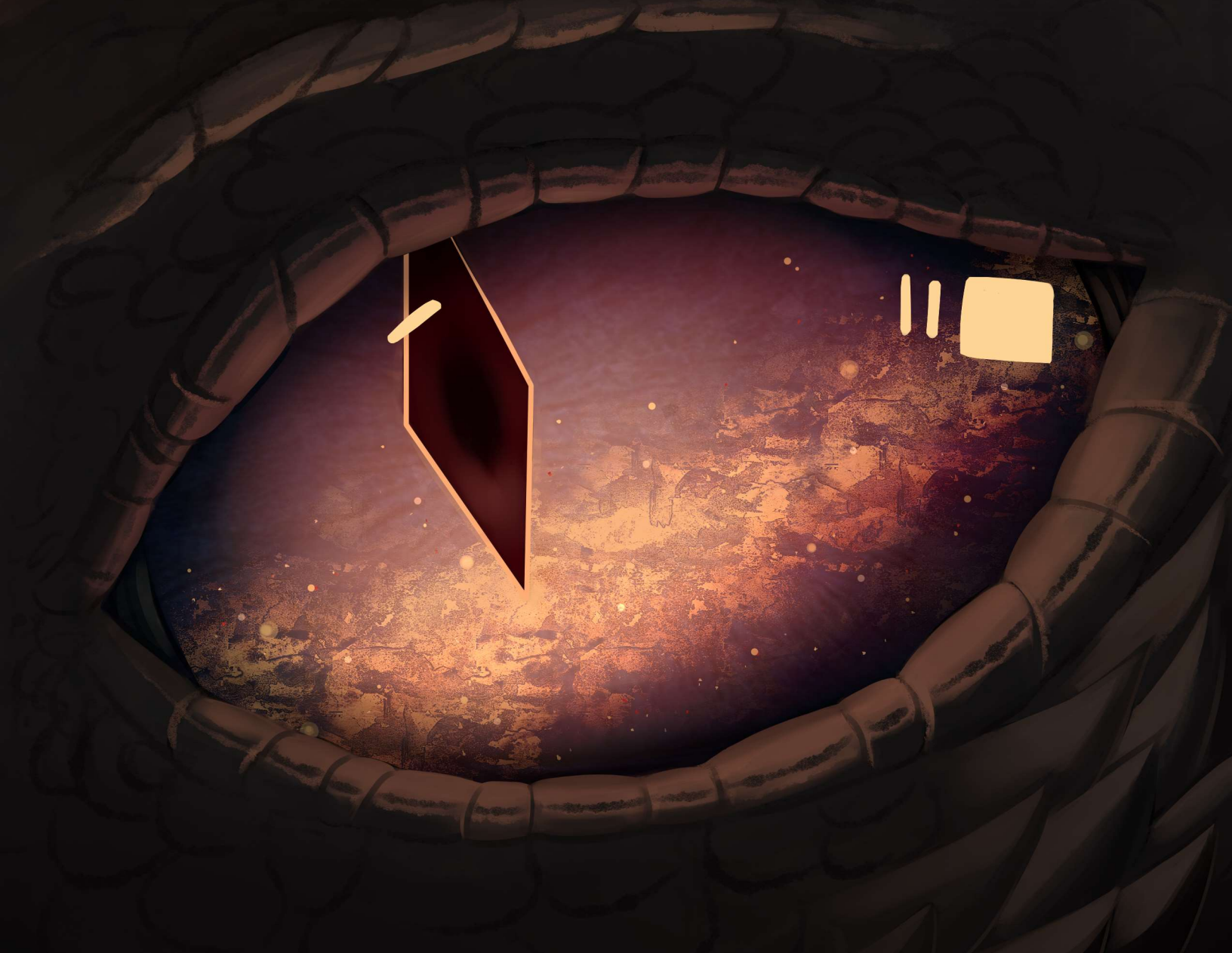


A DARKNESS FROM THE STARS



⌘. A MYSTICAL EBERRON ADVENTURE FOR 4-5 PLAYERS LEVEL 4-6 .⌘

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THE BACKGROUND

SYNOPSIS

A creature of dreams and nightmares takes residence in the mountains under the **Starpeaks Observatory**, inspiring the astronomers to build a magical telescope that will harness the moonlight and empower the creature. The party must discover what is giving the astronomers visions and determine its intentions.

- The party arrives to Tira's Vigil and the observatory amidst strange rumors and cosmic happenings.
- The party is asked by Ilda to stop whatever is affecting the researchers.
- The party investigates a mysterious cavern filled with astronomical wonders beneath the mountains.
- The party meets the creature, which has taken the form of an astral dragon, and must stop its ascent to power.

Note for DMs: In an Eberron setting, the creature is a **quori** that has harnessed enough power to manifest as a dragon. For more information, see the **Epilogue** section for how this can lead into larger adventures. However, whether Eberron or an alternate setting, you may also simply run this as a dragon and disregard the quori aspects. See **The Astral Dragon** for tips on how to run either encounter.

