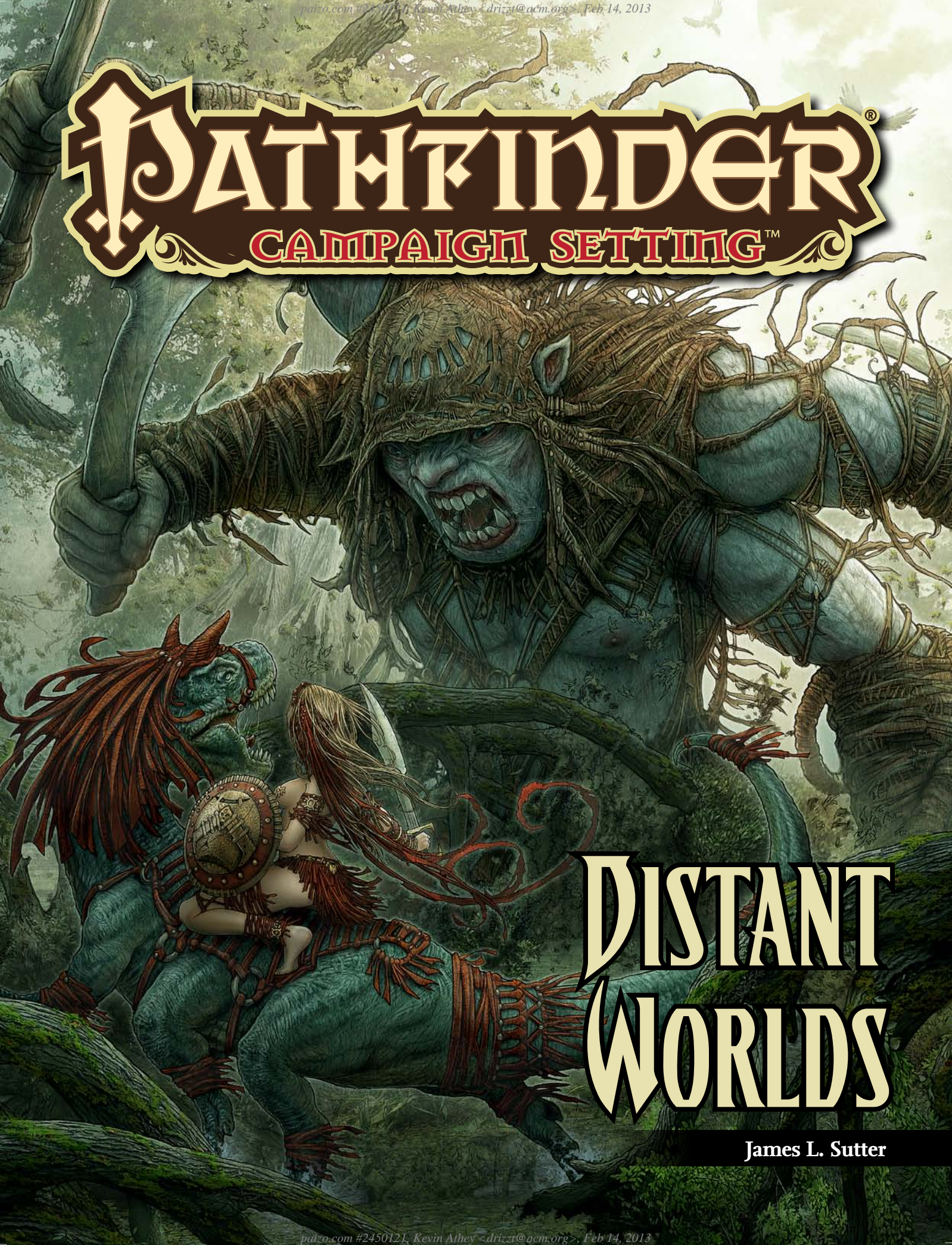


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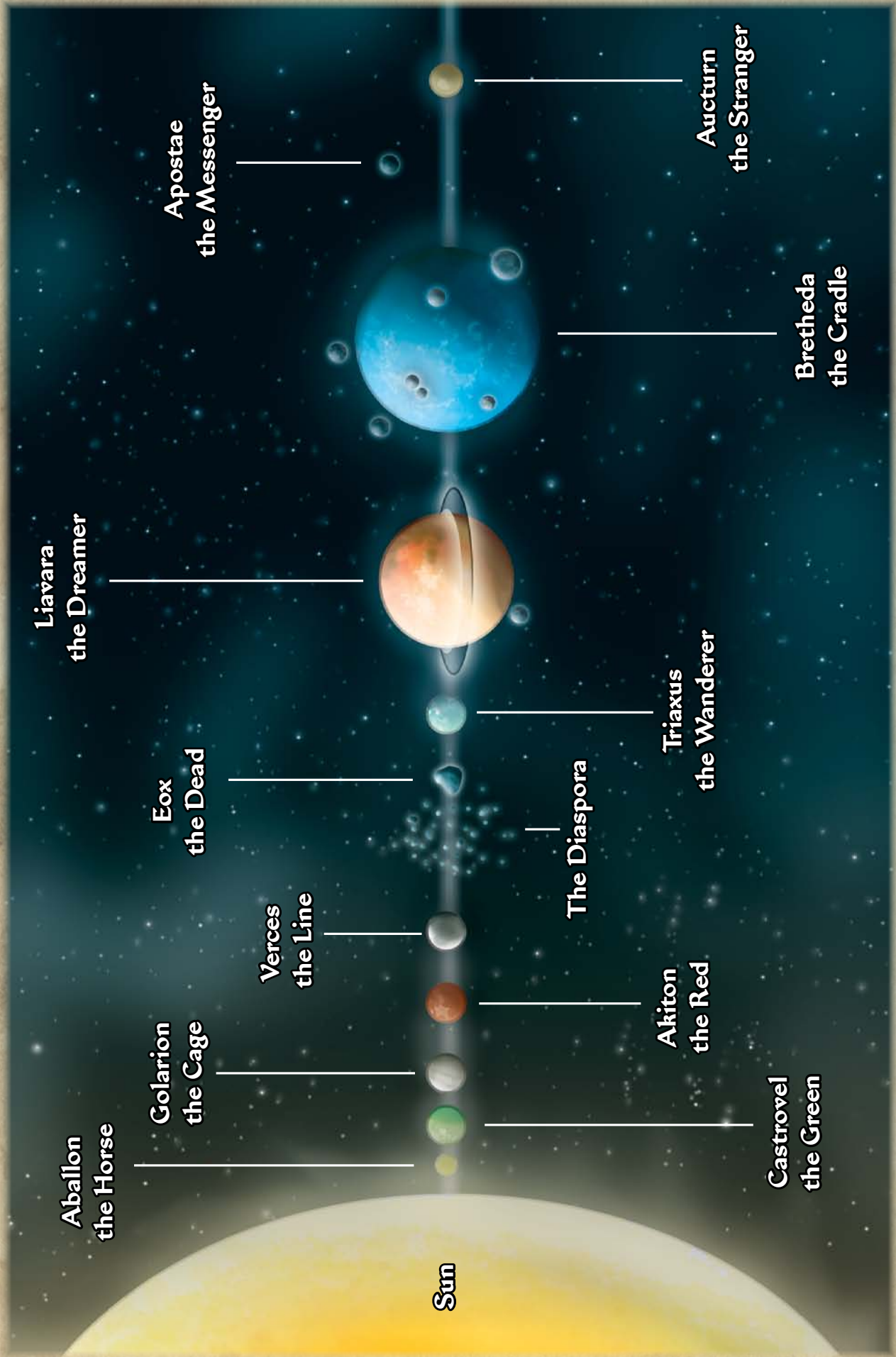
CAMPAIGN SETTING[™]



DISTANT WORLDS

James L. Sutter

THE SOLAR SYSTEM



DISTANT WORLDS

A Pathfinder Campaign Setting Supplement

This book works best with the *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Core Rulebook*. Although suitable for play in any fantasy world, it is optimized for use in the Pathfinder campaign setting.



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INTRODUCTION

We are not alone. The greatest sages and spellcasters of Golarion have long understood this fact, recognizing that there are more worlds than simply the one on which they reside. Every scholar knows that devils, angels, and stranger things lie just beyond the walls of the Material Plane, and even weak spellcasters call on the denizens of other realms to do their bidding. Yet the Material Plane itself retains wonders undreamed of by those who walk the planes, its strange races and vistas separated not by dimensions or planar walls, but by vast gulfs of empty space.

The Pathfinder campaign setting focuses primarily on the world of Golarion, and this book is an introduction to that planet's solar system, an overview of the many worlds revolving around the brilliant yellow star that is Golarion's sun. Note that the aim of this book is not to create a science fiction version of the Pathfinder RPG rules or to present a whole new campaign setting for each of Golarion's sister planets. Rather, this book is designed to help characters from Golarion visit other worlds using the existing rules. Though some of the civilizations presented here may never have heard of Golarion, seeing it only as a slowly moving dot in the night sky, this book is concerned with them primarily in the context of how they might affect adventurers from Golarion.

And make no mistake: these worlds do affect Golarion. Though the average peasant or city merchant might know nothing of astronomy beyond a few constellations, contact between the worlds happens all the time. From the crashed spaceship that forms the Silver Mount in Numeria, to the Osirian pharaohs' obsession with (and perhaps guidance from) Aucturn and the Dark Tapestry, to the elves' mysterious refuge of Sovyrian and the Doorway to the Red Star in the jungles of the Mwangi Expanse, Golarion is stitched to its siblings by dangerous magical pathways, as well as by those bizarre creatures that come through them. The rest of the solar system constantly exerts its ties and influence on Golarion, and to pretend otherwise is to leave the planet dangerously vulnerable.

How to Use This Book

This guide is broken into three chapters. The first is a general gazetteer of the worlds in the solar system, presented in order of their proximity to the sun. The next focuses on general interplanetary adventuring concerns, and the last hosts a collection of new alien monsters.

Each entry in the gazetteer starts with a stat block noting the world's diameter, mass, gravity, and atmosphere as compared to Golarion's—a diameter of $\times 100$ means "100

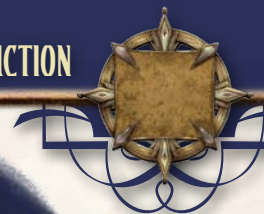
times as large as Golarion's," a diameter of $\times 1/10$ means "a tenth the size of Golarion's," and so on. While the first two comparisons are meant only to give a sense of scale, a planet's gravity and atmosphere can impose important in-game effects on creatures visiting another world, and are discussed in Chapter 2. An orbit entry gives the length of a planetary year (one complete revolution around the sun) as measured in Golarion's days. In addition, each planet has its primary name, its most common appellation in Golarion's mythology (such as "the Horse"), and the rune associated with it in scholarly writings.

From there, each entry presents an overview of the world's environment and most significant cultures, notes for adventurers on particular challenges or pitfalls, an extensive list of locations, and (except for the sun) a map of the world. It should be noted that these maps are rough, cobbled together by planetary scholars, and show only those regions and settlements specifically discussed in the gazetteer—they are by no means comprehensive or to scale, and thus may be useful as player handouts.

Finally, because the hardest part of any interplanetary campaign may be tempting the party to leave their homeworld, each entry ends with several adventure hooks designed to help draw a Golarion-based party to the world in question and keep them entertained once they arrive.

The Gods

While the gods presented in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea World Guide* and the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* can certainly extend their power beyond a single world or solar system on the Material Plane, their organized religions may not be as omnipresent, and the names and practices by which alien races worship the gods can vary considerably. Most worlds, for instance, have a concept of a powerful, evil arch-devil, yet they may not know him by the name Asmodeus. Similarly, many of Golarion's gods are particularly focused on that world, and may pay others little heed; the gods most concerned with caging Rovagug, for instance, know that Golarion is the physical and metaphysical key to his imprisonment, and thus the planet that requires the most watching. Newly ascended gods like Iomedae, Cayden Cailean, and Norgorber are virtually unknown on other worlds, their portfolios presumably seen to by older or lesser gods, while Pharasma is recognized nearly everywhere, as all spirits eventually make their way to her Boneyard. And though the 20 "core gods" may be the most prominent in the planar cosmology, they are far from the only deities in existence.



Whatever names they exhort in their prayers and however odd their characterizations and combinations of portfolios might seem, all divine casters on other planets have access to the same powers as those on Golarion. Whether these abilities are ultimately granted by the same gods under different names, strange combinations of deities, lesser entities like empyreal lords and archdevils, or altogether new gods focused on alien races is a question that some theologians spend whole lifetimes debating.

The Planes

As all planets exist on the Material Plane, all of them are equidistant from the planes of the Great Beyond. That means that all of them are equally susceptible to the predations of outsiders, and that magic-users on different worlds are equally able to travel to other planes or contact them (though local magical traditions may vary considerably). In theory, a magic-user should be able to shift to a plane like Axis from one planet, only to hop back to the Material Plane and arrive on a different planet, thus neatly avoiding the need for space travel. In practice, however, magic doesn't usually work this way—without a direct focus related to the point at which the spellcaster wishes to arrive, he's liable to return to the planet he knows best. After all, most of the Material Plane is empty space, and spellcasters who make a point of hopping between worlds without careful preparation usually end up asphyxiating in the darkness, the silent void swallowing their screams and futile attempts at verbal spell components.

The fey First World and the Plane of Shadow, being coterminous with the Material Plane, are somewhat different. Since both effectively exist “behind” the Material Plane and correspond to real points on it, it's possible to use their unique and mutable properties to accelerate travel between the worlds. Yet even then, such shortcuts are a risky and difficult game, as the Shadow Plane mimics the Material enough that travelers on that plane would still need a way to cross the shadowy version of space's void, and those who think to walk from planet to planet by way of the First World's shifting landscape run the risk of exiting at the wrong point and finding themselves in vacuum's cold grasp, or incinerated in the burning heart of a star.

While creatures from different planets may seem exotic to each other, their differences are primarily mortal distinctions. Most outsiders and other residents of the planes are used to the concepts of infinity and infinite variation, and thus see little difference between Golarion and its sister worlds, maintaining similar relations with all mortals, regardless of their origin.

They Look Like Us!

Those residents of Golarion blessed (or cursed) to come into contact with creatures from elsewhere in the solar system are

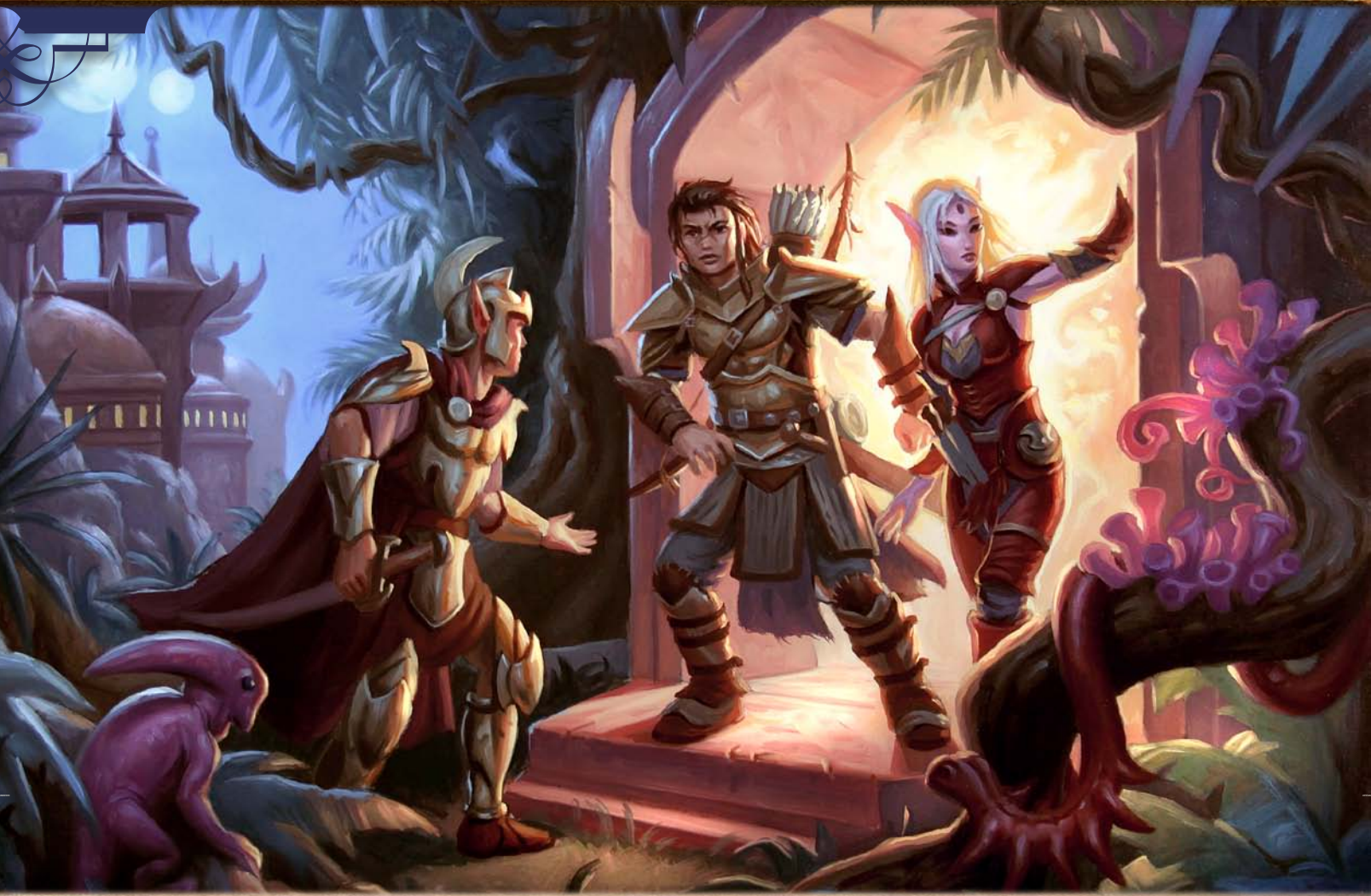


often surprised to find that many of the most prominent races are humanoid. This shock is understandable—when Golarion alone boasts millions of different creatures, all uniquely adapted to their environments, why would the intelligent races on entirely different worlds be predominantly humanoid?

Those scholars steeped in their own prejudice often presume it's because the humanoid form is inherently perfect, but even the most cursory survey of other creatures' adaptations (and the numerous weak points in humanoid physiology) reveals the folly of such hubris. Others posit that the gods themselves tend toward humanoid form, and that those races meant to advance tend to be made in the gods' images. Those of a less theological bent often propose the simplest theory: that sometime in the distant past, many of the races shared a common ancestor capable of seeding multiple worlds. While this last explanation may be the most practical, racial pride generally makes it unpopular.

Whatever the truth, both science and the gods have so far remained quiet on the subject. Perhaps in time someone will discover an answer, but for now, most interplanetary explorers and diplomats are simply appreciative of the fact that many of the civilized races around Golarion's sun are more similar than they are different.





THE SOLAR SYSTEM

"The stars are not silent. Within the vast cathedral of the heavens, they sing with the voices of a thousand worlds, a thousand cultures that live, breathe, and die even as we watch. There are worlds of fire and worlds of ash, worlds of stone and worlds of brilliant gas. Worlds within worlds. All of them reverberate with their own songs, dirges and elegies unheard by human ears.

"For millennia, we have escaped all but the barest fraction of their awareness. Yet a time will come when the gates will open and we can no longer pretend that we are alone. When the races of the stars greet us, will it be with flowers or the harvester's scythe? We cannot know. And so we wait.

"The stars are calling us. Do we dare listen?"

—Greggorik Taraspi,
Chief Astrological Advisor to the court of Herbystes II



THE SUN

The Burning Mother

Diameter: x100; **Mass:** x300,000; **Gravity:** x28

Atmosphere: None; **Orbit:** None

Golarion's sun is an almost incomprehensibly huge and inhospitable place. More than a million worlds the size of Golarion could fit inside the burning star without filling it up, and its coolest sections are still more than twice the temperature necessary to vaporize steel. Yet despite the harshness of its environs, the sun is still host to organic life. Within its fiery depths, massive dolphinlike fire elementals are spontaneously born, rolling and diving in the seas of flame. Deeper down, where the heat and pressure grow so great that the combusting gases change into plasma, some of this strange energy takes on a life of its own. The resulting plasma oozes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 220) are shimmering entities ranging in size from that of terrestrial elephants to blistering mountains, and the mindless giants slither endlessly through the flaming murk.

Not all residents of the sun are native to it. Because of the massive amounts of energy being created within the sun, the fabric of existence regularly gives way, creating temporary portals to the Plane of Fire. Creatures from salamanders to efreet often pass through these portals, and thanks to the sun's tremendous size, whole empires can rise and fall without encountering each other. Of course, this vastness and lack of landmarks means that there's also little here to interest intelligent beings beyond solitude and the aesthetic beauty of solar flares.

Adventuring

The sun should be avoided by all but the most powerful adventurers. In the face of the star's nuclear fires, spells such as *resist energy*, *protection from energy*, and *planetary adaptation* are useless—only complete immunity to fire allows a creature to survive the immense heat (see spells such as *fiery body* in the *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide*). Any creatures or items not immune to fire are instantly and utterly consumed down to the molecular level—only spells such as *wish* or *true resurrection* can bring back such victims.

Flame, however, is only one of the sun's dangers. Travelers must also contend with the fact that while the sun has various layers organized by density, it has no true surface to stand on. As such, only creatures with the ability to fly via magic can navigate its wastes, with all others drawn straight down into the flames. Lacking an atmosphere, the sun offers nothing to breathe. And it has so much more mass than Golarion that its gravity is literally crushing—while amorphous creatures may not have to worry, mundane life forms find that blood ceases to flow, lungs are too weak to inflate, and bodies implode like breached submarines.

Because of poorly understood magical connections between the sun and the Plane of Fire, however, creatures native to that realm do not seem to suffer from any of these additional effects, and can often swim and dive in the sun's crushing plasma as easily as marine animals in a terrestrial sea.

Creatures from Golarion who manage to visit the sun safely typically use powerful magic such as *wish* to create temporary magic diving bells similar to *cubes of force* but immune to fire and crushing damage, or transform themselves into creatures native to the Plane of Fire and thus gain those creatures' immunities.

Gazetteer

The sun has few set locations, and even those often move and drift on great convection currents.

The Burning Archipelago: Though creatures like salamanders and efreet can survive within the sun, that doesn't mean it's comfortable to be constantly tossed about by convection and solar flares. To this end, past residents created the collection of magical bubble cities known as the Burning Archipelago. Here, inside translucent globes that shield against much of the sun's heat and pressure, stand great metropolises where creatures not immune to the sun's fury can often survive with only minimal magic. Each city is connected to the others via magical tethers, keeping the globes within a few hundred miles of each other.

The Silent Sanctum: Few understand the motives of the reclusive wizard **Eziah** (N male human wizard 16). Ageless and long since dissatisfied with the petty politics of Golarion, Eziah turned his talents to creating a home for himself in the most beautiful and forbidding place he could think of. Alone within his many-storied tower, Eziah studies matters far beyond the ken of most mortals.

The Sleeping Sea: Also known as "the Dark Place," this immense and stationary sunspot is one of the sun's few reliable landmarks. Though still more than capable of vaporizing most creatures, the relative cold spot is held in religious awe by the pods of cetacean fire elementals who meet here periodically to discuss matters of importance.

Starheart: As with many stars on the Material Plane, the sun's core contains a portal to the Positive Energy Plane. Carefully shielded jyoti guard the gateway, protecting it from those few enemies not incinerated by the gate itself.

Adventure Hooks

Below are some adventure hooks to draw parties to the sun.

- One of the bubble cities of the Burning Archipelago has broken free and drifted away, and the PCs must locate it and discover what caused the disruption.
- A wizard is building a weapon that creates temporary portals to the sun's surface—if he succeeds, he may well vaporize not just his enemies, but huge swaths of his planet. Only the wizard Eziah knows how to find him.





ABALLON

The Horse

Diameter: $\times 1/3$; **Mass:** $\times 1/20$; **Gravity:** $\times 1/3$

Atmosphere: Trace amounts; **Orbit:** 90 days

The rocky world called Aballon is the closest planet to the sun, and often referred to as “the Horse” for the speed with which it races across the sky. A relatively tiny world compared to Golarion, Aballon is composed primarily of iron and other dense, heavy metals encased in a crust of rock and silicate dust. While splashes of color and weird rock formations are not unknown, most of Aballon’s surface is drab desert and sharp-edged hills, all pockmarked and scarred by countless meteorite impacts, some of which created craters with miles-high mountain ranges surrounding their rims. With no atmosphere to speak of—those little bits it attempts to hold on to are regularly blasted away and replenished by the solar wind—the planet has nothing to help it regulate temperature, so conditions can reach 800 degrees Fahrenheit in the full brunt of the sun and drop below –300 degrees in the shadow, resulting in baking badlands matched by large quantities of ice in deep craters and sheltered polar valleys.

As a result of its harsh environment, Aballon is inimical to all but a few resilient forms of biological life. Yet while evolution and biology may have given Aballon only a cursory glance, other intelligences have found great use for it.

Not even the planet’s oldest residents remember when the mysterious intelligences known as the First Ones arrived, touching down in their immense ships and setting servo-driven limbs to sands bleached white or burned black. Why they came, however, is obvious: with its abundance of free energy in the form of sunlight and its rich cache of metals, the little desert world of Aballon is a planetary cornucopia for those equipped to harvest its wealth. This the First Ones set to with a passion, creating great city-spires and giving life to vast armies of servitor machines, ranging from dull earth-movers to organizational intelligences many times smarter than the most gifted humans.

And then, after apparent centuries of harvest, the First Ones left. In their wake, a vast society of mechanical intelligences suddenly found themselves turned loose, without guidance or obvious purpose. Some shut down. Others went insane, or turned on each other in wars of adamantine excavation claws and brilliant plasma cutters. When the chaos was over and the dust settled, the machines finally accepted their lack of pseudo-divine leadership, and set about discovering what it meant to be free.

Thousands of upgraded generations have passed since the departure of the First Ones, who exist today as little more than legends and objects of worship for the machine-children of Aballon. The great cities of the First Ones are

treated as taboo, and few mechanized citizens ever brave the censure of their societies and the unknown dangers that wait inside those shining steel walls. Instead, the machines craft their own cities, roam in nomadic bands, or revert to an animalistic existence that is at once feral and enlightened. With the sun providing an endless supply of power, the question for Aballon’s millions of machines is not how to survive, but *why*.

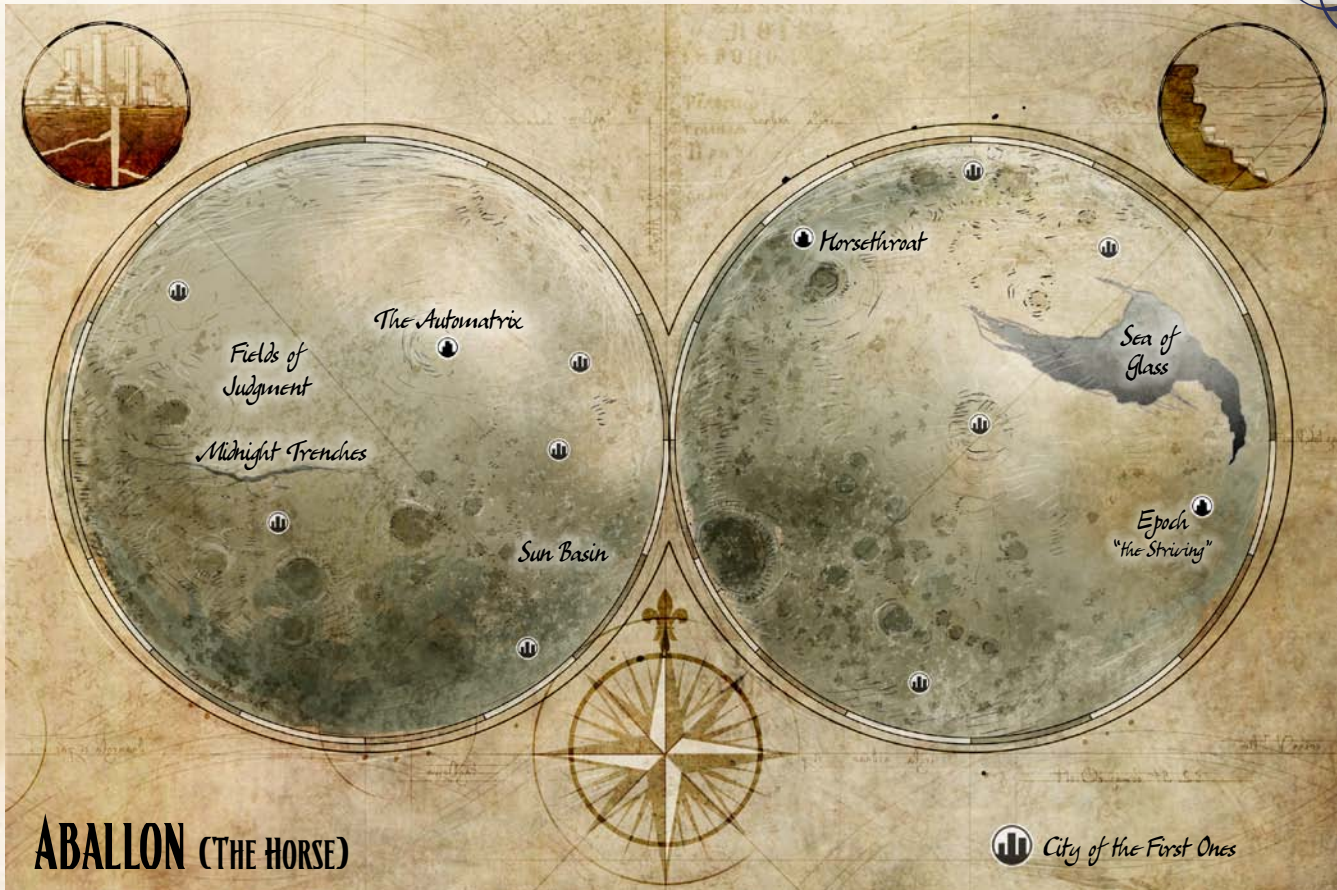
This lack of a concrete purpose—or rather, the dizzying array of potential options—has driven Aballon’s mechanical residents through an evolutionary flowering as diverse as any biological ecosystem. Machines performing different functions take wildly different forms, from huge excavators in the planet’s deep mines to buzzing dragonfly-like predators that “feed” on other machines in order to cull weaker designs from the race. Boxy and bureaucratic brain bots direct fleets of mouse-sized messenger automatons, and delicate, jellyfish-like mechanics and optimization engineers staff the vast factories that continually make repairs and replacements. Though many of the machines are capable of making their own repairs and limited modifications as situations warrant, by far the most popular design is a simple arthropod form, making the planet primarily a place of silvery metal spiders and crab-things.

The various machine enclaves on Aballon are divided into two major schools of thought—the machine equivalent of competing religions. One side, called Those Who Wait, encompasses those machines who believe that the First Ones will eventually return to guide them. These zealots continue their ancient tasks of harvesting and stockpiling materials and energy, struggling to improve their designs in the hope of becoming better servitors. The other faction, Those Who Become, believe that their progenitors were not masters but parents, and that it is instead their destiny to leave Aballon and seed another world, in effect becoming First Ones themselves. Conflict between the groups can sometimes be fierce, and wars have been fought over particularly important resources.

Adventuring

Biological organisms face many challenges on Aballon. While the tiny, half-frozen jungles of the Ice Wells are often temperate enough for humans and similar races to survive in without magic, the temperatures on the surface are too extreme for all but the most powerful magics, and the lack of atmosphere poses an even greater problem. Food and water can be found in the Ice Wells, but always in limited supply, and those who’ve eaten of the plants and animals there note that their flesh tastes of metal and sand.

Collectively, the machines of Aballon are neutral toward outsiders, though their sometimes inscrutable motivations can make them dangerous to interact with. Some of the beastlike models are inclined to hunt and devour new



organisms for the materials and energy they contain, while more sophisticated models may seek conversation. As the robots do not possess souls, they have access only to their advanced science and arcane magic, and are particularly fascinated by divine casting. The idea of a non-machine setting foot in the cities of the First Ones is anathema to most Aballonians, and any visitor who suggests that the First Ones might have been biological entities rather than machines is likely to find himself lynched for his heresy.

Aballon rotates faster than Golarion, resulting in days and nights that are roughly half as long. The lack of atmosphere also means that sound is frequently muffled on the surface (as if by a permanent *silence* spell), and thus most of the planet's residents communicate through sign language or mechanical, wave-based telepathy.

Gazetteer

Below are a few locations of note on Aballon.

The Automatrix: While numerous factories and foundries across Aballon are capable of producing new machines and imbuing them with intelligence, the Automatrix is perhaps the first such manufacturing plant, and by far the largest. Here mechanical technicians labor constantly to produce the next wave of beings, recycling materials from models

judged defective or worn out by their peers. Parabolic forges focus the sun's rays into pinpoint spotlights capable of melting even the strongest alloys, while idiot-savant designer-bots constantly churn out new ideas, their relative insanity believed to be the key to making leaps forward in technology, even if many of their resulting progeny have to be immediately recycled. Despite their differences, both Those Who Wait and Those Who Become work together at the Automatrix, each side certain that mechanical evolution carries the key to eventual success in its mission.

