

Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds

**WAR OF THE
BURNING SKY
4E**

ADVENTURE FIVE



For Character Levels 13–15

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AN ADVENTURE FOR 13TH- TO
15TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

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INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

It is now four months or more since the start of the war, and though the spring thaw should have begun, the entire region is still gripped by a fierce chill. Favorable weather only seems to find the Ragesian army, and it marches steadfastly against many foes. Wise and experienced warriors recognize that Ragesia is not trying to conquer — they are simply spread too thin — but rather are scouring the region, searching for the Torch of the Burning Sky, the artifact which let the Ragesian Empire rise to power.

The heroes return to the port of Seaquen, having secured the aid of Dassen in holding back the Third Ragesian Army (or having left the nation in such chaos and disarray that the Ragesians will have a few months of slogging before they get anywhere near Seaquen). Though Seaquen has had some successes, it is becoming clear that if the Ragesians claim the Torch first, it will render all their work pointless.

When Coaltongue died, the land for miles in every direction was covered by a firestorm which has lasted for months, keeping anyone from getting in to find out the Torch's fate. The remnants of Coaltongue's army scattered in the face of this mysterious storm, but now a contingent of them has descended on the Monastery of Two Winds, which lies in the mountains on the border of the long-time rival nations Ostalin and Sindaire. Divinations have hinted that the heads of the monastery, masters of wind magic named Longinus and Pilus, have the power to hold the firestorm at bay.

Led by Second General Signus, the soldiers laid siege, but they did not count on the tenacity of the monks, the cunning of the monastery's leaders, or the presence of a strange soothing

magic that has stymied all attempts to assault the monastery and its neighboring village of Eresh. In frustration, Signus has left a garrison and departed to seek reinforcements.

Seeing a window of opportunity, the leaders of Seaquen dispatch the heroes to help the monks repel the Ragesian army and gain their assistance in acquiring the Torch. But the heroes are not the first adventurers dispatched by Seaquen. A previous group was already sent, following clues that pointed to a link between the monastery and the magical tempest that struck Seaquen a month ago. Those agents have stopped reporting, their last message being a strangely calm statement that nothing at all was going on.

Two main mysteries surround the monastery. First, a trillith named Balance had taken up residence in the village of Eresh, and has been using her power to keep the Ragesians and the monks from fighting. Balance has used her power too much, and now many on both sides are degenerating into waking comas, uninterested in anything. Balance is growing weak from holding back so much violence, and if she dies the long held-back aggression will be unleashed.

Second, one of the monastery's two leaders, Pilus, was secretly responsible for the attack on Seaquen a month ago, which he used as a test ground for new offensive magic he plans to unleash in the war. His apprentice, a half-elf woman named Caela, has been taking advantage of the strange lull in combat to abduct people, the raw materials necessary for creating the biomantic monsters Pilus is so proud of. Unknown to his brother Longinus, Pilus has allied with the ruler of Ostalin, and intends to enter the war in the coming months, as soon as his latest monster is fully grown.

REQUIREMENTS

This adventure makes use of the rules from the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK®, the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE®, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL®. Additionally, the D&D 4E PLAYER'S HANDBOOK® 2, the D&D 4E ADVENTURER'S VAULT™, and the D&D 4E MONSTER MANUAL® 2 provide useful expansions to provide even richer immersion into the world.

The adventure is designed to be played with a party size of five player characters (PCs) and a Dungeon Master (DM). The encounters and experience awards assume a party of 13th-level characters. If the adventure is run with a different party size or higher levels, the encounters will have to be adjusted to provide enough experience to advance the characters to 16th level and slightly beyond.

Welcome to the fifth adventure in the War of the Burning Sky campaign saga. Since the start of the war, the heroes have carried mysterious war secrets from the neutral city of Gate Pass, through a living forest fire controlled by a dreamborn monster, to the town of Seaquen, a safe haven for refugee mages, and a beacon of hope for those who want to bring the war to an end. In Seaquen, the heroes achieved fame by thwarting a plan by the Ragesian Empire to destroy the resistance with a magical hurricane, but mysteries remained, for it seemed the Ragesians were aided by a third party.

In this installment, the heroes are dispatched to the distant Monastery of Two Winds, where they will have to defeat an occupying army and traitorous wind mages to earn the support of the monastery's masters. A spooky calm has overtaken the village near the monastery, and as that calm slowly fractures the heroes will have two revelations, and they will learn that the war is far more dangerous than previously expected. If they are brave and daring enough to survive the tempestuous onslaught of their enemies, the heroes just might come out a step ahead of the vengeful Ragesian army.

ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

The central goal of *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds* is to persuade the leaders of the Monastery of Two Winds, two brothers named Longinus and Pilus, to help the heroes acquire the Torch of the Burning Sky. With their aid, a path will be opened for the heroes to reach the location where Coaltongue was slain, which forms the basis of Adventure Six, *Tears of the Burning Sky*.

With the aid of a Wayfarer and some protection magic from Lyceum, the heroes teleport into Ostalin, arriving in the city of Yen-Ching, a hundred miles from the monastery itself. After a brief stint in Ostalin, they climb the perilous wintry trails up the mountains, running across a Ragesian ambush intended to keep anyone from coming to the aid of the monks of the monastery. Additionally, several companies of Ragesian forces have lain siege to the town of Eresh at the foot of the monastery, forcing the heroes to sneak past the soldiers to reach the town.

When the heroes enter Eresh, they quickly discover that something is wrong. Soldiers live peacefully next to the townsfolk, tempers unnaturally calm — some people in Eresh have gone so far as to simply sit, uninterested even in eating. The few who have managed to keep some sense about themselves can explain that people are going missing, though no one is motivated enough to investigate. The disappearances are at the direction of Pilus, whose apprentice Caela is using invisible stalkers to abduct townsfolk as fuel for biomantic experiments.

As the heroes climb the mountain to the monastery they are attacked by air elementals which are tasked with holding back all foreigners. When they do reach the top, Caela refuses them entrance to the monastery until the Ragesians are gone and the village of Eresh is free from its strange curse. Even the cunning Pilus does not know what causes the calm over Eresh, and it worries him. He has a pair of invisible stalkers follow the heroes and observe their activities.

The heroes investigate the disappearances and the unnatural stillness in the town, locating both the trillith Balance and one survivor of the original expedition from Seaquen. Balance is growing weak, and soon will no longer be able to hold back the Ragesians. Meanwhile, the survivor, a ranger named Eril, explains that his group found damning evidence that whoever attacked Seaquen has a base in the nearby Valley of Storms, but soon thereafter his companions vanished, and he hid. The heroes have to decide which threat to address first.

For the Ragesian threat, Second General Signus returns to town at an untimely juncture, and his arrival with a hundred hostile soldiers proves too much, breaking Balance's calm, and killing her unless the heroes can help. Released from her power, the soldiers take out their anger on the townsfolk, and the heroes must defeat their leader if they are to save the town.

As for the mysterious disappearances, as the heroes trek to the snowy Valley of Storms, they face many obstacles along the way, from perilous climbs to ambushes by monks and strange flesh-crafted monsters. Once they pass these defenses, they can locate Pilus's hidden laboratory, where they battle a powerful guardian, before facing Caela herself, who wishes to protect her master's secrets, even if it means destroying the laboratory.

Should the heroes focus first on the Ragesian threat, during the battle Caela's invisible stalkers abduct one of the heroes or their allies, encouraging them to pursue. Should the heroes instead focus first on the Valley of Storms, they arrive just as Signus is arriving. Either way, they should deal with both threats before they have a chance to return to the monastery.

When they do finally gain an audience with the masters of the monastery, they must convince Longinus and Pilus to provide them with assistance in acquiring the Torch of the Burning Sky, a task influenced by their deeds throughout the adventure.

The adventure is divided into six acts — The Troll King, Journey through Ostalin, The Calm Over Eresh, The Ragesian Army, The Valley of Storms, and Audience with Two Winds. While they work best in this order, you may need to shuffle them based on the heroes' actions.

CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS

If you are playing through the whole of the War of the Burning Sky campaign, the heroes should already be embroiled in the grand scheme by now and need only a gentle push in the right direction. This adventure assumes the heroes are working with Seaquen in the resistance against Ragesia, but if they are working with another group or hunting for the Torch of the Burning Sky on their own, they could get wind of the divinations which point to the monastery, making it an obvious first step.

If you are running *Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds* as a standalone adventure, the information Longinus and Pilus possess could be whatever you desire, and provide a good jumping-off point for whatever adventure you plan to run next. For a one-shot, perhaps on the heroes is a monk from the monastery who receives an urgent sending requesting he bring help, or one hero might have relatives living in Eresh and hear rumors about the Ragesian attack.

THE MONASTERY OF TWO WINDS

Fifty years ago, when Ragesian Emperor Drakus Coaltongue first swept through the lands of Sindaire and Ostalin, breaking resistance and ensuring that his rule would never be challenged, two brothers from Ostalin watched their homes set to the torch. The wind

carried the flames to other buildings, until their entire village was obliterated. Though they joined the resistance against Ragesia, eventually both realized that the fight was hopeless, and they withdrew, meditating and contemplating on a new path in life.

One brother, Lsi Nu Gon, came to believe that while individual deaths in war are tragic, nothing can truly be destroyed, that souls reach their reward in the afterlife, and that life ultimately endures. Like the gentle west wind, he espoused a philosophy of ascetic detachment, seeking to avoid or endure threats, rather than defeat them.

The other brother however, Lsi Pu, had lost too many close to him, and developed a philosophy of swift surprise attacks, either as retribution or preemptively to ensure no one was ever powerful enough to threaten the innocent. Like the fierce east wind, he espoused concealing one's power, striking without warning, when one blow can be the most devastating.

Lsi Pu had always been in love with riddles and puzzles, so when he and his brother were planning to create a monastery to share their new enlightenment, he convinced his brother that they should both change their names. Lsi Nu Gon, who became Longinus, saw this as moving away from a life that was no longer his, while Lsi Pu, who became Pilus, desired only to keep his past secret, the better to hide his true intentions.

The monastery, built in a mountain valley on the border between the enemy nations of Sindaire and Ostalin, attracted many who were seeking escape from suffering, or who wished to be strong enough to defend themselves. Over the decades, the monastery grew, and a village of former monks and curious merchants was established in the bottom of the valley, where favorable weather made life possible in the otherwise inhospitable mountains.

Longinus and Pilus were born only two years apart, but Longinus is now an old man, his face hidden behind an elegant white mask and his voice rasping and wheezy, forcing him to use words sparingly. By contrast, Pilus appears a healthy man in his early forties, dark-haired and dashing. None has seen Longinus's face, so some suspect he merely plays the part of an old man, or that perhaps the two are half-brothers, and that Pilus has elven blood.

The truth is more magical: Pilus has found a way to cheat death.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you are running this episode as a one-shot or as part of your own campaign, you may want to change some of the encounters, since several of them are designed to hint at events that take place later in the saga. In particular the machinations of Pilus may seem a little out of place or lead to an unsatisfactory conclusion.

As a solution, you can either remove Pilus completely, and have Caela be performing these experiments on her own without the knowledge of her masters, or you might simply use Caela's stats to represent Pilus for a final battle, and have Caela herself use the stats of a typical East Wind monk. Either way, it is best to excise all references to the airship *Tempest*, unless you plan to work a mile-long living airship into your own campaign later on.

PILUS'S PLAN

While Longinus spent his time in meditation and teaching, Pilus acquired a few cunning pupils who could carry the burden of sharing his philosophy, while he spent his time dabbling in countless magical arts, seeking new ways to empower himself. His goal was to take revenge on Coaltongue, and to ensure that none would ever be so powerful or dangerous again. But as Coaltongue was immortal, Pilus knew he would need time, so his first task was to find a way to extend his life, which he did by the age of forty, binding his soul to the elemental air energy of a tempest that had rained perpetually over the nearby sacred Valley of Storms.

Then, with all the time in the world, Pilus developed a grandiose plan to topple the Ragesian Empire. Using biomantic magic he had pioneered, Pilus began to craft monsters, first simple tools and guardians, but slowly working toward his masterpiece — a mile-long living airship, a leviathan of the winds which he named *Tempest*.

Now Pilus's plans are near completion. He has found allied mages of the other three elements — earth, water, and fire — and he has grown a small army of monstrous warriors. As the adventure begins, he has just used his spectacular persuasive skills to ally with the ruler of Ostalin, a petty warlord named Onamdammín, who wishes only to live up to his warrior father's legacy. Before the year's end, Pilus intends to embark Onamdammín's

| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encounters | Level | XP | Parcels |
|---|-------|--------|----------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fire Island | 13 | 4,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patrol | 13 | 4,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pyramid | 15 | 6,300 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patriarch | 16 | 7,200 | 13,13,13,13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Ragesian Long Arm | 14 | 5,600 | 13,13,13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Siege | 16 | 7,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fractured Calm | 13 | 4,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guardians | 14 | 5,000 | 14,14,14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Executing Thashalanos | 14 | 5,400 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wave 1 | 14 | 5,400 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wave 2 | 14 | 5,900 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Final Wave | 16 | 7,500 | 14,14,14,14,14,14,14 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Snatched Away | 13 | 4,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defenders of the Sacred Valley | 15 | 6,600 | 15,15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Valley of the Damned | 13 | 4,000 | 15,15,15,15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Pit (including hazard) | 14 | 5,400 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aurus Attacks | 15 | 6,800 | 15,15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caela | 19 | 12,000 | 15,15,15,15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Troll Search (Skill Challenge) | 13 | 1,600 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gather Information (Skill Challenge) | 15 | 3,600 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Return Hagenild (MQ) | 16 | 1,000 | 13,13,13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Teleportation Event (MQ) | 13 | 4,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Half-Breed Warlord (MQ) | 15 | 1,200 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interacting with a Dream | 15 | 6,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Restoring Balance | 15 | 6,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cold Welcome | 14 | 5,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saving Eresh | 16 | 7,000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chain Lightning | 15 | 1,200 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entangling Rug | 15 | 1,200 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two Masters | 15 | 6,000 | |

army aboard *Tempest*, and with the aid of monsters and sorcery never before seen in the world, lay waste to all the empires and nations of men, until there are no armies left to threaten the innocent.

Of course Pilus is somewhat mad — to commit to this plan, one would have to be — but he at least realizes his plan is unorthodox and somewhat excessive. Surprisingly well-grounded for a megalomaniac, Pilus knows enough to keep the climax of his plan a secret, and until that point will gather allies so that when he does strike, none will be able to stop him. He even briefly tricked the Ragesians into allying with him for the destruction of Seaquen, which got him close enough to the leadership of the empire that he was able to learn its weak points.

Pilus recognizes the potential for hypocrisy in his plan, but if his brother has taught him nothing else, Pilus has learned to take the long view of things. If he must kill thousands to give security to millions, he has no qualms.

THE DUNGEON MASTER'S TOOLKIT

EXPERIENCE TRACKING AND TREASURE

Use the Experience Tracker table above to mark the total amount of experience the heroes gain. As encounters and skill challenges are completed, this provides a concise collection for you to track awards. The chart is colored by events that occur in an act. It is assumed that the characters start this adventure about a quarter of the way into their 13th level (about 41,000 XP — easily accomplished if they participated in Adventure Four, *The Mad King's Banquet*). At the conclusion of the adventure, the heroes should be at or very close to 16th level. There are ample places in the adventure to add more experience, so feel free to create some interesting encounters if your group needs the help. Two areas of expansion could be some intrigue in Ostalin (especially with Haddin's supplying biomantically altered hippogriffs)

and a diplomatic mission to Lady Dene to resolve problems caused by Vidor stealing wood from the Idemmer Wood. It might even be possible to open a trade routes from Dassen to Gate Pass if the Fire Forest of Innenotdar is no longer burning (see Adventure Two, *The Fire Forest of Innenotdar*).

This adventure awards treasure using the parcel system described in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. No specific treasure parcels are detailed in this adventure. The Dungeon Master should consult with his players about their wish list items and make them available during play. Suggested parcel award locations are presented in the table below.

KEY TO THE TABLE

The encounters on page 3 are listed by number identifier and quest type (MQ is major quest and mQ is minor quest). Notice that more than three levels' worth of experience can be awarded.

A parcel is listed next to the encounter where it is most likely to be found. The number is the level of the parcel and the number of parcels is equal to the count of numbers for the encounter. For example, "Patriarch" suggests awarding a total of four 13th-level treasure parcels. No DM should feel required to follow these guidelines precisely.

A WORD ABOUT SKILL CHALLENGES

A DEPARTURE FROM TACTICS

Though filled with tactical opportunities, this adventure deals with events that transcend ordinary skirmish-type combat and thrusts the heroes full-on into the dangers of the battlefield. When thousands of combatants are involved in a clash, this adventure employs the skill challenge system described in the D&D 4E DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE. Turning large tactical situations into skill challenges gives everyone an opportunity to participate in charting the progress of the war. This may require a refresher in how skill challenges work.

In order to make Skill Challenges simpler to read, the adventures in the War of the Burning Sky saga use standardized "shortcuts" to explain the results of using a skill. A skill line takes the form:

Skill DC xx (result of successful check, number of checks allowed, cost of failure)

An example would be

Athletics DC 10 (1 success, no max, fail/healing surge)

This means that if a hero make a DC 10 Athletics check, it counts as one success towards the skill challenge. In addition, Athletics checks can be made any number of times; a failed check

counts as a failure against the challenge, and the hero making the check loses a healing surge.

Primary Skills are listed together in a group; **Secondary Skills** follow in a second group.

The "cost of failure" portion of the skill line may look different for different challenges. In particular, if failing a skill check does not add a failure to the skill challenge, this is noted. The table below explains the most common "cost of failure" entries.

OTHER RESOURCES

The *War of the Burning Sky Player's Guide* and *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide* are free resources that contain rules and descriptions to help you and your players see more of the world than what is described in this module. Rules systems, new feats, spells, and more can be found that help to immerse the players in the unfolding saga. Running this adventure will be simplified if you take advantage of what they have to offer, especially the Attitude Change Skill Challenge system detailed in the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide*. Look for it (and the *War of the Burning Sky Player's Guide*) at the EN World website.

SKILL CHALLENGES TO CHANGE ATTITUDES

Many encounters deal with intelligent creatures that can communicate and reason. Creatures may have the following attitudes towards the party at the start: Hostile, Unfriendly, Wary, Indifferent, Friendly, and Helpful.

Though skill challenges can be created individually for the many social encounters within, this adventure uses the system described in the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide*. This resource has many other helpful suggestions to make the Dungeon Master's job a little easier.

| "Cost of Failure" Text | Explanation |
|-----------------------------|---|
| fail/healing surge | The check counts as a failure and the hero loses a healing surge. |
| fail/group healing surge | The check counts as a failure and all heroes in the party lose a healing surge. |
| fail | A failure with no healing surge loss. |
| —/healing surge | Not a skill challenge failure, but the hero loses a healing surge. This is applied to secondary skills. |
| — | Not a skill challenge failure. This is applied to secondary skills. |
| fail/healing surge* — Skill | The check counts as a failure and the hero loses a healing surge, but there is a secondary skill use that changes the consequence. The secondary skill that helps will be marked with an "*" as well. |

ACT ONE: THE TROLL KING

This act sets the stage for future adventures. The temple ruins where the trolls lair is eerily similar to the ones encountered while hunting attercops in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*. The encounters introduce the heroes to a mysteriously vanished elf nation called the Taranesti. After defeating the trolls, a crypt reveals some clues that show this complex was built as a second Temple of Echoed Souls (to be further explored in Adventure Seven, *Trial of Echoed Souls*), but was never completed and was ultimately abandoned nearly fifty years ago. A Taranesti elf named Fayne Rawnbeck will be obliquely introduced (later to be encountered in *Trial of Echoed Souls*), and Haddin Ja-Laffa will be interested in obtaining living troll flesh to create potions and spells to help the wounded in Seaquen. He is dabbling in Paradim Dogwood's biomantic magical arts (see *Shelter from the Storm*) and considers the trolls' regenerative properties useful in his research.

VIDOR

The Vidor you once knew has changed. As you travel toward the village, a number of townspeople with carts are bringing in wood from the Idemmer Wood that is at the peninsula's origin. Everyone is armed and suspicious and a guard stands on Grimfran's roof peering into swamp beyond. A ribbon of fiery trash and brush burns on the northeast side and is tended by a number of townfolk. As you come into Vidor's center, Leto Moore, the new mayor comes forward to greet you.

It doesn't take long to discover that a troll band has raided the village. Allow the heroes to ask questions of Mayor Leto or around town. The following information is discovered automatically:

- ◆ The raids seem to be coming from the north, beyond where the witches lived. Now that they are gone, the trolls seem to be expanding their territory.
- ◆ Just last night, four women and three children have gone missing and are presumed dead.
- ◆ Five trolls have been observed so far and none have been killed yet.

- ◆ One troll (the largest one) has a number "6" tattooed or burned onto both cheeks of his face.

The heroes can also discover the following by asking around town if they make a successful **Streetwise check (DC 23)**:

- ◆ Two days ago, a dour-faced and rude stranger with an almost constant hacking cough came in from the east and asked about the troll attacks. The description of the stranger matches Haddin Ja-Laffa (see Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*). He came with three well-armed women who never spoke a word and who followed him closely wherever he went. The women were armed with longbows and swords and two of them carried a backpack that seemed to be the man's. After finding out the trolls attack from the north, he went back toward Seaquen. Before he left, he performed a Sending ritual and was overheard mentioning something about body parts and "biography" (the person misheard the word "biomancy").

Mayor Leto is clearly worried for the women and children, especially since the previous encounters have resulted in messy killings and his new wife (Hagenild) is one of them. This seems to be a new tactic and hints at horrible things happening in the troll's lair — wherever that is. He is willing to offer a 1,000 gp reward to stop the threat and discover the fate of the missing villagers.

If the heroes accept the task, they will be given whatever they think they need (within reason) to help them on their search for the trolls. If the heroes balk at the idea, Leto treats it as an affront to his leadership and friendship and comments on their lack of compassion. Any future dealings (even if his wife is saved) will be cold and businesslike only. The heroes will encounter the trolls anyway, but only with the gear they have with them.

Returning Hagenild back to Vidor is worth a minor quest award of 1,000 XP

TROLL SEARCH

This skill challenge is meant to provide information more than slowing the heroes.

Troll Search

Level 13 Skill Challenge • XP 1,600

Complexity 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

The heroes use their skills to find the troll lair.

Primary Skills Insight, Nature, Perception

Victory The heroes make it to the lair without encountering Haddin Ja-Laffa directly.

Defeat The heroes are sidetracked and meet with Haddin Ja-Laffa through one of his traps.

Insight DC 23 (1 success, 2 max, fail/—)

The hero discovers clues that lead the way to the troll hideout.

- ◆ On the first success, there are indications that the trolls are trying to cover their tracks.
- ◆ On the second success, the hero notices that all the marks leading to the lair have six points.

Nature DC 18 (1 success, 3 max, fail/—)

The hero discovers the trail with ease.

- ◆ On the first success, clothing and jewelry from the missing victims is located, but no blood or sign of violence is detected.
- ◆ A large fox the size of a wolf darts past the party's path on the second success. Any attempt to track it is thwarted by the watery bog's terrain. A hero making a DC 12 Nature or DC 18 Perception check notices eleven runes coloring the fox's fur on both flanks. It is clearly an animal companion and a DC 18 History check hints that the tattooing practice was used by an obscure tribe of elves called the Taranesti, who have not been seen in decades.
- ◆ On the third success, the track of the prisoners completely disappears, but the troll tracks have doubled.

- ◆ The fourth success reveals attercop tracks mixed with the troll tracks. Apparently not all the attercops were eliminated in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*.

Perception DC 23 (1 success, 2 max, fail/—)

Subtle gathering of information as the hero searches for a trail helps guide the party on their way.

- ◆ On the first success, the remains of a used ritual scroll is found.
- ◆ On the second success, a piece of troll-like flesh is discovered that quivers with life energy even though it is charred from fire. A DC 18 Nature or DC 18 Arcana check reveals there is some coating or potion slathered over the fleshy part.

HADDIN'S TRAP

If the heroes fail the Troll Search skill challenge, they fall into a trap set by Haddin Ja-Laffa.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Fire Island (page 32)



AFTERMATH

As soon as Haddin appears, the combat is over, unless the heroes want blood. If the heroes want a fight, he will do what he can to invoke a chase and run directly into the troll camp and attercop lair nearby and slip away when the heroes are beset by the more formidable threats. In this event, run the following combat.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Base Camp (page xx)

If the heroes accept Haddin's unemotional apology, he explains that he is attempting to curry favor with his daughter Crystin by providing new healing and limb regrowth. The troll parts will help speed his research into the biomantic arts that will make the healing possible. Any hero making a **DC 23 Insight** check against his bluff will realize he is not

telling the whole truth. If the two archers are still alive, Haddin will tend to them, dousing their flames and binding any wounds. He takes great pride in his ability to modify bodies with such ease, stating that Seaquen is benefiting greatly from his latest research.

TROLL LANDS

If the heroes are not actively searching for the trolls, the shifting waterways of the swamp move them into the new rangelands and they become lost. If they are pursuing the creatures, they easily see their trails. As they approach the troll lair, the heroes notice another set of ruins like the ones they encountered searching for attercops (see Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*). If the fox was seen previously, and the Taranesti connection was made, the heroes realize the architecture is Taranesti design.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Patrol (page 34)



TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Pyramid (page 35)



TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Patriarch (page 37)



AFTERMATH

Only one woman from Vidor survives (Hagenild Moore). She is in poor shape mentally but is able to relate her horror. The king troll had broken into the pyramid a few hours before the heroes arrival. The trip back to Vidor goes easily enough, and the village is mixed in its reaction to the loss of the others and the threat's end. The trip back to Seaquen is relatively uneventful, but takes four days to get back because of bad weather. If the heroes never encountered the Severed Head Tribe of goblins and negotiated a truce, the encounter can be fit in here (see Adventure Three, *Shelter From the Storm*, page 13).

THE TARANESTI PYRAMIDS

If the heroes still don't realize the significance of the pyramids' architecture, have them make History checks when they see them up close.

- DC 15** These pyramids are of Taranesti origin
- DC 20** The Taranesti built pyramids as tombs for great warriors, heroes, and kings
- DC 25** Taranesti pyramids all share a standard design

HADDIN'S AGENDA

Recently, a number of Ostalin mercenaries have contacted Haddin to help create biomantically enhanced hippogriffs for the Ostalin empire. This excursion is under the cover of an Ostalin expedition to find supplies to engineer the creature changes. The cover story is a mission of mercy to help the wounded and maimed regain their limbs. Haddin's real agenda is to use the troll flesh on himself in a way of healing his damaged lungs and obtaining a new lease on life, maybe even immortality of a sort. His current pursuit into the darkest of arts is moving him closer to considering becoming a lich. His imperious conversation and casual disregard to attach moral weight to any of his actions should be unsettling to the heroes. If he is directly challenged about his evil actions, he will lie and appeal to helping Crystin achieve her

new-found religious goals and the completion of the temple in Seaquen (see Adventure Four, *The Mad King's Banquet*).

If asked to help defeat the trolls, Haddin will gladly join the group along with his remaining bodyguards. For encounter purposes, treat any of the remaining archers as bloodied and reduce their defenses by 4 points. Haddin will only be useful in dominating a single troll at any one time. Once he is bloodied, he will run away from the fight and disappear.

If the heroes decide to meet Crystin later, she is distressed by her father's decline into evil actions. He has an 'end justifies the means' attitude that he hides behind seemingly benevolent actions, and many of his results do benefit Seaquen, but she is afraid of his tendencies.

WHAT THE LIBRARY REVEALS

About fifty years ago, Yretb Freafh (the name of the city) was abandoned after the Taranesti in the faraway forest of Ycengled Phuurst cried for help. The northern elves' great guardian dragon, Syana, was slain by Coaltongue, and her daughter, Trilla, had mysteriously disappeared, and now the homeland was in dire danger of being destroyed. All the elves left the city at once to fight the Emperor and his Ragesian horde. In the span of eight hours, 1,500 Taranesti elves left for Ycengled Phuurst.

Only "Six" remained imprisoned, forgotten in the chaos of the emigration north.

A map on the library wall remains, showing Ycengled Phuurst with its five rivers and suspected lairs where Syana guarded the kingdom.

ACT TWO: JOURNEY THROUGH OSTALIN

Act Two sets the heroes on their mission and gets them to the valley where Eresh and the monastery lie. If you are not running this adventure as part of the campaign saga, you can skip or shorten the section in Yen-Ching.

AN URGENT MISSION

When the heroes return, they are summoned to Simeon's office in Lyceum for an immediate meeting. A light drizzle falls on Seaquen, and distant thunder reminds them of the hurricane that struck a month ago.

When they arrive at Simeon's office, the headmaster is looking out his broad window at the harbor. Kiernan, the defense minister of Lyceum, clears his throat to get Simeon's attention. Unless the heroes brought anyone with them, they are the only other people in the room. Simeon offers them drinks and food, though asks them not to discuss anything important while any serving people are around. He suspects Ragesia has slipped a spy into their midst, and he's not taking any chances.

Simeon first wants to hear in detail about how things went in Dassen. As this conversation is winding down, the door opens, and in step the familiar figure of Katrina, with a brown-

skinned stranger beside her. The man is bald and dressed in simple traveling clothes, with a black tattoo on the back of his left hand and on the back of his head. He has a slight smile, and looks like that expression never leaves his face. If the heroes have visited the refugee monks from Sindaire, they recognize this man as Three Weeping Ravens, the spokesperson for his people.

Katrina is a bit displeased they started without her, but she introduces Three Weeping Ravens and the heroes. Three Weeping Ravens is as in the dark right now as the heroes regarding why he has been called here.

"Things are going well for now," Simeon says. "Well enough. We haven't died yet, at least. And while our agents are doing their best to gain us allies against the Ragesians, I'm afraid all our trouble might be for nothing. Kiernan?"

Kiernan draws a scroll case and pulls out a map of the region. He points out locations as he speaks.

"This information is all less than a week old, courtesy of Sending rituals. The Third Ragesian Army is, by your information, going to be stalled by Dassen for a while. The Fourth Ragesian army is flanking around the mountains into northern Shahalesti.

The Western Ragesian Navy is blockading the capital of Sindaire, and the remnants of the First Army, which was with Coaltongue when he died, are scattered throughout Sindaire as well. They are trying to find a way to Castle Korstull, where Coaltongue was slain, which is where we believe the Torch of the Burning Sky now lies — it's just a guess, but it's our best guess. However, a firestorm has appeared over the castle, burning for several months now. They cannot get in.

"The Second Ragesian army has taken Gate Pass, but is having trouble holding it. The amount of resistance they're facing gives us hope that we can still be some use to them, but is also worrying, since it is the one place the Ragesians are actively trying to hold territory. We're still not sure of their goals there, but we are all but certain that the Ragesians' primary goal is covering as much land as possible, looking for the Torch."

THE SPY

Katrina, an NPC introduced in Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*, is a double agent from Ragesia. However, she is not particularly devoted to her masters, and her interactions with the heroes may persuade her to pick a side.

Katrina takes over here. "After the hurricane, we sent agents to investigate one of the leads left after you saved the day, a clue which suggested the Ragesians weren't working alone. Five young men and women headed to the Monastery of Two Winds — it's this order of magic-using monks on the border of Ostalin and Dassen who are skilled with wind magic.

"We received reports, what, every other day? But they were finding nothing of interest, and were confined to the town of Eresh, in a valley near the monastery. The masters of the monastery, two brothers named Longinus and Pilus, have been refusing them entrance. Then, a week ago we received our last message. It was weirdly calm, telling us casually that a company of Ragesian soldiers had arrived at the town and were trying to attack the monastery. Since then we've heard nothing."

