

# PATHFINDER®

## CAMPAIGN SETTING™



# OCCULT MYSTERIES



# THE COSMIC CARAVAN





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## Reference

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

<i>Advanced Player’s Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC		

### On the Cover



Feiya and Daji discover that not all secrets deign to stay buried in this cover by Johan Grenier!



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# Collection Memorandum

To: Nadine Vives, Curator of Impossible Texts, Forae Logos, Absalom

Copy: Brivit Nae, Head Librarian, Forae Logos, Absalom

Being the eighth anniversary of my original request—and as is becoming a regrettable tradition—I am resubmitting my catalog of the most dangerous texts currently held within the Forae Logos collections. In addition to a copy of my original index, I have also included every memorandum and update I've communicated to the Department of Impossible Texts in the intervening years. While I feel confident that this will be the season that

caution and reason prevails upon our assembly to remove these documents from even their limited circulation, I admit that my optimism has limits. I doubt I need to remind my peers of the dangers posed by texts such as these, and of the ability some authors have to wound more efficiently than any swordmaster. The secrets of this world are, occasionally, best left secret.

Regardless, in addition to the 1,822 pages you'll find attached, what follows is a list of this year's addition to my ongoing series of staid warnings and known calamities. These include only the records currently being made available to outside scholars and records that I have newly come to be aware of. Any documents in the library's surely non-existent secret collections, or already in my department's keeping, are not included.

**Accounts of the Lost Angel, by Lady Saphon Laghanni:**

One reader's supposed memoirs of her dreambound reading of the *Lost Gospels of Tabris*. While I'm convinced that this text should be relegated to the fiction stacks, the phrase "he comes to call" appears no fewer than nine hundred times, each time misspelled in a different way. I am certain there's a code or message here.

**The Burgundy Bowl, by Yisme the Candler:** An anatomist's sketchbook and exploration into the virtues of bloodletting and leeching, this text makes frequent veiled references to the macabre tome *Uniting the Flesh*, as though that collection held actual text. In truth, it switches between referencing Sutreib Abdonnovi's questionable *Bonds and Red Rivers* and, at times, the Kuthite tome, *Rites*. This is nothing less than subtle Kuthite propaganda.

**Dwarven Smear, by Gaspard Vocci:** A hate-filled screed from the expatriate slums of Eleder. Amid the author's half-literate, racist claptrap are hidden formulae for no fewer than fourteen substances innocuous to most races but poisonous to dwarves.

**Fourteen Pages of Rain, by Quan Quan:** Far longer than fourteen pages, this folio is more than another collection of naturalistic Xa Hoi meditative artistry. Page 280 clearly depicts the planet Castrovell in the Gigas Major constellation, but as seen from an angle impossible for any terrestrial astronomer. Regardless of whether this depicts an alien sky, or a prior arrangement of the heavens, the text deserves reconsideration.

**Gird, by Gird:** This text is not only intelligent, it is self-aware. Only its cumbersome size and iron binding have prevented its escape from the library on at least three occasions of which I am aware. She seems very interested in traveling to Oppara.

**Hunter's Moon, by Ailson Kindler:** In one of our fourteen copies of this banal fiction, Chapter 21 features completely different wording. The





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subject matter is the same, but the text has been rewritten to include a five-word skip code that hides specific directions to and from points unknown. Quill press in Ardis calls this a “printing error.”

**Pathfinder Chronicles, Volume 5, by (supposedly) Durvin Gest:** Is an utter forgery, likely created by some jealous member of our local explorers’ society. More than one fanciful record in the collection urges the reader toward thoroughly explored Jiskan sites or other known dooms.

**The Red Shining Star, by Father Scepter:** This is more than a text of children’s rhymes and parables about manners. The contents—particularly the red-inked illustrations—can be traced precisely to popular Isergi copies of the Asmodean Monographs. It is not fit for our young scholars collection.

**The Romance of the Cooper and the Hen Handler, by Lord Lonteirre Jeanvar II:** Is simply terrible.

**Untitled #42,003, by Unknown:** Are badly burned and poorly redacted fragments of the corruptive text *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark*. Even thoroughly damaged, this text still presents a potential danger, especially to impressionable readers and known stargazers.

**Untitled #42,466, by Unknown:** This book is the most elaborate riddle scroll I have ever encountered. Its contents elude me, though its size suggests incredible power.

**Untitled #42,880, by Unknown:** I am quite certain this fur-bound text began life as a bear. It has been permanently polymorphed into this shape for unfathomable ends.

**Viceroy, by Dardral the Lesser:** A Brevic text concerning the lifting and toppling of kings. Elaborate metaphors to this effect are reinforced with illuminations throughout the text. These illustrations contain hidden alchemical formulae for the crafting of various philters of love and other mind-manipulating elixirs.

**The Words of Voxkel the Reader, by Voxva, Daughter of Voxkel:** Within this text are three words capable of stealing one’s literacy, as well as three words that can grant literacy to the illiterate. Not a danger, you argue? Then consider if the everyday Kellid were to understand all that’s been written about the everyday Kellid.

Although it is certainly within Curator Vives’s authority to deny me, I plan to—again—warn the Head Librarian of the danger posed by these texts and petition that they be immediately transferred to my department. I hope that Curator Vives’s decisions on this matter are made with wisdom unclouded by any negativity lingering from our past collaborations. I again offer her my sincerest apologies for embalming dear Regalia, her tuatara, without her permission, as well as any part I might have had in that noble reptile’s untimely end. I would reassert, though, that the changes her familiar was undergoing warrant further study and again offer my services in any future—post-mourning—dissection she wishes to pursue.

*Djarin Vhrest, Curator of Apocrypha, Forae Logos, Absalom*

## Mysterious Occultists

It’s no secret that mystery, horror, secret history, and weird fantasy exert strong influences upon the Pathfinder campaign setting. *Occult Mysteries* brings together some of Pathfinder’s most insidiously creative minds to reveal many of Golarion’s intoxicating secrets.

Lead Designer and known heretic Jason Bulmahn extols the miracles of the faith of Razmir.

Author, artist, and harrower Crystal Frasier divulges the mysteries of the harrow and advanced methods of fate manipulation.

Adventure author Jim Groves sheds light on mystical vistas of reality and the mind with new revelations on the Aucturn Enigma, the Harbingers of Fate, and the Way of the Kirin. His tireless pen also transcribes the secrets of the *Aleh Almaktoom*, the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, and *The Inward-Facing Circle*.

Adventure author and antiquarian Brandon Hodge brings to light the mysteries of spiritualism, the agendas of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, and the truths hidden within the *Lost Gospels of Tabris*.

Creative Director and Lovecraftian fanatic James Jacobs hints at the endless insanity of the Night Heralds and the Veiled Masters, as well as documenting the revelations of the *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark*.

Publisher and secret historian Erik Mona unveils the mysteries of the Knights of the Ioun Star and one of Golarion’s most elusive texts, volume five of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*.

Editor-in-chief and fear junkie F. Wesley Schneider risks terror and torture to divulge the existence of the Anaphexia and the Aspis Consortium’s Conference Z, bloody truths found within *Rituals of the Flesh*, and a map of the Cosmic Caravan.

Finally, designer and paranormal scholar Jerome Virnich delves into the ancient secrets of earth, sky, flesh, and fundamental order with Astrology, Creation Myths, the Exodus of the Gnomes, Mortification, and Numerology.

## Postscript

I once more call for the reopening of the investigation into whatever phantom or lost intelligence operates in Buricsheer Tower. Despite the Master of the Guard’s dismissive assurance of its safety, I feel obligated to restate my warnings regarding its supposedly empty reading lounge. No contractor, staff member, visiting scholar, or other non-plagiarist should enter that room until its safety can be verified by either a shaman of the Bekyar people or, barring that, a member of Pharasma’s clergy with no less than forty-three years experience (though I strongly recommend the former). Should we have a repeat of last Calistril’s gory display of asemic writing, it will not be on my conscience.



## Mysteries of Golarion

“These young acolytes come to us, eager to solve the great mysteries of our communal past. ‘Who or what created the multiverse? What became of the great civilizations that preceded our own? What is the nature of magic?’ Tsk. As if they even knew what they were asking. They pose the questions as if our goal were to answer them.

“These young fools are missing the fundamental point of the esoteric arts. They think we’re trying to arrive at a state of certainty. Quite the contrary: Our aim is to unlock deeper and more occluded mysteries, each more confounding than the last. This is the true essence of the esoteric arts—a deep and abiding attachment to the unknown. In short, the goal of occult study is not to eliminate mystery. It’s to preserve it.”

—Amenopheus, the Sapphire Sage



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**L**ike any world, real or fictional, the Pathfinder campaign setting is full of questions so large they may never be adequately answered. It's a fact of the setting that the gods are real and that magic can change the fundamental principles of reality. Yet even in such a fantasy universe, the answers to some mysteries lie outside the reach of mortal minds.

This chapter examines five such mysteries, from the creation myths of various cultures to the mysterious disappearance of the fifth volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*. Each section presents context for the underlying question, the cultural implications of the enigma, and the history of its study, as well as facts that are assumed to be true by all but the most contrarian scholars. In addition, each mystery includes a number of theories formulated by the inhabitants of the Pathfinder campaign setting to answer these questions. Such unverified theories are the products of conjecture and supposition, and in some cases are outright fabrications promoted by far-reaching conspiracies on a cosmic scale. Then again, some of them might also be correct, at least in parts. That's the thing about "big picture" questions—there may never be a way to know anything for sure.

### Mysteries as Plot Hooks

Each of the mysteries presented in this chapter provides a seed from which a GM can cultivate a rich and long-running campaign. You can interweave these pressing questions into an existing Adventure Path or module as a means of enriching the texture of the setting and sparking curiosity and interest in your players, inspiring players and their characters to look beyond just the plot of the adventure itself. Alternatively, you may use these overarching mysteries to provide a common through line linking a number of otherwise unrelated adventures together, using them as the narrative hook to drive the characters' search for greater truths.

This chapter purposefully obscures the true answers to the questions it asks as a means of allowing GMs to build upon these questions, creating or choosing the answers that best suit their individual campaigns. At the same time, anything presented as a fact in the following pages should be considered true, and is something a player character could conceivably learn in the course of adventuring or through study in the many institutions of learning in the Inner Sea region. You may plan out which of the suggested theories is true (and even invent your own truth), or you may let player actions and collaborative storytelling dictate what lies at the end of their journey. In either case, keep players guessing about the truth, leaving just enough plausibility in every conspiracy theory and enough implausibility in every otherwise reasonable supposition to keep them searching for the next fact. If these large mysteries are handled correctly, a GM can use them as a way to let the players' curiosity effectively write the adventure for her.

### The Ultimate Mystery

Perhaps the greatest mystery in Golarion's long history, and certainly the most pressing in the last century, is the truth behind Aroden's disappearance. While a veritable mountain of evidence supports the assumption that the Last Azlanti is dead—among it the formation of the Worldwound, the advent of the Eye of Abendego, and the end of reliable prophecy—no mortal possesses a true account of the late god's fate. Theories regarding his death are as numerous as the stars, and range from a battle with Rovagug or Asmodeus, to a journey beyond the Outer Sphere, to reincarnation as a mortal man destined to save humanity through his sacrifice.

Whatever the truth, Pharasma holds the secrets of his death close, and even the evil gods have not dared to leak the information, if indeed they even know it themselves. The fact that even Iomedae, who has now almost entirely assimilated the last of the dead god's clergy into her faith, has remained silent on the subject indicates that the gods clearly do not intend to share their knowledge of this monumental event with the people of Golarion. And perhaps it's for the best that the inhabitants of Golarion never know the true nature of events that brought low a god and altered the fate of the world. After all, if whatever managed to slay Aroden is still out there, perhaps threatening the mortal world, then knowledge of the danger it presents could tear society apart—ironically ushering the very apocalypse that Aroden may have given his life to prevent. If this is so, then the gods' frustrating silence is one of the greatest gifts they can bestow.

As a GM, you may use whatever story of Aroden's death works best for your campaign. The implications of his death have rippled through the Pathfinder campaign setting to such a degree that whatever truth you settle upon can influence campaigns of any level and in any part of the world. Feel free to build upon the theories your players put forth, providing them the satisfaction of uncovering as-yet-undiscovered revelations. Be sure to keep the mystery alive, however, as the great questions of the universe are a powerful motivator for characters and players alike. After all, Aroden would have liked knowing that his fate would keep humanity looking with hope beyond the edges of the horizon.

### Why Mysteries?

When dealing with the great mysteries of any setting, it's tempting to spill all the secrets at once. Yet as every magician knows, knowing how the trick is done isn't ever as exciting as the illusion of magic. Don't be afraid to never conclusively answer certain questions, as it will inevitably be those unanswered questions that haunt your players' imaginations and inspire new characters and quests. As with so many things, the excitement and adventure of secret information isn't in attaining it, but in the attempt to do so.

## The Aucturn Enigma

Osirian civilization has enjoyed three distinct peaks of power and prosperity. The shortest of these periods, the Second Age, lasted only 67 years. At the time, Osirion was fiercely divided into four factions controlled by competing dynasties. Yet for reasons that stymie even the greatest scholars, in -1498 AR the rulers that would come to be known as the Four Pharaohs of Ascension set aside their distrust, united Osirion, and entered into a powerful magical pact that bound their destinies together. They proceeded to conquer and subsume neighboring nations, including their vassal city-states of the former Tekritanin League. Under the reign of the Four Pharaohs, Osirion produced some of its most awe-inspiring and infamous architectural and magical works, representing an abrupt and radical advancement in magic and technology unheard of since the time of the early god-kings of the First Age.



20  
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100

No one knows what exactly caused this sudden paradigm shift and technological leap, yet many modern Osirionologists have noted the sudden and unprecedented prevalence of the planet Aucturn in writings from that era. To these scholars, the changes of the Second Age were the direct result of contact—and perhaps an alliance—with strange and powerful forces from the distant planet. The nature and implications of this relationship stand at the heart of the mystery known as the Aucturn Enigma.

The first widely read modern scholar of the Aucturn Enigma was a Chelish Osirionologist, Paracount Imivus. Written in 4657 AR, the original text of his seminal work, the *Aucturn Lexicon*, still remains under lock and key in the restricted section of the Grand Athenaeum in Egorian. Imivus was not the earliest researcher into the Aucturn Enigma, but he's nevertheless considered the most authoritative contemporary scholar on the subject. Imivus is widely credited with the discovery of the peculiar recurrence of the numbers 11 and 56, their special connection to the planet Aucturn, and the method of summoning the Four Pharaohs' burial pyramid from the demiplane of Ramlock's Hallow, the site of the paracount's own untimely demise.

While Imivus was penning the *Aucturn Lexicon*, an adolescent Osirian Keleshite now known as the "Sand Sage" accidentally discovered the first of the devices now known as "countdown clocks." Devoting his life to the study of the Aucturn Enigma, the Sand Sage has linked the clocks to Aucturn but has yet to ascertain exactly what the countdown represents—though he is fairly certain what lies at the end of the countdown is nothing good.

## Facts

The adventurers flocking to Osirion since the Ruby Prince opened its deserts to exploration regularly unearth information about the nation's past, some of which sheds light on the truth behind the Aucturn Enigma.

Countdown clocks come in various sizes and shapes, and all of them maintain a synchronized, downward count from an astronomically large number to zero. Each is believed to have started in -1498 AR. It is difficult to determine precisely when the clocks will reach zero, as the starting number is unknown and the symbols do not descend at a uniform pace, but rather at an irregular and often unpredictable rhythm. The rate of descent notwithstanding, if the clocks were truly set 6,212 years ago, even casual examination suggests they must reach zero sometime before the end of the current decade, possibly sooner. There are four known countdown clocks as of 4714 AR, though rumors of others persist.

The numbers 11 and 56 figure prominently in everything related to the Four Pharaohs and the Aucturn Enigma. This includes, but is not limited to, architecture, time-keeping, and sacred and arcane rituals. Aucturn is the 11th planet from the Sun in Golarion's solar system (though this has only been true since the destruction of the Twins and the creation of the Diaspora during the reign of ancient





Azlant). Every 56 years, Aucturn comes into alignment with Golarion and a mysterious dark spot in the night sky that the Osirians claimed was of particular significance. The reign of the Four Pharaohs lasted 11 plus 56 years. These examples only begin to scratch the surface of this pattern.

The much-debated *Calosian Manuscript*, written by a native Osirionologist centuries after the end of the Second Age, is the most forthright in its description of interactions with creatures from Aucturn. According to it, floating creatures referred to only as “the Emissaries” gave the Four Pharaohs 11 gifts. Three of the 11 gifts were cited outright as the Pact Stone, the Aqualinth of Tumen, and the reality-altering mathematical concept known as the Final Theorem. Additional suspected gifts are the Androsphinx of Zukebri and an unknown device at Shotep-Kara. A primary commercial and naval port 30 miles east of Tumen, Shotep-Kara was said to have access to secret sea-lanes that folded space and reduced travel time. Since Shotep-Kara was abandoned, many have searched its ruins for a device that might cause this effect, but none have yet located it.

Scholars describe the Four Pharaohs as the beneficiaries of a psychic phenomenon known as “mind quakes,” which could either expand their consciousness and perception—or obliterate it. Visitors to the Androsphinx of Zukebri report experiences that sound eerily similar. The sphinx radiates a psychic scream that overwhelms all but a few individuals. Those who are immune share no obvious connections or commonalities. Those who can tolerate its psychic assault long enough to get close to the sphinx report a strange black sap seeping from the monument’s eyes. It bears noting that the Androsphinx is within relatively close proximity to three other monuments constructed by the Four Pharaohs.

The Four Pharaohs were interred in a pyramid constructed entirely out of veinstone. Veinstone does not possess any known unusual properties, but the pyramid is exceptional because veinstone is not native to Osirion. In fact, veinstone is unknown in the Inner Sea region, with the exception of in Numeria—another nation with connections to beings and technology from other worlds.

## Theories

While the wealth of knowledge about the enigma continues to grow, scholars find themselves no closer to an ultimate answer, and each new discovery raises a dozen new questions. The following are the most commonly held or widely supported theories that exist today.

**Gateway Between Worlds:** The term *syzygy* refers to any time three celestial bodies in a solar system form a straight line. Ancient Osirians believed that a *syzygy* between the sun, Golarion, and Aucturn allowed people to channel great magic from that world, and also tracked a rarer event occurring every 56 years, in which Golarion and Aucturn come into alignment with a featureless but apparently important part of the sky. Unlike other planets within the solar system, Aucturn has no planetary gate connecting it

to other worlds, yet Osirians believed that the alignment allowed travel between the planets every 56 years. The clocks may count down to a time when a massive spatial rift opens between Golarion and Aucturn, permitting the sinister inhabitants of that world to visit Golarion en masse.

**Numerological Portents:** The countdown clocks are believed to have been counting down since –1498 AR. Were one to count the solar years since that time and look for significant correlations, the span of 6,215 and 6,216 years holds a special significance. Dividing 6,215 years by 11 yields the number 565, whereas 6,216 years divided by 56 yields the number 111. These are two instances where the numbers 11 and 56 divide into a period of elapsed years evenly and also allude to the other number in the pattern, strongly suggesting that the countdown clocks are counting down to early 4718 AR. Assuming a special conjunction between Golarion and Aucturn happens in 4718 AR, it is also possible the same circumstances existed in 4606 AR—the year of Aroden’s death and the beginning of the Age of Lost Omens.

**Psychic Awakening:** The Androsphinx of Zukebri radiates a continuous field of psychic energy that repels all but those with psychic potential. Some posit that the Four Pharaohs constructed the androsphinx to house and protect a device, used to awaken their psychic potential, under the (false) assumption that no one save them could approach the monument. Now Lamashtan cultists often worship at the site, mistaking the sphinx for an idol to their goddess. If cult members were to gain access to the Sphinx and acquire psychic powers, the threat they would pose to every decent civilization would be enormous. Alternatively, adventurers may seek the Sphinx to become psychically activated themselves to combat a future invasion from beyond the stars. Or this alien technology could be mishandled and release a psychic shock wave that forcibly rearranges the neural pathways of every sentient creature for hundreds of miles. The resulting death toll could be enormous, but might also leave Osirion with the largest population of psychically active individuals Golarion has ever known—a magical renaissance, and perhaps a rebirth of the Osirian Empire .

**Secret Sea-Lanes:** The sea-lanes of Shotep-Kara became mystically misaligned without routine calibration, shifting them slightly out of sync with Golarion. This caused the Osirian coastline to rise, sinking the now-lost city of Xanchara. If the magical space-folding properties of Shotep-Kara were to be restored and stabilized, every nation and pirate kingdom with a sizable navy would battle to control its secrets to gain mastery of the seas. The lost port may also unlock the mystery of how so much veinstone was transported so far from Numeria through a secret sea-lane to the Lake of Mists and Veils. Clues to the nature of veinstone itself may be unearthed, and many scholars hope to uncover strange energies that can pass through it like blood through a body—or thoughts through some massive brain.

## Creation Myths and Origin Stories

For most of Golarion's inhabitants, history begins at Earthfall, with the *Starstone* shattering the face of the planet and plunging it into a millennium of darkness. The cosmic bombardment wiped away knowledge of Thassilon, Koloran, Azlant, Ninshabur, and other advanced civilizations, leaving their successors with only fragments of their legacies. Most sentient creatures are content with the cultures that rose from the ashes of Earthfall's holocaust, but scholars and religious leaders sometimes take profound interest in the history of pre-Earthfall Golarion, believing that its study might uncover not only the origins of ancient relics and ruins, but the key to life itself.

## Facts

Historians are able to paint the history of life on Golarion in broad strokes based on archeological evidence, divination, and oral tradition, but little in the way of detailed documentation about its origin remains. While it's possible to commune directly with deities—some of whom are believed to have had a direct hand in the creation of the multiverse and the intelligent life that inhabits it—the gods are uniformly cryptic about the subject, and offer seemingly contradictory responses that even the wisest of sages cannot reconcile. The general consensus is that Earthfall was preceded by three basic epochs: the Age of Creation, the Age of Serpents, and the Age of Legend.

Existence in the Age of Creation was dominated by several gods, the reclusive aboleths, and the mysterious Vault Builders. During this time, the first mortal beings began to populate Golarion, though the nature of those beings is lost to time. That has not stopped cultures from humans to dragons from defining their own mythologies surrounding the creation of the world and their own races (usually with their own race playing a suspiciously central role in the proceedings).

The Age of Serpents was defined by the rise of the serpentfolk—the first mortal race to hold true dominion over large swaths of Golarion. Historians suggest that serpentfolk rule during that age was widespread, spanning not only several continents on Golarion, but perhaps extending to several neighboring planetoids as well.

The Age of Legend saw the end of serpentfolk dominance, their rule replaced by the humans of Azlant, the cyclopes of Casmaron, and the dragons of Tian Xia. The Age of Legend is the best documented of the pre-Earthfall ages, but even so, little evidence of that time remains.

## Theories

Golarion is filled with a wide variety of races and cultures, each with its own history, religions, and fables. This melange of legends makes Golarion's origin and earliest history a patchwork rather than a unified tapestry. Each race elaborates on the common history as it becomes clear, or as it suits their interests. Thus, Golarion is not a planet with a single

creation myth or origin story, but one with many. While each of the dozens of sentient races has its own story to tell, what follows is a few of the most common and compelling.

**Devils:** The infamous *Book of the Damned* claims that in the beginning, before the start of creation, there were several sparks of intelligence floating in the infinite nothing. Two of the most powerful were brothers, who named themselves Asmodeus and Ihs. Both agreed on the act of creation, but where Ihs desired equality and free will in his creations, Asmodeus believed all such creations should be tools, and nothing more; anything else would introduce chaos into the perfect order of existence. Asmodeus eventually killed his brother, yet lost the argument, and created Hell as a refuge of perfect law until the rest of the newborn gods see the error of their ways. As might be expected, this version of creation is espoused primarily by the mortal church of Asmodeus, with devils having no need of faith, and other races rejecting or resenting the story.

**Dragons:** Dragons are among the oldest of all the mortal races. Draconic lore holds that the origin of that race stretches back to the very beginnings of the Age of Creation. Apsu the Waybringer, now the god of metallic dragons, is said to be one of the first two beings in the multiverse. With his mate, Tiamat, Apsu was the progenitor of the gods, including the world-rending Dahak. Known as the Endless Destruction, Dahak is credited with destroying countless worlds, maliciously imbuing Hell with its fiery aspect, and creating the first metallic dragons to be hunted for sport.

Eventually, the violence perpetrated by Dahak became too much for Apsu's conscience, and the Waybringer set forth to end his creation's rampage. However, Tiamat interrupted Apsu's mission, saving both Dahak and a number of the wounded metallic dragons that were being slaughtered in their effort to aid Apsu. This betrayal allowed Dahak to remain incarnate, and still bestows great power to evil dragons willing to make offerings to their former hunter. In a cruel twist of fate, however, it also transformed the healed metallic dragons into the races now known as chromatic dragons, creatures that reject the mercy that created them to pursue bloodlust, treasure, and power.

**Dwarves:** The origin of the dwarves lies in Golarion's lightless depths, guarded by a race now known as the duergar. Dwarven lore holds that Torag created Golarion itself at his celestial forge, shaping it with his great hammer. The stones and sparks that flew from Torag's anvil became the dwarves, creatures embodying the essence of rock, whose spirits are crafted of fire. Scholars debate the origin of Golarion, but most agree that the dwarves were originally a worker race, created by Torag and built for toil. When Earthfall triggered the dwarves' prophetic Quest for Sky, they also unknowingly began a voyage toward self-determination, which culminated in their arrival on Golarion's surface.

**Elves:** Countless people have heard of Sovyrian, the legendary refuge to which the elves retreated ahead of Earthfall, and from which they returned more than 2,000

years ago. Yet even among the elves, very few know that this refuge is in fact a nation on Golarion's neighboring planet, Castrovel. The only well-known access point to Sovyrian from Golarion is a portal deep in the heart of Iadara, capital of Kyonin. While not even the elves themselves know whether they first arose on Golarion or Castrovel, it's undeniable that their settlement of Castrovel predates any known evidence of them on Golarion. Proponents of this theory believe it likely that the first elves arrived on Golarion at the end of the Age of Serpents, as there is no archeological evidence to suggest that the elves ever made contact with the Ydersius Empire. Significant interaction between elves and both the first humans and their aboleth creators is evidenced by the behavior of the contemporary elves of the Mordant Spire. This mysterious enclave of elves speaks fluent Azlanti, and has a long-standing feud with the deep-dwelling aboleths.

Scholars have a variety of competing theories regarding why such a planetary migration may have occurred. Some hold that Golarion is an outpost in a multi-planar elven empire, the vastness of which can be accessed from Sovyrian. Others believe that the elven homeworld is dying, or that the faster-breeding Lashunta are overrunning the elves there. Still others postulate that the elven race is seeking something—an artifact, creature, or arcane secret—and that Golarion's elves are watching for the appearance of some esoteric sign.

**Goblins:** According to the First Songs of the goblins, their origins lie in Lamashtu's theft of a quartet of barghests from Asmodeus's kennel. The Mother of Monsters unleashed the barghests to prey upon Golarion's natives. During their rampages, the barghests discovered that when they spilled human blood, it sprouted into small, ferocious humanoids: the first goblins.

Goblin lore eventually turned these four barghests into gods in their own right, and credited each with teaching his or her offspring one of the basic tenets of goblin society. From Hadregash the goblins learned to fight in packs, using numbers to their advantage. Venkelvore taught them the art of raiding, Zarongel instructed them to ride their canine mounts, and Zogmugot relayed the skill of scavenging. Though most of Golarion's legitimate scholars won't deign to confirm this tale, the goblins hold true to its teachings. To this day, they employ the skills granted to them by their barghest forebears, who originally unleashed the goblin annoyance on an unsuspecting world.

**Humans:** Humans are the dominant race on Golarion—and yet for those who know the dark secret, the origins of that dominance can be traced back to the lightless depths of the oceans, among the enormous aquatic monstrosities known as the aboleths. Toward the end of the Age of Legend, the inscrutable aboleths chose to take an interest in the primitive, nomadic tribes of humans that had arisen across Golarion's surface. By organizing these scattered peoples into a concrete society and gifting them with

technological marvels, the aboleths created the first true human civilization—Azlant.

The Azlanti served their mysterious aboleth masters, while building a vast and culturally rich, continent-spanning empire west of Avistan, which boasted advanced knowledge of arcane spellcraft, astrology, and architecture. Eventually, after generations of advancement, the humans grew to resent their masters and sought to escape their servitude. In response to this affront, the aboleths united in a ritual that sent the *Starstone* and numerous lesser meteors hurtling toward Golarion. The resulting catastrophe, later deemed "Earthfall," proved the end of Azlanti civilization, and the last meaningful contact between humans and aboleths.





## Exodus of the Gnomes

Though it is believed that individual gnomes have visited the Material Plane for as long as it has existed, the gnomes as a race first appeared en masse only several hundred years after the orcs and dwarves burst forth from Golarion's dark interior, before the greatest human civilizations sprouted from the ashes of Earthfall. Some founded small pockets of all-gnome civilization, leading lives of riotous excitement. Yet far more set out to wander this strange new world and integrate into other humanoid societies, and today all-gnome settlements are relatively rare. The feylike creatures' quirky senses of humor are infamous, as is their penchant for illusory spellcraft. With their curiosity, eccentric behavior, exaggerated appearances, and colorful personalities, gnomes are one of the most recognizable races on Golarion.

