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DUNGEON

May/June 2002
Vol. XVI, No. 2 Issue #92

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"Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obedience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom, truth,
Makes slaves of men, and of the human frame
A mechanized automaton."

—Percy Bysshe Shelley,
Queen Mab, iii.

COVER

In the silvery void of the Astral Plane, Kurluth the githyanki sets forth to destroy anyone who dares uncover his mystic secrets. Artist Marc Sasso reveals the danger awaiting the unwary "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai."

MY MENTOR

I started playing D&D at the tender age of five: My brother was the DM, and he needed players. Unfortunately, my mother, with our best interests at heart, was caught up in the frenzy of anti-D&D sentiment running rampant in the early- to mid-eighties, and she ended up burning all our books. (Just so you know, she's not so wacky now.) Roleplaying games dropped off my radar until I was sixteen.

My mom also doesn't care much for board games of any sort; it was one of the few things she declined to do with my brother and I. And after the D&D episode, my brother—four years my senior—found that his friends were amenable to board games, and he happily excluded me from such activities, not that I blame him.

So where was a junior would-be gamer to get his fix? Well, my grandparents lived right next door to us when I was growing up. If I got bored, chances were, that's where I'd head. And grandpa, no matter what he was doing (usually napping), would sit up and play a board game with me if I so desired. We played everything he had in his closet—Monopoly, Sorry, Mille Bournes, Yahtzee, Cribbage, and others. He even let me cheat (and boy, did I) and never said a word. Through these game sessions, we bonded; it was, in fact, "the thing" I had in common with my grandfather that helped us tolerate each other when I was in my butthead teen years.

Over the course of my childhood, it became standard practice for me to head to grandpa's after school and play a quick game with him until I was about fourteen. When I was re-exposed to roleplaying and "fancy" board gaming in high school and college, it was a natural step, and I quickly became infatuated with all types of games.

On February 8, 2002, my grandfather passed away at the age of 87. It was one of those moments in life—the closing of a chapter—that gets you thinking about other things. But that's not what this editorial is about.

Naturally, after his death, I found myself thinking about when I was growing up and the shared experiences that defined my relationship with my grandfather. I discovered something that really surprised me, which was simply this: My grandfather, who'd never heard of roleplaying games, let alone D&D, made me a gamer. My days of playing board games in grandpa's living room eventually led to now, where I'm the editor of one of the coolest gaming magazines in the world. Crazy.

So here's my challenge and question for you: Who was your gaming mentor? Alternatively, who have you mentored? It's not a big thing, and it's certainly not an earth-shattering thing. But take a moment and think about that person and the bond forged between you by a shared hobby. Maybe call them up and ask them to a game; believe me, it's worth your time. At the very least, pull out one of those old games that got you started as a gamer and give it a whirl for old times sake.

Now if I could only find my Yahtzee set . . .



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LETTERS

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OUT-OF-PRINT? NO MORE!

Having never read *POLYHEDRON* before, I was surprised and impressed with the quality of the *Pulp Heroes* game, published in conjunction with Issue #90 of *DUNGEON*. Seeing that you plan to continue publishing new mini-games, I just had to ask: Is there any chance that they will use the space to re-visit classic, out-of-print TSR/Wizards of the Coast games? I would love to see d20 versions of *GAMMA WORLD*, *STAR FRONTIERS*, or even the *ALTERNITY* game worlds of *STAR*DRIVE* and *DARK*MATTER*. For that matter, a d20 version of the *MARVEL SUPER HEROES* game would be great. Any chance we might see some of the above?

Patrick Barrett
Garland, TX

CHEERS FOR ISSUE #90

I'll be blunt. *DUNGEON* Issue #90 was nothing short of a tour de force.

On the balance, I can usually cull one, maybe two adventures from a particular issue that are in line with my tastes as a GM. Not that I begrudge or bemoan whatever else is in the issue. Considering the wide range of tastes out there, I am impressed that even one adventure in any given issue is up my particular alley.

My perusal of #90 began auspiciously. I read J.C. Alvarez's first (!) publication and immediately knew I was in competent hands. The author truly has a talent for imbuing what could be a droll recitation of stats and sites with marvelously evocative and nuanced details. I look forward to all future tales that Mr. Alvarez is wont to weave.

Moving on to "Totentanz," I was further delighted to find a plot with a twist that was genuinely unique and not self-serving. So many writers desperately in need of something to distinguish their mediocrity artificially superimpose an arbitrary plot twist on their story. The eerie Totentanz dance was neither silly nor superfluous.

I turned to "Prey For Tyrinth" already figuring I had exceeded my semi-monthly quota of Vitamins R, P, and G, only to find even more juicy adventure goodness. As adventuresses go, "Prey for Tyrinth" is uncommonly versatile, packed with more atmosphere than you would think possible in five short pages.

It was around this point that I came to the realization that I was in possession of an extraordinary issue of *DUNGEON*. Then you guys hit me with both barrels. "Tears For Twilight Hollow" is not only an adventure, but one of those pivotal tales that can serve as an introduction to a permanent base for those mid-level characters who are at the point where they are ready to dig in and fortify against a future of high-level campaigns. Ms. McCoy and Mr. Perkins should take my praise to heart, because I am not usually fond of event-driven adventures. They are difficult to balance and often under-playtested. Many authors fail to enumerate all the considera-

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tions that should go into triggering an event, thus creating an environment where the PCs can easily and inadvertently derail the story. "Tears" should stand as a textbook case of how to hybridize a site-based adventure with an event-based adventure to create something pre-eminently playable.

Oh yeah, I almost forgot—the POLYHEDRON flip-side kicked butt, too.

So my question to you folks at DUNGEON is, did you know when you were putting #90 together that you had something special? I mean, even the Beatles tooling around in the studio in '65 knew this Sgt. Pepper thing was going to blow the minds of a generation. Writ small, is this what was going on over there in the Editor's office?

Tell the back issues department to stock up on this one; it's an instant collectable.

David Neuschulz
Chatham, New Jersey

The Beatles we are not. We simply did in Issue #90 what we try to do in every issue: Provide the best quality content for a reasonable price. We're happy you enjoyed the issue and hope those that follow live up to the standard.

TABLOID REVENGE

I have been a subscriber for nearly four years and I am troubled by the recent trend of the taglines on the cover of DUNGEON Magazine. For instance, the cover of Issue #84 proclaimed "Drow Declare War on Humanity," an interesting teaser that had me leaping to read the adventure. The adventure however, had nothing to do with the drow "declaring war" on humanity! The line on the cover was obviously a lie meant to entice someone into buying the magazine. Nor is this an isolated problem. On Issue #88 for example, the cover reads "Ancient Keep Doorway to Lost Empire." If you're referring to Netheril, the portal system might have been their creation, but it doesn't lead to anything like a lost empire. Now I understand that DUNGEON wants more readers, and that the truth might occasionally have to be stretched, but I don't think outright lying is permissible, especially when making a promise to us, the readers. Frankly, I felt cheated by the deception.

Roman Goerss
Glendale, AZ

We knew we were stretching the line between fact and fiction a bit when we started using the tabloid-style cover lines with Issue #82. But part of the humor involved in seeing those infamous headlines in the grocery store checkout line is the absurdity of them. Thus, a line like "Drow Declare War on Humanity" is a stretch, but Laveth did indeed

invade the Material Plane in her search for a suitable sacrifice, and the PCs begin the adventure under the assumption that some force from the Abyss has it in for some power on the Prime. If you were upset by that or other leaps of imagination, we apologize . . . but read that adventure. It rocks!

D&D SAVED MY LIFE

I know it sounds corny but it's true. Allow me to spin you a small tale if you will:

I was in bed with what I believed to be the flu, laying there on gaming Sunday with a few hours left until the game. I'd already called to say I would probably not make it. I awoke from a nap later, feeling a bit better, so I gathered my things and off to the game I went. It was a mostly roleplay session that night, where the party would be divided, so I sat around chatting with friends most of the night. My session was last, and we had just finished it when I sat down and passed out. After being revived by my friends (to whom I now owe my life—am I gonna have to provide food at every game from now on, or what?), I spoke with the ambulance drivers who had just arrived and told them I was feeling better. I thought it was probably just dehydration, so I drank some water and thought I'd be fine, only to pass out again once they had made it out the door. After a trip to the hospital, I was diagnosed with a bleeding ulcer that had been bleeding for nearly four days, (the flu symptoms were caused from blood loss). The next day, after I'd been given some fresh blood and a quick surgery to close the hole in my stomach, I was starting to feel a bit better.

So a few days later, I'm back on my feet, and I realize that had I not gone to play D&D with my friends that evening, I would have passed out in my bed, unknown to everyone, and bled to death. Morbid, yes. True, yes. So this is how D&D, and more to the point, close friends who I enjoy playing with so much that I braved the flu to play, saved my life.

Oh, and I really liked Issue #89. I will soon run "Headless" from that issue for my regular party.

Patrick Mason
Via Email

We think the lesson here is clear: Play more D&D! Seriously, Patrick, we're glad you're doing better. And kudos to your friends for being there when you needed them!

THUMBS WAY UP

Issue #91 was superb. Six adventures for that price is incredible! The adventures were all excellent. I especially liked "The Rock and the Hard Place." A great encounter, it works for hack-and-slashers and

puzzle solvers alike. "Challenge of Champions IV" was great fun to read. "Kambranex's Machinations" was absolutely horrible, which is why I like it. I can't imagine our party surviving that dungeon without at least two people getting mechanized.

Personally, I think that "Critical Threats" are as good as "Maps of Mystery" (this makes it very good). The ones in Issue #91 were both good, but my favorite is "The Vortex." In my campaign, the vortex is an arcane creation that drains the magic of anyone or anything that falls or is cast in. An evil mage plans to use this power to wreak his vengeance upon his hometown, which exiled him for blasting a rival in a fit of anger. Kudos to Christopher West!

Joe Carothers
Via Email

How many times do we have to tell people not to praise our artists and cartographers. Keep it up and they'll ask for raises. Sheesh!

KENNON IS DA BOMB, YO!

Just wanted to let you fine folks at DUNGEON Magazine know that I recently subscribed to your magazine and received the first issue of that subscription.

*Come Hither,
you Saucy Wench*




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I really loved the piece of artwork from Kennon James. The two groups of adventurers looked really cool. (Was that a gnome bard with ioun' stones floating around his head? Cool!) I will probably use "Challenge of Champions IV" as a starting point for my new campaign. (I'm currently working on world-building as I type, more or less.) I believe that this adventure will work out perfectly as a "bring the characters together" hook. Everyone involved with your magazine is doing a superb job. Keep it up! I look forward to the next issue.

Dean Siemsen
Via Email

What's a poor editor on a budget to do. Oh well, such praise is well deserved. Kennon and Kyle both did a masterful job with "Challenge of Champions IV," and we can't wait to see the next piece from either of them.

KEEN ON MINI-GAMES

Issue #91 convinced me of something #90 already made me suspect: The POLYHEDRON mini-games rock! Although I saw little (personal) use for the Pulp Heroes game, I knew it was only a matter of time before one that struck my fancy came out, and *Shadow Chasers* is the first. I do have a couple questions, though. First, who designs the mini-games? Do you have to be a part of the POLYHEDRON staff, a member of some elite group, or are there guidelines for readers who would like to submit a mini-game of their own creation? What if I (or someone else) wanted to write a DUNGEON adventure for a mini-game? Do the standard guidelines apply, or will the adventure be set aside if it is not D&D?

Now, a rules question about *Shadow Chasers*: According to the rules, a character's Wounds are equal to his Con score. Is this his current Con score, or his original score? For example, if a character takes Con damage, do his Wounds drop at the same time? What if the Con score is permanently altered, such as by the ability score increase every four levels?

Kurtis Black
Nelson, B.C., Canada

The first few POLYHEDRON mini-games are designed by members of the RPG R&D staff here at Wizards of the Coast. Mini-games give the staff a chance to tweak the rules to their hearts' content in genres that probably wouldn't sell a trillion hardcover books, but which make for a few interesting game sessions, at the very least. There's certainly no reason why other folks can't get in on the action, though, by sending a query to

polyhedron@wizards.com. Look to these pages for some POLYHEDRON writing guidelines, which are currently in the works.

But enough about Poly. Let's talk about wounds. Your wounds total is equal to your Constitution at the time. If you lose Constitution, you also lose wounds. If you add a point to Constitution by going up a level, you also get a wound point out of the deal.

TOKEN REMARKS

Another fine job, although I really missed the monster tokens in this issue. You know, if you put tokens in their own section of the DUNGEON website, we could piece together our own hoards of monsters and print them out on cardstock from the local stationary store.

As for Mr. Adkison's desire for other "utility" tiles, I'd suggest using a mapping package like Dungeon Crafter (<http://www.dungeoncrafter.com>) or Auto-Realm (<http://gryc.ws/autorealm.htm>) to create the desired templates and then print them out on transparency films, again from the local office supply store and far cheaper than supporting Games Workshop! If you want them a bit more rigid than simple transparencies, you can have them laminated or even buy a sheet of thin plexiglass and glue them to that. If cardstock tokens are preferred, use cardstock in the printer.

I find the current format to be a vast improvement over some of the more unorthodox layouts touted in earlier issues. I do have to say, however, that it certainly gives an issue of DUNGEON a +10 Circumstance bonus to Hide checks when left lying open on my desk! As for the back-to-back "flipside" magazines, I instinctively thumbed through to see if you had divided the two by placing the stiffer subscription cards' tear-away page between them. It was actually the reader's survey and was only one page off. If it is an easily adjustable feature, I'd recommend moving the survey (if you make it a regular item) or the subscription cards to use as the "separator" between POLYHEDRON and DUNGEON—and possibly defuse Mr. deMorris and others of similar persuasion. Granted, I did almost buy two copies off the bookstore rack, thinking the POLYHEDRON cover was actually a new product. Maybe I should just subscribe and eliminate that particular confusion.

Michael McNeill
Via Email

The card stock sub cards and surveys have to placed between 32-page signatures in the magazine. It's a printing thing. Oh, and do subscribe. It makes us warm and tingly.

"Letters" continued on page 65

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INTERLOPERS OF RUUN-KHAZAI

BY DAVID NOONAN

ARTWORK BY MARC SASSO • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

| Magic Items ➤ Monsters ⚔ NPCs 🗡 Objects 👑 Settlements ⚠ Traps

"Are they your men?" asked Georg. "Are they your men?" he repeated impatiently as Ulrich did not answer.

"No," said Ulrich with a laugh, the idiotic chattering laugh of a man unstrung with hideous fear.

"Who are they?" asked Georg quickly, straining his eyes to see what the other would gladly not have seen.

"Wolves."

—H.H. Munro, "The Interlopers"

"Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" is suitable for four 13th-level player characters. Characters who survive will advance to 14th level near the adventure's conclusion. Adjust the adventure as you see fit if you wish to play it with a larger, smaller, higher-level, or lower-level group. Many of the antagonists are creatures with classes, so the easiest way to adjust the overall difficulty of the adventure is to increase or decrease their levels. See the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar for more ideas on adjusting the challenge level of the module.

"Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" takes characters to a long-lost githyanki outpost on the Astral Plane rumored to hold powerful magic. Shortly after they arrive, githyanki and githzerai war bands arrive to claim the outpost for themselves. Only after the battle begins do the three groups learn that Ruun-Khazai's original owners don't like trespassers.

PREPARATION

You need a copy of the *Player's Handbook*, the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, and the *Monster Manual* to use this adventure. "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" introduces concepts from *Manual of the Planes* and *Stronghold Builder's Guide*, but they aren't required to play

the adventure. Content pulled from those two sources is reprinted here for your convenience when necessary.

Text that appears in shaded boxes is player information, which you can read aloud or paraphrase when appropriate. Unshaded boxes contain important information for you, including special instructions. Complete monster and NPC statistics are provided with each encounter where appropriate.

"Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" is a site-based adventure, but many of the opponents move from area to area. A timeline sidebar indicates how the various factions move around Ruun-Khazai, but the characters' actions eventually disrupt this sequence of events. Because the situation around the outpost is so fluid, you'll want to give a lot of thought to how the three NPC factions react to one another and to the player characters.

BACKGROUND

More than a century ago, a githyanki wizard named Karluth grew in power by performing a series of arcane experiments in the Astral Plane outpost of Ruun-Khazai. In time, he even started to experiment with eldritch power forbidden by the lich-queen

who rules the githyanki—and all githyanki know the fate of any who attain 17th level: Their essence becomes a meal for the lich-queen.

Encouraged by his paramour, a powerful succubus, Karluth decided to place himself and his fortress beyond the lich-queen's reach. By tricking the other residents of the Ruun-Khazai into sacrificing themselves in an arcane ritual, Karluth conjured forth a powerful astral storm that would drive insane anyone who tried to penetrate its howling winds. But Ruun-Khazai itself remained safe in the eye of the astral hurricane Karluth created. The wizard then retreated into his study, seeking a deific patron who could further protect him from the lich-queen's wrath. The lich-queen—and by extension githyanki society at large—presumed all of Ruun-Khazai lost to the astral storm.

Now, a century later, the astral storm is spent, and Karluth lacks the sacrificial victims necessary to re-conjure it. So he hides in the heart of Ruun-Khazai, hoping to remain undiscovered and perhaps gather unsuspecting victims for another storm-summoning ritual. But others have noticed the return of Ruun-Khazai from the astral mists. The githyanki are eager to re-establish a military presence there, and githzerai raiders will try to take the fortress for themselves. To this volatile mix come the player characters, eager to explore the coveted secrets of the outpost and perhaps establish a permanent base on the Astral Plane.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The characters arrive at Ruun-Khazai and begin exploring the nearest structure, the ruined Sanctum Dome. As they're doing so, they see an astral brig arrive at the four towers, escorted by githyanki astride red dragons. Meanwhile, a githzerai raiding party takes control of a pyramid structure on the

other side of the outpost. The three factions (player characters, githyanki, and githzerai) fight a series of battles at the three structures or in the no-man's-land between them.

When the three groups are weakened by such battles, they learn that Ruun-Khazai is far from deserted. The rebel githyanki wizard who still controls the outpost attacks all of the intruders, and the player characters must defeat him and his allies if they are to take control of Ruun-Khazai and learn its secrets.

CHARACTER HOOKS

Ruun-Khazai is a treasure in itself—a powerful fortress that's apparently vacant. Furthermore, by 13th level, many characters have finely honed exploration instincts. If the characters in your ongoing campaign need a more specific reason to visit Ruun-Khazai, you can try the following:

- The characters find lore (perhaps an old map or a footnote in a spellbook) indicating that Ruun-Khazai holds one or more powerful magic items. Karluth's spellbook is a treasure trove for nearly any wizard—especially because it might have the *summon astral storm* spell in it.

- Another item in Karluth's hoard is a powerful magic sword, *Fedifensor*. This sword, crafted long ago on the Material Plane, has passed back and forth between the githyanki and various good-aligned adventurers for years. It's been in Ruun-Khazai for a century, but with the dispersal of the astral storm, magic divinations for it are more fruitful. Someone on the Material Plane might want the sword back and send the characters to retrieve it.

- Some effects, such as psychic storms, botched *teleports*, and broken *staves of power*, can send characters to a random spot on the Astral Plane. Such an event could put them in the vicinity of Ruun-Khazai

ASTRAL PLANE TRAITS

The Astral Plane is an infinite void that binds the planes together. Suspended in the silvery nothingness are huge chunks of rock such as Ruun-Khazai, and on these places the githyanki make their homes.

The Astral Plane has the following traits:

- **No Gravity.** You can move through the empty void of the Astral Plane by pure thought at a speed of 10 feet per point of Intelligence. (Creatures without Intelligence, such as golems, cannot move through the Astral void unless they are pushed.) However, Ruun-Khazai has its own local gravity field that extends for a half-mile in every direction. Within its pull, gravity works just like it does on the Material Plane.

- **Timeless.** Age, hunger, thirst, poison, and natural healing

don't function in the Astral Plane but resume functioning when the traveler leaves the Astral Plane.

- **Enhanced Magic:** All spells and spell-like abilities used within the Astral Plane are employed as though they were improved by the Quicken Spell feat. Already quickened spells and spell-like abilities are unaffected, as are spells from magic items. Spells so quickened are still prepared and cast at their unmodified level. As with the Quicken Spell feat, only one quickened spell can be cast per round. Sorcerers and bards can take advantage of the enhanced magic of the plane, even though they cannot ordinarily use quickened spells.

- **No Elemental or Energy Traits:** Some small regions of the plane may have one or more of these traits, but the plane as a whole—and specifically Ruun-Khazai—does not.

RUUN-KHAZAI RESEARCH RESULTS

DC Information

20 Ruun-Khazai means “gray-stone hand” in Githyanki. It’s a location of some sort, mentioned briefly (with no further details) in the account of an escaped slave of the githyanki, *Zaaloth’s Letters*, centuries ago.

25 *The Green Book of Oriel the Wanderer* refers to Ruun-Khazai as a githyanki fortress large enough to hold about two hundred troops, including dragon-riders. It was swallowed by a massive psychic storm on the Astral Plane about a hundred years ago.

30 A powerful githyanki wizard named Karluth the Grim built Ruun-Khazai and ran it as his personal fiefdom. Far from other settlements, the stronghold received few visitors, says the *Annals of the Unseen*, and received no relief from the rest of the githyanki army when it was besieged by githzerai for nearly a year. Ruun-Khazai eventually wore out the besieging forces.

35 A description of Karluth in *Baerath’s History of the Gith Peoples* notes that he was never without his consort, “Le’eska the Lovely.” He visited the githyanki lich-queen’s court about 150 years ago to display a recent acquisition, the greatsword *Fedifensor*. Many other githyanki coveted the sword, including thinly veiled proxies for the lich-queen herself, but Karluth returned with the sword to Ruun-Khazai.

40 Gorou Vivian’s *Annotations to Baerath’s Histories* says in a footnote: “Claims that the lich-queen conjured a psychic storm to destroy Ruun-Khazai because Karluth would not surrender *Fedifensor* cannot be taken seriously, for two reasons: The lich-queen’s animosity toward Karluth runs much deeper than a fit of pique over a sword—Karluth was growing powerful enough for his soul to provide sustenance for the lich-queen. Furthermore, the lich-queen hasn’t subsequently demonstrated the ability to control psychic storms, despite ample opportunities to do so in the intervening century.”

just as the events of this adventure begin to unfold. So if your characters actually put the *portable hole* inside a *bag of holding*, you now have someplace specific to send them.

RESEARCHING RUUN-KHAZAI

Because the stronghold has been cut off from the rest of the multiverse for a hundred years, there isn’t a lot of information available about it. But characters employing bardic knowledge or Knowledge (the planes) might be able to learn the basics about Karluth’s fortress. Consult the “Ruun-Khazai Research Results” table; every result includes the information gained from lower DCs.

GETTING TO RUUN-KHAZAI

The easiest way for characters to get to Ruun-Khazai is to *plane shift* to the Astral Plane, then *teleport without error* to Ruun-Khazai. Adventurers who do so arrive near the Sanctum Dome. Natural portals such as astral color pools are plentiful in the general vicinity of Ruun-Khazai, although none exist within more than a mile or so of the fortress.

It’s also a simple matter to add an interplanar portal from the Material Plane to the Sanctum Dome if that fits the needs of your ongoing campaign. Karluth might have constructed such a portal before he put

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

“Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai” is designed for 13th-level PCs. The adventure is already plenty challenging for such characters, especially the final encounter with Karluth, but given the nature of the “empty room adventure,” it’s fairly easy to provide the PCs with a challenge yet not overwhelm them with powerful foes. For lower-level or smaller groups, feel free to stretch the timeline to allow the PCs more time to rest between encounters.

9th- to 10th-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following changes.

- Reduce the levels (or Hit Dice) of all unnamed NPCs (like the githyanki and githzerai squads) so they remain 4–5 levels below the party’s level. Reduce the levels (or Hit Dice) of named NPCs so they remain at or just above the party’s level. Make Karluth a 12th-level wizard/1st-level cleric.
- Remove one or two of the CR 9 or 10 traps and replace them with less taxing encounters (CR 7 traps would work, as would less-threatening monster encounters).
- Leave the two devourers wandering the surface of Ruun-Khazai, but have the PCs encounter them singly.

11th- to 12th-level PCs: Run the adventure with the changes described above, but with the following changes.

- Make Karluth a 13th-level wizard/2nd-level cleric.
- Leave the traps in the adventure as originally written.
- Let the PCs encounter the devourers as originally written.

Higher-level or larger parties should be able to handle the pace of the adventure much more than lower-level or smaller groups. Feel free to shorten the timeline of events if the PCs aren’t sufficiently challenged, or don’t allow them as much time to rest. You can also make sure that Karluth pays the PCs more visits than the other factions in Ruun-Khazai.

14th-level and higher PCs: Run the adventure as written but with the following additional changes.

- Increase the levels of unnamed NPCs so they remain 4–5 levels beneath the PCs. Increase the level of named NPCs so they remain at or just above the party’s level. Keep Karluth 3–4 levels higher than the party’s level.
- Add more traps to the Sanctum Dome.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER’S Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Ruun-Khazai into the eye of a psychic storm—after all, he had more reason than most githyanki to surreptitiously travel to the Material Plane.

RUUN-KHAZAI TIMELINE

The timeline provided on the next page describes how the other three factions on Ruun-Khazai (the githyanki, the githzerai, and Karluth) interact now that the psychic storm no longer swirls around the stronghold. This timeline doesn't account for the characters' actions, and it's likely that they eventually derail this schedule. For example, if the PCs deal the githzerai force a telling blow within 2 hours after their arrival, the surviving githzerai probably hole up in the Pyramid of the Sublime rather than move across Ruun-Khazai to attack the githyanki 2 hours and 45 minutes after the PCs' arrival.

If the characters do not interfere, the githyanki and the githzerai arrive on opposite sides of Ruun-Khazai shortly after the characters do. They spend the first 2 hours on Ruun-Khazai exploring nearby structures. Eventually, the githzerai attack a githyanki contingent near the middle of Ruun-Khazai. They meet with initial success, but the intervention of githyanki blackguards mounted on dragons drives them off.

All this time, Karluth has been using *clairvoyance* to observe events on the surface of Ruun-Khazai.

After this major battle (or after the first major battle of any kind on the surface), he starts preparing spells, then tries to wipe out whichever faction looks weakest, retreating before his foes can mount a serious counteroffensive. Karluth then turns his attention from faction to faction, attacking each in turn.

The Astral Plane is a timeless, silvery void with neither sunrise nor sunset. For simplicity, the "Events at Ruun-Khazai" timeline (see below) tracks events in minutes and hours from when the PCs first arrive at the stronghold. Adjust the timeline to suit the needs of your campaign.

OVERVIEW OF RUUN-KHAZAI

Ruun-Khazai is a half-mile-long planetoid floating serenely in the depths of Astral space. It has five main encounter areas.

Four Towers: Originally the barracks for Karluth's army, these towers on the "north" end of Ruun-Khazai are first reached by a githyanki task force sent to explore the rediscovered stronghold. All four towers are identical. The astral brig that serves as the githyanki task force's command center remains docked here throughout the adventure.

Sanctum Dome: The characters from the Material Plane probably start the adventure by exploring the Sanctum Dome on the "west" edge of Ruun-

EVENTS IN RUUN-KHAZAI

Time Elapsed	Event
0	Characters arrive at Ruun-Khazai's Sanctum Dome.
5 minutes	Githyanki astral brig visible near Ruun-Khazai's Four Towers.
6 minutes	Astral brig comes under fire from Four Towers, returns same.
10 minutes	Astral brig docks at Four Towers. Githyanki first squad begins exploring Four Towers.
15 minutes	Gate from Limbo delivers githzerai raiders. They begin exploring ruined Pyramid of the Sublime.
35 minutes	Githyanki second squad reaches Sanctum Dome. After exploring it briefly, they return to the Four Towers. If they confront the characters, they'll retreat rather than risk serious casualties.
1 hour	Githyanki loyalists secure Four Towers. First Squad sets watch in Tower B while the cavalry alights atop Tower C.
1 hour, 10 min.	Githzerai raiders secure Pyramid rubble and begin unearthing tunnel entrance. They send hellcat scouts to explore surface of Ruun-Khazai.
1 hour, 30 min.	Githyanki Commander Madivh and second squad move toward Quartz Grotto.
2 hours	Githyanki arrive at Quartz Grotto.
2 hours, 30 min.	Hellcats discover githyanki presence, report same to githzerai raiders.
2 hours, 45 min.	Battle at Quartz Grotto begins. Githzerai pin down githyanki forces.
2 hours, 50 min.	Githyanki cavalry and dragons arrive at Quartz Grotto. Surviving githzerai retreat.
3 hours	All combatants retreat from Quartz Grotto.
3 hours, 15 min.	Karluth begins preparing spells.
3 hours, 30 min.	Karluth uses <i>clairvoyance</i> to choose a target, then launches an attack on the githzerai.
4 hours, 30 min.	Karluth attacks the githyanki at Four Towers. Survivors retreat to the astral brig.
8 hours, 15 min.	Remnant githzerai begin exploring passages leading to the heart of Ruun-Khazai.
12 hours, 30 min.	Githyanki task force (everyone but brig sailors) explores passages leading to the heart of Ruun-Khazai.
16 hours, 15 min.	Githyanki and githzerai meet in heart of Ruun-Khazai and attack each other.
16 hours, 20 min.	Karluth arrives and attacks both the githyanki and githzerai. He takes many gith prisoners.
24 hours	Astral brig sends distress signal and awaits further orders.
28 hours	Karluth attacks astral brig and drives it off.

Khazai. Originally the home of Ruun-Khazai's nonmilitary personnel, the Sanctum Dome is not without its perils or guardians.

Pyramid of the Sublime: The githzerai raiders arrive here and begin exploring what was originally Karluth's academy of wizardry. It's just rubble now, although the githzerai spend a lot of time picking through it to be sure.

Surface of the Planetoid: Rough obsidian lava rock dominates Ruun-Khazai's landscape, making overland travel across the surface of the planetoid difficult. Ridges reach 100 to 200 feet above Ruun-Khazai's surface, further impeding travel. Nestled in a deep central valley is a forest of strange crystalline structures. This crystal grotto is likely the site of a major battle among the factions (set to occur 2 hours and 45 minutes after the PCs arrive).

Heart of Ruun-Khazai: Karluth rarely ventures into the towers, dome, or pyramid. But a network of secret tunnels connects all of them to his subterranean living quarters. If the characters want to stop Karluth and take control of Ruun-Khazai, they have to venture here.

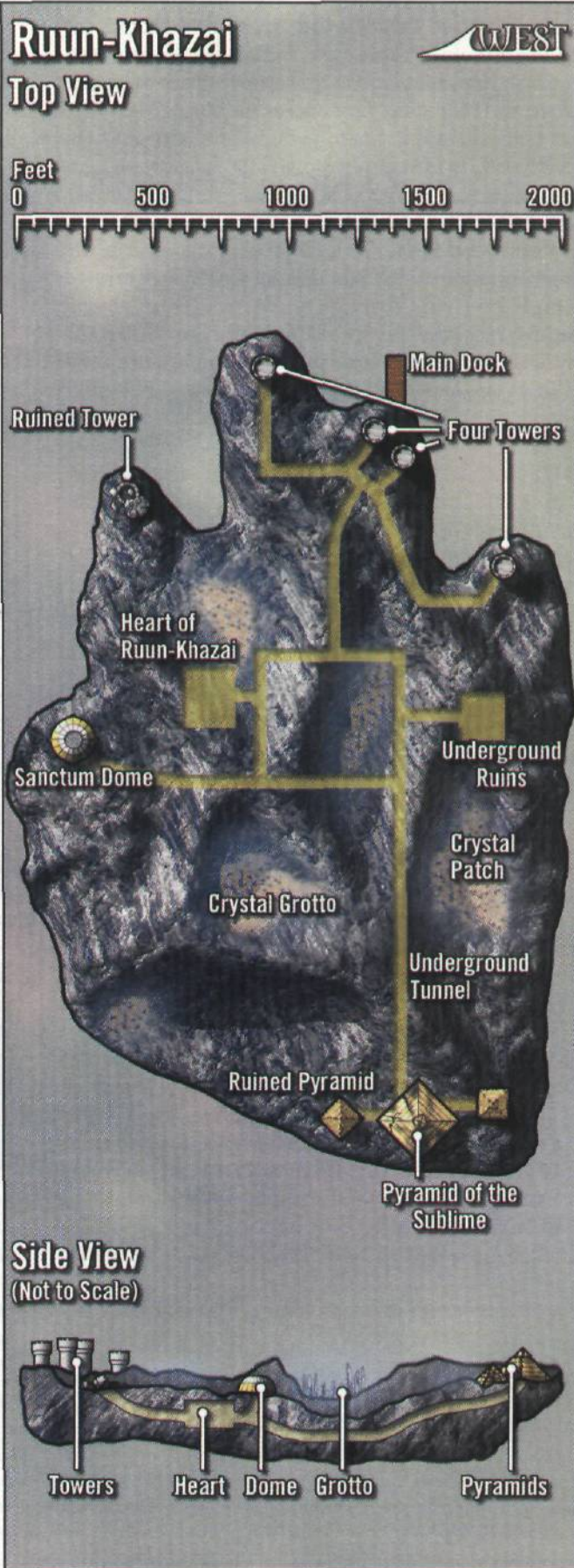
AN EMPTY-ROOM ADVENTURE

As you read the adventure, you'll realize that many of the rooms in Ruun-Khazai are deserted, with neither monsters nor treasure. That's intentional—the characters' foes move from place to place, exploring Ruun-Khazai just as the characters do.

Because every NPC could be encountered nearly anywhere, running "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai" requires both preparation and improvisation on the part of the DM. You need to know the abilities of the NPCs like the back of your hand, because you might not know ahead of time the circumstances of the encounter. To run this adventure, you need to be sensitive to pacing. If the players start to lose enthusiasm for trudging through the rooms, have one of the factions attack them (or have the factions attack each other within earshot of the characters). "Just then, a githyanki kicks open the door" is almost never the wrong thing to say during this adventure.

If you need to, declare a 5-minute break from time to time. While the players are raiding the refrigerator, take the time to review the stat blocks of upcoming foes and figure out what the githyanki, githzerai, and Karluth are up to.

Remember that at its heart, the set-piece battles against smart, versatile foes are what your players will remember. When the characters use the exploding crystals to defeat the githyanki troopers,



only to see red dragons and githyanki blackguards diving out of the astral haze, milk it for all it's worth. Karluth in particular should just be a force of nature when the characters first encounter him.

SANCTUM DOME

If the characters *teleport* or use other magic to arrive at Ruun-Khazai, they'll show up within 50 feet of the west entrance of the Sanctum Dome. If they arrived simply by flying through the Astral Plane, they'll begin to feel the effects of Ruun-Khazai's local gravity at about the same time the Dome comes into view.

Before you stands a 60-foot dome made of polished obsidian, its smooth surface broken only by iron shutters all around the building and large stained-glass windows along the south end that give off a soft glow. An iron portcullis guards the only obvious entrance directly in front of you. A pale blue flag with no insignia stirs in the astral breeze atop the dome, where there looks to be a small platform. You can see illumination coming from beyond the portcullis, although it looks like there's a black curtain draped across much of the passage leading into the dome.

A few words in ornate gilt stretch across the threshold of the entrance.

If the characters can read Githyanki, they can easily translate the gilt words: "Welcome to the Sanctum Dome of Ruun-Khazai."

Unless the characters arrive completely invisible and make no sound while they investigate the Sanctum Dome, the animated ballistas (see below) attack right away.

STRONGHOLD FEATURES

Unless otherwise noted, the features of the Sanctum Dome are as follows:

Ceilings: Ceilings are 10 feet high throughout.

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: Inside, they are constructed of thick reinforced masonry.

◆ **Interior Walls, Floors, and Ceilings:** 2 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 360; Climb DC 15.

The thick exterior walls are made of unusually slick obsidian that has been magically augmented with the *grease* spell.

◆ **Exterior Dome Walls:** 6 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 1,080; Climb DC 32.

Doors: Doors are either made of wood or iron, as noted on the map.

◆ **Wooden Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 23; Open Lock DC 30.

◆ **Iron Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30.

Windows: All windows other than the stained glass ones have iron bars or simple shutters. The stained glass windows break easily (hardness 1, 1 hp), but the pieces are held together with iron thick enough to function as bars.

◆ **Window Bars:** hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 24.

◆ **Window Shutters:** hardness 5; hp 10; Break DC 13.

Light: Hooded lanterns with *continual flame* spells inside them illuminate each room. The lanterns have been omitted from the maps for clarity, so put them wherever you like.

Most of the hallways are only 5 feet wide—an annoyance to characters, but no real hindrance to the githyanki. Once they're familiar with the layout of a building, the githyanki just *dimension door* from place to place.

Many of the rooms are labeled with gilt above the lintels. The labels are in Githyanki unless otherwise noted. The read-aloud text assumes the characters can read Githyanki.

1. BALLISTA PLATFORM (EL 13)

This circular platform atop the Sanctum Dome has only three salient features: an iron trapdoor on the platform deck, a large brass bell mounted on a wooden rack, and four ballistas. Of their own volition, the ballistas swivel in your direction.

The iron trapdoor is locked (although the ballistas can bypass the lock). The giant bell is a *warding bell* (see next page). When it is rung, the twelve nearest

RUUN-KHAZAI AS A STRONGHOLD

The *Stronghold Builder's Guide* was used to construct the Sanctum Dome, Four Towers, and Heart of Ruun-Khazai; you'll find more information about the costs and capabilities of each structure in its individual description. Furthermore, all three structures were designed to be used elsewhere in your ongoing campaign without much modification. Check out the *Stronghold Builder's Guide* for more information on building

and modifying strongholds like those found in "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai."

The base cost for the Sanctum Dome is 784,870 gp, each of the Four Towers costs 233,400 gp, and the Heart of Ruun-Khazai costs 403,300 gp. Actual construction costs vary depending on available magic, type of workers, and so on; the *Stronghold Builder's Guide* has these rules as well.

doors are covered with a glamer (as the *guards and wards* spell). *Magic mouths* in areas 9 and 17 shout "Intruders! Evacuate!" in Githyanki.

‡ **Warding Bell:** When this enormous bell is rung (requiring a standard action), it immediately activates a *guards and wards* spell. The *warding bell* must be somewhere in the area to be warded.

The *fog* and *web* effects work normally. The *arcane lock* effect allows the stronghold's owner to open the doors normally, but no one else.

The *confusion* part affects all intruders—as defined by the stronghold's owner at the time of the creation of the *warding bell*. This means that the owner must list the people who would not be considered an intruder. The longer and less specific the criteria, the more easily this portion of the *warding bell's* security can be breached.

Up to twelve doors can be "lost." These doors must be specified at the creation of the device. Similarly, the other extra effect granted by the *guards and wards* spell must be chosen at item creation. Any locations or programming required for these effects must be defined at that time as well.

Some stronghold owners place a *warding bell* at the stronghold's front gate. In this way, the guards at the gate can activate the security system at a moment's notice.

A single *warding bell* can protect up to six contiguous stronghold spaces, although the warded area is up to 20 feet high. This means that a cunning creator could cover up to 12 stronghold spaces (six apiece on two levels). To protect larger strongholds, you must include multiple *warding bells* (each within the area they protect).

The *warding bell* only functions once per day, and the effects last 24 hours or until the stronghold owner voluntarily dismisses them (you can't dismiss individual effects, only the whole spell).

Caster Level: 12th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *guards and wards*; **Market Price:** 7,200 gp.

Creatures: The ballistas fight the characters until slain, but they are programmed to retreat into the dome if a fight turns against them. This might earn characters a temporary respite, but they learn that the animated ballistas are even more dangerous inside the dome itself.

➤ **Animated Ballistas (4):** CR 9; Large construct; HD 8d10; hp 44 each; Init +4; Spd 50 ft.; AC 23 (touch 13, flat-footed 19); Atk +8 melee (1d8+4, slam) or +9 ranged (3d6, ballista); SA special ballista bolts, trample; SQ hardness 10, construct qualities, blindsight 120 ft., find target, door opening; AL N; Fort +2, Ref +6, Will -2; Str 16, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Special Ballista Bolts (Sp): Each animated ballista stores 100 normal ballista bolts in a nondimensional

space and can reload as a free action. In addition, it can imbue a ballista bolt with one of the following qualities once per day each: *dimensional anchor*, *faerie fire*, *dispel magic*, *dismissal*, *flesh to stone*, *web*. If the ballista bolt hits, the target is hit by the spell effect as well. The special ballista bolts function as the spells cast by an 11th-level wizard.

Find Target (Sp): When directed to hunt down an intruder or other enemy, an animated ballista does so unerringly, as though guided by a *discern location* spell cast at 15th level.

Door Opening (Su): Twice per round as a free action, an animated ballista can open a door within 30 feet (as a *knock* spell cast by an 11th-level wizard) or lock one shut (as an *arcane lock* spell cast by an 11th-level wizard).

Tactics: In the first round, one of the ballistas bashes itself into the *warding bell*, activating the *guards and wards* spell.

Thereafter, the ballistas fire at the characters every round, focusing their attacks on flying opponents first, anyone climbing up the dome second, and foes on the ground third. If the fight turns against them, they flee into the Sanctum Dome, ready to fight the characters in the halls guerrilla-style. Because they can open and close doors as a free action, they have a significant mobility advantage in the corridors.

2. MAIN ENTRANCE

An iron portcullis blocks the entrance to the Sanctum Dome. About 5 feet beyond it hangs a black curtain, and soft amber light spills from around its edges. Arrow slits pierce the walls on both sides of this narrow passage.

Beyond the curtain is a second portcullis. Both can be opened only from the north antechamber, so characters might have to wreck them (hardness 10, hp 60) to get in. The south antechamber has a *warding bell* like the one in area 1.

♣ **Iron Portcullises:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28.

3. HALL OF WELCOME

This room is softly lit by wall-mounted lanterns bearing what are obviously *continual flames* and a fire in a 5-foot-wide brazier near the door. A massive teak desk marks the center of the room. There are iron doors on the west wall, and wooden ones on the east wall marked "Domiciles" (north) and "Diversions" (south) in gilt lettering. A plush red carpet covers the floor, and the walls have frescoes

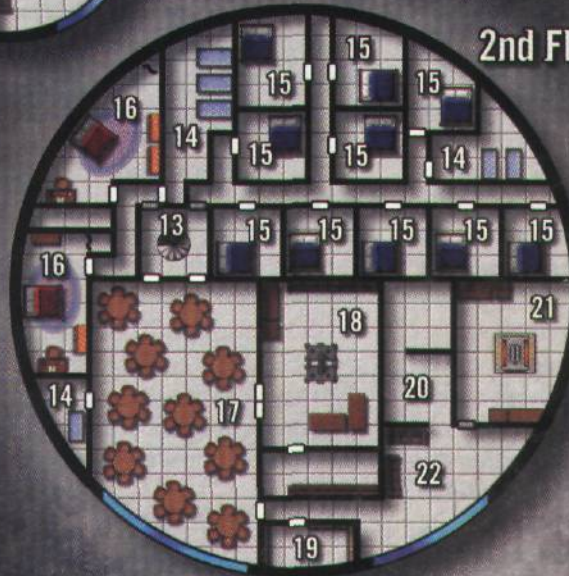
Roof



3rd Floor



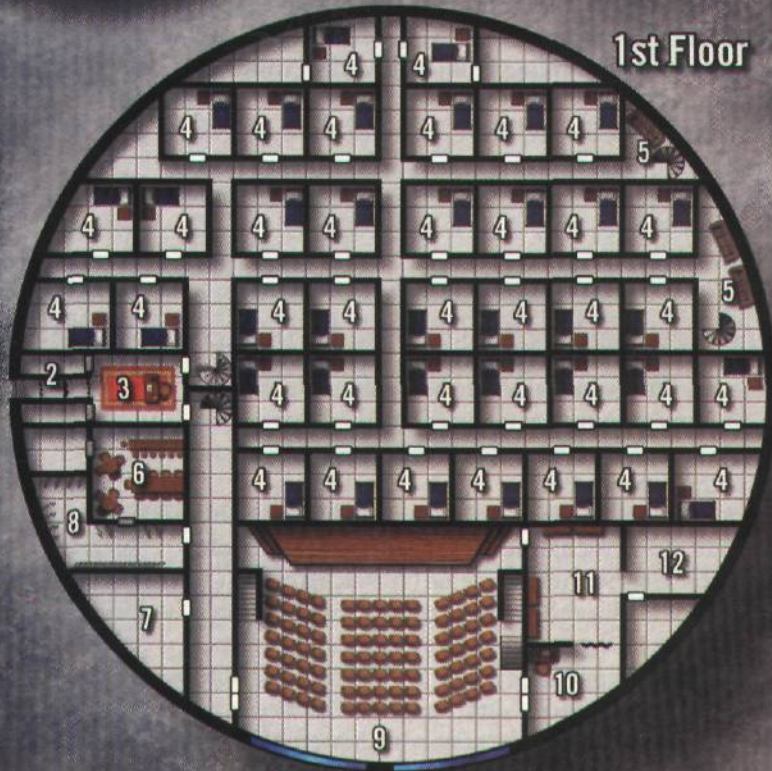
2nd Floor



Underground



1st Floor



Sanctum Dome

WEST

1 square = 5 feet

- 1) Ballista Platform
- 2) Main Entrance
- 3) Hall of Welcome
- 4) Visitor Quarters
- 5) Common Area
- 6) Deserted Tavern
- 7) Art Exhibit
- 8) Hall of Swords
- 9) Assembly Hall
- 10) Office/Salon
- 11) Dressing Room
- 12) Room of the Loom
- 13) Elite Bedroom Foyer
- 14) Fancy Baths
- 15) Elite Bedrooms
- 16) Elite Bedroom Suites
- 17) Hall of Consumption
- 18) Kitchen
- 19) Public Library
- 20) Armory Display
- 21) Smithy
- 22) Common Areas
- 23) Offices
- 24) Public Baths
- 25) Chapel of the Lich-Queen
- 26) Servant Quarters
- 27) Alchemist Lab

depicting various githyanki coronations and other civic ceremonies.

This room is a wizard-created *ambassador's chamber*, although there's probably no one here for the characters to interact with. The Sanctum Dome's major-domo was originally stationed here.

The desk contains sheafs of paper, mostly notes about who's staying in which room, meal schedules, and programs for events in the assembly hall. All are more than a century old.

† *Ambassador's Chamber*: This stronghold space shifts the attitude of any creature entering to the next most favorable reaction on Table 5-4: Influencing NPC Attitude in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, as if affected by an *emotion* spell of the friendship variety (Will save, DC 14, negates). Creatures involved in combat continue to fight normally.

If a wizard creates this chamber, the DC is 16 and the market price is 14,000 gp.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *emotion*; *Market Price*: 10,500 gp.

The brazier near the door is a new magic item: a *brazier of aura revealing* (good).

† *Brazier of Aura Revealing* (Good): When lit, this massive (5-foot-wide) brazier outlines any good creature within 60 feet in a faint gray aura. If such a creature remains in the area for more than 2 rounds, the strength of its aura (dim, faint, moderate, strong, or overwhelming, as per the *detect evil* spell in the *Player's Handbook*) becomes apparent to all who can see the creature.

This item can't reveal creatures who aren't visible (whether by concealment, cover, or invisibility), though anyone within 60 feet of the brazier can sense the presence (and direction) of the good creature, though not its exact location.

If the good power is "overwhelming" and twice the character level of a evil-aligned viewer, the viewer is stunned for one round.

See *detect evil* in the *Player's Handbook* for details on aura strength and how long an aura lingers.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *detect good*; *Market Price*: 3,000 gp.

4. VISITOR QUARTERS

This small room has a stuffed bed on a low frame, a chest of drawers, and a large mirror on the wall. A chair sits in front of a small writing desk, and there's a ceramic washbasin in the corner.

There are thirty-seven such rooms, and they're all more or less like the one described above. It'll quickly become tedious if the characters laboriously

search every chamber. Once the players announce their intention to open each of the visitor quarters, have them establish a standard procedure for doing so. A typical procedure might be: "Lidda listens at the door, then checks it for tracks. Then Regdar kicks it open while Soveliss covers him with his longbow. If it's all clear, Mialee looks for secret doors while Lidda turns the room upside-down."

After they've established such a procedure, figure out how long it takes the PCs to look through all the visitor quarters, then summarize their findings. It's not worth it to spend a lot of time on these rooms.

Development: The network of corridors and doors makes this a good place for a running battle with the animated ballistas. They can potentially split the party on either side of a door they've *arcane locked*, set up crossfires in the corridors, and otherwise frustrate the characters.

5. COMMON AREA

Ornately carved, overstuffed sofas fill this area, and pillows are scattered across the floor. A wrought-iron staircase leads down. Abstract frescoes cover the walls. Near each staircase is a gilt inscription: "Cleanse the body, cleanse the soul."

These rooms, simply well-appointed sitting rooms, lead underground to the lich-queen's chapel and the public baths (areas 24 and 25).

6. DESERTED TAVERN

A polished, marble-topped bar dominates the north wall of what is obviously some sort of tavern. Booths line the walls, and round tables are scattered across the middle of the room. Unopened casks of ale and bottles of wine are placed in neat racks behind the bar.

This room is what it appears to be: a tavern for guests of Ruun-Khazai. The locked iron door leads to a storage room full of more food and drink. Because Ruun-Khazai is on the Astral Plane, no one needs to eat or drink, but many do so simply for the pleasure of it or because they don't want to be ravenous as soon as they travel to a plane where time passes normally.

Treasure: The bottles (all 200 pounds of them) at the bar are worth 1,800 gp, and the food and beverages stored behind the door are worth another 6,000 gp.

7. ART EXHIBIT

The center of this room is filled with easels—dozens of them in neat rows. All have oil paintings

on them. Most are portraits of fierce looking githyanki, but a few are battle scenes depicting githyanki astride red dragons or riding massive ships sailing through the Astral haze. One particularly grotesque picture is titled "Vivisection of a Mind Flayer."

Though they relish war above all else, githyanki do have a limited sense of artistry. One of Ruun-Khazai's long-term residents fancied herself a painter and occasionally sold a work to githyanki travelers.

Treasure: The artwork—500 pounds all told, and very bulky—would be worth 2,500 gp to the right buyer. The paintings are short on artistic merit but valuable as curiosities.

8. HALL OF SWORDS

Swords line the walls and ceiling of this room, and some are even embedded in the floor. Many are obviously shiny and ornamental, while others are shabby and rusted. Other than the swords, the only other object occupying the room is a statue of a githyanki warrior.

Anyone who succeeds at a Craft (weaponsmith) check (DC 15) can tell that many of the older swords are antiques, and a successful Craft (weaponsmith) check (DC 30) reveals that many display decoration unheard of on the Material Plane—this is an interplanar sword collection. About one sword in a hundred is masterwork, and perhaps one in twenty has some sort of gem, is worked with a precious metal, or otherwise decorated with a valuable filigree. It's difficult to tell the value of swords from a dozen planes and two dozen cultures. An Appraise check (DC 30) is required to assess the true worth of the collection. None of the weapons in the room are magical, however.

The statue is a *guardian statue*. Other than the animated ballistas, there's no one around to hear the alarm.

‡ *Guardian Statue:* This item looks like nothing more than a standard piece of statuary. However, if someone comes within 5 feet without giving the password, it lets out an alarming cry. The creator can make this either a mental *alarm* or an audible *alarm*, as per the spell. When found, this is a mental *alarm* 25% of the time and an audible *alarm* 75% of the time.

If the *alarm* is audible, anyone within 60 feet can hear it clearly. Each interposing closed door reduces that distance by 10 feet. Each interposing substantial wall reduces the distance by 20 feet. In quiet condi-

tions, the *alarm* can be heard faintly up to 180 feet away. A *silence* spell on either the *guardian statue* or the listener defeats the audible *alarm*.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *alarm*; **Market Price:** 3,000 gp.

Treasure: There are 641 swords in all (about half are greatswords, with the rest evenly divided among the other types). Many have no intrinsic worth, but the collection as a whole is worth 12,000 gp.

9. ASSEMBLY HALL

This room slopes steeply downward to the north, where there rests a bare wooden stage. About seventy creatures could sit in the plush seats of this auditorium. The south wall has two ornate, translucent stained glass windows, and twin stairways along the east and west walls lead up to small balconies. A stairway along the east wall also goes down into darkness.

If anyone makes noise in this room, a successful Listen check (DC 20) reveals that the acoustics in this room are unusually resonant. A character making a Perform check here involving music or speech receives a +2 circumstance bonus from the sonorous reverberations.

Astute characters might realize—with a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25)—that a psychic storm should certainly have blown out the stained glass windows (it didn't because Karluth placed Ruun-Khazai in the eye of the storm).

10. OFFICE/SALON

Plush tapestries line the walls of this room. A desk and chair are pushed against the wall, and divans and pillows are arranged in the corners in conversational groupings. A curtain covers the entryway to the next room.

The papers in the desk are copies of speeches—mostly exhortations to love the lich-queen in all things and to fight fiercely against mind flayers and githzerai. They aren't in any discernable order, so it's difficult to follow a particular speech for long.

11. DRESSING ROOM

This room is filled with massive oak wardrobes, dressing tables, and scattered garments.

The githyanki are fond of stage epics, full of warriors in costume, simulated combat, and long speeches on the virtues of the githyanki race. This is

where performers prepared themselves for their roles in such performances.

Little in the room has intrinsic value, but there's a lot of material for clever characters to work with. Stuffed in the trunks, dressers, and wardrobes here are the following items:

- Scripts of githyanki epics (imagine the most heavy-handed propaganda pieces you can).
- Lots of githyanki clothing, including soldier, wizard, and noble garb.
- Prop weapons and armor (weapons only do 1d3 subdual damage and armor only provides 1 point of armor bonus).
- Five realistic mind-flayer masks.
- Enough greasepaint and makeup for characters to gain a +2 circumstance bonus on attempts to disguise themselves as githyanki.

12. ROOM OF THE LOOM

A massive, 10-foot-by-15-foot loom dominates this room. A half-completed tapestry of an abstract zig-zag pattern hangs off one edge, and hooks festoon the walls.

Ruun-Khazai's weaver used this as her workspace. The room to the south is full of cloth samples, wool, cord, and other weaving supplies.

13. ELITE BEDROOM FOYER

Finely painted frescoes of battle scenes cover three walls of this room. The fourth is covered from floor to ceiling with a black tapestry. Tightly woven threads depict a massive githyanki in plate armor holding a greatsword above her head while standing atop a pile of mind flayer bodies.

The stairway continues to spiral upward, and there are doors in each of the four corners. The northwest door says "Most Sublime Masters," the northeast door reads "Most Serene Guests," and the both of the two along the south wall say "Hall of Consumption."

The tapestry is a *frightful tapestry*. It probably won't affect the characters, although they might have cohorts or other companions who are at risk of succumbing to its magic. Karluth placed it here long ago to keep the rabble away from his honored guests.

A successful Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 25) reveals that the subject of the tapestry is none other than the legendary Gith herself, liberator of the githyanki from mind flayer servitude.

‡ *Frightful Tapestry*: This huge tapestry takes up an entire wall in a stronghold space. Any creature of

less than 6 HD that enters becomes frightened for 5 rounds (Will save, DC 13, negates). A frightened creature flees the stronghold by the shortest possible path. A subject unable to flee can still fight, but the frightened creature suffers a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, damage rolls, and saving throws.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *scare*; *Market Price*: 10,000 gp.

14. FANCY BATHS

Wooden screens woven with translucent green fiber separate the large tubs and washbasins from each other. The windows are of frosted glass, though they are shuttered right now.

These three rooms are more or less identical. Each has an *everful basin* that supplies cool water for baths (githyanki dislike warm water).

‡ *Everful Basin*: This enchanted basin always has 6 gallons of water in it, no matter how many times it might be dipped into. However, if the *everful basin* is ever emptied completely, such as by tipping it over, it ceases to work forever, the magic spilling away with the last of the water.

Caster Level: 3rd; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *create water*; *Market Price*: 4,500 gp.

15. ELITE BEDROOM

This bedroom features carved teak bedframes, cotton sheets, and wool blankets. An ornately carved bureau and wardrobe stand in one corner, and a simple couch leans against a wall. Oil paintings of sword-wielding githyanki knights and rampaging red dragons dot the walls. Arcane sigils cover the ceiling.

These rooms are designed for visiting dignitaries. As with area 4 above, it's probably not a good idea to explore each room in excruciating detail.

Anyone who looks closely can tell that the paintings were done by the same artist that did the work in area 7.

The sigils are a stronghold enhancement known as *inscriptions of privacy*.

‡ *Inscriptions of Privacy*: This wondrous architecture places arcane sigils throughout the walls and ceiling of a room. They can be as subtle or outlandish as the creator likes. However, when anyone tries to spy upon anyone in the room by means of *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *screying*, a *crystal ball*, or any other method of *screying*, the inscriptions glow softly. If the *screying* attempt originates within the stronghold space, the person attempting it begins glowing as well.

Anyone scried upon can make an opposed Scry check. If the target of the *scrying* attempt wins the roll, she immediately gets a mental image of the scrier, along with a sense of the direction and distance of the scrier, accurate to within 10%.

Caster Level: 7th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *detect scrying*; **Market Price:** 14,000 gp.

16. ELITE BEDROOM SUITE

This large suite includes a finely crafted bed, two dressers, a massive wardrobe, and twin writing desks against opposite walls. A fresco on the ceiling depicts the Astral Plane, complete with occasional color pools and a blurry view of Ruun-Khazai from above.

A curtain hangs across a doorway in the corner. A statue of a githyanki warrior stands at attention next to the door.

The painting of Ruun-Khazai includes all the surface features shown on the city map, although the Pyramids of the Sublime haven't yet been ruined and there are five towers, not four. A faint, glittery paint identifies the crystal growths, including the Crystal Grotto. There's no hint of the subterranean passages that Karluth calls home, however.

The curtain covers a walk-in closet full of githyanki noble garb.

The statue is another *guardian statue* (see area 8 for details) that emits an audible cry of alarm. There probably isn't anyone to respond to the alarm.

17. HALL OF CONSUMPTION

This is obviously a dining hall that seats about sixty people—ten round tables with six chairs spaced around each. Clean ceramic plates are set at each seat, with cold meat and a strange, tuber-like vegetable at each place. A goblet of wine is full at each seat, and an unopened bottle of wine stands at the ready. Massive stained-glass windows dominate one wall.

Listen carefully to what the characters say while they're in this room—they aren't alone. Ten *invisible helpers* respond to anything that sounds like a command, pouring wine, bringing more food, clearing plates, and so on. They never speak, attack, or display any personality.

Because the Astral Plane is a timeless place, the food and wine are still edible despite being served more than a century ago.

† *Invisible Helper:* This *permanent unseen servant* is anchored to a single stronghold space and cannot

leave that space. If it takes enough damage to be destroyed (6 hp), it disappears forever.

Many stronghold owners use one or more *invisible helpers* to supplement their more traditional servants. They never tire and can work endlessly, but due to their lack of smarts, they are a poor substitute for the real thing when it comes to complex tasks or real responsibility. In general, an *invisible helper* can replace any servant whose role is typically filled by a commoner (as opposed to an expert or another class).

Anyone in the space can command the *invisible helper*. If the helper receives conflicting commands, the helper obeys the owner of the stronghold; otherwise, would-be controllers can make opposed Wisdom checks to see who wins command.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *unseen servant*; **Market Price:** 1,500 gp.

18. KITCHEN

Twin iron stoves dominate the center of this room, each with a cooking griddle on top and an oven below. A massive basin designed for scullery leans against one wall, while shelves full of jars, bowls, and jugs obscure the walls.

A door leads to the south.

This is a kitchen, pure and simple. The door to the south leads to a pantry.

19. PUBLIC LIBRARY

A low table separates two small couches in the center of this room. Every wall is covered with bookshelves.

The books detail githyanki history and astral "seafaring." Having access to this library grants a +2 circumstance bonus to Knowledge (history) and Craft (shipmaking) checks.

Treasure: The books are worth about 2,000 gp.

20. ARMORY DISPLAY

This oddly shaped room has ornate suits of plate mail armor hanging from the walls, along with other bits of metalwork, smiths' tools, and half-completed metal shields.

This room is part display area, part storage for the smiths who worked in area 21.

Treasure: There are 2 suits of masterwork full plate, 3 suits of half-plate, and 2 masterwork breastplates along the wall. There's also half-plate barding for a Large flying creature and a Huge quadruped.

21. SMITHY

A great marble-encased forge squats in the center of the room, and anvils, work tables, and barrels of water dot the rest of the floor. The floor is of polished stone, and fine metalworking tools hang from hooks on the walls.

Working in this smithy gives a character a +2 circumstance bonus to any Craft (armorsmithing, blacksmithing, and weaponsmithing) checks due to the masterwork quality of the equipment inside.

22. COMMON AREA (EL 11)

Divans, pillows, and couches cover the floor here, arranged so its denizens could gaze out the windows. The other walls are covered with gruesome frescoes of githzerai hanging from gallows.

There are two such common areas—one near the smithy, and the other on the third floor among the offices. They differ only in the arrangement of the furnishings and a bit of wondrous architecture: The area on the third floor has two summoning stones that each summon a noble salamander to attack non-githyanki who enter the room, unless they're accompanied by a githyanki.

The summoning stones are destroyed if they're removed from the floor to which they're anchored.

Creatures: The salamanders remain for 15 rounds.

➤ **Noble Salamanders (2):** hp 114, 113; *Monster Manual* 159.

23. OFFICES

The white marble floor in this room has been polished so it gleams. A black marble conference table with red upholstered chairs stands in the center of the room, and a wooden writing desk sits in front of the stained glass window. The shelves are lined with charts, logs, and books. The ceiling depicts a starry sky not unlike those found on the Material Plane. A githyanki warrior statue stands near the door.

A gentle, sweet-smelling breeze wafts through the room, though it has no obvious source.

These three offices house Karluth's top civilian lieutenants. Like everyone else who lived here, they were consumed in the ritual that created the psychic storm around Ruun-Khazai.

The statue is a *guardian statue*. Its alarm is likely to go unheeded. (See area 8 for more information on *guardian statues*.)

These offices are chambers of comfort, so they always have pleasant temperatures. The *chamber of comfort* magic is creating the breeze.

The items on the shelves cover the minutiae of running a border post: supply lists, troop requisitions, correspondence with various githyanki nobles, and so on.

† *Chamber of Comfort:* The temperature in this stronghold space is always a balmy 70°F. Additionally, the room magically circulates fresh air in and out of the room. The smoke from a fire lit in the room draws directly into the ceiling and then disappears. The place is never stuffy, always feeling like a soft breeze is flowing through the place, even if it's airtight.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *Leomund's tiny hut*; *Market Price:* 7,500 gp.

24. PUBLIC BATHS

This damp room holds a U-shaped pool full of cold water, fed by basin brimming with water. Wooden doors line the east wall, and iron double doors stand in the southwest corner under a gilt sign that reads, "The Lich Queen Observes You and Bids You Enter."

For those who don't have access to the baths on the third floor of the Sanctum Dome, this was the place to wash themselves clean. These baths also serve a ritual purpose, because worshipers at the chapel of the lich-queen must be clean before they enter. The small rooms to the east are changing rooms, although few of Ruun-Khazai's long-term residents bothered with them.

Another *everful basin* keeps the pool continually filled. See area 14 for more information on this item.

25. CHAPEL OF THE LICH-QUEEN

A polished stone altar displaying the bust of a cadaverously thin githyanki woman rises from the floor in the southeast corner. Low, padded stone benches rise up from the floor itself. Unlike the rest of the Sanctum Dome, this room has no built-in light sources.

A Knowledge (the planes) check (DC 15) reveals that the bust represents Vlaakith the lich-queen, who rules the githyanki.

Although the vast majority of githyanki are not religious and have no access to divine magic, they revere their lich-queen and craft icons and altars in her honor. The Chapel of the Lich-Queen was used for everything from quiet meditation (by knights

preparing for battle) to abject supplication, for it was rumored that the lich-queen would use *clairvoyance* and *clairaudience* to observe her chapels. Karluth detested this place, of course, and only came here when duty bade him

The altar, though frightful in appearance, has no special wards placed on it.

The chapel has a *desecrate* spell woven into the walls itself, and a shallow depression in the stone floor holds a shallow puddle of water. The floor acts as a *pool of scrying* if a nearby ewer of water is poured into it.

Pool of Scrying: This shallow pool forms a reflective surface in which the user can scry on others. This works just like the standard *scrying* spell. Spellcasters can cast certain spells through the *pool of scrying* at creatures or things they are scrying upon, as per the *scrying* spell.

While the pool can be shallow, it must be at least 2 feet by 4 feet. It can be formed into the top of a large pedestal, but these items are just as often found in a room's floor. If the water is ever entirely emptied from the pool, the item loses its magic.

Caster Level: 5th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*; *Market Price:* 12,000 gp.

26. SERVANT QUARTERS

Curtains hide most—but not all—of these three rooms, with beat-up wooden beds and straw mattresses, dinged-up trunks full of clothing, and other detritus from ordinary lives. Rude pictograms scrawled in chalk cover the walls, with graffiti in a dozen languages.

These are the servants quarters—or, more accurately, the githyanki slave quarters. Githyanki raids launched from Ruun-Khazai captured prisoners from countless planes, and some survived to work at the most menial tasks in the Sanctum Dome. In the end, they met the same fate as many of their masters—sacrificed to the spell that Karluth cast to hide Ruun-Khazai in a psychic storm.

27. ALCHEMIST'S LAB

Vials, flasks, beakers, burners, crucibles, and all manner of other alchemical research equipment line the shelves on the walls and are scattered across two wooden tables in this room. The floor is stained with chemicals, and a sickly-sweet odor is almost overpowering.

No one could stand the fumes from the Sanctum Dome's alchemist's lab, so it was put down here.

Shortly before seizing control of Ruun-Khazai, Karluth constructed a secret door (Search check, DC 25) that connects to a tunnel leading to the Four Towers, the ruined Pyramid of the Sublime, and ultimately to the Heart of Ruun-Khazai itself.

Using this lab gives a single character a +2 circumstance bonus to Alchemy checks.

FOUR TOWERS

Originally there were five towers, but one has been blasted into rubble. The other four are identical.

Loyalist githyanki aboard an astral brig arrive at the dock shortly after the characters arrive at the Sanctum Dome. Like the characters, the githyanki have to contend with animated ballistas, and it takes them an hour to secure the towers.

If characters have the right vantage point, they might see the astral brig pull up to the Four Towers dock. And if they explore the Four Towers in the first hour, they'll find one squad of the githyanki warband in one tower, another exploring the next nearest tower, and the command staff aboard the brig.

Unless otherwise noted, the features of the Four Towers are as follows:

Ceilings: In the Four Towers, all ceilings are 15 feet high.

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: All building surfaces are constructed of superior masonry. Exterior walls are also coated with skin of iron.

❖ **Interior Walls, Floors, and Ceilings:** 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; Climb DC 20.

❖ **Exterior Walls:** 1 ft. thick stone plus 2 in. skin of iron; stone hardness 8; hp 180; iron hardness 10; hp 90; Climb DC 25.

Doors: In the Four Towers, the doors are universally constructed of thick iron with amazing locks (Open Lock, DC 40).

❖ **Iron Doors:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60.

Windows: The only windows are arrow slits that measure 6 inches wide at their narrowest point.

Light: Hooded lanterns with *continual flame* spells inside them light each room. They've been omitted from the maps for clarity.

GITHYANKI COMBAT TACTICS

The githyanki have a powerful advantage on the Astral Plane: unparalleled mobility. Because they get a free quickened spell or spell-like ability each round, they can *dimension door* at the end of each of their turns without penalty (githyanki usually wait until the end of their turn because *dimension door* forbids further actions until their next turn). This means that they can attack, then disappear or change opponents.

Githyanki can also use *clairvoyance/clairaudience* at will, so they'll routinely "scan" an area before entering it. Githyanki sentries spend as much time using *clairvoyance* as they do looking at the real landscape around them.

If githyanki have a weakness, it's a lack of healing. The lich-queen forbids any githyanki from becoming a cleric, and githyanki bards, rangers, and druids are relatively rare. Accordingly, githyanki armies often hire mercenary clerics of other races to act as combat medics. (In this adventure, Baur is one such mercenary).

The red dragons can also take advantage of the Astral Plane. It's a terrifying thing when a red dragon uses a quickened *true strike*, then does an all-out Power Attack on a foe. And githyanki cavalry can *dimension door* in and out of the saddle at a moment's notice. The githyanki equip their red dragon steeds with barding, which makes them harder to hurt but can interfere with their spells.

FOUR TOWERS DOCK (EL 16)

This 200-foot-long dock is made of wood bound and bracketed in brass, and it juts out into the haze of the Astral Plane. A 60-foot sailing ship with gossamer sails and arcane sigils on its prow floats in the nothingness next to the dock.

The astral brig is a small ship that often takes on scouting missions for the githyanki military. In this case, it's been dispatched with elite troopers to investigate Ruun-Khazai. Throughout much of the adventure, the astral brig is home to most of the loyalist githyanki leadership. Thus it's a tough nut for the characters to crack. If the characters investigate the brig while the First and Second Squads are still active, they *dimension door* to attempt to rescue the brig.

By the time the PCs deal with these two squads, the githyanki dragon-mounted cavalry take note and investigate from the roof of Tower B (or from the stern of the brig if the Second Squad hasn't secured Tower B yet—refer to the timeline). Only if troopers and cavalry are both dead or beyond a distress call will the githyanki commander, the executive officer, and the mercenary cleric reveal themselves.

◆ **Astral Brig:** Gargantuan Vehicle; Profession (sailor) +0; Spd fly 90 ft. (good); Overall AC 1; Section hp 40 (hardness 10); Section AC 3; Atk +0 deck-mounted ballista or ram 8d6; Face 60 ft. × 20 ft.; Height 10 ft.; crew 16; cargo 40 tons (Spd 60 ft. if 20 tons or more).

The astral brig has a ballista mounted on deck that fires *ballista bolts of lightning* (as *javelins of lightning*) once per round.

♣ **Madivh, Male Githyanki Commander**
Ftr13: CR 13; Medium-size Outsider (evil); hp 102; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 24 (touch 12, flat-footed 23); Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (2d6+13/crit 17–20, greatsword) or +15/+10/+5 (1d8+5/crit 19–20 ×3, composite longbow); SA psionics; SR 18; AL NE; Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 22, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Profession (sailor) +16. **Feats:** Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (composite longbow), Improved Critical (greatsword), Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (composite longbow), Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, mage hand, telekinesis*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

Possessions: +2 greatsword, +1 mighty composite longbow (+4), +3 full plate, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of giant strength +4, potion of cure serious wounds, 30 masterwork arrows.

♣ **Calli'tao, Male Githyanki Executive Officer**
Wiz11: CR 11; Medium-size Outsider (evil); hp 43; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 11); Atk +5 melee (1d4/crit 19–20, dagger) or +9 ranged (1d8/crit 19–20, light crossbow); SA psionics; SR 16; AL NE; Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 21, Wis 13, Cha 8.

Skills: Concentration +15, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (the planes) +19, Scry +11, Search +10, Spellcraft +19. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, mage hand, telekinesis*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

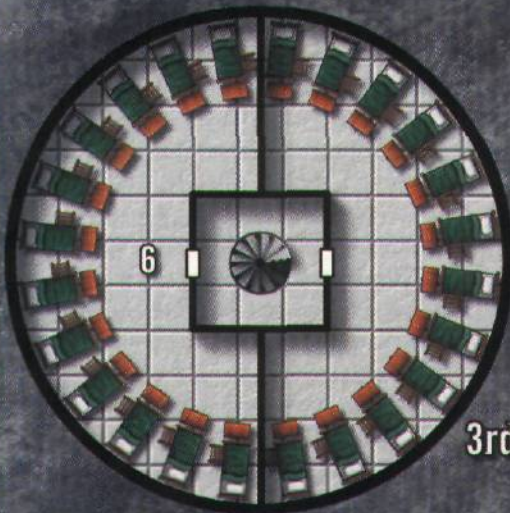
Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/5/5/4/3/1; base save DC = 15 + spell level, 17 + spell level for Enchantment and Evocation spells): 0—*detect magic* (×2), *light, read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile* (×2), *shield* (×2), *animate rope*; 2nd—*endurance, invisibility, knock, see invisibility, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, fly, haste, lightning bolt, suggestion*; 4th—*ice storm, polymorph other, scrying, wall of fire*; 5th—*cone of cold, hold monster, teleport*; 6th—*chain lightning*.

Spellbook: 0—all; 1st—*animate rope, change self, charm person, feather fall, identify, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep, summon monster I, true strike*; 2nd—*bull's strength, cat's grace, endurance, glitterdust, invisibility, knock, Melf's acid arrow, see invisibility, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, displacement, fireball, fly, haste, invisibility sphere, lightning bolt, protection from elements, suggestion*;

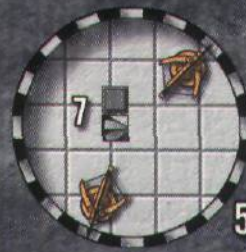
Four Towers

WEST

1 square = 5 feet

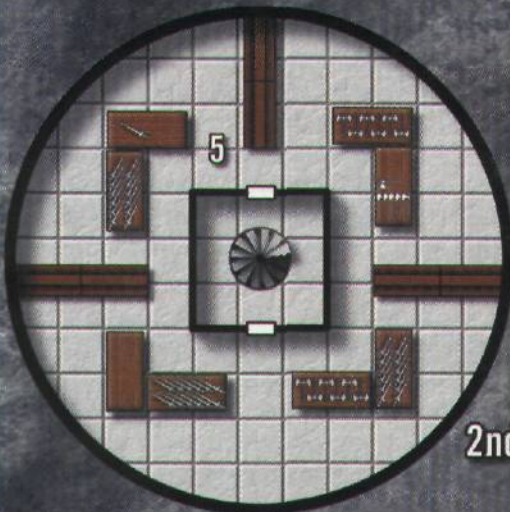


3rd and 4th Floors



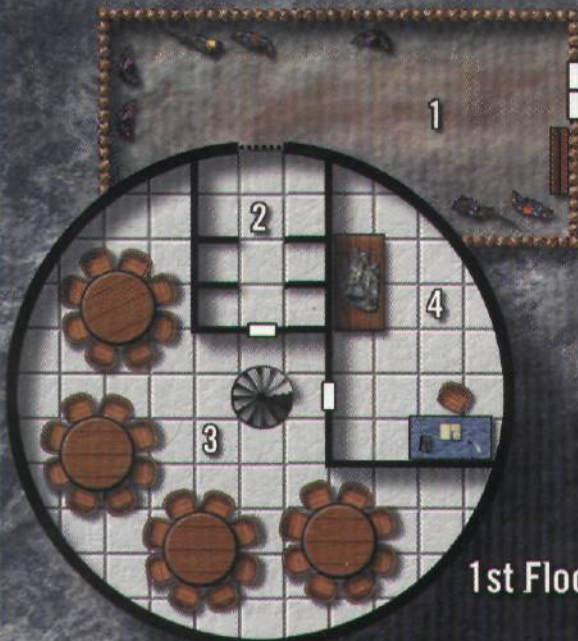
5th Floor

Dock



2nd Floor

- 1) Training Yard
- 2) Entry
- 3) Great Hall
- 4) Office
- 5) Armory
- 6) Barracks
- 7) Roof
- 8) Kitchen
- 9) Servants' Quarters



1st Floor



Basement

4th—charm monster, ice storm, polymorph other, polymorph self, scrying, wall of fire; 5th—cone of cold, dismissal, dominate person, hold monster, permanency, summon monster V, teleport, wall of force; 6th—chain lightning, disintegrate, greater dispelling, legend lore.

