

# SHATTERED STAR



## THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

### PART ONE: THE SIHEDRON REBORN

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

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### PART TWO: XIN RISING

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

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### PART THREE: CRYSTAL PALACE

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

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### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

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

- 15** The PCs should be well into 15th level when they begin this adventure.
- 16** The PCs should reach 16th level before traveling to the island-city of Xin.
- 17** The PCs should reach 17th level before entering the Skymetal Vaults of Xin's Crystal Palace.



# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was a first step the runelords were waiting for.

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

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

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

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

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

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

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

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

## PART ONE: THE SIHEDRON REBORN

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

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

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

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

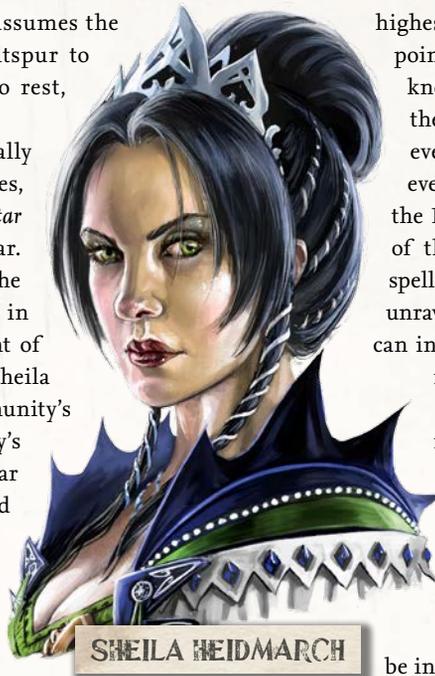
While they wait, the PCs are free to spend their time however they wish. If they're lagging behind in experience points, you can have one of Magnimar's notable NPCs contact the PCs with a mission of your own design. They may wish to take time to craft magic items or simply to roleplay some old relationships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

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

## BENEFITS OF FAME

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

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



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

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

## THE SIHEDRON COUNCIL MEETS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## THE REFORGING FESTIVAL

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

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

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

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

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

## THE RITUAL OF REFORGING

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

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

## SIHEDRON COUNCIL MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PART TWO: XIN RISING

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

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

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

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

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

## EVENT 1: THE EARTHQUAKE (CR 16)

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

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

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

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## ENORMOUS SHRIEZYX

CR 16

XP 76,800

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

CE Huge aberration

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

### DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

**Weaknesses** fear of fire, vulnerable to fire

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

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

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

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

### TACTICS

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

**Morale** The shriezyx fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

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



# SHATTERED STAR

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

## EVENT 2: THE MONUMENTS AWAKEN

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

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

## EVENT 3: TSUNAMI

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

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



ENORMOUS SHRIEZYX

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## EVENT 4: HERALDS OF XIN (CR 15)

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

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

# SHATTERED STAR

## ELSEWHERE ON THE LOST COAST

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



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

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

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

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

**CLOCKWORK LEVIATHANS (3)**

**CR 12**

**XP 19,200**

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

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

## EVENT 5: ENRAGED DENIZEN (CR 16)

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

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

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

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

**AUREUSA**

**CR 16**

**XP 76,800**

Scylla (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 241)



**AUREUSA**

# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

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

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

## CASUALTY REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

## AFTERMATH

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

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

The meeting has only three items on its agenda.

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

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

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

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

## PART THREE: CRYSTAL PALACE

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



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

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

## XIN ISLAND FEATURES

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CRYSTAL PALACE GENERAL FEATURES