Kiernan points again at the map. "It's a short distance from the monastery to Korstull, but we wondered why the Ragesians would attack the monastery, especially if they were allies. One divination we performed returned this result: 'No single wind can destroy the Torch's fire, but a second wind could be its ruin.'"

Simeon smiles. "The way I interpret that is, since the monastery's heads are skilled with wind magic, they have the power to clear away the firestorm long enough for a group to get to the castle and retrieve the Torch, or to find out where it was taken. Whatever has happened to it, nobody's using it, but whoever gets their hands on it will have the power to end this war in a matter of days."

Katrina gestures now to Three Weeping Ravens. "Three Weeping Ravens, here, traveled with his people across the mountains and through Ostalin to reach Seaquen, and he has had dealings with the monks of two winds before. You've actually met the masters of the monastery, correct?"



Three Weeping Ravens nods gently. “They refused our plea for sanctuary. They were not hostile. They simply did not want to attract the attention of the Ragesians.”

Simeon says, “Regardless, you’re the closest we have to an in with them, and you know the way to the monastery.”

“If the monastery falls into the Ragesians’ hands, we will all be in danger, but if we save them from the Ragesians, well then maybe they’ll be willing to lend us aid. It’s a nice balanced arrangement. We cannot afford to pass up this opportunity, so I am asking you to go assist the monks.”

Among Simeon, Kiernan, and Three Weeping Ravens, the heroes can get answers regarding the monastery. Though the heroes can travel overland if they want, Simeon has arranged for the leader of the Wayfarers Cirque, Sheena Larkins (female half-elf Wayfarer), a native of Ostalin, to teleport the heroes to Yen-Ching, the nearest major city to the monastery. Sheena is not willing to risk a mishap by trying to teleport somewhere she has only seen via scrying, and Yen-Ching is the closest place she is very familiar with.

Sheena can take herself and a party of up to 8 people in one day, though it could be very dangerous. Because of the burning sky effect, teleportation should be lethal, but recent experiments at the Lyceum indicate that the phenomenon can be circumvented if each



Three Weeping Ravens — Art by Claudio Pozas

character could become immune to fire. The plan is risky, and a ritual has been devised to impute the immunity, but no one has traveled further than a mile this way, and even that has been unpleasant to the traveler.

In order to leave Seaquen with teleportation, however, the heroes will have to journey ten miles out into the swamp, since otherwise they will be snagged by the teleportation beacon the Ragesians smuggled into Seaquen. Though it’s an inconvenience, for now Simeon is keeping the beacon, using it as a trap in case any Ragesians find a similar way to circumvent the danger of the fires and actually try to ambush Seaquen.

Simeon encourages the heroes to spend the next day or so preparing for the trip, getting whatever supplies they think they’ll need, especially since, if they’re successful, their next stop will be in the middle of a firestorm. Three Weeping Ravens makes sure to bring along several hundred feet of rope, saying it will be useful once they get to the mountains.

Sheena will be ready to teleport them at midnight, since that time seems to be least affected by the burning sky.



THE OTHER PARTY

During Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*, Lyceum became aware of a connection between Lee Sidoneth and the Monastery of Two Winds. During Adventure Four, *The Mad King’s Banquet*, as the heroes were dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Dassen, Simeon directed Seaquen’s General Xavious to select another group of adventurers and send them to the monastery to investigate the connection. The group was led by a ranger named Eril, with whom Torrent has recently formed a relationship (see Adventure Three, *Shelter from the Storm*). If Torrent is with the heroes, she will express concern for his safety.

The adventurers stayed in Eresh for over a week but were unable to gain entrance to the monastery, because the monks claimed that lending aid would bring the might of the Ragesians down upon the monastery.

The Ragesian army and the Seaquen agents were both ensnared by Balance’s power. Caela sent her invisible stalkers to capture the five adventurers, but inadequate information allowed Eril to escape; he is currently holed up in Eresh. The agents were:

- + Eril (male human ranger),
- + Metran (female dwarf paladin),
- + Klezmer (male dwarf bard),
- + Shelton (male human wizard), and
- + Misreth (male dwarf cleric).

Simeon wants the heroes to find out what happened to his men.

NEW RITUAL

Immunity Aura

The very essence of life is channeled to build a protective aura around you, granting you immunity against a single form of damaging attack.

Level 20

Component Cost 5,000 gp, plus 5 healing surges

Market Price 25,000 gp

Category Warding

Key Skill Arcana

Time 10 minutes

Duration 10 minutes

Immunity Aura bathes all characters within the burst radius with a protective aura, granting immunity to effects having a particular keyword (chosen at the beginning of the ritual). The ritual’s effective radius is a burst, based on the spellcaster’s Arcana check result.

| Arcana Check Result | Burst Radius |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 9 or lower | Burst 1 |
| 10–19 | Burst 3 |
| 20–29 | Burst 5 |
| 30–39 | Burst 8 |
| 40 or higher | Burst 12 |

THREE WEeping RAVENS

Three Weeping Ravens is by nature taciturn and serious and views the expedition as his duty, but if anyone speaks with him, particularly to ask about his order of monks or about his people, he opens up somewhat, because few in Seaquen have treated the monks kindly. He makes sure to explain his combat abilities before teleporting, and asks the same of the heroes.

Once the heroes reach Ostalin, Three Weeping Ravens plans a route almost due north from Yen-Ching into the foothills, and then through various circuitous but safe mountain trails, covering a total of about one hundred and ten miles. They can acquire horses in Yen-Ching (teleporting mounts is problematic), and though some of the roads are steep, the horses should cut the trip down to just about three days.

Along the way he slowly becomes more comfortable with the heroes, sharing stories of his people and their legends, explaining that to his people, every soul has power, and the more you know the souls of others, the stronger you can become. This route to power harms no one, but benefits all. Of course, if the heroes do not want to hear him, he keeps his mouth shut, not wanting to irritate.

Three Weeping Ravens spent a week amongst the monks of the Monastery of Two Winds, and he knows them as an honorable group. As for his own group of monks, the Order of Echoed Souls, Three Weeping Ravens tells the heroes that many decades ago, before Ragesia came to power, his order lived in Ycengled Phurst, a forest in what is now northern Shahalesti. However, one of the order's monks touched a group of souls too dark, and it blighted his own spirit until he sought to reshape himself into an entity of callous evil. He achieved his goal, and in so doing, destroyed the Temple of Echoed Souls and scattered the surviving monks. He knows of the desire to build a new temple somewhere in this area of the world, but all history about Ycengled Phurst and the Taranesti who were building the new monastery has been lost since Coaltongue's ascendancy. It is almost as if the elves have disappeared completely from the world. This story lays the groundwork for the heroes' eventual journey to the temple, Adventure Seven, *The Trial of Echoed Souls*.

ARRIVING IN OSTALIN

A TELEPORTATION EVENT

The Wayfarer's teleportation reveals some strange changes to teleportation. First, the travel path does not seem to go through the Astral Sea as is common, but rather the Elemental Chaos. Second, the teleport is not instantaneous. The Burning Sky phenomenon seems to change the nature of the travel to make it time-based. The further one travels, the longer it takes to travel — about 1 second per mile. While in transit, play up the time issue and build up tension that implies that something is going wrong. The immunity ritual only lasts for ten minutes and the teleport will take six. Assuming some preparation time before the actual travel, the heroes may run the risk of losing their immunity before the teleportation is complete. This should heighten the tension. During that time, the PCs may see strange lands and cities and even creatures in the elemental chaos through which the teleportation occurs. Such places as the City of Brass and the Abyss may be seen during the transport. If you desire to make a skill challenge of some sort to identify some of the scenes, feel free.

Traveling more than mile in distance disorients the traveler. When the teleport is complete, each hero is severely disoriented (treat this as an attack, + x vs. Fortitude, where x is the distance traveled, in miles, divided by 10; target stunned, save ends). Creatures not native to the world are not affected by this disorientation.

Award the travelers 4,000 XP as a quest award for taking the trip.

If the heroes do not want to teleport, they can travel the traditional way, which adds another three hundred miles to their trip. Though less risky, time is of the essence, and the heroes should be urged to try the teleport. They will not gain the experience from the quest, but feel free to make up for the loss with a few encounters.

ARRIVAL

Sheena Larkins intends to deposit the heroes in a private garden that belongs to an old family friend at the edge of Yen-Ching. Instead, when the fire clears, Sheena and the heroes are inside a cage with an 8-foot-tall white pillar that looks strikingly similar to the one the heroes found in the steam tunnels under Seaquen. Archers atop four surrounding towers are pointing

TELEPORTATION BEACON

The mages of Ostalin have developed a defense against the Torch, and this teleportation beacon is the first version. Any creature teleporting to or from a point within ten miles of such a beacon (if the distance traveled is more than a mile) is drawn to the nearest clear space to the beacon. The military garrison of Yen-Ching has surrounded their beacon with a cage 20 feet square, with bars for the ceiling. The heroes are the first to actually fall into the trap, but the soldiers are quite ready to pincushion anyone who appears a threat.

The defenders are set up on four square towers 20 feet high and 20 feet wide in the center of a cluster of military barracks. A portcullis gate blocks exit along the ground between the towers. Four male archers and one female priest, acting as a commander, stand on each tower. The beacon sounds an alarm as the PCs appear, so each of the archers are warned before the PCs can perform any actions (the PCs are surprised — allowing the priest and archers to attack first if needed).

Finally, the floor of the cage can be dropped by any of the priests with a lever, opening to a 30-foot drop to a floor lined with spikes (An elite False Floor Pit Level 5 Warider, doing 6d10 points of damage on a fall, +12 vs. Reflex). A second pull of the lever releases a spray of acid (elite Level 6 Blaster, doing 3d10 damage plus ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends), +14 vs. Reflex).

arrows at them. A woman on one tower shouts down, "Identify yourself or die."

If the heroes look ready to start something, Sheena shouts, "Don't attack!" looking more at her allies than at the soldiers.

If the heroes were captured in the previous adventure and taken to prison before sorting out the problems with Dassen, avoid trapping them in the teleportation beacon. Instead of having the full army around, a few mages are making "improvements" to the device and are surprised by appearance. In attendance is a young mage who went with Eril the ranger to Ostalin and helped rout the White Wym's cells in Seaquen after the hurricane. He recognizes the heroes and vouches for their trustworthiness.

Should the heroes provoke a fight, they are doomed, as the towers are reinforced by

hundreds of nearby troops (see the sidebar)

On the other hand, if the heroes explain themselves, the lead priest, a stern militant woman named Felpan (Fau Lu Pan) explains that in a war it pays to be cautious, and says that her lord will want to speak with them. Until that time she requests they hand over their arms and spell components. She promises that if they do not instigate a fight, their gear will be returned and they will be free to leave within a day. Then she formally welcomes them to Yen-Ching.

YEN-CHING

Conventional Small City

Alignment Neutral

Government Military dictatorship

Purchase Limit 15,000 gp; **Assets** 7,500,000 gp

Population 10,000

Demographics 70% human, 10% elf, 10% orc, 5% half-elf, 4% half-orc, 1% other

THE HALF-BREED WARLORD

The heroes are asked to come along, and are escorted (forcibly if necessary) to a small villa at the edge of the barracks. The villa is exquisitely decorated, and guarded by dozens of silent, still watchmen who are almost invisible in the night, each holding a blood red falchion. Felpan quietly explains that they are very lucky to have arrived when they did, for her lord was set to leave in the morning.

Finally the heroes are brought to a soft, comfortable room with dozens of plush beds and beautiful veils pulled away to make a conference space. The air is strong with incense, and the ceiling is a massive polished bronze mirror.

Standing in the room's center is a tall, dark-haired young man, barely twenty-five years old, dressed in regal garb with red and silver gemstone patterns and a cut similar to a warrior's uniform. The man's short dark hair is slicked back, and a strange beard follows his jawline and the edge of his smile, but not his chin. Something about his face is strange, making his actual race hard to place. His eyebrows are long and slender like an elf's, his ears faintly pointed, but his brow is strong and his chin thick, vaguely like a half-orc's. His nose is small, almost cat-like.

Your guide bows reverently before the man, then straightens but keeps her head down. "I present to you the ruler of Ostalin, the grand

Khagan, my lord Onamdammín."

Onamdammín nods once to dismiss your escort, then frowns.

"I apologize for my appearance. The hour is late, so let us keep this brief."

Onamdammín (who is actually a half-elf) has been curious about the status of Seaquen, and whether they are worth allying with, so when the heroes unexpectedly arrive during his inspection visit to the garrison in Yen-Ching, Onamdammín sees it as providence.

The Khagan is not strong like his father. The half-elf son of a strong human man, raised in a world dominated by a half-orc emperor, Onamdammín always saw a weakness in his flesh, and so instead of mastering the arts of war, Onamdammín dabbled in spellcraft and biomancy, seeking to recraft his body into something pure. He has never been satisfied with the results of his magic, and was horrified recently when a fey prisoner gifted into his harem attempted to "heal" him with her innate powers, restoring his face and body to its natural appearance. Onamdammín had the woman petrified as punishment and withdrew in shock, refusing to govern his nation until he was visited by Pilus, one of the masters of the Monastery of Two Winds.

Pilus, a master of biomancy, promised Onamdammín a method to achieve the perfection he desired, as well as a path to power that would let him live up to the standard his father had set. Onamdammín agreed, pledging his nation's army to Pilus's mission, expecting his reward to be one of beauty, power, and conquest. The Khagan is not aware of Pilus's ultimate goal, but even what he does know he will keep secret, for he has been dazzled by the charm of the master of the East Wind.

Onamdammín is considering allying with Seaquen against Ragesia, but he wants to know first whether his respected friend Pilus approves of the heroes. He tells them that if, after their mission, Pilus tells him the heroes were honorable and worthy, then he will pledge his nation to the fight against Ragesia. If the heroes ask for help or claim that the monastery is in peril, Onamdammín scoffs, saying that Pilus is a mighty mage, and that no mere Ragesian thugs can ever threaten him. He fully expects Pilus to ensure no Ragesians ever escape the mountains and reach the lowlands of Ostalin.

This encounter has no grandiose purpose apart from hinting at a connection between

Pilus and the ruler of Ostalin. After a few moments of talking, Onamdammín explains that he is tired and will retire, but he offers them an evening with his harem. The heroes should come away with a sense that Onamdammín is not quite normal — not crazy, but perhaps akin to a rich child with too many toys. Discovering this fact about Onamdammín is worth a minor quest award of 1,200 XP.

INFORMATION GATHERING

If the heroes do spend the evening with the harem — which consists of dozens of women and men of great diversity and talent — they can learn the story behind Onamdammín's obsession with perfecting his flesh, and his recent contact with Pilus, though none in the harem know of the substance of that meeting. They also speak fearfully of Onamdammín's rage after the incident with the fey prisoner, saying that rumors suggest the Khagan decreed all fey found in his borders are to be turned to stone and brought to his palace in Kistan as trophies.

GETTING VIOLENT

If a fight breaks out, the heroes will be hard-pressed to escape. Hundreds of soldiers will answer any alarm, and the Khagan himself is no push-over. Bodyguards discreetly watch through various mirrors throughout the room, and if the heroes cast any offensive spells, only the Khagan's mercy will save them.

EXPLORING YEN-CHING

By noon the following day, the heroes are expected to leave the barracks and the Khagan's manor if they have not already. Yen-Ching itself is a dry city in a flat valley, built over tombs of kings older than the current nation of Ostalin. The city is opulent, despite having to import almost all its food. Massive aqueducts stretch between rugged multi-storied homes, watering the city with snowmelt from the nearby mountains. Numerous schools of philosophy and warcraft vie for dominance, and hippogriff squadrons practice at noon, when the winter temperatures rise to bearable levels.

Magic is not nearly as common in Yen-Ching as in Seaquen, but curious heroes can easily find anything a good soldier would want, from exotic weapons and mounts to masterful martial arts techniques and tomes of cunning swordplay. Most likely, they will want to acquire mounts and set out. Sheena rides



with them until they are ten miles from the city, and then heads back to Seaquen, wishing them good luck and thanking them for giving her a chance to meet her nation's ruler.

INTO THE MOUNTAINS

After a few days of rolling plains, the mountains begin to rise up in the distance, snow covering them and clouds hiding their heights. Progress is slow due to the unnatural winter, with heavy snow and ice abounding, and although the passes remain traversable, the heroes are the only travelers on the roads. A few small villages lie in the lower foot-hills, but once the heroes get more than five miles into the mountains they are completely alone.

The roads are steep, and in some parts, the mountains become practically impassible, so that the only paths are old, hand-carved stairways rising at a 45-degree angle between jagged cliffs. This slope is easy enough for people to climb, but for mounts and beasts of burden, the natives of the mountains have installed simple winches to assist their ascent. A person who climbs the stairs can tie a rope onto the winch, and then attach the other end of the rope to an animal's harness, using the winch's crank to keep the animal from slipping and falling down the icy steps. The winches lock as they turn, and so cannot slip if their operator lets go; they must be manually released.

When the heroes are four miles from Eresh and the monastery, they reach the third of these stairways, except that here, the stairs have been destroyed somehow, leaving in their place a slope of rough scree. Here is where the Ragesian army has set up a watchpost to make sure no reinforcements come from Ostalin, and if the heroes are not observant they will fall into a trap.

Before leaving the monastery for good, Second General Signus had his new pet demolish the last set of stairs on the road. The slope nearby is climbable with difficulty, bare sheer cliffs surround that, and it is nearly ten

miles through trackless mountains to the next clear path. A small group of Ragesians lay in ambush here, changing shifts once every eight hours, though their "leader" is always present.

Though not really a soldier, the goblin Menchi the Headless is a very enthusiastic volunteer, and he is itching for a fight.

Menchi has set an Eye of Alarm a quarter mile before the watchpost. It has normal vision and emits an eagle's screech when triggered. When they hear it, a **DC 15 Nature** check informs the heroes that the sound does not seem to be coming from the air.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

The Ragesian Long Arm (page 39)



AFTERMATH

Captured soldiers will, with a little persuasion, tell the heroes about the disposition of Ragesian forces in the area. They know that the majority of the army left with Second General Signus a little over a week ago and have yet to return, and that the remaining garrison is acting a little oddly. Some of the soldiers here actually prefer being out in the cold here, where at least they feel like themselves.

If any of the soldiers escape the heroes and flee into the mountains, they will eventually meet up with Signus, who will be forewarned when he returns to Eresh in a few days, perhaps dispatching a force to specifically hunt down the heroes.

THE SIEGE

The heroes may be disappointed when they see the Ragesian garrison that is supposedly laying siege to Eresh. Though the camp is filled with crimson and gold tents and efficiently erected wooden watchtowers cut from the nearby forests, the hundred and eighty soldiers in the camp — mostly humans and half-orcs, with a few orcs and dwarves — are not really besieging anything. They go about their duties, oil weapons, and patrol walls, but show no sign

of being interested in fighting. Indeed, if the heroes want, they could simply walk through the garrison, prompting little more than displeased calls of, "Stop. You can't go into Eresh."

The current leader of the detachment is the drunken Lieutenant Kormus, who sees his unit losing its grip and realizes he lacks the willpower to care. He suspects he will be executed when Second General Signus returns.

The soldiers here are not as bad off as the people in Eresh, and relatively few of them are catatonic. The heroes could actually gather information here, if they wanted. Several weeks earlier, they arrived with Signus and prepared to lay siege to the town. After their inquisitor was killed during his ascent to the monastery, Signus gave the order to raze Eresh. The soldiers surged through the gate, reached the first building, and then milled around, only using their torches unenthusiastically when Signus rode in on his destrachan mount and directly ordered them. However, they were unable to motivate themselves to fight, and the villagers were not interested in attacking them, so eventually they went back to their camp where it was warm.

Signus tried again the next day, thinking perhaps it was a spell that might wear off, but even he was not very interested in the attack. He left in fear of being trapped, taking a score of men with him, saying he would return with reinforcements. The garrison soldiers suspect he will be returning any day.

If the heroes decide to pick a fight, anyone they reduce to a bloodied state will attack back freely, but the others lack the will to fight. Each soldier is considered to be in the initial stage of Balance's Calm and so must make a saving throw to attack (unless bloodied). See the sidebar "Balance's Calm" on page 31 for more information. Otherwise, the heroes can simply walk through the garrison to Eresh.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

The Siege (page 42)



ACT THREE: THE CALM OVER ERESH

In Act Three the heroes investigate the mysteries of Eresh and decide where to go next to find answers. The assumed progress of this act is that the heroes arrive in Eresh, realize odd things are going on, and then ascend to the monastery where they are rebuked. Then they investigate the oddities in the village while being watched by invisible agents of the monastery. They locate the survivor of the original Lyceian expedition, and then discover that the trillith Balance — the source of the strange calm that pervades Eresh — is dying. After the heroes save her (or leave her to die), Ragesian army reinforcements arrive, provoking the events of Act Four.

This act also contains events that may occur in later acts, but because they occur in Eresh and might take place in a different order, they are presented here.

ERESH

ERESH

Conventional Small Town

Alignment Neutral

Government Council of elders

Population 1,100

Purchase Limit 800 gp; **Assets** 44,000 gp

Demographics 96% human, 2% half-elf, 1% half-orc, 1% other

The town of Eresh lies at the foot of the mountain atop which stands the Monastery of Two Winds, at one end of a broad, healthy valley. With a population little more than 1,000, Eresh is able to support itself on locally-grown crops, aided by the gentle weathers of Longinus and by plant growth spells from local priests. Scattered copper mines provide for slight income in trade with the outside world, and many buildings are decorated with copper adornments of birds or iconic depictions of lesser wind gods. Though normally the weather would be temperate even in the dark of winter, for some reason the monastery has been unable or unwilling to aid Eresh this year, and so the entire village is below freezing at all times.

There is only one road into Eresh from the outside world, although two roads carry on beyond it — one up a winding cliff path to the

monastery, the other to a forbidden valley to the east said to be inhabited by the gods, the Valley of Storms. An unnamed river flows down from this valley, though it is frozen and shallow now. An old stone wall blocks the entrance into Eresh, but it is unguarded, and would be under control of the Ragesians if they cared enough. The gate currently hangs open.

Eresh is made up of dour but sturdily built stone houses, clustered together on the mountainside, often leaning precariously out

from long terraced slopes. Narrow roads run between buildings, and a few of the townsfolk keep their own gardens, but the buildings are tightly packed, though divided into several large groups.

Snow and rock dominate the landscape, with a few scattered copses of pine trees. The only colors in the grey landscape are the countless brightly colored pennants and flags that flutter in the breeze from the tops of each of the houses. If asked what these mean, locals



will point to the mountain peaks to the east and west and explain that the flags are offerings and prayers to the gods of air and weather.

The town functions similar to a commune, with respected elders deciding on policy, but there being no law enforcement or taxes. During the course of this adventure, nearly all the citizens are too caught up in Balance's power to be of assistance, though the heroes will be contacted by one of the elders, a former monk of the West Wind turned baker named Bechus (Bei Ksu) (venerable male human).

About fifty Ragesian soldiers wander through the streets of Eresh, most of them congregating around the inn, the Peak's Shadow. Affected by Balance, they act as if they are on leave, but they never seem to enjoy themselves, are remain suspicious of the townsfolk, since consciously they know they are among enemies.

A. WALL AND GARRISON

The people of Eresh do not go here, and never really used the wall for defense, so it is not particularly strong.

B. FIRE SHRINE

Four shrines revere the four elements, one at each corner of Eresh. Though the monastery is devoted to wind, its monks respect the need for balance among the elements. Each shrine is a simple one-story building with an elegantly sloping roof and hundreds of banners of the appropriate color, bearing words in the appropriate elemental language.

This shrine, however, has been destroyed, burned down by the Ragesians in their first and only offensive action. A character who meditates in these scorched ruins for 15 minutes gains one extra use of a power or exploit with the fire keyword on the next encounter.

C. LIBRARY

The library of Eresh encourages visitors to bring a book from the outside world to add to the collection, in exchange for which the monks here will scribe a copy of any of the library's current holdings. The monks also can scribe magical scrolls for the normal prices. Any of the new spells detailed in this adventure can be located here. The library's books are eclectic, and possess no particularly vital information.

D. NEIGHBORHOODS

Atop these terraced slopes are the majority of the houses of Eresh's citizens. A typical house

holds a family of four to ten, and includes some sort of shop, since most families provides crafts or services for the rest of the town.

In the southern neighborhood, one building stands out, its roof a shiny copper that has never tarnished over decades of rain and snow. This is the Eresh healing house, where monks of the West Wind use their magic to tend the sick and injured, and to study strange methods of non-magical healing.

E. PEAK'S SHADOW

The only inn in town services the needs of townsfolk and the rare visitors. It lies at the base of a sharp spire of rock 100 feet high, which can be ascended through a narrow and steep circling path of steps terminating at a small shrine. A large gong hangs in the shrine, and when struck its sound can be heard as far away as the monastery. Traditionally the gong is sounded once at sunrise and again at sunset, and multiple times on various holidays, but it has been silent for weeks, ever since Signus attacked.

The owner of the inn is a foreigner, Thashalanos (male elf ranger), a Shahalesti expatriate and retired soldier who lacked the discipline for the monastery, but who liked the weather and the people.

F. MOUNTAIN SHRINE

A character who meditates at the underground chamber in the center of this sturdy shrine for 15 minutes gains one extra use of a power with the healing keyword on the next encounter.

G. RIVER SHRINE

The monks here coated the walls with water which froze, giving the shrine a glistening shine. A character meditating in a boat on the frozen river for 15 minutes gains one extra use of a power or exploit with the cold or acid keyword on the next encounter.

H. FARMS

The farmland of Eresh cannot grow crops in this weather, and the fields lie fallow. Thankfully, the wise monks have stored more than enough food for a year of winter.

I. WIND SHRINE

A mage who meditates on the roof of this monastery for 15 minutes gains one extra use of a power or exploit with the force or thunder keyword on the next encounter.

THE PEAK'S SHADOW

Three Weeping Ravens recommends the Peak's Shadow as a good starting point, both to find lodging and to learn what is going on in the town. The inn, Eresh's only one, is built from stone carved from the rock of the nearby stony outcropping, and it always lies in the shade at sunrise, giving its drunks more than enough time to stagger home without too much bright light, though among the disciplined families of former monks, excessive drinking is usually only for special occasions.

Presently it is crowded day and night, though not at all boisterous. Both townsfolk and soldiers laze about here, several of them practically unconscious. The owner, Thashalanos, has managed so far to resist slipping that far, and he recognizes that something is amiss.

A hub of sorts for the village, it will not be hard for the heroes to notice a relatively high amount of traffic in and out of the inn. When the heroes arrive, Thashalanos is actually excited for a moment to see them, and then he sighs. Heroes looking for information about goings on in the town could do worse than starting here.

ABOUT TOWN

Though many of the residents of Eresh are former monks, there are also a couple of current monks in Eresh itself, having come down to purchase supplies. They are now trapped in the soporific daze of Balance's magic, unwilling to muster up the energy to make the climb back up to the monastery. Their absence has been noticed by the other monks, and is part of the reason that no one else is allowed into or out of the monastery.

These monks, Jamira (Jei Mi Rao) (female human West Wind monk) and Bellock (Bi Lu Kai) (male human East Wind monk) spend their time talking about philosophy at the inn, and are iconic representations of their chosen paths.

The monks are unable to tell the heroes any of the recent goings-on at the monastery, but can tell them about monastery and the order. They can give the heroes an insight into the politics of the monastery, highlighting the divisions between Longinus and Pilus, and telling them about Caela, Pilus's chosen apprentice, who originally followed the West Wind path before being swayed by Pilus's charm.

Perhaps most importantly, the monks will warn the heroes about the elementals that guard the approach to the monastery,

providing them with the codeword to allow safe passage — “Eshu.” Caela has, of course, overridden the code, instructing the elementals to attack anyone who approaches the monastery, but this information will at least allow the heroes to be alert and unsurprised when attacked.

If asked, the monks will accompany the heroes up to the monastery, although they are seen to be unclean and cursed still, so are not allowed back in. Once on the road to the monastery, however, they break free of Balance’s hold, so they might at least be of aid in combat.

Learning About Eresh

Level 15 Skill Challenge • XP 3,600

Complexity 3 (8 successes before 3 failures)

The heroes gather clues about the unnatural calm of Eresh.

Primary Skills Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight, Intimidate, Nature, Religion

Secondary Skills Insight

Victory The clues combine to give the PCs a sense that a magical creature is at the root of the problem. This provides a +4 bonus to all conversations with the trillith Balance when she is confronted.

Failure The heroes receive no benefit in conversations with Balance.

Special If the players piece together the clues and suspect Balance is the cause, then award them the victory.

Arcana DC 18 (1 success, no max, fail/—)

Through use of ancient arts, the hero detects subtle variations in the magical power of the valley. Beating a DC 23 indicates the magical energy has a heavy charm effect.

Bluff or Diplomacy DC 11 (1 success, max 5, fail/—)

Each success reveals one item of interest.

- 1) The feelings of calm happened just as the Ragesians attacked.
- 2) Visitors from the east arrived days before the attack, spoke with Bechus, and then disappeared soon after the siege.
- 3) A few monks tend a healing house on Notus road. They care for those who seem unwilling to continue on.
- 4) Since the event, no one has had any dreams or nightmares.
- 5) There seem to be some people who have gone missing.

History DC 18 (1 success, no max, fail/—)

This effect is seen only once or twice in a millennium, always with the result being madness and death of the population. The

most recent occurrence happened in a small town near Gate Pass nearly twenty years ago. No cause has ever been found.

Intimidate DC 23 (1 success, no max, fail/—)

The intimidated NPC becomes alert and provides the same information as would the next successful Bluff or Diplomacy check. If the hero beats DC 28, the NPC also remembers seeing Agneth appearing in front of her house when the fighting began and change miraculously into a misty dragon-like creature. The Ragesian attacks stopped wherever the dragon flew.

Nature DC 11 (1 success, no max, fail/—)

From seeing the animals in the area, it is apparent the strange calming malady is only affecting humanoids.

Religion DC 18 (1 success, no max, fail/—)

The malady seems to be related to not committing to anything that puts one out of spiritual or physical balance.

Insight DC 11 (0 success, no max, —)

The hero notices something which provides a +2 bonus on the next Bluff or Diplomacy skill check.

THE BALANCE OF POWER

Some time before the heroes first head to the monastery, they have an initial encounter with the trillith Balance.

Unlike the trillith that the heroes might have encountered before, Balance is not an enemy. She is something of a kindred spirit to the monks at the monastery, eager to meditate and withdraw from the world. She emerged from the caverns below Gate Pass twenty years ago and wandered the world, eventually finding her place at the monastery, and though she did not study with them, she was comfortable here, able to pursue enlightenment, and to be free from the pain and strife of her birthplace in the great below.

Balance is averse to emotions of any kind, embracing a sort of emotionless void, promoting a mellow, relaxed, and ultimately apathetic existence where sorrow, joy, bravery, and fear are all absent. She wants simply to be part of the world, not a slave or master. She recognizes that, like her trillith brethren, she does desire that the world come to match her own nature (in this case, balanced), but she believes that the proper path is not to interfere, not even to teach. She rejected the machinations of her fellow trillith.

When the war came, Balance sought to keep Eresh at peace, feeling fear that the refuge she

VARIANT TIMELINE

If the heroes manage to speak to Balance before traveling to the monastery, the trillith does not know to warn them about Caela, and after a few questions begins to cough, too weak to speak any more. She manages to say that she will not harm them, and that they do not need to hold her. Unless the heroes kill her, eventually they will have to release her, at which point she vanishes.

