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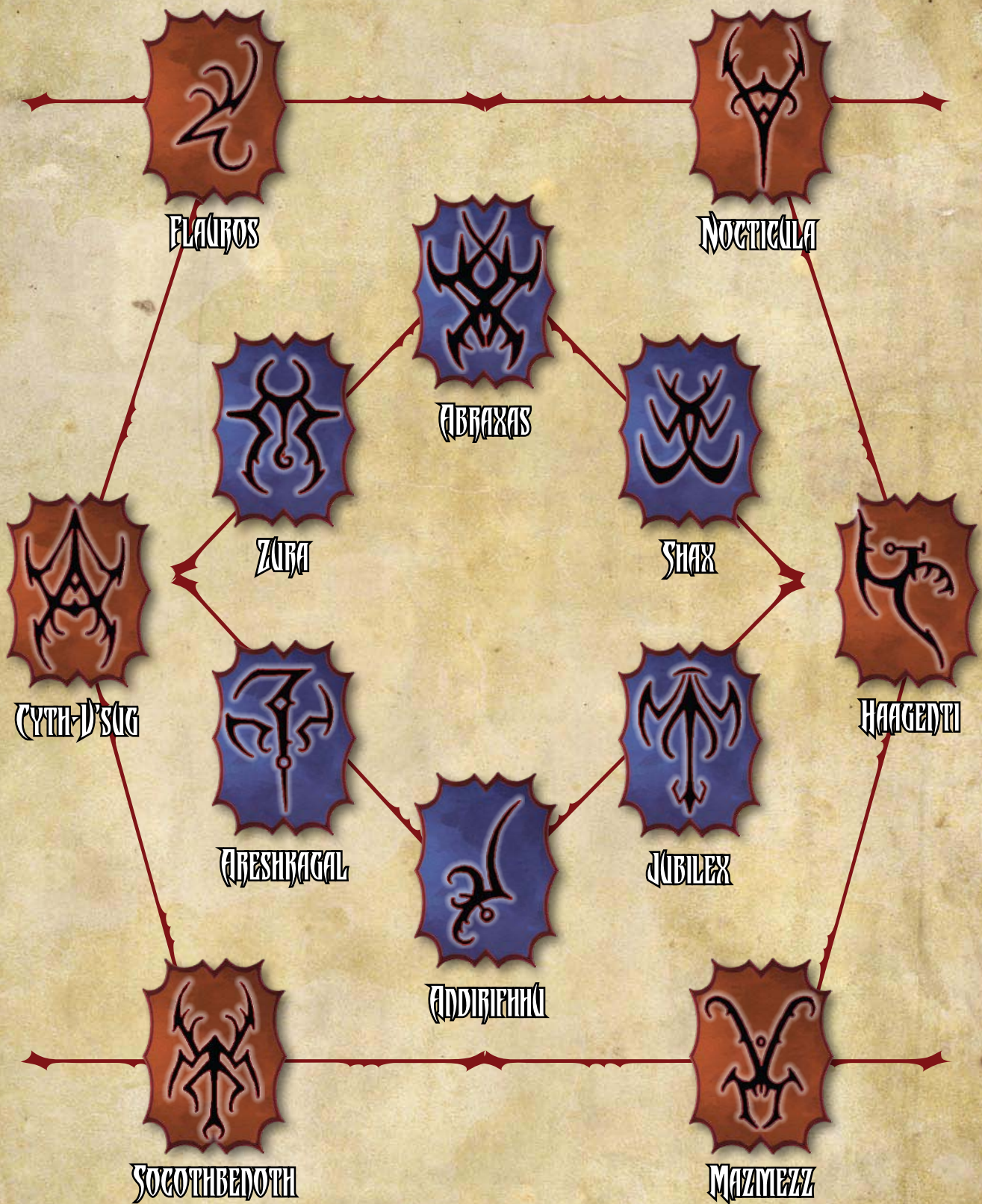


Second Darkness

THE
ARMAGEDDON
ECHO

By Jason Bulmahn

DEMON LORD RINES



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ADVENTURE PATH  PART 3 of 6

Second Darkness

THE ARMAGEDDON ECHO



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"The Armageddon Echo" is a *Pathfinder Adventure Path* scenario designed for four 7th-level characters. By the end of this adventure, characters should reach 9th level. This adventure is compliant with the Open Game License (OGL) and is suitable for use with the 3.5 edition of the world's most popular fantasy roleplaying game. The OGL can be found on page 92 of this product.

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Eyes, Ears, and ENgies

It took us a while to figure out what role the drow play in Golarion, and in the end it was Jason Bulmahn, if my memory banks serve me right, who came up with the idea that the ancient transformation of elf into drow didn't end in that one fell swoop; that the transformation continues to this day, finding fertile soil in the evil hearts and souls of Golarion's most wicked elves and, under the right circumstances, resulted in a physical change from the purity of the elven race into the corruption that is drow. Not all evil elves make the change into drow, of course. The vast majority of drow in (under!) Golarion today were born that way—an elf spontaneously transforming into a drow is a rare event, one that the elves have done their best to cover up over the years. Yet when the transformation strikes a powerful and high-ranking member of elven society like Allevrah, the BBEG (Big Bad End Gal) of Second Darkness, simply covering it up isn't going to keep things contained.

Just such an event was the kernel of an adventure idea that Jason came up with about a year ago—we were casting about for thoughts on how to handle Golarion's first drow-themed adventure, and we all agreed that we needed our own take on the dark elves that at the same time retained as much of their iconic role in the game as possible. At first, we planned on introducing Golarion to the drow in a Pathfinder Module, using a plot revolving around an important elven general becoming a drow and using her resources and knowledge to launch a surprise attack against the elven nation.

Of course, that's a pretty big plot to cover in a mere 32 pages, so we swiftly moved on from there to start planning what would have been an adventure arc covering three successive modules. Yet that ended up being a poor idea too, especially since we wanted our module line to be relatively spry. The Pathfinder Modules are a great way for us to stop by for brief visits throughout the Inner Sea

region, and locking that up with a three-part drow epic gummed up that machine.

All of which led us to the final realization that what we had on our hands was the germination of an Adventure Path. And fortunately, we already had a way to produce and print Adventure Paths. So, like a ravenous hawk swooping down to snatch a tender, succulent rodent from the ground below, I claimed the drow from the modules line for a Pathfinder Adventure Path.

From our initial idea of an elven general transforming into a drow, the rest of the plot (involving meteors and aboleths and Riddleport and complex political intrigue in a giant city of drow) fell into place pretty quickly. And before Jason knew what hit him, I recruited him into writing one of the adventures for the arc. The fact that he's an excellent adventure designer certainly helped, of course, as did his sadistic streak and the almost childlike glee he takes in designing encounters that make players cry (typically encounters involving vroock demons).

Jason was actually the first person I assigned to this Adventure Path—I told him he had first choice on which one he wanted to write, suspecting he'd want to take on the first one or the last one. He tricked me though, and took the middle adventure, when the PCs were first scheduled to fight waves and waves of drow soldiers and spellcasters. Of course, I think that a primary reason he picked "Armageddon Echo" was because it was the earliest he could sneak a vroock into the adventure while it could still wreak havoc on a group of relatively tender PCs.

What Big Eyes You Have!

This adventure also marks a sudden rise in the number of elf NPCs in the Adventure Path. At the same time, the other side of the Editorial Pit is working on the second Pathfinder Companion, *Elves of Golarion* (anyone wanting to flesh out the elves of Crying Leaf with more elf-related gear, magic, or prestige classes should certainly check this 32-page supplement out). So for the past few weeks, we've been pretty deep in pointed ears and big dark eyes here at Paizo.

Elf ears are a funny issue. They're one of those things that everyone seems to have strong opinions about, and I'm not really sure why. The exact length and shape of these things sends our readers into shockingly passionate debates. I'm sure we didn't help things by going all over the board in the early days of *Pathfinder* as we experimented with a look that would be Golarion's. I knew I didn't want Spock-length ears (I wanted to save those for our half-elves), but I also knew that the overly huge "anime-ears" threw a lot of our readers into fits of rage. The direction of those ears caused problems too; do they stick straight up, straight out, or at some angle in-between?

It wasn't until *Pathfinder* #3 that we found a look we liked—Wayne Reynolds's depiction of our iconic rogue Merisiel on the cover was perfect. But Wayne didn't stop with the ears. He gave Merisiel huge dark eyes that made her look almost like an alien. They looked great! (So great that I just bought the original art for Merisiel from Wayne at Gen Con a few days ago!) We immediately latched on to the look... and for the next dozen months, struggled to maintain it.

You see, it was the eyes that were causing us the most grief. Artists were used to elf ears being long and pointed after several decades, but the large eyes with no visible whites to them were new. It seemed for a while that every elf piece we ordered came in with human-looking eyes, and we had to send the art back to the artist for revision every time. Fortunately, I think we've now finally built up enough eye reference that, going forward, you'll be able to recognize a Golarion elf at a glance by those big beautiful peepers.

Back from Gen Con

I'm writing this foreword the second day after my return from Gen Con 2008, and I'm still not quite recovered from it. This Gen Con was Paizo's best ever, and that's in no small part due to our readers—we may be the ones designing and editing and creating the various Pathfinder products, but it's you, our customers, who have made *Pathfinder* such a huge success. It was overwhelming to see just how much support there is out there for what we've been doing with Golarion—we sold out of the *Pathfinder RPG Betas* we'd brought to the show in a mere 9 hours, and the hardcover *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* wasn't far behind. We also launched the Pathfinder Society organized play program at the same show, and as early as 8:00 AM on the first day of the convention, the Pathfinder Society room was clogged with dozens of eager players—and that room stayed clogged for 4 days solid. And on top of that, we won 8 ENnie awards Saturday night, including a gold for Best Adventure (*Pathfinder* #1's *Burnt Offerings*) and a gold for Best Publisher!

It's an exciting time for us here at Paizo and I just wanted to take a moment here to thank all of you who have been reading *Pathfinder* since the start and those who are just now coming on board with Second Darkness. You guys and gals are the best!



James Jacobs
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Second Darkness

CHAPTER THREE

The Armageddon Echo

Some things are best left forgotten. Terrible atrocities, grim sacrifices, and cataclysmic reckonings are no strangers to the annals of history, yet while those who survive such events can never hope to forget, later generations do so in the vain hope that with ignorance comes salvation. Unfortunately, among long-lived races, there are always those who remember. A grudge harbored through centuries grows in strength, waiting for a chance to settle its ancient debt. Many horrific chapters have thus been entered and later scrubbed from Golarion's history as a result of such malice, but none more terrible than the Age of Darkness.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

These are dark times. The secretive and deadly drow, wicked cousins of the graceful elves, used foul magic to pull a star down from the sky to devastate the small island of Devil's Elbow. Yet despite the destruction, this was just a test—far more terrible research is underway in the elven ruins of Celwynvian. The city lay dormant for innumerable years, crumbling and eroding, and when the elves returned to Golarion from their self-imposed exile, they sought out this ancient place in the hopes of reclaiming what was once theirs. It was here the elves first encountered the drow, and here they suffered their first defeat at the hands of their evil kin. Yet the discovery that Celwynvian had fallen to the dark elves was not the end of the horror, for it soon became clear that the taint of the drow was contagious. Spurred by equal parts of terror and shame, the elves took drastic measures. They established the community of Crying Leaf near the edge of the Mierani Forest and have been using it as a base to isolate Celwynvian and the dark elves within, hoping to prevent the rest of the world from learning of their twisted kin's existence. This secret war under boughs of the ancient wood has festered in stalemate for centuries, with both elves and drow struggling for control.

There are some among the elves who lobby for a more extreme response to the drow threat, calling for their outright eradication or even advising that the elves should once again abandon Golarion. None are more capable of acting on these urges than the Winter Council, a conspiratorial shadow council working behind the scenes of the elven government in Kyonin. One of the senior members of the Winter Council, Allevrah, had the most radical plan to deal with the dark elf menace. She lobbied for the use of the same magic that caused the Earthfall so long ago as a method to utterly eradicate the drow. Unfortunately, having nurtured her hatred of the drow for so long and having exposed her soul to vile methods of extracting secrets better left hidden, the beautiful elf found herself transformed into a drow herself as she debated with her fellow councilors, her body changing to reflect the darkness in her soul. After striking a mortal blow to the Winter Council that very nearly destroyed it, Allevrah fled to the Darklands, joining with her new dark elf kin. Once there, she seized control of the drow house Azrinae and made a change to her plans. No longer did she desire to smite the drow with a falling star—her new target was Kyonin itself. To this end, she traveled to Celwynvian with the wizard Nolveniss Azrinae to unravel and refine the powers necessary to call down a star. Even though Celwynvian's records from the time just before the Age of Darkness were fragmented, they nevertheless advanced the drow's research greatly, allowing them to begin preparations to test fire of the meteor-hurling

magic. This experiment, recently completed on the island of Devil's Elbow, was mostly a success—enough so that Allevrah and her most powerful allies relocated to a remote realm deep in the Darklands under Kyonin to begin the long process of building the glyphs required to call down a much larger star on their enemies on the surface above. Yet the Devil's Elbow incident, despite its favorable outcome, still showed the drow several places where they needed to refine their process.

Using a portion of Riddleport's famed Cyphergate and fragments of ancient magic that still functioned in the Celwynvian ruins, Nolveniss accessed a shadow version of the ancient past, a place that the drow might explore and observe the events of Earthfall firsthand. The wizard calls this realm the "Armageddon Echo," a demiplane wherein Celwynvian is utterly destroyed by the cataclysm again and again, and where the shades of ancient elves are forced to endure their destruction over and over. This pocket dimension has also proved invaluable to the drow in their fight with the elves surrounding the city. Whenever the fighting becomes too intense, they simply flee into the Armageddon Echo, giving them time to heal and regroup.

Now, as Nolveniss draws near to the end of his research, the time for the PCs to strike at Celwynvian's invaders is at hand.

Adventure Summary

This adventure begins when the PCs return to Riddleport from Devil's Elbow with the knowledge that the drow caused the destruction on the island and that they have a larger base in the ruined elven city of Celwynvian. They also recovered a journal discussing a strange magic refuge in the city, a hiding place in the past that the drow have been using to perfect their research. They meet again with their elven ally Kwava, who informs them that the presence of drow in Celwynvian has long been a secret—even he just learned of their presence in the ruins. He reveals that the mercenary company he works for has invited the PCs to join them in the town of Crying Leaf to help assist in the struggle. The knowledge gained on Devil's Elbow might turn the tide.

Upon arriving at Crying Leaf, the PCs meet up with Eviana Nirgassan, the leader of the local elves, and deliver the information about the drow refuge, including its formerly hidden location. The characters then travel to Celwynvian with a sizable host. Over the next few days, the PCs undertake missions designed to cripple the drow and secure the city. These missions include claiming one of the less obstructed roads into the city, rescuing a trapped group of scouts, and destroying an alchemical workshop. Once these are done, the final assault on the drow headquarters commences.



ROOM FOR DIVERSIONS

We're trying something a little different here. You'll note that this adventure is for a group of 7th-level characters, yet it's likely that after finishing the previous adventure, "Children of the Void," your PCs are still 6th level. This is by design—by leaving a small gap in the adventure progression here, you can further expand your own campaign as you see fit to give it a more personal touch. Perhaps the PCs have some unfinished business in Riddleport they want to complete before they leave town, or maybe you've got another adventure you want to send them on. You can expand the overland journey to Crying Leaf as well, dropping in more encounters along the way. Alternatively, you can send the PCs on the Set Piece adventure from *Pathfinder #14* (perhaps the *Teeth of Araska* beat them into port and has been causing trouble), or once they arrive at Crying Leaf they may be asked to handle a certain situation in the nearby woods (giving you a chance to run this volume's Set Piece adventure if you care to change its location). The start of "The Armageddon Echo" is deliberately slow-paced—until the PCs arrive in Celwynvian, feel free to let them take things at their own speed.

Going forward to the rest of *Second Darkness*, we'll be returning to the more standard model of "end one adventure and begin another," but if you enjoy having a level between adventures like this (or conversely, if you hate it), drop us a line at paizo.com/paizo/messageboards to let us know. The Adventure Path format is, after all, a constantly evolving one, and the only way we know if new elements work is if you tell us!

—James Jacobs

Located in a ruined school of magic, this final battle is a bitter one. The PCs reach the heart of the defenders only to find the drow retreating through a magical portal guarded by an aboleth. The window leads to the Armageddon Echo, and worse, the drow have dragged some elf captives with them.

Beyond the portal, the PCs find themselves trapped in a Celwynvian of the past, just days before Earthfall. The city is mostly empty, and those ancient citizens who remain are convinced it is a false prophecy or are staying behind to greet the end. Over the next few days, the PCs can explore the city while dealing with drow lurking among the echoes of long-dead elves and avoiding the undead drow left behind in previous cataclysm cycles.

With the apocalypse looming large in the sky, the PCs finally uncover Nolgeniss's secret base in the city's observatory. This final battle puts an end to the drow in the city and gives the PCs a chance to escape back into the present, where the defeat of the Celwynvian drow has granted the elves a unique opportunity to take the battle deep underground to the mysterious drow city of Zirnakanin.

PART ONE: THE PATH INTO PERIL

The adventure begins as the characters return to Riddleport after having explored the island of Devil's Elbow, the recent site of a massive meteorite strike. Through previous adventures, the PCs learned that the drow caused the star to fall upon the small isle, uncovered a secret drow base, and learned that the drow were only part of a larger group located in the ancient elven city of Celwynvian. As the PCs return to Riddleport, perhaps with other survivors from the island in their care, they are met by a clamoring mob.

Riddleport

After recent events, life in Riddleport has started to return to normal, but rumors abound concerning what's been happening on Devil's Elbow since the star fell from the sky. Some explorers may have already returned from the island before the PCs, bearing precious few fragments of a valuable skymetal known as noqual (see *Pathfinder #14*) and spreading tales of alien creatures and horrific undead. To make matters worse, a host of charlatans now wander the streets, offering supposed relics from the island at exorbitant prices while spreading wild tales of vengeful gods, rising runelords, and beautiful princesses descended from the heavens.

When the PCs' ship (likely Captain Creesy's *Flying Cloud*) returns to port, a sizable crowd waits on the docks. Many of these folks are laborers, still hard at work repairing the port from the recent tsunami, while others hope to speak with anyone from Devil's Elbow. Chief among these are a host of merchants eager to purchase any valuable metals that might have been recovered. In addition, several Gas Forge dwarves are on hand to arrange appointments for the smelting and refining of noqual ore, as the Gas Forge is the only forge in Riddleport capable of working with the hard metal. Still not comfortable with the press of urban crowds, Kwava waits to meet the PCs at the Gold Goblin—if they don't go there, he sends an *animal messenger* to locate them and arrange a meeting.

Once the PCs find a secluded spot to speak to the wild elf, Kwava asks them about their recent adventures. He is particularly curious about any information concerning the drow, the fallen star, and the journal the PCs found among Shindiira's possessions. When the characters are finished with their tale, Kwava asks them to do him a great favor.

Kwava pauses for a moment to gather his thoughts, a deep furrow worn into his brow. "These are grave tidings. When you discovered Vancaskerkin was working with one of the dark elves, I could hardly believe it. Now I realize there are far more terrible events in motion. If the drow have learned how to pull stars from the sky, none of us are safe."

"I must ask a great favor of you. My employers, the Shin'Rakorath, have only recently revealed to me the full extent of the drow menace in Celwynvian. As much as I would dearly love to see the city, they have ordered me to remain in the Riddleport hinterlands to keep watch for any further drow influence. Yet they have also expressed interest in hearing from you directly. This journal you found, combined with the one recovered some time ago from Vancaskerkin's drow accomplice, would be of great use to my kin in the Mierani Forest. The Shin'Rakorath and I ask you to carry these journals to Crying Leaf, a small camp in the eastern reaches of the wood. Take it to Eviana, the leader of Crying Leaf. She will know what to do."

Kwava himself knows little of the secret war going on in the Mierani Forest, and has little more to reveal to the PCs. He can offer no reward to the PCs for undertaking the delivery, but he promises that Eviana is sure to be appreciative of their service. Kwava understands if the PCs need to take a day or two to rest from their recent exploits, but he urges them to leave for Crying Leaf as soon as possible.

After taking his leave of the characters, Kwava returns to his camp and sends an *animal messenger* to his contacts in Crying Leaf, informing them of recent events.

The Road to Crying Leaf

The lands north of Riddleport are sparsely populated, with a few struggling farms near the city and the occasional hunter's lodge further afield. A winding dirt road that quickly becomes a Varisian caravan path leads north from Riddleport, a route only infrequently used by travelers making their way between Varisia and the Lands of the Linnorm Kings. This road follows the Velashu River for much of its length, rarely veering away from its winding course to reduce travel time. The route to Crying Leaf follows this road until the Calphiak Mountains recede to the west. About 45 miles north of Riddleport, a hunter's trail branches off to the west—it is this road that leads to the rim of the Mierani Forest and the settlement of Crying Leaf. If the characters follow the road and trail, the journey is about 90 miles long and should take about 3 days on horseback. The characters could attempt to cut across open country to lessen the travel distance, but the reduction in speed makes the journey take nearly the same amount of time and certainly exposes the PCs to further opportunities for peril.

If the characters are running a bit behind in XP, feel free to add a few wandering encounters along the way—encounter charts for Varisia appear on page 71 of *Pathfinder #3*, or in Appendix D of the *Pathfinder Chronicles Campaign Setting* (use the tables for Temperate Hills or Plains). In addition to any random encounters you might throw at the PCs, they should certainly have the following two encounters along the road to Crying Leaf as well.

KWAVA

Kwava (CG male elf ranger 4, see *Pathfinder #13*) is a wild elf of the Ekujae tribe from the distant Mwangi Expanse far to the south. His skin is deeply tanned and tattooed and his raiment is quite simple. A few years ago, he had a vision of an elf holding a light against the growing darkness. This spurred him to leave his people and seek his fortune in the north. After a few years, he found his way to Crying Leaf and joined the Shin'Rakorath, whose creed is "the light against darkness." As a novice member, he was sent to Riddleport to investigate a "renegade elf." In the previous adventures, Kwava learned that this renegade was in fact a drow. He has come to help the characters on a number of occasions, and now turns to them for a favor. Kwava is quick to mention this debt if the characters rebuff his request. Kwava is quiet and stern in urban environments, as they make him uncomfortable. His camp is just outside of town.

Velashu Horse Lords

At some point after the PCs have left the main riverside track and are well on their way toward the Mierani Forest, they encounter a group of the region's infamous "Horse Lords," rugged barbarians and rangers who travel through the Velashu Uplands in nomadic groups, following the region's vast herds of wild horses and incidentally guarding Varisia from incursions of the more violent tribes of barbarians from the Nolands. The Horse Lords are primarily composed of Ulfen explorers and travelers who abandoned the Lands of the Linnorm Kings for a less violent life here on the outskirts of Varisia. Over the generations, their blood has mixed with both Varisians and the odd Shoanti—although the Horse Lords aren't officially part of the Shoanti tribes, some scholars still refer to them as the "Eighth Quah." Never in front of a full-blood Shoanti, though.

At about noon, any PC who makes DC 15 Spot check notices a cloud of dust that seems to be approaching the PCs' location. A PC who exceeds the DC 15 Spot check by 10 or more can make out a host of mounted men riding in front of the cloud, and that they'll cross the PCs' path in about 10 minutes.

The riders are a group of Velashu Horse Lords, nomads who roam this area on their specially bred and expertly trained mounts. Although they are armed, they do not have weapons drawn as they approach the characters. One of their outriders spotted the characters a few hours ago and they have decided to come investigate (if the PCs are taking pains to stealthily pass through the region, you can omit this encounter if you wish, or you can simply explain that the Horse Lords are on their way to confront a tribe of goblins in the Calphiak Foothills and just happen to be crossing the PCs' paths). When the riders approach, read or paraphrase the following to the players.

The cloud of dust dissipates as the riders at its head slow to a canter. They are barbarians by their dress, bearing distinctive patterns of war paint on their faces and shoulders, marks repeated in the same dark color on the necks of their equine mounts. They are twelve in number, although they are followed by a train of two dozen additional horses. As they pull to a stop, they hold up their right hands, showing that they brandish no weapons.

The leader of the group, a tall, sun-tanned man with dusty black hair, urges his mount forward a few steps before speaking. “Strange days these are when stars fall from the sky and the walled-folk wander the plains of the Velashan. I am Windbraid. What brings you here?”

Windbraid (N human male ranger 5) is curious as to why the PCs are traveling toward the Mierani Forest. Regardless of their motives, he warns them that the elves control the great woodland and do not take kindly to intruders. He and his people have wandered these plains for generations, and although the elves have never been overly friendly to them, they have recently become almost hostile and have barred the outlying areas of the Mierani to hunters. The Horse Lords have also heard rumors of pitched battles occurring deep within the woods, but little else is known, as the elves do not speak of it.

At some point in the conversation, Windbraid asks about the markets in Riddleport. His band is heading to the city to sell or trade a number of horses, but he’d rather turn back now if Riddleport’s in one of its semi-traditional uprisings or street wars between crime lords. If the PCs express interest in the horses, Windbraid will sell them to the PCs so long as they have acted in a polite and dignified manner. The Horse Lords are very particular when it comes to their horses, and those who buy them must agree never to turn around and sell or give their horse to another.

Both light and heavy Velashan horses are trained for war. These horses have the maximum number of hit points and are expertly trained. Anyone riding a Velashan horse receives a +2 circumstance bonus on Ride skill checks. A light Velashan warhorse costs 400 gp, while a heavy Velashan warhorse costs 1,000 gp. The horselords will accept coin for their steeds, but they prefer items they can use, such as masterwork weapons and magic items. Items deemed useful to them are accepted as payment at their full value.

After talking with the PCs and possibly trading with them, Windbraid wishes them luck and “swift manes” in their journey before he and his band depart. They ride to the southeast, leaving the characters alone on the plain once more.

Hunters in the Forest (EL 8)

On the final day of travel, the faint hunter’s trail dips under the dense canopy of the Mierani. The forest itself is a place of ancient life, with immense fir trees, pines, and

redwoods making up the majority of the flora. Off the trails, undergrowth and ancient deadfalls make travel difficult, but there are countless narrow trails crisscrossing the woodland that can afford more rapid travel—discovering them requires a DC 20 Survival check. Of course, no such check is necessary if the PCs choose to remain on the hunter’s trail; as narrow as the trail is, it constitutes the main route into the woodlands and the settlement of Crying Leaf. The route skirts the forest edge, never going further than a half-mile into the depths as it winds its way for 5 miles. Yet despite the fact that no elves step out of the woods to bar their entrance, the warnings the Horse Lords gave them are accurate—the PCs are watched from the moment they set foot in the woods, and not only by elven eyes.

Creatures: At some point not long after the PCs enter the forest, they come to a point where some of the Mierani’s more dangerous denizens, displaced from their deeper forest lairs by the fighting near Celwynvian, have roosted in the branches of a towering redwood that overlooks the trail. This ambush is of three reptilian predators—forest drakes. When the characters draw within 100 feet, the drakes burst forth from the tree to attack.

Yet the PCs are not alone in this fight. The Shin’Rakorath are expecting them, after all, since Kwava used an *animal messenger* spell to alert them. The elven mercenaries want to observe the PCs from afar for a time before making contact, but when the trio of forest drakes attack, they swiftly move in to provide aid. The leader of this group of mercenaries is an elf named Kaerishiel Neirenar—he and his hunters arrive on the scene a few rounds after the battle begins (time their entrance so that they arrive just after the first drake is defeated or the first PC falls).

FOREST DRAKES (3) CR 5

hp 59 each (see page 86)

TACTICS

During Combat The drakes only land to attack between uses of their breath weapon.

Morale A drake flees if reduced to 15 or fewer hit points.

KAERISHIEL NEIRENAR CR 8

Male elf ranger 8

LN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +15, Spot +15

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 18

(+4 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural)

hp 47 (8d8+8)

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5; +2 against enchantment

Immune sleep; **Resist** fire 10

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +10/+5 (1d8+1/19–20)

Ranged +2 composite longbow +12/+12/+7 (1d8+3/×3; Rapid Shot) or
+2 composite longbow +10 (2 arrows, 1d8+3 per arrow/×3, Manyshot)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elf +4, human +2)

Spells Prepared (CL 4th)

2nd—*barkskin*

1st—*alarm, resist energy*

TACTICS

Before Combat Kaerishiel casts *resist energy (fire)* and *barkskin* before combat if possible.

During Combat Kaerishiel prefers to fight at range for as long as possible, backing away from foes that approach him and using Manyshot as a standard action on rounds he can't use Rapid Shot.

Morale Kaerishiel fights until reduced to below 10 hit points unless the cause is vital, in which case he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9

Feats Endurance, Improved Initiative, Manyshot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Track

Skills Heal +8, Hide +15, Knowledge (geography) +5, Listen +15, Move Silently +15, Spot +15, Survival +13

Languages Common, Elven

SQ animal companion (fire pelt named Ashka), swift tracker, wild empathy +7, woodland stride

Combat Gear antitoxin (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, +2 composite longbow (+1 Str), *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +2

ASHKA

Male fire pelt animal companion (MM 274, leopard)
hp 19

CR —

ELVEN SCOUTS (4)

Elf ranger 2/rogue 3

NG Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +11, Spot +11

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 14, flat-footed 13

(+3 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 28 (2d8+3d6+5)

Fort +5, **Ref** +10, **Will** +2; +2 against enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1; **Immune** sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk composite longbow +10 (1d8+1/×3) or

mwk composite longbow +8/+8 (1d8+1/×3; Rapid Shot)

Special Attacks favored enemy (elf +2), sneak attack +2d6

TACTICS

During Combat The elves take up positions in the trees 60 feet from the battle and fire upon the forest drakes from concealment. They only use their +1 *flaming arrows* if the battle goes poorly (these are not factored into attack values)—they want to avoid starting fires if possible.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5

Feats Improved Initiative, Rapid Shot, Track, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Climb +7, Hide +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +12, Spot +11, Survival +6

Languages Common, Elven

SQ trapfinding, wild empathy (+2)

Combat Gear +1 *flaming arrows* (5), *potion of cure light wounds* (2), signal arrows (2); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather armor, short sword, masterwork composite longbow (+1 Str) with 40 arrows, 10 gp

Development: After the combat is over, the elves emerge from hiding and slowly approach the characters, holding their bows in a non-threatening manner but nonetheless at the ready. Kaerishiel, the leader of the scouts, asks why the PCs have come to the Mierani Forest, and as long as they mention Kwava's name or indicate they have critical information about the drow that must be delivered to Crying Leaf, he nods—he received descriptions of the PCs from Kwava, but they aren't exact. A naturally suspicious soul, Kaerishiel doesn't fully trust the PCs even if they answer his questions properly, and he and his hunters remain silent and grim for the remainder of the journey as they escort the PCs the rest of the way to town. Apart from explaining that Kwava sent a note informing the elves to expect the PCs' arrival, Kaerishiel has little to say to the PCs. If the characters continue asking questions, Kaerishiel abruptly informs them, "It would be best to allow Eviana to answer your questions. You should keep silent, there are many enemies in these woods."

Crying Leaf

Up ahead, the forest begins to thin somewhat, but a screen of plants prevents observation of what lies within. After a moment, several elf scouts approach the screen, which turns out to be a solid wall of thorny vines. One of the elves puts a small silver whistle to his lips and blows three times. As the last twittering note begins to fade, the wall of vines springs to life, pulling back to reveal a small settlement in a clearing on the other side.

The village of Crying Leaf is a modest one, with low structures made of gracefully shaped stone and wood that has been carefully decorated and carved. What is immediately apparent is that this settlement has seen battle recently. A number of the

buildings bear burn marks and other damage, and most of the citizens are armed with bows and swords.

Crying Leaf, from without and within, is a community on the edge of conflict. Just 1 day to the west lie the ruins of Celwynvian, the site of a near constant skirmish with the drow. As such, the elves use Crying Leaf as a staging ground, a safe haven where weary combatants can get a measure of rest and resupply. Although the drow have long known of Crying Leaf's location, the distance from the drow holdings in Celwynvian has traditionally kept the village safe, but recent attacks on Crying Leaf in the form of conjured demons and swift-moving drow skirmishers have brought the war uncomfortably close to home, as evidenced by the tense nature of Crying Leaf's inhabitants and damage to some of the buildings.

This community has little contact with the outside world. While the occasional merchant caravan travels to Riddleport for supplies, the community is primarily provisioned and reinforced directly from Kyonin, the elven nation far to the east, through the use of *teleport* and similar magic. While many of the elves are interested in the arrival of outlanders since they have seen so few of them in the past couple of years, others are skeptical, believing that they are not needed to solve what is seen as an "elven problem."

When the PCs arrive, Kaerishiel quickly leads them to a low stone building near the edge of town where they can stable their horses and refresh themselves from their hard journey. Many of the elves follow them and loiter around outside, hoping to catch a glimpse of the outsiders. Kaerishiel, meanwhile, goes to report to Eviana and prepare for the meeting.

The building to which the PCs are assigned contains three chambers: a central room, a simple bathroom, and a meditation room containing eight woven reed mats for resting. An oak table surrounded by gracefully carved chairs dominates the main chamber. Atop this table is a mound of fruits and vegetables, freshly harvested.

After an hour has passed, Kaerishiel returns to escort the PCs to Eviana. He leads them to the center of the town to an ornate wooden long hall, roofed in broad, autumn-colored leaves. One end of the hall is open, revealing an immense table that runs the entire length of the hall. At the far end, seated upon a tall chair of polished white wood, is Eviana, the leader of Crying Leaf.

CRYING LEAF

Village conventional (ruling noble); **AL** CG
GP Limit 200 gp*; **Assets** 7,800 gp

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population 780

Type isolated (elf 98%, half-elf 2%)

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Eviana Nirgassan, CG female elf sorcerer 7 (leader of Crying Leaf); **Kaerishiel Neirenar**, LN male elf ranger 8 (leader of local chapter of the Shin'Rakorath)

*Although the GP Limit of Crying Leaf is only 200 gp, supply merchants from Kyonin teleport in on a monthly basis, at which point special requests for additional purchases can be made against a GP limit of 100,000 gp; objects purchased are delivered the next day via a second teleporting merchant.



**Eviana
Nirgassan**

Meeting with Eviana

The leader of Crying Leaf has had a tumultuous reign. Appointed by the elven council in Kyonin, Eviana Nirgassan was placed in charge of the community nearly a decade ago after the previous leader was assassinated by the drow. Although the low-grade war with the dark elves has been going on for many years, it has intensified recently as both sides seek an end to the conflict.

Eviana has also been forced to keep this escalation quiet from both the outside world and her own kin, who would find such news quite disturbing. The Shin'Rakorath, a group of elven mercenaries founded ages ago by the

secretive Winter Council, also maintains a unit of hunters and scouts here. Kaerishiel is the leader of the Shin'Rakorath in Crying Leaf, and he and Eviana do not often agree on what is best for the community—Kaerishiel has long pushed for a stronger offensive against the drow, while Eviana prefers a campaign of silence and containment.

Eviana has been quite disturbed by the recent events in Riddleport, as reported by Kwava. As such, she was quite relieved when Kwava's *animal messenger* arrived, informing her that a group of heroes had recovered a journal that might help turn the tide against the drow. Kaerishiel argued against inviting these "heroes" into an elven situation, but in the end her desires to recruit the aid of the PCs won out over the other elf's reservations.

Seated in a high-backed chair of polished white birch, Eviana is a striking figure. Her high brow is set with a thin metal circlet, and small gemstones sparkle in her hair. Although richly dressed in a finely made gown, the hilt of a sword is clearly visible at her waist. Kaerishiel strides up to take a seat at the table to her right. As she indicates to the PCs that they should be seated at the table as well, she speaks.

“Please, be seated,” Eviana says in light and friendly voice. “I received word from your friend Kwava that you were coming, bringing with you knowledge that might help us with our... situation, deeper in the Mierani. My people and I are grateful that you made this journey. As you can likely guess, we are in a delicate position. It would be best if what you learn here does not spread beyond the bows of the Mierani. Do we have an accord?”

Assuming that the PCs agree to keep this information confidential, Eviana asks them to present what they have learned. Although both Eviana and Kaerishiel are concerned about the events that occurred on Devil’s Elbow, their true interest lies in the two journals—Shindiira’s and Depora’s. Shindiira’s has more information about the Armageddon Echo where the drow of Celwynvian retreat to recover, but both journals, especially when cross-referenced against each other, contain a wealth of information. After the characters are finished with their tale, Eviana offers them 2,000 gp for the two journals as a reward—if the PCs decline the offer, she smiles, visibly impressed by the move. Once she has the journals, she resumes her speech.

“Thank you for this. You now know why we have had to close the borders of the Mierani, and indeed, why Crying Leaf was established. The drow have a strong presence in the old ruins of the once great city of Celwynvian. I tell you now that the situation is far worse than you might suspect. The drow control the ruins almost completely, and have for some time now. We here in Crying Leaf have been locked in what seems to be an unending struggle with them for many years, and until recently we believed we had them contained. Yet your conflicts under Riddleport and on Devil’s Elbow showed us all this was not the case at all. And in Celwynvian, the drow have been quite elusive. Whenever we prepare a major strike, the city seems empty, but our gains are quickly eroded within days as a renewed force pushes us back. We had thought that the drow were fleeing into the Darklands, but now we know the truth of it—they have been retreating instead into this pocket dimension they call the Armageddon Echo.

“I must confer with my contacts in Kyonin to determine what is to be done with the knowledge. Might I ask you to wait until we have decided? You have done well so far against the drow, and there may be a place for you among Crying Leaf’s forces in the battles to come. I assure you, if you are willing to join with us, you shall be paid handsomely, at rates equal to those we afford the Shin’Rakorath.”

With that, Eviana leaves the hall, entrusting the PCs again to Kaerishiel’s care. Once she has gone, the leader of the Shin’Rakorath escorts them back to their lodge in silence, an angry look on his face. Once there, he suddenly turns on them. Read or paraphrase the following to the characters.

ELVEN COMMUNITIES

When your players reach Crying Leaf, try to impress upon them how different it is from anywhere else they have visited thus far. As an entirely elven town, Crying Leaf has a number of oddities that you can play on to great effect. Try to keep the following points in mind.

- There are no beds in Crying Leaf, since the elves do not sleep. There are simple reed mats in nearly every home to facilitate their daily meditations.
- Most of the elves here are vegetarians—meat is never served. Similarly, ale and beer are not readily available. The elves tend to drink water or wine with all of their meals.
- Crying Leaf has little in the way of amenities for visitors. There are no taverns, inns, or stores in the community. All of the food and supplies are rationed by Eviana and her men. Characters looking to make purchases must do so from these stores, which are guarded by several elf scouts.
- Although all of the elves can speak Common, Elven is the only language spoken here. If the PCs do not speak it, they will find that they won’t understand most conversations. When speaking directly to the characters, most elves are polite enough to speak Common

“I suppose you are quite proud of your accomplishments. I have been urging Eviana to all-out war with the dark elves for months, but you have managed to push her to action almost by accident. I would not get comfortable; you will be leaving here soon.”

The characters are left on their own in the guest lodge for rest of the day. They’re free to explore the small village if they wish, but with the majority of the citizens out in the field on missions in and around Celwynvian, there’s simply not much to see. Just before sundown, a group of elves bring them a dinner of fire-roasted vegetables, bread, and wine.

Off to War

In the morning, Kaerishiel arrives with a small host of his guards and asks the PCs to accompany him to Eviana. Returning to the lodge, the characters find the leader of Crying Leaf dressed in a resplendent suit of shining elven chainmail. There are a number of other elves here as well, similarly dressed, poring over large maps of the forest. Read or paraphrase the following to the players.

“We have come to a decision,” Eviana begins, looking both tired and grim. “We are going to war. The information you have provided us has convinced me that we might be able to drive the drow out of our city entirely. Further, I have decided that you might play a useful role in this effort. Our numbers are few and the drow are entrenched. Since you already have experience

dealing with the drow, your assistance would be quite valuable. What say you? Will you help us?"

Assuming that the PCs agree, Eviana thanks them deeply and asks them to return to their lodge to prepare for the journey to Celwynvian—their role in the battle will be explained when they arrive in the ruins' vicinity. If the PCs ask about payment for aiding the elves, Eviana assures them that they will be awarded properly for their help when victory is claimed—see page 19 for more details about the rewards the elves are prepared to gift the PCs with if they press for more details.

After the meeting, Kaerishiel escorts the PCs back to their lodge in silence, refusing to speak to them. When the lodge is in sight, he points and says, "I think you can find your way from here. I am done guiding you. You have no idea of the danger you have walked into." With that, he storms off to prepare his men for the journey.