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

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

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

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



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

## XIN'S SPIRIT

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

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

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

## SPIRIT POINTS

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

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



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

## XIN-HAUNTED CONSTRUCT (CR +2)

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

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

**AC:** +4 deflection bonus to AC.

**hp:** +4 hp per HD.

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

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



# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

## PALACE TRAPS

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

### CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND CR 15

XP 51,200

**Activation Cost** 1d4 spirit points

**Type** magic; **Perception** DC 29;

**Disable Device** DC 29

#### EFFECTS

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

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

### CRYSTAL SLIVERS CR 12

XP 19,200

**Activation Cost** 1 spirit point

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

#### EFFECTS

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

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

## VISIONS FROM THE PAST

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

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

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

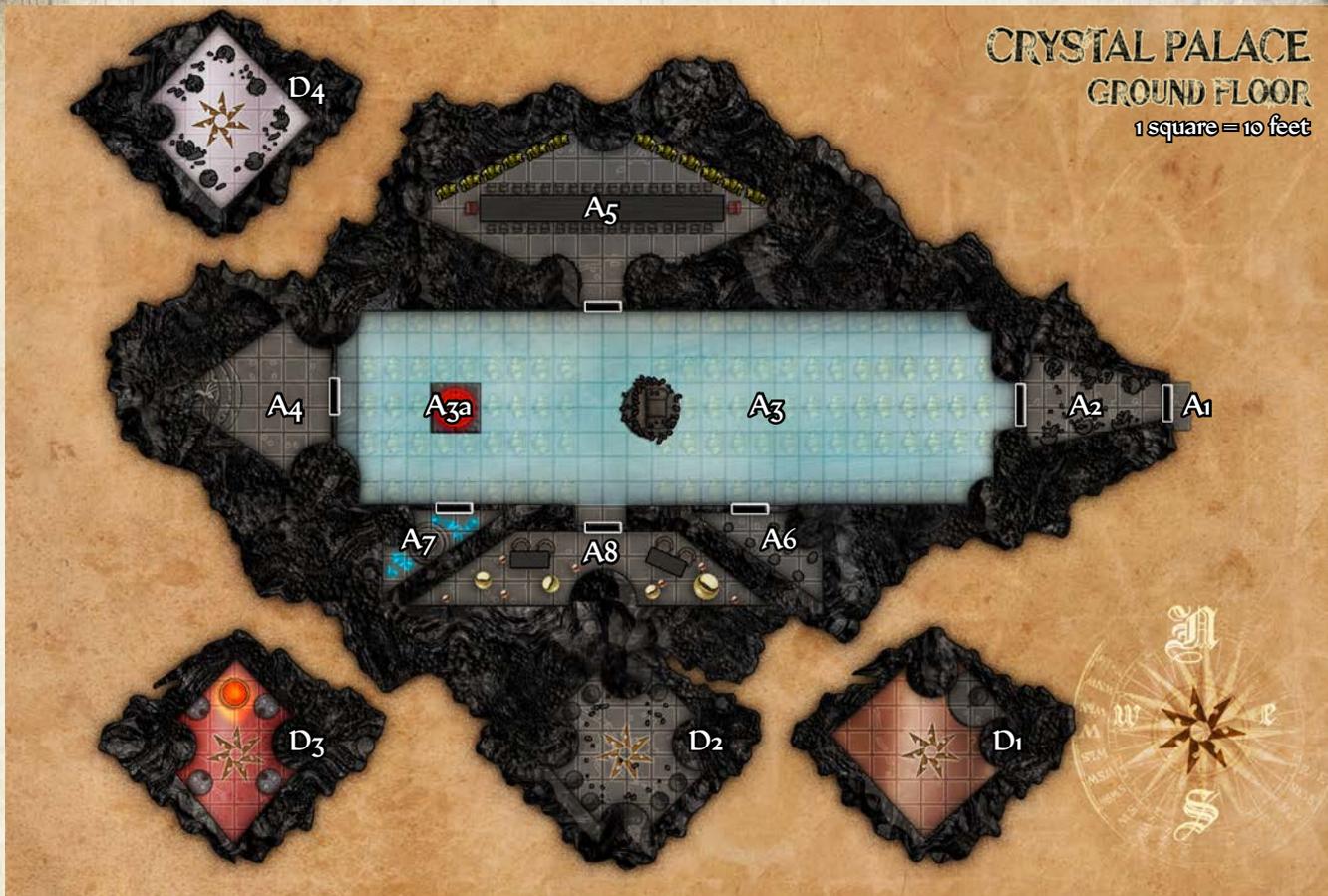
The *flamma horacalcum* does not work the same in every location, and unless otherwise specified below, it replays nothing more than a time-lapse vision of hundreds of years of scurrying servants and glimpses of rich furnishings, all in the span of a few seconds. But where its bright light falls, the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