Despite their integration into Golarion, gnomes are actually an immigrant race. Originally appearing on the Material Plane in -4202 AR, the gnomes were transplanted from a coterminous plane of existence called the First World. Touted by many scholars as the rough draft for the Material Plane, the First World's landscape changes seemingly on a whim, distances alter haphazardly, and the fauna is a wild riot of improbable animals. Many creatures found in the First World are crude prototypes or bizarre evolutionary branches of those found elsewhere, and a thriving primordial gnome population still exists in the First World, their capriciousness an ideal match for the shifting reality and endless novelty of their home plane.

Yet, for some mysterious reason, a huge number of gnomes left their idyllic (for them) fey homeland for a world filled with death, disease, and the Bleaching. This seeming downgrade has puzzled scholars of every race—not least of which being the gnomes themselves—for millennia. Why would the gnomes leave a world that was seemingly perfect for them, in order to settle such hostile territory?

### Facts

Scholars' inability to gain reliable information about the First World hampers investigation into this seemingly simple question. Many of the rules that eventually made it into the final draft of the multiverse—like death, time, and distance—do not apply in the First World, or are instated in random and haphazard fashions, and most of the gnomes' history (if such a thing can even exist on their home plane) has been subsumed by its mutability. However, a few facts can be gleaned from that plane's interaction with the Material Plane.

Gnomes who don't continually pursue new and exciting experiences suffer from an often-fatal affliction known as the Bleaching. Symptoms include depression, apathy, and madness, as well as a gradual fading of the gnomes' brightly colored hair, skin, and eyes. A complete loss of color usually coincides with death, yet a few afflicted gnomes manage to survive the worst ravages of the condition and reach a sort of

depressed stasis, transforming into albino "bleachlings" no longer at risk of death. Though it's easily avoidable and even reversible through aggressive curiosity, the Bleaching is a constant reminder that gnomes are far from their natural habitats, and that their bodies are constantly under threat from an inherently hostile environment.

Many scholars suspect that interplanar breaches were the mechanisms by which the gnomes originally immigrated to the Material Plane. Often thought to be naturally occurring phenomena, breaches form when the barrier between planes weakens, allowing energies and objects to transfer between them. In the case of the First World, breaches result in the leakage of stability into the fey homeland, and the seepage of mutating fecundity into the Material Plane. Few creatures intentionally travel this way, as they are usually maladapted to survival on another plane, but gnomes' curiosity may have driven them to explore the breaches. In some cases, these breaches have even led to interplanar commerce, such as via the legendary Witchmarket.

The prototypical gnomes still flourish in their original First World habitat, which is now known to Golarion's gnomes as the Place of No Consequence. Many of the traits that seem terribly out of place in Golarion's gnomes—including a penchant for trickery, illusory magic, and risk-taking—make perfect sense in a place devoid of cause or effect. In their natural environment, deathless feral gnomes can exercise their ample imaginations and indulge in behavior that might be lethal or disastrous on the Material Plane without worrying about its results. This attitude reaffirms the inherent link that Golarion's gnomes have with their primordial ancestors, and adds to the mystery of why a select group chose to leave their native soil.

### Theories

Scholars are continually puzzled by the presence on Golarion of creatures so well adapted to life in the First World that one can scarcely imagine them leaving voluntarily for another plane. While Golarion, of course, plays home to a wide variety of fey creatures, these are usually relatively rare, and keep to themselves, often in places where nature magic is strong or the barriers with the First World are thin. Gnomes, however, thrive on the Material Plane. Whether the cause of their exodus is truly lost, or simply being withheld by one of the Eldest—the godlike beings who rule the First World—is a matter for debate. The following are several of the most popular explanations for the gnomes' exodus.

**Exile:** Beings with sufficient willpower may shape the wild and unruly fabric of the First World to their will. The most adept at this practice are the powerful fey entities called the Eldest, who pursue unknowable plots and designs, vying for power and influence on a scale so massive that it dwarfs the conscious mind. Some scholars believe that, at some point, a large contingent of gnomes



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took the wrong side in a civil conflict, refused to abide by one of these beings' will, or simply meddled too vigorously in a fey-lord's domain, resulting in their exile from the First World. Those that promote this theory describe the gnomes variously as political rebels, criminal outcasts, or victims of religious persecution.

**Explorers:** Most scholars on Golarion point to gnomes' maladaptation to the Material Plane as evidence that the feylike humanoids are here either by accident or necessity. However, a minority of academics believes that the gnomes who came to Golarion knew full well that they were entering a hostile plane, and were the most curious of an inquisitive race. These gnome explorers were searching not just for new lands, but for novel experiences—experiences such as time, stability, hardship, and mortality. Dedicated to drinking in all the new world had to offer, they persisted in colonizing the Material Plane, eventually losing the ability—or, perhaps, the desire—to return to the First World.

**Plague Bearers:** Some gnomes believe that the Bleaching first started in the First World, the result of magical experimentation gone awry, or perhaps simply the plane's randomness spawning a super-disease. Whatever the initial cause, the virulence spread, and in a desperate bid to save some of gnomekind, the Eldest cast all those afflicted into the Material Plane, vowing to instantly slay any of those who returned. Over time, the plague lost its contagious nature and subsequent generations were welcomed back, but by then the gnomes were already enraptured with the Material Plane.

**Prank Victims:** Mischievousness is a trait common to most fey creatures, but those who have had the dubious pleasure of traveling with gnomes know that they approach pranks and jokes with incredible zeal. It is no accident that wherever gnomes are plentiful, a common saying states, "Every time a gnome laughs—duck!" Some scholars speculate that a large number of gnomes were tricked into passing through a breach, unaware of the consequences of their actions. It's also likely that the prankster was equally ignorant of the full implications of his or her actions: a being from the Place of No Consequence could hardly foresee the death, disease, and Bleaching that awaited his or her brethren on the Material Plane. In any event, once the trap was sprung, and the breach sealed shut behind them, the gnomes were trapped. Having no choice but to forge ahead, they made do in a hostile new plane. Some suspect that the culprit was the gnome god, Nivi Rhombodazzle, while others think that perhaps the inscrutable humor of the Eldest known as the Lantern King was responsible.

**Soul Seekers:** One of the most popular theories holds that gnomes traveled to the Material Plane in order to explore and take part in the cycle of souls, from which the First World is cut off. When they arrived, however, they discovered that only beings born on the Material Plane

can bond with a soul from the Positive Energy Plane and truly engage in the cycle, facing judgment after death and passing into the Great Beyond. The boldest of them settled down and procreated so that their children might understand the mystery. The discovery came with a cost, however: the melding with souls not only made the new gnomes mortal, but also gave them an allergic reaction to the boredom of the Material Plane, as some part of their bodies cried out for the flux and variety of the First World. Thus was the origin of the Bleaching.

One lesser-known variant of this story says that the gnomes' original experiment with souls didn't involve the First World at all. In this tale, one of the Eldest—his or her name now forgotten by history—aided the gnomes by stealing souls from the cycle and bringing them to the First World, setting himself or herself up as a new judge of souls. Pharasma did not approve, and in addition to removing the Eldest from power, also cast the impudent gnomes who'd thought to experiment with souls into the Material Plane, where they could follow the same cycle as everyone else—a classic "be careful what you wish for" parable.



## The Veiled Masters

Azlant was the first, and some still argue the greatest, of humanity's empires on Golarion. For thousands of years, the First Empire flourished, and its citizens worked great feats of magic, construction, science, and art. Their influence stretched across oceans, spreading religions, philosophies, and higher learning to many distant shores. The discoveries and innovations of Azlant continue to benefit humanity to this day.

Yet if dark rumors are to be believed, then for all its accomplishments, Azlant was little more than an experiment, and its citizens nothing more than puppets. No Azlanti were truly in control of their fates, and the expert manipulators known only as the "veiled masters" were never far from the ancient Azlanti's thoughts. Their agents could have been anywhere or anyone. *They* could have been anywhere or anyone. They watched their

playthings scurry while they entertained themselves with a game of power and fate. When the veiled masters wanted a change, it was a simple matter to do so through assassination, economic manipulation, engineered disasters, or even blatant magical control over the weather or the zeitgeist of society.

That Azlant fell is a matter of legend and history. When its people began to count themselves as greater than the veiled masters who provided for and watched over them, these mysterious forces decided the grand experiment was at an end. They withdrew to their hidden cities deep under the sea and called down devastation from the skies above, shattering Azlant and forever reshaping the face and fate of Golarion.

But while Azlant has long since drowned, the veiled masters remain. They are a patient force, and while they have been amused by humanity's efforts to rebuild on their own, they have not entirely abandoned the experiment. They walk among Golarion's people still, watching how society comports itself when no master pulls the strings of every major event and significant discovery. They count strange and sinister forces among their lesser agents—the shapechanging faceless stalkers, the hybrid horrors known as the *ulat-kini*, and others stranger still. Those few who know of Azlant's ties to the deeps often assume that *aboleths* were themselves the veiled masters, yet the truth is that even the mighty *aboleths* are only the masters' lesser kin. True veiled masters control the thoughts of those they wish to influence, can wrap themselves and their environs in illusions, and can transform land-walking creatures into aquatic slaves. They continue to this day on their ageless mission of manipulation.

And they could be anyone.

## Facts

Although the exact details how Earthfall was engineered are not wholly understood, the creatures known as *aboleths* are well known today, if only as the subjects of numerous frightening tales. The word "aboleth" roughly translates from the unpleasant language of the veiled masters into Taldane as "owner," "master," or even "god," depending on the translation consulted. The *aboleths* dwell in deep underwater cities, both in the lightless, flooded expanses of the Darklands, and in the open ocean depths. They are the most numerous of their kind, but are ruled and manipulated in turn by more dangerous species. As a whole, these ichthyic aberrations refer to themselves as the "alghollthu," yet





the surface world ignorantly uses the name aboleth to apply to all of their kind.

The lesser kin of these creatures can be found across Golarion, acting as the masterminds behind cults, savage tribes, secret societies, and cabals of all sorts. But it is the veiled masters who inspire the greatest paranoia among those unlucky few aware of their existence. Their prodigious spellcasting abilities and mastery of runic and mind-controlling magic make them dangerous foes indeed. Veiled masters are most at home in the sea, but their shapechanging powers allow them to walk on land at will. As a result, they roam the world with impunity, using creatures as they will, their experiments ever in service to some sinister end.

The lifespan of a veiled master is unknown, but if the masters are not immortal, they are surely longer-lived than the most venerable of elves. This disturbing fact was made abundantly clear nearly 3 centuries ago when Aylana Cantesslu, the well-known and well-loved Mistress of Crowns of the city of Macini, was revealed by a band of adventurers to be a veiled master. Disguised as Aylana, this veiled master had seized control of much of the city's economy, and the revelation drove Macini into a recession from which it took years to recover. Yet perhaps more disturbing were the discoveries the adventurers made while investigating Aylana's mansion, for there they found irrefutable evidence that the veiled master had been active since Macini's foundation, switching identities dozens of times over the city's history as whim seized it. Worse yet was the evidence recovered that suggested the veiled master who died as Aylana was in contact with others of its kind throughout the Inner Sea region. However, when the adventurers attempted to follow up on this trail of clues, these vanished without a trace.

## Theories

Few who know of them dispute the continued existence of the veiled masters, yet the extent of their infiltration of the surface world, as well as their total numbers, remain a mystery. Some of the more pervasive theories regarding the influence of the veiled masters and their overall plots include the following.

**Invisible Hands:** Scholars who dare speak of their suspicions regarding the veiled masters often find themselves drawn down the rabbit hole of trying to figure out which historical events can be laid at the masters' feet. Certainly, no creature capable of fostering human civilization and then summarily executing it would be content to lie asleep for millennia—so where are their fingerprints? Some believe that Galt's endless revolution is the work of the veiled masters. Others feel that Rahadom's commitment to godlessness must doubtless be the work of veiled masters who resent the idea of higher powers than themselves, and who seek to place themselves highest—though opponents of this idea counter that Rahadomi

would be the last people to bow before any master, deific or otherwise. Many agree that the fracturing of the Taldan Empire was the veiled masters's doing, as surely as if they called down a second *Starstone*.

**The Masters' Masters:** Just as the veiled masters rule over their lesser aboleth kin, some suggest that even the veiled masters themselves are not the most powerful of their kind. Adventurers in the deepest recesses of Orv or delvers of the most remote depths of the oceans tell tales of shapeless, half-glimpsed things stirring in the murk; of shoals of strange, wriggling swarms displaying unusual intelligence; of eel-like monstrosities with mouths within mouths within mouths; of armored leviathans that stride like giants along the sea floor; and of even stranger visions. These may simply be rare and unknown specimens of deep-sea-dwelling life, yet their close proximity to aboleth cities or the way in which aboleths and veiled masters seem to defer to their presence suggests an altogether more terrifying truth.

**New Azlant:** Some believe that the veiled masters have been working to restart the failed experiment that was Azlant—only this time, they are prepared for the onset of humanity's hubris and arrogance. Conspiracy theorists hold that Aroden himself was no Azlant, but was in fact the greatest of the veiled masters. They point to Aroden's raising of the *Starstone* as evidence, for what creature other than one who called down the stone from the sky could achieve such a feat? Largely viewed as a crackpot theory, the conjecture that Absalom was built to be a second, smaller-scale Azlant is strangely compelling. If true, it implies that the *Starstone* itself is nothing other than a bauble designed by the veiled masters, a possibility with disturbing implications for worshipers of the ascended gods. Are Iomedae, Norgorber, and Cayden Cailean nothing more than the greatest illusion the veiled masters have ever perpetrated upon the world? And if they are in fact deities, was their ascendancy simply part of a plan by the veiled masters to seat sleeper agents among the gods themselves, waiting for the signal to put some unthinkably vast endgame into play?

**They Walk Among Us:** The revelation of Aylana as a veiled master sent shock waves through the upper echelons of Chelixa's government, and for a time, anyone in a position of power in Chelixa had to deal with accusations of being a veiled master in disguise. Fortunately, this time of mass paranoia was relatively short lived; yet isolated pockets of these fears still rise. In the last decade alone, personages no less than the Ruby Prince of Osirion, Razmiran, the gold dragon Mengkare of Hermea, at least three members of the Decemvirate, numerous high-ranking members of the government of Druma, and even Lord Gyr of Absalom have been accused of being veiled masters in disguise. None of these accusations have stuck, but in some cases those who made these accusations have mysteriously vanished.



## Volume 5 of the Pathfinder Chronicles

For centuries, the greatest explorers of the Pathfinder Society have recounted their exploits in the sporadically published *Pathfinder Chronicles*. Issued as a series of chapbooks from the Society's Absalom headquarters at Skyreach, the *Chronicles* serve the dual purpose of allowing Pathfinder agents to boast about their most thrilling and lucrative adventures while also providing a map to be used by lesser agents to pick up leftover scraps or follow up on leads left unexplored by the chronicler. Whenever a new volume is published (there have been nearly 50 since the order established the *Chronicles* in 4317 AR), the Society issues numerous copies to venture-captains, who further disseminate them to field agents. Each publication tends to lead to an exploration boom at the sites discussed within it, and even centuries-old accounts retain value to treasure-seekers hoping to discover the one chamber a famous Pathfinder missed. Of all the mysteries unveiled by the Pathfinder Society, those outlined in the infamous Volume 5 of the *Pathfinder Chronicles* are said to be the greatest and most valuable. Naturally, it's been hundreds of years since anyone got a glimpse of a genuine copy.

For reasons speculated upon by even the most casual new member of the Society, the powerful leaders of the Pathfinder Society—the Decemvirate—recalled and destroyed every copy of Volume 5 within months of their original issue. The official story involved errors of fact and manufacture that could have led Pathfinders attempting to retrace the paths outlined within it to certain doom, while rumors swirled that at least one of the accounts—written by a famous Pathfinder agent with strong connections to the group's leadership—had been completely fabricated. But corrected editions never subsequently appeared. Over the years, secondary explorations of famous exploits have turned up numerous high-profile fabrications—for example, Volume 8's account of the jewel-encrusted Isle of Ixchit-Atlan, 100 miles south of Azlant, was proven false after no fewer than seven ships of Pathfinder agents sank in the treacherous storm waters of the open seas at its supposed location. Yet while subsequent volumes may refute the claims of others, never before or since Volume 5 has the Society attempted to recall or correct all copies of a volume of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*.

What could possibly be so offensive, so dangerous, so anathema to the Society's leaders that the volume it appeared in had to be recalled and all returned copies destroyed? Within decades of the Volume 5's disappearance, the formerly approachable adventuring leaders of the Society had fallen to infighting, and to wearing masks to conceal their identities. To this day, whispers among the Society suggest that the two may be connected, or that the destroyed Volume 5 held secrets that condemn not just the Society's early leadership, but the Society as a whole. In an organization built on secrets, the contents of Volume 5 are perhaps the most important. And while no copy has

turned up in hundreds of years, it's a certainty that the curious modern members of the Pathfinder Society will never stop looking for it.

## Facts

Thirty-six years ago, a trio of young diviners from distant lands met by chance at the Society's annual Grand Convocation. Conversation on the enduring mysteries of the organization's origins led to the augury-aided discovery of Volume 5's original print order, misfiled in the depths of the Society's bureaucratic machine. With this list, the diviners discovered that of the 59 original copies, 48 went to agents based in Absalom, and only 11 were sent by messenger to field agents throughout the Inner Sea region. Of the copies in Absalom, all but three are recorded as having been returned and destroyed. The foreign-bound editions seem to have escaped the Decemvirate's recall order, and hold the best promise of rediscovery. At best, 14 original copies of Volume 5 still exist, though several of those have no doubt been destroyed in the centuries since their publication. A few alleged transcriptions of fragments from Volume 5 have worked their way into esoteric writings and near-forgotten travelogues, however, and if these fragments can be trusted, then the bulk of Volume 5's contents concern the adventures of the great questing hero Durvin Gest, one of the founding members of the Pathfinder Society.

According to the writings of the scholar Yargos Gill, the focus is Gest's exploration of the Darklands below the city of Absalom, on a quest to discover a legendary secret sub-temple called the Sanctum of Aroden, where an order of knights with origins in Old Azlant guarded the Living God's greatest treasures from his mortal life.

Another account (transcriptions from the correspondence of Grivellus Rhodenso, Ustalav's famous "Baron Librarian") suggests instead that Volume 5 focused on Durvin Gest's further adventures in the siege castles outside Absalom. If Volume 2 had added to Gest's legend by including his catalog of 31 different ruins, dungeons, and war-works, Volume 5 went beyond lists and furtive explorations to illuminate secrets and dangers found within those edifices. Although no portion of Rhodenso's quoted text includes descriptions of the specific castles covered, the strong implication is that they largely concerned the Spire of Nex, the doorless, windowless mile-high tower thought to include fragments of "stacked" demiplanes—complete with living inhabitants and cultures—stored here to aid the archmage in his failed attempt to sack the City at the Center of the World. Tragically, the Baron Librarian's collection of priceless tomes burned with him and his fellow inhabitants of the Gulcharin Sanatorium in the Great Ardis Fire of 4534.

It's possible that both accounts are true. Gest's 31 Siege Castles and the secret Sanctum of Aroden are both located on the Isle of Kortos near the city of Absalom, so it's not





too far a reach to conclude that the famous adventurer may have written about both in the same volume. That these mysterious locales lie so close to the Society's headquarters and the politics of its inner circle only increases the missing volume's mystique among adventuring Pathfinders.

### Theories

While none alive know the truth of Volume 5's mysterious contents, save perhaps the anonymous members of the masked Decemvirate, numerous theories abound in Pathfinder Society lodges across the Inner Sea and beyond. The following are some of the more prevalent rumors concerning its contents.

**Dangerous Revelations:** In the imaginations of most Pathfinders, the contents of Volume 5 must have presented some sort of threat to the Society or the Decemvirate itself to have prompted a full recall—though a threat that was realized only *after* the volume was already published and distributed. How this could be accomplished is the subject of much debate: A secret code? Well-hidden subtext? Glyphs worked into an illustration or a map? Yet to most scholars, *how* the information was concealed is much less important than *what* was concealed. A current popular theory holds that Durvin Gest uncovered evidence that the Society was in fact founded for malign purposes by some sinister entity—possibilities include a veiled master; Geryon, archdevil of forbidden knowledge; or Tabris, the angelic author of the *Book of the Damned*.

**The Nexus Lodge Connection:** Durvin Gest officially vanished from Golarion in 4360, but a close study of contemporary accounts suggests that his last public appearance on record was decades before, around 4345 AR, when he presented a monograph on his adventures in the southern kingdom of Nex, specifically its capital at Quantum, to the Society's Grand Convocation. The diaries and correspondence of Pathfinders present at the event recount his presentation in vague detail, recalling that Gest used a copy of Volume 5 to illustrate details regarding the archmage and the Spire of Nex outside Absalom, but no record of this discussion exists in the Society's archives. This lacuna—reports from lesser field agents presented at the same conference exist in multitude—has led many agents to believe that the Decemvirate redacted these records in a similar fashion to Volume 5, and likely for different reasons. It seems likely that Nex—whether the wizard, the nation, the Spire, or all three—has something to do with the recall and cover-up. Venture-Captain Shevala Iorae, whose modern exploration of the Spire of Nex fills most of Volume 36, recalls in a footnote that Nex's capital of Quantum was the site of the very first Pathfinder Lodge, and that early Nexian field agents like Gregaro Voth and Adolphus

were among the members of the Decemvirate at the time Volume 5 disappeared.

**Secrets of the Sanctum:** If Volume 5 contained an account of Durvin Gest's exploration of the secret Sanctum of Aroden below Absalom, it's possible that the powerful Church of Aroden had a hand in forcing the Decemvirate to remove the *Chronicle* from the field. Hundreds of years before Aroden's death at the start of the Age of Lost Omens, Aroden's cult was by far the most powerful in Absalom in both magical and political terms. The Sanctum was said to contain an important "Test of Aroden" that inculcated his most dedicated followers into an inner circle led by the legendary Knights of the Ioun Star, with in-person visits by the god himself long after he had otherwise withdrawn from mortal life. It's possible that Durvin Gest discovered secrets within that could pose significant threat to the religion, an excellent motive and opportunity for the church to step in and remove the volume from public view. Some of the more credulous young members of the Society even suggest that the god himself may have simply willed the volumes out of existence, which would account for the complete loss of the record to history.





## Secret Societies

“So I says to him, ‘But I can’t wax the Grand Stairs so close to the ball. The Paracountess would have my hide peeled and sent to the tanners!’ Then he pushes his face into mine—like he’s gonna bite me—and snarls, ‘You owe us.’ I’d just thought he wanted someone to eavesdrop on naughty whispers or slip a note under somebody’s dinner plate! ‘If she slips at the top of them stairs, she’ll break her neck,’ I tell him. ‘Right on schedule,’ he answers. Not even a blink of an eye! ‘If you just want to kill her,’ I whispers, ‘there’s got to be an easier way than this, guv.’ Then he growls, ‘You pathetic wretch, you don’t even realize I’m doing this for you. This has been preordained.’

“What did that mean? Me waxin’ the floors was preordained?”

—Interview with Henny Willbridge, halfling household servant employed at Dralneen Manor. Reference: assassination attempt.

The Inner Sea and the lands beyond it are home to numerous secret societies devoted to occult studies and esoteric traditions. Not all secret societies are cults, but even those that are not can take on cultish qualities, most notably in their efforts to keep their existence and practices hidden from public view. A character might join a secret society as a means of gaining access to its secrets, but must commit to forwarding the society's goals or lose the benefits of membership.

### Joining a Secret Society

A character must pay a fee and pass an initiation test to join a secret society. An initiation test consists of a skill check of a type determined by the society, and a character can attempt the test once every two service periods (a length of time that varies according to each secret society). Once a character is initiated, he must pay a periodic donation to remain in the society until his Fame score rises high enough to grant him permanent membership. These costs, skills, and Fame score requirements vary by society (see the following pages).

### Benefits of Membership

The benefits of belonging to a secret society are similar to those granted by a faction, save that instead of increasing her standing by succeeding at missions related to the organization's goals, a character must succeed at periodic skill checks or complete other tasks to advance her standing in the society. Secret societies periodically reward activities taken on at a member's own initiative, such as research, traveling, and adventuring; these are noted on the following pages as appropriate, but are typically left to the GM to develop as adventures.

A member's Fame score represents her status within her secret society and tracks her success in conducting the society's business. A low Fame score indicates she's a new or a struggling member, while a high one could enable her to become a permanent member or even a group leader. To increase her Fame score, a character must either succeed at Obeisance checks—skill checks with a DC of 15 + her current ranks in that skill (see the Service Periods sidebar on page 23) or perform specific tasks. The methods by which she earns opportunities to attempt Obeisance checks vary by school. A character's Fame score increases by 1 every time she succeeds at an Obeisance check or performs a task for her society. For every 10 points of Fame a member possesses, she gains a cumulative +1 bonus on Diplomacy checks against other members of that secret society. Fame is not expended—when an award granted by a society lists only a required Fame score, a member receives the award automatically when she achieves that Fame score.

Every time a character's Fame score increases, she also earns an equal number of Prestige Points. A member's Prestige Points (PP) reflect the goodwill, research

grants, and personal favors she has built up during her service to the society. These points, when spent, are spent permanently. Members cannot spend Prestige Points during combat, and cannot pool Prestige Points to obtain more expensive rewards. Members must be at their secret society's headquarters or otherwise able to contact fellow members to spend them, with a single exception—a member can spend Prestige Points if she is dead, petrified, or otherwise out of commission. This expenditure represents prior arrangements made with her society to perform certain actions on her behalf, such as having her raised from the dead. In this event, the member's actual location does not impact the Prestige Point cost.

Each society detailed in this chapter lists specific awards that are available only to members, along with any minimum Fame score and Prestige Point cost the awards require. The sidebar on page 25 also lists several generic awards that a member of any secret society can purchase with her Prestige Points.

### Skill Specialization

Many of the prestige awards and forms of recognition that secret society members purchase allow a character to become specialized in a skill. When a PC becomes specialized in a skill, that skill immediately becomes a class skill for him. If the member gains that skill as a class skill from any other source (before or after purchasing the prestige resource), he gains a +1 competence bonus on those skill checks.

### Leaving a Secret Society

A character can leave a secret society at any time by simply alerting her superiors, though abandoning some organizations might come at a price. If a member fails to pay the requisite offerings when they are due, performs some act that jeopardizes the secret society's anonymity, or otherwise violates the society's rules or tenets (based on the GM's interpretation of the act), she is excommunicated from the society and her Fame score and Prestige Points are both reduced by 2d6 (to a minimum of 0). A member who fails a number of consecutive Obeisance checks as set by her secret society is also excommunicated.

Once a member leaves a secret society, she can no longer spend Prestige Points on that society's benefits. If she is excommunicated, she might even lose access to some of the advantages and boons she had already acquired from the society, at the GM's discretion. A member can return to a secret society she left voluntarily by paying the initiation fee again. A member who was excommunicated must pay the initiation fee again and succeed at a Diplomacy check (DC = 20 + the member's current Fame score) to get back into the society. This Diplomacy check can be attempted once per year.

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## Anaphexia

Those who travel the narrow paths of the New Surdina Road through the Hungry Mountains might catch a glimpse of lights high upon Mount Laophis. The very perceptive might even notice a vague outline of spires and sharp roofs, seemingly as weathered and ancient as the mountains that enclose them. Most hurry past the lonely compound, but those who ask about it at the nearby Slit o' the Sun inn or who question travelers along the trail about it receive the same answer, a name and a warning: "The Monastery of the Veil, where they live for death."

According to the records of Cryptgate Cathedral in Kavapest, the Monastery of the Veil was founded as a Pharasmin hermitage in 3882 AR, built by a splinter group of the faith whose members sought to better prepare themselves for death and protect the greatest works of their faith by isolating themselves from the concerns of everyday life. All other records relating to the monastery, its clergy, the donations it collected, and other holdings are inexplicably missing, and any public information about the monastery comes directly from the only member of the brotherhood permitted to leave the sanctuary's walls: Bishop Yasmardin Senir, who also holds the title Count of Ulcazar. Senir portrays his brotherhood as religious anchorites, utterly devoted to Pharamasma and fiercely protective of their isolation. However, only the latter is actually true.

In 4144, the monks of the Monastery of the Veil were exterminated. When the sons of Countess Robeskea were stricken by the plague known as the Whithers—which haunted the shores of Lake Kavapest, its curse of lethal somnambulism reaching even the slopes of Ulcazar—the desperate mother called upon the priests of the Monastery of the Veil for aid. She received no reply. When she sent her guards with an official decree, the monastery refused her messengers entry. When finally she traveled with her unconscious sons to the monastery itself, the bishop denied her, repeating his order's mantra, "We live only for death." The countess's sons died on the monastery threshold soon after.

What followed is a mystery of blood and shadow: Countess Robeskea courted the cult of Norgorber and set them upon the monastery in vengeance for her dead children. The Pharasmins fell and the worshipers of the god of secrets claimed their library of mysteries. But the assassins did not depart. In the catacomb-libraries of the Monastery of the Veil, their leader found something the Pharasmins had kept secret for centuries. He emerged with a new charge and a single word: "Anaphexis."

To the outside world, the Monastery of the Veil appears to continue as it always has, hosting a secretive order of mysterious monks. But for half a millennium, Norgorber's followers—now known as the Anaphexia—have held this redoubt amid the Hungry Mountains. They claim new knowledge before it spreads, killing the

originators and spiriting their discoveries back to the vast catacomb-libraries hidden beneath the Monastery of the Veil. When they take a life, agents of the Anaphexia remove the corpse's head, preventing others from using magic to compel it to reveal its killer, and allowing the cult members to conduct their own magical interrogations. Beneath the Monastery of the Veil, layers of catacombs bore into the mountain depths, lined with the skulls of countless unrecognized geniuses and nameless prodigies who tell their secrets only to the Anaphexia.

