

# **PATHFINDER**<sup>®</sup>

**ADVENTURE PATH**<sup>™</sup>



## **SHATTERED STAR**

### **INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT**

By Richard Pett

WAP 12

## BRING ME A BETTER HEAD!

Madam Seeshaw Raccas runs the Shucked Oyster, one of Magnimar's more infamous brothels. She's long competed with one of the city's other well-known brothels, the House of Welcome, over who can boast of the most outlandish decorations. The House of Welcome recently added a wyvern's head to the barroom. When Seeshaw contacts the PCs, she scoffs, "Anyone can kill a wyvern—I want something better for the Oyster!"

**Reward:** Any non-undead corporeal monster that's CR 14 or higher works as a trophy. Do not count increases to a monster's CR from class levels for the purposes of this requirement. Upon delivering the trophy to Seeshaw, the PCs earn XP equal to the monster's XP award

(provided the trophy is already preserved—Seeshaw has no interest in rotten trophies), along with a *rod of splendor*—or, if the party prefers, free services from the Oyster for life!



DOCKWAY

## A STRANGE SOURCE OF POWER

Magnimar's most esteemed school of wizardry is the Stone of the Seers, an academy that focuses primarily on abjuration and divination magic. The Stone of the Seers is small, for its

master Leis Nivlandis maintains that the larger a school grows, the less its students learn—a thinly veiled jab at Korvosa's Acadamae. Unfortunately for Master Nivlandis, the small size of his school also means he has little free time to do field research, a sacrifice he feels is, in the end, a necessary one for the good of his students' educations. So when he learns that Magnimar's newest heroes are planning an expedition to Guiltspur, a site he's always wanted to visit, he quickly makes contact. His research suggests that powerful abjurations ward parts of Guiltspur, and he would like to know more about how these wards function—particularly, what source of energy powers the protection.


**Reward:** For determining that the wards are powered by an abyssium reactor and reporting that to Master Nivlandis, the PCs earn 51,200 XP and a *wand of stonesskin* (12 charges) as Nivlandis's thanks.



KEYSTONE

# **PATHFINDER** ADVENTURE PATH™

## **SHATTERED STAR**

ADVENTURE PATH  PART 5 OF 6

# **INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT**

# SHATTERED STAR

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Foreword</b>	4
<b>Into the Nightmare Rift</b> by Richard Pett	6
<b>NPC Gallery</b> by Richard Pett	58
<b>Shattered Star Treasures</b> by Richard Pett	62
<b>Leng: The Terror Beyond Dreams</b> by Greg A. Vaughan	64
<b>Lissala</b> by Sean K Reynolds	70
<b>Pathfinder's Journal: Light of a Distant Star 5 of 6</b> by Bill Ward	76
<b>Bestiary</b> by James Jacobs and Sean K Reynolds	82
<b>Preview</b>	92

## SHATTERED STAR



## OKAY, OKAY... LET'S GO TO LENG!

**H**. P. Lovecraft is no stranger to the pages of Pathfinder Adventure Path, and in this volume, his influence returns once again to Golarion, courtesy of Richard Pett's "Into the Nightmare Rift" and Greg A. Vaughan's "Leng: The Terror Beyond Dreams." There are three monsters drawn from Lovecraft's tales in this month's bestiary as well—which I converted to the Pathfinder RPG and originally intended to include in the bestiary of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #46: Wake of the Watcher*. At the time, when I found out from Wes that these three monsters had to be cut from that bestiary for space reasons, I was the typical cranky author railing against the cruelties of the editorial process. And as with most cranky authors railing against cruel editors, it turns out I should have instead been humbly thanking said editors, because as it happens, the bhole, the flying polyp, and especially the nightgaunt work SO much better as new monsters in this volume.

I've made no secret of my admiration of Lovecraft's writing, but strangely enough, this adventure marks the first time that I have personally hard-coded Lovecraftian elements into an adventure during its outline stages. In the early days of Pathfinder, in adventures like *Pathfinder Module: Crucible of Chaos* and Adventure Paths like *Rise of the Runelords* and *Curse of the Crimson Throne*, it was Wolfgang Baur and Greg Vaughan who approached me with the idea to include things like shoggoths, Azathoth, hounds of Tindalos, and Leng in their adventures—suggestions I immediately green-lit, of course. Richard Pett's *Pathfinder Module: Carrion Hill* was likewise an idea he'd had years and years ago for creating a fantasy RPG version of Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror," and the Lovecraft-heavy "Wake of the Watcher" mentioned above was, if I recall correctly, as much Wes Schneider's idea as anyone else's.

# FOREWORD

The thing is, I'm quite aware of the fact that not everyone likes Lovecraft in their fantasy games, and as such, I've kind of been a bit *too* hesitant to suggest things like, "Let's put Cthulhu in this adventure too!" Fortunately, my co-workers and freelance authors know what I like, I guess, and judging from feedback from readers, a lot of you out there like Lovecraft stuff in your games as well. And so, when it came time to outline Shattered Star and I was looking at themes from our first three Pathfinder Adventure Paths to build upon, one of the things I kept coming back to was Leng.

We've been talking about Leng since *Pathfinder Adventure Path #6: Spires of Xin-Shalast*, and in *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Great Beyond* we officially made it one of the planes, cementing its presence in Golarion's cosmology. But we'd never done much more than hint at it. This adventure, as a result, was always "the one where we'd finally go to Leng," even before I settled on Cadrilkasta as the villain and Guiltspur as the location. In fact, those two choices were made, in large part, because it was easy to use established lore and hints to make Guiltspur into a sort of Leng embassy, where Karzoug first started talking with that realm's denizens to help him accomplish his goals in the climax of *Rise of the Runelords*.

As always when we do an adventure that draws so much inspiration from Lovecraft, I'd like to give the fine folks at Chaosium a shout-out for being one of the primary influences on a young James Jacobs back in junior high. *Call of Cthulhu* remains one of my favorite games, and in a lot of ways, Golarion would be a very different place if not for it. If the information on Leng we give you here isn't enough, by all means check out Chaosium's *H. P. Lovecraft's Dreamlands* supplement for *Call of Cthulhu*.

Because I'm assuming all of you have already read Lovecraft's novella *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*. Right? RIGHT?

## HIGH-LEVEL DUNGEONS

One of my goals for the Shattered Star Adventure Path was to build a campaign that was nostalgic and old school in a lot of ways, primarily by having significant parts of each adventure take place in a dungeon. Unfortunately, dungeon adventures tend to be more and more difficult to finesse the higher in level your PCs get because those pesky spellcasters start getting access to spells like *screaming*, *teleport*, *passwall*, and the like—spells that some GMs might think of as having been invented specifically to destroy dungeons.

I generally try to avoid including elements in dungeons that simply and categorically shut down entire types of spells. *Teleport* and *screaming* effects, in particular, are hit with this limitation a lot. It's frustrating to finally gain access to spells like *teleport* and then be told that they don't work in any of the dungeons. I've avoided doing too many

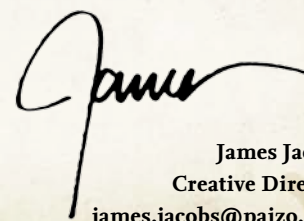
## ON THE COVER

It's hard to believe that it took us 65 volumes of Pathfinder Adventure Path to feature a dragon as the iconic cover character, but Wayne Reynolds' elegantly menacing depiction of the blue dragon Cadrilkasta is well worth the wait!

anti-teleportation effects in previous high-level dungeons, but here in the Guiltspur Depths, you'll find two and a half dungeon levels that do precisely that. One of the big reasons I decided to go with this was not because I was trying to rob spells from the players, but because I needed a reason why a powerful dragon like Cadrilkasta would be forced to dig out a buried dungeon using enslaved giants rather than just teleporting into it. And it's important to note that even despite that, the effects of this anti-teleportation, anti-screaming field don't cover every room—and even better, the PCs can eventually get to the cause of this effect and break it. Not only does this give the GM a chance to enjoy a dungeon the PCs can't scry and teleport into and out of, but it also gives the PCs a satisfying and perhaps therapeutic opportunity to get revenge on it as well!

A lot of the encounters in this adventure are difficult. There are two reasons for this. First, high-level characters are pretty good at escaping, resting, preparing, and returning to hit adventures hard when they're well prepared. Making key encounters particularly difficult helps to play to this truth. Second, we want to actually reward groups that bother exploring dungeons rather than skipping straight to the end. A group that painstakingly explores Guiltspur is going to find a lot more treasure, build up a lot more experience, recruit more allies, and perhaps most importantly, find out a lot more about what lies ahead. So when the group that carefully explores reaches these hard encounters, those PCs will be better prepared than the group that simply skips to the end.

Have any advice of your own for high-level dungeon crawling? Want to let us know what did and didn't work well for your group in this dungeon? Curious to find out how other groups fared in this or other adventures? Head on over to the [paizo.com](http://paizo.com) messageboards and find out—I'll be there to answer questions, give advice, and commiserate with GMs whose players ruined their favorite dungeons!



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# SHATTERED STAR



## INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

### PART ONE: GIANTS OF WRATH

*The PCs journey into the heart of the Storval Plateau to the ruins of Guiltspur, only to find it under the control of a group of giants in the process of excavating the ruin. The Shard of Wrath must be liberated from the giants' sadistic chieftain!*

PAGE 8

### PART TWO: GUILTSPUR DEPTHS

*After the Shard of Wrath grants a vision of the path to the final shard, the PCs delve deeper into the ruins of Guiltspur to face ancient magical traps, mad ghosts, immense lake monsters, a drow hunting party, horrors from beyond dreams, and a demilich.*

PAGE 22

### PART THREE: TEMPLE OF THE CRAWLING CHAOS

*After activating a portal to Leng, the PCs face one final challenge—a not-so-abandoned temple devoted to the Crawling Chaos recently invaded by a blue dragon who now claims the final shard of the Shattered Star as her own!*

PAGE 49

### ADVANCEMENT TRACK

“Into the Nightmare Rift” is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.

**13** The PCs should be 13th level when they begin this adventure.

**14** The PCs should reach 14th level soon after they start Part Two of the adventure.

**15** The PCs should reach 15th level at some point in the Embassy of Leng—they should certainly be 15th level before progressing to Part Three.

The PCs should be close to 16th level by the end of the adventure.





# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

During Runelord Karzoug's reign in the final centuries of Thassilon, the monolith of Guiltspur served a singular purpose—to act as a bridge between the Material Plane and the dread realm of Leng. Part embassy, part vile laboratory, part portal, Guiltspur was built by Karzoug so that he would have a place where he could always contact his strange allies from that nightmarish dimension. When Earthfall struck Golarion, the Kodar volcanoes awoke and spewed ash and lava across the northern Storval Plateau. Guiltspur lay in the path of one of the largest of these lava flows, and while the strange building had been constructed to withstand such devastation, the lava engulfed and buried it nonetheless, trapping its lesser denizens within while its rulers—denizens of Leng, moon-beasts, and the Lissalan priest Mesmalatu—plane shifted to Leng for safety.

The lava flow had another unanticipated effect on Guiltspur—while it didn't damage the structure's upper floors or underground levels, it did sever the planar link to Leng. For many centuries, Mesmalatu stayed among her strange allies in Leng and learned many of their secrets. It was during this time that she became a lich. Eventually, she and her allies rebuilt the portal that linked the depths of Guiltspur to a temple devoted to Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, on Leng, only to find Guiltspur had fallen into complete ruin over the course of the Age of Darkness. This suited Mesmalatu well, for without a runelord to bother her, she could use Guiltspur's remaining resources as she wished.

For many thousands of years, Mesmalatu and her Leng-spawned allies used Guiltspur as their own private Material Plane laboratory, and it was during this time that she abandoned her faith in Lissala for a far more sinister patron—the Faceless Sphinx aspect of Nyarlathotep. In time, even a lich's attentions wander, and as Mesmalatu's final experiments wound down, her allies were forced to abandon their holdings on the portal's far side after a disastrous war against the spiders of Leng. The lich, in response, closed down the portal once more and soon after fell into a centuries-long torpor. In that time, she became a powerful entity known as a demilich, and the upper ruins of Guiltspur became the haunt of all manner of strange creatures from the Darklands.

So Guiltspur lay, until relatively recently. Far to the east in the Hold of Belkzen, a powerful blue dragon named Cadrilkasta made a shocking discovery in a Thassilonian ruin—in an ancient vault, she found the *Shard of Wrath*. In her case, the shard's curse of violence had very little impact on her existing, quite sadistic personality. Intrigued by the shard's power and driven by a vision of the next shard, Cadrilkasta came to a

barren field of ancient lava, only to realize she stood atop what could be a treasure trove of ancient magical power. After discovering that access to the underground chambers was blocked via powerful magic, she swiftly “recruited” (using mind control magic and intimidation) a small army of fire and hill giants and set them to work excavating the site, going as far as to move her own lair into the area.

But even a blue dragon can get in over her head. When her giants managed to open the way into the deeper levels, her growing obsession with finding the *Shard of Sloth* became too much to ignore—so much so that she abandoned the previous shard (which now lies in the possession of one of her more powerful giant minions) and any pretense of looting Guiltspur's upper levels entirely. Her flight through the lower levels, one assisted by stealth and magic, eventually led her through the deep portal to Leng, and not long thereafter she managed to recover the *Shard of Sloth* only to fall victim to a much more insidious curse. Cadrilkasta hasn't been seen by her minions in Guiltspur for weeks now, but the giants still fear her and, believing she might return at any moment, continue to toil at excavating the upper, lava-buried chambers of the structure. What these giants don't realize is that Cadrilkasta's headlong flight through the depths of Guiltspur has awakened powers far more ancient and, perhaps, deadly than a dragon alone, and it is now only a matter of time before the ancient legacy of Guiltspur awakens once again!

## ADVENTURE SUMMARY

After recovering the *Shard of Envy* from Ardathanatus, the next vision sends the PCs back to the Storval Plateau—this time to its northern extremes, to Guiltspur. They find the ruins to be an increasingly anarchic giant-held stronghold. Greed and fear are all that keep the giants here. The *Shard of Wrath* is now the property of the current leader of the giant tribes, a lumbering thug named Jubbek, who has lashed the shard onto a club in order to form a crude but effective pick. In order to gain this shard, the PCs must defeat Jubbek.

Once the PCs secure the *Shard of Wrath*, the final vision reveals that the route to the *Shard of Sloth* is very close nearby—somewhere within Guiltspur itself. Yet this vision seems strange and shadowy, as if a sinister shadow obscures the vision. The PCs journey into the lava-entombed chambers of Guiltspur, and then into caverns below where they encounter a band of drow from House Rasivrein who also seek the *Shard of Sloth*. These drow, cultists of the demon lord Zura, are eager to track down the powerful necromantic artifact they believe is located in the dungeon—the *Shard of Sloth*. Do the PCs oppose or ally with these sinister elves?

Delving deeper, the PCs enter the underground laboratories once used by the lich Mesmalatu, who now exists as an awakened demilich along with her alien allies. Beyond her and her twisted experiments lies a portal to Leng, and a temple to the Crawling Chaos Nyarlathotep that has fallen back into degenerate anarchy.

Finally, in the howling storms on the very edge of the Plateau of Leng, the PCs face Cadrilkasta. Lost in the clutches of the shard's curse, the blue wyrm awakens to a righteous fury when confronted in her new lair perched atop a spur of rock overlooking the dread plateau of Leng itself. In order to claim the final shard of the *Shattered Star*, the PCs must find a way to defeat one of Varisia's most dangerous and powerful dragons!

## PART ONE: GIANTS OF WRATH

If the PCs wish, they can stop by Heidmarch Manor in Magnimar to let Sheila Heidmarch know their plans. As at the start of previous adventures, she can supply the PCs with an *ioun stone* (in this case, a *deep red sphere*) for when they recover the next shard, but by now the PCs should be well into 13th level and as a result are among Varisia's more powerful adventurers. There's little that Sheila can supply the PCs with that they don't already have. Other NPCs the PCs have allied with along the way, such as Koriah Azmereen, may accompany them on their adventures to come as you see fit. As the PCs prepare to leave, Sheila tells them that she's learned a bit more—that the ritual for rebuilding the *Sihedron* from the seven shards requires a special stone as a sort of "mold" to hold the fragments in alignment. Fortunately, the PCs have already discovered one of these stones—the *Sihedron Shrine* in the lowest chamber of the Crow. Sheila's got several lower-level Pathfinders on the task of hauling this shrine up to the surface, and she tells the PCs that when the time comes, she hopes to host a grand ceremony atop the Irespan during which they will reforge the ancient artifact. Pathfinders and other luminaries from throughout the Inner Sea have taken note of the PCs' quest now, and many famous faces will no doubt be in attendance at the ceremony. But now, she notes, with two shards remaining to be found, the PCs still have a bit of work ahead of them.

This adventure doesn't cover the journey from Magnimar (or wherever the PCs are at the start of this adventure) to Guiltspur, as it assumes the PCs can make such an overland journey with ease using magic. Spells like *shadow walk* and *wind walk* can make the journey pass quickly, as can teleporting to a familiar site like Kaer Maga and then traveling north. If you wish the PCs to have some encounters along the way, feel free to have them meet bands of giants, wyverns, rocs, or enormous crimson worms (purple worms advanced to Colossal size), but the

sheer size of Guiltspur requires this adventure to focus on the locations therein (and in the neighboring realm of Leng, of course!).

But before the PCs leave, they might wish to do some research about their destination. If no PC succeeds at the DC 25 Knowledge (geography) check required to identify Guiltspur as their next destination while focusing on the *Shard of Envy*, a few hours spent sifting through Heidmarch Manor's maps, almanacs, and tomes is enough to secure this knowledge. Once the PCs know they're headed to Guiltspur, a Knowledge (history or geography) check reveals the following information.

## GUILTSPUR LORE

Knowledge Check	Lore Gained
DC 15	Guiltspur is said to be cursed—a site avoided even by the giants that call the Storval Plateau home. The site is little more than a strange green pinnacle of stone protruding from the ground, but even this is enough to send chills down the spines of those who believe in the area's curse.
DC 20	Guiltspur is in fact a Thassilonian ruin, a building buried under a massive lava flow that blanketed much of the northeastern Storval Plateau during the fall of Thassilon. The building itself is said to have been a combination laboratory and embassy for strange, otherworldly allies of Karzoug, the Runelord of Greed.
DC 30	The place was little more than rumor until recent years, when stories began to emerge of an immense excavation led by the blue dragon Cadrilkasta. These stories tell of entire tribes of hill and fire giants, enslaved by the dragon and forced to painstakingly dig out the chambers of buildings buried in the ground below the great green spur.
DC 40	The ancient, nearly forgotten church of Lissala, the goddess of runes, supposedly ran the laboratories of Guiltspur, and were instrumental in aiding Karzoug in forging an alliance with the otherworldly realm of Leng to which Guiltspur served as a sort of embassy. Rumors of portals to this nightmare realm deep under Guiltspur were common during Thassilon's height.

If the PCs learn of Cadrilkasta's association with Guiltspur, a Knowledge (arcana) check is enough to learn the following rumors about the relatively infamous blue dragon.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## CADRILKASTA LORE

Knowledge Check	Lore Gained
DC 20	The blue dragon Cadrilkasta is a powerful creature—a blue wyrm, by all counts, who once terrorized the Hold of Belkzen. That she was viewed by the orcs of Belkzen as a blight and a monster goes a long way toward establishing her notoriety—she is a monster’s monster.
DC 30	Cadrilkasta had a large lair in Belkzen, but abandoned it a few years ago and moved west into the Cinderlands. She’s been sighted in the vicinity of Guiltspur, and has recruited hill giants and fire giants to aid in excavating the ruin. Her reasons for this excavation are unknown, although the fact that she left Belkzen not long after exploring and destroying a Thassilonian ruin there has led some to believe she learned of a great treasure supposedly hidden in the ruins of Guiltspur. These same rumors speak of how after the destruction of that ruin, the dragon seemed to grow even more violent, to the extent that the orc tribes of Belkzen still fear her return.

## APPROACHING GUILTSPUR

Guiltspur is located about 530 miles northwest of Magnimar. The site itself is located in a particularly rugged range of badlands that comprise the foothills to the Kodar Mountains. Much of this land was born of ancient lava flows carved by centuries of wind into eerie shapes. This same wind creates mournful and haunting sounds as it blows through the landscape’s myriad hollows. The vision granted by the *Shard of Envy* dulls as the PCs approach a valley in the badlands that has been walled off by a wooden stockade, beyond which a ramp switchbacks up to a higher plateau surrounded by rocky bluffs. Here, a two-story wooden building squats in the shadow of a towering green spire of strange stone—Guiltspur.

The region around Guiltspur has long been in the hands of its giant excavators. While their draconic overlord Cadrilkasta hasn’t been around lately, the giants remain fearful of her punishment should she return and find them lacking, and as such they continue to toil (albeit much more slowly) at excavating the region and the upper levels of the ruins. Still, morale is running low, with several giants now languishing in impromptu prisons while their leaders grow more and more decadent and bold in their roles. The arrival of humans to torment and fight is a welcome change for the giants, and at least initially they rise to the defense of Guiltspur with frightening energy.

Keep track of the number of giants the PCs defeat during this part of the adventure. In all, there are 68 hill giants and 24 fire giants associated with Guiltspur’s uppermost levels, although only 34 hill giants and 12 fire giants are present at the time the PCs first come to the region. If they launch an attack on Guiltspur and then retreat, other giants who were out in the surrounding badlands hunting or scouting return to reinforce those giants who were defeated, effectively replenishing exhausted encounter areas as long as the numbers hold out (there are enough giants to fully repopulate Guiltspur once in this manner). Once the PCs have killed at least 30 hill giants and eight fire giants, all remaining giants panic and flee the site not long after the PCs leave these areas (either to regroup, or to explore deeper levels below). Giants in the Punishment Pits (area **B6**) do not count for any of these totals. Only Chief Jubbek and his minions in area **B8** stubbornly remain behind in this case.

While the following encounter areas place giants in specific parts of Jubbek’s fortress, you should strive to present battles here in a dynamic fashion. Just as powerful PCs aren’t required to tackle the encounter areas in numerical order, the giants don’t have to stay in their assigned locations if flying or teleporting PCs bypass one location to strike another. Giants are noisy combatants, so feel free to have those in neighboring areas come to aid in fights as soon as a previous combat seems to be winding down. You can string multiple battles together in this manner, having epic clashes that can move through numerous locations until the PCs are either victorious or forced to flee and regroup. Stealth and trickery are powerful allies in this part of the adventure, for a frontal assault against the giants is a sure way to rouse the entire fort to arms.

## A1. STOCKADE (CR 14)

The ragged badlands split here, forming a wide valley that rises up to a higher plateau nestled amid the peaks. A wide ledge switchbacks up to this plateau, atop which a fifty-foot-tall wooden structure sits. Beyond this structure, deeper in the valley, a green spur rises out of the cleft to tower over the landscape. The entire valley entrance has been blocked off by a twenty-foot-tall stockade built of tree trunks. A pair of forty-five-foot-tall watchtowers flank an immense wooden gate at the eastern end of the stockade.

This stockade and the ledge leading up to the actual excavation above were among the first things constructed by the giants—they don’t expect this defense to hold back determined heroes or other powerful monsters, but as long as it holds back lesser predators and creatures while giving a chance for an early alarm, the stockade’s doing its job.

A successful DC 15 Climb check is enough to scale the stockade wall or climb one of the watchtowers. Each

# SHATTERED STAR



watchtower consists of a wooden framework with a single floor 35 feet off the ground accessible by a sturdy ladder on the northern side, inside the stockade's bounds.

**Creatures:** This area is watched over by four hill giants—one stationed atop each watchtower and two stationed behind the wall along with trained mastodon mounts. Each watchtower is equipped with a handy stack of a dozen boulders for throwing, along with a large horn carved from a mastodon tusk. While these giants are more worried about Cadrilkasta's return, they quickly mobilize as soon as they spot PCs approaching by blowing loud, mournful alarms on their mastodon tusk horns.

## GUILTSBUR HILL GIANTS (4) CR 9

XP 6,400 each

Advanced hill giant fighter 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150, 294)  
CE Large humanoid (giant)

**Init** +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +16

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+5 armor, +1 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 117 each (11 HD; 10d8+1d10+67)

**Fort** +15, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

**Defensive Abilities** rock catching

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk greatclub +18/+13 (2d8+13) or

mwk lance +17/+12 (2d6+13/x3)

**Ranged** rock +9 (1d8+13) or

light ballista +8 (4d8/19-20)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** rock throwing (120 ft.)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The two giants on mastodons below immediately prepare to attack intruders, waiting for the giants stationed in the towers to pull open the gate—during this round, these two giants drink their *potions of haste*. On the second round, the mastodon-mounted giants charge out while the giants in the towers drop the ropes used to open the gates (causing the gates to swing back shut), then join the others in throwing boulders.

**Morale** The giants fight to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 29, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 29

**Feats** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (light ballista), Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatclub)

**Skills** Handle Animal +7, Perception +16, Ride +9

**Languages** Giant

**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds*, *potions of haste*;

**Other Gear** +1 hide armor, giant bag

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## MASTODONS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 133 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 128)

**Treasure:** Each of these giants carries a bag filled with all sorts of strange objects he's collected over the years. You can randomly generate the contents of each bag by using the table on page 32 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Giants Revisited*, or you can simply assume that each giant's bag contains miscellaneous valuables worth 3d6+60 gp.

**Development:** Note that once the giants raise the alarm with their mastodon tusk horns, the giants stationed atop the hill at area **A3** mobilize at the ballistae and begin firing them at the PCs.

## A2. THE LAVA RISE (CR 12)

This sloped ledge switchbacks up at a relatively gentle angle to area **A3**; climbing one of the ledges up to the next ledge (rather than simply walking the easy route up the back-and-forth slope itself) requires a successful DC 20 Climb check. This ledge is 30 feet high at each highest point, diminishing down to only a foot or so at each corner.

**Creatures:** The giants keep three mastodons tethered to the top of the ledge—and slather these mastodons with thick sheets of tar to serve as armor. The mastodons are used to the tar, but not quite used to the plans the hill giants have for them. If PCs start up this ramp, the fire giant at area **A3** lights the tar-daubed mastodons and then quickly gets out of way. The burning, panicked mastodons then flee down the ramps, trampling and attacking PCs all the way down. Once they reach the bottom of the ramp, if the gates are closed, the frightened creatures reverse course and race back up the ramp. The hill giants didn't quite plan for this contingency, and if the mastodons live long enough to return to area **A3**, they attack any hill giants that remain up there in preference to any other foes.

## TAR-DAUBED MASTODONS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 133 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 128)

**Tar Daubed (Ex)** Each of these mastodons has been smeared with thick layers of tar. The sticky stuff functions as padded armor, granting the mastodons a +1 armor bonus, but its primary use is as a horrific attack. If the tar is lit on fire, the mastodon take 1d6 points of fire damage per round, but also deals +1d6 points of fire damage on each successful hit, or +2d6 points of fire damage with its trample attack.

## A3. GUILTSPUR HOLLOW (CR 13)

This wide valley nestled between ragged badlands features a fifty-foot-tall wooden fortress built on a scale twice what one might expect for humans. This building, built from enormous

timbers, features no windows and only a single hefty door. A flag depicting a giant atop a mound of dead elves and owlbears hangs above the door. Braziers containing smoldering coals burn near the entrance to the structure, while three large ballistae sit on a ledge south of the fortress, looking out over the valley's entrance. Beyond, a large mound of rubble slumps before a towering green spire that extends nearly two hundred feet into the sky.

The flag hanging above the door can be recognized with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (local) check as the banner of a relatively notorious tribe of Storval hill giants called the Elfstompers. This check also confirms that the tribe's leader is an infamously vile and lecherous brute named Chief Jubbek. The interior of the fortress is detailed in areas **A6–A11**.

**Creatures:** A group of three hill giants led by a fire giant keep a watch on this area—if they hear the alarm raised from the giants down in area **A1**, the hill giants quickly man the light ballistae and begin firing them down at the PCs. The fire giant moves to stand near the tar-daubed mastodons kept corralled at the top of area **A2** and uses hurled rocks to support the ballistae—once he sees the PCs moving up the ramp, he lights the mastodons on fire with a thrown handful of hot coals scooped from one of the braziers near the entrance to area **A6a**. As soon as any of the PCs near **A3**, these four giants make a fighting retreat toward the structure, hoping to join their brethren in area **A6a**.

Light ballistae are detailed on pages 160–161 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Combat*. They have a range increment of 120 feet, which puts all targets in area **A2** in the first range increment. It takes a giant 2 rounds to load a light ballista.

## GUILTSPUR HILL GIANTS (3)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 117 each (see page 10)

## FIRE GIANT

CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 142 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

## A4. RUBBLE MOUND

A sizable mound of rubble lies heaped against a cliff side here—a slope of boulders, ranging in size from small rocks to masses larger than a human, that rises to a height of thirty feet.

This mound of rubble marks the site of one of the initial attempts made by the giants to dig down into the underground chambers of Guiltspur, but in their exuberance, they dug too quickly and a large chamber below (once connected to area **B7**) collapsed. The

# SHATTERED STAR

giants have since grown much more careful with their excavations, with the majority of the rock cleared away from the northwest around area **A5**, being heaped in this slowly growing mound.

## A5. GUILTSPUR (CR 12)

A spur-shaped tower of blue-green metal protrudes from the ground here, rising to a height of a few hundred feet. The spur's height seems even greater for the fact that the ground around it has been meticulously chiseled away. Ramps wind down along the spire's sides to a point thirty feet below, where an opening in its side reveals that the structure is at least partially hollow.

The excavation around this metallic protrusion extends upward to the surrounding walls—an examination of the walls of this entire section of the valley reveals that the hollow was created artificially. The spur of blue-green is in fact the top of the tallest of Guiltspur's lava-buried towers, extending down to area **B8**

below. The spur-shaped tower itself is made of magically treated stone, but a closer examination reveals that the entire spur has been coated in a seamless layer of blue-green metal. This metal is in fact an unusual abyssium alloy that was “painted” onto the tower to give it the strange coloration. The alloy itself has bonded with the outer layer of the stone, making it impossible to extract. The entire tower glows softly (this glow is generally not noticeable during the day, and casts 60 feet of dim light at night), but perhaps of greater importance, the abyssium emits debilitating radiation to this extent as well. All creatures within 60 feet of the exterior of this pinnacle must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save each hour to resist becoming sickened for 1 hour. This effect does not extend into area **B8** or its adjoining underground areas.

**Creatures:** A group of three hill giants toils down in the excavation, working as gently as possible to widen the dig and expose more and more of the tower. These giants are all sickened from the tower's proximity, and the sound of their mining picks and groans of distress impose a –6 penalty on their Perception checks. If they notice a fight going on in area **A2**, they abandon their picks, grab their greatclubs, and shamle out to join that fight—if confronted here, they fight until one of them drops, whereupon the remaining giants shamle down the excavation ramp into area **B8** to seek aid from Chief Jubbek himself.

**GUILTSPUR HILL GIANTS (3)**

**CR 9**

**XP 6,400 each**

**hp 117 each (see page 10)**

## A6. GREAT HALL (CR 15)

The wooden walls of this wide timber room are adorned with dozens of trophies, some of which seem to be still alive judging by their feeble twitchings and cries. The majority of the trophies are animals—bears, aurochs, giant lizards, and a few monsters—but here and there hang the mutilated bodies of orcs or humans. A great fire pit lies in the room's center, forming a layer of smoke near the ceiling some fifty feet above, while additional torches guttering on the walls only add to the room's foul scents. Slabs of dubious meat roast slowly over the central fire, while a balcony twenty-five feet above the eastern half of the room looks out over the hall.

The air inside this great hall is musty, hot, and smoky—upon first entering the room, a creature must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 minutes before becoming accustomed to the air. All of the giants encountered here have had plenty of time to become so adjusted. The meat cooking on the fire is mostly aurochs or wyvern flesh.

GUILTSPUR

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

Of the trophies on the walls, two aurochs and one bulette are still barely alive but stable at 2d6 negative hit points. If any of these creatures are cut down from the walls (this requires 1d4 rounds of work with a slashing weapon) and healed to positive hit points, they attack any giants in the room out of anger before turning their attention to smaller targets.

The walls of the steading are constructed of wood, but they've also all been treated with thick layers of resin to somewhat fireproof them. The walls have fire resistance 20 as a result, and cannot catch on fire at all.

**Creatures:** The main chamber of the steading was used by Jubbek as a feast hall and throne room, with the balcony above (area A6b) serving him as his personal quarters. After the lower levels expanded enough and Jubbek fell further under the curse of the *Shard of Wrath*, he moved downstairs and ceded control of this level to a fire giant woman named Stom. As Jubbek grows less and less interested in commanding the giants, Stom has grown more and more into the role of commander, and now prefers to be called General Stom. Unlike most of the giants, Stom suspects that Cadrilkasta met an ignominious end in the dungeons below and won't be returning. She hopes to gather the remaining giants under her command (although she treats the hill giants as little more than slaves), but isn't comfortable launching her coup so long as Jubbek still lives.

Area A6a contains four regular hill giants and two fire giants (plus any giants who fled here from outside). General Stom lounges in area A6b above, and there's a 50% chance that 1d2 of the fire giants from below have been called up to serve as Stom's consorts.

**HILL GIANTS (4)** CR 7  
XP 3,200 each  
hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

**FIRE GIANTS (2)** CR 10  
XP 9,600 each  
hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

**GENERAL STOM** CR 13  
XP 25,600  
Female fire giant fighter 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)  
CE Large humanoid (fire, giant)  
Init +1; Senses low-light vision; Perception +14

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**DEFENSE**  
AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)  
hp 212 (18 HD; 15d8+3d10+129)  
Fort +18, Ref +7, Will +10; +1 vs. fear  
**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, rock catching; DR 2/—;  
Immune fire  
**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

## SIDE QUEST: A FAVOR FOR STOM

When the PCs first enter area A6a, regardless of how many giants they've killed outside, the giants therein don't immediately attack. They stand up and call for their general, who then steps to the edge of the balcony and calls down to the PCs, complimenting them on their battle prowess. Stom has an offer for the PCs—if they can storm the chambers below and take out Chief Jubbek and all the giants down there who are loyal to him, she'll take the remaining giants here and leave without a fight. Which, she points out, incidentally leaves any of the treasure found in the other rooms (areas A7–A11) for the PCs as well. If the PCs agree, she has one of the fire giants escort them to area A7, but none of them are willing to aid the PCs in the fights below.

**Story Award:** As soon as the PCs return with Jubbek's head or otherwise prove to Stom that the hill giant has been defeated, she thanks the PCs, gathers the remaining giants under her command, and makes ready to leave the region within the hour. The PCs earn XP as if they had defeated all the remaining foes in areas A6–A11, and an additional 19,200 XP for allying with Stom. She also points out that there's a fair amount of treasure she's leaving behind in the complex (as indicated in the area descriptions).



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### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft.  
**Melee** +2 *thundering earth breaker* +27/+22/+17 (2d8+18/19–20/x3)  
**Ranged** rock +15 (1d8+11 plus 1d6 fire)  
**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.  
**Special Attacks** heated rock, rock throwing (120 ft.)

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### TACTICS

**During Combat** General Stom has a dozen rocks stacked along the edge of the balcony, and as combat begins, she supports the giants below by hurling these into the fray. She makes the PCs come to her before engaging in melee—if the PCs use ranged weapons or attacks, though, she rushes down the stairs to attack them once at least four of the giants below have been killed.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 80 hit points, General Stom makes a fighting retreat toward the exit, hoping to flee the region entirely once she gets out of the building. If no escape is possible, she surrenders if brought below 20 hit points, and offers to aid the PCs in killing Jubbek. She knows the layout of Jubbek's Halls quite well, and can at the very least provide the PCs with a map and lists of guards. She doesn't know about area B11.

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### STATISTICS

Str 33, Dex 13, Con 23, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 14

# SHATTERED STAR

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +26 (+28 bull rush); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Dazzling Display, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (earth breaker), Improved Iron Will, Improved Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Shatter Defenses, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (earth breaker)

**Skills** Climb +16, Intimidate +21, Perception +14; **Racial**

**Modifiers** +4 Acrobatics (when jumping)

**Languages** Common, Giant

**SQ** armor training 1

**Gear** +2 *adamantine breastplate*, +2 *thundering earth breaker*, bag (see Treasure, below)

**Treasure:** General Stom's bag contains the following objects of interest: a heavy fur-and-wool cloak with deep pockets within which are a bloody ogre hand, a corkscrew, and three knives (one of which is a +2 *dagger*); a gnawed gnome skull; two bags of coins (one with 453 sp, and the other with 309 gp and 99 pp); a meat cleaver; a large meat saw; a vice; two dozen meat hooks (three of which still have orc heads attached to them); and a strange jade icon of a faceless sphinx worth 200 gp. Stom found this symbol while exploring one of the chambers in Jubbek's Halls below—a successful DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check correctly identifies it as one of the countless symbols of the Outer God Nyarlathotep.

Other treasure lies strewn about areas **A6b** as well—this treasure belonged to Jubbek, and if the PCs make a deal with Stom, she leaves all of this treasure behind for them as thanks. Amid the countless heads, limbs, and tusks hanging from the roof or lashed to the walls are an incredibly dirty but very fine rug worth 600 gp, a masterwork pike, three +3 *crossbow bolts* jammed into a doorframe, a pair of sable gloves worth 150 gp, a tapestry depicting humans vanquishing giants that is covered with foul graffiti in charcoal worth 200

gp if cleaned, a Medium +1 *breastplate*, and a *scroll of spell resistance* unfurled and used as a knife target (this damaged scroll has a 25% chance when used of, in addition to its intended effect, affecting the user with a random drawback from the table on page 538 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* for 2d6 hours).

## A7. EMPTY GUARDROOM

An enormous table sits in the northeast corner of this room, while a flight of stairs leads down to the south.

This room was originally used by the giants to guard the entrance to the tunnels below, but as the giants have become increasingly disorganized, the guards normally posted here are now generally found in area **A6a**. The stairs lead down to area **B1**.

## A8. PANTRY

Several large crates and oversized barrels lie stacked about here, leaving very little room to move around.

The barrels here contain the stead's dwindling supply of water. In two days, the hill giants in area **A6a** will be sent on a trip a mile or so south to resupply the water from a small, nameless river. If the PCs spend time watching and waiting, this could give the group a chance to attack the giants when they're split up.

## A9. GAME ROOM (CR 11)

A large, stout table squats in the center of this room, surrounded by three equally stout and somewhat scorched chairs. Several dripping kegs lie on the table, with more strewn about the floor, while to the north, a freestanding shelf sags under the weight of stacks of weapons and bits of armor.

**Creatures:** Three fire giants have converted what was once an armory into a game room of sorts. The three giants are seated at the table, howling in delight at the game itself, which involves drinking from the various kegs of cheap



GENERAL STOM



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

ale they “liberated” from a band of orcs while building an increasingly rickety tower made of human and orc skulls and femurs. Each time a giant knocks the tower down, he drains a keg—currently, the three giants are quite drunk and both sickened and staggered. They ignore the sounds of battle in area **A6a** in favor of playing one more round of “drunk bones.”

Upon noticing the PCs, the giants roar and leap to action, although their drunken condition makes them less dangerous than normal (reducing their CR score by 2). One of the giants stumbles over to the door of area **A10** and calls the creatures inside to help them fight as the combat begins, but since the door to area **A10** is kept barred, the giant needs to take a standard action to open it.

**FIRE GIANTS (3)** **CR 8**  
**XP 4,800 each**  
hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

**Treasure:** The fire giants keep their treasure in a large iron trunk, within which are two bags containing 1,000 sp each, a smaller leather bag containing 500 gp, a black iron weather vane depicting three pigs chasing a troll (the eyes of each creature are made of jasper and the whole item is worth 275 gp), a dented church bell worth 40 gp, and an uncut piece of violet garnet worth 400 gp. Heaped on the shelves are Large lances and clubs, pieces of Large hide armor, and various Medium weapons looted from orcs and Shoanti. Most of the weapons here are mundane, but a +2 *thundering klar* (*The Inner Sea World Guide*) sits on the bottom shelf.

## A10. KENNEL (CR 12)

The floor of this room is strewn with mounds of earth and tangles of broken and scorched bones. The air feels particularly hot and the walls are scorched.

**Creatures:** A pair of nessian warhounds is kept here, all that remains of a larger pack that, as the giant tribes have grown more violent and uncontrolled, has been dwindling in number. These last two warhounds are particularly vicious and violent—each is an advanced specimen of its kind, and they attack any non-giant creatures on sight.

**ADVANCED NESSIAN WARHOUNDS (2)** **CR 10**  
**XP 9,600 each**  
hp 150 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173, 294)

## A11. TOOL ROOM

This chamber is piled high with pit props, torches, spades, miner’s picks, buckets, endless coils of rope, and other mining and excavation gear.

**Treasure:** The tools kept here are relatively mundane, save for their size—they’re all built for Large workers. A fair number of the tools look to be well used or even broken. A search of the various containers and mounds of tools (taking 2d6 minutes) and a successful DC 30 Perception check uncovers the one object of any real value in the room—a *rod of metal and mineral detection* the giants intended to use to assay for new excavation sites but quickly forgot about due to organizational inefficiencies.

## JUBBEK’S HALLS

The upper section of ground below the valley is riddled with lava tubes that connect to a few buried structures that were once part of Guiltspur. The giants have stopped their expansion work here. After Jubbek reported the discovery of area **B11** to Cadrilkasta, the dragon swiftly moved down into the dungeon and hasn’t been seen again, and as such, further excavation proceeds slowly.

The giants found on this level are all loyal to Chief Jubbek (save for those imprisoned in area **B6**), and as long as the chieftain lives, they do not flee combat. Presented with proof of Jubbek’s death (either his head or his weapon), a giant in this area must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be shaken. Giants shaken in this manner flee the region and do not return if reduced to fewer than half their hit points. This loyalty to Jubbek exists in spite of (or, perhaps, because of) the chieftain’s increasingly violent personality. Already a temperamental creature, Jubbek has been made into a horrific sadist by the *Shard of Wrath*. Driven by the shard’s curse, Jubbek has mutilated many of his loyal giants, and all of the giants encountered in this area are missing fingers, toes, or bear hideous scars. These mutilations generally do not significantly impact a giant’s effectiveness in combat, but each giant the PCs encounter has a 20% chance of being mutilated enough that it has 2 points of Constitution or Dexterity drain (50% chance of either). Recently, Jubbek’s taken to working his violence out on captured trolls, granting his other minions a welcome respite from his attentions.

This upper level of the dungeons does contain a few areas that once composed the higher reaches of Guiltspur itself (areas **B8** and **B11**), but they are not considered to be properly part of the complex below and are not warded in the same way as described at the start of Part Two.

