

SECOND EDITION

PATHFINDER[®]



EXTINCTION EXCURSE

THE APOCALYPSE PROPHET

By Lyz Liddell

TRAITS: AIR, BEAST, WATER

Malba and the Dragon



CHECKS: INTIMIDATION +30, NATURE +28

THIS DARING HALFLING RIDES A MONSTROUS DRAGON WHOSE CLOUDS OF MAGICAL ICE THRILL AND DELIGHT!

LEVEL 18 (DC 38)

TRAITS: AUDIENCE, EMOTION, MAGICAL, PLANT

Rain of Blossoms



CHECKS: NATURE +30, PERFORMANCE +30

OH, HOW FLUTTERING-LEAVES-IN-WIND ENTRANCES AUDIENCES WITH CAPTIVATING BLOSSOMS! YOU WILL FEEL WHIMSY, GLEE, AND WONDER!

LEVEL 18 (DC 38)

PATHFINDER

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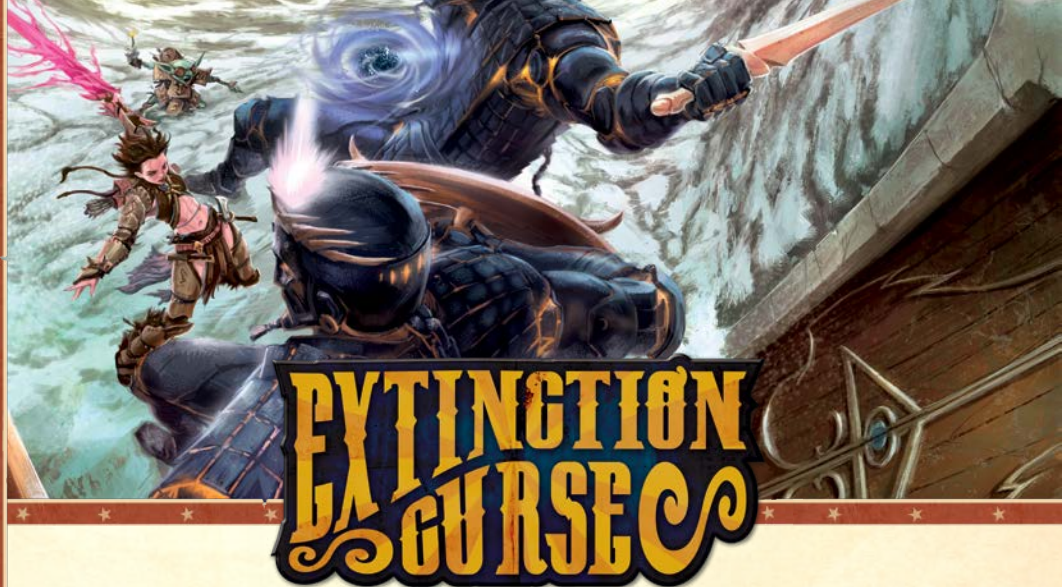
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EXTINCTION CURSE

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The Apocalypse Prophet

by Lyz Liddell

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THE APOCALYPSE PROPHET

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After establishing the Circus of Wayward Wonders in Diobel, the heroes venture into the Kortos Mounts, where they must overcome Sarvel Ever-Hunger's guardians, a mind-controlled garrison outpost, and natural perils to reach the Vale of Aroden.

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In the Vale of Aroden, the heroes must overcome deific trials to access the Verdant Beacon—but these tests are often deadly, and the xulgaths have left their own guardians as well.

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The heroes reach the Verdant Beacon, where they must stop Sarvel Ever-Hunger from conducting the extinction curse ritual and destroying the Starstone Isles!

THE TOP OF THE WORLD

The Extinction Curse Adventure Path concludes with an expedition to Aroden's stronghold in the Kortos Mounts. This is where the leader of the xulgath invasion, Sarvel Ever-Hunger, hopes to trigger the *extinction curse*: a backlash in the *aeon orbs* that will wipe the Starstone Isles clean of life.

Aroden is a complicated figure. He was so arrogant in his goals of uplifting humanity that he didn't often consider the consequences of his actions. Whether Aroden would ever feel guilty about dooming the vault of Vask and the xulgaths there to establish his islands is a question that can't be answered. The good he's done for the people of the Starstone Isles—humans and many other ancestries as well—is indisputable. But these gifts came with enormous cost, paid by the xulgaths, and it's a cost that can never be repaid. The echo of Aroden's legacy has been a core theme of this adventure path.

Sarvel, on the other hand, is a very straightforward villain. He has few thoughts other than to destroy what Aroden built and revels in his role as the bringer of an apocalypse. However right or wrong Aroden's actions were, Sarvel's response is a wholly evil one, so the heroes shouldn't have any qualms about confronting and vanquishing him at last.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"The Apocalypse Prophet" is designed for four characters.

- 18** The heroes begin this adventure at 18th level.
- 19** The heroes should reach 19th level by the start of Chapter 2.
- 20** The heroes should reach 20th level by the start of Chapter 3.



CHAPTER 1: END OF THE ROAD

After Aroden raised the *Starstone* and the Isle of Kortos from the Inner Sea, he found himself facing several challenges. His newly founded domain proved insufficient to support the robust civilization he had envisioned; to solve this problem, he ultimately claimed five of the six *aeon orbs* from the vault called Vask and built his five aeon towers to distribute their life-giving magic. Less pressing, but perhaps more dire, was the question of protecting what he had wrought. The *Starstone* now rested on solid land—protected, but far more accessible than it had been since its arrival on Golarion. Aroden was keenly aware that his followers might well become a threat he needed to defend against.

And so Aroden developed a fail-safe, a means to undo his workings should the worst come to pass, utilizing the same *aeon orbs* that gave the islands their life-sustaining magic. The *extinction curse*, as he called it, was a potent ritual that could dismantle the foundations of the islands,

wiping them clean of life and hurling them—along with the *Starstone*—back into the sea.

Such a powerful mechanism held its own risks, however, and Aroden built several precautions into the ritual to prevent it from being unleashed by anyone other than himself. The ritual could be performed only from his own well-protected sanctum at the Verdant Beacon, the nexus of the *aeon orbs*' magic. Only a caster bearing the *resonant reflections* of all five *aeon orbs* could safely perform the ritual. Without the *resonant reflections*, the orbs would impede, but not fully negate, the ritual's effects.

Sarvel Ever-Hunger learned of the existence of the *extinction curse* ritual through the *moonstone pools* beneath the city of Escadar. He set out to the Verdant Beacon to learn more and take command of this weapon of destruction for his own ends. There he plundered Aroden's personal archives, discovered the ritual, and

set about enacting it. Sarvel had neither the interest nor disposition to gain the *aeon orbs' resonant reflections* for himself, so he instead sent his minions out with orders to destroy the orbs, figuring they couldn't interfere with the ritual if they didn't exist.

What Sarvel didn't account for, however, was the *aeon orbs'* remarkable durability. With the heroes' successes in eliminating his agents at each of the aeon towers, Sarvel realized his window of opportunity was growing short. Even the ritual's mitigated effects would still devastate the hated surface-dwellers who had ignorantly benefitted from Aroden's theft ages ago, and a smaller disaster was better by far than no disaster, so he began preparations to conduct the ritual. The Apocalypse Prophet is ready to enact his revenge!

The Show Goes On

At the end of the last adventure, the heroes gained the last of the *resonant reflections*. They have the tools they need to seek out the Verdant Beacon in the Kortos Mounts, but before they can begin their journey, they must make arrangements for their circus.

As the heroes can't take the circus into the sparsely-populated Kortos Mounts, they must find a relatively large locale to support the show in their absence. While particularly ambitious characters might want to take the show to Absalom, the journey to the City at the Center of the World is a long one, and their circus would still be only a minor show amidst the city's multitudinous wonders. A better host would be the large port city of Diobel. Estessa Vandy, the mayor of Willowside, suggests Diobel as a destination if the heroes don't consider it on their own.

BY LAND OR BY SEA

The circus caravan can travel overland to Diobel if the heroes prefer; the terrain is familiar after the previous events of the Extinction Curse Adventure Path, and barring any distractions or mishaps, the journey takes several days. Travel is likely faster, however, by ship—which means the circus can start performing sooner, and the heroes can start seeking out the Verdant Beacon. Captain Tiratelle Uncrid of the *Geode's Center* is happy to take them, assuming they saved her vessel in "Siege of the Dinosaurs." In either case, the journey is only as perilous as necessary for the heroes to gain any XP they need to reach 18th level.

THE CIRCUS IN DIOBEL

Once they arrive in Diobel, the heroes find that setting up their circus is a relatively straightforward affair, as word of their prior performances has preceded them. If the circus's Prestige is 15 or higher, one of the heroes needs only succeed at a DC 30 Diplomacy or Society check to secure access to a large, fenced area normally used for corralling livestock. This venue costs the circus 10% of its earnings (deducted from the Payout) as a fee for using the space. If the circus's Prestige is lower than 15, a character must succeed



Tiratelle Uncrid

CHAPTER 1 SYNOPSIS

The Circus of Wayward Wonders travels to Diobel for their performances while the heroes ascend into the Kortos Mounts. Their first stop is a fortified outpost maintained by the able Eagle Garrison of Absalom's First Guard. Sarvel Ever-Hunger has unleashed an extraplanar curse upon the soldiers in residence to keep them from interfering in his plans. At the garrison, the heroes can learn more about their path toward the Verdant Beacon and venture further into the heights, facing powerful foes and ancient guardians along the way.

CHAPTER 1 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 1 are as follows.

- +3 armor potency rune
- +2 greater resilient chain mail
- +2 greater striking bastard sword
- +2 greater striking composite longbow
- +2 striking bo staff
- +1 striking bastard sword
- +1 studded leather armor
- ambrosia of undying hope
- dispelling sliver
- jerkin of liberation
- major healing potion
- Piereta
- potion of undetectability
- shield of the unified legion
- wand of remove curse (9th level)
- white wyrm dragon's breath potion

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DIOBEL RUMORS

Few venture into the Kortos Mounts, and rumors about the dangers of the region are often varied and implausible. The heroes can learn some genuine information about the Kortos Mounts while in Diobel by succeeding at a DC 35 Diplomacy check to Gather Information. Success gives the hero a fact from the following list that they don't already know. A critical success gives two facts, while a critical failure provides a false rumor of your invention.

1. "The only scrap of civilization in the Kortos Mounts is that First Guard outpost. The Eagle Garrison runs it, watching over the only road that goes up yonder. Cayden knows what-all they watch for up there—no one with any sense travels up into those mountains!"
2. "Mages and the like hate those mountains. Even the best teleportation magic can't move you around there, and fools who try end up dozens of miles off course."
3. "In the Kortos Mounts? Best be on your guard, or you'll get caught up in the wendigos' accursed storms. Once you're lost in the snow, you're all theirs until you run off and climb into the sky so fast your feet burn off into stumps and you turn into one yerself!"
4. "The last person I heard of going to the mountains was that old halfling. She was downright creepy and rude, I tell you. Somehow, she knew every last thing about you, and every time she opened her mouth, she'd blather everything you never wanted anyone to know. For the best she's not around anymore."
5. "The Kortos Mounts! My uncle used to talk about his friend who went adventuring up around the mountain called the Weeping Grandfather. Came back telling tales of a mystical valley hidden away there, chock-full of statues that could make you into a god just like the *Starstone* down in Absalom. Said he 'hunted the magical beast' and got a bit of god-power himself. Can't be that easy, of course."

at a DC 40 check to secure the space, and the fee is instead 15%, though the party can offer the owner a down payment of 800 gp to secure the lower rate. In a worst-case scenario, after several hours of working their way through several disinterested city officials and independent land owners, the party gains access to a rocky plain northwest of town for a fee of only 5%, but the distance and rough road reduce the circus's Anticipation from advertisements by 2 tiers (that is, if the heroes spend 1,200 gp on advertising, they only start with 20 Anticipation).

In addition to setting up and Promoting the Circus, the heroes can seek out general information about the Kortos Mounts or learn about the Verdant Beacon. See

the rumors presented in the sidebar on page 6. In the event the heroes haven't yet learned that the Verdant Beacon is in the Kortos Mounts, they are fortunate in that Diobel's history is long and the locals take great pride in that history. Any characters who spend at least 1 day Gathering Information, regardless of their success or failure at that task, find someone who can relate very old folk tales about "Aroden's green tower in the Kortos Mounts." With that information, it's relatively simple to learn that only one ancient road leads into the Kortos Mounts, as few have any reason to travel there.

ONE LAST HURRAH

Although the Circus of Wayward Wonders is an exciting addition to Diobel's entertainment scene, the city is abuzz with even greater news: an enormous celebration is being planned in Absalom. The Radiant Festival is a centennial celebration that hasn't occurred in almost 200 years, as Aroden's death cancelled the last festival in 4620 AR. Festival agents have been in Diobel for several weeks now, scouting out talent for the fair. If the Circus of Wayward Wonders can impress these talent scouts, they might have the opportunity to perform in the City at the Center of the World for audiences drawn from across the Inner Sea region!

With these stakes, the heroes likely want to conduct a performance of the Circus of Wayward Wonders in Diobel before departing on their journey. If the circus garners 100 Anticipation before their first show, the Radiant Festival talent scouts make a point of attending. This is an opportunity for the circus to show off its most spectacular and complicated tricks, so performers gain a +1 circumstance bonus to trick checks for tricks that have three or more traits.

If the circus's first show in Diobel is a success, the Radiant Festival talent scouts are impressed with the show and briefly speak with the heroes after the performance, promising that they'll recommend the circus to the festival coordinators. If the show was a critical success, the talent scouts are thrilled and ensure the heroes that the circus's place in the Radiant Festival is all but guaranteed.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for a successful circus performance in front of the talent scouts. Increase this award to 120 XP if the show was a critical success.

Into the Kortos Mounts

Once the heroes have established the Circus of Wayward Wonders in Diobel, they can begin their journey. Their travels into the mountains should be relatively straightforward given the resources available

to 18th-level heroes; though teleportation won't get them into the mountains themselves, they could easily teleport to the foothills and travel from there. *Tree stride*, *wind walk*, and other effects can also speed them along their way.

Since the heroes don't yet know the precise location of the Verdant Beacon, their first destination is likely the Eagle Garrison fort, an outpost in the mountain foothills. They might have heard of this outpost while in Diobel, and it appears on most maps of the area. Parties that simply head off into the mountains without performing any research in advance discover that the only road leads to the Eagle Garrison outpost.

The outpost is in the high foothills of the Kortos Mounts, approximately 100 miles northeast of Diobel, along a road through the logging town of Merovan that grows smaller and less populated the further the heroes travel. By the time they reach the Inland Hills—the foothills of the Kortos Mounts—it's only a narrow track through densely wooded slopes, just barely wide enough for a supply wagon.

SAURIAN WATCH POST

SEVERE 18

The road passes through a narrow opening between two steep bluffs here. Sarvel Ever-Hunger discovered that this site sits at the edge of the Kortos Mounts' protections against teleportation magic. Reasoning that anyone attempting to follow him by magic would most likely end up here, he claimed the site as a watch post. The heroes likely reach this encounter simply by taking the road into the mountains. If they somehow bypass this encounter, the Eagle Garrison members might ask the party to check on their missing comrade once they've been freed from the *convergence lattice*; whether the soldier survives that long is up to you.

Creatures: A gang of gigantic reptilian humanoids called saurians keeps watch over this road. Their camp is simple, consisting only of a few heaped nests of scrubby brush and one pile of cracked, gnawed, and discarded bones and rubbish. While they've been charged with preventing creatures from approaching the Verdant Beacon, their most recent intruder came from the north—a member of the Eagle Garrison caught up in the *convergence lattice* (page 9) ventured down from their outpost to investigate the saurians'



camp and try to draw them into the powerful effect. The saurians have proven resistant to the *convergence lattice* and have been toying with the soldier out of boredom and cruelty.

If the heroes are taking particular care to travel quietly (such as by *Avoiding Notice*), the saurians are too involved with their game to notice the heroes' approach. The heroes can hear the Eagle Garrison soldier's cries of pain from some distance away; even flying characters are likely to hear them. If the heroes are less cautious in their approach, the saurians prepare for their arrival by gagging their captive and taking up positions at the top of the cliffs on either side of the road to ambush the party; in this case, they roll *Stealth* for initiative.

These saurians are bullies who enjoy using their size to intimidate others. They don't back down from a fight against creatures smaller than they are.

SAURIAN WORLDWATCHER

CREATURE 18

Page 81

Initiative Perception +34

SAURIAN WARMONGERS (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 80

Initiative Perception +31

Questioning the Saurians: The heroes might subdue the saurians and question them, rather than simply slaying them outright. They are hostile to the heroes, but if sufficiently *Coerced*, subjected to mind-controlling magic, or otherwise convinced to talk, they relate that Sarvel left them behind to prevent anyone from following him to the Verdant

Beacon. They haven't been there and don't know the specific route to reach the site. They are aware of Sarvel's plan to unleash the *extinction curse* and even know the ritual by name, though they can describe it only as a means by which the xulgath leader plans to enact revenge upon the surface-dwellers by destroying their island. Particularly pointed questions might also lead the saurians to admit that they already captured and ate a humanoid similar in appearance to their current captive—this was the Eagle Garrison ranger sent to report the xulgaths' passage to the First Guard in Absalom.

The Eagle Garrison Prisoner: If the heroes successfully rescue the Eagle Garrison soldier, Kohliarn, they soon discover that he behaves very strangely. His interactions are stilted and oddly mechanical, as described in the *convergence lattice* on page 9. He introduces himself simply as part of the Eagle Garrison and invites the heroes to visit the outpost a few miles up the road. If the party finds the Eagle Garrison badge in the saurians' rubbish heap (see below), he can identify the symbol and urges the heroes to return to the outpost with him. Only if pressed does he give his name, and with a degree of detachment that implies the information is irrelevant. Unlike the other soldiers at the garrison, Kohliarn doesn't try to force the heroes to take any particular course of action; should they refuse to accompany him to the garrison, he simply makes his own way there, where the other soldiers restore him to health before the heroes' arrival.

Searching the Camp: The bone heap consists mostly of the remains of local wildlife, with two noteworthy exceptions. One series of somewhat larger bones can be identified as the remains of a horse with a successful DC 30 Nature check, while a character who succeeds at a DC 35 Medicine check can piece together the majority of a human skeleton. The heap also includes a savaged chain shirt with a badly damaged badge depicting an eagle carrying a sword in its talons. This symbol is the Eagle Garrison's emblem.

A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception or Survival check while Searching the camp notices an exceptional number of spiders in the area. The spiders scurry away if the heroes interact with them, carrying their observations back to the psychopomp who summoned them (see A Neutral Party on page 11).

Eagle Garrison Fort

The road into the Kortos Mounts leads to the Eagle Garrison fort. This outpost was established by Absalom's First Guard to keep watch over travelers in the region, though it operates almost entirely outside of the city's formal command structure. To better perform their duties, the soldiers long ago struck a partnership with an aerie of giant eagles to collaborate in keeping an eye out for trouble (though the eagles limit their involvement to surveying the area and refuse to leave the Kortos Mounts). Given their small numbers and limited resources, the soldiers don't have the ability or the authorization to intervene in any wrongdoing beyond common banditry; their charge is to keep watch over the area and

report any unusual developments to their leadership in Absalom. Around a dozen skilled soldiers occupy the garrison at any time. Their current leader is the half-elf Captain Kendley Nathrael. Four giant eagles roost in an aerie above the garrison.

When Sarvel Ever-Hunger and his retinue passed through the foothills, the Eagle Garrison took note of the xulgaths but decided the group was too dangerous to take on themselves. Captain Nathrael dispatched a ranger to ride south to deliver a full report to Absalom; unfortunately, that rider fell prey to the saurians keeping watch in the lower foothills, and word of the xulgaths' passage into the mountains hasn't spread. The party might have found the remains of this unfortunate ranger in the rubbish heap at the saurian watch post.

The narrow road winds upward over several switchbacks before reaching the garrison's outpost, where it cuts between the structure and a stony cliff nearly 50 feet high. The outpost is a small, fortified stone structure perched at the crest of a high foothill. Its three-story lookout tower offers a view of the lower hills and plains to the west and the mountain reaches to the northeast. The land to the south of the outpost is a dense evergreen forest, but the ground to the north falls away in a steep drop, allowing for the garrison's unparalleled views. Except for the stable and aerie, which are more recent additions made entirely of wood, the outpost is constructed of hewn



Kohliarn

stone with reinforced wood doors. The double door into area A7 is made of iron and embossed with the Eagle Garrison's emblem: an eagle in flight clutching a sword in its talons. The fort's interior ceilings are 12 feet high, and lanterns keep all interior rooms well-lit.

A single horse wanders placidly in the forest near the outpost, munching on underbrush. It wears good iron horseshoes, but no saddle, bridle, or halter.

CONVERGENCE LATTICE

Throughout Aroden's life and godhood alike, he traveled in search of new magic he might shape to his own purposes. Those studies took him across Golarion to places like Arcadia, where he studied and tied himself to the mystical Veins of Creation, and likewise across the planes. It was on one of these extraplanar journeys that he came across the *convergence lattice*, an axiomite creation intended to facilitate communication and harmony among sapient mortals. The creators of the *convergence lattice* intended to advance civilization and minimize warfare through unification, but the magic proved overwhelming to a mortal consciousness, smothering individual personalities beneath a powerful hive mind effect. The axiomites set their project aside, perhaps to return to it at some later age. They readily agreed to let Aroden examine their creation, and they either didn't notice or didn't care that Aroden quietly took the *convergence lattice* with him when he returned to the Material Plane. But Aroden was similarly unable to make use of the lattice's overwhelming effects. He eventually set the item aside in his archive at the Verdant Beacon, recording clear warnings about its effects and dangers in his journals.

Sarvel stumbled across the *convergence lattice* during his search for information about the *extinction curse*. He realized it could effectively neutralize the lingering threat posed by the Eagle Garrison soldiers, so he sent one of his minions back to the foothills to unleash the magic upon the fort. The entire Eagle Garrison (with one exception; see area A9) has since become ensnared in the *convergence lattice*'s hive mind, which now seeks to add more sapient creatures into its harmonious web. The lattice recognized Captain Nathrael as an ideal center for its effects and granted her the role of "authority," the hive mind's locus. The *convergence lattice* is not merely a predatory effect; it also increases the prowess of any who succumb to it. Weaker members in particular gain more strength, while very powerful members of the lattice (such as the heroes) might gain few benefits.

The Eagle Garrison soldiers now operate in a mechanical cycle dictated by the *convergence lattice*,

TELEPORTATION WOES

Teleportation has never worked properly within the Kortos Mounts. Localized effects, like 4th-level *dimension door*, generally function, but longer-range spells either fail outright or deposit travelers miles from an intended destination. The cause of this malfunction has never been thoroughly understood, though many theorize it has something to do with the massive amount of magic Aroden employed to raise the mountains from the seabed.

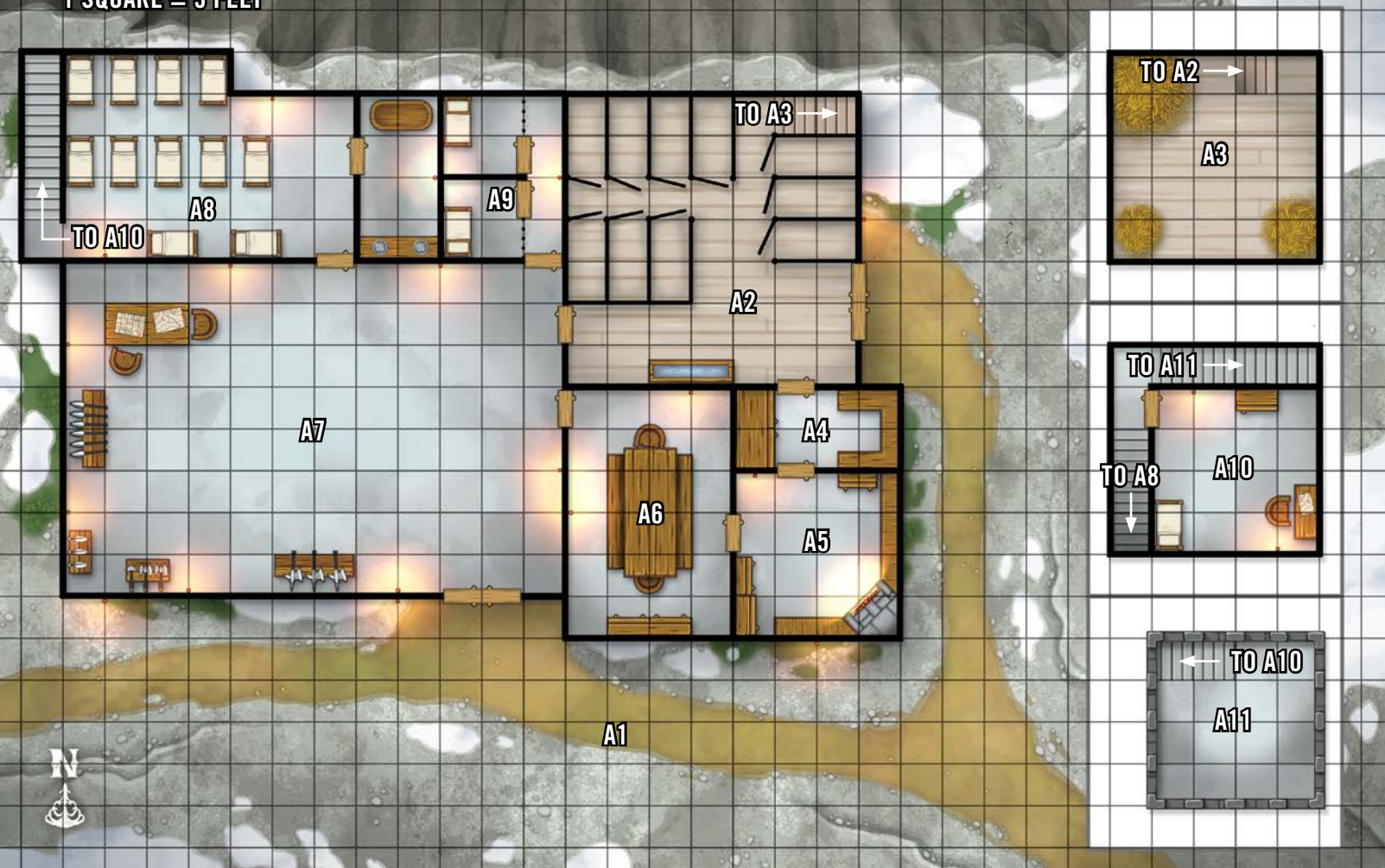
The effect has become worse of late, due to Sarvel Ever-Hunger's activation of the Verdant Beacon's defenses. The disruption affects all teleportation effects originating within the mountains (anywhere beyond the Saurian watch post on page 7). Teleportation effects not created by Aroden that transport a creature more than 120 feet or to another plane (including *blink*, *maze*, *plane shift*, and other effects) fail outright, and the caster must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or become sickened 1. Anyone casting a teleportation effect with a range of 120 feet or less must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or become sickened 1 after the spell is cast, but the spell otherwise functions normally. This save DC increases to 35 in the Vale of Aroden, and a creature becomes sickened 2 on a failure. Within the Verdant Beacon, teleportation effects don't function at all. Completion of a sufficient number of the Trials of Aroden, as explained on page 27, allows a caster to circumvent these restrictions, as they provide a sliver of Aroden's authority.

tending their physical needs but neglecting their responsibilities at the garrison. They identify the heroes as ideal members to add to the lattice and work to keep them at the garrison long enough to be assimilated. The initial attitude condition of the Eagle Garrison soldiers is friendly, but they force the heroes to stay—with violence, if necessary—if they try to leave before they're assimilated.

All assimilated garrison members exhibit peculiar behaviors as the lattice attempts "normal" interactions. A soldier without a current task might repeatedly walk back and forth between two points, pausing meaningfully at each point before turning briskly around. Greetings are oddly out of place, such as, "Good evening" at any time of day, or asking pleasantly, "How are you?" as an initial greeting when the heroes first enter the garrison unannounced. An approximation of leisure time might result in two soldiers sitting in silence at a table, smiling broadly at one another while remaining entirely motionless.

A character who succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check to Sense the Motive of a garrison member

EAGLE GARRISON FORT
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



realizes that the odd behavior is a result of a controlling influence. While the party is likely more powerful than the garrison members—even with the benefits imparted by the *convergence lattice*—they should have reservations about harming mind-controlled soldiers. Destroying the *convergence lattice* in area A8 removes its effects from all affected creatures; a character can remove the effect from a single creature using any ability that would end a possession effect, but that creature isn't immune to future assimilation attempts.

Becoming Convergent: A character is exposed to the *convergence lattice* either directly through the lattice's effects (page 15), through Kendley Nathrael's Convergent Calm ability, or by conversing with any affected creature for more than just a few moments. For this purpose, each attempt to Coerce, Gather Information, Lie, or Make an Impression involving an affected creature exposes the character performing the action to the lattice's effects, as does any other interaction you deem appropriate.

At the end of each such interaction, roll a secret DC 35 Will save for the exposed hero. On a failure, the hero becomes stupefied 1 for 24 hours (and fatigued,

on a critical failure). When a stupefied hero next sleeps, they must attempt another DC 35 Will save. If the hero succeeds at this second save, the effect ends; on a failure, the hero is assimilated into the *convergence lattice*, gaining the convergent link, convergent tactics, and disrupted link abilities. These effects have the curse and mental traits.

A character who becomes stupefied from exposure to the *convergence lattice* is aware that something is amiss. Anyone who succeeds at a DC 35 Medicine or Perception check while observing or examining a stupefied creature notes that something is trying to influence that character's subconscious mind, and that sleeping will have an additional effect. A critical success reveals that sleeping will provide a chance to shake off the effects, but failing to do so will make it much stronger.

Creatures that aren't mortal, aren't native to the Material Plane (such as celestials and fiends), or whose Intelligence modifier is -3 or worse are immune to the *convergence lattice*'s effects.

The rank-and-file members of the Eagle Garrison caught up in the effects of the *convergence lattice*

use the statistics on page A5, though their ancestries, ethnicities, and appearances vary. You can use the ancestry adjustments from page 204 of the *Gamemastery Guide* to reflect these differences.

A NEUTRAL PARTY

Aroden's theft of the *convergence lattice* didn't go entirely unnoticed by the multiverse's guardians. When the lattice was first created, the morrigna psychopomp Daumieth took notice of its potential to interfere with the cycle of souls by removing mortals' freedom of conscience and autonomy. She likewise noted its removal from Axis after Aroden's visit. But the demands on a psychopomp's time are many, and so long as the *convergence lattice* lay hidden and unused, seeking it out was a relatively low priority.

When the *convergence lattice* flared into action at the Eagle Garrison outpost, however, the relic leapt to the top of Daumieth's priorities. She arrived on the Material Plane and has been sending legions of summoned spider minions through the outpost and across the surrounding region to take stock of the situation. Given the increased threat the garrison soldiers pose when bolstered by the lattice's enhancements, she has yet to take decisive action. So far, she has learned that the *convergence lattice* had been kept in the Verdant Beacon and was released only recently. She also knows the route from the garrison to the entrance to the Vale of Aroden (page 28) and how the Trials of Aroden (page 27) work; she can explain these tests and the statues to the heroes, though she may withhold information if she thinks she can use it as leverage to get the heroes' help.

The heroes can encounter Daumieth in any number of ways. She doesn't approach them until she sees how they respond to evidence of the *convergence lattice*; if they are wary of it or recognize its danger, she's more likely to meet them to request aid. Daumieth might approach them at the saurian watch post, especially if they attempt to reverse the effects of the *convergence lattice* on the Eagle Garrison soldier there. Alternatively, if the heroes are aggressive and obviously powerful, she might confront them before they reach the garrison, concerned that if the lattice were to assimilate them, it might become too powerful to be contained without reinforcements from the Boneyard. Daumieth doesn't bother to hide her true nature unless the heroes' actions suggest they might respond with hostility, in which case she uses Change Shape to appear as another member of the Eagle Garrison.

Creatures: Daumieth is cool and detached, viewing the brief and relatively insignificant lives of mortals

through a lens focused by thousands of years in service to the impartial goddess of death. She can be convinced to join the heroes while they investigate the Eagle Garrison if the party deals with her peacefully and a hero succeeds at a DC 37 Diplomacy check to Request her help. She avoids engaging in combat, but she isn't opposed to using her spells to heal injured characters if well-disposed to them.

The morrigna also provides the heroes with one other significant benefit. While researching the *convergence lattice*, she has learned that its effects are fundamentally a curse. When the item sprang to the forefront of her priorities, she requisitioned a *wand of remove curse* (9th level) from the Boneyard's artificers to counteract the lattice's effects. If asked about what help she can provide, Daumieth reveals this item and its purpose. She hasn't used the wand on any of the Eagle Garrison members so far, since they haven't demonstrated any abilities that could be used to neutralize the *convergence lattice* even if they were freed, but she uses it to aid the heroes since they've proven to be far more capable.

Daumieth and her wand can be especially valuable if the entire party succumbs to the *convergence lattice*. Over several days, she frees the party from the convergent control, coolly informs them of her disappointment, and directs them to resume their efforts. Of course, heroes who respond to the psychopomp with violence can also claim the wand to use themselves, but if they do, they don't have any aid should they become controlled by the lattice.

DAUMIETH

CREATURE 16

Elite morrigna psychopomp (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 270)

Initiative Perception +30

Items *wand of remove curse* (9th level)

Treasure: If the heroes collaborate with Daumieth and destroy the *convergence lattice*, she gives them her wand as a token of appreciation for their efforts.

Story Award: If the heroes encounter and deal peacefully with Daumieth, award them 30 XP.

A1. FORT APPROACH

LOW 18

A stone outpost stands at the crest of the steep, wooded rise. While the winding track continues past the small fort along the base of a steep stone cliff, the wider road leads to an iron double door in the building's south face, emblazoned with an emblem of an eagle carrying a sword in its talons. The worn dirt road also continues around the fort's eastern wall. A thin trail of smoke and the scent of a cookfire rise from a small grate high in the south wall.

The Eagle Garrison fort doesn't appear particularly unusual on first glance, though there are a few recent prints in the dirt of the path. A hero who succeeds at a DC 36 Nature check or a DC 38 Perception check notices the giant eagles (see Creatures below) watching over the area.

Creatures: The *convergence lattice* indiscriminately assimilates intelligent creatures and thus has

incorporated the four giant eagles that have partnered with the Eagle Garrison to keep watch over the area. The eagles deeply dislike remaining indoors, and they instead keep watch over the garrison from the outside, perching on tall trees in the area. They make an initial assessment of the heroes from their high perch.

The eagles can't speak, but they can understand several languages. If the heroes spot the eagles and address them in a language they know, the eagles approach the party and encourage them through gestures and gentle nudges to approach the garrison's south entrance. If such an interaction continues for longer than a brief moment, the characters might have the chance to observe the eagles communicating with one another via their convergent link, gaining a clue that something about these beasts is strange. A hero with abilities that lets them communicate despite the eagles' nonverbal nature might gain more information: the eagles are stilted and rigid in their communication, and they refuse to acknowledge anything unusual about themselves, instead insisting that the characters head inside to speak with "the authority." If a hero who can communicate with the eagles succeeds at a DC 35 Perception check to Sense Motive, they realize the eagles are under a mind-controlling effect.

Should any of the heroes threaten or attack the eagles, the eagles fight as a group to defend themselves, but they try to avoid slaying the heroes—they recognize them as a valuable addition to the *convergence lattice*. They instead attempt to subdue or restrain the heroes. So long as the *convergence lattice* remains active, they also attempt to prevent the characters from leaving the fort, going so far as to pursue retreating heroes and bring them back by force.



CONVERGENT GIANT EAGLES (4) CREATURE 15

RARE LN LARGE BEAST

Variant giant eagle (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 141)

Perception +29; low-light vision

Languages Auran, Elven, Sylvan, Utopian (can't speak any language); convergent link

Skills Acrobatics +29, Athletics +25, Stealth +28

Str +6, **Dex** +8, **Con** +3, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Convergent Link Creatures with this ability can communicate with each other by manifesting an aura of wispy Utopian runes. This has the effects of telepathy with a range of 300 feet, but requires line of sight.

AC 37; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +27, **Will** +21

HP 290; **Weaknesses** chaotic 10

Disrupted Link While a convergent giant eagle is confused, fascinated, or frightened, it loses its convergent link and convergent tactics abilities.

Evasion When a giant eagle succeeds at a Reflex save, it critically succeeds instead.

Speed 10 feet, fly 60 feet

Melee ♦ beak +30, **Damage** 4d8+6 piercing plus convergent tactics

Melee ♦ talons +30 (agile), **Damage** 2d10+6 slashing plus convergent tactics and Grab

Eagle Dive ♦♦ The giant eagle Flies up to double its fly Speed in a straight line, descending at least 10 feet, and then makes a talons Strike.

Convergent Tactics The convergent eagle's attacks deal an extra 4d8 damage to creatures within reach of one of its allies with convergent tactics.

Snatch A convergent eagle can Fly at half speed while it has a creature grabbed or restrained in its talons, carrying that creature along with it.

A2. STABLE

The wood walls and shingled roof of this stable have an almost homey feel to them, in sharp contrast to the stark stone walls of the outpost itself. Stalls and racks have space for a dozen mounts, but the stall doors hang open; only one horse remains, gorging itself on oats from an open bin on one wall. A sturdy wooden door to the west leads into the outpost, while the wide door to the east hangs ajar. A narrow staircase along the north wall leads up.

The horses stabled here were of no use to the *convergence lattice*, so it directed the garrison members to set the mounts free. Most have wandered away, though one has lingered in the nearby forest, one was captured and eaten by the saurians (page 8), and one clever horse found its way into the oats bin and has been content to stay here.

The western door into the outpost is made of reinforced wood, but it's not locked. The stairs along the northern wall lead to the eagles' aerie.

A3. AERIE

Several enormous nests of twigs and sticks occupy ledges lining this small room, with downy feathers caught among them. Fifteen-foot-wide windows reveal the dramatic landscape on all sides.

The garrison's giant eagle partners nest here, but the *convergence lattice*'s influence has led them to keep watch from nearby trees instead.

Treasure: One of the nests contains a *potion of undetectability*. If the heroes free the giant eagles from the *convergence lattice*, they present this item to the heroes in gratitude.

A4. STORAGE

With easy access from both the stable and the kitchen, this storeroom is a convenient place to store sundry foodstuffs for the garrison. Its contents are typically kept organized, but the lawful influence of the *convergence lattice* has led to the soldiers keeping the space utterly immaculate. Each crate, box, barrel, jar, and bottle has been neatly labeled in Utopian, and they have been arranged by size and shape rather than by their contents.

