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SHATTERED STAR

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

By Brandon Hodge

WAP 12

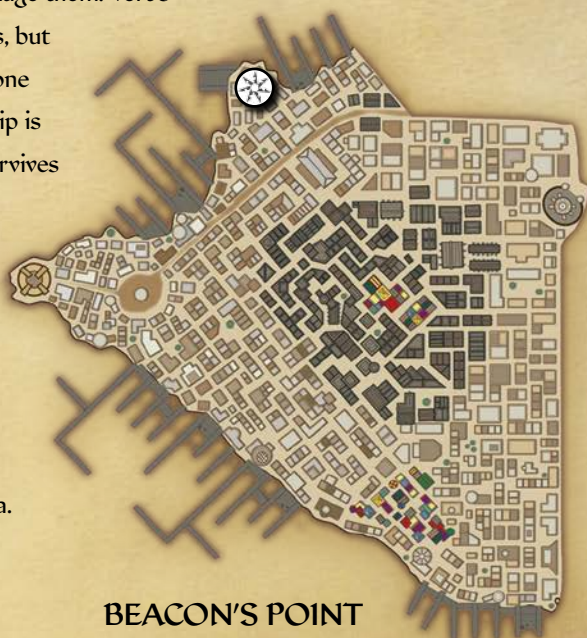


SAVING THE HARBORMASTER

When the earthquake strikes, Harbormaster Vert Aigerd doesn't hesitate—he immediately begins organizing the city's ships and boats, mobilizing them to get out to sea where the inevitable tsunami waves won't damage them. Vert's actions save many of the city's ships, but as he tries to go back to rescue just one more ship, the waves hit and Vert's ship is swept against the Wyrmwach. Vert survives the wreck and becomes stranded on the monument's hill, only to be attacked by a monstrous beast from the deep brought up by the waves and earthquake—a

two-headed serpent called a vydrarch (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Magnimar, City of Monuments* 62). Unless the PCs come to fight it, the monster slays Vert and damages the Wyrmwach before it returns to the sea.

Reward: 38,400 XP for slaying the monster, 12,800 XP for rescuing Vert.



BEACON'S POINT

A RARE OPPORTUNITY

Nireed Wadincoast lives in one of the stranger buildings in the city—the Aquaretum.

Part aquarium, part museum, part workshop, Nireed's home is open to all visitors

who want to come marvel at his strange aquatic pets

and the unusual discoveries he's made on his numerous forays underwater into the Varisian Gulf. When word spreads of a new island rising far out to sea, Nireed seeks out the PCs, a bundle of excited nerves and barely constrained delight. The gnome explains that the PCs have a rare opportunity to salvage strange relics and objects from an ancient civilization. In particular, he asks the PCs to be on the lookout

for a rare underwater clockwork dragon—if the PCs can bring back such a creature's head, Nireed would be particularly delighted. He loans them his *helm of underwater action* to aid in their mission.

Reward: 51,200 XP for delivering the head of a clockwork dragon to the excited gnome.



KEYSTONE



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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 6 OF 6

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	4
The Dead Heart of Xin by Brandon Hodge	6
NPC Gallery by Brandon Hodge	54
Shattered Star Treasures by Brandon Hodge	58
Continuing the Campaign by Adam Daigle	62
Runelords of Thassilon by Rob McCreary	68
Pathfinder's Journal: Light of a Distant Star 6 of 6 by Bill Ward	76
Bestiary by Dennis Baker, Adam Daigle, and Brandon Hodge	82
Preview	92

SHATTERED STAR



SHATTERED NO MORE!

While I'm very pleased with what Brandon Hodge did in this final adventure for the Shattered Star Adventure Path, I'd be lying if I also said I was 100 percent happy with it. Magnimar's one of my favorite creations for Golarion, you see—it's been a part of Golarion from nearly the start, but Magnimar's existed much longer than that. It's one of several cities I transplanted into Golarion from my homebrew setting. While Wes wrote the initial gazetteer of Magnimar for *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #2 back in the day, I'd had a fair amount of my own ideas about the city from my long-running home campaign as well. It was a great delight to get the chance to expand on Wes's work and get in a lot of my own ideas for the city in *Magnimar, City of Monuments*, and even more fun to be able to have the city serve as home base for an entire campaign.

Which is why I was dreading this adventure. Because this is the one where Magnimar gets hit by a tsunami.

Now, I have no one to blame but myself. I've known from the start that having the island of Xin rise would make a great climax to the Shattered Star Adventure Path. But now that I'm here and I'm ordering illustrations of monsters attacking the city and drawing notes on the map of Magnimar to indicate what parts of the city get destroyed, I have to admit... I feel a little guilty!

PLOT TROUBLESHOOTING

"The Dead Heart of Xin" is an unusual adventure in that its plot hinges on the PCs doing something that they might decide they'd rather not do. I do suspect that most parties, after spending the bulk of an Adventure Path tracking down a shattered artifact, will jump at the chance to rebuild the object of their quest. But if writing and running adventures has taught me anything over the past 30 years, it's that players are fond of surprising you.

FOREWORD

In this final adventure, the quest to recover the Shattered Star is over. If the PCs decide they'd rather not rebuild the artifact—the adventure's climax never even begins. Of course, you can certainly have “Into the Nightmare Rift” serve as the climax to your campaign if you want, but I've always been frustrated by other artifact-hunting campaigns that come to an end just as the PCs finally gain the artifact they've spent their entire careers searching for. I'm pretty sure your group will be itching to rebuild and use the *Sihedron* too, and Brandon's adventure gives them plenty of opportunities to do so. But they still need to make the decision to rebuild the *Sihedron* in the first place.

From a baseline viewpoint, rebuilding the artifact is a good thing, since all indications are that the *Sihedron* would be a great tool to use against powerful foes (such as runelords) who might rise up to cause problems sometime in Varisia's future. But it's possible the PCs might decide that reforging the *Sihedron* isn't a great idea, especially if they use divination spells to try to determine the repercussions of such an act.

If the PCs use spells like *commune*, *contact other plane*, or *divination* to look ahead at what they might face by rebuilding the *Sihedron*, you should not obscure the fact that great danger looms in the near future associated with this event. Don't give out details, but use the opportunity to let the PCs know that while rebuilding the *Sihedron* is in and of itself a good thing for Varisia's future, they'll need to be quick on their feet. For example, a *divination* spell might result in a short warning that the very act of reforging the *Sihedron* could attract the attention of dangerous foes. In short, the PCs should want to rebuild the *Sihedron*, but should also be prepared to act quickly once things go bad. If the PCs do a lot of divinations, in fact, you can reward them for their diligence by telling them that they're well prepared, and by giving them a +2 or even a +4 bonus on Fame checks made later in this part to help Magnimarians get to safety.

If the PCs decide not to rebuild the *Sihedron* but hand over the shards to another group, such as the Pathfinder Society, then you can simply have that other group reforge the artifact. In such an event, the PCs may need to take a side trek to reclaim the *Sihedron* for their use, or might even need to attempt to stop Xin's army without the artifact's aid at all!

Finally, if the PCs simply refuse to rebuild the *Sihedron*, you can always flip things around. In such a development, you can say instead that the rising of Xin was on a long-term timer, and that at some point after this adventure begins, that timer runs out. In fact, once the PCs decide to not rebuild the *Sihedron*, you can smile and nod and congratulate them on gathering the shards, then explain that for the next several weeks or months or years or even decades, they live out lives in semi-retirement, until one day a sudden earthquake and tsunami strike the city. At this

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds introduces us to the clockwork reliquary! And while he's at it, he also presents the founder of the nation of Thassilon! (Although given that he's a partially complete skeleton imprisoned in a crystal the size of a coffin, I'm guessing most of Xin's old acquaintances wouldn't recognize him...)



point, you can run the rest of this adventure more or less as is, after which the knowledge that the island-city of Xin has risen soon comes to the PCs' attention. Whether or not this event convinces them to finally rebuild the *Sihedron* or not, they can certainly come out of retirement to go stop Xin's army of golems from awakening!

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once your players complete this adventure, make sure to check out the “Continuing the Campaign” article if you're eager to give the PCs more chances to use the *Sihedron*. Rob McCreary's article about the runelords gives you seven other reasons the PCs might want to continue their adventure—any one of these ancient wizards could make for a great bad guy to fight (even if one of them might need a *resurrection* spell before he's in any shape to tangle with the PCs). The *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* has more powerful magic items and monsters with appropriate themes for high-level play in Varisia, and if you're looking for even more spells, items, and artifacts to vex and reward your players with, don't forget the *More Magic of Thassilon* web enhancement we did long ago for *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #5! We've updated some of those items and spells in the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*, but others in the web enhancement, while still presented in the rules of an older edition, offer plenty of great ideas waiting to be rediscovered.

Of course, if you're eager to start an entirely new Adventure Path, we've got you covered there as well. It's starting to feel a bit chilly, in fact. You should probably gather up your cold-weather gear and your anti-witch tools, and let your friends and family know you'll be gone for a while, because once the Reign of Winter begins, you won't believe the places you'll be visiting!

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SHATTERED STAR



THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

PART ONE: THE SIHEDRON REBORN

The heroes return home to the city of Magnimar, where word of their quest for the Shattered Star is on everyone's lips. A grand festival is organized to celebrate their success and to provide a public venue for the reforging of an ancient artifact.

PAGE 9

PART TWO: XIN RISING

No sooner is the Sihedron rebuilt than an earthquake strikes Magnimar—yet this quake is only the beginning. Strange monsters rise from the deep, and as a devastating tsunami strikes Magnimar, the heroes must move quickly to save their hometown.

PAGE 12

PART THREE: CRYSTAL PALACE

The source of the disaster becomes clear—the ancient Thassilonian capital of Xin has risen from the sea! But worse, a strange and deadly menace from the dawn of history has risen as well, and it falls to the heroes to use the Sihedron to save the day!

PAGE 18

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“The Dead Heart of Xin” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

15 The PCs should be well into 15th level when they begin this adventure.

16 The PCs should reach 16th level before traveling to the island-city of Xin.

17 The PCs should reach 17th level before entering the Skymetal Vaults of Xin's Crystal Palace.



THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Born at the height of Old Azlant's power, Xin was heir to the one of the empire's most influential families and was tutored and nurtured to be a powerful wizard from a young age. Wizardry came naturally to Xin, to the extent that he outpaced his lessons and grew bored and frustrated with what he increasingly saw as stifling traditions. Surely, he reasoned, there were other methods of manipulating magic than those Azlant's wizards had practiced for centuries. Xin abandoned his lessons and traveled to distant lands, visiting the far shores of Avistan to the north and east of Azlant in his search for new insights into magical theory. Time and time again, he found the same thing: talented native peoples who utilized arcane magic in different ways (such as the crystal magic of the Celwynvian elves, the strange divinations of the nomadic Varisians, or the war-runes of the Shoanti) whose traditions were universally derided and scoffed at by the Azlanti as too primitive to amount to anything. Of course, the magical traditions that intrigued Xin the most were the powerful glyphs and runes utilized by aboleths, but even these were shunned by Azlanti wizards, who considered them taboo.

Xin grew increasingly frustrated, recognizing an ugly form of racism in his Azlanti contemporaries. How could those who devoted their lives to the study of magic be content to discount the traditions and lore of another society simply based on their arrogant feelings of cultural superiority? It seemed to Xin that such attitudes only held Azlanti wizards back, and he increasingly lobbied for reform of these old, stilted, and outdated traditions. Unfortunately for Xin, the establishment resented his methods, and with his opportunities dwindling, the wizard began recruiting a larger and larger following of younger Azlanti who saw wisdom in his words.

When Xin finally openly admitted that he had traded Azlanti methods with arcanists beyond the nation's borders and had derived a new method of mastering magic that built upon the Azlanti virtues of rule as a template for the organization of wizardly specializations, Azlant's ruling wizards gave him a choice: remain in Azlant but abandon his ridiculous cause, or accept exile from his homeland. Xin didn't hesitate to choose the latter option.

What Azlant's leaders didn't expect was for thousands upon thousands of Xin's students and admirers to follow him into exile. Nor did they expect him to audaciously pilfer an artifact of tremendous power from his family vaults: a large, dark gem gifted to his family by one of the veiled masters—a "woman" named Ogonthunn (who, unknown to Xin or the rest of Azlant, was in fact a monstrous aboleth-like creature). Whether plucked from the seams of the Dark Tapestry like a heavenly jewel or stolen from the perfect city of Axis itself, the kettle-sized diamond gleamed within with the first uttered glyphs of creation. Daring to give

voice to these primordial runes, he imbued the gem with life, planting it like a seed at the center of his capital and growing a living tower of gleaming crystal to symbolize the purity of the virtues of rule and his authority over all.

Raising humans from barbarism might have been an idle amusement to Azlant's secret aboleth masters, but for Xin, nurturing culture within his new subjects inspired creativity. Within the Crystal Palace of his new nation of Thassilon, Xin spent years in philosophical thought, elucidating at last the intricacies of creation from the elevation of his own subjects' intellects. He founded monastic orders and established schools and other centers of learning to educate the Shoanti and Varisian nomads. Colonial villages soon blossomed into glorious cities that rivaled the gleaming spires of his homeland, and within only a few short years, a wild frontier was transformed into Golarion's second great human empire.

From his gleaming spire, Xin spent a nearly quarter-century developing and refining the intricacies of Thassilonian magic, and his methods of specialization spread throughout his lands. It was during this time of his greatest output of creativity that he created the *Sihedron*. But as Thassilon grew, so did Xin's responsibility to his empire, and he eventually began to resent the necessities of rule, believing they kept his intellect from the greater pursuit of expanding magical research. To alleviate this crush of responsibility, the emperor turned to the most powerful apprentices of his seven schools of Thassilonian magic and awarded them governance over seven portions of his empire, granting each the title "Runelord." But Xin's optimism was in part naivety. He failed to recognize the ugliest aspects of human nature even in his closest confidants. Lacking Xin's virtue and vision, these newly appointed runelords harbored the virtues' soured aspects, and each of the territories slowly turned into a corrupted reflection of the virtue it was meant to represent.

Trusting to a fault and relieved of his imperial commitments, Xin remained largely oblivious to the increasing depredations of his runelords and turned his attentions to contemplation and creation. As the years progressed, however, Xin began to realize the true state of affairs in Thassilon. Paranoia beset him when he discovered many of his meals to be poisoned. Each attempted seizure of his throne made him more desperate, until finally he cast out from his palace the very subjects he had nurtured in his younger days. In their place, the emperor crafted clockwork minions of unquestioned loyalty. As the possibility of war arose, he labored to build a clockwork army to protect his empire and home.

But Xin had grown old and feeble, and while still an unrivaled master of the arcane arts, he could not lead an army with a body crippled by age. And so he crafted a clockwork reliquary to house his soul and to serve as the

SHATTERED STAR

commander of his mechanical army. But the transfer of a human soul into a clockwork body required an amazing amount of magic—more than Xin could command on his own, unless he dismantled his other great achievement, the *Sihedron*, and used the magic housed within its seven shards to augment the transfer from living flesh to living metal. This transfer would be a matter of great delicacy, for not only would Xin be distracted by the complex ritual—he would be without his greatest defense, for he knew the dismantling of the *Sihedron* itself must be the first step.

It was a first step the runelords were waiting for.

Well aware of the palace's impregnable defenses and their emperor's ambitions, the seven runelords waited with uncharacteristic patience to strike. They saw that Xin had poured too much of his power into the creation of his symbols of rule. They knew, just as Xin did, that he was overextended, and that for the old king to transfer his soul into his new clockwork body, he would have to extract some of his power from the *Sihedron* and even from his palace, weakening his defenses. So they watched and waited, and when they sensed from afar the crescendo of magical power, they struck by sending a loyal rune giant named Shasthaak through a portal into Xin's palace. There, the giant moved to assassinate the emperor of Thassilon, but as Shasthaak struck the killing blow, Xin acted to ensure that none could claim his discoveries. He pulled from the delicate machinery of his clockwork reliquary one of the seven shards, and in so doing upended the growing power. Vast energies meant to transfer his soul to a new body instead burst outward, sundering his palace, slaying his would-be assassin, and destroying every remnant of his physical body in what could only be interpreted as the desperate suicide of a man out of options.

But even in death, Xin had a plan. As a part of the dismantling ritual of his *Sihedron*, he siphoned key energies away to power potent contingencies. Just as Xin had recognized (if belatedly) the lust for power that swelled in the hearts of the traitorous runelords, so too did he understand that with his death, the self-centered runelords would never allow the *Sihedron* to remain whole in the hands of a single individual. He predicted war between the runelords—a war for the control of the *Shattered Star*. The runelords would destroy each other, and one would rise a victor to claim the seven shards. But upon the *Shattered Star*'s rebuilding, those contingencies would also rebuild Xin's body, resurrecting him whole and strong and able to take vengeance on the lone, surviving runelord.

But here Xin's predictions failed him, for he had taught his runelords too well. They suspected reforging the *Shattered Star* would play out as Xin foresaw, and when they determined that the destruction of the shards was beyond their capabilities, each agreed to take one of the seven shards away for safe keeping. As long as the runelords

lived, the *Shattered Star* would never be rebuilt, and Xin would remain well and truly dead. The island-city of Xin was allowed to fall into ruin. Without the control of the clockwork reliquary or the lost *Guardian Key*, Xin's construct army slumbered in stasis and his restless spirit haunted the ruins. Fully aware of Xin's ghost and the palace's power, the smoldering ruin became a forbidden place, unexplored for over a thousand years until Earthfall sank it beneath the sea.

There the palace has rested for thousands of years, yet the contingent magics Xin wove did not fade. They decayed and warped over time, but they remained potent, awaiting activation through the ages with the *Sihedron*'s return. And in that time, Xin's spirit has waited as well, but the centuries have not been kind to his undead mind. The Crystal Palace has always been a mirrored reflection of its master. In the years of his virtuous rule, it was a bright, gleaming beacon of hope, justice, and fair stewardship. But now, bathed in necrotic energies of the great deep and corrupted by the dark mind of its now-insane master, the spire has blackened and fouled, its once-virtuous sentience decayed. With the restoration of the *Sihedron*, the palace awakens as the ancient but decayed magic does its best to fulfill age-old instructions to resurrect Xin and his city. But time has taken its toll on these ancient contingencies, and what rises from the deep when the *Sihedron* is rebuilt is a far cry from the glory and grandeur of Thassilon's first king—something far worse.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

With the seven shards of the *Shattered Star* reclaimed, the PCs return to Magnimar triumphant. The *Sihedron* is rebuilt during a grand festival atop the Irespan, but as the artifact is recreated, the ancient contingencies under the sea in the ruined island-city of Xin activate. Xin rises from the sea floor, wracking the Lost Coast with an earthquake and sending a tsunami out to strike southwestern Varisia. The PCs must act quickly if they hope to save lives and prevent the disaster from wreaking havoc on Magnimar!

After handling this sudden threat and several of the strange monsters the event has apparently awakened from the slumber of ages, the PCs explore the newly arisen island, discovering remnants of Xin's capital city and the regenerating black spire that is his sentient Crystal Palace. There, the PCs confirm the threat of a centuries-old army of constructs is preparing to march, and that the mad phantom of Old King Xin is bent on destroying all interlopers as it constructs a new clockwork body to house its shattered soul. Reborn in a corporeal form bent on retaking his lost empire and conquering Varisia, the rebuilt King Xin joins with the clockwork reliquary to take command of his army and finally confront those who would oppose him!

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

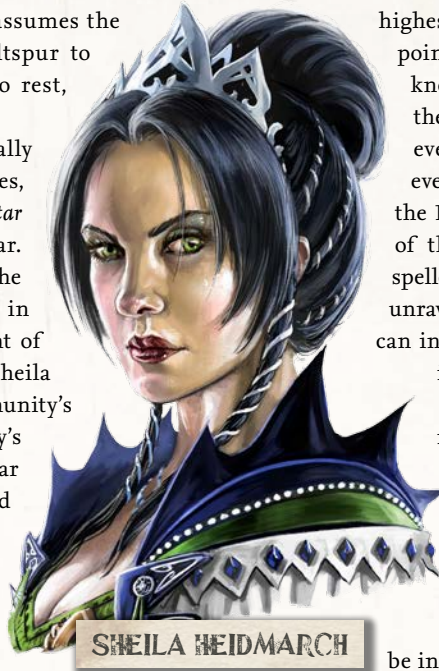
PART ONE: THE SIHEDRON REBORN

Once the PCs recover the final shard of the *Shattered Star*, the only thing left is to return to Magnimar and rebuild the ancient artifact—the PCs should already have learned from **Sheila Heidmarch** (LN female human fighter 3/monk4) at the start of the previous adventure that she's prepared all the necessary elements for such an event back in Magnimar once the seven shards have been gathered. This adventure assumes the PCs have returned safely from Guiltspur to Magnimar and have had a chance to rest, recover, and resupply.

Unless the PCs have been unusually coy and stealthy about their adventures, news of the recovery of the *Shattered Star* spreads quickly throughout Magnimar. It soon becomes obvious that the public has an overbearing interest in the outcome of events that no amount of secrecy can suppress. As a result, Sheila plans an event to channel the community's interest in the Pathfinder Society's favor. It also becomes increasingly clear that the reforging ceremony will need a very large outdoor venue to ensure the safety of its participants, and she decides to attempt the reforging ceremony publicly, atop the Irespan, during what comes to be called the Reforging Festival.

Sheila Heidmarch has already sent forth messages to her superiors in Absalom announcing the recovery of seven powerful Thassilonian artifacts, and her intention to rebuild the *Shattered Star*. Rumors that at least two members of the Pathfinder Society's leadership—the masked and mysterious Decemvirate—are going to be attending the ceremony as well, albeit in disguise as nothing more than another cheering face in the crowd. Representatives from Varisia's interested stakeholders and the Pathfinder Society, handpicked by Sheila herself, serve as the Sihedron Council and the people in charge of the reforging. The PCs are, of course, included on this list.

Exactly when the reforging ceremony is to occur is left to you—it could happen the morning after the PCs return to Magnimar, or it could be weeks or even months in the future. Certainly, the PCs should be eager to rebuild their broken artifact, and the Sihedron Council is as well, for once the artifact is fully functional, Varisia will have a potent defense against the ancient horrors of Thassilon. Any runelords that rise in the future face powerful heroes armed with potent artifacts forged by the man they hated and feared enough to assassinate so many years ago.



While they wait, the PCs are free to spend their time however they wish. If they're lagging behind in experience points, you can have one of Magnimar's notable NPCs contact the PCs with a mission of your own design. They may wish to take time to craft magic items or simply to roleplay some old relationships with friends or rivals in the city. Throughout this period, strive to make the PCs feel like famous heroes—they're among the highest-level characters in Varisia at this point, and everyone in Magnimar should know their names. Furthermore, talk of the upcoming Reforging Festival is on everyone's lips. Such history-making events are unprecedented in scale, and the PCs can take part in as little or much of the action as possible. Many famous spellcasters and personalities arrive to help unravel the artifact's mysteries, and the PCs can interact with some of Magnimar's most influential powerbrokers. Debates on the process of reforging the shards rage long into the night, with each fresh arrival bringing new insights and raising as many questions as they answer.

These events can be played with as much detail as suits your players. In some cases, cinematic cutscenes may be in order while the PCs recover or pursue personal interests. In others, the PCs may wish to engage in the long debates about the artifact and its reforging. Either way can propel the PCs to the next chain of events, as long as key NPCs are introduced and the Reforging Festival is established.

BENEFITS OF FAME

As the PCs have gathered shards of the *Shattered Star*, they have grown increasingly famous in Magnimar, for here is a band of adventurers who began their storied careers in the very city they've come back to at the end of their quest. Even PCs who aren't natives of Magnimar enjoy this fame, for the city of Magnimar is glad to finally have a famous adventuring group of its own like those that have risen in Korvosa, Riddleport, and even Sandpoint.

If your PCs are a part of the Pathfinder Society and have been using the Pathfinder faction rules presented in the *Shattered Star Player's Guide* (available for free at paizo.com), then they'll have earned Prestige Points and increased their Fame with each success. While the PCs can spend Prestige Points on boons and perks, their Fame score is unaffected by such expenditures and should be shared by the whole party. Barring any additional rewards you may have handed out during the previous

adventures, by the time the PCs return to Magnimar and have gathered all seven parts of the *Shattered Star*, they should have a Fame score of about 60 (or 64, if they learned Sorshen's great secret in area L25 under the Lady's Light in the second adventure). If you haven't been awarding Prestige Points and Fame for the adventure, go ahead and simply assume the PCs have a Fame score of 60, with 3d6 Prestige Points each.

Once disaster strikes Magnimar, the PCs will need to make Fame checks to aid them in galvanizing the city and directing panicked mobs. To attempt a Fame check, one player rolls a d20 and adds the party's Fame score. Any PC can then raise the result by a number of points equal to the amount of Prestige Points he wishes to spend on increasing the roll. Spending 5 Prestige Points, for example, gives the PCs a +5 bonus on that Fame check.

THE SIHEDRON COUNCIL MEETS

One day before the commencement of Reforging Festival, the Sihedron Council (see the sidebar on page 11) is scheduled to meet at Heidmarch Manor. The PCs should be in attendance, for at this event they can meet several of the key NPCs who have been selected to help reforge the artifact. This meeting takes place in a large tent set up on the Heidmarch Manor grounds, with Sheila assuming the council's leadership role, as befits the fact that it's her Lodge that sponsored the PCs in the first place. Her husband, **Sir Canayven Heidmarch** (LN male human aristocrat 3/rogue 3), isn't formally a member of the council, but he's here to support her and ensure that the wheels of progress continuously roll forward, toward the artifact's reassembly.

This meeting is primarily intended to be a sort of "meet and greet" so the luminaries who've come from near and far to take part in the ritual can meet the heroic PCs, but also so Sheila can inform everyone what she's learned about the reformed *Sihedron* and how the re forging process works. When the meeting begins, give the PCs a chance to mill about, chat with some of the NPCs, and relax—but at the scheduled start, Sheila clears her throat and addresses the group with the following short speech.

"Greetings, friends and associates, and thank you for agreeing to join the Sihedron Council. Tomorrow afternoon we will gather atop the Irespan to perform the Ritual of Reforging. I'll give a short speech to introduce the council members, in particular the heroes who braved certain death to gather the shards of the Shattered Star, and then they'll have a chance to regale the gathered crowd with tales of their adventures. Next, all seven shards will be brought together and placed in the Sihedron Shrine I've had my people haul up out of the dungeons under the Crow. We'll need several spellcasters to help siphon magical energy into the shards. My research has indicated that once the

Sihedron is reformed, there'll be some flashy lights and sounds, but that there should not be a dangerous discharge of magic—all the energies will be absorbed by the Sihedron itself in the process of re forging. I'd like the heroes themselves not to be involved in channeling magic into the Shattered Star, though, since if something does go wrong, they're our best option to handle whatever develops. And once the Sihedron is reformed, I see no better option than appointing them the artifact's new keepers! And now, if there's nothing more, I thank you again and I'll see you tomorrow upon the Irespan!"

Sheila's hope for a quick end to the council meeting shatters as the gathered NPCs all burst into voice at once. After a moment of chaos, Sheila, Sir Canayven, and the PCs quiet them down, and Sheila ask each group to voice its concerns.

Magnimar's city officials are eager to use the Ritual of Reforging to inflate the importance of Magnimar while the Pathfinder Society is here and paying close attention, while the Society is eager to lay claim to the *Sihedron* and take it to Absalom for study. Other members of the council worry that the ritual may be tampering with potent magic that is better handled behind closed doors. Allow the PCs to help Sheila convince the other council members that a big public event is for the best, and that they should retain control, for now at least, of the *Sihedron* once it's rebuilt—with the PCs' growing reputation and fame, the council members end up offering little resistance and should be easy to sway to these ways of thinking.

Obviously, if the *Sihedron* doesn't get reformed, the remainder of this adventure hits a snag. Do what you can to convince the PCs that rebuilding the artifact is the best course of action—it is, after all, the whole reason they went on this adventure in the first place! If the PCs are hesitant, consult the advice on plot troubleshooting in this volume's foreword.

THE REFORGING FESTIVAL

Although news of the *Shattered Star*'s recovery is on everyone's lips, the general public is mostly ill-informed of the specific events preceding the festival. In large part, the PCs' public perception depends on how they comported themselves over the course of the campaign during their visits to Magnimar.

The PCs themselves have very little responsibility leading up to the festival—Sheila's hired a small army of workers to set things up on the Irespan, and throughout the setup, the crowd of onlookers gathering on the immense bridge deck grows. It's not long before it becomes obvious that the festival is quite popular. Vendors and entertainers arrive days in advance, jockeying for position along the broad expanse of the monument. The site becomes an impromptu marketplace as tenants of the Bazaar of Sails

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

relocate to capitalize on the coming crowds, and it isn't long before opportunistic souvenir peddlers are selling cheap dolls made in the adventurers' likenesses, slivers of fake "skymetals" purported to have been shaved from the *Shattered Star* shards themselves, and seven-pronged wooden star toys that threaten to bruise and batter more than one child over the forthcoming weeks. In short, the cause for celebration turns into something of a circus for a population needing little excuse for revelry.

By the day of the festival, a sizable portion of Magnimar's citizenry ascends to the Irespan, with people of all classes crowding the monument. Processions of local luminaries—an impromptu parade complete with local street musicians, fortune-tellers, plenty of doomsayers, and all manner of revelry—form atop the massive monument. At the center of the festival grounds sits the Sihedron Shrine, a block of stone bearing the indentation of the seven-pointed star sitting on a stout wooden stage and surrounded by a velvet rope creating a cordoned area a hundred feet across.

Shortly after noon, Lord-Mayor Grobaras ascends to the pinnacle of the Irespan to give a blatantly self-congratulatory speech about the nonexistent (yet to him somehow pivotal) role he played in the success of the PCs' quest, managing to mangle their names and take the lion's share of credit for the deed. For their part, Sheila Heidmarch and the other Pathfinders take his political meanderings in stride. After the lord-mayor at last makes his closing remarks, Sheila takes the stage to offer up more honest accolades to the PCs, while explaining to the assembled citizens the importance of this momentous occasion and stressing the threat of the slumbering runelords and the security the protections of the repaired *Sihedron* will provide against their depredations. As she closes to thunderous applause, the members of the Sihedron Council assemble in preparation for the Ritual of Reforging.

THE RITUAL OF REFORGING

As the ritual begins, members of the city watch step forward to help ward the cordon surrounding the shrine. In addition, hired professionals of House Derexhi filter through the crowd to discreetly silence rabble-rousers who might disrupt the ceremony. The PCs are humbly requested to use their newfound celebrity to assist in these matters, and help distract the potentially dangerous throng as the ritual begins. With the ring of protective PCs and city watch in position, Sheila gives the signal. The seven assembled ritualists bear their respective shards, and with mumbled words of power, slowly begin moving toward one another.

The ritual itself requires seven spellcasters of caster level 8th or higher to channel magical energy into one of the seven activated *Shattered Star* shards. The council

SIHEDRON COUNCIL MEMBERS

The Sihedron Council is composed of the following NPCs. Feel free to add additional NPCs who may have played a key role in your game.

Aram Zey (N male Taldan wizard 11): Master of Spells for the Pathfinder Society

Archisa Aparna (NG female Varisian bard 5): Famously dashing, treasure-hunting local Pathfinder

Bevaluu Zimantiu (CG female cleric 10): Caretaker of Magnimar's shrine to Desna

Ernst Landis (N male Chelaxian expert 5/wizard 5): Chief curator of Magnimar's Museum of Ages

Haldmeer Grobaras (N male Chelaxian aristocrat 9): Lord-Mayor of Magnimar

Ibra Demerios (LN female Varisian/Shoanti expert 8): Stubborn head archivist of Magnimar's Founder's Archives

Ismeir Odinburge (LG male human fighter 4/paladin 5): Commander of the city watch

Jyronn Imikar (LG male cleric 13): Leader of the local church of Abadar

Koriah Azmeren (CG female half-elf ranger 11): One of Varisia's most famous Pathfinders

Kreighton Shaine (CG male elf diviner 7/lore master 3): Master of Scrolls for the Pathfinder Society

Leis Nivlandis (NG male half-elf wizard 11): Master of the Stone of the Seers in Magnimar.

Marcos Farabellus (CG male human fighter 6/rogue 4): Master of Swords for the Pathfinder Society

Sabriyya Kalmeralm (LN female rogue 12): Powerful local merchant

Toth Bhreacher (N male human wizard 15): Founder of Magnimar's Golemworks

Verrine Caiteil (LN female elf aristocrat 3/wizard 6): Executive moderator of Magnimar's Council of Ushers

fortunately includes seven such characters—Aram Zey, Bevaluu Zimantiu, Jyronn Imikar, Koriah Azmeren, Kreighton Shaine, Leis Nivlandis, and Toth Bhreacher—which exact shards each of these NPCs takes up doesn't matter, as long as each one places his or her shard, one at a time, in the correct shard sequence (pride, greed, lust, gluttony, envy, wrath, and finally sloth) in the appropriate spot atop the Sihedron Shrine.

Channeling magical energy in this manner requires spellcasters to expend all of their prepared spells or use up all of their spell slots (the number of spells is irrelevant, as long as it's the full potential of spells they could cast in a day). As they do so, the Sihedron Shrine, the shards, and the spellcasters themselves suddenly become wreathed in prismatic energy—all seven colors of the rainbow

SHATTERED STAR

shine from each shard, then surge downward out of each spellcaster as their spellpower ignites the latent spark in the shards. A low rumbling begins, accompanied by a higher-pitched buzzing sound as if from a cloud of bees. As these sounds and lights intensify, they become almost too painful to bear. Just as a ripple of unease starts spreading through the crowd and guards, the sound culminates in a peal of thunder as a beam of light arches up into the sky from the Sihedron Shrine to pierce the clouds above. A moment later, the spellcasters stagger back, fatigued but otherwise unharmed, as the reformed *Sihedron* rises up into the air to slowly hover a foot above the ground.

The crowd, needless to say, erupts into a roar of applause and triumph.

PART TWO: XIN RISING

Let the PCs have a few moments to bask in the triumph of their success. Sheila nods to the PCs, asking them to step up onto the stage while the seven fatigued spellcasters are led away by other council members. She whispers to one of the PCs, "That went better than I..."—but that's all she can get out before a strange thing happens on the horizon.

Approximately 100 miles west of Magnimar, the sunken city of Xin rises.

While those in Magnimar are too far away to see the sea vomiting forth this ancient landscape (atop the Irespan, one can only see about a fifth of that distance before the horizon occludes line of sight), anyone who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check notices a strange darkening in the sky to the west as a mass of dark clouds forms over the angry sea below. An instant later, the Irespan begins to vibrate and hum with a thunderously low drone—throughout all of Varisia, in fact, each Thassilonian monument resonates with the rising of the ancient city, humming for a full minute before quieting once again. In most cases, this strange resonant manifestation has no other effects, but in Magnimar, the resonation awakens an ancient guardian that has slumbered for thousands of year, buried in the deck of the Irespan only a few short feet below.

Unfortunately for Magnimar, the eerie vibrations in the Irespan are only the beginning. The encounters and events that follow should unfold roughly in the order they're presented, but you can adjust things as needed for the flow of your game. Most of the encounters end with a "Casualties" entry. This lists how many people perish as a result of the encounter if the PCs take no actions during the encounter to help Magnimar's citizens. If the PCs do wish to help, they must take actions during the encounter—these can be as simple as just directing crowds or helping fallen citizens to their feet, or they could include the use of powerful spells to halt rushing waters. If you feel that the PCs were concerned and did what they could to help, then at the end of the encounter, they can make a Fame check

to determine how well Magnimar's citizens reacted to their aid, followed their directions without question, and otherwise did what they were told by the PCs in order to ensure their safety. The total casualties for the encounter are then reduced by an amount equal to the result of the Fame check (minimum of 0 casualties). Keep track of how many people perish during these encounters, since that number influences the final XP award the PCs earn at the end of this part. Of course, even experienced adventurers can do little to prevent the widespread destruction of such a monumental disaster, but PCs should feel their actions are saving lives that would otherwise be lost without their intervention; this not only helps emphasize the grand scale of offshore events, but also sets the stage for the first wave of Xin's reawakened army.

EVENT 1: THE EARTHQUAKE (CR 16)

As the Irespan begins to vibrate and drone, panic quickly seizes the crowd. People scream as the crowd starts to surge south toward stable ground, for all those who have visited the Irespan before have never felt the solid stone beneath them shake so. Describe for the PCs how the growing panic threatens to turn the crowd into a mob—if the PCs express an interest in trying to direct the crowd or otherwise aid in the evacuation of the citizens, allow them a Fame check to determine their success at the end of the encounter.

Soon after the panic starts, a greater catalyst enhances the fear as the ground itself suddenly heaves and shakes. The rising of distant Xin triggers a relatively large earthquake under the sea, and the tremors are felt up and down along the Lost Coast. The quake itself is distant enough that, while frightening, it isn't powerful enough to level cities. Some buildings develop cracks, bits of facades crumble to the ground here and there, and in a few places streets buckle slightly. Loose stones tumble from the Seacleft, and many people stumble or fall as the quake continues to rock Magnimar for 1d6+1 rounds. This quake is much less devastating and dangerous than that caused by an *earthquake* spell, but each round the quake persists, the ground is treated as difficult terrain. In addition, each round a PC takes more than a single move or standard action, she must succeed at a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid falling prone.

Creature: Magnimarians have long known of the presence of shriezyx harbored within the network of tunnels that worm through the Irespan's pilings, and as the ancient bridge hums with resonant power, an exceptionally old and powerful specimen of the spiderlike monstrosities awakens from its centuries of slumber. On the second round of the earthquake, this enormous monster bursts out of the Irespan a mere 50 feet north of the Sihedron Shrine. The monster roars and immediately begins attacking fleeing citizens, but swiftly turns its attention to the PCs if they attack it.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



ENORMOUS SHRIEZYX

CR 16

XP 76,800

Advanced shriezyx (*Magnimar, City of Monuments* 60;
Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 294)

CE Huge aberration

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;
Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 12, flat-footed 29 (+4 Dex, +21 natural, -2 size)

hp 243 (18d8+162); regeneration 15 (fire)

Fort +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **Immune** mind affecting effects

Weaknesses fear of fire, vulnerable to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee bite +22 (2d6+11/19-20), 4 claws +22 (1d8+11/19-20)

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

Special Attacks slowing toxin, web (+15 ranged, DC 27, 18 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat The shriezyx uses its web to entrap foes who aren't wearing armor—it's smart enough to assume these characters aren't as strong as armor-wearing foes. It prefers to focus its attacks on armor-clad foes so its poison can debilitate their strength.

Morale The shriezyx fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 19, **Con** 26, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 40

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +40, Perception +28; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear of Fire (Ex) A shriezyx within 30 feet of a fire the size of a torch or larger becomes shaken as long as it remains within that range. If damaged by fire, a shriezyx must succeed at a Will save (DC equals the amount of fire damage dealt) or be frightened for 1 round.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 27; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Str; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Slowing Toxin (Su) Any creature struck by this enormous shriezyx's web must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or be slowed (as per the spell) for 1 minute. Each round, a victim may attempt a new DC 27 Fortitude save to end the effect early. This toxin fades quickly from spun webs—it can only affect targets on the round the web is spun. Existing webs, while they remain sticky, do not have this slowing effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

SHATTERED STAR

Casualties: 50. Some citizens perish in the panic as they're trampled or stumble over the edge of the Irespan, but others are slaughtered by the shriezyx itself as it smashes through the crowd in an almost gleeful display of violence and mayhem.

EVENT 2: THE MONUMENTS AWAKEN

This event is an unusual one in that it overlaps with all the events to follow. Magnimar is known as the City of Monuments, and 12 of those monuments have mysterious and magical legacies. When Xin rises and causes resonance within all of the Thassilonian ruins, the benevolent spirits that watch over Magnimar and its monuments notice as well.

As soon as Event 1 ends, the 12 non-Thassilonian great monuments of Magnimar begin to hum softly and become limned in glowing light, as if under the effects of *faerie fire*. This humming and glowing persists for the duration of this part of the adventure, and at this time, the restriction on having more than one monument boon at a time is lifted. In addition, the time required to gain a boon is reduced from 10 minutes to 1 round. Rules for Magnimarian monument boons appear in *Magnimar, City of Monuments*, and in the inside back covers of each Shattered Star Adventure Path volume.

EVENT 3: TSUNAMI

While the earthquake is unsettling, the tremor doesn't cause a lot of physical damage or injuries. Once it's over, and once the PCs defeat the shriezyx, the citizens and PCs may feel a sense of relief. In fact, a significant disaster is hurtling toward the Lost Coast, and toward Magnimar in particular. The sudden uprising of the island city of Xin has generated a tsunami—the island's ascent is relatively slow, yet still more than enough to send a powerful shockwave through the surrounding ocean. The tsunami generated by the event actually consists of five waves that travel incredibly quickly from the epicenter—the first of these waves hits Magnimar only 15 minutes after Event 1 ends, with a new wave hitting every 5 minutes thereafter until the fifth and final wave has struck the city.

The Lost Coast, Magnimar included, is no stranger to tsunamis, especially in the wake of the wave that hit the city of Riddleport a few years ago after a falling star struck the island of Devil's Elbow. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check is enough for a PC to realize that after an earthquake, a tsunami is a very real threat. Unfortunately, the majority of Magnimar's citizens don't know this, and after the earthquake ends and the shriezyx is defeated, many citizens are eager to return to their homes or places



ENORMOUS SHRIEZYX

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

of business—and those who live or work along the city's shorelines are in the greatest danger.