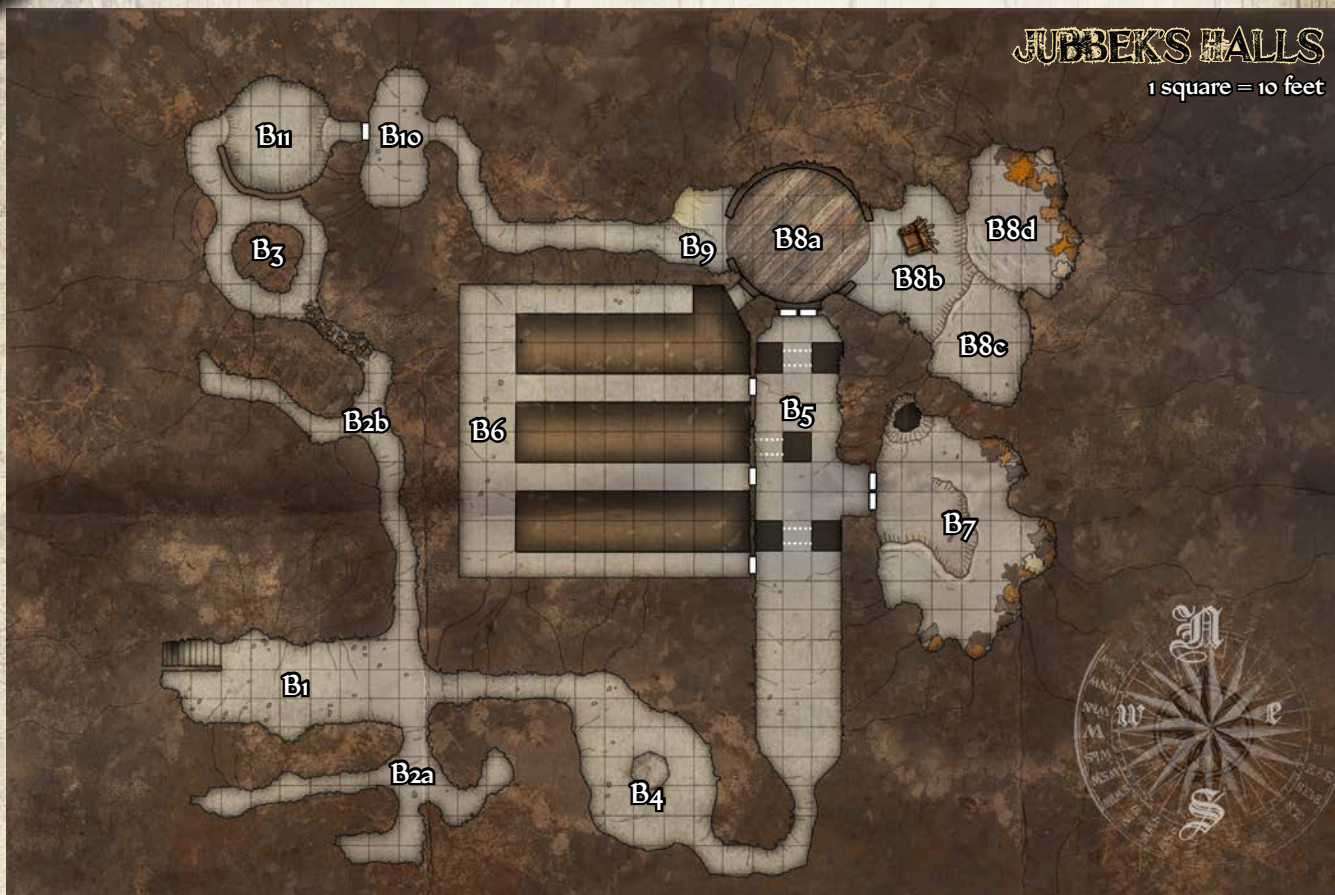
## B1. GUARD POST (CR 13)

This thirty-foot-wide chamber appears to have been widened with picks and chisels. More natural-looking tunnels—ten-foot-wide circular lava tubes—extend from this larger chamber to the north, south, and east, while to the west, a roughly caved flight of stairs sized for giants leads upward.

# SHATTERED STAR

## JUBBEKS HALLS

1 square = 10 feet



Large chunks of stone and debris lie scattered haphazardly about the room.

The stairs lead up 30 feet to area **A7**, but are sized for giants. Medium and smaller creatures treat them as difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** A group of three fire giants stands on guard here at all times, but these sentries are generally lax in their duties, sitting in the middle of the room sharing stories or bragging about past conquests. Distracted, they take a  $-4$  penalty on Perception checks, but once they notice the PCs, they roar and rise up to attack. The giants use the leftover boulders and chunks of stone as missiles against the PCs while they holler for help down the tunnel to area **B2a**—the giants there move to aid their allies here as quickly as they can.

As soon as one fire giant is defeated, the remaining giants begin a fighting retreat to the east, hoping to lure the PCs to the Butcher's Highway (area **B5**) where they have reinforcements and traps to use against the PCs.

**FIRE GIANTS (3)** CR 10  
XP 9,600 each  
hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

## B2. THE LAVA TUBES (CR 10)

These natural lava tubes are roughly circular in cross-section. Fire giants have to crouch slightly to move through here, and take a  $-1$  penalty on attack rolls while fighting in this area. The tubes to the south (area **B2a**) have been extended recently by giants seeking new Guiltspur ruins, while those to the north (area **B2b**) are feared by the giants since they lead to area **B11** and the source of strange monsters that the giants would rather not tangle with. The tunnel has been mostly blocked by mounds of rubble, but gaps large enough for a Small creature to wriggle through with a successful DC 30 Escape Artist check exist. It takes 2d6 hours of work to clear enough room for Medium creatures to move through to area **B3** beyond.

**Creatures:** At the end of each of the tubes in area **B2a** toils a single hill giant with a mining pick. If they hear the giants in area **B1** call for help, they drop their picks, grab their clubs, and rush into battle. If they are confronted in these tunnels, the giants fight to the death.

**HILL GIANTS (3)** CR 7  
XP 3,200 each  
hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## B3. AN UNUSUAL WALL

The lava tube takes a sudden turn here, with the northern wall taking on a strange greenish sheen in places.

This lava tube came up against one of the fully buried spires of Guiltspur here. Originally, only tiny fragments of the wall remained visible, but Jubbek's giants worked diligently to clear more area, including the tunnel to the northwest that eventually breaks through the wall into area **B11**. The wall is plated with the same abyssium alloy as the pillar outside. All creatures within 60 feet of the exterior of this wall must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save each hour to resist becoming sickened for 1 hour—this effect does not extend into area **B11** itself.

## B4. THE WARNING PILLAR

Half emerging from the rough stone floor is a curious pillar of granite. The block has seven sides and rises up through the roof above at an angle. The faces of the pillar still bear the faint markings of runes that have all but worn away with the passage of time.

This menhir was erected in the early days of the Age of Darkness by surviving giants who had escaped the yoke of Thassilonian rule. Memories of the atrocities and horrors of Guiltspur remained fresh in their minds, and so they placed this stone as a warning to all who would come in the ages after. Subsequent eruptions from the Kodars later in that age, unfortunately, saw to this menhir's eventual obscurity under fresh lava flows.

The menhir now functions more as a pillar in this room, its top extending 20 feet into the ceiling above. Only a small portion of the original warning remains visible, and a successful DC 30 Perception or Linguistics check by someone who can read Giant is required to decipher it. Although written in Giant, ironically, Jubbek's giants haven't deciphered the runes due to lack of skill and interest.

The surviving runes read as follows:

"...who sleep in Guiltspur's shadow shall know this fear, and what waits beyond shall..."

## B5. THE BUTCHER'S HIGHWAY (CR 14)

This long, thirty-foot-wide hallway is lit by periodic torches guttering along the walls. Some of the torches have smoldered out, leaving areas of the hallway in dimmer light, but the entire length is lit enough to show off the grisly decor—limbs and entrails and heads hewn from bodies both human-sized and gargantuan litter the southern section of this hallway and hang from the walls by spikes or chains. As a result, the air here is rancid and foul.

The hideous decorations in this hall are a manifestation of Jubbek's growing wrath—the limbs adorning this hall are trophies put on display here by the chieftain. At first, he decorated walls by hammering up limbs with spikes, but as his sadism grew, he simply started tossing the appendages into the southern section of the hall. The cast-off limbs here are so numerous that for Medium and smaller creatures, the ground south of the southernmost door to area **B6** is difficult terrain. The vast majority of these severed arms and legs have been cut from trolls, and a few of the fresher limbs still wriggle and twitch.

**Creatures:** A trio of well-trained and relatively well-mutilated hill giants stand guard in the northern part of this room. Each carries a stash of a half-dozen rocks for throwing in addition to their bags of miscellaneous treasure, and they use these rocks against foes to the south. The giants know where the traps are located in this hall, and while they move to avoid them with ease, they often position themselves nearby, hoping that intruders stumble onto one of the trapped areas. As soon as one of these giants is slain, the remaining two make a fighting retreat north into area **B8a**.

### GUILTSBUR HILL GIANTS (3)

CR 9

**XP 6,400 each**

**hp** 95 each (see page 10)

**Melee** club +17/+12 (1d8+9)

**Mutilations (Ex)** Each of these giants currently suffers from 4 points of Constitution damage and only has one arm. They fight with regular clubs instead of greatclubs as a result.

**Trap:** A total of five pit traps are hidden in the floor of the hall's northern half. Each of these pit traps drops into a greased chute that descends to the west—creatures who fall into one of these traps are deposited into a corresponding punishment pit in area **B6**.

### CHUTE TRAPS (5)

CR 7

**XP 3,200 each**

**Type** mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

#### EFFECTS

**Trigger** location; **Reset** automatic

**Effect** 20-ft.-deep pit (1d6 falling damage) and chute to area **B6**; **Reflex** DC 20 avoids; multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-square area)

## B6. THE PUNISHMENT PITS (CR 12)

This chamber's floor has been divided into three long forty-foot-deep pits, each separated by a ten-foot-wide wall. The tops of these walls double as walkways between the three pits. Openings ten feet off the ground in the east walls of the pits connect to what appear to be greased chutes leading up. Each

# SHATTERED STAR

of the pits is filled with a hideous, foul-smelling slurry of gravel, water, splintered bones, and decayed globs of flesh.

Three large buildings once stood next to each other during the time of Thassilon; Jubbek had his giants dig holes through roofs of each to create three large pits out of the previously lava-encased structures. Into each of these pits, Jubbek casts those who survive his mutilations or anyone who displeases him. The walls of each of the pits can be scaled with a successful DC 30 Climb check, while the chutes in the east walls that lead to area B5 can be climbed with successful DC 35 checks (after the first 10 feet of wall is scaled to reach a chute's entrance, of course). The foul mix that coats each pit floor is a foot deep, making each pit floor difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** Normally, the Climb checks required to clamber out of the pits would be difficult but not impossible for some of the giants imprisoned in the dungeons—which is why Jubbek prefers to cut off the hands of any giants thrown into these pits. This not only prevents the giants from climbing at all, but forces them to use their slam attacks in combat. Jubbek is fond of coming into this room to watch giants fight in the pits. Often, he'll lower a giant into a pit with the promise that if he kills all the current creatures inside, Jubbek will let him out. Jubbek doesn't always keep these promises. The giants currently imprisoned in the pit are, for the most part, nearly feral with rage, frustration, and fear, and anyone foolish enough to come within reach is attacked mercilessly.

The room itself is guarded by a group of three wyvern-like purple dragon-kin with large orange wings—rift drakes. The drakes are relatively intelligent, and are not only smart enough to tell free giants apart from the imprisoned ones, but to know that humans and other "little" races don't belong here. The drakes are well fed by the giants, and are quite loyal as a result. They fight intruders to the death, and aren't afraid of chasing foes into the pits themselves or even out of the room into other parts of the dungeon.

The current occupants of the pits are as follows (since each pit's occupants are stuck in there, they're all associated with their own CR and are not part of the room's overall CR above).

**Area B6a (CR 11):** This pit currently contains two hill giants and one fire giant, all of whom have had their hands lopped off (and thus suffer from 4 points of Dexterity drain each).

**Area B6b (CR 11):** This pit currently contains seven trolls.

**Area B6c (CR 7):** The only current occupant of this pit is a desperate hill giant named Togbad (see Development, below).

**RIFT DRAKES (3) CR 9**

**XP 6,400 each**

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 106)

**HANDLESS HILL GIANTS (2) CR 7**

**XP 3,200 each**

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

**HANDLESS FIRE GIANT CR 10**

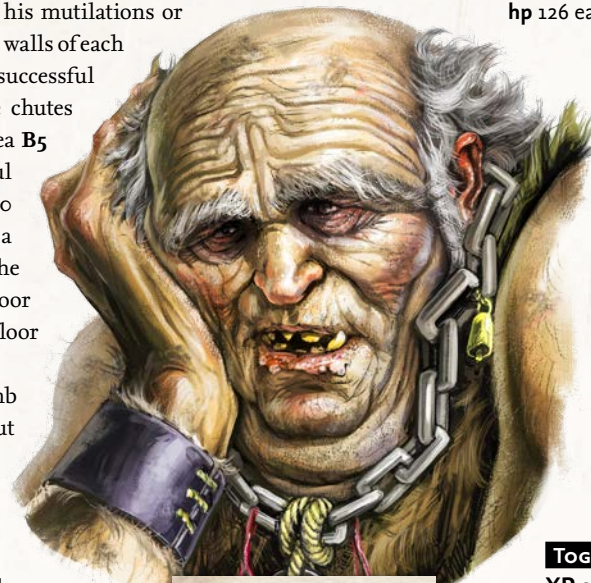
**XP 9,600 each**

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

**TROLLS (7) CR 5**

**XP 1,600 each**

hp 63 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 268)



**TOGBAD**

**TOGBAD CR 7**

**XP 3,200**

CN hill giant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)  
hp 85

**Development:** The lone occupant of area B6c is an almost insanely terrified hill giant named Togbad. He doesn't attack the PCs—indeed, if the PCs approach him, he prostrates himself at their feet and swears on the name of all the giant clans to serve them faithfully to the end of his days. Unlike the giants in area B6a, Togbad hasn't had his hands cut off, but he has been hobbled—both his feet have been broken and his tendons are severed. As a result, the giant suffers 6 points of Dexterity drain and can only crawl until the drain is removed.

Togbad can describe all of this level to the PCs, including area B11 (he calls this place the "monster pit" and is almost as afraid of it as he is of Chief Jubbek). If the PCs heal his damage and help him out of the pit, he becomes a loyal servant to whoever cured his damage, serving as a bodyguard and minion. Togbad isn't evil (indeed, Jubbek mutilated him and threw him in this pit when Togbad attempted to help a group of Shoanti prisoners escape but got caught), but neither is he particularly strong-willed. He fears Jubbek, but also hates him, and if the PCs help him kill the chieftain, Togbad pledges his life to the PCs. Despite his good intentions, though, Togbad remains relatively unpredictable and doesn't fully appreciate his own strength—he may accidentally use a slam attack on

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

an ally by clapping her on the back or might try to grapple someone in a damaging hug if he's particularly excited. Whenever the giant is reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, he runs away to hide, only to slink back in tears once he thinks combat is over. As the PCs progress deeper and deeper into Guiltspur, Togbad's loyalties are put to the test—each time the PCs enter a new dungeon level, Togbad must make a successful DC 15 Will save to avoid panicking and fleeing the party forever.

**Story Award:** The giants in areas **B6a** and **B6b** cannot escape their pits—only award full XP for defeating them if the PCs are threatened by them (such as would be the case if a PC falls into one of the pits). Otherwise, defeating these giants earns only half the normal XP. If the PCs befriend Togbad and gain his aid, they earn twice the XP they would normally earn for defeating him (6,400 XP).

## B7. THE BURROW (CR 13)

This is a vast chamber torn into the volcanic stone. The room arches up to a vaulted ceiling some sixty feet above, while a natural ramp rises up to the east where mounds of ratty old furs have been heaped in several nestlike mounds. To the northwest, a large sinkhole slumps into the ground.

This is where Jubbek's rapidly dwindling tribe sleeps. Jubbek's increasing sadism has seen to the steady atrophy of the total number of giants dwelling in the region, and what were once relatively cramped quarters are now almost spacious. The sinkhole to the northwest is used to dispose of rubbish. A search of the hole reveals a foul mix of human and orc bones, broken tools and gear, and a fair amount of bodily waste.

**Creatures:** The first time the PCs enter this room, several hill giants are sleeping in the mounds of furs. If a fight breaks out in area **B5**, these giants can attempt DC –5 Perception checks (but at a –20 penalty due to distance and the fact that they're sleeping) to wake up, at which point they put on their armor and lumber out to investigate as soon as possible. Caught unawares, the giants are unarmed and unarmored, but still fight to the death.

### GUILTSBUR HILL GIANTS (2)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

hp 95 each (see page 10)

### HILL GIANTS (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

**Treasure:** This cavern is disgusting, even if the PCs avoid the filthy sinkhole. Rotting piles of refuse and infestations of ticks and fleas are mixed in with the furs, making a search

of the place an unpleasant task. Nothing of value is in the sinkhole, but a successful DC 25 Perception check reveals a few doubtful treasures among the furs—a poorly cured dire bear pelt worth 50 gp, an enormous hat made of sewn mice and set with three fractured garnets worth 110 gp, and a Medium suit of masterwork hide armor that's been stuffed with feathers for use as a pillow.

## B8. JUBBEK'S THRONE ROOM (CR 16)

This vast circular chamber rises to a height of sixty feet, the smooth stone walls tapering upward to form a conical ceiling. The floor of the chamber is made of a layer of wooden planks, but periodic gaps between the floorboards reveal that a dark hollow space extends below. Stone double doors sit to the south, while to the east and west large sections of wall have crumbled away to allow access to caverns. A lava tube to the west winds deeper into the rock, although a side ramp seems to lead up and out to the surface. To the east looms a large cavern dominated by an immense throne made of wooden timbers and mastodon bones. Beyond this huge throne rise two ledges—the higher one is littered with a prodigious mound of animal pelts and furs, while a large battered chest sits against the eastern wall of the lower ledge.

The central room of this complex chamber (area **B8a**) is the interior of the single spire of Guiltspur that protrudes above the lava today. Originally, all of the interior floors of the spire had crumbled away, but the giants built a floor of timbers at this level so they could move through the area. These timbers are quite sturdy, but if destroyed or removed, reveal a 30-foot-deep hollow that leads nowhere below (the chambers below this level filled with lava that has long since cooled to solid stone).

Area **B8b** to the east is dominated by Jubbek's throne—a home-made thing made of furs and hides stretched haphazardly over a frame of wood and mastodon bones. Area **B8c** beyond the throne is a 10-foot-high ledge on which Jubbek stores his wealth (see *Treasure*, below), while area **B8d** is a 20-foot-high ledge occupied by Jubbek's "bedroom."

**Creatures:** Even if the PCs don't allow the giants from other parts of the dungeon a chance to retreat to this location, the number of foes in here makes for a dangerous combat indeed. If combat breaks out in this area and the giants in area **B5** haven't already been dealt with, they come to join the fight immediately. While the toiling giants at area **A5**, if they still live, can certainly hear the sound of battle down here, they fear Jubbek enough that they instead flee to area **A6a**, seeking help before returning to this room. Reinforcements from the steading above should take 2d6+10 rounds to arrive after a battle begins here—or if the PCs have already secured an alliance with General Stom, such reinforcements never arrive at all.

# SHATTERED STAR

Reinforcements aside, this set of rooms houses more than just the surly hill giant chieftain Jubbek. He often has giants dress up as the tribe's enemies to enact mock battles in area **B8a**. Currently, four hill giants dressed as Shoanti barbarians fight in area **B8a**. Jubbek demands realism, and as such, these four giants have each taken damage from the fight. Jubbek is also attended by a fire giant bodyguard who stands to the right of his throne, and one of his hill giant concubines, who lounges to the left. His other three concubines—obese giants who smell of a sickly combination of sweat and honey—are located in area **B8d**. His much adored pet, Skullcracker, an advanced smilodon (the only thing Jubbek never vents his wrath upon), sits atop the ledge to area **B8c**.

This battle has the potential to be quite deadly for the PCs, but fortunately, not all the combatants attack at once. Chief Jubbek is somewhat arrogant and slow to fight his

own battles—watching violence is almost as satisfying to him as perpetrating it, and he knows that, of late, once he starts attacking, it's difficult for him to stop. As a result, Jubbek prefers to let his minions fight for him.

Upon noticing the PCs, the giants take up a defensive position. The three concubines in area **B8d** remain where they are for the moment, but Skullcracker leaps down from area **B8c** and moves to a position near the throne. Jubbek's fire giant bodyguard and his fourth concubine remain at his side while Jubbek gleefully orders the four hill giants in area **B8a** to kill the PCs. When the first giant falls, he orders his concubine into the fray—when a second giant falls, Jubbek orders his bodyguard to attack and joins the battle himself as detailed in his tactics. Any attack against Skullcracker compels Jubbek to attack at once. The three concubines in area **B8d** shriek and lumber down to join the fight as soon as Jubbek takes damage.

As long as Jubbek lives, the rest of the creatures here fight to the death. If Jubbek is defeated or killed, his concubines and Skullcracker continue to fight to the death, but any remaining giants immediately make a fighting retreat to area **B9** and then flee up to area **A5** before fleeing the region entirely.



CHIEF JUBBEK

## CHIEF JUBBEK CR 14

XP 38,400

Male hill giant barbarian 7

CE Large humanoid (giant)

Init +4; Senses low-light vision; Perception +13

### DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 7, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +9 natural, -2 rage, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 216 (17 HD; 10d8+7d12+126)

Fort +19, Ref +5, Will +11; +2 vs. evocation

Defensive Abilities improved uncanny dodge, rock catching, trap sense +2; DR 1/—

Weaknesses curse of wrath

### OFFENSE

Speed 35 ft.

Melee +1 morningstar +28/+23/+18 (2d6+17 plus 1 fire/19-20)

Ranged rock +14 (1d8+16)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (120 ft.), rage (21 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, knockback, renewed vigor [1d8+9 hp])

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +14)

1/day—fireball (DC 10)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Once Jubbek joins the fight, he focuses his anger on the creature that damaged him the most before he got to act. He rages as he fights, and works his way into

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

area **B8a**. Once there, he takes a standard action to smash his morningstar against the floor, attempting a DC 20 Strength check to knock a 5-foot-diameter hole into the floor. Once he makes a hole, he and the other giants try to move or bull rush PCs into the hole—it's a 30-foot drop onto rubble below, and the only exit from the area is the hole itself. Jubbek uses the *fireball* spell-like ability granted him if faced by a group of PCs clustering together for their own defense.

**Morale** Chief Jubbek fights to the death.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 38, **Dex** 10, **Con** 25, **Int** 6, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +29 (+31 bull rush); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (morningstar), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Power Attack, Staggering Critical

**Skills** Climb +21, Intimidate +22, Perception +13

**Languages** Giant

**SQ** fast movement

**Gear** +3 breastplate, +2 heavy wooden shield, +1 morningstar, belt of giant strength +4, Shard of Wrath

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Curse of Wrath** Jubbek is consumed by the *Shard of Wrath's* curse. He starts the battle sickened, but this condition vanishes for 1 hour as soon as he reduces a creature to negative hit points. Once he attacks a creature, Jubbek must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be unable to cease attacking that creature until it is killed.

**Shard of Wrath** Jubbek has lashed the *Shard of Wrath* to the head of his morningstar—he deals +1 point of fire damage or +1 point of cold damage (the energy type switches each day) on a hit with his morningstar as a result of the shard's siccitate qualities.

## HILL GIANTS (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

## HILL GIANT CONCUBINES (4)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 85 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 150)

## FIRE GIANT

CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 142 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

## SKULLCRACKER

CR 9

XP 6,400

Advanced smilodon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 265, 294)

hp 133

**Treasure:** Chief Jubbek has collected an astonishing amount of clutter over the years, some of which is actually

rather valuable. The giant's treasure is spread out over areas **B8b** and **B8c** as detailed below.

The walls of area **B8b** are festooned with objects, some of which still twitch now and then, such as his staggering collection of severed troll limbs. A long alphorn leans against the northern wall. Beneath several layers of filth and dirt, this instrument features fine gold filigree work depicting rocs in flight, and is worth 450 gp. A scrimshaw mastodon tusk of very high quality depicting mountain scenes hangs on the southern wall—this item is worth 750 gp.

Jubbek's throne is a relatively foul piece of furniture—the entire thing reeks of sweat and filth, and several bits of leather and fur used to create it were only partially preserved. A poorly hidden pouch on the side of the throne (Perception DC 15) contains 4 *potions of cure serious wounds* as well as 200 gp.

Jubbek's sleeping cavern (area **B8d**) is a mess as well, but several minutes of searching the area are enough to uncover the following unusual or valuable objects: a Small mithral dagger, a Medium +1 *handaxe*, a selection of long iron bars all bent into knots, a massive silver tankard etched with rams attacking stirges worth 300 gp, an iron bottle containing an *elixir of love*, a mummified horse's head with a silver tooth worth 25 gp, a masterwork manacle attached to a wooden beam covered with 54 tiny notches, two huge kegs of cider that taste eye-wateringly bitter (successful DC 14 Fortitude save upon drinking to avoid being sickened for 1 hour), and a suit of half-plate horse barding scattered around the place in pieces. No fewer than 21 pots of honey (a favorite snack) lie amid 43 empty and shattered pots. One of pots of honey contains an undiscovered "prize"—a mummified dwarf's finger that still wears a *ring of minor spell storing* (currently containing *web* and *shocking grasp*).

The bulk of what Jubbek considered his real valuables is kept in the large dented chest in area **B8c**. The chest isn't locked, but a 900 pound rock sits atop it—requiring a Strength score of 15 to merely push it off the top. Inside the chest is a trio of exceptionally high quality furs worth 400 gp each, an average-locked iron box welded to a long chain (break DC 28) that contains three bags of 1,000 sp and a bag of 1,002 gp, a stout iron bound chest with a *rod of enemy detection* thrust through the latch where the lock once was (this chest contains seven gold-plated dwarf skulls worth 200 gp each), a huge jug with a silver handle worth 200 gp, a cider keg brimming with copper coins (4,319 cp in all), a +3 *arrow of ooze slaying*, and a small cork box containing a rolled-up *scroll of heal* tucked into a *ring of protection +4* that simply doesn't work for evil creatures (in fact, when worn, it turns an evil creature's finger a nasty shade of green).

**Development:** The *Shard of Wrath* can be untied from Jubbek's Large morningstar with 2d6 rounds of work (or as a standard action if fire or acid damage is focused on the leather strips). Once the shard is free, the PCs can awaken it

# SHATTERED STAR

with a *deep red sphere ioun stone* and use it to gain a vision of where the next and final shard is located. Unfortunately, the *Shard of Sloth* is not currently located on the Material Plane, so the best this vision can do is to urge the PCs deeper, giving the somewhat inaccurate perception that the final shard is located somewhere deep below Guiltspur. Characters who sleep within the confines of the deeper levels of Guiltspur may have more accurate visions of where the final shard can be found, as detailed on page 23.

**Story Award:** Recovering the *Shard of Wrath*, activating it with a *deep red sphere ioun stone*, and using it to learn the location of the next shard earns the PCs 25,600 XP.

## B9. OUTER RAMP

The northern slope here leads up and out of Jubbek's Halls, exiting at area A5 above.

## B10. THE WATCHPOST (CR 12)

A solid-looking iron door sits in the center of the western wall of this cave. An immense boulder has been pushed up against the door.

Not long after the giants uncovered area B11 from area B3, Cadrilkasta abandoned them to investigate the chambers below. Jubbek ordered a second entrance to connect to area B10 for easier access, and within 24 hours regretted the choice as monsters began clambering up from the chambers below to attack the giants. The first of these was a pair of unusually large cloaklers the giants managed to defeat, but what followed caused quite a bit more damage. This second wave consisted of several scorpion-shaped constructs made of bone—skull rippers. Once these were pushed back into the depths, Jubbek ordered the southern entrance sealed with rubble (see area B2), and fitted an iron door and large boulder over this room's entrance. He didn't want to completely seal off the room, since if Cadrilkasta returned Jubbek wanted a measure of plausible deniability on his side and didn't want her to think they'd tried to seal the dragon into the dungeons below. But ever since the skull ripper incident, the giants have been afraid of what lay beyond this door.

The door itself isn't locked, but it swings outward, so before it can be opened the boulder in front of it must first be moved. The 5-foot-tall boulder (hardness 8, hp 900, break DC 65) weighs 9,000 pounds, and can be pushed aside by a Medium creature with a Strength score of at least 31 (or by a Large creature with a Strength of at least 26, such as a fire giant but not a typical hill giant).

**Creatures:** Two nervous fire giants stand guard at this door. They fight to the death to prevent anyone from opening the door, but won't pursue foes from this room. Characters who manage to gain entrance to area B11 and

try to open the door from that side automatically frighten the fire giants into fleeing their post—rather than report their cowardice to Jubbek, they flee up the ramp at area B9 and do not return.

### FIRE GIANTS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 142 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

## B11. DARKENED SHAFT

A circular chamber with no floor fills this area. Above, the smooth conical walls extend upward twenty-five feet before tapering to a point, while below, a churning cloud of blue-green fog obscures the shaft-like interior after a drop of twenty feet.

This area is the interior of another of Guiltspur's spires, only one that's been completely covered by lava. The shaft drops 60 feet down into area C1—the fog being a physical manifestation of the *mage's private sanctum* that wards the chambers below. The walls of this shaft can be scaled with a successful DC 20 Climb check.

## PART TWO: GUILTSPUR DEPTHS

Although hints of Guiltspur's architecture exist in Jubbek's Halls and in the green spire at area A5, it's not until the PCs descend from area B11 into area C1 that they truly enter the preserved halls of Guiltspur itself. The change in architectural style from caverns partially expanded by giants to chambers of Thassilonian construction should be a stark one indeed. With the exception of a few areas where the ancient lava flow managed to destroy all in its path, the chambers here are nearly perfectly preserved.

As with the other Thassilonian dungeons the PCs have explored, Guiltspur itself is protected by ancient magics that ward it against erosion and decay. This same magic is what protected the complex from destruction when the lava flow hit it so long ago, but time has been a bit rougher with Guiltspur than most Thassilonian dungeons. In many places the dungeons have collapsed into ruin, as indicated on the map—here, the preservative effects have faltered, and nothing remains of Guiltspur's chambers beyond what is mapped.

The Guiltspur Depths consist of three levels—the Silent Halls (areas C1–C14), the Core (areas D1–D9), and the Embassy of Leng (areas E1–E9). All worked-stone walls, floors, and ceilings on this level and below are of magically treated stone (*Core Rulebook* 411), and doors are made of magically treated iron unless otherwise indicated.

All three levels of the Guiltspur Depths are protected in more significant ways by several magical auras that have persisted for centuries without fail. Powered by an immense mass of abyssium in area E5, these magical effects



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

all function at caster level 20th. A *dispel magic* renders an effect dormant for 1d4 rounds in a 60-foot-radius spread before the effect reactivates. The architecture of the Guiltspur Depths radiates strong abjuration and divination magic. These effects are listed below.

- **Construct Repair:** The energies in the Guiltspur Depths repair any construct within its walls, healing damage dealt at a rate equal to 2 points per Hit Die possessed by the construct each hour. A construct that is destroyed remains destroyed.
- **Dimensional Lock:** The Guiltspur Depths are warded by a *dimensional lock* effect, a condition that Karzoug demanded to prevent too much of Leng or its occupants from invading should his alliance with the denizens deteriorate.
- **Mage's Private Sanctum:** Creatures in the Guiltspur Depths are immune to *detect thoughts*, and divination (scrying) spells cannot perceive anything within these three levels.
- **Nightmares and Visions:** See below.
- **Tongues:** All creatures with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher gain the effects of a *tongues* spell while in the Guiltspur Depths.

## NIGHTMARES AND VISIONS OF LENG

The Guiltspur Depths are infused with the influence of Leng. Originating in area E9 and amplified by the abyssium reactor in area E5, these eldritch forces assault any slumbering minds within the realm. Each time a creature sleeps in the Guiltspur Depths, it dreams of Leng—these dreams can be short and obscure, with nothing more than feelings of being lost in a vast frozen tundra, or they can be frightfully specific, such as being attacked by Leng spiders while trapped within a cavern of glowing fungus.

**Nightmares of Leng:** When a PC falls asleep, have her attempt a DC 15 Will save. If the save is successful, she merely has unpleasant dreams and wakes with a vague feeling of unease but suffers no game effects. If a the PC fails this save, her dreams are nightmarish and horrifying ordeals. You can consult the gazetteer of Leng that starts on page 64 of this book for inspiration—simply have the victim endure a nightmare fight against a creature from Leng in a location described in the gazetteer. You can even run a few rounds of combat against the monster if you wish—if multiple PCs fail their saving throws, they can even share the same dream and take part in these fights. The results of these fights are not entirely real—resources expended, wounds suffered, and deaths endured vanish as the dreamer awakens—but neither are they entirely imaginary. Anyone who fails the Will save takes 1d10 points of damage upon awakening and is fatigued (or exhausted if already fatigued). A character who dies in a dream takes an additional 1d10 points of damage and must succeed at a second DC 15 Will save or be afflicted by a random insanity (*GameMastery Guide* 250).

**A Helpful Vision:** A character who has received a vision of the location of the *Shard of Sloth* from the *Shard of Wrath* has a specific dream the first time she sleeps in the Guiltspur Depths. In this dream, she follows a compulsion through Guiltspur, and knows she is being drawn forward to a portal to another world. The dreamer enters a vast underground chamber, the floor of which is almost entirely taken up by a pit filled with silver smoke. Seven doors provide exits from the chamber, but the dreamer knows the *Shard of Sloth* lies beyond an eighth exit that itself lies beyond a circular fountain of glowing water. Yet when the dreamer attempts to use this portal, she realizes she must perform a ritual she learned beyond one of those seven doors surrounding the chamber. At this point, the silver mists in the pit part and a nightmarishly immense worm rears up to level a bleached end filled with hooked jaws at the dreamer, who must then attempt the DC 15 Will save as detailed above. On a failed save, the giant worm darts down and swallows the dreamer whole (resulting in the increased damage and possible insanity, as detailed above), but if the save is successful, the dreamer recalls the ritual in time, opens the portal in the fountain, and jumps through before the worm strikes (and avoids taking any damage at all upon waking). This dream is a vision of area E3 in the Embassy of Leng, manipulated by the dreams of the stranded ghoul in area E4.

**Waking Nightmares:** In certain parts of the Guiltspur Depths, the presence of Leng is powerful enough that horrific effects manifest to conscious characters. In several of the following encounter areas, you'll see the heading Waking Nightmare similar to the call-out denoting a Creature or a Trap. Waking Nightmares function similarly to a trap or a haunt, and provide specific visions or challenges for the PCs to experience or overcome. Specific rules for waking nightmares vary, and are listed each time one occurs. Some of these nightmares affect an individual, whereas others affect entire parties. In each case, a waking nightmare's effects occur in seconds—no matter how long the perceived nightmare takes, less than a round passes in game time. Waking nightmares that occur in areas with creatures can occur in the instant before the battle commences. After a waking nightmare manifests, it becomes inert for 24 hours. Waking nightmares are magical mind-affecting effects. They cannot be disarmed as traps. Rooms or objects infused with a waking nightmare radiate an additional strong illusion (phantasm) aura in addition to any other magic auras they may possess. Successfully casting *dispel magic* or *dispel chaos* against one of these CL 20th effects renders a waking nightmare inert for 24 hours. Each waking nightmare is listed with an XP value—this XP award should be awarded to the party if they manage to bypass the nightmare or if one of the PCs endure the effects (successfully or not), but not if the PCs never run the risk of triggering the nightmare at all.

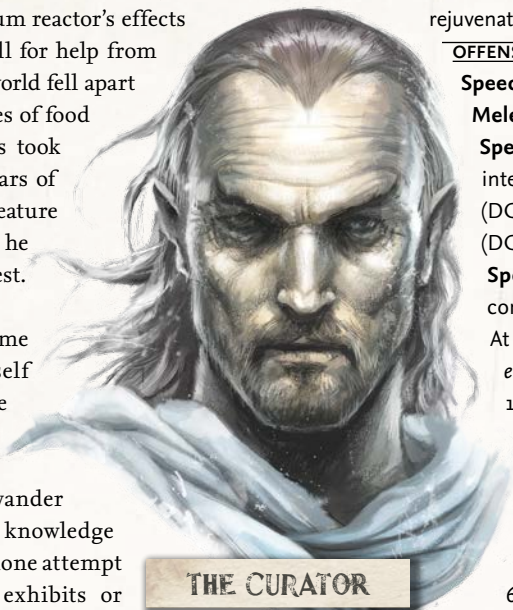
# SHATTERED STAR

## THE CURATOR (CR 14)

After the lava came and sealed Guiltspur away, some of its inhabitants were trapped within the ruins. Of these, the most powerful was a man named Kaiventlu, the curator of the Silent Halls. While he lived, Kaiventlu served as the caretaker of this upper level of Guiltspur, subservient to but not the slave of Priestess Mesmalatu. Kaiventlu survived Earthfall, but he was trapped within the building, unable to flee via magic due to the abysium reactor's effects on the chambers. Attempts to call for help from outside went unanswered as the world fell apart above. Kaiventlu had ready sources of food and water, but in time, madness took over. He spent the last several years of his life as the only free-willed creature in the Silent Halls. As he died, he hoped his spirit would find rest. Alas, it did not.

Kaiventlu has forgotten his name and history, and thinks of himself now only as the Curator of the Silent Halls. His remains lie where they fell in area C10, but the ghost continues to wander the Silent Halls, tending to the knowledge stored here and seeing to it that none attempt to deface or steal any of the exhibits or objects in the halls. The Curator ignores any visitors to the Silent Halls as long as they don't attempt to steal anything or damage objects within areas C1–C14. As soon as a PC does either of these things, there's a flat 20% chance that the Curator manifests within 2d6 rounds to confront the PCs (as detailed in his tactics). If the Curator doesn't confront the PCs immediately, he certainly will in 1d8 hours, if the PCs remain in the Silent Halls that long. Each time the PCs steal an object of knowledge or damage anything in the Silent Halls, the chance of the Curator manifesting and attacking within 2d6 rounds increases by 20%—once this chance reaches 100%, the Curator automatically appears as soon as an object is stolen or damaged.

The Curator appears as a handsome, elderly Azlanti man wearing a heavy cloak and fine blue robes. He may appear out of the corner of a PC's eye even when no objects he guards have been molested (feel free to have this happen whenever someone makes a Perception check for any other purpose and exceeds a DC 35 result). When he appears and attacks, his form alternates between that of an old man and a hideous rotted horror of leathery skin and cracked bone.



THE CURATOR

Male old human ghost transmuter 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 144)  
LE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal)  
**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 26 (+4 armor, +8 deflection, +4 shield)  
**hp** 178 (13d6+130)  
**Fort** +17, **Ref** +9, **Will** +16

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** corrupting touch +5 (14d6/x3)

**Special Attacks** corrupting touch (DC 24), intense spells (+6 damage), malevolence (DC 24), telekinesis (DC 24), spell stealing (DC 24)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +20)

At will—change shape (*beast shape III*/*elemental body II*, 13 rounds/day)

10/day—telekinetic fist (1d4+6 bludgeoning)

**Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; concentration +20)

7th—quicken *dispel magic*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity* (2)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 24), *flesh to stone* (2, DC 24), *quicken glitterdust* (DC 19)

5th—*baleful polymorph* (3, DC 23), *hungry pit*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 22), *extended mass reduce person* (DC 23), *quicken shield*

4th—*black tentacles*, *extended haste*, *ice storm*, *mnemonic enhancer* (2), *shout* (DC 21), *wall of fire*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *pain strike*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 20), *slow* (2, DC 21), *twilight knife*<sup>APG</sup>, *wind wall*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *flaming sphere* (DC 19), *extended mage armor*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 20), *scorching ray*, *shatter*, *whispering wind* (2)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 18), *erase*, *grease* (DC 19), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *reduce person* (2, DC 19)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*

**Thassilonian Specialization** transmutation; **Opposition Schools** enchantment, illusion

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The Curator casts *quicken shield* and *extended mage armor* before attacking.

**During Combat** The Curator casts *extended haste* and *quicken glitterdust* on the first round of combat, then follows up by favoring spells that cause lengthy or permanent problems to the PCs rather than attempting to simply hurt them—he wants to stop the PCs in their

THE CURATOR  
XP 38,400

CR 14

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

tracks with *flesh to stone*, *baleful polymorph*, or *blindness/deafness* if possible. If a lower-level spell is particularly effective, he uses *mnemonic enhancer* to recall it. He's also fond of splitting up the party by using spells like *hungry pit* or *wall of fire* to control the battlefield, and of forcing the PCs to stumble into new rooms before they might be ready. The Curator knows how all of the dangers in the Silent Halls work, and does his best to try to lure the PCs into those dangers.

**Morale** The Curator knows that if he dies, he merely returns in 2d4 days. He fights until destroyed without remorse, but if reduced to fewer than 75 hit points, he knows that he's running out of time in the short term, and at this point does his best to lure the PCs into peril to distract them, preferring to use malevolence in the attempt to possess a PC and then force that PC to go find an untriggered encounter or unsprung trap.

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## STATISTICS

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**Str** —, **Dex** 11, **Con** —, **Int** 24, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 26

**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 24 (cannot be tripped)

**Feats** Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (transmutation), Spell Penetration, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +24, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (nobility) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Linguistics +23, Perception +19, Profession (librarian) +19, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +23, Use Magic Device +21

**Languages** Abyssal, Aboleth, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Cyclops, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Ignan, Infernal, Necril, Orc, Orvian, Sylvan, Terran, Thassilonian

**SQ** Thassilonian specialist (transmutation), arcane bond (ring), physical enhancement +3

**Gear** *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of mental prowess* +2 (Int, Cha; grants ranks in Perception)—both ghostly objects can be found in their physical form in area **C10**

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## SPECIAL ABILITIES

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**Rejuvenation (Su)** The Curator's remains are located in area **C10**. In order to lay him to rest, these remains must be brought to the surface and set before the one remaining spire of Guiltspur that protrudes aboveground. This causes the Curator's ghost to manifest amid a swirling vortex of dust over his remains—he glances around in anguish and despair as he realizes that the time of Thassilon has truly moved on. Within a few seconds, the vortex of air grinds his remains away to dust and his spirit is released to seek its reward or punishment in the afterlife. (*Divination* or other magical investigation is likely required to discover this method of putting the ghost to rest.)

**Spell Stealing (Su)** Once per round as a free action whenever any of the Curator's spell effects affect a spellcaster, he can attempt to steal one of that spellcaster's prepared spells or unused spell slots. The target can resist this attack with

a successful DC 24 Will save. If the save fails, one random prepared spell or unused spell slot of the highest spell level available to the caster is expended for the day as if it had been used, but without any other effect save for healing the Curator damage equal to twice the spell level stolen. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Thassilonian Specialization** The Curator is a Thassilonian specialist, which allows him to prepare the bonus transmutation spell granted by his school specialization twice rather than once. He treats enchantment and illusion spells as if they were not on the wizard spell list. Further details on this form of school specialization can be found on page 17 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Magic*.

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## C1. GUILTSPUR LIBRARY (CR 13)

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This vast circular chamber rises up to a height of sixty feet, a dome-like room with walls that may have once been smooth but are now riddled with cracks and fissures. Twenty-foot-high curving stone shelves fill the room, leaving a circular area open in the center. Iron double doors lead out of the room in the four cardinal directions. Splashes and splatters of blood mar the floor here and there, and two huge leathery mounds lie heaped in the middle of the room.

While the walls of this chamber are riddled with cracks (Climb DC 20 to scale), they still remain strong and protected by the magic powered by the abysium reactor in area **E5**. The passageways beyond the north, east, and west doors are long collapsed and filled with lava, but all four double doors open easily even after all this time.

The contents of this vast library have mostly turned to dust over the countless centuries, but some objects still remain on the shelves. These objects are all the more obvious for their prominence among the dust—see *Treasure*, below. The ancients used levitation or flight to reach the higher shelves, but a successful DC 10 Climb check works as well.

The blood splatters are evidence of the initial clashes the giants had with the monsters in this area. The two leathery mounds in the room are the bodies of two Huge cloaklers that once dwelled in the upper reaches of the library and were held in stasis until the giants broke through—the giants defeated the cloaklers but weren't able to do the same to the room's guardians below.

**Waking Nightmare (XP 2,400):** The first PC to enter this room after passing through the layer of fog visible from area **B11** (but not from within the room) has a startling vision. He sees the library as it was during Thassilon's height—a vast repository of knowledge stretching from floor to ceiling, its shelves holding thousands of books, scrolls, maps, and grimoires. Eager

# SHATTERED STAR

Thassilonian students and wizards mill about the floor below or float up to replace or retrieve books, when suddenly, the dozens of men and women stop and turn to stare hatefully at the PC—and the closest face is the PC's own! The books in the room suddenly writhe and fly off the shelves, opening up and spilling forth foul black mists and coils of corrupt secrets that should never be known. The mist and coils engulf the wizards and students and crush them to pulp. An instant later, the vision passes and the room appears as it actually does. The PC must succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be shaken for 1d12 minutes (this is a fear effect).

**Creatures:** Once a pair of Huge cloaklers guarded the upper reaches of this room, held in stasis by magic. Today, the only guardians are a pair of skull rippers, ancient Thassilonian constructs built of magically hardened bones built to look like immense scorpions. Skull rippers are imbued with intelligence, and while they excel at their guardian tasks, they are equally skilled at plucking off the heads of their victims and mounting the gathered skulls on their own bodies as decorations.

## ADVANCED SKULL RIPPERS (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800

CN Large construct (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 415)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +3

**Aura** dread visage (30 ft., DC 22)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+5 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 147 (18d10+48)

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +9

**DR** 5/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits; **Resist** cold 10;

**SR** 22

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

**Melee** 2 claws +25 (2d6+8/19-20 plus grab), sting +25 (1d10+8 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** behead

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The two skull rippers lurk in the shadows near the north and west doors, attacking as soon as anyone comes within reach. Each focuses on the same foe if possible, moving to flank if there's room. They pursue foes until heavily wounded (see *Morale*), even up into Jubbek's Halls above.

