

PATHFINDER®

ADVENTURE PATH * PART 4



Legacy of Fire
**THE END OF
ETERNITY**

Adventure by Jason Nelson
New Fiction by Elaine Cunningham



rovagug had sent ten thousand children crawling through the fire and the crushing dark, all seeking an escape for their father from the prison that held him. And nearly ten thousand of them had died in fire and agony. Only one, a creature called the Firebleeder, was true to its sire.

The Firebleeder's claws were sharper than those of an earth demon and its breath fouler than that of pure mephitic death from the core of the world. It slithered through the earth like a colossal worm, uncrushable and always hungry. It devoured miles of stone before it, and dropped dust and slag metal in its wake.

And so the creature continued until one day, chewing through gentle sandstone, the Firebleeder found something new: a deliciously glowing bit of lichen in a wet, airy tunnel. It was delicious, a brief spark of sap and living juices against a palate raised on hard stone and dry dust. Ever hungry, the Firebleeder followed the tunnel upward and upward again. Finally it broke through to the surface, under a blinding noonday sun, where it roared and clawed out its own eyes from the pain.

The Firebleeder bled magma from its eye sockets and cursed its father's name, he who had made it, he who had imbued with the urge to dig ever upward. The surface was a place of delicious pain, and so the Firebleeder dragged its bulk just below the surface, scorching everything above it. The flaming demon-worm set fire to the forest. It set fire to the city at the edge of the forest. The Firebleeder ravaged the land, incinerating entire nations in an echo of its father's destructive rage. And so the world began to burn anew.



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ADVENTURE PATH PART 4 of 6



Legacy of Fire
**THE END OF
ETERNITY**

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Dedicated To
Spooky, the Mighty Hunter

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TICKETS, PLEASE?

I admit it. I get frustrated when I read complaints that an Adventure Path is “too railroady.” To me, that’s like complaining that ice cream is cold. An Adventure Path is supposed to be railroady, to a certain extent. That’s why we call them “Adventure Paths” and not “Adventure Lots of Different Paths.” (We have a different name for those—Campaign Setting sourcebooks.) Yet the complaint is not without basis—it’s very easy for an adventure to fall into the trap of expecting certain player character actions in order to progress. A classic example is this plot: “The PCs are going to visit the king, and are forced to leave their gear behind at the door, then have to go on an adventure inside the royal castle where they make do with what equipment they can find.” That plot railroads the PCs out of their hard-won gear—worse, what happens if a PC (or all of them) decides to research the invitation to see the king? What happens if they find out the invitation’s a trap? Suddenly, the adventure as written is all but useless, since it assumed too much about PC actions.

Pathfinder Adventure Paths do assume PC actions to a certain extent (in *Legacy of Fire*, for example, we assume

that the PCs want to play a campaign set in Katapesh where there are lots of gnolls and genies to fight). Yet we try to keep those assumptions few and far between, or as part of the larger scheme of things. One way we try to do this is avoiding having NPCs tell the PCs what adventures they’re going on. Early in an Adventure Path, this isn’t always possible, but as the campaign builds up steam, we try to make the next step in the adventure self-evident to a certain extent so that the PCs, if they’re following said Adventure Path, move along to the next chapter on their own. This doesn’t feel like railroading to the PCs, since they’re the ones making the decisions. We can still put a few key NPCs in to help guide the way, of course, but a campaign feels more “right” if the PCs are active components of driving the plot.

Bad Decisions for Good Reasons

“The End of Eternity” might require you to pull some strings or do some hand waving, for this is that most treacherous and troublesome of adventure plots—the PCs are captured and must escape from their prison. Once you

get the PCs into Kakishon, things should go smoothly—it's getting them there that might prove to be a problem. That problem is simple: if the PCs stop to over-examine things at the start of this adventure, activating the *Scroll of Kakishon* might start to look like the wrong idea. And to a certain extent, it is. The last half of *Legacy of Fire* assumes that the PCs make an error and then spend that last half of the adventure recovering from that error and correcting it. If it works, it's a pretty cool story device, but if the PCs catch wind too early, it can cause trouble. And so, part of your job as GM at the start of this adventure is to encourage the PCs to make a bad decision.

Ideally, when you begin this adventure, the PCs are still guests at Rayhan's Villa, having just recently rescued the old wizard from the Jackal's den at the end of the previous adventure, "The Jackal's Price." You can then begin this adventure with Rayhan coming to the PCs with an exciting announcement—using his notes and building on the surviving research from Andrathi, Rayhan has finally discovered the secret to opening the *Scroll of Kakishon*. At least... he's relatively sure he's discovered the secret. He wants the PCs to try to open the portal, and would rather keep this final test somewhat low-key. If the scroll does end up being a fake, he'd rather not have that discovery be made in front of his colleagues and business associates. Instead, he proposes a quick test at his villa—he'll show the PCs how to activate the scroll, explaining that the procedure is really quite simple and that the true problem lies in tracking down the precise sequence of command words. Once complete, the map should glow, allowing anyone who points to a location on the map to travel to the "landing zone" closest to that location. These landing zones have posts that can be used by visitors to exit the map as well. Rayhan suggests that the PCs prepare for the experiment by getting a full night's rest and be ready for anything—as with all artifacts, the chance of something unusual happening is always there.

The *Scroll of Kakishon* is a powerful artifact, and as a result resists most divination effects directed at it. Use of spells like *augury* and *divination* can warn the PCs that what they're about to do might be dangerous—don't lie to them if such spells are successfully cast. An *augury* about the activation of the *Scroll of Kakishon* should give a result of weal and woe (since there is both danger and great treasure to be had within Kakishon). A successful *divination* should say something like, "Peril and paradise lie within—those who seek one shall find the other, yet what secrets wait there shall save you from greater perils yet to come." If the PCs use more powerful magic, like *commune*, it should encourage the PCs to explore the map (perhaps promising great treasures and the answers to unasked questions) but also warn them to be prepared for anything when they begin to tinker with the artifact.

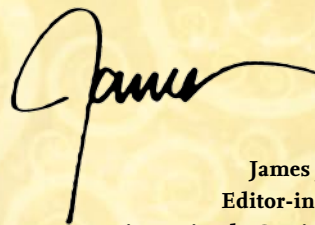
If the PCs remain hesitant, Rayhan nods in understanding. He then suggests that the PCs simply activate the scroll and do not travel into the world within—simply knowing that the scroll can be awakened is enough to put Rayhan's fears at rest.

Yet even if the PCs resist the urge to open the portal to Kakishon, they are not necessarily safe. Proximity is only one way in which the vortex selects those destined to be pulled into Kakishon—those who have handled the *Scroll of Kakishon* and have spent a lot of time in its presence can also be drawn into the vortex, even if they aren't in close proximity when the map is activated. If one or two PCs refuse to take part in the opening of the portal, they won't get left behind when the others start the adventure. Should all of the PCs decide to pass on opening the portal, Rayhan does so on his own as soon as he can get ahold of the scroll.

Other Paths Than These

So what do you do if your players find a way to avoid triggering the *Scroll of Kakishon*? Worse, what do you do if you realize that your players are going to resent you for "forcing" them to go on this adventure?

In this case, it's best to do a bit of creative reworking of this plotline. For a while, let the PCs take control of the plot. If they eventually get around to opening the *Scroll of Kakishon*, all is for the best and you can fire up the adventure. If, on the other hand, they sell the scroll or give it away or simply leave it with Rayhan and leave the city in search of new adventure, let them. Run them through a short side adventure, and then have the PCs hear rumors of a terrific explosion back in the city of Katapesh. Soon thereafter, tales of an army of genies emerging from the explosion should draw the PCs back in, whereupon they can learn that their friend Rayhan has gone missing and a host of genies has marched into Katapesh. At this point, you can fall back on the Handy NPC (I recommend using Kazim from the previous adventure), who tells the PCs that the artifact they brought into the city has exploded, leaving in its wake a strange portal into a stranger realm—a portal that she hires the PCs to investigate, and a portal that leads them directly into their first encounter in Kakishon.



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Legacy of Fire: Chapter 4

The End of Eternity



*R*akishon. A legendary world said to be a paradise, yet none living today can truthfully point to its location on any map, nor can they attest to having visited its mystic shores. Indeed, Kakishon appears only on one map in all the world, and this map contains much more than a route.

This is the Scroll of Kakishon, and it is the doorway to this fabled land; he who carries the scroll carries all of Kakishon. Created ages ago by the wizard-king Nex at the height of his powers, Kakishon was to be his masterwork, his vacation palace, his showplace to allies, and even his final resting place. Yet war with Geb turned Nex's attentions away, and in time, the Scroll of Kakishon was lost.

Until now.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Even before Nex forged his own empire south of Katapesh, he was working magics unlike any the world had yet seen. The hidden realm of Kakishon is credited to him as one of his greatest works, but in truth, Nex did not build this realm from scratch—he merely sought out and enslaved those who could.

Between the Outer Planes lies the Maelstrom, an eternal entropy of limbo and chaos that represents what would exist without existence. This is the realm of the proteans, an ancient race (perhaps even the first race) of creatures who understand the nature of reality by dint of their dwelling in reality's unmaking. When Nex seized upon the concept of creating his own world, he traveled to the Maelstrom and captured a small army of proteans. And in truth, that he was able to capture so many, contain them, and bend them to his will is a feat not much less impressive than creating a world.

Nex forced his enslaved proteans to take the smallest portion of the Maelstrom and to fold it in upon itself. They created a bubble of unreality, and under Nex's direction, sealed this bubble away from the rest of creation. Nex brought into this bubble of creation four "seeds" of matter from the Elemental Planes: a sphere of air, a globe of water, a vortex of fire, and a block of stone—the fundamental building blocks of reality. And outside, Nex wove his own magic to transform this bubble into something that could exist in reality—a parchment scroll. His protean slaves set to the task of working against their very natures to organize the chaos and create a world within that corresponded to Nex's demands, building from the four elemental seeds. From the sphere of air they created an atmosphere that could be breathed. From the globe of water they created the oceans. From the vortex of fire they created a false sun in the heavens above. And from the block of earth they grew dozens of islands great and small. When the proteans were done, and Nex entered Kakishon for the first time, what he found far exceeded his wildest hopes. He could see how the proteans lingered at the edge of reality within Kakishon, how they watched their creation with shame and wrath, their need to unmake what had been made held barely in check. And so Nex finalized the world by banishing the proteans beyond the end of eternity, sealing them forever within the unformed nothing that lies beyond the map's edge.

The proteans safely bound, Nex had his paradise, one filled with exhibitions of flora both exotic and mundane. Islands of ice and deserts and jungles and more stood in convenient proximity to each other, giving the realm a wide range of possibilities. Nex populated his islands with all manner of creatures big and small, as well as a

variety of constructs and bound elemental creatures, each suited to the particular island upon which it resided. He even created a network of animated Nexian galleys to ferry visitors from one island to the next in comfort and luxury, and for a few blissful years the archipelago of Kakishon served its purpose well. Honored guests of the archwizard were escorted to its edenic shores, some to simply luxuriate in his manicured pleasure palace, some to observe the marvels of its diversity and variety, and some to test their mettle in battle or in the hunt, daring devious challenges conceived and constructed by Nex and his minions. Yet not all of Kakishon's islands were for visitors and willing guests; in some cases, Nex sought to imprison enemies as well. Nex even began construction of what would have been a sizable tomb for himself on one island, yet before he could get far on this final construction, reality once again intruded.

Nex's war with Geb drew his attention away from Kakishon, and eventually the wonder, as happened to so many other incredible creations, lay forgotten in his stronghold. Sometime after Nex vanished from Golarion, the *Scroll of Kakishon* fell into the hands of a looter, and from there passed through countless owners. A few discovered the secret of entering the realm within, but most did not. Cut off from the world, Kakishon continued to exist as it always had—until it came into the possession of a brilliant wizard named Andrathi.

Yet Andrathi did not wish to use Kakishon as a place to relax—for the first time, all of Kakishon would be used as a prison. Andrathi spent months working at deciphering the map's keys, and had not yet fully mastered the magic when the time to strike came. His target was the efreeti warlord Jhavlul, a terror that Andrathi's lover, the djinni Nefeshti, had long warred against. Andrathi's hope was to steal into Jhavlul's camp and tear open Kakishon, to create a vortex that would draw in and imprison Jhavlul and his army of genies. Yet Andrathi did not fully understand how Kakishon worked and he underestimated its power; when he tore open the portal, he was pulled in as well, and when the portal closed, he was trapped in Kakishon as surely as his enemy. In the outer world, a craven gnoll stole away with the *Scroll of Kakishon* and hid it, and for the centuries to follow, it remained lost—Nefeshti went mad with grief over the loss of her lover, and the name of Jhavlul receded into that of obscure legend.

Yet within Kakishon, things have been anything but stable. Jhavlul and his army quickly laid claim to several of the world's islands, and for a time they were united with the drive to find Andrathi and draw from him the secret to escape. Yet when Jhavlul finally cornered Andrathi on the Isle of the Dead, the efreeti's rage took hold and he killed the wizard, forever denying him access to Andrathi's lore. This event fractured Jhavlul's command, and the genies

Advancement Track

Characters should be 9th level when they begin “The End of Eternity.” By the time the PCs decide to seek out Andrathi’s fate or are ready to move against the shaitan warlord Obherak, they should be 10th level. They should reach 11th level by the adventure’s end.

fell into a terrible civil war split between those of fire and those of earth. And such remains the state of things when the *Scroll of Kakishon* is found again, this time by a band of heroes. Yet one more thing has changed—when Andrathi tore open reality, he damaged it. The proteans, once bound into the outer dark beyond the end of eternity, can now use pools of raw entropy to temporarily project themselves into Kakishon for short periods of time, and although their ability to reshape and destroy Kakishon has continued to be held in check, those wards are fading too. Soon, the proteans will be able to travel without limitation from beyond the map’s edge, adding a terrible new element to the genie wars within as they attempt to see to the final destruction of what has been both their greatest creation and their prison for untold centuries.

Adventure Summary

When next Kakishon is opened, a tremendous vortex pulls the PCs into the realm within and releases many of Jhavhul’s forces into the city of Katapesh. Stranded in a strange new world, the PCs must explore in order to find a way to escape. In so doing, they quickly become involved in the war between the genies and the proteans—both factions hold clues and fragments of the methods required to escape, yet while they are at war, neither side can realize its goals. The PCs must choose which side of the war to ally with, or none at all—and in so doing, they might just unravel some of the truth about the horrific evil they have unwittingly released into their own world.

PART ONE: KAKISHON

Kakishon is a closed demiplane, cut off from the rest of existence via the powerful reality-reshaping powers of a small army of enslaved proteans. While Kakishon follows many of the implied rules of the Material Plane (gravity works the same, for example), there are three things in this realm that function differently—entropy, planar connections, and time.

Mildly Chaotic: Kakishon is falling apart. Eventually, the entire demiplane will disincorporate into a swirling maelstrom of matter and energy in which very little but

the captured proteans can survive for long. For now, even though the demiplane is still mostly stable, the growing entropy makes Kakishon mildly chaotic-aligned; lawfully aligned characters in Kakishon take a –2 penalty on all Charisma-based checks as a result.

Planar Connections: Although Kakishon is cut off from all other planes, it does have its own “version” of an Astral Plane—this realm is known as Andakami, or the “Isles of Not,” the unused possibility of the unformed left over from when the proteans created Kakishon so long ago. Planar travel into or out of Kakishon is close to impossible while Andakami exists, and only the destruction of Kakishon can destroy Andakami. Each cannot exist without the other.

Thus, while spells that allow travel between the planes or rely upon connections with most other planes do not work in Kakishon, those that utilize the Astral Plane and the Shadow Plane themselves still function after a fashion, although they draw upon Andakami and not the typical plane. Spells that rely on connections to the Ethereal Plane do not function at all in Kakishon. Creatures that exist partially on the Ethereal plane, such as ghosts, cannot manifest in Kakishon. Note that incorporeality itself does not require a connection to the Ethereal, and thus most incorporeal creatures other than ghosts function normally in Kakishon. This lack of planar connection also prevents all spells of the calling subschool from functioning, and prevents spells that rely upon existing planar connections from working. The various *planar binding* and *planar ally* spells do not work here unless they target a creature that can be found in Kakishon. *Plane shift* doesn’t work at all, but *gate* is powerful enough to create a portal between the worlds (unfortunately, no creatures in Kakishon can cast this powerful spell). Spells that banish creatures to their own planes (such as *dismissal* or *banishment*) do not function properly at all—a creature that would normally be banished is instead stunned for 1 round. Summoning spells function normally, as they tap into the raw potential of Andakami and can summon objects and creatures from there, but such spells last only half as long and are more difficult to cast than normal.

Use these guidelines to adjudicate the effects of other spells beyond the core rules to which the PCs might have access. As a general rule, spells should work unless they require access to the Ethereal Plane, and should not allow escape from Kakishon.

Time: While those within Kakishon perceive time to flow normally, it is somewhat detached from the time flow of the rest of the multiverse. Over extended periods, the passage of time in Kakishon is, on average, identical to the passage of time in the rest of the multiverse, but during shorter stays the timeflow is more erratic. Some visitors to Kakishon might find that during their week-long stay, only a single day has passed when they emerge from Kakishon,

while others might find that several weeks have passed. This should have relatively little impact on the PCs, though—the uneven flow of time is merely a plot device to give Jhavhul enough time to conquer Kelmarane and get a head start on rebuilding his lair under Pale Mountain, but at the same time to prevent him from having enough time to achieve his goal. Put simply: no matter how long the PCs spend in “End of Eternity,” the events in the final adventure of Legacy of Fire progress unchanged.

Waypoints and Travel

PCs may use their own resources to travel from island to island, but each major island also features a Waypoint—a stone pier and small domed building crafted of polished yellow marble and alabaster. When Kakishon was functioning properly, these Waypoints were the points of arrival and departure for visitors. Once, a person could walk out upon a Waypoint’s short pier and simply will himself back to the real world by concentrating on the *Scroll of Kakishon*, but Andrathi’s tampering with the scroll destroyed this quality, effectively turning Kakishon into the prison he’d hoped it would be for Jhavhul and his genies. As a result, the end of each Waypoint pier is crumbling, blackened, and ruined, as if the last several feet of the pier had been burned away by an impossibly hot fire.

Each Waypoint is furnished with magical basins that produce food, water, and plush bedding upon command, though any items created dissolve into nothing if removed from the hostel. In addition, anyone with a special charm can call for a magical ship to ferry him from island to island. These ships are a magical wonder—self-propelled galleys, each staffed by a single ram-headed helmsman of enchanted brass. When a boat is called for, it arrives in 2d6 × 10 minutes, then waits at the pier for an hour. A character with a galley charm can then select her destination by naming the Waypoint to which she wishes to travel—otherwise, the galley sails to Kakishon’s Waypoint.