Possessions: Spellbook, headband of intellect +4, gloves of dexterity +2, bracers of health +2, wand of fireball (10d6, 10 charges), ring of protection +1, cloak of resistance +2, Heward's handy haversack, dagger, masterwork light crossbow with 10 masterwork crossbow bolts.

➤ **Baur, Cambion Mercenary Clr11:** CR 13; Medium-size Outsider; HD 11d8+33; hp 86; Init +0; Spd 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (average); AC 27 (touch 10, flat-footed 27); Atk +12/+7 melee (1d8+4, morningstar) or +12 ranged (1d8+3/crit 19–20, light crossbow); SA spell-like abilities; SQ half-fiend qualities; AL CE; Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +12; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 21, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +12, Concentration +17, Knowledge (religion) +4, Spellcraft +14. Feats: Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll.

Spell-like Abilities: 3/day—darkness, poison. 1/day—desecrate, unholy blight, contagion, blasphemy. Baur uses these abilities as an 11th-level cleric.

Half-fiend Qualities: Immune to poison; acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 20.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/8/6/6/5/4/2; base save DC = 15 + spell level): 0—cure minor wounds (×2), detect magic (×2), light (×2); 1st—change self*, comprehend languages, cure light wounds, deathwatch, detect good, obscuring mist, protection from good, shield of faith; 2nd—bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, death knell, desecrate, invisibility*, lesser restoration; 3rd—bestow curse, cure serious wounds (×2), dispel magic, magic circle against good, protection from elements (fire); 4th—confusion*, cure critical wounds (×2), greater magic weapon, status; 5th—break enchantment*, flame strike, healing circle, true seeing; 6th—blade barrier, mislead*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Luck (reroll any dice roll 1/day), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, and Hide are class skills).

Possessions: +2 morningstar, +1 light crossbow, 10 +2 crossbow bolts, +3 full plate, +3 large wooden shield, periapt of wisdom +4, gloves of dexterity +2, scroll of restoration, 3 doses of ointment for true seeing, holy symbol.

➤ **Githyanki Cavalry (3):** hp 68, 65, 70; see area 7 of the Four Towers for statistics and tactics.

➤ **Red Dragon Mounts (3):** hp 130, 136, 134; see area 7 of the Four Towers for statistics and tactics.

➤ **Githyanki Sailors Ftr4 (16):** It's unlikely that these sailors will see combat, and even less likely that they'll pose a significant challenge to the PCs.

Tactics: As soon as the characters begin poking around the brig and someone notices them, an alarm

is sounded and remaining githyanki troopers from the First and Second Squads (see area 2 and the Crystal Grotto for the statistics and tactics of the githyanki First and Second Squads) *dimension door* to the ship to defend it. At the same time, the githyanki dragon-riding cavalry take wing and attack from the air. Only once these forces are dealt with will the PCs need to face the githyanki officers and Baur.

Madivh is something of a ranged attack specialist; he loves to take a full-attack action with his bow from out in the Astral ether, using *dimension door* to put himself at his maximum bow range each round. The first time he appears on top of the ship's mast, one of the towers, or atop a large pile of rubble, he probably catches the PCs by surprise.

If he runs out of arrows or is otherwise forced into melee, Madivh gleefully tries to carve a swath through his foes with his greatsword, attempting to maneuver as best he can to utilize his Cleave and Great Cleave feats to maximum effect.

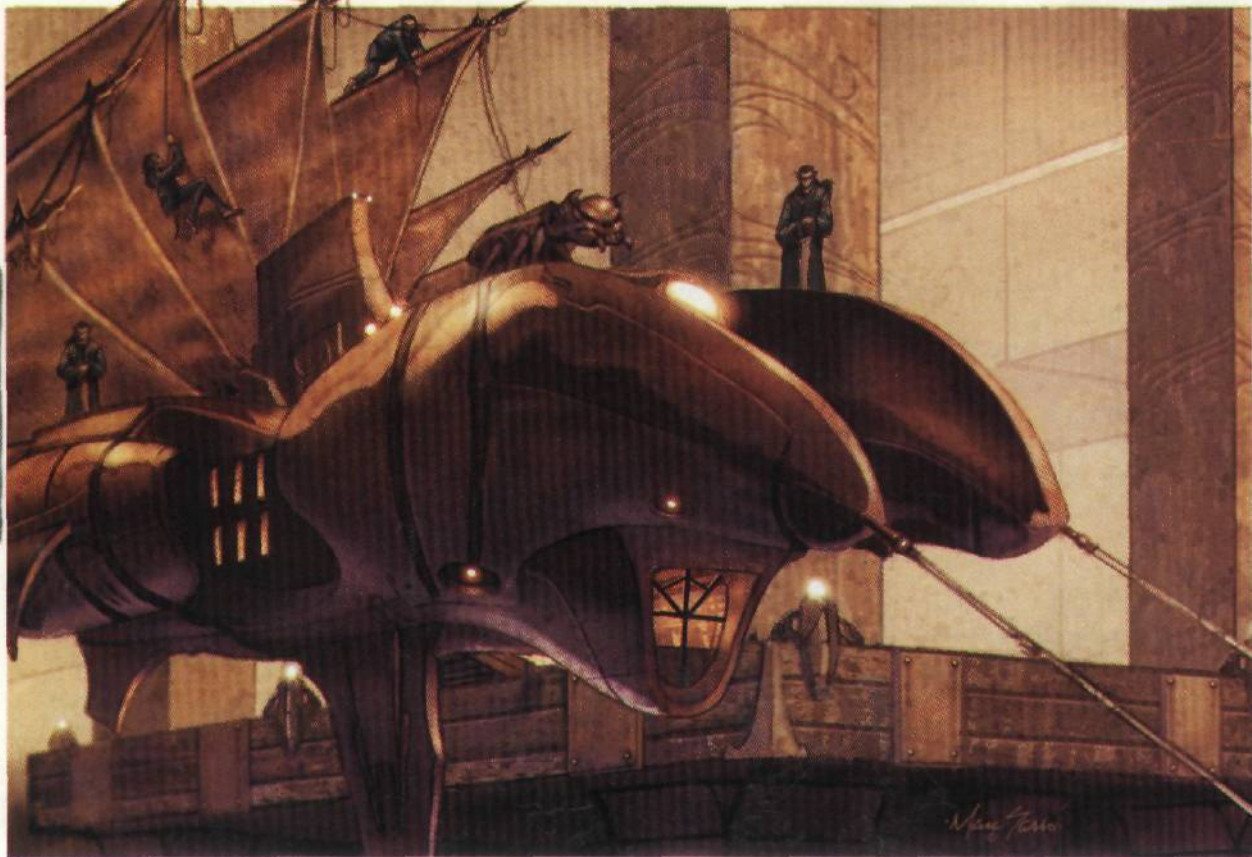
Calli'tao follows a similar strategy to Madivh's, as he also has excellent ranged potential. If he becomes aware of the PCs, he casts *endurance* on Madivh and fly on Baur, followed by *see invisibility* on himself. Once he engages in melee, he begins by casting one of his close range spells (such as *suggestion*). He then uses a free quickened *dimension door* to get at least 150 feet away and bombards the PCs with *fireballs*, *polymorph other*, *wall of fire* (although he won't plant a wall of fire on the ship), and *magic missile*.

Once Baur is aware of the fight outside on the ship's deck, he begins casting spells to increase his combat prowess, including *greater magic weapon*, *magic circle against good*, and *true seeing*. He also uses *change self* to appear as another githyanki.

Although unable to use *dimension door*, Baur uses the fly speed allotted by Calli'tao's spell to keep at a distance from his foes. He tries to move as fast as he can up into the "sky" in the first round of a fight, planting a *blade barrier* in the largest group of PCs as he goes. He only resorts to melee if he has exhausted all his ranged spells and spell-like abilities.

Development: If he has to flee (because he's low on hit points or out of magic) and he's near Madivh, Calli'tao uses his *teleport* spell to get both officers to safety. Although they would prefer to get away with the ship, they both know they can't fly the ship without a crew, and if all the other githyanki are dead or captured, that's obviously the case.

Destroying all the githyanki won't go unnoticed by the other residents of Ruun-Khazai for long. Assume Karluth finds out that the githyanki have been dealt with in 2d4 hours, and the githzerai in 2d6 hours.



1. TRAINING YARD

This yard, fenced with a shoulder-high wooden palisade, has a number of archery bullseyes along the edges and humanoid-shaped practice dummies in the center. Some of the bullseyes still have arrows sticking out of them. An empty weapons rack leans against the palisade near the only opening.

A doorway barred by an iron portcullis leads into the ironclad tower.

This is where the githyanki soldiers stationed at this tower used to train. About forty soldiers can use the training yard at once. The palisade isn't very strong (hardness 5, 15 hp); it's just intended to catch stray arrows.

2. ENTRY (EL 12 ON TOWER C)

An iron portcullis bars the way inside. Beyond it you can see two sets of waist-high walls in front of a burnished iron door.

Atop the portcullis are the words "Revenge!" and a half-dozen skulls of some creatures with unusual jaw apparatuses.

The low walls provided protection to githyanki defenders, who could fall back at any time with

dimension door. The door is unusually thick (hardness 10, 120 hp) and has an amazing lock (Open Lock, DC 40).

The skulls once belonged to mind flayers.

The entryway is magically enhanced to bolster any defenders with a wizard-created *hall of hope*.

Creatures: Once they've completely explored Tower C, the githyanki First Squad sets up watch in its entry.

☛ **Githyanki First Squad Troopers Ftr8 (4):** CR 8; Medium-size Outsider (evil); HD 8d10+8; hp 51, 56, 53, 52; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20 (touch 11, flat-footed 19); Atk +12/+7 melee (2d6+6/crit 17–20, greatsword) or +9/+4 ranged (1d8+2/crit ×3, composite longbow); SA *psionics*; SR 13; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +8, Spot +4. **Feats:** Improved Critical (greatsword), Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Sunder, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, mage hand, telekinesis*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 greatsword, gauntlets of *ogre power* +2, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, mighty composite longbow (+2) with 20 arrows.

Tactics: The githyanki try to set up situations in which they can use a full-attack action while only allowing their foes one attack. They accomplish this using their superior mobility, forcing opponents to come to them. The githyanki typically flank characters, then use *dimension door* to pop out of sight as described in the "Githyanki Combat Tactics" section.

‡ *Hall of Hope:* Any creature that enters this stronghold space gains a +2 morale bonus to saving throws, attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls while in the stronghold space (as if affected by an *emotion* spell of the hate variety; Will save, DC 14, negates, although most creatures aware of the effect voluntarily forego the save).

If a wizard creates this chamber, the DC is 16 and the market price is 14,000 gp.

Caster Level: 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *emotion*; *Market Price:* 10,500 gp.

3. GREAT HALL

This room has a number of round tables, each with eight chairs surrounding it. A long, rectangular trestle table stands atop a low platform at the edge of the room. Pennants and tapestries cover the walls, all depicting githyanki fighting mind flayers, githzerai, and in one tapestry, dwarves.

A door leads east. A wrought-iron spiral staircase leads upward and downward from here.

This is the meeting hall for the unit stationed in this tower. On the Astral Plane, meals are less necessary, so it was only occasionally used as a mess hall.

4. OFFICE

This room has a suit of plate mail standing on a rack, a massive marble-topped desk, and a map of Ruun-Khazai carved into the top of a huge oak table. Shields of various sizes, shapes, and conditions adorn the walls.

The desk belonged to the tower commander. A few papers can be found inside—mostly drill schedules, rosters, and maps showing military exercises carried out in the hills to the south.

The armor is masterwork full plate. It's spiked and has a locking gauntlet. The shields are trophies earned on the battlefield. They're all ordinary shields (many of them pretty beat up) gathered from a wide array of foes.

The map is a *greater map of tactics*, but it's not tracking anyone right now unless the loyalist githyanki have touched it. (It's certainly conceivable that they might have, if they've been through here already.)

‡ *Greater Map of Tactics:* This table (at least 5 feet by 5 feet) features a topographical map of the stronghold and the outlying area to a distance of one mile from the stronghold. When a person touches the map, a glowing icon representing her appears at the appropriate location on the map (Will save, DC 16, negates). The person can then leave the room and wander about as she likes. As long as she stays within the region represented on the *map of tactics*, the map shows just where she is. If she leaves the area and then returns, the map immediately picks up her presence again.

The map can track up to six people at a time for up to 18 hours each. The icon gives more than just location data on the tracked subjects. It also renders their status: unharmed, wounded, dying, disabled, unconscious, stunned, dead, and so on. Anyone within 5 feet of the map instantly understands how to read these icons properly.

If the maximum number of people are already being tracked, no additional people can be tracked until the time limit on one or more of the current subjects expires, or unless one of the current subjects returns to the map and touches it again.

Caster Level: 18th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *status*; *Market Price:* 36,000 gp.

5. ARMORY

This floor of the tower is one torus-shaped room full of racks, tables, and shelves covered with weapons and armor. Some of it shows a lot of use on the battlefield, while other pieces gleam as if they were never used.

Treasure: Here's an inventory of the armory:

- 85 suits of banded mail
- 12 breastplates
- 6 suits of masterwork chainmail
- 5 bucklers
- 10 large steel shields
- 75 greatswords
- 20 tridents
- 4 glaives
- 11 short swords
- 4 masterwork dire flails
- 50 composite longbows
- 800 arrows
- 15 heavy crossbows
- 200 crossbow bolts

6. BARRACKS

These rooms are basic: bare wooden bunkbeds along the walls, each with a trunk at its foot.

Githyanki soldiers rested here between battles and exercises. Each barracks has twelve bunkbeds and twelve chests.

Treasure: Each chest holds 2d10 gp, a *potion of cure light wounds*, and a spare uniform (including boots, gloves, and a pale blue tabard).

7. ROOF (EL 13 ON TOWER B)

This circular platform is guarded by crenellations along its perimeter. An iron trapdoor is sunk into the floor.

At the start of the adventure, there are two animated ballistas stationed here, but the loyalist githyanki destroy them after a 10-minute battle when the astral brig pulls into the dock.

The roof platform is enhanced with a *hall of hope* effect, similar to the one in the entryway (area 2).

Creatures: Once the githyanki first squad has completely explored Tower B, the githyanki cavalry keep watch from this area.

♣ **Githyanki Cavalry, Rgr1/Ftr5/Blk3 (3):** CR 9; Medium-size Outsider (evil); HD 9d10+18; hp 68, 65, 70; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 22 (touch 10, flat-footed 22); Atk +14/+9 melee (1d8+6/crit ×3, heavy lance) or +13/+8 melee (1d8+3/crit 19–20, long-sword); SA *psionics*, smite good; SQ *detect good*, dark blessing, command undead, aura of despair; SR 14; AL CE; Fort +14, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +6, Craft (swordsmith) +3, Hide +5, Knowledge (religion) +2, Ride +12, Wilderness Lore +4. **Feats:** Cleave, Power Attack, Mounted Combat, Ride-By Attack, Sunder, Track, Weapon Focus (heavy lance), Weapon Specialization (heavy lance).

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *dimension door*, *mage hand*, *telekinesis*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

Smite Good (Su): Once per day, the githyanki riders attempt to smite good, adding +1 to a single attack and +3 to damage.

Aura of Despair (Su): Enemies within 10 feet suffer a –2 morale penalty on all saving throws.

Possessions: +1 full plate, +1 large metal shield, +1 heavy lance, *cloak of resistance* +1, *gauntlets of ogre power* +2, *javelin of lightning*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, *potion of heroism*, masterwork longsword.

➤ **Red Dragon Mounts (3):** CR 7; Large Dragon (fire); HD 14d12+42; hp 130, 136, 134; Init +0; Spd 40 ft. fly 150 ft. (poor); AC 26 (touch 9; flat-footed 26); Atk +20 melee (2d6+7, bite), +15 melee (1d8+3, 2 claws), +15 melee (1d6+3, 2 wings), +15 melee

(1d8+10, tail slap); Face/Reach 5 ft. × 10 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon, spells, spell-like abilities; SQ immunities, blindsight 90 ft., keen senses, darkvision 300 ft.; AL CE; Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 25, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +17, Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +15, Jump +21, Listen +15, Search +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +15, Spot +15. **Feats:** Flyby Attack, Hover, Power Attack, Wingover.

Breath Weapon: 40 ft. cone of fire, 6d10 damage. Reflex save (DC 19) for half.

Sorcerer Spells (5/4): 0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *read magic*; 1st—*shield*, *true strike*.

Immunities: Sleep, paralysis, fire; double damage from cold except on a successful save.

Possessions: +1 *chain shirt* barding, exotic military saddle, bit and bridle.

8. KITCHEN

This room has a massive stove in the southeast corner, large tables, and shelves full of hardtack, dried meats, and other foods that won't spoil.

Githyanki don't need to eat on the Astral Plane, but they'd provision themselves here before taking missions to other planes. That's why the food is mostly preserved, despite the fact that food never spoils on the Astral Plane.

Karluth has constructed a secret door (Search check, DC 25) that connects to the tunnels that lead to the Heart of Ruun-Khazai.

9. SERVANTS' QUARTERS

This simple bedroom holds ten. The room holds neatly made straw beds and open shelves with dirty clothes on them.

Githyanki military units often have civilian slaves or servants to look after their gear, carry extra equipment, or perform other tasks beneath the dignity of the lich-queen's finest warriors.

THE PYRAMID OF THE SUBLIME (EL 13)

A pile of rubble about 300 feet across and 50 feet high at its apex still smolders slightly. Along the east edge of the ruins is a crumbling arch bearing the inscription "Pyramid of the Sublime."

The damage isn't really new; the timeless nature of the Astral Plane merely makes it seem so. The Pyra-



mid was once a wizards' academy run by Karluth, but he was forced to destroy it when the other wizards grew suspicious of his activities right before he conjured the psychic storm.

The devastation is nearly total. Only one salient feature of the structure remains: a tunnel that leads into the Heart of Ruun-Khazai. It's buried at the start of the adventure, but the githzerai raiders discover it (through Tardalis's *clairvoyance*) and begin digging their way inside.

The entire raiding party sets up base around the pyramid. The hellcats guard the perimeter while the two monk squads and Tardalis examine the rubble. When the tunnel is found, one squad remains to dig it out while the hellcats and the other squad head toward the Crystal Grotto. But if the characters arrive before that happens, they must face the whole raiding party at once.

The githzerai form the only group in Ruun-Khazai really willing to negotiate. However, they won't accept any sort of bargain that doesn't give them Ruun-Khazai when the dust settles. They are also extremely reluctant to let the PCs walk away with any really valuable magic, although they wouldn't object to the characters taking magic items or other gear from foes they defeat themselves. The githzerai have an initial attitude of Unfriendly (see page 149 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). Good roleplaying or

a successful Diplomacy check (DC 35) is needed to convince Tardalis and his raiders to deal with the PCs.

◆ **Tardalis, Githzerai Commander Sor13:** CR 13; Medium-size Outsider; HD 13d4+26; hp 59; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 14, flat-footed 18); Atk +10 ranged (1d8+2/crit 19–20, light crossbow); SA spells; SQ *inertial armor*, *psionics*; SR 18; AL LN; Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +9; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 24.

Skills: Concentration +18, Spellcraft +16. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Maximize Spell, Point Blank Shot, Spell Focus (Evocation), Spell Penetration.

Spells Known (6/8/8/8/7/7/5; base save DC = 17 + spell level, 19 + spell level for Evocation spells): 0—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*; 1st—*comprehend languages*, *magic missile*, *protection from chaos*, *shield*, *true strike*; 2nd—*endurance*, *glitterdust*, *invisibility*, *resist elements*, *web*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*; 4th—*confusion*, *dimension door*, *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*; 5th—*cone of cold*, *teleport*, *wall of force*; 6th—*chain lightning*, *mass haste*.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*daze*, *feather fall*, *shatter*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level sorcerer.

Inertial Armor (Sp): Githzerai can use psychic force to block an enemy's blows. This gives them a +4 armor bonus as long as they remain conscious.

Crystal Grotto

WEST

1 square = 10 feet



Possessions: +1 light crossbow, 10 +1 crossbow bolts, cloak of charisma +6, ring of protection +2, scroll of disintegrate, amulet of health +2, wand of dispel magic (14 charges).

◆ **Githzerai Raider Squad, Mnk8 (4):** CR 8; Medium-size Outsider; HD 8d8+8; hp 47, 43, 49, 48; Init +3; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21 (touch 17, flat-footed 18); Atk +10/+7 melee (1d10+2, unarmed) or +9/+6 melee (1d6+3, kama) or +10 ranged (1d6+3, javelin); SA psionics, stunning attack; SQ evasion, still mind, slow fall 50 ft., purity of body, wholeness of body, leap of the clouds; SR 13; Fort +8, Ref +11, Will +11; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +14, Jump +15, Move Silently +15, Tumble +16. **Feats:** Dodge, Weapon Finesse (unarmed), Weapon Focus (unarmed).

Psionics (Sp): At will—*daze*, *feather fall*, *shatter*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level sorcerer.

Inertial Armor (Sp): Githzerai can use psychic force to block an enemy's blows. This gives them a +4 armor bonus as long as they remain conscious.

Stunning Attack (Su): 8/day; Fortitude save, DC 17.

Possessions: +1 kama, +1 javelin, ring of protection +1, potion of bull's strength, potion of cure moderate wounds.

Tactics: If the PCs don't make a negotiation attempt, or even if they fail to approach in a conciliatory manner, the githzerai leap to attack. In combat, the monks use their *daze* power before closing to melee, if possible. They try to focus their attacks on

one or two foes at a time, preferring to use their speed to reach enemy spellcasters first.

As soon as the githzerai become aware of the PCs, Tardalis casts *endurance*. In the first round of a developing combat, the monks rally around their commander, only launching an attack after he has cast *mass haste*. Tardalis also tries to cast *fly* on himself before combat erupts. He uses his increased mobility to great advantage, preferring to stay high above a battlefield and launch his long range spells from safety.

Development: The PCs could lose a potential ally if they annihilate the githzerai, but if they're set on taking Ruun-Khazai, they have no other choice than to face the githzerai in battle.

If his force is reduced to 75% of its original strength, Tardalis calls to parley after ordering remaining troops to retreat. At that point, he will concede Ruun-Khazai to the PCs (if that is their goal), but he warns that the PCs' dealings with other githzerai will be more difficult as a result.

CRYSTAL GROTTTO (EL VARIABLE)

The surface of this shallow valley near the center of the planetoid is dotted with coal-black lumps. From

each lump emerges a silvery, crystalline growth that stretches from 10 to 20 feet tall. The crystals sing a wordless note that sounds eerily like a finger caressing the lip of a wine glass.

These crystals grow naturally in sheltered parts of Ruun-Khazai, forming a strange but thin forest in this valley. One can take cover and hide amid the crystals, which hold a secret that's not immediately apparent: If a crystal takes more than 10 points of damage, it explodes, dealing 5d6 points of damage (Reflex, DC 15 for half) to everything within 10 feet (including other crystals).

Creatures: Unless the PCs disrupt the timeline, the githyanki arrive here first, followed closely by the githzerai and their hellcat scouts. A pitched battle erupts, and if the PCs don't interfere, the githzerai accidentally discover the secret of the crystals, then use their *shatter* spell-like ability to decimate the githyanki (until the githyanki cavalry arrives).

♣ **Githyanki Second Squad, Ftr8 (4):** hp 51, 56, 53, 52; see area 2 of the Four Towers for statistics and tactics.

♣ **Githzerai Raider Squad, Mnk8 (4):** hp 38, 40, 40, 37; see the Pyramid of the Sublime description for statistics and tactics.

♣ **Hellcats (4):** hp 52, 50, 51, 53; *Monster Manual* 48.

ELSEWHERE ON RUUN-KHAZAI'S SURFACE (EL 13)

The ground is stony and rough; land travel is slow. Low ridges block sight across the planetoid. Above is the sourceless silver light of the Astral haze.

Except for the areas within crystal forests, where the ground is smoother, the surface of Ruun-

Khazai is trackless hill terrain (see Chapter 9 of the *Player's Handbook* for effects on overland movement). The surface of Ruun-Khazai is almost entirely deserted . . . almost.

Creatures: A pair of devourers haunt the dark landscape of Ruun-Khazai.

♣ **Devourers (2):** hp 80, 77; *Monster Manual* 53.

Tactics: The devourers are loyal to Karluth, although they won't admit his existence to anyone. They tend to lurk along the ridges near the center of Ruun-Khazai, and they gleefully pounce on the aftermath of any battle, hoping to drain energy from the fallen—or the survivors.

Development: Once Karluth has revealed himself to the factions, he calls the devourers back to the Heart, where they act as his bodyguards.

HEART OF RUUN-KHAZAI

It's almost impossible to predict the course of the adventure by the time the PCs reach the Heart of Ruun-Khazai. But one thing is almost certain: Karluth awaits them, and he doesn't like visitors.

Unless otherwise noted, the features of the Heart of Ruun-Khazai are as follows:

Ceilings: All ceilings are 20 feet high unless otherwise specified.

Walls, Floors, and Ceilings: All interior building surfaces are constructed of hewn stone.

♣ **Interior Walls, Floors, and Ceilings:** 3 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 540; Climb DC 22.

Doors: Doors are made of a tangle of magically augmented bone. A successful turning check can open or destroy the nearest door, which is treated as a 12-HD undead creature for this purpose only.

♣ **Bone Doors:** 6 in. thick; hardness 6; hp 60.

Light: Hooded lanterns with *continual flame* spells light each room unless otherwise specified.

HEART OF RUUN-KHAZAI ENHANCEMENTS

These effects are in place in every room of the Heart except area 8, which doesn't have a *forbidding sigil*.

Inscriptions of Vacancy: Everyone within this stronghold space becomes undetectable to scrying. In fact, to them it appears as if the room is entirely empty of people and devoid of activity, no matter how many people are in it or what they are doing.

These inscriptions are often used on areas that need to remain secure, such as throne rooms or war counsel rooms. No decent kingdom is without at least one such room in its leader's stronghold.

Caster Level: 9th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *false vision*; **Market Price:** 22,500 gp.

Forbidding Sigils: These inscriptions guard a stronghold space from unwanted visitors—extraplanar or otherwise. It

has two effects: First, the area is sealed from extradimensional travel into it, including *dimension door*, *teleport*, *plane shift*, and summoning spells. Second, creatures with alignments different from the caster's cannot enter the area. Creatures whose alignments differ in one aspect (lawful evil vs. chaotic evil, for example) take 3d6 points of damage and are hedged out. Creatures whose alignments differ in two aspects (chaotic good vs. lawful neutral) take 6d6 points of damage and are hedged out. A successful Will save (DC 19) negates both effects, but if the save is failed once, future attempts automatically fail.

Dispel magic automatically fails against *forbidding sigils* unless the dispeller is 11th level or higher.

Caster Level: 11th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *forbiddance*; **Market Price:** 12,200 gp.

1. CHAPEL (EL 11)

This room has black marble walls and a ceiling of pale blue mosaic stone supported by white pillars along the walls. Pews line the center of the room, all facing toward an empty black wall where an altar would ordinarily stand. A statue of a 10-foot-tall githyanki in long robes stands near the entry door, pointing at the blank wall.

This is Karluth's chapel, where he meditates to regain his divine spells. He doesn't have a patron deity, so there aren't specific religious trappings here.

Creature: The statue is a stone golem set to attack anyone who is not Karluth, Le'eska, or a devourer. It waits until everyone is in the room before attacking.

➤ **Stone Golem:** hp 80; *Monster Manual* 108.

2. LIBRARY

This cylindrical room is 40 feet high. Along the walls, floor to ceiling, are shelves crammed with books. A sliding ladder attached to a brass rail allows access to high shelves. A desk and a single chair also furnish this room.

This is Karluth's personal library and is a treasure trove of lore. The collection here grants a +2 circumstance bonus to the following checks: Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (religion), Knowledge (the planes), and Knowledge (nature).

Treasure: The books are worth about 6,000 gp.

3. STORAGE (EL 10)

This room is full of crates, chests, and other storage containers.

It takes several hours to search through all the unmarked containers in this room. Most of the contents are perfectly ordinary (alchemical reagents, blank parchment, food, and so forth). However, in a trapped, lead-lined strongbox rest two swords: a githyanki *silver sword* and the broken shards of the once-mighty greatsword named *Fedifensor*.

Trap: This energy drain trap is particularly damaging before a showdown with Karluth. The *true seeing* trigger means that the trap springs on the nearest PC even if he or she is invisible or ethereal, and it strikes true even if the target is the subject of a *blur* or *displacement* effect. The trap resets after 1 round, picking a random target each round after the first.

➤ **Energy Drain Trap:** CR 10; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*), automatic reset; Atk +8 ranged

touch; spell effect (*energy drain*, 17th-level wizard, Fortitude save [DC 23] negates, 2d4 negative levels for 24 hours); Search (DC 34); Disable Device (DC 34).

Treasure: A *silver sword* is a +3 greatsword that looks much like a standard githyanki weapon. However, when drawn in melee, the blade transforms into a column of silvery liquid, altering the weapon's balance round by round as the blade's shape flows and shimmers. In the hands of someone without the appropriate Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat, the weapon is clumsy (-4 penalty to attack rolls) and possesses only its enhancement bonus. A proficient user on the Astral Plane, however, is able to attack the silver cord that connects the astral form to its material counterpart. The normally insubstantial cord is treated as a tangible object with the owner's AC, hardness 10, and 20 hit points (see "Attack an Object" on page 135 in the *Player's Handbook*). A silver cord visibly trails 5 feet behind an astral traveler before fading into the astral medium. Attacking it draws an attack of opportunity from the astral traveler.

When the cord is damaged, the astral traveler must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 13) or be immediately forced to return to its body—which might be a good idea anyway if the traveler is not up to fighting githyanki on their home plane. Severing the silver cord completely destroys utterly both the astral form and the body on the Material Plane.

Caster Level: 11th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, creator must be a githyanki; **Market Price:** 98,350 gp; **Cost to Create:** 49,000 gp + 3,920 XP.

Development: Reassembling *Fedifensor* is a matter for another adventure. Its powers and abilities are left for the DM to flesh out.

4. OFFICE (EL 9)

This room has long benches along the east and west walls and a desk made of what appears to be human flesh stretched across a framework of bone.

This is Karluth's office, which he rarely uses.

Trap: Approaching the desk sets off the *incendiary cloud* trap and drops an iron plate (hardness 10, hp 90) over the door. The trap triggers as soon as someone comes within 5 feet of the desk unless that person is Karluth or Le'eska, due to the *alarm* spell that serves as a trigger. Karluth becomes immediately aware of the PCs, if he isn't already, as the *alarm* trigger is mental. It resets in 1d4 rounds.

➤ **Incendiary Cloud Trap:** CR 9; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset, spell effect (*incendiary cloud*, 15th-level wizard, Reflex save [DC 22] half damage, 4d6/round for 15 rounds); Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33).

5. LIVING QUARTERS (EL 9)

This sumptuous room has a plush bed, gilded dresser, and a small sofa next to a low table. A woman in tight-fitting leather lounges on the sofa, stretching languorously.

Creature: The woman is Le'eska, Karluth's paramour and companion throughout the last century. She uses all her wiles to turn the characters against each other or otherwise divert them.

➤ **Le'eska, Advanced Succubus:** CR 9; Medium-size Outsider (chaotic, evil); HD 12d8+24; hp 80; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 24 (touch 11, flat-footed 23); Atk +13 melee (1d3+1, 2 claws) or +15 melee (1d4+2/crit 19–20, +2 dagger); SA spell-like abilities, energy drain, summon tanar'ri; SQ damage reduction 20/+2, tanar'ri qualities, alternate form, tongues; SR 12; AL CE, Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +14, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Listen +22, Move Silently +13, Ride +13, Search +15, Spot +22. **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*charm monster*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect thoughts*, *doom*, *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *suggestion*, *teleport without error* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only); 1/day—*unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 15 + spell level).

Energy Drain (Su): the succubus's kiss or embrace bestows one negative level; the victim must succeed at a Wisdom check (DC 15) to even notice. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level has a DC of 18.

Possessions: +2 leather breastplate (treat as +2 leather armor), +2 dagger.

Tactics: Le'eska is loyal to Karluth, but flees rather than face certain death. When the characters enter, she uses *charm monster* on a weak-willed PC. If successful, she follows this attempt with a free quickened *suggestion* to another PC to go patrol the halls until she comes to retrieve him.

If attacked, Le'eska uses her energy drain kiss on a PC, followed by a quickened *teleport without error* out into the hallway. She tries to use *charm* and *suggestion* to bring a group to its knees, then uses her energy drain power to finish the now pliable PCs. If dropped to less than one-quarter her hit points and given the change, she *teleports* away.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: Le'eska is much more challenging than a normal succubus. Award 100% more experience for defeating her.

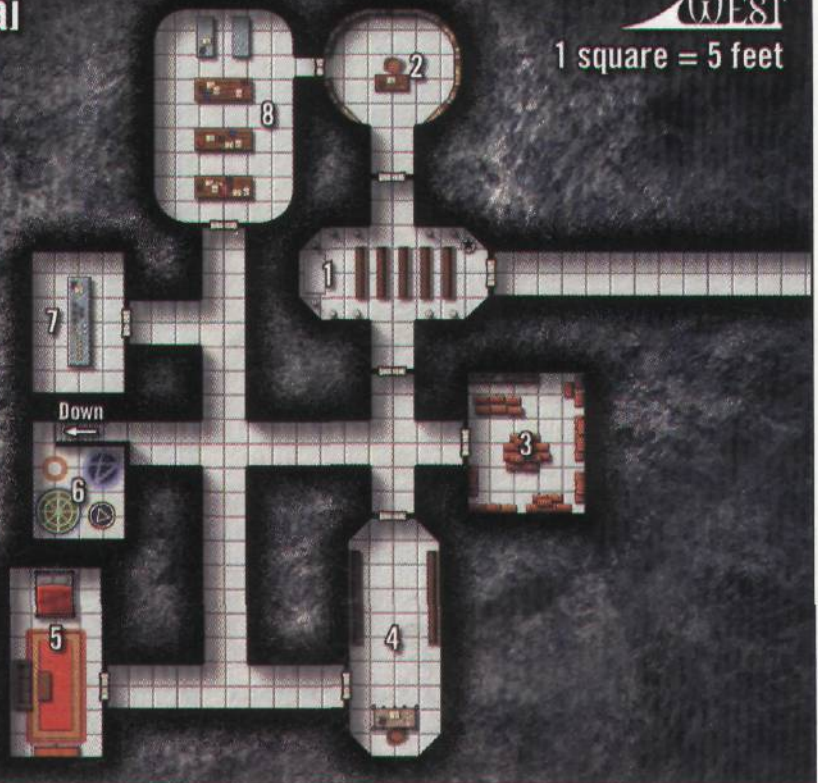


Heart of Ruun-Khazai

WEST

1 square = 5 feet

- 1) Chapel
- 2) Library
- 3) Storage Room
- 4) Office
- 5) Living Quarters
- 6) Summoning Area
- 7) Alchemical Laboratory
- 8) Magic Laboratory



6. SUMMONING AREA

This sunken room holds nothing but four summoning circles etched into the marble floor. They are apparently empty.

They really are empty—for now.

7. ALCHEMICAL LABORATORY

A massive table is covered with beakers and other glassware, all of which looks brand new—almost as if it had never been used. Slate walls are covered with chalk diagrams and formulas.

This room serves as Karluth's alchemical laboratory. It's not apparent at first glance, but the equipment is top-notch. Karluth rarely uses it, however.

8. MAGIC LABORATORY (EL 17)

Blackboards span the walls of this room and are so covered with arcane sigils and notations that they almost hurt the eyes. The marble tile floor is free of dust. Four basins—one on each wall—are empty, but each has a water-barrel suspended above it on a hinged platform. Tables are covered with parchment, books, and various material components like insect parts, plants, and bits of ore.

Creature: If Karluth isn't elsewhere, he's here. And if the characters find him here, they're in for the fight of their lives.

☞ Karluth, Male Githyanki Wiz15/Clr2: CR 17; Medium-size Outsider (evil); HD 15d4+30 plus 2d8+4; hp 80; Init +6; Spd 30 ft., fly 210 ft. (good); AC 16 (touch 14, flat-footed 14); Atk +7/+2 melee (1d6-1, *staff of frost*) or +10 ranged touch attack (as per spell); SA psionics, rebuke undead 4/day; SQ cast divinations at +1 caster level, use scrolls and other magic devices as a 16th-level wizard, familiar; SR 22; AL NE; SV Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +18; Str 8, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 25, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +22, Craft (armorsmith) +11, Craft (weaponsmith) +11, Spellcraft +27, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +16, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +12, Scry +22. **Feats:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration, Spell Focus (Necromancy), Spell Focus (Evocation).

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, mage hand, telekinesis*; 1/day—*plane shift*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

Familiar: Karluth's familiar is Sekyi, a githyanki screech-lizard. It's statistically identical to a bat familiar and has 40 hit points.

Wizard Spells Prepared (4/6/6/6/5/5/4/3/1; base save DC = 17 + spell level for Evocation and Necromancy spells): 0—*dancing lights, detect magic* (×2), *read magic*; 1st—*mage armor, magic missile* (×3), *shield, shocking grasp*; 2nd—*shield* (extended), *cat's grace, detect thoughts, endurance, ghoul touch, spectral hand*; 3rd—*blink, dispel magic, displacement, haste* (×2), *vampiric touch*; 4th—*displacement* (extended), *enervation* (×2), *Otiluke's resilient sphere, stonewood*; 5th—*dismissal, hold monster* (×2), *wall of force, improved invisibility* (extended); 6th—*disintegrate, eyebite, greater dispelling, summon monster VI*; 7th—*prismatic spray, project image* (extended), *summon monster VII*; 8th—*summon monster VIII*.

Spellbook: 0—all; 1st—*alarm, mage armor, magic missile, message, Nystul's undetectable aura, obscuring mist, shield, shocking grasp, unseen servant*; 2nd—*arcane lock, bull's strength, cat's grace, detect thoughts, endurance, ghoul touch, invisibility, magic mouth, spectral hand*; 3rd—*blink, dispel magic, displacement, fly, haste, lightning bolt, nondetection, summon monster III, vampiric touch*; 4th—*charm monster, enervation, ice storm, improved invisibility, Otiluke's resilient sphere, stonewood, summon monster IV, wall of ice*; 5th—*cone of cold, contact other plane, dismissal, hold monster, summon monster V, teleport, wall of force*; 6th—*control weather, disintegrate, eyebite, greater dispelling, legend lore, project image, summon monster VI*; 7th—*limited wish, prismatic spray, sequester, summon monster VII*; 8th—*horrid wilting, prismatic wall, summon monster VIII*.

Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1; base save DC = 12 + spell level, 14 + spell level for Evocation and Necromancy spells): 0—*cure minor wounds* (×2), *detect poison, purify food and drink*; 1st—*cure light wounds* (×2), *Nystul's undetectable aura**, *shield of faith*.

*Domain spell. Domains: Knowledge (divinations cast at +1 cast level), Magic (use scrolls, wands, and other devices with spell completion or spell trigger activation as a 16th-level wizard).

Possessions: *Carpet of flying* (3 ft. by 5 ft.), *headband of intellect +6, staff of frost* (19 charges), *amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +2, pink and green ioun stone, incandescent blue ioun stone, cloak of resistance +4, scroll of true seeing, scroll of wall of force, scroll of sequester*.

Tactics: By the time PCs encounter Karluth, he should be well aware of their presence in Ruun-Khazai due to his *clairaudience/clairvoyance* ability. He has already cast his long duration spells (*mage armor, cat's grace, and endurance*). If he knows the PCs are on their way to confront him (knowingly or not), he casts the rest of his power-up spells (*stonewood, extended shield, extended displacement, improved invisibility, and Otiluke's resilient sphere*). In the first round of combat, he then casts *haste* and *summon monster VIII* (assuming he isn't in an area of the

Heart that doesn't allow summoning), followed by a quickened offensive spell (remember the effects of the Astral Plane on spellcasting).

Karluth fights to kill, but he doesn't hesitate to try to escape if it starts to look bad for him. He might also try to parley with the PCs if he thinks he can convince them he only wants to avoid being consumed by the

ENCOUNTER LEVEL CHART

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (ELs) for all encounters in "Interlopers of Ruun-Khazai." Encounters are broken down by the three major locations in the module.

Note that because of the roaming nature of the inhabitants of Ruun-Khazai, all encounter areas can vary as you desire.

Sanctum Dome

Area	Encounter Description	EL
1	☞ Animated Ballistas (4)	13
22	☞ Noble Salamanders (2)	11

Four Towers

Area	Encounter Description	EL
-	☛ Madivh, Githyanki Ftr13; Calli'tao, Githyanki Wiz11; Baur, Cambion Clr11 ☛ Githyanki Rgr1/Ftr5/Blk3 (3) ☞ Red Dragon Mounts (3)	16
2	☛ Githyanki First Squad, Ftr8 (4)	12

Pyramid of the Sublime

Area	Encounter Description	EL
-	☛ Tardalis, Sor13 ☛ Githzerai Mnk8 (4)	13

Crystal Grotto

Area	Encounter Description	EL
-	☛ Githyanki Ftr8 (4) ☛ Githzerai Mnk8 (4) ☞ Hellcats (4)	varies

Elsewhere on Ruun-Khazai's Surface

Area	Encounter Description	EL
-	☞ Devourers (2)	13

Heart of Ruun-Khazai

Area	Encounter Description	EL
1	☞ Stone Golem	11
3	☛ Energy Drain Trap	10
4	☛ Incendiary Cloud Trap	9
5	☛ Le'eska, Advanced Succubus	9
8	☛ Karluth, Githyanki Wiz15/Clr2	17

lich-queen and eventually sever her hold on the githyanki people (although not entirely true, it's close enough to the truth—Karluth is much more self-serving than he would let on in such a situation).

CONCLUSION

If the characters manage to defeat Karluth, the loyalist githyanki, and the githzerai raiders, then Ruun-Khazai is theirs—at least until the githyanki make another attempt to retake it.

If the characters retreat too often or for too long, Karluth starts to get sacrificial victims by force, culling them from isolated settlements on the Material Plane. He *plane shifts* there, uses his magic to gather as many prisoners as possible, then returns to Ruun-Khazai. If the PCs return after spending a few weeks recuperating, they might find that Karluth needs only one or two more sacrifices for his *summon psychic storm* spell.

In such a multisided fight, it's possible that the PCs might find common cause with one of the factions vying for control of Ruun-Khazai. Such diplomatic efforts are difficult, but by no means impossible. The characters could find themselves in control of a major fortress and have powerful enough allies to keep it. Ω

David Noonan co-authored *Manual of the Planes* and co-edited the *Epic Level Handbook* and *Deities and Demigods*. He's never had a tree fall on him.

ANIMATED BALLISTA

Large Construct

Hit Dice: 8d10 (44 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Dex)

Speed: 50 ft.

AC: 23 (−1 size, +4 Dex, +10 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 19

Attacks: Slam +8 melee; or ballista +9 ranged

Damage: Slam 1d8+4; or ballista 3d6

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Special ballista bolts, trample

Special Qualities: hardness 10, construct qualities, blindsight 120 ft., find target, door opening

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +6, Will −2

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or patrol (1–4)

Challenge Rating: 9

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: 9–18 (Large); 19–24 (Huge)

This mechanical cross between a giant ant and a siege ballista generally patrols a stronghold. Though unintelligent, it's programmed with an array of defensive tactics, and its knowledge of the area it's protecting is unparalleled.

Only at first glance would an animated ballista be mistaken for its non-animated analogue. Instead of wheels, the animated ballista supports itself on six magically hardened legs arranged in forward and rear tripods. Its chassis is mostly the massive timbers and bow that support the ballista mechanism. The animated ballista can pull its own bowstring back and lock it into place. With a sizzle, a ballista bolt then appears from a nondimensional space.

COMBAT

The animated ballista prefers to stay at range and skewer the enemy with ballista bolts. It illuminates invisible foes with *faerie fire* bolts, hits obviously magical foes with *dispel magic* bolts, and fires *web-spinning* bolts to ensnare anyone who tries to flee the battlefield. The *flesh to stone* and *dismissal* ballista bolts are reserved for major threats. The animated ballista generally saves its *dimensional anchor* for enemy leaders who might otherwise get away.

Because it can open and close doors with *knock* and *arcane lock*, it often engages in a hit-and-run fight with intruders or locks them in a room for the stronghold's other denizens to handle later.

Special Ballista Bolts (Sp): The animated ballista stores 100 normal ballista bolts in a nondimensional space and can reload as a free action. In addition, it can imbue a ballista bolt with one of the following qualities once per day each: *dimensional anchor*, *faerie fire*, *dispel magic*, *dismissal*, *flesh to stone*, *web*. If the ballista bolt hits, the target is hit by the spell effect as well. The special ballista bolts function as the spells cast by an 11th-level wizard.

Trample (Ex): An animated ballista can trample creatures of Small size or smaller for 1d8+4 points of damage. Opponents who do not make attacks of opportunity against the animated ballista can attempt a Reflex save (DC 14) to halve the damage.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Find Target (Sp): An animated ballista hunts down an intruder or other enemy unerringly, as though guided by *discern location*.

Door Opening (Su): Twice per round as a free action, an animated ballista can open a door within 30 feet (as a *knock* spell cast by an 11th-level wizard) or lock one shut (as an *arcane lock* spell cast by an 11th-level wizard).

GITHYANKI COMBAT

Medium-Size Outsider (Evil)

Hit Dice: 1d8+1 (5 hp)

Initiative: +1 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 16 (+1 Dex, +5 breastplate), touch 11, flat-footed 15

Attacks: Masterwork greatsword +3 melee; or composite longbow +2 ranged

Damage: Greatsword 2d6; or composite longbow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Psionics

Special Qualities: Psionics, SR variable (see text)

Saves: Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +1

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 10

Skills: Craft (armorsmithing) +2, Craft (weapon-smithing) +2, Search +4

Feats: Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Company (2–4 3rd-level fighters), squad (11–20 3rd level fighters, plus 2 7th-level sergeants, 1 9th-level captain, and 1 young red dragon), or regiment (30–100 3rd-level fighters, plus 1 7th-level sergeant per 10 members, 5 7th-level lieutenants, 3 9th-level captains, 1 16th-level supreme leader, and 1 adult red dragon per 30 members)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always evil (any)

Advancement: By character class

Githyanki are an ancient line of humanlike beings who reside in the Astral Plane. They are gaunt, averaging 6 1/4 feet tall and typically weighing around 170 pounds. They possess rough, yellow skin and black hair that is often pulled into one or more top-knots. Their eyes gleam darkly, and their ears are pointed and serrated in back. They enjoy elaborate dress and baroque armor. They revere weapons and armor, and it is not uncommon for githyanki to show more regard for their panoply than for a mate.

Githyanki speak their own secret tongue, but most also know Common and Draconic. Like dwarves, githyanki are craftmasters, although they focus exclusively on items of warfare. Their items are distinctive, and nongithyanki who acquire them run the risk of immediate retribution should they encounter githyanki.

Most githyanki encountered outside their homes are fighters; however, wizards (called warlocks) and multiclass githyanki (called gish) are also found.

Githyanki are seasoned warriors, familiar with the tactical use of ambush, cover, and psionic sniper attacks from afar. However, they prefer to engage their enemies hand-to-hand so they can bring their devastating melee weapons to bear. Githyanki weapons are usually greatswords, bastard swords, and other particularly large-bladed weapons of special githyanki manufacture, all masterwork and each distinctively decorated and named. Githyanki wizards direct their powers with pinpoint accuracy to support their comrades in melee.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dimension door, mage hand, and telekinesis*. Upon advancing to 8th character level, a githyanki can use *plane shift* once per day. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level wizard.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A githyanki has spell resistance of 5 + 1 per character level.

GITHYANKI SOCIETY

Mind flayers enslaved entire races, including the githyanki forerunners. Centuries of captivity bred hate, nurtured resolve, and finally instilled psionic powers. With mental armaments of their own and a powerful leader to rally behind (the legendary Gith), the slaves instigated a crossplanar struggle that, in the end, threw down the mind flayer empire, bringing freedom to the surviving slaves. However, these soon split into the racially distinct githyanki and their mortal enemies, the githzerai (see the Githzerai entry, below). Each constantly attempts the extinction of the other. This animosity has burned through the centuries, warping the githyanki into the evil, militaristic creatures they are today. Both peoples' hatred of the mind flayers knows no bounds, though, and they will break off hostilities to slay illithids if the opportunity presents itself.

Githyanki live within massive fortresses adrift in the Astral Plane. A fortress contains noncombatants (mostly children) equal to 20% of the fighting population.

The githyanki have no deity but instead pay homage to a lich-queen. A jealous and paranoid overlord, she devours the essence of any githyanki that rises above 16th character level. Besides eliminating potential rivals, the lich-queen enhances her power with the stolen life essence.

Red Dragon Pact: Githyanki have a racial pact with red dragons, who sometimes serve githyanki as steeds. Individually, githyanki gain a +4 racial bonus to Diplomacy checks when dealing with red dragons. In large groups, they can make temporary alliances with red dragons at the DM's option (see Organization, above).

GITHYANKI CHARACTERS

Fighter is the favored class of the githyanki. Githyanki are never clerics, unless they've forsworn the dreaded lich-queen (which is a dangerous and ultimately lethal choice). Some of the most powerful githyanki warlords are blackguards.

GITZERAI

Medium-Size Outsider

Hit Dice: 1d8 (4 hp)

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 17 (+3 Dex, +4 inertial armor), touch 13, flat-footed 14

Attacks: Dagger +2 melee; or composite longbow +4 ranged

Damage: Dagger 1d4; or composite longbow 1d8

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Qualities: Psionics, inertial armor, SR variable (see text)

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 11

Skills: Concentration +4, Search +2

Feats: Weapon Focus (dagger)

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Fellowship (3–12 3rd-level students), sect (12–24 3rd-level students, plus 2 7th-level teachers and 1 9th-level mentor), or order (30–100 3rd-level students, plus 1 7th-level teacher per 10 adults, 5 9th-level mentors, 2 13th-level masters, and 1 16th-level sensei)

Challenge Rating: 1

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Any neutral

Advancement: By character class

Githzerai are a hard-hearted, humanlike people who dwell in the plane of Limbo, secure in the protection of their hidden monasteries.

They are thinner and taller than humans, with sharp features, long faces, and eyes of gray or yellow. Severe and serious, the githzerai tend toward somberness both in dress and personality.

As a rule, githzerai are close-mouthed, keep their own counsel, and trust few outside their own kind. They speak their own language (similar enough to the tongue of the githyanki that either could understand the other if they chose to speak instead of fight), but many also speak Common.

Many githzerai are monks; however, sorcerers, rogues, and multiclass githzerai (called zerths) are also indispensable members of a monastery.

COMBAT

Githzerai do not fear being caught defenseless, because their bodies are weapons. Able to fight weaponless and armorless, githzerai monks yearn to bring the "good fight" to their enemies, the githyanki and mind flayers. In melee, githzerai sorcerers often use their powers to enhance the monks, psychic warriors, and rogues.

Psionics (Sp): At will—*daze*, *feather fall*, and *shatter*. Upon advancing to 11th character level, a githzerai can use *plane shift* once per day. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 16th-level sorcerer.

Inertial Armor (Sp): Githzerai can use psychic force to block an enemy's blows. This gives them a +4 armor bonus as long as they remain conscious.

Spell Resistance (Ex): A githzerai has spell resistance of 5 + 1 per character level.

GITZERAI SOCIETY

The githzerai forerunners united under the command of the rebel Gith (see the Githyanki entry, above), and threw down the planespanning empire of the mind flayers. Once free, the former slaves split ideologically and eventually racially, becoming the githzerai and their foes, the githyanki. The githzerai's history of imprisonment was the foundation of their monastic lifestyle, where all githzerai learn from childhood how to eradicate potential oppressors and enemies of the line (anyone not a githzerai).

Githzerai live within self-contained, fortresslike monasteries hidden deep in the swirling chaos of Limbo. While disorder rules outside, stability holds sway inside. Each monastery is ultimately under the control of a sensei, a monk of at least 16th level, and follows a strict schedule of chants, meals, martial arts training, and devotions, according to a particular sensei's monastic philosophy. A monastery contains noncombatants (mostly children) equal to 15% of the fighting population. Githzerai males and females may be found in almost any role or class.

Rrakkma: As a special devotion, githzerai sometimes organize mind flayer hunting parties called rrakkma. A rrakkma consists of 4–5 githzerai of 8th level and 1–2 of 11th level, mainly monks, but also containing at least one sorcerer and possibly a rogue. A rrakkma does not return to its home monastery before slaying at least as many illithids as its membership.

GITZERAI CHARACTERS

A githzerai's favored class is monk (such characters are of lawful neutral alignment).

CRITICAL THREATS

BY DUNGEON STAFF

ARTWORK BY JASON A. ENGLE



CRITICAL
THREATS:
LORD FLAME

LORD FLAME

Flamebrother Salamander, Ftr1: CR 3; Small Outsider (Fire) (3 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 3d8+3 plus 1d10+1; hp 25; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Atk +7 melee (1d6+1 and 1d6 fire/crit ×3, masterwork light lance) or +6 melee (1d6+1 and 1d6 fire/crit ×3, halfspear) and +4 melee (1d4 and 1d6 fire, tail slap); SA heat, constrict 1d4 and 1d6 fire; SQ fire subtype; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Skills: Craft (armorsmithing) +6, Craft (weaponsmithing) +7, Escape Artist +7, Hide +9, Listen +7, Ride +5, Search +7, Spot +7. **Feats:** Mounted Combat, Multiattack, Ride-By Attack.

Possessions: Chain shirt, buckler, masterwork light lance, halfspear, *potion of cure light wounds*, 3d6 gp in a chain pouch.

The powerful noble salamander sorcerer Ssizat once learned of a powerful wizard on the Material Plane who was massing an army to assault one of Ssizat's enemies, an azer named Umat, on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Hoping to garner an ally in the coming skirmish, Ssizat traveled to the Material Plane to negotiate with this wizard. Accompanying him was his usual retinue of forty trained thoqqua riders, two elder fire elementals, and six noble salamanders who served as his trusted council of advisors.

Unfortunately, Ssizat underestimated the cunning of his enemies. It was, in fact, the very enemy he hoped to ally with who had planted false rumors of this powerful wizard on the Material Plane, and it was this very enemy who had set up an ambush to destroy Ssizat.

A fierce battle raged, and the forces of Ssizat were quickly overwhelmed. To free himself from the chaos of the battle, he broke his *staff of the magi*, scattering friend and foe alike in the resulting release of pent-up magic. One of his thoqqua riders, a

flamebrother named Erthuss, was thrown from his mount and into the underbrush nearby, where he fell unconscious. When he awoke, he immediately went to explore the battle site, only to discover that no trace of survivors could be found. Erthuss had been left behind.

Mounting his thoqqua companion, the devilish salamander surveyed the land to see whether he could find someone to send him home. In the first town he came to, he found that many of the things he touched burned to the ground, and the soft fleshlings who lived in such flammable buildings fled from him in terror. Erthuss reveled in their fear, and his sadistic nature found this aspect of the Material Plane enticing.

He wandered into the neighboring woodlands, where he eventually encountered the O'mak orc tribe. Although he did not speak their tongue, he recognized the craven and subservient nature of the orcs and challenged their tribal leader to a fight to determine who would rule the tribe. Erthuss prevailed.

Now, Erthuss, or Lord Flame as he prefers to be called, rules the O'mak tribe. After learning both the Orc and Common languages from his new clansfolk, he moved their home to a dormant volcano, the heat of which suits his nature. From there, he plots to extend his fiery reach farther than ever.

APPEARANCE

Lord Flame looks like 3-foot-long serpent with the muscled arms and torso of a humanoid creature, and a hawkish, cruel face. Wearing a blackened chain shirt of his own making and wielding weapons of scorched steel, his body flickers with flames generated by the heat of his own body. His scales are the typical red and black of his kind, but his gear, plus the presence of his thoqqua mount, Gerruth, sets him apart from other salamanders.

TACTICS

Lord Flame loves the thrill of melee combat, but he was trained to maximize his damage potential while making it hard to be struck in combat himself. His favorite tactic is to use his Ride-By Attack feat to maximum effect, charging up and past an enemy on Gerruth, then sprinting away after dealing double damage (from charging with a lance).

He is almost never without a large retinue of orcs, some of whom he has trained to fight on giant lizard mounts. Given enough time, Lord Flame hopes to assemble a large force of orc cavalry and spread his fiery destruction across the countryside. Already, other tribes have flocked to his banner, seeking the power and riches he promises.

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs might encounter Lord Flame's mounted orc barbarians and fighters while traveling near the clan's volcanic home. They could be scouting a village or small city nearby, or they might just be on a foraging run.

Alternatively, the PCs might be hired by a village that has already been raided by the O'mak tribe to seek out and destroy the villains. In this case, survivors of the raid would tell stories of the flaming snake-man who led the charge into the village, mounted on a worm with a head of lava. Ω



THE SWARM

BY TITO LEATI

ARTWORK BY BOB KLASNICH • CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

† Magic Items ➤ Monsters ♣ NPCs ♠ Objects 👑 Settlements ↗ Traps

"The Swarm" is a D&D adventure for four 1st-level PCs. A dwarven PC might particularly enjoy this adventure, as it includes two opposing groups of dwarves and goblins whose reciprocal racial hatred is augmented by an old feud. In addition, the adventure features a new monster: the hive spider.

Hive spiders appear in the D&D novel *The Savage Caves*, by T.H. Lane, which can be found at your local bookseller.

BACKGROUND

Forty years ago, after many months of open warfare between goblins and dwarves, a search-and-destroy expedition led by Brokil Golkern (a mountain dwarf lord of great fame) exterminated a tribe of goblin raiders living on Mount Athrof. The goblins proved themselves worthy of the dwarves' undying enmity, as many dwarves were slain in the treacherous, meandering paths that crisscross the craggy surface of Mount Athrof before victory was finally achieved.

During the expedition, to his great delight, Brokil discovered a poorly exploited but huge vein of iron ore in enemy territory. He instantly knew that his crafty dwarves could turn this deposit into a rich mine. Unfortunately, too many of the dwarven lord's warriors had died in the recent struggle to leave a decent garrison in the newly conquered area. For this reason, Brokil decided to return home. Before he left, however, he drew an accurate map to record the location of the mine so his people could find it again without too much trouble.

In following years, the population of the Golkern clan increased, and Brokil's children reached adulthood. Now, four decades after their father's expedition, Brokil's two sons, Cenkil and Liff, have set out with a group of followers to explore the arid slopes of Mount Athrof and claim the iron mine there.

Brokil's sons are unaware that a goblin survivor of their father's raid—a cleric of Maglubiyet named

Plukkah—not only survived the dwarven assault forty years ago but also managed to eke out a living in his tribe's old stomping grounds.

Plukkah did not escape the notice of the dwarven expedition forty years ago. They captured and tortured him. Brokil himself blinded the goblin with a hot iron during interrogation. Aware that his execution was imminent, Plukkah made a desperate escape attempt, jumping off a cliff and plunging into a misty chasm. Informed of this, Brokil gave the goblin cleric up for dead. But Plukkah was not killed by the fall. A subterranean pool at the bottom of the chasm saved him.

Six goblin children who had cleverly escaped the slaughter dragged Plukkah's unconscious body from the pool. Thanks to them, Plukkah was able to pray to Maglubiyet to heal his superficial wounds. However, his eyesight was lost forever.

Plukkah adopted the goblin youths, and they became his eyes while he grew accustomed to his impairment. Above everything else, the cleric inculcated in his apprentices a ferocious hatred of dwarves, hoping that someday they might help him strike back at the Golkern clan.

Two decades after the destruction of Plukkah's tribe, a strange arachnid monster called a hive spider queen moved into the area vacated by the goblins to start a new colony. Backed by his followers, Plukkah confronted the queen, whose sight-scrambling ability had no effect on the goblin cleric. Impressed by this fact, the queen used her telepathy to converse with Plukkah and forge an alliance. Plukkah allowed the queen to spawn a large number of drones and learned how to control them with her consent. Through his link with the queen, the goblin cleric was also able to "see" again through the eyes of the drone hive spiders he commanded.

With the hive spiders as allies, Plukkah plans to exact revenge against the Golkern clan, whose members have once again come to Mount Athrof.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure opens with an overland journey across a mountainous area. The PCs are traversing a path called Ibex Walk near Mount Athrof. At one point, they must cross a stone bridge built near the convergence of two deep canyons ("Golkern's Bridge" on the map). Read or paraphrase the following:

The trail continues over a deep rift thanks to a sturdy bridge set across a narrow, 20-foot-wide span of the chasm. The bridge is small and simple, but it was obviously built by skilled craftsmen.

Brokil Golkern's engineers built the bridge forty years ago. Any dwarven PC who makes a successful Wisdom check (DC 10) or any other character who makes an appropriate Craft or Profession check (DC 15) recognizes the dwarven construction. Under the bridge, which is still safe, the chasm plunges 150 feet to the rocky bottom of Barghest's Rift.

The goblins of Mount Athrof can reach this place by means of a hidden path, whose entrance lies among the rocks about 180 feet north of Ibex Walk (see map). When they first cross the bridge, the PCs have no chance of spotting the hidden path.

Ten miles east of the bridge ("Spider Sighting" on the map), the PCs notice a small spiderlike creature (a hive spider drone) creeping among the rocks of a steep slope at a distance of 50 feet.

Creature: Tlukkah uses hive spider drones to survey the grounds of Mount Athrof. Thanks to his link with this particular spider, the goblin cleric becomes aware of the approaching PCs. The drone scuttles out of sight immediately. Only a PC making a successful Spot check against the hive spider's Hide check (the spider gets a +4 circumstance bonus for one-half cover) can target it with a ranged attack before it disappears in a tiny fissure in the rock. If the PCs kill the hive spider, they can study it.

➤ **Hive Spider Drone:** hp 3; see the "Hive Spider" description at the end of the adventure.

Development: Tlukkah's ability to see through the eyes of the hive spiders gives him a unique tactical advantage, but you should not overuse it, as Tlukkah is not omniscient. Moreover, a snooping hive spider drone can always be spotted by a single random PC who makes a Spot check (opposed by the drone's Hide check). Taking out a snooping drone does not prevent Tlukkah from knowing the position of the PCs but earns the party some XP and reduces the total number of hive spiders in the area (see area 3 of Tlukkah's Lair for details).

For Tlukkah's statistics and how he controls hive spiders, see "The Goblin Cleric" sidebar.

A FAMILY ROW

This encounter takes place at the location marked "Dwarves' Camp" on the map. As the PCs continue their journey on the trail, they meet a group of seven dwarven fugitives who look like the survivors of a lost battle. Read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead you hear two deep but excited voices, both grumbling and shouting in Dwarven. Where the trail intersects a narrow path that climbs north toward the mountaintop, you spot a campsite. Seven dwarves armed with bows and axes occupy the campsite. Two of them argue loudly, while the others stand and observe. Another figure, covered by a bloody blanket, lies on the dusty ground nearby.

The seven standing dwarves appear dirty and beaten. The figure lying on the ground—another dwarf—is dead. A rug is mercifully draped over his lacerated body. The two arguing dwarves are the most important-looking ones, quite young and bearing more than a passing resemblance to one another. They are quarreling about what the group should do. The other dwarves wait impatiently for the outcome of the row, occasionally glancing sadly at their dead friend.

If the PCs ask what is going on, they learn that the two quarreling dwarves are Cenkil and Liff Golkern, respectively the leader and the second-in-command of the group. The dead dwarf, an older individual, was Niefald, the cleric of the expedition (Clr2). The dwarves were ambushed the day before by a band of goblins, which threw a strange-looking net over them (see "Dwarves' Fight" on the map). As the goblins peppered them with arrows, a swarm of spiders came upon the unlucky dwarves stuck in the net. To escape that deathtrap, the dwarves were forced to retreat, leaving four of their number behind.

The dwarves are faced with a conundrum mostly centered on their recent failure. This is the reason for the argument between Cenkil and Liff.

- Cenkil, the elder brother (lawful neutral), is mostly concerned about the honor of his clan, which cannot risk another defeat. He is also worried for the loss of Niefald (whose body he personally carried away from the ambush site), and he wants to rush immediately back to his clan's home to have the cleric *raised* by a high priest of Moradin. Niefald, in fact, is an important advisor of Brokil Golkern, and Cenkil is afraid of being held responsible for the cleric's death. Cenkil knows that reaching the clan's home requires about as many days of travel as the cleric's body will stay preserved enough to be *raised*. He sees no reason to wait and wants to leave for home immediately.

• Liff, the younger brother (lawful good), fears that some of the four dwarves left behind are still alive—prisoners of the goblins or worse. He wants to make at least one attempt to rescue them before it is too late.

Creatures: The dwarves are the remnant of a bigger scouting group from the Golkern clan. The five surviving warriors under Cenkil Golkern's command have the following nicknames: Ironbrow, Claynose, Rustler, Merciless, and Lout (they also have matching looks and demeanors). The four missing-in-action dwarves are Twinbeard, Flatfoot, Trunk, and Digger. The dwarves are all armed with dwarven waraxes and shortbows.

♣ **Golkern Clan Soldiers, Male Mountain Dwarves Ftr1 (5):** CR 1/2; Medium-size Humanoid (dwarf) (4 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 1d10+1; hp 7, 7, 6, 8, 9 (currently 5, 5, 4, 3, 3); Init +0; Spd 15 ft.; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16; Atk +3 melee (1d10+1/crit ×3, dwarven waraxe) or +1 ranged (1d8/crit ×3, longbow); SQ dwarven traits; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Wil +0; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +2, Craft (metalworking) +2, Listen +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe), Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe).

For Cenkil and Liff Golkern's statistics, see "The Golkern Brothers" sidebar.

THE HIVE SPIDERS ATTACK! (EL 3)

As the bickering between the brothers continues (Cenkil: "Irresponsible brat! We would fall to the next trap with our strength halved!" Liff: "Abandoning

our friends is like murdering them! Dwarves do not leave their comrades behind!"), a swarm of hive spiders suddenly attacks the dwarves and the player characters as well.

Creatures: The hive spiders become visible at a distance of 50 feet. They automatically surprise the dwarves, as well as those PCs who are unable to beat the spiders' Move Silently check with a Listen check (with a -2 circumstance penalty for the Golkern brothers' loud argument).

➤ **Hive Spider Drones (10):** hp 2 each; see the "Hive Spider" description at the end of the adventure for statistics.

Tactics: The hive spiders fight mindlessly until all of them are destroyed. Tlukkah controls them like automatons and can direct a maximum of eleven hive spider drones at one time (see "The Goblin Cleric" sidebar). Tlukkah always keeps one drone near him to act as his eyes.

Development: Immediately after the attack, the raspy voice of a screaming old goblin echoes in the canyon. The voice belongs to Tlukkah, who is hiding out of sight, but close enough that his voice carries through the twisting canyons (out of encounter range). The goblin cleric warns the dwarves that their doom is near, shouting in Goblin "Begone, filthy Golkern rats. You cannot defeat the swarm!" He adds that two of the missing dwarves are still alive and that both are going to die slowly and painfully. Of course, the wicked Tlukkah ends his speech with a gleeful cackle.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Swarm" is designed for 1st-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

2nd level: Add one expert level to Tlukkah. Add one warrior level to the goblins and add ten hive spiders to the hive (area 3). Advance the hive spider queen to 3 HD, and add an average of 1d4 points of damage to each trap.

3rd level: In addition to the changes specified above, add one cleric level to Tlukkah and another warrior level to the goblins. Add ten more hive spider drones to the hive (area 3), and advance the hive spider queen to 4 HD. Add an average of 2d4 points of damage to each trap.

If you do not find the idea of Liff going with the PCs interesting or simply dislike having an NPC accompany the party, have the dwarves give Brokil's map to the PCs and leave the mission entirely on their shoulders. In this case, Cenkil promises a reward of 250 gp per missing dwarf brought back to the Golkern clan, dead or alive. If the PCs don't have Liff's help, inexperienced parties of 2nd or possibly 3rd level might find the adventure as written challenging enough. If Liff goes with the party, you might want to adapt his level to that of the PCs;

just keep him at the average level of the group, or within a single level to maintain adventure balance.

4th or 5th level: In addition to the changes specified above, give Tlukkah another level or two of cleric (keep him at or just above the party's level). You could also consider giving him an item that, on command, emits a deeper darkness spell centered on the wielder. This makes the final encounter much more challenging.

Also, advance the hive spider queen, paying special attention to her size. If she is advanced to the point that she can no longer move comfortably in some of the narrower tunnels, you might consider widening some of the tunnels to allow her a free range of movement. At this level, the drones won't be much of a challenge, but allow them to overwhelm foes with Aid Another grapple actions against the PCs.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure. As written, the adventure contains about 1,000 gp worth of treasure, with the possibility to earn a reward of up to 1,000 gp from the Golkern clan. Consult page 170 in the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide* (Tables 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4) to determine treasure appropriate to the new encounters.



WHAT TO DO?

After the defeat of the hive spiders, the surviving dwarves still have a dilemma. Only the PCs can solve it, furthering one of the two possible courses of action and possibly allowing the dwarves to take care of the other. They can go to raise Niefald (see "Back for the Dead" below) or try to save the missing dwarves (see "On for the Living"). In any case, the PCs, if they accompany the dwarves, have to fight the goblins and the hive spiders, for Tlukkah is determined to hunt down all intruders, whether they withdraw, advance, or just pass near.

BACK FOR THE DEAD (EL 4)

Returning Niefald's body to the Golkern clan's home is the less "heroic" choice for PCs. Eager to push the heroes in this direction, Cenkil Golkern offers them his four gems to escort Niefald's body to the clan's home. This way, he also hopes to discourage Liff from foolhardy actions.

If the PCs accept Cenkil's proposal, Liff is wise enough to give up his plan and follows his brother, grumbling all the way back.

Creatures: Knowing that his enemies are turning back, Tlukkah gathers all his troops and rushes to Golkern's Bridge to cut their retreat. The ambushing group consists of the goblin cleric, five bodyguards, and eleven hive spiders.

Tlukkah has prepared a makeshift demolition charge to destroy Golkern's Bridge. As the goblin

THE GOLKERN BROTHERS

Cenkil Golkern: Cenkil is, much like his father Brokil, a stubborn, brave, and strong mountain dwarf. He is disciplined to the point of being excessively single-minded about most things. He distrusts strangers and hates goblins with a passion. He is also obsessed with how his father judges his actions. Cenkil respects his brother Liff but considers him a little too soft-hearted for war.

☞ **Cenkil Golkern, Male Mountain Dwarf War2:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (4 ft. 6 in. tall); HD 2d8+2; hp 13 (currently 9); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Atk +3 melee (1d10+1/crit ×3, dwarven waraxe) or +2 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., stonecunning, +2 racial bonus on saves against poison and spells, +1 racial bonus on attacks against goblinoids; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +3, Climb +4, Craft (metalworking) +2, Jump +4. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Chainmail shirt, small steel shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, dagger, miscellaneous adventuring gear, *potion of bull's strength*, Brokil's map (see PC handout), four gems (worth 50 gp each), 27 gp in pouch.

Liff Golkern: Liff, the younger brother, is far less proud and suspicious than Cenkil. He shares his brother's bravery but is more curious and tolerant. "Although the life of a true friend is a perishable thing," he says, "it is more precious than a heap of imperishable gold." More philosophical and charming than the average member of his race and an accomplished lockpicker, Liff is just a bit lazy, which is almost a capital offense for many mountain dwarves.

☞ **Liff Golkern, Male Mountain Dwarf War1/Exp1:** CR 1; Medium-size Humanoid (4 ft. 4 in. tall); HD 1d8+2 (War) plus 1d6+2 (Exp); hp 12 (currently 10); Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15; Atk +1 melee (1d10+1/crit ×3, dwarven waraxe) or +3 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft., stonecunning, +2 racial bonus on saves against poison and spells, +1 racial bonus on attacks against goblinoids; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +5, Climb +5, Craft (metalworking) +4, Jump +4, Open Lock +5, Search +3. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (dwarven waraxe).

Possessions: Chainmail shirt, small steel shield, dwarven waraxe, shortbow with 20 arrows, dagger, thieves' tools, miscellaneous adventuring gear, *potion of sneaking*, 35 gp in pouch.

cleric attacks the encamped dwarves (see “The Hive Spiders Attack”), four of his bodyguards place the charge while the fifth keeps watch for enemies. The charge consists of 10-pound keg filled with an alchemical substance similar to gunpowder (see the *DUNGEON MASTER’s Guide*, page 163). To make it explode at the right moment, Tlukkah’s bodyguards target the keg with arrows lit with flaming pitch. A natural outcropping 120 feet (two range increments) from the bridge provides the goblin archers with one-half cover (+4 cover bonus to AC). The keg has AC 10 and explodes when struck by the first flaming arrow, weakening the bridge to the point that any weight in excess of 50 pounds causes it to collapse.

The goblin archers wait until the PCs are within 60 feet of the bridge before shooting the keg with their arrows. Immediately after, Tlukkah orders his goblins and hive spiders to attack.

➤ **Tlukkah, Male Goblin Clr2/Exp2:** hp 13; see “The Goblin Cleric” sidebar for statistics.

➤ **Tlukkah’s Bodyguards, Male Goblin Ftr1 (5):** hp 6 each; see area 1 of “Tlukkah’s Lair” for statistics.

➤ **Hive Spider Drones (11):** hp 2 each; see the “Hive Spider” description at the end of the adventure for statistics.

Tactics: Tlukkah and his goblins take the best cover available to them on the north side of Ibx Walk. This gives them one-half cover and places them about 120 feet (two range increments) from the PCs. Out of their lair, the goblins prefer to fight only from a distance, shooting arrows from cover and sending ten hive spiders forward as fodder. (The eleventh spider drone stays near the goblin cleric and serves as his “eyes.”) The goblins retreat as soon as the attacking hive spiders have been killed.

Development: If Golkern’s Bridge is damaged, the dwarves realize that there is no hope of repairing the bridge and raising Niefald in time. They bury the dwarven cleric and join the heroes to destroy the goblins. Otherwise, they try to leave Mount Athrof from the other side, journeying east along the Ibx Walk.

