous victims (outside of the guild) is one of the least discreet forms of investigation. Word gets around quickly, and the party incurs +2 Vigilance Points.

Troubleshooting (Rumours and Red Herrings)

There’s really no way to go ‘off track’ in this section, except if the party becomes frustrated and abandons the adventure. If so, as per before, have them contacted by a guild representative, having been tracked down by reputation as a mercenary band that can get the job done – and move on to **Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting**.

Chapter 4 - An Auspicious Meeting

There are several ways for the Party to find themselves here, either by accompanying the blank (Phineas) to the guild headquarters, seeking out the guild themselves, or being tracked down by an Explorer agent directly. It is possible they come to it later in the adventure, when they need resources to identify the drug, or trace it back to the source. They may even bypass it altogether, by following their own leads and rumours.

At any point the party finds themselves at the Explorers Guild headquarters, they come to the attention of Guildmaster Eiria Valdorn. She has the most accurate picture of these supposed 'random' incidents, and knows that each and every individual affected is an Explorer.

There is a clear pattern of infection or targeting of the Explorers Guild members, and she has her suspicions as to how. She could use her own to investigate, but is legitimately concerned that they could fall victim to this enemy and she would be even further compromised.

She knows of the events surrounding the finding of the Ring (the prologue *Difficult Circumstances*), and the PCs activities from *A Simple Job*, as well as any 'side trek' activities that might reasonably have come to her attention. She has chosen them because they have proven resilient and are known to be outsiders, not involved in city politics. In short, they are neutral, unconnected to the major players (and for the Echo, they are perfect dupes to be used to uncover her enemies).

The PCs are approached by a factor and asked to follow him. If queried, he will say they have been selected for an audience with the Guildmaster, but will not say why, only that 'it is not his place to say'. This should intrigue the party enough to go. If they are reluctant, he adds that he believes there will be gold in it for them, but in a faintly disapproving tone.

The party can use Knowledge (local) or Knowledge (nobility) to discern some information about the Guildmaster of the Explorers Guild;

DC Information

5 Eiria is (in her early 30's) the youngest of the current Guildmasters, and is a shrewd and respected diplomat and politician.

- 10 She and the Trade Guild Guildmaster, Prince Varanion, are at constant odds in the council, and seem to oppose each other on almost all issues
- 15 Eiria was a relative unknown in the city even a few years ago. How she rose to become Guildmaster of the Explorers is a mystery, as the guild members refuse to discuss it.
- 20 As an Explorer, it is rumoured that she uncovered and is in possession of some artefact or object that enhances her persuasive abilities, allowing her meteoric rise.
- 25 There is a whispered rumour that she uncovered some secret about the guild, perhaps the source of its enduring poor reputation, and has blackmailed the senior members of the guild with it, allowing her to become guild master.

They are lead to a well-appointed waiting room and offered refreshments. Secretly Eiria is observing the room from a hidden spyhole to get a measure of the PCs. She is a renowned diplomat, and that reputation is in no small part to her willingness to go to almost any length to get information on her contemporaries. She will observe the party until their patience begins to fray (or they begin to poke, explore or make ready to leave), then make an entrance.

There is a soft swishing of drapes as a woman enters through a curtained doorway. She is tall and beautiful, with pale skin and long auburn hair. She wears a highly fashionable cream coloured dress, but moves like a dancer - or fighter - all grace, power and economy. Her smile is radiant, and her dark eyes are friendly. And yet as attractive to look upon, and pleasant as she appears, in your assessment there is something dangerous about her. You don't become Guildmaster easily. When she speaks, her voice is soft, almost sensual, but there's an edge of confidence in it, as if she's comfortable with command.

"My apologies for keeping you waiting, but a Guildmaster's lot is a busy one. I'll come to the point quickly, for I know too your time is valuable. You may have heard some rumours concerning this so called 'plague'. Firstly, let me assure you it has not been caused by the Explorers, as some might suggest. However, it is targeting only Explorers. Each and every victim has been a guild member, though this is not common knowledge. Too many eyes look to us and our activities. Were it known that only we are affected, it would give credence to the rumours that we have unearthed this, or brought it on

ourselves. Politically it could be used to sway public opinion against us, and sympathies would wither away. We are the victims here, not the perpetrators."

"It is my belief we are being specifically targeted, though I am unsure why, or exactly how. It could be a rival guild, or something else at work, but I need to know what it is and how to stop it. I cannot afford for this to be handled internally, as any Explorer investigators may be susceptible. I need outsiders. And I'd be willing to pay for your services".

Erin's initial offer is 100gp per person, but is willing to go as high as 200gp if the party has shrewd negotiators. Allow a Diplomacy check with a DC of 15. At 15, and for each point above add +10 gp to the offer (for a maximum of 200gp at 24). If the PCs do not negotiate, Eiria's opinion of them is not influenced, but if they do successfully negotiate a higher fee the party gets the sense that she is actually more inclined toward them despite greater costs (she respects intelligence and diplomatic skill).

Once an agreement has been struck, she imparts the following information;

- There are a total of 37 blanked Explorers. The 'affliction' started somewhere around 3 months ago, and is either incredibly slow acting or meticulously managed. They only really started seeing signs of escalation in the last month. **Eiria is not aware of the 38th victim. While someone would have noticed his absence, many explorers die or go missing in mysterious circumstances - it's a hazardous job.**
- The blank that the PCs found is Phineas Amberwell, and he is a broker of the Explorers. All the rest of the victims have been low level guild members, so it has been difficult to follow. Phineas is the first significant Explorer member to be affected.
- She can give the party Phineas' address, and names of his closest contacts in the Explorers Guild, but not much else about his life outside the faction.

Eiria knows about the Trippers sub-sect. What is unknown to her is that the substance the Echo uses to control her slaves is the ultimate origin of it (though many of the younger Explorers follow this sect out of choice, and are not associated with the current events). She will be reluctant to discuss it, but if it is raised by the PCs she will concede the following;

"Yes I am aware of this sub culture within the guild, though it's not something I condone. The guilds are defined by their philosophies and much as their roles within the city, and philosophy is often a broad and debated. Most of the city's guilds have sub factions that deviate from the guild core message.

Exploration can be dangerous. Some choose ways to deal with fear or stress by distraction. Others just enjoy a hedonistic lifestyle. These so called 'trippers' have twisted our philosophy of knowledge to 'self-knowledge' and exploration to 'self-exploration' as a way of legitimizing their personal habits and behaviours. I believe this erodes the foundations of this guild, but killing an idea is impossible, and to directly oppose such a movement is to give it credence. It isn't as if these Trippers openly declare themselves. For now I tolerate it.

I had met Phineas personally, though I can't say I was acquainted with any of the others. If you are telling me you believe him to be one of these Trippers I would be disappointed, but ultimately not surprised"



If the PCs suggest that the effects might be limited to the tripper sub group she concedes it is possible, but cautions the party against jumping to conclusions. All the evidence indicates to this point is that Explorers are being affected.

As the conversation draws to a close, she concludes with;

"You will be investigating under my auspices, and you will receive the full co-operation of the guild and its members". She hands each of you a small platinum Explorers Guild badge, an official seal and number stamped on the other side. "Show these to any Explorers to identify yourself as my agents. You will return them at the conclusion of your investigation. Please do not presume to abuse any authority they convey. It would be ...unfortunate... if I were forced to reclaim them early. In return for guild co-operation I expect you to return and report on any progress you make. Reasonable requests for resources and services, should they be needed in the pursuit of the investigation, can also be provided. Requisition requests should be made to my aide, Aldesh, at the desk outside. Good luck"

The seals will indeed ensure the party receives co-operation from the guild members, but it also allows Eiria (and the Echo) to scry and locate the party more of less at will.

Aldesh is the vaguely disapproving fellow who led them here. While he will honour any required requisitions of normal gear (to the value of 50gp per item), the party will need to justify a specific need. Requests on speculation will not be filled. The party can expect full run of the Headquarters, and access to healing in the hospice (1d4 cure light wounds spells available per day at caster level 1, and/or physicians with the Heal skill at +12). Aldesh can direct the party to services beyond the Guild's resources, but will in no way pay for them.

If the PCs try to turn in Phineas' gear, Eiria takes the guild badge, but indicates the guild has no use for the rest and the PCs make keep it.

The implication is that as both the newest and most important guild member victim to date, Phineas should be the Party's avenue of investigation. Eiria wants this to be the focus of the investigation because she believes it is the most likely avenue to a quick resolution, and she doesn't want the PCs poking around too much in guild

affairs (Eiria's motivation is political, or she thinks it is. The Echo definitely doesn't want the PCs poking around the guild). It's a tight line to walk, but she can't trust general Explorers to get it done (or the Echo's servants to not be exploited). If asked about the other victims she will indicate that those crimes are older, harder to trace, and less relevant. Aldesh can give the party a list of names and residences if they desire.

Phineas' close associates within the guild headquarters can be questioned, but they have no useful information beyond his standard activities. A few of them say he seemed more secretive in the last few days, but have no explanation beyond that.

State of Vigilance

Damien has a very limited ability to keep tabs on the Explorer's guild. If the PCs simply meet with Eiria and move on, no vigilance points are incurred. However, if they undertake a protracted search and questioning of Phineas' associates outside the guild grounds, they add +1 Vigilance Point (This is similar, but not the same, as investigating the victims in **Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings**. It is possible to incur points from both sources).

Troubleshooting (An Auspicious Meeting)

The Party may not wish to meet the Guildmaster, or they may not wish to take the job. Astute players should recognize that having contact with a Guildmaster as a rare and valuable experience. If they do not want to take the job, or continue with their own investigation then the adventure is over. There's only so much a GM can do.

The Party may decide to try to take their investigation in tangential directions. Use **Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings** to facilitate this. At this stage they have enough information to move on to Phineas' residence if and when those leads play out.

Chapter 5 - Residence of Phineas Amberwell

The Party will find their way here from information obtained through the Explorers Guild or the staff at The Soothing Stream

The residence of Phineas Amberwell is on a reasonably quiet lane in the Trade Ward, on a second story above a Notary Office and a Florist, reached by ascending a communal stair that services several such apartments. Accessing it with the key found amongst Phineas' possessions, you find it to be a plain one bedroom affair kept in neat order.

A search of the small apartment reveals a solitary and mostly austere existence of a man dedicated to his Guild. While the apartment has some clothing and decorative personal effects of moderate worth (maybe 400gp all up if stripped and judiciously sold) there are no objects of significant worth. Phineas' wealth was mostly spent on various 'experiences' rather than material possessions.

The one item of note is a crumpled letter in a waste container near a reading chair. The note reads;

*Phineas,
Word is there's something new called Bliss coming out of the Market. Big red tent on the north edge. Ezra's Mysteries or something.
Halden*

Halden was the most recent victim before Phineas - having been found only 1 day before Phineas himself was. The PCs can place the name if they have a victim list from Eiria (**Chapter 4**) and they can match it to the 'hit list' in Ezekial's tent (**Chapter 6**).

Additionally, hidden behind one of the old tapestries on one wall is an inset safe (Perception DC 12 to discover). The safe has no keyhole, but instead a strange six pointed star depression which upon close examination appears to be an ornate lock. Without the key (the pendant from the Drunken Pixie) the lock is difficult to open (Disable Device DC 25), and the safe itself is sturdy enough to withstand most attempts to penetrate (Hardness 10, Hp 30, Break DC 25).

If the PCs manage to open it, they get their first glimpse at the underlying reasons why Phineas was targeted.

Inside the safe is a sketchbook containing over 50 pages of disturbing images, ranging from unpleasant portraits in the beginning to downright abstract collages of hideous creatures and acts toward the end. There is a clear indication that the artist's work degraded over time. Some of the more interesting sketches (in the order they appear in the book) include;

- A number of haggard portraits depicting people in various expressions of pain, anger or despair
- A large chamber with a blue glowing pit in the center (A reservoir chamber of the great Machine - see side trek *Under Eternity*)
- A strange cavern-like chamber with an oddly shaped vine covered tree growing through it. (a somewhat abstract depiction of the machine chamber - see side trek *The Centre of Eternity* and the final adventure of the AP *Doors Best Left Closed*)
- A slug like creature with a scorpion tail and large mandibles (A Vixxzetiflux - see side trek *Under Eternity*)
- A bloated corpse breaking open to reveal a gourd-like seed emerging from its innards (see the side trek *The Gourd* by Richard Develyn)
- A strange abstraction of various faces that seem to be stretched or pulled in various inhuman ways
- A beautiful woman whose face is hidden in the shadow cast by a monstrous figure looming over her (an abstract depiction of the Echo of Faith)
- A pile of dismembered corpses, with a tentacled monster erupting from the mass (A Crinisphaer - featured at the conclusion of this adventure)
- A rune covered black Ring (The Ring from the prologue *Difficult Circumstances* which the PCs should recognize)
- Images of brutally wounded but clearly living people crying out in agony as they drag themselves along dark and twisted city streets.
- Rats feasting on the eyes of a man (this is a self-portrait of Phineas)
- A city vista of the Eternal City (several landmarks such as the council building and walls are clear). The city appears to be a twisted abstract version with buildings and features in positions and angles that defy logic, under a swirling rainbow sky (the city has the potential to actually look like this in the future - at least temporarily - featured in the final adventure *Doors Best Left Closed*).
- An octopus like monster bursting forth from the

head of a maniacally grinning man.

