



ENsider Presents:

Diaspora

Part Three

A 5E-Compatible Adventure for 13th- to 14th-Level Characters



Act Three: To Fall Once More

IN THIS ACT THE PARTY AND KASVARINA ENTER A HEAVILY defended city in order to unlock the memories that will reveal all the conspiracy's plots.

One Does Not Simply Walk into Methia

Exploration. Montage.

The party plans and executes their infiltration of the center of Danor.

With their next destination revealed, the PCs must begin their plans to reach the ghost city of Methia, located deep in enemy territory, and they will need to properly plan their method of insertion and extraction from the Danoran-held city.

A full description of Methia is provided in Appendix Four, Methia Gazeteer. The GM should reference this for more information on the city.

What Do We Know?

The constables can make various checks to learn about Methia, using skills to ascertain information about the city.

- **Folk Tales – DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation):** After the Great Malice, a curse fell over the city. The weather's always overcast but it never rains. Nothing lives there, not even bugs

or weeds. All that remains is bare stone, most of it nearly pristine, like a ghost city.

- **Design – DC 16 Intelligence:** Methia has two districts – the western Holy Methia and the eastern *Urbem Postulatoris* – separated by the Église River.

The western portion, Holy Methia, was surrounded on all sides by a wall of dense white marble. The master craftsmanship of its buildings has kept them from decaying much these past five centuries. Three gates allowed ingress (*Ostium Judicii*, *Ostium Pietatem*, and *Ostium Splendoris* – the gates of judgment, piety, and splendor). The eastern portion, *Urbem Postulatoris* – Postulants' City – spread out haphazardly with no wall, and today most of its buildings are ruined.

In the center of the river, a white tower known as the Lance of Triegenes rises from an island. It is said that before the magic failed, the tower was over a thousand feet tall.

- **History – DC 22 Intelligence (History or Religion):** Now referred to as the Ghost City, Methia was abandoned following the Great Malice during the Second Victory. The dying eladrin goddess placed a curse that transformed many of the survivors into tieflings and created an immense dead magic zone within the nation. In the times following the Great Malice, the city has been left relatively undisturbed, originally superstition keeping away explorers, and now a Danoran military presence guarding the city's borders.

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OPEN GAME CONTENT
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- **Location – DC 16 Wisdom (Survival):** Situated in the center of Danor, Methia is several days' journey from the capital city of Cherage. The city is divided in half; the eastern half is mostly a ruined landscape of broken buildings known as the *Urbem Postulatoris* (Postulant's City), while the western half of the city is walled and retains the splendor it held ages ago. The Église River divides the city, acting as a natural division between the two sections of the city and allowing naval elements to reach Methia. Of course, if the party tried to sail a Risuri ship up the river, the news would spread like wildfire.
- **Dead Magic Zone – DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana):** Since the Great Malice, Danor has become an area of deadened magic, where only spellcasters channeling through powerful foci can hope to use their abilities. Within 3 miles of the center of Methia the deadening is absolute, and this dead magic zone prevents any magical effects short of those created by artifacts. Creatures are unable to cast spells within this zone, and magical items are rendered inert while within the zone. Creatures with magical bodies such as elementals or undead can endure here, but they quickly grow weak.
- **Military Activity – DC 20 Intelligence:** Methia is an increasingly busy staging ground for military activity: Danoran troops are using the city to train and prepare for what they see as an inevitable conflict with Risur. The Danorans goal is to practice city fighting and improve soldier awareness.

Preparation.

Knowing in advance that all their magical items and abilities will be suppressed, the PCs have some options and allies they ought to investigate.

- **Radicals in the City:** Eschatologist PCs have heard rumblings of members of their philosophy held up within Methia. A sect of radicals reside within the city, operating from an undisclosed building. Led by some unknown figure, it is said most of these radicals are devas, those touched by the death of Srasama, who come to the ghost city to prevent themselves reincarnating when they die. While not immediately pertinent, this information does inform the party that there is another group operating within Methia.
- **Coffee, Keys, and Spies:** If the PCs possess a Prestige of 4 or more with the Clergy, they could contact Morgan Cippiano and acquire a detailed map of the city from the Clergy's vaults. Nomads active in the lands around the city – actually a sect of priests devoted these past five centuries to watching Methia for signs of corruption – also report an increased defensive perimeter around the Lance of Triegenes.

Groups having a Prestige of 5 or higher with the Clergy are gifted a unique key, hand-delivered by Cippiano (who will teleport to them for the occasion). The key operates the unique mechanisms that open Methia's *Ostium Pietatem*, a side entrance to the city abandoned by the Danorans. Cippiano can also provide custom-fitted Danoran military uniforms, in case the party might want to try sneaking in.

In return for the information, Cippiano simply asks that the PCs be sure to harm the godless Danorans, then return to share a coffee with him.

Twists in Gaming.

We're all used to dramatic twists in literature, movies, and television. We took particular inspiration from *Watchmen* when designing the campaign, in that we intend to let the PCs rush to thwart the Obscurati's plot during ZEITGEIST #9: *The Last Starry Sky*, only to discover that the villains have already won. Bad guys are always getting beaten at the last moment, so we thought it would be memorable to see what happens if their plot actually succeeds.

During our playtest, though, one player took that development rather badly. This player felt that the adventure gave the party the impression they could stop the villains while at the same time providing no actual chance of success. While the player acknowledged that the failure would set the stage for a heroic come-back in the third act of the campaign, the player also felt deceived as to what the party's options actually were.

Here in the published version of the ZEITGEIST campaign, we are sticking with our original plan, but we do feel it important to remind GMs to consider their players' perspectives. We recognize that many players use gaming as a chance to relieve stress and feel powerful. It can be challenging for a GM to hand such players setbacks without ruining their fun altogether.

Our default assumption is that in Methia the party will learn that the Ob plans to assassinate the king of Risur, then perform a ritual in Flint, led by Governor Roland Stanfield, to alter the nature of reality. Then in ZEITGEIST #9: *The Last Starry Sky* they'll have a chance to stop the assassination and interrupt the ritual—and in so doing ensure the freedom of Risur from the conspiracy's control. However, afterward the heroes learn that the Ob successfully completed the main ritual on Axis Island.

If you think your players might balk at suffering a defeat because of things that happen off-screen, consider adding a mention of the main ritual on Axis Island to the Ritual and Assassination Plan memory-event (page 9). Han Jierre explains that the ritual will be fiercely guarded, listing the unassailable island defenses and confidently explaining that any constables attacking Axis Island will achieve only their own certain defeat. After experiencing and processing that memory-event, Kasvarina will be able to explain that clearly the party's only chance to avoid *complete* disaster will be to save Risur by thwarting the assassination and stopping Roland Stanfield from completing his ritual that will activate the *wayfarer's lighthouse* in Flint, so that at least they accomplish *something*. And if Kasvarina is unable to deliver that information for some reason, make sure one of the PCs realizes it anyway.

Of course, PCs almost always rush headlong toward "certain defeat" (because it's almost never *that* certain). ZEITGEIST #10: *Godmind* will include details of the Axis Island defenses of which Han Jierre is so proud. The heroes need to understand that if they decide to confront the Ob on Axis Island, there's nothing they can do to stop the colossus, and they'll have sealed their homeland's fate. Have Kasvarina or another friendly NPC explain this if it doesn't dawn on the players. Ultimately, if the heroes abandon Risur to attack Axis Island, then in the third act of the campaign, Risur will have become a loyal ally to the Obscurati, and the heroes will be on the run.



Dead Magic Methia.

Methia is the center of a dead magic zone that has a radius of 3 miles. Neither spellcasting nor magic items operate within the limits of the city and a small area beyond. The only exception to this rule is any item designated as an artifact—artifacts are unaffected by the dead magic zone.

Prior to entering the city, consider asking your players to create a secondary version of their characters, removing any magical equipment bonuses and any abilities or powers gained from wondrous items or other magical sources. Players should retain their primary character sheets, of course, especially for the final encounters of this adventure.

The dead magic zone has the same effect as an *antimagic field* spell, with the following exceptions. Creatures that are innately magical—celestials, constructs, dragons, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead—lose one Hit Die for every 24 consecutive hours they remain within the dead magic zone. This loss does not reduce the creatures' maximum hit points, but the lost Hit Dice cannot be recovered while the creature is within the dead magic area. This effect affects even creatures that are somehow immune to Hit Die loss.

In addition, even normal creatures feel ill at ease and somehow mundane within the city limits. The subtle magic that allows a person in this world to heroically endure battle wounds or perform superhuman feats is absent here. Within the Methian dead magic zone, any d20 roll with a final result higher than 30 is reduced to 30. No matter what the bonus or roll, the dead magic zone enforces the limits of physics.

(Alternately, the party might reach out to El Extraño, the Beran kobold spymaster. He can only provide information, though, not keys, clothes, or coffee.)

Getting There.

There are several options the PCs have at their disposal to reach Methia. Work with your players to determine the best approach, remembering that the journey to Methia should be interesting, but is not a critical part of the adventure. If they've found the archives in Ushanti (page 20), they might know to stop off at the ruins of Pala along the way.

The following parts of this adventure assume the PCs manage to sneak into the city somehow. You should work with the PCs to create the most appropriate insertion method (from pure stealth to outright invasion of Danor).

Presented are several options the PCs may use to reach the abandoned city.

- **Docker Smuggling:** Docker PCs can arrange to have the party smuggled into the city onboard one of the few supply ships that makes their way down the Église River to the ghost city. From there, the PCs can sneak out onto the docks of Holy Methia under the cover of darkness, as ship workers distract the Danoran military inspection teams.

While this method requires the PCs have a docker in their party, it is one of the best methods to sneak into Methia. This method bypasses external Danoran defenses, and unless the PCs particularly mess up their movement from the

docks into the city, they may well enter Methia without the Danorans ever catching wind of their arrival.

- **The Heat:** Daring PCs may consider using their own ship as a means of reaching the city. Doing so, requires the PCs to take the treacherous path up the Église River. Danoran warships patrol the mouth of the river, equivalent to the crews in the *Porteur de Mort* naval combat. Morgan Cippiano's Danoran military uniforms would come in especially handy if the PCs use this option (see above under "Preparation"). Once the PCs sneak or bluff their way past the Danoran warships, however, the river is well enough traveled that the sight of a new ship isn't a big deal, as long as it has a steam engine and flies a Danoran flag. Sailing is passé in Danor—no serious Danoran boat operator deploys sails anymore except in an emergency—and the sight of a non-Danoran flag would cause no end of trouble.
- **Magical Insertion:** RHC infiltration specialist Lauryn Cyneburg is aware of complex "tides" in the magic-deadened area that covers Danor, but she hasn't done extensive research. A DC 28 Intelligence (Arcana) check can pinpoint a spot in the wilderness about 50 miles from Methia where a brief "gap" will allow the party to teleport in. Finding a spot to teleport out requires a similar check, though the "gap" would last only a few minutes and would probably require days of travel to reach, with any delay ruining the timing.

A skyseer PC can grant himself or another PC advantage on this check; one check can be attempted each day.

- **Dreaming:** Another option would be to enlist the aid of King Aodhan or the Unseen Court to enter the Dreaming, which has the same geography as the real world, but none of those pesky Danoran patrols. Unfortunately, the fey in the Dreaming analogue of Danor have mostly gone creepy and mad due to the disruption in the magic that supports them, and every forest and field is filled with thorns and briars. Appropriate creatures would include bogeymen, cold riders, forlarren, gremlins, lurkers in light, nuckelavee, and witchlights.
- **Break in the Door:** Another alternative is for the PCs to arrange a military operation to conceal their insertion into Danor. Depending on the evidence accrued by the PCs over the past several adventures, they may be able to implicate Danor in the Obscurati's plots beyond a shadow of a doubt. King Aodhan would be hesitant to launch a unilateral assault, but a few stirring speeches to philosopher councils in Drakr and the Bruse in Ber could ensure the assistance of other nations.

Should Aodhan be convinced to launch a strike, the PCs are granted command of several naval vessels, along with a detachment of two hundred Risuri marines, fifty dwarven riflemen, and Beran bear cavalry, and ordered to strike at the Église River. Simultaneously, Drakr will transport an army into Danor using the Avery Coast Railroad, and Ber will strike the Yerasol Archipelago near Axis Island; these moves will be intended to divert Danoran forces, including troops stationed in Methia.



Methian Wargames

Exploration. Montage.

A Danoran army guards the eerie city of Methia, and the party must figure out how to reach the Lance of Triegenes.

The most prominent landmark of Methia—the broken tower known as the Lance of Triegenes—is visible over the horizon from three miles away, at the edge of the dead magic zone. Upon seeing it, Kasvarina feels drawn to it, or more particularly to a spot high above it, the top two-thirds having collapsed over the past five centuries. She can sense other memories floating at spots lower on the tower, but she knows something momentous happened high up there.

Then the party feels the ground tremble. It repeats every twenty seconds as the colossus Borne takes slow, titanic steps toward the city. At the edge of the Methian dead magic zone, fragments of the colossus become visible now and again, as if it were being glimpsed through thick undergrowth. Over the next half hour Borne makes its way to the eastern shore of the Église River, growing more and more visible. It stops at the edge of the water, now easily visible but still slightly insubstantial.

Here the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate fray and exit into the real world; the colossus stands at the very edge of the veil, but it won't yet step across. It feels uneasy without magic around it, and so it will stay put until it has a reason to move. It moans intermittently, trying to say "Mother" as its mind struggles to regain its memories.

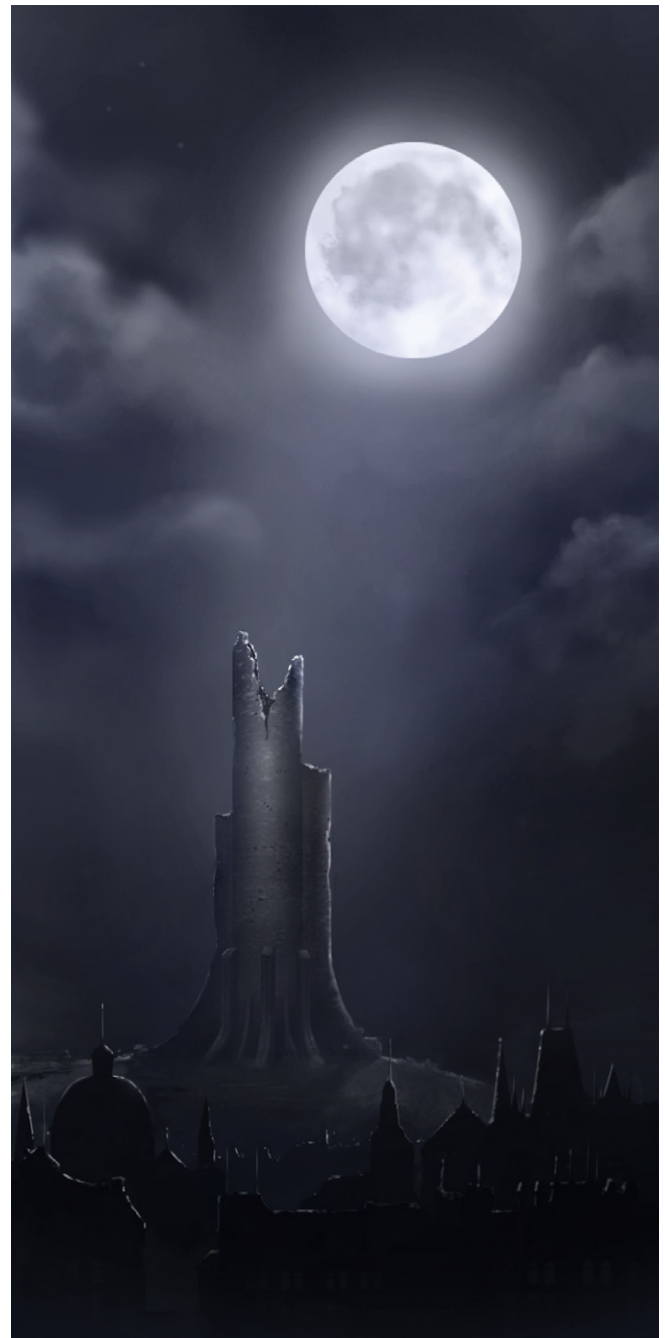
When Kasvarina reaches the Lance and ascends to three hundred feet (see "Ascent of Screaming Souls," below), the *lost arc of Reida* will activate, bringing with it enough magic to slowly reassemble the tower above her and the PCs as they keep climbing. The sight of Kasvarina with her mind restored is enough to prompt Borne to try to reach her. The party will have to decide whether they want to wait for the colossus to arrive or to keep moving.

First, though, the party has to reach the Lance. All they need do is sneak past an army, cross onto an island, and sneak through a ring of soldiers who have orders to kill anyone who tries to enter the tower.

Military Presence.

Individual encounters with the Danoran military are subject to your discretion, with the exception of the encampment at the base of the Lance of Triegenes, which is described in full later on. See "Sample Units," below, for some standard Danoran deployments you can use in the event of an encounter.

Thousands of Danoran soldiers and military materiel (artillery, horses, and huge amounts of supplies) reside in the *Urbem Postulatoris*, on the east side of the river. Under orders from the Sovereign, they leave Holy Methia, west of the river, undisturbed. The Danorans send troops in only to guard the *Ostium Iudicii*, patrol the walls, and occasionally meet with the devas in the Hall of Victories. They do, however, have a major presence at the city docks, with two nimble river warships and a few hundred marines present to keep out potential intruders. Additionally, a large garrison protects the island in the center of the Église River, guarding the Lance of Triegenes.



If the party goes into the eastern *Urbem Postulatoris*, they're so ludicrously outnumbered that any fight lasting longer than a few rounds will get them surrounded and brought down with massed rifle fire. However, sneaking through is fairly easy since the sheer number of troops makes outsiders hard to spot as long as everyone can pass as a human or tiefling. Clever parties might take control of the artillery in the eastern city to fire on the defenders on the island.

Holy Methia is a bit of a challenge to enter, but safe to hide in thereafter. If the party draws the military's attention, though, the city will swarm with increasing numbers of Danoran troops. To represent this, track the Danoran military's levels of readiness using the guidelines below.



All Is Well (Green).

Triggers: PCs remain undetected. No key Danoran military personnel are missing. No expectation of insertion or attack.

Description: This is the initial state of the Danoran military, assuming they have no warning of the PCs' arrival and nothing attracts their attention. During this state, the Danorans stay away from the interior of Holy Methia, maintaining only a small deployment of troops at the gates, walls, and docks of the city.

The PCs should experience no encounters with Danoran forces within the city. They still need to worry about being spotted as they enter the city, or if they go to the *Urbem Postulatoris*. Travelling to any of these occupied districts will immediately trigger a CR 11 encounter with the Danoran military.

On Guard (Yellow).

Triggers: PCs detected, but not identified. Minor Danoran military units missing (but no bodies). Forewarning of potential insertion by enemy agents.

Description: The Danorans are slow to act once outsiders are detected. After all, folks wander into the city all the time, and most of them leave without causing trouble. Unless the PCs are identified as Risuri agents, the Danorans simply believe them to be petty criminals, thrill seekers, or members of some obscure cult. Troops will not be deployed within the city, but there is an obvious increase in personnel stationed around the docks and the gates.

As with "All is Well", such encounters only occur in heavily-defended areas—docks, gates, or the *Urbem Postulatoris*—but they are CR 13.

Alert (Orange).

Triggers: PCs engaged in combat, detected, but not identified. Danoran military units missing, or bodies discovered alongside inconclusive evidence. Warning of imminent insertion by enemy agents.