PART TWO: THE BATTLE FOR CELWYNVIAN

The fighting forces of Crying Leaf take another 4 hours to fully mobilize. During this time, all of the able-bodied combatants are busy preparing to depart for the final campaign. While the majority of the warriors are members of the Shin'Rakorath mercenary company, there is a sizable group of elves reporting directly to Eviana. This mobilization leaves only a small contingent of elves to defend and maintain Crying Leaf—the hope being that if the gathering forces are successful and drive the drow out of Celwynvian, Crying Leaf will face no further peril.

The PCs are left to their own devices during this time, allowing them to pack up for the journey with ease. Just after noon, the elves are ready to depart. Travel through the tangled wilds of the Mierani precludes horseback riding, and Eviana promises the PCs that if they wish to leave any mounts at Crying Leaf, they will be tended and well-cared for. With the army of several hundred elves assembled, Kaerishiel blows a single note from his horn and the march begins. The army does not march in a classic column—rather, the elves break apart into small groups of four to six, both to make moving through the forest less onerous and to present the enemy, if they are encountered, with smaller groups to target. The PCs are expected to form their own such skirmish group, but Kaerishiel is never far off, his distrusting gaze lingering on the PCs if they fall behind or otherwise get distracted along the way.

The journey to Celwynvian takes just over a day to complete, requiring the group to camp in the forest roughly halfway to the ruined city. The journey is largely without event, as the natural predators of the forest are quick to hide or move aside against such a large mobilization of elves. As the second day of the march begins, the first

sign of an abandoned civilization manifests in the form of an ancient road of overgrown marble stones that leads to Celwynvian. While tangled, this path still allows for much faster travel than any other route. The road leads to a clearing just half a mile from the ruins where many of the scouts and skirmishers currently watching over the city hold a temporary camp. The forest still blocks any view of Celwynvian, but half-crumbled pillars and eroded foundations testify to the site's proximity.

The elves spend the rest of the day setting up camp and perimeter watches. Eviana's pavilion is in the middle of the camp, with Kaerishiel's closer to the edge. The PCs are given a spot not far from Eviana's to make their camp, and they are supplied with simple green tents if they do not have any of their own. Just before dusk, one of Eviana's guards comes to inform the characters that the lady has requested their presence at dinner to go over plans and their role in the struggle.

Planning the Attack

Arriving at dinner, the PCs find Eviana seated with Kaerishiel, a host of her personal guard, and a few important-looking elves wearing gleaming armor. These elves represent the leaders of the Celwynvian Watch, a group that has been patrolling the edge of the city for the past few years in an attempt to keep the drow inside. This group is led by an elven ranger named Shalelu Andosana (CG female elf ranger 4/fighter 2), an attractive woman who seems strangely at ease despite the fact that she's obviously just returned from scouting. A Crying Leaf native, Shalelu has only recently come home after spending many years in the area around Sandpoint on the central Varisian coast.

Dinner is a plain affair of steamed turnips, potatoes, and carrots, served in a light vegetable broth along with some simple bread. The wine is light and fruity, but it is served in moderation. Eviana refuses to speak of the conflict during dinner, asking Shalelu and the other scouts about the flora and fauna in the area. After dinner is cleared away, soldiers bring forth a large map of the ruined city, unfurling it out onto the table. The elves look over the map for a moment, and then Eviana turns to Shalelu and, for the PCs' edification, asks her to explain what they're looking at. Shalelu nods, then speaks.

"This is a map of Celwynvian, based partially on old records from Kyonin and modified as appropriate to the current state of things. In some cases, we've had to make educated guesses as to the condition of streets and buildings from our observations, and much of the interior is not well known to us since venturing inside can be quite dangerous. The streets are patrolled by both drow and demons, making reconnaissance difficult. There are only a few unobstructed ways into the city, and we must secure them first if we are to have any chance of reclaiming the site."

At this point, Eviana begins talking strategy with the assembled crowd. Using the information retrieved by the PCs, she lays out a plan to strike at the center of Celwynvian, a place called the Academy of the Arts—it is here that the journals claim the drow refuge is located. Unfortunately, the Academy of the Arts is well behind enemy lines, and before the final assault on the core can be attempted, all of the major roads into the city must be secured so that the army of Crying Leaf can be brought against the drow with ease. This is where the PCs are brought into the planning. Eviana explains that the best road into the city crosses in front of the ancient library of Reenai, and Shalelu reports that the drow have been using this building to watch over the road and prevent intruders from gaining easy access. Eviana would like the PCs to infiltrate this structure and take out the drow hiding within while the rest of the forces attack other critical spots around the perimeter of the ruins. After this, the army will march inward, making its way toward the Academy. Since the interior is not well known, the plans get noticeably less organized from this point onward and most of the talk turns to contingencies. This is also a good time for Shalelu to share any other intelligence she has with the assembled group.

As the meeting continues, Shalelu mentions that there are more than just drow and demons in the city. Two days ago, she saw a green dragon circling the skies above. This bit of news sends a ripple of murmurs through the gathered elves and instigates at least one mention of the name “Razorhorn.” If the drow have a dragon on their side, this battle could be quite a bit more difficult than anticipated.

Kaerishiel is mostly quiet through dinner and the meeting that follows. He discusses the strength of his company where appropriate, but disagrees with both Shalelu and Eviana on a number of key points, the biggest of which remains the involvement of the PCs. He offers to send a group of his scouts in their place to secure the library, suggesting that the characters should be used to guard the base camp. Assuming that the PCs disagree, Eviana disregards this suggestion and proceeds with the planning. Not surprisingly, Kaerishiel fumes for the rest of the meeting, casting cold glares at the characters when no one else is watching.

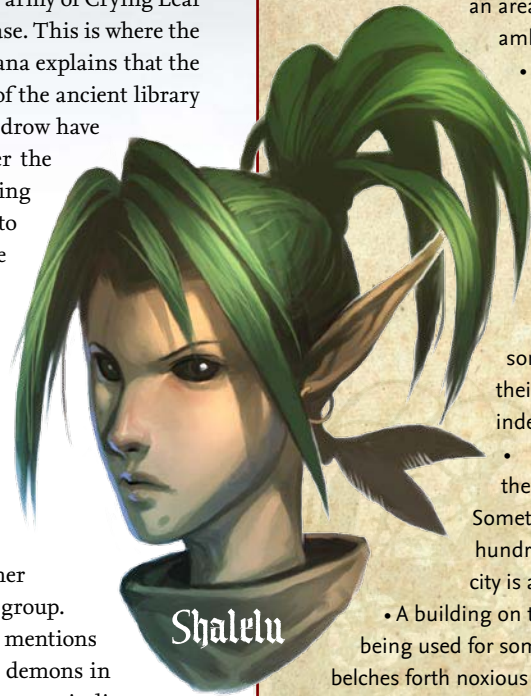
Adventuring in Celwynvian

The following guidelines are presented to help track the ongoing battle for Celwynvian. Since the PCs’ involvement primarily revolves around a number of specific encounters and not with the actual mass battle between large numbers

SHALELU'S INTELLIGENCE

Shalelu has gathered a great deal of information about the drow in Celwynvian during her scouting expeditions, some of which might be of use to the characters during their assault of the city.

- Drow patrol the streets quite regularly after dark, usually with more than one group in an area to aid others in case of an ambush.
 - Many of the drow use dangerous alchemical weapons delivered through specially designed crossbow bolts.
 - There are a good number of demons wandering the city. Although they do not attack the drow, some appear to have bucked their commanders and operate independently.
 - The number of drow in the city seems to vary wildly. Sometimes there appears to be hundreds, while at other times the city is almost deserted.
 - A building on the north side of the city is being used for some foul purpose as it constantly belches forth noxious smoke.
- Although no one else has seen it, Shalelu is positive that the dragon she spotted is Razorhorn, the spawn of a more powerful dragon that once savaged Crying Leaf and was responsible for the death of her mother.



of elves and drow, it’s important to work larger battlefield events and flavor in seamlessly with other random encounters and occurrences. In addition, while the battle continues to rage, certain elements make adventuring in the ruins even more dangerous than normal.

Movement: Although the roads shown on the map are relatively clear, the underbrush has tangled all the other areas, making them difficult to traverse and halving normal movement rates (save for characters like druids who can pass through undergrowth with ease). This is especially true of the areas containing ruins. Moving through a square that contains ruins reduces movement rates to 1/3 normal.

Recovery: The elves have many healers among their ranks, mostly low-level rangers, clerics, and bards armed with *wands of cure light wounds* and *potions of lesser restoration*. If the PCs wish to take advantage of these services at the elven base camp, they can have all of their wounds and ability damage healed

after a short visit to the infirmary in the base camp—there's no need to track charges or roll for healing if they do. Just say a few minutes pass and they get patched up swiftly. Ability drain, negative levels, diseases, blindness, and other more lasting effects cannot be cured quite so quickly. Each day, the base camp has 1d6 uses of *dispel magic*, *remove blindness/deafness*, *remove curse*, *remove paralysis*, and *remove disease* (all at CL 5th) and 1d3 uses of *restoration* (at CL 7th) available for the PCs to take advantage of; once one of these resources is used up, it doesn't replenish until the next day.

Resting: The battle for Celwynvian takes many days, with the elves pressing the advantage against the drow during the day and the drow pushing back at night—both forces are often forced to retreat to safety to rest and recover, but the actual skirmishing continues unabated during all hours of the day and night. The PCs will undoubtedly need to rest, recover from wounds, and resupply during this adventure, likely after each of their missions. The encounters presented here do not follow a set timeline, so you can allow the PCs to recover as needed to ensure they are up to the challenge. Feel free to push them, however, to the limits of what they can accomplish. If the PCs elect to hunker down in the city itself to rest, there's a 20% chance every 2 hours of an encounter—if they retreat to the elven base camp just in the city's periphery, though, they'll be able to rest without fear of interruption. In any event, excessive resting can impact their overall victory—each time the PCs rest more than once in a 24 hour period, they lose 2 Battle Points (see page 19).

Random Encounters: The city is full of drow and elves fighting for every foot of ground. To help simulate this, check for a random encounter each time the PCs move through the ruined city from one location to another, with the chance of an encounter occurring at a rate of 30%. Likewise, if the PCs seek out a building to explore that's not otherwise detailed in this adventure or the gazetteer of Celwynvian that begins on page 48, there's a 30% chance the building houses a random encounter. A list of random encounters for Celwynvian during the battle appears at the start of this volume's Bestiary on page 81. If an encounter doesn't occur, roll instead for a random event. As always, feel free to force or ignore encounters as best fits the flow and need for your game.

Random Events: Whenever a random encounter doesn't occur (or whenever you feel the need to punctuate a long period of time with something to remind the PCs that a battle is going on), roll on the table on page 17 to determine a random event the PCs witness. Several of these random events afford the PCs opportunities to earn additional battle points (see page 19).

Drow Statistics

A large number of drow inhabit Celwynvian. The majority fall into three categories: skirmishers (drow rogues who

serve as scouts, spies, and messengers), soldiers (the rank-and-file fighters), and arcanists (often commanders of smaller units). All three stat blocks are presented here for ease of reference.

DROW SKIRMISHER

CR 3

Male drow rogue 2

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13

(+3 armor, +3 Dex)

hp 11 (2d6+2)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1 (+3 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

Defensive Abilities evasion; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 13

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +5 (1d4/19–20 plus poison)

Special Attacks sneak attack +1d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 2nd)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Drow skirmishers avoid melee combat whenever possible, preferring to use their more accurate ranged weapons. They open with their poison bolts, hoping to poison foes quickly while using *darkness* to slow the advance of enemies. If forced into melee, skirmishers always attempt to flank with one another.

Morale Drow skirmishers flee if reduced to less than 4 hit points, using smokesticks to create cover if necessary.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Feats Improved Initiative

Skills Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +8, Jump +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Spot +8, Tumble +10

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ trapfinding

Combat Gear drow poison bolts (4), *potion of cure light wounds*, smokestick; **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork hand crossbow with 20 bolts, short sword

DROW SOLDIER

CR 5

Male drow fighter 4

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +4, Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

(+4 armor, +3 Dex, +1 shield)

hp 34 (4d10+8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3 (+5 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

Immune sleep; **SR** 15

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk rapier +9 (1d6+3/18–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +8 (1d4+1/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th)

1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect magic, faerie fire, feather fall, levitate*

TACTICS

During Combat Drow soldiers avoid melee combat until absolutely necessary. Instead, they fire on foes using their hand crossbows, often attacking from high ledges they've levitated up to, hoping to down foes with their alchemical bolts. In melee combat, they fight in pairs, teaming up on weaker foes before taking on more skilled opponents.

Morale Drow soldiers flee if reduced to less than 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 13, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5

Feats Dark Adept, Iron Will, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Climb +3, Hide +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Spot +4, Tumble +6

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

Combat Gear fire bolts (5), acid bolts (5), drow poison bolts (2), *potion of cure moderate wounds*; **Other Gear** mithral shirt, masterwork buckler, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 +1 bolts, masterwork rapier

DROW ARCANIST

CR 7

Male drow sorcerer 6

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +5

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex)

hp 27 (6d4+11)

Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7 (+9 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

Immune sleep; **SR** 17

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4–1/19–20)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect magic, faerie fire, feather fall, levitate*

Spells Known (CL 6th; +6 ranged touch)

3rd (4/day)—*fireball* (DC 17)

2nd (6/day)—*acid arrow, blur*

CELWYNVIAN RANDOM EVENTS

d%	Occurrence
01–10	<i>Mysterious Cry</i> : A cry for help echoes from a nearby building. Roll for a random encounter. If none occurs, the building is strangely empty.
11–20	<i>Blood Trail</i> : A trail of fresh blood leads toward a small copse of trees, where suddenly ends.
21–25	<i>Shadow Overhead</i> : Something passes overhead for an instant, causing a shadow to rush over the characters. A DC 25 Spot check picks out a large winged shape (the dragon Razorhorn, see page 43) gliding over the city, quickly passing out of sight beyond the ruined skyline.
26–30	<i>Hail of Arrows</i> : A hail of elven arrows accidentally falls onto the PCs. Each PC is attacked 1d4–1 times at a +5 bonus. The arrows deal 1d8+2 points of damage each.
31–40	<i>Crumbling Building</i> : A nearby damaged building collapses, dealing 4d6 points of damage to anyone within 30 feet (Reflex half DC 15).
41–50	<i>Chance Meeting</i> : The PCs run into a group of 1d4+1 elves making their way into the city. One of them is a 5th level cleric who offers to cast <i>cure light wounds</i> on every character who needs it.
51–65	<i>Dead Bodies</i> : The bodies of 1d4 elves are found in the middle of the street. There is a 60% chance that they are the bodies of drow skirmishers, otherwise they are elven scouts. In either case, there's an 80% chance that their gear has been stripped.
66–75	<i>Leftover Spell Effect</i> : An errant spell blocks the PCs' path. Roll 1d6 to determine the spell: 1— <i>entangle</i> , 2— <i>web</i> , 3— <i>stinking cloud</i> , 4— <i>wall of fire</i> , 5— <i>wall of ice</i> , 6— <i>wall of thorns</i> . The spell effect functions at its minimum caster level.
76–85	<i>Wounded Survivor</i> : The PCs find an elf that is unconscious from his wounds, but stable. If it is an elven scout (50% chance), there's a 20% chance he has important intelligence about the drow—if he's safely returned to the camp, the PCs earn 1 battle point.
86–95	<i>Monster Sighting</i> : The PCs find the horribly crushed body of a drow soldier, his gear completely ruined. If you roll this occurrence again, a crazed treant (MM 244) attacks, driven to madness by recent events. If the PCs defeat the treant, they earn 1 battle point.
96–100	<i>Drow Slaves</i> : The PCs run across a group of 4 troglodytes (MM 246) escorting a group of elven prisoners back to their drow masters. If the PCs free the prisoners and return them to base camp, they earn 1 battle point.

DROW ALCHEMY

The drow have developed a number of alchemical weapons to use in their fight against the elves. The following weapons are common equipment among drow soldiers.

Acid Bolts: These metal bolts have a glass section in the middle, filled with acid. On a successful hit, they deal normal damage and 1d4 points of additional acid damage. Acid bolts do not cause any splash damage. *Cost:* 40 gp per bolt.

Fire Bolts: These carefully crafted wooden bolts have a hollow core filled with alchemist's fire. On a successful hit, they deal normal damage plus 1d4 points of fire damage. Alchemical fire bolts do not cause any splash damage, and the fire burst isn't enough to ignite targets (unless they are particularly flammable). *Cost:* 50 gp per bolt.

Drow Poison Bolts: These iron bolts have small resin tips that break when the bolts strike their targets. Inside is a dose of drow poison. Anyone struck by a drow poison bolt must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1 minute. After 1 minute, the subject must succeed on another DC 13 Fortitude save or remain unconscious for 2d4 hours. Those using drow poison bolts do not risk poisoning themselves, but the strange tip affects the bolts' accuracy. Double the range penalties when using a drow poison bolt. *Cost:* 100 gp per bolt.

ABRAXAS

The drow of House Azrinae serve Abraxas, Master of the Final Incantation, Demon Lord of Magic and Forbidden Lore. Abraxas is believed to know countless magical formulas, spells, and secrets, particularly those that cause great devastation and pain—including the "Final Incantation," a potent word that, when uttered, strips away and destroys magic. His clerics have access to the domains of Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, and Magic, and his favored weapon is the whip.

1st (7/day)—*enlarge person, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*

0 (6/day)—*acid splash, detect magic, ghost sound (DC 14), mage hand, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue (DC 14)*

TACTICS

Before Combat If expecting trouble, drow arcanists cast *mage armor* and use their *wand of false life* as soon as possible. If given additional warning before a fight, they also cast *blur* and use their *scroll of haste* on allies just before the fight.

During Combat Drow arcanists try to take out their opponents as quickly as possible, using *fireballs* against large groups, *acid arrows* against spellcasters, and *rays of enfeeblement* against melee-oriented foes. They avoid melee combat at all costs.

Morale Drow arcanists flee from combat if dropped to below 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 10, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2

Feats Dark Adept, Empower Spell, Weapon Focus (ray)

Skills Concentration +9, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +7

Languages Abyssal, Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ summon familiar (bat)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds, scroll of haste, wand of false life* (10 charges); **Other Gear** *cloak of resistance +1, masterwork dagger, ring of protection +1*

DROW CAPTAIN

CR 7

Female drow fighter 2/cleric 4 (Abraxas)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft. ; Listen +9, Spot +9

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 20

(+8 armor, +2 shield)

hp 39 (6 HD; 2d10+4d8+6)

Fort +8, **Ref** +1, **Will** +7 (+9 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

Immune sleep; **SR** 17

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee +1 *whip* +7 (1d3+2 nonlethal) or

mwk flail +7 (1d8+1)

Ranged *mwk hand crossbow* +6 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, detect magic, faerie fire, feather fall, levitate*

Spells Prepared (CL 4th, CL 5th evil spells)

2nd—*desecrate^P, hold person (DC 15), sound burst (DC 15), spiritual weapon*

1st—*bless, cure light wounds (2), divine favor, protection from good^P*

0—*cure minor wounds (2), detect magic, guidance (2)*

D domain spell; **Domains** Evil, Magic

TACTICS

During Combat In combat, a drow captain uses her spells to best effect, using *hold person* against melee combatants and *spiritual weapon* on spellcasters. If accompanied by undead or other drow, she prepares for combat by casting *bless* on her allies before casting *divine favor* and *protection from good* on herself. She reserves *sound burst* for a grouping of adversaries, catching her allies in the burst if necessary, counting on the drow's innate spell resistance to protect them. If outside the fray, a drow captain uses her *wand of magic missile* to disrupt spellcasters.

Morale If a drow captain's entourage is routed or slain, the captain flees. Otherwise, she only flees if reduced to less than 5 hit points.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 12, **Int** 15, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Feats Combat Expertise, Dark Adept, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip

Skills Concentration +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +9, Spellcraft +7, Spot +9

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

Combat Gear *scroll of cure moderate wounds* (3), *scroll of web*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 3rd, 10 charges); **Other Gear** full plate, heavy steel shield, +1 whip, masterwork hand crossbow with 10 acid bolts, masterwork flail, silver holy symbol of Abraxas, 20 gp

Victory!

As the war for Celwynvian progresses, the PCs earn battle points (BP) for accomplishing goals, defeating drow and their kin, and supporting the elven effort to reclaim the ruins. Some of the decisions they make during both the set and random encounters can earn or cost them BP as well. The number of BP they garner has a noticeable effect on the conclusion of the battle, as noted at the end of this adventure. Keep a running tally of the PCs' accumulated BP as the adventure progresses. At the end of the adventure, this total represents how well the PCs have done and indicates the final reward the elves are able to grant them (since much of this reward money comes from reclaimed gear and treasure taken from the drow, a stronger victory generates more gold). The following table shows the gp value of the item each character should be given. Each item should be one chosen specifically for the character.

BP	Reward
0 or less	No reward
1–5	2,000 gp
6–10	5,000 gp
11–15	8,000 gp
16+	10,000 gp

**PART THREE:
THE LIBRARY OF DUST**

Just before dawn on the morning of the attack, the elven camp is a flurry of activity. The first groups leave well before dawn to reach their appointed battlefields, scattered around the outskirts of Celwynvian. Kaerishiel, who nudges their sleeping forms and shakes the tents, awakes the PCs. He says little to them aside from "I hope you don't plan on spending the entire battle unconscious," before wandering off to join his own soldiers.

As mentioned the previous night, the characters have been assigned the task of securing one of the main entries to the city, a road that leads in from the west, passing

under the shadow of a building known to contain drow. The assault is scheduled to begin as soon as the sun's rays touch the tallest remaining spire in the city; if the PCs are spotted by drow before this time, they lose 3 BP for tipping the drow off to the coming assault.

When the PCs break from the forest and approach the city for the first time, read or paraphrase the following to them.

Leaving the ancient forest behind, the ruins of Celwynvian loom out of the morning fog like ancient bones. Gnarled trees and dense vines cover many of the crumbling structures, making for a strange landscape of leafy walls and verdant towers. Up ahead, a pair of weathered statues loom on either side of the path, marking the entrance to the city. Not far beyond them, a mostly intact library stands in the center of the road.

A1. Approaching the Library (EL 8)

Most of the outer walls of this ancient stone building remain intact, but they show serious signs of damage and decay. Small piles of rubble litter the ground and twisting creeper vines cling to the pitted surface.

The roof of the library is sloped, but the plants and cracks in its surface make it easy to move across. Characters can climb up to the roof, 20 feet above, with a DC 20 Climb check. The stone doors on the south side of the building are slightly ajar, but the doors on the north side are rusted shut and obstructed on the other side by a mass of spider webs. Opening these doors requires a DC 25 Strength check.

Creatures: A group of drow hides on the library roof behind a crumbling parapet. These snipers fire at anyone making their way through the area, using poisoned and alchemical bolts to hamper intruders. When the PCs approach to within 30 feet of the building, give them a Spot check to notice the ambushers and prevent a surprise attack.

DROW SKIRMISHERS (2) **CR 3**
hp 11 each (page 16)

TACTICS

During Combat When the fighting begins, the skirmishers use their crossbows from the roof, firing from behind cover at the PCs, giving them a +4 cover bonus to AC and a +2 cover bonus on Reflex saves. If the characters manage to reach the roof, the skirmishers continue firing at those below if possible, engaging in melee only if the drow soldiers are slain.

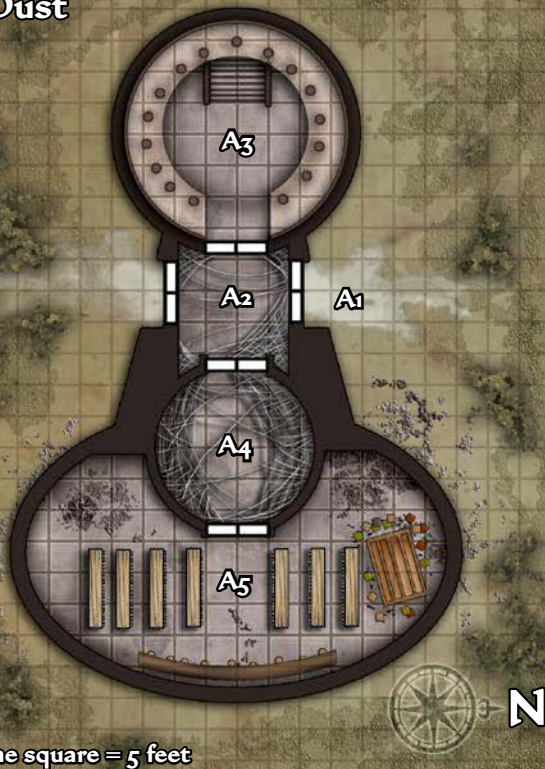
Morale Due to the importance of this location to the drow, these drow fight to the death.

DROW SOLDIERS (2) **CR 5**
hp 34 each (page 16)

TACTICS

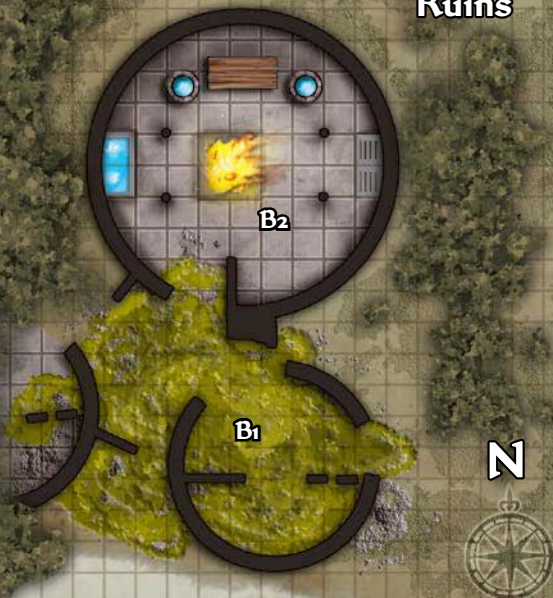


Library of Dust



One square = 5 feet

Alchemy Ruins



One square = 5 feet

During Combat The soldiers begin combat on the roof, firing at the PCs with their hand crossbows along with the skirmishers. They primarily target anyone attempting to climb the walls. If anyone climbs up on the roof, the soldiers break off from firing to engage the characters in melee, flanking if possible.

Morale Due to the importance of this location to the drow, these drow fight to the death.

Development: If the PCs seek shelter inside the library, entering through either doorway, the drow soldiers descend to rejoin the fight in area A2. The drow skirmishers remain on the roof, waiting to fire at anyone who leaves the building.

A2. Spider Infested Lobby (EL 3)

The dimly lit lobby of this building is obscured by rubble and debris; scattered on the floor are dozens of crumbling books. Thick sheets of webbing cover one entire side of the chamber, concealing what lies beyond.

This library has been used by the drow for many years now, first as a defensive point and more recently as a site of careful research.

Creatures: Three enormous recluse spiders have dwelt in this chamber for some time. While they leave the drow alone, they viciously attack the PCs the moment they enter the room.

GIANT RECLUSE SPIDERS (3) CR 1
hp 11 each (Medium monstrous spider; MM 289)

A3. Hall of Memories (EL 7)

This circular chamber has a crumbling staircase on the opposite wall, leading up to a balcony that rims the room ten feet above the floor. Arranged around the balcony are a number of short pillars, several of which support a faintly glowing crystal globe.

The elves once used this chamber to store specially prepared globes containing complex illusions that would answer simple questions and converse with guests on specific topics. Each globe covered a different topic, from the nature of magic to the history of the elven people. Of these only a dozen remain intact, and their magic is waning.

Creatures: The drow stationed here command six mischievous dretches. To keep these lesser demons occupied, they placed them in this chamber so that their research in the main library area could proceed uninterrupted. As such, the dretches have been waiting in this chamber for

some time, chasing each other about the balcony, fighting, and periodically watching the “pretty pictures” in the globes (even though much of the information in the globes is beyond them). When the PCs enter, the dretches hoot and howl with glee and attack immediately.

DRETCHES (6)

CR 2

hp 13 each (MM 42)

OFFENSE

Ranged crystal globe +3 (1d6+1)

TACTICS

During Combat The dretches open combat by flinging heavy crystal globes down at the characters. The globes shatter on impact, releasing a burst of magical energy that deals 1d6 points of electricity damage to all creatures in a 5-foot radius. A DC 11 Reflex save negates this damage. Those hit by a globe do not get a save. Treat the globes as splash weapons. Once the dretches each throw a globe, they move on to other tactics, either filling the chamber with *stinking clouds* or attempting to summon more dretches before engaging in melee.

Morale These dretches fight to the death.

Treasure: Before combat begins, there are 12 crystal globes stored here—subtract any the dretches hurl in the fight when the PCs get a chance to investigate them. Most of the globes only show vague shifting images of an ancient elven city. One of the globes that survives the fight still partially functions. This globe was meant to convey information on elven history. Whenever anyone picks it up, the image of a long dead librarian appears. He identifies himself as Eloquan, Chief Lorekeeper of Celwynvian. This flickering illusion only responds to questions about ancient elven history, made with a +15 bonus on the check. Note that the globe only knows about the elves of almost 10,000 years ago and earlier—as such, it knows nothing of drow, Earthfall, or the events since then. The globe weighs 10 pounds and is extremely fragile. If a PC carrying it fails a Reflex save or takes falling damage, the globe shatters and inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage to the PC. This lone functional globe is worth 5,000 gp; the others are worth only 10 gp apiece as curiosities.

A4. Decayed Archive

This chamber was once used for displaying expertly crafted tapestries and paintings but over the years these have fallen into ruin, with only a few scraps of ancient fabric hanging on the walls. Thick spiderwebs cover much of the walls, but the only spiders to be found are of ordinary size.

The door leading into area A5 is locked and can only be opened with a DC 25 Open Lock check—the key is carried by the drow captain within.

A5. Crumbling Stacks (EL 8)

The center of this vast oval chamber is dominated by a number of tall stone bookcases coated in dust and cobwebs. Some of these shelves lean ominously to one side, their age clearly showing. Scattered about the floor of the chamber are thousands of crumbling tomes, most holding little more than scraps and dust, their knowledge forever lost.

This library was once one of many in Celwynvian. Now it is little more than dusty tomb, holding little of value. The drow have been meticulously combing through the remains of this library, hoping to find any scrap of information that might help in their research.

The bookcases in this chamber are unstable and can be pushed over with a DC 10 Strength check. They are 15 feet tall—anyone struck by a falling bookcase takes 2d6 points of damage, with a DC 15 Reflex save negating the damage. If a bookcase falls into another bookcase, it makes a Strength check to knock it over as well, with a +5 bonus to the roll. This could create a chain reaction that causes half the bookcases to fall all at once. A toppling bookcase creates a 20-foot-radius cloud of dust that obscures vision, giving everyone inside concealment (20% miss chance). Anyone inside the cloud must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or begin hacking and coughing for 1 round, unable to take any action other than a move action. The dust cloud persists for 1d4 rounds.

Creatures: A small group of drow is stationed in this chamber to protect it from intruders and continue the search for intact tomes. If a battle outside made a particularly large amount of noise, these drow are aware of intruders and move to hide between the stacks, waiting to ambush the characters when they enter.

DROW SKIRMISHERS (2)

CR 3

hp 11 each (see page 16)

TACTICS

During Combat The skirmishers open combat by firing their poisoned bolts. One of the skirmishers tries to remain near the captain in order to flank with her in melee combat. If the PCs move into the stacks, they try to push the bookshelves over on them.

Morale These drow fight to the death.

DROW CAPTAIN

CR 7

hp 38 (see page 18)

TACTICS

During Combat The drow captain casts her spells before engaging in close combat if possible.

Morale The drow captain fights to the death.

Treasure: Beyond the gear carried by the drow, a fair amount of information waits here for those with the time



to study the remains of crumbling books and scraps of loose parchment. On the east wall of the room are a number of ancient and crumbling desks of remarkably well-preserved wood. The one at the south end is still mostly intact, and the drow have been using it to store books and parchments that might be of interest to Nolgeniss. An inspection of these six tomes and assorted scraps reveals that all of the books here deal with one of two subjects: astronomy and the Great Beyond. Of particular note, one bookmark denotes a page dealing with the properties of the “realm of shadows” and how time can be “mutable in such a domain.” All of these tomes are written in Elven. In addition, a DC 25 Search check uncovers an ancient *scroll of clairvoyance* and a *blessed book*, both buried under an ancient pile of crumbling pages.

Development: Once the PCs secure the site, a small contingent of elven scouts comes in to hold the building within 3d6 minutes. If the PCs abandon the site before then, there’s a cumulative 1% chance per minute that more drow arrive to reclaim the building, forcing the PCs to repeat much of the work they’ve just done. Once the scouts are in place here, the drow do not retake the library.

Battle Points: Recovering the notes and returning them to the base camp earns the PCs 1 BP. Defeating the drow stationed here earns 2 BP.

PART FOUR: ALCHEMICAL RAID

After securing the library, the PCs’ orders are to return to the elven base camp for further assignment—of course, they’re free to wander the ruins on their own as well and plot their own course through the battle, but this may well result in them missing several key opportunities to earn Battle Points. The fighting in the city itself reaches a steady pace, now that the surprise is over. A few fires burn in the ruins, and the acrid smell of smokes hangs in the air. Muted cries and the occasional sound of a sword fight or an explosion of magic can be heard quite frequently.

Once the PCs return to the elven camp, they find it quite active. Off to one side is a large tent where the elves are storing the dead until they can be properly dealt with. In the center of the camp, Eviana’s tent is a flurry of motion. Messengers stream to and from the tent, relaying reports and receiving orders. If the PCs don’t head to the command tent to report on their mission, a passing elven captain

directs them to Eviana to do so, indicating she has a new assignment for them as soon as they've recovered from the battle. When the PCs are ready for the next mission, read or paraphrase the following to them.

Eviana motions at a map of Celwynvian that has been carefully tagged with a number of small flags, some black, some green. "These green flags represent our current troop deployments around the city, while the black flags indicate known drow holdouts. One such holdout in particular has caught our attention, and taking it out might help us greatly in the long run. We believe these ruins," she says, indicating a spot on the northern edge of the city, "contain an alchemical workshop where the drow have been producing many of their more insidious weapons. We want you to storm this place and take it out. The sooner the better."

The Laboratory

The location of this site is given on the Celwynvian map that appears on page 50. Remember to check for random encounters as the PCs make their way to the site. As they approach, the laboratory is revealed to have once been a much larger structure, but today, only one crumbling dome remains. A hole in its top belches forth a noxious cloud of sickly green smoke, and pools of smoking liquid cover the area around the ruins.

B1. Dangerous Ruins (EL 7)

The dome appears to have only one visible entrance, but this approach is blocked by rubble and ponds of alchemical waste.

This building was once the home of a powerful wizard, but Earthfall ruined much of the building and it has been decaying ever since. When the drow moved into the city, they explored the ancient laboratory and cleared out most of the rubble. The drow now use it to create many of their alchemical items such as acid bolts and poison.

The area in front of the dome is full of ruined stone walls and debris. To make matters worse, the drow also use it as a dumping ground for all of their wastes. Moving through this area requires 15 feet of movement for every 5 feet traveled. In addition, the small pools of alchemical residue cause 1 point of acid damage for every 5 feet traveled. These pools also give off noxious fumes that cause creatures to become sickened while in the area unless they succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save. This save must be made once per minute while in the ruins.

Creature: The drow have stationed a drider here in the ruins to watch over the alchemical laboratory. The drider has grown used to the fumes and does not need to make saves against it—it avoids contact with the acidic puddles by clambering across the broken walls.

DRIDER

hp 45 (MM 89)

TACTICS

Before Combat As the PCs approach the ruins, the drider hides behind one of the stone walls and casts *mage armor*, *levitate*, and *invisibility*. Once prepared, it levitates above the wall, preparing to strike.

During Combat At the start of combat, the drider opens with *lightning bolt*, catching as many of the characters as possible. From there, it continues to use its spells to harass the characters until they find a way to fight back. Once anyone reaches the drider's location, it climbs back down the wall to attack in melee.

Morale The drider fights to the death.

B2. Laboratory (EL 9)

Beneath the dome, a roaring fire blazes in the center of a cluttered chamber. Above the fire, a trio of kettles bubble furiously, with a column of green smoke rising up to a hole in the ceiling. Beyond, a pair of tall glass tanks sits against the far wall, one green and the other oily black. Tools and laboratory equipment are scattered about the room on tables or hung from hooks on the wall. There is an overpowering stench in the air, mixed in with the smell of burning chemicals.

This is the laboratory of Ilverae, a drow alchemist from House Parastric hired by the Azrinaes to aid in supplying their troops here in Celwynvian.

This chamber contains a number of hazards that might come into play during combat. The kettles above the fire can be knocked over, creating a 10-foot line of burning acid that deals 2d6 points of fire damage and 2d6 points of acid damage. Anyone caught in this line can make a DC 15 Reflex save for half damage. In addition, the tanks on the far wall might be shattered (hardness 1, 5 hit points), in which case they cause a 10-foot burst of liquid to splash all the characters in the area. The green tank holds an acidic liquid that deals 4d6 points of acid damage to those in the area. A DC 20 Reflex save reduces this damage by half. The black tank holds a liquid that will eventually be made into drow poison. Anyone struck by this liquid must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or fall unconscious for 1d4 rounds. Finally, the room is littered with large flasks full of alchemical liquid. Ilverae and her servants know what is in these bottles, but the characters do not. Throwing a flask is a ranged touch attack that counts as a splash weapon. If the PCs pick up random flasks and begin throwing them, roll on the following chart to determine their effects. Ilverae and her slaves can choose which effects they want.

d10 Flask Effects

1–4 **Harmless:** The target takes 1 point of damage from the flask, but the liquid causes no damage.

- 5–6 **Alchemist Fire:** Deals 2d6 points of fire damage on a direct hit and 2 points of splash damage.
- 7–8 **Acid:** Deals 2d6 points of acid damage on a direct hit and 2 points of splash damage.
- 9 **Frost:** Deals 2d6 points of cold damage on a direct hit and 2 points of splash damage.
- 10 **Poison:** Works like drow sleep poison, but the DC is 17. No splash damage.

Creatures: Ilverae rarely leaves this chamber and views it as her domain. As such, she is none too happy when the characters interrupt her work. The alchemist is attended by a half-dozen troglodyte slaves that serve as bodyguards, messengers, assistants, or experimental stock as the situation warrants—Ilverae is accustomed to the foul stench of all six, in any event.

ILVERAE PARASTRIC

CR 8

Female drow bard 7

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +1

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14

(+4 armor, +4 Dex)

hp 48 (7d6+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +9, **Will** +4 (+6 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment

DR 1/—; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +6 (1d4/19–20)

Ranged acid +9 (1d6 acid) or alchemist's fire +9 (1d6 fire) or +1 hand crossbow +10 (1d4+1/19–20 plus 1d4 fire)

Special Attacks bardic music 7/day (countersong, fascinate, inspire competence, inspire courage +1, suggestion)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *detect magic*, *faerie fire*, *feather fall*, *levitate*

Spells Known (CL 7th)

3rd (1/day)—*confusion* (DC 17)

2nd (3/day)—*cat's grace*, *cure moderate wounds*, *mirror image*

1st (4/day)—*charm person*, *cure light wounds*, *grease* (DC 15), *hideous*

laughter (DC 15)

0 (3/day)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 14), *mage hand*, *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Ilverae notices the combat occurring outside with the drider, she casts *cat's grace* and *mirror image* on herself immediately and then drinks her *potion of bear's endurance*.

During Combat Ilverae uses inspire courage on the first round of fighting, then supports her troglodyte slaves with ranged attacks and magic. She avoids melee combat if she can help it, using *levitate* to escape if no other route presents itself.

Morale Ilverae is fanatical about her laboratory and defends it with her life.

Base Stats **Init** +2, **AC** 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; **hp** 34;

Fort +3,

Ref +7; **Ranged** acid +7 (1d6 acid) or alchemist's fire +7 (1d6 fire) or +1 hand crossbow +8 (1d4+1/19–20 plus 1d4 fire); **Dex** 15, **Con** 12; **Skills**

Concentration +11, Tumble +11

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 19, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5

Feats Brew Potion, Dark Adept, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy])

Skills Concentration +13, Craft (alchemy) +15, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Listen +11, Perform (sing) +14, Spellcraft +14, Tumble +13

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

SQ bardic knowledge +11

Combat Gear acid (4), alchemist's fire (6), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of bear's endurance*; **Other Gear** adamantine chain shirt, masterwork dagger, +1 hand crossbow with 20 fire bolts

TROGLODYTES (6)

CR 1

hp 13 each (MM 246)

TACTICS

During Combat The troglodytes each throw one flask before closing in for melee combat (+0 ranged touch).