In addition to this disturbing artwork (and the inks used to produce it), there is a gold kraken shaped brooch (the *Brooch That Should Not Be*) and a strange knife made of what appears to be obsidian (a *Builder's knife*). There is also a set of masterwork thieves' tools.

The Art book isn't likely to be of much immediate help, but if the PCs keep it the GM is encouraged to use it as foreshadowing of future events, and to refer back to it as these events occur.

Builder's Knife

These tools are similar to exotic knives in design, with a short handle (8 inches) of bone, and a forward curved blade (12 inches) ending in a forked point. The blade is made of a non-reflective, non-metallic grey material. The blades aren't overly sharp (and cannot be sharpened), but cut through the glassy black builder stone (such as that found in the conduits and machine chamber) as if it were butter. A *Builder's knife* can be used as a weapon similar to a dagger, but is a poor one, dealing only 1 point of damage per strike. They are also quite weak (hardness 2, HP 5) and have the *fragile* quality.

State of Vigilance

Damien is not aware of Phineas' address, and has no particular means of surveillance on it. So long as the PCs do not draw attention to themselves no Vigilance Points are incurred. If the PCs do anything noteworthy (such as noisily bash open a safe) or draw attention to their activities (question all the neighbors) add +1 Vigilance Point.

The Brooch That Should Not Be

This golden clasp has the look of cast gold, wrought in the shape of a Kraken, extended tentacles honed to a razor edge.

The Brooch is crafted from the flesh of an aberration dipped in gold, and retains a portion of the malevolent will of its creature of origin. When worn by a living creature two of the brooch's tentacles burrow into the creature's flesh, causing 1 point of temporary Hp damage that cannot be healed while the brooch is worn. The wearer occasionally suffers from mild fevers and lucid day dreams while wearing the brooch.

Each time the wearer is the target of a spell that requires a Will save, the brooch animates, its tentacles weaving and its eyes glowing. The brooch automatically allows the wearer to roll the save twice and take the better result, but they suffer 1 point of damage for each level of the incoming spell (ie a 5th level spell causes 5 points of damage) as the weaving tentacles lacerate flesh.

Removing the brooch once it has been attached to a wearer is difficult. The wearer must make a Will save vs DC 14 to get the brooch to detach. A failed save causes 2 points of damage and the brooch remains embedded. The brooch can be cut from the wearer's flesh if desired, but requires dealing 10 points of damage to dig out the probes.

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 3rd **Slot** neck;
Price 4000gp

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item,
Improved Iron Will; **Cost** 2000gp

Chapter 6 - Tent in the Great Market

The Great Market is a massive temporary market in the Trade Ward that runs continuously night and day. Traders and peddlers set up, sell until stocks are exhausted and then move on, eagerly replaced by the next merchant. It is a living, breathing crush of commerce.

If the PCs don't have the letter from Phineas' house, asking around the fringes of the Great Market can and will pay dividends, though it all but guarantees that Argus and Grigg become aware of the PCs asking around, and get descriptions of the PCs. This ensures when the PCs arrive at the Tower, both are fully buffed and the traps prepared before the combat occurs. See **State of Vigilance** below.

Asking around the market for a drug dealer with a new drug (even with partial or incorrect information, such as a wrong name) has the party approached by a shifty looking man (a dealer for a competitor) who for a small 'fee' (5gp, or he can be Intimidated into giving it up for free with an Intimidate DC 15 check) will direct the PCs to Ezekiel's tent.

If they have been to Phineas' residence, true to the letter, on the north edge there is a large red tent, closed at the front and hung with a wooden sign that reads "Ezekiel Ravel, Purveyor of Mysteries. By Appointment Only". The Party can find it either by systematic search, or by asking nearby stall holders. Like all merchants, Ezekiel's is temporary, but astute merchants always scope out their nearby contemporaries to gauge competition. When the PCs arrive the tent is quiet and unlit, despite the bustling market around it.

The Tent is separated into 2 sections - a reception area at the front, and a private area at the back. The front is essentially a carpeted section with two chairs, a table between them and a sideboard containing various liquors. The rear section is a living/storage area with a cot, several chests and lockers. At the very rear of the tent, there is a hitching post for a draft animal (ostensibly 'stabled', but actually recently sold) and a cart.

The tent is dark and silent as you approach, which is unusual given the Market is in full activity around it. A carved wooden sign hangs from the lot post, proclaiming this to be "Ezekiel, Purveyor of Mysteries. By Appointment Only".



When the PCs enter the rear section, they find it in disarray and a sprawled body on the floor (presumably Ezekiel) with a cloaked figure standing over it. The cloaked figure is humanoid shaped, but has a misshapen form, and is currently extending some form of proboscis into the body's nose. At the interruption it withdraws its appendage and attempts to flee.

The creature is a unique creation of Damien's design, alchemically grown from the tissues of a captured Mi-Go (see **Chapter 10 - Confrontation**).

Regardless of how the party enters the rear area, the creature's first action is to use a 'psychic door' (similar to dimension door, but much shorter range) to escape the confines of the tent, then flee. Its 'jump' is detectable, and if pursued a 'chase' can be played out. Move to **Chapter 7 - Chase**.

Those remaining behind (if any, or if the party returns after the chase) can examine the scene. Ezekiel is badly injured, attacked by the creature that has been 'blanking' people. He is unconscious and dying (-1hp and falling) and blood flows heavily from his nose. He can be healed if attended to within a few rounds, otherwise he will expire. This means that if all PCs participate in the chase

he will be dead before they return.

If saved, *raised*, or even if the party use *speak with dead* (or other magic) he can give them some insight into his role – limited though it is. He was approached by a dwarf with a proposition. The dwarf had a new drug, and a list of people he wanted sales to – he paid Ezekiel to set up these sales – one at a time, invite only, and secrecy was paramount. This has been going on for months. Every couple of weeks, the dwarf would reappear with a new batch of vials and a new contact list. At first Ezekiel just thought it was just a drug distribution, but eventually put it together that the buyers were the ‘blanks’ that started turning up. He was trying to get out, and (given the attack) clearly had become a liability because of it. He was planning to skip town tomorrow (passage on a merchantman ship booked). He can describe the dwarf and can give the party the 2 remaining ‘drug’ vials he has, and the last list. Unbeknownst to Ezekiel the description is of little value because the dwarf was actually under a *disguise self* extract, and only his race remains as a detectable feature). The description he has is old male dwarf with long black hair and beard (shot with silver) and a nasty facial scar. This does not in any way resemble Argus.

The list contains 5 names, the first three of which (Willis, Halden & Phineas) have already been contacted and sales made (they are already ‘blanked’), but the last two (Arianne and Rellar) for which the remaining vials are meant) have not yet been contacted. The last two were scheduled for the next few days, and he had expected his contact to return in a week (though he was planning to be long gone at that point), but given the attack on him, he suspects that to be unlikely now. He is convinced the dwarf is covering his tracks and destroying evidence.

If the rear of the tent is searched, the party can find amongst Ezekiel’s personal belongings 2 vials of a milky white liquid (the drug, Bliss) and a list of 5 names (see above). His personal possessions are fairly limited as is his on hand wealth (money pouch with 17pp, 45gp, 32sp and 5cp). Most of his wealth went to booking a ‘no questions asked’ berth on a ship leaving tomorrow, and his various possessions are already aboard. What is left in the tent is a few personal items and some clothes, all of which would fit into a single pack. The chests are all empty, but remain to give the impression of status quo.

Bliss

Bliss is distilled from several components, including an extract from the memory thief, ghoran sap and unholy water, among others.

Bliss is a narcotic, with a secondary effect that it boosts memory extraction in those who imbibe it. While under the influence it imposes a -4 alchemical penalty on saves to resist mental intrusion or memory modification. It is even more potent when combined with the memory theft ability of the Memory Thief, allowing the creature to completely drain a victim of its memories in 1 round.

Type drug (ingested); **Addiction** moderate, Fortitude 18; **Effect** 1d4 hours Hallucinogen
Effect 1d4 hours Susceptible to memory modification (-4 to saves); **Damage** 1d3 Constitution damage.

State of Vigilance

The Great Market is where most of Damien’s resources have been placed keeping tabs on his plans because if anyone investigating gets as far as Ezekiel he can be assured that they are very close to unraveling it all. Turning up at Ezekiel’s tent (unless invisible or the like) adds +1 Vigilance Point, and asking around the market adds +4 Vigilance Points, as almost the moment they finish a conversation with the locals a message is sent to Argus.

Troubleshooting (Tent in the Great Market)

The key element of this scene is for the party to get the drug vials. Other information from Ezekiel may help corroborate suspicions later on, but is somewhat suspect given the circumstances. The drug is the last piece of the puzzle, which is covered in **Chapter 8 - Revelation**.

If he is alive, Ezekiel’s fate is more or less up to the PCs.

He has no real useful information, and has no bargaining value. As he suspects, no one is coming to contact him. As his activities are criminal they should hand him over to the Explorers guild, or the Watch. If he thinks the PCs are amenable he might try to bribe to take him to the ship and let him go. He has around 200gp in his remaining possessions on board the merchant ship. However if the PCs do let him go, they may need to explain the origin of the drugs to Eiria, and lying to her is no easy task (she's a politician after all). Her reaction to any unscrupulous behaviour on the part of the Party will entirely depend on how successful they are at solving and halting the attacks on her Guild, but letting anyone who was involved go free will not please her. If the PCs aren't careful that bribe might cause far more problems than it's worth.

Investigating the two remaining names on the list (Arianne and Rellar) will not reveal anything useful. They are Explorers, trippers and associates of Phineas and Halden, but don't know anything useful about the situation or why they would be targeted. They have no special knowledge of The Echo, but this was not known to Damien, who is merely targeting known associates of useful targets in order to hit on the information he desires.

Chapter 7 - The Chase

Refer to the Chase Map, which is included as part of this adventure

If the GM is familiar with the Pathfinder roleplaying game chase rules this scene uses a close variation of that system. The Chase Map indicates the starting positions of the characters and the creature, populated with nodes requiring one of two challenge options to overcome (ie over/through/around) and multiple paths to choose (there is a marked path for the creature on the GM's version).

Standard Initiative rules apply throughout the Chase.

Characters can take 'normal' full round, move/standard action or move/move action, with each square's challenge check 'free' but success required to move on. Characters can choose which challenge to undertake to progress, and may retry or select the other option (on their next turn) if

the challenge is failed. Failure on a challenge check may result in a consequence if indicated in the square (most often simply stop, but occasionally some other effect). A failed check also ends a character's turn. Available pathways are indicated by text in an adjacent square. The one Red 'wall' indicates that movement in that direction is not possible without extraordinary means (teleport etc). Open squares can be seen into from adjacent squares, and a series of connected open squares means they can all be viewed. Characters may 'retrace' their steps into previously crossed spaces without having to complete already conquered challenges. It is assumed they have 'figured out the knack' of traversing that obstacle once it is successfully completed the first time.

Each square represents approximately 30 feet across and around 10-15' up/down. Each square abstractly represents a 'move' action for a 30' speed character (regardless of actual distance). On each turn the number of squares to be moved (and thus the type of action) must be declared before the turn is taken.

Characters with speed 30 can move 1 square per move action, up to 2 squares (assuming challenge success) at normal (2 'move' actions), or 3 squares at -2 to all checks ('full action' equivalent of running).

Characters with speed 20 can move 1 square per move action, but checks are at -2, up to 2 squares (assuming success) at -2 to all checks (2 'move' actions), or 3 squares at -4 to all checks ('full action' equivalent of running).

Characters with speed 40 (or better) are treated as speed 30 (above), but are not penalized when moving up to 3 squares (which is the maximum allowed)

Characters can use standard or full actions to perform any actions normally available to them if they so choose. Creatures must have 'line of sight' to affect other creatures with actions (spells/attacks). In most cases this means on same square or where there are 'open' squares (as noted in the description). It is up to the GM to determine if a creature is in line of sight.

The Memory Thief has move of 30', and needs to succeed on challenge checks the same as the characters. It will be content to just move 2 squares a turn until under assault (in the case of Melee it will try to paralyze attackers with a claw strike), or creatures get within 1 square (when it will

increase its movement to 3 squares with the appropriate penalty on its challenge checks). Its path is marked on the map, and it will try to avoid inhabited areas (sticking to rooftops as much as possible).

Memory Thief - Hp 32. Statistics can be found in the Bestiary on page 45

Ending the Chase

The chase ends with the capture, killing or escape of the creature. The creature escapes if it starts its turn on the final square of the chase map with capacity to act (ie not unconscious or otherwise incapacitated). It uses its *psychic door* ability to 'jump' into a nearby sewer tunnel. The PCs can see the flash through the street drain if they are within 2 squares of the end of the map, but there is no nearby manhole access (the nearest is the next street over). By the time they can access the sewer, the creature is long gone, though it can be tracked (see **Chapter 8 - Revelation**).

If they have captured the creature, they may be able to get it to co-operate. Despite being intelligent, it is not sophisticated. It was not created with social skills and is easy to confuse and question. It does not understand the concept of lying or refusal to answer (this is an oversight Damien is not aware of), and it is a literal creature, which displays thoughts as images. If asked about its master or origin it will display images of the tower or Damien, and other flashes of the basement and other tower details. These images are detailed enough to recognize Damien (the party have met him previously if they participated in the prologue adventure *Difficult Circumstances*) and to identify the tower and its location - Knowledge (local) DC 12 or by asking around since Damien is a prominent city figure. This should be enough to point the PCs to Damien as the culprit.