Description: Aware that there's something definitely afoot within Holy Methia, the Danorans dispatch troops within the city proper. Encounters at heavily-defended areas remain CR 13, but within a minute an equivalent number of soldiers will arrive as reinforcements, effectively creating a CR 15 encounter. Additionally, for every 30 minutes the PCs travel in the open streets, there is a 20% chance a CR 11 Danoran military patrol passes within line of sight of the party, possibly triggering an encounter.

Under Attack (Red).

Triggers: PCs engaged in combat, detected, and identified as enemy agents. Danoran military units known to have been attacked



and slain with obvious evidence. Detailed information leaked to military command.

Description: The Danorans dispatch military units into the city to flush them out. Encounters at defended areas start at CR 16 and jump to CR 18 if reinforcements get a minute to arrive. For every 30 minutes of open travel, there is a 60% chance the party crosses paths with a CR 13 unit.

At War (Deep Red).

Triggers: Formal declaration of war on Danor. News of attacks across the nation. Large numbers of Danoran military slain in combat.

Description: The Risuri have struck Danor and the PCs are the closest outlet for the military's vengeance. Likely the Danorans believe the PCs responsible for burning down an orphanage or commandeering a boat full of orphans to make the trip to the city, leaving the orphans to drown. The PCs are such evil people...

Troops travel with horns, whistles, or bells, sweeping the city building to building looking for enemy agents. Encounters at defended areas stay at CR 16 (CR 18 with reinforcements). Every 10 minutes of open travel presents an 80% chance of crossing paths with a CR 11 patrol that will call for a CR 16 patrol as reinforcements.

Sample Units.

You can find stats for these forces in Appendix Two: Recurring NPCs. For larger units, we include a small number of relatively harmless Danoran fusiliers and scouts, mostly for the satisfaction PCs can have in killing them quickly. If you use a CR 16 or CR 18 unit to represent an armed camp, the fusiliers and scouts can represent sentries, which the party would need to kill quietly in order to sneak past the rest of the unit.

CR 11 PATROL

- 4 Danoran "lone wolf" scouts
- 10 Danoran fusiliers

CR 13 PATROL

- 2 *Porteur de Mort* Marines
- 4 Danoran "lone wolf" scouts
- 1 Danoran rifle troop

CR 16 UNIT

- 2 *Porteur de Mort* marines
- 4 Danoran "lone wolf" scouts
- 6 Danoran fusiliers
- 4 Danoran rifle troops
- 1 Danoran artillery troop

CR 18 UNIT

- 4 *Porteur de Mort* marines
- 2 *Porteur de Mort* snipers
- 4 Danoran "lone wolf" scouts
- 6 Danoran fusiliers
- 6 Danoran rifle troops
- 2 Danoran artillery troops



D(anor)-Day

Action. Tactical.

The Danoran military is prepared to repel any assault on the Lance of Triegenes.

To reach Kasvarina's memories atop the Lance of Triegenes, the PCs must make their way to the island in the center of the Église River. The island is roughly a quarter-mile across and rises fifty feet out of the water at its northern end, sloping to meet the water at the southern edge. There, an old alabaster dock—resembling a cathedral more than a pier—acts as a barracks for the island's defenders, while advanced military materiel defends the rise leading to the Lance of Triegenes.

Complicating matters is the presence of Master Chief Faradio and a detachment of Danoran soldiers stationed at the rise leading to the Spire. Loyal to the Sovereign, Faradio is also a low-ranking member of the Obscurati, entrusted with crafting mechanical inventions of Tinker Oddcog.

The cathedral dock at the southern end of the Lance island is always watched by three Danoran fusiliers and one Danoran scout, who have access to a pair of heavy cannons on a turret. They fire warning shots at any unauthorized vessel that comes within 500 feet, and if a vessel continues to approach they sound the alarm and open fire. Within one minute every soldier on the island is awake, and one minute later they've taken up defensive positions.

DOCK GUARDS

- 3 Danoran fusiliers
- 1 Danoran "lone wolf" scout

HILLSIDE GUARDS

- 16 Danoran fusiliers
- 2 *Porteur de Mort* snipers

LANCE ENTRANCE GUARDS

- 2 Danoran "lone wolf" scouts
- Master Chief Faradio
- *Le Grand Patron*, tank

Terrain.

If the party catches the forces here by surprise, the cathedral that serves as docks and barracks has rooms with bunks filled with sleeping soldiers, while the ground level is stocked with red barrels—handily stenciled with a flame icon—that are filled with the diesel fuel used by Master Chief Faradio's tank *Le Grand Patron*. If that attack does fire damage, or if the cracked barrel subsequently takes fire damage, it explodes. Each creature within 15 feet of an exploding red barrel takes 28 (8d6) fire damage (DC 14 Dexterity save for half).

After the cathedral/docks/barracks is a 200-ft. open plain that slopes up to the Danoran barricades. These barricades—most made of debris from the tower—provide three-quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) against attacks from downslope, but only half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) against attacks from uphill.

Several rows of barricades take up 200 ft. of the slope. A trampled dirt road runs through the center of the barricades, offering what seems to be an open path. Beyond the barricades lies a wide grassy field some 300 feet across with a few scattered trees, and beyond that stands the Lance. The tank *Le Grand Patron* is normally parked there.

Scattered along the approach are several red fuel barrels. If dealt more than 5 damage, the barrels crack. The defenders understand the dangers of these barrels, though, and keep their distance. As the PCs approach, ranks of grenadiers further back will target the barrels as the party passes, hoping to catch them in the explosion.

Tactics.

Most of Faradaio's troops are simple fusiliers, and would not normally pose much of a threat outside the dead magic zone. But with the party's AC likely capped somewhere around 20 without the aid of magic, even these soldiers can hurt them. The main danger, though, comes in the form of Faradio... and his tank.

At the first sign of trouble, the Master Chief and the two scouts with him enter *Le Grand Patron* and seal the hatch. The whole process of Faradio starting his tank takes 1 minute, after which the lizardfolk drives. The two scouts handle reloading the cannon and manning the anti-infantry guns.

Once the PCs are spotted, Faradio stays at range, shelling them with his main cannon. If the PCs manage to approach him, the scouts let loose with the anti-infantry guns, while Faradio tries to run over the party. Stubbornly defiant, the lizardman disregards PCs who try to scale the tank, thinking that without magic, they will be unable to force their way into the interior. If they *do* get inside, he surrenders once reduced below 20 hit points.

Parties that manage to sneak their way up the islet can find Faradio resting in a makeshift tent by his tank. The engineer knows he has little to fight for with his tank unprimed, and he surrenders to the PCs if intimidated.

Aftermath.

When *Le Grand Patron* fires its cannon, the Danoran military in the *Urbem Postulatoris* mobilizes. Depending on how the PCs deal with the tank, you may wish to time the reinforcements arrival differently. If the PCs manage to salvage the tank and have a PC capable of piloting it—Technologists, Gunsmiths, or PCs who make a related DC 27 check will suffice—then the Danorans arrive shortly after the combat wraps up.

The first wave of reinforcements marches off the boat and advances up against the PCs, who can enjoy the satisfaction of unleashing tank weapons upon their enemies. After seeing the first reinforcements slaughtered, the rest of the Danoran forces hold back until they can land *en masse*, giving the party time to rush up the tower.

Such an encounter should only be run if the PCs can handle the additional challenge and would enjoy the opportunity to turn the tank against a large formation of Danoran troops. For more peaceful or stealthy parties, instead just have the Danorans approach cautiously by default.



Le Grand Patron

Huge construct (vehicle), neutral

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 168 (16d12+64)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	12 (+1)	18 (+4)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 5

Languages —

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Down the Hatch. A sealed hatch (AC 18, 40 hit points) allows entry into the interior of *Le Grand Patron* (a 5-foot by 10-foot area). When sealed from the inside, the hatch can only be opened with a DC 26 Dexterity (thieves' tools) check or DC 21 Strength check.

Creatures inside the tank have three-quarters cover (+5 to AC and Dexterity saving throws) which can be increased to total cover by sliding shut view ports, which makes them unable to use any weapons.

Immutable Form. *Le Grand Patron* is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Magic Resistance. *Le Grand Patron* has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Magic Weapons. *Le Grand Patron's* weapon attacks are magical.

Scaling a Dragon. Attempting to get on top of the tank requires a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. The trio of 5-foot squares on the center of the tank can hold a single Medium-sized creature each, though each creature on one of these squares must make a DC 17 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to stay on if the tank moves during the round. A creature who fails this check by 5 or more is subjected to the tank's powerful metal treads (which deal 6d6+13 bludgeoning damage). Creatures on top of *Le Grand Patron* cannot be targeted by ranged attacks made by the tank.

Some Control Required. *Le Grand Patron* requires a pilot in order to operate. While being piloted, its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores are replaced by the pilot's.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. *Le Grand Patron* attacks twice with its anti-infantry guns and once with Jierre's Reckoning cannon.

Anti-Infantry Guns. These guns can be fired at any square within 60 feet. Each gun requires a person to operate. The guns each have a 30 magazines holding 20 shots. Reloading a new magazine requires 2 actions. Any creature within a 10-foot radius of where a shot hits must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 10 (3d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Jierre's Reckoning Cannon (Recharge 5-6). The primary turret can be fired at any square within 300 feet. Reloading takes 2 actions. Any creature within a 30-foot radius of where a shot hits must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. A target takes 28 (8d6) bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Master Chief Faradio

Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (14d8+42)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Con +7, Wis +4, Cha +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +6, Nature +7, Perception +8, Survival +8; alchemist's supplies +4, tinkerer's tools +4

Senses passive Perception 18

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Primordial

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Hold Breath. Chief Faradio can hold his breath for 15 minutes.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Chief Faradio attacks five times: once with his bite and four times with his claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8+2) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (2d6+2) slashing damage.

Ascent of Screaming Souls

Exploration. Real-Time.

The *lost arc of Reida* reassembles the toppled tower as the party ascends, but interacts dangerously with the local dead magic zone, manifesting ghosts of those the party has killed.

The *lost arc of Reida's* slow thrumming grows in intensity the closer it gets to the Lance of Triegenes. Once the PCs reach the tower, the artifact flickers with magical light, and a small area around it—about a 10-foot radius—is restored to normal, exempt from the dead magic zone. If the party lingers in one place too long the radius starts to shrink, but it slowly expands the higher the party goes up the tower. The radius of restored magic is roughly equal to the party's elevation up the tower.

The interior of the Lance of Triegenes is mostly impassable, the upper levels having collapsed inward centuries ago, destroying most of the lower levels. A single staircase spirals up the exterior of the wall, with no hand-rails or barriers. Every thirty feet a doorway leads inward, but most of the floors have all but collapsed. In places the stairs have shattered, but as the party nears them the magic from the *lost arc* reassembles them. Likewise, as they reach the top of the ruined tower, 500 feet above the ground, the artifact reassembles the building above them level by level so they can keep climbing.

The history-manifesting power of the *lost arc* goes a bit haywire here in the dead magic zone, and as the party ascends they'll be confronted both with Kasvarina's memory-events, and the ghosts of various NPCs they have slain throughout the campaign so far.

Encounters on the Climb.

All of Kasvarina's memory-events will occur, and the party will definitely encounter the ghost of Nilasa Hume early in their climb,



Spirit or Memory	Elevation	Description
Nilasa Hume	50 ft.	Thanks party for finding her killer, but warns them that the ghosts of those they killed want vengeance.
Duchess Ethelyn of Shale	150 ft.	Screams and flies at the party, dealing 2d6 necrotic damage (DC 13 Wisdom save for half).
Eberardo & Valando	250 ft.	Roar and breathe fire, dealing 2d6 fire damage (DC 13 Dexterity save for half).
Cillian Creed	350 ft.	Screams and erupts in a flood of witchoil, dealing 2d6 necrotic damage (DC 13 Constitution save for half).
Kaja Stewart	450 ft.	Weeps and shoots herself in the head, causing 15 piercing damage (DC 14 Constitution save negates).
Memory-Event: Ritual and Assassination Plan	500 ft.	The Ob leaders make final preparations for their ritual.
Memory-Event: New-Born Minion	500 ft.	Kasvarina recalls meeting Borne before he was a colossus.
Elanor Yanette	550 ft.	Wails as chains wrap around her. One PC is paralyzed for 10 minutes (DC 13 Wisdom save negates).
Olivert Boone	650 ft.	Screams in agony as he eviscerates himself. One PC is compelled to attack the rest of the party (DC 14 Wisdom save negates, with a new save each round).
Memory-Event: Puppet Mastery	700 ft.	The Ob leaders discuss industrializing Flint.
Ottavia Sacredote	750 ft.	Falls to her knees and screams curses at the gods, dealing 2d6 thunder damage (DC 14 Strength save for half).
Bree	850 ft.	Cries out as her limbs fall from her body. One PC is cursed to be unable to hold things in one hand (DC 14 Wisdom save negates).
Memory-Event: Skyfall	900 ft.	The Ob leaders discuss a failed attempt to alter the planes.
Luc Jierre	950 ft.	His stutters turn to shrieks as he glows from within and then explodes, dealing 2d6 lightning damage (DC 14 Dexterity save for half).
Lorcan Kell	1,050 ft.	Screams with rage and charges one PC with a machete. The target makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw for each eye and for their tongue or else those body parts are gouged away, dealing 20 piercing damage.
Memory-Event: A Second Creation	1,100 ft.	Nicodemus proposes his world-altering plot.
Tinker Oddcog	1,150 ft.	Cackles maniacally and peels his flesh away, shouting "I'm not metal! I'm not!" One PC is affected by the confusion spell (DC 14 Wisdom save negates).
Lya Jierre	1,250 ft.	She raises a wine glass in toast, drinks it, then stares at the party with mute judgment as they move past, but never attacks.
Memory-Event: Epidemic	1,300 ft.	The new nation of Danor struggles without magic.
Memory-Event: Founded in Secrecy	1,500 ft.	Nicodemus, Kasvarina, and Jierre found the conspiracy.
Memory-Event: The Great Malice	1,500 ft.	Kasvarina witnesses one of the defining events in her world's history.

but thereafter only the ghosts of those whose deaths the party were personally responsible for will appear and accost them. Each spirit waits on the staircase, blocking the party's path, but will only interact with them for a moment before vanishing.

Some spirits will cause maladies or damage. If the party is grouped together, the spirit harms them all unless otherwise noted. If someone is scouting ahead, only they will be affected. The spirits are immune to damage, but can be thwarted by turning undead or similar magical effects. For these purposes, the spirits all have identical save bonuses (Constitution +2, Dexterity +4, and Wisdom +6). The GM should feel free to swap in the ghosts of other NPCs based on events earlier in the campaign.

Memory-Event: Ritual and Assassination Plan.

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 500 ft.

Date: 55 Spring, 500 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

The memory plays out around the party, involving Kasvarina, Sovereign Han Jierre of Danor, and Nicodemus, who is wearing the body of a Danoran soldier and smoking nervously. The three figures are clearly visible, but the world around the party flickers with shadows as the *lost arc* struggles to manifest the past in the dead magic zone. If the party gets too active, they run the risk of tumbling off the side of the stairs in the dark.

In this memory-event, the three leaders mark down the list of all their projects. Nicodemus names a project, and one of them explains the status. (Refer to the sidebar "Twists in Gaming," on page 3, for some extra information you might need to include here for your players' sake.)

- **Golden Cell.** Han says his niece Lya has been briefed to take control of this cell, since her predecessor died on Axis Island. Caius Bergeron thinks he's closing in on the last ziggurat. All that remains is deciding which planes to connect to, and passing that information to the tier four members throughout the continent.



- **Convocation.** Nicodemus explains that he plans to put the form of the new world up to a vote to the leaders of the various cells. Kasvarina smiles and asks if he's finally abandoning his idealistic "everyone will get along nicely" plan. Nicodemus stamps out his cigarette and says he's never been hesitant to kill those who have outlived their usefulness.
- **Colossus Cell.** Kasvarina says the colossus is effectively complete, but one of its designers—Alexander Grappa—has been training the colossus to doubt what they're saying. Nicodemus asks Kasvarina to go look into that and make sure they won't have a loyalty problem with the colossus. Kasvarina agrees, but says they trained Borne well; he feels destined to help the Obscurati save the world.
- **Lantern Cell.** Han Jierre says this project is the only real bottleneck, because they need to get Luc's lantern working properly, then scale it up to lighthouse size to focus the ritual.
- **Risuri Assassination.** Kasvarina explains that due to its unique rites of rulership, as long as the king of Risur resists, the whole nation will resist. They'll need at least to abduct and brainwash the king, and possibly assassinate him, but the timing has to be right before they perform the ritual. If they move too soon, a new leader could be *more* hostile and actually oppose them. Nicodemus says, "*That's why we have Stanfield. After all the work he's done for us, let him be king. Han, invade the damned city if you have to, but there can be no interference in Flint.*"

When this memory ends, the scene dissolves and reforms into the next memory event. The three leaders are the same, but dressed differently (Nic has a new body) to show it's a different time.

Memory-Event: New-Borne Minion.

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 500 ft.

Date: 32 Summer, 493 AOV

Stability Value: 3.

Nicodemus stands at the edge of the stairs, smoking contemplatively. Kasvarina seems upbeat, and jokes with Nicodemus that he's lucky to have a new body each visit, since with the way he smokes he could never climb all these stairs. Then she explains her recent visit to the Cauldron Hill facility in Flint to see the excavations. Progress has been swift since Stanfield got the rusted gates built into his canal.

Han Jierre chides her for so casually mentioning the name of another conspirator, but Nicodemus waves off the concern. That's the reason they come here, he says. No one can hear them, and no divination could ever discover what happened here. He points out that he hasn't seen Kasvarina look so happy in...ever.

She pauses, looking almost embarrassed, then says that she spoke with the golems that the Mindmaker has been training. They called the Mindmaker *father*, and called her—she pauses, laughs—*mother*.

Borne's Awakening

Social. Real-Time.

Borne meets its mother.

When the previous memory-event ends, and Kasvarina and the PCs regain their awareness of their surroundings, there's a crackle in the air as the colossus Borne lurches forward, stepping fully out of the Dreaming and into the real world. In a voice as loud as a storm it shouts, "Mother!"

The colossus strides through the river and heads for the tower, which takes it ten minutes. It's only 300 feet tall, so it begins to climb in order to reach its mother.

The characters basically have two choices here. If they keep climbing, they can reach the next two memory-events (and 1,000 feet in altitude) before Borne catches up, but it will be ill-disposed toward the characters because it thinks they're trying to keep its mother away from it. On the other hand, if the party stops climbing and waits for it to arrive, Borne's attitude toward the characters will be more neutral.

If the PCs decide to attack Borne for some strange reason they'll not even scratch it, but they will infuriate it. Borne will refrain from retaliating, out of fear for Kasvarina, until it's close enough to target the PCs one by one.

Assuming the characters don't attack, Borne simply continues to climb until it overtakes them. As it looms over them, it addresses Kasvarina, begging to know what has happened, because it doesn't remember. Kasvarina can quickly relate the things she remembers about the time since Borne's creation. She invites the PCs to fill in details as appropriate.

If the PCs tread carefully here, they might convince Borne to carry the party up the tower, which lets them avoid the other hostile spirit encounters, but not the memory-events. If they ask it to turn and fight the Danorans, Borne requires an explanation for why it should harm these people. Despite its amnesia, Borne still has the intellect of an adult, and an education deeply based in morals and philosophy, courtesy of its "father," Alexander Grappa.