Morale The troglodytes are terrified of failing their mistress and fight to the death.

Treasure: After the combat, the PCs can scrounge the laboratory for



Ilverae Parastric

alchemical items and additional flasks. They can find eight alchemical fire bolts, eight acid bolts, four drow poison bolts, six smokesticks, and six random flasks (rerolling any harmless results). The flasks can be identified with a DC 15 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (arcana) check.

Development: There is a large supply of reagents and alchemical ingredients in this room in addition to the liquid in the tanks and the kettles. Destroying these ingredients is vital to the war effort, but it must be done carefully.

Burning the chemicals destroys them, but also releases a vast cloud of horrible vapor that drifts about the city (treat as a permanent *stinking cloud*). From this point onward, there is a 20% chance that any random encounter also must deal with this roaming cloud.

The chemicals can be dumped down a grate on the east side of the room. Although this destroys the chemicals, it poisons the water table for miles around, forcing the elves to expend resources to create and purify water.

The best option is to neutralize or otherwise spoil the chemicals. This can be accomplished with 2 hours' worth of work and a DC 20 Craft (alchemy) or Knowledge (arcana) check. Each casting of *purify food and drink* grants a +4 bonus to the check and reduces the time required by 15 minutes (to a minimum of 15 minutes). Check for encounters once during this period.

Battle Points: Creating the horrible vapor cloud costs 2 BP. Poisoning the water table costs 1 BP. Neutralizing the chemical supply grants 2 BP.

PART FIVE: RESCUE MISSION

At some point during the adventure after the battle for Celwynvian begins, but before the PCs are ready to move against the Academy of Arts, an elven scout contacts the PCs with a breathless request from Eviana. This scout could contact the PCs anywhere in the city—if you choose to start this encounter at the elven base camp, he'll simply urge the PCs to come to Eviana's tent at once to speak with her.

This mission is simple—a group of elven scouts led by none other than Kaerishiel himself has gotten itself into a dreadful situation. Kaerishiel's animal companion Ashka managed to escape and made it back to camp to alert Eviana of the situation after a *Speak with Animals* spell shed light on the matter. Eviana learns that Kaerishiel and his remaining men are pinned down in a ruined tower that the drow are preparing to destroy. Someone must make haste to the site to defeat the drow before the evil elves can use a captured elven siege engine to destroy the tower and thereby kill the elves pinned inside.

The PCs are in the right place at the right time to handle this task, wherever they may be; the tower in question is only a few minutes away from their current location if they hurry. Ashka may accompany the PCs if one of them is a druid or ranger—otherwise the worried

animal companion waits for the return of his master at the elven base camp. If the PCs hesitate for any amount of time, the tower is destroyed by the drow and the elves lose a valuable commander.

This encounter is on a timer. From the moment the PCs arrive at the scene, they have 5 minutes to deal with the drow atop the tower before they have lined up the ballista to fire on the pinned elves. These bolts cause the ancient walls to crumble, eliminating their cover. If this happens, the wall crumbles in 3 rounds and the elven scouts are slain one per round until all of them are dead, Kaerishiel included.

C1. The Ruined Tower

This is the location of the group of elven scouts. They are pinned in this partially collapsed tower, and to this point have managed to fend off any drow that attempted to enter the area to deal with them in person.

ELVEN SCOUTS (4)

CR 5

hp 28 each (currently 10 each, and two of the scouts are unconscious from drow poison; see page 10)

KAERISHIEL

CR 8

hp 47 (currently 22 and unconscious from drow poison; see page 11)

Developments: After the drow and the dragon are dealt with, the surviving elves emerge from the ruins to greet their rescuers. After recovering from the drow poison in his system, Kaerishiel undergoes a change of heart due to the PCs' heroics and grudgingly comes to respect them. As the adventure proceeds, Kaerishiel's opinion of the characters continues to grow.

C2. Tower Base

Approaching the tower is not a simple task. The drow watch area C1 constantly, and every few minutes one of them patrols the edge of the uppermost floor, looking for anyone approaching. The characters can easily note this pattern with a small amount of patience. If the PCs approach from the southeast, they need not make Hide checks (assuming they wait for the drow to wander to the other side). Otherwise, they are spotted unless they succeed on an opposed Hide check.

There are two ways into the base of the tower occupied by the drow. The first is through an ancient stone doorway. This door is locked and requires a DC 25 Open Lock skill check to open. The other way is through a hole in the southern wall. This is difficult terrain and anyone clambering over it must make a Move Silently check at a –8 penalty. Once the PCs are inside the tower, read or paraphrase the following to them.



The bodies of a dozen drow lie heaped on the floor here, a testimony to the amount of damage the desperate elves in area C1 have managed to do so far. All of their gear has been sent back to the Academy for allocation to other drow.

C3. Tower Roof (EL 9)

This floor of the tower was once on the inside, but the walls have crumbled, making it the roof. Sitting in the center of the floor, mounted on a trio of iron wheels, is a large ballista, made from scorched iron and stained wood.

The drow have been using this location for some time now as a watch post, where they can easily fire down upon intruders. When Kaerishiel and his men approached, the drow opened fire, and, after a short battle, they pinned them into the ruins just to the north. They have been moving around the ballista, and adjusting its angle, to fire down at the trapped scouts.

The ballista has a range of 120 feet and does 3d8 points of damage on a hit, with a critical threat range of 19–20. Medium creatures can fire a ballista with a –4 penalty (–6 for Small creatures). A ballista is treated as a crossbow in terms of proficiency. The ballista can be moved, but it takes time. Turning the ballista 45% requires a DC 15 Strength check as a Standard action. The drow have a case with 20 ballista bolts inside, two of which have a hollow tip that acts as alchemist's fire when it strikes (in addition to normal damage). These bolts deal 4d6 points of fire damage on a hit, with 1d6 points of fire damage dealt to all adjacent creatures. The flames can be extinguished in the same way as alchemist's fire.

Creatures: The six drow here know that they have a commanding position and they fight to keep it. While their current attention is focused on the scouts, that quickly changes if they become alerted to the presence of intruders in the tower. Due to the remnants of the walls, the drow have cover from anyone firing on them from below, granting them a +4 cover bonus to their AC and a +2 cover bonus on Reflex saves. They can increase this to improved cover by hiding behind the walls, and total cover if they crouch down beneath them.

DROW SKIRMISHERS (4) CR 3
hp 11 each (see page 16)

DROW SOLDIERS (2) CR 5
hp 34 each (see page 16)

Battle Points: If the PCs rescue all of the elves, grant them 3 BP. If Kaerishiel is slain, reduce this award to 1 BP. If all of the elves perish, the failure instead costs the PCs 2 BP.

PART SIX: BATTLE AT THE ACADEMY

How long it takes the elves to penetrate to the heart of the ruins depends primarily on how much fun the players are having exploring the ruined city and fighting the drow, and also on your own sense of timing. Between random encounters, the three missions detailed in Parts Three through Five, and additional missions or encounters you add to the adventure, the PCs should spend at least a few days fighting amid the ruins before you proceed with this part of the adventure. At the very least, the PCs should achieve 8th level before they attempt to tackle the Academy of Arts.

The highest concentration of drow in Celwynvian is in the vicinity of the Academy of Arts, which the drow use as their base of operations. It is here that Nolveniss Azrinae coordinates the defense of the city, and here that the portal into the Armageddon Echo is hidden. If the PCs approach this building before you're ready to begin this part of the adventure, you have two choices. You can either simply proceed with these encounters as written (but without any of the elven aid), or you can have the PCs encounter a drow war party as they approach. This group of six drow soldiers is an EL 10 encounter, and it should be enough to turn back the PCs for now.

Once the fight in the city has been going on for a few days, and the number of drow are significantly thinned, this building becomes open to them (as noted under the Battle at the Academy). At this point, Eviana makes the decision to mount the final offensive against the drow in an attempt to claim the Academy and break the back of the dark elf presence in Celwynvian. She calls her remaining commanders, including the heroes, to her tent to discuss the situation.

As she does this, consult the total BP the PCs have accumulated so far. If they have at least 11 BP, things are going well for the elves. If they've accumulated less than 11 BP, things are going quite a bit more roughly—even Eviana herself is wounded, her arm in a sling. The drow have even mounted a few attacks on the base camp aided by several babau demons, and the situation is starting to look grim for the elves—the push to strike at the Academy is thus more of a move of desperation than anything else. This adventure assumes that the PCs have come close to 11 BP, but haven't quite reached that point yet—if the PCs are doing well, adjust the following text to make things seem more positive.

When the PCs enter Eviana's tent, she is glad to see them and is particularly elated if the scouts were successfully rescued, mentioning, "we need as many able-bodied combatants as we can get right now." If pressed, she goes on to state that the efforts have been successful, but that they have come at a terrible cost. Read or paraphrase the following to them.

"The battle has been brutal," Eviana says with a clenched jaw, "but I feel that we still have a chance at victory. With the aid of these heroes

here, our forces have managed to clear a path to the Academy of Arts. We won't be able to hold this route for long, though. The time for our decisive strike has come. I would like you to participate in the attack. We have limited forces to commit here, with our kin spread so far around the city or holding the route to the Academy, so you'll be one of three small teams moving against the building. It is my hope that we can capture or kill the drow leadership, secure access to the Armageddon Echo portal, and finally bring this war to a close. I can understand if you feel this is beyond you, and I would find another group if one was available, but this is just not an option. I need you. Will you take on this last mission?"

All of the bloodshed and life lost has led up to this point, to give the elves a chance to strike directly at the leadership of the drow in Celwynvian. The assault is scheduled to take place at dawn the next morning, giving the PCs time to rest and prepare for the battle and hopefully catching the drow at the time of day when they are most vulnerable. Eviana has little information about the interior of the Academy of Arts to share with the PCs, but she does know a bit about the exterior. She explains that there appear to be three entrances into the building—the main doors in the front and two holes in the exterior, one to the west and one to the north. Both of the holes look like the result of wear upon the ancient structure. She also knows that the drow and their servants fiercely guard all three entrances. The front door is watched over by a host of drow and is by far the most secure. The hole to the west is also well guarded by a few drow and a number of dretches. The hole to the north looks the easiest to breach, since it is close to the trees and guarded over by a few drow and a number of troglodyte slaves. After conveying this information, Eviana asks the three groups which entry each would like to attempt.

Apart from the PCs' group, the other two groups both consist of four elven scouts, each led by one commander. One group is led by Kaerishiel, while the other is led by Shalelu. If Kaerishiel has warmed to the party, he wordlessly cedes the first choice to them and then makes his choice from the remaining two. Shalelu chooses last, cheerfully accepting the route that the PCs and Kaerishiel did not select.

Academy of Arts Features

The journey to the academy is a quiet one. There seem to be very few drow on the streets and they are easily avoided. As the large building draws in sight, both Shalelu and Kaerishiel exchange well wishes with the PCs and each other before taking their small groups off to prepare for the assault. As they disappear into the brush, the first rays of light illuminate the ancient structure. The time for the strike is close at hand.

The Academy itself is one of the more well-preserved structures in Celwynvian, but still the passage of

time has left its mark in places. The building itself is made of stone and consists of three domed structures surrounding a low, one-story stone bunker. The domes are of white marble and thick with ivy and other creeping vines. All doors are made of stone and cannot be locked unless the text says otherwise. Ceiling height in the central bunker is 10 feet, while that inside the domes varies (and is indicated in the appropriate areas). None of the rooms are illuminated unless otherwise indicated. Unknown to the PCs or elves, the attack has hurt the drow far more than they let on—the leaders of the effort have already retreated into the Armageddon Echo by the time the assault on the Academy of Arts begins, but they've left behind enough defenders to give the PCs and the others a strong run for their money nonetheless.

D1. Entry Guards (EL 7–9)

More than a score of drow once fiercely guarded the exterior of the academy, but now, due to their losses and retreat, few remain. The encounter faced by the PCs depends heavily upon which entry point they have selected. As with the initial assault on Celwynvian, the elves hope to mount this assault on the Academy to begin precisely at dawn, and again, if the PCs jump the gun, they lose one BP for giving the drow an advance warning.

Unfortunately for Shalelu and Kaerishiel, no matter which entrance they pick, they are doomed to be captured before making it all the way into the building. The PCs can perhaps encounter and rescue them at a later point, but if they investigate either of the two entrances after they finish off the drow at their own choice, they find several dead drow and elven scouts. In this way, the success or failure to claim control of the Academy rests squarely on the PCs' shoulders.

Creatures: Three groups of defenders guard the entry points into the academy. Each group is detailed below—the PCs need only contend with the defenders at their chosen entry, since the defenders at the other two are all either going to be killed by the elves or are gone to the Armageddon Echo by the time the PCs get to these locations, unless the PCs are so quick to reach the other locations as to arrive within a few rounds of the initial assault. In this case, you can give the PCs the opportunity to save Shalelu and Kaerishiel before they're captured.

D1a. (EL 9): The group at the main entry to the south consists of a drow arcanist and four drow skirmishers. The skirmishers' primary job is to prevent the PCs from reaching the arcanist who uses his spells to devastate intruders. If the PCs take on and defeat this group, award them 2 BP.

DROW ARCANIST
hp 27 (see page 17)

CR 7

DROW SKIRMISHERS (4)
hp 11 each (see page 16)

CR 3

D1b. (EL 8): The west entrance is through a hole in the roof, leading to area D5. This area is guarded of a pair of drow soldiers and three dretches standing watch on the ground just under the holed roof above—the soldiers levitate up to the roof to defend the entrance if necessary. If the PCs take on and defeat this group, award them 1 BP.

DROW SOLDIERS (2)
hp 34 (see page 16)

CR 5

DRETCH (3)
hp 13 (MM 42)

CR 2

D1c. (EL 7): The north entrance is also through a hole in the wall, this one leading into area D6. This guard group consists of two drow skirmishers and four troglodytes. The skirmishers use the troglodytes as fodder to slow down approaching intruders while they rely on their ranged weapons. The PCs earn no BP if they defeat this group.

DROW SKIRMISHERS (2)
hp 11 (see page 16)

CR 3

TROGLODYTES (4)
hp 13 (MM 246)

CR 1

D2. Entry Hall (EL 8)

What once might have been a fabulously decorated entry hall is now a barren, empty chamber. Four white marble pillars support the roof, while two stone benches sit on either side of the room. The stone doors to the south have fallen away from the building's facade, but those to the north remain intact.

Creature: The drow have built a terrible guardian to watch over the entry hall. Made from the bodies of slain elves, this hideous flesh golem is under orders to attack anyone who does not give the correct password ("dshanvian," Undercommon for "terrible beauty"). The creature is 9 feet tall and nearly 6 feet wide, and has four arms stitched to its broad, fleshy body. Dozens of arrows are threaded through loose folds of flesh and fat, piercing its body in numerous locations. The golem wields a pair of magic composite longbows in two of its arms, keeping its other two arms free to fire arrows or smash foes as necessary.

ELVEN FLESH GOLEM
N Large construct

CR 8

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Listen** +0, **Spot** +0

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 13, flat-footed 19

(+4 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 79 (9d10+30)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +3

DR 5/adamantine; Immune construct traits, golem immunities

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +10 (2d8+5)

Ranged 2 +1 composite longbows +10/+10/+5/+5 (1d8+6/x3)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

TACTICS**During Combat** The elven flesh golem fires its bows at intruders whenever possible, otherwise it uses its slam attacks.**Morale** The elven flesh golem fights until destroyed.**STATISTICS**

Str 20, Dex 19, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1

Base Atk +6; Grp +15

Feats —

Skills —

SQ berserk, flurry of arrows

Gear +1 composite longbow (+5 Str) (2) with 40 arrows

SPECIAL ABILITIES**Flurry of Arrows (Ex)** The elven flesh golem wields two longbows at once, and can make attacks with each in the same round at no penalty to its attack roll. Plucking arrows out of its body to fire at foes is a free action for the golem.**D3. Short Hall**

A tiled mosaic in the center of the floor of this chamber is obscured by a pool of fresh blood, with a gory trail heading off toward the east. This heavy scent of copper hangs in the air.

After Shalelu's and Kaerishiel's groups were defeated at the other two entrances, the surviving drow quickly dragged their unconscious bodies through this room and into the eastern dome, where they are preparing to escape into the Armageddon Echo with their prisoners.

D4. Slave Pen (EL 5)

Several elven corpses are strung up along the walls of this chamber, pools of blood congealing beneath their feet. It appears that their throats have been cut. Along the north wall, an ancient elven statue stands, but its skin has been painted black and its face carved into a cruel scowl.

This is where the drow kept prisoners. When it became apparent that they could not hold the city, Nolveniss and a group of his most trusted followers fled through the gate in area A9. Before leaving, the cruel drow master had all of the prisoners here slain.

Creatures: Nolveniss's cruelty did not end with murder. Before he fled into the Armageddon Echo, he cast *animate dead* on these corpses and ordered them to attack any intruders that entered the room. The zombies have been waiting on the walls ever since. When the PCs enter the room, the zombies slip free from their chains and attack.

ELVEN ZOMBIES (8)**CR 1/2**

hp 16 each (use human commoner zombies, MM 266)

D5. Meditation Hall (EL 7)

This long chamber has raised seating on opposite sides of a long pool of water. The pool has a brightly colored rim, and the water within ripples and splashes as waves travel from one end to the other in an endless current. The seats on either side are populated by dozens of decaying, dripping elven corpses, most of which seem to have been crushed and twisted by some great force. A flight of stairs ascends to the remnants of what may have been a wooden balcony that overlooked the room, but now all that remains of this long-crumbled upper floor are a few stone supports.

Creature: When the elves sought relaxation, they came to this chamber to meditate. The waters in the pool helped to soothe spirits. The drow have other, more violent methods of relaxing, but they found a use for this chamber nevertheless—they've repurposed it into an arena, and the water elementals bound in the pool are used to crush and destroy anyone placed within. The dead bodies stacked on the seats represent several elves the drow have already slain in this manner.

The water elementals have learned to avoid drow, but they lash out immediately at anything else that comes within 5 feet of the pool's edge.

LARGE WATER ELEMENTALS (2)**CR 5**

hp 68 each (MM 100)

D6. Summoner's Laboratory (EL 9)

The horrid scent of decay fills the air of this circular chamber. Ancient tables covered in arcane implements stand on either side in front of a faintly glowing circle scribed into the floor. The contents of the circle are a mystery, as thick black smoke fills the interior from floor to ceiling.

When the academy was at its height, this chamber was used to summon all sorts of creatures from across the planes so that the elves might expand their knowledge. The drow have been using it to summon demons to assault the elves and defend the city.

Creature: Before abandoning the academy, Nolveniss bound a vrook into this chamber. Since he did not have

the time to properly negotiate with the demon, he made a simple deal. The demon would be free to leave the protective circle and cause havoc in the surrounding city as soon as anyone other than the drow or their servants entered the room. The vrock has been waiting here ever since, eager to cause destruction and death.

VROCK

hp 115 (MM 48)

CR 9

Treasure: When he left for the Armageddon Echo, Nolveniss took with him most of the research and materials he'd stored in this chamber. Underneath one of the tables, however, is a scrap of parchment, bearing various charts and calculations written in Undercommon. These formulas pertain to the stars in the sky and how they might have looked 10,000 years ago.

One particular note near the bottom reads: "This time is the key. We must study Earthfall more closely, no matter the cost."

A few other trinkets were left behind as well.

A pouch sitting on the table contains 5,000 gp worth of diamond dust, useful in a number of spells and rituals. In addition, there are 1,000 gp worth of onyx gemstones here as well, for

animating undead, and five pearls worth 100 gp each, for identifying magic items.

D7. Vile Altar (EL 7)

Set into the north wall of this antechamber is a black pillar of stone, carved with hundreds of small, wicked symbols. A flicker of purple light pulses from these runes, traveling up and down the pillar's length. In front of the pillar is a prayer rug made of blood-soaked paper.

What was once a small study has been converted into an altar dedicated to Abraxas. The altar can be identified as such with a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check or a DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check.

Trap: The double doors leading into area D8 are trapped and cannot be opened safely without first kneeling on the mat and offering a prayer to Abraxas. Those who fail to do this before opening the door set off the trap, causing a blast of purple flame to fill the chamber 1 round later.

DELAYED BLAST FIREBALL TRAP

CR 7

Type magical; Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

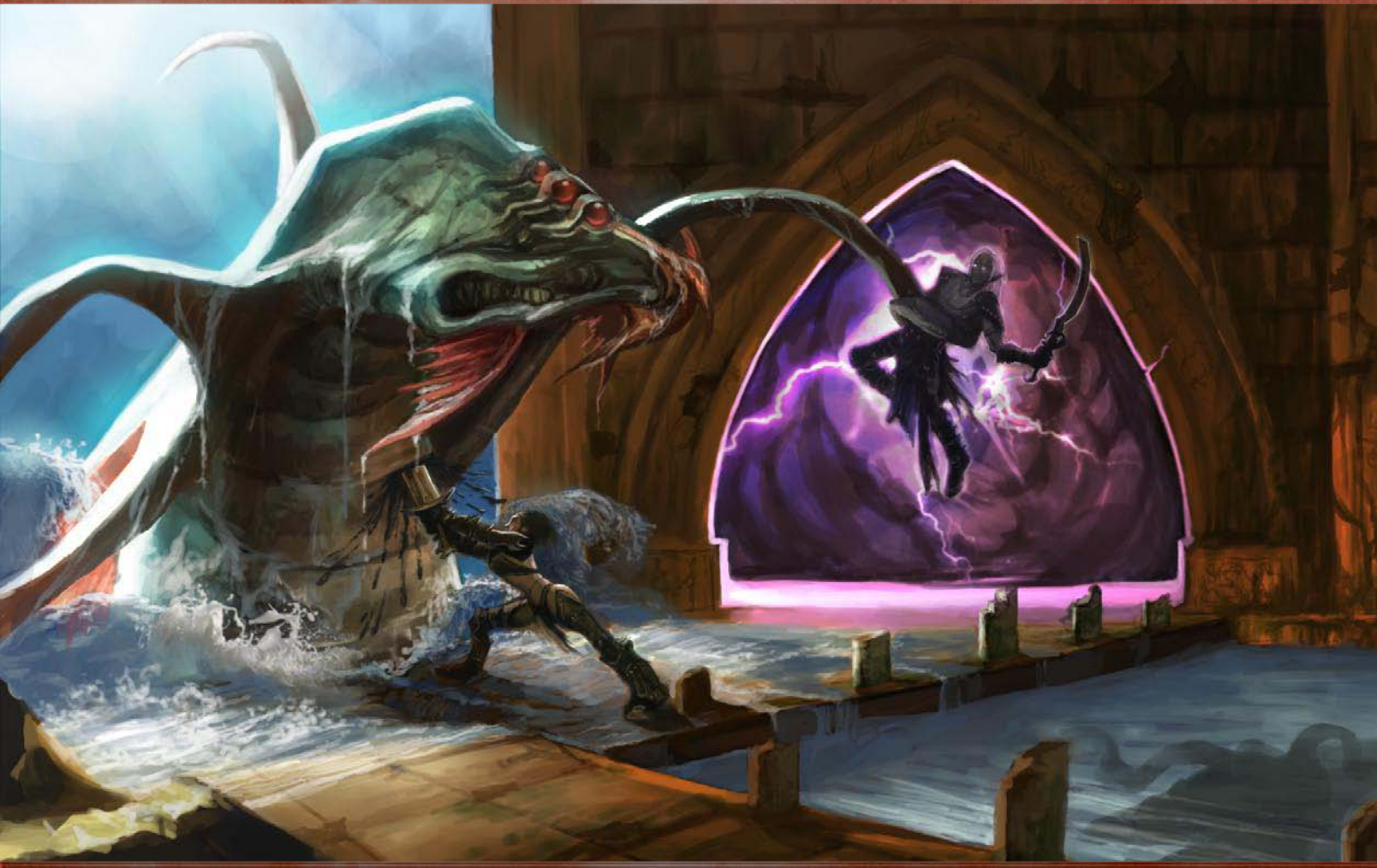
Effect spell effect (*delayed blast fireball*, 1 round after the trap is triggered, 14d6 fire damage, DC 20 Reflex save for half)

D8. Black Gate (EL 7)

Unlike the other rooms of this place, this large chamber has been restored to its former beauty. Polished white marble gleams from the walls, carved in the likeness of dancing and frolicking elves. Along one wall is a gigantic sparkling pool of crystal clear water, behind which stands a gateway made of the purest alabaster, carefully shaped to look like a ring of leaves. In the center of the pool, a comely elven maiden reclines on a tremendous floating leaf.

All of this is an illusion created using *mirage arcana*. The actual chamber is as decrepit as the rest—the walls filthy and worn, the pool fetid, and the archway cracked and broken. Smears of blood (traces of the elven prisoners led through here) lead across the floor to the southern doors. The pool itself seems to be 50 feet deep and is calm water, requiring only a DC 10 Swim check to navigate. In fact, the "floor" of the pool is an illusory wall placed by the pool's occupant; this pool actually drops away into an





underground river that flows from the Calphiak Mountains northward into the sea after several dozen miles.

The gate behind the pool was once an elf gate, but it has not functioned properly for years. The drow have corrupted the portal so that now it leads to the drow city of Zirnakaynin, but only intermittently and only with the portal key that Nolgeniss carries. Due to the timing of the elven assault, the drow had to flee into the shadow version of Celwynvian rather than to their home in the Shadowlands.

Creature: This chamber is the home to an aboleth named Ixilano who allied with the drow some time ago. Ixilano was born well after Earthfall, but it has nevertheless been of great use to Nolgeniss's research. Although thoroughly evil, Ixilano feels no strong loyalty to the drow and is more than happy to converse with the characters through its *veil* illusion for a time before it grows bored and attempts to enslave them.

The illusory elf claims to be an imprisoned spirit from ancient times bound here to serve the drow. The aboleth is curious about the adventurers and the forces arrayed against the drow, so it asks as many questions about the outside world as possible. If the PCs ask about what the drow are up to, Ixilano informs them that the drow have traveled to a hidden demiplane between the Material Plane and

the Shadow Plane to escape the elves, using another portal in the next room. If asked about the elf gate in this room, the aboleth informs them that it has been repurposed, but without Nolgeniss's portal key, the portal is useless.

After a bit of pleasant conversation, Ixilano's illusion asks the PCs to help free her from her bondage. She explains that the only way to do that is to lift her leaf out of the pool, requiring the PCs to swim in to assist her. Once they are in the stagnant water, the aboleth attacks.

IXILANO

Aboleth (MM 8)

hp 76

TACTICS

During Combat Ixilano attempts to enslave the PCs before resorting to attacks with its tentacles.

Morale Ixilano flees through the hidden underwater tunnel at the bottom of the pool if dropped to below 20 hit points.

CR 7

D9. Gate to Armageddon (EL 9)

Opposite the doors of this massive room stands a towering archway made of shimmering black stone. The archway's

keystone seems strangely out of place—unlike the surrounding black stone, the keystone is a pale gray and bears fragments of a spiky set of Thassilonian runes. Inside the archway is a world of shadows in which a strangely beautiful elven city can be seen. Smears of blood along the floor seem to lead up to and through the archway into the flickering world beyond.

This chamber contains the gateway to the shadow version of Celwynnian before Earthfall—a demiplane called the Armageddon Echo. This is where Nolveniss has been conducting research into that cataclysmic event so as to learn how to refine the ancient aboleth glyphs his mistress Allevrah hopes to use to destroy Kyonin. The drow wizard and his most trusted lieutenants have fled through the gate to avoid the fall of the academy and give them time to plan on how best to retake the city from the elves—or at the worst, await the elf gate’s recharge in area D8 so they can flee back to Zirnakaynin.

Anyone stepping through the archway is instantly transported into the Armageddon Echo. The portal itself is effectively a minor artifact, and as such its destruction is impossible without potent magic like *mage’s disjunction*. The keystone is in fact the fragment of the Cyphergate Depora Azrinae sent to Allevrah several months ago—this fragment was the final piece in the puzzle that allowed Allevrah and Nolveniss to complete the creation of the Armageddon Echo.

Creature: Nolveniss left one of his most trusted servants to cover his escape into the Armageddon Echo—a barbaric drow pain taster named Kardrogas. The heavily scarred drow stands at the base of the stairs that lead up to the portal, and as he notices the PCs, a dark smile dances across his lips. “Master Nolveniss bade me give you his apologies,” he says in almost a whisper, “that he will not be present to see you die.” Upon uttering this mocking message, Kardrogas immediately attacks.

KARDROGAS

CR 9

Male drow barbarian 8

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +3; Senses darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 14

(+6 armor, +3 Dex, –2 rage)

hp 89 (8d12+32)

Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +7 (+9 versus spells and spell-like abilities); +2 versus enchantment spells and effects

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2;

DR 1/—; Immune sleep; SR 19

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee +1 *shocking greatsword* +14/+9 (2d6+6 plus 1d6

electricity/19–20)

Ranged mwk hand crossbow +12 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks rage 3/day

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

TACTICS

During Combat Kardrogas rages in the first round of combat and charges the nearest character, using Power Attack as needed to increase his damage. He focuses solely on one character, trying to knock him or her out of the fight before moving on to another opponent.

Morale While raging, Kardrogas fights to the death.

Base Statistics AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 16; hp 73; Will

+5; Melee +1 *shocking greatsword* +12/+7 (2d6+3 plus 1d6

electricity/19–20); Str 14, Con 14; Grp +10; Climb +8, Jump +8

STATISTICS

Str 18, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 12

Base Atk +8; Grp +12

Feats Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword)

Skills Climb +10, Intimidate +12, Jump +10, Listen +14, Spot +8

Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

SQ fast movement, illiteracy

Combat Gear drow poison bolt (2), *potion of bear’s endurance*;

Other Gear +1 *shocking greatsword*, +2 *mithral shirt*, mwk hand crossbow with 10 bolts

Developments: After the combat is over, the image of the shadowy elven city in the portal begins flickering with increasing intensity, even going so far as to vanish for a few seconds at a time. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to confirm the fact that the portal is preparing to close—its recent activation is apparently only a temporary thing. The PCs have only a few minutes before it closes entirely. If they hope to find the leader of the drow and rescue the elves who were taken to the other side, they must go through the portal immediately. Failure to do so allows the drow to regroup and prepare for their return, leading a host of new battles in the city streets, with Nolveniss bringing his full power to bear against the elves.

When the characters cross through to the shadow version of Celwynnian, proceed with part seven of this adventure.

PART SEVEN: IN ARMAGEDDON’S SHADOW

When Allevrah Azrinae first came to Celwynnian, she made great strides in her research in terms of how to manipulate the stars in the sky. Yet for all of her progress, the methods by which to actually *aim* a falling star to a specific point eluded her. She arranged for one of her aboleth contacts, the creature Ixilano, to relocate from the deep and hidden Land of Black Blood (see *Pathfinder* #18) to aid them in interpreting the ancient glyph magic. Yet their goal was still out of their reach—what they needed was some way to

observe, first-hand, the actual event of Earthfall, in order to study the interactions of magic upon the meteors and falling stars that struck Golarion 10,000 years ago.

Of course, traveling to the past to observe the events first hand was not only impossible, but would have been suicidal as well. It was Nolgeniss who hit upon the answer—a scholar of ancient Thassilon long before Allevrah met him, for decades, Nolgeniss had theorized that Riddleport's Cyphergate was an immense window that allowed the runelords to look back or forward in time. With a section of the Cyphergate to serve as a primer, he theorized that he would be able to repurpose one of Celwynvian's non-functioning elf gates. Instead of traveling to the past, Nolgeniss believed that he could recreate an "echo" of that era by drawing upon raw shadow magic to create a demiplane. Impressed with the idea, Allevrah stayed at his side long enough to aid in crafting the potent portal before she returned to the Land of Black Blood herself to prepare things there for the final stage of her plan, leaving Nolgeniss to utilize the Armageddon Echo to observe the events of Earthfall with relative safety. Even better, Nolgeniss shortly discovered that after a brief period of time, the echo would repeat itself again and again, allowing him to view the events over and over and thus perfect his knowledge. The gift of being able to watch the ancient elves die as their city was ruined by a storm of meteors was an unexpected but welcome bonus.

When the elves attacked Celwynvian a few days ago, Nolgeniss was caught off guard. He had not expected such a large force to move against him. His first inclination was to retreat, since most of his research was completed, but the portal to Zirnakaynin needed several more days to recharge before it could be used again. He hoped to hold off the invaders until the elf gate could be activated, but unfortunately, this was not to be, and he was left with only one option—to flee into the Armageddon Echo to wait for the elf gate to recharge.

When the PCs step through the gate into the shadow version of Celwynvian, they find a city on the edge of disaster. A large blot hangs in the sky, similar to the one that floated above Riddleport but hundreds of times larger and swirling like a vortex. The immense blot grows by the hour, and the town is mostly deserted. Although a number of drow are here, hiding among the ruins, Nolgeniss's magic also created a number of shadowy "echoes" of elves and other individuals who were present just before Earthfall. Some of these stubborn few were convinced that the sages and diviners were wrong and that the impending cataclysm was nothing more than smoke and mirrors, while others wanted to watch the world end and were confident that they could use magic to escape to safety. These NPCs can be interacted with on a limited basis, giving the PCs a chance to explore the city and learn about its final days.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Although this adventure assumes the PCs leap bravely through the portal into the Armageddon Echo before it closes, there's nothing forcing the PCs to do so. If they hesitate too long, feel free to have the portal close. (What you *don't* want to do is have the portal close when some PCs are in the Armageddon Echo and some are not.)

But try your best to encourage the PCs to go through the portal the first time, using the results of divination spells if necessary to egg them on. You can even have them all make Spot checks and then tell the character who rolls the highest that he caught a glimpse of Shalelu and Kaerishiel beyond the portal, chained prisoners of the drow.

If the portal closes before the PCs enter, they'll have a tough time getting into the Armageddon Echo without the portal key Nolgeniss carries. You can allow a DC 25 Use Magic Device check to activate the portal blindly, reopening it for a few more rounds. If none of the PCs can make this check, you can certainly have one of the elves step in to make the check for them—as long as they get the portal open again before too many days pass, they'll be able to continue the adventure as scheduled.

If the PCs decide to wait for Nolgeniss to emerge, they'll have a wait of several weeks before the portal opens again. And emerge Nolgeniss does, with a new army of drow, blast shadows, conjured demons, undead, the green dragon Razorhorn, and undead vampiric versions of both Shalelu and Kaerishiel. If Nolgeniss encounters resistance, there could be a terrific battle here against his army and whatever forces the PCs have arranged to lie in wait for him; if the PCs drive him back, they can pursue him into the Armageddon Echo.

Although they do not know it at first, the characters have a limited amount of time to find Nolgeniss and flee the Armageddon Echo. When the PCs arrive, it is 3 days before Earthfall. Although the largest chunk of the meteor impacts an area far to the south that will one day be the Inner Sea, a sizable storm of devastating fragments is due to strike much of Thassilon and the surrounding regions, including Celwynvian. In his lair in an ancient observatory, Nolgeniss and his followers are protected by the proximity of his portal key (the key simply shunts them back to the Material Plane when the apocalypse comes), but if the PCs can't find the drow wizard soon, they might become the latest victims of an apocalypse that happened 10,000 years ago.

Features of the Armageddon Echo

Things function slightly differently in the shadow version of Celwynvian's past. While the PCs are exploring this demiplane, keep the following points in mind.



Nothing the PCs do in the Armageddon Echo has any affect on Golarion's history or the city of Celwynvian. This plane is just a recreation of the past, not an actual portal to the past. In addition, the demiplane is finite in size and doesn't exist beyond the boundaries of the city itself—any attempt to enter the surrounding Mierani Forest simply results in the traveler exiting the forest and entering Celwynvian from the precise path by which he attempted to leave.

Everything in the shadow plane is muted. Sounds are dull, colors are drab, and tastes are bland. Although everything is tangible, much of the substance is drained. As a result, all Listen, Search, and Spot checks suffer a -4 penalty. Light sources remain dim at all times, as if in deep twilight—shadowy illumination is the rule in the Armageddon Echo, and as such the drow need not worry as much about their light blindness.

The primary inhabitants of the Armageddon Echo are echo creatures—shades of real individuals who dwelt in Celwynvian at the time of its fall, yet for all their apparent physicality are in fact insubstantial and harmless. They aren't undead—they're more like complex illusions that react as if they were living creatures. In most cases, they

ignore the PCs entirely. Even if the PCs get into a fight in the center of the street, nearby echo creatures pay no heed to the events. If spoken to or attacked, they respond normally, yet once physical contact is made between an echo creature and anything real, the echo creature vanishes immediately, only to reform with no memory of the event $2d6$ minutes later. Since the drow have yet to be created from their viewpoint, the echo creatures don't know what to think of the dark elves they've spotted moving through their city—most think they're ghosts or figments of the imagination, while a few suspect that they are demons or angels come to torment and tempt those who chose to stay behind.

Spells with the shadow descriptor (such as *shades*, *shadow conjuration*, and *shadow evocation*) are 40% more real in the shadow plane (to a maximum of 100%). In addition, the save DCs of such spells increase by +2. Conversely, spells with the light descriptor have their durations reduced by half, and they cannot be used to dispel darkness spells.

Most of the buildings in Celwynvian are shuttered, their possessions taken by their owners during the flight that happened just a few days prior to the PCs' arrival.

The doors are not locked, allowing the characters to pick one of countless homes in which to rest in relative peace.

Treasure gathered from the demiplane is not real and fades into nothingness once brought into the Material Plane. Treasure and equipment garnered from the drow and their servants is real and can be brought back to the Material Plane normally—this includes all treasure indicated in the text of the adventure.

Exploring the Past

When the PCs first arrive in Celwynvian, they do not find it exactly as it appeared through the gateway in the Academy of Arts. There is a slight time distortion, and the events viewed through the gate occurred anywhere from 10 minutes to several hours ago. As such, Nolveniss and the elven captives are nowhere to be found. When the PCs arrive, read or paraphrase the following to them.

Stepping through the portal is a dizzying experience, and it takes a few moments for the world to right itself. After a time, the surrounding elven city becomes clear, its tall, graceful spires rising up among manicured boughs of a well tended forest. Some of these buildings seem familiar, resembling those of ruined Celwynvian, but strangely restored and made whole. Although this glimpse through time is convincing, something is off. Colors seem dim, sounds are muted, and the shadows appear strangely long and dark. Yet most disconcerting of all is the sky above—for it is nothing more than a vortex of gray clouds, spiraling around a dark blot in the sky.

The first echo creature to encounter the PCs approaches them as soon as they appear in the Armageddon Echo. This imposing figure is an elf clad in resplendent robes of muted green and silver. He does not appear to notice the PCs as he is busy staring up into the sky at the vortex. This elf is **Ilamin Silverwind** (CN male elf wizard 6), a staunch traditionalist who refused to abandon the city when the ruling caste decided to leave Golarion due to the impending disaster. Ilamin is more than happy to converse with the characters about the shadow in the sky, something he believes to be nothing more than a strange celestial event that will surely pass in a few days or years. Ilamin informs the PCs that they should visit the library if they wish to know more about the event, as Eloquent the Librarian is an excellent source of information.

Shadow Celwynvian

There are a number of interesting places to explore in the shadow Celwynvian, many of which still stand in the Celwynvian of the present. These locations are described briefly below.

E. Gateway to Celwynvian: This is where the PCs arrive when they step through the Echo Portal in area **Dg**. The portal deposits them atop a short stone stairway that may

have once led upward to a gate tower or other structure, but now simply comes to an abrupt end at the city's edge. The stairs lead downward 10 feet to the east and into the city itself. Depending on the PCs' state of health and resources, you may wish to greet them with a group of blast shadows or other dangerous denizens as they emerge onto the stairs here, postponing their meeting with Ilamin Silverwind until after this fight.

The air at the top of the stairs continues to whirl and shimmer, but until the portal key that Nolveniss carries is brought near, the portal does not reopen back to the Material Plane (unless a character activates the portal blindly with a DC 25 Use Magic Device check).

F. The Library of Reenai: This building is similar to the one in the Celwynvian of the present (area **A**), save that it is well kept and orderly. All of the globes in the hall of memory are functional, and master librarian **Eloquent** (CG male elf expert 14), who refused to leave his precious library in the face of the coming apocalypse, still tends to them. Eloquent believes that the end is coming, but being extremely set in his ways, he feels no need to abandon the library—if it is to be destroyed, so must he. Eloquent knows that the elven seers have predicted that Earthfall will occur soon. He also shares the seers' belief that Earthfall was brought down upon the world as punishment for humanity's (by which he means Azlant's) hubris before the gods. If the PCs want proof, he suggests that they speak with Ekardani (see area **H**) or Talgoren (see area **O**), the only two humans left in the city.