**Morale** A skull ripper retreats to area C1 if reduced to fewer than 50 hit points. Confronted there, a skull ripper fights until destroyed.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 26, **Dex** 20, **Con** —, **Int** 9, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 16

**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +27 (+31 grapple); **CMD** 42 (54 vs. trip)

**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus,

Improved Critical (claws), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Vital Strike

**Skills** Climb +21, Stealth +20

**Languages** Thassilonian (cannot speak)

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

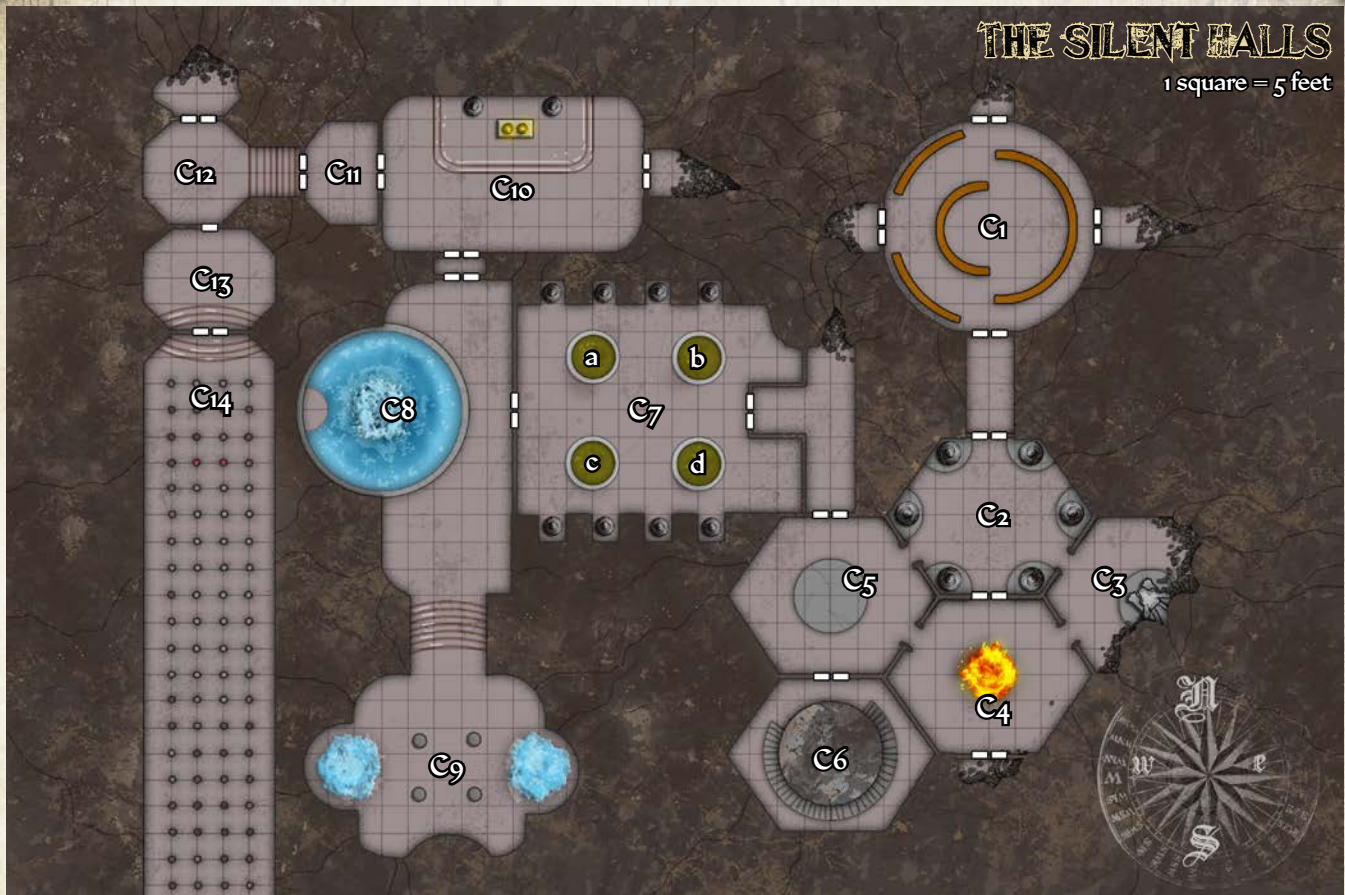
**Behead (Ex)** A skull ripper is an expert at collecting its favorite trophies: skulls. Once it has pinned a foe, it can attempt to behead the victim with its claws. This attempt is made as part of the grapple check to maintain an existing pin, and if successful, deals 4d6+18 points of damage to the victim. If this damage is enough to bring the foe to fewer than 0 hit points, the victim must succeed at a DC 27 Fortitude save to resist having his head torn from his body; failure results in instant death for most creatures. The save DC is Strength-based.

**Dread Visage (Su)** A skull ripper's fearsome appearance is such that all creatures within 30 feet that can see the skull ripper must succeed at a DC 22 Will save at the start of their turn or be frightened for 1 round. If the victim recognizes any of the heads affixed to the skull ripper's body as having once belonged to friends or allies, that victim takes a -4 penalty on the save. A character that succeeds at the save is immune to the dread visage of that particular skull ripper for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

**Poison (Su)** Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 18; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Dex; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Treasure:** A few objects of value remain on the shelves of this room—they aren't hidden, but some sit on higher shelves than can be easily reached from the ground. These include four thin silvery metal plates that contain magical writings—these are sturdy cold siccattite plates that function as spell scrolls—a *scroll of ice storm*, a *scroll of wall of ice*, a *scroll of cone of cold*, and a *scroll of polar ray*. Once used, the “scrolls” become nonmagical but are still worth 25 gp apiece. Another shelf holds a series of metal tablets edged with silver clasps that contain etchings of the internal organs of a whale of prodigious size (measuring nearly 500 feet from head to tail); the tablets are worth 250 gp in all. Three round jars sealed with silver contain baby aboleths preserved in embalming fluid (each jar is worth 50 gp), while fragments of a chuul's shell sit on another shelf. A successful DC 25 Perception check made while examining this skeleton reveals a *pearl of power* (5th level) embedded in one of the shell's claws; the pearl can be pried out with ease. Finally, one shelf near the center of the room contains 29 enormous bone scroll rollers, some of which are 6 feet long. The contents of these scroll rollers have long since turned to dust, but five of the smaller ones are bound in silver and gold and worth 400 gp each.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT



## C2. ECHOES OF A WELCOMING HALL

In each of the six corners of this hexagonal room, a statue stands atop a dais—each is of a six-foot-tall woman dressed in a short robe and wielding a silvery sword. The statues have four wings (the lower pair of each being small and atrophied), and have no faces whatsoever.

This was once the welcoming chamber to a complex of hexagonal display chambers meant to exhibit strange and unusual magical phenomena gathered by the Curator and his minions. Only a few of these chambers survive with their exhibits intact today.

The six statues in this room are nothing more than statues—on a metagame level, their presence here is to help make the animate faceless angels (see area C14) more surprising. They also serve an in-game purpose, though—as soon as anyone steps more than 10 feet into the room, permanent *magic mouths* activate on all six statue faces to utter the following greeting in Thassilonian.

“Welcome to the Hall of Arcane Wonder. Please treat all exhibits with care and respect, and do not attempt unsanctioned interactions within. Enjoy your visit!”

A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check realizes the true blasphemy these statues represent—angels in the service of Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos. (In fact, Nyarlathotep is not served by angels, although he and his cultists often adopt such guises to deceive.)

**Treasure:** Each of the six statues wields a masterwork cold siccattite longsword—a weapon made of cold siccattite deals +1 point of cold damage on a hit. Each sword is worth 1,315 gp, but breaking a sword out of a statue’s grip requires a successful DC 20 Strength check.

## C3. THE FACELESS SPHINX

Half of this hexagonal room is buried under a wall of hardened lava, including the hindquarters of a gray stone statue of a faceless sphinx. The sphinx sits atop a two-foot-tall dais. Shallow shelves have been carved into the side of the dais, in which sit various objects that appear to be of an oracular nature—crystal balls, censers, and the like, many of which have fallen from their alcoves to crack or shatter on the stone floor.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the faceless sphinx as one of the many forms of the Outer God Nyarlathotep (god of conspiracies,

# SHATTERED STAR

dangerous secrets, and forbidden magic). This chamber is exempt from the *mage's private sanctum* effect that cloaks the rest of the Guiltspur Depths (allowing *screaming* effects to function normally here), but all other magical effects from the abysium reactor still function.

**Waking Nightmare (XP 4,800):** The first person to approach within 5 feet of the faceless sphinx statue suddenly feels as if the room were spinning around him while the sphinx statue grinds to life and turns to faces him. He feels the faceless gaze hold him motionless while the world crumbles away to be replaced by the vastness of space. The certainty of a singular malevolence looming behind the stars themselves, a darker dark amid the blackness, fills the character's mind, along with a myriad of strange and horrific secrets. An instant later, the room returns to normal, and the character who received the vision remembers only that he stood before an entity known as the Crawling Chaos. That character must also succeed at a DC 15 Will save or be confused for 1d6 rounds.

**Treasure:** The divination tools once on display around the edge of the dais include long-spoiled or ruined spell components for various divination spells, along with several other objects that retain some value even today. Among these are a dented mithral font worth 900 gp, a handful of strange dice carved from a titan's bones (worth 500 gp as a set), a silver diviner's rod (worth 200 gp), a curious metal orb set with tiny jet stones (worth 180 gp), and a cracked *crystal ball* (this item has the broken condition and until it is repaired, it causes 1d4 points of Intelligence damage each time it is used).

## C4. THE HANGING FIREBALL (CR 13)

This chamber hums with an unsettling noise, for at its center churns a great ball of fire. The sphere measures ten feet across and hangs in the center of the chamber, periodically sending short tendrils of fire out as if tasting the air around it.

With a successful DC 27 Knowledge (arcana) check, a PC can identify the sphere of flames as a *delayed blast fireball* spell that has somehow been "paused" at the instant of detonation. The fire is very real, and anyone standing within 5 feet can feel the heat radiating from it as if from a bonfire. The fact that the fire still roils and flickers despite being frozen in time is very curious. A successful DC 30 Spellcraft check reveals that this hanging fireball is a boon to studying evocation magic—any spellcaster who prepares an evocation spell in this room while studying the fireball can prepare that evocation spell as if it were enhanced by *Empower Spell* but without increasing the spell's actual level. Up to three spells may be prepared in this manner, but doing so requires a successful DC 30 Spellcraft check—failure indicates that the spell is

prepared as normal and the spellcaster takes 2 points of Intelligence damage from magical feedback. Spellcasters who cast spells spontaneously cannot benefit from the hanging fireball.

**Trap:** The fireball is somewhat unstable, and if any physical object touches it, the *delayed blast fireball* immediately explodes into its full 20-foot radius. It then collapses down to its hanging state again, ready to detonate again automatically. If the hanging fireball is disabled, it vanishes harmlessly forever.

### HANGING FIREBALL

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC automatic; Disable Device DC 32

#### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (empowered *delayed blast fireball*, 15d6 fire damage plus 50%, Reflex DC 20 for half)

## C5. THE SERPENTFOLK JUGGERNAUT

A hulking object lies upon a fifteen-foot-wide circular dais at the center of this room. The object is made of stone and seems to be a fragment of a much larger colossal stone carriage or conveyance with immense stone rollers for wheels. Snake motifs cover every corner of the object, while its front has been carved to resemble an immense serpent's skull. Smaller shelves built into the edge of the dais contain numerous other objects ranging from weapons to pieces of armor to more mysterious objects.

The serpentfolk empire was long an enemy of Azlant, and by extension an enemy of the nation of Thassilon. By the time Thassilon was growing, though, the serpentfolk deity Ydersius had been defeated and the race was in decline. Isolated pockets of serpentfolk control remained in Thassilon (particularly near Viperwall and the Mobhad Leigh) or in the Darklands below. The objects on display in this room are all trophies collected from Thassilonian conflicts with these serpentfolk.

The large stone carriage can be identified with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) as a sizable fragment from a destroyed juggernaut of unknown qualities. This check also reveals that juggernauts are powerful constructs enhanced and powered by faith, and were used by ancient religions as machines of war. This juggernaut is no longer functional, but given the surviving portions, it must have been a truly colossal monster when it lived.

**Treasure:** While the juggernaut fragment is relatively worthless save as an ancient curiosity, a few of the surviving items around the dais's rim are of note. One alcove contains a serpent mask of beaten gold with amethyst eyes (worth 1,400 gp in all), while a second alcove contains a mummified

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

snake that crumbles to dust if disturbed, revealing an *incandescent blue sphere ioun stone* the thing had swallowed (this *ioun stone* can be used to activate the *Shard of Sloth*). A third alcove contains an iron *wand of sepia snake sigil* (8 charges), while a fourth contains a *rod of the viper*.

## C6. THE DREAMING TOWER

This sixty-foot-high room is almost completely filled by a twisted metal pillar that rises up from the floor to apparently pierce the ceiling above. A narrow flight of stone steps, only two feet in width, winds up the side of the pillar to the ceiling. A strange, butterfly-shaped rune with what appears to be closed eyes on its wings is carved onto the middle of each step's riser.

With a successful DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check, a PC identifies the rune on each step as an ancient Thassilonian symbol for Desna, one associated particularly with her power over dreams. The entire pillar and stairwell radiate overwhelming conjuration magic. In fact, the metal pillar is a powerful and curious artifact called the *Dreaming Tower* that only partially exists on the Material Plane—it extends below and above into the Dimension of Dreams. The tower itself exists in a remote glen inside of a vast enchanted forest in that dimension, extending well above the surrounding canopy to a height of 1,200 feet. A 60-foot section from the center of the tower also happens to exist here in this room. While the pillar might seem to extend below and above the limits of this room, it does not—if the PCs manage to scrape away bits of the floor or ceiling, they discover the curious fact that the tower simply ceases to exist below the floor or above the ceiling.

A character who attempts to scale the stairs must succeed at a DC 12 Acrobatics check, for the narrow stairs slope outward slightly, making it a vertiginous climb. The point at which the stairs reach the ceiling is a dead end, but a PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Will save while climbing the stairs won't actually reach the ceiling in this room, but instead suddenly finds herself standing atop a 20-foot diameter space high above the enchanted forest in the Dimension of Dreams. A character who fails this save simply does not make this transition (and may try again by starting from the bottom stair and walking up the stairs again), while those who succeed at the save simply vanish from view as they step upon the 33rd step.

The abysium reactor's limitation on dimensional travel is lifted in this specific case.

Anyone standing atop the tower in the Dimension of Dreams feels a chill breeze whip across the structure (this wind isn't enough to blow a character over the edge). A peek over the side reveals the entire 1,200 foot drop into the forest below, and that the winding staircase is the only route down other than a horrific fall. A character who

falls from the tower top experiences that entire fall, but as she lands, she does so in area C6 at the base of the tower, taking 20d6 points of falling damage in the process.

At the very center of the tower's top stands a miniature (10-foot-tall) version of the *Dreaming Tower*, held aloft by three delicate metal statues of butterflies who cradle the tower's foundation in their wings. PCs who succeed at a DC 15 Perception check get the impression the idea that the three butterfly statues are in fact breathing and subtly shifting their weight as if they were alive. An alcove at the tower's base contains a faintly smoking censer (see *Treasure*, below).

This tower top is a safe place to rest and recover resources—the nightmares of the Guiltspur Depths do not reach here. Further, any worshiper of Desna who rests here overnight gains the benefit of *aid* (lasting 8 hours), *cure critical wounds*, and *restoration* upon waking. A worshiper of Desna who casts divine spells can prepare one additional spell of each level she can cast. The healing and restorative effects of resting atop the *Dreaming Tower* can occur once per day, whereas the additional effects for worshipers of Desna can occur up to once per month.

A character who attempts to climb back down the tower stairs finds herself returning to area C6 automatically after reaching the 33rd step. A character who falls from the tower likewise finds herself in area C6 upon landing (see above), but a character who instead leaves the top of the tower via flight feels herself swiftly caught up in powerful winds. The flying character must attempt a DC 25 Fly check—success means that she's suddenly driven to the ground in area C6 but takes no damage, whereas a failure indicates the character is driven to the ground in area C6 and takes 6d6 points of falling damage.

The magic that brought this section of the tower into Guiltspur was made possible by the aid of strange advisors from Leng—their exact purpose in aiding the Curator and his assistants in bringing the fragment of the *Dreaming Tower* into this complex is unknown, for the tower itself is obviously sacred to Desna.

**Treasure:** The incense burner at the base of the miniature *Dreaming Tower* is a *censer of dreams* (see page 62). The *censer* doesn't exist here for evil or lawful creatures, but a neutral good, chaotic neutral, chaotic good, or neutral creature can see it, pick it up, and even carry it back to area C6—once the *censer of dreams* is removed from the Dimension of Dreams and is brought back to Guiltspur, it can be seen and used by any creature. If the *censer* is taken, the miniature *Dreaming Tower* creates a new one in a year.

## C7. EXAMINATION CHAMBER (CR 14)

The ceiling of this vaulted, cathedral-like chamber rises to a height of sixty feet above. The northeastern corner of the room

# SHATTERED STAR

is somewhat collapsed, but the rest of the chamber seems to be in good condition. Double doors open in the walls to the east and west, while four alcoves to the north and four to the south are occupied by statues of winged women with no faces and silvery swords gripped in their right hands. Four ten-foot-wide, fifteen-foot-tall glass jars capped with huge metal lids and filled with cloudy green liquid sit in the middle of the room—large shadowy shapes float inside of each jar.

The statues along the north and south walls depict angelic figures similar to those in area C2, but none of them are the subject of a *magic mouth* spell.

This room once featured a number of examination tables and alchemy labs, but this equipment wasn't protected from the ravages of time and has long since crumbled away. In those ancient times, the scholars of Guiltspur used this room as a place to examine and study the anatomies of a large number of creatures. The scholars would typically spend weeks or even months on a subject, and in order to combat decay or to preserve specimens for study, they built the four huge glass containers in this room.

**Creatures:** Each of these containers is filled with a cloudy magical embalming fluid that functions almost like a *temporal stasis* spell when a specially prepared and willing (or helpless) living creature is completely immersed in the fluid. The Thassilonians used this fluid to store captured creatures they wanted to examine later. Originally, the fluid kept the embalmed creature alive but apart from the passage of time, and maintained that stasis for several hours after the creature was removed from the fluid. Today, the fluid has spoiled somewhat—it still preserves the bodies of the creatures contained within, but the creatures have slowly grown more aware of the passage of time and have gone mad as a result.

An examination of each of the containers requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to make out the shape of the creature within (the creature itself can then be identified using the appropriate Knowledge skill). Tank A contains a small badger-like creature called an aurumvorax. Tank B contains the partially dissected (and dead) body of a phase spider. Tank C contains a roper. Tank D contains a young silver dragon that also happens to be the host to an intellect devourer.

Each jar is relatively fragile (hardness 2, hp 10, break DC 15). A jar reduced to 0 hit points immediately shatters, releasing a wave of spoiled and foul embalming fluid (all creatures standing within 10 feet must succeed at a DC 15 Reflex save or be knocked prone). This immediately revives the tank's occupant (with the exception of the body in tank B, which remains dead). The aurumvorax and the roper are both insane from their long stay, and function as if confused. The intellect devourer occupying

the silver dragon has weathered the years well, and is not insane—but it pretends to be. After spending so many centuries in one body in a jar, it's eager to find something new, and plays at being confused in the hope that its dragon body will be slain (as with all intellect devourers, this creature is starved for sensation, including the sensation of being killed).

As these creatures are slain, their bodies swiftly decay into foul-smelling ooze. Once the dragon is killed, the intellect devourer emerges from the dragon's swiftly dissolving head and is dazed for a round, but after that it immediately tries to flee into the Silent Halls to seek a hiding place. If it manages to elude pursuit, it follows along behind the PCs quietly. The creature hopes to use its body thief ability on a powerful foe the PCs leave dead in their wake, at which point it seeks to ambush the PCs to try to kill them using its new host body—or even better, find them while they sleep so it can inhabit one of them!

## AURUMVORAX

CR 9

XP 6,400

hp 114 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 35)

## INTELLECT DEVOURER

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 180)

## ROPER

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 162 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 237)

## YOUNG SILVER DRAGON

CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 104 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 110)

**Trap:** The western doors bear a dangerous trap, laid here ages ago by the Curator's allies. Cadrilkasta bypassed the trap by using *gaseous form* to seep through the door's cracks (just as she bypassed every door in the complex), but anyone who opens the unlocked doors immediately triggers the trap, which causes a thunderous peal of sound to flood the room. This peal not only deals sonic damage to all creatures in the chamber, but also automatically shatters all four of the jars in the room, releasing their contents simultaneously.

## SONIC DETONATION TRAP

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset none

Effect blast of sound (12d6 sonic damage, Reflex DC 16 for half damage); multiple targets (all creatures and jars in area C7)



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

**Treasure:** Unfortunately, since the weird embalming fluid must resonate with the abysium reactor's energies in order to function, the stuff becomes inert if taken from the Guiltspur depths—as such, it is relatively worthless as treasure.

Each of the eight statues wields a siccacite longsword (8 in all) identical to those in area C2.

## C8. THE ENDLESS WATERFALL (CR 13)

A roar of water echoes from this chamber, and the air is damp with cool mist. A dark pool fills much of the western end of the chamber, while to the south a set of stairs leads up to another room. Tumbling into this pool from a bronze-ringed gap in the ceiling above is a column of frothy water, while a small ledge sits just above the water level on the westernmost edge of the pool itself.

This chamber not only served as a source of water and a place for meditation, but also still houses a pair of guardians. The pool itself never overflows—the water drains from a bronze-ringed drain and immediately cascades back down through the drain above in an effect similar to an immobile set of ring gates (this teleportation effect is exempt from the abysium reactor's effects). Other minor magical effects ensure that new water is created in the pool to offset evaporation.

The 10-foot-wide ledge on the western lip of the waterfall is infused with potent magic similar to the effect in area C4. A successful DC 30 Spellcraft check made while studying the strong aura of conjuration reveals its use—a spellcaster may prepare up to three conjuration spells while meditating on this ledge, enhancing them as if he had the Extend Spell feat without increasing the spell's actual level. Doing so requires a successful DC 20 Spellcraft check; failure results in 2 points of Intelligence damage from magical feedback.

**Creatures:** The pool's magic allows it to summon a pair of elder water elementals once per day—and it does so as soon as it sees any intruders (Cadrilkasta triggered this effect but easily slew the two elementals before carrying on to the north via a freshly cast *gaseous form* spell). The two elder water elementals pursue foes throughout the complex, although they prefer to fight from the comfort of the pool. They fight to the death.

**ELDER WATER ELEMENTALS (2)** CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 152 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 127)

## C9. SHRINE TO THE VEILED MASTERS (CR VARIABLE)

Four deep blue pillars support this chamber's forty-foot-high ceiling. To the south, a detailed bas-relief depicts a city

of graceful towers and pyramids inhabited by humans, but below the city lies a vast underground sea filled with tentacled monsters. Many of their tentacles writhe up through the stone above to manipulate and infest the city. Below the carving are several shelves, most of which are empty save for two—one of these holds a delicate-looking coral helm, and the other holds a strange-looking horn. To either side, a churning fifteen-foot-diameter sphere of water floats in the air; a dark coiling shape writhes within each sphere.

This chamber is a monument to the veiled masters—the aboleths and their strange lords who manipulated the empire of Azlant. Knowledge of this manipulation became increasingly common in the final decades before Earthfall, and Thassilon's runelords often sought to ally with the aboleths. These attempted alliances failed more often than not, and in the end, the aboleths destroyed Thassilon as surely as they destroyed Azlant. The mural to the south shows an idealized image of an Azlanti city under the influence of the veiled masters, and was intended as a reminder to Thassilonian visitors of their own free will.

The floating globes of water each contain the body of a long-dead and well-preserved aboleth. These two creatures were kept here as much as trophies and as a symbol over Thassilon's mastery over elements that Azlant could not control.

**Waking Nightmare (XP 6,400):** As soon as anyone approaches within 5 feet of one of the spheres of water, that person suddenly feels a cold, unnerving pressure, as if she were deep underwater. The victim must attempt a DC 15 Will save—if she fails, her mind is overwhelmed by a potent phantasm, making her believe that she has appeared deep underwater before a living aboleth. Conduct a combat between that character and the aboleth at once—in addition to fighting the aboleth alone, the character must also contend with the possibility of drowning and the fact that she feels like she's deep underwater, subjected to darkness and pressure damage as if she were 500 feet underwater (see *Core Rulebook* 445). No matter how long the battle takes, to others observing the event, the victim only grows suddenly rigid for a brief moment before recovering. If the victim defeats the aboleth, she emerges from the waking nightmare safe and sound. If the victim is defeated (by being killed, being dominated, or even by drowning or succumbing to pressure damage), she collapses to the ground, is reduced to -1 hit points, and takes 2d4 points of Charisma damage as her personality is shattered by the nightmare's results.

**PHANTASMAL ABOLETH** CR 7

XP —

hp 84 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 8)

**Treasure:** The coral helm is a *helm of underwater action*. The horn is a finely made masterwork musical instrument carved from a length of ivory (a PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge [arcana] check correctly identifies this ivory as a tusk from the walrus head of a strange variant of chimera from the Crown of the World) and decorated with scrimshaw carvings of coiling tentacles and bulging eyes. While the horn itself is not magical, the largest of the bulging eyes (one located at the upper end of the horn) is in fact a *pearl of the sirines*. The pearl functions normally as long as the horn is carried. It can be pried out of the horn without damaging the horn, at which point the horn itself is worth 800 gp.

### C10. CHAPEL OF THE CRAWLING CHAOS

This large room seems to be some sort of chapel, yet no pews or other concessions toward comfort are apparent. The ceiling is low, just over ten feet in height, giving the place a claustrophobic feeling compared to the high ceilings in nearby chambers. The walls are of polished black stone, while an upraised pulpit to the north supports a pale yellow altar on which two fat candles flicker. A tall column stands to either side of the altar; the length of each column is carved to resemble an emaciated gargoyle-like figure that lacks all facial features on its horned black head.

This chamber was used by visitors from Leng as a minor temple to carry out the more obscene acts of their blasphemous cult. The temple itself can be identified as one dedicated to the awful glory of the Outer Gods and the Great Old Ones with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check, although it doesn't seem to be devoted to any one entity in particular. The two candles on the altar are lit with *continual flame*—a person who places his hands over the top of each candle could communicate with a person in the Temple of the Crawling Chaos in Leng, but the far end of this communication network has been destroyed for ages.

**Waking Nightmare (XP 9,600):** The first player to step up onto the raised pulpit area suddenly feels dizzy. An instant later, the two faceless gargoyles (actually depictions of nightgaunts—see page 90) suddenly animate and lurch forward. A low, rumbling chanting in an unknown language fills the room as the nightgaunts move up to snatch the PC into the air between them. As they do, the room itself crumbles away, revealing that the PC is held aloft by the two monsters at a height of several miles over a strange frozen mountain plateau below. As the nightgaunts drop their captive, the character snaps out of the vision and must succeed at a DC 17 Will save to avoid becoming afflicted by a random form of madness (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 250).

### C11. THE CURATOR'S TOMB

A human skeleton lies slumped against the northern wall here, draped in a fine cloak and clutching a haversack to its chest.

**Treasure:** The skeletal figure here belongs to Kaiventlu the Curator, slumped against the wall where he finally succumbed to madness-induced self-inflicted wounds. The wizard's remains should have crumbled to dust long ago, but tied as they are to his undead state as a ghost, they've remained in relatively good (if dry and a bit dusty) condition. If the PCs haven't already encountered the Curator, he manifests here immediately and attacks if his remains are disturbed. The skeleton still wears its *cloak of resistance +3* and its *headband of mental prowess +2*. In addition, a *handy haversack* contains the Curator's spellbooks—these books contain all his prepared spells, plus 2d4 additional spells of each level (except for enchantment and illusion spells) of your choice up to 7th level.

### C12. GUEST MANSION

The western wall of this octagonal chamber features a detailed mural of a mansion's facade. The front doors are painted life-sized, but the rest of the mural grows increasingly distorted in size as it nears the edges of the room.

The mansion mural radiates strong conjuration magic, for its doors are the entrance to a permanent *mage's magnificent mansion* (CL 20th). Although the doors appear to be painted on, they can be opened with ease, providing access to the extra dimensional space beyond. This effect was placed here to give visitors to the Silent Halls a place to stay—originally, the northern doors led to one of the complex's several entrances, but this route is now blocked by hardened lava.

This mansion is bedecked with Thassilonian objects and imagery—none of which can be taken from the mansion. Those sleeping in the mansion are not protected from the influence of Leng, but one of the chambers in the mansion is a sizable library that contains a fair amount of lore about ancient Thassilon and Guiltspur. This library grants a +2 bonus on all Knowledge (history) checks made about Thassilon, and you can use the tomes here to reveal some of the original uses of the Silent Halls and the nature of some of its stranger exhibits.

The mansion has a dozen rooms, including a dining hall with stained glass windows that depict Runelord Karzoug, a study, a fully functioning masterwork alchemist's lab, and 10 bedrooms. No fewer than 40 unseen servants tend the magical mansion. The meals served are exotic: flaked dragon turtle cooked in mead, potted wyvern flank in garlic, selections of curious fungi, and lots of mead and very heady wine. The servants, of course, only understand Thassilonian.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## C13. THE TERRIBLE WINDOW

A short, curved flight of stairs leads down to double doors to the south of this somewhat elongated octagonal chamber. To the west, what appears to be a ten-foot-wide open window looks out over an idyllic field of grass with a snow-capped mountain range on the horizon. A cool breeze wafts through the open window.

The window is in fact a *permanent image* of a scene of what the Storval Plateau looked like long before Earthfall—an image placed here by a long-forgotten wizard.

**Waking Nightmare (XP 12,800):** The first time anyone approaches within 10 feet of the illusory window, the scene depicted suddenly shifts from an idyllic noon-time hillside to a nightmare vista of frozen Leng aglow under the gibbous light of a bloated moon. The landscape appears cracked and desolate, and in the medium distance a troop of pallid froglike monsters (moon beasts) leads a line of chained denizens of Leng. A jagged mountain range cuts the horizon, while beyond this range the head of an immense jackal-like leviathan slowly turns, as if to peer back through the window. All creatures in area C12 or on the stairs leading down to area C11 who continue to gaze upon the scene must succeed at a DC 17 Will save or be affected by *feeblemind*, essentially struck dumb by the horror and scope of what they are looking upon. A PC who immediately looks away instead must still attempt a DC 17 Will save to avoid taking 1d6 points of Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma damage.

## C14. THE GRAND CHOIR (CR 14)

A short flight of curving steps leads down to a staggering sight—a twenty-five-foot-wide hallway that slopes downward to the south as far as the eye can see. The hall is supported by hundreds of stone columns spaced every five feet that rise up to the curving ceiling forty feet above. The lower six feet of each column has been carved to resemble a faceless winged angelic woman carrying a longsword.

This architectural wonder descends at a relatively steep slope for half a mile until it reaches area D1.

**Creatures:** Two of the columns in this hallway (the two marked in red four rows in) are in fact powerful constructs—advanced caryatid columns known as faceless angels. As the PCs approach, any PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Perception checks notice that unlike the other columns in the hall, these two angels seem to be armed with real swords rather than carved stone swords.

Advanced quickling caryatid column (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 46, *Advanced Bestiary* 209)

N Medium construct

**Init** +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +4

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 20, flat-footed 17 (+5 Dex, +5 dodge, +7 natural)

**hp** 150 (20d10+40); fast healing 1

**Fort** +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +8

**Defensive Abilities** shatter weapons; **DR** 5/—; **Immune** construct traits, magic

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 80 ft.

**Melee** +2 *siccatite longsword* +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+8 plus 1 cold/19–20)



FACELESS ANGEL

**FACELESS ANGEL**  
XP 19,200

**CR 12**

# SHATTERED STAR

**Special Attacks** rapid attacks

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## TACTICS

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**During Combat** The faceless angels wait until the PCs pass them before stepping out to attack the characters at the back of the party.

**Morale** Once a faceless angel is activated, it fights until it is destroyed. It does not pursue foes once they are out of sight, nor will it pursue foes into area **C13** or **D1**.

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## STATISTICS

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**Str** 22, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 5

**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 46

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +15 (+35 when jumping), Perception +4

**SQ** statue

**Gear** +2 *siccatite* longsword

## THE CORE

Located a half mile south of the Silent Halls and approximately 300 feet underground, the second dungeon level of Guiltspur was known as the Core, for its primary cavern is an immense area that the complex's architects believed was cored out of the stone by some unknown force. The Core is technically a part of Nar-Voth, the uppermost layer of the Darklands, for an immense shaft drops down into Sekamina just west of the central cavern. While the caverns of the Core aren't particularly numerous, their scale is massive indeed—as are many of the monsters that dwell within them.

Cadrilkasta ignored much of the Core as she passed through the cave; she avoided conflict with the mother of oblivion in the waters of area **D2** and used *gaseous form* to seep through the rocks at area **D5**, following her obsessive instincts ever toward the *Shard of Sloth*.

## D1. ENTRANCE TO THE CORE

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The vast hallway comes to a sudden end, looking out into a vast underground lake. The dark waters ripple thirty feet below the jagged edge of the hall's end. A series of intermittently-spaced stone pilings extends south, indicating that at one point the hall transformed into a bridge that extended south over the lake, but the bridge itself must have collapsed long ago.

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The passageway to the north leads back to area **C14**.

## D2. THE NAMELESS LAKE (CR 15)

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This vast cavern's limits recede off into darkness, as do the inky black waters of the lake that takes up the chamber's extent. The ceiling rises to form a cathedral-like space above. Stalactites hang here and there, some of prodigious size, while two irregular rows of stone pilings lead south, out across the

waters. The sound of gently cascading water echoes through the cavern.

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Originally, a stone bridge led over the waters of this nameless lake, connecting area **D1** to a rocky island (area **D5**) on which stood a small keep. This chamber, as well as areas **D4–D6**, are all warded by the effects of the abyssium reactor, but these protections do not extend into areas **D7–D9**. When the end came to Thassilon, this cavern didn't withstand the earthquakes nearly as well as the more solidly built areas of the Guiltspur Depths, and both the bridge over the lake and the keep collapsed, killing all who dwelled within.

The lake itself is 70 feet deep at its deepest point, with very little in the way of shallows along beaches. The surviving pilings protrude anywhere from 5 to 30 feet from the waters below; each is 5 feet across and can be climbed with a successful DC 15 Climb check. The water itself stays at a relatively constant level thanks to several small waterfalls that trickle down the cavern's southeastern walls (groundwater runoff from the nameless river above that also supplies the giants with their drinking water); a survey of the lake's bottom reveals several areas where the water runs through submerged cracks in the northwest that empty into area **D8**.

**Creature:** Different creatures have dwelled in this lake over the eons, but for the past several hundreds of years, only one has ruled the nameless lake—a monstrous aquatic outsider known as a Mother of Oblivion. Part sea serpent, part octopus, part interdimensional monstrosity, this monster was conjured into these waters by a cabal of derro priests of Lamashtu who were eager to learn the creature's secrets. Unfortunately for the derro, their ritual was faulty, and the enraged creature killed and ate them all—only to learn that she'd eaten the only creatures who were capable of sending her back from where she'd been conjured.

The Mother of Oblivion is named Ognathooga. She has long since eaten every creature that lived in the lake, and now subsists on the spoils of raids into the purple worm breeding ground in area **D7**—foul fare, even for a creature as nightmarish as one of Lamashtu's spawn. Over the years, she's grown in power and size and now rivals Varisia's most famous Mother of Oblivion: legendary Black Magga of the Storval Deep. She suffers the presence of the dark nagas at area **D4**, since she appreciates the idea of being worshiped as a god, and hopes that they'll some day be able to devise a way to help her escape from the lake. The arrival of the drow has given the Mother of Oblivion a much needed distraction (she wisely let Cadrilkasta pass through to area **D5** uncontested). She's already killed and eaten two of the drow and all of their riding lizards, but she hopes to eat more, and the PCs could certainly give her a welcome change to her diet.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT



## OGNATHOOGA

CR 15

XP 51,200

Mother of Oblivion (*Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 406)

CE Gargantuan outsider (aquatic, native)

**Init** +4; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

**Perception** +22

### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30 (+24 natural, -4 size)

**hp** 232 (15d10+150)

**Fort** +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

**DR** 15/cold iron and magic; **Immune** death effects, mind affecting effects, petrification, polymorph; **Resist** acid 20, cold 20; **SR** 26

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

**Melee** bite +24 (2d8+13/19-20 plus energy drain), 4 tentacles +19 (2d6+6 plus grab)

**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath of madness, constrict (2d6+11), energy drain (2 levels, DC 22)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)

Constant—*invisibility purge*

At will—*death knell* (DC 17), *prayer*

3/day—*demand* (DC 23), *dimensional anchor*, *divination*, *dominate person* (DC 20), *greater command* (DC 20)

1/day—*commune*, *dream*, *unhallow*

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Ognathooga starts combat by attempting to dominate one of the PCs while herself remaining hidden mostly underwater. If she manages to dominate the PC, she uses her control to lure the rest of the party any way she can into the waters of the lake, where she then risks losing control of her dominated minion by ordering it to attack its allies. She uses *demand* and other spell-like abilities to try to scatter the PCs, so that she can then swim in and attack them one at a time. Note that while in the area of effect of the abyssium reactor, two of her abilities (transdimensional tentacles and warp dimensions) do not work—Ognathooga is unlikely to pursue the PCs beyond area D6, but if she does, these abilities (detailed in full on page 406 of *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition*) function normally.

**Morale** If brought below 75 hit points, Ognathooga retreats to area D3. If encountered there, she fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 37, **Dex** 10, **Con** 31, **Int** 25, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +32 (+36 grapple); **CMD** 42 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike

# SHATTERED STAR



**Skills** Acrobatics +18 (+14 when jumping), Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nature) +22, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +22, Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +6, Survival +19, Swim +36

**Languages** Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Thassilonian, Undercommon

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Breath of Madness (Su)** Ognathooga can exhale a cloud of foul-smelling, narcotic breath as a standard action once every minute. This black smoke fills a 60-foot cone. All creatures in the area take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and become confused for 1d6 rounds (a successful DC 27 Will save halves the Wisdom damage and negates the confusion effect). This is a mind-affecting poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## D3. OGNATHOOGA'S DEN

The entrance to this flooded cavern is near the lake bed's bottom, 50 feet underwater. The chamber beyond serves as Ognathooga's den—a place for the Mother of Oblivion

to retreat to when wounded or tired, and a place for her to store the various items of treasure she's accumulated over the ages from unfortunate victims who've wandered up from the Darklands. The entire cavern is warded by several *unhallow* spells placed by Ognathooga; *invisibility purge* is linked to this area via the *unhallow* spells. The monster has used several stalactites to carve a crude representation of Lamashtu in the northern wall (identifiable with a successful DC 20 Knowledge [religion] check).

**Treasure:** Ognathooga keeps her treasures stacked in a neat pile at the base of her primitive shrine to Lamashtu, hoping that if she eventually places enough here, her mistress will notice and rescue her. Currently, these treasures consist of 2,800 gp, 108 pp, a small diamond worth 1,200 gp, a set of ivory dice worth 30 gp and a matching set of silver dice worth 75 gp, a copper scepter carved with images of spiders worth 50 gp, an ornate silver comb worth 75 gp, a polished coral chalice worth 50 gp, a gold statuette of a red dragon worth 110 gp, a silver chalice with carvings of a marilith on the sides worth 150 gp, a *potion of haste*, a *potion of resist electricity*, a *potion of water*

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

*breathing*, a mithral scroll tube worth 200 gp (containing a *scroll of charm monster*, a *scroll of summon monster V*, and a *scroll of greater spell immunity*), a *wand of magic missile* (44 charges), a *wand of call lightning* (38 charges), a *staff of understanding*<sup>UE</sup>, a *+1 expeditious breastplate*<sup>UE</sup>, and a *seducer's bane*<sup>UE</sup>. In addition, the crushed and ruined body of a drow hunt mistress lies atop the treasure. She still wears all of her gear (see area **D6**), and the relative freshness of the remains should tell the PCs that more drow may be nearby.

## D4. RITUAL ISLE (CR 14)

A barren, rocky isle rises barely above the level of the water here. Something has cleared the island of all rocks and other bits of debris—every stalagmite has been broken off at the root, and the remaining rubble has been placed deliberately across the isle in strangely complex and unsettling coiling patterns.

**Creatures:** A cult of Lamashtu-worshipping dark nagas led by a naga cleric came to the nameless lake several months ago, drawn by visions of a powerful entity sacred to their god that was trapped here. After a laborious ascent of area **D8** that took several days and numerous magical spells, the naga cult came to area **D6** whereupon Ognathooga, quite hungry at that point, devoured the clerical leader (who offered no resistance to “becoming one with a child of the Mother of Monsters”), ironically robbing the cult of its most powerful spellcaster and the creature who would be most able to design the ritual Ognathooga desired to flee this realm. Since then, the nagas (who are an aquatic Darklands variant that possess a swim speed and the advanced template) have done their best to transform this island, their new home, into what they hope some day will become a portal to the Abyss. Unfortunately, their magical skill isn't up to their ambitions. With a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana, religion, or planes) check, a PC can confirm that the pattern of rocks on this island is the perfect arrangement for the creation of a temporary portal to the Abyss, but only if a powerful spellcaster spends several weeks infusing the area with potent magic—magic beyond the capability of these Guiltspur nagas.

The nagas fill their days with prayer on the island's shores, and quickly attempt to capture the PCs alive if they spot them. The nagas hope that by sacrificing the PCs over the course of several days, they'll gain insight or even Lamashtu's aid in building the portal—whether or not such a gambit could even work is left to you. The nagas will not abandon their rituals to come to Ognathooga's aid; they assume the Mother of Oblivion is capable of handling herself in any battle. If the PCs defeat Ognathooga and present proof of this deed to the Guiltspur nagas, the nagas

must each succeed at a DC 20 Will save to avoid becoming frightened for 2d6 rounds.

### GUILTSPUR NAGA (6)

CR 9

XP 6,400 each

CE advanced variant dark naga (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 211, 294)

hp 105 each

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

Skills as standard naga but replace Knowledge (arcana) with

Knowledge (religion) +13, and replace Spellcraft with Swim +19

Languages Abyssal, Undercommon

## D5. RUINED TOWER

A barren, rocky isle rises from the lake waters. Atop the island's thirty-foot-high peak lie the cracked foundations of a long-crumbled structure of some sort.

Very little remains today of the ancient keep that once sat atop this isle. Once home to a cabal of Lissalan priests who stood sentinel over the Guiltspur side of the Embassy of Leng below, the keep is now nothing more than a few foundations and piles of rubble.

A 20-foot square area in the center of the island is in fact an open shaft hidden by four adjacent *illusory walls* (DC 16 to disbelieve, CL 15th). Once, a much more complex ward prevented entrance into this shaft, but today only the illusions remain. Below, the shaft drops 300 feet down to area **E1**. A successful DC 20 Climb check is needed to scale the shaft's walls. A creature that simply walks out onto the open pit must succeed at a DC 20 Reflex save to stagger back from the edge before falling; otherwise, the quick trip to area **E1** deals 20d6 points of falling damage.

## D6. STALAGMITE BEACH (CR 12)

A wide beach of damp stone rises up from the lake's edge here. Numerous stalagmites and stalactites decorate the region, which narrows down to a pair of twenty-five-foot-wide passageways leading to the west. A twenty-foot-wide pathway has been smashed through the stalagmites from the lake to the southernmost entrance—this path is smeared with slime and bits of strange, violet meat.

The stalagmites here are thick enough that they make passage through the area difficult terrain, save for a path worn by Ognathooga's periodic trips to area **D7** to feed. A PC who succeeds at a DC 27 Knowledge (arcana) check can identify the chunks of meat as purple worm fragments.

Once the PCs step across the dotted lines shown on the map, they're stepping out of the area that is warded by the abysium reactor. This border is protected against observation from the west as a *mage's private*

# SHATTERED STAR

*sanctum*—viewed from the west, the dotted lines are opaque walls of fog. Any character who has experienced a vision of the *Shard of Sloth* is struck by a nagging feeling of leaving something behind as she passes out of the influence of the abyssium reactor.

**Creature:** Not long after the blue dragon Cadrilkasta passed through the caverns, new arrivals came to the Core—a band of drow who call themselves the Deep Hunt. Led by a powerful cleric of Zura named Xaivanshee Rasivrein, this small group of drow and monsters has come to the Guiltspur Depths in search of the same thing the PCs seek: the *Shard of Wrath*. The Deep Hunt arrived in the Core approximately 1 day before the PCs reached this level of the Guiltspur Depths, and as such they've not yet had much of a chance to look around. The group's current base of operations is in area **D9**, but after a first, somewhat disastrous attempt to explore the nameless lake, the drow are taking a few days to rest, recover, and plan.