If the creature is dead, it can still yield interesting information. The creature can be 'stimulated' to generate images of its final thoughts by means of pressing on several glands - Knowledge (nature) DC 12 to achieve this. If the PCs cannot do this, or do not think to, the Botanists might be of use (See **Chapter 3 - Rumours, Clues and Red Herrings**). Visiting the Botanical Society now produces the same result as asking them for analysis of the drug (see the next Chapter) as Luther Mendel is once more available for consultation (exactly what has

happened to him in the intervening period is revealed in the side-trek *The Gourd*). The last few images that flash across its face are that of its intent to return the tower & and an image of Damien.

If they lose the creature and they don't see its method of escape there are other (more convoluted) ways of ferreting out its source - see **Chapter 8 - Revelation**.

State of Vigilance

If the Memory Thief escapes add +2 Vigilance Points. If it is slain or detained, Damien will not be aware of it immediately as it ranges quite significant distances in its pursuit of memories. For the first 12 hours it is missing, there is no penalty, but for each 12 hour increment beyond that add +1 Vigilance Point to the final total. Once the PCs have captured or destroyed the Memory Thief speed becomes essential.

Troubleshooting (The Chase)

If the Party has killed the creature and lacks anyone with sufficient ranks in the Knowledge (nature) skill, and they have not previously considered exploring information sources about the creature (ie the Botanists) the GM may wish to simply have the creature's last few memories flash across its face as a way of expediting matters.

If the PCs are particularly clueless (as in short on clues) use the next **Chapter - Revelation** - as a sort of 'troubleshooting' section for the remainder of the adventure.

Chapter 8 – Revelation

Putting the pieces together is somewhat nebulous, and depends entirely on how well the PCs gathered and interpreted the clues to this point. It is assumed if you are referencing this chapter the PCs have not figured out on their own that Damien is the culprit at this time.

Once the PCs have been to Ezekiel's they will have at least the samples of the drug, and maybe Ezekiel himself (and the knowledge he's a distributor for a 'dwarf'). They would have at least seen the Memory Thief, and maybe seen its escape into the sewers (in the previous Chapter).

Following up on the Drug

If they go to Eiria, she will want both vials split and identified separately. If the party is capable, she allows them to do so, otherwise it goes to another alchemist, while the 2nd vial goes to Damien's tower (he is, after all, the city's most prominent alchemist). Damien is a public figure, and his tower is well known. If they seek Damien out without Eiria's direction (reasonably easy with a Knowledge (local) DC 12 or Diplomacy DC 12 check) when they get to his tower they will be denied entry, but Argus (his dwarf alchemist apprentice) will take the vial for testing. In either case, word will return (via messenger) that it is a hallucinogen, but that it is not otherwise harmful (a 'recreation' drug). Damien is gambling that if he is being consulted as to the origin of the drug, his expert analysis will not be questioned and that he has the City's other expert – Luther – out of the way. If the PCs are foolish enough to tell him they are having multiple people analyze the drug he reports its full properties and they lose any chance of catching him in the lie – see **Troubleshooting** below).

Luther Mendel, the "other" alchemist - who is also head of the Botanical Society - can not only identify both the hallucinogenic properties and the chemical alteration that allows for memory drain, he is also perfectly free to divulge at this time that he was employed by Damien to create a creature to seek out drug-addicts specifically addicted to this particular drug. Whether he does actually point directly at Damien now can depend on how well the PCs are getting on with their investigations (i.e. how much help they need). Luther has undergone a transformation in the last couple of weeks (see Richard

Develyn's side trek *the Gourd*) and as a result no longer feels a need to honor old loyalties. He is, however, keen to forge a friendship with the PCs now, as he has need of them later, so he will play things carefully, trying to be helpful without seeding any undue suspicion upon himself.

A PC can identify the hallucinogenic properties with a Craft (alchemy) DC 10 check, and the memory modification property with a DC 15. It is also definitely a synthetic compound, including a number of blended substances (including unholy water).

Hopefully the inconsistency between the results indicates to the players that Damien is either incompetent (unlikely) or concealing something.

Assuming this is the case, Eiria insists that the Watch be informed, and The Party accompany them as her guild's representatives. She sends a messenger to the Watch guildhall to get an inspector (James Sharpes – Investigator 3rd level), instructing the PCs to wait, leaving them in the care of Aldesh as she has 'other' business to attend (see below). If the PCs stay the Watch group (4 soldiers, an arbiter and the inspector) arrives promptly (within 30 minutes - they are in the same ward, and summoned by a Guildmaster), and Aldesh presents the evidence along with the PC testimony. The inspector agrees it's sufficient to question Damien, and the patrol (along with the PCs as witnesses and representatives) goes directly there.

If the PCs leave once Eiria does, they can do as they please (including going to Damien's tower). If they do they will be first there, but the Watch, and others, will arrive not too long after.

Eiria's 'other business' is handled by the Echo, who briefly assumes control to surreptitiously contact the Seekers of Asmodeus (through channels that hide her identity), and set them on Damien's trail. She knows that there is no love lost between them, and the Seekers would be keen to get involved at the least excuse. She implies that he may have access to a Machine piece to get them there (not technically a lie – and covered in the next adventure *From the Ashes*).

Finally, she prepares a nasty surprise for everyone, summoning a particularly unpleasant aberration to attack the tower, suspecting that the Watch, PCs and even the

Seekers may not be enough to bring Damien down. Eiria, of course, will not remember this action.

Following up on the Creature

If the PCs saw it enter the sewers, they can attempt to track it. The sewers are mucky and the creature has an unusual structure and gait, so tracking is relatively easy, though it is time consuming as the creature takes periodic psychic door 'jumps', requiring the PCs to re-acquire the trail every few minutes. The Survival (tracking) DC is 10, and the PCs are likely to arrive around an hour after the creature.

In the sewers surrounding the tower there is a visible purple discoloration on the walls and a slight purple haze in the air, evidence of the methods Damien uses to keep vermin and other unwanted 'visitors' from the base of his tower. Several dead rats near these areas should allow the PCs to identify the threat before they stumble into it. The trail leads into this area (as the Memory Thief is immune to poison). If the PCs come into this area, they are subject to exposure to the poison each round until they depart (see tower defenses - **Chapter 9 - Damien's Tower**). Skirting the 'edge' of this dangerous zone will indicate that it is roughly circular (just slightly larger than the diameter of the tower).

If the PCs fail to find the trail, have a rat approach as **Troubleshooting** below, and convey them to the tower's approximate location.

State of Vigilance

It falls to the GM to determine the number - if any - of Vigilance Points that are gained in this chapter based on character actions. If Damien is contacted to 'help identify' the mystery drug the tower goes to full defense (10+ Vigilance Points) with the expectation that if his deception is uncovered, his complicity will be revealed.

Troubleshooting (Revelation)

If the PCs exhaust all avenues of enquiry, fail to identify key pieces of information or tip off Damien to the point where he is able to cover his tracks sufficiently to foil the investigation all is not lost.

Whether the PCs contacted it in this adventure or not, the Entity approaches one of the PCs through a ranging rat indicating anomalous events that make it 'uncomfortable' and it wishes them to 'take care of it'.

It explains encountered a strange psychic creature in the sewers, fitting the description of the Memory Thief, and projecting stolen memories (the Entity can tell that the memories do not belong to the creature). It tracked the creature to a location in the city (Damien's tower), but it's 'units' were slain on approach by a virulent poison lacing the sewers surrounding the area (part of the tower defenses). It suggests the PCs investigate the building above the sewers, and projects an image ('rats eye view') of the tower at ground level.

This is something of a 'hammer' approach, but is to be used if all else fails.

Chapter 9 – Damien’s Tower

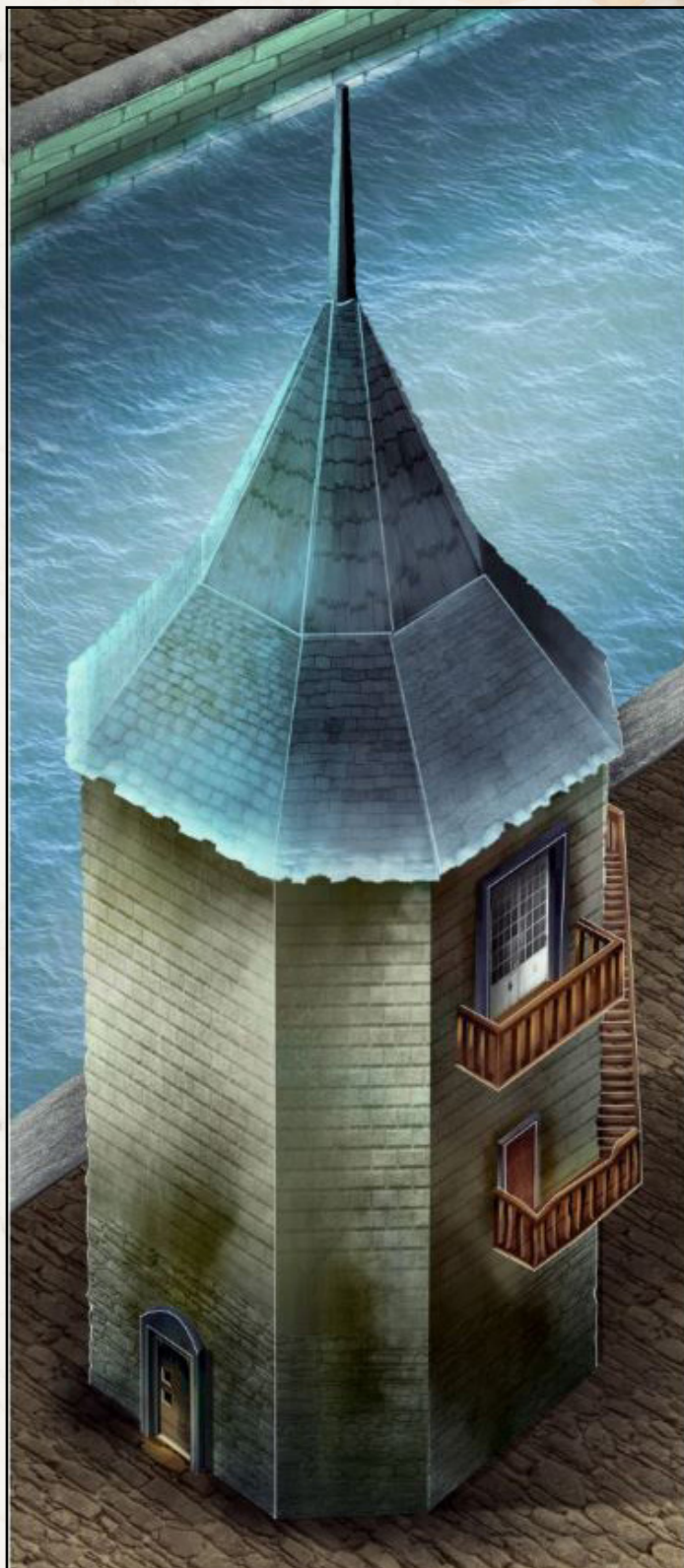
A three story tower sits on the edge of the Trade Ward, up against the canal on one side. Its grey stone blocks are crusted with what appears to be ash and other residues, and its faded blue tile roof is cracked and worn. An external wooden stair winds around the tower from the second level to the third, the wood sagging with age and disrepair. A massive iron bound door sits at ground level showing no signs of the wear affecting the rest of the structure. Aside from the doors, and a balcony on the third level, the tower does not appear to have any windows or other openings

A cursory scout of the tower reveals a sluice chute at ground level that empties into the canal, blocked by a metal grating (this is runoff from the main floor). From ground level the PCs can also see that the 2nd and 3rd floor exits (onto the stairs) have similar doors (though not quite as impressive as the front door). Finally a Knowledge (engineering) DC 15 check will suggest that the stairs may not be structurally sound, though the rest of the building (including the weathered roof) are in good condition despite their outward appearance.

The main door is Hardness 5, hp 20, break DC 23. It has a simple lock (Disable Device DC 20), and if it is barred (see Defense status 2) the break DC increases by 5 and the door must be broken (or reduced to 0 hp) to get through (unlocking the lock will not be sufficient). The door has a slide window so that conversation does not need to be face to face, and small objects (such as vials) can be passed through.

The 2nd and 3rd floor doors are Hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 18. They have simple locks (Disable Device DC 20), and if barred (Defense status 2) the break DC increases by 5 and the door must be broken (either exceeding break DC or reduced to 0 hp) to get through (unlocking the lock will not be sufficient).

The sluice grating is made up of iron bars set into the brick surroundings. The runoff corrodes the bars quickly, and they are replaced periodically. The current set is in good condition (hardness 10, hp 10), but the constant change out has eroded the mounts, making them more susceptible to being pulled out by a determined intruder (break DC 15). This weakness has not gone unnoticed however, hence the installation of the Acid Trap.



The Climb DC of the walls is 20.