FOR THE DM

- A 4–6 hour Eberron adventure, with tips for integrating into alternate settings
- NPC and monster stats, including a homebrew astral dragon
- 3 magical items and maps for each encounter

SAMPLE LETTER

Adventurers,

Tales of your recent victories have crested even the highest peak of the Starpeaks, and it is with trepidation and hope that I write to you. My name is Ildaeva Luciana, and I find myself the remaining sound mind within the Starpeaks Observatory. Let me be frank: the researchers are in desperate need of your assistance.

I do not dare write the details upon this parchment, as I do not know what is safe. We will speak when you arrive. I can promise you compensation, and desperately beg your deliverance from ~~what lurks beneath~~ these concerns.

Please arrive quickly. It is almost complete. —Ilda

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The **Starpeaks Observatory** is a place of arcane and astronomical research, headed by a team of experts. After the appearance of a streak of light across the heavens, strange symbols appeared in the sky. A creature of dreams and nightmares, weakened but purposeful, manifested within this plane and hid under the Starpeaks Observatory.

To gain power, it gave the researchers dreams, inspiring them to build things, including a massive, magical telescope that will harness the moonlight and empower it. Despite their misgivings, the creature's thrall was powerful, and all but Ilda find themselves lost in the building of the telescope.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several ways the DM can draw in adventurers, and for a longer session, the adventure may be more effective if more than one of them is used.

Hook 1: Rumors. For a more exploratory party, **Tira's Vigil** is full of gossipers and is the perfect place to overhear about the strange happenings in the mountains, all of which lead them to the **Starpeaks Observatory**. See **Tira's Vigil** for specific rumors.

Hook 2: The Letter. For a more direct approach, the players may receive a letter of invitation from **Ilda**. The DM can tweak this letter as necessary to be more specific or more vague. Example concerns: fellow researchers acting unusual and even violent, mystifying appearances in the night sky, rumbling beneath in the mountain below, or terrifying dreams.

If you wish to keep this adventure short, this is the recommended hook, as it allows you to breeze through **Tira's Vigil** quickly or skip that section entirely and start with the arrival at **Starpeaks Observatory**.

Hook 3: Strange Things. If DM wants to personally tie in the adventurers, they may also experience the same happenings. They could have the same mysterious dream as everyone else—the dream of the darkness—or see unnatural lights around the mountains at night.

TIRA'S VIGIL

HISTORY

Settled between the **Silver Wood** and the **Starpeak Mountains**, this town stands small but enduring. After the fire of 696 YK, some settlers of the nearby **Daskaran** fled northward and made a small settlement that they called **Tira's Vigil**—named after Daskaran's statue of **Tira Miron**, the first prophet of the **Silver Flame** and a hero for the people of Eberon. The people of Tira's Vigil are hardy and strong. They live in small huts.

Tira's Vigil experiences lush greenery in the spring and summer and frigid cold in the autumn and winter. The citizens are good hunters. Tira's Vigil has a welcoming aura of small-town warmth that comes with both open arms and cheerful gossip.

FOR ALTERNATE SETTINGS

Tira's Vigil can easily be set in any standard setting, perhaps dedicated to an NPC hero you want to memorialize. It's a good opportunity for subtle worldbuilding.

LOCATIONS AND NPCs

This initial section is meant to be brief. There are a myriad of NPCs in Tira's Vigil from whom the party can glean information, but they are worried about what is happening and will urge the party up the path to the mountain. To foreshadow the later encounter with the yeti, most villagers will warn them that there are monsters on the mountain and to be careful.

THE HOWLING WINDS INN

This cozy tavern is run by **Fendrel Elevir**, a half-elf who looks to be in her late 30's. She hears the most rumors of everyone in town and is a source of gossip. Her round, freckled face hides a sly listening ear. She tells tall tales—most of them true—about the town's history and the heroes that came before.

The party may glean from her that **Ilda** was very nervous last time she came to town and that the people of Tira's Vigil are seeing strange things in their dreams.

NORTH PEAKS EMPORIUM

This all-encompassing shop is headed by **Dinain Forge Maul**. He is a bushy, young dwarven male who is eager to prove himself.

He may tell the party of the special metals that were ordered by the researchers for an unknown project—rarely used metals and strange glass fixtures, specially ordered from all over the country.

THE VIGIL'S GUARD

Should the party wish to speak to local authorities, they can talk to **Tulvir**, a middle-aged brass dragonborn. He is brisk and businesslike, claiming he knows nothing of what is happening in the mountains.

However, high insight or persuasive banter may cause him to admit that he is concerned about the researchers, who have not been back to town recently.

OTHER NPCs

Cassius Montagal is a human male who frequents the **Howling Winds Inn**. He believes the dreams are a sign that the Silver Flame is displeased with the town.