If the PCs immediately wish to start spreading the word that a tsunami may be imminent, and use their abilities to quickly move about Magnimar (such as flight, teleportation, wind walk, or fast mounts), then have the PCs attempt a Fame check to reduce the amount of casualties the city suffers. In this special case, each PC gets to make a Fame check—add up all the results from the PCs to get the total number of citizens saved from the coming disaster.

Two minutes before the first tsunami hits Magnimar, the trough that precedes the great wave arrives, drawing water back with the appearance of a suddenly low tide, as if the ocean itself is being drained by the pull of some giant plug. A successful DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Survival reveals this phenomenon for what it is, and allows the PCs to predict that they have only a couple of minutes remaining to save evacuees before they must find higher ground. (If the PCs waited this long to start spreading the word, they only get to make one Fame check overall as a party rather than one check per PC.)

After 2 minutes, the ocean returns—with a vengeance! The waters rise again in a great and terrible swell. Boats are carried up from the harbor and dashed against the docks or nearby warehouses, which crumble under the rushing tide. People and animals are swept away by the horrendous wave—first deep into the city's drowned streets, where they are crushed by debris—and then out to sea, where those unlucky enough to have survived likely drown. The wave itself doesn't resemble the classic curling breaker, but is rather a 10-foot-high wall of water that simply pushes inland, flooding much of the city's waterfront districts. The brunt of the wave's force strikes the western shores of Beacon's Point and Underbridge, but surges up into Dockway as well—Ordellia and Keystone are spared significant damage, although the waters do flood up the Yondabakari in a powerful tidal bore. The map of Magnimar shows the extent of the waves' reach in the city—while stone buildings survive this wave with some damage, wooden buildings and Varisian camps are devastated by the waters. Hundreds are washed out to sea, or simply pulverized by surging waters filled with rubble. In the unfortunate event of a PC or key NPC being struck by the tsunami, see page 234 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* for the effects of being caught up by such a powerful force.

Development: This encounter assumes the PCs seek only to minimize casualties by working to evacuate citizens from coastal areas to higher ground, but by this point the PCs have some significant resources. At your option, if the PCs utilize magic or other abilities in particularly creative ways (such as using a *wall of force* to protect a neighborhood), feel free to increase the Fame check result by 5 or 10.

Actually stopping the tsunami is difficult—but not impossible for high-level PCs. While the wave itself is beyond the power of mortal magic to completely dissipate once it forms, the use of a *wish* or *miracle* spell can protect the city. Using a *wish* or a *miracle* in this way is a very powerful request that requires the use of 25,000 gp worth of powdered diamonds (both the *wish* spell contained in the *luck blade* the PCs may have earned in “Beyond the Doomsday Door” and the *scroll of miracle* they may have discovered in “Into the Nightmare Rift” produce powerful enough effects to suffice). If such powerful magic is used in Magnimar's defense, the method by which the magic moves to save the city is left to you to describe—it should be dramatic and impressive, to say the least. Perhaps the city becomes encased in a sphere of force that simply blocks the wave, or the waters flood the city, yet somehow miraculously do no damage and claim no lives. You could even have the guardian spirits of the city's monuments take form and simply turn back the waters before retreating once more to their slumber. Whatever you decide, this is no small expenditure of magic, and no small sacrifice made by the PCs. Take advantage of the opportunity to make them feel like they just did the impossible!

Note that even if the PCs save the city from the tsunami, you should still run Events 4 and 5—these are smaller-scale encounters, after all, without a particularly good chance of causing a lot of extra damage to the city, but they do give the PCs more opportunities to play the roles of heroes.

Casualties: 450. This tragic loss of life is spread out over the five waves, but for the purposes of Fame checks made to get people to safety, the separate waves are treated here as one event. If the PCs stop the tsunami via a *miracle* or *wish*, the casualty count is automatically reduced to 0.

Story Award: If the PCs use a *miracle* or *wish* to save Magnimar from the tsunami, award them 102,400 XP.

EVENT 4: HERALDS OF XIN (CR 15)

The first tsunami wave that washes in to Magnimar is bad enough, but with each successive one, strange flotsam is carried into the city, and the waves themselves take on an unusual oily sheen. The presence of the active *Sihedron* has served as a sort of beacon for elements among Xin's construct army, and some of these creatures are magically carried along with the later tsunami waves as they approach Magnimar (via a powerful magical effect similar in nature to a *world wave* spell—see the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*). Nowhere else along the Lost Coast does this occur, for these Heralds of Xin specifically seek out the source of the magic that triggered the rising of their land.

If the PCs are down near the waves themselves, describe to them strange new forms among the churning rubble in each wave once the fourth wave rolls in. Amid the tangle

SHATTERED STAR

ELSEWHERE ON THE LOST COAST

Underwater topography and the shape of a coastline have significant effects on the size and destruction wrought by tsunamis. What this means for your campaign is that you can determine how much or how little other locations along the west coast of Avistan are affected by the rising of Xin—Magnimar could well be the only city to be significantly affected by the tsunami, or you could have devastation reach from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings all the way down to Chelax. In this adventure, the assumption is that the chain of islands that encompasses the Varisian Gulf acts as a sort of natural seawall to blunt the majority of the tsunami's force, protecting the Varisian towns north of Magnimar. Other settlements north and south of Varisia are far enough away from the epicenter of the event that no significant damage is incurred.



of broken buildings, upturned carts, and unfortunate citizens, an increasing number of metallic limbs of a strange nature are visible. These are the arms, legs, and other body parts of specialized clockwork soldiers—Xin's Legionnaires, destroyed during their magical transport or after being smashed into the city itself. In a few cases, mostly intact but still "dead" bodies of Xin Legionnaires are visible amid the debris; use this opportunity to foreshadow these distinctive enemies the PCs are destined to face in Part Three of the adventure.

Creatures: Not all of the clockworks that were carried to Magnimar from Xin are destroyed. In particular, a group of three clockwork leviathans—huge constructs designed for an aquatic environment—have survived the rapid 100-mile journey relatively intact. These three eel-like constructs are rumbling, thrashing monsters made of immense metal plates and machinery. They immediately surge out of the churning waters, attacking buildings and citizens alike with blasts of scorching steam and powerful slams and bite attacks. Anyone in a position of prominence atop a tall building finds the monsters an impossible sight to ignore, and word of their arrival spreads quickly.

If the PCs move in to attack the clockwork leviathans, they can attempt a Fame check at the end of the encounter to try to save the lives of those the monsters would have otherwise slaughtered—if they choose to ignore the clockwork leviathans, the constructs are eventually destroyed by a number of golems led down from the Golemworks.

A fight against the three clockwork leviathans also gives you a chance to put the PCs in the path of a final tsunami—you can have this last wave wash over the battlefield just as the last clockwork leviathan is destroyed.

CLOCKWORK LEVIATHANS (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 128 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 55)

Casualties: 80. These citizens are slain by the clockwork leviathans as they rampage through the flooded ruins.

EVENT 5: ENRAGED DENIZEN (CR 16)

The tsunami's waters take over an hour to finally flow back into the sea, during which time no additional significant damage is caused by the flood. Citizens trapped on roofs or in ruined buildings cry for help, and during this time, the PCs, key NPCs, the city watch, religious orders, and other groups mobilize to start the desperate work of rescuing them. As the rescue effort commences, it becomes obvious that Magnimar's citizens aren't the only creatures who've been affected by the disaster. The skies churn with flights of raucous seabirds, while countless sea creatures, including sharks, reefclaws, devilfish, and other dangers, have washed up into the streets. One of these displaced creatures, however, is a bit more dangerous than a shark or a reefclaw.

Creature: Nearly an hour after the final wave, when the water has mostly flowed back into the sea and the task of assessing the damage dealt to Magnimar can truly begin, one final disaster strikes. Above, the skies darken and rumble—a PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies this sudden change in the weather as an effect of *control weather*. Along the ruins of the Shore, near the flooded Bazaar of Sails, a sudden and strangely localized surging of the sea attracts attention as the waves start rushing back in to strike already beleaguered rescue workers. This event should be timed so that the PCs are nearby or able to notice—at the very least, word of the strange waters should reach their ears at once. If the PCs don't investigate, the unusual waves take many lives before their source emerges from the bay to savage more of the citizens before returning to the sea to brood.

A scylla named Aureusa is using her *control water* and *control weather* spell-like abilities to manipulate the weather and waves. A cruelly beautiful woman with the heads of wolves growing from her hips and the lower body of an immense tentacled mollusk, Aureusa spent the last several thousand years magically bound as a guardian of the Irespan. While this monstrosity is normally content to dwell a mile out to sea near one of the Irespan's completely submerged pilings, the resonance of Xin rising undid her bindings and restored her to animate life. As Aureusa rose from the sea and looked upon a world much changed, she realized that she had been slumbering for quite some time. Having sighted Magnimar in the distance, she made her way to the city, and now she has found an entire population upon which to vent her frustrations and anger.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

When the PCs approach, Aureusa recognizes them as people of importance. If they wield the *Sihedron*, she certainly recognizes it for what it is. She uses *project image* to create an image of herself rising from the waters onto the shoreline and accosts the PCs in Thassilonian (this language replaces Common for her), accusing them of having destroyed the empire and brought about the ruin of the world! To a PC warded by the *Sihedron*, she says, “Xin’s trinket brought this doom upon you—its wards cannot stand before the wrath of the runelords themselves!” Feel free to have Aureusa spew other somewhat misleading threats and accusations as she attacks. She casts spells through her projected image, and as the battle begins, she unleashes a driving downpour and a severe windstorm (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 439). She continues using spells until the PCs uncover the deception or dispel her image, at which point the actual Aureusa crashes up from the sea about 100 feet to the south and moves to attack. She fights to the death.

In the unlikely event that the PCs manage to establish a reasonable conversation with the scylla, they can learn a few things of note. Mind control via *dominate monster* or *charm monster* can soothe the enraged creature. Alternatively, if one of the PCs currently inhabits Sorshen’s clone as a result of the trap in the False Sepulcher as detailed on page 26 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #62, Aureusa’s attitude suddenly changes. She becomes submissive, bowing down before “Sorshen” and welcoming her mistress while apologizing for visiting this ruin upon the Irespan. Each round that “Sorshen” speaks to the scylla, that PC must succeed at a Bluff check; otherwise, Aureusa starts to suspect that the cloned Sorshen is actually trickery from an enemy. Once the false Sorshen fails two Bluff checks, the scylla attacks, focusing her wrath entirely on the false runelord.

Aureusa can reveal any secrets of Thassilon you wish. In the time of that ancient empire, she served Runelord Sorshen and agreed to enter a long-term *binding* near one of the Irespan pilings so that she could serve as a spy, observing traffic between Bakrakhan and Shalast for her mistress. If she learns how much time has passed, she takes the revelation in

stride, indicating her desire to start rebuilding Thassilon and seek out her mistress. If she believes one of the PCs is Sorshen, she serves that character as a minion, although she receives regular Sense Motive checks to see through the deception at your discretion. The scylla can reveal much about Xin’s fate, the fate of the *Shattered Star*, and other secrets the PCs may be seeking answers to, but knows little about the island city of Xin itself other than that it is haunted by the vengeful spirit of the First King.

AUREUSA

CR 16

XP 76,800

Scylla (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 241)



AUREUSA

SHATTERED STAR

AC 35, touch 20, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +11 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -2 size)
hp 250

Treasure: Aureusa wears a fully charged *scarab of protection* and *bracers of armor* +5, along with magnificent Thassilon-era gold jewelry (two bracelets, three rings, and several necklaces) worth 12,000 gp total.

Casualties: 100. These are all victims of the enraged scylla.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to “befriend” Aureusa, even if they later kill her, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat.

CASUALTY REPORT

Once the final event is finished, the city of Magnimar sets to the task of recovery. Now and then, minor aftershocks hit the area, but despite fears to the contrary, no further tsunami waves strike the city. The extent of the damage is terrifying, but the PCs’ actions have likely saved many lives. At this point, total the final casualty results after they’ve been modified by Fame checks—the highest amount of casualties possible (resulting from four missed Fame checks) is 680 dead.

679–430 dead: Award the PCs 38,400 XP.

429–380 dead: Award the PCs 51,200 XP.

379–330 dead: Award the PCs 76,800 XP.

Fewer than 330 dead: In this unusual circumstance, award the PCs 102,400 XP, unless they’ve already received this amount for simply protecting the city from the tsunami in the first place with a *miracle* or a *wish*.

AFTERMATH

With the disaster over, the process of rebuilding begins. It will be some time before the city recovers physically and mentally from the disaster. The PCs are free to aid in the recovery process as they wish—either by using powerful magic to repair buildings or conjure aid, or simply by helping to fund the rebuilding efforts.

In the short term, though, the PCs are contacted by Sheila Heidmarch—she wants them to return to her manor to discuss the situation. When the PCs arrive, they find the other members of the Sihedron Council there as well, each wounded, worried, and worn out, but as the PCs enter, the council gives them a round of applause (this applause is greater the more people the PCs saved, of course!).

The meeting has only three items on its agenda.

1. Wayfinder Reward: Sheila informs the PCs that the Pathfinder Society had already planned on rewarding each of the characters with a prize to signify their great accomplishment, but in light of their actions during the disaster, this reward seems almost quaint. Nonetheless, she presents each PC with a *wayfinder of endless doorways* (see page 61) inscribed with his or her name.

2. Construct Remains: Sheila turns the floor over to Toth Bhreacher, who’s studied Thassilonian constructs more than anyone else in Magnimar. Still weary from using his magical power to help reforge the *Sihedron*, he keeps his warning short.

“All of the runelords had varying degrees of mastery over the crafting of constructs, but as far as I’ve been able to deduce from writings recently recovered from the Therassic Library below Jorgenfist, it was their original leader, First King Xin, who was the most talented of them at this art. His entire city of Xin was supposedly protected by an army of golems and constructs, all commanded by one man—Xin himself. As he grew old, Xin apparently sought a way to achieve immortality by transferring his soul to a sort of clockwork reliquary, but before he managed to complete this task, the treacherous runelords sent a rune giant assassin to end his life. That was when the seven shards of the *Sihedron* were scattered, each claimed by one of the seven runelords. And there, information about Xin grows sparse—the empire left the city to fall into ruin, and rumors that Xin’s ghost haunted the site persisted until the end. Now, the thing that worries me is this—those destroyed constructs that washed ashore with the tsunami, along with the clockwork monsters that yet lived, all bore the unmistakable flourish of Xin’s touch. Because of this fact, combined with the ominous storm clouds on the horizon, I fear that the activation of the *Sihedron* may have activated much more than a single artifact. I fear that the island city of Xin itself has awakened!”

3. A Darkened Horizon: And so it comes to this—the PCs are asked by Magnimar and the Pathfinder Society to investigate the darkness on the horizon. If the island city of Xin has indeed risen and Xin’s clockwork army is awakening, this could well be the exact type of threat to Varisia that the recovery of the *Sihedron* was intended to protect against!

PART THREE: CRYSTAL PALACE

With the *Sihedron*’s reforging, the ancient eldritch contingencies put in place by First King Xin ages ago reawaken his palace and raise his capital from the ocean floor some 100 miles off Magnimar’s coast. Though these magical wards were set in place in ancient days to rebuild Xin’s kingdom, not even the powerful emperor could foretell the destruction brought to his city by Earthfall and subsequent centuries spent buried beneath the sea. The continent-shattering cataclysm and slow march of time have strained the magical wards of remaking, and corrupted the arcane energies that once would have seen Xin’s kingdom reborn intact. As a result, while the sea floor rises in the shape of a new mountain, only a relatively small portion of the island-city of Xin reaches above the surface. Nonetheless, the ruins continue to rebuild themselves, rising slowly from the waves

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



intermittently even as PCs journey to investigate the isle as the city's once-glorious spires erupt from the surf in a constantly expanding perimeter around the palace. The dark, now-malignant will of the living palace serves itself—and its master—as best as it is capable in its senile and corrupted state, but like bone ground to powder, not all that was can again be put right.

If the PCs lack a method of reaching the island, their best bet is to use one of Magnimar's many fishing or trade ships that were at sea during the tsunami and thus avoided the waves' devastating strike on the shore. The captains of such ships are eager to provide the heroes free transport to and from Xin as needed, but are hesitant to approach closer than 500 feet of the island's shore—that last distance falls to the PCs to cover on their own.

XIN ISLAND FEATURES

The cluster of islands that rise with Xin's palace compose a ruined wasteland of long-collapsed buildings, crumbling tower tops, and disintegrating archways. Strange sites abound on the islands, and everywhere looms the distinctive interplay of spherical and linear designs that is the hallmark of the Azlanti architecture Xin used to design his city. Dead and dying sea life litters the islands, and crabs

scuttle in all directions to feast on the bounty. Starfish cling futilely to long-toppled columns, and spiny barnacles and dying but razor-sharp coral encrust collapsed walls and old, broken spires, making even casual investigation of ruins onerous. The stench of decay is overbearing, and creatures investigating the islands must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save once per hour or be sickened for 1d6+4 minutes.

Beyond the ruins, very little ornamentation or evidence of ancient habitation remains. Centuries on the sea floor, looting by aquatic denizens, the island's recent rise, and ages of erosion have wiped away most of the treasures that once rested in the depths. While some of the facades are remarkably well preserved, the fact is that most ruins are but empty shells of the former domiciles, with layers of coral and urchin beds obscuring the old buildings' original use and purpose. But even time can't wash everything away, and discerning eyes can detect hints of the city's former magnificence. Shattered glass globes covered in barnacles still hover along cracked sidewalks, where they once provided illumination. Likewise, stone benches and broken machinery of an indeterminate nature float in place, and old library collections, their holdings now little more than corroded bronze plates, orbit lazily around shelves and statues long lost.

Over all looms the dark shard of the Crystal Palace. The apex of the jagged black spire smolders with thick, dark smoke, and embers and sharp crystal flakes shed from its surface. Other than jagged crags, the spire boasts no window or doors beyond a single grand archway that provides entry into the imposing structure.

The focus of the rest of this adventure is on the large, blighted structure that looms atop the island's central and highest peak—the Crystal Palace of Xin. Other dangers and rewards, some far greater than those that await in the palace itself, remain hidden and lurk amid the island's other slowly reforming ruins, but these encounters are beyond the scope of this adventure. The "Continuing the Campaign" article on pages 64–65 contains numerous suggestions for additional encounters on the island or

in its ruined structures. In addition, idle exploration of the island is likely to result in encounters with creatures dredged up from the sea that are now trapped in large lakes of seawater on the islands, or with monsters emerging to boggle at the sky above. Random encounters for the island appear at the start of the bestiary on page 83.

CRYSTAL PALACE GENERAL FEATURES

Xin's palace is a semi-sentient entity of living crystal wholly in tune with the will of its master's restless undead spirit. The entire palace is, essentially, haunted by Xin, and is able to respond to the wishes of both Xin and his axiomite servants—it can mold itself physically in response to their desires. The palace's once-gleaming crystal walls have long since blackened, reflecting the erosion of time, damage dealt during Xin's death, and the subsequent degradation of its master's sanity, and they have taken on the appearance of dull obsidian. These black walls absorb light, and the radius of all light sources within the palace's rooms or hallways is reduced by half. The walls are typically only a foot thick, but the magical energies that infuse them add a layer of force energy, essentially transforming the palace walls into opaque *walls of force* (hardness 30, hp 400). Effects that destroy *walls of force* (such as *disintegrate*, a *sphere of annihilation*, or a *rod of cancellation*) render 200 square feet of wall into masonry for the purpose of resisting damage (hardness 8, hp 90, break DC 35). As long as the force effect remains active, the walls self-repair at a rate of 10 hit points per round as new crystalline structures bloom leaflike to fill cracks and gaps. Scaling a wall requires a successful DC 30 Climb check—while the surface has many rough edges and irregularities, these tend to smooth out when touched, making each possible handhold treacherous.

The sentient and highly magical nature of the Crystal Palace and its connection to Xin's spirit makes it completely impregnable by mortal magics, and spells such as *dimension door*, *passwall*, *shadow walk*, and *teleport* don't allow the PCs to cross the palace's inner or outer walls. Teleporting or moving through the palace in ways that do not requires characters to pass through solid barriers works normally—you could, for example, *teleport* from outside the palace into area A3, provided the doors were all open.

The palace and its structures have saves of +18 against all effects, and are completely immune to cold and fire damage. The palace's weakness is sonic damage. Its structure is treated as a crystalline creature in regard to spells such as *shatter*, *shout*, and *greater shout*, and it takes a –4 penalty on saving throws to resist these effects.

The doors are uniformly 4 inches thick, and are made of the same material as the walls (hardness 30, hp 400); they thus share the self-repair and weaknesses of the walls. The doors in the palace can be "locked" by Xin's spirit, which causes the crystalline material of the door to meld with

XIN'S SPIRIT

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

that of the frame, essentially sealing the door in place. This seal is airtight. A successful DC 30 Strength check is required to break down a door “locked” in this manner, or a successful DC 45 Disable Device check disables the door. A door disabled or broken down in this manner repairs itself after 24 hours.

XIN'S SPIRIT

The most dangerous guardian within the palace is Xin's restless spirit. Not quite ghost and not quite haunt, Xin's insane shade infuses the very essence of the palace. As such, Xin's presence should be a constant menace to characters, but until the final encounter, Xin himself cannot directly face the PCs. Until then, the mad apparition must act through the palace's defenses and guardians. He can manifest an unreal, spectral image of himself in certain areas of the palace (see area A3 for an example), but in most other cases he must expend portions of his spiritual energy to activate traps or to haunt one of the palace constructs—see the Spirit Points sidebar for more details.

Xin's spirit is not evil, but is overwhelmingly chaotic. A spell like *protection from chaos* grants bonuses to AC and saves against all effects linked to Xin's spirit. *Dispel chaos* can be used to diminish Xin's power, either by casting the spell with a touch upon the palace's structure, or by casting the spell with a touch on a Xin-haunted construct. When targeting the palace, the caster must attempt a DC 30 caster level check. Success indicates that Xin loses 1 spirit point, but failure causes a potent backlash of negative energy that inflicts 1 negative level on the caster. When used on a Xin-haunted construct, the construct can resist the touch with a successful Will save—if it fails, it loses the Xin-haunted construct template and is stunned for 1 round (even though constructs are normally immune to stun effects), but Xin loses no spirit points. A *miracle* or *wish* spell automatically reduces Xin's current spirit point total by 2d8+4 points (minimum 0), but doing so counts as a powerful request (and thus costs 25,000 gp in spell components).

Reducing Xin's spirit point total helps to prevent him from haunting constructs during the adventure, and thus makes exploring the palace a bit less dangerous. Xin never balks at using spirit points, even if he's only got a few left and may end up wasting an attempt depending on the die roll needed to activate the effect he desires. As a result, if the PCs push through numerous encounters, they may end up reaching some areas where the text indicates Xin activates a trap or haunts a construct but he simply doesn't have enough spirit points to do so. In such a case, simply reward parties that elect not to take the slow and steady route to exploring the palace by making the encounter less dangerous.

SPIRIT POINTS

Despite his power, Xin's spirit has its limits. When the PCs first encounter Xin's spirit, he has 20 spirit points at his disposal to activate traps or haunt constructs. Costs for haunting constructs or activating traps are detailed in the text below, as are methods for forcing the spirit to expend points against its will.

Xin recovers spirit points at the rate of 1d4 points per hour. If they drop to 0, he can no longer haunt constructs. In addition, the palace walls lose their *wall of force* qualities and the doors can no longer lock in place. All traps in the palace listed in the Palace Traps section on page 22 become inert. Teleportation and other forms of magical travel into and out of the palace function normally.

The only way to permanently put Xin's spirit to rest is to force it into the clockwork reliquary and then destroy the construct, as detailed in this adventure's final encounter.

XIN-HAUNTED CONSTRUCT (CR +2)

Xin can possess most of the constructs the PCs face in his palace—doing so costs him 1d6 spirit points. If this die roll indicates a cost greater than his current remaining spirit points, his spirit point total is reduced to 0, and the haunting attempt fails. Haunting a construct grants Xin the ability to speak to the PCs via his own voice, which issues from the closest thing the construct has for a mouth in a booming, bass tone. When he haunts a construct, he gains complete control over it. Constructs native to the palace receive no saving throw against this, but those brought in from outside the palace can attempt a DC 15 Will save to resist being haunted. A construct that resists being haunted cannot be targeted by any further attempts to haunt it for 24 hours. Once a construct becomes Xin-haunted, it remains haunted until Xin abandons it for another construct—only one construct may be Xin-haunted at a time. This condition also ends the moment the construct steps out of the Crystal Palace.

A haunted construct gains the Xin-haunted simple template, which grants the following abilities (the quick and rebuild rules are identical).

AC: +4 deflection bonus to AC.

hp: +4 hp per HD.

Die Rolls: +2 bonus on all rolls (including damage rolls) and special ability DCs.

Spell-Like Abilities: A Xin-haunted construct gains the following spell-like abilities (CL 20th, concentration +30), once per day each: *chain lightning* (DC 20), *cone of cold* (DC 19), *finger of death* (DC 22), *greater dispel magic*, *meteor swarm* (DC 24), *power word stun*, *prismatic spray* (DC 22), *reverse*

SHATTERED STAR

gravity, scintillating pattern (DC 23), summon monster IX, and telekinesis (DC 19). The use of these spell-like abilities comes from Xin's spirit, and as once such a haunted construct uses a spell-like ability, it is no longer available to any additional constructs Xin might possess for 24 hours.

Vulnerable to Positive Energy (Ex) A Xin-haunted construct takes damage from positive energy as if it were undead. Negative energy does not affect it in any way.

PALACE TRAPS

Xin's spirit can physically manipulate the palace's walls, floors, and ceilings, turning them into dangerous traps. When triggered, these traps manifest as obsidian hands that emerge from the floor to grapple opponents or sharp slivers of crystal that explode from the walls or grow spike-like from floors or walls. Xin's spirit can only activate these traps in certain places, as indicated in the text, and activating them costs him a certain number of spirit points. Once his spirit has activated a trap, it cannot be activated again for 24 hours.

CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND CR 15

XP 51,200

Activation Cost 1d4 spirit points

Type magic; **Perception** DC 29;

Disable Device DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); **Duration** 2d4 rounds; **Reset** automatic (24 hour delay)

Effect spell effect (*crushing hand*, CMB +33, CMD 43, 2d6+12 damage)

CRYSTAL SLIVERS CR 12

XP 19,200

Activation Cost 1 spirit point

Type magic; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); **Reset** automatic (24 hour delay)

Effect Atk +20 ranged (3d8+12/x4, range increment 30 ft.); multiple targets (all intruders in sight within a maximum range of 300 feet)

VISIONS FROM THE PAST

Once the PCs are within the palace walls, temporal anomalies plague them as the veil of reality is pulled aside by the emperor's ancient contingencies to expose visions replaying events from Xin's troubled life—elements all

integral to the adventure's unfolding plot. Revealing key moments in Xin's history with these visions (such as his coronation, the growing treachery of the runelords, and the creation of his army) allows the PCs to slowly piece together the emperor's tragic downfall layer by layer, interact directly with the adventure's backstory, and use the knowledge gained to save Magnimar from the threat of the clockwork reliquary.

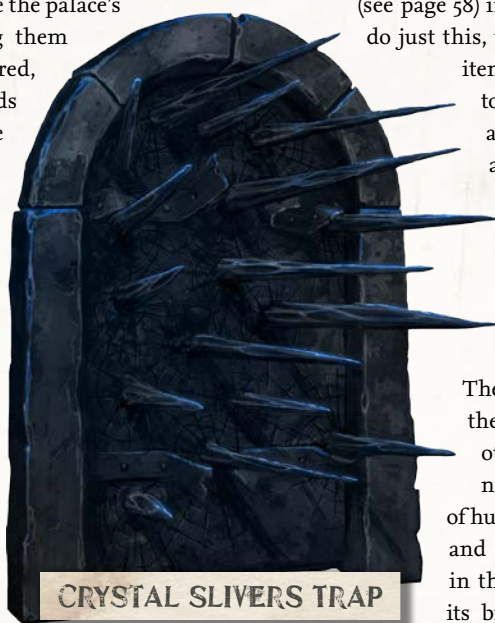
The most effective use of these visions is to help the PCs take an active interest in unraveling Xin's complicated motivations. The early discovery of the *flamma horacalcum* (see page 58) in Xin's throne room allows them to do just this, using the time-warping light of the item to peel back the shroud of history to view rooms as they once were, events as they once occurred, and betrayals as they once happened. Other parties may be more passive in their approach to these interactive elements. In this case, the GM can use encounters with Xin's spirit to activate the six principal visions so that the story may still unfold.

The *flamma horacalcum* does not work the same in every location, and unless otherwise specified below, it replays nothing more than a time-lapse vision of hundreds of years of scurrying servants and glimpses of rich furnishings, all in the span of a few seconds. But where its bright light falls, the palace's walls again shine diamond-like, and the PCs may

spy the ghostly impressions of glorious accoutrements of the world's wealthiest nobility, ancient weapons, strange contraptions, workshops, and bizarre contraptions.

In key palace areas noted below, the bright light of the *flamma horacalcum* triggers special effects and events. Sometimes, these effects change the nature of devices or runes that have otherwise degraded with time. Several visions are powerful enough that they manifest when specific triggers occur, regardless of whether the *flamma horacalcum* is present. Some visions have interactive elements, though you should be careful to remain vague about whether the PCs have truly stepped back into a past they might briefly influence, or the visions and interactions are merely the result of deep psychic impressions left by the trauma of ancient history.

These visions are meant to add intriguing setting elements to the Crystal Palace, highlighting the glories of days long past and emphasizing the tragic fall of its master's utopian reign. They also serve to engage PCs, provide clues to Xin's defeat, and tell a story that will capture the attention of players. The special effects triggered in these



CRYSTAL SLIVERS TRAP

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

CRYSTAL PALACE GROUND FLOOR

1 square = 10 feet



areas by the device's time-rendering powers are detailed on a room-by-room basis on the following pages.

GROUND FLOOR FEATURES

The PCs may be surprised to find no evidence of water damage or smell of rotting fish within the palace. With the exception of the flooded lower hold, the palace's interior is remarkably well preserved because of its protective and regenerative magics, and little has changed within since the fall of Thassilon. The ground floor served as Xin's public forum, where he held court, administered justice, and ruled his empire. In the days when his palace still gleamed bright, visitors were welcomed by the sight of thousands of clockwork legionnaires clearly visible through the crystal floor beneath their feet, an unsubtle display of power indeed.

With the exception of the throne room's soaring 100-foot height, most ceilings on the ground floor are 30 feet high.

A1. POCKMARKED PORTAL (CR 16)

A tall, broad archway grown of crystal stands at the base of the palace. The door the archway frames bears no hinge, lock, or knob—only an unbroken sheet of pockmarked black crystal bars the way into the palace's interior.

This door gives the PCs their first taste of the difficulty of breaching portals within the palace, but before they have a chance to try much against the door, another group of visitors accosts them.

Creatures: The aboleths have long been intrigued by the sunken ruins of Xin, but they also understand the dangers the ruins present. One aboleth in particular, the veiled master Ogonthunn, is obsessed with the ruin, for it was this creature's gemstone, stolen from Azlant long ago by Xin himself, that was used as a seed for the Crystal Palace. During Thassilon's rule, Ogonthunn was content to observe Thassilon from afar, but after Earthfall, the veiled master came to the newly sunken city to try to reclaim its gem, only to find the palace's wards impenetrable even to it. Ogonthunn eventually set aside its desires to explore the palace and reclaim what it felt was its due, but when wards it placed centuries ago on the ruined city activated with the island-city's rising, Ogonthunn teleported there to investigate. Upon finding the palace wards that previously prevented all entry had faltered, it assumed human form and entered. Ogonthunn can now be found within as it works to gain control of Xin's construct army, but has left several dangerous aboleth minions behind to guard against intruders.

SHATTERED STAR



There are three of these advanced aboleths lurking in the 30-foot-deep watery trench that lies 100 feet to the south of area A1. If they notice the PCs' approach, they use *veil* to assume the form of attractive gillmen and then use *project image* to appear to step out of the water and call out to the PCs in Aquan.

OGONTHUNN'S GUARDIANS (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200

Advanced aboleth

LE Huge aberration (aquatic)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +21

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, –2 size)

hp 175 (13d8+117)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +15 (1d6+7 plus slime)

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

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +22)

At will—*hypnotic pattern* (DC 18), *illusory wall* (DC 20), *mirage arcana* (DC 21), *persistent image* (DC 21), *programmed image* (DC 22), *project image* (DC 23), *veil* (DC 22)

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 25)

TACTICS

During Combat The aboleths use *dominate monster* for the first few rounds of combat to try to turn the PCs against each other, and illusions of undead rune giants rising from the island's muck to trick them into wasting resources. Once the PCs are distracted, the aboleths rise to use their wands, resorting to melee as a last resort.

Morale The aboleths fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 26, **Int** 19, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Skills Bluff +19, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana, nature) +17, Perception +21, Spellcraft +20, Swim +31, Use Magic Device +19

Languages Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Azlanti, Thassilonian

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Combat Gear *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 15 charges); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor +4*

Trap: Xin's spirit reacts violently to intrusion—the chamber pulses with the sudden growth of dozens of razor-sharp crystal spikes as soon as anyone attempts to force the door open. This crystal slivers trap fires upon the PCs and aboleths alike.

CRYSTAL SLIVERS

CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

A2. FOYER (CR 14)

Crystal walls that once might have glittered in mirrored reflections are now dull and blackened, oppressively absorbing light and sound. Several glasslike globes—all but four shattered and extinguished—float near the ceiling, casting a muted light within. The haunting eyes of cracked crystal statues stare vacantly toward the door.

This foyer was once where emissaries of Emperor Xin greeted visitors. Few items remain, though tarnished serving trays and vessels of a strange silver metal hang suspended in midair in one corner. On inspection, the statues seem to have grown out of the very structure of the palace, and are staggeringly lifelike in detail and complexity, though all are damaged. There are eight such statues, all of men and women of severe, regal bearing clad in intricate robes and headdresses of ancient design. They all have a distinctive cast to their features, hinting that they are related. They are, in fact, representations of Xin's forebears.

Creatures: A successful DC 25 Perception check reveals the appearance of three subtly glowing runic assemblages slowly etching themselves on the floor of this chamber. They quickly amass, rising up to coagulate into tall humanoid forms dressed in impossibly complicated raiment befitting the richest prince. These creatures are, collectively, Xin's axiomite chamberlain, and speak in staggered unison, completing one another's sentences while referring to themselves as a single individual as they address the PCs in Thassilonian.

Part of the palace's collective sentience, these axiomites are not only disoriented after thousand of years in stasis, but are also disturbed by the potent underlying aura of chaos they feel infusing the place. They treat the PCs as inappropriately dressed emissaries seeking audience with Xin—"an impossibility, I'm afraid, even for noble primitives" is an oft-repeated refrain. They speak in condescending tones, denying PCs further entry and promising that "once my lord and king awakens," the

PCs will be allowed to pass, while reminding them that "one does not request an audience—one comes when Xin beckons." They exchange dignified (if condescending) pleasantries as long as they remain unthreatened. Any attempt to enter area A3 results in the axiomites intervening—they attack if no other option can keep the PCs from "disturbing the Lord."

AXIOMITES OF XIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Female axiomite rogue 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 36)

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 171 each (18 HD; 10d10+8d8+80); regeneration 5 (chaotic or magic)

Fort +9, **Ref** +20, **Will** +13; +2 vs. traps

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2; **DR** 10/chaotic; **Immune** electricity, disease, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (good)

Melee +2 *longsword* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+10/17–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +4d6

Axiomite Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +15)

3/day—*dispel chaos*, *haste*, *hold monster* (DC 21), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *empowered order's wrath* (DC 20), *telekinesis* (DC 21), *true strike*

1/day—*summon* (level 6, 1 zelekhut requires

4 axiomites), *true seeing*

Rogue Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th, concentration +13)

3/day—*prestidigitation*

2/day—*mage armor*

TACTICS

During Combat If threatened, or if a PC attempts to open the throne room portal, the axiomites shift to their crystalline dust forms as a free action and cast *mage armor* on the first round of combat. On the next round, two of them revert to solid form to flank the PC who tried to open the door and attack with their swords while the third stays in dust form and uses spell-like abilities. An axiomite that is brought below 100 hit points reverts to dust form to enjoy the protective effects of incorporeality, replaced in combat by the third, who assumes solid form while the wounded one regenerates and casts spells.

Morale The axiomites fight to the death and pursue foes throughout the palace, but do not pursue enemies out of the palace.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 21, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +24; **CMD** 42

SHATTERED STAR

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*order's wrath*), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +28, Craft (sculptures) +24, Diplomacy +27, Fly +32, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (nobility) +26, Knowledge (planes) +26, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Sleight of Hand +28, Spellcraft +26, Stealth +28

SQ rogue talents (combat trick, major magic, minor magic, weapon training), trapfinding +4

Gear +2 longsword

Development: The axiomites of Xin are unwaveringly loyal to Xin's memory and legacy, not to Xin's current status as a mad spirit. Convincing them that the palace has "gone bad" is a difficult task—Intimidate checks won't work at all, but Bluff and Diplomacy might. Convincing an axiomite of Xin to help the PCs against the chaos of Xin's ghost, accompany them into the palace, allow the PCs into the palace in the first place, or perform any other bit of aid counts as "giving aid that could result in punishment." The axiomites are initially indifferent to the PCs (they only become hostile once they see no other option but to attack), so a successful DC 36 Diplomacy check is required to make such a request; each additional request increases this DC by 5.

A3. THRONE ROOM (CR 16)

A throne of jagged black crystal grows from the center of this massive hall under a hundred-foot-high cathedral-like ceiling. Two lines of motionless automaton warriors stand at attention to the east of the throne, forming a path up to the ruler's seat. Below, the floor is crystal-clear, like glass, allowing observation of a second immense

room below. This second room is flooded with seawater but is fitfully illuminated by what appear to be schools of strange glowing fish. The floor is not visible deep below through the gloomy water, but about sixty feet beyond the throne to the west, the floor's transparent nature is obscured by a twenty-foot-square section of black crystal set flush into the ground. Below, what appears to be a regiment of constructed soldiers of metal and gears seems to float in the water, with successive layers of metal soldiers descending down into the gloom.

The black square of stone at area **A3a** radiates strong transmutation magic. Any creature that stands upon it immediately understands that it can be mentally commanded to transform into a flight of spiral stairs extending down 120 feet into area **B1** and up through the ceiling 100 feet above into area **C1**.

When the PCs first enter this room, a bent, wizened, motionless figure seems to sit upon the throne. Any who approach can see the man appears to be mortally wounded—both legs have been blasted away, along with his right arm. The stumps are charred black, and horrible burns mar much of the rest of his body where flesh is visible through his tattered, once-regal robes. Long black hair cascades from his head, and a metal circlet sits upon his brow. This is an image of King Xin, as he appeared moments after his death.

To all appearances, Xin's body is real and freshly slain, and embers on the man's burnt stumps still smolder and glow. At some point as the PCs approach—just before someone attempts to touch or attack the figure, perhaps—the dead-looking body stirs, as if an old man were suddenly waking from a short nap. Speaking Thassilonian, Xin mutters, "What strangeness disturbs my well-deserved rest? Another assassin?" (If any of the axiomites of Xin from area **A2** still live, they immediately drop to their knees and remain motionless for the remainder of the encounter, offering no resistance to attacks.)

Xin is utterly unaware of his own demise, and no witness to his ruined, blasted form can convince him otherwise. His mind is hopelessly stuck in time, unwilling and unable to see the present reality, and his concerns reflect his last in life—how to avoid assassination long enough to see the completion of the clockwork reliquary. He seems half awake, yet livens up incrementally as the embers of his blackened bones glowing brighter with each sentence.

AXIOMITE OF XIN

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Xin believes PCs are insignificant, intrusive chieftains of the primitive tribes he ruled in early Thassilon. If PCs act disrespectfully, he instead views them as “assassins of those ungrateful runic usurpers!” and warns that “my glorious new body of skymetal will awaken my army, and all will bow before my might!” PCs should be made well aware of Xin’s ambitions and the importance of this “immortal clockwork body” to awakening the slumbering army, and of his goal to “remake my world out of the ashes of yours, as soon as my body is rebuilt.” But for now, Xin seems even more concerned with the “cursed blackness without the walls of my palace” and “that old enemy who now skulks among my soldiers below.”

Xin’s dialogue is punctuated by feeble coughs and hacking laughter. While he engages PCs, he often interrupts with cries of “Chamberlain! Fetch my Sihedron!” or “How comes my reliquary—my army cannot reawaken without it!” or “What is that incessant slithering that haunts my halls below?” If presented with the *Sihedron*, Xin claims it is but a “clever copy—a fake!” and is unwilling to recognize the artifact’s absence over his ghostly form. Additionally, Xin questions whether the PCs are there to “lead your savage tribes alongside my clockwork army, to reclaim my kingdom from those runic usurpers.”

Creatures: Regardless of how he interprets their professed motives, Xin eventually grows frustrated and angry with the PCs. At some point, he suddenly rises up to stand, as if on invisible legs—an act that triggers the first vision (see the sidebar). As the vision concludes, Xin commands his clockwork guardians to attack, and his body suddenly turns to smoke as it swirls and haunts the closest clockwork.