A5. KITCHEN

TRIVIAL 18

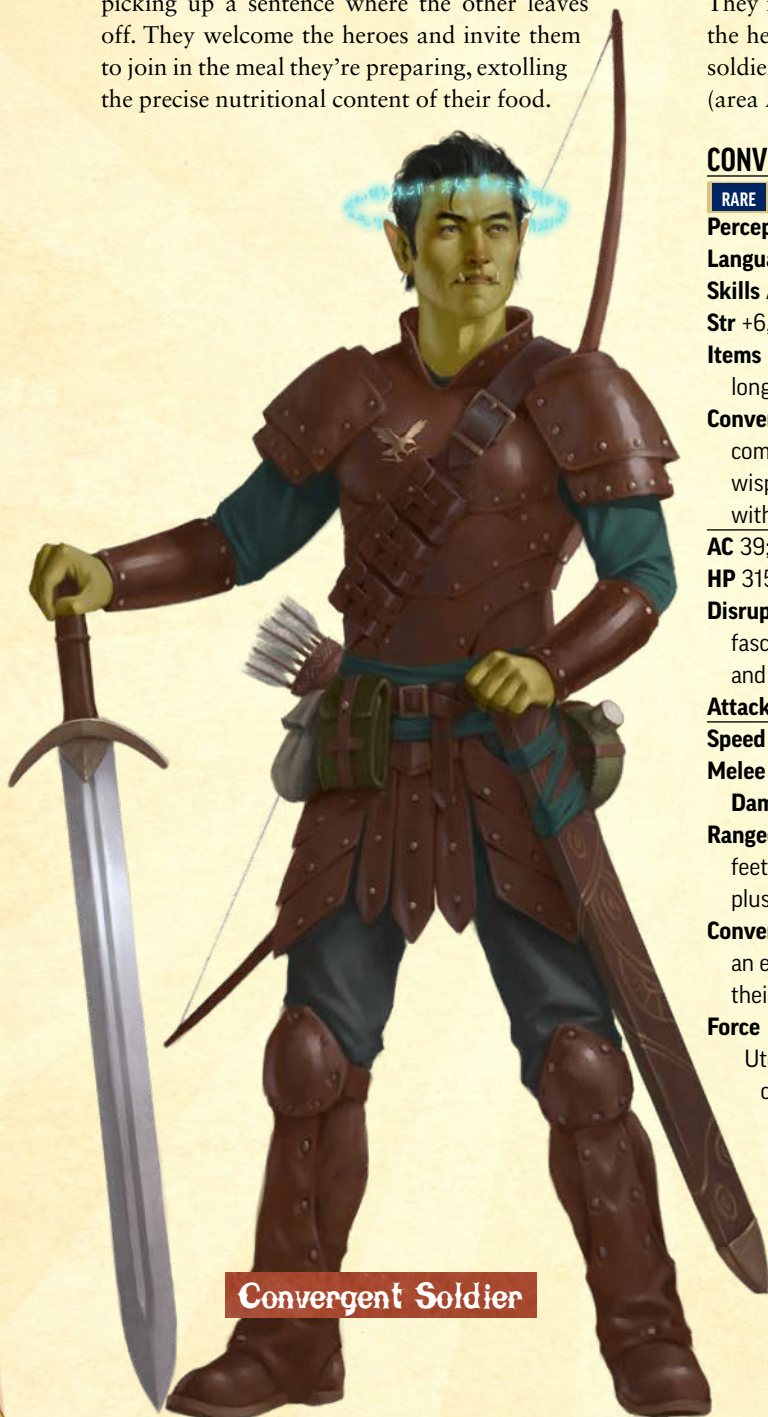
While this kitchen was clearly established in the style of a military outpost, it has been meticulously cleaned



Convergent Giant Eagle

and maintained. A door to the west stands open, offering a view into a spacious mess hall.

Creatures: A pair of convergent Eagle Garrison soldiers work here to prepare a meal for the fort. So long as the heroes haven't antagonized any of the soldiers, they respond to the party's arrival with friendly words in uncanny coordination, each one picking up a sentence where the other leaves off. They welcome the heroes and invite them to join in the meal they're preparing, extolling the precise nutritional content of their food.



Convergent Soldier

They otherwise engage in bland, empty conversation for as long as they can, hoping to draw the heroes into the lattice's network. They block the exit and protest if the heroes try to leave, insisting that they stay "at least long enough to speak with the authority."

If the heroes have confronted any other soldiers in the fort, or if they attempt to leave the outpost despite the soldiers' protests, these convergent soldiers attack. They fight to subdue rather than kill, hoping to bring the heroes into the *convergence lattice*. So long as the soldiers here have line of sight to those in the mess hall (area A6), the soldiers join in any confrontation here.

CONVERGENT SOLDIERS (2)

CREATURE 16

RARE LN MEDIUM HUMAN HUMANOID

Perception +28

Languages Common, Sylvan, Utopian; convergent link

Skills Acrobatics +29, Athletics +32, Survival +28

Str +6, **Dex** +5, **Con** +9, **Int** +2, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +2

Items +1 striking bastard sword, Eagle Garrison badge, longbow (20 arrows), +1 studded leather armor

Convergent Link Creatures with this ability can communicate with each other by manifesting an aura of wispy Utopian runes. This has the effects of telepathy with a range of 300 feet, but requires line of sight.

AC 39; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +28, **Will** +25

HP 315; **Weaknesses** chaotic 10

Disrupted Link While a convergent soldier is confused, fascinated, or frightened, they lose their convergent link and convergent tactics abilities.

Attack of Opportunity ⤴

Speed 25 feet

Melee ⬥ *bastard sword* +31 (magical, two-hand d12),

Damage 2d8+12 slashing plus convergent tactics

Ranged ⬥ longbow +29 (deadly 1d10, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 1d8+9 piercing plus convergent tactics

Convergent Tactics The convergent soldier's attacks deal an extra 4d8 damage to creatures within reach of one of their allies with convergent tactics.

Force Communication ⬥ (divine, illusion, mental, visual) Utopian runes burst from the convergent soldier. Any creature stupefied by the *convergence lattice* who is within 100 feet of the convergent soldier and can see the runes must attempt a DC 34 Will save.

Failure For 1 round, the creature is flat-footed to creatures with the convergent link ability and counts as an ally with convergent tactics for the purposes of activating the convergent tactics ability.

Critical Failure As failure, and the creature is also slowed 1 for 1 round due to the information overload.

A6. MESS

TRIVIAL 18

A long table with seating for twelve occupies the center of this spotless mess hall. Place settings are laid out for nine diners, with extra dishes stacked neatly on a shelf along the south wall. Two doors exit this room, both standing wide open—one leads into the kitchen to the east and the other leads into a much larger space to the west.

Creatures: Two convergent soldiers sit in silence at the table in this room. They greet the heroes with the same mechanical coordination and generic small talk as the soldiers in the kitchen (area A5), and they respond similarly to heroes who have confronted other members of the *convergence lattice*. If engaged in a fight with the heroes, these soldiers use their convergent link to inform their allies in adjacent rooms of the confrontation, and those soldiers hurry to this room to provide support. They prefer to subdue, rather than kill, the heroes.

CONVERGENT SOLDIERS (2)

CREATURE 16

Page 14

Initiative Perception +28

A7. TRAINING HALL

MODERATE 18

This room is lofty and spacious. Weapon and armor racks lined against the west and south walls suggest its function as a military training room, while a wide table in the northwest corner holds maps and notes in precise, orderly stacks. Two doors stand in the north wall, two more line the east wall, and a stout iron double door to the south stands closed.

This room's ceiling is 20 feet high, higher than other rooms in the fort. Normally, the Eagle Garrison uses this multipurpose space for training, sparring, or planning reconnaissance missions. The *convergence lattice* has little use for any such functions, however, and while it has guided the soldiers to keep the room immaculately clean and organized, the convergent soldiers rarely use it for any of its normal purposes.

Creatures: Four convergent soldiers stand quietly in this room, awaiting either an opportunity to serve the lattice or eat the meal being prepared in the kitchen. They greet the heroes with a stiff, eerily coordinated welcome, regardless of how the heroes enter the garrison, unless the heroes have already made an enemy of the lattice. If a confrontation begins in this room, one of the soldiers signals to the pair in the mess (area A6) to come support them. As with the other soldiers in the fort, they attempt to subdue the heroes.

CONVERGENT SOLDIERS (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 14

Initiative Perception +28

A8. BARRACKS

MODERATE 18

A dozen bunks are neatly arranged in this room, each with a sturdy footlocker tucked beneath it and an armor stand at the foot. An open door to the east reveals a small privy and washroom, while a staircase leads up along the west wall. A complex mechanism of gleaming metal and sparkling crystal sits in a storage nook under the stairs.

The garrison can comfortably house up to a dozen soldiers in addition to its commanding officer; there were 11 stationed here when Sarvel Ever-Hunger passed by. A ranger was sent to inform Absalom's First Guard of the vulgaths' passage, though he was slain by the saurians southwest of the garrison. Another soldier, Kohliarn, attempted to draw the saurians into the *convergence lattice* and failed; a third soldier is now in the prison cell in area A9.

The eight convergent soldiers still sleep in this room, keeping it immaculate at all times. This room now also houses the *convergence lattice* itself, tucked into a storage niche underneath the staircase so it can reinforce its effects upon sleeping garrison members. If the heroes infiltrate the garrison at night and avoid drawing attention to themselves, all eight convergent soldiers are sleeping here.

CONVERGENCE LATTICE

HAZARD 20

UNIQUE COMPLEX MAGICAL TRAP


Stealth +34 (master) to realize the lattice is a complex clockwork before it begins to move; noticing the lattice itself is DC 0.

Description A complex clockwork of bright metal and delicately carved gemstones, the lattice's interlocking gears begin to whirl as golden runes glow across its surface.

Disable DC 40 Thievery (master) or DC 35 Religion (master) four times to obliterate each of the four key runes. A DC 45 Thievery (legendary) check (or breaking the lattice) stops the clockwork's movement and prevents it from resetting, but doesn't stop its current activation.

AC 45; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +28, **Will** +36

Hardness 30, **HP** 460 (BT 230); **Immunities** object immunities (except mental effects); **Weaknesses** chaotic 30, mental 30

Begin Convergence  **Trigger** A creature that is not controlled by the *convergence lattice* sees it; **Effect** The lattice's clockworks begin to move and it rolls for initiative.

Routine (3 actions) The *convergence lattice* uses its first action to call for aid. Each convergent creature within 100 feet of the lattice Strides toward the lattice as a reaction. Creatures thus called continue to move toward the lattice on their turn each round until they are adjacent to it, at which point they defend it with their lives. The lattice uses its second action to deal 16d6 mental damage (DC 42 basic Will save) to a non-convergent creature within 100 feet. This damage is nonlethal; a creature knocked out by this damage doesn't gain the dying condition and is automatically controlled by the *convergence lattice* when they awaken. The lattice uses its third action to make the same attack against a second non-convergent creature within 100 feet; if there isn't such a second creature, it doesn't take its third action.

Reset The *convergence lattice* deactivates and resets after there are no uncontrolled targets within line of sight for 1 minute.

Treasure: Once the *convergence lattice* has been destroyed, its raw components become inert and can be salvaged. This includes 3 Bulk of adamantine worth a total of 18,000 gp, diamonds and sapphires worth 15,000 gp in total, and platinum fragments worth 9,500 gp.

XP Award: Award the heroes with XP for creatures they free from the *convergence lattice* as though they had defeated those foes in combat.



Convergence Lattice

A9. HOLDING CELLS

The Eagle Garrison fort has two small cells to hold the occasional bandit or smuggler captive. Unusually, both cells are currently occupied.

Creatures: The woman in the south cell has the nondescript mixed heritage common in Absalom. She is unaffected by the *convergence lattice*, though neither the assimilated garrison members nor the other prisoner know why. In fact, the woman is unaffected by the lattice because she's a powerful glabrezu in disguise. Though Sarvel called this demon to the Material Plane and sent her to the garrison to oversee the effectiveness of the *convergence lattice*, she has another motive. The glabrezu is a particularly powerful servitor of the demon lord Mestama, and she can't resist an opportunity to deceive and undermine another demon lord or this self-proclaimed "apocalypse prophet." Upon seeing the *convergence lattice*'s effectiveness, she's wondering how to subvert its extraplanar magic to serve her mistress's ends. She was perfectly content to let the convergent soldiers place her in the cell once they realized she was incompatible with the lattice, as the holding cell offers her a convenient location from which she can study its effects.

The glabrezu quickly realizes the heroes aren't part of the *convergence lattice*, but also can't help but try to undermine their efforts. She introduces herself as a luckless trader named Kimilekki and offers up her observations about the convergent soldiers and the *convergence lattice*—but she Lies, hoping to steer the heroes toward making critical mistakes. For example, she suggests that the lattice gains power from people affected by it, encouraging the heroes to kill the ensnared garrison members.

She doesn't know Jiareff but nevertheless insists that the half-elf can't be trusted or he wouldn't have been jailed.

If the heroes offer to free Kimilekki or take her along with them, she agrees—though she's quick to turn on the heroes at a critical point. A hero who successfully Senses Motive can discern her treachery before she strikes. If she survives such a confrontation, or if the heroes don't fall victim to her lies, she tails them and confronts them at some point in the Kortos Mounts, likely during another fight or while they're resting.

The north cell holds a half-elf Eagle Garrison soldier wearing only simple trousers and an undershirt. Named Jiareff, he was enjoying a particularly boisterous off-duty night when the *convergence lattice* took

over the garrison. He was so drunk at the time that the lattice couldn't include him in the hive mind, so the other members of the garrison, thoroughly in the its thrall, placed Jiareff in this cell in the hopes that he might eventually sober up enough to join the lattice. While he is now sober, he has so far been able to resist the lattice's effects. The peculiar behavior of the other garrison members and the influence of the occupant of the adjacent cell have left him deeply distrustful. He begins with an attitude of unfriendly toward the heroes. Even if the heroes improve Jiareff's attitude to friendly, he hesitates to share information about the state of the fort—a character must succeed at a DC 33 Diplomacy check to Make an Impression to get him to open up, and he refuses to do so in Kimilekki's presence.

Jiareff is aware that the other garrison members have become controlled by some mental effect; while he doesn't know the details, he has noticed their uncanny coordination and the strange runes that accompany their peculiar form of communication. He can also describe the vulgaths who passed along the road several weeks before and the report that the Eagle Garrison sent to Absalom's First Guard (though he doesn't realize the rider was captured and killed). He doesn't know who the prisoner in the other cell is; when he awoke here with a terrible hangover, the unfamiliar woman was already there, and her comments and conversations since have been cryptic and unnerving. If the heroes convince Jiareff to share what he knows, he also asks them to free the other garrison soldiers from whatever is controlling them.



Kimilekki

KIMILEKKI

CREATURE 17

UNIQUE CE HUGE DEMON FIEND

Female variant glabrezu demon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 79)

Perception +30; darkvision, *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 feet, *tongues*

Skills Deception +34, Diplomacy +32, Intimidation +32, Religion +28, Society +28, Stealth +27

Str +8, **Dex** +2, **Con** +9, **Int** +4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +8

AC 40; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +25, **Will** +30; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 380; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, good 15

Truth Vulnerability A glabrezu's lies sustain them, and the truth can destroy them. Whenever a revelation effect counteracts or reveals the glabrezu's illusions or

the glabrezu fails a save against an effect that would prevent them from lying (such as *zone of truth*), the demon takes 5d6 mental damage. They take this damage only once per effect, even if the effect reveals multiple illusions or prevents multiple lies.

Speed 35 feet

Melee ♦ pincer +33 (deadly 3d10, evil, magical, reach 15 feet),

Damage 3d10+14 bludgeoning plus 2d6 evil and Grab

Melee ♦ claw +33 (agile, evil, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d6+14 slashing plus 2d6 evil

Melee ♦ jaws +33 (evil, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d12+14 piercing plus 2d6 evil

Divine Innate Spells DC 38, attack +30; **9th** *wail of the banshee*; **8th** *dispel magic* (at will), *spiritual epidemic*; **7th** *illusory disguise* (at will), *reverse gravity*; **5th** *dimension door*;

4th *confusion* (at will), *dimension door* (at will);

2nd *mirror image* (at will); **Cantrips** (9th) *telekinetic projectile*; **Constant** (6th) *true seeing*; **(5th)** *tongues*

Divine Rituals DC 38; *Abyssal pact*

Captive Rake ♦ **Requirements** A creature is grabbed in the glabrezu's pincer; **Effect** The glabrezu pulls the grabbed creature up to 5 feet closer, then makes two claw Strikes against it. Those Strikes count as one attack when determining the glabrezu's multiple attack penalty, and the penalty doesn't increase until after both Strikes.

Steady Spellcasting When a reaction would disrupt the glabrezu's spell, the demon can attempt a DC 15 flat check, avoiding the disruption on a success.

Sudden Betrayal A glabrezu can always use Deception when rolling initiative as long as they're aware of at least one opponent before initiative is rolled. When using Deception for initiative, the demon gains a +2 circumstance bonus to Deception.

Treacherous Veil A glabrezu's *illusory disguise* enables it to appear as a creature of any size.

Twisted Desires (divination, divine) Once per month, a glabrezu can grant a mortal humanoid the effects of a *miracle* spell granted by an Abyssal patron, though the glabrezu always perverts the miracle according to their own treacherous nature.

JIAREFF

CREATURE 7

NG male half-elf hunter (*Pathfinder Gamemastery Guide* 204, 219)

Initiative Perception +17

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP if they convince Jiareff to share what he knows. Award them 30 XP if they successfully see through the glabrezu's disguise or identify her information as incorrect, in addition to any XP for defeating her in combat (either now or later).

A10. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS LOW 16

These quarters are comfortably furnished, if still practical and efficient. The bed is made with sharp creases and precise folds. The surface of the desk is hardly visible, but the papers and ledgers spread across it are neatly organized into over a dozen evenly spaced, impeccable stacks. A small door opens onto a private privy.

The commanding officer of the Eagle Garrison fort resides in these comfortable, spacious quarters. Though immaculately arranged, the papers on the desk are ordered by size, color, and paper quality, rather than the information they contain.

The heroes are likely interested in a recent collection of notes about the ancient road leading northeast from the Eagle Garrison fort. Captain Kendley Nathrael asked the garrison's giant eagle partners to scout out the route following the xulgaths' recent passage along that road, and the collected notes detail the route from the fort to a location referred to as the Vale of Aroden, though the report contains no detail on this location beyond the fact that the xulgaths have entered it. Contained within the notes is a brief mention of an abandoned way station—a useful landmark along the way to the vale.

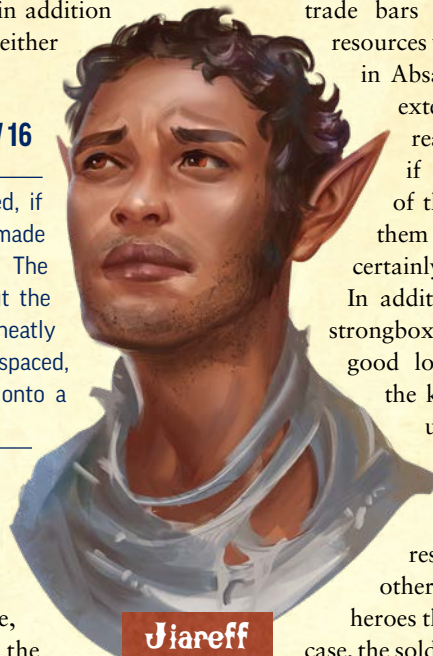
Creatures: If she hasn't been drawn elsewhere by the *convergence lattice's* interactions with the heroes, Kendley lingers in her quarters, reading through the correspondence stored in the writing desk to add the information to the hive mind. As part of the process, she's meticulously organized all of the documents here for ease of reference.

Kendley is the focus of the convergent effect, referred to by everyone in the lattice as the "authority." She hurries to assist other members of the hive mind whenever they are in conflict, especially if the *convergence lattice* itself is threatened.

CONVERGENT KENDLEY NATHRAEL CREATURE 19

Page 86

Initiative Perception +35



Jiareff

Treasure: A small box under Kendley's bed contains two flasks of *ambrosia of undying hope* (page 74), a *white wyrm dragon's breath potion*, and 10 platinum trade bars worth 1,000 gp each. These resources were supplied by the First Guard in Absalom for the captain to use in extenuating circumstances; Kendley readily offers them to the heroes if she survives their destruction of the *convergence lattice*, assuring them these circumstances are most certainly extenuating.

In addition, the desk contains an iron strongbox (Hardness 9, HP 36) with a good lock (to which Kendley carries the key), containing 5,200 gp to be used as the soldiers' payroll for the coming months. Kendley and the other soldiers offer this sum willingly if the heroes restore the fort with no casualties; otherwise they begrudgingly give the heroes the money only if asked. In either case, the soldiers are confident the authorities in Absalom will ensure they're paid eventually.

XP Award: Award the heroes 80 XP for finding the directions to the Vale of Aroden.

A11. LOOKOUT

Low stone walls safeguard against falls from this open-air lookout tower. To the south, thick forest gives way to the foothills and plains of the Swardlands, while the northern view reveals rocky mountain slopes and foreboding climbs. A narrow trail winds from the fort's base up into the mountain range.

The Eagle Garrison normally keeps a pair of soldiers posted here to watch for danger, but the *convergence lattice* hasn't maintained this practice. If the heroes have antagonized the hive mind, the convergent giant eagles from area A1 harry the heroes here.

THE GARRISON RESTORED

If the heroes destroy the *convergence lattice*, its control over the creatures here immediately ends. They lose the controlled condition, but they can recall their actions while within the hive mind and understand what happened to them.

Most of the garrison members are embarrassed and ashamed at having been caught up in the *convergence lattice's* effects. After all, their position here is to guard against danger, and the fact that they all fell prey to this

threat is a marked failure in that goal. Furthermore, at least one of their member has been slain (and perhaps more, if the heroes didn't manage to rescue Kohliarn from the saurian watch post or killed any of the convergent soldiers), the heroes were able to simply walk into what should have been a fortified outpost, and nearly all their horses are gone.

If the party killed any garrison members in their efforts to neutralize the *convergence lattice*, the survivors grimly accept the losses but are unfriendly toward the heroes. Conversely, if the heroes manage to destroy the lattice without any casualties, the rangers express their appreciation for their thorough handling of the situation.

Captain Kendley Nathrael—assuming she's still alive—is grateful for the party's assistance, but she doesn't shirk her responsibilities as leader of the Eagle Garrison fort. She questions the heroes about their business, but she already suspects they're on the trail of the vulgaths and therefore headed to the Verdant Beacon. Kendley can convey the information found on her desk in area A10, but she can also inform the heroes that the "Vale of Aroden" refers to the location up the trail from the fort. The garrison's giant eagle allies have tried several times over the years to scout that area, but thick clouds bar a visual assessment from above, and the clouds themselves have a disorienting effect, rerouting the eagles back down the mountain whenever they fly through. The soldiers themselves aren't equipped for a mountaineering expedition and are reluctant to risk scouting a location that, save for recent vulgath activity, seems abandoned. Kendley also cautions the heroes against using teleportation magic in the mountains, although they're probably already aware of these restrictions. The fort is relatively well-stocked, and as long as the heroes are on good terms with Kendley, they are welcome to rest there before continuing their journey.

In the event that Kendley perished, the garrison's second-in-command—a male halfling named Rorick Silvershine—takes command of the surviving soldiers. Rorick can convey the same information as Kendley, but he is less welcoming of the heroes and urges them to hurry along their way as soon as they're able.

Treasure: Kendley provides the heroes with the treasures in the box in area A10 if they liberate her. If they did so without killing any of Kendley's soldiers, she offers an even greater treasure. After visiting the unmarked burial place of a fallen hero of the Eagle Garrison, Kendley returns with a *shield of the unified legion* (page 75). Though she did not know them, the captain seems confident that its former owner would have wanted the heroes to have it.

Toward the Verdant Beacon

Whether or not the heroes freed the Eagle Garrison from the effects of the *convergence lattice*, they should have had plenty of opportunities to learn the route they must take to reach the Vale of Aroden and the Verdant Beacon. The murrigna Daumieth, the glabrezu Kimilekki, and the notes in Kendley's quarters all point in the right direction, and if all else fails, the old trail winding deeper into the mountains leads to the vale. Since teleportation magic doesn't work, the heroes most likely proceed overland along the narrow track up into the mountains, and the following encounters occur on their journey. Unless the heroes travel with supernatural speed, these encounters likely occur on different days of travel.

UNCANNY STORM

SEVERE 18

As the heroes pass through one of the last forested portions of the trail, the weather begins to turn remarkably bad.

Clouds darken what can be seen of the sky through the evergreen forest boughs, first blocking the sun and then blotting out the remaining light until the forest is draped in a dim twilight. Fat flakes of snow begin to fall, faster and faster, and in only a few moments, the trail is draped in a growing blanket of white. The snowfall dampens all sound, and even the trees just off the trail are hard to make out through the flurry.

The sudden storm is highly localized, covering only 2 square miles; heroes who backtrack find that it abruptly ends less than a half mile behind them. The area becomes severe cold (*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 518), dealing 2d6 cold damage every hour. The rapid snowfall makes the area difficult terrain, and visibility is drastically lowered—creatures take a –3 circumstance penalty to sight-based Perception checks, and creatures more than 15 feet away are concealed. The storm is obviously unnatural, although a successful DC 34 Nature or Survival check is required to identify it as the result of a *control weather* ritual. On a critical success, the hero recalls that some mountainous creatures, like wendigos, have the ability to change the weather in this way; if the heroes heard the wendigo rumor back in Diobel (page 6), they get a +4 circumstance bonus to critically succeed at this check.

A single wendigo named Yesuveth has long lived in these mountains. When Sarvel Ever-Hunger came by, he offered a handful of victims to Yesuveth in exchange for passage. Yesuveth transformed three of these victims into other wendigos and now leads the

small group in expanding their territory; the wendigos take turns hunting in pairs. Long ago, Yesuveth formed something of an agreement with an even-tempered ice linnorm residing further up in the mountains. Whenever the wendigos spot multiple travelers, they summon a storm to trap the victims. The wendigos then goad the linnorm to use the storm as cover to attack and take advantage of the chaos of combat and snow to Sneak up on the travelers and abduct one or two of them (leaving the others for the linnorm).

Creatures: The wendigos remain out of sight in the storm they've created, waiting for the ice linnorm to find the intruders and attack. The heroes' first indication of this trap is likely when the linnorm attacks from out of the heavy snowfall, near the center of the storm.

Savvy heroes might realize there is more at play here than a linnorm attack. A hero who succeeds at a DC 38 Arcana check to Recall Information about linnorms knows that ice linnorms have no innate ability to control the weather or produce localized storms like this, so another threat must be in the area.

The linnorm attacks the heroes out of conditioning rather than true malice. A hero with the Legendary Negotiation feat can convince the linnorm to stand down with a successful DC 36 Diplomacy check. A hero who is legendary in Nature can attempt a DC 36 Nature check to convince the linnorm to stand down (as a variant of the Command an Animal action). Failure at either check compels the linnorm to fight on and makes further attempts at either check impossible.

The wendigos attack during the third round of combat, coming from behind the party to attack the heroes remaining farthest back from the fray. A

wendigo that successfully abducts a character takes their captive to the abandoned way station (page 22) to torment it with the other wendigos there. A wendigo foiled in their attack uses their Howl—which might affect the linnorm—and savages any heroes they can reach.

The linnorm retreats if reduced to fewer than 80 Hit Points, but the desperate and vicious wendigos fight to the death.

YESUVETH

CREATURE 18

Elite wendigo (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 327)

Initiative Stealth +32

ICE LINNORM

CREATURE 17

N male ice linnorm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 225)

Initiative Perception +29

WENDIGO

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 327

Initiative Stealth +30

Treasure: Yesuveth wears a necklace of trinkets and tokens taken from various victims; among the mostly worthless detritus are three large, pink topazes worth 2,000 gp each and a *dispelling sliver*.

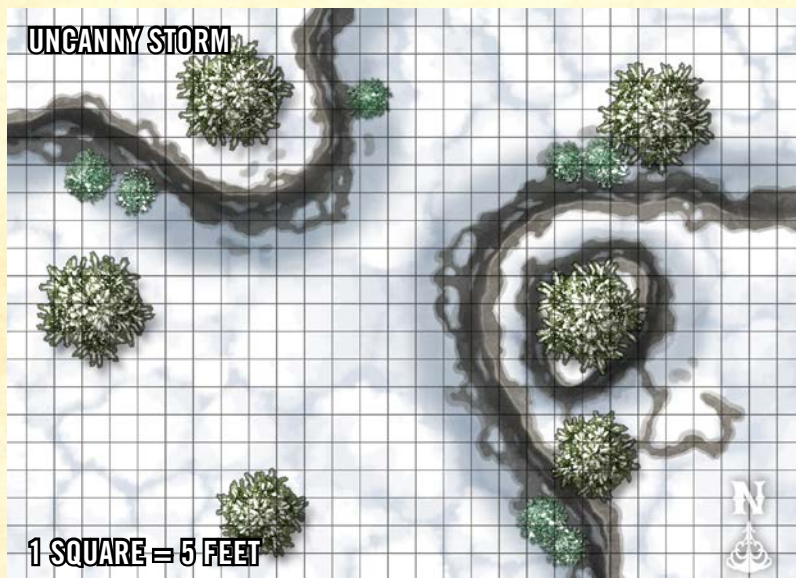
XP Award: If the heroes successfully persuade the linnorm to stand down, award them XP as though they had defeated him in combat.

HERMIT'S CAVE

A narrow trail departs from the main track, leading through a cleft in the stone to a small cave entrance. The area holds several signs of activity, including a

series of footprints (recognizable as those of a single halfling with a successful DC 20 Survival check), a few neatly cleaned bones stacked to one side of the cave entrance, and faint soot marks along the top of the cave mouth. The cave itself is only about 20 feet wide and 30 feet deep, with a low ceiling barely 5 feet high. The cave interior is outfitted with simple but cozy furnishings—a bed-like nest of furs, a fire circle with a tea kettle and an iron pot nearby, a rough table holding a wooden bowl, and the like.

This cave is the home of Malba, an elderly halfling woman who



retreated into the mountains years ago due to a peculiar curse laid upon her by a vindictive priest of Norgorber: no matter what words she speaks aloud, each creature listening hears their own deepest secrets laid bare. Years of misunderstanding and anger fueled by this curse have driven Malba away from settled areas, and she has made her home here, where speaking creatures are unlikely to stumble across her.

Malba is startled to see the party, especially if they barge into her cave home. Even so, she refuses to speak; she communicates only through sign language or via writing. She makes no attempt to hide her alarm at the heroes' appearance, but she isn't immediately hostile, attacking only in self-defense. The curse affecting her is an 18th-level effect with a counteract DC of 34, should a hero identify her condition and attempt to heal her with *remove curse* or a similar effect.

Characters who take the time to communicate with Malba can learn quite a bit from the hermit. She avoids the wendigos that haunt the area (who don't know she exists), but she's on good terms with the ice linnorm whose territory she shares. She knows a large group of creatures came by recently, but she wisely stayed out of sight; she doesn't know what type of creatures they were, although she knows they smelled terrible. Malba has also visited the abandoned way station northeast of her home. She recognized the site as a onetime shrine to Iomedae and has encountered the intelligent rapier *Piereta* there; the sword reacted to her as if it could hear her, but it refused to let the halfling claim or wield the weapon. Reluctant to expose herself to further curses or bad luck, Malba left the rapier alone and hasn't visited the way station since. If the heroes express their intentions of traveling that way, she admonishes them to be polite to any swords they come across.

Malba the Uncursed: If the heroes remove Malba's curse, she is relieved to no longer bear the burden of maintaining everyone else's privacy through silence. She eagerly chats with the heroes, as though trying out normal conversation for the first time in ages, and explains that her rapport with the ice linnorm is much deeper than she's been able to convey in pantomime or writing. If the heroes mention their connection to a circus, and that they either didn't fight the linnorm

or drove it off rather than kill it, Malba suggests that she and the linnorm might return to civilization with the heroes and perform in their circus. If the heroes are willing to let Malba and the linnorm join their circus, provide the players with the Malba and the Dragon trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: Malba rewards heroes who remove her curse with an item the ice linnorm brought to her,



Yesuveth

likely taken from one of its victims in the mountains: a *jerkin of liberation* (page 74). Malba has cleaned the item up, and she doesn't opine as to its origins if the heroes don't ask.

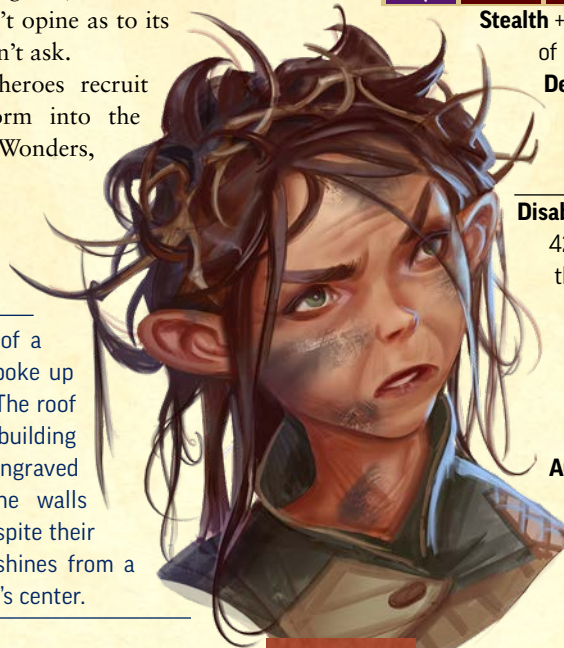
XP Award: If the heroes recruit Malba and the linnorm into the Circus of Wayward Wonders, award them 30 XP.

ABANDONED WAY STATION SEVERE 18

The crumbling remains of a simple stone structure poke up from the drifting snow. The roof and doors of the small building are long gone, but engraved sword motifs along the walls remain faintly visible despite their age. A gleam of silver shines from a pedestal at the structure's center.

This way station was originally a small shrine to Iomedae, doubling as a safe place for travelers to camp. Since Aroden's death, the site has been almost entirely abandoned. Time and the severe mountain weather have taken their toll on the structure. It now consists of only four stone walls, each roughly 8 feet tall, forming a square 20 feet to a side—save for the northeastern corner, which has collapsed to leave a wide gap in the structure. The main door on the south wall is now an open archway. Laying atop a stone altar engraved with distinctive Iomedean iconography is a pristine rapier. Although much of the structure is discolored by rain and snow or covered with debris from the collapsed roof, the altar remains supernaturally clean and the rapier gleams as if new.

Hazard: The newly risen wendigos in the area aren't the only victims of Sarvel Ever-Hunger's ruthlessness. His casual willingness to dispose of his own followers has seeped into the stone of the way station. Their suffering now manifests whenever they senses a nearby creature sharing their fear, lingering as a wailing mass of spectral shapes.



Malba

SUFFERING XULGATHS

HAZARD 16

UNIQUE COMPLEX HAUNT

Stealth +26 (expert) to hear the echoed shouts of panicked xulgaths

Description The shadows of four xulgaths endlessly relive their deaths at the hands of the wendigos and their clutchmates.

Disable DC 42 Religion (master) or DC 42 Occultism (master) to calm each of the four spirits. On a character's first successful check, the character also learns that xulgath funerary rites typically involve cremation, which hints that fire is a viable way to put them to rest.

AC 39; **Fort** +27, **Ref** +31, **Will** +27

HP 24 per spirit; **Immunities** death effects, disease, paralyzed, poison, precision, unconscious;

Resistances all damage 20 (except fire, force, ghost touch, or positive)

Wendigo Remnants **Trigger** A living creature other than a wendigo gains the frightened condition while within 100 feet of the way station; **Effect** The haunt rolls for initiative.

Routine (4 actions) Each active spirit chooses a living non-wendigo creature within 120 feet and attempts to devour it, targeting different creatures if possible. Each calmed spirit reduces the hazard's actions by 1.

Melee **◆** ghostly bite +32 (magical), **Damage** 3d6+5 negative

Reset The haunt is deactivated and resets 1 minute after all non-wendigo creatures leave the area.

ABANDONED WAY STATION



Creatures: The two wendigos who aren't out hunting remain here, near the site of Sarvel's sacrifice that gave rise to even more wendigos in this area. Not yet confident enough to strike out on their own, these wendigos remain close to this site.

The suffering of the xulgaths also drew the attention of a skulltaker lingering in the surrounding peaks. This creature, known only as the Bone Augur, lurks nearby, watching the heroes and hovering along the edges of any conflict at the way station. It recognizes the heroes' substantial power and doesn't challenge them directly. If they attack it, however, the Bone Augur retaliates with the intent of incorporating the heroes' bones into its own body.

THE BONE AUGUR

CREATURE 18

Skulltaker (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 300)

Initiative Stealth +33

Languages Azlanti, Common, Dwarven, Kelish, Osiriani, Sylvan

WENDIGOS (2)

CREATURE 17

Pathfinder Bestiary 327

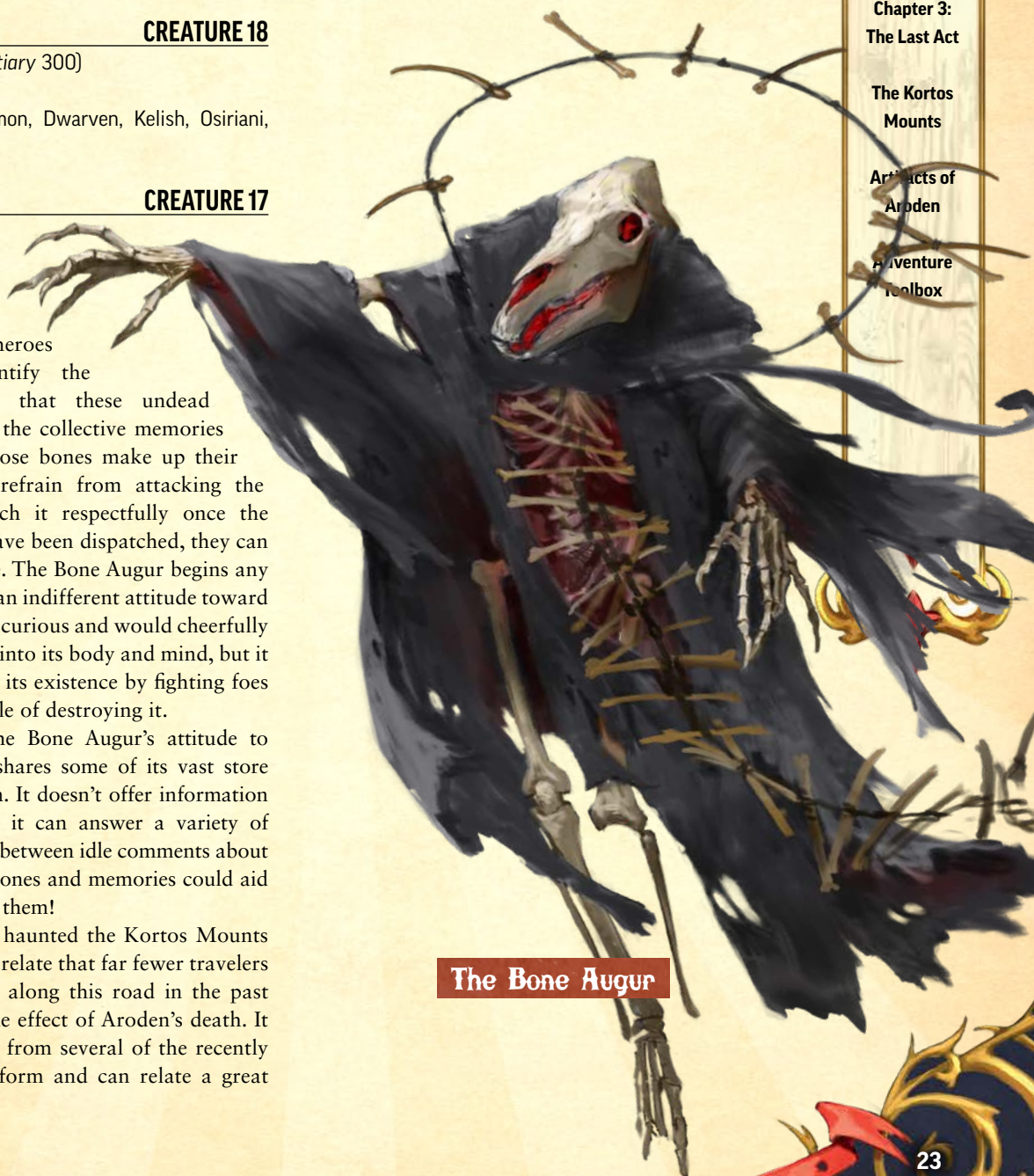
Initiative Perception +32

Talking with the Bone Augur: Savvy heroes who successfully identify the skulltaker may recall that these undead amalgamations possess the collective memories of all the creatures whose bones make up their bodies. If the heroes refrain from attacking the skulltaker and approach it respectfully once the wendigos and hazard have been dispatched, they can try to gain its assistance. The Bone Augur begins any such conversation with an indifferent attitude toward the heroes; it finds them curious and would cheerfully incorporate their bones into its body and mind, but it also isn't willing to risk its existence by fighting foes who might prove capable of destroying it.