Dhulmus Blackiron is the gruff armorer of Tira's Vigil. He has sketches from **Ilda** of the construction of the telescope and has been studying them with no success in understanding what it could be for.

Discretion is a tiefling who trades in secrets. She will take interest in a party that asks a lot of questions and trade her knowledge for gold.

For 25gp, she tells them she has seen **Ilda** hiding scars and bruises and she believes the young researcher is in trouble.

For 100gp, she tells them about the researchers beforehand, emphasizing that **Ihrtos** and **Achuak** don't get along and that **Avrae** has been buying books about dark magic.

The information the party can gather in this section should intrigue them without spoiling any of the mystery. Give them nothing about the creature or about any of the researchers' secrets.

THE PATH TO THE OBSERVATORY

When the party is ready to leave, any NPC can point them toward the mountain trail. The path to the observatory is well trodden by the researchers. There are clear wooden signs that mark the ascent.

There are several encounters that take place within the dungeon, but the DM may choose to add a simple encounter or a skill challenge to the ascension of the mountain to increase the difficulty of this adventure.

Suggested Challenges. A **DC 13 Constitution** saving throw to endure the cold, a **DC 15 Strength (Athletics)** check to climb a particularly steep passage, or an encounter with four **ice mephits** (*Monster Manual*, page 215).

When the party crests the peaks, the afternoon is growing long and the sun dips close to the horizon. Standing in full splendor against the mountain lies the **Starpeaks Observatory**.

STARPEAKS OBSERVATORY

THE HISTORY OF STARPEAKS

The observatory was built by **King Daroon**, who had grown obsessed with predicting the future by the study of moons and stars. The observatory is now owned by the **Arcane Congress** for use of study. The wizard **Larhut** is the keeper.

FOR ALTERNATE SETTING

An interesting way to add flavor to this observatory is to change who it is owned by, and thus its purpose. You may have a political entity trying to gain an edge by use of magical research, or a cult of dark wizards trying to discover the secrets of some unknown being—flavor this in whatever way you wish, as it will greatly enhance the plot hooks available to you after this adventure is done.

No matter what the researchers were previously studying, they have stopped everything to build their telescope.

DESCRIPTION

READ ALOUD

The Starpeaks Observatory stands as a single looming building against a snow-capped summit. Luscious, deep black architecture accents the ornamented shimmering gold details, as if the building itself is a stunning starscape. The dome reflects the setting sun in shades of blazing reds and oranges, and from the way the surface catches the drifting clouds, you know that the stars must alight across the surface at night. The well-worn path coaxes you toward a blessedly warm building, where large arched doorways with crescent golden hands await you.

The inside is a huge, circular room, much more messy and haphazard than a research facility should be. In the middle of the room is the vast **orrery** of the universe, showcasing the sun, the planet, and Eberon's twelve moons in gleaming glass prisms. More significant is a massive **telescope** that seems crammed into the space, bleeding into every work area around it. Made of many facets of metal and glass, it is the largest thing in the room; everything else seems to accommodate it, not the other way around.

Ilda will answer the door, relieved to see the party. This section will be primarily roleplay as the party begins to understand the researchers, the extent of the thrall, and the danger of what calls to them.

NPCs

The researchers are all highly intelligent individuals who were hand-chosen to lead the research at the **Starpeaks Observatory**.

- **Ihrtos Tathrivel [Elf, Male, LG], Head Researcher.** The head of the research team. He is a dark-skinned elf with his hair in long dreads, half of which are pulled back out to keep them out of his eyes. His bright brown eyes that look orange in some lights. He talks quite a bit and seems almost fussy.
- **Josselyn Stonesworn [Dwarf, Female, NG], Engineer.** The engineer and mechanical mind of the research team. She is a stout dwarven woman with muscular arms, thick waves of dark, ruddy red hair, and a hoarse voice. She is pleasant but not talkative.
- **Avrae [Tiefling, Male, TN], Arcane Specialist.** The arcane mind of the research team. Avrae's rich blue skin is ornamented by his long sheet of purple hair. His thin horns circle back around his head into a beautiful crescent. He acts disinterested in the party, but he is intrigued by interesting magic and will talk with enough flattery.
- **Achuak [Dragonborn, Male, NE], Mathematician.** The mathematical powerhouse of the research team. Achuak is a copper dragonborn with thick clothes and an eye for equations. Spines jut out around his jaw and down his back, and his eyes, a stunning grey, always seem sharp and scrutinizing. He does not talk about personal matters but is always eager to talk about research.
- **Thilinwe Melethrin [Elf, Female, LN], Historical Expert.** The historical and astronomical expert of the research team. Thilinwe's pale blonde hair is near the same color as her faintly golden skin, but her gaze is a deep brown. She is haughty and unwilling to spare much of her time for any questions, and she is easily the most motivated of the team.
- **Ildaeva Luciana [Human, Female, LG], Research Intern.** A research intern. A black-haired woman who is easily the youngest of the team in her early 20's. She is medium-height and lithe, though she holds herself smaller than she is and can be somewhat sheepish. Her clothes speak, subtly, to nobility.