The number of Vigilance Points the party have incurred to this point will make a difference to the overall defense status of the tower and its occupants, set out in the table below;

VP	Defense status
0	Poison cloud around sewer access, locked doors, weakened external stairs, and chandeliers lit at all 'occupancy' times.
1	Acid placed in cauldron at all times (grate trap)
2	All doors barred (break DC increases by +5) when building occupied
3	Oil put in cauldron and kept heated
4	Dough boy removed from shelf (in bottle) and placed to actively guard
5	Dumb waiter rigged to drop (improvised)
6	Gray ooze removed from containment and placed in portcullis trap
7	Argus and Grigg prepare 'defense suite' extracts each day (see NPC Gallery pages 46 & 47)
8	Trap set on 3rd floor door
9	Balcony Trap set
10+	Inferno Trap set

The poison (surface and cloud) that permeates the sewers is persistent and quite virulent. It can be identified before contact with a Craft (alchemy) DC 12 or a Knowledge (nature) or Heal DC 15 (observing and 'diagnosing' the dead rats nearby).

Poison 'trap' CR 8, Type - alchemical poison, Perception DC 5, Disable Device DC 30, Trigger - location, Reset - constant, Effect - inhaled/contact, 1/round for 4 rounds, 1d3 Con damage, Save DC 15, 2 consecutive saves.

The weakened external stairs are rigged to collapse at two points - one on the 2nd level and one on the 3rd, as marked on the map. The lower (2nd level) falling stair is automatically triggered by the first person standing on it, and must make a Reflex save DC 14 or fall 20 feet (2d6) to the street below. The second drop is the same, but the fall is 30 feet (3d6) to the street below.

Weakened stair 'trap' CR 1, Type - mechanical, Perception DC 15, Disable Device DC 18 (avoidable once found), Trigger - location (Reflex 14 to avoid), Reset - repair, Effect - 'Pit' 2d6 & 3d6 fall damage

Chandelier - The chandeliers are set in the open space on level 2, above the floor below (see map). Anyone on the 2nd level can cut the suspension rope as a standard action, causing it to fall. Anyone below must make a Reflex save DC 12 or take 1d6 impact damage. That square becomes difficult terrain. If there is oil on the floor and the chandelier is lit, it automatically ignites it on impact.

Acid 'Wash' - the sluice is periodically 'cleaned' with an acid wash. If expecting a potential attack, the acid cauldron is kept filled, and attached to a pressure plate trigger. Each person through the sluice must make a Reflex save DC 12, or trigger the pressure plate that tips the cauldron. Anyone in the sluice at that point takes 2d6 acid damage.

Acid Wash Trap CR 1, Type - Mechanical, Perception DC 20, Disable Device DC 22, Trigger - location (Reflex DC 12), Reset - manual, Effect - 2d6 acid damage.

Hot oil - anyone splashed with the hot oil (1 square in front of cauldron, touch attack, 1d6 damage/round for 2 rounds) is treated as *greased* (DC 12), as is the lower floor (everything from each set of stairs to the front door) for 1d6 rounds (until the oil drains away. If in that time it is ignited by anything, anyone covered in oil takes 1d6 points of damage and may catch on fire on (Reflex DC 15 each round or take 1d6 until successful save or oil burns out). Anyone standing in the oil slick when ignites takes 1d6 points of damage per round (or contact). The oil burns for 1d6 rounds and then goes out.

The dumb waiter is used to transfer goods between the levels. In a pinch it can be used by a creature to do the same. There are levers next to the dumb waiter at each level, and a counter weight mechanism in the wall. Under threat the mechanism can have several pins pulled, but this doesn't guarantee failure. Every time it is used once weakened, there is a 50% chance it fails, dropping its contents 10 feet to the 1st floor (slightly below floor level), and anything or anyone in it takes 1d6 fall damage. It will be unusable until it is repaired.

Gray Ooze Trap - If the defense status warrants it, the alchemists pour the gray ooze (bottled and on a shelf on level 2) into the dump chute above the door. Once the tray is set anyone standing on the floor behind the front door automatically triggers it, and must make a Reflex DC 15 save to avoid having the ooze land on them (free

attack and automatic grapple). This is a difficult trap to 'unset' so it is only active if the alchemists feel an assault might be imminent.

Gray Ooze - 50 hp

Third floor door - There is a trap on the door that is rarely armed for convenience sake, but may be if assault seems likely. The door is rigged with an alchemists fire spray if the door is not correctly unlocked and/or forced. The door 'peephole' releases a jet of alchemists fire onto the space in front of the door, dealing 1d6 fire damage to anyone there (Reflex DC 15 to avoid) and setting the stairs on fire. The burning stairs deal 1d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone in that space, spreading down the stairs at 5 foot per round. After 3 rounds aflame the entire staircase collapses, dropping anyone on it to the street below.

Flame Jet Trap CR 1, Type - Mechanical, Perception DC 20, Disable Device DC 25, Trigger - location (Reflex DC 15), Reset - manual, Effect - 1d6 fire damage.

Balcony trap - The balcony is exposed, but is also three stories up, with a sturdy set of iron framed glass doors (See 3rd level balcony, good quality lock DC 30, hardness 10, hp 20, break DC 22), so the trap is rarely armed. Hung above the doors, and hinged to swing down is a framework set with blades. When the doors are pushed (or forced) inwards it swings down, impacting anyone standing in the doorway (15ft), striking with enough impact to drive the blades into them and possibly push them off the balcony. The trap does not reset once triggered.

Spike Slam Trap CR 4, Type - Mechanical, Perception DC 20, Disable Device DC 25, Trigger - location (+12 to hit), Reset - manual, Effect - 1d6 piercing damage, plus Bull Rush +12 CMB (if pushed 5 feet or more - 3d6 falling damage).

Inferno trap - The 'last resort' evidence destroyer trap, the inferno trap will only be set if the operation is known to be compromised. The walls of all three levels have hollows in them, filled with alchemical fire. Interspersed around the inner walls are tiny nozzles that will allow the fire to be channeled inwards. The trap can be used through a trigger in the basement (see basement level), but being 'set' means that if a second button is not is not

triggered every hour, the trap automatically vents into the tower (it is a short term 'insurance' device in case no one is left alive to destroy evidence). When triggered, each level is subject to 1d6 points of damage to everything within 5 feet of the inner walls for 6 consecutive rounds (Reflex DC 14 to avoid). This is enough to set each level alight and start secondary fires. All internal floors and items should be destroyed by this trap, leaving burned out stone shell of a tower behind.

Inferno Trap CR 6, Type - Mechanical, Perception DC 30, Disable Device DC 45, Trigger - location, Reset - none, Effect - 1d6 fire damage per round for 6 rounds (Reflex DC 14 to avoid)

Means of Entry

How the party intends (or actually gets) entry may vary based on the circumstances of their arrival at the tower, and it falls to the GM to let it play out.

If the defense condition is low (0-2) there is the possibility that the PCs might be able to talk their way in with a convincing enough story. Similarly, at low defense status, Argus and Grigg (and even Damien) will come and go periodically, allowing the PCs to potentially ambush them, or infiltrate when less are present at the tower. If Damien is ambushed outside the tower he will *dimension door* away (or in if close enough) and set the tower on full defense. Argus or Grigg can be dealt with outside the tower, but for every hour they are 'missing' the defense status increases by 1 VP. Anyone attacked within sight of the tower will cause the occupants to lockdown the tower (defense status 10) rather than come to their aid.

If the PCs accompany the Watch, it is all very loud and official, with the front door approached, an announcement of who they are and why they are here, and a demand for entry, repeated several times (which of course allows time for the alchemists to mount a full defence). When surrender is not forthcoming, the Watch will break down the front door with a ram, and run headlong into the Gray Ooze (which will end the 1st level patrolmen rather rapidly).

If the PCs wait long enough (GM discretion on exact time), Triast and a contingent of 10 Seekers arrive (statistics in prologue adventure *Difficult Circumstances*, or use 1st

level warrior NPCs). They will simply begin to break down the front door whilst announcing themselves. The Seekers fare little better against the defenses than the Watch, but Triast is powerful enough to push through (he will enter the final encounter on 1/2 hp). The PCs may 'tag along' in the assault if they have Explorer Guild authority (ie platinum badges from Eiria), otherwise they will be treated as potential hostiles.

Area 1 - Lower Laboratory

This split level room is filled with cauldrons, pots, and glass apparatus that bubble and hiss. A haze of smoke and vapor permeates the air. The lower level is toward the entrance, and sits 5 feet below the main floor, its stone surfaces oddly clean and polished. The upper section comprises most of the floor, and is cramped with work benches and tables filled with all manner of experiments and odds and ends. A set of shelves on the east side of the room are sagging under the range of jars, bottles and containers that are clustered on it.

The storage rooms at the front (south) side of the building contain mundane equipment, furniture, pots and cauldrons and various non-perishable foodstuffs. In the south east room is a large barrel that has an open vial of liquid ice (mostly evaporated) that keeps the internals cool. Perishable foods (meat, vegetables, ale) are kept within.

The lower laboratory is for the volatile experiments on substances and compounds. The floor and furniture show signs of scorching, desiccation and aging in numerous places. All available surfaces are covered in pots, jars, beakers and vials, many of which are under heat, or undergoing various reactions. Interacting with anything will cause 1d4-1 damage from heat or acid, or strange chemical reactions.

The shelves contain all manner of stable and unstable alchemical ingredients, compounds or powders. Amongst the mundane items can be found 2 vials of alchemists fire, 3 vials of acid, 1 vial of liquid ice, 2 thunderstones, 2 tanglefoot bags, sunrods, antitoxin and many other alchemical concoctions or items (anything the GM would like to include).

Area 2 (a&b) - Personal rooms



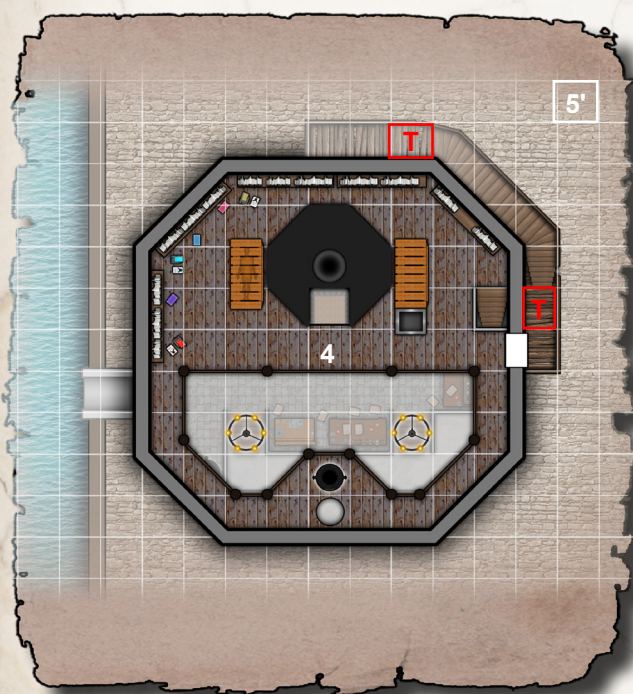
These plain rooms contain only a small bed, side table and chair and a footlocker.

Area 2a (Argus' room) has heavy duty clothing and a few personal items made of metal and stone (some simple mechanical items, rudimentary jewelry and cast chess pieces, stone carvings and the like) as well as a stained and frayed tapestry on one wall depicting a silver anvil with roots entering the earth. A Knowledge (nobility) or (arcana) DC 25 will allow characters to discern this is a depiction of an ancient dwarven artifact known as the **World Anvil**, said to allow its users to craft items of unsurpassed power. It is a legendary item once held by the dwarven royal line, but lost ages past in a time of war (This item is covered in more detail in a later adventure).

Area 2b (Grigg's room) has clothing for a smaller individual, ranging from heavy work clothes to very fine outfits (20gp worth if taken). There is also a highly polished heavy steel shield hung on the wall acting as a mirror. The side table is filled with dozens of glass vials and beakers of various sizes and shapes, all filled to different levels with water. A delicate striker sits beside the arrangement. Very light tapping can cause soft notes to be elicited from the containers. A patient person could craft music on this makeshift instrument.

Area 3 - Ablutions

This area consists of a lavatory and a sink, both of which have very narrow pipes to the sewers below (less than 4 inches across). There appears to be no source of water here, but there is a shelf containing various chemicals to one side. In the right amount and combinations, these chemicals provide cleaning and sterilization for the area, and can be used to safely sanitize hands etc. A Craft (alchemy) DC 15 skill check is required to get these consistencies right, else a user will take 1d6 damage from caustic chemical reactions on their skin.



Area 4 - Upper Laboratory

The walls of this area are hidden by floor to ceiling shelves containing all manner of books and manuscripts, strange objects and jars filled with various pickled creatures or substances. In the center of the room against the support column are two long tables. One has a vaguely man like depression in it while the other has deep sides like it could contain a volume of liquid.

This is the library section of the lab, containing the references and texts relating to alchemical processes,

including manuscripts and notes on creating and preserving alchemical creatures. The jars contain inert specimens and non-volatile substances for the most part, though there is a Pickled Punk and a Mud Ooze in large glass jars here (stats for the former are found in *Bestiary 4*, and latter from the prologue adventure *Difficult Circumstances*). These are low level creatures that pose little risk to the PCs, though if Grigg is in desperate straits he might try to release them as a distraction. If the front door trap is not set, there is a large ceramic lined iron cauldron with a lid bolted onto it here – it contains a Gray Ooze, and this is a dangerous creature. If the trap is set, the cauldron is empty. None of the creatures are controlled by the alchemists, so if set free are as much a danger to them as the PCs.