The PCs might think to check some of the books in the library to determine what the drow were researching. A DC 25 Search check takes 1 hour and uncovers the exact tomes, restored to their original condition. While the tomes discuss the mutability of the shadow realm in detail, the books adjacent to them are of interest as well. They concern the heavens and what is said to lie above, including stars, planets, and meteors. One of these tomes even describes powerful magic that might be used to manipulate these objects. If the PCs find these books, Eloquent stops by to mention that these books have been quite popular as of late, but he does not remember who has been looking through them.

G. Verithes Park: This beautiful garden is carefully nurtured and quite exotic, full of plants not seen in the modern era. There are a few elves here all the time, either tending to the garden or placing small floating candles into the crystal clear pool, holding a silent vigil in hopes of staving off the approaching doom.

H. Ekardani's Estate: This building is the home of **Ekardani** (NE female human wizard 7/fighter 4/elritch knight 3), a representative of Alaznist, the Runelord of Wrath. Although the runelord has gone into hiding, her agents continue her work, confident that their mistress's magic is sure to protect them from the coming darkness.

Celwynvian Past



Ekardani is a brash woman, prone to anger and profanity. She always carries her fiery ranseur and is quick to use it to threaten those who cross her path.

Ekardani is certainly an unusual guest of an elven city, but like Talgoren (see area O), her presence is one the elves tolerated in a diplomatic way to avoid overly troublesome interactions with nearby human empires like Thassilon and Azlant. If the PCs decide to pay her a visit, Ekardani is suspicious at first, accusing the PCs of being envoys of Karzoug sent to sow havoc before the coming apocalypse. If it becomes clear that this is not the case (likely requiring a DC 15 Diplomacy check), Ekardani agrees to speak with the PCs, but only briefly. She knows that the elves believe humanity is responsible for the darkness in the sky, a claim she rejects as preposterous. She says that the elves are fleeing in fear of a new age of humanity, and that an Age of Runelords is prophesized by the coming darkness in the sky—why else would the runelords have retreated from their empires to seclusion, if not to work a great magic to usher in such a new age? Although she believes she is safe, one of the falling stars destined to strike Celwynvian is fated to impact directly on her estate.

I. The Pavilion of Reason: This open-air pavilion is one of a few places used by a group of elves who call themselves

the Doomsayers, a morbid sect which embraces the coming catastrophe with group chants and prayers for the coming darkness. The somber, haunting sounds of their chanting can be heard at times throughout the Armageddon Echo, periodically filling the air with menace and melancholy.

J. The Academy of the Arts: If the PCs come here on their first day of exploring the city, they find this building occupied by a number of elven wizards, the last of those preparing to leave Celwynvian for Kyonin. They have waited behind in the hope of convincing some of the remaining elves to join them, but have had little success. The elves here are uninterested in non-elven PCs, but if there are any elf PCs, the wizards implore them to step through the elf gate that has opened a portal to Kyonin's capital city of Iadara. Although the gate appears to function, it does not for the PCs, and any that attempt to use it find it to be an unyielding surface, much to the surprise of the remaining elf wizards.

If the PCs speak with the wizards here for any real length of time, they'll eventually hear them mention the strange "foreign" elves who have been visiting as of late, asking all manner of questions about the coming danger. These foreign cousins have dark skin and claim to be from a distant land called Zirnakaynin. The wizards complain that these

strange elves have terrible manners, and conspiratorially whisper to elf PCs that the foreigners have not been invited to use the elf gate to flee to Iadara. They do ask the PCs if they have time to contact the foreign elves themselves—perhaps the PCs might have better luck convincing the elves to escape Celwynvian? The wizards can tell the PCs that the foreign elves seem to have set up a camp at the abandoned observatory (area Q) if they seem curious about them.

At the end of the second day, the remaining four wizards in the Academy of the Arts depart through the elf gate, leaving this building empty. An exploration of the structure reveals it to be similar to the current building, yet in much finer condition and completely empty of inhabitants.

K. Vista of Visions: The statues of elven heroes along this long avenue are in perfect condition, appearing as if carved only a few years ago. This street is sometimes used by the Doomsayers (see area I) to preach about the coming end.

L. The Crystal Conservatory: This building is a greenhouse, with dozens of tropical plants growing on its many-tiered interior. In the center of the building is a very young tree that appears to have been planted only a few months ago. Many of the plants here bear a strong resemblance to those found in the Crystal Conservatory of the present.

M. The Fluted Goblet: This inn is completely abandoned, the entire staff having fled to Kyonin some time ago. If the PCs desire a place with beds to rest, this inn is the only one in town, since the elves of Celwynvian generally meditated on reed mats or patches of soft grass. A fully stocked wine cellar lies below, and there is still some edible food in the kitchen.

N. Garden of Eternal Ease: This graveyard appears just as it does in the future, although here it is well tended and maintained. The departing elves laid a large number of floral wreaths on many of the graves, knowing that this might be the last time they visit the departed here. Eloquan visits this garden once per day to lay a flower on his wife's grave.

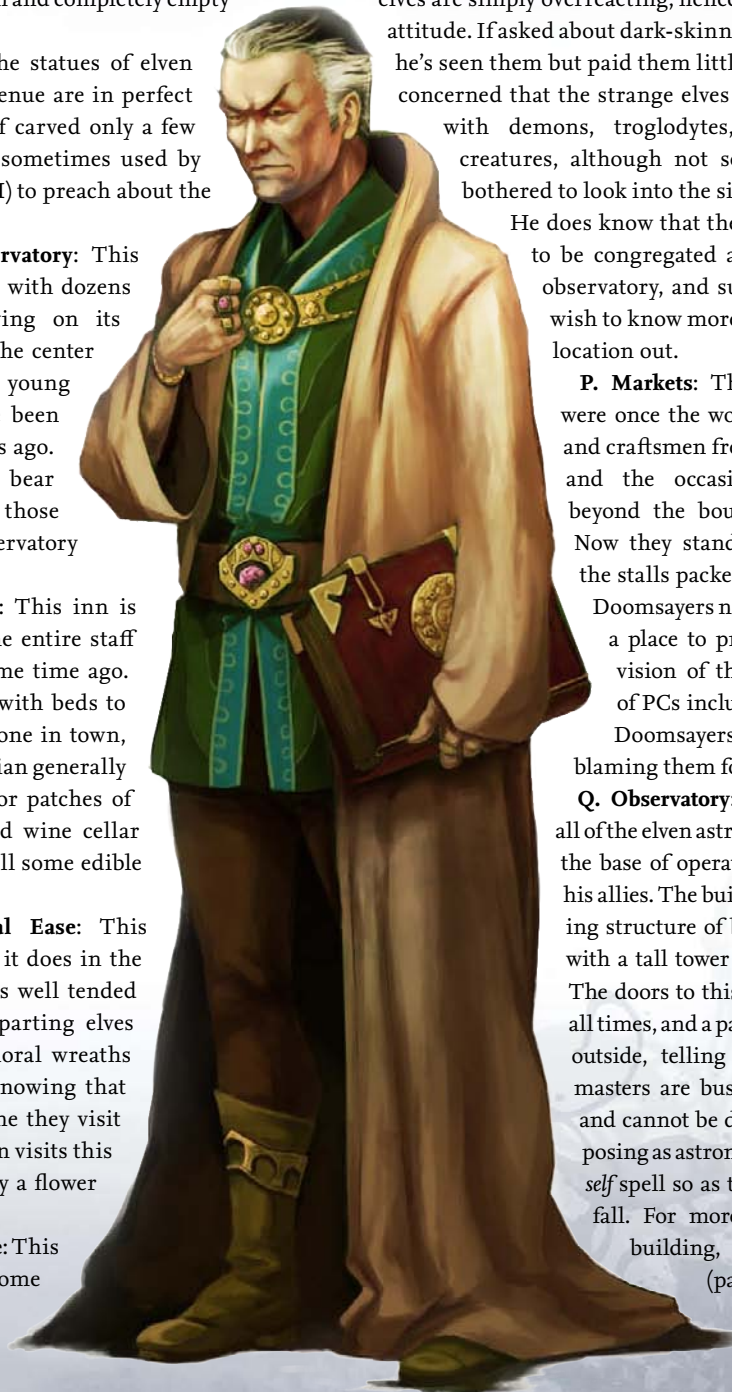
O. Talgoren's Residence: This elegant building is the home

of **Talgoren** (LN male human sorcerer 7/aristocrat 5), one of the legendary Azlanti. Although human, Talgoren is one of the “first humans” and has the high brow-line, piercing eyes, and regal features typical of his kin. If the characters pay a visit here, they find the front doors to his estate open and inviting. Talgoren is inside, reclining on a velvet divan and reading a book of elven poetry. He invites the PCs to be seated and offers them refreshments, pleased to have visitors in these dark times. Talgoren knows little about the impending doom, but he is sure it has something to do with his people's conflict with the aboleths. He feels confident that his people will repel the attack and that the elves are simply overreacting, hence his rather nonchalant attitude. If asked about dark-skinned elves, he admits that he's seen them but paid them little heed. He is, however, concerned that the strange elves seem to be trafficking with demons, troglodytes, and other sinister creatures, although not so concerned that he's bothered to look into the situation in more depth.

He does know that the newcomer elves seem to be congregated around the abandoned observatory, and suggests that if the PCs wish to know more, they should seek that location out.

P. Markets: These open-air markets were once the working-place of vendors and craftsmen from around the Mierani and the occasional merchant from beyond the boundaries of the forest. Now they stand empty, with most of the stalls packed up and deserted. The Doomsayers now use these markets as a place to preach their apocalyptic vision of the future. If the group of PCs includes any humans, these Doomsayers verbally attack them, blaming them for the disaster.

Q. Observatory: This building houses all of the elven astrologers in the city and is the base of operations for Nolgeniss and his allies. The building itself is an imposing structure of black and white marble with a tall tower rising from the center. The doors to this building are locked at all times, and a pair of astronomers stand outside, telling all comers that their masters are busy studying “the event” and cannot be disturbed. The drow are posing as astronomers using the *disguise self* spell so as to better observe Earth-fall. For more information on this building, see The Observatory (page 40).



Dangerous Denizens (EL 8)

Although the echo creatures that populate this shadowy Celwynvian are harmless and can't interact with the PCs in any real physical way, that doesn't mean that all the denizens of the Armageddon Echo are similarly innocuous.

Babau Demons: While Nolveniss's forces utilize a fair amount of dretches, they aren't the only demons the drow of Celwynvian command. Babau demons are also favored minions, and several of these have recently accompanied the drow into the Armageddon Echo. Nolveniss keeps a few of them nearby as guards in the Observatory (area Q), but many more are simply allowed to wander the gloomy streets of the shadowy city, patrolling for anyone foolish enough to follow Nolveniss into the Echo. The demons travel in bickering pairs, but if they encounter the PCs, they fight in a coordinated manner to maximize each other's sneak attacks by flanking foes.

BABAUS (2) **CR 6**
hp 66 each (MM 40)

Blast Shadows: One more type of creature dwells in the shadows of this realm, and unlike the drow or the displaced Shadow Plane natives, this final category of creature seems to be growing. As the drow explored the Armageddon Echo, they learned a terrible truth. Those who remain behind during the recreation of Earthfall and are not within the relatively small zone of protection afforded by Nolveniss's portal key are horribly slain by the disaster, despite its only semi-real nature—so destructive and powerful was Earthfall that even its echo can kill. Those slain in this manner rise as monstrous undead creatures the next time the Armageddon Echo “resets”—the drow have come to call these creatures blast shadows. These wretched undead prowl the streets of Celwynvian at night, completely ignored by the other inhabitants and avoided by the drow. If the PCs wander the streets after dark, it won't be long before a group of three blast shadows confronts them.

BLAST SHADOWS (3) **CR 5**
hp 68 (see page 82)

Drow Patrol: Nolveniss stranded many of his drow soldiers and followers in the Material Plane when he retreated into the Armageddon Echo, but not all of them. Several dozen of his drow subordinates were able to escape with him into the demiplane before the PCs' arrival on the scene and the portal's closing shortly thereafter. While all of the drow are stationed at the observatory or in nearby ruins, most of them spend their time patrolling the

Armageddon Echo in groups of four (two skirmishers and two soldiers). If the drow flee from battle, the PCs can follow them directly to the observatory—alternatively, a defeated drow can be carrying a quickly drawn map that indicates the quickest route between the portal back to the Material Plane (area E) and the observatory (area Q).

DROW SKIRMISHERS (2) **CR 3**
hp 11 each (see page 16)

DROW SOLDIERS (2) **CR 5**
hp 34 (see page 16)

Shadow Creatures: The drow and their minions are certainly capable of causing problems for to the PCs, but when the drow created this demiplane, they drew more than shadowstuff from the Shadow Plane. Several ghoulish natives of the Shadow Plane were pulled in as well, and while small in number, these creatures prowl the darker corners of the region and menace PC and drow alike when they encounter them. Many of these creatures look humanoid, but they have twisted deformities, demonic features, vestigial wings, horns, or other vile mutations that mark their sinister sources. Despite their varied appearance, all of these creatures have the same statistics as typical ghouls (except that their bite does not spread ghoul fever). In addition to these shadowy creatures, actual



shadows and shadow mastiffs lurk in the Armageddon Echo. Typically, all three types of creatures band together in packs consisting of four shadow creatures, two shadows, and a single shadow mastiff.

SHADOW GHOULS (4)

CR 1

hp 13 each (MM 118)

SHADOWS (2)

CR 5

hp 19 each (MM 221)

SHADOW MASTIFF

CR 5

hp 30 (MM 222)

The Assassin (EL 9)

As soon as any drow escape from a confrontation with the PCs, the PCs make a big scene in the city, or they assault the observatory but retreat before finishing the job, Nolveniss knows they're after him and charges the drow assassin Arkaxis, one of his more trusted servants, to eradicate the threat. Arkaxis sets out on the trail of the characters immediately, and unless they take particular pains to hide, he'll locate them within a few hours of their cover being blown.

Creature: Arkaxis is a skilled assassin and well suited to tracking down the PCs and eliminating them one at a time, though at the same time he is trying to keep their attentions away from the observatory. He first uses *disguise self* to make himself appear as an echo elf, making sure that his colors are muted and he speaks in a dull tone. He then searches throughout the city for clues to the PCs' location—one of his greatest tools here is simply making Gather Information checks among the echo elves, asking them if they've seen the PCs. Due to the echo creatures' inattentiveness, Arkaxis must make a DC 25 Gather Information check to locate the PCs, with each check taking 1d4+1 hours. Once he picks up their trail, it's another 1d3 hours before he locates them, at which point he follows them about discretely, biding his time. He is most likely to strike at the PCs while they're engaged in another fight, when they are sleeping, or whenever one of them becomes separated from the others. Arkaxis also goes out of his way to mislead and confuse the PCs. He leaves them notes saying that the "dark-skinned elves" are hiding in the old alchemist shop and other such false rumors. If possible, he puts poison in their food or water.

ARKAXIS

CR 9

Male drow rogue 5/assassin 3

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 16

(+5 armor, +1 Deflection, +4 Dex)

hp 38 (8d6+8)

Fort +4, **Ref** +12, **Will** +3 (+5 against spells and spell-like abilities); +2 against enchantment, +1 against poison

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +1; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 19

Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 rapier +10 (1d6+2/18–20)

Ranged hand crossbow +9 (1d4/19–20)

Special Attacks death attack (DC 16), sneak attack +5d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th)

1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Spells Known (CL 3rd)

2nd (1/day)—*invisibility*, *spider climb*

1st (3/day)—*disguise self*, *obscuring mist*, *true strike*

TACTICS

Before Combat Arkaxis prepares for combat by studying his chosen foe for 3 rounds so that he can use his death attack. He often uses *invisibility* to garner the time he needs to do so.

During Combat Arkaxis prefers to keep combats as short as possible, striking quickly with killing blows and avoiding prolonged melees.

Morale Arkaxis flees if reduced to less than 20 hit points so that he can rest before striking again.

STATISTICS

Str 12, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +6

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +11, Disable Device +11, Disguise +11 (+13 acting in character), Gather Information +8, Hide +15, Listen +13, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +8, Search +13, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +13, Tumble +15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

SQ poison use, trapfinding

Combat Gear drow poison (4), drow poison bolts (4), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 glamed studded leather, +1 rapier, hand crossbow with 20 bolts, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, disguise kit

Riding the Apocalypse

Unless the PCs make a terrible mistake, they should be long gone by the time Earthfall strikes the Armageddon Echo. Yet that doesn't mean you can't play up the tension as the final battle with Nolveniss draws near. As the end approaches, precursor meteors begin to scythe down from the vortex above, periodically smashing into buildings and causing increasing amounts of panic. As the PCs near the climax of this adventure, feel free to add more falling stars to keep them moving and instill a sense of urgency. A few well-placed meteor impacts should do plenty to keep them hurrying along.

If the PCs are still in the Armageddon Echo when Earthfall strikes and they're within 300 feet of the *shadow key* (even if they aren't in control of the *key*), things rapidly grow disastrous as a falling star emerges from the eye of the vortex above. Only a tiny fragment of the size of the *Starstone* itself, the burning meteorite is nonetheless enough to finish off Celwynvian. The meteor strikes in the southwestern corner of the city, filling the Armageddon Echo with thunder and fire. Anyone in range of the *shadow key* at this time is transported instantly back to the Material Plane—all those beyond that range are destroyed by the blast. The next time the Armageddon Echo is entered, the spirits of those killed live on as the newest blast shadows to join the cursed ranks of the city's host, doomed to repeat their deaths forever.

The Observatory

Eventually, various clues should lead the PCs to the observatory, where Nolveniss, the dragon Razorhorn, and the remainder of the drow are hiding. Nolveniss has used this building for every iteration of the Armageddon Echo to study the heavens and learn more about Earthfall. When the elves sacked Celwynvian, he fled here to wait for the corrupted elf gate to begin functioning again to allow him to return home. Unfortunately, the PCs followed him through, and by the time they arrive here, he undoubtedly knows it. Although the drow wizard is supremely confident, he does not like to take risks unless pressed. He is more than happy to remain hidden in the observatory and allow the recurring Earthfall to take care of the PCs for him.

Although the number of drow in the observatory is limited, the number of drow in the Armageddon Echo is not. If the PCs assault the observatory and retreat before they defeat Nolveniss, they find additional drow have been recalled from patrols to repopulate areas that were cleaned out during previous attacks. If the PCs defeat key individuals such as Razorhorn or the babaus, they are replaced by enough drow skirmishers to create an EL equal to that of the previous encounter.

Q1. Outside the Observatory

Standing in the center of a small, well-kept park is a tall and imposing building made of black and white marble and decorated with beautiful celestial patterns. Four low domes adorn the building's corners. A tower rises from its central portion to form a large domed structure from which three ornate telescopes protrude from balconies.

This observatory, once a popular destination in Celwynvian, was one of the first structures to be deserted, since the elves who dwelt here knew beyond a shadow of a doubt what was coming.

Two shadowy elven echoes stand to each side of the door, all that remains of the observatory's staff. When the PCs approach, the guards attempt to turn them away, stepping in front of the doors and barring access. Of course, being echo creatures, the guards have no real ability to stop the PCs (or the drow) from entering, and if they try, they vanish and reform a few minutes later without memory of their observatory being invaded. However, the echo elves are perfectly capable of raising a din as they attempt to block entry into the observatory; if they do, the building's occupants know that someone's here and prepare for a fight accordingly.

Q2. Entry Hall (EL 10)

Inside the gilded doors sprawls a grand entry hall with a richly woven carpet running from the doors to a large silver orrery—a model of the sun and the planets—quietly spinning in time.

The orrery in this room is a complex illusion of the 11 planets (see *Pathfinder* #14 for more information on Golarion's solar system) slowly rotating around the sun. This model is for show only, and it does not accurately predict planetary movement.

Creatures: As this is the only easy way into the building, Nolveniss stationed a sizable number of drow here to prevent intruders from gaining access. The drow have been sitting bored in this chamber for some time, and they are as impatient for a fight as they are to return home.

DROW CAPTAIN CR 7
hp 38 (see page 18)

DROW SOLDIERS (4) CR 5
hp 34 each (see page 16)

Q3. Seasonal Constellations (EL 8)

A circular bench sits at the center of this dark, domed chamber. The walls are a painted pastoral mural of forest beauty. Above, the dark dome flickers with glowing points of light that faithfully recreate the panorama of the night sky on a cloudless, moonless night.

These four chambers were used to study the heavens. The starfields on the domes are actually programmed illusions that gradually shift over time to reflect the sky. Each of these chambers is tuned to show the sky at a different time of the year so that researchers might better understand how the stars move and shift. Chamber **Q3a** shows the stars in spring, and its mural depicts a forest blooming with flowers. Chamber **Q3b** shows the stars in summer, and its mural is a forest filled with nocturnal life. Chamber **Q3c** shows the stars in fall, and the mural



depicts a wood of autumnal leaves. Lastly, chamber Q3d depicts the stars in winter, its walls showing the forest under a blanket of glittering snow.

Creatures: Areas Q3a and Q3b have been converted into barracks; numerous bedrolls and foodstuffs stored in sacks decorate both chambers. Areas Q3c and Q3d have been converted into prisons, although only Q3c currently contains any living creatures; this chamber is where both Shalelu and Kaerishiel are being held prisoner, guarded over by one of Nolgeniss's favorite slaves, a troglodyte warrior named Lagrozan. The troglodyte remains in this area to watch over the prisoners and is more than a little frightened of the dragon Razorhorn—he won't exit this chamber without Nolgeniss for fear that the dragon might try to eat him. He attacks any non-drow who enter the room.

Both elven prisoners are conscious when the PCs arrive, but only just. The poisons and abuse the drow have inflicted upon them have left them weak, injured, and unable to walk (Strength and Constitution both reduced to 3). At first, neither believes that the PCs are real, since Nolgeniss is fond of using illusions to torture his captives. Once convinced, the captives speak of the cruelty of Nolgeniss, who has tortured both of them a number of times since their arrival in the hopes of

learning about the elven forces in Celwynvian. The drow wizard has made clear his intent to keep both of these prisoners alive as hostages, should his route to the Darklands via the corrupted elf gate be guarded when he emerges from this realm. Both elves suspect Nolgeniss dwells in the upper portions of the tower and know he owns a portal key that allows both portals in area D9 to function—if the PCs wish to escape from this demiplane, the drow wizard holds the means for their freedom.

If healed and patched up, both Shalelu and Kaerishiel are eager to aid the PCs in finishing off their mission. Their gear has been incorporated into Razorhorn's hoard in area Q7—if they recognize any of their possessions among the treasure carried by the PCs, they'll be sure to ask for those items back.

LAGROZAN, SLAVE MASTER

CR 8

Male troglodyte warrior 8

CE Medium humanoid (reptilian)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot -1

Aura stench (DC 18)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 20

(+3 armor, +1 haste, +6 natural)

hp 78 (10d8+30)

Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +1

OFFENSE

Spd 60 ft.

Melee +1 *heavy mace* +14/+14/+9 (1d8+4) and
claw +10 (1d4+1) and
bite +10 (1d4+1)

TACTICS

Before Combat If alerted to the presence of someone trying to break into the room, Lagrozan readies his *potion of haste* and drinks it at the first sign of intruders.

During Combat Lagrozan is overconfident in his abilities and charges the largest character in the party. He fights using his club and bite, using Power Attack for as much as 5 if he is hitting easily.

Morale Lagrozan fights to the death.

Base Stats AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 19; Ref +2, Spd 30 ft.;
Melee +1 *heavy mace* +13/+8 (1d8+4) and claw +9 (1d4+1) and
bite +9 (1d4+1)

STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 8

Base Atk +9; Grp +11

Feats Cleave, Improved Sunder, Multiattack, Power Attack,
Weapon Focus (mace)

Skills Hide +6 (+10 in rocky or underground settings),
Intimidate +5, Listen +2

Languages Draconic, Undercommon

Combat Gear *potion of haste*; **Other Gear** patchwork armor
(counts as studded leather), +1 *heavy mace*

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the two elven prisoners survive, award the PCs experience points as if they had defeated them.

Battle Points: For each elven commander the PCs escort back to the Material Plane, award them 1 BP.

Q4. Star Maps

The far wall of this small chamber is covered by a massive chart showing thousands of stars. Over two dozen small pins have been driven into the map, plotting a course through the heavens. On the floor in front of the chart is a pile of discarded papers.

The papers are written in Elven and discuss the findings of astrological surveys the ancient elves made over the course of 6 months prior to Earthfall. The papers discuss an unexpected object that appeared in the heavens and has been growing closer and closer. The papers also describe strange magic emanations that have been detected all across the globe, reported by elves through the system of elf gates. These strange emanations should seem familiar to the PCs: hails of black rain, strange tides, earth tremors, and black shadows in the sky. They are the same signs the citizens of Riddleport experienced before the falling star struck Devil's Elbow, but on what appears to be a global scale.

Q5. Hidden Repository

The door leading into this chamber is hidden and requires a DC 25 Search check to locate. Once found, the door slides aside on silent hinges.

A large table sits in the center of this cramped chamber. Atop the table is a large, illuminated book, written in the script of the elves.

The book sitting on the table contains many of the secret astronomical discoveries made by the elves over the years. Of particular note are the several recent entries that speak to the impending disaster. They spell out in great detail the devastation that is to come, predicting the fall of Thassilon and Azlant, the forming of the Inner Sea, and the Age of Darkness that will follow. The book goes on to discuss, in no uncertain terms, that this apocalypse has been brought down upon the world by very powerful magic. The last note included in the book mentions that if more time were available, it



might even be possible to stop the apocalypse, but only if the site of the original weaving of the magic were known. A footnote concludes the book: “Even if there were time to save this world, I doubt Azlant deserves such a mercy—they bring this doom upon themselves.”

This tome is made of shadowstuff, and as such it cannot exist outside of the Armageddon Echo. Nevertheless, the complex notes within may become quite useful to the PCs near the end of this Adventure Path—fortunately for them, the Armageddon Echo isn’t going anywhere.

Q6. Study (EL 8)

This long chamber contains two tables, where a group of scholars are hard at work, studying a host of charts and making complex calculations. Watching over them is a pair of drow, who immediately draw swords when you open the door.

Creatures: A pair of babau demons mostly loyal to Nolveniss stand guard in this chamber. They have a grudging respect for the wizard, but not for the other drow; if they hear the sound of battle in area Q2, they open the door to watch and mock the drow as the PCs fight them. They don’t attack the PCs unless they are attacked first or the PCs attempt to enter this room.

BABAUS (2)

CR 6

hp 66 each (MM 40)

TACTICS

During Combat The babaus attempt to summon additional babaus on the first round of combat, then focus melee attacks on the same target (preferably a religious-looking target). They pursue foes tenaciously, even out of the building if necessary.

Morale The babaus, bound here by magic, fight intruders to the death.

Q7. Razorhorn’s Lair (EL 8)

This vast chamber has forty-foot-high ceilings. The far side of the room contains a ten-foot-high balcony before a set of immense glass windows that look out upon a gloomy dark forest. Opposite this, three one-foot-tall risers ascend to a pair of dull silvery doors on which images of planets and stars are carved.

Roosting up on top of the balcony is a terrible beast. Green scales cover its powerful limbs and wings, and an oversized horn sits at the end of its snout. The dragon looks down at you, a vapor of sickly green wafting from its flaring nostrils.

Creature: The dragon Razorhorn has lived in the Mierani Forest for many years, and although he’s barely 48 years old, he’s already well on his way toward building a name for himself. Much of Razorhorn’s desire to make a name

for himself stems from the shadow of his more infamous mother, a brutish dragon named Verchazmia. His mother was recently slain for a second (and so far final) time after a campaign of violence against the elves of Crying Leaf, and Razorhorn is eager to carry on and exceed that tradition. The dragon is no fool, and knows that the elves united are a powerful force, and by seeking his own alliance with the increasing number of drow that began to emerge into Celwynvian over the past several years, he hopes to secure a place in their history as a creature to be feared.

Yet the recent assault on Celwynvian has put Razorhorn at something of a disadvantage—he was hoping for at least a few more decades of menace-building before being forced to face the entire town of Crying Leaf at once. He blames the sudden attack on his drow allies, believing that their increase in activity inspired retaliation too soon, and now, against his better judgment, he has sought out a place of hiding in this eerie realm.

Since arriving, the dragon has been waiting in this room for a chance to return to what he considers to be his city. He’s worried that his lair (a short flight south of Celwynvian in the Calphiak foothills), and by extension, his treasure, is unguarded, and wants nothing more than to escape the Armageddon Echo and make his way back there to recover and rethink his allegiance with the treacherous dark elves. The sight of the PCs is enough to drive him into a frenzy, even if they haven’t already encountered him in Celwynvian, and he attacks them on sight.

RAZORHORN

CR 8

Male juvenile green dragon

LE Large dragon (air)

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses; Listen +19, Spot +19

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 9, flat-footed 26

(+13 natural, –1 size, +4 shield)

hp 133 (14d12+42)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Immune acid, paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft.

Melee horn +17 (3d6+4/19–20) and

2 claws +15 (1d8+2) and

2 wings +15 (1d6+2) and

tail slap +15 (1d8+6/19–20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with horn)

Special Attacks breath weapon (40 ft. cone; 8d6 acid damage; Reflex DC 20 half)

Spells Known (CL 1st)

1st (4/day)—*shield*, *true strike*

0 (5/day)—*detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 12), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Assuming he is warned by a fight against the babaus in area Q6, Razorhorn casts *shield* on himself in preparation for combat.

During Combat Razorhorn uses his breath weapon as often as possible, starting in the first round. After that, he makes any PCs that attempt to climb up to the balcony pay with his melee attacks. Razorhorn has a somewhat unusual fighting style for a dragon—rather than biting as his primary attack, he gores and slashes with his namesake, his immense nasal horn. Once he is engaged in melee up above, he flies down below to attack softer targets, hovering in the air if necessary, allowing him to take advantage of his reach. If truly pressed, he takes a round to cast *true strike* before using full Power Attack on the next round to utterly maul one character with his horn.

Morale Razorhorn fights this battle to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14

Base Atk +14; Grp +22

Feats Hover, Improved Critical (horn), Improved Natural Attack (horn), Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Concentration +20, Hide +16, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Knowledge (nature) +19, Listen +19, Move Silently +20, Sense Motive +19, Spot +19,

Languages Common, Draconic, Undercommon

SQ water breathing

Treasure: In an attempt to soothe the dragon's spirits, Nolgeniss has allowed the dragon to keep a few bits of treasure here as extra payment until the drow are finally able to retreat into the Darklands. This treasure consists of loot stolen from elven victims, and includes a +1 *mithral shirt*, a +1 *keen composite longbow* (+2 Str), and a pair of *gloves of Dexterity* +2. In addition, all of Shalelu's and Kaerishiel's gear is here as well.

Battle Points: Defeating Razorhorn awards the PCs 2 BP.

Q8. Star Map Staircase

Two staircases wind up the interior walls of this tower. Between them is an immense black field, suspended in the air, containing hundreds of glowing stars.

The stairs in the room are quite steep and count as difficult terrain for those ascending them. The stairs rise up to a second floor, 20 feet above.

The star field between the stairs can be entered, allowing characters to literally walk among the stars. In the center of this mass is a brightly glowing rock, slowly moving toward a blue sphere down at the map's base. A DC 20 Knowledge (geography) check reveals this to be Golarion, with the *Starstone* rapidly making its way toward history.

Q9. Second Floor (EL 9)

The stairs from the first floor wind up to a balcony that crosses through the center of the tower to another set of stairs continuing up to the third floor. These stairs are just as steep as those below and count as difficult terrain for those who climb them.

Creatures: Nolgeniss has stationed a final pair of minions here to prevent intruders from disturbing his work up above. A pair of drow arcanists wait here for intruders and use their spells to harm anyone attempting to climb up to their level.

DROW ARCANISTS (2)
hp 27 each (see page 17)

CR 7



TACTICS

During Combat These drow alternate between casting *fireballs* down below and selectively targeting anyone that can fire up at them with *acid arrows* and *magic missiles*.

Morale These drow fight to the death.

Q10. Third Floor

The stairs pause for a short run at a small balcony overlooking the haunted city of Celwynvian and the vaguely shadowy expanse of the eerily colorless Mierani Forest beyond.

Flying characters can use this landing to enter the observatory, but any attempt to climb the smooth outer walls of the tower requires a DC 25 Climb check. A fall from this balcony onto the roof 50 feet below deals 5d6 points of damage.

Q11. The Grand Observatory (EL 10)

Looming at the center of this large, open-air rooftop is a gigantic golden orrery, with each planet rotating on delicate golden arms around a bright, polished sun. Three balconies overlook the edge of the tower, each one outfitted with a massive telescope. Above, almost as if the tower were aimed at its churning core, the spiraling vortex of the sky looms.

The golden orrery is a delicate device with gigantic, carefully balanced gold spheres. If the device takes more than 10 points of fire or sonic damage, the entire thing begins to break apart as planets roll in every direction. All characters on this floor are subjected to a bull rush attempt, with a +10 bonus on the opposed Strength check. Anyone pushed off the tower's edge through one of the balconies falls 80 feet to the roof below and takes 8d6 points of falling damage. Those who are pressed against one of the half-height walls that make up the rest of the walls take 3d6 points of damage from the sphere (Fortitude half DC 15) and are grappled. The spheres have a +5 bonus on grapple checks, but do not pin those they strike.

Creature: Nolgeniss Azrinae spends the majority of his time here, meditating in the shadow of the immense orrery and waiting patiently for Earthfall to arrive. He wishes to watch the event one last time, then allow the portal gem he carries to whisk him and those followers who are fortunate enough to be within a few hundred feet back into the Material Plane for one last dash toward freedom via the corrupted elf gate. If the PCs reach here without the noise from earlier battles alerting him, they find the drow wizard studying the orrery and gazing thoughtfully into the vortex above. Otherwise, he has cast several spells in anticipation of battle. In this case, he hovers in the air as he greets the PCs, his voice booming through the gloom.

SHADOW KEY

This deep purple gemstone seems to be inscribed from inside with the drow rune for "portal." The gemstone is an unusual variant of garnet harvested from the Shadow Plane, and feels strangely cool to the touch. The *shadow key* radiates faint conjuration magic, and serves as a key for the opening of various portals. Originally intended as a key for the corrupted elf gate that connects Celwynvian with the drow city of Zirnakaynin, Nolgeniss used it in the construction of the portal into the Armageddon Echo as well.

A person carrying the *shadow key* can activate the portal between the Armageddon Echo and the Material Plane at will. When he activates it on the Material Plane side, the Armageddon Echo resets itself to a date 1d8 days before Earthfall. While in the Armageddon Echo, the *shadow key* creates a zone of safety that automatically transports the carrier and all other creatures within 300 feet who are not native to the Armageddon Echo back to the Material Plane when Earthfall strikes the demiplane. The carrier of the stone appears in area **D9** of the Academy of Arts, while all other creatures appear within a 300-foot radius of that location in roughly the same relation to the carrier of the *shadow key*.

The *shadow key* can also be used to activate the corrupted elf gate between Zirnakaynin and Celwynvian, although that gate's erratic recharge rate (sometimes requiring weeks to build up enough energy to function) make it an unreliable method of travel.

As a strange and unusual garnet, the *shadow key* is worth 2,500 gp. To someone who wishes control over the Armageddon Echo, it is priceless.

"So, you are the ones who led those fragile, delicate elves to my city, who forced me to hide in my own creation. You think that by this you have won? How foolish the sun has made you! My mistress already has all that she needs. You will die here, by my hand, and all you hold dear shall follow soon enough!"

Nolgeniss is a high-ranking member of House Azrinae, and one of Matron Allevrah's most trusted arcanists. He led the research team in Celwynvian for a number of years, and now, just as his research was reaching completion, the elves came to ruin everything. As a result, he is in a particularly foul mood.

NOLGENISS AZRINAE

CR 10

Male drow illusionist 9

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 19

(+4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +4 shield)

hp 47 (9d4+23)

Fort +6, Ref +8, Will +9
Immune sleep; **SR 20**
Weakness light blindness

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee staff of dark flames +5 (1d6+1 plus 1d6 fire)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Spells Prepared (CL 9th; ranged touch +7)

5th—empowered *fireball* (DC 18),
 extended *shadow conjuration* (DC
 21), *shadow evocation* (DC 21)

4th—*enervation, greater invisibility,*
phantasmal killer (DC 20),
stoneskin

3rd—*dispel magic,*
displacement, empowered
magic missile, fly, lightning
bolt (DC 18)

2nd—*false life, minor image* (DC
 18), *mirror image, scorching ray*
 (2), *see invisibility*

1st—*disguise self, magic missile* (3),
ray of enfeeblement, shield (2)

0—*detect magic* (2), *ghost sound* (DC
 16), *mage hand, prestidigitation*

Prohibited Schools Conjuration,
 Enchantment

TACTICS

Before Combat When combat breaks out with the arcanists in area **Q9**, Nolgeniss goes to work casting a number of spells to protect himself in the following order: *fly, shield, stoneskin, false life*, and *mirror image*.

During Combat On the first round, Nolgeniss casts *greater invisibility* on himself before unleashing his more destructive spells against the characters, starting with his empowered *fireball* and following it up with extended *shadow conjuration* to summon 1d3 Medium fiendish monstrous spiders. Nolgeniss is extremely intelligent and he uses his spells appropriately, responding to threats and attacking whenever possible. While flying and invisible, he is very difficult to pinpoint, especially since Nolgeniss always takes his move action to shift position after he has cast his spell.

Morale Nolgeniss refuses to back down and he fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 10

Base Atk +4; Grp +4

Feats Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Familiar, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion)

Skills Concentration +13, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (geography) +11, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +19

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Common, Draconic, Elven, Undercommon

SQ summon familiar (Vezzart)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds* (2), *staff of dark flames* (15 charges); **Other Gear** *bracers of armor +4, cloak of resistance +2, handy haversack, headband of intellect +2, house Azrinae signet ring, ring of protection +1, shadow key, 1,000 gp in diamond dust, spellbook* (contains all prepared spells, all wizard illusion spells from the PH up to 5th level, and four other spells of your choosing of levels 1 through 4)

VEZZART, QUASIT

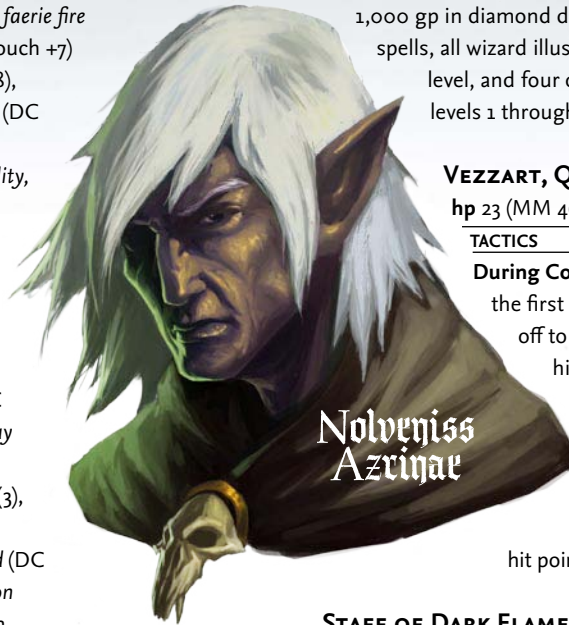
CR 2

hp 23 (MM 46)

TACTICS

During Combat Vezzart uses *invisibility* on the first round of combat, before moving off to claw any archers that are firing at his master, hoping that his poison reduces their accuracy.

Morale Vezzart withdraws from combat the moment he is wounded, to allow his fast healing to restore him to 10 or more hit points before attacking again.



STAFF OF DARK FLAME

Aura moderate evocation and necromancy; **CL 8th**

Slot none; **Price** 44,716 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Made from bleached bones that have been fused together, the head of this staff burns with an unholy fire. This staff can be used as a +1 *flaming quarterstaff* (only one end of the staff bears magical enhancement), and it retains this property even if all its charges are drained. This staff can cast the following spells:

- *Ray of enfeeblement* (1 charge)
- *Scorching ray* (1 charge)
- *False life* (1 charge)
- *Fireball* (2 charges)
- *Animate dead* (3 charges)

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Staff, *animate dead, false life, fireball, ray of enfeeblement, scorching ray*; **Cost** 25,841 gp, 1,510 XP

Developments: With Nolgeniss defeated, the PCs can collect the *shadow key* and use it at area **E** to open the portal back to the Material Plane. Alternatively, they could remain behind in the Armageddon Echo to watch the world end and simply rely on the key to bring them back when this incredible event occurs.

Battle Points: Defeating Nolgeniss and recovering the *shadow key* awards the PCs 3 BP.



CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure ends as soon as the PCs defeat Nolgeniss—without their commander and the *shadow key*, the remaining drow in Celwynvian are cut off from their escape route via the corrupted elf gate. Discord spreads quickly through their ranks, and they scatter into the surrounding woodlands. A few of them might make it to the mountains or the relative safety of the surface world, but for the most part the Shin'Rakorath do a great job tracking these stragglers down and eradicating them.

The elves have a huge task ahead of them now—Celwynvian has been freed of the drow influence, and now the long task of clearing the ruins of other monstrous life and eventual restoration can begin. Eviana thanks the PCs for all they have done, and depending on their success and the total number of Battle Points they've gained during the adventure, she awards them with their choice of magical items, gems, or jewelry in an amount as detailed on the table on page 19. (Magic items can be brought in from Iadara the next time a delivery

of supplies arrives in Crying Leaf via teleportation.) Yet even if the PCs gained few battle points, as long as they defeat Nolgeniss and claim the shadow key, victory is theirs and there is cause for celebration. Eviana invites the PCs to join her, Shalelu, Kaerishiel, and the rest of the commanders that evening for celebration.

Once there, a large banquet is held that night, in honor of the characters. Eviana invites them to sit by her side, and even Kaerishiel seems almost friendly. Yet as the banquet draws to a close, Eviana invites the PCs back to her tent to discuss an important matter. The elf gate in the Academy still functions and the *shadow key* can activate it. In time, the elves will be able to clean the elf gate of its drow corruption, but for now the portal has given the elves an unprecedented opportunity—a chance to infiltrate the mysterious drow capital of Zirnakaynin. A group of spies, properly disguised, could learn much from a mission into the dangerous city—perhaps, she asks coyly, the PCs know of a team of adventurers who might be interested in such a quest?



Celwynvian

In the depths of the Mierani Forest, the vital green trees, thick with leaves and hung with cascading vines, give way to cracked and spindly trunks bowed under the weight of withered greenery. Farther in still, the trees die out completely, leaving behind gnarled shells stretching blighted branches to the sky. In the depths lies a vast, ominous crater filled with pools of sickly water, a foul memorial to an ancient calamity. Beyond stand the remains of the elven city of Celwynvian, the City of Emerald Rains, ruined, defiant, and shrouded by a haze of green where the sheltering Mierani Forest still seeks to heal an ancient wound.

Untold centuries have passed since Celwynvian thrived as an elven center for culture, trade, and research. After its abandonment almost 10,000 years ago, Celwynvian stood empty while the forest encroached upon it and wild animals made it their home. After the elves' return to Golarion,

they came to Celwynvian only to find the wild animals were the least of their worries. The city's enchantments had faded and become unstable; dragons, monsters, and undead inhabited the streets. Worst of all, a secret shame had claimed the city for its own foul devices: dark elves, having breached the world of light by perverting an ancient elf gate within the Academy of the Arts. Desperate to keep the perversion from the eyes of other races, the elves declared Celwynvian off-limits to visitors and set up a guard around the city. It would become a blockade that would last for centuries and hide the fate of the ancient city from all beyond the Mierani.

Even after the passage of ages, great treasures remain in Celwynvian, along with knowledge and research the elves have long feared irretrievable. To explorers of iron courage, the vaults and secret storerooms laying hidden beneath the rubble of the City of Emerald Rains offer great

rewards. But the challenges lurking within the city's shell are dangerous at best and insurmountable at worst, and more than one treasure-hunter has breached Celwynvian's defenses, never to emerge again.

CELWYNVIAN'S DEFENDERS

The elves of Crying Leaf, in cooperation with the mercenaries of the Shin'Rakorath, fight to keep travelers out of Celwynvian and the city's nefarious occupants in. Dense, overgrown vegetation renders entry into the City of Emerald Rains difficult from any number of angles, and the elves know exactly where the easiest entry points stood—protecting them with constant watches and magical sentinels.

At any given time, three to six bands of a dozen elves patrol Celwynvian's borders, with numerous other watch stations hidden in the surrounding woods. These defenders are thoroughly trained and the majority have significant combat experience—the most skilled defenders being fighters or rangers, while a small number possess some arcane ability. A handful of druids and local magic-users supplement the defenders' ranks.

Captain **Kaerishiel Neirenar** (LN male elf ranger 8) currently leads the defenders of Celwynvian. An experienced soldier and member of the Shin'Rakorath, Kaerishiel earns the respect of his troops through consistent, decisive leadership. His quick reactions might seem rash to outsiders, but he possesses unusual wisdom and the ability to quickly evaluate situations. While experienced in melee combat, Kaerishiel favors his longbow above all other weapons. The ancient weapon traveled back with the elves when they returned to Golarion and used to belong to his lieutenant and close friend, Taisylveen. Drow slew Taisylveen the first week she and Kaerishiel took charge of Celwynvian's defense. Kaerishiel wields the bow in her honor.

CELWYNVIAN AT A GLANCE

A mere shadow of the glory and beauty that was once the City of Emerald Rains, the ruins of Celwynvian hide dangers beyond mere beasts and drow invaders. Described here are but a sampling of the best-known ruins and untended landmarks still standing in Celwynvian.

The Path of Fallen Shadows: This wide boulevard leads to an area of crumbled ruins and dense vegetation. Months ago, a band of drow set upon a patrol of Celwynvian defenders, and a fierce skirmish ensued. Elves traditionally carry home their fallen companions to give the dead a proper burial and ensure no dark magic inhabits the corpses. After the drow fled, however, the elves lifted the bodies of the fallen and were horrified to see shadows imprinted on the cobblestones where the bodies had lain.

Fearing powerful magic—either a corruption of an old Celwynvian defense or some new trick of the drow—

the elves retreated and now refuse to enter this avenue. Elven runes warning of danger mark several of the fallen buildings that line the path. The shadows remain, inky-black, on the cobblestones, and a chill permeates the air. Explorers who accidentally wander down the Path of Fallen Shadows sometimes report hearing whispers too quiet and slurred to make out, and leaves that rustle and sway even when there is no breeze.

The Library of Reenai: Scrolls of power, tomes of ancient history, slim volumes of lyrical poetry, charts of lineages stretching back thousands of years, all these and more lined the shelves of the Library of Reenai. In the days before Earthfall, many of the most important books and documents left the city with the elves, but space and haste dictated that some had to be left behind. The remains of this building boast a graceful central spire, a wide plaza out front, and white stone walls engraved with elven runes and artwork depicting concepts of learning, knowledge, magic, and art.

Old bloodstains mar the library's plaza, and cracks in the walls tell the tale of missed crossbow bolts and mace-swings. A band of drow claimed the library as their stronghold some years ago, and the Celwynvian defenders have thus far been unable to rout the squatters.

Elven lore suggests that a dozen vaults hide within the library. Surely some of the vaults have collapsed over time and others were likely emptied, their contents either liberated during the evacuation or looted by the drow. Yet some might still remain intact, guarding their contents against time and pillagers.

Verithes Park: In Celwynvian's heyday, Verithes Park was one of two areas of carefully cultivated wilderness within the city. Exotic plants, tropical flowers, fruit trees, berry bushes, and more grew in this lush, lovingly tended area, surrounded by a border of native trees.

When Earthfall left the enormous crater in Celwynvian's side, the destruction impacted Verithes Park as well. The west and south borders of the park hold rows of skeletal trees, their limbs blackened and shriveled even thousands of years after the catastrophe.

Farther into the park, the trees and plants survived but grew twisted—whether from the effects of Earthfall, or an ancient Celwynvian spell damaged or mutated over time, no one knows. It always seems dark here. The trees whisper and whip their branches at passersby, and brambles and assassin vines lurk amid the seemingly harmless greenery.

The Festering Crater: During Earthfall, a huge chunk of rock struck Celwynvian and blasted a crater in the southern edge of the city. The underground spring that feeds the lake in Verithes Park bubbled up, but some contaminant in the rock tainted the water—or perhaps it was an effect of the myriad elven spells in the area erupting as the crater

Celwynvian



leveled buildings and wiped out ruins. A relatively clear waterfall spills into the heart of the crater where sluggish, sickly water churns.

While the water looks off-putting, it is—for the most part—safe to drink. Forest creatures sometimes stray into the area, and it's not uncommon for bears or other large predators to stalk the watering hole. Animals who drink from the crater suffer no ill effects.

Intelligent creatures, on the other hand, sometimes experience unusual side effects. Divine spellcasters in particular often report dizziness, hallucinations, and uncontrollable discharges of positive or negative energy. Some have theorized a connection between Urgathoa and the crater—a connection too weak to inflict disease on every creature that drinks, but enough to flare up in the presence of a rival faith. Despite its reaction to some divine casters, the water is clear and potable.

Temple of Watchers: This half-collapsed tower holds shrines dedicated to the four deities worshiped by the elves of Celwynvian: Calistria, Findeladlara, Ketephys, and Yuelral. Little of the temple's sanctuary was preserved to modern times, the grand windows and tall altars having been destroyed long ago. Amid the rubble, overgrown by ivy, stands a lone crude statue of an elven dancer that looks to be made of plain clay. In truth, this clay is but

the remains of centuries' worth of dust, mold, and rotted plants. Beneath the filthy shell hides a crystalline statue of the elven goddess of art, Findeladlara. (For more information on elven deities, see *Pathfinder Companion Elves of Golarion*.)

The Pavilion of Reason: The raised central platform of this pavilion has no walls, only wide archways that afford a clear view within. Shattered benches form a semicircle around a podium. Hooks in the ceiling once held aloft sheer silk curtains. Three smaller platforms surrounding the main pavilion bear stands, where spectators once sat to listen to the debates within.

The Pavilion of Reason was a place for conducting lectures, debating philosophy and policy, and expressing rational opinions. Anyone could speak, and when someone's time was up, the next speaker rose to take his place. At times, debates lasted day and night for weeks as speaker after speaker came to take the place of the next.

The open walls of the pavilions offer little shelter against the elements or predators, and so the platforms remain abandoned. Occasionally travelers make use of the raised vantage point and relatively clean interior of the pavilion as a temporary campsite. However, a lingering enchantment remains about the pavilion which dampens noise in all areas except the central platform so that spectators might

more easily hear the debates. Move Silently checks made in this area (but not within the central platform) receive a +4 circumstance bonus.

Yuelral's Rain: In ancient days, the teardrop-shaped towers of this structure housed a number of herbalists devoted to an elven god of magic named Yuelral. Here they devised subtle magics, potions, and infusions meant to encourage the growth of natural things and coax plants into wondrous shapes. Now a ruin, the dark elves have claimed the building as their own, using the remaining pools and fire pits to brew noxious alchemical creations.

The Coliseum of Mask and Lyre: Where once epic ballads and moving odes echoed through these halls, now mournful laments and tragic sighs drift. The Coliseum functioned as both playhouse and auditorium, and some of the most talented actors and singers of the Mierani elves once graced its stage. The Coliseum of Mask and Lyre is detailed more thoroughly on page 66.

The Academy of the Arts: This elegant structure stands at the end of a wide path flanked by two statues of elven scholars, each 12 feet tall. The marble statues once displayed the two scholars in perfect detail as they studied open books, but time and the elements have worn away the details and cracked the limbs of the statues.

At the Academy, elves learned the most ancient secrets of magic and crafted new spells with which to aid and protect their people. The walls thrummed with the power of the Academy's occupants; weapons, potions, and trinkets filled the research labs and vaults. Rumor holds that stockpiles of magical items, spellbooks, and valuable research notes still lay hidden in the Academy, in rooms without doors and vaults hidden behind illusory walls. Anyone wishing to search for this lost knowledge, however, must first deal with the drow who make the abandoned Academy their base of operations.

Vista of Visions: This long avenue slopes up from south to north until reaching an apex, then slopes down to street level again. All along the vista loom ruined statues, once of exceptional quality, with each displaying an elven figure from history, song, or legend.

Here stands Faustinil the Winemaker, proffering a goblet to the viewer, a smile on her lips. It's said that she could distill the green from the forest leaves and infuse her wine with the taste of a rainy day. Leremi the Watcher remains vigilant; during an assault against the city, the guardsman refused to give up his post even against overwhelming odds, and fell to enemy blades just as reinforcements arrived. Sadrissil the Many-Hued stares up at the sky, a distant look in his eyes, as if dreaming up the next painting to draw spectators to the Constellar Gallery. At the apex of the avenue rests an image of Thelissia Seven-Starred, an elven wizard whose research led to many of the arcane defenses that once protected

A VIEW OF CELWYNVIAN

Several areas of historical and modern import lay amid the shattered avenues and overgrown rubble of Celwynvian. These locations correspond to those on the map of Celwynvian, as well as those mentioned in "The Armageddon Echo."

1. The Path of Fallen Shadows
2. The Library of Reenai
3. Verithes Park
4. The Festering Crater
5. Temple of Watchers
6. The Pavilion of Reason
7. Yuelral's Rain
8. The Coliseum of Mask and Lyre
9. The Academy of the Arts
10. Vista of Visions
11. The Crystal Conservatory
12. The Fluted Goblet
13. The Garden of Eternal Ease
14. The Constellar Gallery
15. Ruined Tower
16. Raivanyiel Smithy
17. Emerald Bough
18. Miliaru Park

and bolstered Celwynvian. A *permanent image* enshrouds the statue in floating motes of purple and silver light and colors the statue's eyes a glowing emerald green. The identity of any of these statues can be discerned with a DC 25 Knowledge (history) check—made unusually difficult due to the sculptures' decrepitude. The rest of the statues have degraded to the point of anonymity, or cracked and fallen from their bases.

Save one. On the far southern end of the avenue, a new statue stands on an old base. The sculpture is a wooden bust of an elven man, very young, with a scar stretching from his left ear to the corner of his mouth. There is no nameplate or other identifying mark about the statue.

The Crystal Conservatory: A crystal dome tops this squat building, having miraculously survived the centuries. A narrow flight of steps spirals around the outer wall to an archway leading inside the dome. Within, dozens of tropical plants and exotic flowers grow rampant, their scents mingling to form a heady bouquet that perfumes the air. The crystal dome focuses the sun's light, keeping the atmosphere within the conservatory hot and humid. A hole in the center of the floor admits a few feet of trunk and the leafy top of an ancient tree; the rest of its trunk and roots remain hidden in the room below.

Amid the greenery resides a dryad named Ysila. While not aggressive, Ysila has a difficult time trusting any who enter the conservatory. Too many encounters with drow and monsters have made her wary. Ysila uses her

abilities to try to drive away trespassers without revealing herself. If visitors spend time and effort reassuring Ysila they mean no harm she might emerge from her tree to discourse with them. Ysila knows a tremendous deal about the plants in the conservatory and can recommend herbs to combat diseases or poisons and speak a little about the natural creatures living in the ruins.

The Fluted Goblet: While Celwynvian boasted many inns and taverns of fine quality, the Fluted Goblet carried the reputation for the fullest wine cellar, the friendliest workers, and the most refined patrons. A circular patio surrounds three-quarters of the main floor, where wide windows look into the moldering taproom. An upper level served as a private dining room.

The embattled drow skirmishing against the Mierani guards are not the only ones inhabiting the ruins. Fisaria, a drow necromancer, and her apprentice, Bixus, have made the Fluted Goblet their home while they conduct experiments within the city. Fisaria believes that some of the collapsing Celwynvian sorceries could interact with her necromantic spells to create unique, arcane-infused undead—though so far, all her attempts have resulted in ordinary zombies, skeletons, and ghouls, which she releases to roam the city unfettered.

Fisaria and Bixus make regular excursions to the Garden of Eternal Ease, which they dare not occupy permanently due to its exposed construction and lack of structures suitable to house a laboratory. The drow skirmishers who operate out of the Library and the Academy of the Arts know of Fisaria and Bixus, and they occasionally trade supplies for information she gleans in her midnight prowlings. Unbeknownst to Fisaria, Bixus has recently made contact with the huecuva Vigonyis in the Garden of Eternal Ease. He trades his mistress's secrets to the horror in exchange for the undead monstrosity's own knowledge, hoping to gain the wisdom necessary to overthrow Fisaria and claim her arcane treasures.

The Garden of Eternal Ease: This avenue once led to the most somber garden of the City of Emerald Rains. Today, rubble, fallen trees, and shattered buildings thrown from the impact of Earthfall cover most of this vast field, but some untouched land remains. Here is the Garden of Eternal Ease, the final resting place for many of Celwynvian's citizens. Tiny stones, each one simply marked with a name in Elven and a small symbol, cover the verdant expanse. Each stone marks a grave; each symbol represents the person beneath. Flowers decorate the tombstones of maidens, herbalists, and gardeners; books and stars indicate the graves of historians, wizards, and scholars; and an assortment of more personalized symbols represent the hobbies or occupation of those resting below.

Mounds of dark earth indicate that some of these graves—at least a dozen—have recently been exhumed.

This is the work of the drow necromancer Fisaria and her necromantic experiments. The undead creatures she creates from the corpse dust found within the ancient graves sometimes wander back here, perhaps led by some odd fragment of memory. Among the graves lurks the huecuva Vigonyis (see *Tome of Horrors Revisited*).

Once a priest of the elven god Ketephys, Vigonyis was tasked with leading a contingent of the city's citizens to safety in the days before Earthfall. Panicked by the coming cataclysm and convinced that he'd never survive with a legion of sobbing children and bumbling elders in tow, the priest fled his charges. While racing across the Garden of Eternal Ease, however, he trod upon the grave of a long dead cleric of Ketephys. As he did, the ivy upon the grave lashed out and tightened around Vigonyis's legs. The cowardly priest called out for help, but none ever came. When the stars rained down from the heavens, Vigonyis died screaming. Yet even in death the betrayer's pain did not end, and his hatred for Ketephys and the Mierani elves still smolders within his charred, deathless bones.

The Constellar Gallery: This two-tiered, circular building once housed the greatest works of art of the Mierani elves. Now all the precious paintings, sculptures, and tapestries have been salvaged, stolen, or ruined, and only echoing halls remain. Beneath the two circular galleries, lofty archways lead into the central plaza, where empty marble bases show where statues once stood. Canopies of dead vines hang from the central walls, surrounding the sad and empty plaza.

Short flights of steps flank the archways and lead to the first-floor gallery. Four spiral staircases rise from the first floor to the second. Part of the second-story roof has caved in and left the floor below dangerous to tread. Traveling through the collapsed section elicits ominous groans and creaks from the structure, and any explorers in the area risk plummeting down to the first floor.

Worse, the open ceiling allowed a winged predator to enter the gallery and make its nest there. A cunning maftet (see page 88) named Hharvel lurks here, studying the ancient magics of Celwynvian and gradually determining whether the ruins might make a suitable permanent lair. In her investigation, the maftet has discovered a number of hidden vaults beneath the gallery. Filled mostly with ancient statuary, the treasures within hold little interest for the sphinx-like wanderer, but they do make for an aesthetically pleasing place to claim as a new home. Hharvel keeps herself concealed to avoid the conflicts between the drow and elves, though both factions have caught brief glimpses of her shadowy form. None of the intelligent denizens of the area believe the Constellar Gallery holds anything of worth, and thus far Hharvel's research has gone undetected.

Ruined Tower: Once a community of elven homes, the towers here are now little more than piles of rubble. One, however, has become a watch post for the invading dark elves and supports one of their terrible war machines.

Raivanyiel Smithy: This simple, ovoid building sits next to a still pond. A miniature dock, just large enough for one person to stand upon, stretches a few feet across the pond to where a pole stands in the water, supporting a winch and bucket. A wide archway leads inside the smithy, where two massive anvils flank a narrow pit that once held glowing coals. An overgrown stove and an empty coal-bin stand at one end of the pit.

Once every hour, an elven blacksmith exits the smithy to draw water from the pond. The blacksmith appears to be an elf in the prime of his life, with long red hair pulled back in a braid and lean muscles displayed under his sleeveless leather jerkin. In life, his name was Annin Raivanyiel, but he died during the final days before Earthfall. Now a faint echo of his memory, this phantasm goes about completing a half-finished task. Being incorporeal, the spirit cannot actually affect the sword it is trying to forge but still goes through the motions. When the spirit comes to the end of its fruitless labor, it pauses, then starts over again, repeating its pattern endlessly.

Annin's spirit neither talks nor appears to understand speech. It doesn't react to outside stimuli, and is both insubstantial and harmless. The half-finished sword still lies on the anvil, unclaimed, as the current inhabitants of Celwynvian consider the haunted smithy bad luck.

Any character who watches Annin's spirit go through a complete cycle of finishing the sword (a process that takes 6 hours) gains insight into elven smithing techniques, and can use the forge to make a Craft (weaponsmithing) check with a +2 circumstance bonus. If the half-finished sword is removed, Annin's spirit continues to go through its cycle regardless. If the sword is ever completed and returned to Annin's workshop, the spirit bows its head to the sword's bearer and then vanishes forever.

Emerald Bough: Not all elves attended the Academy of the Arts; children could also go to one of the many small schools in Celwynvian where they learned history, literature, art, music, astronomy, and a dozen other subjects. This was one such school, a delicate building with a peaked roof and sloping sides. Half the building has caved in or been knocked in; the uniform size of the collapse suggests some large creature forced its way into the school at some point in the past. Aside from the strange shape of its ruins, the destruction here hides a somber legacy. An attic whisperer (see *Pathfinder* #1) constructed of bird bones and dry leaves lurks in the fallen school, filling the air with the tiny, whimpering cries of a lost hatchling.

Miliaru Park: The second park in Celwynvian retains much of its original beauty and vitality. Miliaru Park, on the eastern fringe of the ruined city, has been left alone so long that it has grown into a riotous mass of lush, vibrant greenery. The native plants and trees overwhelmed exotic imports, and Miliaru Park offers a dense and healthy tribute to the flora of the Mierani Forest.

Native animals enjoy the abundance of Miliaru Park, and rabbits, grouse, foxes, weasels, and squirrels all make their homes in the greenery. It's easy to hide in the park, but difficult to move quietly or quickly due to the large patches of overgrowth. Drow and other fighters in the area avoid the park both for this reason and because of the tendriculous rumored to hide within the wall of trees.



**Kaerishiel
Neiceanax**



Drow of Golarion

Ten millennia ago, the elves inhabited the surface of Golarion. But when the aboleths called down calamity from the heavens, wrapping the world in eternal night, the majority of the elves retreated to their mysterious homeland of Sovyrian, there to remain until the time was once again right.

A sizable part of the elven population, however, refused to abandon Golarion. Instead, they sought shelter amid the depths of the earth. As the world burned and turned to ash above, they delved deeper, seeking ways to survive. Untold thousands died as they journeyed deep into the world's deadliest wilderness. Preyed upon by unimaginable horrors and enslaved by forgotten races, they endured woe and suffering like none they had ever known. Their travails made them colder and crueler, and their prayers went unanswered by their distant gods. In the end, it was savagery and demonic bargains that steeled them against

the darkness, and bitterness and dreams of revenge against their cowardly brethren that drove them to survive. Over the centuries, pain and hatred and dark magic erased all that made these orphaned elves, and replaced it with a new cruelty known as the drow.

Decades after the elves of Sovyrian returned to Golarion, they were shocked to discover that their distant relatives had survived and the degree to which their brethren had savagely changed. Fearing contamination and corruption of their own bloodlines, the leaders of the elves sought to conceal the drow's presence in the world, both from their own race and all others.

The drow, however, see tenacity and necessity where their one-time kin see savagery. They view themselves as the true descendants of the elven heritage; they have done what they needed to in order to survive, despite the scars that now eternally mar their society, their bodies, and their souls.

DROW SOCIETY

The drow of Golarion are a class-oriented, patronage-based, matriarchical society that dominates large reaches of the sprawling Darklands. The greatest concentration of dark elves dwell deep beneath Avistan in the underground metropolis of Zirnakaynin. In this collection of interlocked caverns, the drow seethe and scheme, readying their revenge on their brethren above. Beyond this deplorable vault, though, there are other communities, ranging from vaulted metropolises to small family outposts throughout the Darklands' central reaches of Sekamina.

The basis of drow society is the family, with each being by a matriarch who is typically the most powerful female. In the dark times of the Abandonment (as the drow refer to the centuries immediately following Earthfall), many of their number fell to battles with dwarves, orcs, derro, and fouler subterranean creatures. The greatest damage was inflicted early in their migration below, with males suffering the greatest losses. As a result, women came to control more and more of drow social life, and it was they who came to dominate the great nobles houses and bargained away their families' services to the princes of the Abyss.

In the years that followed, the gender split continued, such that today an individual male drow may be prized for his intelligence, battle prowess, or comeliness, but is still considered secondary to females in social class. Drow women are decision-makers and rulers within the family and society at large. They are treated with respect, and drow males are expected to carry out orders for the good of the family.

The concept of marriage or long-term relationships broke down over the long years of wandering the Darklands, such that descent and inheritance are determined only through the female line. Drow women take lovers regularly and are restricted only by their own desires, which may vary from a lengthy affair with a confidante to a quick succession of relationships. Drow men are allowed the same supposed freedom, but there is societal disapproval of a male that takes multiple simultaneous lovers, as his ultimate loyalty may be called into question.

The more powerful and successful drow families maintain harems of males who serve as bodyguards, escorts, and chambermates for the ruling females. Such groups may vary from a council of advisors, to a troupe of youthful entertainers, to a unit of elite protectors, but it is generally accepted that such groups are used as available resources for the idylls of the matriarchs.

As a result of this, along with the long lifespans of elves, drow genealogy is a complete and utter tangle, and best ignored. One's mother is known, and one's father is generally

assumed. Children are raised by the entire extended family. Even children of the same mother refer to each other as "cousin" as a term of endearment and fact. Young female drow are taught how to rule and control by their aunts. Male drow are taught how to follow orders. Both genders are taught how to fight and protect their people.

Among her offspring, a matron chooses the most promising, bestowing upon them the titles of "first daughter," "second daughter," "first son," and so on. Such titles are usually granted at the matriarch's whim and create an obvious hierarchy within a drow house. The first daughter is the assumed heir to a matron's throne should the leader not choose another, with other daughters serving as their mother's lieutenants and emissaries. In the case of males, it's not unusual for a house to have no titled sons, as many matrons look down upon the gender. When the title first son is granted, though, it's typically to a male of exceptional talent, though no son—regardless of his rank—may ever command one of his sisters.

LIFE IN THE DARKLANDS

The drow were driven underground into a domain without sunlight, their numbers reduced nearly to the point of extinction. In addition, they fled into occupied lands, the ancestral homes of dwarves, orcs, and other subterranean creatures. They survived, but only by using every resource available to them and bargaining with powers beyond sanity. The drow make no apologies for that survival.

The Darklands are host to their own myriad ecologies, which vary according to depth and location. There are calcium-rich seas ringed with limestone shores, bog-like understories and caverns filled with luminescent fungi, columned chambers fertilized by the guano of blind, bone-white bats, and entire civilizations living within the crumbling halls of still-older and greater domains.

The drow conquered all of that in order to survive.

Taking ancient elven skills for shaping wood and plants and turning them to other goals, the drow gradually became masters of subterranean life—improving some, eradicating others. With deadly patience, perverted elven arts, and Abyssal magic, they warped their new realms to their liking. Fungi were altered to serve as guardians and sate a spectrum of culinary desires; blind, albino beasts were bred and improved to be used as pack animals, mounts, and food sources; and potent unguents and the eerie light of a forgotten rainbow were coaxed from grotesque vermin. What they couldn't create or recreate, they stole. From the vegpepymies, the peaceful mushroom-herding people in the depths of the earth, they stole their fungal flocks and groves of ancient arcana-infused molds. From the derro they took ancient alchemical secrets and demonic lore, in the process of discovering methods of

working the bones of the earth and perverting flesh. And so, deep below the world they once knew, the dark elves made themselves masters of a lightless paradise.

But for all they took, the drow needed something more: manpower. The drow exiles were beset on all sides by natives of this land—derro and skum, deep gnome and orc—who resented the intrusion of refugees. Given their situation, it was little wonder that the drow turned to enslaving their neighbors, waging war not out of self-protection, but out of necessity.

The drow maintain a number of slave races, typically referred to as “servitors.” These servitors range from creatures serving under lash and chain to those who have been molded, in body or mind, into more serviceable forms. Those that require overseers are given the most grunt-like tasks: mining, spore gathering, herding the giant vermin useful for food, and beating the underground forests and flushing out prey for more capable drow hunters. Those that can be trusted that have the capability are often promoted to butchers, cooks, basic tool-makers, and builders. In large conflicts, these more trustworthy servants drive hordes of their chained brethren forward to smash against the front lines of the drow’s enemies. The drow care little if such units return, only that they end the day with more slaves than when they started.

The most trusted servitors are those who have adapted to the drow way of thinking. These are curiosities, kept in the courts as novelties and traded as flashy trinkets. A creature with a good voice, a not-regrettable face, or a quick wit might be adopted by a family who has need of such a creature. If said creature embraces the drow way of life and does not need to be blinded, hobbled, or partially trepanned, so much the better. Willing slaves are always the best. Promising slaves might be branded with the mark of their owners if the drow think they will survive more than a year.

To drow mores, anything and anyone who is not a drow is a candidate for slavery. Their word for servitor is *anquestra*, while their word for outlander is *jenanquestrok*, which means “not yet a slave.” Sentients that are spoils of war are always considered slaves, especially if the purpose of the war is to gather more servitors. Similarly, non-drow trespassers can be declared *anquestra*, and this can happen even to non-drow offered protection from a noble house, should another noble house want to enslave them.

Most slaves are tools to be used, and if a tool is stolen, the umbrage generated depends on the value of the tool. Low-level vermin herders are regularly rustled from one family to another with little consequence, even if they are branded. A highly-trained, non-drow courtesan liberated from a powerful noble house, on the other hand, can be used as a

pretext for war. The drow feel that their enslaving of other races is part of the natural order, and that less-enlightened civilizations fail to recognize its advantages.

Drow view the capture and enslavement of their own kind as anathema, the work of barbarians. Captured enemy drow are treated as guests and ransomed back at the end of hostilities. That is not to say that, should negotiations break down, said guest will not be returned in pieces as a sign of a matron’s displeasure.

Although the dark elves do not enslave their own, many drow willingly seek to serve other, more powerful drow. Particularly among the houses of drow nobles, scores of dark elf servants might attend to the whims of cruel mistresses. Such servants have a better lot than slaves and suffer the barbs and tantrums of their employers for the opportunity and respect afforded those close to nobility. Drow nobles, however, often forget the difference between servants and slaves, however, and many drow guards, handmaidens, pages, and attendants bear the lash marks of their mistresses’ furors.

Aside from drow, certain creatures are considered too powerful for enslavement. The aboleths and neothelids are best avoided, or at most treated with respect when they rouse themselves from their dreaming infinities. The brain-like intellect devourers are similarly treated cautiously and as potential enemies. Demons, the servants of the fiendish patrons of the noble houses, are a special case. They are not drow, and by normal conditions many lesser fiends would be considered enslaveable, but they are spared as they are the representatives of more powerful Abyssal lords. As a result, many demons are considered slaves, but slaves on loan from a fearsome ally. As a result, most drow order about allied demons at will, but they tend to do so politely, just in case.

CRAFT AND PERVERSION

According to drow legend, before Earthfall the elves were masters of the surface world, wielding their abilities to nurture new life. They took this belief with them far below the earth, and as with all things, adapted it to their new home. They had no great trees to modify, so turned to other things: stone, iron, and fungus. And themselves.

Sporecrafting was the first of the drow’s adaptations to the new world, transferring the skills used in shaping plants to those of twisting yeasts, molds, and mushrooms, increasing the yield of existing edible fungi, and domesticating and rendering edible poisonous wild fungi. Over the 10,000 year span of their underground empire, the drow have created entire new species, some of which have gone feral and spread far beneath the surface.

In tandem with their fleshwarping abilities, the drow have modified communities full of vegepygmies, reducing the intelligence of this sentient race of mushroom people to a level close to that of a common cow. These fleshwarps are

known as *halsora*, the Weeping Beasts, because the areas where their eyes had been are now little more continually flowing water ducts. The *halsora* are tended to by chained slaves of little value and intelligence.

The drow have adapted fungi as food, lamps, and guardian creatures. They have also used their sporecrafting to refine and expand their use of poisons. While they are effective at creating poisons lethal to almost any race, mere killing is the work of a butcher. Better are those toxins that paralyze, or remove just one of the senses of the target, or rob the target of its voice. Most infamous are the drow-crafted sleeping poisons that leave victims helpless to the dark elves' perverse wishes. Psychoactive poisons used to make a potential slave more tractable are also part of their fungal pharmacopeia.

Lithicrafting is a slower process, an adaptation of the same traits that allow surface elves to shape trees and crystals. Lithicrafting is not mining—the drow keep slaves to extract rock, ore, and gems by brute force, though the skill may be used for that purpose in a pinch. Instead, lithicrafting is utilized to draw up the existing stone in stalactites and stalagmites and hollow them as living spaces without need for mortar or chisel. The lithicrafter seeks to understand the will of the stone and then turn that will into what the shaper desires.

Lithicrafting can be employed to create hidden watch posts and secret doors in otherwise solid rock, produce new windows, and seal off prison cells forever. They may also be used to create statues of water-shaped stone, gargoyles that can also serve as watchpoints, and plinths that contain bodies that the creator does not wish to be found.

Coldwarping is weaponsmithing without fire or forge. The drow do not lack these technological advancements, and indeed have teams of slaves whose job it is to do nothing but toil at great furnaces and anvils to make tools and weapons. However, a coldcrafter is needed to make the finest weapons.

Coldwarping is akin to lithicrafting, but instead of working with stone, the crafter accesses the spirit of the metal itself, drawing it out, making it more fluid, and causing it to shape

into the desired form. Working from the ore, the crafter pulls the metal out of the rock and works it without heat. The metal is stretched out, then folded upon itself, then stretched again and folded again until the layers of metal bind into a firm, permanent blade. These are the blades carried by the drow nobility, mastercrafted weapons beyond the skills of enslaved peons.

Coldwarpers traditionally make the best weapons, but jewelry is also part of the coldcraft skill, granting softer metals greater strength and durability. The master coldwarpers are few in number and considered racial treasures by the drow, meant to be kept in safety and guarded jealously by the great houses.

Fleshwarping is the most frightening of drow crafting abilities, as it is employed against living flesh. In a society that admires its own dark beauty, such a craft is quietly used to keep even the eldest of its people looking young and bright. But the craft has its own dark potential, one that even the drow themselves are uncomfortable with.

Fleshwarping is a modification of the body, and as such can be used to smooth over scars and erase the more blatant signs of age or despoiled living. Alternatively, torturers use it to twist flesh in painful variations, and then to restore it to a state similar to new, only to start again. It might also be employed to reduce one's enemies to monstrosities, to render a target blind or mute, or to recreate them utterly into half-drow figures, destroying mind and soul in the process of rending the flesh.

Among the twisted forms created by fleshwarpers, the most well-known are the spider-like *driders*—criminals, outcasts, and unlucky drow who are repurposed to a new form as hunters for the noble houses. These grotesque abominations serve as deadly warriors, feared even by their drow masters, unleashed only in the most extreme circumstances, and typically kept far from the sight of civilized drow. (See *Pathfinder* #16 for more details on *driders* and other specific fleshwarped creatures.)

Even in drow society fleshwarpers are regarded with suspicion, similar to the role necromancers have among humans. Most houses keep *driders* as well, though typically far from the sight of nobles.



ARE THERE GOOD DROW?

No. Drow are by their nature cruel, calculating, and evil. The argument can be made that they were always so, if their own legends are to be believed, or that they have become such as a result of the long millennia they have been confined in a hostile territory. Regardless, drow are motivated by advancement of self, of family, and of noble house, in that order. Alliances are made to be broken, friendships are made to be taken advantage of, and even love is just a tool for advancement. Drow see a brutal pragmatism in their behavior, and, if as a consequence of their self-interest, fortune comes to another, this is merely considered an undesired byproduct.

Within any organization, a drow betrays its fellows only at the best possible moment. Indeed, the near-universal fear and loathing of the race in some part guarantees that drow remain loyal to their brethren, as they assume that other races play by the same rules. It is this high level of distrust that keeps the drow loyal to family and house; they have no guarantee that future allies won't betray them as they themselves have betrayed their people.

If a drow were to exhibit good behavior—inordinate kindness, cooperation, or empathy—the individual would be assumed to be either enchanted or ill. Attempts would be made to cure the individual (because a good tool should never be thrown away), but if the condition persisted, there would be no choice but to enslave the obviously insane drow or turn him over the fleshwarpers to create a drider, as a warning to others.

There are rumors among the drow of a society of secretive cabals of fleshwarpers who venerate a patron even more mysterious and evil than even the Demon Prince Haagenti—the fiendish alchemist from whom the first secrets of fleshwarping were learned. The matriarchs know of these fleshwarpers, but rather than strike out against them and their darker master, some covertly trade victims to them, hopeful for some abominable and useful leap forward in the profane science.

DROW POLITICS

The drow are ruled by great noble houses, each one named after a family who protected the race during the dark days of Earthfall. Each noble house has an cloud of lesser families, mercenary companies, commercial fronts, and other puppet groups that makes up its supporters. While one faction might gain ascendancy within house politics, and internal purges and blood feuds are common, a noble house maintains a monolithic appearance of a unified family to outsiders.

While every noble drow owes fealty to its own family and matriarch, within the larger structure of the race

the various family matriarchs owe their loyalty to no one. Each of the noble houses has its own matriarch, who is also called “great mother” by her subordinates. The noble matriarch is responsible for distributing largesse and patronage among her supporters, settling claims and arguments, assigning rights and privileges, promoting the worthy, demoting the unworthy, and eliminating the disloyal. To each family among the drow, the favor of the matriarch is highly sought.

Outside of the various noble families, most common drow seek fortune and power by allying themselves either with nobles or other significantly powerful groups. Many common families act as extensions of the noble houses, providing manpower, resources, gold, and slaves as their masters demand, without question or recourse. In return, they supposedly gain protection, opportunities, and prestige among their common peers, though the whims of nobles often prove fickle and one-sided. There have been rebellions through the years of families bridling against the demands of a noble house, often at the agitation of a rival noble house. Against a force as monolithic as a noble house, though, common families typically stand little chance in an out-and-out conflict. Dissension and espionage prove more useful forms of rebellion—selling the secrets of a cruel mistress to her family’s rivals—though such disloyalty is often punished by the annihilation of an entire house. Survivors of such failed rebellions and shadowy coups might be murdered, taken as slaves—one of the rare times drow might become slaves of their own people—or turned over to fleshwarpers and remade as driders as a warning to others of the punishment for unsuccessful rebellion.

In addition to controlling the actions of her house, the great mother also parleys with the house’s demonic patron. In the darkness, the drow had been abandoned by their gods as well as their people, and as such sought out new beings of power to aid them. They found them among the demons, and each in turn bound its loyalty to a demon lord of the Abyss. The lords vary from amused to demanding, from relatively benign to unforgiving, as is the nature of demons. In general, the demon lords have accepted the veneration and make few demands beyond regular sacrifice, in turn providing what support they can spare from their own battles and intrigues.

Each great mother has an heir, usually a direct child or grandchild, almost universally female. The heir sits at the matriarch’s right hand and is expected to know the precise state of the family’s fortunes, threats, and relative strengths in regard to the other noble houses. Although typically the first daughter of the house, matriarchs look for heirs that have the bloodthirsty ambition to survive familial intrigues, but who also possess sufficient loyalty and wisdom that they will not themselves seek the reigns of power without permission.

At the matriarch's left hand is the favored regent, a position for the alpha male of the family. Deferring to the matriarch, the favored regent can be a transitory lover or a long-time advisor, and may even be the birth father of the heir. Some matriarchs keep the same favored regent for years, such that courtiers seek out his aid in petty intrigues. Others use the position to send a message to others about which faction or family within the house is particularly in favor or disfavor.

The great noble houses are themselves extended families that cover myriad generations, given the longevity of the elves. As a result, there are always related factions that seek control of the houses for their own gain, either through political intrigue, assassination, or full-fledged internal rebellion. Thus, drow politics are extremely fluid, and smart matriarchs often play multiple contenders off each other to maintain a balance of political power. However, while the houses appear to be united, they are in truth fluid, the great mothers holding power as long as they control the bulk of their own family and the house's supporters. This makes for exciting court life and deadly gossip as individuals jockey for position and power.

DROW CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS

The largest drow city is Zirnakaynin, located deep beneath the Fangwood in central Avistan. This chain of three massive interconnected caverns holds the bulk of the drow's sprawling city and vast forges, with outlying caverns rich in fungal farms and grounds for raising edible giant vermin. The bottom-most of these cyclopean caves holds a vast lake of fire, along the ironshod shores of which drow smiths and coldwarpers create works of deadly beauty. The highest of these caverns is dominated by the grounds and towers of the great noble houses, whose supporting families clog the maze-like streets and markets. Zirnakaynin is the so-called Last Home of the Elves, as the drow view themselves as the true inheritors of elven culture and the only elves of pure bloodline.