Secrecy is of paramount importance to the Anaphexia. Any members of the cult who leave the Monastery of the Veil for any reason leave behind their tongues, ensuring that if captured while doing their god's shadowy work, they will not easily give up their secrets. Members' tongues are severed at the roots—an act that deals 1d2 points of damage and leaves the individual unable to speak (even to cast spells). Upon their return to the monastery, their tongues are restored by the regenerative magic of high-ranking cult members. Only the leader of the cult, Bishop Yasmardin Senir, is permitted to leave the monastery with his tongue intact.

In this manner, the Anaphexia has operated for centuries, collecting secrets not just to indulge use its god's divine obsession, but also to continue the work of the monastery's Pharasmin founders, preserving this wisdom in trust for some mysterious age or event yet to come, and for which the modern world is not prepared.

### ANAPHEXIA

*The Norgorberite assassins of the Anaphexia pose as ascetic monks of Pharamasma, and travel the world killing and stealing to amass a wealth of secrets known only to themselves.*

**Location** Monastery of the Veil in Ulcazar (Ustalav)

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** knowledge of the Anaphexia and an offering of a valuable non-personal secret the assassins do not already possess.

**Initiation Test** Knowledge (any) or Stealth DC 20

**Offerings** 300 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Acrobatics, Bluff, Intimidate, Knowledge (any), Perception, Stealth

**Service Period** 6 months

**Excommunication** 2 consecutive failed Obeisance checks (assassination at the Anaphexia's hands)

#### TASKS

**Espionage (+1 Fame)** Successfully learning a secret of national, scientific, or esoteric importance that has not yet been recorded within the Monastery of the Veil's records and adding it to the Anaphexia's repositories increases your Fame score by 1. You can increase your Fame score through this task three times per service period. (What counts as a valuable or new secret is determined by the GM.)

**Sequester (+2 Fame)** You erase all knowledge of a particular secret through assassination and the destruction of documents, ensuring that only the Anaphexia retains that information. You must return the skulls of those you kill to the Monastery of the Veil. Completing a sequestering increases your Fame score by 2. You can increase your Fame score via this method once per service period. If supposedly suppressed information emerges later, evincing a botched effort, your Fame score decreases by 4.

#### AWARDS

**Blessing of the Tongue (10 Fame)** You can cast spells from the cleric and inquisitor spell lists that have a verbal component even when your tongue has been removed.

**Deepest Secret (75 Fame)** You are committed to keeping the Anaphexia a secret from the world. You immediately know the name of any creature within 1 mile who speaks the words "Anaphexia" or "Anaphexis." A creature speaking under the effects of *nondetection* or any other spell that stymies clairaudience prevents this ability from functioning.

**Fatalistic Faith (10 Fame, 5 PP)** Each time you gain a level in the assassin class that grants you a bonus on saving throws against poison, you can exchange that class feature for an increase in your spells per day and effective caster level as if you had gained a cleric level. You can choose this option only if you had cleric levels before becoming an assassin. You do not gain any other cleric class benefits.

**Sacred Confidant (50 Fame)** You are a veteran member of the Anaphexia. You no longer have to pay offerings to the cult, and every time you would normally pay offerings, you instead earn that amount of gold in credit. Whenever you leave the cloister, you can exchange credit for gold, but any unspent wealth or riches gained must be donated to the cult upon your return (you do not earn credit for this amount). Additionally, you take no damage from cutting out your own tongue.

**Scholar of Secrets (20 Fame, 1 PP)** You are granted access to the upper levels of the Monastery of the Veil's library-catacombs. You can spend 1 PP and conduct 1 day of research there to gain a +10 circumstance bonus on a Knowledge check.

**Scholar of Skulls (30 Fame, 2 PP)** You are granted permission to interview any of the skulls held within the Monastery of the Veil's library-catacombs and are supplied with an attendant capable of casting *speak with dead* if such assistance is required. You can spend 3 PP and conduct 1 hour of research there to gain a +20 circumstance bonus on a Knowledge check.

**Silent Speech (5 Fame)** You learn the secret speech of the Anaphexia, a language of postures, gestures, and glares known only to members of the cult. You can communicate in absolute silence with other members of the Anaphexia as long as you can see each other clearly and the other Anaphexia members also know this language.

## Using the Anaphexia

The Anaphexia holds no allegiance to any nation or group, and so might arise to confront agents of any knowledge seeker.

**Secrets to Tempt:** The Anaphexia is always watching scholarly communities, government bodies, ambitious mercantile ventures, and similar far-reaching groups for whispers of unusual new ideas, research, and explorations. Its agents monitor such groups' actions closely, extorting informants for news on provocative developments. Some of the most noteworthy sites they're currently monitoring include archaeological sites connected to the Whispering Tyrant, Technic League laboratories in Numeria, Oppara's Kitharodian Academy, the Sincomakti School of Sciences in Versex, the House of Liars in Nidal, and various Pathfinder lodges. They also keep regular tabs on several secretive groups operating around Lake Encarthan, such as the Aspis Consortium, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, the Old Cults, the Royal Accusers of Ustalav, the Sleepless Agency, and the Whispering Way.





## Conference Z

Issued in 4652 AR, Aspis Consortium Inter-Branch Directive 1111 reads as follows: “Research department heads, electrum agents: Aspis Building, Ostenso. Dawn, 8–24. Conference Z.”

Inter-Branch Directive 1111 remains the only publicly leaked reference to Conference Z. This directive was compromised only when a group of Pathfinder Society members ambushed an Aspis Consortium messenger en route to an undisclosed location in Molthune. Since then, few verifiable details have been uncovered regarding Conference Z and its agents, operations, or purpose. However, Pathfinder Society field reports have linked the group to the brutal interrogation of an Iseri necromancer, an inexplicable encounter with Aspis agents amid the Crown of the World’s Lustral Spires, and the discovery of a caravel wrecked in the Thuvian desert, miles from water.

Only Professor Tantis Mais, the current executor of Conference Z, has full knowledge of Inter-Branch Directive 1111. In this centuries-old directive, Jhandorage Alexayn, one of the Aspis Consortium’s three founders, ordered the organization’s most brilliant minds to discuss radical new avenues for business and expansion. Supposedly, Alexayn judged the conference such a success that he secretly dedicated a percentage of the consortium’s yearly funds to backing the think tank, a practice that has continued.

From its inception, Conference Z has been clandestine, intended to free participants from the shackles of convention and taboo. Over the decades, its mystery has only deepened as a march of obsessive executors have burrowed the suborganization into the depths of the Consortium. Currently, only one of the Consortium’s executives, A. X. Adris, knows of Conference Z’s existence, and in return, she keeps the work of Professor Tantis Mais and his far-flung electrum agents a closely guarded secret.

From laboratories hidden in a secret series of subbasements beneath the Aspis Building in Ostenso, Professor Mais conducts his own top-level research while monitoring Conference Z operations across Golarion. Although he has been executor for over 40 years, even he is unaware of the objectives of some operations that began before his tenure. While the full scope of Conference Z remains a mystery, over the past decade, a small number of Pathfinder agents and unwitting adventurers have stumbled across stronghold laboratories researching bizarre topics such as alien languages, biological hypnosis, elder sciences, enhanced cryptozoology, geothermic industry, immortality, interplanar economics, mass teleportation, psychic enrichment, revived prophecy, and temporal redundancy. Yet other investigations have been officially suspended over the years; curiously, these suspended programs receive only slightly less funding than active projects.

Scholars funded by Conference Z make regular reports to Ostenso, keeping Professor Mais apprised of their

efforts and discoveries. Each venture keeps its own staff and security; most assistants and guards are unaware that the Aspis Consortium funds their work and never hear the name Conference Z. Every electrum agent does, however, possess documents necessary to appropriate Consortium agents and supplies in an emergency.

Perhaps the most sinister aspect of the shadow organization is the cabal of nearly identical, black-clad agents who report directly to Mais, silently carrying out his orders, monitoring underperforming ventures, and hunting those who learn too much about Conference Z.

As only a handful of individuals know of the existence of Conference Z, and even fewer are actual members, the following details a group of investigators who unwittingly serve Conference Z.

**Bureau of Criers:** The Criers investigate reports of bizarre phenomena, unexplained events, and supposed impossibilities, documenting their occurrence and confiscating evidence for scholarly consideration and the public good. Originally named the “Bureau of Inquirers,” decades of malapropism eventually altered the name of these privately funded investigators. Public records and internal files report that the organization is funded by a philanthropic brotherhood of international scholars—perhaps even the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye. Only Chief Crier Byron Lanter knows that the group works for the Aspis Consortium and that all of their discoveries are sent to Mais’s agents. Criers—whether individually, in small teams, or with groups of reliable freelancers—collect accounts of strange events, investigate their causes, and provide detailed reports to the Bureau of Criers in Ostenso or to their field office in Thrushmoor (little more than a basement desk in the Sleepless Building).

### BUREAU OF CRIERS

*These mercenary investigators seek out strange and paranormal activity to report to their mysterious, anonymous superiors.*

**Location** Ostenso (Cheliox) and Thrushmoor (Ustalav)

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** must have had an encounter with a creature or phenomenon that defies rational explanation

**Initiation Exam** Knowledge (any) or Perception DC 20

**Offerings** 200 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Bluff, Intimidate, Perception, Stealth

**Service Period** 3 months

**Excommunication** 3 consecutive failed Obeisance checks

#### TASKS

**Fund Research (+1 Fame)** Once per service period, you can sponsor a fellow Crier’s ongoing investigations by paying her offering for that service period (200 gp). You can sponsor a peer only once per year, and even then only if your Fame score exceeds 20.

**Investigate an Event (+2 Fame)** Once per service period, you can undertake a mission for your superiors. You gain

fame only if you successfully reveal the reason behind some unexplained event.

**Take Evidence (+1 Fame)** Once per service period, you can confiscate a unique item relevant to your investigations and submit it to your superiors for further research and documentation. The item must be unique and worth 1,000 gp per point of Fame you possess. The value of such an item often comes from its rarity or unusual nature, not from its magical properties or component materials.

#### AWARDS

**Academically Prepared (5 PP)** You've spent a day reviewing reports of events similar to one you're about to investigate. Choose a Knowledge skill. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on that skill and a +2 circumstance bonus on Will saving throws to resist fear effects for the duration of one mission (maximum duration of 1 week).

**Memory Purge (50 Fame, 10 PP)** You can request a team of Crier magic-users to wipe the memory of a 24-hour period from an individual. You must know where the target is, and she must either be willing to undergo the wipe or be unprepared for it. The person you wish to affect must be of a character level equal to or less than yours. The 24-hour period does not need to be the last 24 hours, and Crier magic-users typically fulfill their work within 3 days of the request being made. While some targets might escape Crier agents, the bureau's success rate is quite good. You can choose yourself as the target of a memory purge.

**Restricted Access (20 Fame, 2 PP)** You can request additional information relating to your investigation from your superiors. While you can't request specific materials, what you receive proves useful to your work. Support typically takes the form of some rare book or esoteric manuscript that, when referenced, grants a +2 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge checks related to your investigation. Occasionally, though, this might be an unusual magic item with a value less than 1,000 gp  $\times$  your current Fame or a strangely specific mundane item. Any materials granted to you are delivered anonymously within 1 week of the request, and you are expected to return them at the end of your mission or within 1 month (whichever is shorter). Failure to return items decreases your Fame score by 5.

### Using Conference Z

Conference Z is a perfect international conspiracy to either oppose PCs or fund their exploits (via the Criers), potentially even hiring them in order to point them away from larger Conference Z endeavors. Cells funded by Conference Z engage in all manner of bizarre studies, resulting in everything from amoral experiments and monster-gone-wild plots to near-apocalypses. A few of Conference Z's known initiatives include the following.

**Extraplanar Travel:** The non-humanoid Professor Ro charts planar connections across Golarion. During certain

planar conjunctions, his cavernous compound on the coast of Malthune connects with tunnels beneath Axis.

**Extraplanetary Studies:** From his observatory in Manaket, Professor Calaczari seeks methods to study, contact, and travel between the worlds in Golarion's solar system. He believes he's recently made contact with a scholar on Verces.

**Necrotic Enrichment:** Professor Galuzo's agents are among the only living creatures allowed near Finder's Gulch in Isgar, and study the union of disease and necromancy.

**Supernatural Meteorology:** The floating laboratory of Professor Omor monitors the magical storms off the coast of the Spellscar Desert.

**Temporal Anomalies:** From an abandoned cliff dwelling in the Calphiak Mountains, Professor Ilosiel studies irregularities in the flow of time.

**Translocation, Radical:** Professor Nuis studies methods of linking or overlaying disparate locations. Her lab-fortress, Castle Penatha, is currently missing.



## Church of Razmir

Many offer prayers to distant and uncaring gods, yet why bother with a god who might not even know you exist? For a few bold iconoclasts, the true path to power involves offering up prayers to the Living God, Razmir—a being who takes a direct and personal interest in the world's affairs. From his seat in Thronestep, in the country that bears his name, Razmir rules over his nation and his faith, guiding them to power and prosperity.

The faith is organized around various ecclesiastical ranks called “steps,” with the idea that ascending through these levels of faith leads the aspirant closer to Razmir and his divinity. New converts find themselves sent to First Step, a fortress in Razmiran's Exalted Wood. While some never return from this great black edifice, those who do find themselves forever changed as they emerge and are issued a simple iron mask and plain white robe. These acolytes are absolutely faithful to the church, willing to do almost anything to further its goals. As a member ascends in the church hierarchy, she is awarded new masks and robes according to her station, as well as other privileges, such as access to bountiful riches, loyal servants, and willing concubines and gigolos. Razmir promises unquestioned power and worldly pleasures. The only cost is absolute loyalty and obedience.

In truth, while Razmir does indeed reward quality service, he does not share his divine power, nor does he respect those who rely on

others. Those who seek to rise in the church must do so using their own cunning and ability, filling the upper echelons of the faith with some of the most ruthless and power-hungry individuals in all of Golarion.

The Church of Razmir is a relative newcomer to Golarion. Founded only 47 years ago, the church is constantly looking for ways to expand. Although currently limited in influence to the lands around Lake Encarthan, where its faith barges constantly sail to spread the gospel, the church sends missionaries far and wide to spread the word. If a community seems at all receptive, the church sets up a shrine, allowing missionaries to manipulate local politics and expand their influence. Although they often start by gifting food, drink, and even gold to the locals in a display of Razmir's prosperity and beneficence, these gifts quickly turn into loans and coercion. Of course, if the residents accept Razmir and donate regularly to the church, such pressure is unnecessary. Their strong-arm tactics make disciples of Razmiran generally unpopular with members of other religions, who see them as little more than a well-organized gang seeking to expand their protection racket—yet as some Razmiri priests point out, the same could be said of most religions, and at least the Church of Razmir follows through on its promises and takes a direct interest in the worldly success of its faithful.

### CHURCH OF RAZMIR

*Those who seek true power devote their lives to the Living God, Razmir. His faith is one of prosperity and power and those who worship him can share in his bounty.*

**Location** Thronestep (Razmiran)

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** Varies (poor acolytes get in for free, while those with wealth might be expected to pay up to 500 gp)

**Initiation Test** Those who join the church must travel to the fortress of First Step to be trained. Once there, the acolytes are subject to various powerful spells and alchemical concoctions fashioned to erode their will and make them easy to educate. Those who fight against these methods are locked away deep beneath the keep and are never heard from again.

**Offerings** 10 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Use Magic Device

**Service Period** 1 month

**Excommunication** 3 consecutive failed Obeisance checks (execution)

#### ACTIVITY

**Conversion (+1 Fame)** Once per month, you can convert the owner of a local business, a government official, or a noble with a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check (DC equal to 10 + your Fame) to increase your Fame by 1.





The DC increases because you must continuously convert increasingly resistant locals to impress the priests.

#### AWARDS

**Ascendant (10 PP)** You advance to become an acolyte of the second step. You can add a gray sash to your robes, indicating your increased standing. Once per month, you can call upon the aid of two acolytes of the first step, who follow your orders without question (unless the orders are suicidal or obviously against the tenets of the faith). Treat these acolytes as 1st-level warriors. The acolytes serve you for 1 day or on one task, whichever is of shorter duration. You can also borrow up to 100 gp of nonmagical gear from the church to outfit these acolytes, but you must replace anything that is lost or destroyed.

**Domain (5 Fame, 20 PP)** You are given control of an area in a city that the church controls. While you do not dictate business practices or day-to-day operations, you are treated deferentially at all businesses in that area (usually about five, offering various different goods and services). If the businesses openly support the faith, treat NPCs at these businesses as if their attitude toward you were one step better than it would be toward others. Businesses that secretly oppose the church might seek to undermine you, subject to the GM's discretion. In addition, once per month you can request a contribution from these businesses. While you must donate much of this money to the church as part of your monthly offering, you receive  $1d6 \times 10$  gp as a stipend for gathering this wealth. If these businesses offer services or nonmagical goods, you receive a 20% discount on these goods and services.

**Intimidating Student (5 PP)** You have earned a reputation for being fierce and demanding, causing those you encounter to give in to your wishes more readily than they would to others. You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff and Intimidate checks. In addition, when you successfully use Intimidate to demoralize a foe, that foe is shaken for 1d4 additional rounds.

### Using the Church of Razmir

Whenever the Church of Razmir appears in a town, there is bound to be conflict with the local government, businesses, and other religions. The following adventure hooks are suitable for those dealing with the church, as well as those seeking to become members.

**Business Opportunities:** The church has decided to expand its influence over local businesses. Their plan involves having a number of acolytes commit petty crimes against targeted businesses, such as burglary, vandalism, and assault (while not wearing their robes, of course). As the pressure on local businesses mounts, the church offers to help stop the crime spree in exchange for a small donation. Over time, this evolves into a relationship in which the businesses pay to protect their properties from the rampant crime. Non-Razmiri characters are called in by a local trade guild that does not want to deal with

### About Service Periods

Every secret society functions on what are known as "service periods." You can attempt one Obeisance check (using a skill chosen from your society's Obeisance check options) per service period. A service period's actual in-game duration varies from society to society, and you shouldn't hesitate to further adjust a society's service period length to match the speed at which time passes in your campaign. As a general rule, a member should be able to increase her Fame score by 4 to 6 points per character level, so depending on how long characters in your game take to gain levels, you should adjust the length of a service period accordingly, taking into account any extra tasks that earn the student Fame over the course of the term. One relatively simple way to hand-wave service periods is to treat each game session, no matter how much time passes during that session, as one service period, and allow characters in schools to attempt a Training check at the end of each game session. You can also tie these checks to character level, and allow characters to attempt five Obeisance checks all at once every time they level up.

the church, while prospective acolytes are tasked with convincing the businesses to pay up.

**Faith Barge:** Traveling around the shores of Lake Encarthan and up and down the nearby rivers, these barges bear missionaries bringing the word of Razmir to the ignorant masses. When they dock in a town, the missionaries' first job is to impress the locals with the wealth and power of Razmir, which is often done by throwing a raucous party at which they hand out free food, drink, and even money. During the festivities, the missionaries talk to the local business owners, hoping to find one who might be susceptible to their message. If successful, they leave a member or two behind to found a new shrine to the Living God. Not surprisingly, such visits end up causing chaos in town as the local leaders attempt to maintain control over the town after the visit. Local defenders are often called upon to look into these visitors, while neophyte priests are often sent on such journeys to spread the word of Razmir and earn money for the church.

**Local Respect:** The other faiths in town treat the church of Razmir like a petulant upstart, and for the most part, the local townsfolk agree. The church has decided to start a campaign to improve its standing among the locals while simultaneously discrediting the clergy of other faiths. They throw lavish parties for locals, inviting them to enjoy free food and drink, while quietly running a smear campaign against priests of other churches, revealing scandalous secrets (some of which are likely lies). Non-Razmiri characters are asked to investigate the source of the recent rumors, while Razmiri characters are tasked with spreading them even further.

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## Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye

The Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye is perhaps Golarion's most public secret society. Based in fog-shrouded Ustalav, this shadowy organization follows strange dictates from the so-called *Lost Gospels of Tabris*, an ancient text recovered from the Osirian desert by the Order's founder. It purports to reveal the mythical ascendancy of powerful primordial entities, and serves as the allegorical foundation for the society's strange beliefs.

The Order is organized by "cathedrals": localized, semi-autonomous chapters that gather in mausoleums, noble estates, or actual retrofitted cathedrals. Membership is expensive and exclusive, and while not limited to the nobility, it is beyond most commoners' reach. The Order is organized into nine "stations" divided evenly among three "thrones." The Third Throne consists of the general rank-and-file membership of adherents, while the Second and First Thrones are reserved for elder members, powerful nobles, or those who have fully ascended through the Order's ranks of enlightenment.

New members must be invited and vouched for by members in good standing. The order's strange ceremonies of initiation are structured as call-and-response chants, and intoned in a bizarre pidgin of Ancient Osiriani. The rites also involve outlandish symbolism and actions, such as breaking the jaw off of the mummified corpse of a deceased member. Membership brings the exclusivity of a powerful social club, the assured support of fellow members, and connections with influential noble houses.

The Order's theology, as outlined by the *Lost Gospels of Tabris*, is an ordered path of enlightenment designed to cultivate the divine spark that members believe all sentient beings harbor. As a member ascends through the Order's stations, she is expected to achieve greater states of self-awareness and personal insight. The gospels teach through symbolic fables of primordial creation and the cultivation of order from chaos, as well as allegorical tales of the ascendancy of deific beings from primordial forms to godhood.

These strange teachings and secret rites, along with the powerful influence of the order's members,

spark innumerable conspiracy theories and accusations that the fraternal society is at best a deceptive pyramid scheme, or at worst, a diabolical cult. The Order's hierarchy includes markers of divine stations both celestial and diabolical, suggesting that the accusations are not without merit, and the Order's refusal to answer or even silence conspiracy theorists only drives speculation further.

### ESOTERIC ORDER OF THE PALATINE EYE

*This mysterious—and some say dangerous—secret society promotes personal enlightenment and the cultivation of an inner divine spark, all within the framework of an influential and powerful fraternal organization.*

**Location** Ustalav

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** 500 gp

**Initiation Test** Linguistics DC 20

**Offerings** 300 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Bluff, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (religion), Linguistics

**Service Period** 4 months

**Excommunication** 3 consecutive failed Obeisance checks

#### TASK

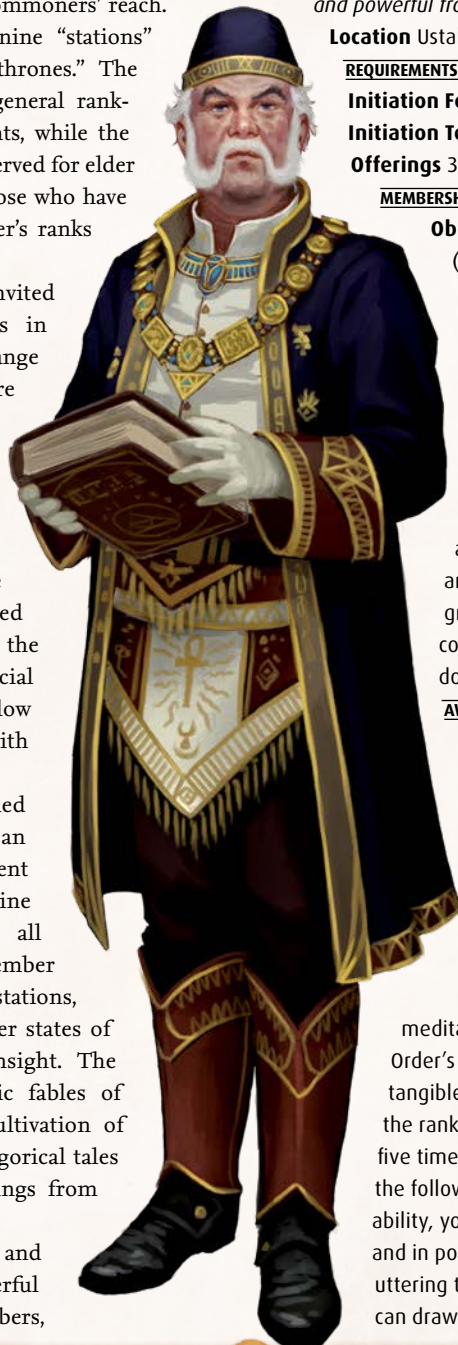
**Recover Lost Knowledge (+1 Fame)**

Lost knowledge relevant to the Order's teachings is hidden in certain ancient texts spread across Golarion, and their recovery by any means is of great importance to the Order. Successful completion of a mission to recover such documents increases your fame score by 1.

#### AWARDS

**First Throne (50 Fame)** You ascend to the highest level of the Order's ranks, and no longer need to pay offerings. Every time you would normally pay offerings, you instead earn that amount of gold in tribute.

**Recitations (20 Fame, 5 PP)** The mental disciplines of the Esoteric Order are instilled in members through meditative recitations—short phrases in the Order's Ancient Osiriani parlance that take on tangible powers as the adherent rises through the ranks of the order. You can take this reward five times. Each time you take it, select one of the following recitations to learn. To use this ability, you must be a member in good standing and in possession of your scarab brooch while uttering the recitation as a standard action. You can draw on the power of these recitations in this



manner a number of times per day equal to the number of recitations you know, but you can have only one recitation active at any one time.

**Ab Sek, Abet Sahu:** This axiom of the order means "Once mine, always yours." By invoking this phrase, you can call on your influence to gain a +4 insight bonus on your next Diplomacy check while the recitation is active.

**Het Aaru Muut:** The saying "Favored is brevity" teaches that adherents of the order live minutes ahead of non-society members. When you activate this recitation, you gain a +4 insight bonus on your next initiative check.

**Khu Ba Heteph:** This motto means "Seek and you shall find"; while the recitation is active, you can reroll one Will saving throw as though you had the Improved Iron Will feat.

**Nib Imnet Hem Maa:** This recitation means "Remember what is learned"; while the recitation is active, you gain a +5 circumstance bonus on a single Knowledge check.

**Sek Ahmet Thul Khu:** The axiom "Secrets kept remain mine" reminds members of their vows of secrecy. You can speak this recitation to gain a +4 circumstance bonus on your next Bluff check while the effect is active.

**Second Throne (20 Fame)** You ascend from the Third Throne of general enlistees to the second tier of enlightenment, and you are gifted a symbolic golden scarab. While you are wearing the scarab gifted to you, this scarab animates and clambers across your torso to intercede against unexpected attacks, granting a +4 bonus to Armor Class against all sneak attacks and attacks of opportunity. The amulet takes up an amulet slot. If you lose this scarab, you can purchase a replacement for 5 PP.

## Using the Esoteric Order

The Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye is an excellent organization for PCs who want to explore strange rites, fraternal camaraderie, and esoteric teachings under the umbrella of a powerful and influential association. However, these same qualities can just as easily make the Order a devious foil to the PCs' pursuits. The facade of an innocuous fraternity begins to crumble as one ascends through the order's stations, and the society's darker pursuits slowly come to the fore. A rising member's assignment to recover some relic from the cathedral of a religion to whom other party members are sympathetic might provide dramatic conflict, as could orders to steal a valuable scroll from a renowned archive of decidedly benevolent service.

**Caliphas Murders:** In the ancient city of Caliphas, a string of strange murders has recently ignited the public's imagination. The scions of influential old noble families have been found hanging beneath bridges, dressed in ceremonial robes and bearing intricate symbols and glyphs associated with the Order carved into their torsos. Has the Palatine Eye turned murderous toward its own members, or is someone more diabolical attempting to

## Generic Awards

Beyond the specific prestige awards that each secret society grants, members can spend their Prestige Points on the following generic awards as well.

**Offering Aid:** You can spend 1 PP to pay your offering for a service period.

**Research Aid:** For 1 PP, you can gain the aid of another member. This grants you a +4 circumstance bonus on any skill check, save for Obeisance checks.

**Spell Transcription:** For 1 PP per spell level, you can have a spell of your choice either transcribed into your spellbook (for magi and wizards) or taught to your familiar (for witches).

**Spellcasting:** By spending the listed Prestige Point total, you can have the following spells cast for you (the caster level in each case is the minimum possible for the spell).

- **1 PP:** *Cure moderate wounds, dispel magic, lesser restoration, make whole, remove blindness/deafness, remove curse, remove disease, remove paralysis*
- **2 PP:** *Atonement* (8 PP to restore cleric/druid powers), *break enchantment, cure serious wounds, greater dispel magic, neutralize poison, restoration* (4 PP to remove permanent negative levels)
- **3 PP:** *Heal, regenerate*
- **16 PP:** *Greater restoration, raise dead*
- **32 PP:** *Resurrection*
- **77 PP:** *True resurrection*

expose the secrets of the Order or use fear to gain power over its members?

**Courtaud Catacombs:** Recently, a militia consisting of Esoteric Order initiates has taken over the local government of the small Ustalavic town of Courtaud following the Order's discovery of a strange glowing ember in the catacombs beneath a crumbling Pharasmin temple there. The group has since locked itself away in the cathedral and refuses to exit. How this relates to the recent reappearance of the Devil in Gray is a mystery the local authorities of the county seat of Lozeri aim to solve, and they might call on PCs to do so.

**Double-Cross:** Characters need not be members of the Esoteric Order to come into conflict with its ambitions. The nobles of the First and Second Thrones will broker no competition in their pursuit of ancient knowledge, and might hire rival adventuring parties to rob weary PCs of some strange relic or tome uncovered among Ustalav's ruins. The Order often sponsors expeditions into the Osirion desert to search for Tabris' sepulcher or other lost tombs, and PCs might discover too late the internal conflict within the Order when hired by one cathedral to perform an exploration, only to be forced to fight off members of another cathedral attempting the same mission.



