

Lost Hunt

Instant Adventure for 4–6 characters levels 8–10

LEGENDS & LAIRS

INSTANT ADVENTURE



The elves of the village welcomed you with open arms, and have demonstrated a kindness and generosity that you have sometimes come to doubt still existed in the world. Now, as you gather among the dappled shadows of the village green—a good night's rest and a hearty breakfast comfortably behind you—a band of children dances about your legs, and a gentle sense of tranquility settles around your soul.

No sooner has it arrived, than the moment is torn asunder by a sudden, piercing scream that echoes from the far side of the small village. Your heads turn as one in its direction, but before you have even a moment to react, you see a black form hurtling through the air toward you. As it crashes to earth scarcely twenty feet away, you realize it to be some monstrous humanoid—and you marvel at the stunning strength of the mighty legs that propelled its massive body through the air.

That which follows seems to stretch for an eternity, although it must last scarcely more than a moment: The creature turns with lithe and sinister ease, and with a casual strength eviscerates the nearest villager with a single, terrible claw.

A shocked silence fills your ears.

And then you hear a sound. You realize it is the children screaming all about you. If the twisted, blackened hide of the creature left any doubt in your mind as to the unnatural blasphemy of its existence, it is eradicated now. The cry for action churns in your stomach, and the creature is already turning to a new victim...



Lost Hunt

by Justin Bacon

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mass seems to melt into nonexistence, leaving in its wake the bloodied body of a young elf.

The elf is Phael'turan, one of the members of the hunting party that was lost seven years ago. His life can still be saved if the PCs act quickly, but he will quickly expire otherwise. Most of the villagers will recognize him immediately and will be able to tell the PCs all they know about the hunting party that disappeared seven years ago (which is very little). It will also turn out that other hunting parties have failed to return over the past few weeks, and several other strange disappearances have also occurred.

If Phael'turan survives he will be able to tell the PCs of how his hunting party stumbled across some sort of magical gate. His memories after that point are jumbled and confused, but he remembers the sense of a great evil being present. He will be able to lead the PCs to the gate once he is recovered—or give them directions.

TO THE GATE

If the PCs are unable or unwilling to save Phael'turan's life, they will have to follow the kehtal's trail in order to find the gate. Following the trail requires the Track feat, and five Wilderness Lore skill checks (DC 15). If a check is failed, the PCs have lost the trail and will have to backtrack: Have them make another Wilderness Lore check (also at DC 15) in order to find the trail again. Each Wilderness Lore check they have to make represents

two hours of elapsed time, so if they follow the trail successfully, it will take them 10 hours to reach the gate. (If the fail checks, of course, it will take longer than that.)

THE GATE

At first it seems as if the trail has abruptly come to a dead-end in a box canyon. Your hearts immediately begin to sink at the prospect of scaling the sheer walls that tower above your heads. As you near the canyon's end, however, you realize that what you thought was the canyon's end—a wall of collapsed rock and rubble—actually appears to be separated from the true canyon wall by several feet, forming a hollow that is hidden from your sight.

If the PCs decide to enter the hollow, read the following:

As you make your way around a large boulder and past the debris into the hollow beyond, you are surprised to find your surroundings lit by a piercing white light. It takes you only a moment, shielding your eyes against the harsh glare, to locate the source of the light: A circular depression in the canyon wall, twice as tall as a man and surrounded by strange runes, pulses with a scintillating, nearly blinding, light.

A Spellcraft check at DC 15 will reveal that the runes, although well worn, clearly identify this as some sort of gate. The gate was once sealed and hidden, but the magic that powered these ancient protections has grown weak over the course of millennia. For many decades now, it has stood undefended, protected only by its remote location and the mazelike canyons in which it resides. The PCs can enter the prison rift by simply stepping through the gate; an identical gate within the rift will allow them to return to the canyon at any time.

