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ADVENTURE PATH[™]



RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

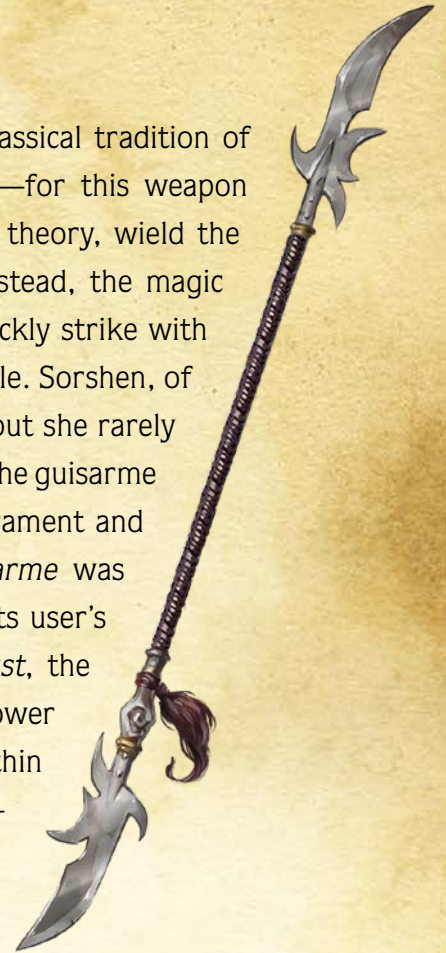
RISE OF NEW THASSILON

By Greg A. Vaughan



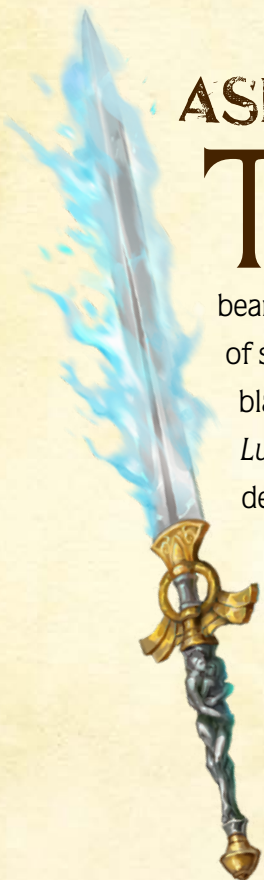
SORSHEN'S SINOUS GUISARME

The design of *Sorshen's Sinuous Guisarme* broke from the classical tradition of the other six *Alara'quin* bequeathed to the first runelords—for this weapon was adorned with blades at either end. While one could, in theory, wield the guisarme as a double weapon, this was never its intended use. Instead, the magic weapon imbued its bearer with the grace and speed required to quickly strike with both blades without requiring special training in an exotic fighting style. Sorshen, of course, was the only runelord ever to wield the *Sinuous Guisarme*, but she rarely saw the need to use it as a weapon in battle. Instead, she commanded the guisarme to transform into a potent magical staff more suited to her temperament and proclivities. As with *Karzoug's Burning Glaive*, the *Sinuous Guisarme* was crafted to defeat those who could not cast spells, and it bolstered its user's defenses by granting incredible luck. Unlike with the *Sword of Lust*, the source of the *Sinuous Guisarme's* intelligence is well known: to empower the weapon, Sorshen offered Xin a magically enhanced gemstone within which she'd stored 13 of her most salacious and outlandish dreams—visions that others would consider nightmares.



ASHEIA, SWORD OF LUST

The *Sword of Lust* was never wielded by its first champion, for soon after she accepted the burning blade from those she'd assigned to create it, Runelord Sorshen publicly and painfully slaughtered the man intended to serve as its bearer. Leaving the blade lodged in his body, Sorshen made a promise to the hundreds of shocked witnesses present for the sudden execution: whoever returned the cleaned blade to her private chambers would be declared the true bearer of the *Sword of Lust* and be honored as Sorshen's most devoted servant. Few survived the self-destructive chaos that followed Sorshen's proclamation, and of those who did, only one emerged from the royal chamber, days later. This was the swordswoman Asheia, a traveler from a distant land unknown to Thassilon's citizens. Asheia served Sorshen loyally for decades, and when her time came to an end and the blade was passed on to a successor, Sorshen kept Asheia's name for the sword. Whether or not the swordswoman's soul provided the intellect for the blade is unknown. The *Sword of Lust* recently resurfaced in the dungeons below Kaer Maga, but it has since gone missing once again.



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ON THE COVER



Artist Ekaterina Burmak depicts our heroes running for their lives as the Oliphaunt of Jandelay has a building for lunch, in addition to depicting the most powerful surviving runelord, Sorshen!



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REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at prd.info.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Rise of the Runelords</i>	ROTR
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Horror Adventures</i>	HA	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Inner Sea Gods</i>	ISG	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM



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Printed in China. New Thassilon is just getting started—long live Queen Sorshen!



RISE OF NEW THASSILON

PART 1: ANIMOUS COLLUSION..... 4

The PCs brave a flooded tomb in order to secure the skull of Runelord Karzoug’s old master, which they can use in the Boneyard to secure aid from Karzoug’s soul and activate the Cyphergate.

PART 2: EXIGENCY SHIFT 27

The PCs travel to the Dimension of Time via the Cyphergate, but in following Alaznist’s footsteps into the mysterious city of Stethelos, they may be bringing doom to one of their own.

PART 3: PERSISTENT PARADOXES..... 41

After securing a path to the past at great personal sacrifice, the PCs must complete seven different jaunts into the distant past to repair the damage Alaznist has dealt to the timeline.

PART 4: QUONDAM RECIPROCITY 55

Time itself has exiled the PCs and Alaznist to the point where it all began—her domain in the crown of Hollow Mountain. Reality can no longer contain them both, and to escape back to the present the PCs must defeat Runelord Alaznist!

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Rise of New Thassilon” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

17 The PCs begin the adventure at 17th level.

18 The PCs should be well into 18th level by the time they activate the Cyphergate.

19 The PCs should reach 19th level after mending three to four temporal wounds.

20 The PCs should reach 20th level while exploring Alaznist’s Demesne (ideally before reaching areas **E8–E12**).

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

After waking from her long sleep in her *runewell*, Runelord Alaznist immediately sought to learn of this new time period—to dominate it and to discover the whereabouts of her fellow runelords. She quickly discovered that Karzoug, Krune, and Zutha had all made their own bids to return and rule once more, and that all had failed due to the intervention of adventuring heroes. She learned that Sorshen had stirred from her slumber, though she knew not where, but that Xanderghul, her most hated rival, remained yet asleep. Fearing the return of the Runelord of Pride more than anything else, Alaznist made preparations to raid Xanderghul’s sanctum at Xincyrusian and end any threat he could possibly represent before it could manifest.

Alaznist found Xanderghul’s defenses to be too powerful to overcome directly, but in searching through the portions of his sanctum she could explore, she learned of his attempt, in the days leading up to Earthfall, to secure a powerful artifact called the *Scepter of Ages*—a device capable of breaking the laws of time itself. Picking up where the Runelord of Pride had left off, Alaznist completed his search for the scepter, recovering it from a reliquary in distant Garund. With the scepter’s aid, Alaznist traveled back in time and altered the past so that she could bypass Xanderghul’s defenses. When she returned to the present, she quickly slew her rival, although she never realized he had been resurrected in limited form in the Temple of the Peacock Spirit.

Since then, Alaznist has used the *Scepter of Ages* seven more times, but these seven new trips through time have wrought increasing damage to reality as she tampered with the past and rerouted history. The immediate result of these temporal invasions was that Alaznist absorbed much of the mythic power that Runelord Xanderghul once commanded, but the Runelord of Wrath didn’t limit her tampering with the past to merely absorbing mythic power. By traveling to these seven specific points in history, she altered events to facilitate her ascension in modern-day Golarion. In doing so, she created disruptive ripples in the time stream, anomalies where the altered events compete with the events as history actually played out to create dual, competing chronologies. Ultimately, unless these temporal disruptions are corrected, the newly created chronology will wholly replace the original timeline and introduce a new history to Golarion—one in which Alaznist rules over a New Thassilon that sprawls from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings to Ustalav to Nidal, and perhaps

MYTHIC CONTENT

A few of the monsters and NPCs encountered in this adventure use content from *Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures*, so that high-level PCs will be faced with particularly powerful and legendary foes. If you prefer not to use *Mythic Adventures* content in your game at all, you’ll need to rebuild the statistics for mythic foes like Alaznist (page 72), Sorshen (page 74), or the High Justice (page 24).

On the other end of the scale, “Rise of New Thassilon” gives an excellent thematic moment for you to allow the PCs to attain a mythic tier: their arrival on the Dimension of Time and the process of traveling back into the past is certainly a legendary enough event to justify such a development. Note that if you do take this option, you’ll need to be comfortable in the ways *Mythic Adventures* changes gameplay, and the work of adjusting encounters to continue providing an enjoyable challenge for a group of mythic PCs will fall to you, the GM.

beyond. But time yet remains to make the corrections and prevent this alternate history from becoming real.

THE SEVEN TEMPORAL WOUNDS

The seven alterations Alaznist wrought to historical events are referred to as “temporal wounds”—unstable and damaged patches of time that seethe and surge as history goes through the painful process of rewriting itself. To those living in the future of these wounds, memories and life accomplishments change without notice, as reality reworks their lives along with the world around them. Only a rare few are outside of this influence: some denizens of the Dimension of Time, certainly, and Alaznist herself as the perpetrator of these crimes against reality.

The only others who remain outside this influence are the PCs themselves. In Part 3 of this adventure, the PCs travel back in time to restore the past and repair the seven temporal wounds, and in so doing infuse their own personal timelines with a degree of “immunity” to the wounds’ effects on the modern timeline. While this allows the PCs to remain aware of the danger and interact with damaged areas they otherwise couldn’t (such as the time-locked Therassic Library in “Temple of the Peacock Spirit”), it’s also put them in peril. For much of this campaign, the manipulation of the past has impacted the use of Knowledge (history) by the PCs, and as this final adventure begins, the PCs are themselves in danger of being removed from reality entirely. If the temporal wounds are not healed, the PCs, who in reality’s original timeline would have lived on to oppose and potentially defeat Alaznist, will be written out of history, and none

RISE OF NEW THASSILON

Part 1:
Animous
Collusion

Part 2:
Exigency Shift

Part 3:
Persistent
Paradoxes

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NPC
Gallery

Beyond the
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SWAPPING OUT PCS

The introduction of the Sihedron Heroes to the plot gives you and your players a unique opportunity—the chance to bring a prior PC “out of retirement.” With the GM’s approval, a player could opt to play her previous character for the remainder of *Return of the Runelords*, regulating the character she played for the first five adventures to a support role as described under Heroic Roles on page 6. Alternatively, if a PC perishes or is otherwise lost during this adventure (such as by being sacrificed at the Well of All; see page 38), a player can bring in a prior PC as a replacement character to finish the campaign.

who remain in the new world will know they ever existed in the first place.

Fortunately for the players, there is no absolute timer to race against. The only “countdown” to the PCs being written out of time is the conclusion of this adventure, be it victory or defeat. By healing the temporal wounds, the PCs ensure their continued existence and grant themselves the advantage they need to hopefully defeat Alaznist in the campaign’s conclusion.

While the lesser ramifications of the seven temporal wounds have had relatively minor effects in prior adventures, as “*Rise of New Thassilon*” begins, these events begin to have significant effects on the region. Summaries of the seven wounds are given below.

Creation of the Sihedron (–6498 AR): Alaznist prevents Emperor Xin from successfully creating the *Sihedron*. Healing this temporal wound restores the *Sihedron* and grants the PCs full access to the artifact.

Assassination of Xin (–6420 AR): Alaznist siphons the devastation caused during Xin’s explosive death into her Hellstorm Flumes, spewing fire and death out along the Lost Coast. Healing this wound reverts the Hellstorm Flumes to ruins and restores the towns of Roderic’s Cove and Sandpoint.

Azanti Invasion of Thassilon (–6301 AR): Alaznist redirects the Oliphaunt of Jandelay to modern-day Varisia. Healing this temporal wound undoes the devastation inflicted on Korvosa by the Oliphaunt.

Runelord Schism (–6150 AR): Alaznist reveals Nocticula’s influence over Runelord Angothane, disrupting their plot to assassinate the demon lord Colyphyr. Healing this temporal wound saves Kaer Maga from demonic domination.

Discovery of Fleshwarping (–5786 AR): Alaznist provides additional aid to her own original research into fleshwarping. Healing this temporal wound negates the sinspawn invasion and ruination of the city of Magnimar.

Construction of the Cyphergate (–5620 AR): Alaznist sabotages the Cyphergate. Healing this temporal wound negates the destruction of the city of Riddleport in the aftermath of the Cyphergate’s activation at the start of Part 2 of this adventure.

Earthfall (–5293 AR): Alaznist sabotages the *Everdawn Pool* to trap Sorshen. Healing this wound returns Sorshen to the modern day and denies Alaznist continued access to the *Scepter of Ages*.

PART 1: ANIMOUS COLLUSION

At the close of the prior adventure, “The City Outside of Time,” the PCs released the Sihedron Heroes and the *Sihedron* itself from temporal imprisonment in Xin-Edasseril. After researching the lore preserved in that city, which was protected from Alaznist’s tampering with the past by dint of being protected in a time-locked demiplane, they also should have discovered the dates corresponding to the seven temporal wounds.

When the PCs step out of the Eye of Jealousy at the end of the previous adventure, having restored Xin-Edasseril to the modern age, they find the city in the same state they left it, save that the temporal dangers have vanished. The border between the old city and the portion previously held by the dome of Crystilan is stark now, with ancient preserved streets leading into the rugged wilderness of modern Peridot Isle beyond. In time, you can allow the PCs to return to the city of Xin-Edasseril to wrap up lingering plot threads, but as they step out of the Eye of Jealousy and reappear in Belimarius’s throne room, they’ll be greeted not by the Runelord of Envy, but by the Sihedron Heroes themselves.

MEETING THE SIHEDRON HEROES

As part of your preparation for running *Return of the Runelords*, you’ll have decided which prior PCs constitute the Sihedron Heroes—those adventurers who previously took part in the *Rise of the Runelords* or *Shattered Star* Adventure Path. If your group has no such PCs, then the roles should be played by either NPC heroes of your own creation or, as is the core assumption made in this text, a selection of the iconic characters whose illustrations graced one of those earlier Adventure Paths. In the latter case, the roles of the Sihedron Heroes are represented by Kyra (the iconic cleric), Merisiel (the iconic rogue), Seoni (the iconic sorcerer), and Valeros (the iconic fighter)—the first four iconic heroes we ever revealed and the first four to appear on the covers of *Pathfinder Adventure Path*.

When the PCs meet the Sihedron Heroes, give them a chance to introduce themselves—and as they do so, the Sihedron Heroes react with surprise, for while the PCs are meeting them now for the first time, the Sihedron Heroes have met the PCs before—in their past, but in the PCs’ future. One ominous thing to note, and something the Sihedron Heroes are particularly concerned about, is that the *Sihedron* itself is missing—when Crystilan was destroyed, the artifact did not return to the Material Plane and the current timeline as the heroes did.

Eventually, the Sihedron Heroes should tell the PCs what they know about these events, revealing the details of their secret mission assigned by the Sihedron Council and how the mission went bad when it came time to confront Alaznist. It might help if you select one of the Sihedron Heroes as a spokesperson for that group to expedite the crucial information they have to impart to the PCs; in the following text, we assume that the iconic sorcerer Seoni takes up this role. First, the Sihedron Heroes discovered hints that Alaznist was meddling with time, and they came to Crystilan to harvest energy from the site to aid in their confrontation with her, but they underestimated her power. Seoni summarizes what they’ve learned. Read or paraphrase the following.

“My companions and I cannot begin to thank you enough for making the daring incursion into Xin-Edasseril and rescuing us, and thus it is with some regret that I must point out that more dangers lie ahead for us all. The things we learned while battling Alaznist prior to our entrapment... suffice it to say that the boundaries of our reality grow weak. The runelord has taken steps to alter the very course of history, changing certain key events to create a confluence of circumstances that will allow her the ultimate victory and mastery over a new and unstoppable Thassilon. I fear that this confluence is now occurring, and the vanishing of the *Sihedron* from our possession is but the first sign of the damaged past reshaping the present. Something must be done to stop her before worse comes to pass!

“But all hope is not lost, my friends. Though Alaznist was able to overcome us with the power of the *Scepter of Ages* when we faced her, we did learn something of value. In those last moments, as she hurled back against us the magic we’d harvested from Crystilan, trapping us in time within Xin-Edasseril, we witnessed something remarkable. Something interfered at the last moment—something reached out from the veil of reality and plucked the *Scepter of Ages* from Alaznist’s hands and spirited it away. Even as we were trapped



within our magical prisons, we saw Alaznist’s rage at losing her powerful weapon. At the time I believed it was a result of our desperate attack—that somehow, we’d managed to disarm her at the last minute in our own defeat.

“I do not believe that now, for your faces are not unknown to me. I saw them, I believe, through the other side of that veil of reality. I believe that it was you who stole the scepter away from Alaznist, and I believe you are the key to defeating her when she is distracted during our attack. And if that’s correct, and you traveled back in time to aid us, then there must be a way to travel back further, to ancient Thassilon itself, and perhaps prevent the damage to history that Alaznist caused in the first place!”

This should confirm what the PCs have come to learn over the past two adventures, particularly from reading Xanderghul’s notes and their own research within Xin-Edasseril. The Sihedron Heroes are quick to agree, for some of them have seen evidence in their adventures that both Karzoug and the Cyphergate have links to the manipulation of time (particularly with respect to Karzoug’s *Leng Device*, detailed on page 353 of the *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*). Xanderghul’s plot to use the Cyphergate to travel back in time might work, but if Karzoug took the secret of its activation to his grave, then the only option is to go beyond the grave to seek out his soul in the Boneyard—provided he hasn’t yet been judged and sent on to his final punishment in the Great Beyond!

In any event, feel free to play this initial meeting out as long as you want, but don’t lose sight of the fact that the adventure should get underway at some point. The next section, which provides more context for how reality is reshaping, is designed to fit into the flow of play dynamically, and so you can begin Grim News (see below) at any point when you feel it’s time to move on with the plot.

GRIM NEWS

This event will require a bit of extra preparation for you, the GM. The goal of the section is to quickly impart to the PCs the nature of what’s happening in Varisia in a way that both encourages them to move forward with their plan to travel back in time, and also give a callback to the first half of the campaign, as an NPC whose company your group particularly enjoyed returns to the story. Since no two groups will have the same “favorite,” the exact details of this encounter must, by necessity, fall to you.

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SORSHEN'S FATE

Sorshen has fallen victim to one of Alaznist's temporal wounds—until the PCs correct the seventh wound, Sorshen remains trapped in the depths of the *Everdown Pool* and cannot aid them. In this timeline, since she never created any blood simulacra of herself to contact the PCs, those versions of her do not exist. As such, neither Sorshen nor her blood simulacra can be the NPC who delivers the grim news, and attempts to contact or locate Sorshen should automatically fail. See *Earthfall* on page 53 for more details on how the Runelord of Lust can be saved.

Events throughout Varisia have unfolded suddenly and dramatically now that the temporal wounds have started to wreak havoc. For the rest of the world, these events reshape memories as well, so from the viewpoint of NPCs, events such as a sudden invasion of Magnimar by sinspawn or the Oliphaunt's rampage through Korvosa are the culminations of bad omens and frightening precursor events that have led logically up to the current calamities. The NPCs still remember the PCs, and in their memory the PCs have had many adventures and accomplished much, but the PCs never actually took part in these adventures. One of these allied NPCs should contact the PCs via magic at some point to beg for aid.

Exactly which NPC contacts the PCs to deliver the grim news is left to you, as it should be an NPC with whom the party has established a strong supportive relationship in one of the first three adventures. Whoever you choose, part of the altered history and warped reality has resulted in that NPC gaining the power and resources necessary to not only contact the PCs via a spell like *sending*, but also either to travel swiftly to their location, perhaps via *teleport* or *shadow walk*, or to communicate over long distances via the use of a powerful magic item such as a *crystal ball* with *telepathy* or a *mirror of mental prowess*^{UE}.

Whatever the method used, the NPC contacts the PCs and desperately begs them to do what they can to save Varisia. From this NPC, the PCs should learn of the following situations, all of which sound dire and perhaps impossible to fix. While the NPC remembers the buildup to these events, the PCs do not. At this point in the game, no skill check is necessary for the PCs to realize they are now in a timeline that has been altered significantly from the one they came from. During the desperate conversation, the following key points are important to convey.

- All along the Lost Coast, eruptions of fire and burning fiends from ancient towers have devastated the region, and the towns of Sandpoint and Roderic's Cove are no more.

- Kaer Maga has been taken over by a demon lord named Colyphyr, who has claimed the city as her domain in return for aid she granted to Alaznist.
- Korvosa has been devastated by the sudden appearance of and attack by a towering monster out of legend—the dread Oliphaunt of Jandelay.
- Magnimar has fallen to an army of powerful sinspawn and other monsters that used portals within the Irespan's pilings as a point of invasion.

Throughout all of this, scattered sightings of Alaznist have been reported—the Runelord of Wrath is reveling in finally being able to wreak havoc as she travels from site to site to watch disaster unfold, periodically helping the ruin along with her magic. Strive to give the impression that the best that can be done in these crises is to minimize damage and perhaps rescue a few survivors; the only way to truly undo the damage done would be to go back in time and restore the proper reality.

HEROIC ROLES

Once the PCs have been apprised of the situation, the Sihedron Heroes volunteer to take up the task of traveling to the embattled regions of Varisia to do what they can to help, giving the PCs as much time as possible to seek out a method to activate the Cyphergate and journey to the Dimension of Time. This also serves as an additional distraction to Alaznist; as the Sihedron Heroes keep up the fight, the runelord will worry more about them, as known threats, than what the PCs are up to.

At this point, you should let the PCs decide which heroic roles the individual Sihedron Heroes should play in the background of this adventure. If at least one Sihedron Hero is assigned to a heroic role, then the PCs gain a bonus on certain rolls once they start traveling through time, as the Sihedron Heroes do what they can to combat the changes wrought by the altered timeline. Once the roles are chosen and the Sihedron Heroes and PCs split up, the role can be changed thereafter only at your discretion (and only if the PCs manage to establish communication with a Sihedron Hero). The bonus listed at the end of each role applies to the PCs as long as they are in the Dimension of Time, traveling into Thassilon's past to fix the temporal wounds, or trapped in Alaznist's Demesne.

Patrolling the Lost Coast: The Sihedron Hero travels to the reactivated Hellstorm Flumes to fight terrifying fiends called in from the Abyss who've invaded the Lost Coast via gaping tears in reality (+2 on Will saves).

Help with the Korvosa Evacuation: As the Oliphaunt nests and wallows in the ruins of Korvosa, the Sihedron Hero works to help those still trapped in the ruined city escape to relative safety in the hinterlands (+2 on Reflex saves).

Hunt Fiends on the Streets of Kaer Maga: The Sihedron Hero travels to Kaer Maga to fight demonic invaders and other monsters unleashed upon the city by the demon lord Colyphyr (+4 on Initiative checks and Perception checks).

Aid the Defenders of Magnimar: The Sihedron Hero travels to Magnimar to aid the last struggling pockets of resistance fighters there against the overwhelming invasion of the sinspawn armies (+2 on Fortitude saves).

A PLAN OF ATTACK

The time is nigh for the PCs to take on the role Xanderghul fancied he would himself play—traveling through the Cyphergate to seek a method of fixing the damage to the past inflicted by Alaznist and the *Scepter of Ages*. The notes the PCs recovered from the Temple of the Peacock Spirit should start them on their way, but there's additional information they'll need to gather first, for simply traveling to Riddleport and opening the Cyphergate without Karzoug's aid is an impossible task.

Complicating this is the fact that Karzoug is dead. Fortunately for the PCs and all of Varisia, his soul has not yet been judged—it was captured by a powerful astradaemon that dwells in an ancient temple carved into the side of Pharama's Spire in the Boneyard. If the PCs use magic like *wish*, *miracle*, or *soulseeker* (*Pathfinder RPG Planar Adventures* 44), they can confirm that Karzoug's soul has not yet been judged and learn its location. See the Court of Amendment on page 19 for more details.

Of course, getting the dead runelord's soul to give up its secrets is similarly complicated. While the PCs can certainly travel to the Court first in hopes of learning more from Karzoug's soul (and if they do so, proceed with the Court of Amendment on page 19), Seoni warns them that death is unlikely to have improved Karzoug's personality. She knows him for the greedy, scheming, vile soul that he is and does not believe that he will willingly give up any information about the Cyphergate. And since he is now an immortal soul likely awaiting his final judgment, there is very little that anyone can do to threaten or otherwise coerce the information from him. One potential solution, though, may lie in Karzoug's shrouded past.

After Karzoug's failed return, study of ancient Thassilon and its rulers took many of Varisia's scholars by storm, among them some of the Sihedron Heroes like Seoni. Fascinated by how a man like Karzoug could become so corrupt, she spent many months researching his history and eventually concluded that he was very much the product of his time—a time in which cruelty was rewarded. In her research, she came across a few mentions of the name "Zinlun," someone associated with the Thassilonian city of Malistoke. Her research revealed

that Malistoke was a city widely known for its slave trade and located in central Shalast until Karzoug destroyed it in –5758 AR, a year after he became the Runelord of Greed; he later quarried out the land around the city to create the lake known today as the Storval Deep. Since the Runelords of Greed never had any qualms about slavery in general, scholars of Thassilonian history have found it odd that Karzoug would obliterate one of the realm's most profitable centers of the slave trade, but few ever hit upon the truth that Seoni suspects.

Seoni (correctly) believes Karzoug spent his first few decades of life as a slave in Malistoke, likely under the yoke of this mysterious person named Zinlun. Further research turned up ancient Varisian legends that spoke of the horrors during the Age of Darkness following Earthfall, several of which mentioned a frightful "wizard of bones" named Zinlun who preyed upon any who dared approach the central Storval Plateau. These legends persisted into the Age of Destiny, suggesting that Zinlun had survived the destruction of his hometown and Earthfall alike, but little has been heard of him since the dawn of the Age of Enthronement. During this research, Seoni uncovered a potent treasure said to have been a possession of Zinlun—a lustrous black *pearl of power* (9th level). She used this pearl as a focus for a *discern location* spell and was startled when the spell revealed to her that Zinlun still existed, dwelling in his tomb at the bottom of the Storval Deep, where Malistoke once stood.

At your discretion, one of the PCs could know or learn this information about Karzoug's past, perhaps after spending some time researching the topic in Xin-Edasseril's libraries and succeeding at a DC 40 Knowledge check.

However the PCs gain this information, their goal should be clear (and if not, Seoni spells it out). If Zinlun or his remains could be recovered from his tomb, his presence (or even the lingering aura around his remains) would likely cause Karzoug's soul to react in shame and anger, and the PCs could to use it as a threat to force information from the runelord or, alternatively, as barter—Karzoug's knowledge of the Cyphergate's use in return for Zinlun's destruction.

Treasure: As a sorcerer, Seoni has no use for a *pearl of power*, and since the time seems right for Varisia's salvation to be handed to a new band of heroes, she gives the *pearl of power* to the PCs as a token of appreciation.

SIDE TRIPS TO VARISIA AND BEYOND

The dire situation elsewhere in Varisia is a backdrop to the PCs' central goal. The deadly encounters presented on the following pages are intended to be risky but the only viable route to defeating Alaznist and saving the region. To that end, no detail beyond the brief notes above is provided on these other events.

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BELIMARIUS'S ROLE

At the end of "The City Outside of Time," the PCs shattered the dome of Crystilan and returned the core of Xin-Edasseril, along with its surviving inhabitants, to the Material Plane. This may well include Runelord Belimarius. Neither the city of Xin-Edasseril nor Belimarius have scripted roles to play in "Rise of New Thassilon," but their presence will certainly have effects on Golarion going forward. The city of Xin-Edasseril could, in time, become an important city in the burgeoning nation of New Thassilon, although its exact role will depend on who rules that nation. In the short term, its remote location can give the PCs a relatively safe place to rest and hide out, away from the mayhem wrought on the rest of Varisia by Alaznist's actions. Belimarius's role depends in large part on how the PCs interacted with her in the prior adventure. If she emerged from that adventure as an enemy, she can either retreat into hiding to become a recurring villain in future campaigns of your own design, or she might seek revenge against the PCs, perhaps attacking them in Riddleport when they attempt to activate the Cyphergate. If instead the PCs maintained a peaceful alliance with her, she might stay in hiding for the duration of this adventure or even become an ally of the party. Her exact role is left to you to decide.

Still, it's possible that the PCs will want or even need to travel to a sizable city to resupply, recover from wounds, or sell treasure. Riddleport is their best choice since it has, so far, largely avoided overwhelming catastrophe. Xin-Edasseril remains an option in the short term for resupplying, but the best bet might be for the high-level heroes to travel to a much more distant city. Distant cities like Absalom or Katapesh are excellent places for a high-level group to shop and sell gear, and using spells like *shadow walk*, *wind walk*, or *teleport* can expedite these trips.

Of course, once the PCs get into Part 2 of this adventure, their options for resupplying become limited to what's available in Stethelos—see page 35 for more details.

EVENT 1. AN END BEFORE A BEGINNING (CR 20)

Creature: Many who dwell in the Dimension of Time are offended by the intrusion of mortal creatures bound by time. One such creature, a time flayer named Srishrin Tham, will be defeated by the PCs once they confront it there, but the fluctuations of time intervene to save the lanky time flayer, hurtling it back in time to this present. Filled with anger and frustration and already wounded in its future fight against the PCs, Srishrin immediately attacks.

The timing of this event is left to you, but it should happen before the PCs begin Part 2 of this adventure. You can use Srishrin's attack to break up a slow part of the

game, to surprise the PCs if they linger too long shopping or selling gear in distant cities, or as they take a break from exploring Zinlun's Tomb or the Court of Amendment. The time flayer manifests out of nowhere, cast involuntarily back through time. The time flayer appears as a tall, shimmering, white-skinned humanoid with the upper portion of its head shrouded in fire. About its slender frame, it wears only a loose toga of black cloth set with hexagonal plates bearing tiny black spirals, and its feet seem to float slightly above the ground. It looks around, unsure of its location at first and obviously wounded, then focuses on the party, saying, "You, still? Even now, not so long ago?" before unwrapping a slender, flexible sword from around its waist and attacking. The nature of the creature's arrival is unusual, as it has been shunted to the PCs during a fight that begins later in this adventure, and the wounds Srishrin has and the resources he's expended are the results of that fight. Believing that it will return to the Dimension of Time if it slays the PCs (it suspects Stethelos shunted it to this time as a result of its proximity to the player characters), Srishrin has little interest in talking. To the PCs, the context for this unexpected fight out of the blue will need to wait until they meet Srishrin for the first (second?) time in Stethelos.

SRISHRIN THAM

CR 20

XP 307,200

Time flayer magus 14 (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 603, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

NE Medium outsider (extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +39

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 35 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +5 insight, +10 natural)

hp 364 (currently 200; 27 HD; 14d8+13d10+230)

Fort +22, **Ref** +13, **Will** +22

Defensive Abilities reality bend; **DR** 10/magic; **Immunity** temporal magic

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 *flaming burst shock speed urumi*
+34/+29/+24/+19 (1d8+10/15-20 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks arcane pool (14 points, +4), greater spell combat, improved spell recall, magus arcana (arcane accuracy, close range, critical strike, spell shield), spellstrike

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 14th; concentration +21)

5th—*cone of cold* (2, DC 22), *telekinesis* (DC 22)

4th—*greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 21), *wall of fire*, *wall of ice* (2, DC 21)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*, *haste*, *ray of exhaustion* (2, DC 20)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *defensive shock*^{UM}, *mirror image* (2), *scorching ray* (2), *web* (DC 19)

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1st—*chill touch* (DC 18), *grease* (DC 18), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shocking grasp*, *vanish*^{APG} (DC 18)

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat From Srishrin's point of view, it has already been fighting the PCs for a few rounds. It's already taken damage (beginning this fight with only 200 hit points), and any spell listed above as prepared twice has already been cast once (don't worry if this variation doesn't match precisely to how things play out when the PCs meet the time flyer again, for the first time, in the Dimension of Time—it won't be noticeable in play to the players). Likewise, you can assume Srishrin has already used 7 of its 14 arcane pool points.

During Combat Srishrin uses its arcane pool in the first round as a swift action to make its weapon a *+5 flaming burst speed urumi* and activates *Arcane Strike* each round thereafter until reduced to 100 or fewer hit points, at which point the time flyer instead activates *reality bend* as its swift action each round. It uses spell combat to fight with its urumi while also casting spells as full-round actions. In the first round, Srishrin casts *greater invisibility* on itself, then *mirror image* in the next round, and then offensive spells in rounds to follow. It attempts to use temporal displacement on any particularly troublesome opponents.

Morale From Srishrin's perspective, it has already faced the PCs once and been defeated, and the time flyer will not stand for another such humiliation from these time-bound mortals. It attacks and fights until slain.

STATISTICS

Str 21, Dex 12, Con 24, Int 24, Wis 20, Cha 20

Base Atk +23; CMB +28; CMD 44

Feats Alertness, Arcane Strike, Bleeding Critical, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (urumi), Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (urumi), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Focus (urumi)

Skills Acrobatics +29, Bluff +35, Climb +12, Diplomacy +30, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (history) +37, Knowledge (planes) +37, Perception +39, Sense Motive +39, Stealth +35, Survival +21, Use Magic Device +35

Languages Aklo, Auran, Celestial, Classical Greek, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Protean

SQ fighter training, foresight, heavy armor, knowledge pool, temporal displacement, time jaunt

Gear +5 kikko^{UC}, +5 flaming burst urumi^{UC}, ring of freedom of movement, magus spellbook

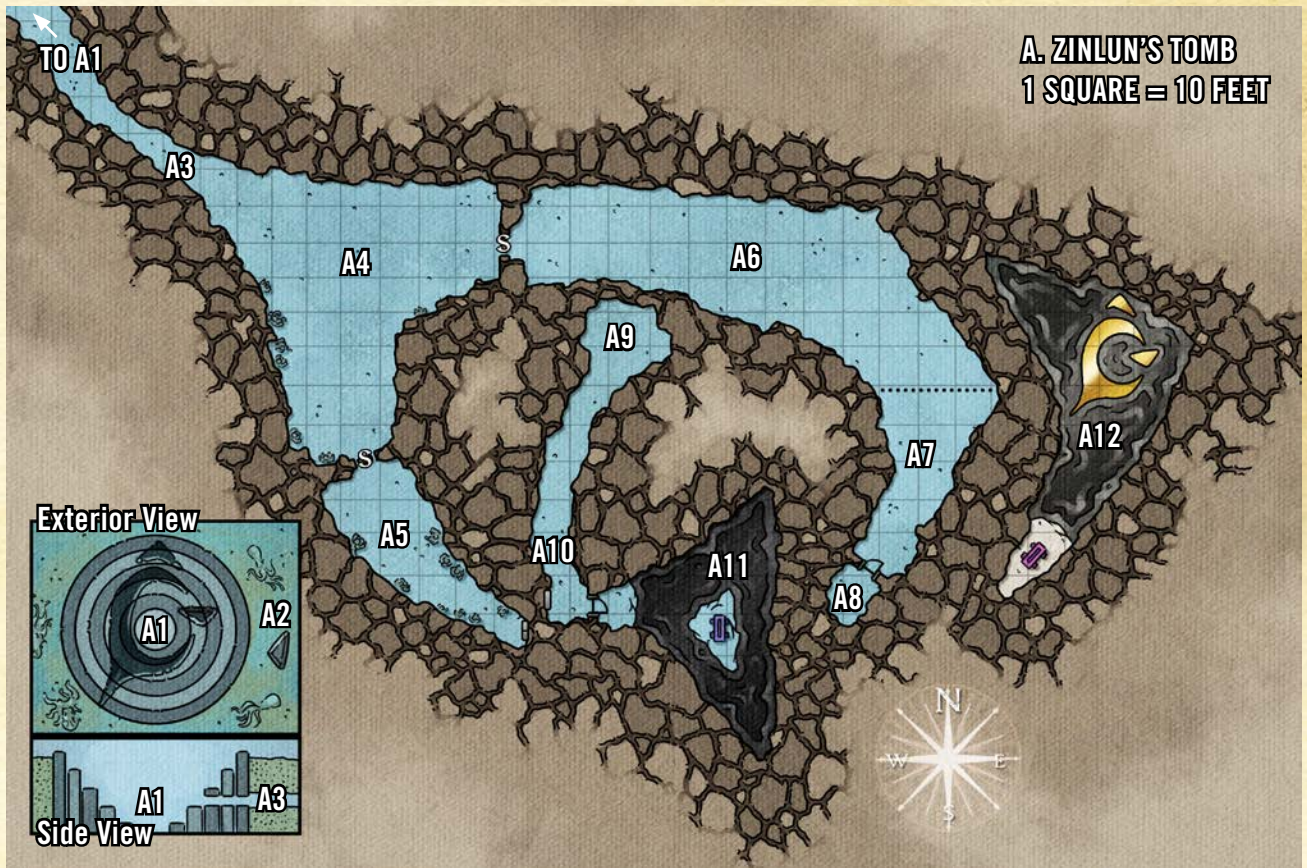
SPECIAL ABILITIES

Foresight (Su) Srishrin can see a few seconds into the future. This ability prevents it from being surprised, caught flat-footed, or flanked. It also grants Srishrin an insight bonus to AC equal to its Wisdom bonus. This ability can be negated, but Srishrin can restart it as a free action on its next turn.

Immunity to Temporal Magic (Ex) Srishrin is immune to all time-related spells and effects (including *time stop*, *temporal stasis*, and the like).

Reality Bend (Su) As a swift action, Srishrin can fold the dimensional space surrounding it so its true location is hard to discern. Srishrin can activate this ability after it is hit in battle to suddenly not be





where it was the moment before, giving it a 50% miss chance it can apply to successful strikes after they occur (but before damage is rolled). This is similar to the miss chance granted by a *displacement* spell. Casting *see invisibility* does not reveal Srishrin's location, but casting *true seeing* does.

Temporal Displacement (Su) As a +12 melee touch attack up to three times per day, Srishrin can attempt to send a creature a few seconds into the future. The creature touched can resist being temporally displaced with a successful DC 21 Fortitude save. On a failed save, the creature vanishes in a flash of white light, only to reappear in the same space 1d4 rounds later. If that space is occupied when the creature returns, it is shunted harmlessly aside to the closest unoccupied space. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Time Jaunt (Su) As a standard action, Srishrin can slip through the flow of time and appear anywhere on the same plane of existence as if by *greater teleport*. Srishrin can bring up to four other creatures within a 30-foot radius; unwilling creatures can resist being drawn along on the time jaunt with a successful DC 23 Will save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

A. ZINLUN'S TOMB

The ancient city of Malistoke was a major Thassilonian hub for Shalast's slave trade. This infamous city of human misery lay sprawled at the base of the mountain range now known as the Iron Peaks. Where Malistoke's infamous flesh pits once stood now sprawls a massive trench gouged by centuries of quarrying that, today, is a lake known as the Storval Deep. At a depth of 2,000 feet and covering more than 3,000 square miles, the result of Karzoug's efforts to erase his hated hometown is truly impressive. The PCs should have little problem determining the approximate location where Malistoke once stood (and thus the location of Zinlun's tomb); a successful DC 30 Knowledge (history) check or consultation with someone like Seoni does the trick. The problem lies with the fact that when Zinlun returned to the Material Plane after Earthfall to rebuild his laboratory, he chose to do so at the bottom of this immense lake.

By the time Karzoug began the destruction of Malistoke, his former master Zinlun was already a powerful lich. After discovering Karzoug's vengeful plans—only hours before the runelord struck—Zinlun quickly fled the Material Plane to escape the runelord's wrath. For centuries he

roamed spheres of existence far from Golarion, growing in power until he finally returned to his home long after Earthfall, when Karzoug could no longer threaten him. He was delighted with the ruined nature of the world and barely inconvenienced by the fact that his old home was now a massive lake. He chose a site below the precise spot of his old home to begin construction of a laboratory and tomb for himself. For centuries, he used this site as a base of operations to spread fear and terror among those who had survived Earthfall, but by the time the Age of Enthronement began, Zinlun had fallen into torpor and become a demilich. There he sequestered himself amid guardians and traps to continue his strange mental wanderings and unfathomable dreams. He was abruptly drawn from his deep quiescence 11 years ago when he sensed that Karzoug had awakened once more. Zinlun has remained within his tomb since then, but he exists now as an awakened demilich, awaiting the intrusion he has deemed inevitable since Karzoug's first stirrings.

The waters of the Storval Deep are calm, requiring only a successful DC 10 Swim check to navigate, but at a depth of 2,000 feet, where the entrance to Zinlun's tomb lies, the silt and water pressure pose significant problems. Visibility is akin to that of a dark night, but the silt in the water limits visibility via darkvision to a maximum of 30 feet. The pressure of 2,000 feet of water overhead deals 20d6 points of damage per minute (a creature can attempt a Fortitude save [DC = 15 + 1 for each previous check] each minute to prevent this damage). An effect like *freedom of movement* protects against this pressure damage. The water at this depth is also incredibly cold, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage from hypothermia per minute of exposure. Furthermore, these deepest waters are poorly oxygenated, such that even the ability to breathe water will not stave off suffocation for long. A creature that can breathe water (including anyone under the effects of *water breathing* or a similar effect) suffers the effects of slow suffocation at this depth; see page 445 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. Magic that provides oxygen or removes the need to breathe (such as *air bubble*^{UC}, a *helm of underwater action*, an *iridescent spindle ioun stone*, or *life bubble*^{APC}) protects a PC from suffocation.

The location of Zinlun's lair is not obvious, but with the information the PCs have obtained and the resources at their disposal, magic such as *find the path* should make finding it simple enough as soon as they determine the means to navigate the waters. They likely arrive at the tomb's entrance (area **A1**). The tomb's interior is flooded and there are no light sources. All surfaces are made of hewn stone. Tunnels have 10-foot-high ceilings, and chambers have 20-foot-high ceilings unless otherwise noted.

A1. The Reversed Rune (CR 17)

A circular depression in the silt of the lake bed seems to have been recently disturbed, revealing a circular stone platform composed of a series of concentric rings. The platform bears a massive stylized symbol that resembles some sort of grasping pincer measuring nearly 100 feet across. The silt-layered lake bed around the platform is uneven, with dozens of corpses of immense tentacled monstrosities partly covered in mud.

With a successful DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check, a character recognizes the large symbol as the Thassilonian rune of greed, but with its orientation reversed, and notes that a portion of the rune is missing—the stylized jewel that the rune normally grasps is not present. An examination of this area of the symbol reveals a large, shallow depression in the shape of the missing piece. A PC who succeeds at a DC 28 Perception check while searching the area is able to locate the missing piece of stone lying partially buried in the silt of the lake bed nearby (see area **A2**). The DC of this Perception check drops to 15 after a battle with the creature that guards the area stirs up the silt covering the stone. The entire platform emits a faint aura of abjuration and serves as the gateway to Zinlun's hidden tomb. The platform is also under the effects of an *unhallow* spell with a *silence* effect tied to it.