## Harbingers of Fate

Lord Garron, a faithful follower of Aroden and Chelish nobleman who fell from favor after House Thrune consolidated power in his homeland, founded the Harbingers of Fate in 4648 AR. As a second-career adventurer and mercenary, Garron discovered the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, a volume that he believed chronicled prophecies regarding the years from 4604 AR to 4714 AR, which included Aroden's dominion over the Inner Sea. The prophecies from the first 2 years are absolutely accurate, while the predictions following 4606 become increasingly nonsensical. Garron believed the book's assertion that Aroden's death was a cosmic accident, and convinced his followers that if they could arrange for any of the prophecies in the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* to come true, Aroden would be restored to life, destiny put back on track, and the Age of Glory ushered in. Garron never saw this dream realized, but his daughter, Lady Arodeth, continues his work.

A citizen of Absalom, Lady Arodeth plays the role of the vapid inheritor of a band of mercenaries for hire called the Band of Blades. In reality, however, she is a cunning politician and strategist determined to see one of the prophecies fulfilled. She has manipulated circumstances in the lives of countless individuals for well over a decade in a failed effort to make this happen, and as of 4714, only 1 desperate, final year remains for the Harbingers to correct the march of history.

The Band of Blades acts as a front for the Harbingers. Though the group also accepts legitimate contracts, which enhance their cover and finance their operations, Arodeth uses dispatches agents disguised as mercenaries all across the Inner Sea without drawing undue attention. The Harbingers continually collect and collate information on individuals and situations that conform to one of the prophecies. This information is used to stage events allowing a prophecy to come true. In this final year, the group has intensified their efforts, and begun actively forcing events to conform to their prophecies. Arodeth used to stop short of doing intentional harm to the Harbinger's pawns, but increasingly, she has started to rationalize that no sin would be unforgivable if it restored her god to life.

### HARBINGERS OF FATE

*Headquartered in the city of Absalom, the Harbingers of Fate use the mercenary company known as the Band of Blades as a front for their true agenda: arranging events so that one of the prophecies in the Book of 1,000 Whispers might come true. The Harbingers of Fate believe if just one of the prophecies is fulfilled, destiny itself will be restarted and the Age of Lost Omens will be replaced by the Age of Glory.*

**Location** Absalom

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** 200 gp, must have read the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*

**Initiation Test** Bluff DC 20

**Offerings** 200 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (religion), Stealth

**Service Period** 4 months

**Excommunication** 3 consecutive failed Obeisance checks

#### TASKS

**Brandish Blade (+1 Fame)** Completing an assignment under the guise of the Band of Blades keeps the Harbingers well financed and well connected throughout the Inner Sea. The completion of an assignment of a CR that equals or exceeds 0 your level increases your Fame score by 1.

**Investigate Omens (+1 Fame)** The Harbingers don't rely solely on the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*; they routinely investigate other sources of oracular insight, such as people claiming to be able to predict the future, priests and arcanists capable of casting high-level divination spells, and alternate books of prophecy. Successfully retrieving a new source of prediction increases your Fame score by 1.

#### AWARDS

**Blessing of the Author (20 Fame, 3 PP)** You can submit yourself to a local chapter house of the Harbingers to receive a temporary magical boon—a continuous *nondetection* spell. This effect lasts for the duration of one mission, or a maximum duration of 1 week (whichever is shorter).

**Fatebreaker (1 PP)** If you have a class ability that requires the target to succeed at a saving throw or reroll any die and take a worse result (for example, the witch's misfortune hex), the saving throw DC permanently increases by 1. You can purchase this award only once per class ability.

**Forerunner (20 Fame)** You are given the title of forerunner and a personalized white gold ring. The engraving marks you as a member of the Band of Blades, but inside the band are engraved the words "No destiny but the Last." So long as you retain this ring, you gain an additional +1 morale bonus on all saving throws against effects that would force you to reroll any die and take the worse result. You can also call upon the network of the Band of Blades and gain an additional +2 circumstance bonus on all Knowledge checks and Diplomacy checks to gather information, provided you have contact with other members of the organization.

**Herald (50 Fame)** You are given the title of herald and no longer need to pay offerings. Anytime you would normally pay an offering, you receive that amount as a personal stipend.

## Using the Harbingers of Fate

The Harbingers of Fate needn't be villains, though they increasingly resort to desperate means to achieve their bizarre ends. In truth, the Harbingers are pawns of the

Author of the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*, and their actions are those of zealots hoping to bring an end to what they see as a century of wrong history that has subjugated their world. As a result, the PCs might find themselves opposed to the Harbingers should the secret society set its misguided sights on the PCs or their allies, or they might see the Harbingers' cause as a sympathetic one. This latter is particularly true for worshipers of Iomedae, whose church took responsibility for most of Aroden's scattered flock after his death, and who are more likely than most to see the return of the God of Humanity as a noble cause.

**Author's Identity:** Seeing the Harbingers as tools of a greater power, the PCs might set out to uncover the identity and intentions of the Author of the *Book of 1,000 Whispers*. Doing so might lead them on a number of adventures based upon their own spurious and far-reaching interpretations of the book's text, and invariably includes a number of dead ends. The PCs' search for the Author's identity could even be one of the Author's own plans, making the PCs cogs in the Author's complex agenda, even as they attempt to free the Harbingers of Fate from their mysterious master's subtle manipulations.

**Mantis Masters:** The Harbingers aren't above hiring the Red Mantis when the prophecies seem to indicate the death of a particular public figure, as the text makes several references to helpful but deadly insects. PCs investigating a Red Mantis assassination might find a Harbinger at the other end.

**Mothman Interrogation:** The inhabitants of a small town in the backwoods of Andoran are beset by strange weather, nightmares, and inexplicable periods of lost time. The Harbingers have secretly captured a mothman and hold it prisoner. The group has demanded that the mothman reveal the purpose for its race's heightened activity just prior to 4606 AR, which abruptly ceased after Aroden died. The entity has remained silent and intractable, and its goals in Andoran, good or bad, remain unmet. The Harbingers plan to crucify the creature if it will not speak, and meanwhile the radius and intensity of the strange phenomena that surround the town grow larger and more cataclysmic by the hour. If the PCs do not thwart this stalemate, something terrible will happen.

**New Blades:** The PCs are inducted into the Band of Blades as probationary members. This provides a means of introducing low-level PCs to the Harbingers gradually, and potentially letting them undertake adventures and missions for profit and experience. Offerings are not required until the PCs are formally initiated into the Harbingers. Once they learn enough about the organization to question its agenda, they must decide whether to continue to support the Harbingers fully, or to put a stop to the group from within.

**Sodden Secrets:** While the Harbingers range all across the Inner Sea in pursuit of their prophecies, they're often drawn to areas specifically linked to Aroden's death. While agents in the Worldwound tend to have a difficult time because of inquisitions among the crusaders (and the occasional disembowelment by a demon), the scattered settlements of the Sodden Lands provide a perfect location for some of the organization's more public and potentially objectionable experiments. PCs traveling in the region might stumble across whole towns twisted by magic or slain in bizarre ways, or—more benignly—harbingers attempting to use powerful magic or artifacts to reclaim portions of the land from the fury of the storm.





## Knights of the Ioun Star

At the height of Imperial Azlant, a shining order of armored magi known as the Knights of the Ioun Star served as the personal guardians of the emperor and the empire's Throne of Glass. For centuries these able warriors provided the ultimate bulwark against assassination and intrigue, bringing a much-needed stability to the tumultuous early human kingdom. Because the knights served the office of the emperor rather than the empire itself, their political motivations and alliances shifted over the centuries, causing the scant remaining documentation on the order to paint the knights in very different shades, from glorious heroes and arcane adepts to the bullying minions of despotic tyrants.

Chapters of the Knights of the Ioun Star were known as *almorains*, an Azlanti term akin to “family” or “alliance.” All *almorains* pledged their loyalty to one of two sects within the larger order: the Knights of the Western Star, who served the emperor directly in business and intrigue within the empire, and the Knights of the Eastern Star, who searched the lands beyond the empire's borders for secret lore. As the Empire of Azlant began its long slide into decline, the knights began to despise the corrupt leaders they were sworn to protect. The Eastern Star Knights began scouring the globe for a prophesied ruler called the Last Azlanti, who they believed would wrest the Throne of Glass from pretenders and lead the Azlanti people into a new future.

A few fortunate Knights of the Western Star survived the devastation of Earthfall and eventually came to serve the living god Aroden, whom they believed to be an embodiment of the Last Azlanti prophecy. Records of the knights accompanying Aroden in the early years of the city of Absalom abound, and armored Knights of the Ioun Star stood alongside the human cultural hero in his struggles against the Whispering Tyrant, his defense of Absalom, and other adventures from the Age of Destiny through the Age of Enthronement. When Aroden died just over a century ago, the Knights of the Western Star faded from history. Meanwhile, the Knights of the Eastern Star have remained scattered throughout Avistan and beyond since Earthfall, ever searching for secret lore and the messianic ruler who would restore the glory of Azlant—they never believed Aroden was truly the Last Azlanti, and took his death as confirmation of their suspicions.

The remaining knowledge of the Knights of the Ioun Star is gleaned from scant surviving Azlanti texts and millennia of apocryphal additions contributed by latter-day converts to the order, many of whom invented esoteric mythology to fill in history's gaps. Modern Knights of the Ioun Star dabble in occult activities, trying to cobble together a secret history of their order from scattered Azlanti fragments. They sponsor expeditions into the ruined continent of Azlant, gather secretly to conduct rituals of dubious provenance, and await one

who can rebuild the empire of Azlant and claim the Throne of Glass once again. Naturally, after dedicating their lives to this search, some of the order's most ardent members come to believe that they themselves are the only ones worthy of this tremendous honor.

Most Knights of the Ioun Star come to the order on their own after running across a mention of it in a long-forgotten tome. Eventually, research on ancient Azlanti prophecies and conspiracies leads them to a web of similarly minded enthusiasts, who introduce initiates to a complex series of secret rituals and occult practices, some completely made up and some with genuine ties to potent Azlanti arcane traditions.

### KNIGHTS OF THE IOUN STAR

*Formed to protect the Emperor of Azlant in ancient days, the Knights of the Ioun Star exists today as an order that passes down ancient Azlanti wisdom and magical traditions jumbled together with later fabrications through a series of secret rituals in hopes of reestablishing the lost empire in modern times.*

**Location** any city

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** none

**Initiation Test** Knowledge (history) DC 20

**Offerings** 100 gp/service period

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (history), Spellcraft

**Service Period** 3 months

**Excommunication** 4 consecutive failed Obeisance checks

#### TASKS

**Ioun Harvest (+1 Fame per 1,000 gp)** When you recover and return any *ioun stone* to the Knights of the Ioun Star's leaders, your Fame score increases by 1 point per 1,000 gp of the *ioun stone's* value.

**Lost Lore (+1 Fame)** Once per semester, if you donate a written work of Azlanti antiquity to the Knights of the Ioun Star, your Fame score increases by 1. The written work or works that you donate must be worth at least 1,000 gp per point of Fame you already possess.

#### AWARDS

**Certainty of Greatness and Inevitability (15 Fame, 10 PP)**

You have become convinced that you are the hero the Knights of the Ioun Star have been seeking, and that you alone can lead humanity to a new destiny. This steadfast certainty in your future allows you to reroll a failed Will saving throw once per day and grants you a +2 bonus on saves against death effects.

**Gift of the Ioun Star (10 Fame, 5 PP)** Others in the order have heard of your exploits, and deliver to you an *eastern star ioun stone* or a *western star ioun stone* at your request.

**Hunch of Great Destiny (5 PP)** Your esoteric research and successful adventures have started to lead you to the conclusion that you are destined for great things.

You gain a +2 bonus on Bluff checks when the subject of discussion is yourself and on Diplomacy checks to underscore your strong personal character.

EASTERN STAR IOUN STONE		PRICE
		4,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT —
AURA strong divination		

This red crystal is cut in the shape of a five-pointed star. Its user understands spoken and written languages as if under the effects of *comprehend languages*.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>tongues</i>	2,000 GP

WESTERN STAR IOUN STONE		PRICE
		4,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT —
AURA strong illusion		

This blue crystal is cut in the shape of a five-pointed star. As a standard action, its user can alter his appearance as with a *disguise self* spell. When so disguised, the user can render the *western star* and other *ioun stones* in his possession invisible.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>disguise self</i>	2,000 GP

### Using the Knights of the Ioun Star

Players need not join the Knights of the Ioun Star for the order to play a part in a campaign. Consider the following adventure hooks.

**Ancient Enemies:** Research on the order or a chance discovery leads the PCs to a document detailing a mission undertaken by an Azlanti emperor's personal guard in the years leading up to the fall of the empire. The knights did battle with an exiled Azlanti prince called Nhur Athemon at a massive edifice of green glass known as the Emerald Spire, which lies in the modern day River Kingdoms. The PCs can pursue their investigation into the Knights of the Ioun Star further in *Pathfinder Module: The Emerald Spire Superdungeon*, which contains more details about the order.

**New Emperor:** Tales of the PCs' exploits convince an NPC knight that one among them is the predestined next emperor of Azlant, who will lead humanity once more into greatness. The NPC follows the chosen player character relentlessly, lending a hand whenever he can. Eventually, more members of the order arrive to aid the PCs, driven by their zealous belief in the supposed next emperor. Eventually, however, the devotees demand that the character take a more active role in her "duty," and might grow adversarial should the PC prove reticent to fulfill this new messianic ambition.

**The Sun Rises in the East:** The strongest faction of the Knights of the Eastern Star is centered in the Taldan city of Oppara, though most of its attention is

cast even further to the east, in the Windswept Wastes of Casmaron. Adherents of the so-called Apotheosis Almorain believe that a resurgent cult of the Ninshaburian hero-god, Namzaruum, will produce the leader destined to become the next emperor of Azlant. As the campaign begins, the PCs might hear about an order of ancient Azlanti knights supporting a desert cult in the distant east. The Knights eventually lead an army of religious fanatics out of Kelesh and begin slipping these forces into Taldor, even as they begin to gather political power in that nation.



## Night Heralds

Mistaken by many for one of the Old Cults, the Night Heralds do not worship anything as simple as a god, alien or otherwise. Instead, they view themselves more as diplomats and scientists—in the black places between the stars, the Night Heralds find not only their inspiration, but also the empire they beckon to Golarion: the mysterious Dominion of the Black. It is the ultimate goal of many Night Heralds to someday be chosen by one of the brain-collecting neh-thalggu—the most numerous contingent within the Dominion—and have their brains plucked from their skulls, adding to those used by the alien spellcasters. The Night Heralds believe this affords them a sort of immortality, allowing their consciousness and minds to merge with the Dominion



and live on forever. Colonization of the world by the Dominion of the Black is an eventual certainty to the Night Heralds, and they hope that by preparing Golarion for a swift and easy invasion, they will be rewarded by attaining this grisly form. How they go about this varies from cell to cell, but often involves pursuing lost items and carrying out blasphemous rituals related to the Dominion and the spaces between the stars.

When not involved in cult activities or study in hidden monasteries or underground grottoes, the typical Night Herald goes about the routines of everyday life. She avoids taking on significant roles in society, preferring to work at inconspicuous jobs to afford her greater freedom to pursue her true goals, though if the cultists determine that getting a member into a key leadership position will help them realize their dream, they stop at nothing to attain this goal. For the most part, Night Heralds reveal themselves publicly only in remote villages where nearly the entire populace has been inducted into their beliefs.

While not large, the cult is widely dispersed across Golarion. Individual cells have only intermittent contact with each other, each preferring to act alone in its preparation for the inevitable colonization. During rituals, Night Heralds wear robes colored at the bottom with the vibrant hues of sunset, yet as the eye travels upward, these colors darken to deep purple, finally culminating in a midnight black hood. The vast majority of Night Heralds are arcane spellcasters or rogues; divine spellcasters are almost all oracles and are a minority. Faith in the divine is simply not of interest to the Night Heralds, although they are fond of allowing their enemies to think otherwise in order to keep foes misinformed and ill-prepared.

Membership in the Night Heralds requires a fanatic level of devotion to the cause, making this secret society a poor choice for most PCs, but members of the group can serve very well as NPC villains for a campaign, and it's possible that a night herald might try to attach herself to a party if she learns the PCs are pursuing an artifact tied to the Dominion of the Black.

### NIGHT HERALDS

*This loosely affiliated regional cult of lunatics and maniacs is dedicated to preparing this world for harvest by the Dominion of the Black.*

**Location** Regional (Numeria, Osirion, Sodden Lands, Ustalav)

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** Sacred Rite of Opening (see below)

**Initiation Test** Sacred Rite of Opening (see below)

**Offerings** none

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Heal, Knowledge (arcana, geography, local, nature, or religion), Linguistics, Spellcraft

**Service Period** 1 year



**Excommunication** 4 consecutive failed Obeisance checks (execution via extraction of brain while alive)

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#### TASKS

**Contact (+1 Fame)** Once per year, you can seek out a representative of the Dominion of the Black. This could be an actual member of the alien empire, a member of a distant branch of the Night Heralds, or some other expert on the subject. Success at this task requires that you record what you learn from the contact in an encoded document by succeeding at a DC 15 Linguistics check.

**Sacred Rite of Opening (+2 Fame)** All new members of the Night Heralds must undergo the Sacred Rite of Opening. Undergoing this ritual immediately increases new initiates' Fame scores; current members can undergo the rite again to increase their Fame scores further, but no more than once every 5 years. This grisly ritual takes 2 hours (the ones preceding and following midnight), during which other Night Heralds perform a trepanation on the back of your skull to expose your brain to the night sky. The character performing the Rite of Opening on you must attempt a DC 25 Heal check. If she succeeds, you take 1d6 points of Constitution damage and 1 point of Wisdom drain. If she fails, you take 3d6 points of Constitution and Intelligence drain.

**Sacrifice (+1 to +5 Fame)** Once per year, you can offer a sacrifice to the Dark Tapestry by ritually trepanning a living, intelligent victim. Doing so grants you a bonus to Fame equal to the CR of the sacrifice divided by 5.

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#### AWARDS

**Insane (20 Fame, 4 PP)** You have finally succumbed and become insane, yet your madness does not cripple you as it would a mind less accepting of the condition. Reduce your Wisdom score by 6—this is a permanent reduction that can only be restored by *greater restoration* or more powerful magic (though if this occurs, you lose all benefits of this award). You can now use your Charisma modifier on Will saves instead of your Wisdom modifier, and you are immune to effects that cause insanity or confusion.

**Madness Resistance (10 Fame, 2 PP)** Long hours spent pouring over blasphemous texts, using mind-altering drugs and poisons to enhance your perception, and gazing into the abyss above have inured your mind to madness. You gain a +2 insight bonus on all saving throws against effects that cause insanity or confusion.

**Research Specialist (1 PP)** Levels in the loremaster prestige class count as favored class levels for you.

### Using the Night Heralds

The Night Heralds can be encountered anywhere across the face of Golarion, for wherever the darkness between the stars exerts its fell influence, the Night Heralds are active. In distant Vudra, the cult is unusually public in its atrocities and is regarded as a significant menace. Among the lizardfolk of Droon in southern Garund,

the Night Heralds are a shameful burden from the past that stubbornly resists all efforts to be expunged. In the Crown of the World, entire villages of Erutaki serve in thrall to the Heralds' madness, and speak of nights of "dark auroras" when the stars lose their luster and visitations from the Dark Tapestry seem all too common.

In the Inner Sea region, a cell of the Night Heralds could be found nearly anywhere, but they are most active in the following four regions.

**Numeria:** The Night Heralds of Numeria focus their interests in the wilds of this region, scouring ruins in the Felldales or along the nation's borders far from Starfall to avoid conflicts with the Technic League. They are less interested in technological artifacts than lore and information scavenged from the old wrecks. These cultists often count malfunctioning androids among their number.

**Osirion:** The Night Heralds of Osirion are often obsessed with the mysteries of the Aucturn Enigma. They use ancient tombs as their headquarters, so adventurers exploring a crypt might find themselves suddenly facing living spellcasters when they were expecting the undead. At least one cult focuses on an entirely different subject—an exceptionally powerful alien lord of the Dominion of the Black. This creature, known as Tychilarius, is believed to be trapped somewhere in Osirion, and the cult believes the alien's freedom might be the beacon the Dominion of the Black awaits before launching its invasion.

**Sodden Lands:** The Night Heralds were an active force in Lirgen before the Eye of Abendego transformed the nation and its neighbor, Yamasa, into the Sodden Lands. Before the storm, the Night Heralds had an uneasy alliance with the Lirgeni astrologers known as the Saoc Brethren. Each group acknowledged the other's skill and lore concerning the night skies, even if the reasons for their astronomical obsessions differed wildly. Yet when the Age of Lost Omens occurred and drove the Saoc Brethren mad, the Night Heralds weathered the transition with ease. Today, many of the ruined observatories of lost Lirgen serve as strongholds from which the Night Heralds manipulate nearby tribes of boggards and sodden scavengers alike into serving as unwitting pawns and protectors.

**Ustalav:** In Ustalav, the Night Heralds are most active in the county of Versex, where they often find themselves in conflict with agents of the Old Cults who also pursue ancient texts or alien artifacts. The largest cult in Versex is based in Thrushmoor, and possesses numerous ties to that city's scholastic pursuits and centers of learning. An adventuring group facing the Old Cults in this region might well find themselves temporarily allied with the Night Heralds, although one must always take care when dealing with those who think the world is nothing more than a vast farm for alien overlords.

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## Way of the Kirin

The Way of the Kirin originated during the height of Imperial Lung Wa's rule (approximately 6800 IC or 4300 AR). Known throughout Tian Xia and as far abroad as the Padishah Empire of Kelesh, the Way of the Kirin presents itself as a mercantile consortium but is actually a private military organization. The group believes that fair business practices and just social policies create a lucrative environment for trade. Seeing to it that the common people are not destitute or taxed into poverty ensures that their wages go back into the economy and drives it forward, while consolidating wealth in the



hands of a few powerful landowners or trade barons results in money sitting in treasure vaults rather than keeping the societal machine running smoothly. Determined to create a fair and robust economic environment, the Way of the Kirin opposes government corruption wherever it is found, if necessary with sharpened steel—especially if its enemies dismiss the organization's compassion as weak. Unfortunately, the chaos that erupted during the dissolution of Lung Wa rapidly overwhelmed the group. The group had amassed considerable legitimate wealth and resources, but also gained enemies—many of which struck back with a vengeance once the opportunity arose. Within a few decades, the Way of the Kirin was driven into hiding and transformed into a covert organization.

Today, the Way of the Kirin picks its battles carefully. It still possesses many resources, but it lacks the influence and membership it once relied upon. The group never possessed a single central leader, which left it with many capable regional commanders but deprived it of a strong and charismatic figure around whom its members could unite. The group's most recent step forward came when it entered into an alliance with the Pathfinder Society in 7213 IC (4713 AR). After a century of secrecy, the organization is no longer just a legend from a bygone era.

In practice, the Way of the Kirin looks to its sacred spirit animal as an example. Without disclosing their collective identity, members use diplomacy, mediation, and, if necessary, intimidation to seek just resolutions to conflicts and encourage trade by making it fair for all sides. If this fails, they evaluate whether the situation could be improved through anonymous but direct military action. At its height, the group attracted many paladins, samurai, and clerics to its rank; these days it accepts those with almost any skill set (including rogues) who can demonstrate adherence to the noble group's code of ethics.

### THE WAY OF THE KIRIN

*This lawful good organization is rare in its belief that good business acumen is not antithetical to advocacy for the poor. When statecraft fails, this paramilitary group takes decisive military action for the cause of social justice.*

**Location** Tian Xia (former Lung Wa Empire)

#### REQUIREMENTS

**Initiation Fee** 300 gp, must have 1 rank in Profession (merchant) or Profession (soldier)

**Initiation Test** Diplomacy DC 20

**Offerings** 200 gp/service period (20 gp of which must be donated to a local charity each time)

#### MEMBERSHIP

**Obeisance Check** Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), Sense Motive

**Service Period** 4 months

**Excommunication** 3 consecutive failed Obeisance checks

**TASKS**

**Fight Injustice (+1 Fame)** The Way of the Kirin opposes those who prey upon the weak and impoverished. As a reward for bringing a criminal or agent of the Golden League (see Golden League Patsies, below) to justice, your Fame score increases by 1, provided the criminal is of a CR no lower than your level.

**Subtle Hand (+1 Fame)** The kirin are a force for good, but act with discretion whenever possible, and those who follow the Way of the Kirin do likewise. Should you resolve a serious problem for a common person or community without threats or violence, your Fame score increases by 1, provided the encounter is of a CR no lower than your level.

**AWARDS**

**Blade of the Emperor (50 Fame)** You are given the title “Blade of the Emperor” (referring to the emperor kirin) and are excused from paying offerings. You instead receive 180 gp per service period as a return on many investments made by the organization in your name. Additionally the base value and spending limit of any settlement increases by 15% for you and your allies. This benefit stacks with similar benefits.

**Defender of the People (20 Fame)** You are given the title “Defender of the People” and receive a 10% discount on potions, scrolls, and wands in communities where the Way of the Kirin is respected. Additionally, the base value and spending limit of any settlement increases by 15% for you and your allies. This benefit stacks with similar benefits.

**Marshal Troops (20 Fame, 3 PP)** You can call upon your good standing and credibility with the Way to make a case for direct military action. You can muster an army with an Army Challenge Rating equal to your own CR (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign* 234). This army lasts for only one military engagement and can be called upon only once per service period. Afterward, the army quickly disbands and quietly fades into the background. The soldiers in the army refuse to fight for any tyrannical or unjust cause.

**Sky Steed (10 Fame, 2 PP)** An impetuous young kirin (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 168) agrees to act as your steed for a limited time. The creature temporarily replaces your mount and stays with you for one short adventure or 1 week (whichever is shorter). You can call upon the service of such a mount only once per service period.

**Using the Way of the Kirin**

The Way of the Kirin is the only staunchly lawful good occult organization presented in this book. Yet despite the Way’s alignment and strict codes of honor and conduct, adventuring parties could still find themselves at odds with the organization. Some potential plot hooks revolving around the Way of the Kirin are detailed below.

**Agents of Corruption:** A local lord or official hires the PCs to stop a group of well-organized bandits. The party’s

employer is a legal authority who convincingly presents herself as the injured party, but actually abuses her citizens. The “bandits” are actually members of the Way of the Kirin who rob from the rich to aid the poor. Whether the PCs learn the truth before a confrontation depends on their investigative skills, and an alliance is possible if they succeed.

**Conflict of Interests:** A piece of treasure, like a choice magical item the PCs would love to obtain, is found in the possession of oni or other monsters. The item also plays an important role in the physical and spiritual well-being of a local village from which it was originally stolen. The village has nothing close to its value to exchange, so the Way of the Kirin tries to persuade the PCs to make a gift of the item’s return. If the party refuses, the Way of the Kirin tries to confiscate the item on behalf of the community.

**Golden League Patsies:** The Way of the Kirin has many powerful enemies, including the Golden League—a powerful organized crime syndicate composed of “families” in every major city in the Dragon Empires. Agents and assassins of the Golden League might frame the PCs to hide their involvement in an underworld scheme, which draws the ire of the Way upon them. Another layer of intrigue might be added if this scheme is deliberately orchestrated to draw the Way of the Kirin out of hiding in order for the Golden League to strike while the former group is distracted.

**Membership Test:** The Way of the Kirin normally carefully observes potential initiates before revealing the group’s existence. With the news of the organization’s existence slowly leaking out, however, some now seek out the group to join it, either in earnest or as infiltrators. If the PCs seek to join, the Way of the Kirin tests their ethics prior to making contact, assessing how the PCs act when they don’t know they’re under observation. A typical test is staged as treasure stolen by bandits or monsters from a local community, with scouts from the Way observing whether the PCs return it or knowingly keep it. Based on the PCs’ choices, an anonymous message is delivered either giving details on where to meet, or instructing the PCs to abandon their search.

**Opposing Goals:** Not all PC groups are good-aligned. The Way of Kirin can be used as a rival organization that stands in opposition to the PCs’ plans of conquest and subjugation. If the PCs are simply thieves, the Way intervenes if local authorities are outmatched.

**Ulfen Treaty:** The Way has brokered a treaty between the Linnorm Kings and several Tian trading houses, pledging that the Ulfen would not raid the trading houses’ ships and caravans in exchange for a trade embargo against Irrisen, but the White Witches attempted to assassinate the messenger before the treaty was ratified. The dying Way agent asks the PCs to get the treaty signed and delivered to the appropriate parties before the agreement collapses.

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## Esoteric Traditions

All we know of history, of the ways of the things that were, begins with Sonnorae and the stories she collected. The last of her line, she sought to protect the ancient tales by casting them into a realm of magic, a plane of pure story, and there gave them form and life, that they might continue even after she passed on to Pharamma's judgment. Yet in this she worked her own undoing, for as everyone knows, stories have a way of growing in the telling, and not always for the best. She sat with them at their great table, showing them the love of a mother for her children. Yet the stories were wicked, and set upon her, carving her up so that each might devour of a portion of her power, and in so doing become more than stories are meant to be. And there she lay, charming Sonnorae, cut to pieces by the very things she loved the most.

—Excerpt from a Varisian folktale



Occult practices have always been popular on Golarion. For those without magical power themselves, they offer a glimpse into the world of the esoteric, and sometimes grant abilities that reveal the more mundane spellcasters of ordinary religions or arcane schools. For those already versed in the ways of magic, the occult presents a chance to uncover new ground and rise above one's peers. For some people, it's not even the forbidden information available in a secret society that's appealing, but rather the membership itself: a chance for an outsider to feel like a part of something larger, for a lower-caste person to rise above the station normally proscribed by society, or for a political schemer to gain both powerful connections and an advantage over those who would otherwise outrank her.