THE PRISON RIFT

The prison that holds the Elemental Lords is an interdimensional rift, trapped between the folds of our world and the next. It is a strange and alien space, its architecture built upon non-Euclidean geometry and warping the normal laws of logic and rational thought. A single passage, for example, may lead to multiple locations; angles beyond our range of sight prevail; and the spatial relations between rooms should not exist.

Because the prison rift is not, strictly speaking, a logical place, mapping it literally would be impossible. Several locations, in fact, cannot be mapped at all. As a result, no scale has been imposed on the map, as it is inconsistent from one area to another. However, compasses will still work properly outside of these specific areas: Use the orientation of the areas as they appear on the maps, even when this results in additional "inconsistencies."

Unless noted otherwise, a pervasive, atmospheric light that has no clear point of origin but suffuses every room, eternally lights the prison rift.

1. SEAL ATRIUM

You pass down a short hallway, your eyes slowly adjusting from the blinding light to a slowly accumulating gloom, and come to an arch of stone. Beyond it, the floor and ceiling curve away from you, forming a perfect sphere of unadorned gray granite. On the far side of the room you can see another arch. Above this second arch you can make out several runes that have been carved into the stone.

There is no gravity within this sphere. Characters stepping over the threshold unprepared will find themselves suddenly floating. Have them make a Reflex save (DC 15) to see if they orient themselves quickly to grab hold of the wall. Otherwise they will simply float in the middle of the room. Once the nature of the room is discovered, it should be a simple matter for the PCs to propel themselves off the walls in order to reach the other side.

The second arch opens into a long hallway that leads to the doors 2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A. Each time someone passes down the hallway, roll 1d4 to determine which door they end up at. So long as the PCs all go down this hall within sight of one another, they will end up at the same door.

Anyone who can read elvish is able to decipher the message written above the door leading to 2A, 3A, 4A, and 5A:

Within lie the Gods of Keht, imprisoned for all Eternity.
Trespass not upon their punishment.

THE ESCHER SQUARE (2-5)

These four areas, like the rest of the prison rift, cannot exist in a Euclidean universe, although that may not be immediately apparent. The stairways that connect the rooms are each 30 ft. long; narrow, but well cut from plain granite. The arrows on the map indicate the direction in which the stairways descend, and you'll note that it should be impossible to get from area 3 to area 5 by both ascending and descending stairs.

Each of these rooms is dedicated to one of the four Elemental Lords. The rooms are each perfect cubes, carved from a hard, unidentifiable rock that matches the elemental color of the Lord. Upon the walls of each room, in a pigment of the same color but a deeper shade, the charges against each of the Elemental Lords are written in ancient Celestial runes. Anyone who can read Celestial can make a skill check (DC 25) to decipher enough of the runes to piece together partial information about the gods that were imprisoned here. The doors leading out of each room are made of a wood of similar color.

Area 2 – Du'than, God of Fire. Red. Cherry.

Area 3 – A'tur, God of Earth. Black. Black oak.

Area 4 – Sur'wahl, God of Water. Blue. Wave cypress.

Area 5 – Ca'wehr, God of Air. White. Ash.

Good Wooden Doors: 1 1/2 in. thick, Hardness 5, hp 15; Break DC 18

This entire area is patrolled by a group of six sahlei, part of the contingent that was left in the prison rift to guard and protect it (see area 6, below). There is a cumulative 10% chance that the sahlei will find the PCs for every 4 rounds that they remain in this area. Sahlei stats can be found in the New Monster section.

GALLERIES (6-9)

6. FIRST GALLERY

You have entered a large chamber with vaulted ceilings. Three doors leave this chamber: two of them (of cherry and ash) upon a shared wall, and a third (of oak) upon another. Five statues stand in a line along the far wall.

Several balls of glowing light, surrounded by some sort of translucent mist, are flickering incoherently into and out of existence around the room.

