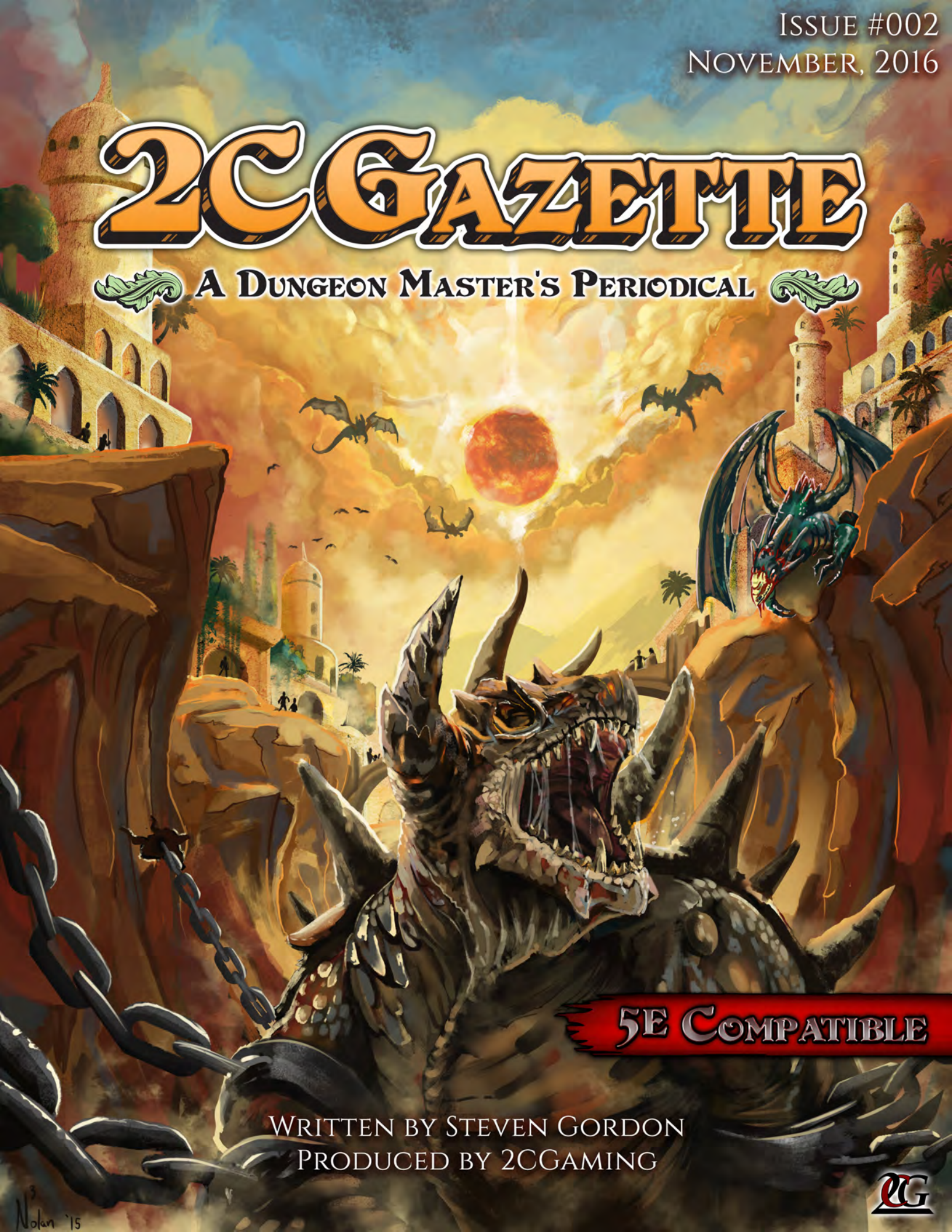
Issue #002
November, 2016

2C Gazette

A Dungeon Master's Periodical



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Written by Steven Gordon
Produced by 2CGaming

The Brass Titan's Lair

The 2CGazette #002 - November, 2016

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The Brass Titan's Lair

Encounter Level 6 (Scales 6 to 12)

SUMMARY

Who likes boss battles against massive creatures that have the heroes scrambling out of the way of heavy stomps and sweeping strikes from a 10-ft. tall axe? If it's you, you're going to like this encounter. Using a custom ruleset for creatures that are very, very big, this encounter puts your players up against a Titanic Golem, the Brass Titan. They'll have to work together and use every resource at their disposal to take down this foe, but a magic item and a hefty reward in treasure await them if they succeed.