Zirnakaynin is not the only large drow city, though it is the most important. There are others littering the Darklands, usually founded by cast-out families and exiled noble factions. Over the course of 10,000 years, a large number of these accumulated, ranging from monastic havens consisting of a few families to powerful cities almost half the size of Zirnakaynin. The rulers of these outposts usually swear fealty to some great noble house, at least on paper, but some rulers take advantage of the distance to declare themselves noble as well. The matriarchs of Zirnakaynin call these rag-tag independents the "Hinter Houses" and use them as disposable pawns in their machinations, when they think of them at all.

DROW FEATS

Some drow draw upon the weird powers of the Darklands to warp their innate elven abilities, manifesting powers beyond those of typical dark elves.

DARK ADEPT

You gain several additional spell-like abilities from your dark elven heritage.

Prerequisites Drow, character level 3rd

Benefit You gain three new spell-like abilities, each usable once per day. These spell-like abilities are *detect magic*, *feather fall*, and *levitate*. Your caster level for these spell-like abilities equals your total character level.

UMBRAL SCION

You develop more advanced spell-like abilities related to your drow heritage.

Prerequisites Drow female, Dark Adept, character level 7th

Benefit You gain four new spell-like abilities, each usable once per day. These spell-like abilities are *clairvoyance/clairaudience*, *discern lies*, *dispel magic*, and *suggestion*. Your caster level for these spell-like abilities equals your total character level.

In addition, the great noble houses, and many of the larger supporting families, have their own secret (or hopefully secret) bases throughout the Darklands where they can muster forces, conduct experiments, and plot and plan out of the earshot of their noble neighbors. These locations are constantly sought out and relentlessly guarded, and they act as major bargaining chips in the rivalries between the houses.

The Darklands are not always smoothly connected, and the spaces between the cities and outposts are often occupied by hostile races of potential slaves. As a result, the drow use magic and corrupted elf gates to cover large distances. The ownership and activation of such magic, like everything else involving the drow, is a closely guarded secret.

DEATH OF A DROW

The drow serve their families, and their noble houses, during life and after. The drow have learned not to waste anything in their quest for survival, and that includes services rendered upon death.

A drow of common blood whose body can be reclaimed is ceremonially chopped and mulched. The remains are then used as compost within the family fungus fields or gardens. If the deceased has given meritorious service to the house, the family is honored by the fallen kin being taken to the fleshgarden of their nobles and used to fertilize the strangely fluted fungal plants that grow there.

Dead nobility are also laid to rest in the house's fleshgardens, but undergo a different process. The brain is

removed and seeded with rare and specially prepared molds by sporecrafters, and is then planted in the garden within a terracotta shell and fertilized with the remains of loyal retainers. The fungal bloom that grows out of this planting has the waxy nature of living flesh and gleams like the skin of a drow. The mushroom blossoms with flower-like buds, and each of the buds opens to reveal a vaguely face-like bloom. Through the use of magics typically utilized by dark elven druids, the living might converse with the precious fungi as if they were speaking with deceased, drawing upon knowledge the dead drow possessed in life. As this magic summons up the latent memories of the dead drow and not her soul itself, nothing of the corpse's personality remains and her secrets are bared to any with the magic to draw them forth.

The drow-faced blooms of the flesh-gardens are, the sporecrafters state, a mimicking of the original form, not a resurrection or recreation of the living being. The soul of a loyal drow, regardless of social class, is consigned to the care of its patron demon. What happens to it after it reaches this new master is left for theologians to discuss.

PAIN TASTER

For some, whether by their own choice or the will of another who is more powerful, a willingness to serve their vile patrons with every bit of strength and loyalty they can muster is not enough. Sometimes such service calls for more than an ordinary mortal body can withstand. To this end was created the pain taster. Largely unknown among surface-dwellers, the pain taster is a prestige class that has existed among the drow of the Darklands for untold centuries, though it is possible that Zon-Kuthon and other evil deities might have secret sects of them.

This prestige class is usually applied somewhat against the will of the recipient, usually after suffering through some

terrible physical torture and developing an obsession with pain as a result. Masochistic individuals who relish the feel of the lash might also take this class as a means of increasing their own personal prowess. To become a pain taster, a special ritual is performed that involves extensive torture and conditioning of the mind. The priestesses of the drow excel at this sort of activity. The agony is so intense that the recipient must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save or die in the process. Alternatively, the recipient can choose to forego the Fortitude save and instead make a DC 20 Will save in the ultimate exercise of mind over body. Once again, failure results in death, but, if successful, the recipient receives a permanent 1 point increase to his Constitution, having discovered new depths of willpower in himself.

Barbarians take to this class most readily, though many fighters do so as well. Interestingly, the third most numerous class to become pain tasters are fantastically rare drow monks, who embrace its doctrine of will over physical hardship, followed by clerics devoted to some demonic liege. Though rangers are well suited for it, they rarely follow this path. Other classes typically avoid the path of the pain taster as a distasteful, if not an outright insane, pursuit.

Requirements

To qualify to become a pain taster, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Feats: Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude.

Skills: Concentration 4 ranks, Intimidate 8 ranks.

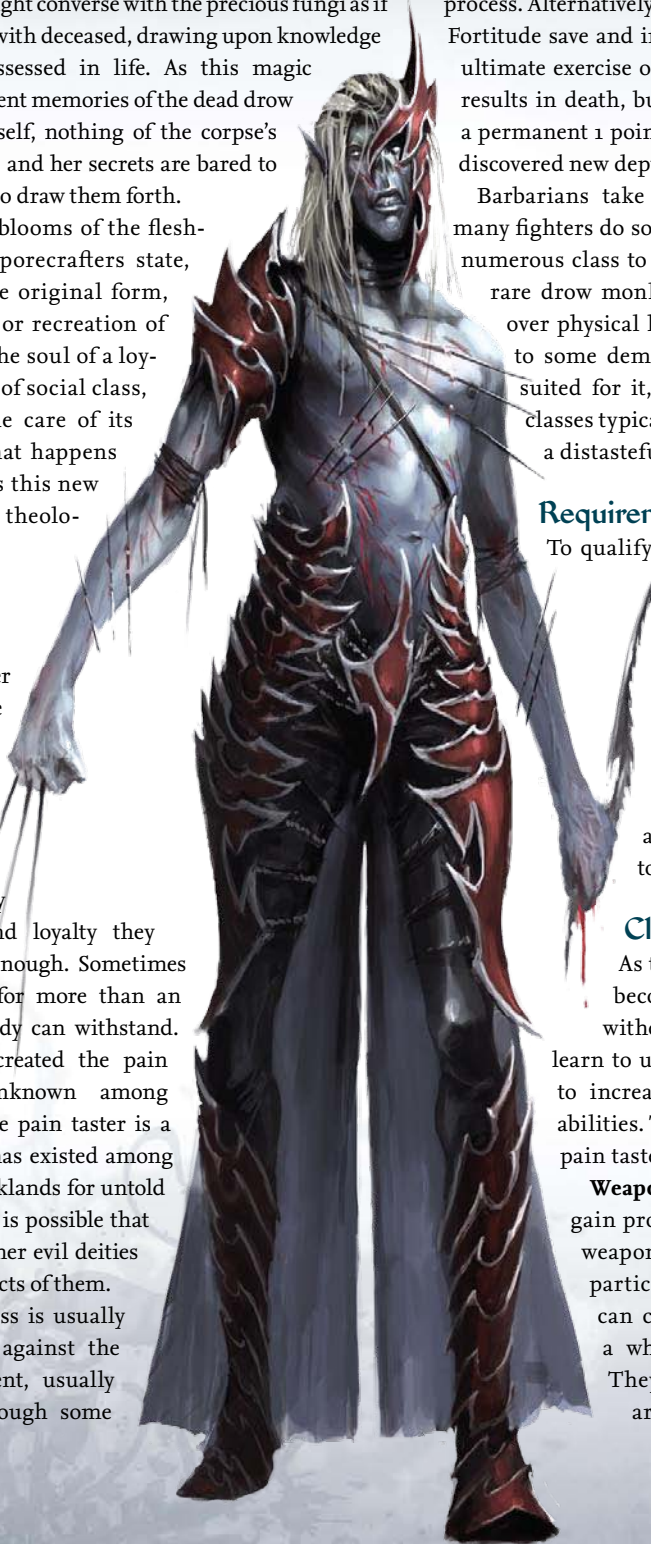
Alignment: Any nongood.

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

Class Features

As they advance in the class, pain tasters become more adept at absorbing injury without detriment. Ultimately, they learn to use the anger caused by their injuries to increase their own strength and combat abilities. The following are class features of the pain taster.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Pain tasters gain proficiency with all simple and martial weapons and with the whip. Pain tasters are particularly adept with whips, and they can choose to inflict lethal damage with a whip rather than nonlethal damage. They gain no additional proficiency with armor or shields.



PAIN TASTER

HD DIO

	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Masochism, disciple of pain
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Cruelty +1d6, damage reduction 1/—
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Blood control, uncanny dodge
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Cruelty +2d6, damage reduction 2/—
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Pain mastery

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Escape Artist (Dex), Heal (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Survival (Wis), Tumble (Dex), Use Rope (Dex)

Masochism (Ex): You have a perverse tolerance for pain that grants you a +4 circumstance bonus on saving throws against pain effects (such as that caused by *symbol of pain* or other effects especially noted to cause pain) and gives you damage reduction 5/— against nonlethal damage. You gain a +1 circumstance bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls anytime you have sustained lethal damage in the previous round (whether self-inflicted or otherwise).

Disciple of Pain (Su): A pain taster gains insight into the mysteries of self-torture and torment. Upon becoming a pain taster, he gains access to the following routines. When he first performs a routine, he must spend an hour and 2,000 gp to prepare himself in the proper way. After that, he may spend an hour performing that routine to gain its benefits for 1 day. Once he has prepared himself to perform a specific routine, he can perform the same routine every day without spending the 2,000 gp again. If at any time he wishes to change his routine, he must spend another hour and 2,000 gp to prepare himself for a different daily routine. He must repay the preparation costs for his former routine if he ever wishes to return to it. A pain taster can only benefit from one routine at a time.

Disciple of Acuity: By spending an hour performing a regimen of increasingly difficult mental exercises while clutching a length of razor-edged metal, the pain taster gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves obtaining and scribing exercises from rare tomes of mnemonic insight, which are rendered useless for this purpose in repeat uses.

Disciple of Flexibility: By spending an hour performing complex stretches, the ascetic of self gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Dexterity for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves purchasing, then bursting a complex personal restraint.

Disciple of Insight: By spending an hour performing a regimen of deep meditation, the ascetic of self gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Wisdom for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves obtaining and burning a number of rare incenses.

Disciple of Spirit: By spending an hour reciting famed monologues and self-affirmations, the ascetic of self gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Charisma for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves memorizing the words of various obscure texts, which are then burnt as a symbol of self confidence.

Disciple of Torment: By spending an hour performing deliberate physical self-tortures, the ascetic of self gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves purchasing a set of custom-made, incredibly sharp but fragile knives and needles, which are destroyed after their initial use.

Disciple of Vigor: By spending an hour performing vigorous physical exercises, the ascetic of self gains a +2 enhancement bonus to Strength for 1 day. Initial preparation for this routine involves purchasing, then ceremonially breaking a number of sturdy and precisely weighted steel weights.

Cruelty (Ex): At 2nd level, a pain taster gains the sneak attack ability, but only when using slashing weapons. This additional damage stacks with any sneak attack damage he may possess from other classes.

A pain taster is particularly adept at delivering cruelty damage with a whip. As long as he chooses to inflict lethal damage with his whip, he inflicts cruelty damage on every strike. If he has sneak attack as well, the additional sneak attack damage only applies if the conditions for a successful sneak attack are met as well. When attacking with a whip using cruelty, the pain taster ignores the restriction on damaging creatures with high armor or natural armor bonuses.

At 4th level, the pain taster inflicts +2d6 points of damage whenever he strikes with cruelty.

Damage Reduction (Ex): Upon reaching 2nd level, the pain taster gains the ability to shrug off some amount of injury from each blow or attack. Subtract 1 from the damage he takes each time he is dealt damage from a weapon of natural attack. At 5th level, this damage reduction rises by 1 point. This damage reduction stacks with any other damage reduction you may already have as a class feature (such as damage reduction gained from barbarian levels).



Blood Control (Ex): At 3rd level, the pain taster gains precise control over the movement of blood within his body. Any attack that deals hit point or Constitution damage through bleeding (such as a bat swarm, stirge, or vampire's bite) reduces its damage by 1 point per round per class level (minimum 0). This applies even to bleeding damage from magical sources such as a wounding weapon.

In addition, a pain taster can delay the effects of injury poisons by attempting a Concentration check as a free action. The DC of this check is equal to the poison's save DC. If the pain taster makes the Concentration check, the poison's initial and secondary damage are both delayed by 1 minute.

Uncanny Dodge (Ex): At 3rd level, a pain taster can react to danger before his senses would normally allow him to do so. He retains his Dexterity bonus to AC (if any) even if he is caught flat-footed or struck by an invisible attacker. However, he still loses his Dexterity bonus to AC if immobilized. If a pain taster already has uncanny dodge

from a different class, he automatically gains improved uncanny dodge instead.

Pain Mastery (Ex): At 5th level, the pain taster's tolerance and enjoyment of pain increases his resistance to nonlethal damage so that he now has damage reduction 10/— against all nonlethal damage. He also gains a +2 circumstance bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls anytime he sustains lethal damage in the previous round (whether self-inflicted or otherwise).

Furthermore, the pain taster can now combine two routines when he uses his disciple of pain ability. The time and cost required remains the same, but he can combine the bonuses of two routines into one. Alternatively, he can double any one routine, gaining a +4 enhancement bonus to an ability score rather than two +2 enhancement bonuses to any two scores.

DEMONIC INITIATE

Beyond the petty cruelties of mortals and the fickle whims of gods watch beings of indescribable foulness.

DEMONIC INITIATE**HD D8**

	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells Per Day
1st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Abyssal resistance, dark mark	—
2nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Demonic boon (lesser)	+1 level of existing class
3rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Abyssal tongue	+1 level of existing class
4th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Summon demonic ally	+1 level of existing class
5th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Damnation, demonic boon (greater)	+1 level of existing class

Class Skills (2 + Int modifier per level): Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (religion) (Int), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Sense Motive (Wis), Spellcraft (Cha)

From lairs secreted amid the very bowels of existence, these princes of the demon race rage with the primal madness of demon kind and plot insane ends to all reality. Individuals of indescribable might, kin to gods, and whispered horrors of profane lore, the demon lords seek to tip the balance of the planes toward the spiral of devastation. For every soul that raises a voice in obeisance and sacrifices his kin to honor the darkness, these foul lords of the Abyss spread their eternal taint. And for such foul devotion, they reward crazed mortals with demonic might and control over all manner of depravities. Yet these lords of the Outer Rifts merely lend their powers, for in the end, the souls of their devoted are the first to be consumed.

Demonic initiate is a prestige class for those who seek to worship and gain power from a specific demon lord. Cultists, crazed mages, foul priests, and thaumaturges delight in the adoration of demons and bargaining for their might. Depending on which demon lord a demonic initiate devotes herself to, her suite of powers and resistance changes. Yet, in the end, all demonic initiates are damned, their souls claimed by their dark patrons upon their deaths.

Aside from the typical requirements necessary to qualify for this prestige class, any who wish to take levels in demonic initiate must foreswear themselves to the worship of a particular demon lord. This is a profane acknowledgment of devotion, typically involving a sacrifice of the character's blood before a congregation of the demon lord's cultists or a servant of the demon lord itself. Upon performing such a rite, a character who meets the class's requirements may become a demonic initiate.

Currently, only the twelve demon lords worshiped by the drow are presented as options for the demonic initiate, but more fiendish patrons and types of demonic initiates certainly exist; see *Pathfinder* #18 for further examples.

Requirements

To qualify to become a demonic initiate, a character must fulfill all of the following criteria:

Feats: Iron Will.

Skills: Knowledge (the planes) 8 ranks, Spellcraft 4 ranks.

Alignment: Chaotic evil.

Special: Foresworn to a demonic patron.

Class Features

As they progress, demonic initiates are drawn deeper into the mysteries and profanities of their foul patrons, trading ever more significant portions of their souls for access to greater fiendish power. The greatest demonic initiates foreswear themselves completely to their chosen Abyssal master, becoming irredeemable slaves to these princes of evil. The following are class features of the demonic initiates.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Demonic initiates gain proficiency with all simple weapons and with their demonic patron's favored weapon. They gain no additional proficiency with armor or shields.

Abyssal Resistance: At 1st level, a demonic initiate gains a measure of resilience against the chosen perils or pains most commonly employed by her demon lord. This resistance varies depending on the character's patron.

Dark Mark: Demonic initiates innately recognize those dedicated to their Abyssal patron. All demonic initiates recognize other demonic initiates of the same demon lord as well as demons in the service of their lord. This does not allow them to immediately recognize all creatures who worship their patron, merely the most fanatical.

Spells Per Day: From 2nd level on, when a new demonic initiate level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if she had also gained a level in whatever spellcasting class she belonged to before she added the prestige class. She does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that she adds the level of demonic initiate to the level of whatever other arcane spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly.

Demonic Boon, Lesser: At 2nd level, a demonic initiate gains the lesser of two demonic boons from

her patron. This dark gift typically takes the form of a number of spell-like abilities, each of which the demonic initiate can utilize once per day. The demonic initiate's caster level for these spell-like abilities equals her total character level.

Abyssal Tongue: Beginning at 3rd level, a demonic initiate may communicate in a way that is only understood by those foresworn to the same demonic patron as her. This includes thaumaturges, other demonic initiates, and demons that worship the same demon lord.

Summon Demonic Ally: Once per day, starting at 4th level, a demonic initiate can cast *summon monster* to conjure a demon in service to her patron. The summoning spell's strength depends on the demonic initiate's class level, with a 4th-level demonic initiate able to use *summon monster IV*, and a 5th-level demonic initiate able to use *summon monster V*.

Damnation: Upon dying, a 5th-level demonic initiate's soul is claimed by her demonic patron. The creature cannot be returned to life by any means unless the demon lord she worships allows it.

Demonic Boon, Greater: At 5th level, the demonic initiate's patron demon lord grants her a second, more significant boon. What this boon entails varies between demon lords.



ABRAXAS

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist effects that employ a written medium, such as *sepia snake sigil* or *symbol of death*.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *augury*, *identify*, and *illusory script* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater *Heretical Revelation:* Three times per day, you may whisper a terrible secret of reality to an adjacent target as a standard action. The target must make a Will save or be affected by one of three effects of your choosing. The Will save DC to resist any of your revelations is 15 + your Intelligence modifier.

Charm: Affects the target as per the spell *charm monster*, lasting for a number of hours equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Confusion: Affects the target as per the spell *confusion*, lasting for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence modifier.

Nausea: The target becomes nauseated for a number of rounds equal to your Intelligence modifier.



ANDIRIFKHU

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to avoid traps.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *fire trap*, *magic weapon*, and *snare* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Any living creature you damage with a slashing or piercing weapon continues to bleed, losing 1 hit point per round thereafter. Multiple wounds do not result in cumulative bleeding loss. The bleeding can be stopped by a DC 10 Heal check or the application of a *cure* spell or some other healing magic.



ARESHKAGAL

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist sonic or language-dependent effects, like a bard's *suggestion* or a harpy's captivating song.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *hold portal*, *magic mouth*, and *touch of idiocy* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Once per day, as a free action, you may pass through one door and come out another elsewhere. This effect functions as the spell *dimension door*, but may only be activated as you pass through a door, archway, window, or other portal. You can exit through any portal you know of within 500 feet.



CYTH-V'SUG

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist any effect that causes nausea.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *hold person*, *ray of enfeeblement*, and *warp wood* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Three times per day, as a standard action, you can make a touch attack against an opponent. If your attack succeeds, the target takes 4d6 points of damage, which you gain as temporary hit points. These temporary hit points disappear 1 hour later.



FLAUROS

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist all fire-based spells or effects.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *burning hands*, *flaming sphere*, and *pyrotechnics* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater You gain fire resistance 10.



HAAGENTI

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist transmutation spells and effects.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *blindness/deafness*, *enlarge person*, and *reduce person* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater You gain a malleable form and may employ *alter self* as a spell-like ability at will.

DROW DEMON LORDS

Demon	AL	Portfolios	Domains	Favored Weapon
Abraxas	CE	forbidden lore, magic	Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, Magic	whip
Andirifkhu	CE	knives, traps	Chaos, Evil, Luck, Trickery	kukri
Areshkagal	CE	portals, riddles	Air, Chaos, Evil, Trickery	sickle
Cyth-V'sug	CE	fungus, parasites	Chaos, Earth, Evil, Plant	scimitar
Flauros	CE	fire, salamanders	Chaos, Evil, Fire, War	spear
Haagenti	CE	alchemy, transformation	Chaos, Creation, Evil, Strength	axe
Jubilex	CE	ooze, poison	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Water	heavy mace
Mazmezz	CE	bindings, vermin	Animal*, Chaos, Destruction, Evil	flail
Nocticula	CE	darkness, lust	Chaos, Charm, Evil, Darkness	hand crossbow
Shax	CE	lies, murder	Chaos, Destruction, Evil, Trickery	dagger
Socothbenoth	CE	perversion, taboos	Chaos, Charm, Evil, Travel	quarterstaff
Zura	CE	cannibalism, vampires	Chaos, Death, Evil, Madness	rapier

*Spells of the Animal domain affect vermin as well when cast by a priest of Mazmezz.



JUBILEX

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on saves made to resist poison.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *curse water*, *detect poison*, and *ghoul touch* as spell-like

abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Three times per day, as a free action, you may add the effects of the spell *poison* to any melee attack that just dealt damage. The target of your attack receives a Fortitude save to resist the effects of the spell as normal. The save DC to resist your poison is 15 + your Constitution modifier.



MAZMEZZ

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on all skill and grapple checks made to escape bindings or grapples.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *animate rope*, *summon swarm*, and *web* as spell-like

abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater You gain a climb speed equal to half your base land speed. In addition, you can communicate with all vermin similarly to the spell *speak with animals*.



NOCTICULA

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on all Will saves made to resist spells of the charm subschool and against blindness effects.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *charm*

person, *darkness*, and *darkvision* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Three times per day, as a free action, you may add the effects of the spell *blindness* to any ranged attack that just dealt damage. The target of your attack receives a Fortitude save to resist the effects of the spell as normal. The save DC to resist this blindness is 15 + your Wisdom modifier.



SHAX

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on all Will saves made to resist illusions of the figment subschool.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *disguise self*, *invisibility*, and *true strike* as spell-like

abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater You gain sneak attack +3d6 as per a rogue. Your sneak attack damage stacks with other character levels you possess.



SOCOTHBENOTH

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on all Will saves made to resist enchantments of the compulsion subschool.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *alter self*, *hypnotism*, and *suggestion* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Your enchantment spells and spell-like abilities become hard to resist, granting you a +1 bonus to their save DCs.



ZURA

Abyssal Resistance You gain a profane bonus equal to your class level on all saves made to resist the supernatural abilities of undead creatures.

Demonic Boon, Lesser You can cast *cause fear*, *deathwatch*, and *spider climb* as spell-like abilities once per day.

Demonic Boon, Greater Once per day, you may draw power from the blood of your victims. You may drink the blood of any creature with a CR less than 2 lower than your character level and who has been dead for less than an hour. For example, a cleric 10/ demonic initiate 5 receives the benefit of draining blood from creatures of CR 13 or higher. Drinking a creature's blood takes 1 minute but grants you the benefits of the spell *death knell* for 1 hour.



Lament for Emerald Rains

The ancient elven city of Celwynvian held many wonders, not the least of which was the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre. Open to elves of all stations, the conservatory's graduates were renowned for their technical acumen and breadth of their repertoire. Yet all things come to an end, and in the wake of Earthfall the elves abandoned the Coliseum as they did all of Golarion. Millennia later, chambers previously filled with music now shelter choking vines and skittering vermin. Yet stranger things lurk here as well, and what once granted inspiration as a muse of music now takes form in smoke and shadow and hunger. Even in a city long lost to tragedy and beset by enemies, those who wander what remains of the City of Emerald Rains avoid these echoing halls, deeming it over all others a cursed, haunted place.

"Lament for Emerald Rains" is an adventure for four 7th-level characters. In addition to working as a stand-alone adventure, this Set Piece can supplement this month's Adventure Path installment, "The Armageddon Echo," or any campaign that might benefit from an ancient ruin.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

PCs might be compelled to explore the ruins of the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre for numerous reasons. Adventure hooks marked with an asterisk might prove especially useful to GMs running "The Armageddon Echo."

Music Hath Charms: When the elves abandoned Celwynvian millennia ago, the residents of the conservatory could not take all of their famed musical instruments with them. They stored the most precious of these instruments beneath the building to reclaim later. Farisein Tolinvinaar, an ambassador from the elven kingdom of Kyonin, would like to see the instruments returned to elven hands. Meanwhile, Jillarmo Carez, a minor Taldan noble, has heard these stories and desires the relics for his own personal collection. Either patron would pay handsomely for the retrieval of such priceless relics.

***The Muse's Revenge:** Elven scouts (or perhaps even the PCs themselves) report seeing a light inside the ruins of the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre. Eviana, the leader of the

*Oh stars, and air, and breath of being,/Muses of whispers and ether's songs.
Oh moon, and boughs, and waters fleeing,/Grant me the voice of heavenly throng.
In Emerald Rains sky deep and strong,/By falls' light kiss and vernal excess,
Amid lark-sung bowers we belong,/asleep, pale poets, in Yuelral's caress.
Our notes we raise in strident address/Our instruments singing your story.
Our boundless devotion to impress/Our hearts reflections of your glory.
In eternal Rains we take our pleasure/Our home, our city, our fair treasure.*

—“Hope for Emerald Rains,” translated from the traditional Elven

elves of Crying Leaf, believes this light must be the “spirit of creativity” that, according to ancient tales, dwelt within the school. She entreats the PCs to make contact with the spirit and see if it might become an ally of the elves defending Celwynvian. (The light is actually the resident will-o'-wisp, though the muse—the ghost Jochareil—will likely make her presence known.)

Raiders of the Lost Art: Aetheri Irvos (NG female elf expert 6), an elven sage and artist, learned of the remarkable quality of the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre's frescoes in an ancient text and desires to copy them for further study. She hires the PCs to defend her and her assistant from whatever dangers might lurk in the ruins. Meanwhile, her assistant, Thistle (CN male elf rogue 3) is looking for easily pocketed relics to supplement his salary. Aerheri wishes to visit every room on the conservatory's main floor, and revealing the frescoes likely means removing some of the ruin's more invasive overgrowth.

***Music of the Night:** The scouts of Captain Kaerishiel Neirenar report having seen dark-robed drow wizards slipping into the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre several times over the past week. The elves have no knowledge of the dark elves' designs on the conservatory, but Captain Kaerishiel asks the PCs to discern their enemies' intentions before ordering an attack. (The drow have attempted to charm the gray render lairing in the conservatory more than once, meeting bloody ends each time. The bodies in area 3 are all that remain of their failures.)

THE COLISEUM OF MASK AND LYRE

Unless otherwise noted, the conservatory has the following common features.

Ceilings: The main hall and mezzanine level have 20-foot-high ceilings, while the ceiling in area 3 rises more than 35 feet above the floor.

Walls: Although only a hand's width thick, the walls throughout the conservatory are of exceptional quality (hardness 8, 90 hp per 6 inches, Break DC 35, Climb DC 15).

Doors: Most of the conservatory's stone doors have weathered the ages well (hardness 8, 40 hp, Break DC 23).

MONSTROUS MUSIC LOVERS

A number of dangerous creatures have taken up residence within the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre.

Ghost: The ghost Jochareil lurks in the ossuary, lamenting the past. She ignores most noise from the ruins above, but should she hear actual vocal or instrumental music, she rises to kill whatever creature intrudes upon her mournful memories. Jochareil does not consider the will-o'-wisp's noises music.

Gray Render: The gray render occupying the conservatory has bonded to the will-o'-wisp that haunts the ruin. At night, it roams area 3, peacefully listening to the creature's weird humming music. Should the music stop, though, the render becomes enraged.

During the day, there's a 70% chance the gray render is off hunting in the city and surrounding forest. Every hour before dusk there's a 20% chance it returns. If spending the day in the ruin, the monster wanders between areas 1, 2, and 3.

Will-o'-wisp: The will-o'-wisp has developed a symbiotic relationship with a local gray render. Every evening it floats around the conservatory, shedding its ghostly light and humming with strange music. Aside from attracting the occasional curious creature, the music entralls the gray render. Once a potential victim is close, it stops its music, which sends the render into a rage. The resulting terror sustains the will-o'-wisp, and the render enjoys the music and extra food.

The will-o'-wisp performs from just after dusk to near dawn, spending the time floating about areas 3 and 5. During the day, though, it invisibly rests in area 8, though it might be attracted to noises elsewhere in the conservatory.

Illumination: Shattered domes and large cracks provide shadowy illumination within the conservatory during the day. The reception hall also receives partial light during the day. The basement is dark.

1. Forecourt

Stone benches—a few still serviceable—surround this sizable, domed building's semicircular forecourt. The courtyard's stones are buckled and rent by tenacious plants. Glimpses

of intricate stone carvings peer out from the building's vine-covered façade like faces behind green veils. A large, half open stone doorway reveals a gloomy interior, as does a section of collapsed wall to the east.

This area is the main entrance to the conservatory. Although the forecourt doubled on occasion as an outdoor theater, it was used daily as a place for students and faculty to gather between classes. The de facto stage often hosted impromptu performances.

ADC₁₄ Search check of the area reveals that the doorframe is damaged, as if something large has forced its way inside.

2. Render's Lair (EL 8)

The stone door to this room has been torn off its ancient hinges and lies amid the dust and vines nearby.

The scent of sweat and a thick animal musk dominates this small room. A large mound of leaves, rotting wood, and shattered statuary lies heaped in the corner.

Once a simple cloakroom, this chamber now serves as a bed for the conservatory's resident gray render. The rotting vegetation serves as a cozy bed for the creature, while it simply enjoys the statuary—having a particular affection for sculpted stone hands.

Creatures: When it is not hunting in the ruined city or wandering area 3 listening to the will-o'-wisp, the gray render spends much of its time lounging about the forecourt or sleeping here. Should the PCs encounter the

creature, it defends its territory, bellowing in an attempt to scare intruders off. If they don't flee, the render attacks.

Clever PCs might know about a gray render's bonding instincts with a DC 18 Knowledge (arcana) or DC 20 Bardic Knowledge check. This particular render is bonded to the will-o'-wisp that inhabits area 8, and it spends much of the evening enrapt with the aberration's eerie music and flashing lights. Should another creature make a DC 12 Perform check, the gray render becomes docile for as long as the music continues and it remains unthreatened.

GRAY RENDER

CR 8

hp 125 (MM 138)

TACTICS

During Combat The gray render fights to defend its territory, making frequent use of Improved Bull Rush and Power Attack.

Morale The gray render usually flees if reduced below 25 hp, but fights to the death if the will-o'-wisp is active nearby.

3. Main Hall (EL 4 or 9)

Despite a number of fallen and crumbling supports, a multitude of stable marble columns holds the ceiling aloft. Mold and fungi seem to grow in every corner and crevice, and the scent of rot and dusty air gives the sizeable hall the feeling of unnatural closeness. Several ancient stone doors provide access to numerous other rooms and to the south stands a vine-tangled platform.

Rats and vermin skitter amid the overgrowth that has invaded this chamber. The platform to the south once allowed featured performers to entertain students going to and from their studies, but aside from vine-hidden images of songbirds, no evidence of this remains.

Anyone who wanders the hall finds two thoroughly dismembered drow corpses against the northeastern wall of the hall. These are the remains of a pair of drow wizards who had hoped to magically coax the conservatory's gray render into their service. Needless to say, they failed. The gray render gnawed a bit upon the corpses but, disliking the flavor of drow flesh, has otherwise left the bodies to rot here.

Creatures: The conservatory's resident will-o'-wisp and gray render nightly roam these halls. An encounter with these two beasts is EL 9.

Also, at any time, shocker lizards might be found hunting the vermin that infest the hall. Any time they pass through the hall, the PCs have a 60% chance of stumbling across 1d4 shocker lizards, an EL 4 encounter on average.

SHOCKER LIZARDS

CR 2

hp 13 each (MM 224)

TACTICS

During Combat If approached (even accidentally), the shocker lizards hiss and shoot stunning shocks at whoever disturbed them.



Morale The lizards continue to attack until the interloper leaves or falls unconscious. They flee to area **10** should they take any damage.

Treasure: Anyone who makes a DC 12 Search check of the drow corpses here finds a pair of masterwork daggers, a *potion of darkness*, 60 gold pieces, and a brief note written in Undercommon that contains orders to enchant the beast that lairs in “the domed ruin at the end of the city’s northwestern arm.”

4. Starry Hall

This oblong chamber is about twenty-five feet long and half as wide, with a doorway at either end and a riser of stone benches along the eastern wall. A continuous fresco of starry skies runs the circumference of the room, obscured by unpleasant patches of mold and mildew.

Devoid of trappings, only the murals along the walls distinguish these former classrooms. To fully examine these frescoes, the layers of mold must be carefully removed—a simple process that requires 5 minutes of effort per 5-foot square, 50 minutes for the entire chamber. If the PCs are escorting someone interested in the conservatory’s art, this area is particular intriguing.

5. Rotunda (EL 7)

Motes of dust drift lazily through this airy chamber. A dome rises high overhead, through which tangled vines tumble like leafy curtains. Across from a pair of sturdy stone doors engraved with chipped images of idealized elven dancers lie the dilapidated, weed-covered remains of some complex stone and metal device.

This chamber once served as the conservatory’s most impressive recital hall, the dome above allowing the colors of the sun and moon to compliment the performance of ancient elven masters. Against the far wall squats what has survived of a hydraulis—a type of pipe organ employing flowing water to compress air in the wind chamber. A protuberance on the wall beneath the organ contains pipes that convey water from an underground source to and from the wind chamber. Although half collapsed, as a testament to elven workmanship, the instrument can still be partially played provided one or more stops are removed. Any character with ranks in Perform (keyboard) can recognize this and make the simple repair. Once fixed, a faint hum fills the room. If a key is then depressed, the pipes emit a loud note, which can be heard throughout the conservatory.

Creatures: Four assassin vines lurk in the room, constricting pillars or hanging from the dome above, concealed by mundane creepers. These four hidden

menaces might be located anywhere in the room that the GM so chooses.

In addition to the assassin vines lurking here, making use of the hydraulis poses an unexpected danger. The sound of music in the halls above attracts the attention of the ghost Jochareil languishing in area **11**, who comes to investigate and torment intruders. There’s also a possibility that creatures outside the conservatory might be drawn to the strange noises emanating from the ruin. There’s a 20% chance for every round the hydraulis is played that a wandering monster (see page 81) comes in search of the noise’s source.

ASSASSIN VINES (4)

CR 3

hp 30 each (MM 20)

6. Evening Auditorium (EL 6)

This chamber is a half-dome projecting out from the conservatory, decorated with overgrown scenes of elves attending to everyday activities accompanied by musicians. Something glitters among these reliefs. High on the dome, nearly thirty feet overhead, the ceiling—spider-webbed with deep cracks—lets in natural light and hanging vines.

The dome’s faded fresco depicts activities that typically occur in the afternoon or evening. As in area **4**, these vines can be cleared with little effort, though they require an hour to fully remove. Those who clear away the vines find flecks of blue, green, and violet quartz crystal studding the eye sockets of the reliefs. These gemstones can be pried out of the walls with any pointed tool or weapon and a DC 12 Strength check. A DC 14 Search check reveals 4d8 of these gems, worth 1d4 gp a piece. Repeated Search checks discover no additional gems.

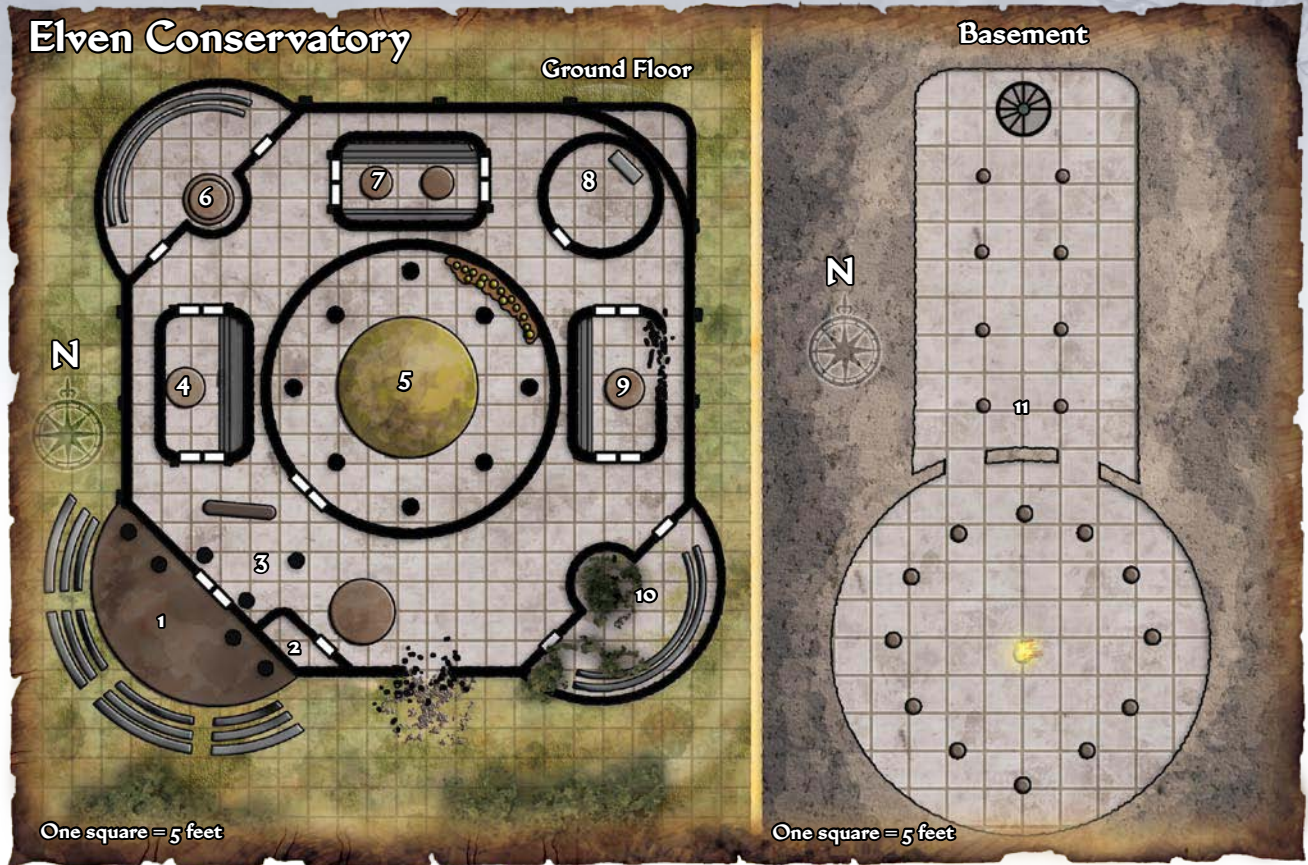
Trap: An unintentional trap has formed in this chamber: the ceiling is about to collapse. Only a few dead vines outside the hall are currently keeping the roof together, and any significant vibration threatens to dislodge them. There is a 20% chance any round that a creature below makes a loud noise, strikes the room’s walls, or tries to dislodge a gem from the walls, that the ceiling’s center collapses, affecting every square below that doesn’t touch a wall. A PC might notice the dangerous ceiling with a DC 22 Spot check (includes a +2 modifier for the ceiling’s distance from the ground). Characters with ranks in Knowledge (architecture and engineering) or stonemasonry get a +2 bonus on this check.

COLLAPSING CEILING

Type mechanical; Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset no reset



Effect atk +20 melee (8d6 stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in the center of area 6)

7. Hall of the Heavenly Ode

A pair of stone double doors stand at either end of this crumbling, roughly oval chamber. Two small platforms rise up from the floor, surrounded by stacked stone benches. From the walls, obscured by vines and streaks of dirty rainwater, protrude reliefs of elven pipers, swirling music, and soaring dragons.

This hall once served as a classroom where two experienced lecturers would instruct an assembly of students. If the PCs are interested in the conservatory's art or with someone who is, this area is particularly significant. The vines here can be removed just as in area 4.