Aside from **Ilda**, every NPC is under the thrall of the dragon, though the extent may vary from game to game. Their conversations will circle back to the telescope again and again, as if they are obsessed with completing it. See next page for notes on roleplaying this section.

ENGAGING THE RESEARCHERS

ILDA'S PLEA

Ilda will be the first to greet the party. If the **Ilda's Letter** plot hook was used, she will immediately thank them for coming. If the DM did not use the letter, she pulls the adventurers aside quickly and asks them for help.

She describes the appearance of a mysterious **door** into the mountains and the deteriorating mental states of her coworkers, saying that they've become obsessed with the **telescope**. Though they started off questioning and wary, the thrall has overtaken them; they not only obey the dreams without question, but they are angry and even violent with Ilda when she tries to investigate further. She is frightened for her safety and begs their help.

She explains that even though they dream of amazing creations, she alone has been having dreams of a darkness that roars inside the stars, then sweeps forward to consume every light, planet, and emptiness before it.

If the party wishes to question the researchers, she warns them to be careful.

THE DANGER

The researchers, who originally studied the door upon its appearance, are now completely under the thrall of the dragon. They have threatened Ilda to keep her from studying the door. If they notice the party investigating too obviously, they may become angry and ask the adventurers to leave, even going so far as to become violent early. This can be avoided with **DC 13 Dexterity (Stealth)** checks, or similar Persuasion and Deception checks.

This section is not intended to dissolve into combat, but should it, **Ihrtos** and **Achuak's** stat blocks are found in the **Appendix**. For the others, use the following statblocks from the *Monster Manual*, increasing the hit points if you would like a greater challenge:

- Josselyn: **Knight** (*Monster Manual*, page 347)
- Avrae: **Priest** (*Monster Manual*, page 248)
- Thilinwe: **Spy** (*Monster Manual*, page 349)
- Ildaeva: **Noble** (*Monster Manual*, page 348)

FORESHADOWING

Most of the researchers will be tight-lipped. However, this section is a good opportunity to introduce foreshadowing about the conflict between **Ihrtos** and **Achuak**. The players can interact with the researchers, learn more about their cosmos, study the star maps, or otherwise interact with the room.

Sow some distrust early on in both Ihrtos and Achuak, and make it clear there is some tension between them. This will take subtle roleplay if you don't want them to ask too deeply about Ihrtos' dreams or to immediately suspect Achuak, but it will greatly pay off later in the **Grand Hall**.

ROLEPLAYING THIS SECTION

Roleplay-heavy parties may choose to interrogate the researchers, wish to help them, or play them against each other. These are the most important facts for the DM to know about each one to greatly enrich the roleplay of this section:

- **Unaware of the Dragon.** None of them know the nature of the creature, which has been speaking to them for just over thirty days. This does not bother them.
- **Communicating Through Dreams.** The dragon only communicates with them through dreams, but not the same dream as the villagers. They dreamed the methods by which to construct the telescope and the orrery and consider themselves divinely inspired.
- **Protective of Dragon.** They are all very protective of this creature that speaks to them, not only because they are under its thrall, but because it has moved forward their research at impressive speeds. They distrust the adventurers' presence to varying degrees, especially if the party express an open desire to kill the creature.
- **A Promised Cure.** **Ihrtos**, whose wife is dying of an unknown illness, has been promised by the dragon that it can give him the power to heal her. He is desperate to meet the creature and receive this power, not knowing it is false. Under very few circumstances will he reveal this.
- **Dreams of Power.** **Achuak** believes that he is special and the dragon has chosen him to lead. Suspecting that Ihrtos communicates with the creature the most, Achuak stole his journal and knows what the dragon has promised Ihrtos. He may be openly disdainful of Ihrtos.
- **Long-Buried History.** **Thilinwe**, as a historian, is being enchanted with dreams of the past. She sees ancient leaders of great power, lost and buried knowledge, and unreadable text she is itching to discern.
- **Arcane Secrets.** **Avrae** has been shown arcane secrets and promised that many more await him when the telescope is completed. He resisted the thrall the longest, investigating the door, but with the constant seeping magic and with tempting, dark secrets dangled in front of him, he is now fully gone to the dragon's side.
- **Alluring Inventions.** **Josselyn** was the first to fall fully under the thrall, thrilled by the mechanical workings of the orrery and the telescope. She's certain finishing the telescope will impress the creature enough to unlock new projects.
- **Protective Heirloom.** **Ilda** does not know why she is not affected. A family heirloom, a brooch she wears to clasp her cloak, protects her from the influence of the dragon.