Attacking Xin’s body or any of the legionnaires that stand at attention in the room immediately triggers the first vision, as does anyone who appears to be Sorshen (her appearance startles and frightens Xin, who thinks she has come to “finish the job your wretched giant started!”).

Though some two dozen clockworks line the throne room procession. Most of these are nonfunctional after all this time—a clue to Xin’s current tentative control over his creations—but six of the soldiers closest to PCs spring forth from standby and attack. The failure of the rest to mobilize enrages Xin, whose screams of “Worthless! Disloyal!” echo throughout the hall. Other enraged shouts providing clues to his motivation include “Chamberlain—secure the Skymetal Vaults!” and “Your Runelord governors will pay for this trespass!” He shrieks these

FIRST VISION—ESTABLISHMENT OF RULE

The palace walls fade as sunlight streams through a circle of fantastic spires looming over a large courtyard. Thousands of cheering people in extravagant clothing surge forward—many with the distinctive features of ancient Thassilonians, but some looking more like Varisians or Shoanti. A young King Xin holds a huge diamond, its inner facets gleaming with a multitude of glowing runes. His voice booms:

“A seed of power is only as powerful as one who plants it!” Thunderous cheers erupt, and the man drops the gigantic diamond to the ground below. The diamond sinks into the earth, and jagged, rune-covered walls of blindingly bright crystal erupt from the earth with lightning speed. The erupting walls dampen the outside cheers, and the man stoops, ages, and burns as the hall returns to its current decrepit state.

Ten thousand years pass in a flash, the vision imparting all the loneliness, madness, despair, and frustration that builds in that time. The vision reveals the island rising new from the sea, and an endless legion of clockwork soldiers marching from the sea led by a clattering shape with a skeleton trapped inside—the clockwork reliquary. The vision ends with this clockwork army dismantling Magnimar and replacing it with a new city of clockwork and crystal ruled by reborn Xin. The PCs realize this final vision has yet to come true and that it is little more than the hope and desire of a powerful spirit that surrounds them.



XIN

commands even as he inhabits one of the legionnaires and leads the attack on the PCs.

XIN LEGIONNAIRES (5)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

Advanced rune-carved clockwork soldier (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 3 57, 290; *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 115)

N Medium construct (clockwork)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +0

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+2 Dex, +6 natural, +4 shield)

hp 97 each (14d10+20)

Fort +4, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities *rune of shielding*; **DR** 5/adamantine;

Immune construct traits, fire

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

SHATTERED STAR

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 greataxe +24/+19/+14 (1d12+14/x3)

Special Attacks latch, *runes of fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Xin legionnaires close quickly to melee range, focusing on the closest target in battle and using their Vital Strike bonus feat on any round they can only make a single attack.

Morale A Xin legionnaire fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 15, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 35

Feats Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B, Vital Strike^B

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rune-Carved Xin's legionnaires have been enhanced by the rune-carved construct modification (see *Ultimate Magic*). The *runes of*

shielding grants a +4 shield bonus to the construct's AC for 3 minutes, and activates automatically as soon as it is attacked with a melee attack, ranged attack, or *magic missile* (this shield bonus is included in the stats above). The *runes of fire* releases a 5-foot-radius burst of fire dealing 3d8 points of fire damage to all creatures within the burst (Reflex DC 12 half).

XIN-HAUNTED LEGIONNAIRE

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 153 (see pages 21 and 27)

Development: Even once defeated or driven from this room, an image of Xin can often be found seated upon his throne or wandering the hall muttering before his dormant clockwork servants. In this case, Xin ignores the PCs completely.

If the *flamma horacalcum* is used to illuminate this chamber, its light reveals wondrous tapestries depicting fantastic feats of magical accomplishment and fleeting visions of fawning courtesans of various races presenting wondrous gifts and rare skymetals to their king.

A4. SHRINE OF LISSALA (CR 17)

Strange glyphs crawl like living things across the walls of this chamber.

Obsidian pews float lazily in a haphazard arrangement before an unusual statue of a six-winged, mouthless woman, her outstretched hands holding forth a perfectly preserved ceremonial robe of fanciful design. A silver, seven-pronged helmet in the shape of the Sihedron rune rests on her head.

Xin's temple dedicated to the forgotten goddess Lissala represents a time before her worship descended into less savory forms. Within this chamber, Xin contemplated the runes of creation scripted by the goddess, and witnessed the fate of his own rule entwined within. The pews float haphazardly around the room in a jumbled mess, knocked loose from their magical anchors. An altar of jet-black crystal floats among them.

Creature: The strange crawling glyphs and runes on the wall are a harmless *permanent image* created to decorate this chamber. Two of the runes, however, are an ancient form of life that has dwelled in this chamber for thousands of years. These living runes think of the chamber as their home, and swiftly move to attack any who dare trespass upon it.

LIVING RUNES (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 161 each (see page 88)



XIN LEGIONNAIRE



THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Trap: A successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check reveals the statue depicts the goddess Lissala. Her outstretched hands offer a very dangerous item. This fine-looking robe is in fact a cursed *robe of powerlessness*, and the statue is specially trapped to compel an unwitting supplicant to take the robe as a gift. The statue subjects one adjacent, randomly selected creature each round to its heightened *suggestion* effect. Creatures that fail their saves immediately move to don the robe, inadvertently exposing a permanent *symbol of death* inscribed on a disk held in the statue's hands. A worshiper of Lissala is automatically immune to the effects of both the *suggestion* and the *symbol of death*.

GIFT OF FICKLE GODS

CR 16

XP 76,800

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable Device DC 33

EFFECTS

Trigger sight (*true seeing*); **Reset** none

Effect spell effects (heightened *suggestion* (9th level, DC 23), affected creature immediately takes the offered *robe of powerlessness*, donning the item on its next turn), removing the robe triggers a *symbol of death* (up to 150 hit points of creatures die in 60-foot radius, Fortitude DC 22 negates)

Treasure: A *phylactery of positive channeling* and an assortment of 12 small golden idols of Lissala worth 1,000 gp each float among the unanchored pews.

Development: The light of the *flamma horacalcum* in this chamber reveals pews in their proper place on the floor. As the scene manifests, supplicants can be seen approaching the statue and donning the offered robe before kneeling in enraptured exultation.

A5. BANQUET HALL (CR 16)

An enormous crystal table bearing no fewer than eighteen place settings grows from the floor of this elaborate banquet hall, as do dozens of crystalline chairs still in the slow process of reforming and repairing themselves into high-backed seats. Gigantic glowing glyphs pulsate on the ceiling, bathing the hall in an eerie, muted blue light that casts shadows on the crystalline furniture below. Against a wall stand nearly a dozen slumped mechanical figures.

The runes that illuminate this room from above depict the seven virtues of rule. The wall of deactivated and broken Xin legionnaires against the northern wall are all destroyed, but lend an ominous air to the room.

Creatures: Xin was nothing if not decadent in his decor. Ever seeking ways to display his power, he chose to illuminate his banquet hall with several dangerous creatures known as shining children. Xin's use of these alien outsiders as nothing more than light sources was quite notorious in Thassilon, a practice that became so

widespread throughout the empire that some older texts still refer to them as the "shining children of Thassilon."

Three powerful shining children remain in this room today, all locked in this chamber via ancient *binding* spells for well over 10,000 years. While this prevents them from leaving area A5, other ancient prohibitions against attacking visitors have long since worn off. The monsters hover near the room's ceiling 40 feet above—if they hear the sound of combat in area A3, one of them uses a *screen* spell to make the ceiling seem to be 10 feet lower, while they then place three *symbols of insanity* that cannot be triggered by shining children on the actual ceiling. Able to see through their own *screen* illusions, the shining children wait for the PCs to be spread out in the room below before dropping *walls of force* down to both lock them in the room and separate them from each other. The shining children continue to do this until they isolate each PC, at which point they cast *spell turning* on themselves, then begin firing searing rays down at the trapped PCs. Once the shining children are in turn attacked, one of them uses *greater dispel magic* to end the *screen* effect, exposing the PCs below to all three *symbols of insanity* (note that the placement of various *walls of force* may protect some PCs, since a symbol's effects function as a burst). One combat begins, the shining children fight to the death.

ADVANCED SHINING CHILDREN (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 184 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 245, 292)

Treasure: The place settings on the table consist of fine crystal goblets and delicate mithral plates, bowls, and utensils. The entire set is quite well preserved, and is worth 18,000 gp in all.

Development: If the hall is lit by the *flamma horacalcum*, PCs witness a flurry of feasting over the span of several seconds, all centered on young King Xin seated, in slower motion, at the table's head. Xin ages as the scenes progress, and a successful DC 30 Perception check reveals at least two instances where his ghostly image seems to waver and collapse before the magic of the *Sihedron* saves him, hinting at poisoning attempts later in his life.

A6. AUDIENCE CHAMBER (CR 15)

Seven pillars of cracked, murky crystal grow from the floor of this audience chamber, encasing the withered forms of desiccated humans dressed in Thassilonian finery. Two of the pillars pulsate with a deep orange hue emanating from within.

Creatures: In his latter years, Xin granted few audiences, and those who displeased him suffered grisly fates. Here are two such ambassadors from his runelord governors who overstepped their bounds, and have remained ever after

SHATTERED STAR

trapped in the palace's crystal prisons. These unfortunates lived through Earthfall and the sinking of Xin, trapped in suspended animation for hundreds of years before they slowly died. Their agonizing and horrific deaths resulted in each ambassador's soul transforming into a dread wraith, both of which now haunt this chamber. Note that while the wraiths can move in and out of the crystal prisons themselves, the force effects on the palace walls prevent them from moving through these barriers.

DREAD WRAITHS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE Large undead (incorporeal)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +23

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 22, flat-footed 16 (+7 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, -1 size)

hp 184 (16d8+112)

Fort +12, **Ref** +10, **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +2, incorporeal;

Immune undead traits

Weaknesses sunlight powerlessness

OFFENSE

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee incorporeal touch +16 (2d6/19-20 plus 1d8 Con drain)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The dread wraiths hate wizards, and focus their attacks on any obvious arcane spellcasters.

Morale The dread wraiths fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 36

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (incorporeal touch), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +0 (-12 when jumping), Fly +26, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (planes) +20, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +23, Sense Motive +23, Stealth +20

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals the resolute figure of Xin, at first young but rapidly aging as the scene transpires, seated in an audience chamber decorated with finery before a blur of servants and courtesans begging favor from their king. Just before the scene ends, Xin appears enraged with several emissaries, whose eyes freeze in horror as crystal prisons grow around them.

A7. SPELLWELL OF GENEROSITY

A crystal dais supports an intricate chair cast from black metal in a delicate weblike pattern. Sets of tiny glyphs, each set

glowing in a different color, crawl over the ceiling, floors, and walls of the room, while a slowly spinning rune-carved disk floats in the air before the chair.

Although Xin kept records of his spells in a series of spellbooks, he preferred using seven potent minor artifacts of his design when preparing spells. These seven objects were known as *spellwells*, each of which was devoted to one of the seven Thassilonian schools of magic. Today, only four of the seven *spellwells* still exist—the other three were housed in wings of the palace that were irrevocably destroyed during Earthfall. It was Xin's *spellwells* that eventually inspired the runelords in their creation of the more powerful *runewells*.

The floating, rune-carved disk in this room is one of Xin's four surviving *spellwells*—this one is attuned to transmutation magic. A character who sits in the large chair causes the *spellwell* to rotate forward to face him, then slowly start spinning. Countless combinations of runes spiral around the disk's edges, while the center seems to fall away into an infinite tunnel toward a bright light. The walls of this tunnel are decorated with spiraling patterns of runes. The image itself is a potent optical illusion—touching the surface of an active *spellwell* reveals it to be flat and solid.

Even a glance into a *spellwell* is enough to cause a minor headache for most, but an arcane spellcaster who prepares spells (not one who casts spells spontaneously) instead swiftly feels a surge of elation as he looks into the *spellwell*. A nonarcane spellcaster who studies a *spellwell* must succeed at a DC 15 Will save at the end of a round of study to avoid taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from the splitting headache that results. An arcane spellcaster instead must attempt a DC 25 Spellcraft check—on a success, he merges his mind with the *spellwell* and can study from it. This *spellwell* contains all transmutation wizard spells found in the *Core Rulebook*—it can contain additional transmutation spells from other sources as you see fit. The arcane spellcaster can prepare spells from this list as if he knew the spells (and could, in theory, later transfer spells new to him into a spellbook, for example). Alternatively, an arcane spellcaster could expend an uncast spell and immediately replace it with a transmutation spell of equal level of his choice from those contained in the *spellwell*. After an arcane spellcaster uses a *spellwell*, he gains a +2 insight bonus on all concentration checks and caster level checks made to penetrate spell resistance for 24 hours.

Trap: The ceiling 30 feet above the chair in this room is warded with a crystal slivers trap.

CRYSTAL SLIVERS

CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Treasure: The chair in this room is made of adamantine, and is worth 4,000 gp.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* can provide the PCs with further clues to the use of these chambers. All visions coaxed from the past show a meditative Xin growing older as the scene progresses. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Spellcraft check confirms that Xin is using the *spellwell* to prepare spells.

A8. AZLANTI ARCHIVES (CR 18)

Dozens of copper spheres float hypnotically at various heights here, each humming quietly as runes engraved on its surface flicker chaotically. Sheaves of thin, bronze plates—or the dust of their corroded remains—orbit each sphere. Runic scripts pulsate on the room's crystal walls, and several steps lead up to a podium with stilted, spiderlike legs holding a large black crystal that shimmers with a nauseating light. To the south, a curved pillar set into the wall features a single shelf on which sits a small coppery orrery, with a bright flame burning at its heart.

Xin “brought” (stole, really) most of his family's archives with him to Thassilon when he was forced to leave Azlant. What remained of this once-priceless collection after Xin's banishment, plunder by the runelords, and the fall of Thassilon has mostly succumbed to the ravages of time. Some texts survive—predominantly bestiaries of long-extinct creatures, theories of magical practice, and encyclopedias of ancient collected knowledge—though most are simply rust-red dust.

Creature: The spider-legged podium is in fact a Medium animated object left behind by Runelord Sorshen, the last runelord to visit and plunder these archives before all seven runelords decided it was best to leave Xin's palace alone. Sorshen left this animated object behind as a trick to vex and imperil the next runelord to come along—but none did. The PCs are the first to enter this room since her visit.

If one of the PCs appears to be Sorshen, the animated object immediately walks up to her and offers her the crystal, almost as if giving her a gift. Otherwise, the animated object springs to life—roll initiative normally, but on the animated object's turn, it dashes the crystal to the ground, shattering it. If the PCs destroy the creature, there's a flat 50% chance the crystal shatters as the animated object crumples to the ground.

The crystal is a black sapphire that Sorshen used to cast *trap the soul* on a deadly Abyssal monster—a thulgant qliphoth. If someone appearing to be Sorshen is present when the thulgant appears after the crystal is shattered, the disturbing monster assumes a submissive pose and telepathically inquires of “Sorshen” what she demands. That character can command one service from the thulgant, after which it plane shifts back to the Abyss (moving to a part of the palace, or exiting it entirely if needed, to get to a point where this teleportation effect can occur).

If there is no “Sorshen” available to issue orders to the thulgant, the creature immediately attacks all visible foes (the animated object included), fighting until reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, at which time it plane shifts back to the Abyss.



ANIMATED OBJECT CR 3

XP 800

hp 36 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

THULGANT CR 18

XP 153,600

hp 290 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 226)

Treasure: With a successful DC 25 Perception check, a PC can sort out seven surviving volumes on ancient arcane theory, each worth 2,000 gp, as well as a *scroll of summon monster IX* and a *scroll of limited wish*. In addition, Xin's *tome of living runes* (see page 61) rests among the debris. If the PCs can salvage the black sapphire, it's worth 20,000 gp.

But the most important treasure to be found here sits in an alcove in the pillar—a potent magical item known as a *flamma horacalcum* (see page 58) that the PCs can use in the palace to peer back through time and learn more about their foe.

Development: The light of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals a flurry of scholarly activity, and a successful DC 30 Perception check spies glimpses of a visibly angry and elderly Xin, placing a black crystal mirror onto spiderlike legs (see the fourth vision on page 42 for more information).

THE LOWER HOLD

The palace once stood over several underground levels, but time and the violent uprising of the island-city has sealed off all but the uppermost of these underground complexes. (At your discretion, additional chambers containing encounters of your own design can survive.) Seawater floods the palace's lowest level, but it is here that much of Xin's clockwork army sits in stasis, awaiting

activation. The ceilings range from 100 feet high in the central chamber to 40 feet high in other chambers. Until recently, this lowest level was accessible via a large fissure that ripped through the palace wall during Earthfall, exposing it to flooding but sparing the upper levels. The palace has since repaired this rift, keeping the chambers flooded even though they now lie above sea level, but also trapping several dangerous underwater monsters within, including the veiled master Ogonthunn. There is no source of air in these drowned depths. Beyond the risk of drowning (*Core Rulebook* 445), the water is very cold (*Core Rulebook* 445) and the PCs risk hypothermia as long as they remain within. The denizens of the chamber are not subject to this cold, as they are acclimated or immune to it.

Ogonthunn has also placed several *illusory walls* in key archways, hoping to keep its newly discovered secrets safe from intruders. These walls are indicated on the map by faded white lines.

OGONTHUNN (CR 19)

The most dangerous denizen of the Lower Hold is also one of its most recent arrivals: the veiled master Ogonthunn—the same powerful and ancient entity that gifted Xin's family with the magical diamond he would eventually use to grow this very palace atop his city's highest peak.

A master manipulator, Ogonthunn was once a secret adviser to Azlant's noblest houses—a scheming counselor to those ancient people, whom it and its kind lifted from savagery to civilization. Ogonthunn mastered the art of the well-placed gift, and bought itself into the influence of Xin's forefathers with the gift of a priceless artifact—a magnificent diamond imbued with runes of creation, secured from some Dark Tapestry denizen in exchange for unutterable secrets.

While few Azlanti knew of these secret masters, the eldest heirs of highborn houses did, and often sought their counsel. In this way, Ogonthunn had no small part to play in Xin's insurrection, and when the future emperor was banished from Azlant, the veiled master thought to retain its hold on the powerful young wizard, allowing him to escape Azlant with the magical diamond stolen from the family vaults. When Xin came into his power after the conquering the lands that became Thassilon, the gem's staggering potential was realized and it grew into the Crystal Palace.

Though Ogonthunn had long assumed Earthfall had destroyed the palace, undersea rumors in deep markets reached its alien ears, and it came to sunken Xin hundreds of years later to find the palace had not only survived, but its magic was strong enough even to keep out the veiled master. And so Ogonthunn placed a few *runes of watching* and went back to other business in the deep and waited. When the palace awoke several thousand years later, Ogonthunn still lived and took note. It came to investigate, and finding a rift in the lower hold that opened to the sea, swam inside.

The palace's magic has since closed the rift, trapping Ogonthunn within the Lower Hold. Of course, Ogonthunn can use the platform in area **B1** to enter the chambers above, but it isn't quite ready to leave yet—it wants to craft a replacement key to control the construct army it found in these chambers. The powerful veiled master is deep in the process of working out several magical glyphs and runes to do just this as the PCs arrive. It has already had some success in claiming and reattuning a few golems in the Lower Hold to its service, but has some time to go before it can seize control and awaken the entire army.

The PCs present Ogonthunn with a handy opportunity to explore the upper levels of the palace, so when it realizes that they've come to explore (likely after flashy spell effects briefly illuminate the depths of area **B1** through the transparent floor of **A3** above, but perhaps not until the PCs come to this floor of the palace on their own), it prepares itself to "recruit" their aid. Ogonthunn has been manipulating humanoids for well over 12,000 years, and knows the best way to secure a powerful group's aid is to appear to them as allies. The veiled master assumes human form—that of a beautiful Azlanti woman—and seeks out the PCs long after they enter this level of the palace. At your option, if the PCs instead move upstairs, Ogonthunn may follow them upward to approach them elsewhere. Ogonthunn hopes to introduce itself to the PCs while they are fighting other denizens of the palace (even some of the monsters it has charmed or dominated), then step in to attack their foes as well, appearing to come to their aid.

After the battle ends, it introduces "herself" as an Azlanti woman named Aulthunn who had remained trapped here in this palace in stasis until recently. She claims to be an ancient sorcerer from Azlant who had come to Thassilon to attempt to broker a new peace with Xin, only to be placed in temporal stasis—an effect that only recently ended with the sudden rising of the island-city. She explains that she's already used several divinatory spells to learn of the major events of the past 11,000 years (she claims to have been placed in temporal stasis 11,211 years ago, in fact—after Xin finalized the design of the Thassilonian schools of magic but before he created the *Sihedron*), but uses her supposed displacement in time as an excuse to question the PCs (mostly to try to find out why they're here and what their capabilities are).

Ogonthunn would much prefer to use diplomacy to convince the PCs to travel up into the palace heights in an attempt to explore the structure. It has many insights into the palace's history and abilities, and is more than willing to divulge some of this knowledge to the PCs—both to further secure their alliance, but also to increase their chances of discovering an easier "key" to controlling the construct army. Ogonthunn knows the palace was "grown from a powerful gemstone seed" and that it is somewhat

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

self-aware, but also that the palace is still “groggy,” and that the PCs should move quickly if they hope to explore the palace before its defenses fully awaken.

The veiled master knows Xin’s spirit haunts the place, but won’t reveal this knowledge to the PCs immediately. Any hints and helps it provides against Xin should be given in the guise of sudden insights or leaps of logic. Ogonthunn knows how the *spellwells* work, and might even suggest seeking them out if the PCs include arcane spellcasters. If Ogonthunn recognizes “Sorshen” among the PCs, she’s visibly taken aback. But since Ogonthunn had met Sorshen several times in the past, it shouldn’t be long before the veiled master realizes what’s really going on—of course, she continues to pretend to be tricked as long as it suits her whims.

The veiled master’s ultimate goal is to explore the palace and determine a method to seize control of the construct army, while maintaining its disguise against the PCs. See “Concluding the Adventure” on page 53 for details on how Ogonthunn hopes to seize this control once the clockwork reliquary is destroyed. Until this point, she claims to be better at divination magic than combat, and hangs back in battle, providing aid only as necessary to help the PCs not be destroyed. If her ruse is revealed at any time, she smiles politely and then immediately teleports away to an accessible but hidden portion of the level, then begins to prepare for the PCs with symbols. If the PCs don’t seek it out, the veiled master eventually hunts them down, now intent on ensuring their cooperation via magical domination.



OGONTHUNN

OGONTHUNN

CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 356 (see page 56)

B1. THE BRASS BATTALION (CR 15)

Submerged far beneath the murky crystal floor of the palace’s main promenade rests a multitude of motionless clockwork soldiers. Each stands firmly in place, row after row, in regimented columns from the floor to the transparent ceiling a hundred feet above, with those above the ground seeming to stand on floating disks of rippling force.

In all, there are 1,760 deactivated Xin legionnaires in this room, each standing 7 feet high as if at attention. The flooding hasn’t yet harmed the inactive constructs, nor has it toppled any of them from their positions, for

each legionnaire is trapped in a *temporal stasis*. Those that stand above the floor do so on permanent *floating disks*. A creature attempting to swim among the stacks of soldiers can do so, but the immobile soldiers effectively turn the region into difficult terrain.

This chamber served as the predominant symbol of Xin’s might, as visitors to his throne room could see directly through the crystal floor beneath their feet and gaze upon the dormant might of the king’s imposing army. Now, it is cold and dark, with only strange fish swimming around the motionless figures to give the chamber any sense of life at all.

The entrance to the north to area **B5** is obscured by one of Ogonthunn’s *illusory walls*.

Creatures: In addition to harmless fish, a group of eel-like predators known as *siyokoys* became trapped in this chamber as the waters rushed in to flood the Lower Hold. Since then, Ogonthunn has used *charm monster* to turn these creatures into allies, allowing the veiled master to pass through this room without conflict.

The *siyokoys* are still a bit disturbed and angered at the strange situation they find themselves in, and by the time the PCs arrive, they’re starting to grow hungry. They lurk amid the soldiers, swimming out to attack the PCs soon after they enter the room.

SIYOKOYS (6)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 136 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 246)

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals little more than the steady march of soldiers into this chamber, forming ranks row upon row, attended by scuttling clockwork servants. The servants are using a single, elaborate winding key on each of the thousands of clockworks, and *detect magic* causes the key to flare with strong divination magic, revealing it potentially links the mechanical minds of all clockworks wound with it. Finally, a great shudder is seen, and a rush of water floods the room from the northern entrance.

B2. SPARE PARTS (CR 15)

This room alone in the Lower Hold avoided being flooded. If the PCs open the door, the water pressure immediately forces characters within 10 feet of the open door into the room unless they succeed at a DC 35 Swim check. Characters pushed into the room by this violent rush of

SHATTERED STAR

water take 4d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 half), and are also swept into the trap within.

Broken parts and spare limbs litter this room; the components form a tangled heap on the floor.

Trap: While there's little left here today of much worth, the room is still warded by a crushing crystal hand trap that attacks anyone who enters the room (or is pushed in by flowing water).

CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND

CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals only the passage of countless servants depositing and removing clockwork parts over the course of years.

B3. FOUNDRY (CR 15)

The incomplete brass bones of dozens of clockwork soldiers litter this floor, below the massive chassis of an eel-like clockwork creature suspended from the ceiling by arcs of magical force. Everywhere are strange metal contraptions illuminated by the pulsating blue glow of glyph-inscribed walls. Eerie shadows dance on the wall as crabs clamber over the incomplete clockworks, and the beady eyes of eels peer from between the wreckage of this assembly line.

This chamber once served as Xin's foundry—it was an efficient, full-service, magically animated laboratory suitable for the creation of all manner of clockworks, and the light of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals it as such. The pulsating runes on the foundry's walls provide dim light. One of Ogonthunn's *illusory walls* conceals a passage to B4 to the west.

Creature: The PCs' intrusive presence has gained Xin's attention in ways that Ogonthunn has not, and his spirit awakens the long-defunct machinery in this room to attack the characters. His spirit haunts the normally deactivated advanced clockwork leviathan, causing the bonds of magic that hold it in place to shatter. This haunting is Xin's only appearance in the Lower Hold, but he pursues the PCs throughout it while haunting this clockwork.

XIN-HAUNTED ADVANCED CLOCKWORK LEVIATHAN

CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 224 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 55, 290, and see page 21)

Treasure: A search of the clutter in this room reveals a +2 *construct-bane battleaxe*, a suit of +3 *full plate* with +3 *armor spikes*, and a *lion's shield*.

Development: The light of the *flamma horacalcum* replays centuries of labored creation. A vision of Xin, moving somehow slower than in other incarnations, hammers furiously at a gigantic geared, armored-plated leg with a spiderlike form, its rune-engraved surface pulsing with power. He snarls at the watching party in frustration, and PCs who succeed at a DC 25 Perception check during this scene receive a +4 bonus on any future Knowledge (arcana) checks related to identify the vulnerabilities of the clockwork reliquary as they spy a revealing flaw.

B4. HALL OF GEARS (CR 16)

Millions of brass gears and sprockets cover this chamber's floor in a layer several inches deep. Glass globes—broken and otherwise—contain even more gears, while brass-mounted lenses, crystal tables, and gilded benches lie toppled and cracked throughout the room. Several small clockwork automaton's futility attempt to put the room in order.

Both entrances to this room are concealed by Ogonthunn's *illusory walls*. Unlike the foundry and the armory, where the less refined aspects of clockwork construction took place, this area is where the various flywheels, gears, and pulleys that powered Xin's army were minutely assembled. A successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a corner of the reconstructed corner of the room, where much of the intact equipment has been somewhat arranged. On a crystal workbench, several incomplete constructs all show signs of recent cleaning and tinkering. Ogonthunn has been using this room and the armory (area B5) to research methods of controlling and activating Xin's constructs. A successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check made while examining the tools and strange runes carved into various construct parts reveals that someone's been using the room for this purpose.

Creatures: If the PCs use stealth to enter the Lower Hold, there is a 50% chance they find Ogonthunn here—otherwise, it's in area B5.

A trio of particularly well-constructed clockwork golems stands guard here, recently reactivated and attuned by Ogonthunn to see it as an ally. The golems attack any others who enter the room. If Ogonthunn is surprised by the PCs here, it joins the battle against the golems as if to aid the PCs, explaining later that "perhaps because I am a full-blooded Azlanti, the golems did not perceive me as an intruder."

Xin's spirit does not attempt to haunt these golems.

ADVANCED CLOCKWORK GOLEMS (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

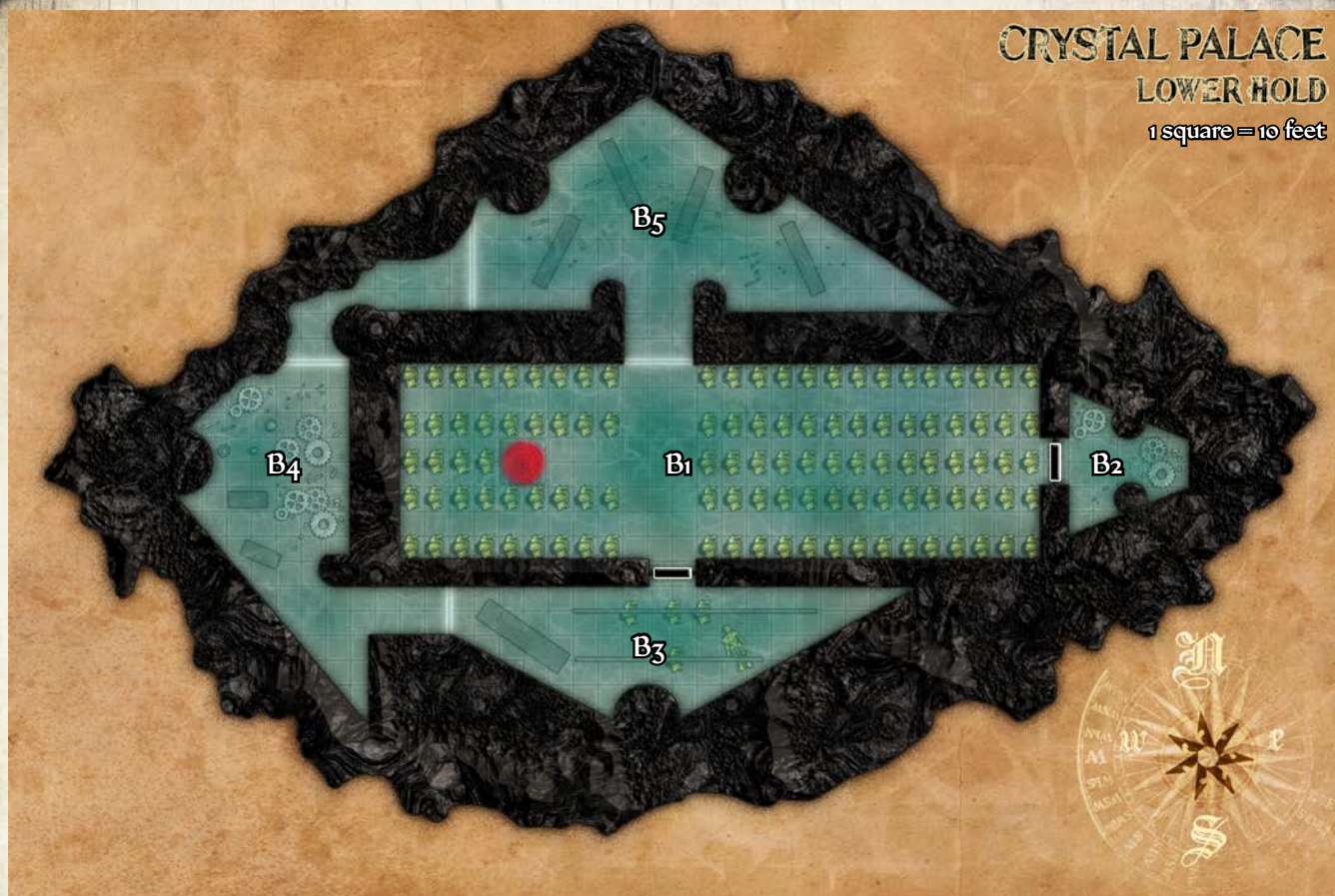
hp 150 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 137, 292)

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

CRYSTAL PALACE

LOWER HOLD

1 square = 10 feet



Development: Using the *flamma horacalcum* in this chamber triggers the second vision, as detailed in the sidebar on page 36. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals that Xin sacrificed a significant portion of his power to craft the *Sihedron*. In addition, the light reveals entrances otherwise obscured by Ogonthunn's *illusory walls*, as well as a time-lapse vision of centuries of creation and labor in its unflooded years. A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check sees a brief vision of a huge, fishlike form drawing runes on a keylike device near the location of the cracked mold that fades as quickly as it manifests.

PCs familiar with the appearance of Sorshen or Xanderghul recognize them among the apprentices in the vision.

B5. ARMORY (CR 15)

A jagged, puckered scar mars the otherwise exquisite floor of this large chamber, as if the palace had covered some great rift with a crystal scab. Debris litters the floor—weapons in ancient styles, wasp-waisted shields, and the parts and limbs of great iron constructs—marking this place as some sort of armory.

It was this room that collapsed and allowed the flooding of the Lower Hold. The palace chose to abandon the old

room and simply grow over the destroyed section—in time, it may reform into the original chamber, which may, at your discretion, connect to deeper chambers below. Two *illusory walls* mask this hallway, and a third masks the entrance into area B1, all placed by Ogonthunn.

Creatures: Ogonthunn splits its time between this room and area B4—if not encountered there by stealthy PCs, the veiled master can be found here, studying the inner workings of one of the several dismantled iron golems. One of these golems remains active—and at one point served Xin as a shield guardian. As with the clockwork golems in area B4, Ogonthunn managed to activate and attune itself somewhat to this golem, but has yet managed to usurp complete control over it. Xin's guardian won't attack Ogonthunn, but will move to attack any PCs it notices, unless one of the PCs carries its amulet (see area B6), in which case the golem abandons Ogonthunn entirely to serve that PC.

Xin's spirit does not attempt to haunt this golem unless it is used against the clockwork reliquary.

XIN'S GUARDIAN

CR 15

XP 51,200

Shield guardian iron golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 158, 162)

N Large construct

SHATTERED STAR

SECOND VISION—THE SIHEDRON'S CREATION

Amid the overbearing heat of forges burning with white-hot fire, Xin wipes grime from his brow, his robes pulled back to expose a sinewy frame smeared with soot. Eldritch words of creation flow from his mouth and take on physical form as glowing runes, which float gently down to settle on seven shards of metal held aloft by seven young apprentices. These seven apprentices move closer, mouthing their own words of power, each exchanging glances of jealousy and resentment. Xin staggers, grimacing with pain, as power flows from the emperor like ectoplasmic fire and enters the seven shards as they are brought closer together. With each step, more power is drawn from the weakening emperor, seemingly to the delight of his apprentices, who draw ever closer to assemble the pieces. With a final step, the seven shards join in a blinding flash, a pulse of arcane fire that throws back the apprentices and scatters the anvils and skymetal molds used in the *Sihedron's* forging. The figures fade, and the room returns to normal.



Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (-1 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)

hp 129 (18d10+30); fast healing 5

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

DR 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +28 (2d10+16/19-20)

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

Special Attacks breath weapon, powerful blows

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +10)

At will—*shield other*, *spell storing* (contains *fireball*, triggered automatically and centered on a corner of Xin's guardian's space closest to an enemy, CL 20th)

TACTICS

During Combat Xin's guardian attacks the closest target if not directly controlled, switching targets each round as appropriate to keep attacking the closest one.

Morale Xin's guardian fights until destroyed (or until ordered to stop fighting by its controller).

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 39

SQ find master, guard

Treasure: Dozens of ruined weapons in various stages of corrosion litter the floor here, but with several minutes of searching through the rubble (and a successful DC

25 Perception check) a PC can find a number of magical weapons forged of skymetal, including a +2 *axiomatic noqual flail*, a +1 *dancing horacalcum rapier*, and a +5 *adamantine longsword*. In addition, a waterproof *iron golem manual* can be found amid the rubble.

Development: Use of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals thousands of clockwork soldiers marching into this chamber and arming themselves with the plethora of weapons that once hung suspended in midair here. In addition, the light reveals the sight of gleaming crystal walls suddenly darkening as if burnt with fire before suddenly rending and cracking as a huge rift tears into the side of the palace, floodwater crushing all before them.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to claim Xin's guardian as their own, award them experience points as if it had been defeated in combat.

THE WORKSHOPS

The second floor of Xin's palace once served as his private workshops and laboratories. As the PCs ascend the structure, the palace awakens further, sensing their presence and the continued agitation of its spectral master. While this agitation can take the form of increased frequency of its defenses, constant harassment of PCs with debilitating traps may lead to more frustration than excitement. Try to maintain a balance between danger and this frustration. The PCs should never be made to feel welcome within Xin's hallowed halls, and the palace offers no respite from his resentment. The ceilings here are 40 feet high.

C1. HALL OF GOLEMS (CR 18)

Inert constructs of all shapes and sizes line each side of this broad hallway. Each specimen is more complicated and intricate than the last, and their varied archaic styles hint that these constructs were not a single person's creations, but rather a collection of multiple creators' works. Several archways punctuate the statue-lined walls.

This hall is filled with inert golems—most of Azlanti origin—that Xin collected throughout his life. An examination can readily discern the evolution of Xin's particular style and technique in crafting constructs from these creations. The floor before each pulsates with small runes—the arcane marks of the golems' creators—along with ancient dates in a forgotten calendar.

The stairwell opens down to the throne room below (see area A3 for details), but attempts to open a crystal staircase leading upward fail because of damage to the upper stories.

Creature: One of Xin's favorite constructs still guards this room to this day—a huge clockwork dragon that stands motionless just to the west of the door to area C9. The clockwork dragon remains motionless, gaining a +20

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

circumstance bonus on its Stealth check as it looms amid so many other diverse and varied deactivated constructs. The monster attacks as soon as the PCs come within 80 feet of area C9, and as it rises up to fight to the death, Xin's ghost possesses it, further increasing the danger.

XIN-HAUNTED CLOCKWORK DRAGON

CR 18

XP 153,600

hp 277 (see pages 21 and 86)

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals nothing but the appearance, one by one, of these golem trophies.

C2. CLOCKWORK ORCHESTRA (CR 16)

Cone-shaped crystal horns descend from the ceiling above an assembly of automatons brandishing an array of outlandish instruments. The various harps, strange horns, unusual lutes, and percussive instruments are heavily corroded, as are the clockwork musicians that hold them.

Trap: After Xin's expulsion of his living courtesans, the emperor created this clockwork band to replace the orchestra that once filled his halls with lilting tones, the music being carried through the bright halls of the palace via the hovering crystal horns that funneled the music throughout the palace. The band strikes up as soon as anyone moves more than 20 feet into the room, but unfortunately the years have ravaged their animation and untuned their instruments, resulting in a confusing cacophony. This discordant noise sounds throughout the palace, and the sound-sensitive walls of the fortress quake in response. Xin's spirit quickens to the sound, and activates a crushing crystal hand that, when combined with the discordant clockwork orchestra, may make rescuing a victim captured by the crushing hand tricky at best.

DISCORDANT CLOCKWORK ORCHESTRA

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger visual (*true seeing*); **Duration** 2d4 rounds; **Reset** automatic (after 10 minute delay)

Effect spell effect (*song of discord*, Will DC 19 negates); multiple targets (all targets in area C2 or within 20 feet of the room's entrance)

CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND

CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

Treasure: Among the clockwork orchestra is a *horn of blasting*—a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception

check picks it out from the rest of the relatively mundane but animated instruments.

Development: If the *flamma horacalcum* is used to illuminate the discordant orchestra trap before it triggers, the trap triggers automatically. But rather than the trap manifesting as a discordant blast, otherworldly music issues from what appears to be a gleaming, uncorroded clockwork band. The effects of this music on all listeners in the trap's area of effect are identical to those granted by *greater heroism* with a duration of 1 hour; a creature may benefit from this effect no more than once per day.

C3. ABYSSAL BIOLOGY (CR 16)

Brass gurneys lie in tattered disarray in this ancient laboratory. Crystal globes filled with bubbling liquids



XIN'S GUARDIAN

SHATTERED STAR

CRYSTAL PALACE WORKSHOPS

1 square = 10 feet



still bob against the ceiling, and the smears of broken runes drawn in phosphorescent inks flicker with a dying light on the chamber's floor. Several lifelike statues, each dressed in intricate robes and wielding long-handled hooks, are scattered in pieces across the floor, their faces carved in horrific grimaces.

Here Xin studied the nature of extraplanar constructs, and often conjured them to this lab directly for dissection and study. He was particularly intrigued by retrievers, but such creatures do not take capture lightly, as indicated by the broken statues—the remains of Xin's servants unable to resist the creatures' eye rays.

Creature: When the palace fell, a single retriever was imprisoned here. The creature has been trapped here ever since, waiting patiently for something to lash out at in its frustration. The monster clings to the ceiling 15 feet above the floor, and waits for multiple targets to wander into the room before it attacks. As it does so, Xin's spirit haunts the retriever in order to further augment its power.

XIN-HAUNTED ADVANCED RETRIEVER

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 227 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 234, 294, plus see page 21)

Trap: Xin's spirit can activate a pair of crystal slivers traps in this room; one to either side of the door.