In the meantime, one of the group's hunters has taken up position here, levitating amid the stalactites hanging over the northern section of the beach. This lone drow is under orders to watch and, if anyone of interest passes through the area, she is to follow quietly and attack only if she's attacked. The drow doesn't expect to see anyone, but is alert nonetheless.

If the PCs attempt to speak to her, she tells them that they are entering the domain of the Deep Hunt, and that they should come with her to speak to her mistress. She won't bother to ask the PCs to give up their weapons, but tells them that if they are foolish enough to attack that she and her many sisters who wait in the shadows will slay them without pause. This last bit is a bluff, of course... until the PCs have reached area **D9**.

## HUNT MISTRESS

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female drow noble ranger 12

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 115)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +8; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.;

Perception +23

### DEFENSE

**AC** 27, touch 15, flat-footed 22

(+5 armor, +4 Dex,

+1 dodge, +4 natural,

+3 shield)

**hp** 142 (12d10+72)

**Fort** +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6; +2 vs. enchantments

**Defensive Abilities** evasion; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 23

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** mwk rapier +15/+10/+5 (1d6+2/18–20)

**Ranged** +2 *shock hand* crossbow +18 (1d4+2/17–20 plus 1d6 electricity and poison)

**Special Attacks** favored enemy (elves +6, gnomes +2, humans +2)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*dancing lights*, *deeper darkness*, *faerie fire*, *feather fall*, *levitate*

1/day—*divine favor*, *dispel magic*, *suggestion* (DC 13)

**Ranger Spells Prepared** (CL 9th;

concentration +11)

3rd—*cure moderate wounds*

2nd—*barkskin*, *bear's endurance*, *cure light wounds*

1st—*alarm*, *gravity bow*<sup>APG</sup>, *resist energy*

### TACTICS

**Before Combat** The hunt mistress uses *levitate* to hide amid the stalactites, 20 feet above the ground. She casts *barkskin* and *bear's endurance* once she notices the PCs coming toward the beach. She watches the PCs move through the area, and if she's not spotted, she drops down to the ground via *feather fall* once the PCs move on, then follows them. She only attacks if they attack first.

**During Combat** The hunt mistress casts *gravity bow* on the first round of combat, then levitates back down to the ground if necessary. Once on stable ground, she uses her crossbow, *Deadly Aim*, and *Shot on the Run* to make a fighting retreat to area **D9** to rejoin her kin. When fighting with others, the hunt mistress instead makes full attacks, taking 5-foot steps as necessary to avoid attacks of opportunity.

**Morale** The *slave collar* worn by the hunt mistress ensure that she fights to the death as long as Xaivanshee lives.

If Xaivanshee dies, the hunt mistress immediately flees back toward area **D8**, leaps in, and *feather falls* back down to Sekamina to return home.

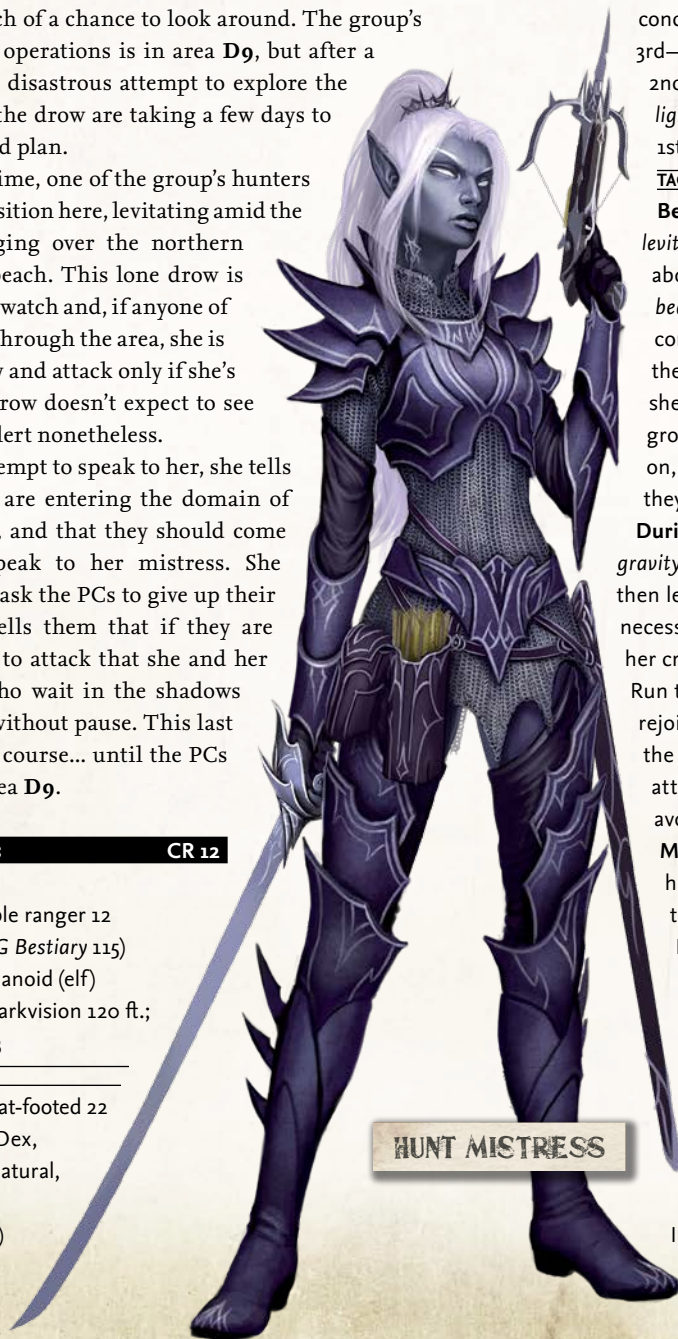
### STATISTICS

**Str** 15, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14,

**Cha** 10

**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

**Feats** *Deadly Aim*, *Dodge*, *Endurance*, *Improved Critical* (hand crossbow), *Point-*



HUNT MISTRESS



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Shield Focus, Shot on the Run, Toughness

**Skills** Acrobatics +15, Climb +16, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +16, Perception +23, Stealth +22, Survival +21, Swim +16

**Languages** Aklo, Elven, Undercommon

**SQ** camouflage, combat style (crossbow), elven magic, evasion, favored terrain (underground +4, water +2), hunter's bond (companions), poison use, quarry, swift tracker, track +6, wild empathy +12, weapon familiarity, woodland stride

**Gear** +1 chain shirt, +1 buckler, +2 shock hand crossbow with 10 drow sleep poisoned bolts, mwk rapier, slave collar (attuned to Xaivanshee Rasivrein)

## D7. WORM-INFESTED CAVERN (CR 15)

The ground falls away here into an immense sinkhole, the floor of which is littered with a carpet of rubble and bones. Three large, deeper holes drop away in the middle of the room, while dozens of smaller holes that look almost like partially collapsed burrows pock the depths.

The edges of this large sinkhole drop 30 feet onto broken stone; the ground below is difficult terrain. A successful DC 15 Climb check is needed to navigate the sides of the sinkhole. While the smaller holes don't go far before ending in collapses, the three larger rifts in the center drop down 80 feet into a large and tangled warren of tunnels—an immense nesting ground for purple worms.

**Creatures:** This cavern is a nesting pit for purple worms. The massive creatures burrow and hunt in deeper, far larger caverns that extend for miles under the area (the extent of these caverns is beyond the scope of this adventure), but come here to lay their eggs. At this time, two purple worms are in the process of laying a new mound of eggs, but if they notice PCs, they immediately abandon their egg laying and dig down into the ground, burrowing through the rubble and up to wherever the PCs are to attack them. A purple worm fights until reduced to 30 or fewer hit points, at which time it flees to the warrens deep below.

Characters who climb (or fall) into the sinkhole have more than just a few adult purple worms to contend with. Only 1d4 rounds after someone enters the pit, a writhing swarm of larval purple worms burrows up from the rubble to attack anyone walking on the ground.

### PURPLE WORMS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 200 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 230)

### LARVAL PURPLE WORM SWARM

CR 12

XP 19,200

Purple worm swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 230, *Advanced Bestiary* 45)

N Tiny magical beast (swarm)

**Init** +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +18

### DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 15, flat-footed 25 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, +2 size)

**hp** 152 (16d10+64)

**Fort** +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

**Melee** swarm +14 (6d6 plus poison)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 21)

### TACTICS

**During Combat** The swarm attacks the closest foe within reach, but does not pursue foes out of the sinkhole. Once no foes are within reach on the ground, the swarm burrows back into the rubble.

**Morale** The swarm fights to the death.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 3, **Dex** 14, **Con** 17, **Int** 1, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 8

**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 23 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (swarm), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

**Skills** Climb +4, Perception +18, Swim +5

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Poison (Ex)** Swarm—injury; *save* Fort DC 21; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Strength damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

## D8. THE DARK GULF

A vast, cold maw opens in the ground here, a bottomless pit hundreds of feet, if not more, in diameter. Here and there, ledges varying from five to ten feet in width cling precariously to the shaft's sides, offering a treacherous route around the edge.

This immense cavern drops 600 feet down into the darkness, where it opens into an immense cavern nearly a mile in diameter in Nar-Voth, the upper realm of the Darklands. The chambers below are wildlands inhabited by all manner of monster—dangerous fungi, giant bats, oozes, purple worms, ropers, and worse. It was through this route that the drow of the Deep Hunt came to the Guiltspur Depths, levitating up the shaft to establish their base camp at area D9.

The walls of the gulf can be scaled with a successful DC 20 Climb check; a fall deals 20d6 points of falling damage. Ledges run around the eastern rim, but in places they've collapsed, so that an approach to area D9 requires climbing, jumping, or some form of flight at times.

The vast caverns below are beyond the scope of this adventure—if you wish to extend the PCs’ explorations in Nar-Voth, *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Into the Darklands* provides details on running adventures set in this hostile realm. If the PCs get too distracted by this direction, however, feel free to have any PCs who used the *Shard of Wrath* to divine the location of the *Shard of Sloth* feel increasingly convinced that they’re drifting astray from their goal, as a new vision from the *Shard of Wrath* can confirm at any time.

## D9. THE DEEP HUNT (CR 17)

A large cavern extends north from the edge of the vast pit. The cavern itself seems mostly empty, save for a thirty-foot-tall square iron tower that sits in the middle of the cavern.

The twenty-five-foot-wide entrance to this cavern is warded by an *alarm* spell that alerts the current hunt mistress atop the tower (see *Creatures*, below) with a mental warning.

**Creatures:** The iron tower is in fact an *instant fortress* owned by the leader of the Deep Hunt, a drow cleric named Xaivanshee Rasivrein. She leads a group of three drow rangers (known as hunt mistresses), all three of whom are bound to her will via *slave collars*. One of these hunt mistresses watches in area **D6**, but the other two remain here, one atop the *instant fortress* and one off duty inside the fortress. The three switch duties every 8 hours. The drow once had several riding lizards as well, but the occupant of the nameless lake managed to gobble them all down.

The interior of the instant fortress consists of 2 floors. The bottom one is a combination barracks and common room, and the upper floor serves as both a temple and boudoir for Xaivanshee. The hunt mistresses typically move to and from the watchpost on the roof by levitating outside rather than moving through their mistress’s personal chambers.

Xaivanshee’s *slave collars* inform her as soon as any of her hunt mistresses are wounded or otherwise harmed. In addition, the collars allow Xaivanshee to communicate with her servants via telepathy as long as they are within 100 feet of her. The drow priestess of Zura herself remains inside her fortress as the PCs approach—her second hunt mistress exits out the front door to greet the PCs and inform them that they stand in the presence of “the

most glorious mistress, Lady Xaivanshee of Zura, third daughter of House Rasivrein.”

Xaivanshee then speaks through this slave via their telepathic link—the drow has no initial interest in fighting the PCs, and would rather secure an alliance with them once she finds out that their goals are similar to her own. Xaivanshee is also not interested in downplaying her perceived sense of self-importance—she’s arrogant and secure in her position, and her method of using slaves to essentially talk down to the PCs may be more than some parties can stomach.

If the PCs choose to attack, Xaivanshee orders the two hunt mistresses to attack at once (or all three, if the hunt mistress from area **D6** has followed)—the one on the ground levitates up to the watchpost to join her sister. Their mistress Xaivanshee takes the time to cast her preparatory spells as detailed on page 60 before emerging onto the upper watchpost to join the fight, which might gibe the PCs a few precious seconds to establish a foothold in the battle. She does not pursue defeated PCs from this area immediately, but eventually tracks them down with her

remaining hunt mistresses as detailed below.

If the PCs choose instead to parley with the drow, Xaivanshee interrogates them on their purpose in the area. If she learns the PCs seek a treasure (she doesn’t necessarily need to be told the PCs seek the *Shard of Sloth*—she assumes that’s why they’re here), she proposes an alliance of sorts. If the PCs agree to let her use the *Shard of Sloth* to finish her transformation into a vampire, she and her minions will follow along behind them to provide aid and support in the battles to come. The drow are true to their word if the PCs agree to this arrangement; you can use them to aid the PCs as you wish in battles, but the drow won’t turn against them. At least, they won’t until Xaivanshee becomes a vampire, at which case her attitude toward the PCs changes drastically—see her NPC entry on page 60.

If the PCs can’t come to an agreement with her, or if they are forced to flee, Xaivanshee waits about half an hour, preparing for the PCs to return for a second attack. If this doesn’t occur, she gathers her hunt mistresses to follow and stalk the PCs. In this case, the drow follow the PCs’ tracks but do not interfere, hoping that the PCs manage to secure the *Shard of Sloth* at a point when their resources prove low enough that Xaivanshee can simply demand



XAIVANSHEE

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

the shard from them. At your discretion, if the PCs are defeated in combat at a later point during this adventure, the drow can step in at the last moment to save them, only to require their servitude in helping recover the *Shard of Sloth* in payment. Even if the PCs never reach this section of the caverns, you can have the drow learn of their passage through the eastern caves of this level, and ambush the PCs at the end of the adventure.

## XAIVANSHEE RASIVREIN

CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 172 (see page 60)

## HUNT MISTRESSES (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 142 each (see page 38)

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to secure an alliance with the drow (even if that alliance later falls apart), award them 25,600 XP.

## THE EMBASSY OF LENG

The deepest portion of the Guiltspur Depths is a small complex that combined the functions of a temple, a neutral meeting ground, and a portal to the nightmare realm of Leng. The embassy was overseen by a priestess of Lissala named Mesmalatu back in Thassilon's day, but with the empire's fall, Mesmalatu has become something more than a mere ambassador—she is now an awakened demilich and a worshiper of Nyarlathotep.

For many centuries, the Embassy of Leng has remained silent, but with the disruptive passage of a blue dragon through these chambers, the rooms have activated. The guardians are now eager to prevent further intrusions, and Mesmalatu herself has risen from her torpor to aid in the level's defense.

This is also the location of the abysium reactor (see area E5). The proximity of the magical engine causes this entire level to vibrate and hum slightly in a way that can be unnerving. After an hour spent in the embassy, a creature must succeed at a DC 20 Fortitude save to avoid becoming shaken for as long as it remains in the embassy. Shutting down the abysium reactor also ends this effect. The denizens of these chambers have long since grown used to the reactor's presence.

## E1. THE FORBIDDEN PORTAL (CR 14)

A ten-foot-wide, fifteen-foot-long hallway extends from the bottom of a deep pit, ending at a massive pair of black metal double doors. The faces of these doors bear a detailed carving of a vast mountain range under a night sky—an eerie castle of immense size crowning the tallest of the mountains.

## THE FACELESS SPHINX

Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, is an ancient Outer God associated with conspiracies, dangerous secrets, and forbidden magic. Said to possess a thousand different forms, he is unusual among the alien Outer Gods in that he actively seeks to sow discord among the various mortal races. Scholars of the Dark Tapestry believe that Nyarlathotep himself is the prime mover in preparing countless worlds for the devastating return of the Great Old Ones. Thassilon was no stranger to his influence, although his manipulations were vague. He was worshiped in Thassilon in the guise of the Faceless Sphinx, an incarnation also worshiped in ancient times in parts of Osirion and to this day in parts of Leng itself.

Worshippers of the Faceless Sphinx have access to the domains of Air, Chaos, Evil, Knowledge, and Magic, and to the subdomains of Arcane, Cloud, Divine, Memory, Thought, and Wind. The cult's unholy symbol is an image of a featureless face, and its favored weapon is a punching dagger.

Additional information about Nyarlathotep and the other Outer Gods and Great Old Ones can be found in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #46.



These doors are immense adamantine portals, sealed against all entry. With a successful DC 30 Knowledge (planes) check, a PC recognizes the carving on the doors as depicting Kadath in the cold waste of Leng, and a successful DC 30 Knowledge (religion) check then confirms that Kadath is one of the palaces of Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos. The adamantine doors are locked and the key to open them is long gone—a PC who succeeds at a DC 40 Disable Device check can pick the lock, or the doors can be destroyed in order to grant passage. While the doors are closed and locked, their seals are not airtight—*gaseous form*, *wind walk*, and similar effects can be used to bypass the doors without setting off the trap that guards them.

The shaft above area E1 leads 300 feet up to area D5.

**Trap:** If the doors are damaged or forced, or the locks are picked, a sudden wave of bone-chilling wind washes out from them, filling all of area E1 with the sound of a shrieking windstorm. All creatures in this area are blasted by cold damage and may be driven temporarily insane by the sound.

## WINDS OF MADNESS

CR 14

XP 38,400

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

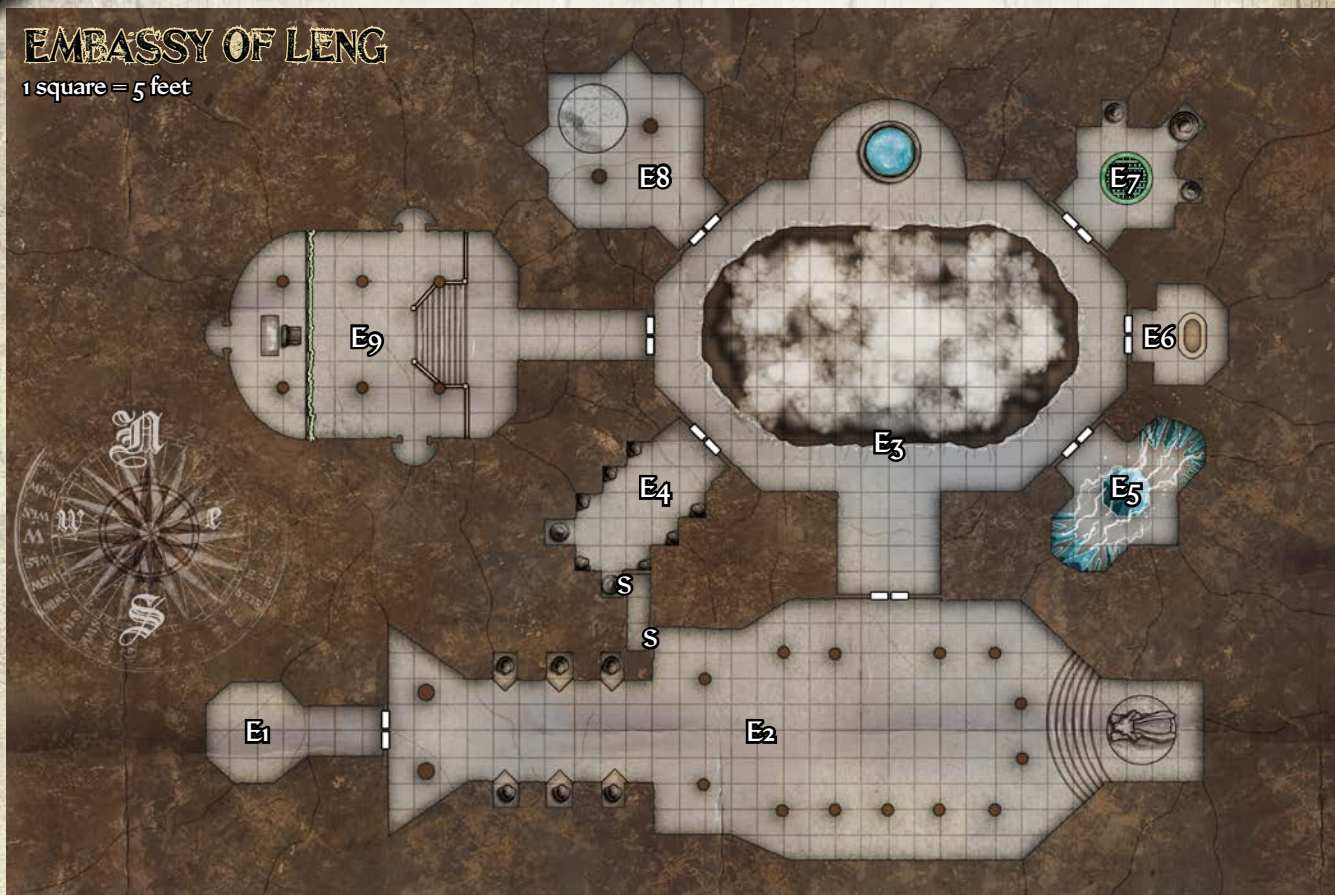
### EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

# SHATTERED STAR

## EMBASSY OF LENG

1 square = 5 feet



**Effect** freezing wind (6d6 cold damage, Reflex DC 20 half); shrieking wind (confusion for 1 round, Will DC 20 negates, this is a sonic mind-affecting effect); multiple targets (all creatures in area **E1**, to a height of 40 feet)

### E2. SHRINE OF THE FACELESS (CR 14)

A vast cathedral towers here, lit by flickering blue lights that dance in the upper reaches of the yawning space. The floor is of a sickly blue stone so polished and reflective that it almost serves as a cerulean mirror. To the west, the ceiling is a mere fifty feet high, but as the cathedral widens to the east, the ceiling rises to twice that height. Stone pillars support the space above, while to the west, six alcoves containing statues of winged women with empty faces stand guard. A twenty-foot-tall stone double door sits in the cathedral's northern wall, its face carved with a depiction of a vast mountain range capped by a towering castle. Far to the east, a series of steps rises up to a wide pulpit on which crouches an elephantine faceless sphinx carved from black stone.

In Thassilon's time, this vast cathedral was devoted to the goddess Lissala, but after Mesmalatu's return from Leng many centuries after the onset of the Age of Darkness,

she transformed this cathedral to the worship of her new patron, the Faceless Sphinx of Leng. Yet as this change took place long after the fall of Thassilon, Mesmalatu was destined to be the only one to offer prayer to the Crawling Chaos in this chamber. In time, as she fell into torpor as a demilich, even those prayers ceased. For centuries, this vast chamber has lain empty.

The faceless statues that stand in the alcoves are similar to those found in the Silent Halls—faceless angels blasphemously associated with the Crawling Chaos. However, a PC who succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge (religion) check also confirms that these statues were once depictions of the goddess Lissala, and that they have been magically altered to depict their new subjects.

The northern doors feature the same image as the doors from area **E1**, save that unlike those doors, these are neither locked nor trapped. The secret door to area **E4** can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

**Creature:** The cathedral itself is ominous in its silence, but it is far from unguarded. A single alien entity, pulled in from a distant world via a ritual even Mesmalatu has forgotten, stands guard here and has done so for ages, sustained without the need for food or drink for nearly 9,000 years. This creature is a flying polyp, a half-invisible

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

malevolent aberration that views its long imprisonment here as little more than an idle curiosity.

The flying polyp lurks invisibly just before the statue of the faceless sphinx, waiting patient and potent for intruders to enter the cathedral. It activates its sucking wind as soon as it notices intruders, targeting as many PCs as it can in an attempt to first slow them and then hold them in place so that it can slither forth and blast them with wind and crush them with its tentacles. The flying polyp fights to the death.

## FLYING POLYP

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 207 (see page 86)

## E3. THE PIT OF SILVER MIST (CR 17)

Over fifty feet across and nearly a hundred feet wide, the ceiling of this immense chamber stretches up into the darkness like a silo. The walls glitter with sparkling blue and purple crystals, with those higher up giving the illusion of colored stars above. A stone door sits at the end of a wide hall to the south, while to either side of this entrance, three large black metal doors loom in the walls (although one set of doors to the northwest has been smashed to rubble). The far side of the room features a wide alcove in which a fountain of glowing blue liquid ripples, but the most significant feature of the massive hall is the vast pit that takes up the majority of the floor, leaving a ten-foot-wide ledge around its edges. Silver light shines up from a roiling bank of fog thirty feet down in this immense pit, and now and then, immense rumblings and sloshing sounds, like a whale floundering amid the waves of a distant beach, echo up from the silver-limned depths.

The vast pit in this room is the anchoring link between the Material Plane and the nightmare realm of Leng—a tether built by Karzoug with significant aid from minions like Mesmalatu and allies on the far side of reality in Leng itself. A successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or planes) check allows a character to recognize the pit for what it is, as does a successful DC 35 Spellcraft check made while studying the pit's strong conjuration aura. This Spellcraft check also reveals the magical link between the pit and the fountain, and that the fountain requires some sort of ritual in order to activate the pit as a portal.

The pit is a two-way conduit that periodically allows nightmarish monsters from Leng to stumble into the Material Plane, but before any creature other than a native of Leng can use the pit to enter Leng, a specific ritual must be performed and the creature must be anointed with the waters of the fountain (see Development below). A character who enters the mist before these conditions are met (by falling, flying, climbing down into the pit with

a successful DC 20 Climb check, or so on) can continue downward forever, as if the pit were bottomless. Each round a creature ends its turn within the silver mist, it must succeed at a Will save (DC = 15 + 1 per previous save) or take 1d4 points of Wisdom drain. If the save is successful, the creature suddenly appears in the fountain to the north of the pit with a great splash and takes 20d6 points of falling damage.

The doors to areas E4–E9 are all made of adamantine and carved with depictions of Kadath, similar to the door in area E1 but with no trap. Each door bears a placard above it written in Thassilonian that lists the name of the chamber beyond as given on the following pages. Any character who approaches within 30 feet of the entrance to area E5 automatically notices an increase in the ambient humming sound that fills the complex. The doors to area E8 have been smashed down—with a successful DC 25 Knowledge (arcana) check, a PC can confirm that the damage caused to the doors seems to have been caused by a combination of draconic claws and powerful electrical discharges.

**Creature:** Creatures from across Leng periodically get pulled through the transdimensional portal here, but most of those, as with anyone who enters the mist without first being attuned, are devoured by the legendary creature that was used to create the deep portal in the first place. This monstrous entity is an unimaginably vast worm from the deep caverns below attacked—a creature called a *bhole*. The conduit between Leng and the Material Plane was, in fact, created by this monster's burrowing after Karzoug and his allies from Leng ensorcelled the creature, using it to essentially dig a hole through reality. The *bhole* remains trapped between worlds now, coiling eternally in the pit. It emerges from the pit 1d4 rounds after any living creature enters the mist, rising a bleached, monstrous head up to attack those in the room. The smashed crystals are the results of prior attacks—PCs could use the *bhole*'s attacks to help destroy the abysium reactor in area E5 if they open the doors and trick the creature into attacking them. When it attacks, the *bhole* can essentially move its space anywhere in the pit but cannot leave it—this means that it can physically attack any creature within its reach from the pit's edge. Once its anger is aroused, the monster remains active in the room for 1d4 rounds after no creatures remain obvious targets, after which it retreats back into the mist until awakened again. If the *bhole*'s hit points are reduced below 0, it is not slain, but it retreats into the mist and does not emerge again for 24 hours.

Activating the fountain with the ritual does not cause the *bhole* to appear, but if the fountain is forced to malfunction, the *bhole* writhes in pain, emerges, and immediately starts to attack any creatures in the room, attempting to slay them before they can enter the mist and travel to Leng.

BHOLE

CR 17

XP 102,400

hp 290 (see page 84)

**Development:** When Cadrilkasta came to this level, she recognized the nature of the pit and fountain, then explored several of the surrounding rooms until she successfully communicated with the *whisperstone* in area E6 to learn how to activate the portal. Since that point, Mesmalatu (who was awakened from her torpor when the dragon activated the portal) has claimed the resonance crystal from the *whisperstone*—the PCs can use the stone to learn how to use the portal as well but must first recover the crystal from the demilich.

In order to activate the portal, a character must expend a *nightmare* or *plane shift* spell (either from spells known or prepared, or by using a magic item that allows one of these spells, like the *nightmare rod* in area E9) while pouring a handful of abysium powder (obtainable at area E5) into the fountain. This method of activation can be determined from the *whisperstone*, or at your discretion, via spells like *divination*, *vision*, or *legend lore*. Alternatively, destroying or deactivating the abysium reactor and destroying the demilich Mesmalatu causes the fountain to malfunction. In either situation, a creature that then partially or wholly immerses itself in the water and leaps into the silver mist in the pit is transported to area F1.

Once the portal is activated, the surge of magic causes Mesmalatu to rise from her torpor in area E9—she arrives in area E3 in 1d4+2 rounds if she still lives to investigate and attack any intruders she finds here.

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to activate the portal and step through into Leng without defeating the bhole, award them full experience points as if they had defeated the creature in combat.

#### E4. THE DREAMING CRYPT (CR 10)

The walls of this room arch up like massive ribs to form a corrugated ceiling. Between each rib stands an upright sarcophagus—all of them have been pried open to allow the contents to spill out onto the dusty floor. The bones appear to have been gnawed and cracked open.

The secret door to area E2 can be found with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

**Creature:** This room served as a crypt for previous ambassadors to Leng where their bodies were buried in a place of honor. The sarcophagi preserved each of the bodies within, but a relatively recent visitor to the embassy has been working his way through the contents one by one. This visitor is a strange, otherworldly ghoul from Leng named Morcruft. Leng ghouls are far more

powerful than standard ghouls, and their features are more bestial, with canine snouts and hooved feet. A creature that succumbs to ghoul fever contracted from a Leng ghoul becomes a normal ghoul unless in life it had 12 or more Hit Dice, in which case it rises from death as a Leng ghoul.

Morcruft stumbled into the embassy accidentally, appearing in the fountain at area E3 after falling from the ledge in area F1. He survived his fall, but didn't initially know how to return. He peeked into several of the rooms surrounding area E3 but it was the contents of this room he was the most intrigued by—and upon discovering the dead of each sarcophagus were relatively fresh, he's spent the last several days enjoying the room's contents as a connoisseur of fine food might enjoy an exotic buffet.

If the PCs fight the bhole in area E3, Morcruft hears the battle and peeks out the door. He may even open the door and call the PCs over, perhaps even promising them safety in the tomb. Otherwise, the PCs find Morcruft leaning against the last sarcophagus—he's eaten all of the bodies here, and while busily finishing off the last skull, he has finally started to worry about how he might be able to return home.

While chaotic evil, Morcruft is also quite intelligent. His primary desire is to return to the Temple of the Crawling Chaos, and he realizes that powerful adventurers might be able to help him if he helps them in turn—further, he knows that he's outnumbered and likely outclassed by adventurers who are powerful enough to reach this complex. When the PCs meet Morcruft, he adopts a submissive pose and in a simpering voice begs them to stay their hands. He offers them his aid if they help him get back home, and if he learns that the PCs seek to reach Leng as well, he capers in delight. He watched Cadrilkasta come to area E3 and knows that she performed some sort of ritual to activate the portal, and that she used some sort of dust from area E5 as part of that ritual after she spent about an hour in area E6. He also knows that a short time after the dragon used the ritual to activate the portal to return to Leng, a “sparkly skull floating on a dust ghost” moved through the central room, went into area E6, then returned with a large crystal clutched in its jaws before it returned to area E9, but he isn't quite sure what this signifies.

Beyond these observations, Morcruft promises the PCs that if they accompany him back to the Temple of the Crawling Chaos in Leng that he'll make sure his brothers and sisters who patrol the temple halls treat them well. He can provide the PCs with a rough sketch of the temple as well, although he only knows about areas F1–F6, since he and his kin aren't allowed deeper into the complex (the Leng ghouls even avoid F6 because of the monstrous guardian there).

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

If Morcruft joins the party, play him as a simpering coward in fights who, after a battle, is only too eager to feed on the remains. If he ever realizes that he doesn't need the PCs to return home (he's not aware of the fact that, being from Leng, he only needs to jump into the mist in area E3 to return), he won't hesitate to abandon the PCs... perhaps after taking a few bites from a sleeping PC before he goes!

## MORCRUFT (LENG GHOUL) CR 10

XP 9,600

Advanced ghoul (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 146)

CE Medium undead

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

### DEFENSE

**AC** 26, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

**hp** 126 (12d8+72)

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4; **Immune** cold, undead traits

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

**Melee** bite +15 (1d8+6 plus disease and paralysis), 2 claws +15 (1d6+6 plus paralysis)

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d6+9), sneak attack +2d6

### TACTICS

**During Combat** Morcruft giggles and capers as he attacks, preferring to lash out at unarmored foes since he dislikes chipping teeth and claws on metal armor.

**Morale** If reduced to fewer than 40 hp, Morcruft shrieks and flees, seeking somewhere to hide. If flight isn't an option, he begs for mercy.

### STATISTICS

**Str** 22, **Dex** 24, **Con** —, **Int** 17, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +15 (+17 trip); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Trip, Toughness, Vital Strike

**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Climb +29, Diplomacy +17, Knowledge (planes) +9, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +20, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +22

**Languages** Aklo, Common

**Story Award:** If the PCs secure an alliance with Morcruft and learn what he knows, award them 25,600 XP.

## E5. THE ABYSIUM CORE

A column of blue-green crystal rises out of the floor to nearly reach the room's ceiling thirty feet above. To the left and right, additional blue-green crystals protrude from the walls, and flickering bolts of lightning arc back and forth from these to the central crystal. The entire room vibrates with a thunderous humming sound.

The crystals in this chamber are refined abysium. In this form, the rare skymetal looks more like a crystalline material, and the radioactive energies emitted are much more potent. These energies are what powers many of the magical effects of the Guiltspur Depths. Any character within area E5, or in E3 within the 60-foot spread from the doors to area E5 once they are opened, must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude save each round to avoid being staggered by the potent radiation and taking 1d4 points of Constitution drain. A successful save indicates the character is only sickened for that round.

Every round creatures are within area E5, there's a 25% chance a bolt of lightning arcs over to strike a random target, dealing 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 15 half).

The abysium reactor can be destroyed by dealing enough damage to the central pillar (hardness 10, hp 3,600, break DC 65–1 per 100 points of damage currently accumulated). Each time the pillar is damaged by any effect, a bolt of electricity arcs back to strike the source of that effect (see above). As long as the pillar is functional, it repairs damage to itself at a rate of 40 hp per hour. Note that canny PCs can



MORCRUFT

use the whole from area **E3** to aid in destroying the pillar. If the whole attacks and misses a character that's adjacent to the pillar, the whole's momentum carries the attack into the pillar, smashing against it. This causes the whole to take 10d6 points of electricity damage (no save), but allows it to make a special Strength check modified by its size modifier to break the pillar—this is a +33 Strength check. The whole gains a cumulative +5 bonus on this check each successive strike it lands against the pillar, but after striking the pillar 5 times it learns from its mistake and no longer attacks foes physically if they're within 5 feet of the pillar.

When the pillar is destroyed, it explodes in a 60-foot radius burst that deals 10d6 points of electricity damage and 10d6 points of sonic damage to all creatures in the area (Reflex DC 20 half).

**Treasure:** Over the centuries the abysium reactor has hummed away, tiny motes of expended abysium have flaked down to gather in small piles on the floor. Even a cursory examination of the powder reveals a section to the northeast of the central pillar where a massive draconic claw seems to have raked through the stuff to gather some up. Abysium powder is a deadly ingested poison in addition to being a useful component to activate the Leng portal. Rules for abysium powder appear on page 70 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* #61. A single dose of abysium is worth 900 gp, and there are effectively 20 doses of the stuff here.

**Development:** If the reactor is destroyed, the effects detailed on page 23 immediately cease. It's now safe to sleep in the Guiltspur Depths, and dimensional travel and *screying* now function normally. The Leng portal's energies fluctuate—if Mesmalatu is slain, the two forces of power that kept the portal stable and mostly closed (Mesmalatu's faith and the reactor's energy) vanish, and the silver mist in area **E3** now transports any creature that enters the mist (with the exception of the whole trapped within) to area **F1**. Mesmalatu immediately notices the reactor's destruction, rises from her torpor, and comes to investigate, attacking any foes she encounters.

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to deactivate the abysium reactor, award them 51,200 XP.

## E6. WHISPERSTONE SANCTUM

This relatively plain room has but one feature—an ovoid, six-foot-long tan stone that floats two feet in the air above a three-foot-high riser. The side of the strange tan stone features a faceted gap, as if some sort of key could nestle within.

The large block of stone is an unusual artifact from Thassilon's era known as a *whisperstone*. *Whisperstones* are infused with potent divination magic, and Thassilonian

wizards often used them to record information and memories, treating them as a sort of telepathic mental library of lore. Each *whisperstone* is keyed to a specific crystal—in order to store information or access it, a user had to insert the crystal into the stone and maintain physical contact with the crystal for the duration of the information transfer. This particular *whisperstone* key is currently located in area **E9**, taken by Mesmalatu after the dragon Cadrilkasta woke her from her torpor by activating the Leng portal. Without the key, a user can still activate the *whisperstone*, but he must succeed at a DC 35 Use Magic Device check to do so.

With the key crystal, a user can access the stored memories within the *whisperstone* (this stone can no longer accept new memories). Using the stone in this manner requires the user to focus his thoughts on a particular topic. If that topic is not one stored in the stone, or if the user doesn't focus his thoughts, the stone merely infuses the user with the knowledge of how to use the stone. If a user concentrates on a topic associated with Guiltspur, Leng, or Thassilon, he must attempt a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana, history, or planes) check—this check can be made untrained. Success indicates that the user finds the information requested, while failure means the user doesn't find the information and must succeed at a DC 12 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Intelligence damage from information overload. You can use this stone to grant the PCs any information you wish them to know about Guiltspur, Leng, and the like, but very little information about the Temple of the Crawling Chaos can be found here apart from how to use the Leng portal in area **E3** to reach it.

Of special note—if the PCs search the *whisperstone* for information about the *Shard of Sloth*, they learn that Mesmalatu relocated the shard to the far side of the Leng portal for safekeeping in the Temple of the Crawling Chaos.

## E7. BINDING CHAMBER (CR 14)

A set of three statues of a woman with no mouth stand in three different alcoves in this room—the central statue is twice as large, while the statues to the left and right hold out coppery platters on which sit golden braziers that emit dark gray smoke. A ten-foot-diameter blue-green metal grill is set into the floor in the center of the room.

The metal grill on the floor radiates strong conjuration magic. A DC 30 Spellcraft check identifies this abysium grill as a magical conjuration circle that increases the save DC of all *planar binding* spells by 2. In addition, the grill itself can be used once per week to target a creature conjured onto the grill with a *binding* spell (CL 20th),



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

provided opals, the necessary material components, are scattered into the shallow hollow below the grill.

The statues are of Lissala—Mesmalatu never bothered defacing them since they weren't part of an actual temple.

**Creature:** Mesmalatu made great use of this chamber many centuries ago before she became a demilich, using the chamber to conjure up all manner of outsiders to torment for secrets and information via the binding effects. Although she hasn't used the room in many years, the last two of her subjects remain in a metamorphosis binding, one each in the fumes that waft up from the censers held by the north and east statues of Lissala.

As soon as a living creature enters the room, both bound outsiders manifest their faces in the fumes rising from the censers. To the north appears the foul, leering face of a nalfeshnee, while to the east appears the androgynous but beautiful face of an astral deva. Both faces immediately start howling for the party's attention, begging for release and attempting to yell over the other.

An *antimagick field* or a *mage's disjunction* can release one of the bound outsiders, but otherwise there's only one way to release them, and this method requires destroying one. By picking up one of the censers below a disembodied visage and dumping the smoldering embers within out, the life of the outsider associated with that censer is snuffed out. Doing so immediately frees the other outsider. Both outsiders know how this works and are quick to impart this information to the PCs.

Of course, there's a catch. Neither outsider is what it appears to be, for they're the final result of one of Mesmalatu's crueler experiments. The minds of the two outsiders have been switched, so that the angel must endure the foulness of the demon's body, while the demon must endure the terrible purity of the angel's body. The astral deva imprisoned in the nalfeshnee's body speaks the truth in a raspy, bellowing pig-demon voice, warning the PCs that a lich swapped their minds between the two bodies, and that the supposed angel is in fact a demon. The demon trapped in the angel's body uses its melodic voice to warn the PCs that the desperate nalfeshnee is trying to trick the PCs into releasing it, and promises to aid the PCs in their quest if they upend the "demon's" censer and kill it.

Since both outsiders currently consist of strongly aligned minds trapped in strongly aligned bodies, any attempt to detect alignments on the two disembodied faces detects good and evil in equal amounts. Both also radiate chaos as well, and this provides a significant clue—if the "angel" is telling the truth, it would be unlikely to radiate chaos at all, since most angels are neutral good (a successful DC 25 Knowledge [planes] check can confirm this). The fact that the "angel" radiates chaos indicates the influence of chaos, such as would result from such a creature housing the mind of a demon.

The fact that the nalfeshnee is more skilled at Bluff could well spell disaster if the PCs merely take both beings at their word.

If the PCs release the "angel" by killing the "demon," the demon-possessed angel appears in the flesh and immediately cackles in glee before attacking the PCs, mocking them for their gullibility and foolishness. The "angel" fights to the death unless the abyssium reactor has been destroyed, in which case it plane shifts to the Abyss to seek a way to restore its former body once reduced to fewer than 60 hit points.

If the PCs release the "demon," it congratulates them on their wisdom and trust, then apologizes for its stomach-churning appearance. The angel bears its condition bravely, and vows to aid the PCs for the remainder of the adventure until it can find a way back home. It refuses to use the unholy aura, demon summoning, or unholy nimbus powers that its new body grants it on principle, but otherwise seeks to aid the PCs as best it can, going so far as to sacrifice itself for them if necessary.

In combat, the abilities of the mind-swapped angel and demon are determined by their bodies, but their actions in combat are governed by their minds. In time, the angel in a demon's body attempts to return to heaven to submit itself to a painful but necessary "cleansing" to restore its true body, whereas the demon in an angel's body seeks to capitalize on its new, seemingly innocent form for its own nefarious purposes.



AEVAENTHIAL

**BERUVEXUS, POSSESSED ASTRAL DEVA**

**CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

**hp 172** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 10*)

**Aevaenthial, Possessed Nalfeshnee (Greed Demon) CR 14**

**XP 38,400**

**hp 203** (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 65)

**Story Award:** If the PCs choose correctly and release the possessed demon and gain its aid, grant them XP as if they had defeated it in combat.

## E8. GUILTSPUR TREASURY

Two stone pillars support the low ceiling of this vault. There are no other furnishings in the chamber, and the room's walls are lined with empty niches. An immense and broken scorpion-shaped statue made of bones lies in the middle of the room.

This room served Guiltspur as a treasury, but after the end of Thassilon, many of the treasures kept here were plundered by Mesmalatu. When she returned from Leng, she slowly started to rebuild the stores here with items of her own creation or discovery. When Cadrilkasta arrived, she couldn't resist the lure of treasure—she smashed down the doors and killed the oversized skull ripper that guarded the room, then loaded the chamber's treasures into her portable hole before moving on. The treasure she looted can now be found in area **F10**.

## E9. GUILTSPUR GRAND HALL (CR 17)

A wide flight of stairs leads up to a large hall. Four black stone pillars support the thirty-foot-high arched ceiling above, while a pale green curtain hangs to the west. Two large faces are carved into the walls to the north and south—the north face grins and the south face scowls. Each face's mouth is agape, allowing access to a small alcove beyond.

This room was once used by Mesmalatu and ambassadors from Shalast who came to hold audiences with visitors from Leng. Today, though, it serves as the demilich's tomb.

Although only two of the unusual mouth-shaped alcove archways are visible when the PCs first enter the room, a third one gapes far to the west behind the throne itself. This third visage's expression is one of abject fear. Upon close inspection, a shimmering but mostly transparent field of energy ripples in each of the mouths—the mouths also radiate strong conjuration magic. A successful DC 28 Spellcraft check reveals that these mouths are portals, and that anyone stepping into one of the mouths would normally be transported to some unknown location. If the Spellcraft check exceeds its DC by 10 or more, though, the observer also notes that the energy field seems unstable, as if the teleportation effect were malfunctioning. (A character who observed and experienced first-hand the problems with the damaged teleporter in the previous

adventure under Windsong Abbey automatically notes this if her DC 28 Spellcraft check succeeds). The teleporters once led to other areas in Guiltspur, but now merely cause excruciating pain to anyone who steps through them, dealing 10d6 points of damage (Fortitude DC 15 half).