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

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



# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



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

## GROUND FLOOR FEATURES

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

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

### A1. POCKMARKED PORTAL (CR 16)

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

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

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

# SHATTERED STAR



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

## OGONTHUNN'S GUARDIANS (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200

Advanced aboleth

LE Huge aberration (aquatic)

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

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 175 (13d8+117)

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

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 10 ft., swim 60 ft.

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

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

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

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

3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 25)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The aboleths use *dominate monster* for the first few rounds of combat to try to turn the PCs against each other, and illusions of undead rune giants rising from the island's muck to trick them into wasting resources.

Once the PCs are distracted, the aboleths rise to use their wands, resorting to melee as a last resort.

**Morale** The aboleths fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

**Languages** Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Azlanti, Thassilonian

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

## CRYSTAL SLIVERS

CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

## A2. FOYER (CR 14)

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

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

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

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

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

## AXIOMITES OF XIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

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

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, lawful)

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

### DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

### OFFENSE

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

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

**Special Attacks** sneak attack +4d6

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

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

1/day—*summon* (level 6, 1 zelekhut requires 4 axiomites), *true seeing*

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

3/day—*prestidigitation*

2/day—*mage armor*

### TACTICS

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

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

### STATISTICS

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

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

# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

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

**Gear** +2 longsword

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

## A3. THRONE ROOM (CR 16)

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

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

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

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

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

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

AXIOMITE OF XIN

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

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

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



XIN

## FIRST VISION—ESTABLISHMENT OF RULE

The palace walls fade as sunlight streams through a circle of fantastic spires looming over a large courtyard. Thousands of cheering people in extravagant clothing surge forward—many with the distinctive features of ancient Thassilonians, but some looking more like Varisians or Shoanti. A young King Xin holds a huge diamond, its inner facets gleaming with a multitude of glowing runes. His voice booms: “A seed of power is only as powerful as one who plants it!” Thunderous cheers erupt, and the man drops the gigantic diamond to the ground below. The diamond sinks into the earth, and jagged, rune-covered walls of blindingly bright crystal erupt from the earth with lightning speed. The erupting walls dampen the outside cheers, and the man stoops, ages, and burns as the hall returns to its current decrepit state.

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

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

### XIN LEGIONNAIRES (5)

CR 10

#### XP 9,600 each

Advanced rune-carved clockwork soldier (*Pathfinder RPG*

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

N Medium construct (clockwork)

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

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 97 each (14d10+20)

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

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

**Immune** construct traits, fire

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to electricity

# SHATTERED STAR

## OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

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

Special Attacks latch, *rune of fire*

## TACTICS

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

**Morale** A Xin legionnaire fights until destroyed.

## STATISTICS

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

Base Atk +14; CMB +23; CMD 35

Feats Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>, Lightning Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Vital Strike<sup>B</sup>

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

## XIN-HAUNTED LEGIONNAIRE

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 153 (see pages 21 and 27)

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

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

## A4. SHRINE OF LISSALA (CR 17)

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

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

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

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

## LIVING RUNES (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 161 each (see page 88)

XIN LEGIONNAIRE



# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

## GIFT OF FICKLE GODS

CR 16

XP 76,800

Type magic; Perception DC 33; Disable Device DC 33

### EFFECTS

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

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

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

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

## A5. BANQUET HALL (CR 16)

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

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

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

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

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

## ADVANCED SHINING CHILDREN (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

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

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

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

## A6. AUDIENCE CHAMBER (CR 15)

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

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



# SHATTERED STAR

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

## DREAD WRAITHS (2)

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE Large undead (incorporeal)