The glowing balls of light are sahlei. They are uniquely suited to the non-Euclidean nature of the prison rift, and are freely shifting between areas 6 and 7—which, in Euclidean terms, both share the same, inverted space (appearing as mirror images of one another). As soon as they become aware of the PCs, however, they will anchor themselves to whichever location they happen to be in.

Thirty sahlei were left in the prison rift to guard and protect it. Ten have now been killed by the kehtal, six are located in the Escher Square (see above), five have been trapped in area 8 (see below), and the other nine are here now, trying to break through the enchantments that have been placed on the door to area 8.

When the prison rift was built, one of the defenses placed upon it was an anti-magic zone. Over time, however, this zone deteriorated and has finally ceased to exist, leaving the sahlei woefully unprepared for a magical assault upon their domain. When the elven hunting party breached the prison seven years ago, the sahlei attempted to stop them. Unfortunately, the elves believed the sahlei were attempting to guard some form of treasure, and their sorcerer (see area 8, below) trapped them in the Escher Square with a variant *lesser dimensional anchor* spell. Fortunately, the passage of kehtal over the past several weeks broke the spell, and allowed the sahlei to escape.

The sahlei are more than willing to talk with the PCs, and will explain to them everything that is going on (to the extent of their own knowledge). If the PCs offer to help, the sahlei will gladly accept. However, they will not want to allow any elves or half-elves to travel further without considerable persuasion (because they're afraid they may be turned into kehtal).

The door to area 8 has been sealed by nothing more powerful

than a *hold portal* spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer. When the door is opened, however, the sahlei will still find themselves unable to pass—the power of the Kehtian gods is beginning to grow.

Good Wooden Doors: 1 1/2 in. thick, Hardness 5, hp 15; Break DC 18

The statues are the five avatars of the Elemental Lords, servants of the Old Gods. After their masters were imprisoned, they were captured and turned into statues through a *flesh to stone* spell before being placed on pedestals that represent their elemental nature. They exist simultaneously in both area 6 and area 7. If they are returned to life (a course of action the sahlei will violently oppose), they will be merely mortal elves—they are effectively powerless so long as their masters are trapped. However, they will attempt to escape through the door to area 8 if it is opened, in order to serve their masters by transforming into kehtal (if nothing else). If this happens, they will eventually be found in area 14. If they can't get away from the PCs, they will attempt to accompany them until they can enter area 10, 11, 12, 13, or 14, at which point they will be close enough to their gods to be turned into kehtal.

7. SECOND GALLERY

This area is the mirror image of area 6, above, except for the doors, which are made of wave cypress and black oak, rather than cherry and ash. The doors are in all other respects identical to those in area 6.

8. OBSIDIAN STAIRWAY

The door swings aside to reveal a startling starscape, stretching out to the seeming limits of infinity before you. It takes you a moment to realize that there is more beyond the door than blackness sprinkled with starlight: A long, black stairway of obsidian—gleaming faintly beneath the stars—leads down from the doorway, disappearing from sight below.

The obsidian stairway is a 15-minute walk from one end to the other. When the PCs have traversed about two-thirds of the distance, read the following to them:

The wonder of the stair has quickly given way to monotony as the minutes have passed with no end in sight. Then, in the distance, your eyes pick out sudden flashes of pulsating light. They seem to be focused about the stair itself, rather than a part of the awe-inspiring backdrop of this place.

Five sahlei and four kehtal are fighting below, including the kehtal who was once Turek'sal—the sorcerer who accompanied the original hunting party. The stats for sahlei and kehtal can be found on page XX: assume that they have been reduced to half their maximum hit points.



Turek'sal, Male Kehtal Sor3: CR 10; Medium-size Outsider; HD 7d8+7; hp 38; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+8 natural); Atk +8/+8 melee (1d6+7, claws), +3 melee (2d8+5, slam); SA spells, enervation, spawn kehtal; SQ kehtalian death, leap of the clouds, damage reduction 10/+1, darkvision 60 ft.; SR 20; AL LE; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +10; Str 21, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentrate +12; Climb +14, Listen +16, Move Silently +14, Spot +16, Jump +30.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Stunning Fist.