Galley charms come in many shapes. The first one the PCs are likely to find is in the shape of a horn taken from the head of the magical beast known as the Golden Ram. By blowing the horn aloud from the end of a Waypoint pier, a Nexian galley can be summoned. If the PCs elect not to take part in the hunt in Part Two, they can eventually discover other charms (although in this event, they’ll likely need to engineer their own method of travel from island to island for a few journeys). If they secure the aid of the shaitan Dilix Mahad in Part Three, she’ll grant the PCs a charm in the shape of a genie lamp that calls forth a galley when the lamp is rubbed while the user stands at a pier.

In addition, numerous single-use galley charms exist as well. These charms were given by Nex to

Magic in Kakishon

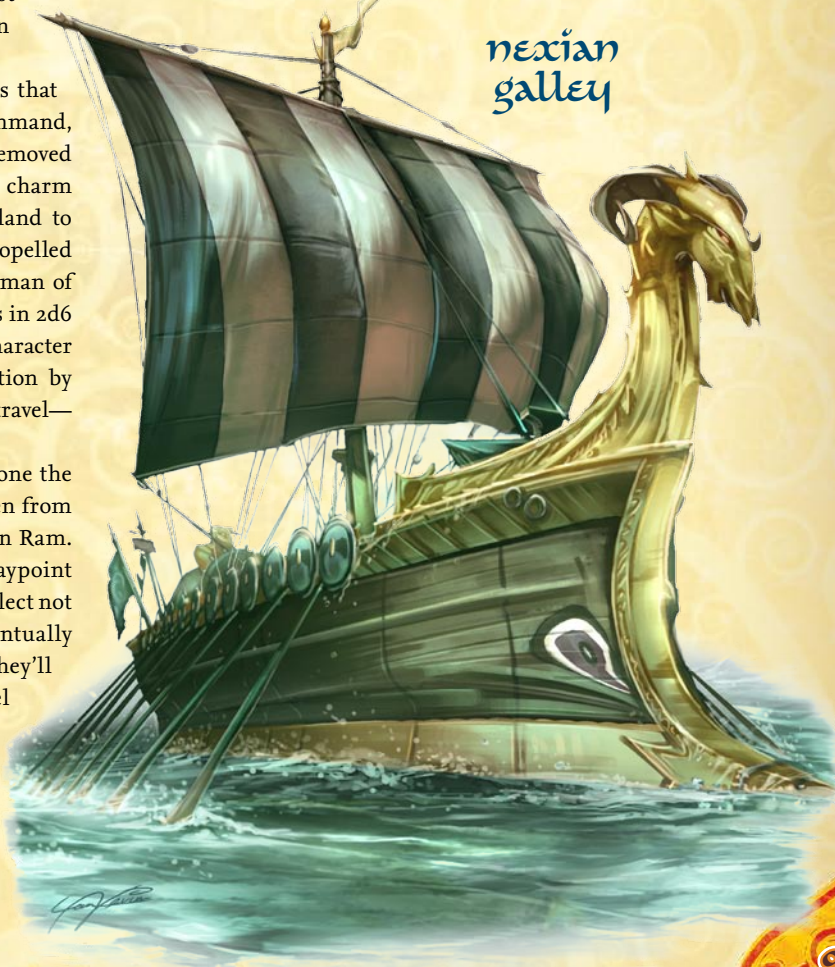
Prohibited Magic: The following spells do not function at all when cast within Kakishon: *astral projection*, *blink*, *ethereal jaunt*, *etherealness*, *phase door*, *secret chest*.

Hampered Magic: The following spells have their durations halved when cast in Kakishon, and require DC 20 Caster Level checks to be cast at all: *creeping doom*, *elemental swarm*, *insect plague*, *instant summons*, *mount*, *storm of vengeance*, *summon instrument*, all *summon monster* spells, all *summon nature’s ally* spells, *summon swarm*, and *trap the soul*.

Limited Magic: The following spells require a successful DC 15 Caster Level check to be cast within Kakishon: *dimension door*, *greater shadow conjuration*, *greater teleport*, *project image*, *shades*, *shadow conjuration*, *shadow evocation*, *shadow walk*, *teleport*, and *teleportation circle*.

Altered Magic: *Dismissal*, *banishment*, and other effects that attempt to force non-natives of Kakishon back to their home planes do not function properly. Instead of banishing a target, the effect (if successful) merely stuns the creature for a round.

nexian
galley



visitors so they could travel from island to island, but since they were single use, Nex could control how often visitors used his magical ships. These charms appear as small bejeweled flying animals (usually bats, birds, or winged snakes) attached to an iron ring via a length of chain. To be used, a charm need only be dipped into the water from the end of a pier, whereupon the charm melts, leaving behind a valueless iron ring and summoning a Nexian galley in the process. Each of these single-use charms are worth 100 gp unused, and they sometimes appear in treasure stashes in Kakishon. In addition, the first time the PCs visit a Waypoint (with the exception of the Sarygamysh Waypoint), there's 50% chance of finding 1d3 single-use charms hanging on a peg on the wall inside the Waypoint's hostel.

NEXIAN GALLEY

CR 10

Colossal animated object (MM 14)

hp 256 (hardness 5)

Speed swim 60 ft. (cannot go underwater)

NEXIAN HELMSMAN

CR 3

Large animated object (MM 14)

hp 52 (hardness 5)

Speed 30 ft.

The Archipelago

Kakishon holds a bewildering array of islands, each with specialized environments originally designed for the entertainment of Nex and his guests or the punishment of his prisoners. Not all of these islands

are visited in the course of "The End of Eternity," but this section provides enough information about them so that if the PCs do wish to go exploring, you'll have a good idea of what to present them when they get there. The islands of Kakishon are not particularly large, yet their environments and ecology are magically sustained as something of a living museum, pleasure park, and hunting preserve. The environments for each island extend to approximately a quarter-mile (1,320 feet) from the isle's shore. Weather patterns and temperature effects swiftly return to Kakishon's natural balmy conditions beyond this range—the open seas of Kakishon are always gentle and comfortably warm.

Aliskiren: Perhaps the most marvelous of Kakishon's islands is Aliskiren, a perpetual winterland bedecked with icicles and snow in the midst of a tropic sea. Mephits flit about in the cold winds and snow flurries of Aliskiren, herding and taunting the cryohydras and remorhazes that hunt the ice-rifts, and keeping them clear of frolicking guests.

Andakami: Sometimes referred to as the "Isles of Not" or "The End of Eternity," Andakami is the shadowy realm that exists beyond the edge of the map. The placid, sun-drenched tropic seas of the Kakishon archipelago extend to the horizon, but the farther one travels from the islands the more pale and wan the sun appears, like a fading sunset that drifts into misty twilight. Eventually, the cataract of world's end can be heard in the distance, and sea and sky merge into nebulous haze. The formless void that exists beyond the edge is the realm to which Nex banished his protean army. It is said the Isles of Not cannot be found save by those who already know where they are, for they are not tied to any one place but float wherever in the voidspace the proteans need them to be, and that one who sails beyond the map's edge without such a guide could be lost forever.

Ismaizade: This small, crescent-shaped island is bedecked with a forest of crystal. The harmonic ringing that rises from wind blowing across this crystalscape gives the island its other name—the Singing Isle. This land is ruled by families of xorn, which tend to the crystals as both a form of art and a source of food.

Isle of the Dead: Located between Kakishon and Khandelwal, this island was at one point of great import, as it was to be the location of the Mausoleum of Nex. Although Nex never completed the construction of his crypt, the isle remains a place of reflection and remembrance, of tears and of wisdom. Some say the spirits of Nex's advisors endure in his tomb, bound to serve him in death but never joined by their master. The Isle of the Dead was the site of a terrific battle many decades ago, when Jhavhul confronted Andrathi here before brutally murdering him. Although his



the end of eternity



Kakishon

- Point of Interest
 - Waypoint
- One inch = 40 miles



spirit has long since gone on to its final rest, Andrathi's presence still lingers on the Isle in the form of his familiar, Spooky.

The Isles of Night: Whereas the rest of Kakishon has a regular day/night cycle, the four Isles of Night lie under the Arc of Night, an eternal shroud crafted by Nex that bathes the islands and the channels between in perpetual twilight. The subtlety of the enchantment still enables plants to grow and thrive despite the shroud, but the islands teem with dark-loving wildlife and vermin, from bats and giant owls soaring above to centipedes, ettercaps, and krenshars prowling below. The largest of the Isles of Night is Rukhsana, with its sister Rishindra lying to the south and west, just off the tip of Kakishon. The smaller isles of Farahani and Demirji trail in their wake toward the Serpent Isles, and are often visited by gnoll outriggers from those islands.

Kakishon: The namesake island of this pocket paradise, tropical Kakishon is flanked by numerous smaller islands—the Mermaid's Necklace to the southwest and Arinze and Marwah to the east. Kakishon and its neighbors are richly forested, with a spine of low mountains running the main island's length. Griffons roost in Kakishon's heights, while monkeys, apes, tigers, and wild animals of all kinds dwell among the trees. The dominant feature of Kakishon is the grand Pleasure Palace of Nex.

Khandelwal: Even in the midst of a verdant paradise, Nex knew some of his guests would miss the shifting desert sands, so he created Khandelwal, the Isle of Sand Rivers. Rimmed with a quarter-mile-wide ring of jungle, the interior of this island is a large and eternally shifting desert.

Khosravi: Also known as the Isle of Flint, this barren and rugged land was a place where any could test their skill and strength against animated war machines and shifting terrain. The island was also a trophy of sorts, for it was here that Nex impaled the mortal remains of the Eater of Magic, a mighty beast sent against him by Geb early in the war with his southern neighbor. Today, the isle is a graveyard of ruined weapons and destroyed constructs. An active volcano rises from the isle of Salenax just to the southeast, connected to Khosravi via the Phoenix Bridge.

The Serpent Isles: This ring of 3 islands (Sarygamysh in the north, Sorrer in the south, and the small island of Azzabes in the east) surrounds a large sea. Designed as a hunting ground, these isles teem with serpents and hydras of all sorts, as well as an enchanted golden ram that Nex devised to challenge the greatest hunters. A small clan of feral gnolls also survives here, descendants of deserters from Jhavhul's army and survivors of the massacre of their kin by the proteans.

Minor Islands

There are many tiny islands scattered around the archipelago. These islands typically share the environment

of whatever island is nearest to them. At the GM's discretion, PCs may be able to direct a Nexian galley to visit one of them, and each island may have its own Waypoint, if little else of consequence.

Denizens of Kakishon

For the past several centuries the genie armies of Jhavhul have waged war on the proteans, yet the war was in large part a stalemate—a situation further complicated when the shaitans (earth genies) of Jhavhul's army rebelled against their leader and relocated to the desert isle of Khandelwal. With three factions all seeking the others' destruction, no one faction felt safe enough to strike against another, for fear of the third group taking advantage of the situation.

When the PCs open Kakishon, Jhavhul rules the Pleasure Palace of Nex on the central isle. After centuries of being alert for any chance to escape, he's ready to move the instant after the PCs open the portal. He brings with him his army of jann and efreet, leaving a only a few of his minions behind. The shaitans are slow to respond to this event, but the proteans are not; they swiftly take actions to contact the PCs and attempt to recruit them in the battle against the earth genies.

The shaitan genie was first detailed in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #18. Several different shaitans appear in the current adventure, and their stats are reprinted in full below. For more information about shaitan society, personality, beliefs, and additional notes, consult the bestiary in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #18 and "Tales and Truths of Genies" in *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #21.

SHAITAN GENIE

CR 7

LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar) (*Pathfinder* #18)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +14,

Spot +14

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 10, flat-footed 19

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

hp 58 (9d8+18)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8

Immune electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +12 (2d6+12)

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

Special Attacks metalmorph, *plane shift*, stone curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—*quicken glitterdust* (DC 14), *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*

1/day—*stone tell*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

TACTICS

Before Combat Shaitans will always use *stoneskin* before entering

battle. If they have a chance to pick their battlegrounds, they prepare with *soften earth and stone* or *transmute rock to mud*. They are fond of using *meld into stone* to lie in wait to ambush foes as well.

During Combat Shaitans use *wall of stone* to partition the battlefield or trap enemies, using stone glide to bypass their own walls and move in to attack trapped foes. They also use *transmute mud to rock* to trap enemies mired in mud that they have previously created. Shaitans use *glitterdust* to reveal invisible creatures that they detect with their tremorsense.

Morale Shaitans fight with a single-minded fury when pursuing a goal, but they are not particularly brave and use their stone glide ability to flee any combat in which they drop below 20 hit points, unless they're bound by magic to fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 13, **Con** 15, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +21

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*glitterdust*)

Skills Appraise +14 (+19 against gems, metal, and stone), Bluff +12, Concentration +14, Craft (gemcutting) +19, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +19, Listen +14, Profession (miner) +19, Search +14 (+19 in stonework), Sense Motive +14, Spot +14

Languages Celestial, Common, Ignan, Terran

SQ earth mastery, stone glide

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Earth Mastery (Ex) Shaitans gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and opposed Strength-based checks (such as grapple and bull rush) when both they and their opponent are standing on any stone or earthen surface.

Metalmorph (Su) As a standard action, a shaitan may touch any single metal object of no more than 10 pounds and transform it into any other metal, including adamantine, mithril, cold iron, silver, or gold. Transformed metal remains transformed as long as the shaitan remains in contact with the metal, and for 1 day after the shaitan releases the object. A shaitan may use this ability to warp and deform any one metal object within 20 feet. This functions like *warp wood*, but affects only metal objects that fail a DC 16 Fortitude save (attended objects use their wielder's saves). Armor or shields lose half their bonus to AC (enhancement bonuses are unaffected), and weapons are rendered useless save as improvised clubs. The transformation lasts 1 minute, after which the affected metal reverts to its normal state. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Plane Shift (Sp) Like all genies, shaitans can enter any of the elemental planes, the Astral Plane, or the Material Plane via *plane shift*, taking up to 8 additional creatures (caster level 13th).

Stone Curse (Su) If a shaitan wins a bull rush check by 5 or more and pushes its target into a stone, metal, or crystal barrier, the target must make a DC 22 Reflex save or be forced into the barrier as if the target had cast *meld into stone* to merge with the object. The victim cannot exit the stone voluntarily unless he takes a full-round action to make a successful DC

What About Rayhan?

When the PCs are drawn into Kakishon, chances are excellent that Rayhan comes with them. Whether he does or doesn't is, in the end, up to you—as is the fate of any other NPC allies the PCs may have nearby when they open the portal. If you think the PCs could use the extra help and you don't mind running a few extra NPCs, send whomever you wish with the PCs, Rayhan included. Yet if you don't want to bother with keeping track of those NPCs, feel free to have the portal only pull in the PCs—in this case, you can have Rayhan show up in the last Legacy of Fire adventure as a prisoner of Jhavhul for the PCs to rescue.

22 Fortitude save. Other creatures can use physical damage to the stone or magic spells to expel the trapped individual in the same way one can force someone out of *meld into stone*. The save DCs are Strength-based.

Stone Glide (Su) Shaitans can move through stone, dirt, crystal, or metal as easily as a fish swims through water, using their burrow speed. This burrowing leaves behind no tunnel or hole or any other sign of passage. A *move earth* spell cast on an area containing a burrowing shaitan flings it back 30 feet, stunning the creature for 1 round unless it succeeds on a DC 15 Fortitude save. This ability does not grant the shaitan the ability to ignore damage from weapons made of stone, metal, or crystal, nor does it grant any protection against earth-based magic.

Skills Shaitans gain a +5 racial bonus on Craft (gemcutting), Knowledge (architecture and engineering), and Profession (miner) checks. They gain a +5 racial bonus on Appraise and Search checks made against stone or gem subjects.

PART TWO: THE HUNT

This adventure begins when the PCs decide to activate the *Scroll of Kakishon*. The Foreword to this volume of *Pathfinder Adventure Path* provides advice on how to build up to this event if your PCs seem hesitant to take matters into their own hands, but in most cases, you should be able to rely on player curiosity to get them to activate the scroll. And if that's not enough, you might want to have Rayhan (the sage the PCs consulted in the previous adventure) remind them of the strong possibility of powerful treasure hidden within—Kakishon was, after all, inhabited by one of Golarion's most powerful wizards!

The process of opening the portal is relatively simple. First, the actual map must be laid bare by one of the methods detailed on page 9 of "The Jackal's Price" (if the PCs leave this step to their friend Rayhan, he does so by casting *comprehend languages* on the artifact). Next, one

Meanwhile, Back in Katapesh...

For the duration of this adventure and the next, the PCs are destined to be trapped in strange lands far from home. Yet while they will not be returning to Katapesh until the final adventure in Legacy of Fire, events proceed apace there while the PCs work their way through Kakishon and, later, Jhavlul's palace in the City of Brass.

During this time, Jhavlul and his army of genies burst into the city of Katapesh, immediately alerting the city defenses. The Pactmasters move swiftly, and using the greatest weapon in their arsenal—their wealth—they swiftly reach an accord with Jhavlul and pay him a healthy bribe to leave the city unharmed. Jhavlul takes the *Scroll of Kakishon*, left behind when the PCs were pulled inside, with him. Over the next several weeks, Jhavlul retreats to the Brazen Peaks, sending out disguised janni spies to learn about what has passed while he was imprisoned. He sends several of his agents back to the City of Brass, both to secure the *Scroll of Kakishon* in a vault in his palace and to find out if it's safe for him to return—it's not, and the scroll and Jhavlul's agents are caught in the palace by a magical trap placed there by the Sultan of the City of Brass, who has seized Jhavlul's holdings (see the next adventure, "The Impossible Eye," for more details). Warned of this by a brief message from one of his agents, Jhavlul decides to return to Pale Mountain and finish his plan to waken and absorb the power that is Xotani the Firebleeder—and when he arrives, he conquers the town of Kelmarane to serve as a base of operations for his army.

need only touch the seven major island regions on the map in the proper order, naming each in turn: "Serpent Isles, Khosravi, Khandelwal, Ismaizade, Aliskiren, Isles of Night, Kakishon." This done, the *Scroll of Kakishon* would normally begin to glimmer and glow, and the map itself would resolve into something more akin to a window looking out over Kakishon at a great height, and by pointing to one of the many Wayports, a person would be whisked away into the world within.

Yet the *Scroll of Kakishon* is damaged. Andrathi's violent use of the scroll to create a vortex to capture Jhavlul and his army undid some of the wards on the world within, allowing the banished proteans to begin working at the underlying supports of reality like acid on the key joints of a massive building. Even before the PCs finish the activation, something seems wrong. Smoke starts to curl up from the map, and the smell of sulfur and burning leather fills the air. A few moments later, an incredible blast of fire and smoke explodes from the map—read or paraphrase the following to the PCs as the portal explodes.

With a sudden explosion of light and sound, the world becomes engulfed in fire. The ground itself seems to give way, and suddenly you are falling, falling through a vortex of fire, plummeting into the throat of a volcano. The pain tears through your flesh, yet still is strangely less overwhelming than what one might expect of a cataclysm this all-encompassing. A sense of vertigo overwhelms even the fire and noise, and the sensation of falling grows into a tempest of burning wind.