If the party shifts the Bone Augur's attitude to helpful, the skulltaker shares some of its vast store of knowledge with them. It doesn't offer information of its own accord, but it can answer a variety of questions, which it does between idle comments about how much the heroes' bones and memories could aid it, if it simply consumed them!

The Bone Augur has haunted the Kortos Mounts for centuries, and it can relate that far fewer travelers have made the journey along this road in the past century—certainly a side effect of Aroden's death. It has incorporated bones from several of the recently slain xulgaths into its form and can relate a great

deal about Sarvel's plans: that the xulgath leader is a favored prophet of the demon lord Zevgavizeb, and that the xulgaths are traveling to the Verdant Beacon so that Sarvel can perform a ritual known as the *extinction curse*, which (according to the xulgaths) will wipe out life from the Starstone Isles and sink them back into the sea. It has also stolen the bones and memories of much older travelers who have visited the Vale of Aroden, and thus it is aware of the vale's role as both a gateway to the Verdant Beacon and a test of visitors' worthiness. If pressed further, the Bone Augur explains the Trials of Aroden as a 12-part test for any that wish to enter the Verdant



The Bone Augur

Beacon. The skulltaker can't tell the heroes any details about the tests beyond the fact that each part involves a statue.

The Sword: The rapier lying on the altar is *Piereta* (page 74), a sacred, intelligent relic of the church of Iomedae. She was placed in this shrine when her most recent wielder perished over a century ago, and has lain here abandoned ever since. The sword observes the party from the altar, assessing their intentions and actions. If the heroes approach with respect and address her politely (which Malba in the Hermit's Cave might have encouraged them to do), *Piereta* replies in kind. She refuses to interact with anyone who is rude to her or attempts to Coerce her.

She can be convinced to accompany the heroes, but she's particular about who she permits to wield her. She accepts any worshipper of Iomedae in good standing, as well as any character of lawful good or neutral good alignment who also worships a good-aligned deity. Any other character wishing to wield *Piereta* must explain why their goals are worthy (preventing the destruction of life across the Isle of Kortos certainly qualifies) and succeed at a DC 36 Diplomacy check before *Piereta* agrees to accompany them.

Treasure: If the heroes explain their mission to *Piereta*, whether or not they succeed in persuading the sword to accompany them, she directs them to a secret compartment built into the stone altar. The heroes can find this compartment independently with a successful DC 40 Perception check while Searching the altar. This compartment contains a *major healing potion* and a *runestone* containing a +3 *armor potency rune*.

XP Award: If the heroes learn about the *extinction curse* ritual or the Trials of Aroden from the skulltaker, award them XP as if they had defeated it in combat. Award the heroes 30 XP for claiming *Piereta*.

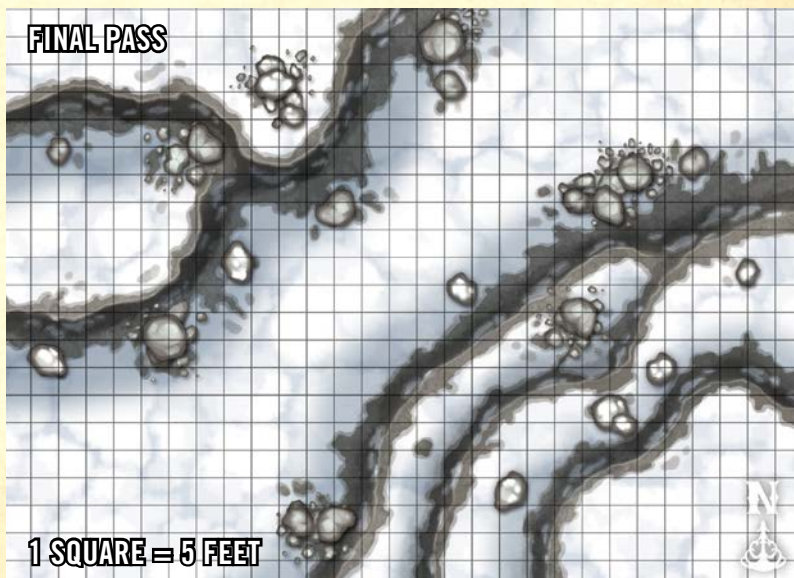
FINAL PASS SEVERE 18

The entrance to the Vale of Aroden appears to be nothing more than a narrow mountain pass about 30 feet wide, albeit one that appears prone to rockslides, given the abundance of loose rock and scree in the area. Deep fog obscures the path after about 50 feet. Viewed from above, this fog appears to be a heavy cloud caught in a valley between several mountain peaks. In fact, it's a

mystical barrier Aroden created shortly after building the Verdant Beacon as part of his protections around the vale and his refuge. A creature that flies into the mist is disoriented and turned around until it emerges from the clouds in the same place it entered. The fog itself radiates a powerful aura of abjuration magic to spells like *detect magic*. Between this confounding mist and the mountains' preclusion of teleportation magic, this pass is something of a mystical doorway: the only way a creature can access the Vale of Aroden (and thus gain entry to the Verdant Beacon) is by walking through this pass.

But reaching the Vale of Aroden is not so simple as just walking. Millennia ago, Aroden built a colossal stone guardian to watch over this entry into his sanctuary, using his Azlanti background in crafting constructs to replicate the enormous creations of a long-forgotten empire. He programmed the creature with a simple directive—let no one pass into the vale other than himself and others who shared his aspects. The construct has served admirably in that role ever since, standing in the center of the pass and keeping watch to the southwest. It swiftly learned that it could use the cliffs on either side of the pass to further deter trespassers by pulling crashing rocks down upon them. Once left alone, it restacks the larger rocks to make it easier to pull them down again. Over the ages, this practice has partially buried the guthallath past its waist in smaller rocks, but it has seen no reason to change its largely effective strategy—especially since it can easily burrow through the piled rock.

Hazard: Before the guthallath begins a fight, it tears at the stones of the cliffs, causing a massive rockslide.



Tons of stone crash down along the trail in a deadly rain of boulders.

GUTHALLATH ROCKSLIDE

HAZARD 19

COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL


Stealth +30 (master) to notice the odd aging of the stones, seemingly far older and more weathered than the surrounding rocks

Description The rock walls nearby begin to crumble and collapse.


Disable DC 48 Crafting (legendary) to buttress the collapsing rocks in three different locations. Using large and durable materials (or applicable spells) to support the rocks reduces the check to DC 45 Crafting (master).


AC 42; **Fort** +35, **Ref** +29

Hardness 20 (10 in the guthallath's erosion aura), **HP** 150; **Immunities** critical hits, object immunities, precision damage

Rumbling Rocks  **Trigger** The guthallath rolls initiative; **Effect** The rocks of the area begin to crumble. The hazard rolls for initiative.

Routine (2 actions) On the hazard's first action, any areas of crumbling rocks from a previous round collapse, making a falling rocks Strike against each creature in the area. On its second action, the hazard crumbles rocks in a 20-foot radius around the previous collapse. A character can Seek (DC 40) to determine where the rocks will fall on the following round, but on a critical failure, they incorrectly identify where the rocks will fall.

Ranged  falling rocks +36, **Damage** 4d10+20 bludgeoning

Early Collapse  **Trigger** The hazard takes 30 or more damage; **Effect** Move the hazard's initiative to immediately follow the creature that damaged the hazard.

Reset The guthallath can reset the hazard with a few days of work stacking the fallen rocks.

Creature: After triggering the rockslide, the guthallath casts *haste* on itself and does its best to kill or drive away the party, focusing on whichever heroes seem most likely to make it through the pass. It pursues creatures fleeing into the Vale of Aroden, but not those who retreat back down the mountain.

GUTHALLATH

CREATURE 19

Pathfinder Bestiary 199

Initiative Perception +30

Entering the Vale: Once the heroes defeat or bypass the guthallath, they can follow the faint path leading into the

dense fog. This fog severely limits visibility—anything 10 feet away is concealed, creatures and objects between 10 and 20 feet away are hidden, and anything further away is undetected.

The trail descends gently through the fog for about a mile through the narrow, winding mountain pass. As the party travels this path, the bitter mountain winds lessen and then cease altogether, and the temperature rises steadily to a cool but comfortable average as the heroes enter the fabled Vale of Aroden.



Guthallath Rockslide



CHAPTER 2: THE TRIALS OF ARODEN

After making their way through the final pass, the heroes descend into the hidden valley beneath the mountain known as the Weeping Grandfather. The Weeping Grandfather is volcanic, but Aroden's magic prevents the eruptions from harming the Verdant Beacon or the valley leading to it, the Vale of Aroden.

The secluded valley is sheltered both by the sharp mountain peaks surrounding it and by magical wards. These wards include the interruption of teleportation magic within the mountains and the disorienting fog that conceals the valley. Only a creature within the valley can see the full extent of the magic's power, however. The shrouding fog is apparent only from the outside of the vale, allowing for abundant sunshine by day and a stunning view of the stars overhead by night. The climate within the valley is preternaturally controlled to be temperate, resulting in a verdant valley secreted away here in the high mountains.

The map on page 28 depicts the Vale of Aroden, including the Trials of Aroden, the Verdant Beacon, and the pathways of the vale's guardians.

Read or paraphrase the following as the heroes enter the Vale of Aroden.

After a long trek through a narrow, fog-choked canyon, the path suddenly widens. A few steps further, the fog lifts away entirely, revealing a crystal-clear view of a wide, secluded valley. At the southeast of the vale is the deep green of a dense forest, while drier hills rise to the northwest. Between them is a wide, grassy plain, marked with a single worn pathway. Not far along this trail is a small stone plaza marked with standing stones and a tall statue; far beyond it is a lake with waters of a pristine turquoise-blue. At the valley's far end rises a steep-sided mountain peak, crowned by a simple tower with a rich green hue, visible even at this great distance.

The Trials of Aroden

The valley below the Weeping Grandfather and the Verdant Beacon hosts a series of tests Aroden created to ensure that anyone approaching his sanctuary meets his personal criteria of worth (their similarity to him)—and to drive away or destroy those who don't. These Trials of Aroden consist of 12 tests, each related to one of the god's 12 mortal guises: artisan, artist, beggar, farmer, fisher, hunter, merchant, scholar, shepherd, soldier, tailor, and thief.

Each trial is centered around a stone statue roughly 10 feet tall, depicting Aroden in that test's guise. Originally carved of durable marble and maintained through the god's divine power, these statues have fallen into disrepair over the past century. Many are weathered, and several have become overgrown with moss or creeping vines. A few have been more directly damaged—largely a result of Sarvel Ever-Hunger's efforts to gain access to the Verdant Beacon.

The heroes may recall a similar array of statues in Moonstone Hall beneath Escadar in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #152: Legacy of the Lost God*. Similarly, the party might have heard rumors of the Trials of Aroden while Gathering Information in Diobel. If they don't recognize the statues on their own, a hero who succeeds at a DC 21 Religion or a DC 25 Occultism or Society check (or a check with an appropriate Lore skill) upon encountering any of the statues recalls that Aroden sometimes walked the world disguised as the practitioner of a common profession, such as a farmer or artist. On a critical success, the hero knows all 12 guises and realizes that each statue represents some kind of test.

The details of each test are described in the encounter area descriptions for each trial. The statue itself and its surrounding environs hint at the task to be performed, but a character observing the statue can discern the task they must complete with a successful DC 34 skill check related to the trial or the guise—though they may not know precisely how to achieve that goal. For example, a character who succeeds at a DC 34 Thievery check while examining the Thief's Trial knows they must find and return the statue's missing treasure, but they wouldn't know about the hidden chamber under the statue or the titan guardian.

When a trial has been successfully completed, the statue conveys the title for its guise upon all creatures present. A creature receiving a title feels a distinctive sense of pride and affirmation in their achievement, as though their work had been praised by a stern parent. In addition, the creature bears a subtle magical energy similar to the *resonant reflections*, but on a much smaller scale. When a statue bestows its title, creatures that previously passed the trial have that title revoked. An individual creature notices the loss of a title with a successful DC 27 Perception check or automatically when they try to access its power. A creature loses all its titles when out of the Vale of Aroden or the Verdant Beacon for 1 week.

Benefits: Characters gain benefits in the Vale of Aroden and the Verdant Beacon based on the number of titles they hold, in any combination. Affected creatures have a supernatural awareness of their increase in status. You can reinforce these sensations to help the party make an informed decision about whether they want to pursue more trials or move on to the Verdant Beacon.

Four Titles: A creature with four titles has earned basic access to the valley and the tower, giving them a sensation of belonging and having

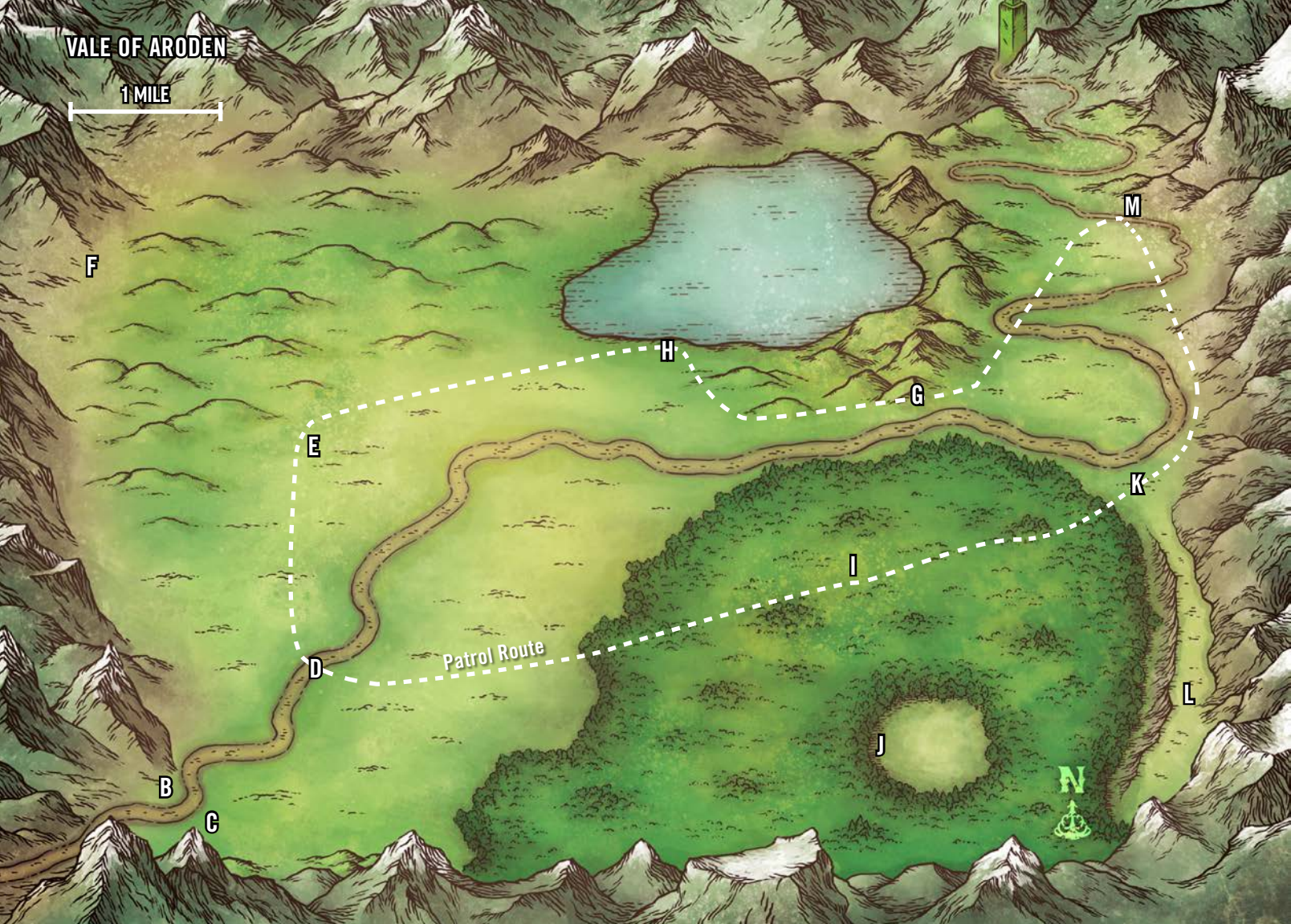
CHAPTER 2 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, the heroes must prove themselves worthy of entering the Verdant Beacon by completing a majority of the Trials of Aroden. These 12 specialized tests each reflect one aspect of the dead god Aroden, and the heroes must prove their worth in multiple trials to pass. Along the way, they must face the activated defenses of the Verdant Beacon under Sarvel Ever-Hunger's control, as well as the xulgath leader's allies and minions—to say nothing of the dangers present in the vale itself!

CHAPTER 2 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 2 are as follows.

- +3 greater striking composite shortbow
- +3 greater striking halberd
- +3 major resilient breastplate
- +3 major striking longsword
- +3 weapon potency rune
- +2 greater resilient full plate
- +2 greater striking ranseur
- +2 resilient leather armor
- +2 striking spear
- bag of holding type IV
- belt of regeneration
- celestial hair
- dread blindfold
- greater breastplate of command
- greater phylactery of faithfulness
- high-grade adamantite maul
- high-grade darkwood shield
- instant evisceration snare
- lavender and green ellipsoid aeon stone
- major alchemist's goggles
- major shadow rune
- major striking rune
- major sturdy shield
- necklace of fireballs type VII
- orange prism aeon stone
- spellstrike ammunition
- staff of the magi



returned home once they gain the fourth title. They can pass through the magical portal at the Artisan's Trial (if it's been repaired; see page 43) and the gates leading into the Verdant Beacon itself (areas N1 and N2), and teleportation magic works normally for them. In addition, the adamantine golems in the valley and the tower no longer perceive the creatures as intruders and ignore them.

Eight Titles: A creature with eight titles gains additional benefits that grant them some degree of control over the area, providing them an instinctive feeling of ownership and authority over the valley and tower. They can key the anti-teleportation effect and the gates to the Verdant Beacon (area N1 and N2) to affect particular creatures (such as saurians or xulgaths) or grant particular creatures access (as if those creatures had four titles themselves). Rekeying the gates or teleportation wards is a 3-action activity that has the concentrate trait, and the heroes can do so as often as they like—doing so can prevent the demons in the valley and tower from casting *dimension door*, for example. Furthermore, characters can activate the

partial constructs in area N7, which they realize upon seeing those constructs.

Twelve Titles: A creature that completes all 12 trials gains a special benefit. The collected titles convey a spiritual likeness to Aroden, manifesting as a sense of supreme confidence and protectiveness. Such a character wielding the Kortos Diamond from area N4 becomes aware of and can use that artifact's second activation.

The Xulgaths' Titles: Through trial and error under Sarvel's leadership, the xulgaths currently hold the titles of artisan, fisher, hunter, merchant, scholar, soldier, tailor, and thief. Completing these trials revokes them from the xulgaths, impairing Sarvel's ability to command the Verdant Beacon's defenses. Recognizing this possibility, however, Sarvel has left his own guardians at many of the trial sites and also sends a saurian strike force against the heroes the first time the xulgaths lose a title (see page 29).

Hazard: Though the magic of the Vale of Aroden is slowly fading, the statues' wards remain in place. Damaging any of the statues causes a magical backlash

to strike out at the offending creature, dealing that creature an amount of force damage equal to the damage the statue took. In addition, the target creature must succeed at a DC 40 Will save or be afflicted with a divine curse that prevents them from regaining Hit Points until the statue is fully repaired.

ADAMANTINE GUARDIANS

SEVERE 19

While the Trials of Aroden protect the Verdant Beacon against uninvited entry, a team of adamantine golems patrols the Vale of Aroden to deter intruders. These constructs were forged to resemble the Last Azlanti writ large, and unlike the statues, their visages have not deteriorated over time.

The golems maintain a consistent path as they patrol the vale, as shown on the map on page 28. The golems take 6 hours to navigate this route, which is worn by the tread of the golems over many, many years. The golems leave this path as necessary to fight off intruders, whom they pursue until either the intruders leave the vale or they themselves are defeated.

Once the heroes have successfully completed four or more trials, the golems recognize them as rightful occupants of the vale and ignore them.

ADAMANTINE GOLEMS (4)

CREATURE 18

Pathfinder Bestiary 189

Initiative Perception +26

XP Award: If the heroes notice but evade the adamantine golems and ascend to the Verdant Beacon without facing them, award them XP as if they had defeated the golems in combat.

SAURIAN STRIKE FORCE

MODERATE 19

The first time the heroes gain a title that Sarvel Ever-Hunger previously held (artisan, fisher, hunter, merchant, scholar, soldier, tailor, or thief), the xulgath prophet notes his loss and dispatches a strike force to scout out the statues and eliminate the intruders before they can interfere with his plans.

Creatures: Sarvel's strike force consists of two saurians leading a team of five viskithrels. These beasts were bred in Zevgavizeb's Abyssal realm of Glutondark to have superior scent and tracking abilities; the saurians rely on these extra senses to supplement their own, but the viskithrels are also fearsome foes in their own right.

The strike force starts its search at the statue of the applicable trial about 2 hours after Sarvel loses a title, then searches outward from there, resting for a few hours each evening but

otherwise searching diligently for the heroes. Sarvel sends word to the saurians immediately if the heroes gain a different title that he once held, which might help them catch up to the heroes. If this strike force is defeated, Sarvel decides to keep his allies close and doesn't send any further forces.



Adamantine Golem

SAURIAN WARMONGERS (2)

Page 80

Initiative Perception +31

CREATURE 16

VISKITHRELS (5)

Page 84

Initiative Perception +27

CREATURE 15

Questioning the Saurians:

The heroes might subdue and interrogate the saurians. They know that Sarvel is performing a long and involved ritual called the *extinction curse* that will wipe out the surface-dwellers—a goal they fully support. They can describe all the statues, including the obvious dangers at each, and they know that the Artisan's Trial can be used to reach the Verdant Beacon (though not precisely how). No matter the information they give, they do their best to omit key details (such as the acidic nature of the valley's lake or various defenders of the valley) in the hopes of leading the heroes into danger.



Eilosseh

B. BEGGAR'S TRIAL

Two statues of the same man face one another here, about a hundred feet apart. The statue to the east wears a simple tunic and leggings and holds an iconic shepherd's crook, shielding his eyes as he gazes out across the vale, oblivious to the bird droppings that streak his worn granite. On the opposite side of the road, mossy, water-stained stone takes the shape of the man in tattered rags sitting with his back to the wall, one empty hand extended wearily before him.

The Beggar's Trial and Shepherd's Trial are both linked to an ancient Elysian titan that wandered into the vale long ago and has since become integrated into the trials. Named Eilosseh, the titan keeps watch over her herd of Elysian sheep while monitoring the vale.

Eilosseh approaches the party shortly after they arrive at these statues, assuming they aren't remarkably stealthy. Her attitude is indifferent, and she keeps her weapons stowed while she assesses the newcomers. Her response to the heroes largely depends on their actions; she's happy to converse with them (and indeed, doing so is part of the role she plays in the trials), but she won't hesitate to defend herself if the characters attack.

Eilosseh fully understands the role she plays in the trials and the purpose of the trials within the Vale of Aroden. If the heroes shift her attitude to friendly or helpful, she provides a brief explanation about the statues and the trials, and a hero who succeeds at a DC 34 Diplomacy check to Request the information persuades her to share her observations of the xulgaths' activities. She simply turns her back and departs if the party worsens her attitude to hostile.

Some common questions the heroes might ask, and Eilosseh's answers, are below. The titan speaks slowly and gravely, weighing the heroes' words carefully before responding.

Who are you? "I am a simple shepherd who watches over my flock and this valley. My name is Eilosseh."

Why are you here? The titan gestures at the two statues. "I am here to tend my flock, to ask for help, and to help those who ask."

What are these statues? "These are the guises taken by a god as he walked among mortals. Each statue is a trial, to determine whether you are like him, in his estimation. Those unlike the god are barred from his tower. The more of the god's guises you wear, the more easily you can enter."

How do we know what to do for each trial? Eilosseh first gestures to the two statues nearby. "Observe. What guise does the god wear? What does he do in that guise? How can you do the same?" She then points to the statue of the beggar. "Here, the god is a beggar, asking for aid. In asking me, you have done the same. Go to the statue, and you will see that you are like him already, in this guise at least."

Don't you realize Aroden is dead? Eilosseh nods solemnly. "We all die in due time, save the Lady of Graves herself."

What help do you need? "I am a shepherd, but my flock has wandered afield. Each time I bring a beast here, it wanders off as I search for the next. Will you return my lost flock to me?" See the Shepherd's Trial for more information on this task.

What dangers should we watch for? "Foes wander this vale just as friends do. Not all things are what they seem. Look before you leap." Eilosseh smiles knowingly and gives a solemn nod.

Have you seen any xulgaths? Eilosseh responds to this question only if the party succeeded at the DC 34 Diplomacy check to Request the information. "Foul-

smelling lizards, yes. Troglodytes, we called them, in ages past. They passed through here some days ago, with great lizard folk and demons and daemons and dinosaurs. They claimed their titles and ascended to the god's tower, but some yet linger in the vale."

Creatures: Eilosseh is content to wait here as long as the heroes take to complete these trials.

EILOSSEH

CREATURE 21

Female Elysian titan (page 82)

Initiative Perception +36

Completing the Beggar's Trial

The Beggar's Trial simply requires the heroes to ask for and receive assistance from Eilosseh—which they likely complete before realizing the nature of the trial if they converse with her.

In the event the heroes attack the titan, she defends herself but retreats as quickly as she can, providing them an opportunity to realize their error and complete this trial later on. Of course, if the characters slay Eilosseh, they can't complete this trial at all.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Beggar's Trial.

C. SHEPHERD'S TRIAL

Eilosseh maintains a small herd of rare Elysian sheep within the Vale of Aroden. These creatures resemble Large mundane sheep with fluffy, iridescent white wool and golden horns, but they are no more intelligent than their Material Plane counterparts.

Given that the typical threats in the valley are localized, Eilosseh allows her herd to run free, knowing the simple creatures won't approach the dangerous areas and won't leave the comfortable vale for the harsh conditions of the surrounding mountains. To complete the Shepherd's Trial, the heroes must gather all five sheep back together into this area.

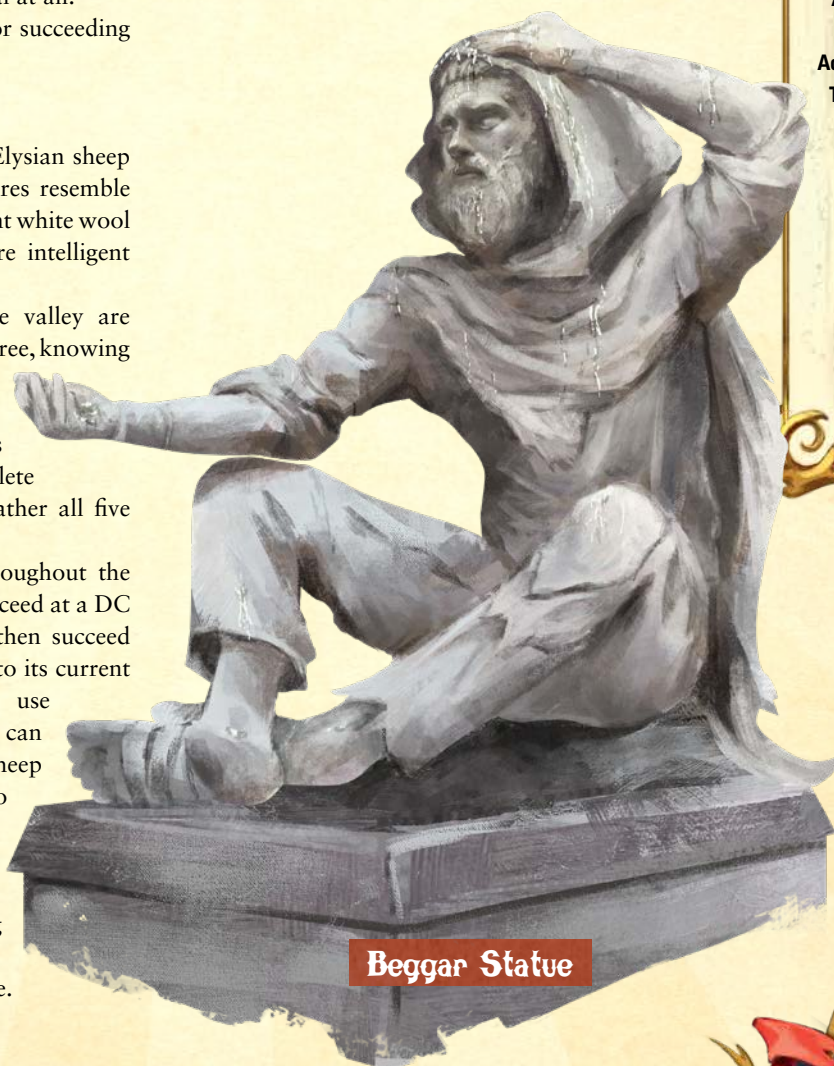
Eilosseh's five sheep are scattered throughout the vale. To find a sheep, a hero must first succeed at a DC 28 Perception check to find its tracks, then succeed at a series of Survival checks to Track it to its current location. Alternatively, the heroes can use spells such as *discern location* (Eilosseh can provide skeins of the wool from each sheep if the party is on good terms with her) to find the missing sheep.

Once the party finds a sheep, they must either encourage it to follow them (by Commanding the Animal or using *speak with animals* or a similar ability) or capture it and bring it back by force.

Untended sheep wander away from the statue, but Eilosseh keeps track of returned sheep so long as she is on good terms with the party. The heroes can complete this task even if Eilosseh is unhelpful or slain, but they must find their own means to keep the sheep at the shepherd's statue until they have all been returned.

The table on page 32 details the location of each sheep, along with the number of successful Survival checks to Track that sheep. The table also lists any complications that make it more difficult to return to the statue.

The heroes might inadvertently (or intentionally) cause the sheep to come to harm. Slain sheep are no longer considered part of the flock and do not need to be returned to the statue for the heroes to complete the trial, though if Eilosseh learns that the heroes harmed any of her sheep, she immediately becomes unfriendly and refuses to further help them unless they can improve her attitude. Should all five of the sheep perish, the heroes can't complete the Shepherd's Trial.



Beggar Statue

TABLE 2-1: SHEEP LOCATIONS

Sheep Location	Survival Checks	Complication
Plains near the scholar statue	1	—
Plains near the soldier statue	1	A critical failure at any check while returning this sheep causes the panicked creature to flee near the soldier statue; any demons there swiftly kill it.
Hills northeast of the thief statue	2	If the heroes spend more than 1 hour among the hills, they draw the ire of the thanatotic titan (page 83).
Northern shores of the acid lake	4	A critical failure at any check while returning this sheep results in that hero and the sheep falling into the acid lake, as described in the Thief's Trial (page 35).
Forest near the hunter statue	3	If the heroes attempt the Hunter's Trial (page 39) before learning about the Elysian sheep, their first attempt to complete the Hunter's Trial leads them to the sheep instead of the barking stag, placing the sheep at risk.

Creatures: The scattered Elysian sheep are unlikely to pose a combat challenge for the heroes, but their statistics are provided below for the purposes of capturing, tracking, or influencing them.

ELYSIAN SHEEP (5)

CREATURE 7

RARE NG LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +18; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +17, Athletics +15, Survival +16

Str +2, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -1

Nimble Grazer Inclines and rocky areas are not difficult terrain for an Elysian sheep.

AC 25; **Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 140; **Weaknesses** evil 5

Cowardly An Elysian sheep gains the fleeing condition whenever it has the frightened condition.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ horn +16, **Damage** 2d8+5 plus 1d6 good

Melee ♦ hoof +16, **Damage** 2d6+5 plus 1d6 good

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, hoof, DC 24

Treasure: If the heroes successfully return all five of Eilosseh's sheep, she gifts them with a thick, fluffy fleece she sheared from one of the creatures so as to preserve its Elysian magic. This rare wool is so skillfully shorn that it is worth 35,000 gp. Woven into the fleece is a single *celestial hair* (page 74).

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Shepherd's Trial.

D. SCHOLAR'S TRIAL

LOW 19

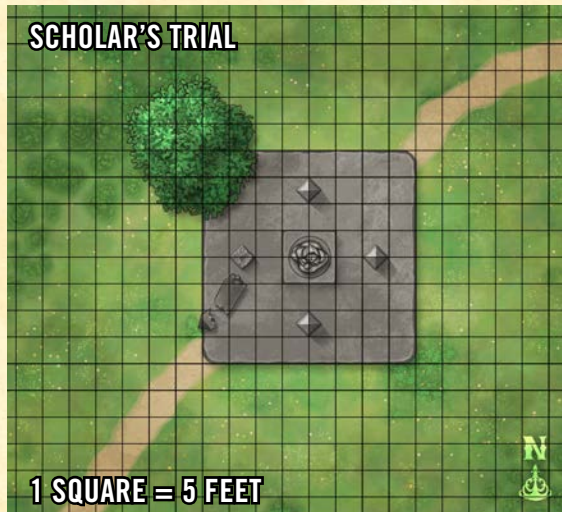
The path climbs a gentle rise amid the rolling plains to a wide plaza paved with aged, cracked flagstones. A century-old tree stretches over the plaza's northwestern edge, providing a patch of shade over the stones its roots have disrupted. At the center of the pavilion stands a ten-foot-tall statue of a man in tidy robes, a collection of rolled scrolls tucked under one arm. To the north, south, and east, marble obelisks match the statue's height, inscribed with lines of archaic text. The western obelisk lies broken along the ground.

The Scholar's Trial is both a test and an instruction guide to the Trials of Aroden as a whole, though the heroes likely can't examine



Elysian Sheep

SCHOLAR'S TRIAL



either the statue or the obelisks in detail until they have dealt with the current occupants of the plaza (see Creatures below).

The obelisks are carved with Azlanti text on all four sides. This text remains almost entirely legible despite the weathering of the stone. If the heroes don't read Azlanti, by their own training or by magic, a hero trained in Society can Decipher the Writing with a successful DC 30 Society check.

Once the heroes can read the text, at least one character must succeed at a DC 38 Society or Religion check to parse the archaic language. If successful, the character learns of the 12 statues scattered throughout the Vale of Aroden and that each has a corresponding trial. A creature wishing to access the Verdant Beacon must first prove their worthiness, measured by successfully completing at least four trials. Deciphering this much of the text formally completes the Scholar's Trial, and the characters receive that trial's title. On a critical success, however, the character also understands that only one creature or group of creatures can hold each trial's title at a time, and that successfully completing additional trials (beyond the four needed to simply gain access to the Verdant Beacon) grants further benefits over the Verdant Beacon's defenses.

The text upon the broken obelisk can still be read, so its disrepair doesn't interfere with the heroes completing the trial. The surface facing down, however, describes (in similarly archaic Azlanti) the locations of the 12 statues. A character must succeed at a DC 30 Athletics check to roll the obelisk over (20 Bulk) so this surface can be read. Doing so before the Scholar's Trial is completed imposes a -2 circumstance penalty on the checks to parse the obelisks' content.

Creatures: Recognizing the scholarly significance of the site, Sarvel left three thoughtmaw xulgaths here to destroy the inscriptions. After toppling one obelisk but finding it resistant to further damage, the thoughtmaws sought additional aid from a pair of allied astradaemons. Rather than simply smash up the obelisks further, as Sarvel would do, these contemplative xulgaths are instead internalizing all the information and calculating how to best obscure key passages or phrases.



The five creatures collaborate in their examinations of the plaza, and they swiftly turn upon any creatures who aren't part of Sarvel's retinue. In a fight, the thoughtmaws direct the astradaemons to engage the heroes directly, hanging back and harrying the heroes with their spells. Unlike most of the xulgaths following their prophet, the thoughtmaw xulgaths are reluctant to throw their lives away. They've seen their lesser kin

fall to the statues' wards and to Sarvel's ruthless drive to reach his goal, and they pride themselves on their greater intellect and strategy. The thoughtmaws call for a truce once their astradaemon allies are slain and only two thoughtmaws remain standing.

THOUGHTMAW (3)

CREATURE 15

Page 85

Initiative Perception +30

ASTRADAEMONS (2)

CREATURE 16

Pathfinder Bestiary 73

Initiative Perception +28



Tailor Statue

Parlaying with the Xulgaths: Heroes who prove themselves the better of the xulgaths in combat might question them. The thoughtmaws share what they know if they believe the heroes will let them live and if a hero succeeds at a DC 40 Diplomacy check (or Deception check to Lie). Like the saurians in the strike force, the xulgaths know that Sarvel is within the uppermost reaches of the Verdant Beacon, and that he's already performing the long and complex *extinction curse* ritual.

Unlike the saurians, the thoughtmaws are less enthusiastic about Sarvel's destructive plans; these xulgaths would far rather plunder Aroden's sanctuary for lost information they can use for their own ends. A character can discern this dissatisfaction with a successful DC 40 Perception check to Sense Motive, and if that character then succeeds at a DC 38 Diplomacy check to Request more information, the thoughtmaws also admit they've been on poor terms with the saurians accompanying Sarvel.

The thoughtmaws can't translate the obelisks in a way that can be directly interpreted by non-xulgaths, but their aid lowers the DC to interpret the obelisks' content by 5.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for successfully interpreting the obelisks and thus succeeding at the Scholar's Trial.

E. TAILOR'S TRIAL

A ten-foot-tall statue of a barely-clothed man stands at the foot of a gentle slope, holding a long swatch of stone carved to resemble cloth draped over one arm. His opposite hand is empty, but from the rubble on the ground, it looks like he once held a stone needle and thread. Much of the "fabric" has also been smashed and broken, the sharp edges and chips of stone scattered nearby. A pair of xulgath corpses lie sprawled at the statue's feet. Death hasn't improved their telltale stench.

The Tailor's Trial requires the heroes to clothe this statue of Aroden with any kind of material, covering at least the statue's torso, legs, and arms. The long stretch of stone hanging from the statue's arm to mimic fabric prevents the heroes from easily applying typical garments. The xulgaths made several attempts at smashing this impediment, but the powerful wards protecting the statue retaliated, slaying several of their number (see Hazard on page 28). Though Sarvel grew impatient, eventually (and begrudgingly) the xulgath thoughtmaws figured out how to properly clothe the statue, earning the prophet his title.