For now, the colossus is likely no threat to the party; Kasvarina can keep Borne from attacking them unless they attack it. If Borne is not persuaded to carry Kasvarina and the PCs, it follows them as they ascend. Refer to the table in "Ascent of Screaming Souls," above. Once the restored magic radius produced by the *lost arc* is large enough, Nicodemus will arrive and try to turn the colossus against the party (see "Enter the Main Villain," below).

Memory-Event: Puppet Mastery.

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 700 ft.

Date: 50 Autumn, 457 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

As before, this memory is shrouded in flickering shadows. The previous Sovereign of Danor gives a report on the status of the Third Yerasol War to Kasvarina and Nicodemus (as always, he's in a new body and smoking). The Sovereign claims that his nation's ships just aren't strong enough to deal with Risuri magic. This worries Kasvarina, since they need Risur to adopt industry if they're going to be able to build the colossus.

Nicodemus points out that Risur is already building some



factories, and that his friends in the Risuri government will raise a stink to guarantee the industry stays out of Slate. That makes Flint the most logical choice. The old witch mountain, he says, will keep the fey from meddling and make it easier to construct the colossus in the Bleak Gate.

He apologizes to the Sovereign, and says they got greedy with this war and should have waited. But it's still an excuse to pour a huge amount of money into a steam-powered warship. It just needs to sail one time and sink a few Risuri vessels.

Kasvarina proposes they hire Risuri mercenaries to steal the ship, and let them get away with it. The Sovereign blanches, not a fan of conspiring against his own country, but Nicodemus just tells him to think about the future.

Memory-Event: Skyfall

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 900 ft.

Date: 77 Winter, 195 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

Centuries earlier, Kasvarina explains to Nicodemus and another Sovereign (who borrows a cigarette) what has gone wrong. They'd found the Ancient ziggurat of Avilona on an island in the sky, floating over the domain of some dragon tyrant. Kasvarina and a few researchers flew up to it, unearthed a golden seal, and found a portal to the plane of air.

After extensive divinations they attempted to replace the seal with another one and steer the portal to a different plane. That succeeded for only a few moments before some powerful destructive energy blasted outward. Kasvarina and the others fled the island, and nearly died when suddenly their flight magic failed.

Two problems are obvious. First, they can't get back to the floating island to try again, not unless Danor's engineers can use their new steam furnaces to power a mechanical bird. And second, clearly their understanding of the Ancient ritual was flawed. Kasvarina thinks they're lucky the damage wasn't worse, and won't risk any more tests at the ziggurat until they know more. Nicodemus throws his cigarette away, then curses at Kasvarina for failing.

Memory-Event: A Second Creation

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 1,100 ft.

Date: 32 Summer, 113 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

The triad meets again, again with a different sovereign. Nicodemus embraces Kasvarina and says he wishes he "could have been there," that maybe he could have helped save her daughter. She waits for a moment, then pulls away and reminds him that she long ago forsook grief. If there is a mission, she will have a clear head so she can focus on the future. The dead are in the past.

Nicodemus nods, then launches into a bit of a firebrand speech about his studies into skyseer magic, the nature of the planes, and how it is possible to alter reality by altering what planes share the heavens with the world. This is nothing the party hasn't already heard.

Skyseer Vision of the Gyre.

When the party is within sight of the top of the tower, the clouds part and reveal the moon. A skyseer PC more senses than sees the presence of Nem, focused through the lens of the moon. Beyond the plane of ruin he sees another realm, a great constellation of gears pulling in worlds and grinding them to dust between their stellar teeth.

The skyseer's consciousness flies through constellation, beyond which floats a whirlpool of debris, slowly circling toward a black pit. On this gyre, handfuls of scattered refugees look skyward and cry out for salvation, and in the gaps between worlds, just beneath the surface of the heavens' dark tapestry, a white serpent slithers toward the end of the world.

This vision references events that may occur in *ZEITGEIST #12: The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

Memory-Event: Epidemic

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 1,300 ft. **Date:** 5 Summer, 40 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

The first sovereign of Danor and the founder of his house, the tiffing Jierre argues with Nicodemus and Kasvarina about whether they're reckless to try to build a nation in this dead magic zone. Smallpox is spreading throughout the land, which used to be a minor concern thanks to the Clergy's miracles. But now it's killing thousands of people. Jierre's people are fleeing in droves to the east, hoping to reach Clergy lands that are free from the disease.

Nicodemus tells Kasvarina to dispatch her husband—Bhalu, is it?—to Drakr, along with a few other eladrin men, with orders to target any Clergy priests performing miracles of healing. Do it quietly, though. All the people in Danor should hear is that there are no miracles to be found in Drakr. In the meanwhile, he'll see if he can dredge up some monsters from the Malice Lands to make the crossing harder.

Jierre scoffs, realizing that Nicodemus only sees the problem of fleeing people undermining the nation he wants, rather than the problem of innocents dying. They're still yelling at each other when the memory-event fades out.

The First Council

Social. Real-Time.

The party bears witness to the founding of the Obscurati.

As the PCs and Kasvarina, with Borne in tow, near the pinnacle of the rebuilt Lance of Trigenes, the great stairway ends at a doorway leading into a room just beneath the uppermost floor. Inside the room, it's nearly pitch black, but a gigantic amethyst is set into the ceiling, and a slightly smaller (but still enormous) yellow topaz is set into the floor. Any light that enters the room will illuminate these two gems brilliantly. The walls are lined with empty cages, except where an elegant staircase rises up the inside wall. Kasvarina climbs the staircase to the tower's top floor as Borne peeks in from outside.



Flecks of ice cling to the top floor as the moaning wind cuts through it. Statues of saints guard four exit arches which lead onto four separate balconies. Each balcony extends twenty feet out above the landscape of Methia, with only a thin golden railing along the edges. At the end of each is set a platinum loop roughly the size of a normal doorway. Kasvarina walks to the one facing east as the *lost arc* manifests a memory.

Memory-Event: Founded in Secrecy.

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 1,500 ft. **Date:** 14 Spring, 19 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

Kasvarina steps carefully across the east balcony, which is riven with cracks. Both of the other visible balconies have already collapsed and fallen away, and the tower's walls look unstable. She runs her hand along the platinum loop at the end of her balcony, then turns as she hears Nicodemus and Jierre (younger now) walking up the stairs into the central chamber. The two men are out of breath from the ridiculous climb.

She asks who the man is, and Nicodemus introduces Jierre, the priest who helped them the last time they were here. Jierre sheepishly explains that he was human back then. Ever since he's struggled to rally the people who are left, to drive out the Clergy remnants, and to make this new nation one founded on secularism. Kasvarina responds by drawing her sword and placing it to Jierre's chest.

She says they should work together to slay all the Clergy they can. Nicodemus defuses the situation by quoting Vekesh about patience being important for revenge. He explains that the three of them are uniquely positioned to not just *kill* Clergy followers, but *defeat* the whole faith, to make a truly better future.

Producing three rings from his coat, he hands one to Jierre, one to Kasvarina. Each is carved from stone taken from the base of the tower. He says that he knows what he's planning will make them enemies to half the world, so he found a way to give physical form to the antimagic of Methia. If they wear these rings, none will be able to divine them, and their plans can remain secret. But he also knows from experience that power corrupts, and so he does not want to lead, but to form a council.

This is in a way a sacrament that will bond them together. They will be secret to the world, but have no secrets from each other. If one of them recites, "At Methia, in the Lance of Trigenes, we were founded in secrecy," he or she will be able to know the location of any other member of the triad, and see what they're doing. He warns them not to let anyone else hear those words, because they'd let others be able to use divinations on them normally.

With that basis of absolute trust among the three of them, he asks them to listen to his plan and, if they agree, to join him in taking long, slow revenge against the Clergy and everyone else who would use power to oppress those weaker than them.

The manifested version of Nicodemus skips, flickers with shadows, and another memory-event manifests directly on top of the current one. The memory glows with light, then fades out, then starts again, each time manifesting in a wider and wider area.

Bypassing Obscurati Rites.

Normally whenever a character attempts to use magic to divine an Obscurati officer's location, thoughts, status, or the like, that character must make a Spellcraft check (DC 34). If he fails, the magic reports something deceptive, usually in a way to lessen suspicions.

This memory-event informs the party that if they recite "At Methia, in the Lance of Trigenes, we were founded in secrecy," they can ignore that protection. Normal saving throws and other magical defenses still apply.

If a PC actually has a ring belonging to one of the Tier One leaders of the conspiracy, then reciting those words allows them to *scry* on any of the leaders, bypassing all defenses and allowing no saving throws. This functions once per day, and does not show a real-time view of the person, but rather a sort of synopsis of what they've been up to.

Kasvarina's ring was lost somewhere in the Cauldron Hill facility, but the party might go digging for it later. Sovereign Han Jierre always wears his, and Nicodemus uses it as a focus for his spellcasting. If they defeat him here, they can take the ring off Andrei von Recklinghausen.

Final Memory

Social. Real-Time.

The party has only one shot to witness Kasvarina's memory of the Great Malice.

A wave bursts out in all directions, and for the next few moments the Danoran military panics as the entire city of Methia is restored to how it was five centuries ago. This memory-event covers the city, and it is critical to Kasvarina's mental stability, but it is also incredibly risky for her. As it begins to take shape, she sags and manages to croak out a warning that the PCs need to make sure nothing disturbs this memory. She points explicitly to the colossus Borne if it's present and yells for him not to interfere.

If the party doesn't intervene at all, the Clergy's punishment that manifests here might render her too injured to be of use in the final encounter. The PCs can use healing spells on her without getting in the way of the people in the past, but if they interrupt the memory more drastically, Kasvarina's original personality as the conspiracy's mastermind could reassert itself.

Chances are the PCs don't want that.

To complicate things, Nicodemus has teleported to a spot on the floor below, ready to interrupt at the worst possible time in order to push Kasvarina over the edge. If the party can keep him back, Kasvarina has a good chance of staying on their side.

Memory-Event: The Great Malice.

Location: Methia, Lance of Trigenes, 1,500 ft. **Date:** 91 Winter, 1 B.O.V.

Stability Value: 5.

Kasvarina and the manifestation of Nicodemus stand at the top of the stairs, looking at the swath of floor made of amethyst and topaz. Plate-armored guards hold them tightly, and another half dozen such guards stand watch by the doors to the balconies. Rich gold lights glow magically behind each of the saint statues. Odd,



tinny sounds of distant battle come from the balcony to the east, where a portal looks down at the fields of war outside Alais Primos. Two priests beside it manually adjust sliding, chevron-shaped lock-pieces to keep the portal open.

In the center of the chamber, an elder priest is directing four young acolytes to assemble the ritual for the *sacrament of apotheosis*. Entrails and blood of a lion, an eagle, a whale, and a dragon are arranged in a ring across the otherwise pristine floor, and two golden urns sits in the center, one empty, the other filled with a mixture of the animals' blood. Other priests stand in the room's corners, nervously discussing battle plans.

One young paladin stands by the ritual, shirtless and proud, openly holding a sword that glows at the crosspiece with the holy symbol of the Clergy god of war.

Creating a God.

The high priest—bedecked in more gold and enchanted finery than the richest king—turns and claps his hands twice at the sight of Nic and Kasvarina. Nicodemus curtly tells Kasvarina, “This is Grand Hierarch Silvestri.”

Silvestri thanks them for coming to witness the Clergy's imminent Second Victory. Silvestri explains that the ritual has been tested and found to work. He adds that he was tempted to have the two of them executed, but after thinking about it he decided to let them live as he agreed so they can scuttle across the world as pariahs and traitors.

He snaps a finger, and the guards produce chains and manacle Nicodemus and Kasvarina to the wall.

With religious bombast, Silvestri addresses the gathered priests. “With this ritual, any warrior of our faith could become a vessel for a god. With holy sword in hand and blessed devotion guiding him, he could kill a thousand of the heathenous, dirt-encrusted creatures.”

Silvestri puts his hands on the shoulders of the shirtless paladin. “This man here, he could drive back the beasts from our doorstep. But that, I'm sure, is just what these two hoped for.”

He nods, and the guards begin kicking Nicodemus and Kasvarina, metal boots drawing blood and dropping the pair to the floor. This continues, round by round as Silvestri talks, dealing 5 damage per round (if the party stands idly by, Kasvarina ends up taking 75 damage. Healing her will not disrupt the memory-event.)

“No,” Silvestri rails, “one does not blindly accept the gift of a fiend. Once, our faith's founder, Triegenes the fisherman-made-divine, used this rite to defeat the Demonocracy. Now the evil within those monsters have found new flesh in the eladrin. Killing a thousand with a holy blade will not purge the world of their apostasy. We must cut out their heart.”

He raises a hand, and the beating stops.

“Within the hour, our foes' race will be no more. Bring her.”

Two priests head to the balcony to the south, and they begin adjusting the sliding chevrons around the edge of the platinum portal. It must be some failsafe mechanism to lock the portals down and prevent intruders from coming through. After a few seconds they have the lock open, and on the far side of the portal, a pair of guards hold a battered and bloody young woman.

They step onto the tower and the portal slowly closes behind

them as they drag their prisoner and throw her to the floor beside Kasvarina, who gasps and struggles against her chains to reach out. She cries out her younger daughter's name, Dala. Dala coughs blood, looks up, and reaches out to her mother, but the shirtless paladin grabs her by her leg and drags her into the circle of entrails.

Nicodemus and Kasvarina yell for them to stop, but in the span of less than a minute, a Clergy wizard dominates Dala, and the acolytes write the name of Srasama on her flesh with the animal blood. Guards hold down Kasvarina, slit open her palm, and bleed her to fill the second golden urn (this deals 10 damage.) They then feed the blood to the blank-eyed Dala.

“With this sacrament,” Silvestri says, “we bless Dala, daughter of Kasvarina and faithful of the goddess Srasama. Bring forth the form of our enemy so that we might drag her down and sever the bloodline of all who worship beneath her infernal face.”

One of the acolytes hesitates, looks at Kasvarina with pity, but then looks at everyone surrounding him and casts his eyes down.

At the grand hierarch's direction, Dala recites the incantation of the ritual, and then her eyes begin to glow. A flaming six-armed nimbus appears behind her, the aspect of Srasama taking form. Amidst Kasvarina's screams, four guards grab Dala and carry her toward the portal to Alais Primos. She's already growing, and is nearly ten feet tall when they manage to hurl her through the portal. She falls to the earth and her titanic form creates a crater.

Killing a God.

The guards then unloop the chains holding Nicodemus and Kasvarina's from the wall and pull the two unwilling witnesses to the middle of the balcony. Silvestri stands behind them, forcing them to watch as halfway across the world Dala transforms into the towering goddess, armed with six flaming swords. All throughout, two priests hold the portal open by manipulating the chevron locks.

Silvestri tells another priest to lower the shield over the city to let her in, and then reminds him to have the warriors say her name as they attack. He feigns forgetfulness and leans down beside Kasvarina, asking what her daughter's name was again. She pulls at her chains and tries to bite him. He responds by kicking her, stomping her chest, and holding her to the ground (this deals 4 damage.)

“You thought you could defeat the Clergy. Hubris! Your punishment is to watch as your race suffers the fate you would have laid upon my people.”

Nicodemus tries to bargain and plead, seemingly to no avail. But then the acolyte from before steps in behind Silvestri and stabs him with a dagger. The weapon simply skips off his flesh, which is as tough as armor, but it's enough to set off a desperate battle on the balcony between the guards and the acolyte. Apparently others in the chamber had been having doubts as well, and the two factions set upon each other. The two priests holding the portal open hesitate, but don't join the fray.

Through the portal the avatar of Srasama can be seen leading the amazed and cheering eladrin through the city walls, only to then be struck by arrows and spells and the swords of summoned angels. It takes but a minute for her to sag, fall to the ground, and be set upon by hundreds of humans. She screams, and thousands of other women scream with her.



Silvestri is about to crush the traitorous acolyte's head with a mace when the screams distract him and the guards holding Kasvarina and Nicodemus. Pushing aside the guards, the two rise and body-check the grand hierarch over the balcony railing. He starts to plummet, but catches Kasvarina's chain. She swings bodily out over the void, arms pulled down by the dangling Silvestri. A guard grabs her legs and tries to pull her back, yelling for help. The priests at the portal finally move, stepping away from their duty to help save Kasvarina and Silvestri. Nicodemus sees his chance, and he leaps through.

Just then, an inferno bursts forth from Srasama's wounds, and though it stops at the edge of the portal, when it abates there is no sign of Nicodemus. A moment later the portal's locks slide it shut.

Enter the Main Villain

Social. Real-Time.

Nicodemus's arrival forces Kasvarina to decide her loyalties, and he tries to recruit the colossus to fight the party.

In the midst of this confusion, the real Nicodemus makes his appearance, wearing the body of Andrei von Recklinghausen. Defended with a bevy of spells, his goal is to disrupt the memory, give Kasvarina one last chance to join him, and ensure the party does not escape. He carries a custom *dimensional lockstone* that prevents planar travel around him, and wears a custom scroll bandolier to let him draw and open scrolls as a free action.

His plan is to clamber up the outer wall of the tower to the balcony where Kasvarina is standing, grab her, and pull her into the central chamber with him. This disrupts the memory-event, which will collapse within a few rounds unless the party can get Kasvarina back where she needs to be.

Nicodemus the Gnostic. Nicodemus's history and motivations are detailed in the *Campaign Guide*. He seldom reveals his true ghostly form, preferring to wear the bodies of others. Currently he resides in the body of Andrei von Recklinghausen, and he's thinking of staying.



Andrei von Recklinghausen. Andrei was "born" two years ago, reanimated from several stitched-together corpses. Possessed of supernatural healing and the ability to drain life with a touch, Andrei at first loathed his existence. He eventually attracted the attention of the Obscurati, who captured him and forced him to serve as the body for the leader of the conspiracy, Nicodemus the Gnostic.

Andrei believes his will might be strong enough to overcome the mastermind for a while, but he hasn't seen the right opportunity to make a break for freedom.



If the party is on guard for any interruptions, they spot Nicodemus before he grabs Kasvarina; otherwise, they can easily goad him into a fight while Kasvarina makes her way to one of the balconies to fulfill the memory. Nicodemus will still attempt to get Borne on his side (see "Loyalties," below).

The Canon Ending.

In the original events, Kasvarina was pulled back up along with Silvestri, who then staggered back into the central chamber. He ordered the portal reopened so he can see what happened, but suddenly every human in the chamber (well, every human in the memory-event) doubled over at the pain of horns tearing through their skulls and tails growing from their backs. The Great Malice takes effect, transforming the leaders of the Clergy into the first of this world's tieflings.

The lights in the tower flickered and died, the stones began to creak, and the central gems cracked. Kasvarina took a sword from a helpless guard and crudely decapitated Silvestri. Then she stumbled to the portal and shifted the chevrons to reopen it. Looking through the flickering and barely functional portal, all she could see on the far side were ashes. She jumped through anyway, and this is where the memory-event ends.

To fulfill this memory, Kasvarina must try to step through any of the tower's four portals. The portal must be unlocked (see Chevron Locks in the next encounter), but she's unlikely to actually go anywhere because of Nicodemus's *dimensional lockstone*. If she doesn't reach a portal within a few minutes, the memory collapses. Nicodemus tries to stop her by maintaining his grab on her, keeping a firm grip on her arm. He says, "Keep your distance or I kill her. Borne, I know you're a thinker and a talker, so don't act rashly and get your mother killed, now. Not until you know what she's done."

