

more than provide a strange series of visions to the user that, over prolonged exposure, can cause madness. Every minute a character remains inside the globe, he must make a DC 15 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Intelligence damage. A character can exit the globe at any time by concentrating on Golarion or any part of the world (including creatures that live on the planet)—once a character is reduced to 0 Intelligence, he is shunted out of the globe automatically.

When the globe was discovered by the Lyrune-Quah priestess Tanjah, she interpreted the visions granted by the globe as sendings from Desna. It was she who added the stars and butterflies to the room's walls, transforming the chamber into a shrine of sorts dedicated to Desna. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals the religious connotations of the room. Ever since, handfuls of Lyrune-Quah followers of Desna make the yearly pilgrimage to this chamber to spend a few minutes inside the globe and to retouch the murals as necessary. After decades of this attention, Desna herself noticed the shrine. Pleased with what her followers had done with the globe, she invested a small amount of her divinity into the device—now, any creature who spends any amount of time inside of the globe gains the Spherewalker's Mark. This is a light blue tattoo-like marking of Desna's holy symbol on the back of the left hand. The Spherewalker's Mark lasts for a week, and can only be granted to a specific creature once per year. As long as the mark persists, that creature gains a +4 bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

Treasure: The globe is held in place from the bottom by a triangle of three *immovable rods*. Removing a rod is a simple matter of pressing the button at the rod's base, but since the hollow stone globe is balanced on the three rods, removing even one causes the globe to roll off and fall crashing to the floor 5 feet below. This sends thunderous echoes up through the ruins (add 10 noise points) and cracks the globe's surface—sinister GMs can pick Varisia as the part of the world to suffer this indignity, even though the damage is superficial and meaningless. A creature under the globe when it falls takes 5d6 points of damage from the sphere unless it makes a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid the damage.

A Parting of Ways

Once the PCs complete their business in the acropolis, the other three groups gathered in the area depart, each in their own way. The Red Mantis depart only through death and defeat—if the PCs haven't had a decisive conflict with the assassins by the time they make to leave the ruins, they should encounter the Red Mantis then. The Sklar-Quah, if they haven't left already, do so soon after the emberstorm ends (which should coincidentally be about the point at which the PCs gain the Spherewalker's

Mark); the PCs don't encounter Krojun and the Sklar-Quah again until Part Six.

Finally, if the PCs encountered and allied with the Brotherhood of Bones, Sial proposes a longer-term alliance. At this point, he admits that his organization feels that the PCs are inexorably tied to matters of great interest to the church of Zon-Kuthon, and if the PCs don't mind, Sial would like to accompany them as an observer. In return for this, he offers chambers in his *bone house* to the PCs as a place for them to rest as they need, and also offers his services as a spellcaster. If the PCs ask nicely (and if you feel that they could use the extra aid), he even deigns to provide support in combat, allowing his chain devil minion to fight alongside the PCs and supporting them from the back ranks with magic. Of course, he remains unapologetically evil and disturbing, and PCs are right to feel ill at ease in his presence. If the characters don't want Sial accompanying them, the cleric nods in understanding and retreats to some other point in the Cinderlands, intending to continue his observation of the PCs from afar via *scrying* whether they like it or not. Sial and the Brotherhood of Bones have a more important role to play in the next adventure, but for now, all you need to really do is make sure the PCs know about him to foreshadow the role he is destined to play in "Skeletons of Scarwall."

PART FOUR: CLAN OF THE MOON

Once the PCs have gained at least one Spherewalker's Mark, the next stage of their journey should be to seek out the Lyrune-Quah and to try to secure the aid of a Truthspeaker. As Thousand Bones has told the PCs, the nomadic Lyrune-Quah spend this part of the year camped near an ancient Desnan temple called the House of the Moon—a place known to some simply as the Moon Ruin.

The House of the Moon is unlike most of the ruins that dot the Varisian landscape, for it was not built by the Thassilonians. Worship of Desna dates back further than Thassilon—before the minions of First King Xin arrived in the region, the Varisians already dwelt here. At that ancient time, they were all nomadic, and they also worshiped Desna. As Thassilon rose, though, the runelords saw open worship of the gods as a distraction, and they destroyed most of the Desnan shrines that dotted the land. The House of the Moon was no exception. Yet when Thassilon fell and the Age of Darkness rose, this mysterious building reappeared on the site of one of those destroyed shrines. It gave the people who would become the Lyrune-Quah a place of shelter in that deadly age, and today it has become one of the anchors of their culture.