The platform is solid stone and 50 feet thick, its surface level with the silty lake bed around it. The rune itself is composed of a 1-foot-thick layer of dark basalt fused to the platform itself. The whole is virtually impervious to physical damage (hardness 30, hp 800 per 5-foot section). However, if the missing piece at **A2** is returned to its place, the concentric rings (including the fused basalt rune) of the platform sink into the lake bed in a stair-step configuration similar to an amphitheater, revealing a tunnel that leads to Zinlun's tomb (area **A3**). As long as the platform entrance is closed, the interior of the tomb is under a permanent *nondetection* and *dimensional anchor* effect (CL 18th). These effects end if the tomb is opened but automatically return if the tomb is closed. Shutting the tomb requires removing the stone "gem" from the platform, at which point the platform slowly rises into its closed position over 2 rounds, returning to a single piece of stone.

Creature: The temperature of the water has slowed the decay of the many immense corpses that lie around the entrance to the tomb. An examination of any of these, accompanied by a successful DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check, reveals them to be the bodies of mothers of oblivion, lake monsters that combine the features of a sea serpent and an octopus. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check recalls that one of the Storval Deep's legendary denizens, Black Magga, was

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one such creature, although she was defeated years ago by the Sihedron Heroes during a torrential rainstorm that caused the Storval Deep to flood the lowlands to the south. The PCs may have even fought one of these creatures during the fourth chapter of this Adventure Path, “Temple of the Peacock Spirit” (and if so, they automatically recognize the bodies).

In truth, these remains are corpses left over from one of Zinlun’s more recent experiments—the cloning of a new Black Magga and subsequent transformation of the monster into an undead guardian to protect the entrance

to his tomb. Time and time again, the awakened demilich created a clone of Black Magga from preserved remains of tentacles shed from the legendary lake monster, only to have his attempts to sacrifice and raise the carcass as an undead guardian fail. Eventually, though, he was successful, and for the past several years, an undead clone of the legend herself has patrolled the waters around the tomb entrance. Her frequent passages through the area are, ironically, what keeps the silt from completely settling into the reversed rune and obscuring it.

Risen Magga returns to the area at some point soon after the PCs arrive but before they complete the task of opening the tunnel (area A3). This undead clone was created in an area of great desecration, and its statistics have been adjusted already to account for this influence. Although Risen Magga retains the staggering intellect of the original creature, its nature as an undead guardian bound to Zinlun’s service limits the entity’s options. If it somehow manages to survive and outlast Zinlun himself, the destruction of the awakened demilich releases Risen Magga from her lowly existence as a tomb guardian, allowing her to resume the role of her progenitor within the Storval Deep.



RISEN MAGGA

RISEN MAGGA

CR 17

XP 102,400

Advanced black magga juju zombie (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 406; *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 291, 292)
CE Gargantuan undead (aquatic)

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

DEFENSE

AC 38, touch 9, flat-footed 35 (+3 Dex, +29 natural, -4 size)

hp 217 (15d8+150)

Fort +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17; +6 vs. channeled positive energy

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, channel resistance +4; **DR** 15/cold iron and magic and slashing; **Immune** cold, electricity, *magic missile*, petrification, polymorph, undead traits; **Resist** acid 20, fire 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +26 (2d8+19/19-20 plus energy drain), slam +26 (3d6+19), 4 tentacles +21 (2d6+10 plus grab)

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

Special Attacks breath of madness, constrict (2d6+19), energy drain (2 levels, DC 24)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)

Constant—*invisibility purge*

At will—*death knell* (DC 19), *prayer*

3/day—*demand* (DC 25), *dimensional anchor*, *divination*, *dominate person* (DC 22), *greater command* (DC 22)

1/day—*commune, dream, unhallow*

TACTICS

During Combat Risen Magga attacks first by attempting to cast *dominate person* on any PC who seems like a divine spellcaster; she avoids casting *greater command* if foes take shelter in the area of silence that covers the platform. She primarily focuses on physical attacks against foes and can even use her transdimensional tentacles to attack foes through the ceiling of areas **A4-A12** in Zinlun's tomb (as long as the entrance is open and the *dimensional anchor* effect over the place is inactive), since there's only 10 to 15 feet of stone between the ceilings of these rooms and the lake bed above.

Morale Risen Black Maga fights until destroyed but does not pursue foes beyond a 1,000-foot radius of area **A1**.

STATISTICS

Str 45, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** 29, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +34 (+36 bull rush, +38 grapple); **CMD** 45 (47 vs. bull rush, can't be tripped)

Feats Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +21, Climb +25, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history) +24, Knowledge (nature) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Knowledge (religion) +24, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +27, Stealth +9, Survival +21, Swim +43

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, Thassilonian

SQ transdimensional tentacles, warp dimensions

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath of Madness (Su) Risen Magga does not use her breath of madness ability in this battle, as it does not function underwater.

Transdimensional Tentacles (Su) Risen Black Magga's tentacles allow her to see into and infiltrate the Ethereal Plane and the Shadow Plane while she is on the Material Plane. This allows her not only to be aware of these planes and the creatures there, but also to shift her tentacles through these planes to attack their inhabitants. She can even phase her tentacles in and out of existence, effectively reaching through walls and other solid barriers to attack foes on the other side, provided that area is not warded by *dimensional lock* or a similar effect. She can grapple foes with her tentacles normally, but she cannot pull grappled foes or objects through planes as her tentacles shift between them.

Warp Dimensions (Su) Risen Magga's presence distorts the dimensions of reality. A creature that attempts to utilize a teleportation effect while within 300 feet of Risen Magga must succeed at a DC 21 caster level check or the effect fails. If the effect fails, the creature that attempted to create that effect must succeed at a DC 27

Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: Over the years, Risen Magga has collected some significant treasures from foolish adventurers who ventured into her domain. These can be found scattered across the area under the silt with an hour's worth of searching and a successful DC 30 Perception check: a *decoy ring*^{UE}, a *lesser persistent spell metamagic rod*^{UE}, a *wand of spell immunity* (46 charges), 90 pp, 1,100 gp, 520 sp, and 5,390 cp.

A2. Rune Trap (CR 17)

This strangely shaped piece of basalt lies half-buried in the silt. While the slab is large and unwieldy, a group of four PCs working together should be able to drag the stone over to its place with half an hour of back-breaking toil; at your discretion, particularly strong PCs or allies, or the creative use of magic, can shorten this time.

Trap: Zinlun has rigged a horrific trap into this stone. Hidden beneath it lies a hollow space filled with a concentrated pool of supernaturally enhanced flesh-eating acid that is very difficult to detect via visual inspection. If the stone is moved, the pocket is opened and the flesh-eating acid swiftly diffuses into the surrounding water, the radius of the affected area expanding 10 feet per round for 4 rounds, when it reaches its maximum size of a 40-foot radius zone around area **A2**; the acid becomes inert 1 round after reaching this limit. Exposure to the hydrogen in the water intensifies the acid even as it remains invisible in the water, so it deals considerable damage each round.

FLESH-EATING ACID CR 17

XP 102,400

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 40; **Disable Device** DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect invisible acid cloud (6d6 points of acid damage each round for 5 rounds, Fortitude DC 25 for half damage each round); multiple targets (all targets in an increasing radius up to 40 feet; see above)

A3. Quarried Entry

This tunnel bores directly into the bedrock and has the appearance of the original quarrying that formed the entire lake.

Zinlun used the existing quarry shafts to build his tomb, expanding them as necessary. His obsession with overcoming and defying Karzoug is evident even in the tomb's design: like the great rune inscribed above, it too is created in the shape of the rune of greed, yet reversed

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to show his disdain for the upstart runelord he once called slave.

Development: If Risen Magga survives her encounter with the PCs, the undead lake monster continues to hunt the PCs after they enter the tomb. As long as area **A1** remains open, the tomb's *dimensional anchor* effect remains negated, so every time the PCs enter a room in the tomb, there is a cumulative 25% chance that Risen Magga attacks through the 10 to 15 feet of stone between the ceiling and the lake bed above with her transdimensional tentacles. She continues doing this until the PCs successfully deal with her once and for all.

A4. The Cenotaph of Karzoug (CR 18)

The walls of this large chamber bear engravings of an ancient cityscape, their lines not dulled by time. They depict a city sprawled below a background of grim peaks as lines of countless chained beings, mostly humanoid, are led to their fate within the city walls. At the end of each of the room's wings are bronze trellises upon which mutilated human corpses have been draped. The bodies' flesh still has a fresh appearance, suggesting the deaths occurred recently. The wall between the two wings bears a 10-foot-high bas-relief of the face of a man with a distinctive pointed chin. He has squinting eyes, arched eyebrows, and a prominent forehead, and his expression is an unmistakable scowl.

The murals show Malistoke at its height, and the bas-relief depicts none other than Zinlun himself captured in an image of displeasure. There are two dozen human bodies mounted on the trellises at either end of the room. All were brutally tortured to death thousands of years ago, yet the combination of cold, anaerobic water and lingering necromantic energies have prevented them from suffering any decay. Anyone closely examining the bodies and succeeding at a DC 15 Perception check realizes that they are all identical—the same man tortured to death dozens of times. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history) check recognizes that each bears the countenance of a young Karzoug, before his ascension as Runelord of Greed. These are all, in fact, clones created by Zinlun from materials left over from Karzoug's days as his slave. Since Karzoug never died while any of the clones existed, his soul never inhabited any of them; though Zinlun mutilated the inert duplicates, it was a pastime he found to be particularly dissatisfying.

Behind each of the bronze trellises is a secret door that can be located with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

Creatures: Of the dozens of mutilated Karzougs on display here, two of them became infused with fragments of Karzoug's soul when he was slain by the Sihedron Heroes; these two bodies rose as powerful undead known

as gallowdead. A single gallowdead hangs from a trellis over each secret door, and as soon as a creature approaches within 20 feet of either door, both undead Karzougs rip themselves free and sink to the ground through the water, then lurch forth to attack. They pursue foes relentlessly and fight until destroyed.

GALLOWDEAD (2) CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 228 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 119)

A5. First Reckoning (CR 15)

The walls of this wide chamber are lined with bronze trellises from floor to ceiling, each festooned with scores of perfectly preserved male corpses bearing some form of mutilation or torture. The far end of the chamber narrows to an ornate bronze double door.

Like area **A4**, the trellises hold hundreds of preserved corpses of Karzoug clones, although none of those on display here are undead. The bronze doors are wonderfully preserved samples of construction in the style of ancient Thassilon.

Trap: The bronze doors are not locked, but they open only onto a blank wall of stone. They are trapped so that when opened, the ceiling of the chamber collapses. The entire room is considered the bury zone of a cave-in; the only slide zone is the 10-foot square outside the secret door in area **A4**. See page 415 of the *Core Rulebook* for rules on cave-ins and collapses; note that the ceiling was not visibly weakened so there is no chance of noticing the potential collapse without first detecting the trap. Those buried in the collapse face not only the normal dangers associated with a cave-in but also the added risk of suffocation should their means of breathing within the flooded tomb end before they can dig themselves out.

COLLAPSING ROOM CR 15

XP 51,200

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable Device** DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect cave-in (8d6 points of damage plus buried; Reflex DC 25 half); multiple targets (all targets in area **A5**)

A6. The Gallery of Karzoug

This long chamber abruptly turns a corner at the east end. The walls leading up to this turn are covered in detailed engravings showing life in a wicked slaver's house. The slave master appears to be a wizard of some power, as his slaves are subjected to experiments and horrific transformations far

worse than the mundane tortures. A ten-foot-high bas-relief of a scowling face with a prominent forehead and a pointed chin looms on the southern wall, a grimace of obvious distaste on its pinched features.

The engravings depict the atrocities of day-to-day life in Zinlun's house. A character examining the engravings notices that most of the slaves undergoing the worst tortures bear a striking resemblance to the Karzoug clones in areas **A4** and **A5**.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 32 Perception check while examining the bas-relief carving of Zinlun's face on the south wall realizes that the carving's nostrils are actually holes that pass completely through the stone wall into another space beyond (area **A9**). This space can be accessed by magic, breaking through the 1-foot-thick stone wall (hardness 8, hp 180, break DC 40), or by passing through one of the 4-inch-diameter nostrils.

Development: Any attempt to break through the wall with force arouses the mithral golem in area **A9**, which immediately slithers through the nostril holes to attack the PCs.

A7. Second Reckoning (CR 15)

The walls of this narrowing corridor are lined with bronze trellises upon which hang hundreds of pallid, brutally tortured bodies. At the south end of the hall, an ornate double door provides the only route forward.

Like the previous chambers, the trellises here are covered with the mutilated but preserved remains of Karzoug clones. However, unlike the previous chambers, these trellis-mounted corpses are part of a trap that activates when the double door to area **A8** is opened.

Trap: The double door activates a multipart trap once it is opened. First, the trellises themselves—complete with dangling clone corpses—immediately collapse inward over the entire area between the double door and the dashed line indicated on the map. This collapsing framework crashes onto everyone in the affected area, creating a mess of bars and corpses that threatens to entangle anyone in the area. Immediately thereafter, the entire area is affected by *greater dispel magic*, a potent and devastating effect on character who rely upon spell effects to deal with the underwater conditions. Once the trellis collapses, the entire room is treated as difficult terrain.

COLLAPSING TRELLIS CR 15

XP 51,200

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect falling trellis (4d6 points of bludgeoning damage plus entangled, Reflex DC 20 half and avoids entangled) plus spell effect (*greater dispel magic* targets all active spell effects in area **A7**, CL 18th); multiple targets (all targets in room)

Development: If the door to area **A8** is opened, the swarm within emerges to attack immediately after the trap is sprung. The swarm is unhindered by the trellis trap and can move freely to attack those entangled in it. In addition, if the mithral golem in **A9** has not been destroyed, it assumes fluid form to slither through the holes in the wall to area **A6** and then comes to investigate this area. It attacks anyone it finds who is not entangled by the trellis before moving in to attack those who are.

A8. Adamantine Swarm (CR 17)

Creature: The small nondescript room behind the trapped double door holds nothing more than a deadly swarm of Fine constructs crafted from adamantine. Each individual element of the swarm has been crafted to resemble the tiny jellyfish known as sea wasps, but in all other ways the swarm conforms to the more common adamantine wasp swarm. The swarm attacks anyone it encounters but does not pursue foes beyond area **A6**.

ADAMANTINE SEA WASP SWARM CR 17

XP 102,400

Advanced variant adamantine wasp swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, *Tome of Horrors Complete* 579)

N Fine construct (swarm)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +2

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 26, flat-footed 20 (+8 Dex, +2 natural, +8 size)

hp 115 (21d10)

Fort +7, Ref +15, Will +9

Defensive Abilities swarm traits; **Immune** construct traits, weapon damage; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 5 ft., swim 40 ft.

Melee swarm (5d6 plus distraction and poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 20)

TACTICS

During Combat The sea wasp swarm attacks all living targets it encounters, but it does not pursue foes beyond areas **A6–A8**.

Morale The swarm fights until it is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 5, Dex 27, Con —, Int —, Wis 15, Cha 6

Base Atk +21; CMB —; CMD —

Skills Swim +16

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Swarm—injury; save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round

RISE OF NEW THASSILON

Part 1:
Animous
Collusion

Part 2:
Exigency Shift

Part 3:
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Paradoxes

Part 4:
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for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dexterity drain; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A creature whose Dexterity score is reduced to 0 freezes solid (similar to a *flesh to stone* spell) for 1d4 hours as his body hardens into ice. If reduced to 0 hit points or below while frozen, the creature shatters into pieces and dies. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: A single flawed sapphire worth 800 gp lies abandoned on the floor here.

A9. Beyond Zinlun's Grimace (CR 17)

Creature: Zinlun posted a powerful mithral golem as guardian in this area. It responds to the trap as described in areas A6 and A7 but is otherwise found here waiting to slay any intruders. Once the golem engages foes, it pursues them throughout the complex but not beyond area A3.

ADVANCED MITHRAL GOLEM CR 17

XP 102,400

hp 220 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 139)

A10. Third Reckoning (CR 15)

The east and west walls of this small alcove each have an identical bronze double door. A face is carved in bas-relief in the wall between the doors, its arched eyebrows raised and its distinctive mouth contorted into a scream or howl.

The carving's open mouth once issued a strong current of elemental water, but this magic has faded over the ages. The mouth is only 5 feet deep and harmless today. The double doors both radiate a strong aura of conjuration—the eastern one from a permanent *magic aura* while the western aura is from a trap.

Trap: The west double door bears an agonizing teleportation trap. If it is opened, all creatures in area A10 are teleported to area A5 and deposited through the double door in that area (as if expelled from the wall behind the door). The process of this short teleportation is agonizing, as the victim feels her body disintegrate and reintegrate in a painful manner. Of course, being disgorged from the doors in area A5 also activates the trap in that area if it hasn't already triggered. If the trap in area A5 has been activated, the PCs still take the damage from the teleport effect but instead rebound back to area A10.

AGONIZING TELEPORTER CR 15

XP 51,200

Type magic; **Perception** DC 35; **Disable Device** DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect teleportation to area A5 and 10d6 points of untyped damage (Will DC 20 half damage and negates teleportation); multiple targets (all targets in area A10)

A11. The Passion of Karzoug (CR 17)

The doors open onto a ledge that overlooks the room below. The ceiling above is studded with dozens of crystalline formations that shed a soft white glow over the entire area. The entry ledge drops 10 feet to a layer of slowly churning tar, heavier than the water above. The tar constantly roils and seethes, forming humanoid shapes that promptly dissolve only to be replaced by new ones. In the center of this tar pit rises a triangular island upon which rests an ornate stone sarcophagus.

This chamber serves as both Zinlun's means of perpetually humiliating his former slave as well as a means of ingress to the demilich's tomb. The tar is heavier than water and fills the pit below to a depth of 30 feet, with the island rising only a foot above its surface. The tar itself bears an aura of moderate illusion from the *permanent image* of churning figures that Zinlun has placed upon it. Anyone who takes the time to observe the shapes rising and falling from the tar can tell it is a performance repeating over and over. The tar takes the shape of a furious wizard (the same one depicted in the mural in A4 and A6) inflicting despicable tortures and degradations upon the shape of a young man. The man is recognizable as the same individual as the many clones found throughout the tomb—Karzoug. Zinlun takes great delight in displaying the many abuses that Karzoug suffered at his hands, and the PCs can readily understand the rancor and shame that the runelord felt for the place of his birth.

It's simple enough to swim above the tar, of course, but anyone who comes into significant contact with the stuff finds that rather than being hot, the tar here is supernaturally cold. The tar deals 1d6 points of cold damage on contact, or 3d6 points of cold damage per round of immersion. This damage continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases, but this additional damage is only half of that dealt during actual contact. Anyone in contact with the tar is entangled for as long as the contact persists.

The sarcophagus is carved from a block of porphyry with its lid bearing the image of the same wizard, easily recognizable by his distinctive eyebrows, high forehead, and pointed chin. The entire sarcophagus radiates an aura of moderate conjuration. The lid weighs 300 pounds and if removed reveals an empty interior. A character who succeeds at a DC 23 Perception check discovers a small inscription, written in Thassilonian, on the underside of the sarcophagus lid. It says, "In my dark repose find your enlightenment."

RISE OF NEW
THASSILON

Part 1:
Animous
Collusion

Part 2:
Exigency Shift

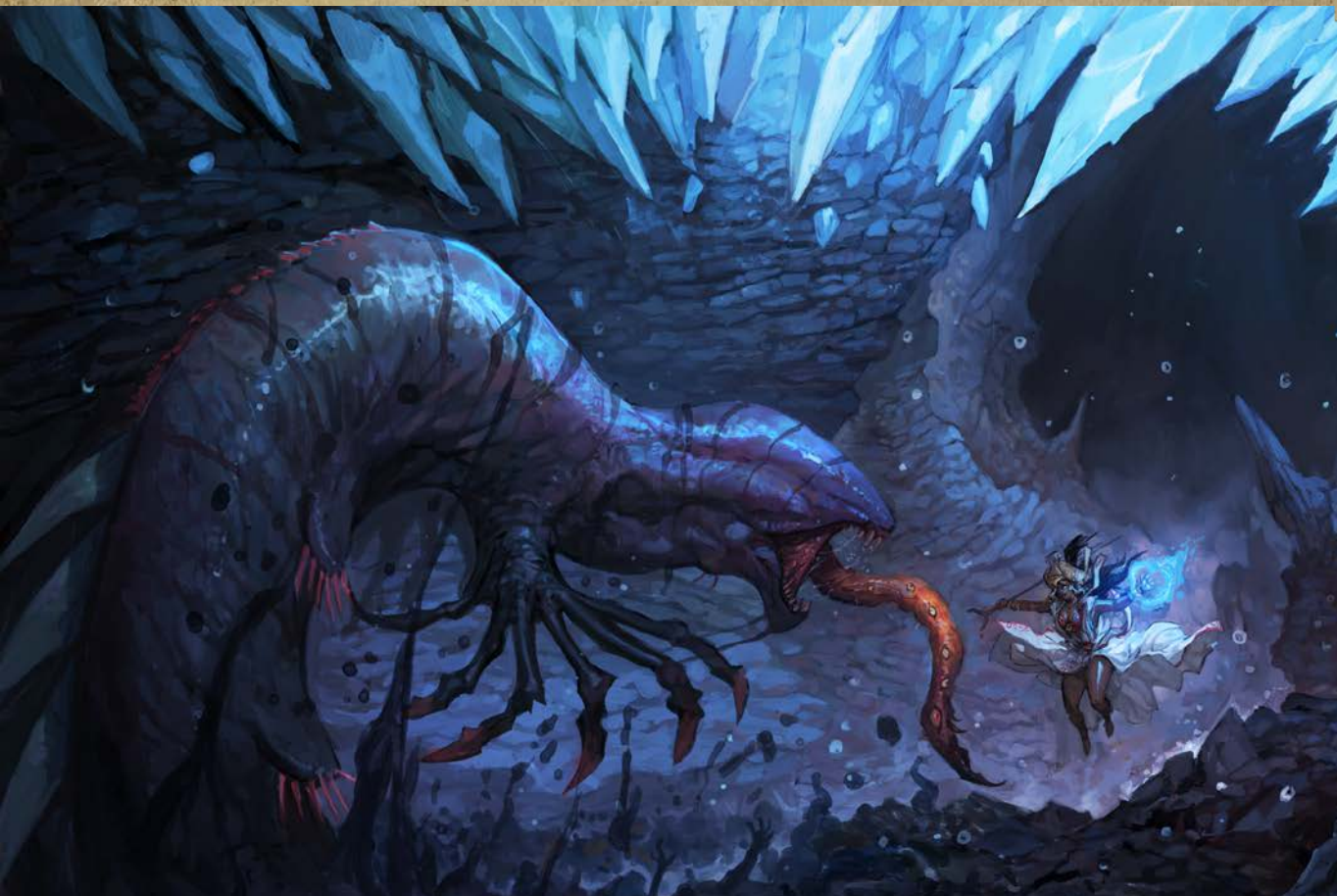
Part 3:
Persistent
Paradoxes

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This is a small clue from Zinlun that the inscription must be viewed from within the closed sarcophagus. If anyone reclines in the sarcophagus and the lid is replaced, that individual is immediately teleported to the interior of the sarcophagus at area **A12**, but only if that sarcophagus is empty (whether or not that sarcophagus's lid is in place is irrelevant). The sarcophagus can hold one Medium creature or up to two Small creatures at a time.

The crystalline formations above are under the effects of permanent *continual flame*.

Creatures: The room is not guarded. Zinlun has placed a pair of targothon in *temporal stasis* beneath the tar. Their stasis ends the first time the sarcophagus is used to teleport to **A12**, or as soon as anyone touches one of the two submerged monsters. The ravenous creatures proceed to attack anyone they find in the chamber, though they are too large to exit through the double doors. If a targothon is reduced to 100 hit points or below, it retreats into the depths of the tar pit but will emerge if anyone enters the room again later (such as when departing **A12**) and fights to the death.

TARGOTHAS (2)

CR 15

XP 51,200 each

hp 253 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 261*)

A12. Tomb of Zinlun (CR 21)

Anyone arriving here from the teleporting sarcophagus in area **A11** finds herself in a porphyry sarcophagus identical to the one in that area. To escape requires lifting the 300-pound lid. While the sarcophagus itself is filled with water, the rest of the room is not flooded. The 50-foot-high ceiling of this cavernous chamber is located 10 feet below the floor level of the rest of the complex, though this room is also to the east of the other areas.

This large chamber is not flooded. The air, though old and stale, tastes sweet after long immersion. A porphyry sarcophagus bearing the image of the same wizard depicted throughout the complex rests on a ledge overlooking the dark expanse of a tar pit. The surface of the tar lies only a foot below the ledge, unbroken by any shifting forms or shapes. Its smooth expanse is a uniform pitch until reaching a series of golden platforms that seem to float upon its surface near the room's center. Several items and forms are situated atop these golden platforms, but they are difficult to make out from the ledge.

This air-filled chamber is the true tomb of Zinlun. The air is breathable, and the tar pit—like that in area **A11**—is 30 feet deep and supernaturally cold. The sarcophagus is

identical to the one in **A11** (minus the inscription), and anyone reclining in it with the lid in place is teleported to that room. The sarcophagus is capable of simultaneously receiving one creature and sending another creature back if both lids are closed with occupants inside at the same time.

The platforms at the room's center form the reversed rune of greed and are made of 1-inch-thick iron plated with gold. They are held in place by an effect similar to that of an activated *immovable rod* (CL 18th) and they sink into the tar in 1 round if this effect is dispelled.

Resting upon the largest of the golden platforms are a half dozen naked human bodies—yet more clones of Karzoug. Interspersed among them are several cruel implements of torture, and it is obvious that these bodies have been recently mutilated much like those found throughout the tomb. One of them, however, remains in pristine condition. It is clearly a fresh clone awaiting animation. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Spellcraft mistakenly believes that the clone's inert nature means that Karzoug's soul already inhabits a living body; with a result of 28 or higher, or a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check, the PC concludes that the soul could also be otherwise occupied and not available for animation of the clone.

On the northernmost gold platform is a glass chest, 5 feet long, 3 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. It is unlocked, and its clearly visible contents consist of dozens of arms, legs, and other portions of a human body that have been amputated and perfectly preserved. A few of them have had large bloodless chunks surgically removed from them. All of the body parts remain under the effects of a permanent *gentle repose* spell as long as they remain in the chest. During the many years of Karzoug's enslavement, Zinlun often amputated portions of his body for entertainment and then later had them regenerated. Anyone who observed the tableau in **A11** has seen this occurring. Zinlun's own demented proclivities compelled him to preserve these trophies from all his slaves, and when he fled from Karzoug's wrath 10,000 years ago, he was able to take these pieces of the runelord's physical form with him. It is these that he has used to make the clones he subjects to his hideous tortures. Zinlun remains perturbed that despite Karzoug's death years ago, the runelord's soul has yet to show up and animate one of his clones—but he remains hopeful that it someday might.

Creatures: The tar pit is guarded by dozens of fossil golems that lie in heaps at its bottom. Zinlun created these from native remains found in the local strata over the centuries and deposited them here as guardians. Unfortunately, their magic is old and feeble and takes some time to fully activate. There are unlimited fossil golems buried in the tar, but Zinlun can call upon only a few at a time. Every time the sarcophagus transporter from **A11** is

used, two of the golems arise from the tar pit and attack the arrivals after 2 rounds. However, at no time can there be more than four fossil golems active at once, and once Zinlun is destroyed, the fossil golems become inert.

The jeweled skull of the demilich Zinlun rests on a plinth on the central platform. He becomes aware of the PCs as soon as the fossil golems begin to attack. He waits until the golems are defeated or the PCs try to reach or otherwise attack the gold platforms before he attacks. Zinlun can call forth another fossil golem from the pit as a swift action every 1d4 rounds, but he still cannot exceed the limit of four golems in the room at once.

FOSSIL GOLEMS CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 122 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 136)

ZINLUN CR 20

XP 307,200

hp 296 (see page 76)

Treasure: The glass box loses its *gentle repose* effect if removed from this room. The crystal plinth is worth 6,500 gp and the velvet cushion atop it is worth 250 gp. The gold plating on the platforms is extremely valuable if harvested (a task that would take days without magic), worth 30,000 gp in all. In addition to Zinlun's gear (see his statistics on page 76), hidden at the bottom of the tar pit among the many fossilized bones and discoverable only with hours of dredging and a successful DC 35 Perception check (or the use of magic detection) are a *+1 wyrm'sbreath (cold) light steel shield*^{UE} and a *staff of one hundred hands*^{UE}.

The greatest treasure in the chamber, though, is Zinlun's skull. With this relic, the PCs have a potent bargaining chip that they can use to convince Karzoug's soul to divulge to them the secrets of the Cyphergate. When Zinlun is defeated, you should immediately roll 2d6 to determine how many days it will take him to rejuvenate. At the end of this time, if the PCs still carry his skull, the demilich reforms at full strength and immediately attacks again. The effects of a spell like *hallow* can delay his rejuvenation as long as his remains stay within the area of effect, but this makes it difficult to transport the skull to Karzoug's location. *Unguent of timelessness* only preserves the skull; it does not prevent Zinlun's return. At your discretion, creative solutions might delay the demilich's return, but in most cases, moving with speed to track down Karzoug's soul is the most advisable course of action.

The safest course of action is, of course, to permanently destroy the demilich by performing the ritual described on page 66 of *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3*, under the entry for the demilich's rejuvenation ability. From Karzoug's perspective, Zinlun's skull remains as effective a

bargaining chip whether or not the demilich himself has been permanently destroyed.

Story Award: The XP the PCs earn from fighting fossil golems here should not exceed 76,800 (the equivalent of fighting four of them).

Locating Karzoug's Soul

Runelord Karzoug's soul traveled the River of Souls when he was slain years ago by the Sihedron Heroes, but a soul as storied and notorious as his attracted unwanted attention along the way. He was fished out of the river by a powerful astradaemon calling himself the High Justice and then stolen away to a remote temple-court carved into the side of Pharasma's Spire overlooking the plane of Abaddon. Karzoug's soul has spent the past several years there, utilized as a measure against which the High Justice weighs other captured souls in his so-called Court of Amendment as he searches for clues regarding the fate of the first Horseman of the Apocalypse.

The PCs should have to devise their own method of tracking down the location of Karzoug's soul. If possible, no NPC should simply point the way. With their powers and resources, the PCs should be able to determine the solution themselves. Of course, a casting of *miracle* or *wish* will reveal that Karzoug's soul is held within the Court of Amendment. If the PCs utilize one of Karzoug's preserved body parts from Zinlun's Tomb, a *discern location* spell will likewise reveal the soul's whereabouts. (Seoni can cast this spell for the PCs if they lack access to it.) The spell *soulseeker* (*Planar Adventures* 44) works perfectly to pinpoint Karzoug's soul if the PCs lack the body parts needed to cast *discern location*, as could *commune* or *contact other plane* if the PCs ask the right kinds of questions. Finally, the PCs could ask around among powerful psychopomps, akhana aeons, marut inevitables, or other outsiders associated with death or the River of Souls; in this case, the PCs may need to provide expensive bribes or payments if they can't use Diplomacy or other skills to secure the outsider's aid.

However the PCs accomplish it, they should discover this information via their own agency, whether by the simple casting of a spell or through a longer, more involved roleplaying encounter with something from beyond.

Story Award: Once the PCs locate Karzoug's soul, grant them 76,800 XP.

B. THE COURT OF AMENDMENT

The astradaemon that calls himself the High Justice was exiled from Abaddon long ago by the Horsemen of the Apocalypse for an attempt to commune with the eclipsed sun high above Abaddon's morass. Sentenced to an eons-long banishment in the trackless expanse of the Maelstrom, the astradaemon returned eons later, changed by his brush with the eclipse. Now possessed of

an understanding of the multiverse that he lacked before, he has become the mouthpiece of an ancient entity long thought dead—the first Horseman of the Apocalypse, an entity referred to in ancient texts as the Oinodaemon. Still barred from entry to Abaddon, the High Justice believes that the eclipsed sun is the Oinodaemon's eye, and that if he can coax that eye to open for even a moment, the Horsemen who exiled him would be annihilated and he, the High Justice, would take their place. Whether or not his plot has any hope for success, none can say, but for the past several years he has taken up residence in one of the few surviving temples devoted to the Oinodaemon—a site carved into the base of Pharasma's spire that overlooks the expanse of Abaddon and provides a glorious view of the eclipsed sun on the distant horizon.

Now the High Justice runs his Court of Amendment from this ancient temple. There, whatever luckless souls (living or dead) are captured by his minions are brought here and tried before the High Justice's own court. These souls are weighed against the soul of Karzoug, and those found too heavy with sin are offered to the eclipse in hopes of one day coaxing that ancient eye to blink open. Since the weight of sin on Karzoug's soul is substantial, most souls are insufficient for the High Justice's needs and are instead found wanting; these are released back into the River of Souls to avoid attracting unwanted attention from Pharasma's servitors.

A PC can pinpoint the location of the Court of Amendment with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (planes) check. If the PC exceeds the DC by 10 or more, she also recalls ancient rumors that the site was once a temple to the Oinodaemon. To reach the Court of Amendment, the PCs must travel to the Boneyard via a means such as *plane shift* (Seoni can provide this spell if the PCs lack access to it). In this case, the PCs arrive on a narrow ledge on the Boneyard's spire, 5–500 miles away from area **B1** unless they have a method to make their *plane shift* spell more accurate. Alternatively, *gate* can open a portal directly to the balcony at area **B1**.

The Boneyard's Spire is unimaginably vast, and those who cling to its sides look out over the endless silver expanse of the Astral Plane, but even 500 miles distant from their goal is close enough to see the mists of Abaddon far below, and above them, the glowering orb of that realm's endless eclipsed sun. Gravity pulls those on the Spire downward toward Abaddon here—if a PC falls, he does so for 10d6×10 feet before landing on another ledge below and taking appropriate falling damage. The walls of the spire can be scaled with a successful DC 15 Climb check, though flight or teleportation are likely the best options for the PCs to navigate to area **B1**.

At your discretion, if the PCs are struggling to find a safe method of navigating the spire, their unusual presence

RISE OF NEW THASSILON

Part 1:
Animous
Collusion

Part 2:
Exigency Shift

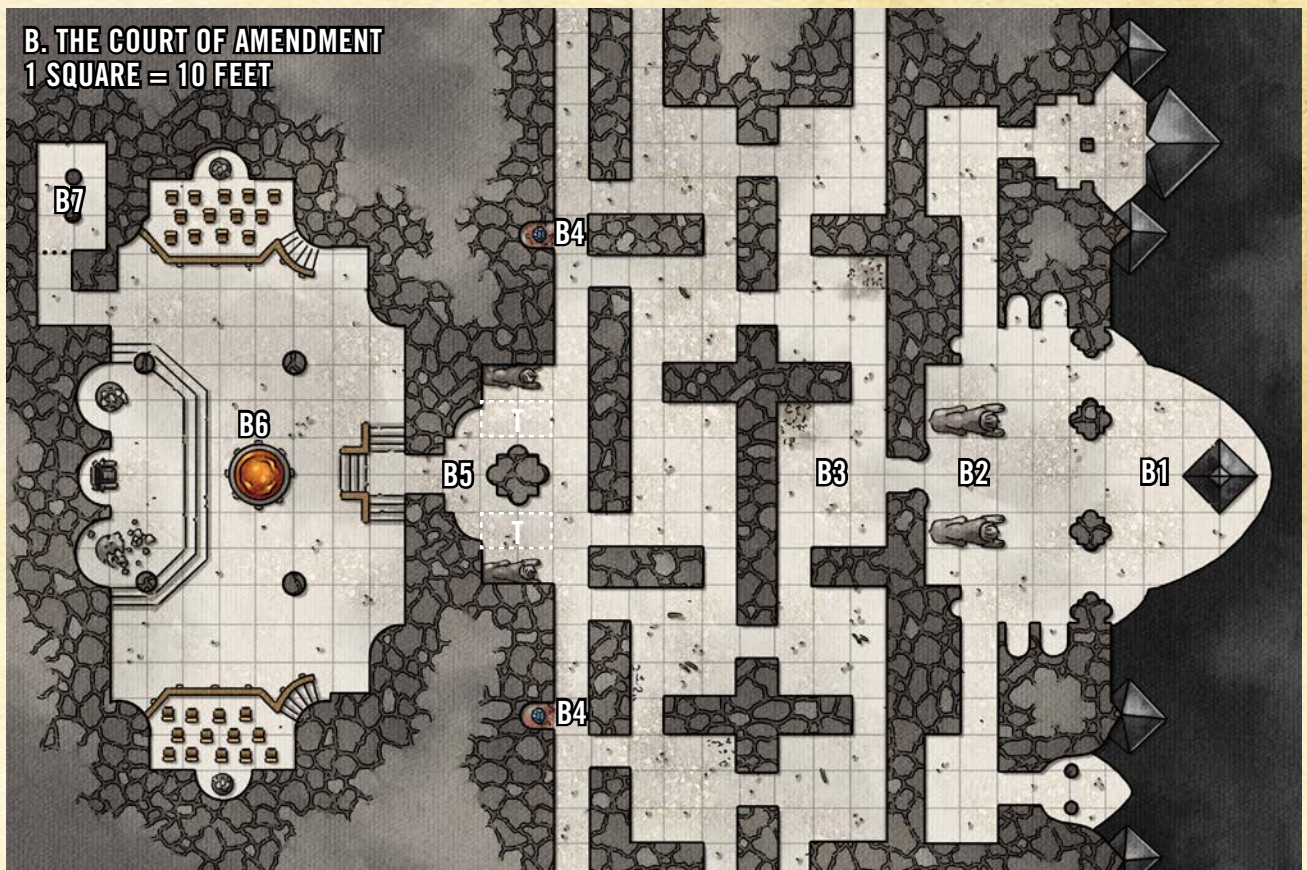
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can attract the attention of a curious adult crypt dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 698). Provided the PCs aren't immediately antagonistic toward the planar dragon, it should be relatively easy to convince the creature to carry the PCs to area B1, if only because the dragon is curious to find out what happens if the PCs enter the notorious location. At its fly speed of 200 feet, the dragon can cover 20 miles in an hour, and thus the journey may require stops for rest. The dragon won't follow into the Court of Amendment itself, but it perches on a nearby ledge to watch and wait for the PCs' emergence.

As the PCs approach the entrance to the Court, read or paraphrase the following.

The strange temple stands not far ahead—an odd amalgamation of pyramids combined with the flying buttresses and arches of the greatest cathedral. The facade is covered in long-faded iconography and strange, worn statuary, giving the whole structure an oddly unsettling feel. There are countless balconies, but a great triple arch provides the main entrance into the structure.

The PCs can reach any of the balconies they like, but all eventually connect to the main triple-arched entry at

area B1. All the rooms within the Court of Amendment are hewn from solid, dark stone formed of the raw quintessence of the Boneyard itself—treat this material as magically treated stone (*Core Rulebook* 411). Corridors have 10-foot-high ceilings, while chambers have 20-foot-high ceilings, and the Court contains no light sources unless otherwise noted.

B1. Main Balcony (CR 16)

A wide balcony extends from the front of the edifice to hang precipitously over the seemingly infinite drop below. At the front edge of the balcony is a twenty-foot-tall pyramid constructed of smooth obsidian and capped in silver. Beyond the pyramid rises an elaborate sixty-foot-tall trefoil triple arch with elaborate supporting columns, beyond which lies a vast, shadowy interior.

Trap: This balcony serves as the primary entrance to the ancient temple and is guarded by an ancient being intended to prevent mortals from entering. So far, none of the High Justice's entourage have activated it, but as soon as any mortal creature (such as all standard PC races) sets foot on the balcony, the pyramid flashes and pulses

with strange violet light as it transforms into a plasma ooze to defend the entrance. Once released, the plasma ooze pursues foes into the temple but not outside of it, instead returning here to resume its pyramidal form 1 minute after no mortals remain.

PLASMA OOZE TRAP CR 16

XP 76,800

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

EFFECTS

Trigger visual (*true seeing*);

Reset automatic (after 1 minute if plasma ooze still lives after no mortals are apparent)

Effect pyramid transforms into a plasma ooze

PLASMA OOZE CR —

hp 241 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 220*)

B2. Sinister Guardians (CR 18)

The entry arch and side passages converge in a sixty-foot-high vaulted hall. Its walls are covered in decorative niches and carvings of strange iconography. Leading deeper into the temple is a single corridor flanked by two huge statues of reclining, vulture-headed sphinxes, their heads turned slightly inward toward the center of the room.

Creatures: The two sphinx statues are in fact half-fiend hieracosphinxes from a bygone era under a permanent effect similar to *statue*. Infused with the blood of an ancient Horseman of War that further grants them the powers of deadly rogues, these twin guardians watch impassively until anyone not associated with the Oinodaemon dares pass between them to move deeper into the temple, at which point they shed their statue form and attack, fighting to the death.

SINISTER SPHINXES (2) CR 16

XP 76,800 each

Rogue half-fiend advanced hieracosphinx (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex 248; Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 171, 294; Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 253*)

NE Large outsider (magical beast, native)

Init +12; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +36

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 natural, -1 size)



SINISTER SPHINX

hp 243 each (18d10+144)

Fort +18, Ref +19, Will +13

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge; DR 10/magic; Immune poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; SR 27

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +26 (2d8+9/19-20), 2 claws +26 (1d6+9)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks pounce, shriek, smite good, sneak attack +9d6 plus 9 bleed

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +11)

3/day—darkness, poison (DC 17), unholy aura (DC 21)

1/day—blasphemy (DC 20), contagion (DC 17), desecrate, horrid wilting (DC 21), summon monster IX (fiends only), unhallow, unholy blight (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat Each sinister sphinx casts *blasphemy* on the first round of combat, followed by *horrid wilting* if they can avoid catching each other in the area of effect. They then turn to physical attacks, focusing on the same foe to maximize sneak attacks.

Morale The sinister sphinxes pursue foes throughout the Court of Amendment and fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 28, Dex 26, Con 24, Int 12, Wis 21, Cha 16

Base Atk +18; CMB +28; CMD 47 (51 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness
Skills Acrobatics +29, Fly +31, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (planes) +19, Perception +36, Sense Motive +23, Stealth +25
Languages Sphinx

B3. Endless Halls

This is an essentially endless series of corridors and chambers that stretches for miles through the surrounding quintessence of the Spire. Explorers could become lost here forever, though fortunately the direct route leading deeper into the temple complex is close to the entrance and doesn't require hours of wandering. The chambers themselves are bare of furnishings and display the same alien iconography found throughout the rest of the complex. A whistling breeze constantly blows through these halls, carrying upon it the eerie sound of whippoorwill songs echoing in the distance.

B4. Bearers of the Rods (CR 18)

An alcove opens in the wall here to reveal an elaborate, dust-covered, standing sarcophagus. Carved into the front is a representation of a mummified humanoid clutching a rod of authority and an ankh crossed upon its chest and with an elaborate miter upon its brow.

Creatures: These alcoves hold undead guardians left behind by the original builders of the temple. At each of these locations, an ecorche rests in the sarcophagus, and though its normally bloody, dripping skin is desiccated and stiff, this does nothing to impair the frightening presence ability of these two undead. When any creature approaches within 20 feet, the heavy sarcophagus lid swings open and the ecorche steps out and attacks. It attacks as long as anyone remains within 20 feet of its resting place before returning to its repose. Each ecorche carries a magical rod that it has the ability to use in combat. One carries a *rod of thunder and lightning* and the other a *rod of withering*.

ECORCHES (2) CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 209 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 109)

Melee *rod of thunder and lightning* +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+13), claw + 22 (3d6+5) or *rod of withering* +27 touch (1d4 Str and 1d4 Con; DC 17 negates), claw + 22 (3d6+5)

Gear *rod of withering* or *rod of thunder and lightning*

Treasure: In addition to its magic rod, one of the ecorches wears a platinum torque worth 8,000 gp and a

jeweled miter worth 4,000 gp, while the other carries an ankh of electrum and platinum worth 12,000 gp.