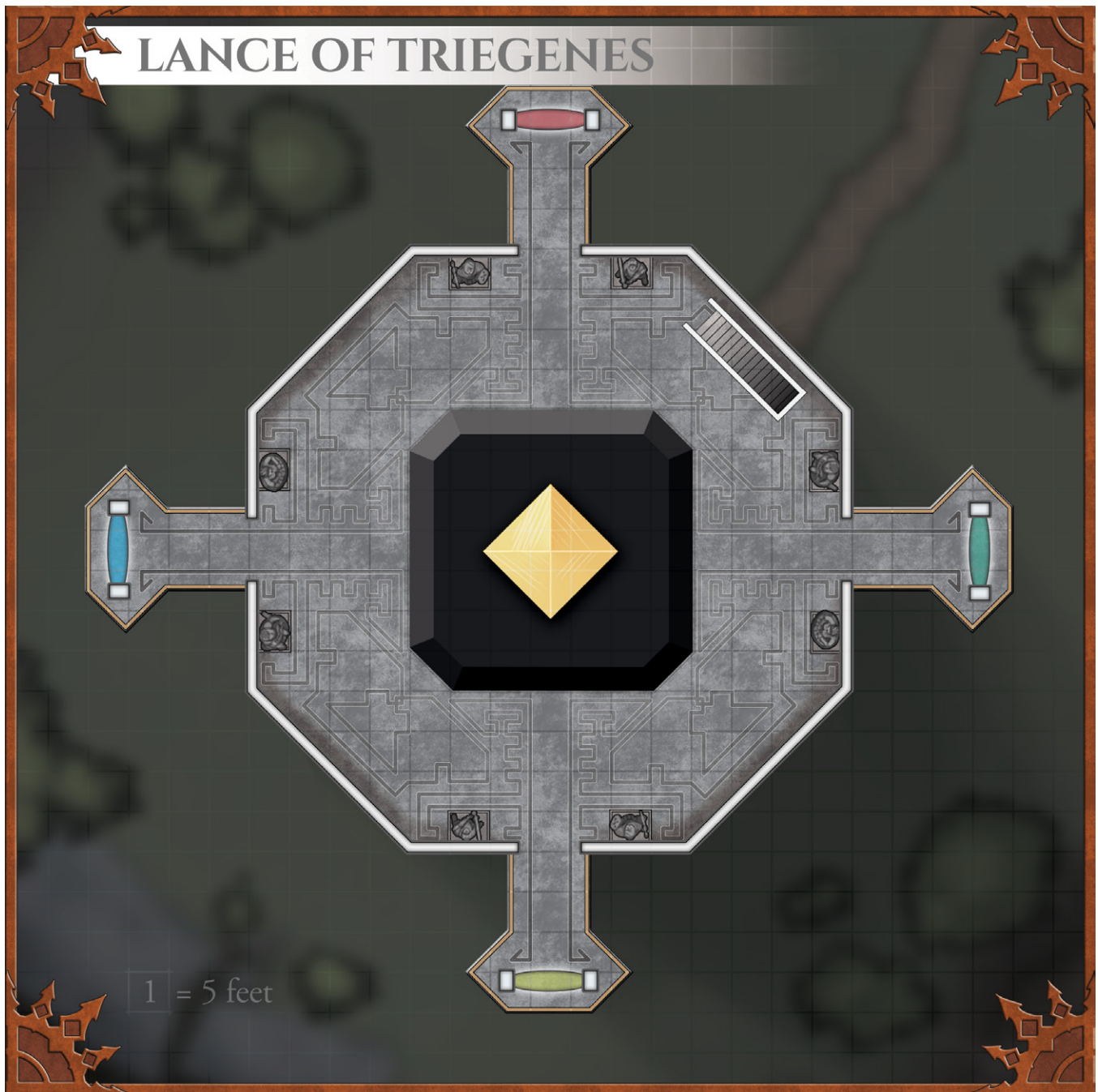
Loyalties.

If Nicodemus has managed to pull off a hostage situation and the party gives him a chance to talk, he tells the party they've tried to make him and Kasvarina enemies, and now they might even force him to kill her. Borne, looming over the scene, growls.

Nicodemus tells Borne that while his body might not look familiar, he is in fact Nicodemus. "Borne, you were raised for one purpose: to enact the grand design and reshape the world. You see, while Alexander Grappa was your father and Kasvarina is your mother, then I, I am the god who gave them leave to create their child. But your father turned from that plan and betrayed your mother! He stole her memories and twisted her into a coward! And that was not enough; he then stole your memories and left you to wander the world.

"Now I return to give you a chance to fulfill your destiny. And I am merciful, yes? For I am giving your mother a chance to return to us! But..." and at this, Nicodemus looks at Kasvarina with a wilting gaze, "But if she refuses, if she callously discards five! Centuries! Of work! When we are so close to success... why then, she is an enemy. And for our enemies, there can be no escape."

For Nicodemus, on the other hand, escape is all but certain. The body he wears is disposable, and the tower they stand in will crumble as soon as the power of the *lost arc* fades. If the PCs force him to fight to death, then he promises he will kill all those who



tried to turn his oldest friend against him. (The GM should try to draw some obvious parallels in speech patterns between Silvestri and Nicodemus here.)

Kasvarina.

As for Kasvarina, her response depends on her mental stability. If her score is at 0 or below, she says that she has the responsibility to fix what she's broken, and she readily joins Nicodemus in attacking the party.

If her score is between 1 and 9, she'll waffle until the memory-event ends, which might adjust her demeanor. In the meanwhile, she switches between allied and hostile round by round.

At 10 or higher, she refuses to aid Nicodemus and will try to

fight him, though he might be able to take her out with a single action at the start of combat if the party didn't mitigate the beating she took in the memory-event.

At 20 or higher, she feigns being loyal to Nicodemus long enough for him to let her go, and then she ambushes him.

Colossus.

The *lost arc* simultaneously restores Kasvarina's memories and the colossus's. Unfortunately, the colossus's memories were specifically designed to ensure his loyalty to the Obscurati. Once Nicodemus finishes his plea, Borne is wholly loyal and will fight to protect his master. No matter what the party says, the colossus is too indoctrinated to change his course now.



Interruption.

If the party interrupts, Nicodemus breaks away and keeps his distance, flying out of the tower and out of sight if possible, but he keeps talking to Borne. If forced to fight, he'll shout to Borne that *they*, Nicodemus's enemies, are afraid to let Borne hear the truth. That's enough to bring Borne into the fight, unless the party can do some very impressive counter-philosophizing. Even that will only stay the colossus's hand for a few rounds, not turn its loyalty away from the Obscurati.

Countdown to Collapse

Action. Tactical.

The Lance of Triegenes will collapse soon, and Nicodemus means to see the party dead.

The party should have the information they came for—Stanfield is a member of the conspiracy, the Ob are plotting to assassinate King Aodhan using *wayfarer's lanterns*, and Flint—indeed, all of Risur—is in peril. So at this point, surrounded by the Danoran army, with the colossus trying to kill them, they could simply run. All it would take is opening the locked portal gates and hopping through one.

Of course, players have a habit of wanting to beat the villains. And Nicodemus knows about the portals and doesn't want the party escaping. So this encounter has several elements.

Chevron Locks.

Each of the four portals has a mechanical chevron lock that circles the outside platinum loop, working something like an egg timer. The chevron can hold five positions, and moving it from one to the next requires a move action to grab and turn it, or perhaps some magic at least as strong as *mage hand*. A given portal can shift no more than two positions each round, no matter how many people try to move it. At initiative count 0 each round, each portal shifts to one lower position unless someone is present and holding onto the chevron.

- **Position One.** 9-o'clock. The portal is wholly deactivated.
- **Position Two.** 12-o'clock. The portal is starting to activate, and the destination can be seen faintly.
- **Position Three.** 3-o'clock. The destination is now fully visible, but you cannot go through it yet.
- **Position Four.** 6-o'clock. The portal is active.
- **Position Five.** Just shy of 9-o'clock. The portal is active.

The actual destination of the portals don't matter, because when the party goes through them they'll end up in the Dreaming in Risur regardless. But for those who are curious, east is Alais Primos, south is Sid Minos, west is Cherge, and north is Trekhom.

Dimensional Lock.

Nicodemus has activated and carries a *dimensional lockstone*, which stops teleportation and planar travel within a 40-foot radius. This is enough that he can stop the party from exiting via any one portal, possibly two if he orients himself just right, but he cannot cover all of them. If he sees the party get a portal open to position two or three, he'll maneuver to keep them from escaping. He might also use spells like *wall of force* to stymie their movements.

Colossus in Melee.

Borne clings to the tower with one hand at a level just below the balconies, with his feet digging into the stone some two hundred and fifty feet further down. Keep track of what side of the tower his torso and head is on, because the tower blocks his line of sight. As a move action he can adjust 45 degrees in either direction. As a swift action he can change which arm he's using to hold onto the tower, but not if he used *crushing fist* or *swipe* this turn.

He uses three main attack methods, and can perform one each round.

- **Spirit Cascade.** The colossus glares, and spirits from its witchoil-fueled engine fly out, striking a 10-foot-radius burst within 1,200 feet. Creatures in the area take 35 (10d6) necrotic damage and make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw or gain a level of exhaustion.
- **Crushing Fist.** The colossus chooses a 25-foot square area he can see and brings his fist down. It is obvious to creatures in the area that the colossus is swinging for them. At the start of his next turn, the fist hits, dealing 100 damage (DC 21 Dexterity save for half) to everything in the target area.
- **Swipe.** The colossus tries to knock people off their footing. He chooses a 15-foot wide, 30-foot long swath and swings his hand through from one direction to the other. At the start of his next turn, creatures in the area are knocked to the far end of the swath and take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage (DC 21 Strength saving throw negates). He can also use this ability to try to brush off creatures that have climbed onto him.

The colossus is practically indestructible. PCs might move onto it in order to get out of the way of its attacks, which should entail a DC 17 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check for each movement. But damaging it is infeasible.

That said, the tower it is holding onto is just magically-reinforced stone. A *disintegrate* spell (or other effect that deals at least 40 damage) targeted at the spot it is holding causes the spot to crumble. The colossus desperately grabs onto the nearest balcony, which cracks under the strain but holds. The colossus is unable to attack on its following two rounds as it struggles to climb back up. If this second hand-hold is destroyed, the colossus falls away, and actually does take substantial damage from the thousand-foot plummet. (Let's just say it's more than 20d6. The *thump* it makes when it lands two rounds later is audible for a considerable distance.) It won't be able to rejoin the fight.

Other tricks can likewise disrupt the colossus's grip, such as *sleet storm*, *earthquake*, or even a few applications of *stone shape* or *grease*.

Nicodemus's Tactics.

His goal is to keep the party here while the colossus finishes them off, so he stays mobile, using *spider climb* and *fly* while throwing ampoules of poison gas or casting spells to split the party or make it dangerous to open the various portals. He starts by dropping poison gas in the central chamber to make it hazardous, then uses his *übergeist* power to cast *hold person* (using high-level spell slots).

He watches where the colossus attacks, and if a PC has gotten a portal open to position two or three, and isn't about to be crushed



by a colossus fist, Nicodemus uses spells like *wall of force* and *wall of ice* to seal off portals, or a form of *arcane lock* made to work at a distance (range 55 ft.) to jam a portal and create a physical lock that must be disabled to keep opening the portal. He can also activate a *scroll of blade barrier*, either to block an exit or simply chop up several vulnerable PCs.

He only uses unarmed strikes for opportunity attacks, or if he has spare *übergeist* uses. His *übergeist* ability makes him resistant to most one-shot takedowns, and Andrei's body regenerates, but if the party can knock him out, his spirit form starts to manifest but is stunned for 1 round, so they have time to throw the *lockstone* away. This lets them simply teleport with spells, or more easily use a portal.

If the party looks like they're about to escape, he'll cast *force cage* on one PC, in hopes of forcing the party to delay and free their friend from the spell.

Nicodemus's stat block appears on page 18.

Kasvarina's Tactics.

If on the party's side, she lends *fly* spells to melee characters, then joins them in chasing after Nicodemus. If hostile to the party, she uses *telekinesis* to try to fling them off the side of the tower and drop *ice storm* next to the portals to make it harder to open them.

If her loyalties are divided, she fights with them one round, against them the next. After this happens twice, she'll shout for the party to run, then will leap off the tower. Borne panics and desperately grabs her, which causes it to lose its grip and barely manage to hold on by grabbing one of the balconies. This takes it out of the combat for at least four rounds.

Victory by Time.

After ten rounds (or if Kasvarina dies or falls off the tower), the lights start to flicker as the *lost arc's* powers fade. Thereafter the tower begins to creak and pieces start to cleave off. Ten rounds later the whole place fragments and the colossus loses its grip and falls away (as above, the mighty *thump* it makes when it lands two rounds later is audible for a considerable distance), while the central gem in the floor snaps and falls. Two rounds after that, the whole place starts to fall apart, but waves of magic burst out from all the portals, catching everyone present. Nicodemus is torn from his body, but the party, Andrei von Recklinghausen, and possibly Kasvarina all end up scattered in the Dreaming.

Deus ex Portal.

If the party is all knocked out or killed, the last conscious PC sees the tower shake and the portals go out of control. The next thing he knows the whole party is lying on grass somewhere unfamiliar. At the start of the next adventure, the fey of the Dreaming can bring back the recently slain in exchange for a favor.

Aftermath.

If his body is reduced to 0 hit points or if he is exorcised, Nicodemus's ghostly spirit emerges and crawls away, slowly burning up from his extremities, much like the pages of a book set aflame, or the cherry of a cigarette turning to ash. He sags and tries to put on a mocking smile, but then spasms with pain and manages to yell, "You, the Clergy, all of you! You keep trying to kill me! But you can't kill *an idea!*" Then he burns away. He'll return later, once his ghost form rejuvenates.

A hostile Kasvarina fights until things look untenable, then tries to leap away and teleport once she's out of range of the *dimensional lockstone*. She might return later, but if she dies her role later could be replaced.

An allied Kasvarina will not abandon the party, and might even throw herself atop a vulnerable PC if he's about to be crushed by the colossus. If possible, though, she'll try to leave with the party.

Andrei might still survive and be able to regenerate, but if the colossus has not been knocked away, taking out Nicodemus won't stop its attacks. The party still needs to escape, and whether they do it on their own terms or are whisked away when the memory-event (and the tower) collapses, they realize immediately that this is no normal teleportation, as the world gushes color and jagged leaves slice their skin. Then they land in an unfamiliar forest.

I Don't Think We're in Danor Anymore

Exploration. Real-Time.

A teleportation mishap traps the party in the Dreaming.

As the PCs get their bearings, they hear pipes and fiddles playing a jaunty but unmistakably militant tune. Through the woods in one direction they spy cavorting figures coming their way. Then from the opposite side, guttural whooping and the beating of wooden drums marks the approach of a second force.

A pixie swoops past them, and it shouts to the drummers, "Here they are! Attack!"

Battle cries ululate from both directions, and within moments the party will be in the midst of a fey melee. But that will be a problem to handle next adventure. 🧙



Nicodemus the Gnostic

Medium humanoid (possessed human), neutral

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 230 (20d8+140)

Speed 60 ft., climb 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	19 (+4)	23 (+6)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +12, Cha +12

Skills Acrobatics +10, Arcana +10, Deception +12, History +10, Insight +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +12, Religion +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Primordial

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

Defensive Magic. Nicodemus begins combat while under the effects of *freedom of movement*.

Dimensional Lockstone. Nicodemus carries a stone that blocks planar travel and teleportation within a 40-foot radius.

Ethereal Sight. Nicodemus can see 60 feet into the Ethereal Plane when he is on the Material Plane, and vice versa.

Ghost in a Human Body. Nicodemus's body, Andrei Von Recklinghausen, is built up from the body parts of others and has supernatural strength and healing ability, but is otherwise human. However, inside that body, Nicodemus is a ghost, and thus can be affected by effects and spells that target undead. If he fails his save against a turn undead attempt he is exorcised from Andrei's body.

Regeneration. Nicodemus regains 15 hit points at the start of his turn. If he takes acid or fire damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of his next turn. Nicodemus dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Scrolls. Nicodemus carries the following scrolls: banishment, blade barrier, chain lightning, dispel magic (2 at 7th level), heal (3).

Spellcasting. Nicodemus is a 13th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): all

1st level (4 slots): *feather fall*, *magic missile*

2nd level (3 slots): *arcane lock*, *shatter*, *web*

3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic*, *major image*, *slow*

4th level (3 slots): *ice storm*, *reach arcane lock*

5th level (3 slots): *cloudkill*, *wall of force*

6th level (2 slots): *wall of ice*

7th level (1 slot): *teleport*

Turn Resistance. Nicodemus has advantage on saving throws against any effect that turns undead.

Übergeist (4 ghosts). Nicodemus controls souls with ease, which has allowed him to create the ghost council. He has integrated a handful of other ghosts into his own spectral body, and can use them to perform minor actions and defend him from magic. Nicodemus begins the battle with four bonded ghosts, which glide behind him like the tail of a comet in as he moves. On his turn he can release a bonded ghost in order to cast a quickened spell (as the sorcerer Metamagic), use a bonus action to use a scroll, to end one spell affecting him, or to strike a creature within 30 feet as if making an unarmed strike (if the party contains more than 5 PCs, add two more bonded ghosts for each extra PC, and let Nicodemus use two bonded ghosts per round.)

If Nicodemus is caught in the blast of Borne's spirit cascade, he regains one bonded ghost, which he sees as a fair trade for whatever damage he might take.

War Magic. Nicodemus has advantage when he is concentrating on a spell and has to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, he can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and he can use his reaction to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action or less at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from him.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nicodemus attacks twice.

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d8+10) necrotic damage, and the target makes a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or its Constitution score is reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a humanoid dies from this attack, a new ghost rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

Nightmare Vapor (12). Nicodemus quickly draws and throws 4 ampoules. Each targets a different square, and shatters on impact to create a 10-foot radius cloud of poison nightmare vapor (which should be enough to fill most of the central chamber at the top of the tower). When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or its Wisdom is reduced by 1 and it is confused until the start of its next turn. The target dies if this reduces its Wisdom to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a humanoid dies from this attack, a new ghost rises from the corpse 1d4 hours later.

A confused creature can't take reactions until the start of its next turn and rolls a d8 to determine what it does during its turn. On a 1 to 4, the creature does nothing. On a 5 or 6, the creature takes no action or bonus action and uses all its movement to move in a randomly determined direction. On a 7 or 8, the creature makes a melee attack against a randomly determined creature within its reach or does nothing if it can't make such an attack.

Appendix One: The Eladrin Diaspora

THESSE MEMORIES GIVE KASVARINA A CHANCE TO RE-connect with elements of her past and learn the fate of her people. Only two are particularly plot relevant (Miller's Pyre and Betrayal of Rilego), but the others can help strengthen the bonds between Kasvarina and the party.

Minor Memories.

The party has to go out of their way to find these.

Memory-Event: Navras.

Location: Risur, the city of Flint.

Date: 15 Spring, 201 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

A docker PC or Panoply adherent might follow a clue from Kieran Sentacore, or the party might simply recall the tale of Navras and bring Kasvarina to see the Navras Opera House in Flint. (See the Player's Guide for details.) Performances here often can enchant magic items.