Applying custom-tailored garments to the statue completes the trial. Constructing suitable garments typically requires a character to procure sufficient raw materials and succeed at a DC 33 Crafting or Thievery check (or a DC 28 check with an applicable Lore skill). Each check takes 4 hours. Alternatively, a character can create garments using magic or other abilities; illusions don't complete the trial, but even crude garments conjured with spells like *creation* suffice.

Each day at dawn, any garments on the statue crumble into dust.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Tailor's Trial by clothing the statue of Aroden.

F. THIEF'S TRIAL

SEVERE 19

A dusty marble statue is tucked in a narrow, shallow canyon in the hills. The man depicted there wears close-fitting garments, a thick cloak, and a satisfied expression. One hand rests at his waist, but the statue's attention is focused on his other hand held out before him, cupped as though to admire some absent treasure. A lingering stench hangs in the still air here.

The Thief's Trial requires a creature to find the statue's missing treasure and return it. The missing

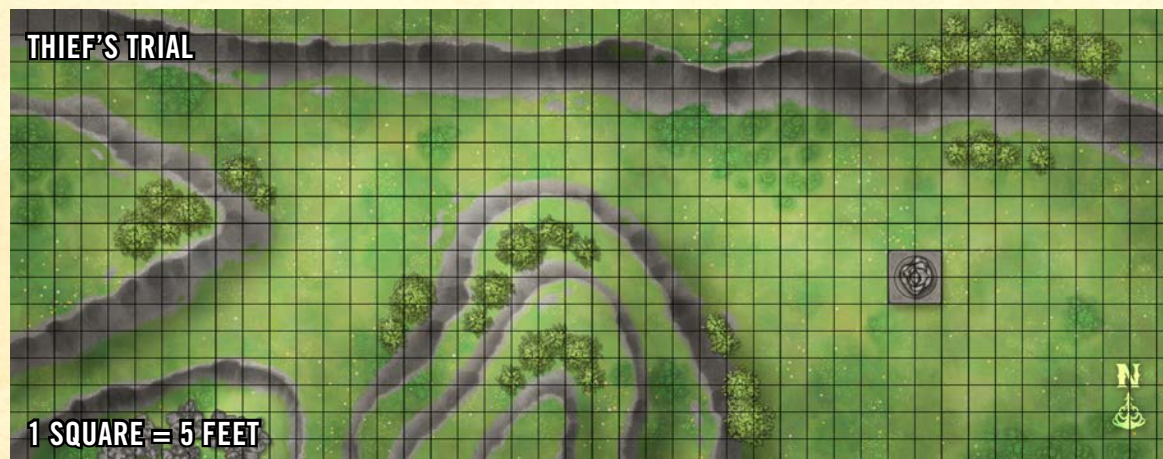
item is hidden in a chamber beneath the statue, but retrieving it is hardly straightforward, and the site is well-guarded.

Aroden stumbled across a thanatotic titan in his extraplanar travels. Fascinated by the creature's boundless hatred, he captured and bound them here to guard the site of this trial. The titan lingers among the rocky stretches of the nearby mountains, watching over the statue.

When Sarvel visited this statue, he located the hidden chamber and sent a xulgath in to explore it. When the titan approached, Sarvel ordered a group of his minions to distract the guardian, buying him enough time to gain the thief statue's title and flee the site. The ensuing conflict between the xulgaths and the titan left their own mark on the terrain, giving hints to characters who examine the area. With a successful DC 34 Survival check to Track, a hero notices footprints, spilled blood, and other indications of the conflict.

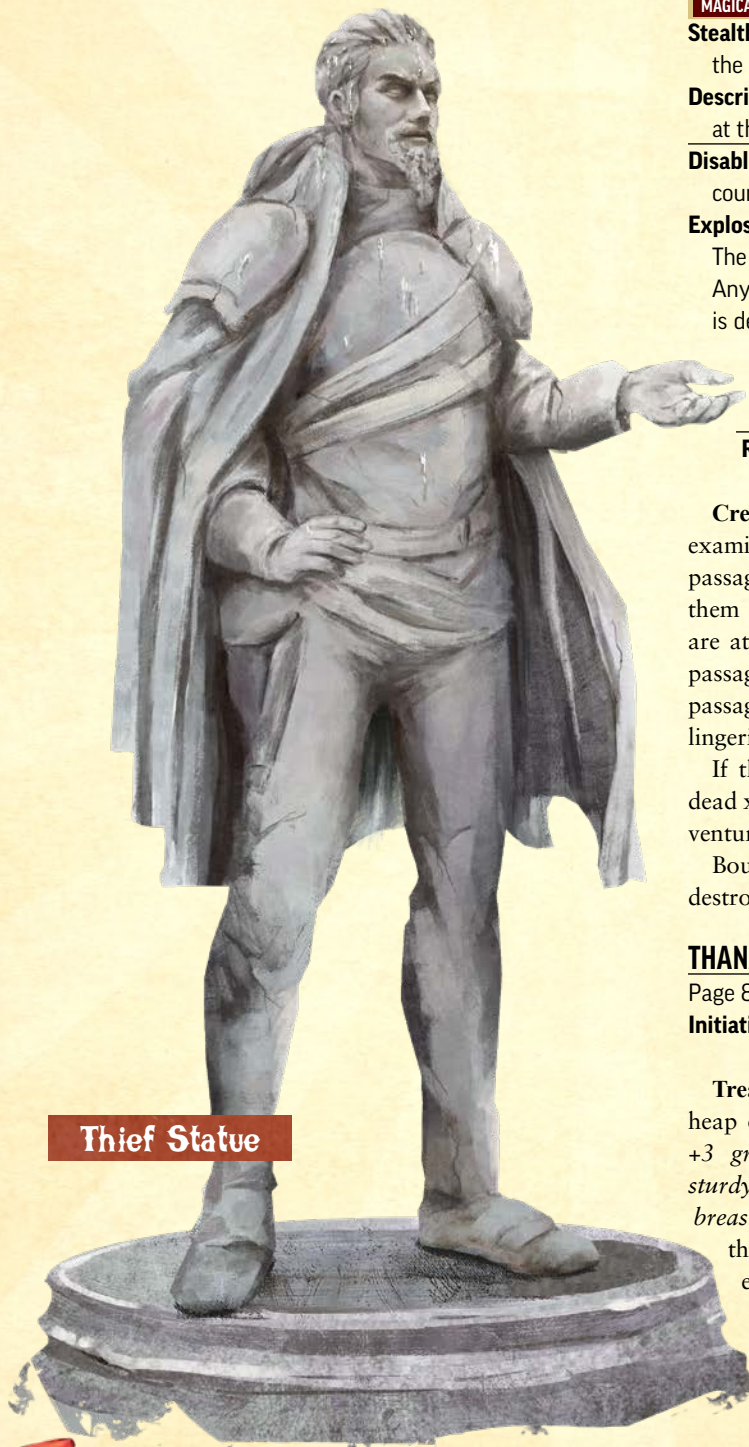
The smell of xulgaths is unmistakable; following the stench wafting across the canyon leads to the source: a heap of slain xulgaths dumped in a mountain gully.

Hidden Chamber: A hero can identify the signs of a hidden chamber with a successful DC 34 Perception check while Searching the area or Investigating the statue, but activating the entrance requires manipulating several cunning latches. Each latch requires a successful DC 37 Thievery (master) check to unhook. Once all three latches are unhooked, the statue rotates, grinding on a series of time-worn bearings, to reveal a 3-foot-wide hole in the ground. The passage descends straight down for 20 feet, narrowing for the entire distance such that Medium creatures must Squeeze (Acrobatics DC 39) through the last 10 feet and Small creatures must Squeeze (Acrobatics DC 34) through the last 5 feet. Protuberances along the walls are precisely positioned to restrain movement; a Squeezing character treats the results of its Reflex



saving throws as one degree worse. The narrow chute opens into the ceiling of a round chamber about 20 feet wide and 30 feet tall. This opening is trapped (see Hazard below).

A pedestal at the center of the room bears the missing treasure: a faceted emerald glowing with a soft green light. A hero need only retrieve the gem and place it in the statue's hand to complete the trial. An hour after



Thief Statue

the gem is removed from the pedestal, no matter where it is, it immediately returns to this pedestal. Although the gem looks exceptionally valuable, this means the heroes are effectively unable to sell it.

Hazard: The lip of the chute, right where it opens into the chamber, is etched with spindly runes.

THIEF'S TRAP

HAZARD 20

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 50 (master) to notice that the hairline cracks on the passage walls actually form runes.

Description Nearly imperceptible runes set off an explosion at the point a thief is most unable to receive aid.

Disable DC 45 Thievery (master) or *dispel magic* (10th level, counteract DC 50) to counteract the runes

Explosion **Trigger** A creature crosses a rune; **Effect** The runes unleash a gout of fire roaring up the chute. Anyone in the chute and within 5 feet of its openings is dealt 8d10+44 fire damage (DC 42 basic Reflex save). Immediately thereafter, the runes emanate a 4th-level *silence* effect for 1 minute, so anyone injured in the chute can't call out for help.

Reset The trap resets in 1 minute.

Creature: The thanatotic titan watches creatures examining the statue and accessing the secret passage, waiting for the best opportunity to catch them unawares. They might attack as the heroes are attempting Thievery checks to access the hidden passage, or they might wait until a hero enters the passage before creeping up to attack any others lingering nearby.

If the titan notices the heroes poking around the dead xulgaths, they attack the heroes for presuming to venture into the terrain they consider their own.

Bound to the site of the test, the titan fights until destroyed but doesn't pursue fleeing characters.

THANATOTIC TITAN

CREATURE 22

Page 83

Initiative Perception +36

Treasure: Characters who discover and Search the heap of slain xulgaths find several items of value: a +3 *greater striking composite shortbow*, a *major sturdy shield*, a high-grade adamantite maul, a *greater breastplate of command*, and a sack containing all the requisite materials to construct an instant evisceration snare.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Thief's Trial by returning the gemstone to the statue's hand, in addition to XP for overcoming the hazard and the titan.

G. SOLDIER'S TRIAL

SEVERE 19

The worn path skirts a bluff to the north, and the thick forest sprawls just to the south of the road. Atop a promontory along the bluff's southwestern edge stands a weather-worn statue of a man clad in heavy armor, hands clasped over the pommel of a sword with its point held against the ground. The statue gazes out over the plains, his expression nearly worn away but his posture commanding and confident.

The Soldier's Trial requires candidates to defeat the creatures guarding the statue. Normally the site summons several kolyarut aeons as its guardians, but when Sarvel defeated them, he stationed a few demons here to prevent others from claiming the title. The demons have become the guardians that must be defeated for a newcomer to succeed at the Soldier's Trial, though they aren't aware that the test has subsumed them into this function. Defeating the demons at the site of the soldier statue successfully completes the Soldier's Trial, after which the trial reverts to summoning inevitables for future candidates.

A character with legendary proficiency in longswords can tell that the statue's sword represents one of exceptionally fine make. A hero who succeeds at a DC 40 Religion, Society, or Aroden Lore check recalls that Aroden was famed in ancient Azlant as a sword-maker, and that the last sword he forged was the *Azlanti Diamond*, a crystal-bladed sword intended for the next Azlanti emperor. According to legend, when the then-emperor asked Aroden to choose a successor, Aroden chose to keep the *Azlanti Diamond* for himself.

Creatures: A marilith general named Urushil commands a trio of vavakia demons in defense of the statue. This team accompanied Sarvel to the Vale of Aroden at the orders of Zevgavizeb himself. Their mandate was to aid the xulgath in whatever way they could, but the marilith has tired of what she views as a petty obsession on Sarvel's part, as well as the short-sighted infighting among his followers. She volunteered for this post as an excuse to put some distance between herself and the prophet.

The demons aren't hiding, but the bluff makes it hard to spot them from a distance. The demons react to the heroes' approach with unbridled violence, not only to sate their own bloodlust but also because they fear their patron's ire should they shirk their responsibilities. The marilith has better gear than most of her kind; she wears powerful armor, and one of her swords is a +3 *major striking longsword*, improving the melee Strikes using that weapon as listed in her stat block below. The *belt of regeneration* she wears

COMPLETIONIST HEROES

While the heroes likely feel some time pressure to act before Sarvel can bring his plots in the Verdant Beacon to bear, they might elect to complete each and every trial. Doing so conveys additional benefits, and so long as you and the players are all enjoying yourselves, there's nothing wrong with spending more time in the vale.

If interest is waning in the trials, however—particularly if the heroes are stumped on one or more trials—you can hint that they should move on. Sarvel is already beginning the *extinction curse* ritual, and this multiday affair likely causes strange lights reminiscent of the *aeon orbs* to emanate from the Verdant Beacon, clearly visible at night or even during the day. Sarvel's experimentation with the ritual chamber atop the tower might result in the thronelike platform activating and rising up into the sky before returning to the tower, which heroes might notice from the ground below. In cases of extreme dawdling, the initial effects of the *extinction curse* might cause tremors and localized earthquakes within the vale, providing the heroes with a clear indicator that it's time to get moving.

is a more recent acquisition from the efreeti at the Merchant's Trial (page 42).

All four demons fight to the death.

URUSHIL

CREATURE 18

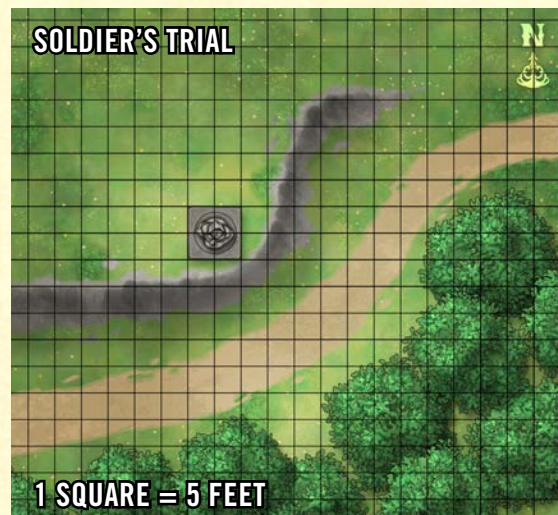
Elite marilith (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 81)

Initiative Perception +32

Items *belt of regeneration*, +3 *major resilient breastplate*, +3 *major striking longsword*

AC 45; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +32, **Will** +30; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 410; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, good 15



Melee ♦ *cold iron silver longsword* +38 (evil, magical, reach 10 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 4d8+18 slashing plus 1d6 evil

VAVAKIAS (3)

CREATURE 18

Page 79

Initiative Perception +32

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Soldier's Trial by defeating the demons, in addition to XP earned in combat.



H. FISHER'S TRIAL

MODERATE 19

A ten-foot-tall statue of a weathered, rugged man stands among waist-high reeds. One hand holds a reel, though the accompanying rod has been broken off. In its other hand, the statue grasps a net holding a carved fish gasping for air. The statue's stony gaze overlooks the rocky shores of a wide lake with startling turquoise waters so placid they resemble a pane of stained glass. Despite the impressive vista, a gentle breeze carries the scent of rotten eggs up from the water to compete with the stench rising from a decaying, two-headed draconic corpse splayed near the statue.

This statue represents Aroden in his guise as a fisher. This trial requires that the heroes catch a fish from the nearby lake and bring it here to the statue. The task is complicated by the fact that the lake's waters are highly acidic. The waters deal 2d6 acid damage to a hero that comes into contact with it, and 20d6 acid damage each round to heroes swimming or submerged in it. A hero who succeeds at a DC 20 Nature or Survival check identifies the acidic nature of the water before coming into contact with it.

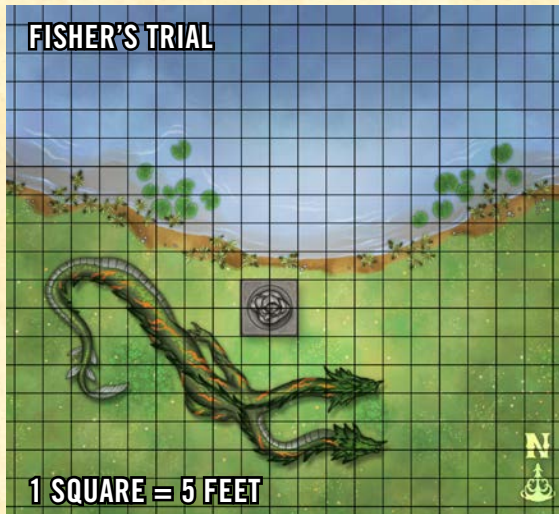
The corpse is that of a tarn linnorm, which the heroes can identify with a successful DC 42 Arcana or Nature check. The body has significantly smaller legs than most tarn linnorms, resembling a two-headed water snake or eel more than a dragon.

Creature: The only "fish" capable of living in the lake (and thus the only creatures the heroes can capture to fulfill the Fisher's Trial) are ancient tarn linnorms. The creatures are standoffish and isolationist, each keeping to their own region of the lake, so the party doesn't

face more than one of the dragons at once. The tarn linnorm whose territory encompasses the edge of the lake nearest the statue took over within the last few weeks, after Sarvel and his allies slew the one previously guarding this stretch of shore. (Sarvel cleverly allowed one of his minions the "honor" of dealing the death blow to the linnorm, thus avoiding their death curse himself.) The linnorm notices any disturbances in the otherwise lifeless lake and investigates immediately.

Slaying the linnorm fulfills the trial's stipulations so long as the heroes haul the linnorm's corpse to the statue, but the heroes have other options available beyond combat. They can immobilize the linnorm long enough to transport them to the statue, or can

FISHER'S TRIAL



attempt to negotiate with the creature. The linnorm isn't bright, but if the heroes successfully shift their attitude from unfriendly to friendly, the linnorm agrees to accompany them to the statue before returning to the lake.

LINNORM OF THE LAKE

CREATURE 21

Elite tarn linnorm (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 226)

Initiative Perception +37

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Fisher's Trial, whether by slaying the linnorm, persuading the creature to assist them, or other means.

I. HUNTER'S TRIAL

A small clearing stands within the thick forest, the boughs overhead allowing a few streaks of light down onto a tall marble statue. Gentle breezes swirl fallen leaves around the figure, a man in forester's clothing with a quiver at his side, holding a bow in one hand. His other hand holds the many-pronged antler of a slain beast. Only a few inches remain of the narrow stone cylinder of the arrow that felled the beast.

The Hunter's Trial requires the heroes to track and catch a mythical animal called a barking stag, though they don't necessarily need

to kill it. At dawn each day, if there isn't already a barking stag in the vale, a new beast comes into being in this clearing and bounds away into the surrounding forest. The barking stag never leaves the valley, and it vanishes after 1 week. Should the barking stag die for any reason before then (such as falling into the lake), a new beast appears the following morning.

A hero must succeed at a DC 40 Survival check to Track the beast and find evidence of its passage. Once a hero has the trail, they must succeed at one subsequent Survival check to Track for each day that has passed since the beast appeared. Roll 1d6+1 to determine the number of days the current barking stag has been in the vale when the heroes first encounter this trial.

The saurians in Sarvel's strike force (page 29) initially helped the prophet track and kill the barking



Linnorm of the Lake

stag, so they know about its movements. They might therefore use the beast to drive the heroes into danger, wounding it and driving it across the path of the patrolling adamantine golems (page 29) or through the well-guarded area of the Soldier's Trial (page 37). The DC to track a wounded barking stag is only 36, but if the heroes haven't yet defeated the adamantine golems or the guardians of the Soldier's Trial, they may stray directly into another encounter.

Creature: The barking stag is a large deer with antlers and tusks, like a muntjac, that makes barking noises when surprised. It is skittish and usually flees

when encountered; it only fights if surrounded by three or more opponents, and usually only to make its antler toss and run away.

BARKING STAG

CREATURE 13

RARE N LARGE ANIMAL

Perception +28; low-light vision

Skills Acrobatics +24, Athletics +27, Survival +26

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +4, **Int** -4, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +1

Foil the Hunt When it isn't injured, a barking stag benefits from Cover Tracks, regardless of its travel Speed.

AC 34; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +26, **Will** +23

HP 245; **Weaknesses** arrow vulnerability

Arrow Vulnerability A barking stag takes 10 additional damage from arrows (but not bolts or other ammunition).

Speed 45 feet

Melee ♦ antler +16 (grapple), **Damage** 3d10+12 piercing plus Grab

Melee ♦ hoof +16, **Damage** 3d8+12 bludgeoning

Antler Toss ♦ **Requirements** The barking stag has a creature grabbed with its antler; **Effect** The barking stag tosses the grabbed creature 20 feet into the air and up to 15 feet away in a direction of its choice, dealing 3d10+12 piercing damage plus falling damage to the creature.

Trample ♦♦♦ Medium or smaller, hoof, DC 30

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for capturing or killing the barking stag and thus succeeding at the Hunter's Trial.

J. FARMER'S TRIAL

LOW 19

The trees fall away here, opening onto an expanse of tangled, overgrown vegetation about two hundred feet across. At one edge of the clearing, creeping brambles have covered a pillar roughly ten feet tall.

Beneath the brambles is a statue of Aroden in his guise as a farmer, depicted wearing simple garments and a wide-brimmed hat, a sickle in one hand and a handful of grain in the other. Along the base of the statue is a depiction of the surrounding land as a lush wheat field. The statue overlooks the overgrown clearing, an acre of land which the characters need to cultivate.

Burning down the growth effectively clears the land, and while this approach isn't contrary to the trial, it does preclude the characters from discovering the beneficial fruits and helpful spirit hidden within the vegetation. Manually clearing the vegetation also meets the trial's requirements; the task takes a combined



Barking Stag

total of 40 hours of work (10 hours of work for four characters, for example). However, this task exposes those clearing the land to the aggressive vegetation described in the Hazard below. Alternatively, the *plant growth* ritual restores the land.

The xulgaths never examined the overgrown statue here closely enough to realize it was one of the trials and therefore haven't been here.

Hazard: The plants in the area aggressively defend their territory, lashing out at all intruders.

ANGRY VEGETATION

HAZARD 20

UNIQUE COMPLEX ENVIRONMENTAL

Stealth DC 42 (master) to notice massive buds beneath the other foliage before they open

Description Five large flowers in the weed-choked field unfurl, each dusting pollen onto vines that animate into wemmuths.

Disable DC 48 Nature (master) or DC 48 Performance (legendary) to calm a flower, closing it

AC 37; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +30, **Will** +30

HP 120 per flower; **Immunities** mental; **Weaknesses** fire 20

Bloom **Trigger** A non-plant creature enters the garden;

Effect The blooms open, spawning a single wemmuth (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 326) that acts on the hazard's initiative, and the hazard rolls for initiative.

Routine **◆◆** If there are fewer wemmuths than open flowers, the flowers create more wemmuths (so there as many wemmuths as open flowers) as their first action. For their second action, the flowers produce a mind-addling pollen. Each non-plant creature within 30 feet of a flower must succeed at a DC 41 Fortitude save or become slowed 1 for 1 round (or confused for 1 round, on a critical failure). The pollen is an emotion, mental, and olfactory effect.

Reset Wemmuths collapse into ordinary vines and the trap resets if the area is left alone for 1 minute.

Fluttering-Leaves-in-Wind: If the heroes disable the angry vegetation without destroying it with fire or damaging the flowers, the spirit animating the hazard takes a physical form as a leaf leshy. This leshy introduces himself as Fluttering-Leaves-in-Wind, an ancient spirit Aroden long ago bound to this bountiful field. The leshy is delighted to no longer be tied to the trial, but bemoans the fact that they're entirely isolated here in the mountains, with no one to appreciate their plant-growing talents. Fluttering-Leaves-in-Wind can be recruited to put their skills to work in the Circus of Wayward Wonders, so long as the heroes make a reasonable offer. If they recruit the leshy, provide the players with the Rain of Blossoms trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: A character who succeeds at a DC 34 Nature check or a DC 39 Perception check notices a number of magical fruits amidst the tangled brambles. These three *panacea* fruits (page 74) are easy to acquire once the angry vegetation hazard is dealt with (even if they destroyed the flowers), unless the heroes cleared the field by simply burning it down.

The heroes can scavenge the fruits while the hazard is still active by succeeding at a DC 39 Acrobatics or Thievery check to retrieve each fruit, but a failure in this check means the fruit is dropped, squashed, or otherwise ruined.



Fluttering-Leaves-in-Wind

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for successfully completing the Farmer's Trial. Award them an additional 30 XP for recruiting Fluttering-Leaves-in-Wind into their circus.

K. MERCHANT'S TRIAL

The road forks, the main path heading north while a short spur leads southeast. Beyond the spur, a brightly colored pavilion stands incongruously between the forest and a steep mountain cliff. A sign of polished brass hangs beside

an open doorway into the tent's shaded interior. Beside the tent is a tall statue of a man in elaborate robes, a heavy coin purse at his waist and a set of small scales in one hand.

The Merchant's Trial is a peculiar conjuration effect. Whenever a new creature enters the Vale of Aroden, if there isn't already a merchant in place, the trial summons a merchant from elsewhere in the multiverse, trapping them here to conduct the Merchant's Trial. While the trial is underway—that is, as long as newcomers who haven't completed the Merchant's Trial remain within the vale—the merchant can't leave the vale, even with magical effects such as *plane shift*.

All a creature must do to pass the Merchant's Trial is strike a deal in their favor with the merchant here, though the difficulty of the task varies somewhat depending on the whims of the merchant involved in the trial. The current merchant is an efreeti named Jalimah (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 164), who is frustrated by her inability to reach her intended destination in the City of Brass on the Elemental Plane of Fire. She arrived when Sarvel Ever-Hunger entered the vale. Sarvel encountered her and responded typically: with violence. He overwhelmed the efreeti and threatened to slay her, then offered Jalimah her life in exchange for the most valuable item he could find among her wares: a *belt of regeneration*. This belt is now worn by the marilith in the Soldier's Trial (page 37).

Jalimah considered her business concluded, but took her time about closing up her shop and preparing her wares to depart. By the time she was ready to go, the heroes had arrived in the vale; the vale's magic trapped her again, so she's now unable to leave without striking a deal with the heroes as well. She's very eager to trade and depart as quickly as possible, without lingering this time.

When the heroes arrive at her tent, Jalimah is initially unfriendly to them; given her interactions with the xulgaths, she expects more of the same treatment. If the heroes improve her attitude to friendly, she warms up somewhat and answers any questions they have about what she's doing in the vale, her interactions with the xulgaths, and what she knows about the Merchant's Trial. Her knowledge on this last point is somewhat limited—she knows only that the trial requires a transaction and not the fact that it must favor the creatures attempting the trial.

The heroes can make any deal they want with Jalimah (who is open to a variety of agreements),



Jalimah

but they must receive something other than simply the Merchant's Trial title in exchange for some other item or service. Even a simple purchase from Jalimah's wares will suffice if the heroes believe the deal to be in their favor.

Jalimah notices if any character wears the marilith's *belt of regeneration* from the Soldier's Trial. She points out that Sarvel effectively stole the item from her, and she offers to accept the belt in exchange for other items in her shop that, combined, equal the belt's Price (an agreement that would fulfill the terms of the trial, whether or not the characters realize it).

Killing the efreeti causes the heroes to fail the trial—though the party might decide it's worth failing the trial to lay claim to Jalimah's inventory of weapons and other treasures. The statue eventually draws in a new merchant, but not until a new creature enters the valley to be tested.

Jalimah's Wares: Jalimah carries her wares in a *bag of holding type IV*, and her colorful tent is an *explorer's yurt*. While she's willing to sell the yurt, she's unwilling to part with the bag; it bears a powerful magical protection that instantly teleports it away to the efreeti's estate in the City of Brass (on the Elemental Plane of Fire) should Jalimah be slain or the bag taken from her.

In addition to the specific items listed below, Jalimah's shop has a reasonable supply of items comparable to those available in a 15th-level settlement (that is, of 15th level or lower), with a total Bulk of no more than 140. She has a keen eye for what her customers might need and is lively at showcasing an item's properties. If the characters are particularly lacking in a given resource, feel free to swap out the items listed here for those of equal level that might better appeal to them.

- *dread blindfold*
- *greater phylactery of faithfulness*
- high-grade darkwood shield
- *major alchemist's goggles*
- *necklace of fireballs type VII*
- *orange prism aeon stone*
- *runestone with a +3 weapon potency rune*
- *runestone with a major shadow rune*
- *runestone with a major striking rune*
- *spellstrike ammunition* (8th-level spells)

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for striking a favorable deal with Jalimah and thus succeeding at the Merchant's Trial.

L. ARTIST'S TRIAL

A ten-foot-tall statue of a man holding a brush in one hand and a palette in the other scrutinizes a smooth cliff face,

where faint and long-faded colors form a partial landscape. The painting first shows a great underground cavern with six small gemstone suns at its ceiling, then a proud man in green robes holding five of the same suns in his hands. Further still, the painting shows four towers lit by their own miniature suns. A fifth tower and the outline of the same robed man nearby was left unfinished—but mud and less savory pigments have transformed the outline into a reptilian creature shattering the tower and its sun.

The Artist's Trial presents the heroes with an unfinished mural of Aroden as he gathered the *aeon orbs* and installed them in his aeon towers. Completing the trial requires the heroes to complete the mural. Doing so requires a successful DC 44 Crafting check or a DC 39 check in an applicable Lore skill—though the characters must first clean off the xulgaths' graffiti. In their arrogance, the xulgaths painted Sarvel destroying the *aeon orbs* rather than finishing the mural as intended, and thus they didn't complete this trial.

The higher terrain here provides a lovely view of the Vale of Aroden, which the heroes might use to identify locations of the other trials. For example, from here, they can easily see the clearing of the Farmer's Trial (though the bramble-covered statue is indistinguishable at this distance), the colorful tent of the Merchant's Trial, and the lake for the Fisher's Trial. To the north, the wide ledge holding the gateway of the Artisan's Trial is visible as a distinctive indentation in the mountain.

Treasure: The gemstone "suns" in the painting—15 in all—are all quite valuable, finely cut stones that easily pop out of the mural; however, doing so before completing the trial makes it impossible to pass until the gems are returned to the mural. Fourteen of the stones are mundane and worth 1,750 gp each. The final stone (one of the initial six appearing in the underground cavern) is in fact a *lavender and green ellipsoid aeon stone*.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Artist's Trial.

M. ARTISAN'S TRIAL

MODERATE 19

A narrow, rocky path winds up along the feet of the mountain called the Weeping Grandfather. On a ledge overlooking the Vale of Aroden to the south and west stands a ten-foot-tall statue of a stern-faced man holding a hammer and a chisel, examining the sheer stone wall before him. The wall bears an elaborate carving of an archway, framing an image of a three-tiered spire with the familiar architectural style of the aeon towers.

The archway carved into the stone is a portal leading to the lower tier of the Verdant Beacon, thousands of feet above at the peak of the Weeping Grandfather, but the portal is presently broken. Repairing it is the Artisan's Trial.

A hero can identify the carving as an inactive portal with a successful DC 30 check to Identify Magic. On a critical success, or with a successful DC 35 Crafting check once the portal has been identified, a hero realizes the portal is broken and must be repaired before it can be used. Actually restoring the portal's function requires a hero with master proficiency in both Crafting and either Arcana or Religion to Repair the portal sufficiently to restore 200 Hit Points to it.

Once repaired, the portal activates whenever a creature bearing the titles from at least four



trials approaches the archway, the space within the arch flickering and shimmering into a veil of light. The portal remains open for 1 minute, during which any creature can pass through to be transported instantly to a spot in front of the main gates of the Verdant Beacon at area N1. As this teleportation effect was created by Aroden himself, it is not subject to the general complications that other teleportation effects are subject to in the Kortos Mounts. The creature who caused the portal to open can also command it to close as a single action that has the concentrate trait.

Creatures: Recognizing the strategic importance of this site, Sarvel left a cadre of guardians to prevent anyone else from reaching the Verdant Beacon. The thoughtmaw Shanchek officially commands this group, a position she reinforces with a *staff of the magi* Sarvel found within the tower and gave to Shanchek to show his favor (even though the xulgath can't make full use of the item).

The four saurians accompanying Shanchek resent this preferential treatment given to their rival. A hero can pick up on the tension between the saurians and the xulgath with a successful DC 34 Perception check to Sense Motive. In battle, the saurians work in tandem with one another but make no effort to defend or cooperate with the thoughtmaw. The viskithrel does its best to follow the commands of Shanchek or the saurians, which might result in conflicting orders.

Shanchek

SHANCHEK

CREATURE 15

Female xulgath thoughtmaw (page 85)

Initiative Perception +30

Items +2 resilient leather armor, +2 striking spear, *staff of the magi*

Melee ♦ *staff* +30 (magical, two-hand d8), **Damage** 4d4+10 bludgeoning

SAURIAN WARMONGERS (4)

CREATURE 16

Page 80

Initiative Perception +31

VISKITHREL

CREATURE 15

Page 84

Initiative Perception +27

Questioning the Guardians: None of these foes are eager to share information with the heroes. They know that this portal is a gate, but it's currently inactive as part of some test they don't fully understand. Although it's possible to walk up to the Verdant Beacon, the gateway is much safer and faster. Sarvel Ever-Hunger is within the uppermost reaches of the Verdant Beacon performing the days-long *extinction curse* ritual, and Shanchek has been charged with making sure no one reaches the tower.

Shanchek more eagerly negotiates if the heroes have killed all the saurians. If the heroes bring up tensions between the xulgaths and saurians discovered here or at the Scholar's Trial (page 32), Shanchek confirms the poor relationship between the intellectual thoughtmaws and the brutish saurians. She suggests the heroes try to speak with the thoughtmaws residing in the lower level of the Verdant Beacon if they seek allies against the saurians.

XP Award: Award the heroes 30 XP for succeeding at the Artisan's Trial by repairing the portal.

Moving On

The heroes can move on from the Vale of Aroden at any time, though they likely want to complete at least a few of the trials before ascending the Weeping Grandfather. Ideally, the heroes should collect at least four titles, which enables them to enter the Verdant Beacon through its main doors.

If the heroes successfully complete the Artisan's Trial (page 43) and collect three or more additional titles, they can use the portal there to arrive instantly at the tower's gates. Should the heroes prove unable to repair the portal or collect enough titles, they can continue along the narrow path ascending the Verdant Beacon from the site of the Artisan's Trial. This grueling climb exposes the heroes to frigid temperatures, severe winds, and the occasional rockslide over 3d4 hours of travel, but they eventually reach the gates of the Verdant Beacon on the peaks of the Weeping Grandfather. While teleportation doesn't work for creatures without four or more titles from the trials, heroes can use non-teleportation effects such as magical flight or other means to speed their ascent. This is an excellent opportunity

to confront the party with extra encounters or hazards, should they need additional XP to reach 20th level. When the players are considering their final class feat at 20th level, you should consider providing them with the option to take the relevant capstone class feats provided on page 72. These class feats reflect the heroes' experiences thus far in the Extinction Curse Adventure Path.



Artisan Statue

THE APOCALYPSE PROPHECY

Chapter 1:
End of
the Road

Chapter 2:
The Trials of
Aroden

Chapter 3:
The Last Act

The Kortos
Mounts

Artifacts of
Aroden

Adventure
Toolbox



CHAPTER 3: THE LAST ACT

One way or another, the heroes reach the highest levels of the mountain called the Weeping Grandfather, where the Verdant Beacon stands proudly overlooking the western reaches of the Isle of Kortos. The tower has roughly the same shape as the other aeon towers, with a three-tiered step pyramid at its top, but it is built on a much larger scale: it stands over 400 feet tall. Unlike the aeon towers, this entire structure seems to have been carved out of a single, massive block of deep-green marble in a feat of deific architecture. Further setting it apart from the other aeon towers is a series of winged-eye decorations. The tower is built along a sharp ridge accessible only from the south; steep drops of hundreds of feet on the east, west, and north faces prevent walking around the tower.

The majority of the Verdant Beacon is magically-reinforced marble; only the three tiers at the top have been hollowed out. The ritual chamber at its top is

the place from which Aroden first constructed the *aeon orbs*' network of life-sustaining magic to support the Isle of Kortos, and it is from here that he planned to perform the *extinction curse* ritual should it ever become necessary. The Verdant Beacon also served as a private retreat where Aroden could watch over his domain, store various treasures, and study miraculous discoveries from across the multiverse.

Verdant Beacon Exterior

The tiered steps of the pyramid atop the Verdant Beacon provide stunning views out over the Isle of Kortos and even to the Isle of Erran. A subtle divination effect allows a viewer to see as though it were always perfectly clear, regardless of the actual weather conditions. The effect doesn't improve the temperature, however, which is severe cold at best, dipping to extreme cold overnight.

The two entry points to the tower are on the lower two of the pyramid's three tiers: area **N1** is 220 feet above the tower base, and area **N2** is 300 feet above the tower's base. Further complicating access is the fact that, simply due to the pyramid's height and the steps blocking line of sight, the south-facing doors in area **N1** aren't visible from the ground, and the north-facing door in area **N2** isn't visible from area **N1** (or from the ground many hundreds of feet below it).

N1. LOWER TIER

MODERATE 20

Heroes who access the Verdant Beacon through the repaired portal at the site of the Artisan's Trial appear on the south side of this ledge, facing the door. Characters who didn't use the portal and walked up the Weeping Grandfather must either Climb 220 feet of the sheer stone tower wall (DC 30 Athletics) or devise another way to reach this tier.

This wide ledge encircles the tower hundreds of feet above the ground. Massive sculptures of winged eyes, each the same green marble as the tower itself, look down from each corner of the ledge. Enormous marble doors lead into the tower, but a curtain of ghostly swords whirls and churns in front of the doorway, blocking it. To one side of the door is an elaborate carving of an archway over the image of a pastoral valley.

The sculptures are large enough to provide cover for Medium and smaller characters; however, the guardians of this level are too large to take cover behind them.

The carving of the archway functions just as the portal at the Artisan's Trial in the Vale of Aroden, save that it is in working order and needs no repair. It leads back to the blank wall in front of the statue of Aroden bearing a hammer and chisel.

Hazard: Both entrances to the Verdant Beacon are barred by a permanent 10th-level *blade barrier* spell (11d8 force damage, DC 40 basic Reflex save), although any failure (not just a critical failure) on the Reflex save prevents attempted movement through the wall. The spell is keyed to the titles bestowed by the Trials of Aroden; creatures with four or more titles can pass through the *blade barriers* unharmed. A creature bearing eight or more titles standing within 10 feet of the barrier can, as a 3-action activity, attune the barriers to allow creatures of their choice to pass unharmed. Sarvel Ever-Hunger did so to allow himself and his minions (including the demons here) to pass freely. If the heroes change this attunement, it might result in a bloody surprise to Sarvel's xulgath and saurian followers.

Creatures: Despite the protection provided by the blade barrier, Sarvel has also stationed guards here. Four vavakias stand watch over the tower's first tier, one demon at each corner. These demons care little for the tower's other residents, but they immediately attack anyone in this area who isn't a xulgath, a saurian, or one of the saurians' viskithrels. Heroes at the tower's base who make excessive amounts of noise might also draw the demons' attention. The vavakias fight until destroyed. They pursue foes who retreat, though they don't completely forsake their role—they leave at least one demon to guard the tower.

VAVAKIAS (4)

CREATURE 18

Page 79

Initiative Perception +32

CHAPTER 3 SYNOPSIS

The heroes make their way to the Verdant Beacon, the nexus of the *aeon orbs'* magic. Within its halls, they must overcome two separate groups of Sarvel's minions: psychic xulgaths and bestial saurians. The heroes can take advantage of the strife between the two groups and learn the terrifying details of the *extinction curse* ritual Sarvel Ever-Hunger is performing at the tower's highest level. Upon reaching the heavily protected ritual chamber, the heroes finally confront the Apocalypse Prophet in an epic fight on a flying battlefield!