Currently, very few Lyrune-Quah have gathered at the House of the Moon. It is still early in their season, and the bulk of the tribe has yet to arrive in the area. Unfortunately, as is sometimes the case, they arrived to find that a local predator took up the ruins as its territory—in this case, a dangerous creature known as a red reaver. In these situations, the first tribe to arrive in the region is responsible for driving out the monsters and making the House of the Moon safe for the tribes yet to arrive. Unfortunately, the red reaver is proving to be a bit more trouble than a pack of gargoyles or a few hungry ankhegs, and already several Lyrune-Quah moon maidens have perished at the monster's talons.

The Lyrune-Quah have sent many of their warriors into the House of the Moon to try to slay or at least drive out the red reaver. Unfortunately for them, the reason for the reaver's interest in the House of the Moon is that the monster has bonded with the site and now views the structure as its territory.

When the PCs approach, they are swiftly intercepted by a patrol of six moon maidens, the traditional honor guard and protector caste of the Lyrune-Quah. Each moon maiden bonds with a wolf upon being accepted into the guard, at which point the two are rarely seen apart from each other. The patrol's leader is a woman named **Tekra'Kai** (CG female human barbarian 1/ranger 5), and she has grown increasingly worried and distracted at the red reaver's presence in the House of the Moon. Having already thrown nearly a dozen of her warriors at the problem, she has consigned herself to the inevitable humiliation of admitting to the main body of the Lyrune-Quah, scheduled to arrive in the area at the rise of the next moon, that she was unable to secure the House of the Moon.

Tekra'Kai's initial reaction to the PCs is one of distrust—her upbringing has taught her to view all *tshamek* as the enemy, yet she also knows that many *tshamek* worship Desna. If the PCs have the Spherewalker's Mark and show it to Tekra'Kai, though, her initial distrust transforms into relief—she immediately comes to see the PCs as saviors sent by Desna to help take care of the problem in the House of the Moon, and quickly explains to them what the problem is, presuming the PCs are just as eager as she is to deal with the red reaver. If the PCs don't have the mark, they need to make Tekra'Kai helpful before she listens to their requests. Diplomacy and magic can achieve this result (her initial attitude toward unmarked PCs is unfriendly), but so can taking the initiative and dealing with the red reaver. Killing it or driving it off ensures the moon maidens' cooperation, even if the PCs don't have a Spherewalker's Mark to vouch for them.

If the PCs secure her cooperation and ask for the use of a Truthspeaker, Tekra'Kai admits that her tribe does indeed have one—his name is Akram, and he is scheduled

to arrive with the rest of her tribe at the rise of the next moon. Yet as long as the red reaver remains in the House of the Moon, she warns the PCs that her fellow tribesmen will have little time to talk about anything else. At the same time, she indicates that if the PCs help in getting rid of the unwelcome monster, the tribe will be much more disposed toward helping them in return.

Assuming the PCs help, Tekra'Kai beams in relief and tells them that she and three of her remaining moon maidens are prepared to assault the House of the Moon immediately—if the PCs are ready, she leads them to the structure's entrance at once.

LYRUNE-QUAH MOON MAIDENS (4) CR 6

Female human barbarian 1/ranger 5

CG Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +12, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15

(+5 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, -2 rage)

hp 64 (6 HD; 1d12+5d8+30)

Fort +11, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee +1 *starknife* +10/+5 (1d4+5/×3) and

+1 *starknife* +10 (1d4+3/×3)

Ranged *starknife* +8/+3 (1d4+4/×3)

Special Attacks favored enemy (giants +4, magical beasts +2), rage 1/day

Spell Prepared (CL 2nd)

1st—*longstrider*

TACTICS

Before Combat All of the moon maidens have used a dose of their war paint.

During Combat Moon maidens rage on the first round of combat, but focus on hurling starknives at their enemies for the first few rounds of combat. Once they're down to only their magic starknives, they rush in to engage foes in melee.

Morale A moon maiden fights until brought below 10 hit points, at which point she flees to recover and plan her second assault on the enemy. A moon maiden who is raging does not flee—she fights to the death.