Then, the heroes next see her when a monk from the healing house asks them to come to see the dying trillith, as chaos is slowly breaking out.

had found would be destroyed. Her powers have been stretched to breaking point since the arrival of the warmongering Ragesian army, and Balance has found her control slipping as she begins to doubt herself. She wonders now if perhaps peace is the imbalance, and that war is the natural state of the world.

The townsfolk of Eresh have not only stopped feeling, but they have also stopped doing, overwhelmed with a sense of apathy and futility. People have stopped working, and instead sit around eating, drinking, and smoking in relative silence, not because they enjoy doing so, but because they have nothing better to do. If the effect continues for much longer, people will start to go permanently insane, and when Balance’s control finally breaks, the backlash will be severe.

In day-to-day affairs, Balance appears as a bald woman and man, Agneth and Boren, though only one is present at any time. During conversations, Balance will sometimes speak from a second body, drawing listeners’ gazes to the new form as the old one dissipates. In its true form, Balance is a wispy serpentine dragon with a head at each end, resembling a zephyr wind.

SPOOKY MEETING

Balance lives in a house of its own near the wind shrine, which the heroes will invariably pass on their way to the monastery. As they are preparing to go up to the monastery, the heroes spot the trillith, in female form as Agneth, standing at her door, watching them. Recognizing that they are new, and that their presence might be the catalyst for disaster, Balance waits for them to approach, beckoning them if necessary, and then retreats into the house as they near.

If the heroes enter, they find the house empty except for veils hanging ceiling to floor. It looks like no one actually lives there (though intense searching reveals footprints). Then, a female voice calls to the heroes from behind the veils.

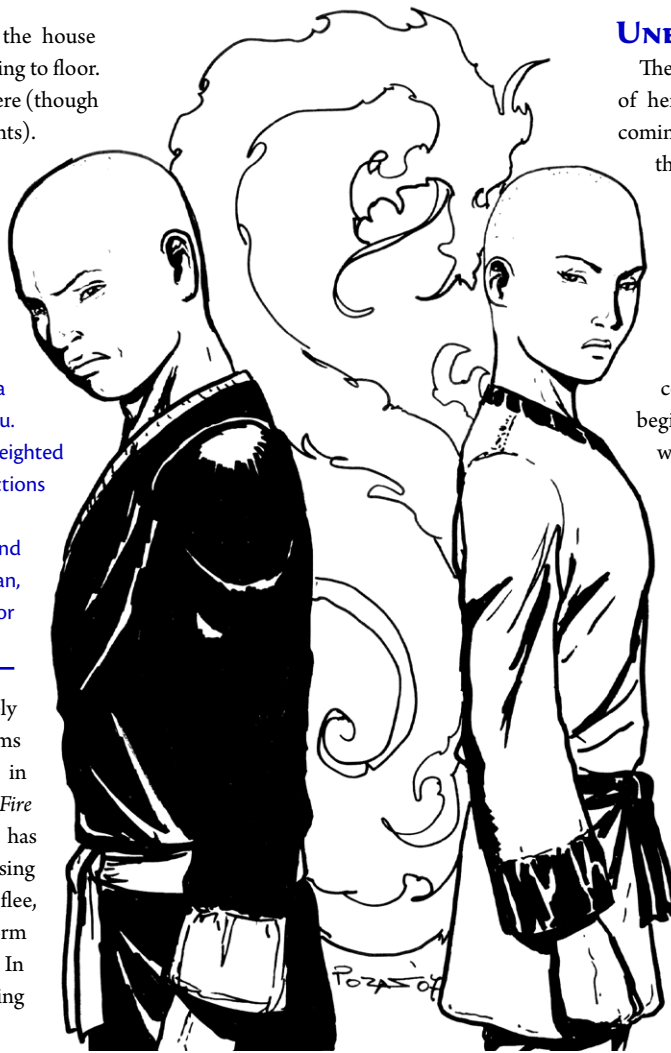
“We are Balance,” the woman says, “and you have met our kin.”

Her form is difficult to see through the veils, and as you move closer for a better look a man’s voice speaks from behind you.

“The scale of the universe is weighted heavily with potential, and your actions will only tip it. This is not balance.”

Veils also hide the new speaker, and when you glance back at the woman, she is gone. Then, when you look for the man, he too has vanished.

Unless the heroes immediately began singing the Song of Forms (which they may have learned in Adventure Two, *The Indomitable Fire Forest of Innenotdar*), Balance has slipped away. If they successfully sing the song, Balance does not panic or flee, but instead decides to speak, her form shifting between male and female. In this case, see the sidebar “Interacting with the Dream,” below.



UNEASE IN THE TOWN

The heroes’ arrival upsets Balance’s control of her powers, as she senses great conflict coming. By the time the heroes return from the monastery the first time, there are already signs that the calm is fading. A few Ragesian soldiers hustle away from the center of the town, looking nervously at everyone around them. Townsfolk wander the streets, calling out for missing friends and family. Some comatose people sit up suddenly and begin punching the nearest inanimate object while laughing and crying in joy and rage.

This encounter occurs some time after the heroes return from the monastery.

Balance’s unease compels her to influence the heroes’ minds when she becomes aware of their return. Any PC making a **DC 20 Arcana** check feels the wavering attempt to charm. They are not the only ones who can feel emotions, however, for a group of soldiers has also shrugged off Balance’s powers and are taking it out on the townsfolk. As the heroes near the Peak’s Shadow, they come across a group of soldiers beating up an innocent passer-by with an alarming amount of brutality, screaming with unleashed glee.

INTERACTING WITH A DREAM

Balance will not speak with the heroes again until they have been to the monastery (not for any personal reason; simply because it is better for the narrative flow). Weakened after coming into contact with the unbalanced heroes, Balance travels to the healing house, seeking aid, though the monks there have no idea how to treat a creature of her sort.

Later, when the heroes return to town (preferably after they witness signs of Balance’s control slipping, and just after they locate and speak with EriI; see “Hideaway,” on the next page), a monk from the healing house comes to find them, saying that one of the patients wants to speak to them. Alternately, this scene might take place if the heroes manage to trap Balance with the Song of Forms.

Balance will answer the heroes’ questions in a dreamy, faraway tone. In particular, the trillith has key information about the following topics. (For each question answered, award 1,000 XP.)

- ◆ *What are you?* “We are a dream, born in the darkness below the world where our mother eternally sleeping lies. You have met our kin, we can sense the wayward elder Indomitability, and others perhaps. Our kind each is born in a dream or nightmare, which determines its nature and powers. We call ourselves the trillith.”
- ◆ *What do you want?* “Our kin have many desires, the nature of which we do not know. We ourselves left home twenty years past, passing through the Gate to the sunlit world, where we sought a home, a quest that eventually led here. Today, we only seek to maintain the calm, but we grow weak from too much strife. Our home is in peril, and we do not wish the minions of the Torch to destroy it.”
- ◆ *What else is going on here?* “The lesser east wind serves her master in this valley and beyond. Stalking claws, invisible and loyal, have seized those we unwittingly laid low, and carried them away to lie beneath *Tempest* to the east. The storm that has gathered for decades will not long idly lie, we sense. Be warned: children of the wind are strong here, too strong for our boon to calm them.”
- ◆ *Can you please stop speaking in metaphors?* “Your eyes see a world of solids, a world we cannot grasp. Your words confuse me as well. We are at a balance.”
- ◆ *What happens if you die?* “We cannot survive much longer without balance; when we pass, the scale of the universe will collapse, and discord will reign.”
- ◆ *How can we help you?* “We are too weak to withdraw our boon from so many, and we will not forsake our beliefs, even if our fleshless spirit be eternally destroyed. Help us by going in peace, leaving, and raising neither sword nor spell in battle.”

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Fractured Calm (page 45)



While the battle will no doubt be short, it is only a prelude. After killing or driving off the Ragesians, Bechus (see “Hideaway,” below) approaches from a crowd that had gathered to watch.

RESTORING BALANCE

Once the heroes meet with the sick Balance, they may seek to save her, not wanting a potential ally to simply let herself die. In order to survive, Balance must be taken away from the soldiers. Because she has no body, either one of the heroes will have to sing the Song of Forms long enough for them to carry her away (she is too weak to resist), or they will have to convince her to endow her power to a creature, entering that creature’s body. Balance is initially Unfriendly when presented with this idea, and will have to be made Helpful, since she views it as abandoning her beliefs. (See the *War of the Burning Sky Campaign Guide* for skill challenge rules to change attitudes. Award a +4 bonus if the PCs won the skill challenge “Learning About Eresh,” on page 15.)

The heroes can more easily sway Balance if they can couch what they say in metaphor. Any skill check made to change Balance’s attitude (as described above) gets a +2 bonus if the players use appropriate metaphors, and a –2 penalty if they speak plainly. Balance is best influenced by arguments which address the concept of balance, such as suggesting that Balance has allowed things to tip too far in favor of peace.

Perhaps the most cunning solution the heroes could come up with would be to take Balance with them to the Valley of Storms as they go to confront Caela, since Balance is a powerful ally, capable of changing the emotions of those around her at a whim, inspiring fear or bravery, joy or sorrow. Of course, as soon as the heroes get Balance more than a mile from Eresh, the soldiers in the garrison quickly snap out of their enforced calm and prepare for an attack.

If the heroes do not think to help Balance, or if they do not want to, she grows weak through their conversation and eventually begins to mutter that she cannot hold them back, that too much is coming. Within an hour (or the next morning, if it is night), she begins to spasm, her form shifting from female to male and back, occasionally even flickering to her true draconic form, before finally screaming

and dying as she futilely tries one last time to maintain the calm. If Balance dies this way, no one gains her boon, since she effectively died of negative levels.

Once Balance is no longer maintaining the calm — whether she lives or dies — news comes that Second General Signus has returned with reinforcements, and that his army is preparing to attack the village. In addition, this event is worth a major quest award of 6,000 XP.

MISSING PEOPLE

Townfolk and soldiers alike have been going missing over the week, amounting to several dozen people, taken away by two invisible stalkers working for Caela, Pilus’s apprentice. The invisible stalkers are delivering them away to Pilus’ laboratory in the Valley of Storms. Pilus uses these people as fuel for his biomancy experiments, either burning their life force to make spells permanent (spending healing surges) or as raw materials for the creatures’ actual bodies.

Because of the apathy afflicting the town, little has been done about this. If the heroes choose to stay in Eresh for more than a day, they should become aware of the disappearances. If they have struck up conversation with one of the townfolk, then he could go missing, though the heroes themselves are not targets until they visit the monastery.

In the assumed timeline, the Ragesian attack occurs before the heroes go to the Valley of Storms, and during the conflict the invisible stalkers attempt to carry off a wounded or unconscious hero, or perhaps Three Weeping Ravens, providing an urgent motivation to go to the valley as soon as the battle is done. If the heroes set out on their own to the Valley of Storms, they clearly do not need any encouragement, and so you can skip this scene.

HIDEAWAY

At some point during the heroes’ time in Eresh, preferably after going to the monastery, when Balance’s deterioration has caused small bursts of violence to break out (see “Unease in the Town,” above), one of the townfolk approaches them, an old man who looks like he is having trouble keeping focused. He introduces himself as Bechus (venerable male human), a baker and former monk, and implores the heroes to help him. Bechus has been sheltering the only surviving member of

the previous adventuring party from Seaquen, their guide, Eril (male human ranger), who has been in hiding since the Ragesians attacked and the rest of his party disappeared. Bechus wants the heroes to get take Eril away, before he is found by the Ragesians.

Bechus takes the heroes to his home in the northern neighborhood, and leads them to his cellar, where the ranger from Seaquen has been hiding. Eril has seen better days and is thin, tired, and half-insane; having kept himself from falling under the sway of Balance’s calm by cutting his skin and refusing to sleep. Despite this, when he sees the heroes he can barely manage a smile.

Eril tells the heroes the story of his party’s downfall:

“We had been refused entrance to the monastery for more than a week. We had spoken with Caela at the door, but she was enigmatic and more than a little unhelpful, suggesting that we would offend her masters by suggesting they’d had something to do with the hurricane.

“We told her that we had found evidence that something was going on in the valley to the east, the one they say is forbidden. Some divinations suggested that whatever magic keeps the storm going forever there was used to create the storm over Seaquen. Caela sneered when we told her this, and told us we were aggravating her. Well, not in so many words. She told us to leave.

“But then the Ragesians attacked, and we suddenly weren’t very interested in doing much of anything. The next day, a silver raven delivered an invitation to the monastery. I wasn’t interested in going, and then the next thing I realized, days had passed, and my companions had not returned.

“It cleared my head enough for me to come here for Bechus’s help, and I’ve been hiding ever since, hoping the Lyceum would send someone else.”

This should alert the heroes that Caela is a threat, and encourage them to go to the Valley of Storms. Though healing could restore Eril’s health, and magic could free him from Balance’s compulsion, he has truly lost interest in risking his life. He never realized how dangerous adventuring would be, and now he just wants to survive, even if that means running away. Eril can be of no more use to the heroes.



ASCENT TO THE MONASTERY

The Monastery of Two Winds is perched atop a low peak at the edge of this valley, with yet higher mountains beyond. Visible from anywhere in Eresh, it is an impressive sight, a massive, red-roofed edifice hundreds of feet across, comprised of many wings that have an orderly sprawl atop the uneven mountain peak. The site is made all the more vivid by the pale snowy mountain peaks in the distance.

Hundreds of brightly colored banners and flags flutter from the rooftops and hang from the walls, flapping violently in the strong wind that whistles about the peak. Flocks of unusual white birds wheel about the monastery. Occasionally one of these birds will flap close to the heroes, allowing them to see the unnatural creature close up. It has three wings, and sharp claws clearly designed to grip onto something. Its beak appears upside down, curving upwards rather than downwards. Its flight is somewhat erratic, its third wing allowing it to change direction suddenly or hover in place.

These birds are one of Pilus's earliest, but more successful creations, called remora birds, designed to clean the monastery's walls, and more recently adapted to clean the mighty skin of *Tempest*. Heroes will not recognize the significance of them yet, but whenever they glimpse *Tempest* in the future they might catch a glimpse of flocks of white birds flying nearby.

The monastery wall is pierced in many places with narrow slits and holes, designed to funnel the wind through them, creating various sounds based on the direction of the wind. At dawn and dusk, the wind currents seem to sing here. Some of these holes are large enough for a Tiny creature to squeeze through.

Once inside, the true scale of the building is impressive. More palace than humble temple, the tiered building is a maze of corridors, courtyards, and chambers, connected by interior and exterior staircases. Within, the monastery is light and airy, many small windows and slits in the roof allowing shafts of light to illuminate the rooms. Most chambers lead off open-aired courtyards and gardens, linked by corridors and colonnades. Clever use of ducts and angled vents draw air through the monastery, creating wind to whistle through the interior of the building, to the amazement of visitors.



The monastery is home to a few hundred monks, with vast open arenas designed for training aerial and acrobatic combat, and elegant open-air gardens for meditation. Visitors are occasionally allowed to the monastery, but in general the monks create everything need, only going to Eresh to purchase food, or to trade with the occasional foreign merchant.

Amazingly enough, the enormous monastery was built in only eight years.

The highest step of the monastery is for the private chambers and court of the masters of the monastery, Pilus and Longinus, as well as a small number of aides and servants. It is here that the heroes will be eventually granted an audience with the masters in Act Six.

THE ASCENT

Accessible only by a narrow path that winds its way up several hundred feet, the monastery is defended by powerful air elementals, two of which are active at any given time. The ascent is like a series of massive steps, rather than a single gentle slope, and though a trail leads all the way up, strong winds occasionally whip around the mountain, spiraling down from the peak and threatening to pitch travelers from the path to their deaths. In places, the path has been eroded by the elements and travelers must step lightly or risk it collapsing under their feet. With a steady pace, the climb takes about an hour.

The path is dotted with brightly colored flags and banners that flap wildly in the constant gales. Each time the cloth flaps against the flagpole, it is said a prayer is uttered to the gods of the wind and the sky.

As the heroes clamber up the path, they reach a particularly crumbly section of the

trail, where the path has been obscured by snow, forcing them to risk stepping into hollow pockets and plunging into rifts 20 feet deep. At this point, the heroes are 600 feet above the level of the village and about 300 feet from the front of the monastery. The ground has a gentle slope, but is icy, with a few scattered rifts. It is while passing through this dangerous area that the monastery's air elemental guardians attack.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Guardians (page 47)



COLD WELCOME

The large double door to the monastery is shut tightly. Heroes who knock and wait will get a feeling they are being watched, and an **DC 20 Arcana** or **DC 25 Perception** check detects a scrying sensor floating nearby. Heroes who knock further, or indicate to the sensor that they have seen it, will find a small vision slit opened eventually by Caela.

Caela seems more than a little displeased to see the heroes, barking at them curtly.

"Begone with your curse!" the woman says, "The masters have said outsiders are not welcome."

If the heroes try to explain themselves, Caela frowns skeptically but will not open the door.

"There are strange things afoot in the valley below," she says, "ever since you outsiders brought your curse into the town. We know your origin and your task, and that your allies were harbingers of the unnatural stillness. It cannot be allowed to spread to the monastery, so you shall have to stay out there and we shall remain in here."

"Now, if you really want to see the masters, you'll have to make yourself useful first and sort out the mess down there. We will endure, for the wind will not be rushed. You, though, might want to hurry. Come again once the curse is lifted, and I will speak on your behalf, asking that my masters grant you an audience."

Caela closes the vision slit, but will open it again to (briefly) answer their questions. She mostly sees the heroes as a threat, but hopes perhaps to use them to ensure the Ragesians don't find out what's going on in the Valley of Storms.

- ◆ **Pilus and Longinus:** Caela is respectful most of the time to her masters, but heroes might be able to discern that she is rather more loyal to Pilus than Longinus by the tone of her voice. She will speak of Pilus far more than she will Longinus, and should give them the impression that Pilus is the more powerful of the two.
- ◆ **The Torch:** Caela knows the legends surrounding the torch, and has a hunch that Longinus and Pilus know far more. She knows the Ragesians want her masters to clear the firestorm, but proudly claims they will never bow to the demands of warbringers.
- ◆ **The Ragesian Garrison:** Caela is more than a little nervous about the garrison. She is confident that Pilus has a plan to deal with them, but is uncertain whether it includes her or not, and is therefore keen to get the heroes to deal with them. She knows more about the army than she should be able to, unless she has left the monastery recently (which she has), though she claims her masters have divined the army's nature.

Caela knows that Second General Signus will return soon, and knows he has a reputation for cunning. If the people of Eresh were free to defend themselves, they outnumber the company here, and many have some combat skills, but she suspects it will be a slaughter. She warns the heroes that they will find no refuge in the monastery if they flee here.

Caela will not admit that General Signus's destrachan mount was crafted by Pilus a year ago.

- ◆ **Balance:** Caela knows nothing about the trillith, and certainly doesn't intend to go and find what's causing the strange happenings in Eresh herself. Mentioning her piques the woman's interest, however, and ensures that the heroes will be watched closely by her invisible stalkers when they return to Eresh.
- ◆ **The Disappearances:** Caela is complicit in the disappearances, but will lie shamelessly to the heroes (she has a Bluff check of +16), blaming them on the army. "You know the Ragesians are infamous for their brutality. No doubt they have an internment camp somewhere in town where the missing are being held. They consort with devils, and such cursed creatures would naturally be immune to whatever curse you might have brought here."
- ◆ **The Other Party:** She admits that they came to the monastery and were rebuffed because they were disrespectful. As for their disappearance, she lies again, remarking, "They spoke of going to the forbidden valley. It is forbidden for a reason. I suggest you strike from your mind any thought of going there if you do not wish to gain the ire of my lords."
- ◆ **Breaking and Entering:** Heroes might decide to bypass or ignore Caela altogether, breaking or sneaking into the monastery by other means. They will have to be very careful if doing so, as the place is full of monks. Although the monks are not necessarily hostile, they are wary of intruders and will attack without asking too many questions.

Heroes who are sloppy will find themselves in the midst of a fully-alert monastery, and quickly confronted by a large number of monks in an environment they are perfectly suited to. This could easily turn into a running battle, made up of a series of fights with groups of monks, as the heroes battle through courtyards, gardens, armories, dormitories, and kitchens. Or it could end swiftly, with each hero struck by multiple stunning fists, then pummeled into unconsciousness.

Heroes who successfully sneak (or fight) their way past the monks can get a premature audience with Longinus (if you're feeling generous) or Pilus (if you're feeling mean). However, the two masters are not willing to deal with the heroes right now — Longinus because he worries for Eresh, Pilus because he is busy finalizing the growth of *Tempest*.

Longinus will simply demand the heroes leave the monastery.

Pilus will sense in the heroes a strong spirit he appreciates. If the heroes find him, Pilus will tell them that even though he cannot speak to them officially, since his brother will never support any agreements he makes, he will lend some aid to them. He will order a single Two-Winds air elemental to accompany them, flying quietly overhead in Eresh, ready to come to their aid against the Ragesians (and equally ready to betray them if the heroes go into battle against monastery monks). He encourages them to solve the mystery, and promises his aid in advance.

This encounter is worth a 5,000 XP quest award.

ACT FOUR: THE RAGESIAN ARMY

This act focuses on the attack by the Ragesian garrison after Second General Signus returns.

RETURN OF THE GENERAL

After leaving Eresh in frustration, Signus linked up with his commander, General Magdus, in Sindaire, where he persuaded the General to lend him a large detachment so he could break through the defenses of the monastery and hopefully force the monks to aid them in reclaiming the Torch.

Fresh and ready for a fight, Signus rides back into town as Balance nears death, accompanied by nearly a hundred extra soldiers, as well as some of the few surviving wyvern knights in the First Army.

The general is not pleased to find the monastery still standing, and his garrison practically insensible. Of course, before he has the opportunity to bash heads together, the new tide of aggression breaks Balance's control, killing her, and utter chaos breaks loose almost immediately.

Within minutes of Balance's death, horns are sounding as the garrison gathers and prepares for an attack. Nearly three hundred soldiers prepare to assault a town of just over a thousand, and though the people of Eresh possess the strength to stop the assault, they are confused and ill-prepared. The heroes have a chance to rally them, either with words or deeds, but time is short.

As soon as Balance is dead, the town erupts into chaos as a wave of emotions overwhelms the townsfolk, driving some of them briefly mad with rage, joy, and sorrow. The soldiers still in the town's limits are the most overcome by these emotions, rampaging through the streets without direction, attacking wildly. Terrified townsfolk emerge from the neighborhoods, looking out toward the open field near the Peak's Shadow, where most of the soldiers are.

Onlookers are paralyzed with confusion as the Ragesians cut down several panicking inn

patrons, then proceed to drag out the owner, Thashalanos, for a public execution. Though the heroes might be a half mile away, word travels fast, and wherever they are they hear horrified reports of what's going on.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Executing Thashalanos (page 49)



DEVELOPMENT

If the heroes do nothing, Thashalanos's death sets off a total panic in the village, and when the Ragesians sound the official attack a few minutes later, the result is a slaughter. If, however, the heroes manage to defeat the Ragesians and save Thashalanos's life — or make a commanding enough speech in the aftermath of his death (**DC 23 Diplomacy**), they can rally the townsfolk, preparing them for a terrible battle.

OTHER OPTIONS

The heroes could handle this situation several ways that don't involve combat.

They might try to help as many of the townsfolk as they can, barricading

them into the sturdy cellars of the inn, library, and various shops, all while fending off angry soldiers. At this critical juncture, the fearful Eril finds his courage, and rises to help the heroes as best he can.

They might lead the townsfolk up to the monastery, despite Caela's previous threats. Surprisingly, when the elementals fly out it is only to attack the Ragesians. The heroes will be met by a different monk at the door, who tells them that Caela is gone. He is willing to let the refugees in, though the heroes will be expected to aid the defense of the monastery when Signus arrives.

More melodramatic heroes might climb to the top of the peak and ring the gong, calling for aid from the monastery, which will manifest in a sudden thunderstorm and precisely-placed lightning bolts, arriving just in time to give the heroes a break so they can regroup and press their advantage (but not so strong as to be a *deus ex machina*).

The heroes might even try the diplomatic approach and attempt to parlay with Signus. This requires an exceptional argument, since Signus is purely Hostile, and he's the sort of man who will kill someone he's Indifferent to if he has been given orders, which in this case he has.

THE VALIANT COUNTER-ATTACK

The heroes' best chance for victory — not just in this battle but in their mission overall — is to convince the townsfolk to fight. Given greater numbers, intermittent martial arts experience, and magical powers, the populace of Eresh is nearly a match for the Ragesians and can give the army a serious fight.

The deciding factor will be the heroes. Unless the heroes have gone out of their way to hide their presence, Signus is aware of them, and he sallies forth with his personal guard, intending to defeat the heroes himself. If the heroes win his fight, the morale of the Ragesians will break, and they will flee into the mountains.



Signus prefers to battle the heroes amid buildings or near ledges, giving his pet destrachan toys to shatter, though he goes wherever the heroes do. A runner could even come to the heroes and alert them that the enemy commander is calling for them. This is a challenging encounter, but give your players a chance to use their wits by choosing their own battleground. Perhaps the best place for the heroes to hole up is in the healing house, where a half-dozen clerics (use West Wind monk stats) will stand ready to keep them alive and in the fight, aided by a large supply of *potions of healing*.

Waves: If you want some build-up to this climax (or if you have a group larger than five and want to provide them with some additional XP), you can assault the heroes with additional waves, or you can skip straight to the arrival of Signus. After a given wave, the heroes should have a short rest to regroup and heal as the enemy army slowly sweeps through the valley, looking for signs of the rabble rousers.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Wave 1 (page 51)



TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Wave 2 (page 53)



TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Final Wave (page 55)



SNATCHED AWAY

When the heroes are close to victory, Caela's three invisible stalkers fly in and carry off a wounded or weak hero, or possibly Three Weeping Ravens. Should this ploy fail to get the heroes to go to the Valley of Storms, a reminder by Eiril or Three Weeping Ravens that the rest of the original expedition may still be held captive could work.

If you would prefer not to abduct a hero and there is no convenient NPC, the invisible stalkers swoop down and snatch a child named Little Erik from the street, eliciting shrieks of despair from his wounded mother, Carmen.

This encounter is designed to provoke the heroes into going to the Valley of Storms, and should only occur after the heroes have gone to the monastery and met with Balance at least once. If the heroes seem motivated enough to go on their own, this scene is unnecessary. Award the experience as a quest award in this case.

The invisible stalkers work together, surrounding their victim so if he flees he provokes attacks from them. They strike to render unconscious, intending to carry their victim away to Pilus's laboratory in the Valley of Storms. Pilus has of course realized the heroes are a threat, and plans an ambush for them. This leads to the events in Act Four.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Snatched Away (page 58)



THE FATE OF ERESH

VICTORY

If the heroes have rallied the townsfolk and manage to defeat Signus, they can watch in pleasure as the Ragesians slowly break off and retreat. If the townsfolk panic but the heroes manage to capture Signus, he will order a retreat, which rallies the townsfolk and averts a complete defeat. Otherwise, the heroes will be able to escape because the Ragesians are afraid of them, but the town of Eresh is doomed.

The survivors are immensely thankful to the heroes, and enough minor mages are present that the heroes will be able to depart on their expedition to the Valley of Storms fully healed, though perhaps depleted of spells and items. The loot, however, is substantial.

If the heroes manage to save Eresh and prevent massive panic, reward them 7,000 XP. If they only manage to save the day after letting panic break out, reward them only 6,000 XP.

DEFEAT

Should the heroes fail, a few minutes after their defeat, Longinus and Pilus call down a powerful snowstorm to blanket the entire valley, freezing the Ragesians as well as the locals. If the heroes survived their defeat, they have a new and very serious problem.

ACT FIVE: THE VALLEY OF STORMS

Act Five is the climax of the adventure, as the heroes leave the town behind and climb into the mountains to deal with the less immediate but perhaps more dangerous threat, Caela.

If the heroes decide to head to the Valley of Storms early on, let them; in this event the climax shifts to the showdown with the Ragesian army. It's far better to accommodate the players' choices than to railroad them into a predetermined sequence of events. You may, of course, need to improve the Ragesians' stats a little if they are used in the climax of this adventure.

Preferably, the heroes should be 15th level before starting this act.

THE VALLEY

Pilus's laboratory and workshop is hidden high in the remote Valley of Storms. Local legend has long held that this is a particularly holy site where the gods of the weather live. When Pilus first built his laboratory here he took advantage of these legends to maintain his secrecy, and developed methods for tapping the air elemental energy of the storm which perpetually hangs over the area, shrouding the valley in rain clouds and foreboding mists. If the heroes ask about the valley they will be urged away from it by the locals, who seem genuinely fearful of what lies there.

If pressed, they will say that an ancient road leads straight to the valley, though it has not been used in ages, and that those who go there never return.

The valley is ten miles away to the east, meaning a journey of at least a day for travelers unable to fly. As the heroes get close, they notice that the weather is oddly warmer here, despite the higher altitude. Wet mists hang over the mountains, and though the weather is still barely above freezing, the foliage here is like a thick pine rainforest.

DEFENDERS OF THE SACRED VALLEY

Finally the heroes have a chance to face the monks of the order of two winds. Pilus anticipates the heroes will head in this direction, and has sent loyal monks to guard the path. Air spirits silently watch the mountainside and

alert the monks to the heroes' activities, so the heroes cannot easily avoid this ambush.

As they pass through the misty mountain forest, a mile from the valley, clear visibility is reduced to 30 feet, and everything has concealment out to 60 feet, beyond which it is impossible to see. Have the heroes make **DC 23 Perception** checks to notice white robed monks clinging to the trees 30 feet overhead. If they are spotted, they attack. Otherwise, the heroes hear soft, confusing whispers in the trees as the monks alert each other in Primordial, just before they attack.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Defenders of the Sacred Valley (page 59)

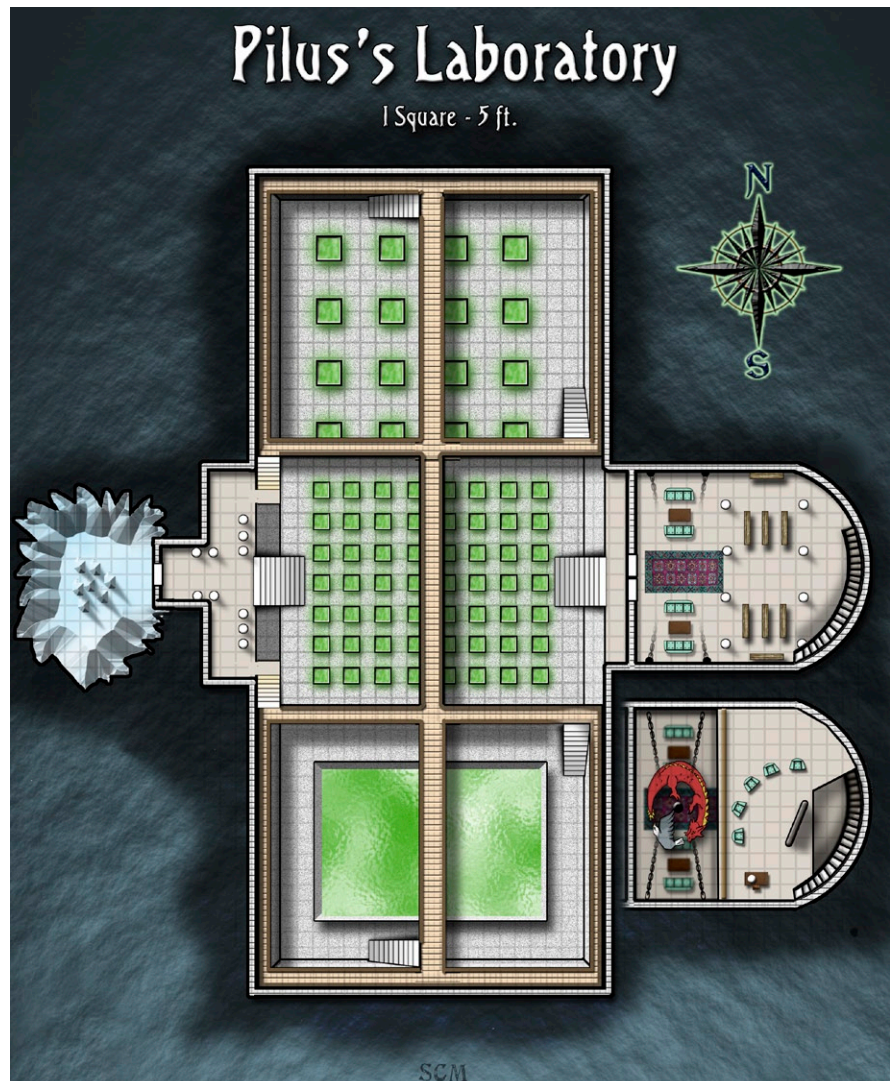
AFTERMATH

These monks know only that the heroes were heading to the forbidden valley. They know nothing of Pilus's laboratory.