B5. Gateway of Eternal Justice (CR 17)

A massive pillar supports the center of this forty-foot-high chamber, its four faces carved in elaborate pharaonic designs. On either side of the chamber are two massive vulture-headed sphinx statues, their gazes turned toward the central column.

Despite their ominous appearance and similarity to the sinister sphinxes in area **B2**, these statues are harmless.

Creatures: The High Justice has placed a pair of crucidaemons here as door guards. These vicious fiends wait invisibly atop the two sphinx statues. When they become aware of intruders, they attempt to summon piscodaemons and attack with their spells as long as possible. They are wholly devoted to the astradaemon and will leap to the floor and attempt to prevent entry to **B6** at any cost.

CRUCIDAEMONS (2) CR 15

XP 51,200 each

hp 212 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 62)

Traps: Each crucidaemon has placed a *greater glyph of warding* on the floor here—one each between the central pillar and the nearby sphinx statue. Each glyph triggers unless the phrase “Justice is blinded” is intoned aloud in any language. The sound of these traps alerts the occupants of **B6** to intruders.

GREATER GLYPHS OF WARDING (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Type magic; **Perception** DC 31; **Disable Device** DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** none

Effect spell effect (*greater glyph of warding* [blast], 8d8 points of acid damage, Reflex DC 25 half); multiple targets (all targets in a 40-foot-by-40-foot square)

B6. Hall of Justice (CR 20)

A few shallow stairs descend into this massive chamber, its coffered ceiling rising over a hundred feet above. At either end of the chamber stand raised viewing galleries with balustrades and rows of seats before an ominous looming statue of a hooded figure. A wide dais occupies the west side of the room, with three sixty-foot-tall alcoves at its back. The southern alcove holds the crumbled base of a destroyed statue, the northern a basalt statue of a tall, hooded humanoid holding forth a large scale that reaches almost to the ground. The central alcove holds an ornate throne carved of white marble. Between the

entrance and the dais is a circular pit from which the shimmer of great heat rises along with the smell of brimstone and superheated rock.

This is where the High Justice has set up his court, taking for his own use an ancient temple devoted to the Oinodaemon. The statues of the eerie hooded figure can be recognized with a successful DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check as ancient depictions of the Oinodaemon shrouded in a cowl that obscures his true form.

The scale held by the remaining statue on the dais does not measure physical weight, but the “measure of sin” between two souls. The more sinful the soul, the heavier they weigh down the scale. For the purposes of this scale, the concept of “sin” is dynamic and focuses on spiritual excesses and vices rather than classical (and often flawed) mortal comprehensions of the concept of sin. The scales can interact with mortal creatures and souls, but not with creatures that don’t have souls (such as most constructs or undead) or whose bodies and souls are unified (such as most outsiders). When a creature or soul is placed on one of the scale’s two pans, it is shackled to the pan with glowing chains that wrap around it. A living creature is affected as if by *temporal stasis* (CL 20th) if it fails a DC 35 Fortitude save. The scale then tips and sways over the course of a round before settling, with the more sinful of the two dipping lower than the other. The more sinful of the two remains in the pan, while the less sinful of the two is consigned to the harvesting pit in the center of the room, unless a creature seated in the throne amends the judgment—in this case, the lighter soul or creature is freed. Currently, Karzoug’s soul is shackled within one of the two pans—whether or not a creature’s measure of sin is greater than Karzoug’s is left to the GM to determine.

As long as a soul remains shackled on the scale, it cannot communicate or move, although it can observe the room. Spells like *speak with soul* (*Planar Adventures* 45), *trap the soul*, or effects that would transform a soul into another creature (such as an undead or petitioner) do not function against a soul shackled on the scale, but effects that locate souls function normally.

The fiery well in the center of the room is a harvesting pit. A living creature that enters the harvesting pit floats just under the pit’s upper rim and takes 1d6 points of Constitution drain and 1d6 points of Charisma drain each round as the supernatural flames burn away flesh and scour the mind. A living creature can crawl out of the pit with a successful DC 15 Reflex saving throw and a creature capable of flight can simply fly free from the pit; alternatively, someone outside of the harvesting pit can pull a creature free as a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity. A soul consigned to the pit (including any living creature that dies in the pit) is

consumed at the end of the round. This obliterates the soul by feeding it directly into the eclipsed sun above Abaddon and grants the High Justice the benefits of a *heal* spell (CL 20th). A soul obliterated in this manner can be restored only via *miracle* or *wish*.

The throne in the central alcove on the dais grants those who sit upon it the ability to consign a soul (but not a living creature) in area **B6** or **B7** to one of the scale’s pans, to consign a creature or soul from one of the scale’s pans to the holding cell (area **B7**), or to consign a creature or soul from one of the scale’s pans to the harvesting pit. Each of these functions can be performed as a free action.

Creatures: The High Justice has held court here for years, ever since it arrived with Karzoug’s soul as its trophy. Its daemon minions scour the Great Beyond for potential souls or mortals to offer to the High Justice, who then weighs them against Karzoug. Most of these are found wanting, and the High Justice releases these souls before they can be consigned to the harvesting pit, allowing them to reenter the River of Souls and proceed upward to the Boneyard for judgment. In this way, he lessens interruptions by psychopomps and his harvests maintain a low profile. Whenever a soul outweighs Karzoug, the High Justice intervenes to save Karzoug’s soul from the harvest, then consigns the more sinful soul to the harvest instead, sacrificing the soul to Abaddon before returning Karzoug to the scale. In this way, the High Justice hopes to someday waken the Oinodaemon and restore it to power. Whether or not this method may eventually work is left to you to determine, for it will not occur during this adventure.

The High Justice employs astradaemons as his agents in the field to gather souls, but none of these minions are present at this time. However, four thanadaemon “bailiffs” and two groups of 13 lacridaemons each are presently seated in the northern and southern balconies. While the thanadaemons play active roles in combat, the lacridaemons do not—these howling and jeering fiends exist only to bolster the High Justice’s ego, to mock intruders and souls alike, and to otherwise function as toadies and sycophants. The thanadaemons themselves have abandoned their association with Charon and don’t have skiffs, but they are otherwise unchanged from those presented in *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2*.

When the PCs arrive in this area, the High Justice is in the process of holding court over his latest acquisition—the soul of Runelord Xanderghul himself. Both Xanderghul and Karzoug are shackled to the scales, and when the PCs arrive, the High Justice has just given the command for judgment. The PCs can watch as the scales tip and sway, and then finally dip to reveal that Xanderghul’s weight of sin is greater than Karzoug’s. If the PCs don’t intervene at once, Karzoug’s soul is released

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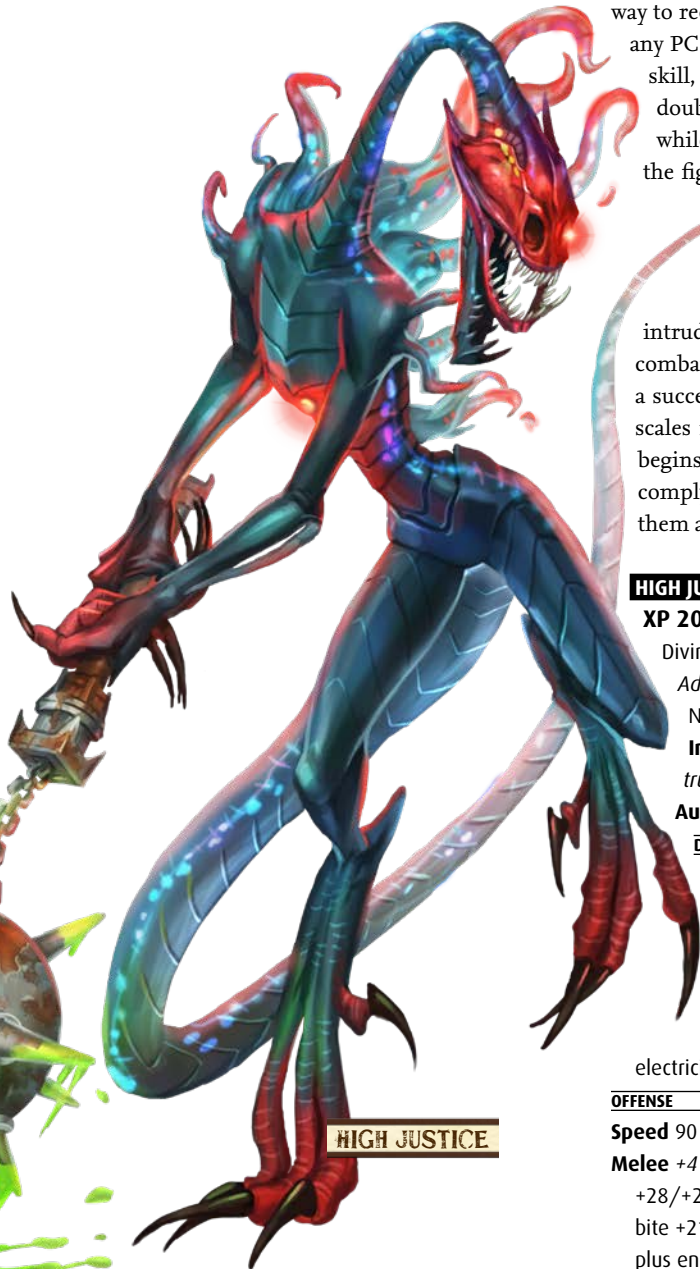
from the scales and the High Justice amends judgment to redirect Karzoug's soul to area **B7** rather than to the harvest, leaving Xanderghul's shrieking soul chained to its pan in the scale.

If the PCs don't immediately attack, the High Justice welcomes them to their trial and tells them to decide the order in which each of them should be tried. The High Justice can sense the power of the PCs' souls and intends to harvest them all, regardless of what happens when they are weighed on the scales.

If the PCs play along for the moment, the High Justice informs them that they stand accused of sins against fate itself, as their actions have harmed destiny

and strive against the flow of reality itself. These claims are, of course, false, but they may nevertheless concern the PCs. Before the High Justice places the PCs in the scales, he "graciously" allows each PC to speak for a few moments in her defense. This is a chance for each player to justify her character's actions through the course of the Adventure Path. Each PC can attempt a skill check to determine the success of her arguments. A PC who cites the truth and is passionate about her delivery can attempt a Diplomacy check. A PC who is argumentative or laces her defense with insults and threats to the court can attempt an Intimidate check. A PC who exaggerates her role and accomplishments or tries to deflect things in a way to redirect the question can attempt a Bluff check. If any PC succeeds at a DC 35 check with the appropriate skill, the lacridaemons in the wings grow silent and doubtful about the legitimacy of the High Justice, while the thanadaemons become shaken during the fight that follows as they are plagued with doubt.

Once a PC achieves such a success, the High Justice, enraged, cuts off any further defense and orders the thanadaemons to apprehend the intruders and forcibly place them upon the scales—combat likely ensues at this point. If no PC manages a success, then the High Justice orders them onto the scales in much the same way, save that when combat begins, the thanadaemons are not shaken. If the PCs comply without resistance, the High Justice sends them all to the fires and your campaign is likely over.



HIGH JUSTICE **CR 19/MR 2**

XP 204,800

Divine astradaemon (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures 224, Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 63*)
 NE Large outsider (daemon, evil, extraplanar)
Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *deathwatch*, *true seeing*; Perception +22
Aura aura of grace, soul siphon

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 22, flat-footed 23 (+2 deflection, +10 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, -1 size)
hp 334 (17d10+241)
Fort +19, **Ref** +22, **Will** +16
DR 10/good and silver; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 90 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)
Melee +4 called *corrosive burst heavy flail* +28/+23/+18/+13 (2d8+14/17-20 plus 1d6 acid), bite +21 (2d6+3 plus energy drain), tail slap +21 (1d12+3 plus energy drain)

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

Special Attacks devour soul, energy drain (1 level, DC 25), mythic magic 3/day, simple divine spellcasting

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +24)

Constant—*deathwatch*, *displacement*, *true seeing*

At will—*enervation*, *fear* (DC 20), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *vampiric touch*

3/day—*dismissal* (DC 21), *locate creature*, *plane shift* (DC 24)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 24), *commune*, *energy drain* (DC 26), *finger of death* (DC 24), *slay living* (DC 22), *soul bind* (DC 26), *summon* (level 6, 1d3 derghodaemons^{B2} 50%)

TACTICS

During Combat The High Justice remains seated on his throne as the battle begins, casting his spell-like abilities at range against the PCs. On the first round of combat, he sends Karzoug's soul to the holding cell in area **B7** as a free action and roars in anger—a howl that immediately calls the daemons from area **B5**, the undead from area **B4**, and the sphinxes from area **B2** to come and join the battle if they haven't already been defeated. Once confronted in melee, or once all four thanadaemons are slain, the High Justice stands up to make melee attacks. He consigns Xanderghul's soul to the harvest pit to *heal* himself if he's reduced to 100 or fewer hit points, but he can only do so while seated in the throne.

Morale The High Justice fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 30, **Con** 34, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 48

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy flail)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Escape Artist +30, Fly +12, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (planes) +22, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +26, Survival +22

Languages Abyssal, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear +4 *called corrosive burst heavy flail*, keys to holding cell (area **B7**)

THANADAEMONS (4)

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

hp 172 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 74)

TACTICS

During Combat The thanadaemons work together to try to place a PC on one of the pans to be weighed against Xanderghul's soul. To do so, a PC must either be rendered helpless, grappled, or otherwise dragged to a square adjacent to the scales. A thanadaemon can place a helpless PC on the scale as a standard action, or place an unrestrained PC on the scale with a successful reposition^{APG} combat maneuver. The thanadaemons are fond of using energy drain attacks to weaken PCs if necessary to aid in this purpose. They don't bother summoning daemons in this fight.

Morale The thanadaemons fight to the death unless the PCs managed to make them shaken with their trial defense before combat begins (see page 24), in which case a thanadaemon flees the battle via *plane shift* to Abaddon if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points.

LACRIDAEMONS (26)

CR 3

XP 800 each

hp 30 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 71)

TACTICS

During Combat These mewling toadies take no actions in combat other than to shout insults from the balconies, and as such, their presence does not alter the encounter's CR. A PC who takes actions against a lacridaemon is only wasting opportunities to confront the true dangers in the encounter.

Morale A lacridaemon tries to flee if it takes any damage, or as soon as the High Justice is defeated, racing off into the endless tunnels of area **B3** if able.

Development: If Xanderghul's soul is harvested, he is forever dead and absorbed by Abaddon's eclipsed sun. At your discretion, a soul of his magnitude may cause the eclipse to pulse faintly with light, momentarily causing the light within this chamber to brighten as this light shines in through the halls from outside, but the exact ramifications of this development are beyond the scope of this campaign and left for you to develop as you see fit.

If Xanderghul's soul remains shackled at the end of combat, his fate is left to the PCs to determine. They can use the throne to release his soul to the Boneyard, consign it to the harvest, or leave him imprisoned—all, again, options left for you to develop in your campaign as you see fit.

Story Award: If the PCs release Xanderghul's soul to be judged, this act of mercy grants them Pharamasma's favor. Each PC gains her divine gift, which protects the PC against the next effect, damage, or other event that would otherwise kill him. (For more details on divine gifts, see page 71 of *Planar Adventures*.)

B7. Holding Cell

A locked gate of iron bars (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 25, Disable Device DC 30) blocks entry to this room. The key to this holding cell is held by the High Justice.

The walls of this cell are specifically treated to contain souls, and as such they also block passage by incorporeal creatures. A soul placed in this room cannot leave the room, even if the door to the cell is opened (the door exists mostly as a formality, but also to prevent living intruders from entering). Using the throne in area **B6** is the only way to allow a soul to leave this room. If the High Justice has relocated Karzoug's soul to this room, that soul is kept within here—otherwise this room is empty.

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Speaking with Karzoug

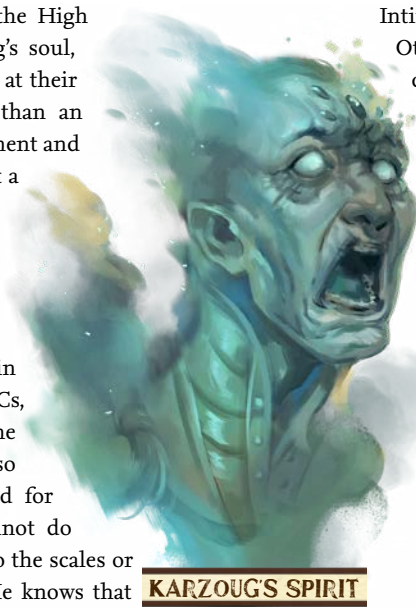
Once the PCs have defeated the High Justice and recovered Karzoug's soul, they have the former runelord at their mercy. He is nothing more than an ephemeral soul awaiting judgment and is unable to fight. He can fly at a speed of 90 feet, but he does not flee at this time. (See page 183 of *Planar Adventures* for more details on souls.) Karzoug knows why the astradaemon was holding him and can explain these circumstances to the PCs, but more than anything else he simply wants to be released so he can travel to the Boneyard for judgment—something he cannot do as long as he remains bound to the scales or trapped in the holding cell. He knows that anyone who sits in the throne in area **B6** can release him, and he begs the PCs to do so.

Denying him release (thus holding his freedom as ransom) isn't enough on its own to guarantee his cooperation, for Karzoug remains in death as bitter and stubborn as he did in life. He's already waited patiently for thousands of years after Earthfall for a chance at freedom, and he can easily wait tens of thousands more for someone else to come along and free him if the PCs deny him this mercy. If the PCs tell him what is currently taking place in Varisia, or of Alaznist's meddling with time, Karzoug scoffs and mocks the PCs, glad that the world he once lived in is suffering, even if it must do so at the hands of one of his hated enemies. Any attempt to get him to divulge the method of activating the Cyphergate is initially met with scorn. He replies to such requests as follows.

"What care I for the fate of the ants who toil mindlessly among the living? Even in death, I remain the Runelord of Greed, and I shall come into my own once the Lady of Graves gathers the temerity to call me before her. The fate of your world is behind me and of no importance now."

A PC who succeeds at a Sense Motive check opposed by Karzoug's Bluff check result (+26) can determine that the runelord's confidence is not as great as it seems, but he is adamant in his refusal to cooperate with the PCs unless persuaded to do so.

In order to break through Karzoug's stubborn resistance, the PCs must succeed at an Intimidate check against him. This check is made as if he still lived, but his status as a soul with very little to lose increases the DC by



KARZOUG'S SPIRIT

an additional 20, and thus it requires a successful DC 52 Intimidate check to force him to become helpful.

Other PCs can attempt to aid another on this check with successful DC 10 Intimidate checks, but in this case these bonuses do not stack. While a high-level PC may be able to achieve success at such an astronomical task on her own, there are several options the PCs can use to gain additional bonuses on this Intimidate check, as summarized on the following table.

Intimidating Karzoug's Soul

Intimidate

Modifier	Action Taken
+2	Mention Malistoke
+2	Mention Zinlun
+4	Mention knowledge of Karzoug's past as a slave
+4	Mention knowledge of Karzoug's humiliations and abuse at Zinlun's hands
+10	Promise to release Karzoug to be judged in the Boneyard
+10	Show Karzoug Zinlun's skull
+10	Threaten to allow Zinlun the chance to rejuvenate as a demilich (if the PCs have already destroyed him and his skull is inert, this requires a successful Bluff check opposed by Karzoug's Sense Motive check result [+22])
+20	Destroy Zinlun's skull in Karzoug's presence (if the PCs have also performed the ritual to destroy the demilich and all they have left is his skull, destroying the skull in Karzoug's presence counts as an automatic success at this Intimidate check)

At your discretion, other methods, such as the use of a *miracle* or *wish* spell, can convince Karzoug to cooperate as well.

Once the PCs have obtained Karzoug's cooperation, he reveals to them the secret of the Cyphergate: it functions as a window through time. Using a ritual he alone knows—the fulcrum key ritual—one could, in theory, open this window to travel to the heart of the Dimension of Time, and from there one could, again in theory, discover a method to exit that dimension at any point in the past. Karzoug never had the opportunity to put the fulcrum key ritual to the test, for Earthfall occurred before he completed research into the ritual. Details on this ritual appear in the next part of this adventure.

The fate of Karzoug's soul, should the PCs choose to release him, is left to you to determine. In any event, once

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he is released, he vanishes immediately with a long sigh of relief, reentering the River of Souls and traveling up the length of the Spire to eventually be judged.

Story Award: If the PCs learn the fulcrum key ritual from Karzoug's soul, grant them 307,200 XP. If they haven't yet earned Pharamsa's divine gift for releasing Xanderghul's soul, they earn that gift when they release Karzoug's soul, but they cannot earn this gift twice for releasing both runelords' souls.

**PART 2:
EXIGENCY SHIFT**

With the fulcrum key ritual provided by Karzoug, the PCs should make haste to Riddleport and the Cyphergate. If they don't have a method by which to return home from the Boneyard, you should consider placing a magic item like a *scroll of plane shift* or an *amulet of the planes* in the Court of Amendment, or perhaps even have a manifestation of Pharamsa herself, her herald, or a powerful psychopomp arrive to personally thank the PCs for excising the stain on the Boneyard that the High Justice represented—in

thanks, the manifestation can return the PCs to Golarion, and even to Riddleport.

Riddleport has, so far, weathered fairly well the disasters afflicting Varisia. The city government has closed the port, and the citizens fear that something dire waits in the wings, but for the moment the city remains relatively stable. The PCs can take time to shop, rest, and recover here if they wish, but if they take too long, you can consider having the damage Alaznist did to the Cyphergate in the past allow for a Thing from Beyond Time (see page 28) to emerge and seek out the PCs as a spur to push them forward.

EVENT 2. DOOM COMES TO RIDDLEPORT (CR 18)

The Cyphergate stretches in a perfect arc 350 feet above Riddleport Harbor. Most assume the memorable Thassilonian ruin is nothing more than a decorative monument, but Riddleport's Order of Cyphers have learned a bit more, including that it is actually a perfect, 700-foot-diameter stone ring that passes completely through the bedrock under the harbor as well. Normally the cyphermages of Riddleport (not to mention the city government) would prove an impediment to anyone seeking to tamper with the Cyphergate without approval, but no one currently in

Riddleport is of the stature necessary to interfere directly with individuals of the PCs' power.

To activate the Cyphergate with the fulcrum key ritual, the PCs must be within range of the Cyphergate (at least 70 feet, assuming an 18th-level primary caster). If the PCs can't fly or for some reason don't want to perform the ritual from a vantage point near where the Cyphergate contacts the ground, they can perform the ritual aboard a vessel in the harbor. Even standing atop the arch itself works in a pinch, although as the ritual progresses and the Cyphergate awakens and starts to rotate, this will swiftly prove to be a poor choice.

The fulcrum key ritual itself is presented below.

FULCRUM KEY

School conjuration (teleportation); **Level** 9

Casting Time 90 minutes

Components V, S, F (the Cyphergate), SC (up to 20)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 37, 1 success; Knowledge (planes) DC 37, 2 successes; Knowledge (history) DC 37, 2 successes; Spellcraft DC 37, 2 successes; Use Magic Device DC 37, 2 successes

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target the Cyphergate

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster is affected by a permanent *slow* effect (CL 20th; this is a curse effect)

Failure All casters age into the next age category (this effect can be removed via *greater restoration*, *miracle*, or *wish*), and a Thing from Beyond Time emerges from the Cyphergate to attack the casters and ravage Riddleport.

EFFECT

The caster stands before the Cyphergate and intones the words and performs the gestures of the ritual. As the ritual begins, the runes upon the Cyphergate begin to glow with a golden light. After 10 minutes, the air and water inside the Cyphergate's ring begins to shimmer and waver. After 20 minutes, the Cyphergate begins to vibrate. After 30 minutes, the Cyphergate slowly starts to rotate in a counterclockwise spin—creatures standing atop the Cyphergate at this point must spend a move action each round to avoid being thrown off the slowly rotating ring. The spinning ring does not damage any of the surrounding structures or the ground itself, as it smoothly slides through their confines completely untouched. After 40 minutes, the rotation increases so that creatures on the Cyphergate must spend two move actions each round to avoid being thrown off. After 50 minutes, the rotation is fast enough that standing atop the Cyphergate is impossible, and the air, water, and stone alike within the ring become warped and distorted. After 60 minutes, a long and sinuous appendage—the tongue of a Thing from Beyond Time—extends though the warp in time and space to “taste” the air around it before

retreating back into the ring. After 70 minutes, the tongue extends through again and makes a single attack against the primary caster. After 80 minutes the tongue extends through and makes a single attack against each caster.

Once the ritual's 90-minute casting is successfully completed, the Cyphergate's rotation reaches a point where it is spinning so fast that it vanishes from sight. At this precise moment, all of the PCs (but not other secondary casters) are immediately transported through time and space toward the Dimension of Time (see **Event 3** on page 29). An instant later, the sabotage Alaznist inflicted on the Cyphergate in the ancient past causes the Cyphergate to explode. All living creatures within 10 miles immediately age beyond the end of their natural life spans and turn to dust, while dozens of Things from Beyond Time emerge from the ruins to ravage the surrounding landscape. If the PCs manage to prevent the temporal damage during the Cyphergate's construction (see page 51), they can prevent this doom from destroying Riddleport.

THING FROM BEYOND TIME

CR 18

XP —

Advanced hound of Tindalos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 158)

NE Gargantuan outsider (evil, extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 13, flat-footed 26 (+6 Dex, +1 dodge, +20 natural, -4 size)

hp 280 (16d10+192)

Fort +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

DR 10/magic; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, poison

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.; *air walk*

Melee bite +29 (8d6+17/19-20), 2 claws +29 (4d6+17), tongue +24 (2d8+8 plus 1d4 Wisdom drain)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks ripping gaze

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

Constant—*air walk*

At will—*fog cloud*, *invisibility*, *locate creature*

3/day—*dimensional anchor*, *discern location*, *greater scrying* (DC 22), *haste*, *slow* (DC 18)

TACTICS

During Combat The Thing from Beyond Time casts *haste* on itself on the first round of combat. It then attacks the PCs, casting *slow* on them as soon as it can catch all of them in the area of effect.

Morale The Thing from Beyond Time fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 45, **Dex** 22, **Con** 32, **Int** 20, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 54 (58 vs. trip)

Feats Ability Focus (ripping gaze), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative,

Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +25, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (engineering) +21, Knowledge (geography) +21, Knowledge (history) +21, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Stealth +13, Survival +26

Languages Aklo

SQ angled entry, otherworldly mind

Story Award: Award the PCs 153,600 XP for successfully performing the fulcrum key ritual, but they do not earn XP from defeating any Things from Beyond Time that emerge from the portal.

EVENT 3. TRANSITION THROUGH TIME

Once the PCs are drawn into the activated Cyphergate, their transition to the Desolate Shore in the Dimension of Time occurs in an instant, yet the PCs themselves do not experience this transition as an instantaneous effect. Instead, as they are pulled into the warped vortex, they find themselves hurtling through a distorted realm of images, sensations, and experiences as they relive not only their own timelines from birth to death, but those of their fellow PCs.

As the kaleidoscope of memories and visions surge and spiral around the PCs, a single form grows constant in their vision—the image of an ancient but alert and hearty woman whom the PCs instantly recognize as the ageless incarnation of the Steward of Stethelos, the same woman they first began receiving visions of back in the third adventure, “Runep plague.” The steward holds her hourglass high as she beckons the PCs forward, and each hears her voice in their heads: “Step forward to the Green Meadow. Step out of your histories and into your futures!” A moment later, the chaos of the transition seems to solidify, and it should take the PCs only a moment to realize they’re experiencing a shared vision from the viewpoint of one of their own party members’ pasts.

At this point, have the PCs roll Charisma checks. The results of these checks serve only to determine the order in which the party experiences these shared visions. Start with the highest result and proceed to the lowest. For each character’s shared vision, first determine what campaign trait that character took during character creation. This campaign trait in turn determines the theme of that character’s vision (see below), which you should describe to the group as a whole. If multiple PCs share the same campaign trait, be sure to vary their visions somewhat so that each feels unique and tailored to that character. For each character who did not select a campaign trait, use what you know of that PC’s history to present a specific vision from the character’s past that was important—this could even be a significant event that happened only recently

during this Adventure Path. The PCs should not recall events yet to come or those in their past that happened in alternate timelines that never came to pass. Don’t take too long describing the shared visions to the party, as you want to move through this transition relatively quickly.

As each vision ends, one final figment of lore manifests in the shared consciousness of the party’s experience. Allow the player whose vision has just been shared to ask you one question about the events leading up to this point in the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path, and provide the party with an answer to that question. Use this opportunity to clear up lingering mysteries, focus the PCs’ plans for the remainder of the adventure, or even to provide valuable clues as to how they can best succeed during the rest of this adventure. You don’t need to (and shouldn’t!) spoil upcoming surprises and events entirely, but if the players ask the right questions, this is the best chance for them to learn information about this campaign that they otherwise wouldn’t have discovered or which they have lost the chance to learn.

Accidental Clone: The vision presents the point at which the PC’s first party perished to the devious trap that reincarnated the character in the body of one of Sorshen’s clones, then changes to a more recent memory in which the PC had a close call with a failed mind-affecting effect—preferably one in which the player used her trait to gain a +20 trait bonus. Reveal to the player that all of these uses of the trait ability were in fact the PC herself reaching back in time to bolster the character’s sense of self, protecting her as best she could.

Audrahn’s Ally: The vision presents the point at which the PC first met his friend Audrahn or the event that sealed their friendship. If you don’t know what this event was, ask the player to describe it briefly to the party. A moment later, the vision changes to a point where the PC used his trait to gain the effects of a restorative spell effect. Reveal to the player that this effect was in fact a manifestation of the character’s current power being focused back through time to aid himself in the past.

Close Allies: This vision, unlike the others, involves both PCs who share the close ally trait, regardless of when the other character’s Charisma check indicated the vision should take place. In this vision, the party experiences an important moment from the allies’ past. In the case of friends or lovers, it might be a vision of the first time they met. In the case of twins or siblings, perhaps a shared triumph in childhood is observed. If you don’t know what this event was, ask the two players of the characters to describe it for the party. A moment later, the vision shifts to a scene where one of these two closely allied PCs used the trait to aid one of the other’s d20 rolls—reveal to the PCs that this was the influence of their own current selves reaching back in time.

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VISIONS FROM THE DEAD

It's possible that some of the PCs who started this campaign have died along the way and have been replaced by new PCs. In this case, it's preferable that the replacement PCs have chosen their own campaign traits from the *Return of the Runelords Player's Guide* (available online for free at paizo.com), but if they haven't, you can use the campaign trait for that player's first character to determine the basic nature of their vision.

Alternatively, you can have the vision consist of a vivid memory of the death of that PC, with the deceased soul noticing the replacement character and performing a metaphorical "passing of the torch" to the new character. How this manifests visually is up to you; a dead cleric might offer a benediction or prayer to the new PC, while a rogue might gift the new PC with a glorious treasure, or a fighter might bequeath to the PC her favored weapon. Whatever the nature of the vision, the current PC's vision should tie that character into the events of the campaign's past and present, just as the other visions do.

Intrigued by Thassilon: This vision reveals the moment in the PC's past when she first learned of Thassilon, but also includes a strange additional element—a superimposed vision of someone in ancient Thassilon in the process of creating or influencing the very element that the PC first learned of. For example, if the PC's first introduction to Thassilon came in the form of stumbling into an old ruin while exploring the woods, the superimposed vision might be of a powerful wizard creating that ruin with a magic ritual; if the PC's introduction was the discovery of an ancient relic, the vision might be of a Thassilonian hero wielding the relic in the battle during which he was slain. At this moment, reveal to the PC that this ancient Thassilonian was in fact a past life or incarnation of herself. A moment later, the vision changes to a point where the PC used her trait to use a magic device or power a charged item. Reveal to the PC that the source of this power was a mote of spiritual energy siphoned from the past and the future—from her ancient Thassilonian incarnation and her current self.

Scion of Legend: This vision recounts the point at which the PC first met the Sihedron Hero he is associated with or, alternatively, a point where he was taught a valuable lesson by the hero. The vision then shifts to recall a point where the PC used his trait to call upon a piece of forgotten lore or advice, and at this point you should reveal that the source of this sudden recall wasn't from the Sihedron Hero at all, but whispered back in time to himself from the PC's present time.

Spirit Touched: The shared vision reveals the moment of overwhelming trauma or supernatural influence that

first granted the PC this trait's effects—if you don't know what that moment was, ask the PC to briefly describe it to the rest of the party. A moment later, the vision shifts to a point when the PC used her trait to avoid death or recover from a negative level. Reveal to the PC that this moment of bolstering health was siphoned harmlessly from her current, more powerful incarnation and then sent back in time to save herself.

Time Lost: The vision granted to the party from a character with this trait shows briefly the events from that character's lost time, a vision from a past incarnation that remains a strong influence (in this case, this could be a vision of one of the player's prior characters who died), or perhaps merely an overwhelming vision of the character entering the Dimension of Time in the first place and of how that sent ripples back in time. In the case of revealing a character's lost or missing time, you should provide a short description of the scene that fits that character's past and, if possible, explains something about why that PC's personality is the way it is. This vision then transitions to one presenting a time when the PC used his trait to force the GM to reroll a single d20 roll—reveal to the player that this shift in luck was the result of the player's current incarnation reaching back in time to subtly influence the flow of fate itself.

Story Award: Once the PCs experience their visions, they feel a sudden surge of knowledge as memories finally return; they have now healed the damage wrought to their personal timelines, and for a brief moment their first meeting with the Steward flashes before them. At this instant, their current incarnations mingle with those of the past. This is what grants their past selves bonuses to their ability scores and enhances their campaign traits (as detailed on page 7 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #135: Runeplague*), and it also restores forgotten knowledge to their current selves. This restoration of knowledge manifests as a reward of 307,200 XP to the party. In addition, each player gains an additional use of their trait's once-per-adventure ability that can be used at any point during the remainder of the campaign.

A moment later, the transition through time ends and the PCs find themselves sprawled upon the Desolate Shore: proceed with encounter **C1**.

THE DIMENSION OF TIME

The Dimension of Time, known also as "the Hidden Dimension," is a strange and largely unknowable realm to most. Infusing all of the Great Beyond and overlapping with all realities in which time flows, the dimension itself is almost inaccessible and impossible to visit for creatures not native to it, other than through the act of aging through time itself. Physical entrance

into the dimension is limited to the dimension's core—a place known as Stethelos. Stethelos primarily consists of a vast ocean, at the center of which is the city of Stethelos itself, known also as the Green Meadow for the mosslike manifestation of raw temporal energy that covers it. Stethelos has a beginning and an end. Those who travel to Stethelos always arrive at the beginning, atop a desolate shore along the ocean's edge. Behind them extends an ominous forest—the farther one travels into the forest, the farther into the actual Dimension of Time one penetrates. Certain ancient texts speak of a land on the far side of the forest known as Tindalos, but those who travel too far into the woods are lost forever, so no confirmation of this theory yet exists. The end of Stethelos is a monstrous cataract that shifts and changes along the shores of the Green Meadow or beyond, over which the endless waters of the ocean pour into the vast nothingness of time yet to occur. As with those who venture too far into the forest, those who plummet over the edge of the cataract are lost forever.

The city of Stethelos is far from empty. Many strange and dangerous creatures dwell here, the most numerous of which are the natives of the Dimension of Time. To them, Stethelos is a gathering place, a stable hub to be used as base of operations when they travel through the inaccessible outer reaches of time. It is also used as a place for those rare few who visit the dimension, like the PCs, to interact with the flow of time itself. Traveling merchants and artisans from countless worlds can be found on the mossy streets or hawking their wares from overgrown buildings, while scholars of countless disciplines explore the Green Meadow in search of secrets the rest of reality cannot reveal. An equal number of Stethelos's residents, though, are themselves forever lost, with no memories of their time before and no desire to escape.

Additional rules and notes on the Dimension of Time, including its planar traits, appear on page 214 of *Planar Adventures*. In Stethelos, these traits are similar to those of the Material Plane—gravity is the same, and magic works as expected, for example. The one significant difference is in the nature of how time passes. While the PCs remain in Stethelos (and while they travel back in time to ancient Thassilon), no time advances on the Material Plane. From the PCs' viewpoint, however, time still seems to pass normally. They'll still need to periodically rest and eat, and they can prepare spells only once every 24 hours as normal.

Furthermore, by traveling to the Dimension of Time and having their timelines restored, the PCs have unintentionally “removed” themselves from reality. Until they restore much of the damage done by Alaznist in the past, they cannot exist outside of Stethelos. They

can still communicate with deities and other planes via spells like *commune* or *contact other plane*, they can still use conjuration magic normally, and divine spellcasters who worship deities still receive spells normally, but until a majority of the wounds are healed, the PCs cannot leave Stethelos.

C1. Desolate Shore (CR 16)

The fulcrum key ritual deposits the PCs on a dank shoreline between a dense and ominous wood and a vast ocean. The PCs arrive prone on this beach of sod and dirt, as if they were waking up from a short nap. Their first view of their new surroundings is detailed below.

The whirling Cyphergate and the oily waters of Riddleport's harbor have given way to entirely different surroundings. It is bright daylight, yet no sun is visible in the unbroken cerulean sky above. The shore is a narrow strip of green grass growing from soggy ground, while a dense wall of green, scaly tree trunks, and a tangled profusion of foliage hems in the narrow band between shore and sea. Opposite this ominous verdure, a vast ocean stretches to the horizon. At some vast distance, just visible on this horizon and before a thin strip of billowy white haze, stands a strange green meadow of an island dotted with what could be buildings.

If a character stands within 5 feet of the shore and focuses his attention on the distant sight of the Green Meadow, the character feels the ground beneath his feet shift and lurch. After 1 full round of concentration, a section of the beach approximately the same size as that character's space breaks free and begins floating across the sea toward the Green Meadow of Stethelos. If multiple PCs are adjacent to each other, the sod raft created is bound together in one, increasing in size to accommodate the additional characters. Sod that calves from the beach into rafts in this manner regrows on the desolate shore should a visitor ever return.

Creature: Before the PCs have much time to do anything at all other than marvel at their new environs, they notice that they are not alone. A strangely familiar figure stands with them on the desolate shore—an elderly woman armed with a glowing dagger and carrying a large hourglass. This is the Steward of Stethelos, a powerful oracle of this realm's lord, Tawil at'Umr.

The Steward greets the PCs with a smile on her lips, but she is not necessarily their friend. She welcomes them to Stethelos and can explain to them the method of forming a raft from the shore to travel to the Green Meadow, but she also carries a warning for them.

“You are intruders in this realm, and those you encounter along the way may take issue with your presence in Stethelos.

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You have no place to return to, but you cannot remain here. You must repair the damage inflicted by your kind, and in so doing, you shall repair your right to exist in reality once more. My lord awaits your arrival at the Well of All within the Great Rotunda, but know that you will need to leave behind one of your own in order to exist before you were born.”

The Steward is willing to answer questions for the PCs before they leave. Likely questions and her replies are as follows.

Who are you? “I am an agent of the All in One, the One in All, but I am also your advocate. I have been chosen to usher you into the Green Meadow and have done so through all of your lives. I am the Steward of Stethelos, but I am not your friend. I shall aid you, for such is my charge, but your trials in the Green Meadow and beyond are yours alone to face.”

Can you help us? The Steward relates that she will use her magic to aid the PCs as best she can, but she will not accompany them into the Green Meadow itself.

Where are we? “This is Stethelos, the heart of all tomorrows and every yesterday. The Green Meadow lies beyond at the heart of Stethelos. This is the core of what

your scholars call the Dimension of Time. This is but one of many thrones held by my lord.”

Who is your lord? She only smirks at this, then says, “Seek the Well of All. You will learn this answer there.”

What is this forest? “You should avoid the Viridescent Jungle. It exists for a reason. Those who flow with time in one direction have no place therein, for beyond lies Tindalos, where none can dwell save the hounds and their masters.”

What is the Green Meadow? “It is a crossroads at the center of time. You will find those who stand against you there, yet you can also find allies and support. Travelers and merchants, artisans and philosophers, folk from across countless worlds come to trade and toil within the Green Meadow, and if you treat them with respect, you can find ample opportunity to trade with them as well. Should you find cause or need to rest, any of the empty buildings within the Green Meadow will welcome you, yet know that those who see you as prey may still seek you out.”

When the PCs are ready to leave, the Steward has one final parting gift for them. She reaches into her hourglass and plucks a single grain of sand from within, then hands

the grain to one of the PCs. “I am given leave by my lord to aid you but once more as you seek to heal time itself. Should you desire my aid, use this grain to summon me through the mists of time and I shall provide what assistance I can.” Once the PCs travel to the past, any PC (not just the one who received the grain of sand) can call upon the Steward as a swift action. She arrives at the end of that combat round, as if she rolled the lowest initiative for the battle, and she remains for the duration of the fight to provide support and aid for the PCs before vanishing as soon as the combat is resolved.

THE STEWARD OF STETHELOS **CR 19**

XP 204,800

Female human oracle 20 (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 42)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +28

DEFENSE

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)

hp 173 (20d8+80)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +15

Immune aging

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *spell storing dagger*
+16/+11/+6 (1d4+1/19-20)

Oracle Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +27)
1/day—*time stop*

Oracle Spells Known (CL 20th; concentration +27)

9th (6/day)—*gate*, *interplanetary teleport^{UM}*, *miracle*, *time stop*

8th (6/day)—*cloak of chaos* (DC 25), *discern location*, *fire storm* (DC 25), *mass cure critical wounds*, *temporal stasis* (DC 25)

7th (7/day)—*disintegrate* (DC 24), *greater scrying* (DC 24), *mass cure serious wounds*, *refuge*, *reverse gravity*, *word of chaos* (DC 24)

6th (7/day)—*banishment* (DC 23), *contingency*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds*, *wither limb^{HA}* (DC 23)

5th (7/day)—*breath of life* (DC 22), *commune*, *dispel law*, *mass cure light wounds*, *permanency*, *plane shift* (DC 22), *telekinesis* (DC 22)

4th (7/day)—*air walk*, *chaos hammer* (DC 21),

cure critical wounds, *dimensional anchor*, *sending*, *threefold aspect^{APG}*

3rd (8/day)—*contact entity II^{HA}*, *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*, *sands of time^{UM}*, *searing light*

2nd (8/day)—*bear's endurance*, *contact entity I^{HA}*, *cure moderate wounds*, *gentle repose* (DC 19), *levitate*, *minor image* (DC 19), *lesser restoration*, *silence* (DC 19), *status* (DC 19)

1st (8/day)—*command* (DC 18), *cure light wounds*, *doom* (DC 18), *entropic shield*, *memory lapse^{APG}* (DC 18), *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *guidance*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *purify food and drink*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

Mystery time^{UM}

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 16, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Toughness
Skills Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +32, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +26, Use Magic Device +30

Languages Aklo, Common, Minkaian, Tien
SQ final revelation, oracle's curse (haunted), revelations (erase from time, knowledge of the ages, rewind time, temporal celerity, time hop, time sight)

Gear +2 *leather armor*, +1 *spell storing dagger*, *Glass of Stethelos* (see page 69)

C2. Viridescent Jungle

The plants that make up this dense wall of forest seem strange and unfamiliar, the undergrowth presenting a nearly solid wall against entry. Deep within the forest, strange and ominous sounds—slitherings, whispers, gurgles, and growls—emerge from the densely packed foliage, an obvious warning against entry.