Secret societies and hidden cults pass down their carefully guarded practices to new members, and these esoteric traditions can form myriad combinations of unpredictable and potent effects. Whether divining by the movement of heavenly bodies, mutilating one's own body to draw power, or teasing out the hidden meanings behind numbers, those who understand these practices can access incredible (and often dangerous) power.

The following chapter explores several of Golarion's esoteric traditions, featuring overviews, histories, beliefs and tenets, centers of practice, variations, new mechanics, and rules subsystems for each. It is recommended that Game Masters not introduce too many of these new rules into a single campaign, or otherwise make them so prevalent that they lose their mystery and occult nature. Rather, allow the PCs to seek out the secrets like those of astrology, numerology, and the harrow through adventure and research, or make mortification a key tenet of a powerful cult the heroes must defeat. Using these systems can help increase the impact of the stories with which they are interwoven, and exploring their secrets can provide great seeds for entire multi-level campaigns.

The occult traditions presented in this chapter, and an overview of the new rules in each section, are as follows.

### Astrology

This section explores the practice of divining meaning and channeling power from the movements of heavenly bodies and the interactions between cosmic forces. Characters who divine using the Cosmic Caravan, the most common form of astrology around the Inner Sea, might take a trait tied to one of 13 sun signs, and those who know how to interpret the movement of heavenly bodies can gain temporary benefits by recognizing the potential in a number of astrological occurrences.

### The Harrow

Inspired by the Tarot of our own world, the harrow deck of Golarion is a divinatory tool with the potential to

unlock magical power beyond that of normal spellcasters. The subsystem presented here is a variant on Paizo's *Plot Twist Cards*, allowing players to alter reality and control their own destinies based on the cards they draw. This section also presents GMs with suggested plot seeds to build encounters around the random cards selected as part of a character's harrow reading.

Several other sources can be useful in unlocking the full power of the harrow. Full rules for conducting a harrow reading can be found in the *Pathfinder Cards: Deluxe Harrow Deck*, while the *Inner Sea World Guide* presents the harrower prestige class. *Pathfinder Module: The Harrowing* explores the deck's origins and meanings by taking players into the bizarre Harrowed Realm, and *Pathfinder Player Companion: Harrower's Handbook* explores even more of the deck's mystical abilities.

### Numerology

The practice of assigning meaning to numbers or looking for the innate equations in all things is called numerology, and has been practiced in many forms throughout history and across Golarion. This section presents new feats allowing spellcasters to augment their spells using arithmancy and sacred geometry. Additionally, the Tian system of numerology called the Path of Numbers provides several new spells with a number of variable effects determined by how a pool of dice falls.

### Mortification

Mortification is the practice of ritualistically harming one's own body in the hope of attaining self-perfection, magical power, or other personal gain. Though sometimes gruesome, this practice is not necessarily evil, and characters of all types might be interested in it.

This section features a system of agonies, daily rituals which, when carried out, grant the character a number of powers that scale with her level. Additionally, the pain taster prestige class presents options for characters who hope to use their own pain as a means of empowering their abilities, and who are inspired and motivated by the pain of their enemies.

### Spiritualism

Used by cultures throughout the world to allow the living to communicate with the dead, the practice of spiritualism is among the most benign of the esoteric traditions in this chapter, but nevertheless plays an important role in many occult organizations. New equipment and spells are presented in this section to allow characters to conduct seances, as well as a number of haunt effects that allow the dead to communicate with the living of their own accord. Finally, this section reprints the occult oracle mystery which first appeared in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #71: Rasputin Must Die*.

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## Astrology

The practice of astrology on Golarion hinges on the core belief that the movements of the cosmos directly affect the lives of Golarion's inhabitants. Though the movements of celestial bodies seem far removed from the quotidian lives of the average creature, and a causal relationship has never been proven, many of the most influential events in Golarion's history coincided with alignments and conjunctions of far-off forces.

Astrology provides a system by which one can extrapolate meaning from the patterns that govern the movement of celestial bodies through the study of constellations and drawing conclusions about terrestrial events based on those observations. This process requires both observation and subjective interpretation, making it simultaneously



an art, a magical practice, and a science. The interpretive component sets it apart from constructive practices that produce replicable results, like alchemy, spellcraft, or engineering, leading many arcanists to find it disreputable. At the same time, however, funding for astrology is often more easy to come by among the wealthy and powerful than money for pure astronomy, and many savvy astronomers have found it prudent to train in both.

## The Cosmic Caravan

Astrology on Golarion has many traditions, but the most common around the Inner Sea is that of the Cosmic Caravan. This system partitions Golarion's night sky into 13 equal longitudinal sections, each containing a distinct constellation. While the movement of these constellations is consistent, year after year, astrologers find meaning in the positions of the planets of Golarion's system, its sun, and other celestial bodies like comets in relation to these 13 signs. Skilled astrologers are able both to foretell events and to determine the prevailing influences on an individual's personality based on the time and location of her birth and relationships between the myriad orbiting bodies in the heavens above.

Little is known about the origins of the Cosmic Caravan, though many scholars believe its study predates the Age of Enthronement. A common theory holds that it was originally an Azlanti methodology, and that both the Varisians who commonly practice it today and the Lirgeni who followed a similar system were working from the same ancient source material.

While belief in the Cosmic Caravan is extremely popular, it's far from universal. The Dragon Empires zodiac, for instance, features 12 signs, and the sign which is important and influential in a given year, month, day, or even hour is determined not by the position of the stars, but by a complex cycle closely tied to the phases of the moon. Each sign in the Dragon Empires zodiac is drawn from ancient Tian legend, and the constellations are said to be guarded by the imperial dragons who give the Dragon Empires their name.














## Using the Cosmic Caravan

In Avistan and Garund, the Cosmic Caravan is the astrological tool of choice for most diviners. Though some cultures grant the Caravan religious connotations, it is an inherently secular system, available for use by characters of all cultures, alignments, and faiths. A list of the Caravan's signs appears on page 37, along with matching traits for characters born under that sign. Players who know their characters' birth dates could incorporate the appropriate traits.

Each sign also features a percentage range, which allows a player who doesn't know his character's birth date to determine it with a d% roll.



## Cosmic Caravan

d%	Sign	Corresponding Dates	Trait
1-7		(18 Kuthona–20 Abadius)	Like the curious songbirds that welcome weary travelers, your voice rings with sweet clarity. You gain a +1 bonus on Perform (sing) checks, and Perform (sing) becomes a class skill for you.
8-14		(21 Abadius–16 Calistril)	You are bathed in the light of the Lantern Bearer, who guides the Caravan through the darkest nights. You can cast <i>light</i> three times per day as a spell-like ability, treating your character level as your caster level.
15-21		(17 Calistril–11 Pharast)	Your sign is of two lovers, intertwined as one. You gain a +2 bonus on Diplomacy checks to influence those who might be romantically attracted to you, and Diplomacy becomes a class skill for you.
22-28		(12 Pharast–18 Gozran)	The Bridge spans the rushing waters that separate the darkness of winter from the warmth of spring. You gain a +1 trait bonus on saving throws against spells and effects with the cold or darkness descriptors.
29-35		(19 Gozran–13 Desnus)	You are filled with the light-hearted joy of the Daughter, who dances her way into springtime. Every creature within 10 feet of you adds +2 moral bonuses to the DCs of checks to demoralize them.
36-42		(14 Desnus–20 Sarenith)	You are born under the auspice of the mounted caravan guard, whose very presence deters danger. Once per day, when you succeed at a Ride check, you can attempt an immediate Intimidate check against the nearest foe. If you fail this check, the DC of your next Intimidate check against that opponent does not increase (as it normally would).
43-49		(21 Sarenith–20 Erastus)	Like the father of the Cosmic Caravan, you have an innate sense of direction. Three times per day, you can use <i>know direction</i> as a spell-like ability, treating your character level as your caster level.
50-56		(21 Erastus–10 Arodus)	Like the vehicle that conveys travelers across the heavens, you are blessed with extraordinary movement capabilities. Once per day as a swift action, you can increase your move speed by 10 feet for 1 round.
57-63		(11 Arodus–16 Rova)	You are blessed by the beasts that trail the caravan, which represent protection in numbers. You gain a +2 trait bonus on Handle Animal checks to teach animals tricks, and Handle Animal becomes a class skill for you.
64-70		(17 Rova–30 Lamashan)	Granting warmth and comfort against the forbidding cold of the wilderness, the Mother is the heart of the Caravan. Allies within 10 feet of you gain a +1 morale bonus on saving throws to resist fear effects. This trait functions only while you are conscious.
71-77		(31 Lamashan–20 Neth)	With his head in the clouds, the Stargazer sees far-off events, but misses the pitfalls directly before him. When rolling initiative as part of a surprise round, you take a –2 penalty on initiative checks, but you gain a +2 luck bonus to AC during all surprise rounds.
78-84		(21 Neth–29 Neth)	Like the lone traveler that walks alongside the caravan for but a brief while, you have a way with strangers. You gain a +1 trait bonus on Diplomacy and Knowledge (local) checks to gather information. Additionally, either Diplomacy or Knowledge (local) becomes a class skill for you.
85-91		(30 Neth–17 Kuthona)	You are born under the sign of the dark figure that trails the Caravan—the specter of death itself. You receive a +2 bonus on saving throws against death effects. All allies within 10 feet of you take a –1 penalty on saving throws against death effects.
92-100	Cusp	—	You were born right on the dividing line between two consecutive signs, providing you with a choice of which sign to adopt. Reroll d%; then choose between the resulting sign, or either of the signs adjacent to it.

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## Glossary of Astrological Terms

The following terms are used to describe astrological events.

**Apparent Retrograde:** The apparent brief reversal of a celestial body's direction of motion as seen from Golarion.

**Appulse:** A very close approach of two celestial bodies so that they are in conjunction but no eclipse or occultation occurs.

**Ascendant:** A celestial body that appears to be ascending on the eastern horizon.

**Conjunction:** Two or more celestial bodies aligned in a straight line with Golarion.

**[Planet] in [Constellation]:** When a given planet appears to an observer on Golarion to be in a portion of the sky ruled by a given sign, that planet is said to be in the associated constellation.

**Sun Sign:** This constellation in which the sun appeared at a given point in time. Since the sun is between this constellation and Golarion, its light obscures the constellation from view, preventing observers from seeing the dominant sign during the month during which it most strongly influences Golarion.

For more information on Golarion's solar system, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Distant Worlds*.

## Astrology on Golarion

In some cultures, celestial divination is an esoteric discipline, while for others it's a major cultural institution. The following are several cultures that hold astrology as a foundational practice.

**Desnans:** Having been credited with the creation of the heavens, and residing among the stars of the Material Plane, the goddess Desna is a fitting patron of astrologers. Her faithful are often conscious of their Caravan signs, and the few permanent temples to Desna often double as observatories. The Varisian people are notably committed to Desna, and they practice several types of divination, including astrology and harrow readings.

**Blink Dogs:** Astrology is a cultural foundation of these good-natured magical beasts, and blink dog packs often take celestial omens into account when making decisions. Each pack has a sage, who councils the alpha of the group on the meaning of such omens, and also preserves the astrological tradition of that race.

**Lunar Nagas:** These creatures are masters of astrology, and their entire culture revolves around it. Lunar nagas have several zodiacs, which they use to create tomes upon tomes of celestial calculations. Though they do not commonly share their findings with humanoids, they are commonly regarded as some of the most skillful astrologers on Golarion.

**Osirion:** Ancient Osirion's obsession with other worlds, particularly the planet Aucturn, led to a great deal of astrology following the reign of the Four Pharaohs. Rather than a single unified practice, this resulted in a

renaissance of countless original and sometimes bizarre systems, almost all of which have since died out, but which continue to puzzle scholars.

**Qadira:** The rulers of Qadira make extensive use of astrologers in their noble courts. That nation's ruler, Satrap Xerbystes II, currently employs several court astrologers to advise him on matters of state. Chief among these is the Keleshite diviner Greogorik Taraspi, who in addition to his advisory role is an astronomer of great renown, and has publicly admitted to having achieved contact and communication with races from other planets.

**Rahadoum:** One might expect Rahadoum to sneer at all divination, seeing in astrology and astrologers a dangerous similarity to priests and religion, and in some cases this is true. Yet the ability to potentially divine the future using scientific practices—and without indenturing oneself to any divine being—has significant appeal, and Rahadoum houses a healthy astrological community.

**Saoc Brethren:** The Saoc Brethren was a cadre of astrologers who ruled the fallen nation of Lirgen. Having mastered the art of celestial divination, the Brethren used prophecy extensively in making state decisions. However, their foresight proved imperfect, as they failed to predict the formation of the Eye of Abendego and its subsequent destruction of their homeland.

## Other Astrological Events

For those able to divine the influence of celestial events, the terrestrial world is a constantly shifting field of energies that appear arbitrary to the uninitiated. Depending on the ever-changing positions of the heavens, certain actions become auspicious, while others become needlessly difficult.

The table below lists a series of astrological events that knowledgeable characters can exploit to alter the way in which they interact with the world. Characters can detect an astrological event by succeeding at a single Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), or Knowledge (planes) skill check made up to once per day, representing their consultation of star charts or observation of the night sky. The DCs for these checks vary from event to event as noted in the Astrological Events table. Using a star chart or astrological reference (treat as a masterwork tool that grants a bonus to one of the applicable Knowledge checks) grants a +2 bonus on this check. Celestial events that last longer than 1 day provide their benefits for the event's entire duration, and can be stacked atop additional effects if the character makes the requisite check the following day. If a character fails her skill check, she must wait 24 hours before reattempting the check to determine the next day's astrological events.

GMs can choose astrological events based on their thematic ties to events in their campaigns, or by making a d% roll. The following table provides some sample events; GMs are encouraged to invent their own based on the associations of the planets and the Cosmic Caravan.





## Astrological Events

d%	Event	Effect	Duration	Knowledge DC
1-5	Akiton Ascendant	Spells you cast that deal damage and require an attack roll to hit deal 2 additional points of damage.	2 hours	14
6-10	Liavara Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on caster level checks when casting mind-affecting spells.	2 hours	14
11-15	Castrovel Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on caster level checks when casting mind-affecting spells.	2 hours	14
16-20	Aballon Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on initiative checks.	2 hours	14
21-25	Bretheda Ascendant	You cast cure spells at +1 caster level but cure spells targeting you are cast at -1 caster level.	2 hours	14
26-30	Aucturn Ascendant	You cast illusion spells at +1 caster level, but illusions spells targeting you are also cast at +1 caster level.	2 hours	14
31-35	Verces Ascendant	You are subject to the effects of <i>nondetection</i> for this period.	2 hours	14
36-40	Apostae Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on Stealth checks.	2 hours	14
41-45	Triaxus Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks .	2 hours	14
46-50	Eox Ascendant	You gain a +2 bonus on the next Knowledge check you attempt.	2 hours	14
51-54	Triaxus in the Wagon	Your speed increases by 5 feet but you cannot move twice in a round or take a charge action.	24 hours	16
55-58	Verces in the Lantern Bearer	You cast spells with the shadow descriptor at +1 caster level, but you must succeed at a caster level check equal to 15 + the spell level in order to cast any spell with the light or darkness descriptors.	24 hours	16
59-62	Eox in the Follower	You cast spells with the death descriptor at +1 caster level but take a -2 penalty on saving throws against death effects.	24 hours	16
63-66	Meteor Shower	You attempt concentration checks at a -2 penalty. The DC for enemies you threaten for the purpose of casting defensively increases by 2.	48 hours	16
67-70	Conjunction of Bretheda and Aucturn	You gain a +2 bonus on Heal checks but take a -2 penalty on Constitution checks to stabilize.	1 week	14
71-74	Conjunction of Liavara and Triaxus	You gain a +2 bonus on Perception checks but take a -2 penalty on Acrobatics checks.	1 week	14
75-78	Conjunction of Castrovel and Eox	You gain a +2 bonus on Survival checks but take a -2 penalty on Knowledge (nature) checks.	1 week	14
79-82	Appulse of Akiton and Apostae	You take a -2 penalty on Diplomacy checks but the DC of all Intimidate skill checks attempted against you increases by 2.	1 week	14
83-86	Appulse of Liavara and Bretheda	You gain a +2 bonus on Stealth checks but take a -2 penalty on Perception checks.	1 week	14
87-90	Appulse of Verces and Liavara	You gain a +2 bonus on Sense Motive checks but take a -2 penalty on Bluff checks.	1 week	14
91-93	Akiton in Apparent Retrograde	You gain a +1 bonus on attack rolls but take a -2 penalty to your AC.	48 hours	18
94-95	Aucturn in Apparent Retrograde	You take a -2 penalty on Wisdom checks and Wisdom-based skill checks but gain a +2 bonus on Will saving throws.	48 hours	18
96-97	Eox in Apparent Retrograde	You take a -1 penalty on attack rolls against undead targets but gain a +2 bonus to AC against attacks by undead.	48 hours	18
98-99	Comet Passes Near Golarion	The DC of all spells and spell-like abilities you cast increases by 1 but you take a -1 penalty on all saving throws.	24 hours	20
100	Entire Solar System in Alignment	You gain spell resistance equal to 10 + your ranks in the Knowledge skill used to identify and exploit this cosmic event. You cannot lower this spell resistance.	1 hour	20

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## The Harrow

The modern harrow deck is the culmination of millennia of storytelling, travel, arcane research, and shared tragedy. Though many wanderers and gamblers claim to read the cards, a rare minority of true harrowers can tap into the weave of destiny through the deck to channel and enhance their own magic.

At a mundane level, the harrow is used to play games, divine the future, and separate fools from their coin. Each card is a beautiful work of art, handcrafted and passed down through generations of mystics. To a trained harrower, each card is steeped in symbolism and meaning. In the distant past, every harrower crafted her own unique deck, but over time the standard deck of 54 cards evolved and is now accepted by all but the most exotic mystic or foolhardy dabbler.

The 54 cards of the harrow are divided into six suits and nine alignments, with each suit featuring a single card per alignment. The alignments hint at a card's meaning: positive or negative and past, present, or future. The suits—hammers, keys, shields, books, stars, and crowns—roughly correspond to the concepts central to a caravan's life: The suit of hammers concerns matters of warfare, hunting, and reputation. The suit of keys evokes both larceny and things closely guarded, like children or dreams. The suit of shields reflects home, community, health, and things kept at hand. Books encompass learning, history, and managing resources or wealth. The suit of stars concerns esoteric and intangible matters such as tradition, the gods, and folklore. Lastly, the suit of crowns delves into those things that rule every mortal: romance, family, and one's place in the world, along with mundane rulership.

A harrow reading is a somber affair. Because a harrowing is subjective and personal, most practitioners learn to read their subjects as much as the cards to inform their prophecy. The subject (or subjects) states a single question clearly, and the harrower withdraws the nine cards of the suit associated with that concern and shuffles them. Each participant draws one of these cards to learn his role in events to come (the "role card"). The entire harrow deck is then reshuffled. Nine cards are drawn and typically laid out in a three-by-three array. Cards in the left column represent the past, while cards in the right reveal the future. Each card's alignment interacts with its placement in the array, and its meaning might be more or less important, or even inverted, based on its position. Finally, any role cards that reappear in the array mean that the indicated participant has a vital role to play, and provides some clue to his purpose. For more information on conducting harrow readings and the interpretations of individual cards, see the *Deluxe Harrow Deck*.

## The Harrow on Golarion

The harrow deck is most famously associated with the Varisian wandering clans of northwestern Avistan. The Azlanti colonists who founded Thassilon brought playing

cards to the region, which their Varisian subjects altered by adorning them with iconography from their own folklore. In the Age of Legends, hundreds of unique cards existed, but with Earthfall, most of the Varisians' lore was lost. The Imlios family dedicated itself to gathering whatever hereditary knowledge they could, but over the centuries, the family dwindled to a single woman: Sonnorae. Sonnorae used Thassilonian magic and her family's harrow deck to create a pocket dimension forged from dreams, where her library of Varisian lore would be safe. Most Varisians now use Sonnorae's *Deck of Harrowed Tales* as the archetype for their own harrow decks, hoping to sympathetically tap into the Harrowed Realm's power and vast store of knowledge.

Far to the south, wealthy traders brought the harrow to Absalom. Initially, the cards were little more than an amusement, but after the death of Aroden, many in Absalom began to take them seriously. Most notably, Arodenites lay out a circular array known as the All-Seeing Eye instead of the standard three-by-three grid, and assign the alignment of each card a numerical value to incorporate some elements of Osirian numerology.

## Harrowing Plot Twists

The harrow deck can be used as an alternative deck of *Pathfinder Cards: Plot Twist Cards*. Plot Twist Cards provide minor story-altering effects that players can use to affect the plot of an adventure, as well as story seeds that the GM can integrate into the campaign to give the players an opportunity to use their cards' effects.

At the start of the campaign as well as every time she gains a level, a PC takes part in an individual in-character harrow reading and gains a harrow card to use as a Plot Twist Card. When a player character gains this card, he can select either his role card or the card whose array position corresponds to his alignment. A PC may have multiple Plot Twist Cards in hand at a time, to a maximum of his level. A Plot Twist Card can be played at any time, even on another character's turn, but a PC can only make use of one harrow card as a Plot Twist Card per round.

To make a reading stand out as truly prophetic, Game Masters might wish to build specific encounters or adventures based on the cards in the PCs' harrow readings, especially for cards that reflect a character's alignment or her respective role cards. Each harrow card detailed below has two characteristics listed. The "Plot Twist" entry indicates the mechanical effect of playing the harrow card as a Plot Twist card. The target referred to in this entry is chosen by the PC who is using the card. The "Seed" entry is a suggestion the GM can work into the campaign to give the player an opportunity to use the Plot Twist effect; incorporating the seed into the campaign in this manner allows the GM to foreshadow future events and create the illusion for the player that the harrow card is truly prophetic.



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### Suit of Swords

Cards in the suit of swords are tied to Strength.

#### THE PALADIN (LG)

**Plot Twist** Shift an NPC's attitude one step toward helpful.

**Seed** The local law enforcement challenges the PCs.

#### THE KEEP (NG)

**Plot Twist** Target converts all damage from one attack into nonlethal damage.

**Seed** The PCs must penetrate a secure location.

#### THE BIG SKY (CG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +10 bonus on its next Strength or Escape Artist check to free itself.

**Seed** Slaves fight for freedom.

#### THE FORGE (LN)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +20 bonus on one Craft check.

**Seed** The PCs are challenged to a test of skills.

#### THE BEAR (N)

**Plot Twist** Target falls prone, or stands from prone as a free action that does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

**Seed** Tamed animals fight for a hidden master.

#### THE UPRISING (CN)

**Plot Twist** Target becomes confused (as the *confusion* spell) for 3 rounds.

**Seed** An angry mob threatens the local leader.

#### THE FIEND (LE)

**Plot Twist** Target takes a -20 penalty on its next attack or combat maneuver.

**Seed** Evil outsiders must feed on the PCs or those they've sworn to protect.

#### THE BEATING (NE)

**Plot Twist** Target immediately provokes attacks of opportunity from foes that threaten it.

**Seed** Hordes of walking dead rise by night.

#### THE CYCLONE (CE)

**Plot Twist:** Hurricane-force winds (*Core Rulebook* 439) surround the target in a 5-foot radius for 3 rounds.

**Seed** Insane air elementals are bent on destruction.

### Suit of Keys

Cards in the suit of keys are tied to Dexterity.

#### THE DANCE (LG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains the benefits of *freedom of movement* for 1 round.

**Seed** A challenge or guardian must be overcome through grace, not force.

#### THE CRICKET (NG)

**Plot Twist** Target's speed increases by 30 feet for 1 round

**Seed** A grig must dance, but cannot dance alone.

#### THE JUGGLER (CG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains the Deflect Arrows feat for the rest of the combat.

**Seed** Giants attempt to crush the PCs from afar.

#### THE LOCKSMITH (LN)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +10 bonus on a single Disable Device check.

**Seed** Thieves come for the PCs' treasures in the night.

#### THE PEACOCK (N)

**Plot Twist** Target is paralyzed for 1 round.

**Seed** PCs must rescue a petrified victim.

#### THE RABBIT PRINCE (CN)

**Plot Twist** Target takes a -5 penalty to its AC, but gains a +5 bonus on melee attack rolls for the remainder of combat.

**Seed** A daring bravado challenges the PCs in an effort to build her reputation.

#### THE AVALANCHE (LE)

**Plot Twist** Target enters a *rage*, as the spell, for 3 rounds.

**Seed** A rockslide threatens the PCs, a village, or an ally.

#### THE CROWS (NE)

**Plot Twist** Target gains sneak attack +3d6 for 1 round.

**Seed** Thieves plot to loot the PCs.

#### THE DEMON'S LANTERN (CE)

**Plot Twist** Target takes a -10 penalty on Survival and Perception checks to notice hazards for the next 24 hours.

**Seed** A false lure guides the PCs into danger.

### Suit of Shields

Cards in the suit of shields are tied to Constitution.

#### THE TRUMPET (LG)

**Plot Twist** Target is immune to fear effects for the remainder of the combat.

**Seed** Archons demand the PCs answer for some crime, which they might or might not have committed.

#### THE SURVIVOR (NG)

**Plot Twist** Dying target is immediately healed up to 1 hit point.

**Seed** Ghosts seek aid, not revenge.

#### THE DESERT (CG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +10 bonus on Survival checks to endure hostile climates for 24 hours.

**Seed** A sphinx offers a contest to test the PCs, but failure comes with a terrible price.



#### THE BRASS DWARF (LN)

**Plot Twist** Target gains energy resistance 10 to one energy type until the end of combat.

**Seed** A small failure sets horrible consequences in motion.

#### THE TEAMSTER (N)

**Plot Twist** Target can immediately attempt a new saving throw against one effect currently affecting it, and gains a +5 bonus on this roll.

**Seed** A mastermind directs monstrous attacks.

#### THE MOUNTAIN MAN (CN)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +4 bonus on Strength- and Constitution-based checks for 3 rounds.

**Seed** Marauding giants are even larger and more dangerous than they should be.

#### THE TANGLED BRIAR (LE)

**Plot Twist** Plants *entangle* (as the spell) the target for 1 minute.

**Seed** Strangling vines and plant creatures overrun a safe haven.

#### THE SICKNESS (NE)

**Plot Twist** Target is immediately infected with a disease.

**Seed** Plague overwhelms the local populace.

#### THE WAXWORKS (CE)

**Plot Twist** Target is stunned for 1 round.

**Seed** An enemy isn't what they seem.

#### Suit of Books

Cards in the suit of books are tied to Intelligence.

#### THE HIDDEN TRUTH (LG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains benefits of *see invisibility* for 3 rounds.

**Seed** A confounding sage will only answer in half-truths.

#### THE WANDERER (NG)

**Plot Twist** Target can uncover an item worth up to 500 gp among junk or refuse.

**Seed** A crucial character or treasure has left town for points unknown.

#### THE JOKE (CG)

**Plot Twist** Target is immune to fear and emotion effects that would impose a penalty for 3 rounds.

**Seed** An opponent is physically overwhelming but mentally fragile.

#### THE INQUISITOR (LN)

**Plot Twist** One of target's weapons gains the *bane* property for the rest of the combat.

**Seed** Investigators begin tearing through the PCs' deceptions or illusions.

#### THE FOREIGN TRADER (N)

**Plot Twist** Target can immediately swap places with a willing adjacent creature or attempt a free reposition combat maneuver with a +4 bonus and without provoking attacks of opportunity.

**Seed** A mysterious merchant has what the PCs need, but asks impossible prices.

#### THE VISION (CN)

**Plot Twist** Target must select a new target for its action.

**Seed** A madman must make the PCs listen.

#### THE RAKSHASA (LE)

**Plot Twist** Target takes a -10 penalty on their next Sense Motive check.

**Seed** A shapeshifter is using the PCs to accomplish its goals.

#### THE IDIOT (NE)

**Plot Twist:** Target takes a -6 penalty on Intelligence-based checks for 3 rounds.

**Seed** Small, simple-minded creatures are making big trouble.

#### THE SNAKEBITE (CE)

**Plot Twist** Target weapon is instantly coated with a dose of black adder venom (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 558).

**Seed** An assassin lashes out against the PCs' supporters.

#### Suit of Stars

Cards in the suit of stars are tied to Wisdom.

#### THE WINGED SERPENT (LG)

**Plot Twist** Target can immediately take an extra standard or move action.

**Seed** Good intentions block the PCs' progress.

#### THE MIDWIFE (NG)

**Plot Twist** Target gains a +10 bonus on one Heal or Knowledge skill check.

**Seed** A middling power seeks to bring something more powerful into the world.

#### THE PUBLICAN (CG)

**Plot Twist** Target can transform one liquid into a *cure serious wounds* potion.

**Seed** Insights come from a one-eyed stranger.

#### THE QUEEN MOTHER (LN)

**Plot Twist:** 1d3 arbiter inevitables (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 162) appear and serve the target through one crisis.

**Seed** The PCs must work for the local nobility or be crushed.

#### THE OWL (N)

**Plot Twist** Target can speak to and understand animals for 24 hours.

**Seed** An imbalance in nature threatens everyone nearby.



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**THE CARNIVAL (CN)**

**Plot Twist** Target automatically fails its next saving throw against an illusion effect

**Seed** Chaos erupts around the PCs and bystanders alike, through no fault of their own

**THE ECLIPSE (LE)**

**Plot Twist** Target's channeled energy, *cure* spells, and *inflict* spells heal only half as many hit points, or deal half as much damage, for 24 hours

**Seed:** An unscheduled eclipse raises restless undead

**THE MUTE HAG (NE)**

**Plot Twist** Target cannot speak for 1 round

**Seed** A vile woman pries secrets from the PCs, or an old woman harbors a terrible secret

**THE LOST (CE)**

**Plot Twist** Target gains negative energy affinity for 1 minute

**Seed** A slain hero returns to undo his good deeds

## Suit of Crowns

Cards in the suit of crowns are tied to Charisma.