**Creature:** Mesmalatu's days of research are long behind her now. As an awakened demilich, she spends the majority of her time in a physical torpor, her mind spiraling through philosophical landscapes and boundless mental explorations of the further realms of probability. While in this state of torpor, she appears as nothing more than a gem-studded skull siting atop a pile of dust on the seat of the throne beyond the emerald curtain.

The awakened demilich rises from this torpor to attack if any of the treasures in the room are touched or if her remains are disturbed. Mesmalatu also rises from her torpor if the abysium reactor in area **E5** is destroyed or the portal to Leng in area **E3** is activated—in such cases, she moves to those locations to investigate. If she finds no intruders to attack, she returns to her throne here and falls back into her torpor.

**MESMALATU**

**CR 17**

**XP 102,400**

Female awakened demilich cleric of Nyarlathotep 13

(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 66)

NE Tiny undead

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +19

### DEFENSE

**AC** 25, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +5 profane, +2 size)

**hp** 153 (13d8+91)

**Fort** +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +19

**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +5, rejuvenation, unholy grace; **DR** 20/—; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, magic, polymorph, undead traits; **Resist** electricity 20

**Weaknesses** priestly shame, torpor, vorpal susceptibility

### OFFENSE

**Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)

**Space** 2.5 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 8/day (DC 21, 7d6), devour soul (DC 21), hand of the acolyte (9/day), telekinetic storm (DC 21)

**Demilich Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +25)

Constant—*true seeing*

At will—*greater bestow curse* (DC 21), *telekinesis* (DC 20), *wail of the banshee* (DC 24) (20-ft.-radius spread centered on the demilich)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

9/day—*lightning arc* (1d6+6 electricity)

2/day—*dispelling touch*

**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 13th; concentration +19)

7th—*blasphemy* (DC 23), still *chain lightning*<sup>D</sup> (DC 22)

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

6th—still *control winds*<sup>D</sup> (DC 21), still *flame strike* (2, DC 21), quickened still *inflict light wounds*  
 5th—*greater command* (3, DC 21), still *imbue with spell ability*<sup>D</sup>, still *spell immunity*  
 4th—still *dispel magic* (2), still *dispel magic*<sup>D</sup>, still *contagion*, still *inflict serious wounds* (2)  
 3rd—*blindness/deafness* (3, DC 19), still *hold person*, still *inflict moderate wounds*, still *wind wall*<sup>D</sup>  
 2nd—still *inflict light wounds* (3), still *obscuring mist*, still *sanctuary*, still *shield of faith*  
 1st—*command* (3, DC 17), *forbid action*<sup>UM</sup> (3, DC 17), *obscuring mist*<sup>D</sup>  
 o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 16), *light*  
**D** Domain spell; **Domains** Air, Magic

## TACTICS

**During Combat** Mesmalatu's first action in combat is to attempt to devour the soul of the most dangerous looking target—if the possessed nalfeshnee from area E6 is with the party, she targets it with this ability in preference to the PCs. On the second round, she uses *wail of the banshee*. On the third round, she casts her most devastating spell. She repeats this pattern, periodically augmenting it with *inflict wounds* spells to heal herself. If she's targeted by *holy smite* or *shatter*, Mesmalatu's next action is to cast *spell immunity* to make herself immune to these spells.

**Morale** Mesmalatu fights until destroyed.

## STATISTICS

**Str** 6, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 21, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 24

**Feats** Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Defensive Combat Training, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Flyby Attack, Quicken Spell, Still Spell, Toughness

**Skills** Fly +31, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (planes) +21, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +19, Sleight of Hand +16, Spellcraft +21

**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Necril, Thassilonian, Undercommon

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Priestly Shame** Even though she abandoned her faith thousands of years ago, Mesmalatu still harbors a hidden reserve of shame. Forcefully presenting any object sacred to Lissala (including anything bearing the image of the *Sihedron*, but not one of the

shards of the *Shattered Star*) as a standard action causes the demilich to become staggered for 1d4 rounds. She can be staggered in this manner no more than once per day.

**Hazard:** The long green curtain that separates the throne and western portion of this chamber from view seems to be made of a flexible but strangely damp cloth. It can be manipulated normally, but if subjected to any amount of force (such as an attempt to pull it down, slash it with a sword, or catch it in the area of effect of a damage-dealing spell), the entire curtain suddenly detaches from the wall and reverts to its actual composition of green slime. The stuff splatters all targets within 5 feet of either side of the curtain—a successful DC 15 Reflex save enables a PC to avoid being splattered with the slime.

## GREEN SLIME

CR 4

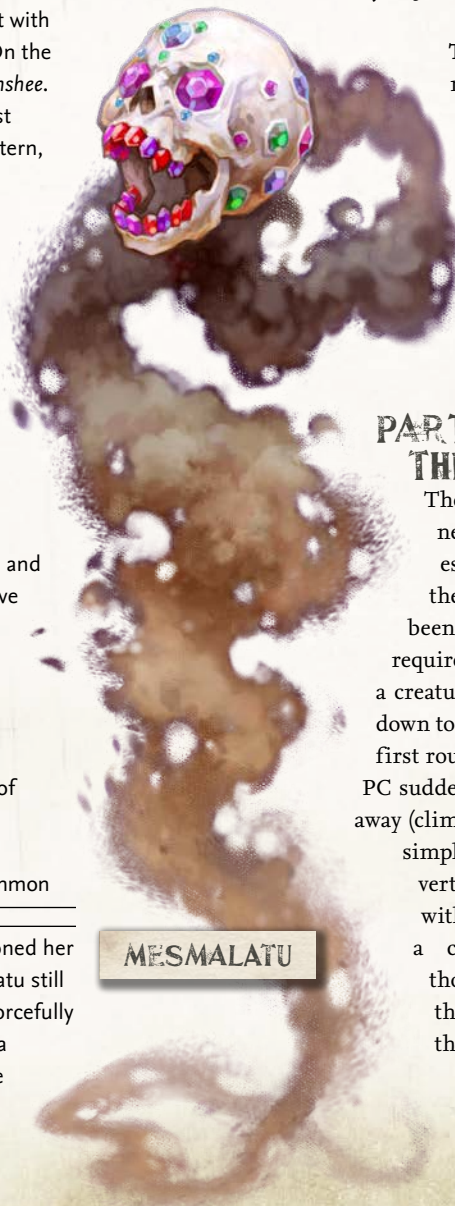
XP 1,200 (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 416)

**Treasure:** Mesmalatu's throne contains more than her remains. A black horned mask sits on the left armrest—this is a *nightgaunt mask*. A deep purple *nightmare rod* leans against the chair back. Last but not least, sitting under Mesmalatu's skull when she's at rest is a large glittering sapphire. This gem is worth 15,000 gp, but also serves as the key to the *whisperstone* in area E6.

## PART THREE: TEMPLE OF THE CRAWLING CHAOS

The Leng portal is a frightening and nerve-racking method of transportation, especially if someone simply leaps into the pit in area E3 once the portal has been activated. A leap into the mist isn't required—simply allowing the mist to envelop a creature is enough, so a PC can climb or fly down to the mist if she wishes. At the end of the first round of being enveloped in the mist, the PC suddenly feels the surrounding reality wash away (climbing creatures feel the wall they're on simply vanish). There are a few moments of vertigo when the PC floats in a silver void without gravity, during which she glimpses a coiling, writhing shape measuring thousands of feet in length through the thin mist—this is the writhing body of the bhole trapped between worlds.

After a few moments of this unpleasant sensation and scene,



MESMALATU

# SHATTERED STAR

the PC feels solidity reform around her. The mists part, and the PC finds herself standing on a 40-foot-diameter platform extending from a ragged mountainside—this is area **F1a**.

## TEMPLE FEATURES

This Temple of the Crawling Chaos is hardly the only one in the realm of Leng, but it is one of the more remote. Karzoug chose this temple as his point of contact for that specific reason—he wisely wanted to limit the number of Leng natives with which he would be dealing, and by choosing a remote site in the far Windswept Range to begin wearing thin the boundaries between Shalast and Leng, he ensured a bit more privacy than had he established a link to the cold wastes themselves.

The temple itself is built into the side of a wind-blasted, icy mountainside. A small ledge provides a sort of stoop for the temple, but no trail leads up from the lowlands below. A long tunnel connects the temple's far side to a higher ledge on the other side of the mountain. The rooms inside are lined with porphyry tiles polished to a near reflective sheen. The doors are made of obsidian, and ceiling heights average at 40 feet in halls and 60 feet or more in rooms, giving the interior of the temple an overwhelming and intimidating sense of scale, as if it had been built for giants.

In fact, the temple itself rarely saw much use, and for most of its time has been relatively abandoned save for small numbers of caretakers and monstrous guardians. The place was viewed by Karzoug's Leng allies as a sort of gathering place before visiting Shalast more than as a temple. The temple is located at an elevation of about 20,000 feet. While Leng is not Golarion, the unfortunate side effects from high altitude zones are in full force—none of the natives of Leng are affected by these conditions, but the PCs must eventually make Fortitude saves to avoid ability damage, as detailed on page 430 of the *Core Rulebook*. In addition, the entire temple complex is below freezing (severe cold) in temperature—see page 442 of the *Core Rulebook* for rules on severe cold.

## F1. TEMPLE ENTRANCE (CR 12)

An ice- and snow-crusting shelf of land over a hundred feet across clings to the side of a mountain cliff. Above and below, dark storm clouds roil and obscure sight of the sky and ground, while to the left and right, the sheer black side of the cliff extends as far as the eye can see. A freezing wind whips through the air, carrying with it a strangely mournful howl. A forty-foot-diameter pagoda-like structure, its domed roof supported by two thick pillars, is attached to the ledge via a short flight of stone steps, leading to a column-lined avenue flanked to each side by three immense stone sphinxes. The avenue leads up to the cliff face, in which wait two immense thirty-foot-tall black stone doors.

The circular pagoda (area **F1a**) is the point at which travelers to Leng appear when they use the Leng Portal. The air between the two pillars maintains a swirling ripple, similar to a vertically aligned but mostly transparent vortex—any creature that steps into this vortex from the west side is immediately transported back to the fountain in area **E3**. The stone pagoda floats in the air, but is as solid as if it were built atop the ground.

The mountainside is sheer—the cliffs extend for over 1 mile up and 2 miles down. A character who steps or falls off the ledge drops several hundred feet and passes into the clouds—visitors to Leng who arrived here via the portal vanish upon entering the clouds only to slam at full falling speed into the fountain in area **E3**, taking 20d6 points of damage.

The obsidian doors that open into the temple are unlocked and swing open silently at a touch.

**Creatures:** A flock of nightgaunts lurk in the nearby crags. While they are forbidden from entering the temple itself, they swiftly react to the arrival of anyone through the portal. Cadrilkasta's recent use of the portal has particularly intrigued the nightgaunts, who have been waiting ever since for new visitors to torment—hopefully, visitors not as large and dangerous-looking as a blue wyrm. The arrival of the PCs is precisely what they've been hoping for.

Upon noticing the PCs, the 16 nightgaunts swoop down to attack, seeking to torment, tickle, and tackle the PCs. The nightgaunts hope to eventually grab up a PC and then drop him over the edge into the clouds below, but once at least half of their number have been slain, the remaining nightgaunts lose interest and fly away, no longer eager to interact with the obviously too-dangerous PCs.

**NIGHTGAUNTS (16)**

**CR 4**

**XP 1,200 each**

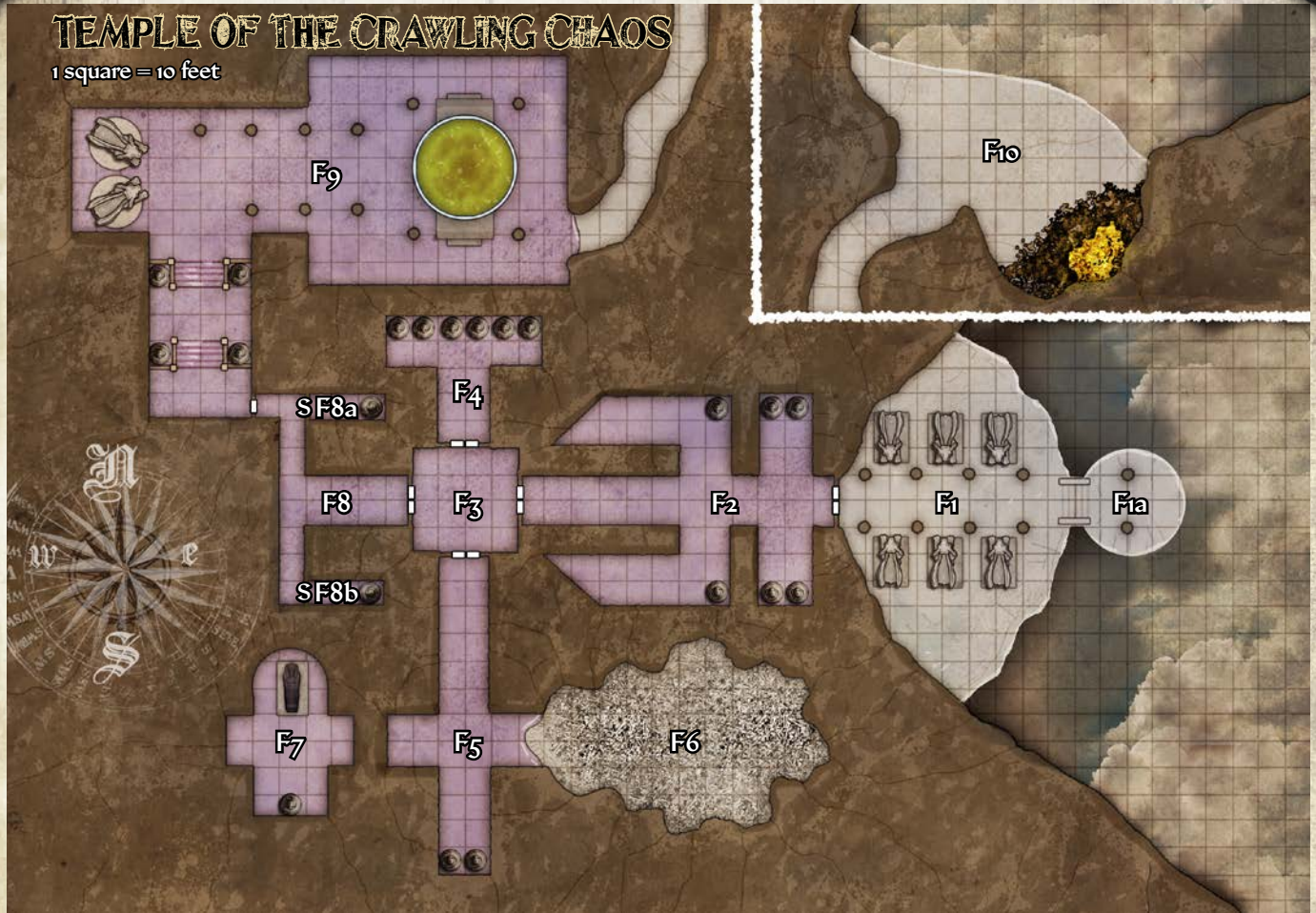
**hp 37 each (see page 90)**

## F2. THE HALLS OF LENG

The walls, floor, and vaulted ceiling of these twenty-foot-wide halls are tiled with reflective slabs of polished purple stone, scarred here and there with cracks and discolorations. Darker, almost black, striations run through these tiles, and when viewed from the corner of the eye, these veins seem to pulse with deeper darkness. Towering statues of regal-appearing men loom at the ends of side passages to either side of the main hall.

The walls of this temple are eerie and unsettling to look at, and feel strangely clammy to the touch, but are otherwise harmless and treated as normal stone. The statues are images of Nyarlathotep in his guise as the Black Pharaoh. These statues seem to shift and move

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT



slightly when one looks away and glances back—again, this is an eerie side effect of the realm of Leng and not something more sinister. The cracked discolorations on the walls are remains from Cadrilkasta’s lightning breath. When she arrived here, she slew several Leng ghouls who once guarded this area—the ghouls have cannibalized those remains but didn’t bother repairing the lightning damage to the walls.

**Creatures:** The guardians of the outer chambers of the temple were once powerful moon-beasts in the service of Nyarlathotep, but today these areas are warded only by a small band of Leng ghouls who agreed to serve as caretakers of the tomb. When the PCs arrive, two of these ghouls stand guard in the shadows near the doors to area F3—if the ghouls notice the PCs first, they squeal in shock and quickly move into area F3. If the PCs confront them and destroy them before they can do so, reduce the number of ghouls encountered in area F3 by 2.

**LENG GHOULS (2)** CR 10  
XP 9,600 each  
hp 126 each (see page 45)

## F3. CHARNEL BANQUET (CR 16)

This forty-foot square room may have once been a fine entry hall, but today it is strewn with heaps of half-gnawed dismembered corpses from humans, animals, and things strangely in-between. Only the freezing temperature keeps the smell of this charnel chamber from being overwhelmingly foul. Large black stone double doors stand in the center of the room’s four walls, with those to the north hanging ajar.

**Creatures:** The remaining eight Leng ghouls guardians of the temple’s outer halls dwell here—the body parts strewn about the room are the scattered remains of these messy eaters’ last meal. The number of body parts on the ground makes the room difficult terrain, although not for the ghouls, who take a perverse glee in moving gracefully through the frozen carrion.

Although evil, these ghouls don’t immediately stop to attack the PCs when they enter. Instead, the ghouls crouch and cower and hiss and growl. One of the ghouls stands up and addresses the PCs, demanding they take their still-too-warm bodies back the way they came if they don’t

# SHATTERED STAR

want to become dinner. A successful DC 20 Sense motive is enough for the PCs to get the feeling that this is mostly bluster, and that the ghouls aren't all that interested in fighting. If the PCs attack, the ghouls flee south to area F6, where they cajole the gugs there to help them fight the PCs, but otherwise they fight until destroyed.

If the PCs are accompanied by Morcruft, their ghoul companion goes a long way toward calming the other ghouls down by explaining how the PCs helped him return to Leng. If Morcruft is not with the PCs, they need to convince the ghouls of their sincerity by making a successful DC 35 Diplomacy check to put them feel at ease enough to talk. Providing the ghouls with a large fresh carcass to eat (such as that of a moon-beast or no fewer than four nightgaunts) grants a +10 bonus on this Diplomacy check.

If the PCs befriend the ghouls, they'll allow the PCs to delve deeper into the temple without opposition. The ghouls can explain the purpose of the automatic abattoir in area F4, and can warn them of the gugs in area F6. Of the dragon Cadrilkasta the ghouls know little, save that she killed a dozen of them before the survivors fled and let her continue her rampage through the complex. The dragon paused long enough before her attack to demand the location of a "Shard of Sloth," but when the ghouls couldn't answer (they do not know the shard has rested within area F9 for the last 10,000 years or so), she attacked and they fled or died. They know the dragon is still somewhere deeper in the temple, and that the moon-beasts who now toil in the Grand Temple are preparing a weapon to use against the dragon, but beyond this they cannot help the PCs.

Morcruft takes his leave of the PCs at this point, and neither he nor the other ghouls are interested in accompanying the PCs further—although they do note that, if they should happen to kill anything or die themselves, it would be ever so appreciated if the survivors could take it upon themselves to return the delicious remains of such a mortal failure back here for supper.

## LENG GHOULS (8)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 126 each (see page 45)

**Story Award:** If the PCs manage to avoid fighting the ghouls and learn what the creatures know, award them XP as if they'd defeated the ghouls in combat (76,800 XP for all eight ghouls).

## F4. AUTOMATIC ABATTOIR

This awful chamber contains hundreds of hooks hanging from chains dangling from the ceiling. Many of these chains contain

the partially butchered bodies of dead humans, animals, and monsters. A bank of ten-foot-tall upright sarcophagi stand along the north wall. Carved into the front of each is a highly detailed image of a human being eaten from all sides by ghoulish figures.

After Thassilon fell and Mesmalatu returned to Guiltspur, the guardianship of the temple's outer halls grew half-hearted. Rather than stay here themselves, the moon-beasts who formerly tended the temple conscripted a tribe of Leng ghouls to stand guard. As part of the deal, they outfitted this chamber with six eldritch sarcophagi that would reach out across Leng and even into the Dimension of Dreams or the Material Plane and pluck bodies of the recently slain from across these worlds, placing them inside the sarcophagi at the rate of one body per day. In so doing, the moon-beasts earned the loyalty of the ghouls, who knew a good deal when they saw it.

Today, five of the six sarcophagi here are empty, but one random sarcophagus contains a fresh body harvested from somewhere else. Feel free to have a little fun with your players here if you want—the body could be someone they recently slew, for example, or could be a body from an entirely different campaign. It could even be a body from a distant planet called Earth.

## F5. CROSSROADS

The hallway branches here into a crossroads. To the south the hall ends at a pair of vaguely humanoid statues standing next to each other and holding a purple sphere of crystal between them, while to the west the hall ends at a wall bearing a spiral of glowing runes. To the north the hall extends back into the dark, while to the east the hall falls away into an immense cavern.

The dead end to the west bears a permanent phase door that allows access to area F7. The spiral of runes is written in Aklo and contain a long invocation to Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos—anyone who reads them aloud activates the phase door and can use it to enter area F7, but unless the speaker is a worshiper of Nyarlathotep, speaking the blasphemous phrases aloud forces the character to attempt a DC 15 Will save to avoid being confused for 1d6 rounds.

**Treasure:** The statues to the south hold a *crystal ball of the dark void* between them, which the ghouls can use to contact and communicate with the moon-beasts who left them here as guards. The ghouls never had to use the *crystal ball* until recently, when Cadrilkasta tore through the temple. The surviving ghouls used it to report to the moon-beasts, who swiftly traveled to the temple from their lair in Sarkomand via the statue at area F8a.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

## F6. BONE PIT (CR 15)

The floor of this huge cavern is adrift in dunes of bones. Skulls, femurs, rib cages, and countless more from countless dead stretch from wall to wall, while from stalactites above hang thick cords of sinew on which dangle complex and disturbingly artistic bone chimes.

When the ghouls finish with their meals, the bones are brought here for disposal—over the ages, they’ve resulted in the massive heaps seen here. These bones (which are stacked 10 feet deep) count as difficult terrain.

**Creatures:** The occupants of this massive chamber are a small group of gugs captured in the dark tunnels under Leng and transported here by the temple’s old masters ages ago. The gugs are long-lived, and their inbreeding over the ages has bred into them increased vigor. Only four of them dwell here now, but one of those four has developed into a powerful gug savant. As with most gugs, all four are strangely afraid of Leng ghouls, and follow their commands without question. The ghouls periodically ensure the gugs have food, and have recently thrown them the remains of their kin slain by the dragon—food the savant is eager to eat in order to show his bravery to the others. The bone chimes that hang from the ceiling are the gugs’ creations—an eerie insight into the monsters’ hidden artistic natures. This nature is nowhere in evidence as soon as they see the PCs—they attack on sight and fight to the death, pursuing them throughout the temple unless confronted by a ghoul, in which case they immediately cower and flee. Canny PCs who learn of this unusual fear can, perhaps, capitalize on it if they can trick the gugs into thinking they’re Leng ghouls themselves, but unfortunately gugs are quite perceptive.

### GUG SAVANT CR 15

XP 51,200

Advanced gug savant (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151, 292)

CE Large aberration

Init +7; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +28

#### DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +16 natural, –1 size)

hp 230 (20d8+140)

Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +19

Immune poison, disease

#### OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee bite +24 (1d8+10), 4 claws +24 (1d6+10)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** rend (2 claws, 1d6+15)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 10th; concentration +16)

1/day—invisibility, spike stones (DC 20), transmute rock to mud (DC 21), unholy blight (DC 20)

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** The gug savant hangs back, using its spell-like abilities on the PCs for a few rounds while its kin engage in melee before it lumbers up to attack as well.

**Morale** The gug savant fights to the death.

#### STATISTICS

Str 30, Dex 16, Con 22, Int 15, Wis 20, Cha 22

Base Atk +15; CMB +26 (+28 bull rush); CMD 40 (42 vs. bull rush)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Dodge, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Mobility, Power Attack, Toughness



GUG SAVANT

# SHATTERED STAR

**Skills** Climb +41, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +30, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +25, Perception +28, Stealth +22, Survival +28  
**Languages** Undercommon

## ADVANCED GUGS (4)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

hp 157 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 151, 292)

## F7. MESMALATU'S PHYLACTERY (CR 15)

This chamber has no obvious exits. The wall to one side features a spiraling pattern of runes, with a statue of a regal-looking pharaoh to the right and a twenty-foot-long basalt sarcophagus to the left in a curved alcove. Numerous empty shelves line the walls, while the ceiling overhead is obscured by a thick tangle of cobwebs.

The spiral of runes is another permanent phase door that functions identically to the door at area F5.

This chamber is where Mesmalatu made her transformation into a lich. The enormous sarcophagus radiates faint necromancy—a successful DC 30 Spellcraft check made while examining it reveals that the thing is a single-use magical creation intended to aid a specific individual's transformation into a lich, and that it was originally infused with potent necromantic energies but was already used long ago. Mesmalatu underwent a lengthy ritual to achieve lichdom using this sarcophagus. The ritual ended with her teleportation into the hollow within the sarcophagus, which she then filled with necromantically infused incense smoke so that her body, soon to be dead of dehydration, could steep in the vapors for a year and a day.

**Creatures:** A particularly powerful Leng spider captured long ago by Mesmalatu has been placed in stasis in this crypt as a guardian. Although her phylactery is no longer stored here (in fact, she lost this item long ago after she became a demilich), the Leng spider remains in stasis among the webs above. It emerges from stasis as soon as any other living creature enters the chamber and immediately moves to attack. It doesn't know that Mesmalatu has forgotten about it, and hopes she's nearby and will keep her promise of releasing it once it kills the next group of intruders.

## ADVANCED LENG SPIDER

CR 15

XP 51,200

hp 232 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 176, 292)

**Treasure:** The spacious coffin-sized hollow within the sarcophagus contains a few items of value—old bits of jewelry and magical leftovers from Mesmalatu's transformation that she had little interest in keeping as

a lich. The sarcophagus must be smashed open to get to these items (hardness 8, hp 900, break DC 65) if no one wants to risk teleporting into its interior.

Within the hollow lies a gold bejeweled brazier worth 5,000 gp, an *iridescent spindle ioun stone*, a *belt of mighty constitution* +6, and a fine Thassilonian funeral robe made of solidified shadows that shifts and flickers (this is a minor magical effect) worth 7,500 gp.

## F8. BACK DOORS

The two secret doors here can be found with a successful DC 40 Perception check. Behind each door lies a short hallway ending at a statue of the Black Pharaoh with his hands at his side, palms out. A native of Leng who touches both of the statue's palms is instantaneously whisked away to another temple devoted to the Crawling Chaos—the statue in area F8a leads to a temple in the Leng city of Sarkomand, while the statue in area F8b leads instead to a temple on the moon looming high over Leng. A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Spellcraft check while examining either statue's strong conjuration aura identifies the use for the statues and the fact that only natives of Leng can safely use them—any other creature that attempts to travel via these statues receives a brief mental image of the destination before being blown backward from the statue by a powerful blast of wind (treat as a tornado-force wind [*Pathfinder Core Rulebook* 439] that affects only that creature).

## F9. THE GREAT TEMPLE TO THE CRAWLING CHAOS (CR 17)

This vast temple rises to a looming height of just over a hundred feet above. The ceiling is supported by pillars of purple porphyry that match the polished sheen of the chambers' floor, walls, and ceiling. To the south, a flight of stairs descends into the cathedral, while a pair of enormous basalt statues of faceless sphinxes squat to the west. An immense stone bowl, its mouth forty feet across, sits on a huge stone altar to the east, beyond which a twenty-foot-wide rent in the east wall provides access to a natural tunnel leading deeper into the mountain. The mangled and burnt corpses of a half-dozen pallid froglike monsters with faces made of tentacles lie haphazardly about the chamber

This huge temple hasn't been used for the worship of Nyarlathotep in over 10,000 years. For much of that time, it instead served as the vault for the *Shard of Sloth*, left by Mesmalatu in the care of a group of undead moon-beasts. Those undead monsters still guarded the shard when Cadrilkasta arrived not long ago—the dragon made short work of the creatures and claimed the *Shard of Sloth* for her own, only to immediately succumb to its curse. Mistaking the lethargy brought on by the shard for



# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT

exhaustion, the dragon retreated up the tunnel to area **F10** and decided to rest for a bit, and has remained there ever since.

The immense bowl was used at one point in the ancient past to hold the vast sacrifices Nyarlathotep often demanded, but today it is being used for something even more sinister.

**Creatures:** After Cadrilkasta's attack on the temple, the Leng ghouls contacted their moon-beast masters to report it. These monsters quickly came to the temple to investigate, but when they first attempted to confront the torpid dragon, she slew three of them with ease, forcing the others to retreat and regroup. Their current plan simmers and bubbles hideously in the enormous sacrificial bowl. The moon-beasts are performing a blasphemous ritual to draw upon the dreaming nightmares of countless insane minds who have been touched by Leng over the years, focusing those nightmares on the dead cleric in the bowl and infusing it with horror. The ritual nears its completion—bubbling in the bowl is an almost completely formed shoggoth, a formless night-black monstrosity born of myriad lunatic nightmares.

The moon-beasts have been taking shifts so they can constantly maintain the complex ritual to grow the shoggoth to full size, and they are only 7 days away from success at the time the PCs first enter this room. Of the four moon-beasts, one of them carries on the ritual while the others watch and rest and guard—the arrival of the PCs gives them a rare opportunity to speed the ritual to its conclusion. If the moon-beasts can get the PCs close enough to the still-immobile but otherwise fully functional shoggoth, it can lash out from the bowl and engulf them, drawing enough life energy from their bodies to hasten the end of the ritual. If the moon-beasts can't magically compel or otherwise grab the PCs and pull them within range of the shoggoth's location, they'll do their best to render the PCs unconscious and simply carry the bodies over to feed it. The moon-beast currently performing the ritual can afford to pause long enough to join in the battle as well.

The shoggoth cannot move from within the confines of the bowl or use its maddening cacophony attack until the ritual is finished. The rim of the bowl is 25 feet off

the ground, which means that the shoggoth can reach any creature standing on the ground in a square adjacent to the bowl's rim. Each living creature the shoggoth manages to kill and engulf shortens the length of its remaining 7 days by 3 days—if it kills and engulfs three creatures (who must have at least 11 Hit Dice—PCs and moon-beasts alike count!), it can slither up and out of its bowl. If no one remains to lure the shoggoth up to area **F10**, the creature begins exploring the temple at random, eventually confronting Cadrilkasta as the moon-beasts themselves originally hoped.

Note that while the shoggoth in this encounter is normally a CR 19 foe, the fact that it is immobile and cannot use all of its special attacks means that the CR of the encounter CR itself is only 17 in total, even including the moon-beasts.



CADRILKASTA

**ADVANCED MOON-BEASTS (4)** CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 161 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 195)

**SHOGGOTH** CR 19

XP 204,800

hp 333 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 249)

**Development:** If the PCs kill all of the moon-beasts, the ritual to finish conjuring the shoggoth is disrupted. The shoggoth begins to waste away, taking 1 negative level per round, and finally melting away once these negative levels equal its total Hit Dice. A successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or religion) check made while studying the strong conjuration aura emitted by the bowl and its almost-conjured shoggoth reveals what the moon-beasts were up to, and while it doesn't impart to the PCs knowledge of how to complete the ritual traditionally, they do know that sacrificing enough creatures with 10 HD or more will finish the summoning, perhaps allowing unscrupulous or foolhardy PCs a particularly devastating tool to use against the dragon. If they still survive, the Leng ghouls can provide the PCs a somewhat guilt-free option for fueling the ritual.

**Story Award:** If the PCs prevent the shoggoth from being freed by killing the moon-beasts and then kill the creature (either by attacking it or just letting it accumulate enough negative levels), award them an additional 25,600 XP. If instead they finish the ritual themselves and lure the shoggoth onward to attack Cadrilkasta (or simply kill

# SHATTERED STAR

the shoggoth after it gets loose), award them experience as if they had defeated the shoggoth in battle.

## F10. THE CURSED DRAGON (CR 19)

A twenty-foot-wide cavern opens onto a high mountain ledge here. The air is unnaturally still and cool, and a mound of rubble into which an immense nest of sorts has been built sits against the cliff side to the south. But the view to the north is far more overwhelming, for here, a ragged black mountain range extends to the horizon. In the distance, brooding upon the range's highest peak, is an unsettling and impossibly tall castle, its towers rising up as if a hand were reaching skyward toward the gibbous moon.

The castle in the distance is Kadath, the crown of Leng and one of the Crawling Chaos's many lairs. As detailed in the gazetteer of Leng starting on page 64, gazing for too long upon Kadath can have dangerous effects on mortal minds. The mountain ledge drops away into a vast emptiness filled with clouds—a character who flies down (or falls) into these clouds returns to area E3, as detailed in area F1.

**Creature:** The blue wyrm Cadrilkasta has been slumbering here for weeks, her draconic metabolism not yet having driven her to action to fight against the *Shard of Sloth's* curse. As a result, she's acclimated to the high altitude—she also protects herself from the cold with *endure elements*. In time, she'll rouse herself and make her way back to Guiltspur, but without the PCs' interference, that day is still weeks, perhaps months, in the future. When she notices the PCs, she raises a sleepy head off the ground to regard them as she clutches the *Shard of Sloth* possessively in one talon (she won't make attacks with this claw once combat begins). Unless the PCs attack her on sight, the dragon rumbles an arrogant but somewhat listless greeting to them.

"And you would be those I have dreamed about. I can smell the other shards on you. Thank you for bringing them to me, apes. Leave them here with me, and I will not contest your immediate and silent departure."

Cadrilkasta is willing to entertain other forms of discussion and conversation for a short time as well—you can use this opportunity to answer questions that curious players may have about the events that occurred behind the scenes of this adventure. Eventually, though, the dragon grows impatient with the delay and lashes out with a breath weapon—allow PCs in a discussion with her to make Sense Motive checks against her Bluff to determine if this occurs during a surprise round or not.

Of course, if the PCs lure a released shoggoth up to this ledge to attack the dragon, there's not going to be time for

discussion—the shoggoth's maddening cacophony attack prevents it from surprising the dragon, for its cries of "Tekeli-li!" as it hurtles up the tunnel are impossible for even a cursed dragon to ignore.

### CADRILKASTA

CR 19

XP 204,800

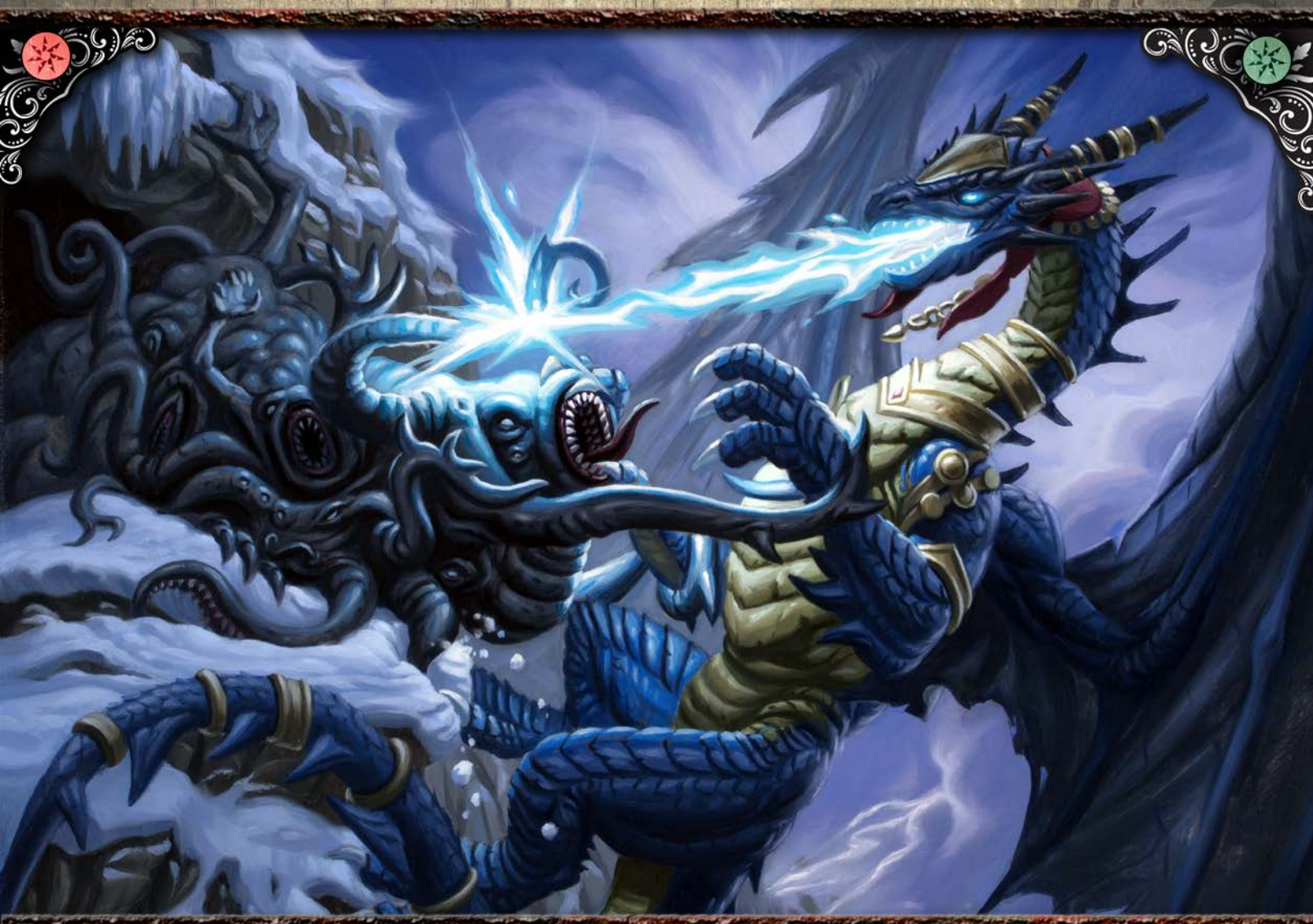
hp 351 (see page 58)

**Treasure:** Beyond the significant amount of valuables that Cadrilkasta wears in the form of jewelry and magic (this treasure is listed in her stat block), the dragon has much of treasure she looted on her way through Guiltspur (mostly taken from Mesmalatu's treasury in area E8) to establish a hoard here in her temporary lair. A fair amount of this treasure consists of loose coins and art objects—gathering it all up and sifting it out from the rubble and snow in the dragon's nest takes at least an hour, although using *detect magic* can significantly speed up the process of gathering the magic items. Cadrilkasta transported most of the treasure here via a *portable hole*, but spread the wealth out when she established her lair here.

There's a total of 120,300 cp, 65,750 sp, 22,075 gp, and 1,937 pp scattered around Cadrilkasta's nest. In addition, the collection of treasures includes a masterwork longsword with a filigreed platinum handle worth 557 gp, four large darkwood and mother-of-pearl keys shaped like demons that do not open any lock in this adventure but are each worth 500 gp, a shrew statuette wearing a pointed cap carved from smoky quartz worth 75 gp, a magnificent mithral tray depicting a murder of crows around a dead tree featuring tiny little flakes of jet for the crows' eyes and worth 2,500 gp, a Small +2 *flaming spear*, a huge jug containing sand and 50 pearls worth 100 gp each, a *lens of detection* in a silk pouch embroidered with an image of a snake eating a hound (the pouch itself is worth 50 gp), a huge gilt-edged tureen depicting a dragon turtle and set with a trio of diamonds (worth 5,300 gp in total), an *eversmoking bottle* carved to resemble a fat man with an open upturned mouth, a leather case containing a *manual of gainful exercise +3*, a poorly taxidermied gnome with a frozen *elixir of firebreath* in his mouth, the fully articulated skeleton of a dog-man (the wire used to articulate the skeleton is silver and worth a total of 250 gp), a glass jar containing a two-headed owlbear fetus that clutches a *stone of good luck* in one beak and a *stone of weight* in the other, and a complicated adamantine puzzlebox scroll tube worth 4,000 gp and containing a *scroll of miracle* (opening the scroll tube requires a successful DC 35 Disable Device check).

**Story Award:** Recovering the *Shard of Sloth* and activating it with an *incandescent blue sphere ioun stone* (such as the one found in area C5) earns the PCs 38,400 XP.

# INTO THE NIGHTMARE RIFT



## CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

With the defeat of Cadrilkasta and the recovery of the *Shard of Sloth*, the PCs' quest for the *Shattered Star* essentially comes to a close. The Adventure Path assumes the PCs face no more significant threats before they return to Magnimar with their prize (although should the PCs wish to explore Leng further, there is certainly no shortage of high-level adventure to be had there!). As with the end of the previous adventures in this campaign, once the PCs return to Magnimar and document their experiences, the Fame scores of PCs who are members of the Pathfinder Society increase by 16, and they earn 16 Prestige Points for their accomplishments.

While the recovery of the seven shards is certainly an accomplishment worthy of legend, actually rebuilding the *Sihedron* itself is an even greater task. Once the PCs return to Magnimar, Sheila Heidmarch informs them that many famous individuals have come to or are en route to Magnimar not only to witness the rebuilding of

the *Sihedron*, but also to meet the adventurers who braved five Thassilonian ruins to recover the shards. She asks them to take part in the reforging ritual, pointing out that this is an opportunity for them to revel in their glory and enjoy their fame—leaving unsaid but implied the increased prestige that this accomplishment will bring the Pathfinder Society.

Unfortunately, the ritual is fated to have one significant and unintended consequence: the contingent activation of powerful ancient magic that has slumbered at the bottom of the ocean for a hundred centuries. The ancient sunken city of Xin rises, unleashing a series of monster-infested tsunamis—a sign of a new danger on the horizon. The quest for the *Shattered Star* was intended to arm Varisia's newest heroes with a potent artifact that could be used to defend the land from future dangers rising from the region's ancient past. That its creation would trigger one such danger is revealed in the final adventure: "The Dead Heart of Xin."

## CADRILKASTA

A native of the Hold of Belkzen, Cadrilkasta has abandoned her homeland and the orcs who have come to fear her for a new venture: an expedition to the Storval Plateau in search of an ancient treasure—the *Shard of Greed*.

## CADRILKASTA

CR 19

XP 204,800

Female wyrm blue dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 94)

LE Gargantuan dragon (earth)

**Init** +2; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., dragon senses; Perception +34**Aura** electricity (10 ft., 2d6 electricity), frightful presence (330 ft., DC 28)

## DEFENSE

**AC** 39, touch 4, flat-footed 39 (–2 Dex, +35 natural, –4 size)**hp** 351 (26d12+182)**Fort** +22, **Ref** +15, **Will** +20; +2 vs. conjuration spells**Defensive Abilities** evasion, *freedom of movement*; **DR** 20/magic; **Immune** electricity, paralysis, sleep; **SR** 30**Weaknesses** curse of sloth

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 20 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 125 ft. (clumsy)**Melee** bite +38 (4d6+16/19–20), claw +38 (2d8+16), tail slap +33 (2d8+19), 2 wings +36 (2d6+9)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (120-ft. line, 22d8 electricity, Reflex DC 30 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (4d6+19, DC 30), desert thirst (DC 28), mirage, storm breath (DC 30), tail sweep (2d6+19, DC 30)**Dragon Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 26th; concentration +35)At will—*create water*, *ghost sound* (DC 15), *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 19), *minor image* (DC 16), *veil* (DC 21), *ventriloquism* (DC 16)**Shard of Sloth Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 26th; concentration +35)  
1/day—*summon monster III***Spells Known** (CL 15th; concentration +25)7th (4)—*greater scrying* (DC 22), *prismatic spray* (DC 22)6th (6)—*chain lightning* (DC 21), *contingency*, *geas/quest*5th (7)—*dominate person* (DC 20), *nightmare* (DC 20), *sending*, *teleport*4th (7)—*charm monster* (DC 19), *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 19), *wall of ice*3rd (7)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *gaseous form*, *slow* (DC 18)2nd (7)—*alter self*, *command undead* (DC 17), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *glitterdust* (DC 17), *scorching ray*1st (8)—*charm person* (DC 16), *endure elements*, *grease* (DC 16), *magic missile*, *reduce person* (DC 16)o (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Cadrilkasta casts *endure elements* every day.