The Viridescent Jungle is incredibly thick and overgrown, and passage through



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THE GREEN MEADOW

Many of the locations in this part of the adventure—the desolate shore, the jungle, the Green Meadow, and Stethelos—are inspired by “The Green Meadow,” a short story written by H. P. Lovecraft that was in turn inspired by a dream experienced by Winifred V. Jackson. Written in 1918–1919, “The Green Meadow” is among Lovecraft’s earliest surviving works, and it functions more as an evocative and eerie mood piece than a classical story with a plot. The use of Stethelos in the Great Beyond as the heart of the Dimension of Time is an element first hinted at in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Great Beyond*, and certainly takes the concept in its own direction well beyond that implied within the original short story, yet at the same time it attempts to stay true to the story’s brief narrative. In the story, word of the Green Meadow comes to Earth in the form of a notebook found encased within an indestructible meteor, while in another of Lovecraft’s tales, “The Quest of Iranon,” Stethelos is implied to exist within the Dreamlands at the base of a great cataract. The association of another of Lovecraft’s creations, Tawil at’Umr (an avatar of Yog-Sothoth), with Stethelos is an invention of this adventure, but one that feels appropriate given the shared themes of time and dream and strange vistas at the far side of reality.

it should be exceptionally difficult. The jungle grows even thicker and more wild, and PCs who persist in traveling in this direction should become more and more aware of the angry sounds amid the foliage and canopy. Feel free to have the PCs encounter deadly foes, like Things from Beyond Time (see page 28) or temporal crawlers (see page 56) if they persist, but if they go too far, they’ll stumble beyond the boundaries where mortal lives like theirs can exist. A character who sets foot this deep into the jungle can stagger back with a successful DC 30 Reflex save, but on a failure, he is swept away into the eternal past, lost forever to realms no mortal should ever go. A *miracle* or *wish* spell can restore such a lost PC; the Steward of Stethelos may deign to perform such a miracle for the PCs the first time one of their members vanishes in this way, but not thereafter.

C3. Billowy Sea

The blue sea of this strange place is billowed by winds that play upon its surface. From a vantage point over the waters, the nature of the strange horizon becomes clearer: it is no hazy view of the far distance, but rather in all directions the horizon is actually the eternal fall of waters, great cataracts that drain from a featureless sky of the same cerulean shade—a sky perhaps entirely composed of the waters of those cataracts impossibly forming a

vault overhead. In other places, the cataracts fall away from the sea, downward into an eternal nothingness (see area C5). As strange as a land entirely bounded by waterfalls is, that is not the strangest thing about the Billowy Sea. The waterfalls conform to an unbroken line, yet they seem to be erratic in their flow: sometimes they flow faster or slower, or sometimes seem frozen in place with no motion whatsoever, and sometimes they appear to be flowing upward in defiance of all natural laws. One thing that is consistent about them, though, is the sense of agelessness that comes from gazing upon them—or perhaps it is the weight of all the ages that they bear; it is difficult to say.

The waters of the sea are rough (Swim DC 15) but are devoid of predators. They quickly drop to fathomless depths away from the shore. The current flows in a spiral around and away from the Green Meadow at its core, and anyone who attempts to explore beyond the city’s boundaries will find that the spiral never ends—though the waters may not stay free of predators if the PCs travel a great distance from shore.

Characters who travel the Billowy Sea aboard rafts of sod calved from the Desolate Shore find that as they float, the edges of their rafts fall away, dissolved by the waters, yet they remain stable amid the rough seas. Those aboard such rafts drift with the spiral current and arrive at the Veil of the Caretaker after 1d4 hours of travel—as do those who wish to swim, fly, or otherwise head out to sea. Regardless of the method of travel, the Desolate Shore falls away behind and is soon eclipsed by a new cataract—there is no returning to that shore from the Billowy Sea itself.

C4. Veil of the Caretaker

Demarcated as a dashed line around the city of Stethelos, this area denotes the boundary along which Tawil at’Umr can cause the cataracts of Stethelos to extend, completely surrounding the island in an impenetrable wall or gulf of flowing time. When the PCs first arrived at area C1 and were able to gain only vague glimpses of the city, this wall was in place, but as their journey across the sea ends, the mists clear to reveal the city. The PCs eventually make landfall at area C7, following in the temporal wake left by Alaznist’s devastating trip through time before them.

C5. The Cataracts

The vast cataracts of water that cascade around the borders of this strange land are literally composed of the passage of time. When these cataracts plummet downward from above, they cannot be penetrated, for nothing exists on their opposite side. A character who tries to ascend the cataracts via flight can travel forever without reaching the source of the waters, yet the return trip to the Billowy Sea

below can always be made in but a few minutes, regardless of the distance traveled.

When instead the cataracts plummet from an apparent edge, they drop forever into the gray distance below. A character swept over this edge falls away forever, and on a failed DC 30 Will save is lost just as if she had ventured too far into the Viridescent Jungle. A character who succeeds at this save finds herself washing ashore either on the Green Meadow 2d6 rounds later or in some distant Dreamlands realm in the Dimension of Dreams (though for the purposes of this adventure, any PC who makes this journey always ends up back in the Green Meadow). The PC experiences this journey as the passage of countless eons and takes 2d6 points of Wisdom drain as a result of the vast, unfathomable passage of time.

C6. The Green Meadow

Also known to some as the Green Meadow, the city of Stethelos is a location unlike any other in the cosmos. Existing at the center of time, it is timeless yet bears the weight of the ages. It has no history, no beginning, and no end; all that ever will transpire within its bounds already has, but also has yet to do so.

At first glance, the word “meadow” does seem like a more accurate description than “city.” The entire island is covered by rolling swells and terraces of a ubiquitous, thick, mosslike growth of a brilliant shade of green that emits a strange sound as if faintly singing. However, examination of this moss reveals that it grows on top of older stone ruins or buildings, crumbled arches, and ancient avenues, and it takes on vaguely humanoid forms of varying thicknesses. The stone structures of the island are continually worn down by the weight and growth of this moss, called anima mundi (see Hazard below), while they are simultaneously repaired by humanlike figures who drift and float forever through the streets. These figures are petitioners of the Dimension of Time, entities known as the unbound. Only one structure, a 225-foot-tall dome of porphyry that looms above the surrounding structures, appears untouched by the anima mundi (see area C8).

Creatures: The only purpose of the unbound is to maintain the structure of Stethelos even as the anima mundi wears it away. Now and then, one of the unbound drifts too close to a cataract and is swept away—in these rare cases, the unbound is deposited on a Material Plane world where it becomes a creature with no concept of its genesis, a twisted parody of humanity known as a khaei (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Bestiary* 22). The unbound function as typical petitioners (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 208) but with a +4 bonus on Initiative checks and a 10-foot increase to their base speed. They do not defend themselves if attacked, but if PCs persist in harassing or

harming the unbound, they swiftly attract the attention of some of Stethelos’s greatest defenders: one of the lawful neutral Fate iriis (*Planar Adventures* 238).

As the PCs explore Stethelos, they encounter other travelers. Often, these are mercenaries (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 188), but any sapient entity could, in theory, be met here. The nature of these travelers is left for you to expand upon as necessary, but their primary purpose in this adventure is to provide the PCs opportunities to engage in trade. The presence of these merchants effectively gives the Green Meadow status as a planar metropolis, with a base value for purchasing gear of 40,000 gp and a purchase limit of 200,000 gp.

If the PCs spend long exploring Stethelos, they may encounter creatures and denizens less interested in trade or philosophical discussion. You can use the encounter table on page 83 to generate dangerous encounters for the PCs to face, or if they need a few additional opportunities to earn XP before traveling back in time.

Hazard: The inhabitants of Stethelos are not the only thing that poses a danger, for the strange singing exuded by the anima mundi is perilous in its own way. The sound of this singing is omnipresent throughout the Green Meadow; the city’s regular inhabitants barely even notice it and have long grown immune to its effects. The singing sounds like a dirge-like chant in a clear voice but with words that are unintelligible to any language or method of comprehension. However, to those who listen too closely, the meaning in the song becomes all too clear and the secrets of the endless cycles of the multiverse begin to take root and unfold like a cancerous growth in the mind.

Anyone who is not a native of the Dimension of Time must attempt a DC 30 Will save upon first hearing the singing of Stethelos. Those who fail the save gain a +1 bonus on Intelligence-based skill checks as the beginning of universal understanding starts to grow. Each hour that passes after this, an affected character must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or take 2 points of Charisma drain as his comprehension of these events fails. Once a character succeeds at any of these Will saving throws, he is immune to further effects of the anima mundi’s song. A character drained to 0 Charisma collapses unconscious among the moss and, if left in contact with the anima mundi, takes 1d6 points of Constitution drain each round as the moss transforms him. Once drained to 0 Constitution, a character has been transformed into anima mundi and is dead.

The song of the anima mundi is a mind-affecting sonic effect.

C7. Path of Destruction (CR 20)

A swath of brown cuts through the uninterrupted perfection of

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the vivid green that otherwise blankets the island, a path akin to an ugly scar. It is as if somebody brought torch and flame to burn back the soft mossy growth here and expose the ancient stonework that forms the bones of this strange city, yet there is no blackening of stone or scorch mark to be seen. The swath measures around a hundred feet wide and seems to follow an irregular path deeper into the ruins of this city.

This is the point where Alaznist originally landed in the city and used the *Scepter of Ages* against the anima mundi and the city's denizens, draining off the essence of the timeless anima mundi and killing it in a great swath that followed her path through the city. A character who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (planes) check interprets this swath of destruction as a physical manifestation of the damage done to the timeline, and the PC knows that as long as the temporal wounds exist, this path will not heal over. For each temporal wound that the PCs heal, the path narrows, vanishing completely if all seven wounds are removed.

Creatures: Dozens of unbound petitioners labor along this path in a hopeless attempt to restore the anima mundi. While they can never repair the damage done here, they are driven to continue their attempt. The petitioners are overseen by a single entity whom the PCs should recognize—the time flayer Srishrin Tham. When the time flayer notices the PCs this time, it doesn't immediately attack, although its initial reaction is still hostile. It approaches them aggressively, urumi in hand, and demands the following.

"And here are more. Lackeys, perhaps? Following the path blazed by an ally? Eager to raze more of time itself? It will not happen again!"

Srishrin assumes the PCs are allies of Alaznist capable of and intending to further damage the anima mundi. The time flayer expects a fight, but if the PCs adopt a defensive posture and talk, they have time to attempt one Bluff or Diplomacy check to convince Srishrin they mean Stethelos no harm and are in fact here to repair the damage Alaznist wrought. The time flayer opposes a Bluff check with its Sense Motive bonus of +39, while convincing the creature to stand down via Diplomacy qualifies as asking for dangerous aid (due to Srishrin's perceived risk to the anima mundi). As a result, it requires a successful DC 40 Diplomacy check to stay its hand. If the PCs successfully convince the time flayer to let them pass, it gives a curt nod but warns them that it will be watching them to ensure they remain respectful of time as it grows. (At your discretion, anything the PCs do later in Stethelos to damage the Green Meadow could result in the time flayer swiftly attacking.)

If it attacks, Srishrin uses its arcane pool to activate spell shield each round to gain a +7 shield bonus to AC, and it uses spell combat to cast spells with its off hand, focusing on any spell it has prepared twice (see Srishrin's statistics on page 8). As this fight proceeds, a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check notes strange but subtle rippling distortions in reality begin to shimmer around Srishrin's form—with a successful DC 40 Knowledge (planes) check, a character correctly identifies this unusual distortion as an indication that Srishrin is becoming unmoored from time, perhaps because its attack against the PCs is in some way creating a paradox. Once the PCs reduce the time flayer to 200 or fewer hit points without simultaneously killing him, once it has cast all of its twice-prepared spells, or once it's used 7 of its arcane pool points (whichever comes first), the distortions suddenly converge on the time flayer and hurl it out of Stethelos and back in time, with the presence of the PCs serving as an anchor—Srishrin manifests earlier in this adventure in **Event 1** to finish the fight. The petitioners take no part in the battle and continue to focus on their toil, ignoring both the PCs and the time flayer.

SRISHRIN THAM

CR 20

XP 307,200

hp 364 (see page 8)

Story Award: If the PCs manage to prevent Srishrin from attacking them, or if they defeat it before time would have otherwise snapped the time flayer back to the past, the earlier fight against the PCs never happened. Each PC feels a sudden burst of energy as their timelines adjust. Each PC is affected as if by a *heal* spell (CL 20th), and all abilities with a limited number of uses per day are restored (including previously cast spells). Charges expended from items and items that have limited uses remain depleted as normal—this "reset" affects only the PCs themselves, not their gear.

If Srishrin is catapulted back in time, the PCs earn only half the XP for this battle. If they defeat him and reset their past, they earn full XP—essentially earning double the reward for this foe counting the earlier conflict (in this specific case, the PCs paradoxically recall the experience of the fight even though they know it never happened).

C8. The Rotunda of Stethelos (CR 20)

This structure is unlike any other to be seen in this strange green city, not least because of its scale. This ten-sided geometric rotunda measures four hundred and fifty feet across and rises to a point half as tall as it is wide. The purple stone walls are entirely free of the mossy growth that covers the rest of the city. A single element mars the dome's smooth exterior—a

great collapse along one wall reveals the dome's interior, from which extends the winding path of barren ground. The sides of this crack in the dome appear strange and pockmarked, as if the stone that once filled the gap had been removed one small sphere of matter at a time to create the semicircular opening.

When Alaznist invaded Stethelos, she used the *Scepter of Ages* to both blaze a path through the *anima mundi* and simultaneously use it as a sort of temporal dowsing rod to determine the site in the Green Meadow best suited to her needs. It led here to the Well of All, the location in the Green Meadow where convergences of the flow of time made the connection to the Material Plane the strongest. As she approached, several of Stethelos's guardians rose up against her, raising the porphyry shell around her target area in an attempt to protect the site, but they and the shell itself stood no chance against the *Scepter of Ages*. Alaznist cast the guardians aside, used the scepter to undo an opening in the side of the shell, and stepped into the Well of All. She then lanced Stethelos seven times, traveling back to each point in the past to do her work before returning to modern Golarion, leaving the temporal wounds behind.

Today, the dome surrounding the well is little more than a shell of porphyry—if the PCs wish to damage it, treat it as unworked stone.

Creature: The structure is not only impressive in size but in the quality of its guardian. It is guarded by none other than Ninuron, the same time dragon who encountered the PCs at the start of "Temple of the Peacock Spirit." The dome is not the dragon's true lair, but he knows that the PCs will soon come to this point and has taken up guardianship of the site as his mandate. As the PCs approach, Ninuron swoops down from the apex of the dome to land next to them, though his reaction to the PCs' arrival depends upon how they treated him in the prior adventure.

If the PCs refused to aid Ninuron or treated him poorly, he sees them as enemies—both to himself and to the Dimension of Time. In this event, he does not bother speaking to the PCs and merely attacks. Use the standard statistics for an ancient time dragon from *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* in this case (even though these stats don't perfectly match up to his stats as they were presented as a young adult time dragon in *Pathfinder*



NINURON

Adventure Path #136, they're close enough that the players shouldn't notice the difference in the fight). Ninuron fights to the death in this case.

If instead the PCs helped Ninuron and left him as allies, he greets the PCs as friends, glad that they've finally made it to their destiny. The dragon tells the PCs that he's been waiting here to repay them for helping end his exile, saying that in doing so they've allowed him to return to his true age and true power. The dragon offers his spells to the PCs as support (although remember that any attempt to *plane shift* out of Stethelos by the PCs will fail), and he can answer questions they have about the

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region as you see fit. His greatest gift to the PCs, though, is an offer to aid them in the past. He can travel with them only once, though, and so the PCs must choose which temporal wound to bring him to, for it is this very act of aid—and not his initial experiments into the nature of altering time—that hurls him out of Stethelos and exiles him as a younger dragon on the Material Plane. Only once the PCs heal enough temporal wounds will Ninuron truly be freed of his personal paradox.

NINURON

CR 20

XP 307,200

Ancient time dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 71)

hp 418

Story Award: If the PCs ally with Ninuron, award them XP as if they'd defeated him in combat.

C9. The Well of All (CR 30)

Within the porphyry dome lies a field of mossy ground scarred by a swath of denuded stone leading up to a ten-foot-high ring of stone in the center. The swath of destruction leads up to the edge of this wall, breaking a hole into it before coming to an end. Within this central ring of stone stand seven writhing, distorted shapes that appear to be distorted humanoid figures and faces draped in sheets of moss, while an eighth figure composed entirely of moss writhes near the breach in the wall.

The area encircled by the low stone ring is the Well of All—the original source of the anima mundi that grows throughout the Green Meadow and the point at which Alaznist wounded time. A closer examination of the seven humanoid statues within the well (located at areas D1–D7) reveals an unsettling fact—they all appear to be wracked in pain and agony, as they have grown around ripples in reality that cause each to shift and warp. These are physical manifestations of the seven wounds in time, and by interacting with them, the PCs can cast themselves back into the ancient past of Thassilon for an opportunity to undo the damage Alaznist has wrought.

The eighth figure is something else entirely. Examination reveals it to be the form of a human man wearing a toga, the entirety of which is made of anima mundi. The man is not distorted by warped time, but he does appear to be whispering. A PC who leans close to his mouth can hear his words spoken in a strange language. This man is an echo of an ancient philosopher from Earth, a man named Empedocles, who managed to reach Stethelos and send a message back through the cosmos to his home world—a message that unfortunately reached Earth centuries after he vanished from his home. The words he speaks are in Classical Greek, and it's likely the

PCs will need *tongues* or similar magic to understand the phrase he constantly repeats: “The Caretaker is Key and Lock at once; in Stethelos, I am waiting.” There is little the PCs can do to interact with this mysterious figure. If damaged, the anima mundi simply regrows him.

Creature: Shortly after the PCs approach the Well of All (preferably just after they hear the philosopher's mantra and certainly before they have a chance to interact with the temporal wounds), the true Caretaker of the Green Meadow manifests in the PCs' presence, an event that causes the philosopher to go silent. This entity appears as a 12-foot-tall, cloaked humanoid figure, his features and limbs completely concealed. If a character somehow catches a glimpse beneath the cloak, she might catch sight of tentacles and a massive cluster of foam, tendrils, and iridescent bubbles, but the Great Old One Tawil at'Umr—for that is who serves as Caretaker of Stethelos—does not lightly allow such a glimpse except as a final vision before death or madness. The Caretaker does not attack; it merely stands within the breach of the wall and regards the PCs impassively for a moment before speaking to them telepathically.

“You have traveled far to reach this, the Well of All. The path ahead will change you forever. You can turn back at this point if you wish, but to do so would deny your own reality. It is from you that reparations must come. It is you who must undo what has been done to your past.”

If any of the PCs are worshippers of either Yog-Sothoth or Tawil at'Umr, they recognize their god (or its avatar) at once, and to them Tawil at'Umr sends an additional telepathic message: “You have done well, but you must do still more.” The Great Old One does not reward its worshippers directly, but in any combat to follow, its worshippers are the last of its targets—perhaps out of admiration, or perhaps in the same manner one might save the best part of a meal to the end—but this may give worshippers an edge in the battle.

If the PCs attack the Great Old One, it casts aside its cloak to unleash its unspeakable presence upon the party, then proceeds as detailed in its tactics below. If instead the PCs hold back, they can ask the avatar of Yog-Sothoth several questions, to which its likely answers are summarized below. It will not prevent the PCs from entering the Well of All, but neither will it offer its advice if the PCs do not think to ask it. In addition to the following questions, it also answers any general questions the PCs may have of Stethelos and the Dimension of Time as you see fit.

Who are you? “I am the All in One, the One in All, the Gate and the Key, Tawil at'Umr. Iä, Yog-Sothoth!”

What happened here? “One from your time and place came bearing a weapon—the *Scepter of Ages*. I watched as

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she wrought her ruin upon Stethelos. As she turned aside its defenders. As she tore seven holes in time to ravage your world's past. It was of little import to me, although momentarily amusing. I will not stand against you should you seek to repair what she has done, yet without the *Scepter of Ages* in your hands you must sacrifice much if you seek to follow in her footsteps. The past does not suffer intruders lightly." At this point, he turns to the mossy remains of Empedocles and offers the information given in response to the next question, even if the PCs haven't asked it.

Who was the whispering man in robes? "His name was Empedocles. A traveler from a world far removed from yours. A fool and a scholar. A reminder and a promise. A visitor to Stethelos, much like yourselves, though his visit came some twenty-three centuries ago, as you reckon time. To him it seems as but a single day, or perhaps a thousand lifetimes, have passed. He was clever and wise, his mind a great machine of perception and idea. I sense something of his grandeur in you.

"Empedocles lasted long before he fully succumbed to this rapture, long enough to understand the nature of the Green Meadow, the soul of the cosmos. The anima mundi he named it, the 'world soul,' although his mind could not

truly fathom its nature. He knew it to be the driving force that binds together all the elements and the motivators he dubbed love and strife, which form all physical and spiritual interactions in the universe, whether living being or inanimate object—the glue that keeps time in its cataracts and allows your insignificant mortal existences to endure. He even wrote of it before his final transfiguration, tried to give warning of this place and to explain its meaning. He hid its truth in code words to befuddle the unworthy; he called it 'Microcosmos,' 'Spiritual Blood,' 'Magnesia of the Heavens,' 'Tartar of the Philosophers,' and 'The Serpent.' He scribed his visions and philosophies into a book and cast it into the cataract in hopes of revealing his discoveries to the world, yet it did not travel to those he intended.

"Now Empedocles is one with the very truth he sought. A nobler deed one could not fathom, is it not? What small price an eternity of a moment, caught forever in that last vital instant as he adds his final scream to the enduring song.

"And that, fellow travelers, is the price that you face as well. To access the wounds and have a chance to save your home, one of you must give yourself willingly, and eternally, to the anima mundi. Nay, stay your outrage

EMPEDOCLES

The Greek philosopher Empedocles was a historical figure from Earth who, among other things, originated the Greek concept of the four classic elements of air, earth, fire, and water. Accounts of his death in history are unclear, with some legends holding that he threw himself into Mount Etna, while another claims he was carried into the heavens during a volcanic eruption. This adventure posits that he discovered a route to Stethelos, fleeing Earth only to have his work destroyed by a natural disaster that devastated his homeland, and his final manuscript (*The Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns*) fell to Earth in a meteor, as chronicled in Lovecraft's short story "The Green Meadow."

The inclusion of a real-world historical figure in this manner may not be to your table's liking, of course. In this case, feel free to replace the name "Empedocles" with one of your creation, but this scholar should still be the author of a legendary book on the nature of time called *The Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns*.

and questions. Ask me not why I demand this price. Suffice to know that it pleases me to do so."

How can we heal the damage Alaznist caused? If Tawil at'Umr has not revealed Empedocles's fate yet, he does so now. Once he tells that story, the method by which the PCs can bargain with the anima mundi to follow through the seven temporal wounds instantly becomes a part of their knowledge. Provided they know the event that the wound links to (something that the PCs can automatically determine as a result of their studies in the prior adventure), one of the PCs need only give themselves to the anima mundi; this takes but a thought as a free action, but it must be done willingly. Inform the players that once a PC makes this choice, they will die and become one with the moss, but in so doing, the seven temporal wounds will open for the remaining PCs to access.

TAWIL AT'UMR

CR 30

XP 9,830,400

hp 752 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 148)

TACTICS

During Combat The Great Old One's power is immense, and he has numerous devastating options. He focuses on physical attacks for the first few rounds of combat, augmenting these with quickened *disintegrate* attempts. As soon as a PC is slain or placed in temporal stasis, the conditions needed to allow the party to travel back in time are achieved, and the Great Old One pauses combat to inform them that they may now step forward into the past. He does not continue combat at this point unless the PCs persist, nor will he prevent them from resurrecting or restoring the PC who was defeated, but if the PCs persist

in fighting, Tawil at'Umr continues the battle (this time conjuring ancient ones to further punish the party), pausing again each time a PC is defeated to offer the survivors another chance to proceed.

Morale Tawil at'Umr fights until destroyed. If the PCs manage this unlikely end, the Great Old One vanishes into a cloud of iridescent foam that burns away the anima mundi below him. Tawil at'Umr immediately manifests a new avatar in the same spot, but he does not continue the battle; instead, he notes that his own defeat has opened the way for the PCs to proceed into the past before vanishing, leaving the party to their own devices from this point forward. The Great Old One does not hold grudges, and its greatest reward for those capable of defeating it once is to allow them to proceed without further harm.

Story Award: For learning how to access the temporal wounds, award the PCs 307,200 XP. This is in addition to the reward they gain should they somehow manage to confront Tawil at'Umr and defeat him in combat (an event this Adventure Path does not anticipate happening).

Event 4. Joining the Anima Mundi

The players may balk at the high price required to access the past, but the anima mundi does not bargain. Without the *Scepter of Ages*, the PCs have no choice but to appease time and Tawil at'Umr with a sacrifice, yet for powerful PCs, such a sacrifice need not also be the end. It is only the act of sacrifice that is required—the fate of the soul beyond this step is irrelevant. This means that a PC who takes this step can thereafter be restored to life (although as becoming one with the anima mundi is a death effect, *raise dead* will not suffice). *Resurrection*, *true resurrection*, *miracle*, and *wish* all restore the PC to life normally, and if the PCs think to ask Tawil at'Umr about this loophole, he confirms that restoration to life will not affect the sacrifice's nature. If one of the PCs is a worshipper of Tawil at'Umr or Yog-Sothoth and chooses to make the sacrifice themselves, Tawil at'Umr even agrees to restore the worshipper to life thereafter via a *wish*—but only if such a request is made before the sacrifice by the worshipper himself! If the PCs do not have access to such magic themselves, the Steward of Stethelos can be called upon to provide the service, although she'll need the PCs to provide the material component for the *miracle* (purchasing an expensive spell component from the various traveling merchants in Stethelos is a relatively simple matter). Finally, if the PC who chooses to make the sacrifice still has Pharasma's divine gift (granted at the end of Part 1 in return for freeing a runelord's soul), the PC can instead offer this divine gift instead of his own life—the anima mundi accepts this power as eagerly as a life itself. Again, Tawil at'Umr can confirm this method will work, but only if asked.

If none of the above options occur to the PCs, or if they can't fulfill them, they can also propose the sacrifice of one of the Sihedron Heroes—but only if the player of that hero agrees. In this case, Tawil at'Umr can reach out across time and space to pluck that hero from Golarion and invest her into the anima mundi (remember that this may result in the PCs losing the bonus granted by that Sihedron Hero, as detailed on page 6). Alternatively, a player who sacrifices her PC here can then take up the role of a prior PC—one of the Sihedron Heroes—to continue playing the rest of this adventure. Again, Tawil at'Umr can transport the chosen Sihedron Hero to the Well of All for the player to continue.

Once the sacrifice is made, the PC in question swiftly transforms into a mosslike incarnation, her gear falling to the ground around her. Close inspection reveals a final short phrase of the PCs' choice being whispered eternally from her mossy lips. Once this occurs, the seven mosslike "shadows" left by Alaznist crumble to ashes, each leaving a 5-foot-diameter swath in the anima mundi in its place.

Tawil at'Umr retreats at this point to crouch upon the upper wall surrounding the well, but he has no further interaction with the story. He is content to watch events as they unfold but does nothing more to influence them.

PART 3: PERSISTENT PARADOXES

The PCs have endured much simply to reach this point, but now they face the final set of conflicts in order to set things right and defeat Runelord Alaznist. They must travel back in time to repair the damage she's done to the past if they hope to have a chance to stand against her in the present!

SEVEN TEMPORAL WOUNDS

Once the temporal wounds are opened to the PCs, they can step into one of the seven barren patches formed in the anima mundi to catch brief glimpses back in time and see when the wounds lead, provided they can focus on the correct historic event damaged by the wound. As a result of their research in Xin-Edasseril in the prior adventure, the PCs can do so automatically—without this research, it would be all but impossible for their minds to focus through the thousands of years into the past. Each temporal wound entry below gives its own description of a vision to read to the PCs as they do this, presented in the encounter's read-aloud text. This text assumes the PCs automatically recognize significant NPCs like Alaznist and Sorshen, but they may need to attempt Knowledge checks to learn more. Once they

ALTERNATIVES TO SACRIFICE

The element of self-sacrifice in this encounter is not meant to punish the PCs, but to evoke a classic story trope of heroic self-sacrifice for the greater good. You know your players best, though, and if you feel that this element might cause too much strife or trigger an unpleasant result, you should absolutely alter the nature of this sacrifice. Perhaps instead of life, the anima mundi only needs a portion of a person's soul or memories, manifesting as the party voluntarily gaining 1d20 permanent negative levels each (which can, of course, then be restored via magic). Maybe it simply requires the offering of an artifact to be consumed by the moss.

And of course, the best solution for your table may be to simply omit the element of sacrifice entirely, and instead design an occult ritual the PCs must perform to open the past. Maybe they instead must defeat a powerful manifestation of the anima mundi in battle (a fight with a pair of mosslords [*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 194] should do the trick) in order to enter the past. And maybe you feel that simply reaching the Well of All is enough, in which case the PCs can enter the temporal wounds merely by being granted permission by Tawil at'Umr.

The choice, in the end, is yours; use what works best for your table!

decide which wound to enter, a PC need only stand within the region of barren stone and concentrate as a standard action—1 round later, all PCs (regardless of where the other PCs might be located in Stethelos at that instant) are together whisked back in time to the wound's associated encounter in ancient Thassilon.

The first time the PCs arrive within the past of a specific temporal wound, they are restored and rejuvenated as if they had just gotten a full night's rest, including regaining new spells and daily uses of abilities. When the PCs manifest in the past, they do so an instant after Alaznist does, overlapping their own timeline with the damaged one but offset by a fraction of a second in the damaged timeline's future. In this state, the PCs can observe Alaznist and the actions she takes, but she cannot see them, as they exist a few instants after her own distorted timeline. The PCs cannot directly interact with Alaznist, but they can work to repair the changes she makes to the timeline. Unfortunately, the paradoxical energies that allow their presence in this overlapping timeline adjacent to the temporal wound means they have only 10 rounds to accomplish these repairs. Likewise, the PCs cannot travel far from the site of their arrival—in game terms, they are limited to the area indicated on each

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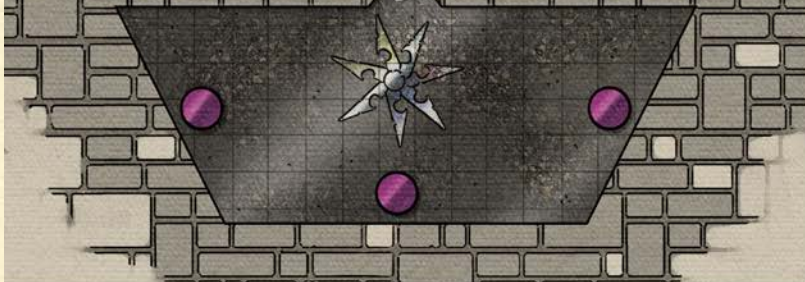
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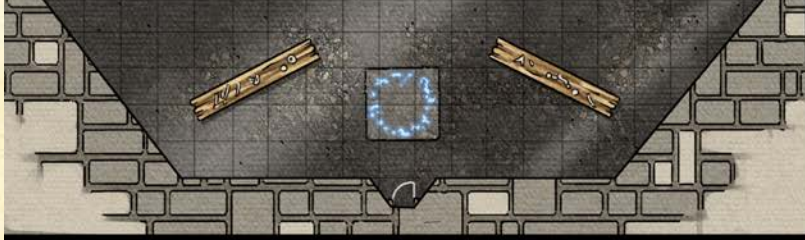
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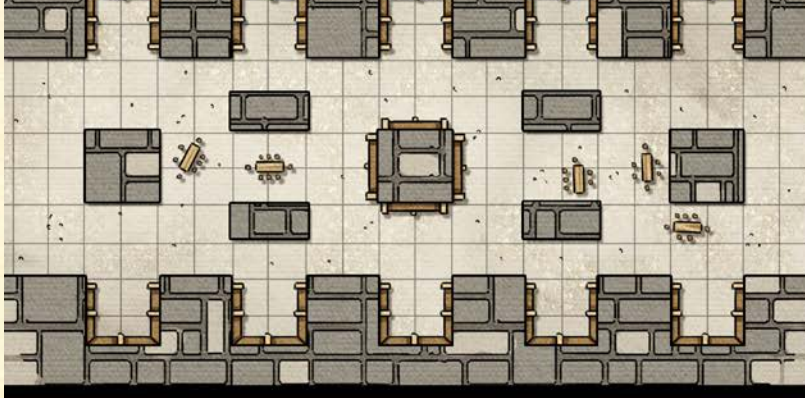
D1. XIN LOSES THE SIHEDRON
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



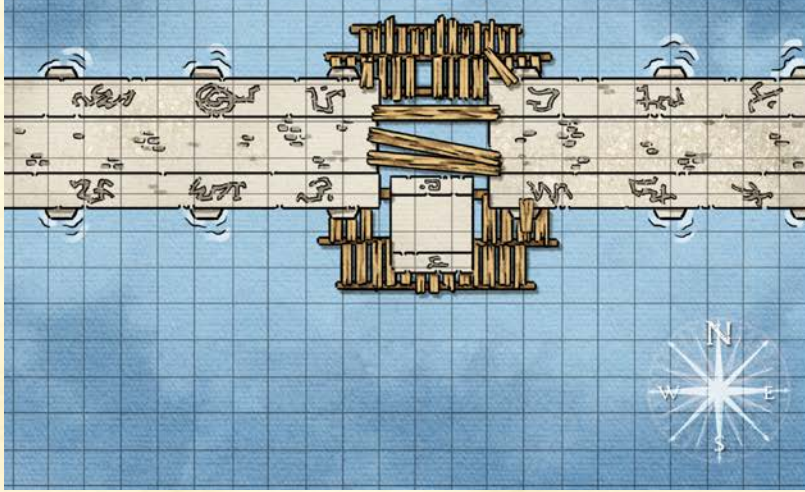
D2. A CATACLYSM REFOCUSSED 1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



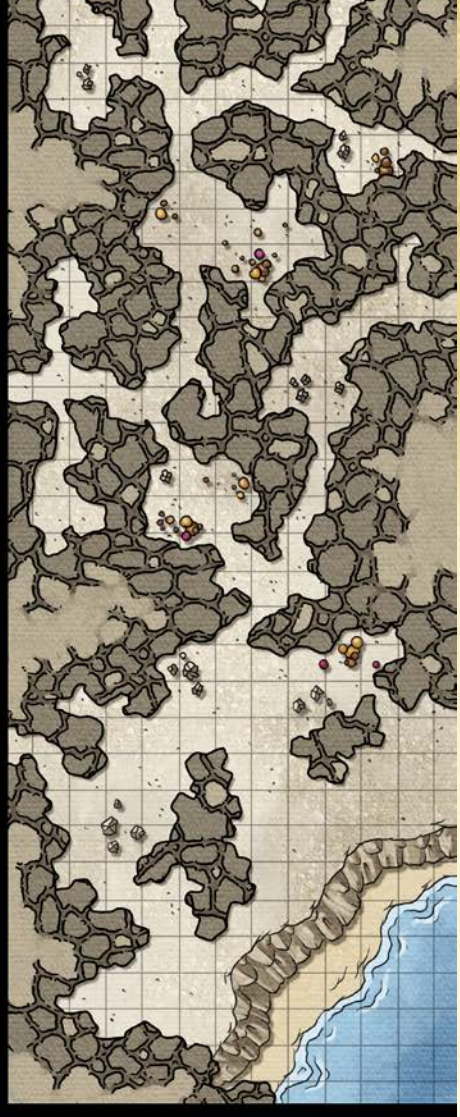
D4. BETRAYAL AVERTED 1 SQUARE = 20 FEET



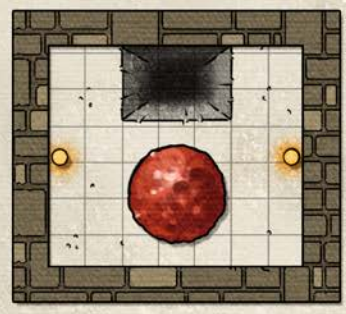
D6. CYPHERGATE SABOTAGE 1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



D5. SECRETS OF WARPED FLESH
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



D7. EARTH FALL
1 SQUARE = 10 FEET



of the maps (or in encounter **D3**, a 100-foot-radius area around an immense temporal portal).

The PCs must accomplish a specific goal within 10 rounds in order to heal a temporal wound. Fortunately, from the PCs' perspective of traveling from the future, they'll know instinctively upon arrival in the past what needs to be done to heal the wound. This is listed under each temporal wound's "Victory Conditions" entry and should be communicated to the PCs just after you present the wound's read-aloud text. Once a wound is healed, the PCs are returned to the Well of All, along with any gear they may have dropped or left behind and with any dead bodies that may have resulted from the conflict. As the temporal wound heals, its barren patch swiftly grows over with fresh *anima mundi*.

If the PCs fail to achieve this victory condition within 10 rounds, or if all of the PCs are defeated in the past, they and everything they brought with them are shunted back to Stethelos (dead PCs remain dead; should all PCs perish, you can have the Steward of Stethelos, Ninuron, or another ally arrange for the resurrection of some or all of the PCs). Each failure to heal a temporal wound also grants Alaznist +1 Paradox Point—these points influence and bolster Alaznist's defenses in the final section of this adventure (see the sidebar on page 68 for more details on Paradox Points). The PCs can make multiple attempts to repair a temporal wound, but they do not gain the restorative effects of time travel on any trips to a given wound's past beyond the first.

Since the PCs can attempt these encounters multiple times, experience points are earned only for healing a temporal wound, not for defeating creatures within the encounter itself (as a result, no monsters in these wounds are assigned XP values). If the PCs heal a temporal wound in 5 rounds or less, they reduce Alaznist's Paradox Point total by 1. Because of this, if the PCs fail to heal a particular wound on the first try, they can at least negate the Paradox Point Alaznist earns by healing the wound quickly on the second attempt.

The order in which the PCs attempt to heal the wounds is up to them to determine, with the exception of the seventh wound, which cannot be entered until the other six have been healed. As soon as the seventh wound is healed, the PCs are shunted not to Stethelos but instead to the heights of Hollow Mountain to Alaznist's Demesne. At this point, they will have begun the final part of Return of the Runelords; see Part 4.

If the PCs achieve the victory condition before their 10 rounds are up, they can spend the remaining rounds looting gear or recovering as they wish. In some cases, they may even be able to converse with surviving NPCs to learn additional information (at your discretion). Any items the PCs loot or secure for their own during the past

remain with them when they return to Stethelos after that temporal wound is healed, with the exception of artifacts they did not have when they arrived in the past, for this method of time travel does not allow for the duplication of unique items in this manner. Items brought back after a failed attempt vanish as they return to their original location in time.

D1. Xin Loses the Sihedron (CR 20)

Altered Event: Emperor Xin creates the *Sihedron* (–6498 AR).

An imperious wizard—none other than Emperor Xin—works a complex ritual in a cathedral-like chamber of dark crystal, attended by a group of what appear to be seven identical duplicates of Xin himself. The floor is inlaid with an elaborate Sihedron rune, and floating a few feet above the floor at its center are seven shards of different metals awaiting but the final joining in order to become the *Sihedron* itself.

Suddenly, Alaznist appears in the room, stepping through a tear in time and space and wielding a glowing scepter in one hand. She confronts Xin with blasts of magical energy, while the seven duplicates transform into copies of Alaznist and surge toward the seven fragments of the incomplete *Sihedron*.

Creatures: In the final hours of crafting the *Sihedron*, Xin used seven creatures called *mezlans* to aid him in the final ritual to seal the artifact's powers within its seven shards and bond them together. Alaznist's arrival and sudden control of the *mezlans* distracts Xin long enough for the *mezlans* to sabotage the ritual, and at the end of the tenth round of this encounter, if any of the traitorous *mezlans* remain alive, the ritual's energies implode and, much like the catastrophic result of a *mage's disjunction*, strip Xin of the power to cast spells. This results in the *Sihedron* itself never being created and removes it from the timeline.

PCs stepping through the wound find themselves in Xin's workshop as Alaznist seizes control of his *mezlans*. The PCs can watch as Xin and Alaznist clash, their magical spells and energies filling the room with chaos, but the two powerful wizards seem strangely blurry and out of focus, due to their being slightly out of sync with the PCs' timeline; neither of them notice the PCs, but the effects of their magic cause a different condition to affect every PC in the room each round. Roll 1d6 at the start of each round to determine how these effects impact the PCs, but note the *mezlans* themselves are unaffected by these magical side effects. In the case of effects that allow saving throws, each PC attempts her save at the start of her turn, with the effects lasting until the start of her next turn in the following round. These side effects function as 7th-level spells cast at 20th level, and they can be blocked by antimagic or spell resistance.

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Magical Clash Side Effects

d6	Result
1	Overwhelming light blinds the PCs for 1 round (Fortitude DC 20 reduces the effect to dazzled for 1 round).
2	Bolts of force lash out and deal 3d6 points of force damage to each PC at the start of her turn (no save, but any effect that blocks <i>magic missile</i> protects against this damage as well).
3	A dizzying array of bewildering colors and sounds confuses the PCs for 1 round (Will DC 20 reduces the effect to sickened for 1 round; this is a mind-affecting effect).
4	A series of thunderous tremors shake the room, knocking the PCs prone (Reflex DC 25 negates).
5	Swirling motes of shrieking black energy in the form of tormented souls spiral through the room, inflicting 1 negative level on each PC (Fortitude DC 20 reduces the effect to shaken for 1 round; this is a death effect).
6	A pulsing nimbus of damaged time paralyzes the PCs for 1 round (Reflex DC 20 reduces the effect to staggered for 1 round).

The seven mezlans are in sharp focus to the PCs. These monsters each seize one of the seven shards of the *Sihedron* as their first action and begin to absorb the shard into their bodies. This has no real game effect until round 10, when their catastrophic inversion of the magic ritual culminates. The mezlans fight back against the PCs once one of them has been attacked. The *Sihedron* shards currently lack their final powers, but a shard can be extracted from a mezlan with a successful disarm attempt—doing so staggers that mezlan for 1 round.

MEZLANS (7) **CR 14**
XP —
hp 195 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 186)

Victory Conditions: All seven mezlans must be slain before 10 rounds elapse to heal this temporal wound.

Temporal Recovery: Healing this temporal wound causes the *Sihedron* to manifest in the PCs' possession as soon as they leave this temporal event. Full details on this potent artifact appear in the previous volume and in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #66. (If you don't have access to either of those volumes, you can simply rule that the artifact's presence grants all of the PCs fast healing 5 and a +2 insight bonus to AC and on Reflex saves, and it prevents the PCs from ever being surprised or flat-footed, in addition to giving each PC a +4 untyped bonus to the ability score of her choice.)

Story Award: Grant the PCs 307,200 XP for healing this wound.

D2. A Cataclysm Refocused (CR 19)

Altered Event: The runelords engineer Emperor Xin's assassination (–6420 AR).

Alaznist made sure to tamper with this historical event before going back further to deny Xin the creation of the *Sihedron* in the first place (otherwise, he wouldn't have had a *Sihedron* to destroy), but the interaction between this wound and the paradox created by that in area **D1** creates an additional layer of complexity if the PCs haven't yet healed the temporal wound of area **D1**. In this case, rather than seeing the *Sihedron* before the clockwork reliquary in the read-aloud text below, the PCs see a strange, warped area of distortion in the shape of the seven-pointed artifact that flickers in and out of reality. A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana or planes) check interprets this as the manifestation of a paradox potentially created by a prior temporal wound. If the PCs persist in entering the wound before resolving the wound at area **D1**, this paradox increases the speed at which the PCs are forced back to Stethelos, resulting in them having only 5 rounds to heal this temporal wound instead of 10.