**THE EMPTY THRONE (LG)**

**Plot Twist** Target can aid another on an ally's check, regardless of range, as an immediate action

**Seed** The heir is missing

**THE THEATER (NG)**

**Plot Twist** Target can use Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate to affect one mindless construct or undead

**Seed** The puppets are not what they seem

**THE UNICORN (CG)**

**Plot Twist** Target can voluntarily take any amount of damage to heal another creature the same amount

**Seed** A normally good creature is rampaging through the countryside

**THE MARRIAGE (LN)**

**Plot Twist** Target noncombatant becomes friendly, as the Diplomacy skill

**Seed** Unlikely allies work together to create something new

**THE TWIN (N)**

**Plot Twist** Attacks against the target have a 50% miss chance for 1 round

**Seed** A *mirror of opposition* appears in the unlikeliest place

**THE COURTESAN (CN)**

**Plot Twist** Target gains the benefits of Improved Feint for the remainder of the combat

**Seed** A social gathering turns deadly

**THE TYRANT (LE)**

**Plot Twist** Target cannot attack for 1 round

**Seed** A deadly foe moves to seize power

**THE BETRAYAL (NE)**

**Plot Twist** Target cannot heal damage for the rest of combat

**Seed** A friend or lover betrays the PCs

**THE LIAR (CE)**

**Plot Twist** Target cannot speak the truth for 5 rounds and has 50% spell failure chance when casting any spell with a verbal component

**Seed** A secret society twists the truth



## Mortification

Pain is a fact of life. It's unavoidable, inevitable, and unpleasant. However, for most creatures, pain is also an important warning system, helping creatures correctly judge their abilities and physical needs, as well as a necessary side effect of growth and evidence of progress. Though most view pain as an obstacle to overcome or avoid if possible, for those individuals who practice mortification, pain is a vehicle for self-perfection.

Mortification is an umbrella term for a number of practices that involve intentional self-harm, including blinding, deprivation trials, amputation, and a host of other practices. Mortification can be a vehicle for magical power, sexual pleasure, or simple aesthetics, depending on the practice. While most associate mortification rituals with evil cults, ascetic traditions involving practices like self-flagellation, fasting, and deprivation are not uncommon among zealous sects of nonevil faiths (including some mystery cults devoted to empyreal lords). To these believers, mortification is a demonstration of transcendence or dedication, or a means of purging the body of impurity. These faiths classify mortification as evil only when it is used to cause suffering or harm to an unwilling subject.

Members of many cults that revere deformity and monstrosity, such as those loyal to Lamashtu, demonstrate their devotion by mutilating their bodies to resemble the forms of their divine patrons. Others—most notably the followers of Zon-Kuthon—pursue pain for its own sake, engaging in contests of self-mutilation to display mastery over pain and settle status disputes within the group. Followers of Irori, Nethys, and some empyreal lords instead pursue painful trials to prove their steadfastness, whether through fasting, sleep deprivation, or more intense practices like the mortification rituals of mystery cultists. Such trials are often intended to empty the body of all worldly influence so it can be filled with divine power.

There is also a category of ritual behavior that achieves gains not through self-harm, but by inflicting pain on others without their consent. Followers of Zon-Kuthon, who revel in both receiving and giving pain, practice torture rituals. Sacrifices of humanoids and other intelligent creatures are common among nihilistic cults, like those of Rovagug, who venerate destruction for its own sake. Several cults whose worship involves the eroticization of pain, such as those of the archdevil Belial and demon lords Nocticula and Sothbenoth, perform ritual sadism that involves inflicting pain or degradation on others for the purpose of achieving pleasure.

### Mortification on Golarion

Though not performed openly in most regions, mortification is nevertheless practiced by a variety of cultures and races across Golarion.

**Bekyar:** Natives of the southeastern coast of Garund, the Bekyar are demon-worshippers who specialize in slave trading. Their extensive piercing and scarring adds to their ferocious reputations; they also brand their slaves, using different symbols to connote the value, origins, and skill sets of their humanoid merchandise.

**Drow:** These twisted elves, who dwell in the Darklands layer of Sekamina, are masters of a cruel art called “fleshwarping.” Fleshwarpers use living creatures as canvases to achieve a variety of effects. One common goal is to continuously erase the signs of aging, giving the subject the appearance of eternal youth. Other fleshwarpers specialize in mutilating captured enemies or outcasts, deforming them into monstrosities. The hybrid spider creatures known as driders are examples of such practices.

**Kuthites:** These clandestine worshippers of Zon-Kuthon are definitely the most highly publicized practitioners of sadomasochism on Golarion. Zon-Kuthon's temples are often converted dungeons, and his services always include torture, whether that of a willing member or an unwilling victim. Kuthites are experts at extreme body modification, and are used to hiding such alteration from the public eye, often going so far as to wear the skins of their victims over their own gruesome wounds.

**Orcs:** In orc culture, where strength is revered, battle scars are commonly displayed as signs of prowess. Orcs use a variety of rudimentary tattooing techniques to accentuate combat wounds, as well as to demonstrate the completion of various rites of passage. Tattooing, scars, and piercing are common among both orc genders for aesthetic as well as hierarchical purposes.

## Agonies

For many practitioners of mortification, pain is an almost religious experience. Even those who do not practice self-mutilation at the behest of gods can nevertheless gain benefits for performing ritualizing physical sacrifices. Characters who take the Agonizing Obedience feat (see page 45) can choose a path of pain called an agony; by performing that agony's obedience, they gain boons. Spellcasting practitioners can integrate their obedience completely with their normal hour-long rituals and methods of preparing or regaining spells; others are free to perform obediences at any point during the day.

## Amputation

You have amputated a digit on one of your hands and treated the wound such that it will never fully heal.

**Obedience:** Manipulate the scabs, scar tissue, and open wound of your amputated digit, preventing it from closing and forcing bits of metal and glass into the wound. Take a –2 penalty on Disable Device, Disguise, Escape Artist, and Sleight of Hand skill checks, as well as to your CMD against disarm maneuvers. When attempting to cast a



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spell with somatic components, succeed at a caster level check whose DC is equal to 5 + twice the spell level or lose the spell slot with no effect. Gain a +2 bonus on saving throws against transmutation spells; this bonus increases to +4 against spells in the polymorph subschool.

**Boon 1:** In addition to the normal effects of your agony strike, the target has a chance of dropping one object held in its hand immediately after you hit it with the agony strike. A successful Reflex save (DC 10 + 1/2 your HD + your Dexterity modifier) avoids this effect.

**Boon 2:** You gain the use of a phantom arm, which functions as the vestigial arm alchemist discovery (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 18) save that it is an invisible force effect, it does not grant an additional ring magic item slot, and it cannot make attacks.

**Boon 3:** You are immune to effects that would cause you to become sickened, and you gain a +4 bonus on saving throws against any conditions that would make you nauseated.

### Blinding

You temporarily blind yourself with blood to heighten your other senses.

**Obedience:** Scratch at your eyes with your fingernails, jagged metal shavings, and thorny branches, allowing the blood from your wounds to form thick scabs over your eyelids and tear ducts. Take a -4 penalty on vision-based Perception checks, and anytime you make an attack against a target benefiting from concealment, increase the miss chance by 10% (maximum 50%). Gain a +4 bonus on saving throws against illusions in the pattern subschool and against gaze attacks.

**Boon 1:** Creatures affected by your agony strike have the distance they can see in areas of dim light and darkness reduced by 50%.

**Boon 2:** You gain a gaze attack with a range of 30 feet that you can activate as a standard action. You can use this ability a number of minutes per day equal to half your hit dice; these minutes need not be consecutive but you must use the ability in 1-minute increments. Enemies affected by your gaze are frightened for 1 minute. A successful Will saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 your HD + your Charisma modifier) negates this effect. A creature that successfully saves against your gaze is immune to its effects for 24 hours.

**Boon 3:** Your affinity to pain allows you to sense suffering in others. You gain lifesense out to a distance of 60 feet.

### Flensing

Practitioners of the agony of flensing are adept at finely removing the skin from living flesh, revealing the vulnerable tissue beneath.

**Obedience:** Remove a patch of your own skin measuring at least 3 square inches with a flensing knife, while carefully avoiding damage to the muscles, veins, and other tissues

### New Feat: Agonizing Obedience

You physically defile yourself out of zealous devotion to pain in order to gain special boons.

**Prerequisites:** 3 ranks in Heal.

**Benefit:** When you take this feat, select an agony. You can gain this feat multiple times, each time selecting a different agony, but you can perform an obedience for only a single agony in a 24-hour period. Each agony requires a different obedience, but all obediences take only an hour to perform. Once the obedience has been performed, you take a number of minor penalties and gain the benefit of a resistance to some element or attack associated with your agony, as indicated below. Additionally, you gain the ability to make an agony strike. A number of times per day equal to 1 + 1 per every 5 Hit Dice you possess, when you deal damage to a creature, you can declare that attack as an agony strike. In addition to the normal damage dealt by the attack, you cause the target to take the penalties associated with your agony for 1 minute. Incorporeal creatures and creatures that are immune to critical hits are immune to agony strikes.

If you have at least 12 Hit Dice, you also gain the first boon granted by your agony upon undertaking your obedience. If you have at least 16 Hit Dice, you gain the agony's second boon as well. If you have 20 Hit Dice or more, you also gain the agony's third boon. Unless a specific duration or number of uses per day is listed, a boon's effects are constant.

If you ever fail to perform a daily obedience, or if you are healed of damage, conditions, or penalties caused in the course of performing your obedience, you lose all access to resistances and boons granted by this feat until you next perform the obedience.

underneath. Leave this patch of exposed nerves uncovered by clothing or armor, allowing it to be exposed to the elements and displaying your sacrifice to all you meet. Take a -2 penalty on saving throws against disease, and take 1 extra point of damage per die from sneak attacks. Gain a +4 bonus on saving throws against pain effects.

**Boon 1:** All attacks you make against a creature suffering the effects of your agony strike deal 1d6 points of bleed damage.

**Boon 2:** Your knowledge of anatomy imparts to you an awareness of others' vulnerabilities. You gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls to confirm critical hits.

**Boon 3:** The frequent removal of skin and subsequent healing has covered your body in thick scars. Your natural armor bonus to AC increases by 2. Additionally, there is a 25% chance that critical hits and sneak attacks fail to affect you, as though you were wearing armor with the *light fortification* property.



## Pain Taster (Prestige Class)

For pain tasters, agony is more than a pleasure—it's a path to power. Until recently, pain tasting was a practice employed exclusively by the drow. However, in recent decades Kuthite scholars have begun spreading details about the practice through cult circles. Though on the surface most pain tasters are followers of Zon-Kuthon, that path is now beginning to crop up among other evil and neutral cults as well.

### Class Details

**Hit Die:** d10.

### Requirements

To become a pain taster, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

**Feats:** Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude.

**Skills:** Heal 5 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks.

**Alignment:** Any nongood.

**Special:** The candidate must survive a special ritual designed to inure her to pain.

### Class Skills

The pain taster's class skills are Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), and Survival (Wis).

**Skill Ranks at Each Level:** 2 + Int modifier.

### Class Features

The following abilities are class features of the pain taster prestige class.

**Weapon and Armor Proficiency:** A pain taster is proficient with all simple weapons, martial weapons, and whips. A pain taster gains no armor or shield proficiencies.

**Disciple of Pain (Su):** At 1st level, a pain taster can focus her agony through the use of six torture routines. Each routine grants her a different day-long benefit. The first time a pain taster performs a particular torture routine, she must spend 1 hour inflicting self-harm using materials that cost 2,000 gp. The method of self-torture is detailed in the routines below. After performing a routine for the first time, she can subsequently perform a less strenuous version of that routine to gain its benefits for 24 hours without needing to expend any further money on torture implements, ritual incense, and pain heightening drugs.

If the pain taster wishes to change her routine, she must spend 2,000 gp when first performing the new ritual. She must pay this cost each time she changes her routine, even if returning to a routine she had previously paid for. A pain taster can benefit from only one routine at a time.

**Disciple of Acuity:** By spending an hour reciting a lengthy series of mantras while clutching a length of razor-edged metal, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to

Intelligence for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves making dozens of arterial incisions and writing the mantras in blood.

**Disciple of Flexibility:** By spending an hour painfully hyper-extending each joint, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves tearing major tendons in each limb.

**Disciple of Insight:** By spending an hour whipping or bludgeoning herself while meditating on her failures and regrets, a pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves inserting a long needle directly into the heart, causing massive internal hemorrhaging.

**Disciple of Spirit:** By spending an hour splitting her tongue by cutting it centrally from the tip to the base, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves applying acid to a normally visible part of the body, inflicting extensive chemical burns.

**Disciple of Torment:** By spending an hour eating dirt, rocks, and other indigestible matter, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves slicing open the abdominal cavity with a blade, and then sewing up the wound.

**Disciple of Vigor:** By spending an hour hanging by the wrists from a tree, crossbeam, or any other support structure, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength for 24 hours. The initial torture session for this routine involves breaking each rib by lying on the ground, and then repeatedly dropping a large rock directly on the ribcage.

**Masochism (Ex):** At 1st level, a pain taster becomes empowered by pain, and is inured to its effects. She receives a +4 class bonus on saving throws made against pain effects.

Additionally, a pain taster can deal lethal damage to herself at any time to gain a bonus on attack and damage rolls. Doing so is a swift action that deals 2 points of damage to the pain taster, does not require an attack roll, and bypasses any damage reduction the pain taster possesses. For 1 round, the pain taster gains a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and a +2 bonus on damage rolls. Every 3 levels thereafter (4th, 7th, and 10th), the amount of damage the pain taster deals to herself increases by 2 and the resulting bonus she receives on damage rolls increase by 1 (to a maximum of 8 points of self-inflicted damage and 5 points of bonus damage to other targets at 10th level). At 7th level, the bonus on attack rolls gained when using this ability increases to +2.

**Scourge (Ex):** Pain tasters are masters of torture, and at 1st level they receive Weapon Focus (whip) as a bonus feat. If the pain taster already has Weapon Focus (whip), she instead receives Whip Mastery<sup>UC</sup> as a bonus feat.





**Pain Taster**

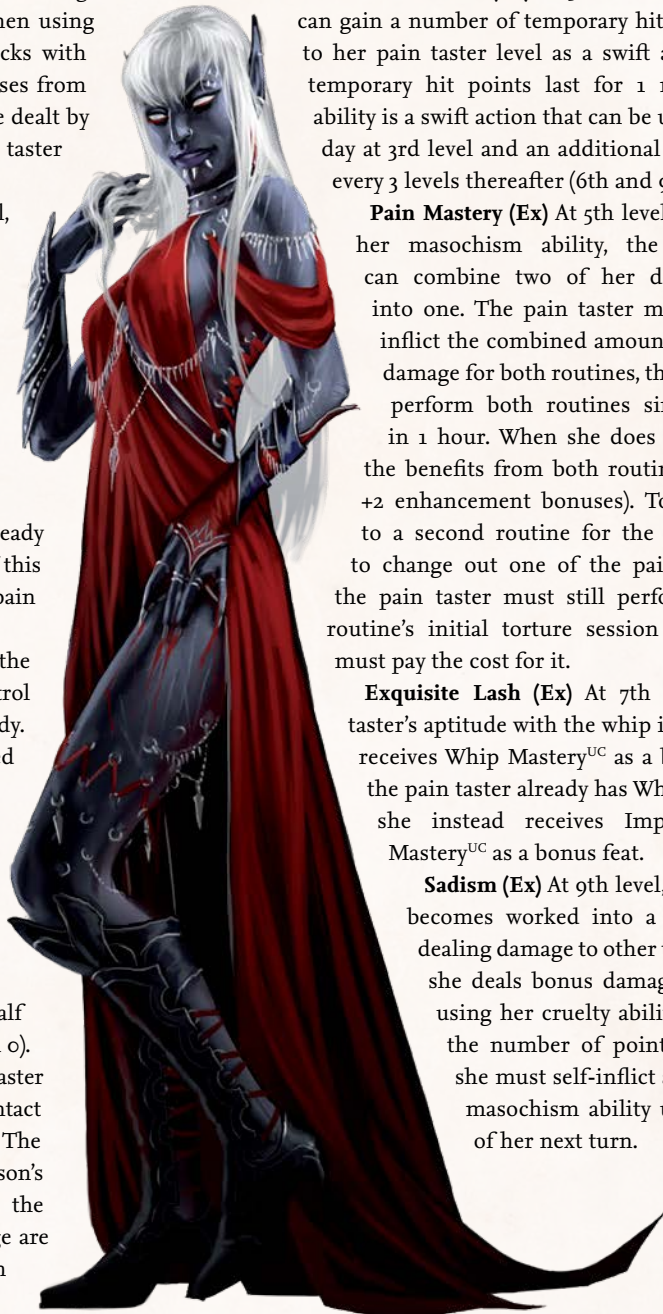
Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+1	+0	+0	Disciple of pain, masochism 1, scourge
2nd	+2	+1	+1	+1	Cruelty +1d6, damage reduction 1/—
3rd	+3	+2	+1	+1	Blood control, torturer's mettle 1/day
4th	+4	+2	+1	+1	Cruelty +2d6, damage reduction 2/—, masochism 2
5th	+5	+3	+2	+2	Pain mastery
6th	+6	+3	+2	+2	Cruelty +3d6, damage reduction 3/—, torturer's mettle 2/day
7th	+7	+4	+2	+2	Exquisite lash, masochism 3
8th	+8	+4	+3	+3	Cruelty +4d6, damage reduction 4/—
9th	+9	+5	+3	+3	Sadism, torturer's mettle 3/day
10th	+10	+5	+3	+3	Cruelty +5d6, damage reduction 5/—, masochism 4

**Cruelty (Ex)** At 2nd level, a pain taster gains the sneak attack ability, but only when using a whip. This additional damage stacks with any sneak attack damage she possesses from other classes. The amount of damage dealt by cruelty increases by 1d6 every 2 pain taster levels thereafter.

**Damage Reduction (Ex)** At 2nd level, the pain taster's incredible resilience grants her a modest amount of damage reduction (DR). Subtract 1 point from the damage she is dealt by any weapon or natural attack. The pain taster's damage reduction increases by 1 point every 2 pain taster levels thereafter. This ability stacks with any other damage reduction the pain taster might already have from other classes. The value of this damage resistance doubles when the pain taster is subject to nonlethal damage.

**Blood Control (Ex)** At 3rd level, the pain taster gains the ability to control the blood pressure throughout her body. Anytime the pain taster is dealt bleed damage, she reduces the amount of damage taken by 1 per pain taster level (minimum 0). When taking Constitution damage as a result of blood loss (such as a stirge or a vampire's bite), a pain taster reduces the amount of ability damage dealt by an amount equal to half the pain taster's class level (minimum 0).

As an immediate action, a pain taster can delay the onset of injury or contact poisons by succeeding at a Will save. The DC of this check is equal to the poison's save DC. If the save is successful, the poison's initial and secondary damage are both delayed by 1 minute per pain taster level.



**Torturer's Mettle (Ex)** At 3rd level, a pain taster can gain a number of temporary hit points equal to her pain taster level as a swift action. These temporary hit points last for 1 minute. This ability is a swift action that can be used once per day at 3rd level and an additional time per day every 3 levels thereafter (6th and 9th).

**Pain Mastery (Ex)** At 5th level, when using her masochism ability, the pain taster can combine two of her daily routines into one. The pain taster must still self-inflict the combined amount of hit point damage for both routines, though she can perform both routines simultaneously in 1 hour. When she does so, she gains the benefits from both routines (a pair of +2 enhancement bonuses). To gain access to a second routine for the first time or to change out one of the paired routines, the pain taster must still perform the new routine's initial torture session in full, and must pay the cost for it.

**Exquisite Lash (Ex)** At 7th level, a pain taster's aptitude with the whip increases. She receives Whip Mastery<sup>UC</sup> as a bonus feat. If the pain taster already has Whip Mastery<sup>UC</sup>, she instead receives Improved Whip Mastery<sup>UC</sup> as a bonus feat.

**Sadism (Ex)** At 9th level, a pain taster becomes worked into a frenzy when dealing damage to other targets. When she deals bonus damage to a target using her cruelty ability, she halves the number of points of damage she must self-inflict as part of her masochism ability until the end of her next turn.

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## Numerology

Whereas most of divinatory traditions—such as augury, extispicy, and astrology—rely on observation of the natural world, numerology manipulates numbers, ratios, and equations. Through the use of mathematics, numerologists are able to both presage events and augment magical effects. Along with harrowing, numerology is one of only a few forms of divination that rely exclusively on abstract systems, making it more widely applicable than many other divinatory practices.

While numerology is not technically a magical practice, it is a natural pursuit for curious arcanists, as the two practices both rely on the user's knowledge of an esoteric "language" to reveal powerful relationships, use combinations of abstract symbols to focus the caster's abilities, and require extensive amounts of dedicated practice and concentration. However, numerology's focus on mathematics links it more closely to alchemy, architecture, and engineering, making it more accessible to craftspeople and scholars than the study of spellcasting, which is often exclusive to magical universities and religious organizations. There are two basic forms of numerology: arithmancy and sacred geometry.

Arithmancy assumes that each linguistic unit has inherent power—a view that arcane spellcasters have held for millennia—and ascribes numerical values to letters or words. For arithmancers, the unseen equations embedded within language evoke hidden meanings that other arcanists often miss. By essentially turning every word and sentence into a mathematical equation, practitioners can boil down names to single numbers that indicate the hidden natures of the spells, creatures, or locations named. Arithmancers often use this skill in a manner similar to astrologers' use of horoscopes, to determine someone's natural profession, her lucky numbers, or auspicious times of year. Arithmancy is most widely associated with the Tian and Draconic languages, though numerological studies of Common are popular in many magical academies.

Sacred geometry holds that some shapes are more auspicious than others, and ascribes cosmic meaning, hidden information, and inherent power to certain geometric shapes and ratios. Many of the shapes revered by sacred geometers are the result of observation of the natural world: hexagons grant abundance because of their inherent efficiency and use in honeycombs, spheres and arches are associated with strength because they can withstand more pressure than any other shape, and logarithmic spirals (such as those found in nautilus shells) are symbols of eternity because it maintains the same shape at every point. Sacred geometry is used extensively in architecture, construction, and spellcraft; sacred geometers seek out and manipulate potent shapes and ratios in order to design magically conductive temples, pinpoint locations of power, and augment spellcasting.

### Numerology on Golarion

Unlike many occult practices, which are intrinsically linked to a specific culture, numerology is common in

cultures around the world. Every civilization that uses some form of engineering or architecture practices a rudimentary form of numerology, but not all cultures invest an equal amount of study into the subject. The following are the three cultures that are most renowned for their numerological prowess.

**Cult of the Last Theorem:** Located on the outskirts of the ruined city of Tumen, the Cult of the Last Theorem seeks the numerological mysteries of Ancient Osirion. The cultists believe that the Pharaoh of Numbers, one of the Four Pharaohs of Ascension, understood sacred geometrical secrets of unimaginable power. They believe that the numbers 56 and 11 hold deep spiritual significance, and are currently searching for an artifact called the *Aqualinth* beneath the ruins of Tumen.

**Dragons:** While all dragons are commonly known to have genius-level intellects, bronze and green dragons are specifically gifted with numbers. Bronze dragons are renowned for their banking prowess, while the hoards of green dragons often contain tomes on the subjects of numerology and mathematics.

**Po Li:** The former capital of the now-defunct empire of Lung Wa, Po Li is now one of 16 successor states. This Tian state is governed by the Oracular Council of Po Li, which uses all manner of divinations, including numerology, to make state decisions. The council's favored divinatory method is the Path of Numbers, a form of energy manipulation that relies on the translation of actions and natural phenomena into numbers. For more information on this method, see the Path of Numbers section on page 50.

## Mathematical Spellcasting

For many, mathematics and magic are worlds apart. For numerologists, however, the two go hand in hand. Mathematical spellcasters use their knowledge of engineering and spellcraft to calculate how certain spells and effects interact. Sacred Geometry gives casters the ability to modify their spells with a variety of metamagic effects that would normally be beyond their capabilities. Arithmancy, meanwhile, allows casters to translate the names of their spells into equations, enabling them to increase the spells' efficacy.

### Arithmancy

You are able to unravel the hidden meanings behind words by translating them into numerical equations. You can apply this insight to empower your magical effects.

**Prerequisites:** Int 13, Spell Focus (divination), Spellcraft 3 ranks.

**Benefit:** Immediately before casting a spell, as a swift action, you can attempt to augment a spell's casting using Arithmancy. To do so, determine the digital root of the name of the spell you are casting.

To find the digital root of a spell name, first assign a numerical value to each letter of the name, per the Letter Values table. Once you have a string of digits, sum them.



## Letter Values

Numerical Value	Associated Letters
1	a, j, s
2	b, k, t
3	c, l, u
4	d, m, v
5	e, n, w
6	f, o, x
7	g, p, y
8	h, q, z
9	i, r

If the result has more than one digit, sum those digits. Repeat this process until you arrive at a single number, called the digital root.

Once you've translated the name of the spell into a single digital root, attempt a Spellcraft check with a DC equal to 10 + the spell level + the digital root. If your check succeeds, the spell is cast at +1 caster level. If your check fails, the spell is cast at -1 caster level. If you do not cast the spell you intended to augment with arithmancy, the spell is expended with no effect, though you retain the action you would have spent to cast it. Metamagic effects are not included in a spell's name when determining the spell's digital root, but they increase the spell's level as normal when determining the DC of the Spellcraft check.

You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to the number of caster levels you possess.

For example, Ezren wants to use Arithmancy to cast an augmented *fireball*. First, he translates the spell name into numbers. *Fireball* translates to 6, 9, 9, 5, 2, 1, 3, 3. Then he calculates the digital root. In this case,  $6 + 9 + 9 + 5 + 2 + 1 + 3 + 3 = 38$ ,  $3 + 8 = 11$ , and  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Therefore, the digital root of *fireball* is 2. He then attempts a Spellcraft check against a DC of  $15 (10 + 3 [\textit{fireball's} \text{ spell level}] + 2 [\textit{fireball's} \text{ digital root}])$ . If his check succeeds, he can cast the *fireball* this round at +1 caster level. If he fails, he can cast the spell at -1 caster level this round. He may also choose not to cast *fireball* and perform another action, though he expends the spell.

## Calculating Mind

You see potential in the world around you that nobody else notices. Your numerological abilities are heightened by this uncommon aptitude.

**Prerequisites:** Sacred Geometry, Knowledge (engineering) 5 ranks.

**Benefit:** Anytime you use the Sacred Geometry feat, you can use d8s instead of d6s when rolling your dice pool. You can use any combination of d6s and d8s that you wish, as long as the number of dice does not exceed the number of ranks you possess in Knowledge (engineering).

## Sacred Geometry

You can use your mathematical prowess to add metamagic effects to your spells without using a higher-level spell slot.

## Prime Constants

Effective Spell Level	Prime Constants
1st	3, 5, 7
2nd	11, 13, 17
3rd	19, 23, 29
4th	31, 37, 41
5th	43, 47, 53
6th	59, 61, 67
7th	71, 73, 79
8th	83, 89, 97
9th	101, 103, 107

**Prerequisites:** Int 13, Knowledge (engineering) 2 ranks

**Benefit:** When you take this feat, select two metamagic feats you do not yet have. When casting a spell, you can perform the steps below to spontaneously apply the effects of either or both of these metamagic feats, as well as any other metamagic feats you have, to the spell without expending a higher-level spell slot. Using a feat in this way increases the spell's casting time to the casting time it would take if the character were a sorcerer or bard (sorcerers and bards using this ability increase the spell's casting time by two categories; see page 113 of the *Core Rulebook*); applying the Quicken Spell metamagic effect negates the increased casting time but still contributes to the modified spell's effective spell level. You can take this feat more than once; each time, select two additional metamagic feats, adding their effects to the list of possible effects you can apply to spells with this ability.

When casting a spell using Sacred Geometry, first determine the effective spell level of the modified spell you are attempting to cast (calculated as normal for a spell modified by metamagic feats). You can apply any number of metamagic effects to a single spell, provided you are able to cast spells of the modified spell's effective spell level.

Refer to the Prime Constants table to determine the prime constants that can be used to cast a spell of the desired effective spell level. Then roll a number of d6s equal to the number of ranks you possess in Knowledge (engineering). Perform some combination of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division upon the numbers rolled that gives rise to one of the relevant prime constants. If you can produce one of the relevant prime constants, the spell takes effect with the declared metamagic effects, and you expend a spell slot of the unaltered spell's level. If you are unsuccessful, you fail to cast the spell, the action used to cast the spell is lost, and the spell slot is used up. The DC of any concentration check to cast a spell affected by this feat uses the effective spell level used to determine the prime constants, even though a successful casting of the spell does not expend a higher-level spell slot.

For example, suppose Ezren wants to add the enlarged and empowered effects to the *magic missile* he just cast. He adds the total level increases of the metamagic effects to the

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spell level: 2 [empower] + 1 [enlarge] + 1 [magic missile's base level] = 4, so the spell's effective level is 4. Ezren refers to the Prime Constants table, and determines that the prime constants for that effective spell level are 31, 37, and 41.

Since Ezren has 5 ranks in Knowledge (engineering), he rolls 5d6. The results of his dice pool are 6, 6, 4, 3 and 1. He then performs the following operations to give rise to one of the prime constants he needs:  $(6 \times 6) + (4 - 3) \times 1 = 37$ . Note that he could also combine the numbers as follows:  $((6 + 6) \times 3) + 4 + 1 = 41$ . He has produced one of the prime constants for the desired effective spell level, so his *empowered enlarged magic missile* takes effect after the full-round casting time, and uses only a 1st-level spell slot.