THE ORRERY

The orrery is important for the first puzzle. Either **Ihrtos** or **Ilda** should take the party on a tour of the facility and introduce them to the orrery, which the dragon inspired the researchers to build.

READ ALOUD

In the middle of the room stands an orrery of the universe, crafted from gleaming golden metals in wide bands around which glass prisms travel, catching the light and throwing it in glittering patterns around the room. These prisms mirror both planets and moons, all gravitating around a splendid sun.

The researchers will be particularly talkative about the moons, which they claim are indicators that they are “protected.” They will list each moon and its meaning, described in the table below, and praise the moons, saying, “We are lucky to be so watched over by the eternal draconic prophecy, recorded in the dragonmarks and in our moons.”

Moon	Meaning
Zarantyr	Storm
Olarune	Sentinel
Therendor	Healing
Eyre	Making
Dravago	Handling
Nymm	Hospitality
Lharvion	Detection
Barrakas	Finding
Rhaan	Scribing
Sypheros	Shadow
Aryth	Passage
Vult	Warding

THE TELESCOPE

The telescope is an engineering marvel of metals, glass, and rare crystals. Getting a close look is difficult: **Josselyn**, **Avrae**, and **Ihrtos** are protective of it, but players who successfully circumvent them may try to inspect its construction.

A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana)** check will reveal that the crystals inlaid between the intricate build act as arcane foci, focusing and magnifying output. A successful **DC 18 Intelligence** check will reveal that the construction seems to be backwards: the telescope is not meant to help vision outward. It seems built to bring something *in*.

The party cannot touch or interfere with the telescope without a violent reaction from the researchers (see stat blocks under **The Danger**.)

PUZZLE AND OPENING THE MOUNTAIN

Ilda will show them a door that seems near carved into the mountain itself. It is inlaid in the stone and has no handle. Spaced down the middle are four glass circles—small glimpses through the door. **Ilda** explains that when the moons rise, the telescope absorbs the moonlight and sends a single beam toward the top circle of the door. This causes sentences to appear over each of the other circles.

At dawn, discover.

At noon, traverse.

At night, stand vigil.

If the beam of moonlight is pointed at the other circles, the words begin to fade. Each phrase refers to the moons of **Eberron**. The party must take specific moons from the orrery, which are glass prisms, and place them into the steady beam of moonlight, reflecting parts of the beam onto each circle through these moons.

The players must choose the following: either **Lharvion** (Detection) or **Barrakas** (Finding) for “discover,” **Aryth** (Passage) for “traverse,” and either **Olarune** (Sentinel) or **Vult** (Warding) for “stand vigil.” Once moonlight shines through the moons onto all four circles, the door opens.

FOR ALTERNATE SETTINGS

Though this orrery, the puzzle, and the constellation room are **Eberron**-specific, they can be translated into other settings with little difficulty. Use them as an opportunity to expound on your cosmos, gods, and lore. The researchers may tell other myths about space or the planes, may describe the positions of planes, or may simply say that the moons are imbued with power that cannot be fully described. Alternatively, portray the twelve phases of the moon instead.

As you adapt these situations to your setting, you may need to write new puzzles. If you find yourself unable to embed your world’s lore, simply open the door when the players think of clever, setting-appropriate solutions. Try to capture a sense of mysticalness in every case.

A CHOICE

At this point, **Ihrtos** and **Achuak** will both wish to go with the party, claiming they will need their expertise in the dungeon. **Ihrtos**, fearing his wife is going to die, will beg the cure before the telescope’s completion, and **Achuak** wishes to talk to the creature before the others to gain its glory.

They will refuse to go together, so the party must choose only one to accompany them.

If asked, **Ilda** will recommend **Ihrtos**, as he seems the most logical and lucid. **Ilda** will not want to come, as she has no adventuring experience, but may be persuaded with a successful **DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion)** check.

RELIQUARY OF STARS

DESCRIPTION

With the door now open, the mountain depths are revealed. The players are given a steady decline down into the mountain through a mysterious, enchanting tunnel. The stone is almost black in the darkness, but seems to glitter with a faint gold when the torch's light dances along the surface.

The steadiest source of light is the beam of **moonlight** unspooling into the depths, coaxing them inward. The beam of light may be described as reflecting off of surfaces to make its way inward, or magically curved downward, as if pulled towards its destination by a force they cannot see.

THE JAGGED ECHOES

READ ALOUD

The first true room that the tunnel expands into is laden with dark stalagmites. Each movement and sound seems to echo a thousand times off the jagged surfaces in the small room, which is only 45 feet by 25 feet at its widest. Your careful movement along the slick floors, uneven flooring, and gleaming obstructions is interrupted by heavy footsteps and two low snarls.

Within this room are two **yeti** (*Monster Manual*, page 305). The echoes in the room require a **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth)** check. On a success, the yeti do not notice them. On a failure, the yeti notice the party and attack first.