If the PCs take the time to examine the library there are many interesting texts on alchemy and creature creation here, though much of it will be beyond characters that do not have the relevant skills. There are instructions on creating Dough Boy constructs here too. If the entire library is preserved, it would add a +2 circumstance bonus to any rolls involving the creation of Oozes, Constructs or Alchemical creatures for any characters with the appropriate skills (this is unlikely, see **Chapter 10 – Confrontation**).

Area 5 - 3rd Floor Entry Chamber

This chamber is empty except for a table with a wide stone base and a wooden top. There are a few miscellaneous papers and empty beakers on the table.

The papers are general notes on random mundane things (pseudo-alchemical lists of components and formulae) and the beakers are stuck (glued) to the table top. This ‘camouflage’ will not stand up to anything more than a cursory glance. A Perception DC 15 check will let the PCs to spot the hidden hinges and catch that allows the top to be swung open, revealing the hollow base that allows access to the basement level (40 foot drop, smooth cylinder, Climb DC 20).

Area 6 - Observatory

This room is dominated by a large telescope that sits on a track leading to a set of doors onto a balcony. It is clear that the

telescope can be moved along the track to the balcony outside. Above the doors is hung a framework covered in wicked looking spikes, hinged to swing down through the balcony doors. The walls are covered in astronomical charts, maps of the world and the city and images of starry skies. Many of them have strange or cryptic notes and marks scrawled on them.

The trap is detailed in defenses at the beginning of this chapter, but the mechanism and trigger are obvious from this side and easily avoided. The notes are not overly descriptive, including things like "seen by 3", "is this it?", "noted on the 7th", "Grigg confirms" and "4,7,2,1,9". They are everywhere – not a single chart or map is free of these odd notations. The telescope is fixed to the rails, and removing it would be a lengthy and laborious task. It also stands over 10 feet in height and weighs over a ton.

The contents of this room are intended to infer an astrological prognostication source of information for Damien. The information is specifically vague so as to not be directly relevant to the campaign - unless the GM chooses for it to be so as a method of conveying more or missed information to the PCs. The numbers and notes could refer to prophetic books or scrolls (or passages within), or be redefined as astronomical positioning or the like. If the GM really wants to make a significant foreshadowing, the notes might refer to a body or creature moving toward the city through space. See the *Campaign Guide* or the adventure *Doors Best Left Closed* for more information.

Area 7 - Study

This room is dominated by a large desk covered in sheaves of paper and stacks of books. A large comfortable chair is pulled up to it. The remaining wall space is taken up with low bookshelves containing hundreds of books, tomes and scrolls.

A copy of Damien's alchemy formula book is here, and there is a scroll of protection from evil (CL 5th), but otherwise the books (etc.) are all non-magical reference material of all kinds, though most relate to astronomy, planar locations & travel, and strange or unexplained supernatural occurrences.

The papers on the desk appear to be mostly research notes written in a single hand (Damien's). The notes vary, but do appear to be a collection of records on unusual



occurrences and 'clues' or pieces of information that links are being drawn between. Example notes include;

"I found a parasite aberration on a rat yesterday. A small purple tentacle like extrusion. The rat seemed completely unaware of its presence"

"The sewer entity was seen again. It appears to be a gestalt creature made of vermin. I believe its origins are the same as the others, but it has yet to act in a hostile manner. Will investigate further when time permits."

"A group of adventurers arrived in the city with another piece of the machine - the focusing lens frame I believe. It was highly active, influencing the entire slum population. The objects are becoming more powerful in proximity to each other"

"Words found scrawled on a tenement wall - *Leave the Silver* - written over and over. It is connected I feel. I just don't know what it means."

There is also an unusual scroll on the desk that appears to be of a very fine bark rather than parchment. Inscribed quite recently it reads;

"Damien, I am aware you have given the seed to the

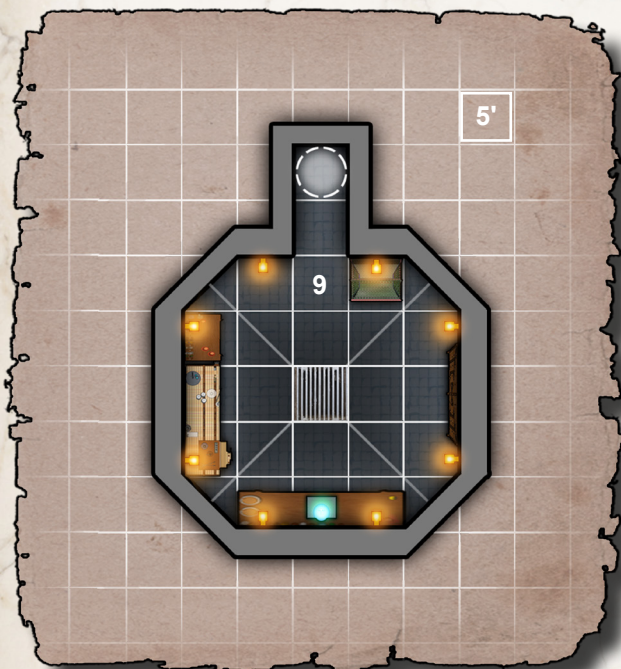
Botanical Society. This was not the agreement. Until you retrieve it and return it to us we will cease providing you with the Ghoran sap you require for your drug, Achechek."

Area 8 - Bedroom

This room has a huge four poster bed and a carved wooden wardrobe, both covered in a fine layer of dust. A smashed mirror hangs on one wall, its shards scattered across the floor.

The bedroom furniture is expensive but clearly infrequently used. The wardrobe contains several older style outfits for a male including several sized for an older child or young adult. A Knowledge (nobility) DC 12 allows the viewer to recognize them as a style from 15-20 years ago.

In one of the pockets of the outfits is a small pendant necklace, clearly forgotten. A Perception DC 12 is required to find it during a search of the wardrobe. It is a tarnished silver heart pendant of apparently low value, though it is in reality a *mind sentinel medallion*. More importantly, it belonged to the Anthilas family gardner's daughter, and anyone wearing it will be immune to her abilities in the next adventure (See *From the Ashes*).



Area 9 - Basement

See **Chapter 10 - Confrontation** below

Chapter 10 - Confrontation

Dropping down the shaft, you find yourself in a basement room illuminated by globes of light fixed to the walls at intervals. The stone chamber slopes gradually toward the center of the room, where a small metal grate presumably allows waste to escape – maybe to the sewers.

Near the entrance, to the left, is an odd caged planter box. Several strange fungal plants are growing within it, most no bigger than a few inches. There is one that is about a foot high, and has vaguely insect like characteristics. It seems to wriggle and twitch occasionally.

Against the east wall is a wooden rack, hung from which is the dissected corpse of some sort of plant creature that has a winged humanoid torso and the lower body of an arachnid-like creature. It has been subject to significant vivisection, and it's internal 'organs' placed on a shelf below.

Against the west wall is a complex glass alchemical apparatus, where various forms of liquid are being mixed or distilled to slowly create a small amount of viscous white fluid.

Finally, against the far wall is a bench that holds a large glass ball set into a wrought iron stand. The ball swirls with blue mist, and occasionally a distorted picture forms briefly, then disappears again.

In front of the glass ball is your old acquaintance Damien, the man that assisted you when you first came to the city in possession of the Ring. The last few weeks have not been kind, he is more drawn than before, but there is an almost manic spark in his eyes. He turns to you and smiles.

Allow the PCs to speak if they wish, or read (or paraphrase) the following

"Ah my friends. How amazing it is that you are the ones to come. I knew there was something special about you when we first met. Now I am truly impressed. Perhaps you will play a role in things to come. I know why you are here. You are here to stop me. But you don't understand my reasons, nor the lengths our enemy will go to bring everything to ruin.



I am not an evil man, and those sacrificed were not done so lightly. They have information about our enemy you see, though some do not even know it. I needed it. I am the only one capable of stopping the impending catastrophe. It is for the greater good you see. Some of the weak must suffer so the rest of us can survive. You understand that surely?"

Allow the party to rebut, comment or converse. Damien will stick to asserting that his actions were necessary, that the 'slaves have been freed from thrall' and that they are better off and may one day recover, and that he killed no one (except Ezekiel but 'he was scum and a blight on the city'). If the PCs seem like they are ready to attack, or join him, or want more information about what he found, move on to the next read aloud text.

Damien's desperate justifications are interrupted by the sound of boots hitting stone. You turn to the shaft and see the Seeker Triast stride out, his green glowing great axe visible through a growing smoke haze.

"Hello old man. Why was I not surprised to find out that you are behind all of this? By the way, did you know your tower is on fire?" Sure enough, you smell the acrid scent of fire on the

Spotlighting The Characters

Both Damien and Triast are significantly higher level than the PCs, but they are not the stars of the show.

Damien and Triast are NPCs, designed fundamentally to keep the story moving for the Players.

The Characters should be afforded the opportunity to take the lead role in the combat, with Damien and Triast ensuring that they do not get overwhelmed (but not steal their thunder).

This is meant to be a 'shared moment' between adversaries, not a way of showcasing the power of the villains.

If played right, the PCs should really have no concept of how powerful the NPCs are (though players will likely meta-game analyze the abilities used, hence keeping Damien to low level spells). The GM should award experience for this encounter based on how much 'help' the PCs required from the NPCs.

haze that is slowly accumulating in the room.

"Triast you fool. Open your eyes! You and your idiot Seekers are being used. I am the only one who can save this city. You are stomping your oversized boots through things you can't even begin to understand!" Damien exclaims, frustration clear in his tone.

Triast's reply is clipped and edged in anger. "What I understand old man is that you have been assaulting citizens and stealing their memories, leaving them catatonic. You are a villain. Don't you see that? You have broken the law, and I am here to arrest you in Asmodeus' name. As for the rest of you peasants, I don't know why you are here but it's time to choose a side. You can stand with me, or you can stand with him."



Allow the players a moment to choose, though before anything can happen read the following;

Fire springs forth in Damien's hands as the axe in Triast's seems to darken in hue. Violence seems imminent. Suddenly cracks appear in the floor and the sewer grate falls away to reveal a strange creature in the tunnels below, a mass of tentacles and teeth. Both men look as surprised as you to see it, as it lashes out at all of you indiscriminately.

The creature is Crinisphaer (75 hp – new monster - stats on page 42), a powerful mature version of a parasitical aberration. This particular specimen is old by the standards of its race, and is something of a 'pet' for the Echo. She will not be pleased if it is slain. Note that it is not immune to poison, and is subject to the tower's sewer defense every round, as will anyone dragged down there (see below).

The Crinisphaer is a large creature, and cannot enter the room without squeezing. It has plenty of reach with its tentacles, and will attack and grapple, pulling a single

creature to the sewers below to bite (and be subject to the poison cloud). Allow Triast to take the brunt of this at first, but if the PCs are handling it with ease (or causing a lot of damage) have it draw one of them below. Triast is capable of significant damage output, but while grappled he can't use his greataxe, being forced to rely on his smaller throwing axes in melee. Damien will start with *blur* (extract), and *shield* (extract), then casts *acid arrow*, then *burning hands*. If the creature is not dead by then, he throws bombs (3d6 fire damage) until it dies (or he has thrown 7 bombs). He will be careful to avoid the PCs with the splash damage as much as possible (he does not have the *precise bombs* discovery), though Triast is not afforded this courtesy if it comes to it.

A couple of rounds into the fight you can read the following, particularly if the PCs are as yet unaware of the poison in the sewers blocking their exit.

The tentacled creature convulses, and Triast, firmly grasped in a flailing limb, reappears from below, dragged up as the monster thrashes. His left arm and wicked looking axe are

pinned, and he hacks at the creature's flesh with a small hand axe in his right. Both he and the creature are smeared with a red substance.

"Poison Damien?!!", he exclaims, fighting against the irresistible grapple of the monster. "You poisoned the sewers?!". Damien pauses in mid motion, mixing two vials together to give Triast a darkly wry look.

"It's to keep unwanted vermin away, my boy. Rats, monsters... Seekers". His mirth is cut short with a curse and a yelp as the momentarily forgotten vial in his hand boils over, glass shattering and reagents spilling.

When the combat concludes

Damien turns to you. "This is why I can't afford to be arrested. Things like this will continue to get worse. I wish I could make you see. I wish there was time. If you truly want to understand, go to where I was forged in fire. There are answers there for those with the wit to see them". With that he quickly recites a spell and disappears with a pop and a rush of air. (dimension door)

At the close of the combat, Triast is displeased with Damien's escape, but as he understands the cryptic clue (referring to Damien's old manor) he is not too angry. He is here for a Machine part, and if it isn't in this tower, it might be there.

The party is free to go. If they sided with Triast, he grudgingly commends their choice. If they sided with Damien he tells them they were lucky the monster arrived when it did, to stop them from doing something foolish. Had they actually attacked him they would be arrested (or dead). The events at the tower are legally sanctioned due to Damien's crimes.

The tower is on fire – if this is not explainable by PC actions, then it is due to some interaction between chemicals released after the PCs went through, or it is the result of the Inferno Trap that was either set as a defensive condition, or triggered by Damien as the PCs accessed the basement.

The PC's options are to brave the fire and smoke (if they have a means to ascend the shaft), risk the poison tunnels or wait it out. Triast takes a seat, explaining that 'his men' are out there, and will contain and control the situation. He will also ensure no evidence is tampered

with. He won't try to stop the party from leaving if they are determined, unless they try to take or destroy 'evidence' (anything on this level). He will allow them to examine it if they have the Explorers Guild badges (and the authority of the Guildmaster to back them up).