Bent with age, the once-imperious Emperor Xin of Thassilon toils before a three-legged, four-armed clockwork frame holding a coffin-shaped crystal. Seven rippling conduits of magical energy flow at his direction from the *Sihedron* into this clockwork device, infusing it with power. A moment later, Alaznist is there as well, and as she holds forth the *Scepter of Ages*, it draws the seven strands of energy away from the clockwork, siphoning it into the glowing scepter as Xin, in a panic, tries to regain control.

Creatures: While Alaznist cannot see the PCs, Emperor Xin can. When they appear, he isn't sure who they are, but he knows he needs help and begs them to help him refocus the conduits on the clockwork reliquary before this unknown magical siphon absconds with the magical power. Xin himself can take no action other than to oppose Alaznist's siphon: doing so prevents her from instantly seizing control of the *Sihedron's* store of power, but Xin is prevented from defending himself or taking steps to sever the conduits of magic from her control.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) check realizes that casting *dispel magic* on a conduit could have a chance of disrupting it, while someone who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (planes) check notices that the conduits are partially physical and could be severed by a magical attack that deals slashing damage. If the PCs don't come up with these solutions by the end of the third round, Xin figures it out and, in a panicked voice, suggests one of the two courses of action. To sever a conduit with *dispel magic*, the caster must target one conduit (area-effect attempts aren't effective) and successfully dispel a caster level 20th

effect. To sever a conduit with slashing damage, the attack must either be from a spell, a force effect, or a magic weapon. A conduit has AC 34 and is incorporeal. Force effects do full damage, as do *ghost touch* effects, but all other forms of damage are halved. A slashing attack must deal at least 15 points of damage to sever a conduit. Note that antimagic does not interrupt the conduit, for the magic is being redirected from an artifact (allow a PC to attempt a DC 20 Knowledge [arcana] or Spellcraft check to realize this an instant before she attempts to use antimagic). At your discretion, other creative methods by the PCs might work to sever a conduit from Alaznist's control.

Things grow more complicated at the start of the second round, when another portal opens into the room and disgorges a towering rune giant. This is Shasthaak, an assassin sent by the runelords to murder Xin. In the proper timeline, Xin unleashed the *Sihedron's* power in a devastating explosion to destroy Shasthaak and his own work, sacrificing himself to ensure the runelords would not be able to take advantage of his legacy for their own nefarious ends. Shasthaak rolls initiative normally as he enters the battle, and if he manages to attack Xin, the emperor triggers this explosion at once. Xin automatically triggers the *Sihedron's* retributive strike at the end of the tenth round. This explosion immediately catapults the PCs back to Stethelos and reduces them all to 1d4 hit points. If all seven conduits to Alaznist have been severed at the time of the explosion, the temporal wound is healed. If even one conduit remained attached at the moment of the blast, though, the wound remains and the PCs must try again to heal it.

If the PCs have already healed the temporal wound at area D1 and bring the *Sihedron* here, the PC currently carrying the artifact immediately understands she can substitute it for the *Sihedron* in the past. Doing so immediately severs the conduits to Alaznist and detonates the *Sihedron*, sending the PCs back to Stethelos and healing the temporal wound, but doing so sacrifices the *Sihedron* so that they cannot use it for the remainder of the adventure.

SHASTHAAK CR 19

XP —
 Male rogue rune giant (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 248, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)
 LE Gargantuan humanoid (giant)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +29

DEFENSE
AC 36, touch 8, flat-footed 34 (+13 armor, +2 Dex, +15 natural, -4 size)
hp 330 (20d8+240)
Fort +18, **Ref** +8, **Will** +20
Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge;

Immune cold, electricity, fire

OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.; *air walk*
Melee +4 *human-bane longsword* +30/+25/+20
 (4d6+19/17-20 plus 2d6 vs. human), slam +21 (2d6+7)
Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Special Attacks command giant, runes (DC 24), sneak attack +10d6 plus 10 bleed, spark shower
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +24)
 Constant—*air walk*
 At will—*charm person* (DC 15), *suggestion* (DC 17)
 3/day—*dominate person* (DC 19), *mass charm monster* (DC 22)



SHASTHAAK

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1/day—demand (DC 22), true seeing

TACTICS

During Combat Shasthaak steps through the portal on the second round but is staggered by the unexpected interactions of magic between the portal and the temporal disturbances in the room. On his first round in the room, he moves across the room and prepares to strike at Xin. If the PCs intervene, the rune giant instead focuses his attention on them, but during any round in which at least one PC doesn't distract the giant, he attempts to strike Xin with his sword, which causes Xin to trigger the *Sihedron's* retributive strike, immediately sending the PCs back to Stethelos.

Morale Shasthaak fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 41, **Dex** 15, **Con** 34, **Int** 14, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +34 (+36 bull rush); **CMD** 46 (48 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Vital Strike,

Iron Will, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +17, Craft (weapons) +23, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (nobility) +12, Perception +29

Languages Common, Giant, Terran

Other Gear +5 *o-yoro*TM, +4 *human-bane longsword*, *belt of mighty constitution* +6

Victory Conditions: The PCs must either sacrifice their own *Sihedron* to disrupt the conduits or successfully sever all seven conduits to Alaznist before Xin detonates his version of the *Sihedron* (either in response to Shasthaak attacking him, or as a result of time running out).

Temporal Recovery: The Hellstorm Flumes do not waken and the Lost Coast is not devastated by fiends and fire.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 307,200 XP for healing this temporal wound.

D3. Jandelay Forgotten (CR 18)

Altered Event: The Oliphaunt of Jandelay repulses an invading Azlanti army (–6301 AR).

A massive city lies in smoking ruin. Huge armies of magic-wielding soldiers flee in panic as an elephantine behemoth trumpets and roars behind them, smashing buildings to rubble and crushing scores of soldiers under its feet. The city's defenders flee in panic as well—it's apparent that the enormous monster obeys no master save devastation. And then, above a flat-topped pyramid at the city's center, a rippling field of energy manifests, within which the flickering, blurry shape of a castle can be seen. The four-tusked beast trumpets anew as its eyes alight on this, and its course immediately changes to a direct line toward the portal.

A successful DC 10 Knowledge (local) check is all that's needed to recognize the blurred castle within the portal as Castle Korvosa, while a PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check confirms that the city in the vision is none other than Xin-Eurythnia, the capital city of Runelord Sorshen's realm and the site on which Korvosa would much later be built. A character who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check recognizes the beast in the vision as the legendary Oliphaunt of Jandelay.



OLIPHAUNT OF JANDELAY

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In this temporal wound, Alaznist is not readily apparent, as she used the *Scepter of Ages* instead to create a vast portal through time to lure the Oliphaunt into modern-day Korvosa. In order to heal this wound, the PCs must close the gate before the Oliphaunt reaches it in 10 rounds. (Theoretically, slaying the Oliphaunt before it reaches the gate would also serve to heal the wound, but as the Oliphaunt is a CR 30 creature, such a tactic is likely beyond the PCs' means. If you wish to include such a confrontation in your game, full statistics for the Oliphaunt can be found on pages 58–59 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Mythic Realms*.)

The PCs appear atop the Grand Mastaba, the pyramid at the city's heart, adjacent to the 100-foot-wide portal in time. Since they exist in a paradoxical alternate timeline, the PCs cannot use this portal to escape to Korvosa; any attempt to do so simply results in the PC moving through the portal and becoming racked with nausea (Fortitude DC 25 to resist being nauseated for 1d4 rounds). No map is provided for this encounter, as the area on which the PCs find themselves is open and featureless, and combat is unlikely to occur.

The PCs, hailing from a timeline in paradox with the one this temporal wound created, have three options when it comes to methods for closing the portal, as summarized below. A character who takes a standard action to study the portal and succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or planes) or DC 40 Perception check can determine one of these three methods of damaging the portal through observation. The time portal itself has 200 hit points; by taking one of the following three options, each PC can, on her turn in a round, attempt to damage the portal. Once the portal is reduced to 0 hit points, it closes in a blast of energy that catapults the PCs back to Stethelos, regardless of how many rounds they had remaining.

Direct Manipulation: As a standard action, a PC can attempt to manipulate the portal's magical energies via a DC 30 Disable Device or Use Magic Device check. On a success, the PC deals a number of points of damage to the time portal equal to the amount by which his skill check exceeded the DC.

Abjuring the Portal: A PC can use a spell that ends magical effects (such as *dispel magic*, *greater dispel magic*, or *mage's disjunction*), one that bars dimensional travel (such as *dimensional anchor* or *forbiddance*), or one that creates an antimagic area to abjure the portal. Regardless of the spell used, the PC must attempt a DC 31 caster level check; on a success, the PC deals a number of points of damage to the portal equal to the level of the spell used plus the highest of his Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier.

Severing Time Anchors: As a full-round action, a PC can use a magic weapon against the portal to physically damage the temporal anchors that connect it to this timeline.

The portal has AC 36; on a hit, the PC deals a number of points of damage equal to 2d6 plus his Dexterity or Strength modifier (whichever is higher), regardless of the actual weapon used for the attack. Critical hits and precision damage do not apply to this damage.

Complicating matters are certain events that occur on the following rounds.

Round 2: The Oliphaunt's influence causes the skies above to boil over with clouds, and bolts of lightning begin to lance down to strike the city. On this round and every round that follows, one PC at random is targeted by a bolt of lightning that deals 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 20 half).

Rounds 3, 6, and 9: The Oliphaunt's advance causes a powerful localized tremor. Each PC must succeed at a DC 25 Reflex save or be knocked prone—characters who are knocked prone must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1d3 rounds.

Rounds 4 and 8: Alaznist infuses the portal with additional energy, restoring 10d6 hit points to the portal.

Round 5: At the end of this round, the time portal pulses with energy that lashes out at the PCs. Each PC must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or become confused for 1d6 rounds as she loses track of countless potential timelines she could have potentially experienced. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Round 10: The Oliphaunt reaches the Grand Mastaba and makes a gore attack against each PC (+49 melee; 4d10+17/19–20 piercing); at the end of this round, it steps through the portal.

Victory Conditions: The PCs must close the time portal before the Oliphaunt steps through it.

Temporal Recovery: The Oliphaunt returns to Jandelay and Korvosa is spared destruction.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 307,200 XP for healing this temporal wound.

D4. Betrayal Averted (CR 18)

Altered Event: Runelord Angothane's betrayal causes a devastating schism among the runelords (–6150 AR).

A lone wizard, clad in the raiment of a runelord and carrying an intimidating but familiar-looking ranseur, rises from a research desk in a cavernous underground library. He moves with a purpose as he gathers scrolls from the shelves, glancing nervously about as he appears to pilfer more magic from the stacks. Suddenly, the ghostly image of a woman in similar robes manifests in the room and points an accusing finger at the wizard. She shouts a threat to him and he, startled, drops his scrolls.

While friction and conflict among the runelords was not unusual, in the year –6150 the actions of one

runelord created a schism the rulers of Thassilon never fully recovered from. Runelord Angothane rose to power as the second runelord of wrath after sealing a bargain with Noctacula, the demon lord of assassins, not realizing that what he gave Noctacula in return would seal his fate nearly a century later. Through the use of a minor artifact called a *mindbind figurine*, Noctacula ensured that Angothane would later serve her as a loyal sleeper agent. In -6150, she activated the *mindbind figurine* and compelled Angothane to betray and assassinate his rival Runelord Xirie (a loyal servant of the demon lord Colyphyr) during a meeting within the halls of a sprawling library deep under Kaer Maga. This act caused two parallel disruptions to the status quo. In the Abyss, the loss of one of her most powerful mortal minions distracted Colyphyr long enough that Noctacula herself was able to assassinate the doomed demon lord of dragons, while in Thassilon the betrayal set into motion a chain of events that saw the deaths of no less than four runelords in all, culminating in Xanderghul's assassination of Angothane. The chaos caused by this schism nearly drove Thassilon to civil war, with only Xanderghul's subsequent slaughter of two other runelords (Jurah and Atharend) preventing an all-out war. Regardless, the runelords never viewed one another the same after this event, and conflicts between the nations of Thassilon became the norm in the centuries to follow.

By traveling back in time to warn Xirie of Angothane's imminent betrayal, Alaznist sets up Angothane's premature death and earns the aid of Colyphyr, who in thanks for saving Xirie agrees to aid Alaznist during her rule in Thassilon several centuries later. The tipping balance of power gives Alaznist enough resources and personal strength to significantly expand her nation into Xin-Shalast, and as a result Kaer Maga becomes a trophy granted to Colyphyr.

Two separate successful DC 35 Knowledge (history or nobility) checks are necessary to identify the two figures in the vision: the man as Runelord Angothane (second Runelord of Wrath) and the woman as Runelord Xirie (first Runelord of Sloth). Any PC who understands Thassilonian can also understand the threat Xirie issues to Angothane: "You would betray all of Thassilon for your Midnight Mistress? Taste then the wrath of my Abyssal patron, worm!"

The PCs appear in the library, which is located in a deep chamber below Kaer Maga, an instant after the image of Xirie vanishes. Angothane, caught in the midst of making his last-minute preparations for his fateful attack on Xirie, is startled by the PCs' sudden manifestation, but an instant later, another threat appears in the chamber—a pair of adult rift dragons

sent from the depths of the Abyss by the demon lord Colyphyr to destroy Angothane. The runelord recognizes the dragons as the more significant threat, but drastically complicating matters is the fact that both dragons have prepared *silence* instead of *shatter*, and both have cast the spell on themselves in the instant before they appear. One manifests on either side of Angothane, ensuring that their 20-foot-radius *silence* areas of effect hedge him in from both sides. Without the PCs' aid, the dragons will quickly slaughter the silenced runelord.

If the PCs defeat the dragons, the *silence* effect ends as the creatures (who were summoned to this site) vanish, restoring sound to the library. Runelord Angothane thanks the PCs profusely, not caring why they're here or who they are, but then tells them he must leave as soon as possible to hasten his attack on his enemy, Runelord Xirie. He demands the PCs provide him with any aid they can in the form of healing and bolstering magic, addressing them in a haughty and arrogant way that is unlikely to win him any friends. Yet bolstering Angothane's chances is precisely what the PCs should do to improve his odds in his upcoming fight against Xirie. The PCs can spend as many rounds as they have remaining bolstering him, healing him, and otherwise preparing him for the fight. As they do so, they can briefly speak with him and learn what's going on—since he's currently under the direct control of Noctacula as the result of the *mindbind figurine*, he can even admit to them that he must move quickly in order to appease his mistress. If any PC is a worshipper of Noctacula as the Redeemed Queen, see the Repercussions for Noctacula sidebar on page 50 for additional information the PCs may gain.

At the end of the 10 rounds, Angothane feels he can no longer delay, since every moment gives Runelord Xirie more time to prepare. He bids the PCs farewell and casts *wish* to travel to Runelord Xirie's location and then carry out his assassination, and the PCs are transported back to Stethelos.

Unfortunately, Angothane has only a 50% chance of successfully defeating Runelord Xirie. If the PCs restored him to full hit points, his chance increases by 20%. If the PCs defeated the dragons before 5 rounds passed, his increased morale increases his chance of success by another 20%. Every additional spell effect the PCs bolster him with increases further his chance by a percentage equal to twice the spell's level; for example, casting *heroism* on him (as a 3rd-level spell) increases his chances by 6%, while casting *mind blank* on him (an 8th-level spell) increases his chances by 16%. At your discretion, other steps (such as giving him magic items, though such gifts are gone forever once the PCs return to Stethelos) can bolster his chances as well.

Roll for his chance of success once he vanishes—if he fails, the PCs must attempt to heal this temporal wound all over again.

RUNELORD ANGOTHANE

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male human evoker 18
CE Medium humanoid (human)
Init +5; **Senses** Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 21, flat-footed 27
(+6 armor, +5 deflection, +5 Dex,
+1 insight, +5 natural)

hp 220 (18d6+155)

Fort +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +19

Defensive Ability *contingency*; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee *Angothane's Hateful Ranseur* +14/+9
(2d4+6/19–20/×3 plus 1 bleed)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with ranseur)

Special Attacks intense spells (+9 damage)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th;
concentration +28)

At will—*elemental wall* (18 rounds/day)

13/day—*force missile* (1d4+9)

Evoker Spells Prepared (CL 18th; concentration +28)

9th—electricity elemental maximized *cone of cold* (DC 28),
maximized *disintegrate* (DC 26), *meteor swarm* (2,
DC 31), *time stop*, *wish*

8th—electricity elemental *delayed blast fireball* (DC 30),
maximized quickened *magic missile* (2), *power word*
stun (2), *stormbolts*^{APG} (2, DC 31)

7th—*delayed blast fireball* (2, DC 29), quickened
displacement, quickened *lightning bolt* (2, DC 26),
prismatic spray (2, DC 29)

6th—*chain lightning* (2, DC 29), maximized *lightning bolt*
(2, DC 26), *mass suggestion* (DC 26), quickened *mirror*
image, *mislead* (DC 26), *true seeing*

5th—*dominate person* (DC 25), *feeblemind* (DC 25),
lightning arc^{UM} (2, DC 28), maximized *scorching ray* (2),
quickened *true strike*, *wall of force* (2)

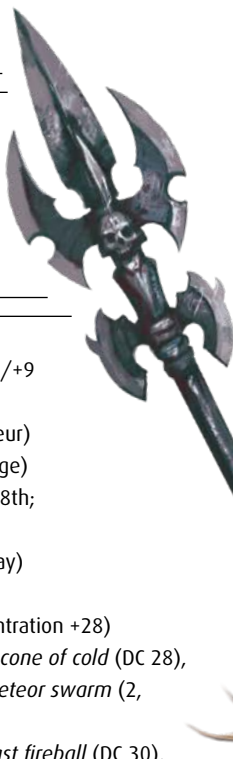
4th—*ball lightning*^{APG} (2, DC 27), electricity elemental
fireball (3, DC 26), *greater false life*^{UM}, *greater*
invisibility (2), *ice storm*.

3rd—*fireball* (2, DC 25), *fly*, *haste*, *hold person* (DC 23),
lightning bolt (2, DC 26), *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*demand offering*^{OA} (2, DC 22), *fire breath*^{APG} (2,
DC 24), *gust of wind* (DC 24), *invisibility*, *mirror image*
(DC 22), *scorching ray* (2)

1st—*magic missile* (7), *shocking grasp*, *true strike* (2)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *light*, *mage hand*,
open/close (DC 20)



RUNELORD ANGOTHANE

Thassilonian Specialization evocation; **Opposition**
Schools conjuration, abjuration

TACTICS

Before Combat Runelord Angothane casts *greater false life* before this encounter.

During Combat As long as he's silenced, Runelord Angothane spends his actions desperately trying to get out of range of one of the *silence* areas. If he does so, he casts *time stop*, then bolsters his defenses with *greater invisibility*, *mirror image*, *fly*, and *displacement*, and then places a *wall of force* between himself and a dragon before casting his most powerful offensive spells against his foes.

Morale Angothane casts *wish* to flee via teleport if reduced to

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REPERCUSSIONS FOR NOCTICULA

If any of the PCs worship Noctacula as the Redeemed Queen, she takes note of them as they interact with her patsy Angothane. Even though she has not yet begun her path toward self-redemption, she can sense the PCs' faith, and it intrigues her. These PCs receive a brief vision in their minds at the start of this encounter—an image of Noctacula who simultaneously expresses fascination at their belief and informs them that Angothane must survive and must be bolstered for his upcoming fight against Xirie before leaving the PCs to their task.

When the PCs return to Stethelos, those worshippers of the Redeemed Queen receive another vision, but this time Noctacula's appearance has changed: she now wears blue hair, a gentler expression, and a more complex (and less revealing) outfit. She thanks her worshippers for saving Angothane so many thousands of years ago and for planting the seed in her mind that she need not remain a mere demon lord. In a way, this brief encounter was the inspiration for a demon lord to ascend from the evil of the Abyss and become something more.



fewer than 40 hit points, in which case the PCs fail to heal this temporal wound.

STATISTICS

Str 15, **Dex** 20, **Con** 22, **Int** 30, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Elemental Focus^{APG}, Elemental Spell^{APG}, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Martial Weapon Proficiency (ranseur), Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Acrobatics +23, Bluff +24, Diplomacy +24, Fly +26, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (nobility) +31, Knowledge (planes) +31, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +23, Use Magic Device +24

Languages Abyssal, Auran, Azlanti, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (*ring of protection* +5)

Combat Gear *greater electricity elemental metamagic rod*^{APG}, *greater maximize metamagic rod*; **Other Gear** *Angothane's Hateful Ranseur* (save for its different name in this time period, this weapon is identical to *Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur*; see page 70), *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *cloak of resistance* +4, *dusty rose prism*

ioun stone, glove of storing (contains *greater maximize metamagic rod*), *headband of vast intelligence* +4, *pink rhomboid ioun stone, ring of protection* +5, *robes of Xin-Bakrakhan* (see page 70), *Sihedron tome*, diamond worth 25,000 gp (for *wish*)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency If Angothane is reduced to fewer than 40 hit points, a *teleport* spell whisks him away back to Hollow Mountain.

ADULT RIFT DRAGONS (2)

CR 16

XP —

hp 270 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 106)

TACTICS

Before Combat Both dragons cast *silence* on themselves.

During Combat The dragons start by both using their breath weapons on Runelord Angothane, then move in to make physical attacks, using their breath weapons as often as possible. Note that

their breath weapons can damage the freestanding bookshelves in the middle of the room, potentially opening up more space for the dragons to move about (each bookcase has hardness 10, which the breath weapons ignore, and 80 hit points). Treat a destroyed bookshelf as difficult terrain.

Morale The summoned dragons fight to the death and vanish as soon as they are slain.

Treasure: Some of the scrolls dropped by Angothane survive the battle and are not reclaimed by the runelord. In all, these consist of a *scroll of maze*, a *scroll of power word stun*, a *scroll of time stop*, and a *scroll of wail of the banshee*.

Victory Conditions: Runelord Angothane must survive the attack and then be prepared well enough to successfully assassinate Runelord Xirie.

Temporal Recovery: Runelord Angothane betrays Colyphyr and Runelord Xirie, setting into motion a schism among the runelords. This not only frees modern Kaer Maga from Colyphyr's control, but also prevents Alaznist from accruing the increased power she would have otherwise gained. In addition, it helps guide Noctacula's own fate, as detailed in the nearby sidebar.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 307,200 XP for healing this temporal wound.

D5. Secrets of Warped Flesh (CR 21)

Altered Event: Alaznist's research into fleshwarping reveals the secrets of creating sinspawn (–5786 AR).

Phosphorescent lichens dimly illuminate the shore of a

subterranean lake or sea. The waves lap upon a gravelly beach descending from a large cavern to this benighted shore. Suddenly, Runelord Alaznist appears on the shore and utters a short phrase. An instant later, a spiraling vortex appears in the waters, growing larger as hideous shapes begin to form from its churning edges. Alaznist then vanishes, leaving the vortex-creature to continue gaining power.

Alaznist initially planned on simply traveling back in time to bolster her own power and knowledge by interacting directly with herself, but when her first attempt to do so resulted in a powerful backlash of paradoxical energies that nearly stripped her of all spellcasting power, she realized her manipulations of the past had to be subtle. As she had to engineer these events so that she herself didn't realize what was going on, she chose to manipulate events where she was never present. The closest she came to breaking this rule was here, where she traveled back in time to a point not long before she made her way to a massive subterranean lake deep under Hollow Mountain to consult with a powerful gongorinan qliptho to learn the secrets of fleshwarping.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 24 Spellcraft check realizes that he has just witnessed Alaznist casting a mythic *wish*. Any PC who understands Thassilionian can understand Alaznist's wish as well: "I wish to contact the intellect of Thuskchoon the Everglutton to reveal to myself in 1 minute hence the secrets of fleshwarping." The result of this mythic *wish* tears a hole in reality, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (planes) check identifies the vortex as a portal to the Abyss. If the result of this check exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the PC realizes this portal leads to Yad Iagnoth, the uppermost of the Abyssal realms ruled by the qliptho. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check, a PC knows that Thuskchoon is a qliptho lord of blinding hunger and revealed secrets, known for his propensity for revealing world-shaking revelations to those who happen to be in the right place at the right time.

As the PCs appear, the portal to the Abyss pulses and thrashes—the thing is partially alive, and it must be defeated as if it were a monster in order to close it. Treat the portal as a fiendish shoggoth. If the portal engulfs a character, that PC must succeed at a DC 22 Will save at the end of each round to resist being transported back to Stethelos (normally, the portal would transport an engulfed victim to Yad Iagnoth, but the nature of the PC's temporal visit instead shunts them back to the Dimension of Time).

At the end of the sixth round, the portal pulses and shudders as Thuskchoon attempts to emerge through it. There's a 20% chance the qliptho lord does so at this point; this chance increases by 20% each round (so that

at the end of the seventh round he has a 40% chance of emerging, up to a 100% chance at the end of the tenth round). This chance is reduced to 0% if the portal is affected by an effect like *dimensional anchor* or *forbiddance*, although such effects are instantly dismissed at the end of round 10 as Thuskchoon's presence rips through the portal despite this warding. Whenever the qliptho lord manages to break through, the portal explodes and Thuskchoon immediately attacks the PCs. If the PCs can slay or banish the qliptho lord before the younger Alaznist arrives, they can still heal the temporal wound, but if the PCs don't do so by the end of round 10, they are whisked back to Stethelos and must attempt to heal the wound again from the start.

PORTAL TO YAD IAGNOTH CR 20

XP —

Variant fiendish shoggoth (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 249)
hp 333

THUSKCHOON CR 21

XP —

hp 396 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 238)

Victory Conditions: The PCs must defeat the living portal or, if Thuskchoon emerges, slay or banish the qliptho lord before Alaznist arrives at the end of round 10.

Temporal Recovery: Alaznist never encounters Thuskchoon here, and instead learns less potent lore about the art of fleshwarping; the sinspawn never launch an assault on Magnimar, and the City of Monuments is spared.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 409,600 XP for healing this temporal wound.

D6. Cyphergate Sabotage (CR 21)

Altered Event: The Cyphergate's keystone is set in place in the final hours of its construction (–5620 AR).

A great circle of rune-carved stone stands upright above a rocky valley, somehow holding itself in place despite not quite touching the ground. At the base of the great floating ring is a massive camp of laborers and craftsmen, with scaffolding erected all along its circumference. Tiny figures scuttle about the camp and cling to the scaffolds, while the larger figures of giants and other beasts haul heavy loads of quarried stone or great logs for the scaffolding. The semitransparent form of Alaznist appears near the top of the ring, where laborers toil at moving a massive, rune-carved keystone into place. Alaznist aims her glowing scepter at the keystone, and the runes carved in the rock seem to shift as tiny cracks spread through the stone before fading from view. None of the laborers seem

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to notice this effect, nor do they react to Alaznist's appearance or her disappearance a few moments later, and they proceed to push the keystone toward its resting place despite the fact that its magic seems to have been tampered with. The tampered magic begins to spread, sending tendrils of energy out to infest the other stones one after another, all unnoticed by its oblivious attendants.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Knowledge (history or local) check recognizes the stone ring as the nearly completed Cyphergate. Once finished, the ring will lower, phasing into the ground below to anchor itself in the world in its more familiar configuration. All that needs to be completed at this point is for the final keystone at its apex to be fitted in place—an event that will occur 10 rounds after the PCs manifest. If at this point the PCs haven't corrected Alaznist's sabotage to the Cyphergate, the infection spreads throughout the structure and the PCs catapult back to Stethelos.

When the PCs appear, they do so on wooden scaffolding attached to the upper reaches of the Cyphergate, standing amid the giants and monsters working to finish placing the keystone. A group of six stone giants provides the brute force of wedging the block in place, using chisels to make last-minute adjustments to the sides of the stone to ensure it's a perfect fit. A group of four moon beasts under the effects of *air walk*, each serving as a mount for a denizen of Leng, looks on from the air nearby—these are representatives of greater powers from Leng who provided advice and support for the structure's creation. A single rune giant stands in the air nearby (thanks to his own *air walk* effect), directing the dominated stone giants. The entire operation is overseen by one of Runelord Karzoug's favorite engineers—a half-elf named Draveenzi who abandoned his home in Mierani to throw in his lot with Shalast. He hopes that by aiding in the creation and construction of the Cyphergate, he can curry enough favor with Karzoug to be transformed into a full-blooded Azlanti, but in fact his destiny will be cut short in only a few minutes' time. After the Cyphergate is completed and Draveenzi teleports to Xin-Shalast to report to Karzoug, the runelord thanks him for his hard work and then murders him to ensure the secrets of the Cyphergate's construction and function are known only to himself.

When the PCs appear, their sudden arrival startles the giants, monsters, and half-elf engineer, who assume the PCs are envoys sent from Xin-Shalast at the last minute with additional demands for the Cyphergate's completion. The denizens of Leng and their moon beasts watch warily but take their cues from Draveenzi, while the stone giants continue to push the block into place and the rune giant steps forward to stand at Draveenzi's side.

The half-elf has cast *fly* to gain additional mobility and swoops over to the PCs to greet them.

At this point, how things develop depends on the PCs' actions. Draveenzi greets them, introducing himself and welcoming them to the final stone placement, but then he pauses, confused as he realizes that the PCs are a rather strange group (especially if they include members of races or ethnicities who have yet to appear in Thassilon). This results in his starting attitude being unfriendly. If the PCs can use Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate to keep Draveenzi mollified, they won't be attacked, but any claims that the Cyphergate's keystone has been sabotaged are a hard sell (all Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks attempted once this claim is voiced take a –5 penalty). Talk of time travel doesn't surprise them, as the workers all know of the Cyphergate's temporal functions and the idea of a traveler arriving from another era isn't impossible to believe. Convincing Draveenzi that the keystone has been modified requires his attitude to be adjusted to helpful through Intimidate, a successful Bluff check to secure his cooperation, or a successful DC 37 Diplomacy check to convince him to give aid that could result in punishment (Draveenzi knows that if Karzoug finds out he let strangers meddle with the Cyphergate, it would be bad for his health). If the PCs fail any of these checks, Draveenzi panics, jumping to the conclusion that the PCs are actually enemy agents, and orders an attack, in which case all of those present do their best to kill the PCs.

In order to repair the damage to the Cyphergate's sabotaged keystone, the PCs must first examine the keystone and succeed at either a DC 35 Perception check or a DC 30 Spellcraft check—these checks can be attempted multiple times if necessary. On a success, a character realizes there are two ways to undo Alaznist's sabotage—by destroying the keystone or by dismantling the invasive magic. Of course, both of these methods are significantly complicated if the PCs have to simultaneously deal with attacks from the nearby workforce.

Destroying the Keystone: The keystone is a magic item (CL 20th) made of magically treated stone (hardness 16, +12 bonus on all saving throws)—once it takes at least 500 points of damage, the block no longer fits in the Cyphergate and a new keystone must be created (this delays the completion of the Cyphergate by several months but, in the long run, is a minor adjustment to the timeline that still allows the temporal wound to heal). Pushing it from the scaffolding causes it to plummet to the ground several hundred feet below and causes enough damage to it that it is effectively destroyed, but the block weighs just over 100 tons (the rollers under it make for favorable pushing conditions, but it still takes six stone giants to move a block this heavy). Destroying the scaffolding under it might be an easier way to cause

it to fall, but even this wooden structure is magically reinforced (hardness 10, hp 240 per 5-foot square); at least four 5-foot squares under the keystone must be destroyed before it falls.

Dismantling the Invasive Magic: Alaznist has infected the stone in seven different locations with paradoxical temporal magic. Dismantling one of these magical infections requires a successful *dispel magic* (or similar spell) against a CL 20th effect or a successful DC 35 Disable Device by a character capable of disarming magical traps. At your discretion, other methods may work, but antimagic effects won't help, for the keystone is considered to be an artifact. A *mage's disjunction* spell used to disjoin the keystone can potentially remove all of the effects at once if the spell is used as if to disjoin an artifact, bringing with it the standard risk of the caster losing all spellcasting ability.

ENGINEER DRAVEENZI CR 18

XP —
Puppet master (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 194)
hp 139

RUNE GIANT CR 17

XP —
hp 270 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)

ADVANCED STONE GIANTS (6) CR 9

XP —
hp 126 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 151)

ADVANCED DENIZENS OF LENG (6) CR 9

XP —
hp 115 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 82)

ADVANCED MOON BEASTS (6) CR 12

XP —
hp 161 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 290, 195)

Victory Conditions: The PCs must destroy the keystone or dismantle the invasive magic before its sabotaged magic spreads to the rest of the Cyphergate after 10 rounds.

Temporal Recovery: The Cyphergate is not sabotaged, Riddleport is not destroyed when the PCs use it to travel to the Dimension of Time, and Alaznist's Demesne is wracked by paradoxical energies as detailed in Part 4.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 409,600 XP for healing this temporal wound.

D7. Earthfall (CR 22)

Altered Event: Runelord Sorshen retreats into the Eye of Desire during Earthfall (–5293 AR).

Note that while the PCs can observe the events within this wound from Stethelos at any time they enter the corresponding scar in the Well of All, they cannot enter this wound until the previous six have been healed, for Alaznist's presence during this event is the strongest of them all.

A lofty, ornate chamber appears, with carved stone walls and braziers. In one wall, a pair of large, oval windows flank a pit in the floor and give a devastating view of a forest being simultaneously blasted with fire and torn apart by a surge of tsunami waves. The sky above belches fire as meteors plummet down to pummel the world below. Within the room, a tortured sphere of blood churns and roils, dozens of human limbs and faces constantly forming from the crimson sphere only to be immediately absorbed back into the mass. The faces are all those of Runelord Sorshen, already partially absorbed by the sphere of blood. She screams in pain as she fights to escape, but it's apparent that she's sinking deeper into the sphere each second. A shimmering phantasm of Alaznist watches nearby, a glowing scepter raised in one hand as she directs the churning blood to claw and tear at the trapped runelord.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or history) check identifies the sphere of blood as the *Everdawn Pool* and the location as the apex of the Thassilonian monument known in modern times as the Sunken Queen. If the result exceeds the DC by 10 or more, the character recalls the ancient name for the site—the Shining Queen—and that it served Runelord Sorshen as a well-defended laboratory and a symbol of her power.

The scene of devastation beyond the windows shows Earthfall in full progress as the lands of Eurythnia are torn apart. Runelord Sorshen attempted to retreat into the demiplane held within her *runewell*, the Eye of Desire, as Earthfall began, only to realize too late that Alaznist had corrupted the *Everdawn Pool* with the *Scepter of Ages*, causing it to instead trap Sorshen forever in time. Alaznist's presence in this wound is more potent than the others. Not only can she interact with the PCs in this event, but her hold over the *Scepter of Ages* helps to shield the wound from entry; only by healing the previous six wounds can the PCs enter this one.

As this encounter continues, the devastation of Earthfall fills the air with the constant sound of destruction and thunder. The constant tremors impose a –8 penalty on Dexterity-based skill checks for creatures on the ground. Spellcasters on the ground must succeed at a concentration check (DC = 20 + the spell's level) to cast a spell. A creature must succeed at a DC 10 Acrobatics check to move on the ground, staying in place on a failure. On the 5th round, a meteor strikes one of the exterior towers of the Shining Queen, tearing it off and forcing

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all creatures on the ground to attempt a successful DC 25 Reflex save to avoid being knocked prone.

The exceptionally disruptive temporal energies active in this encounter make spells of the teleportation subschool difficult to cast—in order to do so, a spellcaster must succeed at a DC 35 caster level check or the spell is lost.

Due to its use as a trap against Sorshen, the *Everdawn Pool's* powers cannot be accessed by the PCs at this time.

Creatures: Runelord Sorshen begins this encounter incapacitated, trapped within the temporally sabotaged sphere of her *Everdawn Pool*. Runelord Alaznist's presence in the chamber functions akin to that of a partially real projected image. She can cast spells through this image, but not mythic spells, and she cannot move from her position floating 10 feet over the center of the pit in the northern part of the chamber.

In addition to the two runelords, another pair of entities manifests in this room the instant the PCs arrive—a pair of iriis, guardians of time who have sensed the distortions caused not only by Alaznist, but also by the PCs themselves. One irii is a chaotic neutral Fortune with the head of a stern androgynous man and crystalline dragonfly wings, while the other is a lawful neutral Fate with a lynx's head and wings made of gold-colored glass. Although the two castes of iriis normally clash, in this case they have a common goal: to end the distortions to time taking place here. The Fate irii opposes Alaznist's attempt to alter the original past and focuses her actions on defeating the Runelord of Wrath, while the Fortune irii sees the PCs' attempt to meddle in time as an encroachment upon its duties and an abomination to the flow of time. As a result, the PCs need not contend with the Fate irii in this fight, and as long as she survives against Alaznist's spells, the Fate continues to distract the Runelord of Wrath from specifically targeting the PCs.

As long as she's trapped in the *Everdawn Pool*, Sorshen is effectively helpless and can take no actions. She can be rescued from the pool by physically dragging her from its clutches—doing so requires a successful DC 40 Escape Artist check or combat maneuver check made as a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Casting *freedom* or *freedom of movement* on Sorshen also allows her to escape, but anyone attempting to teleport her out of the *Everdawn Pool* must succeed at a DC 35 caster level check as the temporal distortions in the room make such magic

unreliable. If Sorshen is freed from the *Everdawn Pool*, she spends the next round stunned, but after that she is fully capable of aiding the PCs against the iriis or Alaznist.

In order to defeat Alaznist, a PC must successfully interrupt her control over the *Scepter of Ages*.

While Alaznist appears partially transparent, the *Scepter of Ages* is fully solid in her grip. Alaznist herself cannot be harmed (although the manifestation can be dispelled; see below), but a character can attempt a disarm or steal combat maneuver to wrest the *Scepter of Ages* from her grasp. If this attempt provokes an attack of opportunity, the *Scepter of Ages* retaliates against the character with a pulse of paradoxical energy, making a single +20 touch attack. On a hit, the target takes 10d6 points of force damage and is hurled backward as if by a violent thrust effect from a *telekinesis* spell (CL 25th); the character can attempt a DC 25 Will save

to negate the violent thrust. Once the *Scepter of Ages* is disarmed or stolen from Alaznist's temporal projection, the events detailed below in Development occur.

Alternatively, if Alaznist's temporal projection can be defeated by *dispel magic* or a similar effect, she vanishes, but the *Scepter of Ages* remains suspended in the air. This effect comes not from Alaznist but the *Scepter of Ages* (CL 25th), and as an artifact, its magic is not thwarted by antimagic effects. At this point, a PC need merely grasp it to trigger the events detailed below in Development.



RUNELORD SORSHEN

IRIIS (2) **CR 19**

XP —
hp 333 each (*Pathfinder RPG Planar Adventures* 238)

RUNELORD SORSHEN **CR 27**

XP —
hp 592 (see page 74)

Development: As soon as the PCs are able to wrest control of the *Scepter of Ages* from Alaznist, several things happen in quick succession.

First, Runelord Sorshen is released from the *Everdawn Pool* and immediately escapes into the Eye of Desire back within her *runewell* deep under Korvosa, returning to the normal timeline.

Second, the PCs experience a sudden flash of memories as all of their potential timelines rip through their consciousness at once. This results in a particularly large XP award as some of these memories and fragments of knowledge remain in their minds. As part of these

visions, the PCs exist for a brief moment alongside the Sihedron Heroes during their fateful confrontation against Alaznist, and realize that it was their actions here in the Shining Queen that ripped the *Scepter of Ages* out of Alaznist's control in the instant after she hurled the Sihedron Heroes into Crystilan.

Third, the *Scepter of Ages* enters a devastating feedback loop of paradoxical energies that cause it to be catapulted forward in time. Where it might land in some future, be it tomorrow or eons hence, is left to you as the GM to determine, but its influence has no more direct effect upon the Return of the Runelords campaign.

Finally, the most important development is that all of the stolen power Alaznist harvested from her manipulation of the past vanishes. She shrieks in rage and frustration as the bulk of her mythic abilities are painfully siphoned away, reducing her to the level of power she had when she first emerged from the Eye of Fury into Hollow Mountain. All of the events that took place in this Adventure Path remain part of this final, stable timeline, including Alaznist's murder of Xanderghul, but she retains none of the additional power gained. She remains a mythic foe, but for the first time in the campaign, her power has been reduced to something that the PCs have a chance to oppose directly.

As her temporal image fades from view, she points a finger at the PCs and cries out, "If I am to be banished back to my domain, I'm bringing you with me! We'll all rot at the edge of the Eye of Fury... at least, until I can track you down and finish you!"

And then, a vortex of countless realities overtakes the PCs as their timelines and that of Golarion are finally repaired. An instant later, the PCs find themselves back in Varisia—but their trials are not yet over. They have appeared in a time-locked instance of Alaznist's Demesne at the highest reaches of Hollow Mountain, and in order to return to the present, they must defeat Alaznist herself.

Victory Conditions: The PCs must cause the *Scepter of Ages* to be cast into the future to heal this wound.

Temporal Recovery: Sorshen's retreat into the Eye of Desire through the *Everdawn Pool* is not compromised, and she is not lost in time.

Story Award: Grant the PCs 1,638,400 XP for healing this final temporal wound and enduring the backlash of countless timelines in a single instant.

PART 4: QUONDAM RECIPROCITY

After the final temporal wound is healed, the PCs suddenly find themselves standing within a strange and

FINAL QUESTIONS, ANSWERED

At this point in the campaign, the PCs are close to finishing their quest, but they likely have plenty of unanswered questions. If you wish, as the PCs transition out of the final temporal wound into the paradox trap within Alaznist's Demesne, you can describe the transition as less an instantaneous event and more a lingering drift through time and space. In this case, each PC discovers something strange—they each hold a copy of the legendary tome, *The Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns*. Each PC can peruse this text and seek a single answer to an unanswered question as the party drifts toward the endgame; use this opportunity to wrap up final campaign plotlines or reveal secrets the PCs have missed, but don't feel pressured to give answers that you feel would spoil any of the final encounters to come!

unfamiliar stone room—area **E1** of Alaznist's Demesne. Just as when they first entered a temporal wound, they are restored and rejuvenated as if they had received a full night's rest and the opportunity to regain spells and daily uses of abilities, and they'll swiftly be confronted with the giant guardians of area **E1** upon their arrival. But they'll soon learn that they are as trapped within this region of Hollow Mountain as surely as they were in Stethelos, with but one way forward if they want to return to the present—the defeat of Runelord Alaznist.

TRAPPED IN A PARADOX

Both Alaznist and the PCs have become trapped in a paradox. While the PCs have healed the damage she inflicted to the past, the flow of time itself has exiled them, metaphorically comparable to how an oyster forms a pearl around an irritant trapped within its shell. The PCs cannot exit Alaznist's Demesne by any means save to enter the Eye of Fury, while Alaznist, as the original architect of the damage, has become even more trapped—she can't leave the Eye of Fury at all. Reality will not tolerate the continued existence of both the PCs and the runelord, and until one defeats the other, the rest of existence is barred to them both. Reality itself is no longer large enough to encompass both of their timelines.

When the PCs confront Alaznist in the Eye of Fury, she may have the advantage over them as a result of her increased mastery over the manipulation of time. This mastery is represented by a pool of Paradox Points available to her for use in adjusting and changing reality. She can use Paradox Points to survive deadly attacks, reverse misfortune, or ensure that dooms befall her enemies within the Eye of Fury. Wise PCs do all they can to reduce her total number of Paradox Points, and indeed

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they may have already unknowingly done so by resolving temporal wounds in 5 rounds or less.