ENCOUNTER STATISTICS

Terrain Tags: Dungeon, boss
Favors: Druids, barbarians, area of effect attacks
Foils: Melee rogues, fragile characters
Encounter Weight: Heavy
Creatures: 1 Brass Titan
XP: 7,000 experience points (7,000 XP from creatures)

ENCOUNTER WEIGHT

This encounter has the potential to wipe out a party – even a fully rested one. The Brass Titan can dish out a lot of damage, and its Death Breath can easily knock out weaker characters in a single hit. The encounter is set up to prevent the party from being ambushed while they're all standing together, but if they don't take advantage of the opportunity to spread out, they're going to be putting themselves between a rock and a very hard place.

TITAN'S LAIR

When the players enter the lair, read the following text to set the scene:

> *A towering chamber rises in front of you, the ceiling nearly 75 ft. above you. Its expansive floor spreads out similarly, and the entire scene is dominated by the colossal humanoid figure in the center of the room. Made of brass, iron, and other metals, this golem is 60 ft. in height. One of its hands clutches a hefty axe, with a blade almost 10 ft. long. The other holds a massive shield. You can barely see the hilt of a sword embedded in the construct's shoulder, perhaps from a previous adventurer. The construct hasn't yet reacted to your presence and you might be able to disable it before it does. Strange inscriptions on the walls may give some clues to its function.*

TERRAIN

The lair itself is spacious, sprawling 75 ft. in every direction, including upward. There are multiple scaffolds the players can climb up to get at the higher and harder to reach sections of the Brass Titan, though a fall from one of these could be unpleasant. The scaffolds extend 10 ft. out from each of the walls, and are spaced out 10 ft. apart vertically. Ladders extended between the scaffolds. Beyond that, there are no hazards present in the terrain of the room. The Brass Titan itself is hazard enough.

The inscriptions on the walls provide clues to the Brass Titan's functions. A character can make an Arcana, Investigation, or Insight check against DC 15 to learn a clue about the Brass Titan. The following are all appropriate clues:

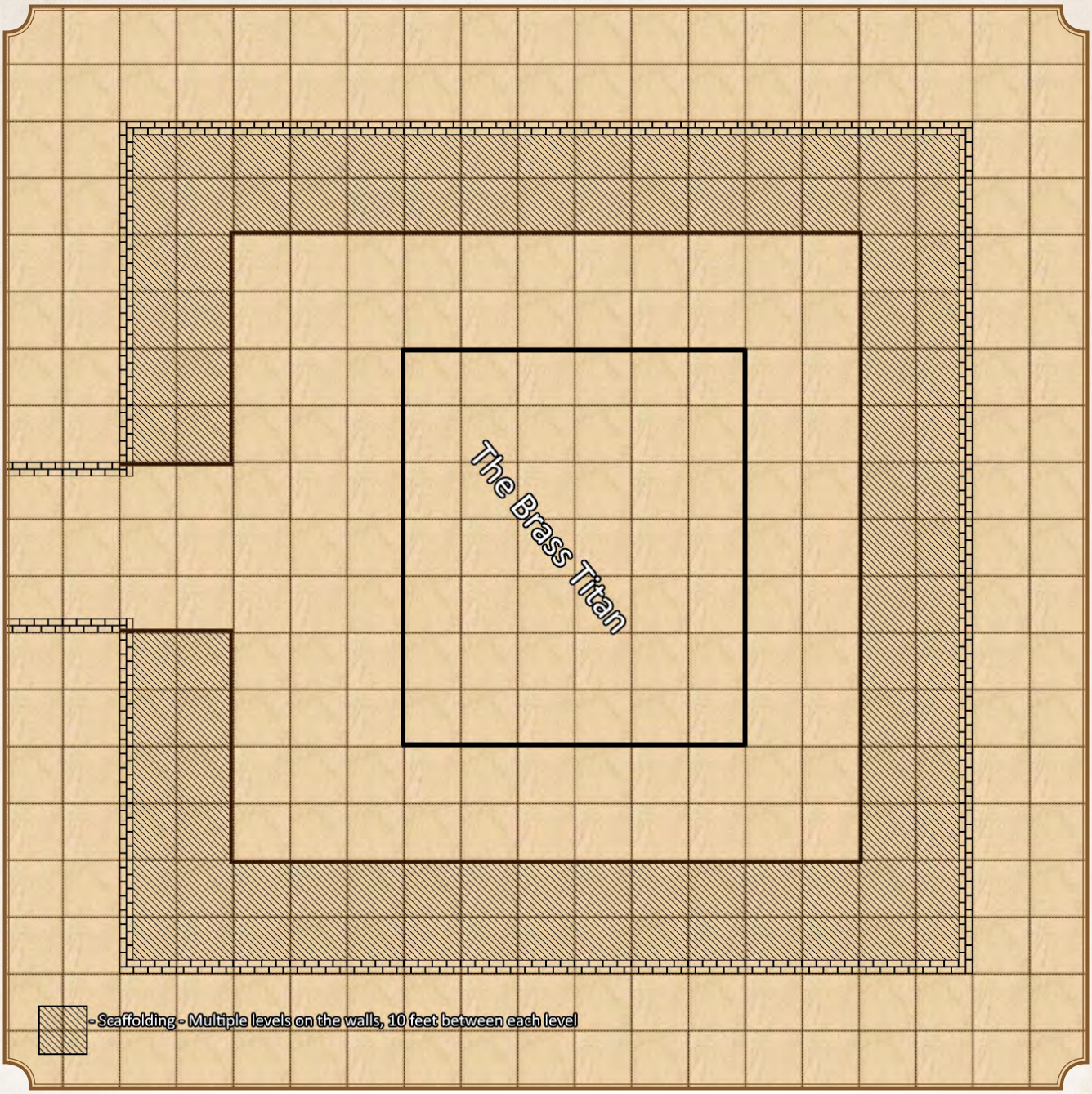
- The Brass Titan is a self-repairing defense golem. Unless you destroy its core, you can't destroy the titan.
- If the Brass Titan falls, its defenses fall with it. A hastily written note adds, "Don't let it fall! Must secure legs."
- The Brass Titan's legs are vulnerable. Scribbled notes read, "Must improve" and "Extra armor? Too heavy!"

After a few moments of investigation, or if the players interact with the Brass Titan, it activates. It's time to roll for initiative!

TACTICS

At level 6, spells like *fly* aren't a big deal because they can only affect a single target. Additionally, the confines of the lair keep even a few flying characters from getting out of reach. The Brass Titan's size and reach lets it hit anything, even creatures on the ceiling. Your players are likely going to spread out and take advantage of the Titan's low speed. This is good; you want them to play smart against this foe. The Brass Titan is not an especially cunning adversary, and is going to move toward the biggest threat. Anything that attacks its core is a big problem for the Titan. It should use its Death Breath every time it's available, hitting as many targets as possible, even if it's only one hero. The arms should spread their attacks out, distributing damage widely. If the Brass Titan focuses its attack on one hero, that hero is going to die. The golem isn't smart enough to do that.

When it comes to using Core Transfer, the golem will prioritize reactivating destroyed sections, trying to keep as many operational as possible. The purpose of this ability is to reward the players for attacking sections other than the core, because it buys them time, and potentially damages the golem's core by redistributing its hit points.



Since each section has only one or two actions, it's a pretty simple encounter to run! Next you'll find the specific rules for running a Titanic creature, and some advice for how to handle unusual situations that may come up.

RUNNING A TITANIC CREATURE

A Titanic creature is big – so big that it doesn't make it sense for it to be treated as a single target. Each Titanic creature has multiple sections, each of which has its own actions, takes its own turns, and has its own hit points. When a section loses all its hit points, the creature loses the abilities and actions of that section. In addition, it may suffer a specific penalty for the loss of that section. Each section has the same AC, resistances, immunities, and saving throw bonuses. Sections are affected by conditions and other effects individually. A Titanic creature's statistics describe how much space the creature takes up, as well as its height. If you're using physical miniatures, you're unlikely to have a massive miniature that's appropriate, so you may have to improvise something. Because a Titanic creature is so big, creatures smaller than it can always occupy the same space, or move through the Titanic creature's space without penalty.