ON FOR THE LIVING

This is the most likely option pursued by good PCs, and the one that produces the most interesting story. If the PCs decline Cenkil’s offer and decide to go with Liff, the latter accepts their help with joy. The other dwarves support Liff’s resolution and remind Cenkil that it is up to “each dwarf to choose his own tunnel.”

Awed by his little brother’s bravery and seeing a rational solution to the dilemma, Cenkil hands Liff the map drawn by their father (see the Brokil’s Map player handout) and embraces him: “You will be a hero or another dwarven skull on Mount Athrof,” he

says, giving the PCs a nod. After that, he orders his men to load Niefald’s body on a makeshift stretcher and departs, heading west across Golkern’s Bridge. Before leaving, Cenkil considers giving the party cleric Niefald’s scroll of *entropic shield*. To obtain the scroll, the cleric PC must succeed in a Diplomacy check (DC 13) with a +2 circumstance bonus if the PC can speak Dwarven.

Development: Tlukkah does not ambush Cenkil’s group at Golkern’s Bridge and instead keeps all his forces to fight those who seem determined to invade his territory.

With Liff at their side, the PCs must explore the paths of Mount Athrof to save the dwarven prisoners before it is too late. As the party proceeds, Liff shows the PCs his father’s map and tells them the story of Brokil’s expedition. (You should determine the information available to Liff by referring to the “Background” section and the Mount Athrof area map provided on page 56.)

MOUNT ATHROF

Mount Athrof is an uneven mass of arid limestone that rises among a bigger mountain and two converging canyons: the Goblin Rift and the Horned Chasm. In ages past, heavy precipitation eroded the top of Mount Athrof, carving a natural labyrinth of passages in the soft rock. Only a few paths, carved over sections of the course of ancient streams, allow easy travel on the mountain heights. The trail that borders the south side of Mount Athrof was built centuries ago by the goblins, who hunted the many ibexes living on the south side of the mountain for fresh meat. Today, the ibex population is noticeably reduced, and only a few specimens can be seen climbing the slopes near the trail from time to time.

Unencumbered PCs move at normal speed on the Ibx Walk and at half speed on the lesser paths (which are about 20 feet wide) due to the broken and uneven walking surface. See page 143 in the *Player’s Handbook* for information on poor walking surfaces. The cliffs that border the lesser paths average 20–30 feet high. Loose shale, dust, and rocks on the cliff faces makes climbing them difficult (Climb check, DC 20). Overland movement away from the paths is almost impossible by normal means and would require frequent and dangerous use of Climb, Jump, and Tumble skills.

The hidden paths marked on the Mount Athrof area map are very narrow trails (5 feet wide) known only by the goblins. Only one was discovered by Brokil’s expedition; see the “Brokil’s Map” handout. These paths are treacherous, half-subterranean passages that sometimes blossom into labyrinthine

OLD GOBLIN DWELLING (EL 2)

Tlukkah's tribesfolk occupied this small network of caves prior to the dwarven attack forty years ago. The old lair includes a guardroom beyond the entrance, a common area surrounded by a cluster of cubicles, a kitchen with a natural chimney, a storage cave, and several narrow tunnels once used as escape routes.

The goblin defenders made an awkward attempt to halt the dwarven invaders by triggering a cave-in, leaving the uncollapsed sections of the lair unfit for occupation. The uneven, 10-foot-high ceilings show many menacing cracks, but they are not in immediate danger of collapsing. Liff or a dwarven PC spots the fissures automatically; other PCs can make a Spot check (DC 10) to notice the cracks.

In one of the cubicles adjoining the common area lies the rotten corpse of a mantichore that died a few weeks before. Any PC who rips open the mantichore's chest and makes a successful Search check (DC 16) finds an intact malachite arrow tip (worth 100 gp) stuck in the monster's ribcage. The character making the unpleasant cut, however, has a 50% of contracting Cackle Fever (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 75). The chance of contracting the disease is halved if the PC protects her nose in some way from the stench of the mantichore's exposed innards.

Nowadays, the only living inhabitants of the old goblin lair are four stirges (see *Creatures*).

The goblin lair had three escape routes, but two were discovered and plugged by Brokil's warriors. The unplugged escape route was too narrow for an adult goblin to pass through, but small enough to be used by the goblin children who have since become Tlukkah's bodyguards. To find the narrow escape route, the PCs must succeed at a Search check. Only a Small PC who succeeds at an Escape Artist check (DC 17) can navigate it.

An empty crystal vial (worth 5 gp) rests on the ground 60 feet down the narrow escape route. A label in Dwarven reads "invisibility." The goblin children took this potion from a slain dwarf and used it to escape.

After about 120 feet, the narrow escape tunnel comes to a dead end, having collapsed of its own accord years ago.

Creatures: The stirges attack only if the heroes enter the storage cave, where they doze during the day, or if the PCs camp for the night inside the cave complex.

➤ **Stirges (4):** hp 5 each; *Monster Manual* 173.

IRON DEPOSIT (EL 2)

Here, on the face of a cliff, the PCs find a small, long-abandoned goblin mine with a crude smithy built nearby. What little equipment was used by the

miners (shovels, pickaxes, metal buckets, wooden lifting machines) is now completely ruined. Nothing of value can be found here besides the mining resources sought by the Golkern clan.

Creatures: Two small earth elementals wandered into this area and were immediately attracted to the wonderful smell of rich iron ore. They've since decided to make the deposit into a new home and, in the manner of creatures accustomed to having their way, are protective of the newly acquired territory.

➤ **Small Earth Elementals (2):** hp 11, 12; *Monster Manual* 82.

Tactics: The elementals attack as soon as the PCs enter the area, choosing two targets indiscriminately. They fight until one of them drops or both are reduced to 25% of their hit points, at which point they sink into the ground and disappear from sight.

TLUKKAH'S PLUNGE (EL 1)

In this place, according to Brokil's map, Tlukkah chose his own doom, jumping down the chasm that opens at the end of the path. The only memento of that tragic episode are some words in Dwarven etched on the rocky wall by an inspired member of Brokil's expedition (Search check, DC 9): "Lightness of being won't make you fly."

If a PC climbs down the chasm for 150 feet right under the spot where the words are etched, she finds a funnel-like cave with a pool of water at its bottom, the one into which Tlukkah fell. Climbing down the chasm is not too difficult (DC 15 without a rope—see the *Player's Handbook*, page 65), and the climber can easily take 10. If the party has enough rope, a PC can also be lowered in the chasm and hauled upward after taking a look. If a climbing PC falls, he drops into the pool of water through the cave (this might serve as a hint).

Creature: No one comes up here much anymore (Tlukkah avoids this place). A young dire bat recently found the chasm and leaves the cave to roam the canyons at night, feasting on rabbits, small mountain goats, and other tasty animals. If the PCs make a lot of noise at the top of the chasm or slide down into the pool, the bat, which has a wingspan of just over 6 feet, erupts from the chasm mouth to attack.

➤ **Juvenile Dire Bat:** CR 1; Medium-size Animal; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 19, flat-footed 13, touch 15; Atk +3 melee (1d6+2, bite); SQ blindsight; SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 20, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +8*, Move Silently +8, Spot +8*.

*Dire bats receive a +4 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks. These bonuses are lost if the creature's blindsight is negated.

Tactics: The dire bat likes the quiet, damp cave, but

not more than its life. If reduced to half its hit points, it flees into the canyons in search of a safer lair.

NEW SITES

These areas are represented by yellow dots on the map and are tied to recent events and new sites unknown to Cenkil and Liff, including Tlukkah's new abode.

SPIDER SIGHTING

Here, the PCs spot a hive spider drone for the first time (see "Beginning the Adventure").

DWARVES' CAMP

Here, the PCs encounter the Golkern brothers and their warriors (see "A Family Row").

DWARVES' FIGHT (EL 2)

In the place where Tlukkah's forces first ambushed Cenkil's expedition, the path narrows to a tight gorge barely 10 feet wide. Liff can make an Intelligence check (DC 15) to remember the exact way from "Dwarves' Camp" to "Dwarves' Fight" on the area map. When the PCs arrive, the ambush site is deserted, but clues of what transpired remain:

A huge net, bloodstained and lacerated, lies across the gorge ahead, spanning its width. Many

splintered goblin arrows litter the rocky ground, where pools of red blood mingle with the foul, purplish ichor of at least ten crushed spider creatures.

The net's corners are tied to four 10-pound stones. Close inspection shows that the net is actually an enormous sheet of spider webs. One-inch-thick strands have been woven with a multitude of smaller threads as thin as human hair (hive spider threads). The web ropes are not sticky anymore but retain their flexibility and resilience.

No dead dwarves can be found here, although two horrible puddles of blood remain. Two of the missing dwarves (Twinbeard and Trunk) were torn to pieces and devoured where they fell. If Liff realizes this, he sheds a single tear; then his eyes light up with cold flames, and he asks the PCs to swear that they will let him deal the final blow to the goblin leader.

Before setting out to attack the escaped dwarves with a new swarm of hive spiders (see "The Hive Spiders Attack"), Tlukkah took the prisoners and loot from the ambush site to his lair. The wounded dwarven survivors were tied to poles, which the goblin shouldered and carried away. Jolting and dangling along the way, the two captives dropped a little blood here and there. Only a PC with the Track feat can try to follow the trail of blood on the ground (Wilderness Lore check, DC 20, with a +4 circumstance



bonus if the party has access to the scent ability). If the Wilderness Lore check succeeds, the tracker can follow the blood all the way to Tlukkah's Lair. Since effective movement on Mount Athrof is confined to the paths, the tracking PC can move as fast as the uneven ground allows without any penalty to the Wilderness Lore check (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 86).

Creature: A giant praying mantis caught the scent of freshly spilled blood and moved in to investigate the area just before the PCs arrive. Frustrated by the lack of actual prey and feisty due the nearness of its mating cycle, the mantis rushes to attack as soon as the PCs come into view.

➤ **Giant Praying Mantis:** hp 26; *Monster Manual* 206–207.

Tactics: The mantis attacks the first creature it sees, using its improved grab and squeeze attacks to maximum effect. If reduced to one-third its total hit points, it attempts to flee into the air with whatever prey it currently holds in its claws. If it doesn't currently hold a character, it makes an attack action to grab someone and then attempts to fly away. If totally denied the pleasure of a fresh kill, it chitters in anger and fights to the death.

WEB BRIDGE

Here the Goblin Rift narrows to a width of just over 60 feet. A rope bridge spans the 120-foot-deep chasm and consists of hive spider webs braided into tough cables. The four main cables that support the bridge are 5 inches thick (hardness 4, hp 20, Break DC 28) and can support one ton of weight before breaking. The bridge is somewhat tottery but safe, as long as its weight limit is not exceeded.

No goblin sentinel watches the bridge, but a hive spider drone is constantly stationed here. When the PCs arrive, the drone is hanging from a strand under the bridge structure. Thanks to his empathic link with the drone, Tlukkah can sense vibrations on the bridge and is warned of trespassers.

Creature: This hive spider does not attack unless provoked. To see it under the bridge, the PCs must succeed at a Spot check against the spider's Hide check. Give the hive spider a +4 circumstance bonus to its Hide check due to the nearly total concealment afforded the creature.

➤ **Hive Spider Drone:** hp 2; see "The Hive Spiders" description at the end of the adventure.

THE GOBLIN CLERIC

Tlukkah, a cleric of Maglubiyet, remembers the terrible suffering inflicted upon him by the Golkern clan. His hatred of the dwarves cannot be rivaled, and he dreams of skinning alive as many members of that race as he can. He is also a decent alchemist and has developed a primitive kind of black powder mixing coal and saltpeter, which he uses to create explosive booby-traps (see below). Tlukkah's black powder, however, is far from being suitable for firearm use and loses its potency a few weeks after its preparation.

Tlukkah is blind but keeps a hive spider drone with him at all times to supply him with a kind of "remote" eyesight. The empathic link with the hive spider queen, in fact, allows Tlukkah to "see" through the eyes of any drone in the immediate vicinity (out to a maximum range of 30 feet), as well as receive vivid impressions (but not specific visual information) from hive spider drones within 12 miles.

Tlukkah can control a number of hive spider drones equal to his Charisma score at any given time, and no more than double that number during a single day. As long as the hive spider queen wishes it, control over any drone can be established telepathically within 12 miles.

Tlukkah speaks Common and Goblin.

➤ **Tlukkah, Male Goblin Clr2/Exp2:** CR 3; Small Goblinoid; HD 2d8–2 (Clr) plus 2d6–2 (Exp); hp 13; Init –1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 12, touch 10, flat-footed 12; Atk +1 melee (1d8–2/crit x3, battleaxe); SQ darkvision 60 ft., rebuke undead, spontaneous casting; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref –1, Will +7; Str 6, Dex 9, Con 8, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Alchemy +9, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Hide +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +6, Spellcraft +4. **Feats:** Blind-Fight, Skill Focus (Alchemy).

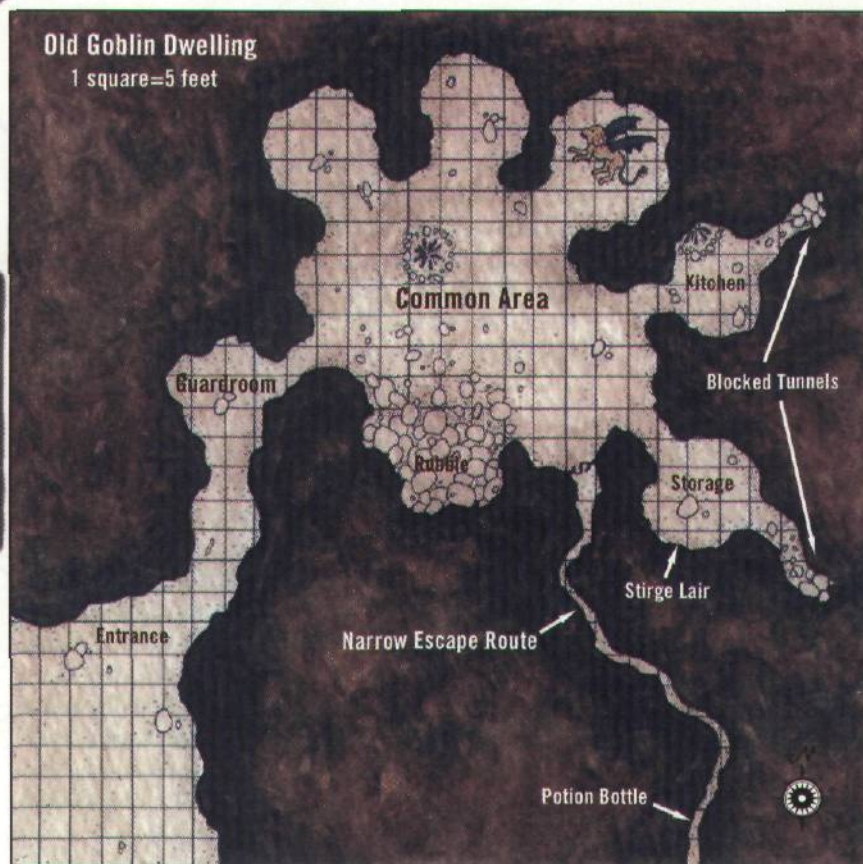
Cleric Spells Prepared (4/3+1; base DC = 11 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, mending*; 1st—*bles, cure light wounds, protection from good*, random action*.

*Domain spell. **Domains:** Chaos (casts chaos spells at +1 level), Evil (casts evil spells at +1 level).

Possessions: Leather armor, battleaxe, dagger, wooden holy symbol (Maglubiyet), tanglefoot bag, 10 tindertwigs, personal "suicide" bomb, three blue quartz gems (10 gp each), 15 gp in pouch.

Tlukkah's "Suicide Bomb"

Tlukkah's personal suicide bomb consists of several tinder-twigs connected to a wooden box full of primitive black powder, nails, and sling bullets. By tugging on a wire, Tlukkah can (as a standard action) cause the box to explode after a round of ominously ludicrous fizzling and sparking, dealing 3d4 points of damage to anyone within 10 feet (Reflex save, DC 11, for half). Of course, Tlukkah's gets no save if the bomb explodes on his person. Moreover, the gems and coins in the goblin cleric's pouch scatter in a 20-foot radius, making a Search check necessary to find them (DC 10 to find 1 gem and 5 gp, DC 20 to find 2 gems and 10 gp, DC 30 to find everything). The PCs can stop the bomb by dousing it with a quart of water (requiring a successful touch attack) or can simply escape its blast radius while the device's fuse is burning.



TLUKKAH'S LAIR

After the destruction of Tlukkah's tribe and the partial collapse of the old goblin dwelling, the cleric and his bodyguards settled in these caves. More recently, the hive spider queen set up her lair here.

The two dwarves captured by the goblins in a recent ambush, Flatfoot and Digger, have been carried here to be tortured at Tlukkah's leisure. Depending on how much time it takes the PCs to come to the rescue, one of both prisoners might be already dead (see area 5).

1. ENTRANCE (EL 1)

Read or paraphrase the following boxed text once the PCs come within sight of the lair entrance:

A low but broad cave mouth, partially choked by rocks and bushes, opens on a steep slope at the end of the mountain path. Hints to the recent passage of filthy creatures can be seen everywhere. Even from a distance, the darkness inside the cave seems to tremble with the evil of goblins and the almost alien nature of the spiders.

The entrance to Tlukkah's lair is only 5 feet tall but well over 10 feet wide. Before it, a wooden gate has been built to stop passage by everyone but hive spider drones, which can squeeze through the 1-

foot-wide spaces between the poles with ease. Small PCs can pass between two poles with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 20). The gate can be easily raised from the inside by a web rope connected to a crude winch and pulley system.

◆ **Heavy Wooden Gate:** 3 in. thick poles; hardness 5; hp 15; Break (DC 20); Lift (DC 18).

Creature: A goblin stands watch behind the gate, which provides one-quarter cover (+2 cover bonus to AC, +1 cover bonus to Reflex saves). The sentinel on duty leaves only to check the prisoners in area 3, and does so only for a few minutes every other hour. Since one goblin is always stationed here, no more than five of Tlukkah's "boys" can ever be encountered outside the lair. These goblins shout obscenities and epithets at any dwarves present.

➤ **Tlukkah's Bodyguard, Male Goblin Ftr1:** CR 1; Small Humanoid (Goblinoid); HD 1d10; hp 6; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14; Atk +4 melee (1d8+1, morningstar) or +3 ranged (1d6/crit ×3, shortbow); SQ darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Hide +5, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, morningstar, shortbow with 20 arrows, pouch containing 2d4 gp.

Tactics: If the goblin spots a PC, he shouts a warning to the other goblins, who usually reside in area 4. Once the alarm is raised, Tlukkah rushes to area 3 to take control of a group of hive spider drones (to determine how many are still available, see area 3), while the bodyguards rush to the entrance. Then, the cleric sends the drones through the gate to engage in melee while the goblins shoot arrows from inside.

Development: If the gate is about to be lifted, sundered, or burned down, or if the number of bodyguards is halved, the remaining goblins retreat to area 4 to make their last stand.

2. CORRIDOR (EL 1)

A twisting, roughly hewn corridor leads farther down into the darkness. Patches of cobwebs

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1d8 and consult this table whenever the PCs reach a red dot on the Mount Athrof map. If an encounter comes up a second time, re-roll or choose another encounter.

1. Goblin Rock (EL 1)

Two goblins hide atop a ledge overlooking the path, gaining one-half cover against attacks from below (+4 cover bonus to AC). Using a wooden lever, the goblins push a big rock over the lip of the rise as the party passes below. The falling rock targets a random PC (+1 ranged, 2d4 points of damage). After that, the goblins shoot an arrow each before fleeing down the nearby hidden path. If the heroes hear or see the goblins lifting the rock (by making a successful Listen or Spot check opposed by the goblins' Move Silently and Hide checks, respectively), they are neither surprised nor flat-footed. In this case, both goblins retreat after dropping the rock.

To reach the ledge where the goblin stand, the PCs must climb to the top of the 20-foot-tall cliff that runs alongside the path (Climb check, DC 20). Otherwise, they must look for the entrance of the goblins' nearby hidden passage at ground level (Search check, DC 20). If trapped in the hidden passage, the goblins try to hide. The only thing left behind by the fleeing goblins is the wooden lever they used to lift the rock.

➔ **Male Goblin Ftr1 (2):** hp 6 each; see area 1 of Tlukkah's Lair for complete statistics.

Development: If one or both goblins are slain, subtract them from the goblins encountered in area 4 of Tlukkah's Lair.

2. Goblin Crossbow Sniper (EL 1)

A lone goblin has wedged a heavy crossbow (taken from the captured dwarves) between two rocks and fires it from a narrow cleft in the rock wall on one side of the path, gaining nine-tenths cover (+10 cover bonus to AC). The goblin shoots the heroes when they come around a bend 120 feet from his position. The crossbow requires a full-round action to reload, so the goblin abandons it after the first shot and curses the PCs loudly (in Goblin). He then escapes through the hidden passage near his position.

➔ **Male Goblin Ftr1:** hp 6; see area 1 of Tlukkah's Lair for complete statistics.

Development: If the goblin is slain, subtract him from the roster of goblins in area 4 of Tlukkah's Lair

3. Rolling Thunder (EL 3)

This encounter happens on a sloping section of the path. From a position similar to the one described in encounter #1 (see above), two goblins push a small keg of Tlukkah's black powder down the slope after lighting some tindertwigs attached to it. The goblins release the keg so that it tumbles down a rocky step near the heroes and explodes within 10 feet of the two lead PCs. The keg has the same effect as Tlukkah's personal suicide bomb (see "The Goblin Cleric" sidebar). After the explosion, the goblins shoot one arrow each (with one-half cover) before retreating into the nearby hidden path.

➔ **Rolling Bomb:** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (3d4 fire damage to all within 10 feet); Reflex save (DC 11) for half.

➔ **Male Goblin Ftr1 (2):** hp 6 each; see area 1 of Tlukkah's Lair for complete statistics.

4. Hive Spider Swarm (EL 2)

Seven hive spiders attack the party. These drones are not controlled by Tlukkah but by the hive spider queen herself. For this reason, they retreat after half their number are killed, climbing on the rough slopes flanking the path and disappearing from sight after 1 full round of movement.

➔ **Hive Spider Drones (7):** hp 2 each; see the "Hive Spider" section at the end of the adventure.

5. Tlukkah's Speech (EL -)

After locating the PCs with his hive spider snoopers, Tlukkah speaks to them from a safe distance. His voices echoes menacingly throughout the mountain path, mocking the PCs for a few seconds before the goblin cleric moves away to avoid detection. Quotes might include the following:

"For each eye you destroy, Maglubiyet gives me twenty new ones!"

"Golkern! Thieves! Assassins! Your axes shall split the logs of your pyres!"

"Bree yark! The warm blood of your bearded friends will make delicious dinner wine!"

"This mountain is your tomb, foolish trespassers! I shall enjoy gnawing on your bones after you are gone!"

Feel free to concoct other insults and disparagements.

6. Tlukkah's Poetry (EL -)

On a rocky wall overlooking the path, scribbled in dwarven blood, the heroes find the following verse (in Common):

A dozen arrogant dwarves came

To steal a bit of their lord's fame.

But they will pay for what he wrought,

And perish all for naught.

After the heroes have read the poetic provocation, you might choose to place Tlukkah within voice range to respond to their comments and deliver a malicious speech similar to that described in encounter #5 (see above).

7. Collapsed Path (EL 1)

The PCs come to a section of collapsed path. To carry on, each PC must proceed horizontally for a dozen yards along a 4-inch-wide ledge hanging over a 20-foot-deep chasm (Balance or Climb check, DC 13). Anyone falling into the chasm takes 2d6 points of damage. If the heroes fail to bypass the hazard, they must go back and find another route.

8. Natural Rockslide (EL 1/2)

A minor rockslide threatens the heroes as they advance on the path. Each PC must succeed at a Tumble check (DC 10) or take 2d4 points of damage from falling debris. Goblins are not responsible for this mishap, but the PCs might well think it. Dwarven stonemasonry (Search check, DC 13) or a successful Listen check (DC 18) can detect the danger beforehand, allowing the heroes to avoid it easily.



mingle with dust and mold. A rotten stench creeps up the passage from below.

The goblins have dug a pit in the rocky ground here, covering it with a net of web ropes (similar to the one used in the ambush against the dwarves). A layer of pebbles and dirt conceals the net.

Trap: The trap is crude but effective, its covering giving way to 50 pounds of weight or more (safe for hive spiders). To bypass the trap, PCs must move in single file, staying close to the west wall, where a strip of firm ground has been left for this purpose. The trap is not hidden well and can be found with a cursory Search check. Whoever falls into the pit, besides suffering falling damage, is entangled by the equivalent of a fighting net (see the *Player's Handbook*, page 102).

↗ **20-foot-deep Pit and Net Trap:** CR 1; no attack roll necessary (2d6 plus entanglement); Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 20).

3. HIVE (EL 2+)

This huge grotto, only partially visible from the mouth of the tunnel, is full of sticky webs. Only a few clear passages allow access among the mass of milky white threads that hang in clusters from the ceiling and fill the cracks in the cave floor. The webs are cluttered with human and animal bones

stripped of flesh. Near the entrance, a spider nibbles voraciously at a fresh, bloody dwarven skull that still bears the remains of a mail coif.

This cave is the center of the hive spider community. The queen lives in the western part of the room, caring for her eggs—a score of 4-inch-wide, membranous purple globes embedded in her flabby abdomen—and eating all the food her spawn can bring. Since Tlukkah is the queen's interlocutor, the hive spiders and the goblins share the caves as a whole. Only the goblin cleric, however, is allowed entrance into the cave itself, and the other goblins gladly avoid it. This cave has three independent exits for the drones—two of the tunnels are large enough only for Tiny creatures to crawl through.

Assorted baubles and trinkets can be found amid the tattered belongings of the spiders' past victims, as noted under **Treasure** below.

At the beginning of the adventure, forty hive spider drones reside here, as ten of the original fifty were killed by Cenkil's dwarves. During the adventure, when one or more drones are killed, subtract them from the total; up to twelve more are likely to be killed early (see "The Hive Spiders Attack").

When the heroes arrive in this area, you must also determine how many spiders defend the queen (at the spot marked X on the map). To do this, subtract the dead drones and assume that 3d4 drones are out hunting and snooping. In any case, the queen has at least ten drones here at all times; ignore all hive spider encounters out of the hive once that limit is reached. If the hive spider total drops under twenty-one, the queen is displeased with Tlukkah and lets him control only half of his normal allowance (six drones). If the number of drones decreases to the minimum ten required by the queen as her personal guard, Tlukkah is not allowed to control any more of them. Of course, the goblin cleric saves at least one controlled drone for his own eyesight. The last ten drones and the queen, if left undisturbed, do not attack the heroes outside area 3.

When allowed to pause from their restless hunting activity, the drones stay inside 3-foot-wide web cocoons that hang from the ceiling where the web-

➔ **Flukkah, Male Goblin Clr2/Exp2:** hp 13; see “The Goblin Cleric” sidebar for Flukkah’s statistics.

➔ **Flukkah’s Bodyguards, Male Goblin Ftr1 (5):** hp 6 each; see area 1 for complete statistics.

➔ **Hive Spider Drone:** hp 2; see the “Hive Spider” section at the end of the adventure.

Tactics: Flukkah tries to cast *guidance* and *protection from good* on himself before entering battle. The hive spider drone that supplies Flukkah with eyesight avoids danger as much as possible (hiding and taking cover on or near the ceiling). Note that without at least one hive spider drone in the immediate vicinity (30 feet or less), Flukkah is blind. If reduced to fewer than 5 hp or deprived of his telepathic eyesight, Flukkah activates his personal “suicide” bomb, cackling maniacally and heading in the direction of the heroes’ voices to catch as many of them in the blast as possible.

Treasure: Inside the trunk, the PCs find the equipment of four Golkern warriors (see “A Family Row”), with the exception of the two suits of armor worn by the two dwarves who were torn to pieces by the hive spiders. They also find a sack containing 157 sp and miscellaneous items of value taken from the dwarven tombs by the site of the Old Goblin Battle (silver and golden rings, collars, and bracers worth a total 530 gp). If the PCs return these dwarven spoils to the Golkern clan instead of keeping them, the dwarves reward them with up to 200% of their value in gold or minor magic items. If he’s still around, Liff informs the PCs of this fact.

5. STORAGE

This cave functions both as storage for goblin supplies—such as they are—and a cell for their prisoners. Here, before a dirty stack of sacks and crates, stand a pair of X-shaped wooden structures, to which two ragged and blindfolded dwarves have been tied with web ropes. Both prisoners are wounded and barely conscious, obviously exhausted by prolonged torture.

The two “crucified” dwarves are Flatfoot and Digger. The goblins have tortured them with the hot iron in area 4 and put salt in their eyes to blind them. Depending on how long it takes for the PCs to arrive here, one or both dwarves could be dead. Record the time elapsed after the PCs first encounter Cenkil’s group, and assume that both prisoners lose 1 point of Constitution each day. The two dwarves need a *remove blindness* spell to recover their sight (their eyes are painfully dry but not yet destroyed).

Creatures (EL –): Even if freed from their bonds, Flatfoot and Digger are both blinded and exhausted.

They are of little help to the PCs until they get adequate rest and healing.

⚔ **Golkern Clan Soldiers, Male Mountain Dwarves War1 (2):** hp 5 each (currently 1 each); see “A Family Row” for complete statistics. Note that these dwarves are bereft of equipment and potentially low on Constitution.

Treasure: The sack and crates contain miscellaneous supplies (web ropes, coal, saltpeter, flasks of pitch) and foodstuffs (roots, tubers, dried ibex meat), including three disgusting hive spider drone abdomens salted and strung up like sausages.

Flukkah’s crude alchemist tools can also be found here, but the only item of value among them is a mortar carved in a chunk of fine marble (10 gp). In addition, the recipe for Flukkah’s explosive powder can be found scrawled on a scrap of leather in Goblin.

Ad Hoc XP Award: The PCs receive an XP reward for each rescued dwarf as if they had vanquished the dwarves in combat.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs destroy Flukkah and his minions, they are invited to the Golkern clan’s homestead, which is carved under a high mountain of your campaign world. There, the heroes receive a reward of 200 gp for each dwarf rescued plus any magic potions not used by Cenkil and Liff during the adventure (see “The Golkern Brothers” sidebar for their belongings). The PCs also meet Niefald, who has been raised by a high priest of Moradin.

If the heroes brought back the spoils from area 4 of Flukkah’s Lair, they are rewarded by the families of the dwarves fallen on Mount Athrof (double the total value of the recovered items). After returning the spoils to their legitimate owners, the PCs are drafted into a rousing (and quite long) dwarven feast, where they are each expected to gulp down a large tankard of homemade beer.

If the adventure went particularly well, with no dwarven losses beyond Twinbeard and Trunk, Brokil Golkern also gives the party one of his golden rings (worth 100 gp) and bids them a lifelong welcome in the halls of the mountain dwarves. In any case, the old dwarven lord, a little tipsy after his fifteenth tankard of ale, promises a larger reward when the clan starts “making reasonable profit” from the iron mine on Mount Athrof. Needless to say, for the laborious and stingy dwarves, “reasonable profit” is probably achieved after decades of toil, perhaps beyond the life span of short-lived PCs such as humans. ♀

HIVE SPIDER

HIVE SPIDER DRONE

Tiny Vermin

Hit Dice: 1/2d8 (2 hp)

Initiative: +2 (Dex)

Speed: 20 ft., climb 10 ft., burrow 5 ft.

AC: 14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 12

Attacks: Bite +3 melee

Damage: Bite 1d2

Face/Reach: 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

Special Attacks: Web

Special Qualities: Vermin, darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0

Abilities: Str 10, Dex 14, Con 11, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 3

Skills: Climb +10, Spot +4

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

HIVE SPIDER QUEEN

Medium-Size Magical Beast

Hit Dice: 2d10+4 (15 hp)

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 20 ft., burrow 10 ft.

AC: 14 (+3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 14

Attacks: Bite +3 melee

Damage: Bite 1d6+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Sight scrambling

Special Qualities: Chemical telepathy

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4

Abilities: Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 4, Wis 14, Cha 12

Skills: Climb +8, Spot +6

Feats: Iron Will

Climate/Terrain: Temperate and warm land and underground

Organization: Swarm (6–25), Hive (1 plus 10–200 drones)

Challenge Rating: Drone 1/6; Queen 2

Treasure: Drones None; Queen 1/4 coins; 70% goods; 70% items

Alignment: Always neutral

Advancement: Drone—1 HD (Small), 2–3 HD (Medium-size), 4–9 HD (Large); Queen—3 HD (Medium-size), 4–9 HD (Large), 10–23 HD (Huge), 24–47 HD (Gargantuan), 48–64 HD (Colossal)

Hive spiders are a hideous cross between web-spinning arachnids and termites that live in subterranean hive complexes. The average hive spider is roughly 18 inches in diameter, its smooth carapace mottled brown and blue. The head, distinct from the



thorax, sports two sets of mandibles, three pairs of eyes, and two jointed antennae. Quite oddly, hive spiders have neither a poisonous bite nor a sting, but their mandibles are strong enough to burrow through soft rock. Hive spiders are omnivorous, but they prefer fresh meat over any other fare.

Most hive spiders are genderless drones born from the eggs of a semi-intelligent queen that qualifies as a magical beast, not vermin. The drones have a lifespan of three years, while the queen can live up to fifteen years. Since no male hive spiders exist, the process that allows a queen to fertilize eggs suggests hermaphroditic reproduction. The title of queen isn't one held by the spiders; it was simply added by others since other hive-minded vermin have queens. The queen possesses cumbersome reproductive organs instead of web spinners. Her bright red eyes are larger and more expressive than the dull, black eyes of the drones.

The queen issues orders to her mindless spawn via chemical pheromones, which allow an empathic link between her and the drones out to a distance of 12 miles. If the drones are separated from the queen, however, they go feral and become dangerous predators, attacking anything with wild abandon. Once every five years, the queen deposits a special egg that gives birth to a female hive spider of the magical beast type. This specimen grows into a new queen,

ENCOUNTER LEVEL CHART

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (EL) for all encounters in "The Swarm." The adventure is fairly difficult for 1st-level PCs, and the encounters assume that Liff Golkern accompanies the PCs.

Area	Encounter Description	EL
*	➤ Hive Spider Drone	—
*	➤ Hive Spider Drones (6)	1
*	➤ Hive Spider Drones (12)	2
*	➤ Choker	2
*	➤ Mountain Lion	2
*	➤ Goblin Rock	1
*	➤ Goblin Crossbow Sniper	1
*	➤ Rolling Thunder Bomb	1
*	➤ Hive Spider Drones (7)	2
†	➤ Small Earth Elementals (2)	2
††	➤ Juvenile Dire Bat	1
†††	➤ Giant Praying Mantis	2
1	➤ Goblin Ftr1	1
2	➤ Pit and Net Trap	1
3	➤ Hive Spider Queen	2
	➤ Drones (6) or	+1
	➤ Drones (12)	+2
4	➤ Tlukkah, Goblin Clr2/Exp2	3
	➤ Goblin Ftr1 (2 or 3) or	+1
	➤ Goblin Ftr1 (4 or 5)	+2

* This encounter is not keyed to a specific location.

† See the "Iron Deposit" section.

†† See the "Tlukkah's Plunge" section.

††† See the "Dwarves' Fight" section.

up to 5 feet in diameter, with a proportionally bigger abdomen and head. The young queen leaves immediately to build another hive out of her mother's "communication" range.

Not mindless and aggressive like the drones, the hive spider queen has an intellect somewhere between the smartest dog and the stupidest human. She can communicate in a crude, halting manner, using special pheromones that can be picked up by the olfactory organs of most intelligent creatures and understood as telepathic "speech." With this ability, a hive spider queen can even transfer the control of some of her drones to her interlocutor, translating chemical signals into telepathic ones. In combat, the queen can use her pheromones to cause an interference in an enemy's vision (see below).

In the wild lands where hive spiders lair, it is not uncommon for a queen to establish a relationship with the leader of a band of humanoids (usually goblins). Most often, the relationship is one of pure convenience, as the humanoids provide food and protection to the queen in return for the service of her

drones. In this case, the drones can eat garbage, dig tunnels, support the humanoids in battle, provide textile web material, or even serve as an emergency food source.

COMBAT

Under direction of the queen (or "linked" interlocutor), hive spiders swarm frantically upon opponents, trying to mince them into bits.

If attacked in the hive, the queen summons all available drones to her side and uses her sight scrambling ability as often as possible to blind foes. She fights only if backed into a corner.

Web (Ex): Hive spider drones are too small to make effective individual web attacks. Spinning together in large numbers, however, they can create hive structures and hazards (as those spun by Medium-size monstrous spiders—see the *Monster Manual*, page 210). Hive spiders (including the queen) move on their own webs at climb speed.

Vermin: Hive spider drones are immune to mind influencing effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects). Note that the queen, being a magical beast, is not.

Sight Scrambling (Su): Every other round, as a standard action, the hive spider queen can concentrate her chemical pheromones on a target within 50 feet to cause *blindness/deafness* as the spell cast by a 4th-level sorcerer. A successful Will save (DC 13) negates the effect. Creatures without a sense of smell cannot be affected, but those with scent suffer a -4 penalty to the saving throw. The effect lasts for 2d4 rounds.

Chemical Telepathy (Su): The hive spider queen can "speak" telepathically with any intelligent creature within 100 feet who has a language. She can also establish an empathic link with a willing interlocutor and confer upon him or her the ability to control drones within 20 miles of the queen. The only limit to this power is that, at a given time, the interlocutor can issue direct orders only to as many drones as his Charisma score.

Once established, the empathic link lasts as long as the queen wishes, unless the interlocutor moves out of range, whereupon the contact breaks immediately. Note that the queen cannot control or affect the interlocutor in any way; only the unintelligent drones are susceptible to her orders.

Among all the questionable and arbitrary rules of old AD&D, the dwarven +1 racial bonus to hit goblins has always been a favorite of mine. This adventure is a tribute to that rule, with the hope that goblins will get their +1 to hit dwarves in 4th Edition D&D.

"Letters" continued from page 12

KUDOS AND HUZZAHS!

Kudos and huzzahs for Issue #91! Thanks to the larger print, I no longer get headaches trying to read your magazines. The layout looks better, and thanks for getting rid of the useless "Encounter Level Side-bars." Any good DM can do this on his own. No more distracting, colored side-bars. Hurray! This is much more enjoyable. I'll give you a dollar if you keep it this way.

Kudos and huzzahs for *POLYHEDRON!* *Pulp Heroes* took me through a secret volcano base populated with intelligent apemen and a mad scientist in search of a "mega-zortillium particle inducer rocket." *Shadow Chasers* looks to take me to places I surely wouldn't want to see in real life. Keep up the good work.

I will certainly continue to buy this magazine now. My condolences for those unfortunate souls who opt to take your magazine apart piece by piece and find everything that is/might be wrong with it. These people should actually get out and enjoy the real world for awhile.

William Vctor
Via Email

Sorry to disappoint you about the Encounter Level Side-bars. They've been well received in the past as a method of tracking which encounters a DM has run a group through, as well as for the purpose of scaling the adventures. I guess we'll have to pass on the dollar.

NO TO THE NEW LOOK

I'm writing in response to the sudden change in layout of *DUNGEON*. Frankly, I don't like it. Here are my reasons. It's good to have something a little different in background to what the core rulebooks offer. This isn't to say that the layouts of the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, or *Monster Manual* are inferior in any way. It's just a matter of visual processing. If I see something that looks exactly like something else, I'll be more prone to not read continuously. In essence my brain will get visually exhausted.

My other reason pretty much follows suit with my last comment: It's too uniform. We see enough of this in our everyday lives. From evil Starbucks to evil McD's to evil Gap, and so on and so forth: evil, evil. The one thing the roleplaying community doesn't want to see, in my opinion, is Wizards of the Coast monotonously spitting out products that have a standard layout. Imagining every d20 product out there with the same inner layout as the core rulebooks is scary to me. Companies are already doing this exact same thing on the outer covers. Stay original people.

This, in no way, is how I feel about the written material. It is fantastic, as always.

William Bryan
Portland, OR

Other than the fact that the core book page layout looks really cool, we made the switch so the casual reader would immediately identify DUNGEON with the core rulebooks. It's also more space efficient (we can fit more words on a page), and it's in a friendlier font to read. And did I mention it looks cool?

#91 RUNDOWN

For starters, I want to say that I liked the change of format as I found it clean and easy to read. Beyond that, though, it was the content that truly made the magazine and would like to comment on it.

"Challenge of Champions IV" was cleverly written. I do have one question for the mentally taxed Farthingale: Would you mind suggestions from a fan for future endeavors?

I truly enjoyed the subtlety of "The Rock and the Hard Place" and only wish I could test my own players with its obscure nature, but they are far short of even the weakest scaling. Nevertheless, I hope to see more of its ilk in the future.

"The Legend of Garthulga" was much to my liking, as well, and perfectly suited to a campaign I have just begun. I would like to point out, though, that it might have been more clearly read if the Brulligum brothers in area 3D were said to flee to tunnels 3E, 3G, and 3E rather than A, B, and C as the map indicates no A, B, or C. Reading the adventure makes it clear enough which is which, but in a pinch, the DM might find it annoying to have to read the text that carefully to determine this. Beyond that, I enjoyed the plot very much and will employ it in an adventure soon.

Finally, while I also enjoyed "Sloth," "Kambranex's Machinations," and the "Critical Threats," I'd like to make a special note of "Bogged Down." It harkens to my love of mysteries, with its murder mystery, the vile antagonist who's kept his nature suppressed, and clues to uncover that lead to justice being done. However, one thing I'd like to ask Terry Edwards about his poor, unresting mummy is whether or not the creature will return to eternal peace if his murderers are brought to justice and executed for their crimes?

Bret Davenport
Via Email

I figure since most groups would kill the mummy, it finds rest in the good, old-fashioned, beat-it-'til-it's-dead fashion. But that's just me.

"Letters" continued on page 112

RETURN OF THE BLESSED DAMOZEL

BY FRANK BRUNNER

ARTWORK BY DEREK THOMPSON • CARTOGRAPHY BY CRAIG ZIPSE

† Magic Items ➤ Monsters ⚔ NPCs ♠ Objects 👑 Settlements ↗ Traps

"Return of the Blessed Damozel" is a D&D Side Trek designed for four 11th-level player characters (PCs). It can take place in any urban or civilized setting in your campaign. The adventure can be adapted for stronger or weaker PCs by increasing or reducing the number and power of the opponents, as noted in the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar.

BACKGROUND

The "blessed damozel" is a reference to a young lady named Christina, who died of consumption three years ago and now pines in the afterlife for her lover Tenad. Unfortunately, Tenad became dark and bitter after Christina died, and he has fallen in with an evil lot. Christina fears that because of his increasingly dark heart, Tenad will never be allowed to join her in the afterlife. She has therefore visited her mother's dreams, piteously begging the old woman to set Tenad once again on the path to righteousness.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In an idyllic city park, the PCs encounter a middle-aged woman berating a young ruffian. The woman's deceased daughter, Christina, has appeared in a dream with a tearful message: The ruffian, her former lover, will never join Christina on the celestial planes unless he ceases his evil thuggery. An opportunity for a change of heart arises when the youth's gang turns up, and the PCs must defend him.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in the city park at the area marked X on the map. It is broad daylight, and the temperature is balmy. The PCs could be out for a

stroll, perhaps with paramours of their own, they could be tipped off by a streetwise informant that there is an odd confrontation in the park, or they could be dispatched by a temple priest who has sensed the nearby presence of a woman with a connection to the higher planes.

A fierce argument disturbs the buzz of the bees and the gurgle of the park brook. On an arching bridge, a middle-aged woman upbraids a young tough dressed in a beaten studded leather tunic. The youth's eyes are sullen as the woman's tirade continues: "How dare you spit on her like this! When was the last time you brought freesia to her grave? When? Bah! Your hands are now for holding razors, not flowers. And where do you think your knives and your blood will take you? Straight to the Pit! The Pit, Tenad, the Pit for you, unless you change your foolish heart!"

The woman does not calm down or end her philippic unless the PCs successfully intervene with a successful Diplomacy check (DC 15). When the PCs intercede, the woman explains:

"Citizens! I had a vision of my daughter last night. She has righteously joined the hosts of heaven now, but still she was crying for this boy who calls himself a man because he holds daggers and menaces the weak in dark alleys! For this . . . bah! I speak of my daughter's former betrothed. And she fears that he will never be reunited with her in the afterlife if he does not change his evil heart!"

The woman is Sidhal (female human Ari3). She is distraught but can impart the following information: Christina and Tenad were lovers. Since Christina's death, Tenad has become a ruffian in the



Alley Claws. She goes on to explain that Christina appeared in a dream last night and said that Tenad's soul was in mortal danger. Sidhal asks the PCs to join her in her fight to save Tenad.

Tenad sighs. "The Claws would not just shred me into meat and leave me for the sewer otyughs. There would be much sport first."

Tenad does not deny that he has turned down a darker path since the wasting disease took Christina from him. He is ready to return to a more honorable life, but he is afraid of what will happen to him if he deserts the Alley Claws gang.

You can roleplay Tenad's redemption, simply allow any PC speaking to Tenad to make a Diplomacy check (DC 15), or some combination of both. The PC gets a +2 circumstance bonus on his or her check for each PC who successfully uses the Aid Another action (Diplomacy check, DC 10). If the PCs fail miserably, Tenad might become desperate enough to draw his weapon. If so, he attempts to take Sidhal hostage to buy time until he can escape or until the Alley Claws appear.

☛ **Tenad, Male Human Ftr3:** See the statistics for the Alley Claws in the next section.

THE CLAWS APPEAR (EL 13)

After the PCs talk or fight with the Tenad, the Alley Claws appear. Word on the street travels fast, and the Claws have heard that something strange is going on with one of their own in the park.

A cracking branch heralds the approach of six young toughs. They walk with a swagger and wear similar outfits of beaten studded leather, just like Tenad. Beyond them, a richly appointed carriage pulls up to the curb. Pulling aside its lace curtains, a mustachioed gentleman in a fez gazes serenely out at you.

Creatures: The six gang members are here to make sure that Tenad does not leave the gang. The spokesman for the group is Rekal (same statistics as the others, see below). Rekal and his toughs probably end up attacking the PCs, either because the heroes have convinced Tenad to turn to good or because Tenad is still uncertain and the gang wants to drive off the PCs before they can finish their proselytizing. Similarly, if the PCs sufficiently frightened or offended Tenad, he orders the gang to attack.

The mastermind behind the Alley Claws is the quiet, well-dressed passenger in the carriage: Nigel



Indrasekhar, a rakshasa in human form. Nigel is a fanatical control freak, and this obsession extends to his own emotions: He always presents a cool, poised front to the world. Nigel is inwardly enraged that someone might try to leave his gang, and he has come to personally ensure that Tenad remains an Alley Claw for life, however short that might be. Nigel has two hellcat companions in the carriage with him.

♣ **Alley Claw Toughs, Male Human Ftr3 (6):** CR 3; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 3d10+3; hp 36 (hit points from Toughness feats included); Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 11,

flat-footed 14); Attack +6 melee (1d6+2/ crit 19–20, short sword), or +4 ranged (1d4+2, dart); AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +7, Jump +5, Pick Pocket +4. **Feats:** Toughness (×4), Weapon Focus (short sword).

Possessions: Studded leather armor, buckler, short sword, 5 darts, 5 gp.

♣ **Nigel Indrasekhar, Male Rakshasa:** hp 56; *Monster Manual* 153.

Rakshasas cast spells as 7th-level sorcerers and can cast 1st-level cleric spells as arcane spells.

Spells Known (6/6/6/4; base DC = 13 + spell level): 0—arcane mark, daze, detect magic, detect poison, mage hand, mending, read magic; 1st—command, cure light wounds, grease, magic missile, protection from good; 2nd—invisibility, mirror image, fog cloud; 3rd—dispel magic, fireball.

Possessions: Wand of color spray (30 charges), wand of magic missile (5th-level caster, 22 charges), wand of web (8 charges), potion of cat's grace, potion of mirror image, potion of haste, potion of glibness, violet garnet cufflinks (2,200 gp each), pouch with 200 pp, richly appointed carriage and fine horses.

♣ **Hellcats (2):** hp 52, 60; *Monster Manual* 48.

Tactics: If a battle starts, Nigel calmly steps outside the carriage and releases his hellcat companions to attack. If he has time, he casts *protection from good* on them first. The hellcats, invisible in the daylight,

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Return of the Blessed Damozel" is designed for 11th-level PCs, but it can be modified for parties of different sizes or levels. Consider adapting the adventure as follows:

7th- to 8th-level PCs: Reduce the number of Alley Claw toughs to four. Eliminate the hellcats. Take away Nigel's *wand of web* and *wand of color spray*, as well as his cufflinks, and give him the option of fleeing if reduced to half hit points or less.

9th- to 10th-level PCs: Reduce the number of hellcats to one.

12th- to 13th-level PCs: Make the Alley Claw toughs 4th level. Add one hellcat. Give Nigel a *wand of lightning bolt* (10th level, 25 charges) and two *potions of invisibility*.

14th- to 15th-level PCs: Make the Alley Claw toughs 4th level and increase their number to nine. Raise the number of hellcats to four, and give Nigel four sorcerer levels (making him a 10th-level caster) and a familiar. Also, give him a *staff of fire* (38 charges) in place of his *wand of color spray* and *wand of web*. Place an ornate candelabra and gold-framed mirror in the carriage (adding 5,000 gp of treasure).

pounce on the PCs at the start of the next round. The toughs swing freely with their short swords, trying to wear one character down at a time.

Nigel prefers to avoid combat, especially physical combat, playing the part of the gentleman overseer. He does not leave the side of the carriage, but he readies an action—casting *magic missile*—to disrupt a PC spellcaster targeting his minions.

Although he dislikes being flashy, Nigel is capable of detonating a *fireball* at his feet to damage all attackers while he remains untouched by grace of his spell immunity ability (note that the hellcats are also resistant to fire). A rakshasa's spell immunity, like spell resistance, can be ignored if the possessor wishes, enabling Nigel to gain any benefits of spells or potions as he wills. Nigel can continuously *detect thoughts*, and he uses this ability to anticipate a change in the PCs' tactics. Another favorite trick is to ensnare enemies with his *wand of web* (an option available in the park due to the numerous trees in the area) and then launch a *fireball* into the mess.

Nigel goes to great lengths to avoid revealing his true identity. If severely pressed and unable to escape via *invisibility* or his carriage, he yells for the city guard.

Sidhal and Tenad hang back from the combat. If the PCs are hard-pressed, you might have Tenad join the fray to aid his would-be rescuers.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs fail to bring light to Tenad's darkened heart, he continues his base existence with the Alley Claws. Eventually he is stabbed by another gang member in a fight over a stolen painting, and the hellcats claim Tenad's soul for their infernal masters.

If the PCs convince Tenad to turn his back on the gang, after he is free of them, he returns to the Lily Bridge. He leans over the rail and sees Christina's face reflected in the pool beside his own. The blessed damozel smiles at him, and then her image disappears in a brilliant flame rushing up to the clouds.

Nigel will not rest until he has made the PCs pay for their insolence. His hellcats strike when the PCs are abroad in daylight, and the Alley Claws will stalk the PCs at night. Nigel also may use his wealth and influence to damage the reputation of the PCs, who might not even realize Nigel's true nature. That mystery itself could lead to further investigations.

Frank Brunner's first *Dungeon Master* was his mom. He says, "I was nine and loved the books and no one else would do it, so mom pitched in. Thanks for starting a life-long hobby, mom!"



THE RAZING OF
REDSHORE



THE RAZING OF REDSHORE

BY JAMES JACOBS

ARTWORK BY CARL CRITCHLOW • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

‡ Magic Items ➔ Monsters ⚔ NPCs 📖 Objects 👑 Settlements ⚠ Traps

“The Razing of Redshore” is a D&D adventure that confronts the party with the destructive force of an awakened sperm whale druid and the sinister machinations of a secret cabal of powerful assassins. It is designed to not only challenge a group of four 20th-level characters, but to provide such a group with an opportunity to continue their adventuring careers into the realms detailed in the *Epic Level Handbook*. This book is not required to make full use of this adventure, though; any pertinent information from the supplement is reproduced here.

High-level characters have a huge amount of resources and skills at their beck and call. Numerous sidebars in this adventure address ways you can handle some of the more potent high-level abilities, such as powerful Divinations, *wishes*, and the like. The main villains in this adventure are epic NPCs with similar abilities; don't be afraid to play them as deviously as your players play their own characters!

A fair portion of the action in this adventure takes place in the coastal city of Redshore, but only a small portion of the locations in this troubled town are detailed in this adventure. Feel free to expand on the city as you see fit. Redshore itself is not set in any specific campaign world; where appropriate, campaign specific things like deity names are kept as generic as possible so this adventure can be adapted with ease to your own campaign.

This adventure works best in a campaign that does not yet have epic-level characters. Indeed, the adventure provides a reason as to why such characters are unknown (or at least fantastically rare). As the major reward for completing this adventure, the party gains access to the *Shadar Pool*, an ancient artifact that unlocks the true potential of those who bathe in it and allows them to become epic-level

characters. If your campaign already has established epic-level characters (such as in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS* setting), feel free to rework some of the abilities of the *Shadar Pool* as you see fit.

BACKGROUND

The troubles currently plaguing the whaling town of Redshore have at their genesis an event so distant in the past that even legends of its passing have faded. In forgotten ages of eons past, the world of mortals and the divine were nearly as one. The deities were pleased with their creations and showered them with gifts and potent abilities. Many heroes of great skill and power walked the lands, raising mighty armies, fighting fearsome monsters, and undertaking quests that shook the foundations of reality.

But then something happened. Perhaps a mortal attempted to usurp a deity, tried to undo a fundamental fact of the universe, or something even more vile. In any case, the gods were shocked and appalled at the actions of their children and stripped from them the knowledge and capacity to reach such great heights of power. They then took this knowledge and secreted it away in the depths of the sea to hide it from mortals while they pondered what to do with it. It seemed a waste to destroy the knowledge, and the gods hoped that someday mortals would become responsible enough to wield such power again. As the eons flew by, mortals eventually forgot of these epic powers, and eventually, even the gods found more important things to occupy their time.

Then, a mere six hundred years ago, the knowledge was rediscovered by a powerful druid named *Shadar*. This human druid had a long abiding love of the sea and with his powerful magic had explored

many of its secrets. Shadar found a pool of dense liquid in a cavern in a deep sea trench and quickly recognized it for what it was: the long-lost artifact created by the gods that held all the lost epic knowledge. Shadar also knew that the powers granted by the pool could disrupt the delicate balance of the mortal realm, so he decided to put aside his adventuring days and founded a highly secretive order of guardians known as the Sentinels of Shadar.

Most of the Sentinels traveled the lands in secret, using the powers granted to them by the pool to maintain balance between law and chaos, good and evil. A select few remained below the sea, in a large complex warded with traps and guardians and made comfortable to any who choose (and are allowed) to visit. These sentinels, along with Shadar himself, stood watch over the pool to insure that only those who would not abuse its power could gain access.

Eventually, even a being as powerful as Shadar moves on. Shadar's death left his followers grief-stricken, but for several hundred years they continued their tasks in honor of his memory. But with his passing, the Sentinels began to drift apart. More of their number opted to wander the world rather than guard the *Shadar Pool*, and eventually, only one guardian was left: an elven druid named Tesseril.

Tesseril grew more and more paranoid and fearful as the years wore on, afraid to leave her post lest someone undeserving gain access to the pool. She enhanced the wards and guardians of the Shadar Caverns, and even used her magic to awaken several whales, giant squid, and other deep-sea animals to serve as guardians. The greatest of these awakened guardians was a cachalot whale named Urlkathoon.

Less than a year ago, Tesseril's fears were realized. A particularly vile and self-absorbed former Sentinel of Shadar named Yaervilar had become corrupted by a dimension-traveling fiend named Lascer. After years of being wracked with visions of power, Yaervilar finally gathered his three most powerful followers to him and set off to wrest control of the *Shadar Pool* from Tesseril. The resulting battle was fierce, and although Tesseril managed to slay Yaervilar, she was too weakened from the battle to put up a fight against Yaervilar's cohorts. The three slew Tesseril, bathed in the *Shadar Pool*, and returned to the town of Redshore to research and practice their newfound epic power.

When the attack on the *Shadar Pool* came, the whale Urlkathoon sensed Tesseril's distress and hastened to the Shadar Caves to assist her, but he arrived too late. Upon his arrival, Urlkathoon found the place a graveyard. When he looked upon what had become of the Shadar Caves and Tesseril herself, he was driven mad with rage. For years, Urlkathoon traveled the sea, destroying all in his path in a senseless rage.

Recently, Urlkathoon recovered from his madness and returned to the Shadar Caves, only to find that they had become the lair of a powerful kraken that has been augmented by the powers of the pool. Unable to regain entrance to the caves, Urlkathoon decided to carry out Shadar's will and travel the world, using his powers to keep similarly powerful individuals from upsetting the balance of reality. He decided that the first and best place to start was with the three who were responsible for Tesseril's death.

Using Divination magic and deductive reasoning, Urlkathoon tracked the three cohorts to their current stomping grounds in the city of Redshore. He has little concept of human society and figures that the entire city is in league with the three assassins. Urlkathoon knows that even with his power he would not last long in a direct confrontation with all three of the villains, and he isn't quite sure who they actually are; he knows only that all three dwell in the walls of the city. So he has begun a one-whale war on the town of Redshore, using his *wild shape* ability to invade the city and wreak havoc, hoping to draw out his three enemies for a final confrontation.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The heroes are drawn by strange and haunting visions of a beautiful woman to the town of Redshore. There, they discover a town in chaos and under siege, yet with no enemy in sight. The town is being terrorized by a powerful druid who is in fact an awakened cachalot whale named Urlkathoon. This druid uses his *wild shape* ability to infiltrate the town in any number of disguises. With powerful magic and potent minions, he then wreaks great havoc. Most of the town's most powerful defenders have already fallen to the whale's attacks, and two significant portions of the town are in ruins.

The adventure continues as the party learns more and more about the nature of the attacks, and of the possible connection to a sinister organization that might be based in town. Soon, the party is drawn into a confrontation with Urlkathoon, who realizes that this party is, in fact, the one the whale has been having visions of. Urlkathoon flees the encounter, only to contact the party the next night. He tells them that there are three powerful assassins hidden somewhere in the city, and that the clues to their identities are likely hidden in a deep undersea cave where they assassinated his leader. Urlkathoon hopes to enlist the party's aid in overcoming the guardian creatures that now lurk in the vicinity of the caves, so he can search them for clues and then return to the city of Redshore for a final confrontation with the assassins of the Shadow Shoal.

Once back in town, the party discovers that the assassins have fled, retreating through *portals* to their dead master's fortress, which is built in the heart of a massive coral reef. This fortress, known as the Coral Citadel, is at the heart of the assassins' power, and if the party can stop them, they can save Redshore from the wrath of Urkathoon as well as from the more sinister threat posed by the Shadow Shoal.

GETTING STARTED

The adventure begins as the characters receive strange visions of a woman floating in a domed underwater cathedral. The woman seems to be writhing in terrible agony, and her body shifts and wavers as it transforms from one chaotic mass of animal parts into another. Beyond the tormented woman floats a roiling sphere of prismatic liquid, in which half-formed shapes and faces seem just about to emerge before they are absorbed. The entire scene fills the character with a sense of potent paranoia and fear, and then vanishes. These visions affect each party member equally, but at different times, perhaps as they are going to bed, while they study spells, or even in the middle of a conversation. The visions feel as if hours pass, but when the character comes to, less than a second has elapsed.

These visions plague the party for some time. All forms of research on what the visions might portend meet with dead ends, be they mundane attempts to gather information or via the castings of powerful Divination spells, since knowledge of the *Shadar Pool*

has been repressed by the gods themselves. A successful bardic knowledge check (DC 35) reveals the most information. If successful, the bard gets a hunch that the visions are actually coming from the sphere, which is obviously quite powerful. In short, the visions are a complete enigma, and a frustrating one at that.

When you feel that the troublesome visions have almost driven the characters to the edge, one of the visions provides an important clue. The party member with the highest Wisdom has a vision in which the agonized woman suddenly grows calm, and her form stabilizes into that of a beautiful aquatic elf. She looks deeply into the character's eyes in the vision, her gaze filled with desperation and worry. She cries out in pain, "To Redshore! Urkathoon! They have gone to Redshore!" She then cries out once more in even greater agony before the vision fades. There are no further visions after this.

A successful Knowledge (geography) check or bardic knowledge check (DC 15) reveals the location of the city of Redshore, far up on the northern coast. Otherwise, a successful Gather Information check (DC 20) reveals the location of the city. You should place Redshore on the very limit of civilization; it is a true frontier town and one of the only bastions of civilization for hundreds of miles around.

REDSHORE

Several weeks ago, shipping lanes into Redshore were shut down. No ship seemed able to reach the

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"The Razing of Redshore" is specifically aimed at a party of 20th-level adventurers, since it is designed to give them access to epic level play. Nevertheless, you can adjust the challenges and encounters in this adventure so it can be used for lower-level parties.

Most of the villains in this adventure possess character levels; reduce these levels by an amount equal to the difference between 20th level and the average party level. Certain encounters in this adventure are difficult even for a 20th level party, such as the encounter with Ithkarsus. Consider dropping these encounters if the party isn't powerful enough. Alternately, you can replace Ithkarsus with an appropriately aged black dragon, and the mithral golem with a couple of iron golems. Likewise, you should reduce the DC required to soothe Tesseril's spirit, and reduce the sonic damage dealt by her wails by $1d6 \times (20 \text{ minus the average party level})$.

The problem posed by the three epic-level assassins in this adventure is a little more difficult to address. You can go ahead and reduce their levels as described above to bring them in line with a lower-level party, but then they lose a large number of epic bonuses. To explain the concern the *Shadar*

Pool still has for their actions, you could alter the artifact such that bathing in it still allows a character to become epic, but none of the effects are felt until the character reaches 20th level. Alternatively, you could establish a link between Ithkarsus and the Shadow Shoal. Perhaps the assassins, although unable to benefit from the *Shadar Pool* yet, have plans to bathe in it soon. Ithkarsus is the guardian appointed to make sure no one else gains the benefits of the pool.

This, then, provides a lower-level party with the motivation to continue the adventure after finding out about the *Shadar Pool* and the Shadow Shoal.

This adventure can also be modified for a group of epic-level characters; the easiest way to adjust the adventure in this case is to increase the class level of the adversaries by a number of levels equal to the difference between the average party level and 20. Of course, you'll need to use the *Epic Level Handbook* to advance the levels of most of the villains in this adventure. Additionally, starting the adventure with epic-level characters wreaks havoc on the plot of the adventure; the purpose of the *Shadar Pool* should be downplayed or reworked altogether to account for the fact that bathing in it isn't necessary to become epic level.

town or leave its harbor without being savagely attacked by sea creatures and tumultuous weather. As the weeks passed and the unusual siege wore on, things grew from bad to worse. Animals and elementals began to attack people on the outskirts of town, then within the town itself. Buildings mysteriously caught fire, bolts of lightning struck down pedestrians in the street, and at one point, a monstrous water elemental burst from a well in the northern part of town and leveled nearly a dozen buildings before retreating. Not long after, a great whale destroyed much of the city's waterfront, and a large group of earth elementals savaged much of the southern reaches of town.

On the day the final vision with the mysterious name of Urkathoon was granted to the party, the most devastating attack on Redshore occurred. Lorchester Keep in Redshore was assaulted by a small army of powerful elementals and other creatures at the same time a powerful lightning storm struck. Lord Lorchester himself and his men fought valiantly, but one of the air elementals was more powerful than any of the others and wielded incredible magic; the men fell quickly under the onslaught, and much of Lorchester Keep was ruined. Lord Lorchester himself was slain in the battle.

👑 **Redshore (Small City):** Standard; AL LN; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 5,340,000 gp; Population 7,120; Mixed (human 79%, halfling 9%, half-elf 5%, dwarf 3%, gnome 2%, 1% elf, other races 1%).

Authority Figures: Lord Torlin Lorchester, Ruler of Redshore, male human Ftr14 (deceased); Erik Lorchester, son of Lord Torlin Lorchester, male human Ari8; Sara Remme, Captain of the Redshore guard, female human Ftr 8/Rgr3; Sir Delon Basilwik, Guildmaster of Merchants, male halfling Exp15.

Other Notable Figures: Bishop Ashton Rolakay, male human Clr11; Jorin Arkalar, male human Brd10; Lady Willarue, female half-elf Rog11; Andril Sunderhammer, male dwarf Exp11; Arkayli Kerrinsar, female human Sor8, Ilaharsun Skrii, female gnome Wiz9; Teladen Ruell, human male Wiz14; Garrison Scrimm, human male Clr18/Asn3; Aaron Kientai, half-elf male Rog11/Mnk5/Asn5; Amyrella Ambermead, female halfling Rgr5/Ftr4/Rog2/Asn11.

THE CITY AS THINGS STAND

Redshore has just withstood a major attack and lost its leader. The city spends the next several days in a state of shock. No businesses are open, and the streets remain deserted except for a couple of nervous, hurried people forced out of hiding for necessities. With the destruction of Lorchester Keep, the town's leaders have gathered together in the Redshore Hall of Records where they debate what to do

next. Many have sought shelter in various temples of the city, especially in the House of the Seafather and the Cathedral of Roses. Although Redshore is not an overly religious city, the attacks have resulted in a sudden rise in the faithful. It is likely that large portions of Redshore's population attempt to flee the city over the next week or so, but for now the town's citizens are too scared to brave the long journey to the next bastion of civilization.

The atmosphere is not one of despair and terror for all of Redshore's citizens. It has long been public knowledge that a chapter of the notorious Shadow Shoal, a sinister sect of fiend-worshipping assassins, has been operating in Redshore. The authorities and several bands of adventurers have tried to root out the assassins many times, but they don't seem to have a centralized lair in town. When one suspected lair is invaded, it is always found empty. Invariably, whoever organized the attack meets with a fatal accident within a day. As a result, Redshore citizens are quick to deny the presence of the Shadow Shoal in town, since one never knows if the man across the street or the woman in the room above works for the guild.

Unless otherwise noted, the horrible weather continues for the duration of the adventure. Treat this weather as equal to a powerful storm (hurricane) as detailed on pages 87–88 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*. This weather is not natural; it is the result of repeated castings of *control weather* by Urkathoon, and as such it can be dispelled or possibly ended with a second *control weather* spell. If the weather is stopped, Urkathoon simply uses his spells or his orb of storms to start it anew.

REDSHORE

1.–4. TOWN GATES

These four gates control the flow of foot traffic into and out of Redshore. Each gate has its own name: area 1 is Redgate, area 2 is Rivergate, area 3 is Eaglegate, and area 4 is Cryptgate (so named because it provides access to the road leading up to the large cemetery on the hill overlooking Redshore). All four gates are currently locked down tight, blocked by a pair of huge wooden doors reinforced with iron and an iron portcullis. The walls of Redshore are made of a beautiful, solid red stone mined from the northern sea cliffs, and they are 15 feet wide. Guardtowers are located frequently along the wall, atop which guards are normally stationed. Currently, no one mans the walls.

🔱 **Iron Reinforced Wooden Door:** 6 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 75; Break (DC 26); Open Lock (DC 30).

🔱 **Iron Portcullis:** 2 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 60; Lift (DC 25); Break (DC 28).

The City of Redshore



THE RAZING OF
REDSHORE

WEST

◆ **Superior Stone Wall:** 15 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 1,350 per 5-foot-wide section; Break (DC 35); Climb (DC 20).

5. RUINED BUILDINGS

This section of town was devoted to Redshore's thriving whaling business, the most lucrative and prosperous venture in town. It was also the site of Urkathoon's second attack. This section of town is now little more than a tangled mess of lumber.

6. WHALING DOCKS

A few of these waterfront buildings survived relatively intact, although their piers were almost entirely ruined. The buildings are deserted now; the sight of a huge angry whale crushing the docks while bolts of lightning rained down on the buildings a few weeks ago drove most of the employees to seek safer jobs in other cities.

7. THE KASPILAR RIVER

This river winds up into the mountains and eventually through several large dwarven communities. In happier days, trade between Redshore and these communities kept traffic on the Kaspilar quite heavy. Today, the rough waters of the river are empty, the waters overflowing its banks and nearly swamping the two bridges that cross it.

8. JORIN ARKALAR'S TOWER

This large building is built of the same red stone the city's walls were fashioned out of. It is the home of a well respected and liked poet and historian by the name of Jorin Arkalar (human Brd10). Jorin is currently huddled in his basement writing, blissfully unaware of the chaos going on around him.

9. THE WHISTLING WHALE INN

This large combination inn and tavern is a favorite spot for sailors and traveling merchants; it's got something of a reputation for being an unsanitary dive, but the entertainment is always top notch. Currently, a large number of drunken sailors and merchants are doing their best to blot out their fear with cheap ale in the common room.

10. MERCHANT'S DOCKS

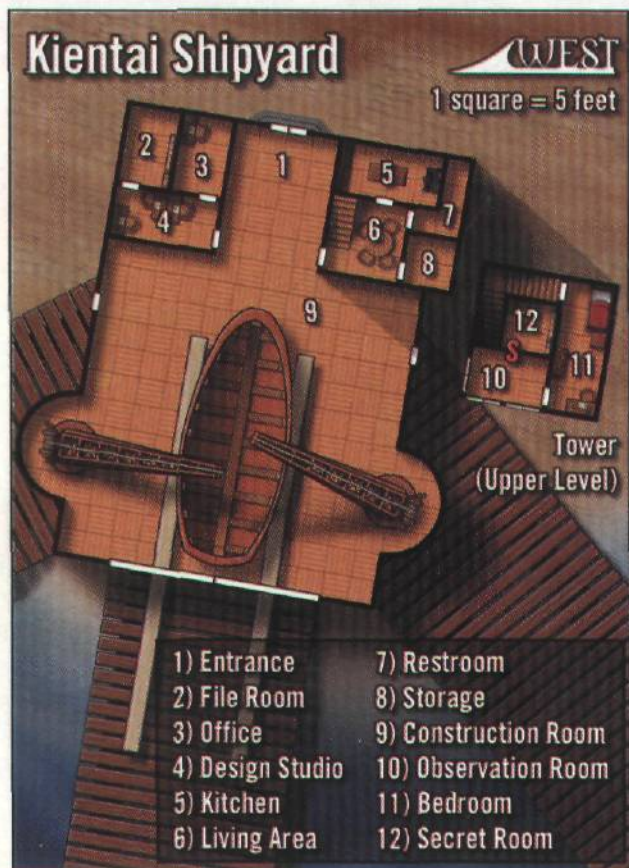
Apart from a freak blast of lightning that caved in the smallest warehouse to the east, these docks have so far been untouched by Urkathoon. The warehouses are all empty, though, since no merchant ships have been able to make it to Redshore for weeks.

11. KIENTAI SHIPYARD (EL 18)

This large building is owned by Aaron Kientai, Redshore's most prosperous (and currently only) shipwright. The fact that Aaron is one of the leaders of the Shadow Shoal assassins and that his competitors all seem to meet with accidents is one of the main reasons behind his success. Aaron Kientai, like his other two conspirators, suspects that the current problems facing Redshore are due to their actions in the Shadar Caves several months ago. He has already relocated his valuables to the Coral Citadel and now spends most of his time skulking about town looking for the cause of the problem.

The bulk of the building consists of a construction room, complete with two large wooden cranes and block-and-tackle apparatus for lifting heavy objects. Ships are built directly on a launching ramp that extends out the southern face of the building, which bears a pair of massive doors allowing most of the southern wall to be opened to the harbor. Although the doors are now closed, the pounding weather is taking its toll, and the southern half of the main room is flooded.

The northern third of the building is more enclosed. The northeast section contains files, an office, and an area to plan the construction of ships. The northwest section consists of a two story tower that holds Kientai's personal sleeping quarters. The ground floor of the tower consists of a living area, a storeroom for the various art objects he's collected (he prefers to work for art), a restroom, and a



kitchen. The upper floor is dominated by a bedroom and a large room that overlooks the building floor so he can observe work from a position of comfort.

A secret room in the middle of this floor (Search DC 35 to find the masterfully constructed secret door) contains the only hint toward Kientai's life as an assassin. This tiny room contains a large desk and a shelf containing hundreds of floorplans of the homes of important individuals. The characters might be disconcerted to find floorplans of their own fortresses here, along with detailed notes on their activities. Similar notes on other powerful individuals throughout your campaign can be found here as well. Kientai believes in keeping up to date on the comings and goings of possible future hits as well as those he is currently planning.

A strange, 5-foot-diameter ring of coral is affixed to the east wall of the secret room. This coral ring is in fact a *coral portal* (see sidebar below).

Creatures: If this area is entered after the party's actions have been noticed by the Shadow Shoal, a group of three Shadow Shoal Snipers waits in hiding in this building to ambush them.

☞ **Shadow Shoal Snipers, Human Rog10/Asn5 (3):** CR 15; Medium-size Humanoid (human); HD 15d6+15; hp 67 each; Init +9; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (touch 17, flat-footed 17); Atk +16/+11 melee (1d6+3, +2 rapier) or +18/+13 ranged (1d6+4, +2 mighty composite shortbow [+1 Str bonus] with +1 arrows); SA sneak attack +8d6, crippling strike, death attack (DC 17); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked, +1 against traps), poison use, +2 save vs. poison; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +19, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 20, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills: Bluff +12, Climb +19, Disguise +17, Escape Artist +18, Gather Information +12, Hide +23,

Innuendo +13, Listen +18, Move Silently +23, Spot +18, Tumble +23. **Feats:** Far Shot, Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Weapon Finesse (rapier).

Assassin Spells Prepared (2/2, base save DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—*change self*, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*darkness*, *undetectable alignment*.

Possessions: +1 rapier, +2 mighty composite shortbow [+1] with 10 +1 arrows and 10 masterwork arrows, amulet of natural armor +1, gloves of Dexterity +2, bag of holding 2, cloak of resistance +3, bracers of armor +4, ring of protection +2, 2 potions of neutralize poison, 2 potions of cure serious wounds, potion of haste, potion of alter self, potion of invisibility, Shadow Shoal tattoo, 5 doses of large scorpion venom (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*, page 80).

Tactics: The snipers are hiding in the observation room, crouched in corners behind furniture. Allow the first PC who enters the room to make a Spot check opposed by the snipers' Hide checks to determine whether the assassins are detected. The snipers attack in unison 3 rounds after the first PC appears in the room. All three snipers focus their death attacks on that one character, hoping to take him or her out of the fight immediately. They then retreat out open windows into the rafters of the construction room (Climb, DC 20), trying to use ranged attacks as long as possible before engaging in melee.

12. THE REDSHORE LIGHT

Remarkably, this 120-foot-tall lighthouse still operates; the structure is solidly built and Tanner Herrison (human male Com3) makes it a point of personal pride to keep the light going. The light consists of a dozen stones that have *continual flame* spells cast on them mounted before a large concave mirror, so there is no chance of wind or rain extinguishing its glow.