Each time the PCs triumph over an encounter in Alaznist's Demesne, they erode Alaznist's defenses and reduce her Paradox Points by 1 (for a maximum reduction of 12 for defeating all dozen encounter areas). When this part begins, Alaznist has 20 Paradox Points, with 1 additional Paradox Point for each time the PCs failed to heal a temporal wound, and 1 fewer Paradox Point for each temporal wound the PCs managed to heal in 5 rounds or less. See the sidebar on page 68 for full details on how Alaznist can use Paradox Points.

PARADOXICAL ADVANTAGE

One element of the strange nature of the paradox the PCs are trapped within plays to their advantage, although the players may not notice it yet. Until they actually observe an area within Alaznist's Demesne, that area remains trapped in time. This means that until the PCs enter an encounter area, the guardians within that encounter cannot take actions. Once observed, though, they are free to move about any chambers within the Demesne that the PCs have already visited, and they may seek intruders out.

This means the PCs could, in theory, proceed carefully and take one room at a time, resting and recovering their resources between each encounter. The challenges within the Demesne are built with this expectation, and they are particularly deadly. PCs who attempt to rush through and complete them all without resting may be

swiftly overwhelmed. Note that while oxygen will not deplete regardless of how long the PCs take, food and water may eventually become a concern. Characters who take too long between encounters and don't have the resources or magic available to survive may find themselves facing a most ignoble end—dehydration or starvation.

Creatures: An additional threat awaits PCs if they backtrack—the manifestation of spiderlike scavengers from the Dimension of Time known as temporal crawlers. Once 24 hours have passed since the PCs defeat an encounter and move on, 1d4 of these ravenous monsters manifest in that area. The temporal crawlers feed upon the released paradoxical energies lingering in each room as the PCs “unlock” them from time, and they do not exit the chambers they manifest within, but should the PCs be forced to retreat or decide to return to a room they've already visited, they may find themselves encountering unexpected conflicts in the form of hungry spiders out of time itself!

GIANT TEMPORAL CRAWLER CR 16

XP 76,800

Variant temporal crawler (*Tome of Horrors Complete* 594)

N Large magical beast (extraplanar, time)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 16, flat-footed 27 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 insight, +16 natural, -1 size)

hp 231 (22d10+110)

Fort +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities temporal foresight; **Immune**

temporal magic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +28 (8d6+10 plus paralysis)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks paralysis (1d4+4 rounds, Fort DC 26), slowing webs (+25 ranged, DC 26, 22 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat The temporal crawlers use their webs on the first round of combat, then move in to attack with their bites.

Morale A temporal crawler fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 6,

Wis 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +22; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 47 (55 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Greater Vital Strike,



GIANT TEMPORAL CRAWLER

Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Vital Strike, Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +13, Climb +24, Perception +12, Stealth +12

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Immunity to Temporal Magic (Ex) A temporal crawler is immune to all time-related spells and effects (including *time stop*, *temporal stasis*, and the like).

Slowing Webs (Su) A temporal crawler's web emanates a slowing effect (as the *slow* spell, CL 16th) that affects all creatures within 10 feet of the web. An affected creature can attempt a DC 26 Fortitude save to negate this effect, but on a failure it is slowed as long as it stays within 10 feet of a web. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Temporal Foresight (Su) A temporal crawler can see a few seconds into the future. This ability prevents the creature from being surprised, caught flat-footed, or flanked. It also grants the creature an insight bonus to AC equal to its Wisdom bonus. This ability can be negated, but it can be restarted as a free action on the creature's next turn.

RETURN TO HOLLOW MOUNTAIN

The highest level in Hollow Mountain is Alaznist's Demesne, an enormous collection of chambers built by and sized for giants. Once the PCs have the chance to study the workmanship of the site, anyone who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (engineering) check notes enough architectural similarities to the dungeons of Hollow Mountain they explored earlier in the campaign to suggest where they are, as should the results of magical divination.

As the Runelord of Wrath's last redoubt, this level of the dungeon is especially warded to prevent intrusion. No divination spell targeting the dungeon level or its inhabitants that is cast from outside the dungeon level will function. Those cast while within Alaznist's Demesne function normally. All of the outer walls of the dungeon level are warded with *dimensional lock* and are likewise impervious to *disintegrate*, *passwall*, *stone shape*, and similar spells that might allow a breach into the dungeon's confines. These spells all function normally within the dungeon level itself so long as they are not used to bypass or breach the outer walls. All walls within the dungeon level are considered magically treated hewn stone.

Corridors and chambers are hewn from the native stone, smoothed and exquisitely decorated with finely carved geometric designs and patterns that are pleasing to the eye. However, the devastation of Earthfall shattered parts of the level, causing cave-ins and ruin in some areas. Floors are of smooth, polished stone, though likewise chipped and cracked in places. All corridors have vaulted, 40-foot-high ceilings, with the ceiling height in chambers rising to 60 feet unless otherwise noted.

Chambers and corridors alike are illuminated by ancient *continual flame* spells burning in discreet sconces of black iron. Doors are made of petrified wood banded with iron and are not locked. Areas **E8–E12** weathered the catastrophe better than areas **E1–E7** due to greater magical protection; these chambers are protected from all divination, teleportation, and wall-piercing magic from both within and without.

E1. Hellstorm Flume (CR 20)

A spiral staircase descends into the floor of this huge chamber, which holds at its eastern end a tower of black stone rising to a height of forty feet. A turret extends an additional twenty feet up from the center of the tower's parapet. Protruding from the side of this turret is a long, trumpetlike tube. The smell of brimstone hangs heavy, and the air bears a slight haze.

The ceiling of this chamber vaults to a height of 120 feet. The stone tower at the eastern end is a smaller-scale but fully functional version of one of Alaznist's Hellstorm Flumes. This semi-sentient structure is constructed entirely of basalt with a hollow at its center in which the magical fury of barely contained evocation magic roils in endless exploding violence. This churning is completely undetectable from the outside other than a slight warmth and vibration if the tower is touched. The Hellstorm Flume can target creatures with *true seeing*, and if anyone enters and does not immediately intone the pass phrase ("All hail Wrath's righteousness" in Thassilonian), the turret activates. On initiative count 10, its trumpetlike tube rotates to belch a 100-foot-long cone of flames at intruders (20d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 28 half). The Hellstorm Flume can fire every other round and can aim anywhere in the room except within 20 feet of the tower's base or atop the tower itself. The turret continues to fire as long as intruders remain in the room. If the flume barrel is sufficiently damaged where it emerges from the turret (hardness 15, hp 125, break DC 36), it can no longer fire. It can also be disabled with a successful DC 40 Disable Device check.

The stairwell leads downward to the next level of Hollow Mountain's dungeon, but the PCs are unable to access this. To them, after descending one full revolution, the stairs end at an impassible wall of writhing green moss... an impenetrable barrier of *anima mundi*. This wall vanishes as soon as Alaznist is defeated.

Creatures: A wooden ladder constructed from tree trunks leans against the tower's north side. It is used by the three chaotic evil sun giants who defend the Hellstorm Flume against those who might try to disable it. They stand atop the parapet, hurling atlatl darts and spells at intruders, concentrating on those who come

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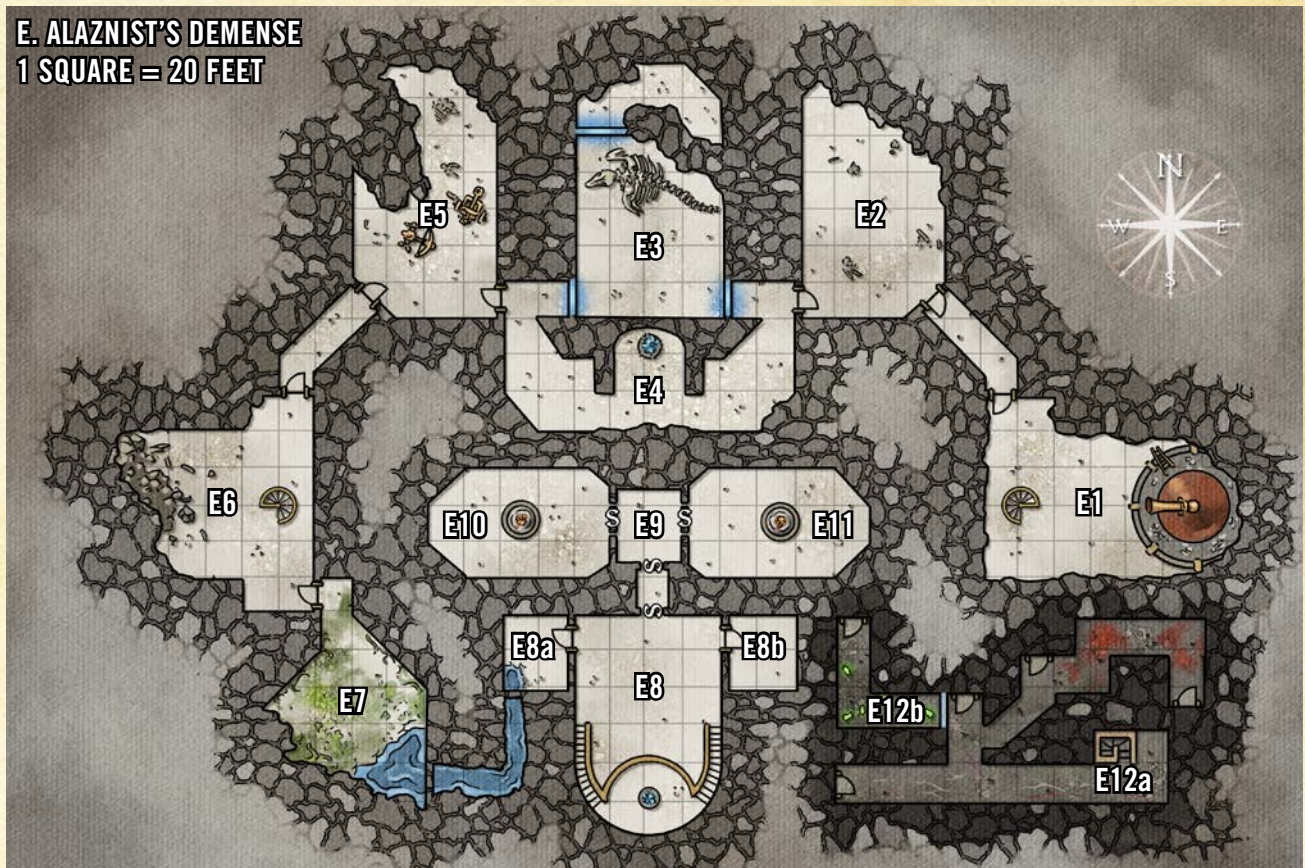
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E. ALAZNIST'S DEMENSE
1 SQUARE = 20 FEET



within 20 feet of the tower base. The sun giants are in turn led by a rune giant who crouches in the air above the central turret and utilizes his spell-like abilities against the PCs. All have not only spoken the passphrase but are also immune to the flume's fire. In any event, they engage in melee only with those who reach the tower's top.

RUNE GIANT **CR 17**

XP 102,400

hp 270 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 130*)

SUN GIANTS (3) **CR 16**

XP 76,800 each

hp 241 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5 123*)

Treasure: The giants have collected among themselves a total of 510 pp, 10 amethysts (worth 90 gp each), four topazes (worth 500 gp each), 6 sapphires (worth 1,200 gp each), eight large rubies (worth 5,000 gp each) a *scroll of mass heal*, a *scroll of polymorph any object*, a *scroll of power word kill*, a *scroll of rampart*^{APG}, a *scroll of screen*, and a *wand of call lightning* (47 charges), all stored in a *handy haversack*.

E2. Bivouac (CR 21)

This crumbling chamber has a ceiling some forty feet high. Swaths of rubble have been pushed to the walls to make room for several oversized bedrolls. The remains of cook fires and the miscellaneous gear of a soldier's encampment sit in the center of the chamber.

Creatures: Among the creatures drawn to Hollow Mountain since Alaznist's awakening were a tribe of sun giants who had dwelled in a remote valley in the Calphiak Mountains to the north. Impressed with their zeal, Alaznist provided them with armaments from her own arsenal and chose a select few to serve as shock troops in her demesne. Currently camped here are five sun giants, though there are bedrolls for a dozen more. They currently spar with a massive construct—a warmonger—that Alaznist originally constructed for her anticipated invasion of Shalast.

When they notice the PCs, the giants form a firing line along the west wall and use spells and atlatls while the warmonger sets up a barrage of rocks and crossbow bolts from the north end of the room. Once the PCs enter

melee, the warmonger moves in, but the giants make ranged attacks as long as possible.

SUN GIANTS (5) CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 241 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 5 123*)

WARMONGER CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 344 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6 274*)

Treasure: Amid the giants' camp are collected valuables: 7,100 gp, 480 pp, a brilliant green emerald worth 6,000 gp, a mithral-inlaid unicorn horn worth 10,000 gp, a diamond worth 25,000 gp, an *amulet of natural armor* +5, a *bag of tricks* (rust), a +2 *holy battleaxe*, a *ring of swarming stabs*^{UE}, a *scholar's ring*^{UE}, and a suit of +3 *studded leather armor*.

E3. Behemoth Corral (CR 22)

Permanent *walls of force* (CL 20th) have been erected to block each of this room's entrances (including the one to the north, beyond which access to other chambers has been blocked by fallen rubble from Earthfall).

Much of this chamber's northern end has collapsed, though it appears that a 30-foot tunnel has been delved through the rubble. The rest of the chamber is battered and cracked, with broken debris strewn about. The fresh but picked-over skeletal remains of a blue whale lie in the center of the chamber.

Creature: Alaznist has converted the ruins of this chamber into a holding pen for the pride and joy of her early attempts at conquest. A single tempest behemoth, captured at great risk and expense, was placed here in *temporal stasis* years before Earthfall. When she woke, Alaznist released the temporal stasis, but not before she erected permanent *walls of force* to hold the behemoth captive, all in preparation for her great invasion of Varisia.

The behemoth has remained quiet and patient as long as it wasn't annoyed, but at the sight of the PCs, the immense monster begins to attack the closest *wall of force*. Its ruinous attacks will make short work of these walls, but with the northern passage (the only one once large enough to allow it easy passage out) blocked, it likely won't be able to pursue the PCs far. This monster need not be defeated to progress, of course, but doing so has twice the normal effect on Alaznist's Paradox Point total—if the PCs slay the behemoth, they reduce Alaznist's Paradox Point total by 2 instead of 1.

TEMPEST BEHEMOTH CR 22

XP 614,400

hp 445 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 37*)

E4. Headquarters of Wrath (CR 22)

This oddly shaped string of chambers serves as the nerve center of Alaznist's war machine. Her old practice of utilizing demonic alliances has continued, and the runelord has secured the services of an Abyssal general to serve as war marshal to the armies of New Thassilon. With this demonic creature at her army's head and serving as her right hand, Alaznist believes there is no military force in the north that can defeat her.

The central chamber holds a fire pit that burns with strange blue flames. Anyone touching these flames takes 6d6 points of fire damage per round (no save). However, any creature or object that fully enters the blue flames is instantly teleported to the similar fire pit in area E8. This teleportation requires 1 full round in the flames (and thus inflicts 6d6 points of fire damage). The flames radiate a strong aura of conjuration (teleportation) magic; this effect is not impeded by the wards preventing teleportation into area E8.

Creatures: Alaznist's favored general, the vrock known as War Marshal Yahar, occupies the central chamber. Yahar is attended at all times by her two shemhazian bodyguards, who occupy the two side chambers. If she becomes aware of intruders, Yahar immediately prepares for battle. All of these demons fight to the death. Yahar fears the guardian of E8 and will not enter the blue flames for any reason, even to pursue the PCs.

WAR MARSHAL YAHAR CR 21

XP 409,600

Female vrock fighter 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 69*)

CE Large outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +30

DEFENSE

AC 36, touch 15, flat-footed 30 (+10 armor, +6 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 379 (21d10+264)

Fort +25, **Ref** +19, **Will** +12 (+3 vs. fear)

DR 10/good; **Immune** electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee +2 *falchion* +33/+28/+23/+18 (2d6+18/18-20), bite +27 (1d8+5), 2 talons +27 (1d6+5)

Ranged +2 *double-barreled musket* +30/+25/+20/+15 (3d6+4/x4)

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

Special Attacks dance of ruin, spores, stunning screech, weapon trainings (heavy blades +2, natural +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *telekinesis* (DC 19)

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WAR MARSHAL YAHAR

1/day—*heroism*, *mirror image*, *summon* (level 3, 1 vrock 35%)

TACTICS

Before Combat Yahar casts *heroism* and *mirror image* and tries to summon an additional vrock.

During Combat Yahar remains at the back while her shemhazian guards engage the enemy, using the first few rounds of combat to cast *mirror image* and *heroism* (if she hasn't already) before using her musket against spellcasters and opponents with ranged weapons. She uses her dance of ruin with any summoned vrock, knowing her demons will be immune to its effects. She engages in melee only as a last resort.

Morale Yahar fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 24, **Con** 32, **Int** 12, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +21; **CMB** +30; **CMD** 47

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Deadly Aim, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms)^{uc}, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mounted Archery, Mounted Combat, Multiattack, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Rapid Reload, Toughness, Weapon Focus (double-barreled musket), Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (double-barreled musket), Weapon Specialization (falchion)

Skills Fly +23, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (planes) +13, Perception +30, Ride +23, Sense Motive +16, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +15, Survival +15

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ armor training 3

Gear +4 *breastplate*, +2 *double-barreled musket*^{uc}, +2 *falchion*, *greater burrowing bullets* (10)^{ue}, *belt of incredible dexterity* +6, *ring of spell turning*

ADVANCED SHEMHAZIAN DEMONS (2) CR 17

XP 102,400 each

hp 280 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 292, 80)

E5. Living Siege Engines (CR 20)

The northern portion of this room has suffered a major collapse, resulting in the destruction of several siege engines once displayed here. Broken remnants of ballistae, catapults, and stranger devices litter the floor.

Creatures: Alaznist reached out to her old ally Yamasoth in her bid for power in the current age and found that her favor with the qliploth lord has not diminished over the centuries. Among the allies the Polymorph Plague dispatched to aid her are four cataboligne qliploth to serve her war machine. These horrific creatures wait quietly in this chamber but are quick to react if the PCs enter.

CATABOLIGNES (4)

CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 241 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 6* 225)

E6. Erstwhile Allies (CR 22)

Much of this large chamber has collapsed, mostly burying a great black tower that once loomed over the western end of the room. A spiral staircase descends in the chamber's center, and doors exit to the northeast and southeast.

Once another Hellstorm Flume like that in **E1**, the original tower in this room was crushed in Earthfall long ago. Its fires have long gone out, but its hollow

interior remains. As in area E1, the stairs here lead down to an impassible wall of anima mundi moss.

Creatures: In aiding Alaznist, Yamasoth also “loaned” the runelord a pair of particularly powerful thulgants to serve as advisors for the runelord. In truth, Yamasoth wishes to gain access to Alaznist’s *runewell* in order to siphon its power and he has taken steps to ensure that one of the most powerful of his qlipthoth, an iathavos, is ready to invade it from within. The “loan” of qlipthoth to the runelord is equal parts aid from Yamasoth and the placing of advance agents in Hollow Mountain for what he assumes will be his inevitable takeover of the entire complex. Despite this, the qlipthoth have little interest in allying with the PCs—all mortals are equally detestable for their capacity to sin, after all. The thulgants immediately attack the PCs upon sight.

Alaznist, for her part, doesn’t trust the qlipthoth to keep to their word, so she’s stationed one of her personal guards here to keep an eye on the thulgants. This is a powerful sinspawn slayer, one of several who normally accompany Alaznist as a personal guard. The sinspawn slayer stands at attention in the southern portion of the room, aware that the thulgants are conversing via telepathy without including it but content with the fact that they haven’t made any obvious moves against its mistress.

engage the PCs first, delaying until the end of the round so he can select his quarry and use studied target on the most dangerous foe in the group, then moving in to deliver sneak attacks if possible.

Morale The slayer fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 22, Dex 20, Con 32, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 16

Base Atk +19; CMB +25; CMD 41

Feats Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Fleet, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Shield Focus, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack, Staggering Critical, Toughness, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

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THULGANTS (2) CR 18

XP 153,600 each

hp 290 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 226)

SINSPAWN SLAYER CR 20

XP 307,200

Advanced wrathspawn slayer 17 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 246; *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 53)

NE Medium aberration

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, sin-scent; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 37, touch 15, flat-footed 32 (+11 armor, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +5 shield)

hp 363 (20 HD; 3d8+17d10+257)

Fort +22, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 13

OFFENSE

Speed 45 ft.

Melee +1 *vorpal mithral scimitar* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d6+7/15–20), bite +20 (1d6+3), claw +20 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks quarry, sinful bite, slayer’s advance 2/day, sneak attack +5d6 plus 5 bleed, studied target +4 (swift action; 4 targets)

TACTICS

During Combat The sinspawn slayer lets the thulgants



SINSPAWN SLAYER

Skills Acrobatics +26, Climb +21, Intimidate +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +32, Survival +27

Languages Aklo, Thassilonian

SQ combat style (weapon and shield^{APG}), slayer talents (bleeding attack +5, combat trick, evasion^{UC}, fast stealth, hard to fool^{APG}, powerful sneak^{APG}, ranger combat style^{ACG}, weapon training), stalker, swift tracker, track +8

Gear +5 mithral chainmail, +3 buckler, +1 vorpal mithral scimitar, amulet of natural armor +2, belt of mighty constitution +6

E7. Sundew Garden (CR 19)

This partially collapsed chamber is almost entirely overgrown—walls, floors, and ceiling—with a weird garden of mosslike growth covered in fine filaments, each tipped with a single drop of red sap. The filaments are so small and close together that they give the floor of the chamber the appearance of being completely covered in red marbles. Across the chamber a dark pool has collected at the base of the collapsed wall, its slime-covered waters giving the entire chamber a dank, cloying atmosphere.

The ceiling in this room is 40 feet high. The pool itself is completely harmless. A PC who succeeds at a DC 37 Perception check notices a submerged tunnel entrance 20 feet down in the murky waters. Viewed underwater, only a DC 17 Perception check is necessary to notice the opening through the algae-thick water. The 10-foot-wide passageway leads to area **E8a**.

Hazard: Using her expertise in fleshwarping to experiment in a similar way with plant material, Alaznist cultivated this entire chamber into a massive trap. She took giant sundew plants, reduced them to a spreading, mosslike growth, and introduced them to this chamber. It is now entirely overgrown. Each creature entering the chamber is subjected to a variant of the giant sundew's stupefaction pollen, and must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Intelligence damage (this is a poison effect). The sundew carpet's adhesive acid has a delayed effect, activating a round after initial contact, at which point a creature must succeed at a DC 26 Reflex save or become entangled, be stuck in place, and take 1d6 points of acid damage. Each round of continued exposure increases the amount of acid damage by 1d6, to a maximum of 10d6 acid damage after 10 rounds. Once a character breaks free from the sundew carpet, he continues to suffer the last amount of acid damage taken for 1d3 additional rounds unless the acid is neutralized (water won't remove it, but strong alcohol or *universal solvent* does).

Further complicating navigation of this room is that, with the exception of the area taken up by the pool in

the corner, the room's gravity fluctuates every 1d3 rounds, becoming affected by *reverse gravity*. A creature stuck to the sundew carpet won't fall, although the sudden shift of gravity requires a stuck creature to succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or drop any held object. This *reverse gravity* effect can be neutralized for 1d4 rounds with a successful casting of *dispel magic* or a similar effect (CL 20th).

The sundew trap is resistant to all damage other than fire or slashing damage (but any weapon used to deal slashing damage becomes stuck to the sundew unless the wielder succeeds at a DC 26 Reflex save). A total of 60 points of damage clears one 5-foot square of the growth. Spells like *blight* or *horrid wilting* that specifically target plants damage the carpet normally. *Diminish plants* immediately neutralizes all of the sundew carpet in the room if the prune growth effect is used; stunt growth has no effect.

Story Award: The first time the PCs navigate this room and either reach the flooded tunnel or destroy the sundew carpet (whichever comes first), award the party 204,800 XP.

E8. Hall of Ruin (CR 23)

A vast hall stretches from a curved, twenty-foot-high balcony in the south to a matched pair of massive double doors to the northeast and northwest. The balcony is accessed by two five-foot-wide staircases without railings. Atop the balcony burns a ten-foot-wide pillar of blue flame. This chamber's stonework is pristine and unscarred, the delicate engravings upon the walls and even the vaulted ceiling sixty feet above as fine and sharp as if they were carved yesterday, their lines stained with pigments of ochre, saffron, and sable.

The blue flame upon the balcony is identical to that in **E4** and functions in the same way, teleporting anyone who steps in it back to area **E4**. The side rooms (areas **E8a** and **E8b**) are empty and unadorned save for a silty pool in area **E8a**. This 20-foot-deep pool has a submerged passage (easily found by anyone who dives to the bottom) that provides access to area **E7**.

In the north wall is a well-hidden, locked secret door (DC 35 Perception to notice, DC 40 Disable Device to unlock).

Creatures: A pair of Alaznist's greatest fleshwarp experiments are kept here. Using secrets taught by Yamasoth, the runelord was able to transform a single enormous hydra into two powerful half-fiend thessalhydras. The monsters have been rendered invisible and lurk quietly in the middle of the room. This invisibility effect breaks as soon as each attacks.

HALF-FIEND THESSALHYDRAS (2)

CR 21

XP 409,600 each

Half-fiend thessalhydra (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 171, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 263)

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CE Gargantuan outsider (aberration, native)

Init +17; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +37

DEFENSE

AC 40, touch 27, flat-footed 23 (+4 deflection, +17 Dex, +13 natural, -4 size)

hp 350 each (20d8+260)

Fort +23, **Ref** +27, **Will** +24

Defensive Abilities all-around vision; **DR** 10/magic;

Immune acid, poison; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 32

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)

Melee bite +29 (3d6+11/19-20 plus 2d6 acid), 2 claws +28 (2d6+11), pincer +26 (2d8+5 plus grab), 8 snake bites +27 (1d8+5/19-20 plus 1d6 acid)

Ranged 8 acid spits +28 touch (2d6 acid)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (30 ft. with snake bites, 40 ft. with pincer)

Special Attacks breath weapon (160-ft. line, 20d6 acid, Reflex DC 33 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), constrict (2d6+11), pounce, smite good

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +21)

3/day—*darkness*, *poison* (DC 15), *unholy aura* (DC 19)

1/day—*blasphemy* (DC 18), *contagion* (DC 15), *desecrate*, *destruction* (DC 18), *horrid wilting* (DC 19), *summon monster IX* (fiends only), *unhallow*, *unholy blight* (DC 15)

TACTICS

During Combat The thessalhydras cast *unholy aura* on themselves in the first round of combat (this spell's effects are calculated into the stat blocks already), then cast *summon monster IX* on the second round to each summon 1d3 hezrous. On the third round, they move into position to hit as many PCs as possible with their breath weapons, after which they fight in melee.

Morale The half-fiend thessalhydras fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 33, **Dex** 44, **Con** 36, **Int** 4, **Wis** 26, **Cha** 13

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +30 (+34 grapple); **CMD** 61 (65 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (snake bite), Multiattack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (snake bite)

Skills Acrobatics +35, Fly +38, Perception +37, Swim +19

E9. Chamber of Brass (CR 20)

This chamber is a forty-foot-cube entirely sheathed in brass. It appears to be otherwise featureless.

Each of the secret doors to this chamber requires a successful DC 35 Perception check to locate from either side. A secret door closes automatically at the start of a round if left open, slamming shut with enough force to push aside mundane attempts to wedge them open and dealing 4d6+12 points of bludgeoning damage to any creature or object in the doorway; if this destroys or kills a creature, the door slams shut after smashing through the barrier. From inside, there is no way to easily open any of the secret doors as long as the trap remains active, though a successful DC 32 Strength check is enough to force open a secret door. Each of the doors into this room is made of



HALF-FIEND THESSALHYDRA

adamantine (hardness 20, hp 80) treated to resemble the nearby walls.

Trap: As soon as all of the secret doors are shut, the brass sheaths lining this chamber appear to heat to red hot, when in fact this is a programmed image and the walls are instead becoming supernaturally cold. Cold damage taken while this illusion is active is felt as fire damage. A PC can attempt a Will save against the illusion each time she takes cold damage from the trap. The brass remains chilled for 1 hour, after which it requires 24 hours to recharge and reset.

FROZEN OVEN

CR 20

XP 307,200

Type magical; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

DEFENSE

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (augmented *chill metal*, 4d6 cold per round for 600 rounds; Will DC 28 to disbelieve fire damage); multiple targets (all targets in room)

E10. Chamber of the Anima Focus (CR 20)

A stone well filled with silvery water sits in the center of this otherwise featureless chamber. A jet of golden flame springs forth from the well, licking at the ceiling forty feet above like a tongue of fire.

Much like Karzoug in Xin-Shalast, Alaznist constructed an *anima focus* to link the world to her *runewell* within the Eye of Fury. The *anima focus* functions as an anchor for the *runewell of wrath* and cannot be affected, damaged, or moved by any mortal effort. It is through this *anima focus* that souls of wrath have been siphoned and focused into the Eye of Fury where Alaznist rested and has since risen. It is also the only means to reach Alaznist in her lair.

Anyone stepping into the silvery pool is instantly consumed by the flames and reduced to a fine ash—or so it seems to observers. In fact, the individual takes only 20d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 20 half) as she is transported into the Eye of Fury. Possession of an *Abyssal runestone* negates this fire damage entirely.

Creature: In what she considers one of her greatest triumphs, Alaznist's dealings with high-level powers of the Abyss resulted in the discovery and complete control over what has become of Runelord Angothane's soul. After his service to Noctricula helped her defeat the demon lord Colyphyr, Angothane's soul was granted the opportunity to ascend into a balor over the course of several thousand years of torment in the depths of the volcanic isle of Tharvool in the Midnight Isles of the Abyss. Pleased with her mastery over another runelord, Alaznist kept Angothane bound

here as a guardian for the *anima focus*, but her choice of guardian may give the PCs an advantage.

When Angothane first notices the PCs, he pauses in shock, as temporally distorted memories of the heroes who aided him so long ago in his fight against Colyphyr's draconic assassins in the library vaults below Kaer Maga suddenly rise in his mind. If the PCs don't immediately attack the obviously confused balor, he asks the party, "Have we met in a previous life? A previous time? Do you know the name of Angothane?" If any of the PCs are worshippers of Noctricula as the Redeemer Queen, they automatically recognize Angothane for who he once was.

If the PCs stay their hands long enough to let him speak more, the balor's shock at this unexpected encounter overwhelms his cruelty and malevolence, and he reveals the following.

"I am bound to prevent you from entering the Eye of Fury, but not from warning you to first seek Abyssal runestones to protect yourself from the fires within. Alaznist kept more of these in her vault—a maze you can access from the pool in the room opposite this one. I remain thankful to you for saving me, even though my memories of your intervention so long ago feel like someone else's dream. You can have the advantage over me, but know that once you attempt to enter the Eye of Fury or attack me, my nature will no longer be so understanding."

Angothane takes no further action to aid or harm the PCs until they either attack him or attempt to use the *anima focus* to travel to the Eye of Fury, in which case he attacks and fights to the death—but treat his initiative in this battle as if he rolled a 1.

ANGOTHANE

CR 21

XP 409,600

Advanced balor (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 58)

hp 410

E11. Vault Entrance (CR 18)

A stone well filled with silvery water sits in the center of this otherwise featureless chamber. A jet of golden flame springs forth from the well, licking at the ceiling forty feet above like a tongue of fire. The walls of this chamber are carved in highly detailed images of demons dancing as tortured souls writhe below their taloned feet.

The pool in this chamber is identical to the one in area E10. Its flame, however, is a *permanent image* (CL 20th), and its silvery waters are pure spring water. Anyone diving to the bottom of the 40-foot well finds a 20-foot-diameter side tunnel that veers southeast. Anyone following the entire 260 feet of this unlit, submerged tunnel emerges at

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a staircase that rises from the waters into Alaznist's Vault at area **E12a**.

Trap: The trap in this room activates automatically at the end of the round after a creature enters the chamber. Once it triggers, the carvings on the wall begin to shift and move, dancing a procession around the perimeter of the room. As they do so, a harsh rhythmic chanting becomes audible and a crackling field of static begins to accumulate on the walls. At the end of the second round, this static explodes into a wave of destructive energy that deals 20d6 points of electricity damage to each creature in the room. This blast of electricity repeats automatically at the end of every even-numbered round.

DANCE OF RUIN CR 18

XP 153,600

Type magic; Perception DC 35; Disable Device DC 35

DEFENSE

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect dance of ruin (20d6 points of electricity damage every other round, Reflex DC 26 half, onset delay 1 round); multiple targets (all creatures in room)

E12. Vault of Alaznist (CR 22)

The stairwell rises from the water-filled tunnel into a room unlike those encountered before. The walls here are of smooth-polished black marble with veins of silver and pink. Cut into these walls are uniform niches measuring two feet wide, two feet deep, and three feet high, stacked four high like the shelves of an apothecary... or a catacomb.

The mazelike chambers that lie beyond the entry stairwell at area **E12a** are the famed vaults of Alaznist. The niches here once held chests, art, and objects of great value, but most are empty now as Alaznist expended great resources in preparing contingencies and gathering allies both in the weeks leading up to Earthfall and in the time since she rose from her slumber.

The hallways extending from this chamber share the same construction, and their niches are in the same general state of vacancy. Set into the corridors at various places are double doors like those found elsewhere in the dungeon level, but they are bound with

massive bronze chains and heavy locks (Disable Device DC 40), and all connect via one-way portals to other locations throughout Hollow Mountain. For the moment, the PCs cannot use these portals to leave the Demesne—the portals' magic simply fails. Once Alaznist has been defeated, at your discretion these doorways can provide quick access to other portions of the dungeon for your PCs to explore.

A permanent *wall of force* (CL 20th) blocks access to area **E12b**.

Creatures: These vaults are guarded by a small pack of powerful creatures known as hallowed lynxes, originally crafted by Runelord Sorshen. Alaznist managed to secure several of these dangerous felines at great personal expense in the final years of Thassilon's height, and they've remained in stasis in the vault ever since. Currently, a half dozen hallowed lynxes guard the vault, held in temporal stasis until any creature other than Runelord Alaznist enters the vault. They return to their posts and fall back into *temporal stasis* 1 hour after no intruders remain in the vault; they are healed of all damage and debilitating effects as they do so. Once activated, they seek out intruders and fight to the death.

HALLOWED LYNXES (6) CR 17

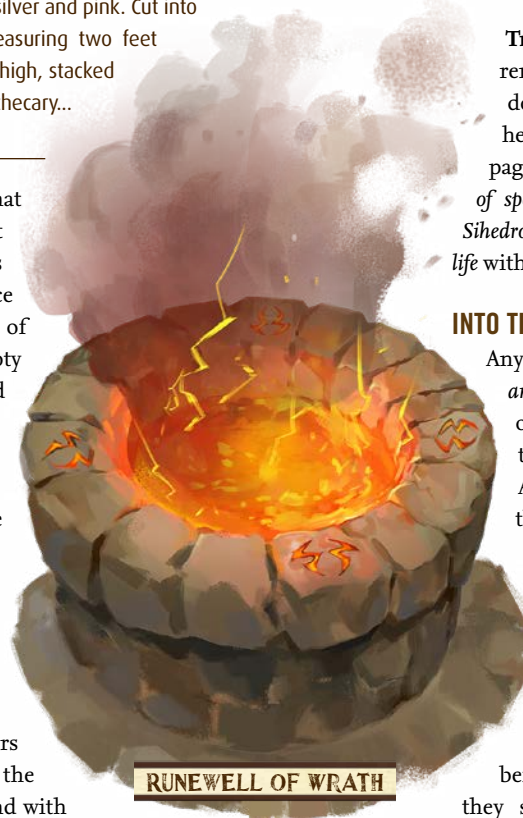
XP 102,400 each

hp 241 each (see page 88)

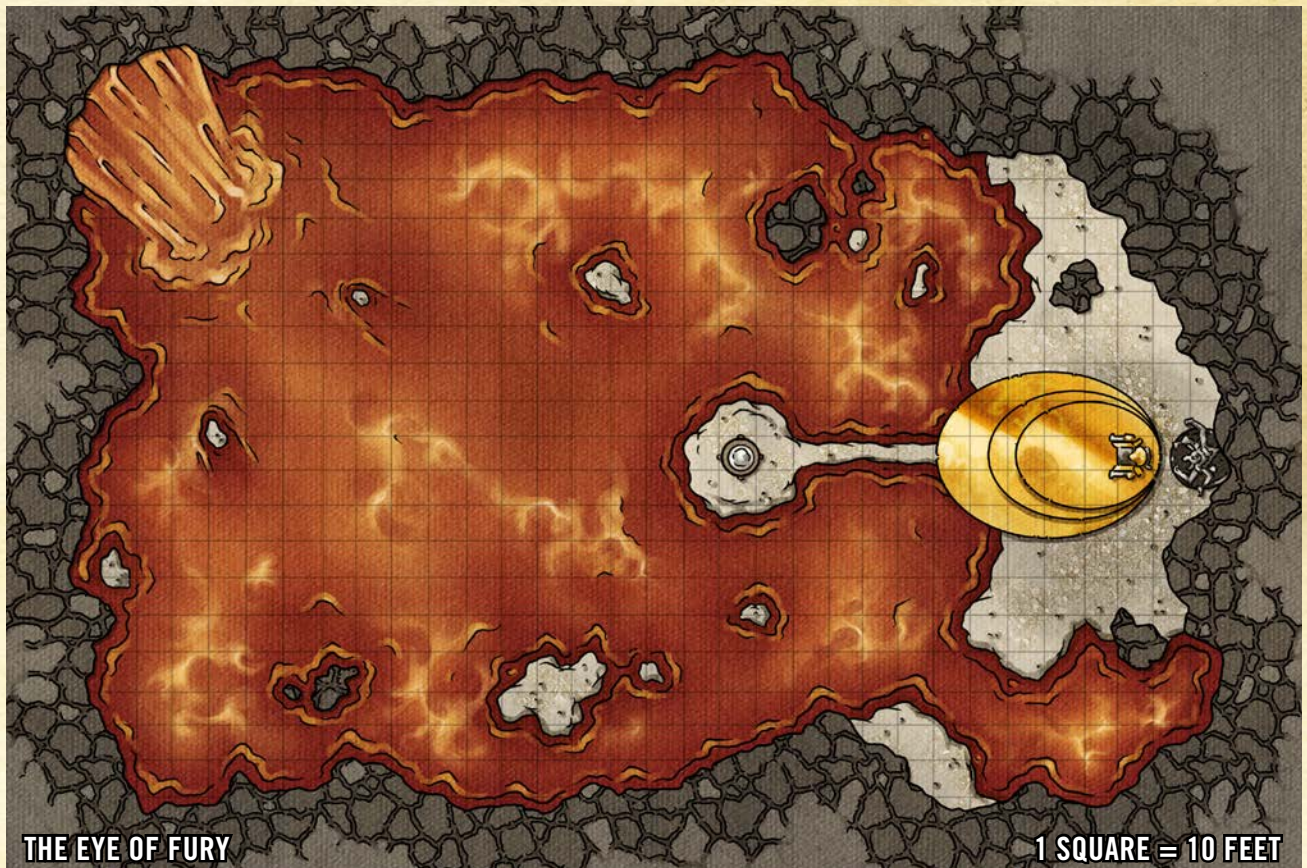
Treasure: A few potent treasures remain behind in niches near the doorway at area **E12b**. Located here are two *Abyssal runestones* (see page 69), a *lyre of building*, a *mantle of spell resistance*, a *rod of splendor*, a *Sihedron ring* (see page 70), and a *staff of life* with 10 charges.

INTO THE EYE OF FURY (CR 25)

Anyone who steps into the fires of the *anima focus* in area **E10** steps out of a similar pillar of fire and into the scorching inhospitality that is Alaznist's personal demiplane—the Eye of Fury. This encounter is not only the climax of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path, but the climax of the entire Runelords trilogy, and so it is meant to be an epic battle to remember. The PCs should not only be 20th level before attempting this fight, but they should also have accumulated



RUNEWELL OF WRATH



several powerful magic items, potent alliances from NPCs they have helped along the way, and even gifts from the gods themselves. Considering all of these resources they may have acquired, you have the best information as to your party's strengths and weaknesses. Feel free to add or subtract foes and dangers from this encounter as you see fit to give your table of players the most memorable battle possible.

The ceiling of this hellish nightmare of a cavern rises more than 100 feet above a lake of churning magma. A massive cascade of molten rock tumbles to one side, creating a calamitous roar that echoes through the cavern. A pinnacle of black basalt rises thirty feet from the magma lake, a well at its center filled with strange liquescent flames swirling in a vortex. A narrow span of rough stone arches over the lava from this pinnacle to an ovoid stone platform of gold atop a wide ledge some forty feet away. Two additional levels of the gold dais rise up in steps to a throne of steel and gold with a back that curves protectively over the seat like the hood of a cobra. Behind the throne and dais stands a fifty-foot-high statue of iron and gears. The statue has a vaguely humanoid head and four arms, each of which ends in a different vicious weapon.

The *runewell of wrath* sits atop the basalt pinnacle, and when the PCs first appear in the Eye of Fury, they stand adjacent to it—see page 70 for details on this powerful artifact. The Eye of Fury itself is a finite demiplane whose borders exist as shown on the map. Within the realm, gravity functions as on the Material Plane, and time also passes normally now that the *runewell* has accumulated enough wrath to relink to the Material Plane (although until the PCs or Alaznist are defeated, it still exists under the same paradoxical effects that restrain Alaznist's Demesne). The air within the Eye of Fury is breathable, but the temperatures within are extreme heat (*Core Rulebook* 444). Note that the *runewell* provides immunity to fire to those chosen by Alaznist, allowing herself and her guardians (but not the PCs or the iathavos, when it arrives) to exist comfortably within the demiplane.

The cave and ledge walls can be scaled with a successful DC 15 Climb check. The lava lake itself is only 20 feet deep (shallow enough for rune giants to wade through if they must, in which case they treat the lava as difficult terrain), and despite the constant churn from the cascade, the lake never rises or falls in volume. Characters exposed to the lava take damage as detailed on page 444 of the *Core Rulebook*.

The top tier of the golden dais grants *freedom of movement* to each of Alaznist's allies who stand upon it, and it function as if under the effects of *spike stones* (CL 20th) to everyone else who sets foot upon it.

Creatures: Runelord Alaznist is seated upon her throne atop the golden dais. She has been expecting the PCs' arrival ever since they mended the temporal wounds she caused, and her attunement to the *runewell* granted her time to prepare. The massive statue behind Alaznist's throne is a clockwork goliath tasked with guarding her, while two of her *sinspawn slayers* stand to either side of her throne, eager to defend their mistress to the death. A pair of *rune giants* stands guard as well, positioned to either side of the *runewell* itself; these giants use *air walk* to stand 10 feet above the lava and are prepared to attack the PCs the moment they come through the portal into this realm.

One unexpected complication to the coming confrontation here is the intervention of the *qliploth* lord Yamasoth, who knows that the PCs' attack on Alaznist represents its best chance to betray the runelord. At a certain point during the battle, the *qliploth* lord uses its resources to tear a hole between the Abyssal realm of Akigiyat and the Eye of Fury, allowing one of the most powerful *qliploth*—the legendary *iathavos*—to burst out of the lava lake to join the battle. This immense *qliploth* may aid the PC in their fight, but once Alaznist is defeated, the *iathavos* turns its wrath on the PCs as well. Yamasoth wants no one to survive this climactic showdown, so he can claim Hollow Mountain without opposition as his bastion in the mortal world.