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

**Aura** unnatural aura (30 ft.)

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 184 (16d8+112)

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

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +2, incorporeal;

**Immune** undead traits

**Weaknesses** sunlight powerlessness

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)

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

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

### TACTICS

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

**Morale** The dread wraiths fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

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

## A7. SPELLWELL OF GENEROSITY

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

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

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

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

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

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

## CRYSTAL SLIVERS

CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

## A8. AZLANTI ARCHIVES (CR 18)

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

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

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

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

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

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



**ANIMATED OBJECT** CR 3

XP 800

hp 36 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14)

**THULGANT** CR 18

XP 153,600

hp 290 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 226)

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

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

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

## THE LOWER HOLD

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

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

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

### OGONTHUNN (CR 19)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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



OGONTHUNN

**OGONTHUNN** CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 356 (see page 56)

## B1. THE BRASS BATTALION (CR 15)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SIYOKOYS (6)** CR 10

XP 9,600 each

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

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

## B2. SPARE PARTS (CR 15)

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

# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

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

## CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND

CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

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

## B3. FOUNDRY (CR 15)

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

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

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

## XIN-HAUNTED ADVANCED CLOCKWORK LEVIATHAN

CR 15

XP 51,200

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

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

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

## B4. HALL OF GEARS (CR 16)

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

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

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

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

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

## ADVANCED CLOCKWORK GOLEMS (3)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

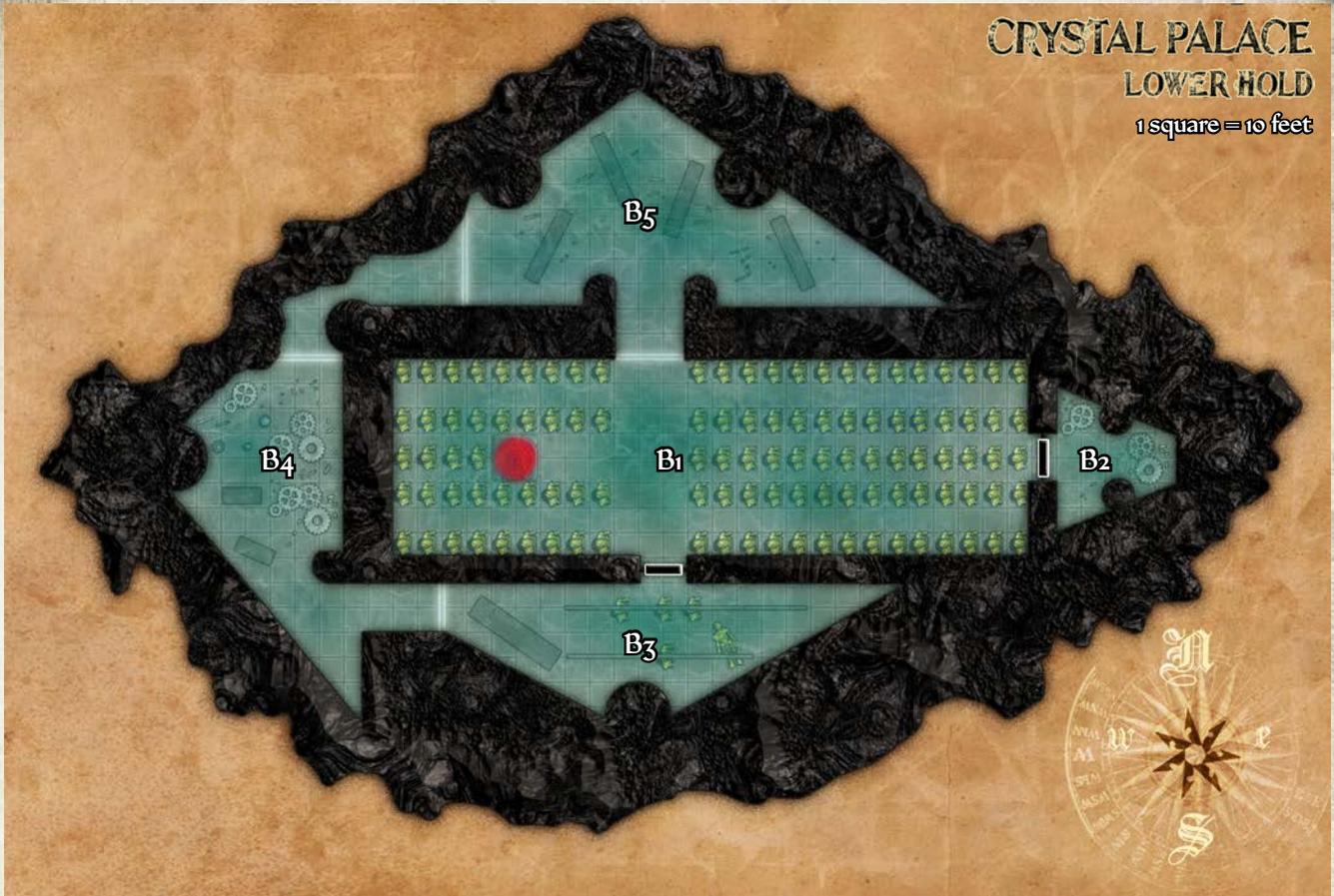
hp 150 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 137, 292)