CORAL PORTAL

Coral portals can be found in areas 11, 17, and 30 in the city of Redshore. These magical devices are used by the assassins of the Shadow Shoal to move from one of these locations to another instantly, as well as to travel to their distant base of operations, the Coral Citadel. Each of these *portals* consists of a 5-foot-wide ring of 3-inch-thick blue coral. A *coral portal* is portable since it only weighs 100 pounds, but it does not function until it is affixed to a solid wall in some way and is then "awakened" by sacrificing 500 XP. The *portal* remains functional until it is removed from the wall (a full-round action that requires a successful Strength check, DC 30, for anyone but the person who awakened the *portal*; this person can remove the *portal* freely).

Once awakened, the *portal* transports anyone who touches the area inside the ring as if by *teleport without error*. It transports the person to one other *coral portal* within a ten-mile

radius; if more than one such *portal* is available, the *portal* either transports the user to a random *portal*, or to the one the user is thinking about at the time the *portal* is activated. If the user bears a Shadow Shoal tattoo, he can choose instead to be transported to area 1 of the Coral Citadel.

Anyone who tries to use a *coral portal* and does not envision a specific location or does not bear a Shadow Shoal tattoo is instead transported to the sea bed 200 miles to the east of the Coral Citadel. The water depth here is just over 4 miles; the poor victim likely drowns or is crushed by the tremendous water pressure before long. A successful Use Magic Device check (DC 30) can temporarily deactivate this nasty trap, allowing anyone who visualizes the Coral Citadel at the time of transport to be transported there, even if they do not bear a Shadow Shoal tattoo.

Additional information about *portals* can be found in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Setting*, pages 59–61.

13. HOUSE OF THE SEAFATHER

The most popular temple in town is the one dedicated to the Seafather; the patron god of sailors and those who travel the sea. This temple is overseen by Bishop Ashton Rolakay (human male Clr11) and his nine acolytes (various races, genders, and levels from 1 to 3), and he is currently horribly overworked. Many wounded line the aisles of the main temple, and all other available space is taken up by hundreds of scared worshipers huddling in the temple for protection. Ashton's spells are all but exhausted, and he would welcome aid from the characters.

14. RUTHIVALD'S IMPORTS

Although whaling is the primary source of income in Redshore, it is by far not the only successful business in town. Ruthivald Skorayn (human male Exp5) has made quite a name for himself importing luxury items to the citizens of Redshore. He's lost three of his four ships in the last few weeks, though, and has closed up his shop. He can be found on the top floor of his empty manor where he has just finished calculating how much he has lost. Ruthivald is only a few hours away from drinking himself into a stupor from which he won't awaken for several days.

15. THE HOUSE OF DUELS

The most successful tavern in Redshore, the House of Duels features nightly combats between illusory creatures created with shadow conjuration by its proprietor, Arkayli Kerrinsar (female human Sor8). Adventurers flock to this tavern, and it is one of the best places to hear local news and rumors. Today, though, the tavern is empty. Most of the visiting adventurers in Redshore have either already been killed or fled for safer locales. Arkayli is nevertheless still an excellent source to find out what's been happening in town; most commoners who are asked for information only point the adventurers in her direction.

16. REDSHORE HIGHMARKET

Normally the site of a bustling economy and filled with tents and booths, the Redshore Highmarket is deserted and flooded. A few tents and booths lie in ruins, their owners unable or unwilling to salvage them before they fled for shelter.

17. SCRIMM'S REMEDIES (EL 18)

This modest building on the edge of the Highmarket is boarded up tightly, as are most other shops. Unlike most other shops, though, this one is still inhabited by its owner. Garrison Scrimm runs this herbalist and apothecary, and has done so for nearly forty years. One of the old timers of Redshore, not many of the locals get along with the cranky old

man, but certainly none of them suspect him of being one of the leaders of the Shadow Shoal assassins. For his own part, Garrison takes a secret delight hiding in plain sight—a seller of potions and drugs who just happens to be one of the most dangerous assassins in the land.

Most of Garrison's wares are fairly innocuous, harmless, or even slightly fraudulent. There is nothing in this building to belie his true nature except for the *coral portal* that hangs above his bed like a trophy in his bedroom.

Creatures: If this area is entered after the party's actions have been noticed by the Shadow Shoal, a group of three Shadow Shoal Snipers wait in hiding in this building to ambush them.

♣ **Shadow Shoal Snipers, Human Rog10/Asn5:** See area 11 for statistics and tactics.

18. LADY WILLARUE'S RETREAT

Lady Willarue's establishment is one of the more popular locations in town; it's a place where a man or woman with a heavy purse can go to relax, get a massage, engage in pleasant conversation, and do whatever else comes to mind with Willarue's attractive employees. The current situation in Redshore has taken such idle entertainment out of the minds of the locals, and the establishment is currently closed.

Willarue (female half-elf Rog11) and her eight employees also comprise a minor thieves' guild, although they rarely dabble in anything more violent than blackmail and burglary. She is the only one in town who suspects that Scrimm might be a member of the Shadow Shoal but has so far kept this information to herself. A successful Diplomacy check (DC 30) would pry this bit of information from her, but only if it's accompanied by a guarantee of safety, 1,000 gp, and a promise that the source of the information is never revealed.

19. REDSHORE MERCHANT'S CONSORTIUM

This large five-story tower contains the offices of the Redshore Merchant's Consortium, a band of merchants who have joined together for protection and share the workload of their lifestyle. A few of their members have turned tail and fled town, but most remain behind, holed up in this tower waiting for the storm to pass. Their leader, Sir Delon Basilwik, is currently in the Hall of Records (area 30) where he is working with other town leaders trying to come up with a solution to the problem facing Redshore.

20. REDSHORE GAMING HALL

Like so many other buildings, this business is closed for the storm. This once popular location is likely to

remain closed, for its owner packed his valuables and left town after the first of Urlkathoon's attacks.

21. ANDRIL SUNDERHAMMER'S FINE WEAPONRY

Andril Sunderhammer (male dwarf Exp11) is an accomplished weaponsmith who has run this shop for nearly eighty years. He can remember when Redshore had little more than a wood palisade for a wall, and he is quick to let any visitors know this. He has retreated to his smithy for the duration of the storm, pouring his anger and distress into his work. He sells exclusively masterwork weaponry.

22. THE CATHEDRAL OF ROSES

The second most popular church in town is the Cathedral of Roses, which is dedicated to the goddess of valor, bravery, and protection. This tall cathedral is made of pink marble, and like the House of the Seafather is filled to capacity with wounded and fearful worshipers. Annah Ravenlash (human female Clr6) and her five acolytes tend this temple.

23. RUINED SECTION

Urlkathoon's first major attack on Redshore occurred here when he led a wave of water elementals (while in water elemental form himself) on a blitz against the residences located here. Nothing remains now in this area but ruins.

24.-25. INNER GATES

The two inner gates are equal in strength to the four external gates (areas 1-4), except that they are currently open to allow access to the High City. Area 24 is known as Noble's Gate, while area 25 is known as Lorchester Gate.

26. ILAHARSUN'S TOWER

This secluded tower is as eccentric in architectural style as its solitary resident. Ilaharsun Skrii (female gnome Wiz9) is a retired adventurer who makes her living identifying and testing magic items for adventurers. She is currently working on researching a spell that protects her tower from the frequent lightning blasts that have been striking Redshore lately, but the going is slow with the storm causing so many distractions.

27. REDSHORE LIBRARY

This is a relatively small building on the surface, but its basement covers an area twice its size. The Redshore Library's contents are focused on local history, local trades (especially whaling and shipping), and the natural world. Although technically closed, Mariah Larumar (human female Exp2) is willing to



open her doors for a trustworthy looking group of characters. If a character wishes to research information in this library, you can reward her efforts however you wish; if the party seems stuck you can use this opportunity to encourage them toward the next part of the adventure by placing some clues.

28. KESTREL HOUSE

This stone building is the highest quality inn in Redshore. There are only six rooms in all, but each is a full suite that can easily accommodate four people. Prices to stay at the Kestrel House are 100% higher than normal, but the price is well worth the pampering. All six rooms are currently occupied by the displaced Lorchester family, who spend most of their time in the rooms mourning their fallen patriarch.

29. OLD MISKANAR'S PLACE

This building is the home of an old gnome named Miskanar (male gnome Com15). A lifelong resident of Redshore, he has lived here for nearly 180 years. Indeed, when he first built his house here, it was the only house in sight. Since then, he has come to accept the arrival of Redshore as a necessary evil; it's easy for him to go buy some mead now, even if he does have to follow the rules of "society" when he goes outside. He's currently hiding under his bed, waiting for the storm to blow over.

30. REDSHORE HALL OF RECORDS

This building is where the majority of the town's records are kept: tax information and payment records, birth and death records, land deeds, pretty much anything of a non-military topic that relates to Redshore as a town. There are several offices and meeting rooms in the northeast portion of the building for town officials to meet with citizens or each other. A small kitchen and dining area is located nearby. The southwest portion of the building is dominated by a huge meeting hall where various large meetings are held. This room is currently used by several of the more powerful and influential citizens of Redshore as they plan on how best to cope with the troubles that have hit the town of late. The northwestern portion of the building contains several rooms used to store files and records, as well as a room to create transcriptions of files and a room to witness the drafting of important documents. The southeastern portion contains yet more file storage, along with the personal quarters of Redshore's bookkeeper, Amyrella Ambermead.

While almost all of Redshore think of Amyrella as little more than the somewhat clumsy but gifted and cute halfling lass who keeps track of Redshore's paperwork and taxes, she is in fact the current leader of the Shadow Shoal assassins. She has worked as Redshore's town accountant for nearly ten years



now, but the job is little more than a convenient cover for her true life. She has long been funneling funds away from income and merchant taxes to the Shadow Shoal, and she views the current troubles as a boon. After the storm, there will doubtless be tax increases to pay for repairs, and with tax increases come more opportunities to skim from the top.

Amyrella's room is somewhat drab and dull, apparently the personal chambers of a lonely and overly intellectual halfling. She knows better than to keep incriminating evidence in her room; the only thing that belies her true loyalty is the *coral portal* mounted on the inside of a closet. A cleverly hidden false wall can fold down along the back wall to hide the *coral portal*; discovering this false wall requires a successful Search check (DC 35). She has toyed with the idea of setting some traps in here to further ward the *portals* but for now she is content that the *portal* itself is trap enough for curious intruders.

If Amyrella becomes aware that the party is after the Shadow Shoal, she does not place assassin snipers here since she would rather not tip her hand. She removes the *coral portal* from the wall, brings it to Scrimm's home, and uses Scrimm's *portal* to gain the safety of the Coral Citadel, leaving absolutely no incriminating evidence in her chambers.

31.-33. LESSER SHRINES

Three lesser shrines are located here. These small shrines are not staffed by clerics and serve only as a place for worshipers to pay their respects to the three minor gods of Redshore. All three shrines are currently unoccupied. Area 31 is the Church of the Sacred Dawn, dedicated to the god of the afterlife. Area 32 is a Shrine to the Blue Lady, dedicated to the goddess of time and destiny. Area 33 is the House of Gold and Silver, dedicated to the god of commerce and trade.

34. REDSHORE MONEYCHANGER

This formidable stone structure serves as a lending house, moneychanger, and bank for the nobles and aristocrats of Redshore who don't feel safe keeping valuables in their homes. The moneychanger is warded by dozens of potent magical guardians and protections, and its curators have closed the building up tight until the storm blows over.

35. ABALONE TOWER

This tall stone tower is completely covered with abalone shell; in the sunlight, its walls shine with a prismatic beauty rivaled by no other building in Redshore. This six story tower is the home of the most powerful non-assassin spellcaster in town: Teladen Ruell (human male Wiz14). His tower is

currently sealed tight, but Teladen himself can be found in area 30 discussing the fate of Redshore with the others.

36. LASTGATE

This gate is the equal to those found in areas 1–4, save that it stands open.

37. REDSHORE GARRISON

This is the site of Urkathoon's latest and most successful attack on Redshore. None of the buildings of the garrison escaped unscathed, and fully 70% of the city guard perished in the battle.

38. LORCHESTER KEEP

The ancestral home of the rulers of Redshore, Lorchester Keep sits abandoned for the first time since the city's founding. The displaced aristocrats are staying at the Kestrel House until the storm blows over, after which they see to the task of rebuilding their home.

EVENTS

The following events all occur fairly rapidly after the party arrives in Redshore. They are not tied to any one location and can happen anywhere and at any time the DM feels they should occur.

EVENT 1: THE REDSHORE COUNCIL

The party is free to arrive at Redshore using any method of travel they wish; no matter how they arrive, they find the city in the same condition. The streets are empty, many buildings are damaged or boarded up, and the entire place is wreathed in a violent, near-hurricane strength storm. Allow them to wander about the town as they will; eventually their questions should result in directions to the Redshore Hall of Records to speak with the town's leadership. If the party decides instead to simply wander around, not much happens until later in the afternoon when Event 2 occurs. All of the town's inns are closed, but a persistent party that doesn't come off as a band of thugs can convince someone to open their doors if they end up needing to spend the night somewhere in town.

If the PCs approach the Redshore Hall of Records, they find a lively meeting in progress in the main meeting hall. Present are Erik Lorchester (representing the Lorchester family), Sara Remme (representing the Redshore guard), Sir Delon Basilwik (representing the Redshore Merchant's Guild), Prelate Ivalar Skeen (human male Clr6, representing the House of the Seafather), Teladen Ruell (representing Redshore's spellcasters), and about a dozen various cohorts and servants. Also present is a remarkably

pretty halfling woman; this is Amyrella Ambermead (she is making transcriptions of the meetings, while at the same time listening closely to see if anything about the Shadow Shoal is mentioned by the nervous city folk).

The party is initially greeted with suspicion and distrust. After they introduce themselves, allow the players to make level checks modified by their Charisma modifier against a DC of 30; success indicates that several of the people present have heard of that character's exploits. This might aid or hinder their efforts to get on the good side of the council. The initial attitude of the council is Unfriendly (as detailed on page 149 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*); their attitude must be changed to Friendly before they agree to trust the party with their problems. For each party member recognized by the council for their past exploits, assign a +2 or -2 modifier to any Diplomacy checks, depending on if they are recognized for their fame or infamy.

Assuming that the party gains the trust of the council, they quickly recount what they know about what happened recently in town. A bulleted list of this information is presented below.

- Seven weeks ago, ships in the vicinity of Redshore reported increased trouble with sea life. Whales in particular were acting strangely antagonistic toward the vessels.

- Four weeks ago, this strange activity increased as numbers of whales and even elementals began to sink ships traveling to and from Redshore. Word spread quickly, and all trade and travel via the sea dropped off within a few days.

- No new ships have arrived at Redshore for the past three weeks. Food stores in the city are beginning to run low.

- Three weeks ago, animal attacks began to increase in the outlying areas.

- Two weeks ago, the animal attacks spread to the city itself.

- One week ago, elementals and various plant monsters joined the animals. The city guard was hard pressed to keep the streets safe.

- The storms began one week ago as well. They have been slowly building in power to the hurricane force winds that currently pound the city. They brought freak lightning storms as well, the bolts of which seem to unerringly seek out large buildings and individuals.

- Five days ago, a large number of water elementals burst out of a sewer entrance in the northwestern part of the city. They were led by a water elemental of great size that commanded powerful magic. The elementals destroyed several buildings before they were forced to retreat.

• Three days ago, a host of water, earth, and air elementals struck at the whaling industry in the southern portion of town at the height of one of the destructive lightning storms. At the same time, a great scarred cachalot whale swam into the harbor and destroyed many of the docks and waterfront warehouses.

• Yesterday, a third attack proved more devastating than anything that came before. A huge number of elementals, led this time by a spellcasting air elemental of enormous size, struck at Lorchester Keep. The battle was furious, and although the elementals were eventually repulsed, only a quarter of the city guard survived the battle. Lord Lorchester himself was slain in the battle, and the survivors have had to abandon their ruined keep to live in town.

• Attempts to raise Lord Lorchester from death have failed. According to Ivalar Skeen, this is because Lord Lorchester's demoralized spirit did not want to be raised, possibly because he feels he has failed his city. Erik Lorchester denies this theory vehemently, at which point the two of them begin a loud and disruptive argument that continues for hours if the party does not intervene.

When asked what they plan to do now, the council replies that they intend to wait until the next day in hopes that the worst of the storm passes, at which time they plan on traveling from door to door recruiting as many citizens as possible into a militia to help defend the city (this is the angry Erik Lorchester's idea). The problem is that they don't rightly know who their enemy is, or where they are located. At this point, allow the characters to make a Sense Motive check (DC 20) to realize that the members of the council are hiding something. If anyone confronts the council on this, they become obviously nervous and edgy, hemming and hawing and trying to change the subject. At this point, Amyrella Ambermead sighs loudly and interrupts:

"Alright, if none of you louts are gonna say it, I guess the bookkeeper has to. These fine folk obviously want to help us out, so we don't gain nothin' keeping things from them!" The pretty halfling blushes, apparently shocked at her own boldness, then takes a deep breath and turns to face you. "You see . . . there's been rumors for the past several years that the Shadow Shoal have established a base of operations in town, and everyone's too afraid to even talk about it. They say that those who start talking about the Shadow Shoal end up dead, or worse! Nevermind the fact that until today, we haven't had anything remotely like an assassination in Redshore at all; if there *were* a branch of the Shadow Shoal operating in town over the past sev-

eral years, wouldn't we have seen evidence of their actions well before today?"

"If you ask me, our problem is with those giants up north. They've got a circle of druids leading them, I hear. Maybe something riled them up and they're taking it out on us! Anyway . . . sorry to interrupt things, but I just had to let you know that we all appreciate any help you can give us, even if most of us here aren't bright enough to recognize a legitimate offer for help if it kicked us in the teeth."

After Amyrella's outburst, the remainder of the council becomes subdued and embarrassed. Erik Lorchester apologizes for the outburst, and thanks the party for coming to offer their aid. He offers to let them stay in a room at the Kestrel House for the night; tomorrow, they have a lot of research and work to do. At this time, the council begins to break up as nightfall approaches.

Amyrella's outburst is a calculated move. She knew that the topic of the Shadow Shoal was only moments from being broached, so she tried to defuse it by casting derision on the idea that the Shoal was even present in town. At the same time, she hopes the party takes the bait and travels north to investigate the giants (who are indeed lead by a circle of evil druids, but they have nothing to do with the troubles facing Redshore), so that they stay out of her way.

EVENT 2: THE WEATHER WORSENS

Later that night, Urkathoon attacks again. He remained in air elemental form after his attack in the morning, floating about in the storm (his abilities as an air elemental and his magic items, especially his *orb of storms*, more than protect him from harm) and watching the town.

Around midnight, a few hours before his elemental *wild shape* expires, he decides to unleash a *storm of vengeance* from his *orb of storms* onto the city. Ten minutes before he casts the spell, he causes the *control weather* spell he has cast to become calm and serene, hoping to draw out some likely targets. When the storm has abated, he creates the *storm of vengeance*. This affects a 360-foot diameter area of the city; go ahead and select a location that indirectly targets the party's location so they'll be part of the action.

The *storm of vengeance* likely damages several buildings, since no one is foolish enough to venture outside. He casts his spell from a vantage point about 1,500 feet up in the sky. Chances are he isn't spotted before the *storm of vengeance* runs its course, after which he once more manipulates the controlled weather to return the hurricane conditions before retreating to the sea to resume his natural form, rest, and eventually replenish his spells for the next day.

EVENT 3: USING DIVINATION MAGIC

The PCs doubtless resort to Divination magic to learn more about the situation. If and when they do, use the opportunity to provide clues to the party rather than to devalue their high-level Divination spells. A *divination* spell cast for the question, "Is the Shadow Shoal responsible for the weather in Redshore?" might give a response like: "The hornet's nest awakens when rocks are thrown from the shallows."

Spells like *commune* and *contact other plane* are more difficult to adjudicate since their responses are not as murky as those provided by lesser Divination spells, but if you adhere to answering questions exactly as they are asked and not volunteering any more information than is called for, you can usually

preserve the mystery of an adventure while at the same time letting the PCs enjoy using their abilities. You can even use the answers to guide the party to the next encounter or event.

EVENT 4: THE FOURTH ATTACK (EL 23)

After Urkathoon rests, heals up from the previous day's battle, and replenishes his spells, he returns to Redshore to mount another attack. Feel free to stage this attack in any way you see fit. If you do not stage the attack near or at the party's location, they should hear about the attack soon enough that they can respond in time. Possible targets for the attack include the House of the Seafather, the Redshore Light, the Redshore Hall of Records, and the

A WHALE TO REMEMBER

➔ **Urkathoon, Awakened Cachalot Whale** Drd16: CR 23; Gargantuan Animal (Aquatic) (62 ft. long); HD 30d8+270; hp 405; Init +1; Spd swim 40 ft.; AC 16 (touch 7; flat-footed 15); Atk +29 melee (4d6+14, bite), +24 melee (1d8+7, tail slap); Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 40 ft./10 ft.; SA spells, *wild shape* 5/day, *wild shape* (Tiny, Large, Huge), *wild shape* (elemental) 1/day; SQ blindsight, nature sense, woodland stride, trackless step, resist nature's lure, venom immunity, timeless body; AL CN; SV Fort +27, Ref +16, Will +24; Str 38, Dex 13, Con 28, Int 14, Wis 30, Cha 12.

Note: All of Urkathoon's ability scores have a +2 inherent bonus from the *Shadar Pool*, except Wisdom, which has a +5 inherent bonus from the *tome of understanding* Urkathoon read long ago.

Skills: Animal Empathy +16, Concentration +28, Intuit Direction +18, Knowledge (nature) +18, Listen +19, Spellcraft +25, Spot +20, Wilderness Lore +29. *Feats:* Cleave, Natural Spell*, Power Attack, Quicken Spell. *Epic Feats:* Improved Elemental Wild Shape, Gargantuan Wild Shape.

*These feats are described in *Masters of the Wild*. Epic feats are described in the *Epic Level Handbook*. See the sidebar for information on these feats.

Spells Prepared (6/8/8/7/6/6/5/4/3, base save DC = 20 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* (x2), *flare*, *light* (x2), *read magic*; 1st—*animal friendship*, *calm animals*, *cure light wounds* (x2), *entangle* (x2), *obscuring mist* (x2); 2nd—*animal messenger*, *charm person or animal* (x2), *fire trap*, *flaming sphere*, *heat metal*, *soften earth and stone*, *tree shape*; 3rd—*call lightning*, *contagion*, *cure moderate wounds* (x2), *protection from elements* (x2), *stone shape*; 4th—*control plants*, *cure serious wounds* (x2), *dispel magic*, *flame strike*, *rusting grasp*; 5th—*animal growth*, *control winds*, *death ward*, *obscuring mist* (quicken), *transmute rock to mud*, *tree stride*; 6th—*charm person or animal* (quicken), *greater dispelling*, *repel wood*, *summon nature's ally VI*, *transport via plants*; 7th—*control weather*, *fire storm*, *greater magic fang* (quicken), *heal*; 8th—*finger of death*, *flame strike* (quicken), *whirlwind*.

Note: Urkathoon can cast spells in his natural form using a variant of whalesong in place of speech (for verbal compo-

nents) and using his tail and flippers in place of arms and hands (for somatic components)).

Possessions: *Druid's satchel*, *orb of storms*, *rod of elemental mastery*, *crystal ball with telepathy*, *pearl of power* (8th-level spell), *pearl of power* (4th-level spell), *wand of cure critical wounds* (43 charges), *figurine of wondrous power* (ivory goats). Urkathoon has also gained the benefit of reading a *tome of understanding* +5. He keeps his magic items stowed in his *druid's satchel* until they are needed; note that he cannot manipulate or use most of his items while in his natural form.

Animal Companions: Urkathoon has used *animal friendship* to gain the companionship of a pair of cachalot whales and a giant octopus; all three of these creatures are currently patrolling the shipping lanes near Redshore and attacking any ships they encounter. They are not encountered by the party in this adventure.

Dominated Elemental: Urkathoon has dominated an elder air elemental with his *rod of elemental mastery*. The dominated elemental is never found far from his side.

➔ **Elder Air Elemental:** hp 204; *Monster Manual* 81.

Description

In his natural form, Urkathoon is a 64-foot-long sperm whale with dead black skin that is pocked with scars and old wounds. He prefers to explore the seas with other whales, but lately he has become horribly obsessed with revenge against the unknown assassins who slew his mistress, Tesseril.

In combat, Urkathoon prefers to use his spells while in *wild shape* form. His epic-level feats allow him to assume a form from Diminutive size up to Gargantuan size; his favorite *wild shape* is a Gargantuan elder elemental. His Natural Spell feat lets him cast spells in any of his *wild shape* forms, despite the probable lack of hands or a voice.

Urkathoon's Improved Elemental Wild Shape feat broadens his choices in elemental form; instead of assuming the form of a standard elemental (air, earth, fire, or water), he can assume the form of any creature of the Elemental type, such as an invisible stalker or a thoqqua. Urkathoon is still not used to being awakened and has yet to fully understand human society.

Cathedral of Roses. Urlkathoon comes to shore in silence well to the south of town and assumes the form of a Gargantuan earth elemental. He then uses his *rod of elemental mastery* to grant himself protection from all elements and then invokes an *elemental swarm* to call forth several earth elementals. They then head north to strike at their target. Urlkathoon's dominated elder air elemental follows along in the air. Urlkathoon presses the attack until he is reduced to 100 hit points or fewer, or until all of his earth elementals are slain.

If the party shows up to fight him, Urlkathoon concentrates his energy against the PCs while his earth elementals fight the townsfolk. At the start of each action, Urlkathoon makes a Wisdom check (DC 30) with a cumulative +2 bonus for each round that passes. When he succeeds, he realizes with a shock that the party is the same group he's been having visions about for the past several weeks. When he realizes this, he becomes confused and retreats from the combat, abandoning his elementals to their fate (although his dominated elder air elemental retreats with him). He returns to his natural form and retreats out to sea as soon as possible.

➔ **Urlkathoon, Awakened Cachalot Whale**
Drd16: See the sidebar on the previous page for complete statistics.

EVENT 5: URLKATHOON CONTACTS THE PARTY (EL 23)

Some time after Urlkathoon's fourth attack, he attempts to make peaceful contact with the party. He first returns the weather plaguing Redshore to normal. He then uses *animal messenger* or his dominated air elemental to contact the party and arrange a meeting. If this fails, he *wild shapes* into some harmless-looking animal and tries to contact them in person. Urlkathoon is somewhat nervous around large numbers of people and prefers to arrange a meeting with the party in some location outside city limits, preferably on the coast. Urlkathoon's

visions have indicated to him that the party can provide him with the aid he needs to return to the Shadar Caves and learn more about his enemies.

If the party agrees to meet with Urlkathoon, he admits to being the one responsible for assaulting Redshore over the past several days. Urlkathoon has the following pieces of information to impart:

- Urlkathoon was *awakened* by a powerful aquatic elf druid named Tesseril; he learned the secrets of the druidic way from her. Tesseril was the guardian of a potent artifact known as the *Shadar Pool*; Tesseril allowed Urlkathoon to bathe in the pool and, in so doing, he gained great insights and experience. He can describe the *Shadar Pool* if asked; the description matches the visions of the strange sphere of liquid in the party's visions.

- Several months ago, Tesseril was attacked by a powerful assassin and his cohorts. Urlkathoon heard Tesseril's mental call for help, but he arrived too late to save her. She had been slain, and her body and soul were absorbed by the *Shadar Pool*. Urlkathoon went mad with rage and spent the next month stalking the seas and wreaking havoc wherever he went.

- Eventually, his rage subsided and he attempted to return to the Shadar Caves to figure out what had occurred and set things right, but the caves had been discovered by a powerful kraken. In addition, Urlkathoon knew that a powerful construct, whose exact nature he is not aware of, guarded the pool and that it had likely gone rogue upon Tesseril's death. He couldn't risk invading the caves on his own.

Urlkathoon used his spells to speak with the plants, fish, and stones of the sea. From them, he learned that three of the assassin's cohorts survived the battle. He traced their movements back to Redshore and decided to exact his revenge. Unfortunately, Urlkathoon didn't know who the assassins were, and he didn't understand human society enough to find out. So he decided to destroy Redshore and everyone within, and in so doing, the assassins as well.

DROWNING, FREEZING, AND BEING CRUSHED

At four-and-a-half miles below sea level, air-breathing creatures need magic to breathe. Further, the temperature at this depth is a bone-chilling 4°F and deals 1d6 points of cold subdual damage each minute of exposure.

The water pressure quickly crushes most visitors, dealing a crushing 237d6 points of pressure damage per minute; a successful Fortitude saving throw (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) means the swimmer takes no damage in that minute. Urlkathoon is acclimated to the pressure (as are other creatures found in the watery depths), but the party

likely needs to turn to magic to avoid pressure damage.

Incorporeal creatures are immune to pressure damage, so any spell that grants this quality (such as *gaseous form*) can protect a character. Immunity to bludgeoning attacks also provides immunity to pressure damage. *Plate armor of the deep* protects against pressure damage, as does a *necklace of adaptation*. The *freedom of movement* spell also prevents pressure damage, as it allows the protected individual to move about without being impeded by water at all. Other effects can protect against pressure damage as you see fit.

Urllkathoon's wish now is to enlist the aid of the party in returning to the Shadar Caves. With their aid, he feels confident that they can overcome the kraken and the artifact's other guards.

He has had visions lately of the *Shadar Pool* and Tesseril, and he knows her spirit is in pain, as well as that it knows who is responsible for her death. If he

finds out that the party has been having the same visions, he is even more convinced that they should accompany him. He would like to leave as soon as possible but understands if the party wants to rest and prepare for a day. He knows the layout of the Shadar Caves, and he is more than willing to impart this knowledge to the party.

FEATS OF CHAMPIONS

Some of the feats presented in NPC stat blocks in this adventure appear in products other than the three core rulebooks. These feats are reprinted here for your convenience.

Feat from *Masters of the Wild*:

Natural Spell [Wild]

You can cast spells while in a *wild shape*.

Prerequisite: Ability to use *wild shape*, Wis 13.

Benefit: You complete the verbal and somatic components of spells while in a *wild shape*. For example, while in the form of a hawk, you could substitute screeches and gestures for the normal verbal and somatic components of the spell. You can use any material and somatic components of a spell. You can use any material components or focuses that you can hold with an appendage of your current form, but you cannot make use of any such items that are melded within that form. This feat does not permit the use of magic items while in a form that cannot ordinarily use them, and you do not gain the ability to speak while in a *wild shape*.

Feat from *Sword and Fist*:

Rapid Reload [General]

You reload a crossbow more quickly than normal.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +2, proficiency with the crossbow used.

Benefit: You can reload a hand crossbow or light crossbow as a free action that provokes an attack of opportunity. You can use this feat once per round.

Normal: Loading a hand or light crossbow is a move-equivalent action, and loading a heavy crossbow is a full-round action.

Feats from *Epic-Level Handbook*:

Automatic Silent Spell [Epic]

You can cast any of your lesser spells silently.

Prerequisites: Silent Spell, Spellcraft 24 ranks, ability to cast 9th-level arcane or divine spells.

Benefit: You may cast all 0-, 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-level spells as silent spells without using higher-level spell slots.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Each time you take the feat, the spells of your next three lowest spell levels can now be silenced with no adjustment to their spell slots. Thus, a wizard who takes this feat twice can cast his 0- through 6th-level spells as silent spells with no adjustment to their spell slots.

This feat doesn't increase the casting time for spells that normally become full-round actions when cast in metamagic form (including sorcerer spells and spontaneously cast spells, such as a good cleric's cure spells). However, since bard spells can't be enhanced with the Silent Spell feat, they can't be affected by this feat either.

Improved Elemental Wild Shape [Wild] [Epic]

You can take the form of a greater variety of elementals than normal.

Prerequisites: Wis 25, ability to *wild shape* into an elemental.

Benefit: Your ability to *wild shape* into an elemental is expanded to include all elemental creatures (not just air, earth, fire, and water elementals) of any size that you can take when using *wild shape* to become an animal. For instance, if you are normally capable of using *wild shape* to become a Huge animal, you can now *wild shape* into a Huge elemental creature. You gain all extraordinary and supernatural abilities of the elemental whose form you take.

Normal: Without this feat, you may only *wild shape* into a Small, Medium-size, or Large air, earth, fire, or water elemental.

Gargantuan Wild Shape [Wild] [Epic]

You can *wild shape* into animals of Gargantuan size.

Prerequisite: Ability to *wild shape* into a Huge animal.

Benefit: You can use your *wild shape* to take the shape of a Gargantuan animal.

Normal: Without this feat, you cannot *wild shape* into an animal greater than Huge size.

Lingering Damage [Epic]

Your sneak attacks continue to deal damage even after you strike.

Prerequisites: Sneak attack +8d6, crippling strike class feature.

Benefit: Any time you deal damage with a sneak attack, that target takes damage equal to your sneak attack bonus damage on your next turn as well.

Perfect Two-Weapon Fighting [Epic]

You can attack with your off-hand weapon as frequently as with your primary weapon.

Prerequisites: Dex 25, Ambidexterity, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting (from *Masters of the Wild*), Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Benefit: You can make as many attacks with your off-hand weapon as with your primary weapon, using the same base attack bonus. For example, a character with this feat and a base attack bonus of +18/+13/+8/+3 could make four attacks per round with his primary weapon and four attacks per round with his off-hand weapon, using this base attack bonus. You still take the normal penalties for fighting with two weapons.

Normal: Without this feat, you can only get a single attack with an off-hand weapon (or two attacks with an off-hand weapon if you have Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, or three attacks with an off-hand weapon if you have Greater Two-Weapon Fighting).

Special: A ranger can qualify for this feat even if he hasn't taken Ambidexterity or Two-Weapon Fighting, but can use it only when wearing light armor or no armor.

If the PCs drag their feet or would prefer to remain in Redshore and track the assassins personally, Urlkathoon becomes agitated. He tries to bribe the party by telling them that if they free the *Shadar Pool* it can reward them with more power and knowledge than they can fathom. If the party still refuses to help, Urlkathoon leaves them immediately, only to attack them at some point in the near future, enraged that they spurned him.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the party manages to befriend Urlkathoon, award them experience points as if they had defeated him in combat.

EVENT 6: RETURN TO REDSHORE

After the party soothes Tesseril's spirit and bathes in the *Shadar Pool*, they should return to Redshore to track down the three assassins. Unfortunately, Amyrella anticipated this, and she and Aaron Kientai have retreated to the Coral Citadel to make plans on how to deal with them. Garrison Scrimm and several groups of Shadow Shoal assassins remain in Redshore to observe the party and possibly attempt assassinations as detailed under Event 7.

It should be fairly easy for the party to track down the three assassins once they have descriptions of them from Tesseril's spirit. They have already met Amyrella, and depending on where they went earlier in Redshore, they might have even met Garrison or Aaron. A successful Gather Information check (DC 20) locates someone in town who knows either Garrison or Aaron by the party's description, and they can guide them to either of their homes. The homes of the three assassins are detailed in the key to Redshore.

In any case, now that the horrible weather is over and the attacks seem to have ended, the city of Redshore is slowly getting back to its feet. The PCs are hailed as heroes for stopping the attacks; the townsfolk accept most any story as to why the attacks have ended as long as the party doesn't concoct a story that's too outlandish. Telling the truth won't make them many friends, and if the citizens of Redshore learn that the one who caused all the damage still lives, they become unfriendly and possibly hostile toward the party.

EVENT 7: ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS (EL 18 OR 21)

After their return from the Shadar Caves (earlier if they nose around in Shadow Shoal business), the party is marked for assassination by the Shadow Shoal. There are a total of six Shadow Shoal snipers in town, along with Garrison Scrimm. The first attempt occurs not long after their return to Redshore and is attempted by a group of three Shadow Shoal snipers. If they fail, a second group makes an

attempt within the hour. If the second group fails, the only remaining Shadow Shoal assassin in town attempts to finish the job. Garrison Scrimm also attempts to assassinate the party if they force their way into his home. Scrimm is a dangerous foe; his favored tactics are detailed at the end of the adventure. If things look grim, he casts *word of recall* to retreat to the Coral Citadel.

☞ **Shadow Shoal Snipers, Human Rog10/Asn5 (3):** See area 11 in "Redshore" for statistics.

☞ **Garrison Scrimm, Human Male Clr18/Asn3:** See the "Coral Citadel" for complete statistics.

THE JOURNEY BELOW

The exact location of the Shadar Caves is left vague so you can place them somewhere appropriate in your campaign. The only requirement is the fact that they are located nearly four-and-a-half miles underwater in the side of a yawning oceanic trench. This adventure assumes that the trench in question is located only a few hundred miles from Redshore.

Urlkathoon can lead the party to the Shadar Caves, although it normally takes the whale at least four days to swim to the trench. The party might be able to speed this time by using magic to travel to the area. *Teleport* spells cut down the majority of the distance, although the powerful aura of the *Shadar Pool* prevents teleportation magic of 9th level or less from functioning within a two-mile radius, so for at least part of the distance the party must swim.

The ocean floor lies a mere three miles below sea level; the trench drops two miles deeper than that. Urlkathoon can guide the party toward the entrance to the caves below. Fighting, moving, and casting spells underwater is more difficult than on land. The "Water, Water Everywhere" article in *DRAGON Magazine* #291 presents all the rules for running adventures underwater. Some of the information from that article is reprinted in the "Combat Adjustments for Water" sidebar for your convenience.

Note: In encounters in which Urlkathoon aids the party, he gains a full share of experience.

THE SHADAR CAVES

The entrance to the Shadar Caves can be seen for some distance, as it is filled with phosphorescent seaweed and bioluminescent fish. It is also the lair of Ithkarsus, a kraken cleric who worships a nearly forgotten god of sea monsters and storms.

The caves themselves consist of two distinct areas. The western caves are natural and filled with flickering light from the glowing plants and fish. The eastern portion of the caves are actually several chambers



carved from the rock ages ago; these caves are illuminated by numerous *continual flame* spells.

There are no wandering monsters in the Shadar Caves. The keyed encounters for the Shadar Caves follow:

1. ITHKARSUS'S LAIR (EL 21)

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs enter the Shadar Caves:

This cavern is massive and filled with an alien forest of glowing seaweed of strange shapes and disturbing size. Luminescent fish flit among the undulant fronds, preventing you from seeing far into the cavern. As you swim into the cave, a strange shudder passes through you, and you somehow know that the *Shadar Pool* knows you have arrived, and it is anticipating your next move.

The floor and ceiling of this cavern are anything but smooth. The ceiling averages 60 feet high, and in most places the seaweed reaches all the way from the floor to the roof. But not all of the "fronds" are seaweed—many of them are the writhing tentacles of a squid the size of a large house!

Creature: Ithkarsus and his dire shark animal companion hide in the cavern. The seaweed grants one-half concealment (20% miss chance) against

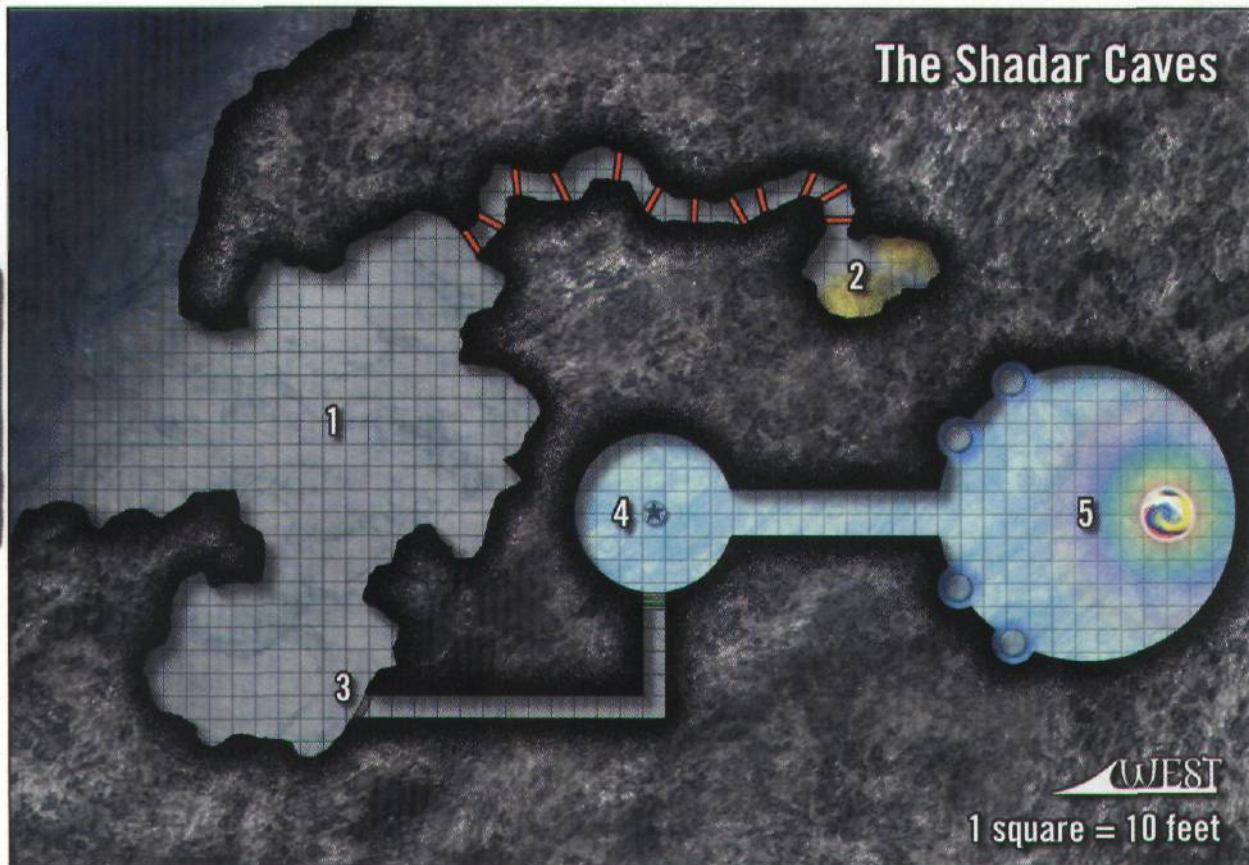
ranged attacks, but no cover against melee attacks.

➤ **Ithkarsus, Kraken Clr9:** CR 21; Gargantuan Magical Beast; HD 20d10+9d8+319; hp 469; Init +4; Spd swim 20 ft.; AC 25 (touch 11, flat-footed 25); Atk +36 melee (2d8+14, 2 tentacle rakes), +34 melee (1d6+7, 6 arms), and +34 melee (4d6+7, bite); SA spells, improved grab (grapple check +52), constrict 2d8+14 or 1d6+7; SQ jet, ink cloud, spell-like abilities; AL NE; SV Fort +29, Ref +15, Will +22; Str 38, Dex 10, Con 32, Int 18, Wis 32, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +33, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (nature) +9, Knowledge (religion) +16, Listen +22, Scry +16, Search +15, Spellcraft +22, Spot +22. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/8/8/7/6/4, base save DC = 21 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *guidance* (×2), *read magic*, *resistance* (×2); 1st—*cure light wounds* (×3), *divine favor*, *doom*, *inflict light wounds**, *protection from good*, *sanctuary*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds* (×3), *endurance*, *hold person*, *shatter**, *speak with animals*; 3rd—*contagion**, *cure serious wounds* (×3), *dispel magic*, *meld into stone*, *speak with dead*; 4th—*cure critical wounds* (×2), *death ward*, *inflict critical wounds**, *poison*, *spell immunity*; 5th—*commune with nature**, *righteous might*, *spell resistance*, *true seeing*.

The Shadar Caves



*Domain Spells. *Domains*: Animal (cast *animal friendship* 1/day; Knowledge [nature] is class skill), Destruction (smite 1/day with +4 bonus to attack and +9 bonus to damage).

Possessions: Ring of spell storing (currently stores two slay living spells), ring of protection +5, rod of absorption (currently contains no absorbed spells, 38 charges), staff of life (10 charges), periapt of Wisdom (+6). Ithkarsus wears the periapt and the rings on three of his tentacles; this does not prevent him from using the arms in combat. He typically grips the rod of absorption in one tentacle and the staff of life in another, preventing him from using these two arms in combat. Thus, a typical attack consists of only two rakes and four arm attacks.

➤ **Dire Shark**: hp 135, *Monster Manual* 58.

Tactics: The dire shark surges forth to attack the instant intruders enter the cave, while Ithkarsus casts *meld into stone*, after which he casts spells on himself in the following order: *endurance*, *bull's strength*, *protection from good*, *true seeing*, *spell immunity*, *righteous might*, *death ward*, and *divine favor*. Once he's done casting, he joins the combat, flailing with his tentacles and using his staff of life to heal himself whenever he is reduced to fewer than 100 hit points. Ithkarsus uses a few of his arms to disarm opponents or trip them, taking full advantage of his feats. He uses Power Attack once he figures out which targets have low Armor Classes.

2. TREASURE CAVE (EL 11)

Read or paraphrase the following when the characters enter the passage to area 2:

This corridor looks to have been shaped from the surrounding rock. While the width of the passage varies slightly, it is mostly 10 feet wide. Twists and bends obstruct your vision beyond 25 feet.

Ithkarsus can wriggle into the cavern with some difficulty; his swim speed is halved while he's wedged into the cave, but this won't stop him from pursuing characters down the tunnel. Additionally, the tunnel is thoroughly trapped.

Trap: Ithkarsus has placed twelve *glyphs of warding* in the tunnel leading to this cave. Each *glyph* is actually a ring inscribed on the circumference of the passage; the red lines on the map indicate trigger points. These *glyphs* should only inconvenience a 20th-level party, but they do serve to keep the PCs on their toes.

➤ **Glyphs of Warding (12)**: CR 4; 4d8 points of sonic damage; Reflex save (DC 24) halves; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

Read or paraphrase the following when the PCs exit the trap-laden corridor:

Beyond the twisting passageway, you discover a room piled high with the treasure of the deep sea.

What once occupied the holds of heavily laden merchant vessels now fills this room nearly to capacity. Chests overflowing with coins are heaped along one wall, and you see evidence of other goods scattered among the treasure.

Treasure: This cavern is where Ithkarsus stores his treasure. This loot was scavenged mostly from sunken ships over many years. The treasure consists of 10,000 cp, 30,000 sp, 16,000 gp, 1,000 pp, thirty-four gemstones worth a total of 17,000 gp, a sword of subtlety, a +5 moderate fortification breastplate, a holy sun blade, and a staff of charming (34 charges).

3. HIDDEN ENTRANCE

The dotted line on the map indicates the presence of a section of 5-foot-thick stone that is permanently enchanted with a variant of the *phase door* spell. The wall remains solid until it is touched by someone who consciously wills the wall to fade, at which point it remains ethereal for 5 rounds. Urkathoon knows the location of the *phase door*, and he is happy to show it to the party. He also needs to assume a smaller *wild shape* form to continue with the party. He chooses the form of a water elemental if he hasn't used his elemental *wild shape*; otherwise he assumes the form of a regular sea animal.

COMBAT ADJUSTMENTS FOR WATER¹

Condition	Slashing or Bludgeoning Attacks/Damage	Claw or Tail Attacks/Damage	Move	Off Balance?
Freedom of movement effect	Normal	Normal	Normal	No
Swim speed	-2/Half	Normal	Normal	No
Successful Swim check	-2/Half ²	-2/Half	Quarter or half	No
Firm Footing ⁴	-2/Half	-2/Half	Half	No
None of the above	-2/Half	-2/Half	Quarter or half	Yes ⁵

1. Water modifiers apply when wading in water at least waist deep, swimming, or walking along the bottom of a body of water.

2. The speeds listed are standard for the Swim skill. You can move one-quarter your speed as a move action or one-half your speed as a full-round action. To avoid the off-balance penalty (see note 5), you must make a Swim check (DC 5 + the DC for the water). The effects of a successful check last until your next turn. Making the Swim check is a move-equivalent action.

3. Creatures without *freedom of movement* effects or swim speeds make grapple checks underwater at a -2 penalty, but they deal damage normally when grappling.

4. Creatures have firm footing when walking along the bottom, braced against a wall, or the like. You can walk along the bottom only if you carry enough weight to weigh you down. The amount of weight required depends on your size, as follows: Fine 1 lb.; Diminutive 2 lb.; Tiny 4 lb.; Small 8 lb.; Medium-size 16 lbs.; Large 32 lbs.; Huge 64 lbs.; Gargantuan 128 lbs.; Colossal 256 lbs. The items you carry to weigh yourself down must be non-bulky and non-buoyant.

5. Off-balance creatures lose their Dexterity bonuses to Armor Class, and opponents gain a +2 circumstance bonus to attacks against them.

Magic: Most spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities work normally underwater. Water does not block line of effect, except where noted below.

Spells or spell-like effects with the fire descriptor are ineffective underwater unless the caster makes a successful Spellcraft check (DC 15 + spell level). If successful, the spell creates a bubble of steam instead of its usual fiery effect. Supernatural fire effects are ineffective underwater unless their descriptions state otherwise.

The surface of a body of water blocks line of effect for any fire spell, regardless of where the spell originates. For example, a *fireball* cast underwater cannot be targeted at creatures above the surface, nor can an underwater *fireball* spread above the surface.

Invisible creatures displace water and leave a visible bubble, although the creature still has one-half concealment (20% miss chance).

Ranged Attacks Underwater: Thrown weapons are ineffective underwater, even when launched from land or the air. Other ranged weapons suffer a -2 attack penalty for each 5 feet of water they pass through in addition to the normal penalties for range.

Melee Attacks Underwater: Melee attacks also suffer a -2 attack penalty for each 5 feet of water they pass through. Attackers using reach to make melee attacks ignore this penalty if they have *freedom of movement* effects. Creatures with swim speeds also ignore the penalty for melee attacks.

Underwater Visibility: Submerged or swimming creatures can also gain concealment from the water, depending on how clear it is. Four-and-a-half miles beneath the surface, the darkness is absolute, and visibility is restricted to 60 feet (with or without darkvision). At 50 feet, creatures have one-quarter concealment (10% miss chance). Beyond 100 feet, creatures have total concealment (50% miss chance and opponents cannot use sight to locate the creature).

THE RAZING OF REDSHORE

4. OUTER SANCTUM (EL 21)

Before the party can enter this room, they need to bypass the first of three stasis doors. These are magical planes of opaque green force that bar passage as a *wall of force*. A character who touches a hand to a stasis door and focuses his mind on passing through must make a Will save (DC 25) to pass through the door as if it did not exist. Urkathoon explains how the doors work, and also warns the party that the room beyond is protected by a mithral golem. Read or paraphrase the following as the PCs enter this area:

This room is staggering in its complexity. The floor is polished, prismatic colored marble, and the domed ceiling comes to a point 50 feet above. The walls and domed roof are covered with thousands of small, intricate carvings of various individuals, places, objects, and things, each of which seems to tell its own story. Flickers of free floating flame swirl about near the ceiling, providing illumination and reflecting off the floor with dizzying beauty.

You also notice that the water here is much warmer, and the pressure of the deep sea seems greatly lessened somehow.

An 18-foot-tall statue of gleaming white metal stands in the middle of the room. It resembles a serene old human man with a look of great contentment and peace in his eyes.

Although this room is still filled with water, it is a much different sort of water than that found outside. The water here is warm and comfortable, does not cause pressure damage, and can be breathed with ease by land-dwelling creatures. This is part of an ancient and permanent spell effect known as *airy water*. The water still impedes movement and vision like normal water.

Creature: The mithral golem that guards this room is a creature of great beauty and greater danger. It stands 18 feet tall, weighs a staggering 12,000 pounds, and depicts the ancient and long-gone Shadar himself. The golem cannot speak or make any vocal noise, and it moves with a shocking agility and grace. Unlike most golems, it can run just as well as a normal creature. The mithral golem was created ages ago by powerful members of the Sentinels of Shadar. When Yaervilar and his three assassin cohorts invaded the caves, they simply avoided the golem using an epic version of *time stop* that affected all four of them.

The mithral golem is detailed fully in the *Epic Level Handbook*.

➤ **Mithral Golem:** CR 21; Huge Construct; HD 36d10; hp 198; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 42 (touch 16, flat-footed 38); Atk +39 melee (4d10+14, 2 slams);

Face/Reach 10 ft. by 10 ft./10 ft.; SQ construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 50/+5, alacrity; AL N; SV Fort +12, Ref +16, Will +12; Str 39, Dex 19, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

SQ—*Magic Immunity (Ex)*: Immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows: A *slow* spell negates its alacrity for 1d4 rounds, while a *haste* spell restores 1d6 hit points per level of the caster (maximum of 10d6) or restores its alacrity if previously negated by a *slow* spell. Multiple *slow* spells simply extend the duration of the effect.

SQ—*Alacrity (Su)*: Once per round, the mithral golem may take an extra partial action (either before or after its other actions of the round).

Treasure: If defeated, the mithral golem can provide a party with a great source of raw materials for various mithral items . . . provided the problem of transporting the mithral is addressed.

5. INNER SANCTUM (EL 20)

Once the PCs have defeated Ithkarsus, bypassed the other defenses of the outer sanctum, and entered this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This huge chamber mirrors the previous one, complete with polished prismatic marble floor and a soaring ceiling lost in murky darkness. The walls are covered with hundreds more tiny carvings, disrupted by only four alcoves and the door behind you. Unlike the last room, though, this room is fairly dark. Portions of the floor and wall look recently damaged by some sort of powerful magic, and bits and pieces of matter (some of which looks like bone and puffy flesh) float lazily in the water.

All of this pales before the source of the only illumination in the chamber, which emanates from an object you immediately recognize on the far side of the room: a roiling sphere of prismatic liquid. As you watch, hundreds of half-formed ideas and thoughts seem to crystallize just under the surface of the pool, only to be absorbed and replaced by a hundred more. Your stomach churns and your brain reels as you look upon the sphere, and you feel that all you have accomplished thus far is little more than the prologue to what mighty works you could weave once the lore in the swirling sphere is yours. The power of this thing is overwhelming.

The bits of flesh and gristle floating in the room are all that remains of the physical bodies of Tesseril and Yaervilar after their mutual destruction some time ago; the other bits of matter are all that remains of their equipment. The four alcoves in the western reaches of the room actually contain *portals* that lead to various other locations of importance to the Sentinels of



Shadar. They are keyed to function only for the Sentinels; Urkathoon could use them, but he could not bring the party with him. The destinations reached by these *portals* can be wherever you wish.

One round after the party enters the room, an image of Tesseril manifests in the center of the room as a translucent version of her former self: a stunningly beautiful aquatic elf. She levels her eyes upon the party and calmly says, "Leave the sanctum of Shadar, mortals. Such lore is not for you." If the party follows her advice and leaves the room within a round, her the image fades from view. Otherwise, on the next round, she flies into a frenzy, screaming and howling with bone shattering rage.

The following section details the effects of the *Shadar Pool*; it also provide insight on how to placate the spirit of Tesseril.

THE SHADAR POOL

The *Shadar Pool* appears as a 20-foot-diameter sphere of multicolored liquid in which numerous shapes constantly form and dissolve. It is composed of the liquefied knowledge of countless ancient heroes of near-deity strength. A character of 19th level or less finds that despite his efforts to enter the pool, it reacts as if made of solid matter and prevents him from entering. A 20th-level character who touches the pool

is instantly absorbed by the pool. For 1d6 rounds, the character remains a part of the pool; observers might even be able to see the liquefied character's face appear in the pool once or twice. After this time has passed, the character is expelled from the pool, apparently none the worse for his ordeal. The character gains the following benefits immediately:

- The character gains 2,000 experience points.
- The character gains a +2 inherent bonus to all ability scores.
- The character gains a permanent +4 insight bonus to any one skill of his choice.
- The character can now progress beyond 20th level in experience, as detailed in the *Epic Level Handbook*.
- All debilitating conditions currently affecting the character are removed. This includes death; if the body of a dead 20th-level character who hasn't yet bathed in the pool is immersed in the pool, it is brought back to life as if by *true resurrection*.

Once a character has bathed in the Pool, he can pass through the pool as if it were ordinary water.

Caster Level: 60th. *Weight:* Immobile.

TESSERIL'S FATE

After Tesseril was slain by Yaervilar, her spirit went insane and merged with the *Shadar Pool*, giving the artifact all of her knowledge, abilities, and personality.

Basically, in absorbing her spirit, the Pool gained Tesseril's sentience. Now capable of using all the druid's magical prowess to defend itself, the *Shadar Pool* sent the visions that brought the PCs and Urkathoon together to avenge the death of the druid and bring balance back to the world by stopping the now-epic Shadow Shoal assassins.

When Tesseril's sentience merged with the *Shadar Pool*, it gained her her desire to protect the artifact's knowledge. In addition to the powers described above, the *Shadar Pool* now has an Intelligence of 14, a Wisdom of 32, a Charisma of 12, and an Ego of 29. Additionally, the artifact has the following abilities:

- At will, the *Shadar Pool* can create a *major image* of Tesseril as she appeared before her death, as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.
- While the image of Tesseril is present, the Pool can project a supernatural scream that causes 8d6 points of sonic damage each round to any living creature in the room (Fortitude save, DC 27, for half).
- Once per round, the *Shadar Pool* randomly manifests a magic effect, as described below, due to the unstable nature of Tesseril's spirit at the time she was absorbed by the Pool. Use the table to determine the random effect each round. If Tesseril's spirit can be reasoned with, the random magic effects cease, and the Pool can then cast any spell from the druid spell list normally at a rate of one per round. All these effects affect every living creature in the room.

Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects

d20	Spell-like Effect (all at 20th level)
1-2	<i>Entangle</i> (Reflex save, DC 22); seaweed erupts from the floor, walls, and ceiling;
3-4	<i>Summon swarm</i> (3 rounds); tiny fish and crustaceans. There is no chance to avoid swarm damage unless the room is exited.
5-6	<i>Poison</i> (Fortitude save, DC 24); water turns toxic.
7-8	<i>Greater dispelling</i> (area dispel); doesn't affect any effects generated by the <i>Shadar Pool</i> .
9-10	<i>Wall of thorns</i> (1d6 rounds); serrated, spiny kelp fills the room.
11-12	<i>Call lightning</i> (Reflex save, DC 24, for half); lightning blasts through the chamber.
13-14	<i>Fire storm</i> (Reflex save, DC 28, for half); water becomes horribly hot and scalding.
15-16	<i>Finger of death</i> (Fortitude save, DC 29, partial); chilling blast of necromantic energy fills the room.
17-18	Increase sonic damage dealt this round by 10d6 and roll again.
19-20	<i>Sunburst</i> (Reflex save, DC 29, halves damage and negates blindness); a wave of energy washes through the chamber.

Upon merging with Tesseril's spirit, the *Shadar Pool* also gained 10 ranks in the Sense Motive skill (for a modified roll of +21). It can *detect magic*, *detect evil*, and *locate object* (120-foot radius) at will. The Pool can also cast *detect thoughts* 3/day with a range of 100 feet (DC 23) and has *true seeing* at will. Finally, the *Shadar Pool* has a special purpose: to protect the knowledge it holds. It can cast *slay living* (DC 15) on any creature that touches the sphere as long as it pursues this goal. All of these abilities are only active when the image of Tesseril is projected.

The only way to placate the rampaging spirit of Tesseril is to successfully negotiate with her or destroy the *Shadar Pool*, which would be a quest unto itself, as the artifact is immune to all spells and damage. In addition, the Pool cannot be moved by any means, and attempts to tamper with it ethereally are met only with failure.

Attacks and spells cast at Tesseril's image have no effect other than to further enrage the Pool. If he is present, Urkathoon (or for that matter, another associate of the Sentinels of Shadar) tries to reason with his former mistress, but his Diplomacy skill is not good enough to make much difference. It might give the party the right idea, though.

One individual per round can make a Diplomacy check to attempt to appease Tesseril's spirit. Other individuals can use the Aid Another action to help the acting PC with their own Diplomacy checks. Alternately, a druid can substitute her Knowledge (nature) skill for a Diplomacy check (either to aid another's Diplomacy check or to make her own check). The primary Diplomacy check gains the following bonuses and penalties to the roll.

- A creature without a neutral component to its alignment is present: -2 per creature.
- Urkathoon is present: +10.
- A druid or ranger other than Urkathoon is present: +2 per creature.
- A true neutral creature that is neither a druid nor a ranger and has an Intelligence score of at least 3 is present: +2 per creature.
- A character with at least 20 ranks in Animal Empathy, Knowledge (nature), or Wilderness Lore is present: +4 per creature (maximum +4 for each qualified creature).
- An assassin is present: -20 per assassin.
- Damage of any type attempted to the manifestation in the previous round: -1 per point of damage.
- A non-offensive druid spell was cast in the previous round: +1 per spell level.
- An Intimidate check (DC 20) was made in the previous round: +1 per 5 points in excess of DC.
- A magic item requiring a druid spell to create is sacrificed to the spirit: +1 per 10,000 gp value of the item.

- Spirit was calm in previous round: +10.
- Someone attempted to bathe in the *Shadar Pool* in the previous round: -50.

The results of the Diplomacy check are as follows:

No check made: Spirit generates one effect (roll 1d20 and consult the “*Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects*” table). Sonic damage is 8d6 points (Fortitude save, DC 24, for half).

0 or less: Pool generates two effects (roll 1d20 and consult the “*Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects*” table). Sonic damage is 10d6 points (Fortitude save, DC 28, for half).

DC 1 through DC 20: Spirit generates one effect (roll 1d20 and consult the “*Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects*” table). Sonic damage is 6d6 (Fortitude save, DC 21, for half).

DC 21 through DC 30: Spirit generates one effect (roll 1d20 and consult the “*Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects*” table). Sonic damage is 4d6 points (Fortitude save, DC 18, for half).

DC 31 through DC 40: Spirit generates one effect (roll 1d6 and consult the “*Shadar Pool Wild Magic Effects*” table). Sonic damage is 2d6 points (Fortitude save, DC 15, for half).

DC 41 through DC 50: Spirit does not generate an effect. Sonic damage is 1d6 points (Fortitude save, DC 10, for half).

DC 51 through DC 60: Spirit becomes non-hostile for 1d10 rounds. No sonic damage.

DC 61 or higher: Spirit becomes friendly; all effects active in room are negated. No sonic damage.

If any damage is dealt to Tesseril while she is non-hostile or friendly, she immediately returns to her frenzied state.

Development: If the party manages to make Tesseril friendly toward them, she can aid them greatly. In short, she can impart the following information to the group:

- She can fill them in on the history of the *Shadar Pool* and the Sentinels of Shadar.
- She can provide detailed descriptions of the three assassins who escaped the battle alive.

Once the party is done asking questions, she impresses upon them the true magnitude of the danger. The *Shadar Pool* allows mortals to transcend their own limitations and gives them the potential to rise higher than 20th level. The three assassin cohorts all bathed in the pool after Tesseril was defeated, and they have doubtless begun to cultivate and nurture their new powers. There is no balancing force in the world to prevent these three from causing untold harm with their abilities. To combat this, Tesseril asks the party members to bathe themselves in the *Shadar Pool*. Doing so grants great knowledge and potential, but more importantly, they'll be better equipped to stand against the three assassins. The only thing Tesseril asks in return is that the party track down the three assassins and puts a stop to their plans, whatever they might be.

In any case, Urkathoon decides to remain here near the *Shadar Pool*. As long as he does so, Tesseril's spirit no longer becomes enraged.

THE SHADOW SHOAL

The Shadow Shoal is a powerful and secret cabal of assassins founded ages ago by a sinister figure named Lascer. Exiled from his home plane for assassinating a now-forgotten deity, Lascer traveled through the dimensions and founded several secret societies of assassins, each of which was led by a chosen master he infused with great power. When the cabal was firmly established, Lascer moved on to a new dimension or world to seed another. He hopes one day to create a network of assassins so vast that he can use their resources to return to his home plane and make a bid for power.

Lascer has moved on from this world; his chosen leader for this world's Shadow Shoal was a powerful wizard/assassin named Yaervilar. Now that Yaervilar has been destroyed, leadership of the Shadow Shoal has fallen to his three most powerful minions: Aaron Kientai, Amyrella Ambermead, and Garrison Scrimm. These three assassins are based in the city of Redshore, and they are directly responsible for coordinating the activities of the Shadow Shoal in the world. Yaervilar's fortress is known as the Coral Citadel, and it was built under a massive coral reef that formed on the remains of an extinct

underwater volcano far out to sea near the equator. Now that Yaervilar is no more, Aaron, Amyrella, and Garrison have decided to make the Shadow Shoal more active in the world. Gone are the days of quiet assassinations done for amazing amounts of money at the request of the world's elite. The new Shadow Shoal plans to systematically assassinate every leader in the world and replace them in secret with puppet leaders loyal to the Shoal. Lofty goals indeed, but with the newfound strength and power gained from the *Shadar Pool*, Yaervilar's former cohorts are closer than ever to seeing their plot succeed.

A new recruit into the Shoal is selected (usually without the recruit's knowledge) by a Shoal leader; the recruit must have at least one assassin level and must perform a difficult assassination for the Shoal without promise of a reward. If the recruit is successful, she is adopted into the Shoal and branded with a Shadow Shoal tattoo. This tattoo is placed over the recruit's heart, and it protects the new member with a continual *freedom of movement* effect, as well as rendering the assassin immune to many Shadow Shoal traps. The tattoo is effectively a magic item that cannot be removed.

THE CORAL CITADEL

The final bastion of the Shadow Shoal, the Coral Citadel is located hundreds of miles from Redshore. Indeed, it is located hundreds of miles from anywhere. The Coral Citadel was built centuries ago by Yaervilar's magic and has been inherited by his three cohorts. It is located beneath an extinct, submarine volcano in the middle of the ocean near the equator. The surface of the volcano is shrouded with a magnificent and monstrosly huge black coral reef, the jagged spires of which reach above the surface like the spines of a barely submerged sea monster.

Read or paraphrase the following if the characters use a *coral portal* to reach the Coral Citadel:

After a brief instant of disorientation, your vision clears and you see that you are somewhere else. The *coral portal* has transported you to a small sandy beach overlooking a wave tossed lake. The air is pleasantly warm and there's not a cloud in the sky. The sand is black, as are the numerous spires of what appear to be coral jutting out of the sand around the lake's waters to heights of well over 50 feet. Yet something seems strange—you can see no land beyond the far side of the ring of black coral spires. You look around and realize you are standing on a tiny coral atoll in the middle of the ocean.

The entire volcano has been protected with a number of epic wardings that provide the following defenses:

- Natural erosion has little effect on the coral reef or the volcano. The stone walls of the Coral Citadel are magically enhanced and have a +10 epic bonus to their hardness (for a total hardness of 18). These same wards also render the stone and coral resistant to spells (SR 40). Additionally, the stone walls are enchanted with a *dimensional anchor* effect, making them impenetrable to ethereal creatures, astral travel, shadow travel, and similar effects. Teleportation is still possible (subject to the limitations given below), as long as the route exists between the point of origin and the destination that is not blocked by solid walls.

- Teleportation spells and spells that allow ethereal travel function normally in the Coral Citadel for anyone who bears a Shadow Shoal tattoo. Anyone else who tries to travel via teleportation or ethereally into the Citadel or while inside the Citadel is automatically redirected to a random point deep in the nightswimmer burrows surrounding the central shaft of the volcano. The inactive *portals* in the Citadel are unaffected by this redirection, and it is possible to *teleport* onto the coral reef as long as one doesn't actually *teleport* into the reef.

- Any Divination spell cast in the Coral Citadel by someone who does not bear a Shadow Shoal tattoo has a 95% chance of failure. This chance is lowered by 1% per level of the caster. Attempts to scry inside the Coral Citadel are also automatically unsuccessful. Any such attempts reveal only the smoky gray haze associated with a failed Scry check.

THE CRATER (EL 20)

The crater of the ancient volcano is completely submerged, with an average diameter of 2,000 feet and a depth of 3,600 feet. The water is clear and cold, and becomes completely dark after the PCs pass the 100-foot depth mark.

Creatures: Below the level that sunlight penetrates, the shaft walls are infested with the enormous burrows of aquatic nightcrawlers known as nightswimmers. As the party travels down the shaft, they are attacked by a pair of the massive undead creatures. You can stage additional attacks by the nightswimmers if you feel that the party needs to be challenged; if the characters begin to explore the tangled tunnels left by burrowing nightswimmers, they should definitely be attacked again and again. There are a total of sixty nightswimmers in the warrens beneath the Coral Citadel, which should be enough to keep the party busy.

➤ **Nightswimmers (attack in pairs):** hp 162 each; Spd 30 ft., swim 60 ft., burrow 60 ft.; other statistics as per the standard nightcrawler; *Monster Manual* 141 (nightshade).

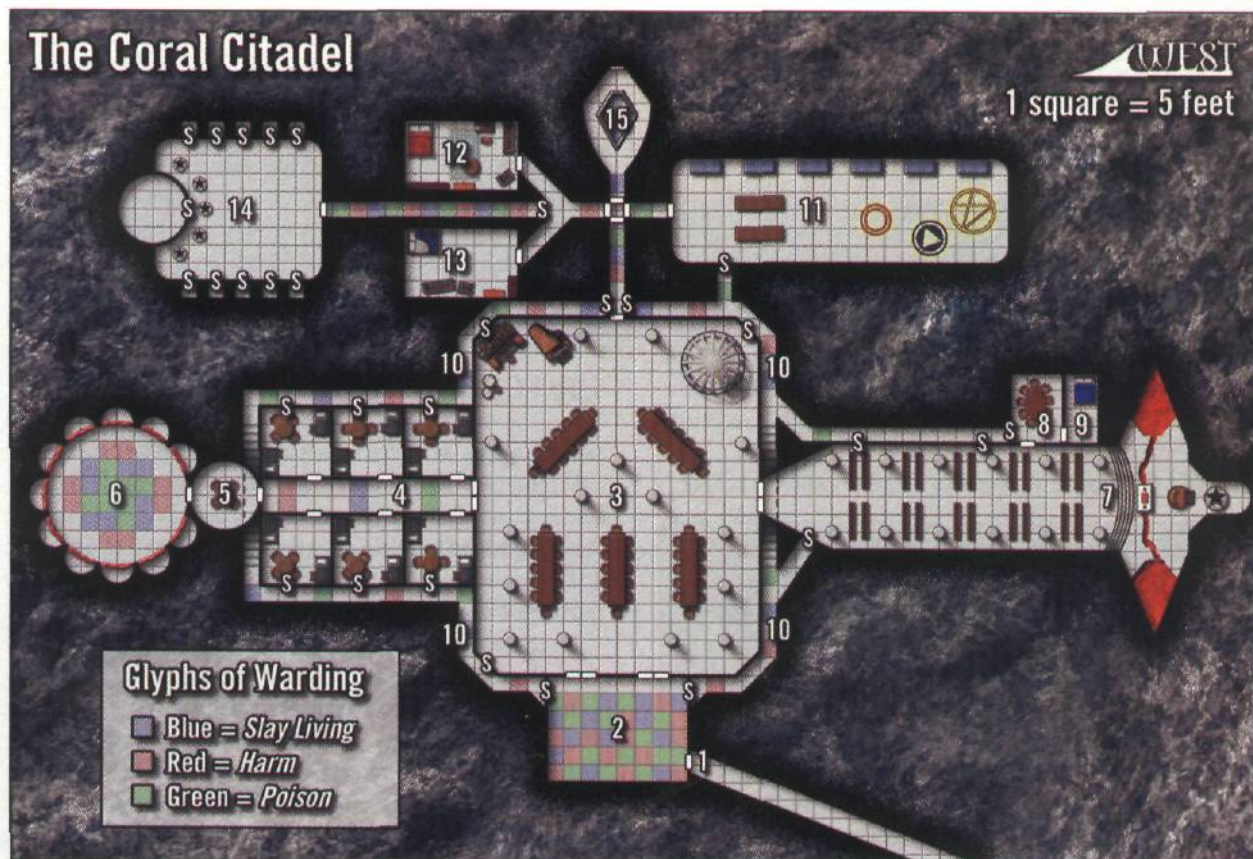
THE WALK OF THE DEAD (EL 19)

A single (but nonetheless masterfully crafted) secret trapdoor is set in the southern wall at of the base of the shaft. A successful Search check (DC 35) uncovers a cleverly hidden catch that activates a *phase door* for 1 minute. Beyond the *phase door* is a 5-foot-wide, 10-foot-tall dry passageway. The *phase door* prevents water from entering the passage. The passage is reinforced often with arches and pillars, and spots of *continual flame* at the bases of some pillars produce a shadowy light. The passage itself winds down like a corkscrew and at a slight decline, descending 100 feet for each complete revolution.

Every 100 feet, the passage holds two alcoves with sarcophagi; these sarcophagi are meant to hold the bodies of shadow sorcerers slain on duty. Only about 5% of the sarcophagi contain bodies, and even those contain nothing of interest aside from a few bones. After the passage descends past the base of the volcano, it straightens out and continues at the same incline for another 2,000 feet before it ends at what appears to be an unfinished dead end. This is, in fact, area 1 of the Coral Citadel.

The Coral Citadel

WEST
1 square = 5 feet



Creatures: A quartet of Shadow Shoal snipers lurks at some point in this passage. Each wears a *ring of sustenance* in addition to his or her other gear.

➤ **Shadow Shoal Snipers, Human Rog10/Asn5 (4):** See area 11 of “Redshore” for statistics.

Tactics: The snipers use their Listen checks and Spot checks to detect the party as they approach. They duck into some nearby sarcophagi alcoves to ambush the party.

KEYED ENCOUNTER AREAS

The lower level of the Citadel is where Yaervilar lived, and it is quite comfortable. Fresh air is circulated through the lower rooms and tunnels magically. Heat is maintained at a comfortable temperature, the walls and ceiling are lined with black coral, and the floor is thickly carpeted (granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Move Silently checks). The place is sparsely lit with dim *continual flames*, providing illumination throughout the complex but also providing ample shadows to hide in (granting a +2 circumstance bonus to Hide checks). Although the primary purpose of this level was to provide Yaervilar with a place to rest, relax, and develop new magic, it also contains quarters for his three cohorts as well as one of many treasure caches kept by the Shoal.

Doors in the lower level are made of iron, and they are locked with amazing locks. The three assassins

all possess master keys to the Coral Citadel; a person with one of these magic master keys can pass through any of the doors in the lower level as if they were unlocked.

⚔ **Iron Door:** 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 40).

Greater glyphs of warding are placed in several locations; each of these *greater glyphs* triggers whenever something not branded with a Shadow Shoal tattoo passes over them. All of the *greater glyphs* function at 18th caster level, since they were placed by Garrison Scrimm. Each glyph stores one of three spells (*slay living*, *harm*, or *poison*), as indicated on the map.

➤ **Greater Glyph of Warding:** CR 7; *slay living* (Fortitude save, DC 22, to take 3d6+18 points of damage instead), *harm* (no save), or *poison* (Fortitude save, DC 22, negates; save for initial and secondary effect); Search (DC 31); Disable Device (DC 31).