CRYSTAL SLIVERS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

Treasure: With a search of the rubble strewn about the room and a successful DC 30 Perception check, a PC turns up a single wooden coffer that seems to have weathered the passage of time quite well. This coffer is coated in *unguent of timelessness* so its contents remain fresh—within is 20,000 gp worth of rare incense usable for the casting of *gate* spells along with three more vials of *unguent of timelessness* and a *rod of withering* Xin sometimes used on living outsiders he conjured here in order to ensure their compliance.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* shows Xin conjuring and then dissecting retrievers, and fleeing servants being petrified and destroyed by the lone surviving retriever.

C4. THE HOMUNCULUS VATS (CR 16)

Fluid-filled cylinders grow from the walls here, each containing mummified husks of stunted, malformed creatures spilling

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

forth from their cracked faces. Several canisters are toppled, with more of the shriveled bodies spilled out before them. The vile preservative liquids have fused the dumped corpses into a disgusting, homogenous mass.

Xin's foray into the growth of homunculus servants was uncharacteristically vexing for him. Attempting to use knowledge gained from his experiments with summoned retrievers, Xin struggled to grow a new form of powerful homunculus infused with some of the qualities of semi-life he had examined in countless retrievers. For years, each new attempt grew into a more horrific form than the last, and the frustrated emperor finally gave up on homunculi and turned his attention to the purity of clockwork construction. He sealed his failed experiments here, where they have sat ever since.

Creature: Where Xin failed to grant the semblance of life, the rising of his island combined with the surge of his tormented spirit have achieved success of a sort. The repulsive amalgamation of discarded homunculi has spontaneously merged into a form of collective but hideous life—an aberrant creature known as a corpse orgy. Fused into a central mass of tiny flapping wings, clenched claws, and fanged mouths, the horrifying creature sits still in ambush, having only recently come to terms with its own hideous existence. It speaks Thassilonian, and as it attacks, shrieks out its hatred for Xin for giving it life while simultaneously attacking any living foe it sees.

HOMUNCULUS MASS

CR 16

XP 76,800

Advanced corpse orgy (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 121, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294)

CE Large aberration

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Perception** +34

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 13, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +17 natural, –1 size)

hp 287 (23d8+184)

Fort +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +19

DR 10/piercing or slashing

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 4 slams +25 (2d6+8/19–20 plus poison and grab)

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

Special Attacks absorb body, pain shriek

TACTICS

During Combat The homunculus mass prefers to attack one target, focusing its attacks there in an attempt to absorb a body. It pursues foes throughout the complex, but if confronted by a construct, it favors attacks against its creator's minions over the PCs.

Morale The corpse orgy fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 16, **Con** 27, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26 (+28 bull rush, +30 grapple); **CMD** 40 (42 vs. bull rush, can't be tripped)

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (slams)

Skills Climb +34, Escape Artist +29, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +27, Perception +34, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +25, Survival +30

Languages Thassilonian

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Absorb Body (Su) A corpse orgy can absorb the physical body of any creature it has reduced to 0 or fewer hit points by moving over it and remaining in contact with it for at least 1 full round. An unconscious or dying opponent who succeeds at a DC 29 Fortitude save evades absorption; otherwise, the victim dies upon being absorbed. A dead opponent gets no saving throw. When the corpse orgy absorbs a body, it gains 12 temporary hit points. A creature whose body is absorbed can only be raised or resurrected if the corpse orgy that absorbed its body is slain and the corpse in question is recovered. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Pain Shriek (Su) Twice per day, as a standard action, the homunculus mass can unleash a piercing shriek that deals 10d6 points of sonic damage to all creatures within a 40-foot-radius burst (Fortitude DC 25 half). This is a sonic effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Slam—injury; *save* Fort DC 29; *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes; *effect* sleep for 1 minute; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals flashes of Xin's frustrating history with homunculus creation. His rage at how difficult he found the creation of life is significant, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check realizes that Xin's frustration could be kindled by the mere sight of a portion of the homunculus mass. While these fragments won't have an effect on his spirit, they could well aid the PCs in the final battle against the clockwork reliquary.

C5. INEVITABLE CONFRONTATION (CR 16)

This workshop possesses a cold, alien beauty. Armored plates of unearthly craftsmanship float in vaguely humanoid shapes throughout the room, the soft glow of electricity subtly arcing between them. Several tables grow from the floor, where more complete specimens rest, surrounded by glowing motes of mathematical equations.

Unlike Xin's mass-production foundries in the lower hold, this workshop is reserved for the sole use of the palace's axiomites to create generals for Xin's army. Here, the axiomites follow the timeless calculations and planar concordances that create inevitables.

Watching the axiomites labor over their creations was a source of inspiration for Xin during his life, and with the palace's rise, these axiomites have again stoked the fires of their forges to create a deadly guardian.

Creatures: When PCs enter this room, three of Xin's axiomites have recently

finished reconstructing and activating a kolyarut inevitable that they hope to send down to the entrance to the complex (area A1) to aid in guarding the site. They've gathered materials to begin construction of a marut, but have yet to begin the process. The axiomites and the freshly crafted kolyarut attack intruders on sight, fighting to the death.

AXIOMITES OF XIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 171 each (see page 25)

KOLYARUT INEVITABLE

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 150 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 163)

C6. COLLAPSED CHAMBER

Jagged shards of crystal mark a partially collapsed chamber. Fragments of what once may have been forges are tangled in the crystalline rubble.

Treasure: A successful DC 35 Perception check reveals a secret safe in the southern pillar—this safe is locked but can be opened with a successful DC 40 Disable Device check. Within lies an iron amulet—this is the keyed amulet for the shield guardian in area B5.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* reveals this room's original purpose—the crafting of unique golems that were too important for Xin to allow servants to help him with. Observation of the scene includes the creation of an iron golem shield guardian, and reveals Xin placing that shield guardian's amulet in the secret safe in the southern pillar.

C7. HUNGRY TREASURY (CR 16)

The remains of cracked crystal benches float lazily in the space of this chamber. Thousands of thin gold and platinum coins float among them.

Creatures: The palace hopes the lure of gold will draw the PCs deeper into this chamber, where four tumorlike growths lie in waiting amid the partially collapsed palace walls to the northwest. If PCs make any attempt to recover the wealth floating throughout this chamber, these creatures, advanced carnivorous crystals that look like semi-fluid blobs of obsidian when they move, slither forth to attack.

ADVANCED CARNIVOROUS CRYSTALS (4)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 168 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 45, 292)

HOMUNCULUS MASS

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Treasure: A rod of thunder and lightning lies hidden beneath the shards of a shattered crystal table. The ancient coins and gemstones that float in the air here do so as a strange result of the powerful magical energies running rampant in the palace—they can be gathered with ease, and are worth 14,000 gp in all.

Development: The light of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals this room for what it once was—a treasury of ancient Thassilon currency where tables once held stacks of minted riches meticulously counted by Xin's servants for distribution to his subjects.

In addition to revealing the original purpose of this treasury, using the *flamma horacalcum* in this chamber triggers the third vision (see the sidebar). A PC who observes the construction of the vaults notes that the sequence in which they were built matches the sequence in which the shards of the *Shattered Star* were linked: horacalcum, adamantine, djezet, inubrix, noqual, siccate, and finally abysium.

C8. SPELLWELL OF KINDNESS

A silvery throne-like chair sits in the center of this otherwise empty room. Floating in the air before the chair is a slowly spinning, rune-carved disk.

Treasure: This room contains one of Xin's *spellwells*. Similar in form and function to the *spellwell* in area A7, this *spellwell* is keyed to the school of evocation. The chair is made of hot siccate, and anyone who sits in it takes 1 point of fire damage per round. It is worth 2,500 gp.

C9. SPELLWELL OF LOVE (CR 16)

A red metal chair sits in the southern corner of this oddly shaped room. Sets of tiny glyphs shimmer in the air near the chair, while a slowly spinning rune-carved disk floats gently in the air before it. To the east, thick, jagged sheets of crystal cover a large archway like a malignant stone scab. A rune of complex design shifts and twitches along the stones of the arch itself.

This room contains a *spellwell* keyed to the school of enchantment, similar in form and function to the *spellwell* in area A7.

The crystal-clogged doorway to area C10 is one of only two means of accessing Xin's Skymetal Vaults, but the doorway was sealed over 10,000 years ago when Xin was assassinated, one of many contingent effects triggered upon his death. The runelords were unable to access the Skymetal Vaults beyond, and eventually gave up trying. Today, the route through these vaults is the only route up to the upper level of the palace.

THIRD VISION—BUILDING THE VAULTS

Xin toils in a series of vaults, each of which seems to be lined in plates of one of the seven skymetals. As each vault is completed, the skymetals stored within are used to craft strange guardians, weapons, armors, and devices. While the vaults themselves have no entrances or exits, Xin travels between them via a Sihedron rune engraved in the ground, teleporting from one to another in specific sequences by touching a tine of his *Sihedron* to the matching tine of the rune on the ground.

After an indeterminate period, the vaults shake and shudder—the palace has just been sundered by the runelords' assassination attempt on Xin. A moment later, the shaking and shuddering increases as centuries pass in a heartbeat. Again and again the runelords try to enter the vaults, only to fail time and time again as Xin's wards hold the vaults tight. Finally, the vaults shake hard enough that these wards crack and begin to fail—this is the fall of Thassilon and the sinking of the island-city beneath the waves.

Fortunately, the years and the violent uprising of the island have not been kind to the wards on this door, and while they once kept out runelords, today, these force-imbued crystals can be smashed apart with enough force (hardness 30, hp 60, break DC 40).

Trap: As soon as the crystals blocking the door are affected in any way (via damage or other attempts to remove them), Xin's spirit triggers four traps—two crystal slivers and a crushing crystal hand—to try to crush and destroy the PCs. The crushing hand is located just west of the door to area C10, while the two crystal slivers are located on the wall to either side of the door.

CRYSTAL SLIVERS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

See page 22.

CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND

CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

Treasure: The *spellwell* chair is made of a djezet alloy, and is worth 500 gp.

Development: The use of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals the fourth vision (see the sidebar on page 42). PCs who witness this scene and succeed at a DC 24 Spellcraft check may realize that the sorceress's touch carried a powerful enchantment, revealing the extent of the runelords' influence over even someone as mighty as Xin just before they rose to total dominance over Thassilon.

SHATTERED STAR

FOURTH VISION—BURDEN OF RULE

"Leave us!" shouts Xin, pacing before seven exquisitely dressed court wizards and tables holding countless wealth, while an army of retainers and handmaidens exits behind them with great haste. "The Shoanti tribes refuse to break antiquated oaths. The Varisians refuse to share their ancestral lands. Can civilization not eclipse old ways? Why do they not heed their emperor?"

"Your grace's wisdom is vast," sneers wizard in fine robes, "but our emperor's time is too precious for such trifles. Perhaps we..." With an eldritch flash, Xin vanishes and reappears before his apprentice, his aging hand arcing with arcane fire clutching the wizard's throat. "And what would you do, Xanderghul? Rule in my stead?"

A staggeringly beautiful woman lays a calming hand on Xin's outstretched arm. "We mean only to administer your justice, your grace—to ease the heavy burden of your rule." Xin releases the gasping savant. "I have taught you well, Sorshen. Are you all not my devoted disciples?" The seven wizards prostrate themselves before him. "You have always served me faithfully. Perhaps it is time you served me further." The scene fades as Xin turns his back on the wizards, who regain their composure with malevolent smiles.



C10. SKYMETAL NEXUS (CR 16)

The dark walls of this room dampen any light brought within. Inlaid in the dark crystal floor is a large Sihedron rune, each of its arms painted a different metallic sheen—black, blue-green, pale green, red, coppery orange, silver, and ivory-white.

This chamber serves as entry to Xin's Skymetal Vaults via a teleportation effect that is not suppressed by the palace wards. By manipulating the Sihedron rune on the floor through magic, users are teleported into one of these seven secure and otherwise impregnable vaults. Failure to properly manipulate the device causes the palace's defenses to trigger (see Creature, below).

The Sihedron rune functions as a *teleportation circle* linked to a similar rune within the lowest Skymetal Vault. The rune itself is currently inactive but still radiates strong conjuration (teleportation) magic. A PC who succeeds at a DC 29 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the rune as a *teleportation circle*, and also realizes that it requires some sort of additional trigger to activate. A successful DC 35 Spellcraft check to identify a magic item reveals that the Sihedron rune is inactive until a spell of the correct school is channeled into one of its seven arms, thereby activating that arm. A character who witnessed the third vision in area C7 gains a +15 bonus on both of these checks.

The Skymetal Vaults are linked by these runes, arranged in a specific order that matches the order of the *Shattered Star's* shard sequence (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #61–70). Xin's research held the seven types of skymetal to be associated in this ascending order, and found that magically enhancing the metals in groups worked better when performed in this sequence—although he never really figured out why this was the case.

To activate any of the Sihedron rune *teleportation circles*, a spell of the proper school must be channeled into the proper arm of the rune. Alternatively, the PCs can use the *Sihedron* to activate the portal by merely touching one of the *Sihedron's* points to the matching arm on the floor. Only activating the correct rune sequence activates a *teleportation circle* to the appropriate Skymetal Vault—the circle remains active for 1 minute before growing inert once again. The rune in this room leads only to the Horacalcum Vault (area D1), so its horacalcum arm (the coppery-colored one) must be activated with a transmutation spell.

Creature: If someone attempts to activate any of the linked Sihedron runes, either in this room or in any of the vaults themselves, by channeling an inappropriate spell into the rune or by channeling the wrong spell in the sequence into the rune, the Sihedron rune creates a blast of force—this deals 4d6 points of damage and knocks a creature prone (with a successful DC 15 Reflex save, the damage is halved and the creature is not knocked prone). This effect only targets creatures that were standing on the rune at the time it was mishandled, and automatically pushes those creatures off the rune regardless of their Reflex saves. An instant later, the rune summons a marut (as if via *summon monster IX*), which immediately attacks all creatures in the room. The summoned inevitable does not pursue foes from this room (but does use its ranged magic attacks and spell-like abilities against foes who flee the room), and vanishes after 10 rounds. The number of maruts that can be summoned in this manner is infinite, but only one can be in existence at any one time.

ADVANCED MARUT INEVITABLE

CR 15

XP 76,800

hp 246 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 166, 292)

Story Award: If PCs successfully decipher the secrets of navigating these Sihedron runes, award them 51,200 XP. The PCs only receive experience points for killing the first marut summoned.

THE SKYMETAL VAULTS

Xin coveted skymetal, and many subjects paid tribute with offerings of the rare metals, allowing Xin to amass quantities since unheard of. Such precious treasure deserves the perfect safeguard, and so Xin's palace grew a separate tower

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

in which its master could house them. While the majority of the skymetal reserves in each vault were depleted over the years, used in Xin's creations, some amount remains in each vault. The ceilings are 20 feet high.

With only two exceptions (both noted in the text), the *flamma horacalcum* reveals similar scenes in all seven of the Skymetal Vaults—images of Xin constructing the vault, creating its guardian, and utilizing the Sihedron rune to teleport to the next vault in sequence.

Each vault contains a *teleportation circle* similar to the one found in area C10. This circle only allows teleportation to the next vault in the sequence, but in either direction—in essence, one can travel from one vault area to the other in ascending or descending order. From area D1, the *teleportation circle* can lead to area D2 or to area C10. From area D7, the *teleportation circle* can lead to area D6 or area C10. Traveling to C10 requires channeling a *divination* spell into the center of the rune. The runes in areas D2 through D6 can only be used to travel to adjoining vaults.

Each Skymetal Vault seems to be plated with sheets of its appropriate skymetal—in fact, these are *permanent images* (CL 20th) placed by Xin. Skymetal was too precious for him to waste on the walls of his vaults, but thanks to the illusions he was able to decorate each vault as appropriate.

A character equipped with the *Sihedron* who turns the artifact so that its ascendant point matches the skymetal of the vault she's currently in experiences a beneficial harmonic effect. The bonus granted by the artifact doubles for as long as these conditions persist.

Areas D1, D2, D3, and D4 are indicated on the map on page 23. Areas D4 and D5 appear on the map on page 38, and area D7 is illustrated on the map on page 50.

D1. HORACALCUM VAULT (CR 16)

The walls of this room are plated in sheets of coppery metal, and are carved with numerous depictions of First King Xin through the ages. Some depict him as a child, others as an old man, with most falling somewhere between these extremes. A single stone statue of Xin stands between two pillars to the northwest—in his hands he holds a coppery platter on which sits a strange contraption of glass and metal. Seven spidery limbs extend from the sides of the contraption to hold the glass in place, while within the glass whirls a cloud of pale blue smoke.

This chamber held the rarest of skymetals—time-bending horacalcum. Very little of the material actually remains here—Xin used almost all of his stores in other objects. All that remains herein are the platter and the contraption itself, both of which are detailed under Treasure on page 44.

Xin's spirit may appear as combat closes, pointing a ghostly finger and mocking the PCs' "bent and crooked" forms. "No one can escape time," he cries, "but one's soul can escape the flesh, and find refuge in an immortal body!" His spiritual presence in this chamber is little more than an unnerving vision essentially amounting to a *major image* that only lasts for 1d4 rounds.

Creature: The guardian of this room is a creature whose very existence is a paradox of time—a bythos aeon. Appearing as a smoky humanoid with four arms and a swirling vortex in its chest, this 13-foot-tall outsider has waited patiently over the years to serve its master Xin in defending the vault from intruders. It attacks on sight and fights to the death.

BYTHOS AEON

CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 207 (Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 10)



BYTHOS AEON

SHATTERED STAR

Treasure: The platter held by the statue is worth 6,000 gp and made of enough horacalcum to melt down and forge into a single weapon.

The true treasure in this chamber, however, is the strange glass-and-horacalcum contraption that sits atop the platter. This is a *timeglass* (see page 61), and its ability to send messages back in time may have already aided the PCs in this Adventure Path.

Development: The *flamma horacalcum* interacts strangely with this room—its material and the nature of the vault itself create a destructive resonance if the *flamma horacalcum* is activated in here. Each round it remains activated, all creatures within a 40-foot-diameter spread (the *flamma horacalcum*'s carrier included) are slowed, as per the spell *slow*, with no saving throw. While it is activated, the bythos's temporal strike ability does not function.

D2. ADAMANTINE VAULT (CR 15)

Seven dark crystal statues of robed men and women in extravagant Thassilonian garb stand around the edges of this black metal-clad chamber. Each statue holds its hands forward in a sign of tribute, though the hands of all but two statues remain empty. The others each offer a jagged chunk of black metal ore the size of a kettle. A black metal halberd leans against the wall next to each statue.

Creatures: The statues here are of the original seven Runelords, though PCs likely only recognize the depictions of Xanderghul and Sorshen, as they were the only original Runelords to rule to the end of Thassilon. All seven may be identified as older versions of the apprentices from previously viewed phantasms. If a PC enters a square adjacent to any statue, it animates and kneels with the sound of cracking crystal, offering a tribute whether it holds anything or not. If the words, "Your emperor accepts!" are not spoken in Thassilonian within 1 round of this action, all of the crystal statues activate simultaneously to attack intruders—Xin's spirit moves to haunt the statue of Sorshen as the battle commences.

ANIMATED RUNELORD

CR 9

XP 6,400

Advanced animated object

N Medium construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception -3

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 12, flat-footed 22 (+2 Dex, +12 natural)

hp 91 (11d10+31)

Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

Defensive Abilities hardness 20; **Immune** construct traits

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 keen adamantine halberd +18/+13/+8 (1d10+9/19-20/x3)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 5, **Cha** 5

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 28

SQ construction points (adamantine, reinforced [1 point, grants +1 hp/HD], weapon wielder [1 point, grants proficiency with all martial weapons])

Gear +2 keen adamantine halberd

XIN-HAUNTED ANIMATED RUNELORD

CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 113 (see above and page 21)

Treasure: The statues of Xanderghul and Sorshen hold adamantine meteors. The piece Sorshen holds is a chunk of adamantine worth 6,000 gp, and enough to forge a suit of light armor or two weapons. Xanderghul's meteor looks identical to Sorshen's, though it radiates strong transmutation magic. If handled, it immediately turns into a +3 *defending transformative* (Ultimate Equipment) adamantine longsword.

D3. DJEZET VAULT (CR 16)

Brass-mounted lenses orbit a massive bowl filled with rust-red liquid in the north corner of this room. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the room seem to ripple and run, as if composed of liquid red metal.

Creatures: One round after a creature enters this room, a pair of unusual oozes known as mezlans slither up and out of the bowl. These insane oozes take the shape of Xin as they manifest; both claim to be Xin himself and demand that the PCs drop to their knees and obey them. Any rebellion against this command results in an immediate attack. The mezlans take the first round of combat to cast *mage armor* on themselves, then follow that up with *chain lightning* before entering melee. They fight to the death. Quick-thinking PCs who attempt to appease the guardians by acting subservient must attempt a Bluff check opposed by both mezlans' Sense Motive checks to avoid an attack, but if the Bluff succeeds, the mezlans demand reports from the PCs on their progress in crafting new clockwork soldiers, mistaking them for Xin's servants. At your discretion, you can have the mezlans answer some lingering questions the PCs may have about the palace and its history, since they began life as two of Xin's students and retain some of their original memories. Unfortunately, the years have not been kind to their minds, and after a few minutes of talk, they suddenly grow enraged and attack anyway. Note that if one of the PCs is a Sorshen clone, the mezlans immediately grow furious at the "vile traitor's presence" and attack at once, focusing all their attacks on her.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

MEZLANS (2)

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 195 each (see page 90)

Treasure: In addition to the two mezlans, the bowl also contains a large amount of raw djezet that remains behind as the mezlans slither out of the bowl to attack. In all, there are 100 pounds of djezet in the bowl—1 pound is a sufficient amount to use for heightening magic (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #61 70–71), and each dose is worth 200 gp, for a total of 20,000 gp worth of djezet in the bowl.

D4. INUBRIX VAULT (CR 15)

The black crystal pedestals along the walls of this white-metal-tiled room contain mounds of pale white ingots, save for the easternmost one, which instead supports an exquisite-looking scimitar.

Creatures: Xin dabbled in necromancy and the creation of undead, but generally found the act a bit too unsettling to pursue. Two of his only undead creations, dread wraiths crafted from the souls of two stone giants who willingly sacrificed themselves for this purpose, remain on guard here. The wraiths swiftly move to attack all intruders, but are unable to move through the force-lined walls.

DREAD WRAITHS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 184 each (see page 30)

Treasure: The *ghost iron scimitar* is the most obvious treasure in this chamber, but the other pillars in the room support a total of 38 inubrix ingots worth 500 gp each.

D5. NOQUAL VAULT (CR 16)

The walls here gleam with sheets of semitransparent green metal plates. Arms and armor forged from the same green metal are displayed on short pedestals throughout the room.

Unlike for the other Skymetal Vaults, Xin actually had a fair amount of noqual to work with after discovering a large quantity of it elsewhere in northern Thassilon in the form of an ancient meteorite. Not all of the plates on the wall are actually noqual plates, but roughly a third are indeed real, and placed about the room in a pattern such that the metal's antimagic qualities focus into the chamber. As a result, spellcasting is particularly difficult in this room—in order to cast a spell, a spellcaster must succeed at a DC 30 concentration check or the spell fails as it is cast. Spells used to activate the *teleportation circle* do not suffer this failure chance.

Creatures: Xin wanted to someday create one of the most powerful of constructs—a noqual golem. Unfortunately, even the large amount of noqual Xin had gathered here wasn't enough to build one of these complex creations. He came close to gathering enough of the rare skymetal before he was assassinated, but never did get the chance to finish this particular task. The two interim guardians he placed here using a hedged prison binding remain to this day: two black crystal outsiders from the Plane of Earth. These crystalline monsters are known as crystallises, and the two that stand sentinel here are particularly powerful specimens of their kind.

ELDER CRYSTALLISES (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Advanced crystallis (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 131)

N Large outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +17 natural, –1 size)

hp 175 each (14d10+98)

Fort +16, Ref +14, Will +7

DR 10/—; Immune disintegration, earth, elemental traits, petrification

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +22 (4d8+9 plus 1d6 bleed)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks crystalline claws, petrification cloud

TACTICS

During Combat Both elder crystallises breath out petrification clouds on the first round, trying to catch as many enemies within as they can, then breathe again as often as they can. They prefer to focus attacks on the same foe, starting with the strongest-looking characters first since they know spellcasters will have problems with the noqual in the walls.

Morale The crystallises fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 16, Con 25, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 14

Base Atk +14; CMB +24 (+28 sunder); CMD 39 (41 vs. sunder)

Feats Greater Sunder, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws), Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +19, Knowledge (geography) +19, Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +16

Languages Terran

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Crystalline Claws (Ex) A crystallis's claws overcome damage reduction and hardness as if they were adamantine, but crumble to powder if removed or upon the creature's death.

Immunity to Earth (Ex) A crystallis is immune to natural attacks and supernatural abilities from creatures of the

SHATTERED STAR

earth subtype, and to all spells with the earth descriptor. They are also immune to disintegration effects.

Petrification Cloud (Su) Once every 1d4+1 rounds, a crystallis can breathe forth a cloud of orange smoke as a free action. This cloud fills a 10-foot cube adjacent to the crystallis and lasts for 1 round before dispersing. A living creature that enters the cloud must succeed at a DC 24 Fortitude save or be petrified, transforming into a crystalline statue. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: In all, there are 100 pounds of raw noqual in the form of metal plates on the walls here, worth 5,000 gp in total. The room also contains a suit of +1 *noqual full*

plate, three masterwork noqual breastplates, and a dozen masterwork noqual weapons of various designs—all of which were eventually slated for being melted down and reforged into a golem, had Xin ever managed to gather enough noqual.

D6. SICCATITE VAULT (CR 16)

An orange glow filters through a thick, pervasive mist that hangs heavy in this chamber. Without warning, the vapor condenses and turns into a slippery, pale blue rime that coats everything in the room for several seconds before again vaporizing to mist. The silvery walls seem to throb with orange or blue light each time the coloration changes. A black crystal shelf to the west holds a stack of silvery bars.

This vault holds Xin's siccattite stores. Bright silver in its raw form, this alloy is found in temperatures ranging from extremely hot to extremely cold—or, in this case, rapidly shifting between the two. Xin fashioned the skymetal he didn't use in the *Sihedron's* construction into a fearsome bodyguard that proved to be too unstable in temperament, and was eventually locked in this chamber to guard the treasures within.

On alternating rounds, the environment of the room changes drastically to reflect its guardian's attunement to fire or cold. When the

PCs first enter the room, thick clouds of steam pervade the area, concealing everything as a *fog cloud* spell. The next round, the vapor coalesces into an icy, slippery rime that covers the floor as if with the effects of a *grease* spell (Reflex DC 11). While the room is filled with steam, all creatures in the room take 1d6 points of fire damage at the start of their turn, and they instead take 1d6 points of cold damage at the start of their turn while the room is rimed in ice.

Creature: The guardian of this room is one of Xin's more dangerous constructs—a potent iron golem that he infused with siccattite to grant it a damaging aura of both heat and cold. The golem looks like Xin himself, only 15 feet tall. When it attacks, the golem makes two slam attacks with hands that end in Sihedron-shaped disks—these slam attacks deal slashing damage instead of bludgeoning damage as a result, and one of them deals additional fire damage while the other deals additional cold damage. Assuming Xin's spirit still has sufficient spirit points to do so, he haunts this iron golem as it activates and attacks the PCs. The golem is immune to the debilitating and damaging effects of the room itself.



ELDER CRYSTALLIS

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

XIN-HAUNTED SICCATITE-INFUSED IRON GOLEM CR 16

XP 76,800

Variant advanced iron golem (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 162, 294, plus see page 21)

hp 237

Melee slam +30 (2d10+19/19–20 plus 3d6 fire), slam +30 (2d10+19/19–20 plus 3d6 cold)

Treasure: The western shelf contains two dozen siccitate bars—12 cold and 12 hot. Each bar is worth 1,000 gp.

D7. ABYSIUM VAULT (CR 17)

Jagged metal shards of a blue-green metal tumble through the space of this room as if in slow motion, each sliver pulsing with a sickly green light. Clouds of the powdered metal drift around the edges of the room in a lazy churning current that stirs into a vertical spiral to the north around a door set into a protruding section of wall.

The hundreds of floating shards and clouds of powdered dust are all abysium—the poisonous metal has significantly tainted the room. All creatures in this room are immediately sickened (no save) for as long as they remain in the room plus 1d4 rounds. In addition, at the start of each turn, the abysium powder in the air exposes all characters who aren't holding their breath to its poisonous effects (*save* Fort DC 18, *onset* 10 minutes, *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes, *effect* 1d4 Con plus nausea, *cure* 2 saves). Each round of breathing, a character is exposed again to the poison. A character adjacent to a wall has the onset time reduced to immediate and the frequency reduced to 1/round for 6 rounds if she fails a saving throw because of the concentrated clouds of poison found there. These are poison effects.

Creature: Xin was more interested in abysium's poisonous properties and its ability to power magical effects when purified than he was in crafting constructs from it, and so he decided to place a living creature here to serve as a guardian—although he needed one that was immune to poison. Because his faith in Lissala made him particularly fond of serpentine shapes, he chose a marilith demon named Belmedra to serve as his guardian, conjuring her with a *greater planar binding* spell, then using *binding* to lock her in this room. Xin armed Belmedra with six magical skymetal swords, commanding her to destroy anyone other than him who attempted to enter the reliquary workshop (area E1) or tried to take any of this room's contents.

Xin did not set any release conditions for Belmedra's imprisonment, and she's waited here for the past several thousand years. Her demonic patience protected her from madness, yet not from boredom—she often uses her summon demon ability merely to call up companionship and conversation. The commands Xin gave her do not compel her

to attack intruders on sight, and as the PCs arrive, Belmedra coils up on herself and greets them in an almost pleasant manner. She's still irredeemably chaotic evil, and in time will likely decide to attack and kill intruders anyway, but initially she seeks conversation with the PCs rather than combat.

Belmedra is quite knowledgeable about Xin's past, Thassilon, the palace, and even the *Sihedron*, since Xin found her to be a delightful conversationalist. After a few decades, her wrath had worn off enough for her not to curse and spit at him, and she indulged him in these conversations in the hope that she'd learn something from him that would let her trick him or force him to release her. Unfortunately, Xin was smarter than the demon, and never gave up any such information. She's willing to answer any questions the PCs may have, but only if they answer a like number of questions from her—she's particularly curious as to how the world moved on in the last 11,174 years during her imprisonment here. You can use Belmedra to answer any lingering questions the PCs might have about the campaign, but can also take advantage of this opportunity to impress upon the PCs that Xin's spirit (with whom Belmedra has periodically spoken) seeks to awaken his clockwork army to rebuild his empire. She can point out to the PCs that Xin's gone mad, smugly noting that her mind ended up being more stable over the long run than her captor's.

Belmedra isn't hopeful that the PCs can free her. Xin's *binding* spell functions at CL 20th and, as with all *binding* spells, cannot be removed by *dispel magic*. If the PCs do manage to free her, she cackles with glee and attacks them at once unless they bargain with her beforehand. She quickly agrees to all sorts of promises if they agree to free her in return, but she only keeps these promises for as long as she must before either betraying the PCs or (more likely) simply abandoning them in search of a way to return to the Abyss.

If the PCs attempt to take any of the abysium or enter area E1, or if they insult her or attack, Belmedra is swift to retaliate with *blade barriers* and her weapons.

BELMEDRA

CR 17

XP 102,400

Marilith demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 63)

hp 264

Melee +2 *abysium longsword of life stealing* +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d6+9/17–20), +1 *adamantine longsword* +24 (2d6+4/17–20), +1 *horacalcum longsword* +25 (2d6+5/17–20), +3 *inubrix longsword* +26 (1d8+6), +1 *construct bane noqual longsword* +24 (2d6+4/17–20), +1 *flaming burst hot siccitate longsword* +24 (2d6+4/17–20 plus 1d6+1 fire), tail slap +17 (2d6+3 plus grab)

Treasure: Apart from Belmedra's six swords (without her infuse weapon ability enhancing these Large weapons, they are a +2 *abysium longsword of life stealing*, an adamantine longsword, a horacalcum longsword, a +3 *inubrix longsword*,

SHATTERED STAR

a +1 construct-bane noqual longsword, and a +1 flaming burst hot siccative longsword), there are 240 pounds of raw abyssium floating in the air in here, worth a total of 24,000 gp.

THE APEX

The majority of the upper spires that served as Xin's opulent quarters and arcane observatories are long gone, destroyed when the *Sihedron's* detonation knocked a chunk from the palace's side and caused the collapse of the chambers above. What now constitutes the palace's apex was once but the midsection of the castle where Xin brought his mightiest creations to life. This level included the shattered rooms where the emperor met his demise at the hands of the runelords' rune giant assassin. These rooms have 40-foot-high ceilings.

Up until this point, the pacing of this adventure should

be set by the players. Xin is in no real rush to finish preparations for transferring his spirit into the clockwork reliquary, which allows the PCs to explore the lower levels and the Skymetal Vaults at their own pace. That changes once the PCs enter the Apex. At this point, mechanical sounds and the hum of arcane runes begin echoing through the palace as Xin's axiomites prepare their master's new body. The timing of when Xin's body awakens is keyed to the first time the PCs enter area E4, but if you determine that the PCs take a particularly long time (such as if they retreat to rest and recover), then the clockwork reliquary is already fully active when the PCs finally encounter it in area E4. Xin's spirit no longer manifests in the palace, haunts constructs, or triggers traps once this endgame event begins.

E1. RELIQUARY WORKSHOP

Gears, levers, cogs, bars, and other construct components lie scattered haphazardly throughout this chamber, creating an uneven, shifting surface to stand on. Some of these components are barely larger than an inch, while the largest measure 10 feet in diameter.

Crystal shelves are littered with thousands of molds and castings of intricately engraved armored plates and humanlike appendages, while heaps of shattered fragments of transparent crystal lie scattered everywhere. Runes flow like thick liquid along the crystal walls, casting strange shadows among the debris. Here,

Xin created the components for his clockwork reliquary, creating the construct before moving it upstairs to the vault (area E4). The leftover components, waste, slag, and such he left here, intending to clean it up or recycle it at a later date only to be attacked in the next room on his way back. The sinking and rising of the island threw the contents into even greater chaos than before, but several minutes of looking through the rubble followed by a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check (a character with Craft Construct gains a +5 bonus on this check) enables

a PC determine that someone crafted a very powerful construct in this room. If the check exceeds its DC by 10 or more, the character can also determine that the construct created here incorporated elements of all seven skymetals, and likely had an element of animation via a captured soul of immense power since fragments of crystal bear certain similarities to what one might expect of components from a spell like *magic jar* or *trap the soul*, only much more potent. A character who can read Thassilonian can correctly interpret the runes on the wall (ancient scrawlings



BELMEDRA

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

from Xin, akin to what one might expect to see on a mad scientist's laboratory chalkboard) gains a +10 bonus on this Knowledge (arcana) check, and can even attempt the check untrained.

Development: If the room is lit with the *flamma horacalcum*, the runes on the walls coalesce into schematic-like glyphs displaying the disjointed form of a three-legged, four-armed spiderlike monstrosity built around a central crystal—the clockwork reliquary. As the sigils shift, piercing rays web out to other runic plans of clockwork soldiers on nearby walls, indicating that this central device or creature is intended to dominate or control the army. Finally, glyphic representations of a humanoid skeleton are shown fading into the clockwork's central crystal, becoming encased within the facets. A moment later, the fifth vision is triggered (see the sidebar). PCs who witness the vision and succeed at a DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check should realize that the components reveal a weakness in Xin's plan—the clockwork reliquary was designed to be bolstered by a whole body and soul, not merely an insane spirit. This suggests that if Xin inhabits the clockwork reliquary now, it would be vulnerable to positive energy.

E2. THE ASSASSIN'S GRAVE (CR 19)

This might once have been an antechamber to the larger chamber beyond, but its walls are now shattered and crumbling, scorched black in places while still smoldering in others with the glowing embers from a dying fire. A smoky haze hangs low to the floor, and red-hot crystal shards pop and burst here and there on the walls, sending out tiny burning slivers in all directions. A twenty-foot-square slab of stone inscribed with glowing runes sits in the middle of the room's floor, while sprawled to the west, where the fire damage seems to be the most recent, lies the blackened body of a forty-foot-tall giant dressed in exotic armor and clutching an immense sword.

The palace has been unable to fully heal itself here, at ground zero of the tremendous explosion that consumed Xin, his would-be assassin, and most of the palace's upper floors. Here, eldritch heat still burns, fused with the very essence of the palace's structure in a perpetual cycle of cauterized and regrown crystal. The crystal shards that grow from the walls only to burst are a manifestation of the palace's failure to heal the room's jagged walls. Each round, there's a 30% chance that one PC, chosen at random, could be struck by one of these goutts of semi-molten crystal—this resolves as a +20 ranged attack. If the PC is struck, he takes 6d6 points of piercing damage and 6d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 15 half).

The square slab of rune-scribed stone is a stairwell similar to the one that links area A3 to areas B1 and

FIFTH VISION—AGING RECLUSE

In a chamber lit by bright forge-fires, Xin labors alone. Rune-engraved gears and intricate armored plates of all shapes and sizes swirl in the space around the old king, the pieces floating into place with every fall of his rune-scarred hammer. With each new blow, the stooped and aging emperor hisses between clenched teeth. "Lies. Deceit. My outcast court spoils and rots with treachery, but not so my new children of metal from the skies!" Laying his hammer aside, Xin stands upright, his arcane susurrations forming glyphs of power that settle on the newly created clockwork soldier. With several twists of a key that seems carved roughly out of stone, Xin speaks again: "Rise, my servant. Take your place among your brothers." The clockwork soldier stands, casting loyal, lifeless eyes down on its creator. Xin points a crooked finger, and a magical portal splits reality, revealing a thousand identical creations assembled beyond. Xin rests a heavy hand upon the anvil, breathing deeply with strain and exhaustion from countless hours of such creation, before picking up his hammer and striking hot metal once more.

C1—this stairwell, once activated, extends upward to connect to area E3.

Creature: The corpse to the west is the body of Xin's would-be assassin, the rune giant Shasthaak, one of the first of his kind created by the runelords. As soon as the PCs enter this room, the fires and smoke along the walls seem to quicken and churn, and the final vision plays out for the PCs (see the sidebar on page 51). Allow PCs who witness this final vision to attempt a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check to interpret what they have just witnessed. PCs who succeed at this check realize that for Xin to assume the mantle of the clockwork reliquary, it was first necessary to extract portions of his personal power—portions of his soul—from the *Sihedron*. Xin's creation are so closely tied to his immortal essence that the clockwork reliquary is likely to be vulnerable to effects generated by the artifact's current user that wouldn't normally affect it.

As the vision ends, the rune giant's remains suddenly stir.

While Shasthaak wasn't the first rune giant created, he was the most loyal and blindly devoted to the runelords, making him the perfect choice for their assassin. The seven runelords worked together to teleport the giant into Xin's palace, and managed to punch a hole through the palace defenses. What they didn't plan for was Xin's willingness to take his own life rather than allow it to be taken from him.

Shasthaak's remains partially survived the blast, but only through the supernatural will of its soul. Stubbornly



remaining, eager for another chance to slay Xin should he rise again, the giant's remains lie in a strange sort of stasis, neither quite dead nor undead. In time, its desire to slay Xin grew clouded, replaced by a simple desire to rise up and slay. The arrival of living creatures for the first time in over 10,000 years is enough to trigger his long delayed transformation into a powerful undead monstrosity. Shasthaak rises as a graveknight and immediately moves to assassinate the closest living foe. If the graveknight rune giant were to survive his encounter with the PCs, in time his overwhelming hatred would recede enough for logic and purpose to regain control of his actions, and in such an eventuality he could become one of Varisia's greatest villains. His defeat at the PCs' hands could well be as important as their defeat of the clockwork reliquary itself.

SHASTHAAK **CR 19**
XP 204,800

Graveknight rune giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130,
Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 138)

LE Gargantuan undead (augmented humanoid)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +39

Aura sacrilegious aura (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 38, touch 6, flat-footed 38 (+13 armor, +19 natural, -4 size)

hp 270 (20d8+180)

Fort +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +24

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 10/magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, fire, undead traits; **SR** 30

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +4 *human-bane longsword* +35/+30/+25 (4d6+33/17-20 plus 5d6 fire)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks channel destruction (fire), command giants, devastating blast (30-ft. cone, 12d6 fire, Reflex 26 half), runes (DC 20), spark shower (DC 20), undead mastery

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +26)

Constant—*air walk*

At will—*charm person* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 19)

3/day—*dominate person* (DC 21), *mass charm monster* (DC 24)

1/day—*demand* (DC 24), *true seeing*

TACTICS

During Combat Shasthaak spends the first 2d6 rounds of combat making purely physical attacks, roaring foul insults and curses at Xin in Giant. If he survives this initial period, he realizes he's not fighting Xin, and switches to using his spell-like abilities in an attempt to control the PCs. If he manages to gain control of them all via magic, see Development, below.