CHAPTER 3 TREASURE

The permanent and consumable items available as treasure in Chapter 3 are as follows.

- +3 *greater resilient antimagic*
ethereal glamer
greater
fortification high-grade orichalcum
chain shirt
- +3 *major striking handwraps of*
mighty blows
- +3 *major striking unholy spiked*
gauntlet
- +2 *greater resilient full plate*
- +2 *greater resilient studded leather*
- +2 *greater striking ranseur*
- +2 *resilient leather armor*
- +2 *striking spear*
- *antimagic oil*
- *elixir of rejuvenation*
- *Kortos Diamond*
- *philosopher's stone*
- *planar ribbon*
- *true elixir of life*
- *whisper of the first lie*

N2. UPPER TIER

LOW 20

The upper tier around the Verdant Beacon is 80 feet higher than the lower tier (area N1).

Littered scraps of bone and flesh are scattered across this ledge encircling the middle tier of the Verdant Beacon. A double door in the center of the north wall is blocked by a whirling blizzard of spectral swords.

Hazard: The door is blocked by a permanent *blade barrier* like that in area N1.

Creatures: A half-dozen saurians guard the tower's higher entrance, as it leads directly into the portion of the tower they've claimed as their den. These guards remain within sight of the door.

Well aware of the disdain the thoughtmaw xulgaths hold for them, the saurians keep careful watch over their tier of the tower, lest they leave themselves open to an attack by their rivals. If they hear sounds of combat on the tier below, they quietly watch from above; a character can notice this observation with a successful DC 25 Perception check, but the saurians don't interfere with the vavakias' fight. They respond with violence, however, if the heroes attack or ascend to their tier. They fight to the death, but don't pursue foes who flee.

SAURIAN WARMONGERS (6)

CREATURE 16

Page 80

Initiative Perception +31

Saurian Reinforcements: If the saurians in area N6 hear a fight out on the middle tier, they quickly mobilize and join the combat in 1d4+1 rounds. If the heroes already re-attuned the *blade barrier* here, the saurians might be in for an unpleasant surprise.

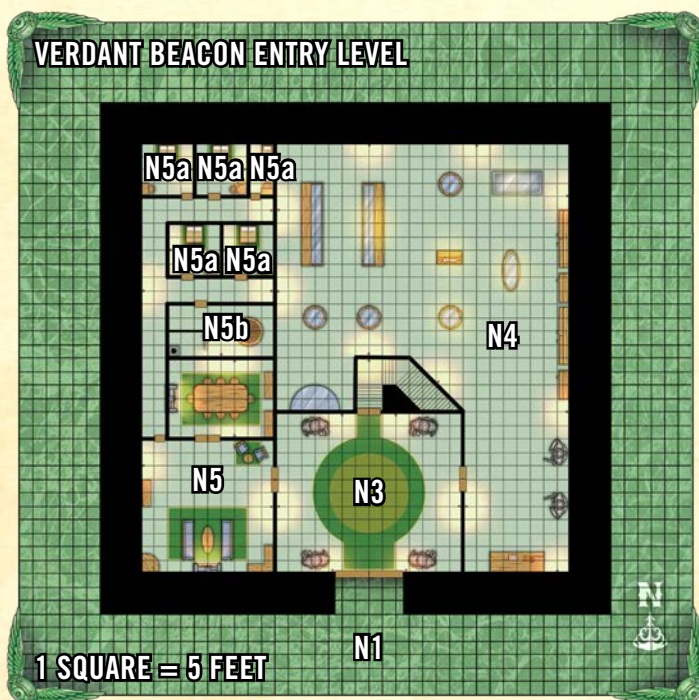
Verdant Beacon Entry Level

The main entrance to the Verdant Beacon is on its lowest level, being the entryway most easily accessed from the Artisan's Trial portal. Though visitors to this tower were rare, Aroden nevertheless designed this level intending it to be the first thing any guests see. Throughout the level, floors are polished to a mirror shine and the walls are carved with intricate detail. The furnishings, all maintained with a subtle transmutation effect to guard against wear and age, are of the finest hardwoods upholstered with silks, brocades, velvet, and other sumptuous fabrics.

ENTRY LEVEL FEATURES

Ceilings in all areas of the entry level of the Verdant Beacon are 30 feet high. A series of 10th-level *continual flame* spells illuminates all rooms and halls within. The walls are all hewn stone that is supernaturally resistant to damage (Hardness 40, HP 160). The interior doors are also all made of stone, set with meticulous care into their frames to open with only a light push. No doors in the Verdant Beacon lock. Despite the icy cold of the mountaintop, the tower's interior remains the same cool but comfortable temperature as the Vale of Aroden.

VERDANT BEACON ENTRY LEVEL



N3. SPLENDID ENTRYWAY

This wide, spacious hall is suitable for royalty. Thick, rich rugs cover the mirror-polished marble floor, while an immense chandelier of ancient design bears and reflects dozens of flickering flames. A double door stands in the center of each wall, though the immense doors to the south are by far the largest.

This magnificent entrance hall provides access to guest residences and Aroden's museum-like archive of wondrous findings. A wide staircase leads up to the middle level from this entryway, behind the northern double door.

Hazard: The pleroma aeon in the Hall of Wonders (area N4) determined that the xulgaths had removed some of Aroden's treasures from the collection there. It therefore saw it necessary to erect an additional ward to prevent further theft. This trap activates when any creature other than the pleroma approaches the western double door.

AXIOMATIC POLYMORPH TRAP


HAZARD 20

MAGICAL TRAP

Stealth DC 47 (master)

Description A Utopian glyph transforms trespassers into aeons.

Disable DC 48 Thievery (master) to drain the glyph's power harmlessly, or *dispel magic* (9th level; counteract DC 42) to counteract the glyph

Axiomatic Polymorph  (divine, transmutation); **Trigger** A creature moves within 10 feet of the entryway to the Hall of Wonders (area **N4**) without speaking the passphrase ("The History and Future of Humanity") in Utopian; **Effect** Each creature within 20 feet of the door is targeted by *baleful polymorph* (DC 42 Will save), except the effect transforms creatures into the form of an arbiter aeon (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 8) rather than that of an animal.

Reset 1 hour

Treasure: The chandelier is constructed with 48 superbly cut white opals worth 1,000 gp each.

N4. HALL OF WONDERS

SEVERE 20

Double doors open into a breathtaking museum. Immediately opposite the doors is a pair of massive adamantine statues of the Last Azlanti in full deific regalia. To the south is a polished desk of rich mahogany, a worn tome laid open on its surface and several others stacked to one side. To the north, the hall expands to reveal shelves of gild-titled tomes and rolled scrolls, racks of fine weaponry, display cases holding various wonders, and more. Elaborate tapestries line the walls, each portraying a separate scene yet all clearly part of the same collection. Aside from the book on the table, the only thing out of place in this hall is an empty display case, its door unlatched and ajar.

Aroden stored and studied a vast collection of artifacts, knowledge, and other unique finds collected from across Golarion and the planes here in his Hall of Wonders. The heroes might uncover a great deal of information and treasure in this room, but they must first contend with the hall's guardians and defenses (see Creature and Hazard below).

The empty display case is large enough to hold an item roughly 2 feet across; a small brass plaque just inside the case is labeled "Convergence Lattice; Axis." Sarvel sent the contents of this case with one of his minions to the Eagle Garrison in the hopes of neutralizing the soldiers there; once ensconced in the fort, it expanded into the gem-encrusted clockwork machine the heroes encountered. (The heroes likely disabled or destroyed the *convergence lattice*, but

they might not have realized its name before now.) A character fluent in Azlanti who skims the books on the desk to the south and succeeds at a DC 35 Society check finds Aroden's notes about the item and learns a bit about its history, as provided on page 9; a character who doesn't read Azlanti must first succeed at a DC 30 Society check to Decipher the Writing.

The other books stacked on the table document Sarvel's efforts to learn about the *extinction curse* ritual. They are also written in Azlanti, requiring a successful DC 30 Society check to Decipher the Writing if none of the heroes can read it. The open book holds the most relevant information: a series of pages recording Aroden's concerns about the accessibility of the *Starstone* and his decision to create a fail-safe ritual to protect it if necessary. This "extinction curse" would harness the power of the *aeon orbs* to undo their bounty, eradicate life from the islands, and sink them back into the sea—undoing Aroden's work so he might start anew if necessary. The text of the ritual itself is missing, and several pages torn hastily from the book obviously once contained this text. (Sarvel took these pages to the ritual chamber to use while conducting the ritual itself.) A character who takes the time to thoroughly read these notes about the ritual learns that making use of the "cleansing pool" aids in harnessing the *aeon orbs*' energy; this refers to the pool in area **N8**.

Creatures: The two statues of Aroden facing the doorway are in fact adamantine golems. Like the golems in the Vale of Aroden, these constructs ignore anyone with four or more titles from the Trials of Aroden. Otherwise, they activate as soon as any non-nulgath creature enters the hall and attempt to eject such creatures or, barring that, kill them.

Another guardian has arrived in the hall following Sarvel's first visit here. When Aroden started storing his interplanar discoveries here, he reached an agreement with a *pleroma* named Weighs-the-Epochs to keep these treasures from falling into the hands of those who might use them to upset the balance of order. Ancient magic alerts Weighs-the-Epochs whenever anything is taken from the Hall of Wonders. When Sarvel removed the *convergence lattice* and the pages describing the *extinction curse* ritual, the *pleroma* became aware of the theft and arrived here to defend the remaining items. Sarvel, having what he needed from the hall, has simply avoided the chamber since. Weighs-the-Epochs, seeing no immediate threat but nevertheless fulfilling its agreement, lingers here. The *pleroma* doesn't permit anything to be taken from the hall or its contents to be damaged, but it won't interfere with anyone examining the books and objects here.

A character who attempts to interact with Weighs-the-Epochs experiences a barrage of mental images as the aeon communicates using its envisioning ability: a glimpse of an endless, perfectly ordered city; a human man with dark hair and green robes; the Hall of Wonders and various objects within it; the *convergence lattice* and its empty display case; a spiraling sense of spreading chaos and destruction enveloping the world and then the universe; and view of the pleroma accompanied with a sudden sense of certain finality.

It is difficult, but not impossible, for the party to persuade Weighs-the-Epochs to allow them to remove items from the hall. First, a character who experienced the pleroma's envisioning message must succeed at a DC 40 Occultism or DC 45 Religion or Society check to interpret the images as an explanation of Weighs-the-Epochs's purpose here and the grave consequences that might occur if items are removed. A hero must then convince the aeon they understand the significance of its role and their actions with a successful DC 38 Arcana or Religion check, and explain why they need the hall's items with a successful DC 38 Diplomacy or Society check. Finally, a character must succeed at a DC 45 Deception or DC 40 Diplomacy check to assure Weighs-the-Epochs that they will handle the items responsibly. Different heroes can attempt the skill checks in each phase of this negotiation, but, if any hero critically fails a check, Weighs-the-Epochs interprets their intentions as deceptive and destructive and immediately attacks. Weighs-the-Epochs also attacks if any hero tries to Bully, Coerce, or otherwise intimidate it. If the party accrues at least one success at each of the negotiation components, however, the pleroma acknowledges the heroes as responsible guardians and allows them to remove items from the hall. As a show of goodwill, it also restores any characters transformed into arbiters by its trap in area N3 to their original form.

Should the heroes come into conflict with Weighs-the-Epochs, the pleroma relies upon its spells and its Sphere of Creation ability. It avoids using its Sphere of Destruction in the hall, lest it inadvertently destroy the items it intends to protect.

The golems here act as Weighs-the-Epochs commands and fight until destroyed.

WEIGHS-THE-EPOCHS

CREATURE 20

Pleroma (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 10)

Initiative Perception +37

ADAMANTINE GOLEMS (2)

CREATURE 18

Pathfinder Bestiary 189

Initiative Perception +26

Weighs-the-Epochs

The Lava Sculptor: One of the most unusual exhibits in the hall is an elaborate glass case nearly 8 feet tall, holding an androgynous humanoid with brassy skin and horns, wearing garments of flame. The plaque along the bottom of the case reads "Fieras,

Lava Sculptor; Plane of Fire (City of Brass).” The figure is unmoving and appears to be dead or magically preserved, as their flaming clothing doesn’t even flicker. The case’s occupant is in fact in a magical stasis that ends as soon as anyone opens the case (achieved by simply unlatching the front panel, which swings open like a door).

Fieras is an ifrit descended from a powerful demigod of fire. This divine power has manifested in a supernatural control over fire and lava that led to them becoming a renowned performer in the sprawling City of Brass on the Plane of Fire, but the sheer power of that divine energy has been burning the ifrit’s life like a candle with too many wicks all lit at once. When Fieras met Aroden after a lava-sculpting performance, the two reached an agreement: the ifrit accompanied Aroden to the Verdant Beacon to perform for the god and his distinguished guests as necessary, and Aroden crafted this case to place the ifrit into stasis between performances so they might make the most of their limited lifespan.

Once the case is opened, Fieras animates instantly, their fire-garments flickering and flaring into motion. Their attitude toward the party is friendly, and they offer a pleasant greeting and ask where and when the characters would like a performance. It may take some back-and-forth for the heroes to understand Fieras’s position and relate the news of the past few centuries—most notably that Aroden has died, complicating the ifrit’s plans. If the heroes offer Fieras an opportunity to perform with the Circus of Wayward Wonders, the ifrit gladly accepts, delighted to be able to continue their performance career, though they ask the heroes to take the glass stasis case with them so they can remain in it between performances and thus prolong their life. Give the heroes the Lava Sculptor trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: The hall of wonders holds immeasurable lore and a variety of interplanar oddities and trinkets. One pedestal has a glass bell jar covering what appears to be a nondescript rock and a small brass tag reading “Philosopher’s Stone; Jistkan Empire” (the label is correct; the item is indeed a *philosopher’s stone*). An armor stand along one wall holds a coppery-colored chain shirt: this is a +3 *greater resilient antimagic ethereal glamerd greater fortification high-grade orichalcum chain shirt* with the label “Arrogant Shirt; Cyrusian.” A wall-mounted rosewood plaque displays a delicate beaded necklace bearing a tiny gold-and-jade bottle; this *whisper of the first lie* is labeled “Whisper of the First Lie; Astral Plane.”

Among all the wonders in this hall, one artifact stands out from the rest: an exceptionally fine

longsword mounted on a prominent display stand, its pristine blade seemingly carved from a single gemstone. Anyone who noticed the peculiar features of the sword held by the Soldier’s Trial statue realizes this sword is identical to the one depicted in that statue, though its nameplate proclaims this blade “Kortos Diamond; Verdant Beacon.” If no one recalled the legend regarding the *Azlanti Diamond* while examining the Soldier’s Trial, a character can do so now with a successful DC 38 Society, Aroden Lore, or similar check. The statistics for the *Kortos Diamond* appear on page 69.

XP Award: If the heroes deal peacefully with Weighs-the-Epochs, award them 40 XP, as if they had defeated it in combat. If the heroes free Fieras and accept the ifrit into the Circus of Wayward Wonders, award them 30 XP.

N5. GUEST SUITES

SEVERE 20

This sumptuous sitting room is a study in opulence. Silken sheets drape from the ceiling, tapestries line the walls, and the floor boasts several thick carpets, giving the hard marble a cozy lining. A fire burns brightly in a wide hearth along the south wall, and luxuriously cushioned seating has been arranged to provide several discrete gathering areas. An open double door to the north reveals a dining table with elegant chairs. An open hallway leads from the room’s northwest corner and a double door stands in the east wall.

While Aroden rarely hosted guests in the Verdant Beacon—much less mortal ones—he nevertheless maintained a series of guest residences.

The *continual flame* spells throughout this suite are set into hooded lamps that can be closed when darkness is preferable—such as for sleeping—and the fires in the hearth in the sitting room and dining room are similar effects that provide modest heat in addition to light. The table in the dining room is a magic item that can be activated once per day to cast 6th-level *create food* followed by 6th-level *enhance victuals* to produce fine meals feeding up to 50 Medium creatures. It loses its magic if removed from the Verdant Beacon.

The hall leads to five posh bedrooms (area N5a) and a spacious bath (area N5b).

Creatures: When Sarvel and his entourage arrived at the Verdant Beacon, Kirosthrek and her loyal thoughtmaw xulgaths claimed these rooms. The creatures have generally found the comforts provided here enjoyable and have left them largely intact. Since thoughtmaws lack the repulsive stench of most xulgaths, the chambers remain surprisingly habitable,

although their psychogenic secretions makes non-xulgaths feel dreamy and relaxed.

Eighteen thoughtmaw xulgaths presently reside here. Some are gathered in the lounge and dining areas, while others sleep in the bedrooms or relax in the bath. They are startled and confused to see the heroes entering their territory, but they don't respond with violence unless the heroes attack them first. They most immediately want to know who the heroes are, why they've come to the Verdant Beacon, and whether they pose a threat to the thoughtmaws or to Kirosthrek.

As the heroes might have learned from the thoughtmaws in the Vale of Aroden, these xulgaths have grown somewhat uncertain of Sarvel's plans. While they were originally enthusiastic about the prophet's mission to deal a devastating blow to the surface-dwellers, they've since learned more about the *aeon orbs* and urged Sarvel to spare the orbs to see how their secrets might restore life to the ancient xulgath empire. Sarvel's insistence upon destroying the orbs has disillusioned them. The heroes might therefore try to strike a deal with the thoughtmaws. A character Requesting a collaboration must improve the xulgaths' attitude from indifferent to friendly and then succeed at a DC 36 Diplomacy check; on a critical failure, the thoughtmaws believe the heroes are trying to deceive them and attack. On a failure (but not a critical failure), the thoughtmaws might send the heroes to eliminate the saurians in the Verdant Beacon (if they haven't already), both to test the heroes' mettle and to eliminate their rivals.

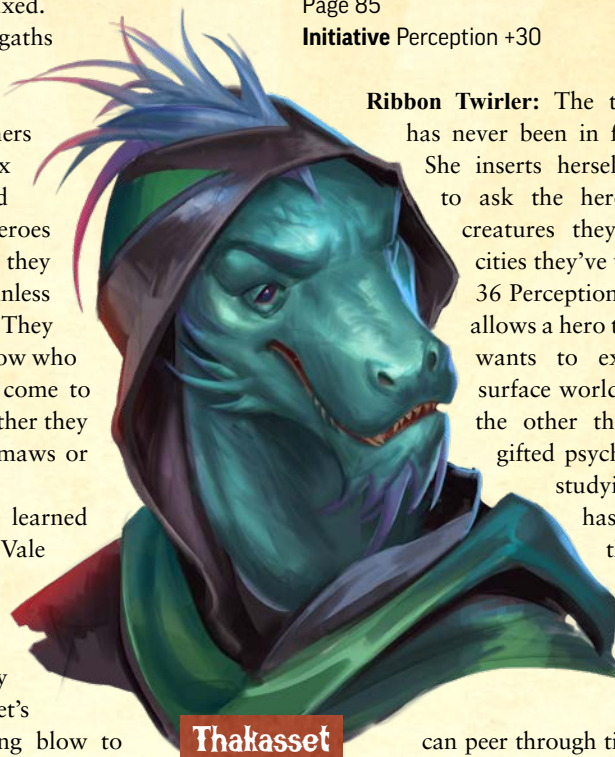
If the party strikes a bargain with the thoughtmaws, the psychic xulgaths use their powerful telepathy to communicate with Kirosthrek in the ritual chamber (area N9) about the benefits the heroes might provide. In addition, the xulgaths offer the heroes use of a bedroom to rest and recover. The thoughtmaws recommend that, before confronting Sarvel, the heroes should take the time to bathe in the "accursed waters of the white room" first—Kirosthrek understood the benefits of the cleansing pool in area N8, and Sarvel's refusal to make use of that benefit was but one more reason for the thoughtmaws to distrust him.

XULGATH THOUGHTMAWS (18)

CREATURE 15

Page 85

Initiative Perception +30



Thakasset

Ribbon Twirler: The thoughtmaw Thakasset has never been in favor of Sarvel's plans.

She inserts herself in any conversation to ask the heroes about their lives, creatures they've seen, and surface cities they've visited. A successful DC 36 Perception check to Sense Motive allows a hero to realize that Thakasset wants to experience life on the surface world and is willing to leave the other thoughtmaws behind. A gifted psychic, Thakasset has been studying with Kirosthrek and has learned, among other things, how to use her *planar ribbon* in ways no other thoughtmaw can match; apart from using the ribbon to peer across space, she

can peer through time. If the heroes return here after defeating Kirosthrek or otherwise gain possession of the *planar ribbon*, they can recruit Thakasset to perform with the item as part of the Circus of Wayward Wonders with a successful DC 30 Diplomacy check. If successful, give the players the Ribbon of Distant Vistas trick on the inside cover of this adventure.

Treasure: A sideboard in the sitting room holds a variety of aged spirits and cordials, most of which have evaporated or spoiled. Among these is a smaller crystal bottle holding a true elixir of life.

XP Award: If the heroes deal peacefully with the thoughtmaws here, whether they simply avoid a fight or make a deal with the disillusioned xulgaths, award the heroes 80 XP.

If the heroes recruit Thakasset into the Circus of Wayward Wonders, award them 30 XP.

Verdant Beacon Upper Level

The upper levels of the Verdant Beacon are the territory of the saurians accompanying Sarvel Ever-Hunger. The thoughtmaws largely avoid this level, given the growing tension between the two groups. The only xulgaths in these areas are Sarvel and Kirosthrek. Although Aroden didn't intend for visitors to reach these levels often, their chambers are nevertheless just as elegantly appointed as those of the entry level.

UPPER LEVEL FEATURES

The upper level of the Verdant Beacon have the same features as the lower level, except that ceilings in the upper levels are 50 feet high.

N6. WRECKED GALLERY

LOW 20

This angled hall was once a gallery, but the statues on display have been smashed to pieces. Only a few chunks of stone still retain the shape of a few fingers or the side of a face. The rubble has been arranged into several round heaps, each with a wide, shallow indentation.

Creatures: The saurians accompanying Sarvel have claimed this portion of the tower as their den. They smashed the statues here—originally depicting Aroden in the numerous guises he has worn throughout the ages—and shaped the rubble to form stone nests for themselves. Now four saurians rest here, along with one of their leader's powerful aides.

Sarvel's clumsy attempts to appease both the thoughtmaws and the more powerful saurians have annoyed both groups, leaving substantial tension between the factions. Unlike the thoughtmaws, the saurians aren't interested in dealing with the heroes, even to conspire against their rivals.

These saurians are vicious and territorial defenders. They don't follow retreating enemies into area N7, assuming the demons there can take care of the them, but otherwise pursue their foes until one side or the other is slain.

SAURIAN WORLDWATCHERS (2)

CREATURE 18

Page 81

Initiative Perception +34

SAURIAN WARMONGERS (2)

CREATURE 16

Page 80

Initiative Perception +31

Saurian Reinforcements: If the saurians in area N2 hear the sounds of combat in this area, they join the fight in 1d4+1 rounds.

N7. ARTIFICER'S WORKSHOP

SEVERE 20

This is the only area in the Verdant Beacon where Sarvel and his minions have managed to counteract the existing *continual flame* spells, and thus it is dark within.

Worktables and shelves line this area, interspersed with partially constructed golems and other clockworks. Though the components and tools are clearly of fine quality, the

area has been devastated. The constructs are discarded like broken toys, the tools are scattered, and every surface is smeared with caked blood and other filth.

Undoubtedly influenced by the marvels of ancient Azlant, Aroden long held a deep appreciation for constructs and their creation. In this workshop he continued his tinkering even as a deity, taking great satisfaction in creating things with his hands. All of the adamantite golems guarding the Vale of Aroden and the Verdant Beacon were crafted in this hall, as were the various traps and wards.

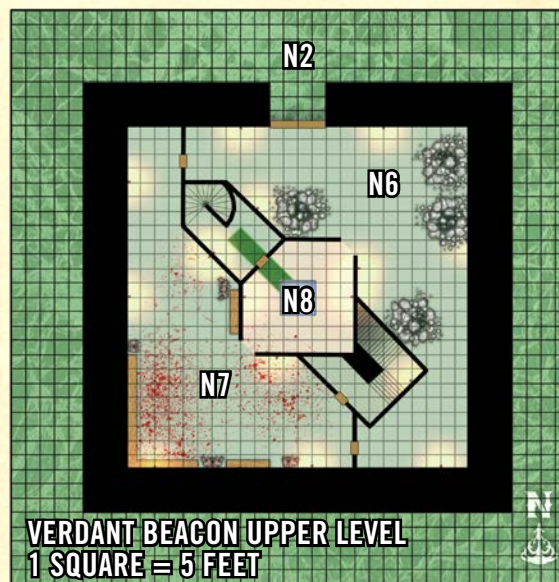
Now, the most powerful demons under Sarvel's command have claimed this hall, smashing what they could, scattering the rest, and scrawling crude Abyssal graffiti across the walls, floor, tables, and any other surface they can fit runes upon. A character who reads Abyssal quickly realizes that most of this petty scrawling consists of mockery of the dead god and praise for Zevgavizeb.

Legacy of the Artisan: Though the constructs in this room have been damaged, they still retain a fragment of their magic. If the party has successfully completed the Artisan's Trial and at least eight of the Trials of Aroden in all, their titles surge with the energy within this room. The heroes immediately and intuitively understand they hold power over the constructs. Each such character is quickened 1 while in this room, but can use this extra action only to activate the constructs.

ACTIVATE CONSTRUCT

AUDITORY CONCENTRATE

Summoning a fragment of Aroden's authority, you command the construct fragments throughout this room to aid you or



to hinder your foes. You gain one of the following benefits, chosen when you use this action.

- The construct fragments shield you, granting you cover until the next time you move or are targeted by an attack.
- The construct fragments attempt to Grapple one foe adjacent to you, with an Athletics modifier of +38.
- The construct fragments Aid your next action this turn, using your modifiers for the check.

Creatures: The demons here are some of Sarvel's most powerful minions, sent by Zevgavizeb to aid and oversee the prophet's endeavors. They include a powerful balor named Rixvir, his troubleshooter and assassin Ihdor, and two feuding vavakias that have served as Rixvir's lieutenants for ages. Rixvir has tangled with Aroden in the past and is pleased to be defacing his old rivals' lair. These demons swiftly attack anyone entering this area who isn't a follower of Zevgavizeb or one of Sarvel's minions. They pursue their foes relentlessly and fight until slain. They take note of any combat in area N6, but don't move to intervene—Rixvir hopes intruders cull a few of the saurian worldwatchers to give him greater influence with Sarvel.

RIXVIR

CREATURE 21

Elite balor (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 82)

Initiative Perception +38

Items bracers of armor type III, longsword

IHDOR

CREATURE 18

Elite marilith (*Pathfinder Bestiary* 6, 81)

Initiative Perception +32

VAVAKIAS (2)

CREATURE 18

Page 79

Initiative Perception +32

Assassin Team: If the heroes cause trouble in the Verdant Beacon and retreat, Sarvel might instruct these demons to hunt them down. Rixvir remains here, as he doesn't want to lose his influence with Sarvel by traveling far from the prophet's side, but Ihdor leads the vavakias against the heroes.

Treasure: The incomplete constructs in this workshop consist of six stacked ingots of high-grade adamantite worth 5,000 gp each. A wide drawer beneath one of the tables holds five crystal vials each holding 3,350 gp worth of ruby dust, a velvet pouch of flawless diamonds worth 62,000 gp, a porcelain bottle of *antimagic oil*, and a vial containing an elixir of rejuvenation.

Rixvir

N8. CLEANSING CHAMBER

This sparse chamber is startlingly different from the rest of the Verdant Beacon. The walls, floor, and the sunken pool in the center of the room are carved of plain white marble, while the water filling the pool to its very brim is perfectly still and crystal clear. The ceiling overhead is a thick layer of translucent stone that refracts and reflects light from the level above into sparkling rainbows that shift and dance as something moves on the other side of the stone.

Faint carvings along the walls show Aroden in the pool in various poses: stepping into it, bending with hands cupped before him, then standing straight with a faint halo around him.

This cleansing chamber is located directly below the Verdant Beacon's ritual chamber (area N9), and the only barrier between the two rooms is the translucent floor of that room. From here, the heroes can see hints of light and movement as Sarvel conducts the *extinction curse* overhead. A character can successfully identify the stone as a rare material called *throneglass* with a successful DC 30 check using Nature or an appropriate Lore skill; throneglass is an exceptionally durable material used to build the Imperial Palace of ancient Azlant.

The pool of water in the room's center carries several enchantments and radiates a powerful divine aura. Lesser enchantments on the pool keep the water clean and plentiful—no matter how much water is removed or how badly it is sullied, it returns to its pristine condition and depth after only 1 hour. Its primary effect, however, is to purify creatures before they enter the ritual chamber above. The pool's waters deal 8d6 lawful damage every round to a creature submerged in them, but a creature who remains within the pool for 3 full consecutive rounds gains a +3 circumstance bonus on checks to Reclaim an *Aeon Orb* within the ritual chamber above (as described in area N9). While Sarvel scoffed at the cleansing pool, Kirosthrek recognized its function and endured the damage to gain its benefits.

None of the current occupants of the Verdant Beacon like spending any time in the cleansing chamber, but since it is easily accessible by both the saurians and the demons, both groups keep watch on it and investigate any noise or suspicious activity taking place here.

The door to the northwest opens into an austere hall of the same white marble. Magically preserved wall hangings of rich green bearing Aroden's religious symbol adorn the walls. A simple green carpet

lines the hall, leading the way from the cleansing pool to a spiral staircase climbing upward at the far end of the hall.

N9. RITUAL CHAMBER

EXTREME 20

The simple door opens onto an austere octagonal chamber lit by flaming sconces set in niches along each wall. The floor is a strangely translucent crystal refracting light from both above and below, with a winged eye symbol carved in the center. Four obelisks rise from this floor, tapering to a point just below the ceiling overhead. Candles, golden

THE
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Ihdor

bowls, eldritch tracings along the floor, burning incense, and other paraphernalia suggest a ritual in progress.

Creatures: Sarvel Ever-Hunger is performing the lengthy *extinction curse* ritual here, aided by the thoughtmaw leader Kirosthrek as a secondary caster. Two vavakias stand guard, ensuring no one and nothing interrupts Zevgavizeb's chosen prophet while the ritual is underway.

When the heroes arrive, the vavakias immediately confront them, attempting to hold them back, while Sarvel and Kirosthrek pause the ritual to deal with the interruption; pausing the ritual occupies them both during the first turn in combat.

Once he can fully engage the intruders, Sarvel's first action is a single action to trigger the ancient clockwork mechanisms here in the Verdant Beacon's ritual chamber.

The entire room vibrates as huge stone gears and shafts start to turn, dust sifting down from the ceiling as seams appear in the smooth marble overhead. The seams widen, the entire ceiling dilating to reveal the clear sky above. With a sudden lurch, the translucent stone underfoot begins to rise up through the now roofless chamber and into the cold, open air atop the Kortos Mounts.

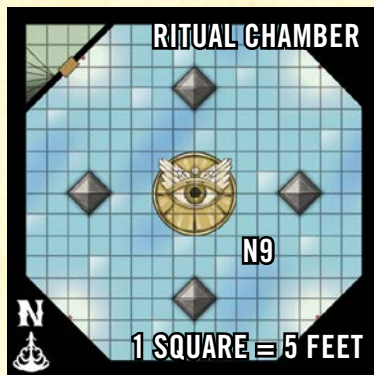
The platform moves through the air at a speed of 30 feet per round. After 2 rounds, the platform rises far enough to bring the *aeon orbs* into view, gleaming with a brilliant light visible only to those standing on the ritual platform, which continues to drift in a broad circle above the Verdant Beacon, the throneglass platform orbiting the Verdant Beacon just as the *aeon orbs* orbit their towers. Once the *aeon orbs* are in sight, Sarvel's echoes of aeons ability can restore him and does so even if he's already dead or unconscious when they come into view. This effect can occur only once for each *aeon orb*—the orb visibly dims when it bestows this benefit. However, if a character Reclaims an *Aeon Orb* (see below) before Sarvel has a chance to use it, that particular orb can't restore him.

Sarvel fights viciously to prove his deity's might over the heroes. He keeps his enraging stench suppressed while his allies remain in the fight, unleashing it only if it won't interfere with their aid. He also prefers to keep his distance, casting powerful spells and relying on the extensive reach of his tentacles to attack foes from afar. He uses the platform's obelisks and the vavakias

for cover, and he doesn't hesitate to use *air walk* to move alongside, above, or even under the throneglass platform if it gives him an advantage over his foes. Sarvel fights to the death—perhaps to multiple deaths, if the *aeon orbs* keep restoring him.

The thoughtmaw Kirosthrek likewise keeps her distance from the heroes, relying entirely upon her spells to harry the party and protect Sarvel. She stays in the fight for as long as Sarvel lives, but if he is slain and can't be restored, she flees. If the heroes successfully convinced the thoughtmaws on the Verdant Beacon's entry level to intercede with their leader on the party's behalf, Kirosthrek alters her tactics. She isn't willing to overtly attack Sarvel, but she hopes the heroes might bring Sarvel low before they die. To that end, she quietly uses her psychic prowess to Aid a hero attempting to Reclaim an *Aeon Orb*,

using Occultism (which provides a +4 bonus on a critical success, since she has legendary proficiency in that skill). The hero performing that action is aware of the assistance, but not its source. In the unlikely event that the heroes defeat Sarvel and offer Kirosthrek a truce, she accepts; see her full description on page 88 for details.



SARVEL EVER-HUNGER

CREATURE 22

Page 90

Initiative Perception +39

KIROSTHREK

CREATURE 20

Page 88

Initiative Perception +36

VAVAKIAS (2)

CREATURE 18

Page 79

Initiative Perception +32

Aeon Orbs: Characters possessing resonant reflections can break Sarvel's connection to an *aeon orb* using the following action.

RECLAIM AN AEON ORB

CONCENTRATE DIVINE MANIPULATE MENTAL

Requirements You can see an *aeon orb* that is currently controlled by Sarvel Ever-Hunger, and you have at least one *resonant reflection*.

You channel the power of the *aeon orb* in an effort to redirect its energy toward yourself. Attempt a DC 48 check using Arcana, Nature, Occultism, Religion, or Aroden Lore,

with the following results. The DC of this check is reduced by 2 for each *resonant reflection* you have.

Critical Success You break Sarvel Ever-Hunger's connection to the *aeon orb* and restore a portion of its energy. The orb immediately casts a 9th-level *heal* spell on you or a single ally within 30 feet of you (your choice), and you regain any expended uses of any *resonant reflections* you have.

Success You break Sarvel Ever-Hunger's connection to the *aeon orb*. If the *aeon orb* hasn't already been depleted, it immediately casts a 9th-level *heal* spell on you or a single ally within 30 feet of you (your choice), and you regain any expended uses of any *resonant reflections* you have.

Critical Failure Your *resonant reflections* are corrupted by Sarvel Ever-Hunger's connection to the *aeon orb*. One of your active *resonant reflections* (selected randomly) is suppressed for 1 minute; if you have a spell from that *resonant reflection* currently in effect, it is automatically counteracted.



Aeon Orb

Restoring the Aeon Orbs

Once the heroes have defeated Sarvel Ever-Hunter, they can perform the task that brought them here to the Verdant Beacon in the first place: restoring the life-giving magic that allows the Isle of Kortos to thrive. The characters can feel a vibrant, almost painful thrum of energy from the *resonant reflections* they carry while within sight of the *aeon orbs*, urging them to take action. Reforging the orbs' network is an instinctual task once the party has the peace of mind to consider it (that is, once they're no longer engaged in combat). As they gaze upon a given *aeon orb*, it takes only a few minutes of concentration to transform that orb's *resonant reflection* into a magical tether, linking it to the Verdant Beacon. The characters need only repeat this process once for each *aeon orb*. As the last tether forms, the characters feel a tremendous surge of magical power flow through them and along these newly built ley lines. The orbs flare momentarily, but each character with a *resonant reflection* can tell that, even as the orbs return to their former brightness, their power has increased many times over. A few moments later, the *resonant reflections* fade from each hero—their energy having been transferred to bolster the newly restored network—and the throneglass platform slowly returns to rest in the Verdant Beacon's ritual chamber.

While restoring the *aeon orbs'* network has no immediate effects on the Isle of Kortos, the empowered network will become evident over the next year and have even greater effects in the decades to come. The following year's harvest across the Swardlands and the Isle of Erran is the most bountiful in a century, and only the first of many. The Welt ceases growing, and slowly begins to contract in the years to come, leaving fertile fields in its wake.

Conclusion

With Sarvel defeated and the *aeon orbs* restored to their full power, the heroes have no further obligations at the Verdant Beacon. The structure must remain standing, as it is part of the arcane network powering the *aeon orbs*, but its inaccessibility and the defenses of the Vale of Aroden remain in place to deter outsiders from trying to reach the beacon for nefarious purposes. Nevertheless, if one or more characters want to remain at the Verdant Beacon as a guardian, the guest residences provide a comfortable place for a mortal to live indefinitely, and there are plenty of opportunities for study, artisanship, and similar pursuits among the Hall of Wonders and Aroden's artificer workshop.

The party may also seek to tie up any loose ends they have in the tower or the Vale of Aroden, such as recruiting Fieras or Thakasset, clearing out any remaining enemies, collecting treasures, or other tasks.

Sooner or later, however, the heroes should return to Diobel, where the Circus of Wayward Wonders has been thriving. The heroes have likely discovered new performers in the Kortos Mounts to add to the show. In addition, if the heroes attracted the Radiant Festival talent scouts to their first performance in Diobel and succeeded at the show, a special letter awaits them upon their return: an official missive from the Radiant Festival organizers inviting the Circus of Wayward Wonders to perform as part of the once-in-a-lifetime celebration in Absalom!

Whether or not the circus accepts the invitation, they heroes have no end of opportunities for performance venues. The circus might embark on a tour of sea ports across Avistan, venture south to the shores of Garund, or set their sights on the City at the Center of the World and the upcoming Radiant Festival. The Starstone Isles are safe, but the show must go on!



THE KORTOS MOUNTS

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Aroden

Chapter 3:
The Last Act

The Kortos
Mounts

Artifacts of
Aroden

Adventure
Toolbox

The Kortos Mounts are an exercise in contradiction. They lie within sight of the greatest city in the Inner Sea, yet their vast, barely explored heights are overwhelmingly wild, untamed, and dangerous. They are primordial—mind-shattering in their immensity—but they arose not from natural forces but rather a singular man, their geological time line disrupted by a mortal who wished to be a god. They are home to ruins and mysteries, strange phenomena, and miraculous manifestations, yet their emergence can be dated precisely, down to the very year.

More prosaically, the Kortos Mounts are a small volcanic mountain range that lies at the center of the Isle of Kortos. There are extensive foothills to the southwest, verdant and dotted with farms and ranches, while the land to the northeast grows more arid and hostile. Absalom nominally claims these mountains, but in practice they belong to no one but strange creatures, natural forces, pilgrimaging zealots, and those wanderers and ne'er-do-wells who thrive on the freedoms found at the edges of civilization.

History

Eons ago, the *Starstone* fell from the sky and ended life on Golarion as it existed before, then came to rest at the bottom of the newly created Inner Sea. There it lay for millennia after Earthfall until Aroden, a powerful mortal magician also known as the Last Azlanti, raised it from the depths—a feat for which he became revered as a living god. As if to mark the occasion, Aroden then lifted the Isle of Kortos from the ocean's briny floor, making a home first for his worshippers and later for a bustling, magnificent city.