Treasure: The walls of this room bear a strange sort of treasure. Anyone who can read Elven and has ranks in Perform recognizes the swirling patterns upon the walls as notations for elven music. The notes record the original version of a famed work known as "Heaven in Ode." Anyone who was raised among elves and hears this music played recognizes it—it's an especially pervasive traditional work. Should a character spend 10 minutes

copying the music upon the walls, the work can be sold to nearly any elven scholar or researcher—particularly those of Crying Leaf—for upwards of 1,500 gp.

8. Shrine (EL 6)

This cylindrical room boasts a domed roof featuring many gaps for long shattered windows amid fanciful carvings. Across from the door stands a stone altar bearing the symbol of a pointing hand surrounded by a rainbow. To the right, water still trickles in an ancient fountain. The entirety of the room was once painted in bright colors, but only a few faint pastel flakes remain.

This shrine is dedicated to Findeladlara, elven goddess of the arts. The walls bear images of her worshipers raising songs and holding festivals in her name.

Those who investigate the altar find numerous holes carved into its surface and an inscription in Elven: "In their names we raise their songs. With their voices our notes take flight. Never will we mourn their loss." A DC 16 Search check also reveals a simple mechanism attached to the altar, allowing it to move, though there is no apparent trigger. Any PC with ranks in Perform (wind instruments) or who makes a DC 16 Intelligence check realizes that the

holes on the altar are similar to those on a flute. Blowing into the largest hole and making a DC 12 Perform (wind instruments) check causes the altar to slide aside, revealing the stairs to area 11. Alternatively, a DC 22 Disable Device check also allows the altar to be pushed out of the way with a DC 14 Strength check.

Creatures: A self-absorbed will-o'-wisp claims the conservatory—and this room in particular—as its lair. The aberration sleeps here during the day (but combat elsewhere in the conservatory might awaken it). It is absent at night, as that is when it stalks the ruins and surrounding areas in search of fearful creatures on which to feed. At dusk and dawn, the will-o'-wisp has a habit of flitting about this room singing for its own amusement. The will-o'-wisp is aware of the gray render, but has no love for anything besides itself. If the PCs mistake it for a benign creature, the will-o'-wisp might play along, but will only lead them into danger.

WILL-O'-WISP

CR 6

hp 40 (MM 255)

TACTICS

During Combat If the gray render is still alive, the will-o'-wisp flees to its side and aids it in attacking its foes. If the brute is unavailable, the will-o'-wisp makes a few harrying attacks against the PCs, attempting to lure them toward the assassin vines in area 5, the weak ceiling in area 6, or the shambling mound in area 10, all the while sniping them with hit-and-run shock attacks.

Morale The will-o'-wisp flees if reduced to half its hit points.

9. Moldering Hall (EL 6)

Thick molds and rotting vines cover the walls of this rectangular hall. Significantly sized cracks in the ceiling let stagnant rainwater pool in places upon the floor except for where the stone rises to form a small circular platform and escalating shelves. The growths upon the walls rise and fall, as if hiding something beneath.

Once a classroom, water and overgrowth obscure this chamber's original purpose. The walls here are covered in well-preserved ancient elven artistry depicting young elven couples reclining amid a grove of fruiting trees. This artwork, however, is now entirely hidden by moss and mold. The overgrowth can be removed, allowing characters to examine the reliefs below, in the same ways as in areas 4 and 7, but here it is a more dangerous prospect. Some of the vegetation along the eastern wall is yellow mold. Any character with ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) can make a DC 14 Spot check to notice this deadly growth. Anyone who disturbs it releases a cloud of poisonous spores in a 10-foot radius (Fort DC 15, initial 1d6 Con; secondary 2d6 Con; see DMG 76 for details). Fire destroys

yellow mold, but also damages the painting underneath. Sunlight (natural or magical) renders the mold dormant.

10. Morning Auditorium (EL 8)

Scenes of elven musicians welcoming the dawning of the sun surround this dilapidated chamber. Numerous man-sized heaps of rotting plant material spill out of a large alcove in the near wall and across the floor. Amid the leaves and piled branches sparkle bits of stone and other baubles.

The heaps here are mostly leaves and small twigs collected by this room's shocker lizard residents to build their nests. A DC 15 Search check reveals a dozen shiny shocker lizard eggs half buried amid the refuse—the heat of decay acting as an incubator.

Creatures: The chamber is home to a colony of shocker lizards that hunts small prey in and around the conservatory. At any time, five lizards are in the nest, the rest out hunting. A shambling mound also inhabits the room, having wandered into the conservatory months ago. It doesn't eat the lizards because it enjoys the mild shocks they give it. The two types of monsters live in relatively harmony, avoiding each other as much as possible while instinctively acknowledging the other's potential usefulness.

SHOCKER LIZARDS (5)

CR 2

hp 13 each (MM 224)

TACTICS

Before Combat The lizards hiss at anyone who enters the room.

During Combat Half the lizards stand on the heap, bringing them eye-to-eye with most characters. The other lizards position themselves on the opposite side of the intruders. The lizards start with stun shocks, but they quickly turn to lethal shocks if the intruders don't flee.

Morale The shocker lizards are fearless in defense of their eggs, though they will not follow PCs out of the room.

SHAMBLING MOUND

CR 6

hp 60 (MM 222)

TACTICS

Before Combat The shambling mound lurks amid the shocker lizards' compost heaps, gaining a +12 racial bonus on its Hide checks.

During Combat The shambling mound attempts to grapple and constrict anything larger than a shocker lizard that enters the area, focusing on creatures that deal it the most damage.

Morale The shambler withdraws if reduced to 15 or fewer hit points or if fire is used against it. If pursued by a faster creature, it fights to the death.

Treasure: The shocker lizards instinctively decorate their eggs' incubator with whatever shiny objects they find.

This mostly consists of broken glass and worthless rocks, but a DC 15 Search check discerns gems and coins among the detritus. If the PCs take the time to search the compost heap, they find 119 gold coins of antique elven mintage, 11 beryls of various shades (each gem is worth 100 gp), and a clear spindle *ioun stone* trapped amid the muck.

11. Ossuary (EL 8)

Two short passages gently slope down to an oblong chamber bisected by three pillars. Stacked cavities riddle the walls, many bearing ancient, cloth-wrapped skeletons in peaceful repose. In others, skulls and other bones are stacked artistically. Other remains—warped wood and tarnished metal from old instruments—litter the room. The far wall is blank, save for a single unadorned alcove.

This ossuary contains the bones of conservatory alumni. Famous musicians and composers were interred, often with an instrument or sheet music (long since rotted away). For others, only their skull, ribcage, and/or hands were preserved. Mourners placed offerings to Pharamasma in the alcove at the rear.

The stairs here rise to the hidden opening beneath the altar in area 8.

Creature: Once a spirit of creativity, the adopted daughter of the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre's first headmistress was an assimar named Jochareil. For long centuries she lived, learned, taught, and led the conservatory, gifting numerous works of otherworldly beauty to her students and peers. When finally she died, her spirit proved so committed to the Coliseum that she lingered on, guarding over the bones of those masters buried beneath her home and granting her soothing song to initiates in search of inspiration.

But all that was a long time ago.

Through the Age of Darkness, Jochareil was left alone. For long centuries she tended the conservatory, waiting for her people's return. Yet, gradually, despair set in, and eventually madness.

Today, Jochareil is completely insane. Crazed by loneliness and pained by the sound of any sort of music, she lairs in the depths of the conservatory, hateful of her surroundings but too terrified to pass on to a final end.



JOCHAREIL

CR 9

Female assimar bard 6

CE Medium undead

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +22,

Spot +22

DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12

(+2 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 38 (6d12)

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Defensive Abilities +4 turn resistance, incorporeal; **Resist** acid 5, cold 5, electricity 5;

Immune undead traits

OFFENSE

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee incorporeal touch +5 touch (1d6)

Special Attacks bardic music (6/day—countersong, *fascinate*, inspire courage, inspire competence, *suggestion*), corrupting gaze, corrupting touch, frightful moan, manifestation

Spells Known (CL 6th)

2nd (2/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16)

1st (3/day)—*hideous laughter* (DC 15), *silent image*, *unseen servant*, *ventriloquism* (DC 15)

o (3/day)—*dancing light, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 14),
mage hand, message, prestidigitation

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

1/day—*daylight*

TACTICS

Before Combat If Jochareil hears music in the conservatory above, she becomes enraged, rising from beneath the ruins to kill the offending musician.

During Combat Jochareil begins combat by singing her terrible song—her frightful moan ability—to scatter foes. She then makes repetitive use of her corrupting gaze while attempting to stay out of reach. If harmed, Jochareil retreats through the nearest wall and attempts to stay out of reach while she uses her bard spells and corrupting gaze to wear down her foes.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 5 hit points, Jochareil flees to the ossuary. If confronted there, she fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 9, **Dex** 12, **Con** 8, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3

Feats Alertness, Dodge, Mobility

Skills Bluff +13, Hide +5, Knowledge (history) +9, Perform (sing) +13, Listen +22, Search +5, Spot +22, Spellcraft +9

SQ bardic knowledge +6, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4

Languages Celestial, Common, Elven

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Corrupting Gaze (Su) 2d10 points of damage plus 1d4 Charisma damage, 30 feet, Fortitude DC 17 negates. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Frightful Moan (Su) Jochareil can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 17 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic necromantic mind-affecting fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by Jochareil's moan for 24 hours.

Treasure: When the elves abandoned Celwynian, the residents of the conservatory could not take all of their musical instruments with them, sequestering many in the ossuary. Here the dry and dark would preserve them under the empty eyes of past masters. While many of these instruments have decayed over millennia, four masterwork instruments have survived. These include the following:

- A lyre of finely tooled elven steel as tall as a man. If tuned, it performs as a *harp of charming*.
- A diaulos, an instrument consisting of two intertwined horns, in this instance one of brass and one of silver, both tarnished nearly black. It performs as a *horn of good/evil*.
- Musical bowls, a set of 10 porcelain bowls marked on the inside with an old elven note on the bottom and a fine line that runs the circumference. If the bowl is filled to the line with water and struck, it sounds the corresponding note. This instrument is worth 500 gp as a set to a collector.

ELVEN MUSIC

Characters exploring the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre can discover much about ancient elven music from the murals displayed on nearly every wall. Performances depicted include drums and water bowls (percussion), lyres and sitars (stringed), recorders, horns, and panpipes (wind), and vocalists (singing). Built into the rotunda is an enormous pipe organ, though no keyboard instruments are depicted in the frescoes.

Interwoven into the representative paintings of elven life is abstract musical notation. A simple pictograph represents each note of the pentatonic scale; they resemble ancient astrological symbols. These notes are strung together into melodies. These lines of music are rarely straight; such twists and turns do not affect how the music is played, but are indicative of its purpose. For example, notes set in a circle might signal repetition, while a melody that curves up and down might be appropriate for dancing.

Each musical phrase has a distinct purpose. Different melodies are played at different seasons and different times of day. There are melodies to express the panoply of elven emotions. There is even music to accompany most occupations and activities: from farming tasks, to crafting, to waging war.

Although the melodies are often simple (using only single notes and no chords), a band of musicians can combine them to create harmonies. Because each melody is specific to time and place, the resulting harmony is a product of the individual performance, and might never be repeated.

To read music from these ancient musical notations, a character must have ranks in Perform and be able to read Elven (or be assisted by someone who does). Most of the music inscribed upon the walls grants the reader no benefit, but some are lost works that could prove quite valuable to the artist who reintroduces them to the world (see area 7).

- A recorder made from a kind of wood that defies all attempts at identification and smells faintly of honey. This instrument might fetch as much as 450 gp, double that if the strange nature of the mysterious wood is revealed.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Although the last inhabitants of the ancient conservatory have likely been destroyed, at least now the memories of the artists who once filled this place with song can rest in piece. With the creatures cleared from its halls, the Coliseum of Mask and Lyre once again stands serenely, all the more likely to be reclaimed by its people. News that the conservatory's legendary muse, Jochareil, had to be destroyed saddens many, but all are pleased that the long suffering spirit now rests. With any luck, the PCs or those with them are capable of rediscovering some lost treasure of the past—either physical or musical in nature—and bring it back to enliven the world once more.



... AND YOUR ENEMIES CLOSER

04 Neth, 4707 AR

Progress at last... of a sort. Ever since leaving the gray dwarves and the ruined city, the path I followed continued to descend, usually at a mild grade but sometimes involving scrambling over water-contoured terraces and down the faces of old rockfalls. The whole time my wayfinder pointed me ever onward down the path I was following. Whatever it is that I seek, it lies deep. I have surely descended into the upper reaches of Sekamina by now—the Darklands' middle layer—and I have begun to see signs of intelligent design in the tunnels. No longer do the ways seem to follow old watercourses or dry fault lines. Instead, I am now finding traces of workmanship—the marks of tools on the stone and a general smoothing of the floor to accommodate two-footed travel rather than just the slinking of multi-legged predators or the oozing crawl of even worse.

Today my footsteps brought me into a dry, barren cavern with no other exits. In the center of the cavern stood a small, stepped pyramid, no more than the height of two men and perhaps as wide as four at its base. Ancient glyphs in flowing serpentine motifs adorned its outer face in no language that I could recognize, and the center of one face was pierced by a deep-set stone door.

Before approaching the door (where the wayfinder, of course, indicated that I should go), I walked the circumference of the pyramid to see if any visible tricks or traps awaited me within or without. I even lit one of my precious sunrods to gain a better view of the ceiling to ensure none of the strange stalactite creatures that had plagued my steps in previous days waited to drop on me from above.

All appeared safe, though my searches did reveal some of the local fauna at the base of the pyramid's rear side. They were a half-dozen small, worm-like creatures, perhaps a type of cephalopod, no longer than my forearm with tiny leg buds along their bodies and four stunted tentacles around their mouths. I have seen them before in these dismal caves and have begun calling them slime crawlers for the opalescent trails they tend to leave behind when scuttling along the floor or other surfaces. I suspect them to be a larval form of some larger creature that I have fortunately not yet encountered.

Whatever they are, their tiny, sucker-like mouths seemed to be particularly well adapted to scouring any organic materials—including their own slime trails and

sometimes each other—directly from the stone surfaces of cavern floors, walls, and roofs. A few days back, I watched a group of them efficiently break down and consume a dead lizard many times their size in little more than an hour, leaving nothing behind but a damp spot on a smooth-polished stone floor.

These particular slime worms were busily tearing into some sort of a spider the size of a large dog with strange, whip-like tendrils. It was difficult to tell its exact structure, as the creatures were already well along in their ministrations. Whether they had brought it down themselves or just happened upon its corpse, I could not say.

I scouted the exterior of the pyramid one more time to ensure that there were no more of the spider creatures about or larger slime trails that might indicate the worm larvae were not alone. Finding nothing, I turned my attention to the pyramid door. It was inset several feet into the pyramid face and made of plain stone, and very unlike the decorative nature of the pyramid's outer surface. It had a simple sliding lock catch with a large handle that could be easily manipulated by any creature with a prehensile limb but was sufficient to keep out less-intelligent predators and vermin such as the slime crawlers.

When I was satisfied that the door was safe, I gripped the handle with one hand and clutched my sword and the sunrod together in the other. As the door grated slowly open, I tossed the sunrod into the room for light and to free up my sword hand for a fight if necessary. I was disappointed that there was no puff of stale air or dust as the door opened—so the pyramid had not been so well sealed after all. My sunrod had clattered against bare stone by the sound of it, and when I had the door fully open, I saw that it more than illuminated the small room within.

The chamber was built as a four-way, corbelled arch, each stone set upon and slightly overlapping the stone beneath but held in place by the weight of the stone above, so that the walls met in an apex not far above my head and held the same general shape as the outside of the pyramid. In the center of the ceiling's peak was an opening into the cavern outside—so much for my careful perusal.

A stone slab on a man-sized pedestal dominated the center of the chamber. The borders of the slab were incised with the same serpentine motif as the outside of the pyramid. Lying atop this slab was a humanoid skeleton wearing a tarnished copper breastplate and grasping a short, wide-bladed chopping sword on its breast in skeletal fingers. A thin veneer of dust and cobwebs covered the ancient cadaver and, though it gave no sign of animation, I watched it carefully as I took in my surroundings. It bothered me that none of the little slime worms had dropped in through the ceiling opening and consumed the remains after all these years.

My suspicions proved to be well founded as I approached the pedestal, to which my wayfinder faithfully pointed, and saw the skeletal form suddenly lurch. My blade shot out almost of its own accord and removed the skull from its position atop the spinal column in one quick swipe. My elation was short-lived, however, as the skeleton clattered harmlessly to the floor at my feet, pushed from its perch by the creature crawling up from behind the pedestal.

My first impression was of lashing whips, as two searching tendril-like strands caromed off of the bare stone surface, but these were followed quickly by two large pincers on segmented arms. Soon, perched before me was another one of those dog-sized arachnids, this one alive and well. Behind the pincers and whips it had three more pairs of legs, and finally another whip-like appendage as a tail that undulated and wavered constantly as if testing the air.

I leaped back a pace to avoid its snapping claws and dug into my pouch for something of use against this creature. I didn't relish the thought of moving within reach of those whips to battle it with my short blade. Somewhere in my pouch was a bag of exploding alchemical goo that would enable me to pin the thing down and make for a swifter kill. My free hand closed on a small ceramic flask—not what I was looking for. I didn't have time to look further, however, as the creature suddenly jerked its thorax upward and sprayed a fine mist directly into my face. The caustic stench of vinegar filled the air, and I was immediately blinded and unable to breathe.

I tumbled to the floor in a panic, clawing at my sightless eyes and trying to draw breath through my swollen throat. In my flailing, I hurled the ceramic flask and heard it smash against stone. Half a second before I felt the burning, I realized what it was—another item purchased in Urgir. I had just smashed a flask of alchemical fire in the small burial vault with me in its midst.

Fortunately, the explosion seemed to clear some of the caustic fumes from the air, and my breathing became easier almost immediately. In addition, by the sound of it I had scored a direct hit on the monster, as I could hear a frantic clicking and scuffling that soon slowed and stopped. With my cloak and evidently part of my hair on fire, I rolled frantically out of the pyramid and into the cavern, freeing my waterskin and dousing myself as quickly as possible while beating at the flames with my bare hands. Finally, the last of my clothing was extinguished, and I lay in an exhausted daze amid the smell of acrid chemicals, acidic mist, age-old dust, and burned hair. That last probably bothered me the most.

I must've passed out for a moment, because I awoke to the feel of something trying to scrape the charred flesh from my scalp. Opening my eyes, I found my vision had cleared enough to realize that one of the larval slime crawlers was sitting on my face making a feast of my

scorched flesh. I could feel another making its slimy way up my arm. Somehow, having these ridiculously vile little worms on me was the worst thing of all, and I spent some time rolling frantically and smashing them flat. There may have been screaming involved, but I couldn't say for sure—there was a lot going on at the time.

When all was said and done, I rubbed my hand through my hair, which succeeded only in painfully irritating the scorched stubble. Fortunately, I still had a few minor potions I had brought along just in case, and one of them managed to heal the worst of the burns, leaving only pink, tender flesh. The hair was another matter, and probably made my head look decidedly lopsided. Not that anyone was here to see it. I decided I really didn't care and went about gathering my things and repairing my charred cloak as best I could.

The inside of the pyramid was still thick and smoky, the spider-thing little more than a curled ball of char on the floor. I retrieved my fallen sword and the sunrod and went to examine the beheaded skeleton now lying on the ground. It appeared human enough at first glance, but a closer look revealed some inconsistencies: its head was narrower with elongated eye sockets, its lower jaw was long and able to come unhinged, and its ribs were lighter and finer than any human's—and there were far too many of them for any man or humanoid race I knew of. The creature bore a distinct serpentine look, which made sense in light of the snake motifs on the pyramid and bier.

As I examined the cadaver, a curl of smoke near my head in the still-cloudy confines of the pyramid caught my attention. A current of air was flowing through the smoke, and it wasn't issuing from the doorway or the opening overhead. A sudden thought occurred to me. I pushed on the bier's stone lip as hard as I could, and the stone gave a little with a grating rasp. Bracing myself against the corbelled walls of the chamber, I heaved with all my leverage and the stone top of the pedestal slid free, revealing a stairwell descending from the bier's hollow interior. My wayfinder quickly confirmed that this was the route I sought.

05 Neth, 4707 AR

After a cold camp to rest and gather my wits about me, including taking inventory of what equipment had survived my misadventure, I descended into the hidden stairway. It continued down some ways before finally leveling off into a passage that extended away in what appeared to be a straight shot but after careful examination proved to be long, sinuous curves, like the undulations of a giant serpent.

The tunnel was high-ceilinged and obviously carved by skilled artisans—probably the same who had constructed the pyramid above—and it had no sharp corners or edges. All was rounded into smooth contours. The walls and ceiling bore long serpentine designs that endlessly

repeated themselves without beginning or end. Intertwined with them were actual carvings of snakes of all sizes and varieties. The walls were broken in places by alcoves that held ten-foot statues of vaguely anthropomorphic snake creatures, some with humanoid bodies and dozens of snake heads on long necks, others of giant serpents with wings and humanoid faces, and still others of beautiful women whose lovely torsos merged into scaly monstrosities. The supply of these varied monsters seemed endless as the corridor went on and on, and I never saw any two alike.

As I traversed this long, majestic hallway, frantically sketching the statues in my journal, one of my footfalls suddenly sounded different than the rest. I looked down, only to find ripples extending out through the stone floor like water in a still pond. The strange wavelets climbed the walls and seemed to sink into one of the alcoves. Therein stood one of the large statues, this one a creature with a humanoid torso and arms but the coiled tail of a giant snake extending downward from its waist. Where its head should have been were a half-dozen fanged, serpentine heads atop elongated, scaly necks with patterns of snake scales. Grasped in its hands was a great axe of ornately carved stone. With a rumble and a crack, a thin patina of dust fell away and the statue slithered from the alcove. Its heads wove menacingly atop sinuous stone necks, and it raised its great axe to swing.

Luck was with me. As the axe swung down, I leaped aside into a convenient alcove across the hallway that held a statue of a hooded snake with a bearded man's face, coiled and arching forward as if to strike. The golem's stroke narrowly missed me as I found cover behind the other statue, thrusting my journal into my shirt. As it recoiled for another strike I cast a quick cantrip to send a spray of acid sizzling toward the narrow base of the statue behind which I hid.

Upon completing the spell, I jumped up behind the statue and grabbed the edges of its hood with my fingers. This sudden move fooled the golem again, and its great axe crashed into the base of the statue near where I had stood. The blow, combined with the hissing acid, created a crack across the statue's base that I capitalized on by bracing myself against the wall with my feet and pushing outward. The top-heavy statue and damaged base were just enough that, with a groan, the entire construction toppled forward as the golem brought its axe down for another blow.

The falling statue caught the golem's axe in mid-swing, and momentum carried the golem down beneath the statue. Before it could react, I was already up and clutching the very item I had sought in vain the previous day. I flung the small leather bag as the golem lunged and snapped futilely, and it exploded amidst the many necks of the statue, coating them in an impenetrable web of expanding ooze that quickly hardened and immobilized

them, sticking the golem fast to the floor, its lower half still partially pinned beneath the fallen statue.

Moving quickly, I scooped up the fallen stone axe that had been dropped when the golem fell. I was barely able to lift it, but its weight was sufficient to shatter one of the serpentine necks. In moments it was over, the last snake head falling free, along with both arms for good measure. Exhausted, I dropped the stone axe and paused; for a moment, I had thought I heard a sound from up the tunnel. I waited, holding my breath, but heard nothing more, and decided that it was perhaps merely a strange echo from the falling stone axe. I hastily gathered my things and continued on my way, once more keeping a watchful eye on my back trail.

The tunnel stretched on, though the décor eventually changed. There were no more alcoves, but new and more varied serpent patterns began to appear on the walls, floor, and ceiling. I finally came to a place where the left wall was embossed to look like the back of a giant serpent's throat, while the floor was decorated like the interior of the lower jaw of a snake's mouth complete with forked tongue, and the ceiling bore the image of the snake's upper jaw. This was not the first such bas-relief I had come upon, and while they had made me distinctly uncomfortable, none had proven to be dangerous. Something was different about this one, though, and made my hackles rise.

I studied the thing for some time before I realized what it was: the stone floor of the tunnel upon the snake's carven tongue was smoother and brighter than the rest of the stone, as if the surface of the stone had been polished away. Slime crawlers had been down here and consumed whatever organic substance that covered the carved tongue, stripping the tiniest layer of the stone beneath in the process—probably some sort of poison or grease. It seemed like a fairly obvious tell for someone looking for a trap, but then again, most creatures of the Darklands didn't seem to use conventional vision and made do without much color variation. A creature traveling along this tunnel using the natural darkvision of the nether realms would have noticed no difference in the coloration of the tunnel floor and walked unheeding to its doom.

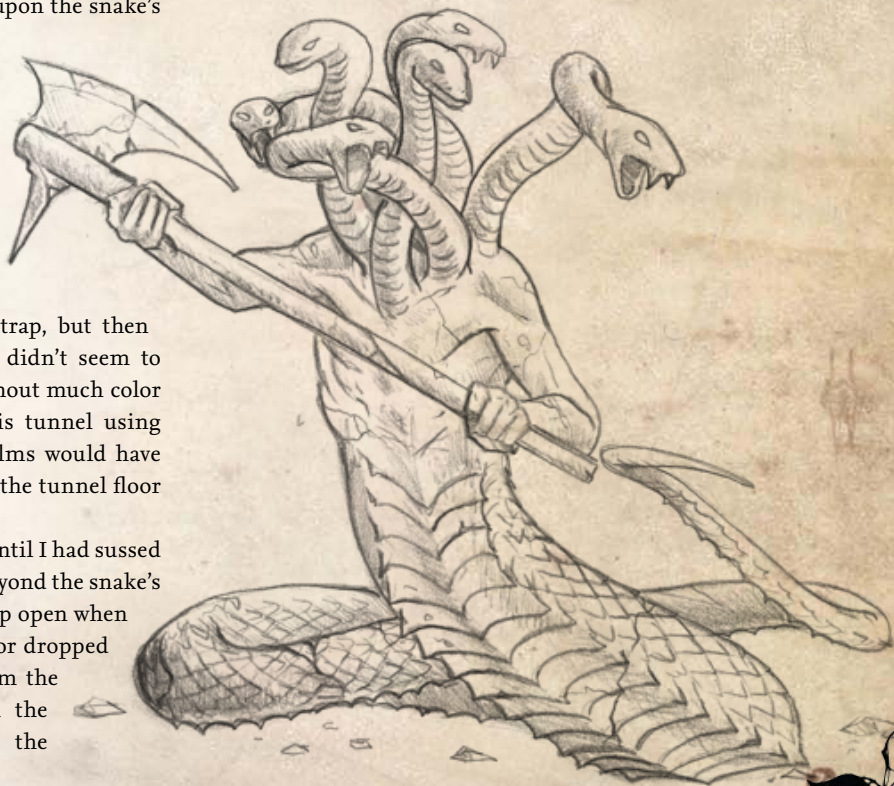
I spent some time examining the trap until I had sussed out the basics of its workings. The floor beyond the snake's lower jaw was hinged and designed to drop open when anyone stepped on the tongue. As the floor dropped away, the teeth of the lower jaw rose from the floor and the upper jaw lowered from the ceiling, clamping together to mutilate the

victim before dropping him into whatever charnel pit lay beneath. However, for the trap to function, a counterweight set into the roof of the snake's mouth had to rise into a ceiling cavity, allowing the upper jaw to drop. I could make out the shape of the counterweight disguised as part of the image's carved palette and finally decided upon a way to counteract the trap, as the trapped section of tongue was obviously too wide to jump across.

Removing a rope from my pack, I worked a short cantrip that allowed me to grasp the end of the rope with an invisible force and carry it up to the counterweight. Concentrating carefully, I threaded the rope through a small hole drilled in the stone counterweight near its end, probably placed there so the stone could be more easily removed and replaced if repairs became necessary. The rope threaded, I summoned the end back to myself, tied a knot in it, then pulled gently to tighten it up against the counterweight.

The trick now was to pull on the rope as I walked across the snake's tongue and apply just as much downward force on the counterweight as my weight was placing on the floor beneath. This I did, carefully, an action made all the more difficult because I had to shorten the length of the rope as I neared the center and then lengthen it again as I slowly stepped over to the opposite side. Other than a few groans and slight shifts in the stone, along with some

I don't normally deface statues, but I enjoyed this one.



white knuckles of my own, I made it safely across. My spell was spent, and I had no way to retrieve my rope, so I left it dangling there, thinking perhaps I would need it for a sudden departure.

I started off down the passage, then on a hunch, stopped short of the first sinuous turn and crouched down, extinguishing my torch. For several long minutes I sat in the cloying darkness, silent, convinced that at last the tunnels were getting to me, making me paranoid. Then, just as I was about to move on and denounce my foolishness, I heard it: the telltale sounds of someone examining the trap. As quietly as possible, I moved back toward the sounds. Ahead, in the dim light of a covered lantern, I could just make out a humanoid form. Hand on sword hilt, I stepped from the shadows just as the man finished using my rope to pull himself across the trap.

Belzig paused in shock at my sudden appearance, and then an oily smile split his face.

"Why, there you are, Kline," the sycophant simpered. "I was hoping I'd catch up to you. Nice work with these traps, by the way. This one would have gotten me for sure."

"Too bad," I replied.

"Is that any way to greet a comrade in arms?" Belzig's false smile was still plastered across his face. "We're Pathfinders. We've got to stick together."

I snorted. "One of us is, at least."

Belzig's smile slipped a bit, and I could tell the barb had struck home. He must have been nearly as tired as I was. He continued regardless.

"After you left, I grew worried that you might need assistance in these dangerous caverns, and Lord Uldeth graciously granted me leave to come help you."

"I'm sure he did," I replied. "Just as you followed me out of the goodness of your heart." I paused, suddenly weary... how long had it been since I'd last spoken to another human? Weeks? "Go back to your orc master, Belzig," I sighed. "There's nothing for you here."

Belzig dropped the phony smile altogether. "Now see here, Kline. I know you're onto something. You came to Urgir to find your way down here, and I helped you make it past Lord Uldeth. A part of whatever treasure you're after is mine by right, and you're going to cut me in."

He took a step forward, and was met by my outthrust hand, shoving him backward.

"Even if there was a treasure, you'd get none of it," I said. "You think I would bring you along just so you can stick a knife in my back the first chance you get? I don't think so, lapdog. Go on back to playing secretary in your orc city."

"You're making a big mistake, Kline," he hissed between his teeth.

"Not as big as yours, apparently," I responded. "Or is there something about living with orcs that appeals to

you? The women, perhaps? Presuming Lord Uldeth doesn't retain *all* your services, of course."

Belzig lunged, swinging his fist. I was waiting for it, and dropped to the ground. He moved in quick, trying to bring his boot heel down on my neck, but I rolled aside and scissored my legs, catching him behind the knees and pulling him down hard on the stone. We both came up at the same time, and I smashed a hard right into his ear, splitting it open, then stepped inside his swing to make two quick punches to the gut. The wind exploded out of him, and he sat down hard on the floor. I backed up to let him think about it a little bit.

He stood up unsteadily, blood pouring from his ruptured ear onto his pricey shirt. His face was flushed and sweaty. For a moment, I think Belzig almost considered backing down. But I should have known that he wasn't the kind to finish a fight fair if he didn't have to.

The only warning I had was the sudden gleam in his eyes, then his ornate rapier was in his hand as if it had jumped there of its own accord. He caught me off-guard—as he lunged, all I could do was raise my left hand to block the thrust. The thin blade sliced cleanly, almost painlessly, across my palm, but I managed to knock the force upward so that the thrust passed harmlessly over my shoulder.

Stumbling backward, I drew my own shorter, heavier blade, the blood flowing freely from the stinging cut on my left hand. "I should have known you couldn't take a hit," I spat.

"You'll have to show me how it's done," he rejoined as he lunged toward me in classical fencing form.

My blade narrowly deflected his attack, and he followed with a quick slash that I wasn't able to block, leaving a short cut across my forearm. He was faster than me with that blade and, it quickly became apparent, better than me at swordplay in general. But was he smarter? My journey had taught me a lot of lessons—many of them none too enjoyable.

We danced around for a few minutes, neither gaining an advantage, but neither giving ground either. My strokes were shorter than his with my heavier blade, and many of them he was able to avoid without even bringing his blade to bear. He was tiring me and, we both knew, beating me.

"We both know how this ends, Kline," he said. "Just tell me what you're after and give me the wayfinder you follow, and I'll let you live. There'll be other secrets to chase."

"No thanks."

His face took on a strange expression. "Very well," he said woodenly. "Your kind never makes the big discoveries anyway, you know. You just keep trying until someone better comes along and plucks it from your grasp. I suppose I was going to kill you all along anyway."

We circled a moment, and he waited until I inevitably made a misstep, tired as I was. Then he lunged in hard.

I couldn't get my sword over to block it or get out of the way in time. I twisted and took the blade through my left shoulder instead of through the breast as he had intended. He paused with a look of triumph—and then faltered as he realized I had him.

My sword swing, too slow to block his lunge, was already en route to its destination. Before he could withdraw his own blade, mine came down hard on the thin blade above the pommel guard. The pain it sent ringing up through my shoulder was excruciating, but the fragile rapier blade snapped, and the force of it sent him stumbling backward, out of the reach of my reverse swing.

Belzig realized where he was when the floor started to tip. Dropping his useless blade, he grabbed the still-dangling rope and hauled hard on it to pull the counterweight down and arrest the tilting of the floor. The trap's jaws, protruding from floor and ceiling about a foot, stopped. Their thick, pulverizing stone teeth had only just begun to close around where Belzig stood.

Belzig, too, was quivering with exhaustion after the fight. Without being tied in, as I had been, he was supporting his entire weight with wearied hands, and he'd grabbed it too late—the floor had already receded enough for the rope to lift him off his feet, dangling helplessly. He'd never make it off the trap alive without help.

His eyes showed that he knew it. Desperate, he forced his voice to remain calm.

"Kline, don't do this," he urged. "It's one thing to kill a man clean in a fight, but this—this isn't your way. If you let me die, you'll regret it forever. Get me out of this, and I swear I'll return to Urgir and leave you to your search. My oath as a Pathfinder."

For the first time in days, I thought of Joskan. Belzig was right—I didn't like leaving people to die.

But damned if I wasn't getting good at it.

His first indication of my decision was the hurtling dagger that sliced cleanly through the rope, one of the better throws I've made. Freed of its burden, the counterweight rose swiftly through its gap in the ceiling. Belzig only had time for a quick scream as the stony jaws drew together, stone teeth occluding my view and revealing only a quick glimpse of the floor tilting suddenly beneath him. Then the stones slammed together with a muffled thud, and all sound from within ceased.

After a moment, the jaws retracted and the ceiling rose back into place. Where Belzig had stood was only a

bloody smear across the trap door, where his shattered corpse had presumably slid into whatever ancient ossuary awaited below. A fitting grave for any Pathfinder, I suppose. And perhaps my own, before this whole thing was over.

Grabbing his lantern, I shuffled, bleeding, down the hallway. When I entered the vast cavern and beheld the vista of the massive city before me, its towers carved like snakes and obelisks and ziggurats dominating the stale air, I barely even noticed. Instead, I sat at the junction where my tunnel opened out onto the incongruous vault and stared without seeing as I withdrew one of the precious healing potions from my pack and swiftly drained it.

I could feel a tiny niggling doubt at the back of my mind as the healing magic did its work. Belzig was right.

I regretted losing that dagger.

*What is it with giant
bugs and spitting?*





Bestiary

Beasts of wild magics and the inhabitants of ancient ruins fill this month's entry into the *Pathfinder* Bestiary. Hidden behind the wall of Varisia's Calphiak Mountains or amid the dense wilderness of the Mierani Forest lurk creatures rarely seen by non-elves. Preying upon cervine herds, gigantic insects, and the occasional unwary elf, a scant number of hated and hunted forest drakes—bestial cousins of green dragons—menace the elven woodlands. To the west, amid the ruins of Celwynvian, horrors of the ancient past take terrible shape, deadly blast shadows forced to eternally suffer a death faced in centuries past. Reclusive maffets, aloof ruin-dwelling kin to sphinxes, also eye the glories of the elven city with thoughts of carving a new home from the rubble. And to the southwest, in human lands, the base magics of human wizards conjure fierce constructs into being, creatures

like the ramshackle cutlass spider that lies hidden amid broken timbers and rusting steel. Where beasts and dark magics are concerned, time rarely denotes frailty, and most grow more dangerous with age.

WANDERING MONSTERS

The ruins of Celwynvian are a war zone. Where for centuries the remnants of the City of Emerald Rains rested in state, in recent decades the taint of drow magic has transformed this esteemed ground into a battlefield between elusive dark elves and the elven protectors of the Mierani Forest. The secret battle for Celwynvian has drugged on for years, hidden from the eyes of the outside world. Yet now, as the drow's plot nears its catastrophic revelation, there finally appears a chance to expunge the dark elves from the fabled city and reclaim its storied spires for its rightful guardians.

The hunt for the drake known as Devilshrike goes poorly. Of the six hunting bands loosed to track the beast, two have failed to report—even now my runners seek to make contact. With some surprise, the groups scouring the terrain north of Crying Leaf, near the Gray Manor and Seeden Heath where the brute is supposed to lurk, recount no sighting nor recent evidence of dragon sign. The others last reported seeking near Geirdril Lan and the Ridge of Red Clouds to the south. The lost bands include a number of my wariest trackers, so I don't yet fear for their lives... yet there's no denying the drake's canniness. With this news, the focus of our search turns southward, and, with Ketepphys's blessing, I hope to send word of the monster's demise and our kinsmen's safety within the week. Clear skies and strong winds.

—Missive from Hunt Leader Vitaim Idoiwren to Captain Kaerishiel Neirenar

Beyond the drow and their minions currently infesting the City of Emerald Rains, innumerable others creatures have come to occupy the city. Some are simple beasts of the elven forest and creatures tasked long ago with defense of the elven sanctuary. Over the centuries, however, deadlier terrors have encroached upon the overgrown ruins, clawing lairs among the pale stones. Although ruined long ago, Celwynvian still pulses with deadly life.

The following descriptions detail several encounters a party might face among the ruined avenues of Celwynvian.

Dragon: The juvenile green dragon Razorhorn makes his home in Celwynvian. Although he has a role to play in this month's adventure, the PCs might encounter him at any time during their exploration of the elven ruins—even if this simply means sighting the dragon or having him perform a hit-and-run attack. If this result is rolled after Razorhorn is defeated, roll again.

Drow War Party: The drow rarely move about Celwynvian en masse, preferring to keep to the shadows and hide their activities. At times, though, greater numbers and blatant acts of force are required, either to establish new holdings or drive back elven forces. At these times, groups of drow silently stalk the Celwynvian night, and few of the ruin's inhabitants dare face them. A typical drow war party consists of 1d12 drow soldiers, 1d8 drow skirmishers, and a drow captain serving as leader. Such a group has an average EL of 11.

BATTLE POINTS

"The Armageddon Echo" makes use of a system of battle points to determine how much aid the PCs provide in the fight for Celwynvian. Defeating the drow and their minions contributes battle points, regardless of whether these skirmishes occur as part of the adventure or as random encounters. Defeating any of the marked results on the Celwynvian Random Encounters table nets the PCs 1 battle point for encounters of CR 8 or lower, and 2 battle points for encounters of CR 8 or higher. See page 19 for a full description of how battle points factor into this month's adventure.

CELWYNVIAN RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

d%	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
1–2	1 unicorn	3	MM 249
3–6	1d4 black bears	4	MM 269
7–9	1d8 dretches*	5	MM 42
10–12	1 forest drake	5	Pathfinder #15
13	1 green hag	5	MM 143
14–15	1 shadow mastiff	5	MM 222
16–17	1d6 shocker lizards	5	MM 224
18–20	1d12 troglodytes*	5	MM 246
21–22	1 belker	6	MM 27
23–25	1d6 caryatid column	6	ToHR 53
26–31	1d6 drow skirmishers*	6	see page 16
32–33	1d6 ghosts	6	MM 118
34–36	1d4 giant stag beetles	6	MM 285
37–38	1d6 shadows	6	MM 221
39	1 shadow demon*	6	ToHR 128
40–42	2d12 zombies	6	MM 265
43–45	1d6 centipede swarms	7	MM 287
46–47	1d4 crypt things	7	ToHR 75
48–50	1 drow arcanist*	7	see page 16
51–55	1 drow captain*	7	see page 18
56–58	1d8 giant wasps	7	MM 285
59–60	1d4 shadow mastiffs	7	MM 222
61–62	1d4 babaus*	8	MM 40
63–69	1d6 drow soldiers*	8	see page 16
70–71	1d6 gibbering mouthers	8	MM 126
72–75	1d8 harpies	8	MM 150
76–78	1d4 shambling mounds	8	MM 222
79–80	1d4 will-o'-wisps	8	MM 255
81–82	1d4 black puddings	9	MM 201
83–86	1d4 driders*	9	MM 89
87–88	1d4 medusas	9	MM 180
89–90	1 vrock*	9	MM 48
91–93	1 bebilith*	10	MM 42
94–95	1 stone golem	11	MM 137
96–99	Drow war party	—	see description
100	Dragon	—	see description

* Awards battle points



BLAST SHADOW

Burnt pieces of flesh still cling to the charred bones of this walking horror. A pale light and thin wisps of smoke issue from cracks in its body, as if an inferno hides within, barely contained by the scraps of melted armor and gear fused to its flesh. Two burning orbs peer out from where its eyes should be, and a trail of smoke rises up from its skull. The thing reaches out with gnarled and twisted claws that glow with intense heat.