All doors in the lower level are warded with carefully engraved permanent *symbols of hopelessness* placed by Yaervilar himself. These *symbols* are all triggered when a creature who does not bear a Shadow Shoal tattoo opens the door.

➤ **Symbol of Hopelessness:** CR 9; hopelessness effect (see page 263 of *Player's Handbook*); Will save (DC 32) resists; Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33).

Additional permanent spell effects are in place in certain areas of the level, as indicated on the map. All

of these permanent spell effects are arcane in nature and were placed by Yaervilar, so they function at 30th caster level.

1. A DEAD END?

The passageway ends at an unfinished wall of stone, almost as if the builders of the passage simply gave up.

This is a *permanent image* cast by Yaervilar (30th caster level). Those who overcome the illusion (Will, DC 30) see that the passage ends at a plain iron door.

2. ENTRANCE TO THE SHADOW SHOAL

This room is empty, but nevertheless it is quite impressive. The walls are of dead black coral and seem to shimmer with energy; flickering *continual flames* burn in the corners of the room, and the floor is covered with a thick, deep-purple carpet.

Dozens of *greater glyphs of warding* protect this room where indicated on the map. In addition, a permanent *alarm* spell wards the entire room. The *alarm* sounds a mental alarm to the three assassins if the room is entered.



3. MAIN HALL (EL 24)

This room is softly lit by a few *continual flames* placed on a dozen crystal chandeliers dangling from the ceiling 50 feet above. The dim light cloaks much of the room in deep shadow. Five huge banquet tables stand before you, and on the opposite side of the room you can see one corner dominated by several musical instruments. The other corner holds an enormous iron birdcage.

This is where the assassins of the Shadow Shoal have meetings and are entertained once a year by their leaders. The place is currently empty. The musical instruments include a grand piano, a pipe organ, and a pair of large drums. The cage is nonmagical (although the lock on the door is of amazing quality) and is used to keep prisoners handy for the entertainment of guests.

Creatures: This central room makes an excellent place for the three assassins to mount a preliminary defense against the party, assuming they know the PCs are approaching. The three hide throughout the room—or possibly in the secret passageway (area 10)—and observe the PCs for 3 rounds before attacking (allowing the melee fighters to attempt death attacks in a surprise round). The coordinated attacks of the three epic-level assassins should test the mettle of even a well prepared party; if the group is low on resources, they might need to flee. However, if the party manages to get the upper hand, the assassins flee and regroup. Garrison flees to area 7, Aaron to area 11, and Amyrella to area 14. If they have time to heal and recover, they band together again to track down the party and finish the job.

◆ **Aaron Kientai, Half-Elf Male Rog11/Mnk5/Asn5:** CR 21; Medium-size Humanoid (half-elf) (5 ft. 8 in. tall); HD 5d8+16d6+63; hp 141; Init +10; Spd 40 ft.; AC 30 (touch 26, flat-footed 23); Atk +32/+27/+22 ranged (1d4+10 plus poison, +5 *unholy hand crossbow* with +5 bolts), or +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+3, unarmed strike), or +19/+14/+9 melee (1d4+4 plus poison, *assassin's dagger*); SA sneak attack +9d6, death attack (DC 18), stunning attack 5/day (DC 16), crippling strike; SQ deflect arrows, still mind, slow fall (20 ft.), purity of body, evasion, poison use, +2 to saves versus poison, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked, +1 against traps); AL NE; SV Fort +11, Ref +22, Will +12; Str 14, Dex 24, Con 16, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 8.

Skills: Balance +22, Climb +16, Craft (shipmaking) +12, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +17, Hide +35, Innuendo +15, Intimidate +9, Listen +23, Move Silently +25, Pick Pocket +20, Read Lips +15, Search +19, Spot +23, Tumble +31. **Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative,

Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Rapid Reload*, Shot on the Run. *Epic Feat: Lingering Damage***.

*This feat appears in *Sword and Fist* and the *Epic Level Handbook*.

**This feat is detailed in the *Epic Level Handbook*.

Note: Feats not found in the three core rulebooks are reprinted in the "Feats of Champions" sidebar.

Assassin Spells Prepared (2/2/1, base save DC = 14 + spell level): 1st—change self, spider climb; 2nd—alter self, darkness; 3rd—invisibility.

Possessions: +5 unholy hand crossbow with 25 +5 bolts, assassin's dagger, ring of protection +4, ring of mind shielding, cloak of displacement (major), bracers of armor +4, gloves of dexterity +4, monk's belt, amulet of health +4, bag of holding I, 5 potions of cure serious wounds, Shadow Shoal tattoo, 5 doses large scorpion venom, 2 doses deathblade, 5 doses terinav root, 1 dose of insanity mist, master key to all doors in the lower level of the Coral Citadel.

Aaron Kientai is not a nice-looking sort; his countenance is filthy, his manner coarse, and his language offensive. Surly, scruffy, and reeking of fish due to the blood and scales caking his clothes, he is known by nearly everyone in Redshore as "that damn mess" when they think he's out of earshot. His brown hair is never combed, and he has a scruffy, patchy beard. His hands are covered with scars from fish bites and accidents at the shipbuilding yard. His watery, puffy, violet eyes, slightly pointed ears, and surprising grace are the only things that belie his true heritage.

♣ **Garrison Scrimm, Human Male Clr18/Asn3:** CR 21; Medium-size Humanoid (human) (6 ft. 11 in. tall); HD 18d8+3d6+42; hp 133; Init +10; Spd 30 ft.; AC 34 (touch 20, flat-footed 28); Atk +22/+17/+12 melee (1d6+2/crit 15–20, +2 rapier of wounding); SA spells, sneak attack +2d6, death attack (DC 14); SQ poison use, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC), +1 to saves versus poison; AL NE; SV Fort +18, Ref +19, Will +25; Str 13, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 27, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +7, Disguise +6, Concentration +21, Hide +28[†], Knowledge (religion) +7, Move Silently +18[†], Profession (apothecary) +13, Spellcraft +23, Spot +12. Note: [†]These skills suffer a –1 armor check penalty, which is factored into the skill modifier provided. Feats: Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Martial Weapon Proficiency (rapier), Mobility, Still Spell, Silent Spell, Weapon Finesse (rapier). *Epic Feat: Automatic Silent Spell***.

**This feat is detailed in the *Epic Level Handbook*.

Note: Feats not found in the three core rulebooks are reprinted in the "Feats of Champions" sidebar.

Cleric Spells Prepared (6/8/8/8/7/6/6/5/4/3, base save DC = 18 + spell level): 0—detect magic, detect poison,

guidance, light, read magic, resistance; 1st—change self*, command, cure light wounds ×2, divine favor, entropic shield, obscuring mist, sanctuary; 2nd—bull's strength, cure moderate wounds ×2, death knell*, endurance, hold person, remove paralysis, sanctuary (still); 3rd—blindness/deafness, dispel magic, silence (still), cure serious wounds ×2, invisibility purge, nondetection*, searing light; 4th—air walk, cure critical wounds ×2, death ward*, divine power, poison, spell immunity, status; 5th—circle of doom, contagion (still, silent), ethereal jaunt, plane shift, slay living*, true seeing; 6th—blade barrier, greater dispelling, harm ×2, heal, mislead*; 7th—repulsion, screen*, slay living (still, silent), summon monster VII, word of recall (silent, spell); 8th—animate objects (still, silent), discern location, fire storm, polymorph any object*, unholy aura; 9th—implosion, soul bind, time stop*.

*Domain Spells. Domains: Death (death touch 1/day), Trickery (Bluff, Disguise, Hide class skills).

Assassin Spells Prepared (2/1, base save DC = 12 + spell level): 1st—ghost sound, obscuring mist; 2nd—undetected alignment.

Possessions: +5 shadow mithral breastplate, +3 buckler, +2 rapier of wounding, ring of protection +4, ring of water walking, ring of sustenance (does not take up a ring slot), 3 scrolls of heal, wand of greater magic weapon (caster level 15, 25 charges left), robe of powerlessness (used to incapacitate spellcasting prisoners), gloves of Dexterity +2, periapt of Wisdom +6, cloak of resistance +4, slippers of



spider climbing, necklace of prayer beads (healing), rope of entanglement, Shadow Shoal tattoo, 2 doses wyvern poison, 10 doses purple worm poison, 1 dose black lotus extract, 10 doses striped toadstool, black sapphire worth 20,000 gp (used for soul binding victims), master key to all doors in the lower level of the Coral Citadel.

Garrison Scrimm is an older human male with shoulder-length white hair. He is lanky and spry, and his gray eyes sparkle with curiosity and perhaps something a bit more sinister. He prefers to dress in blues and blacks and wears his mithral breastplate only when he is expecting combat. He has spent many years in Redshore, building up his herbs and apothecary business, and he is thought of as a somewhat cranky but nonetheless well-meaning shopkeeper. Most who have suspected him of being more than a shopkeeper have either joined him or perished. Although Garrison worships the demon prince Lascor, he does not receive his clerical spells from him. Rather, he gains his divine powers through the force of his belief in sadism, cruelty, and murder.

◆ **Amyrella Ambermead, Female Halfling Rog2/Rgr5/Ftr4/Asn11:** CR 22; Medium-size Humanoid (halfling) (3 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 9d10+13d6+88; hp 178; Init +15; Spd 40 ft.; AC 32 (touch 27, flat-footed 21); Atk +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (1d4+5/crit 12–20, +3 keen bane versus humans kukri) and +32/+27/+22/+17 melee (1d4+5/crit 15–20, +3 returning throwing kukri), or +35 ranged (1d4+5/crit



15–20, +3 returning kukri of throwing); SA spells, favored enemy (humans +2, animals +1), sneak attack +7d6, death attack (DC 24); SQ evasion, poison use, +5 to saves versus poison, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked, +1 vs. traps); AL NE; SV Fort +20, Ref +28, Will +12; Str 15, Dex 33, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 24.

Skills: Bluff +15, Climb +16, Diplomacy +17, Disguise +24, Forgery +16, Gather Information +17, Hide +39, Innuendo +8, Jump +26, Listen +14, Move Silently +29, Search +8, Profession (bookkeeper) +10, Spot +12, Swim +14, Use Magic Device +27, Wilderness Lore +9. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon (kukri), Greater Two-Weapon Fighting*, Iron Will, Improved Critical (kukri), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Power Attack, Track, Weapon Finesse (kukri), Weapon Focus (kukri), Weapon Specialization (kukri). **Epic Feat:** Perfect Two-Weapon Fighting**.

*This feat first appeared in *Masters of the Wild*.

**This feat is detailed in the *Epic Level Handbook*.

Note: Feats not found in the three core rulebooks are reprinted in the "Feats of Champions" sidebar.

Assassin Spells Prepared (3/3/3/2, base save DC = 14 + spell level): 1st—ghost sound, obscuring mist, spider climb; 2nd—alter self, darkness, undetectable alignment; 3rd—invisibility (×2), nondetection; 4th—dimension door, poison.

Possessions: +3 keen bane versus humans kukri, +3 returning throwing kukri, ring of protection +5, ring of chameleon power, ring of Charisma +4 (does not take up a ring slot), wand of expeditious retreat (22 charges), wand of stonewall (14 charges), wand of cure critical wounds (43 charges), wand of magic missiles (9th-level caster, 27 charges), bracers of armor +5, gloves of Dexterity +6, amulet of health +4, boots of striding and springing, cloak of resistance +3, Heward's handy haversack, 3 potions of fly, 3 potions of bull's strength, 4 potions of haste, Shadow Shoal tattoo, 10 doses giant wasp poison, 4 doses purple worm poison, 10 doses blue whinnis poison, 10 doses dark reaver powder, master key to all doors in the lower level of the Coral Citadel.

Amyrella Ambermead is quite beautiful, with long, curly black hair worn loose to her mid-back; brilliant green eyes; and tanned, unblemished skin. She only rarely uses her beauty to gain leverage in a situation, though, and she tends to dress fairly drably and unobtrusively with browns and grays so as to not draw too much attention.

She takes full advantage of society's preconceptions about halflings and uses these notions to gain trust with important individuals. This is how she was hired as the town hall bookkeeper. Her fingers seem to be stained with inks, but these stains are actually blackened scars gained from handling poisons.

Amyrella can move with such an otherworldly grace that observers can't help but be awed and not a little unnerved. She is always outwardly cheerful and smiling; the true depths of her sadism and cruelty are kept well hidden but know no bounds.

Tactics: In combat, Aaron is loud and boisterous, calling out outlandish claims and doing his best to embarrass and humiliate the enemy. He fights with shocking grace and is equally at home pummeling victims with his fists as he is attacking with his magic dagger or hand cross-bow. Despite his loud and obnoxious demeanor, Aaron can be calm, patient, and collected when he is waiting in the shadows to strike.

His epic feat *Lingering Damage* is quite deadly: Whenever he strikes a target and inflicts sneak attack damage, the victim suffers the sneak attack damage again 1 round later as the wound continues to bleed and tear open.

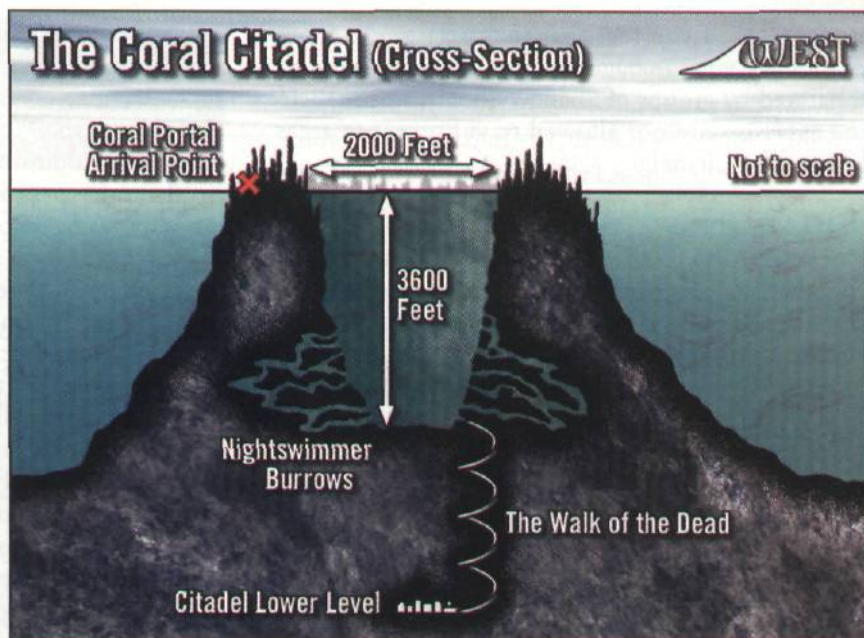
Garrison starts each day by casting several spells on himself and his equipment—in particular, *bull's strength*, *endurance*, *undetectable alignment*, and *non-detection*. Before entering combat, he enhances his +2 *rapier of wounding* to +5 with his *wand of greater magic weapon*. He prefers to let his minions do the dirty fighting while he casts spells from a high vantage point, often gained by *air walking* high above a fight. One of his favorite tricks is to cast a still, silent *slay living* on a random passerby in a crowd and then watch panic ensue.

His epic feat *Automatic Silent Spell* allows him to prepare and cast any 0–3rd level spells as a silent spell without an increase to the effective spell level.

Amyrella prefers to wait in hiding to make a death attack, but should the victim survive she usually remains to finish the job in melee combat. She can cause devastating damage with her twin kukris. If she has time before a combat, she casts *expeditious retreat* and *stoneskin* or herself with her wands. She rarely, if ever, meets her match in combat.

Her epic feat *Perfect Two-Weapon Fighting* allows her to make her full four attacks per round with her off hand, granting her an amazing eight attacks per round. All attacks suffer the standard penalties for fighting with two weapons.

If the PCs encounter the Shadow Shoal leaders here, the villains are probably already aware of the



party's presence in the citadel. All three hide in the room, invisible if possible: Aaron *spider climbs* above the main door. Garrison casts *wind walk* and *spider climbs* up a wall above the iron cage. Amyrella hides beneath the southern trestle table.

Aaron and Amyrella (who drinks *potions of fly and haste*) focus their death attacks on the first person in the room and use their melee attacks simultaneously 3 rounds after the PCs enter. Aaron stays on the wall as long as possible to gain the higher ground bonus to attacks, while Amyrella tries to find a hiding place to set up ranged sneak attacks after her death attack attempt. Garrison casts *time stop* the round the other assassins attacks, and proceeds to plant *blade barrier*, *fire storm*, *soul bind*, *summon monster VII*, and *animate objects* (on the table and chairs nearest the PCs), in that order until the *time stop* ends.

After the surprise round, Aaron activates his *monk's belt* and casts *invisibility* with the *haste* action. Amyrella snipes from cover (sniping from hiding imposes a –20 penalty on Hide checks to remain hidden). Garrison cast another spell from as far away as he can.

In the following rounds, Garrison and Amyrella attempt to stay at long range as long as possible, using full attack actions and spells to wear opponents down. Amyrella doesn't hesitate to engage in melee; she and Aaron try to distract foes from engaging Garrison so he can maximize his spellcasting potential.

4. VISITORS HALL

Visiting assassins stay in these rooms when they travel to the Coral Citadel. There are currently no assassins in the citadel aside from the Shadow Shoal

leaders, but if you feel that the party needs more challenges, you can have one or more of these rooms inhabited by groups of Shadow Shoal snipers. Visiting assassins are not allowed to venture into areas 8–15 of the Citadel.

5. CHECK-IN

Normally, one of the three assassins guards this chamber, making sure that all visitors from the *portal* chamber actually have business here. With Yaervilar's death, the *portals* have shut down, making this room unnecessary for the moment.

6. PORTAL CHAMBER

You have entered a large domed chamber. Eleven curtained alcoves line the walls, and the ceiling soars into darkness above.

The ceiling of this room is 90 feet high, and it is normally guarded by some sort of creature. The last monster to guard this room was a half-dragon fiendish beholder that was magically bound to Yaervilar's will, but when the mighty assassin was destroyed, the beholder wasted no time escaping.

Each of the eleven alcoves contains a different *portal* that leads to one of eleven Shadow Shoal outposts scattered throughout the world. Yaervilar could control these *portals* from afar and tell when someone used them and had the power to shut them off if he detected intruders. When he was slain, the *portals* all shut down. The assassins have been working on a way to restore the *portals* for their use, but so far they have been unsuccessful.

7. TEMPLE TO LASCER (EL 20 or 22)

This large room is obviously some sort of fell temple. Iron pews fill the room, and a blood-red carpet winds between them to a large dais in the opposite end. A bloodstained altar stone sits atop the dais before a tall lectern.

Twin pools of boiling blood (or some other deep crimson liquid) bubble to the north and south of the altar, each fed by a narrow effluvium that springs from a stone tube cut into the altar's base.

A huge, blood-red statue of a leering humanoid looms over the lectern, its arm and legs impossibly long and its demonic face agape with a mouth full of needlelike teeth. The statue grips a rapier in each hand.

This room is a temple dedicated to the demonic founder of the Shadow Shoal, Lascer, Lord of the Lightless Deep. Lascer himself, not being a full divine

power, cannot grant divine spells to his worshipers, but he appreciates the worship of his followers.

This entire chamber is warded with a lawful evil *forbiddance* spell (cast at 18th level) placed here by Garrison. Additionally, the altar stone is enchanted so that once per month, a lawful evil cleric can cast an improved version of *gate* by spilling nine drops of his own blood on it. This *gate* functions at a caster level equal to twice the user's—a gift to Garrison from Yaervilar himself.

Creatures: Once Garrison became aware of the party's interest in the Shadow Shoal operations, he used the *gate* to call four *glabrezu*, which he ordered to stay here and guard the altar from defilement. If Garrison Scrimm fled to this chamber, he alerts the demons of the group's invasion, ordering them to attack the party on sight. Garrison doesn't retreat from any battles that begin here; he fights to the death.

➤ **Glabrezus (4):** hp 85 each; *Monster Manual* 42.

♣ **Garrison Scrimm:** hp 133; see area 3 for complete statistics.

Treasure: The two rapiers held by the statue of Lascer are, in fact, removable. Each is a +3 *unholy wounding rapier*.

8. CONFERENCE ROOM

Garrison Scrimm uses this room to speak with other assassins on religious matters. There is nothing of interest in here at this time.

9. GARRISON'S QUARTERS

This room is sparsely furnished, containing only a bed and an unholy font. Garrison prefers to keep most of his personal belongings with him and spends most of his time in Redshore. As a result, he rarely stays in this room. There is nothing of value here.

10. SECRET PASSAGE (EL 9 EACH)

This 5-foot-wide secret passage wraps all around the central section of the complex, allowing assassins greater mobility through the citadel. Each of the secret doors, in addition to being locked and warded with a *symbol of hopelessness*, contains an arrow slit that is concealed on the secret side by a permanent illusion.

♣ **Symbol of Hopelessness:** CR 9; hopelessness effect (see page 263 of *Player's Handbook*); Will save (DC 32) resists; Search (DC 33); Disable Device (DC 33).

11. LABORATORY (EL 20 or 22)

The floor, unlike the other rooms in this place, is cold stone. A pair of work benches sits nearby, their tops cluttered with alchemical apparatus. To the north, a row of six laboratory tables are covered

with more equipment. To the east, three guttering magical circles glow on the floor. Two of them seem vacant, but a terrible shape wreathed in smoke lurks in the one farthest from the door.

This is where Yaervilar and his cohorts spent much of their time concocting poisons, building magic items, and consulting with fell creatures from other planes. All the equipment here is not only masterwork but also magically enchanted. Using this equipment grants a +10 circumstance bonus to all Alchemy checks and Craft (poison) checks. In addition, any magic items made with this equipment can be built in 75% of the time normally required. The cost of upkeep on the equipment raises the final price of the raw materials by 25%, unfortunately.

Creatures: If Aaron Kientai fled to this room, he quickly chooses a hiding place to heal and recuperate. If the party enters the room, he quickly and quietly throws a bottle of ink at the occupied magical circle. The ink splashes all over the circle's edge, breaking it and freeing the fiendish will-o-wisp sorcerer trapped inside. The will-o-wisp sorcerer has been trapped here for months and is starving; it attacks any visible targets (likely the party) with a hungry fury while Aaron prepares to launch a death attack from hiding.

➤ **Msshilu, Fiendish Will-o'-wisp Sor12:** CR 20; Small Aberration (air); HD 9d8+12d4; hp 75; Init +16; Spd fly 50 ft. (perfect); AC 32 (touch 29, flat-footed 20); Atk +24 melee (2d8/crit 19–20, shock); SA spells, smite good 1/day (+20 damage to a good foe); SQ spell immunity, natural invisibility, cold and fire resistance 20, damage reduction 10/+3, SR

25; AL CE; SV Fort +7, Ref +19, Will +18, Str —, Dex 34, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 19, Cha 20.

Skills: Bluff +15, Concentration +10, Hide +20, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Listen +14, Move Silently +20, Search +13, Spellcraft +13, Spot +14. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Critical (shock), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spell Penetration, Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse (shock).

Spells Known (6/8/7/7/7/6/3, base DC = 15 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, dancing lights, detect magic, disrupt undead, flare, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost*; 1st—*animate rope, burning hands, charm person, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*blindness/deafness, detect thoughts, fog cloud, knock, spectral hand*; 3rd—*dispel magic, haste, lightning bolt, vampiric touch*; 4th—*bestow curse, enervation, phantasmal killer*; 5th—*contact other plane, dominate person*; 6th—*greater shadow evocation*.

➤ **Aaron Kientai:** hp 141; see area 3 for statistics.

Tactics: The will-o-wisp has no time to prepare for the PCs' arrival. It begins combat by casting *haste* on itself and proceeds through its spell repertoire, holding nothing back. If reduced to fewer than 25 hit points, the will-o-wisp attempts to flee toward area 1.

Treasure: If the alchemy equipment can be transported out (each table of equipment weighs 750 pounds, and all eight must be transported for the lab to be of use), they can fetch quite a fair price, as the equipment in the room can be used to furnish six complete alchemist's labs. The various reagents in the room can function as any general spell component for any spell in the *Player's Handbook*. Components for spells that require costed spell components are not available in this room.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Druid's Satchel: This small leather bag is fitted with a strap, allowing it to be worn over the shoulder. A *druid's satchel* appears large enough to hold about 5 pounds of material. In fact, it is similar to a *bag of holding* and can actually hold 2 cubic feet or 120 pounds of material. Even when filled, the satchel weighs only 5 pounds. When the wearer reaches into it for a specific item, that item is always on top; retrieving an item from a *druid's satchel* is a free action.

If the wearer assumes a different form through the use of a spell like *polymorph self* or an ability like *wild shape*, the satchel changes form to accommodate the new form chosen but is not absorbed into the new form. Its weight and the limit on its contents remains the same.

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *Leomund's secret chest*, *polymorph self* or the ability to *wild shape*; **Market Price:** 3,000 gp; **Weight:** 5 lb.

Rod of Elemental Mastery: This potent item allows the user to call forth a small army of elementals to serve him. Once per day, the user can use the rod to create an *elemental swarm*. The type of elementals summoned must be decided when the power is activated, and all elementals summoned must be of the same type. While it is carried, the rod grants a +2 luck bonus to the DC to all the saving throws of spells cast by the user against an elemental. The user can use the rod to cast *dominate monster* on any elemental in range once a day. A dominated elemental obeys the commands of whoever holds the rod. Only one elemental can be dominated at a time; if the rod is used to dominate a second elemental, the first elemental is freed from its domination regardless of the result of the second elemental's saving throw to resist the effect. Finally, the user can use the rod to invoke a *protection from elements* spell five times a day.

Caster Level: 17th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Rod, Spell Focus, *dominate monster*, *elemental swarm*, *protection from elements*; **Market Price:** 158,000 gp; **Weight:** 5 lb.

THE SENTINELS AND THE SHOAL

If you wish to continue the storyline presented in this adventure, be sure to check out "The Sentinels and the Shoal" in *DRAGON Magazine* #297. A companion article to this adventure, it presents the Sentinels and the Shadow Shoal as two possible epic-level organizations (complete with spells and an

epic prestige class) to support a group of epic-level characters. Additionally, it provides statistics for a revived Sentinel Tesseril as a sample epic-level NPC. You can use these statistics in this adventure if the group manages to restore the elven druid to life; she can become a powerful ally in the years to come.

12. AMYRELLA'S QUARTERS

This room is lavishly furnished, neatly ordered, and clean. Various bits of obviously rare artwork hang on the walls or sit on tables and shelves; paintings, sculptures, books, and tapestries are displayed everywhere.

Amyrella enjoys relaxing in the presence of beautiful art, and she imported the contents of this room from around the world. None of it is protected or trapped—she is confident that no one can penetrate this far into the Coral Citadel.

Treasure: There are no less than sixty-four pieces of artwork in this room. Each one is valuable, and each weighs an average of 1 pound. You can determine the value and nature of as many or as few of the works as you wish, but the total value of the collection is an impressive 52,000 gp.

13. AARON'S QUARTERS

This room is obviously well-lived in—it's a mess. Piles of spoiled food lay scattered about, slowly growing mold and tainting the air with a foul stench. The carpet is torn up in places, and the walls and even the ceiling are stained with nameless bits of caked-on filth.

In stark contrast to Amyrella, Aaron lives like a slob. Like Garrison, he prefers to carry all of his valuables on him at all times, so there is nothing of interest in this room, although there are plenty of disgusting places something could be hidden. (Should you wish to add a plot hook for a further adventure, this would be a good place to do so.)

14. TREASURY (EL 20 or 23)

You have entered a large room with rounded corners. The floor, walls, and ceiling seem to be made of polished iron. Directly opposite you, a huge iron sphere bisects the floor and wall. Standing at attention before this sphere are five tall statues of a lanky, rapier-wielding demon.

This room is one of many caches of treasure kept by the Shadow Shoal. Some of the treasure is kept in small vaults along the north and south wall; the secret doors hiding these vaults can be found with a successful Search check (DC 45). Each door is trapped with a *symbol of hopelessness* and locked with an incredibly complex lock (Open Lock check, DC 45). The sphere itself can be entered via an even more cleverly hidden secret door (Search check, DC 55) and an equally magnificent lock (Open Lock check, DC 45). Of course, the party first needs to deal with the guardians of the treasury before they can spend time looting it. The master keys do not open these vaults, and the locks are far beyond the skill of the three cohorts to pick, as much as they might like to get at the prizes inside.

Creatures: The five statues of Lascet are, of course, iron golems. What the party might not notice right away, though, are the two *improved invisible* pit fiends that stand in the northwest and southwest corners of the room. The pit fiends were bound here long ago, and they fight to the death, wading into melee combat only if all five iron golems are slain or the party engages them before dealing with the golems.

If Amyrella fled from area 3, she chooses to make her last stand in this chamber.

➤ **Iron Golems (5):** hp 99 each; *Monster Manual* 109.

➤ **Pit Fiends (2):** hp 123 each; *Monster Manual* 49.

◆ **Amyrella Ambermead:** hp 178; see area 3 for complete statistics.

Tactics: As the iron golems advance to attack the characters in melee, the pit fiends blast away with *meteor swarms*, followed by *fireballs* and *walls of fire*, damaging the intruders while simultaneously healing the golems.

Amyrella remains in hiding as long as possible, making death attacks with her +3 *returning throwing kukri*. She does not want to fight to the death, and if things turn against her, she tries to escape using her magic items. If cornered, she chooses to swallow all the dark reaver powder she has left rather than be captured alive.

Trap: Each vault is filled with burnt othur fumes. If a vault is opened, the fumes spill out in a 30 foot spread that persists for 3d6 rounds. Yaervilar, being

immune to poison, had little to fear from these traps.

➤ **Burnt Othur Fumes Trap:** CR 10; burnt other fumes (inhaled poison; Fortitude save, DC 18, to resist; primary damage 1 permanent Con, secondary damage 3d6 Con); Search (DC 35); Disable Device (DC 40).

Treasure: The treasure stashed in the vaults here isn't the only cache of Shadow Shoal treasure in the world, but it is the largest. The treasure is stored in open chests, on shelves, and even in loose piles in the vaults. The exact contents of each vault are detailed here.

Vault A: 170,000 sp.

Vault B: 41,000 gp.

Vault C: 5,100 pp.

Vault D: 43 gemstones worth a total of 21,500 gp.

Vault E: 39 gemstones worth a total of 39,000 gp.

Vault F: 10 breathtaking gemstones, each of which is worth 5,000 gp.

Vault G: 25 various pieces of fine art worth a total of 37,500 gp; each piece weighs an average of 5 pounds.

Vault H: 24 various pieces of jewelry worth a total of 48,000 gp.

Vault I: 5 suits of adamantine full plate armor, 5 suits of mithral breastplate armor, 5 adamantine rapiers, and 5 adamantine longswords.

Vault J: A *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of levitate*, a *potion of darkvision*, an arcane scroll of *spectral hand*, an arcane scroll (*detect scrying*, *fear*, and *polymorph other*), a +2 *greatsword*, a *javelin of lightning*, a fully charged *wand of cure moderate wounds*, a *rod of the viper*, and a *rod of withering*.

Vault K: This vault contains several powerful magic items kept by Yaervilar to reward his minions or for emergencies. They consist of a *rod of cancellation*, a *rod of flailing*, a *ring of evasion*, a *ring of three wishes*, a *decanter of endless water*, a *gem of brightness*, a *manual of gainful exercise +4*, a *pearl of power* (9th-level spell), and a *talisman of Zagy*.

15. YAERVILAR'S PARLOR

This room is shaped vaguely like an arrowhead, and it is dominated by a similarly shaped shallow pool of crystal clear water. A single iron door is set in the opposite wall.

This was the outer room to Yaervilar's private quarters. These rooms were once accessed via the door to the north, but when Yaervilar was slain a network of contingent magic whisked his chambers away to some vault in another dimension for safe keeping. The door to the north no longer opens; if it is pried from the wall, the characters are met with a wall of

ENCOUNTER LEVEL CHART

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (ELs) for all encounters in "The Razing of Redshore." Encounters are broken down by the three major locations in the module: the city of Redshore, the Shadar Caves, and the Coral Citadel.

Redshore

Area	Encounter Description	EL
11	☠ Shadow Shoal Snipers, Rog10/Asn5 (3)	18
17	☠ Shadow Shoal Snipers, Rog10/Asn5 (3)	18
*	☠ Urlkathoon	23
**	☠ Shadow Shoal Snipers, Rog10/Asn5 (3)	18
	☠ Garrison Scrimm Clr18/Asn3	+3

Shadar Caves

Area	Encounter Description	EL
1	☠ Ithkarsus, Kraken Clr9	21
	☠ Dire Shark	
2	➤ Glyphs of Warding (12)	4
4	☠ Mithral Golem	21
5	☠ The Shadar Pool	20

Coral Citadel

Area	Encounter Description	EL
†	☠ Nightswimmers (2)	20
††	☠ Shadow Shoal Snipers, Rog10/Asn5 (4)	19
†††	➤ Greater Glyph of Warding	7
†††	➤ Symbol of Hopelessness	9
3	☠ Aaron Kientai, Rog11/Asn5	24
	☠ Garrison Scrimm, Clr18/Asn3	
	☠ Amyrella Ambermead, Rog2/Rgr5/Ftr4/Asn11	
7	☠ Glabrezus (4)	20
	☠ Garrison Scrimm	+2
10	➤ Symbol of Hopelessness	9
11	☠ Msshilu, Fiendish Will-o'-wisp Sor12	20
	☠ Aaron Kientai	+2
14	☠ Iron Golems (5)	20
	☠ Pit Fiends (2)	
	☠ Amyrella Ambermead	+3
14	➤ Burnt Other Fumes Trap	10

* Event 4

** Event 7

† Crater

†† Walk of the Dead

††† These traps are found in multiple areas.

naked stone. Yaervilar's quarters consisted of several more rooms—perhaps one of them contained some sort of mechanism that even now is working to restore the powerful wizard/assassin to life?

CONCLUSION

With the destruction of the three assassins, the party has effectively destroyed the Shadow Shoal operation in this part of the world. Any surviving Shoal assassins quickly break up and become lone wolves or join other guilds. The menace posed by the three epic assassins has been averted.

The PCs might wish to convert the Coral Citadel to a fortress or base of operations of their own; if they can get the *portal* chamber to work again (DM's discretion), they can gain access to the lower level.

In Redshore, the mysterious attacks cease and the shipping lanes open again. The townsfolk are grateful to the party, but the recent tribulations have left the city unable to reward the PCs financially. Lord Lorchester continues to resist attempts at being *raised*, so Erik Lorchester becomes the new ruler of the town. Heavier taxes are needed to pay for repairs, but the citizens manage to cope. If the party explains that the Shadow Shoal was operating out of Redshore and can provide proof, the townsfolk are even more grateful. In reward, Erik Lorchester grants the party several tracts of land in the nearby wilds and promises to aid them in clearing the land and developing it however they want.

Urllathoon remains by Tesseril's side. If the party does not return to the Shadar Caves to debrief Urllathoon within a week of defeating the Shadow Shoal, he invites them to visit by way of an elemental. If the party visits, he tells them that his presence has calmed Tesseril's troubled spirit, and he believes that she can now be brought back to life with a *true resurrection* spell. If the party resurrects Tesseril, she can become a great ally

(see "The Sentinels and the Shoal" sidebar for details). Note that the Shadar Pool loses its sentience and the abilities associated with sentient magic items it this happens, but it retains its other powers.

Surviving Shoal assassins continue to plague the PCs for the next several months or even years. If some of the three epic assassins survived, they begin rebuilding the Shoal at once in another part of the world and make the assassination of the characters their primary goal. Even if the Shoal is completely destroyed, though, the characters are far from through with it. Lascer has noticed the destruction of one of his more powerful guild strongholds, and he begins making his way back through the planes and dimensions to the PCs' world. Once he arrives, he wastes no time rebuilding the Shoal and hunting down those responsible. Lascer is a powerful demon prince with tremendous resources at his command even though he is currently exiled from his home realm. He represents an excellent recurring villain to plague the party as they continue to develop their newfound epic skills.

Finally, the party's rediscovery and use of the *Shadar Pool* motivates the gods to lift their age-old ban of epic powers for mortals and remove the restrictions on the *Shadar Pool*. Those who gain access to the *Shadar Pool* and other similar artifacts begin to manifest epic powers, creating heroes and villains the likes of which the world has not seen for many millennia. Ω

I'd like to thank my dad for instilling in me a love of the ocean and the denizens within it, without which this adventure would have been an entirely different beast.

Alas, although I've seen a fair amount of gray whales and blue sharks and even a sea turtle out there, I've yet to see anything really exciting (like an awakened whale druid, a kraken, or a pirate ship).



by Aaron Williams
www.nodwick.com



DUNGEON #93 Previews



THE STORM LORD'S KEEP

by James Wyatt

The vengeance of a cloud giant king is a fierce sight to behold. This 21st-level D&D adventure is perfect for introducing the *Epic Level Handbook* in your campaign.

SWAMP STOMP

by Jeff Ward

The lizardfolk are stirring for war, but after decades of peace with the town of Orchard's Hollow, the question is why? It's a question only the PCs can answer. This D&D adventure is suitable for four 4th-level adventurers.

VANITY

by J. Bradley Schell

A man who would be god found out what happened to those who would challenge heaven. Now the PCs have an opportunity to explore the lost temple of a lost soul. This D&D adventure is suitable for four 5th-level characters.

PLUS A NEW ISSUE OF POLYHEDRON!

BETTER WITH AGE

I've been getting *DUNGEON Magazine* since the issue before the change to the new edition. I first got the subscription to make my brother jealous. He received *DRAGON* and would never let me read it. Though our library carries *DRAGON*, it's annoying to make the trip when there's one sitting in your house. Well, the first issue was both a disappointment and a surprise. While I didn't like the fact that it had no binding and fell apart easily, I read it cover to cover. I really enjoyed it, too. But after two more issues I got bored. I prefer to play, so *DUNGEON* wasn't too important. I would read one adventure here, start reading another one there, but I think that from that first issue until Issue #91, I read less than half a dozen adventures. Last month's issue still remains unopened, but not for long.

Issue #91's new look is a great improvement. When I first opened it I knew this issue was going to be different. The first page I saw was page 27, which contains mostly Scenario #6 of "Challenge of Champions IV." I started reading the adventure in the middle. The effect of the look is amazing, and Jonathan M. Richards wrote an amazing adventure. Stopping before the solution, I read the adventure from the beginning. I found myself trying to figure out the solutions without reading them. I'm now reading "Bogged Down," and I plan to read the entire issue then go on to my previous issues.

In all this jumble, the message I'm trying to get across is this: In the beginning, I read the magazine. Then I stopped reading it. I didn't read entire issues, not because they weren't interesting, but because I don't DM and don't have a group anyway. The new look might have had something to do with it, but I'm reading it carefully now, and one more thing: Where can I find the first three "Challenge of Champions"?

Sam Dallal
Via Email

The first three "Challenge of Champions" modules can be found in Issues #58, 69, and 80, respectively.

LESS CONTENT? NO WAY!

I just wanted to drop you a line and let you know I liked the new layout of *DUNGEON* #91. Using the borders from the core books was really neat. I also like the larger type used throughout the publication. I would like to say that while the font is nice, I would hate to see a decrease in the material presented in each issue due to the larger type. The type is easier to read and well laid out, but more content is what I really appreciate seeing in *DUNGEON*. Since the magazine made the transition to the new edition, the value of the content has increased 100% to me. I

must say that with the quality of the content I would buy the publication if the entire thing were printed in black on white paper and stapled in the upper left-hand corner! Keep up the great work!

James Davis
Via Email

Ha! We knew this one was coming, so prepare for a thorough answer. In the new format, we can now fit roughly 100 more words per page. That means longer adventures take less space, so there's more room in each issue. Sometimes, like in this issue, you might see fewer DUNGEON pages, but the amount of content in each issue is the same or higher than in previous issues. In this case, it was a matter of a low ad count, and a long SPELLJAMMER section.

NUMBER WHAT?

I have a few comments about the latest DUNGEON/POLYHEDRON issue. First, I like the flip-book format, but there are a couple things I would like to see. Could we start numbering POLYHEDRON again? It is much easier to refer to an article in Poly #150 than calling it the POLYHEDRON on the back of Dungeon #91. Also, would it be possible to have the POLYHEDRON cover on the actual cover of the magazine? It looked great on the last issue, but this time we get a year-and-a-half-old ad.

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and out-of-print RPGs,
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I love the mini-games. I hope to play a game of Buff...er... Shadow Chasers soon, and I can't wait to see SPELLJAMMER.

Finally, let's see more of Jim Mahfood's art. While he might not have an appropriate style for D&D stuff, he should definitely be considered for any future Shadow Chasers articles. His stuff reminds me a little of Leif Jones or Steve Prescott.

Bobby Hitt
Via Email

Whether you get a nice-looking back cover on your POLYHEDRON depends on where you pick up your magazine. Issues to subscribers go through the U.S. Mail, who doesn't particularly care for magazines with two covers. Folks who subscribe will continue to get an ad "swapped" for their outside POLYHEDRON cover until that changes. Those of you who grab Poly on the newsstand will continue to get two covers, as normal. As you can see from this issue's Poly cover, the numbering continues no matter where you get the issue. We know it's more confusing that the Encounter Level system, but we beg your forgiveness for Uncle Sam. He's had a tough year.

We adore Jim Mahfood's art and look forward to working with him again next time we've got something that fits his style. In the meantime, get your Mahfood fix by visiting Jim's Web page at www.40ozcomics.com or check out Peter Parker: The Spectacular Spider Man #42 and #43, which should be on stands about the time you read this. Adult readers owe it to themselves to track down Jim's wildly entertaining comic Grill Scouts, which is available in a trade paperback collection from Oni Press.

PLASTIC, PLEASE

I have just received the latest issue of DUNGEON (Issue #91). I am writing to ask you to reinstate the plastic that has protected my magazine from the league of water elementals that run post offices and deliver mail the world over (I am told their head office is in Seattle). Since its inception, this innocuous piece of film has saved me the tedium of drying page after page of a newly received magazine with a hairdryer.

I realize that the addition of the plastic wrap was likely done to ensure extras like CDs and token sheets remain with the magazine during transit. However I ask, for me, and on behalf all your subscribers, to use the plastic wrap as a standard feature.

Andrew
Via Email

Polybags, as they're called in the industry, are expensive, which is a main reason we only use them when we absolutely need to. They also tend to obstruct the cover, which hurts newsstand sales. Oh, and our magazines are mailed out of Illinois, so the elementals must live there.

May 2002

Polygonhedron

SPELLJAMMER

SHADOW OF THE SPIDER MOON

**D&D
adventures
in space!**

**5 new
prestige
classes!**

**8 worlds
of adventure!**

**14 ship
designs!**

#151

**PLUS: New feats and skills,
airsuits, flame pistols & more**



Giff Me a Break

About two months ago today I sat down on the day before sending *Polyhedron* 150 to the printer, my hands sweating due to the stress of completing an issue literally hours before catching a plane for a much-needed Las Vegas vacation. Everything had been taken care of except this editorial, a task I usually reserve for the absolute last moment both because it allows me a better chance to reflect upon the magazine I've created and because I'm a hopeless procrastinator.

I decided to close out the editorial with a preview of the next issue's Mini-Game, in this case Andy Collins's intriguing *Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider Moon* (which you now hold in your hands).

Perhaps because I could already hear the clinking of nickel-slot payoffs (or, more likely, the revving up of my vacation plane's engines), I decided to take an irreverent approach, mentioning that Andy's version of *Spelljammer* dispensed with some of the "sillier" aspects of its venerable predecessor, the AD&D *Spelljammer* setting that came out in 1989.

Specifically, I referred to the *Spelljammer* race of hippopotamus-headed gun lovers as "goofy hippo men," and to the "crystal sphere" fantasy cosmology of the original setting as "wonky." Perhaps worst of all, I celebrated the fact that *Shadow of the Spider Moon* contained no giant space hamsters.

Little did I know what terror those words would bring to the online *Spelljammer* fan community. Before I even knew the issue had hit the stands the WotC periodicals staff was getting emails (some quite irate) about my editorial, most of them predicting doom and gloom so far as the revamped *Spelljammer* setting was concerned.

You see, without giant rodents, *Spelljammer* just isn't *Spelljammer* to some people.

That's all fine and good. But *Shadow of the Spider Moon* is not the *Spelljammer* of 1989. It isn't meant to be. It's a re-interpretation of material designer Andy Collins and I enjoyed the first time around, modified by the new **d20 System** rules and some further tweaks we came up with to avoid things that turned us away from the original setting in the first place.

Judging by the emails and message board posts of several gamers, Andy and I weren't alone in enjoying *Spelljammer's* potential while being turned off by stuff like giant space hamsters named Wooly Rupert. One can, I believe, enjoy flying boats in space without enjoying the presence of anthropomorphic hippos (which almost made it in, alas).

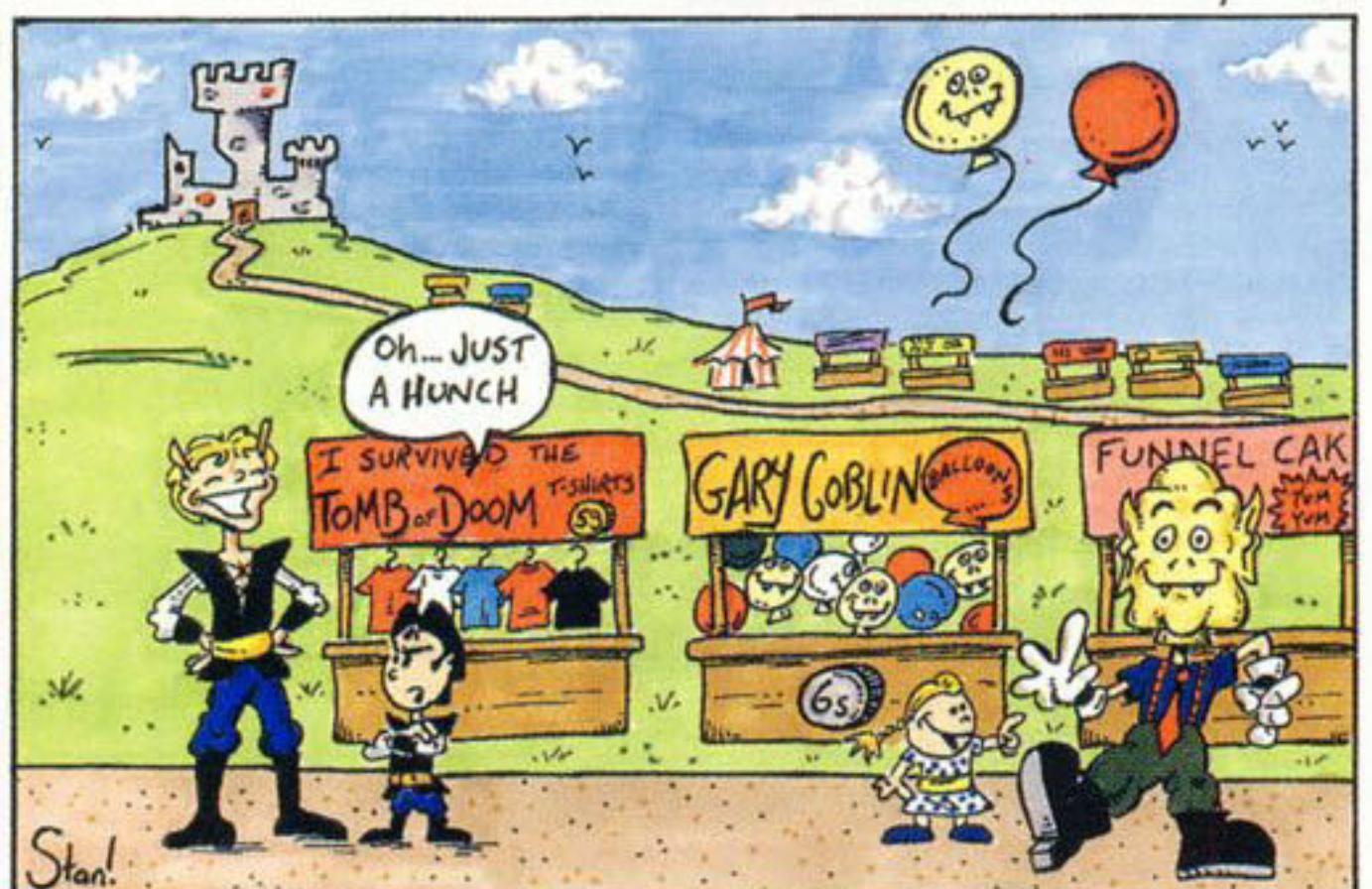
Fans of more traditional *Spelljammer* critters and backstory would do well to check out *Beyond the Moons*, the official *Spelljammer* fan site, located at <http://www.darkwood.org/sj/>. There you can find conversions of giff, crystal spheres, and all sorts of neat takes on "classic" *Spelljammer*. You can use the repository of information there to enhance your *Shadow of the Spider Moon* campaign, or you can use the site as an introduction (or perhaps a re-introduction) to the glories of the original *Spelljammer* universe. Tell 'em *Poly* sent you.

ERIK

Erik Mona
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Bolt and Quiver

by Stan!



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First Watch

Previews, notes & news on the world of d20 gaming

Meet the Tough Hero

Last issue's *Shadow Chasers Mini-Game* introduced hero classes based upon all of the basic d20 System abilities except Constitution. In the meantime, the folks developing d20 Modern decided to add a Con-based hero class in part thanks to feedback from Polyhedron readers. As a preview of the game in progress, here's that class, which is suitable for use with *Shadow Chasers*.

The Tough Hero

The Tough Hero uses his Constitution score to best advantage. Taking a level in this class demonstrates added health and physical stamina. Better vitality, good fortitude, and the ability to shrug off some amount of damage combine to define the Tough Hero.

The Tough Hero might be built like a truck or possess a great amount of stamina. He can take a lot of physical punishment, rarely gets sick, and often is hard to move. The Tough Hero can be stubborn or single-minded, can feel protective and often succeeds because he stays in the contest long after the competition has crumbled, and is often steadfast and confident to a fault.

Class Skills

The Tough Hero's class skills, and the key ability for each, are as follows.

Craft, Drive, Intimidate, Knowledge, Perform, Read/Write Language, Speak Language.

Skill Points at 1st Level: (4 + Int modifier) × 4.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Vitality

Tough heroes gain 1d6 vitality points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Action Points

Tough heroes gain 1d4+1 action points per level.

Starting Feats

The Tough Hero begins play with the

Countdown:



Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons) feat.

Bonus Feats

At 1st, 4th, 7th, and 9th level, the Tough Hero gains a bonus feat. This feat must be selected from the following list: Athletic, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Heroic Surge, Improved Bull Rush, Occupation Feat (select one), Power Attack, Rugged, Stamina, Sunder, Toughness.

Special Ability

At 2nd, 5th, and 8th level, the Tough Hero selects a special ability from the following list, and no special ability can be selected more than once:

Grapple Bonus: The Tough Hero gains a bonus to grapple checks. This bonus is equal to one-half his Tough levels, rounded down.

Remain Conscious: The Tough Hero gains the ability to continue to perform actions when he would otherwise be considered disabled and dying. When the Tough Hero's wound points reach 0, he can perform either an attack action or a move action every round until he reaches -10 wound points (and dies) or his wound points return to 0 or higher. If stabilized, he can continue to perform either an attack action or a move action, but doing so negates the stabilization.

Second Wind: Once per 24 hours of game time, the Tough Hero can use a move action to gain a second wind. When he does this, he recovers a number of vitality points up to but not above his total. The amount recovered is a number of d4s equal to one-half his Tough levels, rounded down. For example, a 5th-level Tough Hero with this ability can recover 2d4 vitality points once per day.

Shrug it Off: The Tough Hero can ignore an amount of vitality point damage equal to one-half his Tough levels, rounded down, once per encounter. In effect, he is shrugging off the vitality damage.

Soak it Up: The Tough Hero can soak up wound damage in certain situations. Once per 24 hours of game time, as a full-round action, the Tough Hero stands in place and concentrates on ignoring pain and damage. If he takes wound damage, the Tough Hero reduces the damage by a number equal to one-half his Tough levels, rounded down. 🎲

Table 1-1: The Tough Hero

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+0	+2	+0	+0	Bonus feat	+0	+0
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+0	Special ability	+0	+0
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+1		+1	+1
4th	+3	+3	+1	+1	Bonus feat	+1	+1
5th	+3	+4	+1	+1	Special ability	+2	+1
6th	+4	+4	+2	+2		+2	+2
7th	+5	+5	+2	+2	Bonus feat	+2	+2
8th	+6/+1	+5	+2	+2	Special ability	+3	+2
9th	+6/+1	+6	+3	+3	Bonus feat	+3	+3
10th	+7/+2	+6	+3	+3		+4	+3

Release Roundup

Fans of the d20 System have much to look forward to this May and June, with a ton of exciting new releases.

Affinity Games

The first-ever product from this fledgling publisher is *Windhaven: City Campaign Guide*, a 328-page hardcover campaign setting that centers around the city fantasy city of Windhaven, a sprawling metropolis that will serve as the focus for campaign books down the line. Company president Kyle Johnson hopes to carry on the tradition of urban rpg gaming started with the venerable *City State of the Invincible Overlord* product from Judges Guild by packing the first book with all sorts of tools, including a color map booklet, details on 40 guilds usable in a variety of campaigns, and a complete commerce system.

Johnson's set up his young company for quite a challenge, but if the frankly stunning computer cartography on the company's website is any indicator, Affinity and Windhaven will be worth watching in the months to come.

Alderac Entertainment Group

Fans of AEG's one-word-titled sourcebooks (*Evil*, *Dungeons*, *Dragons*, etc.) will want to check out *Gods*, which promises pantheons for several monster races,

including minotaurs, ogres, dark elves, and orcs.

At presstime, the company was still promising a "late Spring" release for the *Farscape* d20 game, originally announced for September. Here's hoping the game comes out while the show's still on the air.

Atlas Games

Looking for a spellcaster with a little "something extra" (and can't afford the trip to Bangkok)? Atlas Games comes to the rescue with *Occult Lore*, a 240-page hardcover featuring several alternative magic systems, from standard stuff like alchemy and astrology to intriguing ideas such as rationalism, whose logical practitioners "strip targets of their spells with well-reasoned argument." \$29.95, available in May.

Avalanche Press

Bored of tired re-hashes of Arthurian legend? Check out *I, Mordred*, which releases in May. Using this 64-page sourcebook, players take the role of insurgents against a corrupt King Arthur, hoping through political machinations to escape the wicked knights of the Round Table and place Mordred on the throne as rightful king of England. Yum.

June sees three interesting releases from Avalanche: *All for One*, a campaign setting based on

Alexandre Dumas's famous Musketeer stories, *Whispers in the Shadows*, a guidebook to historical secret societies such as the Rosicrucians and the Knights Templar, and *Endless Sands*, a setting guidebook to ancient Arabia. All of this stuff retails for \$16.95.

Bastion Press

Spells and Magic, releasing in May, offers 96 pages filled with new spells, magic items, and prestige classes. Suitable for use with any d20 System campaign, the book retails for \$24.95.

Fantasy Flight Games

Releasing in June, *Way of the Sword* introduces Fantasy Flight's new line of character class sourcebooks. This 176-page hardcover focuses on barbarians, fighters, monks, and rangers, providing numerous prestige classes, new feats, and new equipment suitable for the martial classes. The book also sees the debut of "legendary classes," advanced prestige classes designed for high-level play. *Way of the Sword* will be followed by *Way of Magic*, *Way of Shadow*, and *Way of Faith* later in the year.

Fast Forward Entertainment

Tired of prying open the dungeon door only to fight your way down through numerous monster-filled levels? *Dungeon World*, a 160-page

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hardbound campaign setting, turns convention on its ear, starting players at the bottom of a massive dungeon. Treasure is nice, and all, but in *Dungeon World*, the greatest reward is escape. Break from the depths with this May release.

Fiery Dragon Productions

May sees the release of *Counter Collection III*, a brand new assembly of cardboard critters to populate your gaming table.

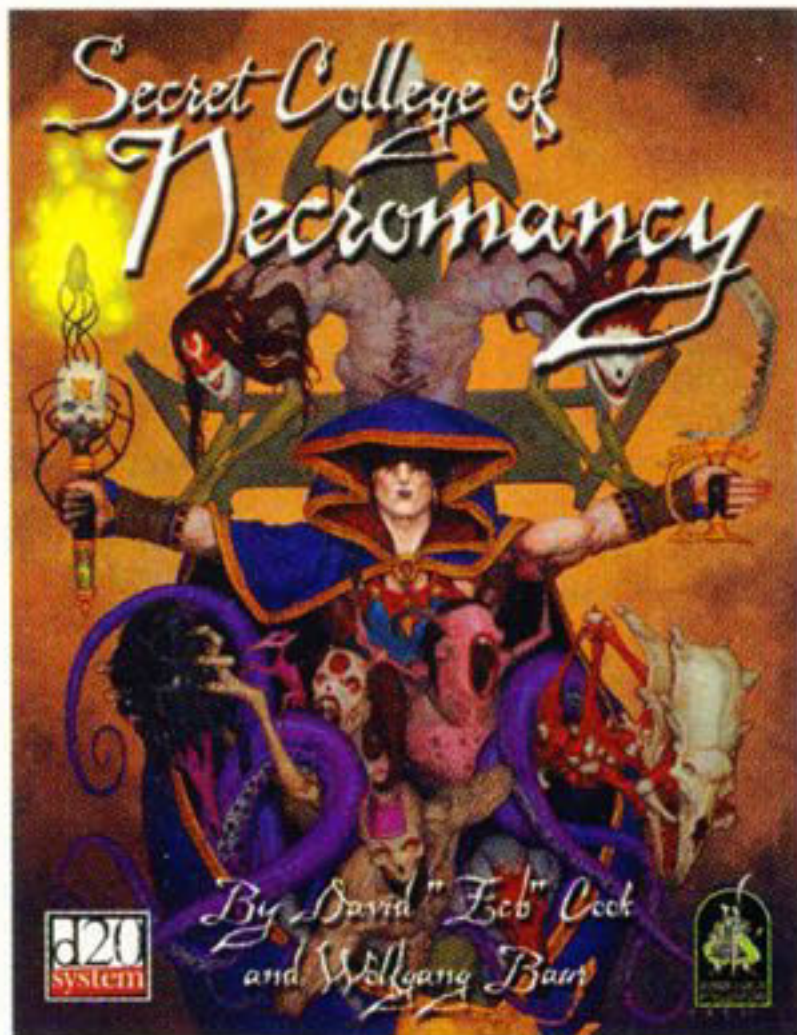
The following month, pick up *Of Sound Mind II*, a sequel to the popular *Of Sound Mind* psionic adventure written by RPGA member and superjudge Kevin Kulp.



Delta Green Goes d20

Now that Wizards of the Coast's d20 version of Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* game has hit the shelves, Pagan Publishing has decided to enter the d20 arena with a d20 version of the Origins Award-winning *Delta Green*. The new *Delta Green* book will feature stats for both d20 and traditional *Call of Cthulhu*, making it accessible to fans of both systems.

In *Delta Green*, players assume the role of modern-era investigators fighting off conspiracies tinged with the madness of H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. The new *Delta Green* debuts some time after July. Keep watching *Polyhedron* for more details.



Green Ronin Publishing

AD&D 2nd edition architect David "Zeb" Cook and former *Dragon Magazine* editor Wolfgang Baur team up in *Secret College of*

Necromancy, a 96-page sourcebook on the dark arts of the undead. The book offers two new core classes and extensive new powers for wizards and sorcerers who dabble in the necromantic arts. *Secret College of Necromancy* hits in May and retails for \$18.95.

Venture into the Spirit World with the 80-page *Shaman's Handbook*. The book kicks off Green Ronin's *Master Class* series with a new core class that uses spirits to do its bidding. The *Shaman's Handbook* also includes associated spells and prestige classes, as well as a bestiary of ghosts and spirits. Written by Steve Kenson, the *Shaman's Handbook* retails for \$16.95.

Holistic Design

We're guessing Holistic will start a new trend with its June "ripped

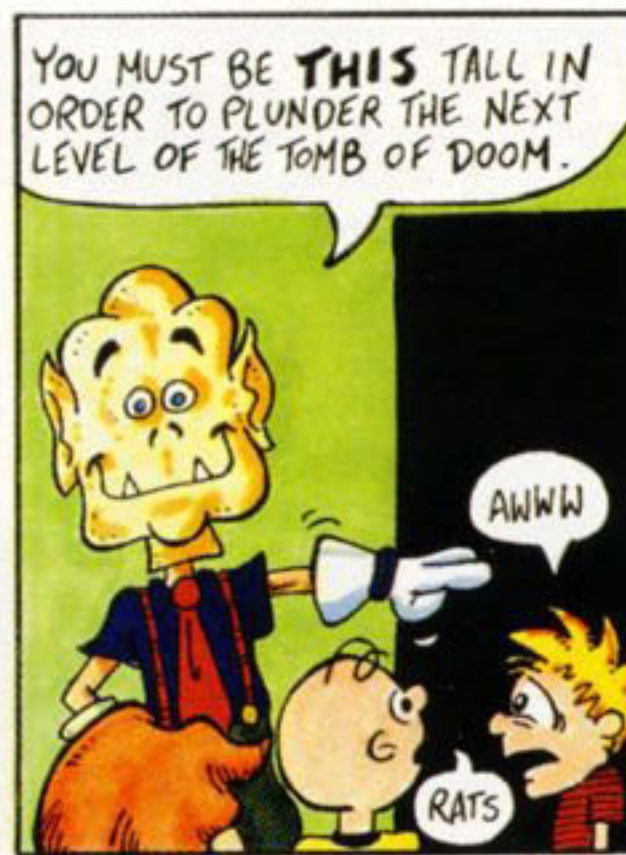
from the headlines" release:

Afghanistan d20. The first in a series called "Real Life Roleplaying," *Afghanistan d20* allows players to take part in the war on terrorism by helping to organize Northern Alliance operatives and by outwitting crafty al Qaeda agents. Drop by the Holistic website at www.holistic-design.com/News/WhyAfghanistan.html for an intriguing look behind why a game company would take on such a controversial topic and what putting the product together means for the Holistic staff.

Malhavoc Press

Dungeon Master's Guide author and d20 electronic publishing pioneer Monte Cook brings one of his popular pdf files to the printed page with *Book of Eldritch Might II: Songs*

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by Stan!

and *Souls of Power*, a 64-page sourcebook on all things arcane published in cooperation with Sword and Sorcery Studios. Packed with new spells and magic items, *BOEM II* also includes alternative versions of the sorcerer and bard classes.

In June, Malhavoc releases another electronic file, a 128-page mega adventure called *The Banewarrens*, which promises blood-curdling, dangerous thrills for PCs of 6th to 10th level. Stop by www.montecook.com for more information.

Mongoose Publishing

The world's most prolific producer of d20 System material continues its class book series with the *Quintessential Wizard* in May, followed by the *Quintessential Elf* in June. That month also sees the release of the *Judge Dredd Roleplaying Game*, a d20 RPG based upon the exploits of the famous comic character from Britain's 2000 A.D.

Monkey God Enterprises

Teaming with Ambient, Inc., a popular producer of for-sale online d20 System electronic files, Monkey God in June brings us *Librum Equitus*, literally the "book of the chevaliers." For \$11.95, you get a ton of prestige classes ranging from the swashbuckler and sniper to strange and creative classes such as the corpulent, a character

Playtest with the RPGA Network!

Want to influence upcoming releases from Wizards of the Coast but don't have a handy group with which to do it? Getting involved has never been easier now that the RPGA has set up online playtesting!

To qualify for online playtesting, you must:

- Be a paying member of the RPGA Network.
- Have registered a Wizards Chat name (go get one from <http://tank.wizards.com/ichatnames/default.asp>).
- Download, fill out, sign, and submit a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) to Wizards (go get a PDF of one from <http://www.wizards.com/rpga/downloads/wotcnond.zip>). Please include your RPGA membership number, email address, and Wizards chat name on the NDA form for ease of reference. (If you don't include your email address, don't expect timely responses.)

Send the NDA by fax to: (425) 226-3182 (Attn: Penny Williams) or snail mail to Attn: Penny Williams/Wizards of the Coast/1801 Lind Avenue SW/Renton, WA 98057.

You may not submit your NDA via electronic means. If you are younger than 18 years of age, your parent or legal guardian must also sign your nondisclosure agreement.

Once we have your NDA and have verified your RPGA membership, you'll get an email verifying your eligibility to playtest online. At that point, you will be instructed on how to sign up for available playtest sessions.

See www.rpga.com for more details on how the online playtesting process works.

who gains power through eating. Tasty!

Necromancer Games

If you're in the market for a mid-level adventure in May, you might want to check out *Hall of the Rainbow Mage*, an adventure for characters of level 7 and higher.

Tougher characters will be itching for a chance to take on *Necropolis*, an Ancient Egyptian

dungeon built into a pyramid filled with deadly traps and even more deadly creatures. Written by Gary Gygax several years ago for the *Dangerous Journeys* RPG, *Necropolis* enters the modern era with newly revamped d20 rules and scores of new magic items, gods, and monsters. A 224-page hardback, *Necropolis* very loudly announces Gygax's return.

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D20 Trend Tracker

How Many Nails in a Dead Pirate's Coffin?

The early success of Green Ronin's *Death in Freeport* proved that fans have an interest in piracy and nautical campaigning. But do they have enough interest to sustain more than a half-dozen major treatments of buccaneers and shipcraft? Here's just a sample of what's coming soon or already on the market. Notice there are seven products, here. Seven is three more than the number of letters in the word "G-L-U-T".

Black Flag: Pirates of the Caribbean

Who: Avalanche Press

What: The leading publisher of historical d20 supplements presents "the quintessential guidebook to roleplaying pirates and privateers in the Caribbean of the 18th Century." The 64-page product contains five new classes and four prestige classes, and retails for \$16.95.

When: Available now.

Freeport: City of Adventure

Who: Green Ronin Publishing

What: More an in-depth look at a fantasy city dominated by pirates than a full-blown nautical supplement, *Freeport: City of Adventure* deserves mention as the latest and most in-depth

treatment of the city that started the d20 revolution. A meaty hardcover that retails for \$29.95.

When: Available now.

Pirates & Musketeers

Who: Published by Alderac Entertainment Group.

What: A d20 System conversion of AEG's acclaimed *7th Sea* game, originally designed by d20 superfan John Wick. The book promises 100 new classes, which has got to be some sort of record. Whether that record will have the pedigree of "most pieces of candy" or "most sharp needles shoved into an eye" remains to be seen.

When: Sailing your way in July.

Seas of Blood

Who: Mongoose Publishing

What: The first in Mongoose's *Traveller's Tales* series, *Seas of Blood* includes a naval combat system, naval prestige classes, new spells, new monsters, information on playing "Sea Druids," and several ship designs. A 128-page softcover release, *Seas of Blood* retails for \$19.95.

When: Available now.

Seafarer's Handbook

Who: Fantasy Flight Games

What: A comprehensive 174-page hardcover resource cover-

ing ship building, underwater combat, aquatic spells, and the ubiquitous ship-to-ship combat rules. Retails for \$24.95.

When: Available now.

Skull & Bones

Who: Your guess is as good as ours.

What: Adamant Entertainment announced *Skull & Bones* a year ago, when the d20 market had fewer than a half-dozen products covering naval rules and piracy. Now, they've decided to put a hold on publishing until they can license the product to another publisher. This sidebar seems to suggest Adamant knows what it's doing.

When: Lord knows.

Twin Crowns: Age of Exploration Fantasy

Who: Living Imagination, Inc.

What: A 304-page sourcebook and rules accessory detailing the world of Ptalmanar, where exploration rules the day and naval travel expands the horizon. The extensive book includes naval combat rules (natch), races, skills, and extensive historical details regarding the setting, which has been used for nearly a decade in a LARP called *Lione Rampant*. All that and more for \$29.95.

When: Available now.

Bolt and Quiver

by Stan!



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News from the Top

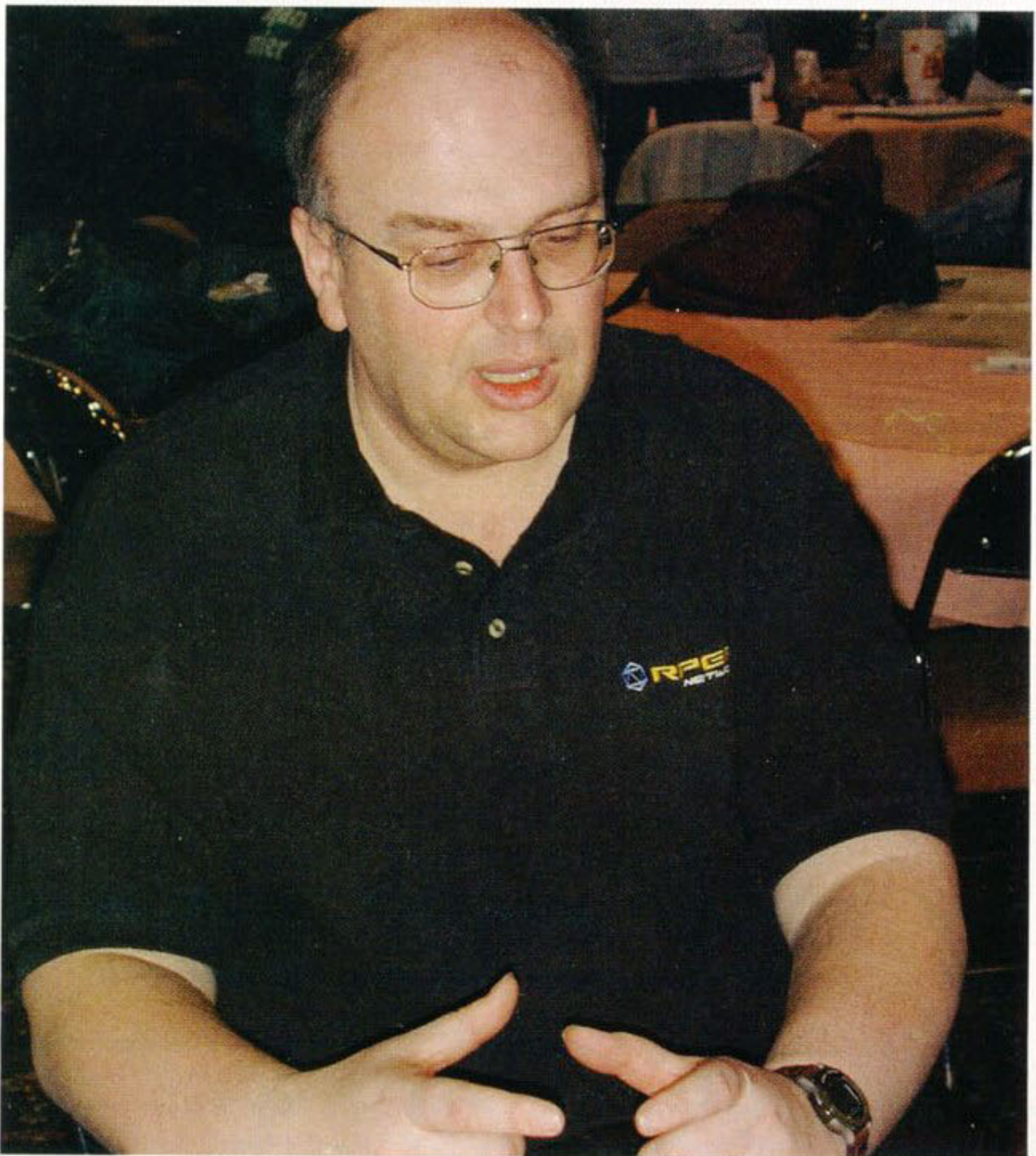
In the last edition of *Polyhedron* I spoke about WINTER FANTASY, the RPGA Network's premiere annual gathering. At the show's members' meeting I had a chance to speak with the membership at large, and I thought I'd take this space to cover and expand upon what was said there.

We appreciate that it's impossible for all members to attend WINTER FANTASY, due to its location in the middle of the United States. Plans are afoot to change the format of the convention by sponsoring multiple "Winter Fantasies" throughout the year in several different locations and countries. It's too early for exact details, but we're looking at the feasibility of such a plan as I write this and I'll be sure to release more details here as soon as I can.

At the show itself debate was high as to whether or not we should jump into globalizing the convention immediately, but I can officially and with much pleasure say that WINTER FANTASY 2003 will again be held at the Grand Wayne Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana, USA.

I opened this year's members' meeting by discussing how the health of the RPG business directly affects the RPGA from the viewpoint of Wizards of the Coast. Over the past 12 months, RPG sales have exceeded the company's expectations. With that in mind, the company recognizes the significant role the RPGA has within the greater roleplaying community and is committed to ensuring the Network's growth and stability.

I also addressed the topic of disappointment. For far too long, the RPGA staff has promised much and delivered little, which results in bad feelings all around. To combat this, I've decided that this year will be a "back to basics" approach, as we attempt to rediscover the purpose of the RPGA—to provide great community gaming experiences and content. Until we're



Ian charts out the future at Winter Fantasy.

satisfied that all of our current programs and promises work toward that goal we simply will not commit to launching *anything* new. This doesn't mean that we won't continue to think up new ideas and programs in the background, but we don't plan to start anything new until we're doing what we've already committed to right.

GM Program Relaunch

In order to deliver the best experience possible at an RPGA table, we will revamp the GM development program and throw some serious weight behind developing superb GMs to help us run games and events within the RPGA community. I would like to basi-

cally develop these GMs into the "heroes" of the RPGA. To do so means radically overhauling the previous system and adding a bunch of new and exciting benefits to make this something attractive to any RPGA member interested in becoming a better game master.

What follows is the initial starting blueprint for the program so you can all see what we have in mind. (Maybe some of you will wish to volunteer to help us develop programs that work to this blueprint—send me an email to get involved.)

The following thoughts are by no means the final document, but should give you some idea of what we're

thinking at the present time. The entire GM development program will be proactively developed with the help of member volunteers, and we'll continue to add enhanced initiatives and benefits as we move forward.

The new system will mean some changes to the way the Network ranks judges. Don't worry about your current ranking too much, for now. When we revamp the system you'll retain your current level. Unlike the current system, however, you will be expected to maintain a level of excellence in judging in order to maintain your current rank (or exceed it, of course).

Levels of DM

The new GM ranking system will have five defined level ranks that, like the old system, are loosely modeled after level advancement in a standard role-playing game. For now, the names of the ranks remain as they currently are (Herald, Master, Grand Master, Paragon, and Avatar), but even this may change eventually.

Benefits

Unlike the current system, the new GM rankings will bring with them significant benefits. While the sidebar on this page shows only tentative benefits (remember, we're still building the program), they ought to show you how serious we are about making this new program attractive to the membership at large. While these benefits give you an idea of our current thinking, fleshing them out will fall to the volunteers who help us shape the final image of the program.