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

Morale Shasthaak fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 47, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 16, **Wis** 27, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +37 (+39 bull rush); **CMD** 47 (49 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative^B, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Combat^B, Power Attack, Ride-By Attack^B, Staggering Critical, Toughness^B, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+11 when jumping), Craft (weapons) +23, Intimidate +37, Knowledge (nobility) +23, Perception +39, Ride +23, Sense Motive +31

SQ phantom mount, ruinous revivification (fire)

Gear +5 *o-yoroi*, +4 *human-bane longsword*

Development: If Shasthaak manages to charm or dominate the PCs, he ceases fighting, then interrogates them to find out what happened to Xin and the palace. Once he learns the truth, he uses the PCs as his bodyguards, sending them upstairs and accompanying them to the final confrontation against the clockwork reliquary. In this event, the PCs may actually gain an advantage over Xin, even though they're enslaved by an undead giant at the time.

At your option, a PC who attempts to reason with Shasthaak and to recruit his aid against the clockwork reliquary can convince the graveknight to cease attacking and talk things over as described above. In this case, Shasthaak may well agree to side with the PCs and help them finish the job he was sent to do so long ago, though he does not consider the PCs anything more than useful tools to be discarded once this job is done. As soon as the clockwork reliquary is defeated, Shasthaak immediately turns on the PCs and attempts to destroy them as well.

If Shasthaak is destroyed, on the other hand, his armor begins rebuilding his body. The PCs must completely destroy his armor, or he will rise again—and once he does so after the clockwork reliquary is no more, Shasthaak could well become a

FINAL VISION—THE ASSASSINATION

Bent with age, the once-imperious emperor of Thassilon seems on the verge of crumbling under the weight of his elaborate robes as he finishes the final touch, polishing the immense central crystal of a sparkling three-legged, four-armed war machine. He pats a coppery metal panel on the machine's side and smiles tiredly.

"Anon, I shed my feeble body at last for this new life!" he sighs. "One final rest to prepare the final apotheosis, and those seven traitors shall know their invulnerable lord's displeasure. And Thassilon... my Thassilon... shall be rekindled." In the vision, Xin gathers up the seven shards of the *Sihedron*, then descends a magical staircase into a lower chamber, but as he crosses its expanse, a dark shadow falls over him.

A massive giant, his black flesh pulsing with powerful red runes, suddenly manifests behind the emperor, heaving a gigantic sword over his head. Xin whirls, seems to recognize the giant, and snarls: "So this is how my loyalty is repaid—in my own blood, even as I forsake mortality!" He stumbles forward as the giant's sword shatters the weakened palace's crystal floor.

Calmly—smiling, even—Xin reaches out a bony hand as the giant prepares to strike again. "You will die. But I will live again!" Holding high the fragments of the *Shattered Star*, Xin closes his eyes and hurls them at the giant, and a blinding white fire consumes all.

dreadful new horror bent on savaging the region!

E3. SPELLWELL OF TEMPERANCE

A throne made of pale white metal sits to the north, with a rune-etched plate floating lazily in the air before it.

This room contains another of Xin's *spellwells*. Similar in form and function to the *spellwell* in area A7, this one is keyed to the school of evocation. Xin used this *spellwell*



SHASTHAAK

in the final days of his life to fine-tune the process of transferring his body and soul into the clockwork reliquary. A PC who studies this *spellwell* can learn about this element of Xin's plan if you wish, giving parties who haven't yet learned of the nature of the palace and Xin's spirit one last chance to do so before confronting the clockwork reliquary in the room beyond.

A magical stairwell in the middle of the room connects to area E2 below.

Treasure: The throne is made of inubrix, and is worth 1,000 gp.

E4. THE DEAD HEART OF XIN (CR 22)

The walls of this cathedral-like chamber stretch nearly a hundred feet into the air above, towering sheets of black crystal along which dance ripples of strange energies. Crumbled shards of crystal litter the floor, while an immense Sihedron rune has been carved into the floor in the center of the chamber. The energy rippling on the walls congregates upon a strange crystal the size of a man's head, embedded in the center of the rune and pulsing as if to the rhythm of an unseen, crystalline heart.

Creatures: There is little of note in this room save its occupants, for it is here that Xin's new body has waited for so long to be activated. The clockwork reliquary stands in the center of the room atop the Sihedron rune that pulses with the palace's energies. The reliquary's wickedly curved components shift and twitch as the PCs enter, and the bones of the ancient wizard emperor Xin, drawn into the reliquary upon his death as one of his contingencies, seem to glow within their crystalline prison, shifting and seeming to be larger than the skeleton of a mere man has any right to be. The palace walls shudder, and creatures composed of crystal step out of them at the same time the energies flowing along the walls descend and coalesce into beautiful but stern humanoid figures. As Xin's spirit quickens within the reliquary, a small force of axiomite and elder crystallis minions held in reserve step forth to protect him. The clockwork reliquary comes to grinding, shrieking life, and the light of the *flamma horacalcum* causes the bones inside its central crystal to change into an image of Xin himself.

Though the PCs are armed with the *Sihedron*, could well be accompanied by allies like Ogonthunn or Shasthaak or others, and may have managed to learn of some of the clockwork reliquary's weaknesses via visions or research, this final battle should test their limits. The axiomites and crystallises move to engage the PCs in melee, but should be little more than distractions. As the battle unfolds, feel free to have more of these minions crawl up and out of the floors and walls to keep the level of peril and danger high, or perhaps to provide additional targets for allies if the

PCs have brought an unexpectedly large number of them. Full tactics and details on the clockwork reliquary itself can be found on pages 55–56.

One final advantage the PCs might earn is catching the reliquary before Xin has had a chance to fully integrate with it. If the PCs push through areas E1–E3 and reach this chamber without significant pause, they force Xin's spirit to rush the final stages of integration. In this case, the PCs have a brief glimpse of the spectral form of the wizard's spirit superimposed over its bones as the construct whirls to life, and automatically gain a surprise round to act. Once combat starts, the clockwork reliquary takes a –10 penalty on its initiative check, and for the first 1d4 rounds of combat after the surprise round, it takes a –4 penalty on attack rolls, damage rolls, and Reflex saving throws. After this period passes, or if the PCs take too long to reach this encounter (such as by pausing to rest and recover after a fight against Shasthaak), this advantage is lost.

With the final blow that lays the clockwork reliquary low, the construct shudders and wheezes and then collapses spectacularly into its components, scattering cogs and gears and springs and metal plates across the ground. Any remaining axiomites or crystallises immediately vanish, and the force effects that imbue the palace walls fade. The central crystal of the reliquary crumbles to the ground and shatters, turning Xin's bones to dust as well. The ruler of Thassilon is, at long last, at rest.

CLOCKWORK RELIQUARY

CR 21

XP 409,600

hp 442 (see page 54)

AXIOMITES OF XIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 171 each (see page 25)

ELDER CRYSTALLISES (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 175 each (see page 45)

Treasure: Amid the clockwork reliquary's scattered remains is a king's ransom in various skymetal components. The exact mix of components the PCs can gather is up to you, but is worth 200,000 gp in all. In addition, several powerful magical items used as nothing more than potent components for the construct's body can be salvaged from the remains, including a *rod of quicken metamagic*, a *rod of empower metamagic*, a *cube of force*, an *orb of utter chaos* (Ultimate Equipment), one of each type of *ioun stone* listed on page 521 of the *Core Rulebook*, two *philosopher's stones*, a *spindle of perfect knowledge* (Ultimate Equipment), and last but not least, the *Guardian Key* (see page 58).

THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



The gemstone at the center of the Sihedron carving on the floor can be removed with ease once the clockwork reliquary is defeated. It is the same crystal Ogonthunn gave to Xin's ancestors so long ago. Currently, much of its energies have been depleted. In time, the crystal could regain its power to create a mighty palace like this one, but for now, it merely functions as an *instant fortress* that creates a tower with walls made of force-infused crystal similar to this palace's walls.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the destruction of the clockwork reliquary, Xin's long-tormented soul is finally released to travel to the Boneyard, and the last vestiges of his invested power seep from his palace. While the PCs may have recovered the *Guardian Key*, its power is reduced and the First King's clockwork army becomes forever inert—only those constructs that may or may not be already active in the island ruins “live.” The PCs may need to deal with some of the “allies” they’ve recruited. Ogonthunn, in particular,

may wish to attempt to gather these powerful characters as its minions and could well attack them there, or may simply bid them farewell only to return at a later date to recruit them via magical domination.

The PCs' actions and trials endured on the risen isle of Xin are in large part unseen, but word and rumor of their actions there spread nevertheless (word spreads faster, of course, if the PCs help!). Their reputations as great Varisian heroes were already established, especially if they aided Magnimar against the tsunami. Magnimar's lowest wards will rebuild, and though many citizens are orphaned or widowed, the general consensus is that had the PCs and the *Sihedron* not been there to protect them, things would have turned out much worse. For this, the survivors are grateful, and while some may blame the deaths of their loved ones on the Pathfinders—and by extension the PCs—most recognize the bravery of the PCs in their live-saving efforts during the calamity and the subsequent heroics to send Xin's palace back to time's dark depths, where all must someday fall.

THE CLOCKWORK RELIQUARY

This construct of skymetal and crystal has waited over 10,000 years for its destiny—for the soul of First King Xin to give it life.

CLOCKWORK RELIQUARY

CR 21

XP 409,600

CN Large construct

Init +6; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, *see invisibility*; **Perception** +31

DEFENSE

AC 40, touch 23, flat-footed 37 (+11 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +17 natural, -1 size)

hp 442 (25d10+305); fast healing 20

Fort +19, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities skymetal plating; **DR** 15/epic (but see text); **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** cold 20, fire 20; **SR** 32 (but see text)

Weaknesses *Sihedron* vulnerability, susceptible to positive energy, unstable mind

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee 4 claws +36 (2d10+18/19-20/x4 plus 1d6 cold or fire)

Ranged 6 inubrex darts +26 (2d6+12/x3)

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

Special Attacks abysium pulse, alloyed claws, conquer construct, djezet blood, rend (4 claws, 2d10+18 plus 1d6 cold or fire)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +31)

Constant—*arcane sight*, *fly*, *see invisibility*, *tongues*

At will—*chain lightning* (DC 27), *dispel magic*, *telekinesis* (DC 26)

3/day—quicken *telekinesis* (DC 26)

1/day—*mage's disjunction* (DC 29), *repulsion* (DC 27)

TACTICS

During Combat The clockwork reliquary lashes at the closest target with its djezet blood on the 1st round of combat, then triggers its abysium pulse in the 2nd round. It uses these abilities as often as it can. The construct uses *telekinesis* to try to wrench the *Sihedron* away from its controller (treat this as a disarm combat maneuver, but grant the defender a +10 bonus to its CMD), mixing melee and ranged attacks as appropriate in a round (it prefers attacking with its claws). If reduced to fewer than 150 hit points, it casts *repulsion* and uses *chain lightning* to keep foes at range while using its fast healing. On the fifth round of combat, the reliquary attempts to use *mage's disjunction* to destroy the *Sihedron*. It has a 20% chance to affect the artifact, at which point the item's controller can attempt to resist the effect with a DC 29 Will save made at a -5 penalty. If the clockwork

reliquary is successful, it must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or immediately and permanently lose its spell resistance, fast healing, damage reduction, and all of its spell-like abilities and supernatural special abilities. If it succeeds at this save, the loss of these abilities is only temporary, lasting for 5 rounds.

Morale The clockwork reliquary fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 39, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 32

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +38; **CMD** 62 (64 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*telekinesis*), Spring Attack, Vital Strike

Skills **Acrobatics** Climb +45, Fly +42, Knowledge (all types) +39, Perception +31, Sense Motive +31, Spellcraft +39, Use Magic Device +36

SQ haunted

Languages Aboleth, Abyssal, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Ignan, Shoanti, Terran, Thassilonian, Varisian; *tongues*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Abysium Pulse (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds as a free action, the two adamantine spheres atop the clockwork reliquary's body can bloom like metal flowers to reveal highly refined abysium rods that immediately pulse with energy. All creatures within a 30-foot-radius spread must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or suffer 1d6 points of Constitution drain and become nauseated for 1 round. On a successful save, creatures in the area suffer only 1 point of Constitution drain and are staggered for 1 round. The reliquary cannot create an abysium pulse in the same round it lashes out with its djezet blood. This is a poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Alloyed Claws (Ex) The clockwork reliquary's claws are crafted from a strange alloy of adamantine and siccacite. These claws threaten a critical hit on a result of 19-20 and deal $\times 4$ damage on a successful critical hit. They always add 1-1/2 times the reliquary's Strength modifier on damage rolls. The claws bypass hardness and damage reduction as if they were made of adamantine, and on a hit, the reliquary can decide to deal +1d6 points of fire damage or +1d6 points of cold damage as a free action.

Conquer Construct (Su) As a standard action, the clockwork reliquary can target a single mindless construct within

NPC GALLERY

120 feet and attempt to seize control of it. The construct can attempt to resist this control with a DC 33 Will save, but on a failure, it permanently falls under the clockwork reliquary's command. If the reliquary targets a dormant construct (such as an unwound clockwork, or any of the dormant constructs on the risen island of Xin), the construct fails the save automatically and is immediately activated at the start of the next round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Djezet Blood (Su) The clockwork reliquary's "blood" is composed of djezet. Once every 1d4 rounds as a free action, the reliquary may lash out at a single creature within 30 feet with a tendril of this blood. The reliquary must attempt a +36 touch attack; if it hits, the target must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or become more susceptible to the reliquary's supernatural attacks and spell-like abilities, taking a -10 penalty on all saving throws against these attacks for 24 hours. The reliquary cannot use its blood in this way during the same round it creates an abyssium pulse. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Haunted (Ex) The reliquary gains its Charisma bonus (+11) to its AC as a deflection bonus and on Fortitude saves as a resistance bonus. It gains its Charisma bonus (+11) to each of its Hit Dice as bonus hit points.

Inubrix Darts (Ex) As a full-round action, the clockwork reliquary may fire six inubrix darts from its upper body, or one dart as a standard action. These darts have a range increment of 90 feet and ignore any armor or shield bonus granted by metal armor or shields. The reliquary can fire 100 darts before it must craft replacements.

Sihedron Vulnerability (Ex) A creature equipped with the *Sihedron* can penetrate the clockwork reliquary's damage reduction with any attack, and automatically succeeds at all checks to penetrate its spell resistance. If the *Sihedron*'s user transfers the *Sihedron* to an ally while the clockwork reliquary is within 30 feet, the reliquary must succeed at a DC 30 Fortitude save or be staggered for 1 round.

Skymetal Plating (Su) Plates of horacalcum and noqual are incorporated into the reliquary's body. These plates rotate and realign every round so that one of the two materials is visible, while the other side of the plate faces inward. On even-numbered rounds, its horacalcum plates are visible and the clockwork reliquary functions as if hasted. On odd-numbered rounds, its noqual plates are visible and its spell resistance increases to 37.

Susceptible to Positive Energy (Ex) The reliquary is vulnerable to damage from positive energy as if it were an undead creature. It is not affected by negative energy.

Unstable Mind (Ex) The clockwork reliquary's animating spirit carries with it all of Xin's madness. At the start of every round, there's a cumulative 1% chance that it malfunctions in that round—if the reliquary malfunctions, it functions for that round as if confused. Presenting evidence of Xin's failure (such as a portion of the homunculus mass—other elements may work at your discretion) increases the next malfunction check by 20%. Once the reliquary malfunctions, the malfunction chance resets to 1% for the next round.

The clockwork reliquary is Xin's last triumph, a construct that he never got to test in the field of battle. His spirit is eager to use the device against the PCs, but even more eager to have the reliquary awaken his slumbering army of clockwork soldiers and lead them into the new world to rebuild his empire.



OGONTHUNN

The massive form of this fishlike alien undulates with thick mucus, and four long tentacles writhe around its multi-eyed head. Despite its alien nature, its presence is almost calming, even... alluring.

OGONTHUNN

CR 19

XP 204,800

Veiled master loremaster 5 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 56)

LE Large aberration (aquatic, shapechanger)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +29

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +2 dodge, +1 insight, +11 natural, –1 size)

hp 356 (21 HD; 16d8+5d6+267)

Fort +19, **Ref** +17, **Will** +18

Immune electricity, mind-affecting effects; **Resist** cold 20; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 10 ft., swim 80 ft.

Melee bite +21 (2d6+5 plus consume memory and slime), 2 claws +21 (1d6+5 plus slime), 4 tentacles +16 touch (2d6+2 plus thoughtlance)

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

Special Attacks delayed suggestion, mucus cloud

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +29)

Constant—*mage armor*

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 21), *dominate person* (DC 24), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 21), *illusory wall* (DC 23), *mirage arcana* (DC 24), *persistent image* (DC 24), *programmed image* (DC 25), *project image* (DC 26), *veil* (DC 25)

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 28), quickened *dominate person* (DC 24), *geas/quest*, *mass suggestion* (DC 25)

Spells Known (CL 17th; concentration +26)

8th (5/day)—*symbol of death* (DC 27), *symbol of insanity* (DC 27)
7th (7/day)—*symbol of stunning* (DC 26), *symbol of weakness* (DC 26), *vision*

6th (7/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 25), *mislead*, *symbol of persuasion* (DC 25)

5th (8/day)—*mind fog* (DC 24), *overland flight*, *symbol of pain* (DC 24), *teleport*

4th (8/day)—*arcane eye*, *charm monster* (DC 23), *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 23)

3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *explosive runes*, *hold person* (DC 22), *vampiric touch*

2nd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *false life*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *touch of idiocy*

1st (9/day)—*charm person* (DC 20), *comprehend languages*, *erase*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 20)

o (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 19), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 19), *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 19)

TACTICS

Before Combat Ogonthunn casts extended *false life* every day.

If the veiled master suspects it will be confronting foes, it places symbols on the walls of its lair. If it wishes to capture victims alive to interrogate them (as is the case the first time it notices the PCs are drawing near), it uses a *symbol of weakness*, a *symbol of persuasion*, and a *symbol of pain*. If it wishes to destroy intruders (as is the case if the PCs return at a later point after fleeing a battle), it uses a *symbol of death*, a *symbol of insanity*, and a *symbol of stunning*.

During Combat If possible, Ogonthunn begins combat from hiding, casting combat spells through a *projected image*. It casts *mind fog* first, followed in subsequent rounds by *dominate monster* and *dominate person* attacks. Foes that seem difficult to dominate are instead targeted with *phantasmal killers*, *chain lightning*, *magic missiles*, and *rays of enfeeblement*, often enhanced via metamagic. Since so many of its spells rely on sight, Ogonthunn prefers to save *blindness/deafness* for particularly frustrating foes who find ways to avoid being dominated or succumbing to symbols. When facing foes in melee, Ogonthunn uses Arcane Strike to gain a +4 bonus on attack damage rolls, unless it is brought below 120 hit points, in which case it augments its attacks with quickened *vampiric touch*.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, Ogonthunn uses *teleport* to flee (using *mislead* to escape in the short term if it must relocate physically to a location where teleportation works). After 24 hours, it returns to Xin, fully healed, to seek revenge.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 24, **Con** 32, **Int** 23, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 40

Feats Arcane Strike, Craft Wondrous Item, Dazing Spell, Deceitful, Dodge, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*dominate person*), Skill Focus (Knowledge [arcana]), Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +0 (–8 when jumping), Bluff +35, Disguise +34, Fly +27, Knowledge (arcana) +37, Knowledge (geography) +22, Knowledge (nature) +22, Perception +29, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +31 (+41 when identifying items), Stealth +8, Swim +38, Use Magic Device +34

NPC GALLERY

SQ change shape (any Small or Medium form; *greater polymorph*), greater lore, lore +2, runemastery, secrets (applicable knowledge, dodge trick, secret health), swift transformation, true lore

Gear spellguard bracers^{UE}, ioun stones (dusty rose, orange prism, pale green prism, pale lavender ellipsoid, pink and green sphere), ring of evasion, ring of telekinesis, bejeweled armbands and rings worth 20,000 gp in all

^{UE} See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Consume Memory (Su) When Ogonthunn bites a creature, it consumes memories. The creature bitten must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save or gain 1 negative level. Ogonthunn heals 5 points of damage each time it grants a negative level in this way, and also learns some of the target creature's memories (subject to the GM's discretion). This is a mind-affecting effect. Ogonthunn can suppress this ability as a free action. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Delayed Suggestion (Sp) Whenever Ogonthunn successfully uses *dominate person* or *dominate monster* on a creature, it can implant a delayed *suggestion* that triggers when the dominate effect ends. This *suggestion* (which functions as a spell-like ability, CL 20th, Will DC 22 negates) is for the creature to put its gear somewhere safe and then spend the next 20 hours attempting to track down Ogonthunn and present itself to the veiled master to be re-dominated.

Mucus Cloud (Ex) While underwater, Ogonthunn exudes a cloud of transparent slime in a 30-foot-radius spread. Every creature in this area must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save each round or lose the ability to breathe air (but gain the ability to breathe water) for 24 hours. Renewed contact with this mucus cloud and failing another save extends the effect for another 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Runemastery (Ex) Ogonthunn is particularly skilled at casting spells that create magical writing, such as *explosive runes*, *secret page*, or any spell with the word "symbol" in its name. It never requires material components or focus components when casting such spells, and the save DC of any of these spells increases by 1. Ogonthunn's symbol spells are difficult to disarm—the Disable Device DC for these symbols increases by 2.

Slime (Ex) A creature hit by Ogonthunn's bite or claw attacks must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save or its skin and flesh transform into a clear, slimy membrane over the course of 1d4 rounds. The creature's new "flesh" is soft and tender, reducing its Constitution score by 4 as long as the condition persists. If the creature's flesh isn't kept moist, it dries quickly and the victim takes 1d12 points of damage every 10 minutes. *Remove disease* and similar effects can restore an afflicted creature to normal, but immunity to disease offers no protection from this attack. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Spells Ogonthunn can cast spells as a 17th-level sorcerer.



Swift Transformation (Su)

Ogonthunn can use its change shape ability as a swift action.

Thoughtlance (Su)

Four of Ogonthunn's tentacles end in glowing spheres of light. These spheres deal 2d6 points of electricity damage on a successful touch attack, and also blast the targeted creature's mind with waves of mental energy—a creature touched by one of these tentacles (regardless of whether the touch deals electricity damage) must succeed at a DC 27 Will save or be staggered for 1 round. Additional touches increase the duration by 1 round. While a creature is staggered in this manner, it must attempt concentration checks to cast spells as if it were experiencing extremely violent motion while casting (DC = 20 + spell level). The save DC is Charisma-based.

The veiled masters are akin to a noble caste in aboleth society, even though the concept of "nobility" is alien to these creatures. Ogonthunn has lived for thousands of years, and remembers Azlant and the rise of Thassilon. It prefers to adopt the guise of a beautiful Azlanti woman when walking among humanity. It has come to risen Xin to seek out an old artifact it gave Xin's ancestors, but has become somewhat trapped in the palace's dungeons.

SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “The Dead Heart of Xin.” Player-appropriate handouts for the treasures detailed here appear in the GameMastery Shattered Star item card set

FLAMMA HORACALCUM (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura moderate evocation; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 7 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The *flamma horacalcum* is tiny ball of fire harvested from a secret and hidden grotto on the Plane of Fire where the flames are infused with energies leaking from the Demiplane of Time. During the time of Azlant, dozens of *flamma horacalcums* existed, each of which had to be encased in an orrery-like container made of horacalcum to prevent the flame from burning away into another time. The flame itself is weightless, but the orrery that contains it weighs 7 pounds, and requires a free hand to carry and utilize.

As a free action, a *flamma horacalcum*’s level of illumination can be adjusted by its carrier’s thought to range from the brightness of a single candle to that shed by a *daylight* spell. This light is considered to be from a 9th-level spell for the purposes of overcoming magical darkness. Once the *flamma horacalcum* is set down, it continues to radiate its last level of light.

This light bends and warps time in slight ways for its carrier, granting her a +4 bonus on all initiative checks. Three times per day, the flame can be commanded to cast a *haste* spell as a swift action. The carrier can also use the flame as a standard action to unleash a thin beam of fire equivalent to a *searing light*. A creature hit by this effect is slowed, as per the spell, for 1d4 rounds if it fails at a DC 20 Will save.

Once per week as a standard action, the user of a *flamma horacalcum* can blow the flame out, snuffing it entirely. This triggers a *time stop* effect on the user that lasts for 1d4 rounds, after which the flame reignites. Other observers see this effect only as a brief flickering of the flame, since the duration of the time the flame was extinguished is contained wholly by the *time stop* effect.

In certain areas that have been subjected to powerful destructive magical effects associated with fire (such as Xin’s Palace), the light of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals images from the past. These images only manifest if the device’s light is at its highest setting, and what exactly is revealed can vary—the light may reveal events from only a few hours past, or it may reveal things from hundreds of centuries gone. The various encounters within Xin’s palace include sections on what the light of the *flamma horacalcum* reveals.

DESTRUCTION

The flame of a *flamma horacalcum* must be quenched in the shadow of a demigod who hasn’t yet been born.

GHOST IRON SCIMITAR

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 20th

Slot weapon; **Price** 162,315 gp; **Weight** 8 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

When Xin learned that the runelords had invested their champions with the swords known as the *Alara’hai*—the *Swords of Sin*—he decided that he deserved such a weapon for his champion as well. Unfortunately, his attempt to create an eighth *Alara’hai* failed. Despite his skill and power, Xin simply couldn’t equal even the least of the other *Swords of Sin*, a truth that vexed and humiliated him. The weapon he created, the *ghost iron scimitar*, was a significant weapon, but it was hardly an artifact. It wasn’t even intelligent. Ashamed of the weapon, but secretly harboring the hope that someday he’d figure out how to improve it, Xin secreted the sword away in a Skymetal Vault and forgot about it.

The *ghost iron scimitar* is a +2 *dancing keen ghost touch inubrix scimitar*. The weapon has been magically enhanced so that it still deals normal weapon damage for its size and is not treated as being broken, despite being made from a soft skymetal. It ignores armor and shield bonuses granted by metal objects. Although the weapon cannot damage metal creatures (and is thus not very effective against the clockwork reliquary), it can be presented to the clockwork reliquary as an example of one of Xin’s failures to aid in triggering its unstable mind.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects*, *keen edge*, *plane shift*; **Cost** 100,315 gp

GUARDIAN KEY (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong enchantment; **CL** 15th

Slot none; **Price** 90,000; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This simple-looking key seems to be carved crudely from stone, but is in fact a sort of skeleton key that can be used to wind all clockwork constructs swiftly and efficiently. Originally, the key allowed the carrier to command limitless numbers of clockworks simultaneously. With this key, Xin could command

SHATTERED STAR TREASURES



Wayfinder of
Infinite Doorways



Timeglass



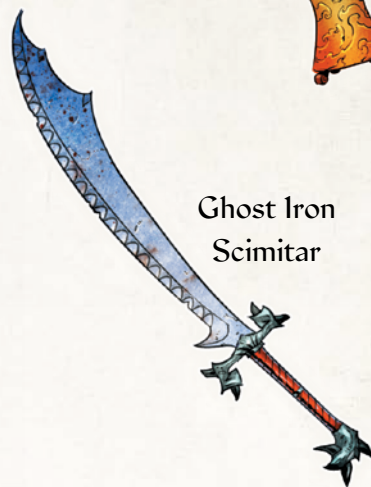
Flamma
Horacalcum



Tome of
Living Runes



Guardian
Key



Ghost Iron
Scimitar

his entire clockwork army effortlessly, and its use was key to his power over Thassilon. But when Xin used it as an element in the clockwork reliquary's construction, the key's powers were vastly diminished. Xin accepted this as a necessity, since if all had gone according to plan, he would still be able to command his army using his new body. The diminished key can be recovered from the destroyed reliquary's remains.

The *guardian key* can fit into any clockwork construct's keyhole, and fully winds a clockwork with a single turn made as a move action. Clockworks wound by the guardian key are healed of 5d8+20 points of damage, remain active for 10 times longer than they normally would, and during this period gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws. The *guardian key* can also be used to seize control of a clockwork. To do so, a creature must attempt a touch attack against the target clockwork as a standard action. If it hits, the clockwork can attempt a DC 15 Will save to resist. If the clockwork's save fails, that clockwork regards the key's carrier as its creator, and follows that person's commands to the letter—provided the commands are spoken in Thassilonian. The *guardian key* can control only one construct at a time. If it is used to control a second clockwork, the previous one is released from its duties immediately.

DESTRUCTION

The *guardian key* must be steeped in the tears of a wistful clockwork lover and then used by that clockwork to unwind itself permanently.

SIHEDRON (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura overwhelming (all schools); **CL** 25th

Slot none; **Weight** 7 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

The *Sihedron* is a seven-pointed star that symbolizes the power of Thassilonian magic. Xin created the *Sihedron* as more than just a symbol of his power over the schools of magic he'd defined for his nation, though. It was initially meant to be a badge of his power over all of Thassilon, and a symbol of the unified nature of the nation's peoples. Each of the *Sihedron's* arms is made of a different skymetal, symbolizing how the nation of Thassilon was made of different races—Azlanti, Varisian, Shoanti, giant, elf, and others. Xin went further than merely making the *Sihedron* a symbol of harmony and diversity, though, and built into its functionality significant advantages when the artifact is shared among a number of allies. The powers granted by the *Sihedron* are greatest when it is used not by a lone individual, but by a group that works together toward a common goal, and whose members trust each other enough to effortlessly pass control of the powerful item between themselves swiftly and without a second thought.

Alas, Xin's ideals for the diversity of Thassilon were misplaced, and even as his rule continued, he found himself increasingly paranoid and unwilling to share the powers granted by the *Sihedron*. The fact that the item was intended to be a powerful shared artifact but has never properly been used in this manner is one of the greatest ironies of Thassilon.

SHATTERED STAR

The *Sihedron* itself is a relatively plain-looking item. The seven different hues of its composite metals help to give it some color, but the artifact lacks any of the decorative runes and markings that are so common on other Thassilonian artifacts. Even the artifact itself, built in the image of the sign of Lissala and the rune for the Thassilonian schools of magic, seems somewhat plain, lacking the *Sihedron* rune's distinctive hooklike shapes along its arms. In fact, these hooks are represented in the device by the placement of the seven *ioun* stone receptacles.

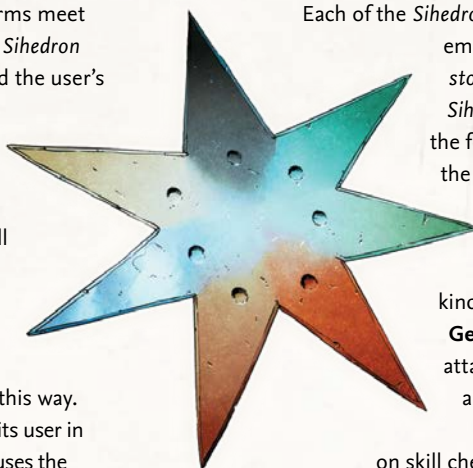
Once the *Sihedron* is activated, it glows with a warm yellow light that sheds illumination as if via a *daylight* spell. To activate the *Sihedron*, a person need only touch the center of the star where all seven arms meet and concentrate as a swift action—the *Sihedron* immediately rises up into the air behind the user's head like a halo and floats along behind him wherever he goes, even teleporting along with him. Although the *Sihedron* is not in physical contact with the user, it is in all ways treated as if it were an attended object being held or carried. The *Sihedron* implants knowledge of all its powers and how to activate them into the mind of anyone who activates it in this way.

Once activated, the *Sihedron* protects its user in a number of ways. First, it constantly infuses the wearer with magical energy, granting him fast healing 5. Second, it grants the user the constant effects of a *foresight* spell (providing a +2 insight bonus to AC and on Reflex saves, and preventing the user from ever being surprised or flat-footed). Third, up to once per day, the *Sihedron* can target its wearer with *true resurrection* the instant he is slain—he need not activate this power, as the *Sihedron* automatically triggers if the user is killed.

When the user activates the *Sihedron*, he may select one of the star's points to be "ascendant." The *Sihedron* rotates so that this point is pointing upward, and he immediately gains an additional defense and the use of a spell-like ability, usable at will, as detailed below. The user may change which point is ascendant as a standard action by concentrating, but cannot change the point to an "oppositional" point. The effects granted by each of the *Sihedron*'s points (as well as the two oppositional points for each) are listed at the end of this item description.

As an immediate action (but no more often than once during any single combat round), the current user of the *Sihedron* may cause the artifact to instantaneously transfer itself to another willing creature within 120 feet. The *Sihedron* teleports from the current user and appears behind the head of the target creature. As it does so, it unleashes a surge of potent magic that affects both of these creatures, granting a

+2 insight bonus on all saving throws for 1 round and healing each creature of 2d8+10 points of damage. This transfer occurs so quickly that it can grant the bonus on a saving throw after the saving throw itself has been rolled, but it must be made before the result of that role is confirmed by the GM. Likewise, the healing granted can occur in the instant before a creature actually takes damage from any source, which could heal a heavily wounded target before the additional damage renders it unconscious or even kills it. When the *Sihedron* is granted to a new target in this manner, the new target can automatically select which point of the *Sihedron* is ascendant, even if the point selected is oppositional to the previously active point.



Each of the *Sihedron*'s arms contains an *ioun* stone embedded in a small receptacle. These *ioun* stones cannot be removed as long as the *Sihedron* is whole, and they help to power the following additional abilities when one of the points is ascendant.

Charity: Grants a +4 insight bonus to AC and *dimensional anchor* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by kindness and temperance.

Generosity: Grants a +4 insight bonus on attack rolls and *beast shape II* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by humility and love.

Humility: Grants a +8 insight bonus on skill checks and *greater invisibility* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by generosity and zeal.

Kindness: Grants a +4 insight bonus on weapon damage rolls and *ice storm* as a spell-like ability.

Opposed by charity and zeal.

Love: Grants a +8 insight bonus on initiative checks and *charm monster* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by generosity and temperance.

Temperance: Grants fast healing 10 (this replaces the standard fast healing granted by the *Sihedron*) and *fear* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by charity and love.

Zeal: Grants a +8 insight bonus on concentration and caster level checks and *dimension door* as a spell-like ability. Opposed by humility and kindness.

DESTRUCTION

The *Sihedron* must be crushed under the foot of the Oliphaunt of Jandelay while it is being used by a character who willingly allows himself (along with the *Sihedron*) to be so destroyed.

Xin was able to cause the *Sihedron* to break apart into its seven shards as an immediate action. Doing so causes an explosive blast of magical power capable of laying waste to a huge portion of the surrounding landscape as well as instantly slaying Xin, his rune giant assassin, and many other occupants of his palace. This did not destroy the *Sihedron*, however, and once the artifact is reforged, no known force can cause it to explode in this manner a second time.

SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

TIMEGLASS (MINOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong divination; **CL** 20th

Slot none; **Weight** 10 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

A *timeglass* appears as a 1-foot-long elongated glass bulb set within a stand made of horacalcum. Within the bulb churns a mote of pale blue mist—vapors extracted from strange flowers that grow only in the Dimension of Time. A *timeglass* can be used as if it were a *crystal ball* with *true seeing*, but also has the ability to scry upon events in the past or future. When using a *timeglass* to look forward or backward in time, a user can't specify what creatures are viewed, but does look upon someone with whom the user has interacted before or will interact in the future. It can be used in this manner only once per day.

If used to look into the past, the *timeglass* does one of two things—it can reveal to the viewer a memory that's been forgotten or put an old piece of knowledge into a new context (granting a +20 bonus on any one Knowledge check), or it can grant a link to a specific person that character has met in the past, allowing for a brief one-way communication to that person. The recipient of this message generally interprets the message in the form of a vision, or a strange prophecy, or divine insight—the recipient does not know the message is in fact from the future (as the *timeglass* distorts messages to the past in order to preserve the flow of time and combat paradoxes). The first time the PCs use this device, they contact the troll augur Augustille, and the result of this contact is the strange prophecy that he gave the PCs back in “The Asylum Stone.” The *timeglass* itself determines whether it grants a bonus on a knowledge check or allows a link to a past mind—allowing the GM the chance to control how the artifact interacts with her campaign.

When a *timeglass* is used to look into the future, the effects are simpler—the PC gains a brief vision of a possible important event that will occur in the PC's immediate future. Memories of these events vanish as soon as they form, but the user retains vague fragments of the memory, effectively gaining the effects of a *foresight* spell for 24 hours.

At your discretion, a *timeglass* can have other uses involving the past and the future.

DESTRUCTION

The *timeglass* must be carried back in time to the point it was created, and must then be used to smash apart the glass containing the mist before its creation is completed.

TOME OF LIVING RUNES

Aura strong transmutation; **CL** 15th

Slot none; **Price** 36,000 gp; **Weight** 15 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This massive, metal-bound tome is filled with 20 thin pages of beaten copper, each indented with arcane sigils and Thassilonian runes. These runes seem to shimmer and twist and writhe when read, and the phrases and words they spell

out are utter nonsense. By studying a page with a successful DC 20 Linguistics check, a person can make sense of the runes and as a full-round action can cause the runes on that page to swim together into a single shape that immediately leaps off the page to serve the user in one of three ways. The rune can manifest as a living rune (see page 88) that serves the user for 15 rounds, as if it had been summoned via a *summon monster* spell. The rune can infest and deactivate any symbol, *glyph of warding*, or other trap made of magical writing with a +25 Disable Device check. The rune can also be made to float around the user's head for 10 rounds, during which time it can be used as an additional material component when casting a spell that creates magical writing. Doing so causes the spell to be cast at +1 caster level. Once a rune is activated, the page in the *tome of living runes* on which the rune was written goes blank. Only one rune can be active at any one time.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *summon monster* VIII, *symbol* (any); **Cost** 18,000 gp

WAYFINDER OF INFINITE DOORWAYS

Aura strong conjuration; **CL** 12th

Slot none; **Price** 45,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This bronze *wayfinder* is decorated with garnets and emeralds, and even without its magical properties would be worth a small fortune. A *wayfinder of infinite doorways* has 10 charges; these charges automatically replenish at a rate of 1 charge every 24 hours. The *wayfinder* has one *ioun stone* slot—as a standard action, the user can drain the power of an *ioun stone* inserted in the *wayfinder* to restore a number of charges equal to the *ioun stone*'s cost divided by 2,000 (thus, draining an *ioun stone* worth 8,000 points would instantly restore 4 charges). The item can be used to activate any of the following powers as a standard action that expends a variable number of charges.

- The *wayfinder of infinite doorways* can be used cast *detect secret doors*. Using the item this way costs no charges, but can only be done if at least 1 charge remains in the *wayfinder*.
- It can be used to cast *knock* at the cost of 1 charge.
- It can be used to cast *dimension door* at the cost of 2 charges.
- The *wayfinder of infinite doorways* can be used to transform any regular door within 10 feet into a portal that functions as a *word of recall*, causing any creatures that step through the targeted doorway to step out of another doorway that has been preselected. If no target doorway has been selected, this use of the *wayfinder* fails. Using the *wayfinder* in this way costs 4 charges. Attuning the *wayfinder* to a destination doorway requires a full-round action and 1 charge, and the user must be standing within the doorway when she does so.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *detect secret doors*, *dimension door*, *knock*, *word of recall*; **Cost** 27,500 gp



CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

AND SO IT WAS THAT THE LIGHT LEFT THAT GLEAMING PALACE OF RIGHTEOUS VIRTUE, AND ITS ONCE-SHINING CRYSTAL HALLS TURNED AS BLACK AS THE SMOKE THAT FOREVER SMOLDERED FROM ITS HIGHEST HEIGHTS. WITH THIS FALL WE SEE THE FRACTURES IN THE CRYSTAL, OBSCURING CLARITY AND MARRING THE FACETS OF OUR LIVES. ONLY FEARSOME WHISPERS ARE HIS COUNCIL NOW, THEY SAY, AND NONE DARE CHALLENGE THE MIGHT OF THOSE FORMER DISCIPLES WHO TRULY RULE IN THE OLD KING'S PLACE. DARK DAYS SHALL RISE AND FALL, AS DO THE SUN AND STARS—NO KINGDOM STANDS FOREVER.

—THASSILONIAN INSCRIPTION IN THE
COLLECTION OF MAGNIMAR'S MUSEUM OF AGES

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Although the Shattered Star Adventure Path concludes in this volume, there are still more ancient Thassilonian secrets to discover. This article presents two possible scenarios to extend your campaign as well as a look at what happens should Xin defeat the PCs.

REBUILDING MAGNIMAR

After the destruction the tsunami unleashed upon Magnimar, the PCs can help to get the city back on its feet—something Magnimar desperately needs.

Magnimar relies heavily on trade, and this event disrupts much of the commerce that usually flows into and out of the city. Rebuilding the city means more than cleaning up debris and shoring up cracked walls; it means getting life in Magnimar back to where it was before the tsunami. Magnimar has been embroiled in a longtime rivalry with Korvosa over trade and their respective holdings, and this event tips the scales in Korvosa's favor. Korvosan merchants charge ruinous prices for building materials, food, and other goods needed for rebuilding. Korvosan bankers offer Magnimar credit, but the complicated terms threaten to lock Magnimar into a weak economic position for years to come. Wealthy PCs can use their gold to aid Magnimar financially, and those with political aspirations can curry favor with the Office of the Lord-Mayor or the Council of Ushers. Particularly diplomatic characters can use their negotiation skills to maintain a fair relationship with Korvosa and avoid opportunistic plays from Magnimar's rivals.