Base Statistics **AC** 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17; **hp** 52; **Fort** +9, **Will** +3; **Melee** +1 *starknife* +8/+3 (1d4+3/×3) and +1 *starknife* +8 (1d4+2/×3); **Str** 14, **Con** 16; **Grp** +8; **Skills** Climb +11, Jump +13

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +10

Feats Endurance, Quick Draw, Stealthy, Track, Totem Spirit (Lyrune-Quah), Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (*starknife*)

Skills Climb +13, Hide +6, Jump +15, Listen +12, Move Silently

The Moon Ruin



+6, Survival +10

Languages Shoanti

SQ animal companion (wolf), fast movement

Gear +1 hide shirt, +1 starknives (2), starknives (6), silver Shoanti war paint (2)

The Red Reaver

The red reaver is not an intrinsically evil creature, but neither is it a particularly peaceful creature. Like its gray render cousins, the reaver bonds to a particular site and then protects that place from intruders with a singular devotion. Until recently, its territory was higher up in the Wyvern Mountains, but after a large flock of particularly tough night wyverns descended on the region (the flock itself having been displaced by giant activity deeper in the mountains), the red reaver was forced to abandon its lair. After roving through the mountains and down into the Cinderlands, it came upon the House of the Moon—as with all reaver locations, something in the terrain and structure itself clicked, and the red reaver adopted the site as its own.

RED REAVER

CR 13

hp 184 (currently 151; see page 88)

TACTICS

During Combat The red reaver spends the majority of its time in area B3, which it finds to be the most comfortable site in the House of the Moon. As soon as it notices intruders, it swiftly moves to confront them.

Morale The red reaver fights until brought below 20 hit points, at which point it loses its bond to the House of the Moon and flees to find another site.

The House of the Moon

A silvery tower stands atop a low promontory in the foothills here. The surrounding stone has been smoothed by ages of wind, but the tower itself remains as stark and crisp as the day its final block was set in place. The structure shimmers with a slightly reflective sheen, as if an almost invisible layer of silver covered it. A thirty-foot-tall opening allows access to the tower interior at ground level, the curving sides framed by the long peacock tailfeathers of an immense butterfly or moth that has been carved into the building's facade. The creature's wings furl to the left and right, fanning over two side towers attached to the central spire, which rises to a height of a hundred feet. Above, a silvery sphere caps the tower's peak, as if the moon itself had fallen out of the sky to become impaled upon the structure's steeple.

The House of the Moon is an ancient structure, built (according to legend) by an army of flyrakiens (see *Pathfinder* #2 page 83) to serve Desna's faithful as a place of shelter

during the Age of Darkness. The stone that comprises the sacred site's walls is certainly unusual, featuring many of the qualities of magically treated superior masonry (hardness 16, 180 hp per inch). In addition, the stone walls repair damage to themselves at the rate of 5 hp per round as long as the moon is visible. The stone itself resists magical manipulation and effects with spell resistance 26. At night, the walls of the House of the Moon glow with soft moonlight.

The entire building is suffused with Desna's grace. Any worshiper of Desna who enters the House of the Moon feels welcome. Worshipers who sleep inside the building at night are always visited with dreams in which a birdlike humanoid with jet black feathers engages the dreamer in conversation. This is a visitation from one of Desna's favored agents, an avoral named Nightspear (see *Pathfinder* #2, page 75). The conversation itself functions as a *commune* spell (five questions) followed by a *divination* spell (on any one topic of concern to the dreamer). This dream vision can occur only once per year, and is one of the primary reasons the worshipers of the Lyrune-Quah come back to the House of the Moon each year.

Ceiling heights inside of the structure average 25 feet. The House of the Moon consists of six locations, as detailed below.

B1. Entrance: The central area of this room contains three 10-foot-square areas on the ground. A character who stands upon one of these darker-colored areas and concentrates on an image of the moon being obscured by clouds activates the square, creating an extradimensional dwelling similar in nature to that created by a *secure shelter* spell (CL 12th), save that each can only contain one person at a time.

B2. Lower Rooftops: These open-air rooftops provide majestic views of the stars. Stairs lead down to the ground floor below, and the entrances into area **B3** are open arches. A ladder ascends along the sides of each of these arches to smaller balconies (area **B5**) above.

B3. Gathering Hall: The walls here have been painted with symbols and imagery sacred to the worship of Desna. A massive starknife is affixed to the ceiling above. Visiting priests rotate the starknife on its central axis to reflect the changes in the four seasons. With its constant need for updating, this primitive proto-calendar enables a visitor to determine how long it had been since the House of the Moon was last visited by a worshipper. This room is also the chosen lair of the red reaver, and a formidable stack of animal carcasses (remnants from the beast's meals) and seven dead moon maidens are heaped in the southwest corner as a result. Much of the moon maidens' gear is intact, but the Lyrune-Quah would like to keep the gear in the clan and frown upon PC requests to loot it.