In combat, every section has a fixed initiative result that it acts on, typically starting at 20 and counting down, though every Titanic creature is different. On each section's turn, if that section has a speed, the entire creature can move during that section's turn, following normal rules for movement. In some cases, a creature may have a certain speed on a specific section's turn, such as a dragon with a "wings" section only having a fly speed when its "wings" act. A Titanic creature has only one reaction, but it can choose which of its sections will take that reaction, such as when a nearby creature provokes an opportunity attack by moving out of its reach.

Some sections have sub-sections, such as an "arms" section having a "left arm" and "right arm"; in this case, each sub-section has its own hit point pool and can be targeted separately, but all sub-sections act on their parent section's initiative count. In the case of the Brass Titan, if the "arms" act on initiative count 15, when that turn rolls around, both the left arm and right arm can take an action.

Finally, every Titanic creature has a "core" section. If the "core" section is destroyed, the Titanic creature is slain. Some "core" sections have certain requirements that must be met before that section can be damaged. For other sections, the effects of being reduced to 0 hit points vary from creature to creature. In some cases, an arm may be cut off, or in others, it may simply be broken and unusable. Some creatures can restore destroyed sections to life, and some can't. In general, unless a Titanic creature has an ability that allows it to restore a destroyed section, it can only do so if it finishes a long rest, which restores all destroyed sections to 1 hit point.

Climbing Titanic Creatures

Characters can attempt to climb a Titanic creature as part of their movement by making an Athletics or Acrobatics check (their choice) opposed by the creature's Athletics or Acrobatics check (DM's choice). Success means they can move up to half their speed along the creature, failure means they stay where they are, whether that's on the ground or on the side of the creature. If they take the Dash action they must repeat this check as part of the movement gained from Dashing. If they take damage while climbing a Titanic creature or a forced movement effect would push them while climbing, they must make a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (their choice) against a DC of half the damage taken or 10, whichever is higher. Success means they hold on, remaining where they are. Failure means they fall, dropping to the ground in the Titanic creature's space and taking falling damage as appropriate. Titanic creatures have disadvantage on all attacks against creatures that are currently climbing them.

Targeting, Spells, and Conditions

You should use your best judgment when it comes to targeting a creature's sections. Ranged attacks should be able to target any section if the caster is within range of the creature, but melee attacks and touch spells can only target sections the character could conceivably reach. A fighter with a sword, for example, isn't going to be able to attack the head of a 60-ft. tall golem, he'll be stuck hacking at the legs.

Likewise, use your best judgment when it comes to applying status effects to the Titanic creature. Casting *dominate monster* on a dragon's tail, for example, probably won't work. It would need to target the creature's head or its core to be effective. Likewise, you probably can't knock a golem's arm prone. Otherwise, most

Vaslandr's Blade

A longsword is lodged in the Brass Titan's shoulder, waiting for anyone brave (or foolish) enough to retrieve it. Of course, it can easily be retrieved after the Titan has fallen, but that's not the stuff heroes are made of. Grabbing the sword while the Brass Titan lives requires a character to get within reach of it, then make a successful Athletics check (to yank it out) or Sleight of Hand (to jimmy it loose) check against DC 15. A character gets one try as part of their movement on their turn, and can try again if they spend their action to Use an Object and repeat the check. Success means they have acquired *Vaslandr's Blade*! A character who retrieves the blade from the golem during the fight is automatically attuned to it (assuming they haven't already attuned to three magic items). If they recover it after the golem is defeated, they must attune to the blade during a short rest, as normal.

Vaslandr's Blade

Weapon (longsword), rare (requires attunement) *Vaslandr's Blade* has the finesse property. If you are proficient with shortswords or longswords, you are proficient with *Vaslandr's Blade*. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this weapon. While attuned to this weapon and wielding it, if you would be reduced to 0 hit points, you can use your reaction to let go of the sword and vanish. You are reduced to 1 hit point instead of 0, turn invisible until the end of your next turn, and immediately teleport to a location of your choice within 120 ft. This effect can't be used again until the next dawn.

AMBROSE HH

effects will only affect one section of the creature. For example, you could stun a creature's arms or legs, preventing them from acting, but the rest of the creature would act as normal.