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

## CRYSTAL PALACE

### LOWER HOLD

1 square = 10 feet



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

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

### B5. ARMORY (CR 15)

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

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

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

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

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

**XIN'S GUARDIAN**

**CR 15**

**XP 51,200**

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

N Large construct

# SHATTERED STAR

## SECOND VISION—THE SIHEDRON'S CREATION

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



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

### DEFENSE

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

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

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

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

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft.

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

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

**Special Attacks** breath weapon, powerful blows

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

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

### TACTICS

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

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

### STATISTICS

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

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

**SQ** find master, guard

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

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

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

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

## THE WORKSHOPS

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

### C1. HALL OF GOLEMS (CR 18)

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

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

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

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

## XIN-HAUNTED CLOCKWORK DRAGON CR 18

XP 153,600

hp 277 (see pages 21 and 86)

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

## C2. CLOCKWORK ORCHESTRA (CR 16)

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

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

## DISCORDANT CLOCKWORK ORCHESTRA CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

### EFFECTS

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

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

## CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

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

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

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

## C3. ABYSSAL BIOLOGY (CR 16)

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



XIN'S GUARDIAN



# SHATTERED STAR

## CRYSTAL PALACE WORKSHOPS

1 square = 10 feet



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

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

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

### XIN-HAUNTED ADVANCED RETRIEVER CR 14

XP 38,400

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

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

### CRYSTAL SLIVERS (2) CR 12

XP 19,200

See page 22.

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

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

## C4. THE HOMUNCULUS VATS (CR 16)

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

## HOMUNCULUS MASS

CR 16

XP 76,800

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

CE Large aberration

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

## DEFENSE

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

**hp** 287 (23d8+184)

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

**DR** 10/piercing or slashing

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

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

**Special Attacks** absorb body, pain shriek

## TACTICS

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

**Morale** The corpse orgy fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

**Languages** Thassilonian

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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

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

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

## C5. INEVITABLE CONFRONTATION (CR 16)

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

# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

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

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

## AXIOMITES OF XIN (3)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 171 each (see page 25)

## KOLYARUT INEVITABLE

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 150 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 163)

## C6. COLLAPSED CHAMBER

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

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

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

## C7. HUNGRY TREASURY (CR 16)

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

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

## ADVANCED CARNIVOROUS CRYSTALS (4)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

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

HOMUNCULUS MASS

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

## C8. SPELLWELL OF KINDNESS

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

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

## C9. SPELLWELL OF LOVE (CR 16)

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

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

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

## THIRD VISION—BUILDING THE VAULTS

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

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



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

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

### CRYSTAL SLIVERS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

See page 22.

