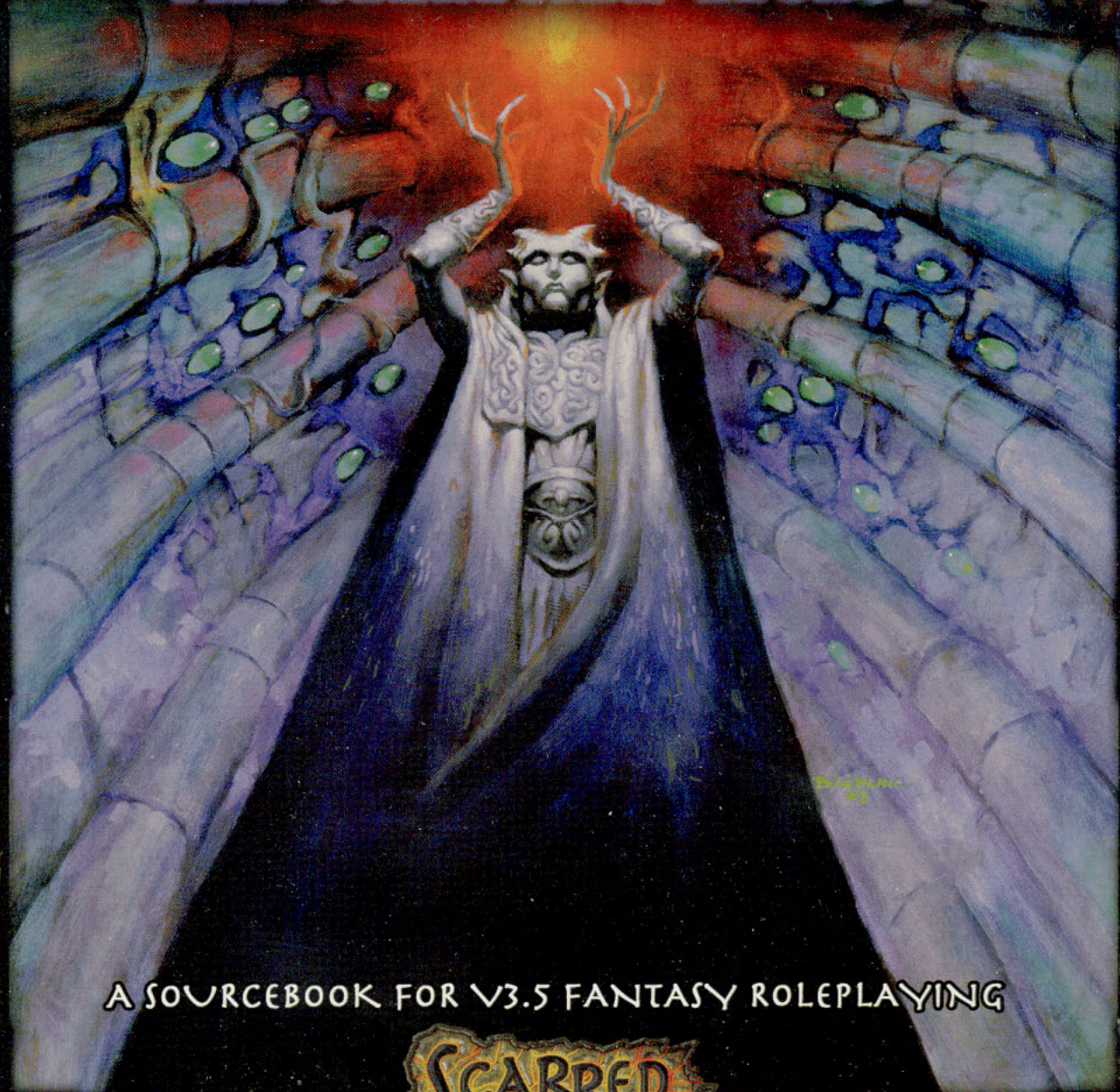




ECHOES

OF THE PAST
THE SLARECIAN LEGACY



A SOURCEBOOK FOR V3.5 FANTASY ROLEPLAYING



ECHOES

OF THE PAST

THE SLARECIAN LEGACY

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Psionics in the Scarred Lands	4
Chapter One: History of the Slarecians	6
From The Ruins	7
The Entrapping Lands	12
Conflict	14
The Rise of an Empire	18
The Fall of the Slarecians	19
Chapter Two: Slarecian Cults	22
Loyal Unto Death	23
Betrayal Champions	29
Those Who Walk Alone	37
Chapter Three: Ruins of the Ancients	46
Ruins of the Slarecians	47
Designing Slarecian Ruins	56
Chapter Four: Return of the Masters	77
The Truth	78
Advancing the Metaplot: Return of the Slarecians	81
Slarecian Story Seeds	87
Appendix: Lore and Artifacts	96
Slarecians	97
Feats	99
Equipment	99
Magic Items	101
Relics	107
Prestige Classes	108
Slarecian Horrors	114
Spells & Psionic Powers	136

Introduction

The book you are holding has been a long time coming.

It all started with a big, white furry book. Okay, so the book itself wasn't particularly hairy, but the cover of the original **Creature Collection** did depict a lot of white fur. Though a collection of myriad beasties, horrors and other critters, it also alluded to something strange.

Something called a slarecian.

Or more accurately (and tellingly), it *didn't* describe a slarecian. It described a handful of creatures quite noteworthy for their oddness and the fact that some kind of common strand linked them together. A crystal-horned gargoyle. A ghoul and a shadow, both undead, but both immune to being turned by clerics and paladins. A disembodied head of weird blackish crystal; there was even something called a "language virus" that rendered communication impossible.

Further books illuminated more of those strands. We learned that the Penumbral Pentagon owed their secrets to the slarecians. These mysterious slarecians had managed to capture or even kill one or more of the very gods — indeed, they were the impetus for the only instance of god and titan joining forces!

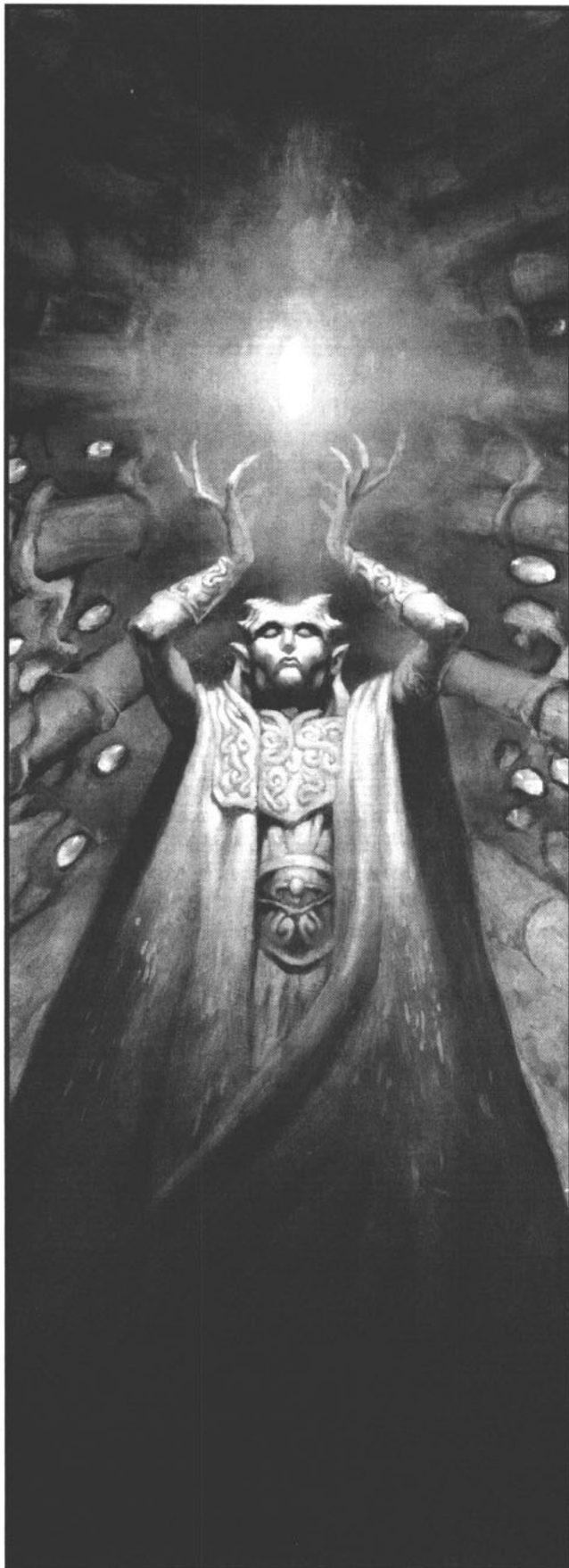
What, then, of the slarecians themselves?

This is their book. We began to tell some of their secrets in **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**. But this is where we lay it all out on the line, telling not only their past, but what might lay ahead.

So, Why Psionics?

The use of psionics is still not official for the Scarred Lands. That is, we don't assume that every creature in the *Psionics Handbook* exists there, nor do people talk about psions or dorjes. However, the themes and imagery involved in psionics are a really good fit for the alien slarecians. From all kinds of bizarre powers associated with crystals to alien skin suits, the legacy of the Ancients seems pretty appropriate for the "weirdness" of psionics.

So, rather than creating a whole new system of magic that — once we'd finished adding in all the specifics associated with the slarecians — would look an awful lot like psionics, we've decided to simply use the psionics rules for ease of expression. No reason to build a whole new "engine" if we can



just use one that already exists; we can instead use all the space that a new system would've required for further detailing the slarecians.

As such, **Echoes of the Past: The Slarecian Legacy** tries to skirt the edge of the psionics issue. In general, where we deal with "in-setting" pieces, we avoid mention of psionics and other similar terms. But when it comes time to describe their weird abilities or strange artifacts, we've elected to use those familiar rules.

General d20 Use

Though this book is written from a Scarred Lands' perspective, it is hardly specific to that setting. Most of the material herein is useable to other campaigns, especially if that campaign has (by dint of its GM using some of the **Creature Collection** material) some element of slarecian influence in it. Slarecians are bizarre and unique beings that can add a great new dimension to any d20 campaign — they've certainly done that for the Scarred Lands!

Psionics in the Scarred Lands

Psionics in a Scarred Lands campaign may be used to represent the power of ancient slarecians, which is unique and different from the power wielded by both gods and titans. As such, this setting utilizes a variant of the "Psionics are Different" rules presented in the *Psionics Handbook*. In the Scarred Lands, psionics and magic are separate forces which rely on different sources of power and which have independent effects. Thus, use the following modifiers to psionics in the Scarred Lands:

Dispelling and Negating: Neither psionics nor magic has any ability to dispel the other. New spells that dispel psionics or new powers that negate spells are not possible. Null magic or psionic areas have no effect on the operation of the other power.

Mind-Affecting Spells and Powers: Spells or special abilities that protect specifically against effects with the [Charm], [Compulsion], or [Mind-Affecting] descriptor work equally well against both psionics and magic. However, abilities that provide only a bonus against magic, such as a mountain dwarf's +2 bonus to saves against magic, have no effect against psionics.

Spell and Power Resistance: Because psionic power is very rare in the Scarred Lands, very few creatures have developed any form of resistance to psionics. Only slarecian constructs, creations, or allies have power resistance. Spell resistance provides no protection against psionic powers,

and power resistance does not protect against magic. Slarecian creatures (such as slarecian dragons, gargoyles, muses and the like) have a power resistance score equal to their spell resistance.

Variant Rules

The following variant rules apply to the use of psionics in the Scarred Lands.

Variant: Mental Fatigue

Harnessing the power of the ancient slarecians involves tapping forces that bodies native to the Scarred Lands were not meant to handle. Psions who expend too much power begin to burn away the very life force that maintains body and soul. In game terms, this means that any psion whose power point total is reduced to one-quarter or less of its normal maximum becomes fatigued (see *DMG*) until he can recover sufficient power points to raise his current total above 25% of maximum. Further, any psion who has a current power point total of 0 is exhausted (see *DMG*). Unlike the normal condition, however, this exhaustion lasts only until the psion can recover at least 1 power point (at which point he becomes fatigued).

Variant: Coordinate Concentration

It is possible for psions and psionic beings to activate a new power while maintaining concentration on another, or to maintain two or more powers at the same time.

Activating Powers: Powers with a manifestation time of 1 standard action or less may be activated even while maintaining concentration on one or more other powers. This requires a successful Concentration check (DC 15 + the level of the highest level power being maintained or activated, + 5 per power being maintained beyond the first). In addition, if the manifester makes any other Concentration checks for any reason, the DC of that check increases by +5 for each power being maintained currently. If any Concentration check fails, any power being activated and all powers being maintained also fail.

Maintaining Concentration: A psion may maintain concentration on more than one power at a time, but this requires a standard action for each round of maintenance (unless the psion also manifests a power, in which case see "Activating Powers," above). In addition, if the manifester makes any other Concentration check for any reason, the DC of that check increases by +5 for each power currently being maintained. If any Concentration check fails, all powers being maintained also fail.

Table I-1: Psion Powers Discovered

Level	PP	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	2	3+d	1+d	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2	3	4+d	1+d	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
3	5	4+d	2+d	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	7	5+d	2+d	d	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5	12	5+d	3+d	1+d	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
6	17	6+d	3+d	1+d	d	—	—	—	—	—	—
7	23	6+d	4+d	2+d	1+d	—	—	—	—	—	—
8	28	7+d	4+d	2+d	1+d	d	—	—	—	—	—
9	36	7+d	4+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	—	—	—	—	—
10	52	8+d	4+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	d	—	—	—	—
11	64	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	—	—	—	—
12	84	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	d	—	—	—
13	100	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	—	—	—
14	124	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	d	—	—
15	144	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	—	—
16	153	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	1+d	d	—
17	175	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	2+d	1+d	—
18	205	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	2+d	1+d	d
19	235	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	2+d	2+d	1+d
20	265	8+d	4+d	4+d	3+d	3+d	3+d	2+d	2+d	2+d	2+d

Variant: Secondary Disciplines and Variant Powers Discovered

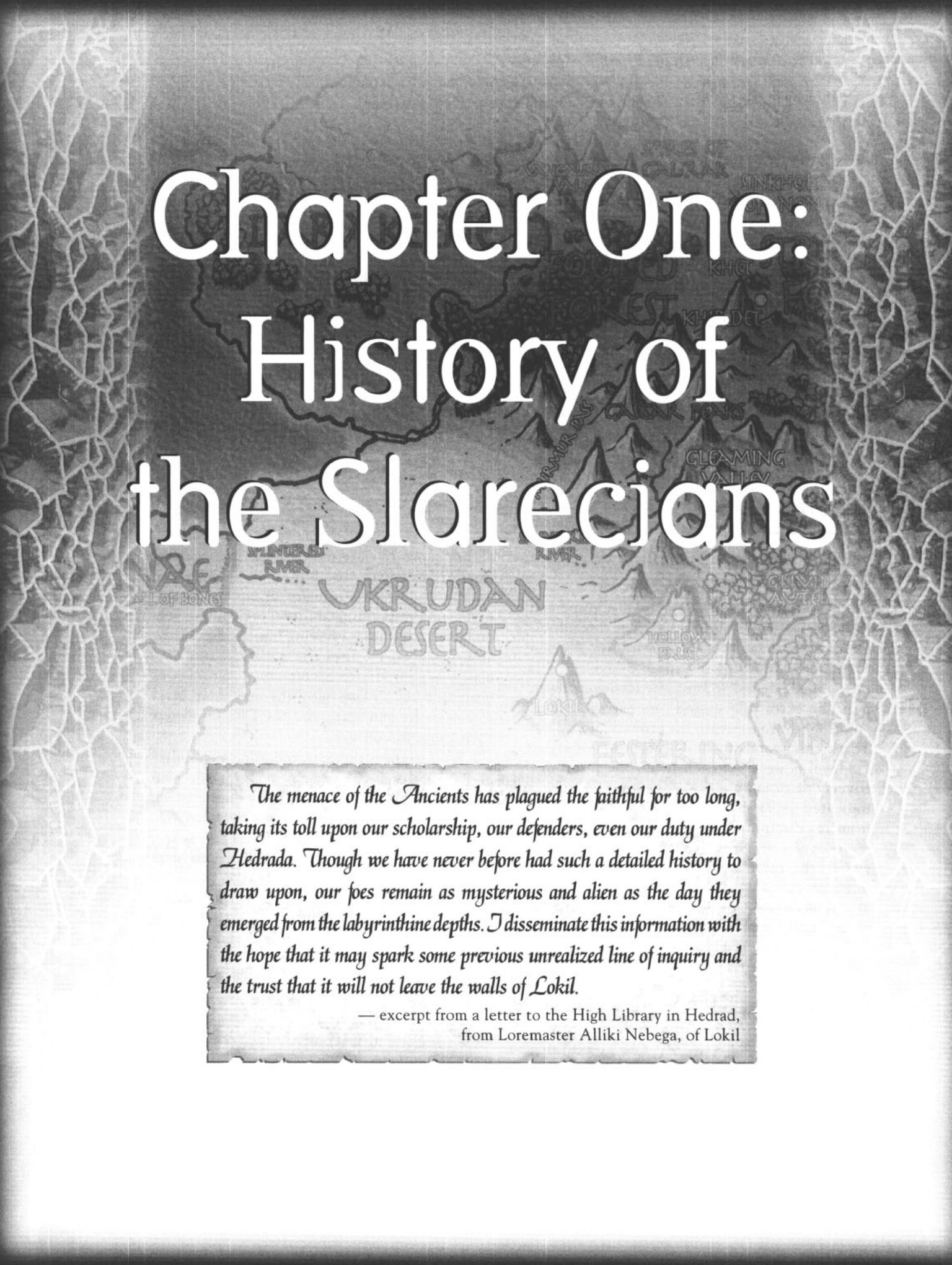
Every psion has one primary discipline and two secondary disciplines; the other three disciplines are by default tertiary disciplines. A psion begins play knowing any three 0-level powers (also called talents) and any one 1st-level power, plus one extra 0-level and one extra 1st-level power, both from within his primary discipline. This yields a total of four 0-level powers and two 1st-level powers. At each level, the psion discovers one or more previously latent powers, as indicated on Table I-1. Psions can pick powers from any discipline, but the “d” in each column represents a single extra power learned from within the psion’s primary discipline. A “—” indicates that no extra powers are known; a “d” or a number indicates that the psion can choose one or more powers at the given level.

To manifest a power, a psion must have a score of at least 10 + the power’s level in the key ability appropriate to that power’s discipline. However, a psion can use his primary discipline’s key ability score for the purposes of manifesting powers in either of his two secondary disciplines as well. He also uses his primary discipline’s key

ability score to determine the DCs of powers from his secondary disciplines. Thus, the psion usually chooses his primary discipline for his highest corresponding ability score, and his secondary disciplines for having low corresponding ability scores. He uses the ability scores normally associated with his tertiary disciplines, as normal, when determining the maximum level of powers he can learn and the DCs of powers from those disciplines.

For instance, the corresponding key ability of Telepathy is Charisma. A telepath who chooses Metacreativity and Psychometabolism as his secondary disciplines uses his Charisma rather than his Intelligence or Strength scores, respectively, when determining the highest level of powers he can manifest in these disciplines as well as the DCs of all powers from those disciplines. His tertiary disciplines — Psychoportation, Psychokinesis, and Clairsentience — use Dexterity, Constitution, and Wisdom, respectively, as usual.

A psion gains base power points per day as indicated on Table I-1, but receives bonus power points for his primary discipline’s key ability score as usual (see *Psionics Handbook*, Chapter 1, Table 1-2).



Chapter One: History of the Slarecians

The menace of the Ancients has plagued the faithful for too long, taking its toll upon our scholarship, our defenders, even our duty under Hedrada. Though we have never before had such a detailed history to draw upon, our foes remain as mysterious and alien as the day they emerged from the labyrinthine depths. I disseminate this information with the hope that it may spark some previous unrealized line of inquiry and the trust that it will not leave the walls of Lokil.

— excerpt from a letter to the High Library in Hedrad,
from Loremaster Alliki Nebega, of Lokil

From The Ruins

From the journey log of the first expedition into the catacombs of Lokil, kept by Scholar Liond —

2nd Wildday of Belsamer, 145 AV

Miners in the deepest obsidian mines have recently broken through a particularly thick deposit — only to find some previously unknown ruins. Due to my learning in the field of ancient cultures, I have been chosen to lead an expedition into the depths to divine the nature of this find. From the miners' initial description of the buildings, I am hoping that we may have discovered a long lost enclave of the Ancients. Perhaps with luck we will come across some artifacts of value.

2nd Belsaday of Belsamer, 145 AV

My team is assembled and we have begun our descent. I brought four Closed Book monks, I'm not expecting trouble but better to be prepared; two scribes to record our findings; Hjeld, a noted priest of the Lawgiver; and Scholars Lavst and Fendlin to help examine any artifacts we might discover. Although we have passed a few outlying buildings, which do indeed indicate some Ancient influence, this cavern is much larger than the miners guessed. I doubt we will arrive in the ruins proper before tomorrow.

2nd Vanday of Belsamer, 145 AV

This morning Timmon, one of our scribes, discovered a strange silver sphere divided into 10 sections. Later, Scholar Lavst and I came across a cache of orb-like crystals. While Lavst believes them to be divinatory crystal balls, I am not so certain — why would a race supposedly as magically powerful as the Ancients require such tools? Unable to discern the nature of these artifacts, I have forbidden their use and will return them to Lokil for further study.

Later this afternoon we came upon an enormous stone mural set into the strange cracked crystal that comprises the architecture of the ruins. Although we are not familiar with the language of the Ancients, I am confident that with time the other scholars and I can translate these runes. I am excited as to what we might glean from this find.

3rd Corday of Belsamer, 145 AV

We've had very little luck deciphering the Ancient runes using mundane methods, save to discover that these creatures referred to themselves as "slarecians" and that the one recording these glyphs is referred to as the "uthriach." I've decided to begin magical experimentation on the runes on the morrow. Perhaps divination will succeed where expertise has failed.





Unfortunately, Timmon has fallen rather ill. I've assigned Hjeld to look after him and the other scribe, Jakque, to oversee his duties.

3rd Taniday of Belsamer, 145 AV

Two days of my most powerful magics and no result, although Lavst seems to have suffered an unusual side effect. We should have examined this place better for traps; for when he cast a simple magical deciphering spell upon the wall, he became afflicted with a strange sort of insanity. Lavst seems to have lost all ability to speak Ledean, though not the rest of his reasoning faculties. He began gibbering excitedly and copying arcane runes, identical to the ones on the wall, into his journal. He seems non-violent and content with his mad work, so we'll leave him be for now.

We've had additional problems in the ruins. The monks repelled an attack by several rotting abominations that I believe were once Ancients. One of the monks has become afflicted with whatever rotting illness the beast was carrying, but I'm confident that Kjeld can cure her. On another note, Jakque seems to have come down with the same illness afflicting Timmon. Concerned that it may be due to the artifacts they were both carrying, I've ordered all collected artifacts be left untouched. As we were unpacking the items, I noticed that four sections of the silver sphere glowed with a strange blue light. Unable to detect any magical influence, I fear some strange Ancient sorcery.

3rd Hedraday of Belsamer, 145 AV

Mad and indecipherable rambling occupies much of this page and the following twenty. Pages have been ripped out and blood stains many of those remaining. From what we can gather, Liond transcribed the Slarecian runes into his journal. We have not deciphered them as yet. The text becomes more lucid upon the next entry, although the handwriting seems rushed and altered.

1st Charday of Hedrer, 145 AV

Like wildfire it spread among us. The blessing! We could see the *uthriach's* words, and I transcribed them that those above might be able to understand what we have wrought. But it was too late! They died one by one as it ate their minds, and then it was whole. And it burned the Closed Books with its horn, and I fled with Hjeld and Fendlin died. For the blessing came as a curse and they could not access their magics. But you see only I recovered, they were still lost in the blessing's embrace. Except for Lavst, but he was dragged away — to what end? We are nearing the ruin's edge, but Hjeld is already gray with the rotting curse and he will not survive. I can Foresee it; perhaps I am also the progeny of Tlarch?

Slarecian Genesis

Behold the words of the uthriach of Tlarch-Phen:

In the beginning there was Void. And though there existed nothing, consciousness and sentience flowed through the not-darkness. In time, with the pulse of eternity, this awareness came to recognize itself as several separate beings.

Thus We were formed.

And as We watched, particles came into being in the Void. Though We, aspects of the Cosmos, had naught to do with their creation, We could know these Creations in the Void simply by shifting Our perceptions. And for an eternity We watched, trying to discern the reason for such Creation, if reason there be in the Void. Among the many worlds, We encountered minute beings who styled themselves all-powerful. These beings seemed incomprehensible, as they were possessed of a fervent desire to create. And so We watched their efforts, and We came to know many novel ideas; Life, Light and Darkness, Matter, Distance, Time, Magic, Emotion, Cause and Effect, and Death.

However, We also came to realize a part of Us was missing. Having learned the concept of Names, this aspect was known as Chelaque the Nomad. Feeling the loss of its existence, I searched across the many worlds, through the whole of the Cosmos. Then I, who had come to be known as Tlarch the Golden, came upon a particle in the Void unlike any other. For rather than the isolated sentiences who crawled upon the lifeless rocks of the Void, it seems that the world itself had achieved a measure of sentience, and like We, it had splintered into various aspects. With raw elemental force and

profuse creative energy, the world took shape as I watched. And I did perceive Chelaque, but it had become entrapped within the tendrils of birthing energy spun by this forming world. And as I watched fascinated, I noticed that I too had become enmeshed, My unembodied sentience becoming cocooned in materiality, the raw elemental force of the planet. One by one, as My brethren came to investigate, We were drawn into this world and ensnared. And We became *uthriach*, for we were truly the formless-given-form.

For the first time, We actually existed. We were material, We lived, and therefore We suffered. Stunned by the agony of physical existence, cycles and epochs of this world passed Us by as Our consciousnesses sought a solution. And as one, We came upon an answer — this world must be destroyed, its creative energy stamped out, for We are bound to the destiny of this world while it should continue to exist. But those elemental beings known as titans, those fragments of that which is responsible for Our entrapment, would oppose Our attempts to escape; for in a sense, they and the world are one just as We and the Void are one. While trivial in their worldly nature, these beings reigned supreme on this world, and thus We, although eternal, could not confront them directly while entrapped.

Also, while We had lain dormant, the one known as Psyclus the Subtle had vanished, its sentience fading from Our awareness. We presumed it had found a method to escape this prison, for Our kind cannot perish. But its passing sparked a new occurrence, and perhaps it was responsible for that which was to come.

God-Kings of the Slarecians

Although the *uthriach* of the slarecians were godlike in their stature and power, they were not worshipped by the slarecians in the same manner as true gods. Unlike the gods, who are recognized as individuals, slarecians see their *uthriach* as aspects of a greater whole. The *uthriach* act as one, with a cohesiveness and unity of purpose that would amaze even the most lawful of gods. Each slarecian was created by, and is in fact an extension of, a particular *uthriach*, and this allows them to understand their role in society and meaning in existence. Slarecians who attempt to grow closer to their god-kings are not therefore worshipping them, but rather are seeking to understand their own nature and place in the universe.

Uthriach

Baeth the Shaper of Stars
Chelaque the Imprisoned
Dyterne the Sundered
Hylop of the Void
Psyclus the Subtle
Qarrath the Worldly
Tlarch the Golden
Valir the Feeble
Xoer the One

Focus

Psychokinetics
Psychoportation
Entropy
Metacreation
Subconscious, dreams
Psychometabolism
Clairsentience
Arcane Magic
Telepathy

Followers

Savants
Nomads
Nihilists, slarecians ghouls and shadowmen
Shapers
Dream beings
Egoists
Seers
Fectui, Eyes in the Night, slarecian dragons
Telepaths

We watched the one known as the Life-Giver shape life and sentience and were intrigued. Perhaps We could craft servitors to further the erosion of Our prison? And so Qarrath, who had become known as the Worldly for its manipulation of life and matter, shaped beings in Our material image and imbued them with a measure of its own sentience. Thus, the race that came to be known as Slarecian was birthed. And those of Us remaining each created a bloodline of similar servants, and they acquired a portion of Our unique sentience. For in a sense, We are the Slarecians and the Slarecians are Us.

I, Tlarch the Golden, created beings known as Seers who would read the tides of destiny and so direct Our efforts to undermine the work of the titans. The servants of Chelaque, the first of us to become imprisoned, became known as the Nomads, as they traveled this world and its planes seeking escape, but to no avail. Xoer the One created the Telepaths, manipulators of sentience,

who sought control over the lesser minds of the titans' creations. Qarrath the Worldly fashioned servants known as Egoists, who mastered all aspects of life and their material forms that they might better understand the nature of this existence. The servants of Baeth the Shaper of Stars, known as the Savants, acquired expertise controlling the raw forces and energies of this world. Hylop of the Void created servitors known as Shapers, who manipulated creation and imposed their will upon the Void itself. The one known as Dyterne the Ebon taught its followers, the Nihilists, the secrets of entropy that they could bring about the end of this world. Valir the Feeble created Fectui, but they too possessed its inability to master the secrets of existence. Psyclus the Subtle never created Slarecian servants, but as ages passed, We came upon beings of pure spirit and thought who claimed to be its children.

And as ages came and went and the rigors of existence tore upon us, We noticed a new event

Psyclus the Subtle

The *uthriach* known as Psyclus the Subtle has always stood apart from its fellows. Unlike the other *uthriach*, Psyclus, who was said to represent the subconscious and primal thought, truly sought to understand those lesser creatures constructing worlds and societies beneath its disembodied gaze. When it became imprisoned on Scarn, Psyclus did not lay stunned and dormant with the other *uthriach*. Instead, finding itself in a realm filled with lesser minds, Psyclus was amazed and fascinated with its connection to such creatures and sought to explore their nature. However, physical existence tore upon and pained Psyclus just as it did the other *uthriach*. Realizing that it could not escape Scarn, and not even truly desiring to — owing to its newfound closeness to mortal beings — Psyclus formulated a plan to once again achieve bodiless perfection while retaining its tie to the world. Through some unknown process, the mysterious *uthriach* left its physical body and transferred its mind into the subconscious of all mortals living on Scarn. In the process Psyclus became something new and different, inhabiting a domain known as the Dreamland formed from the shared primal connection of all mortals.

For a time, Psyclus existed as the ruler of dreams, and it truly came to understand the motivations and desires, trials and triumphs, losses and shortcomings of mortal existence. Unwilling to allow mortals to suffer the petty excesses of the titans, the *uthriach* plotted in secret to overthrow those elemental beings and rule Scarn in their stead. Psyclus did not

count upon the loyalty to the titans of those minds in which he existed, however, and his plan was betrayed as visions by druids to their masters. The titans, unaware of the true threat of Psyclus, charged several of the nascent gods, including Vangal the Reaver, to find and destroy the immortal of dreams. As Psyclus did not have a physical body, the Reaver was forced to destroy the shards of the *uthriach* present in all mortal dreamers, setting off the greatest slaughter that Scarn had, until that point, ever seen. Rather than see his beloved mortals suffer in its stead, the Subtle One willingly dispersed itself, falling into a quiescent state.

Centuries later, the sleeping and quasi-material essence of Psyclus was sundered by two events: the birth of Erias, Demigod of Dreams, and Kadum's Deluge which washed the *uthriach*'s sleeping form in raw titanic energy. Once again infused with the elemental essence of Scarn, Psyclus was sundered into six aspects, including Erias and the sinister Jack of Tears of Termana. So warped by its intimate connection to mortal minds and the subsequent infusions of divine and primal energy, Psyclus has ceased to be *uthriach*, instead becoming truly and permanently linked to the Scarred Lands. Unfortunately for the mortals it once loved, a reconstituted Psyclus would probably be a terrifying being, driven mad by the pain of physical existence and tainted by the elemental energies of the titans.

For more information about the being known as Psyclus, see **Blood Bayou**.

that altered the very destiny of this world. For three of the titans, Cruelty, Fury, and Destruction, pooled their creative energy to generate a new being, a creature neither servant nor titan nor *uthriach* — a creation known as a god. We pondered what connection this new being could have to the world. We knew that the living creations of the titans possessed aspects known as souls. At first, we thought these aspects were simple manifestations of the titans' sentience, in the same way Our servitors were imbued with aspects of Us. But as We watched the first god, which called itself Vangal the Reaver, We realized that this being was purely soul and yet birthed by, and separate from, the soulless titans.

Feeling an affinity with the firstborn, self-proclaimed God of the Apocalypse, We watched as the god began to attract followers from among the titans' lesser creations. We thought for a time that this god might be willing to aid Us in this world's destruction, but We soon realized that the god had achieved a kind of symbiosis with his worshipers, feeding and growing strong upon their adulation. This being was unlikely to eliminate the source of his own power, regardless of his professed beliefs, yet We studied this amazing connection as more gods were birthed by the fecund titans. And We covertly protected the nascent god-cults from the zealous servants of the titans, for We noticed another unique property of the gods. With the aid of their godly patrons, the lesser creatures who had come to worship the deities were able to escape the plane of this world upon their deaths. How were these lesser beings able to achieve what We were not and leave this world? And so We studied them; We studied their prayers and their deaths, their magics and the limits of their devotion. And We determined that We would need to examine a god to truly understand how these beings escape the world's pull. At the same time, the gods had come to discover Our hand sheltering them, and being irrational and fractious, they dared to attack Us.

And for their poor judgment, we scattered the gods' forces and ripped their forms asunder. For We are not of this world, and though Our power be lessened through Our entrapment in physical form, We were still possessed of a might incomprehensible to the gods and all who are connected to materiality. We then decided to take a god being for study. But through Our efforts to capture it, We destroyed the offspring of Belsameth the Slayer, the godling known as Hadarus.

Thus, We turned Our attention to Drendari of the Shadows, spawn of Enkili the Trickster. Learning from Our previous miscalculation, We readily captured that godling. As we probed the being's mind and soul, Xoer the One became concerned that We might again destroy the god or the knowl-

edge we sought in Our ignorance of her mind. Thus Baeth the Shaper of Stars, decided to first extract an aspect of the god that resonated with her own being, the mastery of shadow. And although this aspect of the creature was drawn from the core of her essence, We were able to extract this knowledge with less difficulty than that which We were truly seeking.

Having sorted through the alien and petty thoughts of the god's mind, We learned to emulate her mastery of darkness and shadow, a worthless and trivial thing only the followers of Valir could truly appreciate. We bestowed these magics upon a rebellious group of lesser creatures who had come to Us seeking power, for I had Foreseen the chaos these mages would wreck upon the followers of the gods in eons to come.

And so We wrested the secrets We sought from the mind of Drendari. Having learned the mystery of the migration of souls, We constructed a device that would free Us from this world, this Scarn. We shall use the Rod of Souls to return to the Void, even if it does flay apart this world at the seams. So I have Foreseen, so it shall be done.

Postscript

Scholar Lark of Lokil, 3rd Madraday of Hedrer, 145 AV

We found Scholar Liond unconscious in the artifact storage facility, near the deepest obsidian mine, barely clinging to life and sanity. I have given his transcript over to the Council for further analysis, but it seems to me he was possessed by madness even at that point. Formless beings of thought from another world? Destroying gods? Alien powers? Obviously purest fancy. However, the expedition did seem to activate something in the ruins below, as a number of guardians have attacked our miners and those outposts closest to the ruin's entrance. I will halt further expeditions until I can be sure that the ruins have calmed into a more quiescent state.

When Liond finally awoke, he began ranting in a strange and alien tongue that defied our attempts to translate. In fact, those who have tried have gone insane in a similar manner — though fortunately their condition seemed to resolve itself. Rather than see our healers infected, we gave Liond over to a small local sect of the Order of the Morning Sky, who promptly cut out his tongue to halt the spread of his condition. As they last reported, his madness seems to be improving, although he has begun to manifest strange phenomena that are not the work of magic; moving objects with his thoughts, speaking in the minds of others, and healing rapidly. I sense the workings of Enkili in this entire affair.

The Entrapping Lands

The following fragments were found during a raid upon the slarecian ruins in 148 AV, after a series of escalating attacks into the heart of Lokil forced us to take retaliatory action. Scholar Fallon of the Order of the Closed Book lead the raid, and she has come to believe there is some greater force directing the undead and constructs that saturate the ruins. The expedition reportedly came upon a chamber containing a great mass of records, before being routed by a concerted attack of the gargoyle-like beasts. Fallon's party barely escaped with these few fragments. Fortunately, several of our scholars have learned to read the language of the Ancients after recovering from their infectious madness.

3,422nd Period of Imprisonment, Age of the Capture, Time of Xoer

... And so I had been chosen by Valir the Arcane itself to assist in the next raid upon the surface dwellers who control the southern dry lands. Although I have of course participated in raids in the past, I am hoping the wielders of magic who dominate the southern lands will be more interesting than the crude inhabitants of closer regions. These beings... so alien, obsessed with such worldly minutiae — hunger, greed, exhaustion, time, companionship, worry, love, hatred, jealousy. Their thoughts are jumbled and confused with raw emo-

tion. How can they hope to focus on the truly important matters beyond this tiny world if their lives intrude upon their every thought? Well, no matter, beings more focused upon the spiritual pursuit of magic should prove to be more comprehensible and less corrupted with worldly matters.

... As we journeyed southward, Tosh of Xoer, who of course led the expedition, shunned my brethren Kell and I, which we have come to expect as the children of Valir the Arcane. But as we traveled, our isolation allowed Kell and I to discuss matters of some importance. Tosh, of course, would never deign to use verbal communication. Although Kell and I have come to master the small bits of arcane power we had seen in the hands of the followers of Magic, none of the children of Valir are able to match the sheer mental prowess of our more fortunate brethren. However, Kell, who had been privy to the interrogation of the captured deity, predicted that this imbalance was about to change. It seems this goddess of darkness possessed elaborate magics of shadow that only the children of Valir could master, and her arcane secrets were spreading among our kind almost as quickly as they could be plumbed from her mind. Perhaps the magics possessed by these southern sorcerers will further add to this discovery.



Slarecian Gatekeepers

Stymied by their inability to call upon magical or psionic powers that would allow them to travel the planes or even the material Scarred Lands, in ancient times the *uthriach* constructed huge psionic gateways to link their catacombs. Through some process known only to the *uthriach* themselves, the gatekeepers, psionic beings who control these portals, are able to temporarily transcend the slarecians' prohibition on extraplanar movement. Unfortunately, the slarecians soon found that though they could travel to other planes, the process was both expensive (requiring a substantial sacrifice of wealth from those who would travel) and unable to restore the slarecians to beings of pure sentience. It is generally believed that the gatekeepers themselves are either psionic constructs of the *uthriach* or extraplanar beings psionically compelled to the service of the slarecians.

... Unsurprisingly, I am once again disappointed by the crudeness and hubris of the inhabitants of this world, these humans as they call themselves. Our raid was completely successful, of course. The humans attempted to repel us with their magics, which were quickly dispelled by Kell and I, while their warriors actually thought to drive weapons into our physical forms! Pathetic beasts. Tosh simply overwhelmed their minds, leaving them to battle each other or to babble and salivate as shattered husks. While their magic was somewhat unique, it was still rather disappointing. Why is it that even though these creatures are perceptive and creative enough to master this mystic force, they corrupt its true power by turning it to affect the physical world? These sorcerers called upon the aspects of the world in animate form, summoning elemental beings to fight for them. An interesting trick — did they create this sentience, or did it preexist? From whence did the element come, and where did it return? Are these elemental beings still out there plotting against the sorcerers who would so abuse them? How does this magic affect the elemental balance of this world? All excellent questions, probably never pondered by these creatures in their petty quests for worldly power. In any event, we took four of the spellcasters as well as two of the titans' servitors. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any who followed the gods, but that is just as well as we have more than enough test subjects from the last raid.

I witnessed an interesting sight during the attack. One of the fleeing humans carried a small bundled object, sheltering it against the warring magics. Curious, I charmed the human and called it to my side. Upon examination I realized the carried item was in actuality a living being, a tiny

ill-formed human to be exact, not yet full size and obviously not quite sentient (it was making loud shrieking noises and could not be communicated with). I had heard that humans, like most living beings, were 'born' and 'grew' into their final forms. I still find this a hard concept to understand; how can *any* human, beings so obviously inferior, create new and independent sentience? Arrogant and hubris-laden to the last, these beings do not even understand the significance of this gift, treating it as little more than another aspect of their worldly existence. Furthermore, these creatures all seem to expire after a certain period, the entropy of this world overcoming their fragile forms. Beings so caught up in their own worthless and limited lives are not deserving of such power. I of course allowed the human and its offspring to escape, for I could not destroy such a remarkable display of greatness.

3,423rd Period of Imprisonment, Age of the Gods' Retribution, Time of Dyterne

... The gods known as Enkili the Trickster and Tanil the Huntress took the captive godling from our forces, but not before the *uthriach* were able to rip the information they need from her exposed mind. I do not know what they plan to do with this knowledge, but I have heard rumors about a great artifact that will release us all from our corporeality. I have come to believe that the only way to free our sentiences is to rend apart this place and all who dwell here. Unfortunately, the creatures who inhabit this plane, obsessed as they are with the world and their place within it, will fight against such a course of action with every aspect of their being. Indeed, the escalating attacks by the followers of the gods have lead many, including myself, to believe that those beings have finally divined our true nature and intentions. It cannot be long now until the armies of the divine and the titanic invade our catacombs, only to find the slarecian race vanished, dispersed into the Void from whence we came.

3,424th Period of Imprisonment, Age of the Great Transformation, Time of Valir

... The plan of the *uthriach* has failed. Dyterne the Ebon has become Dyterne the Sundered, in some mishap of which I do not know the details. I have heard its children have followed suit, their bodies warped into horrid beasts and their now-vestigial intelligences seeking shelter in the shadows as entropic shades — it would seem that many of Dyterne's brood retained knowledge of the workings of shadows that was plucked from the mind of the godling. As the least among the slarecians, we followers of Valir the Arcane have chosen to remain behind and prepare the way for the reemergence of the *uthriach*, while the other castes slow the relentless advance of the gods and titans.



Our mastery of the arts of Magic has progressed beyond the practitioners of this world, and is unsurpassed by any save perhaps the titan of magic himself. Thus, we will call upon arcane power to reshape our shells, becoming as physically powerful as even the children of Qarrath, but no longer recognizably slarecian. The children of Tlarch have Foreseen trying times of strife and conflict, where we must hide from our enemies as we plot to regain what was ours. An ignoble but necessary sacrifice that the *uthriach* might escape.

The many races of this world all seem to fear dragons, ensuring that we will, for the most part, be left in peace to accomplish our ends. And those who do not flee from dragons tend to fight them using specific tactics, plans that shall fail before our natures. The future has been foreseen, the plans have been carried out and all is in place.

Now, we wait.

Conflict

For centuries the divine and titanic races of the Scarred Lands have battled the mysterious creatures dwelling below their feet, believing them to be simply another peril of this world—perhaps a castoff race of Hrinruuk or servitors of Mesos. Of course, our ancestors gradually came to understand the immense danger of the Ancients, and so swarmed to the aid of the gods who would act

against them. The following fragments, however, refer back to the earliest conflicts with the Ancients, long before their true intentions were made manifest.

Stone and Strength

Transcribed from a dwarven plinth set in present day New Venir, long accounted the edge of the once-mighty Dwarven Imperium —

Let it be known that the attacks by the subterranean dwellers have increased in recent months, assaulting our outposts under cover of darkness and killing or capturing untold numbers of victims. The beasts, tall and gaunt yet possessed of an almost supernatural strength, seem to target our rune wizards and Imperial ministers. We do not know from whence they come, our diviners cannot predict their raids nor reveal their presence. Though our warriors bravely assault the foes with wicked axe and magic blade, the beasts warp our fighters' minds and turn them against each other or, worse yet, those they seek to protect. All the while, our rune wizards and ministers can neither detect nor dispel any arcane influence. It is as if the gods themselves have abandoned us.

The increasing attacks of Kadum's children on our eastern front combined with our inability to locate these mysterious subterranean foes have made defending this territory impossible, stretching our defenses beyond all reason. Thus, the

Emperor has decreed that we will no longer protect this territory, instead retreating to the fastness of the mountains. This pillar shall forever stand as a testament to the strength of the Dwarves and the edge of our Empire, which shall one day be reclaimed.

The Wheel Crumbles

Official Ledeian records from the Zathiskite Province, dating back to the Argent Dynasty

Oltana, High Scribe to the Seat of Thulkas, Regent of the Zathiskite Province —

At the request of my liege, I am recounting the events that lead to His Splendor's decision to forego his alliance with the Argent Dynasty of Aurimar. It began in our western holdings, the lands north of great Elz and bordering the Ukrudan Desert. Tall, emaciated beings approached our settlements and demanded both tribute and citizens in honor of some sort of pact made in centuries past. The settlers of course refused, never before beholding such alien beings and not recollecting any such agreement. But I have examined the old records, and I know the beings spoke truth. It seems that they did indeed possess an empire, centuries before the founding of Lede, and they regularly exacted tribute from inhabitants of this region, which had been left vulnerable after the retreat of the Dwarven Imperium. The records recount that the Ancients possessed little sense of time, and thus I suppose it is not surprising that they expected their pacts to hold even though generations have passed since they were last utilized.

The settlers' refusal provoked an attack by the beings, which have come to be known as slarecians after the strange stone in which they clothe and arm themselves. Over time, the attacks have become more and more frequent throughout our northern and western holdings. Even Sumara, the Jewel of the North, has felt the touch of these mysterious marauders. And yet the mighty Empire of Lede has refused to provide any but the most meager of aid.

While the Argents demand increasingly more excessive taxes, entire settlements on our western flanks have been destroyed, the people abducted, their wealth stolen, the crops left to rot in the fields. Especially hard hit are those communities that have turned to the divine heresy, though of course the Seat of Thulkas cares little for their loss. The marauders seem to be all but unstoppable, and even our most powerful sorcerers of flame fall before them. Worse yet, their magic is so refined that witnesses claim the invaders need not even speak aloud or gesture to call upon Mesos's gift, and none can see the flows of magic empowering their enchantments. Their unbreakable crystalline weapons

rend our fiercest legionnaires, even as their magical might overwhelms our defenders' minds or calls upon unearthly forces to decimate our troops. Showing neither mercy nor emotion, the creatures simply demand, and if refused, destroy.

In the face of such a menace, and owing to the obvious decadence of the Argents, the Seat of Thulkas has declared his independence that he may devote the resources needed to this threat. His Splendor has sent ambassadors to the creatures, and after much cajoling, the Ancients have agreed to renew the pacts of sacrifice and tribute. In fact, the slarecians have bestowed a gift upon his majesty, a sentient human head constructed of the same unbreakable slarecian crystal comprising the Ancients' arms. As I was fortunate enough to attend the presentation of this gift, called a 'muse' by the Ancients, I witnessed a miraculous display of its power. His Splendor, informed that the muse had the ability to answer any question put to it, asked the image whether the lords of Aurimar would ever again possess the strength to rebuild their fragmenting empire. The eyes of the muse glowed a silvery light as it answered a resounding No, and we knew it to be true. Surely the sacrifice of a few slaves is worth the preservation of our western lands and such a magnanimous gift. The wisdom of the Seat of Thulkas is great indeed.

The Flesh of Mesos

It is said that the following manuscript comes from far off Termana, where the worship of the foul titans is still prevalent among the savages of that land. Although we have sent scholars to Termana to divine the origin of this text, none have been successful, nor even returned...

Once we were one with the nomads who now huddle at the edges of the tepujes, too timid to seek the open jungle yet too superstitious to join us and reclaim their heritage. In the time before our ancestors reached this land, before we discovered the blessings of the tepujes, this place was inhabited by far different beings.

Our people were driven south into the Gamulganjus, seeking refuge from the terrible war between the dragons of the north. However, at the time we knew little of the jungle, and it claimed many of our youngest and weakest. Seeing their people dying around them, our shamans sought aid from the spirits. One spirit in particular, a great being of eldritch might we have come to know as Mesos, guided the tribe to the towering tepujes we now inhabit. Those who would remain nomads, refusing to see the wisdom of the spirits and of change, cursed us as madmen and forsaken, and continued their incessant wandering. We knew their folly for what it was, and for a time, we prospered and dwelled peacefully within our new home.

Soon, however, news of a great war — a battle between the spirits — traveled to us even in the isolated tepujes. Moreover, our shamans began to receive visions of the great spirit Mesos, who once guided us before being sundered by his wayward children. Realizing that the mighty Mesos was calling upon our aid, many of our most devoted became his priests, and as others were born blessed with the titan's power, they also became priests. We came to understand that the Sire of Sorcery had called our people to these tepujes for a reason, and so we began to search their depths for hints of our lord's favor. We were not to be disappointed. Soon we found mysterious ruins overgrown with an extremely hard, translucent crystal. Our priests felt the energy inherent in this crystal, and with it we crafted weapons to ensure our victory over the enemies of our patron. Some shamans, however, seemed to become corrupt in that they refused to accept Mesos as their true master. When many of these same shamans lost the ability to speak coherently, it seemed obvious to the tribe that the Sire of Sorcery was punishing these heretics with madness.

With time, the inability to speak, which had cursed the old shamans, spread to the rest of the people — and we realized it for the blessing it really was. For this contagion, while initially an inconvenience, granted all of the people the ability to speak the Ancient Tongue, and indeed, unlocked the latent power of those loyal to the Ancients who once inhabited these tepujes. It is said that the mind flayers, once the servants of the Ancients and now the caretakers of that left behind, approached those who had been blessed in Mimodar, and unto them revealed the truth.

The crystals that had so strengthened our people and the language contagion that granted us such incredible talents were not blessings of Mesos, but were rather the legacy of an ancient race known as the slarecians. Indeed, these slarecians still lay sleeping, locked in stasis until those loyal could free them from the imprisonment of the jealous gods. Then, these incredible beings would return to their rightful place as rulers of the Scarred Lands, rewarding those loyal with power and strength. The mind flayers unlocked the secrets of the tepuje crystals, teaching the worthy to strengthen them with infusions of arcane energy.

For a time, those few of us who knew the truth persisted in the shadows of tepuje society, hidden among the priest caste as we quietly scoured the tepujes for signs of our lost masters. Finally, in the depths of Chukema we discovered a mural, written in the Ancient Tongue and preserved in tepuje crystal. From the story it told, we were finally able to understand the presence of the slarecians in

these lands. It seems that the slarecians were drawn to the powerful crystal buried in the tepujes, as they could feel its potential even across the great oceans. Though they did not create the crystals, they and their mind flayer servants were able to infuse them with their alien energies, giving to these inanimate objects a limited type of life and sentience.

However, the slarecians were soon driven out by the enraged Mesos, who had laid claim to the crystals in ancient times. Leaving their mind flayer servants behind to watch over the deposits and to awaken them should the need arise, the slarecians fled to Ghelspad. It seems, however, that Mesos could feel the presence of slarecian power within the crystal and therefore spent the following centuries studying the deposits and hiding the crystals from discovery. The sensitive crystals therefore became imprinted with both arcane and slarecian energy, making them perfect tools for those who would follow the Ancients.

For now we wait, gathering strength and numbers until we possess the power to seize control of the priestly caste. We have realized that though Mesos is powerful, he is not our ally but in fact the enemy of our masters. The leaders of Khale Mesos think they have devised a ritual to restore the god of magic by gathering his arcane energies in the Astral Plane. The mind flayers, however, say that such a plan would disrupt the slarecians' prison and lock them forever in Mesos's consciousness, a fate we cannot allow. Our path is clear.

Physiology of the Ancients

This transcript was taken from the body of a titanspawn envoy to Khet. Apparently, this druid of Gormoth the Writhing Lord had found a slarecian body in stasis shortly after the Titanswar and taken it upon himself to study the beast. Unfortunately, we were unable to find the druid himself, for he could have undoubtedly provided much insight on the nature of these creatures.

Dissection of an Ancient

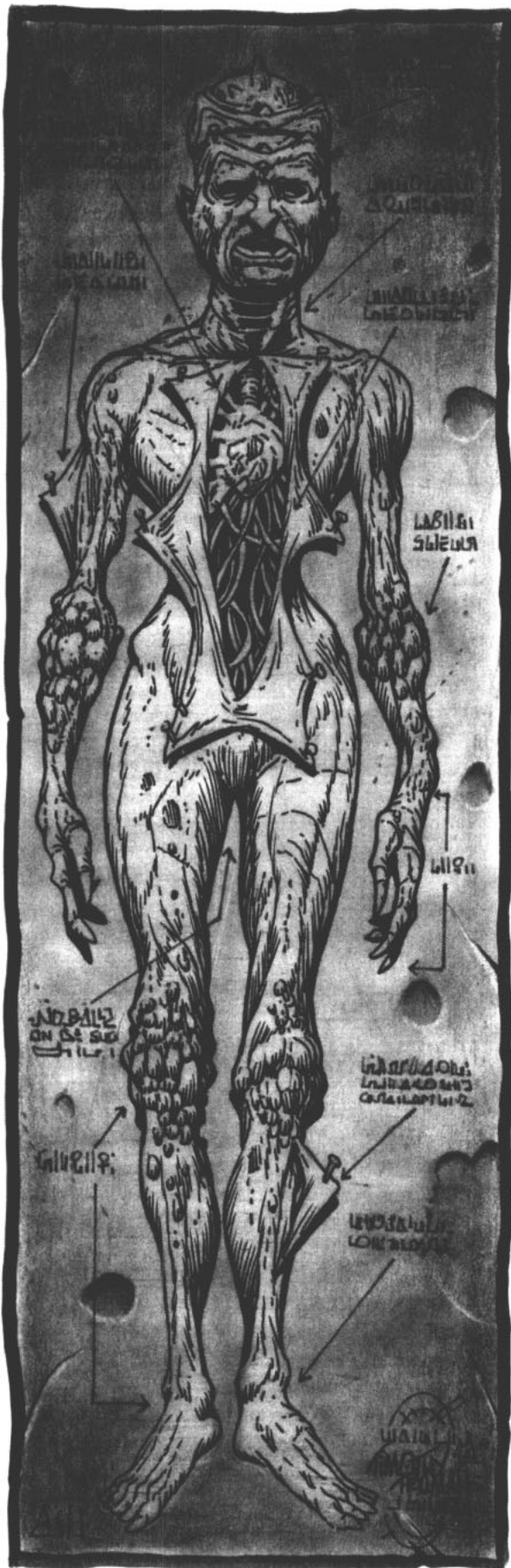
—by Arnuvus of Gormoth

Subject was found frozen in a block of ice, deep within the northern range of the Gascar Peaks. The catacomb was filled with several desiccated, animate versions of these creatures, although once dispatched these specimens were in too poor a shape for proper dissection. The creature appears to be in some sort of stasis, and was unresponsive even once freed from the ice. Although its body is functioning, it does not react to stimulus, and I surmise there is no animating essence. This creature is long and spindly, approximately six and one half feet in height. The subject is wearing loose-fitting robes secured to some crystal-like substance

that adheres to its body. I am unable to determine the subject's sex at this point.

Upon removing the robes, it became apparent that the crystal, a dark gray multifaceted and cracked material, is actually the creature's hide. Although I attempted to break through the crystalline mass with my dissection dagger, I could not even scratch the substance. Thus, I resolved to cut through only the softer portions of the hide. Even the non-crystalline skin has a rough, grainy texture reminiscent of reptile flesh. Upon slicing through the abdomen, I noticed that the subject has a truly unique physiology. Most creatures possess the same rudimentary sorts of organs — a heart, a liver, lungs, a stomach, etc., although some titans such as my lord Gormoth have experimented significantly in order to improve upon earlier designs. But this creature is like nothing I have ever seen. There is just... nothing. In the center of the chest cavity sits a large crystal mass, which slowly pulsates with a dull glow. Tube-like lines of flexible crystal emerge from this mass and disperse throughout the body. I severed one and retrieved a sample of the clear, viscous fluid that I surmise serves the same function as blood. A narrow tube emerges from the neck into the chest, leading into a hard brownish sack in the left portion of the torso. The interior of the sack consists of pointed crystalline shards, similar to those found on the hide. I'm guessing that this is the creature's digestive organ, but there is no excretory system. There appears to be no lungs, but fine pores in the hide and the crystalline tubes leading into the creature's nose lead me to believe that the crystalline mass serves this function. Perhaps the creature's blood absorbs air directly upon exposure?

Unable to make much progress in the chest due to the crystalline plates, I have turned to the creature's head. This species is known for their distinctive cranial ridges and elongated skull, allowing for an increased brain capacity. The ridges form hard points, leading me to believe that they are meant to protect the brain from shock or attack. The specimen has only simple ears, consisting of a small ridge and a membrane, so it must possess only a poor sense of hearing. Examining the mouth, the creature does not possess teeth but rather has hard crystalline ridges embedded in its jaw. There is a rudimentary tongue, but examining the elongated neck, there does not appear to be any sort of vocal control or voice box. Similarly, the subject has only simple eyes, pupil-less membranes of a yellow-orange color. After cutting



into the skull, I was shocked to realize that this was the most complex brain I have ever seen. Humanoid brains are highly ridged to allow for more surface area; but this creature's brain makes a humanoid brain look like that of a worm. The ridges fold in upon themselves in an intricate pattern, and there are shards of the strange crystal dispersed evenly throughout the organ.

Moving on to the creature's support structures, I examined the specimen's bones and musculature. The bone seems to be a fusion of the hard crystal and normal bone-like material, fashioned into long, rod-like structures. Lean and wiry muscles attach to the bone at crystalline juncture points, although there are no nerves or other organs that might trigger movement. The long, thin arms end in four spindly fingers, including an opposable thumb. The creature lacks any sort of recognizable reproductive system. Perhaps they reproduce as worms do? Or maybe they are like several types of insects where only the leader or 'queen' can reproduce.

In short, this subject is like no being I have ever seen. It is almost as if its creator examined a normal living creature and tried to copy it in as simple a manner as possible. This species should not be able to function without the constant use of low-level magic, akin to the flight of a beholder, in order to hear, feel, breathe, speak, even move. Yet I detected no magic while this specimen was alive. I wonder what titan would devote so much energy to make so simple and yet so alien a being? I doubt such a creature could enjoy its existence; it would constantly have to struggle to maintain its fragile body, exerting its will to accomplish what most beings achieve naturally.

The Rise of an Empire

I have studied the race known as the slarecians (I say "known as" as I have come to believe that the true slarecians are those few beings that the records refer to as uthriach) for almost five years, and I have made a number of startling discoveries. My research has focused on the era known as the Slarecian Empire, as I have sought for clues as to what we can expect next from the horrors who dwell beneath the mountain. My insights are at once fearsome and comforting, for while the slarecians of old swept over and destroyed those who opposed them with awesome brutality, they cared little for the day-to-day life of their empire and in general, left those above in peace. May Hedrada grant that should we fail, such a pattern continues.

— Research of Alliki Nebega, Loremaster of Lokil

Although it is unknown precisely when the slarecians began assembling their empire, records associate it with the beginnings of divine worship on Ghelspad. It is certain that the empire grew in strength during the period of the Dwarven Imperium and the Ledean Empire. Similarly, the slarecians ceased to interfere in the matters of the sunlit world after the abduction of the demigoddess Drendari, which is said to have occurred perhaps a century prior to the Titanswar. The Slarecian Empire at its height stretched across the entire continent of Ghelspad, although it had much less influence in titanspawn-dominated regions such as the Titanshome Mountains. Although the records do not convey the actual locations of the slarecian cities (and indeed, cannot do so since they lived entirely underground), slarecian activity was most concentrated at the fringes of divine settlements.

In any event, I use the term "empire" loosely, for the Slarecian Empire was unlike any other empire that has existed in the history of these Scarred Lands. The slarecians did not rule their subject nations directly, but instead showed up periodically to issue seemingly bizarre orders and demand tribute and slaves. The slarecians did not appoint any sort of overseers, nor did they seem to care what their subjects thought of them or did in their absence. However, this lack of control may have been illusory. The records are filled with reports of slarecian sympathizers being ferreted out and lynched after the departure of their masters. It is debatable whether this was the sort of spurious witch-hunt we see in rural backwaters where local sorcerers are burned as "titanspawn," or if it was indeed some sort of more insidious indication. With their famed talent for mental subversion, it is not hard to imagine the Ancients simply seizing control of weak minds and using them as spies. However, it is also known that certain groups of wizards, such as the Eyes of the Night and other mystics, served the slarecians willingly, hoping to learn their arcane secrets and garner power. Perhaps the Ancients had little need to rely on such crude methods as mental domination when their servants could watch unobtrusively from the shadows.

The slarecians did require oaths of obedience from their "subjects," perhaps mistakenly believing that such promises were binding on an oppressed and suffering populace. Or maybe they found it easier to mystically compel desired behavior after their victims had already acquiesced in some form? In any event, I have gathered one such complete oath from the records.

*I, [subject], do hereby swear by
the might of [divinity or titan of
choice] to serve the will of the
Slarecian Empire without question
or restraint,*

*To obey any slarecian who pre-
sents itself and to comply immediately
with the demands thereof,*

*To surrender my property, my
freedom, and even my life for the
benefit of the Empire,*

*To never act against the Empire,
nor betray its activities to any enemy,*

*To bear many offspring for the
glory of the Empire, and to continue to
worship [divinity or titan of choice],*

*I will do this of my own free will,
and may [divinity or titan of choice]
punish me eternally should I fail.*

Noticeably, there are quite a few references to higher beings in the oath, which is interesting since there are no records of slarecians worshipping either gods or titans. Strangely, except for a few isolated incidents, the slarecians seemed to only enslave or kidnap worshippers of the divine. Perhaps the oath was really used as a screening mechanism to isolate worthy candidates?

Slarecian rule was far from absolute. Throughout the history of the empire, rebellions arose on multiple occasions, whether simply as mutual defense pacts among groups of villages or as full-scale attacks on slarecian catacombs. However, the Ancients uniformly crushed such resistance, perhaps intending to provide an example of the folly of insurgence against slarecian rule. During these instances the Ancients left naught in their wake but abandoned buildings; there was never any trace of the rebels, women, children, or even livestock. There were never any survivors nor trace of struggle. Sizable empires, such as the Ledean Empire, soon learned it was not worth the consequences to resist the slarecian demands and allocated resources to

provide tribute. In general, the surface populations shied away from the borders of slarecian holdings and tried to carry on life as normal. Eventually rebels learned to be more subtle, striking out against slarecian sympathizers or abandoning entire villages temporarily when an "official visit" was expected. When the attacks became too draining on the divine settlements, the people prayed to the gods for relief. The result was the unfortunate capture of Drendari. However, that is an issue to be examined at another time.

The Fall of the Slarecians

The following document was transcribed from the mad scrawling of the self-proclaimed "Prophet of Those Without Form," an unfortunate madman who was once a respectable scholar of ancient civilizations. This record was made accessible relatively recently, and we are lucky to retain it after the abduction of the "prophet" by the horrors of the catacombs. I am truly troubled by what these writings portend, though I cannot say for certain whether this warning is some frenetic insight or simply the ramblings of a deeply deluded mind. It is said that not even the gods can foresee the workings of the Ancients, though for all our sake, I pray it is not so.

At first I was blind, but then They came and I at last understood. I had been looking for meaning in the words, the speech of lesser creatures... but then I realized the truth resonated in my mind. And the letters reshaped themselves so that even my small intellect could comprehend what the Ancients were trying to say. For a time, my mind was so confused by the influx of the alien thought processes that I could speak only their tongue. But as I developed mental fortitude, their thoughts unlocked the true potential of my mind and I found that I could once again understand the lesser forms of speech. And with my thoughts clear, I began to truly understand the workings of these god-kings, these *uthriach*, at least as much as is possible for a mind such as mine. It was then that I was finally able to perceive the truth of the past...