And then, in the flaming clouds and firestorm around you, shapes begin to emerge. Men and women made of fire and smoke—adorned with glittering jewelry and wielding scimitars made of fire, their faces twisted masks of glory and cruelty—rise up through the firestorm just as you are falling. Some of them seem to notice and mock you as you fall before they surge upward and out of sight. And then comes the last of them, a towering, burning warrior with great horns and a cruel, curved sword. This immense figure notices you as well, and even takes the time to smile sardonically as he bows in mockery, as if thanking you for a service you provided. And then, with a flash, he is gone as well, trailing behind him a noxious plume of burning ash and searing cinders.

The PCs have witnessed the genie army's release—the last and largest of these figures being the efreeti warlord Jhavlul himself. A DC 18 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the burning men as efreet, while a DC 30 Knowledge (history) check identifies the largest as an obscure but legendary efreeti warlord named Jhavlul who, according to legend, was imprisoned centuries ago in a world beyond the world. After they pass, the PCs' horrific descent continues. While locked in the vortex, the PCs are helpless to take action, but as they fall, things that are familiar to them form out of the fire as well, as if phantoms and memories from the real world are trying to take form. Characters pulled into the vortex without their gear find themselves suddenly outfitted for adventure. Animal companions and cohorts and familiars who may have been elsewhere are suddenly at their side. Even PCs who decided to avoid the triggering of the *Scroll of Kakishon* find themselves suddenly plummeting into the vortex. Kakishon is not without pity, it would seem, and while the PCs are being pulled into a prison, that same prison is providing them with everything they need to survive. Give the PCs a moment to let you know what objects and companions they wish to bring with them, limiting such options to objects the PCs already own or companions they've already befriended. Finally, when they're satisfied with their selection, their harrowing journey comes to an end. Read or paraphrase the following, adjusting as appropriate for your particular PCs.

As suddenly as it began, the vortex of fire is no more. For a moment, you can see nothing, hear nothing, feel nothing. But then, sensation slowly returns. The sound of waves crashing on

a shore; the feel of a warm breeze and the grit of a bed of sand; the smell of salt air and strange exotic flowers—all these and more slowly fill the world. As your vision clears, you behold an idyllic tropical bay. Behind you rises a hilly junglescape rife with birdlife and snakes and strange flowers. Across a shallow inlet, more of the island rises, its slopes covered with jungle as well. Above, the sky is cloudless and blue while some distance down the beach stand a pier and a small stone hut—the only signs of civilization. Of the vortex of fire itself, there is no sign.

Once, travelers to Kakishon could select their destinations, but now that the world is starting to come apart, the PCs have no control over where they land—they arrive a few hundred feet away from the Waypoint, on the isle of Sarygamysh in the Serpent Isles.

Creature: Give the PCs a few moments to compose themselves, look around, and realize what has happened. Before they have a chance to start exploring their new world, though, a rude and hungry introduction is due. The coastal waters off the Serpent Isles are the hunting grounds for hydras, and one such beast is quite near and attracted to the sudden flash of light that signals the PCs' arrival. The hydra is hardly a subtle foe, and the PCs should not be surprised as the immense six-headed monster surges up out of the surf to attack.

SIX-HEADED HYDRA

hp 66 (MM 156)

CR 5

Treasure: The hydra's nest is, in fact, in a small cave under the nearby pier at the Waypoint. An investigation of this cave reveals a low mound of sand, vegetation, and partially eaten meals (including a pair of half-eaten gnolls). Between them, the gnolls possess 10 pieces of coral worth 10 gp each—their armor and weapons are ruined or missing.

Strange Introductions

Not long after the PCs defeat the hydra, but before they take it upon themselves to explore their surroundings, another visitor lumbers up from the gently rolling surf. Yet this is no foe to be fought—rather, it is one of the factions fighting for control of Kakishon. While the shaitan genies are not “tuned in” to the rhythms of reality and thus don't immediately “feel” the PCs' arrival in the demiplane, the same is not the case for the proteans. When the PCs arrive in Kakishon, the dwellers beyond the edge of the world take note, and they are curious. Unwilling to meet with strangers, they instead wish to put the PCs through a test, watching and evaluating their actions to determine if they would make good allies in the war with the genies.

The current leader of the exiled proteans is an imentesh named Lahaprasēt—while the PCs are fighting the hydra, Lahaprasēt uses the entropy pool in area A4 to travel to the Sarygamysh Waypoint, after assuming the form of a sea turtle as a disguise. As she flops up onto the shore to greet the PCs, trusting her innocuous shape to keep them from attacking, she watches and waits to see what the PCs do. Lahaprasēt's initial goal is to determine if the PCs' curiosity and temper are such that they would be capable of reasonable discussion, or if they are merely mindless slayers and killers. If the PCs attack, the “turtle” simply regards them with an expression of mixed disappointment and anger before resuming its true form as a free action, and then vanishes as she's recalled back to area A4.

If the PCs do not attack, the “turtle” looks at each of them in turn, and then coughs a tiny scroll tube up onto the sand before it turns and begins waddling back into the



Long ago, visitors to these islands received a greeting from the Imprisoner. You shall receive the same.

"Greetings and welcome, brave hunters, to the serpent Isles. Here you will find a hunt to satisfy your thirst for challenge, danger, and adventure, a tale to be told as you relax at the Pleasure Palace. Your task is simple: you must hunt down the Golden Ram and take its horn. There are many challenges to be faced on these islands, but only by sounding the ram's horn can you call back the ship that will bear thee hence. Do not think to cheat the hunt, as the Golden Ram is under my protection; this is a test of skill and skill alone, of courage and cunning, not raw power. One ram's horn you must sound and present to the boatman to gain passage. The other horn is yours to keep, as a trophy and reward for your daring. May Fate smile upon you and guide your aim." The Imprisoner is gone now. But his world remains. A world we created. You have only just arrived but we must know if you are ally or enemy, capable or inept. Complete the Imprisoner's task and we shall have a greater one for you, one to help fulfill your heart's desire. Give this egg to the boatman, and he will bring you directly to us. We have much to discuss.

Handout 1

sea. If the PCs attempt to prevent the turtle from leaving, it simply allows the entropy pool to recall her, returning her to area A4.

The scroll tube is under the effects of a *shrink item* spell, as a DC 23 Spellcraft check reveals. Inside the scroll tube, the PCs find two objects. The first is a message written on strange parchment that feels weirdly cool to the touch. This message is reproduced as Handout 1. The second object is a small blue egg with brown spots on one end—this "egg" is in fact a magical key the PCs can use to travel beyond the Edge of Eternity, as detailed in Part Four.

LAHAPRASET

CR 10

Immentesh protean (see page 84)

hp 136

The Hunt

The party will need to explore all of the Serpent Isles in the search for the Golden Ram, as it wanders throughout the islands, ignored by the other inhabitants. *Water walk* gives it the ability to move among all three of the isles, but it does not wander to other islands in Kakishon. It has no set pattern to its travels and may be found anywhere, though it is somewhat more likely to be found in the Mistvaes than the other areas of the islands.

The Serpent Isles exhibit four predominant terrains: the jungle-covered hills of the Mistvaes, the swampy expanses of the Cranemarshes, the rolling plains of the Tall Grass, and white sand beaches. The hunting of the Golden Ram is accomplished via Survival checks made once per hour, with only the PC with the highest score in Survival making the check (other PCs can aid that PC with their own DC 10 Survival checks if they wish). The DC of the check varies, depending on the terrain the PCs are hunting in—some areas are safer to hunt in but have higher DC scores to

find traces of the Golden Ram, while other areas are more commonly traveled by the beast but are more dangerous. There are four possible results for Survival Checks, the exact DCs of which are set by the various islands.

Nothing: A check of this DC or lower indicates that no sign of the Golden Ram is apparent in the area. All further checks in this region suffer a cumulative -2 penalty for each result of "nothing," as it becomes increasingly unlikely that the Golden Ram is in the area.

Spoor: Faint traces of the Golden Ram are found, such as its droppings or faint traces of tracks. These aren't enough to actually track the Ram, but do indicate the creature has been in the area recently.

Tracks: The PCs discover the Golden Ram's trail! All further checks in this region gain a cumulative $+2$ bonus on the Survival checks—if anyone in the party has the Track feat, treat any further result of "Tracks" from a Survival check as a "Sighting" instead.

Sighting: All PCs may attempt a Spot check opposed by the Golden Ram's Hide check—the Spot checks are penalized by -10 due to the 100 feet of distance between the PCs and the Ram. If none of the PCs catches sight of the Golden Ram, treat this as a result of Tracks. Otherwise, the PCs can attempt to engage the beast (see "The Golden Ram" on page 18).

The Beaches

All of the Serpent Islands are ringed by beautiful beaches of brilliant white sand, backed by rows of palm and cypress and occasional tangled thickets of undergrowth and bamboo. There's a 10% chance per hour of a wandering monster encounter on the beaches (or per night spent camping here). Fully 50% of encounters on the beach are with a hydra, a giant constrictor snake, or 2d6 Bloodhunter gnolls—all others should be rolled using the table on page 77.

The Bloodhunter gnoll tribes dwell in crude huts on several beaches; these gnolls are the feral remnant of Jhavhul's gnoll armies, scourged by the proteans and abandoned by their former master. Their fur and armor are dyed in hideous patterns and decorated with shells, feathers, and tiny fetishes, and they eke out a marginal existence on the Serpent Isles, with a permanent encampment on the eastern island of Azzabes, hunting in the Tall Grass and venturing forth in their outriggers to hunt larger game. They have little interest in allying with the PCs, but they generally include a tracker among their groups—if the PCs can make peaceful contact with the hostile tribes, they could hire one such tracker to aid in their hunt. The gnolls know of the Golden Ram, and many have tried to catch the beast to harvest its treasures, but to date no gnoll has survived an encounter with the monster.

Hunting on the Beaches

Survival DC	Result
20	Nothing
30	Spoor
40	Tracks
50	Sighting

The Tall Grass

The eastern sections of the islands, including the whole of the small island of Azzabes, are broadly covered in lush grasses, in places only waist-high savannah grasses, but elsewhere topping the height of a full-grown human. These snake-infested fields are broken by small copses and thickets and tumbled rock formations sheltering pools of clear water. There's a 15% chance per hour of a wandering monster encounter in the Tall Grass (or per night spent camping here). Fully 50% of encounters here are with a hydra, a giant constrictor snake, or 1d4 Huge vipers—all others should be rolled using the table on page 77.

Hunting in the Tall Grass

Survival DC	Result
15	Nothing
20	Spoor
30	Tracks
40	Sighting

The Cranemarshes

The central portions of Sarygamysh and Sorrow are broad wetlands fed by streams descending from the Mistvales and melding into coastal saltmarsh. The marshes teem with life, from tiny fish and amphibians to snails, insects, and the omnipresent waterfowl and wading birds that feed on them—most spectacularly

the pink-plumed cranes and flamingos feasting upon tiny shrimp in the coastal saltmarshes. There's a 20% chance per hour of a wandering monster encounter in the Cranemarshes (or per night spent camping here). Fully 50% of encounters here are with a hydra, 1d3 giant constrictor snakes, or 1d6 Huge vipers—all others should be rolled using the table on page 77.

Hunting in the Cranemarshes

Survival DC	Result
10	Nothing
20	Spoor
25	Tracks
35	Sighting

The Mistvales

To the west, the land rises into a range of low hills split by many waterfalls and mist-shrouded vales, their streams criss-crossing the foot of the hills and feeding into the marshes below. The hills are crowned with thick, tangled forest and many caves and crevasses, but the girallons who dwell there venture only with great caution into the moss-slicked vales below where hydras dwell in numbers. The rocks of the Mistvales are perpetually damp and glistening, but when the sun strikes the hills at the proper angle, a cascade of rainbows is borne upon the clouds of mist thrown up by the unnumbered waterfalls. There's a 25% chance per hour of a wandering monster encounter in the Mistvales (or per night spent camping here). Fully 50% of encounters here are with 1d3 girallons, 1d3 giant constrictor snakes, a hydra, or 1d6 Huge vipers—all others should be rolled using the table on page 77.

Hunting in the Mistvales

Survival DC	Result
5	Nothing
15	Spoor
20	Tracks
30	Sighting

The Golden Ram (EL 10)

The Golden Ram is an ageless, eternal magical beast created long ago by Nex to serve as a great challenge to those guests who wanted to try their skill at the hunt. The creature is a gorgon whose armor plates have been transmuted to gold and whose body has been infused with numerous magical effects and powers. At one point, Nex himself could resurrect the Golden Ram after it had been slain, but now, if the PCs kill the magical beast, it stays dead.

Creatures that succumb to the Golden Ram's breath weapon turn not to stone but to gold, although this



condition is only temporary and such victims revert to normal after 24 hours (unless *break enchantment* or *stone to flesh* is used to free the victim before then)—a rude surprise to ruthless PCs who cut up a golden companion to make for easier transport.

THE GOLDEN RAM

CR 10

Elite spell-enhanced gold-clad gorgon (MM 137, *Advanced Bestiary* 169)

N Large magical beast

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; **Listen** +7, **Spot** +6

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 8, flat-footed 26

(+4 armor, -2 Dex, +1 haste, +14 natural, -1 size)

hp 100 (8d10+56)

Fort +13, **Ref** +5, **Will** +1; +8 against spells

Defensive Abilities freedom of movement, light fortification;

Immune mind-affecting effects; **Resist** fire 10

Weakness vulnerability to electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft., climb 40 ft.; *spider climb*, *water walk*

Melee gore +15/+15 (2d6+10)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (DC 21), trample 1d8+10 (DC 21)

TACTICS

During Combat When PCs encounter the Golden Ram and it becomes aware of their presence, it has a 50% chance to attack or flee. If it is damaged by a PC before it takes its action, it always chooses to attack. The Golden Ram opens with a trample through the densest grouping of enemies, then turns to use its breath weapon against those it trampled in the previous round. After that, it gores with its horns, using its breath weapon as it is able.

Morale The Golden Ram attempts to flee when reduced to less than 25 hit points using *spider climb* and *water walk* to throw off pursuit.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 7, **Con** 25, **Int** 4, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +19

Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (gore)

Skills Balance -6, Climb +3, Escape Artist -6, Hide -10, Jump +7, Listen +7, Move Silently -6, Sleight of Hand -6, Spot +6, Swim +3, Tumble -6

Languages Terran (cannot speak)

SQ spell-enhanced

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Light Fortification (Ex) Whenever a sneak attack or critical hit is

scored against the Golden Ram, there is a 25% chance the extra damage is negated.

Spell-Enhanced (Sp) Nex wove several magical spell effects into the Golden Ram's armor plates, enhancing the beast with the following effects (all at CL 20th): *freedom of movement*, *haste*, *mage armor*, *mind blank*, *protection from spells*, *spider climb*, and *water walk*. If a spell effect is dispelled, it is only suppressed for 1d4 rounds before it reactivates.

Vulnerability to Electricity (Ex) The Golden Ram takes half again as much damage as normal (+50%) from electricity.

Treasure: If the Golden Ram is slain, its body dissipates into a pile of golden dust, leaving behind seven golden armor plates and two curled ram's horns. The seven armor plates each bear a magical spell etched on the surface—each plate is 1 foot square, weighs 3 pounds, and can be used as a scroll. These scrolls function at CL 20th, and contain the seven spells listed above under the Golden Ram's Spell-Enhanced special ability.

Both ram horns are hollow and gold-plated. The right horn is inscribed with Nex's personal rune—this horn is a *horn of the golden draught*. The left horn is pierced at the tip, enabling it to be blown. This is a galley charm, and if sounded from the end of any Waypoint pier, it summons a Nexian galley.

PART THREE: THE PLEASURE PALACE OF NEX

The central island of Kakishon, from which the realm takes its name, is also the location of the largest structure in the realm—the Pleasure Palace of Nex. For many decades the lair of the efreeti warlord Jhavlul, the palace was destroyed when the efreeti and his army surged upward to escape Kakishon after the PCs opened the portal, and now all that remains of the once extensive palace is the partially collapsed central brass dome, along with a small complex of rooms facing the western shore now inhabited by the shaitan Dilix Mahad and a few of her jann and doppelganger servants left behind by a master who had grown tired of them.

If the PCs don't seek out this ruined building after speaking with Lahaprasat in Part Four, they might well come to the region anyway out of curiosity, for the crumbling, still-smoking ruin of the palace can be seen from miles around atop its jungle mountaintop. Likewise, if the PCs summon a Nexian galley yet fail to give it a destination, the galley automatically returns to the Kakishon Waypoint, which lies just down the mountainside from the ruined palace and is connected to the palace via a road of white marble stones.

Alternatively, the PCs could be summoned to the building by its current master, Dilix Mahad. Unlike her enemy

HORN OF THE GOLDEN DRAUGHT

Aura moderate transmutation; **CL** 10th

Slot —; **Price** 7,000 gp; **Weight** 5 lb.

DESCRIPTION

As a standard action, this gold-plated drinking horn can produce a golden draught. A creature that imbibes or is anointed with this liquid is freed from enchantments, transmutations, and curses as if subjected to a *break enchantment* spell. If the user suffers from no such conditions, her skin instead takes on a golden hue and becomes almost impervious to blows, as per *stoneskin*. A *horn of the golden draught* can produce up to five draughts of each version of the draught before it turns to brass and becomes nonmagical.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *break enchantment*, *stoneskin*; **Cost** 3,500 gp, 280 XP

Obherak, Dilix is not distracted by fears of the proteans, plots to rule Kakishon, or other matters, and as such she learns swiftly of the PCs' arrival in Kakishon after she recovers from being abandoned by Jhavlul and surviving the subsequent collapse of the Pleasure Palace. Through a combination of *stone tell* and reports from agents out on patrol, she learns that the vortex that allowed Jhavlul to escape also caught new prisoners. Eager to learn more, she sends one of her concubines, a doppelganger named Neshari, out on a Nexian galley to contact the PCs.

An Invitation to Kakishon (EL 11)

You can time this event as you wish. If the PCs seem to be content exploring Kakishon at their own pace, you can wait until they seem to be growing impatient or aimless for the adventure's plot to move on before having Neshari hail them. And if the PCs are already working for the proteans or Obherak and come to the ruined Pleasure Palace following Lahaprasat's advice, or if they simply happen to visit the ruins on their own, you may have no need of running this encounter at all.

It's best to have Neshari finally encounter the PCs on the sea, when both she and the PCs are aboard Nexian galleys. In addition to the galley itself, Neshari is accompanied and protected by four jann eunuchs, other servants Jhavlul decided not to take with him when he fled Kakishon and who now serve Dilix. The eunuchs, pasty and silent, let Neshari do all the talking.

In the guise of a beautiful young woman wearing expensive robes and jewelry, Neshari hails the PCs and asks them to come alongside her galley so they may speak. She has an invitation to extend to them: "My Mistress in

the Brass Dome would speak to you, if you would hear what she has to say,” she says. “She is curious about you, and suspects you are curious about her and this world you find yourselves in. And if you are willing to help her, she can help you—you will not leave Kakishon without her aid, and should this be your desire, you would do best to accompany me back to the Pleasure Palace of Nex.”