VALLEY OF THE DAMNED

Some of Pilus's less successful creations roam the higher reaches of the valley, posing a threat to those who brave the climb. Although rejected by Pilus, these creatures still think of the laboratory as home and tirelessly guard it. Occasionally, out of pity, Pilus or one of his servants will throw them a body or two to consume.

As the heroes near the lip of the valley, four large and misshapen shapes rise up from behind nearby boulders, looming ominously



in the mist, bellowing in rage and pain. The sound of eight voices meet the heroes, though as the creatures shamle forward they see that each of the four giant beings has two heads, as well as three non-functional feathered wings growing from their backs at odd angles. Once monks who learned too much of Pilus's secrets, they now mindlessly guard the valley.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Valley of the Damned (page 61)



THE LABORATORY

When the heroes come over the edge of the valley, they can vaguely make out a tower in the distance, sticking out 60 feet high, above the treetops. No other particularly dangerous creatures fill the valley, though they might pass by strange biomanced creatures which are strong enough to live, but not escape. The tower is about a quarter mile away, just slightly up the slope of the far side of the valley.

When the heroes reach the tower, they see that it is surrounded by a clearing of icy ground and jagged rocks. The tower is 60 feet high and 20 feet in diameter, and has only two apparent entrances — a single door on the ground floor, and a balcony and broad curtained window on the top floor. There are no apparent guards. Strong winds blow down from above, making flight here impossible, but heroes might try to teleport or climb up to the balcony.

Unfortunately, the entire tower is a permanent illusion (a **DC 23 Perception** check reveals the deception), covering a vast chasm, 60 feet deep. The real laboratory is underground, and though a little over a hundred feet away there is a glass skylight that peeks up from the ground, this too is concealed by a permanent illusion of ground.

THE PIT

A hero who gets within 5 feet of the illusory tower plummets into the icy chasm. A **DC 25 Athletics** or **DC 25 Acrobatics** check lets him catch himself, but the ground is icy and windswept, and climbing out is difficult (**DC 23 Athletics** checks to climb up). A hero who falls lands in a 20-foot-wide field of snow, 60 feet down. (Someone who teleports to the non-existent balcony is in for quite a fall.) Then, at the bottom of the pit, the hero is attacked by one last group of monsters — the mishaps.

Though these creatures appear to once have been humans and dwarves, their flesh appears fused to muscles of living ice, and their eyes are

frozen. The result is vaguely reminiscent of the aquatic skum the heroes faced in the prison under Seaquen over a month ago, though possessed of more powerful magic.

Pit Trap

Level 16 Lurker

Hazard • 1,400 XP

The ground beneath you proves to be an illusion, and you fall.

Trap The hero falls through an illusion into a deep pit.

► Perception

DC 25 The character notices a ripple in the illusion and part of the ladder leading down.

► Additional Skills

Nature DC 20 Same as Perception, above.

► Trigger

The trap attacks when the character steps within 1 square of the illusory tower.

► Attack

Immediate Reaction; Melee

Target The creature that triggered the trap

Attack +20 vs. Reflex

Hit Target falls into pit, takes 6d10 damage.

Miss Target does not fall.

► Countermeasures

While falling, a successful **DC 25 Athletics** or **DC 25 Acrobatics** check allows the character to use his tools and the wall to slow the descent and take half damage.

Any hero who has fallen into the pit is subjected to a combat encounter.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

The Pit (page 63)



The creatures inhabiting the pit were, until very recently, the other four adventurers dispatched by Seaquen to investigate the monastery. Caela killed them after they asked too many questions, and then used them to create these creatures. Though not up to the level of her master's creations, Caela still takes pleasure in adding to her master's lab's defenses, and she appreciates the irony of setting former spies to work as guards.

LABORATORY ENTRANCE

One wall of the bottom of the chasm is dominated with an ornate façade for Pilus's laboratory, depicting the ancient spirits of wind and storm being bound and trapped in mortal flesh. A single broad doorway leads inside,

currently locked and warded with a magical trap. A creature opening the door without first saying, "I am the wind's master" in Primordial triggers the trap. It resets after one hour.

Chain Lightning

Level 15 Blaster • XP 1,200

Trap

Lightning spills from the doorway with a thunderclap and a blinding flash.

Trap A bolt of lightning attacks the triggering character and any nearby allies.

► Perception

DC 21 The character notices scorch marks around on the door where the bolt originates.

Initiative +10

► Trigger

If the creature opens the door without first saying, "I am the wind's master" in Primordial, the trap is triggered.

► Attack

Immediate Reaction or Standard Action; Close Burst 2

Targets All creatures within a close 2 of the previous target, up to 12 creatures total.

A previously targeted creature cannot be targeted again.

Attack +18 vs. Endurance

Hit 2d10 lightning damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Miss half damage.

► Countermeasures

♦ Creating a lightning rod will stop the chain effect from occurring.

♦ A **DC 23 Thievery** check will disable the trap.

► Special

The trap resets one hour after being triggered.

As soon as the heroes enter, a silent alarm alerts Caela in Pilus's study.

The interior of the laboratory is vast and eerily silent. Along the foyer walls, vials of strangely colored liquids boil on unattended burners, while beyond a stairway descends to a chamber containing dozens of square glass tanks filled with viscous green fluid. Each tank is set upon a metal frame 5 feet high, and numerous fleshy hoses extend into each tank from a dimly glowing sphere. The tanks themselves vary in size: most are 5 feet square and 5 feet deep or 10 feet square and 10 feet deep. From the entryway, the heroes can see dark shapes floating in the vats, some twitching in their bubbling beds.

Eerie green light filters into the room through the vats, filling the vast chamber with



an unearthly haze. The pit is 20 feet beneath the entrance level, while stairs lead to catwalks 10 feet higher. The ceiling is 10 feet above the catwalk, making the entire room 40 feet high. Numerous metal runners and chains crisscross the ceiling, designed to lift creatures out of the vats or move the tanks themselves.

On the right side of the great pit is one single enormous tank, over 70 feet long. Ominously, it is empty, and the slimy fluid within it is low, but with signs that it was once much more full, like whatever was growing in it has left.

The laboratory is laid out orderly and deliberately, with drawers and cabinets set into the walls, painstakingly marked in a strange anagrammatic cypher (**DC 26 Arcana** or **DC 26 Religion** check). The same code, marked on small paper placards, identifies the contents of each tank. There is also space to record purchasers, though on all these tanks that space is currently blank — Pilus is only creating monsters for himself now.

At the far side of the room another stairway leads up to a pair of double doors. There is apparently no one here, though if the heroes explore the lab they will find

creatures growing in vats at different stages of development. Some look to have only been placed in recently, with only the slightest change. Six of these people could be rescued and healed with remove affliction rituals. The rest are beyond reclamation.

As the heroes creep about the laboratory, they get a sense they are not alone. A strange whistling fills the air, and they have a moment's chance to spot the lab's guardian before it attacks. A DC 14 Perception check detects Aurus's presence just before he attacks.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Aurus Attacks (page 64)



PILUS'S STUDY

At the other side of the laboratory is Pilus's personal study, an ornate two-story chamber topped with a magnificent glass domed roof. Directly over the entry way is a stunning sculpture of an eagle and a dragon pursuing each other in a circle, crafted of metal and ceramic, and suspended by four chains tied to the walls.

Pilus's study is exceptionally organized for a super-villain's lair, belying his regimented

mindset. Parallel pairs of couches and coffee tables sit near opposite walls, and columns support the second floor, with shelves of neatly lined books between them. At the back wall stairway curves gently up 20 feet to the second floor.

On the second floor, Pilus's desk is clear of clutter, any incriminating messages having been studiously destroyed, and all his notes and records having been meticulously stored on his own person in an extradimensional pocket. The only things on his desk are an inkwell and a quill made from the tail feather of a remora bird. A row of chairs is set up in front of the desk, aligned to show off a slate chalkboard set up in a stand.

The chalk has been wiped away and the slate washed clean, but if an inquisitive hero manages to use magic to see what was on it, they see a map of the region, detailed troop counts of military units in different locations, and a force comparison listing the soldiers of Ostalin — a mock presentation for when Pilus was preparing to convince Onamdamm in to ally with him.

The glass-domed roof is designed to give the onlooker the impression that it is a giant goldfish bowl, an aquarium for the sky. The first person to look up catches a glimpse of what seems to be a great shark in the clouds, but the view is hidden a moment later.

Directly inside the entryway, a beautiful rug covers the floor. Now activated as a trap, the rug reaches upward as soon as a creature sets foot on it, grabbing and immobilizing.

Entangling Rug

Level 15 Obstacle • XP 1,200

Trap

The rug you were admiring a moment ago reaches up to seize you and hold you fast.

Trap The rug entangles the target and immobilizes him.

▶ Perception

DC 21 The character notices the rug's side tassels twitch as if eager for prey.

Initiative +10

▶ Trigger

When the creature steps on the rug.

▶ Attack

Immediate Reaction

Target The creature touching the rug.

Attack +18 vs. Reflex

Hit The target is knocked prone and immobilized (save ends).

If the heroes are coming to find an ally or friend, that person is unconscious and tied up, lying on the second floor next to the banister. In addition, Pilus's apprentice is waiting for them, invisible. Floating 10 feet above the carpet, she waits for the first hero to step into the room, and immediately begins attacking while taunting the heroes.

TACTICAL ENCOUNTER

Caela (page 66)



ESCAPING THE LABORATORY

If Caela is defeated, Pilus (watching via the magic ball) likely decides to finish off the meddling heroes before they can escape, even if Caela is simply captured and not killed. He uses the control wand for his lesser orb of storms, and directs the storm over the Valley of Storms to transform to tornados and terrible winds. Over the next ten minutes the winds intensify, and eventually the eerie growl of a tornado can be heard even in the underground complex.

The tornado rattles the building, tearing open the roof and knocking over furniture and biomancy vats. Lightning crackles and lashes out with frightening proximity. Dust and debris strikes viciously and painfully, as even pebbles become deadly projectiles. It should be clear that if the heroes do not leave quickly, they'll be destroyed by the storm.

The escape should be exciting, but not actually life-threatening, and we recommend not slowing things down with too many rolls. As the heroes make their way out, simply come up with three events to impede their progress, such as collapsing lab equipment, or sprays of shattered glass picked up in the wind, or toppling sections of the roof, or small avalanches knocking them about. If the character fails to avoid the obstacle, he loses a healing surge. Once out of the lab the heroes must still contend with strong winds, making progress difficult. The safest place is low ground,

and as the storm sets off minor avalanches the heroes might even use wreckage of the laboratory as makeshift sledges to race away down into the valley.

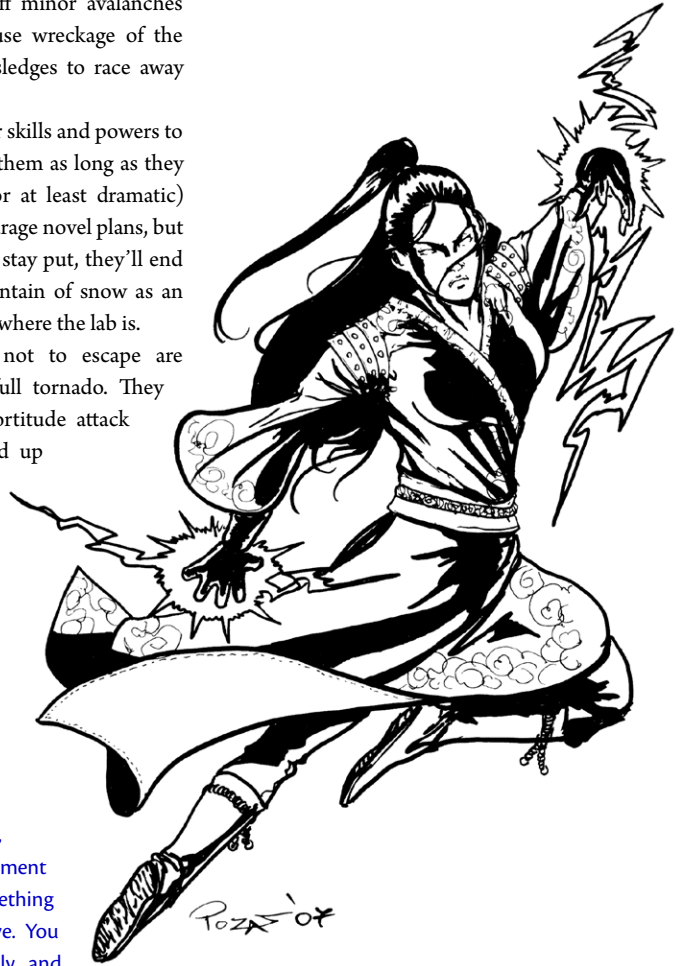
Let the heroes use their skills and powers to escape, but don't punish them as long as they are making intelligent (or at least dramatic) attempts to escape. Encourage novel plans, but explain that if they try to stay put, they'll end up trapped under a mountain of snow as an avalanche fills in the hole where the lab is.

Heroes who choose not to escape are eventually caught in a full tornado. They must avoid a +20 vs. Fortitude attack each round or be picked up and whirled around, taking 6d10 points of damage per round (save ends), before being violently expelled from a dangerous height.

As the heroes get to safety, read or paraphrase the following:

The howling winds have died to a safe flurry, and as you take a moment to rest, you feel something watching you from above. You scan the skies cautiously and there, miles up, directly above the now-annihilated laboratory, you glimpse something impossibly large, so massive that its silhouette is visible even through the clouds of the fading storm. Lightning flashes intermittently, giving you a hint of its form.

It must be colossal, the size of a small city, floating in the tempest like a shark in the dark seas. Massive horns adorn its head, and its body stretches backward at sharp angles, like the wings of a swooping raptor or the fins of an ancient sea predator. Its body tapers to a forked tail, but even that must be hundreds



of feet wide. You see what might be a flock of birds sweeping past it, white birds flying erratically like those at the monastery, and then the clouds begin to roll back in. You know in a moment it will be hidden from you, if it truly exists now.

The last you see of the stormy vision is a glowing disk on its underbelly, and as it vanishes back into the tempest, you realize the disk, farther across than even the largest dragon from maw to tail, was an eye. Moreover, it was watching you.

ACT SIX: AUDIENCE WITH TWO WINDS

The denouement of the adventure comes after the heroes have defeated the two threats, and they go to negotiate finally with the masters of the monastery. Having defeated the Ragesians, the heroes have earned an audience with Longinus and Pilus, and now that Caela is defeated there is no one to stand in their way any longer.

This audience is worth a quest award of 6,000 XP.

TWO MASTERS

Once the heroes return, a grateful and curious Longinus invites them to the monastery. An honor guard greets them outside the entrance to the monastery and escorts them to the masters' chamber. Pilus is cautiously prepared for their arrival, uncertain how much they know, and how much he will have to lie. The two brothers sit on cushions near the wall of a sparse chamber seemingly intended for meditation more than command. A cushion for each of the heroes has been placed on the floor in front of the two masters.

Longinus wears a white mask with blue highlights, and the rest of his body is hidden by gloves and a hooded white robe, etched with gold and black feathers, representing the Stormchaser Eagle. Pilus, by contrast, wears a robe with patterns of two entwined, stormy dragons, and his expression is clear and open, though he has a somewhat amused posture, like he is not devoting his full attention to the proceedings.

Longinus, wheezy and soft-spoken, thanks them, asks them to sit, and then asks they present their request for the boon so many desire.

EASY ANSWERS

If the heroes do not cause a fuss, they can ask for the monastery's aid in reaching Castle Korstull, to which Longinus nods. Pilus then proceeds to explain why they have decided to become involved at this time, a task requiring much speaking which Longinus is disinclined to do.

Their reasons, in brief, are that this war seems to have gone beyond any prior conflict, both in scope and power. Longinus worries that the world itself might be threatened, particularly given the strange planar fluctuations regarding teleportation. Pilus, on the other hand, sees that this juncture holds the opportunity to bring down the Ragesian Empire, a nation that is far too powerful, a bully among kings.

Pilus and Longinus both expect that the Torch will need to be used to end the war, but they warn that its power is corrupting. While the heroes go to retrieve the Torch, the brothers will devote their efforts to finding a way to destroy it, so once it has served its purpose it will no longer be a threat.

Pilus then discusses the details of how they can provide the heroes with an orb that will keep the storm at bay, though it will only work for a few days, given the unnatural strength

of the firestorm. This should be more than enough time to cross the twenty mile stretch of land to Korstull, explore the ruins, and get out. The hole in the storm will be centered over the heroes, but there is a chance others might follow them, and the Ragesians are just waiting for this opportunity.

The orb can be ready in a week. Until that time, the heroes are welcome to stay, rest, and train. The two masters, however, are not interested in long conversations, and so they end their meeting by offering hot rice wine to seal their alliance. Then they nod graciously, and return to their meditations.

HARD QUESTIONS

Of course, the heroes may be less than pleased with the two monks, as evidence paints Pilus as something of a villain, behind the hurricane at Seaquen and experiments upon the townsfolk in Eresh. Pilus handles this in an unusual way, admitting almost the full extent of his plans, with a handful of lies at the right places.

Pilus's main defense is that he is acting for the greater good, having learned to appreciate a broad view of events courtesy of his brother. He admits that he has allied with Khagan Onamdamin, and intends to use his biomanced creations in the coming battles. He says that he needed to learn the weaknesses of the Ragesian Empire, and at the time he did not realize the importance of Seaquen, so he feigned an alliance with them temporarily, the hurricane in Seaquen being the result. He apologizes for that, and says that he sees now what a critical role Seaquen will play.

As for the experiments on the Eresh townsfolk, and the deaths of the previous expedition, Pilus uses Caela as his scapegoat. He admits that he had Caela take some of the townsfolk, though only with the intention of discovering what afflicted them. She told him, he says,



that there was no way to help them, and that several had died upon leaving the village. He suspects now that she was using his biomancy laboratory to grow monsters to sell as warbeasts. He regretfully admits to not being the judge of character that his brother.

Pilus's total Bluff bonus is +29. He is very good at lying, but if caught in a lie he admits to it, saying that he is uncertain whether trusting the heroes is a good thing, and that they are, after all, in a war. He trusts them, he says, but not completely, not yet.

If possible, Pilus would like the heroes as allies, but if that is not possible, he does his best to make sure they do not become his enemies. He will not oppose his brother's decision to help them, and is exceedingly immune to insults and anger.

A SHOWDOWN WITH PILUS

Of course, suspecting that Pilus was behind the disappearances, and knowing that he was

responsible for the hurricane that ravaged Seaquen, the heroes might not be content to let him get away with it. Pilus is far too powerful for the heroes to have a fair chance of victory (he is, after all, intended to be the main foe in Adventure Eleven, *Under the Eye of the Tempest*, intended for parties of epic levels), but the heroes might try to take a swing at him here and now anyway.

If they look set on a fight, Pilus invariably survives their first attacks. On his turn, he looks to his brother for aid, and sees none. Sneering, he teleports away. Though he overmatches the heroes by a wide margin, and knows it, he sees no reason to risk dying stupidly. His timetable pushed forward only slightly, the master of the East Wind flies to his airship, marks Seaquen on his list of places to obliterate, and then reluctantly decides he will have to kill his own brother and destroy the monastery. From time to time in the future he will contact the heroes via Sending

rituals, presenting himself as misunderstood and not hostile, hoping eventually to sway the heroes to his side.

If somehow the heroes do manage to slay Pilus (when he has no printed stats, to boot!), he will still return later to haunt them, since his bond with *Tempest* will let him return to life.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of how things go down with Pilus, Longinus respects the heroes' actions, and wishes to help them. He can promise them protection while in this valley, and asks that they stay while he prepares the orb for their journey to Castle Korstull. While they stay here, he encourages them to consider the nature of balance, and that sometimes a challenge with multiple dangers must be resolved one piece at a time, to avoid completely disaster. Hopefully, the heroes come away with a bit of wisdom, which will guide them to make the right choices on the road ahead. 🌀



APPENDIX A: IMPORTANT NPCs

THREE WEEPING RAVENS

Short, wiry and young, with dark brown skin and shaved black hair, Three Weeping Ravens has a relaxed and disarming air, wearing a constant slight smile that never shows teeth.

Two ravens are tattooed on his left hand and the back of his head, but the third raven must be hidden somewhere beneath his loose-fitting brown and grey monk robes.

Three Weeping Ravens (R)
Level 13 Controller • XP 800
 Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +7; **Senses** Perception +16

HP 127; **Bloodied** 63

AC 23; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 26

Speed 8

☑ **Fast-Strike** (minor; at-will, 1/turn) ♦ Chi, Divine, Weapon

The target is struck with a swift fist or kick. +17 vs. AC, 2d6 damage (crit 12).

☑ **Shuriken** (std; at-will) ♦ Weapon

Ranged 6/12; +16 vs. AC; 1d4+7 damage.

✗ **Stunning Strike** (std; daily) ♦ Divine, Weapon

+15 vs. Reflex; 3d6+7 damage, and the target is stunned through Three Weeping Ravens' next turn.

⚡ **Flurry of Fists** (std; at-will) ♦ Chi, Divine

Close Burst 1; +15 vs. AC; 5 damage.

▶ **Raven Shape** (minor; enc) ♦ Conjuraton, Primal

Three Weeping Ravens changes shape into a raven and gains a fly speed of 8. He must begin and end his movement on a solid surface.

This does not provoke an opportunity attack.

Sustain Minor: Three Weeping Ravens may continue to be a raven.

▶ **Tumble** (move; enc) ♦ Martial

Three Weeping Ravens may shift up to 4 squares.

▶ **Up the Walls** (move; at-will)

Three Weeping Ravens may travel on the surface of a wall as if it were a floor. He must end his move on a horizontal surface or fall, landing prone and suffering falling damage. Movement adjacent to enemies is subject to opportunity attacks.

Alignment Lawful Good; **Languages** —

Skills Acrobatics +13, Athletics +15

Str 18 (+10) **Dex** 14 (+8)

Wis 21 (+11) **Con** 15 (+8)

Int 11 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+6)

Equipment 50 shuriken, 3 *potions of healing*, 1 *potion of vitality*

Tactics Three Weeping Ravens never remains still for long in combat, using Tumble and Up the Walls to move about freely, lending support to allies who need it most. If things get tough, or if he needs to move about the battle swiftly, he will use his Totem Shape feat to turn into a raven and fly about, repositioning himself or withdrawing to use one of his potions.



BALANCE

In humanoid form, Balance appears as one of a pair of beautiful, idealized figures, one female and one male, Agneth and Boren, both with bald heads and flowing robes that seem to drift in an invisible breeze surrounding them. Although Balance speaks telepathically with sentient creatures, they perceive her as speaking to them in their own language with a charming, distant voice. Only one of Balance's forms is ever present at once, but she subtly shifts between the two from time to time, one form vanishing while onlookers are distracted, the other form appearing from the corner of their eyes.

Balance has chosen never to assume her monstrous form, having abandoned that element of her heritage. However, if her true form is ascertained, she appears as a ghostly blue-white draconic serpent, whose body is

made up of strands of intertwined energy that appear as silk and gossamer threads.

ROLEPLAYING BALANCE

Remember that Balance speaks telepathically, so the heroes will hear Balance's words from lips that do not move. Balance frequently uses *change shape* to make subtle changes in her appearance, whether she's appearing as Agneth or Boren, including eye color, facial geometry, height, and weight. It's not necessary to roll Perception checks for this; you need only mention periodically (for example, each time Balance begins speaking) that Balance's appearance has shifted in some minor way. Dramatic changes to Balance's appearance, including her change from Agneth to Boren or vice versa, always occur when no one can see her.



Balance

Level 18 Solo Controller • XP 10,000

Medium aberrant magical beast (trillith)

Initiative +13; **Senses** Perception +23; darkvision, truesight 10

Calm Aura aura 6; creatures that enter or start their turn in the aura make a saving throw for each fear-caused condition, take a –4 penalty to attack rolls, and become dazed.

HP 708; **Bloodied** 354

AC 32; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 30

Immune fear

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, Fly 6

Action Points 2

☞ **Slam** (std; at-will)

Only in Balance's natural form; +23 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage

✓ **Double Slam** (std; at-will)

Balance makes two slam attacks

✓ **Detect Thought** (minor 1/rd; at-will)

Ranged 20; no attack roll; until the end of Balance's next turn, Balance gains a +5 bonus to AC and Reflex against attacks made by the target, and a +10 bonus to Insight checks against the target

✓ **Empathic Retort** (imm reac, when balance takes damage from a melee attack; rchg

☞☞☞☞) ◆ Psychic

You feel the enemy's pain caused by your action, and reel from its consequence
Ranged 20; +22 vs Will; 2d8+7 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares

✓ **Psychic Calm** (std; rchg ☞) ◆ Psychic

+22 vs Will; 1d10+7 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends), and Balance makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +22 vs Will; and the target contracts Balance's Calm disease

☞ **Death Boon** (imm int, when balance is reduced to 0 hp) ◆ Psychic

Close Burst 10 (ignore concealment and cover); targets all creatures; +22 vs Will; 2d8+7 psychic damage, and the target acquires Balance's Boon until it is used or until the end of the target's next extended rest

▶ **Change Shape** (minor; at-will) ◆ Polymorph

Balance can alter her physical form to take on the appearance of any Small or Medium humanoid, including a unique individual. Balance can return to her natural form as a free action. Creatures who can ascertain Balance's true form see a ghostly blue-white draconic serpent whose body is made of strands of intertwined energy that appear as silk and gossamer threads.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Telepathy 20

Skills Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Insight +20

Str 19 (+13) **Dex** 19 (+13) **Wis** 22 (+15)

Con 25 (+16) **Int** 19 (+13) **Cha** 25 (+16)

BALANCE'S BOON

While endowed with Balance's boon, a creature gains the following abilities.

- ◆ A +5 power bonus to Diplomacy checks.
- ◆ The bonus power Psychic Calm.

Balance can grant this boon to five creatures at a time, but it suffers a cumulative –1 penalty to all attack and defense rolls for each boon granted. Each endowment is a standard action and Balance can revoke a boon as a minor action.

Psychic Calm

A feeling of peace and contentment fills your enemy's mind.

Any Level Attack ◆ Psychic

Minor Action; Daily

Ranged 10

Target One creature

Attack WIS vs. Will

Hit The target becomes dazed and takes a –4 penalty to all attack rolls (save ends both).

BALANCE'S CALM

Living creatures that enter Eresh or linger within a mile of it are affected by the power of the trillith Balance, which acts as a suggestion to be calm and take no aggressive action. This is treated as a disease mechanically and can be cured by the use of a Remove Affliction ritual or by bringing an affected creature to its bloodied state. Balance renews this effect each morning, forcing new saving throws against the spell.

Balance's Calm Level 18 Disease**Attack** +22 vs. Will

Endurance improve DC 31, maintain DC 22, worsen DC 21 or lower. Each mile distant from Balance adds a +5 bonus to the Endurance check. In addition, a successful check made farther than 1 mile from Balance automatically cures the disease.

- ▲ The target is cured.
- ▲▼ **Initial** The target is perpetually dazed. It will not use powers (including basic attacks) unless it succeeds in making a DC 22 Wisdom check (negates the dazed condition caused by this disease for 1 round) or is hit by an attack. Once in combat, the target must make a saving throw at the end of its turn or become dazed. Bloodied targets do not return to a dazed state.
- ▲▼ The target is perpetually dazed and cannot take a standard action unless it makes a DC 22 Wisdom check. If the target fails the check, he exhibits an intense emotional reaction (crying, laughing, fear, etc.) (save ends). If the target succeeds the check, he may take the action.
- ▼ **Final** The target is perpetually dazed and takes 5 psychic damage each day until death.

HADDIN**Haddin Ja-Laffa****Level 15 Elite Controller • XP 2,400**

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +10; **Senses** Perception +12**HP** 278; **Bloodied** 139**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 27**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1☑ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+20 vs AC; 1d4+6 damage

☑ **Withering Ray** (std; at-will) ◆ Necrotic

Ranged 20; +19 vs Fortitude; 2d8+6 necrotic damage. If this attack bloodies a target, that target is weakened until the end of Haddin's next turn

✓ **Mystic Hold** (std; at-will) ◆ Charm,

Implement, Psychic

Ranged 10; +20 vs AC; 2d8+6 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Haddin's next turn

✓ **Enslave** (std; rchg ☑☑) ◆ Charm

Ranged 10; targets humanoids; +19 vs Will; the target is dominated (save ends). Haddin can use enslave only on one creature at a time

☑ **Darkness** (minor; enc)

Close Burst 2; creates a cloud of darkness that remains in place until the end of the Haddin's next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight for all creatures except Haddin. A creature entirely within the cloud (except Haddin) is blinded until it exits.

☑ **Sanity Storm** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Psychic

Close Blast 5; +19 vs Will; 3d6+6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Miss: Half damage, and the target is not dazed

▶ **Dominating Seal** (std; enc) ◆ Charm

+19 vs Will; an enslaved target is dominated for 15 minutes, no saving throw allowed

Alignment Evil; **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Deep Speech, Dwarven, Elven, Giant**Skills** Arcana +23, Heal +17, Intimidate +20, Religion +18**Str** 14 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+10) **Wis** 20 (+12)**Con** 11 (+7) **Int** 23 (+13) **Cha** 17 (+10)

APPENDIX B: TACTICAL ENCOUNTERS

FIRE ISLAND

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

A slight fog has arisen from the cool air and warmer water. Following the trail onward, it ends at the edge of a shallow mere with an island in the center. Surprisingly, the fog is nearly non-existent along the island shoreline. Lying against an old thick-trunked cypress tree at the water's edge can be seen three girls. From your distance, you cannot be sure if they are alive or dead.

(When the heroes approach the area — about 5 squares from the island's edge) As you wade through the muck towards the isle, it is apparent that at least one girl is alive as her arm is twitching as it drapes over the body of another.

Have the heroes make a Perception check:

- ◆ **DC 14:** A thin oily film covers the surface of the surrounding 3 squares of water around the island.
- ◆ **DC 23:** The girls seem purposely placed against the tree rather than succumbing to the elements.
- ◆ **DC 28:** A strange “whoosh” and crackling of timber can be heard from behind trees on the mainland shore. Two strange, fiery humanoids are standing where the sound originated.