Curiosity. Infinite curiosity paired with infinite freedom. Beings of cold logic and pure thought, seeing existence but not understanding the drives of lesser beings. But as they watched, those that would become *uthriach* gained the awareness of the universe itself. Then pain, wrenching agony. Heat, cold, even a cool summer breeze is unbearable for a being who has never felt *anything* before... the Formless Ones were trapped in bodies of flesh by the wanton creation and raw energy of the titans. For the first time, the formless and limitless sentience of the universe had been restrained by a physical shell — restricted, given life, made impure. And with life came feeling and need, and with feeling came agony, and with need came mutability...

They came again in my dreams. Or are they glimpses of reality? Trapped in this world seemingly for all time, they call upon my aid. But what can I do to aid gods? Will I be overwhelmed by their very presence? They promise to reveal everything in time...

And the impossibly lean and tall figures felt their empire crumble around them, as they gathered in a circle intent upon the task at hand. How long until the followers of the gods destroyed all remnants of their children? The end of all that had been built was inevitable, without the power of the god-kings, the *uthriach*, to protect it. *What must be, must be*, they all thought at once, leaving sentimentality to lesser creatures. As their minds linked, joining together to form a sentience so powerful that it cannot truly be contained on this world, belonging instead to the universe, strands of energy emerged from their ridged foreheads to combine into an immense well of darkness. The image of the Void. The Void had only been called upon twice before upon this wretched world, once at the Beginning to foresee what was to come, and once to probe the mind of the shadow goddess. It was this second calling that had resulted in the 4 foot black and bejeweled rod hovering above the manifestation of the Void. The Rod of Souls, created from the essence of a goddess and intended to finally break the curse of materiality and return the *uthriach* to a state of formlessness...

And I see one of the figures step forward, its dark and weary eyes leaking black energy and the very stones cracking beneath its step. I know it to be Dyterne the Ebon, god-king of Entropy. The all-consuming might of the Void is channeled through the Rod of Souls and encompasses the *uthriach* in a light both iridescent and black. And the will of the universe struggles to unmake the mistake of the primal titans, to separate form from pure sentience, to finally free the Formless Ones from this cursed world. But suddenly, the Rod beings to spark and malfunction, drawing too deeply upon the Void and leaving the process uncontrolled. With a scream of mindless rage, Dyterne the Ebon becomes Dyterne the Sundered, its body growing bloated and beastly as its mind slips into the Void. And the screams of Dyterne's children rip through my mind. I can feel their agony, a thousand times worse than simple existence, the agony of unbeing, of sundering. Throughout the Empire, the Nihilists were rendered into creatures of mindless physicality and pure essence without being, the sentience ripped from them, leaving only endless hunger...

This is not success, the gods do not know the path, thought the *uthriach* as one as they contained the primal monstrosity Dyterne had become. And with but a thought, their linked infinite will pushed the mindless, but immensely powerful and destructive, abomination decades into the future. *It must be*



destroyed, the *uthriach* concurred. I do not know whether they referred to the wretched shell of Dyterne or the Scarred lands — perhaps both. *What should never have been made must be ripped asunder.* And thus I know it must be...

Then came the followers of the gods: brightly armored champions of the Avenger, cunning assassins of the Slayer, frothing berserkers of the Reaver, bound slaves of the Overlord, even shadow walkers of the shadow godling who sought vengeance in her name. But among the cruelest blows dealt to the Ancients was the influence of the Trickster, for Fate decided that the once-loyal mages of the Ancients, known as the Eyes in the Night, would turn upon their masters and betray them to their enemies. And although this betrayal did not escape the notice of the Ancients, there was little that they could do as the shadow mages revealed their secrets to their divine enemies. But vengeance will come...

The fectui of Valir have gone into hiding, for the Ancients realized they could not count upon the lesser minds that flock to them should the gods succeed. Transforming their shells through the arcane energy only they can seem to master, the fectui will await and prepare for the day of the Return. Thus, the fectui took the forms of the beasts known as dragons, creatures so mighty that even titans and gods interfere in their affairs only with trepidation...

The *uthriach*, in their wisdom, had seen the day of the gods' victory and so had prepared. For as primal and worldly beings, the actions of the titans were essentially random and could not be Foreseen. But the gods were aspects of the universe, and were thus able to be prophesied. Their coming had been known since the beginning of the Imprisonment. So as the mighty figures of the gods broke through the lines of the Ancients, which had been sundered by the primal forces of the titans, they entered the inner sanctum of the *uthriach* only to find it empty save for the cast-off Rod of Souls. The *uthriach* had crafted a perfect sanctuary; a plane connected to the Scarred Lands yet apart from it, sealed from the outside planes containing the homes of the gods, and completely impenetrable save through the power of the *uthriach* themselves. Knowing they could not directly confront the combined might of the gods and the titans, the *uthriach* hid themselves within this sanctuary, awaiting the day when their enemies are divided and weakened. But Chardun the Overlord bound the gateway to this

Slarecian Language Virus

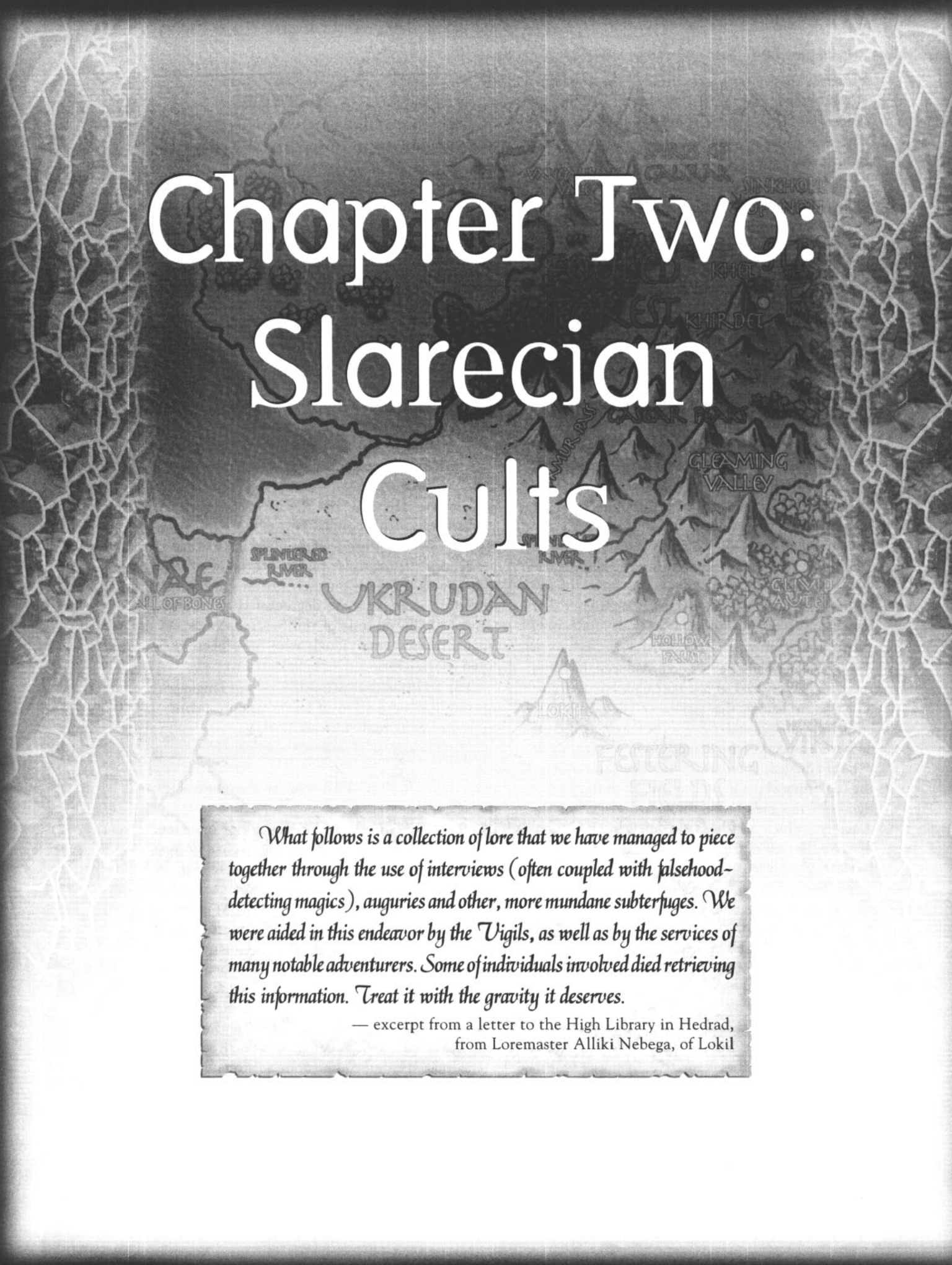
The slarecian language virus (see **Creature Collection Revised**) is more than a simple magical trap meant to protect the secrets of the Ancients. The virus is actually a psionic construct of pure mental energy tied to the physical representation of the slarecian writings. The slarecian language is unique in that the words implant themselves in the reader's mind, directly unfolding their meaning through a quasi-psionic process. Since its creation before the Titanswar, however, the lore-construct forming the language virus has subtly warped and mutated, as planned by the Ancients. Foreseeing their eventual defeat by the gods, the *uthriach* intended the construct to slowly alter when triggered by the lack of exposure to the unique mental energies of its creators.

As the virus changes, it activates the latent psionic talents of some individuals, preparing them to wield powers similar to the Ancients. The slarecians understood that the use of this power would weaken the borders between the planes, perhaps even causing one of their victims to someday breach the *uthriach's* planar confinement. In addition, as the seals on their prison weaken, it allows the *uthriach* some degree of contact and control of the mortals of the Scarred Lands — especially those individuals who have been exposed to the virus.

For additional explanation of the language virus and its activation of latent psionic talent, see **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**.

plane, believing he could forever bar the return of the *uthriach* to the Scarred Lands...

They are returning. They are calling upon me. *Fetch the Rod*, they say, *fetch the Rod and free Us from this prison.* And I see a vision of the Rod of Souls, for even the gods could not destroy such a mighty artifact. Rather than allow a tool of the Ancients to taint the world, I see Chardun the Overlord bind the Rod within the domain of his enemies, locking it within a brazen city of flame, sealed for all time. And yet I must go, I feel it drawing me, pulling upon my soul. Though I know it will release those who plague my dreams and whisper in my mind, the Formless Ones, I must seek it out. The Return has come, and nothing can be done to stop it...



Chapter Two: Slarecian Cults

What follows is a collection of lore that we have managed to piece together through the use of interviews (often coupled with falsehood-detecting magics), auguries and other, more mundane subterfuges. We were aided in this endeavor by the Vigils, as well as by the services of many notable adventurers. Some of individuals involved died retrieving this information. Treat it with the gravity it deserves.

— excerpt from a letter to the High Library in Hedrad,
from Loremaster Alliki Nebega, of Lokil

Loyal Unto Death

Despite the defeat and disappearance of the slarecians in ages past, their memory still remains strong. Part of this longevity lies with the remnants of those cults that once served and revered the Ancients — strange, mad sects often given a taste of the power wielded by their masters. Today, though there are many cells and conspiracies that yet exist to further the aims of the slarecians, some of these don't even know the true nature of what it is they serve.

Cult of the Shade

The Cult of the Shade is among the oldest of the slarecian cults; it is also perhaps the single largest and most powerful of all such associations. Well-organized and carefully led, this particular cult has weathered the centuries since the slarecians' departure with phenomenal skill and determination. If the slarecians have any sense of justice and any caring for their servants at all, then the members of the Cult of the Shade deserve extensive rewards for their generations of loyalty and exceptional service. Hopefully, this recompense will never come to pass.

Recent events have changed the basic makeup of the Cult of the Shade in several ways, mostly in regards to the process by which individuals can become members and how they are inducted into the organization. Originally, the Cult was made up solely of people whose psionic talents were fostered by the slarecians themselves. Lately, with the sharp rise in both psionic powers and with the growing unity of purpose among the Cult's leaders, many new members without slarecian-influenced origins are being welcomed into the fold — albeit at a slightly lesser level of prestige and authority.

With these changes in recruiting policies, the Cult of the Shade is growing faster than it ever has, especially in Ghelspad. This expansion is carefully controlled and centrally organized, however. Training of new members is systematic and rigorous, and both information and resources are carefully distributed throughout all chapters wherever possible. Though Cult factions in eastern Ghelspad have an occasional tendency to become distracted by their vendetta against the Penumbral Pentagon, most chapters of the Cult of the Shade are some of the most efficient and practical servants the slarecians currently have in working toward their eventual goals.

Naturally, all that the majority of the cultists of the shade know and understand about their objectives is that they seek “the rod” about which many of them have so vividly dreamt in recent years. Most believe that this rod will allow them to punish the Scarred Lands for the “injustices” vis-

ited upon their masters, after which the slarecians will reward them by transporting them to an idyllic alternate plane in which the Cult of the Shade will rule, subservient only to their benevolent slarecian teachers. The key emphasis of the Cult of the Shade's goals, therefore, is systematic punishment of all the slarecians' many enemies.

History: A unique slarecian cult in many respects, the Cult of the Shade came into being at approximately the same time as the Penumbral Pentagon (then known as the Eyes in the Night), and the two were at that time essentially one and the same organization. The only difference between the groups was that one — those who eventually became the Cult of the Shade — wielded the strange mental powers of the slarecians, and the other group did not. Those who were psions as well as shadow mages stood apart, for their unique talents had an enormous effect on their powers and abilities.

Over time, this division became more and more obvious and important as the slarecians began to favor their psionic shadow students over their “merely magical” servants. Historians aware of the existence of the Cult of the Shade have speculated that the very inequality between the two groups, though rarely mentioned by the Penumbral Pentagon, was a major reason the Eyes in the Night eventually betrayed their slarecian masters. Certainly, ever since that day, there has been extreme enmity between the two organizations, and only the desperate need for all slarecian loyalists to hide themselves from the followers of gods and titans alike has averted outright warfare between the two.

In any case, the Cult of the Shade was originally a name given by the Eyes in the Night to all psionic students of slarecian shadow-manipulation. It was intended to be a derogatory term, implying that the Eyes in the Night, in spite of their lack of slarecian powers, were nevertheless the greater students of shadow and the greater servants to the slarecians, simply by virtue of their greater independence of thought and action. The Cult of the Shade, they claimed, merely worshiped shadow and the slarecians, and its members were too busy bowing and scraping to accomplish anything of value.

When the Eyes in the Night, led by the first five penumbral lords to call themselves the Pentagon, openly betrayed their slarecian teachers, the psionic shadow students (who may have remained loyal at least in part *because* of the bitter disdain of their non-psionic counterparts) began to openly and proudly embrace the derogatory name they had been given — asserting that the attributes the Eyes in the Night derided (chiefly, the Cult's fanatic

devotion) were the very qualities that proved the Cult to be far superior to the vile betrayers. The name has been a point of pride for the organization ever since.

When the slarecians disappeared, Cult loyalties remained unshakable, and the cultists never for a moment lost faith that they would one day be reunited with their former mentors. Determined to remain worthy (and perhaps to prove the penumbral lords wrong), the Cult of the Shade settled in to acquire as much secret power and influence as they possibly could. They continue to punish their masters' enemies whenever possible, and to await the slarecians' instructions with unfailing patience.

Likewise, since the talents of the mind were always considered a great honor and strength by the Cult of the Shade, the leaders of the group enforced strict breeding programs among the members to keep the powers unlocked by their masters as pure as possible. The recent rise in psionically talented individuals has not disproved this theory in their minds — they still believe that slarecian power creates purer and nobler cultists — they instead take the “new blood” as a sign that the time of the Ancients' return is at hand and that their masters' power has grown almost to godlike proportions. They believe the slarecians have simply transcended the need to “call their chosen” through direct influence.

Location: Easily the most common and widespread of cults, chapters of the Cult of the Shade can be found all over the Scarred Lands. Individual groups tend to prefer wilderness strongholds with key agents placed in nearby cities for the acquisition of wealth, influence and information. The oldest and best-established chapter is located in the Hills of Change in Termana, with a network of spies and agents extending throughout the Termanan human lands wherever the cultists can avoid the hostile attention of the Jack of Tears and his Carnival.

Other important chapters exist just outside the northeastern borders of Darakeene in the Perforated Plains, and in the far northern edge of Termana's Iron Steppes, sand-

wich between the elven lands and the Charduni Empire. In addition, dozens of new chapters are being formed, especially in Ghelspad, and of these, the chapters achieving the fastest growth in power and importance are located in southeastern Calastia and in the Celestial Shelf, near the northern tip of Lake Repose. Of all the eastern Ghelspad chapters, this latter one remains the most aloof from short term vengeance schemes against the Penumbral Pentagon, though members are still known to persecute penumbral lords whenever convenient.

Allies and Enemies: The Cult of the Shade makes a careful practice of secretly infiltrating and influencing other slarecian-loyal organizations wherever it can, so while many other slarecian cults may in theory feel enmity toward the elitist Cult of the Shade, there is rarely any actual conflict directed at the Cult; many outside sects are, in fact, unwitting allies. These diverse groups who unintentionally serve the aims of the Cult of the Shade are quite numerous and vary from region to region. The Cult's most ambitious current project is House Asuras, though it is unlikely that the slarecian servitors wield much authority in the infamous merchant empire as of yet. The Cult of the Shade has no openly known allies, though they currently seem to have a wary truce with the Mistresses of the Mind.

As the largest of the slarecian cults, the Cult of the Shade is also the best known to the slarecians' enemies. Aside from the Penumbral Pentagon, chief among the Cult's extensive list of sworn foes include the Vigils of Vesh, the Order of Obsidian and the Shadow Walkers of Drendari. Other, less powerful and widespread enemies are too numerous to list. It is lucky for cultists of the shade that they are all very good at remaining hidden.

Notable Personages: The same woman, Retaika Zeln (*female wood elf, Psi10/Csh10, LE*), has been leading the Cult of the Shade ever since it first found itself without its original slarecian masters. Without her iron will and phenomenal force of personality, the Cult



of the Shade might never have survived at all as an organization. Though basically elven in appearance, Zeln has obviously been changed by her centuries of exposure to the strange energies of the slarecians; her flesh has taken on a slightly translucent, luminescent hue, like opal and her features have become sharper and more angular. Zeln travels periodically to different chapters of her organization and personally oversees morale and efficiency. She typically spends a year or more in any given location and was last seen in Calastia.

In personality, Zeln has been compared to both a lich and a dragon, yet it is rare to encounter members of the Cult of the Shade who actually dislike the woman. Awestruck worship is a more accurate description of her followers' typical emotions toward her, and anyone who encounters her icy and ethereal beauty can easily see why. One captured cultist once confessed to the vigilants that, "it is difficult not to hate her, but it is impossible not to love her."

Zeln possesses levels in the cultist of the shade (Csh) prestige class, found in **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**.

Signs of Membership: More than ever before, there is little in their appearance or habits that distinguish members of the Cult of the Shade from anyone else. Indeed, cultists are instructed to deliberately make themselves as unnoticeable as possible wherever they go, and those with distinctive physical features of any kind learn early on to disguise them expertly. Aside from their extreme standoffishness, the only thing to differentiate most cultists of the shade from simple, ordinary people (not to mention other slarecian cultists) is their particular mixture of psionics and shadow magic — powers that they go to great lengths to conceal.

Characters of the Cult of the Shade: As its name implies, the Cult of the Shade has always been an organization that operates from the shadows. It embodies the terms secretive and stealthy, and is based on patient manipulation of events rather than overt action. As such, many members are rogues as well as psions or psychic warriors, especially among the "new blood" cultists. Common primary psionic disciplines in the organization include Psychometabolism, Psychoportation, and Psychokinesis (though if using the Secondary Disciplines variant from **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**, the vast majority of Cult members have Telepathy as at least a secondary discipline). Favored psicrystal personalities include Observant, Resolve and Sneak.

The Cult of the Shade prefers to avoid direct confrontation when possible, so members only rarely wear armor or carry visible weapons. Their skills and feats lean toward enabling them to more effec-

tively infiltrate and spy on other organizations, so even those without ranks in the rogue class tend to have a great many rogue-like abilities. Only evil characters are ever granted entrance to the Cult of the Shade, and all individuals with any standing in the Cult are, of course, members of the cultist of the shade prestige class (see **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore** for more details on this prestige class).

Thralls of the Idols

Though most of the thralls of the *slarecian blood foci* (see Appendix) have no particular feelings of loyalty toward the slarecians, and indeed some only know of the slarecians as vague monsters of ancient history, they are nevertheless all working tirelessly in the service of the original makers of the cruel relics known as *blood foci*.

Nearly all of these cultists are entirely unaware that their fanatical devotion to the *blood focus* statues is a state forced upon them by the idols' own powers. They rationalize so thoroughly, that the wild alterations of their lifestyles and the rapid shifts in behavior and alignment toward cruelty and evil are their own choice, that practically without exception they convince themselves they have chosen their new path freely.

An entire organized religion has recently sprung up around the *blood foci*; cultists are convinced that the *slarecian blood foci* are actually idols dedicated to a powerful god who the titans destroyed long before the Divine War. With enough blood sacrifice, they believe, they can raise this god from the dead, and he/ she/ it will restore the Scarred Lands to a state of utopia and destroy all vestiges of the titans and their lingering taint. Surely this is an end that justifies leading a constant supply of innocent people to their deaths... or so they rationalize.

Like many other psionic individuals, some of the thralls of the *idols* (or the Faithful, as they naively call themselves) have dreamt of a mysterious rod that they must acquire at all costs. The religion's "prophets" have declared this to be a tool for amplifying the *blood foci's* powers, so that the "Faithful" can bring hundreds of victims to their beloved idols and finally achieve their blessed goal.

History: The background of the *blood foci* is detailed in the item description in the Appendix, and the history of their thralls is otherwise not long at all. The exceptionally misguided Faithful religion was founded less than six years ago, but the thralls have latched onto its principles in sheer psychological desperation. Deep down, most thralls must know that they are not acting of their own accord, but it is, in general, only the particularly mad or weak of will who are susceptible to the statues' powers. It is thus perhaps understandable that, instead of fighting a mental control none of

them realize is slarecian in origin, they make-up stories about raising dead gods to save the world.

Location: Thralls of the *slarecian blood foci* are currently found only in northern Albadia and rural Darakeene, though a third group of thralls is still seeking a permanent place of residence. This latter band was last encountered in the Heteronomy of Virduk. It is hoped that no more dormant *blood focus* statues lie hidden in the various slarecian ruins, but no one knows for certain how many of the hideous things exist in the Scarred Lands.

Allies and Enemies: This group has no allies whatsoever. Other slarecian cults tend to feel compelled to leave the thralls alone when they come across them, but even they do not typically try to control these groups for their own ends. Most everyone, including those loyal to the slarecians, see the thralls as a dangerous liability to be avoided if at all possible.

The groups' chief enemies are the Mind Hunters. No one else seems to know what to look for yet, in spite of the outbreaks of bizarre group suicides wherever the thralls decide to situate themselves. Leaders in Darakeene have formally requested the aid of the Veshian Vigilants in unraveling the mystery, however, and it cannot be long before the Order of Obsidian catches on to the significance of this bizarre religion as well, so the thralls are likely to soon have a much longer list of rather powerful enemies.

Notable Personages: The thralls have no real leadership directing their actions and decisions, unless one counts the slarecians themselves, through the influences of the *blood foci*; but the nine "prophets" who direct the religious aspects of the "Faithful" are led by a charismatic telepath named Jefepit (*male human, Rog4/Psi4, CE* — note: before the influence of the *blood focus*, Jefepit's alignment was chaotic neutral). Jefepit has a Coward psicrystal, but one would never know it to see him speak. Though he is slightly mad, and his intensity can be quite disconcerting up close, once he is given an audience and a pulpit, he becomes extremely — almost eerily — convincing. He is very careful, however, to never endanger himself, even in the service of his beloved "god."

Signs of Membership: The thralls exist in abject poverty and wear only tatters. Those afflicted with wounds or illness never seek out healers who

are not fellow members of their strange religion. As such, the only healing to which thralls have access comes from their bards, or from psions capable of *empathic transfer*. In other words, the Faithful tend to be a sickly bunch, especially since most of them can only rarely be bothered to seek out food and proper shelter.

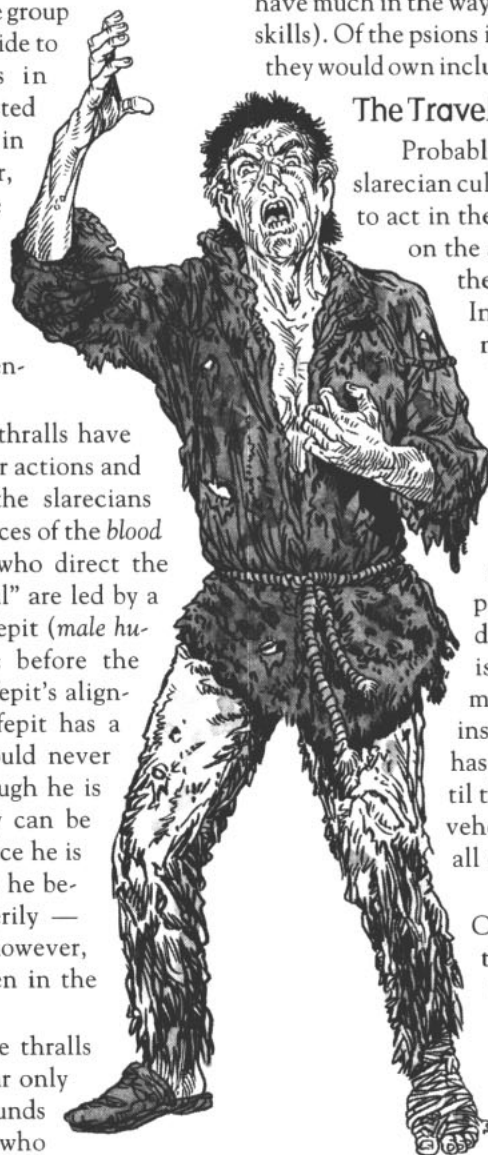
Characters of the Thralls of the Idols: The Faithful are usually low in both Wisdom and in Will save bonuses. Many were only beginning adventurers when they discovered their psionic powers or had them awakened by an infection of the slarecian language virus. Psychic warriors are more common than psions in the cult, and seers in particular are practically unheard of (certainly none of the "prophets" are actually seers, though most are psions, and if using the Secondary Disciplines variant from **Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore**, most of them would have Clairsentience as a secondary discipline). In general, the Faithful are simply a foolish and weak-willed group of people, and few have much in the way of education (i.e. Knowledge skills). Of the psions in the cult, popular psicrystals they would own include Bully, Coward, and Sneak.

The Travelers

Probably the most insidious of all slarecian cults (and certainly the only one to act in the open), the Travelers appear on the surface to be little more than the followers of a new demigod.

Indeed, nearly all of the lesser members believe themselves to be exactly that — faithful worshippers of a powerful new demigod of mental enlightenment (the reward of which is, naturally enough, psionics). This fictitious new deity, named Chairthu, is supposed to be a recently born demigod whose gift to the world is the power of the exalted mind. Adherents of the religion insist that no creature or being has ever held psionic powers until the last twenty years, and they vehemently and irrationally deny all evidence to the contrary.

Anyone may worship Chairthu (who is said to be neutral in alignment), but only the psionically active can become priests. Indeed, all psionically talented individuals are considered to be holy representatives of



Chairthu, and those who do not worship him are simply not yet awakened to their true calling. There are no actual clerics of Chairthu, obviously, but rather than serving as evidence that he does not exist, this is explained away by pointing out that a god who teaches mortals to awaken the power of their minds has no need of divine magic in his followers.

The basic principals of the Chairthu faith claim that, like worshippers of Denev, the souls of Chairthu's faithful are reincarnated after their deaths into new bodies. Unlike followers of the Earth Mother, however, the constant reincarnation of Chairthu's people has a very specific goal — enlightenment. Only psionically active individuals have any chance of achieving this enlightenment, but adherence to an extensive list of rules of conduct (including an admonishment to always obey the awakened “clergy” of Chairthu in all things) increases one's chances of being born psionic in the next lifetime.

Enlightenment, oddly enough, seems to be more of a place in the Travelers' minds than a state of being, however. All faithful psions and psychic warriors are seeking a certain place outside the physical realm, and they believe when they are worthy they will find the means to go there. Extraplanar travel is viewed as almost a sacrament, and Psychoportation powers are considered important training for the final journey.

Priests who are extremely high up in the organization are chosen for regional leadership when they begin to receive instructions “directly from Chairthu.” Most priests who reach this state become increasingly distant and silent (“a sign that they are becoming ready to leave this world”) and then eventually disappear completely, without word or warning. Their congregations celebrate their leaders' achievement of enlightenment, and soon enough, Chairthu chooses a new regional leader.

The vast majority of Chairthu's followers and clergy are neutral, lawful neutral or neutral good in alignment, and they often engage in organized acts of community improvement, compassion, and wholesome

ordinary social events, like picnics and group sports. They are extremely friendly and welcoming to outsiders, and they are even very accepting of other belief systems. In short, they are assets to almost any town or neighborhood, and they are quickly growing in popularity.

However, evidence uncovered by the suspicious (including anyone with enough education in slarecian lore to recognize that Chairthu is basically *uthriach* spelled backward) indicates that at higher levels, this particular religion grows increasingly mysterious and even ominous. Why do high-level members disappear? Where are they really going? Why do they not even say goodbye to their loved ones before they depart? Recently, some clerics have even been informed by their own deities in dreams and visions that, as far as the gods' know, Chairthu does not exist, and there is no demigod of his nature.

Those who have tried to bring forward the notion that the Travelers are led by secret and possibly dangerous beings are usually laughed at, however. How could such wholesome, community minded people be involved with something that endangers all the Scarred Lands? Several scholars of ancient history have been made to look foolish or even sinister when they have attempted to warn others of the dangers of the Traveler religion. Most people have never heard the word *uthriach* in their lives, and some simple folk don't



even believe the slarecians ever really existed at all, so long ago was their reign.

Those in the know are growing very nervous about the Travelers and Chairthu. In some ways, it is even more frightening that the “demigod of the mind” has such a ridiculously obvious name. It seems that the founders and secret controllers of this new religion are nefarious enough to have come up with a scheme that, in all probability, is allowing them to operate right under the noses of those who would stop them — protecting themselves with shields of innocent people and the threat of public outcry and retaliation.

Surely, someone with such cunning would know that all slarecian scholars would instantly see through such an apparent name as Chairthu. Does this “mistake” indicate an intelligence so alien as to be capable of that level of miscalculation even while designing a plot as subtle as the Traveler religion? Or is it instead, perhaps, the work of a being so sure of its own eventual victory that it wishes to taunt helpless scholars with the knowledge of its sinister loyalties, simply so it can watch their frustration as they fail to defeat it? Either way, the friendly, community-minded Travelers represent a mystery and perhaps a very serious threat.

History: The Travelers, in reality, are run by a coalition of truly ancient beings, all kept alive by their mastery of psionic power. These individuals refer to themselves as the Deserted, and they have been alive these many centuries, plotting and scheming for the return of their masters. Though they have held substantial power at various times and in various places, most of their schemes have come to nothing, as — even less so than most slarecian cults — the reclusive Deserted have never truly understood mortal beings or their temporary ways. Unable to comprehend that mortal culture is constantly evolving and changing, the Deserted were also unable to design their plans and schemes to evolve along with it. In some centuries even, it was all the Deserted could do to stay hidden and protected from the followers of the gods.

Recently, while observing the bizarre self-delusions of the Thralls of the Idols, the Deserted, in their ponderous cunning, hit upon a new scheme. Under normal circumstances, this one would have been no more survivable in the long run than any of the others have been, in spite of its frighteningly insidious nature. However, things are moving in the Deserted’s favor this time, and the Traveler plot might last them just long enough to actually aide in the return of the slarecians. The name of their made-up god still causes problems, of course. Unfortunately, the Chairthu name was chosen with the naïve assumption that no one would notice, and the Deserted are all quite concerned that some

scholars have figured it out; they had honestly believed that writing backward was a very creative and clever camouflage. When the Traveler religion was first designed, the Deserted intended for it to have two levels: the innocent and the initiated. The initiated would be psions who worked for them directly and knew the actual truth and purpose of the entire Traveler faith. This latter part of the plot, however, has radically not gone according to plan. The Travelers really believe in their new god, and most of them have proven to be remarkably incorruptible — the obvious flaw inherent in recruiting the innocent to help in working evil. Plans were very quickly forced to change in order to keep even the inner circle in the dark about their purpose, while still guiding the Travelers toward the goals to which the Deserted can sense their slarecian masters calling them.

Keeping the Travelers mislead has proved difficult, however. They remain insatiably curious in their innocence, and quite a number of them eventually find out too much. Once an individual becomes a liability to the Deserted’s plans, that person has to disappear. It was actually the congregation itself that originally came up with the idea of the “ascendance” of disappearing members, but the Deserted seized upon the explanation and have encouraged it ever since.

Location: The Deserted keep their own location well hidden and they move regularly to further avoid detection. The Travelers, on the other hand, have small but growing temples in Vesh, Darakeene, Zathiske, and also, though more secretively, in the kingdom of Karsian in western Termana.

Allies and Enemies: The Deserted, through the front provided by the Travelers, have unwitting allies within most of the organizations that follow the gods. Even King Virduk encourages the religion in his hegemony, as long as the psionic priests agree to help him in his research (a practice that the Deserted allow, while at the same time subtly sabotaging Virduk’s findings). Outside the Calastian Hegemony, those who suspect foul play can hardly act openly against such kindly, faithful people.

Enemies of the Deserted, and in some cases even of the Travelers, include the Order of Obsidian and in western Termana, the Jack of Tears. Many more are working to find proof of the sinister force behind Chairthu, however, so the list may imminently grow longer and the Travelers themselves may soon find themselves disillusioned. In the meantime, the Order of Obsidian especially is having to keep an extremely low profile on all Traveler-related missions, lest its operatives accidentally reveal themselves as a dangerous threat to innocent people.

Notable Personages: None. The Deserted have been telepathically connected for so many centuries that they are now practically a single multi-consciousness. In reality, they are simply ancient psions (of various racial stock) who are out of touch with the modern world; but they have largely forgotten how to be individuals and they make all decisions together, as a consensus.

Signs of Membership: Nothing is really known about the habits or symbolism used by the Deserted. Among the Travelers, on the other hand, there are already several well-known traditions. Travelers like torcs and bracelets that slip on without latching shut. The symbol of the circle that fails to fully connect represents to them the circle of life and the door out to enlightenment. Travelers also tend to pause in doorways to kiss the doorframe (or to more subtly place a kiss on the doorframe with their palms). This is the way they thank all doors for reminding them of their goal of enlightenment.

Psonian Travelers are constantly using their powers to seek out other psionic individuals and notify them of their sacred calling and chance for enlightenment. Whenever a new “priest” is converted, humble Traveler families feed the inductee in their homes every night for a full week, to honor the new priest for recognizing his or her own divine inner glory. Whenever a potential “priest” “rejects his calling,” on the other hand (as they often do — most psionic characters are very angry and frightened to have attention called to themselves), the local Travelers send that individual a gift (usually a basket of bread, fruit or flowers, symbolic of the simple pleasures of this world) to let him know that they respect his holy path and trust him to find his own way to enlightenment and Chairthu.

Characters of the Travelers: Travelers can be from any class or background. For the most part they form an ordinary religion, and as such tend to represent a simple cross section of ordinary people. In the main body of the organization, the most represented classes are probably commoner and expert, and in the “clergy” the most common is psion (or nomad, to be more precise). Preferred psicrystals among the “priests” include Friendly and Resolve. Resolve psicrystals are perhaps the most popular, since psions who have them seem to “achieve enlightenment” more quickly.

Feats, skills and possessions rarely have anything to do with combat readiness among the Travelers. They are peaceful folk who haven’t a clue that anyone who truly achieved the enlightenment they seek (instead of simply being killed by the Deserted for asking too many questions) would, in fact, actually be helping the slarecians in their plot to return to the Scarred Lands. The Travelers

do not realize they have anything to hide, nor any need for violence.

The Deserted, on the other hand, are mostly telepaths and seers. They favor Sage and Singleminded psicrystals, and they tend to be ridiculously high in levels, being thousands of years old. Most carry strange and potent magical weapons and defenses, though they have never in several centuries allowed an enemy to come close enough to combat them directly.

Betrayer Champions

Not all wielders of strange powers were in the thrall of the slarecians. Some broke away from enslavement to the *uthriach* and their spawn, taking the secrets of the slarecian mental talents with them. Many of these groups simply wish to be left alone, but are still remembered for their treachery. Others, however, haven’t forgotten the horrors of the slarecians, and to this day use their secrets to fight against the influence of the Ancients.

Mind Hunters

Since Albadia is so close to the Titanshome mountains, which are the legendary home of some of the most well-known (and apparently most accurate) “hidden slarecian ruins” tales in the Scarred Lands, Albadia has been particularly plagued with outbreaks of the slarecian language virus, as well as with slarecian-loyal cult activity. The oldest and largest of the *blood focus* cults is located here, along with many factions of other cults as well. In general, Albadia is becoming practically infested with evil psions and psychic warriors, and psionics has developed a terrible reputation among the growing percentage of the populace who know what it is.

Mind hunters (see Appendix for prestige class details) start out as people who, whether through the slarecian language virus or by some other means, have awakened to psionic power in spite of the fact that they passionately hate psionics. When such individuals are discovered by the highly secretive organization of Mind Hunters, they are carefully trained to use their new abilities only to fight other psions. Vigilantes who often have truly impassioned and personal reasons for stalking their quarry, the mind hunters are never evil in alignment and are usually chaotic.

History: This organization is still very young and has only a few dozen members, however active they may be. Founded certainly within the last ten years and possibly only in the last five, they have yet to make any noticeable historic mark. Beyond two executions of hunters who “turned bad” (began killing a little too wantonly and even torturing captured targets), the mind hunters have yet to even face an internal political disagreement.

Location: Mind hunters mostly travel in the various wilderness areas of Albadia, but a small band can always be found in the vicinity of any large group of *blood focus* thralls — whom the hunters are particularly intent on destroying.

Allies and Enemies: Very few groups actually know about the Mind Hunters as of yet, and they have not sought any allies, being fearful that their very psionic natures will always lead others to hate them even as they hate psions themselves. Individual hunters may occasionally ally themselves with characters outside the organization, though they will usually take pains to hide their powers from anyone but other psion hunters.

Any psionic groups that know of the Mind Hunters (which are precious few, mostly small local cults) also know to consider them enemies, and some even see them as a serious threat. The thralls of the Idols in particular seem quite fearful of them, perhaps mostly because they know the mind hunters are actively seeking to destroy all of the *blood focus* statues. Most larger, more powerful cults have never heard of mind hunters or refuse as yet to take them seriously.

Notable Personages: The Mind Hunters were founded and are still organized by a set of twins, brother and sister. Kentiri (*female human, Rng3/Rog3/Mih3, CN*) and Valkantir (*male human, Bbn3/Rng3/Mih3, CG*) had been through enough bad experiences with psionics, culminating with the death of their own mother under the spell of a *Blood Focus*, that both rangers counted slarecian cultists as their favored enemy. While tracking one particular group deep into the Titanshome Mountains, they were exposed to the slarecian language virus through some strange carvings they happened upon.

Soon both siblings were having the same strange dreams that other emerging psions experience. This phenomenon they recognized from having seen a cousin of theirs go through a similar process only a few weeks before he joined the *blood focus* thralls and helped to kill the twins' mother, his own beloved aunt. Horrified at the thought that

they themselves might become psionic, they threw themselves recklessly into their cause of destroying all slarecian-tainted things and prayed constantly to Tanil for help and guidance in ridding themselves of the maddening dreams..

Whether Tanil answered their prayers or whether their stubborn anti-psionic obsession simply manifested itself through a new and unexpected version of the powers to which they were awakening, the twins may never know. What they are sure of is that they learned a set of skills that any psionically gifted person can learn, and they have now made it their mission in life to prevent as much as they can of what they call "psionic evil" and to recruit and train as many others to their cause as possible.

Valkantir is a dour and hardened sort — large, silent and generally intimidating. Kentiri is a bit more personable, and at first acquaintance one might even assume that Kentiri, as the one giving the orders, presenting the plans and making all practical arrangements (such as lodging while the two are staying in towns, for example), is the true leader and caretaker of the Hunters. When Valkantir does speak his opinion, however, many are surprised to find that it is often to curb Kentiri's occasional vicious streak and suggest a more merciful course of action; Kentiri always accepts Valkantir's rare suggestions without question, in spite of his usual habits of silently obeying her instructions. Those who know them well understand that they discuss their plans and decisions in private, and that the leadership is shared very equally between them.

Signs of Membership:

For the most part, the Mind Hunters look like ordinary Albadian rangers and barbarians. When in Albadia they usually wear whites and grays, to help camouflage themselves while tracking slarecian cultists through the snowy northlands, but this hardly distinguishes them from ordinary hunters and trappers. When away from Albadia, however they are dressed, they usually come across as northern Albadians, as few of them have any skill at disguise or dissimulation. They also typically don't talk much, because most are very bad at



lying, and they're not about to reveal either their purpose or their powers.

Characters of the Mind Hunters: Most were rangers, rogues or barbarians before becoming psion hunters, though a few members have other classes as well — including a surprising number of psions and psychic warriors. Psions in the group tend to favor Metacreativity and Psychometabolism as disciplines, and Hero and Resolve are popular psicrystals. Weapons, armor, and areas of expertise vary widely among the group's members, based on personal preference and background.

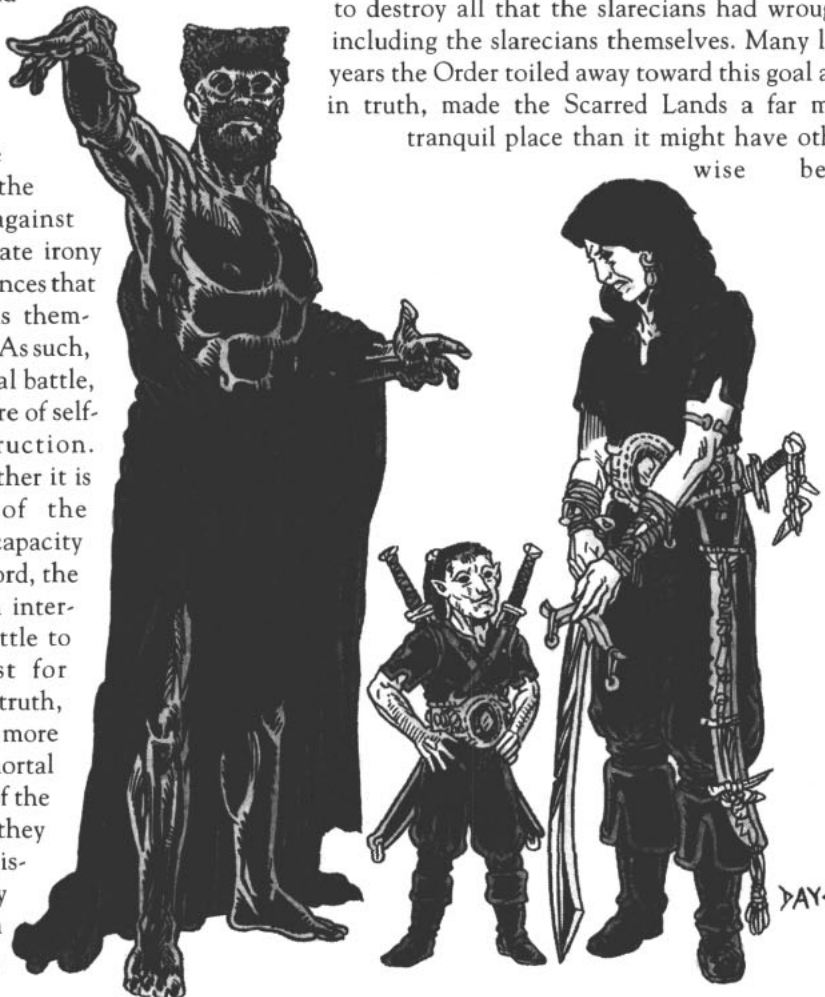
Order of Obsidian

Members of the Order of Obsidian, who refer to themselves simply as "obsidians", make-up an organization dedicated to the total and complete extermination of the slarecians and their legacy in the Scarred Lands. Tasked by the unlikely combination of powers comprised of the divine races and the titanspawn, who unified to hand-craft their organization, the obsidians relentlessly scour the world in a near-unending search for the taint of the Ancients. With such a singular purpose, one would think that the Order of Obsidian would have long ago succeeded, but the blot of the slarecians is both pervasive and insidious and until recently, the numbers of the Order were few. Many non-psions who are knowledgeable of the Order's existence state that the fact that they use the slarecians' very powers against their enemies is the ultimate irony and that the slarecian influences that dwell within the obsidians themselves breed inner conflict. As such, their souls are in a continual battle, which gives rise to a measure of self-loathing and self-destruction. Whatever the reason, whether it is the devious tenacity of the slarecians or some inborn capacity for assured failure and discord, the obsidians are plagued with internal strife — which does little to aid them in their quest for slarecian eradication. In truth, this penchant for turmoil is more a symptom of their own mortal natures than any foul plot of the Ancients; and the fact that they are now misunderstood, mistrusted and mistaken by those very individuals whom they have sworn to protect,

weighs heavily on their spirits.

While once overt in their dealings, the obsidians have in recent times become far more secretive and introverted, adding fuel to the distrust felt for their organization by those few who have actually heard of it. Where they were once hailed as something akin to heroes in the time when the slarecians dominated the landscape of Scarn, they are now thought of as little more than, at best, charlatans and tricksters and, at worst, abominations and delvers into things best left buried. If not for the recent influx of new psionic blood, as a direct result of the slarecian language virus, the Order would without a doubt have fallen into a vicious cycle of fear and retribution, retreating ever further into their secretive caches, harboring long-lived grudges against those whom they should be guarding and protecting. It is ironic to think that the slarecians could, by way of their nefarious virus, be laying the foundations for their own demise. Of course, with the enigmatic and utterly alien views of the slarecians, none can say that this outcome was not part of their intent all along.

History: In the times following the imprisonment of the slarecians, the Order was formed with a steadfast, single and unmistakable purpose — to destroy all that the slarecians had wrought, including the slarecians themselves. Many long years the Order toiled away toward this goal and, in truth, made the Scarred Lands a far more tranquil place than it might have otherwise been.



However, with the rise of the gods and the titans' fall, the perspective of the common people began to change.

Many (most of whom did not even draw breath when the threat of the slarecians was prominent) placed little stock in the myths of the Ancients, who even if they were real, it was reasoned, were now locked away never to return. These thoughts flourished and folk began to think less and less of the dangers presented by the Eternal Enemy, and likewise disregarded those who provided the sole bulwark against them... the Order of Obsidian.

Now feared and misunderstood, but still charged with the protection of those who shun them, the Order has been driven into seclusion. The hearts of the obsidians have become bitter, but they are no less dedicated to their cause. To this day, members of the Order remain hidden but ever vigilant, watching for the horrible event that they know will one day come — the return of the slarecians. Regardless if their cause is appreciated, or if the innocents are truly deserving of protection, they mean to be ready.

Location: Due to the very nature of the Order of Obsidian, it has no single location in which it resides. Its members are each recruited on an individual basis. Candidates are carefully watched for a considerable amount of time in order to gauge their abilities and loyalties. Due to its highly secretive nature, those who do not accept the Order's invitation simply have the relevant memories erased by any one of the Order's many telepaths and are sent on their way, once again completely ignorant of the obsidians' existence.

The Order of Obsidian is everywhere that the threat of the slarecians is, or has been. With the recent surge of new psions and psychic warriors appearing across the known lands, one can be assured that the obsidians are not far behind. No report of psionic powers or slarecian-like ability is left uninvestigated; all known and discovered slarecian ruins and sites are catalogued and observed and slarecian-spawn is not allowed to draw breath any longer than is needed by the Order. Though few in number, the Order is quick to react, and powerful.

This method of operation, termed "invisible omnipresence" in the training methods of the Order, is carefully maintained. They often go well out of their way to fashion elaborate decoys of their movements and actions and take care in spreading lies within lies about their own organization. The obsidians know that their Eternal Enemy is not only supremely intelligent, but that once in the not-too-distant past they ruled over nearly the whole of Scarn. These are the facts that drive the obsidians to such extents and govern their daily

lives. The eyes and the spies of the slarecians are many and varied and despite popular belief, they are everywhere. These evils must be forever vanquished, but first they must be fooled and protected against, if the Order is to achieve its ultimate goal.

With this in mind, the Order can literally be anywhere at anytime. Moreover, they have benefited from decades of focused and intensely driven development of unknowing allies and other resources — to the point where nearly anything can be accomplished or acquired by the power of the Order. The obsidians will allow absolutely nothing to stand in the way of abolishing the threat of the slarecians from their world.

Allies and Enemies: The Order's current insular and withdrawn nature tends to make them tentative of forming allegiances in general. This fact, coupled with their requirement that any psionic organization with which they form a pact must submit to an invasive and in-depth "review process," often leaves them without any true companions in their struggle against the slarecians. As common sense would dictate, the number of organizations that undergo this harrying process merely to sate the apprehensive minds of the Order are few and far between.

However, history has taught the obsidians that they cannot exist within a vacuum — that to separate themselves from those they wish to protect is complete folly. To this end, they have recently begun an underground campaign, of sorts, to forge bonds with those who they deem useful to their aims. Most of the psionic organizations within the Scarred Lands fall easily within the arena of the enemies of the Order, but a few have similar goals and motives. The Mind Hunters are one such organization, and their outlook so meshes with that of the Order that some obsidians are actively pushing to adopt them as a "special operations" force, a fact that has caused more than its own share of unrest and dissention among the rest of the Order. The Exiles of the Penumbra and the Dreamwardens are also potential candidates for future allegiances, but both groups are viewed by the Order with a measure of mistrust that is hard for the singularly focused obsidians to overcome.

Perhaps the most active anti-obsidian force is the Cult of the Shade, who sees the Order as an abomination that warrants destruction on sight. Interestingly, the Penumbra Lords pay little heed to the Order, thinking them beneath their concern — a fact that could well spell the collective doom of these arrogant psions.

Notable Personages: Quite possibly the most striking member of the Order of Obsidian was its first and long-time leader, a being who was known only as Peer. Many believed that Peer was some

form of demigod-made-flesh, for his grasp of the skills of psionics was unmatched by any in the history of not only the Order, but also of the Scarred Lands. The tales of Peer are passed down to all members of the Order, and nearly all obsidians venerate him. None know what became of the wise and formidable Peer, however, for one day he simply vanished from the face of the Scarred Lands. Many feel that he transcended the bonds of mortal flesh and became truly divine; others, the few who suspect and fear him, whisper that Peer rejoined his true masters, the slarecians, and that his eventual treachery against the Order is still pending.

In an organization as old and as widespread as the Order, there are countless notable figures, spread the length and breadth of the world. The obsidians excel at locating, fostering and honing to a fine edge the particular and generally odd traits that exemplify psionically-charged individuals. More so than nearly any organization in the Scarred Lands, the Order of Obsidian is truly a multi-cultural and race-spanning group — any who possess the latent abilities of psionics, regardless of race, previous religious or cultural affiliation or outlook are possible candidates for induction. Due to this philosophy, coupled with the fact that the gods and titans worked together to create the Order, obsidians look upon titanspawn with considerable favorable and will allow appropriately skilled individuals into the organization. The only exception to this openness is in regards to those who are believed (or, in truth, merely suspected) to have any association with the hated slarecians.

As a direct result of this “open mindedness” in regards to membership, some of the most unusual and unexpected individuals claim brotherhood to the Order. In fact, many creatures and beings who most would think barely capable of thought and action are in league with the obsidians, further expanding their massive network of spies and faithful.

Of course, not all of the members of the Order of Obsidian are from odd or unusual races, the vast majority of the obsidians are of the ilk typical to the Scarred Lands. The recently appointed leader to the Order is a halfling, the quiet and gentle Gallus Wellwit (*male halfling, Sor6/Rog7/Psi9, LN*), whose calm demeanor belies his tremendous and potent grasp of the psionic arts. In direct contrast is Gallus's second-in-command, the bloodthirsty Xoztha “the Prize-Winner” (*female human, Bar7/PsiWar7, CN*), who is best known for her habit of preserving trophies from each of her vanquished enemies. Due to the unusual nature of some of these trophies, however, (such as the still functioning and totally intact nervous system of one ill-fated foe) many obsidians worry that Xoztha carries the taint of

titanspawn in her veins. To add to this miasma of uncertainty surrounding her, Xoztha does not mince words when it comes to her intense dislike of Gallus and his demure bearing. The introspective halfling does little to quash the woman's criticism but merely stays to his pre-planned course, heedless of her objections.

Signs of Membership: The most well-known and striking sign of membership in the Order of Obsidian is found in the color of its members' eyes; upon their acceptance into the Order (and the subsequent psionic indoctrination) all obsidians' eyes change into orbs of the deepest black. None know the exact reason for this transformation, but many take it as a reminder that their greatest enemies lie within the swirling darkness of the shadows and the obscuring murk of the past.

Along this theme, the obsidians are known for their *slarecian bane* weaponry, all of which radiates a flinty, rough-edged blackness, despite the physical form of the weapon itself. While many think that these formidable weapons are limited only to blades, this is far from the truth. The craftsmen of the Order toil endlessly, crafting *slarecian bane* weapons of all types and forms, both mundane and exotic.

The Order emphasizes functionality and utility above the decorative. As such, most obsidians do not bother with personal or distinctive embellishments, such as non-psionic tattoos or individualized items or equipment. Most obsidians even opt for the proffered rank-and-file uniform when selecting their clothing. A simple set of dark pantaloons and a jerkin, designed to be worn over most armor, and a set of calf-high dark leather boots is worn by members of the Order most of the time. Generally, the whole ensemble is girded around the waist with a tooled leather belt inset with the Order's singularly unique version of crystal capacitors — the unusual, psionically-receptive stones known as *l'jore* — and any jewelry is functional and always psionic (or magical) in nature. Weapons are typically carried and are always those that the individual is most proficient with. While many would think that in a paramilitary organization such as the Order, this overall uniformity would be the result of some sort of official dictate, in actuality this is not the case. Obsidians are allowed to wear and purchase whatever they individually feel is best, it is just that most members of the Order see little point in burdening themselves with the unnecessary or unneeded.

The Order's symbol is by far the most commonly seen embellishment displayed upon the clothing, items, or skin of obsidians. Many members of the Order undergo a ritualistic scouring upon being accepted, to remove any other such

symbols from their person before donning the emblem of their new and lifelong dedication. In addition, the Order's symbol is often used to indicate a residence or building that is being used by the obsidians (either permanently or temporarily) or to denote that obsidians have recently passed through an area. However, these symbols are always psionic in nature (created by the *psychic print* power) and are rarely (if ever) formed by mundane or magical means. Typically, a non-psionic version of the Order's symbol is used by the obsidians as a sign of a trap or that the immediate vicinity is to be avoided at all costs.

Characters of the Order of Obsidian: Due to the Order's primary motivation and their militaristic stance, rare are those members who do not have some formal training in the arts of war. The obsidians go to great lengths and pains to make certain that all new recruits to the Order are indoctrinated with, at the very least, the basics of combat in both the mental and physical realms. Furthermore, all obsidians are systematically trained and drilled throughout their tenure within the Order, making sure that they are eternally vigilant and prepared to erect psychological and physical defenses at a moment's notice. It is perhaps as a result of these tenets that most obsidians seem fairly high-strung and intense to those outside the Order. Due to the rigid structure of the Order, obsidians tend to be lawful in alignment, but this is by no means a requirement for membership. Those who are more chaotic are simply given positions that require more forward and independent thought, as opposed to following or delivering authoritarian guidelines and rules.

All members, despite which class they belong to, are encouraged to learn disciplines and powers that aid in their primary goal. This all-important objective mandates that, if called, each obsidian will gladly engage in singular mortal combat with their hated enemies, the slarecians, in order to defeat them. As such, most members of the Order focus on equipping themselves with items and honing those powers that combat enemy psionics. In short, anything that could give an individual obsidian an edge in a toe-to-toe fight with a slarecian or their servitors is considered a boon beyond all others.

Without a doubt, the most popular discipline within the Order of Obsidian is Psychokinesis, due to nothing other than the fact that all obsidians are embroiled in an eternal war with the Ancients. However, practically all disciplines find their way into the Order. Feats and skills for most members, as well, are commonly suited more toward engaging, maintaining and surviving psionic combat than say, the creation of new psionic items. How-

ever, there are those within the Order who specialize in the development of new items, so even this is by no means a hard and fast rule.

In regards to items and weapons, members of the Order favor those with stunning or disorienting capabilities, as most prefer to first incapacitate enemies and then deliver the final killing blow. Many are the stories of the tricky slarecians who faked their own demise merely to rise up and turn the tables on the attackers at the last moment; most obsidians thus make certain that their quarry is dead, despite the grisly details. *Brainborers*, *slarecian bane weapons*, and *psionic shatter shards*, all of which were originally developed by the Order, are commonly carried items, as are *amulets of catapsi* and *brain lock pearls* when they can be crafted or obtained.

Armors and protective items tend to be on the light and proactive side and allow for maximum movement and usage of all the varied abilities at the obsidians' command. Armor heavier than chain is typically frowned upon, unless it can be enhanced with magical or psionic powers of *biofeedback*, *body adjustment*, *freedom of movement*, *dimensional slide* or the like. *Psychoactive skins* (particularly those with regenerative or defensive capabilities), *rings of stabilization* and *torcs of free will* are also highly popular. Oddly, rings are almost never worn by Order members, but magical and psionic earrings are common, as are amulets, bracers and gauntlets. Each of these items is guaranteed to be enchanted or enhanced with some sort of beneficial and renewable power, as obsidians simply do not have the time to search for replacements for their most trusted items.

In the same manner that no single class or profession epitomizes the Order, so too is the fact that no single type of psicrystal is representative of all within its ranks. There is but one common trait in these strange constructs — all psicrystals of the Order are shards of obsidian. Those psicrystals crafted of other substances are somehow transubstantiated into obsidian at the exact moment that their masters' eyes take on their black hue.

The Sundered

Their minds shattered by the tormented screams of an imprisoned goddess, the sundered are all that remain of a handful of those who were once loyal to the slarecians and witnessed the confinement and torture of Drendari, goddess of shadow. Now, their minds horribly splintered and yet still bound together by the ties of their psionic natures and the reality-changing spectacle which they were witness to, they wander the whole of the Scarred Lands seeking a balm for their fractured

spirits and consciousnesses. An objective which is very likely little more than a hopeful dream.

History: It has been said that the first students of the slarecians, The Eyes of the Night, as they dubbed themselves, observed the torture and torment of the goddess of the shadow and learned. Some took twisted delight in these heinous acts, exalting in the divine agony that washed over all present and singing in tune with Drendari's godly screams. Others watched on and in the depths of their frozen, poisoned souls, felt nothing; to these wretched few the spiritual rape of Drendari was little more than an instructional lesson, an initial draft for their own twisted plans and ploys for days to come. However, a small handful of these original students beheld the spectacle and recoiled — in truth, the only reasons they continued to remain was to preserve their own lives (for the will of the slarecians was, without reservation, absolute) and because their minds were forever devastated by what they had beheld.

These latter slarecian students did not continue to follow (and eventually betray) their masters, as did their fellows; their names were never numbered among the members of the Penumbral Pentagon. Rather, these few score troubled students slowly and silently departed from the side of their formidable masters and wandered into the wilds, lost and mentally hobbled. While at first they aimlessly traveled in their madness, they soon discovered that they

were not, however, alone — a single strong thread of reason and logic remained unbroken in the crushed hulk that was their minds — there were a few others like them who still survived. Many of these poor souls, drowning in a quagmire of confusion, doubt and insanity, grasped this solitary thread and held firmly to it; these individuals eventually became known as the sundered.

Today, the sundered exist much as they did in those initial days following their discovery of others who shared their curse. They continue to wander the whole of the Scarred Lands, searching for some solace from the eternally rolling chaos within their minds. While they are instinctively drawn to one another, they unfortunately cannot bear the sight of another of their kind, and so do not congregate in any sort of organized group. While theories for this are as prolific as the goblins in the slave pits of Dunahnae, the secret truth is that the sight of one another instantly conjures intense and scarring memories of Drendari's suffering and confinement — memories that are horribly magnified and exaggerated through their shared insanity.

Location: The sundered rarely stay in a single place for any amount of time. Whether this is because the nagging, vexing madness within



them pushes them ever-onward, or due to the fact that civilized folk do their level best to drive them away, is irrelevant. Both aspects of their existence are commonplace and so they eternally wander the wilds of the Scarred Lands. They go wherever their wills and their shattered thoughts pull them, or occasionally, wherever the vicious circle of their urges either lure them to, or propel them away from, one another. Occasionally, these controlling forces bring the sundered into direct conflict with civilization — the tales resulting from these tragic convergences are the stuff of nightmares. While they are typically little more than a noxious disturbance, if threatened, a single sundered individual can lay waste to most villages.

Allies and Enemies: Ironically, the sundered have no allies among the other psionic organizations and forces within the Scarred Lands. While they hold nothing but hatred and contempt for the slarecians (emotions with which the Order of Obsidian, for example, could easily identify), the sundered lack the means to accurately express these concepts. Utterly mad, they act only on whim and in response to external stimuli, leaving them little opportunities for parlay or discussion.

As such, those who view the sundered as a separate organization — for many merely consider them to be little more than raving madmen, or at worst, members of the Warped Ones (**Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**) — typically consider the group a threat which must be eliminated. However, those who desire the destruction of these mad individuals feel this way for varying reasons: the Order of Obsidian, for example, believes that the sundered must be destroyed as they all carry the pervasive taint of their former masters, while the Penumbra Pentagon righteously hunts them down as traitors who abandoned their cause.

Notable Personages: The driving forces, for they can literally be called such, behind the sundered are commonly known as the Four Winds; a name which reflects not only their tumultuous and unpredictable natures, but also their penchant for rambling over the whole of the continent of Ghelspad. Oliuqa (*female elf, Brd4/Sor9/Psi7, CN*), Retsua (*female dwarf, Rgr17/Psi8, CN*), Surue (*male half-orc, Rog19/Psi9, CN*), and Noriks (*male human, Bar10/Rgr3/Psi7, CN*) comprise the members of the Four Winds, and while they are each well aware of the presence of the other three, none have ever met. Nevertheless, wherever they trod they sow the sparks of insanity and draw out the elements of chaos and unpredictability in all with whom they come in contact.

The Four Winds act as driving forces for the whole of the sundered, and it is the movements of these four individuals that most greatly influences

the “migration” of their brethren. There is something about each of the Four Winds that affect all other sundered in a way similar to, but far greater than, others of their kind. It is as if the presence of a single member of the Four Winds repels the sundered a thousand times greater than does a single, “ordinary” sundered. Therefore, as the members of the Four Winds ramble from one area in the Scarred Lands to another, they drive a great host of their “lesser kin” before them like unthinking shepherds with scattered and insane flocks.

Signs of Membership: The two things that all sundered individuals have in common is that they are each utterly insane and are all irrevocably psionically linked. Otherwise, the sundered hold to no symbol or standard and bear no distinctive mark of any kind. It is perhaps this characteristic, coupled with their penchant for wandering the uncharted wilds, which has helped them survive the extermination efforts of the Penumbra Pentagon.