Cities of the First Ones: Abandoned for millennia, the nine jagged spire-cities of the First Ones still stand. Each derelict metropolis stretches up more than out, and narrow streets wind between jagged, needlelike towers and strange domes and arches, some of which are transparent, others totally bereft of windows or entrances. What functions these structures may have served in the past is unclear, and any research into the matter is made difficult by the warrior castes of Those Who Wait, the machines who see absolute protection of the cities as a divine mandate. Still, members of Those Who Become occasionally slip through their defenses, scouring the cities for the secrets of the ancients, and there's no telling what knowledge or magic—or ghosts and security systems—may remain inside their walls.



Epoch, the Striving: The machines of Aballon have many aggregations that might be called cities, but Epoch—also known as “the Striving”—is their most impressive. Here, in the de facto capital of Those Who Become, a city of boxy structures and perfectly gridded streets is surrounded by huge circuit fields. In these fields, thousands of machines labor to keep the interconnected lattice of solar cells and processors connected and free of damage, all working toward a common goal: the creation of a new god.

Those who maintain Epoch are devoted to the idea that by maintaining the largest neural network on the planet, they can give birth to a new entity that is as far beyond them as they are beyond their near-mindless predecessors. In truth, they may have succeeded, for Epoch—the entity that the city is named after—is certainly near godhood in its intelligence and wisdom. Unfortunately for Those Who Become, their creation long ago stopped speaking to them except in strange riddles and koans that smack of prophecy but prove indecipherable to their limited machine-logic. Still, they maintain Epoch’s city-sized brain, constantly expanding and perfecting it in the hope that their god-child will one day deign to speak plain, or that someone capable of deciphering its cryptic messages will come along.

The Fields of Judgment: This stretch of rocky plain is covered in the rusty, slowly deteriorating corpses of thousands of machines. Avoided by all but the bravest or most foolhardy Aballonians, the Fields of Judgment cover a circle roughly 50 miles wide, inside which all machines perish. At its edges, the fields are discernible by a quiet, high-pitched ringing, but as a machine moves toward the center, some invisible force causes various sensors and parts to begin spontaneously malfunctioning, until eventually the machine shuts down. So far, no machine has ever made it to the center, and local legend holds that anyone who can will discover the mysterious source of the fields and learn to harness its wonderful and terrible powers. As a result, some machines due for recycling instead launch quests into the fields in the hope of being the so-called Chosen Entity.

Horsethroat: One of the biggest of the Ice Wells, Horsethroat stands alone as the only one of the biologically infested craters to boast sentient life—an entire town of it.

Ten Golarion years ago, the desert-dwelling human nomad **Abasi Nasf** (NG male human ranger 6) was headed into Osirion’s grand capital of Sothis when he blacked out. When he awoke, he was dreadfully cold, lying in a strange, steamy crater surrounded by unfamiliar plants and a few basic supplies. In the center of the circular crater’s lake of ice stood a tall, door-sized rectangle of glowing energy, from which blew a constant stream of fresh air that filled the crater all the way to its top. Though he immediately attempted to pass through the portal, Abasi found it impervious to his attempts. Eventually he set about the business of surviving in his new home, learning the ways

of the strange plants and small bird- and rodentlike creatures around him.

Over the years since, almost 50 people have passed through the immovable glowing portal, none of them sure how they arrived. Many of the new residents are of races from Golarion—humans, elves, halflings, and the like—but several come from other worlds, such as Castrovell and Akiton. Under Abasi’s guidance, the people have learned to build homes from the great energy-transmitting ice vines and to raise and herd the resident fauna. Of the residents, only **Casson Menias** (N male human wizard 10), a relatively early delivery from the portal, has the magical power to ascend the steep walls of the crater and venture out into the blazing sun or freezing cold of the surface. It was through his investigations and knowledge of the stars that the residents surmised they were on Aballon, and hence named their dark, ramshackle town Horsethroat. Though most residents of Horsethroat have made peace with their strange marooning, theories about its nature abound. The more pious believe the crater to be a sort of divine ark, its residents destined to survive the flaming destruction of their sinful homeworlds. Others believe it to be a psychological experiment by sinister, alien intelligences, and some of these paranoiacs whisper that Casson himself may be their captors’ agent and observer—a suspicion reinforced by the fact that only he has established communication with the mechanical beings on the planet’s surface.

The Ice Wells: While the intense sunlight on Aballon can create temperatures hot enough to melt lead, the almost nonexistent atmosphere means that heat transfers poorly, and shaded regions receive very little of it. The result is one of the strangest natural phenomena on the planet: the so-called Ice Wells. Found all over Aballon’s surface, the Ice Wells are impact craters and fissures deep enough that the bottoms are always shaded, and contain large amounts of constantly frozen water. Though surprising, the presence of the water is not the most interesting part—more importantly, its presence makes the Ice Wells one of the few places on Aballon rife with biological life. Here, plantlike organisms rooted in the ice stretch long, metal-infused tentacles up sometimes hundreds of feet until they reach the edge of the sunlight, at which point they unfurl massive leaves that soak up the sun’s rays with surprising efficiency. This energy is translated into heat and electricity that travels down into the plants’ roots and melts the ice directly around them, creating warm, oxygen-rich steam and small pools of fresh water from which the plants—and other enterprising organisms—can drink.

As very few creatures can survive the extreme temperatures and lack of atmosphere during surface travel between Ice Wells—the pterodactyl-like sharpwings being the most common—each Ice Well is its own self-contained ecosystem, and in many, a myriad of creatures, most tiny





but some surprisingly large, hunt and play within the partially metallic forests of ice vines. Not all craters with frozen water have been colonized by life, but new ones are seeded all the time by the droppings of the sharpwings and the meandering tunneling of the molelike creatures called diggers, whose burrows connect some of the Ice Wells in vast warrens.

The Midnight Trenches: Aballon contains the highest concentration of rare metals—especially skymetals like adamantine—of any world in the solar system, and it's in this vast mine network that they are laboriously excavated by enormous, terribly powerful machines. Within the shafts and bore holes known collectively as the Midnight Trenches, whole legions of robotic diggers and demolitionists live and die in darkness, drinking from energy cables run down from the surface as they strive in zealous fervor to further their factions' goals.

Sea of Glass: At some point long in the past, a massive geological event—whether an artificial explosion caused by warring machines, a weirdly focused solar flare, or something else—bathed this region in hellish heat, burning the silicate sand into a single sheet of mottled glass. Hundreds of miles wide, this smooth sea rolls and undulates much like a liquid ocean that's been frozen in time, its waves cresting and crashing. Across its flattest reaches, spider-legged machines ranging in size from the microscopic to behemoths as large as fortresses skim rapidly across the glass like water bugs. Where the waves overhang or lie in jumbled shards as the result of meteorite strikes, crystalline creatures like vacant-eyed iguanas make their nests, basking in the sun's life-giving rays or hunting the smaller machines and consuming the electrical discharge of their death throes. Rumors among the local intelligent machines hold that in the sea's exact center, a towering palace of pure, shining crystal rises from the surrounding glass, but so far no one who's ventured inside its knife-edged walls has ever returned.

Sun Basin: This mirror-bright crater is the most sophisticated solar energy collector on Aballon. More than 5 miles across, the enormous crater has been completely blanketed with solar panels that absorb the sun's rays and translate it into pure electrical and arcane power. Many of the machines in the region sip carefully from the web of cables that tie the panels together, but so far no machine in memory has been able to drink directly from the Central Conduit, the great fountain of energy housed at the center of the basin. Local legend

has it that one day a machine—or perhaps a biological creature of great magical power—will be able to harness the entirety of the massive energy flow toward great ends, but so far anyone who's attempted it has been immediately incinerated. Indeed, even approaching the conduit is a dangerous endeavor, as the metal towers springing up from the central building frequently discharge excess energy in the form of massive lightning bolts.

Adventure Hooks

Below are some hooks to get parties adventuring on Aballon.

- The PCs wake to find themselves in Horsethroat. The town asks the newcomers to help locate several of their halfling residents, who went missing while attempting to access another Ice Well via abandoned digger tunnels.
- Rogue elements of Those Who Become contact the PCs and ask them to infiltrate one of the forbidden cities of the First Ones.
- The PCs are invited to an audience with Epoch by its machine caretakers, only to uncover a great prophecy.
- The PCs are captured by machines and are given the choice of death or venturing into the

Fields of Judgment to uncover the source of the region's strange powers.



City of the First Ones





CASTROVEL

The Green

Diameter: x1; **Mass:** x1; **Gravity:** x1

Atmosphere: Breathable; **Orbit:** Half a year

The world of Castrovel is the complete opposite of Aballon. Where the Horse is rocky and bare, Castrovel is humid and humming with life, its thick blanket of atmosphere trapping the sun's energy and making the surface a lush, steamy paradise. Jungles abound here, full of great broad-leaved trees that sometimes stretch several hundred feet into the air, with branches large enough to support a house, or else cluster in masses so thick that the sun can barely penetrate to the floor of strange and primeval swamps, where gnarled mangrovelike roots form whorls and hollows housing all manner of creatures. Oceans of colored mist and gas vie with more conventional seas to provide habitats for innumerable species, from cannibalistic selkies and schools of semi-intelligent fish to the elephantine isopods that trundle across the sea bottom, the cracks in their glowing armor providing safe havens for delicate seahorselike symbiotes. Given the sheer amount and variety of life on Castrovel, it's small wonder that legends of "the Green Star" often associate the world with lust and fertility.

There are additional reasons for the world's amorous associations, however. The women of the lashunta, Castrovel's most prominent race, are often cited as the most beautiful humanoids in the solar system. Tall and lithe, the creatures appear to be perfect specimens of elven or human women, save for the thin and twitching antennae that rise up from their foreheads. Combined with the planet-wide tendency to forsake all but the most functional clothing to mitigate the constant heat and humidity, it's understandable how the first human explorers to reach Castrovel might have thought themselves arrived in Heaven itself. Yet despite their beauty, the women of the lashunta are not merely objects of lust. Educated, civilized, and matriarchal, the rulers of the lashunta city-states maneuver for political position from the backs of their terrible lizard steeds, fighting each other when necessary but more often banding together to protect their settlements from the verdant planet's dangerous fauna and their traditional enemies, the insectile formians. Strangely enough, for all the females' beauty, the lashunta men are proportionally ugly—half the height of their female counterparts and twice as broad, the hairy lashunta males are rugged, fierce, and warlike. Yet even the men are ultimately civilized, with their prowess in battle matched only by their thirst for knowledge. Both sexes pursue mental perfection and espouse unlocking the brain's full potential as the noblest goal, with the women's ability to form empathic bonds with their saurian mounts

only the least of their achievements. As a result, Castrovel is a fertile breeding ground for psions and telepaths.

After the lashunta, the most populous race on Castrovel is, strangely enough, elves—those same elves who helped populate Golarion, and who returned to it from their mysterious sojourn more than 2,000 years ago. Just before the fall of the *Starstone* that darkened Golarion's skies and brought about an age of suffering, most of Golarion's elves fled through portals to the mysterious realm of Sovyrian, only to return millennia later when the demon Treerazer attempted to corrupt the portal system the elves had used to evacuate. Yet what few scholars—even elven scholars—on Golarion realize is that the legendary refuge of Sovyrian lies not on some magical plane, but on another planet.

The elven nation of Sovyrian occupies one of the smaller continents on Castrovel, separated from the lands of the lashunta and most other intelligent creatures by a wide and treacherous ocean. So wracked is this oceanic moat by tropical storms that the elves who live in Sovyrian rarely attempt to cross it by physical means, perhaps prompting the creation of the original portals known as *aiudara*, or "elf gates." For most residents, however, the continent of Sovyrian may as well be the entire world. While even the greatest historians can't say for certain whether the elves evolved on Sovyrian and then immigrated to Golarion or vice versa, the elves' physical similarities to the lashunta—tall, idealized humanoids with sharp minds and a propensity for magic—make a compelling case for the fair folk being natives of the Green Planet. This idea is naturally popular with those elves who reside on Castrovel, most of whom find the notion that their race might have arisen on the comparatively barbaric world of Golarion highly insulting.

At various points in its history, the fertile island-nation of Sovyrian has been packed to the gills with elves, the long-lived people building delicate structures in every grove and alpine valley and on every mesa and seaside cliff. The most recent of these population booms came after the elves' great departure from Golarion. Since the elves' return to that world, however, Sovyrian has maintained only a fraction of its peak population, as many of its people flooded through the great portals in the capital city of El, eager for the challenge of reestablishing their holdings on Golarion. Those elves who remain in Sovyrian see themselves as stewards and traditionalists, keeping alive the ways of the ancients, and are both excited by and somewhat resentful of those few elves who still pass between worlds as messengers or secret governmental operatives.

While all the planets in Golarion's solar system contain strange magical portals linking the worlds together (see Chapter Three), the lashunta warrior-scholars learned the workings of these gates long ago, especially the ones connecting Akiton and Castrovel. Because of this, the two planets have the closest relationship of any in the solar



system, with lashunta scholars being particularly fond of sharing ideas with the enigmatic Contemplatives of Ashok. Perhaps in response to the lashunta's mastery of the interplanetary gates, the elves of Sovyrrian invented the *aiudara*, magical archways that allow people to step easily between locations thousands of miles apart, linking all corners of a globe. While the *aiudara* on Golarion have long since ceased functioning, those on Castrovel are still in good repair, and traders and emissaries of all races use them freely, with cities naturally springing up around the dozens of active portals scattered across the planet. Of course, not all who use the portals do so for benign reasons, and the presence of portals in fallen cities on the monster-infested frontiers or between cities in warring nations means that most settlements guard their portals heavily, vigilant against both illicit use and whatever bloodthirsty horrors might come through from elsewhere.

Adventuring

Environmentally, Castrovel is a welcoming world to most civilized races from Golarion, with its tropical climates, familiar gravity, and rich, breathable atmosphere. Food is never a problem, as the jungles, rivers, and mountain valleys are bursting with edible plants and animals—yet it's this

same fertility that makes adventuring here so dangerous. Because of the seemingly endless supply of consumables and the oxygen-rich environment, both plants and animals tend to grow larger here than on Golarion. From enormous saurian horrors and segmented centipede ticks to bug-eyed mountain eels and the poison-beaked sky fishers, Castrovel boasts countless megafauna predators easily capable of consuming a humanoid. Even the environment itself can be a predator: a closer, larger moon means that tides and ocean waves are more extreme, and the high-pressure atmosphere means that winds can be far stronger than those on Golarion. In addition to great hurricanes and other storms capable of scouring the landscape at hundreds of miles per hour, the wet wind is also conducive to moldstorms, in which fields of voracious molds and fungi release their spores into the air, creating a roiling cloud of decay that coats and consumes all organic matter in its path.

Adventurers from other worlds are not common on Castrovel, but neither are they unheard of, as both the lashunta and the elves are consummate scholars, and certain of their cities maintain active trade with Akiton and Golarion's elven kingdoms. The regular use of elfgates to step thousands of miles also makes settlements more accepting of unfamiliar faces, though this ability to travel





is generally restricted to the planet's two primary races, and the various intelligent magical creatures or races of more savage beast-men that live in the deep jungles or isolated mountain dells are less used to outsiders.

Of the various adventuring classes and professions, scholars both magical and mundane tend to be the most respected in Castrovel's cities, followed closely by those who master martial practices. Though both genders of lashunta train to be educated warriors, the rough-edged and beastlike males are far more likely to test a newcomer with a good-natured brawl before accepting his or her company. Druids and other nature-oriented folk are extremely common in the wilder areas, and almost every village or outpost has a druidic guardian or leader. Wandering oracles sometimes go from town to town communing with the forests and fields and speaking their prophecies, while nimble rogues are respected for their talents—but thieves are punished harshly.

Gazetteer

Below are some significant locations on Castrovel.

The Colonies: Officially known by several names, from “the Everlasting Queendoms” and “the Unified Hive” to the baroque “Glorious and Undeniable Dominion of All Beneath Moon and Soil,” the several largest formian hives are most often simply called the Colonies. Thousands of years ago, numerous independent hives of the ant-people battled each other and the lashunta for territory. This running dispute was finally settled by the historic Meeting of Queens, in which the rulers of the most prominent hives met and came to an accord, allying forever against the hated lashunta (whom they can communicate with telepathically, but traditionally despise). Today, the largest hives rule in concord, managing their individual territories and paying deference to the “Overqueen”—an idea rather than an actual creature, and one that allows the collectivist insects to maintain their inborn sense of hierarchy.

El: In a fertile valley near Sovyrian's geographical center lies the nation's capital and heart: the great city of El. The first thing a visitor to the city notices is the Great Houses—rambling, neighborhood-sized structures that climb the cliff walls to either side of the city's majestic waterfall, and which house the most important families and government officials. From its initial cascade, the river flows for only a few hundred feet before being split repeatedly by elegant artificial canals that crisscross the city in artistic patterns, helping to bring running water to the various districts, all of which are connected by delicate footbridges that range from simple but sturdy wooden lattices to soaring mother-of-pearl viaducts. Bound on one side by the cliff, the city spreads out in a great crescent, stretching arms across the open fields and banks of the Woven River and into the thick forests that surround it. Most of the city's farming is

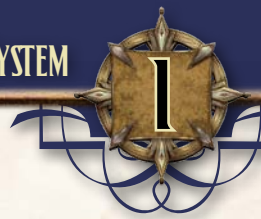
done in the Upper Fields atop the waterfall's cliff, or else in the honeyed plains that follow the river away from the city, beginning just after the canals end in the shipping docks of the city's ports.

It is here, just where the Woven River becomes one wide current again, that the Arch of Refuge stands, 70 feet tall and made of gray stone carved into amazingly lifelike vines. Surrounded by a full dozen lesser *aiudara*, this gateway is the one through which the elves harnessed the power of the *Sovyrian Stone* to make both their escape from and return to Golarion, and is the only gate in Sovyrian known to link the two worlds. Though an honor guard of 26 soldiers in full armor maintains a constant watch at the site, few individuals are privileged to pass through the arch to travel between El and Kyonin's capital of Iadara on Golarion. The dozens of *aiudara* connecting the rest of the continent, however, are frequently used, making the place a constant hub of activity.

In addition to its political significance as the capital of Sovyrian, El is also old—very old. So ancient are some of the structures in its older districts, in fact, that many residents believe it to be the first city ever established by the elves. Indeed, several resident scholars posit that the world “elf” and the popular “-el” suffix in elven names may stem etymologically from the city—literally meaning “person from El”—though this theory is understandably unpopular among non-natives.

Lashunta City-States: The scattered city-states of the lashunta are as autonomous as their name implies. Each is ruled by its own female leader whose position is either elected or inherited, depending on local custom, and who is sometimes advised by a council. Though feuds are not uncommon, complex alliances of trade, interbreeding, and mutual defense tend to tie the settlements together, thus making it rare for conflicts between city-states to go beyond ritualized battles and small-scale raiding for the sake of honor, with true warfare being reserved for the monstrous humanoids, formians, and other savage societies that inhabit Castrovel's wilds. Many settlements rely on telepaths and spellcasters to communicate with their allied nations in real-time, and travel across the intervening jungles and mountains via *aiudara* or on the backs of the fearsome lizard-steeds known as *shota*.

Ocean of Mists: On Castrovel, not all seas are made of water. The Ocean of Mists, which stretches for hundreds of miles and nearly divides the great continent of Asana, is an anomaly that researchers have yet to completely understand: a vast canyon network filled with multicolored mists that roil and splash like an actual sea. Held apart by some indeterminable magical or magnetic field, the microscopic droplets always maintain a constant distance between each other, leaving enough room for air to slip between them, yet maintaining enough pressure that flat-bottomed sailing vessels or paddleboats equipped



with gas bags for buoyancy can cross them safely. Though drowning in the mist sea is believed to be impossible, any would-be sailors must note that it's only their ships' specially engineered shapes that keep them afloat, and deckhands who are swept overboard may find themselves falling slowly to the murky depths, their bodies too dense for swimming, and thus facing a long walk back to land. Some divers take advantage of this fact, dropping down on long ropes to explore and salvage without need of water-breathing gear. Yet the tendency of such ropes to come back frayed and bitten-off at the ends—with no signs of the divers—discourages most sensible folk.

Qabarat: Not all of the lashunta city-states are created equal. By far the most impressive of these is Qabarat, the Shining Jewel of the Western Sea. Positioned in the break where the Yaro River cuts through the sea cliffs, Qabarat is instantly recognizable by its smooth white walls, 50 feet high and encrusted across every inch with shining mosaics made from crushed shells. Bordered by sea, cliff, river, and fertile fields and jungles, Qabarat is both highly defensible and perfectly positioned for trade by water. This positioning as a trade nexus is only enhanced by the fact that the city contains four separate *aiudara*, as well as a highly guarded gate leading to and from Akiton.

Inside, the city is a place of domes and cupolas, ornate columns and centuries-old statues. The grunts and war cries of men and women honing their skills in the Battle Yards are matched by the good-natured shouts of the students attending the city's three great universities, who gather together on the schools' steps to debate the finer points of philosophy, theology, and cosmology. But neither of these commotions holds a candle to the bustle and roar of Shipman's End, the sprawling and brawling free market in which captains and caravan leaders join with the local merchants to display their wares. Above all other structures stands the Threefold House, the capitol building and seat of the ruling Lady of Qabarat, her Chief Consort and Battle Leader, and the handpicked cabinet of scholars, priests, and aides who assist in her rule.

Thanks to the portals, Qabarat is not formed exclusively of lashunta, and members of other races are welcome to become citizens, especially if they have unusual knowledge or skills to offer. Wandering elves are common in many lashunta cities, seeking knowledge in the lashunta's extensive libraries or adventuring through their mostly untamed territories, yet when the rulers of Sovyrian seek to make official contact with the city-states as a whole, they almost always begin with Qabarat, and this significance is not lost on the other lashunta tribes.

Adventure Hooks

Presented here are several adventure hooks for Castrovel.

- While exploring an ancient ruin or fallen elven fortress, the PCs stumble through an undiscovered portal and find themselves in Sovyrian.
- Dangerous creatures have discovered an abandoned portal deep under the mountains and begun flooding through the *aiudara* network. In order to stop them, the PCs will have to venture through the portal to the ruined subterranean city and shut the lost doorway down—then somehow fight their way to civilization.
- An elven scholar in Kyonin desperately needs information from Sovyrian, and has secured passage via official channels, yet needs help from the PCs (creating something of a stir if not everyone in the party is elven).
- Relations between Akiton and Castrovel have become strained, and it's up to an outside party—someone from neither planet—to play arbiter and set things right, whether with words or blades.



Lashunta





GOLARION

The Cage

Diameter: x1; **Mass:** x1; **Gravity:** x1

Atmosphere: Standard; **Orbit:** 1 year

Hopeful astronomers sometimes refer to Golarion as “the Child,” seeing the planet’s hospitable environment and abundance of life as clear evidence that the planet is intended as a gods-given paradise. Yet astronomical literature from other worlds often references it as “the Cage,” presumably alluding to the world’s status as the doorway to Rovagug’s prison. While Golarion itself needs no overview, being the primary focus of the Pathfinder campaign setting, there’s more to this world than simply its oceans and continents.

Golarion’s moon was born long before life arose on either world, likely broken off from its parent in a massive meteor strike while Golarion was still forming. With only 7 percent of Golarion’s surface area and a sixth of the gravity, the new moon was immediately caught in the planet’s orbit and tidally locked, meaning that though the sun shines on all sides of the moon, the same face always presents itself to Golarion. For millennia, while life appeared and flourished on Golarion, the planet’s moon remained cold and geologically dead, with no atmosphere and only a meteorite-pocked crust of gray dust and black, volcanic maria.

All that changed with the coming of the Azlanti. More than 12,000 years ago, when Azlant was at its height, there was little that its people could not do. Yet along with power came a sense of entitlement, a need to extend their reach. And what could be a more obvious statement of power than the subjugation of the moon?

Powerful Azlanti spellcasters had already traveled to the moon, even going so far as to set up small enclaves and mysterious structures there. Yet what these new priests and arcanists proposed was something far greater: the magical terraforming of the entire moon, turning the lifeless husk into a lush world the Azlanti could freely colonize. It was an insane idea, and one passionately spoken against by the elves, yet many of Azlant’s most powerful leaders joined the cause.

The ritual worked—yet not the way the Azlanti intended. For in focusing their massive energies on the moon’s surface, they succeeded not in changing the planet’s nature, but rather in tearing a hole in the fabric of the planes, letting the Abyss’s wild energy rage forth and creating the region known as the Moonscar. Horrified, the Azlanti abandoned their ritual, but not before the monsters of the Abyss succeeded in securing a foothold. Though the fetid jungle of the Moonscar takes up only a small portion of the moon’s surface, the vile atmosphere spewed forth and maintained through the ancient magic is enough to sponsor life beyond simply that spawned in the Outer Rifts. Today, roughly a quarter of the moon’s surface is home to pockets of strange

life, birthed and housed by roiling pockets of weird magic that surface at random, creating a scattered network of unconnected ecosystems across the moon’s surface. The rest of the moon remains as it once was—the so-called Dead Zones, bereft of life or air—serving to keep the planet’s scattered biomes distinct, and in its own way keeping the corruption of the Moonscar from spreading any further.

Adventuring

Though certain elements, such as the moon’s low gravity or the transparency of its black and star-studded sky, are universal across the world’s surface, in general the moon’s environs can be broken into three broad classifications.

The Dead Zones represent the lifeless moon as it existed for most of its history, and encompass most of the world. Here, the moon’s surface is nothing but dust and rock, with no atmosphere and temperatures ranging from several hundred degrees below zero to several hundred above. Though incapable of sustaining life, the Dead Zones are relatively safe for those able to deal with the environment.

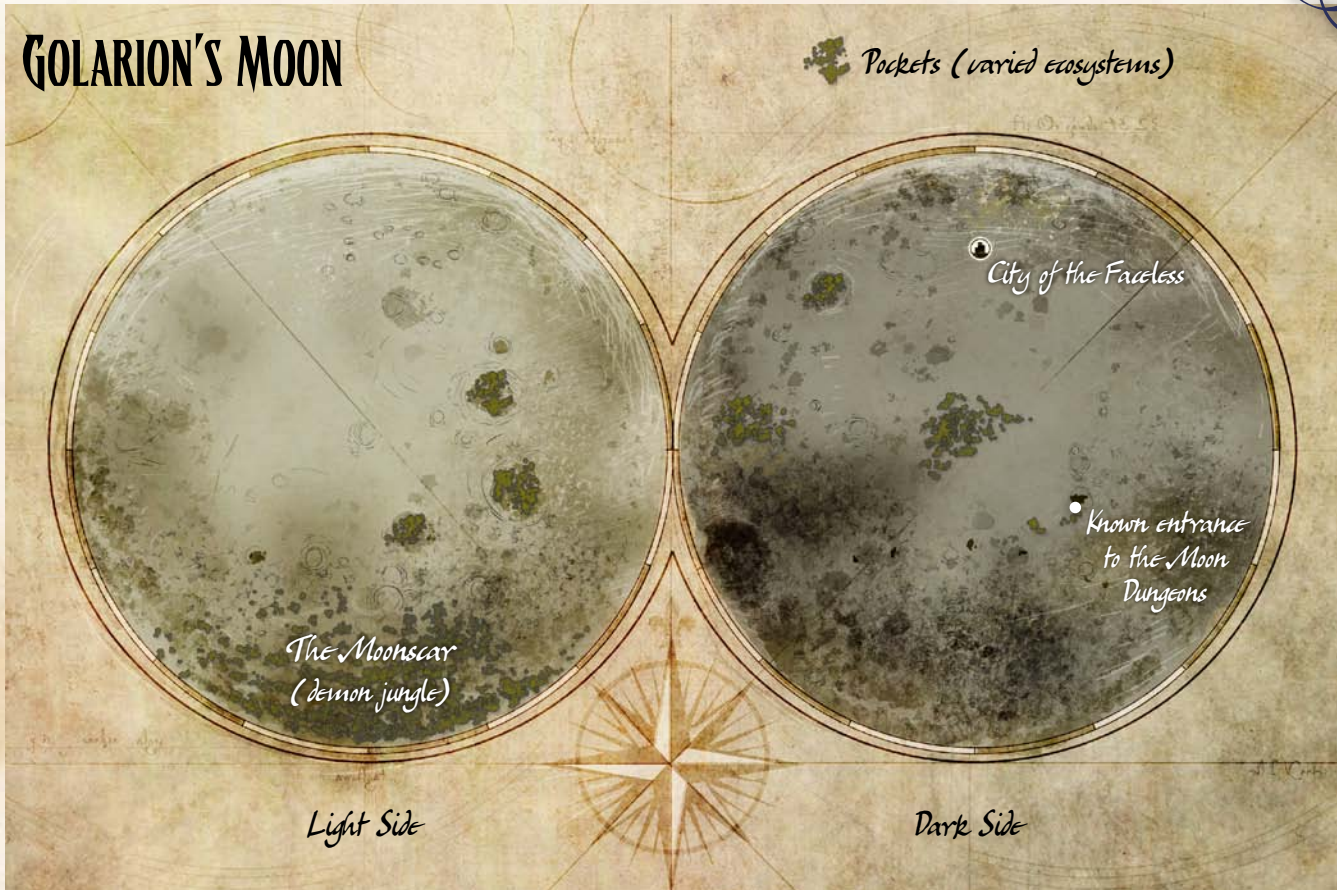
The Moonscar is the complete opposite: a lush, steamy biome that would almost be idyllic, were it not for the place’s Abyssal masters and twisted, monstrous residents. This section is covered in more depth below.

The third category encompasses the scattered biomes known as the Pockets, and presents the widest variety of environments. Created by the uncontrolled backlash of Azlanti magic and Abyssal energies, the Pockets defy scientific laws, containing any number of environments, from tiny tropical seas a few miles wide to vast arctic snowfields, their expanses often cutting off cleanly in impossibly sharp-edged borders. Their residents range from small animals to stunted villages of weird pygmy people with insectile heads, fleshy wings, or segmented and centipede-like bodies, either existing in blissful isolation or paying fearful tribute to the rulers of the Moonscar. While not necessarily evil, the residents of these microcosms are often insular, paranoid, and hostile.

Gazetteer

Below are some of the more notable sites on Golarion’s moon.

City of the Faceless: Long before the creation of the Moonscar, the Azlanti established a penal colony on the moon’s “dark side,” a tenuous city of domes and bunkers whose atmosphere was created and regulated by magical machines. Here the government sent political prisoners deemed too dangerous to be allowed to remain on Golarion, yet too valuable to kill, imprisoning them where the constant labor to maintain their life-support machines would keep them busy, yet still available should the Azlanti require some knowledge they possessed. After Azlant’s fall, the city of convicts self-organized and continued on much as it always had, eking out a rough existence while maintaining a delicate balance between defending themselves against the



half-succubi of the Moonscar and relying on these Abyssal harlots for entertainment and infusions of new blood.

The Moon Dungeons: Without liquid water or geological activity, the moon should have no caverns or tunnel networks—yet it does. One of the chief reasons the Azlanti established the City of the Faceless and set them to work mining was to discover what could have caused the vast tunnel networks that have periodically been uncovered beneath the moon's surface, and what they might contain. Of late, rumors have surfaced that scholars in the city may have discovered something truly monumental in the subterranean dark—something that might make the moon's residents relevant to Golarion once again.

The Moonscar: For the last 12,000 years, this tangled and alien jungle of ravenous plants and horrifying beasts has been ruled by a seemingly welcoming race of beautiful women. These women are in fact all sisters, the half-fiend children of a single powerful succubus. Though generally content to rule in the cities of twisted lunar stone that rise above the jungle canopy, supported by their fecund realm and tribute from nearby pocket-ecologies, the ageless women sometimes employ magic to make the long flight to Golarion, crossing the distance in 2 years. Once there, they seek out humanoid to abduct, carrying them home for use as breeding stock or

transformation into agents of the Abyss, the latter being later returned to their homes to work sinister deeds. (For more information, see *Pathfinder Module: The Moonscar*.)

Shards of the Starstone: As with any meteorite, the *Starstone* did not survive its fall unscathed. Upon hitting the upper edges of Golarion's atmosphere, pieces of the artifact sheared off, either burning up or remaining in orbit around the planet. Would-be ascended deities have long sought these fragments, ranging in size from pebbles to boulders, in the hope that the shards might retain some connection to their famous parent. Yet those few adventurers who manage to ascend to the heavens and approach the debris find themselves experiencing strange and surreal effects, with the universe around them twisting to birth bizarre guardians and indecipherable puzzles.

Adventure Hooks

Below are hooks to draw players to Golarion's moon.

- A cult of Groetus has located a huge skull-shaped mound on the moon's surface, and believe that magic sealed inside could link Golarion's moon with the apocalypse god.
- A scholar believes the residents of the City of the Faceless might shed light on ancient Azlanti secrets—if only she could find adventurers to make the long journey.