Of course, allying with Dilix is only one route to escaping Kakishon, but as far as the doppelganger knows, it is the only hope of escape open to the PCs. If the PCs turn down the invitation, she nods in disappointment and returns to the Pleasure Palace. You can then have Dilix Mahad seek out the PCs in person, if you wish, to present her case to them rather than have the PCs come to her lair to learn what she has to offer. If the PCs attack, Neshari retreats and allows her jann and the galley itself to defend her while she attempts to flee back to Dilix’s side—if Neshari is slain, then you can instead use Dilix as a villain who vows to track the PCs down and slay them. The vengeful shaitan, in this event, swallows her pride and offers her services to Obherak in return for gaining additional aid in slaying those who murdered her favored consort.

NESHARI

Doppelganger (MM 67)
hp 22

CR 3

JANN EUNUCHS (4)

hp 33 each (MM 116)

CR 4

NEXIAN GALLEY

Colossal animated object (MM 14)
hp 256 (hardness 5)
Speed swim 60 ft. (cannot go underwater)

CR 10

Meeting Dilix (EL 10)

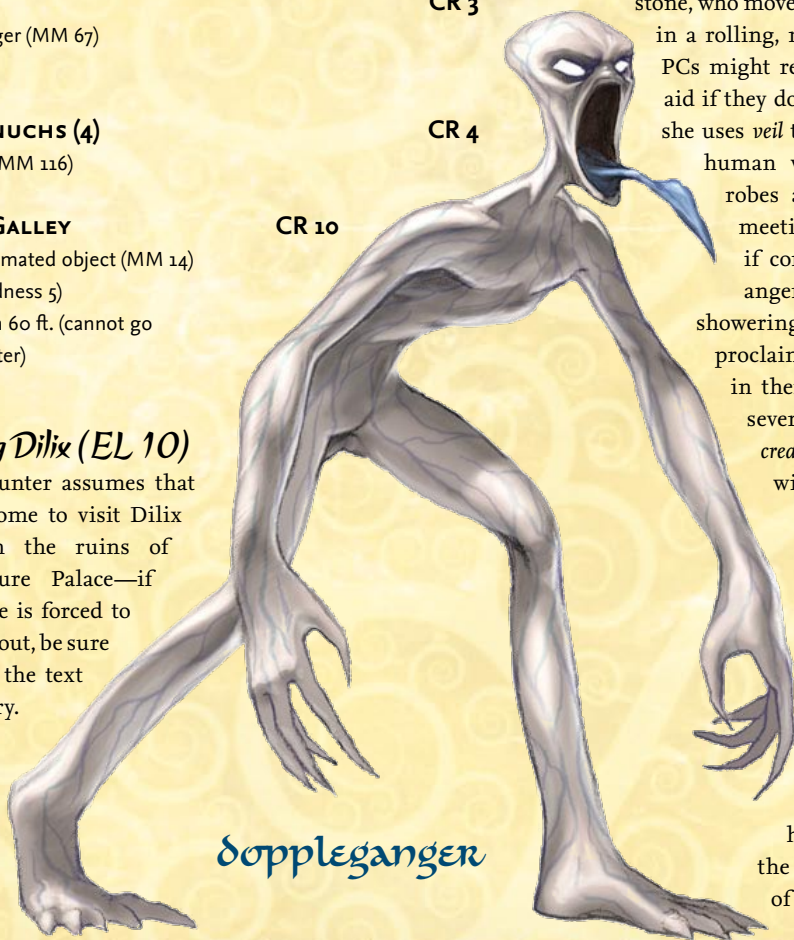
This encounter assumes that the PCs come to visit Dilix Mahad in the ruins of the Pleasure Palace—if instead she is forced to seek them out, be sure to change the text as necessary.

The ruined Pleasure Palace is now in a shambles. Dilix and her followers (consisting of 5 doppelganger consorts and 8 jann eunuchs) are all that remains of Jhavhul’s forces after the majority fled to the Material Plane. Once Jhavhul’s majordomo, and the only shaitan to remain loyal to the efreeti warlord after Obherak led a revolt not long after their initial imprisonment in Kakishon, Dilix was left behind by Jhavhul after being told by the warlord that she would not suffer any of Dilix’s treacherous race to serve him again in the world beyond Kakishon. Dilix still seethes with shame, anger, and jealousy at being left behind, and now seeks the same goal as the PCs—a way to escape Kakishon so as to strike back at Jhavhul.

If the PCs are being led by Neshari, she escorts them to a crumbled plaza that once sat before the palace. Now, all that remains is the partially collapsed brass dome and a large balcony on the dome’s side that protrudes precariously over a cliff dropping into the jungle below. This balcony, and the few surviving rooms that open just off of it, are now Dilix’s domain. Neshari leads the PCs up to the balcony and bows as Dilix steps up to the edge to greet them.

In her true form (as depicted on the cover of this volume), Dilix Mahad is a graceful shaitan with flesh of pale violet stone, who moves with a cat-like grace and speaks in a rolling, musical voice. Knowing that the PCs might respond better to her requests for aid if they don’t suspect her of being a genie, she uses *veil* to disguise herself as a beautiful human woman dressed in extravagant robes and jewels during their initial meeting, revealing her true form only if combat breaks out. She hides her anger and shame at recent events well, showering the PCs with compliments and proclaiming a grand feast will be held in their honor (said feast provided by several of the jann eunuchs using *create food and water*) and that they will be her honored guests.

The tone of the meeting with Dilix depends on why the PCs have come to her. Dilix is, like the PCs, caught between two opposing factions. Like Obherak, she wouldn’t mind ruling Kakishon, but like the proteans, she also wouldn’t mind escaping to the real world. Pride in her race compels her to stand with Obherak against the proteans, while personal hatred of Obherak and the urge to escape



Doppelganger

to seek revenge against Jhavlul compel her to ally with the proteans to find an escape from Kakishon. In short, Dilix seeks someone to make her decision for her. If they are able to ally with her, appeal to her pride, and treat her with respect, she'll befriend them. If they annoy her, disrespect her, or attack her, she'll ally against them. And if the PCs don't ever interact with her at all, she'll ally against them in the end out of sheer suspicion about outlanders who don't bother to seek her advice and aid.

During the feast with Dilix, the shaitan tries to determine, without influencing them, what side of the conflict the PCs seek to be on. You can use her to help the PCs make informed decisions. If they seem to be blindly following the proteans, she might point out the truth—that the proteans are chaotic and shouldn't be trusted, and that their main goal is to destroy Kakishon first. If the PCs are convinced that the proteans are enemies and want to serve Obherak, Dilix points out that Obherak is a cruel shaitan whose personal vices and hubris make him a dangerous ally, and that if he would betray a fellow genie, what would keep him from betraying a mortal? She'll also point out that she's not sure Obherak really can engineer a way out of Kakishon, and that unless the PCs want to stay here forever, allying with him might be a foolish choice.

For her own part, Dilix's initial attitude is indifferent. Unless the PCs can at least make her friendly during the course of their meal with her (such as with a DC 15 Diplomacy check, or by offering her a gift of at least 2,000 gp in value), Dilix, in the end, allies against the PCs, even if their parting of ways after this feast is amiable. Even if the PCs are unable to adjust her attitude, however, she remains very open to discussion with the PCs about Kakishon and its islands during the feast. She can give them most of the general information on the various islands noted on pages 10–12, though unless made at least friendly, she won't mention much about Andakami or Khandelwal, or make any mention of Obherak, Andrathi, Jhavlul, or the proteans.

If made friendly, Dilix promises to aid the PCs in whatever way she can once they come to their final battle, be it against the proteans or Obherak. She gives the PC with the highest Charisma score her *bracelet of friends*, telling the PCs that they can call upon her aid, once, with the bracelet. Furthermore, Dilix offers some advice on how the PCs might prepare for their goal, as indicated in the sidebar. Finally, she grants the PCs a small golden lamp—a galley charm that the PCs can use to summon a Nexian galley at any Waypoint.

If PCs can make her helpful (such as with a DC 30 Diplomacy check, with *charm monster*, or by giving her a gift worth at least 12,000 gp), Dilix gives them the information above but also tells them of Jhavlul,

Dilix's Advice

If made at least friendly, Dilix suggests to the PCs that they seek out the azer smith Artel on the island of Salenax, as the azer was no friend of Jhavlul and, if the PCs can secure his friendship (perhaps by bringing the dwarf a piece of flint from the top of the Black Spire in Khosravi), the azer might offer them advice or a gift in their inevitable conflict with Jhavlul.

Dilix Mahad also suggests visiting the Isle of the Dead, for it was here that Jhavlul finally confronted and slew Andrathi. Dilix has heard persistent rumors that Andrathi's spirit haunts the island now, and if the PCs can establish communication with him, they might be able to learn even more about how to escape Kakishon, if they aren't convinced that siding with the proteans or Obherak is the best plan and want to find a way to escape from Kakishon on their own.

warning that the efreeti warlord is doubtless raining havoc upon the world without and that many of those the PCs left behind might even blame them for releasing Jhavlul. Worse, Dilix is certain that Jhavlul has claimed the *Scroll of Kakishon* as his own (as the scroll would, doubtless, be lying where the PCs left it when they were drawn in, and it would be one of the first things Jhavlul saw upon emerging into the real world), so that even if the PCs do emerge from Kakishon, they should be ready for anything. Certainly, the scroll no longer remains where the PCs left it. Dilix can warn the PCs that Jhavlul is a dangerous foe, and that before he was imprisoned in Kakishon, he was seeking to awaken a powerful monstrosity called Xotani the Firebleeder. Beyond her knowledge that Xotani is one of the Spawn of Rovagug, though, Dilix doesn't know much more—but she's certain that Jhavlul will go right back to work trying to awaken the monster once he's recovered from his imprisonment in Kakishon. Dilix spent most of her servitude to Jhavlul on the Material Plane as a lowly guard in the upper levels of the House of the Beast, but she can tell the PCs a fair amount about how Jhavlul was captured by the Templars of the Five Winds and that his true lair lies somewhere deeper under Pale Mountain, in a place Dilix never visited, yet knows as "Xotani's Grave." Feel free to use Dilix to fill the PCs in on as much of the Legacy of Fire backstory as you wish; they'll get a chance to learn more in the next adventure, but this is a great point to start to build Jhavlul up as the final enemy. In any event, the PCs should be worried about what Jhavlul might do upon finding a healthy village like Kelmarane thriving in such close proximity to his lair.

Exploring the Palace Ruins

Very little is left of the Pleasure Palace of Nex after Jhavhul's explosive exodus from Kakishon; still, the lure of what strange treasures might lie buried in the ruins or perhaps hidden in underground chambers below could well be too strong for some parties to resist. There are great treasures and dangers hidden in the now-sealed lower chambers, but these treasures are beyond the scope of this adventure to present. Still, if the PCs insist, use the following brief notes to develop the palace ruins as you see fit.

Every possible creature comfort, every pleasure of the flesh or the mind, can be satisfied on Kakishon. The palace once contained magically equipped kitchens, elaborate illusory reproductions of the finest bards, minstrels, dancers, acrobatic troupes, fire-eaters, and every form of performance art from the salacious to the sublime, and in the chambers deep below lie prisons that might still hold powerful outsiders and undead long since gone insane over the crawl of centuries.



Dilix Mahad

DILIX MAHAD

CR 9

Female shaitan rogue 4

LN Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; **Listen** +18, **Spot** +18

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 22

(+2 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 106 (13 HD; 9d8+4d6+52)

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

Defensive Abilities evasion, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge;

Immune electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee +1 keen scimitar +17/+12/+7 (1d8+8/15-20) and

mwk dagger +17 (1d6+3/19-20)

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

Special Attacks metalmorph, *plane shift*, sneak attack +2d6, stone curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—quicken *glitterdust* (DC 16), *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*

1/day—*stone tell*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

TACTICS

During Combat Dilix uses *stoneskin* on herself and a quickened *glitterdust* on the first round of combat. She's fond of using *transmute rock to mud* to slow her enemies and *wall of stone* to split up teammates from aiding each other, but in battle generally relies on her allies to set up flanking opportunities so she can sneak attack.

Morale If reduced below 20 hit points, Dilix begs for her life.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 18, **Int** 16, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +23

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability

(*glitterdust*), Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Appraise +19 (+24 against

gems, metal, and stone), Bluff

+18, Concentration +16, Craft

(gemcutting) +19, Knowledge

(architecture and engineering) +20,

Listen +18, Profession (miner) +18, Search

+19 (+24 in stonework), Sense Motive +18,

Spot +18, Tumble +19

Languages Celestial, Common, Ignan,

Protean, Terran

SQ earth mastery, stone glide, trapfinding

Gear bracers of armor +2, +1 keen scimitar, masterwork dagger, ring of protection +1, bracelet of friends (1 charm), Nexian galley charm

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs get Dilix to ally with them, award them experience as if they had defeated her in combat.

PART FOUR: THE ISLES OF NOT

Normally, the land beyond the edge of the map is not a place that can be easily reached by Nexian galleys, but if the PCs possess the egg given them by Lahaprasety, they can give the egg to the helmsman of any Nexian galley to cause him to set course for this impossible destination. Without the egg, the PCs can still set sail for the Isles of Not on their own—they just won't be able to rely on the magic of one of the galleys to take them there.

If PCs give the blue egg to the helmsman, the strange construct's eyes take on a greenish-golden glow as he turns to the tiller and guides the Nexian galley out to sea. Nex's original design for the plane of Kakishon was that it be a flat disk, but he discovered that he and his guests preferred the sense of a vanishing horizon, so he compelled the proteans to warp the reality of the demiplane into a slightly convex disk like a turtle's shell, its span extending just beyond the



horizon before dissolving into the ether substrate from which the proteans wove the plane's material substance. Near the edges of the disk, the sea begins to slip off—while gravity still operates normally for creatures on the water's surface, the sea itself is drawn in an accelerating current toward the disk's edge until it cascades in an immense cataract off the edge of the world.

The Edge of the World (EL 8)

The 50-mile voyage beyond the horizon takes approximately 12 hours from most Waypoint piers. As the traveler approaches the edge, ambient light begins to dim and distort, as though filtered by a thin veil of dark mist. Sounds become simultaneously muted and echoing, and in the far distance a loud but growing susurrant hiss and a DC 15 Profession (sailor) check confirms that the ship is being carried along with a strong current. The ship continues to speed ahead, moved forward by quickening waters as well as the relentless strokes of its animated galley oars and a freshening breeze. The light around dissolves into a misty twilight of winking stars and roiling clouds above a roaring sea. In a moment, the mists part and the traveler can see with terrible clarity that

the sea below seems to end, as if sliced off by an impossibly huge razor. This is the end of eternity.

As the ship plummets over the edge of the infinite, PCs have a chance to be tossed overboard if they are not lashed to the deck. The ship falls for 6 rounds before hitting bottom, and each round every character must make a DC 20 Balance check or a DC 20 Climb check (the helmsman automatically makes these checks). A failed check results in 2d6 points of damage as the character is buffeted about, falling from his perch but catching himself again. A PC who fails two checks in a row falls completely off of the ship and suffers 8d6 nonlethal damage from the pounding of the water about him. Of course, creatures that can fly or otherwise slow or halt their falls can effect a much more controlled descent over the edge. After a distance of just over a mile, the traveler finally hits bottom.

Fortunately, there is not a doom of sharp rocks and broken ships awaiting beyond the edge of the world. Instead, as the ship falls beyond that first mile, it plunges into the half-formed world of Andakami. The cascade of falling water, once a raging torrent, thins and dissolves into clinging mist, and within moments the ship's fall

slows as the clinging mists grow thicker and almost solid, a turbid expanse of featureless, washed-out colors. The ship finally comes to a shuddering stop, settling into a strange “lake” of thicker mist with a muffled thud, shaking with the impact.

The PCs have fallen out of solid reality and into a realm of mutable substrate used by the proteans to create and maintain the world of Kakishon. While the spatial reality here is malleable, all of it is contained within the bounded demiplane of Kakishon and offers no hope of egress from the plane. It extends to the infinite, yet distances are strangely unstable. One can swim for years in one direction, and then upon turning back, arrive at the point of departure in minutes.

Any creature that fell out of the ship or makes a more controlled descent via flight arrives in roughly the same region as where the ship touched down. Those who land in the thick, tar-like mist are treated as if in quicksand for the purposes of movement and drowning (DMG 88). Flying creatures might have difficulty finding their allies, as the surface of the mist-colloid is covered by a 20-foot-deep layer of *solid fog*, above which floats a 20-foot-deep layer of thick fog equal to a fog cloud, both of which grant concealment within 5 feet and total concealment beyond 5 feet. The mists dampen sound, penalizing Listen checks by 1 every 5 feet rather than every 10 feet.

The Nexian galley takes only 6d6 points of damage from the fall into the thick mist. If this is enough to destroy it, or if the PCs arrived without a ship, they must either swim through the mist-colloid, fly, or find some other means to move. If the Nexian galley is intact, it automatically begins to move again once all PCs are on board—they have entered the protean’s domain, and as guests (either welcome or not), their ship is caught up in a current that will, in the course of 10 minutes of slow travel, bring them to the Isles of Not. Even if the PCs wander aimlessly here, there’s really only one place to arrive at, and you can simply have the PCs arrive at the Isles of Not whenever you wish.

The Isles of Not

After Nex banished them to this misty realm, the surviving proteans continued to maintain their hidden lair here at the end of eternity. Although called the Isles of Not, the lair itself consists of a series of cavern-like cysts organically shaped from raw substrate, each cyst containing a wide pool of liquid precipitate that the proteans used for visualizing the creation—and, in theory, the destruction—of Kakishon. Around the Isles, the mist is as strong as stone, yet possesses a curious elasticity that yields softly to the touch. The caves themselves are lit by a softly glowing light that seems to have no true source—everything within is under shadowy illumination unless otherwise noted.

The proteans are chaos incarnate, and as such their reaction to the PCs’ arrival is the same whether the PCs are here to speak to them after having been summoned or they’ve come to attack them. Of course, should combat begin, the proteans are quick to adjust their attitudes and will do their best to defeat the invaders.

The floors, walls, and ceilings of these caves are actually quite spongy and uneven, constantly shifting and moving despite their solid appearance. Movement on these surfaces is considered difficult terrain. Doors within the caves are circular plugs of shifting mist that, at first glance, look more like strange protuberances on the walls than doors. A DC 20 Spot check is enough to see them for what they really are, and once the PCs know what to look for, the doors are obvious. They open like an iris when touched, closing automatically a round later as long as nothing remains in the doorway.

A1. The Hidden Harbor (EL 10)

The blinding fog thins ahead as three yellow-green lights come into clear view. A strange crescent-shaped anchorage just large enough to snugly secure a vessel forms out of the mist, each of its crescent quays tipped by a small stonework tower like a small lighthouse surmounted by a bright-glowing, yellow-green lantern. The harbor seems to abut the base of a large hill of slowly roiling mist, with a third lantern at the center of the crescent, mounted over an archway leading into the hillside along a dimly lit cobblestoned avenue.