**During Combat** Although Cadrilkasta is a dangerous foe, the curse that afflicts her helps to soften that danger somewhat. She doesn't bother casting many preparatory spells before combat, and for the first few rounds of battle she doesn't bother taking more than a move action, and stays in her nest. She clutches the *Shard of Sloth* tightly in one claw at all times, which prevents her from making a second claw attack even when she does start making full attacks. At the start of combat, Cadrilkasta activates her storm breath ability, calling down a bolt of lightning on the closest foe. She continues calling down bolts each round until she's reduced to fewer than 250 hit points. At this point, she realizes she's up against significant foes. She then leaps into the air and starts taking her full complement of actions (at which point her curse makes her sickened). She prefers not to make full attacks, and instead swoops back and forth while casting spells or breathing lightning on the PCs. She also starts using *Quicken Spell* to cast additional spells each round—*displacement* on the first round, followed by *glitterdust*, *scorching ray*, *magic missile*, *grease*, and *reduce person*. She saves a 7th-level spell slot for *summon monster VII*, three 5th-level spell slots for her *teleport* spells, and at least two 4th-level slots for *charm monster* spells to be used as detailed in her *Morale* section if she flees. Once she's reduced to fewer than 150 hit points, her *contingency* spell activates, turning her invisible. She then casts *teleport* to retreat to area **F3**, where she casts *summon monster VII* to summon 1d3 lillend azatas, then orders them to heal her with *cure serious wounds* and *cure light wounds*. Once they exhaust their healing, she uses her mirage ability to create a duplicate image of herself farther up the tunnel, making it appear that she's come back to cast more spells and breathe more lightning at foes while her lillends move up to attack the PCs as well. As soon as her mirage ends or the PCs confront her in **F3**, she lands in their midst and starts making full attacks (still minus one claw attack).

**Morale** Cadrilkasta tries to escape if reduced to 60 hit points or fewer, taking with her only the

# NPC GALLERY

treasures she carries or wears and leaving the rest behind in area **F10**. She casts *teleport* to return to area **F1**, then flees through the portal back to area **E3** in the Embassy of Leng (she doesn't realize she can do the same by fleeing into the clouds below). The dragon makes her way back through the dungeons—pausing to breathe a bolt of lightning into the pit at area **E3** to wake up and anger the bhole so that pursuing PCs need to deal with it (unless they've already damaged the bhole enough to make it retreat for an extended time). As she works her way back up through the dungeon, Cadrilkasta uses *charm monster* to recruit additional creatures to slow down her pursuers. Once she exits the dungeon (or immediately upon returning to the Material Plane if the abyssium reactor is no longer functioning), she uses *teleport* to escape into an old lair in the Kodar Mountains.

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## STATISTICS

**Str** 37, **Dex** 6, **Con** 25, **Int** 20, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20

**Base Atk** +26; **CMB** +43; **CMD** 51 (55 vs. trip)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

**Skills** Bluff +34, Diplomacy +34, Fly +13, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Knowledge (geography) +34, Knowledge (history) +34, Knowledge (nature) +34, Perception +34, Sense Motive +34, Stealth +15

**Languages** Aquan, Common, Draconic, Giant, Thassilonian, Varisian

**SQ** *contingency*, sound imitation

**Gear** *amulet of mighty fists* +3, *portable hole*, *ring of evasion*, *ring of freedom of movement*, *Shard of Sloth*, *contingency* statuette worth 4,500 gp

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## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Contingency** If Cadrilkasta is reduced to 150 hit points or fewer, *greater invisibility* activates on her.

**Curse of Sloth** Cadrilkasta is under the curse of sloth from the *Shard of Sloth* she carries (*Pathfinder* #61 69).

Cadrilkasta's mother was slain by a party of adventurers not long before Cadrilkasta's egg hatched, but the miscreants failed to locate the dragon's lair. Having hatched with no parents or siblings but inheriting a sizable treasure, Cadrilkasta spent her early years making raids against the orcs to the south and barbarians to the north. By the time she was an adult, she was frustrated by her lack of learning and relocated her lair to the Hungry Mountains. There she spent many decades abducting scholars to force them to broaden her education, particularly with stories of ancient Thassilon. Once she felt she'd learned all she could, she returned to Belkzen to build her legend among the orc tribes—although killing orcs was generally only a method for her to gain access to more Thassilonian ruins to explore and loot.

## CAMPAIGN ROLE

If Cadrilkasta makes it back to her old lair, she hides out long enough to heal, during which time she uses *greater scrying* to spy on the PCs and *nightmare* to show them she will come after them someday. The dragon could track the PCs all the way to Magnimar or even the city of Xin in an attempt to kill them and get back her treasure!



## XAIVANSHEE RASIVREIN

Xaivanshee leads a small group of highly trained specialists far beyond the walls of the drow city of Zirnakaynin in search of an artifact that she needs to complete her personal quest to become a vampire.

## XAIVANSHEE RASIVREIN

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female drow noble cleric of Zura 15 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 115)

CE Medium humanoid (elf)

**Init** +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +17**Aura** *cloak of chaos* (DC 23)

## DEFENSE

**AC** 28, touch 20, flat-footed 22 (+7 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)**hp** 172 (15d8+101); fast healing 10**Fort** +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18; +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. fear and poison**Defensive Abilities** Zura's favor; **Immune** sleep; **SR** 26

## OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +3 *horacalcum rapier* +18/+13/+8 (1d6+3/18–20), +3 *keen mithral rapier* +17 (1d6+3/15–20)**Special Attacks** aura of madness (DC 22, 15 rounds/day), channel negative energy 5/day (DC 19, 8d6), chaos blade (7 rounds, 2/day)**Demonic Obedience Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)  
1/day—*vampiric touch***Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)  
8/day—touch of chaos, vision of madness (+/–7)**Drow Noble Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +17)  
Constant—*detect magic*  
At will—*dancing lights*, *deeper darkness*, *faerie fire*, *feather fall*, *levitate*  
1/day—*dispel magic*, *divine favor*, *suggestion* (DC 15)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +20)  
8th—*cloak of chaos*<sup>D</sup> (DC 23), *rift of ruin*<sup>BOTDz</sup> (DC 23)  
7th—*destruction* (DC 22), *insanity*<sup>D</sup> (DC 22), *mass cure serious wounds* (DC 22)  
6th—*blade barrier* (DC 21), *heal*, *heroes' feast*, *phantasmal killer*<sup>D</sup> (DC 21)  
5th—*breath of life* (2), *dispel law*<sup>D</sup>, *greater command* (2, DC 20), *mass cure light wounds* (DC 20)  
4th—*air walk*, *confusion*<sup>D</sup> (DC 19), *cure critical wounds*, *freedom of movement*, *greater magic weapon* (2)  
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds* (2), *magic circle against law*<sup>D</sup>, *magic vestment*2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *hold person* (DC 17), *resist energy*, *silence* (DC 17), *touch of idiocy*<sup>D</sup>1st—*command* (DC 16), *cure light wounds* (3), *lesser confusion*<sup>D</sup> (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *read magic*, *stabilize*  
**D Domain spell; Domains** Chaos, Madness

## TACTICS

**Before Combat** Xaivanshee uses her *extend metamagic rod* to cast an extended *heroes' feast* for herself and her allies every day. She also casts *magic vestment* on her armor and *greater magic weapon* on both rapiers, then casts *cloak of chaos* on herself (this lasts for 24 hours due to her favor with her deity). If she knows she's about to enter combat, she casts *air walk* and *freedom of movement*.**During Combat** Xaivanshee hangs back in combat, letting her allies occupy foes in melee as long as possible. Her first act in the battle is to cast *rift of ruin* to open a chasm under the feet of any enemies standing on the ground. On the second round, she causes the rift to close by summoning a bebilith through it to fight alongside her. (If you don't have access to *rift of ruin*, replace this spell with *summon monster VIII*.) Xaivanshee uses her ranged attack spells in following rounds. If she sees her allies have become wounded, she moves in to aid them with healing spells. She's well aware that the longer they live, the longer they can protect her. She enters melee combat if she has to, but tries to cast *divine favor* beforehand. She saves *heal* to cast on herself once she's reduced to 50 hit points or fewer.**Morale** Xaivanshee goes to any lengths to remain alive if faced with certain defeat, taking hostages to bargain for escape, fleeing in outright cowardice, offering bribes, or begging for mercy (in that order of preference).

## STATISTICS

**Str** 10, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 31**Feats** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Demonic Obedience<sup>BOTDz</sup>, Dodge, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Diplomacy +13, Knowledge (religion) +12, Linguistics +6, Perception +17**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Elven, Necril, Undercommon  
**SQ** elven magic, poison use, weapon familiarity**Combat Gear** *extend metamagic rod*; **Other Gear** +1 elven chain

# NPC GALLERY

shirt, +1 horacalcum rapier, +1 keen mithral rapier, belt of physical might +4 (Dex, Con), gloves of arrow snaring, instant fortress, slave collar keys (3, each attuned to her hunt mistress's slave collars), spell component pouch, unholy symbol of Zura, fine spidersilk robes worth 2,500 gp

<sup>BOTD2</sup> See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lords of Chaos, Book of the Damned, Vol. 2*

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Demonic Obedience** This feat grants Xaivanshee *vampiric touch* as a spell-like ability and a +4 profane bonus on saving throws against the supernatural abilities of undead. In order to maintain Zura's Favor and the other effects of the feat, every day while she prepares her spells Xaivanshee must drink the blood of a willing creature while allowing that creature to drink some of her own blood.

**Profane Gift (Su)** Xaivanshee has a +2 profane bonus to her Constitution—a profane gift from the succubus Liluresha, who serves the demon lord Zura.

### Zura's Favor (Su)

Xaivanshee currently enjoys the favor of her patron demon lord, Zura. As a result, her *cloak of chaos* spell lasts for 24 hours when cast, and she gains fast healing 10. If she ever loses Zura's favor or fails to perform her Demonic Obedience, she loses these benefits forever, takes 2d6 points of Wisdom drain, and gains 2d4 permanent negative levels.

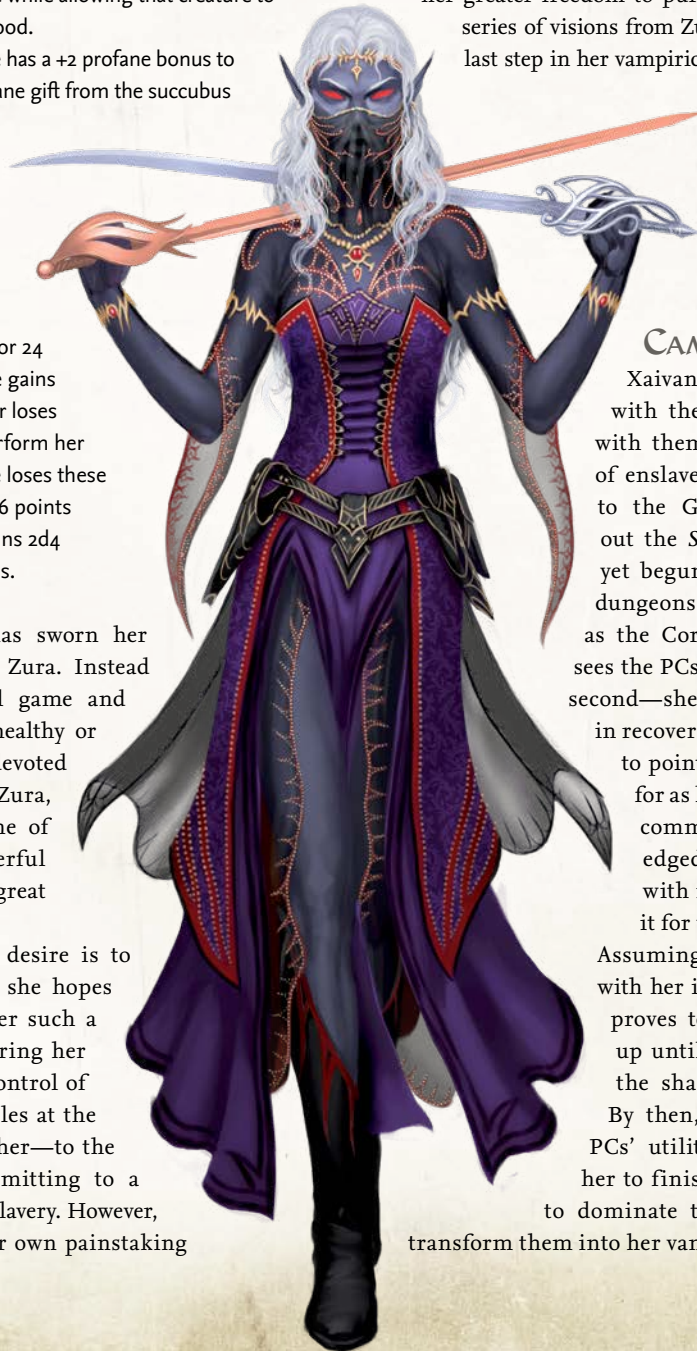
Xaivanshee Rasivrein has sworn her life to the demon lord Zura. Instead of playing the political game and building relationships (healthy or otherwise), Xaivanshee devoted herself completely to Zura, and in time became one of her house's most powerful clerics—a fact she took great pains to keep to herself.

Xaivanshee's greatest desire is to become a vampire, and she hopes that the newfound power such a transformation would bring her will allow her to seize control of her House. Yet she rankles at the thought of serving another—to the domineering drow, submitting to a vampire's bite is akin to slavery. However, with Zura's favor and her own painstaking

research into a vile ritual, Xaivanshee has developed her own method to achieve vampirism.

But as she has worked on her necromantic goals, the city of Zirnakaynin grew increasingly unstable. When one of the city's most powerful groups, House Azrinae, attempted a devastating attack on the surface elves only to be defeated by heroes from the surface world, Zirnakaynin was thrown into chaos. House Rasivrein, like the city's other noble houses, grew increasingly desperate to fill the vacancy in power left by Azrinae's fall. Xaivanshee watched in amusement from the shadows as her kin struggled to increase their house's standing in the growing violence and discord, enjoying the fact that the growing turmoil gave her greater freedom to pursue her own goals. A final series of visions from Zura recently showed her the last step in her vampiric transformation ritual—she

must seek out a specific powerful and ancient necromantic artifact with which to take her own life. She must recover the *Shard of Sloth* and use it to slit her own throat.



## CAMPAIGN ROLE

Xaivanshee can either compete with the PCs or temporarily ally with them. Leading a small group of enslaved half-sisters, she's come to the Guiltspur Depths to seek out the *Shard of Sloth*, but has not yet begun her investigation of the dungeons beyond the region known as the Core. Wise in her ways, she sees the PCs as tools first and enemies second—she wants to recruit their aid in recovering the shard, and is quick to point out that she needs it only for as long as it would take her to commit suicide with the sharp-edged artifact. Once she's done with it, the PCs are free to keep it for themselves.

Assuming the PCs decide to work with her instead of fighting her, she proves to be a trustworthy ally—up until the point when she uses the shard to become a vampire.

By then, she's come to value the PCs' utility, and if the PCs allow her to finish her ritual, she attempts to dominate them all and, eventually, transform them into her vampiric thralls.

## SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

The following unique treasures can be found in “Into the Nightmare Rift.” Player-appropriate handouts appear in the GameMastery Shattered Star item card set.

**CENSER OF DREAMS**

**Aura** moderate abjuration; **CL** 11th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 8,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

Typically crafted of bronze, brass, or copper with an upper section of silver or mithral, a *censer of dreams* protects sleeping minds from the fell influence of magical nightmares. A *censer of dreams* can burn any type of incense as per a normal censer, but can also be commanded to emit lavender-scented fumes that fill a 30-foot-radius spread for up to 8 continuous hours per day, as long as the censer remains immobile. Strong winds disperse this effect, and moving the censer causes the effect to end immediately, but otherwise, any creature that sleeps in this area gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws made against dream- or nightmare-related effects, such as the *nightmare* spell or the effects of the nightmares caused by the abysium reactor in this adventure. A night hag cannot use her dream haunting ability in an area under this effect, and at the GM’s discretion, the effect can block other strange effects that target sleeping or dreaming minds. All creatures who sleep for the full 8 hours in this area awaken particularly refreshed, having had pleasant dreams in which they explored idyllic landscapes and spoke with charming and eccentric creatures. Upon awakening, these subjects heal as if they’d taken complete bed rest for an entire day and night (recovering twice their character level in hit points).

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *dream*; **Cost** 4,000 gp

**CRYSTAL BALL OF THE DARK VOID**

**Aura** moderate divination; **CL** 10th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 60,000 gp; **Weight** 7 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

*Crystal balls of the dark void* look like dark-colored *crystal balls*. Upon inspection, most appear to be filled with roiling clouds of midnight blue smoke, but some seem to contain motes of light that evoke the night sky. This item functions as a standard *crystal ball*, but can be used to cast *sending* once per day targeting any creature observed in the crystal ball.

Once per month, the user can attempt to use a *crystal ball of the dark void* to contact a flying creature from the depths of space called a shantak (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 244). The user must attempt at a DC 25 Spellcraft check. If the attempt to contact a shantak is successful, the monster flies

to the location where the user was when contact was made. It arrives there in 3d20 hours, at which point the user must use Diplomacy or magic to compel the shantak to serve him. Failure to do so (or failure to meet the shantak) causes the angry shantak to remain in the area for 2d6 hours, attacking anything that comes near.

Every time a *crystal ball of the dark void* is used, there’s a 5% chance that the item doesn’t work as intended and instead reveals glimpses of alien horrors from the depths of the Dark Tapestry to the user, who must immediately attempt a DC 20 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom drain.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying, sending*; **Cost** 30,000 gp

**NIGHTGAUNT MASK**

**Aura** moderate divination; **CL** 11th  
**Slot** head; **Price** 30,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lbs.

**DESCRIPTION**

A black, horned *nightgaunt mask* has two eyeholes but no other facial features. When the mask is worn, even the eyeholes vanish, leaving the wearer with no visible face at all. The wearer gains the advantages shared by the faceless nightgaunts on which the mask is based. The entire face of the mask functions as a sort of “eye,” allowing the wearer to see normally. The wearer also gains a +4 bonus on all saving throws against gaze attacks, and does not breathe (and is thus immune to inhaled toxins and scent-based effects). However, the wearer can’t speak, and therefore can’t cast spells or use items that require verbal components or command words.

Once per day, but only after wearing the mask for at least 1 hour, the wearer can summon 1d4+1 nightgaunts to do her bidding, as if by casting *summon monster VI*. These nightgaunts remain for 11 rounds. Alternatively, the wearer can summon a single nightgaunt that remains for 24 hours. She can communicate with and thus give orders to these nightgaunts via telepathy to a range of 100 feet. If the wearer removes the *nightgaunt mask*, any summoned nightgaunts immediately turn on her and attempt to carry her off and drop her from a great height before vanishing.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *alter self, blindness/deafness, summon monster VI*; **Cost** 15,000 gp



# SHATTERED STAR TREASURES

Nightmare Rod



Censer of Dreams



Crystal Ball of the Dark Void

Nightgaunt Mask



Slave Collar

## NIGHTMARE ROD

**Aura** strong illusion; **CL** 13th  
**Slot** none; **Price** 80,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lbs.

### DESCRIPTION

A *nightmare rod* is a wooden rod with a smooth, purple, crystalline octopus clutching one end, its tentacles wrapped around the length of the rod and its bulbous body serving as a sort of mace head. Indeed, a *nightmare rod* can be wielded as a +2 *heavy mace*. On a critical hit, a *nightmare rod* floods the target's mind with horrific visions of nightmarish dooms that stagger the victim for 1 round if it fails a DC 15 Will save. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

In addition, a *nightmare rod* has the following powers.

- Once per day as a free action when the rod hits a living creature, the user can affect the creature struck with a *phantasmal killer* spell (Will/Fort DC 16).
- Once per day, the user can cast *nightmare*. If the recipient is awake when the spell begins, the wielder need not enter a trance (as he would if he had cast the spell)—the *nightmare rod* maintains its own sort of trance on the spell and automatically finishes casting the spell as soon as the recipient falls asleep. If the recipient does not fall asleep within 24 hours, the *nightmare rod* ceases attempting to cast the spell automatically.
- As long as the wielder carries the *nightmare rod* in his hand, he is immune to fear effects.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Rod, *fear*, *nightmare*, *phantasmal killer*, *remove fear*; **Cost** 40,000 gp

## SLAVE COLLAR

**Aura** moderate divination; **CL** 9th  
**Slot** neck; **Price** 25,000 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

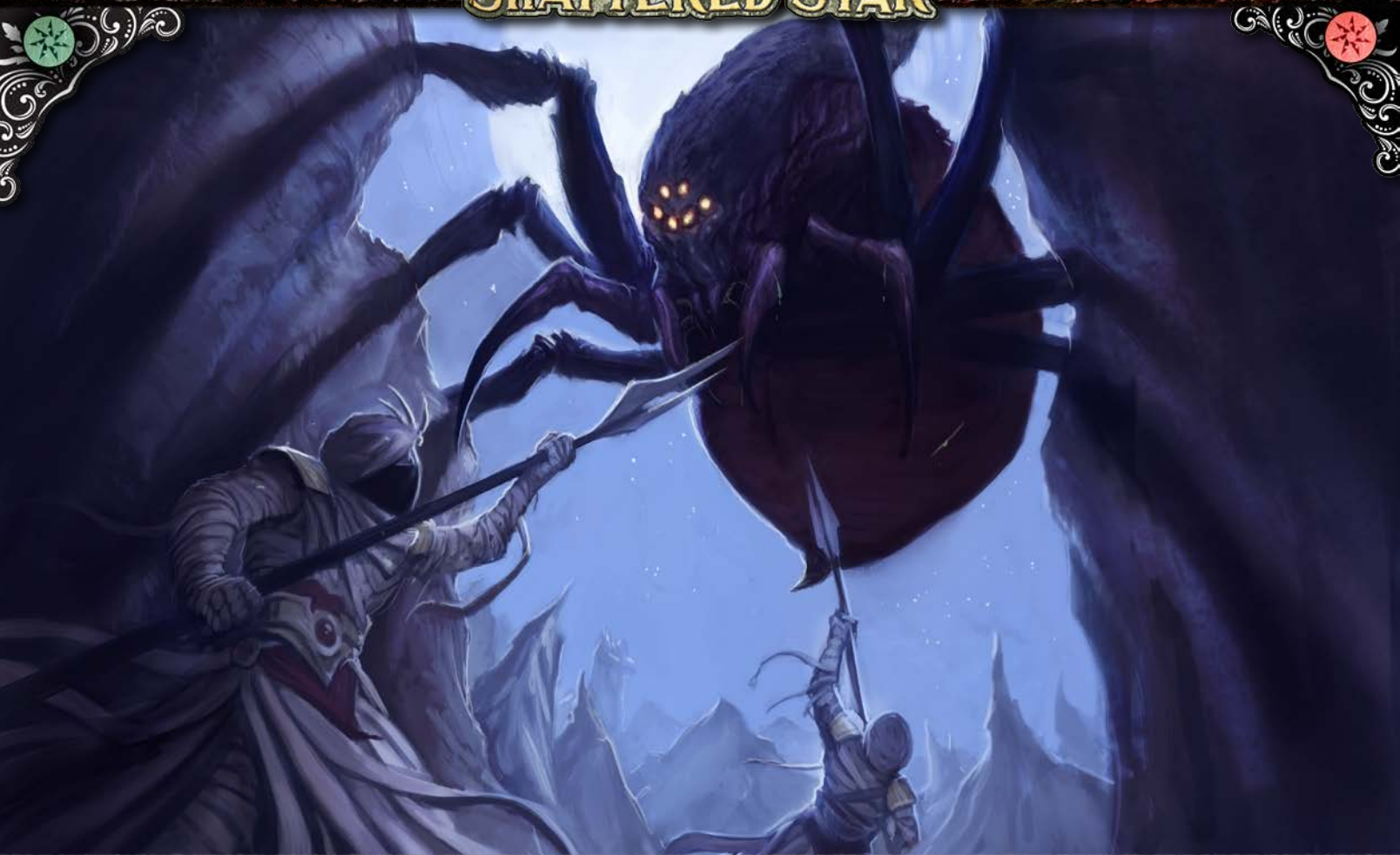
### DESCRIPTION

*Slave collars* are popular items among drow, duergar, and other Darklands societies that require obedience and servitude from slave castes. As these collars are relatively costly, they are typically reserved for use on particularly powerful or desirable slaves. A *slave collar* consists of a simple ring of metal (typically brass or bronze) that latches in place with a lock. Many feature additional adornments like short lengths of chain. Each *slave collar's* lock is attuned to a unique key. The person who carries a collar's key is aware of that collar's wearer as if it were the target of a constant *status* spell. In addition, the key carrier can communicate telepathically with the wearer of the collar as long as the wearer is within 100 feet of her. As long as a *slave collar* is worn, that collar's key carrier automatically penetrates the collar wearer's spell resistance (if any), and the collared creature takes a –5 penalty on all saving throws against the key carrier's spells. A *slave collar's* lock can be picked with a successful DC 40 Disable Device check, or broken open with a successful DC 30 Strength check—either method immediately destroys the *slave collar*. The wearer of a *slave collar* takes a –10 penalty on Disable Device or Strength checks made to disable the *slave collar* it wears.

### CONSTRUCTION

**Requirements** Craft Wondrous Item, *status*, *telepathic bond*; **Cost** 12,500 gp

## SHATTERED STAR



### LENG: THE TERROR BEYOND DREAMS

**T**HE SHANTAK NOW FLEW LOWER, REVEALING BENEATH THE CANOPY OF CLOUD A GREY BARREN PLAIN WHEREON AT GREAT DISTANCES SHONE LITTLE FEEBLE FIRES. AS THEY DESCENDED THERE APPEARED AT INTERVALS LONE HUTS OF GRANITE AND BLEAK STONE VILLAGES WHOSE TINY WINDOWS GLOWED WITH PALLID LIGHT. AND THERE CAME FROM THOSE HUTS AND VILLAGES A SHRILL DRONING OF PIPES AND A NAUSEOUS RATTLE OF CROTALA WHICH PROVED AT ONCE THAT INGANOK'S PEOPLE ARE RIGHT IN THEIR GEOGRAPHIC RUMOURS. FOR TRAVELLERS HAVE HEARD SUCH SOUNDS BEFORE, AND KNOW THAT THEY FLOAT ONLY FROM THE COLD DESERT PLATEAU WHICH HEALTHY FOLK NEVER VISIT; THAT HAUNTED PLACE OF EVIL AND MYSTERY WHICH IS LENG.

—H. P. LOVECRAFT, *THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH*

# LENG: THE TERROR BEYOND DREAMS

The Dimension of Dreams lies somewhere beyond the conventional planes of the Great Beyond, a realm both created and fueled by the collective dreams of sentient beings from across the cosmos. And beyond its distant shore lies Leng. This windswept plateau between the arms of embracing mountain chains descends in an inexorable slope to the Dreaming Shore. Upon the blasted tableland sit scattered villages of stone huts, seemingly the remnant of some immeasurably ancient civilization that once held sway here. Usually long-abandoned, these dark ruins occasionally teem with foul semi-human denizens of Leng going about their own barbaric and unknowable purposes. The few inhabited villages can be recognized from afar at night by the evil fires that burn bright within them, though even villages known to be abandoned often show those same evil flames in the inky darkness of a Leng midnight.

None travel the wastes of Leng lightly, and its cursed villages are universally avoided. The tales that come out of Leng are usually the ravings of dream walkers struck mad by what they saw or the mumbling of vacant-eyed indigents upon the streets of dreaming lands' cities. These luckless souls talk of the cold and crumbling ruins, of horrific creatures that lurk among the stones, and of terrifying hunts ending in violent debauches perpetrated by the degenerate denizens. They speak of gruesome acts and rituals conducted to propitiate a yellow-robed monster known as the High-Priest Not To Be Described, and hint darkly at even worse rituals conducted by that same figure to propitiate who knows what horrors.

Leng exists at a crossroads of sorts, a realm all its own yet accessible from virtually anywhere via the Dimension of Dreams. These dream travelers can spend a lifetime learning the skill to walk lucidly among the streets of dreams or find that they simply have the knack as young, impressionable children, only to lose it as they age and mature beyond the fantasies of youth. Many seek strange drugs and unguents to enable them to achieve this dream-state, and some forfeit their waking lives altogether, choosing to instead inhabit a half-remembered fantasy realm of wonders. Yet when these dream travelers sink into the realm of nightmares or venture too far into the dreaming lands, they can find themselves upon the bleak shores of Leng, looking up into a seemingly endless plateau of ruin, and would be wise to find the means to awaken or seek egress back to safer lands before night falls and the inland fires light.

The geography of Leng is one of extremes. Interminable plains of desolate bleakness rise from a rocky coast of black boulders and cold sea spray, then climb to a cordon of impossibly tall mountain peaks hedging it in on both sides and acting as a funnel, guiding the unwary traveler to an unutterable fate in the valleys where they

## LENG PLANAR TRAITS

Leng exists beyond the Dimension of Dreams where nightmares overlap into a strange reality spawned by no dreamer, except perhaps for the dreams of outer beings of primordial madness. It has the following traits.

### Normal Gravity and Time

**Finite Size:** Leng is bounded by mountains on three sides and by a mysterious coastline on the fourth, giving it a finite size, but its appearance tends to change based on the point of origin of each traveler so estimates of its size can vary widely. In addition, Leng overlaps with various worlds on the Material Plane, and its size and other qualities extend farther in the regions where these convergences occur.

**Divinely Morphic:** Who or what powers can transform this realm to their whims is beyond the knowledge of even the most erudite sages.

### Strongly Chaotic-Aligned, Mildly Evil-Aligned



meet. However, no two sojourners seem to describe the lay of the land quite the same way, as if the topography changes from the perspective of the viewer depending on from whence his journey began. In fact, some of the few Leng scholars speculate that it is a direct extension of countless worlds at once, and therefore has a unique lay of the land related specifically to each of its constituent waking-world connections. It may be that Leng is truly limitless, and that it is the Material Plane that is hedged in by its impossibilities, or that each time a new dreamer falls into a nightmare, those unconscious terrors work to extend Leng's borders just a little more.

The easiest method of approach is by sea, but a daring few who have managed to obtain local guides from some of the dreaming lands have been shown hidden pathways and passes that lead through the mountain wall. In addition, on nights when the mysterious moon sinks low and full over the plateau, black-hulled ships ply the skyways and can provide another means of entry for those with the bravado or ill-luck to try it.

The plateau rises ever upward as it travels away from the coastline, eventually encountering more barren mountain peaks (though not as tall as those that hedge the entire tableland) that must be somehow surmounted for a traveler to continue. And beyond these warding peaks stands the true horror of the demiplane—a mountain of impossible height spanning countless miles, dwarfing those found elsewhere within Leng, and upon whose summit rests the terrible unknown city of Kadath where dark gods are whispered to cavort and devour any who dare intrude upon their solitude.

# SHATTERED STAR

## DENIZENS AND DANGERS

Despite its cold and arid desolation, Leng hosts a surprising number of different creatures.

**Bholes:** These immense burrowing horrors are found only in the underworld deep below, and no reliable report of the appearance or habits of a bhole has ever been received. It is rumored that they are used as part of some great breeding project by powerful inhuman arcanists, but even that is only the barest conjecture. (See page 84.)

**Denizens of Leng:** The eponymous inhabitants of this nightmare land, these creatures have a largely humanoid shape that is kept firmly shrouded beneath voluminous robes, turbans, and veils. They ply the waters of Leng, the Dimension of Dreams, and the waking world alike in black ships, trading strangely flawless rubies for slaves and seemingly random goods of unknown purpose. But even these denizens have masters, and many are actually held in thrall to the hideous moon-beasts and serve them as diplomats, slave labor, and provender. (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 82.)



DENIZEN OF LENG

**Ghouls and Ghosts:** The ghouls and ghosts of Leng are different creatures than the relatively weak undead of the waking world. In Leng, the typical ghoul is a more bestial undead with a canine snout and hooved feet—Leng ghouls are more powerful than their waking world kin (see page 45 for a typical Leng ghoul's stats), and often take levels in alchemist, oracle, witch, or wizard. A Leng ghost is little more than a Leng ghoul with a few more racial Hit Dice and a stench aura, but deep under Leng, these two "races" are often at odds. Leng ghouls are known to sometimes be helpful to visitors in return for gifts of carrion, but the ghosts are more feral and violent.

**Gugs:** The four-armed giants of Leng's underworld maintain a hidden walled city somewhere within its dark reaches. Gugs often war with and feed on Leng's ghosts, but many have an unusual fear of the region's ghouls. A gug can easily destroy a handful of ghosts and guarantee itself a good meal, but for that reason the ghosts tend to travel in packs and attack gugs en masse, so the battles are rarely a sure thing for either side. Even though ghouls are physically weaker than their ghost cousins, gugs bear an irrational fear of them and almost always retreat when confronted by such creatures, regardless of numbers. (See *Bestiary 2* 151.)

**Leng Spiders:** These creatures were once the predominant inhabitants of the Plateau of Leng, until a genocidal war with the denizens of Leng untold ages ago pushed them to the brink of extinction. Now these gigantic arachnids lurk upon the fringes of Leng in shadow-haunted valleys. They are always on the lookout for humanoids who come too close to their lairs, snaring careless wanderers and torturing them in order to momentarily relive the feeling of dominance they once enjoyed. (See *Bestiary 2* 176.)

**Moon-Beasts:** The true masters of the denizens of Leng, the moon-beasts are bloated monstrosities with rolls of pale flesh culminating in faces composed of pink tentacles. They hail from the moon that hangs over Leng, and ply the many waterways of the moon, hidden within black galleys captained by their slave-thralls. The moon-beasts are consummate slavers, seeing all other races as lesser beings awaiting exploitation as laborers or victims bound for other, darker purposes. (See *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 195.)

**Nightgaunts:** Nightgaunts haunt Leng's mountains and Underworld, and have been known to kidnap lone travelers, carrying them upon night flights of great distances to unpredictable destinations. This is often done at the behest of some master, for nightgaunts are somewhat like dogs in their intelligence and can be trained to be intensely loyal. For some reason, shantaks have an intense fear of nightgaunts and flee from their presence. (See page 90.)

# LENG: THE TERROR BEYOND DREAMS



**Scarlet Walkers:** Not all arachnid inhabitants of the Spider Vales are the purple Leng spiders. In some of the more remote valleys, high upon canyon walls, hang immense sacs made from coagulated blood and tissue. These are hives for the scarlet walkers. Unlike Leng spiders, these creatures hold no grudge against the humanoid races, but rather see them as food, for the scarlet walkers subsist on living blood. Equally at ease walking on earth or air, scarlet walkers have been known to make the lengthy trek from Leng to the moon by foot. (See *Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 414.)

**Shantaks:** Shantaks dwell in great numbers upon the Plateau of Leng, principally in the mountainous regions. They can also be found dwelling in the shadows of the Great Quarry, where they hunt unwary travelers. The shantaks of Leng appear to be allied with the dwellers of Kadath and have been known to serve the High-Priest Not To Be Described. (See *Bestiary* 2 244.)

**Other Denizens:** In addition to these primary inhabitants, many other types of creatures also call the nooks and crannies of Leng home. Examples of these include ant lions, basilisks, and cockatrices upon the stony plains; belkers, manticores, and wendigos in the frozen heights; and shining children and winged urhags in the Cold Wastes and shadowed quarries.

## GAZETTEER

Though Leng appears desolate and monotonous, enterprising explorers can find a surprising number of unique features and locations if they know where to look—and can survive long enough to reach them!

**Cold Waste:** Beyond the Watchers in the Waste, where the mountain walls of Leng converge toward Kadath, lies the Cold Waste, a stony desert forever shrouded by night. The sun never rises over the Cold Waste and Kadath beyond, and distances are tricky here, sometimes seeming only a short journey of a day or 2 to the northernmost point at Kadath's foothills and sometimes requiring a journey of many months or even years through the night-dark lands.

**Dreaming Shore:** A gray sea laps here at the edge of Leng, where the plateau descends from its mountain-bound heights, extending beyond the horizon and allowing one to travel directly into the dreaming lands beyond. Here the boldest ship captains from those same dreaming lands—realms with names like Celephais, Inganok, and Lomar—may come to test their luck or taste for adventure, but few return twice. The risks of landing upon Leng's shore are great enough to make such a trip rarely profitable, and the predatory black galleys of the moon-beasts that frequently ply these waters render the shore doubly hazardous.

## VISITING LENG

While Leng can be reached through the Dimension of Dreams, you don't need to physically travel there in order to experience the place, as GMs can provide glimpses into Leng through PCs' dreams. These vignettes allow the players to see the strange horrors that await them without becoming stranded in an alien dimension or preyed upon by the threats therein. These fleeting visions of Leng can also be used to foreshadow a trip to the terrible realm so that PCs have some sense of where they have arrived once they step foot on the cold plateau that is Leng.



**Kadath:** Kadath, the impossible castle-city, is a vast fortified citadel that sits atop the highest mountain at the farthest extremity of Leng. The mountain of black stone itself is dozens of miles high, far taller and steeper than any natural geological formation should be. No known paths lead to its heights, so only flyers or those with formidable magic have any hope of making the ascent. Occupying the entire summit of this colossal massif is a fortress beyond imagining, built entirely of black onyx and seemingly grown from the precipices around it. This city is in itself several miles in height, brooding atop the mountain peak below with countless chambers and many miles of passages ranging in size from the most squalid goblin warren to cyclopean thoroughfares fit for the gods—for that is what resides within. Strange gods of unknown pantheons are said to cavort within Kadath. What they represent and what cultures worship them are great enigmas, though some purport to venerate them in their mystery. Whether their worship is noticed and rewarded is anyone's guess, for no one dares approach this impossible height to bring obeisance directly to these unknown deities. Those that have dared unflinchingly run afoul of their guardian and alleged caretaker—Nyarlathep, the Crawling Chaos, who it is rumored stands as door ward to the will of the primal chaos at the center of the universe. Few who have dared the Crawling Chaos's abominable presence have returned to tell of it.

One interesting note regarding Unknown Kadath is that the few who have braved some portion of its heights and avoided confrontations with elder gods or outer powers report that behind it the Plateau of Leng continues to extend down between hedging mountain walls to a gray coastline in no fewer than two different directions. It seems that Kadath looks down not only upon the dreaming lands of Golarion, but also upon those of other worlds as well. Whether the Plateau of Leng that extends towards these dreaming lands is a sort of mirror of that which is known to Golarion or whether it is entirely different in

its inhabitants and locales remains a great mystery, for these far reaches have only been seen from the vast heights of Kadath's upper slopes, and no one has yet been able to journey down to them to see firsthand.

Those who come too near to Kadath and look upon its shape are often granted visions of the horrors that wait within. The first time a sane mind gains a good view of Unknown Kadath, it must succeed at a DC 15 Will save to avoid taking 1d4 points of Wisdom damage at the ominous sight—fully 25% of those who take Wisdom damage in this way also go insane (the type of insanity developed should be determined randomly from the list on page 250 of the *GameMastery Guide*).

**Lelag-Leng:** This crude village of huts of stone and wood houses a singular and primitive race of short, bald-headed humanoids with narrow eyes and brown, weathered skin. Many consider them to be a degenerate tribe of humans, but something about them seems otherworldly. They are known for the exotic silks they trade with the denizens of Leng and for the powerful sorcerer said to rule over and protect their isolated settlement.

**Mhar's Fossa:** This tunnel of gargantuan proportions opens at the end of a furrow descending from Kadath high above. It marks the route taken by the Great Old One Mhar when he attempted to bore directly into the Material Plane near the Storval Thinning before becoming trapped in a stony gestation. Numerous side passages branch off from this central tunnel, leading to various pocket dimensions and vaults. No one has dared plumb the farthest depths of this excavation for fear that Mhar still restlessly waits somewhere within.

**The Moon:** This ghostly white planetoid hangs placidly over the collective dreaming lands of the Dimension of Dreams—for some a romantic orb of soft silver light, for others a horrifying death's head or a trigger of lycanthropic madness. However, above the Plateau of Leng it gains its most sinister aspect as the destination for the slave-driven black galleys of the moon-beasts. Only by these strange craft or other more fantastical means can the vast gulfs separating this satellite from the lands below be traversed and the true horror of its darkened far side be revealed—cities of cyclopean gray-white stone built upon the shores of an oily sea.

**Nameless Rock:** This bleak rock rises from the sea several miles off the Dreaming Shore and serves as a citadel of the moon-beasts. When a passing ship dares to come close enough, the sides of the tapering rock reveal strangely proportioned architecture like that found in the moon-beasts' city upon the moon. At the summit of the island's lone peak stands a great temple to unnameable gods in which a bottomless pit is said to reach all the way to the underworld. The entire island swarms with moon-beasts and their slaves.

# LENG: THE TERROR BEYOND DREAMS

**Onyx Quarry:** Cut into the base of the mountains that encircle Leng, this vast quarried pit is 5 miles wide, 10 miles long, and over 2 miles deep. It is said that the onyx stones from which the great citadel of Unknown Kadath was constructed were quarried here. Numerous smaller quarries surround this great quarry and are still used by the people living in the lands beyond Leng, who reach them with yak caravans over the low mountain passes.

**Prehistoric Monastery:** Atop the wind-swept tableland stands this squat, windowless stone building in a circle of stone monoliths. Below presides the High-Priest Not To Be Described, a nightmarish figure venerated by the denizens of Leng and many other inhabitants of the plateau, who always keeps his bloated, lumpish form swathed head to foot in a robe of yellow silk and his face covered by a blood-spattered veil of the same material. There he stands before a shadow-filled well and plays strange melodies upon his pipes as he waits for new victims to be delivered to him.

**Sarkomand:** A crumbling ruin of cracked stone and broken columns standing at the base of a tall basalt cliff, Sarkomand formerly served as the capital of Leng. At its center stand two oddly pristine sphinx statues guarding a pair of stairways that descend into the unknown and darkened depths of the plateau. Though the ruins are haunted by an air of abandonment, those foolish enough to camp here for the night find that when darkness falls, black galleys dock upon the ruined quays and the city fills with hordes of denizens of Leng in a ruthless carnival of trade, debauchery, and violence visited upon any trespassers they find within the ruins.

**Spider Vales:** These shadowed vales are the last refuge for the Leng spiders. Vast constructions of web and stone create villages for these arachnid horrors where they congregate in small groups and plot their vengeance upon the humanoid races and the eventual conquest of all planes.

**Storval Thinning:** Rugged foothills mark where the substance of Leng overlaps and comes very near to northeastern Varisia. Whether this condition existed before or because of Runelord Karzoug's alliances with Leng's denizens, no living soul can say.

**Watchers in the Waste:** Massive sculptures of two-headed wolflike guardians as tall as mountains crouch before the approach to the Cold Wastes. Shantaks are known to nest upon the watchers, but the true horror lies in the fact that these sculptures are themselves alive and possess a malign intelligence and the capacity to move to destroy any who dare to cross the benighted threshold that they guard.

**Windswept Ridge:** This ridge of bleak, knife-edged

stone stands at the farthest extremity of Leng, where its hedging mountains converge below Unknown Kadath. However, here the encompassing mountain ridge dips slightly to create a shallow saddle over which arctic winds blow in great storms and blizzards, making this the coldest portion of Leng. Anyone gazing upon this saddle notices strangely regular rock formations that seem almost cubic in their proportions and are stacked one atop another, as if some sort of intelligence placed them there. When the wind blows strongest over this ridge, its song seems to bear a mournful note, and one can almost hear an eerie piping that sounds something like "Tekeli-li... Tekeli-li..." in its dirge-like tones. Only two explorers have sought this ridge and lived to tell of it, and neither dared to pass beyond its leeward slopes. Strangely, their accounts of what they glimpsed upon the far side do not match, with one describing a seemingly endless range of mountains rife with ancient temples barely visible through the crystalline mist, and the other describing a vast frozen city spreading out in a valley, reflected in the sky above and thus made visible thanks to that same crystalline mist. Which of these vistas actually awaits an intrepid explorer—or whether both of them do, with the windswept ridge perhaps leading to different places at different times on different worlds—remains to be discovered.