The three girls are from Vidor and unfortunately dead. Haddin rescued them and they died from exposure. The mage knows this area is part of the troll's normal foraging and he hopes to surprise and kill a few with an exploding tree. He has also used his dominating powers and new-found biomantic skill to change two of his bodyguards into fiery archers. Haddin is out with the other female guard and will appear later.

- ◆ 2 Biomantic Fire Archers (F)
- ◆ 1 Explosive Cypress (C)
- ◆ Oily Water (see Features of the Area)

Biomantic Fire Archer

Level 14 Artillery • XP 1,000

Medium natural humanoid (fire, human)

Initiative +13; **Senses** Perception +9

HP 108; **Bloodied** 54

AC 26; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 28

Resist 20 fire

Speed 6

☑ **Fiery Claws** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire

+21 vs AC; 2d8+6 fire damage

☑ **Longbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire, Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +19 vs AC; 1d10+6 damage plus 1d6 fire damage

✓ **Double Attack** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire, Weapon

The biomantic fire archer makes two ranged basic attacks against the same target or two separate targets within 5 squares of each other.

↖ **Flame Gout** (minor; rchg ☐☐☐☐) ◆ Fire

Close Blast 2; +19 vs Reflex; 1d10+6 fire damage and the target is pushed 1 square.

▶ **Fiery Trail** (move; at-will) ◆ Fire

The biomantic fire archer can move up to 6 squares, leaving a trail of fire behind her. Creatures in squares adjacent to the archer's path take 10 fire damage. The fire lasts until the beginning of the archer's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common

Str 17 (+10) **Dex** 22 (+13) **Wis** 15 (+9)

Con 18 (+11) **Int** 11 (+7) **Cha** 11 (+7)

Equipment Arrows (30), longbow

Tactics The biomantic fire archer ignites the tips of her arrows by striking them against her body before launching them. Enemies within melee striking range are hit with a flame gout to push them away before shooting with her longbow.

Explosive Cypress

Level 14 Blaster • XP 1,000

Hazard

As the bodies are moved, a small stone wedged behind one girl falls. Instantly, a hiss can be heard from a hole the stone covered and a small flicker of flame erupts from the tree trunk.

Hazard The heroes are attacked by flames if they move the bodies.

▶ **Perception**

DC 24 The three bodies are entangled in such a way that they will all move if one moves. A more careful examination shows where one of the bodies has a stone wedged between against the trunk.

Arcana DC 28 A smell of brimstone around the tree trunk suggests there is more to the scene than what is first imagined.

▶ **Trigger**

As soon as one girl's body is moved significantly, the trap is sprung and rolls initiative.

A burning arrow striking the tree (AC 10) triggers the trap if 15 damage or more is suffered in one hit.

Initiative +12

▶ **Attack**

Standard Action; Close Burst 10 (centered on the tree trunk).

Targets Creatures in blast

Attack +18 vs. Reflex

Hit 2d8+5 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares, knocked prone, and dazed until the end of the target's next turn.

Miss Half damage

▶ **Countermeasures**

◆ A **DC 20 Thievery** check keeps the hole properly covered to prevent the ignition of the small amount of air-flame shoved into the hole.

TACTICS

Unless the archers are detected early, they will not fire upon the heroes until the tree is exploded or the trap is discovered and someone is attempting to disable the bomb. If the bomb is not triggered, one archer will target the tree. The archers will then fire their longbows and attempt to kill off the stragglers. Under Haddin's domination and their new powered form, they see the heroes as trolls and act to burn all but one of them, so that Haddin can later scavenge the troll-flesh. When the

fight is over, or the heroes are on their last legs, Haddin appears where the archers started and stops the women.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

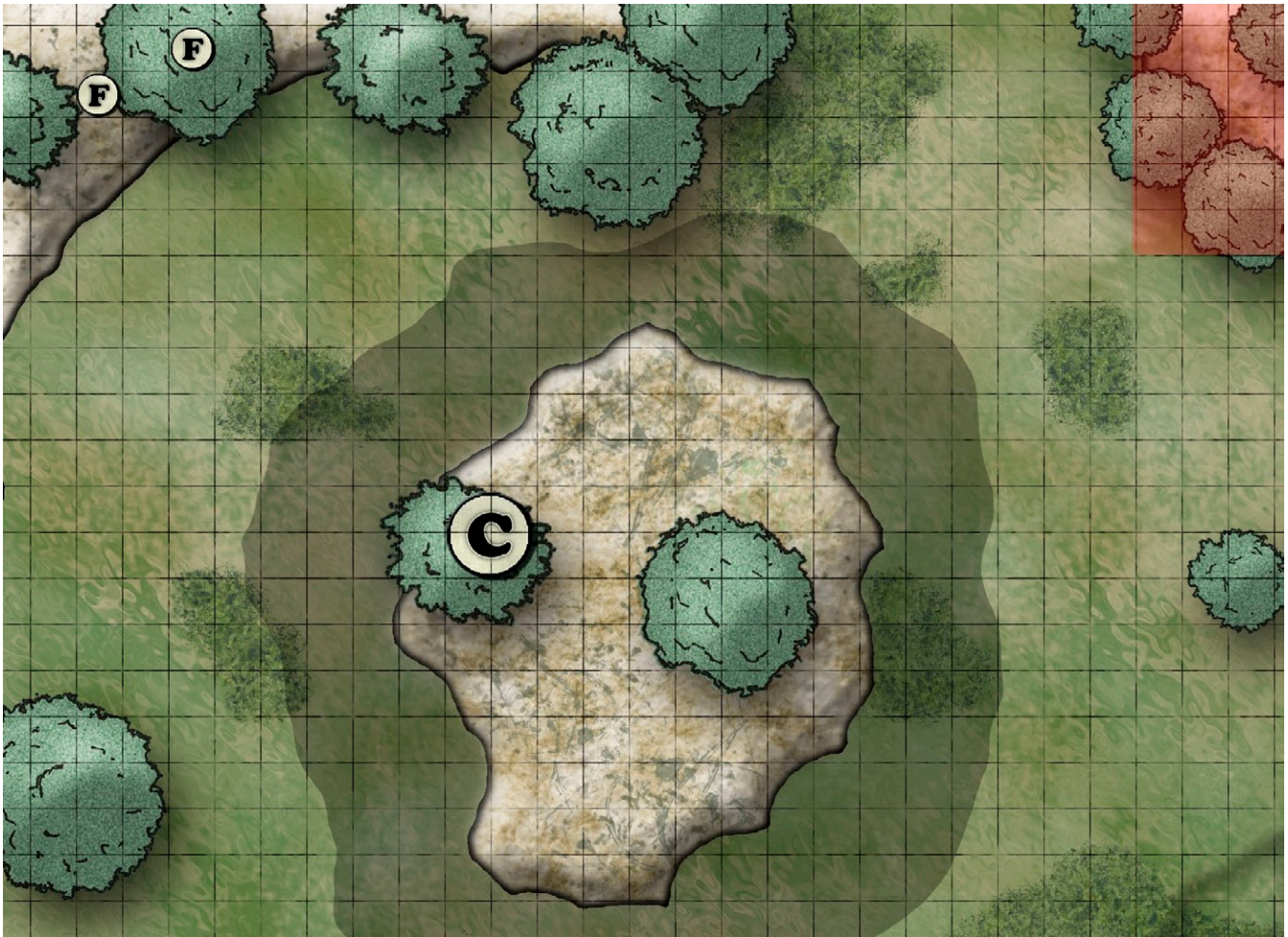
Swampvine: Any character ending his movement in a swampvine space is slowed until the end of his next turn.

Pond: The island is surrounded by a shallow pond (1 foot deep), which counts as normal terrain. It cannot be traversed by boat.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain

for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

Oily Film: Any fire that touches the water begins a chain reaction fire around the island. The flames spread at the start of each turn and expand by three squares in an ever-expanding burst from the origin. The squares sputter out at the beginning of the fourth turn after lighting. A creature caught in the fire takes 10 fire damage each round and ongoing 5 fire damage after escaping from the fire (save ends).



PATROL

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

- ◆ 3 Swamp Trolls (T)
- ◆ 2 Destrachan Lopers (D)

Swamp Troll

Level 14 Soldier • XP 1,000

Large natural humanoid

Initiative +12; Senses Perception +15

HP 110; Bloodied 55

Regeneration 10 (if the swamp troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 30; Fortitude 29, Reflex 25, Will 25

Speed 6

☞ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 2d6+7 damage

☞ **Greatsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the swamp troll's next turn

☞ **Longbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +20 vs AC; 1d12+3 damage

☞ **Great Sweep** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires greatsword; Close Blast 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone

▶ **Blood Pursuit** (imm reac, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the swamp troll moves or shifts; at-will)

The swamp troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.

▶ **Threatening Reach**

The swamp troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).

▶ **Troll Healing** ◆ Healing

A troll reduced to 0 hp or fewer by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hp.

Alignment Chaotic Evil; Languages Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +19, Endurance +17

Str 24 (+14) Dex 16 (+10) Wis 16 (+10)

Con 20 (+12) Int 10 (+7) Cha 12 (+8)

Equipment arrows (30), greatsword, longbow, plate armor

Destrachan Loper

Level 10 Artillery • XP 500

Large aberrant magical beast (bind, mount)

Initiative +9; Senses Perception +12; blindsight

HP 87; Bloodied 43

AC 22; Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 21

Immune gaze; Resist 10 thunder

Speed 6, climb 4

☞ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs AC; 1d8+4 damage

✓ **Sound Pulse** (std; at-will) ◆ Thunder

Range 10; +14 vs Reflex; 2d6+5 thunder damage

☞ **Bellowing Blast** (std; rchg ☐☐☐☐☐) ◆ Thunder

Thunder

Close Blast 5; +14 vs Fortitude; 2d6+5 thunder damage and target is dazed (save ends)

Alignment Evil; Languages Deep Speech

Skills Bluff +10, Stealth +14

Str 19 (+9) Dex 19 (+9) Wis 15 (+7)

Con 21 (+10) Int 8 (+4) Cha 11 (+5)

TACTICS

The trolls set the destrachans off first to send off their *sound pulse* while they prepare their longbows. Two trolls will wade into battle after the first volley unless the destrachans are

in a position to blast the heroes with *bellowing blast*. If the destrachans are killed off quickly, the trolls will run to the pyramid and will be waiting when the heroes arrive.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Swampvine: Any character ending his movement in a swampvine space is slowed until the end of his next turn.

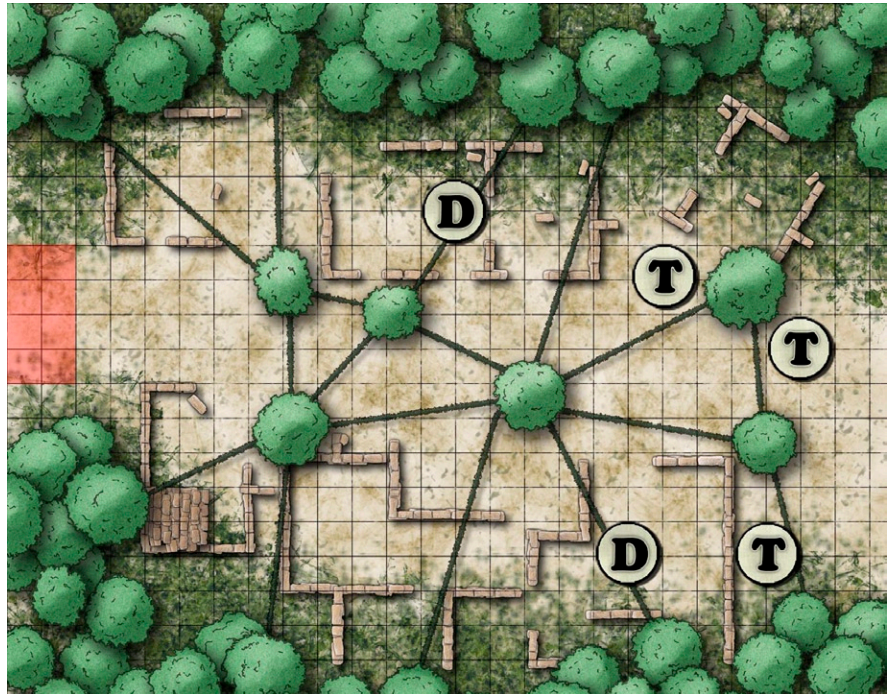
Pond: The island is surrounded by a shallow pond (1 foot deep), which counts as normal terrain. It cannot be traversed by boat.

Small Trees: Traveling through a tree square is difficult terrain. A tree square provides lightly obscured concealment and cover for attackers. Trees can be climbed using normal climb rates to a height of 10 feet.

Rubble: The areas of rubble are difficult terrain.

Low Wall: A low wall is 3–5 feet tall. The wall provides concealment and possible cover. Climbing a low wall requires a DC 15 Athletics check and costs 4 squares of movement. The top of a low wall is difficult terrain.

Light Drizzle: Lightly obscures beyond 3 squares. Apply a –2 penalty to attack rolls and non-sound-based Perception checks.



PYRAMID

Encounter Level 15 (6,000 XP)

SETUP

At a pyramid similar to one you've seen before, the trolls wait outside a side opening that looks freshly destroyed. Floating in the water are dozens of attercop bodies and the trolls are clearly seeing them as pests to be eliminated — until they notice you.

The trolls are either alerted to the heroes' presence (from the previous encounter), or they are lazily killing attercops for sport while their leader, Six, is exploring the interior of the just-opened pyramid.

- ◆ 3 Bog Brutes (B)
- ◆ 3 Swamp Trolls (T)
- ◆ 5 Attercop Pouncer Adults (A)

Bog Brute (B)

Level 12 Brute • XP 700

Large natural animate (plant)

Initiative +5; **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

HP 150; **Bloodied** 75

Regeneration 5

AC 24; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

Immune lightning; see also *lightning affinity*

Speed 4 (swamp walk)

☑ **Tendrils** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d8+6 damage.

✓ **Enwrapping Clutch** (std; at-will) ◆ Healing

The bog brute makes two basic attacks. If a single Medium or smaller target is hit by both attacks, the bog brute makes a secondary attack against it. *Secondary Attack*: +13 vs. Fortitude; the target is pulled into the bog brute's space and restrained (save ends). While the target is restrained, at the start of the bog brute's turn, the target takes 10 damage and the bog brute regains 10 hp. Up to two creatures can be enwrapped at a time, and when one makes its save, it reappears in a square of its choice adjacent to the bog brute. While restrained, no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target.

▶ **Lightning Affinity** (imm reac, when hit by a lightning attack; at-will) ◆ Healing

The bog brute regains 10 hp.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —

Skills Stealth +12

Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+6)

Con 20 (+11) **Int** 6 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+6)

Lore A hero knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15 The common bog brute enfolds its prey and crushes it with its rootlike tendrils.

DC 20 Lightning rejuvenates bog brutes. Some of them can store lightning and release it back in their attacks.

Swamp Troll

Level 14 Soldier • XP 1,000

Large natural humanoid

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +15

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55

Regeneration 10 (if the swamp troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25

Speed 6

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 2d6+7 damage

☑ **Greatsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the swamp troll's next turn

☑ **Longbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +20 vs AC; 1d12+3 damage

☑ **Great Sweep** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires greatsword; close blast 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone

▶ **Blood Pursuit** (imm reac, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the swamp troll moves or shifts; at-will)

The swamp troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.

▶ **Threatening Reach**

The swamp troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).

▶ **Troll Healing** ◆ Healing

A troll reduced to 0 hp or fewer by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hp.

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +19, Endurance +17

Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+10)

Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+8)

Equipment arrows (30), greatsword, longbow, plate armor

Attercop Pouncer Adult (A)

Level 9 Controller • XP 400

Medium natural beast (spider)

Initiative +3; **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 93; **Bloodied** 46

AC 19; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18

Vulnerable 10 psychic

Speed 8, climb 6 (spider climb)

☑ **Poison Bite** (std; at-will) ◆ Poison

+12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 poison damage and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

✓ **Web Spinner** (minor 1/rnd; at-will)

Ranged 3; +11 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained until the end of the attercop pouncer adult's next turn.

▶ **Hunter's Advantage**

If the attercop pouncer adult is adjacent to an enemy, all other attercop pouncers have combat advantage against that enemy.

▶ **Scuttle** (move; at-will)

The attercop pouncer adult shifts 3 squares.

▶ **Soft Fall**

The attercop pouncer adult ignores the first 30 feet when determining damage from a fall.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12

Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+5)

Con 13 (+5) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 5 (+1)

Description Attercop Pouncer Adults are thick-bodied hunting spiders with an animal cunning like that seen in wolves and hyenas.

Lore A hero knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15 Attercop pouncer adults do not kill their prey, but knock them unconscious, wrap them in webbing and plant their eggs into the victim. The young incubate for a week and eat the host from the inside out when they hatch.

DC 20 Attercop pouncers are easily charmed and are trainable as pets.

TACTICS

Six is in the pyramid, and the trolls are afraid-enough of him to leave him to his search. Until the heroes announce their presence, the bog brutes and trolls will continue to chase attercops and kill them. Once the party is discovered, one troll will attack the bog brutes to enrage them while the others advance

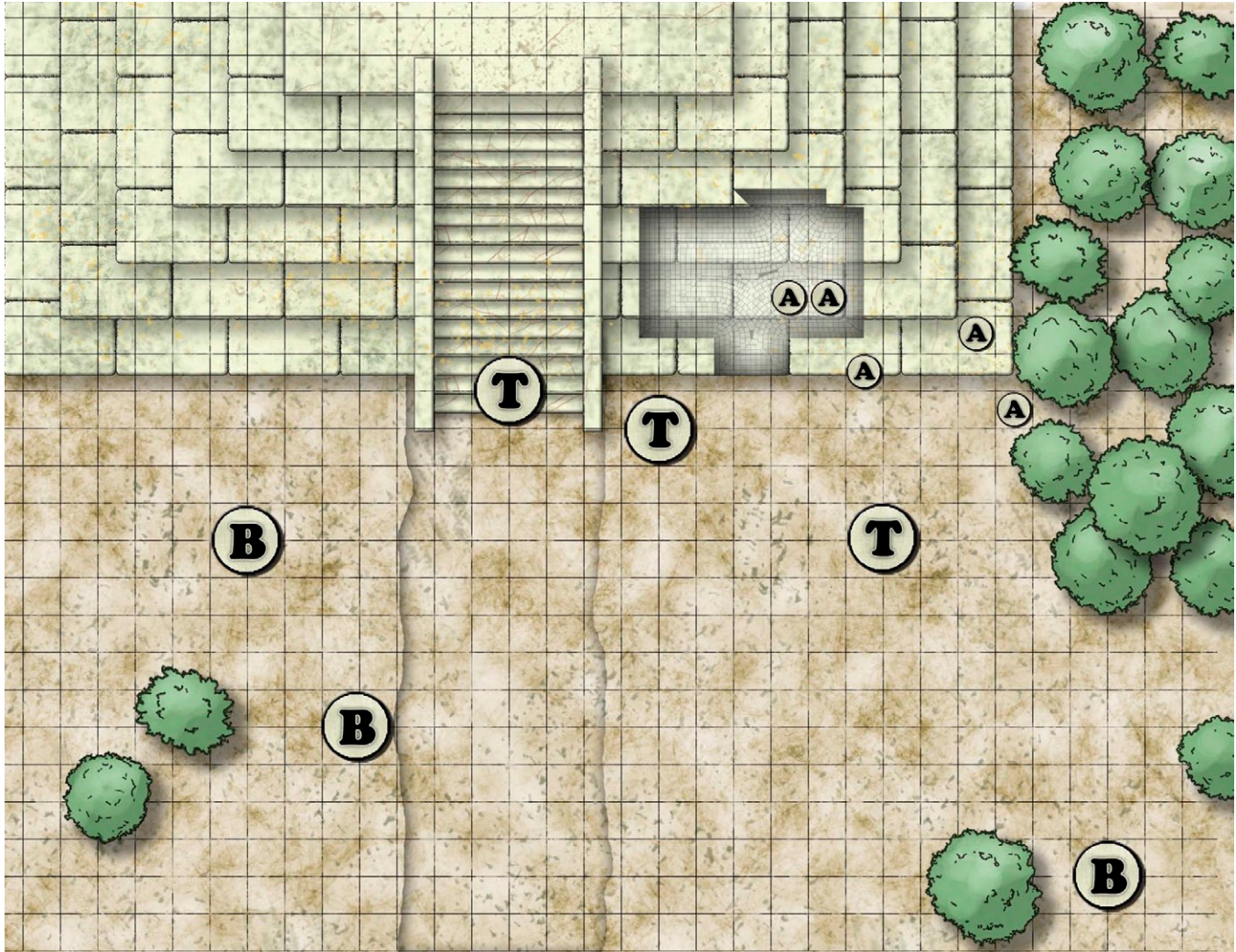
toward the party. The attercops will scabble around and be nuisances rather than have any planned attack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Rubble: The areas of rubble are difficult terrain.

Shallow Bog: The areas of swampvine are difficult terrain.

Pyramid Stairs: These can be climbed as normal. Broken stone can be lifted and rolled down the stairs or dropped on the bog brute. Lifting one requires a DC 18 Strength check. Throw rock; Standard Action; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d6+str modifier damage.



PATRIARCH

Encounter Level 16 (7,200 XP)

SETUP

Clearly, the attercops thrived in this ruin and the antechamber is slick with their blood. The passage going deeper into the structure's heart is dimly lit with a soft green glow.

Six has recently opened the pyramid's interior which was built near where the temple of echoed souls once stood. It contains library materials from the Taramesti and the king troll is looking for information now that he is free. Like the trolls outside, he is killing attercops as he plunders the structure. Three of the women are in the library with the trolls and Six.

Any hero who makes a **DC 15 Perception** check hears grunts and troll-like shuffling beyond the passage. The sound of a woman's sob is stopped quickly by a meaty slap and a gravelly voice in Common that says, "You hurt my ears! I'll make sure your tongue is the first thing I eat!"

- ◆ Six (S)
- ◆ 3 Swamp Trolls (T)
- ◆ 7 Attercop Pouncer Adults (A)

Attercop Pouncer Adult (A)

Level 9 Controller • XP 400

Medium natural beast (spider)

Initiative +3; **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 93; **Bloodied** 46

AC 19; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18

Vulnerable 10 psychic

Speed 8, climb 6 (spider climb)

☑ **Poison Bite** (std; at-will) ◆ Poison

+12 vs. AC; 1d8+5 poison damage and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

✓ **Web Spinner** (minor 1/rd; at-will)

Ranged 3; +11 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained until the end of the attercop pouncer adult's next turn.

▶ **Hunter's Advantage**

If the attercop pouncer adult is adjacent to an enemy, all other attercop pouncers have combat advantage against that enemy.

▶ **Scuttle** (move; at-will)

The attercop pouncer adult shifts 3 squares.

▶ **Soft Fall**

The attercop pouncer adult ignores the first 30 feet when determining damage from a fall.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +12

Str 11 (+4) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 13 (+5)

Con 13 (+5) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 5 (+1)

Description Attercop pouncer adults are thick-bodied hunting spiders with an animal cunning like that seen in wolves and hyenas.

Lore A hero knows the following with a successful Nature check.

DC 15 Attercop pouncer adults do not kill their prey, but knock them unconscious, wrap them in webbing and plant their eggs into the victim. The young incubate for a week and eat the host from the inside out when they hatch.

DC 20 Attercop pouncers are easily charmed and are trainable as pets.

Swamp Troll

Level 14 Soldier • XP 1,000

Large natural humanoid

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +15

HP 110; **Bloodied** 55

Regeneration 10 (if the swamp troll takes acid or fire damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 30; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 25

Speed 6

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 2d6+7 damage

☑ **Greatsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the swamp troll's next turn

☑ **Longbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +20 vs AC; 1d12+3 damage

☑ **Great Sweep** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires greatsword; close blast 2; +20 vs AC; 1d12+7 damage, and the target is knocked prone

▶ **Blood Pursuit** (imm reac, when a bloodied enemy within 2 squares of the swamp troll moves or shifts; at-will)

The swamp troll shifts 1 square closer to the enemy.

▶ **Threatening Reach**

The swamp troll can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).

▶ **Troll Healing** ◆ Healing

A troll reduced to 0 hp or fewer by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 15 hp.

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Elven, Giant

Skills Athletics +19, Endurance +17

Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 16 (+10)

Con 20 (+12) **Int** 10 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+8)

Equipment arrows (30), greatsword, longbow, plate armor

Six**Level 16 Controller (Leader) • XP 1,400**

Large aberrant humanoid

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +15**HP** 160; **Bloodied** 80**Regeneration** 10**AC** 30; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23**Vulnerable** 10 acid or fire (if Six takes acid or fire damage, his regeneration does not function until the end of his next turn)**Speed** 6☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +21 vs AC; 2d8+9 damage, and Six pushes the target 1 square

☑ **Power Tap** (std; at-will) ♦ Psychic

Ranged 10; +20 vs Fortitude; 2d8+9 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the target's next turn. Each ally within 3 squares of the target may use one available power owned by the target in place of one with an equal type, action and usage owned by the ally.

☑ **Soul Tap** (minor 1/rd; at-will) ♦ Healing, Necrotic

Targets an immobilized creature; +20 vs Fortitude; 1d10+6 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge. In addition, Six regains 5 hp

☑ **Sudden Rush** (move; rchg ☑☑☑)

Six shifts his speed and makes an attack against each enemy he moves adjacent to during the move; +20 vs Reflex; 1 the target is knocked prone

☑ **Quickening** (imm reac, when an ally within 10 squares of six regains hp from troll healing; at-will) ♦ Healing, Implement

Close Burst 10; the triggering ally regains 20 hp

▶ **Troll Healing** ♦ Healing

If Six is reduced to 0 hp by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, he falls prone and remains at 0 hp until the start of his next turn, when he regains 10 hp. If an attack deals acid or fire damage to Six while he is at 0 hp, he is destroyed.

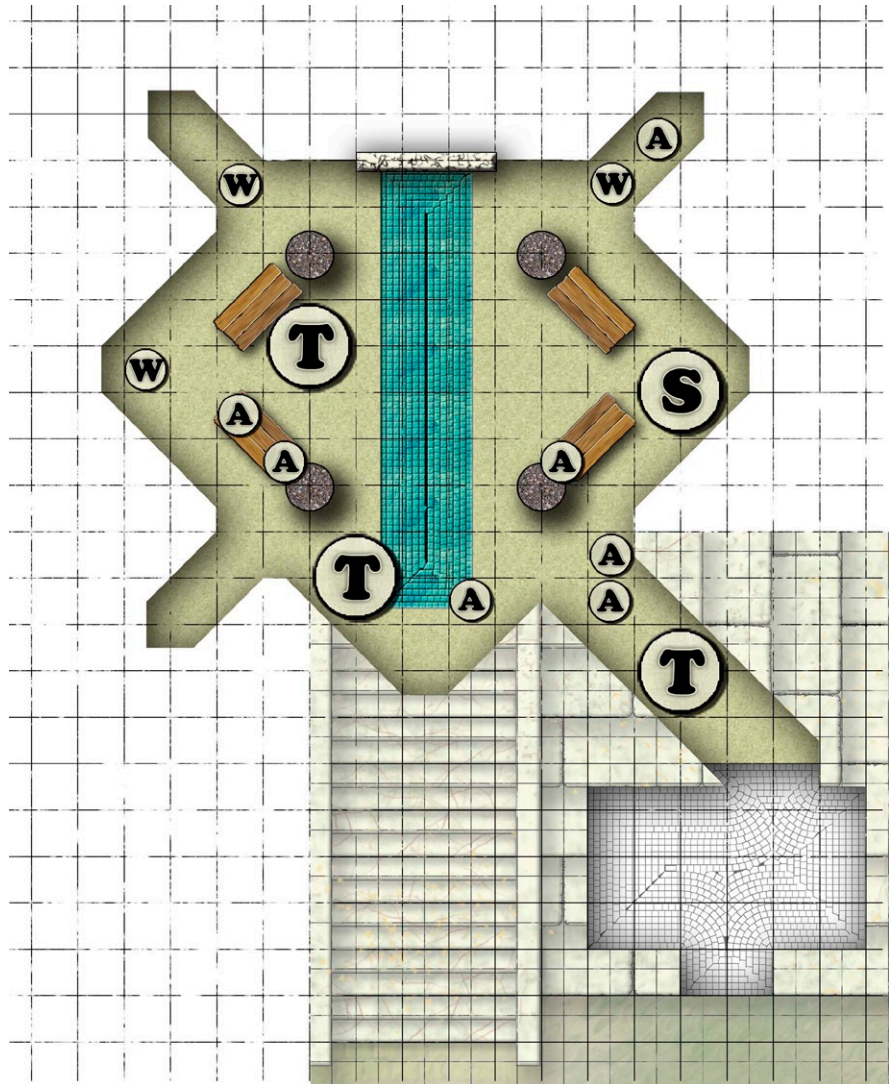
Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Athletics +18, Endurance +20, Religion +17**Str** 20 (+13) **Dex** 18 (+12) **Wis** 14 (+10)**Con** 24 (+15) **Int** 18 (+12) **Cha** 12 (+9)**TACTICS**

It is possible to surprise the trolls. Once the battle is started, Six likes to Power Tap and Sudden Rush to get to the spellcasters in the back, allowing the trolls to start engaging the broken front line. He sees he is in tight quarters and will do all he can to get to the outside. He tries to stay within Quickening range to help his trolls, but will take a chance to bring the battle

outdoors if it presents itself. The attercops are interested in Web-Spinning the women, so the heroes may find themselves needing to split themselves to attend to two battlefronts.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Table: A table will break if a character jumps on it, requiring a DC 20 Acrobatics check to avoid falling prone.



THE RAGESIAN LONG ARM

Encounter Level 14 (5,600 XP)

SETUP

When the heroes reach the base of this stairway, call for Perception checks. Anyone who beats DC 25 notices signs of traffic at the top of the stairs. A check that beats DC 10 notices what appear to be wolf tracks at the base of the stairs, heading up a winding and steep path to the top. Everyone else simply spots that at least the winch at the top of the stairs looks to be in order. If someone can get up there, it would not be too hard to pull the others up, even with the scree.

Once at least half of the heroes are within 2 squares of the base of the stairs, Menchi squeals and casts his wall of fire, springing the ambush.

- ◆ 6 Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 3 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 2 Ragesian Infiltrators (I)
- ◆ Menchi the Headless (M)
- ◆ 1 Battle Worg (Ekseru) (E)

Ragesian Infiltrator

Level 11 Lurker • XP 200

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +16; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision

HP 87; **Bloodied** 43

AC 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 20

Speed 6

☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs AC; 1d4+5 damage

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

☞ **Walking Wounded** (std; daily) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs Fortitude; 1d6+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone. Until the end of the encounter, the target falls prone any time it moves more than half its speed in one action.

▶ **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

▶ **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack hits the Ragesian infiltrator; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

▶ Sneak Attack

Once per round, the Ragesian infiltrator gains +2d6 damage when he has combat advantage.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Endurance +12, Nature +12

Str 18 (+9) **Dex** 24 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), climber's kit, dagger, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow

Experienced Ragesian Soldier

Level 13 Minion Soldier • XP 200

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

Speed 6

☞ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+20 vs AC; 6 damage.

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +20 vs AC; 6 damage.

☞ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +18 vs AC; 8 damage.

☞ **Shield Slam** (minor; rchg ☞☞☞)

Must be using shield; +18 vs Fortitude; 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square or knocked prone (attacker's choice). This may also be used as a melee basic attack when charging.