Rebuilding Magnimar certainly includes actual physical labor, and this is something with which any number of PCs can assist. Strong characters can lend their muscle to remove rubble and clean out flooded buildings. Clever PCs can organize work crews and engineer efficient ways to repair damaged buildings and streets. Those capable of casting spells can make this work easier and aid those performing the work. Characters with a knack for healing find their abilities in demand to stem the increase of disease and ensure that Magnimar's food and water are safe and healthy for its citizens; these characters can also set up triage for those wounded in the tsunami. Other characters of faith can lend their aid to religious leaders, blessing those who perished and providing proper burials. Assistance in any of these spheres earns the PCs great respect from Magnimar's leaders, and in the future the Council of Ushers and the mayor trust the words and actions of the PCs who came to their side in these dark times.

WHAT IF THE PCS LOSE?

Xin's restless spirit, merged into his clockwork reliquary, laid the mighty heroes low with his potent magic and autonomous minions. What now?

A CLONE'S LIFE

If one of the PCs fell victim to the Sorshen's Fury trap (in the False Sepulcher from page 26 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #62) and ended up being revived in Sorshen's clone body, she might feel a strong connection to her new form. This can manifest as the PC having dreams and brief visions of Sorshen's life. These visions trigger an urge to reconnect with the things for which Sorshen lusted in life. A logical place to investigate these visions and urges would be below the city of Korvosa. Perhaps, with this new body of a runelord, the character can even affect the vaults below Korvosa in ways other explorers could not.

First and foremost, Xin reclaims the *Sihedron* the PCs worked so hard to gather and rebuild. Once again in possession of the artifact, Xin disassembles the arcane device and incorporates the seven shards into his new mechanical body. This action bolsters his power, essentially granting him the spellcasting power of a 20th-level wizard in addition to the regular uses of the *Sihedron*. Reawakened, Xin works to pull more of his once-great city up from the waves. More earthquakes rumble through the region, followed by greater tsunamis that wash over the city and countryside. In addition to the natural disasters brought on by the rising city, other monstrosities that had lain dormant beneath the Varisian Gulf are released upon Magnimar and the surrounding area.

As Xin gains a better understanding of what has transpired while he was dormant, he sends his clockwork army to invade Magnimar. Thousands of clockwork soldiers stream into Magnimar as the guard does its best to defend the battered city. Greater clockwork threats, such as clockwork leviathans, clockwork dragons, and other creations follow Xin's legionnaires to conquer the City of Monuments.

As the city falls, Xin claims it as the first prize in his new quest for domination of Avistan. In short order, his automatons begin construction of a massive bridge, much like the Irespan, to connect the newly raised city of Xin to Magnimar. Its completion facilitates deployment of Xin's clockwork armies into the lands of Varisia and beyond. News of Magnimar's fall spreads throughout the Inner Sea region as clockwork troops turn their mechanical eyes toward Korvosa. Word of this event reaches nations' leaders, powerful organizations like the Pathfinder Society, and significant personalities on Golarion as they scramble to stem the tide of conquest led by a 10,000-year-old haunted construct. New heroes are needed to put down this threat to the continent.

SHATTERED STAR

EXPLORING XIN

When the PCs confront the abomination that once was the great Xin, they do so in his palace, but there is more to the once-great city of Xin. A whole metropolis crests the sea and even more rests beneath the waves, ripe for exploration by those with enough mettle and the right preparations. A GM can reference the map of the risen part of the city of Xin in the adventure to find the best locations to place the following encounters.

Also, the following encounters can be added to the adventure if a GM desires, if the PCs go off target, or if they wish to explore more during the course of the adventure. They can also provide challenges after the

players achieve their ultimate goal, perhaps when the PCs return to the island after making their way back to Magnimar. Xin was a huge place filled with all manner of threats and treasures, and taking a little time off to tend to Magnimar isn't going to lessen the availability of these encounters.

ISLAND ENCOUNTERS

For centuries, the sunken villas of Xin have been home to the worst the drowned darkness had to offer, and now that which once slithered in the depths awaits on the arisen isle.

While detailed encounter areas for the reborn city are not provided, many dangers still lurk in the city's long-sunken buildings, and GMs can draw their own encounter maps or use *Pathfinder Flip-Mats* or *Pathfinder Map Packs* to add greater detail. The following encounters have an average CR listed, as well as suggestions for where to place the encounters on the map of the island of Xin on page 19. In addition, each encounter listed includes a sample treasure to be found as a result of the encounter.

Black Bile Building (CR 16; just east of Xin's palace):

The hollow foundations of interlocked towers loom overhead, their walls composed of jagged, flaking shale. A tribe of 20 chardas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 55) waits in ambush here. The tribe is under the sway of a lazy hezrou (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 62) who lairs in an antechamber beyond. The chardas attack any who intrude on their territory.

Treasure: Lost when the city was destroyed, a *wand of mnemonic enhancer* (48 charges) rests just beneath some rubble.

The Buried Herald (CR 12; just south of Xin's palace):

Enormous armored plates and segmented legs grate loudly as a partially disabled war machine struggles in the collapsed rubble of a gigantic stone mausoleum. Another of Xin's heralds, this clockwork leviathan (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 55) is fully operational with the exception of its crushed legs. Its partial burial gives it the AC benefits of cover, but reduces its movement to 5 feet. The clockwork terror attacks any who disturb it.

Treasure: Graceful statues of polished marble depicting dignitaries of Thassilon's time litter the ruins. Only one is completely intact; it would fetch a price of 9,000 gp from the right collector.

The Clockwork Waste (CR 14; immediately west-northwest of Xin's palace): The courtyard before the palace's entrance is littered with the corroded and barnacle-covered remains of dozens of clockwork legionnaires expelled from the palace walls while the city sank. The majority of these clockworks remain in various



CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

states of disrepair, but they rise to protect the palace if disturbed. If PCs enter this area, 1d6 Xin legionnaires (page 27) animate every 4 rounds to attack, for as long as they remain. These clockworks cease to animate if the PCs destroy the buried herald.

Treasure: Lightly buried in compressed silt sits a crate containing 20 1-pound bars of adamantite and 20 1-pound bars of mithral, worth 16,000 gp altogether.

Dead Cloud (CR 16; just southwest of Xin's palace): A deep crevice between palace towers resonates with necrotic energy, and has long harbored a corrupted pocket of spirits that drowned in Earthfall. They have coagulated into a deadly sea bonze (*Bestiary* 3 239). It lurks near the palace, jealously striking out at the living.

Treasure: A newly crumbled wall reveals a series of golden plates inscribed in Thassilonian runes worth 15,000 gp to a collector.

Deadly Lenses (CR 13; just northeast of Xin's palace): Ancient Azlant's myriad uses for magical lenses are well-documented, and Xin's capital city, modeled after the emperor's homeland, was little different. These brass-mounted lenses are dirty, corroded, and covered in barnacles. They orbit high over an ancient bathhouse where they once heated the waters by focusing the sun's rays. Now wildly malfunctioning, they release searing blasts of fire, mechanically identical to a maximized *fireball* trap (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 421) that automatically resets every 10 minutes.

Treasure: A dented case holding a set of four *elemental gems* (one of each type) protrudes halfway from the silt.

Howling Promenade (CR 19; just southeast of Xin's palace): Surrounding the palace is a spacious open-air courtyard where the sweeping curve of Xin's symmetrical streets terminates. The once-prominent buildings on one side of this courtyard have since fossilized into a homogenous mass of collapsed stone and sediment. The ruins harbor a recently-awakened and ravenous shoggoth (*Bestiary* 249). This fearless alien predator wanders the area, voraciously devouring dying sea life. But the sound or scent of larger prey, or movement near the palace, triggers an immediate attack.

Treasure: Covered in sediment, a skeleton wears a +2 *blinding heavy steel shield* and a +2 *dispelling burst longsword*. Everything else the warrior was carrying has long since eroded away.

Killing Field (CR 17; just west of Xin's palace): The cleanly severed limbs of several dozen strange undersea creatures lay scattered between the foundations of an ancient ruined dome. The area is patrolled by four scurrying shipwrecker crabs (*Bestiary* 3 60). The bodies are a slaughtered tribe of sahuagin (*Bestiary* 239). Through either *speak with dead* or an actual survivor, the GM may inform the PCs of recent local events—a once-silent

crystal palace suddenly growing upward toward the open sky, and the ancient city erupting from the sea floor.

Treasure: Among the gear the sahuagin had on them, the PCs can find a *ring of protection* +2, a *jellyfish cape*, and a *wand of hold person* (41 charges).

Lurking Horrors (CR 13; in the water just west of Xin's palace): This building once housed a massive, multistory archive. Little remains but a broken shell, inhabited by four trapped giant squids (*Bestiary* 259). Any movement above alerts the trapped and hungry beasts, and they lurk in the murky water below, using the reach of their tentacles to snatch prey walking above.

Treasure: Lumps of barnacle-encrusted gold and silver coins lay scattered across the ground. Because of their history and precious metal content, they are worth about 10,000 gp to collectors.

Malfunctioning Regrowth (CR 16; north-northwest of Xin's palace): Massive stones glow subtly with arcane fire as they orbit around the stacked foundations of an old Thassilonian ruin. The huge blocks settle slowly into place as if set down by unseen hands, then topple under their own weight to begin the process anew. These perpetually regenerating buildings' stones lash out violently at the approach of living creatures. If any creature enters within a 30-foot radius of such a structure, the blocks immediately swirl outward in an exploding vortex of crushing stone similar to a crushing stone trap (*Core Rulebook* 422).

Treasure: Revealed as the palace rose from the sea, tearing away crusted sediment, a *pale lavender ioun stone* shines among the ruins.

Strange Geometry (CR 14; east-southeast of Xin's palace): This ancient archival vault is built with a disjointed linear symmetry. PCs approaching this location attract the attention of a dangerous pack of 12 hounds of Tindalos (*Bestiary* 2 158), drawn here by the palace's temporal disruptions. They exit through a rift in reality along the building's right angles to attack aggressively.

Treasure: Scattered about are various baubles of unusual workmanship made of strange alloys. A dozen such items can be found, each worth 1,000 gp.

Tarnished Temple (CR 11; west-southwest of Xin's palace): Massive columns tumble in midair before a tiered bronze ziggurat covered in verdigris. Large barnacle-encrusted slivers of the corroded temple slice through the air menacingly. Three strange statues floating aimlessly about betray a glint of gold, though their golden forms are unrecognizable in the constant churning of the corroded columns. PCs wishing to recover a statue must endure 3 rounds of the sharp orbiting debris, treated as an instant-reset chamber of blades trap (*Core Rulebook* 421).

Treasure: If recovered, the battered statues seem to depict strange humanoid figures whose heads are concealed within unusual helmets, and each is worth 3,000 gp.

THE RISE OF GLUTTONY

With the defeat of Karzoug at the hands of adventurers a few years ago, Varisians began to wonder: "Are the six other runelords out there? Will they too rise again, and if so, when?"

Now that the PCs are in possession of the *Sihedron*, they have the best opportunity to search out the remaining runelords and other ancient Thassilonian threats. Currently, tales involving Zutha are coming out of the orc-ruled lands of the Hold of Belkzen, once known as Gastash—dominion of the Runelord of Gluttony (though it is rumored the Pathfinder Society is investigating a lead involving the Runelord Krune).

Amid the orc clans fighting each other for territory lives a taiga giant named Thulos. Raised in the Mindspin Mountains, Thulos learned to hear the spirits of his ancestors and use them to his advantage. As he grew, he threw himself into the study of necromancy and eventually stumbled upon the teachings of Zutha. He tracked down ruins scattered throughout the lands of Belkzen, uncovering the remains of lost Gastash. It was in these places he discovered the first portion of the *Gluttonous Tome*—the *Kardosian Codex*. (For more information on the *Gluttonous Tome*, see the *More Magic of Thassilon* web enhancement on paizo.com.) Less than a decade after finding and reading that tome, Thulos slaughtered 1,001 slaves and bathed in their blood while his sisters exsanguinated him in a ritual to transform himself into a lich. He used the power of the *Kardosian Codex* to aid in this transformation and, like his lord Zutha, imbued his soul into his spellbook—*The Eager Tooth of Gluttony*—to make that item into his phylactery.

After achieving lichdom, he gathered forces of his own, made up of orcs and giants, as well as various undead forms of those monstrous brutes. Through research he discovered the location of another part of the *Gluttonous Tome*—the *Bone Grimoire*. Possessing two parts of the phylactery of Zutha, Thulos believed he felt the presence of the runelord and knew that if he could find the third portion of the tome, he could raise Zutha and rule by Zutha's side as they overtook the lands once part of Gastash and even beyond.

After making a painful deal to attain the remaining part of the *Gluttonous Tome*, Thulos was horrified to learn the copy of the *Black Book* he possessed was not genuine. However, though the forgery didn't contain a third of the essence of Zutha, the manuscript contained enough information for Thulos to devise a way of bringing Zutha back without the final third of the *Gluttonous Tome*. Thulos is frighteningly close to fulfilling his goals. He still thinks he senses Zutha and has no doubt that he will be the one responsible for raising the Runelord of Gluttony.

Thulos holds a ruined tower in the foothills of the Tusk Mountains, not far from the Cenotaph where his legions of

orcs, giants, and undead monstrosities protect his study. **Feron** (CE male taiga giant vampire barbarian 6) serves as his champion and controls his living and undead forces: a company of hill, stone, and taiga giants; two platoons of skeletal champion hill giants; nearly a hundred orc zombies; and close to a thousand orcs from various tribes throughout the land. Thulos keeps to himself, spending most of his time in his study deep in the dungeons below. The place is warded with powerful magical traps that only the elite of his forces can pass through safely by using specially crafted magical insignias. The nine flesh golems Thulos created by using the *Gluttonous Tome* patrol the lower levels of the complex, and he has passed control of most of them to his steward, **Ruanti** (NE female half-orc lich cleric of Lissala 14). When group of ghouls made their way to the dungeons by chance through a tunnel that leads to the Darklands, Ruanti quickly integrated them into the lich's forces, along with a handful of shadows that serve as spies and assassins.

Thulos spends much of his time in the inner sanctum, which serves as a study and laboratory. It is protected with *symbols of death* on each of the chamber's seven sides, to which Feron and all of the forces in the lower levels are attuned. Within, Thulos has the two genuine sections of the *Gluttonous Tome* and the forgery laid out on elaborate black iron bookstands shaped like ravenous mouths. Three marble-lined pools near the bookstands are filled with blood, refreshed daily from the slave pens and kept warm through magic. A 6-foot obsidian mirror rests atop a flat sarcophagus in the center of the chamber—the device from which Thulos hopes Zutha will one day arise!

THULOS

CR 24

XP 1,228,800

Male taiga giant lich necromancer 16

CN Huge undead (giant)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +45

Aura fear (60-ft. radius, DC 32)

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 16, flat-footed 28 (+8 armor, +4 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –2 size)

hp 356 (31 HD; 15d8+16d6+233)

Fort +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +26

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, rejuvenation, rock catching, **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, enchantment and illusion spells, undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +26 (1d8+9) or

+3 unholy scythe +30/+25/+20/+15 (3d6+16/19–20/x4) or touch +21 (1d8+14/19–20 plus paralyzing touch)

Ranged rock +21 (2d6+15)

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

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 25, 12/day), intense spells (+8 damage), paralyzing touch (DC 32), rock throwing (140 ft.)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +25) 12/day—grave touch (8 rounds)

Spell-Like Abilities (bestowed by the *Gluttonous Tome*; CL 31st, concentration +40)

At will—*detect undead*, *gentle repose*

3/day—*false life*, empowered ray of *enfeeblement* (DC 20)

1/day—*bestow curse* (DC 22)

Necromancer Spells Prepared (CL 16th; concentration +25)

8th—*create greater undead*, *horrid wilting* (DC 29), *moment of prescience*, *symbol of death* (2, DC 29), *temporal stasis*
7th—*finger of death* (DC 28), *greater teleport*, *plane shift* (DC 26), *reverse gravity*, *waves of exhaustion* (2)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 25), *circle of death* (DC 27), *eyebite* (2, DC 27), *planar binding* (DC 25), *shadow walk* (DC 25), *true seeing*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 24), *cone of cold* (DC 24), *magic jar* (2, DC 26), *symbol of pain* (DC 26), *telekinesis*, *telepathic bond*, *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th—*bestow curse* (2, DC 25), *black tentacles*, *enervation* (3), *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 23), *wall of fire*

3rd—*displacement*, *fireball* (DC 22), *fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 22), *slow* (DC 22), *tongues*, *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (2, DC 23), *ghoul touch* (DC 23), *glitterdust* (DC 21), *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*, *shatter*, *spectral hand*, *spider climb*

1st—*burning hands* (DC 20), *chill touch* (DC 22), *expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (2, DC 22), *true strike*

o (at will)—*bleed* (2, DC 21), *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Thassilonian Specialization

necromancy; **Opposition**

Schools abjuration, enchantment

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 16, **Con** —,

Int 28, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 48

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat

Reflexes, Command Undead, Craft Magic

Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Critical

Focus, Dodge, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy),

Improved Channel, Improved Critical (scythe), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Self-Sufficient, Shot on the Run^B, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (scythe)

Skills Climb +14, Fly +22, Heal +29, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (arcana) +37, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +37, Knowledge (geography) +37, Knowledge (history) +37, Knowledge (local) +37, Knowledge (planes) +37, Knowledge (religion) +42, Perception +45, Sense Motive +40, Spellcraft +43, Stealth +21 (+27 in undergrowth), Survival +19, Use Magic Device +30; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth (+14 in undergrowth)

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Common, Giant, Infernal, Necril, Thassilonian

SQ arcane bond (+3 *unholy scythe*), life sight (30 feet, 16 rounds/day), spirit summoning

Combat Gear scrolls of harm (CL 16th; 3), wand of dispel magic (32 charges), wand of stoneskin (CL 10th, 19 charges);

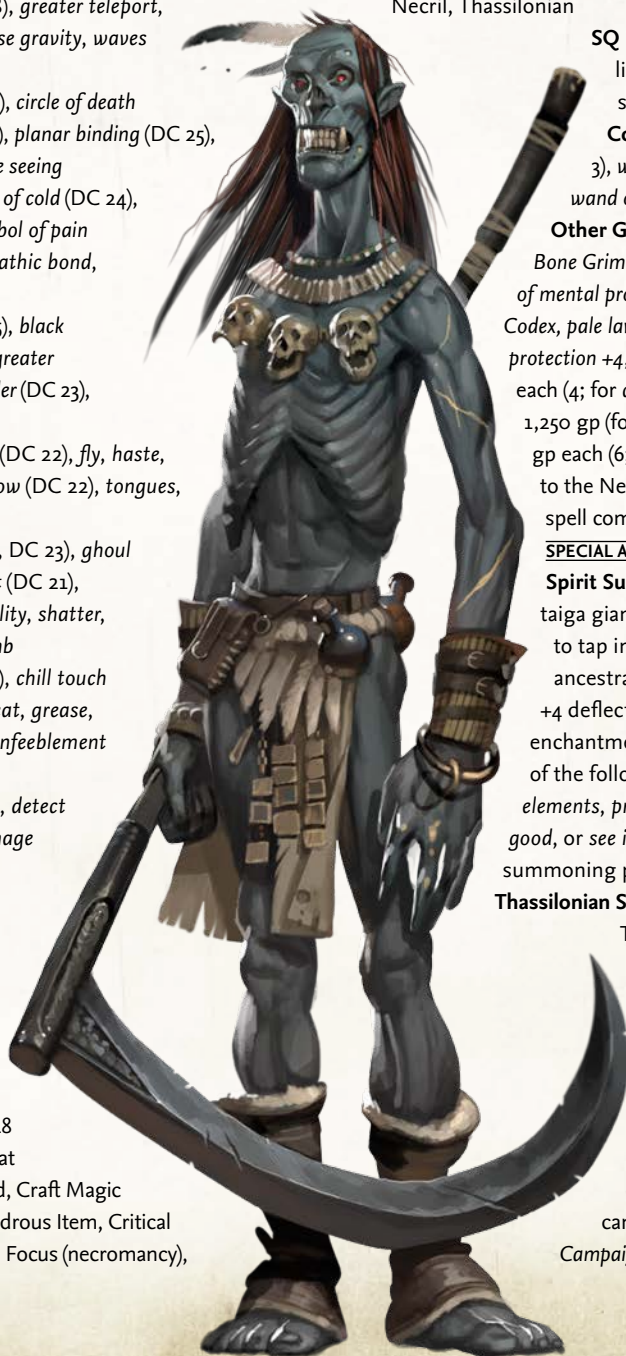
Other Gear +3 *unholy scythe*, *Black Book*, *Bone Grimoire*, *bracers of armor* +8, *headband of mental prowess* (+4 Int, Cha), *Kardosian Codex*, *pale lavender ellipsoid ioun stone*, *ring of protection* +4, crushed black pearls worth 500 gp each (4; for *circle of death*), eye ointment worth 1,250 gp (for *true seeing*), sapphires worth 100 gp each (6; for *magic jar*), forked rod attuned to the Negative Energy Plane (for *plane shift*), spell component pouch

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Spirit Summoning (Su) Once per day, a taiga giant may perform a 10-minute ritual to tap into the power and insight of his ancestral spirits. These spirits provide a +4 deflection bonus to AC, immunity to enchantment and illusion spells, and one of the following spell effects: *bless*, *endure elements*, *protection from evil*, *protection from good*, or *see invisibility*. The effects of a spirit summoning persist for 24 hours.

Thassilonian Specialization Thulos is a

Thassilonian specialist, which allows him to prepare the bonus transmutation spell granted by his school specialization twice rather than once. He treats abjuration and enchantment spells as if they were not on the wizard spell list. Further details on this form of school specialization can be found on page 17 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*.





RUNELORDS OF THASSILON

ALTHOUGH FIRST KING XIN FOUNDED IT, THE EMPIRE OF THASSILON IS BETTER KNOWN FOR ITS SEVEN RUNELORDS, POWERFUL WIZARDS FIRST APPOINTED BY XIN TO GOVERN THE EMPIRE, BUT WHO LATER CAME TO RULE THASSILON. THE RUNELORDS TOOK XIN'S SEVEN VIRTUES OF RULE—CHARITY, GENEROSITY, HUMILITY, KINDNESS, LOVE, TEMPERANCE, AND ZEAL—AND CORRUPTED THEM INTO THE REWARDS OF RULE, NOW KNOWN AS THE SEVEN GREAT SINS OF THE SOUL—ENVY, GREED, PRIDE, WRATH, LUST, GLUTTONY, AND SLOTH. ALTHOUGH THASSILON AND ITS SEVEN DOMAINS (BAKRAKHAN, CYRUSIAN, EDASSERIL, EURYTHNIA, GASTASH, HARUKA, AND SHALAST) WERE DESTROYED BY EARTHFALL, THE SEVEN RUNELORDS FORESAW THE CATAclysm AND RETREATED INTO HIDDEN REFUGES TO ESCAPE THE DEVASTATION. THERE THEY WAIT IN STASIS UNTIL THEY ARE REAWAKENED, WHEN THEY WILL UNLEASH THEIR ARCANES MIGHT ON AN UNSUSPECTING AGE.

RUNELORDS OF THASSILON

ALAZNIST

Runelord of Wrath

Domain: Bakrakhan

Weapon of Rule: Charred adamantine ranseur impaled with the skull of the very first Runelord of Wrath

Thassilon's final Runelord of Wrath was Alaznist, Queen of Bakrakhan, a specialist in wrath magic—now called evocation—and a powerful arcane knight.

Alaznist was of noble birth, born to wealth amid the aristocracy of the city of Xin-Bakrakhan. Apprenticed first to her father, himself a powerful wizard of wrath, Alaznist soon surpassed even his mastery of magic and turned to otherworldly mentors to increase her power, most notably the nascent demon lord Yamasoth. When her father tried to warn her against the dangers of such pacts, Alaznist sacrificed him and her entire family to the qliphoth lord in exchange for even greater arcane knowledge. Alaznist challenged and killed the reigning Runelord of Wrath, Thybidos, soon after and claimed the mantle of rulership for herself. This method of succession was a time-honored tradition for the previous Runelords of Wrath, but unlike her predecessors, Alaznist was able to defend her title against all future challengers with Yamasoth's backing, reigning over Bakrakhan until its fall.

Alaznist was a gothic beauty with wild, flaming red hair, often depicted with a furious or scornful—some even say insane—look on her face. She was known for both her charisma and her mercurial temper, as befits the Runelord of Wrath. Alaznist was a skilled practitioner of alchemy, fleshwarping, and demonology, and encouraged the worship of demons and their destructive power among her followers. She cared little for spell research and item creation, instead focusing her efforts on the corruption, mutation, and empowerment of her vast legions, which clashed regularly with those of Karzoug, the Runelord of Greed and ruler of Shalast. Just prior to the destruction of Thassilon, Alaznist seemed close to triumph over her rival, and would have imposed a humiliating peace treaty on the Runelord of Greed had not her entire kingdom sunk beneath the waves during the cataclysm of Earthfall. Alaznist herself is believed to have escaped the devastation by retreating to an otherworldly refuge accessed through her demesne at the top of Hollow Mountain.



Bakrakhan was the westernmost of Thassilon's seven kingdoms, sharing its eastern border with the domain of greed, Shalast. Its capital, Xin-Bakrakhan, was Thassilon's very first city, founded by Xin himself when he landed on the shores of Avistan. Bakrakhan was a land of thick forests and craggy mountains, home to hundreds of tribes of bugbears, gnolls, goblins, enslaved forest giants, and twisted sinspawn. These tribes warred constantly against one another, but were all united under Alaznist's thunderbolt-lance blazon.

Alaznist's Legacies: Alaznist left behind numerous monuments and legacies of her rule, the most notable of which are Hollow Mountain and the Irespan. Towering over the ruins of Xin-Bakrakhan, Hollow Mountain bears the sneering visage of Alaznist herself, a colossal portrait carved into the slopes of the mountain. Behind the face lies a vast series of subterranean chambers that descend all the way into the Darklands realm of Gongorina, once home to the nascent demon lord Yamasoth. The Irespan, also known as the Giant's Bridge, was a gigantic basalt bridge that stretched across the mountainous realm of Bakrakhan from Xin-Bakrakhan to the Shalast border.

The Irespan was almost entirely destroyed during Earthfall, but ruins of the mighty span still stand in the city of Magnimar, and remnants of its huge pilings jut above the waters of the Varisian Gulf. Alaznist also created the Hellstorm Flumes, destructive watchtowers built along Bakrakhan's border with Shalast that could incinerate armies with arcane fire from miles away. In addition to these structures and monuments, Alaznist was responsible for the creation of the sinspawn, mutant soldiers infused with wrath who made up the bulk of Bakrakhan's armies, as well as reefclaws, who served as guardians in her moats and Bakrakhan's rivers.

Relics of Wrath: Among the many artifacts created by Alaznist and the other Runelords of Wrath are *Garvok*, the *Sword of Wrath* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends*); the *minor runewell of wrath* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *rift siphon* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #61*); the *rod of Malrion* (*More Magic of Thassilon*; see Foreword); the *rune of razing* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #5*); the *sacrificial spear* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *scepter of Alaznist* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms*); and the *sign of wrath* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*).

SHATTERED STAR

BELIMARIUS

Runelord of Envy

Domain: Edasseril

Weapon of Rule: Ornate memory-stealing halberd of gold and mithral

Belimarius was the final Runelord of Envy and Queen of Edasseril. An unsurpassed practitioner of the magic of envy—now called abjuration—Belimarius began her career in the convoluted and contentious bureaucracy of Edasseril. Through a combination of skill, slander, assassination, blackmail, and outright theft, Belimarius rose quickly through the ranks, soon attracting the notice of Runelord Phirandi, who accepted her as an apprentice. Belimarius poisoned Phirandi's other apprentices until only she remained, finally confronting the Runelord of Envy himself. After stripping Phirandi of his various magical defenses, Belimarius imprisoned him, alive and powerless, in a transparent coffin of force. For the duration of her reign, Belimarius kept Phirandi as a trophy in the throne room of her Palace Miasmoria in Xin-Edasseril, where he could forever see and covet her power and glory.

Belimarius appeared to be the oldest of all seven runelords. Heavyset and homely, she was frequently depicted in imperious poses with a sneer on her face. She always carried an especially powerful ebony *rod of cancellation* and an antique speaking mirror that she consulted regularly. Belimarius was obsessed with defending her realm, her magic, and her wealth from those who would try to take them from her—in Belimarius's paranoid eyes, this meant the other six runelords. A consummate politician, Belimarius constantly schemed against her peers with intrigues, poisons, and assassins, yet the other runelords seem to have never retaliated against her, and avoided even the barest mention of her in most of the records they left behind. Like the other runelords, Belimarius made provisions to survive the death of Thassilon, though her final resting place remains a mystery. Some believe she lies in suspended animation far beneath the earth, while others postulate that she dwells within the crystalline sphere of Crystilan. Even more intriguing are the hints of an otherworldly, prismatic sanctum that the runelord created to hold her greatest treasures, and if necessary, herself.

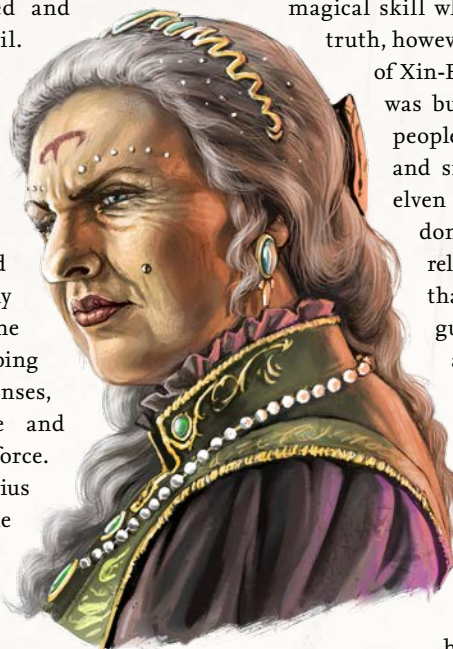
The domain of Edasseril was a wealthy one, but it was a realm of bitter jealousy and hollow vanity. The very first

Runelord of Envy, obsessed with the beauty of the elves of the nearby kingdom of Celwynvian, stole the name of the elven princess, Edasseril, for her domain, hoping her glory would outlast that of the elves. Edasseril was rich in iron, timber, and precious gems, and possessed a large population of enslaved giants, as well as great herds of aurochs, horses, and sheep. The vast majority of written records from Edasseril's heyday describe a paradise of perfect harmony, wise rulership, and unsurpassed magical skill where nothing ever went wrong. The truth, however, was far different. The capital city of Xin-Edasseril, though a wonder to behold, was built atop a pestilent marsh, and its people frequently suffered from plagues and sickness. Ettercaps, ettins, and wild elven raiders were a constant threat to the domain, and those in power schemed relentlessly against one another. No fewer than a dozen poisoners' and assassins' guilds flourished in Xin-Edasseril, and the domain's bureaucracy was full of backstabbing officials more concerned with the advancement of their own careers than with efficient management of affairs of state.

Belimarius's Legacies: Few of Belimarius's monuments survive to the present day. The ruins of her capital, Xin-Edasseril, still lie on

Chakikoth Isle in the Ironbound Archipelago in the Steaming Sea, overrun with envyspawn, ettercaps, and ettins. Yet one of Xin-Edasseril's most famous attractions, the wondrous Temple of Desna's First Dream, seems to have disappeared entirely from the ruins—though it is believed that the temple might still exist, or at least be accessible from the Dimension of Dreams itself. A shining edifice of glass, diamond, and magical force, the Temple of Desna's First Dream was said to contain Belimarius's vast collection of precious gemstones, as well as a "dreaming chamber" that could bring dreams to life. Outside of ruined Xin-Edasseril, the translucent crystal dome called Crystilan still stands on Peridot Isle in northern Varisia. Believed to be a perfect impenetrable sphere, Crystilan contains an ancient city trapped inside it like a fly in amber.

Relics of Envy: Among the spells and magic created by Belimarius and her predecessors are the *covetous aura* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); *dust of envy* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *Invidian Eye* (*Artifacts & Legends*); the *rune of resistance* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #5*); *Tannaris*, the *Sword of Envy* (*Artifacts & Legends*); and the linked mirrors called *vanity's eye* (*More Magic of Thassilon*).



RUNELORDS OF THASSILON

KARZOUNG

Runelord of Greed

Domain: Shalast

Weapon of Rule: Burning glaive studded with meteoric gemstones

The wizard Karzoug was Thassilon's eighth and last Runelord of Greed and ruler of the domain of Shalast. Although rumored to either be half-vampire or have the blood of dragons in his veins, Karzoug was in fact a normal human, born a slave in the city of Malistoke during the reign of Runelord Haphrama. After an apprenticeship with an itinerant demon binder, a period in which Karzoug died and was raised several times over, he was accepted as an apprentice of the runelord himself. Utterly merciless and calculating, Karzoug made secret alliances with creatures from the dimension of Leng that allowed him to overthrow Haphrama and claim the title of Runelord of Greed. A tall, arrogant man with several *ioun stones* embedded in his forehead, Karzoug was a specialist in the magic of greed—now called transmutation—as well as in demon binding, and he made many pacts with denizens of other worlds and planes. Corrupt, amoral, and manipulative, Karzoug was defined by his greed, and came to be known as Karzoug the Claimer. The runelord drove his apprentices and slave-wizards to create ever more and greater magic items, while he became obsessed with the transmutation of flesh into gold.

Shalast was the wealthiest of Thassilon's seven domains, and second in size only to Cyrusian, but Karzoug's avarice knew no bounds. Even the vast riches produced by Shalast's numerous gold, copper, mithral, and gemstone mines, transported on the backs of powerful mammoths, were never enough for the greedy runelord. One famous story tells of Karzoug immolating an entire city because its tax collectors were short by just a few silvers. Karzoug's capital, Xin-Shalast, built at the foot of the great mountain Mhar Massif, was arguably the greatest of Thassilon's seven rune-cities. Its streets were said to be paved with gold, though most of Shalast's wealth actually went instead to the covetous runelord's personal treasure vaults and alchemical furnaces.

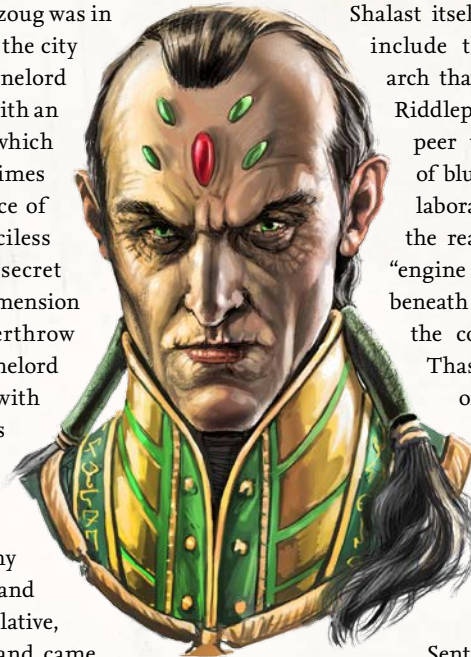
Karzoug ruled Shalast for 466 years, until Earthfall brought his kingdom low. Although Karzoug was one of the most powerful runelords, and certainly the mightiest of the eight Runelords of Greed, his rule was characterized by near-constant warfare with his greatest rival, Alaznist,

Runelord of Wrath and Queen of Bakrakhan. Karzoug avoided the devastation of Earthfall and the destruction of Thassilon by retreating into a demiplane called the Eye of Avarice, which floated between the Material Plane and Leng. Karzoug awoke from his *temporal stasis* within the Eye of Avarice in 4708 AR, but was defeated by a band of adventurers before he could fully return and reclaim his long-lost power and kingdom.

Karzoug's Legacies: Besides the city of Xin-Shalast itself, Karzoug's most enduring legacies include the Cyphergate, the colossal stone arch that towers over the modern-day city of Riddleport's harbor, created by Karzoug to peer through time; the strange complex of blue-green spires called Guiltspur, part laboratory, part portal, part embassy to the realm of Leng; the God Pool, a living "engine of prophecy" deep in the warrens beneath the city of Kaer Maga, composed of the conjoined bodies of priests of every Thassilonian god; the gigantic carving of Karzoug's countenance carved into the south face of Mhar Massif, one of the highest mountains on Golarion; the Obelisk Forest of Mundatei, a valley of thousands of 10-foot-high menhirs, each hollow and containing a twisted human corpse sealed inside; the giant Sentinel Statues that Karzoug created in his own image to watch over Shalast's border

with Bakrakhan; the huge dam called Skull's Crossing, which holds back the waters of the Storval Deep, a lake filling a vast quarry that once provided stone for many of Thassilon's great monuments; Spindlehorn, a slate spire thousands of feet high on the shores of the Storval Deep from which the mighty Oliphaunt of Jandelay might be summoned; and the cyclopean Storval Stairs that climb the Storval Rise, still flanked by twin statues of the runelord.

Relics of Greed: Karzoug and the other Runelords of Greed and their servants created many spells, magic items, and artifacts during their reigns, such as the *anima focus* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *blood money* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); *Chellan*, the *Sword of Greed* (*Artifacts & Legends*); the *glove of strength-stealing* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *golden helm of Xin-Shalast* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); Karzoug's *burning glaive* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *Leng Device* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *robes of Xin-Shalast* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *rune of contingency* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #5); the *runewell of greed* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); and the *soul lens* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*).



SHATTERED STAR

KRUNE

Runelord of Sloth

Domain: Haruka

Weapon of Rule: Dragon-tooth longspear that can move and attack of its own volition

Thassilon's last Runelord of Sloth was Krune, Lord of Haruka and High Priest of Lissala, the Thassilonian goddess of runes, fate, and the rewards of service. Krune began his studies of sloth magic—now known as conjuration—in the Great Temple of Lissala in Bakrakhan. As his mastery of magic and runes increased, he was awarded the position of high priest of Lissala's Temple of Sloth in the city of Xin-Haruka. Unlike most of his peers, Krune did not seize his title from his predecessor. A favored counselor of Runelord Ivarinna, Krune was the runelord's chosen successor, peacefully inheriting the mantle of Runelord of Sloth when Ivarinna relinquished her throne and title and succumbed to the indolence and lassitude that were her rewards of rule.

Krune was a short, bald man with beady eyes, and his flesh was tattooed with the runes of a hundred secret spells, reportedly taught to him by Lissala herself. He carried a rod inscribed with the secret symbols of his faith. A contingent of clerics, summoned servants, and wizards of various schools of magic always accompanied the runelord, and Krune relied upon them to cast magic for him and oversee the daily management of his realm. Primarily concerned with shiftless pleasures and the scholarly study of runes and magic, Krune is remembered chiefly for the apathy and inactivity of his reign. Although said to be the weakest of the seven runelords, Krune was respected and feared by both his people and his peers, who worried his mastery of runes would allow him to turn their own magic against them, and he was more than capable of defending his realm when attacked. Krune avoided war for the most part, taking great pleasure in displaying the strange and unique powers supposedly granted him by his goddess to forestall any outside aggression.

It is currently unknown whether Krune survived the fall of Thassilon or perished during the destruction and chaos following Earthfall. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the runelord's fate, recent rumors that active cults of Lissala survived Earthfall, operated in secret for 10 millennia, and now work to bring about their last high priest's return have caused consternation throughout Varisia. Where or how the cultists believe Krune survived Earthfall remains a mystery.

The domain of Haruka was widely seen as languorous and lazy, but also as cruel and cunning as the runelords who ruled it. Many Harukans worked as slavers, buying and selling their wares throughout Thassilon, then returning to their homes in Haruka to enjoy and abuse their living possessions. Haruka had the highest slave population of all of Thassilon's domains, and its flesh markets sold a range of wares, from simple menial slaves to exotic concubines from other worlds and planes. Conjured outsiders and summoned creatures from all over the Great

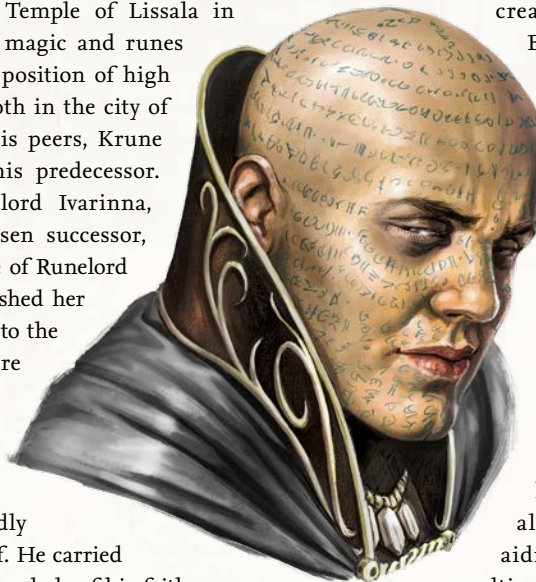
Beyond were a common sight on the streets of the capital city,

Xin-Haruka, which boasted a magical transportation network of linked teleporters and an army of *unseen servants* to keep the streets clean. The faith of the Peacock Spirit was well established in Haruka, but after Krune's accession to the throne, the church of Lissala gained ascendance, and the two priesthoods often violently clashed over dogma and heresy. Boggards, hill giants, and gnoll tribes were all active in Haruka, sometimes aiding escaped slaves in the hills in ultimately futile rebellions. Thousands

of gnolls served as scouts and forward observers in Haruka's armies, though their natural laziness made them inferior soldiers at best.

Krune's Legacies: Few remnants of Krune's rule survive to the present day. His capital of Xin-Haruka and its great Lissalan Temple of Sloth are lost to time, said to have been razed by an assembly of metallic dragons for unknown reasons, but the mysterious Thassilonian ruins known as Desgard's Thousand Columns remain. Each of the towerlike pillars was believed to house a garrison of extraplanar soldiers, summoned to Golarion by Krune using secret runes imparted to him by Lissala. Krune is also credited with creating the first gelatinous cubes in the slime pits of Haruka, though the location of these legendary ooze vats remains a mystery.