The *lost arc* can manifest a memory event where Kasvarina came to visit her friend during the opera house's construction. They walk through the skeleton of the structure, still open to the sky. She wonders why he's building this thing here, rather than back in their homeland, and Navras says that he doesn't like what Elfaivar is turning into. She asks if he'd mind her staying until the building is complete so she can hear the first performance. Navras sneers and threatens to have security drag her out if he sees her.

If Kasvarina's mental stability is at 10 or higher, somehow the *lost arc* resonates with the innate magic of the opera house and manifests another memory-event, of Navras performing the song of Vekesh on opening night. Each PC present chooses one item he or she possesses. That item is enchanted to be able to cast *restoration* once per week.

Memory-Event: Bhalu.

Location: Drakr, the city of Trekhom.

Date: 42 Winter, 248 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

In Trekhom, the party can find the *Obpeyeble Nipneka Mobicneten* (Doomed Order of Thinkers), a nightly gathering of eladrin philosophers, all men, led by **Bhalu Varal**, who was married to Kasvarina from 119 to 248 AOV. Today the shaggy and portly Bhalu spends his days sleeping and his evenings drinking and discussing philosophy and politics without ever being motivated to get up an effect any changes in the real world.

If the party goes to the meeting, a memory-event triggers. Kasvarina imperiously stalks into a room filled with pipe-smoking dwarves, where Bhalu lies passed out in the corner. She splashes him with water to wake him, then drags him outside to ask how being a drunken lout is contributing to the mission she sent him on. He is supposed to make allies in Trekhom and learn which philosopher parties might be a threat.

Bhalu says that she sent him to kill too many people, and that the occasional bedding down with her isn't worth the blood he was spilling. Blood is something for the body, anyway, and he thinks it's time for the eladrin to just die. He's vowed to devote his life to his mind, and to punish his body with the greatest beer the dwarves have crafted.

She says she's staying to clean him up. He's too valuable. He shrugs, and challenges her to be more convincing than his friends inside. The memory-event fades, and the real modern Bhalu is flabbergasted. While not the hugest fan of his ex-wife even now, Bhalu has sobered up a bit and does have contacts all throughout Drakr. His value is up to your players to decide.

Memory-Event: Amielle.

Location: Danor, the city of Cherage.

Date: 2 Autumn, 400 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

In *ZEITGEIST #7: Schism*, the party met the ghost of Amielle Latimer, an Ob conspirator with a knack for custom firearms, who seemed somewhat uncertain of her loyalties to Nicodemus. You might remind the party that there was an Amielle Latimer who came from Danor to Risur a hundred years ago and did a favor for the king, helping to open up pathways of industry. A bit of investigating could track down Amielle's past, whereas a gunsmith PC would simply know the famous workshop in Danor where she first started mass-producing rifles.

If the party gets into the city of Cherage and visits the workshop, it has now been converted into a fancy restaurant, the walls adorned with guns. In the memory-event, Kasvarina and Nicodemus speak with a very-much-alive Amielle, telling her that she needs to undertake a risky bit of diplomacy. They're sending her to Flint, to help the king deal with a witch problem.

This can point the PCs to Flint, where the Navras memory event can manifest *Bonds of Forced Faith*, or you could simply run it as a sort of one-shot sidequest. And after the party leaves her workshop, Amielle's ghost gets wind of it. In the following days she'll try to communicate via *sending* with the party. If they're outside Danor's dead magic zone, she warns them that Nicodemus is tracking them and is preparing for them to go to Methia, because something valuable is there.

Amielle cannot leave the rest of the ghost council to go help them in person, and she's not willing to betray the conspiracy in any event, but she encourages them to avoid Methia and stay in Flint to protect their homeland.



Memory-Event: Chatwood.

Location: Risur, the city of Shale.

Date: 8 Spring, 490 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

In the city of Shale, an eladrin woman known only as **Chatwood** has been in an insane asylum for a decade. The chief physician of the asylum, **Mayhew Fisher**, is on the Obscurati's payroll, and has fabricated evidence to keep the poor woman locked up.

The memory-event occurs at Chatwood's old home, still maintained by one of her friends. In the past, Kasvarina and Chatwood share tea, and Chatwood—who is only just an adult by eladrin standards—seems nervous around her elder.

Kasvarina explains a mission for Chatwood: to ingratiate herself into Duchess Ethelyn's circle of advisors and offer her skyseer visions as aid in the ongoing Fourth Yerasol War. The visions can all be accurate, and Chatwood should try to honestly help the war effort, with the exception of anything having to do with a place called Axis Island. When possible, Chatwood is to fake visions saying that the island is dangerous, and to let the Danorans take it and lose soldiers without a fight.

Chatwood asks why, and Kasvarina won't explain. So Chatwood refuses, saying that Risur is her home now, far more than Elfaivar was. Kasvarina seems to realize that her spy can no longer be trusted to be silent, but since there are so few eladrin women even now, she cannot kill her. The memory-event ends with Kasvarina casting *power word blind*.

After the vision, the party might arrange to free Chatwood and cure her blindness. She claims she tried to warn people about a conspiracy, but everyone thought she was crazy. Kasvarina is horribly shamed of what she did, and tries to avoid ever being seen by the woman she betrayed.

Memory-Event: Mind-Taker.

Location: Risur's Bleak Gate analogue, Cauldron Hill facility.

Date: 7 Summer, 500 AOV

Stability Value: 3.

In Flint, Kasvarina feels a pull toward Cauldron Hill, and she remembers her time there drugged after she first lost her memories.

The ruins of the Obscurati complex in Cauldron Hill has been labeled off-limits, and while the party can get permission from the defender of the mountain, Captain Dale, actually finding anything in the black tangle of machinery is a challenge. A group without a technologist will have to succeed a variety of Strength (Athletics) and Dexterity (Acrobatics and thieves' tools or tinkerer's tools) checks to get into the part of the facility where Kasvarina's memory-event will trigger. A technologist PC, however, can easily navigate service passageways and guess the safest, shortest route.

Feel free to add shadow monsters and undead, if your party is itching for a fight.

The party can see a variety of memories in the Cauldron Hill facility, most of them incidental moments of Kasvarina touring with Leone Quital and watching the colossus be built, or her laying *geas* spells on the key workers there, or her doling out punishment to workers who try to sneak out and return to the real world. She also spends a great deal of time with Alexander Grappa and the golem prototypes he built, training them and raising them so they would

be trustworthy. But one extended memory involving Alexander Grappa stands out.

Kasvarina has arrived to discuss the problem of Grappa's disloyalty, and she retires with Leone to make plans over a bottle of wine. During their discussion she realizes Grappa is actually watching from an air vent, and Leone uses his steelshaping magic to pull Grappa out and pin him. They lock the man up and Kasvarina has to break the news to Borne that his father is a traitor to their cause.

Later, Grappa sends his bronze golem handservant to request Kasvarina come talk to him. He ambushes her, plants a hand on her face, and casts a spell to lock away her memories. As the old man holds her down he apologizes, and says that all people are is the sum of their lives. He's giving her another chance at life, a chance to be a decent person. The memory-event ends there, though the party knows that Grappa went on to lock away the colossus's memories, then fled and was caught and killed by Leone.

The Enclave Ushanti.

Asrabej can easily point the party to Ushanti, and Kasvarina's presence will earn the party a quick entry. Unlike Sentosa, Ushanti drifts slightly through the jungles of Elfaivar, and its interior is not analogous to the real world. Similar to a *rope trick*, the entrance is an invisible extradimensional portal, which leads to a hill that overlooks a field and a forest connected by a river that flows in an infinity shape. Buildings cluster near the crossing in the center of the demi-plane, and the whole enclave is scarcely 2 miles across.

The new leader of the enclave, **Ajit**, is wholly loyal to the conspiracy, and likely has learned of the death of Cula Ravjahani at the Obscurati convocation (see *ZEITGEIST #7: Schism*), which he blames on the PCs. But he welcomes the group with open arms, intending to murder them in their sleep and hand them over to Nicodemus. He's wary of tipping his hand but not infallible—a DC 27 Wisdom [Insight] check is needed to see through his deception.

Not all the enclave is affiliated with the conspiracy, and they sincerely welcome Kasvarina and her "rescuers". The party might find allies, or simply rush to see the memory-events at the matriarch's hall before Ajit can spring his trap. If they fall for it though, that night a *silence* spell targets the party's sleeping quarters, and then 5 eladrin rajputs (page 28) *fey step* in and ambush them in their beds.

With a bit of politicking and combat, Ajit could be deposed and the enclave could become an ally of the party's.

Two memory-events occur here.

Memory-Event: Rejecting the Call

Location: The enclave Ushanti, matriarch's garden.

Date: 58 Summer, 100 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

In this memory-event, Nicodemus (in the body of a young human merchant) is escorted into Kasvarina's garden. He asks her the status of a mission to steal from a Clergy library and slay its keeper, but Kasvarina says she's busy with matters that are important to her people, and doesn't have time to keep pursuing these vendettas. She feels the Clergy have been sufficiently punished, and her fellow matriarch Athrylla is trying to pursue an actual peace.



Nicodemus argues with her for several minutes, stating that he has finally hit upon a greater plan, something that will change the whole world. He starts to ask what she knows about skyseers and planar magic, but she changes the subject to the garden, and invites him to stay and relax. Nicodemus keeps arguing, and eventually Kasvarina gets upset and orders her guards to take him away.

Memory-Event: Ghostly Apparition

Location: The enclave Ushanti, Kasvarina's home.

Date: 84 Winter, 17 AOV

Stability Value: 1.

Kasvarina is browsing a bookshelf when she sniffs the air and detects the scent of cigarette smoke. She tentatively calls out, "William?" but a man replies, "It's Nicodemus."

She opens the door and lets in Nicodemus (in the body of a bookbinder). Their postures and sentences suggest intense discomfort, like they're talking around an issue. Nicodemus explains that it took him a few bodies to get here, and spotting a map on a table he idly traces his path—"Pala, to the coast, over to Trekhom, then by boat to Vendricce. I had to walk from there."

Kasvarina steps close as if to touch him, and he quickly moves to the bookshelf. He suggests a few books he heard of lately that she should get, then mentions that he's heading back to old Methia to look for someone. She asks if he wants her to come, and he says that he'll *send* when the time is right. He might need a year to figure out the next step. In the meanwhile, he suggests she take Vekesh's advice and keep on living.

Kasvarina responds that Vekesh was caught by the Clergy and killed a year ago. After a pause she invites Nic to stay for a few days. He nods, and the memory ends.

This memory can point the way to Pala, though the party might need to replay the memory and look at the map closely to figure out where to start.

Key Memory: Lands Forgotten

Situated in the Malice Lands, the former city-state of Pala was somewhere along the Eastern Piscine Mountains, with history leaving the exact location up for debate. The party is likely to only find this memory-event if they risk entering Kasvarina's old enclave Ushanti, and they witness the Ghostly Apparition event. Following the map they see there, they can backtrack to find the ruins.

As usual, the Malice Lands are home to all manner of misshapen monsters, but a catastrophically powerful one lurks in the ruins of Pala. But before the party can reach what little remains of the city, they pass near the Clavel Ranch.

The Ranch.

Connected to the remainder of civilization by a winding, half-overgrown trail, the Clavel Ranch claims to technically be part of Danor. Once a noble tiefling family, the Clavel was driven out of their homeland. Spending their family fortune to establish a distant farm, the Clavels hoped to bring unique agriculture to Danor and perhaps earn their way back to prosperity. They never managed that, and today the family has consigned itself to raising

malice beasts, specifically a breed known as axebeaks.

Just over three dozen people work on the Clavel Ranch, led by **Leonard Clavel**. Leonard's oldest daughter Jeanette tends to a small crop of leaf of Nicodemus, which the men of the ranch smoke in abundance.

The staff are friendly but surprised at the sudden appearance of outsiders. Leonard is alright with letting them look around the property, assuming they're supervised. He sends his ranch-hand, **Angus Perasmus** to escort them. Angus is a calm and collected well-built man who rarely speaks and carries himself with a controlled measure.

In truth, Angus is actually a member of a secretive monastic order known as the Fists of Pala. The order was founded by the scattered survivors of Pala, eventually coming together and making a pact to protect the memory of the place and disseminate the philosophy of William Miller. Today, Angus serves as a watcher for the Monument of Pala, a nearby grove that holds the order's holiest site.

Despite his secretive role, Angus in the guise of Angus acts the simple ranch aide, and shows the party around the ranch as required. He tries to keep the PCs from the monument—located three miles outside the borders of the ranch, inside a nearby forest that has grown up around the ruins of Pala—until they can earn his trust.

There's not much to see on the ranch, but if asked specifically about ruins, the various ranch hands know there are the remains of a few really old buildings in the forest. But some monster hides in ruins out there—called the Wriggling Dread—and every time it's been spotted, people have been devoured.

The Malice Cometh.

The Malice Lands interfere greatly with the power of the *lost arc of Reida*, and though Kasvarina can sense the nearby presence of the memory site, she cannot pinpoint it. This leaves the PCs to search the Clavel ranch as they please, but it also have the unwanted side effect of drawing the attention of a nearby malice beast.

Known locally, as the Wriggling Dread, the malice beast normally squeezes and crawls through the ruins of Pala. The huge monster has the body and abdomen of a spider, but tentacles for legs and a toothy, eyeless snake-like appendage for a head. The creature makes its slow way to the ranch over the course of an hour.

A general timeline of the beast's actions after it arrives are presented below, though GMs should adjust as necessary:

- **The Wriggling Dread Arrives (0 minutes):** The Dread is spotted approaching from the north; one of the Clavel children sees it while tending to an injured axebeak.
- **Fence Is Destroyed (3 minutes):** As the farm is made aware of the creature's approach, it breaks through the northern fence, letting loose a terrifying snarl as it does so.
- **Storage Barn Destroyed (6 minutes):** Making its way to the storage barn, the Dread breaks it apart, becoming temporarily caught in the wreckage. For the next 10 rounds, the Wriggling Dread is only able to attack with half its natural weapons, while the rest are used to dig itself from the wreckage. During this time, the Dread can hurl debris at nearby targets.



- **Stampede (10 minutes):** As the monster escapes the wreckage, the ranch staff manage to incite a herd of axebeaks to rush the creature. While generally ineffective, the axebeaks manage to confuse and damage the Dread prior to being killed. The Wriggling Dread loses 30 hit points as a result of the axebeak assault. From this point onwards, the Dread can begin hurling axebeaks at creatures.
- **Staff Defense (15 minutes):** The staff attempt to repel the Dread on their own using bows and spears, but are pushed back after the creature slays one of them. The Dread loses another 20 hit points from the combined assault of the ranch staff.
- **Angus Stand-Off (20 minutes):** As the creature approaches the homestead, Angus moves to fight it, revealing himself as a more than a mere ranch hand. He scrambles across its body, trying to wear it down while avoiding its attacks, but without support he is slain after a minute of fighting. The Wriggling Dread loses another 75 hit points from the engagement.
- **Homestead Is Destroyed (30 minutes):** Reaching the homes of the Clavel family and staff, the Dread begins to destroy structures and kill any survivors who attempt to flee. None of the family survive the creature's attack.
- **Creature Moves Off (45 minutes):** Having fed on the ranch staff and families, the Wriggling Dread finds itself stuffed, quickly forgetting the reason for its attack. The creature crawls back to the ruins of Pala.

Engaging the Dread.

When the PCs attack the Wriggling Dread, it turns its attention on them. In combat, the Dread focuses on creatures that impede its ability to move, or those who deal the most damage to it. If a target stands out as a primary damage dealer, the Dread attempts to swallow that target. Against ranged opponents, the Dread uses its breath weapon; a horrific expulsion of internal fluids, which could contain the partially digested remains of axebeaks or ranch staff (or a freshly-swallowed PC).

If the PCs attack prior to his intervention, Angus watches the conflict, but intervenes if things go against the party. In particular, you may wish to have the Fist of Pala step in after one of the PCs has been consumed by the Dread, or if most of the party is caught in the creature's grappling tentacles.



Wriggling Dread

Gargantuan aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 175 (10d20+70)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	7 (-2)	24 (+7)	2 (-4)	15 (+2)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Int +1, Wis +7

Skills Perception +12

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from weapons not made of cold iron

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, prone, stunned

Senses blindsight 100 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages —

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

All-Around Vision. The wriggling dread has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and cannot be surprised.

Hulking Hurler. As the wriggling dread moves through the ranch, it can pick up various implements to hurl with its tentacles. Initially it can throw no objects, but after the storage barn is destroyed it can begin hurling debris. Once the axebeak stampede occurs, the wriggling dread can begin hurling axebeaks.

Magic Resistance. The wriggling dread has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The wriggling dread attacks seven times: once with its bite and six times with its tentacles. Instead of making two of its melee attacks, the wriggling dread can make one ranged attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d6+8) piercing damage.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d4+8) bludgeoning damage and the target is grappled (escape DC 21).

Swallow. The wriggling dread makes one bite attack against a Huge or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. The swallowed target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the wriggling dread, and it takes 15 (2d6+8) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage at the start of each of the wriggling dread's turns. The wriggling dread can have up to 5 targets swallowed at a time. If the wriggling dread dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 5 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Hurled Axebeak. Ranged Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 18 (3d6+8) piercing damage, the target makes a DC 23 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone, and the axebeak dies.

Hurled Debris. Ranged Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d8+8) bludgeoning damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 6). The wriggling dread breathes out acid in a 50-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 77 (14d10) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Angus Perasmus**

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (Wisdom)**Hit Points** 103 (1d8+44)**Speed** 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +10**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Insight +6, Perception +6, Religion +5, Stealth +8**Damage Immunities** poison**Condition Immunities** disease, poison**Senses** passive Perception 16**Languages** Common, Dwarvish**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

Evasion. When Angus is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Ki (1 ki points/Short Rest). Angus can spend *ki* points to fuel various *ki* features.

- ✦ **Flurry of Blows.** Immediately after Angus takes the Attack action on his turn, he can spend 1 *ki* point to make two unarmed strikes as a bonus action.
- ✦ **Patient Defense.** Angus can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Dodge action as a bonus action on his turn.
- ✦ **Step of the Wind.** Angus can spend 1 *ki* point to take the Disengage or Dash action as a bonus action on his turn, his jump distance is doubled for the turn.
- ✦ **Stunning Attack.** Angus can spend 1 *ki* point to attempt to stun a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of his next turn.

Martial Arts. Angus can use Dexterity instead of Strength for the attack and damage rolls of his unarmed strikes and monk weapons. In addition, when Angus uses the Attack action with an unarmed strike or a monk weapon on his turn, he can make one unarmed strike as a bonus action.

Open Hand Technique. Whenever Angus hits a creature with one of the attacks granted by his Flurry of Blows, he can impose one of the following effects on that target:s

- ✦ It must succeed on a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone.
- ✦ It must make a Strength saving throw. If it fails, Angus can push it up to 15 feet away from him.
- ✦ It can't take reactions until the end of Angus's next turn.

Stillness of Mind. Angus can use his action to end one effect on himself that is causing him to be charmed or frightened.

Tranquility. At the end of a long rest, Angus gains the effect of a *sanctuary* spell that lasts until the start of his next long rest (save DC 14; the spell can end early as normal).

Unarmored Movement. Angus can move along vertical surfaces and across liquids on his turn without falling during his move.

Wholeness of Body (1/Long Rest). As an action, Angus regains 33 hit points.

ACTIONS

Extra Attack. Angus attacks twice when he takes the attack action (using a bonus action he can attack a third time with Martial Arts, or a third and fourth time with 1 *ki* point to use Flurry of Blows).

Unarmed Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) magical bludgeoning damage.