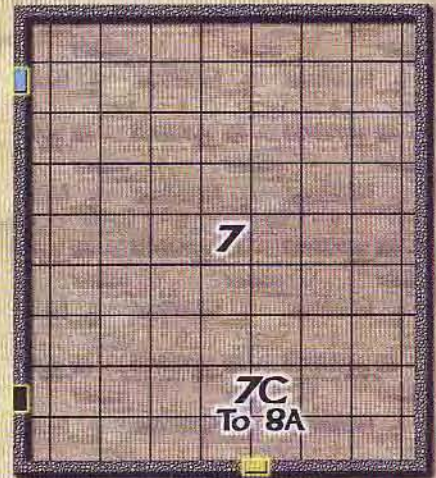
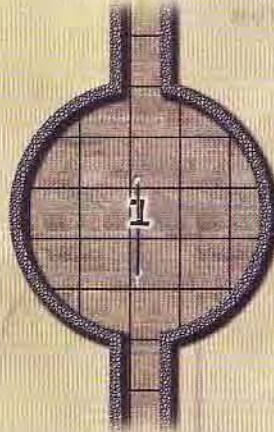
Spells (6/5 per day, chosen from the following list): 0—*daze, detect magic, light, mage hand, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*charm person, hold portal, mage armor, magic missile, obscuring mist, protection from good, shield, true strike*.

9. ANTECHAMBER

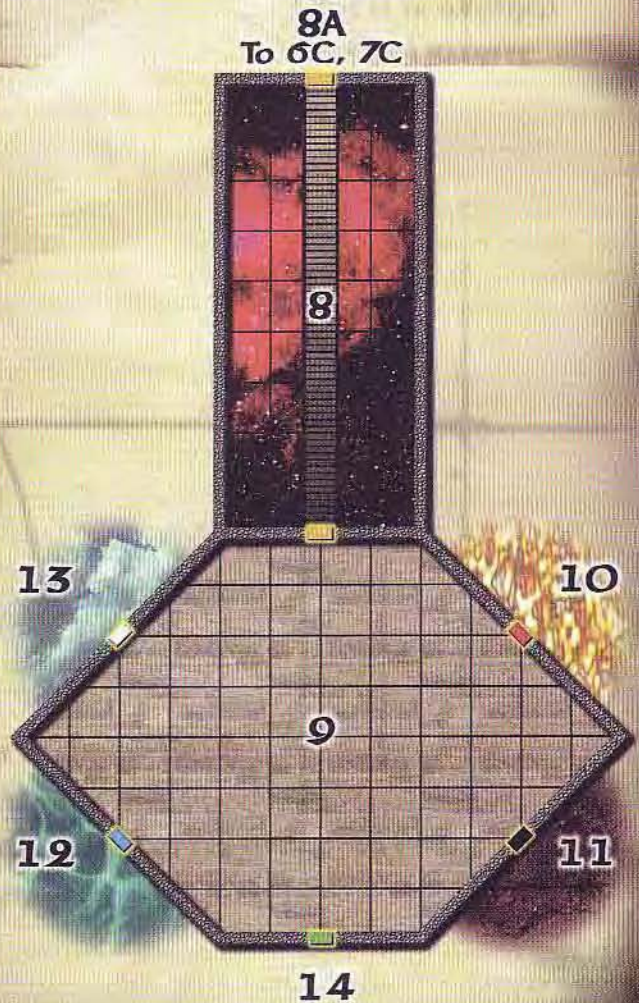
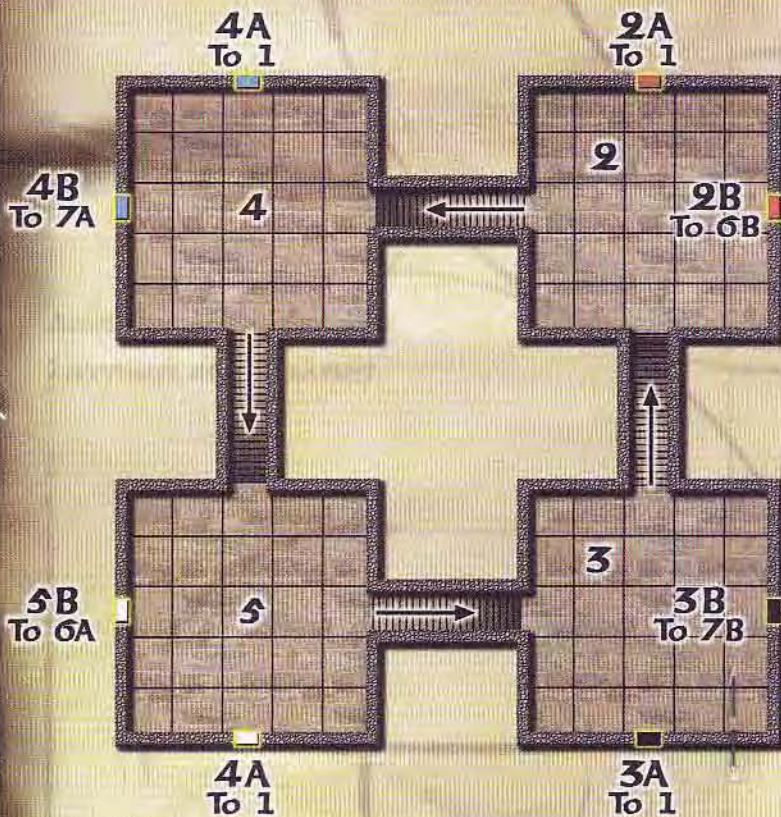
As you open the door at the base of the stairs your senses are suddenly forced to readjust from the vastness that has surrounded you to a simpler scope: A diamond-shaped room of gray stone stands before you, roughly 40 paces to a side. Massive doors of red, white, black, and blue marble have been set into the four walls, and a fifth door—this one of jade—stands opposite you.