As well as the dissected Mi-go (which is still alive – just dormant) and the new 'crop' of Memory Thieves, there are 2 doses of Bliss in the distiller and 1 more in the process of creation. The glass sphere is a minor magic receptacle that can hold transferred memories (willing only) as images for up to 24 hours before they vanish (see below). There is also a book containing various notes and diagrams on crafting plant creatures and constructs.

None of these items are available for the party to take if Triast is there, but they can study them. If the PCs have managed to get here less than 24 hours after the attack on Phineas (which would be remarkable!) the glass sphere swirls with his memories, though these are chaotic and reflect much of what is in his art book (See **Chapter 5**). Damien 'deleted' everything else as it was 'not relevant'. If it has been more than 24 hours since the attack on Phineas the sphere shows odd hints of images (after images) but nothing coherent. A Spellcraft check DC 20 will identify the item and its use.

In addition to the opportunity to look around, this is also a rare opportunity to talk to Triast if they so choose. Despite his arrogance and seemingly unwavering faith in his God's divine mandate, a successful Sense Motive DC 15 will allow the party to get the sense that Triast believes he is not only doing what's right for Azmodeus, but also the city and its people too (of course that's his belief, not necessarily objectively true). A reasonable Diplomacy check (DC 20) by the party might earn them his grudging respect, but only if they do not espouse too much of an opposition to his god or his cause (a little is fine, he's used to 'the unenlightened' disparaging religion in the city). He is cold, arrogant and dismissive, but he isn't actually *evil*. If they raise the subject of Damien he looks smug, and warns them to stay out of it. He will not be drawn further on the subject, except to say Damien is a criminal (as evidenced by his recent actions) and the Seekers will take care of it.

Eventually the fires will be doused and a rescue will be mounted with chain ladders being lowered to allow the party to escape (and the investigators to get in).

Chapter 11 – Conclusion

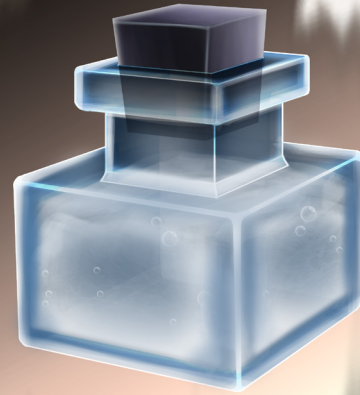
Very little is salvageable from the tower, except on the basement level, and almost all of that is ‘evidence’ so the PCs can’t take any of it. If the party has acquired items from the rest of the tower along the way (and admit to it) they are examined by Inspector Sharpes and Triast for ‘evidentiary value’. Anything not deemed pertinent the PCs may keep, though Triast sneers at their scavenging.

Any lingering effects (such as Crinisphaer eggs or poison) will be handled by local representatives from the Healing Hands guild, drawn to the site by the fire.

If the PCs were working for the Explorers Guild, Eiria thanks them for their service, pays them and reclaims their guild issued badges.

Damien’s last cryptic clue is dealt with in the next adventure, but if the PCs discuss or share it with anyone in the aftermath there are mixed reactions. As previously covered, Triast warns them not to pursue it, and insists that if he finds that they have he will arrest them for interference in his investigation. If the PCs raise it with Eiria, she indicates that she does not know its meaning and suggests that it’s likely a trap set by Damien and they should ignore it. Inspector Sharpes thanks them for the information, and he’ll look into it, but cautions them against pursuing it themselves. Told three times to let it go – this should be more than enough incentive for them to follow it up.

By the end of the adventure the PCs should have earned enough experience to advance to the next level, which is likely to be somewhere between 4th or 5th level (depending on what level they started at).



Bestiary

Crinisphaer, Mature

This massive creature is a wet, slimy mess of tentacles that writhe and shift constantly as it undulates with a menacing motion. The central mass opens to reveal a fanged mouth.

Crinisphaer, Mature

CR 7

XP 3,200

CN large aberration

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+6 natural, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, -1 size)

Hp 75 (10d8+30)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +8

DR 5/slashing and silver; **Immune** aberration traits;

OFFENSE

Speed 40ft.

Melee bite +9 (3d6+8), 4 tentacles +7 (1d6+4 +grab +constrict)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with tentacles)

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+4), egg injection

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +10 (+12 to Grapple/Trip); **CMD** 20 (+22 to Grapple, cannot be Tripped)

Feats Multiattack, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Combat Reflexes

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +12, Escape Artist +10, Intimidate +8, Perception +12, Stealth +6, Survival +8, Swim +10

Languages aklo

SQ spherical.

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Egg injection (Ex): when a Crinisphaer successfully latches onto a creature with its Grab ability, it can inject an egg into its victim as a standard action. This is a disease effect.

Type Disease (parasite), injury; **Save** Fortitude DC 17

Onset 1 day; **Frequency** 1/day

Effect Euphoria and 1d3 Con damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves or *Remove Disease*

When a creature reaches 2/3 of its original Con the

affected area shows a deep purple welt. Once the infected creature reaches 1/3 of its original Con a small purple tentacle erupts from the affected area. The euphoria effect induces mild hallucinogenic and pleasant sensations to dissuade the host from trying to remove it, causing a creature to believe that the 'growth' is normal.

The parasite is particularly susceptible to *remove disease*, and is automatically cleansed if subjected to this spell.

Spherical (Ex): A Crinisphaer is essentially a sphere with dozens of tentacles protruding from all sides. It cannot be effectively tripped.

Mature Crinisphaer tend to be close to fearless, wading into combat with lashing tentacles to grapple and trip opponents, relying on its natural reach, reflexes and damage reduction to keep it safe.



Dough Boy

This mass of pliable white goo looks like a crude humanoid shaped by the hands of a simple minded child.

Dough Boy

XP 800

N small construct

Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -1

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +1 size)

Hp 32 (4d10+10)

Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities amorphous, bend don't break 4/day, hardness 2; Immune construct traits

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +5 (1d6+1 plus alchemical absorption)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with stretchable)

Special Attacks alchemical absorption

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4 (+12 grapple); **CMD** 17 (25 vs. grapple)

Languages common (can't speak)

SQ compression, tied in knots

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or gang (2-4)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Alchemical Absorption (Su) Whenever a dough boy touches or is struck by an alchemical weapon such as alchemist's fire or bottled lightning it may absorb the substance instead of being affected by it. For one round after absorbing an alchemical weapon the dough boys slam attacks apply the effect of the alchemical weapon to the target on a successful hit. The dough boy may only absorb one alchemical weapon per round and may not absorb alchemical weapons that cause cold damage.

Bend Don't Break (Su) The dough boy's hardness represents its ability to deform its body without taking damage. As a swift action, a dough boy may increase its hardness to 10 for 1 round. A dough boy may use this ability once per day for each hit die it has.

Stretchable (Ex) As full round action a dough boy can increase its reach to 15 feet for 1 round. It may also make

1 slam attack this round.

Tied in Knots (Ex) Due to its malleable form a dough boy gains a +8 bonus on combat maneuver checks to grapple and to its combat maneuver defense against being grappled.

Dough boys are bipedal, vaguely human shaped masses of white or colorless clay-like dough. Undoubtedly the creation of some deranged arcane researcher, dough boys are the perfect mindless guardians that can be set to perform simple tasks such as patrolling or guarding important areas. Their affinity for alchemical weapons makes them especially useful to alchemists or anyone clever enough to control their exposure to such substances. The dough boy's compression ability means they can be stuffed into quite small spaces where they can lurk and wait to surprise unwanted trespassers.

Created by Russ Brown



Psychic Mote Swarm

This creature appears to be a swarm comprised of numerous tiny balls of energy, humming as they move erratically around each other.

Psychic Mote Swarm

CR 3

XP 600

N Diminutive Elemental (Swarm)

Init +9; Senses Mindsight 60 ft.; Perception +10

Aura Psychic Static (20ft. -4 penalty to Will saves and concentration checks)

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 19, flat-footed 14 (+5 Dex, + 4 Size)

Hp 24 (4d8+8)

Fort +3, **Ref** +10, **Will** +7

Defensive Abilities swarm traits (1/2 damage from slashing/piercing) Immune elemental traits

OFFENSE

Speed Fly 30 ft (perfect) (no land speed)

Melee Swarm (1d6 points of force damage, plus Distraction plus Psychic Shock)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks Psychic Static, Psychic Shock (Will DC 14), Distraction (Fort DC 14)

STATISTICS

Str 2, **Dex** 20, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 10 (can't be tripped, grappled or bull rushed)

Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will

Skills Acrobatics +10, Fly + 20, Perception +10, Stealth +21(+1 Conspicuous) Racial/Size Modifiers +6 Fly, +6 Perception, +12 Stealth

Languages None

SQ Psychic Dispersion, Conspicuous

ECOLOGY

Environment localized to the Anduria and surrounds

Organization colony (swarm)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Distraction (Ex) A creature with this ability can nauseate the creatures that it damages. Any living creature that takes damage from a creature with the distraction ability is nauseated for 1 round; a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 1/2 creature's HD + creature's Con modifier) negates the effect

Mindsight (Su) Psychic motes are drawn to mental energy. If a creature has an Intelligence score of 1 or higher, a psychic mote can always see it. Psychic motes

cannot detect unintelligent (Int 0) creatures with this sense. Mindsight can be fooled by magic or effects that shield or misdirect from mental or magical location or detection (ie the misdirect spell). The Psychic Mote must make a Perception check versus the DC of the spell or effect to overcome it.

Psychic Shock (Su) Any creature damaged by a Psychic mote swarm must make a Will save DC 13 (10+1/2 HD +Con mod) or become psychically disoriented for 1d6 rounds. A psychically disoriented character incurs a -2 penalty to attack rolls and AC, and must make a concentration check to cast spells or spell like abilities.

Psychic Static (Su) A psychic mote emits a buzzing resonance in its vicinity that is psychically disturbing to intelligent living creatures. All Will saves and Concentration checks required within 20 feet of the psychic mote swarm suffer a -4 penalty.

Psychic Dispersion (Su) A psychic mote swarm cannot be psychically repulsed as single motes can, but is subject to being dispersed into its single component motes through force of will. This is a standard action (provoking an Attack of Opportunity), at a range of up to 20 feet from the mote swarm, and creates an effect to which the mote swarm must successfully resist with a Will save, the DC equal to 10+the creature's Wis modifier. Several creatures can combine their will, increasing the DC to 10+highest Wis modifier of group, +1 per creature. Failure on the part of the mote swarm causes it to disperse into its component motes for 1d10 rounds before it can reform. Creatures can attempt as many times as they like to disperse a mote swarm. Once dispersed, the individual motes can be repulsed.

Conspicuous (Su) Despite its small size and agility, a psychic mote swarm is not particularly stealthy courtesy of the light and sound it generates at all times. Unless in an environment where the light or sound it generates is mitigated (extremely bright or noisy conditions eclipsing the motes natural emissions, silence, or deaf/blind opponents) each imparts a -10 penalty to stealth (total -20)

Memory Thief

This humanoid looks like a giant insect covered in moss, with strong backward bent legs and two smaller arms folded close to its torso. A round featureless face flashes with strange images, like projections, that seem to form pictures of people or places. In place of a mouth twitches a mosquito-like proboscis.

Memory Thief

CR 4

XP 1,200

N Medium plant

Init +8; Senses blindsight 30 ft., low-light vision, pheromone sense; Perception +10

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +5 natural)

Hp 32 (5d8+10)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1

Defensive Abilities; Resist Cold 10; **Immune** plant traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +7 (1d6+1 plus poison)

Special Attacks Memory theft, Brain hemorrhage.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 7

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat reflexes, Improved initiative, Weapon finesse.

Skills Acrobatics +10, Climb +8, Perception +10, Stealth +10; Racial Modifiers +2 Acrobatics, +2 Climb, +4 Perception.

Languages common (can't speak)

SQ Psychic door, Pheromone Sense

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Brain Hemorrhage (Ex) If it chooses, a Memory Thief can cause significant damage whilst its proboscis is inserted into a victim. For every round of memory theft, it can also cause 1d4 points of Con damage, with the victim receiving a Fortitude Save at DC 14 to avoid. Generally it will not unless specifically commanded to do so by its master.

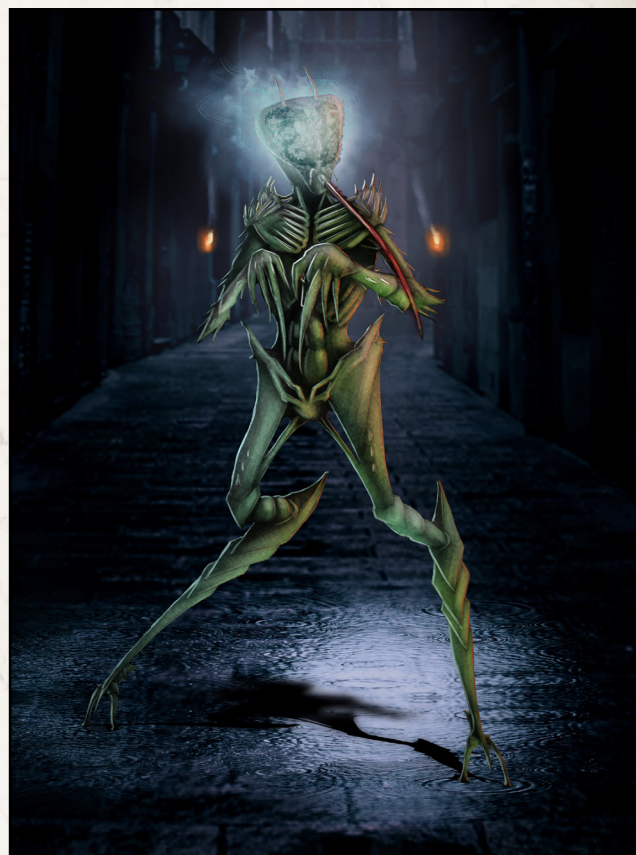
Memory Theft (Su) As a full round action a Memory Thief can insert its proboscis into the nose or ear of a helpless target, and steal specific or random memories, affecting the target similar to that of a modify memory

spell. For each round as of memory theft, the memory thief can take a 1 minute time period of memories from the victim. The victim loses all recollection of the affected memory, but recognizes that there is a 'gap' at that point. The memory thief gains the memory as if it were their own. A successful DC 12 Will save negates the effect. The save is Wisdom based.