**AKITON****The Red****Diameter:** $\times 1/2$; **Mass:** $\times 1/10$; **Gravity:** $\times 1/3$ **Atmosphere:** Thin but breathable; **Orbit:** 2 years

For millennia, the people of Golarion have looked to the world of Akiton as a harbinger of war, seeing in the Red Star's bloody hue a martial blessing and portent of coming battles. Yet few have ever realized how close their stories come to the truth.

Akiton is a harsh world. With only a thin layer of breathable atmosphere to support life and keep the planet insulated, it is mostly cold desert, the planet's red color stemming from the vast plains of iron-rich sand and stone that cover much of its surface. Once, in its geological youth, Akiton played host to great seas rich with life and nutrients, yet these have long since evaporated, run deep underground, or condensed into the thick ice caps at either pole. In their wake, they left only dusty mountains and dead sea-bottoms, with strange plateaus and weirdly organic rock formations rising from the drifting sands. In places, the sides of knife-edged canyons reveal layers of sediment containing the strange skeletons of colossal creatures from a lost era, their bones crafted into ornaments and weapons by savage desert tribes who still tell stories of a time when the land was rife with seas and monsters, racial memories of an epoch before the planet's slow decline.

Just as Akiton is less forgiving than Golarion environmentally, so too are its people harder. While the planet hosts a significant population of red-skinned humanoids that are exceptionally similar to Golarion's humans, even to the point of being able to interbreed, these city folk and desert barbarians are rarely what people think of in conjunction with the Red Planet. Rather, the iconic image of Akiton is that of the Shobhads: 12-foot-tall, gray-skinned warriors with four arms, each muscular limb bearing a sword, lance, or deadly flechette longrifle capable of firing nearly to the horizon. Among the planet's innumerable arroyos and dunes, the fiercely territorial tribes of Shobhads—collectively known as the Shobhad-neh—war constantly with each other, both over ancient feuds and simply for positioning in their barbaric social structure. Few members of other races would dare challenge a single Shobhad warrior in his clinking battle harness, let alone a war band or one of the raiding parties that constantly redraws the giants' borders. (For more information, see page 63.)

Although the four-armed giants may be the most immediately arresting citizens of Akiton, they're not the only strange race to go bounding across its landscape. Timid and crafty, the Ysoki rat-men make their way equally well in the open desert, the mysterious honeycomb

caves sometimes found in the deepest trenches, and the slums of the great cities, where they are master traders as well as skilled pickpockets. Though weak individually, the Ysoki are notorious for their pack loyalty, and anyone who thinks to take advantage of a lone rat-man or dispute a fair trade may find himself bled to death by the Ysoki's 10 nearest relatives.

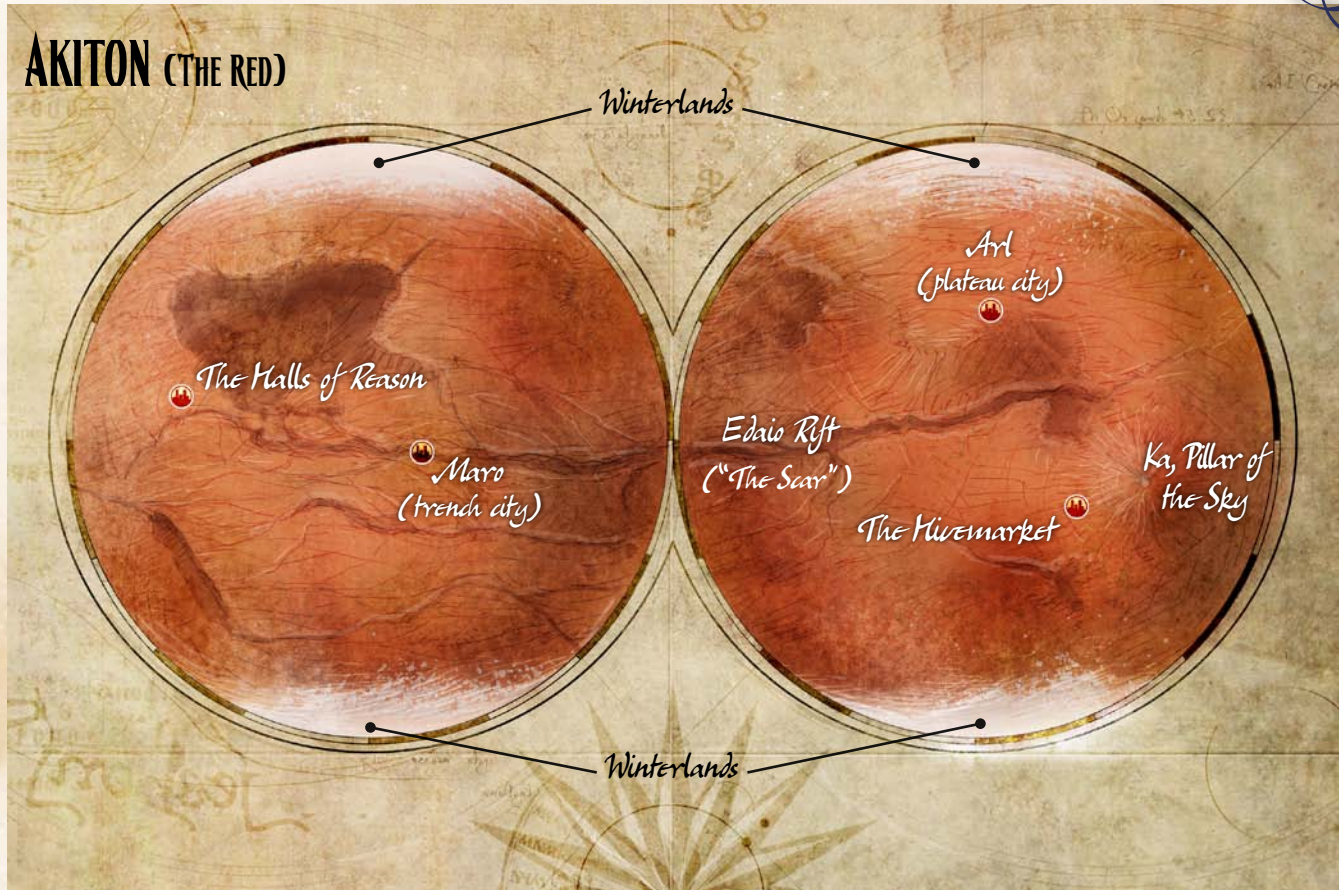
The red-skinned lizardfolk of the deep desert are less common, primarily because of their discomfort in cities, yet they birth fighters every bit as fierce as the Shobhad-neh. Instead of warring with each other, however, the iguana-faced lizardfolk tend to reserve their ferocity for nature itself, eking out an existence in the planet's harshest climates and hunting the great sand serpents with nothing more than crude spears and their teeth.

Perhaps most alien of the civilized races of Akiton are the mysterious Contemplatives of Ashok. Composed primarily of soft and throbbing brain-sacs, with only the most rudimentary limbs to move them around and assist in their casting and experimentation, the Contemplatives are creatures of the mind, into whose engorged, swollen forms the ether occasionally whispers secrets of things that have been or are yet to come.

Despite the inhospitality of its landscape, with its cold mountains inhabited by savage beasts, endless sand dunes, and thin, much-coveted streams in deep basins and canals, Akiton also contains pockets of surprising civilization. Its cities, where they arise, tend to be both ancient and cosmopolitan, with races mixing freely. The idea that life is too hard to risk passing up a potentially beneficial trade breaks down many social barriers—at least in the marketplace—and this general comfort with outsiders in the big cities is aided by the planet's relatively advanced technology, which in addition to the four-armed tribes' flechette longrifles includes things like crude solar collectors, moisture farms, and the legendary flying boats—magical aircraft capable of traveling safely and quickly between cities, if you have the coin for passage. The cities themselves take numerous forms, from great mountaintop monuments and hollowed-out cliff-dwellings to darkened trench-towns and lonely spires that rise stark and beautiful like coral from the dried beds of ancient oceans.

Adventuring

While Akiton is colder and less forgiving than Golarion, with a thin atmosphere that often leaves Golarion-born humanoids short of breath, its environment is no more dangerous than Golarion's great deserts or mountainous reaches. In fact, creatures from Golarion often find themselves at a distinct advantage on Akiton because of the significantly lower gravity, in which they can make tremendous leaps, send projectiles three times farther, lift three times their normal amount, and perform other



great feats of speed and strength. At the same time, the lower gravity also means that the structures and natural features on Akiton can be much taller and more delicate than those on Golarion, with loose sand dunes the size of hills and thin rock spires or city towers that would collapse immediately on a world with greater gravity. For more information on adventuring in low gravity, see page 54.

Though not precisely the same as Golarion humans, the red-skinned humans of Akiton are more of a different ethnicity than true aliens, and the planet as a whole has seen enough visitors from the geologically and culturally younger world that larger cities like Maro generally know of the other humans' existence, and may even have a few in residence at any given time. Elves are relatively familiar to Akitonians, thanks to the planet's connection to Castrovel and Sovyrian, but smaller races such as halflings, dwarves, and gnomes tend to be regarded with unguarded fascination or derision.

Even the more peaceful settlements on Akiton are still dangerous places, and adventurers find their skills in high demand. Barbarians, fighters, rangers, and cavaliers are always needed to protect caravans or fight in arenas, and may even find acceptance among the Shobhad clans if they survive the vetting process. Quick-fingered rogues

and bards fill the streets or rob the forgotten cities of the ancients, and spellcasters of all types are valued for their insight and ability to hold the beasts of the sands at bay. Yet perhaps the biggest difference between the adventurers of Golarion and Akiton is the increased prevalence of gunslingers on the Red Planet—given the low gravity and otherworldly effectiveness of the Shobhad longrifles, the world is a paradise for those who follow the way of the gun, and these elect warriors are in high demand among mercenary companies and town militias.

Gazetteer

Below are a few of the more notable locations on Akiton.

Arl: Positioned on a rocky plateau far above an ancient sea bed, the great city of Arl looks out over its holdings, impregnable and majestic. It is from here that the Free Peoples of the High Plateau, primarily humanoid and ruled by a princelike leader called the thurok, eke out a hard existence, farming where they can, defending themselves as necessary, and watching alien bloodsports in the coliseum known as the Crimson Forum. Dominating the center of the city is an immense, 500-foot-tall red pyramid, and it is from the portal at the monument's top that the city's most distinctive quality arises.



Long ago, powerful figures from ancient Azlant emerged from the portal and subjugated the locals, who believed the newcomers to be gods. In the generations since, few new beings have come through the portal, yet the language of the Free People remains a heavily accented form of ancient Azlanti, and the city officially considers itself an outpost of the empire of Azlant. Any creatures who might enter the city from the top of the pyramid—such as by locating the hidden portal in the Maze of the Open Road in Golarion's nation of Galt—are assumed to be new incarnations of these gods, and immediately named thuroks. Yet such paths must be trod carefully, for the Free Peoples still remember the barbarism and enslavement of their past, and those "gods" who slip up may find themselves torn apart by their faithful.

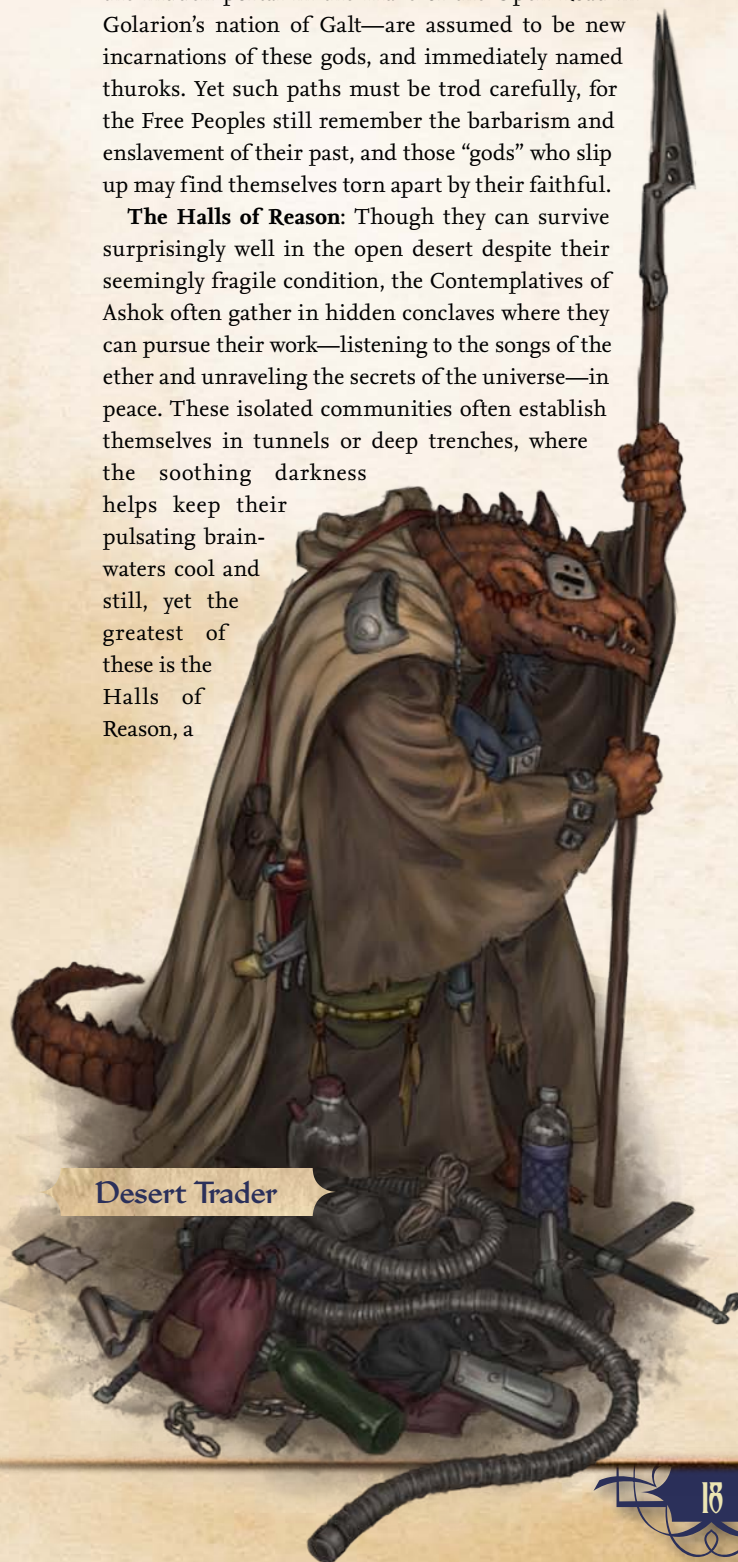
The Halls of Reason: Though they can survive surprisingly well in the open desert despite their seemingly fragile condition, the Contemplatives of Ashok often gather in hidden conclaves where they can pursue their work—listening to the songs of the ether and unraveling the secrets of the universe—in peace. These isolated communities often establish themselves in tunnels or deep trenches, where the soothing darkness helps keep their pulsating brainwaters cool and still, yet the greatest of these is the Halls of Reason, a

compound of vast, squared-off stone towers and cubes entirely without windows. Inside, hundreds of Contemplatives float from room to room on magical cushions of air, communing psychically or with their keening songs, sometimes linking with each other to attempt to move aside the twin veils of space and time. Non-Contemplatives are occasionally allowed in, but despite the residents' politeness, their strangeness eventually proves too unnerving for all but the most dedicated scholars. This complex was also the site of one of the Contemplatives' greatest collective works: a permanent portal capable of contacting creatures on Golarion. Though the device (and contact with Golarion in general) was eventually judged too dangerous and locked away, its anchor at the Golarion end remains where it originally appeared in the Mwangi Expanse, a legendary artifact known as the Doorway to the Red Star. (For a more complete history of the Doorway, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Heart of the Jungle*.)

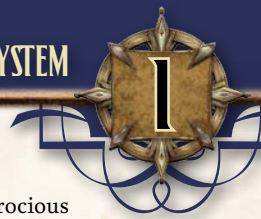
The Hivemarket: Less a city than a giant bazaar, the Hivemarket rests along the eastern foot of Mount Ka. Here, merchants of all races and nations meet to trade without the taxes or influence of any particular city or ruler. The market itself is half aboveground and half in an ancient tunnel network that appears to have formed naturally from the volcano's prehistoric lava flows. Through the marketplace swim the incorporeal ghost-things called khulan. Large-headed and glossy-eyed, with two arms and bodies that trail away to nothing, these silent guardians protect the markets and keep them independent, doing nothing to affect even the most heinous trade or business deal but immediately descending in a ghostly pack on those who attempt to secure influence over the market via force or violence.

Ka, Pillar of the Sky: Several times taller than any mountain on Golarion, the vast and dormant shield volcano known respectively as the "Pillar of the Sky," the "Great Father," or simply "Ka" is the tallest single mountain in the solar system, yet its base is so broad that most of its slope can be simply hiked up. Visible from hundreds of miles away as a bulge on the horizon, the mountain is of great significance to the tribes of the Shobhad-neh. Battles for territory or honor regularly take place along its slopes, and only the annual Clanmoot held at the foot is guaranteed to be peaceful, as chieftains from tribes across the world assemble with their retinues to boast, make alliances, air grievances, and keep the warring clans from being totally overrun by other races.

The mountain also plays an important role within tribes—while most successions and assumptions of power involve duels, those who pass the Test of the Mountain are always afforded great honors by others. These are the rare and foolhardy few who dare to climb above the point at which the mountain grows so high as to poke through the breathable atmosphere, into the edges of outer space.



Desert Trader



Those who manage to return need not bring any tokens to prove their success, for all can see the changes in their personalities, the strange fits that overtake them, and their tendency to spout prophecy. Yet whether these changes are due to some unknown artifact on the mountain's highest slopes, or simply the result of madness brought on by slow asphyxiation and brain damage, none dare question the mountain-tested, for they are completely fearless, seeing themselves as already dead—or perhaps reborn.

Maro, City of the Trench: Running like a great scratch along Akiton's equator is the Edaio Rift, sometimes known simply as "The Rift" or "The Scar." At 3 miles deep and thousands of miles long, it is a canyon without parallel, in some places so wide that its bottom almost forms a plain, in others so narrow that the bottom is shrouded in constant darkness. Though many have built their homes and settlements on its floor or burrowed into its walls for safety, the largest city to make use of this natural wonder is Maro.

So old that no one remembers its first builders, Maro is nevertheless divided into newer and older districts. As might be expected, the New City is inhabited primarily by the well-to-do merchant castes, while the older buildings of adobe and decaying sandstone house itinerant barbarians, travelers, and the poor. This divide in the population has been exacerbated significantly in the last 50 years by the rise of the Arsis Holdings—a plateau kingdom to the north that prides itself on its civilization and urbanization, shunning the traditions of their barbarian ancestors. The subsequent flood of settlers, traders, carpetbaggers, and strange new drugs has left the downtrodden of Maro locked into strange dreams and flashes of seemingly psychic revelations, even as they slave under new masters. Though the class divide creates tension, it's a tension that has lasted for generations, and the city is seen by many as a nexus of trade and travel, drawing caravans and skyships from across the world—as well as the occasional off-world visitor—to its famed Thousand Lights, which burn in the near-perpetual twilight of the trench's floor.

The Winterlands: In most regions of Akiton, water is a scarce and precious commodity. Tribes fight to the death over small oases and canyon-bottom streams, and many cultures use the ceremonial sharing of water to formalize pacts, alliances, and marriages. The exception to this is the planet's large polar ice caps, sometimes referred to proudly as "the Winterlands" by hardy locals who scrape out livings on these glaciers of water ice. If still liquid, the ice caps at both north and south poles would contain enough water to cover the planet's surface—and indeed, the water collected here is likely the same water that once created Akiton's great seas and canal-carving rivers. How it came to be frozen at the poles is perhaps the planet's greatest mystery.

Though they maintain a few cities, walled and highly defensible, the people of the northern ice cap are primarily

nomads, draping themselves in the hides of the ferocious native arabuk—furred creatures one part caribou and one part ferocious snow leopard—and migrating across the glaciers and ice shelves in portable, yurtlike structures. These people, dubbed the Ice Clans, are primarily human, though at least two white-skinned Shobhad clans live there as well. Yet these tribes are clearly not the first people to have resided here. In the tangle of frigid and foreboding mountain ranges around the northern pole, ancient and abandoned cities of molded stone and weird metal towers have stood empty since times beyond memory, perhaps even since before the world's seas froze. Scattered carvings indicate that the residents were tall, four-armed humanoids, giving rise to the notion that these might have been the ancestors of the Shobhads, yet the strange and stylized masks worn in all the drawings keep scholars from being sure, as does the tendency for even well-equipped adventuring parties to disappear in the mountains.

The southern ice cap is far less populated, with most civilization ringing its edges. Local legends say that people once lived much farther into the snowy wastelands, but were chased north after awakening an unnamed evil. Certainly the southern cap is more barren and forbidding, with great white-out storms that can last for days. Here, too, there are ruins—structures completely unlike those on the northern pole, and obviously designed for inhuman forms. Yet more interesting still is that many structures bear scars and contain shards of weapons more appropriate to the northern ruins, suggesting the possibility of a planet-wide war between north and south. Significant exploration, however, has been hampered by the fact that the ancient warning stories ring true, and something dark still hunts the icy southern plains.

Adventure Hooks

Below are a few ways to get your party invested in Akiton.

- For unknown reasons, the Doorway to the Red Star in the Mwangi Expanse has become operative once more. Whether it's intentional on the part of the Contemplatives, or a push for power by someone like Walkena, the mummified ruler of Mzali, creatures from both planets have begun flowing back and forth, bringing new dangers to both worlds, and someone needs to investigate.
- The PCs stumble through a portal deep in the ruins of an Azlanti city, only to find themselves standing atop the main pyramid of Arl and greeted as gods by the adoring populace.
- Scholars in Maro have long suspected that the ruins in the Winterlands predate the formation of the ice caps, yet now some believe that whatever race lived there may have actually caused Akiton's cold desertification. It's up to the PCs to lead an expedition into the dangerous, hidden cities to verify the theory—and perhaps reverse whatever process the ancients set in motion.





VERCES

The Line

Diameter: x1; **Mass:** x1; **Gravity:** x1

Atmosphere: Breathable; **Orbit:** 3 years

Verces, also known as “the Line,” draws its name from the fact that it is tidally locked, with the same hemisphere always facing the sun. With one side of the planet baking in the constant light and radiation, and the other losing its heat to the darkness of space, the thin atmosphere of Verces is unable to fully distribute the energy, resulting in one side that’s blistering hot and another that’s freezing cold. Only along the terminator line, the narrow band where day meets night, are temperatures favorable to conventional animal life, and it is here that Verces’ civilization has flourished, encircling the planet in a bustle of activity. Steamy jungles and tiny tropical seas populate the sunward side of the band, filled with cold-blooded reptilian creatures that bask in the eternal afternoon sun, while farms and fields occupy the majority of the sunset, and warm-blooded predators stalk the twilight of the opposite side, becoming steadily more alien as they pass beyond humanoid-held lands and into the true black of Darkside.

Verces’s several distinct environments support a wide variety of monsters and magical beasts ranging from simple brutes to weird savants with thought processes far beyond those of human ken, yet the indisputable masters of the planet are the Vercites, the only race responsible for a planet-wide civilization. Physiologically, the Vercites are surprisingly similar to the humanoid races of Golarion, standing 8 feet tall with delicate features and legs that seem a touch too long. Their most striking differences from humans or elves are their eyes—shining black half-globes that protrude from their heads like those of a mouse—and the ability of their inhumanly smooth and perfect skin to change color at will, an adaptation likely spawned by a need to regulate the amount of radiation absorbed when passing from one sun-climate to another. Vercites wear only as much clothing as is functional, instead preferring to decorate themselves with brilliant patterns on their skin. And just as their planet is divided into three overarching biomes, so are the people of Verces divided into three castes.

The first caste, known as the Augmented, contains those Vercites who have chosen to take advantage of the race’s considerable magical and technological achievements to modify their own bodies, enhancing their natural abilities. These are the warriors and adventurers, the starship captains and elite technosages, with embedded augmentations ranging from simple nightvision monocles to robotic limbs and powerful on-board weapon systems.

The second, known as the Pure Ones, contains the Vercites who reject all personal augmentation, accepting

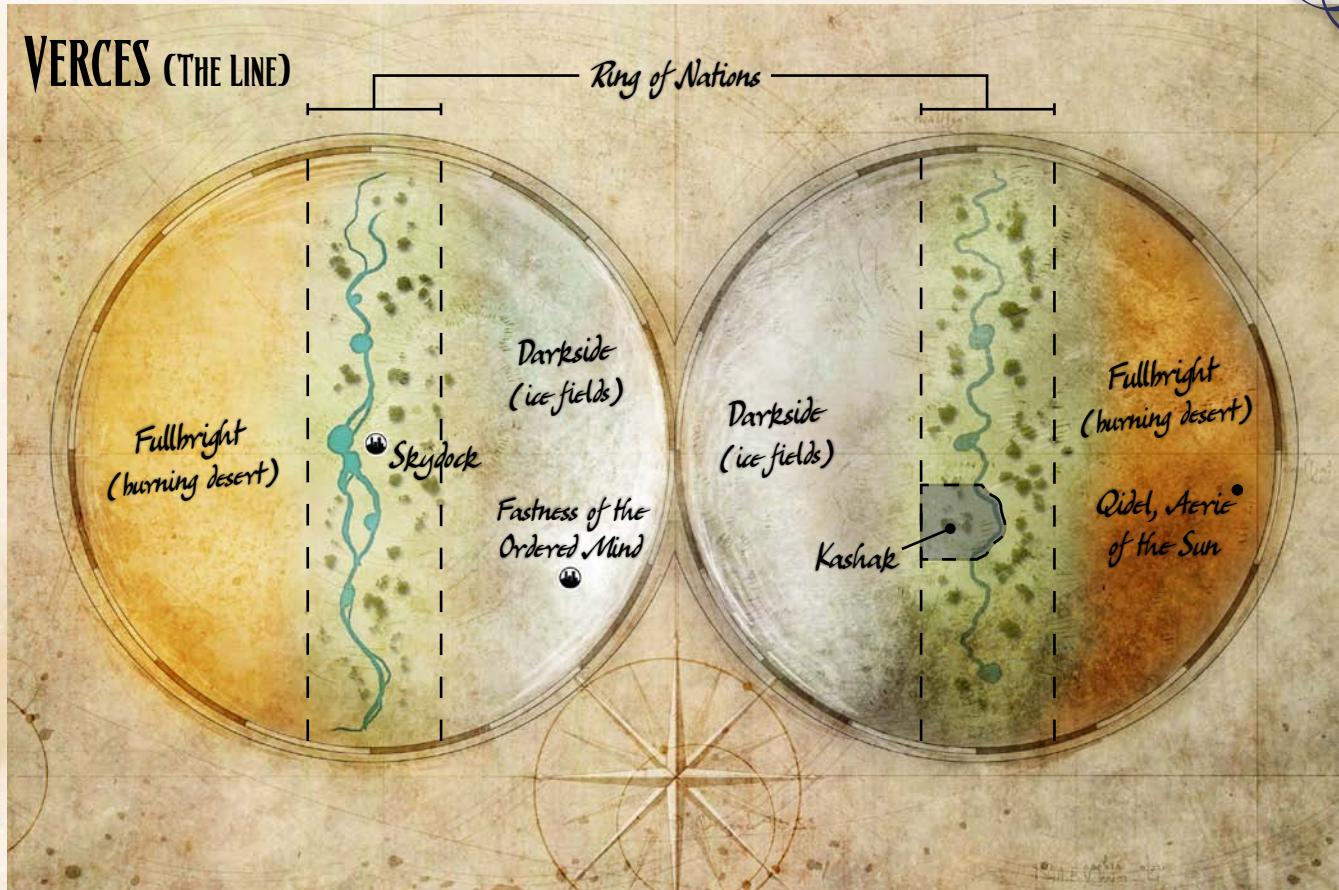
the role that basic magic must play in any society but often employing nothing more technological than the same farming equipment one might find on Golarion. Honing minds and bodies through toil in the fields and the fellowship of other workers, the Pure Ones are responsible for producing the society’s food, as well as for much of its governance and commerce.

Last but not least are the God-Vessels, citizens devoted entirely to the service of a deity. While arcane magic is the purview of scholars and sorcerers of both other castes, only the God-Vessels are clerics. Whether singly or in churches, these sworn messengers of the gods work to further their patrons’ wills and fulfill their individual roles within society. God-Vessels can often be easily identified by their devotionals—holy symbols emblazoned on their chests, brands that have been burned to form scar tissue that can no longer change color, frozen permanently in place.

Regardless of nationality, caste selection on Verces is an individual affair, generally selected when one reaches sexual maturity around 16 years old. Though family and friends naturally have a large effect on a young person’s choice, active coercion is extremely taboo.

Visitors from other planets often wonder at the balance of power between the classes, in particular the fact that the simplistic Pure Ones appear to be in charge of most of the government. Why, they wonder, haven’t the heavily armed warriors of the Augmented caste taken over, or the God-Vessels leveraged their divine powers to dominate the others? As with so much on Verces, the answer is balance. By longstanding tradition, the Augmented and the God-Vessels may take their brides and husbands only from the ranks of the Pure Ones. In this way, the old adage goes, the balance and understanding between classes may be maintained within each individual home. It also doesn’t hurt that the Pure Ones, as those responsible for the business of food production, are by necessity the most populous class, and can count on traditionalist members of the God-Vessels to back them against any challenge to the status quo.

This concept of balance and cooperation can also be seen in the structure of Verces’s cities and nations. With the blazing sun and frozen night establishing their eastern and western borders, the nations of Verces are laid out in a giant segmented ring that encircles the planet from top to bottom, with each roughly rectangular nation usually bordering only two others. These national borders, once fiercely defended, are now generally permeable, allowing trade and traffic to pass along the grand circuit of civilization relatively unhindered. The cities themselves are wonders of technology and engineering, sometimes stretching for miles in great warrens of glass and steel, with smooth towers catching the endless sun while shaded lower levels are forced to rely on magical or electric light, their glowing hives visible from space. In some cases, great



arcane engines pull trains of goods for hundreds of miles, bringing produce in from the outlying farm communities or connecting neighboring settlements with high-speed rail lines whose creation is a closely kept trade secret.

Despite wildly varying social customs and a certain amount of individual pride, all the civilized countries of Verces bow to the will of the Grand Assembly of the Ring of Nations. In this large parliamentary body, representatives from the various nations interact as equals, cooperating for the good of the planet as a whole while simultaneously protecting the interests of their individual homes. Though sometimes frustrating, this process is one of the reasons that none of the nations of the Ring have engaged in open warfare with one another in more than a thousand years.

The other reason is the Stewards. An independent coalition owing loyalty only to the Grand Assembly, the Stewards are a highly trained peacekeeping force drawn from all three castes, with well-defended citadels in every nation. Though happy to lend a hand against monstrous threats from the east or west, and sometimes treated as a secondary police force, the Stewards exist to defend the Ring of Nations and ensure individual countries' loyalty. Recognized the world over as elite and disciplined warrior-diplomats, the Stewards also have the added advantage

of being the only organization with access to the Draws, a network of linked teleportation stones that allow easy passage between any two Steward citadels on the planet, allowing them to mobilize at a moment's notice.

Beyond the narrow band of the Ring of Nations, Verces is divided into Darkside and the Fullbright. In those lands where the sun constantly shines, hardy plants with poisonous spines and stalks as hard as iron provide food and shelter for animals immune to the blistering heat. Many of the more docile beasts engage in a form of photosynthesis, gaining much of their nutrition through the light striking their skin, while chitinous abaki and the burrowing dust mantas earn their sustenance through more violent means. Those desert people who eke out a living here are often visible from far away because of the mirrored robes that keep them cool, save for when they're hunting, when the robes are turned inside-out to reveal dun-colored fabric capable of blending in perfectly with the sun-baked badlands. Darkside is similarly depopulated, with the majority of humanoid civilization centered in the little fishing settlements clustered around the edges of the great ice seas closest to the Ring, where salinity and warm winds keep the water from freezing all the way. Farther out on the seas, people are forced to take



shelter within the ice, mining deep through it to reach the relative fertility of the lightless liquid oceans. Here as well, monsters hold sway, from the white-furred hoarbats capable of exsanguinating a man in seconds to the horrors of the bloodbrothers, inside whose frigid flesh a prey creature is kept alive and in agony, its straining heart adding its own blood and warmth to the predator's until the victim dies from exhaustion.

Perhaps as a result of their advanced technology and generally peaceful civilization, or maybe simply as a result of their proximity to the Diaspora and the desire to defend themselves from a similar fate, Verces has made enormous breakthroughs in the field of space travel. From the nearly self-sufficient orbital settlement of Skydock, the great metallic dirigible-shaped ships of Verces launch themselves into the space between worlds, their pressurized hulls filled with precious air and propelled by flame both magical and mundane. Though exceedingly expensive and crewed only by the bravest Augmented, the legendary aetherships are both commissioned and maintained by the Grand Assembly, who have seen firsthand what the predatory bone sages of Eox are capable of.