▶ Combat Advantage

The experienced Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ Ragesian Taunt

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the experienced Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the experienced Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Acrobatics +18, Arcana +14, Stealth +18

Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)

Con 16 (+9) **Int** 13 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)

Equipment arrows (20), dagger, heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Veteran Ragesian Soldier

Level 11 Soldier • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20

Speed 6

☞ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

☞ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +16 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

☞ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +16 vs Fortitude; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

The veteran Ragesian soldier can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

☞ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☞☞☞) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

▶ Combat Advantage

The veteran Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ Ragesian Taunt

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the veteran Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the veteran Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

▶ **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Menchi the Headless**Level 9 Elite Controller (Leader) • XP 800**

Small natural humanoid (fire, goblin)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 194; **Bloodied** 97**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 21**Resist** 5 fire**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1☞ **Small Trident** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

✓ **Burning Hex** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire

Ranged 10; +13 vs Fortitude; 3d6+5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends)

✓ **Rekindle Hex** (std; rchg ☞☞) ◆ Fire

Ranged 10; +14 vs AC; The target is slowed and takes; 3d6+5 fire damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).

✳ **Wall of Fire** (std; sustain minor; enc) ◆

Conjuration, Fire

Area Wall 8 within 10; the fire goblin hexer conjures a wall of fire that lasts until the end of the fire goblin hexer's next turn. The wall is 6 squares high, lightly obscuring and is difficult terrain. A creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 5 fire damage, and a creature that enters a square of the wall or starts its turn there takes 15 fire damage. Sustain Minor: The wall persists.

✳ **Flame Sphere** (std; sustain minor; rchg

☞☞☞) ◆ Conjuration, Fire

Area 1 within 10; a sphere of flame is conjured that floats up to 4 squares in height and attacks as an immediate interrupt when a creature moves into melee range; +14 vs AC; 2d6+5 fire damage, the sphere is destroyed and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn. The flame sphere can be moved up to 6 squares by the fire goblin hexer with a move action. Sustain minor: The sphere persists.

▶ **Flaming Shield**

Any creature that hits the fire goblin hexer with a melee attack takes 5 fire damage.

▶ **Superior Goblin Tactics** (imm reac, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The fire goblin hexer and up to 2 allies within line of sight shift 1 square.

▶ **Survival Instinct**

The fire goblin hexer's defenses increase by +3 when it is bloodied.

Alignment Evil; **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Stealth +14, Thievery +14**Str** 14 (+6) **Dex** 20 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+7)**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 11 (+4) **Cha** 21 (+9)**Equipment** chainmail, small trident**Description** Grinning moronically atop a black worg, this goblin's arms and waist are adorned with heavy bangles and pouches, and though he wears a vest of chain armor, his chest is bare, revealing a massive — and seemingly once-fatal — scar across his neck and torso.**Battle Worg****Level 11 Brute • XP 600**

Large natural magical beast

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision**Menacing Growl** aura 3; enemies in the aura take a –1 penalty to attack rolls, and allies in the aura gain a +1 power bonus to attack rolls.**HP** 141; **Bloodied** 70**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19**Speed** 6☞ **Bite** (std; at-will)

+14 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends)

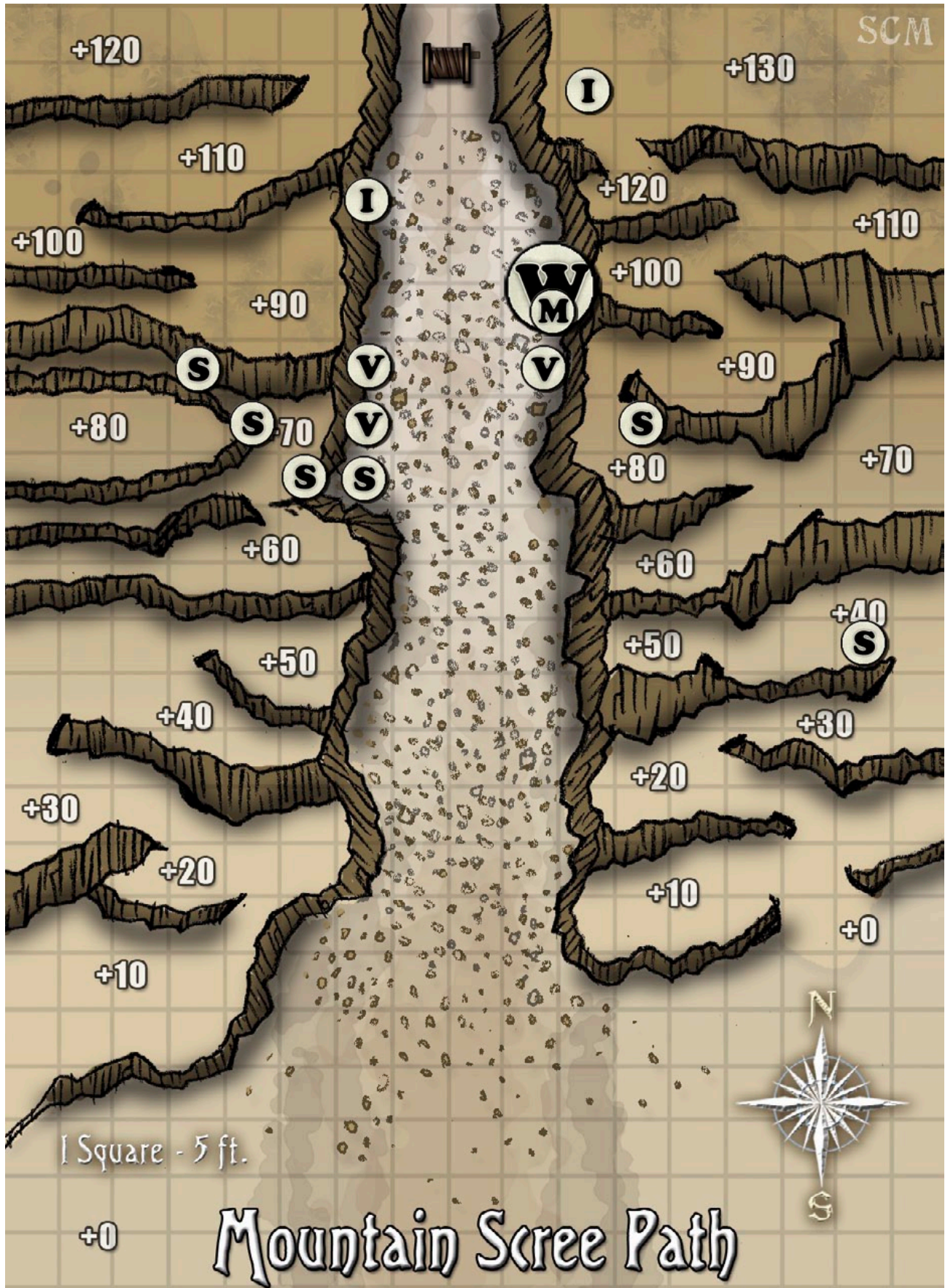
Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Abyssal**Skills** Stealth +14**Str** 22 (+11) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 11 (+5)**Con** 21 (+10) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 17 (+8)**TACTICS**

The hyperactive Menchi squeals as he rides through combat, thinking this is delightfully fun. If the Ragesians are aware of the heroes' approach, Menchi prepares for their arrival by casting up to two *flame spheres* at good choke points (uses a move and a minor action to sustain both). Then as the heroes come within range, he casts *wall of fire* behind them to drive them up the slope. He stays close to the Ragesians in order to give them the benefit of his *superior goblin tactics*.

As they ride through combat, Menchi takes advantage of all the flaming spheres created, directing them to chase heroes so as to keep them from stopping on the plateau.

Meanwhile, the Ragesian soldiers pepper the heroes with arrows, readying actions if necessary to attack heroes when they break from cover. The infiltrators head down the slope stealthily and try to flank the heroes, hoping to take out a spellcaster.

FEATURES OF THE AREA**Boulders:** The boulders provide cover.**Small Trees:** The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.



THE SIEGE

Encounter Level 16 (7,000 XP or more)

SETUP

This encounter is not meant to be a realistic fight. If a battle does begin, do it in waves where Lieutenant Kormus rouses the soldiers from their stupor with *rally cry*.

- ◆ 128 Typical Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 24 Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (E)
- ◆ 16 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 6 Ragesian Infiltrators (I)
- ◆ Lieutenant Kormus (K)
- ◆ 8 Ragesian Fire Hounds (H)

Typical Ragesian Soldier

Level 10 Minion Soldier • XP 125

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23; **Reflex** 22; **Will** 19

Speed 5

✓ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) • Weapon
+17 vs AC; 5 damage

► **Combat Advantage**

The typical Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment plate armor, battleaxe, heavy shield

Experienced Ragesian Soldier

Level 13 Minion Soldier • XP 200

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22

Speed 6

✓ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
+20 vs AC; 6 damage.

✓ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
Ranged 15/30; +20 vs AC; 6 damage.

✓ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
Requires longsword; +18 vs AC; 8 damage.

✓ **Shield Slam** (minor; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Weapon
Must be using shield; +18 vs Fortitude; 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square or knocked prone (attacker's choice). This may also be used as a melee basic attack when charging.

► **Combat Advantage**

The experienced Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the experienced Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the experienced Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Acrobatics +18, Arcana +14, Stealth +18

Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)

Con 16 (+9) **Int** 13 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)

Equipment arrows (20), dagger, heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Veteran Ragesian Soldier

Level 11 Soldier • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20

Speed 6

✓ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
+18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✓ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
Ranged 15/30; +18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
Requires longsword; +16 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✓ **Shield Push** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon
Must be using shield; +16 vs Fortitude; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

The veteran Ragesian soldier can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

◀ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Weapon
Close Burst 1; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

► **Combat Advantage**

The veteran Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the veteran Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the veteran Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

► **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Ragesian Infiltrator**Level 11 Lurker • XP 600**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +16; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision**HP** 87; **Bloodied** 43**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 20**Speed** 6☞ **Dagger** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+16 vs AC; 1d4+5 damage

☞ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

☒ **Walking Wounded** (std; daily) ◆ Weapon

+14 vs Fortitude; 1d6+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone. Until the end of the encounter, the target falls prone any time it moves more than half its speed in one action.

▶ **Creeping Slide** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian infiltrator shifts 3 squares and selects a single target within 6 squares; the designated target grants the Ragesian infiltrator combat advantage until the end of the Ragesian infiltrator's next turn.

▶ **Evasive Reaction** (imm int, when an attack hits the Ragesian infiltrator; enc)

The attacker rerolls the attack and applies the second result.

▶ **Sneak Attack**

Once per round, the Ragesian infiltrator gains +2d6 damage when he has combat advantage.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Endurance +12, Nature +12**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 24 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), climber's kit, dagger, leather armor, light shield, short sword, shortbow

Lieutenant Kormus**Level 12 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 1,400**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision**HP** 240; **Bloodied** 120**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 21**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1☞ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Melee 1; +19 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of its next turn

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +19 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

☒ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +17 vs Fortitude; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. Kormus can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

☞ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +19 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

☞ **Compelling Command** (minor; rchg ☐☐☐)

Close Burst 5; Kormus rolls a Saving Throw. If he succeeds, all allies in the burst are roused out of their dazed condition.

▶ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Healing, Weapon

All allies within line of sight can make a basic attack as a free action and regain 10 hp.

▶ **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Bluff +14, Intimidate +14**Str** 25 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)**Con** 16 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 16 (+9)

Equipment arrows (20), battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow

Ragesian Fire Hound**Level 9 Brute • XP 400**

Medium elemental beast (fire)

Initiative +6; **Senses** Perception +13**Fire Shield** aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d6 fire damage.**HP** 117; **Bloodied** 58**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21**Resist** 20 fire**Speed** 6☞ **Bite** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire

+12 vs AC; 1d8+2 damage plus 1d8 fire damage

☞ **Fire Breath** (std; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Fire

Close Blast 3; +11 vs Reflex; 2d6+3 fire damage

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —**Str** 15 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 18 (+8)**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+4)**TACTICS**

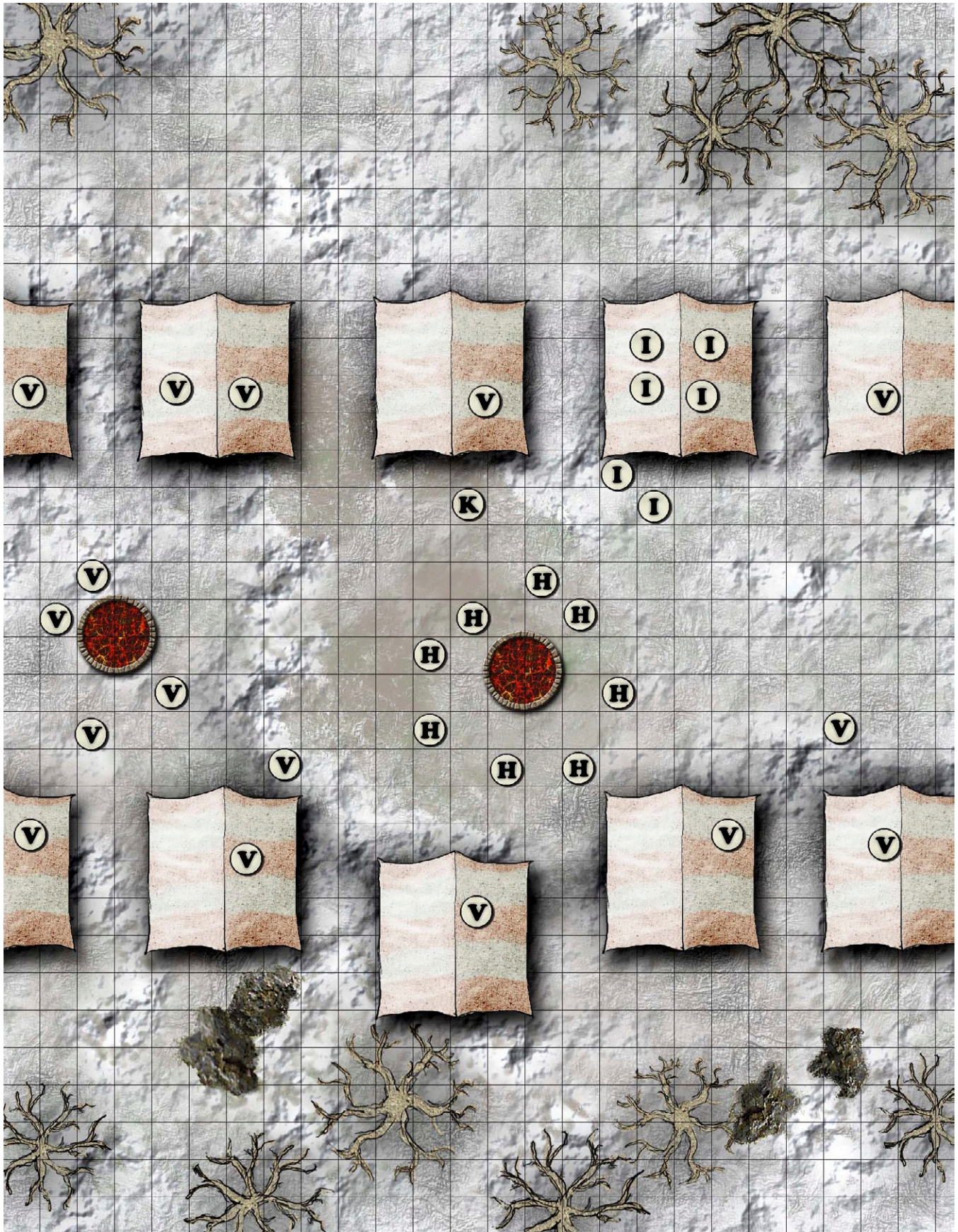
Lieutenant Kormus initiates the first wave by using *compelling command* to pull some of his soldiers out of their dazed condition. If any fire hounds are in the burst, they break Balance's charm and will not be dazed until the next day. Those in the immediate burst area are able to engage the heroes. Other Ragesians will be mildly interested in the fight and will watch the skirmish about 10 squares away, but will not participate unless damaged.

If Kormus becomes bloodied, he runs back to the observers and uses *rally cry* again to bring in more reinforcements. He will do this in waves until he is defeated.

FEATURES OF THE AREA**Boulders:** The boulders provide cover.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

Fire Pit: Anyone stepping into the fire takes 2d6 fire damage and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).



FRACTURED CALM

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

Ever since coming back to Eresh, you sense something has changed. As you approach Peak's Shadow, you see whatever calm there is has begun to fracture. Eight Ragesian soldiers are attacking a man with fists and kicks while a number of onlookers gaze impassively. Their sport nearly over, one of the soldiers grabs a old woman observer and starts to drag her towards his comrades.

Balance's hold on the people's minds has begun to decay. A number of Ragesians are openly attacking some of the townspeople. This encounter seems like a fight, but it is really a hostage situation.

- ◆ 8 Typical Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 5 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)

Typical Ragesian Soldier

Level 10 Minion Soldier • XP 125

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23; **Reflex** 22; **Will** 19

Speed 5

✓ **Battleaxe (standard; at-will) • Weapon**

+17 vs AC; 5 damage

► **Combat Advantage**

The typical Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment plate armor, battleaxe, heavy shield

Veteran Ragesian Soldier

Level 11 Soldier • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20

Speed 6

☞ **Longsword (std; at-will) • Weapon**

+18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

☞ **Shortbow (std; at-will) • Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Power Melee (std; at-will) • Weapon**

Requires longsword; +16 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✓ **Shield Push (std; at-will)**

Must be using shield; +16 vs Fortitude; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

The veteran Ragesian soldier can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

☞ **Blade Flurry (std; rchg ☞☞) • Weapon**

Close Burst 1; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

► **Combat Advantage**

The veteran Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the veteran Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the veteran Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

► **Unbreakable (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)**

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

TACTICS

The soldiers will not use conventional straight attacks against the heroes. They will instead run over to the bystanders and use them as shields or threaten to kill more innocents unless the heroes back away. Imagine this encounter as more of a stand-off where no one is willing to help the heroes out.

The soldiers will do everything possible to escape back to the main force, even if they have to drag their victims the whole way. If the heroes attempt to talk the soldiers down, the four veteran soldiers need to be convinced they will not be killed after they release the hostages. Each one needs to be successfully bluffed or submit to Diplomacy three times before releasing their captive.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Bystanders: Counted as difficult terrain if one wants to pass through a crowd. A bystander can be grabbed and used as a shield. AC 10, 1 hp. No bystander will attempt to escape the grab, even if its life is in danger.

Crates and Barrels: Counted as difficult terrain.

GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 14 (5,000 XP)

SETUP

Suddenly, ahead of you, two swirling whirlwinds appear to be guarding the path.

The air elementals have been instructed to attack any intruders, since the monastery has sealed itself until the curse upon Eresh is broken.

- ◆ 2 Two-Wind Air Elementals (A)
- ◆ Ice Rifts (see Features of the Area)

Two-Wind Air Elemental
Level 14 Elite Skirmisher • XP 2,000
Large elemental magical beast (air)

Initiative +18; **Senses** Perception +9

Whipping Debris aura 1; any creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 damage.

HP 280; **Bloodied** 140

AC 28; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 22

Immune disease, petrification, poison; **Resist** 30 lightning

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, Fly 10 (hover)

Action Points 1

☞ **Gusting Slam** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +19 vs AC; 1d10+6 damage, and target is pushed 3 squares

✗ **Multigust** (std; at-will)

The Two-Wind air elemental can make two gusting slam attacks

✗ **Whirlwind Dash** (std; at-will)

The Two-Wind air elemental flies up to 15 squares and makes one gusting slam attack at any point during that movement. The Two-Wind air elemental doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

☞ **Gale Blast** (std; rchg ☞☞☞)

Close Blast 5; targets all creatures; +17 vs Fortitude; 2d8+6 damage, and the target is knocked prone and stunned (save ends).

✦ **Wind Devil** (std; at-will) ◆ **Zone**

Area Burst 1 within 10; +17 vs Reflex; 2d8+6 damage and the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is filled with a mini-tornado and is considered difficult terrain until the end of the encounter. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the zone takes 5 damage

▶ **Hard to Hit** (std; at-will)

The Two-Wind air elemental becomes insubstantial through its next turn.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Primordial

Str 14 (+9) **Dex** 29 (+16) **Wis** 14 (+9)

Con 20 (+12) **Int** 5 (+4) **Cha** 17 (+10)

TACTICS

The Two-Wind elementals swoop in, using *whirlwind dash*, then move so they are 10 squares away from their enemies, waiting to use *gale blast* to stymie enemies who try to approach. Occasionally they use tag-team

tactics, one elemental descending amid the enemies while the other uses *wind devil* against a foe in the first elemental's threatened space, or the two of them flanking an entire group of enemies so that anyone who tries to flee (or who is knocked away with a burst of wind) incurs opportunity attacks.

As long as they are not being severely hurt they enjoy themselves, looking for fun tactics, especially slamming heroes into each other like billiard balls. If either is bloodied, they retreat. Alternately, if the heroes are on the verge of defeat they withdraw, called back by Longinus.

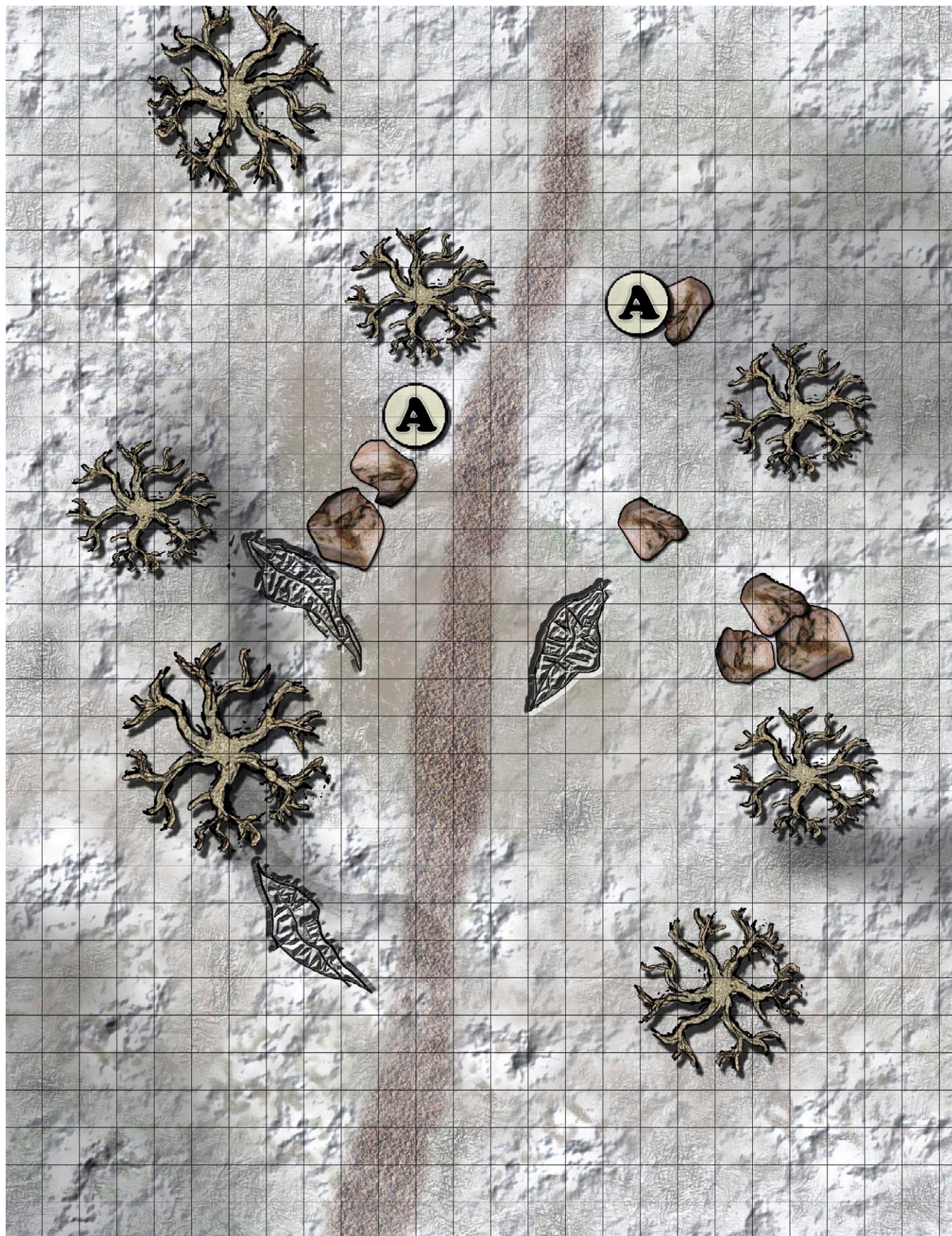
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ice Rifts: The rifts are hidden by ice and snow and are at least 10 feet deep. A creature stepping on a rift realizes it is there when it is triggered.

Hidden Ice Rift: +15 vs. Reflex. *Hit:* The target falls into the rift, takes 1d10 damage, and falls prone. *Miss:* The target returns to the last square it occupied and ends its move action immediately. *Effect:* the whole rift is revealed by a snowslide.

A hero who falls into the rift can climb out with a **DC 23 Athletics** check.

Treasure: The first hero to fall into a rift is saved from becoming wedged at the bottom by landing on a frozen body. If the victim is searched later, he is carrying three 14th level treasure parcels.



EXECUTING THASHALANOS

Encounter Level 14 (5,400 XP)

SETUP

The bruised and battered elf is now being dragged along the path up the mountain-side to the overhang. One of the lieutenants and men are sure to dash the innkeeper to the rocks a hundred feet below. In their haste, though, the path they took has a few boulders to clear before they reach the summit. There may be enough time to save Thashalanos!

The soldiers intend to take their time, enjoying themselves and beating Thashalanos for a few minutes before killing him by dragging him up to the top of the 100-foot-high peak and throwing him off.

- ◆ 8 Typical Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 5 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Lieutenant (L)
- ◆ Thashalanos (T) (non-combatant)

Typical Ragesian Soldier

Level 10 Minion Soldier • XP 125

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 26; **Fortitude** 23; **Reflex** 22; **Will** 19

Speed 5

✓ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) • Weapon

+17 vs AC; 5 damage

► **Combat Advantage**

The typical Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment plate armor, battleaxe, heavy shield

Veteran Ragesian Soldier

Level 11 Soldier • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20

Speed 6

✓ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✓ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +16 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✓ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +16 vs Fortitude; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. The veteran Ragesian soldier can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

◀ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

► **Combat Advantage**

The veteran Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

► **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the veteran Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the veteran Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

► **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Equipment arrows (20), heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Ragesian Lieutenant

Level 12 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 1,400

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 240; **Bloodied** 120

AC 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 21

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

✓ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Melee 1; +19 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of its next turn

✓ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +19 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✓ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +17 vs Fortitude; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square. The Ragesian lieutenant can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

◀ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☑☑☑) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +19 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

◀ **Compelling Command (minor; rchg ☑☑☑)**

Close Burst 5; the Ragesian lieutenant rolls a Saving Throw. If he succeeds, all allies in the burst are roused out of their dazed condition.

► **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Healing, Weapon

All allies within line of sight can make a basic attack as a free action and regain 10 hp.

► **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The Ragesian lieutenant can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Bluff +14, Intimidate +14

Str 25 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)

Con 16 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 16 (+9)

Equipment arrows (20), battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow

TACTICS

The Ragesians are out for blood and are a bit disorganized. The minions stay grouped together and rush the heroes quickly before the lieutenant can organize the tactics. The veterans follow quickly behind in an effort to

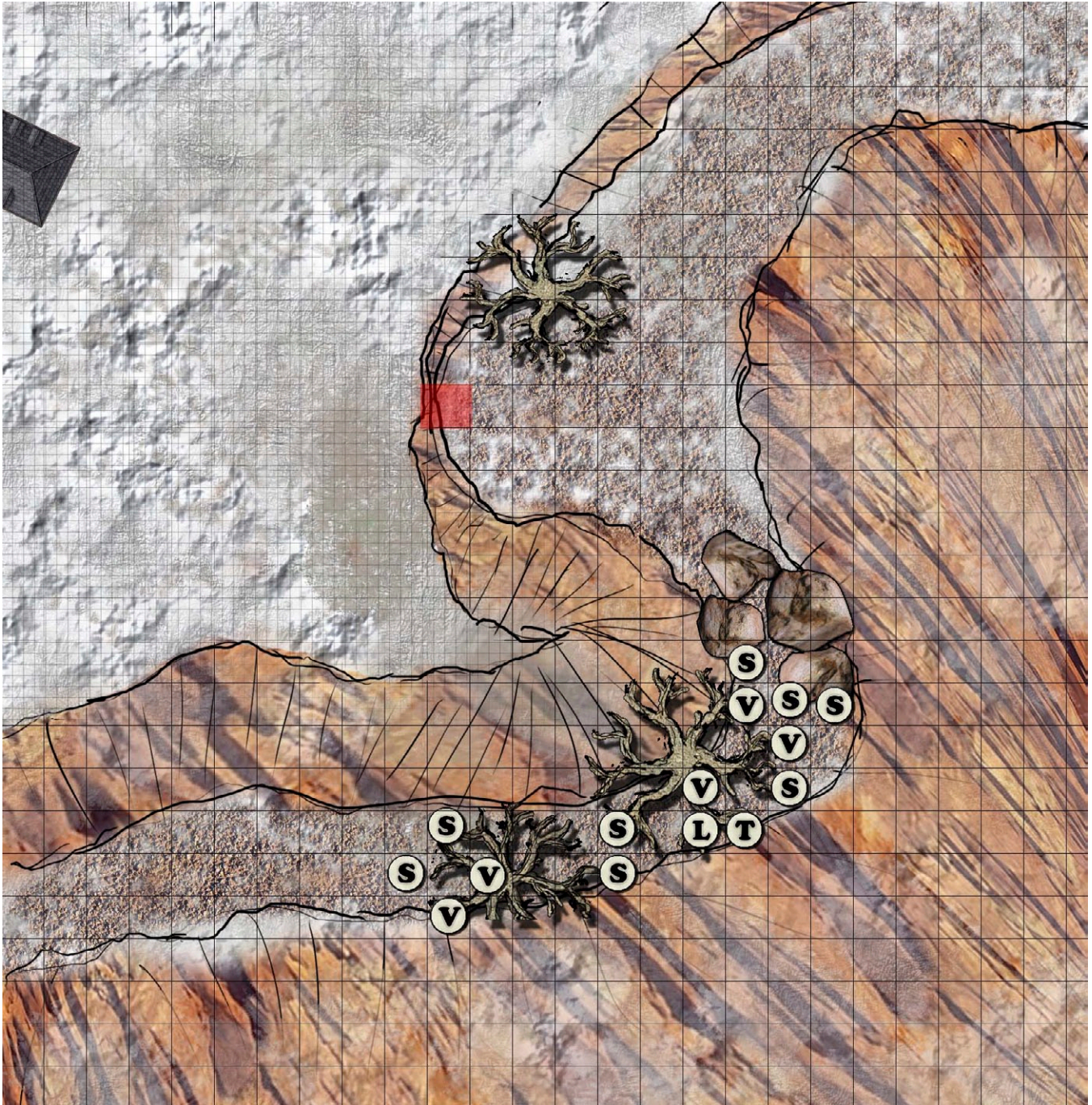
keep the others alive. After the third round, the lieutenant kills Thashalanos and gets involved in the fray.

If things go badly for the heroes, Thashalanos recovers and can attack the Ragesians as well, especially pursuing the lieutenant.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: The boulders provide cover.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.