Finally, you may have some difficulty when dealing with effects that push, pull, or teleport creatures around. What happens if one part of a Titanic creature is hit with an effect that transports it to another plane of existence, like *banishment*? You could have that section disappear and return when appropriate, which would fit well for creatures like a golem or other construct, but you might also deem that such spells fail automatically against Titanic creatures. If you rule that they aren't going to work, you should tell your players up front. If one of them says they want to cast *banishment* or use a similar ability, tell them that their character is pretty sure that's not going to work. Likewise, push or pull effects might automatically fail, or move the entire creature a reduced distance. To avoid making dozens of rules to cover every possibility, control of the details is in your hands.

TREASURE

Aside from *Vaslandr's Blade*, the golem itself is full of precious metals and gems used in its components. Stripping down and salvaging the entire golem is no easy task, requiring 2,000 work hours to complete. This means it will take 10 workers 200 hours, or 100 workers 20 hours to fully salvage the Brass Titan. Each work hour that gets put in returns 20 gold pieces of usable salvage, resulting in a total haul of 40,000 gold pieces. It's up to you if your players get to keep all of it, must pay their workers, or have some of that salvage stolen. And if they do get it all, what are they going to do with it? Settle down and build a stronghold? Have the biggest celebration ever? It's a plot hook waiting to happen.

PLOT HOOKS

Who built the Brass Titan? Is it unique, or are there others? Can the players get a bunch of constructs and combine into one mega-construct that they all pilot? Now that you've introduced your players to Titanic creatures, they'll be expecting (or fearing) more of them. Where you go with this concept is up to you, but it's worth considering your plans before you run this encounter.

Another avenue here would be to play up Vaslandr's Blade. Who is the hero (or villain), Vaslandr? Does he (or she) yet live? Perhaps the blade's owner was involved in the creation of the Brass Titan, rather than its destruction. If the players find Vaslandr or clues about him, they can learn more of the Brass Titan and its true purpose.

CHANGING THE FLAVOR

The purpose of the lair setup is threefold: first, to let the players see the Brass Titan and learn a little about it before they roll for initiative and start fighting it. Second, to give them something to climb on to reach the taller sections of the Brass Titan. Third, it makes it difficult for the heroes to harry the golem with ranged weapons while remaining safe from its attacks. If you can come up with another situation that addresses those three concerns, feel free to change the scenery!

Here are a few possibilities to inspire your creativity:

- The Brass Titan is marching down a canyon pass, the heroes can rappel down the sides to attack from above.
- The Titan is at the gates of a city, forcing the heroes to defend from the ramparts or sally forth and attack from behind.
- The Brass Titan is climbing out of a massive pit in the ground, and the heroes must disable it before it reaches the surface.

SCALING BY LEVEL

EL 8 (+1,100 XP) Add 1 Lamia to the encounter. This is the Brass Titan's creator, and it has gone mad. It masquerades as a humanoid wizard, using its spells to assist the Brass Titan. *Suggestion* and *charm person* are both highly effective at disabling party members, and *major image* can be used to good effect by creating false terrain hazards such as pits and spikes on the floor that the heroes will want to avoid, but the Brass Titan can convincingly walk over without ruining the illusion. If the Lamia is threatened, it will use *mirror image* on itself, but will only attack if it can't get away from its aggressors.

EL 10 (+3,300 XP) Add 3 Black Puddings to the encounter. These function as living lubricant for the Brass Titan's systems, and each time one of its sections is reduced to 0 hit points, one of the Black Puddings emerges.

EL 12 (+7,000 XP) Increase the hit points of every section of the Brass Titan by 30. Add another Arms section to the Brass Titan, which acts on Initiative 5, allowing the golem to take additional actions and giving it four arms. This adds a second shield, which increases the Brass Titan's AC to 21. Finally, the Brass Titan gains a Gravity Aura ability which affects all creatures within 150 ft., causing them to be pulled 60 ft. toward the Brass Titan at the end of each of their turns. A Strength saving throw against DC 15 negates this effect.

At level 12, your players are battle-hardened veterans. Adding another section to the golem is like adding another creature to the encounter, and the Gravity Aura circumvents many of the ways higher level characters avoid direct conflict. Your players are still going to have a lot of tricks to throw at this creature, so don't be too surprised if they come up with a clever way to lock it down and take it out.