Creatures: The three lighthouses are each permanent illusions that hide a single naunet protean, while the “lanterns” are everburning torches held aloft by the proteans. The naunets use *detect law* on anyone who approaches, but do not overtly move against new arrivals unless first attacked. They remain motionless unless confronted, in which case all three slither out of their illusory towers to hiss and growl in Protean. If the PCs can establish a means of communication, the naunets tell them that they are expected and should proceed into the cave behind them—they do not accompany the PCs.

NAUNET PROTEANS (3)
hp 85 each (see page 86)

CR 7

A2. Chaotic Corridors

The boundaries of this cave are unsettling to look upon, for slowly palpating whorls and streams of dim, multihued radiance flicker deep within the pale walls. Even without the colored light, the passageway would be disorienting, as its width and height and direction seem to pulsate and shift, almost like the throat of an immense living creature.

The Isle of Not



The first time the PCs enter the caves, they must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become sickened as long as they remain in them. Blind creatures are immune to this effect, and the Endurance feat allows a bonus to this save.

If the PCs are here to speak to the proteans, an echoing female voice calls out to them from the depths of the cave, saying, “Welcome, my guests. Come forward so we may speak.” If, instead, the PCs are here for mayhem and violence, they get no greeting save for a vague and somewhat unsettling sense that they are unwanted by the place.

A3. Empty Cyst

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this irregular chamber are studded with large cysts and buds, though they appear somewhat dried and withered. Most of the floor is covered with a pool of faintly glowing greenish liquid.

These empty cysts were once the chambers of imentesh proteans who have been killed or captured by the shaitans. They contain no treasure or personal items. The pools contain entropic essence, a strange liquid that works quickly to undo physicality in the same manner as a powerful acid (2d6 acid damage per round of exposure, doubled against

creatures with the lawful subtype). Each pool is only a foot deep, and the stuff itself cannot exist outside of Andakami; if brought back to reality, the stuff fades away.

A4. Cystic Chamber (EL 11)

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this large chamber are studded with strange cysts and buds. Most of the floor is covered by a wide pool of faintly glowing green liquid but for a narrow pathway leading around it to an opening on the far side. There stand a sumptuous divan, a canopied bed, and a table surrounded with chairs.

This chamber is the heart of the tiny protean society that remains in Andakami, the lair and throne room of their current leader Lahaprasert.

Creatures: Standing near the entrance to the chamber is a strange, pale-skinned elven man dressed in fine leathers and armed with a curved blade. He eyes the PCs warily and silently as they enter but makes no move to intercept them unless they attack. A second figure is seated upon the divan across the room—another elf, this one female and strikingly beautiful. She calls out to the PCs in a melodious voice, beckoning them over.

"I greet you, my heroes from outside this reality. I am Lahaprasnet. I am a spirit of creation, and I wish you to be my champions. Thank you for answering my summons, and I trust that business with the Golden Ram did not vex you overmuch—it was but a convenient way for me to judge your skill and worth. Do not mind Chinoy; he is not much for conversation but watches over my safety. Come, let us sit together. We have so much to discuss."

Lahaprasnet works in this chamber, shaping designs and plans for her few remaining proteans to begin the final unraveling of Kakishon once the realm has been scoured of non-native life—as long as creatures from the real world remain alive in Kakishon, the atrophied power of this Cystic Chamber is unable to work the final unweaving. Non-native lives are all the blockage that remains, and until these lives are ended or expunged from Kakishon, the proteans cannot complete their goal of reverting the entire realm to something akin to Andakami, a place more to their liking if they are to escape to the Maelstrom themselves.

Yet the imentesh protean is wary of exposing the full extent of her plan to intruders, for she knows full well that non-proteans do not understand the beauty of entropy and resist it out of fear. Likewise, she understands that her true form unsettles most, and has adopted what she hopes is a more pleasing one for the extent of the PCs' stay in the caves.

Lahaprasnet can relate much of the history of Kakishon to the PCs; she can tell them that she and her kin were captured long ago by Nex and forced to create this realm, and of how when their work was done, Nex betrayed them and forced them into Andakami rather than releasing them to the Maelstrom for fear that the loss of the proteans would cause Kakishon to crumble over time. Lahaprasnet knows this to be true, of course, but points out if asked that "everything crumbles to dust in the end, and that the foolish hope to oppose such certainty is the base flaw of life." In her telling of the tale, she takes pains to portray herself and her kind as benevolent spirits of creation tricked and then imprisoned by Nex after fulfilling their end of the bargain. She also explains how a wizard from the world outside recently tore open the portal to Kakishon to imprison an army of fire and earth spirits, and that in so doing he damaged the structures of creation. This damage is what allows Lahaprasnet and her kin to emerge

from Andakami into Kakishon, but the damage was not enough to allow them to escape to their true home in the Maelstrom. She also, almost mournfully, recites how the most recent forced opening of the portal (the one the PCs are responsible for) wrought great strain upon the mind of their previous leader, a protean named Thaiyanathan.

Lahaprasnet explains that this other lives still, but has been imprisoned for his own safety for he no longer knows friend from foe. Worse, the only other surviving imentesh protean, Magiyawalla, has recently been captured by a shaitan named Obherak.

Here, Lahaprasnet asks for the party's aid, and promises them a valuable reward should they accept her offer—the PCs can no more escape Kakishon than she can, and if they can rescue Magiyawalla and slay the shaitan genies that still dwell in Kakishon,

Lahaprasnet promises to help the PCs escape from Kakishon. She's reticent to go into details as to how she plans to help the PCs escape, since she can only force the PCs out of Kakishon as the start of the final unmaking of the world, something that can only begin

once all intruders are either dead or willing to leave. Until the shaitans are dead or willing to leave as well, she cannot use this method to return the PCs to the outer world.

If the PCs agree to her terms, Lahaprasnet tells the PCs she can use the entropy pool to send the PCs back to Kakishon, to any Waypoint they wish. She recommends one of three destinations:

- **Isle of the Dead Waypoint:** It was here that Andrathi was slain by Jhavhul long ago, and Lahaprasnet suspects the wizard's spirit haunts the isle still. If the PCs ask for more information about Andrathi, Lahaprasnet reluctantly suggests that the PCs should travel to this isle to seek answers, although she would prefer they go to Kakishon or Khandelwal to start fighting shaitans.
- **Kakishon Waypoint:** The PCs can swiftly reach Nex's Pleasure Palace from here—this was, until very recently, the home of the warlord Jhavhul. The few genies who remain there now are not as violent or dangerous as those who serve Obherak, and the PCs might be able to learn more from them about Magiyawalla's fate and Obherak's defenses.
- **Khandelwal Waypoint:** The shaitan Obherak rules now over a crater in the middle of Khandelwal. The shaitan captured Magiyawalla some time ago, and the site's



wards against chaotic outsiders make it a difficult place for Lahaprasat to assault—and the small numbers of surviving (and sane) proteans make such a prospect unnerving at best anyway. She does know where the lair is located (under the Golden Bowl in the central portion of the island), and that the entrance is likely to be blocked with stone for most hours of the day. Lahaprasat points out that even shaitans must breathe, though, and that it's likely they periodically open the entrance to the lair for ventilation.

If the PCs ask for aid, Lahaprasat gifts the PCs with the vials of *oil of soften earth and stone* and the *wand of stone shape* from the treasure, explaining that as creatures of earth, the shaitans are likely to use stone walls instead of locked doors to secure their lair. If the PCs can adjust her friendly attitude to helpful with a DC 20 Diplomacy check, she opens her treasure cache to the PCs as a bribe to encourage them to undertake the task—this treasure is less important to Lahaprasat than her quest, and she'll let the PCs take it all if that's what it takes to get them to comply. If the PCs ask her to accompany them, or to send other proteans to aid them, she sadly explains that while the structure of Kakishon has been strained by the recent forcing open of its portals, she and her kind are still exiled and barred from staying long in Kakishon. They can use the entropy pool to travel to various Waypoints, but after a minute, they are pulled back here to the Isles of Not and cannot travel in such a way again. She also points out that when one of them attempted to travel directly to the shaitans' lair, she was captured and prevented from returning at all—if the shaitans are to be defeated, it must be by hands other than the proteans'.

If PCs refuse her quest, she grows sullen and moody, ordering the PCs to step into the entropic pool at once so she can send them back to Kakishon (if the PCs comply, she returns them to the Sarygamysh Waypoint). If they become aggressive, she attacks, calling upon all of the sane proteans in the area to aid her. In all, there are 6 naunet proteans ready to rush to Lahaprasat's aid—this is an EL 13 encounter, and thus one the PCs would be well advised to avoid if possible.

When the PCs are ready to go, they need only to step into the entropic pool while Lahaprasat concentrates on their destination. A moment later, the ghostly caves are suddenly and shockingly replaced by Kakishon—the return is instantaneous, and for the PCs, one way. If they wish to return to the Isles of Not, they'll need to travel out to sea and over the edge of eternity once again.

LAHAPRASAT

Imentesh protean (see page 84)
hp 136

CR 10

CHINOY

Naunet protean (see page 86)
hp 85

CR 7

Treasure: Lahaprasat has collected a small cache of treasure consisting of various items and trophies won from her long war with the genies. This cache is hidden in a small cyst on the west wall (DC 30 Search check to find). Within lies an alabaster coffer worth 200 gp containing 1,100 gp, 230 pp, an ivory comb worth 70 gp, a pair of silver earrings set with silver pearls worth 500 gp, a silver medallion inlaid with the seal of Mouhannad Iqilma (a long-dead merchant-prince of Katapesh) worth 130 gp, a gold pendant set with a large opal worth 1,200 gp, and a single plain gold earring worth 50 gp. In addition, a jade box inlaid with gold filigree worth 700 gp contains 24 sticks of rare incense worth 5 gp each as well as a *potion of cat's grace*, two *potions of fly*, three vials of *oil of soften earth and stone*, a *wand of stone shape* (32 charges), a *wand of restoration* (28 charges), and a *wand of dimension door* (19 charges).

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs accept Lahaprasat's quest and learn about Kakishon's history, award them experience as if they had defeated a CR 10 creature in combat. If they secure additional aid from Lahaprasat (in the form of treasure), increase this to a CR 12 award.

A5. Chamber of Crippled Chaos (EL 11)

The walls of this chamber are studded with strange cysts and buds, while the floor is dominated by a pool of churning, bubbling greenish liquid. Rising from the pool's center, wrapped in green liquid tendrils that seem to rise from the pool itself, is a hideous serpentine creature. Vaguely humanoid in form but with massive saucer-like eyes and a fanged maw one might expect on a prehistoric beast, its mouth seems to move in a strange cadence, almost as if it were whispering constantly to itself, and its bulging eyes stare sightlessly at nothing.

Creatures: The pool of entropy in this room once functioned as those in areas 3 and 4, but the latest wrenching of the Kakishon portal damaged the pool—and drove insane the imentesh protean who was using it at the time. That protean, Thaiyanathan, has been bound into the pool by Lahaprasat, who hopes that unraveling Kakishon will restore his mind. The bonds that hold Thaiyanathan in stasis in the pool set him apart from time and space, as if under the effects of *temporal stasis*, yet this bond is fragile. If any non-outsider touches him or the pool he is imprisoned in, the bonds shatter and release the insane protean, who immediately attacks anyone in the chamber, protean or otherwise.

Thaiyanathan is guarded by two naunet proteans—they move to block any non-protean who attempts to approach the pool, and attack if the intruders do not immediately turn back.

THAIYANATHAN

Immentesh protean (see page 84)

hp 136

CR 10

NAUNET PROTEANS (2)

hp 85 (see page 86)

CR 7

Development: If Thaiyanathan is released, the pool of entropy continues to flash and sputter. Unlike the dormant pools in area 3 or the active one in area 4, it rejects any non-proteans who touch the pool. Such creatures are immediately teleported to the last Waypoint they visited (an unwilling creature can resist the teleportation with a DC 15 Will save). If the PCs lack flight or teleportation (or similar magical travel) and have slain or estranged Lahapraseth, this pool may well be their only means of returning to Kakishon once their business in the Isles of Not is ended.



and the Templars of the Five Winds to recover the *Scroll of Kakishon* and rescue him, but for reasons Andrathi never learned, that day never came. Jhavhul finally caught up with the wizard here, on the Isle of the Dead. Fortunately for Andrathi, by that point Jhavhul's frustration and rage were so great that he did not capture the wizard alive—Andrathi escaped an eternity of torture and torment when Jhavhul blasted him to cinders on the steps of the Brazen Mausoleum.

Jhavhul turned his attentions elsewhere once Andrathi was slain, but unknown to the efreeti lord, a fragment of Andrathi's spirit did not move on—it became a haunting presence on the Isle of the Dead, and in time grew capable of interacting with the world via two singular sources—the tomb's guardian spirit (a wyrmskull named Venema Shodair), and his familiar (a bedraggled cat named Spooky). Both of these points of contact with the living world are limited to the Isle of the Dead physically. Of the two, Andrathi can only speak through the voice of Venema, and it is only with Spooky that he can contact creatures beyond the Isle's shores, for like many cats, Spooky has a strong connection to the world of dreams. Andrathi's otherworldly influence has vastly increased Spooky's lifespan (effectively making the cat immortal as long as he remains in Kakishon), but more importantly, allows Spooky to enter the dreaming minds of non-outsiders.

PART FIVE: THE HAUNTED ISLAND

Although the Isle of the Dead is one of the smallest islands in Kakishon, it was, at one point, the most important, for this was the site of Nex's first tomb. After he abandoned Kakishon, Nex abandoned this tomb as well, and as a result, the extensive underground crypts he had envisioned were never built.

As with any other island, player curiosity could eventually bring the PCs to visit the Isle of the Dead. Yet as with the Isles of Not and Kakishon, the current "ruler" of this island is more likely to seek out the PCs and lure them here well before they decide to visit on their own. This "ruler" is, in fact, the spirit of Andrathi, lover of Nefeshti and the wizard who trapped Jhavhul in Kakishon so long ago. Andrathi had hoped to be able to escape Kakishon via a Waypoint, but he swiftly realized that his forcing open of the portal to capture Jhavhul's army had damaged that escape route. So instead, he spent several months on the run, hopping from island to island as he evaded Jhavhul's increasingly enraged attempts to catch him and force from him the secret of escaping Kakishon. He hoped to evade the efreeti long enough for Nefeshti

A Shared Dream

All of the PCs who sleep on Kakishon (or in the case of elves, meditate) experience the same strange dream. In the dream, the character is wandering on an island covered with dead trees, and is searching for something very important but can't remember what it might be. Allow a dreaming character to make a DC 15 Spot check—with a success, he spots a small brown cat sitting on a gravestone ahead, and realizes that this cat knows what the PC is looking for, yet if the PC tries to catch the cat, it evades them and runs away only to perch on another gravestone. This chase continues until the cat leads the PC to a large bronze mausoleum at the highest point on the island. The front of the mausoleum seems partially melted, and the cat perches on the highest step, where several humanoid bones have partially melted into the bronze. The cat howls, its screech deafening and pitiful, forcing the character awake.

Andrathi's capacity to contact dreaming minds is limited—he's unable to directly communicate, and is limited as well by Spooky's precocious cat-like nature. Yet the dream has a powerful effect on those who experience it—and every time a PC sleeps until he visits the Isle of the Dead, the dream repeats.

Each time a character wakes from the dream, he can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom check (with a cumulative +2 bonus for each time prior he's experienced the dream). With a success, the character feels a strong mental pull in the direction of the Isle of the Dead for a few seconds after waking, and the name "Isle of the Dead" comes unbidden to his lips. A PC can use this name to have a Nexian galley travel directly to the Isle of the Dead.

Isle of the Dead

The Waypoint on the Isle of the Dead is unusual in that it has no accompanying hostel—it was never intended as a place of rest but rather of quiet reflection and repose. The small island comprises a single hill with a gentle, grassy slope on one side and a high, cliff-backed scarp at its eastern end, surmounted by a massive edifice of verdigris-encrusted brass: the Brass Mausoleum of Nex. Two small woodlands of dead trees cover much of the island's eastern half, while the west is a gentle slope of dry grass covered with tombstones. There are no graves on the island, though—Nex had the tombstones erected simply as decoration. He never intended anyone but himself to lie in rest under the Isle of the Dead.

B1. The Plaza of Welcome

Two stone quays protrude from a small plaza at the lowest point of the small island. A flight of marble stairs leads up a gentle slope to the island interior to the north.

This plaza is meant to exude a sense of welcome and serenity, and any creature touching the stones of the plaza is affected as by a *calm emotions* spell (Will DC 22 negates).

B2. The Stairs of Ascension

A massive stairway forty feet across, its treads and risers seemingly unscarred by the erosive hand of time and pristinely free of mark or debris, climbs the modest slope of the island toward the fields above. To either side of the stairs runs a row of columns of the same white stone, each column surmounted with a statue of golden marble that bears a mask of polished brass. All the statues bear the face of the archwizard Nex, but each displays him in the trappings of a different role: astrologer, explorer, scholar, teacher, poet, scribe, ruler, hunter, and warlord.

Passing between the statues of the archwizard conveys a sense of inspiration, hope, and possibility for the future. Any character who walks all the way up these stairs gains the benefits of a *false life* spell (CL 20th)—a character may only gain this benefit once per day.

When the PCs first arrive on the Isle of the Dead, a familiar brown cat sits on the top step—Spooky. As soon as he's spotted, he turns and runs inland toward area B4.

B3. The Well of Tears (EL 10)

A semicircle of four marble platforms stands here, each surmounted by a colonnaded dome inlaid with pearlescent tiles that catch the sun's rays in a multihued fire. Just beyond these shelters is a low limestone platform inscribed with bas-relief of gods, spirits, animals, and all manner of mythological creatures of ancient Katapesh, surmounted at intervals by plinths of stone bearing statues of winged humanoids, male and female, each comforting the other but with a hand extended to beckon. Hovering a foot above the platform's center is a slowly rippling sphere of blue water.

The shelters are elegantly furnished with carved stone benches and inlaid with mosaic scenes representative of scenes of the four elements, with air to the north, earth and fire in the center, and water to the south.

The floating sphere of water itself is dark and cool, redolent with memory and loss, the voices of the past but also the voices of regret. Any character staring into the water for 1 full round begins to hear the voices of those long dead echoing in his mind. These lost spirits will call out to the character, asking questions and offering advice, granting the PC the benefit of a *divination* spell (CL 20th) about any question or task the PC chooses. However, the residue of longing, sadness, and loss these ancient memories carry with them can be overwhelming, and the PC must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be affected as if by an extended *crushing despair* spell (CL 20th).

Creature: The Well of Tears is not unguarded—before anyone can look into the water and use its powers, its guardians must be defeated. These guardians are four elementals, each of which is bound into the four marble platforms. When anyone approaches within 15 feet of the Well of Tears, a vortex of wind surrounds the north pillar as a Huge air elemental surges out of it to attack. As soon as the air elemental is defeated, the second pillar to the south suddenly seems to shed a shell of earth and stone that transforms into a Huge earth elemental. Next comes as a blast of fire from the third pillar, and finally a geyser of water that creates a Huge water elemental, each triggering when the previous elemental is slain. They do not pursue foes more than 50 feet, and if they're

Isle of the Dead



attacked at ranges beyond this, they simply vanish back into their pillars. If all four are not defeated, the entire series “resets” and must be attempted anew the next time the well is approached.