Adventuring

PCs adventuring in the nations of the Ring have little to fear in terms of environmental hazards, as the land there is similar in climate to the temperate swaths of Golarion, with the intimidating metallic cities surrounded by relatively pastoral fields of crops. Far more confusing is the collection of sometimes bizarre local customs and the tendency for locals to try to assign outsiders to a caste. Still, Vercites are no more predatory than people anywhere, and those who get over the initial shock of meeting outsiders are likely to greet them with curiosity and hospitality.

Away from the terminator, however, things quickly become dangerous. Temperatures soar or drop depending on which direction one travels, approaching and soon surpassing the range of what can safely be handled with a simple *endure elements* spell. Even most Augmented Vercites know better than to travel too deep into either Darkside or the Fullbright without special protective suits, syntheses of

magic and machinery that defend against the elements and sometimes include both physical assistance and increased combat abilities. Such suits are expensive and bulky, but relatively common, given the number of excursions necessary to hunt the bizarre creatures that live in either environment, or to mine the crystals and metals used as components in the Ring's monolithic factories. Statistics for a version of these suits usable by humans appear on page 55.

Gazetteer

The following are just a few of the notable locations on Verces.

Fastness of the Ordered Mind: Deep in the permafrost expanse of Darkside rests the cluster of linked temple-strongholds known collectively as the Fastness of the Ordered Mind. Here dwell the reclusive Ascetics of Nar, brilliant scholar-monks who see in the crystalline structure of snow and ice the inherent order of the universe. While their knowledge of esoteric matters is impressive, even to academics of the Ring, the brothers and sisters of the monasteries are frightening and strange. To better focus their minds, the Ascetics of Nar use sharpened ice to carve sigils into their flesh, then lie perfectly still as the frozen blades melt and run down their bleeding bodies, soothing and—supposedly—infusing them with the order and structure the water no longer contains. In addition, many of the monks spend long periods meditating in the cold wastelands with only minimal protection, losing digits and limbs to the blackening, ravaging winds. Those who lose so many limbs in this manner that they can no longer function unaided are either sold at great cost to the Skydock shipyards, where they are permanently linked into ships to aid in their navigation, or else joined psychically with their similarly mutilated cohorts in the deepest sanctums of the monasteries—with both fates being considered the highest of honors and service to the Fastness.

Kashak: Even within the Ring, not everyone is content to be ruled by tradition and the consensus of all nations, constantly watched over by the Stewards. Throughout history, various upwellings of resentment within the Ring have led to dissension or outright conflict, and the most recent of these complications is currently stirring in the nation of Kashak. Here, a particularly zealous cadre of Augmented caste members has been gaining power and popularity, preaching the idea that Pure Ones are backward, unnecessary brakes



Augmented Aethership Captain



on the great machine of progress and scientific advancement. Surprisingly, many of the nation's God-Vessels have gotten behind this idea as well, with those powerful priests most concerned with knowledge and arcana joining the new sphere of influence. As a result, Kashak is now almost entirely Augmented in some fashion, and the proportion of the Augmented is still rising. Their neighboring nations are understandably nervous that the Kashakians (or their ideology) may spill over the border any day now, but as of yet the Grand Assembly has been unwilling to send in the Stewards to physically enforce conformity.

The Outlaw Kingdoms: The nations of the Ring hold the choicest territory on Verces, yet they are not its only civilized peoples. Usually referred to derisively as the "Outlaw Kingdoms," many other small groups and factions unwilling to consolidate and join the homogenous totality of the Ring eke out their own meager existences within the Fullbright or Darksides. These include isolationist ice fishermen and taiga-hunting nomads, as well as clans of masked desert people and sun worshipers. Tending toward loose collections of clans and cults, and cut off from all but the most basic trade with the Ring, the residents of the Outlaw Kingdoms are generally seen as backward and inbred by Verces' more cosmopolitan residents. Many have their own alternative caste systems or cultic beliefs that further alienate them from mainstream Vercite culture, and over time some have physically adapted to better rule their chosen ecosystem. Yet for all the disdain the tribes of fire and ice earn from their supposedly sophisticated Ring brethren, few can deny the total mastery of their terrain that makes them perfect guides, guerillas, and thieves—all traits useful to outsiders, provided they can navigate the outlaws' complex web of customs.

Qidel, Aerie of the Sun: In the center of the Fullbright, a narrow spire rises from the desert. Thousands of feet high, the stone monolith towers over the surrounding land. Though visible for miles around, the spire called Qidel remains a mystery to most, thanks to its residents. From their roost atop the spire, strange bird-creatures of shining steel sail out over the landscape in predatory packs, ruled by human-shaped overlords who fly on obviously artificial wings of a similar metal. These aerial creatures speak in shrill screams, and make contact with the surrounding desert peoples only in the form of raids on livestock and the abduction of young men and women—presumably for breeding and darker pleasures. Though many believe the bird-men of Qidel to be rogue Augmented who long ago forsook civilization—and indeed, this example is often held up in the Grand Assembly as support of the status quo—no one truly knows what goes on in the Aerie of the Sun, thanks to the ferocity of its defenders. Recently, data gathered from a spacecraft flying over the spire has raised new questions, as the settlement at the spire's peak seems to be some sort

of ancient temple, and divination scans have revealed that the spire itself may be hollow, a long tube that drops below ground level into some unknown depths.

Skydock: Rising up from a tremendous base near the equator is the greatest wonder Verces has to offer: the legendary needle-spire of Skydock, which is in fact a magical cable stretching all the way to space and tethering the satellite at the end of the cable in geosynchronous orbit. Those given the opportunity to teleport to the top find themselves in a cramped complex that is one part military base, one part port, and one part shipyard. Controlled jointly by all the nations of the Ring, Skydock is where the best and brightest technosages and traditional spellcasters work together to design ever-better ships capable of making the long journey between worlds. It's here as well that Verces trains its space pilots, refuels and provisions returning ships, and receives those few offworld visitors (such as the sarcesians) who arrive via conventional means rather than teleporting directly to the planet's surface.

Sun Farms: While the Fullbright may be too dangerous to venture into without protective suits or magic, that doesn't mean it's not still useful. To help power their massive cities, the Vercites maintain the Sun Farms, huge plantations of solar panels that constantly and efficiently drink in the sun's light, translating it to usable energy. Situated well into the scorched lands, the Sun Farms and their miles of power conduits are maintained by well-paid workers who live in completely enclosed structures, the better to avoid both heat and any dangerous radiation breaking through the atmosphere. In addition to the technicians, the Sun Farms also require significant numbers of guards to protect the facilities against predatory beasts, anti-technology zealots from the desert, and those members of the Outlaw Kingdoms who would siphon away the farms' energy without contributing to its function.

Adventure Hooks

Below are some adventure hooks for Verces.

- Conflict has erupted in the Grand Assembly over caste issues, and only outsiders totally without castes themselves can mediate. But can the PCs survive the negotiations and stop a civil war before it starts?
- One of the larger desert Outlaw Kingdoms clans has plans to take over the nearby mines and Sun Farms. Upon learning of their plans, will the PCs fight to protect legitimate Ring holdings—or join the downtrodden people in their quest for liberty and equality?
- The PCs are close to locating a fabulous artifact or adventure location somewhere in the void of space, but no teleportation magic can take them to the site when its exact whereabouts are unknown. Only the legendary aethercrafts of Verces can possibly make the search feasible.





DD THE DIASPORA

The Lost Ones

Diameter: Millions of asteroids up to 600 miles across;

Mass: $\times 2$ total (less than $\times 1/100$ for any single asteroid)

Gravity: Varies; **Atmosphere:** Varies; **Orbit:** Varies

Today, Golarion's solar system has 11 planets, but this was not always the case. Modern astronomers have long been fascinated by the fact that the writings of ancient Azlanti scholars reference two more worlds: the Twins, Damiar and Iovo, orbiting at a point between Verces and Eox. Damiar and Iovo were close enough that the planets spun around each other in the course of their orbits, and their residents were likely the first sentient races in the system to achieve interplanetary communication and trade. Together, their federated worlds became a powerful partnership, and worked together to send emissaries to the other inner worlds of the system.

And then something went wrong. After thousands of years, even the displaced children of the Sister Worlds no longer remember exactly what happened. Most believe that there was an interplanetary war culminating in the destruction of the planets themselves. Others believe that attempts to establish mass magical travel between the worlds led to a shift in their orbits, resulting in a collision. Still others claim that neighboring Eox is to blame, having destroyed the Twins with a weapon of incomparable power.

Whatever the case, the writings of the Azlanti and other planetary scholars record a day when the Twins flared into a single light bright enough to match the noon sun—then were gone. In their place was a expanding field of debris that stretched across the sky, quickly filling the entirety of the planets' former orbit. For centuries afterward, nearby worlds were regularly bombarded by meteorites—some small, some devastatingly large—as detritus was cast out by momentum and gravitational forces. Slowly, the carnage stabilized, coming to occupy a vast ring of space.

The Twins are mostly forgotten now, and the asteroid belt is instead known as the Diaspora, sometimes more poetically referred to as the March of Stars. Primarily dust and tiny shards of stone and metal, the Diaspora nevertheless contains more than a million celestial bodies with diameters greater than a mile. So vast is the space the belt occupies, however, that collisions between significant objects are rare—at least as humans think of time—and creatures or vessels passing through the debris field are exceedingly unlikely to accidentally strike an asteroid of any discernible size. Despite occasional impacts and unpredictable gravitational effects, most of the larger asteroids are safely contained within their orbits, though it's suspected that the fabled *Starstone* that caused the Age of Darkness may have started life as an object within the

Diaspora, knocked out of its stasis and pulled toward Golarion by the mysterious powers of the aboleths.

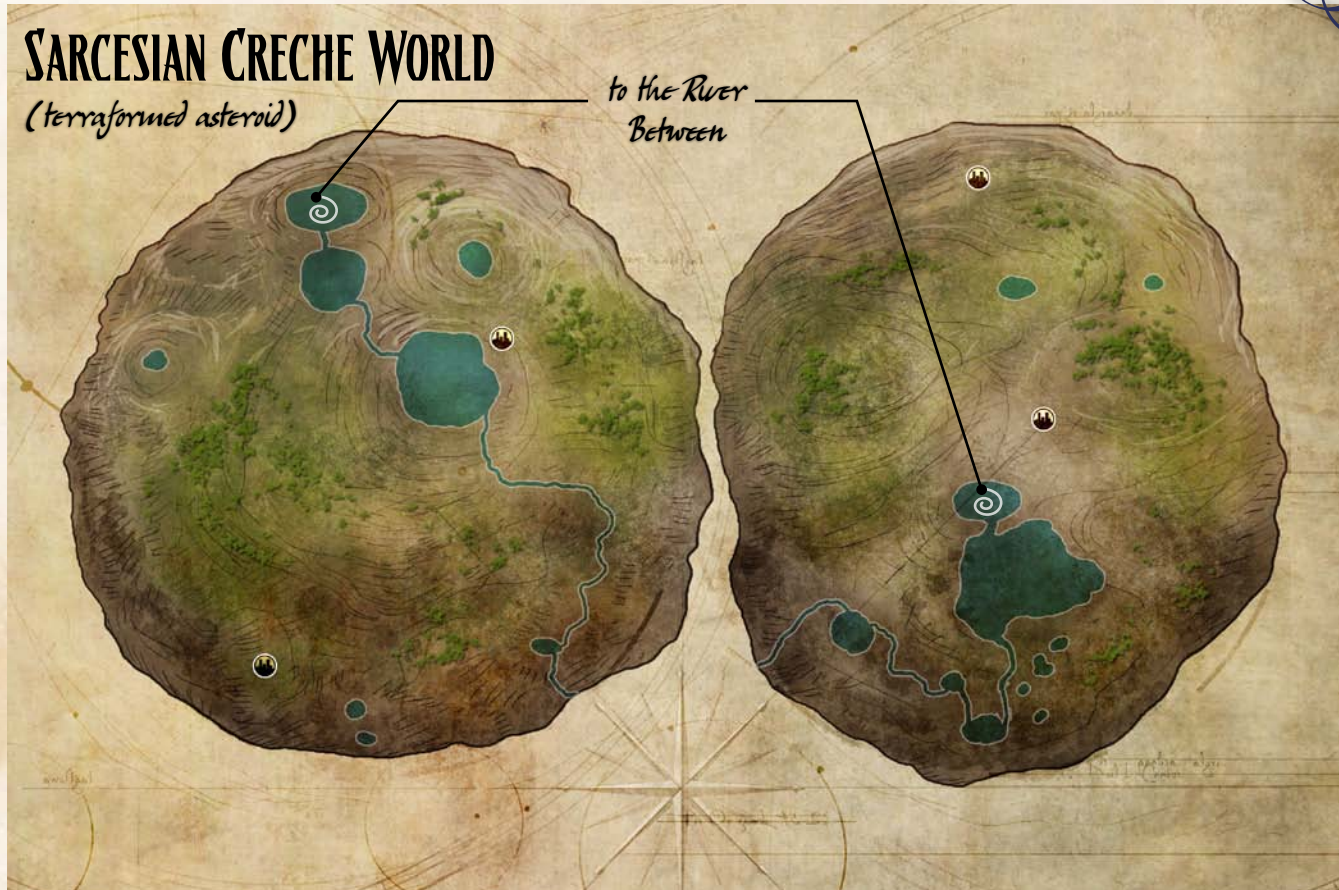
Unlike an asteroid belt formed normally during a solar system's birth, the Diaspora still holds many traces of its violent birth. While most of the asteroids and dwarf planets contained within its shifting mass are nondescript, lopsided rocks of stone, metal, and ice, some still bear identifiable traces of the civilizations that were destroyed in their formation. Individual asteroids might contain a few chiseled words or chunks of a ruined city block, while whole fields of crumbled buildings and other artifacts might spin together in a mass, mysteriously spared by the cataclysm that ripped the worlds apart.

Perhaps the most amazing thing about the Diaspora, however, is the fact that it remains inhabited. While the populations of Damiar and Iovo were almost completely wiped out—and indeed, other than the fact that they were humanoid, their nature and culture have been forgotten—life continues to flower among the planets' ruins. With the riches of two entire worlds cast into the void, salvage is extremely valuable for those races capable of reaching and surviving among the debris. Outlaw conclaves of aethership captains from Verces make their pirate dens on large asteroids, while long-legged robotic spiders—perhaps seeded by the First Ones of Aballon—mine and scavenge, launching themselves from asteroid to asteroid with absolute mathematical precision, in an environment where the slightest error would see them floating helplessly into space for eternity. Here as well one can find hermits sick of all other life forms, immensely powerful wizards and demigods for whom individual asteroids are barren homes—or prisons. Scattered among these intelligent residents are more bestial creatures such as the delicate, three-mouthed void-binders and the brilliantly glowing ribbons called flaresnakes.

The most civilized and populous creatures of the Diaspora are the sarcesians. Believing themselves to be the only descendents of the lost peoples of the Twins, the sarcesians have adapted to life in hard vacuum. Averaging 10 to 15 feet tall, sarcesians are humanoid in shape, but stretched long and bird-thin, their pale bodies designed for life in the absence of gravity. Able to suspend respiration indefinitely, these gentle aliens soar between asteroids on moth wings of pure energy, riding the solar wind and reflected light like birds on a thermal. Those rare travelers from Golarion who've made contact with the sarcesians sometimes compare the willowy perfection of the winged race to that of angels, though of course this resemblance is generally dismissed as coincidence or heresy.

Adventuring

The vast and rocky spray of the Diaspora is almost as inhospitable as the void of space itself. Except for a



select few sarcesian creche worlds, none of the asteroids are capable of maintaining a significant atmosphere. Temperatures are extremely cold, typically around -100 degrees Fahrenheit. Though a fair number of the irregular, misshapen rocks that make up the asteroid belt are large enough to exert noticeable gravitational pulls on Medium-sized creatures, this is barely enough to keep one's feet on the ground. Creatures on these asteroids can carry tremendous amounts or make enormous leaps with minimal effort—perhaps 10 or 20 times their normal height—but may run the risk of flinging themselves completely off the surface if they jump too hard or run too fast. Smaller asteroids require creatures to hang on to maintain contact in the zero-gravity dance of space.

By far the safest method of traveling through the Diaspora is via teleportation magic, with spells like *teleport* and *greater teleport* being sufficient to carry parties between various bodies within the belt, and scrying magic or high-powered telescopes often proving useful for surveying destinations. Other options include magical flight, sailing the solar wind via energy wings modeled off the sarcesians' natural appendages, sailing the River Between, riding along on one of the Aballonian spider-machines' carefully calculated leaps, or any methods sufficient for interplanetary travel.

Information on operating without atmosphere and on low-gravity worlds can be found on page 54.

Gazetteer

Though the Diaspora contains a staggering number of boring, lifeless rocks, the following are a few of the more interesting locales.

Creche Worlds: When the Twins were destroyed, most of their resident cultures were destroyed with them. Of the millions of souls that once populated the doomed worlds, only a tiny fraction were saved, either through freak chance or by virtue of being off-planet at the time in one of the rare diplomatic and trade voyages to other worlds. Of these desperate few, some left to settle other worlds. Others turned outward, fleeing the system entirely in the hope of finding another world or plane where they could rebuild and forget. Yet most of the survivors chose to stay, using powerful magic and science to transform themselves into creatures capable of colonizing the ruins of their lost home. These latter became the strange and beautiful people known as sarcesians.

While sarcesians' lives are spent primarily in vacuum and the cold void between drifting asteroids, they still maintain a racial memory of the worlds they lost, and



require warmth and breathable atmosphere in order to bear young. As such, the greatest arcanists and clerics of an age long lost combined their abilities to create a dozen sanctuaries known as the creche worlds, each an asteroid no more than a few hundred miles in diameter, all tied together by the River Between. On these worlds, powerful magical engines deep within the asteroids generate artificial atmosphere and magical fields capable of holding it to the surface, as well as warming the planetoids with their exertions. These worlds are strange, miniature paradises drifting through space, arcologies filled with forests, fields, and pastoral villages where the delicate sarcesians can relax and raise children, soaring through the weak gravity and appreciating that which was taken from them so long ago. Of course, these same qualities also make the creche worlds prime targets for space pirates, rogue wizards, and other opportunists, but the sarcesians are well prepared to take care of their own.

House of the Void: No one knows what world originally spawned the Brothers of the Void, whether they were residents of the Twins who escaped destruction or more recent immigrants to the Diaspora. As far as outsiders are concerned, it's impossible to even tell if all the brothers are of the same race, as they insist on draping themselves in perfectly black robes that completely hide their seemingly humanoid forms. Their monastery, the House of the Void, is a squat and rambling stone fortress all out of proportion to the relatively small asteroid it sits on. From here, the generally silent brothers contemplate the void of space, seeking enlightenment in the perfect absence of being. While most other residents are content to leave the dark figures alone, the brothers' tendency to turn up in unexpected places in the asteroid field leads some to question whether there's more to their self-imposed isolation than a mere search for peace, as well as to speculate on what unknown magics hidden in the heart of their fortress allow them to survive in the lonely wasteland. Rumors about their nature fly fast and furious—that they're exiled angels, cultists of the gibbering gods of the Dark Tapestry, or the ageless architects of the Twins' destruction seeking atonement for their sins—but so far no theories have any evidence to back them up.

Nisis: The largest asteroid in the Diaspora, Nisis is the only dwarf planet large enough to have formed into a sphere under its own gravity. Between a crust of ice and a clay core lies an ocean of liquid water that accounts for most of the planetoid's 600-mile diameter and masses more fresh water than can be found on all of Golarion. On its surface—its coldest region—Nisis is a chilly -30 degrees Fahrenheit, yet still quite manageable with a simple *endure elements* spell.

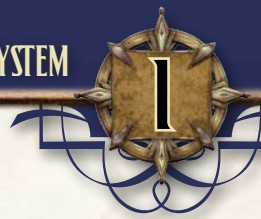
Unlike the creche worlds, Nisis's environment is naturally occurring. Early on, the people that would

become the sarcesians rejoiced over its discovery, and set about transferring those aquatic members of their collective to the spacious sea, as well as adapting some of their terrestrial kin for life beneath the ice crust. For a while, Nisis seemed like a godsend, with more than enough space to house all the survivors of Damiar and Iovo.

Yet it quickly became apparent that the new settlers were not alone in the oceans. Something—perhaps whole races of something—already inhabited the world, swimming up from the darkness to take the newcomers in twos and threes, leaving only clouds of blood hanging in the water. To date, no one knows what these strange predators are—perhaps denizens of their former planets' Darklands equivalents who were shielded from destruction by their rocky homes, or some more familiar animals mutated beyond recognition by the magical energies unleashed in the cataclysm. Regardless, the sarcesians are a slow-breeding race, and can't afford the losses of a prolonged campaign of exploration and potential genocide. Instead, those conclaves of civilized creatures who still live on Nisis keep to the relatively well-lit shallows just beneath the ice, retreating to small outposts on the surface when necessary and ceding the miles of crushing, blackened depths to whatever has claimed them.

The River Between: Crafted via magic or technology long since lost to the sarcesians, the River Between is flowing body of water running through the Diaspora and connecting several of the creche worlds. Both water and atmosphere are held in by a strange, tube-shaped force field a hundred feet in diameter, which meanders through the empty space between the worlds before eventually looping back around on itself in a great torus. How the river functions, especially the manner in which it shifts and distends to match the planetoids' constantly drifting positions, is a mystery to even the greatest sages among the sarcesians, yet swimming or sailing along the deceptively swift-flowing waters is one of the fastest ways to travel through the asteroid belt. Unfortunately, not all who begin such a journey return; some simply disappear, with the sarcesians whispering that the magic powering the strange concourse is a tiny splintered fraction of the River Styx itself—and that those who go missing have drawn the notice of the greater river, or perhaps been selected as sacrifices in accordance with some unknown pact of the river's creators.

The Vacant Halls: While many asteroids contain burrows and passages—some explainable by dint of their origin or residents, others not—none quite compare to the labyrinthine asteroid known as the Vacant Halls. This large, gourd-shaped rock is riddled with literally thousands of passages, some sized for a child and others large enough for twenty men to walk abreast, all obviously carved with deliberation and care. These halls turn and twist for hundreds of miles, interconnecting and curling around



each other without apparent purpose. Rumors of some great secret or artifact hidden at the labyrinth's heart have led to several attempts to map it, yet all such expeditions have returned frustrated—if they return at all. Those who have made the attempt speak angrily of the asteroid seeming to intentionally defy their intrusion, with passages they deliberately marked disappearing as soon as they're out of sight, or reappearing in a completely different spot. As a result of this strange defense mechanism, the legend of the riches it protects has only grown, though it has also given rise to a counter-theory: that the asteroid is in fact a single great puzzle-lock, a cage for some unspeakable threat locked away in its center.

The Wailing Stone: This large asteroid is mostly hollow, its interior carved with a small city's worth of passages and chambers. Discovered relatively recently by the sarcesians, this rock was clearly once inhabited by hundreds of humanoids, likely a rogue sect of sarcesians or salvagers and miners come to make their fortune in the Diaspora. Now, however, the carefully excavated corridors house only stale air and the stench of death.

Sometime in the last hundred years, the residents of the Wailing Stone went insane. Investigators from the nearest creche world initially believed it to be the result of void sickness—a sort of cabin fever that comes from staring too long into the darkness, or being trapped in an enclosed space. Inside the silent, dusty halls, the corpses of the asteroid's residents lie sprawled behind locked doors in postures of terror or extreme violence, some tearing at their own eyes or scouring their hands to ragged stumps scrawling nonsense across the stone walls in their own blood. For weeks after the doomed habitat's discovery, the sarcesian archaeologists did their best to piece together what had happened, taking particular interest in the myriad notes that spoke of "the Sign." Yet their research was cut short when one of their own—a solid and respected scholar—suddenly came down with the same madness while walking alone in the halls, killing three of his colleagues before being brought down.

Since that ill-fated expedition, the sarcesians have quarantined the asteroid, believing it to be either haunted or infected with some sort of illness capable of surviving in vacuum. Now bearing the mocking name of the Wailing Stone, the asteroid is used as a punishment site for the worst criminals among the sarcesians and their neighbor races, with individuals marooned there with sufficient food and supplies to last a year, along with the understanding that at the end of their tenure they'll be picked up and freed. Whether or not the sarcesians would actually retrieve such an individual is a moot point, as so far no one has ever been seen waiting at the rendezvous point.

Adventure Hooks

Below are several adventure hooks for the Diaspora.

- An asteroid is about to collide with one of the delicate creche worlds, and the sarcesians need the PCs to help avert the destruction via a legendary artifact.
- The PCs are made a one-time offer by a visiting Vercite aethership captain whose life they unknowingly saved to accompany her on a mission of danger, discovery, and salvage in the ruins of the Twins.
- A recent spate of murders on one of the creche worlds has led to fears that whatever sickness infects the Wailing Stone has begun to spread. In order to save a delicate world, the PCs need to venture into the Wailing Stone itself and uncover its terrifying secrets.



Sarcesian

**Eox****The Dead****Diameter:** $\times 2/3$; **Mass:** $\times 2/3$; **Gravity:** $\times 1$ **Atmosphere:** Unbreathable; **Orbit:** 5 years

For millennia, Golarion's astrologers have seen something sinister and prophetic in Eox's retrograde orbit. Though their reasoning may be more superstitious than scientific, in this instance they are correct, for Eox is indeed a dead world—yet one that still seethes with malignant activity.

Long ago, Eox was a lush world, filled with vibrant forests and fertile golden seas. Its primary race was the most similar of any extraterrestrial race to the humans of Golarion, and it's often been posited that humanity itself may have been some long-lost cousin or wayward child. Averaging 6 feet tall and with almost translucently pale skin that soaked up the light of the distant sun, Eoxians also differed from humanity in having slightly larger craniums, their foreheads distended with the great masses of their larger brains. Whether by a longer period of evolution or divine gift, the Eoxians were far more intellectually gifted than humanity or the residents of their nearest neighbors, the Twins, with every Eoxian a genius in his or her own right.

In the end, this natural advantage was the Eoxians' downfall. While their powerful intellects gave them many boons—cities that would defy any architectural schools on Golarion, machines capable of reaching the sky and stars, wizards capable of bending space and time to their whims—it also brought hubris and an innate sense of superiority. As a race, the Eoxians turned bitter and petty, constantly striving for new discoveries, abandoning weaker concerns such as love and morality. The greatest among them may even have ascended to godhood through arcane means, forming their own pantheon. Yet despite their achievements, the Eoxians knew no peace, only a ceaseless desire for more.

As with the death of the Twins—with which it may be linked—the calamity that destroyed Eox's bounty is a mystery, and even the gods remain strangely reticent about the matter. As a result of this divine silence, some theorize that the catastrophe was punishment from deities moved to wrath by the Eoxians' presumptuous attempts at godhood. Yet the most popular theory is that the Eoxians themselves were responsible for the destruction of both their world and the Twins, seeing the Sister Worlds as rivals to their own self-important majesty. According to the residents of the Diaspora, the destruction of their ancestral homes was caused by an enormous interplanetary weapon crafted by the Eoxians, an engine of annihilation so powerful that the mere backlash from its successful firing set the atmosphere of Eox aflame, burning off the life-sustaining gases in a

worldwide firestorm. Cities burned and blackened, and seas boiled and condensed into sludge.

Most residents of Eox were killed instantly in the cataclysm. For the few thousand who survived in self-contained environments and secure bunkers, it was the beginning of a new era. With no atmosphere, a critically low population, and most inhabitants sterilized or worse by the wash of radiation that accompanied the catastrophic blast, the inhabitants of Eox found themselves unable to rebuild the civilization they had once known. Yet such was their power that this alone was not enough to stop them.

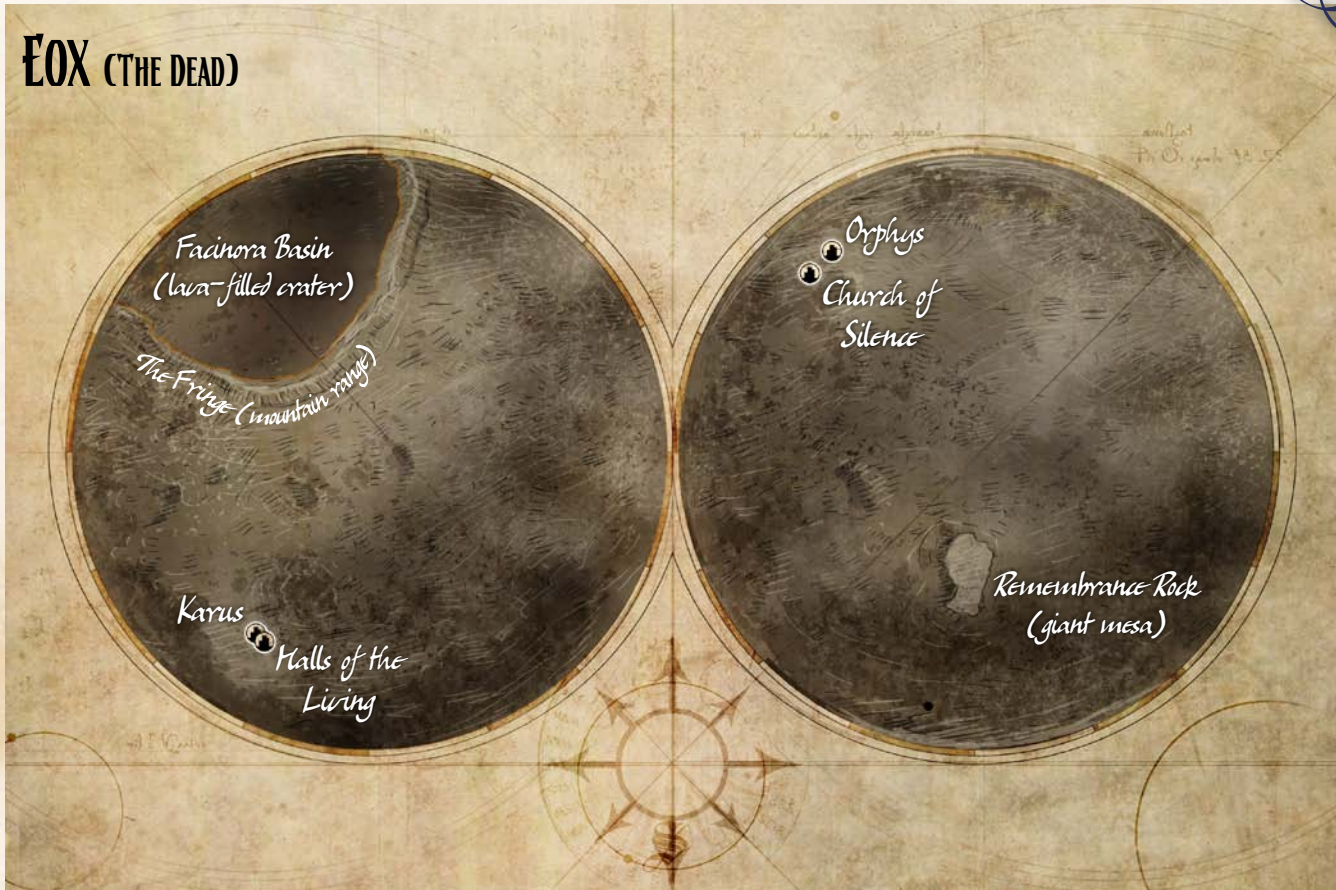
Left with no other choice, the remaining residents of Eox turned to undeath. Though this mass transformation into lichlike beings permanently capped their population, the new existence allowed them to do away with unnecessary and distracting biological processes such as breathing and breeding. In honor of their new phase of existence, the people of Eox renamed themselves, and when the planet-wide fires finally burned themselves out, the first of the bone sages stepped out to greet their new world.

In the millennia since, the bone sages of Eox have grown wiser, more powerful, and even less concerned with matters of ethics. In their vast and mostly empty necropolis cities or scattered holdings across the wastelands, the citizens of the dead planet have turned all of their faculties to the two pursuits left to them: magic and science. In their sprawling demesnes, individual bone sages follow their own passions, banding together only when great works demand it, such as planetary defense or large-scale magical efforts to contact—and enslave—beings beyond knowing. In general, however, the paranoid megalomania that led to their current state prevents bone sages from working together, instead keeping them embroiled in petty political maneuvering.

While the bone sages are abhorrent to civilized beings from most worlds, the issue of their sociopathic immortality would be strictly academic were it not for their corpse ships. Vessels of steel spines and blistering flame, some as large as cities, Eoxian corpse ships are capable of traversing the vast distances between planets, thanks in large part to the bone sages' unique undead nature. Effectively immortal, the residents of Eox care little about the long spans of time sacrificed in the voyage, nor do they have any need to transport food or atmosphere. Instead, their ships are often open to the void in places, adorned with grim trophies and laden only with a few emotionless bone sages or bound servants and the terrible weapons that allow them to take what they want from other races.