SCALING BY TACTICS

Easier: Making the Brass Titan easier to provoke will go a long way toward reducing the challenge of this encounter. If it spends more time running after distant foes and less time smashing nearby heroes, your players will take less damage and be in a better place. You can, if needed, have the Brass Titan stop attacking when it's knocked prone, but simply adjusting the way it chooses targets should be sufficient to tone it down. Keep that second tweak in your back pocket if the Titan is still proving too much for your players.

Harder: Focus the attacks from the Brass Titan's arms a bit more. Use the leg's Kick ability to push heroes into corners, making them unable to escape, or forcing them to take an opportunity attack from the Brass Titan as they run by. If the Titan can use its Shield Bash to knock a hero prone, follow up with a pair of axe attacks with advantage for a brutal combo.

Lethal: The Titan should get as close to as many heroes as possible and use Stomp liberally. Prone heroes should be attacked without mercy, and if there are any heroes who roll between a 15 and 10 on initiative, after the arms but before the legs, you can use the legs to move right on top of them, then get in a full set of attacks from the golem's arms before they can react. If the Brass Titan focuses on wounded heroes, there will soon be a party of dead adventurers at its feet.

Brass Titan
Titanic Construct, Unaligned

Armor Class 19 (natural armor, shield)
Hit Points Special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)

Speed Special
Damage Immunities poison, psychic
Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common
Challenge Special (7,000 XP)

TRAITS

Titanic Monster: The golem has multiple sections. Each section has a fixed initiative result, taking its turn on that initiative count (and losing all ties). Each section has its own hit point totals, its own actions, and its own penalties to the golem if that section is destroyed. Each section shares the golem's AC, saving throws, resistances, immunities, and ability check bonuses. If a section has a speed listed, the entire golem can move that far during that section's turn.

Immutable Form: The golem is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance: The golem has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons: The golem's weapon attacks are magical.

Brass Titan Arms

Hit Points 66 (shield arm) / 66 (axe arm) (4d20 + 24 each)
Initiative 15
Speed 0 ft. (see Crawl)

TRAITS

Crawl: If the golem is prone, it can move 15 ft. during the arm's turn.

Sub-sections: The golem's arms can take one action for each hit point pool that is above 0. Some actions are tagged with a specific sub-section, and if that sub-section is reduced to 0 hit points, the golem can no longer take those actions.

Penalties: When the Brass Titan's Shield Arm is first destroyed, the golem's AC is reduced by 2. This penalty remains even if the shield arm is reactivated. While either arm is destroyed, it cannot Crawl.

ACTIONS

Shield Bash (shield arm): *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, each 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw against DC 14 or be knocked prone.

Multiattack (axe arm): The golem makes two Axe Chop attacks.

Axe Chop (axe arm): *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, each 15 ft., one target. *Hit*: 24 (3d12 + 5) slashing damage.

Brass Titan Core

Hit Points 165 (10d20 + 60)
Initiative 20
Speed 20 ft.

TRAITS

Transfer Energy: At the start of the Brass Titan Core's turn, it can transfer up to 40 of its hit points to other areas of the golem. If this increases a section's hit points above 0, that section reactivates.

Penalties: When the core is reduced to 0 hit points, the golem is destroyed.

ACTIONS

Death Breath (Recharge 5-6): The golem exhales lethal gas in a 30-ft. cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed save. A successful save halves the damage.

Brass Titan Legs

Hit Points 49 (3d20 + 18)
Initiative 10
Speed 20 ft.

TRAITS

Penalties: While the Brass Titan Legs are reduced to 0 hit points, the golem is knocked prone, its speed becomes 0, and it loses its resistance to all damage, though it remains immune to poison and psychic damage. Each time the Brass Titan Legs are reduced to 0 hit points, they cannot regain hit points (such as from the Brass Titan Core's Transfer Energy ability) until the beginning of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Stomp: All creatures within 10 ft. of the golem must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw against DC 14 or take 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. On a successful save the target takes half damage and is not knocked prone.

Kick: *Melee Weapon Attack*: +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit*: 15 (3d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage, and the target is pushed 30 ft. away from the golem.