Fist of Pala. Angus makes a single unarmed strike. On a successful hit, he deals 14 (4d6) extra damage that ignores all damage resistances and immunities.

REACTIONS

Deflect Missiles. Angus can use his reaction to deflect or catch the missile when he is hit by a ranged weapon attack. When he does so, the damage he takes from the attack is reduced by 1d10+11. When the damage is reduced to 0, he can catch the missile if it is small enough for him to hold in one hand and he has at least one hand free. If he catch a missile in this way, Angus can spend 1 *ki* point to make a ranged attack with the weapon or piece of ammunition he just caught, as part of the same reaction (+9 to hit, range 20/60 ft., 1d8+5 damage).

Slow Fall. Angus can use his reaction when he falls to reduce any falling damage he takes by 55.

The Monument of Pala.

If the party helped save the ranch, Angus Perasmus explains his role as a member of the Fists of Pala, though he does little to describe the order beyond its name and formation. If asked, he can lead the party to the Monument of Pala (which is 3 miles away).

The Monument of Pala is located in a 10-foot diameter grove, at the center of which is a small standing stone. The stone is engraved with text in the common tongue, but of an older style and with embellishments common in the first decades following the Second Victory.

The monument reads:

*A dream that shall endure beyond the destruction of stone,
A brotherhood undaunted by atrocities of the mighty,
Their bodies shall be strengthened by this good labor,
To spread his words, an offering to the world,
Until the dream may become reality.*

As one of his first acts after being burnt alive and finding a new body, Nicodemus came to the ruins of his former nation and crafted this small monument. In the days and weeks that followed, the scattered survivors of Pala returned and discovered the stone among the ruins, and many resolved to spread the philosophy of their martyred leader across the world. In so doing, they helped strengthen Nicodemus and make his spirit nearly impossible to destroy.

Angus can fill the PCs in on the details of Pala. His order believes this stone was placed at the exact site where the city's founder William Miller was burned upon a pyre of his own books.



Memory-Event: Miller's Pyre.

Location: Pala.

Date: 31 Autumn, 17 AOV

Stability Value: 3.

Kasvarina orients herself around the stone and walks a few feet away. The stone of the monument shimmers, moving like wet paint being pushed across a canvas. The forest around you smears into a small city glowing orange from scattered fires. In a moment, the clearing transforms into a beautiful courtyard, with a simple stone bench where the monument was. A bald, bearded man sits there, reading a book by the light of the city being razed around him.

A group of scholars frantically try to save documents from a nearby burning library. Men and women make suicidal runs into the collapsing structure to save as much documentation as they can from the flames. From the other direction, soldiers are visible through the haze of heat for the light glinting from their armor as they march down the thoroughfare. The air is thick with aromatic smoke.

A bloodied sword in hand, Kasvarina steps up to the figure seated on the bench. She breathes heavily like she's run here. "William," she says, "you need to go. The city is gone, but there's still a chance. I can get us away from here."

With a wave of his right hand, the man brushes her off. He closes his book and looks at the soldiers, who'll be on them in minutes.

He asks, "Isn't there anything I can do to effect a real change? We were naïve at the island, and then...Methia. I thought this place could be a bastion of sanity, and again the damned Clergy takes my best intentions and destroys them. No, Rina, I am done running."

Kasvarina grabs his shoulders, sobbing. "William, please just come with me. It's risky, but we can teleport away."

She tries to grab his hand, but he pushes her back. "If I run they'll call me a coward and all this will be wasted." He glances to the soldiers, now only a few hundred feet away. "If I die, I might do more good than I ever did alive."

"William, no." She follows his gaze, then shakes him. "Dammit, William! We can just live. We don't need to fight. We can just be together."

"We could be, yes. But then we'd be distracted, and another thousand people could die because I gave in to complacency. This is not a world ruled by the good, Rina. Now go. They'll kill me, I'll find a new body, and we can start the fight again. There's no more time for idle, halcyon dreaming." He stands, gives her a short kiss, then sits back down.

Her voice catches, and force out, "Please no, William. I can't watch my world be destroyed again."

"These people killed your daughter! They destroyed your world before, and they'll keep doing it until we take control and make the world we know is best. Run. You don't come back like I do. The next time you see me, call me Nicodemus."

Kasvarina turns and runs, and the memory fades as the soldiers close in and surround William Miller, defiantly reading. Then the memory fades and flickers to several hours later. Miller stands strapped to a tall wooden stake, atop a pile of books. Kasvarina hides around the corner of a building at the edge of the courtyard, watching Clergy priests declaring Miller's heresies as they light the pyre.



Aftermath.

Kasvarina comes out of the memory weeping at the sight of a man she loved burning alive. She recalls that Nicodemus came back, but he was never the same as when he was William Miller. She wonders how much her loyalty to him was because she hoped to reclaim that happy time.

Cult of Personality.

Angus is amazed that Kasvarina knew his order's inspiration. The party should likely be amazed that Nicodemus was once William Miller. If the party has Angus take them to a gathering of other fists of Pala (they meet and meditate in caves along the mountains nearby), they might be able to convince the group that Miller went on to become leader of a conspiracy that has murdered and manipulated events in order to gain power for himself. It would require some solid evidence and a bit of time investment, but if the party works at it, they can turn the Fists of Pala against Nicodemus.

Key Memory: Death of Launga

From the vision in Sentosa (Rescue Alliance), the party knows Kasvarina's older daughter Launga was captured by the dragon Rilego in the city Seobriga, which today is the capital of Ber. They also know that she died, and that another matriarch betrayed Kasvarina in the process. If the party heads to Seobriga, they can find a shrine commemorating one of the first times a foreigner slew a dragon tyrant. Polite parties might ask the Bruse for permission before they reenact a devastating and terrifying battle from the city's past.

If you want to force the PCs to actually fight a red dragon, feel free, but the memory-event's key focus is not death, but escape.

Memory-Event: Betrayal of Rilego

Location: Ber, the capital Seobriga.

Date: 15 Summer, 111 AOV

Stability Value: 5.

The memory-event begins in the streets of Seobriga. Kasvarina is running for a building, followed by Sor Daeron, the matriarch Latika, and a handful of horribly burnt eladrin soldiers. Kasvarina hears the beating of wings and looks up, the whites of her eyes



reflecting firelight from the city burning around her. She whispers, “Not again.”

Landing on a perch atop an elaborately-spired building, a dragon the color of day-old blood, with a body larger than an elephant’s, holds Kasvarina’s daughter Launga pinned to the roof with a foreclaw.

“Please no!” Kasvarina shouts. “Just ask, and I’ll give you anything you want.”

The dragon rears and huffs a flaming laugh. Then a hand made of salt crystals grasps Kasvarina by the back of her neck, and a blade pokes her back. Sor Daeron and Latika have revealed their betrayal, and Sor explains that they *know*. It took them a century to find out, a century of actually being allies with the greatest traitor of their people, but now they *know*. And so it wasn’t just enough to kill Kasvarina. They had to make her lose all she cared for.

Kasvarina breaks away from Sor and despite taking a dagger to her kidney she tries to teleport up to her daughter. Her spell finishes but nothing happens, because the streets have been paved with gold, blocking her teleportation.

Latika waves to the dragon Rilego, who draws a deep breath. Kasvarina screams and runs for the entrance to the building the dragon’s perched on, and Latika orders Sor after her. Kasvarina just manages to get inside when the entire building shakes and radiative heat cracks bricks and sets the air ashimmer. Though she knows her daughter is already dead, Kasvarina runs for the stairs to the roof. She gets halfway up when Sor blocks her path with a *wall of force*.

The two duel with sword and spells for nearly a minute, but Kasvarina pulls loose, burning debris onto him with *telekinesis*. She finally has time to cast *fly*, but when she clears the skylight, the entire roof is aflame, and the structure is compromised. Protected from the heat by magic she runs and finds her daughter Launga’s corpse. When she picks her up, her face is blackened on one half, nearly pristine on the other.

In the street below, Rilego has landed and Latika is climbing aboard his back. She and Kasvarina lock eyes. Still holding her dead daughter, Kasvarina starts to cast, but she does not aim at Latika or the dragon. Rather, she fires a *chain lightning* directly down into the building to finish off Sor Daeron, and the energy is enough to shatter wooden supports. The whole burning structure implodes beneath her, and she remains hovering in the air, implacable.

Rilego takes to the air and strafes with claws while Latika tries to strip away Kasvarina’s flight with *dispel magic*. Kasvarina survives, watches them turn for another pass, and casts *suggestion*, miraculously managing to affect Rilego. She says, “Drop her and let her burn, then fly away.”

Latika falls into the burning rubble and Kasvarina finishes her off. She would return days later to track down Rilego and slay him as well.

But she only *assumed* Sor Daeron died in the building collapse. The party can witness the scene from another perspective, and they should spot Sor Daeron stumbling out of the door just as the building collapsed, then fleeing through the dust and smoke.

Mourning and Pursuit.

Kasvarina takes the memories of her daughter’s death stoically. She’ll weep and mourn later, in private. Right now she’s too detached to really grasp what she witnessed, and she cannot understand what she might have done to make Latika and Sor hate her so much to do this to her.

The challenge falls to the party now to track down what became of Sor Daeron. He changed his name to Abuelo Juhu and hid for centuries, afraid of Kasvarina’s retaliation. He lives now in a small community of eladrin two hundred miles from Seobriga, and to this day still casts *nondetection* and *detect scrying*, though if he’s found he doesn’t have the strength to run anymore.

The party might find him magically, or simply ask about for rumors of a one-armed eladrin who appeared around the time of the Betrayal of Rilego. He has no children, but lives with a dozen other old eladrin men, none of whom served in the war or could recognize him. If confronted, he feigns senility (or rather, feigns it being worse than it actually is).

Sor regrets letting his hatred get the best of him, and wishes he had just killed Kasvarina and not punished her daughter. His memory actually has faded, to the point where he knows Kasvarina killed Srasama, but he doesn’t remember how. One thing his memory is clear on, though, is that the plot to destroy Kasvarina was not theirs. An outsider brought evidence to them, and once they were nice and angry, he suggested a way to draw Kasvarina away from her seat of power.

Names and faces, Sor can’t recall. But scents, well, those endure. And the man who told them to kidnap Launga and kill Kasvarina was always surrounded by smoke from the leaf of Nicodemus.

Consequences of the Revelation.

If the party finds this memory-event, finds Sor, and learns that Nicodemus betrayed Kasvarina, she gains enough clarity and focus that from here on she is lucid in every memory-event, and will always gain more mental stability unless the event collapses. After treachery so supreme, there is almost no way Kasvarina will return to Nicodemus’s side.

Appendix Two: Recurring NPCs

Elfaivar.

Kasvarina, Asrabey, and warriors from Sentosa might adventure alongside the party.

Kasvarina.

Before losing her memory, Kasvarina was perhaps the most powerful spellcaster in the world, and when empowered by her followers in the enclave Ushanti she was unrivaled. When the party first meets her, however, Kasvarina's memory loss gives her a -6 penalty to all d20 rolls. Every time she experiences a major or critical memory-event for the first time, this penalty is reduced by 1.

Kasvarina Varal

Medium humanoid (eladrin), neutral

Armor Class 20 (+1 mithral plate)

Hit Points 130 (20d8+40)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (*winged boots*)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +7, Wis +5

Skills Arcana +7, Deception +15, History +7, Insight +5, Intimidation +15, Perception +5, Persuasion +10, Survival +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish, Infernal, Primordial

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

Fey Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Innate Spellcasting. Kasvarina's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

5/day each: *silver tongue* (advantage on Charisma [Deception] checks for 1 minute)

1/day: *detect thoughts*

Spellcasting. Kasvarina is a 14th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit with spell attacks). She has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *acid splash, light, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, shocking grasp, true strike*

1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, burning hands, charm person, disguise self, fog cloud, shield*

2nd level (3 slots): *invisibility, shatter, suggestion*

3rd level (3 slots): *fireball, fly, magic weapon*

4th level (3 slots): *charm monster, greater invisibility, ice storm*

5th level (2 slots): *cone of cold, geas, scrying, telekinesis*

6th level (1 slots): *chain lightning, geas, true seeing*

7th level (1 slots): *power word pain, teleport*



Superior Critical. Kasvarina's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Wands of Lightning (25 Charges). Kasvarina can use an action to cast *lightning bolt* (Dexterity save DC 13 for half damage; 25 charges) or *clairvoyance* (32 charges).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Kasvarina attacks three times.

+1 Ghostly Shocking Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) magical piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) lightning damage. This weapon can be wielded by an ethereal creature to attack a target on the Material Plane and vice versa. When she scores a critical hit, Kasvarina can cast a quickened spell (as the sorcerer Metamagic) so long as the target is in the spell's area of effect.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Fey Step (1/Day). Kasvarina can use her reaction to teleport to a space she can see within 30 feet. She cannot take other creatures with her.

TACTICS

When preparing for combat Kasvarina activates *winged boots*, then casts either *haste* or *greater invisibility*. If she's in melee she reserves her bonus action in case she scores a critical hit.

In general Kasvarina fights cautiously, trying never to get outnumbered. In unfamiliar situations she'll scout using *clairvoyance*. Her younger self will not abandon allies, but if she regains her original personality she prefers to withdraw, assuming she can always find new allies and try again, even if it takes a few decades.



Asrabey.

The party might be able to convince him to come along with them, but it's up to the GM whether or not to have another powerful NPC around, as his participation might make combat encounters too easy.

Asrabey Varal

Medium humanoid (elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 26 (*glamered +3 platemail, lion shield*)

Hit Points 150 (20d8+60)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +10, Con +8

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +10, Insight +6, Intimidation +4, Nature +6, Perception +6

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elven

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

Cloak of Smoke. At the beginning of his turn, Asrabey can dismiss or invoke a constant roil of smoke that fills his square, granting him half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws). He can see through the smoke without trouble.

Indomitable (2/long rest). Asrabey can reroll a saving throw that he fails. He must use the new roll.

Fey Ancestry. Asrabey has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put him to sleep.

Lion Shield. Asrabey can use a bonus action to toss this magic shield into the air and speak the command word. The shield begins to hover and attacks one creature of his choice within 5 feet of him. While the shield hovers, it shares Asrabey's space and travels wherever he moves, and it continues attacking the same target as long as it remains within 5 feet of him. Asrabey can use a bonus action to command the shield to attack a new target within 5 feet of him. The shield does not provoke opportunity attacks from movement. After the hovering shield attacks for the fourth time, it tries to return to Asrabey's hand. If you has no hands free, it falls to the ground at Asrabey's feet. The shield ceases to hover if he grasps it or is moved more than 10 feet away from it.

Power Attack. When Asrabey makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Asrabey can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after he uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Asrabey can only use this feature on his turn.

Quick. Asrabey has advantage on initiative rolls.

Slippers of Spider Climbing. Asrabey can move up, down, and across vertical surfaces and upside down along ceilings, while leaving his hands free.

Vekeshi Blade. On his turn, Asrabey can transform his longsword, choosing between a whip form that has 15-foot reach or longsword form. While in whip form, the weapon still deals damage as a longsword.

High Level Equipment.

Below are the listed rules for all equipment wielded by the Dreadnought Asrabey Varal. Take note that the equipment presented here is meant for GM reference only, and PCs are not expected to acquire this gear. Should Asrabey fall, the Unseen Court demand his gear be returned to them.

Cloak of Smoke.

An ornate garment from the lands of the Unseen Court, this cloak fills your square with a constant roil of smoke that grants half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws). You can see through the smoke without trouble, and you can dismiss or invoke the smoke at the beginning of your turn without any actions required.

Lion Shield.

This specially crafted +3 *shield* can also be loosed to attack on its own. You can use a bonus action to toss this magic shield into the air and speak the command word. When you do so, the shield begins to hover and attacks one creature of your choice within 5 feet of you. The shield deals 2d6 magical piercing damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 11 + your proficiency bonus), and it uses your attack roll and ability score modifier to damage rolls. While it is attacking, you gain no bonus to armor class from the shield.

While the shield hovers, it shares your space and travels wherever you move, and it continues attacking the same target as long as it remains within 5 feet of you. You can use a bonus action to command the shield to attack a new target within 5 feet of you. The shield does not provoke opportunity attacks from movement.

After the hovering shield attacks for the fourth time, it tries to return to your hand. If you have no hand free, it falls to the ground at your feet. The shield ceases to hover if you grasp it or are moved more than 10 feet away from it.

Vekeshi Blade.

Normally a +3 *longsword* that deals an extra 1d6 fire damage, the Vekeshi Blade wielded by Asrabey Varal is a potent artifact of the Unseen Court. When wielding the Vekeshi Blade, you can transform the weapon into a whip-like form that has 15-foot reach but still deals damage as a longsword. On your turn, you can shift and revert the blade; this does not require an action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Asrabey attacks four times.

Vekeshi Blade. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft. or 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8+8) magical slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage if wielded in one hand or 13 (1d10+8) magical slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) fire damage if wielded in two hands.

Lion Shield. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6+5) magical piercing damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 16).



Sentosa.

While the enclave Sentosa has many lesser defenders, its elite warriors, all of whom are male eladrin, are known as rajputs.

Eladrin Rajput

Medium humanoid (eladrin), neutral

Armor Class 19 (+2 studded leather)

Hit Points 91 (14d8+28)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Con +6, Wis +3, Cha +6

Skills Arcana +4, History +4, Intimidation +6, Perception +7

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Boots of Speed (10 Minutes/Long Rest). The rajput can use a bonus action and click the boots' heels together, increasing their speed to 60 feet, and giving any creatures making opportunity attacks against them disadvantage on the attack roll.

Fey Ancestry. The rajput has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rajput attacks six times with their swords or four times with their shortbow.

+1 Flaming Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) magical piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) fire damage.

+1 Human-Bane Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) magical piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) extra damage if the target is human.

+1 Human-Bane Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) magical piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) extra damage if the target is human.

REACTIONS

Fey Step (1/Day). The rajput can use their reaction to teleport to a space they can see within 30 feet. The rajput cannot take other creatures with them.

Danor.

The elite *Porteurs de Mort* hound the party in Elfaivar, while large units of lesser Danoran military personnel defend the ghost city Methia.

Porteurs De Mort.

The following are statblocks for the elite *Porteurs de Mort* soldiers assigned by Sovereign Jierre to target the PCs. If the party faces them in Methia, remember that they cannot use any magical items or effects.

Porteur de Mort Artillerist

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 75 (10d8+30)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +4

Skills Acrobatics +4, Arcana +4, Insight +3, Perception +5, Survival +3; alchemist's supplies +2, thieves' tools +2

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Dwarvish, Primordial

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Ready. Trained in specific use of mobile artillery emplacements, the artillerist is capable of setting up a man-sized mortar after 1 minute. Once deployed, it takes the artillerist 3 rounds using both their bonus action and action to reload the weapon; a second artillerist can assist, bringing the reload time down to 1 round.

Take Aim. Highly inaccurate unless a target has been properly painted, an artillerist must make a successful ranged attack roll with disadvantage in order to strike a target. For every 50 feet the target is away from the mortar, this roll is made with a -1 penalty. If the target is not visible and the artillerist has no direction on where they could be, the artillery shell only lands a direct hit on a natural roll of 20 (a lucky shot).

Then FIRE! A successful strike from an artillery shell does 21 (6d6) piercing damage within a 15-foot radius centered on the target. A successful DC 17 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half.