Game Master Sanctioning

This new system should not be dependent on overall scores applied as one number to denote level. That simply acts as a positive affirmation of ongoing support but does not denote any level of competence. The new system will be about passing higher and higher qualification guidelines and remaining thus over a 12 month period. It is envisioned that at any time an individual becomes inactive or a minimum threshold for level maintenance isn't upheld, then they would qualify for a new lower level but would not, as under the current system, hold the level for life. The

Proposed GM Program Benefits (Tentative)

Rank	Benefit
Herald	Password access to a sanctioned GM-only RPGA website. FREE annual adventure drawn from the RPGA library. Recognition for achievement within <i>Polyhedron</i> and on the RPGA website. Recognition badge/pin/other for level. Certificate for level recognition. Inclusion in website 'sanction' GM finder.
Master	FREE annual base membership (\$5) Enhanced opportunities to playtest Wizards of the Coast RPG products. Rest as per Herald.
Grand Master	FREE upgrade to include <i>Polyhedron/Dungeon</i> magazine. Rest as per Master.
Paragon	Discount at the Wizards of the Coast e-commerce store. Annual Paragon T-shirt/Polo shirt. FREE upgrade to include <i>Dragon</i> magazine. Rest as per Grand Master.
Avatar	Paid-for travel and accommodation/invites to the main RPGA events every year (ORIGINS, GEN CON, GEN CON EUROPE, WINTER FANTASY). All core rule products (e.g. <i>Manual of the Planes</i>). Annual Avatar jacket/sweat shirt/Polo shirt. Rest as per Paragon.

system is about rewarding those who are prepared to be the lifeblood of the organization and who continually provide the heightened experience we think the RPGA community deserves. The actual guidelines for this sanctioning process have yet to be developed and will, again, be developed by the volunteers who help us come up with the new program.

Communications

As I mentioned at the WINTER FANTASY meeting, the RPGA staff's communication channels have been woefully lacking. To address these concerns, we will develop a reworked global volunteer RD (Regional Director) and AC (Area Coordinator) program to ensure that information is passed to the membership in a timely manner. By decentralizing the flow of information through delegation, we hope to ensure that general inquiries to the RPGA leadership receive a quicker response than has been the case in recent times.

Additionally, we plan to proactively utilize the Network website (www.rpga.com) to deliver even more timely information that it currently does.

Living Campaigns

For the most part, the Network's overwhelmingly popular LIVING campaigns will continue much as they are

now. Network HQ has no plans to launch any new LIVING campaigns in the foreseeable future, but if the past few months are any indication, I am certain a number of Member-run LIVING campaigns are in the works even as you read this.

As I mentioned above, we're planning to review all of our programs and set them to right before committing to any new major initiatives. Once we have the basics of our existing HQ-managed LIVING campaigns in order we will consider new campaigns. High on the agenda is a LIVING (though perhaps "living" isn't quite the right word) *Call of Cthulhu* campaign.

In Conclusion

Obviously, it's going to take a lot of member volunteers to make all of our current plans work. If you're interested in participating, please write me at ianr@wizards.com. As things take shape I'll report on developments and release information within these pages in forthcoming issues of *Polyhedron*.

In closing this issue's *News from the Top*, I'd like to wish you all the blessings of the Goddess Tymora. May she shine upon your d20s everywhere...

Ian Richards
RPGA Worldwide Manager
ianr@wizards.com

Robert Remembers. . .

A week before this issue of *Polyhedron* went to press, Robert Wiese left the Wizards of the Coast office for the last time as a full-time employee of the RPGA Network. The achievements of his nearly seven-year tenure rank him among the most important figures in the history of the organization—when the lights almost went out on TSR in early 1997, Robert was the sole RPGA staffer. With a tenacious work ethic and a refusal to give in, Robert not only kept the Network alive but actually saw it flourish at what could have been its final hour. Without Robert's efforts, I think it's fair to say the RPGA wouldn't exist today.

Before he left to start a new life in Reno, Nevada, I asked Robert to reflect upon his tenure in the pages of *Polyhedron*. Robert, if you're reading this, thanks for keeping the fire alight all those years, and try not to spend too much money in the casinos. —Erik Mona

I joined the RPGA staff in June of 1995, and my first task was to format and edit the AD&D Open for that year, *Sacred Heart*. Harold Johnson was converting the scenario as I scanned, edited, and fixed the files, and we barely got it done in time. Baptism by fire, but that was the way of things at the RPGA. That year was the first I worked on the GEN CON Game Fair as a staff member, and I met some great people that I could not have gone through later years without: Cheryl Frech, Tom Fortunato, John Vaccaro, and Don Weatherbee.

Later that year, Network Coordinator Scott Douglas and I took *WINTER FANTASY* in a bigger direction than it had seen, and planned to publish our own *LC5: Player's Guide to the Living City Campaign*. Scott and I did the layout (with Duane Maxwell's help), and I had the first print run done at Office Depot at my own expense. That was the RPGA in those days; we found a way to do the things we wanted to do.

Then, December 20, 1996 happened, and I was left alone in the HQ

office. Without the help of Don Weatherbee and Jae Walker in setting up communication lines, and Don taking over the entry of member points, we would not have made it. I threw myself into work, probably too much, but everyone needed me so I was there. I worked hard to keep scenarios coming out and conventions supplied with materials, because I knew that game play was the essence of the Network.

From the time of the Great Crash at TSR until David Wise became the Worldwide RPGA Manager in 1999, I held the title of Network Coordinator, and pretty much served as second-in-command during my entire tenure. I drifted through various job responsibilities, as one does in the RPGA, and my job always included the duty "and everything else." Finally I drifted out of most of the things I loved to do, and it was time to go. I knew this at GEN CON in 2000, but did not know where I was going until this past fall.

Everyone has accomplishments at their jobs, and so did I. I am particularly proud of these:

- Starting game days and home play. The future of our growth is not at conventions, but at home, and reaching that market was a big success.
- Converting the scenario provision system to the online form that we have now, and designing the database that we use now.

- Germinating the idea of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign as a regional campaign and selecting a great team to nurture it to reality: Erik Mona, Cisco Lopez-Fresquet, Cheryl Llewellyn, John Richardson, and Tip Vaught. The campaign showed more promise than we ever dreamt, and now Stephen Radney-MacFarland is developing things for the campaign that we originally envisioned but did not have the methods or technology to implement.
- Beginning the LIVING FORCE campaign, and choosing the best team of *Star Wars* goobs I could find: Jae Walker, Morrie Mullins, and Colleen Lahna. Writing the *LIVING FORCE Campaign Sourcebook* with Morrie was the best part of this whole experience, but I really do like planning campaigns and building things that members will enjoy.
- Converting the LIVING CITY campaign from a director model of leadership to a board model of leadership, so that the campaign

could do more for more people. Dan Donnelly wore himself out, poor soul, running LIVING CITY by himself, and with the growth experienced



during his tenure it was clear that one person could not run it all. I will always consider him a friend, but I also have to thank Brian Burr, Lee McClurkin, Brooks Banks, Greg Sherwood, Troy Daniels, Cindy Osborne, Gail Reese, and Joe Cirillo for their hard work on this campaign as we tried to make it what you wanted as well as something that would last.

- Developing the idea of the member-run campaign, though a lot of people helped with that, too. Member-run campaigns really started back in the fall of 1995 when I appointed Claire Hoffman as LIVING DEATH Campaign Coordinator, and even before that with the *Virtual Seattle* campaign run by Ron and Margaret Heintz, and now by Wes Nicholson. LIVING JUNGLE was the third, when we settled it on Tom Prusa's shoulders. These three were the model for later campaigns.

So what have I learned? What is the perspective from the first officer's chair? I'd have to say that working for the RPGA taught me a lot, about myself and about people. Here is what I learned, and I hope that my experiences can help you as well, as you carry the RPGA into the future.

First, there is always a way. Sometimes the resources don't seem to be there for what you want to do, or some person seems to be blocking you from what you want to do. If it will serve the members, then find a way to do it anyway. You will, I know. I always did. If it will only serve you, or increase your power base, then reconsider.

Second, the further up in RPGA responsibility you get, the more of a servant you become to everyone else. Volunteering comes with responsibility, and sometimes authority, but not power.

Third, members hate change. You do, really. But change can be good, and is in fact the only constant of the universe. Things will change. Learn to live with change, and to adapt, and even to look at potential changes in a positive light first, and you will do very well.

Fourth, it is easy to blame HQ. We at HQ are reviled all the time, and

have blame heaped upon us for things that sometimes are not even our fault. Sometimes they are. However, blaming HQ is the easy way out. Stop taking the easy way out, and try to see things the way they really are. Give the HQ guys a break; they really want what is best for the Network. They just have a different perspective than you do on what that is.

Fifth, members love to whine. It is almost a knee-jerk reaction sometimes, I think. And at HQ we hear a lot of whining, and not a lot of good things. So, I'd ask, as I depart full-time status, that you consider doing two things: one, when you want to complain, offer a solution to something you don't like, rather than just whine about it, and two, tell HQ staffers when they do something good. They like to hear that, too.

Lastly, dream big. Don't settle for something when you can see it being better. Look at the LIVING DEATH interactives we have held at the Milwaukee Public Museum to see what I mean. Look at what we tried at Con2001 as an example, and at the *Live and Let Die* integrated LIVING CITY event. They were not perfect, but they tried to be so much more than just people sitting around a game table. We have such creativity in this organization; don't waste it. If things look hard, remember my first lesson.

Before I end this, I have to thank everyone whose name I mentioned above, plus Larry Hull, Michelle and Lee Sharp, August and Cynthia Hahn, Willie Burger, Catie Martolin, Rhonda Hutcheson, Jeff Boles, Keith Hoffman, and countless others for helping make my visions a reality for the RPGA.

What will I be doing? I'll be busy with convention planning for GEN CON, WINTER FANTASY, the RPGA events at ORIGINS, and anything else that HQ wants to throw at me. I'll be writing freelance projects, and occasionally scenarios (I'd love to reach Tom Prusa's record of 103 rounds, but I have 47 to go...). I'll still be around. I am not that easy to get rid of.

Robert Wiese
Former RPGA Network Coordinator

So Long, Spock!

Back in 1999, as I prepared to assume command of the Starship RPGA, the first thing I did was talk to Robert Wiese about it. He had been single-handedly running the Network since 1996, and had been there for a few years before then, so I worried about "leap-frogging" past him and into the captain's chair. Robert, however, was perfectly comfortable with the development. "I've always preferred the first officer's position to the captain's," he explained. "I'd rather be the guy who gets the job done than the one who determines the course." Thus, he has been the Spock to my Kirk during this three-year mission, executing my orders with an analytical efficiency, no matter how the Klingons of Chaos raged all around us. He has served the RPGA with distinction and a loving care that belies his stoic demeanor, so it is with a heavy heart that I bid him "smooth sailing" as he turns in his uniform and treks off to a separate future. May the next generation fare half as well!

Thank you, Robert, for staying at your post while TSR fell into disarray and forgot the RPGA for a while. Thank you for your penetrating evaluation of every crazy idea I had, and for your ability to turn those brainstorming into workable plans. Thank you for your willingness to don the black hat while I had all the fun of wearing the white. Thank you for making GEN CON, WINTER FANTASY, and ORIGINS so great a delight to so many people. Thank you for caring so much about the members through good times and bad. Among the luminaries of the RPGA's long history, your star shines brightly, lighting our way long after your departure. Live long and prosper!

David Wise
Former Worldwide RPGA Director

Convention scene

Winter Fantasy 2002

Every year, RPGA members from around the world convene for an event unlike any other. WINTER FANTASY, the Network's premiere gathering, allows members the chance to interact with the RPGA staff, game industry professionals from Wizards of the Coast, RPGA LIVING campaign administrators and each other during a weekend of gaming fun in which the RPGA itself takes center stage.

Though WINTER FANTASY features several dealer tables and a few special seminars, the bulk of the weekend is given over to RPGA gaming and member meetings. It's a special time for members to gather and share good times around the gaming table in an informal atmosphere of fun times and comradery.

This year's WINTER FANTASY, held January 24-27 at the Grand Wayne Convention Center in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, was no exception. Guests of honor included DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Creative Director Ed Stark, JD Wiker (*Star Wars*, ALTERNITY), and Sean Reynolds (FORGOTTEN REALMS, GREYHAWK). These guests coordinated seminars, ran personal games, and even had a chance to sit in for a few gaming sessions with the fans.

Members interested in the venerable LIVING CITY campaign had much to do at the show, as WINTER FANTASY served as the debut convention for OrganizedPlay, the company that has licensed the right to run the campaign from Wizards of the Coast. In sharp contrast to the chaos of last year (remember LC's conversion to 3rd Edition? We do. . .), everything ran incredibly smoothly. OrgPlay even allowed members to order *any* LIVING CITY scenario for play at the convention. If you wanted, you could spend your WINTER FANTASY playing LIVING CITY and nothing else.

Of course, the RPGA had a lot more to offer. This year marked the second for the Network's LIVING FORCE campaign, and member Jae Walker and her



Left: Hohn Cho and LC Director Greg Sherwood clown around at the LC activity center. Right: Head Marshal Lee Sharp plays a crafty minotaur (that's what the hat says, folks) at the LC Interactive.

army of battle droid volunteers put on a smashing interactive that featured several activity booths and more players in costume than any seven LC interactives combined.

Two years ago, WINTER FANTASY attendees got their first taste of LIVING GREYHAWK in a special preview event. This year, the campaign officially entered its second year (592 CY in GREYHAWK terms) with two adventures. Fans of the chaotic LC conversion got to feel the love all over again as the campaign transitioned to an "adventure cert" standard—from now on, individual item certificates will be relatively rare, and instead of a log sheet players get a special adventure result tracking form each time they play. It's a different system that led to some confusion on the day, but most folks were able to adapt to it and throw themselves headlong into the fun.

New RPGA Worldwide Manager Ian Richards came all the way from the UK to meet with members and to chair the annual members' meeting (see *Notes from the Top*, page 10).

This year's WINTER FANTASY also featured a completely new type of special event—the Open Gaming Fiesta. During this one-slot event, the RPGA had zero

scheduled events. It was an "open" slot during which any member could run any adventure for anyone at the show. For five hours, the Network lifted the regional limitation of LIVING GREYHAWK adventures (so long as the adventure was judged by a member from the region with which it was associated), which proved to be enormously popular. The regionality of LIVING GREYHAWK is one of the things that makes it so special, and the Open Gaming Fiesta gave everyone a chance to sample from regions to which they might never be able to travel (UK and Australian adventures proved enormously popular for just this reason).

More than any specific game or event, though, WINTER FANTASY allowed members to get together and share good times. Minutes after the gaming halls closed, dozens of gamers flocked to the Hilton's bar to collapse in comfortable chairs with the company of cold beer and good friends. It's become something of an annual tradition to come together at the end of the night to share gaming stories and anecdotes, and this year was certainly no exception.

Be sure to make plans to attend next year's WINTER FANTASY. For more details, visit www.winterfantasy.com.

Requires the Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook

SPELLJAMMER

SHADOW OF THE SPIDER MOON



d20
system

SWASHBUCKLING SPACE FANTASY!

BY ANDY COLLINS • ILLUSTRATIONS BY SCOTT SCHOMBURG



SPELLJAMMER

SHADOW OF THE SPIDER MOON

A Polyhedron Mini-Game of Swashbuckling Space Fantasy

FOR USE AS A COMPLETE CAMPAIGN SETTING FOR THE DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ROLEPLAYING GAME

Introduction

Spelljammer: *Shadow of the Spider Moon* is a d20 game of space fantasy. In this game, freebooting half-elven corsairs rub shoulders with wealthy halfling merchants and dwarven freedom fighters, while fending off deadly foes such as drow, yuan-ti, and dreaded mind flayers.

Spelljammer uses the d20 system, as based on the *D&D Player's Handbook*. In fact, this game is similar enough to *D&D* that you can use virtually any *D&D* product in your *Spelljammer* campaign with little or no difficulty. However, it also adds new and wondrous elements, including flying ships, firearms, and all the skills, feats, and prestige classes you need to explore the vastness of space!

If you want to incorporate portions of this game into your *D&D* campaign, that's just as easy. All of the new systems use familiar terms and mechanics, making it simple for a DM to add gnome scavengers, soaring vessels, or flame-throwing pistols to his home game.

So strap on your cutlass and trusty sidearm, and hoist the mainsail! It's time to take fantasy into the stars!

Credits

Game Design: Andy Collins
Cover and Interior Art:
Scott Schomburg
Editing & Art Direction: Erik Mona
Graphic Design: Andy James
Logo Design: Sean Glenn

Based on the original *Spelljammer* campaign setting created by Jeff Grubb and the original *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson.

This *Polyhedron* d20 System Mini-Game requires the *Dungeons & Dragons Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual* to play. *Polyhedron* Mini-Games adapt the standard *D&D* rules and conventions to nonstandard settings and genres. Unless specifically noted in the text, this Mini-Game follows the core *D&D* rules. If you know how to play *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*, you'll pick up the rules of this game in moments.

Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider Moon utilizes game mechanics developed for the new *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison. This *Wizards of the Coast* game contains no Open Game Content.

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A ship cannot sail without a steady crew. Will your wizard give locomotive power to the party's vessel? Will your fighter defend the ship from drow and mind flayer attacks? Will you emerge from humble spacehand origins to become stellar corsairs or planetary explorers?

32 Chapter 2: Space and Spelljamming

In the system of the Spider Moon, majestic and terrible vessels ride stellar winds in search of adventure and plunder. Learn how to handle space travel using the dzo System, and take a moment to peruse the gallery of spelljamming vessels your characters soon will encounter.

46 Chapter 3: Equipment and Magic

Before heading off to space, you'll want to pack an airsuit, several firearms, and a bag or three of bullets. Don't forget a *spelljammer helm*, or you're not getting off the planet.

52 Chapter 4: Setting

The system of the Spider Moon contains eight distinct worlds loaded with adventuring possibilities. Brave the barren deserts of Ashen or plumb the depths of Quelya in search of the treasure-filled structures of an ancient race.

64 Chapter 5: Enemies

A life in space is about much more than plundering ships and exploring strange worlds. It's also about fending off the predations of drow, formians, and yuan-ti. Even worse, it can mean an encounter with a mind flayer crew hungering for tasty brains.

Special Pull-Out Spelljammer Tokens

Twenty-eight tokens to help you manage ship-to-ship combat, from the lowly illithid boreworm to the majestic elven amada.



CHAPTER ONE

CHARACTERS

The characters of *Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider Moon* come from a wide variety of backgrounds and play a range of roles. In some cases, these appear very similar to the familiar elements of D&D, but most characters differ in subtle but important ways.

Races

The races of the *Spelljammer* setting are functionally identical to the character races presented in the *Player's Handbook*. Use the racial traits as presented there for your characters. However, personality traits, relations, and other characteristics vary as presented in this chapter.

Humans

As both the youngest and shortest-lived of the races, humans are always pushing to expand their knowledge and influence throughout the system. Relatively new to spelljamming, humans have nonetheless taken to it with a mixture of fervor and grace that belies their young culture.

Personality: Humans are adaptable and outgoing. Though perhaps not as ambitious as halflings, humans nevertheless share that race's interest in "what's out there." Since human recorded history doesn't go back as far as that of the other races of the system, humans are often seen as the "children" of the region.

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*. Most humans have skin tones ranging from lightly tanned to bronze to near-black from their continued exposure to direct sunlight, though those raised away from the human homeworld of Quelya sport a lighter range of skin tones. They tend

to favor lightweight, brightly colored clothing that doesn't restrict their movement.

Relations: Humans tend to accept the other races at face value, without undue prejudice. For this reason, they make excellent intermediaries between foreign cultures.

Alignment: Humans span the entire range of alignments, with no particular predilection.

Homeworld: All humans in the system hail (originally) from the watery world of Quelya, third from the Pyre. Even those humans born elsewhere, such as in the asteroid city of Discord, look to Quelya as their homeworld.

Religion: Humans tend to worship a range of gods, but the most significant in most settlements is Pelor the sun god. Fharlanghn is also widely venerated, but more as a god of travel than of roads (which tend to be short on Quelya).

Language: Humans speak Common.

Names: Human names vary greatly. Some families adopt naming traditions from other races, while others favor names that indicate their occupation or role in society.

Adventurers: Humans take to the adventuring life with ease. A human may adventure for glory, for wealth, for power, or simply for personal enjoyment. Some aim to prove themselves (or their race) to others.

Dwarves

Once a proud race of skilled craftsmen and mighty warriors, the dwarves of today are a defeated people, scattered throughout the system to live out their remaining days in sullen solitude.

Personality: Most dwarves are extraordinarily grim and quick to

anger. Barely a generation removed from the loss of their homeworld, dwarves are a race without true direction or purpose. Though some still cling to the hope that the invading mind flayers might still be defeated, these hopeful few represent only a small portion of the dwarven populace. Woe betide anyone who tries to cheer up a sullen dwarf with a jest!

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*, except that most dwarves are completely bald and clean-shaven. They voluntarily undergo this ritual as a remembrance of their lost world. Only a dwarf who has completely turned his or her back on the rest of the race dares grow hair on head or face. Their dress appears drab to others, since dwarves have little use for color (their underground, darkvision-controlled existence leads to a life seen in black and white).

Relations: Dwarves have little choice but to coexist with other races, though they do so grudgingly. They can't understand how the gnomes cope with the loss of their homeworld, and they have little patience for elven politics. Dwarves find humans and halflings acceptable company, though the relatively short lifespans of those races generally prevent strong bonds of friendship from growing. Despite the ancient enmity between dwarves and orcs, the dwarves understand that half-orcs are as much victims of the illithids as they.

Alignment: Dwarves still retain their bent toward law, though many have turned from good to neutral in the years of separation from their world.

Homeworld: The dwarf homeworld, Moradin's Forge, is a cold, dark planet where virtually all life exists far



beneath the surface in geothermally heated caverns. For thousands of years the dwarves battled the other native humanoid species, the orcs, for control of the planet. Only the arrival of the conquering illithids quieted this ancient war, and now the only dwarves remaining on the Forge are either slaves or freedom fighters.

Religion: Moradin is the chief deity of the dwarves, though with the loss of their homeland the worship of Moradin has waned. Many younger dwarves know little of their race's patron and creator.

Language: As in the *Player's Handbook*. The Dwarven alphabet is shared with the language of orcs and gnomes.

Names: As in the *Player's Handbook*, though many younger dwarves forgo the use of a clan name.

Adventurers: Dwarf adventurers may be freebooting mercenaries, artifact hunters, or would-be freedom fighters.

Elves

Elves are polite, patient schemers. On the surface, they seem placid and unmoved by events around them, a veritable calm amid the storm. But an elf's inner thoughts betray his chaotic nature, seeking the ever-elusive edge to help advance his personal schemes

and the goals of his noble house.

Personality: Elves personify patience. With their long lives, elves are content to let their plans and schemes unfold over years or even decades.

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*, though their dress and demeanor is both graceful and showy. Elves tend to dress to display their standing and attitude, with different garb for various ceremonies or even times of day. Their attire suggests possibilities while simultaneously concealing reality.

Relations: The elves' unique perspective often infuriates other races, particularly halflings, who have little taste for sitting and waiting for things to happen. Humans and elves have always been friendly to one another, though some elves take a patronizing attitude toward their "less civilized cousins." Though half-elves are theoretically welcome in an elven court, many elves tell snickering stories about their parentage. Elves see dwarves as a hopeless cause, and turn up their noses at the "grubby" gnomes. When they deign to recognize half-orcs, it's generally only as hired muscle.

Alignment: The only true rule of elven society is that no one looks out for you but yourself. Thus, most elves tend toward chaos, with little use for strong tendencies of either good or evil.

Homeworld: Perianth, fourth planet from the Pyre, is a cool forest world. The tall conifers give shade to the ground below, cloaking the elven courts in perpetual twilight.

Religion: Elves worship Corellon Larethian as both the Preserver of Life and the Great Planner of Creation. His patience, both in the celestial courts and in the hunt, is the stuff of legend.

Language: As in the *Player's Handbook*.

Names: As in the *Player's Handbook*.

Adventurers: Often, younger children from powerful elven families seek adventure as a means of finding a new station in life. Other elven adventurers might be outcasts from the court or simply those with less patience than their fellows.



Gnomes

The victims of an ancient cataclysm, the gnomes of today wander as a homeless race. Unlike the dwarves, whose loss has crippled their culture, the gnomes have learned to face their hardships head-on, seeing opportunity in every setback.

Personality: At their hearts, gnomes are plucky pack rats, scavenging through the discarded trash of every culture in the system. Even broken or seemingly useless objects still have nails, fabric, or even scrap metal that may come in useful at a later point. Centuries of enforced pragmatism and self-reliance have shown the gnomes that unbridled curiosity is a dangerous thing, but any gnome worth his salt won't shy away from exploration or new experiences. After all, one never knows what useful knowledge or useful items may come of it!

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*. A gnome without a bit of dirt or grease under his fingernails is rare indeed, and any gnome of adult age seems to have a perpetual squint from years of peering too closely at the refuse of other races.

Relations: Most races look down on gnomes at least a bit, though this ranges from bemused grins from humans to snipes of "grubby scavengers" from the elves. Halflings secretly respect how the gnomes have coped with their poor situation, though most successful halflings wouldn't want to link the two races in any way. Dwarves think the gnomes cope far too well with the loss of their homeworld.

Alignment: Gnomes are most often neutral, tending toward good. Despite the terrible tragedy of their past, most gnomes are good-hearted and will help out others in need (as long as it doesn't endanger the gnome's survival too much).

Homeworld: The gnome homeworld is long gone. Even its name has faded into history. All that remains of it is a wide belt of asteroids named the Chain of Tears. Small colonies of gnomes dot the asteroid belt, though a good portion of the race calls no location home. A number of gnome settlers moved to Moradin's Forge after they lost their planet, and most now serve as slaves of the illithids.

Religion: Gnomes revere Garl Glittergold as a protector who looks out for those who are crafty enough to look out for themselves.

Language: The Gnome language uses the Dwarven script. It is not known whether this is the original language of the gnomes, or if it is merely a derivation of the Dwarven tongue picked up after the race scattered through the system.

Names: As in the *Player's Handbook*.

Adventurers: For most gnomes, adventuring is an assumed way of life. Virtually every gnome has been an adventurer of some sort during his life, whether scavenger, asteroid miner, or treasure hunter.

Half-elves

The long-term friendly relations between humans and elves have led to a fair number of half-breeds roaming the system. Some are children of loving parents, while others are outcasts, unable to find a place in either society.

Personality: The half-elf personality melds the ambition and drive of the human parent with the grace of the elven parent. If raised by one culture or the other, the half-elf is likely to exhibit more traits of that culture.

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*.

Relations: Half-elves are both universally accepted and widely distrusted. Their lack of fixed loyalties make them welcome in most situations, but their outsider nature prevents them from ever becoming truly settled into a new group.

Alignment: Most half-elves are neutral, tending toward the chaotic nature of their elven ancestors.

Homeworld: Half-elves have no homeworld of their own. Those raised by human parents see Quelya as their homeworld, while those brought up in elven society look upon Perianth as their place of origin.

Religion: Half-elves raised among humans worship human gods, while those brought up by elves generally revere Corellon Larethian.

Language: Half-elves speak Common and, if raised among elves, Elven.

Names: A half-elf's name depends on the culture in which it was raised.

Adventurers: Half-elves are natural adventurers. Some seek to prove their place in human or elven society, while

others simply want to establish a name for themselves.

Half-orcs

These simple, brutal creatures are the descendants of illithid breeding programs. Knowing no home, culture, or true place in the universe, half-orcs occupy the lowest rung of the social ladder.

Personality: Half-orcs are generally short-tempered and ill-mannered. However, they are as quick to laugh as they are to fight. Despite their poor position, most half-orcs seem to ignore the social stigma that other races seem to expect they should feel. When a half-orc bothers to think about his situation at all, he inevitably comes to the conclusion that since it's not his fault, he has nothing to be ashamed of or worried about. Then he has another drink, or bashes another chair, or sings another bawdy song.

Physical Description: As in the *Player's Handbook*.

Relations: Though most races see half-orcs as the scum of the system, half-orcs seem oblivious to others' opinions of them. While the average half-orc envies those more wealthy than himself, the half-orc knows that if he wanted your gold, he could probably take it from you.

Alignment: Half-orcs tend toward chaos and unstructured lifestyles. Having no real exposure to their orcish ancestry, they have no particular bent toward evil.

Homeworld: Like half-elves, half-orcs have no homeworld. Instead of being torn between two cultures, though, the half-orc simply rationalizes this as "wherever I am, that's where I'm from."

Religion: Half-orcs generally worship human gods, particularly those of strength or war.

Language: Half-orcs speak Common.

Names: A half-orc typically chooses his own name as soon as he can talk. This leads to most half-orc names being simple, guttural sounds. Occasionally, as a half-orc reaches adulthood, he might choose another appellation to add, such as "the Brutal" or "Blood-drinker."

Adventurers: The half-orc lifestyle naturally lends itself to committing violence and needing money, which makes them natural adventurers. Many serve aboard spelljamming vessels until they

Humans have taken to spelljamming with a mixture of fervor and grace.

can afford to go it alone (which lasts about as long as it takes to drink their wealth).

Halflings

The halfling is always looking for an angle, some opportunity that will bring him fortune, power, or both.

Personality: In his heart, the halfling perpetually seeks his golden opportunity. They are explorers and risk-takers, traders and dealmakers. They know they have no hope of succeeding in life through strength and physical power, so they dedicate their lives to cultivating other means of controlling their situation.

Physical Description: Halflings always dress well, attempting to intimidate others with shows of wealth.

Relations: Halflings put on a good face with everyone, never knowing if that's the next person they'll need to deal with. On the inside, they respect those races that succeed through force of wit, such as the gnomes, or by planning, such as the elves. Many halflings hold a grudge against elves, however, fearing that the elves can "see through" their ploys and merely humor the halflings for their own personal joke.

Alignment: Most halflings are neutral, having little use for law or chaos, good or evil.

Homeworld: The halflings share the world of Quelya with the humans. Most halflings look forward to the day they can leave their homeworld, returning only to make business deals.

Religion: Though every halfling village has a shrine to Yondalla the Protector at its center, most halflings worship Fharlanghn as a god of commerce.

Language: Halflings speak Common. Some linguistic scholars wonder if the halflings originally had a different language but adopted Common to better interact with humans, or if Common is a derivative of the original halfling tongue that humans have adopted.

Names: Halflings tend to accumulate names, thinking that a longer name makes them seem more powerful and important.

Adventurers: Every halfling is an adventurer. Some explore new frontiers in search of hidden wealth, while others attempt to make their fortunes by "liberating" the fortunes of others.

Classes

This section describes how the core classes from the *Player's Handbook* function in the game, and also describes a number of prestige classes unique to the setting.

Core Classes

Each of the classes presented in the *Player's Handbook* has a role in the *Spelljammer* setting. Some are linked closely to a specific race, culture, or planet, while others span a range of options.

Barbarians still stalk the more savage reaches of every world, and some choose to venture from their tribe even into the depths of space. Human and halfling barbarians come from isolated island tribes of Quelya. Dwarf barbarians might hail from refugee groups fleeing the conquest of their homeworld, while some gnome clans have devolved into barbarism over the centuries. The phrase elven barbarian is a contradiction in terms, as such a character is all but unthinkable, but a half-elf cast out of society at a young age might grow up as a barbarian. Half-orcs take naturally to the raging demeanor of the barbarian.

Bards find employment both in royal courts and aboard spelljamming vessels. Many elves find the life of a bard welcome, and humans, halflings, and half-elves all make good bards as well. Surprisingly, a fair number of half-orcs enjoy life as effective (if crude) bards. Most dwarves tend to be too dour to take up the bard's path, while gnomes tend to prefer a life of lower profile.

Almost any spelljamming ship of any size keeps a *cleric* on board to tend to and support the crew. These might hail from any race or culture, and religions of many sorts thrive in the system. Some clerics have even been known to worship deities linked with other races, so complete is the integration of cultures.

While most *druids* prefer to remain on the planet of their birth, others see the expanse of space as nature's ultimate mystery. Races with a close link to the natural world, such as elves and humans, are most often found as druids, though any individual seeking to learn more of the secrets of nature can follow the path.

Fighters have a place in any combat, regardless of planet, and they can be found among all races. Dwarves, half-orcs, and humans are perhaps the most common fighters. The smaller races—gnomes and halflings—often prefer less physical means of resolving issues, and the highly cultured elves sometimes disdain brute force.

Monks are rare sights in the system, though they are by no means unknown. The dwarves of Moradin's Forge once maintained a number of monasteries dedicated to instilling discipline, though most of these are now only a memory. Before the fall, though, much of the knowledge of these schools was passed on to interested humans, half-elves, and others.

In a setting so beset with darkness, the role of the *paladin* has never been more needed. Though many dwarf paladins fell in battle against the illithids, no small number still remain vigilant against evil. Paladins among the humans, gnomes, and halflings often serve as community protectors. Perhaps sadly, one of the few commonalities between the elves and the half-orcs is their lack of use for the paladin's code of ethics.

The *ranger* is a valuable addition to any exploration, scouting party, or planetary investigation, as his

wilderness skills and adaptability are second to none. Humans, gnomes, and half-elves all take up the mantle of the ranger with some frequency, as do elves less interested in politics than in discovery. Dwarf rangers tend to be loners or leftovers from the tradition of spelunking scouts. The rough, solitary life of a ranger often appeals to half-orcs looking for more than meaningless brawls.

The *rogue* truly comes into her own in a *Spelljammer* campaign, whether as a wily thief, canny scout, or crafty con artist. Endless treasures lie in hidden ruins, and equal possibilities for wealth sit in the bellies of spelljamming ships soaring through space. Members of all races—from the burly half-orc to the refined elf—find vast opportunities in the life of a rogue, but perhaps none more than the sly halfling.

The innate power of the *sorcerer* marks him as one to be respected on any world. They tend to come from the less-civilized worlds, making humans, halflings, and half-elves more likely sorcerers than members of the other races. Neither dwarves nor half-orcs tend to have the force of personality needed for true sorcerous might, while elves tend more toward the cultivated pursuit of wizardry (though elven sorcerers are far from unknown).

Wizards are the flip side of sorcerers, as they tend to congregate around centers of civilization. Both elves and gnomes commonly pursue wizardry, though its potential is not lost on the ambitious halflings and humans. The long-lived dwarves have the patience for wizardly pursuits, though their race has no real tradition of it. Half-elves, particularly those raised among elves, make fine wizards, while half-orcs rarely have the discipline.

Prestige Classes

Many of the prestige classes already published for D&D are entirely appropriate for a *Spelljammer* campaign. The tradition of the dwarven defender harkens back to a time when Moradin's Forge still belonged to the dwarves. Assassins lurk in the shadows of every world, while loremasters wander from planet to planet hoping to unearth hidden storehouses of knowledge. Spelljammer pilots often

Table 1: The Master Scavenger

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+2	+0	Thorough scavenger, sense magic
2nd	+1	+3	+3	+0	Improvised tools, gnome respect
3rd	+1	+3	+3	+1	Knack for repair, sharp eyes
4th	+2	+4	+4	+1	Improvised weapons
5th	+2	+4	+4	+1	Skill mastery, inflate value

employ devoted defenders (from *Sword & Fist*) as personal bodyguards, both aboard ship and (more importantly) while in port. Duelists (*Sword & Fist*) are common in elven society, as are bladesingers (*Tome & Blood*), though arcane archers are relatively rare. The group known as the Stargazers (detailed in *Defenders of the Faith*), and their unique prestige class, the Knight of the Middle Circle, would fit well into a *Spelljammer* campaign. Alienists (*Tome & Blood*) have started appearing in the system, whether by coincidence or in connection with the coming of the illithids. Many of those who hunt for treasure in lost tombs and crypts are dungeon delvers or temple raiders of Olidammara (see *Song & Silence*).

In addition to those, this section presents five new prestige classes unique to the setting. The master scavenger is a gnome whose unmatched eye for value in the unwanted allows him to thrive. The planetary explorer specializes in investigating new worlds and discovering secrets long forgotten. The spelljammer ace is a pilot with few peers, a master at the helm. The stellar corsair is a unique version of the traditional buccaneer, transported into the exotic realm of interplanetary space. The storykeeper serves as a storehouse of memory and an inspiration to his race.

Master Scavenger

While all gnomes come from a background of proud scavengers, only a few gnomes dare call themselves master scavengers. These elite among gnome society are widely revered as peerless experts, not only in locating valuable goods that others have left behind, but also in turning such castoff items into valuable loot.

Rogues and rangers make the best master scavengers, as these classes have the sharp eyes needed to pursue the path. Illusionists who become master scavengers supple-

ment that class's ability with their knack for concealing an object's true nature (all the better to pass it off as something it isn't). Most other spellcasters have little to gain (other, perhaps, than prestige among gnomes) from this class, and combat-oriented characters rarely have the patience required to gain it.

Master scavengers usually fit into one of two roles. Some lead bands of like-minded individuals, teaching them the knack of scavenging. Others work alone, either distrusting the abilities of others or merely seeking only to improve their own lot in life. Either way, a master scavenger whose identity is known generally has the respect of any gnomes around him.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a master scavenger, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Race: Gnome.

Skills: Appraise (4 ranks), Craft (any) (4 ranks), Search (8 ranks), Spot (8 ranks).

Class Skills

The master scavenger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Disable Device (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Open Lock (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Use Magic Device (Cha), Use Rope (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the master scavenger prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The master scavenger gains proficiency in all simple weapons, and in light armor.

Thorough Scavenger (Ex): Whenever the master scavenger takes 20 on a Search check, he may add his class level to the check result.



Sense Magic (Su): By handling an item, the master scavenger can detect any magical auras in effect on the item, just as if he had cast *detect magic*. The first round reveals the presence of any magical auras, the second the number of auras present and the strength of the strongest aura, and the third the strength of each aura. In place of a Spellcraft check, the master scavenger may make a Search check to determine the school of magic involved (the DC is the same).

Improvised Tools (Ex): The master

scavenger can attempt Craft, Disable Device, and Open Lock skill checks with no tools without suffering the normal -2 penalty.

Gnome Respect (Ex): The master scavenger gains a +2 bonus to Diplomacy and Gather Information checks made with other gnomes, as long as his identity as a master scavenger is known to the gnome(s) in question.

Knack for Repair (Ex): Whenever the master scavenger repairs an item, he gains a +4 bonus to the Craft check

required. See the Craft skill listing in the *Player's Handbook* for information on repairing items.

Sharp Eyes (Ex): The gnome scavenger gains a +2 bonus to Search and Spot checks.

Improvised Weapons (Ex): The master scavenger suffers only a -2 penalty (rather than the normal -4) when wielding a weapon that he is not proficient in, as well as when throwing a weapon not meant for throwing.

Skill Mastery (Ex): When making a Disable Device, Open Lock, Search, Spot, or Use Rope check, the master scavenger may take 10 even if stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

Inflate Value (Su): When selling an item, the master scavenger can make the item seem more valuable than it actually is. This requires a Bluff check (DC 20); if successful, the master scavenger can sell the item for 25% more than its normal value. This is a mind-affecting ability. (At the DM's option, this check can be opposed by the buyer's Sense Motive check; grant the buyer a +10 circumstance bonus to the check.)

Planetary Explorer

The planetary explorer represents the pinnacle of bravery: the character whose entire life revolves around investigating new and unfamiliar territory. The planetary explorer revels in discovery, finding glory and self-fulfillment in examining the strange or unusual.

Rangers and, to a lesser extent, druids, have a natural bent toward this class. Bards willing to foray into the wild find their vast knowledge to be of good use in exploration. Barbarians willing to broaden their outlook beyond their tribal territory also make fine planetary explorers. Wizards have the knowledge base, but few choose to give up their spellcasting pursuits. Clerics who become planetary explorers might function as missionaries. Fighters, paladins, and sorcerers tend to make poor explorers, as their focuses don't mesh well with the class's goals and abilities.

Some planetary explorers work as forward scouts, preferring to be the first to see a new land. Others come along after the initial discovery to catalog and examine the territory. A typical planetary explorer might owe allegiance

to a planetary government (particularly common among elves), a particular clan (such as a gnome family), a trading company (such as those owned by halflings), or herself and no one else.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a planetary explorer, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Knowledge (space) (8 ranks), Knowledge (geography) (8 ranks), Wilderness Lore (6 ranks).

Special: Must have visited a planet other than her homeworld.

Class Skills

The planetary explorer's class skills (and the key ability for each) are Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (space), Profession (Wis), Search (Int), Speak Language, Spot (Wis), Swim (Str), Use Rope (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill points at each level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The planetary explorer gains proficiency with all simple weapons, and with light armor.

Lore (Ex): The planetary explorer picks up a wide variety of stories and tall tales on her travels. This is functionally identical to bardic knowledge. The planetary explorer may add her class level and Intelligence modifier to the roll. If the planetary explorer is a bard, her bard and planetary explorer levels stack for the purposes of bardic knowledge.

Bonus Language (Ex): The planetary explorer gains one bonus language every even-numbered level.

Planetary Expertise (Ex): At first level, and again every three levels thereafter (4th, 7th, 10th), the planetary explorer may designate one planet (including the Chain of Tears) as an area of expertise. The planetary explorer gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the following checks when made on or in reference to that planet: Gather Information, Knowledge (geography), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (nature),



Table 2: The Planetary Explorer

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Lore, planetary expertise
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Bonus language
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Environmental resistance
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Bonus language, planetary expertise
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Hear the world
6th	+4	+5	+2	+5	Bonus language
7th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Planetary expertise
8th	+6	+6	+2	+6	Bonus language
9th	+6	+6	+3	+6	Speak with the stones
10th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Bonus language, planetary expertise

Knowledge (space), Wilderness Lore. The planetary explorer can't select the same planet twice.

Environmental Resistance (Su): At 3rd level, the planetary explorer gains cold and fire resistance 5.

Hear the World (Sp): At 5th level, the planetary explorer may cast *commune with nature* once per week as a druid of her class level. On a planet designated as one of her areas of expertise (see Planetary Expertise, above), her effective level is doubled.

Speak with the Stones (Sp): At 9th level, the planetary explorer may cast *stone tell* once per day as a druid of her class level. On a planet designated as one of her areas of expertise (see Planetary Expertise, above), her effective level is doubled.

Spelljammer Ace

While anyone who can fly a spelljammer is called a pilot, only a rare few earn the title of spelljammer ace. These elite individuals have honed their piloting skills to the point that their ship becomes a mere extension of their body. The spelljammer ace can maneuver even the largest vessels as easily as a normal person walks through a crowded room.

The brash attitude of the spelljammer ace often appeals to the bard or sorcerer, while wizards enjoy the power and respect gained. Some clerics, particularly those dedicated to deities of luck, magic, or travel, become spelljammer aces. Only those rare druids who can see the reach of nature in the void of space become such dedicated pilots. Rogues who dabble in spellcasting often find this class to their liking.

Many spelljammer aces serve as pilots for military forces or merchant houses. Others find themselves on the



wrong side of the law, using their abilities for personal gain. Still others hire themselves out as mercenary pilots, working for the highest bidder regardless of ethical or moral concerns.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a spelljammer ace, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Concentration (8 ranks), Pilot (8 ranks).

Feats: Skill Focus (Pilot), Spelljammer Helm Operation.

Special: Ability to cast 1st-level spells.

Class Skills

The spelljammer ace's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Knowledge (space) (Int), Pilot (Dex), and Profession (spacehand) (Wis).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Table 3: The Spelljammer Ace

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special	Spellcasting
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Spelljammer defense	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Piloting mastery	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Extra maneuver (-10)	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Ride the stellar wind (+30 ft.)	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Second chance	+1 level of existing class
6th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Spelljammer specialization	+1 level of existing class
7th	+3	+2	+2	+5	Extra maneuver (no penalty)	+1 level of existing class
8th	+4	+2	+2	+6	Ride the stellar wind (+60 ft.)	+1 level of existing class
9th	+4	+3	+3	+6	Strengthen the ship	+1 level of existing class
10th	+5	+3	+3	+7	Spelljammer evasion	+1 level of existing class

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The spelljammer ace gains no proficiency in weapons or armor.

Spells per Day: A spelljammer ace continues training in magic as well as improving his piloting ability. Thus, when a new spelljammer ace level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in a spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained (improved chance of controlling or rebuking undead, metamagic or item creation feats, and so on). This essentially means that he adds the level of spelljammer ace to the level of some other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day, spells known, and caster level accordingly.

Spelljammer Defense (Ex): The spelljammer ace may add his class level to the AC of any spelljamming vessel he pilots. This is a dodge bonus, and thus doesn't apply when the character is flat-footed.

Piloting Mastery (Ex): At 2nd level, the spelljammer ace may always take 10 on a Pilot check, even when stress and distractions would normally prevent him from doing so.

Extra Maneuver (Ex): At 3rd level, the spelljammer ace can attempt a third maneuver requiring a Pilot check each round (rather than the normal limit of two per round). However, he suffers a -10 penalty to the Pilot check made to achieve this third maneuver. At 7th level, the spelljammer ace may attempt the third maneuver with no penalty.

Ride the Stellar Wind (Su): A 4th-level spelljammer ace may add 30 ft. to the tactical speed of any spelljamming vessel he pilots. At 8th level, he may add another 30 ft. to the ship's tactical speed.

Second Chance (Ex): Once per day, a 5th-level spelljammer ace may reroll any Pilot skill check he has just made. He must decide to reroll the check before its success or failure is announced, and she must use the second roll, regardless of whether it represents an improvement.

Spelljammer Specialization (Ex): At 6th level, the spelljammer ace gains the bonus feat of Spelljammer Specialization.

Strengthen the Ship (Su): Whenever a ship piloted by a spelljammer ace of

9th-level or higher is forced to make a saving throw, it may use the spelljammer ace's Will save bonus in place of its own save bonus, regardless of the type of save required. The effects of a successful or failed save remain the same.

Spelljammer Evasion (Ex): At 10th level, the spelljammer ace may attempt a Pilot skill check to negate any hit inflicted on the spelljammer vessel he pilots. The DC of the check is equal to the attack roll that hit the vessel. If the Pilot check is successful, the vessel suffers no damage from that hit. The spelljammer ace may only use this ability once per round.

Stellar Corsair

Born from the proud seagoing traditions of the humans of Quelya, the stellar corsair brings the mentality of the privateer to the spacelanes. Whether serving her government, a merchant house, or merely her own greed, the stellar corsair lives each day to the fullest, inspiring her crew with her bravery.

Rogues and fighters make excellent stellar corsairs, and most are drawn from the ranks of those classes. That said, any class can find much to offer from this pursuit. A barbarian might choose this class to become a blood-thirsty pirate. A bard or sorcerer's Charisma lends itself to a fanatically loyal crew. A paladin or monk in the service of a lawful regime becomes a loyal privateer, protecting merchant ships from the predations of buccaneers.

Some stellar corsairs follow the life of a freebooter, pillaging those ships unlucky enough to cross their path. Others lead their crews against the enemies of their masters, whether these enemies be pirate or monster. And some stellar corsairs simply seek a life of adventure, with ill will toward none except those who would cross her.

Hit Die: d8

Requirements

To qualify to become a stellar corsair, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4

Skills: Balance (4 ranks), Climb (5 ranks), Profession (spacehand) (2 ranks), Tumble (4 ranks), Use Rope (5 ranks).

Feats: Weapon Finesse.

Class Skills

The stellar corsair's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (space) (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Spot (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex).

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The stellar corsair is proficient with the dagger, longsword, rapier, sap, scimitar, and short sword, and with light armor.

Scale the Rigging (Ex): A stellar corsair can climb ropes or rope ladders at an accelerated rate without suffering a -5 penalty to Climb checks.

Gather the Crew (Ex): The stellar corsair gains a bonus to her Leadership score for the purpose of attracting followers (but not for attracting a cohort). This bonus is +2 at 2nd level and +4 at 7th level.

Sneak Attack (Ex): The stellar corsair gains the sneak attack ability (see the rogue section in the *Player's Handbook*) at 3rd level if she does not already have it. She gains +1d6 damage with this attack initially, and this rises by +1d6 per three stellar corsair levels thereafter. If she already has the sneak attack ability from a previous class, the damage bonuses stack.

Fortune's Smile (Ex): Once per day, the stellar corsair may reroll any attack, saving throw, ability check, or skill check that she has just made. The stellar corsair must accept the second roll, regardless of whether or not it represents an improvement.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): Starting at 5th level, the character gains the extraordinary ability to react to danger before her senses would normally allow her to do so. At 5th level and above, she retains her Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) regardless of being caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. (She still loses her Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized.) At 8th level, the character can no longer be flanked; she can react to opponents on opposite sides of her as easily as she can react to a single attacker. This defense denies others the ability to use flank attacks to sneak attack her. The exception



to this defense is that a rogue at least four levels higher than the character can flank her (and thus sneak attack her).

Inspire the Crew (Su): The stellar corsair's stirring words can inspire courage in her allies, much like a bard's song. To be affected, an ally must hear the stellar corsair speak for one round. The effect lasts as long as the stellar corsair speaks and for 5 rounds after the stellar corsair stops speaking (or 5 rounds after the ally can no longer hear the stellar corsair). While speaking in this way, the stellar corsair can fight but cannot cast spells, activate magic items by spell completion (such as scrolls), or activate magic items by magic word (such as wands). Affected allies receive a +2 morale bonus to saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus to attack and weapon damage rolls. The stellar corsair can inspire courage a number of times per day equal to her Charisma modifier (minimum once per day). This is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability.

Scourge of the Spacelanes (Ex): By 10th level, the stellar corsair's reputation is so legendary that any enemies fighting her (or her crew, as long as her presence is known) suffer a -2 morale penalty to attacks, damage, and saves vs. fear. In addition, she gains a +4 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks.

Storykeeper

First known among the gnomes, the tradition of the storykeeper has spread to other races recent years, particularly the dwarves. Put simply, the storykeeper's role is to maintain the legends and traditions of his people, regardless of any obstacles the culture might encounter over the centuries. But even as they master the art of remembering and telling stories, they also learn the power of the voice over the mind.

Bards make the best storykeepers, as the role is a natural one for them. Wizards have the aptitude for the class, though they sometimes lack the natural flair of the storykeeper. Clerics dedicated to the preservation of community often follow this path. Few other classes have the combination of skills necessary for the role of storykeeper.

Table 4: The Stellar Corsair

Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Scale the rigging
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Gather the crew (+2)
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Sneak attack +1d6
4th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Fortune's smile
5th	+5	+1	+4	+1	Uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC)
6th	+6	+2	+5	+2	Sneak attack +2d6
7th	+7	+2	+5	+2	Inspire the crew, gather the crew (+4)
8th	+8	+2	+6	+2	Uncanny dodge (can't be flanked)
9th	+9	+3	+6	+3	Sneak attack +3d6
10th	+10	+3	+7	+3	Scourge of the spacelanes



Storykeepers are almost always found at the center of their culture, whether that be a tribe, clan, town, or city. They are widely revered by those of their race or culture, making them excellent diplomats or advisors to rulers.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a storykeeper, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Skills: Diplomacy (2 ranks), Gather Information (2 ranks), Knowledge (history) (8 ranks), Knowledge (local) (4 ranks), Perform (5 ranks, must include one of the following: ballad, epic, ode or storytelling).

Feats: Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]).

Class Skills

The storykeeper's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (any) (Int), Perform (Cha), and Sense Motive (Wis).

Skill points at each level: 2 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The storykeeper gains no proficiency in any weapons or armor.

Repository of Knowledge (Ex): The storykeeper may add his class level to any Knowledge checks made in reference to his own culture.

Inspiring Tales (Su): By relating an inspiring tale of his culture, the storykeeper can instill courage in those who share his race and/or culture. This functions identically to the bard's ability to inspire courage. The storykeeper may use this ability once per day per class level.

Soothing Voice (Su): At third level the storykeeper's voice becomes soothing and restful. This can create any of the following three effects, at the storykeeper's choice. First, the storykeeper can make a Perform check (rather than a Heal check) to provide long-term care to an injured patient. Second, it calms agitated creatures (just as a *calm emotions* spell). Third, it can protect the storykeeper from

Table 5: The Storykeeper

Level	Base				Special	Spells per Day
	Attack Bonus	Fort. Save	Ref. Save	Will Save		
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Repository of knowledge	+1 level of existing class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Inspiring tales	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	Soothing voice	+1 level of existing class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Hypnotic voice	+1 level of existing class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	Zealous inspiration	+1 level of existing class

Table 6: New Skills

Skill	Bbn	Brd	Clr	Drd	Ftr	Mnk	Pal	Rgr	Rog	Sor	Wiz	Untrained	Key Ability
Knowledge (space)	-	*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*	No	Int
Pilot	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Dex

attacking creatures (just as a *sanctuary* spell). Regardless of the effect, the DC to resist is 10 + class level + Cha modifier. Using soothing voice requires a standard action to begin, and the effect lasts as long as the storyteller continues to speak (he can fight, but can't cast spells that require a verbal component or use items that require spell completion or activate via magic word). The storykeeper may use soothing voice as often as desired, but he can't use more than one soothing effect simultaneously. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Hypnotic Voice (Su): By fourth level, the storykeeper's power of voice becomes so potent that it can hypnotize listeners. This can affect one creature per class level with a range of 30 feet. The storykeeper must speak for a full round, after which each creature to be affected must make a Will save (DC = 10 + class level + Cha modifier) or be hypnotized (as the *hypnotism* spell). Any creature not engaged in combat suffers a -4 penalty to the saving throw. The effect lasts as long as the storyteller continues to speak (he can fight, but can't cast spells that require a verbal component or use items that require spell completion or activate via magic word), plus two rounds. The storykeeper may use this power a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier (minimum once per day). This is a mind-affecting ability.

Zealous Inspiration (Su): At fifth level, the storykeeper can inspire near-zealous heroics in his allies. Once per week, the storykeeper can speak for a full hour. Anyone hearing the entire speech gains the effects of a *heroes' feast* (cured of all diseases; healed of 1d4+4 points of damage; immune to poison and magical fear and hopelessness for 12 hours; and gain a +1 morale bonus to attacks for 12 hours). This is a mind-affecting ability.

Skills

For the most part, skills work identically in *Spelljammer: Shadow of the Spider*

Moon as in standard D&D. The notes below indicate changes to existing skills or new skills added to the game.

Knowledge (local) (Int)

Each time you take ranks in this skill, you must designate the planet to which it applies. For instance, you might have 4 ranks in Knowledge (local: Quelya) and 2 ranks in Knowledge (local: Perianth).

Knowledge (space) (Int)

This skill represents a body of lore and scientific learning about planetary motions, the void between planets, and the creatures existing in that region.

In addition to those classes noted in Table 6: New Skills as having Knowledge (space) as a class skill, any prestige class that has Knowledge (any) as a class skill also has Knowledge (space) as a class skill. For example, Knowledge (space) is a class skill for loremasters, since all Knowledge skills are class skills for that class.

Pilot (Dex)

Use this skill to force a spelljamming vessel to achieve greater maneuverability than normal.

Check: You can make a spelljamming ship perform a maneuver greater than normally allowed to it with a successful check. The DCs required by various maneuvers are listed in Chapter 2: Space and Spelljamming.

Retry: You generally can't retry a maneuver without first suffering whatever ramifications come from failing it in the first place. In some cases, these are minor or insignificant, but some failed checks may have dire consequences.

Special: This skill is cross-class for any character who has not selected the Spelljammer Pilot feat (see Feats, below). If you have selected that feat, Pilot is treated as a class skill for all of your classes.

Profession (Wis)

Added to the list found in the *Player's Handbook* is Profession (spacehand), a character trained in handling shipboard duties.

Feats

This game uses the concept of Background feats. A Background feat helps describe your character's origin. You may only select a single Background feat for your character, and you may only select a Background feat during character creation.

Aerobatic

You are very agile.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Jump and Tumble checks.

Athletic

You have a knack for athletic endeavors.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Climb and Swim checks.

Ballista Master

You are extremely talented at operating a ballista.

Prerequisite: Ballista Training, Profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +8 bonus to attack rolls made with a ballista.

Normal: Without this feat, a ballista attack roll is modified only by range.

Ballista Specialist

You are skilled at operating a ballista.

Prerequisite: Profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls made with a ballista.

Normal: Without this feat, a ballista attack roll is modified only by range.

Born Spacer [Background]

You have an inborn aptitude for spelljamming travel, and aren't shaken easily by strange or frightful sights.

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to Profession (spacehand) checks, and a +2 bonus to Will saves vs. fear.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

Cannon Master

You are extremely talented at operating a cannon.

Prerequisite: Cannon Specialist, Profession (siege engineer) or

Table 7: Feats

Feat	Type	Prerequisite
Acrobatic	General	—
Athletic	General	—
Ballista Specialist	General*	Profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks
Ballista Master	General*	Ballista Training, profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks
Born Spacer	Background	—
Cannon Specialist	General*	Profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks
Cannon Master	General*	Cannon Training, profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks
Craft Spelljammer Helm	Item Creation	Spellcaster level 12th+, Craft Wondrous Item
Education	Background	—
From The Gutter	Background	—
Mysterious Heritage	Background	—
No Identity	Background	—
Noble Birth	Background	—
Spelljammer Helm Operation	General	—
Spelljammer Specialization	General	Spelljammer Helm Operation, Pilot 6+ ranks
Stealthy	General	—

*A fighter may select this feat as one of his bonus fighter feats.

Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +8 bonus to attack rolls made with a cannon.

Normal: Without this feat, a cannon attack roll is modified only by range.

Cannon Specialist

You are skilled at operating a cannon.

Prerequisite: Profession (siege engineer) or Profession (spacehand) 4+ ranks.

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to attack rolls made with a cannon.

Normal: Without this feat, a cannon attack roll is modified only by range.

Craft Spelljammer Helm

You can create *spelljammer helms*, which grant motive power to spelljamming vessels.

Prerequisites: Spellcaster level 12th+, Craft Wondrous Item.

Benefit: You can create any *spelljammer helm* whose prerequisites you meet. Crafting a *spelljammer helm* takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its base price. To craft a *spelljammer helm*, you must spend 1/25 of its base price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of its base price. See Chapter 3: Equipment & Magic for descriptions of various *spelljammer helms*, the prerequisites associated with each one, and their prices.

Education [Background]

Choose a specific Knowledge skill, such as Knowledge (history). Through training and natural aptitude, you have a knack for learning and retaining facts related to that area of knowledge.

Benefit: You may treat the selected skill as a class skill for you, regardless

of your class.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

Endurance

Note that the +4 bonus granted by this feat applies to saves made to resist the effects of stale or foul air.

From the Gutter [Background]

You have dragged yourself up from poverty through sheer perseverance, gritty toughness, and occasional thievery.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Will saves, +1 hit point, and a +1 bonus to Pick Pocket skill checks.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

Mysterious Heritage [Background]

Somewhere in your ancestry was a mysterious figure of great power. You have inherited some of that power.

Benefit: You gain a +1 bonus to Intimidate checks. Add +1 to the save DC to resist your Enchantment spells.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

No Identity [Background]

You are a living cipher. Thanks to your unremarkable appearance, attitude, and other factors no one knows or well remembers anything about you. Even you don't know anything about your background or ancestry.

Benefit: Your unremarkable nature grants you a +2 bonus to Disguise checks, as well as to Hide checks made to blend into a crowd. Gather Information checks made to learn about you suffer a -4 penalty.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

Noble Birth [Background]

You come from noble birth.

Benefit: You start with double the normal starting gold for your class (see Chapter 7: Equipment in the *Player's Handbook*). You gain a +1 bonus to all Diplomacy checks.

Special: You may only select this feat during character creation.

Spelljammer Helm Operation

You can operate a standard *spelljammer helm* proficiently.

Benefit: The Pilot skill is a class skill for you. This remains true regardless of your class.

Normal: Without this feat, Pilot is a cross-class skill.

Spelljammer Specialization

Choose one type of spelljamming vessel, such as the hammership. You are especially good at piloting that type of ship.

Prerequisites: Spelljammer Helm Operation, Pilot 6+ ranks.

Benefit: You add +4 to all Pilot checks made when operating the chosen type of ship.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take this feat, it applies to a new type of spelljamming vessel.

Stealthy

You are particularly good at avoiding notice.

Benefit: You get a +2 bonus on all Hide and Move Silently checks.

CHAPTER TWO

SPACE AND SPELLJAMMING

For generations, sentient races gave little thought to what lay "out there." Each race believed its planet unique among creation, and regarded the starry void as merely a backdrop.

Most believe today that the elves were the first to develop true spelljamming technology—that theirs were the first ships to ply the spaceways. Indeed, Quelyan history still remembers the first meeting between elven scouts and the human/halfling civilization of that watery world. Within a generation, ships had visited every planet in the system, from the barren Ashen to Moradin's Forge, and every race realized that they were not unique among the universe, but interlinked with other races and cultures as never before dreamed.

Today, crews of every civilized race fill the spelljamming vessels flying between worlds. But this intermingling has not brought peace; rather, it has exposed these peoples to new evils beyond imagining.

Spelljamming Helms

Virtually all spelljamming vessels are powered by a magic item known as a *spelljamming helm*, or simply a *helm* (see Magic Items in Chapter 3). In most cases, a *helm*—which appears much like a large thronelike chair—acts as an "engine" for the ship, as the pilot's control station, and as an atmospheric recycler for the vessel. Without a *helm*, a ship has no ability to move under its own power and can't replenish its air

without exposure to an atmosphere. A *major helm* can power a ship of up to Colossal size, while a *minor helm* is sufficient for a ship of up to Huge size.

Movement

A *helm* grants a spelljamming vessel the ability to fly as its pilot wills. A spelljammer has two speeds: its cruising speed dictates how rapidly it can cover long distances (such as the void between worlds), while its tactical speed indicates how quickly it moves when in the vicinity of other sizeable objects (such as in combat). Tactical speed is covered under Spelljammer Combat, below.

Cruising Speed

Away from planets and other large objects, a ship moves at what is called cruising speed. The cruising speed of a ship depends on the *helm* propelling it. A *minor helm* allows a ship to travel between adjacent planets in $2d6+2$ days, while a *major helm* moves between adjacent planets in $1d6+1$ days. (The random element assumes that even adjacent planets may be in different parts of their orbits. In extreme circumstances, you could double or even triple these times.)

While in cruising speed, a spelljammer cannot interact with other objects in any way. Effectively, it moves so quickly as to be invisible to other objects. However, a ship may only move at cruising speed if its natural gravity exceeds the influence of the natural gravity of other objects in

nearby space (see Natural Gravity, below). A ship moving at cruising speed that comes too close to another object of sufficient size (and thus natural gravity) immediately drops out of cruising speed (see Tactical Speed, below).

Natural Gravity

Every object exerts a "natural gravity" that attracts other objects to it. In most cases, natural gravity is undetectable (the gravity of planetary bodies far overpower it). But in space, far from planets and other enormous objects, this force can have an effect. A *helm* channels the natural gravity of a spelljammer to allow those aboard it to act as if they were on a planetbound ship.

The value listed on Table 8: Natural Gravity indicates the natural gravity of an object, based on its size. If the object is particularly dense (such as metal or creatures of elemental earth), double the listed value. Conversely, objects of low density (such as creatures of elemental air or fire) have only half the listed value of natural gravity (treat values of less than 1 as 0).

Table 8: Natural Gravity

Object Size	Natural Gravity Value
Less than Large	0
Large/Huge	1
Gargantuan/Colossal	2
Awesome	4
Planetary Body	32

The value of an object's natural gravity lessens with distance, as indicated in



Table 9: Natural Gravity and Distance. At a distance of up to 1,000 feet, the object's natural gravity value is normal. For every doubling of this distance (2,000 feet, 4,000 feet, and so on), the influence of an object's natural gravity is halved (treat values of less than 1 as 0). Thus, within 1,000 feet an Awesome object's natural gravity value is 4, from 1,001 to 2,000 feet it is 2, from 2,001 to 4,000 feet it is 1, and at any distance of greater than 4,000 feet it exerts no gravitational influence. Note that no object exerts any natural gravity at a range of greater than 32,000 feet (approximately 6 miles).

Table 9: Natural Gravity and Distance

Distance To Object	Divide Natural Gravity Value By
Up to 1,000 feet	1
1,001 to 2,000 feet	2
2,001 to 4,000 feet	4
4,001 to 8,000 feet	8
8,001 to 16,000 feet	16
16,001 to 32,000 feet	32
More than 32,000 feet	n/a

If the total influence of natural gravity from all nearby objects on a spelljammer is equal to or greater than the spelljammer's natural gravity, the spelljammer can't move at cruising speed, but only at tactical speed.

Example: A spelljamming vessel of Awesome size (natural gravity value 4) is surrounded by the following objects: an Awesome floating wreck 1,800 feet away (natural gravity 4, divided by 2 for range, is 2), a Colossal warship 1,200 feet away (natural gravity 2, divided by 2 for range, is 1), and a Large chunk of rocky debris 400 feet away (natural gravity 1, divided by 1 for range, is 1). The total influence of natural gravity on the spelljammer is 4, which equals its own natural gravity. Thus, it may only move at tactical speed, not at cruising speed. If it can increase the distance between it and any of the objects such that the objects' influence of natural gravity lessens enough to make the total less than 4 (for instance, by moving at least another 201 feet from the floating wreck and reducing its natural gravity

influence to 1), it can move to cruising speed.

Air

A *helm* provides sufficient breathable air to sustain all those aboard the ship. As long as the *helm* operates, the air aboard a spelljamming vessel is clean and breathable. A ship with an inoperative *helm*, or one without a *helm*, cannot recycle air used by its crew. In this case, assume that the air of a typical ship with a normal crew complement becomes stale after 1 day and foul after 3 days. Smaller or larger crews use up air at slower or faster rates as appropriate.

The oxygen deprivation of stale air affects mental and physical ability scores. After each 6-hour period a character spends in stale air, he must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take one point of temporary damage to all ability scores.



The Endurance feat grants a +4 bonus to saving throws made due to stale or foul air.

In foul air, the save must be made every hour, and failure also inflicts 1d6 points of subdual damage. (Characters reduced to unconsciousness take normal damage instead.) Characters who have taken subdual damage from foul air are fatigued (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*). Subdual damage from foul air cannot be recovered until the character is exposed to fresh air for at least 4 hours—not even magic that restores hit points (such as *cure light wounds*) heals this damage.

Replenishing a ship's air supply requires an active *helm* or exposure to an atmosphere. Each category of air quality upgrade (foul to stale, stale to fresh) requires 4 hours. Some spells (such as *gust of wind*) can accelerate this process at the DM's judgment.

Crew

In most cases, it's not worth providing statistics for every crew member. Most ship descriptions simply indicate the average crew quality. Apply the modifier listed on Table 10: Spelljammer Crew Quality to all Pilot checks and ship weapon attack rolls.

An untrained crew has no particular skill at operating a spelljamming vessel. For instance, most formian crews are untrained. A skilled crew, such as that populating a typical human ship, represents 1st-level characters (usually experts or warriors) trained in operating a ship and its weapons. An expert crew, common among elven vessels, is composed of 2nd- to 5th-level elite NPCs with extensive training in ship operation.

Table 10: Spelljammer Crew Quality

Crew Quality	Modifier
Untrained	+0
Skilled	+4
Expert	+8

Ship Combat

Ship-to-ship combat in the *Spelljammer* setting functions very similarly to normal D&D combat. In essence, the ship acts as the pilot wills, taking actions just as a character. However, ships don't really have attack actions, since ship weapons are operated separately.

You can use a grid for spelljammer combat, just as with character combat.

Table 11: Spelljammer Sizes

Size Category	Modifier	Size	Examples
Awesome	-16	more than 128 ft.	dreadnaught
Colossal	-8	64 to 128 ft.	hammership
Gargantuan	-4	32 to 64 ft.	tradesman
Huge	-2	16 to 32 ft.	wreckship
Large	-1	8 to 16 ft.	boreworm

Each square on the grid is 30 ft. on a side.

Spelljammer Size

A spelljamming vessel's size affects its capabilities in combat. Size modifiers are listed in Table 11: Spelljammer Sizes. Apply this modifier to the ship's AC and to Pilot checks made to operate the vessel. If you are using crew initiative, apply the modifier to this roll as well (see the Crew Initiative sidebar).

Tactical Speed

In addition to a ship's cruising speed—the rate at which it travels between worlds—every ship has a tactical speed used in combat situations.

A ship's tactical speed depends on its size category and the type of *helm* powering the ship (*minor* or *major*). See Table 12: Spelljammer Tactical Speeds to determine this value. This value represents the distance (in feet) that a spelljammer can move with a single move action (like a character, a ship can take a double move to move twice this distance in a round).

Table 12: Spelljammer Tactical Speeds

Ship Size	Minor Helm	Major Helm
Up to Large	120	180
Huge	60	120
Gargantuan	30	90
Colossal	n/a	60
Awesome	n/a	30

Spelljammer Facing

Unlike standard D&D, ships in the *Spelljammer* game have a facing; that

is, they have a distinct front, back, and sides. This has a number of effects on combat.

Facing determines the ship's default direction of movement. Unlike a character, a ship can't simply choose to move in any direction it wants—it must move in the direction of its facing unless it turns (see Maneuvers, below).

Facing also determines the direction in which a ship's weapons point. Each weapon has a firing arc that limits the direction in which it can shoot (see Ship Weapons, below).

Maneuvering

Each ship has a maneuverability, from perfect to clumsy, as shown on Table 13: Spelljammer Maneuverability. A ship can execute moves, turns, and other maneuvers as appropriate for its maneuverability with no difficulty (though some maneuvers require the expenditure of speed, which is subtracted from the ship's total movement that round).

To accomplish a maneuver appropriate to a higher maneuverability, the pilot must make a Pilot check. The DC is 20 for one category higher, 30 for two categories higher, 40 for three categories higher, and 50 for four categories higher. Making a Pilot check to accomplish a maneuver is a move-equivalent action. (Note that even a *hasted* pilot can still make only two Pilot checks to accomplish maneuvers in a given turn.)

Minimum Forward Speed: If a spelljammer fails to maintain its minimum forward speed, it must land at the end of its movement. If it is too high above the ground to land, it "falls" toward the most powerful source of natural gravity in its vicinity. The falling ship travels 150 ft. in the first round of falling, after which the pilot can arrest the fall with a DC 20 Pilot check. Otherwise, it falls another 300 feet each round (allowing a similar Pilot check each round to recover) until it impacts. If there is no source of natural gravity in the vicinity of the spelljammer, it need not maintain its minimum forward speed.

Crew Initiative

For ease of play, you may choose to make a single initiative roll (based on the size of the ship) for the entire crew of a ship. Use the modifier given in Table 11: Spelljammer Sizes, and add the pilot's Pilot skill modifier. Characters acting independently of a ship may use their personal initiative modifier instead.

Table 13: Spelljammer Maneuverability

Maneuver	Maneuverability				
	Perfect	Good	Average	Poor	Clumsy
Minimum Forward Speed	None	None	Half	Half	Half
Hover	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Fly Backward	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Reverse	Free	-30 ft.	-	-	-
Turn	Any/0 ft.	90°/30 ft.	45°/30 ft.	45°/30 ft.	45°/60 ft.
Turn in Place	Any/0 ft.	+90°/-30 ft.	+45°/-30 ft.	No	No
Maximum Turn	Any	Any	90°	45°	45°
Loop	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Up Angle	Any	Any	60°	45°	45°
Up Speed	Full	Half	Half	Half	Half
Down Angle	Any	Any	Any	45°	45°
Down Speed	Double	Double	Double	Double	Double
Between Down and Up	0	0	30 ft.	60 ft.	90 ft.

Hover: The ability to stay in one place while airborne. This only applies if there is a source of natural gravity in the vicinity of the spelljammer (any spelljammer can hover if no natural gravity is acting upon it).

Fly Backward: A "Yes" entry indicates the ship can fly backward at its normal speed.

Reverse: A ship with good maneuverability uses up 5 ft. of speed to start flying backward. A ship with perfect maneuverability can reverse direction of flight without any loss of speed.

Turn: This entry indicates how much the ship can turn after covering the stated distance. If the ship doesn't have sufficient speed to make such a turn with a single action, it can't make such a turn.

Turn in Place: A ship with good or average maneuverability can spend some of its speed to turn in place. If the ship doesn't have sufficient speed to make such a turn with a single action, it can't make such a turn. A ship with perfect maneuverability can turn in place at no cost of speed.

Maximum Turn: This indicates how much the ship can turn in any one space.

Loop: A spelljammer with perfect or good maneuverability can perform a vertical loop as its movement, ending its turn in the same space it began and facing in any direction the pilot chooses. This is useful for getting behind a pursuing ship.

Up Angle*: The angle at which the ship can climb away from the pull of gravity.

Up Speed*: How fast the ship can climb against the pull of gravity (only applies if the source of natural gravity

is at least four times the ship's; see Natural Gravity, above).

Down Angle*: The angle at which the ship can descend toward the pull of gravity.

Down Speed*: A spelljammer can fly "down" toward a source of natural gravity at twice its normal speed (only applies if the source natural gravity is at least four times the ship's; see Natural Gravity, above).

Between Down & Up*: A spelljammer with average, poor, or clumsy maneuverability must fly level for a minimum distance after descending and before climbing. Any ship can begin descending after a climb without an intervening distance.

*These maneuvers only apply when the ship is influenced by a source of natural gravity greater than its own, such as a ship within gravity range of a planet or larger vessel.

Example: A ship with poor maneuverability cannot turn in place. If the pilot wishes to turn in place, he must make a Pilot check. To turn 45 degrees by spending 30 feet of movement, the DC is 20 (since this can be achieved with average maneuverability, which is one category higher than the ship's). To turn 90 degrees by spending 30 ft. of movement, the DC is 30 (since this requires good maneuverability). To turn in place more than 90 degrees, or without spending any movement, requires a DC 40 Pilot check (since this requires perfect maneuverability).

Failed Maneuvers

If a pilot fails a Pilot check by 10 or more, he may lose control of the ship. Make another Pilot check using the

same DC as the original (failed) check. Failure indicates loss of control—the ship yaws, spins, or even tumbles. Find the number by which the pilot missed this second check on Table 14: Failed Pilot Checks to determine the severity of the outcome and the circumstance penalty applied to all attack rolls and skill checks made aboard the ship until the pilot regains control.

Each round that a ship is out of control, the pilot may try again to regain control, using the same DC as above. Apply the result to Table 14 to determine the current severity of the loss of control.

Any ship that is out of control continues moving in the same direction it was going at the point of the failed maneuver (effectively taking a double move each round) until the pilot regains control or the ship crashes into another object.

Table 14: Failed Pilot Checks

Check Failed By	Effect	Penalty
Up to 10	Minor	-2
11 to 20	Major	-4
More than 20	Extreme	-8

Ramming (and Crashing)

A pilot can intentionally cause a collision between his ship and another by moving into the target's area. The DC of the Pilot check is equal to the AC of the target ship. Ultimately, the only difference between ramming and crashing is one of intent: the effect is largely identical.