Though compared to the grandeur of Absalom, the Kortos Mounts were something of an afterthought. Even once raised, their unremarkable mass of sediment and volcanic rock from the ocean floor remained largely inhospitable, so the humans of the lowlands mostly let them be. In time, however, outsiders arrived on Kortos, including some brave enough to make parts of the range their home. Centaurs, minotaurs, and harpies

were among the first settlers of the mountains, though hardly by choice; after their failed siege on Absalom, they had no other option than to flee to the eastern crags. This contingent has spread in the millennia since, with centaurs forming largely peaceful enclaves among the island's sparse woodlands, minotaurs lording over desperate townships of similarly shunned creatures, and harpies flocking to serve various mystics and cults of personality.

Over the years, the realities of trying to maintain community in the broken, windswept mountains caused nearly all of the Kortos Mounts' residents to fracture into ever-smaller groups interconnected by trade, marriage, and alliances of convenience. Charismatic leaders periodically attempt to unite these bands into an army, but Absalom's rulers have always taken defensive steps before the efforts get very far. Adventurers slew the last major warlord from the Kortos Mounts, the amethyst-scaled dragon Maejerex Steeleye, in 4592 AR.

With Absalom's recent interregnum, however, a new crop of would-be tyrants has quietly emerged from the mountains' shadows. The 87th Yellow-Eyed King has been working to forge the harpies' loose alliance into a genuine nation, the Famished Mind is crafting horrors of brutally extracted stone and citrine, and the Vitric Queen has claimed a portion of the mountains as her own private preserve. If Absalom goes much longer without a proper primarch, powerful forces from the Kortos Mounts might move to fill the power vacuum.

At a Glance

The Kortos Mounts are a modest mountain range at the center of the Isle of Kortos covering an expanse of roughly 3,000 square miles. There are several active volcanos in the area, and the whole region is seismically active. Several of the highest mountains in the Inner Sea region stand here. The Weeping Grandfather volcano (19,000 feet) is famous for its periodic ash rains and curious ruins. Mount Ganog (21,000 feet) is known for its gentler slopes and small mining towns. Greatest

KORTOS MOUNTS



of all is the awe-inspiring Arazlant Mox (26,000 feet), first home of the *Starstone* and sacred mountain for all of the Ascended Gods.

The lower reaches of the mountains are covered in forests and alpine meadows and dotted with tiny ranches and mining communities. Various centaur tribes claim the mountains' foothills, some preferring to herd sheep and cattle while others tend toward raiding and trading with more settled peoples. The Zel-Vana confederation to the southwest consists of about a dozen centaur families on cool-but-polite terms with their human neighbors, but the Zur-Kelivas confederation of the east are known to be demon-worshippers and vampires.

The high passes and plateaus of the Kortos Mounts are largely the domain of the minotaurs. There are some 40 different minotaur droves in the region, ranging from modest raiding groups such as the Gorebreathers to large and sophisticated droves like the Ivory Sons, whose settlement of Faer's Labyrinth deals regularly with Nuar Spiritskin's embassy in Absalom. Most of the minotaurs are worshippers of the demon lord Baphomet, though that does not stop them from making the occasional

deal with humans. The Lord of Minotaurs is cunning and patient, and his priests are known to say that "the Beast takes his time"—which more-agreeable minotaurs interpret as a stamp of approval on peaceful trade.

At 15,000 feet lies the permanent snow line, above which the treeless mountains are covered in eternal frost. Various harpy factions claim this lifeless realm as their own, venturing down to hunt and collect sacrifices to Pazuzu. All harpies nominally acknowledge the authority of the Yellow-Eyed King, though each faction has its own simple political structure, typically a chiefdom.

Notable Locations

An exhaustive gazetteer of the 50-mile-long Kortos Mounts range could span several volumes. Below are a few of the range's most interesting or important locations, which correspond to the map above.

The Aerie: The detachment of Eagle Knights who occupy this mountaintop fortress have the unenviable task of surveilling the northern reaches of the Kortos Mounts. Their two-fold mission requires them to make sure that nothing blindsides Absalom from the island's

interior, and to keep small problems from becoming large ones. The Eagle Knights consider the fortress a hardship posting due to the region's thin air, bad food, and ill-tempered neighbors.

Recently, the discovery of three decapitated scouts has rocked the Aerie—whoever killed them left the corpses to rot, and their heads are nowhere to be found. Most of the soldiers blame the local Gorebreather minotaurs, but Captain Guyse remains skeptical. The Gorebreathers—virulent raiders and demon-worshippers, all—are an unlovely bunch to be sure, but this crime doesn't fit their usual *modus operandi*. Whoever the murderers are, the captain and his cadre would very much like to know.

Aroden's Rest: At the pinnacle of Arazlant Mox, the highest peak in the Kortos Mounts, is a curious platform carved from a single piece of green-veined white marble. It stretches 10 paces across, and at its center is a patch of naked stone with a small impact crater—it is here that the *Starstone* supposedly rested for 5,000 years before Aroden raised Kortos from the depths and moved the artifact to its present home.

Just below the platform are the remnants of a small hermitage, today inhabited only by the shade of Sahba al-Koriab, an Arodenite priestess who perished when the miracle allowing the priests to survive at such extreme altitudes expired with Aroden's death. As a ghost, Sahba continues to exist much as she did before, attempting to attend to the needs of the ever-scarcer pilgrims who are, more often than not, simply treasure-hunting adventurers. Recently, Sahba has found herself counseling the Vitric Queen, who comes to Aroden's Rest often to meditate on the nature of eternity and loss.

Black Ink Lake: According to some legends, the night after Norgorber's ascension he cast all evidence of his life into the waters of this frigid mountain lake 13,000 feet up the side of Arazlant Mox. The lake supposedly turned black with the ink of incriminating ledgers and police reports, and it remains so to this day—the lake's waters are true iron gall ink, made of iron salts and tannin.

Today the lake is a site of pilgrimage for Norgorberites around Golarion. Tradition is to throw a sacrifice into the lake—typically a watertight box with papers bearing secrets, but pilgrims have also thrown in vials of poison, murder weapons, and bits of stolen loot. Some foolhardy opportunists have tried diving into the lake after the thousands of sacrifices, but the ink is icy-cold, unfathomably deep, and impenetrable to the unaided eye. Those who have taken a dip and emerged report feeling sinuous forces grasping at them in the darkness.

Absalom's Court of Black Paper maintains a small temple by the shore to collect ink for occult contracts or scrolls. The Court also initiates new priest-advocates by briefly submerging them in the lake. Very few drown.

HAZARDS OF THE KORTOS MOUNTS

Traveling in the Kortos Mounts—even its sloping, often dangerous lowlands—is anything but safe going. The following are just a few of the many natural dangers travelers might face while scaling this epic range.

Altitude Sickness: Many of Kortos's peaks rise more than 15,000 feet above sea level, where breathing becomes difficult and few living things unacclimated to the heights can survive for long. Even further down the slopes, the air is thin enough to require acclimation in order to stave off fatigue.

Ash Rain: The Weeping Grandfather sometimes belches forth clouds of burning ash. Winds disperse the ash all across the western mountains, obscuring footpaths and hindering visibility, potentially for weeks at a time.

Blizzards: During winter, furious blizzards and white-out conditions are common anywhere above 5,000 feet.

Earthquakes: Whether because of Aroden's island-raising magic or the rippling effects of the *Starstone*'s cataclysmic impact, the Kortos Mounts sport incredible seismic activity. Tremors cause avalanches and rockslides that rise in frequency the further one travels inland.

Mirages: Altitude sickness, fatigue, and poor visibility frequently cause travelers to see mirages among the Kortos Mounts. Most of these visions are simply mundane illusions of passes or shelter, but a few travelers report mirages that act with intelligence or even malevolence.

Teleportation: Conjunction magic such as *teleport* does not always function as usual amid the turbulent ley lines of the Kortos Mounts; those who attempt such spells may find themselves flung to a ridge or valley far from their intended destination. (See the sidebar on page 9 for more details.)

Winds: Oceanic trade winds funnel through the steep valleys and jagged peaks of the Kortos Mounts to produce a bewildering amount of turbulence.

Danaetlugh's Spring: Some 16,000 feet up Arazlant Mox is a small spring nestled in the roots of an enormous pine tree. The legend goes that after Cayden Cailean ascended to divinity, he came to this spring to clear his foggy head and try to reassemble the events of the Test of the *Starstone*. Before he left, Cayden's touch blessed the spring in which he washed his face and the sapling against which he leaned.

Now, the spring pours forth blessed uisce beatha, the spirits of purest life. Enough of this holy whiskey will cure any ailment and even bring back the dead. However, Danaetlugh, the great elder arboreal who guards the spring, shares its bounty only if a plea moves them to tears or, failing that, if the arboreal is beaten in a contest of strength—a seemingly

impossible feat, as Danaetlugh is tall as a titan and strong as an avalanche. If Danaetlugh is befuddled with clever words and strong liquor, they let slip the secret of their strength—a different secret each time—so that they can be beaten. Killing the arboreal is useless, as the spring loses all power until Danaetlugh, having marinated in the uisce beatha for centuries, regrows the following spring.

The Famished Mind: Decades ago, a clutch of demon-worshipping xulgaths discovered within their Darklands home a cache of orange crystal shards that hummed with a tremendous hunger. Considering this a sign from the demon lord Zevgavizeb, the xulgaths followed the trail of increasingly large crystals and growing sensations. The path upwards eventually deposited the pilgrims in the Kortos Mounts. There, hanging from an overpass in the wind and snow like an ornament, was the source of the calling: a worked sphere of pure citrine. When the xulgath approached, the orb absorbed the terrified beings and digested their bodies and minds.

An entity called the Famished Mind resides within this orb. Its first meal contained a xulgath stoneliege, their body bound with living rock. Initially, the nascent Mind could only convey its hunger through citrine, but it now affects and binds both citrine and basalt. It has built glittering orange and grey simulacra of its xulgath prey, who were the first creatures it encountered since its mysterious arrival from places unknown. These ersatz xulgaths range the mountains in search of others for their alien master to consume. Crude at first, the Famished Mind grows in knowledge and subtlety with every acquisition, ever spreading its mysterious, terrifying agenda across the Kortos Mounts.

The Glass Fortress: Some years ago, in preparation for Tar-Baphon's return, agents of the Whispering Way managed to awaken an ancient Jistkan lich known to history as the Vitric Queen. The results were something of a disappointment, as the golemcrafter-lich promptly sank into a profound depression at how little of Jistka remained in this new world. She nominally remains a vassal of the Whispering Tyrant, but it is a loose relationship. The Vitric Queen obeys his orders, so long as he doesn't give very many, and Tar-Baphon supports her endeavors, so long as he needn't do so very often.

Moving to Kortos to avoid unpleasant memories, the Vitric Queen carved a fortress of obsidian in the caldera of Mount Namran and populated it with servitors of living molten glass. To pass the time between bouts of melancholy, she desultorily conducts research into animating elementals and constructs. Recently though, she's heard that somewhere in Absalom lies the body, and perhaps the core, of a master automaton known as

the Alkahest Sage. Just who the Sage is remains unclear, but this news has galvanized the Vitric Queen to new heights of activity.

The God-Carcass: The vampiric centaurs of Zur-Kelivas—worshippers of the Azlanti demon-queen Zura, She Who Savors Flesh—control Kortos's eastern foothills. For close to a hundred years, these demon-worshipping centaurs have been secretly working on a profoundly blasphemous project. Whenever one of their number captures living victims, they drain them of blood to sate their hunger, then throw them into a huge pit shaped like a mold for some enormous quadrupedal statue. By now, the pit is almost full of necrotic flesh semi-preserved by the priests' magic, and its heinous stench wafts over the entire hillside. What happens when the pit is finally full is unclear, but the Zur-Kelivas centaurs have grown increasingly tense and excited as the project nears its completion.

Grandfather's Arms: Generations of Earthsong minotaurs have lived between the "arms" of two volcanic ridges on the Weeping Grandfather's northern slope. One of the more peaceful droves, the Earthsong pushed aside their priests of Baphomet long ago in favor of a hereditary line of earth-sorcerers. Now, the Earthsong farm the rich volcanic soil of their ancestral lands and craft intricate trinkets of bone and rock for trade with other communities.

Recently, the venerable **Earthsinger Revered Areid** (LN female minotaur druid 10) traveled up the mountain to commune with her volcanic patron. She has not returned, and now Grandfather's Arms is under siege by reptilian golems that glitter ominously in the mountain sunlight. For the moment, the Earthsong have managed to push back the intruders with blood, bone, and cunning stone traps, but any capable outsider willing to aid the farmers is likely to receive a far more enthusiastic greeting than usual.

And not a moment too soon, as the Famished Mind will shortly unleash more and more powerful creations upon the Earthsong. Meanwhile, Dalren the Cunning, the clan's largely unheeded chief priest of Baphomet, has argued that only his people's ancestral patron can save the Earthsong; the zealot is eager to use any available opportunity to prove his point.

Hall of the Yellow-Eyed King: The Yellow-Eyed Kings of the Kortos Mounts are harpy sorcerer-priests of Pazuzu whose line of otherwise-unnamed hereditary leaders stretches back hundreds of years. Some of these so-called kings have been sages, some fools, but the current high priest of Pazuzu, **the 87th Yellow-Eyed King** (CE male harpy witch 14), is a figure of rare energy and ambition. From his base in an ancient Arodenite temple, lit with yak-butter lamps and hung

with decaying tapestries, the 87th King has been slowly uniting the harpy flocks under his banner through a combination of war, diplomacy, and intrigue. Despite his success, the 87th King now casts about for some secret weapon, some edge—and if the rumors are true, he may recently have found just what he is looking for in the ruins of Yvuvho.

The Inheritor's Forge: The Ascended deity Iomedae is strongly associated with several legendary divine swords, including *Radiance*, *Seriththal*, and *Heart's Edge*, as well as a score of lesser blades. According to legend, she forged one or more of her swords in this small mountain keep, 20,000 feet up the side of Arazlant Mox.

The castellan of the keep is the mighty angel Qistiel, who maintains the sacred forge with the aid of a cadre of argent wardens and crafts blades for Heaven's soldiers in anticipation of confrontations between celestials and fiends on the Material Plane. Qistiel can be persuaded to loan one of their blades or allow access to the holy forge, but only if the petitioner impresses them with sufficient courage, wisdom, and honor.

Saddlebark Ranch: The Saddlebark Ranch has been supplying "faerie mounts"—short-legged, large-eared riding dogs—to travelers in the Kortos Mounts ever since old **Timblethorn Baublebrand** (NG male gnome rancher 0) realized that while camels and axebeaks are fine in the lowlands, something more stable and sure-footed is necessary for the high passes of the Kortos Mounts. Today, wiggles of faerie mounts are a common sight throughout the Kortos Mounts, used for pulling ore or carrying goods through the snow, and their smaller cousins, the Taldan corgis, are popular pets across the island. The Saddlebark Ranch is now only one of a dozen ranches in the foothills between Absalom and Diobel. Unfortunately, Timblethorn has become a victim of his own success, and Aspis Consortium agents have started threatening ranchers and buying up properties. Timblethorn's granddaughter, **Kai Baublebrand** (NG female gnome rancher 2), has been trying to rally the ranchers against the Consortium, but so far no one else is willing to stand with the young dogherder.

Wall of Faces: Located near the Weeping Grandfather at an altitude of 17,000 feet, this bizarre escarpment has been carved with hundreds of faces—14 rows of 68 faces each, laid out with mathematical precision. The weathered visages are three times life-sized, and most are human faces of an Azlanti cast, but there are others as well, some belonging to no species native to Golarion—feline faces with feathered ears, narrow faces with elongated skulls, and stranger things still.

The Bloodwhistler harpies have found that if one anoints the lips of the faces with living blood, the stones speak in soft, whispering voices that can be mistaken for the whistling of the wind. Most only gibber and whimper, but some prophesy or give good counsel. Bloodwhistler shamans typically use their own blood for such rituals, but when they capture outsiders, a festival is held so that as many faces as possible can speak.

Yvuvho: This ancient, remote structure was recently discovered by one of the current Yellow-Eyed King's priests. The structure resembles a pyramidal ziggurat, tipped with three towers and resting on a single massive black stone. The 87th King believes that this was once a small military outpost of the Shory Empire, a lesser cousin of the great flying cities, lost at sea and brought up when Kortos was raised from the depths.

Using brute-force demonic magic backed by mass sacrifice, the 87th King has managed to raise Yvuvho and let the ziggurat fly once more. Unfortunately, the harpies have yet to figure out how to direct its movement, and so Yvuvho floats aimlessly around the Kortos Mounts, its deadly weapons aimed at nothing more threatening than mountain goats. The 87th King has unwillingly come to the conclusion that he'll need outside help, and is thus making plans to entice or kidnap some scholar of the Shory.



Bloodwhistler Harpy



ARTIFACTS OF ARODEN

*To: Irranda Liassheir, Curator of Antiquities,
Forae Logos, Absalom*

In the absence of my superior, Curator Vhrest, I humbly apologize for the delay in responding to your request for details on the relics of the dead god Aroden. I have spent the last three weeks poring through holy scriptures, volumes of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*, and our own extensive records in order to provide you with a primer on known Arodenite relics and items of historical interest. (As a personal aside, my tardiness in reply is attributable to an ill-fated run-in with abnormally large rats in the second subbasement of our archives and a subsequent recovery in the Forae Logos infirmary, and while I recognize this is a poor excuse, I have prioritized your request ahead of seeking reparations from the “adventurers” who supposedly cleared the infestation last month.)

In the interest of expedition—I know your time is valuable—the following is a brief summary of known Arodenite antiquities.

Azlanti Diamond: Aroden crafted this legendary sword for the next emperor of Azlant, and when he took the blade for himself, his hubris may have been the inspiration for whatever foul forces unleashed the devastating Earthfall upon Golarion.

Shield of Aroden: Before Tar-Baphon destroyed Aroden’s famous shield and transformed it into the *Shattered Shield of Arnisant*, the God of Humanity supposedly carried it on his own person for untold centuries during his travels. Of course, with the recent failed siege of the Whispering Tyrant and the brave sacrifice of the heroes who defeated the lich using shards of the shield embedded in their own bodies, it is a foregone conclusion that the *Shield of Aroden* has well and truly passed into the realm of history.

Throneglass: Modern smiths struggle to understand the properties of the ancient, hard-as-steel crafting material called *throneglass*. With the destruction of Old Azlant, the secrets of making *throneglass* were

destroyed as well, meaning there is a small, finite amount of the material left in the world.

Tomes of Memory: These scattered volumes are perhaps the best-known remnants of the Last Azlanti’s legacy, possessed as they were by leaders of every one of his numerous temples. In the last century, so many of the Tomes have been stolen or otherwise gone missing that it is no stretch to refer to these books as artifacts, though the magical potency they impart is perhaps not imbued, exactly, but rather gleaned from the pages.

If my work pleases you, a kind word in the ear of either Curator Vhrest or Head Librarian Nae would do much to improve my station here at Forae Logos so I could assist you further—or it might at least be the final bit of inspiration necessary to supply my basement office with a proper desk.

*Glisson Deremor, Assistant Researcher,
Religious Department, Forae Logos, Absalom*

IN SEARCH OF GREATNESS

While this volume marks the end of the Extinction Curse Adventure Path, that doesn’t necessarily mean this is the end of your players’ adventures on the Isle of Kortos. The Aeon Towers and corresponding Orbs were but a fraction of the marks the dead god Aroden left on his home island. The God of Humanity walked Golarion for millennia; who knows what other ancient relics, guardians, and mysteries he left behind?

The following pages detail four of the lesser-known artifacts associated with Aroden. Each entry includes the item’s physical description, statistics, brief history, and possible ramifications associated with having it.

The search for an artifact—or the pursuit of its destruction—can provide fuel for enough adventures to compose an entirely new campaign. Tread carefully, however; to trifle with a god’s belongings is no mean matter, and that’s doubly true for a now-dead god who made no shortage of enemies during his time on Golarion.

Chapter 1:
End of
the Road

Chapter 2:
The Trials of
Aroden

Chapter 3:
The Last Act

The Kortos
Mounts

Artifacts of
Aroden

Adventure
Toolbox

Aroden's Hearthstone

Colorful wisps of flame dance about within this exquisitely cut fire opal and periodically converge into the shape of a five-pointed star. The gem is warm to the touch.

ARODEN'S HEARTHSTONE

ITEM 25

UNIQUE ARCANES ARTIFACT ENCHANTMENT

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

This coin-sized gemstone can be used on its own but must be included in the construction of a hearth in order to fully activate its magic.

Activate 3 days (Interact); **Frequency** 4 times per year;

Requirements You have Legendary proficiency in Crafting; **Effect** You craft a magical weapon or armor of up to 20th level. You must attempt a Crafting check as usual to create the item, but you need supply only raw materials worth a quarter of the item's Price, and you need not pay the remaining portion of the item's Price or spend additional downtime days working on it. While *Aroden's Hearthstone* is active, the stars in the sky, including Golarion's sun, appear to glow brighter within a 100-mile radius of the hearthstone.

Activate >>> command, envision; **Frequency** once per month; **Effect** *Aroden's Hearthstone* draws in heat from the world itself, causing the ambient temperature within 100 miles to drop below 0°F. Within 1 mile of the *Hearthstone*, the temperature drops to -200°F, rivaling the frigid cold of outer space and dealing 4d6 cold damage each round to every creature in the area. This effect lasts 1 minute, during which time the nearest moon (probably Golarion's) appears an eerie blue color to any observers within 100 miles of the hearthstone. At the end of 1 minute, the hearthstone emits a blast of concentrated heat that deals 25d6 fire damage to creatures and objects within 150 feet.

Destruction Using *Aroden's Hearthstone* to craft a cursed item results in a failed creation and causes the gemstone to split into five equal-sized but magically impotent pieces. Over the course of a year, four of these pieces crumble to dust, while the fifth expands to the size of the original artifact and bears its powers anew. To destroy *Aroden's Hearthstone*, each of the separated pieces must be plunged into one of the five stars that compose the cosmic constellation known as the Follower.

HISTORY

Aroden's Hearthstone may be one of the oldest relics associated with the Last Azlanti. It was originally the central piece of Aroden's forge in old Azlant, and the talented crafter used its incredible powers to bolster his own extraordinary knack for smithing. With a word, Aroden could command the gem to produce enough heat to melt nearly any material and infuse it with the same enduring magic that keeps the ancient ruins of Azlant standing to this day.

Aroden took the hearthstone from his forge after he seized control of the *Azlanti Diamond* and the planet descended into darkness. During the era following Earthfall, he used its immense magic to repair and forge numerous objects of wonder, including several that he wielded while walking the world in one or more of his twelve guises.

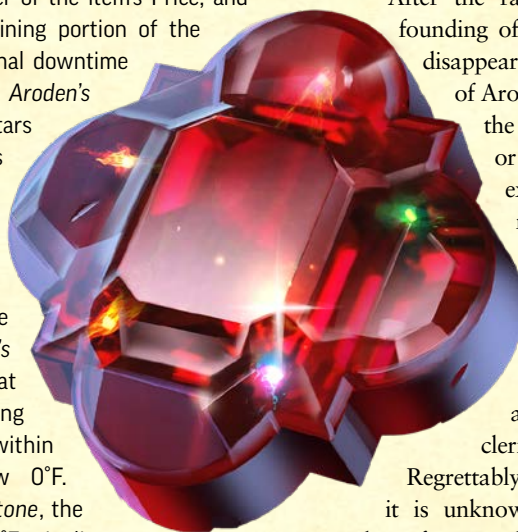
After the raising of the *Starstone* and the founding of Absalom, *Aroden's Hearthstone* disappeared from the mortal plane. Scholars of Aroden speculate that it was taken to the god's domain on the plane of Axis or that he carried it with him in his explorations of the cosmos, ever reinforcing its abilities in the fires of other distant stars. Whatever the case, it wasn't until 4645 AR, when a former priest of Aroden noted distinct scorch marks around a gemstone adorning a crypt, that the church's former clerics claimed it had resurfaced.

Regrettably, the written accounts end here; it is unknown where *Aroden's Hearthstone* was taken after its rediscovery, though the most reliable rumors place it in one of the Last Azlanti's ruined rural churches somewhere on the Isle of Kortos.

RAMIFICATIONS

Noble Remuneration: The items produced by *Aroden's Hearthstone* are invariably things of legend. These creations are constantly sought by Golarion's movers and shakers, beneficent and otherwise. Anyone known to be in possession of *Aroden's Hearthstone* will no doubt find themselves dogged by those who seek to use the gemstone's magic for their own agendas.

Occult Interest: The occult summoners known as the Night Heralds seek *Aroden's Hearthstone* to help them create a weapon capable of freeing the dread being Tychilarius from its unknowable prison. The Heralds know the signs of the potent gem's usage and are prepared to use powerful divination magic to locate the artifact when such a time should arise.



Hunter's Dawn

This unassuming atlatl is made of dark, worn wood. A boar is chiseled onto the spur, and simple images of leaping antelope and great fires are carved into the shaft.

HUNTER'S DAWN

ITEM 23

UNIQUE ARCANES ARTIFACT ENCHANTMENT

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

Hunter's Dawn is a +3 greater striking speed ghost touch club. However, the notched head of the weapon marks it as an atlatl, an ancient tool used for throwing darts and javelins. You can use *Hunter's Dawn* with a mundane dart or javelin like you would use a bow with an arrow; when you do so, the range of the dart or javelin is doubled, and the dart or javelin uses *Hunter's Dawn* to determine its attack modifier and damage dice.

Activate ◆, ◆◆, or ◆◆◆ (Interact) You swing *Hunter's Dawn* and launch a magically conjured javelin at a target within 60 feet, making a ranged Strike. The javelin has the statistics of a javelin but gains the magical properties of *Hunter's Dawn* and disappears immediately after hitting or missing its target. On a successful hit, you deal damage (3d6 piercing, due to the atlatl's greater striking rune, plus your Strength modifier); in addition, a gazelle leaps from the hit target to one or more targets within 20 feet of the first, dealing 2d6 piercing damage plus your Strength modifier. The number of additional targets hit in this way is equal to the number of actions you spend to activate this ability (one additional target if you used one action, two additional targets for two actions, and so forth).

Activate ⇨ **Trigger** You hit a creature with a ranged Strike with *Hunter's Dawn*; **Effect** The target is marked. Once per day, you can cast a 5th-level *locate* spell on the marked target, regardless of its distance from you or your ability to cast spells. This effect persists until it is dispelled (counterspell DC 46), the creature dies, or a new target is marked.

Activate ◆ (Interact) **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** You shave a curl of wood from *Hunter's Dawn* and create a roaring fire within 15 feet. You can choose one of the following shapes for the fire to take: a 10-foot square, a 20-foot line, or a 15-foot cone. Each creature in the affected squares take 6d6 fire damage (DC 46 basic Reflex save).

Destruction *Hunter's Dawn* can be destroyed only by placing it on the funeral pyre of a dead god.

HISTORY

In caves near Cheliaz are a series of paintings dating to the Age of Anguish. These paintings depict a human in green robes hunting game in tall grass. The human carries a growing tree whose fruit are spears, and from the spears leap nimble beasts who attack the human's enemies: shadowy demons and unnatural monsters.

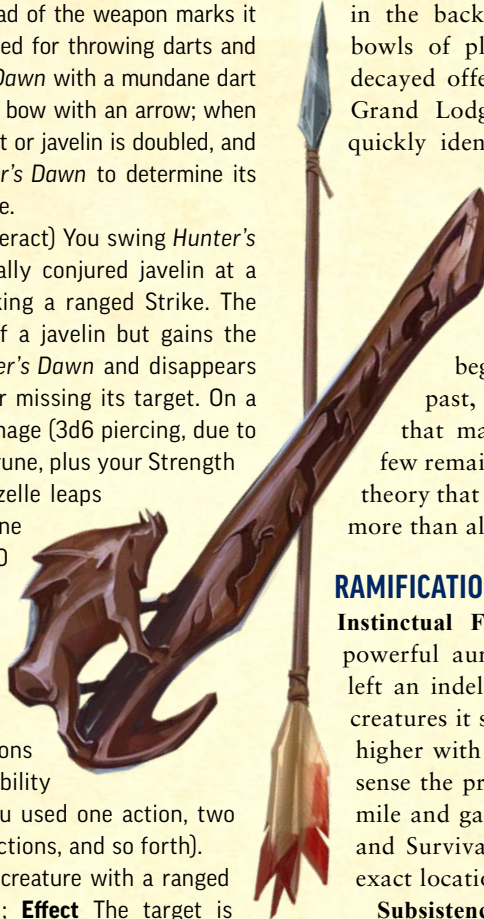
Coated in a fine, translucent layer of alabaster, this strange atlatl was discovered by Pathfinders in the back of a cave alongside fragmented bowls of plant matter and other long-since-decayed offerings. After being returned to the Grand Lodge in Absalom, the weapon was quickly identified as profoundly magical, but it would be some time before a researcher of Aroden's 12 guises identified it as belonging to the Last Azlanti.

The same archaeologists who discovered *Hunter's Dawn* have begun deeper research into Aroden's past, searching for any other artifacts that may have escaped the notice of his few remaining followers, operating under the theory that accounts of Aroden's guises may be more than allegorical.

RAMIFICATIONS

Instinctual Fear: *Hunter's Dawn* radiates a powerful aura. Its use in the Age of Anguish left an indelible mark on the evolution of the creatures it slew. Any creatures of 18th level or higher with the demon or aberration trait can sense the presence of *Hunter's Dawn* within 1 mile and gain a +2 status bonus to Perception and Survival checks to track down the item's exact location.

Subsistence Mindset: Many historians believe that *Hunter's Dawn* and artifacts like it helped bring humanity back from the brink of extinction during the Age of Darkness. The kingdoms whose humans wielded the weapon in those tempestuous days, so the legends state, used it to make themselves the global powerhouse they are today. Numerous powerful kingdoms, religions, cults, and factions of all ancestries would go to considerable effort to attain the legendary atlatl for themselves in the misguided hope of bringing their own peoples to the forefront of the world stage (perhaps ignoring the fact that the atlatl was crafted by the God of Humanity and would presumably do little to assist tyrannical pursuits).



Kortos Diamond

The blade of this elegant longsword is made from glass the color of the sea. Its hilt is made from fine gold, and the symbol of the Eye of Aroden is engraved onto the pommel.

KORTOS DIAMOND

ITEM 22

UNIQUE ARTIFACT DIVINE EVOCATION

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

The hilt of this +3 major striking axiomatic spell-storing longsword is simple and elegant. The blade itself is made of thronerglass—a clear, jewellike crafting material with a razor-sharp edge, capable of absorbing psychic magic and redirecting it at the wielder's enemies. Whenever the *Kortos Diamond* is in an area of dim or brighter light, it glows faintly, as if reflecting the light of a setting sun.

While wielding the *Kortos Diamond*, you gain a +2 item bonus on saving throws against mental effects. You can never harm yourself with the *Kortos Diamond*, even if confused.

If you ever travel farther than 100 miles from the Isle of Kortos while in possession of the *Kortos Diamond*, the sword becomes impossibly heavy; you are encumbered as long as you carry the sword and remain outside of this area. If you relinquish the *Kortos Diamond* while away from Kortos, the sword gradually makes its way back to the isle over the course of a year.

Activate ♦ Interact; **Frequency** once per day;

Effect You attempt a melee Strike with the *Kortos Diamond* against a creature within reach. On a hit, you deal damage as normal and the target's mind is inflicted with a powerful disruptive energy. When the creature attempts to Cast a Spell, it must attempt a DC 44 Will save; on a failure, the spell fails and both the spell and the actions spent to cast it are lost. This effect lasts for up to 1 minute.

Activate ♦ envision; **Frequency** once per round;

Trigger You damage an aberration with the *Kortos Diamond*; **Effect** You deal an additional 2d8 force damage to the struck creature.

Activate ♦♦ command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** You hold the *Kortos Diamond* aloft and proclaim your might in a booming voice. You cast *overwhelming presence* (DC 42).

Destruction A deity who ascended to divinity via the Test of the Starstone can damage and destroy the *Kortos Diamond* as if it were not an artifact.

HISTORY

In ancient Azlant, Aroden was a famed crafter of fine swords. In the waning days of that empire, the

Azlant emperor charged Aroden first with forging a sword for the next emperor and then with choosing that emperor. Aroden found the pool of candidates lacking and instead kept the sword, the famed *Azlant Diamond*, for himself—an act of defiance some scholars believe spurred Azlant's alghollthu masters to bring about Earthfall and destroy the empire they had built. Millennia later, after raising the Isle of Kortos from the sea, Aroden forged the *Kortos Diamond* as a replica of the *Azlant Diamond*, intending the blade to be wielded by the defender of his sacred isles.

Whether or not Aroden actually bequeathed the *Kortos Diamond* to such a guardian is hotly debated, not least because the sword's current location is unknown. Even if Aroden could overcome its deleterious effects away from the Isle of Kortos, he likely kept the blade in a safe place where it would be at its strongest. Anyone wielding the blade would have to be a fool—or a god—in order to use it effectively away from its designated domain. So researchers and treasure hunters have invariably concluded that the *Kortos Diamond* must be somewhere on the Isle of Kortos. Locating an item measuring just over 4 feet long on such a vast island, however, has thus far proven to be no simple matter.

RAMIFICATIONS

A Heavy Burden: Whoever wields the *Kortos Diamond* effectively has the divine blessing of Aroden to guard the Isle of Kortos. With the god who created it long dead, many Kortosians whose ancestors worshipped the Last Azlant believe that a new deity will arise to lead humankind to further greatness. Whether or not the wielder of this blade is in fact destined for deism, possession of such a storied weapon carries with it a burdensome responsibility to the residents of its namesake island, who will no doubt look up to this warrior with awe—and expectation.

Siege for the Sword: The *Kortos Diamond* is an immensely powerful weapon when used against spellcasters. Wizard-kings such as Nex and Geb have both sent agents to the Isle of Kortos to search for the relic, all to no avail. It may only be a matter of time before other aspiring tyrants—or those who wish to end the reigns of such magical oppressors—launch a full-scale expedition of the island to unearth the incredible blade. Such a campaign would no doubt draw a fierce reprisal from Absalom, possibly resulting in an island-wide war, the likes of which the city has never seen.



Tears of the Last Azlanti

This skillfully made necklace bears six beautiful stones, each carefully affixed to a bail styled like the Eye of Aroden. The bails are fastened to a fine golden chain.

TEARS OF THE LAST AZLANTI

ITEM 25

UNIQUE ARCANIC ARTIFACT INVESTED TRANSMUTATION

Usage worn necklace; Bulk L

This gold necklace sports six bails, each with a different *aeon stone*. The backside of each bail is engraved with a single ancient Azlanti rune: Patience, Remembrance, Resilience, Tenacity, Wisdom, Invention.

While a bail is active, you recall pieces of childhood memories, brief stories and lessons spoken to you by Aroden. The knowledge imparted by each bail carries a specific power but also allows you to access the invested and resonant powers of the *aeon stone* (Core Rulebook 604) in the active bail's slot as though the stone orbited your head. Each day at dawn, a new bail becomes active; roll 1d6 to determine which bail is active, determined by the table below. Only one bail can be active at any time.

Once per day, you can attempt to exchange the *aeon stone* in a given bail for another *aeon stone* with a successful DC 35 Arcana check.

D6	Bail	Default Aeon Stone
1	Patience	Gold nodule
	Active Power: Telepathy with a range of 100 feet	
2	Remembrance	Tourmaline sphere
	Active Power: Cast <i>hypercognition</i> at will	
3	Resilience	Clear spindle
	Active Power: Worn armor gains the <i>antimagic</i> property rune	
4	Tenacity	Pink rhomboid
	Active Power: Wielded weapons gain the <i>vorpall</i> property rune	
5	Wisdom	Orange prism
	Active Power: Skill checks for downtime activities or to Recall Knowledge are one degree of success higher	
6	Invention	Lavender and green ellipsoid
	Active Power: You can craft items up to 5 levels higher than your actual level	

Destruction The memories and lessons that echo through the *Tears of the Last Azlanti* give clues about steps needed to destroy the artifact. After you have gained the power of each of the six *aeon stones* at least once, you are granted visions of

six locations across Golarion. At each of these locations, you must replace one of the necklace's *aeon stones* with a dull gray *aeon stone*. Once the final stone is replaced, the powers of the necklace are drawn into its new stones. These stones become pieces of *throneglass*, and the chain and bails disintegrate.

HISTORY

The *Tears of the Last Azlanti* is a perplexing artifact. It is known that Aroden created it, but to what point and purpose is a matter of debate.

When he mentioned it briefly in *The History and Future of Humanity*, Aroden referred to the necklace simply as an heirloom. For most of history, the necklace sat in a vault within the Cathedral of the *Starstone* in Absalom. After Aroden's death, it was taken from the Cathedral and displayed in mourning processions throughout the city. Several priests wore the necklace out of grief, and each who did claimed to have heard the voice of their fallen deity in their minds, as though he were guiding their choices.

The necklace's current location is a closely guarded secret. It has been known in recent years only through a pair of illustrations. The two pictures differ in that one shows a simple clasp while the other shows a clasp with an attached nameplate inscribed with an indiscernible rune. Contemporary Arodenite scholars staunchly maintain that the second illustration is a fake.

RAMIFICATIONS

Chelish Subterfuge: House Thrune is ever watchful for potential threats to their supremacy in Chelias. A resurgent cult of Aroden that rallies behind someone holding the *Tears of the Last Azlanti* is a threat to their rule that cannot be tolerated.

Cult of Personality: The *Tears of the Last Azlanti* carries with it a weighty responsibility. Some followers of Aroden have tied to the necklace their hopeless faith in the god's return (or at least in some closure regarding his death). Others see the necklace as a dangerous device that flies in the face of established texts and doctrine. Its mere presence is a divisive force within the church. The *Tears of the Last Azlanti*, should it be found and its knowledge and lessons shared, has the potential to create a vast schism in the few remaining faithful of Aroden's religion and to tarnish age-old alliances between nations and faiths.

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The Extinction Curse Adventure Path concludes with the heroes vanquishing the xulgath menace under Sarvel Ever-Hunger and bringing the Circus of Wayward Wonders to the heights of legend. But what does this mean for your world?

Beyond the Campaign

What role the heroes play in your world going forward is best left for you and your players to decide, but here are a few plot threads to inspire you.

The Circle of Stones: The heroes might want to learn more about the Circle of Stones to determine whether they're a threat to the remaining *aeon orbs*. More information about the Circle of Stones is presented in *Absalom, City of Lost Omens*, and the heroes might venture to Absalom to confront the nature priests' leader, the mysterious dryad queen Iolanthe.

Gluttdark Expands: The demon lord Zevgavizeb might turn his gaze back to the sacred land of Vask, which he once considered part of his Abyssal realm, to find its *aeon orbs* missing. Zevgavizeb might instead draw the Starstone Isles into Gluttdark, bathing the islands in Abyssal energies and compelling the heroes to confront the demon lord directly.

The Greatest Show in Golarion: Assuming the Circus of Wayward Wonders put on a successful show in Diobel at the beginning of "The Apocalypse Prophet," the circus is a star attraction in the upcoming Radiant Festival in Absalom. Though this is a great place to say farewell to the circus and its performers, the City at the Center of the World has endless possibilities for adventure. The Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path showcases just a few of these threats, and there's no reason the heroes of that adventure path couldn't be affiliated with the heroes from this one.