B4. Upper Walk: Once the Lyrune-Quah settle in the area, this chamber is set aside for their resident Truthspeaker to use as a home. Currently, the chamber is empty.

B5. Upper Rooftops: Smaller versions of the open lower rooftops below.

B6. The Sky Well: A circular dome in the ceiling of this room casts down a shimmering curtain of shadow below. The area encompassed by this shadow acts as a scrying device that can be used to scan the stars of the night sky. At night, the pool reflects the constellations above, but by moving hands in different patterns while an observer is within the shadow, the image can be shifted to bring specific constellations or heavenly bodies into sharper focus. This chamber functions in many ways as an observatory, allowing the faithful of Desna to stargaze even on stormy nights.

After the Battle

Although the Moon Clan is a terse and gritty clan of warriors, their xenophobia pales in comparison to that of their brothers in the Sun Clan, particularly if the PCs have Spherewalker's Marks to indicate they've already gone on a pilgrimage. Once the red reaver is slain or driven off, the Lyrune-Quah become even friendlier, and invite the PCs to stay with the tribe for a few nights, if they wish. If the PCs still have Skoan-Quah guides, these Shoanti prefer to avoid too much interaction with the Lyrune-Quah—certainly, if Shadowcount Sial is still with the PCs he politely refuses the invitation, opting instead to erect the *bone house* out of sight in a nearby vale until the PCs decide to move on.

The rest of the Lyrune-Quah tribe arrives, as scheduled, one night after the PCs arrive. Tekra'Kai introduces the PCs, and once the PCs explain that they seek a Truthspeaker to witness their journey to the Feeding Grounds of the Quah-Kael, the Shoanti become rather impressed. The tribe's only current living Truthspeaker is an aged man named Akram, and assuming the PCs have established a friendly relationship, he readily agrees to travel with the PCs—if only so he can witness the fury of Cinderfist himself. The Lyrune-Quah are not at war with the Sklar-Quah, but neither do the two tribes particularly enjoy each other's company—Akram sees this as an opportunity to speak with a Sun Shaman to attempt to strengthen allegiances between the two tribes.

In any case, once Akram agrees to accompany the PCs on their journey, he can be ready to go at a moment's notice. The old man presents an additional level of complexity to the PCs—Akram remains relatively spry for man of 68 years and his mind and vision remain sharp, but he's also quite frail and feeble. Keeping him alive when faced with wandering monsters or other concerns is an unspeakable

responsibility the PCs shoulder as soon as they leave with their new Truthspeaker ally—it's dishonorable for the Lyrune-Quah to send additional members along on a Truthspeaker's mission simply to support the man, since that implies that the Truthspeaker alone isn't enough to witness the required event.

Akram himself is a quiet man, content for the most part to watch and observe. He finds the PCs endlessly fascinating—you should select one PC in particular (the character who is the most out-of-place and awkward in a wilderness environment works best) for him to become particularly interested in. Akram is never too far from this character, and often asks him to explain the choices he made in a combat or conflict. You can use Akram as a voice to make the PCs examine their tactics and methods and goals, or you can keep him in the background as a resource that needs to be protected from peril—whatever works best for your game.

TRUTHSPEAKER AKRAM

CR 7

Male old human cleric 7 (Desna)

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** discern lies; Listen +5, Spot +5

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 9, flat-footed 10

(+1 armor, -1 Dex)

hp 28 (7 HD; 7d8-7)

Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement 7 rounds/day, luck reroll 1/day

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk starknife +3 (1d4-3/x3)

Special Attacks turn undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+9)

Spells Prepared (CL 7th)

4th—*dimension door*^P, *sending*, *tongues*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*^P, *magic vestment*, *prayer*

2nd—*aid*^P, *calm emotions* (DC 17), *enthrall* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*, *zone of truth* (DC 17)

1st—*command* (DC 16), *endure elements*, *longstrider*^P, *obscuring mist*, *protection from evil*, *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield of faith*

0—*create water* (2), *light* (2), *mending*, *purify food and drink*

D domain spell; **Domains** Luck, Travel

TACTICS

Before Combat Akram casts *magic vestment* on his robes every day after breakfast.

During Combat Akram prefers to save his spells for healing or support. He generally casts *prayer* on the first round of battle, followed by *spiritual weapon* and then *sanctuary*, so he can move about the fringe of combat to heal allies in relative safety.