A ship—or really, any object—that rams (or crashes into) another ship inflicts damage based on its size, as noted in Table 15: Ramming Damage. Add +1d6 damage per 60 feet of the

ramming vessel's current speed (the distance it would have moved this round if not for the crash). Apply this damage to both objects involved in the ram or crash.

Example: A Huge ship (or other object) with a speed of 60 rams into another vessel as part of a double move. Its current speed is effectively 120 (since it would have moved 200 feet as its double move). It thus adds +2d6 to the base damage of 10d6, for a total of 14d6 damage inflicted (and suffered).

Any ship that has a piercing ram or bludgeoning ram takes only half the normal damage when it intentionally rams another ship with that ram. Piercing and bludgeoning rams add +4d6 to the normal damage inflicted.

Table 15: Ramming Damage

Ship Size	Damage Inflicted
Awesome	20d6
Colossal	16d6
Gargantuan	12d6
Huge	8d6
Large	4d6
Less than Large	0d6

Attacking

Firing a ship weapon functions much like a standard ranged attack. Note that unless the firing team has the proper feat, firing a ballista or cannon uses only a standard d20 roll, modified only by range (and not by base attack bonus, ability modifiers, or other standard modifiers).

Weapon Arcs

Most spelljammer weapons are mounted with a specific fire arc: front, aft (back), port (left), or starboard (right). A turret allows a weapon to fire in all arcs, while a half-turret allows a weapon to fire in two adjacent arcs (such as front and port, or aft and starboard). Chapter 3: Equipment and Magic has information on turrets.

Armor Class

A spelljammer's AC includes its size modifier and a natural armor bonus (generally equal to the hardness of its material). In addition, the pilot of the ship may add his Dexterity modifier (if positive) to the ship's AC whenever it is in tactical speed. Just as normal with a Dexterity bonus to AC, this bonus is lost when the pilot is flat-footed.

A spelljammer ace (see Prestige Classes, above) may also add his class level to the ship's AC.

Damage

Ships suffer damage much like objects. Every ship has a hardness and a quantity of hull points, which function much like hit points. Whenever damage is inflicted to a spelljammer, first subtract the hardness and then apply the remaining damage to the ship's hull points.

Spelljammer vessels take half damage from ranged weapons (except for siege engines and the like), acid, fire, and lightning. Divide the damage by 2 before applying the ship's hardness. Cold attacks deal only one-quarter damage to spelljammers. Sonic attacks deal full damage to ships. Some ships may be more or less resistant to some attacks due to their construction; this is noted in the ship's description.

A spelljammer reduced to half its total hull points suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to its Pilot checks. A spelljammer reduced to 0 hull points is effectively destroyed.

Repairing Damage

Repairing lost hull points requires a Craft (shipbuilding) check and one hour of time. The base DC is 10, which restores 1d6 lost hull points. For every 5 additional points above 10, another 1d6 lost hull points are repaired.

A character can perform a rushed repair job, but only on a spelljammer that has suffered extensive damage (in other words, is at less than half its total hull points). A rushed repair requires one round and a Craft (shipbuilding) check. The base DC is 20, which restores 1 lost hull point. For every 10 points above 10, another 1 hull point is restored. You can't use a rushed repair check to bring a ship's hull points above half its normal total.

Each repair check, whether normal or rushed, consumes 10 gp worth of repair supplies. A character with 5 or more ranks in Profession (spacehand) gets a +2 synergy bonus to Craft (shipbuilding) checks made to repair a spelljammer.

Spelljammer Descriptions

Each spelljamming race has its own unique style of ship, from the graceful vessels of the elves to the ramshackle

tugs of the gnomes. On occasion, a ship may find its way into other hands—it's not unusual for a dwarf to captain a tradesman, for instance—but in most cases, spelljamming races tend to be possessive of their vessels.

Along with the description for each ship is a statistics block. What follows is an explanation of that material.

Helm: the typical *helm* type used in this type of ship.

SZ: the size of the ship.

Face: the beam length (or width) by the keel length.

Crew: the minimum crew required, and the maximum crew the ship can reliably support. The crew's typical quality is listed in parentheses, along with the modifier this applies to attack rolls and Pilot checks.

Mtl: the primary material used in the construction of the hull. The value in parentheses is the hardness of the hull; subtract this from any damage inflicted to the ship.

hp: the ship's hull points. Remember that spelljammers (like all objects) take only half damage from ranged weapons (except for siege weapons and ship weapons, which inflict normal damage), and from acid, fire, and lightning. Cold attacks deal one-quarter damage. Sonic attacks deal full normal damage.

Init: the normal initiative score for the ship. This includes the typical crew initiative for a ship of that size, and the typical Pilot skill modifier. Modify as appropriate for a different pilot. If you wish to generate a "standard" crew, add the modifier from Table 10: Spelljammer Crew Quality.

Spd: the ship's speed in feet, plus its maneuverability class in parentheses.

AC: the ship's Armor Class. This assumes that the pilot has no Dexterity bonus. A ship's armor class only applies when it is in motion. A stationary ship (such as one that has docked or is drifting aimlessly) is treated as an inanimate object.

Arm: the ship's armament. A parenthetical listing with each entry denotes the weapon's arc of fire: (f)ore, (p)ort, (s)tarboard, (a)ft. Multiple listings indicate turreted weapons. Each weapon's damage is in parentheses.

SA: any special attack forms the ship may have;

SQ: any special qualities the ship may have;

LC: the ship's landing capability, if any;

Cargo: the ship's cargo capacity, in tons.

Human Ships

Ships built and crewed by humans tend to have characteristics associated with the aquatic creatures of Quelya. Since water landings are *de rigueur* for such vessels, all are built to travel via the oceans as effectively as through space. They also tend to be bulkier than other vessels, with expanded cargo space the norm.

Elf Ships

Elf ships are as much grown as they are crafted. The wingsails are actually enormous leaves, harvested from carefully tended (and well-guarded) arboretums and grafted onto the hulls of the ships. Even after this grafting, the wingsails continue to grow, ever so slowly, and thus must be pruned and tended throughout the life of the vessel.

It should come as no surprise, then, that elves view their spelljammers as works of art. Every inch of these handcrafted vessels is painstakingly carved, sanded, and polished until it shimmers in the light. The loss of an elven ship is treated like the death of a close friend, and outsiders viewing such mourning who ask "So who died?" typically receive only a cold glare in return.

The ships' living nature also extends each vessel's natural supply of air. Even without the *helm* active, the air aboard an elf vessel lasts twice as long as normal before growing stale.

Unfortunately, the artistic niceties also reduce the available cargo space of elven ships. Thus, many elven merchants have taken to using human vessels.

Gnome Ships

Though not a true spelljamming race, gnomes nonetheless have a style of spelljamming vessel all their own. Of course, some might dub it a "lack of style" instead, but in their own inimitable fashion, the gnomes make do with what they have.

Every gnome ship is unique, for they are built from whatever pieces, parts, and leftover bits the gnomes can scavenge. A "typical" gnome vessel—if such a thing can even exist—might have a mast from a tradesman, a hull constructed from old buildings, a rudder

fashioned from scrap metal, and whatever weaponry the gnomes could beg, borrow, or steal.

Because of this unique nature, no two gnome vessels have exactly the same statistics, though the information here provides a good baseline. Due to the inherent difficulty of keeping such a ship in one piece, most gnome vessels are relatively small—nothing like a gnome warship has ever been seriously imagined, much less built.

Despite their ugly appearance, though, the gnomes look fondly upon their vessels, much like a human might look upon a trusted pet. A gnome's ship is his friend, his toolbox, and his salvation all rolled into one. While the captain of a gnome vessel might laugh along as you mock his craft, he's quietly looking at yours for the next addition to his beloved ship.

Drow Ships

Until recently, the very concept of drow spelljammers was a misnomer. Thanks to their imprisonment on the Spider Moon, a centuries-long embargo against trade placed by the elves of Perianth, and no lack of diligence on the part of the elves, the dark elf presence in space has been nonexistent for as long as any living creature can remember.

But that has changed. No longer are the drow trapped on their barren planetoid. Thanks to an unholy bargain with the illithids, the dark elves once again ply the spacelanes, and with a fury never before seen.

Drow ships are all constructed along similar lines, their appearance giving clear signal as to their origin. From the relatively tiny spinneret to the ponderous great mother, these vessels are designed to instill terror into the enemies of the dark elves, and to state clearly and with no mistake that the drow have returned.

Formian Ships

Much like their chief enemy, the gnomes, the ships of the formians are marked more by a lack of style than an actual style. For the formians do not craft their vessels so much as *inhabit* them.

Formian spelljammers are nothing more than enormous rocks—meteors, asteroids, or other cosmic rubble—honeycombed with tunnels leading to a central cavern. From this central point, a formian queen controls the movement of

the ship, tapping into the hivemind of her minions (at least 40 are needed) to provide motive power and maneuverability. The statistics provided here are only an average sample of a formian vessel, though few vary much from these numbers.

Unsurprisingly, these vessels (dubbed stonships by the gnomes, a name that's stuck ever since) are remarkably clumsy, maneuvering poorly even for their size. In most cases, this is countered by their unceasing pursuit of whatever goal lies before them, whether that be the destruction of outsiders or the invasion of a new world.

The stonship's incredible density means that it has a natural gravity of 8, double the normal natural gravity for an object of its size.

Formian Stonship: Helm: hivemind; SZ: Awesome; Face: 90 ft. by 180 ft.; Crew: 40/240 (unskilled/+0); Mtl: stone (8); hp: 800; Init: -16; Spd: 30 (clumsy); AC: 2 (-16 size, +8 natural); Arm: None; SA: bludgeoning ram; SQ: increased natural gravity; LC: Land; Cargo: 16.

Illithid Ships

The spelljamming vessels piloted by the mind flayers look like nothing before seen in the system. Strangely alien in design, the very appearance of one of these ships can set an onlooker's teeth on edge. Those few who have had the luck to view an illithid vessel for an extended period of time report feelings approaching nausea, though no explanation for this has ever been presented.

Most believe that the illithid ships seen to date represent only a small fraction of the variety created by the mind flayers. Perhaps these were the only ships thought needed for the illithid invasion—or perhaps more and stranger vessels are on their way.

These ships' water landing capability has suggested to some that, assuming they are indeed common vessels among the illithids, their home world might also be largely aquatic.

Note that the number of illithids aboard a typical mind flayer ship is only about 25 to 50% of the total crew complement. The remaining crew is made up of grimlocks, half-orcs, and other enslaved soldiers.

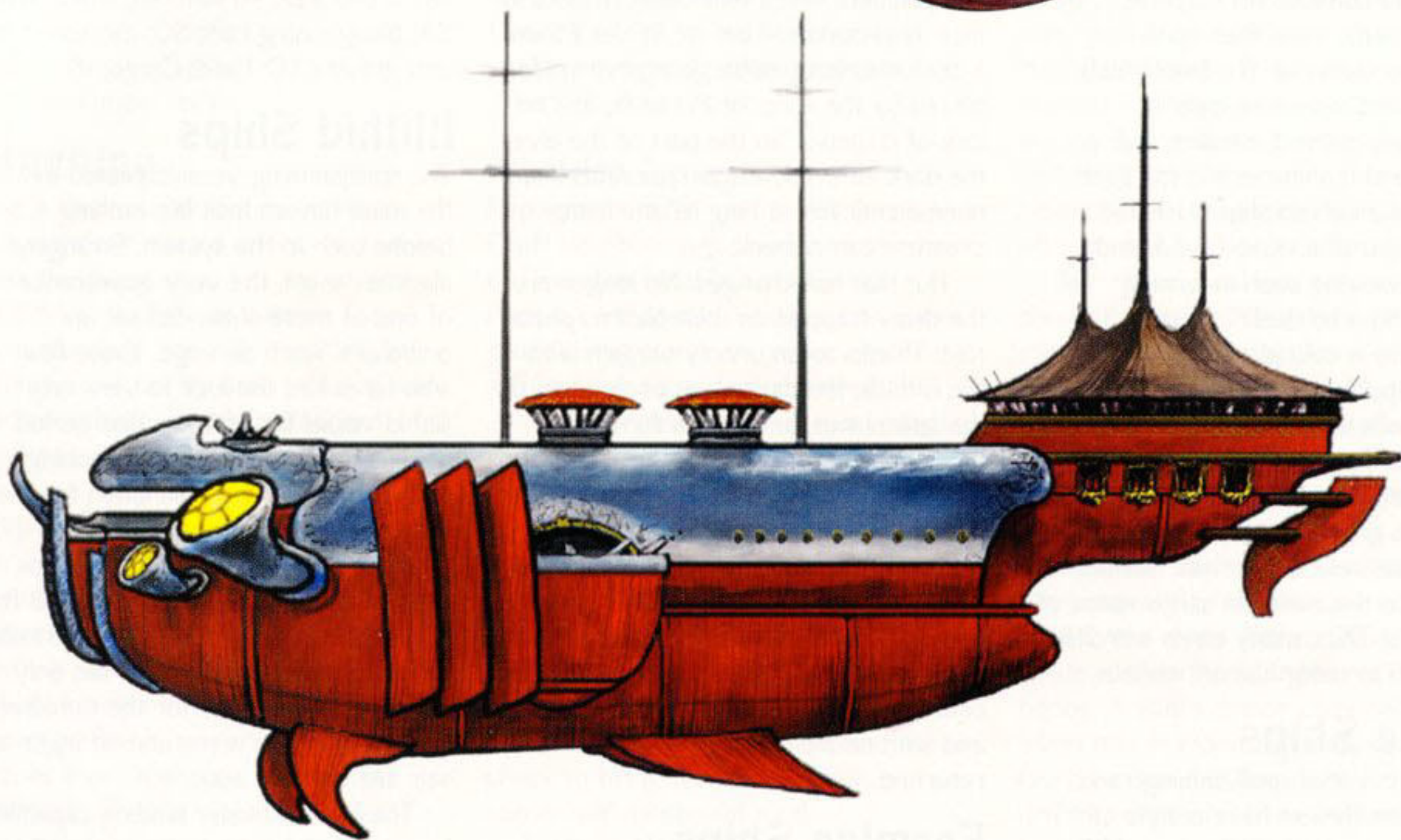
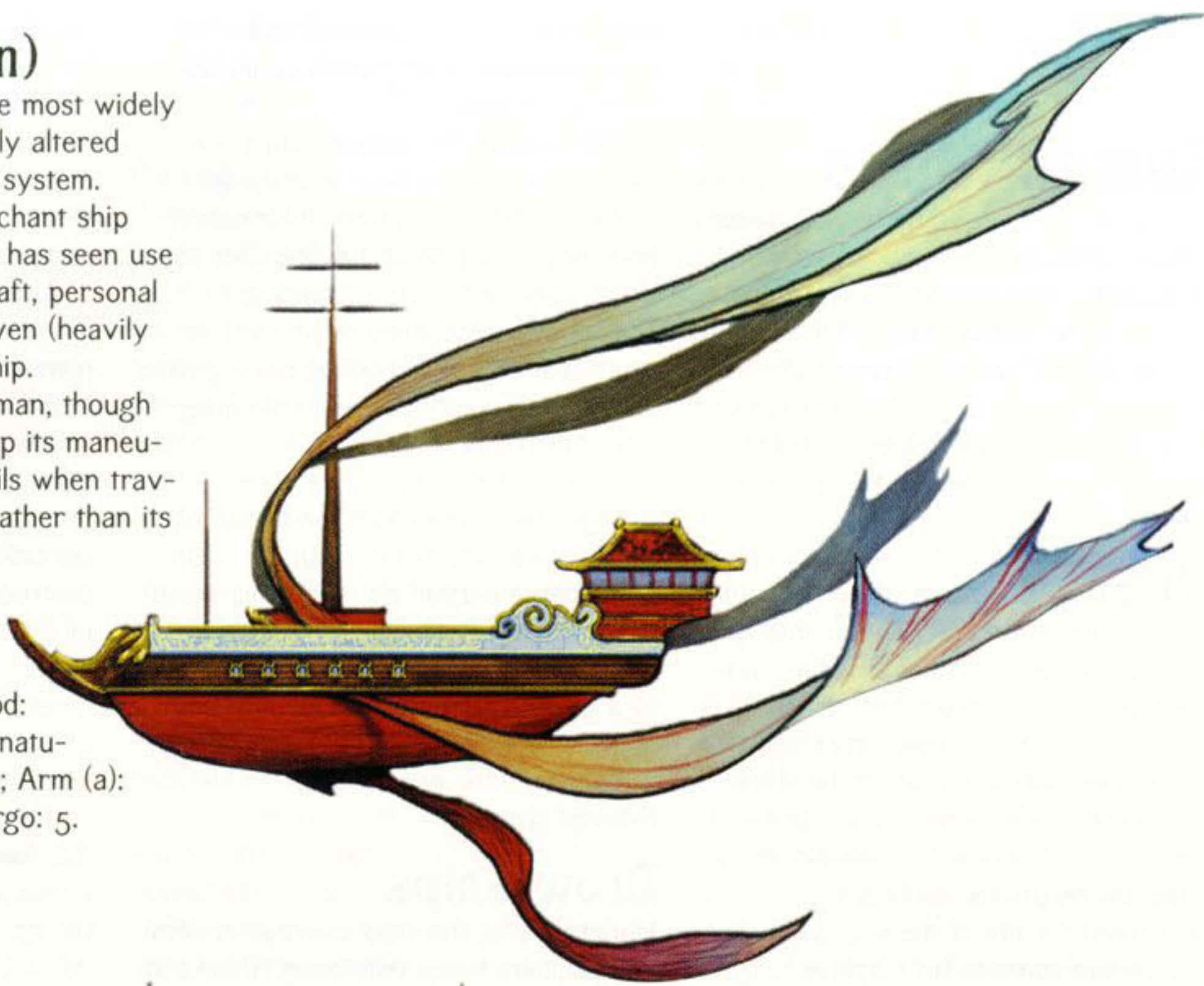
Tradesman (Human)

The tradesman is undoubtedly the most widely produced, widely used, and widely altered spelljamming vessel in the entire system.

Originally crafted as a small merchant ship (hence the name), the tradesman has seen use as a scouting vessel, pleasure craft, personal transport for the wealthy, and even (heavily modified) as a short-range warship.

The trailing fins of the tradesman, though appearing merely decorative, help its maneuverability in flight. It raises its sails when traveling by water, relying on wind rather than its helm for propulsion.

Tradesman: Helm: *minor*;
SZ: Gargantuan; Face: 30 ft. by 60 ft.; Crew: 4/12 (trained/+4); Mtl: wood (5); hp: 50; Init: -4; Spd: 30 (average); AC: 11 (-4 size, +5 natural); Arm (f): heavy ballista (5d6); Arm (a): light ballista (3d6); LC: water; Cargo: 5.



Hammership (Human)

When it came time for the humans of Quelya to develop a warship, many designs were tested. Ultimately, the hammership's combination of a protected main deck, weapon ports, and ramming power made it the favored style, though other vessels of this size and varying capabilities exist.

Today, hammerships see a variety of uses, from accompanying groups of tradesman between worlds to patrolling the seas of Quelya. Though ungainly in appearance (don't even think about asking an elf what he thinks of the design),

the hammership's sturdy effectiveness maintains its popularity among those races that favor function over form.

Hammership: Helm: *major*; SZ: Colossal; Face: 30 ft. by 120 ft.; Crew: 12/30 (trained/+4); Mtl: reinforced wood (6); hp: 200; Init: -8; Spd: 60 (poor); AC: 8 (-8 size, +6 natural); Arm (f/p): heavy cannon (8d6); Arm (f/s): heavy cannon (8d6); Arm (p/a): two light cannons (damage); Arm (s/a): two light cannons (damage); SA: bludgeoning ram; LC: water; Cargo: 10.

Archelon (Human)

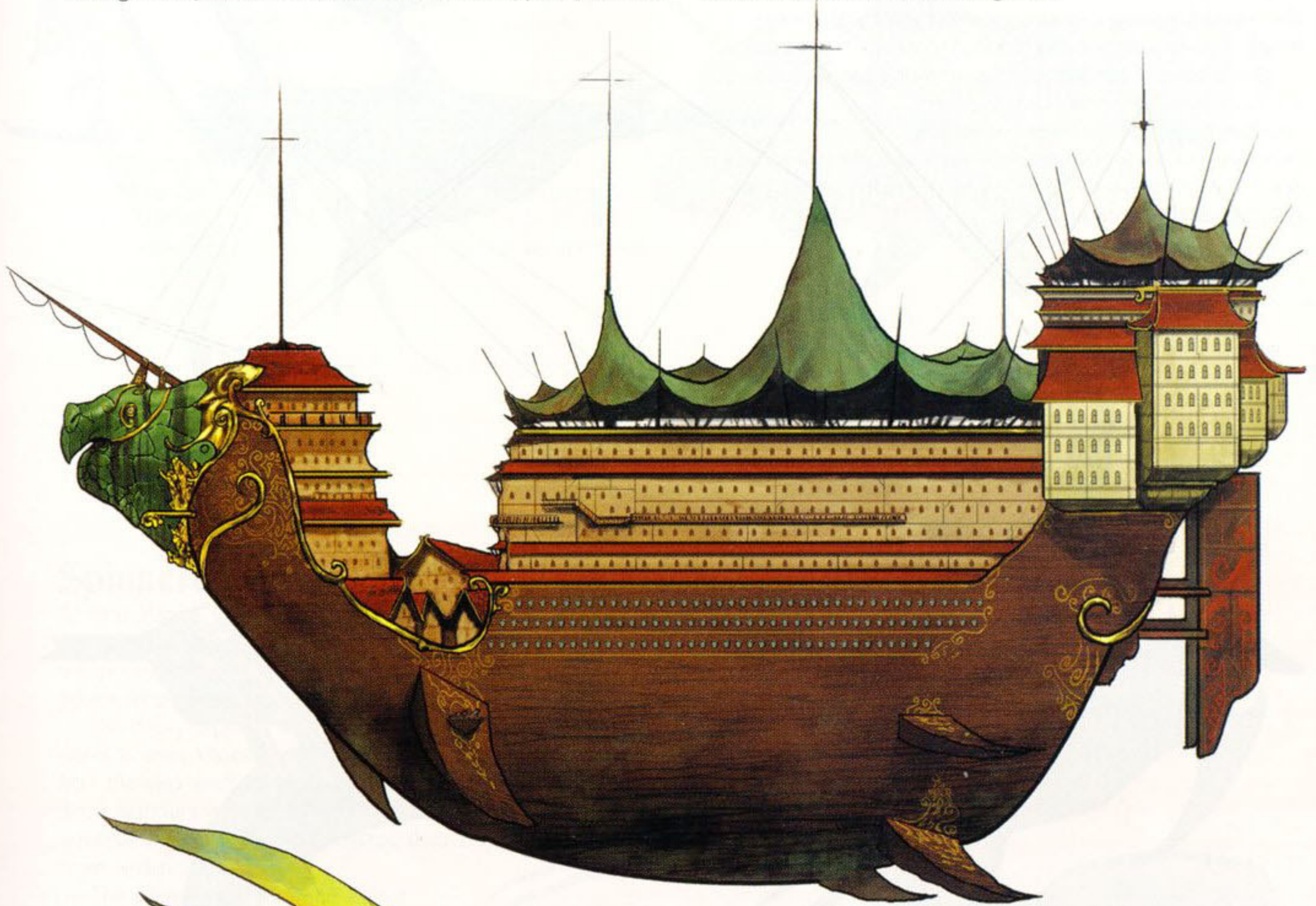
The archelon is the standard human capital-class ship. The first elf who viewed the enormous craft is said to have fainted dead away, aghast at the lack of style or beauty.

Time has proven the archelon's worthiness, however. Though only a handful of these titanic vessels have ever been constructed, every one of those is reported to still be in fine shape and fully functional.

Loosely modeled after the great sea turtles that swim through Quelya's warm waters, the archelon typically serves

as a battleship, leading groups of hammerships and tradesman through space to their destination. Stories of a lone archelon dedicated purely to scientific exploration of the worlds, while popular among starfarers, remain unproven.

Archelon: Helm: *major*; SZ: Awesome; Face: 30 ft. by 240 ft.; Crew: 20/80 (trained/+4); Mtl: reinforced wood (6); hp: 500; Init: -16; Spd: 30 (clumsy); AC: 0 (-16 size, +6 natural); Arm (f/p): heavy cannon (8d6); Arm (f/s): heavy cannon (8d6); Arm (f): two heavy cannons (8d6); Arm (p): light cannon (6d6); Arm (s): light cannon (6d6); Arm (a): two light cannons (6d6); LC: water; Cargo: 20.



Warbird (Elf)

Despite being works of art, even the smallest elven ship is also crafted for battle. The warbird is no exception. First developed as a scout/fighter ship, the graceful and speedy warbird also occasionally sees use as a diplomatic vessel or merchant ship.

Though members of other races occasionally salvage and repair a damaged warbird, elves will not sell them to nonelven crews, and will fire upon warbirds they know to be crewed by other races.

Warbird: Helm: *major*; SZ: Gargantuan; Face: 60 ft. (including wingsails) by 60 ft.; Crew: 4/12 (trained/+4); Mtl: ironwood (10); hp: 40; Init: -4; Spd: 90 (good); AC: 16 (-4 size, +10 natural); Arm (f/p): light ballista (3d6); Arm (f/s): light ballista (3d6); SQ: extended air; LC: none; Cargo: 2.



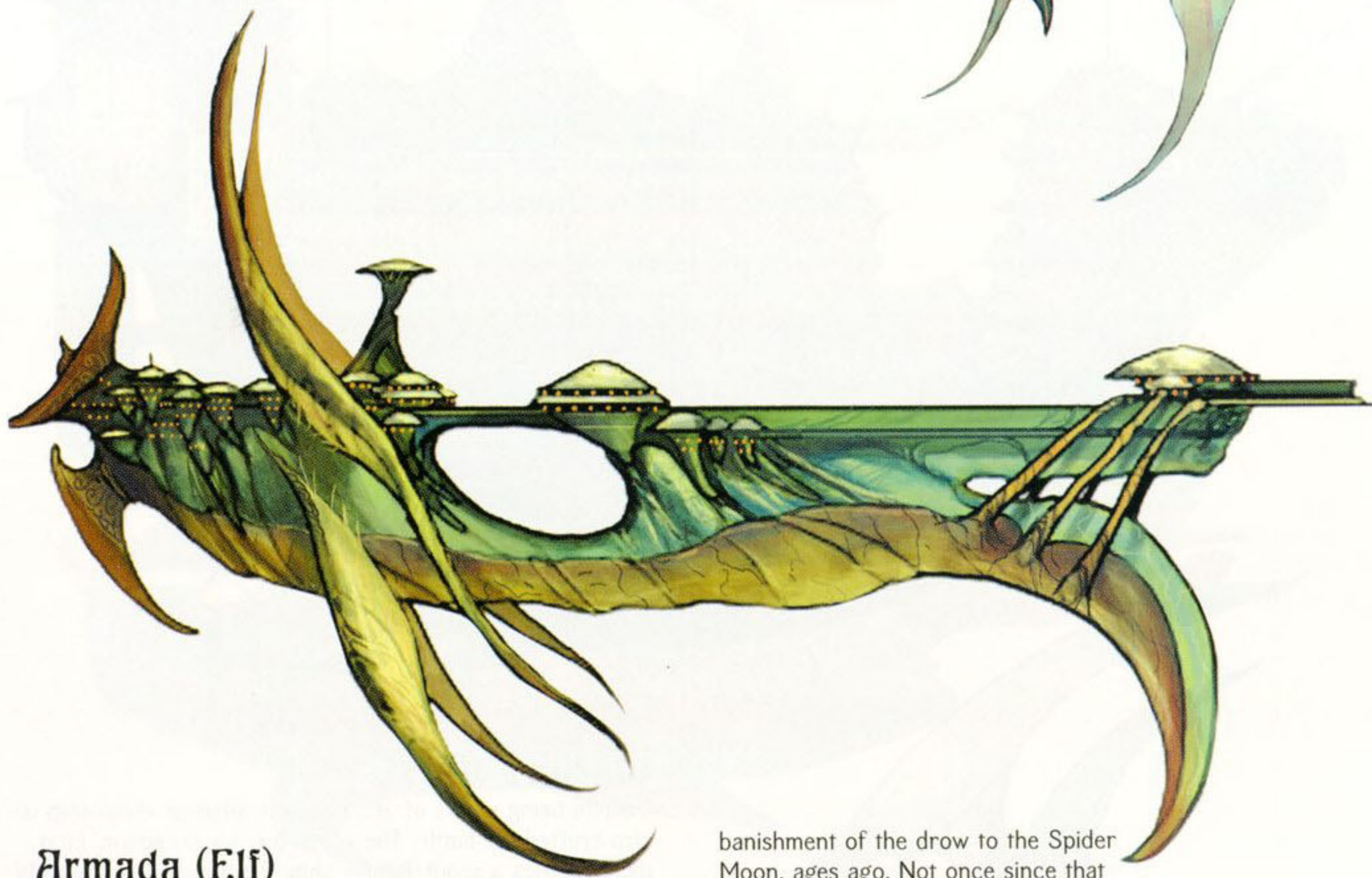
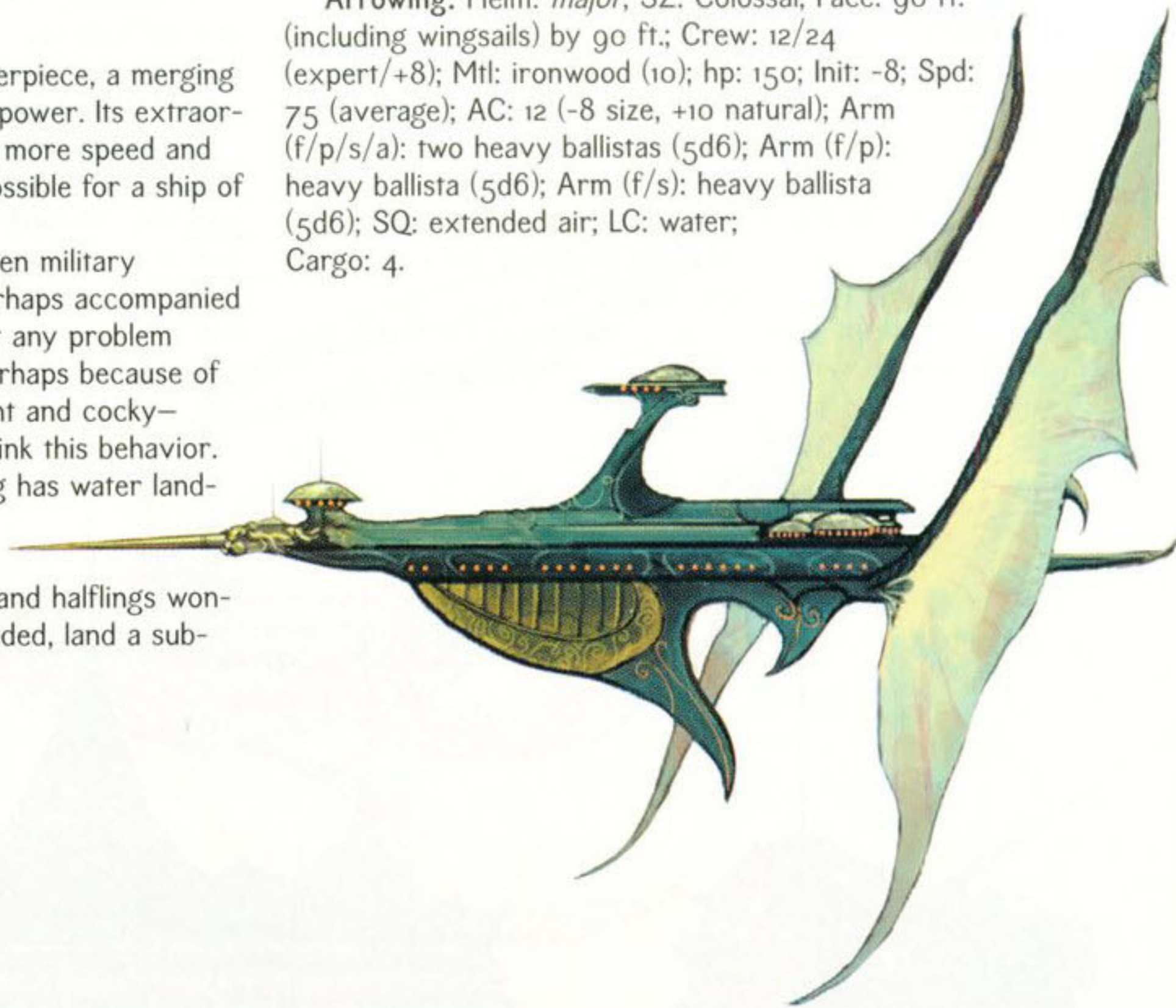
Arrowing (Elf)

The arrowing (AIR-oh-wing) is a true masterpiece, a merging of sleek beauty, elegant grace, and deadly power. Its extraordinary design allows it to eke out just a bit more speed and maneuverability than would normally be possible for a ship of its size.

The arrowing represents the typical elven military response to trouble. A single arrowing, perhaps accompanied by a few warbirds, can take care of almost any problem imaginable (short of a full fleet assault). Perhaps because of this, many arrowing captains grow arrogant and cocky—though few experience any reason to rethink this behavior.

Unlike other elven vessels, the arrowing has water landing capability. The elves claim this is to facilitate repairs in the lakes common to Perianth, though some suspicious humans and halflings wonder if it might be so the elves could, if needed, land a substantial military force on Quelya.

Arrowing: Helm: *major*; SZ: Colossal; Face: 90 ft. (including wingsails) by 90 ft.; Crew: 12/24 (expert/+8); Mtl: ironwood (10); hp: 150; Init: -8; Spd: 75 (average); AC: 12 (-8 size, +10 natural); Arm (f/p/s/a): two heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (f/p): heavy ballista (5d6); Arm (f/s): heavy ballista (5d6); SQ: extended air; LC: water; Cargo: 4.



Armada (Elf)

Generally regarded as the crowning achievement in stellar warfare, the elven armada serves as battleship, carrier, and troop transport all rolled into one. In addition to its crew, it can hold up to 40 soldiers and eight warbirds (with wingsails furled). Truly, even the sight of an elven armada is often enough to turn the tide of battle—few captains are foolhardy enough to stand against one.

In recent years, such encounters have been few and far between. Most elven armadas stay close to Perianth, protecting the elven homeworld from threats real or imagined. In fact, the last large-scale use of the armada ships was the

banishment of the drow to the Spider Moon, ages ago. Not once since that day has such a collection of spelljamming power been seen in sky or space, and not a single elf wishes to witness such a day again.

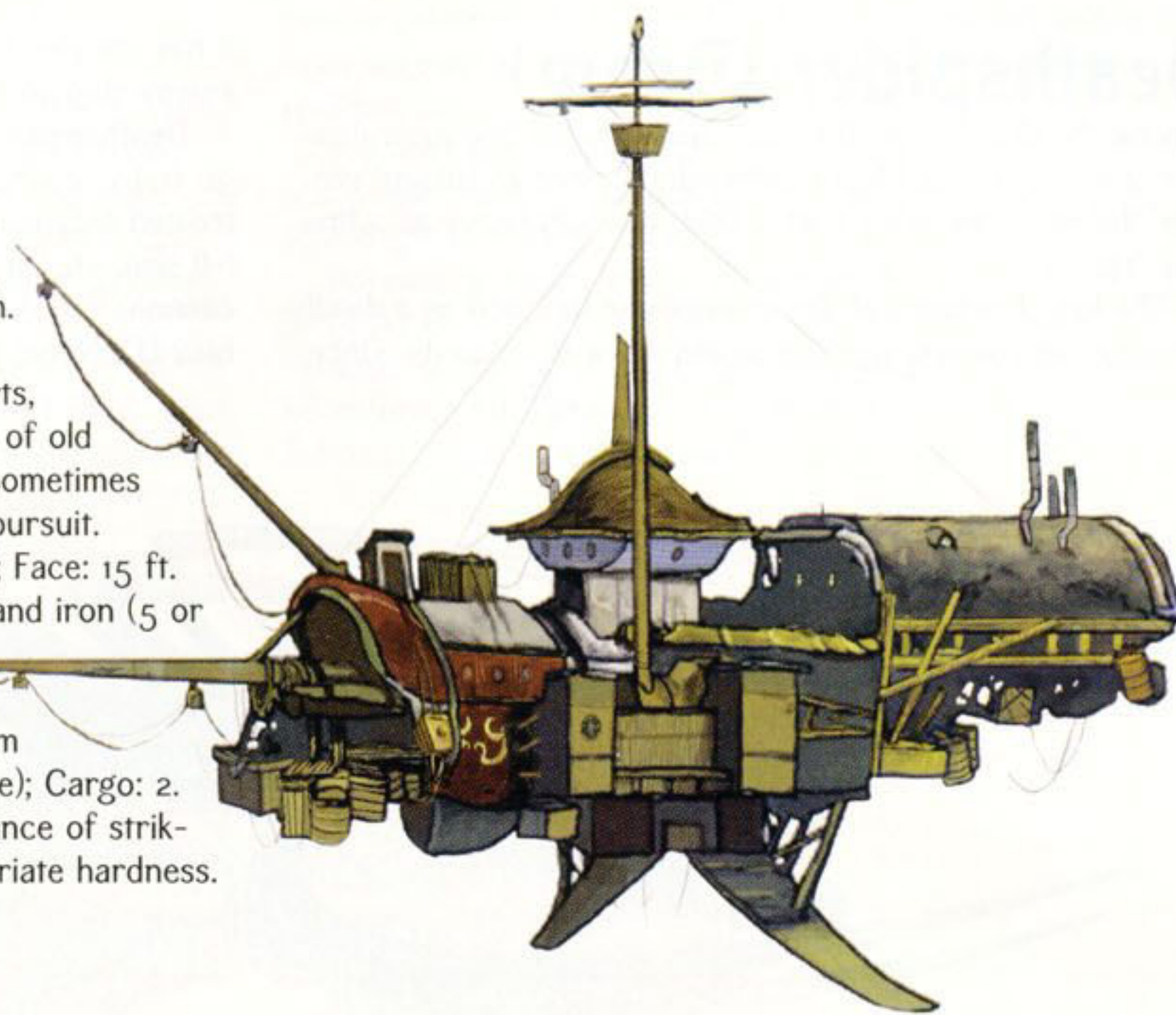
Armada: Helm: *major*; SZ: Awesome; Face: 120 ft. (including wingsails) by 180 ft.; Crew: 30/60 (expert/+4), plus 40 troops; Mtl: ironwood (10); hp: 400; Init: -16; Spd: 30 (poor); AC: 4 (-16 size, +10 natural); Arm (f/p/s/a): two heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (p/a): heavy ballista (5d6); Arm (s/a): heavy ballista (5d6); Arm (f): two heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (p): two heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (s): two heavy ballistas (5d6); SQ: extended air; LC: none; Cargo: 8.

Wreckship (Gnome)

No two gnome ships are exactly alike, but the statistics below can be used to represent a generic example of gnome shipcraft in a pinch. Looking like nothing so much as a cobbled-together mass of trash and discarded ship parts, wreckships blend in easily among the remains of old battles and spelljammer graveyards. Gnomes sometimes seek such locales when trying to shake off a pursuit.

Gnome Wreckship: Helm: *minor*; SZ: Huge; Face: 15 ft. by 30 ft.; Crew: 4/12 (trained/+4); Mtl: wood and iron (5 or 10*); hp: 10d6 (average 35); Init: -2; Spd: 60 (poor); AC: 13 (-2 size, +5 natural); Arm (f/p/s/a): light ballista (3d6); Arm (f): light cannon (6d6); LC: varies (usually none); Cargo: 2.

*Any hit on a gnome ship has an equal chance of striking a wood or iron surface. Apply the appropriate hardness.



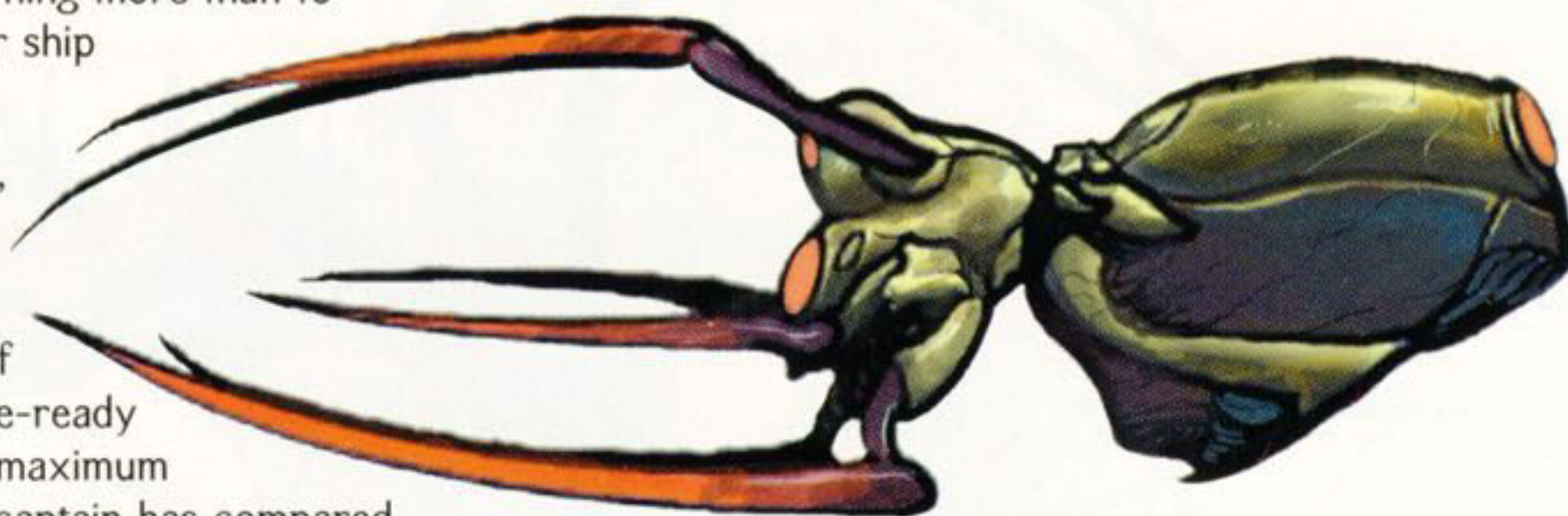
Spinneret (Drow)

At first glance, most spelljamming captains wouldn't see such a small vessel as a threat. The spinneret has no visible weaponry, and even a full-speed (and suicidal) ramming attack would seem only moderately dangerous.

But those captains would be wrong. For when one spinneret is seen, chances are that many more are near. And it isn't the ship itself that one should fear, but its crew: crack drow warriors and wizards, wanting nothing more than to overrun their enemies and destroy their ship from within.

The spinneret is designed almost entirely as a boarding vessel. The "legs" that extend from its front are hinged, allowing the ship to grip a larger target and hold on. Once attached, the front of the spinneret opens, disgorging its battle-ready crew, all of whom are trained to inflict maximum damage. More than one knowledgeable captain has compared the spinneret's attack to the illithid boreworm (see below), and it seems likely that the dark elves have mimicked this effective technique.

Spinneret: Helm: *minor lifejammer*; SZ: Huge; Face: 10 ft. by 20 ft.; Crew: 1/8 (trained/+4); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 35; Init: -2; Spd: 60 (good); AC: 14 (-2 size, +6 natural); Arm: none; SA: grappling; LC: None; Cargo: 2.



Deathspider (Drow)

Among the drow ships, the deathspider is the one most commonly encountered. Most deathspiders serve as raiding vessels, though if the drow built a fleet, it would serve as a fine warship.

The long forelimbs of the deathspider function as a deadly piercing ram, skewering smaller vessels with impunity. Once

it has crippled its prey, the deathspider's crew board the enemy ship and dispatch or capture its crew, at their whim.

Deathspider: Helm: *major lifejammer*; SZ: Colossal; Face: 30 ft. by 120 ft.; Crew: 8/40 (trained/+4); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 180; Init: -8; Spd: 60 (poor); AC: 8 (-8 size, +6 natural); Arm (f): heavy cannon (8d6), two light cannons (6d6); Arm (a): heavy cannon (8d6); SA: piercing ram; LC: None; Cargo: 8.



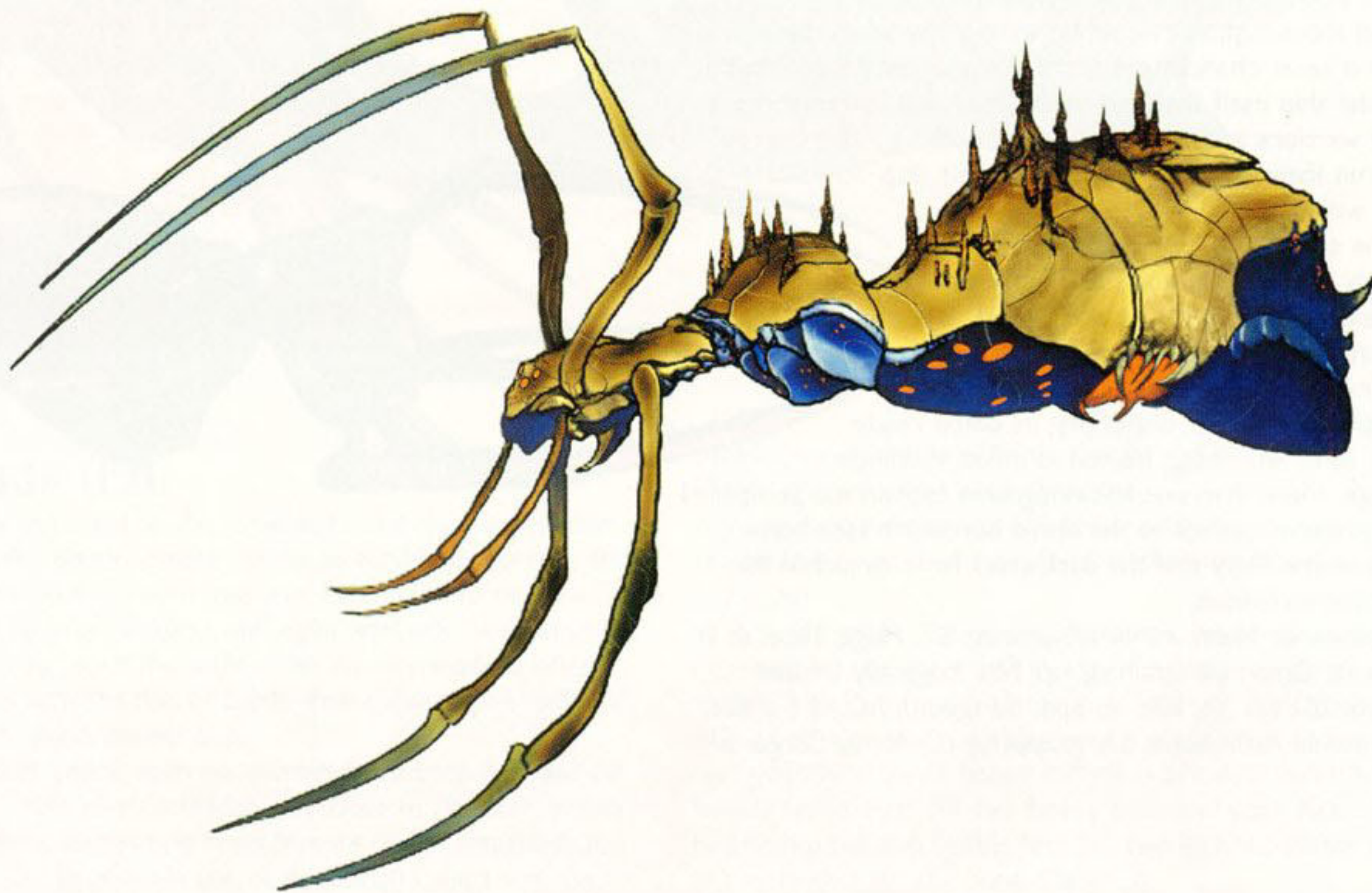
Great Mother (Drow)

Though not the equal of the elven armada, the drow great mother ship is nonetheless a terrifying foe. In addition to her weapons, the spellcasters no doubt on board, and the many soldiers, most great mothers bring along anywhere from a half-dozen to a dozen spinnerets, clinging to her underbelly like a great egg sac ready to burst.

After the great mother has disabled an enemy ship, it

approaches and uses its forelimbs as bridgeways, allowing drow troops to flood the decks of the crippled target.

Great Mother: Helm: *major lifejammer*; SZ: Awesome; Face: 60 ft. by 240 ft.; Crew: 20/60 (trained/+4); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 500; Init: -16; Spd: 30 (clumsy); AC: 0 (-16 size, +6 natural); Arm (f/p/s/a): two heavy cannons (8d6); Arm (f): two heavy cannons (8d6); Arm (p): two light cannons (6d6); Arm (s): two light cannons (6d6); SA: grappling; LC: None; Cargo: 16.



Boreworm (Illithid)

As the illithids have never seen fit to tell others what (if anything) they call their ships, their crafts' names come from those who have encountered them. In this case, the name comes from the human explorer and corsair Starlin Kress, who likened the vessels to the parasitic worms that plagued ships from his home planet.

The boreworm's mode of attack is simple: Ram into an enemy vessel at full speed, then disgorge its mind flayer pilot and any crew into the target ship via a front-mounted hatchway. Thanks to the illithid's mind blasts, the enemy crew is

usually defeated in short order. As a result of this simplicity, most boreworm "pilots" don't have any particular talent in spelljamming.

The boreworm is also fully submersible to a depth of 1000 feet below the surface, though it has no airlock or similar equipment to prevent flooding.

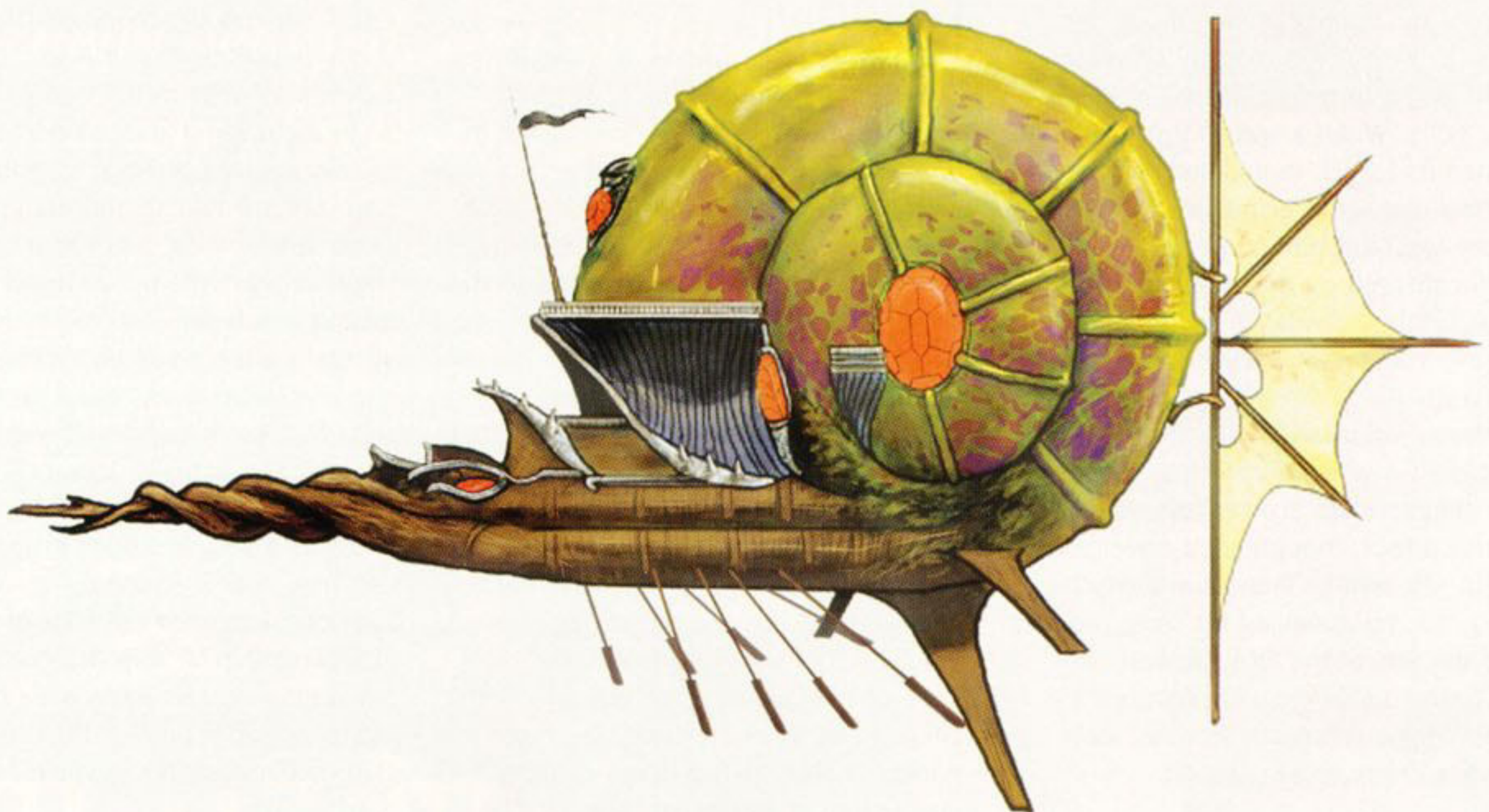
Boreworm: Helm: *minor lifejammer*; SZ: Large; Face: 5 ft. by 15 ft.; Crew: 1/3 (unskilled/+0); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 30; Init: -2; Spd: 60 (good); AC: 15 (-1 size, +6 natural); Atk: None; SA: bludgeoning ram; SQ: Submersible; LC: Land or water; Cargo: 1/2.



Nautiloid (Illithid)

Named by the humans for its resemblance to a large mollusk, the nautiloid is most often used as a ship of war. Its enormous forward ram is devastating to most targets, it bristles with armored weapon ports, and most carry a dozen or more grimlock troops for mop-up duty.

Nautiloid: Helm: *major lifejammer*; SZ: Colossal; Face: 30 ft. by 120 ft.; Crew: 10/30 (trained/+4); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 250; Init: -8; Spd: 60 (poor); AC: 8 (-8 size, +6 natural); Arm (f): two heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (p): two light ballistas (3d6); Arm (s): two light ballistas (3d6); SA: piercing ram; LC: Water; Cargo: 8.



Dreadnaught (Illithid)

This vessel was named by the first elven captain to encounter one, though she did not survive the battle. Since that time, the number of verified appearances by an illithid dreadnaught is in the single digits, leading many to believe (or hope) that only a very few of these ships even exist.

If that hope is true, it is indeed a boon to the friendly races of the system, for the dreadnaught is a terror unlike any other in the skies. Its weaponry is unmatched, the single-mindedness of its pilots is legendary, and it possesses a capability undreamed of to most captains: the dreadnaught can actually grapple another vessel.

The four great tentacles sprouting from the ship's bow

can wrap themselves around a target of up to the dreadnaught's size, virtually immobilizing the vessel. It then spews forth an acrid crimson fog that stuns all who breathe it in (DC 18 Fort save to avoid being stunned for 2d6 rounds). Once neutralized, the enemy ship is boarded by a horde of grimlocks and a handful of illithid masters, who make short work of any left conscious.

Dreadnaught: Helm: *major lifejammer*; SZ: Awesome; Face: 60 ft. by 180 ft., plus 60 ft. tentacles; Crew: 30/120 (trained/+4); Mtl: magically treated ceramic (6); hp: 600; Init: -16; Spd: 30 (poor); AC: 0 (-16 size, +6 natural); Arm (f/p/s/a): 2 heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (f): 4 heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (p): 2 heavy ballistas (5d6); Arm (s): 2 heavy ballistas (5d6); SA: grappling; LC: water; Cargo: 16.



Special Ship Attacks

Webshot

One of the nastier inventions of the drow is *webshot*, a magical enhancement given to projectiles such as ballista bolts. When a *webshot* projectile strikes its target, in addition to inflicting normal damage it erupts in a spray of sticky webbing (the equivalent of a *web* spell centered on the projectile).

A single well-placed *webshot* can greatly reduce an enemy ship's capability, particularly since most captains are loathe to voluntarily start fires on their vessels. Covered-deck ships, such as the hammership, are far less vulnerable to this attack, though such a weapon might still reduce maneuverability by a full grade by gumming up sails, rudders, and the like, at the DM's option.

Caster Level: 3rd; **Prerequisites:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *web*; **Market Price:** as +2 weapon.

Spelljammer Grappling

Both the drow spinneret and the illithid dreadnaught are capable of latching onto an enemy ship and holding on. In both cases, this works similarly to a ramming attempt: a Pilot check against the target ship's AC. If successful, the grappling ship has attached itself to the target (in the case of the spinneret) or wrapped its tentacles around the target (in the case of the dreadnaught).

Ships engaged in a grapple (whether the attacker or defender) may lose maneuverability or even the ability to move at all. The smaller of the two ships in a grapple loses its ability to move entirely (except to escape the grapple, see below). The larger of the ships loses one category of maneuverability, but only if the smaller ship is one or two size categories smaller than it (ships three or more size categories smaller than the

other have no effect on maneuverability). If this reduces the ship's maneuverability below clumsy, it is incapable of movement while in the grapple.

In the case of the spinneret, multiple spinnerets may attempt to grapple the same ship. If two spinnerets grapple the same vessel, treat them as a single Huge ship for the purposes of determining which ship can move. Four spinnerets are the equal of a Colossal ship, and eight spinnerets equal an Awesome ship. Sufficient spinnerets working in concert can actually "control" a ship much larger than any of them singly.

Once a ship has been grappled, it can free itself by winning an opposed Pilot check against the pilot of the grappling ship. A ship designed to grapple enemy vessels gains a +4 bonus to this check. The pilot of the attacking ship can release the grapple as a standard action.

CHAPTER THREE

EQUIPMENT AND MAGIC

This chapter covers various additions and changes to the normal array of equipment and magic found in a D&D game.

Weapons

Firearms are the most significant addition to standard D&D weaponry found in a *Spelljammer* campaign. Most are powered by gunpowder, which was first invented by gnomes, and their popularity has spread across much of the system. Two notable exceptions are the elves, who prefer the elegance of the bow, and the dwarves, who are wary of anything that might threaten the limited air supply of their natural cavern homes.

Each type of firearm requires a separate Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat.

Masterwork firearms can be created for an additional 300 gp. A firearm can accept any of the magical enhancements appropriate to crossbows.

Masterwork bullets can be created at an additional cost of 300 gp per 50 bullets. Bullets can accept any of the magical enhancements appropriate to bolts.

Weapon Descriptions

Ballista: Basically a very large crossbow, the ballista fires a spear-like bolt using a straight 1d20 roll with no modifications (no character base attack bonuses, ability modifiers, etc.) except for range. Loading and cocking a ballista is 3 full-round actions for its crew.

Bullet: These large, round, lead pellets are sold in bags of 10.

Cannon: Like the ballista, the cannon fires with a 1d20 roll unmodified by anything except range. Each shot uses 16 ounces (one lb.) of gunpowder. Loading and firing a cannon is 3 full-round actions for its crew.

Cutlass or Small Cutlass: This lightweight, curved sword is similar to a scimitar but includes a basket hilt that can be used for punching attacks as a gauntlet. A character with multiple attacks may use the cutlass's normal slashing attack and its punching attack interchangeably. It is popular among human and halfling sailors and spacefarers alike. The Small cutlass is used by halflings and other Small wielders.

You can use the Weapon Finesse

feat (see the *Player's Handbook*) to apply your Dexterity modifier instead of your Strength modifier to attack rolls with a cutlass.

Flamegun: This pistol-sized weapon shoots a thin stream of alchemist's fire that ignites as soon as it hits air. It requires only a touch attack to hit a target. It deals no splash damage, but any target struck must make a Reflex save (DC 15) or catch fire, suffering an additional 1d6 points of fire damage each round until he can extinguish the flames.

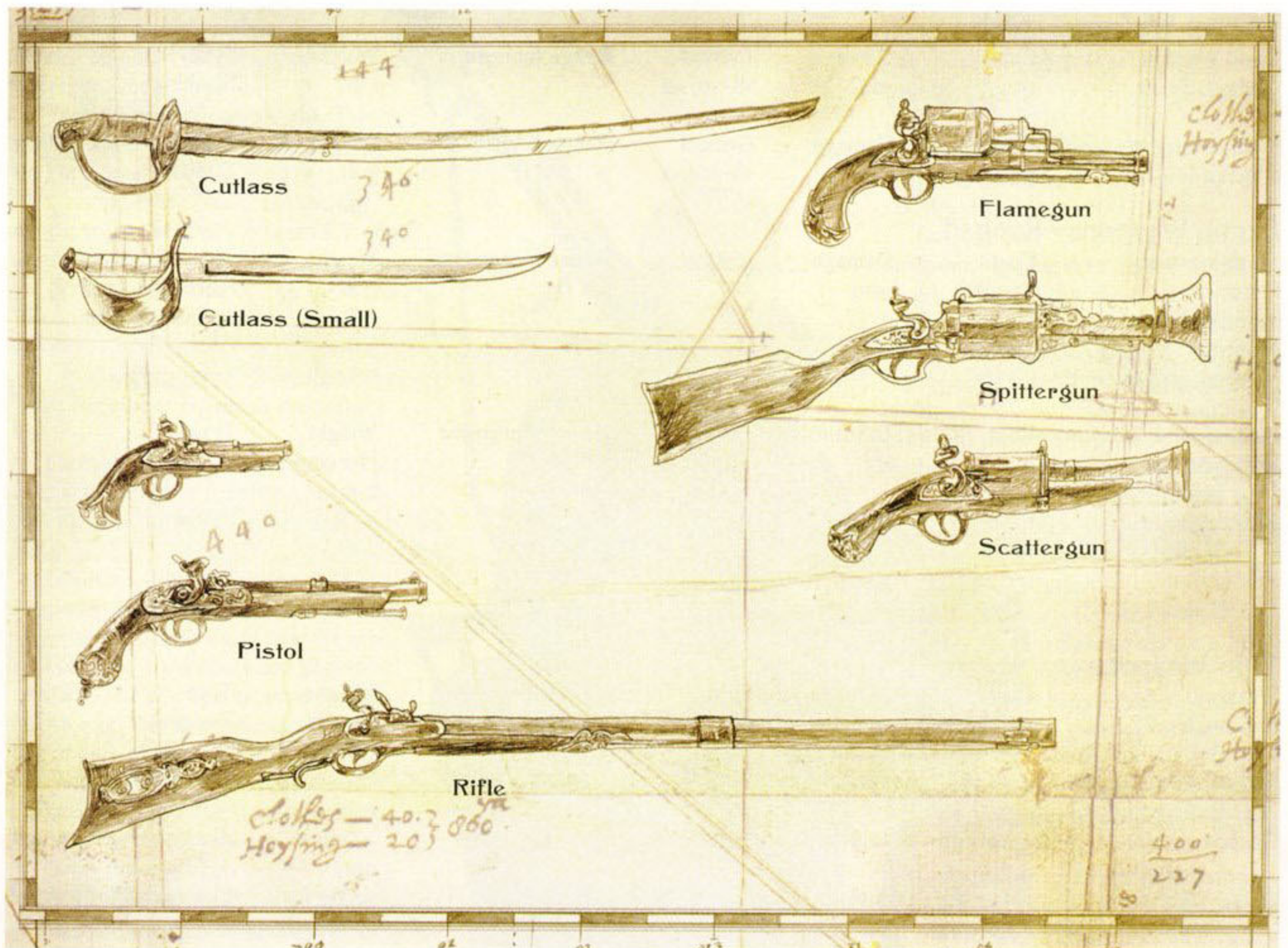
A flamegun is supplied by a five-shot fuel pack. As long as fuel remains, you can shoot the flamegun according to your normal number of attacks without reloading. Replacing a spent fuel pack with a fresh one requires a standard action.

Fuel Pack: A flamegun fuel pack holds enough alchemist's fire for five shots. If broken open, treat it as a flask of alchemist's fire.

Pistol: The pistol holds a single bullet and requires a standard action to reload.

Rifle: The rifle holds a single bullet and requires a standard action to reload.

Firearms are the most significant addition to standard D&D weaponry in a *Spelljammer* campaign.



Weapons common to a *Spelljammer* campaign.

Scattergun: The scattergun fires a spray of shrapnel in a 15-foot cone from the firing character. Make an attack roll against each target in the area, applying a penalty as appropriate.

A scattergun holds five shells at a time but must be cocked between shots (a move-equivalent action). Reloading up to two shells is a standard action. Reloading more shells than that (up to all five) is a full-round action.

Range to Target	Attack Penalty	Damage
Up to 5 feet	—	3d6
6 to 10 feet	-2	2d6
11 to 15 feet	-4	1d6

Scattergun Shell: This metal tube is packed with tiny metal pellets. It includes a gunpowder charge, so you don't need any additional powder to fire the weapon.

Spittergun: The rifle-sized spittergun holds six bullets. While it holds bullets, you can shoot the spittergun according to your normal number of attacks without reloading. Reloading a full clip of six bullets is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity.

Turret: While not actually a weapon, a turret or half-turret can be installed on a ship along with a weapon to increase its firing arc. See Chapter 2: Space and Spelljamming.

Equipment

This section describes some of the goods and services unique to a *Spelljammer* campaign.

Airsuit: This full-body covering protects its wearer from the airless void of space. The airsuit provides no armor protection, but an alchemical filter (sold

separately) attached to it recycles the wearer's breath, allowing him or her to survive for up to 12 hours with no other air than that brought along inside the suit (after which the filter must be replaced). If the suit is breached (hardness 1, hp 5), it becomes useless. An airsuit inflicts a -2 armor check penalty (which stacks with armor worn), but has no effect on the wearer's maximum Dex bonus, arcane spell failure chance, or speed. The wearer of an airsuit also suffers a -2 penalty on Spot and Listen checks. Airsuits for creatures smaller than Small or larger than Large must be made specially at a cost of 1,000 gp and up.

Airsuits can be magically reinforced to resist damage at an additional cost of 1,000 gp. This doubles its hardness

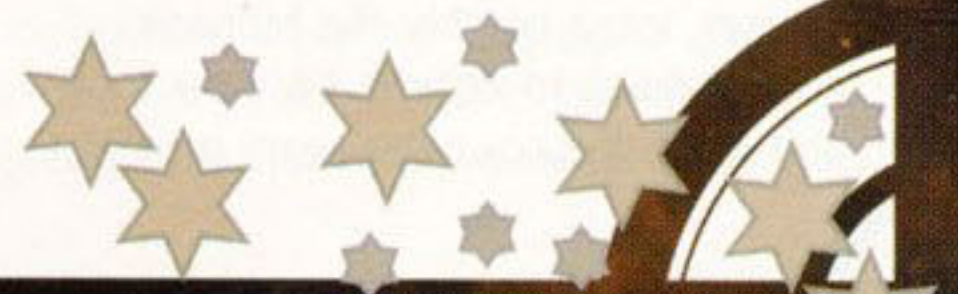


Table 16: New Weapons

Martial Weapons—Melee

Small Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Cutlass, Small	15 gp	1d4	18-20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
Medium-size Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Cutlass	20 gp	1d6	18-20/x2	—	3 lb.	Slashing

Exotic Weapons—Ranged

Small Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Pistol	250 gp	1d10	x3	50 ft.	3 lb.	Piercing
Bullets(10)	3 gp	—	—	—	2 lb.	—
Flamegun	400 gp	1d6	—	10 ft.	3 lb.	Fire
Fuel pack (5 shots)	50 gp	—	—	—	2 lb.	—
Medium-size Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
Rifle 500 gp	1d12	x3	150 ft.	10 lb.	Piercing	—
Bullets (10)	3 gp	—	—	—	2 lb.	—
Scattergun	1000 gp	special	x2	special	10 lb.	Piercing
Shells (5)	10 gp	—	—	—	2 lb.	—
Spittergun	1500 gp	1d10	x3	100 ft.	12 lb.	Piercing
Bullets (5)	15 sp	—	—	—	1 lb.	—

Ship Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Damage	Critical*	Range Increment	Weight	Type	Crew
Ballista, heavy	800 gp	5d6	x3	180 ft.	1200 lb.	Piercing	2
Ballista bolts (10)	1 gp	—	—	—	9 lb.	—	—
Ballista, light	500 gp	3d6	x3	120 ft.	800 lb.	Piercing	1
Ballista bolts (10)	1 gp	—	—	—	9 lb.	—	—
Cannon, heavy	5,000 gp	8d6	x4	240 ft.	4,000 lb.	Bludgeoning	2
Cannonballs (10)	4 gp	—	—	—	20 lb.	—	—
Cannon, light	2,000 gp	6d6	x4	180 ft.	3,000 lb.	Bludgeoning	1
Cannonballs (10)	2 gp	—	—	—	10 lb.	—	—
Turret	500 gp	—	—	—	300 lb.	—	—
Turret, half-	300 gp	—	—	—	200 lb.	—	—

and hp (to 2 and 10, respectively), with no other effects.

Airsuits can also function underwater.

Airsuit Filter: An airsuit filter can be created by an alchemist (Alchemy DC 25). Each filter lasts for 12 hours.

Delivery, planet-to-planet: This is the typical cost for delivering a message or relatively small package to another world. Large deliveries can cost up to double this amount.

Gunpowder: This alchemical substance was invented by the gnomes in the distant past, but has only recently been “rediscovered” by gnome alchemists. Its use has since spread to some of the other races of the system, most notably the humans, always quick to accept any new tool, and the half-orcs, who seem to enjoy

it for its incendiary properties as much as its utility. Most dwarves shy away from gunpowder weapons, having a natural dislike for incendiary substances bred by generations of life in deep caves, where fresh air is at a premium.

A single ounce of gunpowder is required to propel a bullet from a firearm (see Weapons, above). If lit, it will burn for a single round and provide illumination equivalent to a sunrod). Wet gunpowder is useless and must be dried (requiring 10 minutes of exposure to air) before it will ignite.

Gunpowder is sold in 20-ounce water-resistant powder horns and 15-pound kegs.

Spelljammer Passage: Even those spelljamming vessels that don’t specialize in passengers often have a few

bunks or some floor space available for those willing to spend some gold.

Spells

Some spells function differently in this setting than in standard D&D, while others have certain restrictions as to the extent of their effects. For specific effects on spells, see the text and the list below. For spells not in the *Player’s Handbook*, use the descriptions below to adjudicate an appropriate effect.

Treat creatures or objects on another planet as being on another plane for the purposes of these spells: *Drawmij’s instant summons*, *greater scrying*, *scrying*, *sending*, and *status*.

The following spells don’t allow interplanetary travel: *refuge*, *teleport*, *teleport without error*, *teleportation circle*, *transport via plants*, and *word of recall*.

Specific individual spell effects are as follows:

Air Walk: Assuming a sufficient duration (or multiple castings), you could use this spell to travel between planets.

Clairaudience/Clairvoyance: This spell's range is limited to the planet you are on.

Commune with Nature: When in space, treat the spell's effect as if you were outdoors.

Contact Other Plane: This is limited to contacting other planes, not other planets.

Discern Location: This spell also indicates the planet on which the subject lies.

Earthquake: This spell has no effect in space, though it functions normally on any celestial body (planet, asteroid, etc.).

Ethereal Jaunt/Etherealness: Assuming a sufficient duration (or multiple castings), you could use the ethereal plane to travel between planets.

Find the Path: The location sought must be on the same planet as you are at the time of casting.

Fly: Assuming a sufficient duration (or multiple castings), you could use this spell to travel between planets.

Gate: This spell can create a connection between two different planets, or between a caster in space and another planet, to allow travel, but cannot call a creature from another planet.

Imprisonment: This spell has no effect in space, though it functions normally on any celestial body (planet, asteroid, etc.).

Plane Shift: This spell allows interplanetary travel, but with the same inaccuracy as listed for the spell.

Shadow Walk: Assuming a sufficient duration (or multiple castings), you could use the Plane of Shadow to travel between planets. Note that since the Plane of Shadow doesn't automatically allow three-dimensional movement (unlike the Ethereal Plane),



you must have some ability to fly or travel through space to do so.

Wind Walk: Assuming a sufficient duration (or multiple castings), you could use this spell to travel between planets.

Magic Items

A few special magic items exist in this setting, described below.

Floatanchor: This device allows a spelljamming vessel to levitate in place above the ground without fear of crashing due to gravity. It appears much like a standard anchor, with a heavy chain 500 ft. in length. One end is affixed to a vessel with a *spelljammer helm* and the other end (with the anchor) rests on the ground. While levitating in this manner, the ship neither rises nor falls, though it is subject to wind and storms.

Caster Level: 5th;
Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *levitate*;
Market Price: 10,000 gp;
Weight: 500 lbs.

Gadabout: Almost more plant than item, this winged device is worn like a backpack. It wraps lithe tendrils around the wearer's body and extends great leaflike wings that allow the wearer to fly at a speed of 30. Furthermore, the *gadabout* provides its wearer with fresh air at all times. This grants a +2 bonus to saves versus poison gas attacks. The *gadabout* functions for a maximum of 2 hours per day. It must receive at least 2 hours of sunlight per day (*daylight* functions equally well) or it ceases to function, going dormant until it receives the necessary "nourishment."

Caster Level: 5th; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *plant growth*;
Market Price: 8,000 gp; **Weight:** 10 lbs.

Helm, Lifejammer: The *lifejammer helm* looks like a double-sided throne, with a seat extending from each side of a central back. Like a *spelljammer helm*, it grants any vessel on which it is installed the ability to fly at a rate determined by the vessel's size. The spellcaster sitting in the front half of the *lifejammer helm* controls the ship's movement, while the character sitting in the back half provides the life-energy that powers the helm. Each

hour of travel inflicts Constitution damage to the character providing the life-energy needed by the helm. A character reduced to 0 Constitution by a *lifejammer helm* becomes a dried, withered husk.

A *minor lifejammer helm* can grant flight to any spelljamming vessel up to a maximum size of Huge and inflicts 1 point of Constitution damage per hour of operation. A *major helm* can power a vessel up to Colossal size and inflicts 1d4 points of Constitution damage per hour of operation.

Caster Level: 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Spelljammer Helm, Craft Wondrous Item, *air walk* or *fly*, *vampiric touch*; *Market Price:* 15,000 gp (*minor*); 40,000 gp (*major*); *Weight:* 500 lbs.

Helm, Spelljammer: The standard *spelljammer helm* takes the form of a large, heavy throne-like chair. When installed on a vessel, the *spelljammer helm* grants that vessel the ability to fly at a rate determined by the vessel's size. The *spelljammer helm* may be operated by any spellcaster seated upon it.

A *minor spelljammer helm* can grant flight to any spelljamming vessel up to a maximum size of Huge, while a *major helm* can power a vessel up to Colossal size.

Caster Level: 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Spelljammer Helm, Craft Wondrous Item, *air walk* or *fly*; *Market Price:* 20,000 gp (*minor*); 50,000 gp (*major*); *Weight:* 500 lbs.