WAVE 1

Encounter Level 14 (5,400 XP)

SETUP

- ◆ 4 Ragesian Archers (A)
- ◆ 4 Standard Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Fire Hound (F)
- ◆ 2 Ragesian Infiltrators (I)

Ragesian Archer**Level 11 Artillery • XP 600**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision**HP** 84; **Bloodied** 42**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 20**Speed** 6☑ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage

☑ **Longbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +18 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage

✓ **Evasive Strike** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 20/40; +18 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the archer's next turn.

✓ **Fusillade** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Must be adjacent to another ally using a ranged weapon; Ranged 20/40; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5

✓ **Twin Fire** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Targets 1 or 2 creatures; Ranged 20/40; Make 2 attacks; +16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +12, Nature +12**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 24 (+12) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 12 (+6) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)**Equipment** arrows (20), longbow**Standard Ragesian Soldier****Level 10 Soldier • XP 500**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 103; **Bloodied** 51**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19**Speed** 6☑ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

☑ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +17 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

✓ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +15 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage

✓ **Shield Slam** (minor; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆

Must be using shield; +15 vs Fortitude; 5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square or knocked prone (attacker's choice). This may also be used as a melee basic attack when charging.

▶ **Combat Advantage**

The standard Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the standard Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the standard Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)**Equipment** arrows (20), dagger, heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow**Ragesian Fire Hound****Level 9 Brute • XP 400**

Medium elemental beast (fire)

Initiative +6; **Senses** Perception +13**Fire Shield** aura 1; any creature that enters or begins its turn in the aura takes 1d6 fire damage.**HP** 117; **Bloodied** 58**AC** 21; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 21**Resist** 20 fire**Speed** 6☑ **Bite** (std; at-will) ◆ Fire

+12 vs AC; 1d8+2 damage plus 1d8 fire damage

☑ **Fire Breath** (std; rchg ☐☐☐) ◆ Fire

Close Blast 3; +11 vs Reflex; 2d6+3 fire damage

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —**Str** 15 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+6) **Wis** 18 (+8)**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 3 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+4)

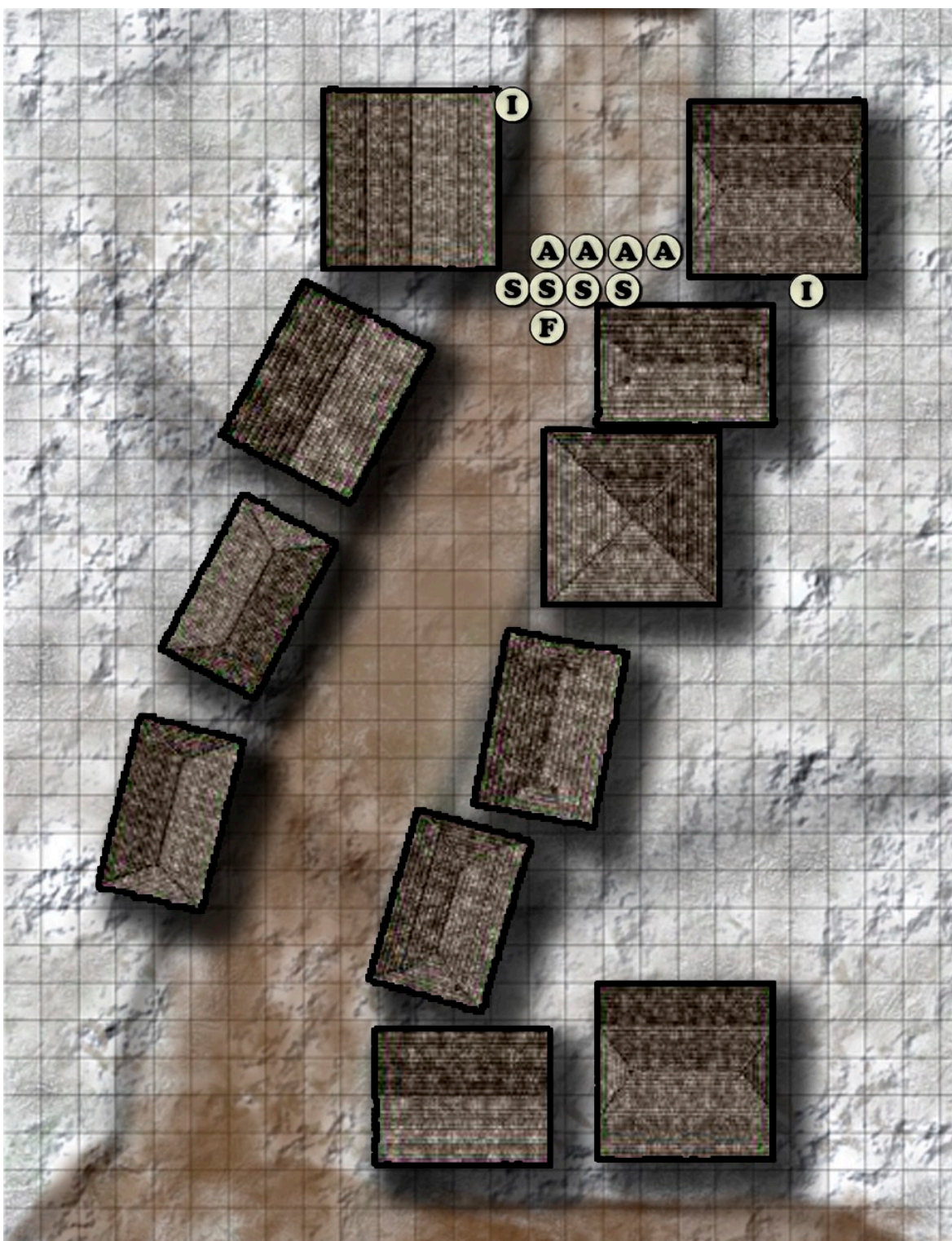
TACTICS

The soldiers form two lines, advancing to within 16 squares. The front line uses its shields to provide total cover, protecting against most attacks. The second line carry no shields, and have bows ready. Once in position, the archers ready an action to shoot, and the front line lowers its shields. The archers fire, and then the front line raises their shields again. Meanwhile, the hellhound charges in suicidally, and two infiltrators sneak around to flank the heroes and take out their mages.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Doors: A building can be entered with a DC 20 Strength check (standard action) to bash it down. The interior provides cover.

Barrels and Crates: The various barrels and crates are about 3 feet high and provide cover. Climbing a stack of crates requires a DC 15 Athletics check and costs 2 squares of movement.



WAVE 2

Encounter Level 14 (5,900 XP)

SETUP

While the heroes are outdoors, particularly if they have not chosen a location to make their stand against Signus, a trio of Ragesian wyvern knights spots them. One of the knights calls down to some soldiers as the trio prepares to engage the heroes.

- ◆ 3 Ragesian Wyverns (W)
- ◆ 3 Ragesian Wyvern Knights (K)
- ◆ 4 Standard Ragesian Soldiers (S)

Ragesian Wyvern (W)**Level 11 Skirmisher • XP 600**

Large natural beast (mount, reptile)

Initiative +7; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 114; **Bloodied** 57**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23**Speed** 4, fly 8 (hover); see also *flyby attack*☉ **Bite** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

☉ **Claws** (std; at-will)

Can be used while flying; +16 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

☉ **Sting** (std; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

Reach 2; +16 vs. AC; 1d6+3 damage, and the Ragesian wyvern makes a second attack against the same target. Second attack: +14 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

✗ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The Ragesian wyvern flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when Ragesian wyvern moves away.

✗ **Cherry Pick** (std; enc)

Only while flying; the Ragesian wyvern emulates a charge but picks up the target and hurls him a distance up to 8 squares. reach 2; +14 vs. Reflex; the target is picked up into the air and thrown a number of squares equal to the straight line distance traveled by the Ragesian wyvern before the grab. The target suffers 1d6 damage per square thrown, is knocked prone, and is dazed (save ends). Hitting an obstacle (such as a wall) adds 1d6 of damage.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —**Str** 22 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 18 (+9) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+4)**Ragesian Wyvern Knight (K)****Level 12 Soldier • XP 700**

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +10; **Senses** Perception +6**HP** 122; **Bloodied** 61**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 22**Speed** 5, ride 12☉ **Short Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage.

☉ **Crossbow** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +19 vs. AC; 1d6+4 damage. 2H, Load Minor

✗ **Cleave** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+19 vs. AC; 1d6+6 damage and another adjacent enemy takes 6 damage.

✗ **Wyvern Bloodstrike** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+19 vs. AC; 2d6+6 damage damage, and target suffers ongoing 5 damage and –2 penalty to AC (save ends both).

☉ **Ragesian Dragonbomb** (std; at-will)

Close Burst 3; targets all creatures; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6+5 fire damage, and target suffers ongoing 5 damage and is stunned (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +16, History +13, Intimidate +11**Str** 22 (+12) **Dex** 19 (+10) **Wis** 11 (+6)**Con** 18 (+10) **Int** 14 (+8) **Cha** 11 (+6)**Equipment** *chainmail armor* +1, crossbow, light shield, Ragesian dragonbomb, short sword**Standard Ragesian Soldier****Level 10 Soldier • XP 500**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 103; **Bloodied** 51**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 19**Speed** 6☉ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+17 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

☉ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +17 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

✗ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

Requires longsword; +15 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage

✗ **Shield Slam** (minor; rchg ☐☐☐☐)

Must be using shield; +15 vs Fortitude; 5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square or knocked prone (attacker's choice). This may also be used as a melee basic attack when charging.

▶ **Combat Advantage**

The standard Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the standard Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the standard Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)**Equipment** arrows (20), dagger, heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

TACTICS

The knights fly by and take potshots with their crossbows, and if one of the heroes is away from the rest of the group, a wyvern may dive and attempt to use *cherry pick* on a hero. One knight will try to drop a dragonbomb amid the heroes, while the others will conserve theirs,

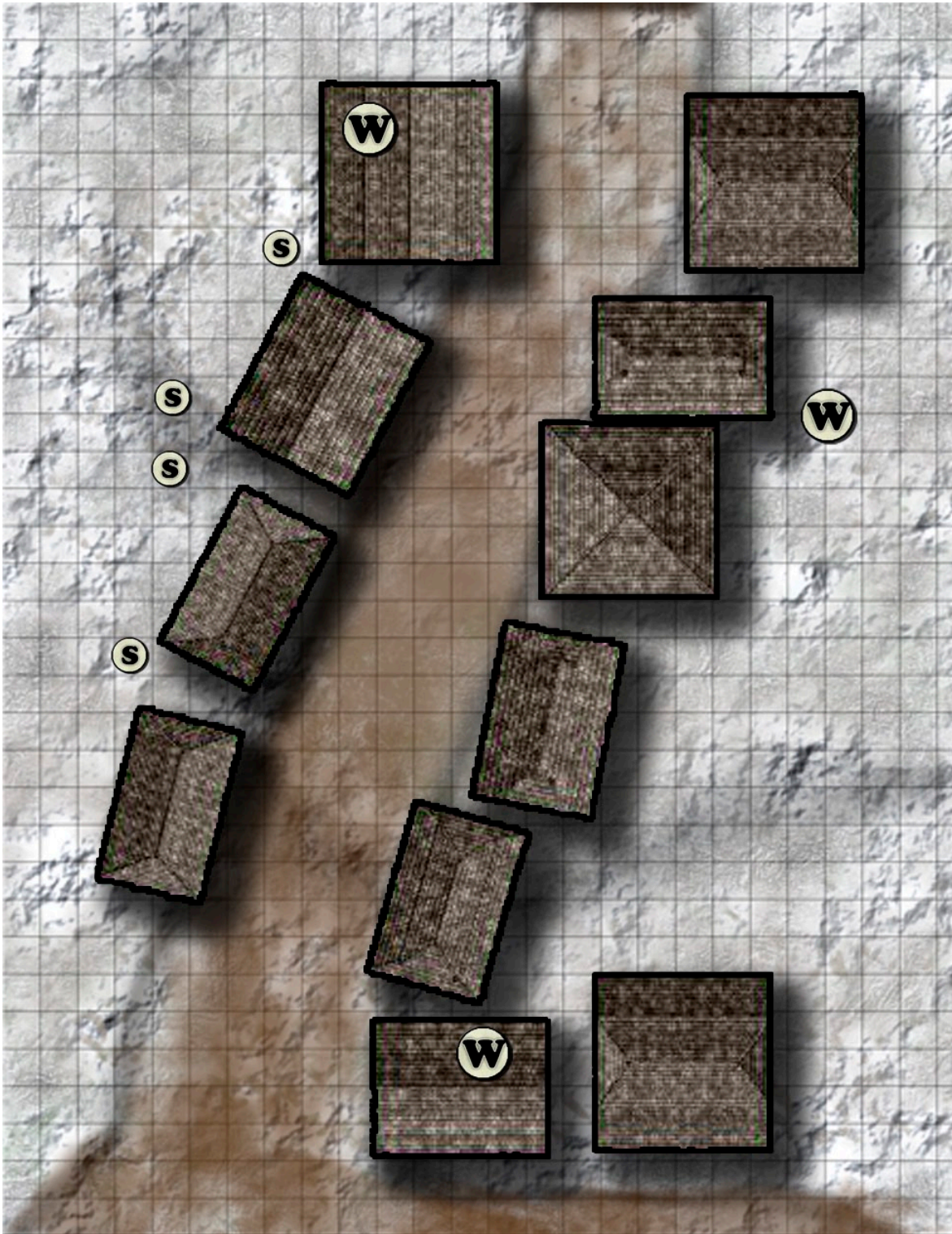
so that if the heroes try to take cover indoors they can set the building on fire and drive them out. Three rounds after the sortie begins, the soldiers enter onto the map.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Doors: A building can be entered with a DC

20 Strength check (standard action) to bash it down. The interior provides cover.

Barrels and Crates: The various barrels and crates are about 3 feet high and provide cover. Climbing a stack of crates requires a DC 15 Athletics check and costs 2 squares of movement.



FINAL WAVE

Encounter Level 16 (7,500 XP)

SETUP

- ◆ 1 Destrachan Loper (D)
- ◆ Second General Signus (G)
- ◆ 8 Experienced Ragesian Soldiers (S)
- ◆ 3 Veteran Ragesian Soldiers (V)
- ◆ 1 Ragesian Lieutenant (L)

Destrachan Loper**Level 10 Artillery • XP 500**

Large aberrant magical beast (bind, mount)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +12; blindsight
HP 87; **Bloodied** 43**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21**Immune** gaze; **Resist** 10 thunder**Speed** 6, climb 4☞ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs AC; 1d8+4 damage

✓ **Sound Pulse** (std; at-will) ◆ Thunder

Range 10; +14 vs Reflex; 2d6+5 thunder damage

☞ **Bellowing Blast** (std; rchg ☞☞☞☞) ◆ Thunder

Thunder

Close Blast 5; +14 vs Fortitude; 2d6+5 thunder damage and target is dazed (save ends)

Alignment Evil; **Languages** Deep Speech**Skills** Bluff +10, Stealth +14**Str** 19 (+9) **Dex** 19 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 21 (+10) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+5)**Second General Signus****Level 16 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 2,800**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +12; low-light vision**Emboldened** aura 6; allies who enter or start their turns within the aura gain +2 to Will against fear effects, and +2 to saving throws against fear effects.**HP** 314; **Bloodied** 157**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 25**Saving Throws** +2 (+4 against fear)**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1☞ **Bastard Sword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+23 vs AC; 1d10+7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Signus's next turn. If the target is prone, it cannot stand up until the end of Signus's next turn

✓ **Aggressive Attack** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Signus makes two sword attacks

✓ **Flanking Shift** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+23 vs AC; 1d10+7 damage, and any ally adjacent to the general or his target may shift 1 square.

✓ **Spirited Charge** (when charging while mounted; at-will) ◆ Mount

Signus adds +10 damage on a successful hit

✓ **Tactical Advantage** (move; rchg ☞☞)

Ranged 10; Signus or an ally takes a move action as a free action.

☞ **Invigorating Word** (std; at-will)

Close Burst 5; allies within burst regain 10 hp and immediately shift 3 squares.

▶ **Rally Cry** (minor; enc) ◆ Healing

All allies within line of sight can make a basic attack as a free action and regain 10 hp.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +20, Diplomacy +18, Insight +17, Intimidate +18, Religion +18**Str** 24 (+15) **Dex** 15 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+12)**Con** 21 (+13) **Int** 21 (+13) **Cha** 21 (+13)**Equipment** bastard sword, heavy shield, plate armor**Experienced Ragesian Soldier****Level 13 Minion Soldier • XP 200**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 22**Speed** 6☞ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+20 vs AC; 6 damage.

☞ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +20 vs AC; 6 damage.

✓ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +18 vs AC; 8 damage.

✓ **Shield Slam** (minor; rchg 456)

Must be using shield; +18 vs Fortitude; 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square or knocked prone (attacker's choice). This may also be used as a melee basic attack when charging.

▶ **Combat Advantage**

The experienced Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the experienced Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the experienced Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Arcana +14, Stealth +18**Str** 22 (+12) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)**Con** 16 (+9) **Int** 13 (+7) **Cha** 13 (+7)**Equipment** arrows (20), dagger, heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow

Ragesian Lieutenant**Level 12 Elite Soldier (Leader) • XP 1,400**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +11; **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision**HP** 240; **Bloodied** 120**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 21**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1⊗ **Battleaxe** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Melee 1; +19 vs AC; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of its next turn

⊗ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +19 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✔ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +17 vs Fortitude; 1d10+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

The Ragesian lieutenant can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

⚡ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☞☞☞) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +19 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚡ **Compelling Command** (minor; rchg ☞☞☞)

Close Burst 5; the Ragesian lieutenant rolls a Saving Throw. If he succeeds, all allies in the burst are roused out of their dazed condition.

▶ **Rally Cry** (std; enc) ◆ Healing, Weapon

All allies within line of sight can make a basic attack as a free action and regain 10 hp.

▶ **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The Ragesian lieutenant can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Bluff +14, Intimidate +14**Str** 25 (+13) **Dex** 16 (+9) **Wis** 16 (+9)**Con** 16 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 16 (+9)**Equipment** arrows (20), battleaxe, heavy shield, plate armor, shortbow**Veteran Ragesian Soldier****Level 11 Soldier • XP 600**

Medium natural humanoid (half-orc)

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 111; **Bloodied** 55**AC** 27; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 20**Speed** 6⊗ **Longsword** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

⊗ **Shortbow** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 15/30; +18 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage.

✔ **Power Melee** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Requires longsword; +16 vs AC; 1d8+7 damage. Add +1 damage when used two-handed.

✔ **Shield Push** (std; at-will)

Must be using shield; +16 vs Fortitude; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

The veteran Ragesian soldier can shift into the unoccupied space as a free action.

⚡ **Blade Flurry** (std; rchg ☞☞☞) ◆ Weapon

Close Burst 1; +18 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

▶ **Combat Advantage**

The veteran Ragesian soldier deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks when it has combat advantage against a target.

▶ **Ragesian Taunt**

Marks the target of the attack. The mark lasts until the end of the veteran Ragesian soldier's next turn. Whenever the target shifts or makes an attack that does not include the veteran Ragesian soldier, the soldier makes a melee basic attack against the target (as an immediate interrupt).

▶ **Unbreakable** (imm int, when hit by an attack; enc)

The veteran Ragesian soldier can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Bluff +11, Intimidate +11**Str** 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 15 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+6)**Equipment** arrows (20), heavy shield, longsword, plate armor, shortbow**TACTICS**

Signus loves his destrachan loper mount, and takes full advantage of it. Signus begins the battle by shouting his battle cry, "Give 'em thunder, men!" to which his soldiers reply by roaring in unison. His first attack is to ride forward amidst his enemies, so the destrachan can release a burst of destructive harmonics, and then the other soldiers charge in. If Signus wants to release a burst again, he uses *flanking shift* to get his men to scatter first. The general likes to find opportunities to use *spirited charge*.

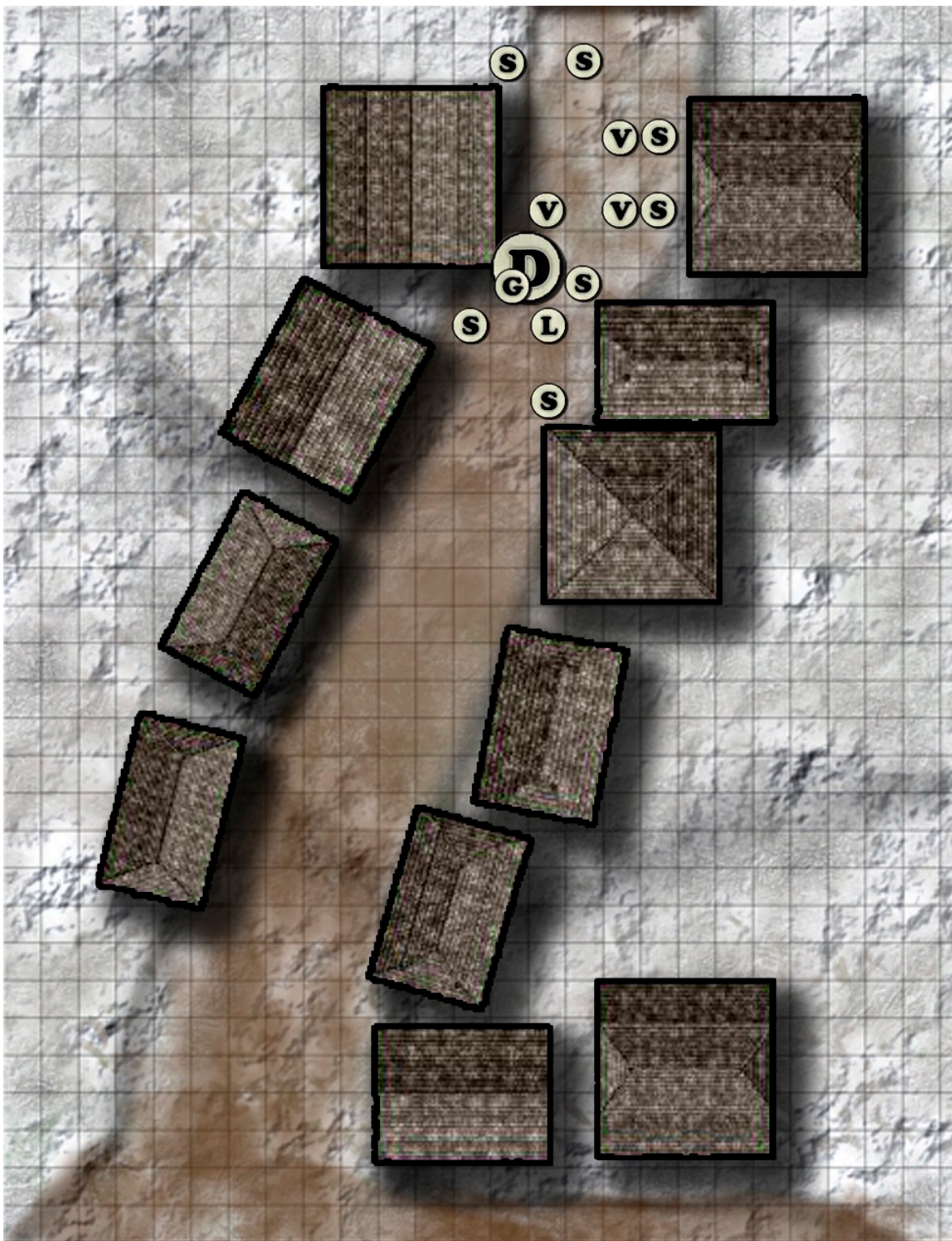
When Signus is reduced below 20 hp, or if he is low on allies and is bloodied, he throws down his sword and asks to surrender. Similarly, if one of the heroes looks badly injured he will shout, "Surrender and receive mercy." He does his best to prevent his mount from killing anyone who has surrendered or fallen unconscious, but the destrachan has a mean streak. If Signus is taken alive, he can order a retreat for his army.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Doors: A building can be entered with a DC 20 Strength check (standard action) to bash it down. The interior provides cover.

Barrels and Crates: The various barrels and crates are about 3 feet high and provide cover. Climbing a stack of crates requires a DC 15 Athletics check and costs 2 squares of movement.

Treasure: After the battle is finished, the heroes end up retrieving seven 14th level treasure parcels from the defeated foes.



SNATCHED AWAY

Encounter Level 16 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

Your chase has led you to a spot where you see one of the creatures, or more of an oily-gray cloud-like shape resting atop a boulder. Another cloud appears next to the first and they begin to talk in breathy voices. From somewhere beyond the two, you hear a third voice. Your comrade must be close!

The stalkers carry the hero a short ways and then land to switch off to one of the others. It is during this short rest that the party catches up.

A hero who makes a **DC 23 Perception Check** pinpoints the location of the third stalker (the one with the captured hero).

- ◆ 3 Invisible Stalkers (I)

Invisible Stalker

Level 12 Elite Lurker • XP 1,400

Large elemental magical beast

Initiative +17; **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 188; **Bloodied** 94

AC 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 24

Immune poison, sleep, stun, petrification;

Vulnerable 10 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

Action Points 1

☞ **Slam** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+17 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage

✗ **Aggressive Slam** (std; at-will)

+17 vs AC; 3d6+5

▶ **Invisibility** (minor; at-will) ◆ Illusion

The invisible stalker becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or it attacks.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Primordial, can understand Common

Skills Stealth +18

Str 19 (+10) **Dex** 25 (+13) **Wis** 16 (+9)

Con 16 (+9) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 13 (+7)

TACTICS

The stalkers will go invisible in the first round. They will attempt to attack any character using fire first. Because they slavishly follow their master's commands, they will remain close to the unconscious hero until he can be picked up again (6 rounds later). If the party finds a way to keep the hero away from the stalkers, the stalkers will fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: The boulders provide cover.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

Tall Trees: Branches start at 20 feet and extend up to 50 feet. Climbing a tree requires a DC 18 Athletics check for each move action. Using a dagger or spike to help climb provides a +4 bonus to the check.



DEFENDERS OF THE SACRED VALLEY

Encounter Level 15 (6,600 XP)

SETUP

The mist is getting heavier as you trudge through the snowy terrain. Even the slight whispering wind in the trees is muffled as your visibility is brought to a few dozen feet. It feels like the world is closing in with no escape.

A hero who makes a **DC 20 Perception Check** hears faint whispering from the branches above, as though someone is waiting in the trees to ambush the party.

- ◆ 5 West Wind Monks (W)
- ◆ 5 East Wind Monks (E)
- ◆ 1 Mantidrake (M)

East Wind Monk

Level 11 Artillery • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +13; **Senses** Perception +6**HP** 87; **Bloodied** 43**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23**Speed** 6☉ **Force Missile** (std; at-will) ◆ Force

Ranged 20; +16 vs Reflex; 2d4+5 force damage

✓ **Sucker Punch** (minor; at-will, 1/rd)

Must be adjacent to the target; +16 vs Reflex; 1d8 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the East Wind Monk's next turn

✓ **Flying Fist** (std; enc) ◆ Conjuraton, ForceRanged 10; +16 vs Reflex; 1d10+5 force damage. *Sustain Minor*: The fist attacks again. *Move Action*: Move the fist to a new target within range.✓ **Elemental Cascade** (std; rchg ☉☉) ◆ Lightning

Ranged 10; targets one, two, or three creatures; +16 vs Reflex; 2d6+5 lightning damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the East Wind monk's next turn.

☾ **Flurry of Fists** (std; rchg ☉☉☉) ◆ Divine

Close Burst 1; targets enemies; +18 vs AC; 1d6 damage

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Primordial**Skills** Acrobatics +18, Arcana +14, Stealth +18**Str** 15 (+7) **Dex** 27 (+13) **Wis** 12 (+6)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 18 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+7)

West Wind Monk

Level 11 Controller • XP 600

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +10; **Senses** Perception +9**HP** 111; **Bloodied** 55**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23**Speed** 6☉ **Bladed Whip** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +16 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage

☉ **Shuriken** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Ranged 6/12; +16 vs AC; 2d4+5 damage

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std, when flying; at-will) ◆ Weapon

The West Wind monk flies up to 8 squares and makes one bladed whip attack at any point during that movement. The monk doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

✓ **Sucker Punch** (minor; at-will, 1/rd)

Must be adjacent to the target; +15 vs Reflex; 1d8 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the West Wind monk's next turn

✓ **Whip Trip** (std; rchg ☉☉☉) ◆ Weapon

Must be using bladed whip; Reach 2; +16 vs AC; 1d6+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone

✓ **Forceful Hold** (std; rchg ☉) ◆ Divine, ForceRange 10; +15 vs Will; 3d6+5 force damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the monk's next turn. *Effect*: The target takes a –2 penalty to Reflex defense (save ends).☾ **Flurry of Fists** (std; rchg ☉☉☉) ◆ Divine

Close Burst 1; targets enemies; +16 vs AC; 1d6 damage

▶ **Fly** (std; sustain move; enc)The West Wind monk gains a speed of fly 8 until the end of his next turn. *Sustain move*: The West Wind monk continues flying.**Alignment** Unaligned; **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Religion +11, Stealth +15**Str** 18 (+9) **Dex** 21 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+9)**Con** 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 13 (+6)**Equipment** bladed whip

Mantidrake

Level 11 Skirmisher • XP 600

Large natural magical beast (dragon, mount)

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +13; scent +10, darkvision**HP** 113; **Bloodied** 56**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23**Immune** sleep, immobilize, thunder**Speed** 6, fly 10, overland flight 10**Action Points** 1☉ **Bite** (std; at-will)

Reach 2; +14 vs Reflex; 1d10+6 damage

☉ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+16 vs AC; 2d6+5 damage

✓ **Flyby Attack** (std; at-will)

The mantidrake flies 10 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The drake doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target

✓ **Spike** (std; at-will)

Ranged 10; +16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage. Hit or Miss: The mantidrake shifts 3 squares after making the attack

☾ **Thunderous Roar** (std; rchg ☉) ◆ Thunder

Close Blast 5; +14 vs Fortitude; 3d6+5 thunder damage and the target is pushed 5 squares and knocked prone

✦ **Spike Salvo** (std; rchg ☉☉☉☉)

Area Burst 2 within 10; +16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

▶ **Furious Assault** (std; at-will)

The mantidrake makes a claw attack and a spike attack (in any order) and shifts 1 square between the two attacks.

Alignment Unaligned; **Languages** —**Skills** Endurance +13**Str** 21 (+10) **Dex** 20 (+10) **Wis** 17 (+8)**Con** 17 (+8) **Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 12 (+6)

TACTICS

Two West Wind monks glide down from the trees, striking with their bladed whips before ascending back to balance on branches twenty feet up. The other three throw a flurry of shuriken that have had light cast on them, aiming one at each hero. Then the East Wind monks, hidden 10 squares away on the ground, each use their elemental cascade, targeting the general area of the glowing shuriken.

After this, the West Wind monks continue strafing with their whips for two rounds before descending, while the East Wind monks travel in a cluster through the trees, casting magic missile against a single target at a time, en masse.

When more than half of the monks are down, one of the survivors shouts, "Lords of the two winds, bring down your fury!" A distant roar answers, and in two rounds heavy wing beats become audible. Two rounds later, the forest is shaken by intense winds, and the mist is blown clear, revealing a massive green draconic beast swooping into battle.