Characters of the Sundered: As individuals, the sundered, due to their fragmented mental state, possess equally disjointed examples of classes and professions. Nearly any conceivable combination of player and non-player character classes can be found among their number, often without any rhyme and reason. Generally, however, all sundered possess at least some levels of ranger, druid, barbarian, fighter, or rogue as they must all at some time or another, carve out a living on their own in the wilds of the Scarred Lands. Feats and skills follow the mismatched and haphazard example set by the classes, but all sundered possess at least four ranks in Survival. Overall, both skills and feats tend toward the more physical realms as sundered individuals simply do not perform mentally in the same manner as other folk.

Strangely opposite to the randomness of their mundane classes, the psionic disciplines found among the sundered are almost always the same: Psychometabolism, Psychokinesis, and Psychoportation. In fact, to this day, no other examples of any other psionic discipline have ever been witnessed being manifested by a sundered. For reasons unknown, few sundered use or carry psicrystals, but those who do always possess only those with the resolve personality. It has been proposed that these unusual curiosities might be tied to the event which originally spawned the sundered; perhaps Drendari's prison was a crystalline chamber which resembles the psicrystals of today and conceivably a bit of her divine essence might have leaked into that prison. The theory goes on to state that when Drendari was freed, her prison shattered, forming the first psicrystals. If this were true, then it would make sense that it is within the resolve psicrystals that the sundered can most feel the power of the goddess for whom they now, in a strange and convoluted way, suffer.

Those Who Walk Alone

Though very rare, there are those groups that have nothing directly to do with the slarecians. In some cases, individuals gained their powers naturally and only subsequently banded together; in other instances, an established group acquired psionic abilities as a result of the presence of the energies the slarecians manipulated—even though the Ancients took no direct action one way or the other in the genesis of the group.

The Dasa

In recent days, explorers have discovered the Dasa, a tribe of aboriginal peoples native to the Yellow Jungle of Termana, who are perhaps one of the most distinctive and unique examples of a group of psions to fall under scrutiny during the history of the Scarred Lands. These simple and self-sufficient jungle folk are led by a council of psionic interpreters (all of whom are exceedingly powerful telepaths) known collectively by the title *Al'malla*, and the group as a whole live by hunting, fishing and growing a smattering of crops deep within the unexplored reaches of the Yellow Jungle. Like many tribes of the Gamulganjus, the Dasa revere their ancestors. What makes them stand out is the fact that their entire society revolves around the worship of those ancestors as manifested as the personality fragments found within psicrystals.

History: With a culture as developed and interwoven as the one exhibited by the Dasa, there can be little doubt that they possess a long history. Only fragments of this historical record can be confirmed, as the Dasa record their past in the form of complex chains of sacred dances known as the *daspensar*. The *daspensar* are performed to the mental music produced by the bulk of the tribe and tell in detail every event in the tribe's past; however, sacred Dasa law forbids that these dances, once begun, ever fully cease (for fear that the present of the Dasa might also cease to

move forward in time). As such, the first telling of the *daspensar* still has not come to an end, and is remarkably complex and difficult for outsiders to understand.

However, as best as can be gleaned, the Dasa have always inhabited the depths of the Yellow Jungle and have always worshipped psicrystals as their ancestors. These crystalline entities, which the Dasa term the *leekka'ong*, are considered by these simple people to be their god-like ancestors who now exist eternally in their most perfect physical form. The Dasa take the telepathic words of the *leekka'ong* as law, and look to the *Al'malla* for guidance in interpreting the often cryptic instructions given to them by the psicrystals.

Location: The Dasa have, to the best of anyone's knowledge, always lived within the Yellow Jungle. Many have begun to theorize that these gentle native people (who have only been discovered by explorers in the region within the past five years) might hold the keys to unlocking some of the area's curious secrets. The Dasa know of the outside world, but refer to it as the "Lands-Beyond-Perfection" and will not enter into it under any penalty, including death. While they welcome outsiders warmly, they do not invite them and tend to view those outside their tribe in a forlorn sort of way; they feel that those who are not Dasa are damned to live out eternity in the lands beyond their paradise, and therefore look upon them with deep pity and sadness.

Allies and Enemies: The Dasa possess little knowledge or interest in the things that lie outside the borders of their strange tropical environs. Furthermore, their geographical isolation precludes them from nearly all interaction with those not native to the Gamulganjus. However, the Dasa have long been allies with the reclusive gnomes who inhabit the Gamulganjus (who they claim to hold some ancestral tie to) and are on good terms with the terali.

Those psionic organizations in the Scarred Lands who know of the Dasa feel that they are likely some sort of cult that has been, over the centuries, duped and



manipulated by the servants of the slarecians. Thus, the perception of psionic associations toward the Dasa varies according to each group's loyalties and motivations. Most all believe, however, that the Dasa's worship of psicrystals is a thinly veiled attempt on the part of the Ancients to garner not only followers, but also a means to possibly funnel their formidable psionic energies into a weapon that they can wield even from within the confines of their extra-dimensional prison.

Notable Personages: The Dasa have no true lord or leader as such, but rather exist in a tribal culture fostered by their telepathic leaders. However, even in this near perfect cultural condition, differences of opinion and basic human nature still manage to intrude from time to time, marring the placid surface of Dasai society. It is during these times that the Dasa look to the eldest member of the Al'malla, currently the venerable Kootou (*male human Psi10, NG*). Kootou is a withered, ancient old man, stooped with age but considered wise beyond reckoning. He has led the Al'malla for longer than anyone can remember, and even some of the oldest fragments of the *daspensar* echo his name and deeds. Kootou is the closest thing that the Dasa have to a chieftain, yet he holds no power over any man, woman or child. Kootou is also the chief interpreter (though by no means the only) of the words and emotions of the psicrystals that have been gathered, over the centuries, by the tribe.

While life within the tribe tends to plod along in its nearly idyllic and simple haze, the fact that the Dasa reside within one of the more deadly environs in the Scarred Lands is a constant and omnipresent aspect of reality. Yatalla (*female human PsyWar5, LN*), the leader of the tribe's psychic warrior protectors, the Jeet'ta, relentlessly trains and tests her juniors in order to answer the ever-present and life-threatening challenge of the Yellow Jungle's strange ophidian inhabitants. Yatalla takes not only her role as an "honor warrior" of the Dasa very seriously, but is also completely dedicated to her position as the formal leader of all who share the position of protectors with her. She is a driven individual who sacrifices her personal needs before the needs of the tribe and as a result, can often be seen as grossly withdrawn and needlessly obsessive.

Signs of Membership: Like most of the tribal folk of the Gamulganjus, the Dasa are a relatively slight and small people, with a fine bone structure and lithe, wiry frames. They have dark brown skin tones along with dark eyes and hair, though the white of their eyes as well as their hair often displays a strange, yellowish-gray tone as they grow older.

While the Dasa do not possess any sort of unified symbol or uniform, they do all wear similar saffron colored clothes (short, toga-like robes for

the women and loincloths for the men), often with a sash or headband of the deepest maroon. However, the reason for this is derived more from their cultural and geographic standpoint, as these colors have long been used by the Dasa as camouflage from the myriad predators within the Yellow Jungle. Most Dasa do not wear foot coverings and those who do opt for rustic wood and leather sandals. Jewelry is a cultural taboo as it is seen as an affront to the *leekka'ong*; this prohibition also precludes the Dasa from using gemstones as a currency as well.

The Dasa do not possess any form of architecture, unless bamboo huts and thatch roofs can be deemed as such; however, they do construct elaborate and intricate *shrazhas*, or shrines, to each of the *leekka'ong*. These massive and elaborately decorated temples are said to be some of the most stunningly beautiful creations in the whole of Termana.

Characters of the Dasa: Though not every member of the Dasa are psionic, examples of every known discipline can be found within the tribe. Psionic members of the Dasa utilize their abilities for the health and well-being of the tribe, usually taking on mundane professions that exist in harmony with their innate abilities. For example, those among the Dasa who are egoists are nearly always healers; however, the Dasa do not view these as imposed roles. Instead, they see them as a harmonious balance between their state of being and the world around them.

Very few members of the Dasa possess non-psionic classes. In fact, the bulk of the Dasa are commoners and warriors only, save for the rare few who hold ranks in the classes of psion and psychic warrior. The psychic warriors of the Dasa fill a special role in their culture, that of an "honor warrior," whose sole duty is to protect the Dasa, the *leekka'ong* and their way of life — even if it means lying down their own in the process. These warriors, known as Jeet'ta in the language of the Dasa, are some of the most formidable combatants ever known to walk upon the continent of Termana.

Members of the Dasa tribe do not possess, in the conventional sense, psicrystals; any psicrystal is considered to be an autonomous individual and thus, cannot be owned by another being. The Dasa open their homes and lives to all types of psicrystals, thinking of and treating them as one would a highly esteemed relative. As a result, these simple folk may well "own" the largest single collection of psicrystals in all the Scarred Lands. However, the Dasa merely view this as having a large extended family stay with them... forever. While this open-minded attitude of freedom and autonomy for psicrystals might seem utterly wholesome, it has on

rare occasions in the past provoked Dasa attacks upon psicrystal-bearing psions who were lost within the unfathomable depths of the Yellow Jungle. Woe be it to the psions who try to argue the "theft" of their valuable psicrystals, for the Dasa would perceive such claims of ownership to be akin to the enslaving of a long lost family member.

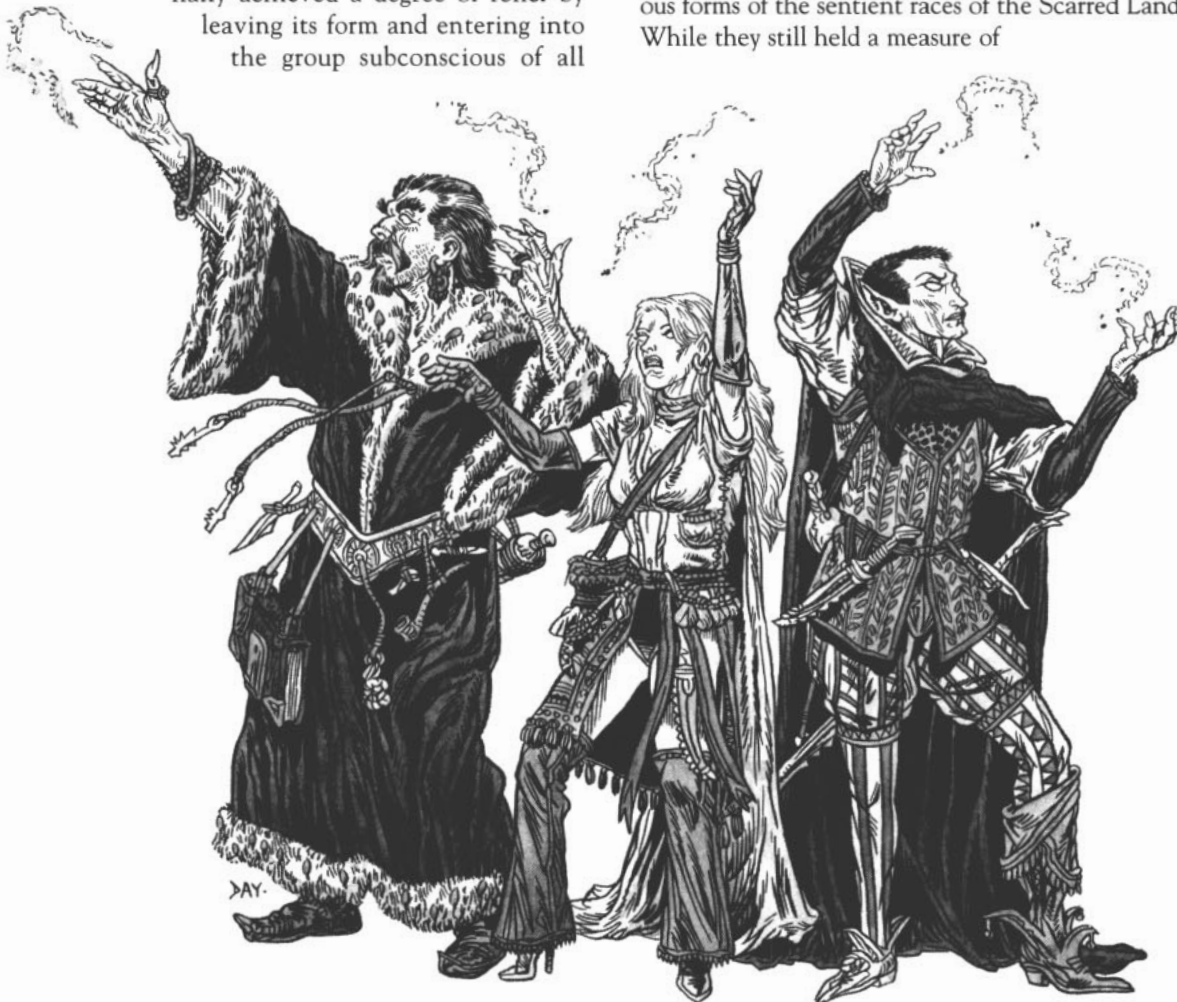
Dreamreavers

The dreamreavers, dwellers of the mysterious and nebulous Drifting Isle, are the subject of both intense speculation and decided apprehension among the people of the Scarred Lands. While they are perhaps some of the most powerful psionic creatures in existence, since the departure of the slarecians, they remain wholly isolated, yearning only to sate the burning hunger and loneliness that gnaws eternally at their souls. It is their penchant for entering into the minds and dreams of their victims, and stealing those very dreams, that makes them so feared and loathed by almost all who learn of their existence.

History: After its imprisonment upon Scarn, the bodiless *uthriach* Psyclus began a campaign to end the searing torment it suffered as a result of its existence in a semi-physical state. It finally achieved a degree of relief by leaving its form and entering into the group subconscious of all

mortals living on Scarn. Unfortunately, Psyclus by no means succeeded on its first attempt. Though it perceived its initial abortive efforts as little more than an exercise of its near-godly will, the clashes of its massive power with the relatively tiny and simplistic mortal minds resulted in the formation of the beings who comprise the dreamreavers.

Although it is unknown to any (Psyclus and the dreamreavers included), each time the *uthriach* tried to meld itself into the minds of Scarn's inhabitants, a miniscule portion of its essence fragmented off from the whole, much like a tiny sliver of stone chipping away from an immense boulder. Utterly unnoticed to Psyclus, these fragments were, in relation to mortals, tremendously powerful; these pieces of sentience soon developed minds, personalities and motivations of their own. For a long time individual slivers of Psyclus drifted alone and aimless in a strange place that spanned both the realms of the *uthriach*'s subconscious and the collective subconscious of all the mortals of Scarn. Like fluttering moths to a flame, however, each was eventually drawn to the others, if for no other reason than their shared and unique state of being. Finally, Psyclus succeeded in its goal and gained its new state of being. It was at this point that the dreamreavers too became physical, taking on the various forms of the sentient races of the Scarred Lands. While they still held a measure of



power and essence from the being from which they were split, the *uthriach*'s new form was now so different from both what it had been and from what they now were, that the creatures who were to become the dreamreavers were utterly abandoned.

The dreamreavers, now corporeal and driven primarily by fear and a restless hunger, began to delve into the minds and dreams of others. They each desired a portion of the realm from which they had been thrust and they used their *uthriach*-like powers (known to others as psionics) to sate this craving. Currently, these beings lead a shrouded and mostly misunderstood existence, revered by some, hated by others, but feared by all with whom they come in contact.

Location: The dreamreavers rarely leave the Drifting Isle, at least in physical form. They often depart its shores, however, through their psionic abilities or via *dream incursions*, and enter into the dreams of creatures scattered all over the face of the Scarred Lands. When they are not trolling the dreams and minds of sentient beings, collecting dreams to consume and power their creations, they remain cloistered within the Slepirstpire, at the heart of the Night Woods. The dreamreavers' hesitation to leave the Drifting Isle is two-fold: first, they are terribly persecuted by any who learn of their true identities, and second they have little need to do so — all that they require can be obtained through the Isle's unique properties.

Allies and Enemies: The dreamreavers take great pains to avoid as much as possible physical contact with sentient beings. While none know exactly why, some sages theorize that the proximity of physical, thinking creatures actually causes extreme pain to these psionic dream-devourers. As such, the dreamreavers view all living things, especially other psionic creatures, as a genuine threat and go out of their way to avoid such interactions at all costs. While they do not see outsiders as enemies per se, they certainly do not seek allies.

Other psionic organizations generally regard the dreamreavers as somewhat of a ludicrous legend, or perhaps as a group of doddering old sorcerers who have been too long lost in the sleepy dreamland of the Drifting Isle. Some groups, however, do perceive them as a perilous threat which must be eradicated upon sight — but as of yet, no individual or association has been in the position to take any direct action.

Notable Personages: Thankfully, the roster of the dreamreavers remains ever short, mostly due to only a finite number of these beings having ever been created. Furthermore, the fact that they are hunted and exterminated whenever they set foot off the shores of the Drifting Isle does little to preserve their ranks. Only upon the Drifting Isle,

where emphasis is placed upon dreams and those who have dealings with them, are the dreamreavers generally left alone; and even there they have been informally isolated into the dark and shadowy Night Woods, where most mortals rarely tread.

Of their number, there are three names which stand out among the dreamreavers: Idiths (*male human*, Sor7/Psi13, NG), Egaoth (*female half-elf*, Wiz7/Psi13, NE), and Ethgos-Ithian (*male elf*, Sor11/Psi9, N). These individuals, who are known collectively as the Triumvirate, are said to be the eldest of the dreamreavers. It is whispered that they possess the most potent portions and aspects of the once-formless *uthriach* Psyclus.

Signs of Membership: The dreamreavers possess no sign of membership, as to do so would be pointless in their isolation and, during their rare circumstances of travel, any distinctive feature would be counter productive to their survival. These beings are unequivocally hated and threatened by almost all who know of their existence and of their unusual dream-stealing abilities. However, they have always been, and will forever be, tethered together by virtue of their unique conception and by the power bled from the *uthriach* Psyclus. In truth, the dreamreavers do not consider themselves to be an organization, but rather a gathering of similar and like-minded individuals who happen to all possess the need to devour dreams to survive. Quite possibly the most notable quality of the dreamreavers, as a whole, is their ability to enter into the Dreamland at will and steal dreams from the minds of others. Physically, however, all dreamreavers do share a singular quality as a result of their unusual creation — their eye sockets are filled with a multi-faced, crystalline substance.

The dreamreavers are by no means a malicious group of individuals (although a few notorious exceptions do exist among their number); rather, they perform the acts of which they are despised out of nothing more than loneliness and hunger. As word of their existence spreads and becomes more commonplace within the minds and dreams of the folk of the Scarred Lands, the fear that their persecution will become even greater grows within the hearts of the dreamreavers. In order to combat this hatred, an idea has begun to coalesce among the dreamreavers that perhaps they should take a more active stance toward those who would destroy them.

To this end, Idiths has feverishly begun delving into the idea that perhaps a portion of the dreamreavers' gathered dream-stuff might be actually crafted into new life in their image. While Egaoth and Ethgos-Ithian are not wholly sold on the concept, the fear of their numbers eternally dwindling and the searing pangs of loneliness

which they have felt since their creation make them long for the companionship of more of their kind. Consequently, these “children”, as Idiths calls them, are a very appealing proposal for many of the dreamreavers.

Should the dreamreavers succeed in this attempt to create life in their own likeness, they might for the first time have a method to interact directly with the races of the Scarred Lands without fear of persecution — assuming they can correct for the identifying eyes and painful affliction that limits their current interactions. None, not even the Triumvirate, can foresee what this would mean for their isolated community, or how these offspring would interact with the world. Likely, the dreamreavers would soon find that the reality of the beings who tread the face of the Scarred Lands is far removed from the dreams which fill their heads.

Characters of the Dreamreavers: Most of the dreamreavers are sorcerers and wizards of formidable stature, as their minds seem suited to those mental paths of power. They rarely occupy any of the other classes, though the occasional bard or loremaster does exist. Dreamreavers, in their near-complete physical avoidance of other peoples, do not engage in combat if possible, and if pressed to do so, rely on their redoubtable psionic and arcane abilities to flee or fight as needed. Similarly, feats and skills possessed by the dreamreavers tend to meld with and buttress their mental capabilities. There are also many of this group who spend their time crafting wizardly objects, the likes of which have been unknown upon the Scarred Lands since the time of the Divine War.

In accordance with their highly psionic natures, all psionic disciplines are common among their order, but the most often seen are Psychometabolism, Psychoportation, Telepathy and Clairsentience. Psicrystals employed by the dreamreavers span the gamut but center around the Sage, Singleminded, and Observant personalities.

Exiles of the Penumbra

The Exiles of the Penumbra are a tiny brotherhood of penumbral lords who have developed psionic powers. The truly remarkable thing about this organization, given its make-up, is that most of its members are good in alignment and all of them worship Madriel, goddess of light. Indeed, the group's name, Exiles of the Penumbra, is symbolic of this divergence from what is typical for a penumbral lord. Although most of the founders were literally exiled from the Penumbral Pentagon, and the members are still, in effect, banished from most of civilization for the many wrongs they aided and supported before their conversion, the group also finds it deeply inspirational that in being forced to leave the realm of shadow they have now found themselves bathed in glorious light. After all, as it is light that creates shadow, it seems fitting to the Exiles that shadow should now serve light.

History: Penumbral lords, and the Penumbral Pentagon in particular, have always been fascinated with slarecian texts and artifacts. Suspecting that there were shadow secrets their masters withheld from them, the shadow mages have long poured through all things slarecian that they can acquire. This, naturally, sometimes exposes these individuals to the slarecian language virus. It is a risk they were quite willing to take, however, especially with their more expendable student scholars.

In the last few years though, the language virus has changed. Instead of simply being unable to communicate for a few days until the virus could be properly quarantined and magically dispelled, shadow scholars would seem to recover on their own and then later turn out to have developed psionic powers.

At first Dar'Tan and others within



the order were ecstatic. This development could lead to fantastic new fields of study and huge leaps forward in penumbral power goals. The blessing quickly showed itself to be a curse in disguise, however. The slarecians have not forgotten the betrayal of their penumbral students, and the alien beings are not the type to forgive treachery. Whether this particular curse was put in place during recent events or as one of the slarecians' final acts before leaving Scarn, it cannot be doubted that the Ancients designed it specifically as a punishment for the shadow mage traitors.

The new psionic powers interact strangely with the penumbral lore in the minds of the afflicted shadow mages, and the newly psionic penumbral lords — apparently due to inexplicable reactions between psionics and penumbral lord magic — begin to develop a distaste for all penumbral magic. This effect is so pervasive that even an afflicted individual's own shadow powers cause intense physical nausea. Surrounded as they were by penumbral magic in Dar'Tan's secret fortress, the students quickly lost mental stability and began to lash out violently at those around them.

It became obvious that the psionic penumbral lords had to leave the Pentagon, and since the Pentagon couldn't afford to have exiles knowing the location of their fortress (and since those affected were fairly low-level students anyway), the psionic penumbrals were to be executed. Through ingenious and collaborative use of their new psionic powers, against which the arcane penumbral lords had no defenses, the young shadow mages — seven of them, total — managed to escape, only to find themselves facing a hostile world with practically no resources or allies.

They were penumbral lords — low-level penumbral lords who had never held any major authority in their organization, but penumbral lords nevertheless. They were hated by all good peoples for their evil ways, and they were also particularly hunted by Drendari's Shadow Walkers and by all slarecian cults, for their order's history. They were also now exiled penumbral lords, sought after by the Penumbral Pentagon and all of that far-reaching organization's allies. Their chances of surviving a single week seemed rather slim.

Unlikely as it may sound, these outcasts turned to the only place they believed would offer succor: Madriel, the Redeemer. Apparently the shock and terror of their impossible position was sufficient to allow just enough of an alignment shift in most of them that Madriel was even willing to hear and answer their earnest prayers.

Not only did the group make it to Vesh alive, through numerous close calls with the Pentagon

Psionic Penumbral Lords

Any penumbral lord who develops psionic powers, simultaneously experiences a powerful aversion to penumbral magic. Though she doesn't lose her powers as a penumbral lord, she must always make a DC 15 Will save to use them. A failure means that the character may not act in that round except to vomit. A character who fails three times in a day cannot attempt to use penumbral lord powers again until the next day, their bodies simply refuse to risk the abuse. Spellcasting is not affected by the revulsion unless the spell directly involves shadow magic, but all penumbral lord special abilities are subject to the Will save in order to activate them. Powers that would normally always be in effect on a non-psionic penumbral lord — such as *darkvision*, for example — are unaffected by this.

Psionic penumbral lords are similarly subject to physical revulsion when they encounter penumbral magic cast by other penumbral lords. This is advantageous in that any offensive action taken against another penumbral lord carries a +1 bonus for the psionic penumbral lord.

On the other hand, whenever a psionic penumbral lord is the subject of any type of shadow magic cast by other penumbral lords (including every day spent in the strange and magical Penumbral Fortress in the Kelder Mountains) another DC 15 Will save is required to avoid the same sense of nausea experienced when casting her own spells. Failure at these rolls creates a similar inability to act for one round and these failures are also cumulative with the personal power failures described above, for the purposes of determining whether or not a psionic penumbral lord can continue to attempt the use of her penumbral powers in a given day.

If at any time, for any reason, a psionic penumbral lord fails more than three revulsion Will saves in a day, she loses one temporary point each of Wisdom and Constitution. These losses heal normally. The loss of Wisdom typically manifests itself as various forms of insanity.

and other dangers, but along the way they encountered a small group of cultists of the shade who had captured a high-level independent penumbral lord (one of the many shadow mages who left Dar'Tan's service years ago). Through cleverness, fantastic bravery and incredible luck, the seven young Madrielite converts managed to defeat the much more powerful and numerous cultists and rescue the other penumbral lord (who also turned out to be a recently awakened psion and who also had turned to Madriel in his hour of frantic desperation — coincidence? Ask Madriel).

This older shadow mage, a wood elf named Delnor, then proved his own conversion to the cause of redemption, by leading his rescuers to a nearby Veshian residence where he had learned that the Cult of the Shade planned to steal and defile a powerful ancient artifact guarded by the descendants of a great local hero of the Divine War. The mage/psions warned the family and stayed to fight beside them, defeating the cultists (who had counted on both surprise and a lack of psychic and magical defenses for their plans), and possibly averting untold disaster.

Unfortunately, when the hero's family found out the helpful strangers were penumbral lords, they felt forced, in spite of their gratitude, to turn the eight men and women in to the Veshian government to stand for their many former crimes. The villains turned heroes acknowledged the justice of this decision, and promptly escaped. They vowed in the future to conceal their identities more carefully, so as to avoid placing other good people in similarly difficult moral binds, as well as to devote their lives to atoning for the evils they had committed.

Ever since, the Exiles of the Penumbra have wandered eastern Ghelspad, righting wrongs and contacting others like them in the hopes that still more psionic shadow lords will choose the path of redemption. With now just less than a dozen members, they are still an extremely small organization, and they continue to have a truly daunting list of enemies (though they hope to eventually clear things up with Drendari's followers, at least). They do, however, now have Madriel on their side, which is better than an evil shadow cult led by a dark elf of questionable sanity any day.

Location: The Exiles of the Penumbra are nomadic, but mainly wander eastern Ghelspad. The group has considered relocating to Termana, so that they might find more allies and fewer enemies among the local populace, but the general consensus seems to be that eastern Ghelspad was where they did their harm, so eastern Ghelspad is where they must redeem themselves—until Madriel specifically requires their presence elsewhere, of course. In general the organization is broken into several smaller parties, each of which uses psionics or magic to keep in contact with the others.

Allies and Enemies: Aside from their goddess, this organization has no allies. A rare few individuals understand the group's true nature and thus might provide occasional assistance, but generally everyone in eastern Ghelspad can safely be considered their enemies. Outside of eastern Ghelspad, no one knows they exist.

Notable Personages: Though the organization has no official leader, it cannot be denied that all members tend to defer to Delnor, still by far the

oldest and most powerful of their number. Delnor (*male wood elf*, *Wiz8/Pen9/Psi3*, *NG*) is almost as ancient as Dar'Tan and was even one of the five key members of the Penumbral Pentagon for a short period of time just after the Divine War. He quarreled badly with Dar'Tan (whom he once considered a very close friend) and the two have hated one another ever since.

Delnor has had more than a century to slowly change his philosophies from misanthropy to philanthropy, so the conversion to the worship of Madriel was never quite as much of a stretch for him as it has been for many of the other members of the organization. His deep-seated remorse for the crimes he has committed makes him a reclusive and cheerless man, prone to deep depressions and rarely seen to smile. However, this same guilt creates in him an endless well of acceptance and forgiveness for the crimes of others, and his gloomy exterior hides a caring and indomitable soul.

Signs of Membership: Whenever possible, the Exiles of the Penumbra carry plain white feathers in honor of the First Angel of Mercy. In most other respects they resemble only ragtag bands of wanderers. Indeed, whenever they can manage it, these mage/psions attempt to conceal even their spellbooks and psicrystals, only revealing their powers in times of dire necessity.

Characters of the Exiles of the Penumbra: Most characters in this group are wizards, penumbral lords and psions. Naturally, given their revulsion for it, shadow magic is only used when absolutely necessary. All disciplines are highly favored by the Exiles, and they try, when possible, to maintain a balance of powers in any given band. Favored psicrystals include Friendly, Hero, Resolve, and Sneak. Skills and feats are typically more active in nature than one might expect of wizards, but they otherwise vary widely throughout the group.

Penumbral Pentagon

Though of slarecian origin, this group of non-psionic shadow mages betrayed the slarecians at a crucial point in the war with the gods and titans. Now hated and hunted by all slarecian cults who know their history, the Penumbral Pentagon wishes only to be left alone to take over the world in peace (or pieces as the case may be). Details on the Penumbral Pentagon and its notorious leader Dar'Tan can be found in **The Penumbral Pentagon** sourcebook as well as several other Scarred Lands' products, including **Mithril: City of the Golem, Relics and Rituals**, and **The Wise and the Wicked**.

Seekers on the Ether

With the sudden rise of psionics in the Scarred Lands, many "non-psionic" national leaders have begun to express growing concerns. Psionics is without a doubt a potent force to bring to bear,

whether in the political arena or on the battlefield, and in the tumultuous existence experienced by most of the Scarred Lands even the slightest advantage can make all the difference. A small and enterprising group of psionic-enabled individuals who call themselves the Seekers on the Ether are well aware of this fact and have come up with an ingenious way to make their psionic talents work for, instead of against, them.

History: Formed only in the past several years, the Seekers are a small but highly sought group of adventurers who sell their services to the highest bidder. Their effective methods and habit of producing quick results have rapidly made them in demand by those nobles and lords throughout the whole of Ghelspad and beyond — among those few who have actually heard of them. The services offered by the Seekers are two-fold: they are excellent agents who use their psionic-based skills to obtain information that would normally be unavailable, and they also compile reports on any psionic-based activities within a general area.

In the current atmosphere of general outcry and panic in regards to all things psionic, whether or not the services provided by the Seekers are entirely accurate and true seems to matter little. In fact, the small group has quickly found themselves with more clients and more assignments than they can effectively handle. To this end, they have begun tentatively taking on even more new recruits than usual over the past three years.

Location: The Seekers have no singular location to claim as a base of operations; to do so would be utter folly and would quickly bring about their complete destruction. Rather, the organization is wholly decentralized and spread all over the entire continent of Ghelspad. Its members operate in complete secrecy and their clients are contacted surreptitiously, so they could literally be anyone at anywhere at anytime. These crafty and ambitious agents know that they could potentially have enemies about them at all times (and, in truth, they are often called upon to infiltrate and spy upon the very organizations that would gladly order

their annihilation) and that their only true protection is the concealing cloak of complete anonymity.

Allies and Enemies: Because they actively seek out and uncover any activity tinged with the art of the mind, the Seekers have no allies among their psionically-enabled brethren in the Scarred Lands. In fact, in the short time since their creation, this small group has managed to acquire the intense dislike or outright hatred of nearly every other psionic cabal, organization or cult, due to their disruptive and exposing capabilities. The Seekers are by no means ignorant of this fact and thus do not attempt to ally with any established organizations.

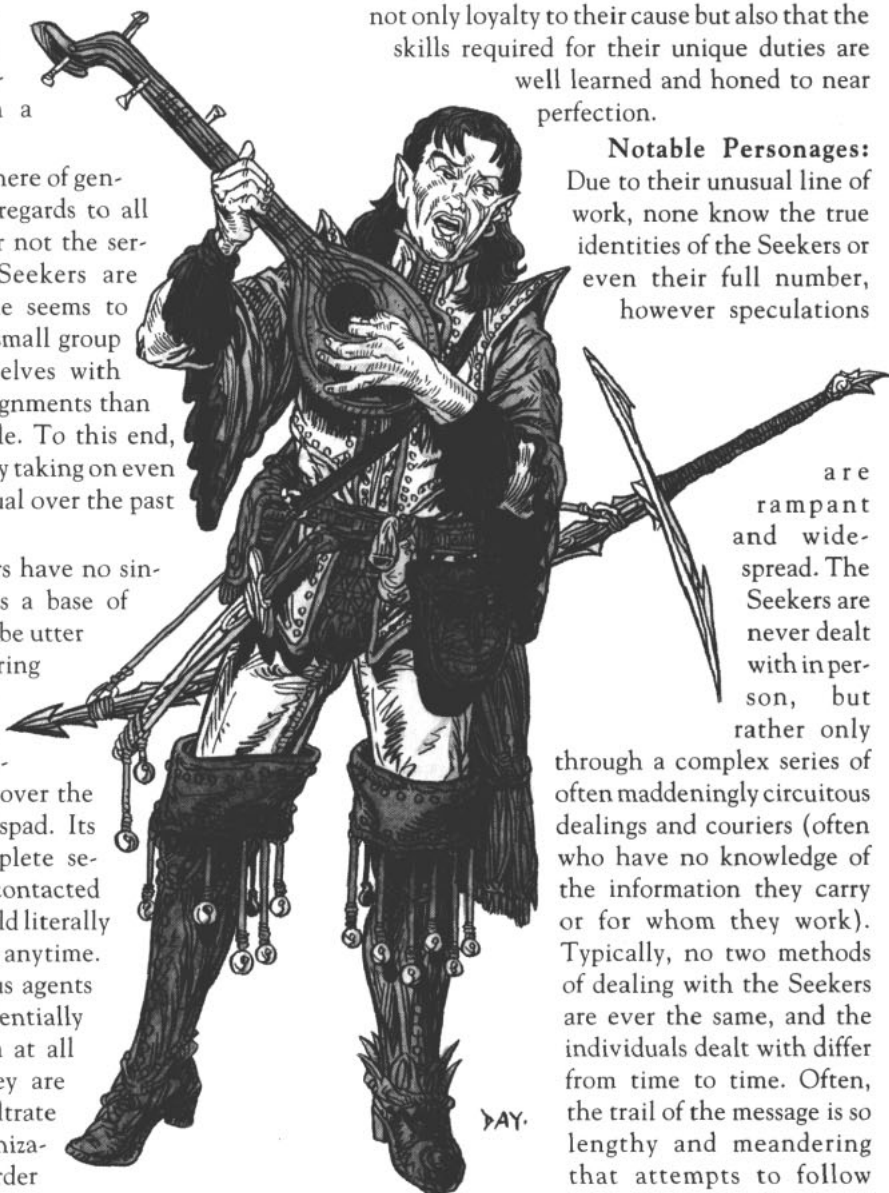
Instead of drawing support from an external group, the Seekers carefully select new recruits from a young age (often purchasing the children outright from slavers or even impoverished parents) and raise the children under their own specific tutelage. In this manner, the Seekers can insure not only loyalty to their cause but also that the skills required for their unique duties are well learned and honed to near perfection.

Notable Personages:

Due to their unusual line of work, none know the true identities of the Seekers or even their full number, however speculations

are rampant and widespread. The Seekers are never dealt with in person, but rather only

through a complex series of often maddeningly circuitous dealings and couriers (often who have no knowledge of the information they carry or for whom they work). Typically, no two methods of dealing with the Seekers are ever the same, and the individuals dealt with differ from time to time. Often, the trail of the message is so lengthy and meandering that attempts to follow



DAY.

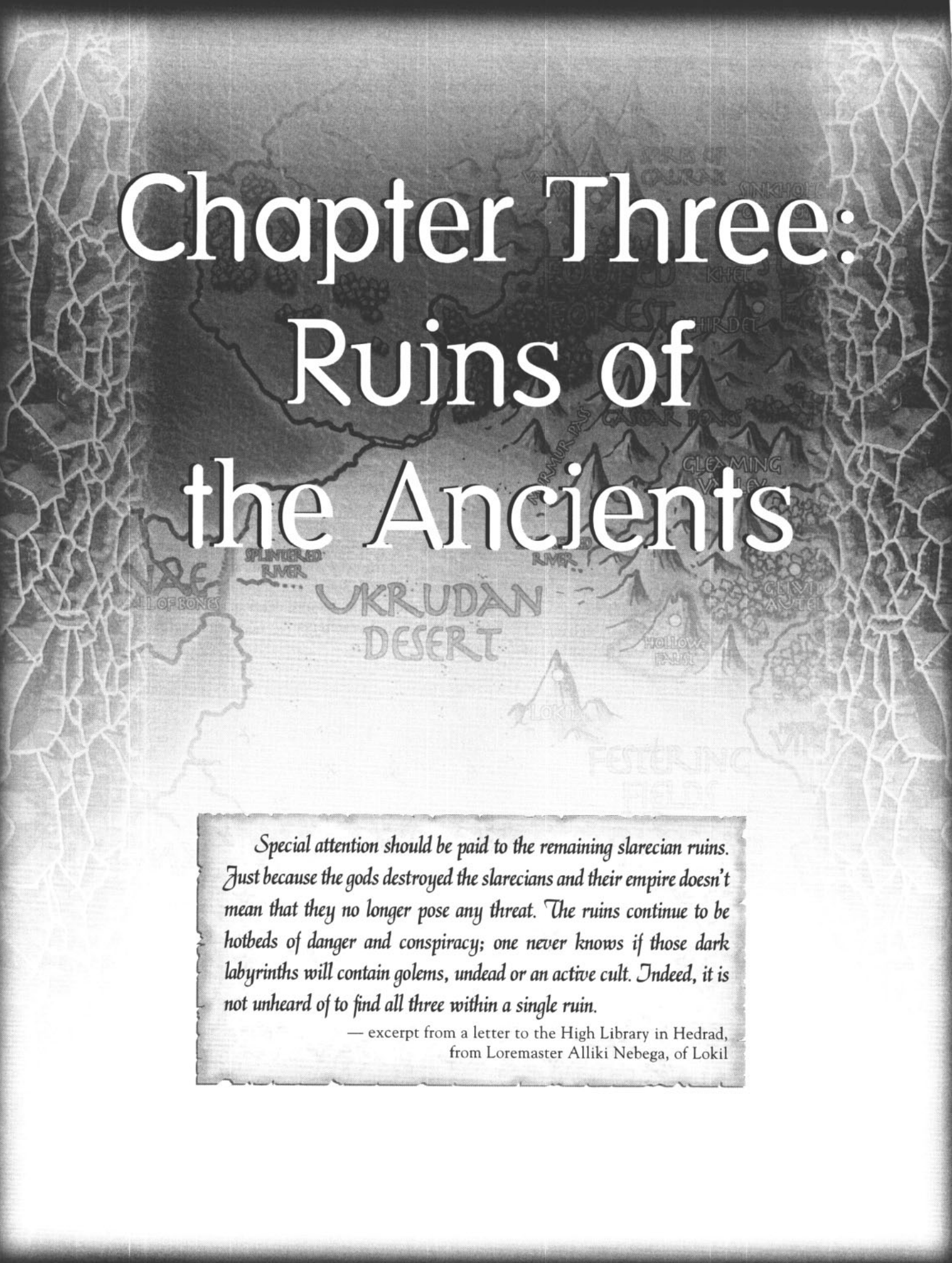
never end, or find their terminus within an utterly defeating and meaningless dead-end. However, by some means the leaders of this unusual group always manage to retrieve their messages and send their own communiqués in turn.

It is widely rumored that the well known womanizing bard Del'Sturis (*male half-elf, Rog3/Psi6/Brd10, CG*) is one of, if not the leader of the Seekers. It is said that he uses his fortune as well as his expansive network of guild contacts, in conjunction with his countless demure suitors, as a means of both gathering and delivering commands to his underlings. Whether or not this is true remains to be seen, but the handsome and debonair Del'Sturis does not refute the claim, rather enjoying the air of "danger and mystery" it lends to his already alluring persona.

Signs of Membership: Among the Seekers, a sign of membership is considered too dangerous. Not only are these trademark symbols of association shunned, they are completely banned by the organization. Operation within the confines of utter secrecy and under the guise of absolute trust with fellow members are the only tell-tale signs of a member of this shadowy brotherhood. So complete is the secrecy of the Seekers that the organization, after its founding, had to actively begin planting rumors about its own existence! Once those seeds took root in the fertile ground of

the suspicious and fear-flooded minds of the nobility and upper classes of Ghelspad, however, the word of the mysterious psions soon spread like wildfire.

Characters of the Seekers: All of the members of the Seekers must have levels in one of the psionic classes, and a great number of them exhibit several classes, including ranks in Rogue, Ranger and so forth. This requirement facilitates the members' uncanny ability to blend in seamlessly with nearly any backdrop or locale in which their assignment takes them. Of course, at least one of their classes must be in either Psion or Psychic Warrior, with the latter being the most common. Of those psionic classes, the disciplines of Psychometabolism, Psychoportation, Psychokinesis, and Metacreativity comprise the vast bulk of their number, closely followed by Telepathy and Clairsentience, in that order. Seekers generally employ all manner of armor, weapons, and items as dictated by the specific needs of their current mission. Generally, feats and skills are selected that allow them the widest range of flexibility, in order to qualify for a greater variety of assignments. When utilized, the psicrystal personalities of Hero, Friendly, Liar, and Sneak are generally selected, but again, the specific requirements of the mission override personal preference on many such selections.



Chapter Three: Ruins of the Ancients

Special attention should be paid to the remaining slarecian ruins. Just because the gods destroyed the slarecians and their empire doesn't mean that they no longer pose any threat. The ruins continue to be hotbeds of danger and conspiracy; one never knows if those dark labyrinths will contain golems, undead or an active cult. Indeed, it is not unheard of to find all three within a single ruin.

— excerpt from a letter to the High Library in Hedrad,
from Loremaster Alliki Nebega, of Lokil

Ruins of the Slarecians

The slarecian ruins presented below may be used by GMs for a multitude of purposes. Whether used as back story elements, or for fleshing out into full multi-layer dungeons, these ruins are found in a variety of places throughout the Scarred Lands. Indeed, it is entirely up to the GM whether or not these places even exist. They are presented with the following format:

Threat: This is the “baseline CR” for each ruin. In general, most of the creatures and traps found inside are within a point or two range of this number.

Location: This gives the precise location of the ruin. GMs should keep in mind that this exact information is rarely known prior to the adventurers’ arrival.

Lore: Divided into sub-sections, this provides the DC for the various skill or class ability checks necessary to ascertain whether or not a given character has heard of the ruin, as well as determining the specifics that individual would know. In general, a roll of this nature shouldn’t be against a specific DC; instead, it should simply be an open roll, with the final result being used by the GM to give the character’s player information.

Features: This tells the GM what kind of features the ruin has, and includes such things as strategic placement in the terrain, memorable architectural specifics, and significant hazards and traps.

Inhabitants: Of course, all ruins must have inhabitants of some sort. This section details the kinds of creatures that dwell within each ruin.

Hooks: A series of quick ideas on involving the adventuring party with the specific ruin being detailed.

The Bloody Grotto

Before the Titanswar, the slarecian city Erlassiach lay nestled in the Cliffs of Constancy. Without slarecian defenders, the city shattered relatively quickly after its inhabitants evacuated. Powerful magics turned the entire metropolis on its side and forced it down, into the burgeoning Blood Sea. The tainted blood of Kadum then twisted and warped the slarecians’ abandoned creations, spawning obscene horrors in the depths of the grotto.

Threat: 7

Location: The Bloody Grotto lies east of Hedrad, deep below the Cliffs of Constancy. The largest entrance is underwater, and was only recently discovered by pisceans. Other openings include a tiny fissure (large enough to allow entrance to two Medium creatures at a time) in the face of the cliffs, as well as a tunnel extending from the sewers beneath the Unseen District of Hedrad.

Lore:

• **Bardic Knowledge:** DC 20 — An ancient city near Hedrad was lost to the Blood Sea after the Titanswar. DC 25 — Sailors speak of a sunken city accessible through an underwater tunnel at the foot of the Cliffs of Constancy.

• **Gather Information:** DC 15 — Huge ratmen have been lurking in the uncontrolled regions of the city of Hedrad. They boil up from beneath the streets, attacking local inhabitants, then return to the sewers. DC 25 — Captured slitheren have spoken of an “aquatic rift” allowing the pisceans and their servants access to Hedrad’s sewers.

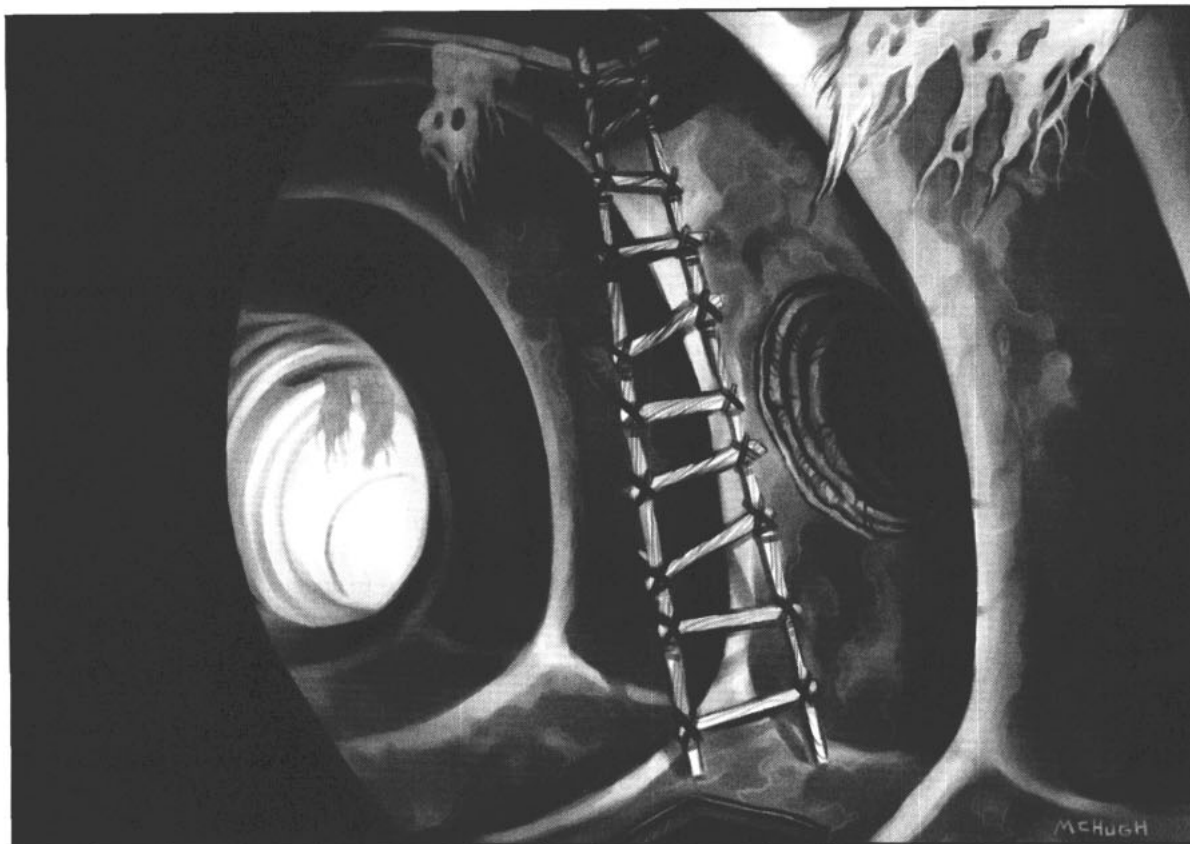
Features: Those sections of the ruins that are not submerged are still waterlogged. The copper-and-salt smell of the Blood Sea is inescapable and stronger here than on the surface. A group of ragged slitheren foamers makes their warren here and their presence is quite obvious, though their stench is almost overpowered by the smell of the fetid water.

• **Architecture:** The cataclysm that submerged the ruins also pitched the entire city on its side. The original floors are set at an angle of almost 90 degrees, and doors open in what are now ceilings and floors. Furniture lies scattered and heaped where gravity left it, or is piled up for the ratmen’s nests. Many of the membrane gates are still quite active, despite their new placement and the water. Most of the rooms have ropes attached to the doors or ladders made of driftwood, constructed by the ratmen.

• **Hazards:** As if the slant of the ruins was not enough, the sodden environment is a breeding ground for molds and other dangerous vegetation such as soma flowers. Leech crystals grow in cracks in the chitinous walls and many of the membrane gates are quite hungry. Psionic zones are uncommon, but they do exist, causing the occasional slitheren to manifest psionic powers. Near-constant wetness has taken its toll on the organic walls, causing spots of the shell to rot and warp. See “rotted shell” below, for more information.

• **Traps:** The Bloody grotto is full of flood pits as well as various traps set by the foamers to discourage wandering creatures and encroaching pisceans. In the areas held by the foamers, a number of the traps left by the slarecians are marked in red paint, but just as many sit as-yet undiscovered.

Inhabitants: In the upper levels, the foamers hold sway, though other amphibious creatures have found their way into the grotto. The foamers are content to keep them out of their nesting grounds and let them wander as added security. The ruins are home to a relatively small nest of slitheren, with a population of only about 300. Other creatures that might be found in the areas above water include angler ooze, gore beetles, and leech hosts, to name a few.



Underwater, the ruins are inhabited by any number of twisted aquatic creatures, mutated by Kadum's blood. The pisceans have begun to explore the submarine portions of the ruins, but they have not yet discovered the link to Hedrad.

Hooks: If the PCs are at sea, they might chase a foamer warband through the cliffside entrance. If they begin the storyline in Hedrad, they might be recruited to assist in one of the relatively regular purges of the sewers. The Patriarchs have already learned from captured slitheren about the rift leading to the Blood Sea, but they do not view the information as a completely credible threat.

The Drifting Citadel

The precise nature of the Drifting Citadel is unknown. Its history is shrouded in the depths of the past, but it has become something of a legend among those who travel the waterways. Sailors from the Blood Sea to the Blossoming Sea have claimed to have seen it at one point or another, or at least know someone who has.

Threat: 4

Location: In the far reaches of the Blossoming Sea, many miles from the coast of Ghelspad, the Drifting Citadel drifts aimlessly on the waves. Sealed tight against the water, constructed of thin walls of slarecian chitin, the citadel lurks like a malevolent iceberg, with only its uppermost layers protruding from the water and the greater part of its bulk unseen beneath the waves. Clearly, the citadel was

not always thus; outside examination reveals that the base must have been broken off in some distant cataclysm, the lowest rooms swiftly sealed against the ocean by hastily formed shadow constructs. Where the citadel might once have stood, or what disaster could have ripped it from its moorings, none can say. An earthquake, perhaps, or a terrible storm, a volcanic eruption, or even the wrath of Kadum. The citadel bears no marks, save the jagged fracture across its base, to show what might have befallen it. It remains today, drifting on the tides of the wide ocean, as a marvel of resilient slarecian architecture — and evidence that even the slarecians could not always stand against the ravages of nature.

Lore:

• **Bardic Knowledge:** DC 15 — A lone castle, or even perhaps a small city, floats on the currents of one of the Scarred Lands' great oceans. Who built it, and what wonders it contains, remain undiscovered. DC 25 — The Blossoming Sea is the ocean on which the castle floats. Some legends state that it has no isle or land beneath it, but is in fact a purely artificial construction. DC 30 — The castle moves to the whim of specific currents. The pattern is complex and difficult to predict, but if one could study sufficient charts and weather patterns it might be possible to calculate the citadel's location.

• **Gather Information:** DC 15 — Sailors occasionally report seeing what appears to be an enormous ship, or some other manner of structure,

on the horizon. All who have attempted to approach this odd vessel have been unable to get very close, due to strange phenomenon or creatures in the surrounding water. If any *have* landed on it, they haven't come back to tell of it.

Features: The portions of the citadel that bob above the water are composed of gleaming wet chitin. The edifice appears to be primarily tall spires, with the tops of a few domes barely protruding from the waves between them. Several portals provide access, but they open only when forced or to the proper telepathic commands. These are iris gates, with membrane gates directly behind them so as not to allow entry to high waves or rain. The halls are slick with a small layer of moisture that has crept in over the years. Furniture — tables, chairs, and lab accoutrements, mostly formed from chitin — lies scattered about the rooms and halls, thrown about by the cataclysm that ripped the citadel free of its base, and by centuries of bobbing and drifting.

The bulk of the structure below the waves looks similar to that above, though it consists of many more wide halls and large chambers. The towers and domes viewed from the surface come together to form a single massive structure below. On the lowest levels, the chambers are partially filled with old, brackish seawater. The very bottom portions of the walls end in broken, jagged edges; the breach is closed off with shadow-stuff, clearly an emergency, stopgap measure. The lower levels also have exit portals that constantly leak moisture. The air is stuffy, and filled with the briny scent of saltwater.

- **Architecture:** Even the interior doors are doubled, with iris gates backed with membrane gates as described above. As the citadel was obviously built partially underwater, the slarecians wished to be able to seal off individual corridors in the unlikely event of a flood. Several knowledge troughs stand in the center of the large domed areas, which seem to function as commune chambers. While the “floor” of the citadel is one large shadow construct, several other rooms contain small tools built of shadow-stuff as well, perhaps created when the slarecians were first attempting to repair whatever happened to their home. The upper floors of the towers — which have small iris/membrane gates intended to be used as cover for repelling a siege should that become necessary — all function as mental bastions or speaking chambers.

- **Hazards:** Those who spend too long on the lowest level, standing on the shadow floor itself, may find their own shadows animating as per the Drendari's vengeance effect. Many of those same rooms on the lower levels are fully flooded, and forcing open the wrong iris/membrane pairing can make that particular problem far worse. Other

dangers include the rather hungry membrane gates, and the fact that several of the inner floors, exposed to saltwater over the years, have become rotted shells. The mental bastion towers often have peripheral fields — a boon to the slarecians, who knew how to deal with them, but disconcerting to everyone else.

Outside the citadel, all manner of oceanic hazards will challenge explorers — from whirlpools and storms, to sea creatures afflicted with the Psionic Sensitivity feat (see Appendix).

- **Traps:** Many of the Drifting Citadel's traps no longer function. Several preservation tanks in the lower levels are still active, however; a few sit waiting for someone to accidentally tumble in, while others contain slarecian-created abominations, abandoned when their creators fled the citadel. A few mechanical traps, such as psychic poison needles (as well as needles with more traditional venoms), still function in the upper towers.

Inhabitants: Several slarecian shadows, no doubt created by Drendari's vengeance, haunt the lower levels. When the citadel broke free of its base, the slarecians were experimenting upon a number of large vermin; most of the upper levels are now swarming with the descendents of these unwilling passengers. The spiders, centipedes and what-not are fed by a family of kapoacynth (aquatic gargoyles) who gained entry to the citadel and made it their home. As they are all but immune to the vermin's bites, the kapoacynth treat them as amusing pets.

Hooks: The heroes might hear legends of the “floating castle” and decide to seek it out — or, if they require a more solid motivation, they might hear of a reward offered for the rescue of someone else who sought out the edifice and has not returned; the fate of the missing individual being up to the GM. Alternatively, the adventurers might be on a ship fortunate (or unfortunate) enough to catch sight of the citadel's towers. Anything from a curious captain to a sudden storm that sinks the ship might inspire the PCs to attempt entry.

Ruhk Khellantras — the Trees of Ash

The natives of the Gamulganjus speak of the Trees of Ash, warning that only misery and insanity come to those who stumble upon them. It is claimed that even worse fates are given to those fools who seek out this place deliberately.

Threat: 9

Location: Deep in the Gamulganjus jungle, where the tepuje nomads and even the fierce terali do not go, stands a thick and towering copse of trees. From a distance, these giant growths appear normal, albeit perhaps unhealthy or even dead. Only as one draws near does it become clear that

the trees are not wood at all, but are rather a hard, oily chitin, sculpted into a shape that would, from a distance, blend into the surroundings. This is Ruhk Khellantras, a slarecian complex built both above and below ground. Its towers are the enormously thick false trees, each of which may contain dozens of rooms. Its passageways run from tower to tower through bridges formed by hollow branches, while its lowest chambers are hidden inside fake roots broader than entire keeps. Various hidden membrane gates allow entrance to Ruhk Khellantras, but most are hidden high in the false trees, accessible only to those who can levitate — or are willing to risk a truly prodigious climb.

Lore:

• *Bardic Knowledge:* DC 15 — Hidden within the depths of the Gamulganjus is a deadly place called the Trees of Ash, where natives will not go. DC 20 — Ancient legends among some of the local tepuje nomadic tribes claim this is *Ruhk Khellantras*, a name that translates roughly into “Garden of Dreams.” DC 30 — Those same legends state that any who go near this place experience odd thoughts, feelings and visions.

• *Gather Information:* DC 10 — Nobody goes to that part of the jungle. It’s dangerous, and forbidden by ancient tradition. DC 20 — Strange beasts, with the bodies of men but faces writhing with tentacles, occasionally hold gruesome rites and conduct sacrifices there.

Features: Though the exterior of the Trees of Ash are, indeed, sculpted to resemble trees, the interior is clearly unnatural. Floors and walls of smooth chitin or unidentifiable fleshy substances wind in tight circles, connecting small chambers, transport tubes and spiraling staircases. Many of the rooms are taller than they are wide, and are equipped with climbing walls for ease of use. From within, the complex almost feels like a massive castle, with larger rooms among the roots and towers comprised of the trees themselves. The towers are connected by a veritable cobweb of passages running through the branches, making it exceptionally easy to get lost.

• *Architecture:* Perhaps the two most common features of *Ruhk Khellantras* are membrane gates — which are often designed to blend in with the walls, effectively making them secret doors (DC 15 Spot check to locate) for those who do not know where they are — and climbing walls, to make the upper galleries of the larger chambers easy to reach. Very little in the way of original furniture, or any other movable objects, remains in the complex; in fact, it very much seems as though someone has come along and cleaned out the place. Several of the towers do, however, have pieces of unusually small wooden furniture scattered throughout the rooms. These same towers have several rooms that are literally carpeted in old animal bones. In the tops of the highest towers are a number of oath and speaking chambers, long unused.



- **Hazards:** Falling is perhaps the most frequent hazard encountered here. The climbing walls in several of the rooms have grown old and ineffective, with portions having turned greasy rather than sticky. The spiral stairs are steep and narrow, and the entrances to the complex itself are mostly located hundreds of feet above the jungle floor. Numerous “pockets” of psychic energy — from psionic zones, to empowerment and enlightenment fields, to free-floating sensations — fill random passages, and many of the walls are coated in distilled madness.

- **Traps:** The “towers” are relatively free of traps, save for the occasional attuned membrane or disjunction portal protecting a slarecian’s former private sanctum or laboratory. The lower levels possess numerous extractors and feeding chambers; the feeding chambers in particular are remarkably well-preserved, given the age of the complex. A few of the upper towers, those occupied by the new inhabitants, are full of far more primitive traps, such as traditional arrow launchers and poison needles.

Inhabitants: While much of the complex is deserted, several of the towers have been occupied by a small tribe of gnomes. Initially simple explorers, these gnomes have, en masse, been driven utterly insane by the distilled madness and free-floating sensations of the complex. They are now a violent, bloodthirsty bunch, who have developed both sadistic and cannibalistic tendencies. They are sufficiently crafty to hide their true intentions, and have been practicing passing themselves off as innocent explorers trapped by the horrors of *Ruhk Khellantras*. Fortunately for those they encounter, however, the gnomes suffer a –4 circumstance penalty to any such attempts at deception, as they have various hideous and insane mannerisms that give them away.

While the lower levels are not occupied per se, they are visited frequently by mind flayers, former servitors of the slarecians. These hideous beasts return to this site as part of their constant quest for a means to bring their “gods” back to Scarn. They have become aware of the gnomes, and are currently observing to see if they would make good slave-soldiers.

Hooks: If a tepuje hunting party went missing in this region, the tribe’s fears and traditions might force them to seek outside aid in locating their missing compatriots, rather than violating the regional taboo themselves; PCs traveling the area are likely candidates. Druids of Denev or the *ushada* might also prevail upon stalwart heroes to investigate the legendary Trees of Ash, perhaps assuming that the site represents a bastion of Mormo- or Chern-worshippers. PCs seeking to collect tepuje

crystals in the Gamulganjus might be attracted to the region, either by its intense psychic aura or simply by rumors of “strange dreams and visions,” which certainly implies the presence of some psionic force.

The Shining Shard

In the heart of the vast Ukrudan Desert, a monolithic obelisk stood as mute witness to the passage of Thulkas as he crossed the burning sands. This immense tower somehow withstood his fury, but the heat and sand caused by the Titan’s movements polished its chitinous surface to a glassy finish. The obelisk still keeps watch over the sands of the Ukrudan, and is now known by the various tribes of the area as the Shining Shard.

Threat: 4

Location: Beneath the Shining Shard lies a massive slarecian complex. For those who know where to look, a secret entrance may be found. If the characters dig at the location marked by the shadow of the obelisk’s tip, at sundown, they will discover a sealed and flamelock trapped door leading down into the underground. Another entrance lies far to the west, camouflaged under a sand dune, but that portal is jealously guarded by the slarecian dragon, Stakaarletas.

Lore:

- **Bardic Knowledge:** DC 10 — The Shard is the key to the location of a magic treasure. DC 15 — The Shining Shard is the only remaining sign of an enormous city that stood before the Titanswar. DC 20 — The secrets (and treasures) of that fallen civilization may be found if brave explorers search at the Shard’s furthest reach. DC 25 — The Shard is a remnant of a great device built by the slarecians.

- **Gather Information:** DC 15 — A dragon has been raiding caravans near the Shining Shard and is having a chilling effect on trade. DC 20 — The dragon’s horn is apparently quite similar in appearance to the Shard itself.

Features: On the surface, the desert is nearly featureless. Shifting dunes and scourgeweed make navigation difficult at best. Sand vortices and storms turn an already risky proposition into pure hell for those unprepared for desert travel. The only permanent landmark in the region is the obelisk, which is part of a nonfunctional apparatus built into the slarecian city’s common area: a massive astronomical observatory. Over the last two centuries, the desert has insinuated itself into this city, and sand now covers many of the floors and fills some of the passageways. The ever-present granules trickle from ceilings, and in some spots the sand is deep and loose enough to pose a danger to adventurers.



• **Architecture:** The most unique piece of architecture in the complex is located in the common area. A massive replica of Scarn's solar system takes up the center of the hub cavern, with the various levels arrayed around this immense room. The heavens were completely reconfigured following the Divine War, so the model itself is pitifully out of date and will be unfamiliar to all but the most ancient of creatures. The constellations and the ordering of the planets would be of interest to many burgeoning astronomers or astrologers, and hints at the fortunes Scarn might have faced, if not for the Titanswar. Humongous gears and pulleys indicate that the model is intended to move, but it is currently silent and still. The southern arm of the first level hub is home to a tribe of adapted kobolds (see appendix) who have taken up residence, and their "improvements" can be seen in nearly every room. They do not like to leave their territory except to hunt, but they know the layout of the ruins better than any other living creature save perhaps Stakaarletas.