Adventuring

As a world for living travelers, Eox is almost as uninviting as the Diaspora (or much worse, given the planet's ghoulish inhabitants). With all oxygen and other easily combustible gases long since burned away, what's left of the planet's



atmosphere is unbreathable by most beings, though it retains enough atmospheric insulation to transmit sound and keep the planet from freezing over entirely. Even thousands of years after the cataclysm, certain irradiated regions and magical scars cause mutations or death in living creatures moving past their invisible borders, and in certain areas great electromagical storms can rage suddenly and destructively in the otherwise night-black sky. While a few scrubby plants have managed to recover and adjust to the new environment, for the most part the surface of Eox is a blasted waste, drab and burnt.

Harsh as it is, the environmental dangers of Eox are still secondary to those presented by its residents. Despite their undead status, the bone sages don't consider themselves evil—rather, they consider the concepts of “good” and “evil” to be hopelessly backward, with the true measure of a method's worth being its effectiveness. Naturally, such a utilitarian perspective frequently leads them to decisions that most other civilized beings would consider evil. This complete lack of regard for other beings would be bad enough, but in this case it's also partnered with extreme megalomania and the paranoid belief that any advances made by others make them more able to someday challenge the sages' supremacy. Still, despite these complications,

the bone sages remain indisputably intelligent, and as such can be reasoned and even bargained with, provided a petitioner has something worthwhile to offer.

Gaining an audience with a bone sage is a harrowing experience, and any sage's dwelling is likely to be thoroughly enmeshed in a network of magical traps and summoned guardians. This holds true even in the Necropoleis, where the patchwork of buildings represents numerous sages' territories abutting each other along well-maintained boundaries. Scrying magic is ubiquitous on Eox, as are powerful wards against it for the bone sages themselves, and thus little occurs within a given sage's area of concern without his or her knowledge.

Those off-world visitors who manage to converse with a bone sage generally find the experience unnerving. After millennia, many sages have given up any attempts at preserving their appearances, and hence have the skeletal look typical of many liches, their ossified bones draped in elaborate finery. Fashions change regularly and vary widely, however, and others preserve their ancient flesh magically, reconstruct their former appearances out of stone or metal, shroud themselves in disturbing illusions, or replace all but their key elements with robotic prostheses. Of late, it's become especially popular to wear pressure suits taken



from the most recent Vercite expedition to the planet (now deceased), or bizarre masks that constantly shift the wearer's appearance. Most communication is conducted magically so as to keep the sages safely ensconced in their citadels, and other civilized humanoid are frequently taken aback by the bone sages' paranoia, their unwavering sense of superiority, and the easy manner with which they discuss the most horrendous atrocities.

Gazetteer

Much of Eox is a blasted, lonely place—a barren hellscape charred as black as the souls of its rulers. Yet even here, there are great works and natural wonders.

Church of Silence: While most people on Golarion equate the Whispering Way with Tar-Baphon, the path of perfection through undeath was followed long before that mortal wizard took his first breath. On Eox, the art that allowed the population's widespread lichdom—sometimes called “the Great Change” or “the Undying”—is referred to as the Song of Silence, and is given the closest thing the bone sages have to religious reverence. The Church of Silence, standing just outside the great necropolis city of Orphys, is a towering testament to the Eoxians' respect for undeath as the savior of their race. Twenty stories tall, this black spire is a mass of spines and rail-less balconies, its windows winking open and closed with horrible, organic smoothness. By longstanding agreement, the heretical libraries of this cathedral are neutral ground, open to all.

Facinora Basin: When the cataclysm that destroyed Eox's ecosystem struck, it did so with a force far beyond even the fall of Golarion's legendary *Starstone*. Whether a great impact or the recoil from some inconceivable weapon, the explosion tore millions of cubic miles of rock from the planet's face, vaporizing it or casting it into space. In its place, a festering wound boiled and oozed in the planet's northern hemisphere, molten rock from the world's core surging up in a futile effort to fill the gap. For centuries, the planet itself screamed and writhed, struggling to heal over the grievous injury done to it. In the end, it only partially succeeded.

Today, this crusted-over wasteland is known as Facinora Basin—a vast crater so wide and deep that it gives Eox the dubious honor of being the only true planet in Golarion's system that isn't spherical. In time, gravity and erosion will likely even out the damage, slowly burying the evidence of the Eoxians' hubris. Yet for now the caldera-like basin remains a knife-edged lava field inhabited by monsters twisted far out of true by the vengeful radiation of a planet betrayed. Travelers cresting the Fringe—the blackened mountain range that surrounds the basin—immediately notice that the mountains are twice as tall on the crater side, dropping precipitously down to the basin's floor, a bed of obsidian and cinder-gray boulder fields broken only by pools of the sludgy, evaporated remnants

of former seas. Those who manage to make it down to the crater's floor are greeted by the frantic lashings of injured magnetic fields and magical ley lines, with ball lightning and strange sheets of flame or magical transmutation storms tearing across the landscape. Here, too, can one most easily make contact with the spirits of those legions destroyed by the catastrophe—a communication that even the most powerful bone sages tend to avoid, as hungry spirits roam the region in gibbering packs known as the Ghost Wind, perhaps cut off from the River of Souls and denied their afterlife by the sheer violence of their passing.

Yet for all of this, the crater is not totally avoided by the locals. Despite the 30-foot-long glass serpents that slither through the rocks, their previous meals clearly identifiable (and sometimes scabbling futilely) inside their translucent coils, or the constant geysers and volcanic eruptions that simultaneously destroy life and provide oases of life-giving chemicals, there are still things in the basin worth having. Some sages seek the strange new life forms that radiation and harsh environments breed, such as the semi-intelligent grub colonies of the steaming sulfur springs, or the horned and blistered ellicoths, with their elephantine legs, mournful dirges, and relentless thirst for soul energy. Others study the lingering effects of the cataclysm, or comb the plains searching for traces of ancient artifacts related to the event. Still others want nothing less than to harness the raw power of the region. Yet all tread carefully, for while Eox may be dead, her death throes linger here.

Halls of the Living: Not everyone on Eox is dead. In the center of the necropolis city of Karus lies a singular attraction—and the reason for the city's formation—known as the Halls of the Living. Here, one of the closed environments that saved a handful of Eoxians from the cataclysm remained sealed, undiscovered by the bone sages until long after their transformations. When the bone sages did eventually uncover the vault centuries later, they discovered that the people inside had grown into their own inbred but sustainable society. Instead of freeing their fellow citizens, the twisted sages became fascinated, expanding the complex and installing magical viewing and manipulation devices so that they might be better entertained. The residents of the Halls have long since realized what's going on, but have either given up any attempt at escape or else enjoy positions of privilege inside the sealed community, in which the bone sages frequently force the residents into acts of torture or erotic congress out of a voyeuristic interest in things like pain and sex, which they can no longer experience themselves. Upon rare occasions, other living humanoids visiting Eox have woken to find themselves imprisoned within the Halls, intended to supplement the stagnant population.

Necropoleis: Though most bone sages have little need for community, over the millennia various factions have



banded together for mutual protection and great works. The results of these temporary alliances are the great cemetery cities that litter the planet's surface, known collectively as the Necropoleis. Some of these build off the remains of ancient pre-cataclysm cities, while others are entirely new, rising in grotesque spires of steel and synthesized bone, their towers leached of all color. While Orphys is the most populous of these by dint of its proximity to the Church of Silence, the Necropoleis are all extremely independent, and often have little interaction with each other.

Remembrance Rock: During the explosion that formed Facinora Basin, the surface of the planet directly opposite the crater rose up in a massive mesa several miles high, a flat-topped plateau that bulged from the earth and remained there. It is here, on the formation named Remembrance Rock, that the bone sages reveal what little emotion is left to them in a shrine to their origins. Carved into the walls of this monolithic mesa are thousands of crypts and labyrinths shaped and warded by individual bone sages as monuments to those lost in the cataclysm. Uninhabited save by guardian creatures and the occasional visitor, Remembrance Rock and its warren of tunnels are a place of both sadness and pride, as many bone sages still remember those friends and family lost in the tragedy, yet recognize the atrocity as a necessary catalyst in their fortuitous conversion to undeath.

The Sentinel: Of all the objects that orbit Eox, the relic known as the Sentinel is the most important. Created so long ago that the secrets of its construction and operation have been lost, this 3-mile-wide, citylike structure is nothing less than an orbital defense platform. Inside the cracked domes and cramped corridors that once held precious atmosphere, carefully chosen bone sages operate those great weapons systems whose functions and use are still known. Though perhaps only a third of the armaments remain functional, these are more than enough to defend against the sarcesian colony fleets that occasionally embark on the generations-long quest to attack Eox, soaring through space on great solar sails to take revenge for the attack on their ancestors. Though the bone sages have no trouble picking off such attackers, the staff of the Sentinel is carefully managed by one of the few regulatory committees on the planet, lest someone decide to turn the station's weaponry toward the world below.

The Thousand Moons: Not all of the rock that was torn free in the creation of Facinora Basin was vaporized or fell back to Eox in a deadly rain. Instead, a significant portion of the ejecta was flung high beyond the planet's atmosphere, becoming a scattered ring of orbiting stones not dissimilar to the smaller worlds of the Diaspora itself. Called the Thousand Moons by those left to see them, these objects trace a regular orbit across Eox's night sky,

a brilliant procession that would be more beautiful were it not also a reminder of the Eoxians' guilt. Most of the bone sages view this band of moonlets with distrust, knowing that any sarcesians who reached them would have an easy time using the drifting rocks as a staging ground for attacks on the planet's surface. In fact, a recent undercurrent of tension among those sages who study the moons closely suggests that such an assault might already be beginning, with someone—or something—causing large outbursts of magical energy in the debris field.

Adventure Hooks

Below are several ways to involve your players with Eox.

- The PCs wake to discover themselves transported to Eox and trapped inside the Halls of the Living.
- Whispering Way cultists have traveled to Eox to search the Church of Silence for information that might lead to Tar-Baphon's release, and only the PCs can stop them.



Bone Sage



Π TRIAXUS

The Wanderer

Diameter: x1; **Mass:** x1; **Gravity:** x1

Atmosphere: Breathable; **Orbit:** 317 years

In many ways, Triaxus is actually two worlds. Dubbed “the Wanderer” because of its extremely eccentric orbit, Triaxus’s distance from the sun varies greatly as it traces its slow path through the heavens. At its farthest point from the system’s center, out past the great gas giants, the sun is little more than a bright spot in the sky, and the world is covered by glaciers and vast snowfields. At its closest point, however, Triaxus comes even closer to the sun than steamy Castrovel, transforming into a world of vibrant forests, rushing rivers, and fertile earth. Because of this extreme seasonal shift, Triaxus has two distinct ecologies, each of which changes or goes dormant while the other is ascendant.

During the Triaxian winter, the planet’s civilized races hunker down in castles and towns carved from ice and stone, hunting the giant furred insects and terrifying snowbirds of the plains while burning pale fungi and snowmoss for warmth. Seas freeze partway over, and narrow straits become ice bridges connecting islands and isthmuses. This is a hard time for everyone, and the people’s personalities reflect it—gruff but honorable, concerned first and foremost with the survival and comfort of their families, slow to give friendship but willing to fight to the death to uphold a promise. Though life remains slightly easier along the equator, with the nations there sometimes constructing vast energy-absorbing plates and angled mirrors to help harness and redirect the weak sun’s rays, most settled peoples prefer to stand their ground rather than attempt to migrate, passing stories to their children of their icy world’s transient nature and the new paradise to come.

In the spring, Triaxus’s glaciers melt and recede in great monsoons, after which those fortunate generations known as the Summerborn abandon their stalwart forts to live free and easy in the forests and jungles that spring up overnight, feeding off the plentiful wildlife, such as bright-plumed vapor boars and the centipede-like dashilen. While most nations retain their greatest cities and townships, this is traditionally a time of nomadism for several cultures, while others encourage homesteading to take advantage of the unclaimed but suddenly fertile landscape. Regardless of the particular tactics a nation or family takes during the summer months, only the most foolish forget the warnings of history, and most priests and government officials during the autumn years require those under their control to stow away a certain percentage of their crops to help feed future generations

during the dark years to follow. Of course, as with any society, there is rarely a shortage of fools who prefer to live for the moment—on Triaxus, a single orbit around the sun takes 317 years, while its humanoid races rarely live more than 80. As a result, autumn is typically a time for rebellion and resentment by those who see no reason to toil in preparation for a season of hardship they know only from legends and may not even live to see.

The primary peoples of Triaxus resemble humans in many ways, with the biggest difference being cyclical changes in their physiology tied to the seasons. While many creatures on Triaxus go dormant or lay eggs capable of surviving through whichever season they find themselves unsuited for, the Triaxians have evolved to match the planet’s orbit. Summerborn individuals tend to have dark skin and relatively little hair, the better to regulate heat and protect against harmful solar radiation. Yet the children and grandchildren of these people are inevitably and progressively born with lighter skin and more hair, until in just a few generations the Winterborn’s bodies are coated in fine, white fur, their eyes narrowing and elongating to protect against snow-blindness. Strangely enough, this reproductive cycle seems to match environmental conditions but is not dependent on them—Triaxians raised on other worlds continue their several-hundred-year cycle.

Upon initial inspection, it seems clear that everything on Triaxus has evolved to accommodate the planet’s eccentric, long-seasoned orbit—and yet the true wonder may be the orbit itself. For even taking into consideration the long route the planet must travel from the inner system to out past the gas giants, conventional physics would say that its orbit should be measured in decades, rather than centuries. Compared to the other planets, whose orbital speeds correspond neatly to their distance from the sun, Triaxus appears to be moving in slow motion. Why this might be is anyone’s guess, though scholars have postulated everything from a temporal anomaly surrounding the planet like a bubble to some magical engine or portal at the planet’s center. Regardless, for those native to the world, Triaxus is simply Triaxus, and both the Summerborn and Winterborn are too busy making the best of their environment to worry overmuch about what hand—divine or mortal—may have shaped both them and their world.

Adventuring

Triaxus is relatively friendly to visitors from Golarion, with similar gravity and a breathable atmosphere. Even at its hottest and coldest, the planet still stays within ranges habitable to humans—if only just barely—and the required adventuring gear for a given season is similar to that needed for arctic or tropical regions on Golarion.





Instead, the greatest dangers on Triaxus come from the planet's residents.

While creatures from other worlds have visited the planet before, such travelers are rare, and likely little more than fairy tales to the average Triaxian. The reception undisguised aliens might receive varies greatly from city to city and nation to nation. In the Drakelands, the PCs would undoubtedly be brought before a draconic overlord as prisoners, while the scholars of Preita would find the PCs a font of knowledge about their homeworld, and the decadent nobles of Ning would immediately incorporate the PCs into their games of status and prestige. Though almost all of the classes are represented somewhere on Triaxus, spellcasters and alchemists from Golarion are likely to find numerous differences between their own magic and that of local practitioners, and both sides could learn much from each other.

Gazetteer

Below are a few of the most notable regions on Triaxus.

Allied Territories: The myriad nations of the Allied Territories represent the majority of humanoid civilizations on Triaxus. Though in theory acting as a single federated unit, this alliance in fact extends only

so far as to represent the humanoids' willingness to band together in order to defend against conquerors from the Drakelands and other, more distant threats. In daily life, the nations of the Territories (as they're more commonly called) operate with complete autonomy, squabbling over territory and trade and occasionally swallowing each other whole in uneasy mergers, or else splitting and dissolving in swift civil wars. Only when one of their number seems likely to conquer several of its neighbors do the rest of the nations step in, with most of them preferring to go to war only when it benefits their own citizens. Some of the most important kingdoms, democracies, and theocracies of the Territories include the border state of Kamora, where every Summerborn man, woman, and child wears a blade to help defend against the vampiric predators of the southern Uchorae Jungle; Zo, the Port of a Thousand Ships; Aylok, whose fertile plains breed the best terrestrial cavalry during the summer and white-furred horrors in the winter; and Preita, the Scholar's Paradise, where wisdom and knowledge are more valuable than gold.

The Drakelands: Taking up most of a continent, the Drakelands are a collection of regularly warring states, not so different from the Allied Territories save for





their leadership—for while most of the serfs and lesser residents of the Drakelands are humanoid, the leaders are dragons and their kin. Here, dozens of ancient dragons maintain city-states and whole countries of servitors, with their younger offspring, dragonblooded Triaxians, and the planet's unique dragonkin (weaker and less intelligent versions of dragons, falling somewhere between true dragons and bestial drakes and wyverns) acting as generals and administrators. No one remembers how or why the dragons originally decided to mingle their affairs with those of humanoids, but the arrangement has been in place for countless generations.

Though a few holdings maintained by good dragons exist in the Drakelands, for the most part the righteous metallic dragons are slower to breed on Triaxus, and many strains have been hunted into near-extinction by their chromatic kin, with only the bravest remaining visible in the company of their peers. The lands are instead ruled with both cunning and savage ferocity by evil dragons of all colors, from the manipulative blues and their realpolitik policies to the barbarism of the whites, who lead their armies of howling barbarians from the front. While the relative balance of power between the dragon states shifts regularly, as per any set of nations, the changing of the seasons tends to affect it as well, with the whites being more prominent during the winters, only to be driven back into the most northern reaches by the other colors during the summer years, in which reds and blues tend to be dominant, with greens establishing scholarly enclaves and blacks digging in and fortifying isolationist settlements.

Ning: Separated from the threat of both the Allied Territories and the Drakelands by the vast expanse of the Sephorian Sea, the Immortal Suzerainty of Ning has historically been allowed to develop with relatively little threat from outside sources (though the monstrous threats within their own declared borders remain significant). Seen as a direct manifestation of the land's will, the Immortal Suzerain—whose immortality is figurative rather than literal, with each new ruler forfeiting his birth name in favor of the title—has historically ruled kindly and justly, and despite his absolute power over the vast empire, rebellions and civil unrest are rare. In part this is due to the military's key role in protecting the rural villagers who dwell in the land's chaotic, sharp-walled mountains and hidden valleys, guarding them against the strange and sometimes fearsomely intelligent creatures that lurk in the wild. Often the first thing constructed when a new village is founded is the town's shelterstone—a fortified ziggurat that villagers can retreat to when the periodic waves of monsters sweep through, and that generally contains some magical means of contacting the military authorities.

While life in Ning's rural areas is little different from life in frontier regions anywhere, the nation's cities are a different story. In addition to the usual art and commerce, citizens of the Suzerainty are obsessed with station, honor, and matters of precedence. Though the people are generally polite, the unspoken rules governing their society are iron-clad, and those who disregard them may find themselves effectively invisible—a potentially life-threatening situation for those unable to trade or seek healing and protection. Another notable feature of the cities is the elite warrior caste known as *ukara*, a name which translates roughly as “battleflowers.” These lithe, androgynous warriors renounce all ties to family and station in order to paint their bodies and compete in highly ritualized martial competitions that are popular spectator sports. *Ukara* are treated as nobility, with the best warriors second only to the highest-ranking nobles in status. This position comes with a price, however, as those men and women declared *ukara* who fail to prove themselves in the ring after their first year are quietly “encouraged” to take their skills to the hinterlands and protect those communities until death. Taking a *ukara* as a consort is seen as quite prestigious among the upper classes, and many nobles want the most acclaimed consort they can get, regardless of gender or sexuality.

Sephorian Archipelago: Due to the planet's lack of a moon, the seas on Triaxus have no true tidal action, with only weather, currents, and the annual glacial melt causing waves and changes in water level. In the several hundred islands of the Sephorian Archipelago, the relative gentleness of the sea has led to a community of tiny towns and villages that travel almost exclusively via canoe in the summer and by walking across the ice floes of the shallows in the winter. Though trade is vital to the scattered tribes' survival, each beachside hamlet has its own particular customs and traditions, and the unprepared may find themselves driven back into the water for reasons they cannot decipher. Strangely, though arable land is always at a premium in the archipelago, a sizable number of islands are left fallow, treated as taboo by the residents. Similarly, several of the inhabited islands bear tall, cylindrical towers that occasionally exhale plumes of smoke that are clearly visible from the water and often used as navigational aids. Yet even in the coldest years, none of the island communities near these monuments dwell inside the vast towers, and outsiders asking about their obvious existence are met with stony silence.

The Skyfire Mandate: Not all of the dragons on Triaxus seek to rule or dominate the humanoid races. In the region known as the Skyfire Mandate, established long ago by an agreement between fleeing good dragons



and the people of the Allied Territories, the two races work together to maintain a buffer between the chaos and fear of the Drakelands and the relative peace of the Territories. Though the true dragons have long since moved on, here the weaker dragonkin bond with humanoids to form the famed Dragon Legion, squadrons of dragonriders who patrol the border and keep the peace with a crusader's tenacity. Living primarily on tribute from those border communities they protect, as well as on the spoils of war when forced into serious conflict, the dragonriders live in secluded mountaintop aeries, fortified redoubts capable of withstanding the wrath of even an enraged true dragon. Though the citizens under their protection may grumble about the heavy tithing, few are willing to give up the shield of the Mandate, and even the more callous and arrogant dragonriders are treated with respect.

Anyone who feels called to be a dragonrider can undertake the years of training and service at the aeries of the Mandate, but in the end, all dragonkin make the final decision regarding who they will and will not carry into battle. Generally wise and good-natured, the Skyfire dragonkin are nevertheless prone to all the same emotions as humanoids, and thus must form a strong bond of love and trust with their riders, who serve as the dragons' military comrades, domestic partners, and caretakers. In some cases, this partnership even takes on romantic qualities, and sorcerers with the draconic bloodline are unusually common in the Mandate, though this topic is generally avoided in polite society, and is reflected in the most common anti-dragonrider insults.

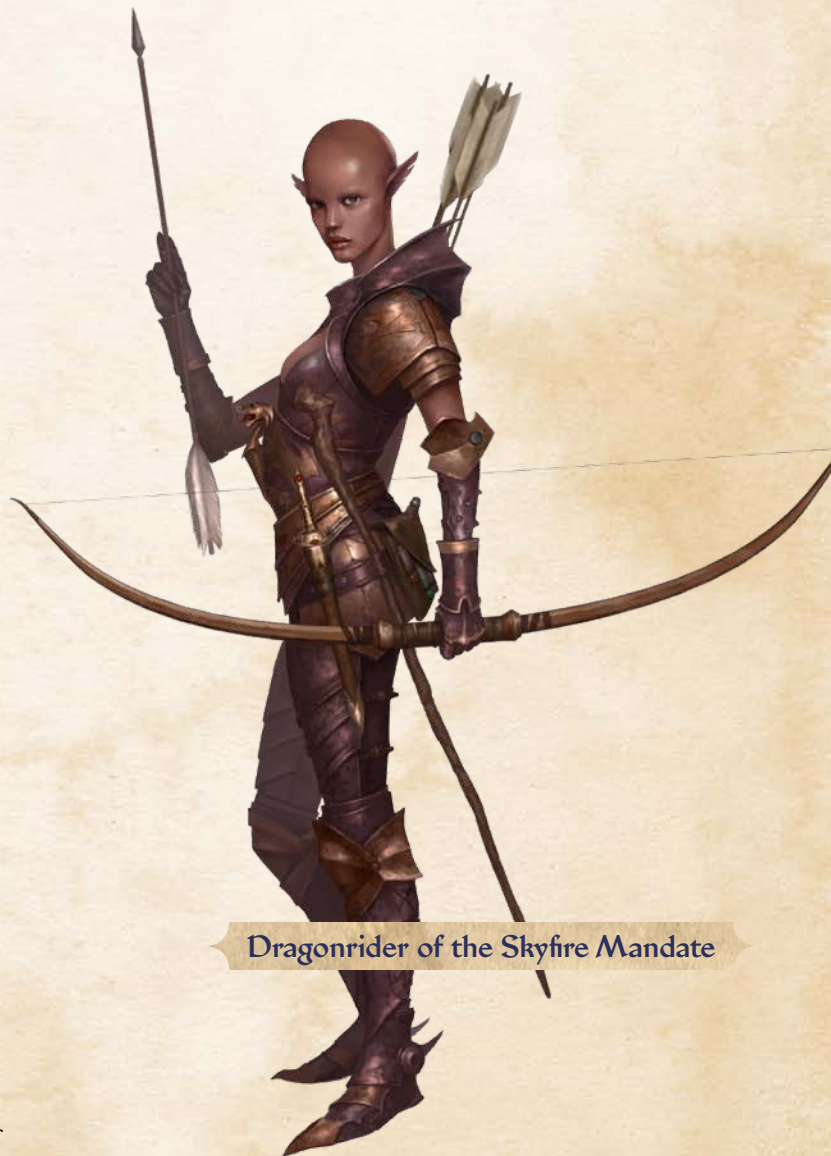
Adventure Hooks

Below are a few ideas to help get your party invested in the planet of Triaxus.

- For the first time in millennia, Triaxus's orbit is bringing it close to Golarion—very close. As the strange new light blazes across the night sky, scholars and leaders are eager to find out what it means, and only transporting a party of bold explorers directly to the wandering world's surface will satisfy them.
- Several prominent good dragons from Golarion have disappeared. Investigation reveals that they've either been spirited away or invited to another world by emissaries from something called the Skyfire Mandate. Fortunately, they've left behind enough evidence that a skilled spellcaster can follow them before Golarion's delicate balance between chromatic and metallic dragons is permanently disrupted.
- An unprecedented evil has appeared on Golarion, and for the first time in scholars' memory, numerous evil drakes and dragons are not just rampaging, but apparently banding together into some sort of

regulated army. Whispers among the frightened populace tell that the lead dragons are not natural, but rather exiles from some other world, and whole nations tremble before the growing might of the draconic war machine. Can the PCs stop the burgeoning war, and will doing so require traveling beyond Golarion?

- In the heart of the Allied Territories, leaders fear that this may be the Final Winter of legend, and that disorganization and rebellion during the autumn months have depleted their stores beyond repair. With nowhere else to turn, the exhausted leaders look to an ancient prophecy indicating that, in the darkest of nights, the towers of lost Sefhoria will hold the key to survival. Yet the legends also say that the ones to uncover this secret will not be born of Triaxus, but rather creatures of the worlds beyond the stars...



Dragonrider of the Skyfire Mandate



LIAVARA

The Dreamer

Diameter: x10; **Mass:** x100; **Gravity:** x1 (at “surface”)

Atmosphere: Unbreathable; **Orbit:** 12 years

Past Eox and wandering Triaxus, the familiar rocky worlds of the system’s interior give way to a new type of planet, the two titanic gas giants who trade a firm surface of rock and metal for thick expanses of gas vast enough for all the other planets to disappear into without a trace. So large are these goliaths that some of the many moons held fast by the giants’ massive gravitational pulls are nearly the size of planets themselves.

Liavara is the closer of the two, with the major differences between it and its larger counterpart, Bretheda, being its peach-colored complexion, its smaller number of significant moons, and its bright rings of dust, which are so massive as to be visible from Golarion through a basic telescope. In addition to the rings and their myriad shepherd moons—some no larger than a house—the planet also has several populated moons, described in detail below.

Yet life around Liavara is not restricted to its moons. In the great orange-white seas of gas that make up the planet’s outer atmosphere, strange creatures totally unlike any terrestrial animals wheel and dive, feeding upon the floating plants and giant bacteria that make up the foundation of the planet’s food chain. As numerous and varied as those of any jungle, the fauna of the outer layers take a variety of forms, from birdlike fliers whose skin is both eye and digestive apparatus, to great cloud-skates that glide through the skies via a form of jet propulsion, to dangerous swarms of floating keji and the utterly transparent tarenake, whose great bulks are discernible only by the shapes they displace in the thick gases. Farther down, the pressure of the atmosphere increases, and creatures take on a more piscine aspect, with massive predators swimming slowly through the dense atmosphere, feeding on the young of higher-flying creatures. Many of the creatures in the upper layers of the planet’s atmosphere must drop their eggs down into the depths to reproduce. The eggs gestate in the sacred, lightless layers where they finally achieve neutral buoyancy, held there until the hatching and the newborn’s reflexive quest for the light and safety of the upper atmosphere.

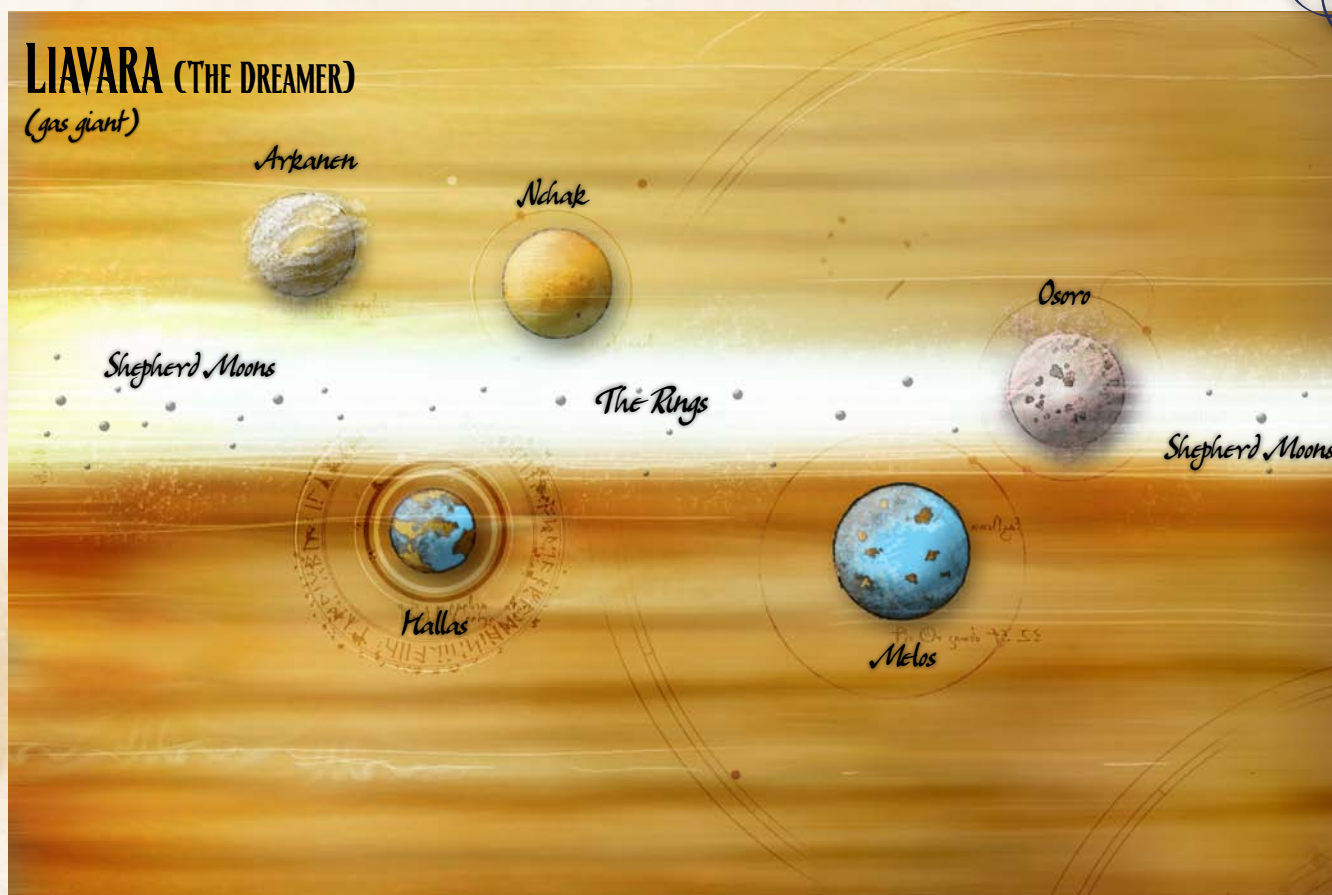
While Liavara’s ecosystem is rich and diverse, a wild and untamed display of nature’s wonders, there is some question as to whether or not most of it is native. This uncertainty is due in large part to the planet’s only intelligent race: amorphous, blimplike creatures almost identical to common Brethedans, yet lacking the collaborative civilization of those specimens found on Bretheda. According to the oral history of Brethedan scholars, the masters of Liavara were once Brethedan explorers who made the long voyage across

the darkness of space to seed the planet with their own brand of life. Once there, however, the explorers seem to have gone feral themselves, devolving back into a more animalistic state even as the organisms they brought with them in their great creature-ships took root and blended with the native life. Today, the “Brethedans” found on Liavara still show evidence of their former intelligence in their songs and complex social interactions, yet much of their logic is strange, and their actions are seemingly without clear purpose as they wander contentedly through the gas seas, searching out lesser creatures and plants as food. Though Brethedan language is already difficult for humanoids to parse, the Brethedan term for their Liavaran counterparts translates roughly as “Dreamers,” and these feral cousins appear to be held in considerable esteem, causing some scholars to wonder if the creatures living in a state of nature on Liavara are not so much regressed as enlightened.