The Interdimensional Prison

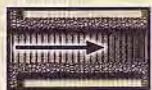
To the gate



To 2A, 3A,
4A, 5A



Key



Stairs



Door

The four marble doors lead to the prisons of the four Elemental Lords. The fifth door leads to the prison of Tul'llur, the Elemental Father. The doors are unsealed and counterbalanced, opening easily to the lightest of touches. Anyone who can read elvish will recognize the rune on each of the doors as representing one of the four primal elements (with the appropriate rune appearing on each door). The symbol on the fifth door is the elvish rune meaning "lord."

THE DEMON CELLS (10-14)

Each of the five demon cells is nearly identical: As the doors of marble or jade open, they reveal a small room of granite. Near the center of the room is a simple stone altar, and upon the altar rests a metal ring: Copper for fire; Iron for earth; Steel for air; Silver for water; Gold for Tul'llur.

These metal rings are the demonbinds in which the Kehtian gods have been trapped. In order to repair the damage done to the enchantments on them, a spellcaster with the Craft Ring feat and Spellcraft skill will need to empty five of his spell slots for the day and make a successful check at DC 30.

Before doing so, however, the PCs will need to overcome the gods' last line of defense. Upon crossing the threshold of the cells, the lead PC(s) will disappear and find himself in a fantasy realm created by the last remaining power of the god:

Area 10, God of Fire: An endless realm of fire, rendering 3d6+5 points of damage per round.

Area 11, God of Earth: The PC will find himself buried alive. There is no air here, and no surface to tunnel to. Apply the standard rules for suffocation.

Area 12, God of Water: An endless watery realm. There is no air here, and no surface to swim to. Apply the standard rules for drowning.