Relics of Sloth: Krune (and his slothful predecessors) claimed that Lissala herself had granted them the knowledge of unique spells and magic items. Among these supposed gifts of the goddess of runes are the *effigy of the favored servant* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *ring of the clean hands* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *runes of the lord's palanquin* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #5); *Shin-Tari*, the *Sword of Sloth* (*Artifacts & Legends*); and the *swipe spell* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*).



RUNELORDS OF THASSILON

SORSHEN

Runelord of Lust

Domain: Eurythnia

Weapon of Rule: Double-headed guisarme

For all of its history, Thassilon had but one Runelord of Lust—Sorshen, Lady of Eurythnia. One of only two runelords whose reign lasted from the founding of Thassilon to its fall (the other being Xanderghul, the Runelord of Pride), Sorshen accompanied First King Xin in his exile from Azlant and was rewarded for her service with the domain of Eurythnia and her original title of Runelord of Love. Sorshen was a beautiful woman with long, flowing hair and large eyes. Representations of Sorshen depict her either nude or clad in alluring attire of red and purple, but always with a seductive look on her face. She was known to carry a lewdly shaped mithral staff, but in battle, she wielded her weapon of rule, a double-headed guisarme with both masculine and feminine motifs that could summon two lascivious bodyguards.

Sorshen mastered the magic of lust—now known as enchantment—and her skill at magic, second only to that of Xanderghul, was matched by her beguiling voice and her eagerness for all manner of debauched perversions. An unabashed libertine, Sorshen's carnal appetites were legendary. Over the course of her reign, Sorshen seduced and ultimately betrayed every one of the runelords, and some say even Xin himself. Subtle, treacherous, and controlling, Sorshen excelled at identifying and exploiting the lusts of her rivals, and what she couldn't attain through seduction or skillful politicking, she used her magic to take. Despite her betrayals, the other runelords found themselves trusting her time and time again, even as her honeyed words and adroit caresses coaxed ever more from them.

Eurythnia was Thassilon's southernmost domain, a land of fertile farms and sensual passions. Much of Eurythnia's wealth came from seagoing trade with distant lands, and enslaved marsh giants were employed to guard the realm's shipping from sahuagin and pirates. Imported spices made Eurythnia's cuisine second to none, and exotic slaves from distant lands, especially elves, brought lustful customers from all over Thassilon to experience the domain's elegant and extravagant brothels.

Like most of her peers, Sorshen was prepared for the disastrous fall of Thassilon that followed Earthfall.

Guarded by clans of loyal, deathless vampires, Sorshen went into hibernation, interring herself in secret vaults deep beneath her palace in her capital city of Xin-Eurythnia. These vaults were actually an elaborate puzzle designed to siphon blood from a menagerie of exotic creatures that would be used to slowly reawaken the slumbering runelord once the danger had passed. It is believed that something went wrong with Sorshen's plans, however, and that she still remains in her tomb.

Sorshen's Legacies: The Varisian city of Korvosa is built atop the ruins of Xin-Eurythnia, and several of Korvosa's landmarks date from Sorshen's reign, including Gatefoot, an immense foot which is all that remains of a statue of Sorshen that once towered over the city, and the Pillar Wall, a line of 100-foot-tall pillars that once supported a grand processional. Castle Korvosa itself sits atop the Grand Mastaba—this cyclopean, flat-topped sandstone pyramid was Sorshen's palace and fortress, and the vaults deep beneath the pyramid were her arcane laboratories and crypt. Sorshen also commissioned numerous monumental statues in her image throughout Eurythnia, though only one of these, the Lady's Light, now survives. In

Sorshen's day, this was a palace, treasure vault, and symbol of the power and beauty of the Runelord of Lust, but today, it stands above the swamps of the Mushfens, little more than a beacon for shipping. The Mushfens are also home to the Sunken Queen, a stone pyramid carved with a giant bas-relief image of the nude runelord, which holds one of Sorshen's greatest accomplishments—the *Everdawn Pool*, an artifact capable of manipulating the energies of life and death. Sorshen also hid numerous clones in her likeness throughout Thassilon—while most of these have long since been lost, some (such as the one below the Lady's Light) exist to this day, waiting for the right combination of events to live again. Given the correct conditions, an awakened Sorshen could well be able to commandeer one of these clones for her own use.

Relics of Lust: Sorshen created many spells and magic items that still exist, including *Asheia*, the *Sword of Lust* (*Artifacts & Legends*); the *Everdawn Pool* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #12); the *mirror of Sorshen* (*Lost Kingdoms*); the *rune of the mistress* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #5); the *sadist's lash* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *scintillating garment* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); and the *unconscious agenda* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*).



SHATTERED STAR

XANDERGHUL

Runelord of Pride

Domain: Cyrusian

Weapon of Rule: Lucerne hammer made of an unknown type of skymetal

The Runelord of Pride was Xanderghul, Satrap of Cyrusian and holder of the Peacock Throne. The strongest of the seven runelords, Xanderghul was one of only two runelords to rule his domain for the entirety of Thassilon's history (the other being Sorshen, the Runelord of Lust). Xanderghul was a high-ranking member of Azlant's aristocracy who saw the ancient empire as moribund and weak, and left with Xin to found a new kingdom in exile where he could rule in splendor and honest pride. Although he was one of seven runelords, Xanderghul believed his status as one of Xin's original confidantes made him first among equals. He was known by many titles, including Lord of Illusion and Master of the Unblinking Eye, and after Xin's death, Xanderghul proclaimed himself the Heir of First King Xin and Rightful Emperor of Thassilon. Later, he even put himself forward as a claimant to the throne of Azlant just before Earthfall laid low the first human empire.

A strikingly handsome man with a neatly trimmed beard, Xanderghul's severe and imperious features marked him as true descendant of ancient kings. He carried a feathered staff of *lignum vitae*, and his weapon of rule, a skymetal lucerne hammer, was said to have been forged by Xin himself. Arrogant and supremely confident, Xanderghul was a master of mind, body, spirit, and the magic of pride—now called illusion. He was an expert diplomat who prided himself on being above the squabbling wars and political schemes of the other runelords. The great linnorm Fafnheir, the Father of All Linnorms, who even today claims the Grungir Forest as his own, was an adviser to Xanderghul, and the runelord used dragons—allied, tamed, or enslaved—as a symbol of his power and might. Xanderghul was a devotee of the mysterious Peacock Spirit, the only runelord to publicly acknowledge such a faith, and under his patronage, groups such as the Therassic Order and the Order of the Green Feather flourished.

Cyrusian was the largest of Thassilon's domains, as well as the most powerful, and after the abandonment

of the great city of Xin after First King Xin's death, Cyrusian served as Thassilon's de facto capital until the empire's fall. Created as a paradise for Thassilon's best, brightest, and wealthiest citizens, Cyrusian also boasted greater monuments—all to the glory of Xanderghul—than any other domain. Cyrusian's central location gave Xanderghul immense influence over trade and communication throughout the empire, and its cities were by far the largest and most numerous of all of Thassilon's urban centers. Xanderghul cloaked his entire realm in illusions both for the enjoyment of its citizens and to protect it from invaders. Through all of its history, no other runelord dared invade Cyrusian, for none knew the true strength of Xanderghul's armies and defenses. Xanderghul's capital, Xin-Cyrusian, was Thassilon's largest city, guarded by legions of bound angels, enslaved dragons, and giant slaves. Xanderghul ruled his domain from Citadel Arete, though accounts differ whether this palace was an impossibly high tower or a wondrous floating castle.



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Xanderghul's Legacies: The city of Xin-Cyrusian and Xanderghul's Citadel Arete are lost somewhere in the Kodar Mountains, but another of Cyrusian's great cities, Torandey, existed long after the fall of Thassilon, and today its ruins serve as the foundation for the Linnorm Kingdoms city of Jol. The ruins of another of Cyrusian's cities, Justnoque, still jut from the icy waters of the Steaming Sea, as do the remains of a northern Cyrusian outpost in the Howling Straits of Broken Bay called Udeomel, better known as simply the Sunken City. Elsewhere in the lands once claimed by Xanderghul are the Emerald Chambers, built in mocking homage to Xin—a shrine with a thousand doors, one of which reportedly serves as a portal to the First King's legendary treasure—and the Castle of the Green Feather, a floating fortress of the knights of the Order of the Green Feather, now crashed high in the Kodar Mountains but still home to cruel undead graveknights who eternally serve the enigmatic Peacock Spirit.

Relics of Pride: Among the many spells and magic items credited to Xanderghul are *Baraket*, the *Sword of Pride* (*Artifacts & Legends*); *empty hands* gloves (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *mantle of lordly command* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *raiment of command* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); and the *rune of the inscrutable one* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #5).

RUNELORDS OF THASSILON

ZUTHA

Runelord of Gluttony

Domain: Gastash

Weapon of Rule: Life-draining scythe of bone

The final Runelord of Gluttony was Zutha, the Lord of Gastash, an undead creature not unlike a lich, but even more powerful, horrible, and unique. His predecessor, Runelord Goparlis, became obsessed with the theft of a masterpiece magical sword created by the necromancers of Runeforge. One of Goparlis's apprentices, Zutha took advantage of his master's distraction and betrayed the runelord, taking the mantle of Runelord of Gluttony for himself. Soon after his accession, Zutha exchanged the corpse of Goparlis for the service of the graveknight Ungarato and the sword Ungarato had stolen, which later came to bear the graveknight's name.

Zutha was a master of necromancy, which in those days was known as gluttony magic. He was morbidly obese, his flesh rotting in places, revealing the bones beneath. Nevertheless, Zutha's body was still capable of experiencing all the sensations of life, though the unliving flesh required constant renewal from stolen life energy. Unsurprisingly, Zutha was a gourmand of debauched vices and jaded tastes, importing exotic foods and meal-slaves from across the world, and it is said he never ate the same meal twice. For all his power and prestige, Zutha disdained most of the trappings of rule, dressing in little beyond ragged robes, though he favored a set of showy magic rings and *ioun stones*, linked in some way to create a powerful weapon that none have mastered since. The clever and canny Zutha used trade to play his peers against one another, leaving himself and his domain untouched. He avoided war by selling supplies to both sides, and any who turned against him soon found themselves running short on precious commodities.

Obsessed with immortality and afflicted with unnatural hungers, Zutha carried out many unspeakable experiments in the Flesh Pits beneath his capital of Xin-Gastash. Like his fellow runelords, Zutha realized the fate that would befall Thassilon and took steps to avoid sharing in it. Unlike his peers, however, Zutha's undead form required a phylactery called the *Gluttonous Tome*—a blasphemous codex crafted of leathery flesh, bound in bone, and inked in the blood of a thousand slaves. To prevent the destruction of the phylactery and

his soul inside, Zutha arranged for the *Gluttonous Tome* to be divided into three different volumes, each a powerful artifact in its own right, which would be safely stored in three different locations in his domain. His servants did not prove so loyal after the disasters of Earthfall, however, and the three parts of the *Gluttonous Tome* were scattered across Avistan, where one or another of them has reappeared over time, only to vanish again.

The domain of Gastash was an abundant and fertile land, rich in copper and tin and blessed with plentiful harvests of wheat, rye, and wool, which the merchants of Gastash then sold on at considerable profit to less productive domains. The people of Gastash followed their runelord's lead and led lives of gluttony, but their safety was ever threatened by ankheg infestations, marauding bulettes, and bandits from other lands who envied Gastash's plenty. Zutha's capital, Xin-Gastash, offered myriad gluttonous pleasures for visitors and citizens alike to indulge in. The wealthy of Xin-Gastash arranged for the interment of their dead bodies in extravagant mausoleums or ossuaries, or paid exorbitant fees to continue living as intelligent undead such as liches or vampires. The dead of the lower classes,

on the other hand, became fodder for experiments in Gastash's necromantic academies or were animated as mindless undead. Many of these formed the backbone of the sleepless undead army that manned the walls of Xin-Gastash.

Zutha's Legacies: Little remains today of Gastash under Zutha's rule, though the enormous marble staircase called Seraph's Ladder in the orc-hold of Belkzen is believed to date from his reign. Likewise, the Thassilonian ruins known as the Black Squares of Ungevick are thought to be the remnant of a vast necromantic engine built by Zutha for some unknown purpose, and the many incorporeal undead that haunt the site lend credence to this claim.

Relics of Gluttony: Zutha and his predecessors are known to have created numerous necromantic spells and magic items, many of which survive today, including the *deathwine* spell (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *famine rod* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *Gluttonous Tome* (*More Magic of Thassilon*); the *rune of obedience* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #5*); the *runeslave cauldron* (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*); the *spherical boat of Zutha* (*Lost Kingdoms*); and *Ungarato, the Sword of Gluttony* (*Artifacts & Legends*).



SHATTERED STAR



CHILD OF A DISTANT STAR

PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: LIGHT OF A DISTANT STAR 6 OF 6

The sounds of rioting outside had grown louder. The crowd—a collection of wastrels, afternoon drunks, pirates, and the unemployable—was growing larger. I had thrown another bolt on one of Gundsric's windows, this time at the front of his house, and by opening it just a crack I could see the tumult outside slipping further into pandemonium.

"I have to wonder if Kostin knows what he's doing," I said.

"Well, it did get us inside," Shess said, stuffing a platinum-inlaid Ustalavic icon into her already bulging pouches. The room was rich with neglected treasures, like the ten or so others we had made cursory inspection of since clambering through the window I had left unlocked yesterday—a yesterday that seemed a thousand years ago.

"But will we ever get out again?" I asked, just as I caught sight of Kostin again in the crowd, this time with Gyrd next to him—the warrior must have somehow gotten word that Shess was here. Kostin had been alone when he responded to Shess's whistle, a code the two of them had used in the past, after our arrival at Gundsric's house an hour ago. Slipping away from the combined guard forces of the half-orc drug dealer Boss Croat and the official police force of the corrupt but unassailable Overlord Cromarcky, Kostin greeted us with a warm smile and a quip about my appearance.

To be sure, my filthy clothing, rent and bloody shirt, and bruised face certainly hinted at a story, but Kostin was not going to get it from me. Not yet. Irritated by the joke—a jape incongruous with the look of concern in his eyes,

CHILD OF A DISTANT STAR

which only irritated me all the more—I clamped a hand over Shess's mouth as she started to excitedly relate our adventures. "What the hell are you doing here, Kostin?"

He laughed. "Isn't that what I'm supposed to ask you? Well, I've been enjoying the fruits of our labors, putting the scepter to good use." He patted the bundle at his side, the lines of the artifact visible in the old cloak that wrapped it. He had tied a rope to the ends of the bundle, and wore it over one shoulder. "Once I was done bilking dicers, securing loans, selling bargain ships and titles of nobility, and... well, after all that I remembered what you said about the alchemist."

"What did I say about the alchemist?"

He recounted my conversation with Shess the night before—he had been paying more attention to it that she had, it seemed. Gundsric was a drug manufacturer, the man behind gleam, and I was going to have nothing more to do with him—all of which sounded emphatic and certain with Kostin relating it back to me. When I had first said it, though, a little drunk and completely exhausted, scared for my health and confused about what I had learned, it had all seemed more like thinking aloud and not some recitation of cold, hard truth.

Well, Kostin had gone ahead and acted on my cold, hard truth, selling the information to both Croat and Cromarcky in less time than it took for Shess to finish a plate of pickled herring.

He could see the annoyance in my eyes. "Look, the money is *ours*. I looked for you this morning, and you weren't at the Shark. I couldn't ask you anything and... and I was worried. A bit. You said you were done with the bastard, and these guys all want his head. After what he did to you, I'd happily sell his head at a discount."

"Kostin, I need to get in that house." I told him about the unlocked window around the back, and about my real purpose in Gundsric's employ.

His smile vanished. "Ah. I see. In that case... we could always use the scepter to make them let us in, but then we'd have to hold them with it for as long as we were inside." He paced the alley, tapping the scepter in its cloth wrapping. Behind him I could see Gundsric's house looming up like a great slab of weathered stone. "Alright, I think I could distract them, pull them away from the back long enough for you and Green to get inside. She climbs faster than anyone I've seen, and that looks like enough rope to do the trick."

It had been enough rope, but barely. Kostin hadn't been wrong about Shess's skill at climbing, and once the guards had been lured away by Kostin's disturbance—"just a little tussle" he had said—we quickly made our way up the wall and to the third-floor window that had, luckily, remained unlocked.

But with me and Shess no closer to finding the journal of Jan Lortis, Kostin's "tussle" in the street outside was teetering on the edge of a full-scale riot. I could see him now edging

along the margins of the crowd, a worried look on his face that would have been comical if I could laugh at the situation.

He had had the same look when we agreed on the plan and parted ways, Mordimor reluctantly going with him, Kostin trying to mumble out some apology for his stupid comments the night before. He stood there, sheepishly fumbling for words.

"Don't," I said, wanting him to stop talking, wanting him to understand that if he owed me an apology, then I owed him one in return for shutting him out these last few weeks. He met my eyes, and suddenly it was that night on the ship all over again, with the others still asleep belowdecks. Kostin and I had shared a bottle of Chelish red he had rescued from Gyrd's drunken predation. Riddleport was in our future, as was all of Golarion to hear Kostin speak of it. The moon had turned the sea to silver, and we talked of our childhood together, almost as two strangers comparing parallel lives. Then we had spoken a different language, one that needed no words.

"Kalashar the Unvanquishable, Deadliest Blade in All Casmaron, apologizes to no one," I said, placing a hand on his chest and pushing him gently away. "Go on already before I lose my nerve."

Kostin grinned, nodding his head. "Kalashar does, however, make the occasional exception for Great Tazza of Arcadia, explorer of sea and land." Mordimor padded over to him, his face a mirror of Kostin's own concern. "Be safe," Kostin said before trotting off, the scepter already in his hand.

"Tal, you know you have a lot of room in that pouch still."

Shess's voice brought me back to the present, and I turned to see Shess, her every purse and pocket already bulging with stolen objects, trying to squeeze a disk-shaped Mwangi sky calendar down the front of her tight leather armor. "Maybe we could come back later?"

The banging on the door downstairs was all the answer we needed to that question, and together Shess and I hurried through more rooms, racing past yet more forgotten glories. How many years and how much coin had the dwarf spent on this collection, only to let it fall into ruin? We came back to the room on the second floor that contained Gundsric's library, a room full of books and scrolls tossed negligently into shelves and boxes.

There was so much more of the house to inspect, but here was a room too ripe with promise to ignore a second time. I began to scan the volumes, ignoring bound ones as best I could. The journals would be a loose collection, the pages tied or pinned together, the cover more a waterproof purse than proper boards. This much at least I knew from the Heidmarchs' description. I told Shess what to look for and we searched the shelves.

There was so much to go through, so much that had value. I could only hope that whoever ended up with this collection treated it with more respect than the mad dwarf.

Many times I came upon volumes I myself had worked on, and they felt like old friends in my hand. The many hours I had spent in the room just across the secret hall from here had been rewarding, stimulating. For once I had felt like the scholar I had set out to be, someone making a real contribution. Someone privy to secret knowledge.

"Um, Tal, you should see this," Shess said.

I glanced at what she held and knew it instantly, a folio edition of an old Taldan prayer book I had myself translated and annotated just a few days ago. "Keep looking, Shess," I said, turning back to a jumble of scrolls in an urn at the foot of one of the shelves. "That was one of mine."

"In that case, Tal, you *really* need to see this."

Something in the tone of her voice chilled my blood. I walked over to her and took the volume in my hands. But when I saw what was written there, not only seeing it but *remembering* it, the book slipped through my fingers and smacked facedown onto the dusty floorboards.

The leaves scattered. A few were pentameter verse in Taldane. The rest, done in a hand I recognized as my own, was the scribbled madness of a gleam addict. Whirls and lines like a Minkai sand garden ran alongside cryptic runes in no language I knew, as incomprehensible as those on the Cyphergate. And through it all, repeated again and again, was the asymmetric ten-pointed star that was the symbol of gleam.

"We must try to be innocent of the future when telling our tales. By shaping our story according to the dictates of the moment, we make writing into a second act of discovery." Master Shaine had said that, always maintaining that storytelling was an art as difficult and as powerful as magic, something with which it had much in common. He warned of the dangers of confusing life with art, and art with truth, and truth with power. So many subtleties lost on us initiates, and probably outside the consideration of many confirmed Pathfinders as well.

But how can we retell a moment when it is lost to us as soon as it happens? How can we truly make it a second act of discovery, when so much of our past is colored by all of the layers of time, all of the subsequent moments, that have come since? I have written almost the entirety of this account in an effort to discover what it was I felt, saw, knew, feared, and loved in the exact moment that I looked down upon that jumble of parchment. Looked down on it while removing Gundsric's potion from my pouch, uncorking it with a faint pop, and downing the luminous substance in one quick swallow.

"Taldara!" Shess said, concerned and puzzled.

I smiled at her, trying to convey a confidence that I was uncertain I felt. "We need to follow this through, Shess. Finish it. I had thought you were the one who set this stone rolling downhill," I touched a strand of her emerald hair—impossibly bright, impossibly green when seen through

gleaming eyes—as she looked at me in confusion. I held up the empty vial, faintly glowing from the residue of the potion. "But it was this. The moment I first had gleam, the whole story was set in motion. Time to end it."

I bade her follow me, and we moved through the house, going downward. I led the way as if it were my own home, for I knew it intimately now. It was as if every room, corridor, door, and secret were outline in glowing bands of fire. I had a map of the place in my mind, and I had to fight to keep it in focus—for I knew my map was much larger than Gundsric's home. If I gave in to the temptation to explore, to fly along the fiery pathways the map laid out for me, I might have seen all of Riddleport, from the creaking tenements and crowded harbor bristling with a hundred masts, to the great buildings at its heart—the octagonal pyramid of Calistria's brothel-temple; the drowning bowl of Besmara teeming with ever-hungry life; the arena, throbbing with the pulse of death; Cromarcky's fortress isle warded and guarded; and the dingy Gas Forges crouching over the secrets of the earth, converting poison into power. Everything was there, all of the city, all of Varisia, and all of Golarion too—so much that I feared that to relax my concentration for even a moment would send my mind skittering out into the world, never to return.

The sounds of the rioting grew louder as we reached the first floor, then vanished completely once we entered the alchemist's basement laboratory. The door was triple-locked, and Shess snapped a pair of picks as she worked the tumblers. She remarked that she wished Aeventius was there with one of his lock-opening spells, and Gyrd and Kostin, too. I agreed, though my apprehension was of a different source than hers. For I was hearing voices—voices of light.

They began as a whisper, seemingly the hint of a stray thought or half-remembered phrase. As we moved downstairs, they grew louder. When Shess finally clicked the last of the locks on Gundsric's laboratory open, the chatter of voices rose in a tumult, a cacophony of pleas, shouts, prayers, and confessions. A thousand lost voices calling out in the dark, unable even to hear one another, alone and anonymous in the midst of their own multitude.

"What is it?" Shess asked when I almost staggered from the weight of voices.

I didn't answer; what could I say? I merely collected myself and led the way down. It was bright now, painfully so, the carbauxine torches on the stairwell blazing at full strength, their radiance increased by back-reflecting mirrors. A dozen smells assaulted us, sour and sweet, chemical and earthy, fertile and rotten, and Shess pinched her nose at the unpleasant commingling of odors. At the landing we turned and entered the lab proper, its interior as bright as a star and hotter than the summer air outside.

The place was large enough and well equipped enough for a dozen alchemists. Stone slabs spanned the hexagonal

CHILD OF A DISTANT STAR

outer walls of dressed limestone, and heaped upon them was a dizzying array of equipment, the purpose of which I could only guess at. Everywhere was glass—spun glass tubes through which dark fluids dripped, specialized glass containers with scorched bottoms, heavy glass jars stoppered tight, containing solutions ranging over all the colors of the rainbow. As arresting as the sight of Gundsric's alchemical array was, however, it was the horror at the center of the laboratory that drew our attention.

Tables had been pushed aside, fine glassware smashed in haste. On the floor was a kind of summoning circle, the familiar whirls and lines of the gleam vision, the ubiquitous asymmetric star rune at the center. At four points within the circle, enormous glass containers filled with a luminous solution stood bright as columns of sunlight. These lines on the floor were no mere charcoal scribbles, however. They glowed with an almost painful radiance, white as the hottest part of a fire. They pulled at me, and I could feel the pressure in my eyes building as I stared. It was gleam itself, but not the debased powder that had been in one of Shess's envelopes. Not even the potion-diluted substance I had just ingested. This was pure, and it was *alien*.

And then the pattern itself snapped into focus. These things were not random, at least not in their higher form. All the frenzied scratchings on the walls of Riddleport's gleam dens were but a pale reflection of this, like a misremembered face. This was a map. A map and a road, one leading through uncharted spaces, to the farthest reaches of the universe. I knew because I was seeing through gleaming eyes. I knew because the pattern on the floor was one that I had discovered and recorded as I worked diligently in Gundsric's upstairs room, lost in the fog of a trance.

"What does it mean?" Shess asked, her voice low and reverent.

"It means he's coming," I said, without thought.

It was then that I noticed that the point of light at each intersection of the gleam lines was a brightly glowing eyeball. The large glass containers themselves contained hundreds of such orbs, suspended in a glowing solution.

At the center of the circle was a beaker of fine green glass. I stepped into the circle to better see it.

"I'm not sure I like this," Shess said. "Who did you say was coming, again?"

"The Bright One," a ghostly voice answered. I turned toward it and saw a thick vapor coalescing just inside the doorway. At first it seemed a mere parody of humanoid form, but then the gray mist solidified into the form of Gundsric, bloody and scorched from head to foot from his recent fight.

"The Child of Light comes this day," he coughed through bloody lips. On his shoulder, Carchima chirped agreement and flexed his tattered wings. "You thought you could shut me out with guards and that riotous crowd? No." He pulled the sealskin bag from his hip and flung it

to the ground, where its grotesque contents spilled over the floor. "And we don't even need them, now. Not with you here. I thank you, elf. Your arrival was perfectly timed."

I knew instinctively it was true. Gundsric had needed a certain amount of saturation, a certain amount of reflected light from all of those who had seen with these gleaming eyes—seen things illuminated by the light of a distant star. It was all around me, now, the chorus loud enough to reach the far ends of space and time. The Shining Child was coming, and if I listened closely, I could almost hear my own voice crying out for his arrival.

Then I heard a different sound: that of the upstairs door crashing open in a splintering boom, followed by a tumult of angry shouts filling the hall.

Shess lunged at Gundsric, bright blade in her tiny fist, but the dwarf's misshapen familiar intercepted her, flapping into her face. Gundsric hesitated, torn between defending his home from the rioters and confronting



"Kostin's grown a bit too fond of that thing."

me in the center of the summoning circle. I locked eyes with him, eyes bright as his, and snatched the green glass potion from the center of the floor.

"Give that to me," he roared, bloody spittle exploding from his mouth. He lumbered forward into the circle, and the world grew brighter. In truth I was uncertain what to do with the potion—smash it or drink it? Either course could spell disaster.

He locked his hands around my wrist, his earlier, mutagen-infused strength gone but replaced by the power of desperation. We crashed to the ground, the gleam feeling like hot ash where it touched my skin. We rolled once and he drove his thick skull against my jaw, raving manically, bloody drool falling into my face and leaving a black splatter in the white lines on the floor.

And then a commanding, irresistible voice broke through the chaos.

"Step away from her, you beardless freak." Kostin's magic rod was brilliant in his hand. Gyrđ stood next to him, sword drawn, and I could see a grim Aeventius behind them both. Rioters flanked the trio like an honor guard. At Kostin's feet, Mordimor bounced eagerly, bristling for a fight.

Gundsric moved to obey, a hysterical keening somewhere in the back of his throat. I stood, inching away, green-glass potion still in my hand. A wounded Carchima had flapped away from Shess, to shelter behind a tangle of retorts and glassware at the far corner of the room.

"We'll have to figure out what to do with you, dwarf. Maybe an auction, with Croat and Cromarcky in attendance." Behind Kostin the rioters snickered. Then he turned to me, voice softening. "Are you hurt, Tal?"

Before I could answer, something changed. The scepter, one second a flawless length of gemstone-encrusted platinum and steel, turned dull, then black, then crumbled to dust in the hands of an astonished Kostin.

Gundsric was quick to react, snatching the potion from my grasp in the same instant he brought another to his lips. I lunged at him, and saw Shess doing the same from the other side of the circle. Gundsric finished the potion in one swift gulp, wiped his lips with the back of his hand, and smiled.

And then the dwarf vomited a gout of hornets in a black and angry swarm.

It was as if a sandstorm raged over us. I could see nothing through the horde of insects. They stung me again and again, a thousand hot pinpricks of pain, and flowed down my shirt, caught in my hair, clogged my nose and mouth. I flailed at them, smashing them by the hundreds as they lanced my hands with their envenomed stingers.

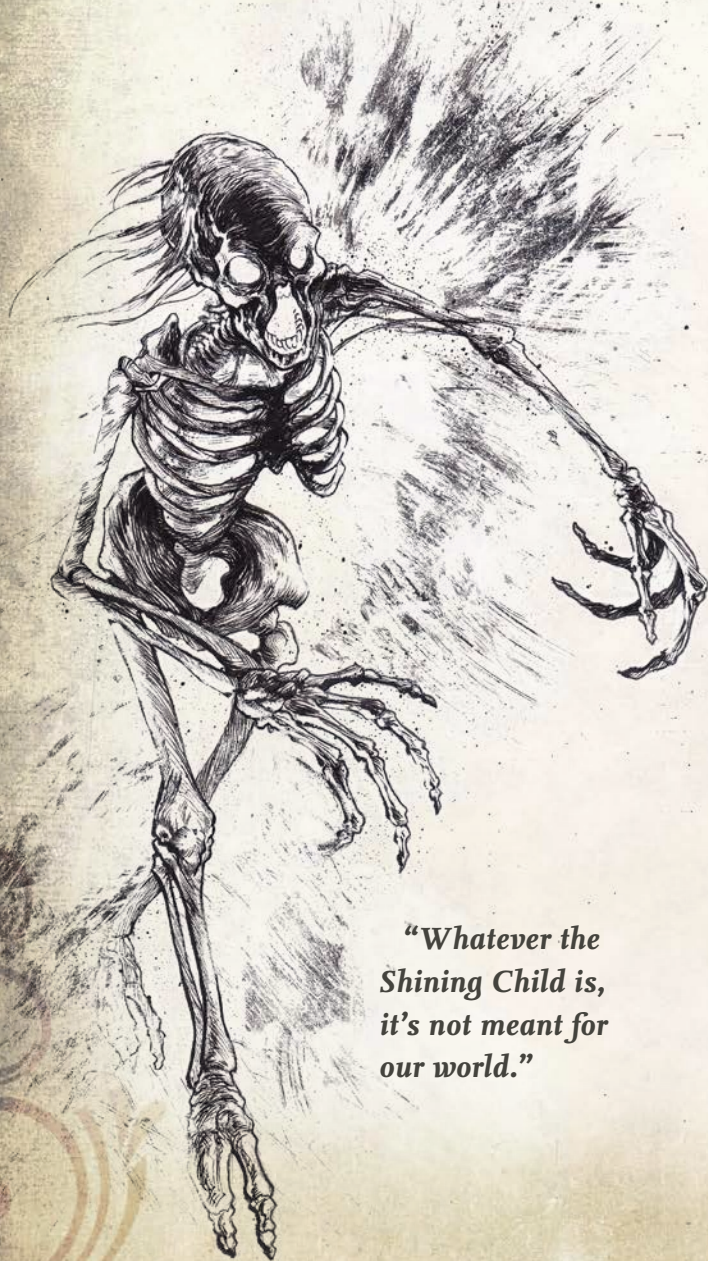
But even the droning of the swarm could not drown out the radiant choir screaming in my mind, and the sudden change in its chorus was proof enough that Gundsric had drunk the potion that had rested at the center of the circle. He had called the Burning One, the Shining Child, and it was coming.

Somewhere in the deep universe, a voice answered the call.

My body burned to a cinder and disintegrated, blown away on furnace-hot winds. The world was white, whiter than white, the white of the heart of a star. The Child was there, probing, playing with pieces of my memories.

Gundsric was with us, laughing in triumph. I saw him then, saw his past as vividly as if it were my own. The moment long ago when he had first found it, the fallen stone that contained within it a potent piece of star stuff. Gundsric, breathing laboriously through the bellows-mask he wore, deep in the poison dark of the tunnels beneath the Gas Forges. Gundsric making it his obsession, killing the fellow miner who learned of it, making the death look like an accident.

The alchemist had removed the stone under cover of night, taking it home, cracking open its secrets and growing



"Whatever the Shining Child is, it's not meant for our world."

CHILD OF A DISTANT STAR

strong on the knowledge. He searched for more, charting the hidden depths of the mines, but never finding another such bright and terrible stone. But the gleam had kept him alive despite the black lung, and it could do so much more. The star stuff itself was alive, part of a being that yearned to rejoin it, yearned to be whole again after a impossible gulf of time.

And Gundsric yearned for something too—yearned to destroy. To burn his enemies, burn the whole world to a dead ball of ash and spit his last bloody breath on its corpse.

The Child answered the call, and I could feel us moving back the way we had come. Somewhere I felt the painful throbbing of my body, heard the swarm, the chaos of fighting. We were drifting back to our world, and Gundsric sang with joy. I could see it through his eyes, his anticipation of Riddleport in flames, all of Varisia consumed in the blaze of a hundred raging fires. The Child would do it, without care or thought—it sought only to reunite with the star stuff, the gleam.

You don't have to do it, I thought, and the Child swept its pitiless gaze over me. *You can refuse.*

I offered my mind up to it, and it took it. All of it. The scholar who was a thief. The daughter who said no to the father, again and again, always doing the opposite of what he had planned for her. The disobedient initiate who won the respect of her Masters when she followed her own conscience. The little girl who snuck out of her mother's home to play at swords and spells with the willful Varisian boy, her bad influence and greatest friend.

But there were forces at work, rules that could not be broken. The Child rode a tide of fire, and it would come. I could see the planned arrival now from Gundsric's perspective, see one of the eyes in the glass containers exploding outward in a portal of light as the Shining Child stepped through. Once in our world it would be bound, stuck there under Gundsric's command for as long as the dwarf could hold it.

We were so close now. I could feel my body lying on the circle of gleam, my flesh hot from the star stuff, hot from the stings of the insects that wandered over me in a mass. I understood everything at that last moment, and through aching blaze of my mind showed the Child the choice it could make. Its first and last in my world.

Somewhere in the bright space our minds shared, the Child showed me it understood.

My eyes snapped open. Kostin was there, swatting the wasps off of me, saying something I couldn't hear. I looked across the circle at Gundsric, his glowing eyes darting from container to container, wondering which of the gleam-saturated orbs would suddenly blossom into a portal of fire and give birth to his revenge. Gundsric, smiling his bloody smile.

And then his head exploded.

It was over in a flash. A pinpoint of heat and light, the slightest hint of fear on the alchemist's face, and then an

expanding halo of white-hot flame that collapsed back in on itself. In that brief instant I could see the Child, see its sun-bright eyes peering into our world with curiosity and incomprehension. I wonder if the Child saw me, and what that meant to it; if the choice I had shone it—that of manifesting in the eye of Gundsric himself, and thus freeing the Child of any obligations to its summoner—was something it could feel any gratitude for. Or did it just assume that everything was a part of its own story?

The logic of my own tale demands that it end here, with the burning headless body of Gundsric on the center of the bare floor of his lab, the scorched wasps falling from the air like black snow all around us. The gleam had vanished, sucked back through space in an instant, and even the grotesque collection of eyes had lost the luster of their inner glow. The choir was silent, its conductor dead.

We pushed our way out of the place, Kostin trying to warn the looters of the danger they faced while Gyrð—Shess cradled in the crook of one thick arm—cleared a path for us with the flat of his blade. Without the rod, however, the mob cared nothing for Kostin's word, and so some two score or more of them were left in the house as we made our escape.

Left in the house when the raging fires in the lab finally touched the carbauxine stores and the air in the place detonated in a firestorm. The upper story of Gundsric's home blew up and out, throwing stone and wood and a king's fortune in valuables far into the sky. In my delirium I fancied it looked quiet a bit like Gundsric's head.

"Did you guys see that thing?!" a breathless Shess asked as Gyrð set her gently to her feet. "It sucked up all the gleam! Was that a star through the portal? I mean through the dwarf's, er, head? Maybe you didn't see that. Were you talking to it, Tal? What did it say? Can I maybe talk to it too sometime, or is it gone for good?" She started rummaging in her overstuffed pouches as an excited Mordimor bounced by her side, but every packet of gleam Shess found was empty.

Aeventius, a frown on his bruised face, toed a smoldering book across the cobbles. "Well, this is depressing. Please tell me you grabbed a few volumes before blowing that alchemist's house to pieces."

I felt sick, unsteady, the ordeal with the Shining Child having sapped my strength more thoroughly than even the hornet swarm. Hopeful looters still filled the streets, though they had moved well back of the burning house. I wobbled over to Kostin where he stood with his head down, gazing hopelessly at the lump of hard ash in his hand—all that was left of the scepter he had been sent to steal.

"Let's go," I said to him, slipping a hand into his. "Tomorrow is another story."

The street was littered with scorched treasures as we made our way out of Rot Gut, but not one of us bothered to pick them up.

SHATTERED STAR



BESTIARY

WHAT GREAT WONDERS EXISTED IN THE AGE OF LEGEND! IF ALL OF THE STORIES CAN BE BELIEVED, AMAZING CITIES OF GLEAMING SILVER AND RARE METALS FLEW EFFORTLESSLY THROUGH THE AIR, TOWERING METROPOLISES AND COLOSSAL MONUMENTS SPRANG UP SHAPED BY MAGIC AND BUILT BY THE HANDS OF GIANTS, AND NEARLY IMMORTAL WIZARDS HELD THE GREATEST POWER AT THEIR FINGERTIPS AND USED IT TO RULE PROSPEROUS NATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. HOWEVER, AS WITH ALL THINGS, THOSE TIMES WERE DESTINED TO PASS, AND PASS THEY DID INTO THE AGE OF DARKNESS.

—KURALI MESSONDIN, *THE TIMES OF THE INNER SEA*

This month's entry into the Pathfinder Bestiary reveals cunning creatures from ancient empires. Many of these creatures have been on Golarion for thousands of years, but they have lain low, and like the secrets of these fallen empires, have been lost on the fringes of memory.

CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTS, AND MONSTERS

As the PCs perform the ritual to combine the shards into the *Sihedron*, the former Thassilonian capital city of Xin rises from the ocean, bringing with it a massive tidal wave. When the PCs venture to this newly risen island, they do so with a solitary task in mind—stopping Xin's return to Golarion. To provide additional opportunities for adventure, three encounter hooks are listed below as well as a table of random encounters suitable for this volume of the Pathfinder Adventure Path.

Most of the encounters on the table fit among the crumbled ruins of Xin, and since most of the city is still flooded, the aquatic results on the table fit in the submerged portions of the ruined city. When consulting the table, if the resulting roll is not appropriate to the PCs' current location, roll again or simply choose a suitable encounter.

Exploring Opportunists (CR 14): While the Shackles is better known for piracy in the Inner Sea region, brigands and free captains ply the waters everywhere, and the Varisian Gulf is no different. While sailing the near Magnimar, this pirate crew nearly fell victim to the tsunami that resulted from Xin rising above the water, but the nautical skills of the captain and crew kept the ship afloat. Sure of his sailing and not afraid of adventure, Captain Dethros (use the stats for a pirate captain on page 281 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) changed his course and headed straight to the new island, eager to plunder its previously hidden wealth. He ordered his first mate Breyton Chayros (use the stats for a bandit lord on page 259 of the *GameMastery Guide*) and eight crew members (use the stats for a raider on page 280 of the *GameMastery Guide*) to assemble an away team to assist in looting the island and providing protection while doing so. The PCs can encounter this crew while exploring the island and potentially brawl over the possession of ancient relics and newly uncovered treasures.

Fear and Flame (CR 15): Roused by the sudden appearance of the lost city of Xin and the potent magic unleashed during this event, the adult red dragon Zastulax (*Bestiary* 98) gathered her cruel graveknight champion (*Bestiary* 3 138) and set off to investigate the newly risen palace. Arriving at the ruins of the ancient city, she sought to secure the magic-wrought place as her own and has been fighting its guardians and any newcomers

ISLE OF XIN ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–4	1 augnagar	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 219
5–9	1d6 carnivorous crystals	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 45
10–14	1 demilich	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 66
15–19	1d8 hezrous	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 62
20–24	1 nightwing	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 203
25–29	1d4 shining children	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245
30–34	1 dybbuk	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 108
35–39	1d4 glabrezus	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 61
40–44	1d4 iron golems	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 162
45–49	1 neothelid	15	<i>Bestiary</i> 214
50–54	1 bythos	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 10
55–59	1d6 ghorazaghs	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 124
60–64	1 mithral golem	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 139
65–69	1 plasma ooze	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 220
70–74	1d6 shipwrecker crabs	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 60
75–79	1 marilith	17	<i>Bestiary</i> 63
80–84	1 rune giant	17	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 130
85–89	1 kraken	18	<i>Bestiary</i> 184
90–94	1 clockwork goliath	19	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 54
95–100	1 shoggoth	19	<i>Bestiary</i> 249

ever since. In the air she serves as a mount for her undead companion, strafing enemies with fire from above. On the ground, the graveknight dismounts and wades into battle with its greatsword while also using its devastating blast ability. These two dangerous combatants fight in tandem, always adjusting to accommodate each other.