HIGH-PRIEST NOT TO BE DESCRIBED

## SHATTERED STAR



## LISSALA

**L**ISSALA (LIS-SALL-UH) IS AN ARCANE GODDESS ONCE WORSHIPED BY THE AZLANTI AND THASSILONIANS. SHE IS PRECISE, RIGID, DILIGENT, AND INTOLERANT OF DISOBEDIENCE, AND HER MAGIC AND PHILOSOPHY WERE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THASSILON'S RISE AS AN EMPIRE. LIKEWISE, THE THASSILONIANS' SLOW REJECTION OF HER FAITH OVER THEIR EMPIRE'S LAST CENTURIES GREATLY CONTRIBUTED TO ITS DOWNFALL. IT APPEARS THAT SHE HAS WITHDRAWN FROM GOLARION AND HAS NO KNOWN PRESENCE IN THE GREAT BEYOND. MOST MODERN SCHOLARS ASSUME SHE HAS DIED, BEEN SUBSUMED BY ANOTHER DEITY, OR TRAVELED BEYOND THE KNOWN PLANES IN SEARCH OF INFINITE WISDOM. COMMON FOLK IN VARISIA WHO DISCOVER HER RUNES ATTRIBUTE THEM TO RUNE GIANTS OR DEMON CULTS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT SOME OF THE MAGICAL RUNES OF THASSILON RETAIN SOME LINK TO HER, AND RUMORS OF NEW CLERICS DEVOTED TO THIS ABSENT AND NEARLY FORGOTTEN GODDESS ARE SPREADING.



# LISSALA

Lissala's origin is unknown, as there are no records from Azlant that explain how she became a goddess or when she first intervened in the mortal world. She could have been a creation of the Vault Builders, an ascended serpentfolk or Azlanti mage, an early attempt by the aboleths to establish control over the dry lands, or one of the first mortals to learn and perfect dragon magic. Regardless of how she came to be, she was a well-established deity during the empire of Azlant, and (unlike several other Azlanti gods) her power survived after Azlant's fall thanks to Thassilon's founder Xin making her religion a key part of the new country.

At the height of her worship, she was generally aloof, but responded to questions from those with a desire to learn and the willingness to work for knowledge. Most scholars believe that her eventual withdrawal from Thassilon was probably deliberate, but so slow that most of her worshipers never realized it was happening.

As the goddess of harsh duty and obedience, she represents the power gained from practice, study, and deference to one's masters. As such, she is favored more by wizards than by other arcane spellcasters (in particular bards and sorcerers, who develop magic on their own or are encouraged to challenge authority). She is intolerant of insolence and disobedience, and supports the use of corporal punishment or magical forms of discipline (including temporary curses and transformations) for would-be wizards who do not appreciate their mentors. Apprentices pray to her so they may stoically perform their chores without their masters punishing them unreasonably for errors; wizards pray to her so their apprentices are efficient, talented, and worth the master's time—for a foolish or incompetent apprentice is useless at best and dangerous at worst.

As the deity of rewards of service, she teaches that the only worthwhile rewards are those which come from great effort. Anything given as a gift is of dubious value, and the receiver should be suspicious of the source's motivation. Apprentices ask that their minds be open to all that their masters can teach them; wizards ask that their students be appreciative of the knowledge they are given, and that they become useful allies once they strike out on their own.

As a goddess of fate, she has a complicated relationship with Pharamasma (who was also worshiped in Thassilon). Pharamasma's fate aspect is intertwined with discerning and

fulfilling prophecy, whereas Lissala's fate aspect is more about accepting necessary burdens, persevering despite hardships, and planning for the long term. She considers divination magic unworthy of study. Not only does she not deem it a true school of magic (it is not, in fact, associated with any of the seven types of rune magic), but she believes using it bypasses the proper methods of learning. Divination is not forbidden, but the faithful disdain it as the mark of an amateur. Worshipers are encouraged to plan their lives and magical research years in advance.

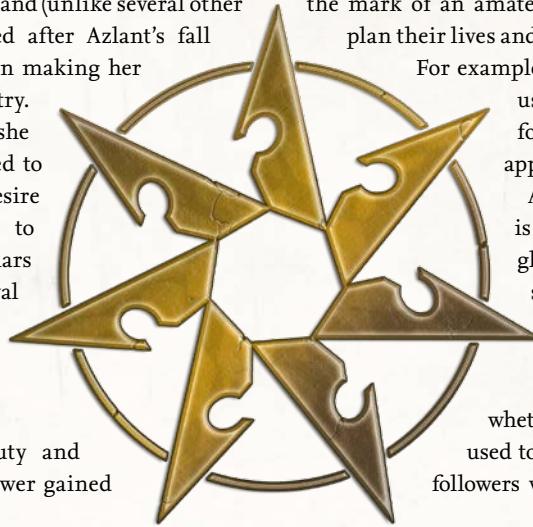
For example, those planning to become lichens usually have time allotted every year for advancing that goal, even from apprenticeship.

As the goddess of runes, her touch is in every spellbook, every graven glyph, and every sigil and symbol spell, as well as on the flesh of every rune giant, whose race owes its existence to Lissalan rune magic.

She teaches that writing is power, whether magical writing or letter-runes used to preserve or convey knowledge. Her followers would sooner burn their own flesh than burn a book, and in her church it is considered a high honor for the dead to have their skin tanned into vellum for use in spellbooks and religious texts, forever associating the person's remains with magic.

The living worshipers prize these books, and a mentor may award such a tome to a journeyman priest or wizard who worked hard or who showed great talent. Tattoos and branding are common among the faithful, and some worshipers even have the text of their favorite books or spells etched upon their flesh while still alive, in anticipation of becoming books once they are dead.

Lissala manifests as a stern-looking, fair-skinned woman, likely of Azlanti descent, but there is something strange and alien about her eyes, and she has no mouth—the lower part of her face is smooth flesh, though she is able to speak and cast spells as if she had a mouth. She normally appears wearing severe robes of green and gold, usually with a snakeskin pattern and a Sihedron rune, and faintly visible on her back are six ghostly, transparent bird wings. Alternatively (especially when she expects battle), she sometimes takes the form of a lillend-like creature with a snake body, wings, and a Sihedron in place of her head. In her presence, time feels slightly stretched, and spoken words and spells often briefly manifest as illusory writing around the speaker. In art she is usually depicted in her humanoid form, though her "battle form" is favored in murals commissioned by evokers and



**"No worthwhile reward comes without work, service, or sacrifice."**

**—Devotion to the Seven Forms**

wrath-priests. She is often accompanied by snakes—either actual snakes, snakes of pure energy, or elements of her clothing animating in the shape of serpents.

Lissala shows she is pleased through the momentary appearance of her strange eyes, snakeskin patterns or subtle runes materializing on paper or stone surfaces, and single peals of deep-toned bells. She may cause a spellcaster to retain a prepared spell after casting it or prevent a scroll from fading when used. When she is angry, work slows, writing becomes incomprehensible, plans are delayed, and minions disobey their masters or mishear commands.

Lissala is lawful evil and her portfolio is runes, fate, duty, obedience, and the reward of service. Her favored weapon is the whip. Her holy symbol is a variant of the Sihedron rune, though practitioners of rune magic sometimes use a symbol of a whip twisted into the shape of their keyed rune. Her domains are Evil, Knowledge, Law, Nobility, and Rune. During Thassilon's heyday, she was revered by most of the population as the goddess of magic, but now her faith is all but forgotten by humans and only persists among rune giants, as her faith led the Thassilonians to create their race. Rumors of scattered cults of Lissala appear in some parts of Varisia, but there is no organized, public institution of her religion. Historically, most of her priests were clerics, with some especially devout wizards taking roles in the church hierarchy. Among the scattered modern cults devoted to her, the proportion is closer to half and half, with a few oracles (usually with the bones, flame, or lore mysteries) making an appearance. All have ranks in Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (history); otherwise, others in the cult would not respect them.

Snakes, nagas, and magical ophidians (including couatls and lillends) are sacred to Lissala's church. The faithful avoid conflicts with such creatures, even if there are alignment issues (such as an evil priest with a lawful good guardian naga). Her followers dislike magic-destroying creatures and things that consume books and other writings, including mundane creatures such as silverfish and moths. This opposition to moths (and butterflies, due to overzealous precautions) often starts feuds with Urgathoa's and Desna's followers. Some Lissalans take this aversion to moths to such an extreme that they refuse to wear garments made of silk, though this is not required by the goddess.

A typical worshiper of Lissala is a wizard, cleric, scholar, historian, or taskmaster. The faithful perform magical research, train others to use spells, use their knowledge to fortify their communities, or magically control creatures for that purpose. They are hard-working, driven, fastidious, and used to slow progress toward goals.

Worship services involve reading aloud and transcribing scrolls, spellbooks, or Lissala's holy text. Priests create or reinforce the magical wards in and around the temple and report progress on magical research. Apprentices and

acolytes have almost no role in temple ceremonies, as they have not yet proven themselves. During services these minor members of the church busy themselves fashioning quills for writing; grinding styluses for scribing stone or clay; preparing parchment, vellum, and paper; polishing stone plates for scribing; or firing marked clay tablets.

Lissala teaches that marriage is an excellent cultural tradition and a long-term commitment between two (or more) people. Whether a marriage is for love or arranged for political or familial purposes, she expects spouses to fulfill their marital oaths, and is intolerant of adultery or other violations of the expected contract. She expects that one person in the marriage is dominant and the other(s) should defer to that one. She does not require this pattern of dominance to be defined in the marriage oaths, though if the spouses wish to do so, it suits her. Members of the church are not required to have children (whether they are conceived naturally, adopted, or magically created), but children are expected to obey their parents or guardians. Parents may raise their own children or rely on employees or an external institution to do so for them.

## TEMPLES AND SHRINES

Temples are traditionally built or carved from dense stone, and constructed to last for hundreds of years. Wood is too combustible and brick is too fragile (especially against earthquakes) for a sacred space devoted to the goddess. Many holy sites are made of magically conjured stone or by creating chambers in natural rock with acid, *disintegrate* spells, or the work of enslaved giants. The entry and ritual chambers are usually septagonal and decorated with a large Sihedron mosaic. During the era of Thassilon, most of the temples adopted one of the seven vices as a theme (usually associated with the runelord who controlled that territory), but this was not a requirement, and there are a few temples that are not dedicated in this fashion.

The few people living today who have explored Lissalan temples may assume they are hidden, convoluted affairs with traps, but those were only nominally temples and primarily served as secret places to perform obscure rituals in service to the runelords. During the time of Thassilon, Lissala's worship was public and common, and her temples had a very different structure. A typical public temple was a large, sprawling building or complex with spaces for many priests, servants, and slaves to live and work, with kitchens and food stores to support all of the temple's inhabitants. Most activity related to the crafting and maintenance of spells and items to protect and expand the reach of Emperor Xin or the runelords; this required creating parchment and vellum, inscribing scrolls or glyphs, carving blocks into runestones, inscribing weapons and armor with protective runes, practicing means of magical tattooing and branding, and

so on. Amid all of this activity, priests whose labors had earned them time to study established lore or to engage in magical research, usually in secluded rooms that muffled the noise of the temple's other activities. Most temples also contained a small cemetery or crypt for important members of the faith who had passed on. These features made the Lissalan temples much like self-contained cities or fortresses and allowed the priests to survive the many food riots that happened as Thassilon declined.

Shrines to Lissala were common, typically human-sized blocks of hard stone graven with the Sihedron rune and traced with dozens of smaller runes, often added long after the original stone was consecrated. Green marble and gray stone with flecks of gold were the most common types of stone used for the shrines. Often these shrines were used to store, direct, or reinforce wards or other magical effects, such as magic that prevented slaves from rebelling. Many of these shrines have a lingering magical power, long dormant but still waiting for a priest to awaken them.

## A PRIEST'S ROLE

Priests are taught that obedience to one's superiors is absolutely necessary, that following orders is a minor form of prayer, and that the goddess awards knowledge to those who serve faithfully. Every priest knows exactly whom she reports to in the church hierarchy and exactly which underlings she can command, as well as whose instructions are merely suggestions and whose minions are to be left alone. Each day is a regimented list of activities, with work, worship, meals, leisure, celebration, and sleep all given specific time periods so the temple as a whole functions smoothly. To deviate from these plans causes disruptions; for example, being late to a meal means the kitchen is overtaxed feeding extra people at a certain hour, loud worship or celebration at inappropriate times may awaken others scheduled to sleep at that time, and so on. Priests quickly learn the value of this kind of scheduling and tend to anger quickly when dealing with others who are more relaxed about schedules and deadlines.

In an adventuring party or even a common travel situation, a priest likes to create a schedule for the group and expects everyone to comply with it, including brief rests during the day and assigning who is on watch at night. If the priest's companions fail to comply, the priest may retaliate by exaggerating her activities to bother others, such as praying loudly to herself when others are trying to sleep.

Priests appreciate others who are knowledgeable and willing to teach about an area of expertise. For example, if a priest has no interest in or talent for battle tactics but travels with an experienced mercenary or military officer, the priest looks to that person for advice in combat about which foe is the most dangerous, which allies are



# SHATTERED STAR

expendable, and when to retreat. A smart priest is able to compartmentalize when he is directing others (such as by setting a schedule for a caravan) from when he should follow another's orders (such as obeying an officer's battle commands). Others may find the transition from bossy schedule-maker to taciturn battle healer jarring and uncharacteristic, but to the priest it is a well-developed coping mechanism learned in a temple of complex overlapping hierarchies.

As Thassilon grew more decadent, so did Lissala's priesthood, though this was a reflection of the country's culture and not a directive of the goddess. In earlier centuries, the church encouraged lazy acolytes to seek careers outside the priesthood and sold weak-willed slaves

to other temples; over time the priesthood hardened and flagellation became a common practice among underlings and slaves, either as punishments for minor errors or for the gratification of the superior clergy. Lissala's whip became an active threat rather than a subtle reminder of encouragement. Each temple adopted one of the seven vices and focused its magic on that vice. Self-mortification became common practice; priests branded runes into their flesh to show their devotion, impress colleagues, and purge weak impulses and rival vices from their bodies. Senior priests often had dozens or hundreds of runes decorating their bodies, and learned how to invest these runes with power, much as was done with the creation of rune giants. The factions within the churches delved deep into magical research and unlocked great and terrible powers: gluttony priests created rituals to turn themselves into vampires, sloth priests slowed their metabolisms and lived in a dream-like meditative state for weeks at a time, and so on. Over time, these practices became more important to the priests than actual worship of Lissala, and their divine powers weakened even as their arcane mastery improved. These acts did not conflict with Lissala's teachings (and were practiced for decades by priests in good standing), but when secular ceremony becomes a replacement for true devotion and worship in any religion, a cleric risks losing the connection to her deity that powers divine magic. Eventually, Lissala was only granting spells to a few members of the priesthood, with the rest having long since become arcane spellcasters or magical beings (including Runelord Krune, her high priest).

With the fall of Thassilon, her few remaining priests went into hiding or suspended animation (or became undead). They instructed their followers to practice the goddess's teachings in secret and persevere until the time came to awaken the leaders. Most of these hidden cults also revere the seven sins rather than being purely devoted to Lissala, but this may change if she returns in full force and unites her scattered followers.

A priest usually has a mental list or schedule of things to accomplish each day. These efforts are coordinated with others in the cult, working together toward a distant but achievable goal. In civilized lands, her priests may pretend to be followers of Nethys or Pharasma, speaking words of wisdom about magic and fate. In evil lands they may pretend to serve Asmodeus, encouraging obedience and diabolical conjuration. Her priests are patient and methodical, enduring hardships, indignity, and the inner outrage of speaking false prayers to another god instead of true ones to Lissala. If a priest follows a mortification cult, a hidden space on her body may be the site of many overlapping cuts—a secret ritual of faith and obedience to honor the priest's true beliefs.



20 11 12  
CERAM

Formal dress for the clergy is a tan or yellow robe with a billowing green cloak. Snakeskin and Sihedron decorations are common but are not required except for higher-ranking clergy. Ceremonial garb may include a snake-patterned skullcap and a metal frame worn on the shoulders that supports several majestic but fragile wings crafted of wire and bird feathers. Scars, brands, and tattoos in the shape of runes are common (especially in mortification cults) but not necessary.

Traditionally, the church of Lissala was heavily involved in the local community, contributing magic to build defenses and providing slaves and charmed minions to assist in tasks throughout the city. For a secret cultist, interaction with the community follows a similar role to whatever faith the priest is emulating, though usually emphasizing service.

## HOLY TEXT

The official holy book of the church is *Devotion to the Seven Forms*, consisting of eight chapters. The first chapter explains the tenets of the faith, with the others each explaining one of the seven worthy schools of magic (abjuration, conjuration, enchantment, evocation, illusion, necromancy, and transmutation), and emphasizing the relationship between runes and magical power. In the most valuable copies, the opening page of a chapter is made of human skin donated by one of the faithful, and the introductory text was tattooed or branded on it while the person was still alive. Most copies of her book were lost or destroyed in the fall of Thassilon, and those in the hands of sin cultists may have been revised to inflate the importance of their chosen sin.

## APHORISMS

Because her faith changed much over the last few hundred years of Thassilon and the surviving cults are hidden and may be practicing corruptions of her original teachings, it is unclear which phrases date back to the original faith, as none are direct quotations from her holy text.

## HOLIDAYS

The holy text describes various holidays associated with stellar conjunctions and their specific relationships to the seven schools of true magic. The decadent church has added its own holiday and ritual tied to rune magic.

**Feast of Sigils:** In its original form, the priests held this ritual on 3 holy days during the year. The feast links the souls of the participants—drawing their power into runes drawn in wine, wax, blood, perfume, and food—amplifies this energy, then returns it to the feasters, who gain more than what they put in. In decadent Thassilon (and in modern practice), nonspellcasters joined the feast, inadvertently losing their life energy to the feast, which increased the power of the priests.

## CUSTOMIZED SUMMON LIST

Lissala's priests can use *summon monster* spells to summon the following creatures in addition to the normal creatures listed in the spells.

*Summon Monster VI*

Advanced kyton evangelist (lawful, evil)

Dark naga\* (lawful, evil)

\* This creature has the extraplanar subtype but otherwise has the normal statistics for a creature of its kind.

## RELATIONS WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

Lissala is an evil goddess but had amiable relationships with all the deities of Thassilon, even Desna (though modern Desnans would have little love for her church). She had a fierce rivalry with Amaznen, the Azlanti god of magic, but he may have been killed during Earthfall and his worship was outlawed in Thassilon, leaving her supreme in magic. In modern Golarion, she has had no interaction with any known deities for thousands of years.

## NEW SPELLS

Clerics of Lissala may prepare *sepia snake sigil* as a 3rd-level spell and *explosive runes* as a 3rd-level spell. In addition, her priests have access to the following spell.

### LISSALAN SNAKE SIGIL

**School** see text; **Level** cleric 3, sorcerer/wizard 3 (Lissala)

**Duration** permanent until discharged; 1 day/level; see text

There are seven variants of this spell, one for each of the Thassilonian schools of magic. Each functions like *sepia snake sigil* (and counts as that spell for the purpose of combining other spells that hide or garble text), except instead of trapping the subject, the triggered sigil's effect depends on this spell's school. This effect lasts for 1 day/level. This is a curse effect that can be removed via *remove curse*.

**Abjuration:** All beneficial magical effects on the target last half as long as normal.

**Conjuration:** The target is nauseated. This is a poison effect.

**Enchantment:** The target takes a 1d6 penalty to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma. This is a compulsion effect.

**Evocation:** The target gains vulnerability to an energy type, chosen randomly from the following: acid, cold, electricity, or fire. This is an acid, cold, electricity, or fire effect.

**Illusion:** The target's vision is blurred, giving it a -4 penalty on Perception checks relating to vision, and the target treats all other creatures as having *displacement*. This is a glamer effect.

**Necromancy:** The target is exhausted. This condition cannot be removed with rest.

**Transmutation:** Target is affected by *slow*.

# SHATTERED STAR



## AN OVERDUE APPOINTMENT

PATHFINDER'S JOURNAL: LIGHT OF A DISTANT STAR 5 OF 6

**Y**ou," was all he said, stomping toward me with bloody hands.

The wererats had seized me before I even knew what had happened. One to either side, they dragged me from the foul-smelling straw that had broken my fall. My left hand and wrist throbbed painfully where I had landed on my hand, having extended my arms in a foolish attempt to arrest my descent. Fortunately, the trapdoor was only some ten feet above the moldering straw pile. Whoever had set the trap obviously wanted those who fell into it alive and in good condition.

Looking into the Gundsric's wild eyes, I had to wonder how long that would last.

He lumbered over to me, the heavy pewter flask he wore around his neck swaying like a pendulum, his hunchback giving him a strangely lopsided appearance. The basement was lit by a few sputtering candles, but even in such low light I could see nearly the entirety of the room with uncommon clarity, no doubt the continued effects of the gleam in my system. Beyond the small alcove into which I had fallen—which could be locked up like a prison cell with the closing of a barred gate at one

# AN OVERDUE APPOINTMENT

end—the basement was long and rectangular, its dirty plaster walls flaking away in patches to reveal ill-fitting stone blocks. The scribbles of gleam addicts filled every section of plaster that had not yet crumbled to the ground, stretching from floor to ceiling like a detailed map of an insane mind.

But it was the bodies that were the core of the place—dozens of men and women, nearly all of them human, stacked in piles or lying in the few cots scattered around the room. The thick smell of blood and rot in the air seemed only magnified by the underlying mustiness of the basement, and I choked back the rising bile in my throat. The dingy cots gave the impression of long use, like those in the common room of some cheap flophouse. But there were far more bodies than beds, and many of the oldest corpses were stacked against the wall opposite the alcove, heaped up like swollen sandbags bracing a levee.

I screamed then, shouting for Shess or Mordimor or some other deliverance. The rats to either side of me hauled me farther into that gallery of death, and I could see that there were more hunched shape-shifters in the basement all around me.

Riding on instinct, not caring at all about the futility of my struggle, I drove my heel into the bare foot of the one on my right, then tried to pull him off balance. He staggered, but his center of balance was lower than mine, and his tail kept him from tipping. Snarling, he slammed a blow into my stomach, and I dropped to my knees. He clamped a hand over my throat and jerked my head close, chattered threats or promises in my ear. His garbage-foul breath washed over me, and I retched.

The rat to my left was running his paws over my body, taking his time. Upon finding the long knife under my jacket, he snatched the weapon from its sheath and threw it into the corner. There was another such blade in my boot that he didn't find, and I hoped I'd have a chance to use it.

Gundsric loomed over me, a misshapen, palpable malignance. He smiled, teeth filmed with fresh blood, his beardless face wrinkling up like crumpled paper.

"I don't remember making an appointment with you today, elf." His laughter bubbled thickly up from blood-filled lungs. The harsh chemical reek he exuded was almost a welcome respite from the sickly sweet stench of decay that filled my nostrils.

I didn't reply, doubting the claw-tipped hand around my neck would allow any speech.

"Check upstairs," Gundsric barked. "This spy has friends." Dark shapes in the corner moved out of my line of sight, and I heard the faint sounds of feet scraping up stairs.

It was then, while trying to follow the movement of the second group of wererats, that I noticed the final detail about the corpses that lined the basement.

They were gleamers, of course—that much was obvious from the markings on the wall. But these bodies told a further tale. Shess hadn't seemed to know how or why gleam users disappeared eventually, but they always turned up dead, if they turned up at all. Dead and blind. And here they were: each face devoid of eyes, the sockets yawning a deeper black in the dark.

"Go with them, my sweet." Gundsric's murmur had taken on an oddly affectionate tone. "See all."

I turned back to him, wondering whom he was speaking to, only to find him shrugging as if in a seizure. Beneath his clothing, his malformed shoulder twitched and jerked, the hunch shuddering as if it had a life of its own.

And it did. Emerging from beneath his jerkin was a lopsided mass of flesh like a lesion, a cancerous growth made animate. It chirped once through a pore-like orifice, unfurled membranous wings the color of burned skin, and took flight after the departing wererats. Riding above a sudden heaving nausea, my thoughts tracked back to the persistently circling bat I had seen the night before, the one that had hunted the skies as the wererats arrived at the Clippers' hideout.

Gundsric chuckled. "So, you've seen dear Carchima around, perhaps? He gave a most specific report about you. Though neither of us has yet deduced who it is you work for."

I started to speak, gurgling out a response as the wererat tightened his grip on my throat. Gundsric stepped forward and backhanded me across the face.

"One or the other of them," he growled. "I don't care! Cromarcky would be most likely, yes? Croat and his boys would have a better use for the likes of you. Right now the both of them are at a stalemate, pacing around outside my home like gulls waiting for the tide to bring in the trash. After tonight it won't matter. I'll tread on their charred corpses and watch this whole damn town burn."

The hand that had slapped me came back around to cup my chin. "And it's because of you," he crooned. "I had been complacent. Me, complacent! But you made me step things up, made me round up as many of these *insects*"—he waved a bloody hand in the direction of a pile of corpses—"as I could get hold of last night. Made me come out here and do it myself, take the rest of them all in one go."

Gundsric scooped a gnarled hand into the sealskin bag he wore at his side and produced a palmful of glistening eyeballs, each glowing with its own light.

"No one upstairs, not even that vicious little badger of hers," hissed a voice I faintly recognized. I tore my eyes away from Gundsric's palm, his handful of luminous orbs like bloody organic pearls. Carchima fluttered clumsily back to Gundsric's shoulder and landed with a wet smack. The wererats had returned from their exploration, and

## SHATTERED STAR

in their lead was the scarred, black-furred female I had fought at the Clippers' wharfside hideout. She fixed beady eyes upon me and licked her lips. "I'll take that elf's eyes now."

"No," Gundsric said flatly. Carchima squirmed its way back under his clothing with nauseating intimacy. "I can better use her, I think. She wasn't given that street garbage, she's as pure as I am. And... she showed me the way." He leaned in close to me, and it was then that I noticed for the first time that his own black eyes shone as intensely as Idrek's had. Gundsric nodded at the recognition, and I wondered if my own eyes were filled with such light.

"Is the fire behind your eyes, elf?" Gundsric was nearly whispering now. The stink of sulfur and dizzying reek of carbauxine poured out of him as if he were some poisonous fissure in the earth. "Do you hear the radiant choir, as I first did all those years ago? The others said I was mad, wanted no part of my search, but I kept digging. Digging toward the voice—the burning voice like a pyre for all the world!" He smiled his bloody smile at me, his eyes luminous and searching.

"Ziphras didn't send us out to be dog-slaves to a mad dwarf," the female wererat interrupted. She spat on a corpse, and hissed something at the wererats to either side of her. There were half a dozen of them in the basement, all wearing their in-between forms, standing on their hind legs as hideous, man-sized rats. "I owe this elf a debt of blood. Her gang killed my kin, ruined our trade. Ziphras will mark me for this failure." The livid scar beneath her eye twitched. "You owe me her life, blood-debt to be paid."

Gundsric only growled, then began to cough. The other rats in the basement chattered among themselves, and I could sense the anxiety of the two that flanked me, their uncertainty as to which way this challenge to Gundsric would go. It seemed all was not well in the dwarf's employ.

The black-furred female was padding closer to Gundsric's back, and I saw the glint of a hooked blade in her hand. "No trade now, and no Clippers. No more buyers—all dead or fled. I wonder... how much longer will Ziphras make deals with you for a drug he can't sell?"

The alchemist's coughing had subsided to a rhythmic hitch, like a second heartbeat. Gundsric didn't speak, didn't turn, but I saw his hand stray to the belt he wore beneath his stained and scarred leather apron.

"Take your hand off the potion, dwarf," the wererat hissed, creeping yet closer to the alchemist's back.

Gundsric spat a gob of black mucous onto the floor. Keeping his eyes on me, he pulled his hand away in a flash, withdrawing a coin pouch from beneath his apron. The nervous rats next to me tensed as if an electric jolt

had pulsed through them, then relaxed just as quickly when they saw what the dwarf had been reaching for.

Gundsric raised the coin pouch high, tipped it, and spilled out a small fortune in gold sails that rang upon the stones of the floor. Every rat in the room watched them fall, the gold reflected in their beady eyes.

Then he spun and threw something with his other hand, straight at the black-furred wererat. With uncanny accuracy it struck her face, exploding in a blast of white and blue fire.

I flinched, feeling the blast even from half a room away. The wererat shrieked as alchemical flame engulfed first her face, then the entirety of her body. Rats darted away from her, a few suffering minor burns themselves. But the female blazed like a torch, stumbling blind before toppling over one of the corpse-filled cots and crashing to the ground. The other rats stood stunned for a moment as the female writhed on the ground, her body roiling in sulfurous white flame that clung to her like tar.

Gundsric raved then, shouting threats at the rats, telling them their choice was between the gold on the floor and the burning body on the ground. The stink of scorched fur and flesh filled the room, and smoke stung my eyes and brought tears. But even through my blurred vision I noticed the silent figure that had just entered the room from the far corner, where I knew the stairs to be.

It was Gyrd, but not as I had ever before seen him. His mail glistened silver, polished and well maintained in contrast to the dirty and rent hauberk the fighter routinely slept in. He stood taller, straighter, like a noble warrior out of some Ulfen saga. His beard was trimmed close and clean, and his long hair was gathered neatly into thick plaits. There was no gray in the fiery red mane, no flush of drunkenness on his fair skin, and no shadows under the clear, proud eyes.

He drew a mirror-bright sword and opened his mouth in a silent roar.

The wererats saw him. They crashed around the room in surprise, some heading for the shadows, one even managing to fall over the smoldering form of the dead female on the floor. Some let fly a few knives and darts, which sliced through the dark with no effect. Gyrd advanced, rolling his wrist so that his blade danced deadly circles in the air.

I could hear Gundsric's shouts over the din and squeal of the panicking rats. He had noticed the same thing I had: That this bright image of Gyrd, standing tall like a hero of legend, wasn't real. It was an illusion.

But the blade that ripped through the wererat next to me was real enough.

The image of Gyrd vanished. The rat let out a piercing wail and crumpled to the floor, limbs twitching in his



# AN OVERDUE APPOINTMENT

death throes, and then Shess was next to me, sword in hand.

I spared no time marveling at the gnome's skill in sneaking undetected into and around a basement full of wererats. Whipping my newly freed right arm around in an arc, I drove my palm into the face of my remaining captor, smashing the soft nose at the end his snout. He chattered in anger, jerking me forward and raking his claws against my shoulder and chest. Warm blood flowed from the stinging wound.

*Ignore it, Taldara. Push it aside.* My father's words rang in my mind. *Everything is won or lost in the head, not the body. Without focus, you're no better than your human blood.* I had always challenged him when he said such things about humanity, but he would laugh and make a joke of it, claiming he only said them to rile me, to challenge and push me. He was right about focus, though, and a great deal more, even when he was so infuriatingly wrong. I sometimes suspect my rebellion against him was his object all along—my final graduation from his academy of life.

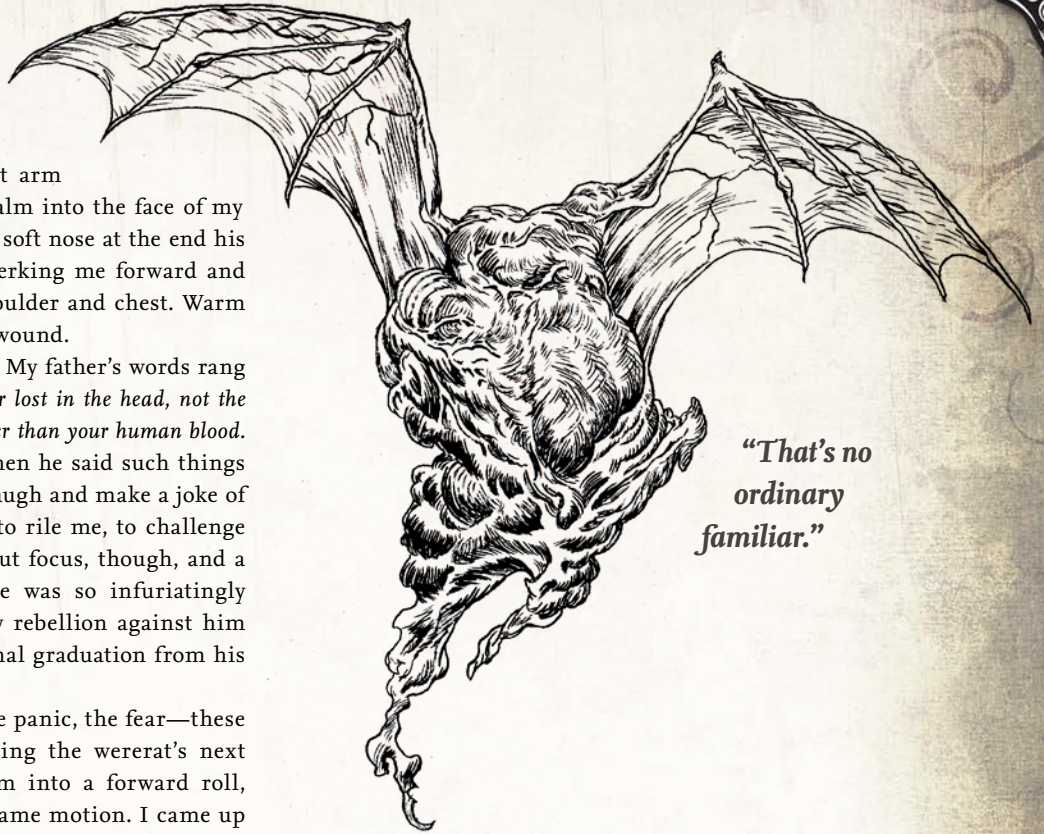
I kept my focus. The pain, the panic, the fear—these were like old memories. Ducking the wererat's next strike, I turned my momentum into a forward roll, drawing my boot knife in the same motion. I came up in a crouch next to my attacker, well inside his guard, and drove my blade into his guts. Black blood spurted from the wound as he flailed at me, and I struck again. He jerked back, collapsing in a twitching heap, his rat-screams mingling with the chaotic din of the basement.

I sprang to my feet in time to see Gundsric raise the pewter flask he wore around his neck to his lips.

More rats converged on Shess and me, blocking my view of the alchemist. The gnome spun and darted among them, a maddeningly nimble and unpredictable opponent. I fought defensively, with knife and fist, my back to the wall. The rats were enraged now and, in their half-human forms, they seemed disinclined to draw their weapons, fighting instead with claws and teeth.

"Keep them off me!" Shess yelled. I turned my head in time to see her repel her attacker with a quick chop to the thigh. In almost the same movement she tossed her sword to me. I barely caught it in my off-hand, then threw my own dagger over her head, at the wererat nearest her. Taking her short sword in my newly freed right hand, I stepped forward to cover the gnome.

Shess's sword was as light as my boot knife, and keen as a razor. I slashed, backing the rats off, ignoring a glancing blow to my arm. There were three wererats left, though the one Shess had wounded was keeping his distance, hobbling along the edge of the combat and looking for an



*"That's no ordinary familiar."*

opening to throw a knife. I kept slashing, more to create space around us than to do damage. And in that moment, I noticed the change that had come over Gundsric.

He was broader and taller, the muscles bulging beneath his dirty clothes like those of some Shoanti barbarian fresh down from the Storval Plateau. The remnants of a potion stained his lips, mingling with the bloody sputum of his black lung that ran down his chin. The insane light of his eyes was as bright as a lamp now. As bright as a bonfire. As bright as—

The basement exploded in multicolored light, a rainbow of blinding force. I had been ready for it, but even still I found myself temporarily blind. Shess's child hand closed over my wrist and dragged me to the right, while the snarls and shouts of our enemies reverberated in our ears.

"Come on!" Shess shouted as I tripped over the first of the stairs. "Straight up this way."

I ran blindly up the stairs, the world black as night after the blast of blinding color from Shess's spell. We came to a landing, and then a small room whose walls I could see as faint blotches of gray in the dark. Shess guided me to the door, taking her sword out of my hand as she did so, and I squinted to bring the world back into focus.

## SHATTERED STAR

The afterimage of the spell was wearing off quickly, but even still it was as if I had been staring at the sun before plunging into a dark cave.

There was light in the short hall we entered, and I realized it was from the lantern in the common room of the Forty Fathoms. We darted down the hall quickly, arriving in the alehouse's dusty front room, and I vaguely recognized the furnishings through my blurred vision. Behind us someone was clambering up the stair.

"Stick to the left wall," Shess told me.

We were almost at the door when it burst open, slamming against the wall and rattling the thick glass in the alehouse windows.

"Hrushgak!" Shess said cheerily. "And I see you brought Idrek."

The half-orc wasn't the first thing I would have wanted to see with my restored vision. Almost as big as Gyrd, he was leaner, sharper-featured, but no less muscled than the Ulfen warrior. He wore a scarred black leather vest with rings sown on to it, but his thick arms were bare save for vambraces of silver-chased steel and pale scars like worms tracking over his greenish skin. Protruding from his piggish face was an asymmetric jumble of dirty fangs.

He clutched a dripping axe in his right hand. In his left, held up by his black hair, was the head of the gleam addict Idrek.

"He said you would be here, little thief." Hrushgak flung Idrek's head contemptuously into the room, where it struck the floorboards with a sound like dropped sack of meal. More thugs were pushing into the room behind him, all tough-looking half-orcs—Boss Croat's drug-trade enforcers. "I never liked you, gnome."

Shess began to protest, her feelings clearly—and strangely—hurt. And then Gundsric stomped into the room behind us.

He looked more a monster than a dwarf. Grotesquely muscled, his body now sprouted mottled thorns like the spikes of some shelled sea creature. At his shoulder Carchima spread his wings of skin and shrieked. The alchemist's eyes burned like Riddleport's beacon tower.

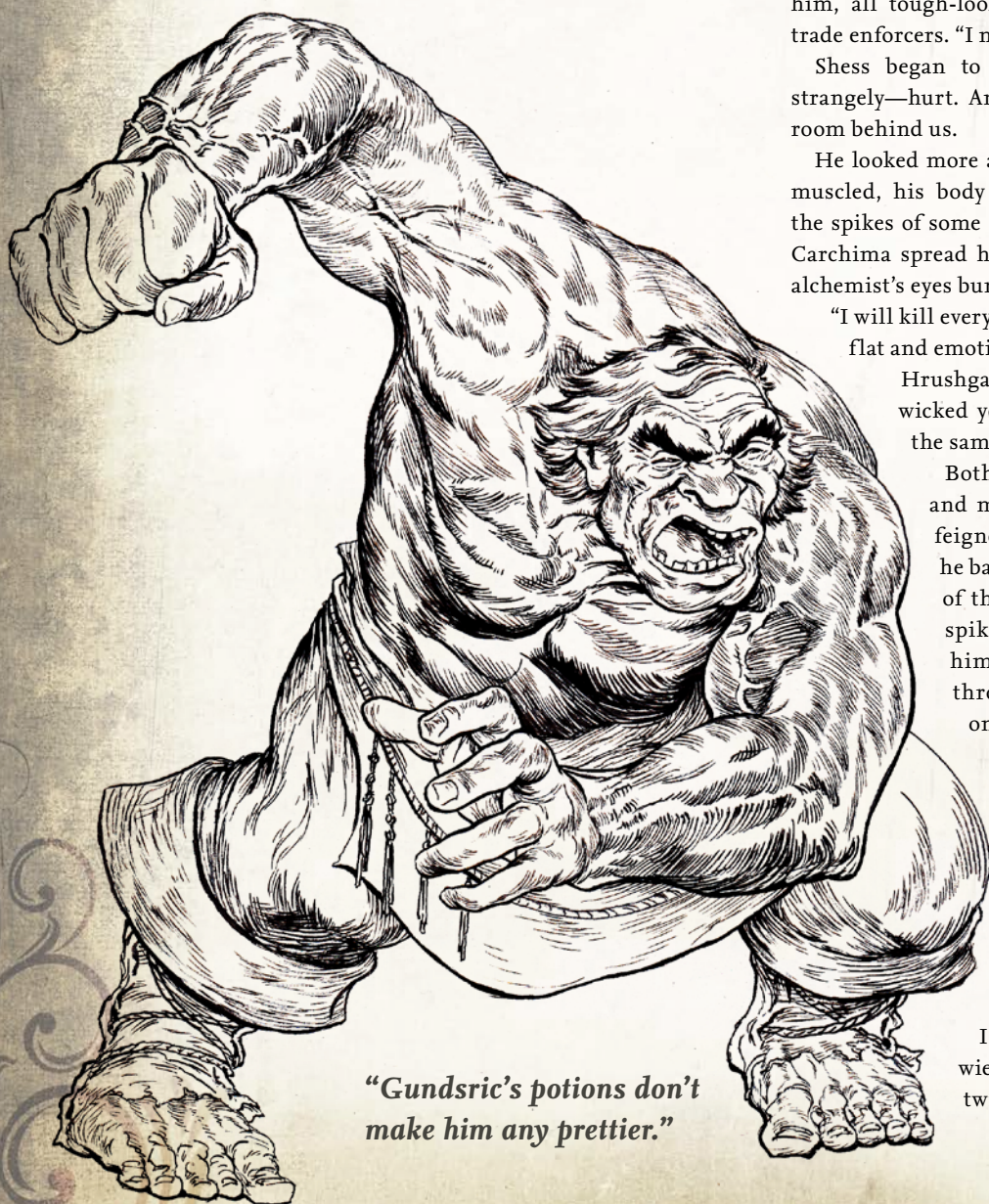
"I will kill every one of you," Gundsric said, his voice flat and emotionless.

Hrushgak smiled, baring his jumble of wicked yellow teeth. "I was just about to say the same thing."

Both sides moved at once, with Shess and me caught in the middle. Hrushgak feigned a strike at me and I leapt back as he barreled past, intent on Gundsric. One of the half-orcs went after Shess with a spiked club, but she deftly maneuvered him over to the trapdoor. He dropped through with a yelp, smacking his head on the lip of the floor as he did so.

An explosion tore through the room, knocking me forward in a wave of heat and force. Another alchemical bomb. I caught myself on the wall, one of Hrushgak's thugs inches away. He thrust a knife at me and I slipped to the side, but he caught me across the forearm with a wild backswing.

I was unarmed now, and the knife-wielding half-orc probably weighed twice what I did. Shess had her own



*"Gundsric's potions don't make him any prettier."*

# AN OVERDUE APPOINTMENT

problems in the shape of a nearly naked maniac with a short-hafted axe in each hand.

I kept my arms out, hoping to catch my attacker's wrist or else turn aside his thrust. I was close to the door—a well-timed roll could take me past him and out into the street.

The half-orc chuckled, noting the direction of my gaze. Weaving the serrated blade in an intricate pattern between us, he licked his lips. "Ain't no one gonna save you now, sweet meat."

A streak of black and white burst through the open door and proved him wrong. Mordimor, snarling and yipping, launched himself at the half-orc's legs. Blood flew and the half-orc screamed and staggered. I lunged forward, catching his knife hand in both of mine, and drove the weapon through his eye. He collapsed heavily to the floor, the bone-handled weapon lodged in his face to the hilt.

"I was worried about you, Mord," I said. Mordimor looked at me in the way he does, adorable despite the bloody froth that ringed his muzzle.

Shess had finished with her own attacker and the way was clear, the rest of the thugs having converged on Gundsric and one of his remaining henchrats. We darted out of there—Shess handing me one of the axes she had taken from the berserker—just as another explosion shook the place. The windows of the Forty Fathoms blew out into the street.

"Let me go in first next time, Tal," Shess said breathlessly next to me as we turned back to watch the alehouse from the cover of a nearby alleyway. The muddy street was littered with glass, glistening in the afternoon light like ice. Inside the Forty Fathoms, flames blossomed.

Mordimor looked up from his cleaning and chuffed agreement, wiping his bloody face with a moistened paw.

"I'll insist on it, Shess. In fact, I think you'll get the chance within the hour." She looked at me in surprise, one green eyebrow quirked upward.

Was I really thinking about doing this? With Gundsric busy fighting Croat's thugs—or, even better, dead at their hands—now seemed like the opportunity I had been waiting for. I was exhausted, wounded, frayed to my last nerve. All this sneaking and fighting, the gangs and their squabbles, Gundsric's own hideous plot in supplying drugs to the city for whatever strange destructive revenge this would grant him—it was all secondary to my purpose. To the story as it had to be told. I could almost see Master Shaine shaking his head; in amusement or disappointment, who could say?

"We're going to break into that crazy dwarf's house and finish this for good." It felt good to say it—more, it felt *right* somehow. Shess added her own enthusiastic

agreement. We spent some time tending our wounds, my own minor healing magic knitting the slash on my shoulder closed and hopefully rendering it free of the bad humors associated with wererats. I told Shess of my real purpose in finding employment with Gundsric, finally telling her the whole truth. She relished every detail, excited not only at the prospect of stealing treasure, but at rediscovering the lost adventures of a famous Pathfinder.