WHAT IF THE HEROES FAIL?

In the worst possible turn of events, the heroes fail to stop Sarvel Ever-Hunger from triggering the *extinction curse* in the Verdant Beacon. Although this adventure

presents the apocalypse as inevitable, it occurs in several stages. A campaign in these end times isn't about preventing the catastrophe, but about saving as many lives as possible in the face of impending doom.

Dying Greenery: The first cataclysm of the *extinction curse* is the complete devastation of vegetation across the Starstone Isles. The heroes saw a foreshadowing of this desolation in the Welt near the town of Willowside. Fruits wither on the vine, mighty trees become brittle and hollow with rot, and stores of grain desiccate and become dust. Farmers and foresters flee the islands, their livelihoods shattered. Shipments of food delivered to the isles fare just as poorly, rotting into noxious sludge as their vessels approach the cursed land.

Wracking Plagues: The second cataclysm is a series of plagues to compound the misery of the widespread starvation. It's never clear how many plagues there actually are—they have dire names such as Skull Rash, Weeping Lesions, and the Shuddering Death—but all are lethal. Tenacious and highly infectious, these plagues sweep across the communities nearest the *aeon* towers, and from there to larger communities like Escadar and Absalom. Although those cities have significant resources, they fight a losing battle against the epidemics.

Crumbling Stone: In the third cataclysm, the land itself begins to give way. The strong stone that Aroden hauled up from the sea floor becomes brittle, causing buildings to collapse and hills to crumble in deadly landslides. Casualties are highest in cities, where falling structures decimate the sick and starving populace. In the Kortos Mounts, mountains collapse into poisonous dust that pollutes the landscape with a toxic haze.

Sinking Land: In the final cataclysm of the *extinction curse*, the islands themselves shake apart in a series of powerful earthquakes. Without vegetation to hold the soil together, and with stone as brittle as chalk, these earthquakes soon break the islands apart completely. Survivors of the previous cataclysms are swallowed by the sea. The great city of Absalom and the many wonders of Aroden are shattered and lost to the Inner Sea forever.

Capstone Feats

Characters who have reached 20th level can choose from the following feats, representing the pinnacle of mortal power influenced by their triumphs.

ANNIHILATING SWING ♦♦

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON BARBARIAN

You have learned from the brute destructive power of xulgaths and their kind. You make a melee Strike that ignores any resistances the target has. If you target a solid unattended object or surface with your Strike, you might automatically destroy it without an attack roll. If you target any object or surface with Hardness 20 or less that isn't a magic item or the effect of a spell, you destroy it. If the target object or surface is a magic item or the effect of a spell, you attempt to counteract it using your attack bonus with the Strike for the counteract check. On a successful counteract check, you destroy the object or surface unless it has Hardness greater than 20, is an artifact, or is similarly difficult to destroy. You destroy up to a 5-foot cube of an object or surface larger than Medium.

ASTONISHING EXPLOSION ♦

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON ADDITIVE 2 ALCHEMIST

Frequency once per minute

Trigger You use Quick Alchemy to craft an alchemical bomb that deals splash damage and is at least 2 levels lower than your advanced alchemy level.

Your bomb incorporates an explosive spark of wonder that leaves witnesses dumbfounded. Any target hit by your Strike with the bomb is fascinated by you for 1 round. On a critical success, the target is also stunned 1.

BANISHING BLOW ♦

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON CHAMPION

Prerequisites Fiendsbane Oath

Trigger You use your champion's reaction, triggered by a fiend within your reach.

The erratic teleportation magic you experienced in the Kortos Mounts has taught you a few tricks. You attempt an Athletics check to Shove the fiend that triggered your champion's reaction; on a success, the target can't teleport or summon creatures for 1 minute. On a critical success, the target is also stunned 1 and can't teleport or summon creatures for 1 hour, and if you are on your home plane and the target is a fiend of level 18 or lower from another plane, it is also banished to its home plane. Your multiple attack penalty doesn't apply to this attack.

DENIER OF DESTRUCTION ↻

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON CLERIC

Prerequisites healing font

Trigger Any ally within 30 feet that you can heal with your

heal spell would take damage from an attack or effect from a source you can observe.

Requirements You have a *heal* spell prepared and you aren't flat-footed to the source of the damage.

You can manipulate the same energies that the *aeon orbs* use to sustain life. You cast *heal* on the triggering target. Instead of its normal effects, the *heal* spell reduces the triggering damage by an amount equal to the Hit Points a 1-action *heal* spell of that level would have recovered. As usual, if this reduces the damage to 0, it might also remove additional effects of the triggering attack, such as injury poisons.

ENDURANCE OF THE ROOTED TREE

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON MONK

Prerequisites Wholeness of Body

Just as the Vale of Aroden retains light and life despite inhospitable surroundings, you can sustain yourself regardless of your environment. You don't need to eat, drink, or breathe. In addition, you can cast the *wholeness of body* ki spell almost effortlessly. You can cast it as a free action that triggers at the start of your turn.

MIMIC PROTECTIONS

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON RANGER

By adopting *resonant reflections*, you have learned to copy the abilities of other creatures as well. When you use Hunt Prey on a foe within 100 feet, you gain resistance 10 to all damage types that target has resistance or immunity to for as long as the foe remains within 100 feet.

RECLAIM SPELL ♦

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON WIZARD

Prerequisites Reprepare Spell

You have learned to manipulate reflections of magic, similar to the *resonant reflections*. You reclaim the magic of an ongoing spell, using it to reprepare a spell with a duration. You Dismiss a Spell of 4th level or lower that you cast today from a spell slot with at least half its duration remaining, even if that spell can't normally be Dismissed. You can then spend 10 minutes to reprepare the spell in that spell slot, as Reprepare Spell.

REFLECTING RIPOSTE ↻

FEAT 20

UNCOMMON FIGHTER

Prerequisites Dueling Riposte, Mirror Shield, or Twin Riposte

Trigger An opponent casts a spell and you critically succeed at a saving throw against it.

Requirements You have a shield raised or are benefiting from Dueling Parry or Twin Parry.

You attempt to counteract the triggering spell using powerful magical techniques observed in the Kortos Mounts. Use your attack roll modifier with your shield or parrying weapon

for your counteract check. If you counteract the spell, it is reflected upon the caster. If the spell targeted individual creatures, it targets the caster only. If the spell targeted an area centered on a point, the new area is centered on the caster. If the spell was a cone or line, the cone or line emanates from you toward the caster. If the spell has a save DC, it uses your class DC, and if it requires a spell attack roll, use the same attack roll modifier as the counteract check.

RINGMASTER'S INTRODUCTION FEAT 20

UNCOMMON AUDITORY BARD

Trigger An ally's turn begins.

Requirements The ally hasn't acted in the current combat. You announce the triggering ally with a litany of their legendary achievements, spurring them to action. The target is quickened this turn and can spend the extra action to Stride, Strike, Demoralize, Feint, or Perform.

STEAL ESSENCE FEAT 20

UNCOMMON ROGUE

Prerequisites legendary in Thievery or master in Arcana, Nature, Occult, or Religion

Requirements A magic item is within your reach.

Being in the presence of the *aeon orbs* as they deteriorated has taught you how to siphon energy, and you do so with the required magic item. The DC to steal the properties of a magic item is equal to the DC for the item's level or the normal DC to Steal the item, whichever is higher. The targeted item then becomes temporarily immune for 24 hours. If the object was on a creature, that creature is also temporarily immune (which prevents you from attempting to Steal the Essence of another object on it).

If you successfully steal the properties of an item, it loses its magical properties for 24 hours and you can move those properties to a non-magical object of the same general kind (such as moving a hat's properties to another piece of headgear or moving a weapon's properties to another weapon) for the same length of time. If the moved properties are counteracted, they return immediately to the original item. You automatically fail to Steal the Essence of an artifact, cursed item, or similar item.

TENACIOUS BLOOD MAGIC FEAT 20

UNCOMMON SORCERER

Frequency once per minute

Trigger You apply an effect from your blood magic that lasts for 1 round.

You have learned how to invest magic more deeply by witnessing Aroden's works. The triggering blood magic effect lasts for 1 minute instead of 1 round.

VERDANT PRESENCE FEAT 20

UNCOMMON DRUID

Frequency once per hour

Trigger You take damage or cast a primal spell.

The life-giving properties of the *aeon orbs* flourish within you. Small plants or fungi magically appear on all surfaces in a 60-foot emanation around you. This life withers after 1 day unless the environment can support it. You can choose one of the following options each time you use this feat.

- You can cause any number of 5-foot squares in the area to be light undergrowth, which is difficult terrain and provides lesser cover.
- You can cause a tree or giant mushroom to appear in any unoccupied location in the area; it occupies an entire 5-foot square and provides standard cover. The tree or mushroom has 5 Hardness and 50 Hit Points.



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Titanic Treasures

Aroden himself raised the mountains of Kortos from the bottom of the sea, and he called this island his home for centuries. In the millennia since, it has been home to countless invaders and would-be gods. They have left or inspired a number of impressive treasures.

AMBROSIA OF UNDYING HOPE

ITEM 19

RARE ALCHEMICAL CONSUMABLE ELIXIR NECROMANCY

Price 6,200 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

This elixir is usually stored in a small metal flask or miniature stein. The dark liquid sparkles as if it were full of stars and is considered sacred to Cayden Cailean and to the cults of the Failed in Absalom. The next time you would die from damage within 8 hours after you drink the ambrosia, it prevents you from dying, you regain 20 Hit Points, the elixir's benefits end, and you become temporarily immune to the *ambrosia of undying hope* for 24 hours. The ambrosia can't protect you from death effects or disintegration, but it can protect against almost any other form of death via damage. You can only be under the effect of a single *ambrosia of undying hope* at a time.

CELESTIAL HAIR

ITEM 20

RARE ABJURATION CONSUMABLE MAGICAL TALISMAN

Price 12,500 gp

Usage affixed to armor; Bulk –

Activate ♦ Interact; Trigger You critically fail a saving throw or are critically hit by an attack.

This strand of hair shimmers like the strands of fate. When you activate the string, it resonates with a single, perfect note. The triggering saving throw becomes a failure or the triggering attack roll becomes a regular hit, not critical one. If the source of the attack or effect is an evil creature, that creature must succeed at a DC 41 Will saving throw or be enfeebled 2 and stupefied 2 until the end of its next turn.

JERKIN OF LIBERATION

ITEM 17

UNCOMMON ABJURATION ARMOR INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 14,000 gp

Usage worn armor; Bulk 1

This +2 *greater resilient studded leather* is traditionally inscribed with a symbol of either Norgorber or Cayden Cailean. Its leather is light as silk, and its buttons and studs are gleaming crystal. While you wear it, you get a +15-foot item bonus to your Speed, and effects that attempt to impose penalties on your Speed must first

counteract the *jerkin of liberation* or they have no effect on you.

In addition, you are hard to incapacitate. You use the jerkin's item level or your own level, whichever is higher, to determine effects of the incapacitation trait.

LOCKET OF SEALED NIGHTMARES

ITEM 19

RARE ILLUSION INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 36,000 gp

Usage worn necklace; Bulk –

As long as this locket of horn and silver is closed, you don't need to sleep. However, you can still overexert your body with too much activity, so you still need to rest to avoid becoming fatigued or to remove the fatigued condition. You also gain a +4 item bonus on saving throws against mental illusions, magical effects that would make you unconscious, and effects that would make you fatigued. Each time dawn occurs, you regain the ability to make your daily preparations as if you had rested for 8 hours. Daily preparations still take about an hour, as normal.

Activate ♦♦ envision, Interact; Requirements You aren't fatigued; Effect You open the locket to unleash the dreams it has kept at bay. You become fatigued and cast one of the following spells at 9th level (DC 41): *hallucination*, *sleep*, or *weird*.

PANACEA FRUIT

ITEM 19

RARE CONSUMABLE HEALING NECROMANCY PRIMAL

Price 8,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk L

Activate ♦ Interact

This fruit is slowly, constantly changing shape, transforming from one fruit into another, but always appearing at the peak of ripeness. When you consume the fruit, it attempts to counteract all curses, diseases, and poisons affecting you, and you immediately regain 8d8+30 Hit Points. The fruit has a counteract level of 9 and a +30 modifier for the rolls against each condition. The fruit's seed remains after consumption and can be planted later, becoming a seed-shaped *tree feather token* that sprouts a tree bearing many kinds of mundane fruit.

PIERETA

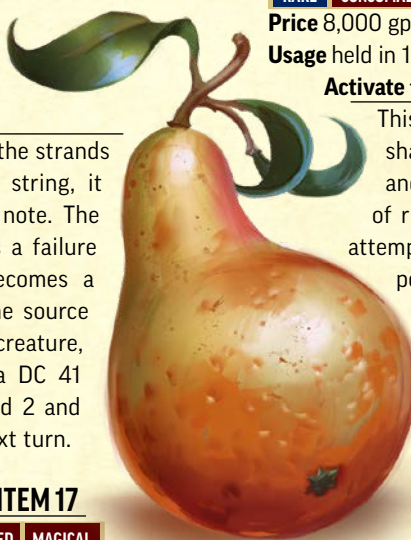
ITEM 20

UNIQUE DIVINE EVOCATION INTELLIGENT

Usage held in 1 hand; Bulk 1

Perception +27; precise vision 30 feet, imprecise hearing 30 feet

Communication telepathy (Azlanti, Celestial, Common, Utopian)



Skills Diplomacy +33, Religion +29, Warfare Lore +27
Int +0, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +6
Will +31

Piereta was a Knight of Ozem during the Shining Crusade, sworn to the service of Aroden's herald, Arazni. After Arazni perished at the hands of the Whispering Tyrant, Piereta became the first paladin to swear her service to the newly ascended goddess, Iomedae. When she fell in battle, a fragment of her spirit clung to the sword through which she had wielded her faith in countless battles, granting the weapon a sentience of its own. The sword named herself after her fallen bearer and has been a faithful companion to many Iomedae warriors since.

Piereta is a +3 *major striking holy rapier* devoted to the principles of Iomedae as an exemplar of valorous action and as a protector of the innocent.

Piereta is very particular about who she permits to wield her. She agrees to work with you if you are a follower of Iomedae, or if you are lawful good or neutral good and worship a different good deity. Otherwise, you must convince *Piereta* of the rightness of your cause. If *Piereta* doesn't want you to wield her, once per minute she can attempt to force you to put her down (DC 42 Will save to resist this command). Even if you succeed at this saving throw, *Piereta* refuses to apply any of her fundamental or property runes and gives you a -2 penalty on attack rolls with *Piereta* or any other weapon until you drop her.

Piereta can use the following activations.

Activate command, Interact; **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** *Piereta* makes a Retributive Strike (Core Rulebook 107), resolved as though you had used the ability, including any benefits from champion feats you have.

Activate command, Interact; **Frequency** once per day; **Effect** *Piereta* casts a 9th-level *field of life*.

PLANAR RIBBON

ITEM 20

UNIQUE CONJURATION OCCULT

Price 60,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** L

By twisting and twirling this ordinary-looking leather ribbon, you can temporarily bend a rift in space.

Activate 1 minute (command, envision, Interact); **Effect** The ribbon spins and swirls, creating a circular loop in the air through which you can spy on a creature on another plane. This has the effects of a *scrying* spell (DC 40) against the creature but functions more as a mundane—albeit interplanar—window; a similar loop appears before the target, and for the duration, both sides can clearly see and hear each other through the created portal, but nothing can pass through. You can Sustain the Activation to gain the effects of Sustaining the Spell. This activation has the *scrying* trait.

Activate Interact; **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** You extend the ribbon to brush against a foe up to 60 feet away. If that creature fails a DC 42 Reflex save, you exchange positions with the target and all of that creature's allies are flat-footed to you until the end of your turn. This activation has the *teleportation* trait.

SHIELD OF THE UNIFIED LEGION

ITEM 20

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL SHIELD

Price 70,000 gp

Usage strapped to 1 hand; **Bulk** L

This high-grade orichalcum shield (Hardness 16, HP 64, and BT 32) bears a +3 *major striking shield boss* that cannot be removed. It gleams brightly in any light, drawing attention at all times. When you

Raise this Shield, ephemeral reflections of it appear in front of each of your allies within 30 feet, granting them its +2 circumstance bonus to AC for as long as they are within 30 feet of you and your shield is raised.

Activate Interact (force); **Frequency** once per minute; **Effect** You heft the shield and thrust it forward, causing ephemeral reflections of the shield to surround you and then rush outward in a 90-foot line or 60-foot cone (your choice). Make a shield bash Strike against each enemy within the area, except that the damage dealt is force damage. Each target you hit is moved 10 feet away from you (each target you critically hit is also knocked prone). This is forced movement. These shield bashes count against your multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until after you have made all these attacks.

STAFF OF SIEGES

ITEM 20

UNCOMMON EVOCATION MAGICAL STAFF

Price 65,000 gp

Usage held in 1 hand; **Bulk** 1

This adamantite staff is fitted with mithral plates resembling battlements on a castle. Lesser cover, cover, and greater cover don't grant any bonus against your spell attacks or to saving throws against your spells that you cast from the staff.

Activate Cast a Spell; **Effect** You expend a number of charges from the staff to cast a spell from its list.

Cantrips *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

1st *gust of wind*, *longstrider*

2nd *obscuring mist*, *web*

3rd *fireball*, *wall of wind*

4th *hallucinatory terrain*, *solid fog*, *wall of fire*

5th *cloudkill*, *wall of stone*

6th *fireball*, *wall of force*

7th *magnificent mansion*, *prismatic spray*

8th *earthquake*, *scintillating pattern*

9th *meteor swarm*

Epic Spells

Legendary magic has echoed across the Kortos Mounts ever since Aroden raised the Starstone Isles. These spells have been used by Aroden or those who succeeded him.

ASTRAL LABYRINTH

SPELL 9

UNCOMMON ABJURATION INCAPACITATION

Traditions arcane, divine, occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 120 feet; **Area** 80-foot burst

Duration 1 day

You connect the entire area with an invisible maze of astral energy that interferes with dimensional and mental magic. Choose a point in the area that you can see when you cast this spell. Objects other than force effects and rare metals can't block this spell's area. *Astral labyrinth* attempts to counteract magical mental effects targeting or including anyone other than the caster in the area, though it has no effect on mental effects that began outside the area or before the spell was cast.

In addition, any creature that tries to depart or arrive in a location in the area by teleportation or extradimensional travel (including extradimensional spaces) must attempt a Will saving throw. Summoned creatures must attempt the save when they are summoned, but not when the summoning ends.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is stunned 1.

Failure The creature is stunned 1, you are mentally alerted that something has failed its save against this spell, and the creature arrives in the empty space closest to the point you chose instead of its intended destination.

Critical Failure The creature is stunned 3, you get a mental glimpse of its appearance, and the creature arrives in the empty space closest to the point you chose instead of its intended destination.

Heightened (10th) You and creatures transported by your spells can't get a result worse than success on the saving throw to teleport into or out of the area.

DELUGE

SPELL 8

UNCOMMON EVOCATION WATER

Traditions arcane, primal

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 500 feet; **Area** 40-foot burst

You unleash a catastrophic downpour in the area that vanishes an instant later. All flying creatures in the area descend 50 feet or until blocked by the ground or firm surface. Each creature whose descent was blocked by the ground or firm surface takes bludgeoning damage equal to the number of feet it fell (the creature does not also take falling damage) and is knocked prone. Creatures on the ground, including flying creatures forced to the ground by

the spell, must succeed at a Reflex save or be pushed 50 feet away from the center of the area.

Flimsy structures in the area collapse. The GM can determine other large-scale effects that result from the deluge.

Heightened (+1) The area increases by 10 feet, and flying creatures fall an additional 10 feet.

DEVOUR LIFE

SPELL 8

UNCOMMON DEATH HEALING NECROMANCY NEGATIVE

Traditions divine, occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 30 feet; **Target** 1 living creature

Saving Throw basic Fortitude

You attempt to utterly consume the target's life force. The target takes 60 negative damage with a basic Fortitude save. If this damage reduces the target to 0 Hit Points, it dies immediately. You regain Hit Points equal to half the negative damage the target takes (after applying resistance and the like). Any excess healing is gained as temporary Hit Points, which you lose after 1 minute.

Heightened (+1) The damage increases by 10.

PRYING SURVEY

SPELL 8

UNCOMMON DIVINATION SCRYING

Traditions arcane, occult

Cast 1 minute (material, somatic, verbal)

Area 120-foot emanation

Duration 1 hour

You create eight invisible, floating eyes, each about 3 inches in diameter, that scan the area around you, transmitting rough impressions of the environment. The eyes constantly examine and send you summaries of their findings. They are solid and can't move through barriers, and they don't follow routes that they fail to find while Searching. Any damage to an eye destroys it. When all eyes are destroyed, the spell ends.

As a single action, which has the concentrate trait, you can concentrate on a location within the area that an eye can reach. An eye travels to that location, and you Seek visually as if you were there. As an exploration activity, you can travel at half speed while continuing to concentrate on the eyes to gain the benefits of both the Scout and Search activities. With the eyes, you can check everything even if you are traveling faster than 300 feet per minute. The eyes use your Perception modifier. You can have only one *prying survey* in effect at a time.

Heightened (10th) The area increases to a 500-foot emanation.

UNDERMINE REALITY

SPELL 8

UNCOMMON ILLUSION INCAPACITATION SHADOW

Traditions arcane, occult

Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 500 feet; **Target** one creature
Duration varies

You lash a target with tendrils of shadow that steal some of its substance, making it quasi-real. As long as it is quasi-real, its Strikes deal half damage, it can't critically succeed at any skill check, and creatures attempting saving throws against its spells and effects get a result one degree of success better than they rolled. The target must attempt a Will saving throw.

Critical Success The target is unaffected.

Success The target is quasi-real until the end of its next turn.

Failure The target is quasi-real for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, it can attempt another Will save, ending the spell on a success.

Critical Failure The target is quasi-real for an unlimited duration.

UPHEAVAL

SPELL 9

UNCOMMON CONJURATION EARTH

Traditions arcane, primal

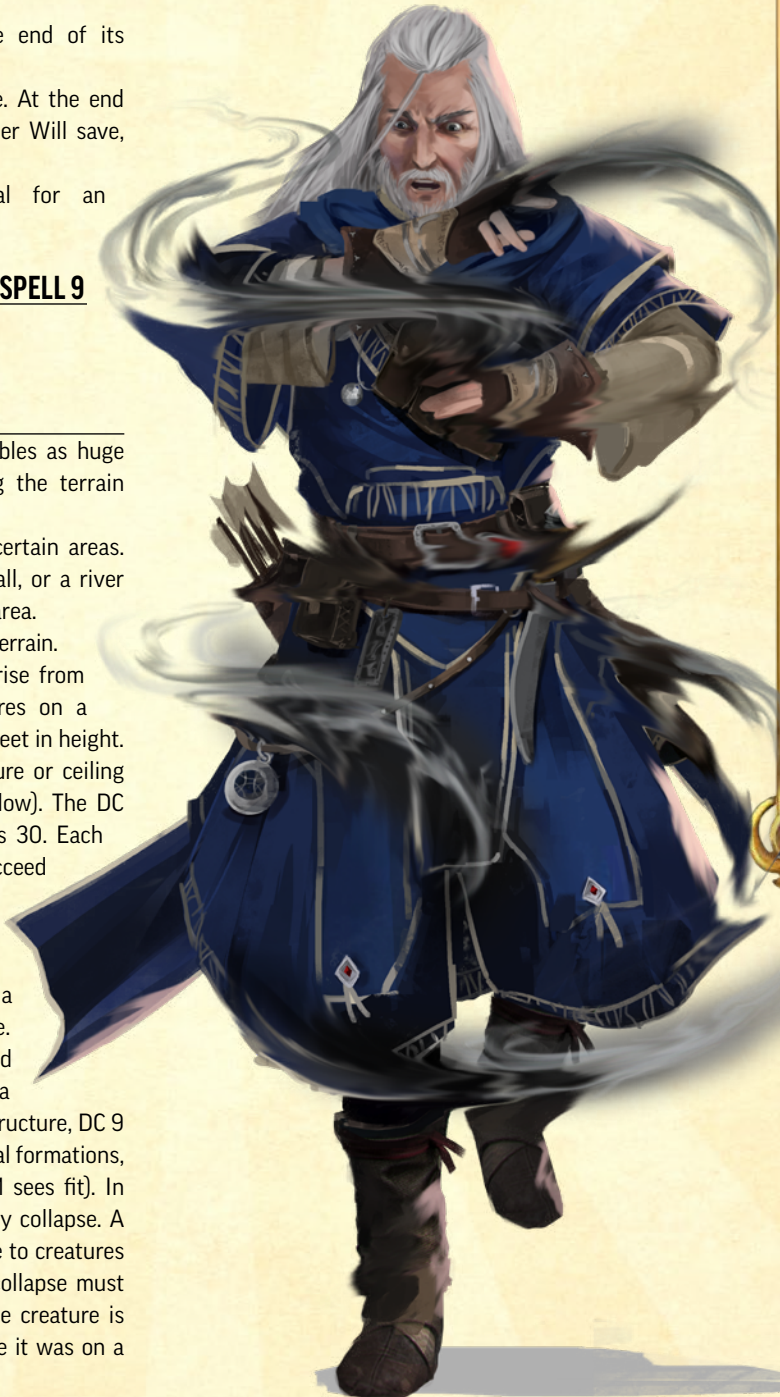
Cast ♦♦ somatic, verbal

Range 500 feet; **Area** 150-foot burst

The ground in the area shudders and crumbles as huge pillars of stone erupt into the air, rending the terrain around them.

The GM might add additional effects in certain areas. Cliffs might collapse, causing creatures to fall, or a river might be blocked and flood the surrounding area.

- **Stone Debris** The area becomes difficult terrain.
- **Rising Pillars** Pillars of smooth stone rise from your chosen number of 10-foot squares on a surface in the area, ascending up to 60 feet in height. Each pillar stops when it hits a structure or ceiling unless that structure collapses (see below). The DC to Climb or Grab an Edge on a pillar is 30. Each creature on a pillar after it rises must succeed at a Reflex saving throw or fall off the nearest edge (the creature can choose which edge, if several are equally close). A creature on a pillar that is stopped by a structure falls without attempting a save.
- **Structural Collapse** Structures and ceilings might collapse. The GM rolls a flat check for each (DC 14 for a sturdy structure, DC 9 for an average structure and most natural formations, all adjusted higher or lower as the GM sees fit). In general, shoddy structures automatically collapse. A collapse deals 11d6 bludgeoning damage to creatures beneath it; each creature caught in a collapse must attempt a Reflex save to avoid it. If the creature is forced to attempt a Reflex save because it was on a rising pillar, it uses the same result.





SCIONS OF THE ELDER MYTHOS

Children of Mhar are not the only agents of the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods to emerge on Golarion. Gibbering mouthers supposedly have some connection to unholy Abboth, and the ancestors of the Darklands-dwelling chardas were once potent clerics of Orgesh, the Faceless God.

Child of Mhar

Mhar, an ancient evil deity of caverns, mountains, and volcanoes, belongs to the pantheon of the Great Old Ones—monstrous beings of alien intellect and unfathomable power. The so-called children of Mhar (known as deghuuns in the chaotic tongues of Mhar's enraptured cultists) physically resemble blue-gray octopods made of stone, mud, and molten iron. Venthole-like craters dot the surface of a deghuun's body, through which the creature can gaze out with a single golden eye that it can move from crater to crater.

DEGHUUN (CHILD OF MHAR)

CREATURE 18

UNCOMMON NE HUGE ABERRATION

Perception +30; greater darkvision, smoke vision

Languages Aklo; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Athletics +37

Str +9, **Dex** +6, **Con** +8, **Int** -1, **Wis** +0, **Cha** +4

Smoke Vision The deghuun ignores the concealed condition from smoke or smog, including from Sulfurous Plume.

AC 42; **Fort** +34, **Ref** +30, **Will** +26

HP 420; **Immunities** fire, poison; **Weaknesses** cold 10, good 10; **Resistances** physical 10 (except adamantine)

Unfathomable Aspect Anytime a deghuun attempts a Will save against an enchantment spell, the spell's caster must attempt a DC 38 Will save or become confused for up to the spell's duration.

Speed 40 feet, climb 40 feet

Melee ♦ tentacle +35 (agile, reach 20 feet),

Damage 3d10+17 bludgeoning plus Grab

Ranged ♦ lava ball +34 (brutal, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 4d6+17 bludgeoning plus 3d6 fire

Divine Innate Spells DC 38; 8th *earthquake*; 6th *earthbind* (×3), *hallucination*

Beak Crunch ♦ **Requirements** The deghuun has a creature grabbed with its tentacles; **Effect** The creature takes 4d8+17 piercing damage.

Sulfurous Plume ♦♦ (fire, poison) The deghuun vents caustic smog for 1d4 rounds. Any creature that ends its turn within 30 feet of the deghuun during this time takes 6d6 fire damage and is sickened 1 (DC 38 Fortitude save; the creature avoids the sickened condition on a critical success, or is sickened 2 on a critical failure). While sickened in this way, a creature takes a -2 status penalty to its saving throw against the deghuun's *hallucination*. Any creature that's in the smog is concealed and treats other creatures as concealed. Strong winds dissipate the smog.

Tentacle Assault ♦ The deghuun makes three tentacle Strikes, each against a different creature within reach. These attacks count toward its multiple attack penalty as normal.



Demon, Vavakia

Juggernauts of destruction, vavakias are formed from the souls of mortals who extract, enslave, or consume the souls of others.

VAVAKIA

CREATURE 18

UNCOMMON CE HUGE DEMON FIEND

Perception +32; darkvision, *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Athletics +35, Deception +32, Intimidation +34, Religion +30, Stealth +32

Str +9, **Dex** +4, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +6

Items breastplate, +2 *greater striking ranseur*

AC 42; **Fort** +32, **Ref** +28, **Will** +30; +1 status to all saves vs. magic

HP 350; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, good 15

Frightful Presence (aura, emotion, fear, mental) 60 feet, DC 37

Restoration Vulnerability A vavakia is repulsed by the restoration of souls. The demon takes 3d10+10 mental damage the first time each round that a creature within 100 feet of it is restored to life or loses the doomed condition.

Speed 40 feet, fly 40 feet

Melee ♦ *ranseur* +36 (disarm, magical, reach 25 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 piercing plus 1d10 acid and Grab

Melee ♦ jaws +35 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d8+17 piercing plus 2d8 persistent bleed and smoking wound

Melee ♦ claw +35 (agile, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 slashing

Melee ♦ tail +35 (backswing, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 3d12+17 bludgeoning plus stunning tail

Divine Innate Spells DC 40; **9th** *massacre*, *power word stun*; **8th** *divine aura*, *divine wrath* (at will), *earthquake*; **5th** *dimension door*; **4th** *dimension door* (at will); **Constant (9th)** *true seeing*

Rituals DC 40; *Abyssal pact*

Smoking Wound A creature damaged by the vavakia's jaws is sickened 1 from the rank smell of vapors from the wound.

Soulfire Breath ♦♦ (death, divine, necromancy, negative) The vavakia exhales ghostly green fire in a 60-foot cone. Living creatures in the area take 20d6 negative damage (DC 42 basic Reflex save). A good creature that fails this save is becomes stupefied 2 for 1 minute (stupefied 4 on a critical failure). A creature slain by Soulfire Breath can't be resurrected except by powerful magic such as a *wish* spell. The vavakia can't use Soulfire Breath again for 1d4 rounds.

Soulfire Inhalation ♦ (divine, healing, necromancy) **Requirements** The vavakia's last action was Soulfire Breath; **Effect** The vavakia inhales and regains 10 Hit Points for each creature damaged by its Soulfire Breath. Any excess healing is gained as temporary Hit Points, which remain for 1 minute.

Stunning Tail

(incapacitation) If the vavakia critically hits with its tail Strike, the target must succeed at a DC 40 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1 round (1d4 rounds on a critical failure).

Trample ♦♦♦ Large or smaller, claw, DC 40



SAURIAN TYRANTS

Vavakias carve out tyrannical empires throughout the Abyss, particularly in steaming jungles and fetid swamps. Their minions are usually lesser demons, xulgaths, or saurians (page 80). They enjoy coming to the Material Plane to feed on souls and spread devastation.

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the Road

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SAURIAN ALLIES

Saurians' immense physical strength and incredible longevity make them natural stewards of other powerful creatures such as dinosaurs and mammoths. However, they would never call these creatures "domesticated," a concept they find particularly reprehensible.

Saurian

Enormous tyrannosaurus-humanoids, saurians are ancient beings who predate the rise of humans and dwell in the world's primeval jungles. While the saurians presented here are evil, saurians of all alignments exist.

SAURIAN WARMONGER

These saurians adopt warfare as their primary role and greatest calling. They particularly excel at taking slaves.

SAURIAN WARMONGER

CREATURE 16

UNCOMMON NE HUGE DINOSAUR HUMANOID

Perception +31; darkvision

Languages Common, Ignan, Sylvan; *speaking with animals*

Skills Athletics +32, Crafting +28, Intimidation +28, Nature +30, Survival +30

Str +8, **Dex** +5, **Con** +6, **Int** +4, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Items leather armor, +1 striking mancatcher, +2 greater striking spear

AC 39; **Fort** +26, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28

HP 340; **Resistances** fire 10

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ *spear* +32 (magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d6+16 piercing

Melee ♦ *mancatcher* +31 (grab, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+16 slashing plus restrain

Melee ♦ *jaws* +30 (deadly d12, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+16 piercing

Melee ♦ *tail* +30 (agile, finesse, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 3d6+16 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *spear* +32 (magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 3d6+16 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 37; **4th** *air walk*; **3rd** *animal vision* (at will; dinosaurs only); **Constant (2nd)** *speaking with animals*

Boneshaking Roar ♦♦ (incapacitation, sonic) The saurian warmonger bellows, evoking the power of the primordial world. Non-dinosaur creatures within 30 feet take 10d6 sonic damage (DC 34 basic Fortitude save). On a failed save, a creature is also slowed 2 for 1 round (stunned 1d4 on a critical failure). The saurian can't use Boneshaking Roar again for 1d4 rounds.

Primordial Balance A warmonger wields their *mancatcher* in one hand.

Restrain When the warmonger makes a successful *mancatcher* Strike, their target must succeed at a DC 34 Reflex save or become grabbed until the end of the warmonger's next turn. Each

time the creature fails an attempt to Escape the warmonger, it takes 2d6 piercing damage.

Three-Limbed Lunge ♦ The saurian warmonger makes three Strikes: one Strike each with the weapons in their hands and one Strike with their tail. They can perform these attacks in any order, though each counts toward their multiple attack penalty as normal. After making a Three-Limbed Lunge, the warmonger is flat-footed until the beginning of their next turn.

SAURIAN WORLDWATCHER

The longest-lived saurians favor introspection and take the long view of things—though this thoughtfulness should not be mistaken for weakness. Other saurians defer to worldwatchers' experience.

SAURIAN WORLDWATCHER

CREATURE 18

UNCOMMON NE HUGE DINOSAUR HUMANOID

Perception +34; darkvision

Languages Common, Ignan, Sylvan; *speaks with animals*

Skills Acrobatics +35, Athletics +33, Diplomacy +32, Intimidation +32, Nature +34, Stealth +35, Survival +34

Str +7, **Dex** +9, **Con** +6, **Int** +5, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

Items javelins (2), +2 greater striking naginata

AC 43; **Fort** +30, **Ref** +33, **Will** +32

HP 330; **Resistances** fire 15

Raptor Jaw Disarm ⤵ **Frequency** once per round; **Trigger**

A creature makes a melee Strike against the worldwatcher but misses; **Effect** The worldwatcher breaks the triggering creature's limb or weapon. If the triggering Strike was an unarmed attack, the triggering creature takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage and becomes clumsy 1 until the limb is reset (an Interact action with the manipulate trait). If the triggering Strike was a weapon Strike, the weapon takes 6d6 bludgeoning damage.

Speed 40 feet

Melee ♦ *naginata* +35 (deadly d8, magical, reach 20 feet, versatile P), **Damage** 3d8+19 slashing plus stunning blow

Melee ♦ *jaws* +33 (deadly d12, magical, reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+17 piercing

Melee ♦ *fist* +35 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 4d10+19 bludgeoning plus stunning blow

Melee ♦ *tail* +35 (agile, finesse, magical, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 3d6+19 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ *javelin* +35 (thrown 30 feet), **Damage** 1d6+19 piercing

Primal Innate Spells DC 40; **9th** *fiery body*, *summon animal* (dinosaur only), *volcanic eruption*; **4th** *air walk*; **3rd** *animal vision* (at will; dinosaurs only); **2nd** *animal messenger*; **Constant (2nd)** *speaks with animals*

Boneshaking Roar ♦♦ As saurian warmonger, but DC 38.

Stunning Blow (incapacitation) Whenever the worldwatcher hits a creature with their fist or *naginata* Strike, that creature must succeed at a DC 39 Fortitude save or be stunned 1 (stunned 3 on a critical hit).





TITAN WEAPONS

Some titans carry a fabled *mattock of the titans*. Good titans use it to build, while evil titans use it to destroy. Similar weapons include the *felling axe of the titans*, a greataxe that can be whirled to create a *punishing winds* effect.



Titan

Created by the deities long before the rise of mortal races, titans united and attempted to overthrow their deific progenitors. The resulting war still figures prominently throughout mortal myths.

ELYSIAN TITAN

Those titans who remained true to their creators earned their freedom. Many train aspiring champions of freedom, sacrifice, and selflessness.

ELYSIAN TITAN

CREATURE 21

RARE CG GARGANTUAN HUMANOID TITAN

Perception +36; darkvision, *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +36, Athletics +43, Crafting +37, Diplomacy +37, Intimidation +35, Religion +37, Survival +37

Str +10, **Dex** +7, **Con** +8, **Int** +6, **Wis** +8, **Cha** +6

Items +2 *greater resilient breastplate*, +3 *greater striking greatpick*

AC 46; **Fort** +37, **Ref** +34, **Will** +35; +4 status to all saves vs. mental

HP 400; **Immunities** death effects, disease

Impossible Stature (aura, divine, illusion, mental) 100 feet. Titans warp perception and distance around them to seem even larger and more imposing. A creature that enters or begins its turn within the emanation must succeed at a DC 44 Will save or its movement toward the titan is movement over difficult terrain (greater difficult terrain on a critical failure) for 1 round.

Speed 40 feet; *air walk*

Melee ♦ *greatpick* +41 (fatal d12, magical, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d10+20 piercing

Melee ♦ fist +38 (agile, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d8+20 bludgeoning

Ranged ♦ rock +38 (brutal, range increment 200 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 bludgeoning

Divine Innate Spells DC 44; **10th** *meteor swarm*, *revival*; **8th** *dispel magic* (at will), *freedom of movement* (at will); **7th** *plane shift* (at will); **6th** *scrying* (×3); **5th** *sending* (×3); **Constant (10th)** *air walk*, *true seeing*

Divine Rituals DC 44; *freedom*

Throw Rock ♦

Titantic Grasp ♦ The titan makes a fist Strike against a creature affected by their Impossible Stature, even if it's outside of the titan's normal reach. On a hit, the titan automatically Grabs the creature and, if out of their reach, pulls it within reach.

Wide Cleave ♦♦ The titan makes a melee weapon Strike against each foe within their reach. This counts as three attacks for the titan's multiple attack penalty.