Sloth's Servant (CR 16): Thousands of years ago, Malkay Enrili was a visitor to the city of Xin, a skilled wizard seeking to learn more of Thassilon's particular style of magic, but he perished as the city was destroyed and sank below the waves. However, this adherent of Krune was a potent conjuror, and his violent passing in such a magic-rich place transformed him into a writhing abomination—a worm that walks (*Bestiary* 2 286). In his new form, he wanders the shattered halls and sunken streets of the once-great city, as he has for millennia. Loneliness never struck Malkay in the thousands of years since his transformation, as he could call companions and helpers from a countless array of worlds. From constantly summoning these allies, he learned more about the current state of Golarion and widened his knowledge of the planes, as well as increasing his skill at magic. His most recent assistants, a group of four piscodaemons (*Bestiary* 2 72), were promised mortals to torture and souls to savor, but have grown bored, hungry, and agitated. However, now it seems the risen city of Xin should bring many, many more opportunities for death and torture.

SHATTERED STAR

AZATA, Raelis

This lithe, bronze-skinned celestial wanders the worlds ceaselessly, seeking tales of wonder and heroism.

RAELIS

CR 10



XP 9,600

CG Large outsider (azata, chaotic, extraplanar, good)

Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 19 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 138 (12d10+60)

Fort +9, Ref +12, Will +10

DR 10/cold iron and evil; Immune electricity, petrification, rune mastery; Resist cold 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 120 ft. (good)

Melee 2 slams +19 (2d8+7 plus stun)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *nondetection*

At will—*alter self*

3/day—*dimension door*, *modify memory* (DC 17)

1/day—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *plane shift*

Sorcerer Spells Known (caster level 12th; concentration +16)

6th (3/day)—*greater glyph of warding* (DC 21), *shadow walk*, *symbol of fear* (DC 21), *symbol of persuasion* (DC 21)

5th (5/day)—*seeming*, *symbol of pain* (DC 20), *symbol of sleep* (DC 20)

4th (7/day)—*confusion* (DC 18), *greater invisibility*, *scrying* (DC 18)

3rd (7/day)—*beast shape I*, *explosive runes* (DC 18), *glyph of warding* (DC 18), *haste*, *illusory script* (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *sepia snake sigil* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd (7/day)—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*erase*, *feather fall*, *hypnotism*, *silent image* (DC 15), *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 24, Dex 19, Con 20, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 19

Base Atk +12; CMB +20 (+24 grapple); CMD 34 (36 vs. grapple)

Feats Greater Grapple, Improved Grapple, Improved

Unarmed Strike, Power Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +18 (+26 when jumping), Bluff +18, Fly +20,

Knowledge (geography) +15, Knowledge (history) +15,

Knowledge (planes) +18, Perception +16, Perform (oratory) +15,

Spellcraft +18, Stealth +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ mutable polymorph, word caller

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Elysium)

Organization solitary, pair, or band (3–6)

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Mutable Polymorph (Su) When using spells with the polymorph descriptor, raelises have an uncanny amount of control over their target shape. While they still cannot use the spells to transform into specific individuals, they can control the skin tone, the hair color, the general body shape, and even the gender of the creature they transform into, granting them a +20 bonus on Disguise checks instead of the usual +10. This is a free action made as part of the spellcasting.

Rune Mastery (Ex) Raelises are masters of all magic based on runes or symbols. They automatically add *explosive runes*, *glyph of warding*, *greater glyph of warding*, *sepia snake sigil*, and all symbol spells to their list of spells known and increase the DC for these spells by 1. Additionally, raelises are immune to magical traps and effects that utilize runes or symbols, such as *sepia snake sigil* and *explosive runes*.

Spells A raelis casts spells as a 12th-level sorcerer. It has no sorcerer bloodline and does not gain any other sorcerer class abilities.

Stun (Ex) A raelis's iron-hard fist delivers a powerful, stunning blow. A creature struck by this attack must succeed at a DC 23 Fortitude save or be dazed for 1 round. If the attack is a critical hit and the target fails its save, the creature is instead stunned for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Strength-based.

Word Caller (Su) Raelises automatically sense the presence and basic topic of any books, scrolls, or other writings within 50 feet. By spending a standard action, they gain a deeper understanding of the text, treating up to 100 pages of nonmagical writing as if they had read it, or treating one magical spell or scroll as if they had read it and successfully made a successful Spellcraft check to understand it.

Formed from the souls of authors, artists, and storytellers, raelises travel to the farthest corners of Golarion and beyond searching for epic stories, poems, and simple tall tales. As they travel and quest for ever more obscure tales, they strive to make the world a brighter place—setting wrongs right or acting as agents for divine beings.

Though raelises appear to be frail, they possess a wiry strength and long-fingered hands ideally suited for the brawling and wrestling they enjoy so much. Deep brown or gray eyes dominate their expressive faces, and smiles and laughter come easy to their lips. Newly formed raelises have fair skin, but it slowly darkens over the centuries as they spend long hours exposed to the sun and elements. A raelis stands 9 feet tall and weighs close to 1,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

The lust for new tales and stories drives raelises to the mortal planes more often than most of their azata brethren.

Unable to just stand idly by, raelises aid mortals more frequently than do other azatas, though they almost always do so disguised as humans or sometimes even common or familiar animals. Raelises prefer to avoid physical confrontation when dealing with mortals, but don't hesitate to influence events in other ways. A raelis might travel from town to town spreading tales and news to encourage rebellion in a poorly run kingdom, or insinuate itself into an invader's army to sow dissension. Often a raelis's influence isn't felt until it is long gone, as raelises use their powers to bend minds in subtle ways to plant the seeds of change.

Essentially gender neuter in their natural form, raelises have an androgynous beauty to their lean, sculpted bodies. When altering their physical form via *alter self* or other magical abilities, they can choose to take on male or female forms. Younger raelises often have a preferred gender, but as they get older, raelises choose their gender based on mood or as the task in front of them demands. They occasionally tryst with mortals, though their lack of stable gender identity sometimes leads to confusion.

Ironically, bards and storytellers are the mortals least likely to receive the aid of a raelis azata. Raelises almost universally believe the best mortal works are born of strife and crisis. Shielding a known storyteller from the trials of life could very well prevent the greatest epics from being written. Exactly how far they are willing to let things go is a matter of preference and a frequent topic of debate among their kind. Raelises like to compare the trials and suffering of storytellers to the fire and anvil that forges a great sword. Raelises do not enjoy this suffering, however, and those who deliberately abuse or murder a storyteller while a raelis is near discover swift justice after the fact.

Traveling is raelises' second love; they pride themselves on their knowledge of obscure back roads and trails. While they all have favored trails, raelises consider it a bad omen to make the exact same journey twice and they go long distances out of their way to avoid doing so. After eons exploring in this manner, the average raelis becomes a living atlas.

Though competent flyers, raelises prefer to walk or even run when they travel. Even on the coldest and hottest of days they travel with their feet bare. They love the feel of grass or even mud between their long toes, and pass time reciting stories they have collected, getting a feel for the flow of the verse and the rhythm of the words. Raelises can run for days at a time without stopping to rest or even sleep, crossing great distances or just scouting all available roads and trails in an area.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Their ability to travel discretely and their familiarity with the cities and geography of Golarion make raelises excellent spies and agents for deities with similar interests. While they avoid long-lasting alliances, raelises have much in common with the Empyrean Lord Sinashakti and often find themselves exchanging favors with him. Less frequently, they strike bargains with Cayden Cailean or even Desna in exchange for small favors or information.

Though many raelises are poets and storytellers, they value the stories mortals create. Few raelises worry overmuch about the accuracy of any given story—they are more interested in the art of the telling rather than the veracity of the tale. Some raelises even prefer the most outlandish tall tales and outright fabrications, as long as the exaggeration furthers the story.



CLOCKWORK DRAGON

Made from gleaming metal and countless complex cogs and gears, this draconic creature has the presence of a dangerous killing machine.

CLOCKWORK DRAGON

CR 16



XP 76,800

N Huge construct (clockwork)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +2 dodge, +20 natural, -2 size)

hp 177 (25d10+40)

Fort +8, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities noqual scales; **DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** electricity 20, fire 20; **SR** 27

Weaknesses vulnerable to electricity

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., fly 100 ft. (average), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +35 (4d6+12), 2 claws +35 (2d8+12), tail slap +30 (2d8+6), 2 wings +30 (2d6+6)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (100-ft. line, 14d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 22 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), powered by abysium, self-destruction

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +39; **CMD** 55 (59 vs. trip)

Feats Improved Initiative^B, Lightning Reflexes^B

Skills Fly +8, Perception +8, Swim +20; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Fly, +8 Perception

SQ adamantine weapons, efficient winding, exceptional perception, swift reactions

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adamantine Weapons (Ex) The teeth and claws of a clockwork dragon are made of adamantine, and have the qualities of a weapon made from that material.

Efficient Winding (Ex) Built for deployment on long and dangerous missions, a clockwork dragon can function for 3 days per Hit Die every time it is wound.

Exceptional Perception (Ex) A clockwork dragon construction includes magical enhancements that grant the creature particularly keen senses. In addition to its +8 racial bonus on Perception checks, a clockwork dragon can detect invisible creatures as if it were under the effect of a permanent *see invisibility* spell.

Noqual Scales (Ex) The noqual alloy from which a clockwork dragon's scales are crafted grants the creature spell resistance. In addition, a clockwork dragon gains a +4

resistance bonus on any saving throw made against a magical source.

Powered by Abysium (Ex) A clockwork dragon's bite carries with it a dangerous poison rendered from the skymetal abysium. The clockwork dragon need not deal damage to affect its target with this affliction. If the clockwork dragon's bite attack is sufficient to hit the creature's touch AC or if the dragon's bite hits but damage reduction negates any damage dealt, the target is affected with abysium exposure.

Abysium Exposure: Poison—contact; *save* Fortitude DC 18; *onset* 1 minute; *frequency* 1/minute for 6 minutes; *effect* 1d4 Con plus nauseated; *cure* 2 saves.

Self-Destruction (Ex) When reduced to below half of its hit points, a clockwork dragon can trigger a reaction that causes its body to self-destruct in a fiery explosion that deals 20d8 points of fire damage in a 20-foot radius. This violent explosion superheats the various volatile materials that make up the clockwork creation and spreads the risk of abysium exposure to all creatures that are within a 300-foot radius.

The magic-wielding engineers of ancient Azlant created marvelous clockwork creations, but few equaled the formidable power of the clockwork dragon. The construction of clockwork dragons was based on a similar design, that of the clockwork leviathan. The Azlanti engineers used the leviathan as a basic chassis, borrowing the same technology to fully waterproof the creature, then further modified the clockwork monstrosity to specialize it for defense and fast, brutal attacks. The Azlanti focused on clockworks because they knew that the aboleths' illusions and magic meant to trick the mind would be useless against their mechanical creations, and began amassing clockwork armies of various shapes and uses to fight against their sinister rivals. In addition to being sent to war against aboleths, clockwork dragons were also used by the Azlanti against other threats, such as the serpentfolk, and later the Ghol-Gani cyclopes.

Most of the time, clockwork dragons are built to represent metallic dragons, though some creators designed their mechanical beasts to resemble dragons of the chromatic grouping. Preserved illustrations unearthed from Thassilonian archaeological sites show even primal and imperial dragons influenced some designs.

It is rumored that an improved version of the clockwork dragon's design possessed a semblance of sentience, having the ability to alter their programming mid-mission. Other variants of clockwork dragons wield breath weapons that deal alternate forms of energy damage. The greatest example of these variants is said to be capable of blasting a line of force from its fanged mouth. Some even claim to have spotted a similar creature in Numeria (likely a product of parallel design): a robotic creation outfitted

with enhanced flight, keen senses, lasers, and self-propelled explosive devices.

The Azlanti engineers who first crafted these creations made use of some of the rarest elements available. This included the various skymetals, and in the creation of the clockwork dragons, the engineers discovered many new uses for those metals. Through their research, they found a more efficient way to work noqual and discovered the safest methods of working with abysium. According to some reports, though the material was never used for clockwork dragons as far as anyone knows for sure, the engineers even discovered a way to alloy djezet.

The inclusion of abysium shows that the clockwork dragons were not necessarily designed to win their particular battles, and some claim the elaborate devices were never intended to return once successful. The Azlanti could send these skymetal-infused creatures at their enemies as a first strike, sickening whole groups from exposure to abysium and thus weakening the targets for the Azlanti soldiers who followed.

ECOLOGY

Clockwork dragons must be wound up to perform, and though a full winding lasts much longer for these creations than other clockwork creatures, they eventually use up their power and go dormant. Most clockwork

dragons in Golarion remain in this dormant state, awaiting a fresh winding.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Clockwork dragons were most plentiful in Azlant, though in Avistan, Thassilonian builders were also known to create the elaborate creatures for use in war. As constructs, the creatures have no true society, but many clockwork dragons were deployed with a contingent of clockwork servants to attend to their winding and repairs. Some clockwork dragons were also built with tiny compartments in their bodies that housed a dozen clockwork spies they could deploy during their missions so they could provide their creators with a full report of the particular action in which they were involved. Most of the time, these tiny clockwork spies cling to the dragon while it is in action, scurrying over its metallic scales as the beast pursues its quarry.

CONSTRUCTION

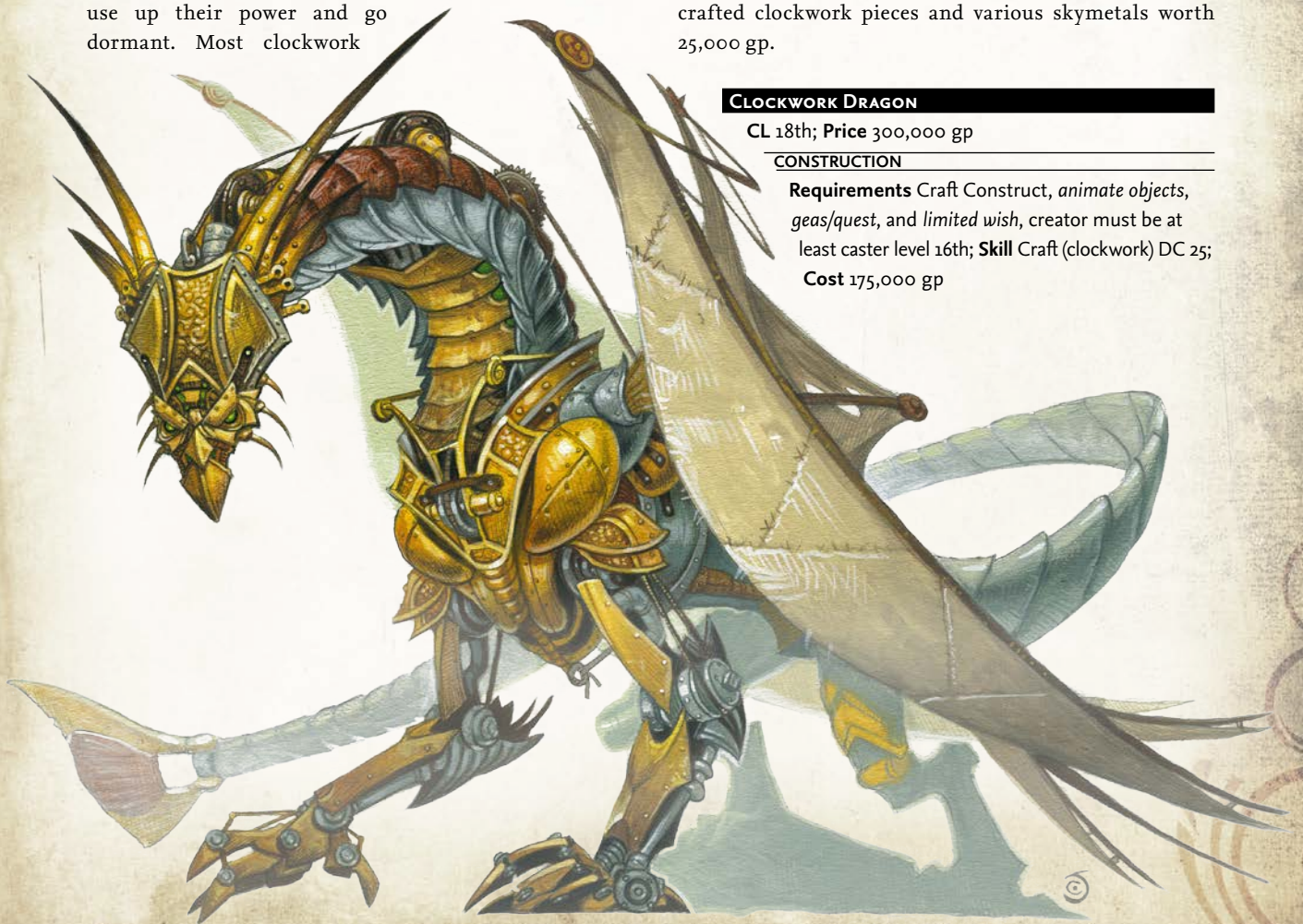
The clockwork dragon is a masterpiece of Azlanti technology and is exceptionally difficult to create. In addition, the inclusion of skymetals makes clockwork dragons much more expensive than normal clockwork creations of the same size. The creator must begin with crafted clockwork pieces and various skymetals worth 25,000 gp.

CLOCKWORK DRAGON

CL 18th; Price 300,000 gp

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Construct, *animate objects*, *geas/quest*, and *limited wish*, creator must be at least caster level 16th; **Skill** Craft (clockwork) DC 25; **Cost** 175,000 gp



LIVING RUNE

A pulsating glyph animates into a quickly flowing script that changes form as it rewrites itself, before finally assembling into an arcane symbol that flares with untold magical power.

LIVING RUNE

CR 13



XP 25,600

NE Medium aberration

Init +15; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 28, flat-footed 16 (+6 deflection, +11 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 153 (18d8+72)

Fort +10, **Ref** +17, **Will** +15

Defensive Abilities amorphous; **Immune** bleed, disease, magic, paralysis, poison, stunning

Weaknesses vulnerable to sonic

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.

Melee glyph touch +24 touch (3d8 electricity)

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

Special Attacks symbols of power

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)

At will—*arcane mark*, *illusory script* (DC 18), *telekinesis* (sustained force only, DC 20)

3/day—*explosive runes* (DC 18), *greater glyph of warding* (DC 21), *sepia snake sigil* (DC 18)

STATISTICS

Str —, **Dex** 32, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 41 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +15, Climb +12, Disguise +7,

Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +15,

Knowledge (planes) +15, Knowledge (religion) +15,

Perception +27, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +35

Languages truescript

SQ camouflage, compression, two-dimensional

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or string (3–4)

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Camouflage (Ex) A living rune is able to shift its coloration and form to blend into its surroundings. The creature automatically hits with its touch attack against any creature that fails to notice it and enters its square.

Glyph Touch (Su) A living rune deals 3d8 points of electricity damage with a successful touch attack, and it uses its Dexterity modifier (instead of its Strength modifier) to resolve all touch attacks.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A living rune is immune to spells and spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. In addition,

certain other spells and effects function differently against the creature as noted below.

- An *erase* spell deals 6d6 points of damage to a living rune.
- A living rune caught in the radius of any symbol spell is immune to its effects and heals 1d8 points of damage per spell level. Hit points beyond its total maximum are gained as temporary hit points that fade in 1 hour.
- A living rune is affected normally by *magic missile*, *maze*, and spells that deal sonic damage.

Symbols of Power (Su) As a standard action, a living rune can shift its form into a number of powerful symbols whose effects can damage or incapacitate opponents. Each round the living rune can choose a new effect, but a particular symbol form can only be used once every 4 rounds. This attack is resolved with a touch attack and the save DC is Charisma-based.

Fear: The target becomes panicked for 2d6 rounds (Will DC 24).

Pain: The target suffers wracking pains that impose a –4 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and ability checks for 1 hour (Fort DC 24).

Persuasion: The target is charmed by the living rune (as *charm monster*) for 2d6 hours (Will DC 24).

Slow: The target is slowed (as the *slow* spell) for 12 rounds (Will DC 24).

Stunning: The target is stunned for 1d6 rounds (Fort DC 24).

Weakness: The target suffers crippling weakness that deals 2d6 points of Strength damage (Fort DC 24).

Truescript (Su) A living rune can sculpt its form into complicated scripts and pictographs that can be understood by any creature with the ability to read written language. A living rune can also understand any written or spoken language.

Two-Dimensional (Ex) A living rune only exists in two dimensions, and has some qualities in common with incorporeal creatures. A living rune has no Strength score. It cannot move in three dimensions (such as jumping or flying), and can only navigate along solid surfaces such as floors, ceilings, and walls. It can only attack creatures by entering their squares and touching them directly. A living rune can crawl onto solid surfaces that can then themselves be moved (such as onto a tome via its *telekinesis* spell-like ability). It cannot fall or take falling damage, cannot make trip or grapple attacks, and cannot be tripped or grappled. It cannot take any physical action that would move or manipulate an opponent or the opponent's equipment, has no weight, and does not set off traps that are triggered by weight. A living rune takes no damage from nonmagical attacks and only takes half damage from magical weapons.

Whether first scribed by some forgotten deity or birthed by magic glyphs long soured, living runes are among the most stubborn and arrogant of dungeon denizens.

Though two-dimensional and lacking any sort of real body, the creatures are sentient, but with a venomous hostility toward the so-called “lesser races” they feel are corrupted forms of the universe’s first words of creation. Appearing as magical glyphs, animated pulsating runes, etched hieroglyphics, or even ancient cave art, these creatures live to prey on lesser beings for no other reason than to prove their superiority over flesh-and-blood creatures.

ECOLOGY

Living runes are ambush hunters, lying in wait amid ancient graffiti and faded pictographs, or even on the pages of ancient texts and tomes. They use their mutable forms to camouflage themselves—often changing texts with *illusory script* to lead adventurers into nearby traps or hazards, or lacing important sources of information with *explosive runes* and then striking at trespassers when they have triggered the dangerous glyphs. Immortal unless destroyed, the creatures do not need sustenance in a traditional sense, though, like their will-o’-wisp cousins, they seem to feed on the terror and pain they induce in their victims. In addition to fear and pain, living runes feed on the written word (which they can erase through this consumption or leave unharmed). Living runes reproduce by a strange sort of mitosis, where two creatures merge to create complex sentence structures and concepts before splitting a portion off each of their malleable bodies to create a new unique rune that contains the knowledge of both parent runes.

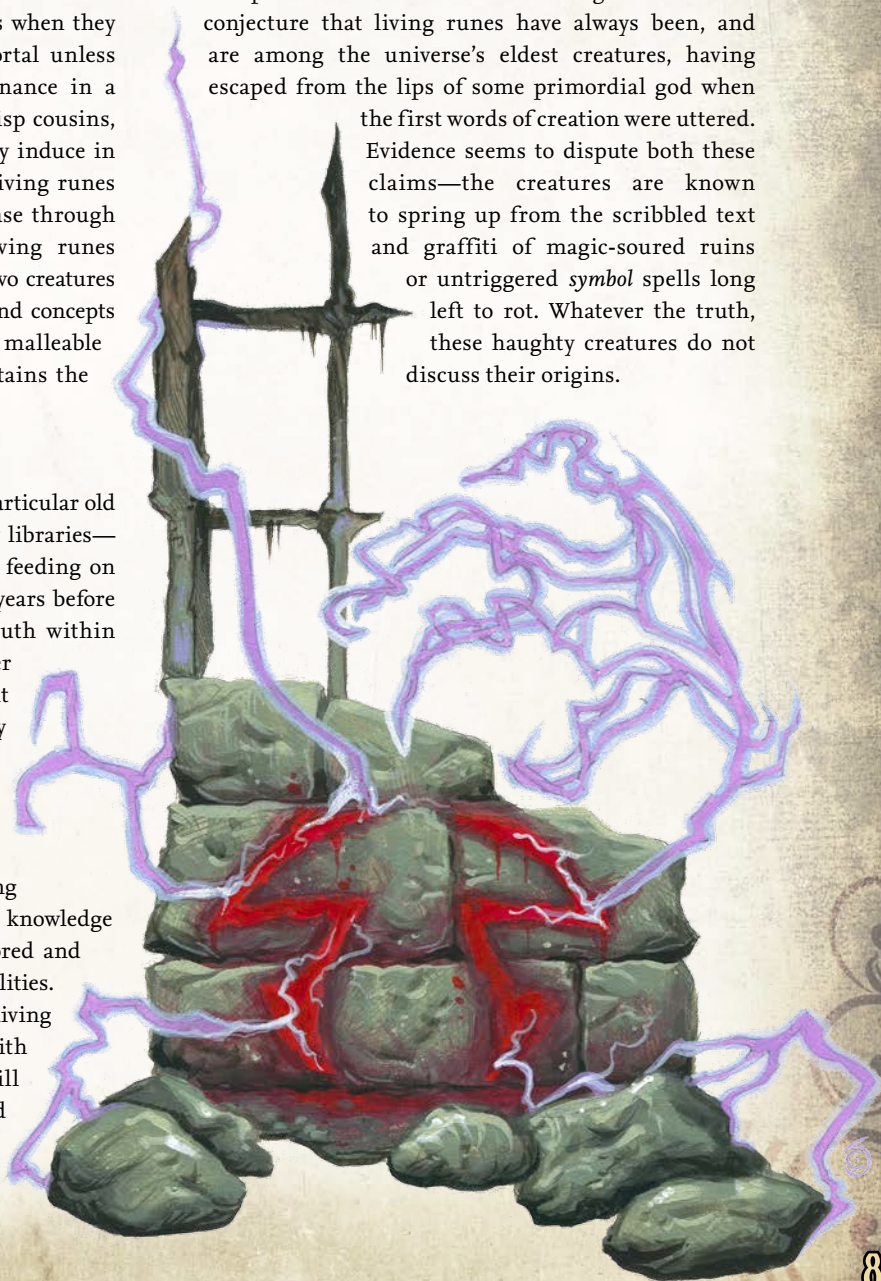
HABITAT & SOCIETY

Most commonly found in deserted ruins—in particular old alchemical labs, forgotten temples, and musty libraries—living runes prefer to live isolated existences, feeding on lost knowledge, consuming it slowly over the years before erasing or altering it, then hoarding the truth within themselves to tease races seeking to recover it. For this reason, they prefer to haunt the fringes of civilization, where they may terrorize lesser creatures in this manner—particularly arcane spellcasters. They derive a sick pleasure from the mental and physical torture of humanoids; in particular, they enjoy cornering humanoids in debates and wrapping them in riddles with the promise of shared knowledge or information, before ultimately growing bored and attacking the intruders with their myriad abilities. Such communications always begin—in the living rune’s unique form of communication—with scribbled inquiries trespassing creatures will understand, and this somewhat playful and innocuous introduction often draws explorers to their deaths when they assume they are

conversing with some benign artificial intelligence. In instances becoming horrifically frequent, archivists have discovered previously unheard of colonies of living runes deep in the bowels of urban libraries and archives, hiding out for years in an attempt to learn more of modern civilization, with unknown motivations that may hold terrible consequences for civilized races.

ORIGINS

In the annals of recorded history, ancient texts mentioning living runes always seem to do so in relation to the forgotten goddess Lissala, leading scholars to believe that either the creatures served worshipers of the deity in some way, or were rewarded as gifts to particularly devout supplicants. Some even speculate that Lissala herself is responsible for the creation of living runes. Others conjecture that living runes have always been, and are among the universe’s eldest creatures, having escaped from the lips of some primordial god when the first words of creation were uttered. Evidence seems to dispute both these claims—the creatures are known to spring up from the scribbled text and graffiti of magic-soured ruins or untriggered *symbol* spells long left to rot. Whatever the truth, these haughty creatures do not discuss their origins.



SHATTERED STAR

MEZLAN

An amorphous blob coalesces, slowly rising up to form into a humanoid figure. As it stabilizes, intricate details emerge.

MEZLAN

CR 14



XP 38,400

N Medium ooze (shapechanger)

Init +11; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft.; **Perception** +20

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 18, flat-footed 22 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural)

hp 195 (17d8+119); **regeneration** 5 (acid)

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

Immune ooze traits; **SR** 25



OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.

Melee 2 morphic weapons +22 (2d8+10)

Ranged morphic weapon +19 (2d8+10)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (15 ft. with 1 slam per round)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6, spell battery (*chain lightning* [DC 19], *dispel magic*, *mage armor*)

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 25, **Con** 24, **Int** 15, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 40 (can't be tripped)

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Stealthy

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +14, Climb +18, Disguise +25, Escape Artist +9, Linguistics +11, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +25, Swim +18; **Racial Modifiers** +12 Disguise, +4 Linguistics, +4 Stealth

Languages Aklo, Azlanti, Common; versatile speech

SQ morphic body, skill pool

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Morphic Body (Ex) A mezlan can assume the appearance of any Medium or Small creature (other than creatures with the elemental, incorporeal, or swarm subtypes—the body assumed must be solid). The mezlan's creature type doesn't change in this new form and it gains none of the mimicked creature's special abilities; the transformation is cosmetic only. In these other forms, the mezlan retains all of its normal statistics and abilities as depicted above. Though this ability only affects the mezlan's outward image, it is a transmutation effect.

Morphic Weapons (Ex) A mezlan can manipulate its body to mimic a wide array of potent weaponry wielded by its various forms. While the weapons may look different, they are considered natural weapons and they all do the same amount of damage; are treated as magic for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction; and deal bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage. Once per round, a mezlan can extend one of its limbs to strike at a distance up to 15 feet away with one of its slam attacks. Also, while mimicking a creature wielding a ranged weapon, a mezlan can fire a portion of its body as if the fragment were a projectile. This projectile is treated as a thrown weapon and has a range increment of 60 feet.

Skill Pool (Ex) A mezlan has a special knack for solving problems. Five times per day, it can apply a +4 competence bonus on any skill check, even checks for skills it has no ranks in or skills that can only be used untrained.

Spell Battery (Su) A mezlan can store up to 10 levels of spells that it can then cast freely. The spells imbued into a mezlan

are each activated with the casting time for the relevant spell and are cast at the caster level of the spellcaster who provided the spells. A mezlan can store and use both divine and arcane spells, and can be imbued by any number of casters at a time. To fuel this ability, a caster must cast her spells into the mezlan; alternatively, the spellcaster can use a scroll to place a spell into the mezlan. A mezlan must voluntarily lower its spell resistance in order to be imbued with spells.

In addition, a mezlan can choose to lower its spell resistance and absorb spells cast at it. The mezlan must be aware of the incoming spell and ready an action to absorb it. Only spells that have the mezlan as a target can be absorbed in this way; area spells are not absorbed. If a mezlan already possesses 10 levels of spells, it cannot absorb more. The mezlan can use these absorbed spells as its own.

Versatile Speech (Ex) A mezlan has a talent for parsing spoken languages. After spending 1 minute listening to a speaker use a language it doesn't already know, a mezlan can understand that language. After listening for 1 additional minute, the mezlan can speak the language. This understanding lasts for 24 hours before fading from the mezlan's mutable mind. To understand the same language again after this time, the mezlan must spend another minute listening to a creature speak that language. The mezlan doesn't have to be engaged in a conversation to use this ability.

Built by Azlanti arcanists and engineers to perform the duties of spies and elite troops, units of mezlans were deployed to engage in extractions, infiltrations, and quick strikes on well-protected locations. Scholars believe that at the height of Azlant, close to 1,500 mezlans were created to save the empire. The difficulty of destroying mezlans leads scholars to believe that at least half of them still exist to this day.

Mezlans blur the lines between constructs and oozes, a mixture made even more strange by their possession of unique, previously human personalities. Each mezlan was once an exemplary living Azlanti or Thassilonian soldier graced with superior skills and intelligence. Upon being chosen for this new duty, these soldiers were given a full explanation of the changes they would undergo and signed a contract to serve them empire as mezlans. Each was then subjected to numerous magical and technological procedures to extract her consciousness, preserve it, and inject it into her new form. Sometimes the process didn't take as well as others, and resulted in an incomplete and flawed mezlan. Evidence of these flawed specimens didn't always reveal itself before the creatures were deployed, and many these became rogue mezlans.

Most mezlans were recruited from the ranks of the military, and thus most of them possessed martial-related

or skill-related class levels; however, a few of these creatures were once wizards who traded their magical talent for an amorphous form and near immortality.

ECOLOGY

Without the need to eat, sleep, or breathe, mezlans are practically immortal. When they are defeated in battle, they simply disincorporate and begin seeping down into the soil or cracks in the ground. If the material making up a mezlan isn't contained in some way or destroyed by subjecting it to continued energy damage, the creature lies dormant for 10 years before reforming. When a mezlan reincorporates, it is treated as if it had 16 negative levels. These negative levels are removed through time at a rate of 1 per month.

Mezlans retain a portion of their previous memories and experiences, but the extent of those memories varies from individual to individual. Some mezlans slowly regain their memories, some immediately remember everything from their previous incorporation, and others never fully grasp their previous selves.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

Mezlans seem to get along and work well with other mezlans, but to normal, living creatures, they appear strange and unnatural. They are very observant creatures who study everything they encounter, especially creatures—a frequent use of their skill pool ability. Some mezlans become accustomed to a particular form or body and use that persona as a default. Others enjoy keeping dozens of regular personas and cycle through them for particular duties they need to complete, meshing these personalities into a toolkit they use throughout their day-to-day activities. A few purists keep an amorphous, bloblike form unless they need to resemble something else. Strange mezlans who have gone mad over the years constantly shift their forms, flickering between hundreds of different ones.

BECOMING A MEZLAN

Though not constructs, mezlans are still created beings, the marriage of transformative magic and a living soul. Only the prohibitive cost of creating mezlans, not any shortage of volunteers, prevented their creators from manufacturing thousands of them. The sheer volume of djezet needed to create a mezlan forced their creators to grant the honor of the transformation to only the best of the best, greatly increasing their worth.

The method for creating a mezlan is lost to time, though it is rumored one of them retains the knowledge to produce more of its own kind. In any case, the price of the materials and special processes necessary to create an army of mezlans would likely bankrupt a nation.

NEXT MONTH

REIGN OF WINTER BEGINS!

In sunny Taldor, unseasonable weather disrupts the summer, bringing cold winds and snow to southern climes. Portals are opening everywhere, threatening to spread Irrisen's eternal winter all across Golarion. Will a group of brave adventurers manage to track down the source and stop it before ice covers the entire planet?

THE SNOWS OF SUMMER

By Neil Spicer

Every 100 years, the Witch Queen Baba Yaga returns to the nation of Irrisen to place a new daughter on the throne, but this time, something has gone wrong. Far to the south, an unseasonable winter cloaks the forest near the village of Heldren with summer snows. When the heroes venture into the wood in search of a missing noblewoman, they discover a mysterious portal to the frozen land of Irrisen, whose magical winter will soon engulf all of Golarion unless the PCs can discover the fate of the otherworldly witch Baba Yaga, a quest that will take them through snowbound Irrisen to even stranger lands beyond.

HELDREN AND WALDSBY

Two villages to explore as the characters venture from their comfortable home to the icy lands of Irrisen.

REIGN OF WINTER TOOLKIT

Learn about Jadwiga, winter witches, White Witches, the touch of Baba Yaga, and other mysteries of the land of eternal winter.

AND MORE!

Kevin Andrew Murphy takes Norret the alchemist to Irrisen in the *Pathfinder's Journal*, and four new monsters native to snow-covered Irrisen haunt the *Pathfinder Bestiary*.

SUBSCRIBE TO PATHFINDER ADVENTURE PATH

The Reign of Winter Adventure Path begins next month! Don't miss out on this exciting campaign—head to paizo.com/pathfinder and subscribe today to have each *Pathfinder Adventure Path*, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting*, *Pathfinder Player Companion*, *Pathfinder Module*, *Pathfinder Tales*, and *Pathfinder accessory product* delivered to your door!

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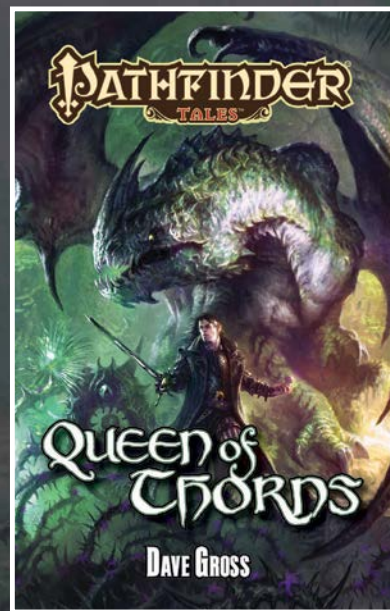
Luma is a cobblestone druid, a canny fighter and spellcaster who can read the chaos of Magnimar's city streets like a scholar reads books. Together, she and her siblings in the powerful Derexhi family form one of the most infamous and effective mercenary companies in the city, solving problems for the city's wealthy elite. Yet despite being the oldest child, Luma gets little respect—perhaps due to her half-elven heritage. When a job gone wrong lands Luma in the fearsome prison called the Hells, it's only the start of Luma's problems. For a new web of bloody power politics is growing in Magnimar, and it may be that those Luma trusts most have become her deadliest enemies...

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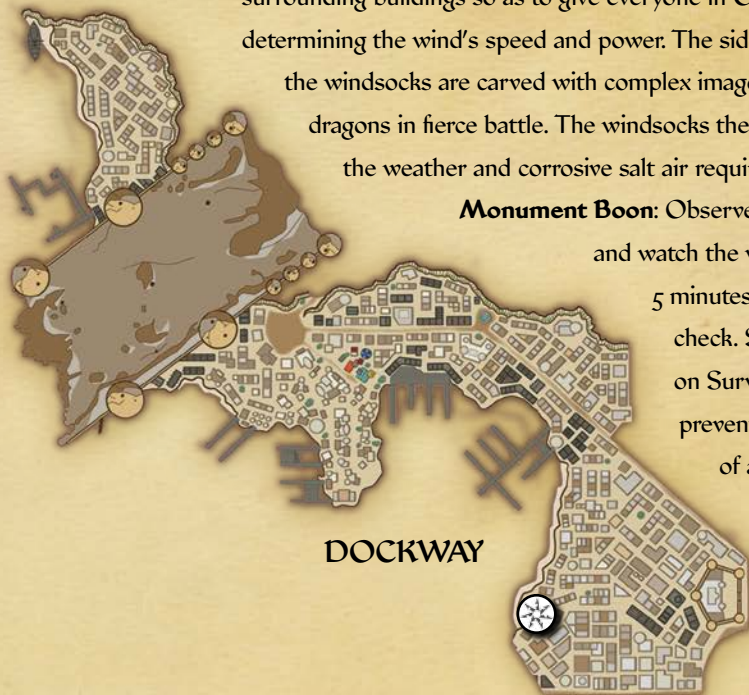
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THE FIFTH WIND

This massive stone weather vane stands amid the docks, its windsocks towering above surrounding buildings so as to give everyone in Outcast's Cove an easy method of determining the wind's speed and power. The sides of the stone pylon that supports the windsocks are carved with complex images of air elementals and cloud dragons in fierce battle. The windsocks themselves are often replaced as the weather and corrosive salt air require.

Monument Boon: Observe the patterns on the pylon and watch the windsocks cavort above for 5 minutes, then attempt a DC 15 Survival check. Success grants a +2 morale bonus on Survival checks for 24 hours, and prevents seasickness for the duration of any sea voyage begun while this bonus persists.



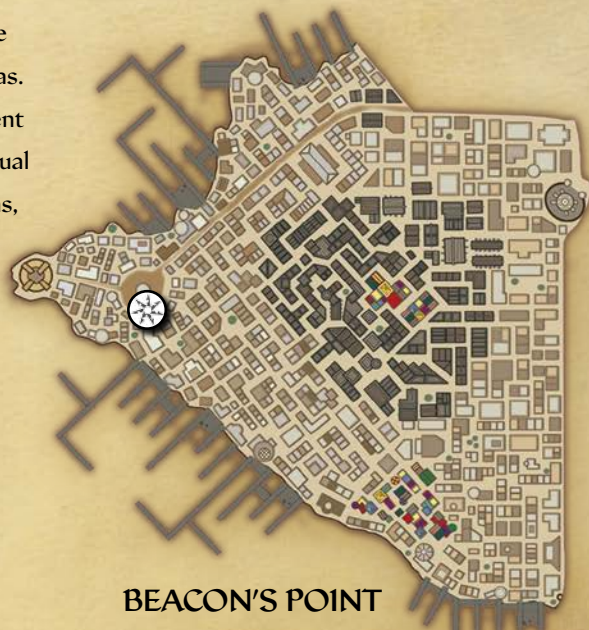
DOCKWAY



THE BATTLE OF CHARDA

This statue depicts the first and most famous of the nautical battles waged in the city's early days. The battle itself was significant not only for the size of the invading force, but also for the pirates' use of five captured and charmed monsters harvested from the Darklands—chardas. Today, the monument exaggerates the actual size of the chardas, depicting them as immense behemoths.

Monument Boon: Practice weaponplay for 10 minutes and make a successful DC 20 Intimidate check to gain a +1 morale bonus on all attack rolls made with melee weapons for 24 hours. This bonus increases by 1 for every 10 points by which you exceed the initial check.



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