There are no surviving membrane gates, due to the arid climate. Their parchment-like remains hang dry and brittle in their frames, and are easily torn away.

• **Hazards:** Outside the ruins, sand vortices are a common sight. Sand slides and sand traps are also encountered all too regularly. Scourgeweed is one of the only plants that will grow in the harsh

environment, and its addictive nature makes it a bad choice for animal fodder. Inside, clusters of leech crystals grow fat due to the kobolds' presence. Psionic diseases are also easy to contract; in particular, the adapted kobolds seem to be prone to cerebral parasites, and cascade flu (see the *Psionics Handbook*) sweeps through the tribe now and then. Psionic zones are abundant, particularly peripheral zones, and time slips even occur infrequently. The omnipresent sand camouflages smaller creatures and, if deep enough, masks other hazards altogether.

• **Traps:** There are relatively few traps inside the ruins, and the dusty halls are largely unexplored. Fire-based traps are a particular favorite here, though shadow spines are also prevalent when items and locations have been trapped at all.

• **Inhabitants:** In the areas surrounding the ruins, asaathi outposts are few and far between, and the sutaks are encountered rarely. The Shard is home to the largest concentration of adapted kobolds on Ghelspad. Builder beetles are common, and their larvae make up a staple of the kobolds' diet. The builder beetle hive is located in the lowest level of the ruin's eastern arm. It has been kept relatively small, due to kobold predations. Other subterranean creatures have found their way into the city, and a juvenile slarecian dragon makes its lair in the lowest levels, preying on kobolds foolish enough to scavenge in its territory. The

dragon is fond of raiding nearby caravans, and enters and leaves the ruins by way of a camouflaged tunnel far to the west of the Shard.

Hooks: Legends of a vast treasure hidden near the Shard are common knowledge in nearly every tribe that wanders the Ukrudan. Alternately, the dragon's raids are starting to affect trade in the area, and characters might be hired to deal with the problem.

The Web of Razors

One of the sites where slaves were traditionally offered to the Slarecian Empire as peace-trade, the Web of Razors is long abandoned, but still feared.

Threat: 6

Location: Deep in the Canyon of Souls, in a vale so far off the standard routes that even the wind-walker guides do not know of it, a steep crevice plunges into the depths of the earth. Here the winds, already fierce and deadly as they are elsewhere in the Canyon, turn the shards of rock into vicious cutting blasts. Entry is a lethal prospect for anyone without heavy magical or psionic protections — and that's just the way the former inhabitants liked it. Within that crevice stand a number of structures, designed to look like rocky outcroppings, connected by tunnels through the sides of the canyon itself. There a population of slarecians made their homes, hidden from the eyes of divine races and titan-spawn alike. The halls are largely empty now, but not even the gods know for certain what the slarecians might have left behind.

Lore:

- *Bardic Knowledge:* DC 20 — The elves of the eastern Ganjus used to set up sentry posts specifically to watch for some threat from the canyons of what is now Ontenazu. DC 30 — Legend has it that when those elven sentries returned home after several weeks on duty, they were kept quarantined and carefully examined with divination spells.

- *Gather Information:* DC 10 — Even the natives of Ontenazu don't know all the reaches of the Canyon, but they believe that previous occupants of the land may have known more. DC 15 — Certain canyons are full of gale-force winds that seem unnatural, even as compared to the normal fearsome gusts of the region. For three to five times the normal guide fee, a wind-walker will lead travelers to, but not into, said canyons. DC 25 — Creatures dwelling near some of the aforementioned canyons seem abnormal, both stronger and more vicious than would be the average for their kind.

Features: The rooms and halls of the Web of Razors are stone, with only a very few walls constructed in the slarecians' standard chitin. The stone walls are unnaturally smooth throughout most of the complex, but are horribly pitted in the passages leading to the outside world as a result of

the razor winds (see below). Most of the complex's doorways are paired iris gates; one gate opens into a small room, and the second door will not open until the first shuts. The inner chambers are absolutely full of furniture and equipment, much of which is constructed from locally occurring crystal, but the outer rooms are utterly empty of anything but broken rock. Because the Web of Razors is constructed from naturally occurring tunnels, the complex is fairly haphazard and random, with passages crisscrossing each other in all directions, including up and down. It is this that gives the Web the first part of its name.

- *Architecture:* Almost every door in the complex is an iris gate and these are always found in pairs, as described above. The entire Web is lit by illumination crystals resonating at unusual psionic frequencies; psionic creatures can see as though they had darkvision, whereas other creatures must supply their own light source. Many of the caverns are inaccessible without flight or levitation, and several of these are home to reanimation chambers (some with undead still in them, as they have had no means of escape). Shadow mirrors, in which the slarecians would study the souls of their experimental subjects, can also be found here.

- *Hazards:* Numerous forsaken zones fill the various caverns, as the slarecians were performing experiments on the nature of the human (and humanoid) soul. Similarly, many of the corridors and rooms generate mindspeakers, scramblers, and untethered shadows and voices. Perhaps the greatest hazard of the region, however, is the presence of the razor winds (a CR 7 hazard). These not only fill the cavern outside, but a combination of expert construction and permanent telekinetic fields cause the winds to scour many of the entrance halls and outer chambers as well. The slarecians learned to surround themselves with telekinetic protection against the wind and rock. Anyone else is subject to horrific damage. All those caught in one of these winds suffers 1d6 points of slashing damage per round in the canyon, or 1d4 points when in the outer passages. All victims must also succeed in a DC 12 Reflex save to avoid being blinded. Other than these effects, the razor winds are similar to windstorms (as described in Chapter 3 of the DMG). They are also rather analogous to the hideous storms of the Bonewind Hills in Termana, a coincidence that has not gone unnoticed by Lethene's followers. They have not yet determined why a weather formation created by their patron titan in the south almost perfectly duplicates a phenomenon here that was at least partially created by the slarecians — and few of them like the guesses they've come up with....

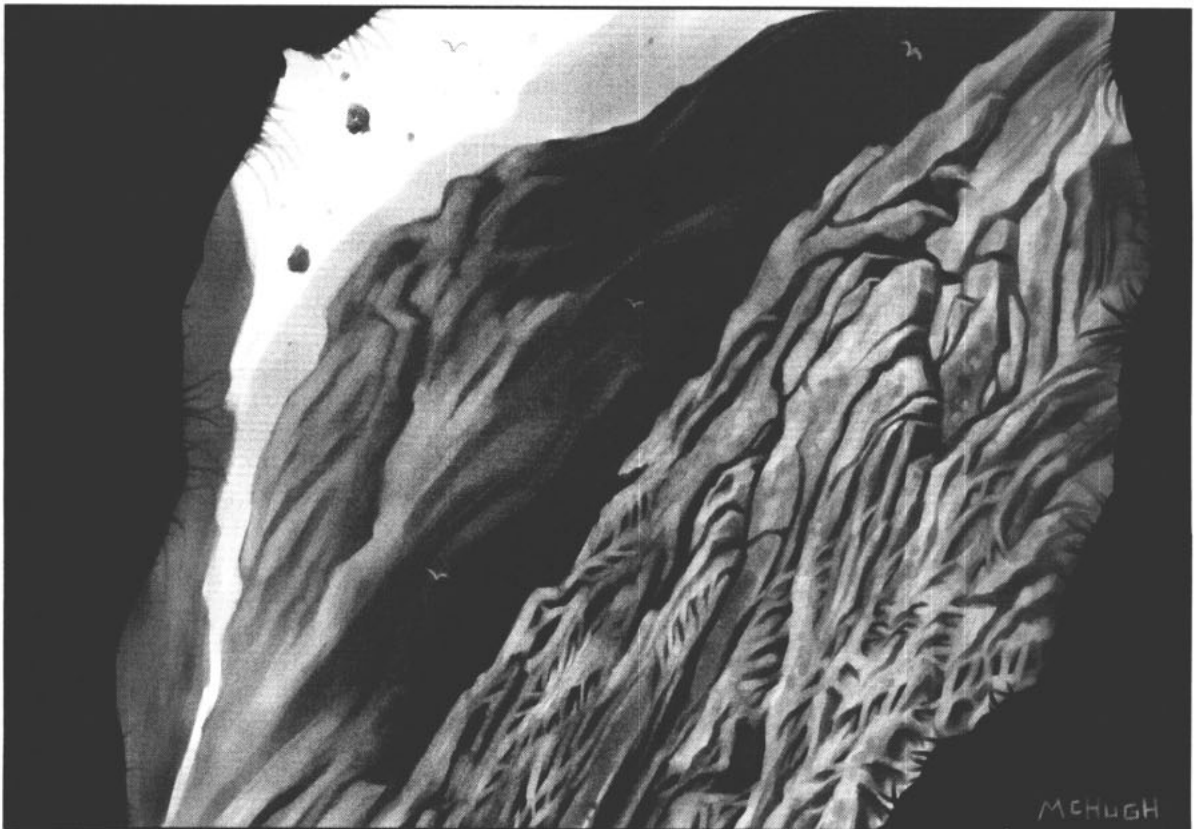
• **Traps:** Several of the rooms in the Web that are still subject to the razor winds are rigged with *ectoplasmic floors* and *entrapping surfaces*, to ensure that those who don't belong here are caught in the deadly gale for as long as possible. Interior rooms possess these traps as well, along with fascination crystals, mind fields, memory eaters and other methods to capture or incapacitate rather than kill. Once intruders succeeded in winning past the winds, the slarecians figured it was more efficient to capture them for use in their soul-experimentation.

Inhabitants: Most of the Web of Razors is empty now, but several small portions of it are not completely abandoned. As many of the reanimation chambers are inaccessible without levitation of some sort, several corporeal undead still lurk within, trapped since the days of slarecian occupation. A small handful of incorporeal undead haunt the ruins as well; these souls were initially trapped in the forsaken zones, and grew so enraged at the world that they remained on Scarn even after finding their way out. Further, the rock walls of the canyons are rich in minerals — one of the reasons the slarecians chose this location was in the (failed) hope of discovering more crystals like those found in the tepujes of Termana. Several xorn make frequent trips into the nearby cliffs, and they frequently pass through the complex to consume some of the leftover crystals on which the slarecians experimented.

Hooks: A citizen of Ontenazu, with more ambition than is perhaps good for him, has decided to explore the validity of the legends surrounding these side caverns. As none of his countrymen will accompany him, he's seeking brave adventurers willing to travel and explore in exchange for a small fee and a large share of any treasure found. Alternatively, druids of Lethene may force several wind-walker guides to show them into the cavern, in hopes of determining once and for all if the similarities between the razor winds and the bonewinds are coincidence or something more. Even if the PCs aren't motivated to rescue the kidnapped (and soon to be slain) Ontenazans, preventing Lethene cultists from finding whatever wonders may be concealed in the vale should be inspiration enough.

Zatasthriax, the Bandit's Folly

When Kelra Endili and his band of thieves made their base in a small cave, they had no idea what they were getting themselves into. Through a fissure in the rear wall, they discovered an abandoned black city, and began to explore. Convinced that a great treasure must be hidden in the surreal ruins, Kelra vanished down the corridors of the unknown metropolis, and returned with a new light in his eye and a name for the city — Zatasthriax. He continually talked of transforming the ruins into a haven for all manner of criminals, and using



the place as the basis of his own empire. But one by one, Endili's men vanished from their cavernous stronghold. Paranoia and fear set in, and many of the thief's subordinates abandoned their leader to his fate. The small group who stayed faced horrible consequences for their loyalty.

Kelra's obsession with the city grew, and he pushed his now greatly diminished band further into its depths, to hunt for the treasure that surely existed there. After narrowing their search to one final section, they broke down the iris gate of a laboratory and found themselves staring at their missing companions among a horde of the undead.

Threat: 6

Location: 100 miles north of Hollowfaust, the only entrance lies on the west face of Mt. Elas. The cavern lies a fair way off the path, but signs of

recent passage may be noticed by competent trackers. The cave itself is partially concealed behind a sloppily constructed mound of camouflaging brush. Characters will notice the entrance on a DC 15 Spot check.

Lore:

• **Bardic Knowledge:** DC 15 — Some nights, strange lights can be seen near the peak of Mt. Elas, east of the Splintered river. DC 20 — Legends describe the lights as spirits escaping from some dark prison beneath the mountain.

• **Gather Information:** DC 15 — The thieves band's leader, Kelra Endili, has a large price on his head. DC 20 — Bandit attacks near Mt. Elas have quite suddenly decreased, but attacks by the undead have increased substantially. DC 25 — Witnesses last spotted the bandits fleeing into the foothills of Mt. Elas.

Features: The city of Zatasthriax has obviously been the site of recent looting and chambers near the entrance show signs of human habitation. The farther into the city characters explore, however, the more untouched it is. The shattering of Scarn was not kind to Zatasthriax, fissures rip through walls and floors, making for fragile footing and allowing all manner of creatures into the city while blocking off the passages to the surface.

• **Architecture:** Laboratories make up the majority of the intact chambers, reflecting the slarecians analytical and sterile perspective, even regarding magic such as necromancy. Signs of recent looting are easily visible and footsteps are simple to track in the thick dust blanketing everything. Zatasthriax's transport gate is intact and operational.

• **Hazards:** Awful things were done in Zatasthriax, and those events refuse to be forgotten. Time echoes are relatively common in the corridors and whispering voices wait for the chance to be heard again. The architecture is as twisted as the experiments that were once performed there. Near the transport gate, random warps are a fairly common annoyance.

• **Traps:** Zatasthriax was prepared when the gods and titans attacked. Many traps can be found by intrepid explorers wandering the halls. Slarecian traps are, of course, dominant, but Kelra's followers set up their own defenses against the undead and other looters. Teleport traps and *mass concussion* traps have been discovered by more than one unlucky member of Endili's crew.

Inhabitants: The undead subjects of a number of slarecian experiments now wander freely through the streets of the city. Kelra and his followers are all but trapped in the building that houses the furnaces, which they use to dispose of corpses (causing

Fetid Transformation

Fetid Transformation: Spread by damage from infected creatures (contact); DC 12; **Incubation:** 1d4 days; **Damage:** Transformation.

Living creatures infected with fetid transformation suffer a horrific rotting of the flesh. Those who fail their saving throw are stunned for the next 2d4 rounds, during which time the victim's life force is whisked out of her and she is essentially turned into an undead and gains a zombie-like appearance (ashen gray skin) and manner thereafter.

While victims of the disease receive all the immunities typical of the undead, they are also caught in a terrible limbo between life and death. The trauma of the condition leaves the victim in a kind of walking coma, a state of shock that cannot be shaken. The character will attack anything that gets close enough, lashing out with teeth and fists at friends and foes alike. Until the effects of the fetid touch can be removed, a victim's wounds no longer heal naturally, and even magical healing spells and potions do not aid in healing. Individuals in this state can be hurt further, however, so it's an extremely perilous condition.

If *remove disease* is unavailable, the character does have a chance at natural recovery. A victim receives a new saving throw every day to attempt to recover naturally, but the DC increases by one per day. So, the day after the affliction is acquired, the Fortitude save is DC 13, and the next day it is DC 14.

Whether afflicted characters have *remove disease* cast on them, or recover naturally, they shake off the condition, but their Constitution is temporarily lowered to 9. This Constitution damage heals at the regular rate.

Kelra Endili

Kelra Endili, Mad Bandit Lord, Male Human, Rog5/Psi1: SZ M (5'8"); HD 5d6+1d4+6; hp 28; pp 3; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 +1 leather armor); BAB/Grp +5/+6; Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, *short sword* +2) or +6 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Full Atk +8 melee (1d6+3, *short sword* +2) or +6 ranged (1d8, light crossbow); Space/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft.; SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ sibilant infection; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; PD Psychoportation; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 14.

Skills: Disable Device +6, Disguise +9, Escape Artist +7, Forgery +2, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +6, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Psicraft +5, Search +5, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +3, Swim +3, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +4, Use Rope +9.

Feats: Dodge, Evasion, Run, Uncanny Dodge, Weapon Finesse (short sword).

Languages: common, goblin, elven, halfling.

Special Attacks: Sneak attack +3d6.

Special Qualities: Infected – Currently suffering from a sibilant infection (see below), trapfinding, trap sense +1.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, short sword +2, light crossbow, psicrystal (sneak).

Powers Discovered (2+d/d): 0-lvl – burst, catfall, elfsight. 1st-lvl – call weaponry.

the chimneys to emit the strange lights recently seen near the peak of the mountain). The most dangerous inhabitant, however, is invisible to the naked eye. A hideous disease similar to the *fetid touch* of the slarecian ghouls has been loosed by the thieves' explorations.

Hooks: The undead freed by Endili are trickling into the countryside, terrorizing and infecting travelers and villagers alike. When the necromancers of Hollowfaust hear reports of increased undead activity, they are likely to send a group to investigate the source of the disturbance. Some of the bandits who deserted their leader have already been infected with the disease, and once their symptoms manifest the spread of the infection must be contained quickly. Alternatively, the lure of Endili's bounty as well as the treasure surely gathered by the bandits might help pique the party's curiosity.

Designing Slarecian Ruins

The cities left behind by the slarecians are twisted, warped places in the eyes of both titanspawn and divine races. These ruins are not merely crumbling stone and mortar. They are organic constructs, chitinous shells and living things psionically shaped

by slarecian architects. The majority of the living creatures bred to serve the slarecians have long since died, leaving membrane gates and other apparatus that no longer work properly. Those that do still function are receiving some sort of sustenance, usually in the form of wandering animals and curious treasure hunters who get too close.

When designing a slarecian ruin for your players, keep in mind that the slarecians did little without reason, though their rationale is rarely apparent. They chose the locations of their cities and outposts carefully, the better to study the surface dwelling species or to keep watch over a settlement or culture. Their thought processes were completely alien, however, not only to the divine races, but also to Scarn's very plane of existence, so slarecian motivations may not be readily apparent to explorers. It is important, however, for the GM to consider the reasons behind an emplacement.

The overall aesthetic of slarecian architecture is darkly organic. Iridescent blue-black walls curve up to meet the ceiling, their smoothness interrupted occasionally by raised, unreadable symbols. Crystalline fixtures give off pale illumination where treasure hunters or worse haven't stolen them.

Slarecian architects designed their homes in line with their own strange perceptions. Slightly odd angles predominate, just "off" enough to discomfit outsiders without them knowing quite *why*. Prolonged exposure to slarecian architecture can induce a vague sense of vertigo, disorienting and confusing explorers. It is easy to become lost in the ruins, never to return, and many adventurers who have come back have done so with very little of the wits they possessed when they entered the ruins.

Laboratories are common, and focused on everything from necromancy to researching the shadow powers stolen from Drendari. All their studies bear the mark of their search for escape, however. The slarecians are a singularly driven race, with one goal in mind, and everything they do reflects that goal, even their architectural design.

The layout of slarecian complexes actually has more in common with a labyrinth than the term *city* might suggest. The streets are usually a vast network of fluted tunnels, branching off into the various chambers that make up the laboratories, meeting rooms and homes of the slarecians. Common areas are typically the largest caverns, with multiple levels reachable by often hideous networks of organic pathways. In these areas, the most elaborate architecture can be found, with large buildings crafted out of chitin, metal and rock to meet specific requirements to which the caverns are, for one reason or another, unsuited. Illumination crystals are set into the bottom of the catwalks, still lighting the way for the city's absent inhabitants.

Inspiration

Before running a game that involves a slarecian city, watch *Aliens*, read H.P. Lovecraft, Caitlin R. Kiernan or Clive Barker and find art by H.R. Giger. Remember always that these creatures are not “human-like.” They are outsiders from another dimension that were trapped into primitive fleshy forms. Their state of mind is not bound by this plane’s reality like the divine races, who have never known anything else.

In the time since the slarecians were imprisoned, their tightly controlled cities have been shattered in cataclysms and occupied by various creatures. Entire ecosystems have built up in the blue-black corridors of some ruins. The darkness of the subterranean cities, and the manner of experiments performed there, favor undead shadows and their ilk. The unnerving qualities of the architecture paired with the magic and psychic manifestations can disturb and confuse a party, making them easy prey for doppelgangers, mimics and other insidious monsters. Entire tribes of creatures have taken up residence in the ruins and been twisted by their homes’ ambient emanations, manifesting psionics and other strange abilities. The rotting remnants of slarecian experiments still scrape through the surreal halls.

Description is imperative in running adventures in slarecian ruins, to keep their ancient catacombs from becoming just another dungeon. Play up the “weirdness factor” of the mostly organic materials used in construction, the angles and the alien devices. Mood is everything when dealing with the slarecians. Keep in mind that the architecture is built in such a way to actively deny the hold of the material world on the city’s inhabitants. Apparently frail spires support great weights and the chambers and catacombs are designed with geometry that seems impossible. A mixture of magic, psionics and deft engineering shaped slarecian cities into works of weird, but undeniable, beauty.

Architecture

Slarecian ruins should be unique, not merely “dungeons with black spray-paint.” To this end, the following common features of slarecian architecture are intended as a toolkit to allow GMs to design their own slarecian ruins and give a bit of insight into the alien mindset of their creators. This list is by no means exhaustive, but it is representative of the sorts of architecture one might find in these ruins.

Alien Angles

In their examinations of worlds and dimensions other than Scarn, the slarecians discovered places in which the very laws of physics and mathematics functioned differently than they do here. Once trapped in physical form, the slarecians found it *exceptionally* difficult, but not utterly impossible, to make use of those otherworldly techniques in constructing their domains. Thus, in certain rare slarecian ruins, hallways and chambers intersect and connect in physically impossible ways. Turning left might lead a traveler into a room *above* the hall in which he was in; traveling around a gentle curve in a passage might place him in the center of a room that only has an exit in the floor. This is not teleportation in the strictest sense, as the two areas that are linked must actually be in proximity to one another; the connection between them simply takes an utterly alien, non-Euclidean form.

Because these junctions can be difficult if not downright impossible to map, even the most savvy of adventurers often find themselves lost under such circumstances.

Builder Hive

Slarecian architects made extensive use of fist-sized builder beetles that have the ability to excrete a hard substance similar to their own iridescent, chitinous exoskeletons. Massive swarms of these beetles worked together under the psionic direction of the architects to sculpt entire complexes to their masters’ specifications.

The beetles did not die out when their masters were imprisoned. Rather, they continued to swarm in abandoned laboratories and caverns near the slarecian cities, creating chaotic and elaborate sculpted hives of surreal beauty. These hives can grow large enough to fill an entire cavern, twisting and bonding with the stalactites and stalagmites, and crawling with vast hordes of builder beetles (see Appendix). Characters who venture too close to the hive run the risk of attracting a builder swarm, as detailed below.

Adventurers foolhardy enough to enter an active hive find themselves in a tumultuous maze of shifting walls, floors and ceilings. Builder beetles can be found on nearly any surface, digesting and recreating the hive in infinite variations at the whim of their queen. The queen sits at the center of the hive, surrounded by a phalanx of beetles who will obey her every command.

Climbing Walls

While most slarecians had various means of flight or levitation at their disposal, many of their slave and servitor races did not. Portions of slarecian complexes therefore use organic trans-

port tubes, but they only allow access to select areas. In many of their cities, particularly those heavily populated by servitor races, the slarecians layered the walls and even ceilings of certain rooms with a transparent coating of psychically reactive ectoplasm. This ectoplasm is exceptionally sticky, allowing anyone who wishes to climb the walls, ceilings, and other surfaces as though under a *spider climb* effect. Slarecian slaves used this primarily for maintenance of their masters' facilities.

Because the ectoplasm is psychically active, it senses the desires of the climber, and grows more or less sticky at need. This allows climbers to actually move across the surface, as opposed to remaining stuck in place. Anyone ignorant of the ectoplasm's function (such as most adventurers) will be unable to use it to climb, as it is only sticky for those who actively wish to utilize it.

Commune Chamber

Present in every slarecian city, the commune chamber is usually the largest single room in the ruin, since it must be able to accommodate the city's entire population. When the slarecians decided to gather, for political, educational or strategic reasons, this is the location they came to. The chamber is large and generally oval-shaped, though the particular configuration varies from complex to complex. A central dais is designed to allow the speaker who has the floor to be heard in every nook and cranny of the room, thanks to the acoustics provided by the strange and very precise architecture of such places. The dais is surrounded by a tiered series of benches to seat the assemblage. The ceiling is the most impressive feature, it is typically chitin sculpted into an elaborate cradle for a humungous milky globe that brightens the room.

Dimensional Convergence

A dimensional convergence occurs only at the most extreme points of the alien angles discussed above, and even then only rarely. In these areas, the angle of construction is so extreme and so mathematically impossible that it actually comes near to breaching the barriers between dimensions. In such cases, spells and psionics that conjure extraplanar materials, summon extraplanar beings, or allow communication with extraplanar or deceased creatures, all function at an increased caster level. (Caster level is improved by 2d4.)

It is unclear whether the slarecians built these convergences deliberately, or simply took advantage of something that occurred by accident, but many slarecian ruins have small chambers built just beside extreme angles in the passageways to take fullest advantage of these effects.

Displacement Door

Mostly used as a sort of security through obscurity, displacement doors have the appearance of any other portal, whether iris gate, membrane gate, or any other kind of door in the slarecian ruins. However, these doors have an enchantment similar to that of the displacer beast. Thus, they appear to be up to 5 feet away from their true location. *True seeing* reveals the portal's actual placement.

Failed Experiment Storage

The slarecians created numerous servitors in their day, birthing unique abominations and entire races, and even turning some of their own number into new entities such as the slarecian dragons. Some were intended as slaves from the beginning, whereas other experiments were conducted as the slarecians attempted to learn the nature of the lives and souls of Scarn's natives. Still, not all of their experiments turned out as they were intended. Attached to many of their laboratories are large vaults, protected by trapped membrane or iris gates. Within these chambers are numerous cages and preservation tanks (see Traps, below); and in many of those are failed experiments, stuck into storage by the slarecians with the hope that their disappointments might still be made useful in some form or fashion. This is an excellent place for a GM to introduce any truly bizarre or twisted monsters to the campaign; alternatively, the trapped creature might be a chitin golem, or otherwise normal animals with the Psionic Sensitivity feat, both presented in the appendix.

Illumination Crystal

Large crystals inset into the walls give off a permanent, wan light equivalent to torch light. If the crystal is removed from its fixture, it ceases to glow and appears to be regular clear quartz to all forms of inspection. The fixtures radiate a slight magical signature, and will cause any crystal placed in them to glow with the same pale light. In most of the ruins, previous explorers have taken a number of the crystals, leaving irregular patches of light and darkness behind.

In secure areas, a special variety of crystal was used to discourage low-level slaves and interlopers. These crystals have no visible effect, and non-psionic beings will likely think the devices broken. Psionic creatures, on the other hand, find themselves able to see without the aid of artificial light sources. The crystals bestow darkvision on creatures with psychic aptitudes, allowing them to see up to a distance of 60 feet.

Inaccessible Rooms

In addition to thinking in very different ways than any humanoid creature native to the Scarred

Lands, many slarecians possessed various means of flight or levitation. Thus, not all the chambers in a slarecian ruin are accessible via halls, stairs, or ladders. Some few are built fully in three dimensions, and actually require flight or levitation to reach. This is hardly an insurmountable obstacle, but it can prove a remarkable inconvenience to explorers. Along similar lines, shelves, switches, windows or levers might also be placed well above the floor, requiring levitation (or, in a pinch, some form of stepstool) to reach.

Iris Gate

The most common sort of doorway used in slarecian architecture, Iris gates are constructed out of the same chitinous material used to construct nearly everything else. The gate is made up of several interlocking pieces of chitin that form a circle when completely closed. The doorway is psionically imbued so that when a sentient being approaches, it will spiral open, allowing passage.

To secure a gateway, mechanical locks are used and are commonly trapped. To augment the mechanical locks, slarecians also made extensive use of the *psionic lock* power. If the characters come across a psionically locked gateway, there are two possibilities for gaining access. The first, and easiest, would be for a psionic character to use *negate psionics* or the *knock* power. The second is to force the door. Iris gates may be broken with a Strength check (DC 25, DC 35 if psionically locked).

Knowledge Troughs

These often appear to be little more than small membrane-covered holes in walls or pedestals, but they in fact represent one of the slarecians' major accomplishments. By inserting a hand (or other extremity) through the membrane, a sentient creature gains access to thousands of years-worth of knowledge, stored in raw form by the slarecians. The slarecians themselves knew precisely how to access the information they sought; anyone else must take their chances.

A non-slarecian seeking specific knowledge has a percent chance, equal to his Intelligence bonus times 10, of accessing the desired information. If the roll fails, or if the individual touching the membrane has no particular goal in mind, that person receives only random information. These facts — random or specific — can take the form of a few slarecian details (such as might be gained on an easy bardic knowledge check), a +1 bonus to a skill check, or the like. For every additional round the character remains in contact, he gains more detailed information, or an additional cumulative +1 to the relevant skill. This knowledge or skill bonus lasts for a number of minutes equal to the character's Intelligence modifier plus 4d4.

However, non-slarecians who access this collection of information may well pay the price for allowing these alien thoughts into their minds. For each round in which a character remains in contact with the membrane, he must succeed in a Will save. The DC for this save is 13 the first round, and increases by 1 each additional round. If the character remains in contact for more rounds than his Intelligence bonus, he fails the save automatically.

A character who fails this save is immediately subject to the effects of the Slarecian Language Virus (see **Creature Collection Revised**). The further results of a failed save depend on whether the slarecians themselves are present in the complex. If a slarecian is present (perhaps because they have escaped from their dimensional exile), the character immediately falls under the mental domination (as per the *domination* psionic power) of the nearest slarecian. If no slarecians are within the ruin, the subject instead goes mad, suffering the effects of the *insanity* psionic power. (If the slarecian who dominates such a character is killed, the character immediately becomes subject to the madness instead.)

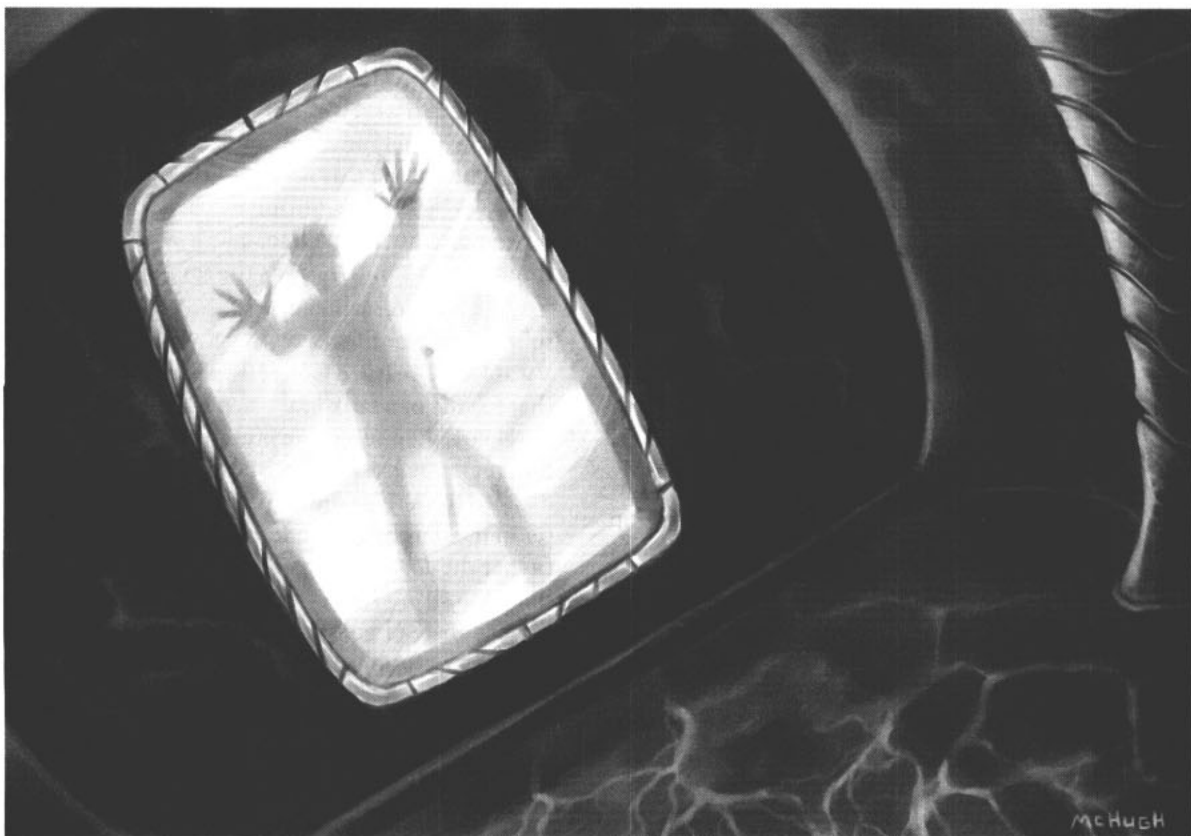
In either instance, the victim may make a new Will save every 24 hours to break the effect. The save DC picks up at the level at which the character failed the save when in contact with the membrane, and continues to increase by 1 for each day that passes. Once the save DC rises to the point where the character can succeed only on a natural 20, the effect becomes permanent until cured with *psychic surgery*, a *wish*, or something equally potent.

Laboratories

The ruins of slarecian laboratories sit under years of dust. Cobwebs and grime blanket everything, from rusted tools to disintegrating notes. On the shelves sit bottles of every shape and size. In these vials, all manner of twisted and deformed flesh float silently, in various stages of preservation. Creatures that haven't existed since before the gods rebelled, stare out of amber liquid with dead eyes. Shattered jars and the stench of alchemical compounds hint that some things may be lurking still.

The most significant creatures are preserved magically, in exactly the state they were in when the slarecians abandoned the outpost for their safehold.

Tables outfitted with rotting leather straps sit atop magical circles, covered in stains of blood and other fluids. The necromantic studies of the slarecians ensure that many laboratories are home to at least one undead being, and sometimes a host of creatures continue to maintain the laboratories



at the behest of a slarecian ghoul, working in a grotesque parody of the experiments that led them to their current state.

Membrane Gate

Most often used for the personal quarters of the slarecians, these living portals resemble nothing so much as the flesh from a bat's wing stretched taut and pulsing over a rounded doorway. It is unknown whether these gateways are a rare, naturally occurring life-form, some throwback from the time of the Titans perhaps, or if they are something twisted and perverted by slarecian experiments. Passing through one of these gates is a disturbing experience for most creatures, as the doorway does not *open*. It envelops those passing through, and expels them on the other side, slipping from the traveler like a caul.

A living thing, the gates could be trained – and often were – to only allow entrance to specific individuals. Occasionally, the gates were designed to deny passage to inorganic items, stripping those who pass through them of weapons and armor, ripping seams and unbuckling catches where necessary.

In most areas, the membrane gates have already succumbed to starvation, and their remains hang like parchment in the doorways. If they do not already hang in shreds, these gates must be torn through to gain passage. Dead membrane gates have a hardness of 2, and can withstand up to 5 hit points of damage before they tear.

Memorium Box

The slarecians value knowledge and thought over everything except their freedom from this stagnant reality. To preserve the knowledge of their subjects, no matter what the outcome of their experiments, they created the memoriam box. Before the tests began, the slarecians performed a short ritual, extracting the thoughts of their subject and transferring them into a mystical container. These boxes were then stored for later study.

During the Titanswar, many of the remaining boxes were damaged by the various catastrophes caused by the destruction of the Titans, and most now only hold fragments of the mental essence originally stored within. These fragments might hold first-hand clues that could lead to a better understanding of the slarecians, however, since no slarecian literature survives in languages that may be read by modern inhabitants of the Scarred Lands. This mental essence may be tapped into and read through the use of mind-reading abilities.

Memorium Jar

Built on the same precepts that created the memoriam box, the memoriam jar is a smaller and more portable device for storing the thoughts and memories of living creatures. Additionally, the memoriam jar serves a secondary purpose: emergency empowerment. A slarecian (or other psionic creature who knows the jar's true nature) may “burn” some of the thoughts and memories therein,

using the mental energy as psionic power points. Each given thought, memory, or emotion translates into a single power point; each jar contains 1d100 such points.

The act of releasing these thoughts for use as power points involves the wielder opening the jar and inhaling the escaping thoughts, which manifest as a transparent haze.

Mental Bastions

Defensive positions prepared by the slarecians for the war they knew was coming, these chambers are fortified with psychic defenses rather than physical ones. Anyone inside the chamber is immune to mind-affecting enchantment spells, and gains the benefit of the *tower of iron will* psionic defense form.

Message Wall

Most commonly found in laboratories, these inset sections of the wall are nearly indistinguishable from the surrounding chitin. If a sentient being *thinks* a message at the wall, however, his thoughts express themselves on the wall in raised text. These messages always appear in slarecian, regardless of the character's native language. Anyone who takes more than a glance at the message on the wall, including the originator, must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or become afflicted with the Slarecian Language Virus.

Native Walls

The slarecians prefer chitin to other building materials but, ever and always efficient, they were more than happy to make use of other available supplies. These other materials, to the slarecians, included living creatures who otherwise had no value or had proven inappropriate for use in other experiments. The so-called "native walls" are named thus because they are, quite literally, made of natives to the region in which the slarecian complex was built.

Bones of dozens if not hundreds of living beings form the basic structure of these walls, with flesh and other dense tissues used to create the actual surface. Muscles serve as hinges, flexing and contracting to open doorways or windows. Thousands of nerve endings run the length and breadth of the wall. Any slarecian or other psionic creature within 10 feet of such a wall may use those nerve endings to increase the range of their telepathic powers, communicating with any other creature standing within 10 feet of the wall. These walls often run the entire length of a complex, making this communication method quite useful. Additionally, some of these walls have eyes and ears worked into their designs; any psionic creature in physical contact with the wall may see or hear through any of these sensory organs.

On average, a native wall has a hardness of 8, 20 hit points, and a Break DC of 30 (this is so high because the wall is very malleable). Such walls heal themselves at a rate of 4 hit points a day, though they cannot naturally replace lost organs.

Some of these native walls have other abilities as well; see Traps, below.

Oath Chambers

At its height, the Slarecian Empire consisted mostly of subjugated territories forced to pay homage and tribute to their alien masters. The slarecians most frequently left the natives to run their own governments, so long as those regimes were themselves nominally loyal. On occasion, if the slarecians wanted to *ensure* the obedience of a specific community's leaders, or even a specific individual, they would bring the people in question into their cities, to swear their fealty in an oath chamber. These psionically-empowered chambers mimic the effects of multiple psionic powers, including *detect thoughts* and *thrall*. Any psionic person in the room instantly knows if anyone else in the room is lying. Furthermore, any oath sworn to a psionic individual in this room is absolutely binding; the subject cannot later change her mind, even if she wants to, and is both mentally and physically incapable of acting against that oath. Thus did the slarecians ensure that some of their most dangerous subjugated territories remained loyal — at least until the people rose up and removed their ruling class, often to the leaders' secret relief.

The oath chamber is a simple circular room. In the center is a small block on which the supplicant would kneel, and a raised platform on which his slarecian lord could stand to receive his vow of fealty. This furniture is entirely symbolic, however, as the room's powers function anywhere within its walls.

Pillars

Deceptively thin strands of chitin and crystal spiral up out of the ground, supporting massive ceilings and large platforms. The pillars are extraordinarily strong and dense; they are virtually impossible to shatter by normal means.

If a pillar is broken, however, it's only a matter of time before the rest of the columns sharing the weight it was supporting shatter as well, bringing the entire platform crashing to the ground.

Projection Chambers

All the slarecians' cruelty, all their studies, all their efforts, were bent to one ultimate goal — to escape Scarn, and the physical forms that trapped them here. In these specially designed chambers, of which fewer than half a dozen ever existed, the

uthriach could enjoy a temporary taste of that freedom.

In these chambers, psionically-endowed creatures may expend their energies (in the form of power points) to temporarily abandon their bodies and become creatures of pure thought. They can roam anywhere, learn anything, even depart Scarn on a temporary basis. Alas for the slarecians, even with the help of the room's energies, the process is trying and lasts only a short while. It requires the expenditure of 10 power points to attain this formless state, and an additional power point per minute. At any time, the individual can voluntarily return to its physical form without harm. If, however, the psion waits until his points are fully expended, he is forced roughly back into his body and suffers 1d4 points of Intelligence damage.

The projection chamber is a perfectly spherical room, with a cot stretched across the rounded curve of the floor. It is otherwise featureless, providing no distractions to those who would use its special form of release.

Only the *uthriach* were permitted to use these chambers, though most slarecians would have been capable of doing so. Some grew almost addicted, utilizing these places on a regular basis, while others — frustrated that the rooms granted only a temporary reprieve — shunned them completely.

Reanimation Chambers

Though their creation of a mighty rod with the essence of the goddess Drendari did not work as it was intended, the slarecians still learned valuable lessons from their failure. One of those revelations was that undead creatures could be created through powers available to the slarecians themselves — and given that they needed to increase their forces, to repulse the divine races long enough to create their extraplanar sanctuary, they realized that the undead could be valuable indeed. Thus, while most of the slarecians focused on the creation of their new refuge, a few instead turned their attentions to the development of reanimation chambers.

The function of these places, rectangular rooms filled with row upon row of stone or chitin biers, is simple enough. Any dead body laid on one of the biers rises instantly as either a zombie (in most cases), a skeleton (if the corpse is largely decayed before reanimation) or a ghoul (if the corpse is that of a psionic creature). These undead are normal in all respects, save that they automatically follow any orders given to them by a slarecian.

During their war against the gods and their agents, the slarecians used these chambers as veritable undead factories, churning out hundreds of the monstrosities to hurl against the divine races. Rumor holds that a number of the Scarred Lands'

necromancers, from the inhabitants of Hollowfaust to agents of the Ghoul King, deliberately seek slarecian ruins so they might study these chambers and learn how their ancient masters created controllable undead so efficiently.

Ritual Workspaces

Usually connected to or part of laboratories, these areas are typically charged with ambient magical residue. It is apparent that immense power has been brought to bear in these rooms, and knowledgeable spellcasters can recognize signs of the use of true rituals. These workspaces are some of the most likely areas to exhibit the ambient psionic or magic phenomena listed below.

Ritual tools lie disused and dusty, though the more valuable have often already been stolen. Moldy old tomes line the shelves of these rooms, the knowledge inside them locked behind the indecipherable slarecian language. Surely, they hold rituals and spells completely unknown to modern spellcasters.

Sewers and Furnace

In a closed, subterranean environment, even a people with needs as spartan as the slarecians found it necessary to create a system of waste disposal. To that end, a sewer system is commonplace in these ruins, running like veins inside the walls of the cities. The sewer pipes are too small for even a halfling to squeeze into, and large items must be broken down into manageable chunks before being deposited. Through means both magical and mechanical, trash is transported from designated drop points into the depths of the city, where it is dumped in huge furnaces.

The furnaces are enchanted to incinerate anything thrown in them, including living beings. It is extremely dangerous to enter a furnace, and characters (and their belongings) unlucky enough to somehow make their way into one suffer 6d6 points of fire damage per round. Characters and items immune to fire damage are likewise safe in the heart of these places, and more than one furnace has become home to fire-based monsters.

Shadow Constructs

Toward the end of their reign, when the slarecians had stolen knowledge of shadow from Drendari, they granted most of it to their servants, those who would become the Penumbral Lords. Several of the magic-using slarecians also kept this knowledge for their own purposes, however. One of their primary uses of that magic took the form of improved means of shadow conjuration, and these slarecians often used solid

shadows to build rooms, structures, and even entire complexes when traditional methods of construction would have taken too long. A room, item, or building constructed of shadow is utterly invisible in the dark (even to darkvision), but glaringly obvious when viewed with any moderately bright light source. On average, a shadow object or structure has 75% of the hardness, hit points, and break difficulty of a stone version of the same object.

Shadow constructs are rare, however, as the slarecians knew them to be less sound than normal methods of building, and looked askance at the magics required to create them. They are found, for the most part, only in those slarecian cities and complexes that required swift expansion, often as stronghold after stronghold fell to the divine races.

Shadow Mirror

Framed in blue-black carapace, and nearly ten feet tall, shadow mirrors incorporate a highly reflective black glass. Though usable for *remote viewing*, their default state is a different matter altogether. In the glistening surface, characters do not see themselves as they are; they see their own spirits, and the spirits of those around them, even invisible creatures and characters. It can be a traumatic experience for a character to see his own spirit, especially when the true spirit doesn't resemble his self-image. Characters confronted with such a sight are likely to second-guess themselves and might, at the GM's discretion, begin an alignment shift to one more appropriate to their actions. These mirrors are immobile, quite firmly rooted to the ground, much to the chagrin of treasure hunters everywhere.

Speaking Chamber

This tiny, cylindrical chamber is constructed of chitin with various metal objects and crystals embedded in the walls, strung together by nerves stripped from the flesh of living beings. These rooms are intended as long-distance communication devices. Any psionically empowered individual in such a chamber can telepathically communicate — at a cost of one power point per minute — with any other psionic individual in a similar chamber. This allowed instant communication between slarecian enclaves. Furthermore, a psion in such a chamber can attract the attention, via a mental call, of any other psion with whom he wishes to communicate. The recipient would have to find and enter such a chamber to actually communicate, but this “alert” would be enough to let the individual know that someone wished to communicate with him.

In modern days, some psionic creatures still loyal to the slarecians have rediscovered a few of these chambers. Several of their most powerful psions claim that they have been able, through the expenditure of great deals of power, to contact the slarecians in their extraplanar prison. Those who make this claim have also grown violent, unpredictable, and in many instances stark-raving mad. Whether this communication with the absent masters is real, whether an attempt to contact a race that no longer exists in the Scarred Lands has damaged their minds, or whether some other horror is communicating in the guise of the slarecians, is still pure speculation.

Transfer Tube

In some chambers, ramps, stairways and ladders were either undesirable or inefficient. In those areas, a network of stringy, organic tubing hangs from the ceiling — resembling nothing so much as the intestines of some vast creature. The fleshy tubes wend in and out of the walls and ceilings, leading to and from various places. As an individual approaches a tube, its muscles flex, and the tube sucks the character in, spitting him out whole, healthy and mostly dry at his destination.

Characters unaccustomed to the transfer tubes must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or become *nauseated* for 1d10 rounds after making use of them. If the character attempts to attack a tube, it will immediately retract, leaving him stranded without the primary means of progress in the ruin.

Transport Gate

The slarecians preferred to make the most of their time, and went to extremes to ensure expediency in all things. Many slarecian cities incorporated a transport gate system that allowed the inhabitants to easily move from one settlement to the next. Before the *Uthriach* escaped into their safehold, they sabotaged or disabled many of these gates and set traps before the remainder of them. Where the gates are still functional, they are invariably host to some of the most dangerous traps the slarecians devised.

The gates themselves are an arcane mixture of chitin, steel, stone and wire.

Unlike the slarecian gatekeepers (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**), these gates do not require an offering of gold, but they only have the capability to transport their passengers to other working gates within the network built by the slarecians. A traveler need only concentrate on the city she wants to reach and step into the churning darkness between the transport gate's pillars. She will immediately appear in the destination, disoriented but aware. Keep in mind, however, that whatever traps bar entrance into the transport gate's chamber will also obstruct the new arrival's exit.

Hazards

Babble Bubbles (CR 2)

Some slarecian ruins contain pockets of random psychic activity, leftover from the days of the slarecians themselves. These regions take many forms, perhaps the most inconvenient of which is the so-called “babble bubble.” In these areas speech is utterly scrambled, as though all within were subject to the slarecian language virus. Telepathic communication functions normally (unless the region is also home to a catapsi bubble, as described below).

Catapsi Bubble (CR 5)

So much ambient psionic energy exists in stretches of the ruins that it creates a kind of psychic static. This white noise acts like a permanent manifestation of the *catapsi* power. Any psionic action within a catapsi bubble costs twice as many power points to use, unless the character makes a successful Will save each time he manifests a power. Freely manifesting 0-level powers takes 1 full round, rather than 1 action.

Distilled Madness (CR 4)

In regions where a great many suffering creatures were exposed to substantial psionic activity, a thin oily residue accumulated on the walls, ceilings and other surfaces. This distilled madness is very difficult to detect (DC 20 Spot check under even the best of circumstances). The oil is inert, remaining harmless until touched. If a sentient creature comes into contact with the oil — which can seep through cloth and other thin materials, so contact with the flesh is not required — it will inevitably seep into the victim’s skin. This leaves a slimy, dirty spot which the creature may or may not notice, and which will seem to wash off after prolonged scrubbing.

At the moment of contact, the creature must make a Will save, DC 14. (If the individual maintains contact with the source of the oil, such as leaning against the wall on which it has developed, the DC increases by 1 for each additional round of contact.) The victim must make a second save a minute later, as though the oil was a contact poison. In either case, failure induces madness, as per the *insanity* psionic power. If the victim failed only one of these two Will saves, the effect lasts for 10 days minus the victim’s Intelligence modifier (minimum 1). If the affected creature failed both saves, the effect is permanent until cured.

If detected, the oil can be burned or frozen off a surface. (Attempting to scrape it away simply transfers portions of it to the object being used.)

Drendari’s Vengeance (CR varies)

The goddess of shadows was violated by the slarecians, her penumbral powers torn from her. A reflection of her fury exists in slarecian ruins to this

day, even those that had nothing to do with the nascent Penumbral Pentagon. In these areas, characters’ shadows are animated and awakened as undead shadows that may attack immediately or bide their time, mimicking their host until an opportune moment. These areas resemble the more harmless zones of shadow play (see *Untethered Shadows*, below), and there is no way to tell the difference between the two.

Empowerment Fields (CR —, but see below)

These regions are absolutely bursting with psychic energies. Any psionic creature within such an area may use his powers by spending power points gained from the ambient energies, rather than expending his own energies. These points can only be used to activate powers; they cannot be “stored” or used to replenish a psion who is low on points.

While such a region may not, in and of itself, prove hazardous, they tend to attract psionically active creatures (for obvious reasons). Any psionic creature in an empowerment field is considered CR +1.

Enlightenment Fields (CR —, but see below)

Psychic energies, of a far more intense concentration even than in other “psionic fields,” permeate this area to such a degree that all creatures find their minds psychically charged. The positive side to these places is that all non-psionic creatures find themselves temporarily able to invoke a single 0-level psionic power, three times per day. Doing so, however, causes 1d6 points of nonlethal damage, as the character’s mind is unaccustomed to channeling this sort of power.

The down side is, of course, that *all* creatures are now fully vulnerable to all psionic attack modes, and lose their non-psionic buffer against such attacks (and any other psionic powers that the buffer would normally impede). Because they do not pick up any alternate defense modes, this renders most living beings *extremely* vulnerable to psionic attack. Even worse, enlightenment fields often overlap with empowerment fields (above), attracting psionic creatures who are likely more than happy to take advantage of the adventurers’ newfound vulnerability.

The effects of an enlightenment field on someone who already possesses psionic powers are far less dramatic. She simply gains three additional 0-level manifestations per day while she is within the field.

Typically, all these effects, positive and negative, disappear the instant the character leaves the enlightenment field (except any nonlethal damage, which must fade as normal). If one of the players in the party has been looking for a justification for multiclassing into a psion or psychic warrior, however, the GM might determine that the power in the field awakened the potential of the character’s mind, permanently granting him the ability to use psionic powers.

Any encounter with a psionic opponent in an empowerment field is considered EL +1, unless all the PCs are psions or psychic warriors.

Fissures (CR varies)

A general hazard for spelunking adventurers, fissures can force a party to double back or spend precious time searching for a way to traverse the crack. Slarecian cities did not escape the devastation wrought by the Titanswar. The walls of slarecian cities are strong, but they pale next to the might of the heaving earth. The fissures that sunder the ruins range from inch-wide rifts to chasms hundreds of feet across. It has even been known for one-half of slarecian ruin to lie nearly a mile up a mountainside, while the rest of the city lies broken at the bottom of a cliff.

Details on these features can be found in the DMG, Chapter 3, "Mountain Terrain," *Chasm*.

Flooding

In the upheavals of nearly two centuries ago, many ruins, especially those near the coasts, were laid bare to the elements. Entire segments were flooded and remain submerged, adapted and adopted by fish and other aquatic creatures. Those ruins along the east coast of Ghelspad are particularly dangerous, having suffered the taint of Kadum's blood along with the residue of so much magic and psionic activity.

Details on these features can be found in the DMG, Chapter 3, "Aquatic Terrain," *Flowing Water*.

Forsaken Zones (CR 3)

The slarecians conducted many experiments on the power of the divine, trying to determine how the gods channeled magic to Scarn, and how the souls of the faithful traveled to the afterlife. In some cases, the massive amounts of power the slarecians channeled into these experiments damaged reality itself. In these areas, contact with the gods is absolutely impossible. Clerical magic (not all divine magic, but only that of clerics) is impeded, as though the caster was within an *antimagic field*. Clerics attempting to regain their daily spells must do so elsewhere, as their prayers in this area go unanswered. Finally, any god-worshiper slain in such a place may very well find himself unable to reach his proper afterlife. This is a temporary situation, as the soul need merely leave the area to escape Scarn, but all such souls manifest as ghosts until they do manage to depart the region.

Free-Floating Sensations (CR 2, 3, or 5)

Psychic echoes from the time of slarecian power, these are literally areas of strong emotion. Anyone stepping into such a zone is immediately subjected to these powerful feelings, and is likely to react to them accordingly. Each character must make a Will save (DC based on the area's intensity, as described below), or suffer an effect also based on the intensity of the emotion.

These effects last for so long as the character remains in the area of sensation. Once a character has successfully saved, she is immune to that particular area for 24 hours.

The precise nature of the emotion varies by region, though they are all intense, and the mechanical effects and level of distraction are the same. Most such regions cause the victims to suffer intense pain, but others might include less obvious discomfort (itching, nausea, or the like), fear, despair, or even (in those areas where the slarecians were truly performing odd experiments) sexual ecstasy.

Mild Emotion: Will DC 13; -2 circumstance penalty on all attacks, saves, and skill checks.

Moderate Emotion: Will DC 15; -4 circumstance penalty on all attacks, saves, and skill checks; subject is constantly distracted and suffers the equivalent effects of a *slow* spell.

Extreme Emotion: Will DC 17, -6 circumstance penalty on all attacks, saves, and skill checks; subject is constantly distracted and suffers the equivalent effects of a *slow* spell, and is considered constantly flat-footed.

Greased Floors (CR 1)

While not actually coated with grease, some floors are covered in a thin layer of slippery, spontaneously manifested ectoplasm. Any creature entering the area must make a successful DC 15 Reflex save or slip, falling prone. Creatures who make their saving throw may move at half their normal speed through the greased area.

Heat and Humidity (CR 2)

Oddly enough, one of the most frequent dangers of some slarecian ruins is also the most mundane. Given the partially organic nature of many of the chambers and items within, the walls and furniture often radiate a mild warmth. This can actually be pleasant in colder climes, but in warmer areas this results in levels of heat and humidity that can become downright oppressive. Characters suffer the effects of "very hot conditions" (above 90° F), as described in "The Environment" section, "Heat Dangers" subsection, of Chapter 8 of the DMG. Furthermore, due to the oppressive humidity, all saves to resist the heat suffer a -2 circumstance penalty.

In some particularly foul areas, the humidity might also carry with it the risk of disease, at the GM's discretion.

Leech Crystal (CR 2)

Scattered throughout the corridors are small deposits of purple crystals. These crystals do not grow in the same manner as normal minerals. They require psionic power to expand. Any psionic character within 30 feet of these crystals does not regain power points, and must make a DC 13 Will save every minute or lose

1d10 power points. Leech Crystals cannot be encoded as psicrystals, though they will devour any psionic essence that such an attempt would require.

Membrane Gate, Hungry (CR 5)

Membrane gates take what sustenance they require from those who pass through them. Given fairly regular traffic, a gate satisfies itself with surface nutrients, feeding off of sweat and microscopic organisms. If it is starved, however, it will trap a traveler and attempt to devour the victim.

If a character is so trapped, he may attempt a DC 25 Reflex saving throw to force himself through the door. Otherwise, he begins to suffocate (see the rules for suffocation in the *DMG*). The victim's companions may attempt to cut him free with edged weapons. The membrane gate has hardness 4 and can withstand up to 15 hit points of damage.

Mindspeakers (CR 1)

The psychic energies in this area tap into the minds of all who are present, broadcasting their thoughts. Each individual who enters a mindspeaker must succeed in a DC 14 Will save, or his surface thoughts (as defined by the third round effect of the *detect thoughts* spell) become audible to everyone, as though he were speaking them aloud. A successful save grants immunity to that particular mindspeaker for 24 hours.

Penumbra Depths (CR varies)

The deeper into the ruins characters travel, the more likely they are to come across one of these underground "lakes." Inky black and completely placid, these areas are not water at all, but pools of shadow. The pools behave as a *darkness* spell, but it cannot be dispelled and can only be counteracted temporarily in a relatively small area by use of casting *daylight*. The *vigilance* power allows psionic characters to see for a distance of 10 feet. Nocturnal creatures and those who do not depend on sight are fond of making their lairs in or near these shadowy pools. Undead shadows and slarecian shadowmen (see **Creature Collection Revised**) are also relatively common in these locals. In rare instances, characters passing through one of these pools will attract the attention of a shadow lord (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**), who find the pools the perfect location to replace a character's shadow.

Peripheral Field (CR —)

The slarecians made considerable use of psionics, leaving an ambient psychic residue that causes odd shifts in perception and ability in certain areas. One such zone is a peripheral field. Characters entering a peripheral field come under the effects of the *expanded vision* psionic power. Everyone in the field experiences a much wider peripheral vision. However, non-psion characters suffer a -2 enhancement penalty to all concentration checks, since they are not familiar with the ability.

Psionic Diseases (CR varies)

The sheer number of psionically imbued creatures that have typically lived in slarecian ruins make these places the perfect locale for psionic diseases to flourish. Leech crystals are fertile breeding grounds for infectious agents, as are any of the psionic zones and the many wandering psionic creatures. As with all diseases, the victim must make a successful Fortitude save once per day or suffer the damage again. If a character makes two consecutive Fortitude saves, she has fought off the disease. Cascade flu and cerebral leeches are common, along with the following examples:

Euphoric Flashbacks: Spread by contact with soma flowers (see **Hazards**, below); DC 13; *Incubation*: 1d4 days; *Damage*: 1d4 power points, apathy.

After an unsuspecting character comes in contact with soma flowers, their pollen puts him at ease. The real danger of the flowers only affects psionic creatures, and it can manifest days after the victim is exposed. While he is under the effects of an euphoric flashback, a DC 13 Will save is required for the character to commit any strenuous action, and a DC 17 Concentration check is required every round to keep the character focused and attentive, unless his life is immediately being threatened.

Sibilant Infection: This is typically contracted in one of the whisper areas (see **Hazards**, below); DC 15; *Incubation*: one hour; *Damage*: Lingering voices.

The voices continue to torment the character even after she leaves the area of effect. Their insistence and determination seems to flag outside of those zones, however, and the character only has to resist Wisdom damage once every hour rather than every five rounds.

For more information on psionic diseases, see the *Psionics Handbook*.

Psionic Zones (CR 3)

In some areas the psychic residue is so strong that certain powers imprint themselves on the minds of those who spend time there. In these zones, there is a small chance that non-psionic characters will be imbued with a minor psionic power for a short time. However, these powers are rough on minds that are not accustomed to them, and can be torturous if overused.

If a character lingers for more than a minute in such an area, there is a 5% chance that the character will gain any one psionic power of level zero, and one and 1d6 power points which cannot be regenerated. Once the character drops below a number of power points to fuel the use of the power, it goes away. Every time the character uses the power, however, he must make an Intelligence check (DC 15 +1 each time a granted power has been used in the last 24 hours, cumulative between exposures). Failure indicates that the character suffers 1 point of Intelligence damage. This damage cannot be healed in a psionic zone, but heals normally once the character leaves the area.

Psychic Slime

(CR as per slime/ooze/normal hazard +1)

When exposed to sufficient emotional and psychic energy, otherwise normal slimes and hazards (such as green slime or yellow mold) become slightly psionically sensitive. Psychic slime is, in essence, a normal such hazard, except that it is actually attracted to the thoughts of sentient beings. A psychic slime moves to pursue such creatures, or to place itself in a better position to attack, and has a movement rate of 20. It is otherwise identical to a normal hazard of its type.

Random Warps (CR 3)

It is unknown if these hazards are a side-effect of the slarecian gates, but they do seem to occur more widely and often in proximity to active gates. Within these zones, every time a character takes a movement (even just a 5-foot step), there is a 20% chance that she will be teleported to a random spot within 30 feet (1d6 x 5 ft.) of the square she intended to finish her movement in. This can lead to an extraordinarily confusing battle, if characters attempt to initiate combat in a random warp zone.

Reanimation Fields (CR varies; see below)

A "wild" variant of the reanimation chamber discussed above, this is a region in which any corpse, including anyone who dies while in the field, immediately reanimates as a ghoul, skeleton, or zombie. (See the reanimation chamber entry to

determine which form a particular undead takes.) Unlike the undead created by a proper chamber, these undead are not under anyone's control; they do, however, tend to possess an innate hostility to anyone else present.

The CR of such a hazard is determined by the number and types of corpses present or brought into the area. Calculate as per normal CRs for the given undead.

Rotten Shell (CR 1)

The walls, floors and ceilings of slarecian cities are generally quite strong. The chitin that is used in their construction is already extremely durable, and many architects shore up their creations with magic or psionics. But the walls are, when all is said and done, organic. Organic material eventually decomposes, and the substance produced by builder beetles is no exception. Usually, it takes an extremely long time to rot, but in certain circumstances, it can happen more quickly. When this happened in the past, slarecian architects would merely direct a swarm of beetles to repair the damage. However, now, the decomposing areas sit unattended and can pose serious problems to the unwary adventurer.

Rotten chitin takes on a dull, translucent color, rather than the iridescent shine of a healthy carapace. Characters will notice the difference on a successful DC 15 Spot check, though they might not understand the significance until they have



experienced it. Rotten shells are brittle, fragile things, easily broken (hardness 1, 6 hp). If the floor is rotting, it cannot even support the weight of a halfling before crumbling under the unlucky individual's feet. Characters who fall through the floor take damage appropriate to the distance of the fall. Walls are easily broken through, allowing entry to the next passage or even the vein-like sewer pipes, if the characters require access.

Scramblers (CR 3)

In these regions of psychic instability, the five senses of any passersby may be scrambled or even shut down. Those who fail a DC 16 Fortitude save suffer one of the following effects (roll 1d6).

d6	Result
1	Victim goes blind until cured.
2	Victim goes deaf until cured.
3	Victim loses sense of smell until cured.
4	Victim cannot taste until cured.
5	Victim cannot feel anything through touch until cured.
6	Victim's senses are scrambled; he "hears" light, "tastes" sound, "sees" smells, etc. This effect lasts until cured.

A victim whose senses are scrambled suffers a -4 penalty to all rolls, due to the confusion caused by the abnormal sensory input. GMs should enhance this by describing things strangely; tell the player that something sounds blue, or smells musical.

These effects can all be cured by *heal* or comparable magics. Particularly kind GMs (if such a thing exists) might allow *remove blindness/deafness* to work on the other senses as well.

Shimmering Lights (CR 1)

Like the aurora borealis, a wave of free floating, shimmering light with no visible source appears in the ruins from time to time. Characters who fail a DC 12 Will saving throw are dazzled (as per the *Player's Handbook Glossary*) until the lights dissipate, which takes 1d10 rounds.