THANATOTIC TITAN

Thanatotic titans served as assassins in the war against the deities. They learned to sever their targets' divine connections, murdering mortal priests and divine heralds alike.

Thanatotic titans were locked away in the Abyss, but some sneak away from the Abyss to continue their sprees of murder and mayhem.

THANATOTIC TITAN

CREATURE 22

RARE CE GARGANTUAN HUMANOID TITAN

Perception +36; darkvision, *true seeing***Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 feet**Skills** Athletics +45, Crafting +41, Deception +36,

Intimidation +38, Religion +38, Stealth +36

Str +10, **Dex** +4, **Con** +9, **Int** +8, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +8**Items** +2 *greater resilient full plate*, +3 *greater striking halberd***AC** 46; **Fort** +37, **Ref** +34, **Will** +35; +4 status to all saves vs. mental or divine**HP** 540; **Immunities** death effects, disease**Impossible Stature** (aura, divine, illusion, mental) 100 feet. As Elysian titan, but DC 45.**Attack of Opportunity** ➤ The titan can use their Attack of Opportunity when a creature within their reach uses a concentrate action, in addition to its normal trigger. They disrupt actions on any hit, not just a critical hit—including triggering concentrate actions.**Speed** 40 feet; *air walk***Melee** ➤ *halberd* +42 (magical, reach 40 feet, versatile S), **Damage** 4d10+25 piercing**Melee** ➤ foot +39 (agile, reach 30 feet), **Damage** 4d8+20 bludgeoning**Ranged** ➤ rock +39 (brutal, range increment 200 feet), **Damage** 3d12+20 bludgeoning**Divine Innate Spells** DC 45; **10th** *massacre*, *meteor swarm*; **8th** *dispel magic* (at will), *spiritual epidemic* (at will), *suggestion* (at will); **7th** *spell turning*;**6th** *screaming* (×3); **5th** *sending*; **Constant (10th)** *air walk*, *true seeing***Divine Rituals** DC 45; *planar ally*, *resurrect***Godslayer** ➤ (divine) **Trigger** The titan damages a creature capable of using divine spells or abilities; **Effect** The creature must attempt a DC 45 Will save.**Critical Success** The creature is unaffected.**Success** The creature can't use divine spells or abilities for 1 round and is frightened 2. Only powerful non-divine magic, such as *wish*, can undo this effect.**Failure** As success, but the duration is 1 minute.**Critical Failure** As success, but the duration is unlimited.**Throw Rock** ➤ (divine, transmutation) If a titan's rock Strike isn't a critical failure, the rock explodes, dealing 10d6 damage of a damage type of the titan's choice to all creatures in a 20-foot burst (DC 45 basic Reflex save).**Titanic Charge** ➤➤ The titan Strides twice and makes a melee Strike. If the Strike hits, the titan can cast *earthquake* centered on the target as a free action.**Trample** ➤➤➤ Huge or smaller, foot, DC 45**Wide Cleave** ➤➤ As Elysian titan.

OTHER TITANS

Titans vary widely, depending on what function the deities intended them to serve or their methods of waging war. They include inflexible davana titans, warmongering hekatonkheires, armored fomorian titans, shapeshifting sashenji titans, and cunning citevi titans.

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SUMMONING VISKITHRELS

Long ago, xulgath priests deep in the Darklands learned that summoning a single viskithrel doesn't do much good; the lone creature resists any commands, instead seeking out other viskithrels to form a new pack.

Summoning multiple viskithrels at once requires more powerful magic, and is usually performed only by the most powerful xulgath priests or by Darklands denizens who live near stable gates to Gluttondark.

Viskithrel

One of the many horrid life-forms native to Zevgavizeb's Abyssal realm of Gluttondark, viskithrels—or "gluttonraptors"—are tireless hunters resembling tentacled theropods. They are social creatures by nature and prefer to hunt in large packs, chasing down prey and tearing them apart to share with their fellow hunters. A lone viskithrel forgoes hunting to frantically seek out others of its kind, starving to death if it cannot do so. Although viskithrels attack nearly any other creatures they encounter, they virtually never fight other viskithrels; even beasts in rival packs give each other space rather than fight over territory or prey.

Other, smarter denizens of Gluttondark, such as xilvireks (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #154: Siege of the Dinosaurs* 84) herd and train viskithrels, working to convince the viskithrels that the trainer is one of their pack. This not only protects the trainer from attacks by the viskithrels, but also enables the trainer to easily direct them.

VISKITHREL

CREATURE 15

UNCOMMON NE HUGE BEAST

Perception +27; darkvision, scent (precise) 100 feet

Languages Abyssal (can't speak any languages)

Skills Acrobatics +25, Athletics +31, Survival +27

Str +8, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** -3, **Wis** +4, **Cha** -1

Ravenous Tracker A viskithrel can detect a creature's scent up to a week after the creature has passed through or left an area, and it gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Track a creature whose scent it has detected.

AC 37; **Fort** +25, **Ref** +27, **Will** +23; selective scent

HP 275; **Immunities** sickened

Selective Scent A viskithrel's many-chambered snout allows it to partition and ignore scents. The creature can choose to critically succeed at any saving throw against an inhaled threat (such as inhaled poison) or olfactory effects, regardless of its roll.

Predator's Leap **Trigger** A creature within 10 feet of the viskithrel makes a melee Strike against it; **Effect** The viskithrel Steps up to 15 feet, ignoring difficult terrain as it leaps over obstacles. If this movement takes the viskithrel out of range of the triggering Strike, the Strike is disrupted. It then makes a jaws Strike against a bleeding creature.

Speed 40 feet, swim 20 feet

Melee ♦ jaws +30 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 3d10+14 piercing plus 1d10 acid and Grab

Melee ♦ talon +30 (agile, reach 10 feet), **Damage** 3d10+14 slashing

Melee ♦ tentacle +30 (reach 20 feet), **Damage** 1d10+14

slashing plus 2d10 persistent bleed

Swallow Whole ♦ (attack) Large, 3d10 bludgeoning plus 2d10 acid, Rupture 25

Xulgath Thoughtmaw

Xulgath thoughtmaws are inheritors of the xulgaths' ancient psychic legacy. They eagerly and liberally use their ability to extract knowledge from their foes to quicken their own prodigious intellects.

XULGATH THOUGHTMAW

CREATURE 15

RARE CE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Perception +30; darkvision, thoughtsense (imprecise) 60 feet

Languages Draconic, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Acrobatics +25, Arcana +27, Deception +29, Diplomacy +27, Intimidation +29, Occultism +31, Society +27, Xulgath Lore +31

Str +4, **Dex** +6, **Con** +4, **Int** +8, **Wis** +5, **Cha** +6

Items +2 resilient leather armor, +2 striking spear

Thoughtsense (divination, mental, occult) The thoughtmaw senses a creature's mental essence at the listed range.

AC 36; **Fort** +23, **Ref** +26, **Will** +30

HP 280; **Resistances** mental 15

Psychogenic Secretions (aura, mental) 30 feet. A creature that enters the emanation must attempt a DC 36 Will save. On a failure, the creature is stupefied 1 for 1 minute (stupefied 2 and also paralyzed for 1 round on a critical failure). A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to psychogenic secretions for 1 minute.

Speed 25 feet, fly 35 feet (from fly)

Melee ♦ *spear* +30 (magical), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

Melee ♦ *jaws* +28, **Damage** 3d8+10 piercing

Melee ♦ *claw* +28 (agile, finesse), **Damage** 3d4+10 slashing

Ranged ♦ *spear* +30 (magical, thrown 20 feet), **Damage** 2d6+10 piercing

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 36; **7th** (3 slots) *phantasmal killer*, *visions of danger*, *warp mind*; **6th** (3 slots) *phantasmal calamity*, *scrying*, *wall of force*; **5th** (3 slots) *hallucination*, *mind probe*, *synaptic pulse*; **4th** (3 slots) *invisibility*, *modify memory*, *suggestion*; **Cantrips (7th)** *daze*, *forbidding ward*, *message*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 36, attack +28; **8th** *phantom pain* (×3); **5th** *telekinetic haul* (at will); **2nd** *telekinetic maneuver* (at will);

Cantrips (8th) *telekinetic projectile*; **Constant (8th)** *fly*

Occult Rituals DC 36; *inveigle*

Consume Knowledge ♦♦ (divination, mental, occult) The thoughtmaw invades the mind of a creature within 100 feet and attempts to swallow its capacity for higher thought. The creature must attempt a DC 36 Will save. Using Consume Knowledge immediately ends any of the ability's previous effects on a different creature.

Critical Success The creature is unaffected.

Success The creature is slowed 1 for 1 round.

Failure The creature is slowed 1 and can take no actions other than basic actions for 1 minute.

Critical Failure As failure, and the thoughtmaw is quickened 1 for 1 minute. It can use this extra action to Stride, Strike, or Cast a Spell if the target had prepared spells or a spell repertoire.



THOUGHTMAW LOCATIONS

Few thoughtmaws travel beyond the deepest vaults of the Darklands. There, they dwell in crumbling ziggurats and plumb ruins for lost knowledge, directing xulgath clutches through mental finesse or outright domination. Some seek to transcend mortal existence, while others plan conquests of the surface world.

Chapter 1:
End of
the Road

Chapter 2:
The Trials of
Aroden

Chapter 3:
The Last Act

Adventure
Toolbox

Adventure
Toolbox

KENDLEY NATHRAEL

The captain of the Eagle Garrison is a skilled, experienced ranger in her own right, but the influence of the convergence lattice makes her a deadly foe and a threat to the region she's supposed to be monitoring—all in the name of unification.

Kendley Nathrael was born and raised in a small community in Nirmathas along the southwestern border of the Fangwood. She spent a significant part of her youth evading military incursions from Molthune. She sought out mentorship and opportunities to continue learning over the years, slowing rising through the ranks, informal as they were, of the Nirmathi militia. Her life was dangerous, thrilling, and deeply rewarding.

Then the hobgoblins came. The Ironfang Invasion swept indiscriminately across southern Nirmathas and Molthune, razing villages and driving the survivors into the forest. Kendley found herself leading a desperate group of refugees to the Nirmathi capital of Tamran, where the survivors found refuge and Kendley found herself working alongside other militia leaders to respond to the sudden and dire hobgoblin threat.

Higher-ranking militia members in Nirmathas took note of Kendley's abilities, so when strange reports started trickling down from the Nirmathas-Lastwall border, they assigned Kendley to scout and evaluate the situation. She traveled north along Lake Encarthan and up the Tourondel River, hoping to make a circuit of the nation, but that circuit was abruptly cut short when the Whispering Tyrant obliterated Vigil, Lastwall's capital. Overnight, Kendley went from scouting a region for danger to fleeing from it, once again leading a band of refugees into the Fangwood for safety. For several weeks, she managed to keep her ragtag followers alive in the face of the undead horrors rising up across the devastated nation, and when she stumbled across the Knights of Lastwall making their own way to Absalom, she insisted they take along her group of survivors. To her surprise, those survivors insisted she remain with them; with the region in shambles, she agreed to accompany them to the City at the Center of the World.

Absalom completely overwhelmed Kendley, and so she sought out the only structure she was familiar with: the military. She enlisted in Absalom's First Watch, and the skills she had built over her years in Nirmathas

helped her quickly rise through the ranks. It was only a few months before she was promoted to a captain's post, but despite her success, Kendley still found the city uncomfortable and oppressive; she missed the cool hills and dense forests of her homeland terribly. A few days after mentioning this longing in passing to a few guard colleagues, however, her commanding officer came by with a question: Had Kendley heard of the Eagle Garrison?

The opportunity seemed too good to be true. A position outside of the confines of Absalom's walls, high in the foothills of the nearby mountains. A role centered around the scouting and reconnaissance work she had excelled at in Nirmathas. Even her command of the Sylvan language—learned through her interactions with the Fangwood's fey—would serve her well communicating with the noble giant eagles allied with the Eagle Garrison. Moreover, the garrison's present captain was looking to retire once a suitable replacement had been found. Perhaps, the officer suggested, that role might appeal to her?

She accepted immediately.

Captain Nathrael has been posted at the Eagle Garrison for just under 6 months. Though she operates within a larger hierarchy, the bureaucracy is a distant thing and she rarely has to deal with it. The mountains are different from the woodlands of her home, but the work is largely the same, and she's found a kinship with the other rangers similar to what she had with her old colleagues further north. Having lived through several crisis events, she gauges everything with a level head and a keen eye that her subordinates have rapidly come to trust and respect.

Campaign Role

When the heroes first encounter Kendley, she's been incorporated into the *convergence lattice*. The convergent effect identified her as the most capable creature in the hive mind and centered itself on her as the "authority," drastically augmenting her power. Unfortunately, the lattice's goal of forced unification for all puts her at

odds with the heroes, and she does everything she can to incorporate the heroes into the hive mind.

As with all the Eagle Garrison rangers caught up in the *convergence lattice*, Kendley is simply being controlled. Killing her certainly lessens the immediate threat the *convergence lattice* poses, but if the heroes can remove the effect or destroy the lattice without killing her, she regains the behaviors and abilities she had before the lattice empowered her (without the convergent abilities, Kendley is a 12th-level creature). If returned to her own senses, Kendley can serve as an ally and source of reliable information. She's familiar with the region and she knows Sarvel and his entourage (consisting of several dozen xulgaths, over a dozen saurians, and several demons) passed by the garrison and headed into the Vale of Aroden. She's also heard many rumors about what might be found in the Vale, although she's never seen it herself.

CONVERGENT KENDLEY NATHRAEL CREATURE 19

UNIQUE LN MEDIUM ELF HUMAN HUMANOID

Female half-elf afflicted guard captain

Perception +35

Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan, Utopian; convergent link

Skills Athletics +32, Diplomacy +35, Intimidation +33, Survival +30

Str +5, **Dex** +0, **Con** +4, **Int** +3, **Wis** +3, **Cha** +6

Items +2 greater striking bastard sword, +2 greater resilient chain mail, +2 greater striking composite longbow (20 arrows), key to strongbox in area A10

Convergent Link Creatures with this ability can communicate with each other by manifesting an aura of wispy Utopian runes. This has the effects of *telepathy* with a range of 300 feet, but requires line of sight.

AC 41; **Fort** +33, **Ref** +29, **Will** +32

HP 440; **Weaknesses** chaotic 20

Disrupted Link While Kendley is confused, fascinated, or frightened, she loses her innate spells and her convergent link and convergent tactics abilities.

Speed 25 feet

Melee ♦ *bastard sword* +34 (magical, two-hand d12), **Damage** 3d8+11 slashing plus convergent tactics

Melee ♦ *composite longbow* +29 (deadly 2d10, magical, propulsive, range increment 100 feet, reload 0, volley 30 feet), **Damage** 3d8+11 piercing plus convergent tactics

Divine Innate Spells DC 39, attack +31; **10th** *divine wrath* (lawful only); **2nd** *calm emotions* (at will), *telekinetic maneuver* (at will); **Cantrips** (10th) *shield*, *telekinetic projectile*

Convergent Calm When Kendley casts *calm emotions*, creatures controlled by the *convergence lattice* automatically fail their saving throws against

the effect, but they can still use hostile actions against creatures who aren't controlled by the *convergence lattice*. Each time she Sustains the Spell, creatures affected by the spell are exposed to the *convergence lattice* as though they had been in conversation with her.

Convergent Tactics Kendley's attacks (including *telekinetic projectile*) deal an extra 4d8 damage to creatures within reach of one of her allies who has convergent tactics.



KIROSTHREK

A cunning historian and summoner from a line of xulgaths who retain the psychic might of their fearsome ancestors, Kirosthrek serves Sarvel Ever-Hunger in the hopes of gaining the power she needs to restore the xulgaths' ruined Darklands empire.

Thoughtmaw xulgaths are larger, more intelligent, and more powerful than others of their kind, and Kirosthrek has long embraced that truth. Where many of her kin heard only fanciful legend and exaggerated myth in the tales told by her clutch's elders, those recountings of powerful xulgaths ruling the Darklands resonated with Kirosthrek. Most of her kin feared the spirits of the past and looked only to the present and the future, but Kirosthrek dug into that past, hunting through the ruins of the long-dead xulgath empire around her for fragments of lost lore and forgotten secrets.

Bit by bit, Kirosthrek expanded her knowledge. From ancient texts, she began to piece together even more powerful spells and rituals. Others in her clutch came to fear the ancient magic she commanded, and so she found herself with followers willing to do her bidding if she spared their minds. She took her elders' place, telling not mere tales but true histories of their people, of the Darklands vault they once ruled and the abrupt end of that empire. The thoughtmaws were the true descendants of that empire, she insisted, and some day they would rule it again.

The isolated clutch she led was too small to retake an empire single-handedly, so Kirosthrek sought allies. This search brought to her attention a high priest of Zevgavizeb calling himself Sarvel Ever-Hunger, leading a fierce conquest in the upper Darklands. He was a lesser xulgath, but one infused with fiendish might and the blessings of a demon lord, and so Kirosthrek led her clutch to join forces with this new conqueror, hoping to subjugate the priest into furthering her own goals.

Sarvel was not easily subjugated, however, and while he welcomed the thoughtmaws' addition to his might, Kirosthrek was forced to adjust her own plans and serve as Sarvel's chief advisor. The priest's interests were not so different from her own, she found; furthermore, he held his own scraps of knowledge about the ancient empire Kirosthrek so admired. From him, she learned that the vault they ruled had been known as Vask, and that some sudden tragedy

had darkened the life-giving suns of that realm. She took that name to her daemonic allies, seeking to learn more about that catastrophe, and from them, she learned about Aroden's theft. For Kirosthrek, this revelation was a clear directive: she would go find the sun-orbs Aroden had stolen and reclaim them, using their power to rebuild the empire of old.

And for a time, it seemed Sarvel shared her goals. The conquering high priest fixed his sights on the surface world, organizing an operation with enough subtlety and savvy that Kirosthrek began to consider him a suitable leader. But Sarvel's true goal with the orbs is now clear to her: rather than reclaim the orbs, he wants them destroyed. Hoping to make the most of a plan gone wrong, Kirosthrek continues to aid Sarvel, but only from a lack of better options; her opinion of the priest now calling himself the Apocalypse Prophet continues to sour.

Campaign Role

Kirosthrek is not the heroes' ally, but neither is she an unreasonable zealot. She fights alongside Sarvel and views the heroes as soft-skinned surface dwellers who don't deserve the privileges that have benefited them throughout their lives. But she is a quick thinker and a survivor; if the odds are obviously stacked against her, she doesn't hesitate to prioritize her own self-preservation. She doesn't like the heroes, but she respects their power, and she is no stranger to bartering with powerful beings for their aid.

Should the heroes defeat Sarvel while Kirosthrek lives, she loses all interest in the surface campaign. Her first instinct is to flee, but if the heroes offer a truce, she's also willing to negotiate with them. She doesn't limit her opening requests, however: she wants the *aeon orbs* so she can restore the xulgath empire in the Vault of the Black Desert. She also isn't any kinder or gentler than other xulgaths, and she makes no attempt to hide her intentions of subjugating and enslaving other peoples in the areas she intends to claim (such as the urdefhans and drow that now live

in what she considers xulgath lands). Even so, the heroes may feel they owe the xulgaths some form of reparations for Aroden's theft millennia ago, and Kirosthrek is willing to entertain reasonable offers to benefit her people, in lieu of the *aeon orbs*. The details and repercussions of such an arrangement are beyond the scope of this adventure.

KIROSTHREK

CREATURE 20

UNIQUE NE MEDIUM HUMANOID XULGATH

Female xulgath loremaster

Perception +36; darkvision, thoughtsense (imprecise) 60 feet, *true seeing*

Languages Abyssal, Common, Daemonic, Draconic, Undercommon; telepathy 100 feet

Skills Arcana +36, Deception +33, Diplomacy +41, Intimidation +33, Medicine +38, Occultism +38, Stealth +37

Str +3, **Dex** +3, **Con** +1, **Int** +4, **Wis** +4, **Cha** +7


Items +2 greater resilient studded leather, planar ribbon (page 75), true elixir of life

Thoughtsense (divination, mental, occult) Kirosthrek senses a creature's mental essence at the listed range.


AC 45; **Fort** +31, **Ref** +33, **Will** +36


HP 375; **Resistances** mental 20

Psychogenic Secretions (aura, mental) 30 feet. As xulgath thoughtmaw (page 85), but DC 42.

Divert Thoughts  (mental) **Trigger** Kirosthrek attempts a saving throw against a spell; **Effect** Kirosthrek diverts some of the spell's energy, gaining a +2 circumstance bonus to the saving throw or +4 if the spell has the mental trait. If she critically succeeds at the saving throw, she can use the Cast a Spell action on her next turn to cast the triggering spell at the same level without expending any spell slots.

Speed 25 feet, fly 35 feet (from fly)


Melee  jaws +34 (magical), **Damage** 4d8+6 piercing plus 4d6 mental

Melee  claw +34 (agile, magical), **Damage** 4d4+6 slashing plus 4d6 mental

Occult Spontaneous Spells DC 42; **10th** (2 slots) *alter reality*, *summon fiend*; **9th** (3 slots) *foresight*, *synesthesia*, *weird*; **8th** (3 slots) *confusion*, *disappearance*, *maze*, *wall of force*; **7th** (3 slots) *phantasmal killer*, *vision of danger*, *warp mind*; **6th** (3 slots) *phantasmal calamity*, *screaming*, *wall of force*; **5th** (3 slots) *hallucination*, *mind probe*, *synaptic pulse*; **4th** (3 slots) *invisibility*, *modify memory*, *suggestion*; **3rd** (3 slots) *enthrall*, *haste*, *paralyze*; **2nd** (3 slots) *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *silence*; **1st** (3 slots) *fear*, *sleep*, *true strike*; **Cantrips** (10th) *daze*, *forbidding ward*, *message*, *shield*

Occult Innate Spells DC 42, attack +34; **8th** *phantom pain* (at will); **5th** *telekinetic haul* (at will); **2nd** *telekinetic maneuver* (at will); **Cantrips** (10th) *telekinetic projectile*; **Constant** (10th) *fly*, *true seeing*

Occult Rituals DC 42; *call spirit*, *inveigle*, *planar binding*

Consume Knowledge  As xulgath thoughtmaw (page 85), but DC 42.



SARVEL EVER-HUNGER

The fiendish xulgath priest of Zevgavizeb known as the Apocalypse Prophet is an ambitious, hateful monster fixated solely on bringing death and destruction to the reviled surface-dwellers upon the Isle of Kortos.

In a squalid colony nestled deep in the Darklands realm of Nar-Voth, the xulgath Sarvel hatched, first of his clutch to break free from the shell. Sarvel was also the last of that clutch to do so, for upon breaking free of his calcified prison, he promptly crushed the other eggs and devoured their contents in a fit of ravenous fratricide. This gluttonous rampage served him well, for the sustenance helped him grow swiftly among kin who recognized only strength and might. As he grew older, he gorged himself upon fallen foes and allies he found too weak to provide any other benefit. Sarvel became known as a leader to be feared and followed.

Though it hadn't been Sarvel's intention to draw the attention of his clutch's priests, they recognized in Sarvel the gifts of their vile god Zevgavizeb. In an ill-conceived effort to bring forth those gifts, they beseeched their patron to bestow further blessings upon him. The demon who responded feasted upon the startled priests, but Sarvel conquered the demon and consumed it in turn.

This meal profoundly changed Sarvel. Perhaps it was the Abyssal power of the demon, the divine energy carried within the priests' bodies, or a combination of the two. Fiendish power surged within him, and he was seized with a desperate hunger beyond any he had ever known. Sarvel emerged from the priests' sanctum bearing the blessings of Zevgavizeb in the form of writhing tentacles emerging from his back, and he commanded the demon lord's own power through his spells. Few dared oppose him when he declared himself high priest and took the name Ever-Hunger, and those who did became his next screaming meals.

For years, Sarvel led his clutch to many conquests in the Darklands, but these victories were never enough. From his communion with Zevgavizeb, he learned that a sacred vault called Vask once existed as a haven for his people. With help from one of his xulgath allies—the thoughtmaw Kirosthrek—he painstakingly reconstructed records of scattered xulgaths from millennia ago, learning of Aroden's theft in the process. A kinder or more reasonable xulgath might

have tried to steal the orbs back, or even negotiate for their return, but Sarvel is neither kind nor reasonable. He instead embarked on a mission to destroy what Aroden had wrought and crush those surface-dwellers who dared benefit from the slight to his people. A conquest of deific scale must surely sate his hunger; if not, he shall feast upon the bodies left in its wake.

Campaign Role

Sarvel Ever-Hunger is the final foe of the Extinction Curse Adventure Path. His machinations threaten the stability of the Starstone Isles. He knows that the heroes are the ones who have foiled each of the champions he placed at the aeon towers, and he harbors a grudge as enormous as his hunger. Sarvel holds no compassion—only hatred and a vicious thirst for destruction fueled by fiendish spite. Granted some degree of power over the *aeon orbs* by the *extinction curse* ritual, he is difficult to defeat, and he holds no reservations about slaying the heroes and feasting upon their flesh.

SARVEL EVER-HUNGER

CREATURE 22

UNIQUE CE LARGE FIEND HUMANOID XULGATH

Male xulgath prophet

Perception +39; darkvision

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Undercommon

Skills Athletics +41, Arcana +38, Intimidation +40, Religion +42, Survival +40, Zevgavizeb Lore +40

Str +9, **Dex** +2, **Con** +6, **Int** +2, **Wis** +6, **Cha** +4

Items +3 major striking handwraps of mighty blows, +2 greater resilient full plate, +3 major striking unholy spiked gauntlet

AC 48; **Fort** +37, **Ref** +34, **Will** +36


HP 430; **Weaknesses** cold iron 15, good 15

Echoes of Aeons At the start of Sarvel's turn, if he is dead, unconscious, or otherwise unable to act, his efforts in the unfinished *extinction curse* ritual pull on the power of an *aeon orb*. The surge of power heals his body completely without causing the wounded condition, causes him to grow an additional tentacle, and attempts


to counteract all detrimental effects on Sarvel as a 10th-level effect with a +42 counteract modifier. An *aeon orb* used by Sarvel or the heroes is depleted and can't be used to power this ability.


Enraging Stench (aura, emotion, mental, olfactory) 30 feet. A creature that enters or begins their turn in the emanation must attempt a DC 45 Fortitude save. On a failure, the creature is sickened 2 and confused for 1 round; on a critical failure, it can't target Sarvel with any Strikes or other effects from its confused condition. While within the emanation, the creature takes a -2 penalty to saves to recover from the sickened condition. A creature that succeeds at its save is temporarily immune to all xulgaths' stench for 1 minute. Sarvel can suppress or resume this aura as a free action.


Touch of Zevgavizeb Sarvel begins combat with two tentacles. Each tentacle has 66 HP and is immune to area damage. A creature can attempt to sever one of Sarvel's tentacles by specifically targeting it and dealing damage equal to the tentacle's Hit Points. A tentacle not completely severed returns to full HP at the end of any creature's turn. For each tentacle he has, Sarvel gains an extra reaction at the start of his turn that can be used only for an Attack of Opportunity. If he has no tentacles, he can no longer make tentacle Strikes, *Writhe Independently*, or *Constrict*.

Attack of Opportunity  tentacle only

Speed 30 feet; *air walk*, *freedom of movement*


Melee  *spiked gauntlet* +41 (agile, magical), **Damage** 4d8+19 piercing plus 1d6 evil


Melee  tentacle +41 (agile, magical, reach 20 feet), **Damage** 4d8+19 slashing plus Grab

Melee  jaws +41 (magical), **Damage** 4d12+19 piercing

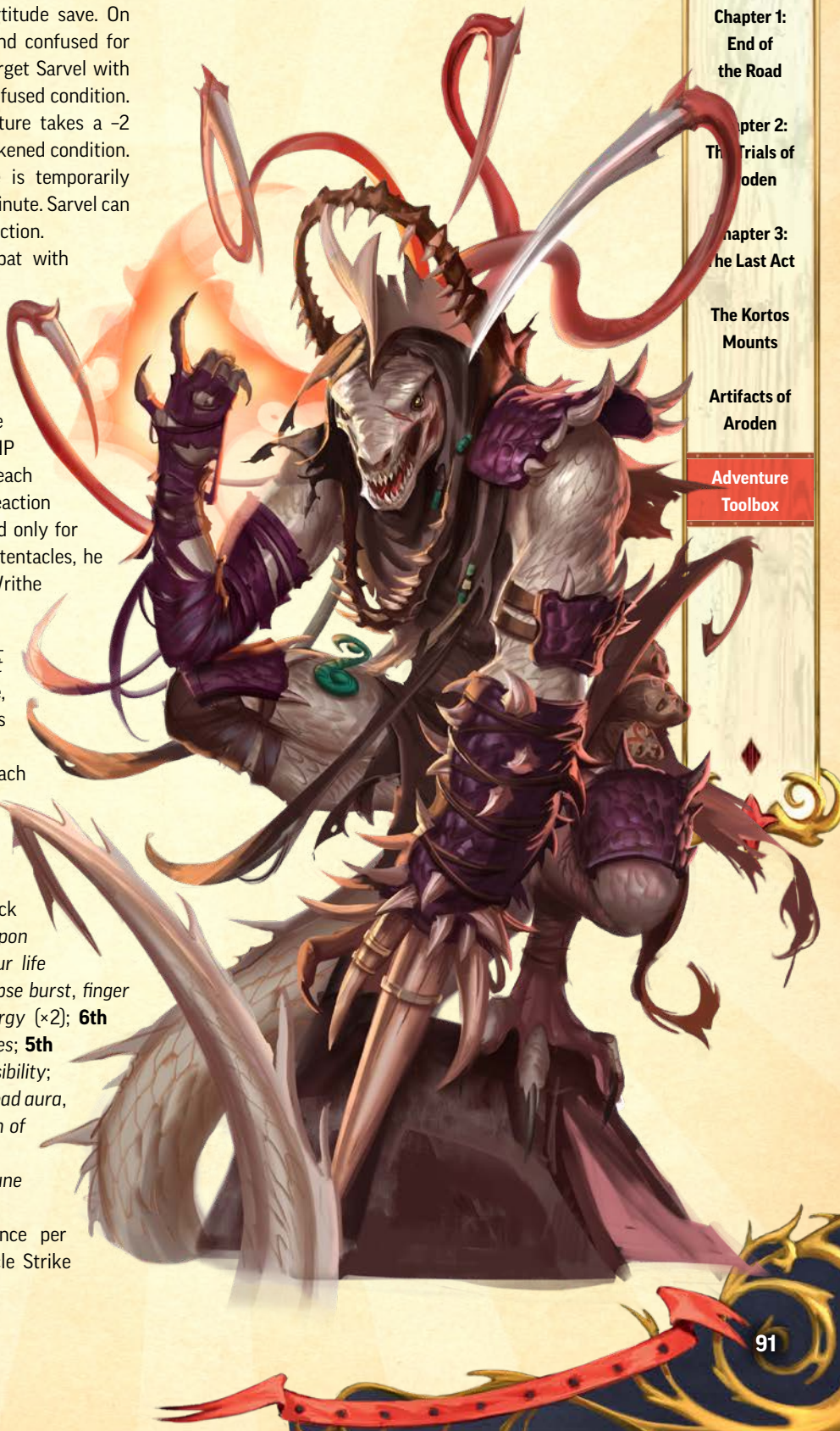
Divine Prepared Spells DC 45, attack +37; **10th** *harm* (×5), *miracle*, *weapon of judgment*; **9th** *blade barrier*, *devour life* (page 76), *wail of the banshee*; **8th** *eclipse burst*, *finger of death* (×2); **7th** *paralyze*, *resist energy* (×2); **6th** *divine wrath*, *flame strike*, *restore senses*; **5th** *Abyssal plague*, *prying eye*, *see invisibility*; **Cantrips (10th)** *divine lance*, *message*, *read aura*, *shield*; **Constant (4th)** *air walk*, *freedom of movement*

Rituals DC 45; *Abyssal pact*, *atone*, *commune*

Constrict  4d8+12 bludgeoning, DC 45

Writhe Independently  **Frequency** once per round; **Effect** Sarvel makes one tentacle Strike

with each tentacle he currently has (to a maximum of six Strikes), but he can't target a single creature with more than one Strike. Each attack counts toward his multiple attack penalty, but the penalty doesn't increase until all the attacks have been made.



Next Month

DEVIL AT THE DREAMING PALACE

by James L. Sutter

The Agents of Edgewatch Adventure Path begins! Absalom's centennial Radiant Festival has attracted thousands of visitors from around the world, and countless common crooks, charlatans, and even killers aim to take advantage of the festivities. When a squad of rookie officers is enlisted to solve a spree of unusual missing persons cases, they must follow the clues to locate the lost fairgoers—and ensure the criminal behind the disappearances is put behind bars!

THE RADIANT FESTIVAL

by Patrick Renie

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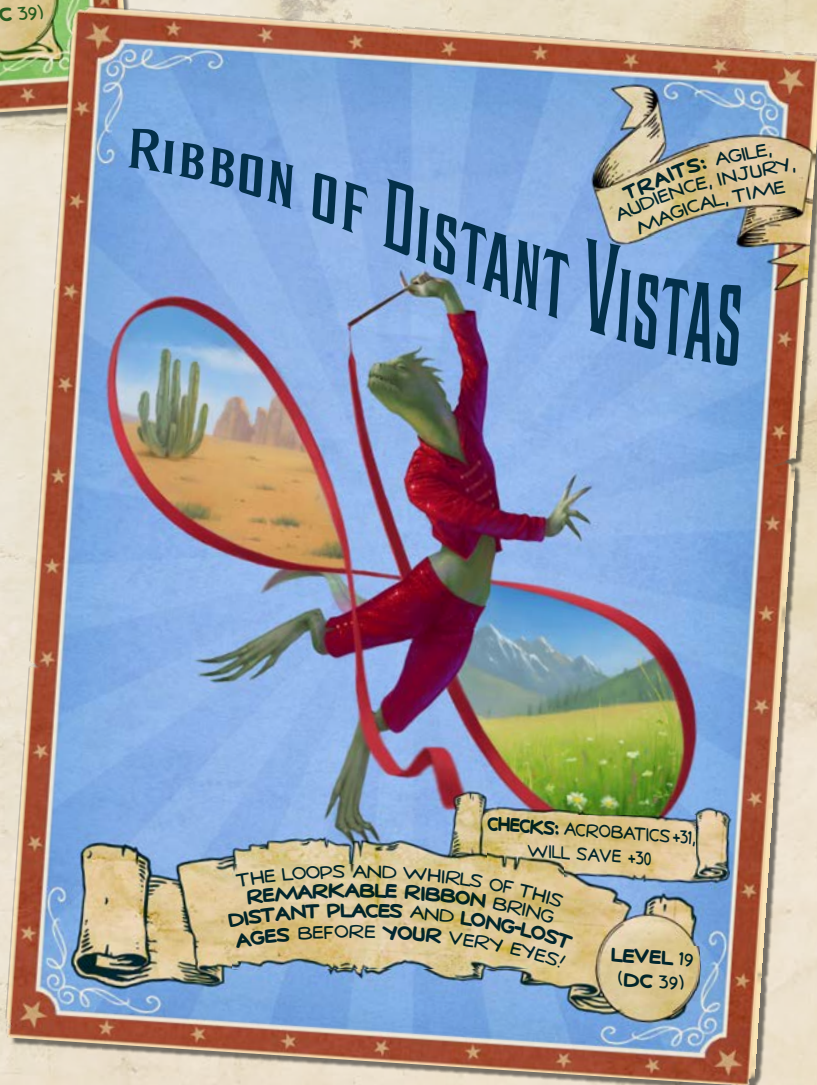
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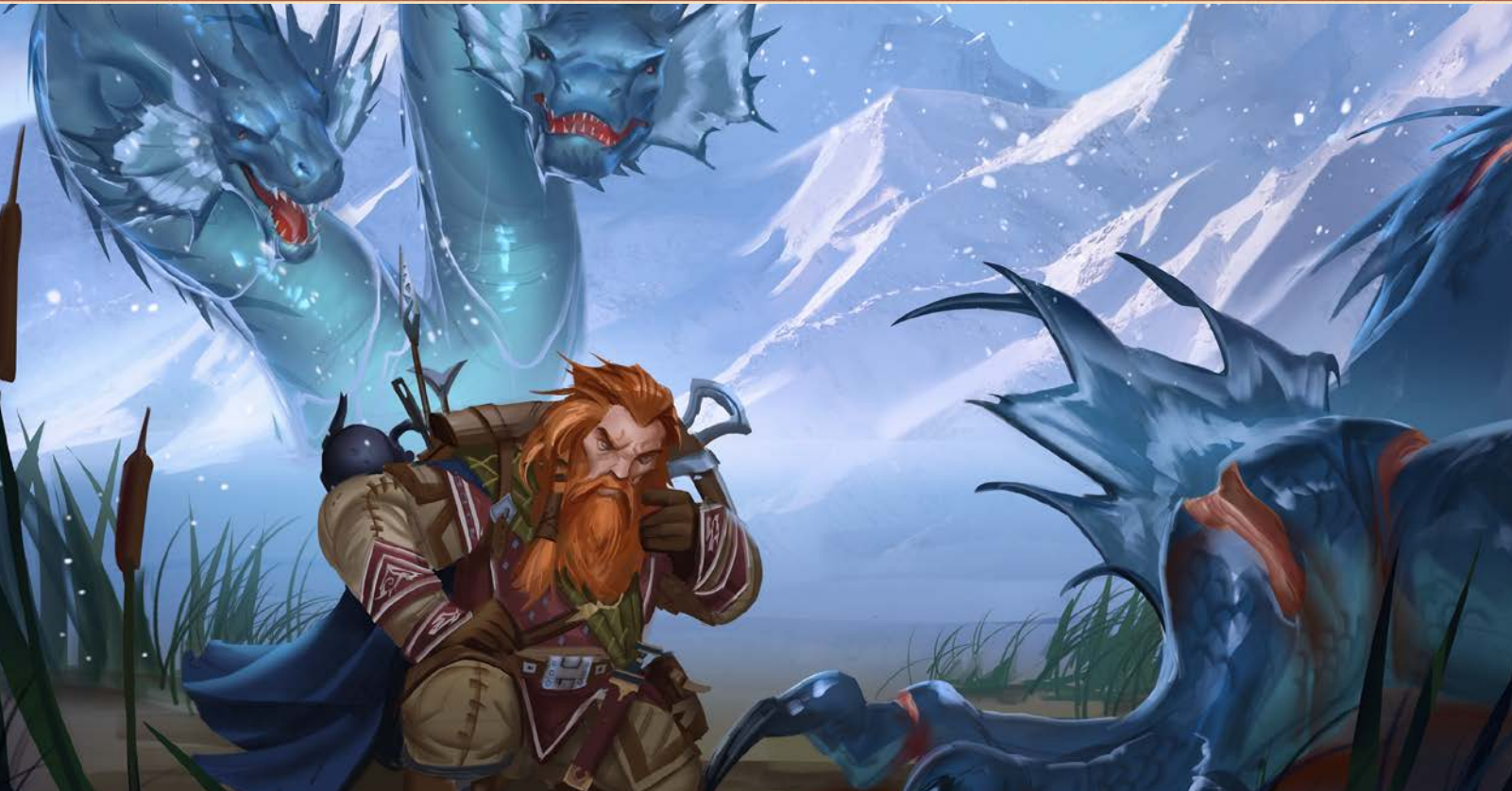
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