Adventuring

Even setting aside the issue of local flora and fauna, the gas jungles of Liavara are a difficult destination for terrestrial travelers to survive in, for two main reasons. First is the lack of breathable atmosphere—while Liavara has plenty of gas to go around, its atmosphere is composed almost entirely of hydrogen and helium, neither of which is helpful to creatures that evolved on Golarion-like worlds, which will need to enact powerful magic or bring great stores of bottled air in order to keep from asphyxiating. Even more complicated, however, is the fact that Liavara has no “ground” as terrestrial creatures understand it. Instead, Liavara is an enormous ball of gas, with the density and pressure increasing as one travels toward the core, not unlike the increase in pressure when diving in an ocean. Creatures with the ability to fly, either magically or via wings, should be able to ply the skies easily enough, yet anyone who loses this ability for even a moment finds himself falling toward the planet’s center as quickly as a dropped stone on Golarion, and a character whose flying spell fails may be lost from view by the time he manages to get the magic recast. So large is Liavara that a character who falls without any ability to check himself continues to do so for days, gradually working his way down through the various density layers of the atmosphere until he is eventually burned up or crushed to death by the heat and pressure of the planet’s core (see the Adventuring section for the Sun on page 5).

Once the problems of maneuverability and atmosphere have been addressed, adventuring on Liavara becomes significantly easier, but still far from safe. Unlike Bretheda, Liavara is a wild place—perhaps even a sort of planet-wide wildlife preserve maintained by the Dreamers, who act as its stewards. Most of its creatures



expect to eat or be eaten in any given encounter, and are drawn to the heat, psychic emanations, or obvious nutrition evident in a party of adventurers. As many of the creatures are soft-bodied or full of gas (the better to ride out the planet's storms and doldrums), teeth and claws are less common weapons among predators than digestive acid, vampiric tentacles, suckers, magical holding fields, and other methods that ensure prey won't simply fall away as soon as it's lost the fight.

Gazetteer

With no firm surface, Liavara's cloudscape is constantly changing, and most of its notable locations are instead found among its moons and rings.

Arkanen: The most populated and conventionally civilized of Liavara's moons, Arkanen exists in a strange balance. On its own, the Golarion-like world would be unable to hold its atmosphere, as it steadily bleeds off its air in a white, cometlike tail that follows it through space. Once each year, however, the moon's orbit takes it so close to Liavara that it plunges through the upper levels of its parent's atmosphere, tearing away enough of Liavara's gas to replenish its atmosphere and keep its ecosystem functioning for another year.

As vital as this annual replenishing is to sustaining life on Arkanen, it's also an extremely dangerous time in which catastrophic storms wrack the moon, monstrous predators from Liavara sail between worlds, and disruptions and conflicts between the planets' magnetic fields cause enormous bolts of lightning to arc between the two. This last phenomenon is a source of great power for the humanoid and centaurlike spellcasters and scientists of Arkanen, and most major projects take place at this time of year (thus making it all the more troublesome when hungry beasts follow the lightning bolts down from the heavens). Strangely, conventional physics holds that Arkanen's orbit and theft of gas from the giant should be impossible, supporting the theory that the moon may have been created magically as a sort of arcane dynamo in order to power some unknown undertaking.

Hallas: The creatures that evolved to rule the relatively habitable moon of Hallas—a race that combined the most interesting features of snake, cephalopod, and bird—had few natural predators. So easy was life on their little world, in fact, that their scholars and spellcasters created a system of magic with a single glaring hole: a complete lack of magical transportation. To them, the universe clearly revolved around Hallas, and the idea of leaving



it—to pursue the stars, touch the surface of great Liavara, or explore distant and theoretical planes of existence—was tantamount to heresy. Instead, the creatures of the moon turned inward, focusing themselves entirely on the perfection and evolution of their race, both naturally and by way of biological and cognitive engineering.

In this, they succeeded. More than a thousand years ago, the people of Hallas finally reached the culmination of evolution, shedding their physical forms and becoming creatures of pure energy, glowing figures of light capable of lightning-swift movement, perfect telepathic communication, and more. Unfortunately, it was around this time that the first emissaries from Arkanen reached the world. In that initial contact, the searing weight of the Hallasians' consciousness set the soft curds of the ambassadors' brains aflame, and in the wake of their deaths the greatest wizards and divine champions of Arkanen used that planet's significant energy to set up a magical cordon around Hallas, warning away travelers and imprisoning the unknowingly dangerous population within. Ironically, this cordon is completely unnecessary: the creatures of Hallas, for their part, still see no need for travel despite their incredibly advanced state, and instead exist in a nexus of constant communication, no longer needing to eat or sleep in their incorporeal forms, content in their small-minded and incurious sprint toward a racial godhead.

Melos: Despite its hospitable environment, with breathable air and quietly lapping seas, no one has lived on Melos for a thousand years. Judging by the great stone ziggurats and temple complexes that coat the moon's surface, the world once played host to a society of significant advancement and extreme piety. Yet judging from half-completed histories rendered in complicated mosaics, life on Melos simply stopped a millennia ago, its population disappearing without leaving so much as a single corpse to tell its tale. Scholars from Arkanen have argued long and hard about the fate of Melos: Was it a vast migration to some other planet or plane? A species-wide evolution into creatures with no need for physical forms, like their neighbors on Hallas? Those few mosaics that address the issue at all speak of the Taking, a rapturous ascendance gifted by the gods for their devotion. Yet a group of Arkanen archaeologists recently unearthed a carefully sealed hiding place in the stone of one of the temples, similarly empty of corpses, but scrawled thoroughly with dire warnings suggesting that the Taking may not have been as glorious as the mosaics purport.

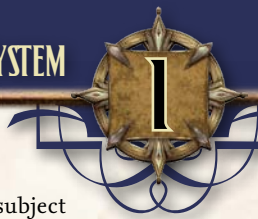
Nchak: On the hive moon of Nchak, roughly a quarter the size of Golarion, the arthropod is king, with a wealth of different species making their way through the thin atmosphere of the rocky world's millions of crisscrossing tunnels. Though many of the creatures are little more than oversized insects—most strikingly the horse-sized

ankhegs, apparently indistinguishable from Golarion's own—some of these scuttling horrors have evolved and specialized to become thinking parts of a vastly complicated society. Pulsating philosopher worms keep the prophecies and use their vast psychic powers to link and organize hives of shovel-jawed workers, while thin-legged priest-bugs interpret the will of the Forever Queen and her current mortal incarnation. Not every creature on Nchak works in harmony—and indeed, the intelligent residents of Nchak must often defend their surprisingly artistic warrens from their bestial kindred—but everything on the moon is ultimately dependent on the twisted fungi, fast-growing moss, and soaring butterfly-shaped things that turn the light of the distant sun into food.

Osoro: On many moons, a lack of atmosphere is the primary barrier to life and colonization. Yet on Osoro, it is the atmosphere itself that is the greatest danger. A rocky, mountainous planet, Osoro's surface is covered in a thick layer of deadly gases, anywhere from a few dozen feet to half a mile thick, produced by a combination of sulfurous gas vents and the breathing of whole jungles of poisonous plants. Above this layer, the peaks and slopes of tall hills and mountains protrude like islands in a sea, stretching forth into the safe, oxygen-rich air of the upper strata. It is on these high redoubts that the residents—believed to be naturalized colonists from Arkanen—make their homes, traveling between peaks on incredibly long rope bridges and skillfully riding the winds on hang gliders and magical beasts. Life among the high mountain forests and lakes is still far from safe, however, for terrifying creatures suited to the poisonous world at their doorsteps occasionally rise from the depths to terrorize isolated settlements, and wind storms make it easy for a settlement to be cut off from all others for weeks at a time. Over the last few generations, various scholars and adventurers on Osoro have begun to venture below the colored waves of gas in magical and mechanical diving apparatuses, seeking confirmation of the theory that the planet's deadly atmospheric seas were once much smaller, and that ruins hidden at their bottom may hold the secret to their ascendance—and a potential recession.

The Rings: The accreted dust and ice particles that ring Liavara are home to numerous forms of life, creatures that feed off the miniscule but pervasive electrical fields generated by the rings' particles constantly smashing into each other. The most common life forms among the rings are tiny mephits and lightning elementals, spritely beings of pure electricity that dodge and play through the rings, most no larger than a human hand. Yet there are other things here as well—the perfectly disguised ring serpents, or the occasional half-hearted nanite swarm that, cut off from whatever mysterious power source once drove it, can now barely replicate enough of itself to stay coherent and





semi-sentient. By far the largest creatures in the rings are the oma, sometimes referred to crudely as “space whales.” The largest of the class of creatures known as Brethedans, the space-dwelling oma are big enough to sometimes be used as vessels between worlds by their smaller kin. Those found in the rings of Liavara are generally wild, feeding their massive bulks by skimming across the rings and straining out the necessary nutrients and energy (particularly wayward elementals). For more information on oma, see page 62.

Shepherd Moons: In addition to Liavara’s five major moons, the planet has a huge number of small orbital bodies, many no larger than asteroids from the Diaspora. These moons are often called shepherd moons by scholars, as their gravity helps maintain the sharply defined edge of Liavara’s rings, as well as the striations and gaps within them. Though most of these orbiting chunks of rock and ice are lifeless, some bear the secret marks of civilization in the form of mines, unexplained obelisks and artifacts, and tombs for powerful rulers and spellcasters from the inhabited moons. The strange, floating residents of Liavara itself also seem to hold the shepherd moons in an almost religious regard, their prophecies about them nearly indecipherable, but seeming to speak of a time when the shepherds will “gather together their flocks” in preparation for some great event. Whether this supposed conjunction or intersection of orbits presages something wonderful or terrible has yet to be determined, as the Liavarans themselves seem unable to make the distinction.

Adventure Hooks

Presented here are several ways to get your characters involved with Liavara and its surrounding worlds.

- A powerful arcanist on Golarion has planned an experiment so monumental that nothing short of the annual lightning storms of Arkanen can possibly hope to power it. To this end, the PCs are sent as emissaries to convince the resident wizards of the Liavaran moon to allow this outsider to join their ranks. Conversely, the magic in question may be a weapon or ritual of great evil, and the PCs must travel to Arkanen in order to stop it before their own world is irreparably changed.

- The Taking of Melos has long been a disturbing subject for those scholars who know about it, yet now the planet’s strange abandonment has become even more ominous as another world has begun to show signs of a similar development. It’s up to the PCs to figure out exactly what happened on the vacant world, and how another—perhaps their own—can avoid the same fate.
- The poison seas of Osoro have begun to rise, slowly but steadily, and the residents of the planet’s mountaintop islands are desperate to reverse the effect. In order to do so, however, someone will need to venture deep below the roiling waves and delve into the fabled sunken ruins to uncover a past that may have been deliberately forgotten.



The Forever Queen



8 BRETHEDA

The Cradle

Diameter: $\times 11$; **Mass:** $\times 320$; **Gravity:** $\times 2-1/2$ (at “surface”)

Atmosphere: Unbreathable; **Orbit:** 30 years

Bretheda is far and away the largest planet in Golarion’s system. Huge and swirling, with blue and purple clouds, it hangs in space surrounded by the dozens of moons that make up its “children.” A gas giant, it has no true ground, only countless miles of drifting atmosphere and gas seas that gradually condense as one falls lower into their swirling torrents. Yet despite this lack of terra firma, Bretheda is inhabited by some of the most distinctive and widely varying beings in the solar system.

The Brethedans—vulgarly called “floaters” by some—are more of a family classification than a specific species of creature. While some of the gas giant’s gently drifting inhabitants are little more than brute beasts riding the air currents, those strains gifted with intelligence have long since banded together to create a far-reaching and highly advanced society, one both alien to human thought and bereft of conventional technology. Rather than seeing each biological organism as a distinct entity separate from its peers, the Brethedans see themselves as components meant to be combined for maximum efficiency. Floating through Bretheda’s upper atmosphere like enormous, contented blimps, the jellyfish-bodied aliens possess highly creative intellects that combine to form temporary and localized hive minds with whichever other individuals happen to be around them, each combination giving birth to a new and slightly different personality that lasts only as long as is convenient before the individual component creatures drift apart and go their own ways. As a result of this constant birth and retirement, Brethedan society is gentle and communal, with the violent egotism and lonely individuality of terrestrial races as alien to them as their amorphous forms are to humanoids.

In addition to their strange collaborative intellects, Brethedans are notable for their physical versatility and ability to consciously shape their own forms. To a Brethedan, adaptation and evolution is the proper response to any situation, whether it means binding together into a single massive entity to defend against a threat or hardening their bodies against the vacuum of space in order to visit other worlds. It’s this latter ability, combined with some unknown impetus in the dim mists of time, that led the Brethedans to colonize the neighboring world of Liavara, through both their own adaptation and the use of their titanic cousins, the beastships known as oma. At rest, however, most Brethedans prefer to maintain their amorphous forms as they slide

through the gas seas, trilling songs or swooping down on prey with surprising grace and agility.

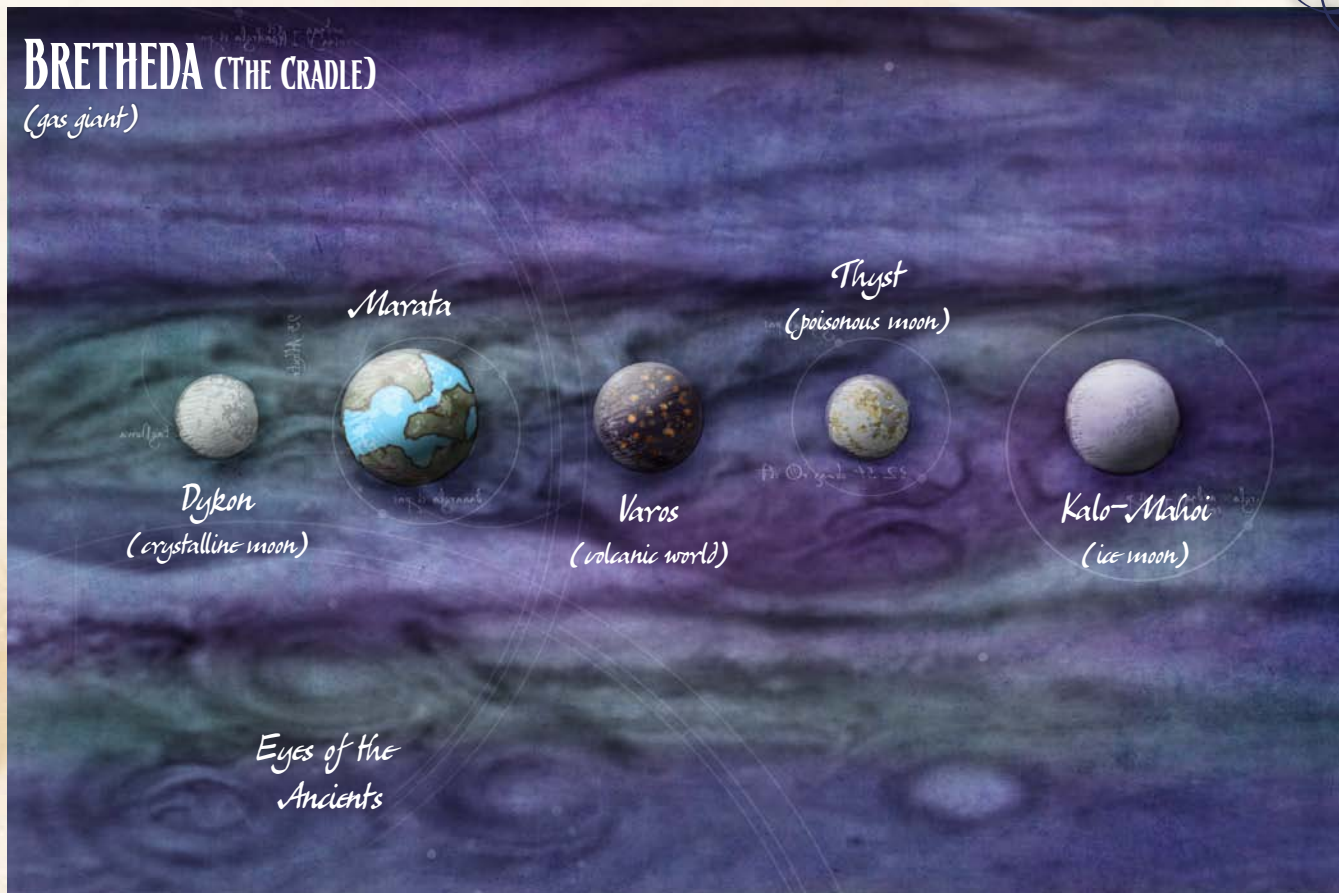
Brethedan society differs from that of the Liavaran Dreamers primarily in their reactions to outsiders and their willingness to problem-solve. Whereas the Dreamers are relatively stoic and unresponsive, preferring to drift as individuals rather than joining into more powerful hive-minds, Brethedans are curious and eager to interact. When faced with adversity, they quickly network into a new being able to either solve the problem or recruit further cells. Also unlike their Dreamer counterparts, Brethedans have a thriving system of technology, though not in a fashion that many other races would recognize it. All the tools Brethedans create fall into the category of biological technology, tailored mini-organisms that they forge within the crucibles of their own bodies by consciously manipulating their own cells, the craftsmen literally giving birth to the semi-intelligent tools they need. Tailored viruses, servitor creatures, and ferocious guardian swarms are commonplace among the Brethedans, and some research suggests that the great space-whales that swim between the stars may be their greatest creation.

Not all of the residents of Bretheda are intelligent, of course. Though the title of Brethedan goes to those malleable beings who are the planet’s masters, they are supported by a whole ecosystem similar to that found on Liavara. In addition to the dirigible and gliding creatures found on both worlds, creatures unique to Bretheda include the spiderlike haan with their parachute-sails of gossamer webbing, the deadly levitating nuru worms, vampiric mist-storms larger than anything seen on other worlds, and the anemone-like sagolath that rise from the deeps to feed, their poisonous tentacles festooned with balloonlike lift-sacks carrying biologically warmed hydrogen.

Adventuring

As with its smaller sister, Liavara, Bretheda has no firm surface outside of whatever superheated mass makes up the planet’s core. Instead, it is both sea and sky, a roiling atmosphere of blue- and purple-tinted gases that increase in density the deeper one goes. Adventurers on either gas giant must contend with the unbreathable atmosphere, a total lack of solid ground, and temperatures that range from nearly absolute zero in the planet’s outer atmosphere to a blistering celestial furnace in the planet’s core, so hot and pressurized that hydrogen itself becomes metallic (see the Adventuring section for the Sun on page 5).

The chief difference between the two worlds is their weather. While Liavara tends to be fairly placid, with gentle winds and currents, Bretheda is anything but calm. Here thunderheads larger than Golarion itself



face off in massive confrontations, blasting each other with some of the most powerful lightning bolts in the solar system. In addition to constantly rotating weather systems called “jets” that striate the planet in opposing equatorial bands, winds caused by convection between the planet’s cool outer layers and hot inner layers can easily reach hundreds of miles per hour. Along with fronts of shredding crystals of ammonia ice and blistering upwellings of boiling gas, the planet’s system is also prone to enormous cyclones and hurricanes capable of lasting for hundreds of years, storms large enough to see from Golarion. Given the implacable nature of these powerful natural forces, it’s not surprising that the creatures of Bretheda have evolved to be supremely adaptable, riding each challenge and opportunity to the best of their ability.

Gazetteer

Bretheda’s honorific of “the Cradle” stems from the fact that while many planets have moons, Bretheda has dozens, revolving around the gas giant as if it were the sun in its own miniature solar system. So numerous are these moons that astronomers from Golarion are still discovering and charting new ones to this day. Though

many of these are barren and crater-pocked rocks that have never borne life, some are so large and fertile as to rival the true planets. Presented below are just a few of the more important worlds and locations around Bretheda.

Dykon: On the sharp-edged world of Dykon, the very ground itself reflects the sun’s light from a million facets of the crystalline structures that make up the moonlet. More than just a floating gem, Dykon also bears an entire ecosystem of silicon-based life, with both flora and fauna taking crystalline forms. “Plants” range from delicate gem fans to hunched hills of eye-searing brilliance, their growth patterns similar to coral reefs on Golarion. While the world also hosts creatures resembling crystals, elementals, and crystalline monsters found on other worlds, the most interesting beings to move among them are the sentient and tanklike urogs, regimented and logical creatures that resemble tortoises or snails in their plodding mannerisms, if not in form. Roaming seemingly at random across the moon’s face, absorbing the sun’s light on their great skin-shells while propelling themselves along on microscopic cilia and electromagnetic fields, the buffalo-sized urogs have little interest in other species. Instead, they seem designed to organize themselves



in vast networks, communicating through electrical signals conducted through the planet's surface. For the most part, these networks are focused on solving arcane and seemingly impossible mathematical quandaries, though in times of danger the urogs may band together with great precision to defend against predators such as xorns, who sometimes emerge through portals from the Plane of Earth and enjoy the novelty of hunting and devouring intelligent crystals and minerals.

Eyes of the Ancients: Of Bretheda's many storms, the three largest and best known are the Eyes of the Ancients. Cyclones tens of thousands of miles wide—large enough to be visible through a telescope from Golarion—these storms seem like a natural enough formation, save for the perfect equilateral triangle they form in the planet's southern hemisphere. Add into the equation the fact that the first accounts of the storms in historical records appear almost exactly 3,000 years before the death of Aroden and the formation of the Eye of Abendego on Golarion, and the question of the storms' nature quickly becomes more than a simple matter of academics.

Kalo-Mahoi: The most heavily populated world orbiting Bretheda, Kalo-Mahoi keeps its people and cities hidden, showing outside observers only a blue-white field of blank and brilliant ice. Beneath this crust, however, the ocean planet's miles-deep seas teem with life both familiar and bizarre. Along with the unintelligent beasts—glowing blink fish, seal-headed orbigati-dahu, 20-legged crabs, easily domesticated giant seahorses, and tube worms capable of capturing and devouring a terrestrial whale—the world also plays host to the kalo, a distinctly peaceful and civilized race of aquatic scholars and poets. Somewhat bat-shaped, the transparent kalo have little skeletal structure, instead feeling more like smooth, compact jellyfish, with great wings of webbing between their arms and legs that help them propel themselves quickly through the oceans. Only their eyes—great and bulging things capable of moving independently and focusing on two different scenes at once—have any color at all, blazing in the lightless seas as they glide effortlessly in their ritual dances and wraithlike hunting squadrons. Their cities are beautiful and delicate things that seem almost organic in nature, and frequently incorporate local creatures and polyp colonies into their structures, commonly arising in the warm and nutrient-rich waters near geothermal vents. Though the kalo tend to be friendly and helpful to those outsiders who manage to impress them with their eloquence and conduct, the sea-dwellers' civility should never be mistaken for weakness, as any who've seen a group of hunting kalo turn a vortex shark or saber whale into a dark cloud of blood and gristle can attest.

Marata: Known as the maraquoi, the mammalian hominids of Marata's cool, arid forests have several differences from humans—silky fur, prehensile tails, and the ability to feel sound through their skin rather than a specialized ear. Yet by far the most interesting divergence is their gender. Whereas most animals that reproduce sexually have two genders, the maraquoi have seven, all of them vital for reproduction. The actual mating process is exceptionally complex for a naturally evolved system, and even requires the participation of the seventh and rarest "facilitator" gender, which does not pass on its genetic code directly, but rather seems to pass on some element of itself psychically to the forming fetus—yet the extreme mix of different hereditary traits that results makes maraquoi children extremely hardy. Life on Marata has thus far remained primarily a hunter-gatherer affair, with tribal villages taking the form of cliff-side pueblos, split-log structures in the deep forests, or easily portable hunting camps of skins and spears for those tribes actively hunting cattle-lizards on the planet's wide, rocky plateaus.

Thyst: For most visitors, the extreme radiation that permeates Thyst would be a death sentence, transforming otherwise healthy cells into bulging tumors and quickly metastasizing cancers that melt flesh from bone and make marrow run like water. For the planet's natives, however, that same radiation is the planet's lifeblood. Shielded from the sun by thick layers of cloud that leave the planet in a perpetual half-light, the plants and creatures that evolved on Thyst have learned to absorb and harness the radiation pouring from the very stones beneath them in a process not unlike photosynthesis. Between the black-leafed fern-trees and 20-foot-tall grasses, emaciated felines prowl, their skin bare and dark, in search of the foot-long locust-voles in their city-sized burrow complexes. Texts from nearby worlds suggest that the dominant race on the secluded moon is that of thin humanoids with skin that absorbs all light, their bodies made of flat planes that seem too simple and precise to be organic. Whether this description represents their true forms or simply some strange type of armor is anyone's guess, as to date few have managed to contact the mysterious masters of Thyst, and records of visits to that poisonous world speak only of the twilight grass-forests and countless glowing eyes.

Varos: Long after the sun has grown old and died, and the rest of the terrestrial worlds in Golarion's solar system are lifeless rocks or clouds of debris, the Brethedan moon called Varos will still be seething with heat and energy. Unlike most worlds, Varos gets its primary heat not from the sun, but from its orbit, as Bretheda's gravity distorts the very shape of the world as it passes. The friction and pressure from this distending and contracting, called



tidal heating, results in a violently volcanic world, with almost every surface covered in erupting volcanoes and rivers of magma, great fiery pustules on the moon's face. Only creatures in love with heat and sulfurous skies can survive here, and the primary residents are various elementals that feel perfectly at home in the constantly reshaping world. Of those creatures unique to Varos, perhaps the most impressive are the armored and segmented fire-worms that actively swim in the lava, slithering from caldera to caldera via the constantly shifting network of lava tubes, both active and defunct. Though most creatures from Golarion would wonder why anyone would visit this searing world, the truth is that the raw elemental power and frequent rifts to the Plane of Fire may be of use to spellcasters, as can heat-resistant predators ripe for summoning, or the several unique types of gemstone that form only in the planet's turbulent mantle.

Adventure Hooks

Presented below are several ways to draw players to the Cradle and its surrounding moons.

- A brilliant but discredited astronomer in Rahadoum has recently come to believe that the Eye of Abendego may soon expand dramatically. If his research is correct, then only by unraveling the mystery of similar storms on Bretheda can he hope to keep Golarion's own eternal hurricane from claiming his homeland—but to do so, he'll need the help of some powerful volunteers willing to brave distant skies.
- Slavers from another world have uncovered a portal to Marata and begun harvesting the primitive locals to sell into bondage for the deviant aristocratic elite of several worlds. After freeing several alien prisoners from a corrupt noble's harem, the PCs gain the opportunity to infiltrate and shut down the operation once and for all. But can a new group of outsiders win the maraquoi's trust?
- A feud between elemental and genie clans on the Plane of Water has spilled through a planar rift into the waters of Kalo-Mahoi, wreaking havoc on the moon's delicate ecosystem. A vision from one of the kalo's oracle-poets has shown them the faces of their saviors—strange beings from a far-off world of dirt and air called Golarion.
- A spellcaster friend of the PCs requires a powerful focus to achieve her arcane masterpiece, and when it comes to spells involving gems, few could be more powerful than the crystal megaliths of Dykon.

But even if the PCs can make it to the crystalline moon—perhaps by way of the elemental planes—will they be able to convince or overpower the local urogs, and will achieving their goals be worth the potential ramifications when the crystals begin to exhibit unusual magical properties, perhaps vibrating with an unpredictable new magical resonance?

- One of the Brethedans' great oma creature-ships has arrived in Golarion's upper atmosphere, sparking all sorts of debate. Some argue for an immediate preemptive assault on the intruders, while others welcome their brethren from beyond the sky. Have the weirdly floating aliens come for conquest, colonization, camaraderie, refuge and aid, or some stranger reason?





APOSTAE

The Messenger

Diameter: $\times 1/5$; **Mass:** Less than $\times 1/100$; **Gravity:** $\times 1/10$

Atmosphere: None (outside), breathable (inside);

Orbit: 243 years

The rocky planetoid known as Apostae is tiny compared to the other worlds of the solar system, and immediately establishes itself as an anomaly by orbiting the sun at an angle far out of the ecliptic, almost perpendicular to Golarion's own path. Both of these suggest that the planet is in fact a captured object, something formed elsewhere which drifted through the system and was drawn in by the sun's gravitational well. What keeps the world from being written off as simply another captive asteroid is not Apostae's size, but its mystery.

From the outside, Apostae is a barren and rocky world with no atmosphere and no unnatural markings or points of interest save for two. The first is a lonely arch similar in many ways to the portals that connect the various planets, yet with markings totally unique and indecipherable. Though it stands near a circle of working portals connecting Apostae's surface to most of the other worlds in the system, this portal was clearly set apart from the others. Those few powerful spellcasters from other worlds who have dared to leave bootprints on Apostae's dusty face have tried any number of means to activate the mystery portal, with no success. Nevertheless, their extensive tests seem to indicate that the activated portal would not connect to any of the known portals on other worlds, leading some to believe that this doorway may have originated far beyond the solar system, created by whatever unknown race linked the planets—and perhaps even introduced life to the system in the first place. Some scholars go even further, positing that this arch was left here as a test, with its architects waiting for the younger races to mature enough to decipher its workings and make contact. While speculative, this theory is supported by the world's other distinguishing characteristic: miles-wide metal doors set flush with the stone in several places around Apostae's surface. Ornate and covered in equally strange symbols, these doors have so far resisted all attempts to open them—both magical and mundane—and make it unclear to outsiders whether this planet is inhabited by a reclusive race of subterranean creatures, or is perhaps itself some sort of automated emissary from beyond the solar system (hence the sobriquet of “the Messenger”).

As it turns out, both theories are correct. Unknown to the races looking on from other worlds, the dead shell of Apostae hides a twisted but thriving community beneath its great blast doors, one that strives for freedom even as it struggles to understand itself. For Apostae is not a world, but a single vast starship, crewed by a people who have

long since lost all knowledge of who they are or what their original mission was—if indeed they ever knew it.

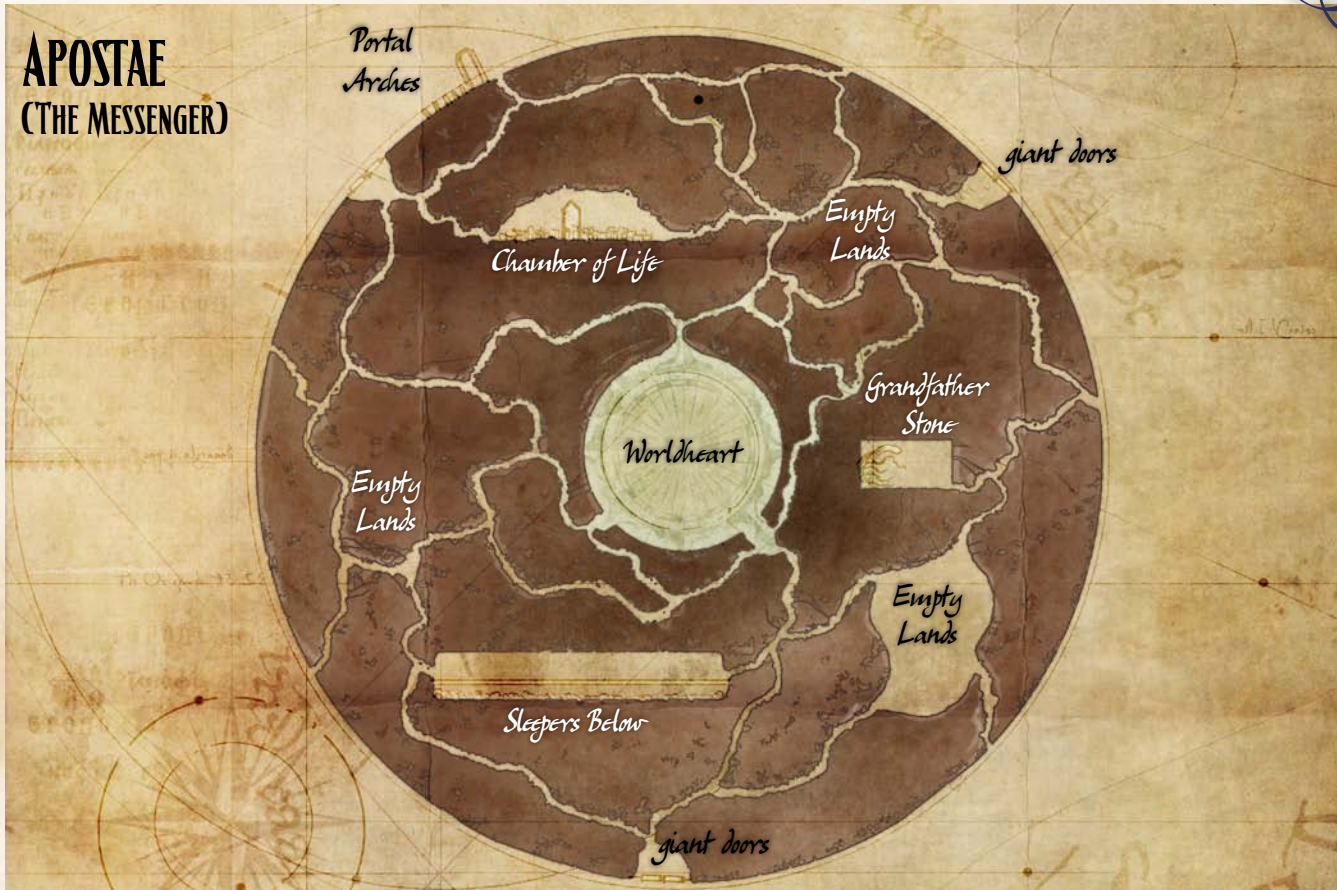
The primary inhabitants of Apostae call themselves the Ilee, yet to call them a race is to overextend the word's definition, for the Ilee possess no universally shared traits, nor do they reproduce in any way known to saner worlds. One Ilee may resemble a huge-eyed centaur, while another might be a headless insect-thing with a hundred gossamer wings, and another might be a blind and limbless worm with great colored frills and antennae. Yet all are intelligent, and invariably find means of communicating with each other. The secret of this strange heterogeneousness lies in the fact that, while a few of the forms may have semi-compatible sex organs, all actual reproduction is handled in the Chamber of Life, where Apostae itself decides what form a desired child will take, with only passing attention given to the physiognomy of the “parents.”