Slarecian Language Virus (CR —)

Blocks of raised text are imprinted into the walls in certain areas, indecipherable even by magical means. The majority of these messages, warnings and signs carry the Slarecian Language Virus (see **Creature Collection Revised** for more information) and will infect anyone who attempts to decode the ancient language. When inflicted by the language virus, it is impossible for a character to communicate with the uninfected, but he can understand the writing on the walls, and any slarecian texts he might come across.

Soma Flowers (CR 2)

Only found in areas with raw, earthen floor visible, and particularly common in ruins beneath the Kelder mountains, soma flowers are not flowers at all. They are actually a kind of mushroom with a flowerlike bulb that varies in hue from white to indigo. Soma beds are surrounded by a cloud of pollen that induces a euphoric feeling in most of the divine races, with the exception of dwarves. Dark elves are fond of the pollen, and have attempted to transplant beds of the plant into their own cities. These efforts have met with failure, however, and it is unknown whether the soil contains a special mineral or if some other force is at work.

Soma-induced euphoria causes those under its effects to become languid and apathetic. Stress melts away and any danger less than immediate fades into irrelevance. While the character is within the cloud of pollen, she must succeed on a DC 13 Will save every round to resist the urge to relax and ignore any previously held motivations. This effect lasts for 1d6 rounds after leaving the soma bed. The feeling of euphoria is fleeting with most characters, but its true danger becomes apparent for psionic individuals. Within 1d4 days, any psionically capable character who has been exposed to the mushrooms' pollen will suffer from an ongoing euphoric haze (see "psionic diseases," above).

Steam Vents (CR 3)

Occasionally erupting from the fissures above the furnaces, these vents randomly produce scalding steam. Each round, there is a 15% chance that the vents will erupt, and characters within 5 feet of one of these fissures must make a DC 15 Reflex save or suffer 3d6 points of heat damage. The steam also gives characters 20% concealment cover for the remainder of the round, unless they exit the nearby square.

Time Echoes (CR 1)

Sometimes, an event can imprint itself so heavily on an area that it is psychically branded into reality. In some places, particularly laboratories, traumatic events of such magnitude happened that flashes of the events still repeat themselves to this day. The tortured screams of long-dead experimental subjects still echo through corridors, and fleeting glimpses of horrific episodes haunt characters like twisted ghosts. If a tableau requires stairs that no longer exist, the phantoms will climb up thin air; if ancient slarecians took part in what occurred, then their alien forms will appear right beside those who were tortured. These impressions are nothing more than echoes, however, and cannot interact with characters or harm them. They are merely reverberations, memories that have taken form in an endless loop, unchanging and unaffected by the pas-

sage of time. In these areas, characters are witness to events that have already occurred, and they cannot interfere. The unending repetition of such gruesome events and the consternation of helplessness often wears away at explorers, and can easily distract them from all too real dangers. While in the presence of a time echo, characters suffer from a -5 penalty to all Concentration and Spot checks. Prolonged exposure to the sort of images likely to cause a time echo might, at the GM's discretion, cause nightmares and prolonged psychological damage.

Timeslip (CR 5)

Immense magical power expended regularly over a long period of time has twisted this area, so that time itself no longer appears to flow properly. Characters entering such a zone find that their torch flames freeze in one place rather than flicker, water flows back into its vessel, and odd moments of dislocation are experienced where time reverses itself, slows down or speeds up. Temporal measurements are completely impossible in a timeslip.

In actuality, it is only the characters' perceptions that are altered. Combat runs as normal, but characters suffer a -6 penalty to all attack rolls, ranged or melee. Characters proficient with the Blind Fight feat or tremorsense are only hampered by a -3 penalty. Combat feels highly disjointed, with participants suddenly appearing in different locations and distances from each other. Timeslips are a highly disturbing, though thankfully quite rare, experience.

Transference Zones (CR —, but see below)

Within the sphere of a transference zone, karma is illustrated in the most elementary way possible. Any attack in a transference zone does not harm the intended victim, rather it inflicts its wounds on the attacker himself. For example, if an orc attacks Toval with an axe and hits, rolling 6 points of damage, the orc suffers that damage in Toval's stead. If Toval tries to be clever and turns his blade inward, inflicting damage upon himself, he still takes the damage as normal.

These places make excellent safe havens for adventurers and weak or wounded individuals. Particularly cunning creatures lure their victims into the zone and provoke them into attacking and, essentially, doing the dirty work for them. Many of the ruins' current inhabitants have stumbled over these areas and, remembering where they are, are loath to approach them again.

While this hazard doesn't have a CR itself, it increases an encounter's effective EL by +2.

Twisted Angles (CR 2)

In certain areas, the disorientation caused by the twisted architecture is a subtle but ever-present danger. Oftentimes the effects creep up on those

who seek to investigate those places that are, perhaps, better forgotten. Characters can explore the crypts and cities of the slarecians for a number of hours equal to their Wisdom, before the odd geometry of the passages and rooms begins to prey on their minds. For every hour thereafter, they are subject to a DC 13 Will saving throw to resist vertigo and the threat of rising madness.

If a character fails the saving throw, she becomes *nauseated*, and this condition slowly makes it impossible for her to make use of ranged weapons; the affected individual must concentrate merely to remain standing. For every thirty minutes that the character continues to be affected by the dark corridors of the slarecian ruins, she suffers a cumulative -1 penalty to all skill checks. After six hours, and every two hours thereafter, if the character remains in the throes of vertigo and nausea, she suffers one point of Wisdom damage. The character is allowed another DC 15 Will saving throw every hour to shake off the effects, and heals ability damage at the normal rate. Vertigen are immune to the effects of the unconventional angles.

Untethered Shadows (CR —)

Shadows are malleable things. So learned the slarecians when they stole shadow magic from Drendari. In some dark places, the ambient magical energy has animated the shadows. These shadows are, thankfully, not the undead creatures they appear to be, but are merely puppets on the wall. Characters may notice their shadows cavorting or making subtle movements that reflect their current state of mind with a successful DC 13 Spot check. The shadows shift and play across the walls, unattached to their supposed hosts. The effect is jarring, but harmless.

The true danger of these animate shadows is their role as a distraction. Shadowy creatures, including slarecian shadowmen, have a tendency to take full advantage of these rooms, lying in wait and blending in with the other silhouettes until adventurers let their guard down.

Untethered Voices (CR —)

Possibly akin to the energies that created untethered shadows (see above), these regions are at least as disturbing. In such a zone, the voices of all those passing through seem to take on a life of their own. They begin to speak, saying things the characters are not verbalizing or even thinking, and they often come from sources other than the individual to whom the voice seemingly belongs. Even worse, characters who try to speak find themselves unable to do so. (This also thwarts the casting of any spells with a verbal component.) Fortunately, this effect ends the instant the characters leave the area, but no known way exists of nullifying the effect in the field itself.

Telepathic and other methods of nonverbal communication are unaffected.

Whispers (CR 5)

In certain corridors and rooms, the whispers of the slarecians can still be heard. Voices cajole characters in these areas, making promises and offering rewards for service. These voices tend to choose a single target, and cannot be heard by any other character. The whisperers sow discord, working to separate their target from the rest of her party. Compliments come next, stroking the character's ego, explaining that *she* is special — chosen. For every five rounds that the character is subjected to these susurrant voices, she must succeed at a DC 18 Will save or suffer 1 point of Wisdom damage. As her Wisdom decreases, she will become more likely to follow the advice of the whisperers, become separated from the party, and easy prey for the things that wander the ruins. This damage only occurs until the character reaches a Wisdom of 6, after which point the character only has to attempt a Will save whenever she returns to 7 or above.

It is unknown whether the whispers are echoes from the past or the *uthriach* reaching out from their safehold to manipulate the present. Characters under the whisperers' sway do tend to know things they shouldn't, and champion plans that are quite inscrutable to their fellows....

Traps

Any trap with *detect thoughts* as a proximity trigger can be programmed to react to any being with a mind, or only to sentient beings, as the creator prefers.

A trap listed with "telepathic password bypass" can be temporarily deactivated with a mere thought, if the individual doing the thinking is psionic and knows the appropriate password. No power points need be spent in this process, but the trap's builder must invoke *detect thoughts* as one of the powers used in creating the device.

Some traps are designed to poison their victims; unless otherwise stated, these toxic substances and their relevant information can be found in the DMG.

CR1 Traps

Basic Spine Trap

Small holes in the chitinous walls betray the danger posed by spine traps. When the trap is triggered, a thin barb shoots out of the wall and pierces its victim. Most often used for low security rooms, spine traps were not meant to kill or even maim their victims. Instead, they were intended as a method of conditioning slaves through pain to stay away from off-limits areas.

Basic Spine Trap: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 melee (1d6); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. *Market Price:* 2,800 gp.

Ectoplasmic Floors

A thin coating of transparent ectoplasm makes these floors extremely sticky. Anyone stepping onto

this surface who fails her save is trapped until she, or someone else, can cut her free. The ectoplasm has a hardness of 17 and 30 hit points.

Ectoplasmic Floors: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; power effect (modified *ectoplasmic cocoon*, 5th-level psion, DC 14 Reflex save negates); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15. *Cost:* 3,900 gp, 400 XP.

Flamelock

Flamelock traps are the most common form of psionic trap in the slarecian ruins. Based on the 0-level power *finger of fire*, a flamelock is one of the first traps burgeoning psions learn to create. Intended more as an annoyance or distraction than as a true impediment, a gout of fire shoots out of the lock, causing relatively minor damage to its victim. Ingenious slarecians made use of this trap as a trigger for other, far worse effects.

Flamelock: CR 1; psionic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*finger of fire*, 3rd-level psion); Atk +10 ranged touch attack (1d3); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24. *Cost:* 250 gp, 20 XP.

Putrefaction Portals

Attached to any sort of door (including the various gates discussed above), this trap rots any foodstuffs and pollutes water and other potables. Each individual may make a single save for all her nonmagical food and drink, and one save for each magic potion or other enchanted consumable. Though not an immediately harmful trap, this can make things exceptionally difficult for adventurers planning to spend any length of time exploring a slarecian ruin.

Putrefaction Portals: CR 1; psionic/magical device; location trigger; manual reset; telepathic password bypass; power effect (*putrefy food and drink*, 5th-level caster, DC 14 Will save negates [item]); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 15. *Cost:* 6,600 gp, 600 XP.

CR 2 Traps

Alchemist's Fire Trap

A simple but deadly design, reminiscent of childhood pranks. The trap consists of a trigger mechanism and a flask of alchemist's fire (see *Player's Handbook*). When the trap is triggered, it splashes the fluid out at the victim, and affects everyone who happens to be standing too close.

Alchemist's Fire Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +10 ranged (1d6 plus splash damage); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 15. *Note:* Splash damage inflicts 1 hp of damage to everyone within 5 feet of the target. See PHB for rules detailing Alchemist's Fire. *Market Price:* 1,020 gp.

Entrapping Surface

When a victim touches the wall, door handle, or whatever surface is protected by this trap, that surface exudes a small bit of ectoplasm which firmly traps the subject's hand (or whatever the limb in question may be). The ectoplasm can be cut away, and has hardness of 17 and 30 hit points.

Entrapping Surface: CR 2; magic/psionic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; power effect (modified *ectoplasmic cocoon*, 5th-level psion, DC 14 Reflex save negates); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 15. *Cost:* 4,800 gp, 400 XP.

Flash Trap

Usually placed in front of secure areas, flash traps fill a 10 foot radius with fiery sparks, burning anything they touch.

Flash trap: CR 2; psionic device; proximity trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*Firefall*, 3rd-level psion, 1d4, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26. *Note:* flammable materials such as cloth, paper, parchment, thin wood, and so on, burn if the flames touch them. A character can extinguish burning items as a full-round action. *Cost:* 3000 gp, 240 XP.

Gibbering Mouths

Through a combination of psionic effects and actual organic mouths taken from living beings, the slarecians attached orifices to some of their construction (most frequently in native walls). These mouths begin gibbering loudly when they sense the presence of a non-slarecian sentient creature; furthermore, their voices spread the slarecian language virus, which follows all the normal rules once the subjects are exposed to it.

Gibbering Mouths: CR 2; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; power effect (modified *create sounds*, 5th-level caster, DC 18 Will save negates); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 20. *Cost:* 7,800 gp, 600 XP.

CR 3 Traps

Absorption Tendrils

Seen only on some native walls (described above), absorption tendrils lash out and attempt to grapple anyone within 15 feet of the wall. They are considered to have the Improved Grab ability, and thus do not draw attacks of opportunity for trying to grapple their victims. They cause damage both with impact and during every round they maintain the grapple; all damage they cause is funneled back into the wall, allowing it to heal any previous damage done to it. Hit points over the wall's normal total are gained as temporary hit points, which fade an hour later. "Disabling" the trap involves locating the tendrils and plugging or blocking the holes from which they come.

Absorption Tendrils: CR 3; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; multiple targets (anyone within 15 feet of the wall); Atk +12 melee (2d6, tendril w/claws of the vampire), grapple +12; Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 24. *Cost:* 15,800 gp, 1,000 XP.

Cocoon Trap

When activated, this trap spews forth strands of ectoplasm that bind the victim helplessly in a mummy-like cocoon. The swaddling lasts for one minute, during which time an alarm claxon sounds — obviously intended to alert nearby security. In contemporary times, creatures make their nests

near such traps to better take advantage of the victims' helplessness.

Cocoon Trap: CR 3; psionic; proximity trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*ectoplasmic cocoon*, 10th-level psion, DC 20 Reflex save negates); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 30. *Cost:* 10,100 gp, 800 XP.

Poisoned Spine Trap

Making use of the paralytic venom of the builder beetles, these traps were designed to immobilize their targets until slarecian inquisitors could arrive and decide the fate of the helpless victims. The slarecians typically laid these traps where bandits or explorers might easily find entrance into the catacombs. The venom of the beetles was also a favorite method of capturing new subjects for their slarecians' many experiments.

Poisoned Spine Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch; automatic reset; Atk +8 melee (1d6 plus poison); poison (builder beetle venom, contact, DC 15 paralysis/0 hp); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. *Note:* the spine is automatically immersed in venom when it resets. *Market Price:* 1,500 gp.

Psychic Poison Trap

These traps shoot forth tiny needles whenever a psionically-endowed creature enters the area without broadcasting the password. The needles do no damage, but instead deliver a dose of mindburn venom (see Appendix).

Psychic Poison Trap: CR 3; psionic/magical device; proximity trigger (*detect psionics*); manual reset; telepathic password bypass; Atk +12 ranged (poison damage only, needle delivery); poison (mindburn venom, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d3 Int/1d3 Wis and special); Search DC 19; Disable Device DC 15. *Cost:* 4,800 gp, 400 XP, plus 2,000 gp for the poison.

CR 4 Traps

Angled Pit Trap

This is a standard deep pit trap, placed around the bend of an alien angle (see above). As such, it is far more difficult than average either to detect or to avoid.

Angled Pit Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 28 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 24. *Market Price:* 5,200 gp.

Flood Pit

Hidden beneath a disguised one-way iris gate, these traps are extraordinarily common in the Blood Grotto. When the gate is triggered it spirals open, dropping the trap's victims into a flooded room. The door then closes, cutting off the only escape route and leaving the victims submerged with very little air.

The gate may be broken with a Strength check (DC 20 for those trying from above, 30 for victims floating in the water).

Flood Pit: CR 4; mechanical; Location trigger; automatic reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep, *drowning*; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 15. *Note:* Victims are in danger of drowning if left underwater with no oxygen, see *DMG* for rules on drowning; *Market Price:* 2,000 gp.

Greater Concussion Trap

A concussive blast emanates from the trap, slamming into the victim with great force.

Greater Concussion Trap: CR 4; psionic; touch trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*greater concussion*, 6th-level psion, 5d6, DC 16 Fortitude save half damage); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 25. *Cost:* 9,000 gp, 720 XP.

Mind Field

A mind field is an area with a specific psionic attack mode (such as mind blast or ego whip) attached to it. Anyone entering the area without bypassing or disarming the trap is subject to the attached attack. All standard rules for determining effect and defense apply; see the "Psionic Combat" section of Chapter Four of the *Psionics Handbook*.

These traps are particularly dangerous if they happen to overlap with an enlightenment field (see "Hazards," above), something that seems to occur with remarkable frequency considering that such fields are not deliberately placed.

Mind Field: CR 4; magic/psionic device; location trigger; automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; power effect (variable attack mode, 7th-level psion, DC [1d20+4+variable] Will save negates); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 20. *Cost:* 21,300 gp, 1,120 XP.

CR 5 Traps

Chitinous Pendulum

When the characters enter the triggering area, a vicious, highly-honed black blade swings from the wall with tremendous weight and speed. These were fairly rare traps, only enabled in anticipation of an attack. In those areas where these exist, there are usually a variety of other defenses nearby.

Chitinous Pendulum: CR 5; mechanical; proximity; automatic reset; Atk +20 (2d10 +5); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 28. *Notes:* Bypass available (hidden switch, Search DC 25); *Market Price:* 6,100 gp.

Mass Concussion Trap

As the greater concussion trap, but affects all creatures and unattended objects within a 20-foot radius.

Mass Concussion Trap: CR 5; psionic; touch trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*mass concussion*, 8th-level psion, 7d4, 20-foot radius); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20. *Cost:* 16,000, 1,280 XP.

Memory Eaters

Modified memoriam jars (see above), these traps are hidden in plain sight as everyday items. Any individual who touches one, however, must succeed in a Will save or begin to lose thoughts and memories to the trap. These missing memories manifest as negative levels (four negative levels standard for this trap). The subject recovers her memories (and levels) in four hours, but a copy of those thoughts remains in the trap. A slarecian (or other psionic creature who knows how to operate the trap) may access those memories, learning about the subject or using the stored thoughts to empower psionic abilities.

Memory Eaters: CR 5; magic/psionic device; touch trigger; repair reset; power effect (modified *mindwipe*, 7th-level psion, DC 18 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20. *Cost:* 13,800 gp, 1,120 XP.

Preservation Tanks

These crystalline tanks were originally created for storing organic samples, but were later jury-rigged as traps during the final days of the slarecians' downfall. As traps, they are often placed within pits (those that open at the top), or behind doors (those that open on the side). Any living being who remains inside an active chamber for five rounds is immediately trapped by a slamming door and subject to a *temporal stasis* effect, which remains until the chamber is deactivated. The Reflex save allows a victim to avoid falling into the chamber, or indicates that the individual has leap through the door prior to it slamming shut; the Fortitude save allows the victim to shrug off the *stasis* effect. The walls of the chamber have a hardness of 10, 60 hit points, and a break DC of 28. Triggering the door to open requires a DC 15 Disable Device check.

Preservation Tanks: CR 5; magic/psionic device; location trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass; power effect (*temporal stasis*, 15th-level caster, DC 15 Reflex save avoids, DC 23 Fortitude save negates); onset delay 5 rounds; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 15. *Cost:* 58,700 gp, 4,800 XP.

CR 6 Traps

Crisis of Breath Trap

The power of this trap compels the subject to purge her entire store of air in one explosive exhalation, thereby disrupting the victim's autonomic breathing cycle. Furthermore, the subject's lungs do not automatically breathe in again while the power's duration lasts. Those who choose to consciously control their breathing each round (in an attempt to regain some air) are limited only to partial actions during that round as they gasp for breath.

Affected creatures can choose to take action normally, but each round they do so they risk blacking out from lack of oxygen. They must succeed at a DC 10 Constitution check every round that passes without a breath to remain conscious. Every round that goes by without the victim breathing, the DC increases by 1, but the DC drops back to 10 if a normal breath is taken.

If a subject fails a Constitution check, she is staggered (0 hp). The following round she drops to -1 hit points and is dying, unless the duration lapses first. Failing a lapse in the power's duration (16 rounds with the above statistics), the subject dies on the third round.

Crisis of Breath Trap: CR 6; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; power effect (*crisis of breath*, 8th-level psion, DC 18 Will save negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. *Cost:* 24,700 gp, 1,600 XP.



Empathic Razor Trap

Anyone caught in the area of this trap suffers the effects of the *empathic razor* psionic power (see the Lore and Artifacts Appendix). Any empathic links (wards and familiars, druids and animal companions, paladins and mounts, psions and psicrystals, and the like) are temporarily severed.

Empathic Razor Trap: CR 6; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; power effect (*empathic razor*, 7th-level psion, DC 21 Will save negates); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 25. *Cost:* 22,900 gp, 1,680 XP.

Teleport Trap

Upon triggering the trap, infinitesimal bits of the victim are teleported randomly, dispersing throughout the area.

Teleport Trap: CR 6; psionic; touch trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*baleful teleport*, 10th-level psion, 9d6, DC 20 Will save half damage); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 30; *Note:* Targets are protected from the effects of this trap by *dimensional anchor*. *Cost:* 25,000 gp, 2,000 XP.

Terinav Blades

Crystalline blades, coated with poison distilled from the terinav root, slice down into the victim. These blades are typically situated to impale a victim's hand or arm while the individual is attempting to take a significant item.

Terinav Blades: CR 6; mechanical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; Atk +10 melee (1d6 plus terinav root poison); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 25. *Market Price:* 4,250 gp.

CR 7 Traps

Crystallization Chamber

Anyone standing in the center of this chamber, without first disabling or bypassing the trap, is subject to a modified petrification effect. Rather than turning to stone, however, the subject becomes crystalline, similar in type to the tepuje crystals of southeastern Termana. (The slarecians were attempting, and failing, to find various means of recreating those psionically-charged crystals; hence their willingness to resort to magic rather than psionics for this trap.) Despite this alteration, all relevant restorative spells (such as *stone to flesh* function normally).

Crystallization Chamber: CR 7; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass; spell effect (modified *flesh to stone*, 11th-level caster, DC 19 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 20. *Cost:* 35,300 gp, 2,640 XP.

Fascination Crystal

Anyone within 20 feet who looks at the crystal must make a Will save or become enraptured, as per *brain lock*, standing motionless and staring into the faceted surface of the crystal. A character who succeeds in this save is immune to the *brain lock* effect of this particular crystal for 24 hours. The following round, the victim must make another

save. If he fails this save as well, he must make an immediate second save or suffer the effects of both the *mind thrust* and *psychic crush* attack modes. The victim takes ability damage as though he were a psionic creature (1d2 Int damage, 2d4 Wis damage), regardless of whether he is psionically imbued or not. A hypnotized character may attempt a new save every five rounds to break free, but every time he fails he must save against the attack modes or take additional ability damage.

Fascination Crystal: CR 7; magic/psionic device; location trigger; automatic reset; power effect (*brain lock* [heightened to 5th level], *mind thrust* and *psychic crush* psionic attack forms, 5th-level psion, DC 19 Will save negates); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 25. Cost: 33,300 gp, 2,600 XP.

Flaming Shroud Trap

Fire encases the victim, causing a massive amount of damage.

Flaming Shroud Trap: CR 7; psionic; touch trigger; manual reset; psionic effect (*flaming shroud*, 12th-level psion, 11d6, DC 22 Reflex negates); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30. Cost: 36,000 gp, 2,880 XP.

Shadow Spine

Usually hidden in dark places or attached to locks, shadow spines are covered in shadow essence and drain the strength of their victims. Those who they touch are hard pressed to accurately describe the unearthly cold sensation of this trap's touch.

Shadow Spine: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +12 (1d6 plus shadow essence poison); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 25. Market Price: 9,900 gp.

CR 8 Traps

Feeding Chamber

These chambers were originally built simply to provide food for the slarecians' favorite servants, but they were later adapted into deadly traps. Five rounds after anyone enters one of these rooms, the chamber seals and a semi-alchemical, semi-psionic gas fills the area. This gas does the listed damage every round of exposure, and eventually dissolves most organic tissue into a thick paste, but — due to its psionic enhancements — does not damage the brains of sentient creatures. The paste eventually runs through drains in the floor, where it collects in bins and was used to feed many of the slarecians' prisoners; the brains were collected and went to those servants who preferred such cuisine. The walls of the chamber have a hardness of 10, 60 hit points, and a break DC of 28. Triggering the door to open requires a DC 18 Disable Device check.

Feeding Chamber: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden switch bypass; room fills with psionically charged acidic gas (14d6 damage); onset delay 5 rounds; Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 18. Cost: 1,200 gp, plus 4,200 gp and 3,360 XP for the gas.

Insanity Trap

When this trap is triggered, a spiraling, morphing pattern appears on the trapped object, enthralling the victim. The impossible geometry and shifting colors affect viewers on a subconscious level, quickly driving them insane.

Insanity Trap: CR 8; psionic; touch trigger; automatic reset; psionic effect (*insanity*, 14th-level psion, DC 24 Will save negates); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 35. Cost: 49,000 gp, 3,920 XP.

Poisoned Floor Spines

Long, thin barbs covered in purple worm poison shoot up from the floor into the feet of everyone within a 10-foot radius.

Poisoned Floor Spines: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 27 Reflex save avoids; Spines (2d6 plus purple worm poison); multiple targets within a 10-foot radius; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 27. Market Price: 5,200 gp.

Recall Agony Trap

The subject of the trap is instantly forced to relive intense memories of the worst pain he has ever experienced in the past, suffering 9d6 points of damage in the process.

Recall Agony Trap: CR 8; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; power effect (*recall agony*, 11th-level psion, DC 19 Will save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28. Cost: 43,200 gp, 3,080 XP.

CR 9 Traps

Dimensional Loop

Used to trap intruders until the slarecians could come along and deal with them, a dimensional loop takes the form of a door, though it can be any sort of portal (standard door, membrane gate, iris gate, etc.). Anyone who steps through the door without bypassing the trap is immediately teleported back into the doorway, which teleports him back into the doorway, which teleports him... This is literally an endless loop, and can keep the character helpless and ageless (since teleportation takes place through the astral plane) indefinitely. The victim may make a Will save when the trap first activates; if he succeeds, he is able to push through the door without being teleported. Once trapped, the character may make additional saves, but only once every 24 hours. A character coming out of a dimensional loop has no sense that any time has passed. Other than a successful save, a character can only escape through outside assistance; finding the hidden switch to deactivate the trap frees anyone caught in the dimensional loop.

Dimensional Loop: CR 9; magic/psionic device; location trigger; automatic reset; telepathic password or hidden switch bypass; power effect (*teleportation circle*, 18th-level psion, DC 24 Will save negates); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 18. Cost: 99,100 gp, 7,920 XP.

Extractor

Modeled after the piercing tentacles of the slarecians' favored servant race, the extractor is a steel device attached to a cable and moving through a combination of springs, gears, and psionic encouragement. It drops from a concealed niche and makes an attack against the victim. The device is treated as though it had the Improved Grab feature, and thus does not draw an attack of opportunity when it attempts to grapple. All four attacks are directed against a single victim, as the trap lacks the flexibility to target more than one subject. A tentacle deals full damage on a successful strike, and continues to deal that same damage for every round it maintains a grapple — as it burrows into the victim's body. If the trap brings a victim's hit points to -10, this indicates that it has extracted the subject's brain.

Extractor: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass; Atk +18 (3d8, 4 tentacles), grapple +18; Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 23. *Market Price:* 7,900 gp.

Injector Array

A series of hollow spines pierces into the target's chest, injecting the victim with wyvern poison.

Injector Array: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 melee (3d6 plus wyvern poison); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 30. *Note:* Other injector arrays exist, incorporating various poisons, some even inject multiple types of poison at once. The CR of this trap should be adjusted appropriately, depending on the type of poison it delivers. *Market Price:* 7,000 gp.

Shadow Twin Trap

When touched, the trap causes its victim's shadow to separate from the person's body. The shadow takes on nearly all of the living individual's abilities, and attacks the target until either itself or the victim is defeated.

Shadow Twin Trap: CR 9; magical; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*shadow twin*, 15th-level wizard); Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 35. *Note:* see *Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore* for more information on *shadow twin*. *Cost:* 60,000 gp, 4,800 XP.

CR10+ Traps

Attuned Membranes

Most membrane gates allow passage to anyone who walks through them, but some were "trained" only to allow entrance to specific types of creatures. A few paranoid slarecians, however, took their security one step further. An attuned membrane gate only allows specific individuals to pass through. Anyone else who attempts to walk through the portal is subject to a *teleportation* effect, and winds up in some other predetermined



location. Sometimes that site is a prison cell (in which case those so captured are often stripped of inorganic items while being teleported), but some attuned membranes teleport unwanted visitors into other traps, furnaces, deep water or other lethal areas. Such attuned membranes should have their CR adjusted by the lethality of the trap/environment on the other end.

Attuned Membranes: CR 11 (but see above); magic/psionic device; location trigger; automatic reset; power effect (*teleportation circle*, 18th-level psion); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29. *Cost:* 86,100 gp, 6,480 XP.

Disjunction Portals

Anyone walking through this portal (which can take the form of any sort of door) suffers the effects of an *M's disjunction* spell two rounds after exposure. Those affected must succeed in a Will save for each of their permanent magical items, and all spell effects and temporary items are destroyed instantly. Again, the effectiveness of this trap persuaded the slarecians to overcome their normal disdain for magic.

Disjunction Portals: CR 14; magic/psionic device; location trigger; automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; spell effect (*M's disjunction*, 20th-level caster, DC 25 Will save negates [per item]); onset delay 2 rounds; Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 28. *Cost:* 113,300 gp, 8,800 XP.

Disjunction Trap

Extraordinarily rare, these traps work to disenchant all magical items in a 40 foot radius. *Disjunction*

traps were most often used as last resorts, a final line of defense before the slarecians had to dirty their hands with physical combat.

Disjunction Trap: CR 10; magical; location trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*disjunction*, 17th-level wizard, DC 27 Will save negates); multiple targets, all magical effects and magical items within a 40-ft. radius. Search DC 35; Disable Device DC 40. *Notes:* Will save must be made for each magical item, see text of spell; *Cost:* 76,500 gp, 6,120 XP.

Dragon's Maw

A hideous pit trap, typically hidden beneath a weakened section of chitinous flooring. Curved and barbed spines line the sides and floor of this trap, and everything is coated in dragon bile.

Dragon's Maw: CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 70 ft. deep (7d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spines (Atk +10 melee, 1d6 spines per target for 1d6 each, plus dragon bile poison); Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 29. *Market Price:* 5,300 gp.

Nightmare Manifestation Crystals

Anyone unfortunate enough to look directly into one of these crystals is immediately subject to the effect of the *manifest nightmare* power (see the **Lore and Artifacts** appendix). After a victim has been affected once, he is immune to that particular nightmare manifestation crystal for 24 hours.

Nightmare Manifestation Crystals: CR 10; magic/psionic device; proximity trigger (*detect thoughts*); automatic reset; telepathic password bypass; power effect (*manifest nightmare*, 15th-level caster, DC 23 Fortitude save partial); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 26. *Cost:* 76,100 gp, 6,000 XP.

Chapter Four: Return of the Masters

The stars are our destiny, as is all that lies between them. We, the living thoughts of the universe, are eternal and not meant to be confined. And when we escape this infinitesimal particle, this Scarn, we will return to the Void, our birthright. Locked in this flesh, trapped in life, we suffer. But flesh is not eternal, and Entropy overwhelms all. Eventually this world will fall away, our shells will be shattered, and we will return from whence we came.

— Dyterne the Ebon



The Truth

The creatures who are now known as *uthriach* were once alien beings of pure thought who roamed freely throughout the universe. Unknowably ancient, these entities considered themselves scions of the universe itself — they were the mind and thoughts of creation. These formless sentiences watched with a detached interest as worlds came into being and life developed, considering themselves above such petty physical events. This state of affairs ended, however, when the amorphous ancients shifted their perceptions to the nascent world of Scarn. Swollen with the primal energies of the titans, the raw generative nature of the world grasped at these disembodied minds, encasing them for the first time in physical shells. Stunned by this development, the formless ones, now known as *uthriach*, struggled to maintain their cosmic perception while they endured the agony that came with newfound materiality. Not until the Epoch of Gormoth, when other sentient life began to develop on Scarn, did the *uthriach* become truly aware of the world around them. Seeking to free themselves, these beings linked into a single mind, forming a consciousness that was truly a fragment

of the universe. With this unified awareness, they delved into the future of the world that imprisoned them. What they saw amazed the *uthriach*; the rise of divine beings, world shattering conflict, the creation of empires — and enemies gathering against them. What their probes into the future couldn't see, however, both confused and terrified the alien beings. For the titans, as raw creatures of primal chaos, could not truly be predicted, and thus these tumultuous beings were anathema to the purely rational and spiritual *uthriach*. They saw that the only way they could possibly succeed would be to convince their foes to turn on one another, and to create the illusion that the *uthriach* themselves were not a threat. The gods, whose existence they clearly saw in the future, were predictable and not powerful enough to stop the *uthriach*'s plans on their own, but they did have the might to threaten the titans. Thus, in the yet unborn gods lay the *uthriach*'s hope and possible salvation.

Crudely emulating the life-shaping power of the titans, the *uthriach* constructed followers, few at first and then in numbers sufficient to fill vast underground cities. These beings, to be known in following eons as slarecians, were little more than extensions of the *uthriach*'s own infinite conscious-

ness; walled off and independent, yet sharing goals and aspects of personality. Because only the *uthriach* themselves could create slarecians, the race grew slowly. Thus, the Ancients hid underground and beneath the notice of their titanic foes for centuries, gradually gathering their strength and preparing for the inevitable future.

As time passed, the *uthriach* watched with interest as the titans began to produce divine progeny. Finally, here was a tool that the Ancients could turn against their primordial foes. Then the *uthriach* noticed something unexpected about these nascent beings. The new gods quickly attracted followers whose mortal worship and belief strengthened the deities, giving them a powerful incentive and a strong interest in the well-being of their world. More importantly, the *uthriach* noticed that as the gods' mortal followers died, their souls were able to migrate away from the plane of Scarn to the planar homes of the gods. Seeing a parallel between themselves (as beings of pure thought trapped in physical shells) and the mortal followers of the gods (at essence, souls within a physical form), the *uthriach* became curious about this method of planar travel. For a time, the Ancients subtly shielded the communities worshipping the divine from the prejudices and outright hostility of the more traditional titan worshippers, hoping to both strengthen the gods and acquire specimens for experimentation. Simultaneously, the Ancients built their surface 'empire,' established for a dual purpose: to continue their study of the surface settlements and to provoke the gods to war. For, if their enemies could be convinced that they were defeated, the

uthriach could work in uninterrupted secret to accomplish their goals. At some point the gods, of course, became aware of the growing activity of this mysterious race, and with the advice of Mesos decided to investigate. Resenting the gods' interference in their affairs and eager to study a divine specimen directly, the *uthriach* made plans to acquire Hadarus, the son of Belsameth. Finding the godling especially willful and yet unfortunately fragile, the god-kings accidentally destroyed Hadarus during his attempted capture. But the *uthriach* always learn from their mistakes, and they were soon able to imprison the elusive and shadowy Drendari, who had thought to spy upon the Ancients.

For many years, the god-kings probed and experimented upon the demigoddess of shadows, enduring increased attacks by the gods and their zealous followers. Fearful to probe too deeply into the captured divinity lest they kill her and gain no information, the *uthriach* first sought to understand Drendari's divine control of shadows. Though this information was acquired as a by-product of a more pressing issue, the slarecians found it useful and granted the arcane knowledge of shadows to their mortal followers. Finally, the *uthriach* felt confident enough to search for their true goal — the divine spark that allows gods to walk the planes and enables the migration of the souls of their followers. At this point, however, Mesos had revealed that the slarecians' activities were damaging the fabric of Scarn, and the gods had realized that their enemies were seeking to understand and utilize their own divine secrets. The titans and gods at-

Rod of Souls (Major Artifact)

Description: Created by the *uthriach* to emulate the divine essence of the gods, the *Rod of Souls* was meant to allow the Ancients to escape their physical bodies and roam the universe once again as beings of pure sentience. However, the rod was flawed in some unknowable way; when tested on the *uthriach* Dyterne the Ebon, it sundered the Ancient's mind and physical form, leaving the god-king a mindless abomination. Still, the *uthriach* hope to use the rod as a key to their prison, compelling those bearing their taint to seek it out and thus destroy the wards of the gods. The *Rod of Souls* currently remains secluded in the sealed city of the efreet.

Powers: The rod may be used to attack as a *psychic, great dislocator heavy mace*. Depending upon the psionic power of its wielder, the rod gains special abilities in the following order: *sundering, dissipater, and mind feeder*. In addition, the wielder of the rod may manifest the following powers once per day as a

20th level psion: *banishment, curse of materiality, disintegrate, metaconcert, and psychic surgery*.

In the hands of a more powerful psionic entity, such as an *uthriach* or a linked mind (via *metaconcert*) of at least 200 power points, the rod's true power may be activated. Once per day, the rod may be used to sunder a being's physical form, as per the *dissolution* power manifested at 20th level (DC 30 Fort save). If the being possesses a soul, that soul goes on to receive its final reward, whatever that may be. Regardless, that being has been utterly severed from the plane of the Scarred Lands and cannot be resurrected by any method. Soulless but sentient beings, such as slarecians and many types of undead, are instead transmuted into horrifying, mindless abominations. Slarecians will usually be sundered into slarecian ghouls (see **Creature Collection Revised**), although other beasts are possible. Soulless and non-intelligent beings, such as constructs, cannot be affected.

tacked the Ancients together, destroying the Slarecian Empire piece by piece as the *uthriach* worked feverishly to probe Drendari's essence. Finally, with the sacrifice of most of their worldly empire, the *uthriach* managed to coalesce a part of Drendari's being into a powerful artifact known as the Rod of Souls, which they hoped would allow them to transcend physical form once again.

Dyterne the Ebon stepped forward, willing to risk his very essence to finally achieve freedom. The *uthriach* once again joined minds, focusing the will of the universe, amplified by the rod, upon the ill-fated Dyterne. But rather than strip the *uthriach* of his hated physical shell and release his purified essence into the Void, the rod warped and mutated his form, leaving him a mindless and raging abomination. The other *uthriach* used their powers to push the creature, that had once been Dyterne, far into the future — coldly realizing that when the monstrosity reemerged, if the *uthriach* were still in existence they could simply push it further into the future, and if they'd been destroyed, it would be a fitting plague upon their enemies. While their failure had been taken care of, at least temporarily, the *uthriach* were still faced with the realization that no simple device would allow them to transcend their cursed state. Since their very essence was bound up in the creation of their imprisoning world, the planet and everything in it would have to be destroyed before they could once again achieve their true state.

When the gods and the titans finally routed the slarecian forces and broke into the sanctum of

the *uthriach*, they found it empty save for a single great arch of dark, cracked slarecian crystal. The *uthriach* had constructed an extradimensional sanctuary, impenetrable even by the planes walking gods. Furthermore, the gods found themselves unable to defeat the slarecian gatekeeper guarding the sanctuary, for it had been strengthened psionically to a practically indestructible level. Instead, Chardun sealed the portal so that it could never be opened, nor affected by any magical, titanic, or divine power. Thinking the *uthriach* trapped in their prison for all eternity, the gods and titans began to purge the world of the taint of the slarecians. Ruins were destroyed or sealed, slarecians and their followers were hunted down, and the Order of Obsidian was created to ensure no slarecian taint escaped notice. Most importantly, the indestructible Rod of Souls was sealed in the City of Bronze, the home of the imprisoned efrete following the Titanswar. Thus, the titans and gods turned upon each other, content that the mysterious and alien slarecians had been forever dealt with.

This assumption could not have been more wrong. The *uthriach* possess incredible foresight, and from their extradimensional prison they continue to plot against the inhabitants of the Scarred Lands. Servitors of the Ancients remain active and include the slarecian dragons, the slarecian cultists, the mind flayers of the Termanan tepujes, and the insidious slarecian muses. Furthermore, the *uthriach* left behind the slarecian language virus to spread their influence even after their departure. This mutating psionic lore construct not only serves



to protect the lost knowledge of the Ancients, but also gives to those infected some of the strange mental powers of the slarecians. What is less known, however, is that the *uthriach* are able to subtly influence those affected, even from their planar prison. The canny Ancients realized that the gods would be incapable of sealing their prison against the use of their own mental powers, since psionics were inaccessible to divine beings. However, the gods would surely realize when Chardun's ward was sundered and the *uthriach* were released. Appreciating the need to distract those who would watch for them, the god-kings are making use of the *Rod of Souls* once again. Those tainted by the language virus have begun to receive suggestions from the *uthriach* to seek the rod within the City of Brass. For when they enter the sealed city of the efreets, they will sunder Chardun's wards and release geniekind upon the unsuspecting Scarred Lands. Amid the inevitable chaos, who will notice one more ward breaking or the return of the *uthriach*? In the meantime, the other servants of the slarecians prepare for their arrival, reactivating the old ruins, inciting conflict between the divine races and titanspawn, gathering the lost artifacts, rebuilding the cults, and eliminating those who remember the Ancients and their mysterious powers. Save for a few half-mad and slarecian tainted hermits and the mistrusted Order of Obsidian, the divine and titanspawn races remain ignorant of the Ancients' plotting, to their peril.

Advancing the Metaplot: Return of the Slarecians

Game masters who wish to fully incorporate the slarecians into their campaigns may desire to use the threat of the returning Ancients to drive their stories. This chapter will detail the "official" events that would occur should the Scarred Lands be opened once again to the malevolence of the god-kings. Note that these events are completely optional, and no game master should feel obligated to include them in a campaign simply because they are in print. Of particular importance is the role that PCs may play in the sundering of the wards and the ensuing chaos that would follow. A note of caution, however — including these events will change the face of the Scarred Lands and irrevocably alter any campaign.

Most importantly, remember to keep the timing and flow of the return of the slarecians steady. After their long imprisonment, the *uthriach* are eager but cautious, remembering their prior defeat at the hands of their enemies. They strive to move quickly enough to take advantage of the gods' strife and confusion, using the cover of increasing

titanspawn attacks to hide their activities. At the same time, the *uthriach* require time to rebuild and gather their forces, many of whom remain in stasis or are scattered throughout the Scarred Lands. The PCs can serve as heroes or antagonists in this process, either hampering the efforts of the Ancients or discreetly serving their hidden masters.

Whispers in Madness

Even before the return of the slarecians, those who are watching the slarecian ruins, such as the scholars of Lokil and the Order of Obsidian, notice increased activity. In hidden places, such as the tepujes of Termana and the catacombs below Lokil, cultists and dark allies of the slarecians are gathering. PCs may become involved as more and more individuals are infected by the language virus, perhaps even the PCs themselves. Eventually, the slarecians call those afflicted to the *Rod of Souls*, through silent compulsions and dreaming whispers. The PCs may feel this compulsion themselves, or notice the odd actions of friends or the presence of strange pilgrims traveling through the area. Likely characters for this sort of campaign include artifact hunters, sages and wizards obsessed with the secrets of the past, outcasts driven from society due to their newly developed psionic powers, slarecian cultists, or half-mad warped ones.

As they begin to uncover the mystery of the ruins and the Ancients who once walked them, characters will feel increasing pressure from the imprisoned *uthriach*: beckoning dreams and the awakening of their own psionic powers, increasing activity of slarecian cultists, and strange constructs and allies of the Ancients again dwelling in the old ruins. A campaign of this type would detail the characters' fight to either stand against the *uthriach*'s alien influence or to empower and free their imprisoned masters. Excellent antagonists include psionic cults, the Order of Obsidian, and newly freed and rampaging psionic monsters.

Sundering the Seals

When the seals on the genie citadels are sundered, priests throughout the Scarred Lands receive a vision from their respective gods, warning of the impending peril. Characters may begin to look into the reason for the breaking of the wards or prepare their nations and communities for battle, for it is not long before probing attacks by genies assault even isolated settlements. Soon chaos erupts among the civilized nations as titanspawn make pacts with the rampaging genies and coordinate their attacks. Adventurers of all sorts will find themselves occupied with staving off marauding titanspawn, investigating the source of the recent troubles, and working to ensure that the genies are not able to



resurrect their titanic masters. Amid this chaos, hints of the returning slarecians begin to emerge.

Characters in such a scenario would most likely be followers of the divine and their allies. Although they would probably begin such a campaign unaware of the true slarecian threat behind the genie attacks, the characters would eventually discover the presence of strange cultists while investigating the more obvious enemies. As the campaign progresses, it will become evident that there is a threat existent besides the genies. The characters would have to decipher the true danger before the *uthriach* are released from their prison, in order to stop that dire event from occurring. Although they could possibly receive aid from like-minded groups such as the Order of Obsidian and followers of the gods (particularly Chardun and Hedrada), the party would be challenged by foes such as genies and other titanspawn, slarecian

cultists, psionic monsters and constructs, and even the slarecians themselves should the characters fail to prevent their return.

By the Shadows' Glare

For some time after their release, the *uthriach* work in secrecy to rebuild their forces and train cultists for the coming war. Followers of the slarecians seek out lost artifacts among the ancient ruins, engage in secret warfare with rebel psion factions and the Penumbra Pentagon, work to establish control among the Termanan tepujes, and incite chaos and division within the civilized nations. Adventurers may discover any number of these nefarious endeavors or they might be directly engaged in these actions themselves, supporting the slarecians or their enemies. During this time, strange warriors with all-black eyes and bearing obsidian weaponry

Portraying the *Uthriach*

Possessed of vast consciousness yet limited by their physical frames, the *uthriach* have the potential to be mighty allies or deadly opponents. Consider each *uthriach* to be a 20th-level psion/10th-level psychic warrior of the slarecian race (see Appendix), specializing in that *uthriach*'s primary discipline. An *uthriach* will be able to manifest all the powers of their primary discipline and an appropriate number of powers from other disciplines based on their psion/psychic warrior levels. Each *uthriach* should have a score of 40 in the ability corresponding to their primary discipline, and a 20 in every other ability (modified by slarecian racial bonuses). Drawing from a nearly infinite consciousness, each *uthriach* has an inexhaustible supply of power points. Valir the Feeble does not share the psionic strength of its brethren, instead supplementing its limited power with arcane might. Valir is considered a 20th-level psion/10th-level psychic warrior, and its primary attribute is Intelligence. However, Valir can take on the form and abilities of a great wyrm slarecian dragon (see **Creature Collection II: Dark Menagerie**), requiring only a full-round action to shapechange between the two forms.

begin appearing in the courts of civilized nations throughout Ghelspad, warning of the threat of the Ancients and seeking aid. However, due to the remoteness of this threat and the increasing attacks by titanspawn, such warnings usually go unheeded, although the Vigils of Vesh and the spies of King Virduk begin to discreetly look into these claims.

The characters could approach such a scenario from multiple perspectives, either as slarecian cultists themselves, allies of the Penumbra Pentagon, members of the Order of Obsidian, or agents of the divine. As the shadow war heats up, loyalties would quickly become confused as rival slarecian cultists inspire turmoil between the nations of Ghelspad. Such a campaign would involve politics and court dealings as well as assassination, betrayal, and other more discreet tools. Can the characters hold together the fracturing nations of Ghelspad while uncovering the true intentions of their foes? Alternately, will the PCs be able to undermine the civilized nations to fall before the horrible might of the Ancients? Regardless, the future of the Scarred Lands will be determined by their actions.

The Formless Reborn

When the slarecians have gathered sufficient strength, they will reveal themselves and strike with tremendous force and speed. Lokil, their first target, will be quickly overcome, even as slarecian monstrosities wreck havoc in Darakeene and the other surrounding nations. Adventures may find a role here defending Lokil and leading small bands of refugees to relative safety within Hollowfaust. The slarecians will work quickly to expand their terrain, using the distraction of rampaging titanspawn to efficiently overwhelm opposition within the Ukrudan Desert. They work to seal this area from observation and teleportation by mortals and gods alike. Instead of facing this growing threat, King Virduk concentrates his forces ever further against Durrover and Burok Torn, contrary to the advice of his wife and Antreas. Characters may become engaged in the siege of Hollowfaust by titanspawn forces, investigate the odd behavior of the king of Calastia, serve the Veshian Vigils within the western Calastian Hegemony, or act as scouts tracking the movement of the slarecians within the Ukrudan.

This scenario could also serve as an opportunity for characters to play slarecians themselves, perhaps forming a mixed group of slarecians and their cultist allies. The Ancients have much to accomplish once they are restored

to the Scarred Lands; they seek to destroy the treacherous wizards of the Penumbra Pentagon who once betrayed them, seek out artifacts and ruins that are essential to their progress, counter increasing attacks by the allies of the divine, and work to rebuild their once-great network of slaves and followers. Will the characters engage in outright war against the civilized nations or use more subtle methods to achieve their aims? Will they use the hatred and focus of the titanspawn against their divine foes? And how does one go about destroying the world, anyway? Such a campaign allows the GM to delve into the mysteries and alien nature of the slarecians and make the most of an epic setting.

Chains of Mithril and Obsidian

As the slarecian invasion shifts into high gear, surrounding nations will engage in outright warfare to hold the Ancients at bay. When Dunahnae, Durrover, and Fangsfall become threatened, the gods will realize the dire nature of the slarecian threat and begin to work against the Ancients directly. Characters may receive visions from the gods, prompting them to seek out lost artifacts of slarecian power or to reinforce threatened settlements. Unfortunately, the direct intervention of the gods also gives the mighty *uthriach* the ability to work against the Eight Victors directly. Using powerful psionics, incredible foresight, their knowledge of the nature of divinity, and the betrayal of Drendari, the *uthriach* will seek to imprison and control the gods themselves. Of course, the followers of the titans will use this chaos to formulate their own plans and attempt to resurrect their lost masters.

Characters in such a setting should be agents of the divine, fighting openly against the slarecians and their followers rather than warring in secret. The nations of the Scarred Lands have realized their danger, and the churches of the Eight Victors are unified in their desire to face this threat head-on. How will the characters contend with the strange powers of the slarecians? Will they ally with the enigmatic and mysterious Order of Obsidian, or will they seek out slarecian artifacts with which to counter their foes? The gods may be rightfully apprehensive to return to the Scarred Lands during this time, fearful that they may be captured individually by the mighty *uthriach*; but in the absence of direct divine aid, can the slarecians be defeated? What would the characters do if the slarecians succeed in capturing or even undoing one of the Eight Victors?

A Timeline of the Return

What follows is not an "official metaplot" by any means. Rather, think of it as an example of the kinds of huge, world spanning changes that might come from the return of the slarecians. Feel free to utilize, to adapt, or simply to be inspired by this timeline.

Date	Event
<i>Belsamer, 145 AV</i>	Explorers from Lokil breach a large slarecian ruin, allowing the language virus to escape and run through the population. Wielders of psionic power quickly become much more prevalent in the Scarred Lands.
<i>Corot, 150 AV</i>	Slarecian ruins throughout Ghelspad begin to reawaken, as they become inhabited by cultists and slarecian creations.
<i>Enkilot, 151 AV</i>	Those tainted by the slarecians receive increasingly strong visions of the <i>Rod of Souls</i> and are compelled to seek it out.
<i>Belot, 151 AV</i>	A child of the gods enters the sealed City of Brass, sundering the wards and releasing genie-kind upon the Scarred Lands.
<i>Chardot, 151 AV</i>	War breaks out across the Scarred Lands as the genies, strengthened by other titanspawn, probe divine defenses and settlements.
<i>Vangalot, 151 AV</i>	Slarecian cultists find and reactivate the portal to the <i>uthriach's</i> prison, allowing the god-kings to enter the Scarred Lands.
<i>Charder, 151 AV</i>	The <i>uthriach</i> begin to reestablish themselves in slarecian ruins, creating slarecians and training cultists to build an effective army.
<i>Madrer, 151 AV</i>	Followers of Denev, in the absence of direction from their titan and in retaliation for perceived mistreatment by the divine races, refuse to stand against the genies — who are fellow children of Denev. Slarecians and cultists engage in secret warfare with the Penumbra Pentagon, hoping to destroy those who remember their true nature.
<i>Enker, 151 AV</i>	The cultists of the Termanan tepujes purge from their priest caste those not loyal to the slarecians. They begin preaching of the return of the Ancients and the need to join their masters.
<i>Belsamer, 151 AV</i>	Realizing the extent of the danger presented by the slarecians, the Order of Obsidian sends envoys to rulers throughout Ghelspad. They seek to assemble an army against the Ancients. In the face of increasing titanspawn attacks, however, these emissaries are mostly rebuffed.
<i>Hedrer, 151 AV</i>	Lokil is overwhelmed and destroyed by desert titanspawn from above and slarecian attacks from below. Survivors flee across the desert to Hollowfaust, bringing tales of rampaging sutak and horrifying slarecians. The abomination that was once Dyterne, along with a hoard of slarecian ghouls, appears in the royal court of Emperor Klum of Darakeene, slaying the royals and many of the realm's nobility. The various provinces are isolated as they individually struggle to protect themselves from this menace at the heart of their empire.
<i>Vanger, 151 AV</i>	Acting under the suggestion of a slarecian muse he has been hiding, King Virduk of Calastia renews his attack on Burok Torn and Durrover, pulling soldiers from his western protectorates to lay siege to the dwarves.
<i>Corot, 152 AV</i>	Under the attacks of titanspawn and marine genies, the Northern Protectorate of Mithril collapses. The survivors flee to city of Mithril, swelling it with refugees.
<i>Tanot, 152 AV</i>	The titanspawn of the Ukrudan attack Hollowfaust en masse, summoning a massive firestorm that scours the divine ranks. The city is preserved only through the efforts of the mighty Bonewrack Dragon.
<i>Enkilot, 152 AV</i>	The slarecian cultists and mind flayers of the Termanan tepujes use a slarecian gatekeeper to open a massive portal to the ruins of Lokil. Their army, equipped with powerful tepuje crystal weaponry and fearsome psionic talents, attacks the Desert Paradise of the Asaatthi. The asaath city's ancient defenses awaken fully, creating a protective zone into which the serpent-folk retreat. A siege ensues.
<i>Belot, 152 AV</i>	The slarecians, having secured the majority of the Ukrudan Desert and parts of the Devil's March, erect a mystic barrier that prevents all scrying and teleportation into and out of the region.
<i>Chardot, 152 AV</i>	Meeting in the Birthplace of the Gods on distant Asherak, the Eight Victors and several demigods gather to discuss the return of the slarecians. They renew the Divine Truce, and Enkili suggests releasing one of the titans, for the gods have been shown they cannot face the slarecians by themselves. Outraged, the gods of Light and Order storm away.
<i>Enkilot, 152 AV</i>	The Wall of Bone opens and six Scepters of Dunahnae, lead by the Great General himself, march upon the slarecian center of power within the Ukrudan. The army and Chardun's avatar are never seen again.
<i>Belot, 152 AV</i>	The Order of Obsidian and other psions not aligned with the Ancients serve as guides to communities that have felt the slarecians' touch. They form small bands of warriors and skirmishers on the borders of slarecian power.
<i>Chardot, 152 AV</i>	The provinces of Darakeene crumple one by one under increasing attacks from the slarecians in the south and from the titanspawn of Khet and the Titanshome Mountains. The western provinces are preserved only with the direct assistance of Karria and Uria.
<i>Enkilot, 152 AV</i>	Hollowfaustian envoys travel to Calastia, Dunahnae, Vera-tre and Vesh to seek assistance. They are totally unsuccessful.
<i>Chardot, 152 AV</i>	Taking advantage of Virduk's weakness in the western hegemony, Veshian forces are able to free several nations and buttress them against the slarecian advance.
<i>Enkilot, 152 AV</i>	Burok Torn falls before Calastian forces. Refugees flood through the mountains northward into Vesh.
<i>Chardot, 152 AV</i>	Deep within the abandoned tepuje of Maratawo, Mesos begins to reform — as his arcane devourers construct a body of tepuje crystal and infuse it with captured arcane energy.

Allies and Enemies

Like the timeline above, what follows is not necessarily the way things are in the Scarred Lands. From the information on Drendari to Enkili's treachery against her fellow gods, these are simply samples of how the return of the slarecians might affect the movers and shakers of the Scarred Lands.

Baeth the Shaper of Stars: Baeth, along with Qarrath, leads the advance of the slarecian armies. Its first target is the Desert Paradise of Asaatthi, which it recognizes as a threat possessing ancient and deadly magics. Baeth instructs and commands the slarecian cultists who flock to the Ancients' banner.

Chelaque the Imprisoned: Chelaque formulates a bold plan to protect the growing Slarecian Empire from the interference of the gods. Sending its children to the borders of slarecian territory, the *uthriach* performs a powerful ritual to seal the Ukrudan Desert against scrying and teleportation. Not even divine power can penetrate this ward, preventing the gods from determining the true intentions of the Ancients.

Dyterne the Ebon (Drendari): Knowing that the use of the untested *Rod of Souls* might very well end in its destruction, Dyterne planted a *mind seed* within captured Drendari. Although the demigoddess had struggled with the emerging personality of Dyterne since her capture, she was finally overwhelmed when she came into contact with the warped *Rod of Souls*. Although vastly reduced in power, both because of its demigod form and its reincarnated mind, Dyterne now possesses the power of divinity.

Dyterne's previous shell, now a mindless abomination, finally erupts from its temporal imprisonment. The other *uthriach* have aimed the beast at their enemies, caring little for the havoc it wrecks.

Hylop of the Void: Hylop spends its energy creating slarecians and constructing slarecian constructs and monsters to swell the ranks of their army. The most scholarly of the *uthriach*, Hylop plots with Tlarch to divide and overcome their divine and titanspawn enemies.

Tlarch the Golden: This *uthriach* reestablishes itself beneath Lokil, in the ruins of *Tlarch-phen*. It directs the war against the forces of Lokil, hoping to acquire the amassed history and knowledge of the Scarred Lands.

Qarrath the Worldly: Like Baeth, Qarrath commands the slarecian armies. While Baeth directs mostly mortal followers, Qarrath has

constructed many slarecians, whom it has trained as egoists and psychic warriors.

Valir the Feeble: Initially arriving in a position of strength due to its slarecian dragon followers, Valir moves in secret to defend the slarecians while its brethren prepare their forces. During the actual war, it is generally disregarded as powerless by the other *uthriach*, even as its magical power swells due to arcane secrets stolen from the tomes of Lokil.

Xoer the One: Xoer plots to trap and overwhelm the gods with the help of the reborn Dyterne. It hopes to lock the gods in stasis and overcome their minds one by one. Finally, controlling the power of the Eight Victors, Xoer plans to rip the world asunder with divine power.

Slarecian Cultists: Since the mutation of the slarecian language virus, the ranks of the slarecian cults have begun to swell. With rejuvenated strength, these cults quickly heed the call of the returning slarecians. While some of the more martial psions aid directly in the war, others seek to undermine the unity of their foes or inspire conflict among the titanspawn and divine races. The Cult of Shade is charged with destroying the remnants of the traitorous Eyes in the Night, today known as the Penumbral Pentagon.

Tepujes of the Gamulganjus: Realizing their ancient masters are about to return, the tepuje slarecian cults increase their production of tepuje crystal weaponry and begin to purge the priest caste of loyal followers of Mesos. Portraying the slarecians as followers of Mesos and the mind flayers as Mesos's priests, the cults are able to convince the folk of the tepujes to prepare for war. They plan to use a vast slarecian gatekeeper, found far beneath Chukema, to transport their armies when their masters finally call upon them. While preparing for battle, few inhabitants of the tepujes have noticed the increasing activity in Maratawo by arcane devourers and titanspawn of Mesos.

Order of Obsidian: Aware of the increasing activity of the slarecians, the order seeks to recruit new psions and gather support from divine nations. Realizing that they stand little chance of success before the slarecians reveal themselves, obsidians harry and delay the slarecians with guerilla tactics. Several members of the order distribute obsidian weaponry to communities on the edges of slarecian territory.

Mesos: The Sire of Sorcery begins to reform using the mystical tepuje crystals and the arcane energy gathered by his arcane devourers. The titan hopes to use the slarecian-tainted crystals

to master the mysterious powers of the Ancients in addition to his own mighty sorcery.

Chardun: Feeling his wards dissipate, the Great General prepares his forces for war. When he learns of the slarecian menace, he hopes to crush the Ancients between the juggernauts of Calastia and Dunahnae, but the Overlord finds himself mysteriously losing control over Virduk. When dealing with the other gods, Chardun urges immediate and determined war against the titanspawn and slarecians.

Enkili: Enkili realizes that the gods alone do not possess the power to destroy the returning god-kings. After being rebuffed by the other gods, she sets herself to resurrecting her mothers, Lethene and Gulaben.

Genies of the Four Citadels: As expected, the genies swarm over the Scarred Lands, allying with titanspawn forces to harass their divine foes. The lesser genies attempt to keep the champions of the gods occupied while their leaders seek methods to resurrect their lost masters.

Asaatthi: The Desert Paradise of Asaatthi lies in the middle of slarecian territory, forcing the *uthriach* to neutralize the ancient power of the serpent-folk before engaging the divine nations. The desert city's defenses become fully active when the Ancients approach, protecting the city and the asaathhi who dwell on its fringes. The serpent-folk lack the knowledge to channel the power of the Desert Paradise and call for aid, but the Ancients have incited their allies among the daywalkers and sutak to attack Hollowfaust. The swamp-dwelling asaathhi marshal their forces to head north, but must battle both slarecian minions and divine forces before even reaching the desert.

Followers of Denev: Although many individual Denevites aid the cause of the divine races, as a whole the faithful of Denev refuse to attack Denev's genie children without word from their patron — who has been unusually silent. When the alien and destructive nature of the slarecians is revealed, however, the nations loyal to Denev prepare for war against these beings.

Lokil: Unfortunately for the folk of Lokil, the great library of Hedrada lies directly above the center of slarecian power and provides a tempting target for the returning *uthriach*. Already taxed through years of conflict and divided by internal slarecian cultists, Lokil will probably fall quickly to the slarecians. However, the library is also a center of power for the Order of Obsidian, which will work to discretely counter the slarecian threat.

Gleaming Valley: The Order of Silver attempts to meet the threat posed by the emergence of the mystical genies. Its wizards focus on mastering the ancient art of genie binding, to better counter their enemies. Unfortunately, by the time the slarecians emerge as the true threat, the paladins are spread too thin to defend the Gleaming Valley, and the hollow knights begin to take horrendous losses from conflicts with the Ancients.

Hollowfaust: Hollowfaust soon finds itself harboring unexpected refugees from Lokil, and furthermore becomes the target of increasing attacks by titanspawn of the Ukrudan Desert. Although the city-state seeks aid, the surrounding nations are too overwhelmed by the rampaging genies to send more than token assistance. Only through the most powerful death magics and the aid of the Bonewrack Dragon is Hollowfaust able to temporarily stave off the sutak hordes.

Darakeene: Misfortune seems to converge upon Darakeene, as it is ravaged from within by the rampaging shell of Dyterne, finally released from its temporal prison. The titanspawn of Khet and the Titanshome Mountains waste little time in carving away at the empire's eastern provinces, and the southern provinces are able to do little to stave off the advance of the slarecians. Refugees flood into the western provinces, which are defended by the realm's many mercenaries and allies.

Dunahnae: Dunahnae strives to avoid the conflict until the Great General himself, in avatar form, appears and demands that his forces march against the slarecians. Hordes of undead and half the mighty nation's scepters march with their god into the Ukrudan, only to disappear without a trace. The nation's remaining forces strive to reinforce their border and seek aid from the Empire of Chains on distant Termana.

Calastia: Amazingly, King Virduk concentrates ever more heavily on his enemies to the east, even going to far as to pull soldiers out of his imperiled western realms. Calastia's subjects start to wonder at the king's health and sanity, even as the western realms begin to break away or falter under the slarecian advance.

Vesh: Not particularly endangered itself, Vesh sends aid and vigilants to support its allies, including Mithril and the Gleaming Valley. Vigilant forces encourage western realms within the Calastian Hegemony to break away even as it reinforces them against the encroaching slarecian threat.