BLAST SHADOW

CR 5

CE Medium undead (fire)

Init +8; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +14

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14

(+4 Dex, +4 natural)

hp 68 (10d12+3)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +8

Immune fire, undead traits; Weakness vulnerable to cold

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +10 (1d8+2 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks cloud of smoke and flame, death burst

TACTICS

Before Combat Blast shadows sneak up on their foes, using the shadows to hide their presence.

During Combat Once combat begins, blast shadows move close to the enemy, attacking any they can reach with their burning claws.

Morale Blast shadows never retreat and doggedly follow foes that attempt to flee.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 18, Con —, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 16

Base Atk +5; Grp +7

Feats Improved Initiative, Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Hide +17, Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +14

Languages Common

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary, pair, or disaster (3–8)

Treasure none

Alignment always chaotic evil

Advancement 11–30 HD (Medium)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Cloud of Smoke and Fire (Su) A blast shadow can, as a free action, surround itself with a cloud of smoke that burns living flesh.

While active, the blast shadow gains concealment, and all living creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 points of fire damage per round. If the blast shadow takes any cold damage, this cloud is dispelled and cannot be renewed for 1d6 rounds.

Death Burst (Su) When a blast shadow is reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, it explodes in a blast of flame. All creatures within 30 feet take 5d6 points of fire damage. A DC 18 Reflex save results in half damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Death by fire is a horrible fate, but far worse is death by a fiery apocalypse. While most are incinerated by such conflagrations, others are infused with the energy of that terrible act and rise again as blast shadows. These undead creatures linger on after the inferno, seeking to spread their pain to the living. Blast shadows haunt the wastelands that spawned them, waiting for victims to come and learn of the catastrophe. Only then do they strike out from the shadows to show them the horrors up close.

Blast shadows typically have the form of the creatures they were in life, though scorched and withered by their fiery deaths. Little more than humanoid skeletons with bits of flesh and hair fused to charred bones, blast shadows usually weigh little more than 60 pounds, and

stand at a height typical for the race of which they were formerly members.

Ecology

Blast shadows are created when creatures die because of a magical holocaust that claims numerous lives in an act of wanton destruction. A *fireball* is not terrible enough to spawn a blast shadow, but a *firestorm*, *incendiary cloud*, or *meteor swarm* might be. While most are made through fire, there are tales of blast shadows that drip with acid or radiate extreme cold (see “Variant Blast Shadows”).

Some blast shadows are created as the result of a natural catastrophe, as long as the event was precipitated by an intentional act of magic. A meteor pulled from the sky or an unnatural blizzard are both good examples of how a blast shadow might be created.

Those who die as a result of a blast shadow’s death burst rise as blast shadows in 1d4 days. Creatures slain by a blast shadow’s claws do not rise in this manner.

Habitat & Society

Blast shadows tend to stay in the area that was destroyed when they were created. As such, they are most often found in smoldering ruins and burnt-out buildings. If left on their own, blast shadows tend to reconstruct their environment as it once was, using the charred remains to rebuild an area. They even go so far as to arrange the bodies of the dead into the poses they held before dying. Burnt corpses sitting on chairs, propped up behind the bar, or reclining in a bed are all common in a blast shadow’s haunt. The blast shadows then hide among these corpses, waiting for the curious to draw near before revealing their true nature.

Blast shadows frequently hunt in packs. Although they rarely communicate with one another, they have been known to work in groups to morbidly recreate an entire devastated area.

Creating a Blast Shadow

Blast shadows usually spawn as the result of a magical catastrophe, but can also be artificially created. Pyromaniac magic users, worshipers of evil fire deities, and the servants of powers that crave burnt offerings favor these undead horrors. A spellcaster of 14th level or higher can create a blast shadow using *create undead*. In addition to the normal components of the spell, the spellcaster must use the body of a creature that died as a result of a fire spell or effect. The spell must be one that affects an area. *Scorching ray* is not sufficient, but *fireball* is. The creature must have died within 24 hours of the casting of *create undead*. Blast shadows created in this way are loyal to their creator, but those created by a death burst are beholden to no one.

Variant Blast Shadows

Although most blast shadows are created through fire, others are known to exist. The following variants have different abilities than the standard blast shadow.

Acid Shadow: Created using an *acid fog* or similar effect, the claws, cloud, and death burst of an acid shadow deal acid damage instead of fire damage. The cloud of an acid shadow does not grant concealment, but any weapon that strikes an acid shadow takes 2d6 points of acid damage.

Freezing Shadow: Those who die from supernatural cold, such as the cold created by *control weather*, sometimes rise as freezing shadows. The claws, cloud, and death burst of a freezing shadow deal cold damage instead of fire damage. A freezing shadow can move across ice and snow without penalty.

Lightning Shadow: These undead are created through terrible lightning storms, such as those manifested by *call lightning storm* and *storm of vengeance*. The claws, cloud, and death burst of a lightning shadow deal electricity damage instead of fire damage. The cloud of a lightning shadow does not grant concealment, but anyone who strikes a lightning shadow with a metal weapon takes 1d6 points of electricity damage.

Ire in the Ashes

Although an exceedingly rare form of undead, there are numerous scorched and blasted locations throughout Avistan and Garund where blast shadows lurk.

Buried Alive: In 4607, Mt. Kuvetheir in Taldor’s reach of the World’s Edge Mountains unexpectedly erupted, burying the mining communities of Milon’s Wait and Voredding. Although the pyroclastic flow scoured the two towns from the map, the extensive mines connecting the communities remained. Now, the scarred and poisoned corpses of those buried alive linger on in a maze of copper and lead, digging endlessly in a futile attempt to escape.

The Burning Lake: Deep in the Mwangi Expanse hides Lake Kiwavu, and on its shore the village of Taimbwin. Thirteen years ago, the lake began bubbling mysteriously. Shortly thereafter, Taimbwin was engulfed by a tsunami of scalding water. Nearly all of the small village’s 200 residents died, but some have not rested easy, as a number of the village’s elders—believing the unexplained disaster stemmed from an ancient lake god’s anger—returned to ward intruders away from their cursed home.

Professional Hazard: In the autumn of 4705, the furnace “Black Bhronha” at Magnimar’s Golemworks exploded, killing six laborers. Due to unpredictable alchemical and magical reagents in close proximity, the warehouse housing the furnace was swiftly bricked over. Yet, judging by the eerie noises that sound from inside, something within the charred workshop might have survived.



CUTLASS SPIDER

This spider-like creature seems to be made entirely of weapons and splintered planks, with thick and curved blades held together by strange reddish sparks at their tips and pommels. Sleek and lethal, its eight legs each composed of three deadly “joints,” it never stays completely still, swaying with a deadly grace that hints at great power and speed.

CUTLASS SPIDER

CR 6

Always N Large construct

Init +3; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 16
(+3 Dex, +7 natural, -1 size)

hp 74 (8d10+30)

Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Immune construct traits; **DR** 5/adamantine

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee 2 legs +10 (2d8+5) and
bite +5 (1d8+2)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks collapse, weapon thief

TACTICS

Before Combat A cutlass spider's creator often orders the construct to lurk above the sites of potential battles, such as on ceilings or hidden amid a ship's rigging, so it can drop down to attack.

During Combat A cutlass spider typically attacks several opponents at once, using at least one attack a round to disarm foes.

Morale Possessing no sense of self-preservation, a cutlass spider fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +15

Feats Improved Disarm^B, Power Attack^B

Skills Climb +13, Hide +11 (when collapsed), Listen +4, Spot +4

SQ shared enchantment

ECOLOGY

Environment any

Organization solitary

Treasure none

Advancement 9–16 HD (Large); 17–23 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

All-Around Vision (Ex) A cutlass spider can see through the blades that makes up its body as if they were eyes, providing a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks. A cutlass spider can't be flanked.

Collapse (Su) As a full-round action, a cutlass spider may withdraw the magical energy holding its body together and fall into a heap of blades and wooden pieces. Any creature occupying a square adjacent to a cutlass spider must make a DC 14 Reflex save or take 2d6+5 points of damage. The save DC is Dexterity-based. A collapsed cutlass spider may reform itself as a standard action.

Shared Enhancement (Su) Should a cutlass spider have a magical weapon incorporated into its body (either given to it by its creator or stolen through the use of its weapon thief ability), it shares the weapon's enhancement bonus and special abilities with all of its natural attacks. The construct only benefits from the abilities of the highest-value magical weapon incorporated into its body. For example, a cutlass spider that disarms an opponent, stealing his +1 *flaming short sword*, gains a +1 enhancement bonus and the effects of the flaming weapon special ability on its leg and bite attacks. Should the cutlass spider later disarm a +3 *holy quarterstaff*, the effects of the cheaper short sword are replaced, granting the creature's legs and bite a +3 enhancement bonus and the holy special ability.

Weapon Thief (Ex) A cutlass spider that succeeds on an opposed roll to disarm an opponent incorporates the disarmed weapon into its body. The weapon cannot be retrieved until the cutlass spider is destroyed.

Skills A cutlass spider has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. A cutlass spider gains a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when using its collapse ability. This bonus increases to +12 when collapsed amid trash and other debris.

Terrible, spider-like accumulations of hundreds of weapons given arachnoid shape and unreasoning purpose, cutlass spiders serve as favorite creations of magic-users removed from the rare materials and exotic components of civilized lands. Named for their association with mages in the service of privateer crews and pirate lords, cutlass spiders serve their creators as enforcers, bodyguards, and occasionally assassins. Regardless of its name, a cutlass spider can be made of weapons of any sort, though blades feature prominently among the frames of the most fearsome constructs.

A cutlass spider typically stands approximately 8 feet tall and weighs at least 1,500 pounds, although the materials used in the creatures' construction cause their appearances to vary widely.

Ecology

As artificially constructed beings, cutlass spiders have no niche in the natural world and do little to impact their surroundings. Created from weapons, the appearance of a cutlass spider often reveals a great deal about the construct's creator. While most such creatures are made from discarded weapons and bits of scrap wood, cutlass spiders comprised wholly of exotic, specially made, or masterwork weapons exist (such components don't affect a cutlass spider's statistics).

Habitat & Society

The creators of cutlass spiders typically use them as guardians, particularly in the ramshackle fortresses and disguised lairs that thieves, pirates, and other such scallywags tend to inhabit. Requiring nothing in terms of food or supplies, cutlass spiders sometimes lurk in deserted seaside ruins, still following the commands of long-slain or departed masters. Occasionally mages order their cutlass spiders to hide amid tide pools or submerged within flooded chambers, thinking that rusty weapons appear more threatening and hoping to enhance their servants' deadliness with the additional threat of tetanus. (See *Pathfinder* #8 for more details on tetanus and other diseases.)

Construction

A cutlass spider is an amalgam of weapons worked into a cage-like frame of wood or metal. They are crafted from 1,000 pounds of wood or metal and covered with dozens of weapons and oils distilled from urchins and crustaceans costing at least 400 gp. Assembling the body requires a DC 13 Craft (weaponsmithing) check.

There are two arcane methods—of varying reliability—for creating cutlass spiders, the differing formulas being known as the Principal Design and Varghant's Gamble.

The Principal Design requires the following elements: CL 8th; Craft Construct, *geas/quest, keen edge, limited wish*, caster must be at least 8th level; Price 18,000 gp; Cost 9,000 gp + 720 XP.

Varghant's Gamble requires the following elements, but leaves the construct with the berserk special quality: CL 7th; Craft Construct, *geas/quest, keen edge, limited wish*, caster must be at least 7th level; Price 16,000 gp; Cost 8,000 gp + 667 XP.

Berserk (Ex) When a cutlass spider enters combat, there is a cumulative 1% chance each round that its animating energies malfunction and the construct goes berserk. The uncontrolled construct goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is within reach, then moving on to spread more destruction. Once a cutlass spider goes berserk, no known method can reestablish control.

Intelligent Cutlass Spiders

Cutlass spiders have a unique interaction with intelligent magical weapons as a side effect of their weapon thief and shared enhancement abilities. If a cutlass spider steals an intelligent magic weapon with a gp value higher than any other magic weapon it currently possesses, the construct immediately collapses. It spends 1 round inert, after which it reforms free from the commands of its master, now fully controlled by the newly subsumed intelligent magic weapon. If the intelligent magic weapon is not the highest value weapon in the cutlass spider's body, there is no special effect. Should a cutlass spider controlled by a weapon's intelligence add a new non-intelligent weapon of higher value than the intelligent weapon to its body, the intelligent weapon's consciousness is repressed and the construct collapses, remaining an inert pile of weapons until reactivated by its creator.

Although an exceedingly rare occurrence, there are multiple documented cases wherein magical weapons have gained control of cutlass spider bodies.

Captain Saws: Originally a +2 *wounding falchion* known as Throat Cleaver, when the weapon took over a cutlass spider body, it took on the persona of Captain Saws and began rounding up a crew out of Drenchport. A mysterious captain whose true identity is only known to his first mate, the one-armed elf Levechael, the merciless Captain Saws hunts the western coast of Garund, ever searching for weapons to add to his collection.

Nana Sharpe: A +3 *defending morningstar*, this intelligent weapon was an avenger of neglected children. When stolen by a cutlass spider, the morningstar was released by its wielder, a cleric of Erastil, and departed with its new body to defend an Andoren orphanage on the coast of the Inner Sea. Although it has not been seen for years, the children of Almas all know the tale of Nana Sharpe.



FOREST DRAKE

Two long, leathery wings sprout from the green-scaled back of this ferocious creature. Its head bears a long snout full of razor-sharp teeth, and a green vapor drifts from its mouth. Two emerald eyes peer from its brow with the cunning of a skilled predator. A foot-long spike adorns the tip of its sinuous tail, swishing from side to side, waiting to strike.

FOREST DRAKE

LE Large dragon (air)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +12, Spot +12

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 17
(+2 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 59 (7d12+14)

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

Immune acid, sleep, paralysis

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (average), swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +10 (1d8+6 plus 1d6 acid) and tail +8 (2d6+4)

Special Attacks acidic cloud breath, speed surge

TACTICS

During Combat Forest drakes prefer to ambush prey, attacking from amid the trees or underwater, unleashing their breath before leaping into melee. They often fight in the middle of their own acidic cloud, using their immunity to their greatest advantage.

Morale Forest drakes are fierce, but they often retreat if brought below 10 hit points. They have been known to carry a grudge and frequently hunt stronger foes from a distance, waiting for an opportune moment to get their revenge with ongoing hit-and-run strikes.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +15

Feats Alertness^B, Hover, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Hide +8, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Spot +12, Swim +22

Languages Draconic

SQ water breathing

ECOLOGY

Environment any forest

Organization solitary, pair, or rampage (3-12)

Treasure standard

Alignment usually lawful evil

Advancement 8-13 HD (Large); 14-21 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Acidic Cloud Breath (Su) A forest drake can, as a standard action, breathe a ball of acid that dissipates into a cloud on impact.

This attack has a range of 60 feet and deals 4d4 points of acid damage to all creatures within the 10-foot-radius cloud. A successful DC 15 Reflex save halves this damage. The cloud remains for 1d4 rounds once created, but a strong wind disperses it in a single round. Once a forest drake has used its acidic cloud breath, it cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds. The Reflex save is Constitution-based.

Speed Surge (Ex) Three times per day, a forest drake may draw on its draconic heritage for a boost of strength and speed that allows it to take an additional move action. Using this ability is a free action that can only be used once per round.

Water Breathing (Ex) A forest drake can breathe underwater indefinitely and can freely use its breath weapon and other abilities while underwater. The acidic cloud breath dissipates after 1 round if used underwater.

Skills Due to the coloring of its scales, a forest drake has a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks made in a forest environment. A forest drake has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check made to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

The degenerate cousins of green dragons, forest drakes are cunning predators. While they lack the intelligence and wit of true dragons, they make up for it with savage instincts, hunting prey through the forest in packs. Travelers making their way through drake-infested woods know to bring a company of archers with them to drive the beasts off, but if the drakes attack in numbers, even this defense is not enough. It is not uncommon to find acid-scorched wagons and burnt bones along the paths in a forest drake's domain.

Forest drakes typically stand approximately 12 feet tall, with wing spans nearing 30 feet. With only slight differences between genders, the drakes typically weigh around 3,000 pounds.

Ecology

Despite centuries of inbreeding and coupling with lesser species, forest drake are still similar in many ways to their green dragon cousins. Although today the forest drake has come to breed true, there are still a number of different subspecies with slightly varying characteristics.

Forest drakes are hatched from eggs, like most dragons, but their parents do little in the way of rearing. The parents stay with the eggs only until they are hatched, at which time they go their separate ways. Each such mating produces between four and eight eggs. Once hatched, the young forest drakes quickly begin hunting as a small pack. Once they reach 5 years old, the pack splits, with males and females going their separate ways. Forest drakes mature rapidly, reaching full size in only 5 years. While many die from violence, forest drakes can live to be up to 200 years old.

Like their green dragon relations, forest drakes have a particular taste for the flesh of elves and fey creatures. Less subtle and clever than true dragons, drakes are prone to attacking communities of such forest-dwelling creatures, intent on gorging themselves amid the ensuing carnage. Rather than instigate an all-out attack, warier drakes often prowl the region around elven and fey communities, seeking to prey upon any morsels foolish enough to wander from their homes alone.

Habitat & Society

Forest drakes tend to have communal lairs, which they place in secluded spots deep in the forest. The less accessible the spot by land, the better. This means that forest drakes often lair in dense thickets or remote clearings far away from established trails. The pack often brings food back to the lair to allow it to properly rot before being eaten. As such, the lair of a forest drake or pack is littered with decaying flesh, broken bones, and discarded (and frequently ruined) equipment—usually of elven origin.

Forest drakes can be found in nearly any forest environment, although temperate forests are the most common. Such environments allow the forest drakes to hide more easily in the foliage and surprise their prey.

Forest drakes spend most of their lives hunting with their siblings, breaking from the group only when it is time to mate. If a forest drake is lost or abandoned, it quickly joins another group if one is available. Such packs often have established orders, and while new members are welcome, they are forced to eat last and have few options for mates, with more senior members of the pack getting first choice. Solitary forest drakes tend to take on lone targets or merchant wagons, whereas a large pack might attack heavily guarded caravans or even a small town close to their lair. If prey grows scarce, a pack of forest drakes splits up, moving to different forests before turning on each other as a last resort.

Treasure

Although forest drakes have little interest or need for treasure, they find the scent of past meals enjoyable. To such end, they'll often keep the bones, clothes, armor, and other equipment of those they've consumed hoarded away. Any investigation of a forest drake's lair likely reveals a variety of gnawed-upon equipment, typically of elven or fey design.

Variant Forest Drakes

Although all part of the same species, forest drakes tend to vary a bit in their physical qualities, owing to their murky and convoluted heritage. Each forest drake has one of the following variations. Although uncommon, forest drakes from the same parents might have different variations. A forest drake with two of these variant abilities has a CR +1 higher than normal.

Dragon Senses (Ex): Some forest drakes inherit the keen senses of their draconic kin. These forest drakes have blindsense out to 30 feet.

Frightening Roar (Ex): Like a true dragon, this variety of forest drake can unsettle foes by emitting a terrifying roar. The forest drake can use this ability once per day as a free action. All creatures (other than other forest drakes) within 60 feet that can hear the forest drake must make a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for 1 minute. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Hard Scales (Ex): This breed of forest drake's scales are as hard as stone. Increase its natural armor bonus by +2.

Long Wings (Ex): This type of forest drake has longer than normal wings. Increase its fly speed to 90 feet and its maneuverability to good.

Quick Breath (Ex): This breed of forest drake's breath weapon recharges faster than most and can be used once every 1d4 rounds.



MAFTET

This creature drops soundlessly out of the sky on broad hawk wings that support a lithe humanoid body. From the waist up, it looks like a bronze-skinned human, with a human head and stern face, but its legs are those of a tawny bipedal lion, complete with a twitching feline tail. Bare-chested, its shapely torso is decorated with strange tattoos that glow faintly with eldritch power. The creature wields a wickedly curved scimitar in each hand, weaving them in an intricate pattern of cuts and slashes.

MAFTET

CR 6

Usually N Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17

(+4 armor, +5 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 58 (9d8+18)

Fort +7, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)

Melee mwk scimitar +11/+6 (1d6+3/18–20) and
mwk scimitar +11/+6 (1d6+3/18–20)

Special Attacks aerial pounce, paired weapons, raptor dive

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

3/day—*magic weapon*

1/day—*cat's grace*, *mage armor*, *protection from evil*

TACTICS

Before Combat A maftet activates its runic tattoos, casting *cat's grace*, *mage armor*, and *magic weapon*. If facing a foe it suspects to be evil, it also casts *protection from evil*.

During Combat A maftet prefers to attack by surprise from the air, charging into combat with a raptor dive and aerial pounce. Once engaged in melee, a maftet makes full attacks and uses Combat Reflexes to take attacks of

opportunity against mobile foes.

Morale If reduced to fewer than 15 hit points, a maftet takes to the air and flees.

Base Statistics When its runic tattoos are not activated, a maftet has the following statistics: **Init** +3; **AC** 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; **Ref** +9; **Melee** mwk scimitar +10/+5 (1d6+2/18–20) and mwk scimitar +10/+5 (1d6+2/18–20); **Dex** 17; **Skills** Move Silently +13

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 21, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

Feats Combat Reflexes^B, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (scimitar)

Skills Knowledge (history) +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +15, Spot +8

Languages Common, Sphinx

SQ runic tattoos

Gear 2 masterwork scimitars

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate and warm deserts and mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or pride (6–10)

Treasure standard

Advancement by class; **Favored Class** ranger

Level Adjustment +4

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aerial Pounce (Ex) When making a raptor dive, a maftet can take a full attack.

Paired Weapons (Ex) A maftet is ambidextrous and fights with a scimitar in each hand. Because of its intense training with these weapons, the maftet's off-hand scimitar is treated as a light weapon and the maftet adds its full Strength bonus to damage with it.

Raptor Dive (Ex) Maftets begin combat from the air. When airborne, they can swoop down and strike at lightning speed. This is equivalent to an aerial charge, allowing a maftet to dive at twice its normal flying speed and granting it a +2 bonus on its attack roll.

Runic Tattoos (Su) The eldritch tattoos scribed on a maftet's body power its spell-like abilities and glow faintly when those abilities are used. A maftet can activate any number of spell-like abilities as a standard action. It may also make a Fortitude save to resist the effects of an *erase* spell cast on its tattoos, but if it fails the

save, it loses access to its spell-like abilities for 24 hours.

Skills Maftets have a +4 racial bonus on Move Silently checks.

Inhabitants of crumbling ruins and lost cities, maftets are a race of winged feline humanoids. Also called sphinxkin, aslani, or singhala, maftets appear similar to bipedal sphinxes or lamias, although in fact they are neither. Accomplished hunters and stalkers, maftets are also highly skilled in fighting with paired scimitars. While not quite xenophobic, maftets are often hostile towards interlopers in their territory. As forbidding as the ruins they inhabit, maftets keep their own counsel.

A typical maftet stands over 7 feet in height and weighs between 250 and 300 lbs. Their upper bodies are humanoid, with bronze skin and human faces, although their eyes have the vertical pupils of felines. All maftets have a pair of broad, feathered hawk wings on their backs, usually dark in color. Their lower bodies are those of lions, covered in short fur that ranges in coloration from a light buff to yellowish or reddish brown, with feline tails as well. In some climates, maftets have the spotted lower bodies of leopards, and, rarely, a maftet is born with either white fur and pale skin, or black fur and grayish-purple skin. Such individuals frequently rise to positions of power among their kind.

Ecology

Although maftets are omnivorous, they prefer fresh meat and the thrill of the hunt. Typical prey includes aurochs, mountain sheep, deer, and other large herd animals. While maftets use javelins and nets in hunting, they disdain the use of such weapons in combat.

Maftets are very protective of the ruins they inhabit. What an adventurer may see as a dungeon ripe for plunder, a maftet views as its home, and will defend it against any intruders, regardless of their intentions. A particular pride might inhabit a ruin for generations, claiming the ancient place as its ancestral home—much to the frustration of historians and would-be treasure-seekers alike. This doesn't, however, prevent the maftets from exploring and utilizing the treasures in their own lairs. While maftets are usually indifferent to other races, they have an instinctive hatred for lamias and their kin. Maftets attack lamias on sight, and no maftet pride will suffer the presence of a lamia in its territory for long. Indeed, many of the maftets' combat and defensive abilities were developed and honed over centuries specifically for use against lamia-kin.

Habitat & Society

At home in dry deserts and mountains, maftets prefer to lair in abandoned ruins, seemingly drawn to such desolate places. They also make do with dens in cliffside caves or mountaintop eyries, but only if no suitable ruins can be found. Although the origin of maftets is unknown, some

sages believe they are related to sphinxes in some way, and their predilection for such ancient dwellings has led to speculation that maftets may be the fallen remnants of a sphinx empire that predates humanity. Thus far, however, no evidence of such a prehistoric civilization has been discovered.

Like lions, maftet society is organized into prides of four to six related females, their children, and a coalition of two to four males. A pride claims a territory centered on a given ruin that serves as the group's home. A particularly large ruin may be home to multiple prides that share the surrounding territory, but such occurrences are rare. Maftet females cooperatively share the responsibility for the majority of a pride's hunting, while males train the pride's children in warfare and guard the pride from outside males attempting to claim leadership of the group. Both sexes defend the pride and its territory against intruders. Ruins are sometimes home to a lone pair of maftets as well, frequently a mated couple seeking to establish a new pride.

Maftet children learn to fly after only a few years and begin studying the combat arts almost as soon they can hold a wooden scimitar. When a young maftet turns 12, it receives its runic tattoos from a shaman, usually the eldest female in the pride. The art and magic of creating these tattoos has been passed down from mother to daughter for thousands of years, along with a healthy dose of racial history and legend. The tattoos are always the same (with minor cosmetic variations between the sexes and between different prides) and always have the same effects, their origins lost to history. Under no circumstances are these tattoos ever given to non-maftets.

Once a maftet receives its tattoos, it must embark on the final step of its coming-of-age journey: the lamia hunt. In a fire-lit nighttime ceremony, the adolescent recites the deeds of its ancestors and is gifted with its paired scimitars. As the ritual concludes with the sunrise, the magic of the young maftet's tattoos is activated. Together with other children of age and the pride's warriors, the youths track, stalk, and kill a lamia. Only once it has taken part in such a hunt is a maftet considered an adult. At this point, females join their mothers' pride, while the young males are exiled to become nomads, find a mate, or join another pride.

Religion

Maftets worship an aspect of Curchanus, the ancient and nearly forgotten god of beasts. Although Curchanus is long dead, maftet clerics and shamans still receive divine spells from Curchanus's successor, Desna. Their reverence of Curchanus is more than partially the root of the maftets' enmity towards lamias, whose own goddess, Lamashtu, killed Curchanus and stole his portfolio of beasts.

SAJAN



MALE HUMAN MONK 7

ALIGN LN INIT +3 SPEED 50 ft.

DEITY: Irori

HOMELAND: Vudra

ABILITIES

13	STR
16	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
12	WIS
8	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 49
AC 18
 touch 17, flat-footed 15
Fort +7, Ref +8, Will +6
 (+2 against enchantment)
Special Defenses evasion, slow fall 30 ft., still mind;
Immune nonmagical disease

OFFENSE

Melee unarmed strike +8 (2d6+1) or flurry of blows +7/+7 (2d6+1) or +1 temple sword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)
Base Atk +5; Grp +6
Special Attacks ki strike (magic), stunning fist 8/day (DC 14), wholeness of body (14 hp/day)

SKILLS

Climb	+11
Escape Artist	+13
Jump	+21
Sense Motive	+11
Tumble	+15

FEATS

Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (temple sword), Improved Trip, Mobility, Stunning Fist, Weapon Finesse



Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds, potion of fly (2)*; **Other Gear** +1 temple sword, bracers of armor +1, ring of protection +1, monk's belt, wooden holy symbol, belt pouch

Sajjan Gadadvara and his twin sister Sajjni were separated when the lord they served was shamed and forced to cede half his army to the victor—among them Sajjan's sister. Sajjni was taken away from Vudra by her new master, and Sajjan abandoned his own responsibilities to follow. He spent years trying in vain to find her, but has not yet given up. Sajjan knows he cannot return to Vudra, for the padapranja there would execute him as a deserter. He cares not for his home country, however, and continues to seek out any clue that might point him toward his sister.

LINI



FEMALE GNOME DRUID 7

ALIGN N INIT +1 SPEED 20 ft.

DEITY: Green Faith

HOMELAND: Land of the Linnorm Kings

ABILITIES

6	STR
12	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
18	WIS
13	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 56
AC 17
 touch 13, flat-footed 16 (+4 bonus against giants)
Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +9
 (+2 against illusions)
Special Qualities low-light vision, nature sense, woodland stride

OFFENSE

Melee sickle +4 (1d4–2)
Ranged +1 sling +8 (1d3–2)
Base Atk +5; Grp –1
Special Attacks +1 on attack rolls against goblins and kobolds, wild shape 3/day
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st)
 1/day—*dancing lights, ghost sound* (DC 11), *prestidigitation, speak with burrowing mammals*
Spells Prepared (CL 7th; +7 ranged)
 4th—*air walk, dispel magic*
 3rd—*call lightning* (DC 17), *neutralize poison* (DC 17), *quench* (DC 17)
 2nd—*barkskin, cat's grace, lesser restoration, resist energy*
 1st—*entangle* (2, DC 15), *longstrider, produce flame* (2)
 0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *guidance, light, mending*

SKILLS

Concentration	+13
Craft (alchemy)	+2
Handle Animal	+11
Knowledge (nature)	+12
Listen	+6
Ride	+11
Survival	+6
Wild Empathy	+8

FEATS

Augment Summoning, Natural Spell, Spell Focus (conjuration)

ANIMAL COMPANION

Droogami (snow leopard; MM 274)



Combat Gear *wand of flame blade* (50 charges), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 leather armor, sickle, +1 sling with 10 bullets, ring of protection +1, *periapt of Wisdom* +2, belt pouch, mistletoe, spell component pouch, rations (2 days), collection of special de-barked sticks, 5 gp

Lini always seemed to possess a certain affinity with various creatures of the woodlands near where she grew up—particularly with larger predators like bears and snow leopards. In the years since her departure from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, Lini has collected more than a dozen sticks—one from each forest or wood she visits.

SELTYIEL

MALE HALF-ELF
FIGHTER 7/EVOKER 5/ELDRITCH KNIGHT 1

ALIGN LE INIT +3 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Asmodeus
HOMELAND: Cheliox

ABILITIES

12	STR
17	DEX
14	CON
14	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 40
AC 19
touch 15, flat-footed 16
Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +3;
+2 against enchantment;
immune to sleep effects

OFFENSE

Melee +1 longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +8 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +4; Grp +5
Special Qualities low-light vision
Spells Prepared (CL 5th, +7)
ranged touch, 10% spell failure
3rd—*fireball* (DC 16), still
scorching ray
2nd—*bear's endurance, bull's strength,*
still *magic missile, mirror image*
1st—*enlarge person, burning hands*
(DC 14), *magic missile (2), shield*
0—*flare* (DC 13), *light, mage hand,*
ray of frost, prestidigitation
Prohibited Schools enchantment,
necromancy

SKILLS

Concentration	+10
Craft (alchemy)	+10
Diplomacy	+2
Gather Information	+2
Intimidate	+4
Knowledge (arcana)	+10
Listen	+0
Search	+3
Spellcraft	+10
Spot	+0

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Dodge,
Mobility, Scribe Scroll, Spell
Focus (evocation), Still Spell,
Weapon Focus (longsword)

FAMILIAR

Dargenti (bat)



Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +2; **Other Gear** +2 *leather armor*, +1 *longsword*, dagger,
masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows, *gloves of Dexterity* +2, *ring of protection* +2, flask of fine
absinthe worth 50 gp, gold holy symbol worth 75 gp, spellbook, 8 gp

Born from a dead mother amid screams and disgrace, Selyiel grew up surrounded by shame and abuse. Before he came of age, his stepfather attempted to murder him, but after Selyiel turned the tables, he fled into the wild. Since then, his life has been a cruel series of betrayals and pain. His brief reunion with his true father (a notorious bandit) ended with the half-elf being betrayed and imprisoned. Recently released, Selyiel longs for revenge against both his fathers for his stolen childhood.

AMIRI

FEMALE HUMAN BARBARIAN 7

ALIGN CN INIT +1 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Gorum
HOMELAND: Realm of the Mammoth Lords

ABILITIES

18	STR
13	DEX
16	CON
10	INT
12	WIS
8	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 72
AC 17
touch 12, flat-footed 16
Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3
Special Defenses trap
sense +2, improved
uncanny dodge; DR 1/—

OFFENSE

Melee Large +1 bastard sword
+11/+6 (2d8+7/19–20)
Ranged +1 comp. longbow +9/+4
(1d8+5/×3)
Base Atk +7; Grp +11
Special Attacks rage 2/day
Special Qualities fast movement,
illiteracy

BARBARIAN RAGE

HP 86
AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 14
Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +5
Melee Large +1 bastard sword
+13/+8 (2d8+10/19–20)
Str 22, Con 20

RAGING POWER ATTACK

Melee Large +1 bastard sword
+6/+1 (2d8+24/19–20)

SKILLS

Climb	+12
Intimidate	+9
Jump	+12
Listen	+11
Spot	+3
Survival	+11

FEATS

Exotic Weapon Proficiency
(bastard sword), Improved
Bull Rush, Power Attack,
Weapon Focus (bastard
sword)



Combat Gear *potion of barkskin* +3 (2), *potion of fly*; **Gear** +2 *hide armor*, Large +1 *bastard sword*, +1
composite longbow (+4 Str), javelins (2), throwing axe, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *amulet of health* +2,
ring of protection +1, 20 gp

Amiri never quite fit in to the expected gender roles of her tribe, and when the tribe attempted to send her on a suicide mission, she returned with an enormous trophy—a frost giant's sword. She has since abandoned her people, and has come to value her oversized sword (even though she can only truly wield it properly when her blood rage takes her). She never speaks of the circumstances that forced her to flee her homeland. Some things are better left unsaid.



Next Month in **PATHFINDER**

ENDLESS NIGHT

by F. Wesley Schneider

The way to the Darklands stands open and the plot of the drow takes shape. With the dark elven taint in Celwynvian purged, the elves seek to learn more of their foul cousins' terrible scheme. Through guile and strange magic, someone must don the cruel visage of the drow and infiltrate their merciless ranks. Do the PCs dare to trespass into the realm of the drow? Can they hope to weather horrors that have lain hidden in the darkness for millennia? And will their cunning be enough to pass as drow themselves?

ZIRNAKAYNIN

by F. Wesley Schneider

Deep beneath the surface, in a land untouched by the scouring sun, grows the root of a forgotten evil, a city of magic-warped stone and bladed iron: Zirnakaynin, the Last Home of the Elves. Brave the twisted streets and deadly caverns of the deadly subterranean refuge, learn the ways of the drow's demon-sworn families, and take part in the depredations of the dark elves in this gazetteer of one of the foulest metropolises in all Golarion.

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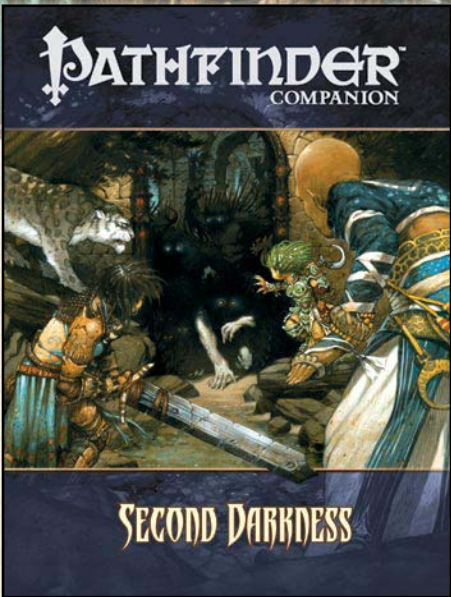
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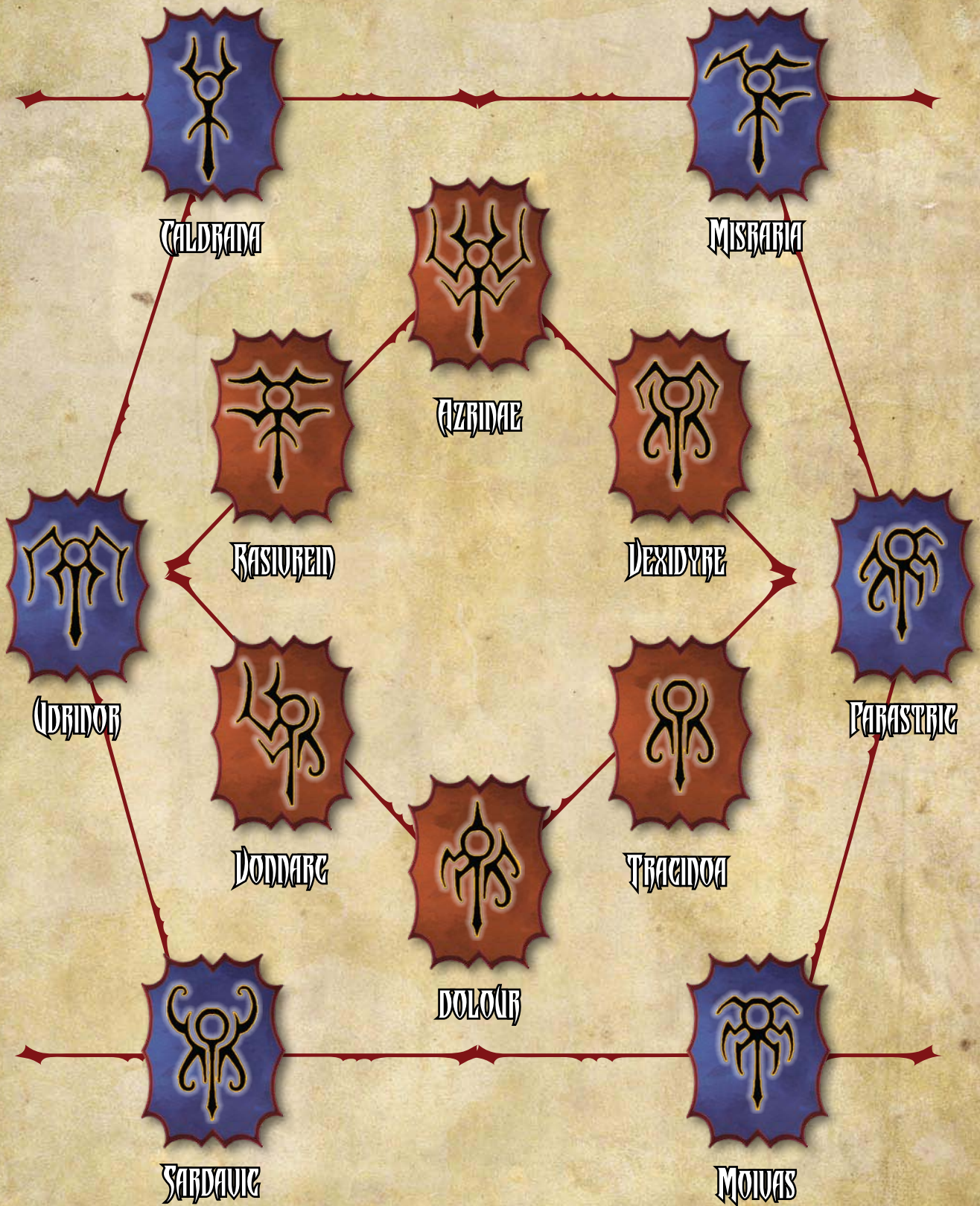
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