Artifacts

Crown of the Stars: This minor artifact is prized by spelljammer pilots throughout the system. It appears as little more than a golden circlet set with a single black diamond. Its wearer can control any spelljamming vessel he is on, just as if he were sitting in a standard *spelljammer helm*. It even overrides the power of any other helm on board the ship. If two characters wearing *crowns of the stars* aboard the same ship simultaneously attempt to exert control, the winner of an opposed level check (including each character's Charisma modifier) gains control for one minute.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 1 lb.

Table 17: Goods and Services

Adventuring Gear

Item	Cost	Weight
Airsuit, Small	100 gp	5 lb.
Airsuit, Medium-size	200 gp	10 lb.
Airsuit, Large	400 gp	20 lb.
Airsuit filter	50 gp	1 lb.
Gunpowder, horn	30 gp	1.5 lb.
Gunpowder, keg	240 gp	20 lb.

Transportation

Item	Cost
Delivery, planet-to-planet	10 gp
Spelljammer passage	25 gp (berth) 250 gp (cabin)



Spelljammer helms.

CHAPTER FOUR

SETTING

Spelljammer: *Shadow of the Spider Moon* describes the activity in a single star system occupied by several sentient races and a wide range of other strange creatures. Each of the celestial bodies in the system has its own climate, set of characteristics, and (if appropriate) dominant species.

The Pyre

At the center of the system lies The Pyre, the fiery body that warms and illuminates the inner worlds. Some claim the Pyre is a gate to the Elemental Plane of Fire, while others claim it was once a world like any other, but infernal magics cursed it to an eternity aflame. Salamanders, mephits, and other fiery creatures live here.

Climate and Terrain

The Pyre is almost entirely composed of elemental fire. Superheated smoke and vapor collects in deadly toxic clouds. A few rocky earthbergs even float through the upper atmosphere, blasted and half-molten from the incredible heat.

Some of the larger bergs provide shelter to creatures incapable of surviving the temperatures here. Indeed, rumors persist of island-sized rocks that hide small networks of caverns that hold lost treasure, concealed pirate outposts, or even wizards' lairs. Of course, reaching one of these bergs—

assuming you even know where to find it—is hazardous in the extreme.

First, any object within the Pyre's upper atmosphere suffers 2d10 points of fire damage per round of exposure and must make a Reflex save (DC 15) each round to avoid catching fire.

Second, the smoky atmosphere limits normal sight to a range of 120 feet (except for creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Fire with the elemental (fire) or outsider (fire) type and subtype, who can see up to 240 feet). Thus, a pilot must remain constantly wary for obstacles hiding in the fiery haze.

Third, natural hazards such as steam clouds and rains of ash are common in the atmosphere. A steam cloud has a radius of anywhere from 100 to 1,000 feet and inflicts an additional 1d10 points of fire damage per minute spent within it. Rains of hot ash move in like a stormcloud, lasting 2d10 minutes (and inflicting an additional 1d10 points of fire damage per round) before drifting off or burning out.

Denizens

As might be expected, only those creatures that can withstand the awesome heat of the Pyre live here. Salamanders of all sizes are common residents, as well as fire, magma, and steam mephits. Some of the larger earthbergs hide the lairs of red, brass, and gold dragons. Rumors persist of fire giant enclaves scattered about, and the efreet are said to have an outpost in the upper atmos-

phere. Surprisingly, few true elementals are encountered here.

If you have access to the *Manual of the Planes*, you can populate the Pyre with additional fire element creatures, such as wyverns, manticores, dragons, giant eagles, and pegasi.

Resources

The Pyre has virtually no natural resources to offer explorers. Some earthbergs may contain veins of gemstones or precious metals.

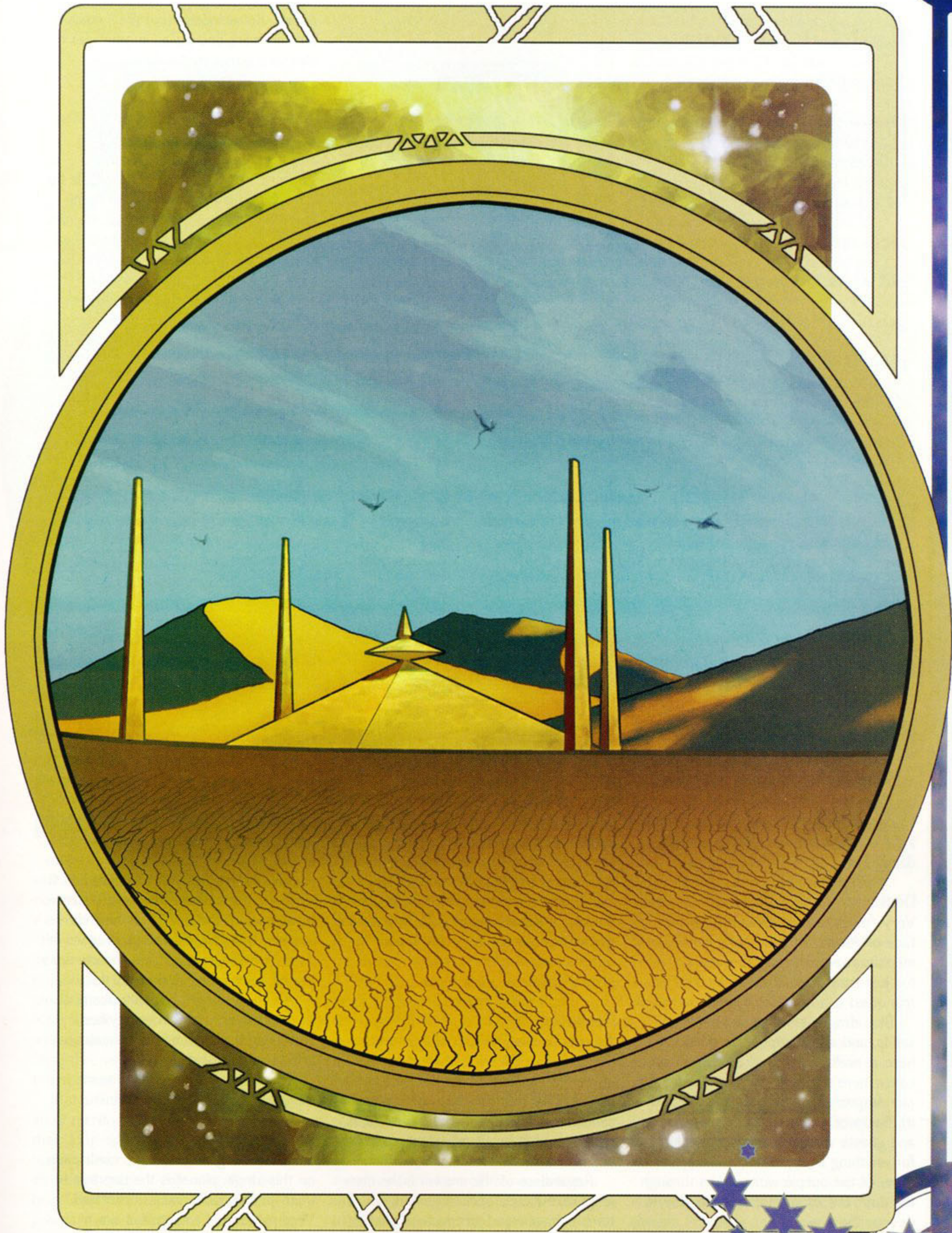
Ashen: A World of Dust

Closest to the fiery sun is Ashen, a searing hot world covered by a desert of white dust. Whatever once lived on this planet—and the half-buried pyramids give silent voice to some culture existing here long ago—has been dead and gone for eons. Despite their age, these ruins continue to attract treasure seekers from across the system, for the hoards of magic hidden beneath the sands are legendary.

Climate/Terrain

Ashen is hot, dry, and dusty. Daytime temperatures on this desert world average 120 degrees F, and can reach as high as 150 degrees. This heat can have deadly effects (see Chapter 3 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for details).

However, at night the temperature drops rapidly, sometimes going as low as 60 degrees. This sudden temperature



Lost City of Spires

Somewhere in the southern hemisphere of Ashen, in an area known for particularly harsh dust storms, hides a collection of towers mostly buried in the sand. Despite the name (given to it by a human explorer long ago) no one knows what purpose these structures once served. Were they part of a great metropolis of the ancients? Did they, as some sages claim, serve as a great cosmological timepiece, tracking the movements of the planets and stars in the sky? Do they mark the tombs of long-dead kings and emperors? Or did they perhaps once function as docks and landing bays for pre-spelljamming starships?

Because of the dearth of landmarks on Ashen, finding the Lost City of Spires is an extraordinary challenge. Even assuming that the last sandstorm hasn't swallowed up the towers completely, those who would seek this place—whether for knowledge or plunder—have their work cut out for them. And, if you can believe those who claim to have delved into the towers, the denizens include the foulest of undead, aberrations, and worse.

shift often creates howling duststorms (as described in Chapter 3 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, except that 25% of these storms inflict subdual damage, not 10%).

Denizens

Very few creatures exist on the surface of Ashen. At least one clan of dust mephits roams the surface, searching for lost treasures. Their chief rival in this quest is a nomadic band of jann.

Blue dragons lurk under the dusty sands, and a few copper dragons live here as well (if you find a safe-looking cave, there's a good chance that a copper dragon either lives or has lived in it). Packs of withered, hungry ghouls and ghouls wander the desert, looking for anything living. Sand-dwelling versions of the purple worm swim through the dust, breaching the surface only to devour the unwary.

A wider variety of creatures is found in the buried (and thus protected) ruins that dot the surface. Bodaks and mummies haunt cursed sites. Monstrous spiders spin webs in dark caverns. Magically bound fiends wait eventual release at the hands of unlucky treasure-seekers. Destrachans, gricks, hydras, lamias, ropers, and other strange beasts lurk in underground lairs.

Resources

Ashen's primary resource is its mystery. What reduced this world to its current state? Who built the pyramids and obelisks that now lie crumbling and sandblasted? Who created the magical treasures that brave adventurers pull out of the sands year after year?

Regardless of the answers, the clarion call of riches beckons explorers, tomb robbers, and loremasters alike to

Ashen. Some indeed find their goals, but far more end up as another set of bleached bones in the dust.

Verdura:

The Jungle Planet

The first truly habitable world is Verdura, covered from pole to pole by lush, thick tropical jungles and dominated by reptilian beasts of all sizes and shapes. Once a thriving center of civilization, the mighty temples of Verdura have long since crumbled under pressure from the tendrils of the jungle. The depraved yuan-ti rule this planet, though their influence is admittedly limited beyond their small territories.

Climate/Terrain

Warm jungles and marshes cover almost the entire planet of Verdura. Fully two-thirds of the planet is covered by land, with only a few shallow seas and numerous small lakes dotting the world. A half-dozen mountain peaks protrude from the treeline, but none of these tower more than 10,000 feet.

During the summer, the daytime high temperature can reach 120 degrees F, but a more common temperature is 80 to 100 degrees. The evenings cool slightly, but the jungles trap the heat effectively, keeping nighttime lows at 70 degrees or more.

Denizens

Verdura is a reptilian paradise. Serpents, lizards, and even dinosaurs of all shapes and sizes roam the sweltering jungles. Basilisks, behirs, couatls, hydras, shocker lizards, and wyverns are all native to Verdura. True dragons are exceedingly rare here—the yuan ti largely exterminated these great creatures back at the height of their civilization—though a few black dragons lair deep in rotting meres. The shallow seas are often ruled by dragon turtles.

A wide variety of deadly plants also thrive on Verdura. Assassin vines, shambling mounds, and tendriculoses are all relatively common.

The most significant natives of Verdura, though, are the yuan-ti.

Civilizations

The only thing resembling a civilization on this jungle planet is the depraved yuan-ti. This fallen race once ruled Verdura—and, if the stories are true,



reached beyond this world as well—but now are only a corrupted shadow of their former glory.

Today, the great cities of the yuan-ti lie in ruin, overtaken by the encroaching jungles. Here and there, great temples dedicated to the yuan-ti god of Merrshaulk poke from the treetops, while snakes slither through the crumbling throne rooms of long-dead yuan-ti emperors.

But still the yuan-ti survive, ruling small territories a mere fraction of their long-ago size. No longer truly human either in appearance or mindset, these evil serpent-folk cling to the belief that they can once again rise to power. Yuan-ti abominations plot epic

plans of conquest, but the creatures' innate chaos continues to prove their downfall as infighting, treachery, and simple bloodthirstiness continues to rule the day.

But what toppled the yuan-ti empire? Some scholars claim that demonic influence is to blame, perhaps even naming Merrshaulk as a demon prince rather than true god. Others believe that the yuan-ti trifled with magical power beyond their control, and that even today the remnants of that magic lie hidden beneath the jungles and marshes. Still others point to the physical nature of the yuan-ti as a clue, suggesting that ill-fated breeding programs with reptilian creatures are

to blame for their corruption. Even the elves, the oldest of the current cultures of the system, can't say for certain.

Resources

The jungles of Verdura provide many fine hardwoods used in construction, shipbuilding, and furniture. Skins of the various reptilian beasts fetch good prices in many markets. And of course, the ancient ruins of the yuan-ti lure many who seek to recover the ancient artifacts that once powered this fallen civilization.

Quelya:

A Watery World

Third from the sun orbits the watery world of Quelya, studded by long chains of islands crisscrossing her blue face. Humans and halflings rule the surface of this world, gathered into merchant clans that lay claim to various archipelagos. Beneath the still waters lurk the evil sahuagin, who believe themselves rightful owners of the entire planet. Stories tell of even greater evil in the deepest parts of the oceans.

Climate/Terrain

The ocean covers more than 90% of Quelya's surface. Broad continental shelves make for vast shallow seas in most cases, though great abyssal chasms plunge miles into the dark depths.

The climate of Quelya ranges from tropical (in a wide band around the equator) to temperate (between the equator and polar regions) to cold (in the world's small polar areas). Temperatures don't vary much from season to season due to the moderating influence of the ocean—temperate regions enjoy temperatures from 50 to 80 degrees year-round, while tropical regions range from 60 to 100 degrees.

Storms are common sights on Quelya, particularly during the late spring when hurricanes are most prevalent. Such weather can strip an island bare of buildings and construction in mere hours, so most Quelyans have storm shelters to which they can retreat.

With no moon, Quelya's tidal action is almost nil. The passing of nearby planets (Verdura and Perianth) has a

Freehold of Lagos

One of the largest settlements on Quelya, Lagos is a city dedicated to mercantilism. Visitors have likened the freehold to an enormous bazaar, packed into a walled compound. It is true that the number of permanent structures in Lagos can be counted on the fingers of one hand, but locals point to that as a strength, rather than a weakness. After all, with powerful storms and sahuagin raids commonplace, it only makes sense to build a city that you can pack up and move in a matter of hours.

Despite the transitory appearance of Lagos, this place offers tremendous opportunities for merchants, traders, and tourists alike. Unlike Discord (see below), Lagos is warm, friendly, and generally safe (thanks to strict agreements between the various merchant guilds and trade federations that operate here). Instances of crime are generally restricted to petty theft, grift, and the occasional fraudulent sale.

Depending on the season, Lagos can swell to the size of a large city or shrink to a large town. Statistics are given for the middle of that range.

Lagos: (small city): Nonstandard; AL LG; 15,000 gp limit; Assets 7,500,000 gp; Population 10,000; Mixed (human 79%, halfling 9%, elf 5%, half-elf 3%, gnome 2%, dwarf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Guildmaster Nena Stallos, female human Exp13 (the most influential of the guildmasters).

Important Characters: Gileas Rumblefoot, male halfling Ari8 (wealthiest individual in town), N; Cinster Fenn, male human Exp11 (another guildmaster), LN; "Nails" Yursh, female half-orc War11 (captain of the guard), LG; Marwyn Lightbringer, male human Clr10 (high priest of Pelor), NG; Umarta Ryad, female human Ftr8/Exp4 (weaponsmith), CG; Talia, female half-elf Rog12 (fence), CN; Drok Malov, male dwarf Wiz8 (seller of potions and scrolls), N.

minor, but noticeable, influence on weather patterns.

Denizens

As one might expect, most life on Quelya is aquatic or at least amphibious. Fish of every conceivable variety swim in Quelya's planet-spanning ocean. Sharks, octopuses, and squids are all common, though no marine mammals (such as seals, dolphins, or whales) exist on Quelya. The largest known aquatic predator is the dire shark, which has been known to attack small and mid-sized boats.

Some mariners claim to have seen giant squid, and others believe that krakens lair in the deepest ocean canyons. Storm giants occasionally lay claim to entire islands.

Three humanoid races call Quelya home: the humans, halflings, and sahuagin (see below).

Civilizations

The humans and halflings share the sparse land available to them. In most cases, the two races live as one, with little or no social distinctions between them. Only a very few all-human or all-halfling settlements exist, a testament to the two races' ability to cooperate. Most villages and towns center around a single merchant clan, which dominates daily life in most ways. Larger towns and cities bring up to a dozen merchant clans together to share power in a tenuous balance.

Halfling lore speaks of a time when they had to defend themselves against the sahuagin without the help of "big folk," which suggests that the two races haven't always lived together. However, they seem happy now to have the larger and more powerful humans around for defense against sahuagin raids.

For their part, the halflings tend to gravitate toward positions of monetary influence within this shared society. Thus, many of the merchant clans of Quelya are controlled—either directly or indirectly—by halflings.

Humans seem more comfortable in the role of defender of the surface territories. Often content to leave financial or business matters to the halflings, the humans prefer a more active lifestyle.

The other civilization found on Quelya exists entirely beneath the waves. The vast empires of the sahuagin

include most of the planet within their territories. These natural predators see themselves as rightful rulers of Quelya and loathe the surface-dwelling humans and halflings. Only the never-ending territorial wars between various sahuagin kingdoms and baronies prevent them from becoming a unified force capable of wiping out their surface enemies. Even so, their predations are a constant threat to the humans and halflings.

Resources

The teeming ocean of Quelya provides a bounty of fish, far more than needed to feed the natives. The shipwrights of Quelya are legendary for their aptitudes, a necessity on this dangerous world.

Like the other planets in this system, Quelya has its share of ruins said to hold vast treasures. Most of these ruins lie on the shallow ocean floor. The sahuagin make no claim to these structures—indeed, most shun them as profane sites—suggesting that either another aquatic culture once built these sunken towers and temples, or that vast areas of the continental shelf once sat above sea level. Regardless of their origins, they attract many treasure-seekers willing to brave the fearsome denizens of the deep.

Perianth:

A Planetary Forest

Perianth, the last of the inner planets, is dominated by thick, ancient forests. The elves rule here, as they have for millennia, in quiet grace and dignity. However, behind the façade of serenity lies a churning turmoil of political intrigue, as various noble houses angle for power.

Climate/Terrain

Vast forests cover most of Perianth. Crystal-blue lakes and small seas dot the terrain, but make up no more than 30% of the total area of the planet. The forests are a mix of evergreens, including mighty sequoias, fragrant cedars, yews, firs, and pines, and deciduous trees, such as tall oaks, maples, and alders. In these old-growth regions, such trees grow to truly massive size and girth, creating a canopy that shields the forest floor below in eternal twilight.

The climate of Perianth seems trapped in perpetual autumn, as cool, crisp mornings give way to bright, comfortable days. During the day, temperatures range from 50 to 70 degrees, dropping to the low 40s or 30s during the night. Only the polar forests know freezing weather for more than a few days each year.

Denizens

The forests of Perianth feature a variety of animals and beasts, from rabbits and elk to dire badgers and giant eagles. Many predators stalk the woods as well, including wolves, bears, griffons, monstrous spiders, and displacer beasts. Green dragons lurk in hidden caves in dark places in the forest. Treants tend specific wooded areas like shepherds protecting their flock.

The world of Perianth is steeped in magic and mystery, and thus is a haven for fey creatures of all types. Dryads and pixies frolic in glades, while satyrs pursue nymphs near their watery homes.

Civilizations

The elves have ruled Perianth for untold generations. Over time, their culture became steeped in intrigue and deception. Rather than engaging in physical conflicts, the elven kingdoms spar with words and plots in the various royal courts, reception halls, and back rooms of the world.

No less than a dozen fiefdoms of significant size exist, and though nothing resembling a war has occurred on Perianth for over a thousand years, nonetheless these nations watch one another with a coolness that most other races reserve for their enemies. Each ruler keeps a network of spies—generally referred to as diplomats, ambassadors, cultural attachés, or consular

Temple of the Feathered Serpent

One of the more popular tales spun by explorers, corsairs, and treasure-seekers alike is the story of the Feathered Serpent of Verdura. Depending on who you listen to, this creature is either an ancient dragon, a capricious demon who grants wishes then devours your soul, or perhaps a slumbering god. Or maybe something else entirely.

What all the tales have in common is that the Feathered Serpent lives (or sleeps) in an enormous crumbling ziggurat on an island in the middle of a swampy lake. Most also include the existence of a mountain of silver and gold, left over from the days when the yuan-ti empire ruled the globe.

Other elements of the legend which may or may not be true include the presence of shambling undead beings with serpents' fangs, towering golems of brass, carnivorous vines encircling the island, and, of course, dire curses laid upon the ziggurat itself.

If this temple hides such a horde of treasure, why haven't the yuan-ti claimed it for their own? Maybe they have, and they merely spread the tales to draw more adventurers to their doom. Maybe they tried and failed, and even today plot future assaults upon the island. Or perhaps even the yuan-ti fear this place because of some link it has with their past.

Behind the facade of serenity on Perianth lies a turmoil of intrigue, as noble houses fight for power.

representatives—spread among his or her neighbors at all times.

Resources

The elven kingdoms of Perianth draw most of their trade with other worlds from controlled harvests of lumber. Most merchants would rather trade with the elves—despite that race's love of seemingly arbitrary taxes, tariffs, and duties—than risk the dangers of Verduran lumber.

In addition to lumber, Perianth enjoys a brisk trade in agricultural and herbal products. No other planet has such rich, nutritious soil capable of long growing periods and bountiful harvests. Though most elves disapprove of the growth in agriculture because of the linked necessity of clearcutting forest land for its use, few seem inclined to halt the process (probably for fear that the neighboring nations will simply take up the slack, and the income to be gained therefrom).

The Spider Moon: Reminder of a Dark Past

Gone but not quite forgotten from Perianth are the dark elves, banished to the Spider Moon that crawls across the starlit web of the heavens. Exiled to this grim prison ages ago, the dark elves plot their cold revenge upon those who wronged them.

Climate/Terrain

The Spider Moon appears much as a twisted reflection of its parent, Perianth. Where Perianth has lush, thick forests, the Spider Moon has only scraggly thickets dotting the landscape. The comfortable, temperate climate of Perianth is replaced here by cold winds lashing the landscape. Rough peaks and crags suggest that the Spider Moon is a far younger and rougher world than Perianth. It also boasts extensive networks of caves.

Denizens

Few creatures are native to this harsh world. Wolves and worgs prey upon elk and other herbivores. Carrion crawlers, owlbears, gricks, monstrous centipedes, spider eaters, and other strange beasts roam both above and below the surface of the planet. A few tribes of ogres,

The Royal Court of Fleuris

The Duchy of Fleuris, a medium-size fiefdom near Perianth's equator, looks to outsiders like nothing more than a typical elven territory. But the quiet grace on the surface hides one of the most complicated webs of deceit, intrigue, and political machinations on all of Perianth.

The royal family of Fleuris is one of the more decadent among the elves. Rumors have floated for centuries about the family's dabbling in damnable perversions, illicit narcotics, and demonology. More than one courtier has whispered of fiendish blood running in the family's veins. And the family certainly has more than its share of bastard children (most of them half-elves) scattered between the worlds. But through it all (or perhaps, in part, because of these practices), the noble house of Fleuris has sustained its power and influence.

Are all of these tales true, or is the House of Fleuris simply the victim of rumormongering and malevolent gossip? And what of the recent story that House Fleuris has begun financially supporting frequent explorations of Verdura? Do these nobles seek the lost artifacts of the yuan-ti, or is something more dire in store?

If one of the PCs in the campaign is a half-elf, linking that character's heritage to House Fleuris provides an unending supply of adventure hooks.

ettins, and hill giants eke out a bare existence here.

When the dark elves came here, they brought with them many creatures that served them as allies, pets, or beasts of burden, including araneas, ettercaps, displacer beasts, and of course, monstrous spiders. These new arrivals have since spread across the moon.

Civilizations

The drow occupy the role of dominant species here, though their grasp stretches only so far as their power and sheer will allows. Banished here thousands of years ago, the drow have stoked the cold fires of vengeance since the day of their arrival. But trapped without spelljamming technology or the knowledge to build the ships required to



free themselves, the dark elves have had no outlet for their hatred . . . until today.

Resources

The Spider Moon has virtually no resources worth mentioning. It is unfit for agriculture, and its minerals are few and hard to refine. The only substance in abundance on the Spider Moon is fury—the fury of the drow, waiting some method of focus and harvesting.

The Chain of Tears:

A Ruined World

The asteroid belt known as the Chain of Tears separates and protects the inner worlds from the harsh environment

beyond. Reputedly once a planet in its own right, the Chain now provides homes to creatures of all varieties, though it is most famous for three groups of inhabitants: gnomes, supposedly the original natives of the world that became the Chain; pirates, who use the chaotic swirl to hide their caches and bases; and the insectlike formians, whose colonizers continue to spread across a wide swath of the Chain.

Climate/Terrain

If a belt of asteroids can be said to have a climate, this one is uniformly cold and stark. Most of the rocks hurtling along in this region boast little more than a few patches of lichen,

though some larger planetoids feature a few bent and twisted trees clinging to life.

Denizens

Despite the harsh prospects of survival, the Chain of Tears has small pockets of life scattered throughout. Virtually all such creatures were transported here from other worlds, whether intentionally or unwittingly. Spelljamming sailors warn of nondescript asteroids home to ship-devouring purple worms. Monstrous spiders spin webs in dark caves. Oozes scour the rocks for sustenance.

Undead haunt the Chain of Tears with a density unseen on any other world. Whether this is due to the echoes of intense emotion left from the destruction of the gnome homeland, or whether these are the spirits of the countless sailors who have met their end here, it remains true that any ship passing through the region had best bring a cleric along to handle the inevitable encounters with shadows, wraiths, spectres, ghosts, and nightshades, not to mention the legendary “deadships” crewed by skeletons, zombies, and worse.

Civilizations

Long ago, the gnomes called the planet that would become the Chain of Tears home. Today, this region remains the largest concentration of the gnomish people, though they now wander the asteroids in search of anything they can salvage. Some gnomes have settled down on larger asteroids, turning them into bases of operations from which they can launch exploratory missions while also having a safe haven to which they can retreat.

One of the larger asteroids is home to the “city” known as Discord, where scoundrels, spacehands, and fortune-hunters of all stripes rub shoulders. This metropolis packs its inhabitants into tight quarters both above and below the surface of the asteroid. Here a visitor can find virtually anything he or she seeks, from weapons to ships to food to magic. Black marketeers provide illicit goods, such as poison and slaves.

The newest addition to the Chain of Tears are the insectlike formians. Colonists from some far-off world or

The Dark City of Xogotha

If the drow can be said to have a capital city, Xogotha is probably it. And if you believe the whispered tales, this foul pit may be the most depraved and hateful place on all the planets.

Put simply, Xogotha is a nightmare of urban filth and decay, ruled over by spiteful queen, and populated by the sinister and the murderous. Thousands of dark elves and their slaves are packed into a great cavern, huddled in makeshift hovels clustered around five great stone towers that hold up the ceiling far above. These towers, in turn, house the wealthy and powerful of Xogotha, who use their might to squeeze loyalty (of a sort) and tribute (when they can) from those below.

Characters might come to Xogotha (assuming they could even find it) in search of contraband, dark rumors, or even potential allies against the dark elves or the illithids. For even in a city of pure evil, there are always those willing to change sides for the right price.

Xogotha (large city): Nonstandard; AL NE; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 40,000,000 gp; Population 20,000; Isolated (drow 96%, human 2%, half-elf 1%, other 1%).

Authority Figures: Queen Wyclara, female drow Wiz13, NE; High Priestess Vuthonis, female drow Clr15 (Lolth), CE.

Important Characters: Xanoi Han, male drow Ftr8/Rog5/Asn4 (captain of the guard), LE; Royal Consort Thyam, male drow Ari5/Brd1/Rog4, NE; Hlississ, male illithid Wiz5 (royal advisor), LE; Guildmaster Fitch, male drow Exp7/Rog3/Asn1, CE.

dimension, the formians have found the asteroid belt to their liking, as the rocks provide perfect locations for hive-cities. In only a few decades, the formians have leapfrogged from asteroid to asteroid, spreading their influence across a wide swath of the belt. Wherever they have encountered resistance, the formians have simply overwhelmed such creatures with sheer numbers. Only the fact that the formians seem largely uninterested in branching out their colonization efforts to the other planets of the system has prevented them from becoming a threat to other civilizations.

Resources

The Chain of Tears has three forms of resources of interest. First are the abundant minerals found in the asteroids themselves. Many miners who dared the cold darkness have found rich rewards—though far more find only death.

The second resource of the region is the city of Discord. Anything and everything imaginable is for sale here—as the saying goes, “If you can’t buy it on Discord, you haven’t looked hard enough.”

The third resource of abundance goes unnoticed by most. Where the average spacegoer sees junk, the keen-eyed salvager seeks riches. The sheer variety of garbage strewn throughout the belt—everything from ancient leftovers of the destroyed planet that once orbited here, to the wreckage of countless ships, to the massive quantities of trash left behind by those who live or have come through here—represents a treasure trove to those with the patience to find it and discover its value.

Moradin's Forge:

A World Lost

Beyond the Chain of Tears is the outer zone, where hurtling comets, deadly meteor showers, and stranger celestial phenomena endanger unwary travelers.

Perhaps most lethal of all is the simple bone-numbing cold of the region, as the Tears block most of the heat emanating from the Pyre.

The lone planet of any size in this area is a dark, mountainous world known to most in the system as Moradin's Forge (or more simply, the Forge). Though the frigid surface is generally uninhabitable to most species, the geothermally heated tunnels deep within the planet provide reasonable comfort. Once a place of unending conflict between the dwarves and orcs native to it, the Forge now lies in the iron grip of the invading illithids.

Climate/Terrain

Moradin's Forge is a cold, broken world. Craggy mountains and cratered chasms scar its face. Almost no liquid water exists on the surface, though the thick polar caps have enough to fill dozens of seas. Temperatures range from the mid-30s during a balmy summer day down to as low as -20 degrees in the long wintry nights.

Denizens

Almost no native life exists on the surface of Moradin's Forge. Only an occasional patch of lichen or other hardy vegetation suggests this is anything more than a dead world. Puddles of gray ooze slither along the rocks, searching for scraps of organic material.

Below the surface, however, is a different world. Vents belch forth volcanically heated steam, warming the tunnels and caverns to life-allowing (if not always life-nurturing) temperatures. A wide variety of lichens and fungi thrive here, creating the base of a subterranean ecosystem that also includes darkmantles, ropers, monstrous spiders, spider eaters, stone giants, and many other strange creatures.

Of course, creatures that don't rely on the typical food chain also exist on Moradin's Forge in numbers. Delvers, rust monsters, thoquas, xorns, and

**Moradin's Forge now lies in the
iron grip of the invading illithids.**



Veil

As its name suggests, the town of Veil exists in perpetual secrecy. Few non-dwarves have visited the place, and even fewer knew where they were when they did. All this mystery is necessary for one simple reason: Should the mind flayers and their minions learn of Veil's location, it would cease to exist within days.

For Veil serves as the nerve center, the heart, and the soul of the freedom movement to overthrow the illithid masters of Moradin's Forge. Here plans are laid that will be executed by resisters thousands of miles away—often without ever knowing who was responsible for their actions. Spies from Veil lurk in dark caves, on the outskirts of slave camps, and even in urban alleyways on distant planets, always looking for something to give them an edge against the foul mind flayers.

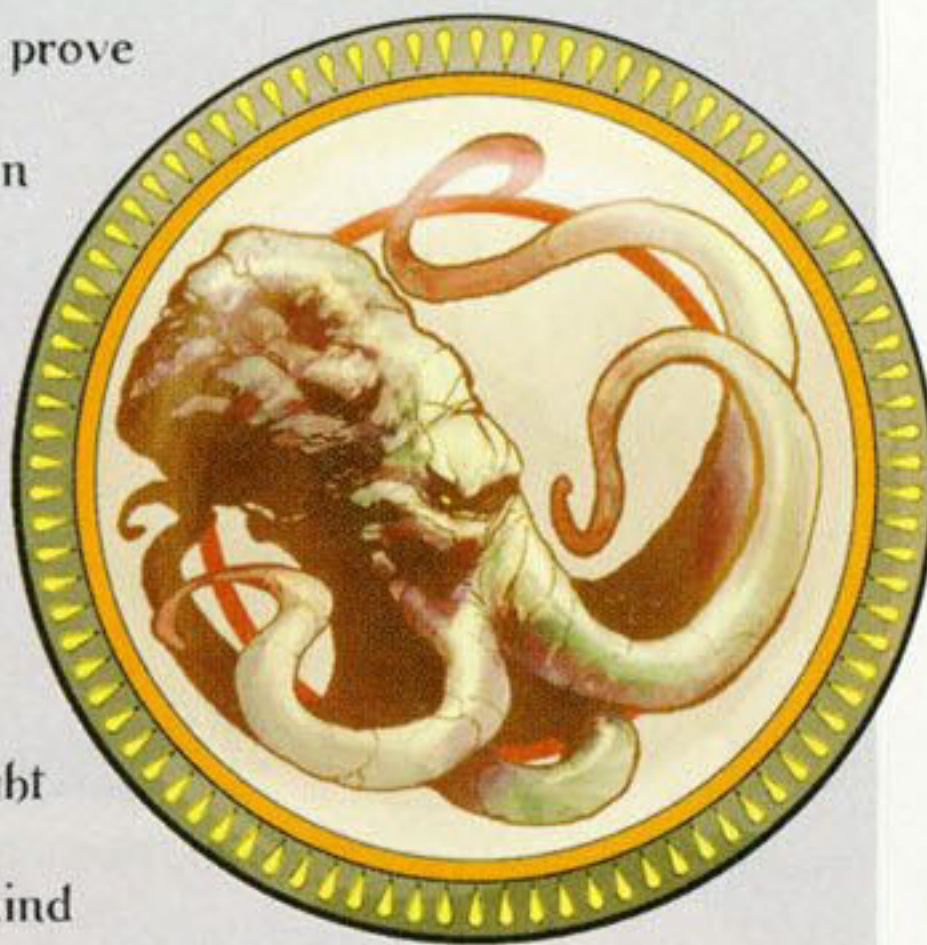
Characters who seek out Veil must prove their good intentions, often before even realizing they are doing so. Should they be fortunate enough to actually see the town, PCs will be welcomed into the network of freedom fighters, and may quickly find themselves caught up in a revolution against the hated mind flayers.

Veil (small town): Nonstandard; **AE NG**; 800 gp limit; **Assets** 48,000 gp; **Population** 1,200 (varies); **Isolated** (dwarf 96%, half-orc 2%, orc 1%, other 1%).

Authority Figures: Townmaster Helm Hammerfist, male dwarf

Ari2/Ftr6, NG.

Important Characters: Skall Ironfoot, male dwarf **Rog8** (spymaster), **CG**; Verda Silvereye, female dwarf **Clr5/Brd1/Storykeeper3**, **EN**; Kail, male half-orc **Rgr5/Rog3** (chief of security), **N**.



similar creatures feed on the very minerals or rocks themselves.

Two humanoid races are native to the Forge: dwarves and orcs (see below). A third sentient species, the mind flayers, arrived only recently, bringing their slaves, the grimlocks, along with them (see below).

Civilizations

For as long as the dwarves have kept their history, they have warred with the orcs. No one conceived of a time when that war might end without the complete eradication of one side or the other.

But no one could ever conceive of the evil known as the illithids. When the dreaded mind flayers first arrived on Moradin's Forge, the orcs thought that they had found the ally that would help them destroy the dwarves once and for all. Only after the armies of orcs, fortified by the addition of thousands of grimlock servants, had broken the backs of the dwarven people did the illithids show their true colors. The grimlocks turned on their one-time allies, and the mind flayers feasted on orc and dwarf brains alike. So total was this betrayal that even to this day, there are far fewer orcs remaining in the system than dwarves.

Some small enclaves of dwarves or orcs—numbering anywhere from a few dozen to several hundred—resist enslavement at the hands of the mind flayers and their grimlock warbands. In some rare cases, the orcs and dwarves even ally against their common foe. But when dwarf or orc allows himself to ponder the state of his world, only the most blindly optimistic sees any future that does not involve the illithids.

For their part, the mind flayers generally keep close to the surface to maintain access to their spelljammers. Surrounded by their loyal grimlock armies and served by dwarf, orc, and half-orc slaves, the illithids have begun to turn their attention toward the other worlds of the system.

Resources

Moradin's Forge has a vast wealth of mineral resources. Veins of copper, iron, gold, silver, mithral, adamantine, and various gemstones thread through the entire planet. Of course, with the illithid domination of the Forge, such resources tend to be extraordinarily difficult to retrieve.

CHAPTER FIVE

ENEMIES

Despite the relatively peaceful interaction between most sentient species of the system, a few races threaten the safety and freedom of all who call these worlds home.

Mind Flayers

The lawful evil mind flayers represent a presence so alien, so incomprehensible to the denizens of the system, that few can fathom their ultimate goals. Clearly, they seem bent on conquest, as demonstrated by their well-conceived assault of Moradin's Forge. They also have a powerful command of scientific disciplines, as exemplified by the breeding program that gave birth to the half-orc race.

But no one knows from where the mind flayers have come, or what brought them here. Most hope that the cold, dark Forge marks the extent of illithid influence in the system. Even with their grimlock army, the illithids don't appear to have the power necessary to threaten additional worlds.

Unfortunately, in this case appearance belies reality. The mind flayers present on Moradin's Forge are merely a forward scouting operation, sent here centuries ago from their far-distant sector of the galaxy. And they like what they have found.

Many centuries ago a mind flayer scoutship stumbled across an enormous colony ship—packed nearly to overflowing with slumbering humans—drifting through space on the outskirts of illithid territory. After sating their hunger with a few brains, the illithids reported their discovery. Soon, a force of mind flayers and grimlock warriors were dis-

patched to follow the colony ship's trail—wherever it came from, more luscious brains must await.

The mind flayers found Moradin's Forge a suitable point to begin their exploration and conquest of the system. Its cold, dark nature suited them well, and the ongoing conflict between the dwarves and orcs made the world ripe for exploitation.

When their breeding program, using captured orcs from Moradin's Forge and humans from the original colony ship, failed to produce a tractable servitor race, the illithids decided to seek out an ally. Though the formian hive-mind mentality seemed at first to present an attractive option, the formian queens proved far too dangerous to attempt to subvert. The limited capabilities and unpredictable natures of the sahuagin and yuan-ti made those races poor choices as allies.

And then the illithids made first contact with the drow of the Spider Moon, and an unholy alliance of evil was born. Gifting the dark elves with their *lifejammer* technology, the mind flayers liberated the drow from their age-old prison. The illithids had but one request: Find for us the power of the ancient civilizations, and we will help you crush your enemies.

For the illithids still desired to find out who had sent out the colony ship they discovered long ago. The humans of Quelya didn't have that capability, which meant that those responsible either no longer lived or were hidden somewhere in the system. But their relics remained, and these might give clues to their true power.

Drow

The neutral evil drow of the Spider Moon represent the most common and prevalent danger in the region. With their newfound spelljamming capability, the dark elves have started appearing in all corners of the system, from Ashen to Moradin's Forge.

While many fear that this is part of a push by the drow to conquer new worlds, what few realize is that the dark elves have undertaken a grand quest. They seek to recover the artifacts and relics of those civilizations that existed in the system in pre-historical times. From the buried pyramids of Ashen to the sunken citadels of Quelya, from the serpent-infested temples of Verdura to the lost treasures hidden in the Chain of Tears, the drow scour the system for these forgotten magics with the goal of reconstructing the power of the ancients.

The end goal of this quest is simple: vengeance. Above all else, the drow hunger for vengeance against the elves of Perianth. Their psyche has never recovered from the insult of their banishment to the Spider Moon, nearly a millennium ago. Until recently, this manifested in petty plots of cruelty and destruction wreaked upon their enemies. But now, with a greater purpose before them, the dark elves have rallied together like never before.

Yuan-Ti

Once a human-like race, the depraved yuan-ti mingled their essence with the serpents of their jungle world, becoming horrible hybrid creatures. No one truly remembers what the civilization of the yuan-ti resembled at its height, but

the ruthlessness of the chaotic evil serpentfolk is known far and wide.

Though few yuan-ti would admit it, deep down most yearn for a return to the days when theirs was the pre-eminent power in the region. Quietly remembered stories tell of a time when none rivaled the yuan-ti's might, and their magic reigned supreme.

But then something occurred, some horrible event or series of events that no one can (or wants to) remember. Whatever this cataclysmic occurrence was, it toppled the yuan-ti's place of dominance, shattering their civilization and crushing their dreams of power. Sages argue whether this event pre- or post-dated the yuan-ti's tainted bloodline, whether one caused the other, or even if the two are associated at all. One thing is for certain: the yuan-ti have never regained anything like their lofty position of long ago.

Today, the yuan-ti constantly scheme and plot, though their chaotic nature prevents these plans from reaching far beyond the next jungle valley. Each abomination believes itself to be the rightful ruler of the serpentfolk, and this internecine strife keeps the yuan-ti from becoming a threat to the system.

But great artifacts of power remain hidden in the jungle ruins, and who knows if the next great discovery might be enough to pull the yuan-ti up from their eternal struggle and direct their attention outward, back into the stars.

Formians

The most recent addition to the system, the formians present a wholly new threat to those they encounter. They exhibit none of the cruelty or bloodthirstiness common to other dangerous species (such as the dark elves or the yuan-ti). Instead, their single-minded approach and total lack of emotion renders bargaining or diplomatic approaches meaningless.

When you encounter a formian war party, you have two choices: fight or flee. And if a colonization party arrives in

your area, the first option is all but impossible.

The formians have but one goal: to spread colonies until every inch of territory belongs to them. They have no malice toward those in their way, but neither do they have any compunctions about conscripting or wiping out those who interfere with their colonization efforts. They are implacable, irresistible, and unstoppable.

Thankfully for most worlds, the formians seem to have limited their colonization to the asteroids of the Chain of Tears. Since most asteroids are uninhabited by sentient races, interactions between the formians and other races are limited. But when those interactions occur, most people agree with the philosophy of the gnomes—the race with the most formian contact—that the best plan is simply to pack up and get out of the way. After all, as long as you're alive, you can always find a new place to live.

Sahuagin

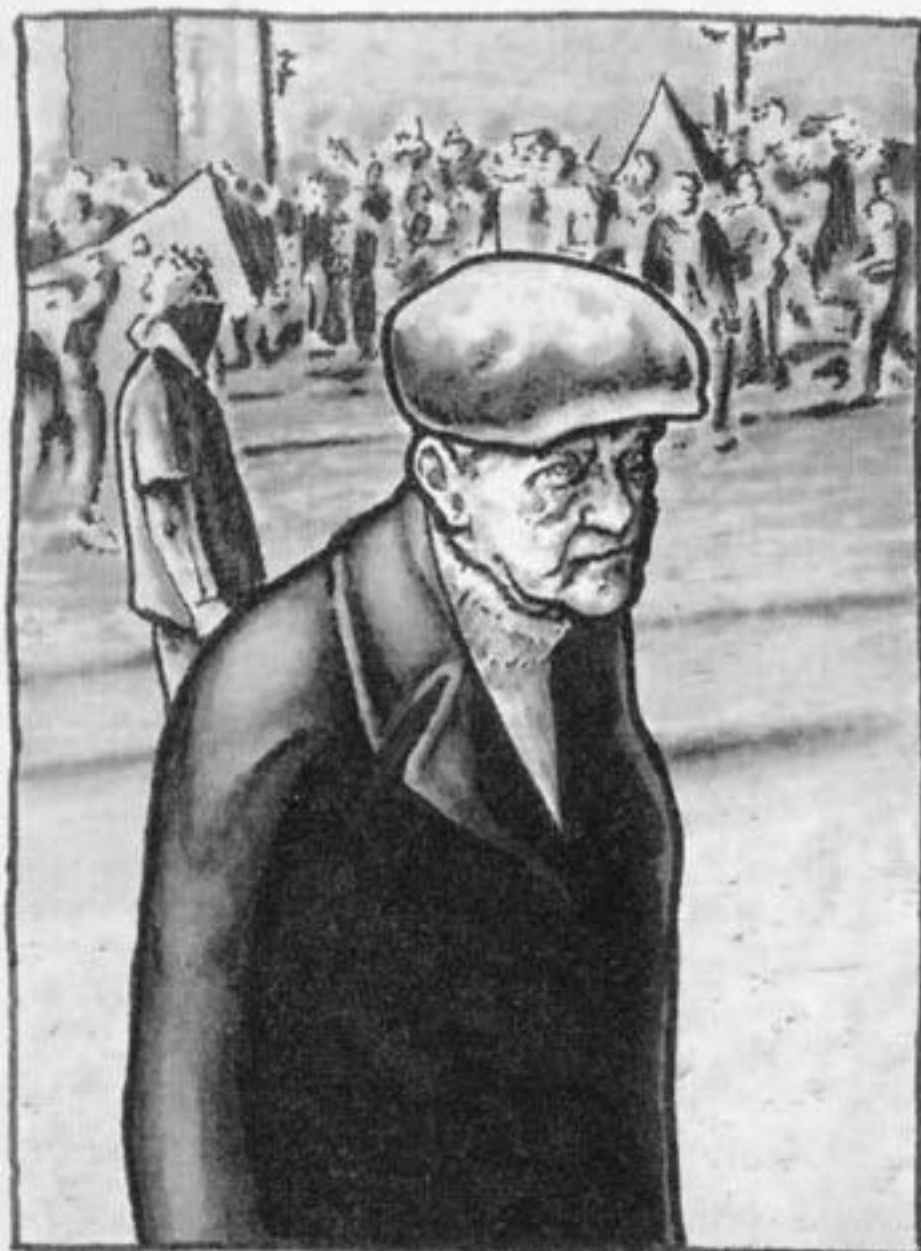
The predatory sahuagin live in strongly organized communities, each ruled by a powerful male. An ancient code of ritualized behavior controls everyday sahuagin life. Its chief tenet: total eradication of all that is not sahuagin.

As the oldest existing humanoid species on Quelya, the sahuagin believe that the watery planet (called Sahu in their culture) rightfully belongs to them. In fact, sahuagin lore makes the bold claim that the sea devils are the oldest humanoid species in the system, though few give this much credence—after all, how could the planet-bound sahuagin know anything about the natives of other worlds? Sahuagin thus view the halflings and humans as invaders, despite the fact that neither species truly infringes on territories capable of supporting sahuagin life. Sahuagin rangers usually choose humanoids (humans or halflings) as their first favored enemy.

To this end, the sahuagin take any opportunity to harry, sabotage, or destroy the human/halfling civilization that thrives on the long island chains of Quelya. This most often takes the form of night-time raids on the surface, though attacks on merchant vessels plying the ocean are common.

The sahuagin make no claim to the various ancient underwater ruins dotting Quelya. In fact, sahuagin clerics preach that these ruins are polluted, sacrilegious sites that must be shunned by sahuagin and surface-dweller alike.





We was talking about Briety Krizova right? I seen that picture of him last week in Time. Some guy snapped a photo of him in front of the Czech embassy with all those protestors. I could see it in his eyes...he's still there, back in the war, fighting the Nazis. Hell, he's still wearing the same hat I last saw him with in Paris in 1945. The guy's a legend. We did a lot together in the war, me and him. He was our ticket into Europe. With his power, any door in Axis Europe could spit out a half a dozen Commandos at any moment...

He was a nut, that guy. I mean, hell, I was indestructible. Briety he was just nuts. I could see it in that photo, he still is. I remember this time in Essen... Nevermind.



GODLIKE

There Were Giants in Those Days...

Part Two: Pevnost, the Fortress

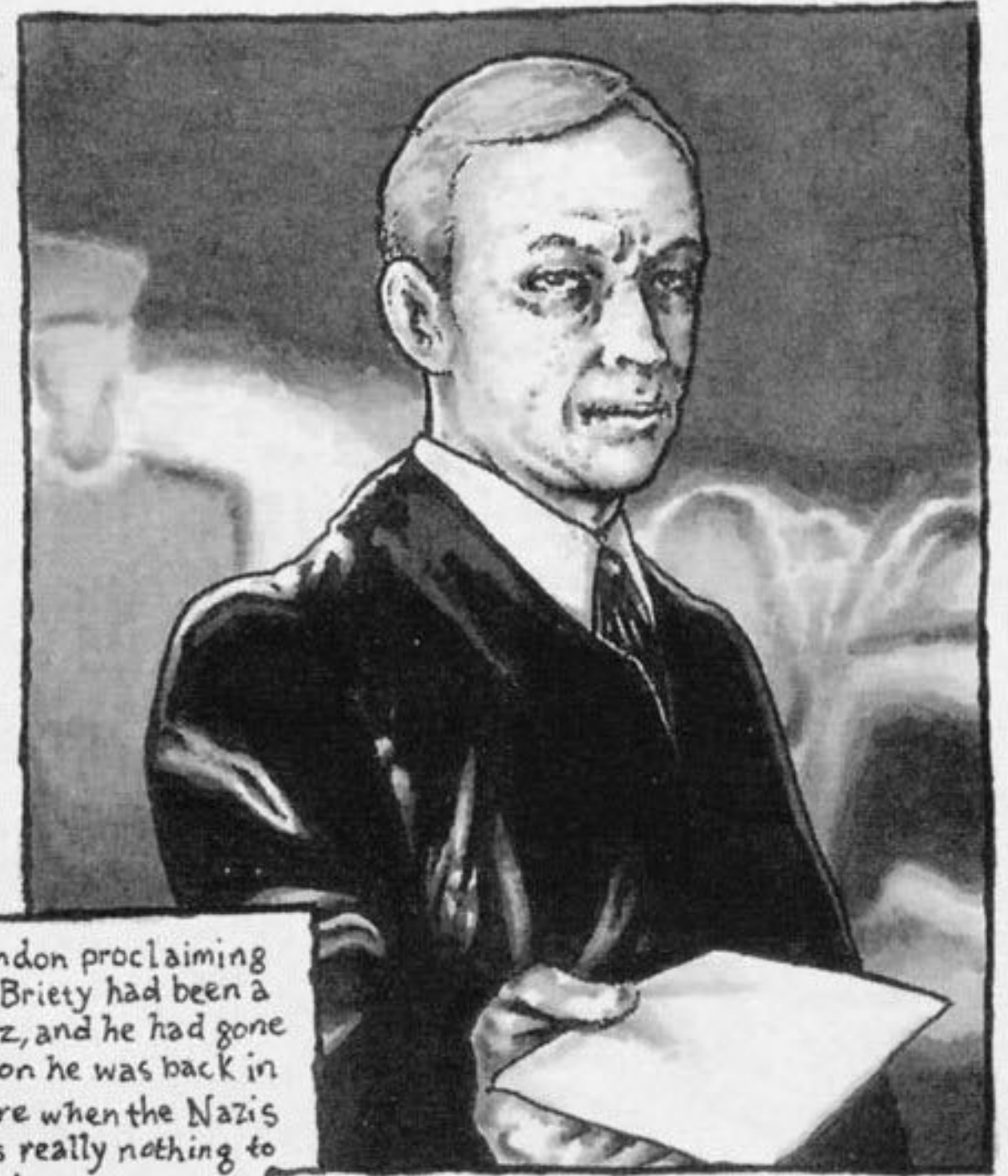


I know what you're thinkin', you're thinkin' I'm living in the past too, but it's different.

How's that Mr. Moreland?



I live in the past because it's when I was the "Indestructible Man." I live in the past because it's when I was great. Briety lives in the past 'cause it's all he's got left.



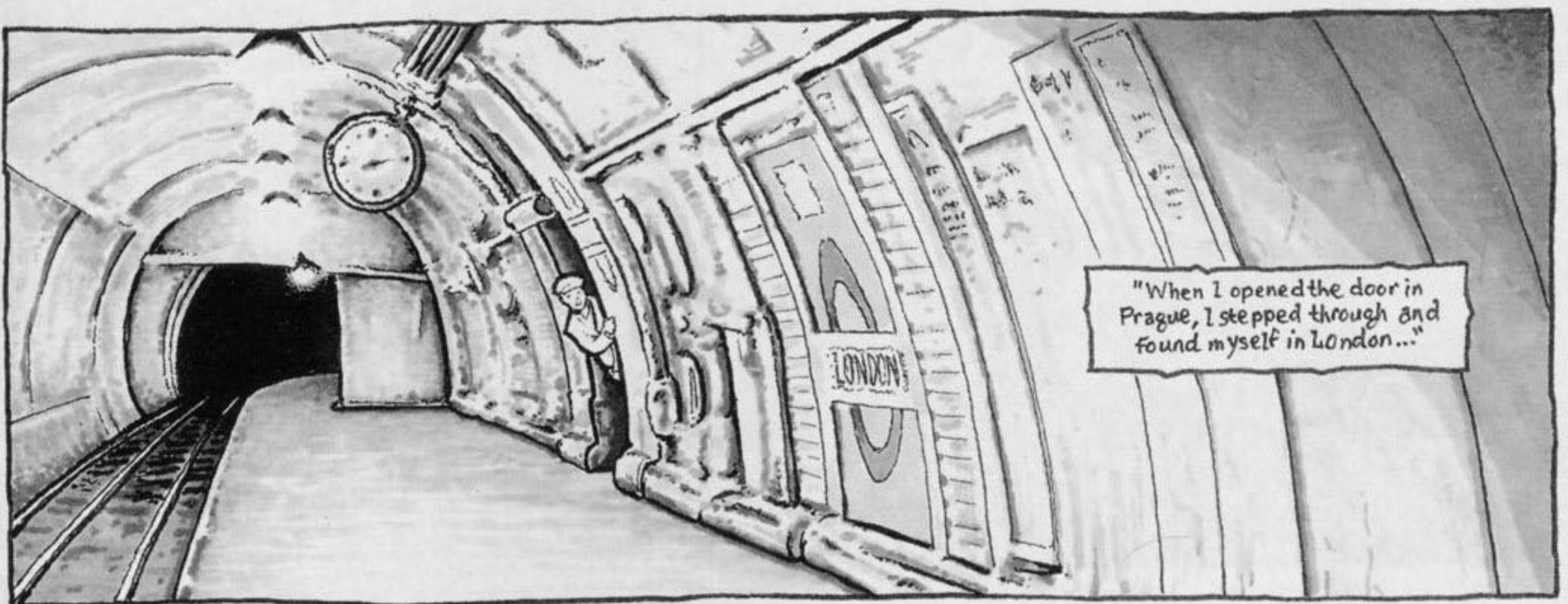
When Chamberlain signed away Czechoslovakia in 1938, and came back to London proclaiming "Peace in Our Time," the Gestapo was serving papers of their own—in Prague. Briety had been a member of the Czech Socialists, protested against the Nazis at college in Linz, and he had gone to London and Spain for various political missions—which was exactly the reason he was back in Prague. He flunked out of school due to his budding political career. He was there when the Nazis began rolling in. It was something he never thought would happen, but there was really nothing to be done. By the time Briety was ready to act, it was already too late...



The knock at the door came at seven the next morning. Briety felt it was almost flattering. The Gestapo had just taken over and he was already on the list. His options were few. He was on the second floor...



Briety told me once, "I could feel the nothingness on the other side of the door. I could see the void, so I tried to imagine somewhere safe on the other side. I tried to imagine something beyond the door other than the Gestapo, and a noose. I tried to remember what it felt like to be somewhere I knew was safe, and you know what?"



"When I opened the door in Prague, I stepped through and found myself in London..."

Briety turned himself in... or he tried to. He sat in the London constabulary for four hours while they ignored him. Since the appearance of the Nazi super-humans, people had been turning up all the time claiming to be the next super-human. That was Briety all over... polite. Wouldn't say you-know-what if he had a mouthful...
Once, in Berlin, he said "excuse me" to a guard, before shooting him...

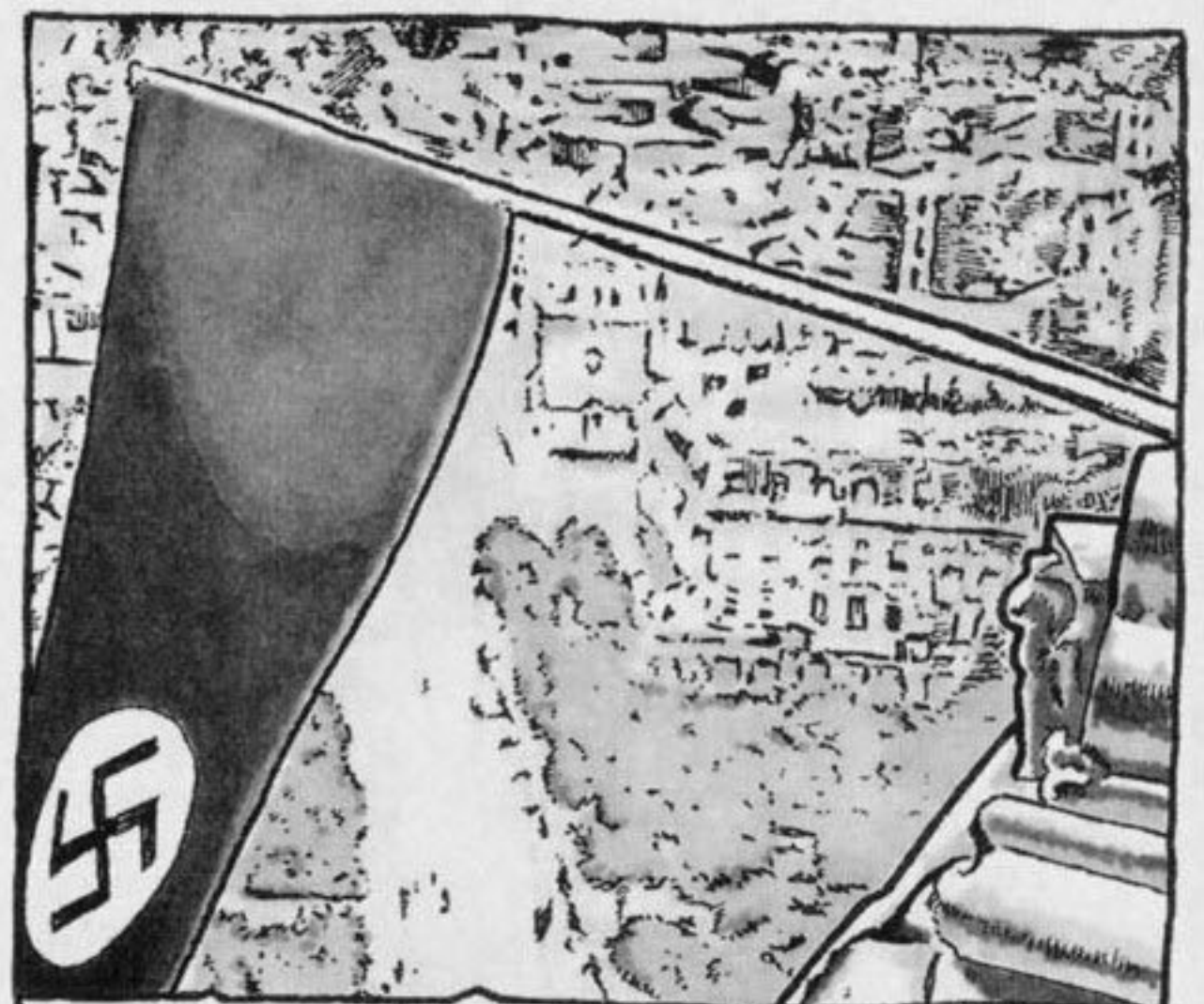


He finally got sick of waiting though, so he threw the door of the constabulary open — suddenly the south of France was on the other side of the door, instead of Fleet Street. From that point on, the situation exploded.



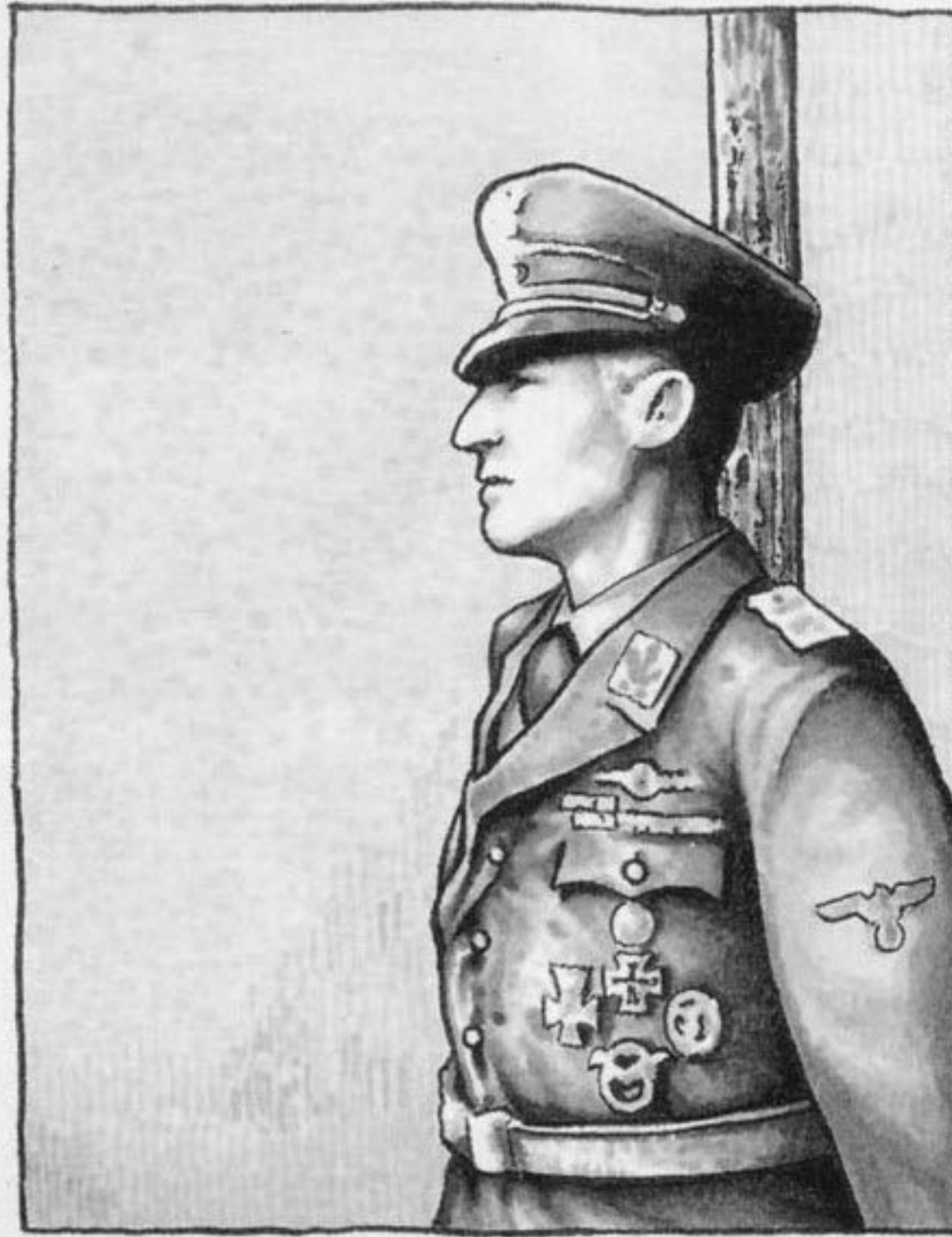
Briety became the scourge of the Nazis. With his power, he moved men and equipment into Axis occupied Europe, arming the resistance from England. He gained the name "Pevnost" or "Fortress" in his native tongue. He was the first good guy, the first hope that the Nazis were not the only ones with supers...

He was a God to the men and women who fought for him. Unlike other resistance groups, Briety's reach was enormous, and his plans were big.



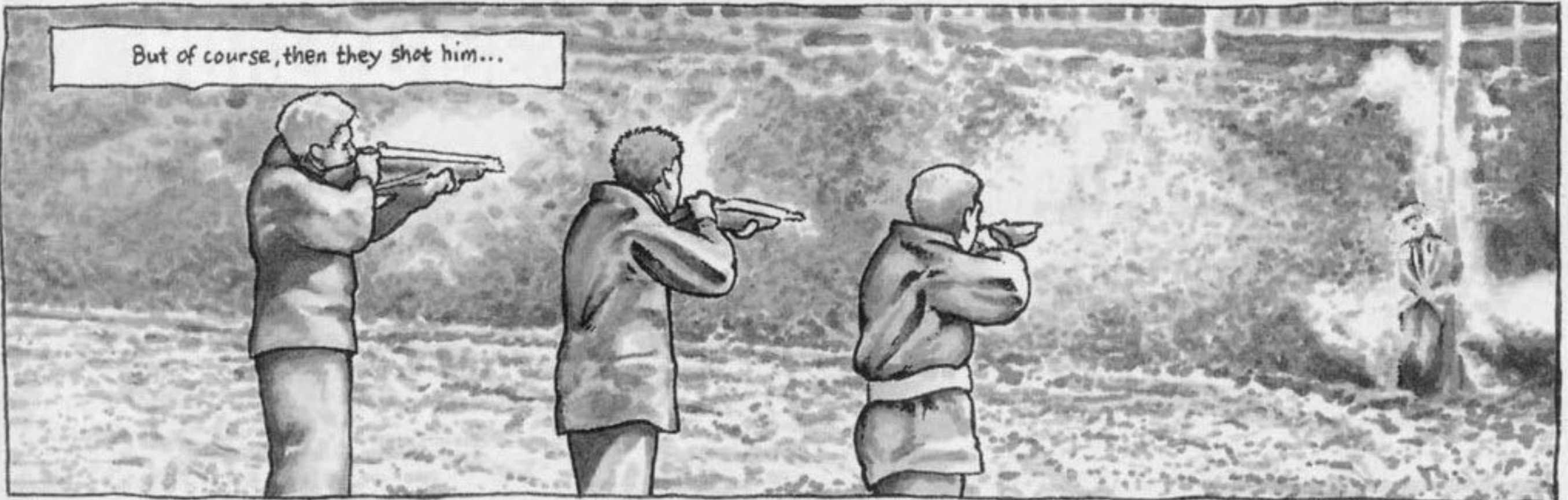
No one knew how big until the resistance seized Prague in the summer of 1941. The Nazis were stunned. Partisans and British Commandos poured from doors all over the city...

Imagine coming home in the impregnable heart of the German colonies in the east, to find a British Commando team. I can tell you, it didn't sit well with the Nazis. The Allies spread out into the town like a wave...



The Commandos siezed key military personnel, crippled communications, and effectively sealed off the city. The Nazi forces were stunned, the nearest reinforcements were three days out. Hitler, when informed, flew into a rage and called the prospect of a Allied super-man "preposterous." Reinhard Heydrich, the "Protector" of Czechoslovakia, took the raid well, or so Briety said... He never once begged, and only requested that he be allowed to don his dress uniform. Briety always said that Heydrich looked perfect that summer morning. With his medals and uniform and polished boots.

But of course, then they shot him...



It was a victory on so many levels, the raid. When Hitler moved the Das Reich division to Prague and threatened to level it, the Commandos disappeared back through the doors, just as they had arrived. When the Germans pushed through the barricades, the town was empty. Fifty-five high ranking Nazis had been killed by firing squads. Hitler was incensed. SS troops rounded up seven hundred Czech children and women, and two days after the uprising shot them in a cow field near Levzacky. Briety got the picture. The smiling happy kid from Prague limited his actions to military positions from that point on. Hitler held the country hostage. Briety, with all his power, could do nothing. It was a hard fact to swallow...



We were all like that. Us Talents. We thought we could do so much. We thought we could change it all. But in reality, the best we could do was pretend that we could... Eventually it caught up with you. There were Talents who never gave up though. Talents who fought and struggled and did it all...

Let me tell you about one of them...

Next Issue: Cien "The Shadow"

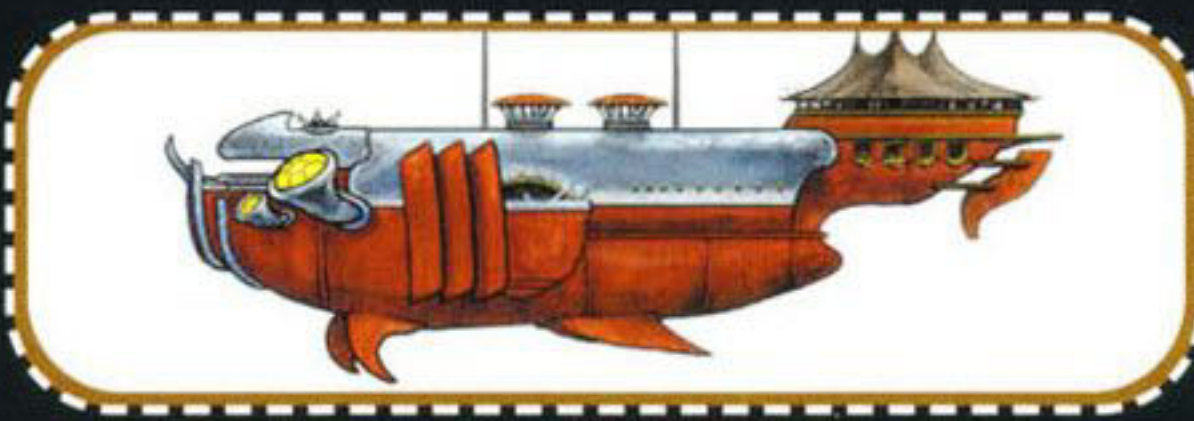
SPELLJAMMER SHIP COUNTERS

Polyhedron

Take your Spelljammer battles to the tabletop with these handy ship counters. You can play out space battles on a regular one-inch-square grid, with one inch representing 30 feet in the game. All ships have been presented here with the exact face/reach appropriate to the vessel in question as presented in Chapter 2: Space and Spelljamming. A few Awesome-sized ships have not been presented here, for space reasons. Permission is granted to photocopy this page for home game use only.



Tradesman (Human)



Hammership (Human)



Warbird (Elf)



Arrowwing (Elf)



Wreckship (Gnome)



Spinneret (Drow)



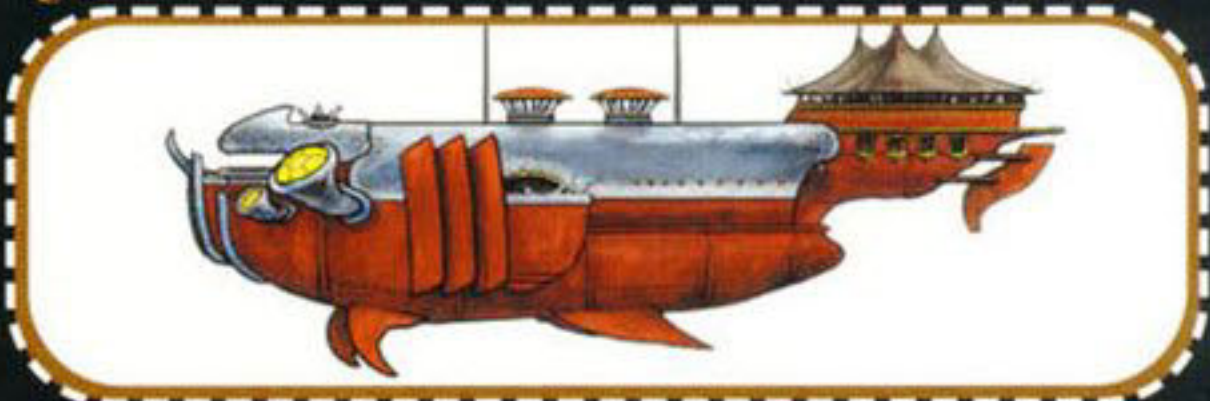
Deathspider (Drow)



Spinneret (Drow)



Nautiloid (Illithid)



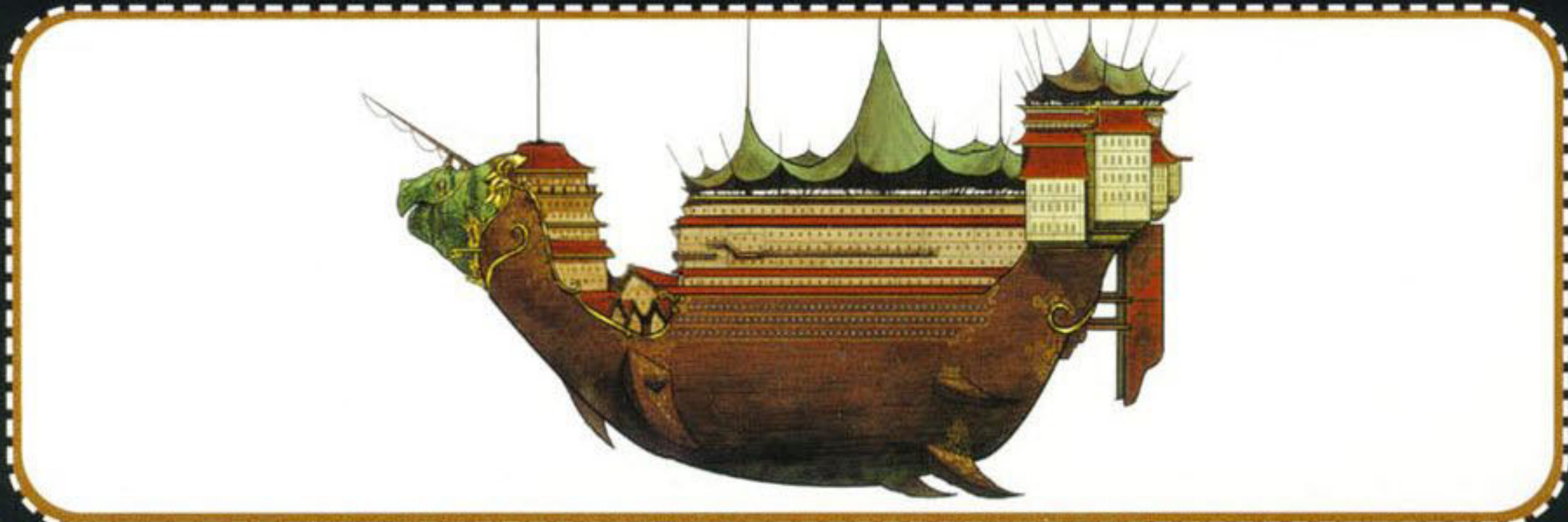
Hammership (Human)



Tradesman (Human)



Boreworm (Illithid)



Archelon (Human)



Wreckship (Gnome)

Polyhedron

SPELLJAMMER SHIP COUNTERS
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