In addition to their damage, the artillery has been fitted with specialty ammunition fabricated in Danor. Using chunks of stone from buildings in the magic-deprived ghost city of Methia, the ammunition has a lingering effect that impedes spell casting. Creatures damaged by the shells must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 15 + spell level) anytime they cast a spell, or until someone removes the shards of stone from their skin, requiring an action and DC 17 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Any creature attempting to cast a spell within the impacted radius must make a Concentration check with a DC of 15 + spell level. This lasts for 5 rounds after a shell lands.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The artillerist attacks twice.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Bomb (5). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 20/40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6+3) fire damage. Creatures adjacent to the target make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take half as much damage.

**Porteur de Mort Marine**

Medium humanoid (tiefling), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (breastplate)**Hit Points** 150 (20d8+60)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +6, Dex +6, Con +6**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Athletics +6, Deception +1, Intimidation +4, Perception +4, Stealth +7, Survival +4**Damage Resistances** fire**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14**Languages** Common, Infernal, Primordial**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)**Danoran Surprise.** At the end of any Attack action, the marine can fire their pistol.**Evasion.** If the marine is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the marine instead takes no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.**Infernal Legacy.** The marine knows the *thaumaturgy* cantrip, they can cast the *hellish rebuke* spell as a 2nd-level spell once with this trait (regaining the ability to do so when they finish a long rest), and they can cast the *darkness* spell once with this trait (regaining the ability to do so when they finish a long rest). Charisma is their spellcasting ability for these spells.**Marines-At-Arms.** *Porteur de Mort* marines have trained together and work best when standing side by side or flanking. When the marine stands beside another marine engaged with their target, they count as flanking. If a marine flanks their enemy, they deal an extra 7 (2d6) damage when using Sneak Attack.**Methia Modifications.** In the dead magic zone, the marine cannot use Infernal Legacy or their potions.**Potions.** The marine carries 2 *potions of greater healing*.**Power Attack.** When the marine makes their first melee weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage.**Sneak Attack (1/Turn, 2d6).** The marine deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the marine that isn't incapacitated and the marine doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.**Superior Critical.** The marine's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** The marine attacks twice.**Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) slashing damage or 8 (1d10+3) slashing damage if wielded in two hands.**Pistol (10).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d10+3) piercing damage.**Porteur de Mort Sniper**

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)**Hit Points** 104 (16d8+32)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +5, Wis +5**Skills** Acrobatics +7, Insight +5, Perception +8, Stealth +10**Senses** passive Perception 18**Languages** Common, Primordial**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)**Adaptive Ammo.** When firing their rifle, the sniper can select a special type of ammunition used with each shot. This is a unique ability combining arcanoscientific munitions with special *Porteur* training.

- **Acid Chewer Shot:** The shot deals an extra 7 (2d6) acid damage, as well as an additional 3 (1d6) acid damage the following round.
- **Coldfire Shot:** The shot deals an extra 10 (3d6) damage, half of which is cold and the other half is fire.
- **Electromagnetic Shot:** The shot deals an extra 10 (3d6) lightning damage.
- **Lander Rounds:** Made of a laden material, this shot causes any creature flying above ground to descend 15 feet each time they are struck by a round (this movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.)

Marksmanship. The sniper doubles their proficiency bonus when making ranged attack rolls with a scoped rifle.**Methia Modifications.** In the dead magic zone, the sniper cannot use any potions or adaptive ammo.**Potions.** The sniper carries 2 potions of greater healing.**Superb Aim.** The sniper ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and they don't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When the sniper makes their first ranged weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** The sniper attacks twice.**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) piercing damage.**Rifle (30).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage.**REACTIONS****Fast Reload.** The sniper reloads their rifle.



Rank and File.

These forces can complement the *Porteurs* or be used in encounters in Methia.

Danoran Sailor

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +4, Con +4

Skills Athletics +4, Intimidation +2, Perception +3; vehicle (water) +2

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Lethal. A weapon deals one extra die of its damage when the sailor hits with it (included in the attack).

Potion. The sailor carries a *potion of greater healing*.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sailor attacks twice.

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d8+3) piercing damage.

Pistol (12). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d10+3) piercing damage.

Danoran Fusilier

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +3, Con +3, Int +3

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Intimidation +3, Perception +6, Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Primordial

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Superb Aim. The fusilier ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and they don't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When the fusilier makes their first ranged weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The fusilier attacks twice.

Bayonet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Rifle (20). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage.

Danoran "Lone Wolf" Scout

Medium humanoid (human), neutral

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +2, Wis +3

Skills Acrobatics +7, Athletics +5, Intimidation +4, Perception +5, Sleight of Hand +7, Stealth +7

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the scout can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn, 4d6). The scout deals an extra 14 (4d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the scout that isn't incapacitated and the scout doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Supreme Sneak. The scout has advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check if they move no more than half their speed on the same turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The scout attacks twice.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) piercing damage.

Dagger (4). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4+3) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Uncanny Dodge. When an attacker that the scout can see hits them with an attack, they can use their reaction to halve the attack's damage against them.

Troops.

If the PCs particularly fumble things, they may gain the attention of larger troop formations. These troops represent incredibly difficult challenges for PCs bereft of magic, and should only be encountered within Methia if the PCs have really messed things up.

Danoran Rifle Troops

Gargantuan swarm of Medium humanoids, lawful neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 170 (20d8+80)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +8

Skills Athletics +10, Perception +9, Stealth +7, Survival +5

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses passive Perception 19

Languages Common

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Chaos of Combat. Any creature that is adjacent to or in the swarm's space has a hard time focusing on magic. A creature casting a spell or concentrating on a spell makes a Constitution saving throw (DC 15 + spell level) or loses the spell.

Grenade Volley. The swarm can use a bonus action to throw a grenade at a square within 60 feet where it explodes in a 30-foot radius. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 42 (12d6) piercing and slashing damage, or half as much on a successful save.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Medium creature. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bayonet Flurry. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (4d6+6) piercing damage, or 13 (2d6+6) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Fusillade. The swarm fires a fusillade of bullets in four 200-foot lines that are 5-foot wide. Each creature in the line must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. A creature takes 36 (6d10+3) piercing damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Danoran Artillery Troop

As with a Rifle troop, but replace Fusillade and Grenade Volley with the following.

Overwatch. As an action, the swarm can put covering fire over a swath of terrain, shooting their carbines at any creature that gives them a clear shot. The swarm chooses four 5-foot lines with a range of 50 feet. They immediately deal 25 (4d10+3) piercing damage to all creatures in that area (a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half).

Additionally, until the start of the swarm's next turn, whenever any creature enters or moves through that area, unless it is prone or has cover or concealment for the entire duration of its movement, the swarm deals 25 (4d10+3) piercing damage to that creature (a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half). If a creature gets caught in the initial volley, if it is still in the same location at the end of its turn and hasn't gone prone or otherwise gained cover or concealment, it is also struck by the covering fire.

Shelling. The swarm can use a bonus action to target a single square up to 400 feet away with mortar shells (minimum range of 50 feet). This attack deals 21 (6d6) bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage to all creatures in a 30-foot-radius burst (a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half).

Risur.

If the party is working for the conspiracy, use these forces to oppose them. Laurny Cyneburg can teleport soldiers into ambush or flanking positions, but generally does not engage by herself. Captain Dale is an expert in battling practitioners of the dark arts, and his Cauldron Hill commandos are ready to take on any sort of supernatural threat.

Regular Troops.

Risuri Rifleman

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 45 (10d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +2, Wis +4

Skills Acrobatics +6, Athletics +3, Intimidation +3, Perception +6, Survival +6

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Primordial

Challenge 4 (1,100) XP

Superb Aim. The rifleman ignores half cover and three-quarters cover when making a ranged weapon attack, and they don't have disadvantage when attacking at long range. When the rifleman makes their first ranged weapon attack in a turn, they can choose to take a -5 penalty to their ranged weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to ranged weapon damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rifleman attacks twice.

Bayonet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Rifle (20). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage.

REACTIONS

Fast Reload. The rifleman reloads their rifle.



Risuri Battle Druid

Medium humanoid (half-elf), neutral

Armor Class 17 (+1 hide, shield)

Hit Points 65 (10d8+20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Int +4, Wis +6

Skills Animal Handling +6, Arcana +4, Medicine +6, Nature +4, Perception +9, Performance +7, Survival +9

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Common, Elvish, Primordial

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d6 (2/Long Rest). As a bonus action on their turn, the battle druid can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear them. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d6. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Cure Wand (50 Charges). The battle druid carries a wand of *cure wounds* (cast using a 1st level spell slot).

Fey Ancestry. The battle druid has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put them to sleep.

Spellcasting. The battle druid is a 5th-level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The battle druid has the following spells prepared from the druid's spell list:

Cantrips (at will): *light, guidance, poison spray*

1st level (4 slots): *entangle, faerie fire, fog cloud*

2nd level (3 slots): *animal messenger, pass without trace*

3rd level (2 slots): *call lightning*

Wildshape (2 Hours/Long Rest). As the feature for a druid of 5th (maximum CR 1/2, no flying speed).

ACTIONS

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Elite Forces.

Captain Dale

Medium humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 19 (+2 studded leather)

Hit Points 195 (30d8+60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +5, Dex +9

Skills Athletics +5, Insight +6, Perception +6, Stealth +9, Survival +6

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Elvish, Orc, Primordial

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Defensive Tactics: Multiattack Defense. When a creature hits Captain Dale with an attack, he gains a +4 bonus to AC against all subsequent attacks made by that creature for the rest of the turn.

Favored Enemy. Captain Dale has advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to track aberrations, monstrosities, and undead, as well as on Intelligence checks to recall information about them.

Hunter's Prey: Colossus Slayer (1d8, 1/Turn). When Captain Dale hits a creature with a weapon attack, the creature takes an extra 1d8 damage if it's below its hit point maximum.

Ranger Features. Captain Dale has the Hide in Plain Sight, Land's Stride, Natural Explorer (forest or mountain), and Primeval Awareness ranger class features.

Spellcasting. Captain Dale is a 12th-level spellcaster that uses Wisdom as his spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14; +6 to hit with spell attacks). He knows the following spells from the ranger's spell list:

1st-level (4 slots): *alarm, hunter's mark, longstrider*

2nd-level (3 slots): *pass without trace, spike growth*

3rd-level (3 slots): *plant growth, protection from energy*

Vials. Captain Dale carries a *potion of greater healing* and 4 flasks of holy water.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Captain Dale attacks twice and can spend a bonus action to attack with his second scimitar.

+1 Cold Iron Scimitars. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) magical slashing damage.

+1 Holy Pistol (10 bullets of each type). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10+6) magical piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) radiant damage.

Volley. Captain Dale makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 10 feet of a point he can see within his weapon's range, making a separate attack roll for each target.

Cauldron Hill Commando

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)**Hit Points** 143 (22d8+44)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +6, Cha +3**Skills** Acrobatics +8, Arcana +5, Athletics +6, Intimidation +7, Nature +5, Perception +10, Religion +5, Stealth +12, Survival +10**Senses** passive Perception 20**Languages** Common, Primordial**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)**Cunning Action.** On each of its turns, the commando can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.**Evasion.** If the commando is subjected to an effect that allows them to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the commando instead takes no damage if they succeed on the saving throw, and only half damage if they fail.**Potions.** The commando carries 2 *potions of greater healing*.**Sneak Attack (1/Turn, 6d6).** The commando deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when they hit a target with a weapon attack and have advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the commando that isn't incapacitated and the commando doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.**Supreme Sneak.** The commando has advantage on a Dexterity (Stealth) check if they move no more than half their speed on the same turn.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** The commando attacks three times.**+1 Warhammer.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8+3) magical bludgeoning damage.**Cold Iron Shortsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) piercing damage.**Chambered Rifle (30, 10 silver, 10 cold iron).** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 80/240 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10+4) piercing damage.**REACTIONS****Uncanny Dodge.** When an attacker that the commando can see hits them with an attack, they can use their reaction to halve the attack's damage against them.**Lauryn Cyneburg**

Medium humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 20 (*mage armor, cloak of protection, ring of protection*)**Hit Points** 150 (20d8+60)**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +1, Dex +7, Con +10, Int +8, Wis +2, Cha +13**Skills** Arcana +6, Deception +11, Perception +5, Stealth +10**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15**Languages** Common, Elvish, Primordial**Challenge** 14 (11,500 XP)**Magic Items.** When Lauryn is knocked unconscious, her amulet automatically *teleports* her to Flint's teleportation beacon. She also carries a *potion of fly*.**Fey Ancestry.** Lauryn has advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put her to sleep.**Spellcasting.** Lauryn is a 14th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). She knows the following spells from the sorcerer's spell list:**Cantrips (at will):** *chill touch, mage hand, mending, message, prestidigitation, ray of frost***1st level (4 slots):** *detect magic, disguise self, enlarge/reduce, identify, mage armor, shield***2nd level (3 slots):** *gust of wind, invisibility, scorching ray, spider climb***3rd level (3 slots):** *dispel magic, major image, nondetection, protection from energy***4th level (3 slots):** *dimension door, greater invisibility, wall of fire***5th level (2 slots):** *cloudkill, dominate person, hold monster***6th level (1 slot):** *seeming, true seeing***7th level (1 slot):** *delayed blast fireball, teleport***Sorcery Points (14/Day).** Lauryn can use sorcery points to gain additional spell slots, or sacrifice spell slots to gain additional sorcery points.

- ♦ **Creating Spell Slots & Sorcery Points.** As a bonus action on her turn, Lauryn can expend one spell slot and either gain a number of sorcerer points equal to the slot's level or create a spell slot by expending sorcery points (1st-level—2 points, 2nd-level—3 points, 3rd-level—5 points, 4th-level—6 points, 5th-level—7 points).

- ♦ **Metamagic: Distant Spell.** When Lauryn casts a that has a range of 5 feet or greater, she can spend 1 sorcery point to double the range of the spell. When Lauryn casts a spell that has a range of touch, she can spend 1 sorcery point to make the range of the spell 30 feet.

- ♦ **Metamagic: Quicken Spell.** When Lauryn casts a spell that has a casting time of 1 action, she can spend 2 sorcery points to change the casting time to 1 bonus action for this casting.

- ♦ **Metamagic: Subtle Spell.** When Lauryn casts a spell, she can spend 1 sorcery point to cast it without any somatic or verbal components.

- ♦ **Metamagic: Twinned Spell.** When Lauryn casts a spell that targets only one creature and doesn't have a range of self, she can spend a number of sorcery points equal to the spell's level to target a second creature in range with the same spell (1 sorcery point if the spell is a cantrip). To be eligible for Twinned Spell, a spell must be incapable of targeting more than one creature at the spell's current level.

War Magic. Lauryn has advantage when she is concentrating on a spell and has to make a Constitution saving throw from taking damage, she can wield weapons or a shield in both hands and still make somatic components for spellcasting, and she can use her reaction to cast a spell (maximum casting time: 1 action) at a creature that provokes an opportunity attack from her.**ACTIONS****Unarmed.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1 bludgeoning damage.**Masterful Insult.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, range 100/200 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is mildly embarrassed.

Appendix Three: Magic

New Magic Items.

Armatura Divinitatae.

Armor (plate), very rare (requires attunement)

This gleaming golden set of heavy armor is inscribed with hundreds of depictions of holy soldiers battling against demons and heretics. While you are wearing this pristine set of plate, you have a +1 bonus to AC and your unarmed strikes deal 2d8 magical bludgeoning damage + your Strength modifier.

Arsenal of Dhebisu.

The greatest warrior of her day snatched a falling star and used it to slay a rakshasa. This shining mote of the heavens is the raw ideal of "weapon," and thus can take the form of any killing tool its wielder might need.

Wondrous item, artifact

You gain a +4 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. Once on your turn, while you are wielding this rock you can transform it into any non-firearm weapon of Small, Medium, or Large size—melee or ranged, one-handed or two-handed, simple or martial. If you release it for more than a minute, it reverts to being a (brilliantly-glowing) rock.

If in the form of a melee weapon, it increases the DC for *ki* features used through the weapon by 2, and allows the wielder to spend 1 *ki* point as a reaction after a successful strike to make a Strength (Athletics) check to try to disarm, push, or trip the target. You have advantage on the check.

If a ranged weapon that uses missiles, they deal an extra 2d6 fire damage and it never runs out of ammunition.

If a thrown weapon, it returns to your hand immediately after being thrown and ignores armor bonuses to AC.

When you have changed the weapon's shape each round for at least 3 rounds, and the weapon has not had the same shape twice during that time, you gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, damage rolls, AC, and saving throws.

The *arsenal of Dhebisu* can be destroyed if struck by a blacksmith's hammer that was used to forge thirteen different types of weapons.

Kuat Lengen.

Made from massive strands of black hair, this exceptionally large longbow has the same consistency as steel. A single taut line of bone-white ligament connects the top of the bow to its bottom.

Weapon (longbow), very rare

You have a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this longbow. It is made of hairs shed from Hewanharimau as he was hunted across Elfaivar. If you are an elf, you must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw at the end of every long rest the weapon is in your possession, or contract lycanthropy. Non-elves must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for the following day.

If you have any animal companions, you can make a specialty shot. Once per day, you fire an arrow at a location within range. Immediately after the shot, your animal companion appears at the location struck

and can immediately act. Making this shot can be done as a reaction if you have an attack bonus of +10 or higher.

Third Blade of Srasama.

In your hands you hold a sliver of a goddess. The gleaming mithral weapon transforms to a blade of fire or back at a thought. In your mind's eye you feel the presence of Srasama's second aspect, that of the mother-protector.

Weapon (longsword), artifact (requires attunement)

You have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this longsword, and on a successful hit it deals an extra 7 (2d6) fire damage. You can only attune to it if you are eladrin or follow eladrin philosophy and religion. You can use a bonus action or reaction to teleport the weapon to your grasp from any distance across the world.

While attuned to the blade, you have advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) checks. Three times between long rests, when you attack with this weapon you can use a bonus action to cast *mass cure wounds*.

You know the status and location of all women within 1 mile, and if you have met them before, you also knows their identities. If this power is ever used to harm innocents, you immolate, taking 5d6 fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished (an action and DC 13 Dexterity saving throw). The sword teleports away and will never serve you again.

If a mother who witnessed the death of her daughter willingly plunges the blade into her heart, both she and the blade are incinerated, leaving behind nothing but ash.

New Martial Training.

Bullet Slice.

This is not a technique practiced idly. As a bullet flies at you, before you even register the sound of the gun's retort you swing your blade and cut the projectile in twain, feeling the breeze of two chunks of metal fly past.

Martial Scientist training boon

Requirement: Characters with the Martial Scientist theme who spend time training with the eladrin warrior-monks of Sentosa can use this power. As with all martial scientist powers, you can only have one ready at a time, chosen after one hour of study and preparation.

Description: This technique protects you from firearms and other ranged weapons, similar to the Deflect Arrows feat. You must be wielding a slashing weapon with at least a +1 enhancement bonus. Once per round when you or an adjacent creature would be hit with a ranged weapon attack—even one you are unaware of—you can slice the incoming weapon or projectile in two, causing the attack's target to take no damage. Magical weapons or ammunition are simply deflected if your weapon's enhancement bonus is lower than the attacking weapon's.

Unusually massive ranged weapons (such as cannon shells or ballista bolts) can also be sliced in two, as long as your weapon or projectile is smaller than your weapon's blade. You likely cannot slice boulders in two.

Appendix Four: Methia Gazeteer

THE CAPITAL CITY OF THE CLERGY PRIOR TO THE death of Srasama, Methia was abandoned five centuries ago after the Great Malice. As the Clergy fled their city, the common citizens of what would become Danor united together under the direction of a tiefling named Jierre. Forsaking the former center of power, Methia was left to languish.