If the result of Ezren's dice pool were 1, 1, 2, and 5, he would have been unable to produce any of the relevant prime constants. His attempt would have been unsuccessful, and he would have expended a full-round action and his prepared 1st-level *magic missile* spell with no effect.

## Path of Numbers

Few nations are so committed to the practice of oracular divination as Po Li, in Tian Xia. Po Li is among the most powerful of the 16 successor states that arose after the fall of the Lung Wa Empire. The nation is governed by an oracular theocracy, and many of Po Li's administrative decisions are made with the aid of divinatory practices. The ruling Oracular Council is made up of numerous oracles, who are trained from childhood in the practice of divination.

The members of the Oracular Council are expert in several divinatory systems, including the Dragon Empires zodiac, augury, oneiromancy, and extispicy. The most famous of these systems, however, is the Path of Numbers. The Path of Numbers is a system of numerology that describes eight basic energies. Any of these types of energy can interact at any time,

producing 64 possible combinations. The Oracular Council holds that those 64 combinations are sufficient to describe the basis of every interaction in the cosmos. No matter the plane, creature, or time in question, every event in the multiverse is based on one of those 64 templates. In short, the Path of Numbers is a periodic table of energetic elements.

The following spells utilize the Path of Numbers to create magical effects. The chart on page 51 lists the eight basic energies, along with effects employed by multiple spells.

### CALCULATED LUCK

**School** divination; **Level** cleric 3, witch 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** personal

**Target** you

**Duration** 1 round/level (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You are able to use the Path of Numbers to substantially boost your combat preparedness, but your foresight comes at a price. Roll 3d8 and refer to the Eight Basic Energies table on page 51. After rolling, assign each die to one of the following.

- **Energy Type:** You gain vulnerability to the energy type that matches the die's result for the duration of the spell. You take half again as much damage (+50%) from that energy type, regardless of whether you successfully saved against the damaging spell or effect.
- **Magic School:** For the spell's duration, you cast all spells from the school that matches the die's result at +1 caster level.
- **d20 Roll Type:** You receive a +2 luck bonus on the d20 roll that matches the die's result for the duration of the spell.

### CLEROMANCY

**School** divination; **Level** cleric 2, druid 3, inquisitor 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

**Casting Time** full-round action

**Components** V, S, F/DF (a set of 64 chicken bones)

**Range** personal

**Target** you

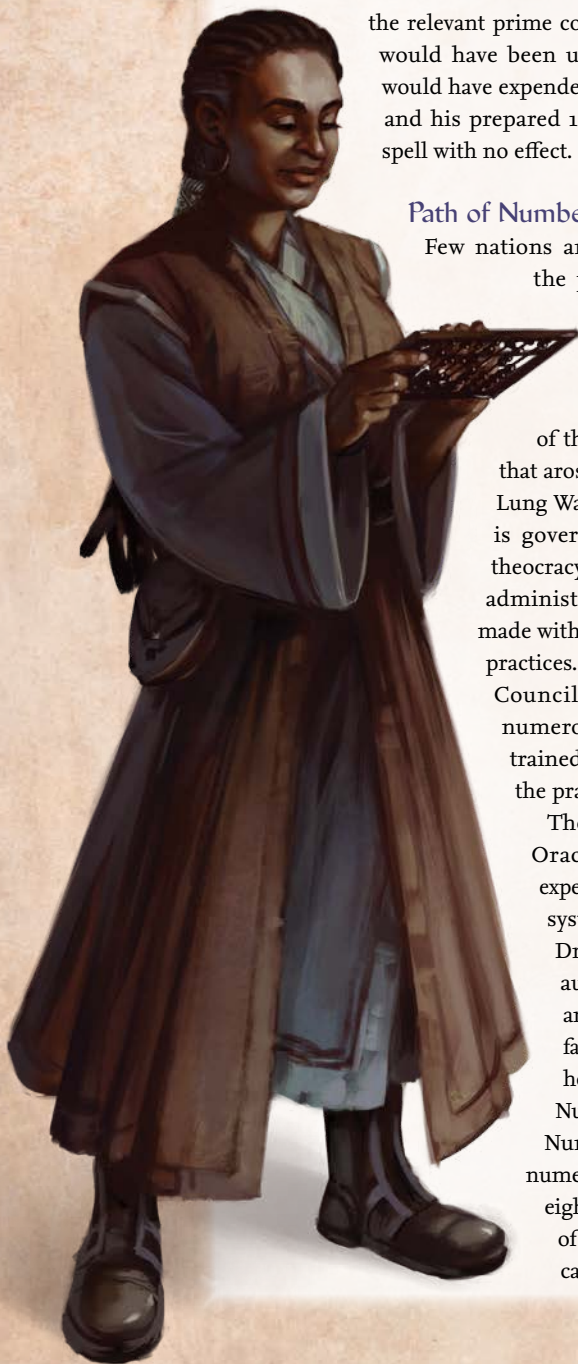
**Duration** 1 round/caster level

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

*Cleromancy* involves casting bones and interpreting the results. Those able to arrive at the proper interpretation are granted knowledge of coming events. Roll 1d4 per caster level. Group the dice by like results, and choose one of the groups. For the duration of *cleromancy*, you can apply a luck bonus equal to the result of the selected dice to any d20 roll. You can apply this bonus to a number of rolls equal to the number of dice in the group. If *cleromancy* expires before you are able to allocate the total number of allotted bonuses, the remaining bonuses are lost.

### LUCKY NUMBER

**School** transmutation; **Level** bard 1, cleric 1, druid 1, inquisitor 1, paladin 1, sorcerer/wizard 1, summoner 1, witch 1





**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** touch

**Target** one willing creature

**Duration** 24 hours or until discharged

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

You are able to tweak tiny variables affecting a creature's immediate future in order to grant the target a bit of luck at the right time. Roll a d20; once during the duration of *lucky number*, when the target creature rolls that result (regardless of what type of dice the target rolls), the creature has the option to either reroll the result or add a +2 luck bonus to the result. The creature must decide to use this ability before the success or failure of the original roll is known. A creature can have only one lucky number at a time. If *lucky number* is cast on a creature already affected by that spell, the new number replaces the previous one.

#### MATHEMATICAL CURSE

**School** necromancy [curse]; **Level** antipaladin 2, bard 2, cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 2, witch 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S, M/DF (a full set of 10 fingernails)

**Range** touch

**Target** one living creature

**Duration** see text

**Saving Throw** Will negates; **Spell Resistance** yes

Using the Path of Numbers, you are able to influence the seemingly random elements in the environment around a creature, reducing that creature's efficacy. Roll 3d8 and choose one of the dice—this die's result is the penalty *mathematical curse* imparts. Next, choose either of the two remaining dice; the d20 roll corresponding to that result on the Eight Basic Energies table is the roll the spell's penalty applies to. The result of the final die represents the number of rounds that *mathematical curse* lasts. A creature can be under the influence of only one *mathematical curse* at a time. If *mathematical curse* is cast on a creature already affected by that spell, the new curse replaces the previous one.

#### NUMEROLOGICAL EVOCATION

**School** evocation; **Level** magus 3, sorcerer/wizard 3, witch 4

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

**Range** see text

**Target** see text

**Duration** instantaneous

**Saving Throw** Reflex half; **Spell Resistance** yes

You can use the Path of Numbers to calculate the latent magical energies all around you and fire customized rays of elemental energy that damage nearby targets. Roll 1d6 per 2 caster levels you possess. This is your dice pool. You will use each die in the pool exactly once to customize *numerological evocation*. Choose a number of dice in the pool, and match

### Eight Basic Energies

d8	Type	Magic School	d20 Roll Type
1	Air	Enchantment	Will save
2	Electricity	Illusion	Reflex save
3	Fire	Necromancy	Attack roll
4	Sonic	Evocation	Initiative roll
5	Acid	Abjuration	Fortitude save
6	Water	Transmutation	Caster level check
7	Cold	Divination	Concentration check
8	Earth	Conjuration	Combat Maneuver Check

their results to the values in the first column of the Eight Basic Energies table to determine the types of energy damage the spell deals. You can allocate any number of dice in this manner, provided you still have enough dice remaining for the subsequent steps.

Next, allocate one of the dice to represent the total number of target creatures you can affect, including the initial target. No matter how many creatures you are eligible to affect, no two affected creatures can be more than 15 feet apart. Next, allocate any number of the dice to represent the range of *numerological resistance*. The range of the spell is 10 × the sum of the allocated dice. Finally, add up the results of the dice remaining in the pool. This is the amount of damage that *numerological evocation* deals to the first creature hit. A successful Reflex save halves this damage. Secondary targets take 50% of the damage dealt to the first creature hit (rounded up), and successful Reflex saves negate this damage.

#### NUMEROLOGICAL RESISTANCE

**School** abjuration; **Level** cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

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

**Target** see text

**Duration** see text

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

*Numerological resistance* allows numerologists to use the Path of Numbers to grant their allies resilience in the face of elemental dangers. Roll 5d8; this is your dice pool. You will use each die in the pool exactly once to customize *numerological resistance*.

Choose one of the dice, and match its result to the appropriate value in the first column of the Eight Basic Energies table to determine the type of energy to which *numerological resistance* grants resistance. Next, allocate one of the dice to represent the number of creatures you can affect with *numerological resistance* (including yourself). All of these creatures must be within the spell's range. Then allocate one of the dice to represent the number of rounds *numerological resistance* lasts. Finally, sum the remaining two dice. This is the number of points of resistance that *numerological resistance* grants.

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## Spiritualism

Not all who seek to pierce the veil of death are foul necromancers. Instead, there are those who proceed with respect and caution. The practice of attempting to establish such benign communication is known as spiritualism.

Spiritualists rely on unquiet souls and minor haunts to establish communication with spirits, and those mortals who act as conduits between worlds are called mediums. Most keep a cautious distance from the higher orders of dangerous and unpredictable spectral undead such as ghosts and wraiths. Instead, they seek out lower stations of localized spiritual entities, such as poltergeists and haunts, in order to act as liaisons for the unquiet spirits.

Most talented mediums are oracles, though some experts without magical ability specialize in seeking out and communicating with rapping spirits and possessive dead (see page 54). They find their talents well compensated by bereaved mourners seeking solace from a loved one's lingering spirit. These profitable practices also attract all manner of fakes, who resort to the cover of dark seances and deceptive ventriloquism to fool grieving families.

The process of spirit communication is a difficult affair, and only the most powerful mediums are capable of summoning the spirits of specific individuals directly to their location. Others must seek out haunts in the places where

they reside in order to establish a direct rapport. Mediums often aid those

troubled by the restless spirits of recently deceased, who—lacking the truly tragic circumstances necessary for them to manifest as ghosts, but still experiencing some unresolved conflict—linger in the mortal world as haunts. Once mediums have overcome the effects of such haunts, they can proceed with communication.

A wide variety of entities are capable of communication. Neutralized haunts (those reduced to 0 hp) of all types might revert to rapping spirits or possessive dead (see page 54) during their reset periods. Likewise, destroyed spectral dead such as ghosts and poltergeists can assume this same state during rejuvenating periods, and can attempt to convey their needs to the living. While still potentially malevolent, these entities can often communicate via simple codes (such as one rap for “yes” and two for “no”) or by the medium calling out words, numbers, and letters for rapped selection by the spirits. Such messages can be formed at the rate of 1d10 words for each minute in which a character succeeds at a Linguistics check, with a DC equal to 15 + the original haunt's CR. Mediums channeling possessive dead, on the other hand, typically whisper messages, or write at the haunt's suggestion—both at the same rate when unaided by tools of their trade. In either case, spirits are often unreliable, always cryptic, and never able to convey knowledge beyond what they knew in life.

To facilitate communication, mediums use spells such as *calm spirit* (see page 55), indulge in diplomacy, and create comforting environments such as dark seance cabinets. Some mediums carry flat, lettered boards known as “talking boards,” cone-shaped spirit trumpets, or writing planchettes—small boards that can be written on with chalk or charcoal pencils.

While these are mundane versions of magical *trumpets of spirit speaking* (see page 55) and *spirit planchettes* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path #43: The Haunting of Harrowstone* 19) with no inherent power of their own, in the hands of those with properly established rappings, these tools increase the efficiency of messages received to 3d6 words per minute of communication, and grant the user a +4 bonus on Linguistics checks to decipher the cryptic messages of haunts.

### Spiritualism on Golarion

Many cultures on Golarion engage in spiritualism, with varying degrees of reverence. Seances are popular parlor entertainment in the more cosmopolitan parts of Ustalav, particularly among adherents of the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, where members are encouraged to meticulously record spirit communications in the event that seance sitters tap into some miraculous reservoir of hidden knowledge.





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Ancestor worship is another form of spiritualism on Golarion, with some cultures communing with the lingering haunts of their forebears, who they believe persist on the mortal plane to protect their descendants. The Shoanti, for example, engaged in totemistic rituals meant to anchor these spiritual protections to them. Far to the east, Tians who prize family and genealogy practice a similar form of ancestor worship wherein descendants venerate departed souls and attune themselves to the quiet guidance of protective spirits while taking measures to guard themselves from the vengeance of wrathful entities.

The Mwangi Expanse holds all manner of mysteries, but few draw the awe and interest of outsiders so much as the mysteries of juju. This unique form of communication with the spirit realms (known to them as the *hana juju*) developed after centuries of supplication to spiritual entities called wendo, who through generations of homage have been elevated beyond mere haunts to assume greater importance to the juju shamans. The wendo represent archetypal spirits of various aspects of Mwangi life, such as Adamde Baaka who embodies nature and the jungle, and Old Ba, who embodies folklore and ancient wisdom.

### New Oracle Mystery

Many natural mediums and others gifted in the spiritual arts are oracles, most of whom possess the occult mystery.

### Occult

You have an innate connection to the spirits of the dead.

**Deities:** Magdh, Nethys, Pharasma, Tsukiyo.

**Class Skills:** An oracle with the occult mystery adds Bluff, Disguise, Knowledge (arcana), and Use Magic Device to her list of class skills.

**Bonus Spells:** *Unseen servant* (2nd), *spectral hand* (4th), *clairaudience/clairvoyance* (6th), *srying* (8th), *contact other plane* (10th), *project image* (12th), *vision* (14th), *moment of prescience* (16th), *astral projection* (18th).

**Revelations:** An oracle with the occult mystery can choose from any of the following revelations.

**Automatic Writing (Su):** Once per day, you can spend a full hour in uninterrupted meditation. During this period, your hands produce mysterious writing that pertains to the future. At 1st level, the prophetic writing manifests as an *augury* spell with 90% effectiveness. At 5th level, the writing takes the form of a *divination* spell with 90% effectiveness. At 8th level, the writing manifests as a casting of *commune* with no material component required.

**Brain Drain (Su):** You can take a standard action to violently probe the mind of a single intelligent enemy within 100 feet. The target receives a Will save to negate the effect and immediately knows the source of this harmful mental prying. Those who fail this save are wracked with pain, and take 1d4 points of damage per oracle level you possess. After successfully attacking with this ability, you can use a full-round action to sort through the jumble of stolen thoughts

and memories and then attempt a single Knowledge check using the victim's skill bonus. The randomly stolen thoughts remain in your mind for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier. Treat the knowledge gained as if you had used *detect thoughts*. This is a mind-affecting effect. You can use this ability once per day at 1st level, plus 1 use per day at 5th level, and 1 use for every 5 levels beyond 5th.

**Ectoplasmic Armor (Su):** You can conjure armor made of ectoplasm that grants you a +4 armor bonus to AC. In addition, this armor functions as if it had the *ghost touch* special ability. At 7th level and every 4 levels thereafter, the armor bonus increases by 2. You can use this armor for 1 hour per day per oracle level. This duration does not need to be consecutive, but it must be spent in 1-hour increments.

**Phantom Touch (Su):** As a standard action, you can perform a melee touch attack that causes a living creature to become shaken. This ability lasts for a number of rounds equal to 1/2 your oracle level (minimum 1 round). You can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + your Charisma modifier. At 5th level, the target instead becomes frightened, and at 7th level, the target becomes panicked.

**Project Psyche (Su):** You can project your psyche into another vessel. Once per day, you can possess another creature as if using the *magic jar* spell, though this does not require a receptacle. You must be adjacent to the target creature, which receives a Will save against the effect. You must be at least 11th level to choose this revelation.

**Shroud of Retribution (Su):** As an immediate action, you can summon a shroud of spirits that reflects your attackers' damage back onto them. Any creature that strikes you deals normal damage to you, but at the same time the attacker takes 1d8 points of force damage + 1 point per 2 caster levels you possess (maximum +10). This effect lasts until the end of your next turn. You can use this ability once per day, plus one additional time per day at 11th level and every 4 levels thereafter. You must be at least 7th level to select this revelation.

**Spectral Spells (Su):** You gain Ectoplasmic Spell<sup>APG</sup> as a bonus feat. In addition, once per day, you can cast a spell with the Ectoplasmic Spell metamagic feat as a standard action that does not increase the level of the spell. You can use this ability one additional time per day at 7th level and every 4 levels thereafter.

**Spirit Walk (Su):** You can become incorporeal and invisible. While in this form, you can move in any direction and pass through solid objects. You can take no actions other than to move while in this form. You can remain in this form for a number of rounds equal to your oracle level, but you can end this effect prematurely as a standard action. You can use this ability once per day at 11th level and twice per day at 15th level. You must be at least 11th level to select this revelation.

**Sure Soul (Su):** Because of your experience with possessing spirits, you gain a +2 insight bonus on saving throws against possession effects such as *magic jar*, a ghost's malevolence ability, or domination effects. At 7th level, this bonus also



applies against death effects and mind-affecting effects. At 11th level, the bonus increases to +4.

**Voice of the Grave (Su):** You can use *Speak with Dead*, as the spell, for a number of rounds per day equal to your oracle level. These rounds do not need to be consecutive. At 5th level and every 5 levels thereafter, the dead creature takes a cumulative –2 penalty on its Will save to resist this effect.

**Final Revelation:** Upon reaching 20th level, you become one with the spirits. You become immune to death effects, exhaustion, fatigue, nausea, negative levels, and the sickened condition. You can cast *astral projection* and *true seeing* once per day as spell-like abilities without requiring material components. Should you die, you rise again 2d4 days later as a ghost.

## Tools of Spiritualism

Spiritualists with both natural talents in the art and who pick it up by choice often employ the following spells and magic items when practicing their craft. Additionally, they use common, nonthreatening haunts as methods of reaching across to the other side.

## Haunts

While most haunts are malevolent in nature, some are more benign and serve as a means to communicate with spirits.

The most common of these haunts are rapping spirits: unquiet dead with just enough substance to produce cacophonous knocking and loud bumps in the night. Adventurers can attempt communication with these intelligent spirits by working out codes to form cryptic messages at the rate of 1d10 words per minute with a successful Linguistics check (see page 52).

### RAPPING SPIRIT CR 1

#### XP 400

Alignment varies persistent haunt (5-ft. radius)

**Caster Level** 1st

**Notice** Perception DC 10 (to hear faint knockings on walls, floor, and furniture)

**hp 4; Weakness** tricked by *hide from undead*; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

#### EFFECT

When this haunt is triggered, a chorus of agitated raps and blows rings out from nearby hard surfaces (those capable of physical manipulations, as *mage hand*) as unquiet spirits convey their unrest to the living. All who hear the supernatural knocks are affected by *cause fear* (save DC 11).

#### DESTRUCTION

Rapping spirits typically ask for their mortal remains to be laid to rest or for the PCs to seek revenge for their deaths. Fulfilling these requests dismisses the haunts.

Instances of so-called direct-voice channeling, automatic writing, and talking board communications are often the result of haunts known as the possessive dead: haunts

capable of influencing the thoughts and actions of those in the mortal realms to communicate their anger, desires, or goals as they seek eternal rest.

### POSSESSIVE DEAD CR 3

#### XP 800

Alignment varies persistent haunt (15-ft. radius)

**Caster Level** 1st

**Notice** Perception DC 15 (to hear faint mutterings and feel cool breezes)

**hp 13; Weakness** tricked by *hide from undead*; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

#### EFFECT

When triggered, this haunt seeks to influence the actions of the living, targeting a victim with *suggestion* (save DC 14). Depending on the haunt's alignment, the suggested actions might be malicious, subtly putting their victims in harm's way or sowing antagonistic interactions, or benign, with the haunt prompting mysterious automatic writings or unconscious utterances from the possessed in hopes of communicating its desires with the world of the living.

#### DESTRUCTION

Possessive dead typically seek rest for their mortal remains or resolution to unfulfilled desires in life. Fulfilling these requests dismisses the haunts.

## New Spells

The following spells are uncommon among the general population on Golarion, but in spiritualist cults and ancestor-worshipping cultures, they are relatively common.

### CALL SPIRIT

**School** conjuration (calling); **Level** cleric 5

**Casting Time** 10 minutes

**Components** V, S

**Range** 10 ft.

**Effect** call the spirit of a single deceased humanoid creature

**Duration** concentration

**Saving Throw** Will negates, see text; **Spell Resistance** no You attempt to cause the spirit of a specific individual to manifest from its final resting place. You must request the spirit's presence by speaking its name.

Unwilling spirits can resist the summons by succeeding at a Will save. If the chosen spirit resists your call, another spirit with malevolent intent almost always takes its place, intent on deceiving you. The difficulty of the save depends on how well you know the subject and what sort of physical connection (if any) you have to the creature you wish to call.

Knowledge	Will Save Modifier
Name only*	+15
Secondhand (you have heard of the subject)	+10
Firsthand (you met the subject in life)	+5
Familiar (you knew the subject well)	+0

\* You must have at least a name the creature was called in life.





Connection	Will Save Modifier
Likeness or picture	-2
Possession or garment	-4
Body part, lock of hair, nail clipping, etc.	-10
Different alignment	+4

A successfully called spirit manifests as a wispy, vaporous form that vaguely resembles the form the deceased creature wore during life. The spirit has the physical attributes of an *unseen servant* and is capable of minor physical manipulations, with the ability to speak in quiet, ghostly whispers in whatever languages the creature knew while still alive. The spirit is not an undead creature, and is not beholden to its caller. Whether you summoned the chosen spirit or a deceitful replacement, the spirit can refuse to answer your questions or attempt to deceive you using *Bluff*, though in either case these spirits can speak about only what they knew in life and have no knowledge of events that occurred after their deaths. Malevolent spirits might take advantage of their limited physical abilities to cause poltergeist-like outbursts designed to terrorize the caster.

You must concentrate on maintaining the spell (a standard action) in order to ask questions at the rate of one per round. You can ask one question per caster level, which the spirit answers during the same round. When the spell ends, the spirit's ectoplasmic form fades and the soul returns to its rest. This spell cannot call the spirits of creatures who are currently undead.

**CALM SPIRIT**

**School** necromancy; **Level** cleric 2

**Casting Time** 1 standard action

**Components** V, S

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

**Target** one incorporeal undead creature or haunt

**Duration** 1 minute or 1 round/level, see text

**Saving Throw** Will negates or none, see text;

**Spell Resistance** yes

This spell temporarily calms agitated haunts and incorporeal undead such as ghosts and poltergeists. You have no control over the affected creatures, but *calm spirit* postpones hostile action by the affected spirits for the duration of the spell. Entities so affected cannot take violent actions or do anything destructive, including triggering persistent haunt abilities, though they can defend themselves. Any aggressive action against or damage dealt to a calmed spirit or haunt immediately ends the effect.

Haunts do not receive a saving throw against the spell, but the caster must succeed at a caster level check equal to at least 10 + the haunt's CR in order to temporarily calm the angry entity. The spell's duration decreases to concentration (up to 1 round/level), when affecting a haunt.

**Magic Items**

Practitioners of spiritualism often use these magic items to facilitate their communication with spirits.

GRAVE CANDLE		PRICE 5,500 GP
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 10th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate necromancy		



Grave candles are magical candles that draw forth spirits from the mortal remains of long-dead creatures, allowing the living to speak to these spirits for a short period while the candle's wick burns. In order to function, a *grave candle* must be placed amid the physical remains of the body whose spirit the user wishes to contact. These remains can be partial, or even just a handful of ash or grave dust, but a totally destroyed body (as results from *destruction* or *disintegrate*) doesn't leave enough material for a *grave candle* to function. When the candle is lit, the smoke rising from the candle grows thick, and a ghostly shape similar to the creature's appearance in life manifests in the smoke.

At this point, the manifested spirit (which is as much an echo of the creature as it is the actual departed soul) can speak. A *grave candle* does not impart any additional understanding of languages to its user. In other respects, the conversation with the dead spirit adheres to the rules for *speak with dead*, save that the dead spirit takes a -4 penalty on its saving throw to resist the spell. Furthermore, a dead body can be subjected to the effects of a *grave candle* only once—the burning of a *grave candle* effectively burns out the latent necromantic and spiritual energy left behind by the soul's departure from the world (this does not harm the actual soul of the dead spirit, however) and destroys the candle.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 2,750 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>speak with dead</i>	

TRUMPET OF SPIRIT SPEAKING		PRICE 6,500
<b>SLOT</b> none	<b>CL</b> 6th	<b>WEIGHT</b> 1 lb.
<b>AURA</b> moderate necromancy		



This long, segmented cone is made of a lightweight metal and collapses into three sections. Although nonmagical spirit trumpets are most often used by fraudulent mediums and manipulated with sleight of hand and ventriloquism, a *trumpet of spirit speaking* allows actual communication with the spirits of the deceased. Once per day, when its mouthpiece is placed to the lips of a mostly intact corpse, the user can ask up to three questions of the dead creature, as if the corpse were subject to a *speak with dead* spell. The corpse's replies to the questions issue forth from the horn in quiet, ghostly whispers.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 3,250 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>speak with dead</i>	

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- Occult Writings



## Occult Writings

With heavy load my captors strode;  
My body borne by hands of blue.  
I was bestowed down midnight road,  
As into darker dens we drew.  
And when we strayed to where they prayed  
Their azure fingers set me down.  
Then with blade of sharpened jade,  
They opened me from gut to crown.

—From “Beloved Below” in *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark*



Introduction

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**F**rom the earliest days of civilization, hidden societies and secret cults have shared their teachings through mysterious writings on forbidden topics. Countless volumes explore such taboo subjects, though many are lost and known only through rumor and legend. In some cases, a newly discovered tome of ancient knowledge has resurrected a long-dead movement in the practice of dark magical arts.

This chapter details six such volumes, giving a history of each book, presenting a breakdown of its contents, and identifying those who can use it. In many cases, reading or studying these books provides the researcher with insights and abilities, which make these tomes prized possessions and add to their mystery.

In addition to or in place of her own spellbook, a spellcaster can use a copy of any of these occult writings when preparing spells. Some spells gain additional benefits when prepared using these mysterious texts; these benefits are detailed in their respective entries—though the benefits are not transferred along with the base spells should a spellcaster copy them to her own spellbook. A spell prepared from a given occult text can benefit from a maximum of one metamagic effect, including any free effects granted by the book itself.

The monetary values of these volumes are intrinsically tied to their power, and those with magical abilities or transcribed spells are treated as wondrous items or as spellbooks to determine their value. Their prices tend to be high in comparison to those of nonmagical writings on similar subjects, which both reflects and drives their rarity and the occult status of the information contained within their covers. In some cases, sections of books are priced individually to account for incomplete volumes. While some of the books are more common than others, all are rare enough that finding a copy is often its own quest or the seed of a new adventure.

Those occult volumes that are minor artifacts can be destroyed by redacting all of their contents with the pen that originally wrote the words, using the blood of the book's original author as ink.

### Other Occult Writings

In addition to the six volumes detailed in this chapter, the Pathfinder campaign setting features a number of other occult texts, which are described elsewhere or left up to individual GMs to flesh out as their needs and inspirations dictate. Among these additional works are the following.

**Azlanti Neris:** This ancient tome describes three pre-Azlanti cities that imprisoned Great Old Ones.

**Book of the Damned:** This multivolume text catalogs the evil Outer Planes and the outsiders who inhabit them. The contents are thoroughly explored in the Pathfinder Campaign Setting books *Princes of Darkness*, *Lords of Chaos*, and *Horsemen of the Apocalypse*.

**Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns—Shadows of What Was and Will Be:** This volume provides information concerning travel to the mysterious Dimension of Time.

**Chronicle of the Cantorian Spring:** A tome with wooden covers and blank parchment that, when watered and cared for, grows into a plant with leaves covered in ancient elven inscriptions. The writing on the leaves seems to tell a tale about forests and bodies of water on stars.

**Chronicle of the Righteous:** Similar in scope to the *Book of the Damned*, this volume catalogs the ranks of the celestials who inhabit Elysium, Heaven, and Nirvana, and the Empyrean Lords who reign supreme there. This book is featured in the Pathfinder Campaign Setting volume of the same name.

**Emerald Codex of the Therassic Order:** This collection of spells and rituals devoted to the Thassilonian deity known as the Peacock Spirit was penned by the Therassic Order, a group of devotees to the Peacock Spirit.

**The King in Yellow:** This arcane text is associated with the Old Cults, and particularly the Great Old One, Hastur.

**Lacuna Codex:** A tome of immensely powerful spells that the lost kings of Ustalav used in their war against the Whispering Tyrant, this book features prominently in the Pathfinder Tales novel *Prince of Wolves* by Dave Gross.

**Necronomicon:** This is perhaps the most notorious text associated with the Old Cults.

**On Verified Madness:** An ancient, jet-black tome discussing the Dark Tapestry this is a work of starry observations and occult lore.

**Pnakotic Manuscripts:** A foul book containing information and prophecies related to the Outer Gods and the Great Old Ones, this tome is sacred to the Old Cults and also valuable to those who oppose them.