Area 13, God of Air: The PC will appear in an empty expanse of air, with neither ground nor gravity. The only feature will be a door approximately 20 feet away. However, the character will be unable to reach it unless he can find some way to move through the air.

Area 14, the Elemental Father: An endless vacuum, devoid of any form or matter. Apply the standard rules for suffocation. The PC will also suffer 5d8 points of damage per round due to vacuum exposure.

The effects in areas 10–13 will last for 40 rounds. The effects in area 14 will last for 80 rounds. These numbers are for a single character. If multiple characters enter the area, divide the number of rounds by the number of characters who enter the area.

To survive, the PCs will most likely need to be prepared magically before entering these chambers. The sahlei can warn them of what likely tests they will face in reasserting the demonbinds. If the PCs survive (or escape, in the case of area 20), however, the last of the god's temporary reserve of power will be exhausted, and the characters will reappear in the stone room and be able to take action against the fraying demonbinds.

DMs looking to add an even greater mythic touch to the adventure might choose to have the gods themselves present in their challenges, so that the PCs will have a chance to interact with them. These gods might even come across as sympathetic characters if



played correctly.

For purposes of XP awards, consider areas 10–12 to be CR 11. Area 13 can be considered a CR 8 challenge. Area 14 should be considered a CR 12 challenge. Award XP only to those PCs who actually enter the area in question.

FURTHER ADVENTURES

Assuming that the Kehtian gods are kept imprisoned, there are still several loose ends that the PCs might choose to pursue. Several kehtal still wander the landscape, for example. Someone will also need to notify the elven gods that their ancient prisons are failing. The PCs may have to undertake a quest to find and secure the other Kehtian prisons before they fail again.

If the PCs fail to reassert the demonbinds, the Kehtian gods will escape within the next few months. They will first attempt to free their brethren from their prisons, and then challenge the dominance of the Young Gods.

If the PCs decide to help the Kehtian gods escape—for whatever reason—they will now find themselves the chosen servants of a resurgent pantheon. Whether this means they are transformed into kehtal (and retired as NPCs), sent on a holy quest to liberate the other deities of the Kehtian pantheon, or employed in some other way by their new patrons is a decision left to your discretion.

THE DEMON PANTHEON

OPEN CONTENT

The gods of the Keht were arranged into a number of feudalistic “families,” alliances of gods, often related to one another, who quarreled among each other. There were more than a dozen of these families in the Kehtian pantheon, but three of them—commonly referred to as the Triad—were of preeminent power. The most powerful member of the Triad was the Divine House, which ruled over the other gods and was, in turn, ruled over by the Matriarch, Seris.

One of the smallest families was also one of the most powerful: The four Elemental Lords, children of Seris and their patriarch, Tul’llur, the Elemental Father.

Tul’llur, the Elemental Father: Tul’llur ruled over his family with an iron fist, always coveting greater power with a fiery passion controlled through the virtue of a cool wisdom. It was said that he still loved Seris, though she now spurned his advances.

Du’tan, God of Fire: The youngest of the lords, and as hot-tempered as his elemental nature might lead one to suppose. He feels—perhaps rightly—that the other members of his family look down upon him, and is always anxious to prove his worth.

A’tur, God of Earth: A sullen figure. It is said that A’tur lusts after his sister, Ca’wehr.

Sur’wahl, God of Water: Sur’wahl is the eldest of the lords, and is universally respected among her siblings. Even Du’tan, who is at times insanely jealous of her, covets her respect.

Ca’wehr, God of Air: Ca’wehr keeps her distance from the rest of her family. She loves them dearly, but she is also all too aware of their flaws—and weary of their eternal bickering.

NEW MONSTER

KEHTAL



Medium-size Outsider

Hit Dice: 6d8+24 (52 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (+8 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +7 melee, slam +2 melee

Damage: Claw 1d6+7, slam 2d8+5

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

Special Attacks: Enervation, Spawn Kehtal

Special Qualities: Kehtalian Death, Leap of the Clouds,

Damage reduction 10/+1, SR 20, Darkvision 60 ft.