HUGE AIR ELEMENTAL CR 7
hp 136 (MM 96)

HUGE EARTH ELEMENTAL CR 7
hp 152 (MM 97)

HUGE FIRE ELEMENTAL CR 7
hp 136 (MM 99)

HUGE WATER ELEMENTAL CR 7
hp 152 (MM 100)

B4. The Groves of Contemplation

An open wood of dead, leafless myrtle and olive trees gives the island here an ominous cast. The sound of rasping wood in the wind is all around, and the dry branches seem to twitch when viewed out of the corner of the eye.

Although sinister, the dead trees are a powerful ward against death. A character who enters the woods feels a compulsion to spend a few minutes contemplating death at the base of one of the trees—a character who chooses to do so gains the benefit of a *death ward* (CL 20th), but only the first time he contemplates death in the grove. Future visits bring no benefit.

As the PCs enter this area, they catch glimpses of Spooky the cat scurrying ahead of them, up toward area B5.

B5. The Memorial Ground (EL 10)

This hilltop is covered with landscaped dirt and gravel, smooth-swept earthen pathways winding among graveled expanses raked in curves, whorls, and intricate patterns, studded with larger boulders and artfully trimmed dwarf trees placed sparsely throughout. Surrounding all is a rim of naked rock, roughly hewn and surmounted by thick, imposing limestone columns carved in relief, each capped with a stone griffon, dragon, lammasu, shedu, or similar winged beast. To the southeast rises a towering brass mausoleum, its facade depicting scenes of a powerful wizard working strange magic upon the world, although the carvings appear partially melted. A pair of large brass doors stand ajar in the mausoleum’s northwest side, and

the end of eternity

embedded in the bronze are blasted and blackened fragments of a human skeleton.

A DC 20 Knowledge (nobility and royalty or history) check discerns that the figure depicted on the carvings of the mausoleum's facade are of the Wizard-King Nex.

The first time the PCs arrive, Spooky the cat sits before the doors, and as they notice him he slips quietly through the doors into the mausoleum's unseen interior—an instant later, the doors close.

As soon as anything other than Spooky approaches within 30 feet of the mausoleum, a sudden wave of anger and menace seems to wash out over the entire party. An instant later, a vision of a strange, half-formed humanoid composed of air, earth, fire, and water manifests before the mausoleum. In a booming voice, it bellows demands at the PCs.

“Why do you come here? What do you seek? This place was made for those who are dead. Why do the living trouble the endless sleep, the final dream?”

Although the figure itself is in nothing more than a *programmed image* (CL 20th), the answers to its questions have implications. The actual answers do not matter as much as the use of specific key words do, and certain key words can trigger dangerous magical effects. Allow the PCs a minute to answer the demand, and pay attention to the words they use. When the minute has passed, use the following to resolve the effects of their answer.

- If a PC uses the words “power” or “glory,” a *magic mouth* upon the right statue shouts, “Fools seek power and are destroyed by it!” All characters who used those words are immediately targeted with a *disintegrate* spell (CL 12th, +10 ranged touch attack, Fortitude DC 19 partial).
- If a PC uses the words “knowledge” or “secret,” a *magic mouth* upon the left statue declaims, “Some knowledge is dangerous, and deeper knowledge is more dangerous still!” Those characters are then targeted with *insanity* spells (CL 14th, Will DC 20 negates).
- If a PCs uses the words “wisdom,” “truth,” “enlightenment,” “advice,” or “counsel,” the leftward carving repeats the word uttered and then states, “A worthy goal, but elusive. Sometimes you find it best looking inside yourself. Other times your own counsel is the last you should heed.” Each use of one of these key words prevents a *disintegrate* or *insanity* from being activated (determine which effects are not activated randomly if there are multiple targets).

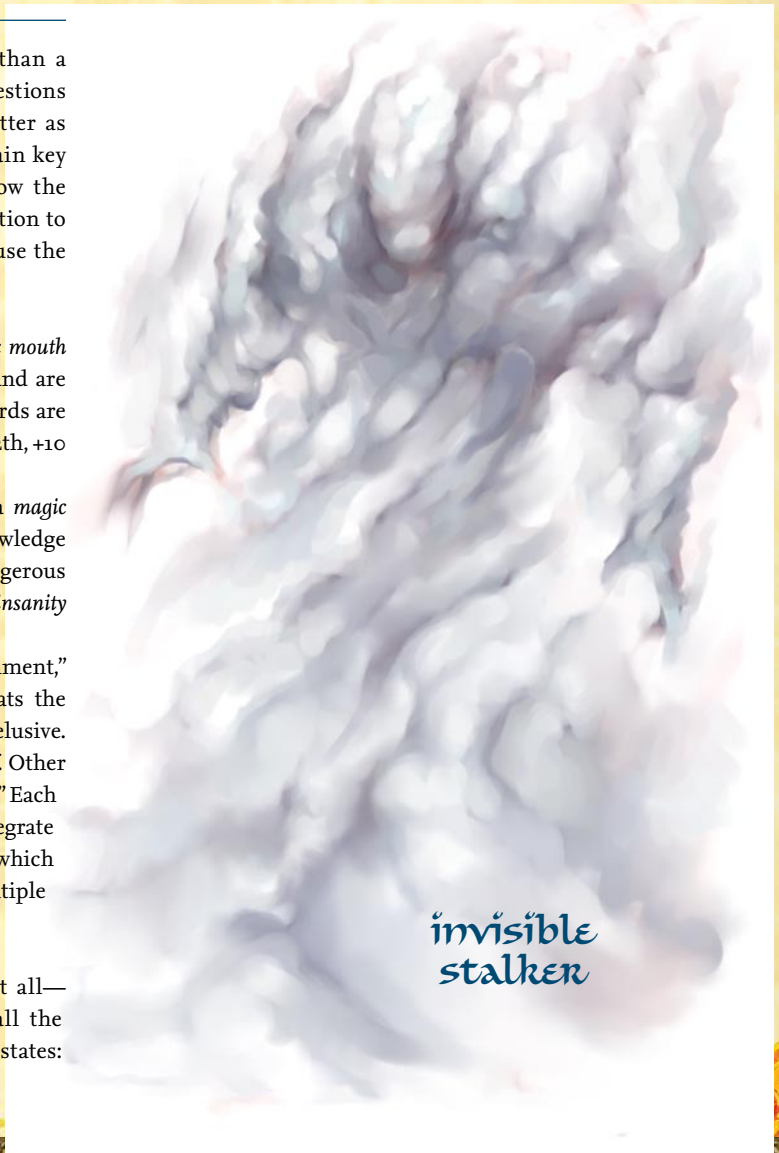
No matter what the reply (including no reply at all—perhaps the safest solution to the puzzle), once all the effects above resolve, the carving on the right wall states:

“Truth is the most terrifying thing in the world, and the most enchanting. Dare you face it? Dare you use it? Answer truthfully and enter.”

Nex, an admirer of classic riddles and trickery, has sealed the 1-foot-thick gates of enchanted brass (Hardness 20, hp 200, Break DC 38) with a customized *arcane lock* (CL 20th) that opens to anyone who speaks the password “truthfully.” If PCs speak this word, the brazen portals sweep inward on silent hinges, allowing access to the mausoleum interior.

The skeleton embedded in the brass before the door is the mortal remains of Andrathi, magically preserved by the powerful and strange magics that blasted the front of the mausoleum during his final battle against Jhavlul.

Creatures: Of course, physical damage and spells like *knock* or *dispel magic* can also cause the doors to open, but doing so triggers one final defense. As soon as such methods are attempted, the carvings seem to sigh in disappointment—in actuality, they are each releasing an invisible stalker to attack the PCs. These invisible stalkers



invisible
stalker

fight to the death, pursuing the PCs throughout all of Kakishon if required.

INVISIBLE STALKERS (2)

hp 52 each (MM 160)

CR 7

B6. The Brazen Mausoleum (EL 12)

The interior of the mausoleum dazzles the eye, almost overwhelming in its intricacy. The floor and ceiling are of polished golden marble tiles, each white-veined tile set off with a framing inlay of lapis lazuli. The cornices and joints of wall, ceiling, and floor inlaid with burnished brass glow in the light of heatless crystal lamps that hang from empty air. Within these brazen borders, each wall holds an enormous mosaic of enchanted tile that moves and flows like a living thing, replaying the triumphs and tragedies of Nex in an endless refrain.

In the center of the vast, silent chamber sits a bier of plain white limestone, simply carved, its lid unadorned but for a single rune. At the bier's head is a large marble pedestal on which stands a curious statue of a man toppled over. The statue's head is carved of gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly of bronze, its thighs of iron, and its shattered feet of clay. At the bier's foot is a smaller platform upon which rests an equally strange trophy: a large reptilian skull as large as a grown man, crested and glinting golden in the lamplight.

This grand tomb is the unused mausoleum of Nex the archwizard. The true fate of Nex after his final confrontation with Geb is unknown even to this day, but if dead he is, his resting place is far from here. The simple bier Nex prepared in the midst of his opulent mausoleum stands empty.

Creatures: If the PCs have been following Spooky, the cat sits atop the sarcophagus, idly cleaning itself and ignoring the PCs until they speak or enter the room, at which point he glances up at them, eyes wide and bright.

The reptilian skull is Venema Shodair, who in life was Nex's brass dragon companion until she fell in battle against the Eater of Magic (see page 34). Distraught at her death, Nex restored her to a semblance of life as a wyrmskull guardian, and the undead dragon has watched and waited patiently for the day Nex returns here to rest.

Venema silently observes the party as they enter the room, waiting at least a minute before initiating contact. As long as PCs are respectful and do not appear interested in mayhem or destruction, and as long as they treat Spooky kindly, her attitude shifts to friendly, as she has long been pining for someone to talk to her. If instead the PCs immediately set to looting the place or attack or otherwise try to harm Spooky, she instead flares with fire and rises up to attack.

If the PCs are respectful and do not attack, or if the PCs realize that the dragon skull is an undead creature

and make to attack out of misunderstanding, Venema rises from the ground with trails of fire and introduces herself, asking the PCs to stay their hands and saying that they, like Andrathi before them, are prisoners here and that she knows how they might escape. If the PCs persist in attacking, of course, Venema fights them with all her strength.

If the PCs resist the urge to attack, though, Venema speaks to them in a strange, hollow voice as she floats above the sarcophagus.

"I have waited for Nex to come to rest here for more centuries than I care to count, yet this is no concern to me. I shall continue to wait. Yet not all who have come before me have shown the same respect as you. Certainly, the one whose spirit suffuses this place respected it—he was known as Andrathi in his day, and he came to this tomb pursued by the warlord Jhavlul. For many days, Andrathi hid here and we shared many conversations, but in the end, Jhavlul found him. It is to Andrathi's credit that he did not drag the fight in here, that he confronted Jhavlul on the steps outside. It is there that he died, and in his rage to be gone from this place, Jhavlul did not linger, and thus I survive to continue my duties. And Andrathi lingers here as well—he is but a memory and a shade, though, his soul having long passed on from here. Yet enough lingers to advise me, and what lingers is curious—as am I. How is it you have come to be in Kakishon?"

If the PCs tell Venema how they came to be here, she flares momentarily with anger at the discovery that Jhavlul has escaped. She tells the PCs that he does not deserve freedom, that he was a cruel and destructive element in Kakishon, and that she shudders to think of what he may be doing now that he has escaped to reality. Use Venema to impress upon the PCs the need to defeat Jhavlul—as with Dilix in Part Three, you can use Venema (speaking from what she's learned of the matter from Andrathi) to fill in the PCs on much of the Legacy of Fire background, including Jhavlul's plan to awaken Xotani the Firebleeder (although like Dilix, Venema does not know Jhavlul's reasons for wishing to do so).

If the PCs express an interest in opposing Jhavlul, Venema tells them they should seek the azer Artel Norrin. She explains that, before Andrathi came to her, he had sheltered for a time with the azer, and during that time learned that Artel resented the incursion of Jhavlul and his army into Kakishon and was secretly working on a weapon to be used against him, but whether he finished the weapon or even still survives, Venema does not know.

If the PCs ask Venema for her advice on how to escape Kakishon, she sadly admits she lacks that power, and even Andrathi wasn't sure on how best to escape. Yet Andrathi remained convinced to the end that there was a method—

and that method, he said, lies with the proteans who built this realm in the beginning. Venema suggests the PCs seek out the proteans for answers, yet warns them that they are creatures of primal chaos and one should take care in trusting them.

Venema is willing to answer other questions the PCs might have, such as the following.

How can the proteans help us escape? “You are not natives to Kakishon, and as such you are impurities to the chaos they desire. If they have their way, I suspect they will unmake Kakishon and return it to the chaos from which it formed, but as long as creatures not native to Kakishon are found within, they cannot fully unmake what they have created. I suspect they seek to slay the shaitans, and would do the same to you if you weren’t so eager to leave. Obherak and his followers seek to rule here—they have no wish to leave, and thus the proteans wish them slain. Or at least reduced in strength and number to a point where they can finish them off without undue risk.”

Wouldn’t they need to destroy you too? “No, for I was created here. If this place is to be taken apart, I welcome the bliss of oblivion, and if Nex returns, I trust he can remake me to serve him again. It is of no consequence to me... although I doubt that the other denizens of these isles would share my sentiment.”

Obherak says he can get us out too. Is he lying? “Partially, yes. The genies lack the power to escape by themselves, otherwise Jhavlul would have escaped himself long ago. If the proteans are defeated, the mysteries of their lair beyond the end of eternity will no longer be guarded. The fundamental realities of Kakishon were damaged when Andrathi first captured Jhavlul, and now, with his escape and your arrival, that damage has increased—perhaps to a point where a shaitan, or even yourselves, could engineer an escape. I do not know how this might work, but the shaitans are inventive—if Obherak believes he knows a way to effect an exit from Kakishon now, I suspect he can... although I suspect as well that his method would not be without risk.”

There was rumored to be a great weapon called Flameblood hidden in Kakishon; do you know anything about it? “Alas, I believe the concept of a weapon called Flameblood may merely be a metaphor for Jhavlul. After all, he sought to resurrect and tame the Spawn of Rovagug known as Xotani the Firebleeder—I suppose that is the “Flameblood” of your legend. I know of no potent weapon hidden here—unless, of course, the azer smith Artel finished the one Andrathi believes he was working on.”

Venema will not leave the mausoleum and memorial grounds, but is very grateful to PCs for conversing with her, and she grants them leave to rest on the island as long as they wish. With her blessing, the traps and guardians of the Isle of the Dead no longer trouble the PCs. Furthermore,

once she has spoken to the PCs, and should the PCs vow to defeat Jhavlul, Andrathi’s spirit can rest. Spooky approaches the PC that was the kindest to him and rubs against his leg. Although now nothing more than an ordinary cat in most regards, as long as he lives and accompanies his chosen PC, that character gains a +1 luck bonus on all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and level checks. Spooky can serve as a familiar or animal companion, in which case his statistics change as appropriate.

VENEMA SHODAIR

Female mature adult brass dragon wyrmskull

hp 143 (see page 89)

SPOOKY

Lucky male cat (ex-familiar)

hp 2 (MM 270)

Ad Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs ally with Venema and learn what she has to tell them, award them experience as if they had defeated her in combat.

PART SIX: FLINT AND STEEL

Although a journey to the island of Khosravi isn’t required by the shaitans or proteans, and it isn’t a necessary step to escape from Kakishon, there are several points in this adventure where the PCs can learn that a smith who dwells on the island may have been building a weapon to fight Jhavlul. These stories are true, and if the PCs make the journey to the Isle of Flint and secure the friendship of the azer Artel, they will be all the better prepared to face Jhavlul when they finally confront him in the last adventure, “The Final Wish.”

Khosravi, known also as the Isle of Flint, is a blasted and barren land of rock and gravel. Nothing grows on the island, and its skyline is dominated by two singular sights—the rise of an active volcano, Salenax, just off of Khosravi’s southern shore, and the immense stone spike of the Black Spire from the island’s center. The rest of the island is littered with ruined siege engines, broken towers, crumbling stone barracks, and other accoutrements of war, for it was on Khosravi that Nex readied his initial armies to aid in taking control of the nation destined to bear his name.

The numerous ruined buildings were built for the use of creatures coming to Khosravi to drill and practice their martial skills, and they still bear remnants of the ancient magics with which Nex infused them. Any creature resting in the ruins of one of the hundreds of barracks that decorate the expanse of the Isle of Flint heals naturally at twice the normal rate.



The remnants of siege engines and mock battlefields that clutter much of the island give the place a strange, sterile appearance—that of a mass battle that resulted in no bloodshed or death, for nowhere are there bodies or bones to tell the tale of what occurred here. In some places, fires seem to have damaged large areas of the island, but these came after Nex abandoned the place and result from the actions of Jhavlul and his army, who spent some time sifting through the rubble looking for treasure only to be discouraged by the lack of worthwhile finds combined with the hostility of the Isle of Flint's primary inhabitants—ghosts. Today, these ghosts are much fewer in number, and cluster around the foot of the Black Spire.

The Black Spire (EL 10)

An immense spike of sheer, solid rock with narrow grooves spiraling up its entire length protrudes from the ground. Driven deep in the heart of a hilltop at the center of the island, the spike rises to a height of at least one hundred feet. The spike impales the petrified ribcage of an enormous draconic beast, its stony ribs themselves over twenty feet high. Scattered nearby are other fragments of the colossal skeleton—bits of wing, legs, and to the south of the spire, an immense horned skull. The spire widens at the top like the knob of some brobdingnagian club, and the top is slightly jagged, as though pieces have been broken off.

Here sits Nex's tribute to his own cleverness. When one of his enemies managed to invade Kakishon with a primordial nightmare called the Eater of Magic that devoured every kind of magical power Nex could throw at it, he conceived the idea of building an immense rod of great weight and hardness, suspending it magically, and then dropping it from a great height upon the beast. The calculations required to hit a moving target, even one as large as the Eater of Magic, were quite complex, but Nex successfully lured the creature to the precise spot required at the very moment the enormous flint spike (carved from the island itself) struck, impaling the creature and putting Nex's enemy to flight. That enemy's name is now lost to time, but the fossilized remains of the Eater of Magic live on here as a testimony to Nex's power.

The bones of the Eater of Magic have a peculiar property still—they suppress magic, creating a permanent anti-magic zone to a radius of 150 feet from the spire's base. This made for an excellent neutral ground where Nex or his agents could safely meet with enemy spellcasters to resolve issues diplomatically without fear of magical treachery. Nex built a structure atop the spire and had steps carved into the spire's sides, and for some time Andrathi hid atop this spire until he was forced to flee after Jhavlul found a way to drive the isle's ghosts against him.