While the stalagmites may offer the party some cover, the yeti may also rip them from the floor and hurl them. A thrown stalagmite has a +4 attack bonus and deals **3d8** piercing damage on a hit.

CONSTELLATION ROOM

The tunnel opens into an oval room, lit only by the steady stream of moonlight. The walls in this room are different—the golden glow on the rocks pools together to create constellations that encircle the space. These constellations light up when touched and require a **DC 10 Intelligence (History)** check to recognize. Should the party not recognize them, **Ihrtos** or **Achuak** will identify them if asked.

READ ALOUD

The hushed air seems to hum with warmth as you step in. This room is far darker than the last, but as you move toward the center, the images on the walls come to life in that darkness, and the sense that you are within something vast and eternal overwhelms you. The shimmering surfaces, once smatterings and straying trails of gold, now gather into celestial shapes that near dance under the dim light.

Constellation	Meaning
Aasterinian	Invention and Trade
Astilabor	Wealth
Bahamut	Protection and Good Fortune
Chronepsis	Fate and Prophecy
Falazure	Death and Decay
Garyx	Chaos and Destruction
Hlal	Humor
Io	Magic and Knowledge
Lendys	Justice and Law
Tamara	Life
Tiamat	Greed and Power

A riddle appears in golden Celestial writing, hovering like constellations in the air. Have the characters make **Wisdom (Perception)** checks; the character with the highest roll sees the lines drifting around them first. **Ihrtos** or **Achuak** can read the lines if no players speak celestial:

*The first is that which ends it all,
The second a lone muse's call,
The third a rigid line in stone,
The fourth a gilded, beck'ning throne,
The fifth corrupts, the sixth enchants,
The seventh makes, the eighth's a chance,
The ninth and tenth stand stark opposed,
The last alights the more it grows.*

The opportunity for multiple answers to each line is meant to make this difficult. The intended answer is as follows, but if the party has good reasoning for their choices, allow them to pass without forcing them to follow this exact answer.

They must touch the constellations in order:

- **Garyx** (Chaos and Destruction)
- **Chronepsis** (Fate and Prophecy)
- **Lendys** (Justice and Law)
- **Astilabor** (Wealth)
- **Tiamat** (Greed and Power)
- **Io** (Magic and Knowledge)
- **Aasterinian** (Invention and Trade)
- **Bahamut** (Protection and Good Fortune)
- **Tamara/Falazure** (Life/Death and Decay)
- **Tamara/Falazure** (Life/Death and Decay)
- **Hlal** (Humor)

Once they are lit in the correct order (the ninth and tenth being interchangeable), the door on the other side rumbles open to a tunnel, and the constellations are left gleaming behind them.

ANTI-GRAVITY ROOM

An immense (250 ft. x 150 ft.) oval room, still a dark black with glittering gold like stars, that continues to decline into the mountain. The only noticeable thing in the emptiness is the moonlight, piercing through the vastness and disappearing through the far door. As the party enters, gravity ceases to exist, leaving the party drifting around the room.

If the party needs a breather after the yeti encounter, keep this room simple. The party may use any number of ways to propel or push themselves toward the door on the far end. Reward creative solutions.

For a party needing a challenge, place floating golden stars in their path that require **DC 16 Dexterity** saving throws to navigate around. These hovering stars explode for **2d8** radiant damage on a failure or half as much on a success.

THE VOICE

As they near the door, have them make a **DC 14 Wisdom** saving throw. Anyone who fails blacks out for several seconds and experiences one of the following.

d4	Effect
1	a dream of the universe
2	a sensation of being offered great power
3	a splitting headache to discourage pressing forward
4	a vision of the stars being snuffed out

A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal that **Ihrtos** or **Achuak** also heard the voice. The degree to which they are visibly affected should depend on the relationship your players established with them in the observatory. This may be where Ihrtos tells the party about his sick wife, but that reveal may also come in the Hall, found below. Achuak will either not talk about what he heard or make up a convincing lie.

TREASURE ROOM

Connected to the Anti-Gravity Room is a small alcove the players can direct themselves to. High perception checks will reveal treasure glittering inside. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** or **Strength (Athletics)** check is required to navigate to the room.

If they navigate to the room, they see an ornate black rug with gold trim and star charts stitched into it. A successful **DC 15 Wisdom (Insight)** check will reveal that it is not covered in dust like the rest of the room. A successful **DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana)** check will reveal that it is magical.

If they proceed to the treasure, the **rug of smothering** comes to life and attacks them (*Monster Manual*, page 20).

Once they defeat it, they find **2100 gold**, a **spell scroll** (Moonbeam) (uncommon, DMG 200), and the following:

Loot	Value	Loot	Value
Chalcedony	50gp	(2) Star rose quartz	100gp
(2) Moonstone	100gp	Zircon	50gp
Quartz	50gp	Meteorite	75gp

THE GRAND HALL

DESCRIPTION

The Grand Hall is a long room filled with history.