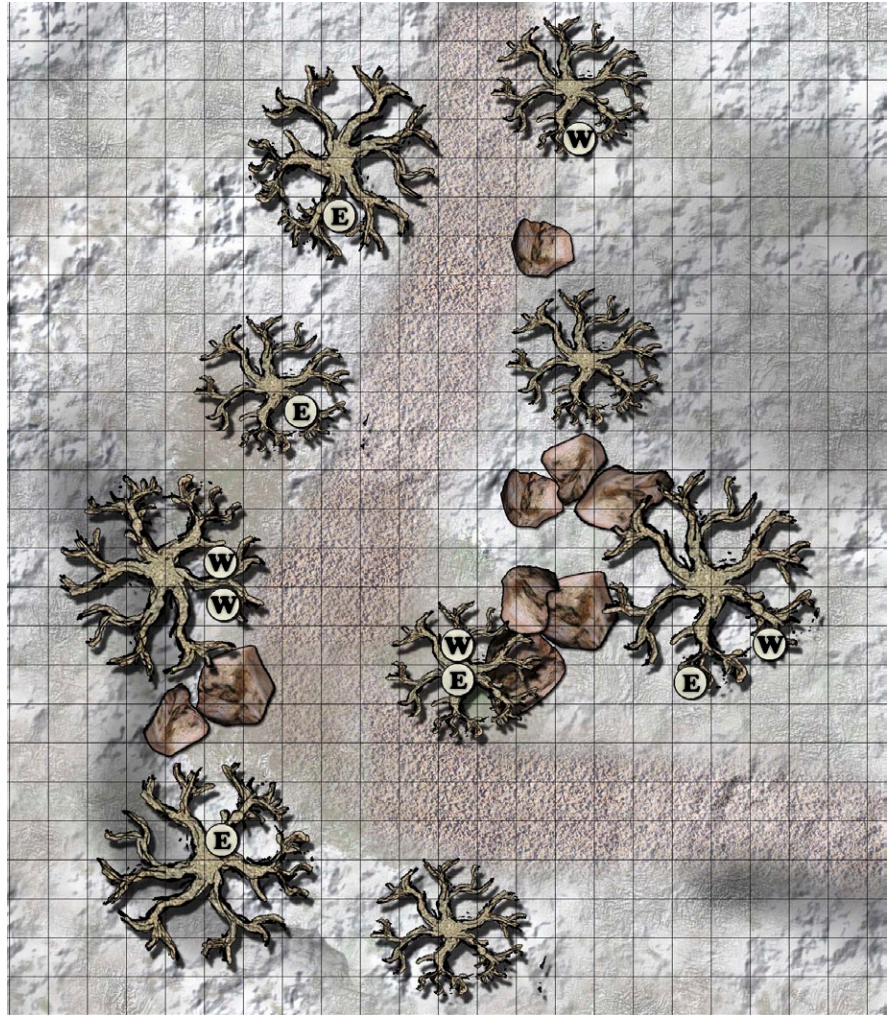
The mantidrake tries slightly to avoid catching the monks in its breath weapon, but it understands the nimble monks have a fair chance of surviving. However, each blast of the breath weapon shakes the trees, and if a given section of the forest takes more than 35 points of thunder damage, the trees there shatter and begin to topple, requiring those in the area to make a DC 18 Athletics or DC 18 Acrobatics check to avoid taking 2d6 points of damage. Thereafter, the ground becomes difficult terrain.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: The boulders provide cover.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

Tall Trees: Branches start at 20 feet and extend up to 50 feet. Climbing a tree requires a DC 18 Athletics check for each move action. Using a dagger or spike to help climb provides a +4 bonus to the check.



VALLEY OF THE DAMNED

Encounter Level 13 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

As the path dips down into the valley below, the trees shake and, four large and misshapen shapes languidly climb over the boulders. Looming ominously in the mist, they bellow in rage and pain. The you see four bodies, you hear more than four voices and as your eyes adjust to the distance, you realize they each have two heads. Even more strange are feathers and wings coming out of their backs. They are far too short to achieve flight, but they flap every time one of the heads wails or moans.

The ettins are foraging for something to eat in the wintery snow. They will certainly see the party as a food source

- ◆ 4 Valley of Storms Ettins (E)

Valley of Storms Ettin

Level 10 Elite Soldier • XP 1,000

Large natural humanoid

Initiative +8; **Senses** Perception +12

HP 222; **Bloodied** 111

AC 26; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

☑ **Lightning Club** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

Reach 2; +17 vs AC; 1d8+5 lightning damage, and the target is pushed 1 square

✗ **Wallop** (imm reac, when an enemy moves into a position that flanks the ettin; at-will)

The ettin targets one creature flanking it; +15 vs Fortitude; and the target is pushed 3 squares

⚡ **Lightning Barrage** (imm reac, when an enemy hits the ettin with a melee attack; enc) ◆ Lightning

Close Burst 2; +15 vs Reflex; 1d6+5 lightning damage, and enemies are pushed 1 square and stunned (save ends)

▶ **Binary Brain**

At the end of its turn, the ettin automatically saves against the dazed and stunned conditions and against charm effects that a save can end.

▶ **Double Minded**

A Valley of Storms ettin rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different head. The ettin's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** Giant

Str 28 (+14) **Dex** 12 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 23 (+11) **Int** 8 (+4) **Cha** 9 (+4)

Equipment clubs (2), hide armor

TACTICS

The ettins are initially separated from each other by 2 or 3 squares. As soon as they see the party, they move to attack but will not attempt to flank right away.

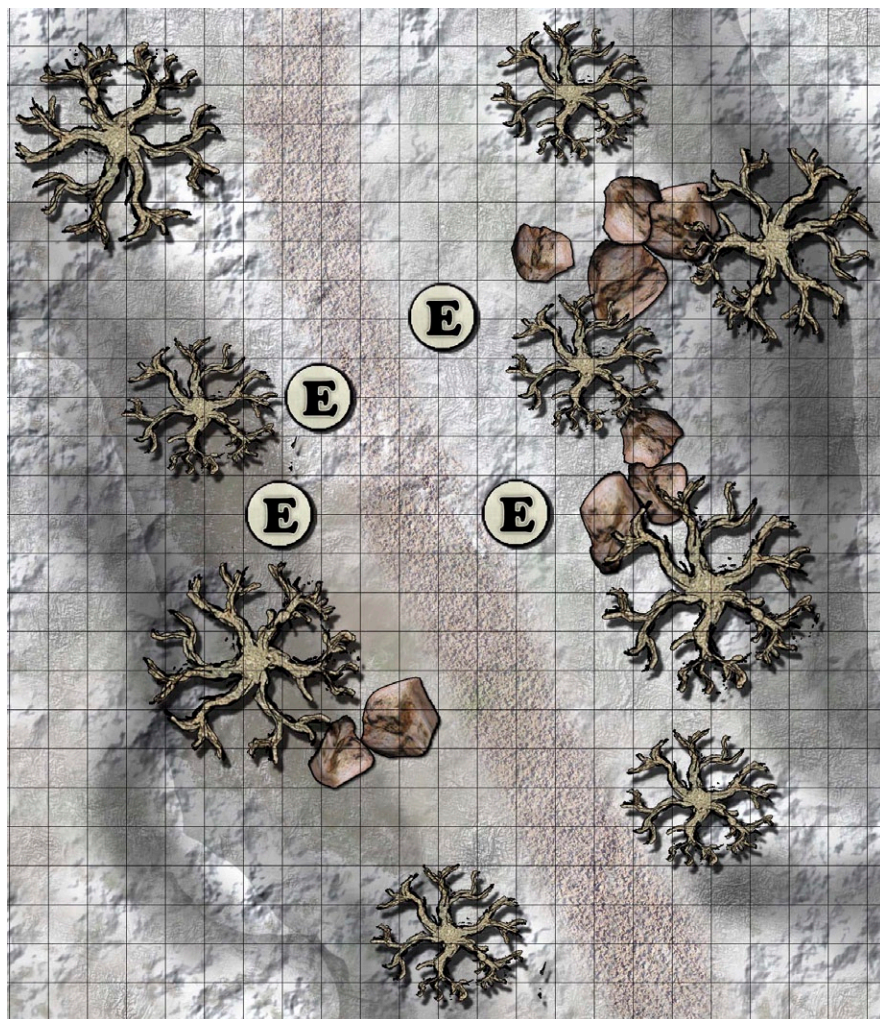
The ettins are mentally in pain and enraged over their situation. They can be talked with, but they will not listen to reason, believing everyone is out to harm them. They do not fight in a coordinated way, so a single ettin could be separated from the others easily.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: The boulders provide cover.

Small Trees: The trees are difficult terrain for Medium or greater sized creatures. They provide cover on the ground and superior cover to creatures that are up in the branches.

Tall Trees: Branches start at 20 feet and extend up to 50 feet. Climbing a tree requires a DC 18 Athletics check for each move action. Using a dagger or spike to help climb provides a +4 bonus to the check.



THE PIT

Encounter Level 16 (4,000 XP)

SETUP

Though these creatures appear to once have been humans and dwarves, their flesh appears fused to muscles of living ice, and their eyes are frozen. They look similar to the aquatic creatures Lee Sidoneth had in the prison in Seaquen, but these creations appear far more powerful.

- ◆ 5 Mishaps (M)
- ◆ 8 Degenerate Mishaps (C)

Mishap

Level 11 Controller • XP 600

Medium aberrant humanoid

Initiative +9; **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 25; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 25

Immune cold

Speed 6, fly 8

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+16 vs AC; 1d8+5 damage

☑ **Cold Slash** (std; at-will) ◆ Lightning

+16 vs AC; 2d6+5 cold damage, and the target is marked until the end of the mishap's next turn

☹ **Cold Blast** (std; rchg ☑☑☑☑) ◆ Cold

Close Blast 5; +15 vs Reflex; 2d6+5 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). On a miss, half damage and the target is slowed (save ends)

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** —

Skills Endurance +13

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 18 (+9) **Wis** 15 (+7)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 12 (+6) **Cha** 12 (+6)

Degenerate Mishap

Level 10 Minion Controller • XP 125

Medium aberrant humanoid

Initiative +7; **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 24; **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 22, **Will** 21

Immune cold

Speed 6

Action Points 2

☑ **Claw** (std; at-will)

+15 vs AC; 5 damage

☑ **Icy Touch** (std; at-will)

+15 vs AC; 5 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mishap's next turn

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** —

Str 15 (+7) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)

Con 15 (+7) **Int** 9 (+4) **Cha** 7 (+3)

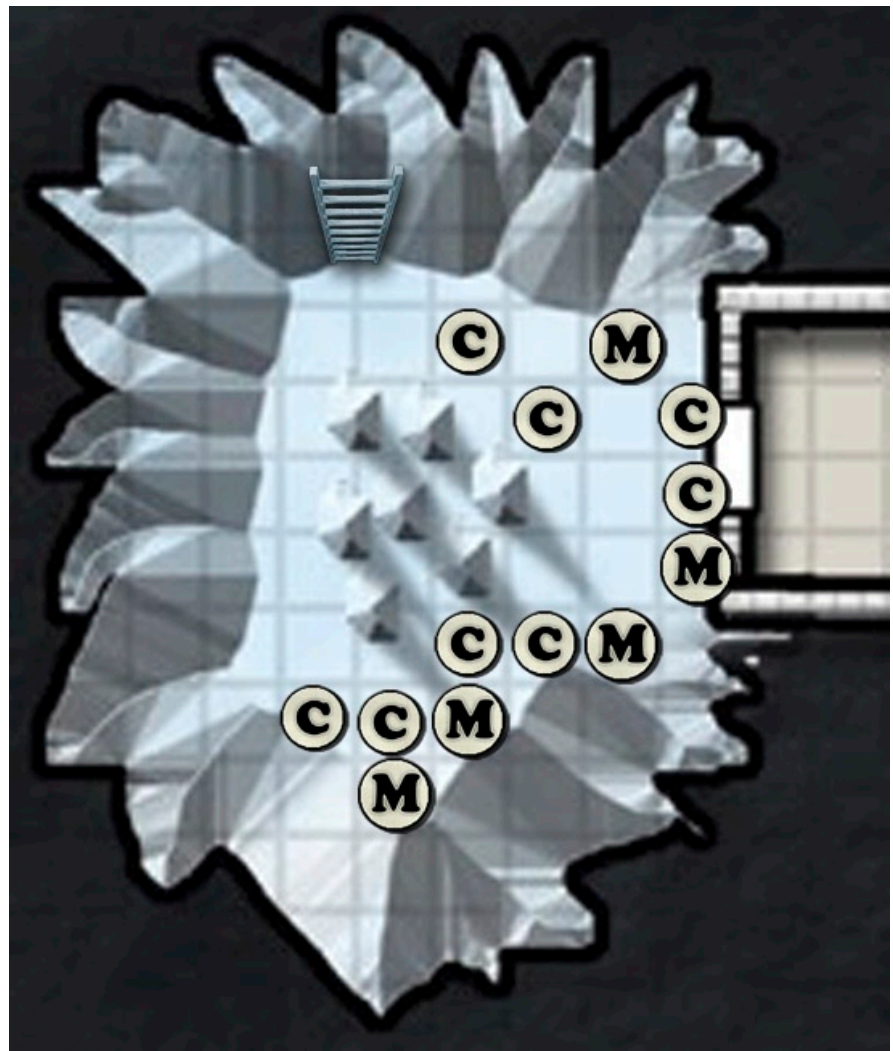
TACTICS

The mishaps and degenerate mishaps fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ladder: A strong ladder has been cut into the ice, ascending to the top of the pit.

Boulders: The boulders provide cover.



AURUS ATTACKS

Encounter Level 15 (6,800 XP)

SETUP

Through the distorting green fluid of the nearest vat you spot something moving, its form indistinct, so silent you wonder whether it's just a trick of the light. Larger than a man, horns stretching out from its head, you realize suddenly that it is charging straight for you. The vat shatters, and toxic slime sprays you as a bull-headed humanoid bursts through, roaring and swinging a massive hammer. Its skin is icy white, verging on blue, its body nothing more than wisps of vapor beneath the waist.

When Pilus and Caela are absent, they leave the laboratory guarded by Aurus, one of Pilus's first successful experiments in marrying elemental and physical form. The windborn minotaur spends most of his time as a soft breeze, but when the laboratory is threatened he fearlessly manifests and attacks.

- ◆ 6 Biomantic Skum (S)
- ◆ Aurus (A)

Biomantic Skum

Level 11 Brute • XP 600

Medium aberrant animate

Initiative +7; **Senses** Perception +6

HP 141; **Bloodied** 70

AC 23; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22

Speed 6

✓ **Claw** (std; at-will) ◆ Poison

+14 vs AC; 2d6+5 poison damage

Alignment Chaotic Evil; **Languages** —

Skills Stealth +12

Str 21 (+10) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+6)

Con 21 (+10) **Int** 2 (+1) **Cha** 4 (+2)

Description A part-human, flippered-foot creature comes into view. It glistens with a layer of slime and its claws are sharp points meant to make deep punctures. Suckers line the inside of its forearm.

Aurus, Windborn Minotaur Warrior

Level 17 Elite Soldier • XP 3,200

Medium natural humanoid

Initiative +12; **Senses** Perception +19

HP 330; **Bloodied** 165

AC 33; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 30

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, fly 6

Action Points 1

☑ **Air Slam** (minor; at-will)

+22 vs Fortitude; and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn

☑ **Warhammer** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+24 vs AC; 1d10+7 damage

✓ **Cruel Warhammer** (std; at-will) ◆ Weapon

+24 vs AC; 2d8+7 damage

✓ **Flying Charge** (std; at-will)

Aurus flies up to 6 squares and makes a melee basic attack during that movement. The target is not granted an opportunity attack when Aurus moves away.

✓ **Overwhelming Charge** (std; at-will)

Aurus may move up to 12 squares in a straight line and pummel with gusts of wind and strike with his warhammer. For each target in the path; +22 vs Fortitude; 3d8+7 and the target is knocked prone. The charge continues until he fails an attack or finishes his movement. This provokes opportunity attacks.

☹ **Whirlwind Attack** (std; rchg ☹☹) ◆

Weapon

Close Burst 2; targets enemies; +22 vs Reflex; 2d8+7 damage, and the windborn minotaur warrior pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone

▶ **Ferocity** (when reduced to 0 hp)

The windborn minotaur warrior makes a melee basic attack.

Alignment Evil; **Languages** Common, Giant

Skills Dungeoneering +17, Intimidate +15, Nature +17

Str 27 (+16) **Dex** 15 (+10) **Wis** 18 (+12)

Con 21 (+13) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 15 (+10)

Equipment warhammer

TACTICS

At the start of combat, Aurus's wispy form casts a shadow through a nearby vat just as he begins to attack, whirlwind attacking to strike a hero and shatter a handful of tanks.

Thereafter, Aurus normally floats to the nearest foe and pummels him with the warhammer, but if ever two enemies are in a straight line with him he uses his overwhelming charge to strike them both. Be sure to make a big deal of just what provokes Aurus to use this attack. In the middle of combat he pauses for a fraction of a second, glances at those foes who have so conveniently lined up, then briefly grins and cocks his head from side to side as he aims his charge. Optimally, the heroes will recognize this pattern in Aurus's attacks, and take advantage of it, luring him into a charge that will leave him vulnerable.

Aurus cares nothing for the biomantic skum, and will kill any that get in his way. The skum simply attack the nearest creature.

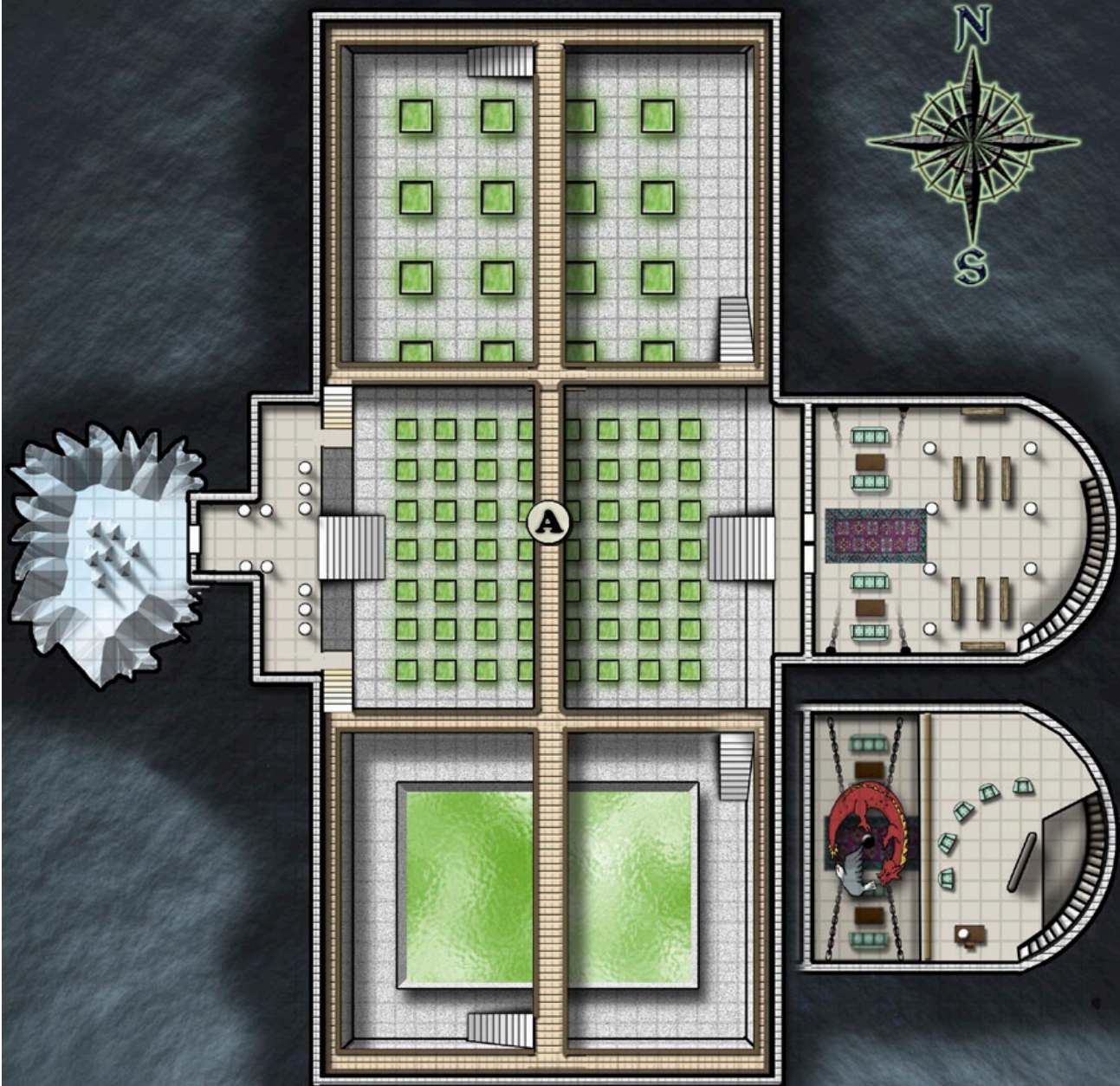
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Biomantic Tanks: The smaller tanks are filled with different medium-sized creatures grown from humanoid stock, though none are fully formed, so they have the stats of biomantic skum. The larger tanks have various more powerful creatures growing in them. Should any of the tanks be shattered (50 points of damage, or Break DC 23), the creature spills out. The skum are healthy enough to fight, though they are stunned for a round after being expelled from the tank. The larger creatures are unable to support themselves, and simply flail about while slowly dying.

Spilled Fluid: If any tanks break, they spill biomantic fluid on the floor in a blast 2 shape. Characters entering affected squares must make a **DC 15 Athletics** or **DC 15 Acrobatics** check to avoid falling prone. Once prone, getting up requires a **DC 13 Dexterity** check to keep from slipping again.

Pilus's Laboratory

1 Square - 5 ft.



SCM

CAELA

Encounter Level 19 (12,000 XP)

SETUP

Caela speaks one paragraph each round.

“You don’t understand the concept of ‘Forbidden Valley,’ do you?”

“The others who came before were as tenacious as you, but not nearly as useful. All they accomplished was to guard the entrance to this laboratory for a few days, until you killed them.

“You’ve defeated scores of Ragesians, which earns you the favor of my master. When this is over, I shall craft suitable new forms for those of you I haven’t killed.

“A pity—if you hadn’t come here, you might have managed to retrieve the Torch. With that in his possession, no empire could stand against my master.

“There has long been too much war and suffering in this world. It is time we ended it.”

Caela likely knows the heroes are coming a few minutes before they see her. When the heroes breach the laboratory, a silent alarm alerts her since she is in Pilus’s study. The alarm also notifies Pilus, far away in the monastery, and he watches the coming battle magically.



Caela prepares for the heroes’ arrival by using *invisibility* and *fly*. When the heroes arrive, Caela is floating 10 feet off the ground over the carpet, invisible.

◆ Caela (C)

Caela

Level 19 Solo Controller • XP 12,000

Medium natural humanoid (human)

Initiative +18; Senses Perception +15; low-light vision

HP 716; Bloodied 358

AC 33; Fortitude 30, Reflex 32, Will 31

Immune sleep; Resist 15 fire

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6

Action Points 2

☑ Lightning’s Hand (std; at-will) ◆ Lightning

+24 vs AC; 2d6+7 lightning damage and the target is dazed until the end of Caela’s next turn.

✓ Dazzling Dance (std; at-will)

Caela can shift 10 squares and make up to four *lightning’s hand* attacks each on different creatures at any time during the move.

✓ Like Lightning (std; rchg ☑☑) ◆ Lightning, Polymorph

Caela transforms into a bolt of lightning and may use her movement action to travel up to 12 squares. Caela may travel through occupied spaces, damaging the targets; +23 vs Reflex; 2d6+7 lightning damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). This action does not provoke opportunity attacks. Caela must end her movement on an unoccupied square.

✓ Telekinetic Push (minor; at-will)

Ranged 6; +23 vs Fortitude; the target is pushed 4 squares, and if the target ends the push adjacent to a wall, it is knocked prone.

✓ Flying Fist (std; rchg ☑☑) ◆ Conjuraton, Force

Ranged 10; +23 vs Reflex; 3d6+8 force damage. Sustain minor: fist attacks again. Move action: move the fist to a new target within range.

▶ Dimensional Slide (move; rchg ☑)

Caela teleports up to 12 squares.

▶ Fly (std; sustain move; enc)

Caela gains a fly speed 10 until the end of her next turn. *Sustain Move*: Caela continues flying.

▶ Invisibility (minor; at-will) ◆ Illusion

Caela becomes invisible until the end of her next turn.

▶ Second Wind (std; enc) ◆ Healing

Caela spends a healing surge and heals 179 hp.

Caela gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of her next turn.

Alignment Unaligned; Languages Common, Elven, Primordial

Skills Acrobatics +23, Arcana +20, Athletics +18, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, Religion +20

Str 19 (+13) Dex 28 (+18) Wis 22 (+15)

Con 19 (+13) Int 22 (+15) Cha 25 (+16)

TACTICS

Caela uses *like lightning* as her initial attack, striking as many of the heroes as possible. She tries to pass through the group and end up in the vat chamber, floating 20 feet off the ground, out of reach. (Refer to the map on page 65.)

Thereafter, Caela flies 10 feet off the ground—high enough to stay out of reach, but low enough to use the vats as cover against ranged attacks. Because her mobility is her greatest weapon, she seeks to string out her foes, flinging them one or two at a time into vats with *telekinetic push*, or using *like lightning* to strike multiple foes if they stick close together. If an enemy is standing on a catwalk, she might use *telekinetic push* to push the character off.

If reduced to less than 30 hp, Caela uses *dimensional slide* to return to Pilus’s office. Her arrival is easily visible as a burst of fire. She takes time to heal, though does not dally unless she has taken out at least one foe, preferably a healer, since she does not want to give her foes an opportunity to heal.

If the heroes return to Pilus’s office, she might destroy the skylight, raining massive sheets of broken glass down on the entire room. Creatures in the area must make a **DC 12 Dexterity** check to avoid taking 2d6 points of damage from the glass. Thereafter the storm overhead rains into the room, and strong winds make ranged combat difficult. Alternately, she might shatter the chains holding up the dragon-and-eagle sculpture. If she destroys all four chains, the sculpture falls, dealing 10d6 damage on anyone beneath it (**DC 12 Dexterity** check negates). If she only destroys two chains, the sculpture swings, bull rushing creatures in its path (effective Strength modifier of +15).

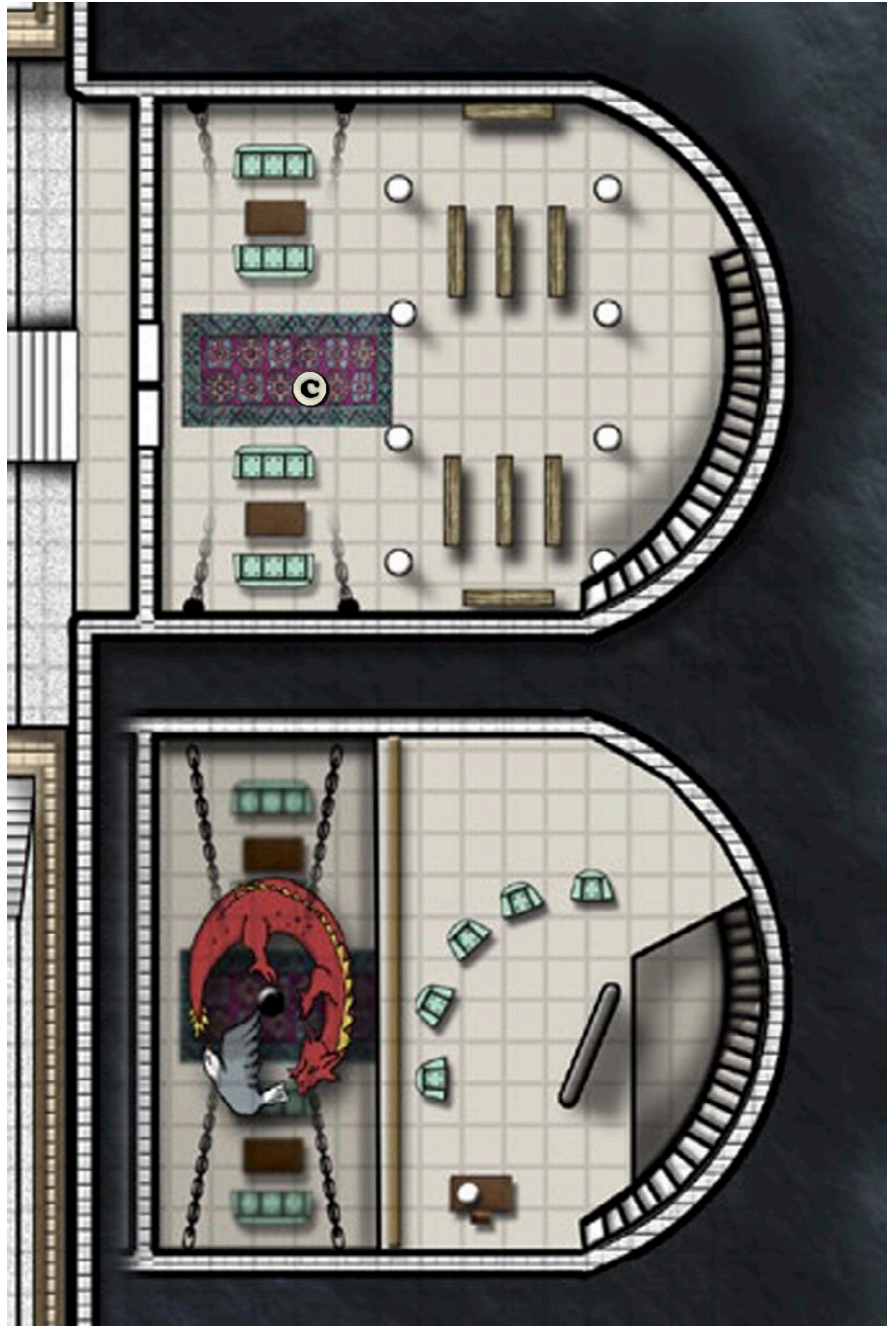
Finally, the shattered ceiling gives Caela an escape route if she thinks she has lost.

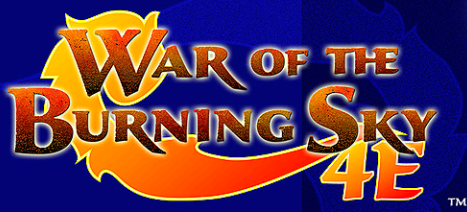
FEATURES OF THE AREA

See “Tactics” for details of the skylight and sculpture in Pilus’s office. If Caela makes it out of the office, the following features of the laboratory are relevant.

Biomantic Tanks: The smaller tanks are filled with different medium-sized creatures grown from humanoid stock, though none are fully formed, so they have the stats of biomantic skum. The larger tanks have various more powerful creatures growing in them. Should any of the tanks be shattered (50 points of damage, or Break DC 23), the creature spills out. The skum are healthy enough to fight, though they are stunned for a round after being expelled from the tank. The larger creatures are unable to support themselves, and simply flail about while slowly dying.

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Mission to the Monastery of Two Winds

Wind-worshipping monks at a monastery in Ostalin are threatened by the Ragesian army: remnants of the army Emperor Coaltongue was commanding before he was assassinated.

The heads of the monastery have a proposition: they can aid the heroes in retrieving the lost Torch of the Burning Sky if the heroes help fight the army.

What surprises are in store for the heroes when they undertake a mission to the Monastery of Two Winds?

For use with the 4th Edition

**DUNGEONS
& DRAGONS**
ROLEPLAYING GAME

Requires the use of the D&D Player's Handbook®, Monster Manual®, and Dungeon Master's Guide®, Player's Handbook® 2, Monster Manual® 2, Adventurer's Vault™ core rulebooks, available from Wizards of the Coast, LLC

For Character Levels 13–15

Original Design by SHANE O'CONNOR

Updated and Edited by STEVE MUCHOW