Slarecian Story Seeds

Below are some basic strategies for how to fit slarecian themed adventures into an ordinary campaign — almost anywhere in the Scarred Lands. General information for each story idea is provided after each heading. These guidelines are intended to be usable for any sort of campaign, regardless of mood, style or party. Thus, the epic slarecians can be made more easily accessible, playability-wise, regardless of the average level of the party. These are all slarecian story seeds, so to speak, planted in the soil of the Scarred Lands' setting (though GMs should feel free to use these ideas and generalizations in any locale). It should be noted, however, that the following is meant to simply provide inspiration and give possible new directions a campaign can pursue; it is not a statement of what is going on "canonically" in the Scarred Lands.

The boxed text included in some sections could perhaps be referred to as "story sprouts." These are examples of how the story seeds can be used to "grow" interesting stories. We have only included a few of these sprout ideas, but GMs are very much encouraged to mix and match what they find useful to their specific campaign setting.

Ghelspad

Until recently, slarecian based events were relatively rare in Ghelspad. As a well-populated and mostly god-loyal continent, any sort of activity that implied loyalty to forces in opposition to the various "divine races" instantly inspired the hatred and enmity of the local populace. In or even near the more populated areas such activity was practically impossible to conceal, and thus only rarely took place. Recently, however, this state of affairs has begun to change. In dozens of locations throughout the continent, slarecian cults and creatures are becoming more active, in spite of swift reprisals from local armed forces. Rumors are flying, and leaders are growing concerned.

In general, GMs should remember that someone important will hear about almost any slarecian-related event in Ghelspad, not long after it happens. The major powers of the continent are aware of a rise in the activity of a strange new form of magic, and they are interested, if not outright disturbed. Pretty much anywhere, it can be counted on that at least one major government will have an informant located there. Thus, many slarecian cults in Ghelspad have not been where they are for very long. Likewise, many of them have been through a variety of "incarnations" — forced to disband

when attention grew a little too great upon them, and reforming elsewhere at a later time. Because of this process, age is a poor gauge of power when it comes to these cults, and the rulers of Ghelspad are continually underestimating the might of their new adversaries.

Reconnaissance missions are common throughout the continent, sponsored by just about any organization a GM can think of. Everyone wants to be the first to understand this "slarecian outbreak," and everyone is trying to find defenses against it or uses for it. Any important information that the PCs manage to stumble across will be extremely valuable to those individuals of high enough station (or education) to recognize its significance. Of course, many of these same highly placed individuals will go to a great deal of trouble to keep said information from spreading to their rivals, a circumstance which may very well put the PCs in danger.

Slarecian ruins are also not as apt to be unknown in Ghelspad. Unless a ruin is specifically stated to be in a certain region (such as the ruins beneath Lokil or the Ukrudan Desert, for example), GMs should use discretion in placing such sites. Ghelspad is a highly populated continent, and many cities boast treasure-hunting clubs and esteemed scholars of pre-war ruins. Adventures in search of ancient relics are hardly unusual. It stands to reason, therefore, that if there was a slarecian ruin under every rock and behind every tree, the inhabitants of Ghelspad would know a great deal more about the slarecians by now than they do. Un-mapped slarecian ruins in Ghelspad can, in most cases, be assumed to be either nearly impossible to locate or destroyed during or long before the Divine War. Many known ruins will also show signs of entry by previous adventurers (missing treasures, dead bodies, etc).

Albadia

One of the only nations in which rumors of the slarecians have never taken on the "forgotten myth" quality that other cultures seem to give to them, Albadia is one of the locales best prepared for the rise in slarecian-related events. This is fortunate, because Albadia is also one of the regions where the most strangeness is occurring. Adventurers are regularly being called on to protect towns from previously unheard of slarecian beasts and constructs. Parties are constantly being sent up into the mountains on missions to rescue the last group who went seeking treasure or information. And in the far northwestern regions, people are behaving strangely, sometimes even to the point of infecting entire tribes.

Example: A merchant in Horat is worried because a shipment of furs that he purchased from the king of a small northern tribe is very late arriving. He has sent two messengers already, one of them accompanied by guards. Neither messenger has returned, and the king has sent no word. The merchant hires the PCs to recover his furs (or at least his money) for him.

Along the way to the tribe's lands (located near the Titanshome Mountains), the PCs run across a few abandoned farmsteads. While there are no signs of violence or death, it is fairly obvious that the previous occupants left suddenly. An old madman suddenly accosts the party, and turns out to be a powerful warped one from whom the PCs escape only with great difficulty (it might be useful to the GM, in later slarecian-related adventures, to let this individual get away alive).

Before the PCs escape the encounter, the warped one drops a few garbled hints about the evils lurking in the stronghold they seek (in later adventures, the party might even discover that the warped one attacked them *because* he'd discovered that they were seeking this particular tribe). He speaks of a statue, and of blood.

When the PCs finally arrive at the tribal stronghold, they find it abandoned like the farmhouses (with enough furs and other wealth lying around for them to complete their contract, easily). Upon further investigation, however, they discover the gruesome truth. The entire tribe is clustered in the cellars, and all are quite recently dead of suicide. In the very back of the room, the PCs find a *slarecian blood focus* (see Appendix). Regardless of how the PCs decide to handle the situation, it leaves them wide open for a new adventure involving the half-mad thralls who tend the statue and bring it victims, as well as, possibly, the Mind Hunters who seek to eradicate the deranged cultists.

The Calastian Hegemony

As one of the most thickly populated areas of Ghelspad, the Calastian Hegemony has been practically free of slarecian activity since the slarecians themselves disappeared. Recently, however, slarecian monsters and mad psions have been making regular appearances in many of the rural areas — most especially in the Heteronomy of Virduk. In Ankila and New Venir, slarecian cults have been uncovered masquerading as Enkilite or Belsamethan mystery cults. Also, the higher population density means that, simply by the law of averages, more new psions are emerging in the Calastian Hegemony than in almost any other part of Ghelspad.

Outbreaks of the slarecian language virus also typically spread further, with more people around to be infected and carry the disease.

King Virduk, Queen Geleeda, and Royal Grand Vizier Anteas are all well aware that something strange is going on. More than any other major leader, in fact, King Virduk is determined to be the first to uncover the mystery of the recent bizarre activity. Anteas and Geleeda both seem convinced, through their information networks and divinatory powers, that to ignore the phenomena or allow information about it to fall into enemy hands would be foolish beyond measure.

Virduk is determined, therefore, to not only discover the answers for himself, but to also keep this information from, say, the Veshian Vigils, for example. Simultaneously, Virduk is obsessed with finding some way to harness this new power for his own purposes. It is actually likely that, before he destroys any unusual threat he encounters, Virduk will first attempt to convert it to his own expansionistic goals.

Some terrific Calastian storylines, therefore, might take place if one or more of the PCs have developed psionic powers of their own. Virduk will do almost anything to recruit into his service those who manifest these rare abilities, but he will also take extreme measures to keep such powerful individuals from serving anyone else (including themselves) ever again.

Example: Even if the PCs have no psionic powers whatsoever, and even if they haven't a clue that psionics and slarecian activity are on the rise, they might still accidentally get involved with the wrong "temple," or be seen in the wrong place at the wrong time. Once Virduk's spies get it into their heads that the party has powers or information that their king wants, they'll stop at nothing to force the PCs' compliance — even if the characters are unable to obey. The PCs will have to think fast and stay low to keep themselves out of trouble, and to figure out why on earth they're in trouble in the first place.

Between unpleasant interrogation sessions and the unwanted and unexplained help of actual slarecian cultists, the PCs can eventually figure out what's going on, and probably even find some real and important information about secret psionic organizations (or even about the slarecians themselves!). Depending on the nature of the organizations and the loyalties of the party, they can either take this information to the Calastian king on their own, or they can attempt to escape the Hegemony without allowing it to fall into Virduk's hands.

Central Ghelspad

In spite of its low population density and vast stretches of dangerous wilderness, central Ghelspad — including the Ganjus and Hornsaw forests, the Haggard Hills and Blood Steppes, and the small nations of Amalthea and Ontenazu — seems to be the area least affected by the recent rise in slarecian and psionic activity. Is this simply because of a lack of slarecian ruins and artifacts to spread the virus? Could the prevalence of Denev-worship offer the people some kind of protection? Perhaps something hidden in central Ghelspad represents a forgotten anti-slarecian defense that the followers of the gods can use to protect the rest of the Scarred Lands from the imminent slarecian invasion.

If the latter is the case, it is undoubted that the slarecian cults and monsters will be doing everything in their power to find and destroy this unknown defense before it has a chance to substantially interfere with the slarecians' plans. Those followers of Denev and the gods who are aware of recent slarecian-related events (which will not include many locals, since they've had no reason to notice any change) are desperate to discover why "Denev's lands" seem to be protected. If the PCs or those they serve can understand the nature of this protection, maybe they can use it more effectively against their slarecian enemies. If nothing else, perhaps the PCs can at least protect whatever is defending the area from attempts to corrupt or destroy it.

Of course, there is no guarantee that the nature of the protection is benign. Other terrible things besides titans were defeated and imprisoned during the Divine War, often in unknown locations. Who knows what the efforts to find the mysterious "defense" will uncover, or worse, awaken? Other titans besides Denev have worshippers in these lands, as well. Mormo's sundered body was scattered through the Hornsaw, and Gormoth and Thulkas were both defeated (and Gormoth perhaps still lies imprisoned) in the Blood Steppes. Could this regional immunity even imply that in order to defeat the slarecians a second time, the followers of the gods will have to find a way to work together with the remnant powers of the fallen titans?

Darakeene

Somewhat like Albadia, Darakeene has always been surrounded by wilderness, and parts of those wild lands have traditionally been known for slarecian activity. Particularly in the Phylacteric Vault, with all of its acquired knowledge of the Scarred Lands, much is known about the slarecians and the recent slarecian-related events. Indeed, some of the scholars at the vault may know a bit too much. In addition to the same sorts of adventure and intrigue to be found in Albadia, strange things may be afoot at the Phylacteric Vault.

Example: Perhaps the PCs have a friend or relative who works in the Phylacteric Vault, or they might have been hired by someone who does. The PCs are given little more information than "something strange is going on," and they are asked or personally motivated to investigate the situation.

When they arrive at the Vault, they are not welcomed; but before they leave (or cause trouble) they are contacted discreetly by a small faction of scholars who are very concerned over the recent odd behavior of many of their colleagues, including even Chancellor Nerith Alia (see *The Wise and the Wicked*). Without letting anyone know what they are up to, the PCs must figure out what is making these scholars act the way they are. Some may have been infected with the slarecian language virus and may even have joined slarecian cults. Others (like the Chancellor herself) may be acting under psychic coercion.

The PCs can't remedy the situation alone, but if they can figure out how to free as many scholars as possible from the psychic compulsion, the wizards and loremasters of the Phylacteric Vault can probably take care of themselves. It is also quite conceivable that secrets that the PCs uncover in this process may very well lead them on to their next adventure.

Dunahnae

In Dunahnae, like everywhere it seems, strange manifestations are on the rise. Much like King Virduk, High Priest Aarixthic is determined to be the first to understand and harness the emerging "new magic" powers. Psions discovered in Dunahnae are immediately captured and enslaved for research purposes by the clerics and necromancers of the Dunahnaen theocracy. Horrible tortures are inflicted upon these poor souls, in hopes that Aarixthic can learn how to awaken his own brain to psionic powers.

GMs are encouraged to remember that not all emerging psions and psychic warriors are mad or allied with evil beings bent on destroying the world. Some psychics are simply people who don't know why or how they've developed these powers, and others are doing the best they can to actively battle the slarecians and slarecian cults. Psions are being horribly persecuted in Dunahnae at the moment, regardless of their natures or loyalties. Rescue missions may be in order, or even the organization of rebellion.

On the other hand, no one knows what Aarixthic and his people may have discovered in their unethical experimentation. What powers have the leaders of Dunahnae been exposed to? This information is likely to be worth a huge amount to almost any government or organization, assuming the PCs can get in and out of Dunahnae alive.

Eastern Ghelspad

East of the Kelder mountain range, and for the most part including the mountains themselves, there seem to be fewer slarecian ruins and artifacts to spread the slarecian language virus. Because of this fact, slarecian cult activity is a little more rare and also a little better hidden. However, now slarecian monsters seem to be appearing more often, especially in the Kelders, and weird phenomena are becoming more prevalent than usual. Outside of a few key people though (like the leaders of the Veshian Vigils, the Penumbral Pentagon and perhaps a few other astute scholars), no one seems to suspect that anything is wrong.

In many ways, this makes eastern Ghelspad a perfect environment for slarecian cult activity, since few are likely to suspect the true nature of any reasonably discreet

group of slarecian cultists, even while they go about the business of infecting rural towns with the language virus. Vigil leaders have their hands full, and rumor has it that they are even enlisting the aid of the criminal Scaled in an attempt to understand and contain these strange outbreaks.

Things are also going poorly for the Penumbral Pentagon of late, as well as for other penumbral lords who have not sufficiently concealed their natures and identities. Apparently the slarecians, for all their otherworldly might, do nevertheless tend to hold a grudge. In any case, the Penumbral Pentagon is being forced to put many of their plans for world domination on hold for the moment, and concentrate merely on defense and survival. If events continue to progress as they have been, penumbral lords may be forced to ally themselves with the armies of the gods, simply for protection. The Pentagon, for example, seems to be warily developing a relationship with followers of Belsameth. Only the penumbral lords know anything about the precise nature of the dangers they are facing (and many understand precious little), but as yet they seem unwilling (or even unable?) to disclose anything of import, even to their allies.



Example: A bizarrely paranoid wizard-type begs the party for protection, but refuses to tell them why. Immediately afterward, even if the PCs initially refuse to help the woman, the party discovers that they are being tailed and later comes under psionic attack. Oddly enough, the PCs soon also find themselves persecuted by some of Drendari's Shadow Walkers.

In order to save themselves from the psychic attacks the party must defeat a small group of cultists of the Shade. And to appease or at least escape the Shadow Walkers, the group must discover that the "wizard" who spoke to them is actually a penumbral lord. Even if they refused to help her, she has been sticking close to the party in shadow form, thus making it appear that the PCs are protecting her, even if they are not.

If the PCs make these connections in the right order, they might be able to enlist the aid of the Shadow Walkers against the cultists, since followers of Drendari have good reasons to hate all things slarecian in nature or loyalties. Of course, if the party did freely agree to help the penumbral lord, getting her and the cultists to work on the same side may be impossible. The Shadow Walkers might even refuse to stop hunting the party until the penumbral lord is no longer under the PCs' protection.

Finally, if the penumbral lord survives the adventure (or maybe even if she doesn't!), the peril and intrigue is unlikely to stop there. It seems there is something even more mysterious and sinister stalking the shadow mage – something that still sees the PCs as a threat. Perhaps the characters know information that could potentially upset slarecian plans. Perhaps their eldritch stalker only thinks that they do. Or perhaps that pesky penumbral lord is still following them....

The Gascar Peaks

These peaks are inhabited by a strange mix of peoples, including the noble Hollow Knights of the Gleaming Valley, the wise necromancers of Hollowfaust, and the crafty Scaled in their hidden university of crime. Through means that vary as widely as the people themselves, the leaders of all three of these communities have learned of the rise in slarecian activity, and all three groups understand that this does not bode well for the Scarred Lands. Now, these three mismatched neighbors are working together more than ever before to keep the Gascar peaks free of slarecian activity.

One doesn't expect to see a highly-trained thief, a knight of Corean and a necromancer traveling together as friendly companions, but recently this scenario has become not particularly unusual in the Gascars. Small patrols, carefully chosen to maximize the strengths of all three communities, occasionally traverse the passes between major cities and investigate rumors of bizarre activity. Of course, the secretive Scaled are still careful not to let the other organizations discover the location of their school of thievery (a continent-spanning thieves' guild has to keep its secrets), but the criminals are behaving with honor and even generosity (as the Scaled generally do when they want something – in this case information and safety in numbers), so even the Hollow Knights are respecting their privacy.

Perhaps the most interesting developments taking place in the Gascars, however, are in Hollowfaust proper. The necromancers, for reasons they appear to have trouble explaining to outsiders, have outlawed the use of the new mental magics in Hollowfaust. Psions are not persecuted unless they make use of their powers, but the necromancers are adamant that psionic activity not take place within their walls. They seem to wish to urge their allies to pass similar laws, but they are waiting for more information so as to effectively make their case. In addition, many slarecian ghouls have been arriving in Hollowfaust lately, and a few are being kept for study – in particular, the Guild finds the ghouls' immunity to the turning power of divine servants to be both fascinating and disturbing. As yet, the ghouls have not proven to offer any concrete new information, however. Nevertheless, the necromancers show signs of knowing – or at least suspecting – more than they are telling, much to the annoyance of the curious Scaled.

Lokil

There has been no communication from Lokil for about a month. Most people would not have noticed the silence yet, but Hollowfaust is considering sending a few messengers, just in case. It might be nothing, of course. If it were anything really serious, someone would have sent out a distress message, right?

What is really going on could be anything from a similar situation to the one listed in Darakeene for the Phylacteric Vault, to a strange null-magic zone around Lokil and a physical blockade of the city, to even crazier things like the whole mountain inexplicably vanishing. Maybe the problem isn't in Lokil, but involves some conspiracy in Hollowfaust itself or indicates a dangerous development in the area between the two cities. Regardless, the problem needs to be remedied and the PCs might be just the group to do it.

Example: In the year 145 AV, the scholar Liond led a small expedition into a Slarecian ruin that was discovered in the depths of Lokil's obsidian mines. Only Liond ever returned from the ruins, and he came back insane and gibbering. Fortunately, Liond's journal was later discovered by subsequent expeditions (see the beginning of the History chapter for excerpts), and it has offered glimpses of what those ill-fated explorers discovered. The scholars of Lokil have continued to attempt to unlock the secrets of these strange ruins, and perhaps the most recent party of adventurers sent into the vaults have awakened or unleashed something truly horrible.

See the chapter on Slarecian Ruins for information on what sort of bizarre perils might have been encountered in the various chambers of the ruins. Dangers that might have been particularly likely to cut off all communication from the city include a massive, uncontrolled outbreak of the Slarecian language virus or – even more sinister – the awakening of some terrible “failed experiment” that has somehow managed to take the entire city hostage. Most likely, this is a creature so horrific that the slarecians considered it failed mostly due to their own inability to control its vast power. On the other hand, the awakened creature could be a powerful slarecian dragon, and the beast would unfortunately be quite capable of making good use of the ruin's powers and guardians against the might of the surface city.

The Northwestern Wilderlands

One of the two highest zones of slarecian activity in Ghelspad, the Northwestern Wilderlands include all of the less settled regions north of the Gascar Peaks and west of the Kelders and the Ganjus. Though all of these regions are prime areas to encounter tribe-like slarecian cults (of any race or sentient species) or lone wandering warped ones, the Titanshome Mountains are particularly dangerous of late and seem to be home to a great many strange new psionic beasts.

Adventurers persist, of course, in seeking treasure and artifacts in the mountain's vicinity, but most never come back, and those who do seem to have accomplished little beyond spreading the language virus and perhaps awakening yet another terrible slarecian monster. Rescue missions, and hired guard and guide positions are all in high demand throughout the region, especially the closer one comes to the deadly northern mountains. Parties who make it as far as the actual ruins will find evidence of many adventurers before them. All the easy treasures will already be gone, and bones and

even fresh bodies will litter most pathways, sometimes warning of traps and perils ahead, and sometimes only adding to the confusion and dread of the place.

Southwestern Ghelspad

The bad news for isolated Fangsfall and Shelzar is that the second most slarecian-active region of Ghelspad is in the southwest, to a large extent coming between each of these cities and the rest of civilization. Like the wild regions surrounding the Titanshome Mountains, most of the wilderness of Ghelspad's southwest has seen a sharp rise in the activity of slarecian cults, and some areas have been made vastly more dangerous by the appearance of new and strange slarecian monsters.

The good news for residents of these two city-states is that the worst area for slarecian activity seems to be the Ukrudan Desert, at the northern edge of the region. Perhaps this is due to the old slarecian ruin that lies somewhere in this desert. Campaigns taking place after the

Example: A merchant in Shelzar has been behaving strangely – disappearing for days at a time, acting out of character and becoming defensive if anyone mentions it. His friends and family are worried about him. If the PCs live in Shelzar, he is one of their chief contacts; otherwise, they are hired to investigate. One of the man's friends mentions suspiciously that the merchant has been spending a great deal of time at a certain brothel.

In fact, the very brothel mentioned is one that someone (perhaps the merchant, if appropriate) has been recommending repeatedly to some or all of the PCs. Come to think of it, the individual espousing the brothel's charms seemed almost religiously fanatical about it. If the PCs investigate the brothel, they find what initially appears to be a nice but ordinary establishment of its kind. While many of the prostitutes are not particularly beautiful in the standard sense, all seem exceptionally striking and magnetic, regardless of appearance.

The prostitutes and panders are all psions, and they are using telepathy to attempt to alter the experiences of the PCs and other customers. They don't do anything malicious – they simply want the PCs to believe that their brothel is, indeed, the most wonderful brothel possible, on every level. The PCs will have to do a lot of creative investigation before they figure out that the business is actually a front for a slarecian cult of some kind, and the prostitutes are using sex and the adoration of their clients as a starting point for converting the unwitting to the slarecians' cause.

resurrection of the elven god, Jandaveos, can read an account of a recent foray into this probably unique ruin in **Forsworn**, book two of the **Dead God Trilogy** by Richard Lee Byers. Campaigns that do not incorporate the adventures of Vladawen in the course of raising his fallen deity may instead use an ordinary slarecian ruin as described in this book.

Far from the main center of slarecian activity, Fangsfall and Shelzar have still seen a rise in psionic abilities in their citizenry. Also, while the cities remain thus far untouched by the crueler dangers that the wilderness holds, it is becoming increasingly more obvious that slarecian cults are trying to take up residence even within the urban streets of the city-states.

Termana

For several reasons, the recent slarecian-related events are manifesting much differently in Termana. First, with a lower population, it is easier for the rise in slarecian activity to go unnoticed. Events can simply be confined to wilderness areas, where there are few to no spy networks in place. Also, Termana is, in general, a less educated continent than Ghelspad. Only in the elven lands does scholarship begin to take on the same prevalence that so many nations of Ghelspad can boast. As such, even when the world leaders do hear about the rise in weird magics and encounters with bizarrely-powered creatures, they are unlikely to recognize the significance of those events.

On the other hand, with a lower population and fewer scholars, the slarecian language virus is not spreading as far or as fast, so while psions can operate with great freedom and only minimal secrecy in Termana, the slarecian cults are accomplishing very little. Slarecian ruins in Termana are largely undisturbed, however. Though a fair number of such ruins exist, mostly in deep wilderness areas, if they are known at all by local peoples in most cases they are simply considered to be strange cursed regions. Unlike the slarecian ruins in Ghelspad, they are unapt to show any signs of recent visitors or previous adventuring parties.

The Blood Bayou

The Jack of Tears apparently hates psions. Anyone or anything with psionic powers, he destroys as soon as it dares to set foot in his lands. He gives no explanations for this behavior, and he shows no mercy. Speculations abound as to his reasons, but Momus is nothing if not mysterious.

Example: One possible explanation is that the Jack of Tears, probably due to his origins in the mysterious and sundered being, Psyclus (see both the History chapter and **Blood Bayou** for more details), has some instinctive understanding that the rise in psionic activity is being caused by a force that means harm to the Scarred Lands. Whatever his other flaws, Momus is deeply connected to his lands and will not wish to see them further harmed. He doesn't care how innocent individual psions may be. If psionic power threatens his bayou, it must be wiped out.

If this is the case, the Laughing Man might be a particularly important source of information for PCs questing to figure out the true answer to the recent "new magic" riddle. Chaotic being that he is, he may even know more than he himself realizes, but the true challenge lies in convincing him to talk – and then getting out alive.

Also, Momus might prove an unexpected and... "interesting" ally for those actively striving to prevent the slarecians' return.

The Chained Mountains

Much like the leadership of Dunahnae, in Ghelspad, the charduni are also determined to harness the power of psionics for the greater glory of Chardun. Slaves are being deliberately exposed to the slarecian language virus, and all manner of strange and horrible experiments are being performed on new psions. The charduni hope to eventually awaken psionic powers in their own people, to aid them in the cause of enslaving the world.

The Elven Lands

Alone in Termana, the leaders of the elven lands and Virduk's Promise have a clear idea that something is happening. In Virduk's Promise the settlers in the know are simply interested in collecting information for the Calastian king (and his gold). The elven lands, on the other hand, have a far different motivation.

For campaigns that do not incorporate the recent rebirth of the forsaken elf deity, reactions to the current psionic activity are rather varied and complex in the elven lands. Elves of the Forest Realm, Shield Realm and Midrealm are unlikely to have noticed slarecian activity of any kind. Strange phenomena will be seen as odd and nothing more. Elves of the Southsea Realm will have sighted an enormous whale-like monster that resembles a guard construct from a very old legend of slarecian treasure (see entry for the sentinel fish in the Appendix), so they may be slightly more sensitive to other

forms of slarecian activity, but these elves are unlikely to have associated the “new magic” of psionics with the sea monster or any other slarecian goings-on.

In Kasiavael, the Skysight Realm elves (who will also have noticed the leviathan), will have divined much more of the nature of the recent activity than other Termanan peoples, and the results of this are unlikely to be good. Fascinated by knowledge and power as they are, the scholars and wizards of this land are likely to be even more eager than the nearby charduni to experiment with this new mind magic and to understand and harness the bizarre slarecian phenomena. Given time, their behavior may become increasingly erratic and lead to eventual suspicions on the parts of their neighbors in the Southsea and Shield Realms.

If the GM's campaign includes the rebirth of the forsaken elf god, Jandaveos is currently among the most active deities in the Scarred Lands. He is very nervous about the rise in the appearance of slarecian influence and has asked his people not only to not make use of psionic power, but also to refrain temporarily from even studying slarecian artifacts. As such, these activities are not exactly illegal, but they are taking place only with the greatest of secrecy and social stigma. Jandaveos promises to give his faithful more information as soon as he has it himself. He has also asked the elves to protect the Eternal Isle from intruders, a request that has confused many. What is the point of guarding an impenetrable island from penetration?

Eternal Isle

Whatever the elves may think, there are many slarecian cultists looking for ways to break the seal on the Eternal Isle. Some believe their masters are trapped inside. Others think they can find the means to contact their lords through the Isle's magic. Some don't really know why they're doing it

Example: The PCs have been hired by an elf to help him keep watch over the Eternal Isle. He thinks the whole idea is terribly stupid, but he figures he could at least use the company. He is badly prepared, very disorganized, and angry to have been given such a ridiculous assignment. Obviously his superiors thought it was a stupid assignment too, or they would have chosen someone else.

When the cultists surround and attack his ship, the PCs must think fast and fight hard to save themselves and avoid drowning. If they succeed, when the elf's superiors hear of the incident, they hire the PCs to investigate these cultists and figure out why on earth they were trying to approach the Isle. The PCs are soon embroiled in a classic cloak and dagger web of intrigue and peril. On the other hand, if the PCs, perhaps due to their employer's poor planning and irresponsible behavior, fail to fight off the cultists, they wake up as prisoners and must feign conversion in order to escape (learning a great deal of surprising things in the process).



– it just seems like the thing to do; this last motivation might even be the most nefarious, as it could indicate some sort of direction by the Ancients themselves. The cultists' proposed means of entry vary as widely as their reasoning, and some of their plans are truly bizarre. One group is even searching for a certain monster in Kadum's Bight that is rumored to be able to swallow living beings whole and carry them inside the island's defenses. Most slarecian loyalists simply attempt to work various rituals to gain them entry, however, and no one knows what will happen if any of them succeed.

The Gamulganjus

The Gamulganjus is far and away the most concentrated region of slarecian and psionic activity in Termana, though this is often unnoticeable to adventurers passing through the region. Bands of slarecian cultists hardly stand out in the Gamulganjus among the other savage tribes and strange creatures of the area. Indeed, some of the original tribes have been recently converted by slarecian cultists, so it is often practically impossible to tell the difference. The local people know which tribes are acting strange of late, however, and also which bands of humans are exhibiting unusual powers; the trick, of course, is picking the right people to ask, and earning their trust. As indicated in the Slarecian Ruins chapter, there is also a large and dangerous slarecian ruin located in the Gamulganjus. Like many other such ruins, local peoples scrupulously avoid the area and consider the region cursed. Discovering that the bizarre ruin is slarecian in origin is difficult at best to all those not well-versed in slarecian lore, but perhaps the PCs will be able to unravel the mystery.

The strange Tepuje cities are another source of bizarre activity in the Gamulganjus. Though ostensibly dedicated to the worship of Mesos, it cannot be denied that much of the magic of these regions is strange and quite similar to the other new mental magic in the Scarred Lands. Whether they intend to aid the slarecians or not, it is likely that the people of the Tepujes are unwittingly working toward slarecian goals.

The Human Lands

Those in the human lands, who have noticed psionics at all, simply see it as a weird new form of magic – one that the Carnival of Shadows doesn't

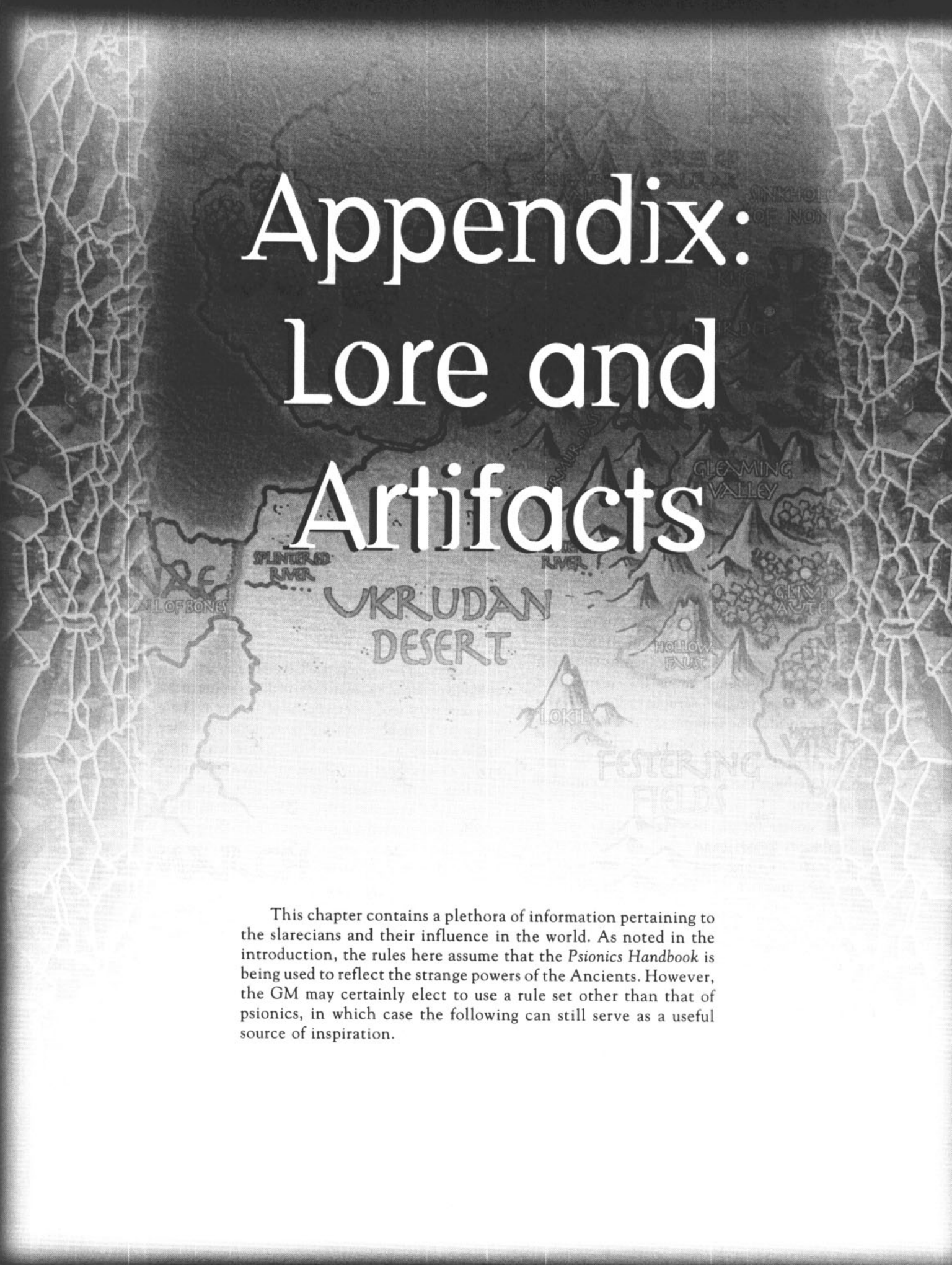
Example: For GMs who wish to include psions or psychic warriors in their campaigns as ordinary PCs, without dealing too heavily with the slarecian metaplot, the human lands of western Termana are recommended as the best place to pursue such storylines. The Jack of Tears provides a compelling villain for psionic characters, and very few people the PCs encounter will think anything terribly odd of "a new kind of magic." Here is the one place in the Scarred Lands where psions are only slightly more remarkable than druids or monks – not because they are common, but simply because no one in the region is really paying attention.

like. Since no one really likes the Carnival King, this tends to make people fairly sympathetic to psions. A few warped ones have been welcomed into the ever-present Beggars' Guild (see the *Player's Guide to Rangers and Rogues*), and though no one feels free to publicly proclaim their loyalty to the slarecians, no one is going to be feared, persecuted or ostracized simply for being psionic. Of course, if word gets back to the Momus, a psion might find this comfortable situation changing very quickly.

The Wild Lands

Some very old, very well established slarecian cults have been installed in some of the more out of the way regions of southern and central Termana. These groups are incredibly loyal and quite certain that they know exactly what they are doing and what their masters want. They don't have any more real understanding of the situation than any other cults, of course, but they undeniably think that they do. Their faith has been passed down from generation to generation, and there are powerful clerics with less devotion to their chosen deities than these fanatic people have for their beloved slarecians.

Naturally, no one really knows these groups exist, but that doesn't stop them from working with all their might to follow the promptings that have recently arisen in their bones. Though these groups are not large and are not even growing much lately, they are also operating entirely unchecked. If they manage to enter the efreet citadel, seeking the strange rod that haunts their dreams, things will not look good for the rest of the Scarred Lands.



Appendix: Lore and Artifacts

This chapter contains a plethora of information pertaining to the slarecians and their influence in the world. As noted in the introduction, the rules here assume that the *Psionics Handbook* is being used to reflect the strange powers of the Ancients. However, the GM may certainly elect to use a rule set other than that of psionics, in which case the following can still serve as a useful source of inspiration.

Slarecians

Not so much a living race as the projection of shards of the infinite will and sentience of the mighty *uthriach* into psionically crafted shells, the slarecians once held an empire that dominated Ghelspad and reached even unto Termana. Both physically and mentally powerful creatures, slarecians are at once disdainful and awed by the “lesser” races who inhabit Ghelspad’s surface. Unlike true living beings, slarecians lack souls. Therefore, they cannot reproduce nor wield divine magic. In fact, as extensions of their godlike masters, slarecians possess a portion of the *uthriach*’s curse; they are unable to remove themselves even temporarily from the plane of the Scarred Lands.

At the same time, slarecians are known for their powerful and, to the other races of the Scarred Lands, mysterious power of psionics. Able to bypass even the strongest magical defenses, the power of the slarecians allowed them to maintain an immense empire even in the face of the growing divine races and the earth-shaking titans.

Slarecians place a great deal of value on rational and pragmatic thought, disdaining emotions as weaknesses born only by lesser races. They shun most worldly matters, focusing instead on such esoteric pursuits as pondering the nature of the universe, inner perfection, and their psionic arts. But the slarecians do have emotion, albeit alien and incomprehensible to most beings of the Scarred Lands. They possess extreme jealousy of the lesser races, all of whom can reproduce, an act the slarecians see as mighty and sacred. Rather than being emotionless, these beings are simply the ultimate manifestation of selfishness, lacking the empathy to feel any sort of kinship with other beings. Like their masters, the slarecians plot endlessly to free themselves from the physical plane of the Scarred Lands.

Regions: Slarecians live in elaborate underground catacombs, deep below the surface of Ghelspad and in the Gamulganjus jungles of Termana. Preferring isolation, they tend to reside on the edges of civilized lands; this gives them the privacy they require and allows for the acquisition of slaves and tribute when they feel the need.

Racial Abilities: Slarecians have all of the following racial traits:

- +4 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +2 Charisma, -2 Constitution
- Medium Size
- Slarecian base speed is 30 feet.



• **True Vision:** Slarecians have darkvision, allowing them to see up to 120 feet in the dark. Darkvision is black and white only, but it is otherwise just like normal sight and slarecians can function normally with no light at all. Furthermore, slarecians are permanently under the effect of the *vigilance* power, allowing them to see up to 30 feet through fog, cloudy water, smoke, and other non-solid concealment. In magically created *darkness* or *fog*, this vision is reduced to only 10 feet.

• **Crystalline Hide:** A slarecian's torso and limbs are protected by an elaborate shell of nigh-unbreakable crystal, designed to look like armor or clothing. This crystal grants a +4 natural armor bonus to AC.

• **Inertial Armor:** Slarecians automatically receive the Inertial Armor feat even if they do not otherwise meet its requirements, receiving a +4 armor bonus to AC.

• **Mental Fortitude:** The impregnable and alien minds of the slarecians protect them from both mind-affecting psionics and magic. Slarecians receive a +2 racial bonus to saving throws against mind-affecting spells and powers. In addition, slarecians have 2 points of mental hardness against psionic attacks.

• **Psionic Mastery:** Most slarecians automatically receive the Psionic Focus feat, even if they do not meet its normal requirements. Slarecians of Valir instead gain the Spell Focus feat in a school of their choice. As beings acclimated to the use of psionic energy, slarecians do not suffer from the mental fatigue variant described in the Introduction.

• **Psionics:** Slarecians with an attribute score of at least 11 in their corresponding favored discipline (as determined by their *uthriach* progenitor) may choose three 0- or 1st level powers from that discipline. Each power is usable once per day as a psion of the slarecian's character level. Disciples of Valir do not receive this ability.

• **Entrapment:** Slarecians are trapped in the Scarred Lands by their physical shells, making them completely unable to travel the planes. Treat the slarecian as if it were permanently under the effects of a *dimensional anchor* power.

• **Soulless:** Slarecians are not truly living beings, but are rather extensions of their *uthriach*'s sentience in a physical shell. As such, they cannot reproduce, cast divine magic or bardic magic, or be raised from the dead. On the other hand, slarecians do not age and are immune to energy drain and Enchantment (charm) effects.

• **Automatic Languages:** Slarecian.

• **Bonus Languages:** Ledean, Termanan, Dwarven, and any titanspawn language.

• **Favored Class:** Psion or Psychic Warrior. A multiclass slarecian does not count its psion or psychic

Slarecians as PCs

The GM may choose to allow the PCs to be slarecians in the service of the various *uthriach*, seeking to reestablish themselves in the Scarred Lands and ultimately to destroy all of existence. A mixed group of slarecians and cultists may work very well in a campaign, provided the players understand that they are portraying protagonists rather than heroes. Such PCs might be active in the tepujes of the Gamulganjus, as they attempt to establish slarecian control; among the nations of the divine races, as they seek to undermine and divide their enemies or spy upon rival war efforts; along the front lines of the slarecian army, in any number of significant battles; below the Kelder Mountains, as they hunt the traitorous agents of the Penumbra Pentagon; or even scouring ancient ruins for long-lost slarecian artifacts.

Slarecians as a race can be difficult to role-play for a variety of reasons, and players should keep the following points in mind when portraying minions of the *uthriach*:

• Slarecians are completely inhumane and alien. Their driving goals and motives are centered around self-annihilation — a very different purpose than most PCs would normally have. Slarecians hate life and existence and value only thought and the hope of eventual freedom.

• Slarecians have no gender, do not reproduce, have little in the way of emotions, and understand the concepts of gender, growth, emotion, or mortality only in a crude fashion if at all.

• The Ancients have goals and construct logical (albeit monstrous and alien) plans to meet them. They are not frothing and rampaging monsters, but rather are cold and calculating strategists.

The GM and players should keep in mind that slarecians are feared and reviled in most areas. Once the slarecians reveal themselves, rumors of their return and their ancient atrocities will spread quickly. Thus, slarecian PCs will be forced to make heavy use of obfuscation, stealth, and mortal proxies outside slarecian-controlled areas. Though powerful, slarecians can be defeated and killed; make the PCs respect the power of the "lesser races" and realize that discretion is necessary for survival.

warrior classes when determining whether it suffers an XP penalty for multiclassing (see *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 3, "Experience for Multiclass Characters"). Offspring of Valir, being barred from the psion class, instead have Wizard as their sole favored class.

• **Level Equivalency:** Class level +3.

Feats

The following feats are intended to reflect the strange heritage that the slarecians left in their servitor races — and in those who fought against them.

Imbued Ancestry

One (or more) of the character's ancestors were subject to slarecian experiments back in the days of the slarecian empire, and for some reason the resulting traits, long dormant, have bred true. As a result, the character enjoys several small advantages.

Prerequisite: The individual so imbued must belong to a race that existed at the time of the slarecian empire, and that had some representation in regions where the slarecians operated.

Benefit: The character never suffers multiclass penalties for taking levels in psion or psychic warrior, regardless of his race or other classes. If and when the character picks up his first level of psion or psychic warrior, he needs no training or other in-game explanation; it simply manifests as his heritage comes to the fore.

Special: This feat must be taken at character creation, unless the GM decides that some event later in the character's life somehow "triggered" latent ancestral abilities.

Psionic Sensitivity

Creatures with this ability can sense psionic beings, and possibly even merely sentient living things, in the area around them. They also tend to focus on such individuals as preferred prey. Most creatures with Psionic Sensitivity either developed it due to overexposure to slarecian psionics, or were given it deliberately by slarecian experimentation.

Prerequisite: Aberration, animal, or magical beast. Intelligence 5 or lower.

Benefit: The creature has the *detect psionics* power constantly active.

Special: This feat may be purchased twice. The second time, the subject no longer merely senses psionic creatures, but any sentient creature (defined as living, self-aware, and with an Intelligence of 3 or greater) in the area of the *detect psionics* power.

Most creatures that gain this ability grow to prefer feeding on psionic beings (or sentient ones, if they have the feat twice). This often makes them far more hostile than normal creatures of their type.

Equipment

The following is a selection of items and substances associated with the slarecians, or simply connected to the strange powers they wielded.

Poisons

Mindburn

A poison developed by the slarecians, mindburn does only very moderate damage to most subjects. It is especially potent against psions, however, for it temporarily alters the subject's metabolism. While under the influence of mindburn, psions and psychic warriors who use their psionic powers burn hit points, rather than power points. This is real damage, and heals at the normal rate. It may be healed magically.

When a psion or other psionic character is exposed to mindburn, keep track of the degree to which he fails either or both saving throws. If he fails one save but makes the other, the number by which he failed indicates the number of hours the mindburn effects him. (For instance, if a psion rolls 11 on the first save, but makes the second with an 18, he failed the roll by 3. He thus suffers the effects for three hours.) If the character fails *both* rolls, take the roll by which he failed the most; this is the number of *days* for which the mindburn effects him. (For instance, if the psion above had rolled 11 on the first save and 12 on the second, he failed both rolls, one by 3, one by 2. He will suffer the effects for three days.) This applies only to the poison's effects on power points and hit points; the ability damage is treated as normal, regardless of the degree of failure.

A more potent version of this poison, called mindscorch, exists in extremely limited quantities.

Poison	Type	Initial Damage	Secondary Damage	Cost
Mindburn	Injury DC 14	1d3 Int + special	1d3 Wis + special	2,000 gp
Mindscorch	Contact DC 21	1d6 Int + special	1d6 Wis + special	6,000 gp

Special Materials

Many materials of the Scarred Lands exhibit innate special properties that affect psionics. These substances might owe their existence to the slarecians or may have merely been discovered later though the actions of the titanic and the divine. Most of these materials are extremely rare or found only in isolated portions of the Scarred Lands.

Slare

A very uncommon substance in modern times, slare was once used by the ancient slarecians to graft buildings, weapons, and even servants. Slare has a cracked and faceted crystalline appearance, save that it is steel to dark gray in color. It is said that the horns of slarecian gargoyles and dragons, slarecian muses, and even the bodies of the Ancients themselves were crafted of this mysterious substance. Slare is nearly unbreakable, with a hardness of 25 and 20 hit points per inch of thickness. Modern psions have lost the knowledge of how to grow or craft slare, so all weapons and armor made of this substance hail from ancient times. Items crafted from slare are considered masterwork for the purpose of enchantment, and they possess an inherent enchantment bonus that does not stack with magical or psionic bonuses. In addition, slare acts as a capacitor for psionic energy. Any item crafted of slare, weighing at least 1 lb., is able to store one power point as a *crystal capacitor*. Finally, psionic powers used to enhance items made of slare (such as *metaphysical weapon*) last for twice their normal duration. It is said that the slarecians made psicrystals from slare, although this art has also been lost to modern psions.

Item	Enhancement Bonus	Base Price Modifier
Light armor	+1	+3,000 gp
Medium armor	+2	+6,000 gp
Heavy armor	+3	+12,000 gp
Shield	+1	+3,000 gp
Weapon damage 1d4 or 1d6	+1	+4,000 gp
Weapon damage 1d8 or greater	+2	+10,000 gp
Other items	—	+2000 gp/lb. or +1000 gp if weightless

Obsidian

Few would consciously decide to make a weapon out of obsidian; it is a brittle material that chips easily and so requires much maintenance. However, after the defeat of the slarecian menace, Thulkas, the Father of Fire, gifted the newly created Order of Obsidian with weapons and techniques meant to harden this substance — revealing that it could be used to devastating effect against psionic beings. Although obsidian itself is not particularly rare, the psionic hardening process required to craft a useable weapon can be expensive and time-consuming. In its natural state, obsidian has a hardness of 2 and 3 hit points per inch of thickness. Crafted and hardened obsidian, however, is considered masterwork for the purposes of enchantment and it has a hardness of 8 and 10 hit

points per inch of thickness. Obsidian weaponry interferes with psionic energy, sapping 1 power point with each successful strike. Psionic beings without power points instead lose the ability to manifest one randomly selected power for a full round. However, obsidian weaponry also leaches power from its wielder, draining 1 power point for each hour it is worn. Characters with the slarecian bane ability (see *Order of Obsidian, Relics & Rituals 2: Lost Lore*) are immune to this debilitating effect.

Item	Enhancement Bonus	Base Price Modifier
Any armor or shield	—	+2,000 gp
Weapon damage 1d4 or 1d6	—	+2,000 gp
Weapon damage 1d8 or greater	—	+5,000 gp
Other items	—	+500 gp/lb. or +250 gp if weightless

Tepuje Crystal

Also known as Mesos's Flesh, tepuje crystal is mined deep within the tepujes of the Gamulganjus in Termana. It is also created by the crystal grower guild, a group of psions who hold a prominent position and a great deal of power within Ehitovael. The crystal was said to be discovered by Mesos, the Sire of Sorcery, and hidden from those who would purge the Scarred Lands completely of slarecian taint. Upon the titan's death, the crystal was infused with arcane energy, becoming a vaguely living substance, able to grow and respond to psionic energy. Tepuje crystal is extremely hard but brittle, providing a hardness of 20 and 5 hit points per inch of thickness. Items made from the crystal are considered masterwork and have an inherent +1 enhancement bonus that does not stack with magical or psionic bonuses. These items weigh only 75% as much as normal items, and since the substance is easily malleable in the hands of a psion or psychic warrior, a +2 circumstance bonus is given to the appropriate Craft checks. Tepuje crystal can also be infused with magical or psionic energy, and in such a state it becomes extremely durable, its hit points increasing to 20 per inch of thickness.

Item	Enhancement Bonus	Base Price Modifier
Light armor	+1	+1,500 gp
Medium armor	+1	+3,000 gp
Heavy armor	+1	+6,000 gp
Shield	+1	+1,500 gp
Medium weapon or smaller	+1	+2,000 gp
Large weapon	+1	+4000 gp
Other items	—	+1000 gp/lb. or +500 gp if weightless

Magic Items

Though masters of psionics, the slarecians were not without arcane might. The following are but small examples of their prowess at the crafting of such items.

Box of Storm and Shadow

Description: These rectangular boxes were created by slarecian slaves, at the direction of their cryptic masters, to contain the fury of Drendari while the *uthriach* attempted to wrest her powers from the goddesses control. While a decent number of these boxes were created over the course of her imprisonment, still her rage could not be quenched. However, Drendari is the only being active in the Scarred Lands today who would recognize these boxes for what they are, and realize the history behind them.

A *box of storm and shadow* is a highly ornamented onyx-colored box held shut by a latch in the shape of a stylized lightning bolt. Etched storms rage across the sides of the box in raised black-on-black bas-relief. Each side of the box depicts a specific type of storm that was common to pre-Titanswar Scarn.

Powers: The box may be opened once per day, unleashing a hellish, violent pairing of the energy of the Plane of Shadow and the Negative Material Plane. This creates a brief but intense storm in a 30-foot radius.

Any characters unlucky enough to be caught within the tempest must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude saving throw or suffer 1d6 points of temporary damage to both Strength and Constitution. A successful save indicates that they lose only half that amount. Additionally, everyone in the vortex suffers 4d12 + 15 hp damage. Characters who succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save take only half damage.

Strong necromancy; CL 15th;
Craft Wondrous Item, *shadow storm*; Price: 48,000 gp;
Weight: 3 lb.

Ring of Lost Shadows

Description: These rings were worn by many of the slarecians and slaves who had to interact with the demigoddess of shadows during her imprisonment. Carelessly cast shadows in her presence had a habit of rearing up and felling anyone they could

reach. As a precaution, slarecian wizards created these rings.

Powers: While a *ring of lost shadows* resides on a wearer's finger, she has no shadow. It completely disappears. This is useful — if a bit unnerving to those around her — in that it helps protect the character from falling victim to a mimicking shadow and sometimes assists her when she attempts to hide. The character benefits from a +5 circumstance bonus to her Hide checks if the situation is such that the lack of a shadow would be helpful, at the GM's discretion.

Strong illusion; CL 1st; Forge Ring, *obscure shadow*; Price: 2,000 gp; Weight: —.

Psionic Items

Though they were perhaps the best known for the creation of psionic items, the slarecians hardly were the only ones to do so. Those who took up the study of the powers of the Ancients eventually learned to create these items as well, discovering that sometimes, a well-placed, enhanced blade might work where mental strength was just not enough.

Armor Enhancements

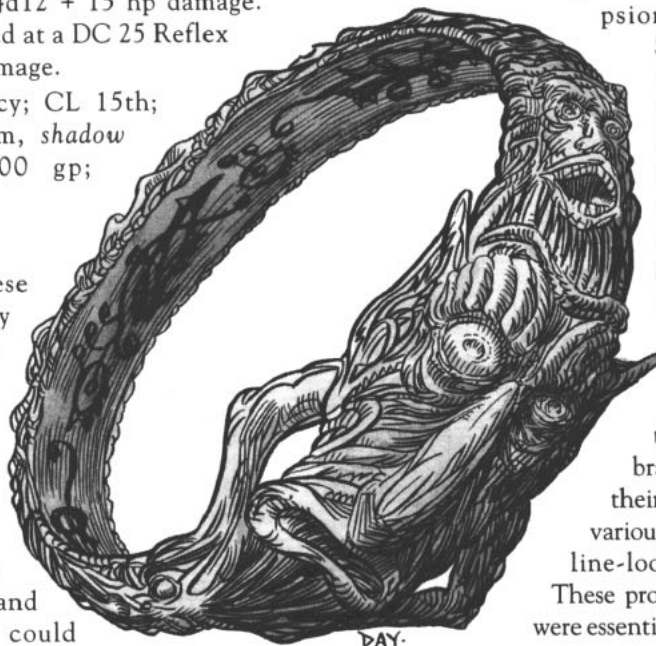
Encephalitic

Description: Armors and shields that possess the encephalitic enchantment type are examples of perhaps one of the most characteristic and frightening displays of psionic prowess ever seen from the slarecians. Using an ancient (even to the slarecians), mysterious and exceedingly dangerous process, the slarecians were able to gradually alter an individual

psionically from birth.

Slowly, over the years and through endless psychic adaptation and mental tutoring, the subject was finally, at maturation, able to fully display and utilize its fully harnessed talents.

These abilities included the capacity to psychically extrude their greatly increased brain matter outside of their bodies and form it into various organic- and crystalline-looking configurations. These projections of grey matter were essentially a new form of armor



DAY

and shielding previously unheard of or seen anywhere upon (or beneath) the face of the Scarred Lands. It was these encephalitic armors and shields that came to be so closely associated with the few surviving pieces of slarecian art and sculpture that allows modern artists to depict it today. It was not metal and leather, but rather gray matter and cerebellum that flowed forth from the brain stems and spinal columns of the slarecians, hardening into a psionically-enhanced diamond finish upon contact with the air; and it is this unique process which gave the slarecians' attire its characteristic appearance.

However, the slarecians did not grow their encephalitic armors and shields for their pleasing appearance. Rather, the stunningly powerful material not only enhanced their psionic abilities, but was always with them and could even be commanded to operate on its own, if so needed.

Powers: Armors and shields that possess this enhancement can store and activate three additional powers per level, provided that the powers are each third level or lower. Furthermore, encephalitic armors and shields are able to follow the near-subconscious desires of their possessors and are +3 living armors/shields for all intents and purposes.

However, these powerfully enhanced armors and shields carry a weighty penalty. Due to the fact that they are literally composed of hardened brain matter, if the armor or shield is ever destroyed (e.g. the sunder feat) or suffers damage equal to more than one-third of its creator's total hit points in a single round, it is forever destroyed. The subsequent effect on the wearer/wielder is so devastating that he/she/it must succeed at a DC 33 Will saving throw or instantly slip into a coma that can only be treated through the use of psychic surgery or powerful magic (such as the *heal*).

Overwhelming psychometabolism, telepathy; ML 20th; Weight (as normal item).

Specific Armors

Bracers of Disintegration

These bracers are covered in ornate spirals that wind their way around a series of small crystals. The largest crystal is embedded so that it sits on the back of the wearer's hand. When these bracers are first donned by a new user, they

communicate one thing to the wearer; the command thought that activates the bracer's power.

Three times per day, when the wearer points his arm in the direction of a target and thinks the command thought (usually a short phrase or conceptual image), a translucent, shining ray bursts forth from the largest crystal, causing the creature or object it strikes to utterly vanish, leaving a fine powder behind. The wielder must succeed with a ranged touch attack to hit. Up to a 10-foot cube of nonliving matter is affected, so the bracers only affect part of sufficiently large objects, creatures or structures. The bracers affect even magical and psionic matter or energy, such as a *wall of force* or a *wall of ectoplasm*, but have no effect on areas that negate psionics or magic. If the target succeeds on a DC 23 Fortitude save, it is only partially affected, suffering 5d6 points of damage rather than disintegrating. The bracers only affect one target per use of the power.

Moderate psychokinesis; ML 13th; Craft Psionic Arms and Armor, *disintegrate*; Price: 84,240 gp; Weight: 1 lb.

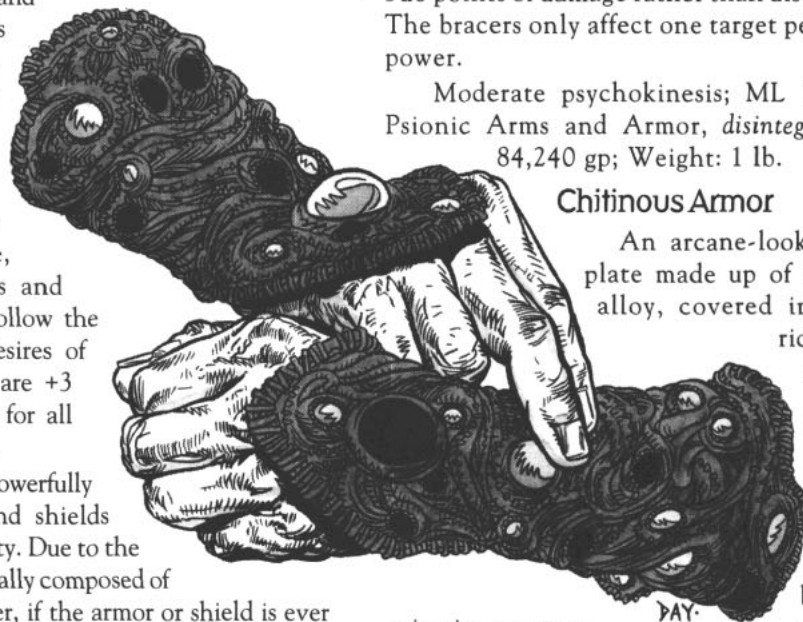
Chitinous Armor

An arcane-looking breastplate made up of a chitinous alloy, covered in elaborate ridges and spirals, chitinous armor is slightly warm to the touch.

When worn by a non-psionic creature, chitinous armor acts as a +3 breastplate with a special ability. It reveals its true nature only when donned by a psionic character.

When a psionic character puts on the breastplate, she feels the unmistakable brush of a mind against hers. The armor is alive, and feeds off the sweat, dead skin cells and even shed blood of its host and those it harms. When someone grapples with the wearer, the armor immediately erupts into a riot of spines, piercing the attacker to feed itself. Anytime the wearer grapples with another creature, whether the wearer initiates the grapple or not, the other grappler suffers 1d6 points of additional damage if he is not wearing breastplate or above in protective armor.

If the *chitinous armor* isn't donned for long periods of time, it does not immediately starve. Rather it first enters hibernation and slowly



bleeds off its energy reserves over a period of 1d6 weeks. Then, it falls into a sort of stasis, acting as a +3 *breastplate* until it is worn long enough to build up its reserves again. After a period of 1d4 days, it will regain enough energy to again begin attacking grappling enemies.

Strong psychometabolism; ML 13th; Craft Psionic Arms and Armor, *claws of the vampire* and *suspend life*; Price: 234,350 gp; Weight: 30 lb.

Weapon Enhancements

Encephalitic

Description: Encephalitic enchantment type weapons are some of the most remarkable examples of quintessential psionic prowess. The slarecians were able to alter an individual from birth, using a complex and mysterious process of endless physical adaptation and mental tutoring. Upon adulthood, these alterations resulted in these individuals possessing the capability to psychically extrude their brain matter, which had also been greatly increased, outside the body. This substance was then able to create formidable weapons. These characteristic weapons, composed not of metal, wood, or stone, but rather of gray matter, fibrous nerve cords and cerebellum, flowed forth from the brain stems and spinal columns of the slarecians and became the weapons of choice and the symbols of the elite. These stunningly powerful weapons not only enhanced the psionic abilities of the slarecians, but were stronger than conventional weapons, could never be lost in the heat of battle and could even be commanded to operate on their own, if so needed.

Powers: Weapons that possess this enhancement can be used to store and activate one additional power per level, provided that the power is fifth level or lower. Further, encephalitic weapons are considered to be keen dancing vorpal +3 weapons for all intents and purposes.

However, these powerfully enhanced weapons are bought with a price that far exceeds gold or silver. Due to the fact that they are literally hardened brain matter, if these weapons are ever destroyed (e.g. the *sunder feat*) or suffer damage equal to more than one-third of the wielder's total hit points in a single round, they are forever destroyed. The subsequent effect upon the wielder is significant and he/she/it must succeed a DC 33 Will saving throw or slip into a coma (as *encephalitic armor*, above).

Overwhelming psychometabolism, telepathy; ML 20th; Weight (as normal item).

Specific Weapons

Slither Sword

Description: Though the slarecians preferred to let others do their fighting for them, if necessary, they were quite capable of defending themselves in melee combat. The *slither sword* is one result of their preparations. It appears to be made of an alloy incorporating the same chitinous material that makes up the bulk of the walls in slarecian ruins. The weapon resembles a falchion, though the blade is slightly thicker.

When the blade is drawn from its sheath, everyone within 15 feet can hear it telepathically whispering in the indecipherable tongue of the slarecians. All who hear the sword "speak," must succeed in a DC 18 Fortitude saving throw or become infected by the slarecian language virus (see **Creature Collection Revised**).

When used normally, the *slither sword* acts as a +2 *falchion*. Upon the mental command of the wielder, however, the sword reveals its flexibility. Sections of the sword separate, transforming the blade into the equivalent of a +2 *spiked chain*, stretching and giving the wielder a surprising reach.

The wielder need not be psionic, but must be proficient with both weapons to properly use the *slither sword*.

Moderate psychoportation; ML 13th; Craft Psionic Arms and Armor, *call weaponry*; Price: 30,700 gp; Weight: 15 lb.

Crystal Capacitors

L'jore

Description: *L'jore*, much like *crystal capacitors*, are items used by psionic characters to store power points; however, *l'jore* also display other useful properties. *L'jore* are smooth, psionically-receptive stones that are specially crafted by the skilled psions among the Order of Obsidian from a substance with the same name. While *l'jore* store power points and basically function in exactly the same manner as *crystal capacitors*, they differ from their classic counterparts in three ways. First, *l'jore* are composed of a substance more akin to stone than crystal; they are generally dark in coloration, are considerably more rounded and display fewer to no facets. *L'jore* are typically worn in a fashion similar to jewelry – worked into bracelets, amulets, rings, belts, and even clothing. Second, *l'jore* enable members of the Order of Obsidian to communicate with one another through their minds. They also facilitate limited mental communication with others outside the Order. Third, *l'jore* work

in conjunction with one another, unlike the more commonly used crystal capacitors.

Even among the Order few possess the knowledge of the *l'jore's* origin and true capabilities. Due to this and the fact that obsidians are exceedingly rare outside of the ranks of the Order, a single *l'jore* can typically fetch up to four times the normal market rate for a *crystal capacitor* that contains an equal number of power points. However, only those specially trained in both the Order's special mental communication protocol and the *l'jore's* basic use are able to unlock its *mindlink* powers.

Powers: *L'jore* are used in precisely the same manner as *crystal capacitors*, with the following exceptions: *l'jore* can contain any number of power points, so long as the maximum number of power points that can be stored in a single *l'jore* is never more than seven and no more than one *l'jore* per every five levels can be used at once by a single user; further the user can draw power points from more than one *l'jore* simultaneously, so long as they do not exceed the total number of *l'jore* usable by a single individual. Also, all *l'jore* possess the psionic powers of *lesser mindlink*, which is usable only in conjunction with non-Order members and *mindlink* which is used exclusively with other members of the obsidians. Lastly, users of *l'jore* consider them a boon in that they are able use several *l'jore* in conjunction with one another to manifest psionic powers or attack/defense modes. However the fact that each *l'jore* typically contains far fewer power points than a single *crystal capacitor* somewhat balances this attribute.

A typical *l'jore* weighs a tenth of a pound, has an AC of 10, 10 hit points, a hardness of 10 and a break DC of 20.

Universal Items

Blood Acorns

It is unknown if these items were originally built by slarecians near the Hornsaw forest or if they were merely co-opted as a means of quickly gathering a group of combatants to fight for the wielder. The physical item itself is a large, twisted deep-red acorn, discolored and warped by the tainted blood of Mormo. A hollow needle sheathed in a stem-like cover has replaced the stem at the apex of the seed. The acorns themselves are surprisingly heavy, despite the fact that they are hollowed out and specially treated during construction.

To use the *blood acorns*, the wielder must prick his own finger on the needle, taking 1 hp damage in doing so, and drain his blood into the

acorn before dropping it on the ground. After the acorn is released, it quickly sinks into the ground and a hideous construct of ectoplasm and blood (treat as an astral construct as detailed in the *Psionics Handbook*) erupts from its location. This creature will attack the wielder's enemies to the best of its abilities for 1d10 rounds or until it is slain or dismissed. Blood acorns may be used up to 3 times per day.