Pheromone Sense (Ex) A Memory Thief can sense the pheromones of its own kind up to 1 mile. Similarly, it can sense any substance wholly or partly created from itself, and anyone who has been touched or affected by its poison or memory theft abilities for up to 1 hour after contact within that 1 mile distance.

Poisoned Claws (Ex) Claw – injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency –; effect paralyzed for 1d4 rounds; Cure 1 save; Successful save indicates staggered for 1 round. The save is Constitution based.

Psychic Door (Su) As a standard action a Memory Thief can generate a psychically powered teleport ability that acts as a dimension door spell, but has a range of only 60 feet, and can be used once every 3d4 rounds.



NPC Gallery

Argus

XP 800

Chaotic Neutral, Dwarf, Male, Alchemist 4

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60'; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex,); +4 dodge vs. giants

Hp 33 (4d8+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3; +2 vs. spells and spell-like abilities, +4 vs. poison

Defensice Abilities Resist 5 Fire

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *battleaxe* +5 (1d8+2/×3) or +1 *battleaxe* +7 (1d8+6/×3) (mutagen and 2hd)

Ranged bomb +4 (2d6+3 fire, splash 6 fire DC 15 reflex for 1/2)

Special Attacks +1 on attack rolls against orcs and goblinoid humanoids, bomb 7/day (2d6+3 fire, DC 15)

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd (2) – *spider climb*, see *invisibility*

1st (4) – *comprehend languages**, *identify**, *expeditious retreat*, *true strike* (*enlarge person*, *shield*)

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 17, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 9

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 12 (16 vs Bull rush or Trip)

Feats Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Throw Anything

Skills Craft (alchemy) +14, Disable Device +8, Heal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +10, Perception +7, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +6

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnomish, Orc

SQ favoured class bonus (1hp/level), alchemy (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), discoveries (Elemental mutagen (fire) 5 Resist, Spontaneous healing (free action, 5 hp 2/day), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy.

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 5th, 2d8+5), *potion of resist energy* (fire, CL 5th), *wand of blurred movement* (CL 1st, 17 charges), acid (2), Tanglefoot bag (2);

Other Gear +1 *chain shirt*, +1 *battle axe*, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as the following:

1st – *cure light wounds*, *endure elements*, *disguise self*, *jump*), 43 gp

TACTICS

During Combat Argus prefers melee combat, and he

and Grigg have a defense strategy on that basis. If time permits he will use his extracts in the following order (if nothing is immediately needed); see *invisibility* (40 mins), *spider climb* (40 mins), *enlarge person* (4 mins)*, *expeditious retreat* (4 mins), *shield* (4 mins)*, *wand - blurred movement* (1 min), *Potion - resist energy* (50 mins). He will combine with the Dough Boy to keep attackers in tactically advantageous positions (ie lower floor if possible where the oil/chandeliers can be brought to bear) while limiting their access to Grigg.

* If defense condition 7 is reached, *comprehend languages* and *identify* are switched out for *enlarge person* and *shield*

Morale Argus will fight to the death, and look to bring as many foes down with him. If his death is imminent he is not above creating conditions of mutual destruction.



Grigg

XP 800

Chaotic Neutral, Gnome, Male (middle-aged), Alchemist 4

Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +6

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+3 armor, +1 Dex, +1 size); +4 dodge vs. giants

Hp 33 (4d8+12)

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2 (re-roll 1/day); +2 vs. illusions, +2 vs. poison

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee small dagger +3 (1d3-1/×3)

Ranged mwk small light crossbow +6 (1d4/19-20) or Bomb +6 (2d6+3 fire, splash 6 fire DC 15 reflex for 1/2)

Special Attacks +1 on attack rolls against goblinoid and reptilian humanoids, bomb 7/day (2d6+3 fire, DC 15)

Spell-Like Ability (Sp) At will – speak with animals (CL 4th)

1/day – *dancing lights*, *ghost sound* (DC 11), *prestidigitation*

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd (2) – *blur*, *see invisibility*

1st (4) – *comprehend languages**, *identify**, *jump*, *shield*, *expeditious retreat*, *true strike*

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 17, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +1; **CMD** 12

Feats Brew Potion, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Throw Anything

Skills Appraise +8, Craft (alchemy) +14, Disable Device +8, Heal +4, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (nature) +8, Perception +6, Spellcraft +8, Use Magic Device +8

Languages Common, Gnome, Elvish, Celestial, speak with animals (at will)

SQ favoured class bonus (1hp/level), alchemy (alchemy crafting +4, identify potions), discoveries (smoke bomb, stink bomb), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 40 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy.

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 5th, 2d8+5), *potion of invisibility* (CL 5th), *wand of cure light wounds* (CL 1st, 25 charges), alchemists fire (2), acid (2), thunderstone (3);

Other Gear +1 *leather armor*, masterwork light crossbow with 10 bolts, dagger, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as the following: 1st – *cure light wounds*, *endure elements*, *disguise self*, *enlarge person*), 22 gp

TACTICS

CR 3

During Combat Grigg tries to remain at range as much as possible, using his bombs (fire, stink and smoke) and other alchemical items to pepper his targets. If he is on the 2nd level of the tower (his preferred spot if there is a ground level breach) he will also drop the chandeliers on anyone in place, particularly if the oil has been deployed. When using his extracts (if nothing is needed specifically), the order of use is *see invisibility* (40 mins), *blur* (4 mins), and *shield* (4 mins) and *expeditious retreat* (4 mins)*. He will also try to imbue the dough boy with alchemical absorption when possible (see Dough Boy description).

* If defense condition 7 is reached, *comprehend languages* and *identify* are switched out for *expeditious retreat* and *true strike*.

Morale Grigg is not as fatalistic as Argus. If reduced to 1/4 hp, or if Argus falls, he will seek to flee, using his *potion of invisibility* if necessary.



Damien Anthilas

XP 25,600

Neutral, Human, Male, Sorcerer 8 (Tattooed Sorcerer), Alchemist 5

Init +9; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex);**Hp** 71 (8d6+5d8+21)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11; +4 vs. poison**Resist** Fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +8 (1d4+poison)**Ranged** bomb +8 (3d6+2 fire, DC 16)**Special Attacks** bomb 7/day (3d6+2 fire, DC 16)**Sorcerer Spells** (CL 8th, Concentration +12, +16 casting defensively)**4th** (4/day) - *dimension door*, *elemental body*^{BL}**3rd** (6/day) - *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 19), *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*^{BL}**2nd** (7/day) - *acid arrow** (DC 18), *anti-summoning shield* (DC 18), *share memory* (DC 18), *scorching ray*^{BL} (DC 18)**1st** (7/day) - *burning disarm* (DC 17), *burning hands*^{BL} (DC 17), *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *memory lapse* (DC 17), *protection from evil*.**0th** (at will) - *acid splash** (DC 16), *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*, *ray of frost** (DC 16), *read magic*, *resistance*

* can be changed to fire energy type when cast

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 5th)**2nd** (3) - *blur*, *invisibility*, *see invisibility***1st** (5) - *comprehend languages*, *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *heightened awareness*, *shield*

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 14 (18), **Wis** 12, **Cha** 18 (22)**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 18**Feats** Brew Potion, Mage's Tattoo (Abjuration +1 CL, resistance 3/day), Throw Anything, Combat Casting, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Craft Ooze, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Focus (Abjuration +1 DC), Inscribe Magic Tattoo.**Skills** Appraise +6, Bluff +12, Craft (alchemy) +20, Craft (tattoo) +15, Disable Device +9, Fly +5, Heal +6, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (local) +3, Knowledge (nature) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +3, Knowledge (planes) +10, Perception +11, Profession (Merchant) +2, Sleight of hand +5, Spellcraft +18, Survival

CR 13*

+5, Use Magic Device +8.

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnomish**SQ** Favoured Class bonus (1hp/level of Sorcerer), Skilled (+1 skill point/level), Bloodline (Elemental - Fire), Bloodline Arcana (energy spells can be changed to bloodline energy type), Tattoo Familiar (greensting scorpion, +4 initiative), Create Spell Tattoo (1/day), alchemy (alchemy crafting +5, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural armor, 50 minutes), poison use, swift alchemy.**Discoveries** Cognatogen (mutagen enhances mental abilities and penalizes physical), Collective memory (while using cognatogen +1/2 class level on Knowledge Skills + untrained use)**Combat Gear** potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 5th, 2d8+5)x2, 2 vials of memory thief poison (injury; save Fort DC 14; frequency -; effect paralyzed for 1d4 rounds; Cure 1 save; Successful save indicates staggered for 1 round. The save is Constitution based), a *Spell Tattoo of dimension door* (as scroll, CL 8th)**Tattoo 'Gear'** Reservoir Tattoo (generally holds *protection from energy - fire*), *Tattoo of resistance* +2 (as cloak), *Tattoo of armor* +4 (as bracers), *Tattoo of Spell knowledge* 3 (*dispel magic*, as per ring), *Tattoo of levitation* (as boots), *Tattoo of proof against detection and location* (as amulet),**Other Gear** headband of mental prowess +4 (*Int & Cha*), ring of protection +3, metamagic rod of quicken (lesser), metamagic rod of piercing (lesser), masterwork dagger, formula book (contains all prepared extracts as well as the following: 1st - *enlarge person*, *endure elements*, *disguise self*, *identify*, *jump*, *true strike*; 2nd - *cure moderate wounds*, *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, *resist energy*, *spider climb*)

TACTICS

During Combat Damien is not a particularly combat focused, but can hold his own if needs be. His tactics for the encounter are listed above. For other situations, he will use defensive buffs (*blur*, *shield*, and *protection from energy - fire*) and use his fire magic where appropriate (ie fireball only if there is space and limited collateral damage) as well as his bombs. If he finds himself in dire straits he will use his metamagic rod of quicken to up his damage output, and always saves a spell slot or spell tattoo of dimension door to ensure an escape.**Morale** Damien will always seek to escape when the tide turns against him, until such time as the city is safe. He has sacrificed too much to waste his time on futile battles when the war remains to be won.

* Damien has an increased CR for having approximately PC level treasure.

Triast

XP 4,800

Lawful Neutral, Human, Male, Fighter (Lore Warden) 7

Init +6; **Perception** +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+6 armor, +2 Dex);

Hp 66 (7d10+28)

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4; Defiant (+2 to stabilize and saves to end ongoing conditions)

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *greataxe* +15/+10 (1d12+11/x3) or *Power Attack* +13/+8 (1d12+17/x3) and +2d6 damage vs chaotic creatures, or *mwk handaxe* +11/+6 (1d6+5/x2)

Ranged *mwk handaxe* +9/+4 (1d6+5/x2)

Special – *Maneuver Mastery* (+4 to CMB/CMD), *Know Thy Enemy* (std action, Knowledge check, gains +2 hit/damage), *Weapon Training* +1 hit/damage (Axes), *Disruptive* (+4 to threatened enemy defensive cast DC)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +15 (+17 Disarm); **CMD** 27 (29 Disarm)

Feats *Combat expertise*, *Combat reflexes* (+2 AoO), *Cornugon Smash*, *Disruptive*, *Improved Initiative*, *Improved disarm*, *Iron Will*, *Power attack*, *Weapon focus* (*greataxe*), *Weapon specialization* (*greataxe*)

Skills *Climb* +9 (+7), *Intimidate* +10, *Knowledge* (local) +9, *Knowledge* (nobility) +9, *Knowledge* (planes) +9, *Knowledge* (religion) +9, *Perception* +5, *Profession* (lawyer) +7, *Ride* +6, *Spellcraft* +5, *Swim*+8 (+6).

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ favoured class bonus (1hp/level), *Scholastic* (+2 skill points/level for Int skills), *Skilled* (+1 skill point/level)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 5th, 2d8+5)x2, *potion of invisibility* (CL 5th), *potion of spider climb* (CL 5th)

Other Gear +2 *chain shirt*, “*Last Command*” +2 *axiomatic*, *defiant greataxe* (which can be used to cast *dispel magic* and *break enchantment* 1/day each at CL 12), *ring of feather fall*, *belt of physical perfection* +2, *mwk handaxe* (2), *mwk manacles* (2).

TACTICS

During Combat Triast is a warrior who seeks to close with his opponents (either melee or caster), engage and force a surrender quickly. Against casters he tries to corral them, hampering their spell casting, and using his axe’s *dispel magic* to strip defensive magics. Against melee he tries to disarm them, and will use *Cornugon*

CR 8*

Smash to demoralize his opponents as he injures them. He is aware he cannot go toe-to-toe for protracted battles in his light armour. If over matched he uses his potions of *invisibility* and/or *spider climb* to retreat.