READ ALOUD

You enter a great cavern littered with remnants long forgotten. Faded tapestries and scattered etchings tell of a world of dreams and of the expanse of the universe, all of it faded until you can barely comprehend what you are seeing. You behold rings of landscapes you cannot recognize, landscapes that seem to shift from scene to scene with no explanation.

Only a successful **DC 20 Intelligence (History)** check will reveal that this is **Dal Quor**, the **Region of Dreams**.

This is specifically to assist the **Quori** plot hook. If you are running the **astral dragon** plot instead, turn this into a room where the dragon has collected remnants of old conquests or more unique treasures.

FOR ALTERNATE SETTINGS

This is another place to laden in your worldbuilding. If your observatory was once owned by a cult, you may place relics of their worship in this room. You may instead choose to tell your world's history. Once again, primarily capture a sense of mysticalness and mystery—and should you find yourself without ideas, simply describe it as ornate and let the players wonder.

THE BETRAYAL

More under the thrall than ever before, **Achuak** will see this room and become convinced of the being's greatness—and through that, his own. He will betray the party in this room.

If the party brought **Ihrtos**, Achuak will catch up and accuse Ihrtos of trying to hide the being's power for himself. Ihrtos will reveal his wife's illness to the party at this point if he did not in previous interactions. If the party brought Achuak, he will attack the party when they least expect it, prioritizing whoever is the most powerful. This will most likely lead into combat, as Achuak, by this point, is far too gone to be reasoned with.

See the **Appendix** for stat blocks.

CONCLUSION

With **Achuak** either dead or subdued, **Ihrtos** apologizes to the party for not telling them about his wife if he did not do so earlier. He is beginning to see that the creature's thrall might be driving him mad, but he feels he must face it and discover what it truly is. Part of him still clings to the hope that he might be able to help his wife.

If the party allows him to continue with them, he will assist in the final fight. It is not difficult to hear the rumbling of slow breathing or feel an immense presence before entering the next room.

THE ASTRAL DRAGON

DESCRIPTION

The cavern is vast and looming, easily 90 feet by 65 feet with a dark ceiling nearly 50 feet above. The dark stone seems more dappled with stars than ever before; even the ceiling, littered with stalactites, glows with golden freckles, and the ground seems to light up with gold under each footstep.

Most apparent is the final destination of the moonbeam: the lying dragon, with scales like a dark night sky that ripple with gold and shimmering effects as it moves. Ihtos is horrified to know that this is the creature that has been captivating them for so long. It is furious that it has been interrupted before the telescope is complete and it can rise to full power, and it will only endure a few questions before attacking ruthlessly.

RUNNING THE FIGHT

Use the below stat block for the astral dragon whether you are running it as a dragon or a quori. Here are suggestions on how to flavor the roleplay aspect of it for both versions. See the **Appendix** for the astral dragon stat block.

THE ASTRAL DRAGON AS A QUORI

If you are running the astral dragon as a **quori**, the quori should be played dark, vengeful, and manipulative. As a servant of the **Dreaming Dark**, the quori is trying to increase the power and presence of the quori over this world. The moonlight coming through the specialized telescope allows it to harness enough power to appear on this plane as this astral dragon; however, without the telescope's completion, it is still bound to **Dal Quor**.

The quori is extremely vengeful and should use the party's dreams and wishes against them in the fight. It should be a nightmare. DMs should emphasize the feeling of being adrift in dark space, as the quori seems to snuff out the light as the battle goes on.

QUORI PHASE (OPTIONAL)

If you are running the astral dragon as a **quori**, then you may, once the players have brought the dragon to 0 HP, have the form melt away to reveal its quori form. Use the following stats for a **tsucora quori** (ERLW, page 307). The quori will be more vengeful in its original form, wracking the party with nightmares while it attacks.

Note. This will make this challenge significantly harder. You may choose to shift to this form once the dragon is low rather than defeated, lower the HP of the quori because it is damaged, or supply your party with more healing potions earlier on if you wish to run this extra encounter. You may also discard the earlier Yeti encounter in favor of this encounter—or, hey, do it all for a hard mode.

THE ASTRAL DRAGON AS A DRAGON

If you are running the astral dragon as a **dragon**, then the fight can take a myriad of tones. You may run the dragon as disinterested now that its puppets have figured out the truth, causing Ihtos great despair. You can run it angrily, furious that it must rely on the celestial skies—this is even more effective if the party sees the prizes of its old conquests in the previous room and gains a sense that it is weakened, relying on the moonlight. You may also run it more mysterious, evasive with its answers, increasing the feeling of the threat by revealing nothing.

However you choose to run it, the astral dragon should always be in control—never let it feel weak or cornered.