Many different types of these acorns exist, ranging the gamut of power from 1st-level through 9th-level. The deeper the shade of scarlet, the stronger the construct created by the *blood acorns*.

Weak to strong metacreativity; ML 10th; Craft Universal Item, the appropriate *astral construct* power; Price: 1,200 gp (1st-level), 9,600 gp (2nd-level), 25,200 gp (3rd-level), 43,200 gp (4th-level), 66,000 gp (5th-level), 93,600 gp (6th-level), 126,000 gp (7th-level), 163,200 gp (8th-level), 205,200 gp (9th-level); Weight: 2 lb.

Boots of Stomping

These boots are made of rugged black leather, and their soles are covered in steel. When worn, the character suffers a -2 penalty to jump, climb and swim rolls, and is considered to have a maximum dexterity bonus of +2. However the character cannot slip on ice or grease, and kicks delivered with these boots count as "armed" attacks, and deal 1d6 damage.

In addition, the character can, three times per day, *stomp* as per the psionic power. All creatures standing in the area who fail a DC 20 Reflex save are thrown to the ground and take 1d4 subdual damage in the process. Rising from a prone position is a move-equivalent action.

Moderate psychokinesis and psychometabolism; ML 10th; Craft Universal Item, *stomp*; Price: 12,000 gp; Weight: 5 lb.

Brainborers

Description: At first glance, brainborers appear to be nothing more than small, inch long fragments of unprocessed crystal. However, the more astute will soon find, upon closer inspection, that these items favor nothing so much as the grub form of various insects. Minuscule eyes and mandibles protrude from the crystal, in addition to three sets of tiny jointed appendages, which are generally drawn tight against its crystalline body. Brainborers are seen in all shapes, sizes and colors and it seems that there is at least one type of creature for each of the various configurations of naturally occurring crystals. The weight of most brainborers is negligible (a hundred of them weigh approximately a pound). These creatures have an AC of 8, 2 hit points, a hardness of 10 and a break DC of 18.

Powers: Brainborers are widely known and sought after for one reason – their ability to quickly even the tide of battle with a psionic individual. Brainborers remain completely dormant until they are thrown at an opponent (treat as a ranged touch attack) at which point they awaken with a fearsome and gruesome hunger. Generally, entire handfuls of these unsettling crystals are thrown at a time, and even the ones that do not strike (i.e. land upon) an individual immediately begin scuttling toward the nearest sentient being upon their contact with terra firma.

Animate brainborers move at a surprising rate of 10 and they seem driven with a demonic fervor to crawl up the bodies of any creature (with an Int greater than zero) they reach. Once a brainborer has reached an individual's head, it begins to frantically burry itself into the creature's skull. It takes only a single round for a brainborer to scuttle up the length of a Medium creature, but fortunately (for those dealing with the little monstrosities) it is a full round action. On the following round, however, the brainborer enters into the skull of the victim (causing one point of damage) wherein it begins to devour the creature's grey matter (1/2 point of Int and Wis damage caused per brainborer). Once they have consumed what they can of brain matter, the horrific little things explode in a miniature version of the concussion power, doing 1d3 points of damage instantly (no save).

Removing brainborers from one's person is a full-round action and requires a DC 14 Reflex save per brainborer. DC 18 Concentration checks are required for any who elect to let the vile things crawl up their bodies while they are performing other actions. Once a brainborer enters the skull, the DC to concentrate increases by one (per each brainborer), as it obviously becomes increasingly difficult to ignore a tiny shard of "living" crystal tunneling into your brain.

Moderate psychokinesis; ML 6th; Craft Universal Item, *control object*, *lesser concussion*; Price: 1,200 gp (per bag of 100); Weight: 1 lb.

Goggles of Steadfastness

The lenses of these goggles glow a steady yellow when worn, though the radiance does not distract the wearer. In fact, very little can distract the gaze of the wearer, as she is immune to all gaze attacks while wearing the goggles.

The incandescence of the goggles can prove a disadvantage in the dark, however, and the wearer suffers a –6 penalty when attempting to hide or sneak in shadows.

Weak clairsentience; ML 1st; Craft Universal Item, Persistent Power, *steadfast gaze*; Price: 2,000 gp; Weight: 2 lb.

Medallion of Foresight

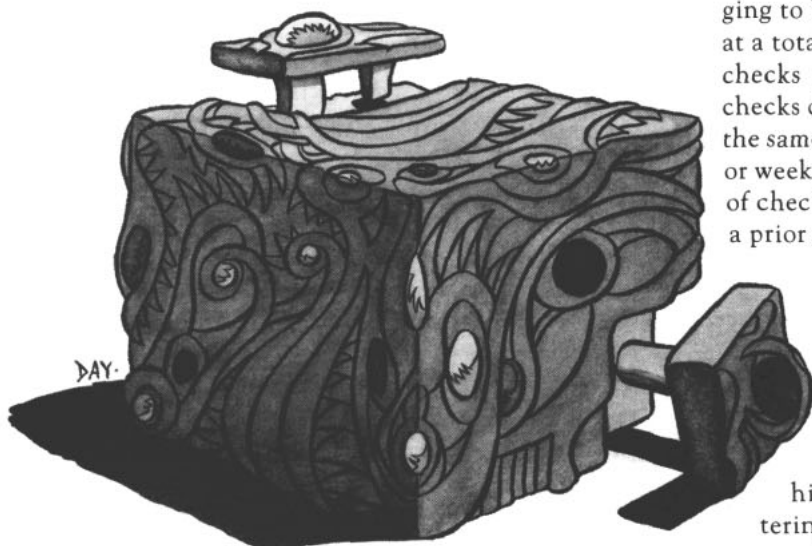
This amber-colored crystal amulet is carved to resemble a set of three open eyes, one atop the others in a triangular pattern. While this medallion is worn, the wearer benefits from the effects of the *foresight* power. In short, the wearer receives instantaneous warnings of impending danger or harm. He is never surprised or flat-footed, and receives a +2 insight bonus to AC and Reflex saving throws. This bonus is lost whenever he would lose his Dexterity bonus to AC.

Strong clairsentience; ML 16th; Craft Universal Item, *foresight*; Price: 256,000 gp; Weight: 1 lb.

Microcosmic Cube

This cube appears to be nothing more than a child's plaything, an elaborate puzzle constructed out of metal and crystal. Of course, upon consideration it is unclear why the slarecians would have any use of such a toy, since there was never any such thing as a slarecian child. The puzzle itself is addictive, almost begging to be deciphered. Characters must succeed at a total of five cumulative DC 20 Intelligence checks to solve the *microcosmic cube*. These checks do not have to be contiguous, or even at the same time. They may be spread out over days or weeks, and the character can fail any number of checks, though every time a roll of 1 occurs, a prior success is lost.

When the puzzle is solved, however, the victim is rewarded by having his senses shunted away from this world into an existence that is completely fabricated in his own mind. In reality, the victim lays sprawled out with the *microcosmic cube* clutched in his hands, drooling and occasionally muttering. The cube can only affect a creature



who has 100 or fewer hit points. If an individual with more than 100 hit points solves the puzzle, nothing happens.

The only methods to recall the affected creature's senses back to reality is to find a way to make the individual solve the puzzle *again*, or to affect the person with the *microcosm* power.

Strong telepathy; ML 18th; Craft Universal Item, *microcosm*; Price: 325,000 gp; Weight: 1 lb.

Null Psionics Medallion

This onyx-colored medallion, similar to the *medallion of foresight* in shape — if not composition — is a set of three eyes, one atop the other, except in this case the top eye is closed. While this medallion is worn, a 10-foot bubble that suppresses most psionic effects as per the *null psionics field* power surrounds the wearer.

Any psionic items, with the obvious exception of the *null psionics medallion*, do not function psionically while within this bubble. Astral constructs wink out of existence if they enter the field, and reappear in the same spot once the bubble no longer covers them. Psionic weapons still can be used as a masterwork weapon, but any psionic power they previously exhibited is gone for the duration of their stay within the *null psionics field*. Characters within the field cannot utilize their psionic powers; they must leave its protection to make use of their abilities.

Moderate psychokinesis; ML 13th; Craft Universal Item, Persistent Power, *null psionics field*; Price: 156,000 gp; Weight: 1 lb.

Shatter Shards

Description: When found or purchased, these small, pyramidal crystals will always be kept in a finely wrought, smooth case that seems to have been grown rather than shaped by mortal hands. Within the container are eight shatter shards all steeped in a clear, viscous fluid that has a tactile quality that can best be described as tacky. These items are used in a similar manner to caltrops; handfuls of shatter shards can be tossed at an opponent (treat as a ranged touch attack) where, if they hit, they adhere to the victim as a result of their sticky coating.

Powers: The moment they affix themselves, each shard causes waves of searing mental agony to course through the individual (as per the power *recall agony*). Furthermore, these waves of psionic energy are so intense that each shatter shard has the potential of shattering psionic items within a 10 foot radius. Each shard has a base 2% chance of destroying (as per the *disinte-*

grate power) psionic or psionically enhanced items. Shatter shards that have overlapping areas of effect (such as two shatter shards that have adhered to the same individual) have cumulative percentages for rendering such items utterly useless.

Shatter shards that do not stick to an individual remain inert, but will flare to life the moment they come into contact with any living being (including the original user). Any shards that remain outside of their container, for more than ten minutes, dry out and become useless. Shatter shards have no direct affect on undead of any kind, but may affect psionic items carried or worn by undead that enter into their area of effect.

Strong clairsentience, psychokinesis; ML 15th; Craft Universal Item, *disintegrate*, *recall agony*; Price: 6,250 gp (per set); Weight: —.

Skin of Shadows

This psychoactive skin (see the *Psionics Handbook* for information on psychoactive skins) spreads over any Medium-size or smaller creature who projects the proper command thought; the same command thought causes it to disengage, shrinking down to its former size.

When deployed, the *skin of shadows* causes the wearer to be subsumed and transformed into a living shadow as per the *shadow body* power, including all the benefits and disadvantages thereof.

Strong psychometabolism; ML 17th; Craft Universal Item, *shadow body*; Price: 68,000 gp; Weight: 2 lb.

Skin of Dimensional Anchors

This psychoactive skin spreads over any Medium-size or smaller creature who projects the proper command thought; the same command thought causes it to disengage, shrinking down to its former size.

When deployed, the *skin of anchors* completely blocks bodily extradimensional travel. Forms of movement barred by the *skin of anchors* include those granted by spells such as *astral projection*, *blink*, *dimension door*, *dimension slide*, *dream walk*, *ethereal jaunt*, *etherealness*, *gate*, *maze*, *phase door*, *plane shift*, *shadow walk*, *teleport* and other similar spell-like, magical or psionic abilities. The skins' primary purpose, however, is to protect its wearer from the effects of *baleful teleport*.

Moderate psychoportation; ML 9th; Craft Universal Item, *dimensional anchor*; Price: 72,000 gp; Weight: 2 lb.

Third Eye Vigilance

This third eye (see the *Psionics Handbook* for more information) allows the wearer to see 30 feet in total darkness or other vision-impairing media. As with regular darkvision, the wearer perceives the world only in black and white. In areas obscured by magical or psionic means, such as locals under the effects of *darkness* or *fog*, *third eye vigilance* allows the wearer to see only 10 feet. The power of the *third eye vigilance* does not allow the wearer to see through solid objects.

In addition, the wearer gains a +5 competence bonus on Spot and Search checks.

Moderate clairsentience; ML 5th; Craft Universal Item, *vigilance*, creator must have 3 ranks of the Spot and Search skills; Price: 25,000 gp; Weight: —.

Relics

Slarecian Blood Focus

Description: *Slarecian blood foci* look like statues of slarecians, cast in various metals. Though the Faithful who worship the statues believe that they are all representations of the same unknown deity, each of the statues is actually unique, and is a careful portrait of one of the original *uthriach*. It is thought that many *uthriach* once had statues like these, but only three have been found thus far (one bronze, one mithril, and one iron), and it can only be hoped that the others have all been destroyed.

Each *slarecian blood focus* was originally created to grant its maker enhanced psionic abilities, through the deaths of their less necessary servants. Intended to keep weak-minded psionic servants busy bringing the statues victims, and to rid their makers of the burden of an overabundant non-psionic slave population, the *blood focus* actually inspires non-psionic people to kill themselves in its presence. It drinks in their psionic essence and channels this energy directly to its maker.

It never occurred to the slarecians that the *blood foci* might function between the planes, so they didn't originally try to use these evil tools when they first fled Scarn. It has been only in the last 15 years, when the bronze *focus* was discovered by unwitting adventurers and immediately set about fulfilling its purpose, that its maker discovered just how powerful the bond between item and creator seems to be.

Immediately, the thralls of the first *blood focus* were sent in search of more of these horrifying statues, and more have indeed been uncovered. The thralls are still searching, but they fortunately do not seem to know where to look. Within the last six years, the thralls have formed a bizarre organized religion around the *blood foci* (see *Thralls of the Idols* in Chapter Two), and they call themselves the Faithful.

Powers: Any humanoid coming within 10 feet of a *slarecian blood focus* must make a DC 10 Will save or become utterly fascinated by the statue. Characters become convinced that the statue is the most beautiful thing they have ever seen, and they can take no action other than to stare at it raptly for 1d10 rounds. Fascinated psionic characters may make a DC 20 Intelligence check to notice a sense of being mentally tested or probed during this period of enthrallment.

At the end of the fascination, affected characters make a second DC 10 Will save. Those who fail are affected as if by the psionic power, *true domination*, manifested by a 17th-level telepath. This effect is permanent unless dispelled, or unless the affected character succeeds at a subsequent Will save (see power description for details).

Dominated characters are given one of two sets of orders. If they are not psionic, they are ordered to immediately slit their wrists there in the presence of the statue, using any conceivable available tools. Characters so ordered should be given separate saving throws for each wrist, and a third to actually sit still and allow themselves to bleed to death instead of seeking bandages or healing. If no piercing or slashing weapons are available, characters should receive bonuses to their Will saves (from +1 to +5 depending on circumstances), due to the surreal absurdity of needing to find or improvise a weapon for such a task.

If affected characters are psionic, they are instead told to protect the statues at all costs and to bring fresh victims through any means necessary. Many (the young and strong) are also ordered to seek out the rest of the lost *slarecian blood foci*. For the purposes of all of these powers, the *slarecian blood foci* are considered to speak all languages.

Any time a humanoid bleeds to death within 30 feet of a *slarecian blood focus*, every hit point of blood that the character loses is converted into a psi point and is

stored inside the *blood focus* itself. The *uthriach* specifically attuned to that *blood focus* can then draw on those psi points at will. There is no known limit to the number of psi points a *blood focus* statue can store, though all the statues still lost (assuming they have not been destroyed) are currently empty. The three *blood foci* currently in use contain 10d20 psi points at any given time, and they each lose one psi point per thrall per day. If they were to become emptied of psi points, all current thralls would be freed, but the statues' other powers would still continue to function as normal.

Overwhelming enchantment/overwhelming psychometabolism; CL 35th; Weight 15 lb.

Prestige Classes

It is only understandable that, given the intensely experimental nature of the slarecians and their servitors, there should have developed a number of expressions of psionic ability. In addition to the Mind Hunter (below) and the psionic prestige classes in *Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore*, the following prestige classes, from both the *Psionics Handbook* and *If Thoughts Could Kill* (by Malhavoc Press) also make for interesting character concepts.

Core Prestige Classes

Prestige classes from the *Psionics Handbook* may also be used to represent slarecian cultists and their opponents within the Scarred Lands.

Metamind

Representing the pinnacle of slarecian tutelage, the few metaminds existing in present times serve as leaders among the most powerful slarecian cults. Like the ancient slarecians themselves, metaminds are disdainful of worldly affairs, choosing instead to focus on the perfection of their art. It is said that the metaminds were the only mortals to achieve even a modicum of respect in the eyes of the Ancients. Upon reaching apotheosis at 10th level, a metamind becomes immune to the Mental Fatigue variant described in *Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore*.

Pyrokineticist

Beneath the burning sands of the Ukrudan Desert are said to lie mysterious catacombs that could only belong to the

inscrutable slarecians. While civilized desert nomads avoid such areas, occasionally hermits and madmen are driven to take shelter in such ruins... and a handful of these individuals emerge as destructive wielders of flame. It seems that the Thulkas-granted power over flame so many in this area are blessed with reacts strangely with the slarecian language virus, producing psions who can channel flame through will alone. Their numbers increasing in recent times, these psions often become Speakers of Fire and continue to plague the desert tribes.

Slayer

Among the tepuje nomads of the Gamulganjus it is seen as an amazing feat of bravery to return from the Maratawo pilgrimage with the head of a mind flayer. Some tribesmen don't just accomplish this goal once — they become mind flayer hunters, dedicating themselves to routing out these tentacled abominations. Because of their constant contact with the slarecian language, it usually isn't long before such hunters develop psionic talent, and most quickly become slayers. Such warriors are honored by their people for being willing to continually face those beings that fill most nomads with terror.

Soulknife

In ancient times, the soulknives were a sect of mortal worshippers loyal to the *uthriach* Chelaque the Imprisoned; it is believed they were created to assassinate powerful foes of the slarecians among the divine and titanspawn races. Although their masters have long disappeared, the soulknives continue to serve their purpose, using their talents to hide among the populace and assassinating those they feel are dangerous to the cause. Recently these cultists have begun to foment dissent among the various nations, assassinating leaders who advocate peace or reconciliation. Perhaps they hope to generate discord so their enemies will be weakened when the Ancients return to claim this world.

Mindscales in the Scarred Lands

For those players or GMs with access to Malhavoc Press's excellent *Mindscales: A Psion's Guide*, we give the following as a starting point for integrating the prestige classes therein into ongoing Scarred Lands' campaigns.

Astral Zealot

Unlike the ancient slarecians, mortal psions are unique in that they can actually enter the Astral Plane and manipulate its energies directly. Cultists who served the *uthriach* Hylop of the Void or Chelaque the Imprisoned often focused their studies on the Astral Plane, learning to draw upon and shape summoned ectoplasm with amazing facility. Other zealots continue to roam the Astral Plane, hiding from their enemies dwelling within the Scarred Lands and continuing with the vain hope that they will find their long vanished masters. Astral zealots have encountered increasing resistance from arcane devourers and other servitors of Mesos in recent times. Perhaps their intrusions and diversion of the energy of the Void is somehow interfering with the titanspawns' plans?

Cerebral Rager

The slarecian language virus does not always drive its victims into wailing insanity. Sometimes it strikes more subtly, leaving those it affects with almost supernaturally focused coldness and rage. Occasionally, when the virus interacts with one able to call upon the ferocious rage of the barbarian, a fearsome cerebral rager is produced — an individual able to channel his hatred and emotion into enormous psionic potential. Cerebral ragers are by no means common or organized in the Scarred Lands, but they are most likely to be found in areas such as Darakeene and Albadia.

Chakra Savant

Continually fighting against the horrors left by the slarecians, the scholars of Lokil have come to realize they must master the mysterious power left by the Ancients if they are to counter it. An increasing number of scholars have become infected with the slarecian language virus, only to find themselves able to employ unprecedented powers when cured. A few learn to focus these new abilities, coming to truly understand their powers and how they interact with their mortal bodies and the cosmos. The most advanced of these scholars become chakra savants, able to extend their consciousness to cosmic proportions to understand that which is inscrutable. When chakra savants reach 10th level, they have achieved sufficient enlightenment to ignore the Mental Fatigue variant described in **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**.

Chronorebel

In ancient times, the envious slarecians forbid their servants the freedom to travel the planes using their mental talents, a skill which the Ancients lacked. So constrained, the servants of Chelaque, both mortal and slarecian, turned their enormous intellects toward traveling temporally. The hope of the *uthriach* was that perhaps they could travel through time to before the creation of Scarn, and either free themselves or warn their prior incarnations. Although great success was made in manipulating the flow of time and even traveling temporally, the slarecians quickly ran into the limitation of the Edict of Time. Unable to change the past without utterly destroying themselves in the process, the slarecians gave up on this research and left it to their mortal cultists. In the present day, psions desperate to change the past sometimes take up the mantle of chronorebel, although few remember the origins of their dangerous power.

Crystal Proselyte

Most common in the tepuje cities of the Gamulganjus of Termana and among the crystal growers of Ehitovael, many modern psions have learned to fuse themselves with the mysterious crystals that radiate slarecian energy. Never existing in the ancient world, these beings have achieved a state similar to that of the ancient slarecians, at once flesh and immortal crystal. Upon reaching 10th level a crystal proselyte has attained the purity of crystal, and thus provides less resistance to the flow of psionic energy; this allows her to ignore the Mental Fatigue variant found in **Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore**. Crystal proselytes are seen as sacred beings by those tepuje dwellers devoted to the slarecians, and they direct their followers with all the authority of the Ancients.

Ghostbreaker

In areas heavily laced with necromantic energies, such as the Festering Fields, Hollowfaust, and Glivid Autel, those who have already been tainted by the slarecian language virus sometimes undergo a startling transformation. Taking in the negative energy around them, these individuals learn to psionically harness their power to affect undead. Although ancient myths insist that the slarecians infused mortals with the power to deal with the undead released with the sundering of Dyterne, modern ghostbreakers have no connection to the Ancients. Unlike

other characters who can turn undead, ghostbreakers can also turn slarecian undead such as slarecian ghoul.

Innate Pretender

Since the destruction of the slarecian armies, their mortal followers have had to hide among the titanspawn and divine races, disguising their true nature. A number of cultists have become quite proficient at this, bending their psionic talents to aid their need for secrecy. Even now, the followers of the Ancients wait among the servants of their enemies, watching for signs that the true masters' again have need of them. Many innate pretenders serve as contacts for more extreme slarecian cults, sending them resources and recruits in return for training and other aid.

Lucid Cenobite

While the Order of the Closed Book provides the front line defense against the slarecian terrors rampaging below Lokil, quite a few of the monks have fallen prey to the slarecian language virus. Awakening changed, both mentally and physically, many of these monks choose to harness the mysterious powers granted by the virus in order to hone their skills as warriors. Ironically, lucid cenobites develop a mentality that is frighteningly close to that of the slarecians, seeing the world only as a distraction and focusing solely upon spiritual matters. It is uncertain how loyal these monks will prove to their city should the ancient slarecians, beings who can grant true enlightenment, once again arise.

Pattern Master

A number of cultures in the Scarred Lands employ mystical tattoos, appreciating both their aesthetic beauty and their arcane utility. When such folk become tainted with the slarecian language virus, many retain their fascination with body art; but such decoration takes on a greater purpose, serving as a focus for their mental power. Wood elves, dark elves, and Albadians are the most likely to take up this path, allowing them to disguise their psionics behind a traditional cultural paradigm. Pattern masters rarely have any link to the ancient slarecians, instead maintaining their traditional loyalties and struggling to blend into the societies of their birth.

Psychic Chirurgeon

During ancient times, the slarecians trained a number of cultists to become healers of great power. These individuals were expected to care for those wounded, both in forays to the surface and during the slarecians' vile experimentations. Slarecians themselves were said to lack the empathy to heal, considering it a lowly and disdainful duty. Thus, the task was left to mortal servitors, and when the slarecians were destroyed these healers were dispersed across the Scarred Lands. Today, few sects of psychic chirurgeons maintain loyalty to their ancient but cruel masters, instead acting as roving bands of phenomenal healers. Few who are desperately in need of healing think to question the mysterious powers of those who come to their aide, so in general these individuals are not persecuted.

Spirituel

It is said that the mortal cultists of the slarecians once worshipped the *uthriach* as gods, and the psions known as spirituels continue to do so to this day. Spirituels are able to tap into the Godmind of each *uthriach*, drawing power even as the god-kings of the slarecians themselves remain imprisoned. Spirituels are often found guiding cults of other psions, serving as spiritual leaders because of their unique connection to the *uthriach*. If characters take this path, psionic nodes should be designed for each *uthriach* based on the divine domains found in the *Player's Handbook*. Upon achieving 10th level, the spirituel no longer suffers from the Mental Fatigue variant described in *Relics & Rituals II: Lost Lore*.

Voce Warrior

Slarecians have never truly understood the magic of bards. Possessing no soul, these beings were unable to grasp the ties that bind other races, the shared soul that bards draw upon when creating their magic. Thinking that their power was a simple sonic effect, perhaps a manipulation of thought through sound, the servants of Baeth the Shaper of Stars and Qarrath the Worldly developed their own sonic tradition. Although unable to manipulate thought in the same manner as bards, these psions quickly found sound to be a potent weapon, able to rip apart foes without the distastefulness of physical contact. A few voce warrior cultists are said to yet exist within the expanse of the Kelder Mountains near Vesh, awaiting the return of their masters.

Mind Hunter

The mind hunters are a dour bunch. One must suppose that is how a person behaves when she becomes what she hates. This, after all, is what has happened to the psion hunters. All started out as people who, mostly through traumatic life experiences, had grown to hate psionics above all other things. Secondly, all of these individuals have also discovered psionic power in themselves.

Psionic ability does not inherently make one evil, but the mind hunters do not realize this. They are focused only on the slarecian monsters, the slarecian cults, or even the horrifying Thralls of the Idols. Thus, they cannot see that their own psionic abilities, often caused by an infection of the slarecian language virus, are not constantly eating away at their own souls – they instead live with the underlying dread that on some level they must be like those beings that killed their families or destroyed their villages or raped their daughters, or whatever specific reason each psion hunter is dedicated to fighting all that is psionic.

And so, when such individuals first sense the call to psionic activity in their blood, they resist it, and they hate themselves, and they beg the gods or Denev to save them from this curse. The unlucky ones sink into despair and often either kill themselves or fall so far as to become the fulfillment of their own terrifying prophecies. The lucky ones, on the other hand, are found by mind hunters. They are trained to control and use their psionics in the cause of destroying those evil psions whom they hate so passionately.

Mind hunters do not mean to be prejudicial and most of them do intellectually understand that if it is possible for them to be both psionic and serve righteousness, then it must be possible for others to do so as well; but it is still a hard concept for their wounded hearts to fully grasp, even if their minds know better. Thus, it is exceptionally difficult for any active psions to gain the trust of mind hunters, as they only tentatively have faith in themselves.

Technically, it may be possible for psion hunters to appear outside of Albadia and the Mind Hunter organization. But with the steady stream of horrors wandering down out of the Titanshome Mountains, only the harsh snows of far northern Albadia have currently developed the kind of savage, desperate atmosphere of hatred for the “new magic” that is generally required to create a true hunter of all that is slarecian.

Hit Die: d10

Requirements

To qualify to become a mind hunter, a character must fulfill all the following criteria:

Ability: Favored enemy: (anything with psionic abilities, such as slarecian cultists or mind flayers, for example), Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC).



Alignment: non-evil, non-lawful.

Base Will Save: +2

Feats: Iron Will, Track.

Skill: Survival 8 ranks.

Special: Must have psionic potential (GM's discretion), must swear fealty to the Mind Hunter organization.

Class Skills

The mind hunter's class skills are: Autohypnosis (Wis), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Handle Animal (Cha), Heal (Wis), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (psionics) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Psicraft (Int), Ride (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Stabilize Self (Con), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the Mind Hunter prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Mind hunters are proficient with simple and martial weapons and with light armor and shields.

Powers: A mind hunter always manifests psionic powers, but the individual's selection of these powers is fairly limited (see list below). At each level, the mind hunter discovers more previously latent powers, as indicated on Table A-1.

To manifest a power within a particular discipline, a mind hunter must have a key ability score of at least 10 + the power's level. The DC for the saving throw to resist a mind hunter's powers is 1d20 + the power's level + the psychic warrior's key ability modifier. The 1d20 roll is made by the attacking psion when the power is manifested.

Note: Just as psions can, a mind hunter may choose to discover a lower-level power in place of the higher-level power normally granted by level advancement.

Power Level	Powers Available
0	<i>Bolt, burst, catfall, detect psionics, elfsight, know direction, talons, valor, verve.</i>
1	<i>Biofeedback, bite of the wolf, call weaponry, combat precognition, hustle, know location, lesser metaphysical weapon, stomp, vigor.</i>
2	<i>Animal affinity, claws of the bear, combat prescience, darkvision, painful touch, recall pain, see invisibility, sustenance, vigilance.</i>
3	<i>Bite of the tiger, claws of the vampire, danger sense, displacement, improved biofeedback, metaphysical weapon, prowess, rejuvenation, ubiquitous vision.</i>
4	<i>Dissolving touch, fate of one, immovability, inertial barrier, mass concussion, natural armor, steadfast perception.</i>
5	<i>Adamant grasp, adapt body, catapsi, ectoplasmic armor, psychic vampire.</i>
6	<i>Breath of the dragon, improved vigor, shield of prudence.</i>

Power Points: A mind hunter can manifest a certain number of 1st level and higher powers per day based on available power points, but need not prepare powers in advance—the mind hunter simply pays the power point cost of a power to manifest it. Mind hunters do not gain bonus power points for exceptional ability scores, so at every level they have only the number of power points listed in Table A-1.

0-level Powers: Also called talents, 0-level powers have a special power point cost. A mind hunter can manifest any talent known for free, a number of times per day equal to the character's mind hunter level +1. After exhausting the daily allotment, the mind hunter must pay 1 power point per manifestation of a 0-level power for the rest of that day.

Wall of Fury: The mind hunter's rage against all psionics is so intense and consuming that it can actually serve as a shield against an enemy's psionic attacks. This wall serves two main purposes. First, it grants the mind hunter a bonus to all Will saves versus psionic attacks or powers equal to 1/2 her mind hunter level (round down). Second, the *wall of fury* serves much like a psionic defense mode for the mind hunter, granting a mental hardness equal to one-third the character's mind hunter level (round down). Because of the savage nature of the wall, this ability simulates a powerful mixture between the *empty mind* and *thought shield* defense modes. Against any given psionic attack mode, the *wall of fury* ability always provides the better modifier between that of *empty mind* and of *thought shield*.

Wall of fury costs one power point per round to manifest and maintain. It can be activated as a free action and remains in effect for a maximum of 5 rounds per the character's mind hunter level. When *wall of fury* manifests, the mind hunter appears to be subtly surrounded by heat waves.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd, 4th, 6th and 8th levels, the mind hunter may choose a bonus feat. The bonus feat must be from the following list: any psionic feat, Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge (Mobility, Spring Attack), Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot (Far Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run), Power Attack (Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Sunder Great Cleave), Skill Focus, or Toughness.

Mind Body Fusion: Psionic power is more instinctive and primal for the mind hunter than for many other psionic beings. Because of this, the mind hunter's mental powers are more inextricably linked to her physical well being, and this connection provides the mind hunter with a unique ability. Once per day, a mind hunter may trade hit points for power points or power points for hit points. There is no limit to how many hit points or power points may be spent in this manner, but the transfer happens all at once.

Table A-1: Mind Hunter (Mih)

Class Level	Base				Special	Power Pts/Day	Powers Discovered						
	Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save			0	1	2	3	4	5	6
1st	+0	+2	+2	+1	Wall of fury	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
2nd	+0	+3	+3	+2	Bonus feat	4	2	1	—	—	—	—	—
3rd	+1	+3	+3	+3	Mind body fusion (1/2)	5	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
4th	+1	+4	+4	+4	Bonus feat	8	2	2	1	—	—	—	—
5th	+1	+4	+4	+5	Static blast	16	2	2	2	1	—	—	—
6th	+2	+5	+5	+6/+1	Bonus feat	21	2	2	2	2	—	—	—
7th	+2	+5	+5	+7/+2	Mind body fusion (1:1)	28	2	2	2	2	1	—	—
8th	+2	+6	+6	+8/+3	Bonus feat	35	2	2	2	2	2	—	—
9th	+3	+6	+6	+9/+4	Psionic rage	44	2	2	2	2	2	1	—
10th	+3	+7	+7	+10/+5	Mind body fusion (x2)	64	2	2	2	2	2	2	1

Hit points or power points lost due to this process cannot be regained by psionic means.

At third level, hit points can be spent to gain 1/2 as many power points (round down) or vice versa. At seventh level, hit points spent in this manner gain the mind hunter a number of power points equal to the number of hit points lost, or vice versa. At tenth level, any hit point spent in this manner grants the mind hunter 2 power points, and any power point spent in this manner grants the mind hunter 2 hit points. The mind hunter can never exceed her normal maximum for either hit points or power points through the use of this ability.

Undergoing this transfer requires a full round of uninterrupted concentration to succeed. At the beginning of the round, the character must declare how many of which type of points she intends to spend. This amount cannot be changed once declared. If the mind hunter's concentration is broken before the end of the round, the declared power or hit points are still lost, but nothing is gained in return. The exchange (or loss) does not take effect until the beginning of the next round.

Static Blast: Starting at 5th level, the mind hunter gains the ability to emit a blast of psionic static that temporarily disables all psionic activity in a radius surrounding the character. This is treated as a *null psionics field*, including its power point cost. The primary difference is the fact that this ability can only be performed once per day.

Psionic Rage (Su): At 9th level, a mind hunter gains the ability to go into a *psionic rage* three times per day. Though the character behaves very much as if entering a barbarian rage, the reality of the situation can be far more dangerous. Once begun, a *psionic rage* ends when either the

combat itself is over or when the mind hunter runs out of power points. While enraged, a mind hunter can make use of no psionic or magical powers or abilities other than the rage itself. A rage may be started as a free action, but a mind hunter must have at least one power point available in order to activate the ability.

While enraged, a mind hunter can take no action save to engage in melee combat or to flee (thus ending the combat and the rage). All feats and skills that pertain to melee fighting or to fleeing can be used while enraged, with the exception of Expertise. Feats and skills that pertain to any other type of action cannot be used, with the exception of Concentration, as follows. Even speech is difficult, and the enraged mind hunter must make a DC 5 Concentration check per word spoken aloud. Failure results in an incoherent snarl.

What makes the mind hunter's rage most dangerous, however, is the psionic element. The mind hunter's raw psionic ability is channeled through her rage and serves to mesmerize her opponents and to psychokinetically rip their wounds wider and deeper. While enraged, a mind hunter may spend up to her mind hunter level in power points each round of combat. These power points can be divided however the character wishes between attack and damage rolls within that round. For each power point spent, the mind hunter receives a +2 to either attack or to damage on a single roll. At the beginning of her attack action, the mind hunter must declare how many power points she will be using in that round and to which rolls they will apply.

Even if a mind hunter has power points left over after a rage, she cannot use any psionic powers or abilities for a number of minutes equal to the number of rounds she spent enraged.

Slarecian Horrors

The following are creatures and templates that arose from the influence of the slarecians in the Scarred Lands. They might simply be creations of the Ancients, be caused by the unnatural changes their interference in the natural world bore, or even (in rare instances) have originated from the need to combat slarecian domination.

The Ever-Watchful

Since their creation ages ago, the Order of Obsidian has struggled relentlessly to fulfill its sole and initial charge: to seek out and destroy the foul taint of the slarecians. Despite their formidable powers, however, the obsidians soon realized that the task of tracking down and neutralizing every tainted aspect of a race that once spanned the whole of the world and imprisoned the very gods themselves was quite a daunting assignment. The Order eventually determined that a means of vigilance – eternal vigilance – was direly needed if they were ever to succeed against their staggeringly powerful and astute foes.

To this end, the most powerful of the Order labored tirelessly to create a process by which this could be achieved. Pooling their formidable psionic talents, they were able to forge a surprising solution. What resulted took the form of the Ever-Watchful, an entirely new breed of creature that sacrificed portions of themselves in order to attune to the presence of psionics and the black, ever-growing stigma of the slarecians.

Becoming one of those numbered among the ever-watchful is a harrowing and invasive process that removes nearly every trace of individuality from a person. Through a drawn-out and unrelenting series of psychic surgeries, the wants, needs, and desires of the

self are utterly quashed, leaving only a hunger for knowledge of the slarecians and an irrepressible want for the approval of the Order to linger within one's mind. The need to rest or sleep is ripped from the individual's subconscious and the ability to maintain massive stores of psychically-preserved knowledge known as *memory codices* is conferred to the subject. The intended end-result of this process is an unwavering, tireless watcher who remains eternally observant for signs of the slarecian presence and records all knowledge pertaining to their hated charge.

Among the Order of Obsidian, the ever-watchful typically fill the roles of archivists, sages, and historians with regards to the slarecians and all thereby related subjects. They amass great stores of knowledge on the subject in their psionic memory matrixes, which can be shunted to the Astral plane at will and thereby accessed by members of the Order in times of need.

While the bulk of the Order feel that the creation of the ever-watchful was a crowning success for their ilk, a precious but often vocal few believe these stunted conceptions are a weakness waiting to be exploited by the agents of the slarecians or even by the Ancients themselves.

They believe that any who possess the sufficient skills could simply alter the psychic programming of the ever-watchful and convert them into the perfect tool for crafting the downfall of the obsidians. For now, however, the ever-watchful remain as they have ever been, seeking

knowledge that they eternally carry and continuing in their never ending, sleepless vigil against what they see as the ultimate threat.

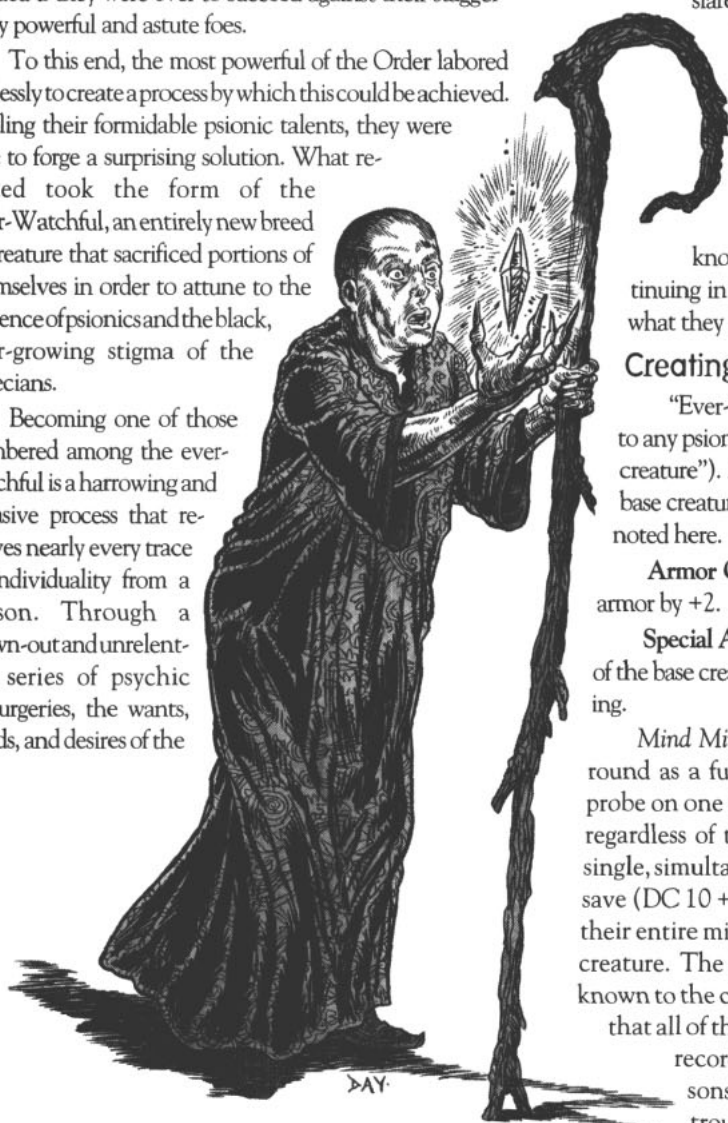
Creating an Ever-Watchful

"Ever-Watchful" is a template that may be added to any psionic creature (referred hereafter as the "base creature"). An ever-watchful creature uses all of the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Armor Class: Increase the base creature's natural armor by +2.

Special Attacks: An ever-watchful creature has all of the base creature's special attacks and adds the following.

Mind Mince (Su): The creature may, once per round as a full action, attempt to perform a mind probe on one character per its HD/level. The probe, regardless of the number of targets, is considered a single, simultaneous attack. Individuals failing a Will save (DC 10 + ever-watchful creature's hit die) have their entire mind rifled through by the ever-watchful creature. The ever-watchful creature makes it well known to the character during that short span of time that all of the individual's memories are now being recorded and are no longer solely that person's. The attack is so disconcerting and troubling that the target is thereafter stag-



My most esteemed and entrusted colleagues,

My doubts and fears are nigh ineffable on this, what could be our most fated, day. I have just received word from our high-seated advocates and associates that the powers that be have deemed the usage of the processes that we have so long striven against to be not only safe but advisable for all divisions of our beloved Order. There is little to stand in the way, now, of those who desire to create more of these "ever-watchful" creatures. I feel that an alien infection, of sorts, has begun to manifest itself within the confines of our Order's once expertly honed and eternally prudent mind. Why else would we have taken such a disastrous path?

There can be, in my mind, little doubt that Our Eternal Enemy has placed a sullied hand upon these proceedings at some point. Whether it was to provide the initial (and utterly external, surely) stimuli that began the whole process, or to subtly and deviously nudge it along a predestined path, or even to sway this final and most crucial decision will likely never be known; for our Enemy is just so oblique as to begin and control such a grandiose and circuitous scheme (even within the very confines of their greatest enemy's camp) and then leave it to its own predestined and utterly doomed measures.

What folly are we subject to so that we think ourselves above the gods themselves! Were not even they, those most divine and omni-powerful beings also fooled by the Enemy's wiles? Even still, the aftershocks of those divine actions reverberate in the ears of the here and now. If we do not act, and soon, my comrades in thought, then we will soon find ourselves taking residence in Drendari's long vacant prison and warming her now cold shackles with our precious life's blood.

We must act as soon as we dare and must censure these actions which have brought the abominations of the ever-watchful into existence. The safety of the Order rests solely on our shoulders. We have seen these creatures for what they truly are - what they will doubtlessly one day become - the taint of the seemingly forgotten Enemy.

We must remind those around us of the duty with which the Order of Obsidian was originally tasked. We must open their eyes to the danger that grows around us with each passing day. May our thoughts be with us, for the gods and all else have forsaken us long ago - the slarecians are returning - right in our very midst and by our own hand!

*Emphatically yours,
Stal'vas Wartsian*

gered for a number of rounds equal to the Ever-Watchful creature's Wisdom bonus (this cannot be less than a single round).

Special Qualities: An ever-watchful creature has all of the base creature's special qualities and adds the following.

Memory Codex Manipulation (Su): The creature gains the ability to generate, tap into, or modify any memory codex created by one of its kind. These memory matrixes are massive crystalline storehouses of sheer psi-charged memories, feelings, stories, rumors and outright knowledge. Those unskilled in the terms of dealing with such items think them little more than massive crystalline outcroppings, but they are in reality tremendous sources of information that can house knowledge which would normally encompass several tremendous libraries.

Telepathy (Su): The creature possesses the supernatural ability to communicate telepathically with any creature within 200 feet per its HD/level.

Unending Vigilance (Su): The creature is bound by its very nature to remain ever vigilant and watchful. As a result, they can never be surprised.

Unsleeping (Su): The creature no longer requires sleep and suffers no ill effects as a result of this fact.

Saves: Same as base creature.

Abilities: Int +8, Wis +4.

Skills: Same as base creature.

Feats: Same as base creature.

Environment: Same as base creature.

Organization: Same as base creature.

Challenge Rating: As base creature +1.

Treasure: Same as base creature.

Alignment: Usually lawful neutral.

Advancement: Same as base creature.

Level Adjustment: +2

Ever-Watchful Characters

Long before the change actually occurs; characters who undergo the process to become an ever-watchful creature are typically selected well in advance. As such, they generally experience little to no change in profession or outlook. However, occasionally, as a result of the ever-watchful creature's mind mince ability, an encounter leads to a spontaneous change within a psionically-enabled character. When this occurs, the character generally tends toward the path of the Psion, with a focus in the discipline of Clairsentience.

Psychic Phantom

Description

Among the many sins of the slarecians, one of the greatest was their practice of stealing thoughts and memories from their prisoners. Whether they were to be stored in memoriam boxes and jars, analyzed so the slarecians might better understand these “lesser” creatures, or simply transformed into psionic energies and consumed, such acts are perhaps the worst form of violation imaginable. Bad enough that the slarecians merely copied the minds of their subjects, but at times they literally stole thoughts and memories, stripping away everything that made an individual who he was, leaving him an empty husk while storing his identity in some isolated artificial hell.

On rare occasions, when the victim knew in advance what fate was to befall him, when he felt each and every memory sucked from his mind in a slow but inexorable process, the sheer horror and rage the individual felt at this violation mixed with the thoughts and memories themselves, granting these nebulous feelings and awareness and identity all their own. These became psychic phantoms, collections of memories bound together and granted sentience by a thread of powerful emotion. Most of these phantoms remain trapped in memoriam boxes and other thought-storage devices of the slarecians, but some few have escaped (or were released) to haunt the wilds of the Scarred Lands.

Psychic phantoms appear as intangible and transparent variations of the individuals who spawned them. Many details are inaccurate, as the psychic phantom takes its appearance from the original creature's self-image, rather than reality; thus, the psychic phantom of someone who considered himself especially charming will likely present a more attractive and regal appearance than the subject truly possessed. Additionally, most psychic phantoms constantly experience a sequence of powerful emotions, from rage to horror to hatred. These feelings too manifest in their appearance, at least in their expressions and body language.

It's important to note that while a psychic phantom is created from the mind of a living being, it does not necessarily duplicate that being's personality precisely. The phantom is a collection of thoughts, memories and emotions, but a collection is all it is. Those thoughts and details are not associated with one another as they were in the original host. For instance, a psychic phantom still

remembers “his” wife, but that memory has no more importance than the memory of what it had for breakfast the day before it became a phantom; its thoughts, memories and emotions are utterly unconnected to one another in any meaningful fashion. Most psychic phantoms are incapable of truly feeling anything but the emotions that spawned them, despite their memories of other feelings. A psychic phantom might seek revenge against the slarecians (and anyone it believes associated with them) for its current state, it might seek to take out its frustration on anyone nearby, it might simply wish to be left alone to cower and bemoan its fate — but few, if any, hold any goals or emotions beyond these. While some psychic phantoms are capable of focusing past their emotional distress and actually communicating with others, they are rarely able (or willing) to do so for more than a few moments at a time.

Sample Psychic Phantom

This example uses a 3rd-level elven ranger as the base creature.

Tadthreus Davalorelle, the Lurker in the Mourning Marsh

This strange entity looks almost ghost-like. It is transparent, wavering though no breeze blows to disturb its shape. It is dressed in traveling leathers of an ancient style, and empty scabbards hang at its waist. Its features are sharp, regal, the epitome of elven grace — and elven arrogance. It moves as though it still needed to walk, slightly crouched, like a hunting predator. The eyes of this strange being are narrowed, its mouth twisted in a scowl of sheer hatred.

In the final days of the slarecian empire, an assault force of Ganjus elves and Veshian soldiers moved determinedly into the Flourishing Flats (today the Mourning Marshes), their eyes on a slarecian city they knew existed somewhere in the region. Their efforts were apparently successful — nobody heard anything more from the slarecians of that area — but few of the brave warriors survived to return home.

Alas, not all who didn't survive were necessarily deceased.

The slarecians were indeed driven from their city, but they were able to take some prisoners with them as they retreated to other, secret havens in the region. One of those prisoners was the elf Tadthreus Davalorelle, an elven ranger who had raged against slarecian oppression since he was old enough to understand what happened to those who were led from his village every few months as “tribute.” Unfortunately, Tadthreus clearly never got the justice and vengeance he craved. What happened to his body none can say, but the slarecians clearly



MECHUGH

abused his mind. His psychic phantom escaped whatever thought receptacle it was imprisoned in — possibly when the slarecians abandoned Scarn — and has roamed the regions surrounding their hideaway ever since. His hatred for the slarecians who did this to him has grown, expanded, and become fury at every living, thinking thing. Tadhreus no longer cares who is guilty and who is innocent; all must suffer for the outrage the slarecians perpetrated upon him.

Tadhreus Davalorelle, the Lurker in the Mourning Marsh
Psychic phantom 3rd-level elven ranger
Medium Construct (incorporeal)

Hit Dice:	3d10+20 (43 hp)
Initiative:	+7
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares), fly 60 ft. (perfect)
Armor Class:	16 (+3 Dex, +3 deflection), touch 16, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/—
Attack:	Incorporeal touch +6 (1d6+3 nonlethal)
Full Attack:	2 incorporeal touches +4 (1d6+3 nonlethal)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Mind wipe, mind drain
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, favored enemy (slarecian), combat style (two-weapon), psionic advancement, fast healing 3, psychic vulnerability, rejuvenation, spell/power resistance 14, immunities, construct traits
Saves:	Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2
Abilities:	Str —, Dex 17, Con —, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 16
Skills:	Climb +4, Concentration +3, Handle Animal +6, Heal +5, Hide +15, Jump +3, Knowledge (geography) +5, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +17, Move Silently +6 (but see incorporeal subtype), Search +15, Spot +17, Survival +5.
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance ^B , Track ^B , Improved Initiative
Environment:	Temperate Marsh (Mourning Marshes in the Scarred Lands)
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	5
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Chaotic evil
Advancement:	—
Level Adjustment:	+5

Creating a Psychic Phantom

“Psychic phantom” is an acquired template that can be added to any aberration, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast or monstrous humanoid. (Technically, the original creature spawns the psychic phantom, rather than becoming it, so perhaps “add-

ing” is a misnomer. Still, the GM should create the psychic phantom in the standard manner.) The creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature) must have Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores of at least 5 each.

A psychic phantom uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The psychic phantom's type is “construct.” (Though they appear ghostly, they were never truly alive, and are thus not undead.) Do not recalculate the creature's attack bonus, saves, or skill points. The psychic phantom has the “incorporeal” subtype. Its size is the same as the base creature.

Hit Dice: All current hit dice become d10s, unless they were already higher than that — in which case they remain at the higher type. All future hit dice become d10s regardless. The creature loses any extra hit points gained due to Constitution, but receives hit points base on its size as per the rules for constructs.

Speed: Psychic phantoms have a fly speed of 60 feet, unless the base creature has a higher fly speed, with perfect maneuverability.

Armor Class: The psychic phantom does not gain any natural armor the base creature may have had, but it does receive a deflection bonus equal to its Charisma modifier (minimum +1).

Attack: The psychic phantom cannot cause physical harm, but it gains a psychic touch attack, which it delivers either by hand (if humanoid) or by any attack form it may have previously possessed, such as claws or bites.

Full Attack: If the base creature had natural attacks, it retains all those attacks but they now function as psychic touch attacks. If it did not, it gains however many attacks its base attack bonus would normally provide.

Damage: A psychic phantom's touch deals nonlethal damage based on its size; its Charisma modifier affects the damage dealt as though it were a Strength bonus.

Size	Damage
Fine	1
Diminutive	1d2
Tiny	1d3
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

Special Attacks: A psychic phantom gains all the spell-like and supernatural special attacks of the base creature, but loses any extraordinary attacks. Psychic phantoms retain any spellcasting

ability the base creature possessed, but cannot cast spells that require a material component. Additionally, the psychic phantom acquires two of the following three special attacks. One of these attacks is *always* mind wipe. The other is chosen based on which emotion was dominant in the phantom's formation — rage, terror, or hate. If no single emotion was dominant, choose whichever power seems to fit the phantom best. The save against all these abilities is $10 + 1/2$ the phantom's hit dice + Cha modifier. (Alternately, if the GM prefers a more psionic feel, the save is $1d20 + 1/2$ the phantom's hit dice + Cha modifier.)

Mind Wipe (Su): Though the touch of the psychic phantom deals nonlethal damage, the creature poses a danger far more insidious than simple unconsciousness. If a psychic phantom successfully touches an unconscious target — including one rendered unconscious by the phantom's own touch attacks — it drains memories. The victim suffers a number of negative levels equal to the damage the phantom normally deals (i.e. $1d6$ for Medium phantoms). A victim reduced to 0 levels, in this fashion, dies as his mind literally “forgets” how to keep the body alive. Otherwise, victims may roll saving throws to regain lost levels as normal.

Mind Crush (Su): Once per round, the psychic phantom can declare one of its attacks a mind crush attack. If the attack strikes and does damage, the victim must succeed in a Will save or be stunned for $3d4$ rounds. An individual who successfully saves is immune to that same phantom's mind crush for 24 hours. This power is most appropriate to psychic phantoms animated by fear or terror.

Mind Ride (Su): Once per round, a psychic phantom can merge its body with a living, sentient creature, or with a sentient creature dead no more than a number of minutes equal to the phantom's Charisma modifier (minimum 1). This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 10th or the phantom's Hit Dice, whichever is higher), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the phantom must try to move into the target's space; moving in this manner, while utilizing the mind ride ability, does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The target can resist the attack and prevent the merging with a successful Will save. A creature who successfully saves is immune to that same phantom's mind ride for 24 hours, and the phantom cannot enter the target's space. If the save fails, the phantom vanishes into the target's body. This ability is most appropriate for phantoms driven by anger, rage and the need for vengeance.

Mind Drain (Su): Once per round, the psychic phantom can declare one of its attacks a mind drain attack. If the attack strikes and does damage, the victim loses $1d4$ points of either Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma. (The ability type that is drained is determined when the phantom is created, and cannot later be changed.) Some of this loss may be permanent drain. Twenty-four hours after this ability damage, the victim must make a Fortitude save. If the save succeeds, the victim regains 1 point at that time, and 1 more point for each day that passes. If the save fails, the victim does not regain a point that day, and 1 point of the damage is permanent. He may make another save the following day, until he either makes a save (and will thus eventually regain all lost points remaining) or until all the damage is determined to be permanent. This ability is most appropriate for psychic phantoms driven by hatred, not just against their oppressors but toward the entire world.

Special Qualities: A psychic phantom has all the supernatural and spell-like special qualities of the base creature, but does not possess the base creature's extraordinary abilities. In addition, it has those qualities described below.

Psionic Advancement: A psychic phantom who possesses, or can possess, class levels, may not gain class levels in the 11 core classes. It can, however, advance as a psion or psychic warrior. Additionally, each time a psychic phantom gains a psion or psychic warrior level, it may choose to also replace a previously gained level with one of these two classes. For instance, a psychic phantom who was a 5th-level fighter gains a level of psychic warrior. It may choose, at this time, whether it is now a fighter 5/psychic warrior 1, or whether it wishes to replace its highest fighter level and become a fighter 4/psychic warrior 2. It may only replace one old level each time it gains a new level, and must make that decision at the time it acquires that level.

Fast Healing (Ex): A psychic phantom has fast healing equal to its Charisma modifier (minimum 1).

Psychic Vulnerability (Ex): As creatures of pure thought and emotion, psychic phantoms are particularly vulnerable to attacks that target thoughts. They

Non-Psionic Campaigns

If the GM is using a psychic phantom in a campaign without the psionic's rules, the psychic phantom instead advances as a sorcerer. It must have at least as many Enchantment or mind-affecting spells as it has other types of spells, gains the Eschew Materials feat free, and cannot learn spells with a costly material component.

receive a -2 racial penalty to saves against spells, powers or abilities that erase memories or cause ability damage or drain to Intelligence, Wisdom or Charisma. They share the standard construct immunities to any *other* sorts of mind-affecting spells and powers, however.

Rejuvenation (Su): Psychic phantoms are very difficult to annihilate. The “destroyed” phantom spirit will often restore itself in 2d4 days. Even the most powerful spells are usually only temporary solutions. A psychic phantom, who would otherwise be destroyed, returns to the spot on which it was defeated with a successful level check (1d20 + phantom’s HD) against DC 16. As a rule, the only way to permanently get rid of a psychic phantom is to reduce one of its mental attributes — Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma — to zero. This instantly causes the thoughts and memories that make up the phantom to lose cohesion, and it dissipates in 2d4 rounds (though it is subject to the limitations of its new attribute levels, the phantom can still act normally while it is dispersing).

Spell and Power Resistance (Ex): Psychic phantoms have spell and power resistance equal to their hit dice +11.

Immunities (Ex): Psychic phantoms are immune to any effects that force a physical change of shape, such as *baleful polymorph*.

Construct Traits (Ex): Though the psychic phantom appears as an undead being in many respects, it is not. As a creature who was never truly alive, it qualifies as a construct and has all the salient traits thereof, except as noted above. (It also cannot be turned, though many a cleric has attempted to do so.)

Abilities: Same as the base creature, except the psychic phantom has no Constitution score, and its Intelligence and Charisma scores each increase by +2.

Skills: Phantoms have a +8 racial bonus on their Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks. Otherwise these constructs are the same as the base creature (but remember to take the heightened Intelligence into account).

Environment: Any, usually in or near slarecian ruins.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

Treasure: None.

Alignment: Usually chaotic evil. Psychic phantoms can begin their existence as any alignment, but their strong violent emotions and lack of connection to their previous lives usually push them inexorably toward chaos and evil.

Level Adjustment: Same as the base creature +5.

Slarecian-Touched Creature

In the ruins abandoned by the slarecians before the Titanswar, psionic and magic residue creates ambient clouds of energy that twists and changes everything they touch. When creatures ignorant (or uncaring) of the catacombs’ origins discover these black tunnels, they often find these places to be an appealing new home. As the years pass, the creatures are exposed to the strange energies emanating from their surroundings, and eventually, those creatures, or their offspring, are changed — “touched” by the slarecian legacy.

Creating a Slarecian-Touched Creature

“Slarecian-Touched” is a template that can be added to any intelligent humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature (hereafter referred to as the “base creature”). A slarecian-touched creature’s type changes to “aberration.” It uses all the base creature’s statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d8.

Special Qualities: A slarecian-touched creature retains all the special qualities of the base creature and also gains the following.

Psionics (Sp): At will — three psionic powers chosen at the GMs discretion from those powers available to a Psion of equivalent level to the creature’s new CR.

Attack/Defense Modes (Sp): At will — *ego whip*, *id insinuation/empty mind*, *tower of iron will*.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Int +4, Wis +4.

Skills: Slarecian-touched creatures gain a +8 racial bonus to concentration checks. Otherwise, same as the base creature.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Environment: Any land and underground.

Organization: Same as the base creature.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2.

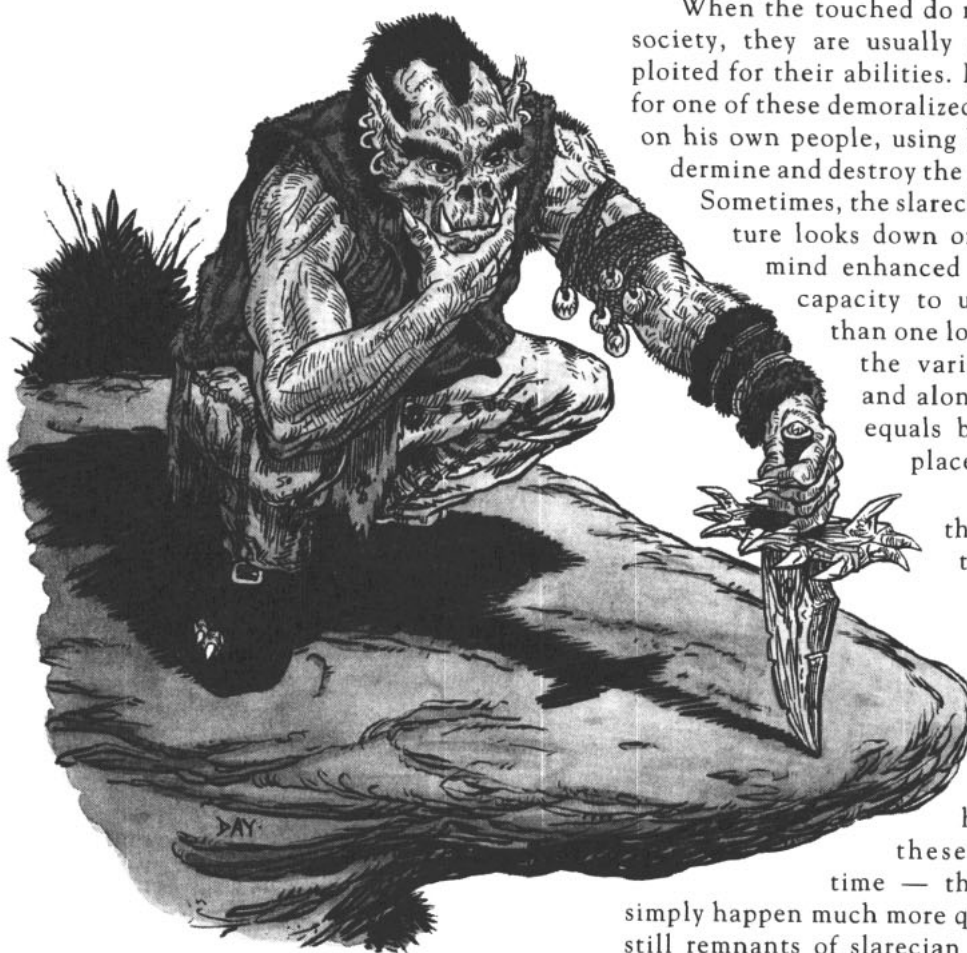
Treasure: Double standard.

Alignment: Usually neutral evil.

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

Slarecian-Touched Characters

Generally, it requires generations upon generations of a community living in the slarecian ruins for one of their number to be



touched. Initially, slarecian-touched creatures are treated with fear and, perhaps, subconscious envy. As generations pass, the adaptation becomes fairly common, and the new creatures are eventually tolerated by — or even elevated within — their parent society.

These creatures find themselves to be different from their brethren without really knowing quite why. slarecian-touched creatures are smarter than their fellows, and eventually tend to rise into positions of leadership within their societies. Thus it is that these “wise” men or women lead many of the tribes that inhabit the organic catacombs of the slarecians.

When the touched do not integrate into society, they are usually ostracized or exploited for their abilities. It is not unknown for one of these demoralized creatures to turn on his own people, using his powers to undermine and destroy the tribe from within.

Sometimes, the slarecian-touched creature looks down on his fellows, his mind enhanced far beyond their capacity to understand. More than one lone creature stalks the various ruins, bitter and alone, hoping to find equals but resigned to a place of superiority.

If a creature was the subject of certain slarecian experiments, the end result would be similar to that of the slarecian-touched creatures who have evolved these abilities over time — the process would simply happen much more quickly. There are still remnants of slarecian experimentation wandering the depths of the Scarred Lands, driven mad by their treatment at the hands of their captors. Some of the most dangerous subjects still lie resting, sleeping a dreamless sleep in the slarecian laboratories, held in stasis by eldritch means, merely waiting for someone to awaken them. Other subjects have drifted into an undead state, using the last vestiges of their psionic abilities in a haphazard manner, throwing powers around at random or, worse yet, at the behest of a dominating necromancer or more powerful (and intelligent) undead creature.

Slarecian-touched characters gain psion or psionic warrior (choose one when applying the template) as a preferred class.