Creatures: A dozen of the isle's ghosts remain, dwelling amid the petrified remains of the Eater of Magic in a perpetual state of starvation and hunger. They have learned to fear the results of wandering too far from the spire (they are not yet aware of the fact that Jhavlul and his army have left Kakishon), and instead clamber and howl madly among the bones here. Their howls increase in ferocity if the PCs approach, and they scuttle forth to attack at once.

The ghosts do not pursue foes outside of the antimagic zone. While inside the zone, the ghosts cannot inflict foes with ghoul fever (as this is a supernatural ability), but their paralysis and stench abilities are not impeded at all. More importantly, they cannot be turned, rebuked, or commanded while in this zone, as the ability to turn and rebuke undead, as a supernatural ability, is blocked by antimagic. If they are assaulted from beyond the antimagic zone via ranged weapons, they simply seek cover amid the large bones and wait out the siege—although constantly starving, they, as undead, have no need to eat to continue on.

GHASTS (12)

hp 29 each (MM 119)

CR 3

Treasure: The ghosts have amassed a small cache of loot from their victims, and have hidden it in the left eye socket of the Eater of Magic where a DC 20 Search check can locate it. The cache consists of 190 gp, 13 +3 *undead bane* arrows, a *scroll of disintegrate*, a +2 *mithral* buckler, and a *periapt of wound closure*.

Yet what might be a greater treasure lies atop the Black Spire. A PC that climbs to the top of the spire finds the partially collapsed structure that once served Nex as a diplomatic summit chamber. The building itself is empty of furnishings and guardians (although any ghosts are sure to clamber up here to attack any foes they see), but in 2d4 locations, strange gray crystals the size and shape of a dagger's blade have sprouted from the flinty ground. These strange crystals form as a result of the combination of magic and antimagic that so powerfully infused the area, and can be harvested by simply smashing away at the underlying stone with any bludgeoning weapon as a full-round action. Once harvested, these strange crystals can be worked like iron. Any piercing or slashing weapon crafted from the crystals is exceptionally sharp, and gains a +2 enhancement bonus to damage done. A single crystal is large enough to forge a single light Medium weapon. Two are required for a one-handed weapon, while four are required for a two-handed weapon. A weapon made of this material penetrates DR/magic even if the weapon itself is not magic. A single crystal is worth 4,000 gp to a smith who recognizes its usefulness—likewise, a weapon

made from this crystal costs 4,000 gp more than its actual price. This nameless crystal grows only atop the Black Spire, and even then at a hideously slow rate of one per century.

Salenax

Those who seek to visit the azer smith Artel must climb the slopes of Salenax, for the smith's forge lies within a cavern overlooking the volcano's caldera. The volcano itself rises from the sea, its own separate island just off the southern coast of Khosravi, but its lower slopes are connected to the larger island by a long bridge of red marble—the Phoenix Bridge. Salenax itself is very active, constantly belching steam and ash and periodically lava, but the underlying structure of Kakishon itself serves to isolate its seismic activity so that no tsunamis result from its rumblings. The Phoenix Bridge itself, although it shakes and shudders ominously each time the volcano erupts, is never in any actual danger of collapse.

On the Salenax side of the bridge, a short path leads to a small gatehouse consisting of two towers extending out of the side of the volcano, between which looms a 25-foot-wide cave entrance. Smoke plumes from this entrance constantly, carried on blisteringly hot winds. This is the entrance to the Fireforge, the lair of the azer smith Artel Norrin, who once served Nex as the master smith of weaponry. Like the Phoenix Bridge, this underground complex is shielded and protected from the seismic activity of the volcano, and even though the forge itself looks out over the volcano's active throat, no danger of flooding from magma exists here.

Yet the temperature within the Fireforge is blisteringly hot. The temperature here is severe heat, and creatures within must make a DC 15 (+1 for each previous roll) Fortitude save every 10 minutes or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage—characters in heavy armor or clothing suffer a –4 penalty on this save. For more details on severe heat, see page 303 of the DMG.

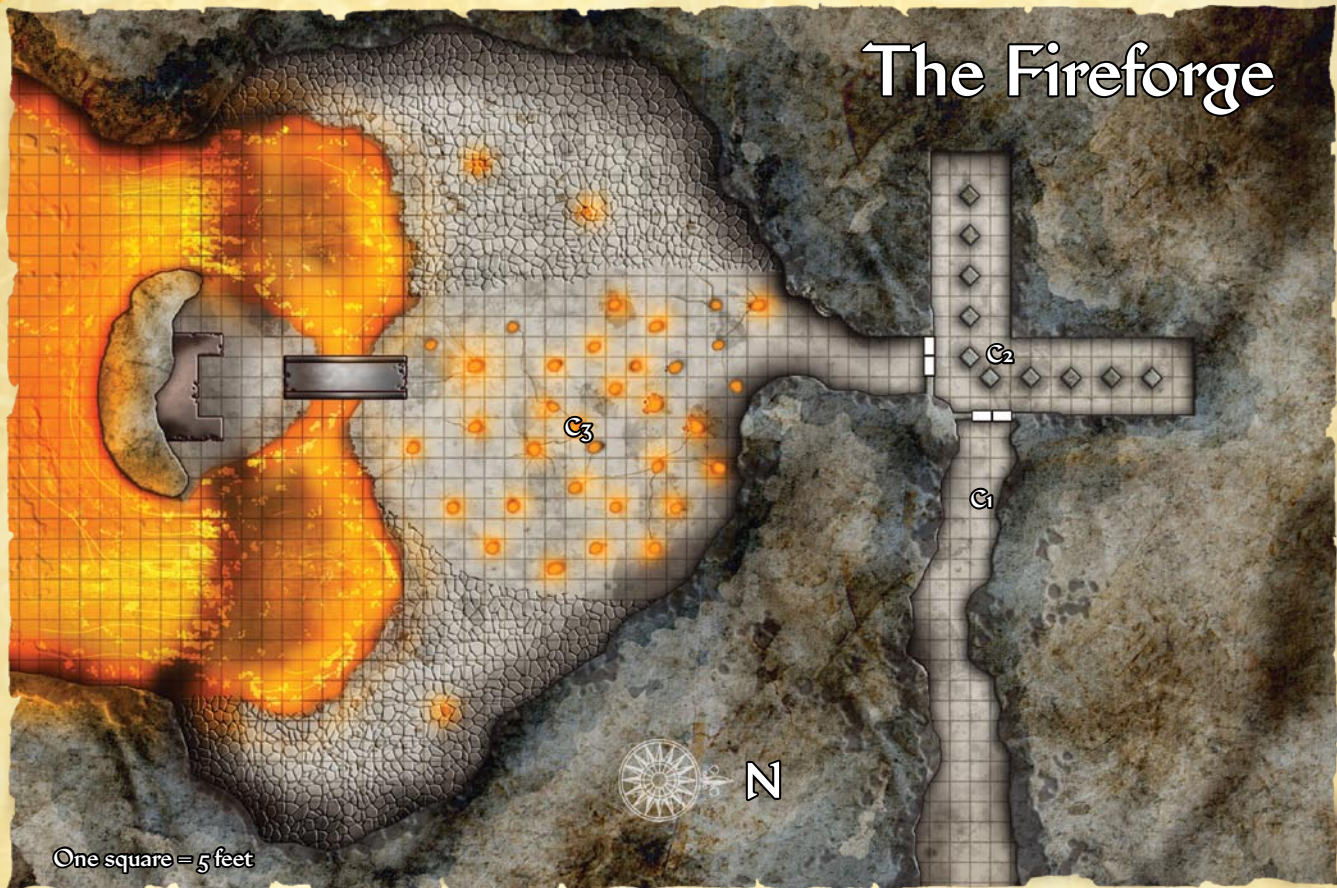
The tunnel winds through the depths of the volcano for a mile and a half (characters moving at speed 30 can traverse this length in about half an hour, and thus will likely need to make three saving throws against the heat before reaching area C1).

C1. The Baleful Gates

The tunnel ends in a pair of red-hot metal gates, embossed with the seal of Nex and a dwarven figure covering both door panels, with the dwarf's left hand on an anvil and his right hand on a hammer.

The doors are not locked, but they are tremendously hot and heavy, requiring a DC 20 Strength check to push open.

The Fireforge



Up to four people can work together to aid another on this strength check, but each round spent pushing and forcing the door open inflicts 2d6 points of fire damage.

C2. Arms and Armor

A single row of red-hot metal columns runs down the center of this curved hall. The plain stone walls are lined with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of weapon and armor racks. The majority of these racks are empty, but several along the south wall still hold a magnificent array of glittering arms and armor.

During Nex's day, this storeroom was filled with weapons produced by the Fireforge, and raw materials stacked high awaiting use. When Nex left, he took the weapons with him, and no new supplies of raw materials have come in. Artel Norrin has been forced to recycle his creations for the past several centuries as he reworks weapons and stores them here, and when he runs out, he simply reuses old weapons for new base materials.

The doors to the south are red hot and heavy to open, as the door at C1.

Treasure: Currently, there are a dozen magic weapons stored here (3 +1 longswords, a +2 battle axe, two +1 halberds,

a +1 *thundering bastard sword*, a +2 *rapier*, and 4 +1 *daggers*), along with a suit of +2 *chainmail* and +1 *full plate*—all awaiting eventual recycling and transformation into new weapons.

C3. The Fireforge (EL 10)

The air in this yawning cavern roils with heat. A broad expanse of stone slopes gently to the south, pocked with dozens of steaming holes in the ground. At the far end, a bubbling pool of magma surrounds a stone precipice, both of which overlook the volcano's smoking crater. Lava drains off in immense cascades, yet the level of magma in the lake remains constant. An immense iron-and-stone forge looms at the edge of the island in the middle of the lava lake.

Here, inside the Fireforge itself, the heat is extreme—breathing the air deals 1d6 points of damage per minute (no save), and creatures must make a DC 15 (+1 per previous check) Fortitude save every 5 minutes or take 1d3 points of nonlethal damage (see DMG 303 for rules on extreme heat). Additionally, the roar of the forge, lava cascades, and the constant rumble of the volcano itself impart a –10 penalty to all Listen checks made in here.

The ground between the entrance and the actual Fireforge itself fits into two categories. The central section is solid, with small fumaroles as indicated on the map. Anyone who enters a square with a fumarole has a 50% chance to trigger a sudden blast of hot gas, inflicting 4d6 points of fire damage (DC 15 Reflex halves).

To the left and right of the central area, the ground is actually just a thin shell of rock over more magma. A DC 20 Survival check is enough to note the hazard—otherwise, a creature of Small or larger size that treads upon the rock breaks through and must make a DC 15 Reflex save to stagger back to solid ground. If solid ground is not within 5 feet, or if the Reflex save is failed, the creature plunges into the lava, taking 20d6 points of fire damage per round of immersion (see DMG 304 for rules about lava).

Creatures: Three different creatures dwell in the Fireforge—Artel Norrin, his magma mephit familiar Farid, and his four magmin servants. Artel and the magmin are focused on their most recent project at the forge and are unlikely to notice intruders in the cave, but Farid is perched on a tiny ledge by the wall. As soon as he notices the PCs enter, he flutters down and demands to know their business, stating that his master is very busy. He is brusque and unfriendly, and while he understands Common, he only replies in Ignan (he feels Common speech is beneath his position as the forgemaster's familiar). PCs who can make him friendly with a DC 25 Diplomacy check convince him to interrupt his master's work, in which case he escorts them across the bridge for an audience. PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy checks if they reply to Farid in Ignan—offering him a bribe of at least 100 gp in precious metal or gems also grants a +2 bonus. Showing one of the crystals from atop the Black Spire automatically makes the mephit helpful, and he flaps off to excitedly inform his master of the kindly visitors bearing important gifts.

The forge itself is tended by the four magmins, toiling constantly to keep it hot and ready for use and fetching tools and metal from a large pile of partially melted weapons and armor as Artel demands. Over the thousands of years Artel has toiled here, though, the passage of time has worn heavily on his mind and many of his memories of life before are merely hazy whispers and shadows. He remembers Nex as his father, and speaks of him kindly, but doesn't recall much of use from Kakishon's early days. His memories of Jhavlul are more clear, as is his hatred

of the efreeti's demands and overbearing nature. Jhavlul supplied Artel with some materials to continue forging, but much more haphazardly and periodically—and only as Jhavlul needed weapons. Artel forged such for the efreeti, but only begrudgingly, and when not working he has been toiling to perfect his masterpiece (see Treasure).

As the PCs approach, Artel greets them with an exasperated sigh and declares impatiently, "All right, you have your meeting with the great forgemaster, Artel Norrin. That's me. Now what do you want? Be quick about it. As you can see, *some* of us have work to do."

Artel is gruff and surly but generally indifferent—but if the PCs give him at least one of the crystals from atop the Black Spike, he immediately becomes helpful. As the crystals are in an antimagic zone protected by ghosts, Artel is unequipped to harvest the crystals despite his great love of working with them.

If Artel is made at least friendly, and if he believes that the PCs are no friends of Jhavlul, he'll agree to help them against the hated efreeti. Artel admits that he's been working in secret on several weapons to use against Jhavlul, and if told that Jhavlul is no longer in Kakishon, he appears crestfallen. He has dwelt here in Kakishon long enough to have developed a sort of agoraphobia about returning to the real world—with Jhavlul gone, he sees no reason to continue his work on his weapons against the genie. However, if made friendly, he agrees to sell the weapons to the PCs—if made helpful, he gives them to the PCs for free, as long as they promise to use them on Jhavlul and let the efreeti know they're from Artel when they do.



artel norrin

ARTEL NORRIN

CR 9

Male azer wizard 8

LN Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24

(+4 armor, +3 Dex, +6 natural, +4 shield)

hp 59 (10 HD; 2d8+8d4+30)

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Immune fire; **SR** 21

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 warhammer +7/+2 (1d8+1/x3 plus 1 fire)

FLASK OF EBON FLAME

Aura faint transmutation; **CL** 5th

Slot —; **Price** 1,500 gp; **Weight** 1 lb.

DESCRIPTION

This small flask smokes with an odorless black mist when opened. Each flask contains a single use of ebon flame, a strange sort of fire that is hostile to normal fire. Cool to the touch even in hot environs, when poured out, a flask creates a 20-foot-radius burst of black fire centered on the user. This burst of ebon flame extinguishes all natural fires and dispels magical fire (dispel check 1d20+5) in the area, including magic items that have fire effects (such as a *flametongue sword* or a *necklace of fireballs*), although items dispelled merely cease to function for 1d4 rounds.

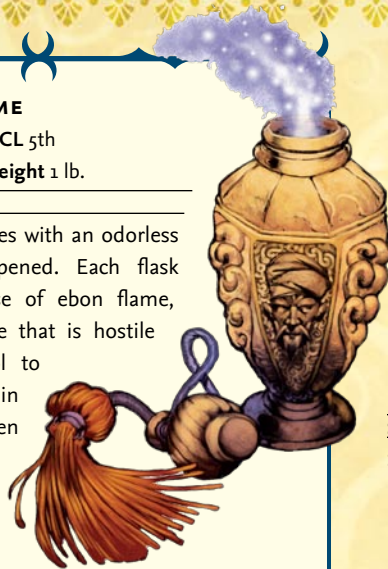
The ebon flame can cure damage caused by fire—each creature in the burst is healed 5d6 points of damage caused by fire effects.

A creature with the fire subtype inside the area of the burst takes 5d6 points of damage and is stunned for 1 round—a successful DC 15 Fortitude save halves the damage and negates the stun effect.

Ebon flame is unstable, and when combined in doses larger than a single use, or when not stored in a specially prepared flask, it dissipates harmlessly in a cloud of faint black smoke. Overlapping areas of ebon flame do not stack their effects.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *false life* or *cure moderate wounds*, *resist energy* or *quench*; **Cost** 750 gp, 60 XP



unless it's obvious that some of the PCs are taking damage from the environment, but is quick to use *ice storm* against foes whom he suspects might take additional damage from cold. His first act in combat is to cast *haste* and send his magmin out to attack melee fighters. Artel is fond of using *rainbow pattern* to lure enemies into the lava, and uses *fly* to gain mobility over the PCs if necessary.

Morale Artel uses *dimension door* to escape if reduced to 15 hit points or less, fleeing into the volcano itself for safety. If prevented from escaping and captured alive, he offers his weapons as a bribe for his life and freedom.

STATISTICS

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

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

Feats Craft Magical Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Improved Familiar, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +9, Climb +4, Concentration +11, Craft (armorsmithing) +13, Craft (weaponsmithing) +12, Hide +8, Jump +5, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +6, Search +9, Spellcraft +14, Spot +6

Languages Common, Ignan, Terran

SQ heat

Combat Gear *scroll of identify*, *scroll of protection from chaos*, *scroll of see invisibility*, *scroll of shrink item*, *scroll of tongues*, *wand of invisibility* (45 charges); **Other Gear** +1 *warhammer*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *hand of the mage*, spellbook (an iron book with metal pages, this spellbook contains all the spells Artel has prepared plus an additional 2d4 spells of each level).

FARID

Magma mephit familiar
hp 29 (MM 183)

CR —

MAGMINS (4)

hp 11 each (MM 179)

CR 3

Treasure: In order to construct a weapon for use against Jhavhul, Artel has focused his research and work over the past few centuries perfecting something to fight against fire. His research into the methods of how fire works, and how to “unburn” things, led him to a singular discovery—ebon flame. Crafting ebon flame from raw fire is a lengthy process, but he’s secured a dozen vials of the stuff so far.

Yet his crowning achievement has been the creation of *Zenzirad*, a +1 *fire outsider bane frost falchion* forged on ebon flame. Artel, being a creature of fire, still bears scars on his arms and hands from handling and forging this weapon, and as proud as he is of the result, he’s eager to see it handed off to a proper warrior. Feel free to change *Zenzirad* into a different weapon that matches one favored by one of your PCs—preferably not the same PC who wields *Tempest* from “Howl of the Carrion King.”

Spells Prepared (CL 8th, +9 ranged touch)

4th—*confusion* (DC 18), *ice storm*, *rainbow pattern* (DC 18)

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fly*, *haste*, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 17)

2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *mirror image*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*

1st—*feather fall*, *floating disk*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *ray of enfeeblement*

0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *message*

TACTICS

Before Combat Artel casts *mage armor* and *shield* as soon as he suspects trouble might be coming.

During Combat Artel avoids using his fire spells against foes

PART SEVEN: SANDS OF THE SHAITAN

Unlike the proteans, Dilix, or Andrathi's spirit, the leader of the shaitan rebels who turned against Jhavlul has no real interest in allying with the PCs. This adventure assumes that Obherak is destined to become the villain of the piece, but if the PCs learn of the shaitan and wish to ally with him, this option is possible—see the “The Shaitan Pact” for details on what happens if the PCs seek an alliance with the shaitans.

Most likely, the PCs are encouraged by the proteans and Dilix to confront Obherak, to defeat him and rescue the protean imentesh he has taken prisoner in his fane. Obherak and his army of shaitans are perhaps the most numerous faction in Kakishon, yet they remain a small fraction of their original power—long centuries of a cold war against both the proteans and Jhavlul have whittled away their numbers to what remains today. Obherak has taken as his lair an ancient temple once dedicated to the worship of Nethys located in the heart of Kakishon's desert isle of Khandelwal, known also as the Island of Sand Rivers. Ringed entirely by a band of jungle, PCs who travel to Khandelwal quickly find the island's interior to be an arid, inhospitable desert, its jungle edge maintained by the magic of the realm.