Triast will only resort to lethal tactics if his life is in danger. Dead men tell no tales (at least not without significant magical intervention), so Triast is far more inclined to try to force a surrender or disable an opponent, then arrest them for further questioning.

Morale Triast is no coward, but he's also no fool. He has a mandate to fulfil and an unforgiving archdevil master to answer to. He will retreat if overmatched (as above) or if reduced to 1/4 hp.

* Triast has an increased CR for having PC level treasure and an additional unique weapon of significant power.



Pregenerated Player Character Statblocks

Alizsah, Tiefling (kyton spawn) Female Bard 4

CG medium humanoid (Tiefling)

Init +2; Perception +4; Darkvision 60 feet.

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+2 natural, +3 armor, +2 Dex);

Hp 24 (4d8+4)

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +4; +4 vs bardic performance and sonic

Resist cold/electricity/fire 5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 Sickle 1d6+1 (20/x2)

Ranged +6 Longbow 1d8+2 (20/x3)

Special bardic performance 13 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire courage +1, inspire competence +2)

Spell-like Ability (CL 4th, Concentration +7)

2nd (1) - *web* (DC 15)

Bard Spells Known (CL 4th, Concentration +7)

2nd (2) - *blur*, *eagles splendor*

1st (3) - *comprehend languages*, *delusional pride* (DC 14), *ear-piercing scream* (DC 14), *innocence*

0th (at will) - *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *presdigation*, *read magic*.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +3; **CMD** 15

Feats Armor of the Pit, Martial Weapon Proficiency (longbow)

Skills Acrobatics +6, Appraise +5, Bluff +10, Climb +5, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +8, Heal +3, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (Nobility) +7, Knowledge (Planes) +7, Perception +4, Perform (dance) +10, Sense Motive +3, Sleight of Hand +6, Spellcraft +5, Stealth +6, Use Magic Device +8.

Languages Common, Abyssal, Infernal

SQ Tiefling racial (cold/electricity/fire resist 5, +2 Escape Artist/Intimidate, prehensile tail), Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), bardic knowledge +1, versatile performance (Acrobatics, Fly).

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (Cl 1st),

Other Gear +1 composite longbow (12 str), 24 arrows, cold iron masterwork sickle, +1 leather armour, cloak of resistance +1, daredevil boots, mysterious engraved circlet, 10gp

TACTICS

Alizsah tends to use charm, guile and, if needs be, intimidation to achieve her goals. She prefers subterfuge to open action, though she's not afraid to get her hands dirty when the time comes. In a party she will support any action with spells, performance and her bow, closing to melee only as a last resort. She specializes in confounding her opponents.

Description

Lithe and agile, Alizsah has short black hair, violet skin and wickedly demonic eyes. When working, she wears dark, form fitting leathers, and carries a bow over her shoulders and sickle at her side. When 'performing' she wears little more than a smile.

Background

Alizsah grew up in the darker parts of the city, her blood and upbringing making the transition to the seamy side of society. She moves through the criminal element like a master, using her burlesque performances to get close to the right people. She takes jobs where she can get them, but excels in spying, information gathering and 'recovery'. Despite a truly devilish streak, Alizsah has limits to how far she will delve into the darkness, and she is particularly cagey about her past or the mysterious circlet she carries.



Character Concept - Vernon Swain-Nisbet

Elzix, Human Female Oracle 4

CG medium humanoid (Human)

Init+0; Roll Twice; Perception +7

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+6 armor, +3 shield);

Hp 23 (4d8)

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

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +7 longsword 1d8+3 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +3 throwing axe 1d6+2 (20/x2)

Oracle Spells Known (CL 4th, Concentration +7, +11 casting defensively)

2nd (4) – *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *fog cloud*.

1st (5) – *cause fear*, *cure light wounds*, *enlarge person*, *forbid action* (DC 14), *murderous command* (DC 14).

0th (at will) – *create water*, *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*, *spark*, *stabilize*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 15

Feats Combat Casting, Extra Revelation, Scribe Scroll

Skills Craft (alchemy) +7, Diplomacy +9, Heal +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Perception +7, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +7

Languages Common, Halfling

SQ Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), Skilled (+1 skill point/level), Mystery (Battle), Revelations (War Sight, Skill at Arms, Weapon Mastery - longsword), Oracle Curse (Lame)

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (CL 1st), *scroll of fog cloud* (CL 4th)

Other Gear +1 longsword, +1 scalemail, +1 heavy steel shield, cloak of resistance +1, throwing axe (4), 10gp

TACTICS

Elzix revels in a brawl, but she's got a deep vindictive streak. She opens combat with spells that hamper or confuse her opponents, then wades in with her sword and shield, ruthlessly crushing her opposition while they are weakened.

Description

Thin and waifish, with slightly tangled long brown hair, Elzix looks like exactly what she is – a hardened street kid. She has a noticeable limp, and a masterful 'innocent' expression only a 15 year old girl can produce. Garbed in slightly oversized armour and wielding a longsword and shield, she cuts a slightly comical figure until observers realise the deadly precision of her movements and the almost maniacal gleam in her eye.

Background

An orphan in an unforgiving city, Elzix grew up rough and poor, falling into street gangs at an early age. She found she had the fire for a fight, and never took a backward step. Her awakening to mystical power occurred at puberty, and she rose even further, her gang and their "Battle Witch" carving out a nice little territory in the Lower Ward. Until recently, she was content with this, but she's begun to sense true darkness on the horizon...and she's always up for a scrap.



Character Concept - Zorba "The Dwarf Smasher"

Lenalee Shieldheart, Halfling Female Paladin 4 (Hospitaler)

LG small humanoid (halfling)

Init +1; Perception +5

Aura - Courage (10' all allies gain +4 saves vs fear)

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18 (+7 armor, +2 shield, +1 Dex, +1 size);

Hp 36 (4d10+8)

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9; **Immune** Fear, Disease

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft. (15ft in armor)

Melee +7 longsword 1d6+2 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +6 light crossbow 1d6 (19-20/x2)

Special Smite Evil (one target, +3 to hit, +4 damage, Bypass DR, +3 AC vs target, damage bonus doubled on 1st attack vs evil outsider, dragon or undead)

Spells Prepared (CL 1st, Concentration +4)

1st (1) – *cure light wounds*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 12, **Con** 12, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 15

Feats Toughness, Word of Healing (use Lay on Hands at 30' range)

Skills Diplomacy +10, Heal +8, Knowledge (Religion) +5, Perception +5

Languages Halfling, Common.

SQ Halfling Racial (+1 AC and hit, -1 CMB/CMD, +2 saves vs fear, +1 all Saves, +2 Acrobatics/Climb/Perception, +4 Stealth), Favoured class bonus (+1 skill point/level), Aura of Good, Detect evil (move action, single target, 60' range), Smite evil 1/day, Lay on Hands (30', 2d6 healing and removes *sickened* condition 5/day, can damage undead), Mercy (sickened), Channel energy (positive, 30' burst, 1d6, Will DC 15) 6/day

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds* (1d8+1), *potion of shield of faith* (CL 1st)

Other Gear +1 longsword (small), +1 chainmail, +1 light steel shield, masterwork light crossbow (small), 24 bolts, cloak of resistance +1, 10gp

TACTICS

Lenalee will always attempt a diplomatic solution before combat, and will seek to incapacitate rather than kill opponents if possible, always offering quarter if asked. If her comrades are in genuine danger she will switch, however reluctantly, to lethal combat.

Lenalee uses her spells and abilities to shield and heal her allies, and will always interpose herself between them and harm.

Description

Lenalee always tries to keep a comely appearance (her only true vice) despite wearing her father's weathered suit of armour. Her auburn hair is usually in a ponytail with some sort of flower decoration. Both her shield and her armour display her family crest, a pair of swords crossing in front of a heart. Her eyes (one blue, the other green) seem to have a welcoming twinkle about them. Unlike most halflings, her feet are covered mainly for protection. Her father's long sword rests in a sheath on her right hip (she's left handed).

Background

Lenalee was born to a forgotten hero and took up his mantle when he passed. She seeks to do his memory justice and protect the weak from aggressors. To her everyone is deserving of mercy and bloodshed to her means failure.

Character Concept - Adam Matherly



Luther "Sarge" Flint, Human Male Gunslinger 4

LN medium humanoid (human)

Init +3; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge);

Hp 36 (4d10+8)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 longsword 1d8 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +8 pistol 1d8+1 (20/x4, Misfire 1)

Deeds Deadeye, Gunslinger's dodge, Quick clear, Gunslinger initiative, Pistol whip, Utility shot

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 13, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 17

Feats Gunsmithing, Extra Grit, Point Blank Shot (+1 hit/damage within 30'), Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (pistol)

Skills Acrobatics +10, Craft (weaponsmith) +8, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Knowledge (local) +8, Perception +9, Profession (soldier) +8.

Languages Common, Dwarven.

SQ Favoured class bonus (1hp/level), Skilled (+1 skill point/level), Grit (4 points/day), Deeds, Nimble (+1)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CI 3rd 2d8+3), *potion of shield of faith* (CI 1st)

Other Gear masterwork longsword, dagger (2), +1 pistol, shot & powder for 60 shots, +1 studded leather armour, cloak of resistance +1, gunsmith's kit, 1030gp

TACTICS

Luther is soft spoken and is equally at home talking things through or 'taking them outside'. If combat occurs he prefers to think his way through a situation, calm and considered before taking action - which is inevitably through the sights of his pistol.

Description

Luther is a man in his forties, short cut hair and heavily scarred face. He wears leather armour and a heavy coat, and carries a longsword and a pistol holstered at his side. He has the bearing and calm assured purpose of an ex-military man.

Background

Luther served as a sergeant in the Andurian Guard, stationed in one of the few external outposts in the region. Career military, he was content to serve out his days, but a sudden, unprovoked attack on the outpost by a small horde of shambling undead wiped the Guard contingent there out to a man - only Luther survived. The attack ceased as suddenly as it started, with no apparent reason or trigger. Deeply troubled by this he resigned his commission to seek out the cause of the incursion.

Character Concept - Brian Dunnett



Tarathiel Crystalthorn, Elf Male Wizard 4

NG medium humanoid (Elf)

Init +6; Perception +7; Low Light Vision.

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 11 (+2 Dex, +1 deflection);

Hp 22 (4d6+4)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4; +2 vs Enchantment; **Immune** Sleep

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 Longsword 1d8 (19-20/x2)

Ranged +5 Longbow 1d8 (20/x2)

Special force missile (1d4+1) 6/day

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 4th, Concentration +7, +11 casting defensively)

2nd (3) – *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*.

1st (4) – *burning hands* (DC 14), *mage armor*, *magic missile*

0th (4) – *detect magic*, *light*, *ray of frost* (DC 13), *resistance*

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 17, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

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

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +8, Craft (alchemy) +9, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (local) +9, Perception +7, Spellcraft +10 (+12 for identification).

Languages Common, Elven, Celestial, Draconic, Sylvan.

SQ Elven Racial (Immune to magic sleep, +2 saves vs enchantment, +2 Perception/Spellcraft (identification only), +2 Cl to overcome SR, proficiency with 'elven' weapons), Favoured class bonus (1 skill point/level), Arcane Bond (amulet, cast any spell known 1/day), Arcane school (Evocation, opposition schools Necromancy and Enchantment), Intense Spells (add +1/2 level to damage of evocation spells)

Combat Gear *scroll of mage armor* (Cl 4th)x2, *scroll of shield* (Cl 4th)x2, *scroll of burning hands* (Cl 4th)x2, *scroll of expeditious retreat* (Cl 4th), *scroll of grease* (Cl 4th), *scroll of magic missile* (Cl 3rd)x2, *scroll of invisibility* (Cl 3rd), *scroll of scorching ray* (Cl 3rd), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2d8+3)x2.

Other Gear masterwork longsword, masterwork longbow, 24 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, spellbook (all 0th, memorised plus *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *protection from evil*, *shield* and *fox's cunning*), 200gp

TACTICS

Tarathiel is happy for others to go hand to hand, remaining toward the back where he can rain down destruction on his foes with magic or arrows.

Description

Tarathiel is a young elf, with pale blonde hair blue eyes. He wears finely tailored clothing, and carries a longbow and longsword, the traditional weapons of his people.

Background

Tarathiel is young by the standards of his race, young enough to be impassioned and wish to embark on grand endeavours. 'Foolish' other elves deem it. Tarathiel was raised in a distant enclave, to a life of study and privilege. When he uncovered an ancient text predicting a great evil rising in the Eternal City, Tarathiel impulsively journeyed there to uncover and face this menace.

Character Concept - T. Minards & Micah Watt



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Campaign Guide: What Lies Beyond Reason, 2016, Pyromaniac Press; Micah Watt.

Sometimes its better not to know...

Citizens are turning up in the city in catatonic states, alive but devoid of personality. Are they the victims of an illness or disease, or is there something more sinister at work?

Encountering one of these poor souls, the characters are drawn into an investigation of politics and treachery, seedy underworld dealings and rooftop chases, culminating in a fiery conclusion. Can they discover the cause of this epidemic before it's too late?

Ignorance Is Bliss continues the epic journey to uncover the corruption and madness eating away at the Eternal City from within