Methia is a metropolis-sized settlement, now devoid of the citizens, where no sound echoes save the rustling of a constant cold breeze. A few trees and plants still grow near the river where occasionally fog will water them, but the overcast skies never give forth rain. Wild animals and crawling insects wander in occasionally, but flying creatures avoid it. The city's buildings are predominantly bone white, giving the city a barren, skeletal look.

Layout.

Divided in half by the Église River, the south-western portion of the city, known as Holy Methia for its high population of priests, is ringed by white marble walls. North of the river is the *Urbem Postulatoris* (Postulant's City), once home of the lay and common folk.

Holy Methia was left relatively intact following the disastrous end to the Clergy's war against the eladrin of Elfaivar. Originally home to the most senior clerics and anointed servants, this portion of the city was thought to be free from the wars that raged throughout the distant east. Most citizens were afflicted by the horrific curse laid down by Srasama, and transformed into tieflings, while others simply fled the city in grief and panic. Today, Holy Methia bears few scars from the momentous fall, exuding an eerie aura of calm and sorrow.

The *Urbem Postulatoris* was the site of tightly packed ghettos, filled with pilgrims seeking admission to the holy city proper. Almost ten-times the size of Holy Methia, the Clergy believed that if an attack ever occurred, the citizens of this area could be called upon to form a wall of holy flagellants to throw at their enemies. When Srasama was destroyed, the citizens of this region turned on each other in a night of butchery and blood. Little remains of this portion of the city other than the broken ruins of tenements and minor churches dedicated to the various saints of the Clergy.

Modern Methia is all but vacant, only the recent arrival of Danoran military units for preparatory war games has added any substantial populace to the great city. Along with the Danoran military increase, a small number of Eschatologists have holed up in the city for the past decade, residing within and waiting for their perceived judgment day.

The Three Gates.

The city walls of Holy Methia rise like marble cliffs 60 feet high. The wall completely encircles the city, except for portions along the Église River that lie outside of it. Roads lead into the city from the northwest, from the south, and following the river from the southeast, each of them leading into a beautiful gate. Entrants were once blessed by passing beneath these gates (and magically-compelled to be faithful and pious). Today the gates—masterpieces of architecture—are all in good repair.

Squads of riflemen and marines laxly patrol the ramparts of the wall, not taking their duties very seriously and spending as much time as possible indoors in the battlements to avoid the chill winds. Still, the ground around the city is open for half a mile at least, so approaching travelers will likely be spotted.

Ostium Judicii.

Twin statues of pure marble—one of a fisherman wielding a harpoon, and the other of a fully armored holy warrior—flank the city's primary entrance, *Ostium Judicii* (Gate of Judgment), which faces south, to the road that leads to Cherage. Once defended by various spells and wards, the modern gate is a tactical nightmare, with no physical doors to prevent entrance.

Danoran troops guard this entrance with zeal because their commanders; even though they've never had to actually fight back intruders, their commanders harshly punish dereliction of duty. The soldiers have set-up half-a-dozen barricades and defensive lines made from old marble columns and stone debris in canvas sacks. Over 60 well-armed soldiers watch the gate at any time.

Ostium Splendoris.

The northwestern entrance, *Ostium Splendoris* (Gate of Splendor) is named after the brilliant reflection its sealed doors have against the rising sun. The Clergy kept it open from dawn to noon, then forced most travelers to wait and pray in its glow until it opened again. The Danorans keep it closed at all times.

Ostium Pietatem.

Near the river, the *Ostium Pietatem* (Gate of Piety) normally remained shut, but acted as an expedited entrance elite members of the Clergy who bore the proper key. While not magically powered, the unique key shape required by the gate has vexed Danoran engineers, leaving the gate all but abandoned by Danoran military personnel.

Aspirants' Bridge.

Constructed as the sole link between Holy Methia and the *Urbem Postulatoris*, this bridge suffered greatly during the death of Srasama, since its structure was dependent on magic.

Made of the same white-stone that marks most Methian structures, the 3-foot high railing of the bridge is inscribed with names—each a survivor of the First Victory—which were etched on the bridge when the champions returned to Methia from the war of expansion.



Now the bridge is home to Danoran sniper training grounds. Snipers take up positions on the Holy Methia side of the bridge, and take shots across the gap at varying targets that are set-up for them. A smaller patrol of Danoran soldiers resides on the Urbem Postulatoris side, charged with replacing struck training dummies and monitoring the Église River for signs of smuggler boats seeking to sack the city.

Docks.

Where Holy Methia is bordered by the river, Clergy naval vessels once would disgorge soldiers and workers. Today the docks serve in a similar fashion for the Danoran army. At any time, two to three Danoran vessels of varying size can be found at the docks. If it has not already been sunk, the experimental vessel *Lya's Lament* can be found resting here, crewed by a handful of *Porteur de Mort* marines.

Six small gates pass through the walls from the docks, each guarded by a small detachment of soldiers.

Lance of Triegenes.

The former seat of power for the Hierarchs of the Clergy, the tower known as the Lance of Triegenes dominates the skyline even though most of it has collapsed. It originally thrust fifteen hundred feet skyward, but today barely a third of that remains. Without magic to support it, the tower fell in on itself and shattered.

The structure once had hundreds of small shrines that served as foci for powerful spells protecting the nation, but the collapse destroyed most of these, and whatever was left of value has long since been looted. However, a 15-foot wide staircase spirals up the exterior of the tower. Climbing to the current pinnacle—about 50 stories—takes most people half an hour.

Located on a small river islet, the tower has been left uninhabited for centuries, even the Danoran military having strict orders from the Sovereign to leave the site undisturbed, for fear of waking any lingering curse from Srasama.

Despite their orders not to enter the tower, the Danorans maintain a heavy blockade of the island. The isle's single dock resembles a cathedral more than a wharf, and soldiers use it as barracks. They have dug a series of trenches and used debris from the tower to craft defensive lines all the way all the way to the base of the spire.

Other Sites of Note.

If you want an interesting backdrop for a scene or battle in Methia, consider these.

Font of Saint Sharissey.

A few blocks from the *Ostium Judicii*, the grand fountain that is the Font of Saint Sharissey still disgorges water. Crowned with the features of the stern saint, the spring is filled with discarded copper and silver, each piece thrown in by the Clergy of old and Danorans of present, in an attempt to gain the favor of the saint. Danoran commanders have standing orders to arrest any soldier who engages in such superstition.

As a source of clean drinking water, the font has never been truly examined for fear of disrupting whatever technological or magical marvel that keeps it functioning.

Hall of Victories.

This incredibly large structure was built as a museum to commemorate the many successes and struggles of the Clergy. Divided into 3 major areas, the museum has a wing dedicated to the conflict First Victory, a second wing dedicated to rise of Triegenes and the war against the Demonocracy, and a final (unfinished) wing dedicated to the ongoing struggles. They optimistically labeled it the Wing of Our Second Victory.

A group of Eschatologists have inhabited the unfinished wing, using it as a base of operations for their actions in the ghost city (see page 37).

Tears of Hell.

The Great Malice tore the ground of the western edge of the city asunder. Originally housing the barracks of the city guard and military units, the rents in the earth sucked in these unsuspecting residents, plunging them into sinkholes. This act rendered the city guard ineffective during the chaos that followed, another tragic footnote of Methia's fall.

Today the "Tears of Hell" as they are known remain as great chasms within the city walls. Danoran soldiers tell tales of rifts that go all the way down to lava, with creatures moving within, but these ghost stories are only to scare new recruits, since everyone knows no ghosts can endure here.

Factions.

There are a handful of groups at work within the city of Methia.

Obscurati.

Embedded within the Danoran military presence, several Obscurati agents work within the city. While not high-ranking members of the conspiracy, these agents act as the personal will of Sovereign Jierre, informing him of all that transpires within the ghost city. These agents remain unaware of Methia's history and connection to the conspiracy's roots, but have explicit orders from the Sovereign to ensure none enter the Lance of Triegenes.

Master Chief Faradio is a Beran lizardfolk who got his hands on technological designs from Tinker Oddcog and fled to Danor. He bartered the information for a chance to actually build one of the devices and help upgrade a unit of the Danoran army with advanced vehicles. He's also a Tier Four member of the Obscurati (his ring reads *Ole! Bravo! Boom!*)

Uses the island as a testbed for the new machine of war: an experimental tank dubbed *Le Grand Patron*.

Danoran Military.

Across the Église River in the old *Urbem Postulatoris*, the Danoran military has set-up a veritable town of tents and temporary lodging. The surviving structures of the former ghettos have been converted into temporary command centers and military planning areas. A total of 5,000 Danoran soldiers inhabit the town, with an addition 2,000 soldiers deployed throughout the greater region.

Marshal Henric Beaujeu is charged with monitoring the precision of operations in Methia. Holding the title of Marshal, Henric's role is more honorific than any proper position of authority.



Having married a lesser noble, Henric was honorably discharged after breaking his leg during a diplomatic mission to Drakr. Since that fateful day, Henric learned to maneuver himself politically, and obtain a position of prestige, without any actual work. Now the obese man walks with a pacing stick, barking orders and telling stories to any who pay attention long enough.

Minister of War Eloise Duffet acts as a VIP on-site during the military exercise. Holding no official military rank, Duffet served during the last war, where she was a leading military commander in the Yerasol Archipelago conflicts. She hates Risur as easily as she breathes, and has swayed many in the local units to her point of view.

Eschatologists.

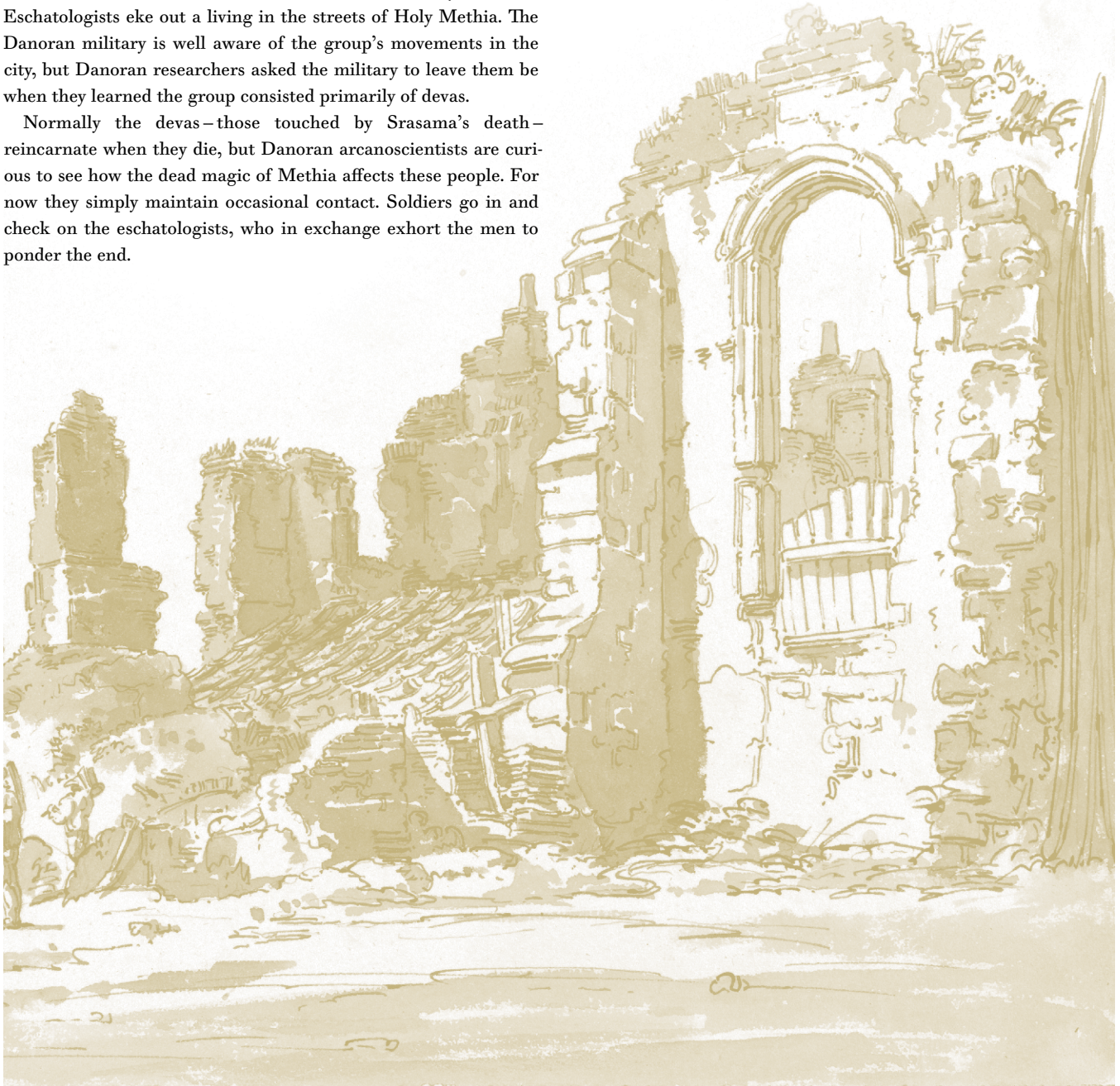
Sheltered within the Hall of Victories in the western city, a band of Eschatologists eke out a living in the streets of Holy Methia. The Danoran military is well aware of the group's movements in the city, but Danoran researchers asked the military to leave them be when they learned the group consisted primarily of devas.

Normally the devas—those touched by Srasama's death—reincarnate when they die, but Danoran arcanoscientists are curious to see how the dead magic of Methia affects these people. For now they simply maintain occasional contact. Soldiers go in and check on the eschatologists, who in exchange exhort the men to ponder the end.

Lady Emselle d'Grise leads the Eschatologists within the city, more by virtue of being the first to arrive. Emselle spent most of her incarnations in Danor and had quite a convoluted history, but she always maintained correspondences with numerous other devas. After listening to philosopher Vlendam Heid a few years ago, Lady Emselle invited her friends to join her in Methia to prepare for their final deaths.

If the party is on the run, they might run into a deva eschatologist who could briefly shelter them. Earning the trust of the eschatologists is difficult, but if the party is honest, the devas are fascinated by their mission and will help as they can to get the party through the city. Dressing like the devas will let them avoid attention as long as the alert level is not too high.

So what *does* happen when a deva dies in Methia? They don't know.



Player Handout: Elfaivaran Colonies

FOLLOWING THE ELADRIN'S CATASTROPHIC DEFEAT, the Clergy established several garrisons throughout the nation, ensuring an eternal presence to keep the eladrin from regaining any military might. In the past few centuries, other nations have looked to the resource rich remnants of Elfaivar, and have begun establishing formal colonies. While the Clergy frowns on these new colonists, they have neither the military nor inclination to get involved in political strife with these new settlements.

Colonies

Described below are several colonies that exist within modern Elfaivar. You can use these colonies to assist in bringing Elfaivar to life, give the PCs additional tools in their search for Kasvarina, or to build some additional adventures in the region. Even within these colonies, the region is still only sparsely populated, with vast swaths of land still controlled by the eladrin. East of the colonies lie thousands of miles of lands that are effectively uninhabited.

Risur, Danor, and Drakr each control one major colony, while Crisillyir has three:

- **Angelus.** The oldest colony in Elfaivar, located across the strait from Vendricce, controlled by Crisillyir. Though safe and established, the colony's largest city still only has a population of twenty-five thousand.
- **Kellandia.** A Risuri colony along the western coast, including the large island Titania. Many Risuri who feel uncomfortable with the technological direction their nation is taking have emigrated here, and while no colony is precisely welcomed by the local eladrin, the people of Kellandia are at least on friendly terms. The capital city **Sawyer** provides magically-resonant timber for ship-builders, and is home to an orthodox druidic circle known as the **Ford**, which hopes to earn the trust and loyalty of the eladrin people. The party will be welcome and safe here, and it can serve as an easy base of operations.
- **Otto.** A Drakran colony along the northern coast of Elfaivar.
- **Rationalis.** A Danoran colony in the southeast, separated from the Risuri colony by Tropaeum. Has a strong military presence to retaliate against native attacks, since the eladrin are very hostile to the mining and industry. The capital city **Valence** is a technologist's paradise, combining a steady

stream of engineers and scientists with arcane scholars who are free to experiment in ways the more structured society of Danor would not approve of.

- **Tropaeum.** The second Crisillyiri colony in Elfaivar, located along the western coast. It was the launch point for many attacks against the dragon tyrants of Ber over two centuries ago, and its churches showcase many trophies from these conquests.
- **Vigilia.** Crisillyir's youngest colony in Elfaivar, stretching along the eastern half of the north coast. No major cities exist yet, and the country is still in the process of clearing out the natives.

Sentosa lies in land that is technically claimed by Danor in Rationalis, though the nearest settlement is two hundred miles away. Later when the party heads for the Ingatan's Refuge, they'll need to enter the Crisillyiri colony of Vigilia.

Minor Sites

Described below are several settlements you can place throughout Elfaivar as needed, to give the party places to recruit help or simply to rest.

- **Bloody Stump Trading Posts (population < 50 each):** More mistakes than genuine settlements, the Bloody Stump trading posts were established by Captain McGraken—a troll from the Anthras Mountains—and his indentured crew of Beran prisoners after their ship was forced ashore by a storm. Leaving some men behind as a base camp, McGraken personally took to exploring the jungles at night, returning each morning with one of his hands bitten off by some jungle creature, but slowly regenerating. He'd take most of his men and march them until they found his hand, then nail it to a tree and have them build another camp while he went out scouting again at night. After 6 days and 60 miles, he found a spot with the supplies necessary to repair his ship.

He sailed back to Ber and asked for permission to reinforce his settlements with trolls from his home tribe, plus more orc, half-dragon, and goblin prisoners. Bruse Shantus agreed and named McGraken "regional overlord" of Ber's "colony" in Elfaivar. Today the various bloody stumps—now numbering in the dozens—serve as trading posts throughout the region. All criminals and villains are welcome, except thieves, who are punished as one might expect.

The party might encounter a Bloody Stump Trading Post anywhere in Elfaivar.

- **Macdam (population 3,200):** Eldest of the non-Clergy Elfaivaran colonies, the settlement of Macdam lies on the massive isle of Titania, technically within the Risur colony of Kellandia. Founded during the Second Yerasol War when Risur was particularly hostile to the idea of technology and industry, the town became home for misfit technologists.



Located along a river and backed by high cliffs riddled with cannons, Macdam is excellently defended and serves as a safe haven against pirates. With Risur's recent adoption of more technology, Macdam has begun to seek stronger connections with the homeland. Pemberton Industries was in the process of building a factory here when its founder fell out of favor with King Aodhan.

- **Port Perrault (population 947):** Not officially recognized as a Danoran colony, Port Perrault was established by a Danoran commodore tasked with hunting pirates in the region. Chosen for nearby hills that provide coal for refueling steam engines, the port is slowly expanding its tendrils into

Elfaivar's natural resources, and might eventually become a full-blown shipyard. Currently the port is home to a duo of vessels operated by the elite *Porteurs de Mort*—the *Boucherie des Mers* and *La Rêve Invincible*.

- **Shaha (population 4,340):** A city founded by an eastern border state of little regional power, Shaha is infamous as the capital of the modern slave trade. Peoples from the far southeast can be bought here, and the leader of the colony—known as “daimyo”—has used slave labor to construct extravagant architecture, believing these great edifices will aid in taming the nearby jungle.