### CRUSHING CRYSTAL HAND

CR 15

XP 51,200

See page 22.

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

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

## FOURTH VISION—BURDEN OF RULE

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

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

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



## C10. SKYMETAL NEXUS (CR 16)

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADVANCED MARUT INEVITABLE

CR 15

XP 76,800

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

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

## THE SKYMETAL VAULTS

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

## D1. HORACALCUM VAULT (CR 16)

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

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

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

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

**BYTHOS AEON**

**CR 16**

**XP 76,800**

**hp 207** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 10*)



**BYTHOS AEON**

# SHATTERED STAR

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

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

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

## D2. ADAMANTINE VAULT (CR 15)

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

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

### ANIMATED RUNELORD CR 9

XP 6,400

Advanced animated object

N Medium construct

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

#### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 91 (11d10+31)

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

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

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

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

#### STATISTICS

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

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

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

**Gear** +2 keen adamantine halberd

### XIN-HAUNTED ANIMATED RUNELORD CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 113 (see above and page 21)

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

## D3. DJEZET VAULT (CR 16)

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

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

## MEZLANS (2) CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 195 each (see page 90)

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

## D4. INUBRIX VAULT (CR 15)

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

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

## DREAD WRAITHS (2) CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 184 each (see page 30)

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

## D5. NOQUAL VAULT (CR 16)

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

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

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

## ELDER CRYSTALLISES (2) CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Advanced crystallis (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 131)

N Large outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

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

### DEFENSE

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

**hp** 175 each (14d10+98)

**Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7

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

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

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

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

**Special Attacks** crystalline claws, petrification cloud

### TACTICS

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

**Morale** The crystallises fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

**Languages** Terran

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

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

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



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

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

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

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

## D6. SICCATITE VAULT (CR 16)

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

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

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

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



ELDER CRYSTALLIS

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

## XIN-HAUNTED SICCATITE-INFUSED IRON GOLEM CR 16

XP 76,800

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

hp 237

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

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

## D7. ABYSIUM VAULT (CR 17)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## BELMEDRA CR 17

XP 102,400

Marilith demon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 63)

hp 264

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

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

# SHATTERED STAR

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

## THE APEX

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

Up until this point, the pacing of this adventure should

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

## E1. RELIQUARY WORKSHOP

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

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

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

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



BELMEDRA

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

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

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

## E2. THE ASSASSIN'S GRAVE (CR 19)

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

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

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

## FIFTH VISION—AGING RECLUSE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SHASTHAAK** **CR 19**  
**XP 204,800**

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

LE Gargantuan undead (augmented humanoid)

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

**Aura** sacrilegious aura (30 ft.)

**DEFENSE**

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

**hp** 270 (20d8+180)

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

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

**OFFENSE**

**Speed** 20 ft.

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

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

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

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

Constant—*air walk*

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

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

1/day—*demand* (DC 24), *true seeing*

**TACTICS**

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

**Morale** Shasthaak fights until destroyed.

## STATISTICS

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

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

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

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

**SQ** phantom mount, ruinous revivification (fire)

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

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

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

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

## FINAL VISION—THE ASSASSINATION

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

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

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

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

dreadful new horror bent on savaging the region!

## E3. SPELLWELL OF TEMPERANCE

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

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



SHASTHAAK

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

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

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

#### E4. THE DEAD HEART OF XIN (CR 22)

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

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

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

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

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

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

##### CLOCKWORK RELIQUARY CR 21

XP 409,600

hp 442 (see page 54)

##### AXIOMITES OF XIN (3) CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 171 each (see page 25)

##### ELDER CRYSTALLISES (2) CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 175 each (see page 45)

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

# THE DEAD HEART OF XIN



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

## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

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

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

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