The Ilee may be considered a single people, but that doesn't make them a single nation. Their domain extends from the massive surface doors (and the impenetrable spherical energy shell that lurks just beneath the surface rock) through the thousands of miles of rocky tunnels and glowing, steel-lined corridors that combine in a vast warren, connecting chambers with functions both known and unknown. Only the world-ship's core is forbidden to them, blocked on all sides by more of the great metal doors and guarded by automated defenses that burn challengers to dust in seconds. Though the Ilee are surprisingly populous, their world remains too large for them, and they tend to congregate around the fungus fields, oases, and magical waste recyclers that provide the bulk of their diet, leaving vast swaths of the world empty, inhabited only by dust, ghosts, and the occasional renegade monster or robotic automaton going about its unfathomable business. This vastness of territory means that separate groups frequently develop cultural or ideological differences. Skirmishes are not uncommon, especially at pseudo-religious nexuses like the doors to Worldheart or the chambers of the Sleepers Below, where tribes clash over their desire to serve the will of the ship versus the urge to destroy or challenge the systems for greater understanding. Only the Chamber of Life is understood to be truly neutral ground, as without its strange but dependable means of reproduction, the Ilee would disappear within a generation.

Adventuring

Apostae is the most isolated world of any in Golarion's system. While even mysterious Aucturn has some effect on the lives of creatures on other planets, Apostae is a completely sealed environment, with little on its surface to give away the wonders waiting inside. The energy shell that forms the ship's hull and keeps the Ilee from simply tunneling around the massive doors is a seemingly





insurmountable barrier, stopping even teleportation magic and interplanar travel. Even the gods themselves seem unable to penetrate it more than a fraction—devoted clerics virtually unknown among the Ilee, and most of their healing coming from bards or those divine casters like oracles who come to their powers through more roundabout means. (PCs who manage to enter, of course, may inadvertently create a channel for their own gods to exploit). As a result, religion is a strange affair among the Ilee, based solely on faith rather than direct miracles from the gods, and often incorporating worship of the ship-world itself and the machines that maintain it.

The Ilee know nothing of the world outside, yet their own multitude of forms means that non-Ilee are not immediately recognizable on their own. Rather, Ilee encountering a group of PCs are more likely to be startled and frightened not by their differences, but by the eerie similarities between all the humanoid characters. Reactions in such instances might vary wildly, from open curiosity to murder of the heretics who claim to come from beyond the doors.

The interior of Apostae is remarkably habitable, with breathable air and consumables like food and water available either at the small oases and lakes or mechanical feeding stations provided by the ship. Beyond the settled

zones of the Ilee, the Empty Lands are significantly more barren, and prowled by dangerous beasts and rogue machines that may be more or less of a threat than the Ilee themselves, depending on the PCs' interactions.

Gazetteer

Below are several important locations within Apostae.

Chamber of Life: Situated about halfway between the world's surface and its forbidden center, the Chamber of Life is a massive, dome-shaped cavern several miles wide and half a mile tall. Over countless generations, many of those areas not covered with stacks and towers of humming machinery have been planted with glowing fungus-flower trees or hung with brightly colored streamers and elaborate fetishes, giving the entire cavern floor a riotous, festive look. It is to the chamber's center, however, that all the roads from various tunnel entrances lead like spokes on a wheel, guiding the pilgrims in. Here, amid great ceremony, couples or triunes wishing to foster children step forward and present themselves to a thrumming silver monolith, taller than any other structure in the cave. A polished black eye then opens in the tower's side and bathes the given partnership in light, after which it closes again and the petitioners are free to leave. When they



return a year later, they are once more bathed in the light of the Great Eye, whereupon the obelisk opens a door in its foot and presents the partners with their child.

Ilee children often share some sort of trait with each parent—a set of mandibles, a particular color of scale, a series of sensory antennae running down the spine—which helps to establish the familial bond and identify relations, yet the overall forms are always wildly different and seemingly chosen at random by whatever intelligence drives the ship. Not all of these strange designs work out, and while very few children are born dead, some are clearly too ineffective to be useful to the tribe, or are in such pain that encouraging them to grow seems cruel. These offspring are never killed outright, but instead taken to the edge of inhabited territory and released to find their own way. Most die shortly thereafter and go to feed the things of the dark, yet others grow and perhaps even find

alternate ways to procreate, spawning the feral beasts that hunt in the Empty Lands.

Empty Lands: Life is hard within Apostae, and many Ilee die without ever making the pilgrimage to the Chamber of Life. As a result, much of the planet's interior remains unclaimed by any particular tribe or clan. These tunnels and chambers are known as the Empty Lands, and are the wilderness of the subterranean peoples, populated by scattered outcasts and weird, feral monsters. Here chambers of unknown and arcane functions lie motionless, or else whirl with strange machines and deadly energies, guarded by constructs that may slaughter an invader on sight or ignore it completely. Perhaps most frightening of these tunnels are those reaches where an invisible force creates illnesses and unfortunate mutations beyond the ability of any Ilee to heal—in more frequently explored corridors, these corrupted regions are sometimes emblazoned with warning signs and sigils, etched neatly into the walls by unknown hands or scrawled by panicked and dying Ilee. Still, despite the dangers of the Empty Lands, the need to hunt, explore, salvage, and locate other tribes keeps bold young Ilee venturing out into them, sometimes bolstered by an ancient legend of a place called the Armory, where mythic weapons beyond conventional understanding lie waiting for whoever discovers them.

Grandfather Stone: Many of the Ilee have seen the strange, scuttling metal creatures that wander the Empty Lands or keep the feeding machines in good working order, and know them to be generally harmless. Yet of all the metal “not-people,” only Grandfather Stone has ever been known to speak.

Grandfather Stone's chamber is small, and mostly filled by the enormous construct's body. Ten feet tall, he consists of a blocky, many-eyed head and several extending tentacle-arms with delicate hands and grasping claws, most of which lie listlessly on the chamber's floor. Where neck and arms connect, the robot merges seamlessly with the chamber wall, seemingly trapping him here and giving him his name. Only the bravest of Ilee bother to petition him, as one can never tell when he'll speak and when he'll tear his visitors in two with his powerful claws, and only shamans and scholars can begin to make out the muddled barrage of strange languages and confusing metaphors with which he answers all questions. Yet for those who make the effort, Grandfather Stone is a font of potentially world-shaking information.

An ageless and brilliant mechanical entity, the construct called Grandfather Stone by the Ilee is perhaps the only individual in the ship's inhabited reaches who



Ilee



remembers Apostae's origins or its intended mission. Unfortunately, the span of millennia has caused some of his circuits and processors to degrade, depriving him of much of what he once knew and driving him quite insane (with the visits from the comparatively imbecilic Ilee hardly helping matters). Though his answers tend to come out muddled and cryptic, Grandfather Stone knows that at least one of the ship's functions was as a zoological expedition, hence the Sleepers Below—though he no longer remembers whether its goal was to take samples or introduce fully formed creatures to habitable worlds. Similarly, he knows that the vast distances between here and the ship's unknown origin required it to be a generation ship—one in which many generations of crew would live and die during the voyage—but it's unclear whether the Ilee are the cripplingly inbred descendents of the ship's creators, an engineered race of pilot-creatures, or the children of a revolt among creatures harvested as specimens, who long ago wiped clean any trace of the ship's original crew.

Sleepers Below: This cylindrical chamber is many miles long and hundreds of feet in diameter, crisscrossed by walkways of metal grating that extend from tunnels to either side and run the length of the horizontal chamber. Below these suspended pathways, the bottom half of the chamber is covered in what looks at first glance like a sea of bubbles, each transparent and gleaming. Only when the eyes adjust to the perspective does it become clear that each bubble is in fact a glass-smooth egg, within which floats a single creature, seemingly asleep or in some sort of stasis. The bubbles range in size from that of a fly to behemoths that threaten to touch the bottoms of the walkways. Over all of this scuttle untold thousands of tiny, crablike creatures that delicately probe the containers, occasionally injecting clouds of unknown substances or surrounding the bubbles with an electrical nimbus.

The Ilee refer to these pods as the Sleepers Below, and hold to a variety of beliefs about them. Some believe that the creatures are their brothers and sisters, and that the Ilee exist to help guard the sleepers until the fated Day of Awakening. Others argue that the Day of Awakening will only come when the Ilee are strong enough to prompt it, and seek to free the sleepers from their prisons (an effort which Apostae itself seems to combat with lightning and swarms of machines). Still others believe that the sleepers are the true architects and power source of the ship—that the Ilee and all they know are just a dream, and will cease to exist once the dreamers wake. Whatever the truth—whether the bubbles are stasis fields keeping the inhabitants safe across light years or impenetrable cells for prisoners and zoological specimens—adventurers from other worlds who spend time looking through the ranks will likely be disturbed to note examples of their own races among the sleepers, albeit dressed in unfamiliar fashions and ceremonial markings.

Worldheart: While the Ilee have free reign over most of Apostae's interior, the one place they're never allowed inside is the complex at the planet's core, known as Worldheart. It's here, in the robotic nerve center of the great generation ship, that automated processes and slaved artificial intelligences keep the planet humming with power, atmosphere, and all the components necessary for life. It's here as well that the vast machines responsible for upholding the planet-ship's mission make whatever decisions that keep the ship in orbit around Golarion's sun—if indeed it even retains the ability to leave.

To the Ilee, however, all of this is a mystery. They know only the great doors that seal away Worldheart from all sides, and the turrets of blazing light that defend the doors against those Ilee who attempt to force entry. Such attacks are rare, in part because of those other tribal warriors who fight to stop any rebellious assaults before they even reach the hallowed doors. Though no Ilee truly understand the nature of Worldheart, residual legends and racial memories indicate that it is the key to everything on Apostae, and most tribes hold to a prophecy of a Chosen One who will one day approach the murderous doors and have them open, after which he will take control of the world and guide it to a place of safety and plenty, where the outer doors will at last spring wide and disgorge the Ilee into a new way of life.

Adventure Hooks

Any adventure on Apostae involving PCs from another world is ultimately one of first contact with the Ilee. Below are a few suggestions.

- A group of interplanetary scholars believe they have come up with a way to open Apostae's doors, and need a team of adventurers experienced with a wide range of environments to guard them from whatever's inside.
- Apostae appears to be changing its orbit. At incredible expense, astronomers from several nations have come together to magically send their greatest champions—the PCs—to the mysterious world in order to decipher what the change means, and whether the planet is in fact headed straight for Golarion.
- The PCs have already secured their place in history by breaking through Apostae's doors and making first contact with the tribes of the Ilee, yet the story isn't over. In the wake of their arrival, the natives are in chaos, with pitched battles in the chambers of the Sleepers Below and those around Worldheart. Can the PCs keep the world they've just uncovered from destroying itself?
- With the PCs' arrival, the Ilee believe the Day of Awakening is finally at hand, and have begun a massive push to locate the legendary Armory in order to arm themselves for the next phase of their existence. Can the PCs find the lost weapons before the natives do? And just what is the purpose of these legendary items?



AUCTURN

The Stranger

Diameter: Varies; **Mass:** x2; **Gravity:** x2

Atmosphere: Poisonous; **Orbit:** 500 years

Aucturn is an enigma, a dark mystery to even the greatest of planetary scholars. Unreachable by all but the most powerful magic, Aucturn is the only world in the system not connected to any others by the interplanetary portal network, thus adding to its sinister legend. Some say that it is a world of monsters, or the home of an ancient god just now waking from a million years of dark slumber. Historical writings seem to link it to the spaces between the stars known as the Dark Tapestry, or the mysterious and terrifying beings collectively called the Dominion of the Black. Perhaps Aucturn does not even exist entirely in this dimension, and acts as a link between this universe and others. Whatever the truth, for thousands of years the planet has unnerved astronomers who, peering at it through their telescopes and scrying spells, all report very different descriptions, from a terrestrial world with atmosphere to a ringed gas giant to a dark and lifeless rock—even when observing it through the same shared telescope.

Despite its reputation, Aucturn is no figment of scholars' imaginations. It is a real place, a dark globe hanging out beyond all but the faintest reaches of the sun. Its atmosphere is poisonous, and swathes the planet so thickly in yellow-green clouds that, even without its strange shrouding magic, its surface remains invisible from orbit. On the ground, it is a mostly dead world, with only stunted trees and skinless beasts that hunt each other constantly, their exposed muscles weeping pus into the misty air. Though roughly twice the size of Golarion, and with the horribly enervating pressure of twice Golarion's gravity constantly bearing down on visitors, the planet seems to have no set diameter, shifting by a slight but significant margin at regular intervals. Combined with the fact that those who drill down far enough into the rubbery soil eventually strike veins of black, acidic muck, this inevitably leads to one conclusion: that Aucturn is in fact one enormous, slowly breathing entity—a blind and planet-sized god-thing of unknown intelligence and unknowable motives.

Nor is Aucturn's life limited to mere beasts that slink or flap through its soupy atmosphere. Those who wander its suppurating wastelands invariably come across the ruins of great temples and strongholds built from blocks of quarried flesh-stone and abandoned to rot. Whether these were built by immigrants or whatever original inhabitants Aucturn may have carried, none can say, but today these structures are inhabited primarily by ghostly half-creatures. Sometimes these apparitions—thin and humanoid, or incomprehensible swirls of light and eyes—reveal something of their physical forms to intruders, while

other times they are simply a presence that slowly makes itself known, planting seeds deep in the minds of visitors, sowing discord and murder in the adventurers' hearts.

In addition to these half-seen denizens—which may be actual ghosts, creatures calling out from the next dimension over, or poorly understood echoes of a different time—Aucturn also plays home to a small but significant population of Old Cult worshipers drawn by the call of the Dark Tapestry and the Old Ones and Outer Gods that rest beyond the edge of the sun's light. Often imbued with unholy powers, these dark spellcasters raise up purulent cities from Aucturn's face, warring with each other or communing with the planet while staring out into the stars, eager for the next wave of madness to show them the horrible face of reality.

Adventuring

In addition to animalistic predators resembling skinless versions of more recognizable animals, Aucturn also hosts stranger things: flopping tendons and corporeal gas, or needle-faced mosquito-things that burrow into the planet's surface to drink its black ichors. The atmosphere functions as a variety of poisons, and those who travel here should be treated as having been dosed with a random poison (*Core Rulebook* 558–560) for each hour that they remain, as well as every time they consume native creatures or water.

Given enough time, Aucturn warps newcomers as well. For each day that a PC spends on Aucturn's surface, she must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or begin to twist and mutate. Roll 1d6 to determine which ability score is affected, then roll 1d4—the latter is how many points the ability score permanently increases or decreases (50% chance of either). These alterations can take whatever aesthetic form you choose, such as thickening skin, fingers falling off, expanding skulls, or muscles bursting through skin, and may have additional game effects at your option. Each time a PC fails a mutation save, the DC for the next save increases by 5, with the number not resetting until the mutations have been magically cured. *Remove curse* or a more powerful spell removes all mutations on a target (even beneficial ones).

For alternative mutation effects, see the protean warppave effects on page 213 of *Bestiary 2*, or feel free to create your own.

Gazetteer

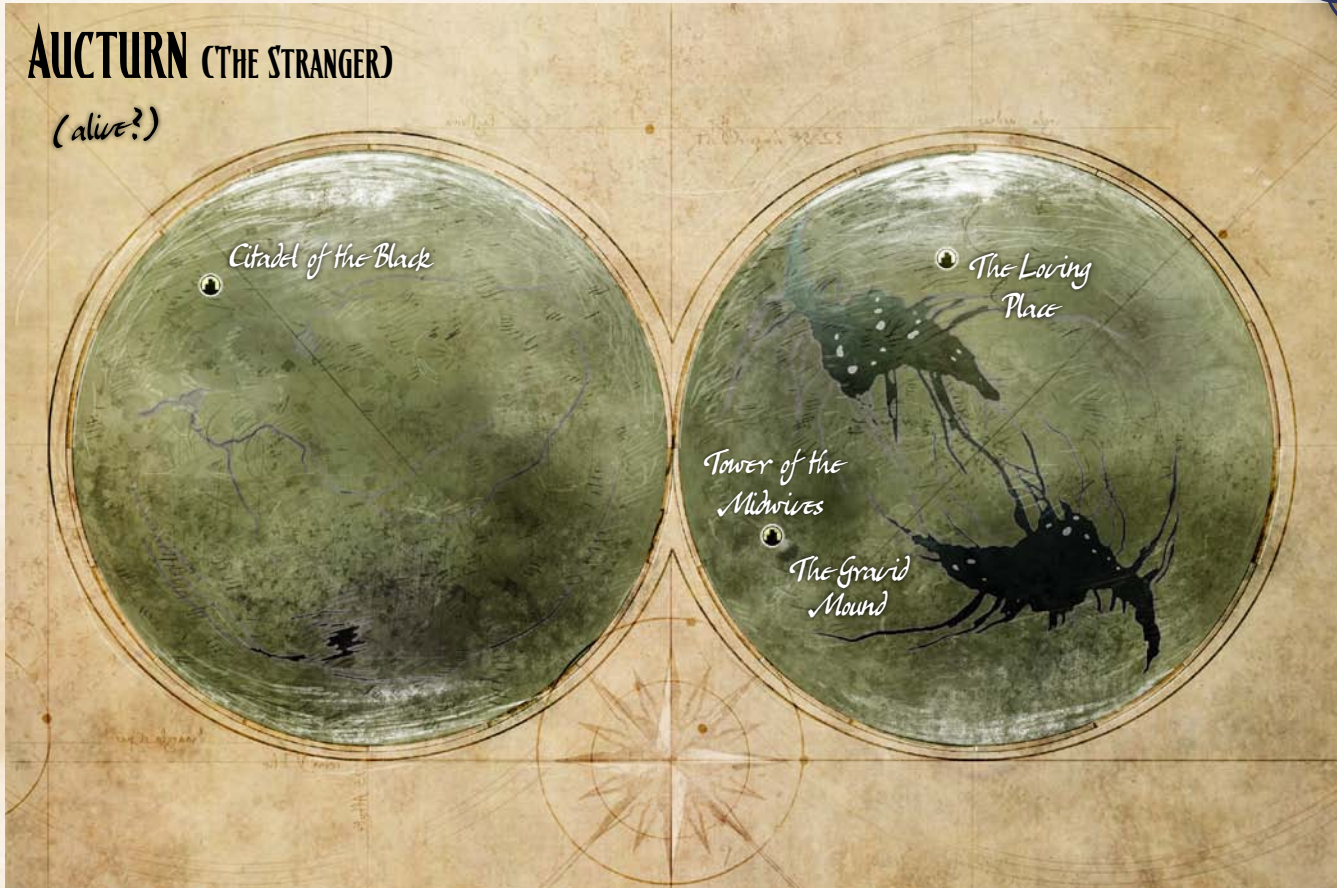
Aucturn's landscape twists and folds in on itself, consuming entire regions while extruding new ones overnight, yet the following have held their current positions for some time.

Citadel of the Black: There are those who other worlds call the Old Cults, worshipers of strange entities that lurk between the stars. In most nations, they are forced to hide, driven into the dark by those who understand what madness and horror their twisted worship brings. Yet in the skin-domes and jagged spines of the Citadel of the Black, those who seek the greatest secrets of the Old Ones



AUCTURN (THE STRANGER)

(alive?)



can join together and rejoice in their efforts—at least, as much as their paranoia and insanity will allow. The city is looked over by Carsai the King, dark lord of the citadel and the being who most frequently extends his hand to zealots of other worlds, bringing them here to labor in the shadow of his spire. Constantly wreathed in dark smoke, with only flashes of his cloak and burning eyes to give him form, Carsai might be anything—a man, a daemon, or some crude puppet-thing controlled by the Dominion of the Black. But whatever his motives—for it's unclear whether he even worships the Old Ones at all—none dare challenge his rule or refuse his offers of assistance.

The Gravid Mound: This egg-shaped mountain is somewhere between a volcano and a polyp, expanding outward and then narrowing again at its base. From a wide caldera at its top weeps a constant stream of black goo in which pale and quivering chunks of meat float like icebergs, the viscous pool constantly overflowing and trickling down the sides of the Gravid Mound. At the mountain's southern foot, protected from the caustic flow by a wide moat, stands the circular tower-city of the Midwives. Thirteen in number, these cowed and veiled spellcasters believe that one day the Gravid Mound will burst like a cyst, disgorging a horrible new entity that will

be Aucturn's child. When this happens, the Midwives plan to be present to control the powerful new being—or be the first to fall to their knees and worship the fetal god.

The Loving Place: On most of Aucturn, the native creatures try to kill visitors or sacrifice them to dark gods. Within several hundred miles of the Loving Place, however, their desires are even worse. Compelled by strange vapors, creatures living near the Loving Place capture any nonresident creatures they can and bring them to the region's central cleft, where narcotic steam from the planet's depths roils out in a euphoric cloud. Here, the residents mate desperately with their prisoners regardless of size or species, always careful not to let the prisoners die. Fortified by the vapors, the captives quickly convert to the new mindset themselves, birthing abominations and leading them out to hunt for their own mate-offerings.

Adventure Hooks

Below are adventure hooks to help get PCs to Aucturn.

- Deep in an Osirian pyramid, the PCs solve an ancient riddle related to Aucturn, causing a portal to spring to life. Do the tomb's greatest treasures lie on another world?
- The PCs' greatest foe accepts the aid of Carsai the King and flees to the Citadel of the Black. Do the PCs dare follow?





OTHER WORLDS

Golarion's sun is not alone in the cosmos. Beyond strange Aucturn, beyond the Ice Belt where comets are born and gossamer creatures of frost and light dance between the scattered bodies, there is a greater universe—a universe of nebulae and black holes and spinning galaxies, in which every point of light is a star that may host worlds of its own, and strange eyes looking back down at Golarion's tiny sun.

In practical terms, this means that nothing is too bizarre to exist in the Pathfinder universe, as even the gods themselves may have limited reaches, or lose sight of what happens in the next galaxy over. Golarion's galaxy is enormous, yet it's only a single point of light on the great black canvas of the Material Plane. "Crossover" campaigns are easy, as any campaign setting you enjoy might be revolving around a distant sun. Perhaps Earth is even out there somewhere. For more information on creating your own branches of the cosmos, as well as tips on designing the alien cultures that live there, see pages 164–165 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

Some of these celestial bodies—and the spaces in between—have particular significance to Golarion, and are addressed below.

Constellations: One of the ways in which civilizations interact with the stars is through the creation of constellations. Presented below are the star-pictures most commonly recognized in the nations around the Inner Sea, along with their most prevalent associations.

Ardacondis: Who wrestles the Kraken to keep it from choking the world.

The Caravan: Which protects all who travel.

The Fang: That vampires kill for.

The Ferryman: Who claims lost souls.

The Gecko: Who climbed up to the sky.

Gigas Major: The old giant.

Gigas Minor: The young giant.

The Hawk: Who hunts the heavens and defends the sun.

The Key: Which Abadar made to unlock the First Vault.

The Kraken: Who ensnares Ardacondis.

The Sea Wraith: The vessel of Besmara, the Pirate Queen.

The Sorcerer: Who spellcasters look to for guidance.

The Sphinx: Who knows many secret things, and whom even the gods respect.

The Spider: Who weaves the night in its silken strands.

The Stair of Stars: The pathway that leads the faithful to Desna's palace of Cynosure.

The Stirge: Whose nose got stuck in the sky.

The Tarrasque: Who sleeps among the stars for now, but will return when the time comes to end the world.

The Throne: Reserved for the final king.

The Wyrm: The great star-dragon, considered good by some and evil by others, who guards his celestial hoard.

Cosmic Caravan: The 13 signs of the Cosmic Caravan offer portents to Varisians and astrologers alike. Below are the astrological signs and their corresponding dates.

The Thrush (18 Kuthona–20 Abadius): This curious bird heralds the coming of the travelers, its wings spread wide.

The Lantern Bearer (21 Abadius–16 Calistril): Guiding the caravan past danger and monotony, this serpentine angel lights the way with the torch of inspiration.

The Newlyweds (17 Calistril–11 Pharast): Slipping away for privacy, this couple—represented by a pair of intertwined bodies or scarves—embodies devotion and new life.

The Bridge (12 Pharast–18 Gozan): A span across danger, this constellation carries the travelers to new adventures and separates the dark of winter from the light of summer.

The Daughter (19 Gozan–13 Desnus): This light-hearted dancer is the first to cross the Bridge, skipping into the warm days of spring, filling them with joy and song.

The Rider (14 Desnus–20 Sarenith): This stern barbarian and his painted mount watch over the caravan, sometimes a boisterous companion, other times a solemn warden.

The Patriarch (21 Sarenith–20 Erastus): The father of the wanderers reliably steers the Wagon through danger.

The Wagon (21 Erastus–10 Arodus): The vehicle that conveys the travelers through the sky, represented as a seven-armed wheel or star.

The Pack (11 Arodus–16 Rova): The beasts that follow the Wagon, either dutiful hounds or scavenging wolves.

The Mother (17 Rova–30 Lamashan): Depicted as a cauldron over a warm fire, the spiritual heart of the caravan shares her bounty of food and comfort to stave off the coming chill.

The Stargazer (31 Lamashan–20 Neth): Either a prophet or a fool, this robed traveler casts his gaze ever toward what lies beyond, searching for either new wonders or treasures lost.

The Stranger (21 Neth–29 Neth): A fleeting companion to the wanderers, this outsider passes through their lives on his own journeys, and is represented by a single staring eye.

The Follower (30 Neth–17 Kuthona): Trailing behind the travelers and only seen on the darkest of nights, this veiled figure waits at the end of every journey—the constant companion, Death himself.

Cynosure: This star is vital to Golarion as both the planet's pole star—the star that always holds its place in the north rather than traversing the sky with the planet's rotation, thus making it an important navigational tool—and the reputed home of Desna's palace. Cynosure can easily be found in the night sky by following the path of the constellation known as the Stair of Stars.

The Dark Tapestry: Evil lurks in the long gaps between stars that residents of Golarion call the Dark Tapestry, the darkened vistas where dead molecules have long since grown so cold that they cease to vibrate. Hungry and formless, nameless to all but the most blasphemous, the ancient intelligences that reside there are too alien for

even the gods to comprehend. These are the Old Ones and Outer Gods, the malign entities worshiped by the mad souls collectively called the Old Cults. Were these sleeping giants to ever rouse fully and turn their myriad eyes to Golarion and its sister worlds, their voices would be the trumpets that sound the beginning of the end. Still, depraved individuals hungry for power sometimes beseech aspects of these cosmic horrors for boons—a practice that invariably ends in destruction, as the Old Ones are not benevolent masters.

The Old Ones and Outer Gods are not the only things floating out there in the darkness beyond sanity. Often, when desperate spellcasters and hubristic scholars seek contact with the abominations of the Dark Tapestry, they instead make contact with the Dominion of the Black, a race of heralds and emissaries who live between the stars as well, sustained only by the knowledge of their masters. No one knows exactly who or what the Dominion is, or how many of them lie in their dark ships beyond the sun's light, but where the Dominion marches, madness follows.

On Golarion, the Old Ones and Outer Gods—who may predate most of the conventional gods—are worshiped and petitioned secretly, as members of other religions almost unanimously understand the dangers represented by contact with the alien consciousnesses. Even their names—strange appellations such as Azathoth, Yog-Sothoth, Shub-Niggurath, Nyarlathotep, and Mhar—are understood to have power, and bring undue attention upon worlds where creatures whisper them. Over the millennia, the silently screaming realm of the Dark Tapestry has touched Golarion many times, often introducing new monsters. As far back as the days of ancient Thassilon, records indicate that a group called the Thrallkeepers attempted to summon Dark Tapestry monstrosities for Runelord Karzoug, and more modern groups like the Night Herald in Garund continue to seek a dark apotheosis through communion with the void.

Of all these heresies, perhaps the most significant lies in Ancient Osirion. Scholars have long believed that the pharaohs' society was influenced by forces from beyond the stars, with murals in ancient tombs indicating that they may have been a major factor in the culture's rapid development, perhaps even mandating the construction of the massive pyramids that pharaohs later adopted as tombs. While the identity of these progenitors remains unknown, Osirion has always held Aucturn in great esteem, and some fear that the visitors from the stars may have been emissaries from the Dominion of the Black, an idea supported by such occult texts as *The Last Theorem*. What makes this possibility even more disturbing is that, if certain theories are to be believed, some of the



Dominion of the Black Ship

wall carvings and carefully excavated riddles in the most ancient tombs can be combined to form a sort of clock—one counting down to a date in the not-so-distant future.

The Ice Belt: Beginning just beyond Aucturn, this region is a ring of icy masses and small, rocky bodies from which most of the solar system's comets are born. Extremely small compared to the planets, the scattered chunks of rock and ice are difficult to detect until something knocks one out of its usual holding pattern, sending it hurtling toward the sun. Despite the vast distances between proto-comets—far greater than those between the asteroids of the Diaspora—there is life even here. Small, quasi-elemental creatures of frost and glowing energy flutter between the cosmic snowballs like hummingbirds, their crystalline skeletons so delicate that summoning them anywhere closer to the sun causes them to immediately melt and die.



STELLAR ADVENTURES

"I felt it once, the touch of the void. The *Seraph* had lost power just a few hundred feet from Skydock, and someone had to go out and take a look. I suited up, attached my safety lines, and made the long climb back along the outer hull.

"I don't remember the blast. Funny how a thing like that escapes you. But I remember floating, listening to the snake hiss of air escaping my suit, feeling the cold turn my limbs to lead as frost coated my helmet and blocked out the stars. I've heard spacers say that it's like being rocked to sleep. But for me it was more like a wine-dark sea, gentle as the womb, drawing me down. And as the last air gave out, I understood.

"We belong to the void. And in the end, it will claim us all."

—Alina Karaphasi,
Vercite aethership captain

In many ways, adventuring on other planets is similar to adventuring in unexplored parts of Golarion. There are still monsters to fight, locals to talk to, and treasures to be looted from ancient ruins. Yet while many of the worlds presented here are relatively hospitable to terrestrial life, there are some regions—such as the vacuum of space—that are extremely dangerous, and a planet-hopping campaign has certain fundamental differences that a GM should consider before removing PCs from their homeworld.

Travel

Though it may seem like Golarion's solar system is crowded with life, the truth is that the worlds presented here are separated by near-unimaginable expanses of empty space, without even air to breathe. Most creatures and even magic-users cannot simply fly up into space without asphyxiating or running out of atmosphere to support their wings or mechanical conveyances. Only the most powerful magic or technology is capable of bridging the gap between worlds, and those few privy to such secrets guard them well. Of all the options available for interplanetary travel, most fall into one of the following categories.

Portals

Nearly everyone on Golarion has heard of the great elven exodus before the fall of the *Starstone*, in which all of elven society gathered together in Kyonin to step through a portal into the mysterious refuge of Sovyrian. Few realize, however, that the portal binding Golarion to Sovyrian was not one of their legendary *aiudara* (or “elf gates”) which link locations on a single world, but rather one of a network of interplanetary portals that predate the elves' existence—and indeed, may predate all life in the solar system. These ancient passageways link all the system's planets save for Aucturn, and though knowledge of how to operate them remains scarce, the warrior-scholars of Castrovel long ago learned how to use the portals to step between their own world and the red planet of Akiton, giving those two worlds the most contact of any in the system. And just as the elves have their gate between Sovyrian and Kyonin, so have Akiton's Contemplatives of Ashok managed to create their own portal to Golarion's Mwangi Expanse, though this gate—the Doorway to the Red Star—has to date brought the Contemplatives nothing but disappointment.

Who built the original portal network remains a mystery, but a strange gateway left behind on Apostae is believed by many to be a test—a puzzle that, when solved, will grant passage to whatever faraway star or galaxy houses the gateways' original creators. So far, no one appears close to solving the mystery. Yet in recent years, portals across the system have begun winking on seemingly at random and with increasing frequency, offering brief windows during which those brave or foolish enough can pass through

to another world, and suggesting that perhaps a time of greater connection between the planets is at hand.