LAIR ACTIONS

The lair actions may be tweaked for party composition. Here are sample rotations for each round:

- **For level 4 players:** no effect -> full moon -> no effect -> half moon -> no effect -> crescent moon, etc.
- **For level 5 players:** no effect -> full moon -> half moon -> crescent moon -> new moon -> no effect, etc.
- **For level 6 players:** full moon -> half moon -> crescent moon -> new moon -> full moon -> half moon, etc.

EPILOGUE

CLEAN-UP

The treasure hoard changes depending on whether you chose to run the creature as a dragon or as a quori. If run as a **dragon**, the party finds **850gp**, an **ivory mug with semi-precious stone inlay** (250gp), an **onyx bracelet** (250gp), and a **glass statuette** (300 gp). If run as a **quori**, the party finds **850gp**, an **ornate mirror that shows visions of other planes** (500gp), and large piles of **moonstone** (350gp).

With the astral dragon defeated, the researchers will find themselves free of the creature's thrall. They are relieved, frightened, and reeling from being under the thrall for so long. They may ask the party for assistance in re-establishing connection with the Arcane Congress and getting themselves back into shape.

Having promised the party a reward, **Ilda** will offer **1,500gp** in her gratitude.

PLOT HOOKS

- **The Quori.** In a long-term Eberron campaign, this is a great introductory adventure to the Dreaming Dark and the conflict between the quori and the kalashtar. The party may find correspondence with other quori or may find a map of other places on the continent in which the quori are trying to emerge onto this plane.
- **Ihrtos' wife.** The next plot could easily be finding a cure for Ihrtos' wife, which can lead to any number of adventures. Flavor her mysterious illness as necessary.
- **Arcane Congress.** A nice way to get the party involved in high-ranking politics is to have them act as envoys to the Arcane Congress for aid after what happened at the Observatory. This may lead them on a new adventure to Arcanix or even Aundair's monarch.
- **Signs in the Sky.** For a lighter fare, have the researchers insist the party celebrate with them for one more evening. The researchers will be much kinder after having been freed, and there will be food, drink, and joviality. That is, until the appearance of other strange signs in the night sky, seen through the telescope, calls the adventurers to what awaits them next...

APPENDIX

MAGIC ITEMS

Ilda's Brooch. A gleaming dark opal nestled in white metal, reflecting many colors. When worn, the wearer has advantage against charm and fear spells or effects.

Orrery Spheres. Shaped like the moons, these prismatic spheres can be used to focus spells and empower them for an additional 3d6 force damage. They may be used 1d4 times before they shatter, causing the user to take the damage instead.

Celestial Torch. While carrying, the torch-bearer gains +2 to any Arcana checks.

NPCs

IHRITOS

Medium humanoid (human), Lawful Good

Armor Class 15 (Studded Armor)
Hit Points 55 (10d8+10)
Speed 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Athletics +2, Nature +4, Perception +4, Stealth +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Celestial

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. Ihrtos makes two longbow attacks.

Divine Arrow (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). Ranged Spell Attack: +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., all creatures within a line 1 ft. wide and 35 ft. long. **Hit:** 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) force damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. **Hit:** 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

ACHUAK

Medium humanoid (dragonborn), Neutral Evil

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 84 (13d8 + 26)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4

Skills Arcana +6, History +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Draconic, Celestial, Elvish

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. Achuak is a 9th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *poison spray*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *dissonant whispers*
2nd level (3 slots): *acid arrow*, *suggestion*
3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fireball*, *fly*
4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*
5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Actions

Tainted Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

ASTRAL DRAGON

Large dragon, neutral evil

Armor Class 17 (Natural Armor)

Hit Points 133 (14d10+56)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	6 (-2)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +3, Con +7, Wis +3, Cha +4

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +3

Senses Blindsight 30 ft., Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Actions

Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus (1d8) force damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* (2d6 + 4) piercing damage plus (1d8) force damage.

Radiant Blast (Recharge 5-6). The dragon soaks in moonlight and lets out a burst of gleaming magic in a 15-foot radius. Each creature in that area must make a **DC 15 Constitution** saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Phase Change. The dragon may use an action to change the phase of the moon.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragon takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects. Only one moon may be active at a time.

Full Moon. The gravitational pull of the room changes, pulling all creatures toward the ceiling, which is covered in stalactites. All creatures must succeed a **DC 16 Dexterity** saving throw to avoid stalactites or take 2d8 piercing damage.

Half Moon. Platforms begin to rise from the floor, pulled toward the ceiling, separating the party. Jumping from one to another requires a successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics)** check. The dragon can fly freely about the space.

Crescent Moon. Movement speed is halved as gravity weighs you down. No sneak attacks available.

New Moon. The room is cast into complete darkness, requiring darkvision or high perception checks to attack.

MAPS

See the next page for maps of the possible encounters.

- A. The Jagged Echoes
- B. The Treasure Room
- C. The Grand Hall
- D. The Lair of the Dragon

MAPS