A round-by-round breakdown of Alaznist's likely tactics are presented below. The clockwork goliath, *rune giants*, and *sinspawn slayers* all move to engage the PCs in *melee*, fighting to the death in their attempt to keep foes from engaging Alaznist in combat. If they cannot reach the PCs in *melee*, these foes instead remain at Alaznist's side and ready actions to attack anyone who comes in reach.

ALAZNIST CR 24

XP 1,128,800

hp 504 (see page 72)

CLOCKWORK GOLIATH CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 214 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 54)



ALAZNIST

IATHAVOS CR 20

XP 307,200

hp 372 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 222)

RUNE GIANTS (2) CR 17

XP 102,400 each

hp 270 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 130)

SINSPAWN SLAYERS (2) CR 20

XP 307,200 each

hp 363 each (see page 61)

Using Mythic Power: If Alaznist has more than 300 hit points, at least three uses of *mythic power* remaining, and her actions that round involve her casting a spell she knows the *mythic* version of, she expends one use of *mythic power* to cast the *mythic* version of the spell.

In any round where Alaznist has at least six uses of *mythic power* remaining, hasn't cast a *mythic* spell, and has more than 300 hit points, she expends one use of *mythic power* to take either an additional *standard* action when a PC is in reach to attack him with her *halberd* or another *move* action to get close enough to cast her spells for that round in the most advantageous way possible.

In any round where she has fewer than 300 hit points, she saves her *swift* actions each round to activate her *cloak of quick reflexes* and reroll a failed *Reflex* save or to use her *surge* ability to augment the result of a failed *Fortitude* or *Will* saving throw, whichever need arises first. (Remember that *quickened* spells use *swift* actions, so she won't cast *quickened* spells when at fewer than 300 hit points.)

Round 1: Alaznist casts *time stop*, using a *swift* action and expending one use of *mythic power* to use *arcane surge* and cast the spell without expending it. During the 1d4+1 rounds gained, she casts the following spells in order: *true seeing* and *quickened displacement* on herself; *project image* and *quickened greater invisibility* on herself; *crushing hand* near a spellcasting PC and *quickened mirror image* on herself; *fire shield* on herself with a *quickened wall of force* to split up the party (and, if she casts the *mythic* version, aligning its *repulsion* face to try to push PCs into the lava); and *clenched fist* near a PC who uses ranged attacks.

Round 2: Alaznist casts maximized *chain lightning* and maximized *quickened magic missile* at the PCs.

Round 3: Alaznist casts *meteor swarm* and another maximized *quickened magic missile* at the PCs.

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PARADOX POINTS

Unless the PCs were particularly swift in repairing temporal wounds or particularly diligent about clearing out the defenses within her demesne in Hollow Mountain, Alaznist's remaining influence over time (a side effect of her having the *Scepter of Ages*) grants her a number of Paradox Points that she can use to manipulate events in this climactic battle. She can spend 1 Paradox Point to achieve any of the following results (she can do so even when it's not her turn, and doing so does not count as a swift action). She can do so as many times as she wishes in a round, but each successive time she uses Paradox Points in a single round, she must spend 1 additional point. (For example, if she uses Paradox Points three times in a round, she'll need to expend a total of 6 Paradox Points overall that round; 1 for the first use, 2 for the second, and 3 for the third.)

Reverse Personal Misfortune: Alaznist can immediately reroll one failed attack roll or saving throw.

Survive Deadly Attack: Alaznist can negate one attack or effect that would have killed her.

Prevent Allied Doom: Alaznist can immediately end any one of the following adverse conditions affecting an ally in the Eye of Fury: all ability damage and drain, all negative levels, blinded, confused, dazed, dazzled, deafened, diseased, exhausted, fatigued, feebleminded, insanity, nauseated, poisoned, sickened, staggered, or stunned.

Round 4: Alaznist casts *power word kill* on the most wounded-looking PC and a quickened *lightning bolt* at the party.

Round 5 and beyond: If Alaznist is winning the fight by this point, she continues hammering the party with damaging spells. If she's losing, she grows desperate and starts using all-or-nothing spells like *dominate person*, *phantasmal killer*, and *finger of death* to try to take out the most dangerous PCs before returning to area-effect evocations.

Alaznist is at 150 hp or fewer: If Alaznist is reduced to 150 or fewer hit points, she casts *time stop* again (augmenting it with *arcane surge* if she has any uses of mythic power left) and uses any rounds she's regained to use her divine scrolls and Use Magic Device, *wish*, or *limited wish* to recover as best she can.

Alaznist's Ranseur: As the combat progresses, *Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur* casts its own spells each round on the runelord's turn. It predominantly casts *lightning bolt* at the PCs, but it casts *protection from energy* of an appropriate type if a PC uses anything other than fire attacks against Alaznist since the runelord's last turn. If Alaznist has 300 or fewer hit points, the ranseur instead casts *cure serious wounds* on her.

The Iathavos Arrives: The round after Alaznist is reduced to 250 or fewer hit points or on round 4 (whichever comes first), Yamasoth sends the iathavos qliphoth into the Eye of Fury. The immense qliphoth bursts out of the magma lake on its initiative count (appearing within reach of Alaznist or at least one PC if possible), taking 20d6 points of fire damage in the process but also splattering every creature within its reach with magma (10d6 points of fire damage, Reflex DC 20 negates). The iathavos continues to take damage from the lava at the rate of 10d6 points of fire damage per round for the next 1d3 rounds, which may be a saving grace for the PCs in the long run. As the iathavos takes to the air during its first round of combat, it activates its horrific appearance as a standard action. On the next round, it casts quickened *heal* on itself to combat the unexpected lava damage (remember it must succeed at a concentration check against that round's 10d6 points of continuous fire damage to do so) and attempts to cast *imprisonment* on Alaznist, per Yamasoth's command. If successful, the runelord is imprisoned in her *runewell* (see *Concluding the Adventure* for the ramifications of such an outcome), the iathavos turns its attention on the PCs, and it fights until destroyed. On round 3, the iathavos unleashes entropic beams on all creatures in range, starting with Alaznist and her allies and using leftover beams against PCs. If the iathavos still lives after this, it makes physical attacks every odd-numbered round and uses a damaging spell-like ability every even-numbered round. If Alaznist still has a *wish* prepared when the Iathavos appears, she casts it to try to banish the iathavos back to the Abyss. She must penetrate the qliphoth's spell resistance and it must fail its saving throw against the spell for this to work, but if the *wish* is successful, the iathavos is banished to the Abyss for a year and a day, and Yamasoth decides to let the PCs handle Alaznist from here on out. If the *wish* fails, the runelord focuses her attacks on the iathavos until it is destroyed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The battle against Alaznist should be intense, perilous, and devastating; this is the final conflict of the campaign, after all, and it should be memorable. If Runelord Alaznist is imprisoned in her *runewell* by the iathavos (or, alternatively, by a PC who casts *imprisonment* on her), she is essentially defeated but could, at your discretion, return in the future unless the PCs take action to release her via a *freedom* spell to finish the fight.

Should the PCs manage to truly defeat the runelord, regardless of the method, two events happen simultaneously. First, the fragments of wrathful souls she's absorbed over the ages explode outward from her in a blinding flash of light—all creatures in the Eye of Fury must succeed at a DC 25 Fortitude save or suffer permanent blindness. Second, any surviving allies of the runelord are either slain or destroyed by her fury (if the iathavos is present, it is automatically banished to the Abyss by this event). Any PC who avoided blindness sees that Alaznist's soul has rebelled against her own death and transformed her into a ghost, but before she can take any actions in her new undead form, reality around her ripples and distorts as a myriad of claws, mouths, tentacles, and other demonic limbs reach out to rip her soul apart and retreat with their still-shrieking incorporeal prizes back to the Abyss. Alaznist's numerous dark bargains and pacts with demonic and qlipthoth lords has damned her soul to the depths of the Outer Rifts—there is no afterlife but torment for the most wrathful of runelords, and she will not return.

With Alaznist defeated, the lava within the Eye of Fury swiftly hardens to cool stone. There is little left here of interest to the PCs (with the exception of treasure to be looted from their enemies, of course), and they can return to the Material Plane at any moment, either via the *runewell* or their own planar travel methods.

What the PCs find on the Material Plane when they return is left to you. Certainly they have accomplished a great deed, and while the devastating alternate realities caused by Alaznist's damage to history never took place and are not remembered by anyone save the PCs, memories of their actions against the runelords, the roles they played in this campaign, and the lives they saved are certainly cause for great celebration. Consider having each PC enjoy a heartwarming reunion with friends, find final closure to lingering plot threads, or move on to greater and even more mythical pursuits. The PCs have accomplished an incredible mission in defeating Alaznist, and they have more than earned the right to celebrate!

Alternatively, you can end the campaign on a more sinister note—when the PCs return to the Material Plane, they may well find that they emerge not in the present, but in the ancient past. In this case, the changes they've made to time exile them to ancient Thassilon. You can use the notes in the Beyond the Campaign article (see page 78) to continue a new campaign in this ancient empire, or perhaps allow the PCs to pursue mythic options as they work to find a way to claw their way back to the modern era—or perhaps strive to change the history of your game from within by taking on Thassilon's rulers themselves!

APPENDIX: ARTIFACTS AND MAGIC

Numerous magic artifacts and powerful items play roles in this final adventure. Those that are brand-new to the Pathfinder RPG are presented in this appendix, but several are only summarized here or have roles limited to story elements. These incidental artifacts are presented first in a highly abbreviated format, along with a reference for GMs who wish to read more about their actual powers.

Abyssal Runestone (minor artifact; CL 20th; *Pathfinder Adventure Path #134: It Came from Hollow Mountain 47*): This handheld *runestone* allows its carrier to swap out a prepared spell of equal level to cast *planar binding*, but its primary use in this adventure is to allow passage through the *anima focus* without taking fire damage.

Anima Focus (major artifact; CL 20th; *Pathfinder Adventure Path Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition 420*): This major artifact maintains the link between the *runewell of wrath* in the Eye of Fury and the Material Plane, appearing in area E10 as a pool of silvery liquid. It serves as a gate, allowing creatures to travel to and from the Eye of Fury, but anyone other than Alaznist who attempts to use this portal takes 20d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 20 half). Once the *runewell of wrath* is destroyed, the *anima focus* can be destroyed by damage (hardness 20; hp 800; break DC 50).

Glass of Stethelos (major artifact; CL 30th): This large hourglass allows the Steward of Stethelos to project herself back in time to interact with the PCs; the glass may have other powers as well that are beyond the scope of this campaign. Feel free to expand its powers as you see fit in the unlikely event that the PCs gain control over the glass—alternatively, the artifact may simply vanish into an alternate timeline should its owner be vanquished.

Emerald Ellipsoid Ioun Stone (minor artifact; CL 12th; *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition 421–422*): This *ioun stone* embeds itself harmlessly in the flesh when activated and grants 5 bonus hit points (Alaznist wears her 20 stones in a row along her spine). The bonus hit points from multiple *emerald ellipsoid ioun stones* stack; there is no maximum benefit.

Runewell Amulet (minor artifact; CL 20th; *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition 425*): This amulet grants its wearer a +5 enhancement bonus to natural armor and attunes the wearer to her associated *runewell*. As long as this *runewell* functions, the wearer does not age and has no need for food or water, can fly at a speed of 60 feet with perfect maneuverability, and gains fast healing 10.

Scepter of Ages (major artifact; CL 25th; *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends 42*): This Adventure Path uses the *Scepter of Ages* more as a plot element than an

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actual device to directly influence encounters. It does not directly come into play in battle in Return of the Runelords, but its combat statistics are presented in *Artifacts and Legends* if you wish to use it in your own game.

Sihedron Ring (35,000 gp magic ring; CL 9th; Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition 426): A *Sihedron ring* grants a +3 deflection bonus to AC and a +3 resistance bonus on all saving throws, and it protects the wearer with a constant *endure elements* effect. The wearer can change the appearance of his clothing or armor at will (the clothing or armor retains its normal properties, including weight).

Sihedron Tome (minor artifact; CL 16th; Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition 426): A *Sihedron Tome* holds an infinite number of pages for spellcasters to inscribe spells upon. A wizard who prepares spells from a *Sihedron Tome* can prepare bonus spells as if her Intelligence were 6 points higher.

ALAZNIST'S HATEFUL RANSEUR		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT 12 lbs.
AURA strong evocation [evil]		
Alignment CE	Senses darkvision 120 ft., hearing	
Intelligence 17	Wisdom 10	Charisma 17 Ego 24
Languages read languages, speech, telepathy (Abyssal, Azlanti, Thassilonian)		

Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur is a +3 keen spell-storing wounding adamantine ranseur that bears a charred human skull—a representation of Runelord Alderpash's—impaled upon its blade, though this does not impede its use as a weapon. The ranseur grants the wielder a +2 luck bonus on attacks, saves, and ability and skill checks. On a critical hit, *Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur* deals 1d4 points of damage to the target's Charisma, Intelligence, or Wisdom—whichever score is the highest. The weapon tirelessly threatens destruction and vengeance upon any wielder who is not a rightful ruler of Bakrakhan, given its purpose of defeating all others than its wielder. The ranseur can cast *cure serious wounds* and *protection from energy* on its wielder each three times per day, and it can cast *lightning bolt* three times per day.

DESTRUCTION

Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur can be destroyed if it is hurled under the crushing feet of the Oliphaunt of Jandelay, but only if there is no current Runelord of Wrath living in the world.

ROBES OF XIN-BAKRAXHAN		PRICE
		198,000 GP
SLOT body	CL 16th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA strong abjuration and conjuration		

The traditional robes of the Runelord of Wrath are known as the *robes of Xin-Bakrakhan*. Woven of the finest of crimson silks and accented with precious gold, the robes

are surprisingly light and easy to move in. The *robes of Xin-Bakrakhan* aid and accentuate their wearer's spellcasting ability. They grant a +5 shield bonus and spell resistance 24, and the wearer casts all spells at +1 caster level. Two of the robe's pockets function as *handy haversacks*. The wearer of these robes is immune to the effects of *calm emotions* and can use all skills and abilities that require patience or concentration when under the effects of a *rage* spell or similar effect.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 99,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>calm emotions</i> , <i>protection from spells</i> , <i>shield</i> , <i>secret chest</i>	

RUNEWELL OF WRATH		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT 900 lbs.
AURA strong necromancy		

Alaznist's runewell of wrath is located within the Eye of Fury, a demiplane hidden within the uppermost reaches of the runelord's realm of Hollow Mountain. The *runewell's* job of absorbing fragments of wrath from souls has already finished and allowed Alaznist to emerge, but it retains a few additional powers of note, beyond providing a portal between the Eye of Fury and Alaznist's Demesne. It grants Alaznist the ability to cast *scrying* at will, although its range is limited to Hollow Mountain and the surrounding environs of Rivenrake Island. It also allows Alaznist to grant immunity to fire to anyone she chooses; this immunity is permanent until she revokes it, but it functions only while a creature is in the Eye of Fury. The *runewell* itself is 10 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep; the fiery liquid it contains functions as magma for the purposes of objects or creatures placed within it. Alaznist can extract up to 50,000 gp worth of material components (usually gemstones for casting spells like *wish* or *forcecage*) per day from this liquid fire; these material components fade if not used in 24 hours.

DESTRUCTION

The *runewell of wrath* is linked to Alaznist, and as long as she lives, the *runewell* cannot be destroyed. If Alaznist is slain, the liquid fire within the *runewell* immediately cools and becomes ordinary water, destroying the *runewell* in the process (although it can still be used as a portal to travel to Alaznist's Demesne, provided the *anima focus* at area E10 still functions).

SCINTILLATING GARMENT		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT body	CL 20th	WEIGHT 1 lb.
AURA strong abjuration and conjuration		

Sorshen's *Scintillating Garment* is the traditional robe of the Runelord of Lust. Woven of the finest of silks and accented with precious stones, the garment is surprisingly light and easy to move in. The *Scintillating Garment* functions as a

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robe of scintillating colors, but it has additional powers as well. The wearer casts spells at +1 caster level and gains a +5 deflection bonus to AC, a +5 resistance bonus on saving throws, and spell resistance 30. Four of the garment's pockets function as *handy haversacks*. The wearer of this garment is immune to mind-affecting effects unless she chooses otherwise, and the garment grants all of her ability scores a +6 enhancement bonus (the bonus to Intelligence also imparts ranks in Escape Artist, Fly, and Use Magic Device).

DESTRUCTION

The *Scintillating Garment* is destroyed if it is immersed in the waters of a destroyed *runewell of lust*.

SORSHEN'S SINOUS GUISARME			MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 20th	WEIGHT 10 lbs.	
AURA strong evocation [evil]			
Alignment NE	Senses darkvision 120 ft., hearing		
Intelligence 18	Wisdom 14	Charisma 20	Ego 37
Languages read languages, read magic, speech, telepathy (Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Thassilonian)			

Sorshen's Sinuous Guisarme is a +5 *keen speed spell-storing mithral guisarme*. Although it has a blade at each end, it is not technically a double weapon—when

its *speed* special ability is used to make an extra attack, that extra attack is made with the alternate blade. As a swift action, the guisarme can transform itself into a *staff of enchantment*. If it uses up all of its charges, it automatically reverts to guisarme form. Created to defeat non-spellcasters, the glaive grants its wielder a +2 luck bonus on attacks, saves, and ability and skill checks. It can cast *charm monster* once per day, *mirror image* upon its wielder three times per day, and *suggestion* three times per day.

With Sorshen's recent shift in alignment, her *Sinuous Guisarme* finds itself increasingly in conflict with the runelord. Whether this will eventually result in the guisarme's alignment adjusting to match its owner or whether the glaive's fell influence might cause Sorshen to backslide to evil, only time (and GM whim) can tell.

DESTRUCTION

Sorshen's Sinuous Glaive can be destroyed if it is hurled under the crushing feet of the Oliphaunt of Jandelay, but only if there is no current Runelord of Lust living in the world (note that when Sorshen fully takes on the mantle of ruler of New Thassilon, she abandons her role as Runelord of Lust for the purpose of fulfilling this latter requirement for destruction).

ALAZNIST, RUNELORD OF WRATH

The runelord of ancient Bakrakan, Alaznist emerged from the *runewell of wrath* and immediately set out upon a murderous plot to reclaim her empire.

RUNELORD ALAZNIST

CR 24

XP 1,228,800

Female human evoker 20/archmage 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 14)

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +12; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 42, touch 25, flat-footed 32 (+7 armor, +5 deflection, +8 Dex, +2 dodge, +5 natural, +5 shield)

hp 504 (20d6+432); fast healing 10

Fort +26, **Ref** +22, **Will** +26

Defensive Abilities *contingency*, evasion, hard to kill;

Immune confusion, disease, *feeblemind*, fire; **SR** 24

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee *Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur* +20/+15 (2d4+10/19–20/x3 plus 1 bleed)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with ranseur)

Special Attacks eldritch breach, intense spells (+10 damage), mythic power (11/day, surge +1d8)

Evoker Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +33)

At will—*elemental wall* (20 rounds/day)

16/day—*force missile* (1d4+10)

Evoker Spells Prepared (CL 21st; concentration +34)

9th—maximized *chain lightning*^M (DC 31), *crushing hand*, *meteor swarm*^M (2, DC 34), *power word kill*, *time stop*, quickened *wall of force*^M, *wish*

8th—*clenched fist*, empowered maximized *fireball*^M (2, DC 28), quickened *greater invisibility*, *horrid wilting* (DC 31), maximized quickened *magic missile*, *polar ray* (2), *power word stun*

7th—*delayed blast fireball* (2, DC 32), quickened *displacement*, *finger of death* (DC 30), *forcecage* (DC 32), quickened *lightning bolt* (2, DC 28), *limited wish*, *project image* (DC 30)

6th—*chain lightning*^M (3, DC 31), *disintegrate* (2, DC 29), *flesh to stone* (DC 29), quickened *mirror image* (2), *true seeing*

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 30), *dominate person* (DC 28), *dream*, *feeblemind* (DC 28), *interposing hand*, *sending*, *telekinesis* (DC 28), *wall of force*^M (2)

4th—*charm monster* (DC 27), *fire shield*, *ice storm* (2), *phantasmal killer* (DC 27), *resilient sphere* (2, DC 29), *wall of fire* (2), *wall of ice* (DC 29)

3rd—*fireball*^M (3, DC 28), *haste*, *lightning bolt* (3, DC 28), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 26), *slow* (DC 26), *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (3, DC 25), *flaming sphere* (DC 27), *gust of wind* (DC 27), *invisibility*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 25), *scorching ray* (2), *spectral hand*

1st—*burning hands* (2, DC 26), *charm person* (DC 24), *disguise self*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 24), *reduce person* (DC 24), *shocking grasp*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 23), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Thassilonian Specialization evocation; **Prohibited Schools** conjuration, abjuration; **M** mythic spell

TACTICS

During Combat See page 67.

Morale Alaznist fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 26, **Con** 36, **Int** 36, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 32

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 40

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor,

Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge^M, Empower Spell, Fleshwarper, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Inscribe Rune, Martial Weapon Proficiency (ranseur), Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Toughness^M

Skills Bluff +21, Craft (alchemy) +36, Craft (armor) +19, Craft (clockwork) +19, Craft (traps) +19, Craft (weapons) +19, Fly +39, Heal +27, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana, engineering, local, nobility, planes, and religion) +36, Linguistics +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +36, Use Magic Device +31

Languages Aboleth, Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Azlanti, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Ignan, Infernal, Necril, Protean, Shoanti, Sylvan, Terran, Thassilonian, Undercommon, Varisian; *tongues*

SQ amazing initiative, arcane bond (*Alaznist's Hateful Ranseur*), arcane surge, enduring armor, exceptional statistics, immortal, inherent bonuses, mythic spellcasting, permanent spells, profane pact, recuperation

Combat Gear *scrolls of greater restoration* (3), *scrolls of heal* (3); **Gear** *Alaznist's Hateful Ransour**, *belt of physical perfection* +6, *cloak of quick reflexes* +5/+6 (*Mythic Adventures* 149), *emerald ellipsoid ioun stones** (20), *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of evasion*, *ring of protection* +5, *runewell amulet**, *Sihedron Tome**, diamond worth 25,000 gp (for *wish*), diamond worth 1,500 gp (for *limited wish*), ruby dust worth 500 gp (for *forcecage*), *true seeing ointment* (worth 250 gp)

* See pages 69–71.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency (Sp) If Alaznist takes damage when she doesn't have a *displacement* spell active, a *displacement* spell immediately activates on her.

Exceptional Statistics (Ex) Alaznist's ability scores were generated using 25 points, rather than the standard 15. Additionally, she has much more gear than an NPC of her level would normally have. These modifications increase her total CR by 2.

Feats (Ex) *Inscribe Rune* allows Alaznist to inscribe potent magical runes and was used in the creation of her *runewell* and other historical events, while *Fleshwarper* allows her to craft grafts and create fleshwarped creatures. Neither feat plays a direct role in this adventure.

Immortal (Ex) Pacts with forces from the Abyss have allowed Alaznist to live well beyond a human's normal lifespan. She gains the +3 bonus to her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores for having lived beyond venerable age, yet she retains the youth of a young woman and does not take the penalties to her physical ability scores. She is immune to disease and to all forms of madness (including confusion effects and *feeblemind*).

Inherent Bonuses (Ex) Alaznist has used *wish* spells to increase her statistics and has a +4 inherent bonus to her Constitution, Dexterity, Strength, and Wisdom scores and a +5 inherent bonus to her Charisma and Intelligence scores.

Permanent Spells (Sp) Alaznist has made the following spells permanent on herself: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

Profane Pact (Su) Alaznist bears a brand in the form of the rune of wrath on her hip—a mark bestowed by the powerful lilitu demon Ariashrael that also grants the runelord a profane pact; this pact grants Alaznist a +4 profane bonus to her Constitution score.

Alaznist has burned with an impotent rage for 10 millennia as she waited for the opportunity to unleash her wrath upon the world. Stopping her plot to alter history in order to conquer the north of Avistan is the primary focus of

this Adventure Path. If Alaznist is not stopped, she will drown Varisia in blood, and violence will soon surge into neighboring realms as she expands her conquest.

Note that the version of Alaznist presented here does not reflect the height of her power before the PCs healed the temporal wounds. If you wish to use that version of Alaznist in play, advance her to a tier 10 archmage and give her the advanced creature template.



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SORSHEN, RUNELORD OF LUST

The ruler of ancient Eurythnia has grown weary of her excesses and seeks to rule New Thassilon not as a tyrant, but in a way that avoids the threat of constant war.

RUNELORD SORSHEN

CR 27

XP 3,276,800

Female human enchanter 20/trickster 10 (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 44)

CN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +17; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +27

Aura despair (30 ft., 20 rounds/day), mythic presence (30 ft., DC 35)

DEFENSE

AC 42, touch 24, flat-footed 33 (+13 armor, +5 deflection, +7 Dex, +2 dodge, +5 natural)

hp 592 (20d6+520); fast healing 10

Fort +19, **Ref** +20, **Will** +28

Defensive Abilities *contingency*, hard to kill, mythic saving throws, unstoppable; **Immune** bleed, confusion, disease, *feeblemind*, mind-affecting effects; **SR** 30

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee *Sorshen's Sinuous Guisarme* +19/+19/+14 (2d4+8/19-20/x3)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with *guisarme*)

Special Attacks force of will, mythic power (23/day, surge +1d12)

Enchanter Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +35) 18/day—dazing touch

Enchanter Spells Prepared (CL 21st; concentration +36)
9th—*dominate monster* (2, DC 38), quickened *dominate person*^M (DC 34), *imprisonment* (DC 34), contagious *insanity* (DC 36), *overwhelming presence*^{UM} (DC 38), *power word kill*^M, quickened *teleport*, *wish*
8th—quickened *confusion*^M (DC 33), *demand* (DC 37), *irresistible dance*^M (2, DC 37), *mass charm monster* (DC 37), *maze*, *mind blank*, *power word stun*^M, *trap the soul*

7th—quickened *dispel magic*^M, contagious *dominate person*^M (DC 34), contagious *feeblemind* (DC 34), *forcecage* (DC 32), *limited wish*, *mass hold person* (DC 36), *power word blind*^M, *waves of ecstasy*^{UM} (2, DC 36)

6th—*forceful hand*, quickened *glitterdust* (2, DC 27), *greater dispel magic*, quickened *invisibility*, *mind swap*^{OA}

(DC 35), *mass suggestion* (2, DC 35), *true seeing*, *unconscious agenda*^{ROTR} (DC 35)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 30), *dominate person*^M (2, DC 34), *dream*, *hold monster* (DC 34), *mind fog* (DC 34), *sending*, quickened *shield*, contagious *suggestion*^M (2, DC 32)

4th—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (2, DC 33), *dimension door* (2), *lesser geas* (DC 33), *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *mindwipe*^{OA} (3, DC 33), *phantasmal killer*^M (2, DC 29), *stoneskin*^M, *wall of fire*

3rd—contagious *charm person* (2, DC 30), *fireball* (DC 28), *hold person* (DC 32), *lightning bolt* (DC 28), *matchmaker* (DC 32; *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue* 220), *nondetection*, *reckless infatuation*^{UM} (2, DC 32), *spiked pit*^{APG} (DC 28)

2nd—*create pit*^{APG} (2, DC 27), *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *scorching ray* (4), *unnatural lust*^{UM} (2, DC 31), *web* (DC 27)

1st—*charm person* (2, DC 30), *disguise self*, *grease* (DC 26), *lock gaze*^{UC} (DC 30), *magic missile* (5), *unseen servant*
0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Thassilonian Specialization enchantment; **Prohibited**

Schools necromancy, transmutation; **M** mythic spell

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 24, **Con** 22, **Int** 40, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 40

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 36

Feats Combat Expertise, Contagious Spell, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge^M, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Inscribe Rune, Iron Will^M, Martial Weapon Proficiency (guisarme), Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus^M (enchantment), Spell Penetration^M, Toughness^M

Skills Bluff +41, Craft (clothing, sculpture, tattoo, weapons) +26, Diplomacy +41, Disguise +35, Escape Artist +27, Fly +38, Intimidate +41, Knowledge (arcana, engineering, local, nobility, planes, and religion) +38, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +38, Use Magic Device +35

Languages Aboleth, Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Celestial, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Infernal, Shoanti, Sylvan, Thassilonian, Varisian; *tongues*

SQ amazing initiative, arcane bond (*Sorshen's Sinuous Guisarme*), enchanting smile, enduring armor, Everdawn infusion, exceptional statistics, fleet charge, immortal,

inherent bonuses, legendary hero, menacing whisper, mythic presence (DC 35), mythic spellcasting, path dabbling, perfect mimic, permanent spells, recuperation, subtle magic, supreme trickster, thwart detection, vanishing move

Combat Gear *ring of three wishes*; **Other Gear** *Sorshen's Sinuous Guisarme**, *belt of physical perfection +6*, *emerald ellipsoid ioun stones** (24), *headband of mental superiority +6*, *ring of wizardry IV*, *runewell amulet**, *Sihedron Tome**, diamonds (2, worth 25,000 gp each, for casting *wish*), diamonds (5, worth 1,500 gp each, for casting *limited wish*), black sapphires (3, worth 20,000 gp each, for casting *trap the soul*), ruby dust (worth 1,000 gp, for casting *forcecage*), *true seeing* ointment (3 doses, worth 250 gp each); note that Sorshen has a staggering amount of equipment available to her—this gear represents only the minimum of what she keeps on her person.

*See pages 69–71.

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency (Sp) If Sorshen is ever reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, a *teleport* spell whisks her away to safety.

Everdown Infusion (Ex) Sorshen calculates her hp using her Charisma rather than her Constitution modifier, and she is immune to bleed effects.

Exceptional Stats (Ex) Sorshen's ability scores were generated using 25 points, and she has more gear than an NPC of her level would normally have. These modifications increase her total CR by 2.

Feats (Ex) *Inscribe Rune* allows Sorshen to inscribe potent magical runes and was used in the creation of her *runewell* and other historical events.

Immortal (Ex) Long exposure to the *Everdown Pool* has allowed Sorshen to live well beyond a human's normal lifespan. Unless slain by violent means, she is immortal. She gains the +3 bonus to her Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores for having lived beyond venerable age, yet she retains the youth of a young woman and does not gain the penalties to her physical ability scores. She is immune to disease and to all forms of madness (including confusion effects and *feeblemind*). Sorshen also has the immortal base mythic ability from her mythic tier.

Inherent Bonuses (Ex) Sorshen has used *wish* spells to gain a +5 inherent bonus to all of her ability scores.

Permanent Spells (Sp) Sorshen has made the following spells permanent on herself: *arcane sight*, *darkvision*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

Runelord Sorshen spent her life wallowing in excess, dominating the weak, and reveling in cruelties. But during her even longer exile within the Eye of Desire, she's realized that if she hopes to survive to rule New Thassilon, she must adjust her ways.

As Sorshen is not intended to be a foe in this adventure, no tactics have been given for her.

Beyond the campaign, Sorshen is assumed to take control of the burgeoning nation of New Thassilon, a place she establishes as a welcoming haven for exiles of all walks of life. In time, Sorshen fully abandons her own legacy, retrain as a universalist wizard, and as her faith in the Redeemer Queen Noctacula grows, becomes a stronger ally to exiled artists and wizards across Golarion—actions that lead to her gathering both new allies and new enemies.



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ZINLUN

The origins of Runelord Karzoug's rise to power and cruel excess can be found in the trader of flesh, Zinlun, long a thorn in Karzoug's subconscious and now a powerful awakened demilich awaiting the inevitable reunion with his former slave.

ZINLUN

CR 20

XP 307,200

Human awakened demilich transmuter 18 (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 188, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 66)

CE Tiny undead (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +38

DEFENSE

AC 35, touch 31, flat-footed 26 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +10 profane, +2 size)

hp 296 (18d6+231)

Fort +26, **Ref** +26, **Will** +30

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +5, rejuvenation, unholy grace; **DR** 20/—; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, magic, polymorph, undead traits

Weakness *vorpal* susceptibility

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Special Attacks devour soul (DC 29)

Demilich Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +30)

Constant—*true seeing*

At will—*greater bestow curse* (DC 26), *telekinesis* (DC 25), *wail of the banshee* (20-ft.-radius spread centered on the demilich; DC 29)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th;

concentration +28)

13/day—*telekinetic fist* (1d4+9 bludgeoning)

Transmuter Spells Prepared (CL 18th; concentration +28)

9th—*mage's disjunction* (DC 29), *time stop* (2), *wail of the banshee* (2, DC 29)

8th—*quicken still fireball* (4, DC 23), *still reverse gravity* (2)

7th—*still disintegrate* (2, DC 26), *resonating word*^{DM} (3, DC 27), *teleport object* (DC 27)

6th—*still baleful polymorph* (2, DC 25), *quicken still magic missile* (4), *still telekinesis* (2, DC 25)

5th—*still calcific touch*^{APG} (2, DC 24), *contact other plane*, *still enervation* (4), *still mass reduce person* (DC 24)

4th—*still dispel magic* (2), *extended still false life*, *still fireball* (2, DC 23), *still slow* (2, DC 23), *still vampiric touch*

3rd—*still eagle's splendor* (2), *still glitterdust* (4, DC 22), *still twisted space*^{UC} (2, DC 22)

2nd—*still magic missile* (7), *still reduce person* (2, DC 21)

1st—*flare burst*^{APG} (3, DC 21), *heightened awareness*^{ACG}, *still mage hand* (2), *true strike* (3)

0 (at will)—*flare* (DC 20)

Thassilonian Specialization transmutation; **Prohibited Schools** enchantment, illusion

TACTICS

Before Combat Zinlun casts extended *still false life*.

During Combat On the first round of combat he casts *time stop*, and takes advantage of this moment to cast *reverse gravity*, *glitterdust*, *eagle's splendor* and to move into a more advantageous combat position. After his *time stop* ends, he attacks the party with an area-effect offensive spell on odd-numbered rounds and a devour soul attempt on even-numbered rounds. If reduced to fewer than 100 hit points, he casts *time stop* again and then casts spells and repositions as appropriate to regain an advantage.

Morale Zinlun fights until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 6, **Dex** 26, **Con** —, **Int** 31, **Wis** 29, **Cha** 30

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 26

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell, Toughness

Skills Bluff +28, Fly +33, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Knowledge (local) +31, Knowledge (nobility) +31, Knowledge (planes) +31, Perception +38, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +37, Use Magic Device +28

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ arcane bond (*emerald wedge ioun stone*), enhanced ability scores, physical enhancement (+4 Dex)

Gear *emerald wedge ioun stone* (see page 77), spellbooks

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Enhanced Ability Scores Zinlun was old when he became a lich, and he retains the benefits of that age to his Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. In addition, he has used *wish* spells to gain a +5 inherent bonus to all three of these ability scores and to Dexterity.

While Zinlun was never the formal ruler of the ancient Thassilonian city of Malistoke, the powerful transmuter was unequaled among the purveyors of the city's flesh pits and virtually ruled the city from behind the scenes. By the time of Karzoug's birth into slavery under Zinlun, the wizard had already become a lich.

Zinlun's cruel attentions to the young slave defied description, but eventually Karzoug managed to manipulate Zinlun into selling him to a known cannibal-wizard in a fit of pique. Karzoug soon turned the tables on his new master, murdering him and using the cannibal's adamantine teeth to buy an apprenticeship with the conjurer Thurbel, a path that ultimately led him to rulership over all of Shalast as the Runelord of Greed.

During the years of Karzoug's rising power, Zinlun grew increasingly wary and nervous, knowing that Karzoug harbored hate in his heart. He was not overly surprised when Karzoug unleashed his fury upon Malistoke and sought to erase every evidence of it from the world. Zinlun fled, one step ahead of the runelord's wrath, to a secret sanctuary hidden in the Great Beyond and resolved to wait out Karzoug's reign in hiding.

As it happened, Earthfall ended more than just Karzoug's reign. When Zinlun returned to Golarion, he found Thassilon devastated. Undeterred, the lich rebuilt a tomb-lair in the stone deep under the site of lost Malistoke. For centuries, he antagonized those who managed to survive in the surrounding lands, but he increasingly spent his time ensconced in his tomb, growing more and more obsessed with Karzoug. Using materials taken from Karzoug's own body long before and magically preserved for centuries, Zinlun created clone after clone of the fallen runelord, hoping to recapture his soul but failing every time—for Karzoug had not yet died. The lich's fixation became an obsession as he sought the means to imbue the Karzoug clones with life so he could torture and murder them in ever more inhuman ways. Even this obsessive paranoia waned as the millennia rolled by, and Zinlun succumbed to the final transformation and became a demilich.

When Karzoug woke in the Eye of Avarice, Zinlun's wandering psyche was once again brought back to his physical remains. Now an awakened demilich, Zinlun remains in his tomb-lair, anticipating the arrival of his long-lost slave with equal parts obsession and fear.

Zinlun plays little part in the campaign beyond that of an irredeemable foe to be defeated and ultimately used as a bargaining chip in negotiations with Karzoug's soul. However, the more the PCs can discover about Karzoug's former master, the greater advantage they have in their dealings with the deceased runelord.

EMERALD WEDGE IOUN STONE		PRICE
		32,000 GP
SLOT	none	CL
		12th
		WEIGHT
		—
AURA strong transmutation		

An *emerald wedge ioun stone* is a bit larger than most ioun stones. This *ioun stone* grants a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom; it grants ranks in Use Magic Device as a side effect of its Intelligence bonus. Zinlun's *emerald wedge ioun stone* is wedged in a crack in his skull, and he can use this magic item as his arcane bond. For all other creatures, it functions as a normal *ioun stone* that floats in the air about the user's head.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
	16,000 GP

Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be 12th level.



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“I have lived longer than most, and in that time, I have done many things I regret. I hope to live just as long to undo some of the wrongs I am responsible for, but I have few illusions about that. My contemporaries, the other runelords of Old Thassilon, rose before me, stubbornly adhered to the old ways, and paid the price. Now, most lie dead. I vow to learn from their mistakes. With the guidance of the Redeemer Queen and the example set by the heroes of this land, I promise this: I shall rule a new nation where individuality is our greatest resource. We will welcome exiles and artists from throughout the land and forge a society that will honor Xin’s legacy. Welcome, my sisters and brothers, to New Thassilon!”

—Queen Sorshen; Ruler of New Thassilon

The events of Return of the Runelords could have catastrophic effects on the Inner Sea region. If the PCs fail to defeat Alaznist, in the years to come she expands her claim over Varisia in all directions. Eventually, this New Thassilon could grow to encompass much of Nidal, the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Belkzen, and Irrisen, and perhaps territories beyond. Should this come to pass, a new band of heroes must rise to oppose the empire.

However, the Inner Sea region will change dramatically even if the PCs defeat Alaznist. In this case, the New Thassilon that emerges encompasses a much smaller region ruled by a runelord who—if not truly benevolent—is at least willing to work peacefully with those who neighbor her dominion.

NEW THASSILON

Going forward, Return of the Runelords assumes that the PCs defeated five of the seven runelords, including Alaznist, and that Runelord Sorshen and Runelord Belimarius survive. From their efforts, the nation of New Thassilon is born. The realm is divided into two subregions—Edasseril and Eurythnia.

Edasseril is the smaller but more aggressive of the two regions. Initially, Belimarius's realm extends no further than Peridot Isle, but as she rebuilds her armies, she swiftly expands her holdings to include the Mierani Forest and declares rule over two of the relatively deserted Ironbound Islands: Antler Rock and Flintyreach. She also claims the relatively uninhabited and unclaimed isles stretching from Chadoth's Tooth and Bloodglisten all the way southwest to Thoska Isle. The few elves who dwell in the Mierani Forest oppose this part of Edasseril's expansion, as do White Estrid and her allies, who are even more ferocious in their resistance, setting the stage for Flintyreach to quickly become a hotly contested battleground. As Belimarius recruits giants, troglodytes, and other denizens of these isles to her armies, she moves her forces further into the mainland in a bid to seize the region known as the Nolands.

The larger of the two regions, Eurythnia, is at first more sparsely populated than Edasseril. Ruled by Runelord Sorshen, who relocates her base of power from her old home below Korvosa to the city of Xin-Shalast, this region encompasses the Kodar Mountains and much of its northern and southern foothills, though it stretches all the way west to the coast, where it shares a contested



border with Edasseril. Sorshen names this realm after her old nation, and while she chooses Xin-Shalast as her capital, she may eventually rename the city (although she keeps the name for now out of nostalgia and to remind herself of the errors that prior rulers made). Under Sorshen's rule, the Nolands are the first area to experience immense growth. Brinewall quickly becomes a thriving port, and under Sorshen's guidance, land travel and trade between Varisia to the south and the Linnorm Kingdoms to the north flourishes.

Sorshen sees Belimarius as an unstable element and knows that it's simply a matter of time before something must be done about the other runelord. Still, Sorshen abstains from dissenting publicly, and rather than attempting to control her rival's destiny, she allows Bellisarius to forge her own fate.

In Eurythnia, the church of Nocticula as the Redeemer Queen doesn't quite wield the power of a state religion, but its open-arms policy encouraging acceptance of artists and exiles dovetails perfectly with Sorshen's new outlook. Most of the Redeemer Queen's clerics are chaotic neutral, though she also allows those of chaotic good alignment to join her clergy. She does not, however, accept clerics who are chaotic evil. A cleric of Nocticula gains access to the domains of Artifice, Chaos, Darkness, Travel, and Void (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 319), and to the subdomains of Exploration^{APG}, Isolation^{ISG}, Moon^{ISG}, Night^{APG}, Revelry^{ISG}, and Whimsy^{ISG}. The holy symbol of the goddess is a moon with a pair of lips at its center and a seven-pointed crown behind it. Nocticula's favored weapon is the dagger.

OLD THASSILON

In Return of the Runelords, the PCs not only secured a wealth of preserved information about ancient Thassilon in the city of Xin-Edasseril but discovered a method (albeit a dangerous one) to travel back in time. At your option, the PCs may even have emerged from their climactic fight against Alaznist to discover themselves trapped in the ancient past.

The map of ancient Thassilon presented in this article depicts the nation's borders and points of interest as they were in the years before Earthfall, circa –5300 AR, during the reign of the final seven runelords. As one travels further back in time, national borders shift and change, and significant monuments have yet to be constructed. The apocalyptic event known as Earthfall fundamentally changed the face of the world, and much of western and southern Thassilon sank beneath the sea as a result.

Many of the locations indicated on the map indicate regions of note that have appeared in prior adventures or

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products, but even more are brand-new locations that, to date, have been mentioned only by name—if that! While some of these locations may some day be explored more fully in upcoming products, others have featured already in prior adventures and supplements. You can also use the locations presented on this map as lost sites for modern-day adventurers to explore. Feel free to expand upon these sites as you see fit in your campaign!

Note that while the PCs don't have the opportunity to explore much when they travel into the past during "Rise of New Thassilon," the locations of the seven temporal wounds the PCs traveled back in time to repair are noted on the map, as well as tags that correspond to each wound, as described in areas **D1** to **D7** (see Part 3 on page 41).

THE RUNELORDS OF TOMORROW

As New Thassilon experiences its share of growing pains and internal conflicts, rumors spread about a new tradition of magic growing within its borders. Even as Sorshen increasingly abandons the old ways, in Edasseril arcane spellcasters are swiftly developing a new method of magic based on the energy contained in ancient glyphs and sigils. These spellcasters call themselves runelords, adopting the unfashionable title once used by those who ruled ancient Thassilon. These new runelords do not seek to rule over nations, but instead utilize magic in a way that melds old traditions with new techniques.