Saves: Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +6

Abilities: Str 21, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 10

Skills: Climb +14, Hide +5, Listen +16, Move Silently +14, Spot +16, Jump +30

Feats: Alertness, Blind-fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Stunning Fist.

Climate/Terrain: Any underground

Organization: Solitary or pride (3–7)

Challenge Rating: 7

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 7–9 HD (Medium-size); 10–18 HD (Large); 19–25 HD (Huge)

The kehtal were the immortal servants of the Kehtian Gods—elves who had been chosen from among their brethren to serve their demonic patrons for all eternity. The specifics of their appearances varied greatly according to the god which had empowered them, but they held in common their sheer, brute size and brawn: An almost perfect inversion of the natural elven slender form.

Although many of the kehtal were destroyed when their gods were imprisoned, some escaped and many still haunt the forgotten corners of the world today.

COMBAT

Kehtal are fast, strong, and savage, the perfect servants for a violent, barbaric pantheon of gods. The negative energy which empowers them fills their lightest touch with deadly potential, made all the more fiercesome through their sheer physical strength and prowess. They have no fear, and will wade into the midst of a dozen opponents, confident that their strength and endurance will prevail.

Enervation (Su): Any creature that receives damage from the kehtal’s claws is affected as per the spell *enervation*, as if cast by a 9th-level sorcerer.

Spawn Kehtal (Su): Any character with elven blood who is reduced to negative levels by the kehtal’s enervation will – instead of dying – may be transformed into a new kehtal (at the whim of the kehtal and its god). The transformation will take place 1d6 rounds after the character has “died,” unless a remove curse spell is immediately cast upon them.

Kehtalian Death (Su): A kehtal that dies will revert to its natural, elven form. In its elven form it will have –9 hit points and will automatically fail its stabilization check on the following round if action is not immediately taken (see PHB 129). If returned to

health, the elf will have no memory of its existence as a kehtal.

Leap of the Clouds (Su): As per a monk (see PHB 40), a kehtal's jumping distance (vertical or horizontal) is not limited according to its height.

SAHLEI

Medium-size Outsider

Hit Dice: 7d8 (31 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)

Speed: Fly 60 ft. (perfect)

AC: 15 (+5 natural)

Attacks: 2 light rays +7 ranged touch

Damage: Light ray 1d8

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

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Damage Reduction 20/+1, celestial qualities

Saves: Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +8

Abilities: Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 12

Skills: Concentration +8, Hide +5, Listen +10, Move Silently +10, Spot +10, Sense Motive +10

Feats: Improved Initiative, Flyby Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any

Organization: Solitary, pair, or squad (3–5)

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always lawful

Advancement: 7–9 HD (Medium-size)

The sahleis are servants of the elven gods, created to fulfill tasks of the greatest importance. They are creatures of pure light and positive energy, appearing as bright balls of ethereal light surrounded by a translucent, glowing mist. When they speak their voices will not appear to actually emanate from their "bodies," but instead emanate throughout whatever area they happen to be in, as if their words were materializing out of thin air.

COMBAT

Sahleis will avoid melee range at all costs, preferring to maintain a distance that maximizes the effectiveness of both their light rays and their aura of menace. If faced with a particularly dangerous or difficult set of opponents, sahleis will typically choose to swarm, focusing their attacks upon a single foe and overwhelming him before moving onto the next opponent.

Light Ray (Ex): A sahleis's light rays have a range of 30 feet.

Spell-like Abilities: At will—*aid*, *detect evil*, *dimensional anchor*, *continual flame*. These are cast as a 12th-level sorcerer.

Celestial Qualities: Aura of menace (DC 17), magic circle against evil, electricity and petrification immunity, teleport, tongues, +4 against poison.

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