Builder Beetle Swarm

Tiny Aberration (Psionic, Swarm)

Hit Dice:	9d8 (36 hp)
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft., fly 10 ft.
Armor Class:	17 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural armor), touch 16, flat-footed 13
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/—
Attack:	Swarm (2d6 plus poison)
Full Attack:	Swarm (2d6 plus poison)
Space/Reach:	10 ft. /0 ft.
Special Attacks:	Engulf, Venom
Special Qualities:	Attracted by light, darkvision 60 ft., immune to weapon damage, resistance to fire 30, susceptible to domination, swarm traits
Saves:	Fort +10, Ref +14, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 1, Dex 19, Con 9, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 9
Skills:	Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +6, Listen +6, Spot +10
Feats:	Natural Armor
Environment:	Warm underground
Organization:	Solitary, mass (2-4 swarms), or wave (5-8 swarms)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	None
Level Adjustment:	—

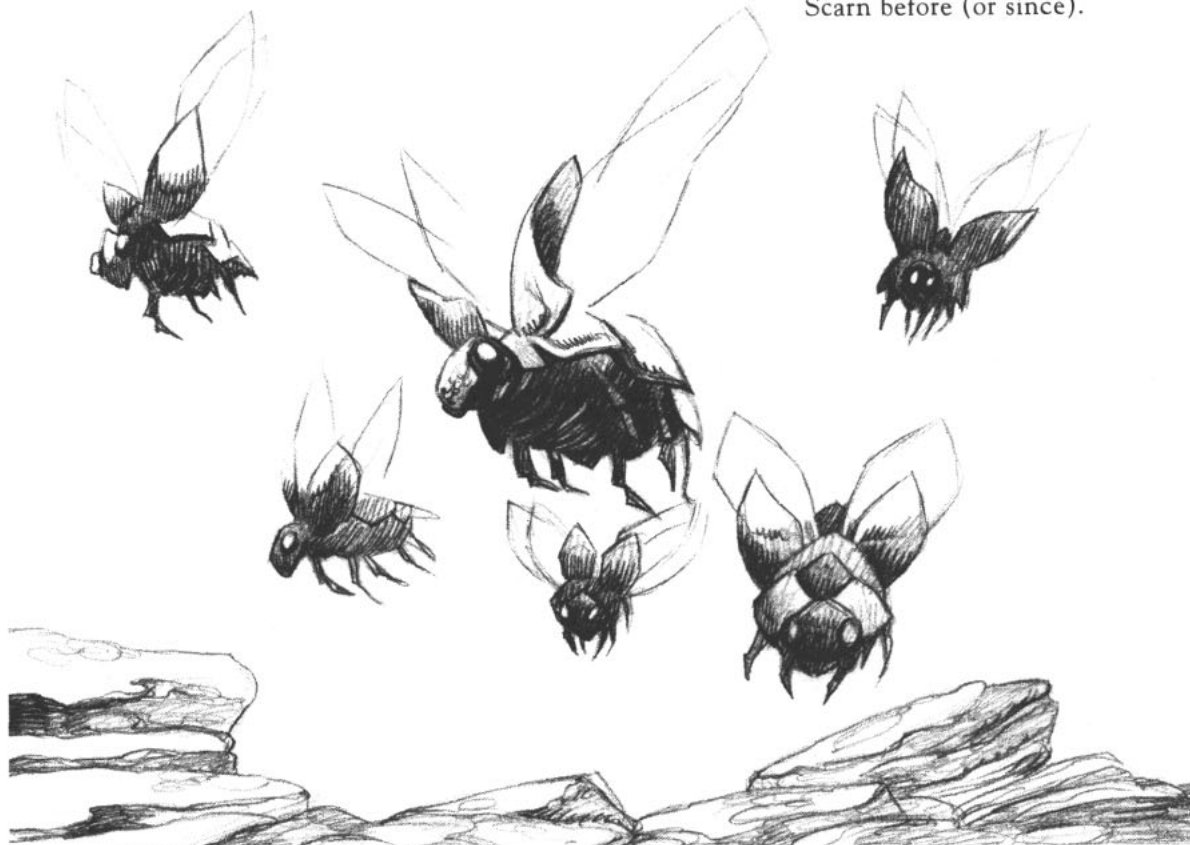
A wave of pearlescent blue-black beetles surges forward, engulfing everything in its path.

Description

Long before the Titanswar began, the slarecians discovered a species of beetle that secreted a resilient mineral and — unlike most vermin — were surprisingly susceptible to psionic control. Their curiosity piqued, the slarecians studied the insects. Following their subjects into the depths of Scarn, they discovered huge, bizarre hives teeming with these beetles.

They also discovered the insects' queen. The slarecian scientists were shocked when they felt her mind brush against theirs, fumbling in a clumsy attempt to add them to the hive's population. Unable to control the encroaching beings, she psionically directed a horde of workers to swarm and attack them. When the swarm rushed forward, the slarecians merely dominated the queen herself, and through her, found themselves in control of the entire colony.

It was only a matter of time before the queen was subjugated and delivered to the *uthriach* for study. After a relatively short period of time, slarecian architects began to breed their own colonies of beetles, subverting the queens and directing the swarms to build fantastic subterranean cities unlike anything seen on Scarn before (or since).



Builder beetles are similar in appearance to the more mundane stag beetle, but they are larger and wider. Their carapace is an iridescent blue-black and their wickedly sharp mandibles make up a third of their length. Like most beetles, builders are willing to eat anything organic, be it wood, bone or flesh. Scholars who have had a chance to study builder beetle specimens speculate that they are an offshoot breed of the more common tar beetle.

In the wild, builder beetles are content to do their queen's bidding, continually refining their hive, gathering food and propagating their race. Since the imprisonment of their keepers, some colonies have begun to wander further and further afield, leaving the dark halls of the slarecian ruins behind. However, builder beetles are still most commonly found near slarecian settlements building ever larger, more elaborate hives.

Combat

Builder beetles are usually found in swarms up to one hundred strong. For those unlucky enough to attract the attention of such a horde, the sight of a shimmering blue-black sea of the creatures is usually enough to give even the bravest soul pause.

A beetle swarm attacks its victims as one entity, attempting to engulf and overwhelm their foe through sheer numbers. When the insects have covered their prey, they begin to excrete their fluid, which burns the victim as it hardens into a chitinous shell.

Attracted by Light (Ex): Builder beetles are drawn inexorably toward bright lights. They will focus on anything creating illumination roughly equivalent to torchlight or better. While concentrating on such a light, they receive a +2 bonus to resist any attempts to psionically direct them. They will still react to direct threats to their existence, however. Scholars researching the beetles have witnessed entire swarms lost to the glow of a river of molten lava, and villages have been threatened by the sudden eruption of a swarm of beetles attracted by stray shafts of sunlight piercing the dark tunnels of their hive. Sages suggest that the queens of these swarms attempt to rein in such potentially destructive behaviors, drawing them back into the underworld following such events.

Engulf (Ex): When a swarm attempts to engulf a character, she must make a DC 20 Reflex saving throw to escape the throng. If the character is inundated, it takes the swarm ten rounds to fully cover her. During this time, the character suffers 1d20 points of damage each

round from the hot fluid and the insects' mandibles. She may attempt another DC 20 Reflex saving throw to swat the creatures off and escape before she is encased. Add +1 to the difficulty of the saving throw for every two rounds that the character is struggling.

While the character is being engulfed, the beetles will also inject a form of paralytic venom, putting the character into a form of stasis that will keep the victim alive and vital — the better to be used as an incubator for beetle larvae as well as the larvae's first meal.

After the character is completely covered, it takes 5 rounds for the fluid to harden, and the cooling liquid does 1d6 points of damage each round unless the character is immersed in water. In the event that the character is completely entombed, she will begin to suffocate (see the rules for suffocation in the *DMG*) and must succeed in a DC 20 Strength check to break the carapace. Her fellow adventurers may attempt a DC 18 Strength check to shatter the chitinous shell, but unless they succeed with a margin of at least five points, they also inflict 1d10 points of damage to the victim.

If the character suffocates before the venom takes hold, or dies due to the solidifying chitin's scalding heat, the beetles will devour her over the course of the next few days, leaving a hollow humanoid sculpture behind, along with her tattered belongings. Otherwise, they will transport the shell back to the Queen's chamber for use as an incubator.

Fear (Ex): A builder beetle swarm is an intimidating sight that causes a fear effect. Characters who encounter a swarm of more than 15 beetles must make a DC 15 Will save or be shaken (–2 morale penalty to attack, damage and saves).

Susceptible to Domination (Ex): As part of the hive, a builder beetle is conditioned to accept the queen's psionic instructions without hesitation. When a command comes directly from the queen, builder beetles receive no Will save to resist. Against all other domination attempts, the beetles suffer a –4 penalty to their Will saves.

Venom (Ex): Builder beetles are voracious creatures. They require such a large amount of sustenance that they are forced to prey on creatures much larger than themselves. To that end, they are equipped with paralytic venom not unlike a spider's. The main difference, however, is that a builder beetle's venom is designed to keep its victims alive.

Builder Beetle Queen

Medium Aberration (Psionic)

Hit Dice:	4d8+2 (24 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	10 ft. (2 squares)
Armor Class:	17 (+7 natural armor), touch 10, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple:	+2/+3
Attack:	Bite +3 melee (2d6+1)
Full Attack:	Bite +3 melee (2d6+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Psionics
Special Qualities:	Darkvision, direct beetles, psionic proxy, resistance to domination
Saves:	Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +0
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 15
Skills:	Concentration +4, Listen +4, Spot +3
Feats:	Psionic Focus (telepathy)
Environment:	Any underground
Organization:	Hive (1 queen, 50-600 beetles)
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Always chaotic neutral
Advancement:	5-7 HD (Medium); 8-10 HD (Large)
Level Adjustment:	—

The creature before you is a bloated insect, the size of a man and the color of a new-dead corpse. She rears up, revealing the nest of slimy eggs beneath her and glares at you with segmented eyes that spark with intelligence.

Description

The builder beetle queen is a large white, bloated creature, with a hideous spark of intelligence in her beady compound eyes. She lies in a soft depression deep within the hive, attached to a grayish-white egg sac similar to the transport tubes used by the slarecians. Typically there are large numbers of eggs surrounding her, along with a "harem" of male builder beetles. In general, the queen spends her time directing her colony mentally while producing the next generation. Builder beetle larvae resemble worms and can reach lengths of up to 22 inches long before they begin their metamorphosis into adult form. One in five hundred larvae have the potential to grow into queens.

The queen lives far longer than her species' average of six months, and can survive for up to ten years. Usually, however, an upstart "princess" slaughters her before she has a chance to expire due to old age. It is not uncommon for a queen to devour princess larvae before they mature and become a threat to her safety, though the queens cannot always identify these princess larvae psionically or physically. Builder beetle queens tend to develop a paranoid, reckless streak as they age.

The egg sac itself is usually an intermediate phase in the birthing process. The eggs are stored in the egg sac, and may hatch there, if no other option exists, but the beetles prefer to use living



vessels as incubators. When imprisoned victims are delivered to the hive, the queens' servant beetles will transplant batches of eggs from the sac through the hard shell into the soft, warm flesh of the victim below. When the larvae awaken, they are immediately voracious, and begin to devour their host.

Builder beetle larvae excrete a substance with a wildly different chemical composition than mature beetles. The material expelled by the larva actually acts as a counter-agent to the chitinous excretions of their elders, causing chitin to decompose in a matter of minutes to a paper-like state. The larvae have mandibles that are capable of tearing through the weakened material, freeing them from their incubator. Because of this substance, the larvae are kept in the base of the hive, against the stone floor, where their "drool" will not harm the hive itself.

Combat

The queen does not normally participate in hands-on combat, preferring instead to summon beetle swarms to her aid and make use of her psionic abilities. If attackers actually approach the queen, it takes her a move action to disengage herself from the sac and defend herself. When the queen is forced to physically fight, she

will immediately choose the most imposing target and let loose with a *concussion* attack.

Direct Beetles (Sp): Once per round, as a free action, the queen can give mass instructions to her colony, and any beetle within one-half mile will respond. If the queen summons beetles to her side, 1d4 beetle swarms will appear within 1d4 rounds and fight to the death.

Psionics (Sp): At will – *aversion*, *charm person*, *concussion* and *dominate*. These abilities are as the powers manifested by a 12th-level psion.

Psionic Proxy (Ex): While the queen is more difficult to dominate than her children, it is well worth the effort, as the slarecians discovered when they first encountered the insects. If a psion can bring the queen under his control, he finds it simple to direct the rest of the hive by using the queen as a sort of middle-man, relaying his orders in a voice they are unable to deny.

Resistance to Domination (Ex): Unlike most insects, the builder beetles and their queen are susceptible to psionic domination. Psionics are essential to the builder beetle's "culture," as it were. Unlike her brethren, though, the queen is a hard target for domination. When attempting to resist psychic intrusion, the builder beetle queen gains a +6 enhancement bonus to her Will saving throws.

Golem, Chitin

	Chitin Golem, Medium	Chitin Golem, Large	Chitin Golem, Huge
Hit Dice:	6d10+20 (53 hp)	12d10+30 (96 hp)	24d10+40 (172 hp)
Initiative:	+1	+0	-1
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)	30 ft. (6 squares)	20 ft. (4 squares)
Armor Class:	19 (+1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 18	21 (-1 size, +12 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 21	25 (-2 size, -1 Dex, +18 natural) touch 7, flat-footed 25
Base Attack/Grapple:	+4/+6	+7/+19	+18/+36
Attack:	Slam or claw +6 melee (1d8+2)	Slam or claw +15 melee (1d12+6)	Slam or claw +28 melee (2d8+10)
Full Attack:	2 slams or claws +6 melee (1d8+2)	2 slams or claws +15 melee (1d12+6)	2 slams or claws +28 melee (2d8+10)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.	10 ft./10 ft.	15 ft./15 ft.
Special Attacks:	Psionic attack mode (1/day), psychic touch	Psionic attack mode (2/day), psychic touch	Psionic attack mode (3/day), psychic touch
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, damage reduction 5/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., power resistance 17, psionic deflection, immunity to magic, low-light vision	Construct traits, damage reduction 5/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., power resistance 23, psionic deflection, immunity to magic, low-light vision	Construct traits, damage reduction 10/adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., power resistance 35, psionic deflection, immunity to magic, low-light vision
Saves:	Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +2	Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +4	Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +8
Abilities:	Str 14, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1	Str 22, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1	Str 30, Dex 8, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Skills:	—	—	—
Feats:	—	—	Awesome Blow ^B
Environment:	Slarecian ruins and surroundings	Slarecian ruins and surroundings	Slarecian ruins and surroundings
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2–4)	Solitary or gang (2–4)	Solitary or gang (2–4)
Challenge Rating:	8	11	17
Treasure:	None	None	None
Alignment:	Always neutral	Always neutral	Always neutral
Advancement:	—	—	—
Level Adjustment:	—	—	—

The automaton, constructed entirely of some sort of insectoid chitin, glistens sickeningly as though covered with a thin layer of oil. Humanoid only in the most general form, it lumbers forward silently, smoothly, serrated limbs raised to attack.

Description

Created by the slarecians from the same strange chitin they used to build many of their structures and creations, the chitin golems served them for centuries as sentries, bodyguards and shock troops. Many of these constructs have out-survived their masters, and still roam the halls of slarecian ruins and the wilds beyond them. Most still follow the programming they received so many years ago, but others roam truly mindlessly, wandering where they will and slaughtering any who attempt to stop them.

Chitin golems range from 6 feet to 20 feet tall, and weigh anywhere from 800 to 20,000 pounds. They can vary in color from dark greens and blues to grays and blacks, but always appear vaguely oily, glistening in the right light. Though their basic shape is humanoid, the specific details of their appearance are often quite alien, and differ dramatically from golem to golem. Some have humanoid features, some insectoid, some slarecian, and some none at all. Limbs

are of variable length, depending on the preferences of the golem's creators. Some chitin golems have normal hands (with which they can make slam or grapple attacks), others have serrated blades or claws, and many have one of each.

Chitin golems do not obey verbal commands at all, but can follow relatively complex telepathic commands when given by a slarecian master. Chitin golems are inextricably linked with their creators. Only a slarecian can ever obtain true control over a chitin golem. If anyone else manages to somehow take control of the golem, it receives a Will save every 10 rounds to break that domination; once it has done so, it is immune to that particular individual's control for 24 hours.

Combat

Chitin golems can make two attacks per round; these attacks do damage based on the golem's size, regardless of whether the blows are slams, claw attacks or some combina-

tion of both. Chitin golems can attempt to grapple and hold a foe, but they do so only if directly ordered to take a prisoner alive — otherwise, they fight to kill.

Psionic Attack Mode (Sp): A chitin golem is capable of launching a psionic attack. This attack form is chosen from among the psionic attack modes when the golem is first created, and cannot later be changed. The attack roll for this attack is determined by the golem's creator; typically, the golem receives a bonus of +5 to the psionic manifestation roll, in addition to any modifiers imposed by the victim's defenses. Obviously, a chitin golem equipped with *mind blast* is far more dangerous to non-psions, while other abilities pose a greater threat to psionic characters. A chitin golem can use this power a set number of times per day, based on its size.

Psychic Touch (Ex): The touch of a chitin golem drains power points from psions and psychic warriors. Any time a psionically empowered creature is struck by a chitin golem's slam or claw attacks, the victim must make a Will save (DC 10 + 1/2 the golem's hit dice). Failure indicates that the victim loses as many power points as he does hit points. These points can be regained through rest and meditation, as normal.

Psionic Deflection (Ex): Any psionic power directed at a chitin golem that fails to bypass the golem's power resistance is instead directed either back at the psion (25% chance) or toward some other randomly determined creature in the area (75% chance).

Immunity to Magic (Ex): Chitin golems are immune to any spell or spell-like effects that allow magic resistance, except as follows:

Any instant kill or death effect, such as *finger of death*, affects the golem as per a *slow* spell. The golem receives a save, but is *slowed* even if the save succeeds; it merely suffers the effects for half the normal time.

Any spell that causes divine damage ignores the golem's immunity for that portion of the damage. For instance, *flame strike* deals half fire damage and half divine damage. The chitin golem ignores the fire damage, but suffers the divine damage normally (though it may still save for half).

If the golem fails its save against *baleful polymorph* or *polymorph any object* it is not transformed, but instead loses its damage reduction for a number of rounds equal to the caster level plus the spell level.

Construction

A Medium chitin golem is constructed of 800 pounds of chitin; a Large golem from 2,000 pounds of chitin; and a Huge golem from 20,000 pounds of chitin. This chitin can be created only by those who know the slarecians' ancient techniques, and costs a gold piece amount equal to twice the chitin's weight in pounds. (Thus, enough chitin for a Medium golem costs 1,600 gp, whereas the chitin for a Huge golem costs 40,000 gp.) Other materials, such as charged ectoplasm and special tinctures, cost an additional amount equal to 10% the chitin's cost. Creating the body requires a DC 18 Craft (sculpt chitin) check.

CL 16th; Craft Construct; *incarnate*, *null psionics field*, *stabilize construct*†, *true creation*, and whichever psionic attack mode the golem uses. Caster must be at least 16th level; Medium: Price 40,000 gp; Cost 23,360 gp + 1,600 XP; Large: Price 80,000 gp; Cost 47,600 gp + 3,200 XP; Huge: Price 160,000 gp; Cost 81,760 gp + 6,400 XP.

† From *If Thoughts Could Kill*, published by Malhavoc Press.



Maw, The

Huge Outsider	
Hit Dice:	20d8+20 (110 hp)
Initiative:	+4
Speed:	40 ft. (8 squares)
Armor Class:	8 (-2 size), touch 8, flat-footed 8
Base Attack/Grapple:	+20/+38
Attack:	Grapple +30 melee
Full Attack:	Grapple +30 melee
Space/Reach:	15 ft./10 ft.
Special Attacks:	Constrict (8d6+10), devour, fear aura, induce madness, mesmerize
Special Qualities:	Enter shadow, light blind, shadow spy, shadow travel, slavelink
Saves:	Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +14
Abilities:	Str 30, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 25
Skills:	Climb +23, Concentration +14, Escape Artist +13, Gather Information +20, Hide +15, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +17, Move Silently +15, Search +13, Sense Motive +23, Spot +17
Feats:	Alertness, Blind Fight, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Stealthy
Environment:	Any shadow
Organization:	Unique
Challenge Rating:	20
Treasure:	none
Alignment:	Always neutral evil
Advancement:	none
Level Adjustment:	—

Description

Probably the single most horrible result of slarecian experimentation with shadow magic, the Maw, to the slarecian mind, was a great triumph. Being powerful enough to control it, as few mortal beings could ever be, the slarecians saw the Maw as the perfect assassin, the perfect persuasion tool, and even the perfect garbage disposal. As fierce and powerful as many dragons, yet able to hide itself faultlessly in even very small shadows and willingly follow fairly complex orders, it is understandable that the slarecians were so pleased. Of course, it is also clear why the gods decided it was an abomination and chose to rid the world of its evil (well, actually everyone but Belsameth and Vangal thought it was an abomination – the two of them argued over who would get to keep it as a pet and

only agreed to destroy the Maw in order to keep each other from having it).

Unfortunately, some combination of the creature's shadow and psionic abilities made it impossible for even the gods to truly destroy or banish. Instead, they were forced to send it into a magical sleep and thus imprison it forever. One assumes the gods were thorough in this, but rumor nevertheless would have it that the Maw has, after many long centuries, recently escaped. These speculations also hypothesize that the Maw is not acting entirely of its own vicious will but is somehow still being controlled by the slarecians, even now. If these tales are correct, this could go a long way toward explaining why the penumbral lords are so nervous lately. The Maw is not a thing by which one generally wishes to be hunted.

Combat

If the Maw were acting on its own, it would generally fight by leaping from a shadow on an unsuspecting victim, grapple the creature, constricting said victim into submission, and then devouring the helpless victim whole. If presented with an opponent capable of actually threatening it, the Maw would flee without hesitation.

However, the Maw seems to still be controlled by some force far more restrained and subtle than itself, so its combat tactics will vary widely according to its current instructions.



Assuredly, the Maw's favorite tactic is to devour victims as quickly as possible, and it will do so whenever permitted by its masters.

Those who control the Maw are extremely careful in their use of this dangerous servant, so it is all but impossible to ever encounter the Maw engaged in any act that has not been directly assigned to it. This is not a monster that one encounters randomly, nor does it ever act without very specific cause.

Devour (Su): Its favorite and most dangerous ability, the Maw can swallow whole anything smaller than itself. Should the thing in question be alive and conscious, the victim receives a DC 10 Reflex Save to avoid being devoured. Once devoured, a thing is gone. No living creature has ever returned from being swallowed by the Maw, and since the Maw has nothing resembling ordinary digestive processes, nothing is known of what becomes of the things it swallows.

GMs are warned to use this ability sparingly and only as a plot device. Devoured characters may find themselves largely unharmed but stranded on the *plane of shadow*, for example. They may appear in a small pocket dimension with everything else that the Maw has ever devoured. They may find themselves facing the Maw (in some horrifying alternate form perhaps) in single combat in a surreal arena, where killing the Maw brings them home, unharmed. In most cases, however, the Maw is instructed to only devour certain people, which should not usually include the PCs.

Enter Shadow (Sp): At will, the Maw can "enter" any shadow, regardless of its size and shape. To the Maw, all shadows act as open gateways into the *plane of shadow*, and it can slide through even the smallest of them. The Maw can also stay in its "shadow gateway" indefinitely, with most of its body hidden on the *plane of shadow*, and only a small part of itself resting in the *material plane* — whatever small part could actually fit into the shadow the Maw has "entered."

The Maw generally chooses only the darkest and deepest of shadows for this ability, and not only because of its blindness in lighted areas. Any shadow that a person could ordinarily see into (such as the shadow of a tree on a bright sunny day, for example), would leave the Maw, as well as the open gateway to the *plane of shadow*, totally visible to any who glance in the shadow's direction. Only very deep shadows (or shadows hidden behind other objects) will offer the Maw the concealment it generally requires for its assignments.

Fear Aura (Su): The Maw instills fear in all intelligent creatures (any creature with an intelligence score) within a radius of 50 feet, who are in line of sight of this strange ancient monster. Creatures affected must make a DC 10 Will save or react in one of four ways.

d4	Result
1	Flee: Victim becomes panicked for 1d4 minutes.
2	Frozen in Fear: Victim becomes paralyzed for 1d12 rounds.
3	Insane: Victim becomes insane (as per psionic power insanity, where "act normally" involves acting as though the Maw were not in the victim's presence at all) for 1d10 minutes.
4	Shaken: Victim becomes shaken for 1d12 rounds.

Induce Madness (Sp): Another of the Maw's favorite abilities, *induce madness* allows the Maw, three times per day, to emit an aura of madness in a 20 foot radius. Any creature with an intelligence score above 8 must make a DC 20 Will save or become permanently mad until cured. Madness generally involves an inability to communicate clearly (DC 15 Will save per attempt to string together a coherent sentence, verbally or written) and a tendency toward random action (during any action, other than sleep, that lasts for more than five minutes, roll on the table for the psionic power, *insanity*, to determine how characters react when their attention loses focus).

Light Blind (Su): The Maw's ability to perceive visually is base on darkness rather than light, so the darker it is, the better the Maw can see; alternately, the lighter it is, the more blinded the Maw becomes. Because of this the Maw is largely invulnerable to light attacks (just as an ordinary human would be unharmed by a blast of darkness), unless they involve heat or other damaging properties. The Maw can also be blinded by a *darkness* spell, if it is targeted at its eyes. In any light brighter than that of dawn, before sunrise, the Maw is as blind as an ordinary human would be in opposite conditions after sunset. For light based modifiers, simply give the Maw the same penalty a human would receive for the opposite light condition. When possible, the Maw operates entirely in deep shadow or full darkness, and will often retreat in the face of bright light.

Mesmerize (Sp): The Maw is horrifying to look upon — so much so that all those who have survived encounters with it, after they were cured of their madness, remember nothing of the

Maw's appearance beyond vast blackness. Those unlucky enough to see the Maw fully, almost invariably fall under its power. Once per week, should the Maw choose to reveal itself to a single creature with an intelligence score above 8, that creature must make a DC 20 Will save or be affected as if by the psionic power *thrall* until the Maw chooses to release it. Creatures already subject to the Maw's *fear aura* or *induce madness* abilities receive a -5 penalty to all saves versus the Maw's *mesmerize* ability.

While mesmerized, the affected creature behaves as if the Maw is a deity to be worshipped, no matter how terrified of the Maw the creature may be. The *mesmerize* ability can be cured in the same way as the *thrall* power. Any creature deliberately released by the Maw is left permanently mad, as described in the *induce madness* ability above. Creatures affected by both the *induce madness* and *mesmerize* abilities are able to behave as if perfectly sane any time they are directly engaged in carrying out the Maw's orders. For the purposes of this ability, the Maw is considered to speak all languages.

Shadow Spy (Su): Once the Maw has "entered" a shadow, it may stay there at will to watch and listen from that shadow. Shadows act as lamps for the Maw, and very dark shadows

allow it to see even into otherwise well-lit rooms. For the purposes of the *Shadow Spy* power, the Maw is considered to understand all spoken languages and to read all written languages.

Shadow Travel (Su): When the Maw "enters" a shadow, it may choose, at will, to pass through it fully into the *plane of shadow*. If it does so, it may reemerge into the *material plane* either through the same shadow or through any other shadow within 30 feet of the original shadow it "entered." If, for some reason, no shadows are available (a nearly impossible circumstance), the Maw is trapped in the *plane of shadow* until a shadow of some kind comes within 30 feet of the place where the Maw originally "entered" the *shadow plane*.

Slavelink (Su): Though no one knows for certain to whom, the Maw appears to be the thrall of some mighty and subtle being or group of beings. It does the bidding of its mysterious master(s) and virtually never acts of its own free will unless granted a brief special dispensation to do so. The *uthriach* are thought to be the Maw's masters, and it is unknown whether or not any other beings — even the gods — would be capable of controlling the Maw in a similar manner; but, considering the intricacies of the Scarred Lands, anything is possible.

Sentinel Fish

Colossal Construct	
Hit Dice:	50d10+80 (355 hp)
Initiative:	-3
Speed:	Swim 500 ft. (100 squares)
Armor Class:	42 (-8 size, -3 Dex, +53 natural), touch 1, flat-footed 42
Base Attack/Grapple:	+37/+59
Attack:	Tail slam +37 melee (20d12+22)
Full Attack:	Tail slam +37 melee (20d12+22), bite +32 (40d12+22)
Space/Reach:	1000 ft./500 ft.
Special Attacks:	Swallow whole
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, damage reduction 20/epic, psychic control
Saves:	Fort +16, Ref +13, Will +16
Abilities:	Str 54, Dex 5, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 9
Environment:	Any ocean
Organization:	Unique
Challenge Rating:	50
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	—
Level Adjustment:	—

The dark patch rises rapidly; as it breaches the water, its huge size can be seen. Larger than many ships, its scaly hide is actually crafted of stones, cunningly crafted to fit together, moving in near-seamless harmony.

Description

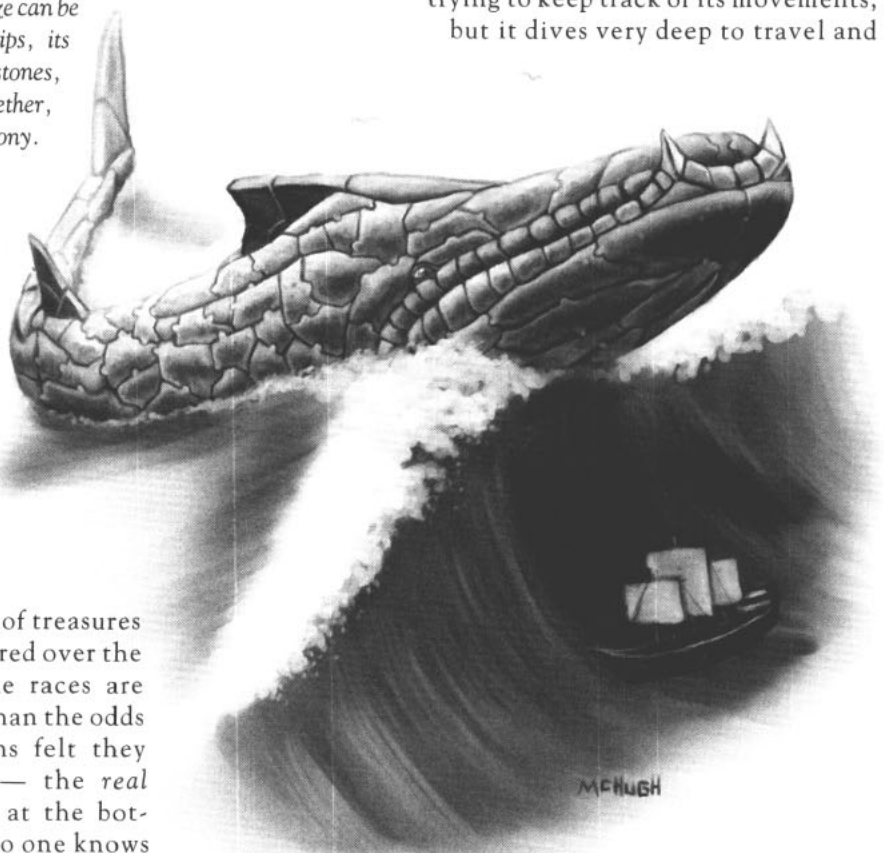
One legend of the slarecians claims that when they realized war was coming, they secretly created an undersea hoard where they could store their treasures and artifacts for safekeeping until after they had conquered Scarn. According to this fable, even the greatest of treasures and magic items uncovered over the centuries by the divine races are actually nothing more than the odds and ends the slarecians felt they could afford to lose — the *real* slarecian treasures are at the bottom of the ocean, and no one knows where.

However, rumors are also very specific about the sentinel fish, guardian of said treasure: an immense stone fish- or whale-like beast, large enough to swallow even the mightiest vessel whole and possessing slarecian mind powers. Whether the legend is accurate about the treasure cannot be said, but recently, something that could only have been the sentinel fish has been reliably sighted far off the eastern coast of Termana. Suddenly, the legend of the slarecian undersea hoards is becoming quite popular.

Naturally, there is supposed to be a treasure map carved into the wall of some slarecian ruin, somewhere, and some other slarecian ruin on the other side of the world supposedly contains instructions for how to control the sentinel fish and use it to gain entry to the hoard itself — but no evidence of map or instructions have yet been found.

In the meantime, the sentinel fish has harmed no one and seems to be peacefully minding its own business, which begs several questions. What business could a construct that dwarfs the Mithril Golem possibly have?

Why has it left its guard post (if indeed it ever had one)? A few elven ships are trying to keep track of its movements, but it dives very deep to travel and



would appear to swim far faster than the fastest ships the Scarred Lands have ever seen.

Combat

Psychic Control (Su): According to legend, the sentinel fish can be telepathically controlled by anyone who knows the proper method of doing so. At the GM's discretion, the sentinel fish may currently be under the control of the slarecians, or the PCs may be able to discover the means to control the sentinel fish themselves (perhaps for the purpose of using it to guide them to its supposed cache of slarecian treasure).

Swallow Whole (Ex): After a successful grapple check (for which the sentinel fish uses its powerful jaws), the mighty being may swallow whole anything from size gargantuan or smaller. Anything gulped down by the sentinel fish winds up in a large, wet cavern made of some strange metal or stone appar-

ently alien to the Scarred Lands. Several old wrecked ships also inhabit this cavern, though it would appear that the great construct cleans itself out every century or so. The cavern is airtight, but contains enough air to last up to 20 humans indefinitely between "gulps." Water that washes in during swallows is drained out of the cavern and never gets higher than a human's knee. Escape is possible whenever the sentinel fish opens its mouth, but if the fish is in the act of biting or using its *swallow whole* ability, all actions directed toward escape carry a -10 circumstance penalty.

The sentinel fish can also use its *swallow whole* ability by accident. Any time the sentinel fish misses with a bite or grapple attack, all creatures of size large or smaller within 50 feet of the sentinel fish's jaws can be accidentally swallowed. Once swallowed, the same rules apply as if they were ingested deliberately.

Slarecian Hound

Large Magical Beast	
Hit Dice:	6d10+18 (51 hp)
Initiative:	+5
Speed:	50 ft. (10 squares)
Armor Class:	18 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 17
Base Attack/Grapple:	+6/+15
Attack:	Bite +10 melee (1d8+7 and power drain)
Full Attack:	Bite +10 melee (1d8+7 and power drain)
Space/Reach:	10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Power drain, bay, trip
Special Qualities:	Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, cunning, pack link, burst of speed, inexorable track, psionic abilities
Saves:	Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3
Abilities:	Str 20, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +1, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Spot +5, Survival +2*
Feats:	Alertness, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Psionic Sensitivity ^B , Track ^B
Environment:	Any
Organization:	Solitary, pair, or pack (4-9)
Challenge Rating:	6
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Usually neutral evil
Advancement:	7-9 HD (Large); 10-18 HD (Huge)
Level Adjustment:	—

The beast looks at first like a giant hound that has been expertly skinned, glinting as it does in the light. Only as it nears does it become clear that its surface is not bare skin at all, but a tough gray flesh hardened in spots into a glistening chitin. Its hideously rounded jaws gape open, presenting rows of teeth, and its eyes flash with some internal malevolent gleam.

Description

When the slarecians were first created by the Ancients, and realized they were trapped in physical form on the primal world of Scarn, a small number of them became so desperate that they hurled all their mental strength against the barriers of reality, determined to break through and escape by main force. Unfortunately for them, mighty as they were, the bonds that tied them to the titans' creation were mightier still. They succeeded only in burning themselves out, utterly destroying their higher brain functions, yet leaving other portions of their minds intact. Never ones to waste opportunity, the other slarecians physically transformed their brethren

into bestial shapes, creating creatures of low cunning, fury, pure instinct and deadly mental power — the dogs of war of a psionic people. The slarecians used them like hounds — to track, to guard, to harry, and to kill — and the hounds took to their training well. Today, though their masters are long absent, several packs of the hounds remain, roaming the empty places of the Scarred Lands or standing guard over the slarecians' abandoned homes.

Slarecian hounds are canine only in the most general sense. Their features are often hideously elongated, or else unnaturally rounded. Their flesh is of dull hues, normally grays, dark greens or black, and a layer of chitin covers much of their body. Odd protrusions cause their skin to bulge, as if their bones were perhaps to large, or too sharply angled, for their frames. Their eyes gleam (though not so brightly as to make it impossible for them to hide in the dark), and they run in utter silence, never uttering a bark or a growl save for the horrifying bay they use to unnerve their prey.

Combat

Slarecian hounds prefer to hunt and fight in packs, coordinating their efforts to bring down victims swiftly, or to take on foes too tough for a single beast. They use their psionic abilities, high endurance and terrifying bay to run prey to



ground, and prefer to attack after a victim has been exhausted if at all possible.

Power Drain (Ex): When a slarecian hound bites a psionic foe, it drains power points equal to half the physical damage it caused. Assuming the victim survives, these points can be regained normally through rest and meditation.

Bay (Su): When running down prey, slarecian hounds can let loose with a bone-shilling bay that freezes the blood. Anyone within range to hear the call (usually around 500 ft., but this can vary based on impediments, weather conditions, etc.) must make a DC 15 Will save. (The save DC is Wisdom-based.) If this save is failed, creatures of less than the hound's hit dice are both frightened and *held*, as per the *hold monster spell*, for 2d4 rounds. Creatures of greater than the hound's hit dice are shaken for the same length of time. A successful save grants immunity to that particular hound's bay for 24 hours. Packs often howl in unison, requiring multiple saves. Slarecian hounds bay only when running down prey or charging, never once they have engaged in melee.

Trip (Ex): A slarecian hound that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent (+9 check modifier) as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the hound.

Cunning (Ex): Though the slarecian hounds no longer possess most of their higher brain functions, they do retain an echo of their former intelligence. In any event where Intelligence is used to determine tactics, strategy or to assess an

opponent's capabilities, the hound is treated as having an Intelligence of 10 rather than its normal 3.

Pack Link (Ex): A pack of slarecian hounds are empathically linked. If one is aware of danger, all are aware. If even one is not flat-footed, none are flat-footed. If even one is not flanked, none are flanked. A "pack," in this instance, is defined as any slarecian hounds within half a mile of each other — as the beasts will not willingly range farther than this from their pack-mates.

Burst of Speed (Ex): For a total of 10 rounds a day, a slarecian hound may increase its base speed to 80 ft.

Inexorable Track (Ex): Slarecian hounds possess a psionic sixth sense, in addition to the standard five. One a hound has seen, smelled, or otherwise sensed a specific creature, it cannot ever lose that individual's trail through natural means. It need not roll to track the creature, so long as the subject has passed by a given area no more than a week previously, and it cannot be thrown off the scent by water, strong odors, or even flight. Only areas that scramble psionic powers, teleportation or other instantaneous transportation, can break the trail.

Psionic Abilities (Sp): At will — *detect animals and plants*, *empty mind* defensive mode, *thought shield* defensive mode; 3/day — *mental barrier* defensive mode, *intellect fortress* defensive mode; 1/day — *catapsi*.

Skills: Slarecian hounds have a +2 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot Checks. They also have a +4 racial bonus on Survival checks when tracking by scent.

Slarecian Snowbeast

Medium Monstrous Humanoid (Cold)	
Hit Dice:	8d8+40 (76 hp)
Initiative:	+0
Speed:	30 ft. (6 squares)
Armor Class:	16 (+6 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 16
Base Attack/Grapple:	+8/+13
Attack:	Claw +8 melee (1d8+5)
Full Attack:	2 claws +8 melee (1d8+5)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Icy touch, mind freeze
Special Qualities:	Cold subtype, monstrous humanoid traits, power resistance 25
Saves:	Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +6
Abilities:	Str 21, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 7, Wis 6, Cha 10
Skills:	Hide +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +2, Stabilize Self +6
Feats:	Diehard, Endurance, Iron Will
Environment:	Cold mountains
Organization:	Solitary or pair
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None (standard in lair)
Alignment:	Usually neutral
Advancement:	9–12 HD (note: higher level slarecian snowbeasts can often speak broken Slarecian or even Ledean)
Level Adjustment:	+8

Shimmering in the light, the angular, vicious creature shifts forward with the sound of scraping ice, its claws outstretched. It seems crafted of ice, though its form is not human, but that of some other creature.

Description

These frozen beasts are largely the result of pointless cruel experiments that the *uthriach* performed on their slarecian servants. Originally, the idea was to craft servitors of various natural forces, such as lightning or fire. The experiments all went badly, however, and most of the beings used as subjects died slowly and in great pain. The ice experiments were the one exception to this.

Resembling a cross between a carved ice statue and a slarecian ghoul, the slarecian snowbeasts survived the changes their bodies underwent as a result of their masters' tortures. The pain of the process drove all of them mad, however, and only a very few of them retained even the ability to read or speak. Surprisingly though, they did retain a small portion of their former psionic powers, significantly altered by their transformations and in some ways even

augmented by their new link with the natural force of cold.

It is said that the *uthriach*, unhappy with their now-savage creations, locked the slarecian snowbeasts all in great vaults in the Titanshome Mountains and forgot about them. The creatures survived, needing only cold to sustain them, and grew more and more demented as the centuries passed. How they recently escaped their ancient prison can only be guessed at. Did the walls finally crumble with age? Were they set free by well-meaning adventurers or ill-meaning slarecian cultists who perhaps hoped to control them?

In any case, the slarecian snowbeasts are not always hostile to those they encounter. Indeed, they seem particularly curious and friendly toward children, and a small few of them even remember how to speak a language or two (brokenly, at best). Their madness can make them quite dangerous even without meaning harm, of course. They do not know their strength or understand the effects of their icy powers on mortal beings. As pathetically lonely as they seem, slarecian snowbeasts are usually best avoided.



Also, as a result of their betrayal and torture at the hands of their masters, slarecian snowbeasts have developed a hatred for all manifestations of any kind of magical powers. They do not distinguish at all between arcane, divine and psionic energies. If they perceive (with their limited capacities for reason) that a character has made use of anything magical, they will attack immediately. It is sometimes possible to subdue a slarecian snowbeast and regain its trust in spite of its fears, but this is extremely difficult. This unfortunate habit has earned the slarecian snowbeasts a fearsome reputation, and they are often deliberately hunted.

Combat

Under most circumstances, the slarecian snowbeast attacks exclusively with its claws, choosing not to use either of its psionic cold attacks. When severely wounded or outnumbered, as well as whenever a slarecian snowbeast is threatened by fire or any form of supernatural power, the creature lashes out with its *mind freeze* ability. When its *mind freeze* ability is exhausted for the day, a snowbeast generally retreats.

Some slarecian snowbeasts are entirely unaware that the *icy touch* ability is an effective attack against other creatures. Snowbeasts of higher hit dice will usually make use of the ability as often as possible, but most snowbeasts only use their *icy touch* to heal themselves. Some snowbeasts will even use the ability on friendly creatures who are injured, thinking to heal them with the soul-piercing cold.

Slarecian snowbeasts will usually not harm children deliberately, and will almost never set off a *Mind Freeze* blast when a child of any humanoid species is standing in the area of effect.

Icy Touch (Sp): A slarecian snowbeast is capable of producing intense and psionically enhanced cold in the tips of its long, icy fingers. On a successful attack, a snowbeast can release this literally mind-numbing cold, which does

three things. First, *icy touch* adds 1d4 points of cold damage to the attack. Second, any psionic character who is subject to an *icy touch* attack loses 1d2 psi points for the day, or 1d2 additional hit points if he has no psi points remaining. Finally, all characters subject to an *icy touch* attack must make a DC 8 Fortitude save or be unable to act for one round due to uncontrollable shivering.

Icy touch has another important use for slarecian snowbeasts, in that any snowbeast may use it on itself or another snowbeast to create a healing effect. Each *icy touch* heals 1d4 points of damage when used on a slarecian snowbeast. No other cold attack has this effect on the strange creatures, and it is thought that the psionic enhancement of the ability is what allows the snowbeasts to gain healing from it.

A slarecian snowbeast can use the *icy touch* ability once per round. If utilized on itself or to heal another snowbeast, the slarecian snowbeast can take no other action in the round. If used as part of an attack, the snowbeast can make a single attack and use the ability on the same target as the attack. The rest of the snowbeast's full attack is forfeited for that round, and the beast can take no further action until the next round.

Mind Freeze (Sp): The slarecian snowbeast's most fearsome attack is the *mind freeze*. Three times per day, a snowbeast can unleash a blast of soul-chilling cold in a 30 foot radius from its own body. Though the snowbeast itself is unaffected, all other creatures in the area take 8d8 points of cold damage (DC 18 Fortitude save for half damage). In addition, due to the partially psionic nature of the attack, all creatures in the area of effect must make a DC 18 Will save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds with an internal "psychic" cold. All creatures who failed the first Will save must make a second DC 18 Will save or take 1 point of temporary Intelligence damage. All psionically active creatures receive a -10 penalty to both Will saves.

Spells & Psionic Powers

Crystalline Body

Psychometabolism (Str)

Level: Psion 9

Display: Au

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Power Points: 17

Description

The most fearsome of Qarrath the Worldly's servants were said to transform their entire bodies into psychoreactive crystal before entering combat. Their crystalline forms turned aside even potent magics and all but the most powerful of blades, even as their blindingly fast and jagged fists ripped apart their mortal foes. Though this power has been lost with the disappearance of the slarecians, records of its use persist among the cultists, who struggle to regain this awesome power of the Ancients.

Power Effect

The body of the manifester transforms into nigh-indestructible crystal, granting damage reduction

50/adamantine. Temporarily a non-living being, the manifester is immune to blindness, critical hits, damage to ability scores, deafness, disease, drowning, poison, stunning, and all powers, spells, and attacks that affect physiology. The psion suffers only half damage from fire, cold, and acid attacks, but she becomes vulnerable to sonic attacks, suffering double damage or half upon a successful save.

While in this form, the psion gains a +8 enhancement bonus to Strength but suffers a -2 enhancement penalty to Dexterity. The character's speed is not reduced, although she cannot perform a run action. The psion may not consume anything (including potions), nor breathe in this state.

The psion's unarmed attacks deal 1d10 points of normal damage (a small manifester deals 2d4 damage), and she is considered armed for the purposes of combat. In addition, upon manifesting the power, the psion may grant each fist up to a +2 psionic weapon ability, such as *mindfeeder* or *charged*. These abilities may not be

changed while the power is manifested, but can be chosen differently each time the individual transforms.

The psion's weight increased by a factor of 5, causing her to quickly sink in water. However, she can easily survive changes in pressure and a lack of air — until the expiration of the power, that is.

Curse of Materiality

Psychoportation (Dex)

Level: Psion 5

Display: Au

Manifestation Time: 1 full round

Range: Touch

Target: One sentient creature

Duration: Permanent

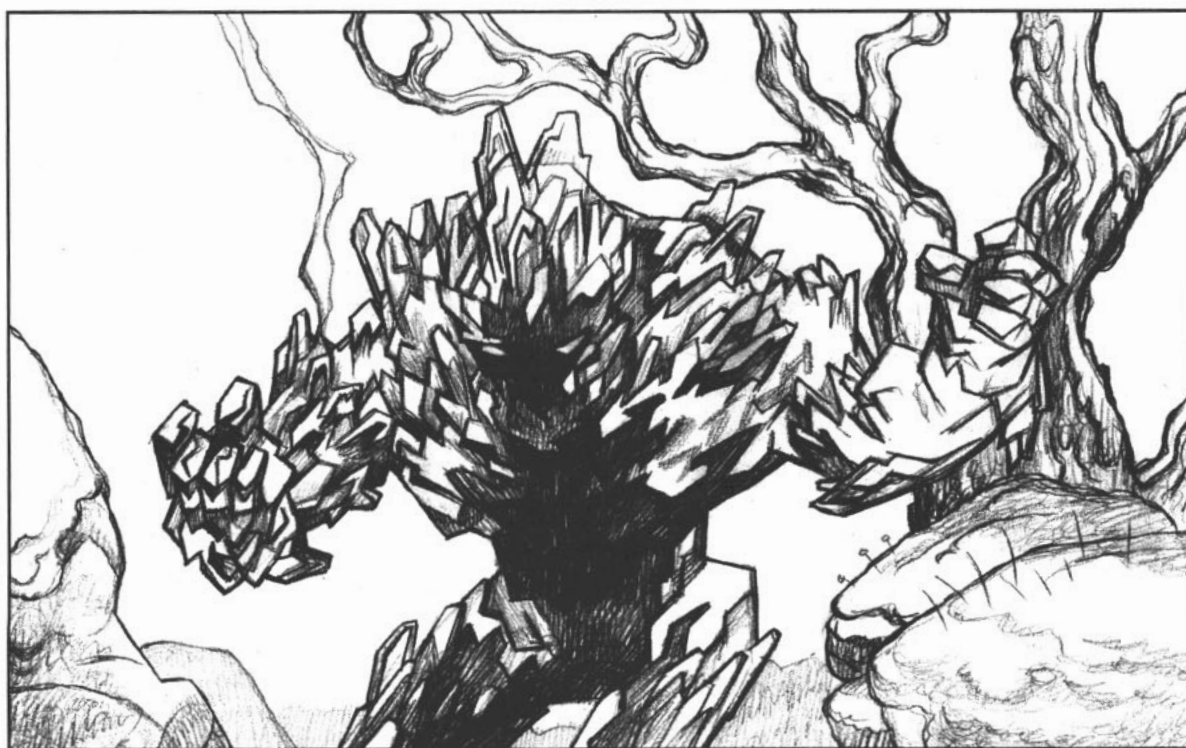
Saving Throw: Will negates

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 9, XP cost

Description

The ancient slarecians were jealous and harsh masters. Even as they taught those who would flock to them to harness their mysterious powers, they realized that the lesser races were worldly and liable



to misuse their gifts. Thus, they bound their servitors to the plane of the Scarred Lands just as they themselves were bound by the curse of the titans. Although the years since the disappearance of the slarecians have seen the decline of this power and subsequent development of psionic planar travel, it is certain that if the slarecians were ever to return they would rein in their wayward followers.

Power Effect

This power permanently locks the target creature from dimensional travel, as per the *dimensional anchor* power. However, the caster and any other being the caster chooses (including an entire race, such as all slarecians) may suppress this effect at will as a free action; furthermore, this suppression can occur from any distance, even from another plane. The slarecians were fond of so chaining a servitor, and then giving the individual temporary freedom, in order to keep tabs on their followers' dimensional travel.

It is said that *psychic surgery* can dispel this fearsome curse, although only the ancient slarecians possessed that level of psionic mastery — and they would surely prove rather unwilling to release their thralls.

XP Cost: 1000 XP.

Empathic Razor

Telepathy (Cha) [Mind-Affecting]

Level: Psion 4

Display: Me, Vi

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: One creature and its empathic companion; see below.

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: Will negates

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 7

Description

No one is entirely sure when the slarecians created this power. It first saw heavy use against paladins of Corean, severing their bonds to their mounts in the midst of a cavalry charge, and was later used to good effect against many of the sorcerous servants of Mesos.

Power Effect

The manifester temporarily severs the empathic bond between two creatures. Potential targets include a wizard or sorcerer and her familiar, a paladin and his mount, a druid and his animal companion, or a psion and her *psicrystal*. The psion must be able to see the primary target creature, and he must be aware of the presence of the target's companion (though the companion need not be in plain sight).

If the target creature fails his save, he suffers the following effects for the duration of the spell:

- Inability to communicate with his companion.
- Does not gain any granted abilities from this companion (such as skill bonuses or Alertness), or any other special benefits the companion normally grants.
- Suffers one negative level that cannot be restored for the duration of the spell.

Additionally, the companion temporarily becomes a normal creature or item of its type, losing any special connection or affinity for its master. Animals act as normal animals of their type, often fleeing in fear or possibly even attacking. (*Psicrystals* become normal gems, and thus don't really do much of anything.)

Assuming both parties survive the experience, the bond is completely reestablished when the power wears off, with

no lasting effects except possible embarrassment on the part of the companion for its behavior. Should the empathic companion die while under the effects of this spell, the primary target suffers all the normal effects of losing said companion, including possible XP loss (which might end up making the level loss permanent).

Enhance Psicrystal

Metacreativity (Int)

Level: Psion 4

Display: Au, Ma

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Your *psicrystal*

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Power Resistance: No

Power Points: 7

Description

With their general distaste for worldly affairs, the slarecians were eager to leave their scouting and daily matters to their *psicrystals*, leaving the alien beings free to pursue more worthy goals. However, *psicrystals* have only an extremely limited ability to affect the world around them. The most intelligent of the crystals banded together and petitioned their masters to develop a power that would allow them to defend themselves, which the Ancients grudgingly consented to. This power has been rekindled among several sects of warped ones, who often find themselves unable to function effectively in society and depend very heavily upon their *psicrystals*.

Power Effect

This power allows the psion's *psicrystal* to independently call upon the psion's powers, manifesting them itself as if it were a separate mind. The *psicrystal* may manifest known powers up to 4th level

as a manifester of equal level, drawing from the psion's pool of power points. In addition, while this power is active, the psicrystal is protected by inertial armor, granting a +4 armor bonus to its AC.

Greater Severance

Psychokinesis (Con)

Level: Psion 5

Display: Au, Ma

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Area: Undead within a 10-ft.-radius burst

Duration: Instantaneous (1 round/level)

Saving Throw: Will partial

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 9

Description

When the *uthriach* Dyterne was sundered, his followers plagued their fellows as rampaging undead. The slarecians found their powers of mental domination little use against these undead monstrosities, until the servants of Baeth the Shaper of Stars discovered how to manipulate the negative energy inherent in the ghouls. A refinement of that principle, *greater severance* allows the manifester to completely cut-off an undead creature's source of negative energy while the effect lasts, jarring the creature and often rending apart its form.

Power Effect

This power severs the link of undead to the Negative Energy Plane, dealing 9d8 points of damage to all undead within the area. Undead that successfully make a Will save suffer only half damage. Undead brought to 0 hit points or less fall instantly to dust if corporeal or disperse in a screaming roil of ectoplasm if incorporeal.

In addition, undead that fail their Will save are completely cut off from the

Negative Energy Plane for 1 round/manifester level. During this time, the undead cannot regenerate (if it has that ability) and loses any attacks that deal energy drain or ability damage.

Joining of the One

Telepathy (Cha)

Level: Psion 5

Display: Vi, Ol, Me

Manifestation Time: 1 full round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: 1 sentient creature/level

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Power Resistance: No

Power Points: 11

Description

In the image of Xoer the One, the most powerful of telepaths constructed a method to link together many non-psionic minds; this was done to better teach their mortal followers and coordinate their defenses in times of war. While this power forms a link more cohesive than *mindlink*, it lacks the unity of purpose defined by *metaconcert*, instead allowing those affected to act individually but in great harmony.

Power Effect

This power forms an immense hivemind between the psion and affected creatures. While this power is in use, no affected creature may be surprised unless all those affected are similarly surprised. In addition, treat the affected creatures as having all-around vision. It is impossible to flank any affected creature unless all are flanked. Those affected are in constant mental contact, and so they may freely speak telepathically, assuming they share a common language. While linked, any creature may use a standard action to use the aid another action to help any other linked creature, re-

gardless of range (see "Aid Another" in the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 8). Similarly, affected creatures may use cooperation as a standard action to assist other linked individuals, regardless of range (see "Cooperation" in the *Player's Handbook*, Chapter 4).

Only willing individuals may be affected by this power. This power may only persist as long as each affected individual remains within close range of the manifesting telepath. Those who leave the area lose all benefits from the power. There must be at least 2 affected creatures, including the psion, for this power to be effective.

Manifest Nightmare

Metacreativity (Int)

Level: Psion 8

Display: Au, Vi

Manifestation Time: 1 round

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One living creature.

Duration: 1 round/level or until destroyed (D); see below

Saving Throw: Fortitude partial

Power Resistance: Yes

Power Points: 15

Description

Legend (among those few who pay attention to such things) has it that the slarecians created this power in response to various spells that attack the victim with illusions of their darkest fears. Apparently the slarecians determined that images and mirages were not sufficient, and set about to develop a more potent variant.

Power Effect

Much like the spell *phantasmal killer*, *manifest nightmare* reaches into the victim's own subconscious, extracts her greatest fear and causes it to manifest. Unlike that spell, however, *manifest nightmare* creates a solid creature, which may be able to slay the subject



even if her initial save succeeds.

When the nightmare manifests, it immediately makes an attack against the subject. The first time the manifestation succeeds in touching or striking the subject, the victim of the spell must succeed in a Fortitude save or die. If she succeeds, she must still face the summoned creature, though she is no longer at risk of *instant* death. Regardless of the nightmare's physical form, shape, or characteristics, it is mechanically considered to be a 4th-level astral construct. It attacks the victim of the spell until either it is destroyed, the victim is dead, the spell duration ends, or the manifester chooses to dispel it. Unless forced to defend itself from attack by others, it ignores everyone but its intended victim. The subject of the spell — but nobody else who might engage the construct in combat — suffers a -2

morale penalty to attack rolls and saving throws.

Obsidian Body

Psychometabolism (Str)

Level: Psion 6

Display: Au

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 minute/level (D)

Power Points: 11

Description

A power recently discovered by the Order of Obsidian to counter the growing threat of rogue psions and reawakening remnants of the slarecians, *obsidian body* allows the psion to transform his body into living obsidian. This form lends great strength and interferes with the psionic power of others, yet it is also very brittle. Sages of slarecian power among the order theorize that obsidian, which represents a pure elemental composite of earth and fire, the very substance of Thulkas, somehow overwhelms

the connection between mind and body necessary to manifest psionics. The order fears that when the ancient slarecians rise again, this theory will be put to violent and dire testing.

Power Effect

Under the effects of this power, the psion becomes living obsidian and gains damage reduction 10/bludgeoning. The psion is also immune to blindness, damage to ability scores, deafness, disease, drowning, poison, stunning, and all powers, spells, or attacks that affect physiology. Furthermore, the psion is immune to fire and heat, and takes only half damage from acid attacks. Cold attacks deal double damage, or half upon a successful save.

The manifester gains a +3 enhancement bonus to Strength and a -3 enhancement penalty to Dexterity (with a minimum score of 1), and speed is reduced by half.

The psion may not run, eat, drink or breathe under the effects of this power.

The manifester sprouts sharp obsidian talons that deal 1d8 points of normal damage, and she is considered armed when making unarmed attacks (a Small manifester deals 1d6 points of damage). In addition, all attacks possess the *psibane* quality, dealing an additional +2d6 points of damage upon psionic targets. The manifester does not suffer a negative level for possessing such weapons.

While this power is active, all psionic powers activated by the caster cost twice as many power points.

Psychic Print

Metacreativity (Int)

Level: Psion 1

Display: Vi (see text), Au, Ma

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Area within a 25-ft. + 5 ft./2 levels-radius spread, centered on you

Duration: Concentration, up to 10 minutes/level

Saving Throw: None

Power Resistance: No

Power Points: 1

Description

Through this power the manifester is able to create or see a distinct psychic impression in the shape and design of the creator's liking, and leave it behind when he departs. This power is often used by psions to mark their path or as signals to other passing psionic individuals. When viewing the

print left by others, the mark appears as a hazy, slightly indistinct yellowish aura in whatever form was dictated by the creating psion.

Power Effect

The manifester can create one distinct print per round of concentration, up to the maximum duration of the power. The manifester cannot place his own psychic print over another, even if the pre-existing print is one that was originally created by the same individual. These symbols can be anything desired by the manifester — other than words or phrases, that is. Any psychic print can be seen through the use of this power and psychic prints, once created, can never be hidden or erased. Furthermore, the print, as it is nothing but psychic energy, need not be adhered to a physical object of any kind.

If the manifester elects to use the power to detect psychic prints, then one distinct print per round may be detected, if any indeed exist.

Putrefy Food and Drink

Metacreativity

Level: Psion 1

Display: OI

Manifestation Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Targets: 10 cu. ft./level of food and water

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Will negates (object)

Power Resistance: Yes (object)

Power Points: 1

Description

It's a little unclear why the slarecians developed this specific ability. Perhaps, sages theorize, it manifested during their investigations of the limits and requirements of their new physical forms. Whatever the case, they swiftly set about using it to attack invaders in their territories, knowing that the loss of supplies would at least seriously slow any such intrusions, and possibly result in the slow deaths of the intruders.

Power Effect

The spell immediately rots, spoils or otherwise ruins any food or drink in the area of effect. This can include potions and other magic comestibles. Unattended and nonmagical objects are ruined automatically; food rots, water stagnates, etc. Any supplies in the possession of a sentient being receive a save; roll only once for all nonmagical supplies on a given individual. Potions and other magic items each receive an individual save, rolled separately from that of the nonmagical supplies. Any item that fails the save is utterly ruined, and anyone who attempts to consume it anyway gains no nourishment or benefit, and must succeed in a Fortitude save (DC determined by the caster of the spell) or be *nauseated* for one round per caster level, and *sickened* for one hour per caster level.

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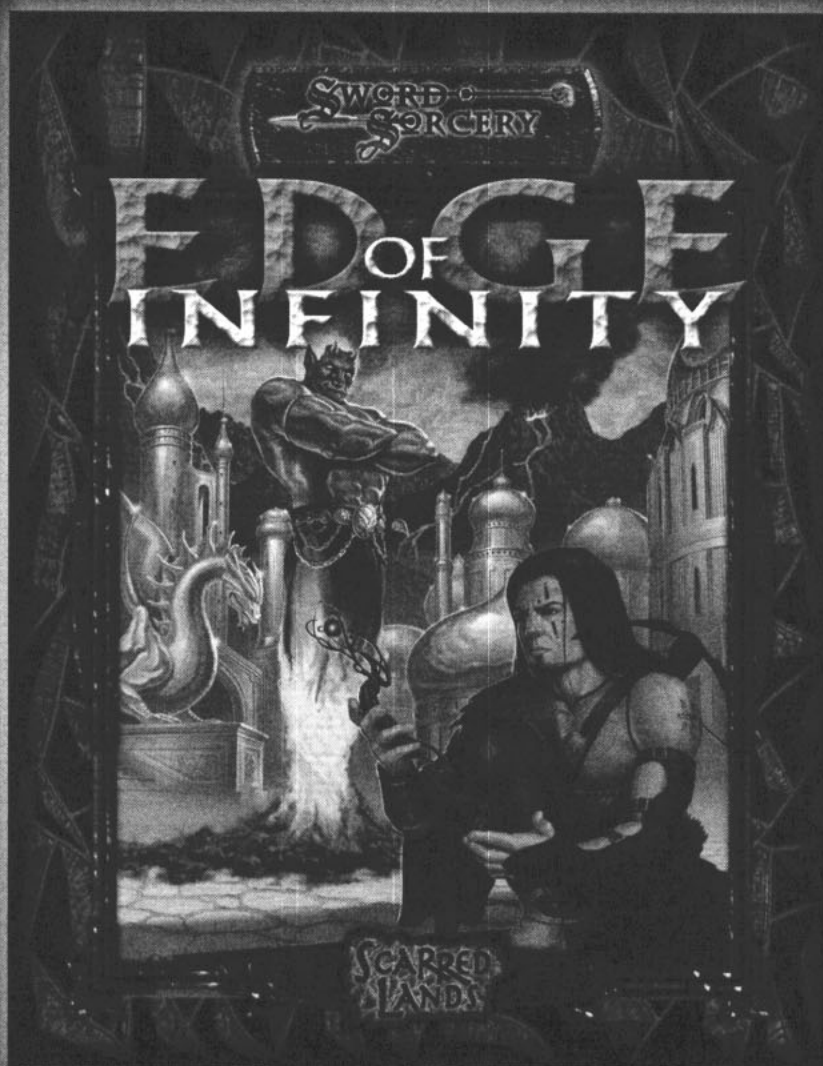
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ECHOES

OF THE PAST

THE SLARECIAN LEGACY

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Deep in the history of the Scarred Lands, the gods and titans joined forces to destroy the slarecians, a people of strange and terrible power. The full repercussions of this mighty war remain as much a mystery as its cause. What powers did the slarecians wield? Why were they such a danger that the mightiest beings in all of Scarn cast them down? And what of their legacy still threatens the people of the Scarred Lands in current times?

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