As New Thassilon experiences internal struggle between east and west, however, so too do these emergent runelords find themselves in conflict. A vocal faction among their kind, growing quickly in both numbers and power, seeks to emulate the traditions of old and increasingly adopts the evil ways of the legendary runelords. Some of them pledge their service to Belimarius, while others oppose Sorshen and undermine her effort to abandon traditional Thassilonian values. The majority of these evil runelords, though, deem themselves rightful rulers and establish cabals of apprentices, minions, and slaves to bolster their own glory and power. This group's most powerful emergent leader is a woman named Aethusa (known to some as the Thrice-Born Queen) who claims to be the reincarnated soul of not one but two previous runelords (both themselves named Aethusa). That she's chosen conjuration as her specialization and not necromancy or transmutation (the schools practiced by the prior Aethusas) adds only further mystery to her nature and purpose.

In opposition to these "classic" runelords, though, are those who see value in the ancient wisdom and lore of Thassilon's founders and rulers, but who nevertheless understand that the use of that knowledge for selfish

or cruel reasons is what ultimately led to the defeat of the runelord legacy. As with Sorshen, these runelords are less concerned with personal power and more with the exploration of rune magic itself, and their ability to cooperate among themselves and with adventurers and other organizations may well give them an advantage over their sinful opposition in the long run.



AETHUSA

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BESTIARY

Before I conclude my letter, I must once again thank you for the most marvelous and unusual creature that you gifted to me during your last visit. Since I last wrote, I have received no less than thirteen separate comments remarking on how exquisite she is. The children are in love with their new pet, which provides a soothing night-light to accompany them to bed, and I dare say there is no drawing room in the city that has more pleasant illumination in the evenings! I did wish to inquire, however, if you know what might cause the lynx's lovely orbs to stop glowing? I suspect it results from some black-hearted mischief perpetrated by the neighbors, as it always seems to coincide with fires in the courtyard, or with one of our dear servants having a severe episode...

—Celeste Viardot, Taldan noble

Return of the Runelords concludes within the mysterious depths of the Dimension of Time and the demiplane of Runelord Alaznist within Hollow Mountain. The new creatures presented in this bestiary are challenges for even the most powerful adventurers and include a cursed and bound undead salamander, a Great Old One tormented by the unending cold of the universe, a magically enhanced lynx created by Runelord Sorshen in ancient Thassilon, a dragon infused with planar chaos, and a living avalanche.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

“Rise of New Thassilon” sends the PCs to Stethelos within the Dimension of Time. The Stethelos Encounters table presented here features challenges the PCs might face beyond those in the adventure. Each hour the PCs spend traveling around Stethelos, they have a 30% chance of a random encounter. If a random encounter occurs, roll d% and run the encounter listed for the result. The PCs should have at most three random encounters in a 24-hour period.

Several of the creatures encountered in Stethelos are presented in previous volumes of this Adventure Path—if you don’t have a cited volume handy, simply replace the encounter with something on the list below you do have access to. Additionally, if the result rolled doesn’t make sense in the context of where the PCs might be, roll again or choose a different encounter.

MERCHANTS

Strange travelers from across time sometimes show up in the city of Stethelos and serve as traders or merchants. Examples of a few merchants that the PCs might encounter are listed below.

The Book Wagon (CR 20): A bandaged and tattered merchant called **Voden** (CE denizen of Leng psychic^{OA} 12) hauls a narrow, rickety wagon through the back alleys of Stethelos. Voden’s wagon is jam-packed with magical books and tomes of all kinds; shoppers can buy *manuals of bodily health*, *manuals of gainful exercise*, *manuals of quickness of action*, *tomes of clear thought*, *tomes of leadership and influence*, and *tomes of understanding*. Leng versions of these books are available at a 15% discount, but anyone who reads one is afflicted with *insanity* (CL 20th) in addition to all other effects.

The Dancing Scroll Shop (CR 30): An off-putting crone runs a small stand made of gingerbread and bearing imagery of chickens. Knowledgeable PCs might recognize the woman as **Baba Yaga** (NE female venerable advanced human witch 20/archmage 10; *Pathfinder Adventure Path #72: The Witch Queen’s Revenge* 74). She offers all manner of potions and scrolls to the PCs, including potions of spells that are higher than 3rd level. She sells her wares at exorbitant prices, but offers to give them away to PCs

STETHELOS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1–35	Merchants	—	See below
36–40	2d6 hounds of Tindalos	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 158
41–46	1d6 misery siktemporas	15	<i>Pathfinder AP</i> #135 90
47–53	1d6 time dimensionals	17	<i>Pathfinder AP</i> #136 90
54–61	2d4 time flayers	17	<i>Pathfinder AP</i> #135 46
62–69	1d3 bythos aeons	18	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 10
70–76	1d4 giant temporal crawlers	18	See page 56
77–84	1 Thing from Beyond Time	18	See page 28
85–92	1 irii (50% chance of either Fate or Fortune)	19	<i>Planar Adventures</i> 238
93–100	Ninuron	20	See pages 37–38

who agree to help her around her shop; however, PCs who agree to this bargain find themselves never running out of tasks and slaving away for months.

Live from Stethelos! (CR 13): The PCs encounter a strange undead creature who introduces himself as **Zo!** (NE male elebrian necrovite; *Starfinder Pact Worlds* 94). He offers the PCs a great opportunity for fame and fabulous prizes if they participate in his latest game show, *Draw That Card!* The game involves drawing from the *Deck of Many Things* while being recorded in front of an undead audience. Each group of contestants is tasked with drawing 10 cards and surviving the results. The “winners” get to keep the show’s collector edition version of the deck, as well as a *Book of Infinite Spells*.

Next Month’s Fashions, Today! (CR 22): This clothing store offers countless high-end garments in a variety of styles ranging from ancient Azlanti to off-beat fashions advertised to be from far in the future. The Thassilonian proprietor, **Xalmerni** (N female human expert 6/magus^{UM} 18), also offers a multitude of gems to accent and accessorize these outfits. Spellcasting PCs may purchase these gems to serve as material components for spells such as *raise dead* and *wish*. In addition, Xalmerni sells a variety of *ioun stones* including *Thassilonian ioun stones* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 421) and those found on pages 43–50 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Seeker of Secrets*.

Witchwyrd Traveler (CR 22): A witchwyrd by the name of **Jinvar** (LN male witchwyrd^{Bz} arcanist^{ACG} 16) offers a chance for the PCs to upgrade their “primitive” gear. Jinvar has many magical weapons and armors for sale, but also sells far stranger equipment (such as items from *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Technology Guide*). If asked for information about his wares, Jinvar refuses to answer, citing a policy of limited interference with underdeveloped societies.

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ASHEN FORGEMASTER

This hulking, serpentine creature resembles an oversized salamander devoid of color. Its flesh is pockmarked with coal-like scales and metallic piercings, and it carries a fearsome spear.

ASHEN FORGEMASTER

CR 17



XP 102,400

CE Large undead (extraplanar, fire)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., smoke vision; Perception +28**Aura** fire aura (5 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 14, flat-footed 27 (+5 Dex, +18 natural, -1 size)**hp** 290 (20d8+200); regeneration 15 (cold)**Fort** +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13**Defensive Abilities** ashen cloud, channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/good; **Immune** fire, undead traits; **SR** 28**Weaknesses** vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** +2 *impervious transformative spear* +28/+23/+18 (2d6+17/x3 plus 2d6 fire), tail slap +20 (3d6+5 plus 2d6 fire and grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (20 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** constrict (3d6+15 plus 2d6 fire), heat (2d6 fire), lava trail**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +30)At will—*fire shield*, *mending*, *produce flame*3/day—quickened *detonate*^{APG} (DC 24), *greater dispel magic*, *make whole*1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 26), *flame strike* (DC 25), *wall of iron*

STATISTICS

Str 30, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 23, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 31**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +26 (+30 grapple); **CMD** 41**Feats** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Craft Magic Arms and Armor^R, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*detonate*), Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (spear)**Skills** Bluff +20, Craft (armorsmithing) +34, Craft (blacksmithing) +34, Craft (weaponsmithing) +34, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (engineering, planes) +26, Perception +28, Spellcraft +29; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Craft (armorsmithing, blacksmithing, and weaponsmithing)**Languages** Common, Ignan**SQ** prison forge

ECOLOGY

Environment any land**Organization** solitary, pair, or cluster (3–5)**Treasure** double (+2 *impervious transformative spear*, other nonflammable treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Ashen Cloud (Ex) When an ashen forgemaster is struck in combat, some of its scales crumble off to create a noxious cloud of ash, smoke, and rotting flesh that lingers for 1 round in all adjacent squares. Any creature that starts its turn in this cloud is sickened for 1 round (Fortitude DC 30 negates). The cloud obscures all sight beyond 5 feet, providing total concealment. A creature within 5 feet has concealment. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Fire Aura (Su) An ashen forgemaster is surrounded by an aura of intense heat. All creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of the forgemaster's turn.

Lava Trail (Su) At the start of the forgemaster's turn, any square it occupies melts or catches fire from the intense heat of its body. These squares become difficult terrain for all creatures other than the ashen forgemaster. Each creature that enters or begins its turn within the affected squares takes 10d6 points of fire damage. The squares cool and return to normal after 1 round.

Prison Forge (Su) An ashen forgemaster is bound to a monolithic forge and cannot stray more than 500 feet from it. A forgemaster that moves more than 500 feet from its prison forge is staggered until it returns. A forgemaster that remains more than 500 feet from its forge for 24 hours takes 2d6 points of Charisma damage, and an additional 2d6 points of Charisma damage every day it remains out of range of its forge. When the total Charisma damage equals or exceeds the forgemaster's Charisma score, it is destroyed and rejuvenated in its prison forge once again (see below).

Rejuvenation (Su) One day after an ashen forgemaster is destroyed, its forge begins to rebuild the undead creature's body. This process takes 2d6 days—if the body is destroyed before that time passes, the forge merely starts the process anew. After this time passes, the forgemaster awakens fully healed. It does not have any of the gear left behind on its old body, but it can forge a new weapon or simply select one from the many weapons it has previously made.

Smoke Vision (Ex) An ashen forgemaster can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by *pyrotechnics* or its own ashen cloud ability).

Ashen forgemasters are massive, undead salamanders tasked with eternally toiling at a forge, crafting armor and weapons. They begin their lives as living salamanders but are bound to a forge, continuing their work eternally, long into their undeath. Centuries spent in seclusion erodes their personality, and they eventually grow into paranoid, violent, and sadistic creatures. Forgemasters surround themselves with the weapons and armor they have crafted over the years, the designs and shapes of which grow more bizarre as the forgemaster's delusions grow.

An ashen forgemaster stands between 9 and 12 feet tall and weighs about 5,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Throughout history, those with the power to control salamanders have used them for their metalworking prowess. Such powerful beings sometimes bind a salamander to a forge to keep it in servitude. These salamanders might be imprisoned for decades, tasked with performing whatever their captors require of them. An ashen forgemaster is created when a salamander dies while bound to a forge. These salamanders are reborn as undead, forced by the binding spells to continue their work.

Early in their unlife, ashen forgemasters retain the appearance of flames, as a live salamander might have. As it continues to exist, however, an ashen forgemaster's flesh gradually dulls to gray and then white, until it looks like a statue of its former self. Despite their burnt-up exteriors, ashen forgemasters smolder with all the heat of the Plane of Fire. As their bodies decay and crumble away into dust, they periodically collect the remains, mix them with molten metal, rebuild themselves, and continue their eternal work.

The forge used to bind a salamander is generally covered in ritual runes that strengthen the binding and protect the forge from harm, preventing the salamander from destroying its prison to escape. A single forge cannot host more than one salamander in this way, though some spellcasters will link multiple forges at once to enslave many salamanders simultaneously.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Most forgemasters rarely see other creatures after their transformation, as they interact with only their captors. Spellcasters willing to bind a salamander to eternally work its forge seldom care about the salamander's well-being and see the creature as a mere tool to be used when necessary, ignoring it for years at a time.

A forgemaster's weakened mental state makes interaction with it dangerous. A forgemaster lashes out against those it sees as interfering with its work or attempting to steal its creations. In cases where a forgemaster is not abandoned, or when its task can actually be completed, it might retain its sense of self. These forgemasters are fiercely driven to accomplish whatever is necessary for their release, even making deals with their hated efreet enemies. Multiple salamanders bound to nearby forges often form close bonds with each other.

Forgemasters litter the area in their vicinity with weaponry and sculptures in a feeble attempt to remain grounded in reality. Many chain themselves to their forge to symbolize their slavery and measure out the distance they can safely roam.

PRISON FORGE

An ashen forgemaster's soul is bound to a massive forge similar to the way a dryad is bound to its tree or a lich to its phylactery. As long as the forge burns, the forgemaster is rejuvenated after it is destroyed. The ritual that originally binds the salamander also directly connects the forge to the Plane of Fire, so extraordinary measures are necessary to extinguish it. Powerful water- or cold-based abilities, such as the breath weapon of an ancient or older silver dragon or the drench ability of an elder water elemental, can suppress or sever this connection long enough to douse the forge's flames. The forge then becomes mundane and can be dismantled to prevent the forgemaster from rejuvenating.

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GREAT OLD ONE, MHAR

Eight pairs of crystalline legs support this enormous volcano. The volcano's crater constantly spews smoke and roiling lava.

MHAR

CR 26



XP 2,457,600

CE Colossal aberration (chaotic, evil, Great Old One)

Init +15; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 600 ft.; Perception +45

Aura cloak of ash (30 ft.), unspeakable presence (300 ft., DC 35)

DEFENSE

AC 43, touch 13, flat-footed 42 (+1 Dex, +10 insight, +30 natural, -8 size)

hp 592 (32d8+448); regeneration 20 (electricity, see below)

Fort +24, **Ref** +13, **Will** +28

Defensive Abilities earthen regeneration, insanity (DC 35);

DR 15/epic and good; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, aging, cold, death effects, disease, energy drain, fire, mind-affecting effects, paralysis, petrification, *plane shift*;

Resist acid 30, electricity 30, sonic 10; **SR** 37

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 120 ft.

Melee 4 claws +33 (4d12+16/19–20 plus 2d6 fire)

Space 50 ft.; **Reach** 50 ft.

Special Attacks mythic power (10/day, surge +1d12), taphophobic dreams, volcanic tempest

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 32nd; concentration +41)

At will—*dimension door*^{MA}, *dream*^{MA}, *greater dispel magic*, *insanity* (DC 26), *mindwipe*^{OA} (DC 23), *nightmare*^{MA} (DC 24), *synesthesia*^{OA} (DC 22), *wall of fire*, *wall of stone* 3/day—*demand* (DC 27), *earthquake* (DC 27), quickened *feeblemind* (DC 24)

1/day—*meteor swarm* (DC 28), *microcosm*^{OA} (DC 28), *symbol of insanity* (DC 27)

STATISTICS

Str 42, **Dex** 13, **Con** 38, **Int** 28, **Wis** 31, **Cha** 29

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +48 (+52 bull rush); **CMD** 69 (71 vs. bull rush, can't be tripped)

Feats Awesome Blow, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*feeblemind*), Stunning Critical, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +51, Intimidate +44, Knowledge (arcana, geography, history, local, nature, planes) +41, Perception +45, Sense Motive +42, Stealth +20, Survival +45, Swim +51

Languages Aklo, Ignan, Terran; telepathy (100 ft.)

SQ massive, otherworldly insight

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary (unique)

Treasure double

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cloak of Ash (Ex) A blanketing layer of swirling ash surrounds Mhar's bulk, obscuring the vision of anyone who draws too close. All creatures within the area have concealment. A strong wind (21+ mph) disperses the ash after 1 round. The ash returns immediately once the strong wind ends.

Earthen Regeneration (Ex) Mhar's regeneration functions only while it is burrowing, submerged in lava, or otherwise underground. The regeneration continues for 1 minute after it emerges aboveground. If Mhar's regeneration is stopped, the regeneration automatically resumes when Mhar burrows or enters lava.

Immortality (Ex) If Mhar is slain, it explodes violently, spraying earth and lava in all directions. Creatures within 30 feet of Mhar take 30d6 points of bludgeoning damage and 30d6 points of fire damage. A creature can attempt a DC 40 Reflex save for half damage. Mhar manifests again 1 year later in the same area, restored to life via *true resurrection*.

Massive (Ex) Due to Mhar's tremendous size, it treats uneven ground and other terrain features that form difficult terrain as normal terrain, though areas of forest or significant settlements are still considered difficult terrain to Mhar. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by Mhar, and vice versa. Mhar can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. Mhar gains a bonus for being on higher ground only if its entire space is on higher ground than that of its target. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb Mhar—this generally requires a successful DC 30 Climb check, and unlike the normal rules regarding Mhar and attacks of opportunity, a Small or larger creature that climbs on its body provokes an attack of opportunity from Mhar. Any creature that climbs on Mhar is treated as if it is totally immersed in lava (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 444).

Taphophobic Dreams (Su) When Mhar uses its *nightmare* spell-like ability on a creature within 5 feet of earth or worked stone, it also afflicts that creature with terrifying dreams of an immense presence surging through the ground, ominously circling the target and threatening to pull it under. In addition to the effects of *nightmare*, the target must also succeed at a DC 35 Will save or be unwilling to approach within 5 feet of any amount of earth or stone and, if within such an area, compelled to leave it immediately. The creature is profoundly uncomfortable in such an area, reducing its Dexterity score to 1. This is a mind-affecting curse effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unspeakable Presence (Su) Failing a DC 35 Will save against Mhar's unspeakable presence causes the victim to

experience the crushing entombment of earth and lose the ability to breathe as long as it remains within the area of effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Volcanic Tempest (Ex) Once every 1d6 rounds, Mhar can spew a torrential rain of lava, fire, and caustic ash as a full-round action. All creatures within 60 feet of Mhar take 8d6 points of bludgeoning damage and 8d6 points of fire damage (DC 40 Reflex half). In addition, the ground within 60 feet of Mhar when it uses this ability becomes covered in a thin layer of lava. Any creature that ends its turn within this lava takes 20d6 points of fire damage. The lava cools after 1 minute. Finally, the area within 60 feet of Mhar when it uses this ability fills with deadly ash that functions as *stinking cloud* (Fortitude DC 40 negates). This ash disperses naturally after 1 minute. The save DCs are Constitution-based.

Mhar is a Great Old One that was born eons ago on the edge of the Material Plane. A unique planar rift caused pure essence from the Plane of Earth and Plane of Fire to collide and fuse together, coalescing into a being that lived in a state of constant anguish—a mass of volcanic eruptions that cooled and melted away in a cycle that caused it unending pain. Seeking relief from its torment but unable to escape the Material Plane, Mhar alleviated its suffering by traveling the stars.

Mhar found nascent planets that were still made of roiling magma. For a time, Mhar could rest in the core of these planets, but even such primordial heat could not keep Mhar sedated. Mhar would eventually awaken, destroying the planet and departing to find another haven elsewhere. After destroying countless worlds, Mhar learned a way to escape to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Unfortunately for Mhar, this required greater power than it currently had. Mhar found another young planet—the world called Golarion—burrowed deep into its core, and waited to grow.

While Mhar rested, the goddess Sarenrae tore open a portion of the Material Plane to seal Rovagug within the Dead Vault. Unbeknownst to her, she slew Mhar in that process, granting it the reprieve from pain it had always sought. However, even oblivion could not quell Mhar's suffering, and its agony was enough to stir it from death. When Mhar awakened yet again, trapped within the crust of Golarion, it went mad, unable to escape its own torment. Mhar let out a psychic scream. As this scream rebounded and echoed between the crust and

Mhar itself, intensifying the creature's madness, the mental force of it pushed against the surface of the earth and formed the Kodar Mountains.

Mhar seeks to break free from beneath Golarion's crust and destroy the world, then use the magma as a focus to open a breach to the Plane of Fire and flood the entire Material Plane with lava. Once all of reality is a mass of fire and destruction, Mhar can finally find peace.



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HALLOWED LYNX

Within a halo of brilliant, glowing orbs are the distinctive features of a compact feline with tufted ears, a short tail, and keen, piercing eyes.

HALLOWED LYNX

CR 17

XP 102,400

NE Small magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +0

Aura hallowed lights (60 ft., DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 17, flat-footed 23 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural, +1 size)

hp 241 (23d10+115)

Fort +17, **Ref** +20, **Will** +14

Immune blindness, fire, light effects

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +29 (1d6+1), 2 claws +29 (1d6+1)

Ranged blinding orb +24 touch (10d8 plus blindness)

Special Attacks blinding orb (DC 26), pounce, rake (2 claws +29, 1d6+1), release shining child, sneak attack +6d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 23rd; concentration +28)

 Constant—*arcane sight*

 At will—*daylight*, *major image* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *rainbow pattern* (DC 19)

 3/day—quicken *dispel magic*, *prismatic spray* (DC 22), *scintillating pattern*

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 21, **Con** 19, **Int** 4, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +23; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 39 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Following Step^{APG}, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*dispel magic*), Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Spring Attack, Step Up, Step Up And Strike^{APG}, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +37 (+41 when jumping), Climb +9

Languages Azlanti, Thassilonian (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary or pair

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blinding Orb (Su) A hallowed lynx has a halo of seven orbs of brilliant light. It can hurl an orb as a ranged touch attack with a range of 120 feet. A creature hit by the hallowed lynx's blinding orb takes 10d8 points of fire damage and must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save or be permanently blinded. Once hurled, an orb loses its innate brilliance and cannot be used again until 24 hours have passed, after which time its energy refreshes and it resumes glowing. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hallowed Lights (Su) The glowing orbs surrounding a hallowed lynx radiate light out to a distance of 60 feet.

This light counters and is countered by *darkness* as though it were an 8th-level spell. Allies in this light, including the hallowed lynx, gain an insight bonus on Charisma-based skill checks and Will saving throws equal to the lynx's Charisma modifier. Enemies in the light at the start of the lynx's turn must succeed at a DC 26 Will save or become blinded for 1 round. If the hallowed lynx has expended all seven of its orbs through its blinding orb or release shining child ability, the hallowed lights cease until at least one of the hallowed lynx's orbs has refreshed. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Release Shining Child (Su) As a standard action, a hallowed lynx can release the shining child^{B2} encapsulated within any one of its glowing orbs. This functions as if the shining child had been summoned using a *summon monster IX* spell (CL 23rd). Once an orb has been used in this manner, it loses its innate brilliance and cannot be used again until 24 hours have passed, after which time its energy refreshes and it resumes glowing.

A mid-sized feline adorned with a halo of blinding orbs of light, the hallowed lynx is a creature widely thought to be mere myth or long extinct. Only a handful of hallowed lynxes exist, most held in stasis within long-buried Thassilonian ruins, though rumored sightings of the blindingly bright cats suggest that small populations may have survived to the present day. Created from keen hunters and imbued with potent light-based magic distilled from powerful outsiders, hallowed lynxes are deadly predators whose mere presence bolsters their allies. Aside from the brilliant orbs that surround them, a hallowed lynx resembles its mundane kin, having a short tail, large paws, spotted tawny fur, and distinctive tufts of fur extending from its ears. It is the same size as an ordinary lynx: just over 2 feet tall, around 3 feet long, and weighing about 35 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Hallowed lynxes are not natural creatures, though they are descended from the mundane lynxes still found across Varisia. Their origin can be traced to the height of the Thassilonian empire in the realm of Eurythnia, where the runelord Sorshen created the first hallowed lynxes to serve her as favored pets and guardians similar to the way in which animals served the gods.

Creating the original hallowed lynxes involved powerful conjuration magic, wherein the terrible creatures known as shining children were summoned and bound into the physical form of a living lynx. The outsiders' intellect bolstered that of the host, and the host channeled the outsiders' magic and light for its own benefit. The shining children continue a half-existence after their integration,

orbiting the hallowed lynx and shedding their light as a powerful aura. A hallowed lynx can utilize this energy in one of two ways: either hurling the orbs at a foe, or temporarily releasing shining children from within the orbs.

While several other creatures were also magically “hallowed” in a similar manner during Sorshen’s rule, the hallowed lynx was by far her favorite, eventually spreading beyond her court as demand for the creatures grew among Thassilonian nobility. These noble felines served as pets and guardians for the realm’s elite, their owners benefitting from the same aura that made the creatures so effective against intruders and foes. The small size of hallowed lynxes made them ideal indoor pets but still large enough to present a significant threat to anyone or anything that crossed their path. As status symbols, hallowed lynxes typically led plush, pampered lives in which their stalking and hunting was conducted for their own amusement rather than sustenance. More intelligent than a common lynx, a hallowed lynx can—with sufficient exposure—understand the languages spoken around it, and it can perform far more complex tasks than its mundane kin; though, as with most felines, it can be challenging to convince a hallowed lynx that undertaking a given effort is worth its time.

Scattered historical records, most of which were poorly kept to begin with, make it difficult to determine how many hallowed lynxes were created within the empire, but historians agree the number was exceptionally low, and likely only in the hundreds. Given their scarcity even at their peak, scholars conclude that hallowed lynxes met their end along with the empire that created them. Today, the creatures are known from only a handful of surviving mosaics, engravings, and other artwork, and occasional references in written documents that have connected the image with their name.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Much like other lynxes, the hallowed lynx is a solitary creature. Some form bonds with their keepers, with records suggesting that Sorshen had a particularly powerful hallowed lynx that followed her as dutifully as any of the runelord’s sycophants. But even within the empire that created them, it was rare for hallowed lynxes to encounter one another due to their scarcity, and such encounters have become rarer still since the empire’s fall.

Being savvy and sturdy creatures, however, not all hallowed lynxes perished during Earthfall. A few were caught up in the Thassilonians’ various efforts

to survive the catastrophe, held in stasis or otherwise preserved within the homes and temples they once prowled. A few others escaped, fleeing the collapse of Thassilonian civilization and taking shelter deep in the forests of Varisia. The persistence of the hallowed lynx as a creature in rumors and folktales suggests that the creatures managed to survive and reproduce, yet they remain so rare and hide themselves so well that their existence remains unconfirmed. Whether the creatures simply seek to remain hidden for their own safety or whether they’re guarding long-buried secrets of Thassilon has yet to be determined.

Few predators—natural or otherwise—pose a serious threat to a hallowed lynx. Their small size and unambitious nature places them below the notice of tyrants and chromatic dragons, but they are tremendously powerful creatures in their own right, apex predators in those few habitats where they remain. If cornered, confronted, or challenged, a hallowed lynx first hurls its blinding orbs in an attempt to debilitate its foes, then pounces to attack its target’s weak points. Against multiple foes, it releases the shining children bound to it and flanks foes, or else it employs its spell-like abilities to weaken, distract, and entrance enemies.



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PLANAR DRAGON, TUMULT

This dragon seems to be made of parts from different creatures.

TUMULT DRAGON



CN dragon (chaotic, extraplanar)

BASE STATISTICS

CR 8; **Size** Small; **Hit Dice** 10d12

Speed 60 ft., climb 60 ft., swim 60 ft.

Natural Armor +8; **Breath Weapon** 2d8 energy damage

Str 17, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

ENVIRONMENT

Ecology any (Maelstrom)

Organization solitary

Treasure triple

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Form (Su) As a swift action, a tumult dragon can gain resistance 30 to its choice of acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic until it uses this ability again.

Eccentric Infusion (Su) A tumult dragon's planar infusion also imposes the wild magic trait.

Entropic Breath (Su) A tumult dragon's breath weapon permanently reduces the hardness of objects in its area by an amount equal to twice the dragon's age category.

Flexible Breath (Su) The dragon can affect either a cone or a line with its breath weapon, and can choose to deal acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic damage.

Transforming Breath (Su) Three times per day as a free action, the dragon can transform any one creature or object it damages with its breath weapon, as *polymorph any object*.

Twist Reality (Su) Three times per day as a swift action, the dragon can change the planar traits imposed by its planar infusion for 1d4+1 rounds, as *greater create demiplane*^{UM}.

Vexing Wings (Ex) The dragon can attempt a dirty trick as a free action against a creature it hits with both wing attacks.

Warpproof (Ex) A tumult dragon is immune to confusion, hostile transmutation effects, and petrification.

Age Category	Special Abilities	Caster Level
Wyrmling	Entropic breath, warpproof	—
Very young	Adaptive form	—
Young	Flexible breath	1st
Juvenile	Frightful presence, planar infusion	3rd
Young adult	DR 5/lawful, spell resistance	5th
Adult	Vexing wings	7th
Mature adult	DR 10/lawful	9th
Old	Eccentric infusion	11th
Very old	DR 15/lawful	13th
Ancient	Transforming breath	15th
Wyrm	DR 20/lawful	17th
Great wyrm	Twist reality	19th

YOUNG TUMULT DRAGON

CR 12

XP 19,200

CN Large dragon (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** dragon senses; Perception +20

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+1 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 175 (14d12+84)

Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Immune paralysis, sleep, warpproof

Defensive Abilities adaptive form

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., climb 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +20 (2d6+10), 2 claws +20 (1d8+7), tail slap +18 (1d8+10), 2 wings +19 (1d6+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (40-ft. cone, 6d8 damage, DC 23), entropic breath, flexible breath

Oracle Spells Known (CL 1st; concentration +4)

1st (4/day)—*entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*

0 (at will)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +22 (+24 dirty trick); **CMD** 33 (35 vs. dirty trick, 37 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Hover, Improved Dirty

Trick^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (wing)

Skills Acrobatics +15, Bluff +20, Climb +15, Fly +12, Know. (local, nature, planes) +19, Perception +20, Spellcraft +19, Swim +15

Languages Common, Draconic, Protean

ADULT TUMULT DRAGON

CR 16

XP 76,800

CN Huge dragon (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +4; **Senses** dragon senses; Perception +28

Aura frightful presence (180 ft., DC 25)

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 8, flat-footed 31 (+23 natural, -2 size)

hp 290 (20d12+160)

Fort +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +17

DR 5/lawful; **Immune** paralysis, sleep, warpproof; **SR** 27

Defensive Abilities adaptive form

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., climb 60 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +29 (2d8+15), 2 claws +28 (2d6+10), tail slap +26 (2d6+15), 2 wings +27 (1d8+5)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 12d8 damage, DC 28), crush, entropic breath, flexible breath, vexing wings

Oracle Spells Known (CL 7th; concentration +12)

3rd (5/day)—*dispel magic*, *sands of time*^{UM}

2nd (7/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *grace*^{APG}, *shatter* (DC 17)

1st (8/day)—*bless*, *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of sickening*^{UM} (DC 16), *shield of faith*

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0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 10, **Con** 27, **Int** 18, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +32 (+36 dirty trick); **CMD** 42 (44 vs. dirty trick, 46 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Greater Dirty Trick^{APG}, Hover, Improved Dirty Trick^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (bite, wing)

Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +28, Climb +18, Fly +15, Knowledge (local, nature, planes) +27, Perception +28, Perform (dance) +25, Spellcraft +27, Swim +18, Use Magic Device +28

Languages Common, Draconic, Protean

SQ planar infusion (180 ft.)

ANCIENT TUMULT DRAGON

CR 21

XP 409,600

GN Gargantuan dragon (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** dragon senses; Perception +38

Aura frightful presence (300 ft., DC 31)

DEFENSE

AC 40, touch 5, flat-footed 40 (−1 Dex, +35 natural, −4 size)

hp 462 (28d12+280)

Fort +26, **Ref** +17, **Will** +23

DR 15/lawful; **Immune** paralysis, sleep, warproof; **SR** 32

Defensive Abilities adaptive form

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., climb 60 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy), swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +39 (4d6+21), 2 claws +39 (2d8+14), tail slap +36 (2d8+21), 2 wings +37 (2d6+7)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, 20d8, DC 34), crush, entropic breath, flexible breath, tail sweep, transforming breath, vexing wings

Oracle Spells Known (CL 15th; concentration +22)

7th (5/day)—*destruction* (DC 24), *word of chaos*

6th (7/day)—*animate objects*, *harm* (DC 23), *heal*

5th (7/day)—*dispel law*, *insect plague*, *plane shift* (DC 22), *wall of stone*

4th (7/day)—*chaos hammer* (DC 21), *dismissal* (DC 21), *freedom of movement*, *tongues*

3rd (8/day)—*daylight*, *dispel magic*, *sands of time*^{UM}, *stone shape*

2nd (8/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *enthrall* (DC 19), *grace*^{APG}, *lesser restoration*, *shatter* (DC 19)

1st (8/day)—*bless*, *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*, *ray of sickening*^{UM} (DC 18), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *spark*^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 39, **Dex** 8, **Con** 31, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +28; **CMB** +46 (+50 dirty trick); **CMD** 55 (57 vs. dirty trick, 59 vs. trip)

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Greater Dirty Trick^{APG}, Hover, Improved Dirty Trick^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Sickening Critical, Weapon Focus (bite, claw, wing)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Bluff +38, Climb +22, Fly +20, Knowledge (arcana, local, nature, planes) +37, Percept. +38, Perform (act, dance) +35, Spellcraft +37, Swim +22, Use Magic Device +38

Languages Common, Draconic, Protean

SQ eccentric infusion, planar infusion (300 ft.)

These planar dragons (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 696) seek out dynamic and changing places, imposing their own whimsical will when those sites no longer intrigue them.



STURZSTROMER

Stones jump and roll as if moved by an earthquake that affects nothing else around it. A wave of disturbed earth and rock follows behind them.

STURZSTROMER

CR 19

XP 204,800

CN Tiny outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar, swarm)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 120 ft.;

Perception +33

DEFENSE

AC 34, touch 14, flat-footed 32 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge, +20 natural, +2 size)

hp 324 (24d10+192)

Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +16

DR 10/—; **Immune** electricity, elemental traits, swarm traits;

Resist cold 30, fire 30; **SR** 30

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee swarm (6d6+6 plus distraction)

Ranged rock +29/+24/+19/+14 (6d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks distraction (DC 30), landslide, powerful swarm, rock throwing (120 ft.), rumble, trample (6d6+6, DC 26)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +21)

 Constant—*stone tell*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 13, **Con** 27, **Int** 10, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +24; **CMB** —; **CMD** —

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Greater Blind-Fight^{APG}, Improved Blind-Fight^{APG}, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Quick Draw, Run, Weapon Focus (rock)

Skills Appraise +27, Climb +31, Knowledge (geography) +27, Knowledge (planes) +27, Perception +33, Stealth +36

Languages Terrain; *stone tell*
SQ mountaineer

ECOLOGY

Environment any mountains (Plane of Earth)

Organization solitary

Treasure incidental

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Landslide (Ex) When a sturzstromer runs, it can create an avalanche (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 429) 1d6×100 feet wide along the path which it moves as a free action. The sturzstromer must be in an area of natural rock, soil, or sand and moving downhill, though even gentle slopes are sufficient, and it can use this ability only if it took sonic damage within the past round or if it used its landslide or rumble abilities in the previous round. Each creature caught in the avalanche can attempt a DC 26 Reflex save to halve damage in the bury zone or negate damage in

the slide zone. The sturzstromer is unaffected by its own avalanche. The save DC is Strength based.

Mountaineer (Ex) A sturzstromer takes no penalty to speed or on Acrobatics or Stealth checks when moving across steep slopes, rubble, or scree. In addition, a sturzstromer can hide in rocky terrain, even if that terrain provides no cover or concealment.

Powerful Swarm (Ex) A sturzstromer adds 1-1/2 times its Strength modifier on swarm damage rolls, and it is treated as a Large creature for the purposes of its rock throwing and trample abilities.

Rumble (Ex) As a full-round action, a sturzstromer can create a rumble that shakes the ground and air in a 120-ft. radius centered on the sturzstromer (the sturzstromer still makes a swarm attack at the end of this round). A creature that starts its turn in the affected area must succeed at a DC 26 Reflex save or be unable to move. A creature that fails this save by 5 or more is knocked prone; a flying creature falls instead. Casting a spell in this area requires a successful concentration check (DC = 15 + the level of the spell being cast). All other concentration checks in the area have their DCs increased by 5. The DC of Perception checks is likewise increased by 5. The effects of this ability last until the start of the sturzstromer's next turn. The save DCs are Strength-based.

Sturzstromers, also known as living landslides, are the elemental incarnations of earth in motion, from crushing rockfalls to landscape-altering avalanches. A sturzstromer consists of hundreds of stones, each moving of its own volition. When at rest, the stones lie atop one another; when the sturzstromer moves, the stones roll and churn, drawing smaller pebbles and dirt into their mass. Some observers are able to discern faces in the textures and colors of these rocks.

The individual rocks that compose a sturzstromer are roughly a foot in diameter, though often irregularly shaped, and weigh approximately 80 pounds each. Altogether, a sturzstromer weighs around 12 tons, and when formed into a pile, the peak reaches 5 feet high.

ECOLOGY

A sturzstromer consists of several hundred rocks each able to move independently. It is unclear to scholars whether a sturzstromer is made up of a mob of tiny elementals working in unison, or whether it is a single elemental spirit divided among countless bodies. Some sages speculate that when a powerful being of elemental earth is destroyed, its shattered remains reanimate in the form of a sturzstromer.

A sturzstromer can be composed of any sort of common rock, though all of its constituent stones will be of the same type. The type of rock invariably matches a type common to the area where the creature lives. A sturzstromer that has

lost stones (often due to damage) can replace them with stones from its environment, infusing them with the same elemental spirit that animates the sturzstromer.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Sturzstromers dwell in only the largest caverns of the Elemental Plane of Earth. Here they can spend decades, even centuries, raising mountains of earth and stone, only to bring them crashing to the ground in the blink of an eye. Although sturzstromers do not seek out companions, other earth elementals are sometimes drawn to them, aiding the living landslide in its creative and destructive endeavors. Some monastic oreads and shaitans view the sturzstromer's efforts as a metaphor for sublimation and catharsis. Due to how long it takes for sturzstromers to build their mountains, their constructed landscapes often become inhabited, usually by creatures unaware of the inevitable catastrophe.

A sturzstromer is unlikely to travel to the Material Plane intentionally or even by accident. Those that exist on Golarion were conjured in ages past by powerful ritual magic. Whether to cause mayhem or to accelerate entropy, cultists of Ayrzul, Groetus, and Rovagug have called sturzstromers or attempted to magically dominate those previously conjured. Living landslides do not take well to being controlled, and this has been the downfall of many cults.

Though others may see them as a destructive force of nature, sturzstromers view themselves as artists creating beauty in the rise and (especially) fall of mountains.

VARIANT STURZSTROMERS

Sturzstromers can form from any sort of stone, from sedimentary to igneous. Some sturzstromers contain traces of cold iron or silver ore, allowing them to overcome the corresponding damage reduction. The following variants emerge from those regions where two Elemental Planes overlap.

Glacial: Though similar in many ways to a true sturzstromer, a glacial sturzstromer is composed of chunks of ice and snow. Hailing from the border between the Elemental Planes of Air and Water, they are found only upon snowy peaks on the Material Plane. A glacial sturzstromer has the same statistics as a normal sturzstromer except as follows: It loses the earth subtype and gains the cold and water subtypes. It loses all energy resistance, but it gains immunity to cold and vulnerability to fire. A glacial sturzstromer can use its landslide ability after taking either fire or sonic damage, and its mountaineer ability applies to

snow and ice instead of rocky terrain. It speaks Auran and Aquan instead of Terran, and can use its *stone tell* ability to speak with snow and ice instead of stone.

Pyroclastic: Dwelling near the border between the Elemental Planes of Earth and Fire, pyroclastic sturzstromers can only be called to the Material Plane from active volcanoes. Though other sturzstromers may consist of volcanic rock, pyroclastic sturzstromers retain molten heat. A pyroclastic sturzstromer has the same statistics as a normal sturzstromer except as follows: It gains the fire subtype in addition to the earth subtype. It loses all energy resistance but gains immunity to fire and vulnerability to cold. Its attacks, including avalanches it creates, deal 2d6 fewer points of bludgeoning damage, but deal an additional 2d6 fire damage plus burn (2d6, DC 30). A pyroclastic sturzstromer can use its landslide ability after taking either cold or sonic damage. It speaks Ignan in addition to Terran.

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NEXT MONTH

THE DEAD ROADS

By Ron Lundeen

The Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path lurches to life with a grim beginning! Although the heroes remember their recent lives in the small town of Roslar's Coffin, they all awaken in the Boneyard, where dead souls come to be judged. Yet the heroes are neither dead nor destined to remain within the Boneyard for long. They must walk the Dead Roads used by the psychopomps, the stoic shepherds of the dead, to return to Roslar's Coffin. The journey is fraught with perils and questions about the cataclysm that thrust the heroes into the Boneyard.

TOOLS OF THE BONEYARD

By Matt Morris

Located at the nexus of the Outer Planes, the Boneyard is a busy hub of activity where outsiders of all allegiances mingle with the multitudes of the dead awaiting judgment. Those bold enough to visit the Boneyard can find equipment, information, and training available nowhere else in the planes!

THE HALF-DEAD

By Mikhail Rekun

Many among the living have close ties to the dead. Take a closer look at dhampirs, duskwalkers, mortics, and shabtis, and discover feats and magic items unique to these people.

TO EXCEED THEIR GRASP

By Crystal Frasier

The Whispering Tyrant stirs within his prison, and his schemes mean doom for the living! This article provides a detailed background for the world-shaking events of the Tyrant's Grasp Adventure Path.

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EVERDAWN POOL



When Runelord Sorshen first discovered the *Everdawn Pool*, roiling and churning on the lower slopes of a remote mountain range in the northern reaches of the realm she would one day rule, she kept its discovery secret. Her insights into the pool's underlying structure gave her an epiphany that allowed her to achieve mythic power—the second runelord to do so. Soon after, she used what she'd learned to craft the first *runewell*. Sorshen shared this lore with the other runelords as a show of good faith but kept the existence of the *Everdawn Pool* a secret for many centuries. She built a pyramid called the Shining Lady to house the pool and protect it, and it played a key role in developing her own immortality and helping her to avoid the devastation of Earthfall. The mystery of the

Everdawn Pool was reintroduced to the world after Queen Ileosa discovered the ancient artifact and used it in her bid to control Korvosa, but those who have visited the pyramid in recent years report something strange indeed—the *Everdawn Pool* has mysteriously vanished from the structure.

BLOOD ENGINES OF EURYTHNIA

Deep under the foundations of Castle Korvosa lie the *blood engines of Eurythnia*. Built into the very walls of what was originally intended to be Sorshen's tomb, the *blood engines* were designed to siphon blood from strange and exotic creatures kept in a large menagerie; when combined, these various strains of blood not only maintained Sorshen's immortality but would also awaken her from a long slumber, should the worst come to pass. The literal heart of the *blood engines*, crafted from crystallized blood drawn from the *Everdawn Pool*, was tended by bound demons and constructs and guarded by a cabal of vampires, but what tends the machine now, and what use it might still hold now that Sorshen lives again, is unknown.





SINS OF THE PAST

Varisia has been destroyed! Runelord Alaznist's alteration of the past has thrown the frontier nation into chaos, devastated cities, resurrected demon lords, and worse. The Runelord of Wrath is now primed to seize control of a ruined realm, so that she can remake it into a New Thassilon with herself as its furious queen. Only one desperate plan can set things right—a band of heroes must discover a method to travel back in time and repair the damage their enemy has wrought on history, but can they make the sacrifices necessary for victory? This adventure allows the heroes to reach the absolute height of power, but even the potent options gained at 20th level may not be enough for the party to survive the furious might of Runelord Alaznist in her seat of power!

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path concludes the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path and includes:

- “Rise of New Thassilon,” a Pathfinder RPG adventure for 17th-level characters, by Greg A. Vaughan.
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- A bestiary of monsters, including undead salamander forgemasters, living landslides, the mysterious hallowed lynxes used by runelords as pets and guardians, a planar dragon from the tumultuous Maelstrom, and the immense Great Old One Mhar itself, by John Compton, Andrew D. Geels, Lyz Liddell, Luis Loza, and David Schwartz.



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