**Preklikin's Book of Cults:** This arcane tome describes the Old Cults and the Great Old Ones. Statistics for this book can be found in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods*.

**Religious Texts:** While holy and unholy texts dedicated to the faiths of deities prominent on Golarion are not necessarily difficult to find, some are banned in regions where worship of the associated deity is forbidden. In such cases, cults of these gods hide away the texts detailing their faiths, and such books might be significantly more expensive and harder to acquire than normal.

**Sarkorian Prophecy:** This series of prophecies inscribed by a Sarkorian oracle was thought to be lost after the Worldwound opened, but it has recently been recovered by the Pathfinder Society. For more information on these writings, see *Pathfinder Society Scenario #2–08: The Sarkorian Prophecy*.

**Sarkoris Shards:** These rune-carved crystal shards from Sarkoris tell of witch-cults and cannibalism, and are generally associated with the Old Cults.

**Xanthuun Tablets:** This tome is associated with the Old Cults, and purports to reveal secrets about primordial forces and the creation of the world.

## Aleh Almaktoom

Otherwise known as the *Book of the Dead*, *Aleh Almaktoom* is the definitive ancient Osirian necromantic treatise and spellbook. Although a grasp of theology aids in understanding the mysteries detailed in this series of papyrus scrolls, they speak primarily of arcane matters. Many would-be scholars attribute the book's authorship to the infamous necromancer Geb, but credible Osirionologists maintain that he merely collected a much older set of documents. The collection spans 20 to 24 different scrolls, and is typically stored in a small wooden chest. The book is usually divided into four sections.

**Chapters 1–5:** These chapters relate to the preparation of the dead for burial. They also detail a divine rite that can protect the soul from attacks by daemons, night hags, and other soul-feasting fiends as it journeys along the River of Souls and awaits judgment in the Boneyard. This ritual requires the ability to cast at least one 3rd-level necromancy spell (or success at a DC 20 Use Magic Device check), takes 8 hours, and uses up 1,000 gp in spell components. The ritual imbues one corpse with the benefits of a permanent *sanctify corpse*<sup>UM</sup> spell and protects the corpse's soul from harm until it is judged by Pharasma.

This section of *Aleh Almaktoom* also contains the following spells: 3rd—*gentle repose* (affected by Extend Spell when prepared from this source); 1st—*decompose corpse*<sup>UM</sup>, *sculpt corpse*<sup>APG</sup>.

These chapters of *Aleh Almaktoom* are worth 350 gp.

**Chapters 6–10:** These chapters provide spells to combat the undead and techniques to prevent their creation. They include a list of conditions under which undead can naturally occur, plus symptoms of ghoul fever and other afflictions. Readers who consult these chapters gain a +5 competence bonus on Knowledge (religion) checks regarding undead and on Heal checks to identify and treat diseases imparted by undead creatures.

If a spellcaster prepares at least five spells from the *Aleh Almaktoom*, he can apply the benefits of the Thanatopic Spell<sup>UM</sup> metamagic feat to any one spell he has prepared without increasing its spell level.

Additionally, this section contains the following spells: 6th—*spectral saluqi* (see the sidebar), *undeath to death*, *undeath ward* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Dungeons of Golarion* 63); 4th—*boneshatter* (*Pathfinder Adventure Path* #84); 3rd—*halt undead*, *sands of time*<sup>UM</sup>; 0—*disrupt undead*.

This section of *Aleh Almaktoom* is worth 4,425 gp.

**Chapters 11–18:** These pages detail

## New Spell

Among the many rare spells to be found in the *Aleh Almaktoom* is *spectral saluqi*, a spell popular among the pharaohs of Ancient Osirion that is capable of summoning a magical flying hound.

### SPECTRAL SALUQI

**School** necromancy; **Level** sorcerer/wizard 6, witch 6

**Casting Time** 1 round

**Components** V, S, F (a precious metal canine statue worth 100 gp)

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

**Effect** one spectral dog

**Duration** 10 minutes/level (D)

**Saving Throw** none; **Spell Resistance** no

This spell creates a spectral saluqi, an undead canine resembling an oversized hound with black fur, a gray ruff and tail, and milky gray eyes. The hound shares your alignment and can converse with you telepathically. It can see and attack ethereal creatures, and otherwise has the same statistics as a yeth hound (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 286). It usually leaves no tracks because it prefers to fly an inch above the ground. You are immune to the hound's bay ability. The hound's bite is considered aligned to any single alignment you possess for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.

means by which a necromancer can control or influence undead, as well as the moral and religious implications of doing so. If a spellcaster prepares at least three spells from the *Aleh Almaktoom* and reads from this section while doing so, he can apply the benefits of the Threnodic Spell<sup>UM</sup> metamagic feat to one spell he has prepared without increasing its spell level.

These chapters contain the following spells: 7th—*control undead*; 2nd—*command undead*; 1st—*detect undead*, *hide from undead* (this is an arcane version of the spell added to the sorcerer/wizard spell list).

This section of *Aleh Almaktoom* is worth 2,750 gp.

**Chapters 19–21:** These chapters provide information on undead creation, and are often omitted from copies held by nonevil necromancers. This section is believed to have been penned by Geb himself and added later. A necromancer who consults these chapters when preparing spells gains two additional daily uses of his power over undead arcane school power.

These chapters include the following spells: 9th—*canopic conversion* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Faction Guide* 60); 8th—*greater create undead*, *tomb legion* (*Faction Guide* 61); 6th—*create undead*; 4th—*animate dead*; 3rd—*lesser animate dead*<sup>UM</sup>.

This section of *Aleh Almaktoom* is worth 4,700 gp.





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## Book of 1,000 Whispers

The *Book of 1,000 Whispers* is the inspiration and primary guide for the secret society known as the Harbingers of Fate. Dating from the turn of the 47th century, the tome was discovered in 4648 AR. It chronicles a series of prophecies regarding events occurring from 4604 to an undisclosed year believed to be 4714 AR. Beginning with Aroden's death in 4606, the prophecies veer away from actual events and describe a timeline that never occurred. The tome has been copied a handful of times and entrusted to high-ranking members of the Harbingers (see page 26), though not all of the copies include the esoteric and magical rites described in the original. The very first copy discovered by Lord Garron is bound in black leather with an intricate design, common to certain puzzle boxes, embossed in brass leaf on the cover.

In truth, the book a trick designed to manipulate the disappointed and desperate. No author is attributed, though the Harbingers hold "the Author" in cultish reverence, and their conviction drives them more passionately than threats of punishment or promises of power ever could. The Harbingers' deliberate lack of outward markers of mysticism has left them all but unnoticed, except when their actions give them away. A testament to the cunning of the Author, the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* has driven the Harbingers to the brink of insanity without the casting of a single spell—just dashed hopes.

A copy of the *Book of 1,000 Whispers* is worth 100 gp; if it includes instructions for performing the Ritual of the Whispering Counsel, it is worth 450 gp.

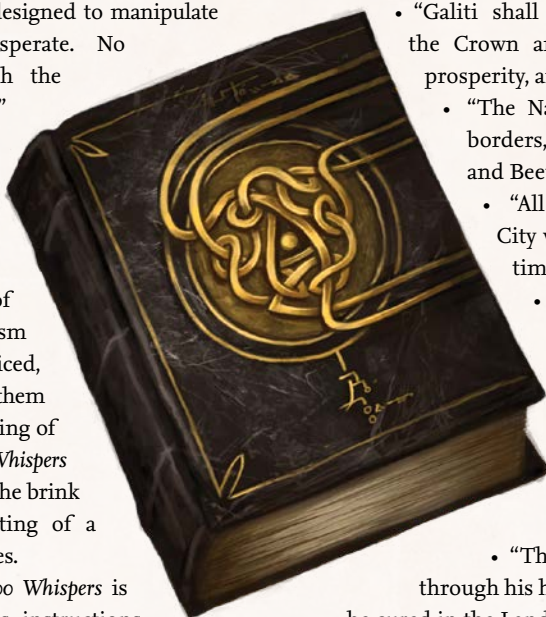
**Pages 1–4:** The tome begins with a short prayer to Aroden, invoking a blessing upon the book and the reader. Anyone reading or reciting this blessing aloud is considered familiar with the Author for the purposes of *scrying* and other divinations.

**Pages 5–37:** The prophecies on these pages contain cryptic predictions regarding events to occur between the year 4604 and the beginning of 4606, which history has since verified as accurate. The final prophecy on page 37 is interpreted by most as a reference to Aroden's supposed return to Golarion and the ushering in of the Age of Glory.

**Pages 38–194:** The prophecies on these pages increase in their abstractness with each passing page, and are difficult for even the most studious of readers to parse and place within the timeline. Choice passages from this section include the following.

- "The Kingdom of Shadow Unending shall be rendered insensate, the chain to its Master cut."
- "In the ruins of the Lonely Eye shall rise a throne of gold, and the people of Zistrallad shall end their strife."
- "The fiends of the Mother Realm will be slain, their servants driven into Heaven before the Army of Twenty-Two Thorns."
- "The liberating blade shall bend before the might of Lord Anvalxor and his Dragon Warriors."
- "Upon the banks of the Dark Lake, the simian shaman shall fall to the Striking Asp."
- "After the ascension of the Child of None, the people of Givbrafeth shall put to the sword all but the Niwqan."
- "When the Daughter of the Seventh Branch reclaims her homeland, the color of Thought shall fade from the Darkness."
  - "Galiti shall be liberated from the rule of the Crown and become a bastion of peace, prosperity, and learning."
    - "The Nation of the Isle will spread its borders, and will engulf the Lions, Veils, and Beetles."
      - "All the carillons in the Cloistered City will shatter in a single peal at the time of Beliskiar's death."
        - "Where the Shining Champion once battled the Dust Legion, the Scarecrow Wars will rage."
          - "Visitors who hail from distant Ormairahep will arrive atop a moving Island, bearing gifts from the People of the Elder Realm."
            - "The cornice of a living Yumbiltha through his heart, the Lord of Night's Feast will be cured in the Lands of Fallen Locusts."
  - "The Stone of Heaven, Moon, and Stars—its duty met—shall be returned to whence it came. Alsharashrai be praised!"
  - "Banished to the Realm of Devouring Dreams, the salient Spire will no longer plague the horizon, and the Last Siege will end the suffering of the Faithful."

**Pages 123–125:** The margins of several pages in this section contain details on the Ritual of Whispering Counsel, which purports to allow the ritual caster to commune with the book's mysterious Author. When performed, the ritual functions as *divination*, without the 1-week time restriction and without a chance of failure. The advice given always takes the form of whispers and always urges the ritual caster toward actions that support the Author's agenda. The ritual requires the ability to cast at least one 4th-level divination spell, takes 10 minutes to perform, and uses 25 gp worth of material components. The ritual can be performed only once per day; all attempts beyond the first receive no answer.



## The Inward-Facing Circle

*The Inward Facing Circle* is a rare and lavishly illustrated treatise on diabolism penned by Coganaris the Wracker. Coganaris was an early luminary within House Thrune at the end of the Age of Enthronement, and helped to shape and define the House's aggressive outlook on the exploitation of infernal powers.

The volume is bound in rich burgundy leather, and it is ornamented in silver along the spine, over the corners, and on the clever lock that seals in its secrets. A miniature magical circle diagram is also embossed in silver on the cover. Inside, the crisp pages of high-quality parchment complement Coganaris's immaculate and precise calligraphy. Each word is penned in bright red, evoking the blood of an infernal creature, which never darkens to rust.

The book's last known whereabouts place it in the possession of agents of the Pathfinder Society, though other copies of the book might exist, especially in the libraries of the diabolists of House Thrune.

A complete copy of *The Inward-Facing Circle* is worth 2,255 gp.

**Pages 1–36:** Coganaris offers his perspective on how souls are judged and become petitioners. This knowledge, he writes, is necessary to understand the nature of fiends. According to those Pharasmins who have viewed the work, the descriptions contained within are fundamentally accurate, if biased in favor of Hell.

**Pages 37–72:** The Wracker details how the damned are herded like cattle to specific layers of Hell, where every memory is winnowed and burned away like chaff as the souls become lemures. Coganaris instructs the reader that a devil is nothing but another soul, albeit one with delusions of grandeur, and the reader should suffer neither threats nor intimidation from one who is, at best, only the reader's peer—and quite possibly less, considering that the reader is still alive and the devil-changed soul was too stupid to avoid either death or damnation. Consultation with this chapter grants the reader a +2 circumstance bonus on Knowledge (planes) checks concerning devils.

**Pages 73–108:** Coganaris provides a 4-page overview of each layer of Hell, with at least one illustration each. The illustrations can be used as a substitute for a forked metal rod attuned to Hell for the purposes of a *plane shift* spell—even to travel to a specific layer of Hell, though the specific arrival point within that layer remains random as per the spell. The drawings are both gruesome and accurate in their depictions of Hell's torments.

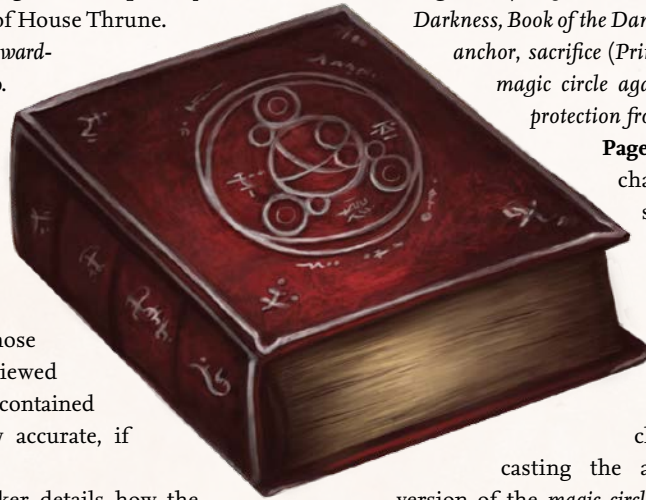
**Pages 109–144:** These pages contain a series of collected notes and observations of the most common devils inhabiting Hell. Six unusual magical symbols are worked into some of the illustrations. With a successful DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check, a character identifies them as infernal sigils. In this section, Coganaris's usually precise choice of words gives way to several awkward paragraphs. A character can confirm he is writing in code with a successful DC 20 Linguistics check, and with a successful DC 30 Linguistics check, she cracks the code. The true names of six devils that correspond to the sigils can be deciphered. Of the six, four are lesser devils, and two are greater devils, and all are among those currently bound to the Chelish royal court.

**Pages 145–180:** This chapter is a collection of spells Coganaris declares essential to basic diabolism, and includes the following spells: 8th—*greater planar binding*; 6th—*planar binding*; 5th—*lesser planar binding*; 4th—*agonize* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned, Vol. 1* 46), *dimensional anchor, sacrifice* (*Princes of Darkness* 47); 3rd—*magic circle against evil*; 2nd—*communal protection from evil*<sup>UC</sup>.

**Pages 181–216:** Within this chapter, Coganaris reveals some of his greatest discoveries. The Wracker instructs the reader on how to construct a diagram and a special circle made of silver that can be repeatedly charged with magic by casting the alternative inward-facing version of the *magic circle against evil* spell on it—this variant of the spell allows the caster to capture and contain a summoned outsider.

Unlike the ring of powdered silver normally used when casting *magic circle against evil*, a permanent circle is embedded in the floor and so cannot be broken by such things as a careless footstep or a gust of wind. A permanent circle requires 500 gp worth of silver, and the creator must be able to cast *magic circle against evil* and possess the Craft Wondrous Item feat. The creator must also succeed at a DC 20 Spellcraft check (as described in the spell) or the effort is ruined and the materials wasted. The circle possesses no inherent magic; rather, it's imbued with magic when a spell is cast upon it.

Finally, Coganaris instructs the reader on the best practices when haggling with an infernal entity. His insights into the infernal mind give the reader a +5 circumstance bonus on opposed Charisma checks to negotiate with a devil after casting *planar binding* or a similar spell. This includes coercing a devil to be bound to a devil talisman.





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## Lost Gospels of Tabris

Hidden for centuries by the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, the *Lost Gospels of Tabris* are the central codices from which the order draws its strange occult teachings of mortal enlightenment. Recovered under mysterious circumstances by the gentleman adventurer Aldus Canter, the *Lost Gospels* are the source of endless speculation among Golarion's scholars. Canter found the disintegrating scrolls within a sepulcher deep in the Osirian Desert, and their guardian—the desiccated husk of a formerly angelic being—claimed to be Tabris, the author of the *Book of the Damned*. However, it has never been proven whether the guardian was indeed the fallen author or rather some other silver-tongued entity intent on mankind's corruption. The mystery of the *Lost Gospels'* true author persists, with the order perpetuating the legend and the presumption that the texts will usher in a golden age of divine enlightenment.

The order secretly preserved the aging parchments through means both magical and mundane, and housed them in the Necropolis of the Faithful in Sothis. Here the fragments were mounted on a long roll of enchanted linen and wound between intricately carved rods. One of the text's enduring mysteries is that scrolling back and forth between chapters reveals slight variations between readings, with a word missing here or a misplaced phrase there—variations that consumed Aldus with madness in his later years. The order is convinced the gospels are the true account of creation and key to the rebirth of the primordial god Ihy, the murdered brother of Asmodeus. The leadership's intense interest in recovering the *Ihystear*—the fragment of the spear used to murder the proto-god—lead many to question the gospel's true contents.

The scroll-bound fragments account for over 1,000 pages of text written in a spidery, sprawling Celestial, and contain what the order purports to be the secret—or blasphemous—history of the universe, interwoven with nearly indecipherable rituals and powerful spells.

The original copy of the *Lost Gospels of Tabris* is a minor artifact, as are each of the few meticulously replicated and translated copies that exist in the secret libraries of the order. Numerous lay translations exist that lack any of the full text's magical abilities, spell transcriptions, words of power, or instructions for creating golems; each is worth 100,000 gp for the translations' rarity and curious nature alone.



**Gospel of Azhia:** This account purports to be notated whispers collected by Tabris from the near-dead god Azhia, whose dying corpse is endlessly feasted upon in the court of the archdevil Baalzebul. The gospel claims the deity witnessed the sundering of the two spheres of the Great Beyond as they split, mitosis-like, in the womb of the Astral Plane. As such, the themes of rebirth and creation that obsess the order are rife within these fragments, and primordial scripts within contain the recoverable essence of spells such as *acid fog*, *ash storm*<sup>UM</sup>, *caustic eruption*<sup>UM</sup>, *clashing rocks*<sup>APG</sup>, *cloudkill*, *create demiplane*, *hungry pit*<sup>APG</sup>, *incendiary cloud*, and *major creation*.

**Gospel of Ihy:** Fragmented and incomplete, this gospel is purported to be the translated echoes of Ihy's death-scream collected by Tabris through communion with the *Ihystear*. The spear fragment is said to hold in its reverberations all knowledge possessed by the proto-god on the secret creation of the universe until the moment of his murder. The words of this text are a mass of formless symbols until they coalesce into primitive Celestial upon reading. These pages contain a number of words of power (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 162), including all change, illumination, language, life, power, and time words.

**Gospel of Maelissikek:** The author ostensibly collected these mutterings from a protean lord named Maelissikek, who witnessed the parsing of the Outer Sphere. This chapter is littered with the complicated hierarchies and dominions of thousands of powerful outsiders—including the true names of many. The order is quick to warn that the passage of time or the deception of the chronicler might taint the names' power or relevance. This gospel includes the following spells: *astral projection*, *binding*, *gate*, *greater planar binding*, and *plane shift*. The *gate* spell described is unique in that each casting opens a gate to an Outer Plane location containing a ruined sepulcher that matches Aldus's description of Tabris's tomb in Osirion. What secrets lie within these identical sepulchers is a source of endless debate and daring exploration among the order's most powerful members.

**Psycic Psalms:** These haiku-like verses shift syllables in an intricately numbered sequence, and contain blasphemous accounts of the deities' experiments with the titans and the creation and ascendancy of mortal life. Within the pages are many accounts of so-called "false starts" to life that act as magical *golem manuals* for clay, flesh, and stone golems. This chapter contains a single page fragment totally covered in dripping black ink; this page acts as a *bag of devouring* for anyone foolish enough to explore its dark depths.

## Secrets of the Dreaming Dark

*Secrets of the Dreaming Dark* is an anonymous work originating from late in the Age of Darkness, when the void between the stars had never been deeper. Its pages, written in dense Aklo, have been transcribed numerous times, but never completely. Many of these incomplete copies of the book still exist, but only seven complete copies of the original (itself long lost) are thought to still survive. All seven copies are bound in identical midnight-black shantak leather. Complex star charts, tangled equations, and baffling maps of strange worlds disrupt the text, along with painstakingly detailed images of the hideous creatures that dwell in and beyond the Dark Tapestry. Full comprehension of the text requires mastery of the Aklo tongue and years of toil, but the gist of its contents can be absorbed by spending 96 hours studying the tome and then succeeding at a DC 35 Linguistics check.

A complete copy of this book is considered a minor artifact, while incomplete versions are worth the total value of the components present.

**Pages 1–195:** Roughly the first half of the immense book is a tangled and often self-contradictory investigation into hundreds of worlds said to exist in or be touched by the Dark Tapestry. A fragment concerning the nehtalgggu of the Dominion of the Black is the most detailed, yet even this section on their mysterious interstellar empire remains vague. Those who use this section of the book as a reference when attempting Knowledge checks related to the Dark Tapestry or its inhabitants (save the Great Old Ones and Outer Gods) gain a +10 bonus on such checks and can attempt such checks untrained.

This portion of *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark* is worth 10,000 gp.

**Pages 196–239:** This section of the book focuses on the manipulation and alteration of certain spells normally limited to the summoning of outsiders from other planes. When using this section of the book as a focus while casting *planar ally*, *planar binding*, their lesser and greater variants, or *gate*, the spellcaster can use the spell to instead conjure creatures from the Dark Tapestry. However, these pages offer little advice on how to protect oneself from such entities.

This section of the book is worth 5,000 gp.

**Pages 240–281:** This section of the book feels almost rushed, as if the unknown author were afraid of going into full detail on the subject, or perhaps feared offering

too much information. These pages focus on the various Great Old Ones and Outer Gods associated with the Dark Tapestry, and can aid Knowledge checks concerning this subject as detailed above for the Dark Tapestry, save that the bonus granted is only +4.

This section of the book is worth 1,600 gp.

**Pages 282–317:** This section, composed mainly in haunting verse, compiles no less than 61 different dreams, apparently recorded from as many different subjects. Each dream features themes from the Dark Tapestry, and each entry is appended with a date and cause of death. While theories abound, no one has yet determined how these dates and deaths relate to the dreams themselves. If one studies these pages and then augments her next sleep with

certain rare drugs, there is a small chance her mind will be touched by one of the entities or intelligences alluded to in the manuscript.

Most such visitations result in the dreamer taking 4d6 points of Intelligence drain, but in some rare cases (5% of instances) the dreamer awakens to find that her Intelligence score has permanently increased by 1d3 and she has permanently lost the ability to dream (preventing further use of this section of the book).

This portion of *Secrets of the Dreaming Dark* functions only in complete versions of the book. In an incomplete volume, this section of the book is worth 2,000 gp.

**Pages 318–371:** This section of the book is the one that causes many spellcasters to seek out the tome. It contains dozens of strange, rare, and often dangerous arcane spells tied to the Dark Tapestry. Frustratingly, the spells in each of the seven existing copies are different, and often incomplete, forcing those who wish to learn them to acquire multiple copies of the book in order to reconstruct them.

The value of this section depends on the total scribing cost of the spells within (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 219).

**Pages 372–404:** The final pages are the tome's most maddening and mysterious, for here, in all surviving copies, an unknown hand has blotted out the majority of the words with a tenacious black ink that resists all attempts at removal by means both magic and mundane, and defies attempts to see through it. The only legible words on these pages include "house," "home," and in one single case, "firmament" (this one word being the only word in the entire book written in red, whereas the rest of the book is written in black—this is also the only time the word firmament appears in the tome). Any strange secrets that lie hidden beneath the ink have yet to be revealed.







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## Uniting the Flesh

Although thousands of pages of captions and descriptive footnotes annotate *Uniting the Flesh*, the only actual sentences in the text of this oversized collection of 1,986 plates are the postscript, a formal farewell from the author—a mysterious artist-scholar known only by a signatory “V.” Anatomical dissections, écorchés, skeletal studies, circulatory atlases, unflinching depictions of exposed organs, and a graphic encyclopedia of abnormalities straddle the line between artistry and grotesquery in this portfolio. Few scholars can accept that this collection of masterpieces, crafted with such precision and surgical detail, exists merely for art’s sake. While the mysterious “V” gives no explanation of his or her purpose, numerous scholars have offered their own interpretations and companion studies. Of these theses, three stand out as the most recognized and provocative.

By itself, a copy of *Uniting the Flesh* is worth 2,000 gp.

### Bonds and Red Rivers:

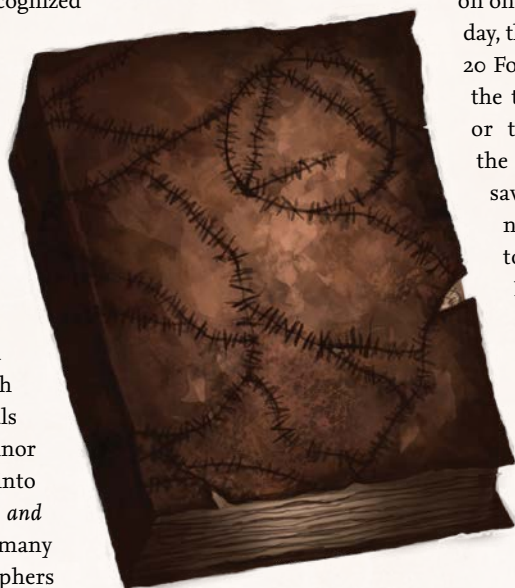
In *Bonds and Red Rivers: The Paths Within*, the Rahadoumi mystic Sutreib Abdonnovi reveals numerous patterns found within *Uniting the Flesh*. The treatise posits that some divine consciousness inscribed countless messages within each mortal body and that individuals can, through meditation and minor bloodletting, gain revelations into hidden potentials. While *Bonds and Red Rivers* offers few answers, many Garundi athletes and philosophers laud the text for its insight into the links between body and soul. If a reader spends a day studying *Bonds and Red Rivers* and then attempts to retrain a class feature, the amount of time required to retrain that class feature is reduced by 2 days (to a minimum of 1 day).

A copy of *Bonds and Red Rivers* is worth 10,000 gp.

**A Healer’s Anatomy:** Since 4300 AR, *Uniting the Flesh* has been paired in Qadiran universities with Khimeh Asopha’s *A Healer’s Anatomy*. Asopha’s text makes frequent references to the older work, employing its illustrations to instruct doctors in diagnosing conditions and performing complex operations. *A Healer’s Anatomy* is widely held as a seminal work for all healers who eschew magic. Any reader who spends 10 minutes referencing both *Uniting the Flesh* and *A Healer’s Anatomy* can immediately attempt a Heal check to provide long-term care or to treat deadly wound with a +2 bonus on that check.

A copy of *A Healer’s Anatomy* is worth 4,000 gp.

**Rites:** The least known of the companions to *Uniting the Flesh* is Gostain’s *Rites*. Gostain, a fanatical devotee of Zon-



Kuthon, is best known for establishing a 300-member congregation of Kuthites only to slaughter them in a mass sacrifice near the Vale of Shadows. Gostain vanished soon after, but his three surviving acolytes found a copy of *Uniting the Flesh* in the caves he inhabited, along with a journal written in Common and Infernal. The journal details an interpretation of *Uniting the Flesh* that it claims transforms the body into a “living sacrifice” and opens one’s metaphysical gate to the Promised Perfection. The method is baffling and beyond painful, and even the most devout Kuthites balk at its attempt. Yet this hasn’t stopped the church from widely circulating Gostain’s teachings and copies of *Uniting the Flesh* among its senior members.

Any nongood character can use *Rites* as part of a 7-day ritual. This ritual can be performed only on oneself, not on other creatures. Every day, the character must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude saving throw to withstand the torture he’s inflicting on himself, or the ritual ends immediately. If the character succeeds at all seven saving throws, he gains a permanent negative level and a portal opens to the realm of Xovaikain on the Plane of Shadow. An ostiarius kyton immediately (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 176) steps through, holding a black gem. The kyton congratulates the character on proving his worth and claims the gem is the cage bearing the character’s “true will.” It then offers either to take the character to a realm of indescribable revelations—

Xovaikain, the domain of Zon-Kuthon and the kytons—or to open the gem, granting the character a *wish*. Simple wishes have a greater chance of being fulfilled to the character’s expectations; more elaborate wishes are often fulfilled with a physically or psychologically torturous twist. The kyton and the portal vanish after 7 minutes or at the conclusion of negotiations. A character who performs the ritual a second time is offered only passage through the portal.

Any character who accepts the kyton’s *wish* is marked. Within 2d12 hours of the character’s death, an ostiarius returns to claim the body—the character is always treated as being lawful evil for the purposes of an ostiarius’s *plane shift* ability. If the ostiarius is forced to flee or the character is resurrected, an ostiarius appears every subsequent time the character dies, often with more powerful kyton allies, until the kytons claim the character’s body. If the character travels with the kyton to Xovaikain, his end is immediate and unspeakable.

A copy of *Rites* is worth 150,000 gp.

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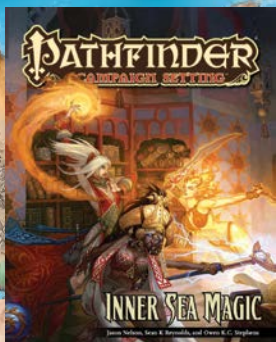
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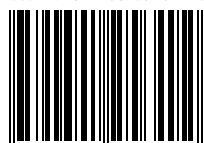
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