From a game perspective, portals are the easiest means of travel for GMs to manage, as it allows them to control when such travel is possible and where on a given world a party appears, as well as creating natural adventure hooks. Whether they've been carefully searching for such a gateway or simply stumble upon it in the center of a dungeon, it's hard for PCs to resist stepping through a portal and seeing what's on the other side.

Spells

Many wizards believe that spells like *greater teleport* and *scrying* have no range limitations, but those who have tried to use them to reach the stars know better. Some attribute the resulting difficulties to the mortal mind's inability to truly envision the distances involved, others to the speed with which celestial bodies move through the blackness, and still others to the lack of any sort of ether for the magic to travel through. Whatever the case, the truth is that it's easier for most spellcasters to shift between planes than to observe or travel to other planets. (For a discussion on why shifting between planes doesn't aid planetary travel, see page 3.)

For those spellcasters determined to reach Golarion's sister worlds, the spell *interplanetary teleport* in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* makes it possible, as do spells such as *wish* and *miracle*, though individual GMs may decide that even these may not be enough without specific items or creatures to focus the energies on. The latter spells also make *scrying* possible, though *greater scrying* can sometimes be used to observe creatures on another world, albeit with the same DC penalties associated with viewing a creature on another plane. In many cases, the magics required may necessitate the possession (or construction) of great artifacts, some of which can still be found abandoned by their creators on planets like Golarion.

Vessels

By far the most terrifying and dangerous means of interplanetary travel is the use of starships. Over the course of the system's history, several cultures have attempted to build ships capable of crossing the void, yet only a few have succeeded. Most common are the great metal dirigibles of Verces, which several times have set sail from their needlelike space elevators to trade with Akiton or explore the Diaspora, sometimes merely observing other cultures through thick portholes, other times making peaceful contact—or going rogue and becoming the space pirates who make their coves within asteroids or on the dark sides of moons. Though the sarcesians of the Diaspora may do more regular traveling of the void than any other race,



theirs is not via great ships, but as individuals on wings of light, sailing between asteroids or diving toward Eox on missions of vengeance. The Bone Sages of Eox, for their part, are already dead, and thus have an easier time than most civilizations in constructing spacecraft, with their warships of steel spines and gushing flame often airless and left open to the void.

For interplanetary colonization, no race can boast better success than the Brethedans, whose vessels are merely the largest of their jovian herd animals, colossi spurred beyond the bounds of the planet's gravitational pull with bellies full of carefully adapted Brethedans. Many of these great beastships have died out since Bretheda seeded Liavara, as the Brethedans have little interest in the system's rocky worlds, yet the smaller descendant race known as oma can still be found skimming the atmospheres of the gas giants. Other creatures capable of crossing the reaches of space, such as shantaks (*Bestiary* 2 244), have been used as mounts by powerful adventurers from more humanoid worlds.

Yet not every ship found in the solar system needs to be a product of one of the native races. The great capital ship that crashed in Numeria, for instance, is obviously beyond the technological capability of any current races—presumably coming from some other star, dimension, or era—and there may yet be other equally alien crafts out there waiting to be discovered. Once the PCs stumble upon a ship of any sort, it's up to the GM to decide how difficult it is to operate, what role magic (especially divination spells) plays in deciphering its mechanisms, and whether travel between the planets takes days, months, or generations.

Environment

Once they reach another planet, PCs must be prepared for a number of fundamental differences.

Atmosphere and Vacuum

One of the greatest threats on any world is its atmosphere. While certain spells—such as those presented later in this chapter—fortify characters against even the dangers of hard vacuum, the unprepared may find themselves in dire peril. A character introduced to hard vacuum, such as all of outer space, immediately begins to suffocate (see page 445 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). Characters introduced to a planet where the atmosphere isn't rich enough in oxygen may use the same rules, or else the modified rules for slow suffocation (*Core Rulebook* 445) if the oxygen quotient is almost sufficient. Some planets, such as Aucturn, may even have poisonous atmospheres, which can use the stats for any inhaled poison in the *Core Rulebook* and affect any breathing creatures, even if the planet otherwise has enough oxygen to sustain them.

Vacuum also presents another danger: decompression. A character suddenly transitioned from a normally pressured

environment to pure vacuum, such as by being flung out of an airlock, takes 3d6 points of damage (no save) in addition to any suffocation damage. Sound is muffled in thin atmospheres, mimicking the effects of a *silence* spell.

Gravity

Gravitational differences between planets have the potential to cripple characters or make them superheroes—and sometimes both at the same time. For many planets, the gravity is similar enough to Golarion's that trying to arbitrate the difference isn't worth the time. Yet others require special consideration. For planets with significantly different gravities than Golarion, the game effects are proportional, so a planet with half Golarion's gravity allows players to jump twice as high, whereas one with twice Golarion's gravity cuts jump heights in half (see below). In all cases, effects may be more severe and problematic for PCs when they first arrive, and they may take additional penalties to hit or to movement until they adjust.

High Gravity: On high-gravity worlds, characters are literally crushed to the planet's surface by their increased weight, and their physical abilities are affected accordingly. For example, on Aucturn, where the gravity is twice as strong as on Golarion, a character weighs twice as much as he does on Golarion, but has only the same amount of strength. Such characters move at half speed, can only jump half as high or as far, and can only lift half as much. Their projectiles (though not those of natives) have their ranges cut in half as they fall to earth more rapidly. Personal effects (modifications to running, jumping, lifting, etc.) can be negated by spells such as *freedom of movement*, but projectiles remain affected. Characters who remain in a high-gravity environment for long periods often become fatigued.

Low Gravity: Low-gravity worlds are PC playgrounds, in which characters' hyperdeveloped Golarion muscles are far more effective than normal. On a world like Akiton, with only a third of Golarion's gravity, PCs can jump three times as high and as far and lift three times as much. (Movement speed, however, stays the same, as moving in great bounds is awkward and difficult to control.) Projectiles have their range categories tripled.

No Gravity: A lack of gravity is not the same as flight. Movement is difficult, and creatures without something to push off from often find themselves floating helplessly. When a creature does manage to find something to propel itself off of, it can move in any direction, but at half speed. Double-moves and charges are still possible, but running is not. If provided with sufficient handholds, a creature with a climb speed can move along a wall at full speed, as can any PC who makes a DC 20 Climb check (adding in her Dexterity bonus). Note as well that a creature that moves in a given direction continues to move in that direction at the same speed each round (without the cost of a move

action) unless it is able to change its motion by latching on to an object or creature, pushing off in a new direction, or creating thrust of some kind (all of which are considered move actions). Creatures that fly using physical means, such as wings or jet propulsion, are affected by these same rules while in vacuum—in atmosphere, they may recover and get their bearings within 2d6 rounds, after which they can fly normally. Magical flight is not affected. A character in a weightless environment can lift and carry 10 times her normal amount. Projectile weapons have their range categories multiplied by 10. In addition, ranged weapons no longer have a maximum number of range increments—their wielders simply continue to accrue penalties the farther away the target is.

Temperature

Even habitable planets can vary wildly in temperature. Some are close enough to Golarion standard that their effects can be mitigated by spells like *endure elements*, whereas others are more extreme and require greater magic, such as *planetary adaptation*. On human-friendly worlds such as Castrovel, Akiton, and Triaxus, most of the planet is an endurable temperature, with the extremes represented by the cold and heat dangers on pages 442 and 444 of the *Core Rulebook*. On blistering worlds like Aballon or the alternately frigid and searing sides of Verces, however, such rules may not be adequate, and the precise amounts of temperature damage are left up to the GM to adjudicate (so as to drive the environmental effects home for parties of all levels without necessarily killing them outright). In general, planets with less atmosphere are colder, as more heat escapes into space.

Time

While time itself does not change on different worlds, its measurement may. GMs are free to ignore such issues if they choose, as game effects tied to time may create difficulties. For instance, on a planet with a slower rotational speed, such as Aballon, a “day” may take 48 Golarion hours—meaning that spellcasters need to either sleep and study again during the middle of each “day” or make do with half their normal spells, and priests who always pray at dawn may need to get creative with regard to what exactly that means to them. In many cases, the easiest option is simply to have spells and abilities recharge at the same rate as they do on Golarion—including for natives of the new planet. Similarly, a planet with multiple moons or none at all may play havoc with lycanthropes. Such potential issues are endless, and what a GM chooses to do is between her and her players, yet GMs are encouraged to evaluate each issue as it arises and decide whether playing it up would be a hassle or an excellent adventure hook and opportunity to drive home the world’s alien nature.

New Spells and Equipment

Adventuring in space and on other planets can be made much easier with the right spells and equipment.

PLANETARY ADAPTATION

School transmutation; **Level** alchemist 5, cleric 4, sorcerer/wizard 5, summoner 5

Casting Time 1 standard action

Component V

Range personal

Target you

Duration 1 hour/level

This spell functions as *planar adaptation* (*Advanced Player’s Guide* 236), save that it only works on worlds of the Material Plane. The cold void of space is considered a single world for the purpose of this spell, allowing you to survive in vacuum.

PLANETARY ADAPTATION, MASS

Level cleric 6, sorcerer/wizard 7, summoner 6

Casting Time 1 standard action

Component V, S

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

Targets one creature/level, no two of which can be more than 30 ft. apart

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

This spell functions as *planetary adaptation*, except as noted above.

PRESSURE SUIT

Aura faint abjuration; **CL** 5th

Slot body and helm (see text); **Price** 4,000 gp; **Weight** 30 lbs.

DESCRIPTION

This magical full-body suit completely protects the wearer from temperature extremes (as if by *endure elements*) and pressure dangers of hard vacuum and all worlds in the system (save the sun), though it only carries enough air for 3 days before it must be recharged in breathable atmosphere (such as that inside a ship). If the suit’s seal is broken—such as the helmet being removed to eat or drink—all the air escapes in 2d6 rounds. A suit with a broken seal confers only the benefits of *endure elements*. The suit automatically repairs small holes, but if it is struck by a critical hit from a piercing or slashing weapon, the wearer of the pressure suit must succeed at a Reflex save (DC equal to the opponent’s confirmation roll) or the seal breaks. A suit with a broken seal can be repaired with a DC 18 Craft (armor) check or a *make whole* spell. The suit does not compensate for changes in gravity. Wearing a pressure suit imposes a –1 armor check penalty; this penalty stacks with those provided by other equipment (such as armor). Since it takes up both the body and helm slots, armor can be worn over a pressure suit, but robes and helms cannot.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *endure elements*, *gust of wind*; **Cost** 2,000 gp



ALIENS

“They’re horrible, mistress. As soft and pale as larvae, but reared up and stretched out. All of them have articulated feelers ending in fleshy pedipalps, but some have stingers as well. Their antennae frills lie listless, or else chopped short in some sort of ritual scarification. They cover themselves in folds of discarded webbing, and communicate solely through wet hoots and whistles. All attempts by our scouts to establish normal communications have been met with fear and violence.

“They’ve already breached the tunnels, my queen. They appear almost blind, yet their fumbings are drawing them ever closer to the birthing chambers. Shall the legion advance?”

—Soldier of the Forever Queen of Nchak,
translated report of first humanoid contact

A solar system is defined by its residents. The strangeness of encountering new life forms and understanding what they can do or attempting to decipher the cultural mores and taboos of an alien society is usually at the heart of any campaign that deals with outer space. Yet the sheer scale involved in creating worlds can be overwhelming.

Though this chapter presents several new monsters, these are not necessarily the ones most important to your particular campaign. Nor are those monsters mentioned in this chapter—many intentionally left vague for GMs to flesh out—the only new creatures for those planets, or even the only intelligent ones. Together, the worlds presented in this book host millions of new organisms and cultures. While this book spotlights the most significant races for each world, this is simply a starting point—detailing the rest is up to you.

An easy solution to this challenge is to simply “re-skin” monsters—use the statistics for a familiar monster, but describe it in a different way. Change a succubus to a strange spore-maiden, make an otyugh tall and skinny and well spoken, or make the giant octopus a space-faring creature with light-sensing pseudopods and a taste for the energy produced by starship engines. As long as you change the way you describe a monster, your players will never know any better. Most of the new races discussed here can be modeled in this same fashion—an Ilee is not an advanced mongrelman, and the bird-men of Qidel are not quite *strix* (*Inner Sea World Guide* 313), but your players don't need to know that.

In addition to the new monsters created for this book, many familiar monsters found on Golarion originally came from other worlds, or have direct counterparts there.

Akatas (CR 1, Bestiary 2): These beasts originally come from the Diaspora, but can also be found on Eox and sometimes on the other inner worlds.

Ankhegs (CR 3, Bestiary): These are common on many worlds, but especially the Liavaran hive-moon of Nchak.

Behirs (CR 8, Bestiary): Behirs are almost as common on Akiton as they are on Golarion.

Carnivorous Blobs (CR 13, Bestiary 2): These deadly oozes ride on meteors, and are also found on Eox.

Cerebric Fungi (CR 3, Bestiary 3): Known for their complex and seemingly incomprehensible thoughts, these fungi are commonly encountered on Castrovel and Nchak.

Crysmals (CR 3, Bestiary 2): These crystalline scorpion-creatures exist in great numbers on Dykon.

Death Worms (CR 6, Bestiary 2): The great sand worms of Akiton are extremely dangerous.

Denizens of Leng (CR 8, Bestiary 2): These mysterious traders are free to walk all the worlds—even Aucturn.

Elder Things (CR 5, Pathfinder Adventure Path #46): These entities may be found hibernating on any world, but especially on Akiton near the southern pole.

Flumphs (CR 1, Bestiary 3): Come from beyond the stars to warn of the dangers of the Dark Tapestry, flumphs can be found on most of the system's inhabited worlds.

Frost Worms (CR 12, Bestiary 2): These are common wintertime predators on Triaxus.

Girallons (CR 6, Bestiary): Girallons are common on Akiton, and because of the apes' four-armed forms, many scholars think the beasts evolved there.

Gricks (CR 3, Bestiary 2): Gricks dwell on rocky worlds, shunning the sun in favor of dark tunnels.

Gugs (CR 10, Bestiary 2): These toothy abominations are common on Aucturn.

Intellect Devourers (CR 8, Bestiary): These horrors originally come from the Dark Tapestry and can be found on Aucturn, as well as the dark places of other worlds.

Liches (CR 12, Bestiary): Liches can be found everywhere, but only Eox is home to a large population.

Mobats (CR 3, Bestiary 2): Mobats are most common on Castrovel and in the Diaspora.

Mongrelmen (CR 1, Bestiary 2): These creatures are prevalent on worlds where crossbreeding is common.

Moonflowers (CR 8, Bestiary 2): These are common on Castrovel, Triaxus, and Golarion's moon.

Morlocks (CR 2, Bestiary): These creatures are often the result of prolonged inbreeding in small, isolated settlements.

Neh-Thalggus (CR 8, Bestiary 2): These come from a different solar system entirely, and are found on worlds populated by humanoids.

Plasma Oozes (CR 16, Bestiary 3): Plasma oozes hail from the fiery depths of the sun.

Ratfolk (CR 1/3, Bestiary 3): On Akiton, ratfolk are known as Ysoki; their representatives may be found on Castrovel as well.

Shantaks (CR 8, Bestiary 2): As one of the few creatures capable of carrying a rider between worlds, these creatures are found somewhere on almost every world in the system.

Shoggoths (CR 19, Bestiary): These horrors exist on several worlds, especially Aucturn and Akiton's south pole.

Tzitzimitls (CR 19, Bestiary 3): Originally created by the liches of Eox, these undead starfarers travel through the blackness to bring ruin and destruction to living worlds.

Witchwyrds (CR 6, Bestiary 2): Long ago, an ancient race on Akiton was split in two by the pressures of a great war. The branch that wanted to keep fighting went on to become the Shobhad-neh, while the other left the world to become traders and manipulators throughout the universe. The latter are known today as witchwyrds, and several can be found on Golarion as the masked Pactmasters of Katapesh.

Worms That Walk (CR 14, Bestiary 2): These are found on both Eox and Aucturn.

Xorns (CR 6, Bestiary): Xorns can be found on any world rich with gems and ores, especially crystalline Dykon.



ABALLONIAN

This insectile construct skitters around on metallic legs, its manipulators clacking and glowing eyes searching.

ABALLONIAN

CR 7



XP 3,200

N Medium construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +10**DEFENSE****AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18 (+2 Dex, +8 natural)**hp** 75 (10d10+20)**Fort** +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits**Weaknesses** sunlight dependency**OFFENSE****Speed** 40 ft., climb 20 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +15 (1d8+4/19–20 plus grab)**Ranged** spark +12 touch (2d6 electricity)**STATISTICS****Str** 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +14 (+18 grapple); **CMD** 26**Feats** Improved Critical (claw), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)**Skills** Acrobatics +12 (+16 when jumping), Climb +22,

Knowledge (engineering) +13, Perception +10, Stealth +12

Languages Common; shortwave 100 ft.**SQ** rebuild**ECOLOGY****Environment** Aballon**Organization** solitary, pair, or network (3–6)**Treasure** standard**SPECIAL ABILITIES**

Rebuild (Ex) Aballonian machines are capable of improving and adapting their designs. Each Aballonian starts out with one of the abilities listed below. For every two additional abilities it possesses, its CR increases by +1. Aballonians may also add the customizable abilities of animated objects (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 14, *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #43 80), increasing their CRs by +1 for every 2 Construction Points spent in this way. (They are already considered metal.) Aballonians may adapt of their own volition, but it takes 1 day to add each additional ability beyond the first, and they must also possess the rare materials necessary to make such improvements. An ability can only be gained once unless stated otherwise.

- Gain a plasma cutter that deals 1d6 points of fire damage on a melee touch attack.
- Gain advanced treads that increase base speed to 60 feet.
- Modify chassis to gain a burrow, climb, or swim speed of 60 feet. This ability may be taken multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time it is taken, it applies to a new movement type.
- Add a radar dish that grants blindsight 120 feet.
- Gain an additional claw or slam melee attack (1d6 damage).

- Lengthen arms to extend reach by 5 feet.
- Gain the rend special attack (2 claws, 1d8+6).
- Add armor plating to gain a +4 natural armor bonus to AC.
- Harden systems to gain resistance 10 against a single energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or fire). This ability may be taken multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time it is taken, it applies to a new energy type.

Shortwave (Ex) An Aballonian can communicate with nearby Aballonians via invisible waves. This functions as telepathy 100 ft., but only with other Aballonians. In combat, if any allied Aballonians within range can act in a surprise round, all of them can.

Spark (Ex) As a standard action, an Aballonian can launch an arc of electricity at a nearby creature. This attack has a range of 20 feet with no range increment. In addition, whenever an Aballonian makes a check to maintain a grapple, it can use its spark attack against the creature it is grappling as a free action.

Sunlight Dependency (Ex) Aballonians gain their energy from light. In areas of darkness, they gain the sickened condition.

Aballonians are intelligent, self-modifying constructs. The stat block presented here represents only the most basic type found on Aballon, with much larger or smaller variants taking the form of gargantuan excavators, gliding solar-powered flyers, ribbonlike serpent creatures, disembodied processor intelligences, or stranger designs.



BRETHEDAN

This amorphous creature looks like a fleshy, iridescent dirigible, with no visible features save for tentacles dangling down in a line.

BRETHEDAN

CR 5



XP 1,600

N Large aberration

Init +0; Senses blindsense 120 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17 (+8 natural, –1 size)

hp 66 (7d8+35); regeneration 2 (acid)

Fort +7, Ref +2, Will +9

Defensive Abilities amorphous

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (good)

Melee 2 slams +9 (1d6+4 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (1d6+4), engulf (DC 17, 1d6 acid and paralysis)

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 11, Con 20, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 11

Base Atk +5; CMB +10 (+14 grapple); CMD 20

Feats Combat Reflexes, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Escape Artist +10, Fly +12, Handle Animal +7, Perception +12, Stealth +6

Languages Brethedan; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ adaptation, combine

ECOLOGY

Environment any gaseous atmosphere

Organization solitary, pair, or flotilla (3–8)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptation (Ex) A Brethedan's body is extremely mutable, and can adapt to respond to virtually any situation. Once per round as a swift action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity, a Brethedan can reshape its body and chemistry to adopt any of the following qualities.

- Resistance 5 against a single energy type (acid, cold, electricity, or fire).
- An additional natural attack (tentacle, bite, etc.) with damage appropriate to the Brethedan's size.
- Change its slam damage type to slashing or piercing.
- Increase its slam damage die by one step (from 1d6 to 1d8 for most Brethedans).
- Gain a +4 natural armor bonus to AC.
- Extend its reach to 20 feet.

A Brethedan can only have one modification in effect at any one time—a Brethedan that selects a new adaptation loses any other in effect. More extreme adaptations are also possible (at the GM's discretion) but generally take days or even months to adopt.



Combine (Ex)

Thanks to their perfect communication, Brethedans can combine to work together as parts of a larger organism. As a swift action, a Brethedan adjacent to another can merge with it, becoming a single creature occupying both spaces. The merging Brethedan forfeits its actions to augment the other, and adds its hit points (though not its Hit Dice) to the new creature's collective total. At this time, it also chooses one adaptation—the combined creature gains this benefit, and it cannot be changed unless the combined creature uses its single adaptation action each round to do so. Any number of Brethedans can merge in this fashion, but each adaptation can be gained only once (though resistances to multiple energy types are allowed). The combined creature retains the ability to swap one adaptation each round (not once per component creature). Splitting into the component creatures again is a full-round action, in which all component creatures are released and the remaining hit points are divided evenly. For the purposes of Hit Dice-related effects, the Hit Dice of a combined Brethedan are equal to those of the component creature with the highest CR.

Brethedans are an adaptive race of floating, telepathic blimp-creatures that live on gas giant worlds. The culture disdains physical tools, instead solving problems by combining and modifying their bodies or producing tailored biological agents inside themselves. A typical Brethedan is 10 feet long and weighs 200 pounds.



CONTEMPLATIVE OF ASHOK

This floating creature is mostly pulsating brain-sac, with the body beneath it somewhere between that of an insect and a human fetus.

CONTEMPLATIVE OF ASHOK**CR 2****XP 600**

N Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +10**DEFENSE****AC** 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 18 (4d10–4)**Fort** +0, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7**Immune** mind-affecting effects**OFFENSE****Speed** 5 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** claw +2 (1d4–2)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 4th; concentration +9)Constant—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*, *tongues*At will—*daze* (DC 15), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *ghost sound* (DC 15), *magic missile*3/day—*telekinesis* (DC 20)**STATISTICS****Str** 6, **Dex** 13, **Con** 8, **Int** 24, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 14**Feats** Combat Casting, Dodge**Skills** Bluff +9, Diplomacy +9, Fly +9, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge (arcana, history, planes) +11, Linguistics +11, Perception +10, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +11, Use Magic Device +9**Languages** telepathy 100 ft., *tongues***ECOLOGY****Environment** urban**Organization** solitary, trio, or band (4–7)**Treasure** standard

Once, the entities that would become known as Contemplatives were relatively normal humanoids, notable only for their extreme intelligence. At some point in the distant past, however, their race discovered a great secret within itself, unlocking the mind's potential for such sought-after mental powers as telekinesis. Evolution—whether natural or forced by the Contemplatives themselves—made their incredible brains the sole focus of their advancement, and as the Contemplatives grew to rely more and more on their psychic abilities, their limbs withered and shrank.

Today, a Contemplative's massive brain makes up roughly 80 percent of its bodyweight. Below the pulsating and partially translucent sac that protects the vital organ, the rest of its body hangs almost vestigially, used for little more than breathing and processing food. Movement, speech, and the manipulation of objects are handled by



the creatures' psychic abilities, resulting in a collection of eerily quiet figures that float slowly and precisely along the halls of their fortresses, mulling over ideas that only their advanced brains are capable of understanding. Though alien in appearance and demeanor, Contemplatives are rarely malicious; instead, when their unexplainable goals bring them into conflict with other races, it can generally be assumed that they have good reasons for their actions, though this may be of little comfort to those inconvenienced by the far-seeing brain-people's schemes. Perhaps the most disturbing thing about the Contemplatives, however, is the chance that their abhorrent, brain-centric form may in fact be the ultimate destination of all humanoid evolution.

A typical Contemplative of Ashok weighs roughly 100 pounds and measures 3 feet in diameter, though it prefers to float at the eye level of whomever it's talking to. Most become sages or arcanists, taking levels of wizard, sorcerer, bard, or other arcane spell-wielding classes; though divine casters are not unknown, most Contemplatives have little interest in the gods (or perhaps the gods take affront at the creatures' probing and presumptuous questions regarding the nature of reality). When they speak inside another creature's head, their voices are monotone and seeming to come from everywhere at once, and when multiple Contemplatives are encountered, they almost always speak as "we" rather than the individual "I."

DRAGONKIN

This sleek, gold-scaled draconic creature looks both regal and intelligent. A leather harness holds a saddle between its wings, and it bears a massive glaive.

DRAGONKIN

CR 9



XP 6,400

LN Large dragon

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +12 natural, -1 size)

hp 115 (10d12+50)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +8

Immune fire, magic paralysis and sleep, dragon traits

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 120 ft. (average)

Melee mwk glaive +16/+11 (2d8+9/x3), bite +16 (1d8+6) or bite +16 (1d8+6), 2 claws +15 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with glaive)

Special Attacks breath weapon (30-ft. cone, 9d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 20 half, usable every 1d4 rounds)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 15, **Con** 20, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 29

Feats Combat Reflexes, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Bluff +16, Fly +17, Intimidate +16, Perception +14, Stealth +11, Survival +14

Languages Common, Draconic

SQ rider bond

ECOLOGY

Environment any mountains

Organization solitary, pair, patrol (3-6), or wing (7-14)

Treasure standard (masterwork glaive, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Rider Bond (Su) A dragonkin can form a permanent bond with its rider. Once this bond is made, a dragonkin cannot form another rider bond until its current rider dies. A dragonkin and its rider can communicate with each other as if they both had telepathy 100 ft. In combat, when a rider is mounted on his dragonkin, both creatures roll initiative separately and treat the highest result as their single result.

Somewhere between true dragons and brute drakes lie the dragonkin. Intelligent, even-tempered, and deadly in combat, dragonkin get along well with humanoids. Unlike many other dragons, dragonkin have enough dexterity in their front limbs to have adopted weapons, favoring huge glaives and long lances.

The most unique aspect of dragonkin is their bond with other races. Dragonkin opposed to the depredations of evil dragons in the Drakelands recognize other cultures' potential, and such individuals often adopt humanoid riders. After it comes of age, a dragonkin may form an unbreakable partnership with a rider, who acts as a trusted comrade. In battle, a rider and her dragon are inseparable, in such constant telepathic communication that they almost seem to be one entity. When not fighting, the humanoids are responsible for caring and providing for their draconic companions, though this domestic role is more a social dynamic than outright servitude.




Built for speed, dragonkin are long and sleek. Many adopt mannerisms from humanoid races, even going so far as to wear armor, and this, combined with the fact that dragonkin have thrown in their lot with humanoids, sometimes disgusts true dragons. A typical dragonkin is 15 to 20 feet long and roughly 2,000 pounds.





OMA

This amorphous, whalelike creature floats ponderously, arcs of brilliant energy filling its mouth and rolling down its body.

OMA	CR 16	  
XP 76,800		
N Colossal magical beast		
Init -2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +24		
DEFENSE		
AC 30, touch 0, flat-footed 30 (-2 Dex, +30 natural, -8 size)		
hp 290 (20d10+180)		
Fort +23, Ref +10, Will +7		
Immune cold, electricity, fire		
OFFENSE		
Speed fly 200 ft. (average)		
Melee bite +33 (4d6+21 plus electricity plus grab), tail slap +28 (4d6+10)		
Space 30 ft.; Reach 30 ft.		
Special Attacks capsize, swallow whole (6d6 acid damage, AC 25, 29 hp)		
STATISTICS		
Str 52, Dex 7, Con 29, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 5		
Base Atk +20; CMB +49 (+53 grapple); CMD 57		
Feats Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike		
Skills Perception +24		
SQ carrier, no breath, starflight		
ECOLOGY		
Environment vacuum and gas giants		
Organization solitary, pair, or pod (3-6)		
Treasure incidental		



can choose to forgo the normal bite damage of swallowing whole, but not the acid damage of the first stomach.

Starflight (Ex) An oma can survive in the void of outer space, and flies through vacuum at incredible speeds. Although exact travel times vary, a trip between two planets within a single solar system should take 3d20 days, while a trip to another solar system should take 3d20 weeks (or more, at the GM's discretion), provided the oma knows the way to its destination.

Capsize (Ex) An oma can attempt to capsize a spacecraft or airship by ramming it as a charge attack and making a combat maneuver check. The DC of this check is 25, or the result of the captain's Profession (sailor) check, whichever is higher. For each size category the ship is larger than the oma's size, the oma takes a cumulative -10 penalty on this combat maneuver check.

Carrier (Ex) A creature swallowed whole by an oma can forgo attempts to cut itself out and instead make a DC 20 Reflex save on its turn. Success allows the creature to move into the creature's larger second stomach, where it can ride safely for an indefinite period without taking damage. When a passenger wishes to leave, it can cut its way free using the normal rules, or make an additional DC 20 Reflex save to be safely excreted in an adjacent square. An oma's carrier stomach can hold up to one Gargantuan creature (or twice as many creatures of the next smallest size, so two Huge creatures, four Large, etc.). At its option, an oma

The titanic oma, sometimes referred to as "space whales," are some of the largest creatures spawned by the gas giant worlds. Capable of soaring through both dense gas and the vast gulfs between planets by means of magically projected electromagnetic fields, these docile beasts skim planetary atmospheres or trawl the rings of dust and ice surrounding some worlds, singing their crooning telepathic songs across great distances. Despite their size, oma are capable of feeding on even the smallest of prey, straining out life-sustaining molecules such as hydrogen with the electromagnetic fields in their energy baleen. When larger creatures or objects get in their way, however, oma are perfectly happy to swallow them as well. Anything ingested by the creatures in this fashion is blasted by electrical energy, dissolved by acid, and then sequestered in a surprisingly habitable second stomach before being eventually excreted. The Brethedans long ago took advantage of this second stomach to use the oma as living starships, telepathically guiding the colossi through the void between worlds.

A typical oma is 150 feet long and weighs 250 tons.



SHOBHAD

This gray-skinned giant is lean and muscled, with four powerful arms bearing weapons. She wears only a decorated leather harness and a loincloth.

SHOBHAD CR 4 

XP 1,200

N Large monstrous humanoid

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +8

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 17 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +4 natural, -1 size)

hp 47 (5d10+20)

Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4

Defensive Abilities ferocity; Resist cold 5

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft. (30 ft. with armor)

Melee longsword +5 (2d6+5/19-20), longsword +5 (2d6+2/19-20), 2 claws +4 (1d6+2)

Ranged shobhad longrifle* +6 (2d6/x4)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

STATISTICS

Str 20, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 13

Base Atk +5; CMB +11; CMD 22

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Multiweapon Fighting⁸, Weapon Focus (shobhad longrifle*)

Skills Intimidate +9, Perception +8, Stealth +2, Survival +8

Languages Shobhad

ECOLOGY

Environment cold deserts and mountains

Organization solitary, pair, raiding party (3-19), or clan (20+ plus 1 sergeant of 3rd-4th level per 10 adults and 1 leader of 5th-7th level)

Treasure NPC gear (hide armor, 2 longswords, shobhad longrifle* with 20 bullets, other treasure)

* Treat as a Large rifle with a range increment of 200 ft., which only works in the low gravity of Akiton and similar worlds. See *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*.

The fabled four-armed giants of Akiton are renowned across several worlds for their ferocity in battle. Most Shobhads are born and come of age in one of the fierce tribal clans known collectively as the Shobhad-neh, and disdain the “soft living” practiced by other humanoid races, seeing in the abandonment of nomadic culture a slippery slope that leads away from individual honor and into marginalization. Whether with flashing swords and lances or the mysterious longrifles capable of picking off targets on faraway horizons, the clans of the Shobhad-neh vie constantly for resources in the hard deserts and mountains where they live, their need to survive trumped only by a still greater desire for honor. While considered barbaric by many, the Shobhad-neh

operate under strict codes of conduct that dictate how a warrior may gain status via ritualistic challenges or daring coups in territorial squabbles. Unfortunately for other races, these rules almost always apply exclusively to interactions with other Shobhads, and “lesser” races are frequently seen as little more than sheep to be culled by the Shobhad wolves.

Typical shobhad warriors stand 12 feet tall and weigh 500 pounds, and their lean bodies are corded with ropes of muscle. Clothing is either practical—such as hide armor and wrappings to protect against biting sandstorms—or ceremonial, with chieftains and shamans wearing brightly colored skins and feathers, yet most shobhads prefer to go naked save for loincloths and the all-important leather harnesses that crisscross their chests and secure their weapons. While Shobhads are occasionally found alone in the various cities of

Akiton, such urban individuals are the exception rather than the rule. In a human city, their shamans preach, an individual is little more than a faceless cog in a machine, remembered by none. Yet a shobhad warrior who rides heroically into battle atop her armored reptilian steed is never forgotten—not by her own kin, nor by the families of those she defeats. Thus, in battle, a Shobhad is made immortal.



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