Gundsric's house was close, only a few squalid blocks from the tavern, but Shess and I made the journey with deliberate caution, wary of encountering another group of half-orcs, or surviving Clippers, or Desna knows what else. We made a brief detour when Shess spied an odd jobs man pushing his tool cart through the street. For a ridiculous sum I bought a length of rope from him, frayed and tarred, and Shess picked up a few stout nails she said would help her climb. With a wink he unrolled a square of oilcloth to expose a worn set of thieves' picks, but Shess declined. Clearly the man catered to all sorts of clientele.

Part of our caution was also due to Gundsric's ravings about his home being surrounded by the forces of Croat and Cromarcky. I didn't want to be seen approaching by any suspicious guards. How Shess and I would manage to get around a patrol and somehow climb to a third floor window—a window that was hopefully still unlocked—was something I was not prepared to worry about just yet. If the last few days had taught me anything, it was to take things one step at a time.

The place was indeed surrounded, and more thoroughly than I had imagined. Black-clad half-orcs with an array of brutal weapons shared the space around the heavy stone walls of the house with Cromarcky's uniformed gendarmes. Together they shouted off bystanders and smacked around the occasional too-curious passerby. They glared uneasily at one another, hands always upon their weapons. Their truce was an uneasy one, and no doubt whoever was to eventually win the right to Gundsric's home would be something decided at the highest levels. So until the bosses made their decision, the guards would continue to pace belligerently back and forth outside, spoiling for a fight. Shess was already proposing we distract them before climbing up—either with an illusion, or a fire, or a barrage of fish. Her suggestions grew steadily more absurd, but I wasn't paying attention. Instead, I stared in disbelief at the figure moving easily among the guards. I could only shake my head, not even daring to guess what his presence meant.

Kostin Dalackz strutted and joked with gendarmes and half-orcs alike, a ready smile on his face and the scepter bundled in an old cloak at his side.

# SHATTERED STAR



## BESTIARY

**T**HIS BIZARRE WORLD, CAPPED ENDLESSLY IN THE TENEBROUS VEIL OF NIGHT, TEEMS WITH DANGEROUS CREATURES RIPPED STRAIGHT FROM A MADMAN'S NIGHTMARE. SILHOUETTED AGAINST A PALLID MOON, HUNDREDS OF STRANGE HUMANOID CREATURES FLIT THROUGH THE SKY FAR ABOVE THE WINDSWEPT CLIFFS AND MOUNTAINS, AT TIMES CHASED BY LARGER, MORE UNFATHOMABLE HORRORS. EVERY SO OFTEN, THEY LIFT A SQUIRMING CREATURE FROM THE GROUND BELOW, WRESTLING WITH IT FOR A FEW MOMENTS LIKE A KITTEN PAWING AT A LIZARD, BEFORE DROPPING IT TO THE COLD GROUND ONCE AGAIN.

—ATILIA SPIRLIU, *A SIGHT INTO DREAMS AND NIGHTMARES*

This month's Pathfinder Bestiary brings you to the heights of the Storval Plateau, where you can discover the threats that lurk just below the surface, as well as those that have leaked over from another dimension. Here we explore otherworldly horrors from the mind of H. P. Lovecraft—the whole, the flying polyp, and the nightgaunt—as well as a herald of a forgotten deity.

## CHANCE MEETINGS, MALCONTENTEDS, AND MONSTERS

As the PCs search for another shard of the *Sihedron*, this adventure takes them to Guiltspur. Once used by Karzoug as a bridge to the dread realm of Leng, Guiltspur frequently leaks threats from that plane into Golarion. Here you'll find a random encounter table suitable for Guiltspur and its environs—including Leng—as well as three encounter hooks to add to your Shattered Star campaign.

Some of the creatures on the table can be encountered on the way to Guiltspur or in its immediate vicinity, while others can be encountered in the dungeons below—or the realm of Leng itself. If the result is a creature not suitable for a random encounter in the PCs' current environment, roll on the table again or simply choose an appropriate encounter.

**Dreaming Dangers (CR 13):** Those sleeping in the proximity of Guiltspur frequently find themselves plagued by unsettling dreams. Some of these nightmares are simply the result of mundane dreaming, but sometimes nightmares are the direct result of Siebetha, a night hag (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 215) who preys on mortals while they sleep in hopes of collecting some savory souls to add to her collection. With the aid of four particularly nightmarish animate dreams (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 29), Siebetha seeks out those sleeping in the area, then uses her dream haunting ability to slowly wither her victims to nothing. In recent days, this group of nightmare peddlers has been seeking out giants that have been laboring at Guiltspur, but the group is always looking for more intelligent and thus tastier victims for its phantasmagoric predations.

**Raiders (CR 14):** Sometimes members of the Shoanti clans violate the codes of their clans and find themselves exiled to the harsh badlands of the Storval Plateau. These exiles either perish in the harsh climate or persevere, using their strength and brutality to eke out an existence raiding other clans or preying on those who travel this land. Benkor and his fellow exiles fit into this latter category. Benkor (use the stats for a bandit lord on page 259 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*) leads a group of eight bandits and raiders (use the stats for a viking on page 281 of the *GameMastery Guide*) in a campaign of theft and murder across the plateau. Here they fought some of their previous enemies in other clans, and then took on tribes of giants, which led them to the area around Guiltspur. As they have gained power and confidence, they have begun

## GUILTSPUR ENVIRONS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
01–09	1 fire giant	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 148
10–15	2d8 nightgaunts	10	See page 90
16–20	1d8 wyverns	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 282
21–23	1d6 destrachans	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 83
24–28	1d4 night hags	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 215
29–32	1d4 rift drakes	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 106
33–35	1d4 rocs	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 236
36–42	1d8 denizens of Leng	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 82
43–49	1d4 gugs	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 151
50–54	1d6 mastodons	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 128
55–58	1 roper	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 237
59–62	1d8 shantaks	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 244
63–66	1 shining child	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 245
67–71	1d8 stone giants	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 151
72–75	1d4 carnivorous crystals	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 45
76–81	1d4 moon-beasts	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 3 195
82–87	1 Leng spider	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 176
88–92	1d4 scarlet walkers	14	<i>Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition</i> 414
93–99	1d6 stone golems	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 163
100	1 shemhazian demon	16	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 80

threatening any creatures they come across that have something they want—including powerful adventurers. They prefer setting up ambushes and traps, using their knowledge of the environment to their advantage.

**Sinister Fiendcallers (CR 15):** When the lost city of Xin-Shalast was rediscovered high in the Kodar Mountains, it drew those interested in history, power, and riches from all across Avistan. Not all of these visitors' however, had benevolence in their hearts. Knowing the lost city to be a dangerous place, Kistad, a demon-worshipping cleric with roguish skills (use the stats for a cult leader on page 279 of the *GameMastery Guide*), prepared herself and her group of adventurers by stealing powerful magic items before setting out across the Storval Plateau. Enlisting the aid of a ranger named Frantoc (use the stats for a bounty hunter on page 283 of the *GameMastery Guide*) and an adventuring scholar named Thanli (use the stats for a sage on page 297 of the *GameMastery Guide*), the group set off to uncover ancient Thassilonian riches. Kistad and Thanli successfully made use of a stolen cache of scrolls to bind two vrocks (*Bestiary* 69) to their service. Now they visit lost Thassilonian sites collecting more power and wealth in order to pay off the other fiends they manage to bind to their service. Defeating this group not only rids the world of the members' foul presence, but also gives adventurers access to a large collection of stolen scrolls and other potent magic items.

# SHATTERED STAR

## BHOLE

This titanic worm heaves its endless bulk into the air, raising a bleached end as if ready to strike with a massive set of hooked jaws.

### BHOLE

CR 17



XP 102,400

CN Colossal magical beast

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, tremorsense 120 ft.; Perception +28

**Aura** frightful presence (300 ft., DC 26)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 33, touch 1, flat-footed 33 (–1 Dex, +32 natural, –8 size)

**hp** 290 (20d10+180)

**Fort** +21, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11

**DR** 10/—; **Immune** acid, disease, fire, magical control, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning effects; **SR** 28

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 50 ft., burrow 50 ft.

**Melee** bite +29 (6d6+25/19–20 plus grab), slam +29 (3d8+25/19–20)

**Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.

**Special Attacks** breath weapon, overwhelming strength, swallow whole (20d6 acid damage, AC 26, hp 29), trample (2d8+25, DC 37)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 44, **Dex** 8, **Con** 28, **Int** 3, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 23

**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +45 (+49 grapple); **CMD** 54 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Awesome Blow, Critical Focus, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

**Skills** Perception +28

**Languages** Aklo (rarely speaks)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any underground

**Organization** solitary

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Breath Weapon (Su)** Once every minute, a bhole can expel a prodigious amount of thick slime from its gullet. This breath weapon has a range of 900 feet, and creates a 40-foot-diameter spread of slime in its targeted area. Any creature within this area must succeed at a DC 29 Fortitude save to avoid being stunned for 1d4 rounds. The slime transforms the area it coats into difficult terrain. Furthermore, any creature that is in the area (or that attempts to enter the area) must succeed at a DC 29 Reflex save to avoid becoming entangled by the slime. Bhole slime persists for 2d6 hours—bhole lairs are typically pre-caked with the stuff. A bhole can move through bhole slime without penalty. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Immune to Magical Control (Ex)** A bhole is immune to nearly all forms of mind control, including all charm

spells, *suggestion* spells, and dominate spells. It is similarly immune to *magic jar* and possession attempts. Confusion and other mind-affecting effects that don't allow another creature to directly control a bhole work normally. Rare effects that allow a creature to manipulate the exact effects of confusion on a creature provide one of the few ways to magically control a bhole. Other methods, particularly those tied to strange and powerful artifacts, may work as well.

**Overwhelming Strength (Ex)** A bhole always applies 1-1/2 times its Strength modifier on all natural weapon attacks.

Known on some worlds as dholes, bholes are among the largest of living creatures, wormlike leviathans of such size that few can claim to have seen one wholly from head to tail, and those who do tend toward madness and other afflictions that carry with them a heavy burden of doubt. The coloration of these creatures' coiling bodies ranges widely—from darker blues and purples to paler grays, yellows, or bleached white—with a cavernous mouth consisting of long, bony jaws that extend and unfold from the creature's head when it feeds.

## ECOLOGY

By all accounts, bholes are incredibly long-lived—those that exist in remote worlds or on other dimensions have done so for countless eons. The bholes themselves seem to have no interest in their history, perhaps as a result of their limited intellect, but by all accounts a bhole can live forever, barring death by violence. For a creature as immense and dangerous as a bhole, such conditions essentially amount to immortality.

Regions inhabited by bholes are always barren wastelands. What creatures survive there do so with a combination of stealth and speed, and even then they quickly learn to make themselves scarce when the telltale rumbling of an approaching bhole begins to shake the ground. Bholes themselves seem able to eat and digest anything and everything, and in time can reduce a huge area to a honeycombed network of immense tunnels. These regions swiftly collapse, leaving behind crumpled, rubble-filled pits of vast and terrifying size. Legends speak of entire worlds being reduced to rubble by bholes—they also tell of the danger of allowing these monsters into inhabited worlds, for their hunger is eternal, and a relatively small number of bholes can do incredible damage on a continental scale.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Legends state that even larger bholes exist in distant realms below the Dimension of Dreams or deep under Leng. These legends state that no one has actually seen one of these truly enormous bholes; while someone

must have witnessed one for the legend to spread, the number of those who have survived an encounter with a bhole with body and mind intact is so small that the hyperbole is for all intents and purposes the truth. Certainly the immense burrows in certain regions of the underworld below Leng or the Dimension of Dream speak of massive creatures indeed—holes into which typical bholes might fall and vanish forever. If these monsters do indeed exist, they do so on a scale that may make them impossible denizens of such constraining habitats as mere planets.

Bholes are more intelligent than animals, but only just. They rarely speak, and their vocabularies are generally limited to only a handful of words in ancient, mostly forgotten languages—those words they do know and speak in more widespread tongues are generally limited to a few phrases in Aklo. Yet bholes rarely have cause to speak, for little seems to interest them apart from eating and slithering.

No active bholes currently exist on Golarion, although dormant ones may certainly dwell in the deepest reaches of the Darklands, or may well be trapped between this world and other dimensions. Explorers are most likely to encounter these creatures on other planes, other planets, or in other dimensions. Certain members of the cult of Groetus have long sought a way to bring bholes to Golarion, or if they already exist in its depths, methods of locating and awakening them, for what swifter doom could one bring to a planet than to infest it with creatures capable of coring it out as a worm might devour an apple from within?

## ENCOUNTERS WITH BHOLES

A typical bhole is only 30 feet wide, yet is hundreds of feet long and weighs thousands of tons. Combat with such immense monsters might present some challenges for games based around miniatures and play mats. When you include an encounter with a bhole in such a game, it might be best to describe the immense worm as extruding itself out of the earth to attack those nearby—if the bhole needs to move, it simply burrows to a new location, sticks out its head, and starts attacking new targets. Alternatively, you can treat the bhole's head as its only actively dangerous portion. In this case, attacks directed at its immense body are irrelevant, with only those directed at its head (which consists of a 30-foot space) actually reducing its hit points. You might even run an encounter with a bhole using a truly enormous space on your Flip-Mat—a space of 100 feet or more, perhaps. This solution presents its own challenges,

obviously, particularly if your gaming area lacks for space. Of course, if these options for handling immense monsters don't sit well with you, the best solution is to simply downsize bholes in your game; assume they coil up on themselves and fit entirely into their 30-foot space, with their length accounting for their unusually enormous reach. Finally, you might consider not using miniatures at all for a fight against a bhole, with the assumption that once combat begins, the immense monster poses a significant threat to all in the area and that even several rounds of flight might not put a victim outside the monster's reach. Pick the solution that works best for your style of game play; in the end, the point is that a fight with a bhole should be one that your players remember for a long time.



# SHATTERED STAR

## FLYING POLYP

This nauseating tapered tower of flesh, eyes, and tendrils coils through the air, surrounded by a strange vortex of sucking wind.

### FLYING POLYP

CR 14



XP 38,400

CE Huge aberration (air)

**Init** +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +26

**Aura** frightful presence (90 ft., DC 24)

### DEFENSE

**AC** 29, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -2 size)

**hp** 207 (18d8+126)



**Fort** +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, deflecting winds, partial invisibility; **DR** 10/magic and slashing; **Immune** acid, cold, sonic; **SR** 25

**Weaknesses** vulnerable to lightning

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

**Melee** 4 tentacle +21 (1d8+9/19-20 plus grab)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+9), sucking wind, wind blast

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +19)

At will—*alter winds*<sup>APG</sup>, *gust of wind* (DC 17), *whispering wind*, *wind walk*

3/day—*control winds* (DC 20), *river of wind*<sup>APG</sup> (DC 19), *wind wall*

1/day—*control weather*, *whirlwind* (DC 23)

### STATISTICS

**Str** 28, **Dex** 15, **Con** 24, **Int** 19, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 42 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

**Skills** Fly +27, Knowledge (engineering) +22, Knowledge (history) +22, Knowledge (nature) +25, Perception +26, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +15, Use Magic Device +23

**Languages** Aklo

**SQ** amphibious

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any

**Organization** solitary, pair, or storm (3-10)

**Treasure** standard

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Deflecting Winds (Su)** A flying polyp's control over wind allows it to surround itself with blasts of precisely aimed gusts, effectively granting the creature a +5 deflection bonus to its Armor Class and a +4 resistance bonus on Reflex saving throws.

**Partial Invisibility (Su)** A flying polyp's body constantly flickers and shifts, passing from visibility to invisibility in a seemingly random pattern and often not wholly at once, leaving the creature's body in what appears to be multiple sections. This ability, combined with the flying polyp's amorphous, elastic form, makes it difficult to target a flying polyp, granting it a 20% miss chance against all attacks. By concentrating, a flying polyp can become fully invisible.

**Sucking Wind (Su)** This attack allows the flying polyp to send an eerie "sucking" wind out to slow and eventually stop a creature's escape. The wind itself isn't particularly strong, but it creates a peculiar sucking sensation as



if it were attempting to pull things back toward the flying polyp. Activating this ability is a full-round action for a flying polyp, and it must concentrate each round to maintain the sucking wind's effect, as if it were concentrating to maintain a spell duration. The sucking wind manifests as a 100-foot-radius spread, with the flying polyp at the center. Each round the polyp maintains concentration, the sucking wind's radius increases by 100 feet, to a maximum radius of a mile. A flying polyp can detect creatures within this area via tremorsense. As a free action, it can increase the effects of the sucking wind on up to five different creatures within the area at one time. Each targeted creature must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save each round it remains in the area of the sucking wind or be slowed until it leaves the area. A creature already under the effects of any slowing effect (such as from this sucking wind or a *slow* spell) that fails this save is held in place for 1 round—it is not helpless, but cannot move via any means. *Freedom of movement* protects against the effects of the sucking wind, and *control winds* negates its effects in the area of effect of the *control winds* spell. Natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect on a sucking wind. A flying polyp can activate a sucking wind once per day, and can maintain concentration on the effect for up to an hour. The save DC is Constitution-based.

**Wind Blast (Su)** Once every 1d4 rounds as a standard action, a flying polyp can create a powerful blast of wind at a range of up to 120 feet. This blast of wind creates a sudden explosion of flesh-scouring wind in a 30-foot-radius burst. All creatures within this area take 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage, with a successful DC 26 Reflex save halving the damage. In addition, these winds can check or blow away creatures as if they were tornado-strength winds (see page 439 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*). The save DC is Constitution-based.

A flying polyp is a hideous mass of flesh, eyes, tentacles, and mouths suggestive of a particularly nauseating evolutionary path. A typical flying polyp measures 30 feet in length but is unusually light for its size, weighing no more than 2,000 pounds. These creatures seem to have no maximum lifespan, but their violent, warlike nature ensures that death eventually occurs—even if it takes eons for the polyp to encounter something capable of defeating it.

## ECOLOGY

A flying polyp is a physical being, but one composed of material strangely unlike the flesh that garbs most living creatures. While the stuff that makes up the exterior of a flying polyp's body might seem similar to ordinary flesh, it often behaves in ways that should be impossible.

The material seems to fade in and out of visibility, almost at random, at points becoming transparent enough that the nauseating inner workings of the thing's body are laid bare to view. Although the polyp feels moist and damp to the touch, what might serve as blood in other creatures behaves more like strange vortices of wind within a flying polyp's body. When wounded, its damaged flesh does not bleed so much as whistle and gust.

A flying polyp's association with wind is particularly noteworthy, and goes far beyond the strange storms that surge through what passes as veins and arteries in its massive body. These creatures have a remarkable ability to control the air around them, both via a wide array of spell-like abilities and through the use of potent supernatural powers. They do not wield tools or weapons as a rule, instead using their mastery of the winds themselves to wage war and build their grim cities, scouring towers and chambers out of basalt with precise blasts of sand-laden wind.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Although flying polyps certainly display some of the features of other sentient races, particularly in their habit of building cities (although these towering cities incorporate architectural features that most other races find awkward and unsettling), in other areas they seem strangely primitive or disinterested. They are as aberrant in mind and philosophy as they are in physical form. For example, they seem to have neither a name for their own race, nor a language to call their own. Their cities, while unnerving in their vast scale, seem to serve little other purpose than to unnerve, for flying polyps do not engage in trade or politics or other social constructs.

The primary exception to this, to the detriment of other creatures unfortunate enough to dwell in regions claimed by flying polyps, is war. Flying polyps excel at genocide, using their mastery over wind to scour clean entire cities and civilizations when they come upon them. Some among their kind can even travel to other planets by bringing with them a sizable sphere of purloined wind and air to carry them aloft and sustain them, and with this power they lead armies from planet to planet as necessary, relentlessly tracking their chosen enemies across worlds. Every so often, flying polyps encounter a race that is their equal in war, and on some worlds, including Golarion, they still endure the humiliation of these ancient defeats after being imprisoned in extensive underground chambers where they are cut off from the outside world. Yet flying polyps are long-lived, and when an unforeseen tectonic event creates new exits to their prison chambers in forgotten corners of the Darklands, they emerge with unabated fury to seek revenge.

## KURSHU THE UNDYING

This large creature has the upper body of a winged woman and the lower body of a snake. She looks withered, like a preserved corpse.

### KURSHU THE UNDYING

CR 15



XP 51,200

LE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

**Init** +10; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +25

#### DEFENSE

**AC** 30, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+2 deflection, +6 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)

**hp** 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 5 (acid)

**Fort** +20, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17

**DR** 10/cold iron and magic; **Resist** cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, sonic 30; **SR** 26

**Weaknesses** divine separation

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft.

**Melee** 2 slams +21 (1d6+5 plus 1d4 Intelligence drain), tail slap +16 (1d8+2 plus grab)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Special Attacks** constrict (1d8+5), power surge

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +22)

At will—*detect magic, floating disk, mage hand, read magic, tongues*  
3/day—*cure serious wounds, dispel magic, displacement, fireball* (DC 20), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *hold person* (DC 20), *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *limited wish, magic missile, plane shift* (DC 24), *slow* (DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *vampiric touch*

#### STATISTICS

**Str** 20, **Dex** 23, **Con** 26, **Int** 31, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 25

**Base Atk** +17; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 41 (can't be tripped)

**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Craft Wondrous Item, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Scribe Scroll

**Skills** Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +23, Fly +21, Heal +22, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +27, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (planes) +30, Knowledge (religion) +27, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +30, Stealth +22, Swim +22, Use Magic Device +27

**Languages** Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, Infernal, Terran, Thassilonian; telepathy 100 ft.

**SQ** change shape (human; *alter self*), feed, spell-like crafting

#### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any land (extraplanar)

**Organization** solitary or cabal (herald and 1d4 charmed outsiders of CR 5 to CR 10)

**Treasure** standard

#### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Divine Separation (Su)** The herald has been separated from Lissala for thousands of years and does not know where

her master is. The loss of her connection to the goddess severely weakens the herald, and she gains 1 negative level per day, up to a maximum of 16 negative levels. These negative levels cannot be suppressed or removed in any way (including *restoration* spells), except by using her feed ability. If Lissala returns and the herald regains her connection to her master, she permanently loses this weakness and its associated negative levels.

**Feed (Su)** Once per day, the herald can devour an outsider's corpse as a full-round action. For each Hit Die of the devoured outsider, the herald automatically removes 1 negative level gained from her divine separation ability. The consumed outsider must have at least 8 Hit Dice.

**Intelligence Drain (Su)** The herald drains 1d4 points of Intelligence each time she hits with her slam attack. (The herald does not heal any damage when she uses her Intelligence drain.)

**Power Surge (Su)** Three times per day as a swift action, the herald can increase the DC of her next spell-like ability (if it is cast that round) by +2.

**Spell-Like Crafting (Su)** The herald may use any of her spell-like abilities when crafting magic items as if they were actual spells.

Lissala's herald is Kurshu the Undying, a powerful and dutiful agent of magic who has been suffering in her master's long absence. Known as "Kurshu the Divine Serpent" during the time of Thassilon, she possesses a powerful serpentine lower body, a female humanoid upper body, and three pairs of feathered wings. Her humanoid half is more serpentine than that of a lillend; she has tiny scales on her arms and a scaly cobra hood that blends into her hair. She looks haggard, as if afflicted with a chronic wasting disease, and her movements betray an ancient and resigned weariness. Her voice is thin and susurrant, and she tends to hiss when she speaks, especially when angry. She tends to verbalize in Thassilonian even when communicating telepathically. She is a lost being without a purpose, devoted to Lissala but unable to find her.

Records of the herald's origin are lost to passing centuries, but she claims she was created in her current form by the goddess, who used parts from several different creatures and then granted her true life. The goddess's withdrawal has taxed the herald's ability to maintain her own life, and eventually she may fragment back into her component pieces (which may or may not be alive after this transformation). Bound to Lissala by magic and an unshakable sense of duty, she resents her master for leaving her behind to wither away, and despises herself for knowing that if Lissala returns, she will crawl back to the goddess like a sheltered, neglected child who has no alternative but to love her creator and jailor.

## ECOLOGY

Kurshu's degenerative condition means that (unlike most outsiders) she must eat to survive; otherwise, she wastes away into a skeletal, nearly helpless version of herself. She reached that lowest point only once, but was lucky enough to catch suitable prey unawares and work her way back to an exhausted but functional level. Consequently, Kurshu makes sure to feed at least every few days.

As there are few creatures in Lissala's service who have the power to conjure her, Kurshu is mainly left to her own devices, but (unlike heralds of active deities) may choose to respond to a summons from any spellcaster. In exchange for her services, she demands that she be given outsiders she can enslave for later feeding, Thassilonian magic items, or items that bear some lingering piece of Lissala's power. She is knowledgeable about Thassilonian magic, rune magic, and Azlanti practices, though she is hesitant to speak of the latter when on Golarion lest it attract unwanted attention from slaves of the aboleths; having witnessed Earthfall at a distance, she has no desire to subject herself to a direct attack by entities who control that kind of magic.

Kurshu has no compunction about killing something that defies her or appears to be withholding information or objects she wants (if she has to, she can compel answers from its corpse using *limited wish* to duplicate *speak with dead*). She feels her pseudo-mortality at all times and fears death, and is likely to flee any encounter in which she feels outmatched.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Kurshu is alone in the multiverse. Her goddess is gone, Lissala's other divine servants have perished or converted to other faiths, mortals who knew her at the height of Thassilon are long dead or in suspended animation, and her existence has no purpose. Her hunger for outsider souls repulses her (as she never had to eat while Lissala was present) but she accepts it as a necessary embarrassment because she is unwilling to accept death—or an eternity spent as an invalid.

She normally keeps a "stable" of charmed outsiders near her (using her *limited wish* spell-like ability to duplicate *charm monster*) so she can slay and consume one if necessary. Her devotion to law and hatred of chaos means her minions are usually daemons, demons, or proteans; though she finds their flesh repugnant, she would rather destroy a minion of disorder than a devil or similar lawful evil outsider. She is stern but courteous to these minions, who obey and

respect her power even beyond the enforced friendliness of the magic that binds them to her.

Because of her chaotic associates, she has survived many hostile encounters in which opponents attacked her with lawful magic (such as *order's wrath*)—such attacks do not harm her, giving her a few vital seconds to decide whether she wants to retaliate or abandon her minions and flee.

The herald spends her infinite hours wandering the planes in search of Lissala or visiting Golarion to bask in places sacred to her missing goddess, trying to detect echoes of her master's presence like an old widower smelling his dead wife's clothes for a hint of perfume to spark a long-forgotten memory.



# SHATTERED STAR

## NIGHTGAUNT

This lanky ebon humanoid has batlike wings and a long prehensile tail, yet its most unsettling feature is its lack of a face.

### NIGHTGAUNT

CR 4



XP 1,200

CN Medium monstrous humanoid

**Init** +6; **Senses** all-around vision, blindsight 60 ft.; Perception +6

### DEFENSE

**AC** 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15 (+2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural)

**hp** 37 (5d10+10)

**Fort** +3, **Ref** +8, **Will** +6

**Defensive Abilities** faceless; **Immune** cold, gaze weapons, inhaled toxins, scent-based attacks

### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (average)

**Melee** 2 claws +9 (1d6+4 plus grab)

**Special Attacks** clutches, tickle

### STATISTICS

**Str** 18, **Dex** 15, **Con** 14, **Int** 5, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 11

**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +9 (+13 grapple); **CMD** 22

**Feats** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes

**Skills** Fly +7, Perception +6, Stealth +11; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth

**Languages** Aklo (cannot speak)

### ECOLOGY

**Environment** any mountains

**Organization** single, pair, flight (3–12), or colony (13–50 plus 1–4 nightgaunt elders)

**Treasure** none

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Clutches (Ex)** Although a typical nightgaunt stands only half a foot taller than most humans, it is a remarkably tenacious grappler. A nightgaunt gains a +8 racial bonus on all combat maneuver checks made to grapple (rather than the typical +4 bonus most creatures with the grab ability gain). If a nightgaunt uses its fly speed to move itself and a grappled target, it can fly at full speed.

**Faceless (Ex)** A nightgaunt has no face, yet it can still see with remarkable clarity in all directions as if its entire body were a single strange eye. This unusual form of vision renders it immune to gaze attacks, but not to illusions that rely upon vision to function. A nightgaunt feeds on the despair and horror of its victims, which replaces the creature's need to eat and drink. It has no need to breathe at all, and is immune to all inhaled or scent-based effects.

**Tickle (Ex)** A nightgaunt's long, sinuous tail is covered with razor-sharp barbs. While this appendage looks dangerous and is exceptionally agile, a nightgaunt's tail doesn't have much strength, and thus cannot be used as a natural weapon. Yet when a nightgaunt grapples a foe, its tail can slither along the target's flesh to tickle and tease with

nauseating efficiency. Ticking a foe is a swift action, and the foe must either be helpless or grappled by the nightgaunt in order for it to use this ability. When a creature is tickled by a nightgaunt, the victim must succeed at a DC 14 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Nightgaunts haunt the deepest and darkest chasms of dream. They lurk in the shadows that loom at the edges of sane slumber, but are ready at any moment to snatch a blithe dreamer away, carrying it off into realms of endless nightmare and tickling it terribly all the way. They appear as stooped, emaciated humanoids, yet possess a strength in their sinewy limbs that far surpasses that of most humans. With inky black skin, batlike wings, long spiny tails, and demonic horns protruding from their skulls, nightgaunts are fearsome foes—yet it's their lack of any facial features makes the creatures truly nightmarish.

A typical nightgaunt is 7 feet tall and weighs 175 pounds.

## ECOLOGY

Nightgaunts' most singular feature—their uncanny *lack* of features—is perhaps their most intriguing biological facet. That the creatures can see is manifestly obvious, for they react to purely visual stimulus with speed and precise action, as if their whole bodies can see in all directions. Scholars have yet to determine how the bizarre creatures accomplish this eerie stunt, but the fact that they were spawned originally in the depths of ancient nightmares might indicate that no sane or logical explanation for their sight exists.

Nightgaunts feed on emotions; while fear and horror are the usual staples of nightgaunts' diet, the creatures actually prefer a meal of varied emotions. A mix of laughter and terror provides a succulent meal for nightgaunts. Little else can provoke as delectable a bouquet for a nightgaunt as lifting victims high into the air while tickling them with its long, whip-like tail, a situation that those who have survived relate as one that can never be forgotten. During this frightening feeding, a nightgaunt often carries its victims aloft for miles as it continually tickles and torments the poor souls, finally dropping its prey into a remote area where monsters and worse lie in wait once it has gorged itself. Although nightgaunts won't hesitate to drop particularly troublesome or dangerous creatures from a great height, they prefer to release those they carry off from heights of only a few feet, as if to ensure their survival in whatever eldritch wilderness the nightgaunts have brought their victims to. Nightgaunts rarely return to feed on creatures they've dropped off in a dangerous region (although the same cannot be said of victims who escape to safety), provoking theories that the creatures have some sort

of ancient pact with the monstrous denizens of these remote locales.

## HABITAT & SOCIETY

Nightgaunts dwell in the parts of the world that inspire nightmares, where dreamers pray for dawn. They can be found amid the creaking boughs of haunted forests, lurking in the caves of desolate mountain gorges, or perched atop crumbling gravestones in forgotten boneyards. Yet when they grow hungry, they take wing from their eerie lairs to seek out victims, scouring cities and towns for open windows from which to snatch their meals.

Although nightgaunts can be found throughout Golarion, this is not their original home. The first nightgaunts were spawned deep in the Dimension of Dream from the nightmares of a forgotten poet whose fears were so consuming that every night he dreamt, his nightmares grew more and more powerful and overwhelming. Dreams of being carried over horrific landscapes and mind-numbing vistas of eldritch blight drove the poet deeper and deeper into madness, and in desperation he sought out the aid of a strange alchemist who supplied him with an elixir that would rid him of his fears forever. The poet took the draught and immediately fell into a deep slumber, and in that slumber, his nightmares fled his mind, transforming into the first and most powerful of the nightgaunt race. Unfortunately for the poet, the nightgaunts also took his muse, and when he woke the next morning, he found his ability to write had vanished forever—he had traded his soul for a life of gentle sleep. When he found he could not go on without his poetry, he sought out that strange alchemist in hopes of reversing what he'd done. The stories do not reveal what fate eventually met this strange and forlorn poet, but the nightgaunts have certainly prospered.

Most nightgaunts have little drive to be anything more than predators of slumbering societies. They often gather in large colonies, entertaining each other by sharing emotions they've fed upon via strange touches and lingering caresses. Powerful warlords, wizards, priests, and the like often enjoin nightgaunts to serve them as guardians or even forms of travel, promising them slaves or other captured prey in return for their services, but those who traffic with nightgaunts must take care to stay in their faceless friends' good graces, for a nightgaunt can turn upon its allies at the smallest slight.

Nightgaunts often war with the other creatures found in their desolate realms,

led into battle by elder nightgaunts who carry strange magical tridents and command considerable magical powers. These elder nightgaunts typically have levels as magi or oracles—a nightgaunt colony led by such a powerful creature is a much more dangerous threat than most, for these colonies often have agendas that go beyond mere predation upon kinder societies. Nightgaunt elders are typically chaotic evil, and many use their followers to keep humanoids as cattle in horrific pens or cages in lightless caverns.

The most powerful nightgaunts, though, are those original creations pulled from the mad poet's nightmares. These creatures are all-powerful spellcasters of prodigious size, and dwell in the deep underground realms below the Dimension of Dream, or else rule vast rookeries on the ragged borderlands that surround the dread Plateau of Leng. What their goals might be is not for sane minds to know.



## THE DEAD HEART OF XIN

by Brandon Hodge

The seven shards of the Shattered Star have been recovered, and the Pathfinders prepare a grand festival on Magnimar's Irespan to celebrate this incredible achievement. The culmination of this celebration is to be the reassembly of the seven shards into the legendary Sihedron itself, rebuilt for the first time in more than 10,000 years. But a great deal can change in that amount of time, and as the ritual to reforge the artifact finishes, ancient contingencies rumble to life. As the dead heart of Thassilon begins to beat again, all of Magnimar is put in terrible danger. With the power of the Sihedron on their side, the heroes make a stand against this risen evil—but will even the aid of an ancient artifact be enough to save them all?

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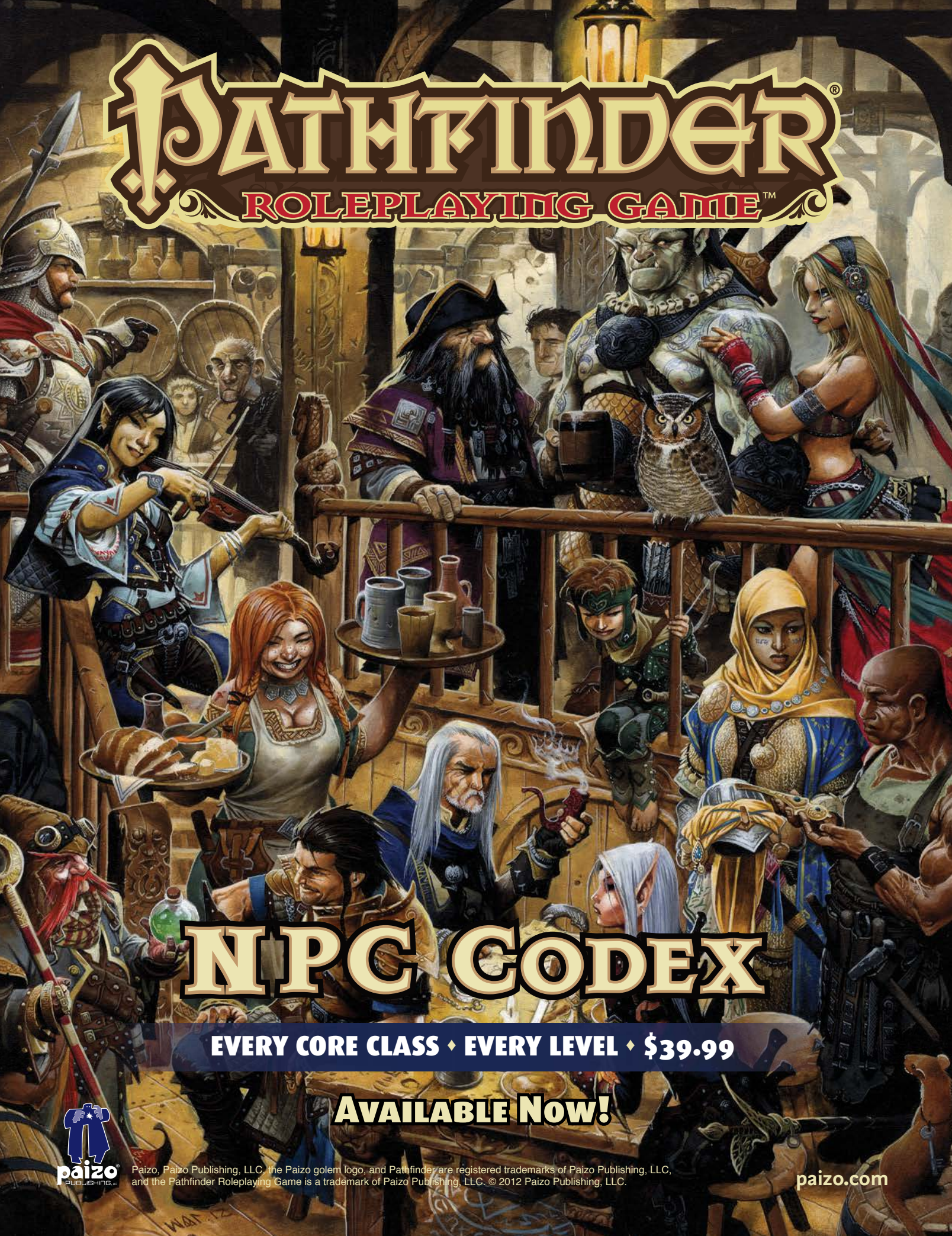
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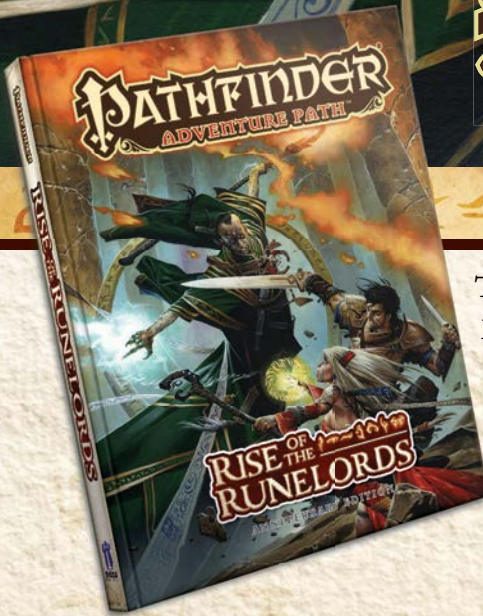
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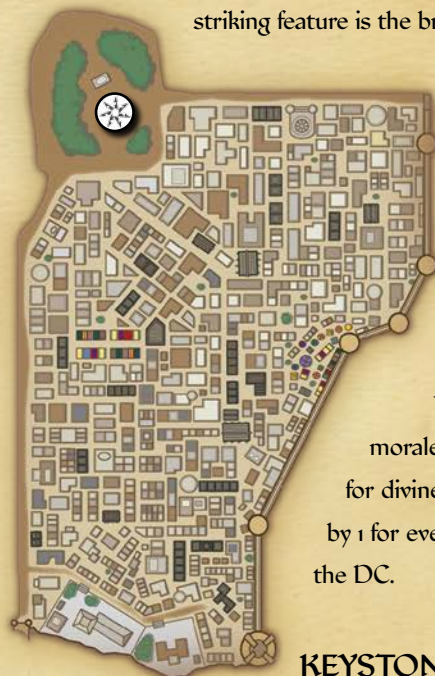
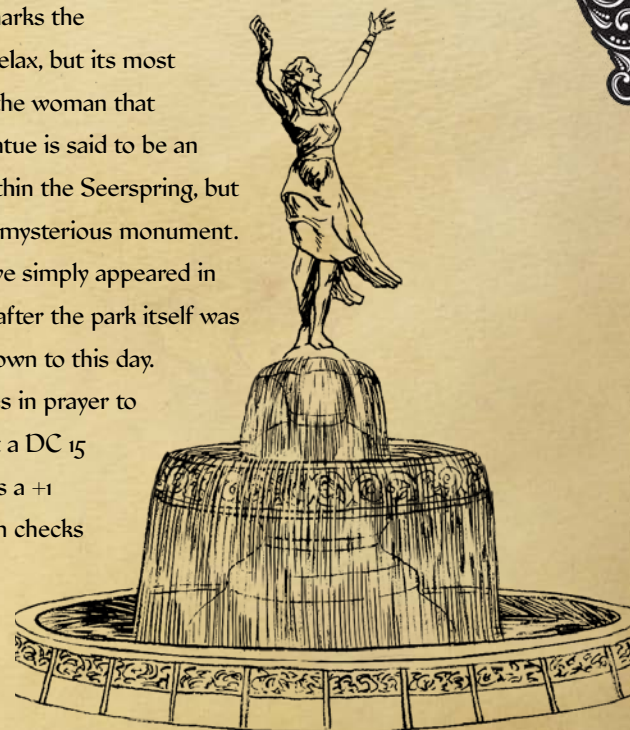


## OUR LADY OF BLESSED WATERS

Seerspring Garden, a park boasting a spring of crisp, clear water, marks the northeastern corner of Keystone. The park itself is a fine place to relax, but its most striking feature is the bronze, strangely verdigris-free statue of a lithe woman that

stands at the center of the water. The statue is said to be an image of the spirit believed to linger within the Seerspring, but none in Magnimar know who built the mysterious monument. The oddly soothing statue is said to have simply appeared in Seerspring Garden overnight not long after the park itself was established—its source remains unknown to this day.

**Monument Boon:** Spend 10 minutes in prayer to the spirit of the Seerspring, then attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check. Success grants a +1 morale bonus on all caster level and concentration checks for divine spells for 24 hours. This bonus increases by 1 for every 5 points by which your check exceeds the DC.



KEYSTONE

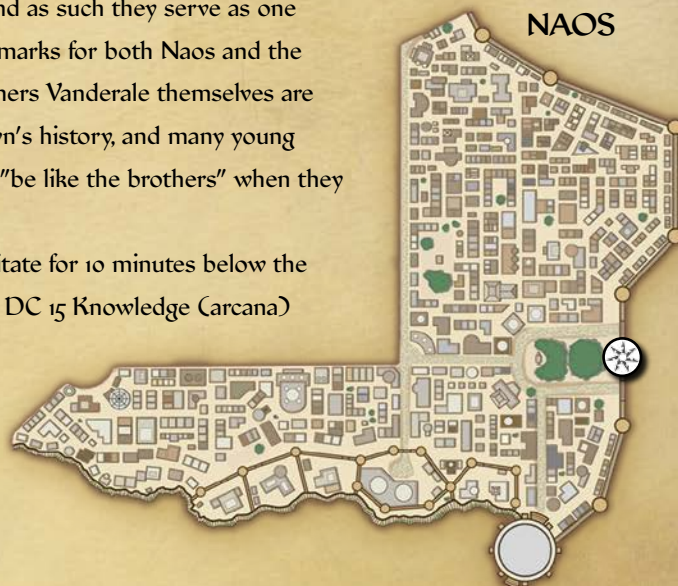
## THE GUARDIANS

Just within Twins' Gate stand the Guardians, one of the city's larger monuments.

These 200-foot-tall colossi depicting the young heroes Cailyn and Romre Vanderales face each other with burning staves held high, forming a giant arch. The Guardians stand at the southernmost end of the broad Avenue of Hours, which runs from the city wall all the way north to Indros cul Vydrarch Plaza and the Pediment Building, and as such they serve as one of the most notable landmarks for both Naos and the Capital District. The brothers Vanderales themselves are well regarded in the town's history, and many young Magnimarians strive to "be like the brothers" when they grow up.

**Monument Boon:** Meditate for 10 minutes below the arch and make a successful DC 15 Knowledge (Arcana) check to gain a +1 morale

bonus on all concentration checks for 24 hours. This bonus increases by 1 for every 10 points by which your check exceeds the DC.



NAOS

# GIANTS IN THE EARTH

With five shards of the *Shattered Star* secure, visions point the PCs toward one of Varisia's most remote corners as the site protecting the sixth fragment of the powerful artifact. Yet the heroes are not the first to search for this shard—upon arriving at the ancient ruin known as Guiltspur, they find a small army of giants excavating the site on the order of a blue dragon. Even this is not the entirety of the danger, however, for as the heroes soon learn, there are other forces searching for the final shards as well—some hailing from the Darklands below, and some from beyond reality in the nightmare realm of Leng!

This volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* continues the *Shattered Star Adventure Path* and includes:

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