Morale Akram has little interest in combat, and *dimension doors*

to safety and then casts *fly* to escape peril if confronted while alone, or if reduced to less than 10 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 5, **Dex** 9, **Con** 11, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +2

Feats Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Iron Will, Track

Skills Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (religion) +7, Survival +13

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Shoanti

SQ spontaneous spellcasting (*cure* spells), Truthspeaker

Combat Gear *wand of cure moderate wounds* (32 charges), *wand of lesser restoration* (29 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork starknife, *cloak of resistance* +1, *periapt of wisdom* +2

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Truthspeaker (Su) Akram has undertaken a lifelong quest of fasting, meditation, exploration, and prayer to achieve the status of Truthspeaker. This has granted him immunity to all charm and compulsion effects. Furthermore, he is constantly under the effects of *discern lies* (CL 7th).

PART FIVE: BELLY OF THE BEAST

Cindermaw is one of the deadliest predators of the Cinderlands, an ancient purple worm changed and transformed into a unique creature infused with elemental fire after it devoured a malfunctioning portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire that stood inside a partially collapsed Thassilonian ruin the creature blundered into. The infusion of fire not only granted Cindermaw a host of unique fire-based abilities, but awakened its intellect as well, granting it the ability to understand its place in the world. Cindermaw knows that the Shoanti regard it as a sort of god, and it has taken this notion to an extreme. For an immense worm, Cindermaw is surprisingly vain and egocentric.

Cindermaw is a fiercely territorial hunter. Shoanti myth portrays the worm as a demon-like creature capable of consuming entire tribes. The creature's exceptionally long lifespan (another side effect of consuming the portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire) has only further cemented its position in Shoanti myth. Although it is a challenge tracking a creature that can burrow, Cindermaw generally sticks to one large hunting ground in particular. Thousand Bones can tell the PCs that their best chances of finding one of Cindermaw's current feeding grounds is to explore a region in the extreme west portion of the Ash-Blown Lands; it is said that the cindercones and other volcanic activity common in this area soothe the beast's troubled spirit.

As the PCs approach the worm's killing ground, they should increasingly become aware of the beast's presence. Encounters with other creatures grow less and less frequent, and what at first might seem like hills are in fact mounded burrows left behind by Cindermaw's tunneling. You can heighten the excitement of tracking down Cindermaw by confronting the PCs with some of

the environmental hazards common to the Ash-Blown Lands, such as earth tremors or even cindercones.

Cindermaw Rising (EL 14)

In the end, the PCs don't have to find Cindermaw—if they spend enough time exploring its feeding grounds, the immense worm finds them. Build tension by having the creature surface in the distance, arc, and then dive below, as if it were an immense whale swimming through the ground, showing the PCs its massive segmented body. Have the worm erupt in front of the PCs, then behind them, and then to the side, and so on—Cindermaw enjoys showing off and intimidating prey before it attempts to feed.

In order to fulfill the ancient tradition's requirements and properly display bravery, only one PC needs to be eaten by the worm. How he emerges from within the worm is irrelevant, as long as Akram sees (and believes) a character swallowed, and then later sees that character alive and outside of the worm (and is given a believable story as to how that character escaped). The character's tale will hold water when the PCs approach the Sklar-Quah later. Slaying Cindermaw isn't recommended, and can ironically undermine the PCs' story. After all, if the worm they fought could be killed, it obviously wasn't that tough of a foe.

The simplest method of fulfilling the goal is to allow the worm to swallow a character whole, and then that character simply cuts his way out of the beast's belly. Of course, this is a dangerous stunt, and fire and acid resistance is a good way to prepare for it. Paralyzing the worm (with *hold monster*, for example) is an acceptable way to simplify the situation, as is charming or otherwise magically controlling the worm. If a PC can handle the Concentration check required to spellcast while inside of a monster, he can even *dimension door* or otherwise *teleport* out of the beast's belly once he's been swallowed.

Illusions are another option—since the PCs only really require Akram to truthspeak to the Sun Shaman for them, they could use illusions to trick Akram into believing they have completed the deed. Fooling Akram in this way requires an illusion capable of replicating a Gargantuan creature visually and audibly—since Cindermaw radiates heat, the illusion must also be capable of radiating warmth as well. *Major image* (or a more powerful illusion) can create a believable scene, but Akram still gets a Will save against the spell's DC to determine if he believes it enough to truthspeak the tale later. Of course, in order for such a deception to function, he also needs to believe he is in Cindermaw's hunting grounds in the first place.

If the PCs succeed in recreating the legend but do not slay Cindermaw in the process, they gain one respect point when Akram tells the tale to the Sklar-Quah.