Most of Khandelwal's shoreline and the area around the hostel are green and pleasant, with groves of fruit trees and palms interspersed with flowering shrubs and vines, and inhabited by monkeys large and small, as well as fisher birds who also frequent the reedy inlets and tidelands at the water's edge. Very different from the island's sandy interior, the shoreline areas exhibit light undergrowth interspersed with small trees. Fortunately for the PCs, the island itself is relatively small, yet in order to locate Obherak's fane, the PCs will need to use magic or seek the advice of someone like Dilix—otherwise they may end up wandering the desert for days before they find the crater that marks the site of the shaitans' lair.

The Shaitan Pact

Before the PCs can speak on peaceful terms with Obherak, they should first contact him via magic (such as *sending*) or via one of the shaitans that can be encountered as wandering monsters throughout Kakishon. Alternatively, they could simply approach his fane. If they make it to the fane without encountering his guards, they can secure a peaceful meeting with the shaitan by requesting such from Iqilma, the Oberhak's majordomo—Obherak's pride prevents him from meeting directly with strangers until he knows the meeting is worthy of his presence. Securing a meeting requires changing Iqilma's attitude from hostile to

friendly with a DC 35 Diplomacy check, magic, or a bribe of at least 15,000 gp in magic or gifts.

Iqilma is terse and blunt during the meeting. Unlike the proteans, who seek out the PCs and are more humble about their need for help, the shaitans see asking for help as a sign of weakness, and therefore they try to come off as tough even though they might need help—it's a tough act to pull off, and her attitude is likely to annoy and estrange the PCs unless they're exceptionally patient. Yet if the PCs can secure her aid by making her friendly, she'll finally relent and tell them to come to the Golden Bowl at the next dawn—if the PCs do, Obherak will meet with them and agree to hear what they have to say.

The leader of the shaitans is as good as his word—when the meeting occurs, he and all nine shaitans stationed at his fane are there to greet the PCs, although only his two bodyguards and Iqilma are visible (the other six meld into stone and are ready to emerge to aid their commander if the PCs attack). Obherak allows the PCs to present their case, but if they aren't quick about explaining themselves, he grows impatient. His initial attitude is unfriendly—he must be made friendly before he'll consider helping the PCs. If he can't be made friendly in the span of 1d4 minutes, he grows tired of the meeting and informs the PCs that they have annoyed him and must leave the Golden Bowl at once. If the PCs don't immediately comply, he orders all nine of his shaitans to attack, joining them in the fray along with the sphinx Zulfihar and the gargoyles who watch over the Golden Bowl (see area **D1**). As this is an EL 15 encounter, the PCs would be well advised to retreat.

Obherak makes clear his desires if the PCs ask him about the proteans—he wants to rule Kakishon as his own paradise. After a lifetime of serving under others (most recently, Jhavlul), he would prefer to cut the demiplane off entirely from the rest of reality. And since the proteans want to destroy Kakishon, they are his greatest enemies. If the PCs ask him if he knows of a way to escape Kakishon, he laughs mockingly, saying, “Only fools would wish to leave paradise!” Yet he does have an idea—he sees the continued existence of the proteans as the reason Kakishon has been damaged: “Had this realm's creator slain them after their work building this realm was completed rather than just banishing them to the Isles of Not, Kakishon would have endured forever! Yet he was crippled by cowardice and compassion, I suspect, as are all men—he could not bring himself to slay his slaves, and instead just locked them away in a place where their anger would be allowed to fester and grow.” As long as the remaining proteans exist, his paradise is threatened—if the PCs agree to slay those who still dwell in the Isles of Not, Obherak tells them he can help them escape Kakishon. If the PCs agree to travel to the Isles of Not, Obherak bids them good luck but does not provide them additional aid unless the PCs make

him helpful, in which case he sends Iqilma and two other shaitans with them to aid them in the battle to come on the Isles of Not.

Obherak is being only partially truthful—PCs can make Sense Motive checks against Obherak’s Bluff check to determine he isn’t being entirely honest. His true reason for not wanting any part of the final battle with the proteans is cowardice—they lie at the other side of the sea, and Obherak’s loathing of water is one of his greatest secrets.

The Golden Bowl

Obherak’s lair lies below a crater in the heart of Khandelwal—a site called the Golden Bowl. Located in a sandy valley surrounded by a ring of badlands high enough to block the sand-tides of Khandelwal, the rocky escarpment that rings the Golden Bowl is visible from a distance of a mile when a traveler stands atop a dune. Gargoyles are common among these craggy rocks, and the shaitans have a tentative alliance with the stony creatures—if the PCs don’t use stealth in their approach, gargoyles flying above the badlands are likely to see them long before they reach the Golden Bowl and swoop down to alert the guardians of the area.

The entrance to Obherak’s fane itself is via a small stone temple perched on the northern edge of the Golden Bowl. A stone ramp leads down from this open-air structure to the dusty floor of the crater. The sand here is incredibly fine and golden, and characters who stand in it must wade through the stuff as if it were thick water—the sand is a foot deep and is treated as difficult terrain.

D1. The Ancient Fane (EL 11)

The stone platform that hangs over the edge of the crater is of polished granite, its surface inscribed with faint geometric patterns. Partially eroded statues of a humanoid figure stand atop the open area, while just to the north a colonnade supports a stone roof that provides shade. A stone ramp leads down from the platform into the dusty crater to the south.

The statues once depicted Nethys, but erosion has seen them wear away to featureless forms—strangely, the same erosion doesn’t seem to affect the structure itself, perhaps as a result of the fane’s loss of Nethys’s favor due to neglect from his faithful.

The actual entrance to Obherak’s fane is quite cleverly hidden. When the site was a functional temple devoted to Nethys, a large well existed in the central part of the platform just south of the roofed area. This well, at one point, dropped down into the chambers below, but the shaitans have used *wall of stone* and *stone shape* to block this entrance completely, leaving a 1-foot-thick plug to seal the entrance tight. When they need to come and go, they simply

use *earth glide* to pass through the stone into the chambers below. A DC 25 Search check made in the area notes that a 10-foot-diameter area lacks the faint inscriptions found elsewhere, and a DC 24 Spellcraft check identifies the work of *stone shape* and *wall of stone* to cover something up.

Yet, since shaitans breathe, they must periodically open this entrance to ventilate their lair. This occurs daily, at dusk. At this time, one of the shaitans (usually Obherak’s majordomo Iqilma) emerges, uses *stone shape* to open the shaft, and then uses her *wind fan* to circulate the air within. This grants PCs who take the time to observe the area from afar a chance to learn how to enter the fane.

Without magic, the only way into the fane once this opening is sealed is to hammer through the opening. The plug is 6 inches thick (Hardness 8; hp 90 per 5-foot square; Break DC 32). If the PCs are working with the proteans, they can use the *wand of stone shape* or a vial of *oil of soften earth and stone* to ease the opening of the way.

Once the stone is removed, a 10-foot-diameter shaft drops down into area **D2** below. The shaft walls are very smooth, and it takes a DC 30 Climb check to scale them. A character who falls lands atop the stone prison in area **D2** below; the shaft itself descends for 60 feet before emerging into the roof of area **D2**, and the floating block of stone upon which falling creatures land is a further 20 feet down from the shaft bottom above. The shaitans use their *earth glide* ability to move about their lair, emerging as needed to toil in their workshops but generally avoiding the need to use the vertical tunnels of the chamber.

Creatures: This area is protected by a gynosphinx named Zulfiqar, the latest in a long line of sphinxes to have served the shaitans as guardians and keepers of the entrance to their fane. In addition, a flock of six gargoyles perch on the upper edge of the roof behind the sphinx, using their freeze ability to look like demonic decorations. In addition, Iqilma, a golden-skinned female shaitan, waits in the stone of one of the pillars using *meld into stone*, listening to what transpires above.

When she notices the PCs, Zulfiqar’s expression brightens from boredom as she prowls up to the edge of the building. “What have we here?” she asks. “Travelers! The Golden Bowl sees so few of your kind these days.” Despite her apparent delight at having visitors, Zulfiqar’s initial attitude is indifferent. Although she’ll engage the PCs in conversation, she won’t reveal the identity or nature of her master, or who truly dwells here. If the PCs press for information or attempt to explore the fane, she stands and offers to aid the PCs only if they can answer a riddle.

“Many find riddles cliché, but I find them quite delightful. If you would seek my aid or pass beyond, you must answer me this: I build up hills and tear down mountains. I make blind eyes see and make seeing eyes blind. What am I?”

the end of eternity



The answer is “sand.” With this correct answer, Zulfiqar smiles broadly and moves aside as though to let them pass, but at this point Iqilma emerges from her pillar. The voluptuous, golden-skinned shaitan’s expression is one of anger and impatience as she speaks to the sphinx. “You’ve had your fun, Zulfiqar. Need I remind you that you serve Obherak now, not the ridiculous tongue-twisting traditions of your kind?”

Zulfiqar’s expression clouds with rage at this—give the PCs a chance to act. If they come to Zulfiqar’s defense in any way, the sphinx finds the courage to stand up to the abusive shaitan and sides with the PCs in the fight to come. If, on the other hand, they attack or try to parlay with the shaitan (see “The Shaitan Pact” sidebar for more information about this), the sphinx swallows her pride and attacks the PCs, directing her fury and shame at them rather than at Iqilma.

In either case, if a battle begins, the gargoyles swoop down to join the fight as well, shrieking in delight at the battle and bloodshed to come.

When this battle begins, Zulfiqar and Iqilma both attempt to bull rush PCs off the edge into the basin below. The shaitan fights until reduced to 20 hit points or less, whereupon she flees into the fane below to join Obherak and

warn him of the PCs. Once she flees, Zulfiqar curses and abandons her post, flying off to find a new life and fed up with working for genies. The gargoyles fight to the death.

ZULFIQAR

Female gynosphinx (MM 233)
hp 52

CR 7

IQILMA

Shaitan (see page 12)
hp 58

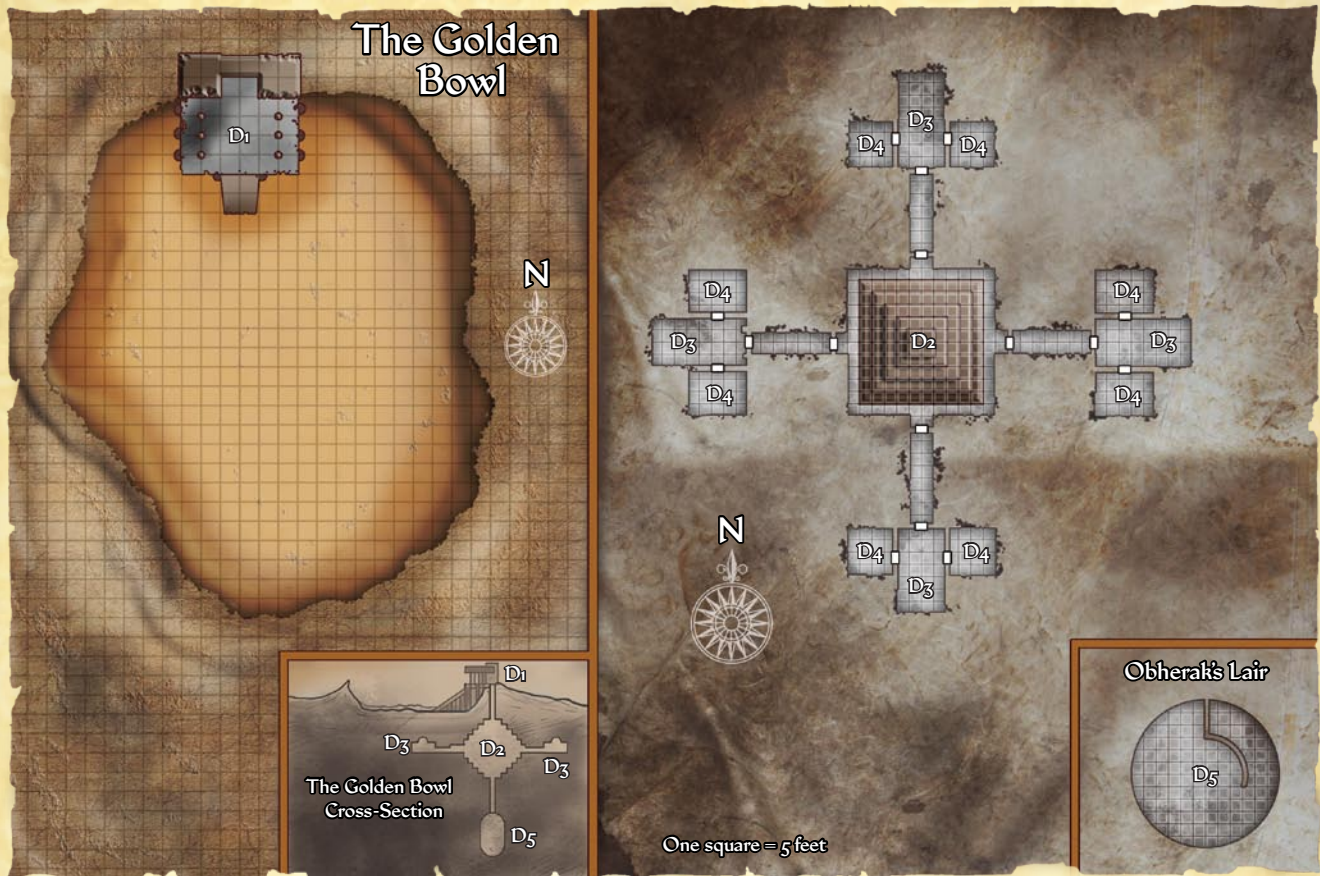
CR 7

GARGOYLES (6)

hp 37 each (MM 113)

CR 4

Treasure: Zulfiqar keeps a cache of treasure given her by the genies in a hidden compartment in the westernmost pillar, concealed behind a graven relief of a criosphinx. A DC 25 Search check finds the cache, which contains 1,500 gp, 6 tiger eye gems worth 10 gp each, a topaz worth 1,000 gp, a *potion of lesser restoration*, and a blue crystal *wand of false life* (CL 3, 17 charges). Iqilma carries a *wind fan* that she uses periodically to ventilate the chambers below.



D2. The Prison Cyst (EL 11)

This bizarre, sixty-foot-wide chamber suggests the interior of twin six-stepped ziggurats set base to base; the floor drops away in five-foot-wide tiers mirrored by similar tiers in the ceiling above. A shaft extends up from the ten-foot-square area at the highest point above, while hanging in midair in the center of the chamber is a blocky structure some twenty feet across, covered in an intricate lacework of tiny, glowing, golden Terran runes, giving a dim light to the entire chamber. At the widest point of the room's perimeter, where the two inverted ziggurats join, stand four large stones. Yet in this strange chamber, perhaps the strangest sight of all is the figure imprisoned in that floating stone block—a snake-like creature with a feathered reptilian head and delicate humanoid arms seems to have been fused into the block, coils of flesh and lengths of arms protruding here and there from the stone, its head partially encased with only one closed eye free.

When the shaitans claimed this abandoned Nethysian fane as their lair, they used *wall of stone*, *stone shape*, and their stonecrafting talents to completely remake and rebuild the underground portion of the complex to their liking. Yet the thing that initially drew them to this site, and the one part of the fane they didn't change, was the

strange block of stone that floats in this room. This block of stone is the one Nex brought to Kakishon to aid the proteans in the world's creation—unlike air and fire and water, whose elemental seeds were diffused and merged with the new reality, only this stone was solid enough to remain pure—the islands of Kakishon formed around it, but it did not merge with them. It, along with the proteans themselves, is the only thing in Kakishon that predates Kakishon itself, and as such it represents a link to the multiverse.

Obherak recognized this when he first discovered this site, not long after the genies came to Kakishon. Jhavlul had sent his genies out to explore the new realm, but Obherak knew this stone and its link to the multiverse could, in theory, be used to escape from Kakishon. Even then, Obherak knew that he never wanted to leave, and so he kept this knowledge from Jhavlul, and when the shaitans turned against Jhavlul sometime later, Obherak led them here.

Today, the stone serves as the interdicted prison cell holding the imentesh protean Magiyawalla. She is stable, but unconscious at -1 hit points, and remains so as long as she's imprisoned in the block. The unique nature of this block greatly enhances a shaitan's stone curse ability—a creature forced into this block of stone with stone curse

has its supernatural abilities, spell-like abilities, and fast healing suppressed, and can only attempt a Fortitude save against stone curse once per day to escape. To further her imprisonment, the shaitans make sure that Magiyawalla remains unconscious so that she can't even do that. Magiyawalla can be released from her prison in the same way someone can be forced out of *meld into stone*—further, she can be released by simply doing enough damage to the block of magically enhanced stone (hardness 16, hp 600), a task much easier with the aid of spells like *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *stone to flesh*, or *transmute rock to mud*. Spells used against the stone itself to free the protean do not harm her in the way that they would if used directly against her to free her (as detailed in the description of *meld into stone*).

The ground at the bottom of the chamber is protected by another stone wall identical to the one in area **D1** above; this plug blocks another shaft that descends a further 60 feet before ending at the top of a spiraling ramp that winds down to area **D5**. The walls of this shaft are smooth and can be climbed with a DC 30 Climb check.

Creatures: Although no shaitans guard this chamber, the room is far from unprotected. Two deadly constructs, beings created of stone and shaped vaguely like gorillas covered with jagged stony spikes, stand vigil in this chamber. The ground and stone around them ripple and extrude spikes, almost as if the latter were infecting the nearby stone with their presence. These are spikestone guardians, ancient creations of Nex that Obherak discovered and was able to use his mastery over earth to influence and control. One construct stands guard before the north doorway, and the other construct guards the doorway to the south.

If the PCs free Magiyawalla or restore her to consciousness, the panicked protean immediately begins to roar in rage and fear. If the PCs don't help her escape from her stone curse, she can immediately make a DC 22 Fortitude save to try to escape. As soon as she is released from the stone, her long-delayed return to the Isles of Not whisks her back into exile and she vanishes without a trace, returning to area **A4**. If the PCs are working with the proteans to rescue Magiyawalla, Lahaprasat is true to her word. Only a round after Magiyawalla's disappearance, Lahaprasat and three naunet proteans appear in the room, transported here by the entropy pool. Still exiled, the proteans have only 1 minute to aid the PCs against whatever enemies still remain in this chamber, and they do their best to help finish the battle before they're forced back to the Isles of Not for 24 hours.

SPIKESTONE GUARDIANS (2)

Variant advanced stone guardian (*Tome of Horrors Revised* 220)
N Large construct

CR 9

Init –2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see invisibility; Listen +0, Spot +0

Aura spikes (5 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 23, touch 8, flat-footed 23

(–2 Dex, +15 natural)

hp 96 (12d10+30)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Defensive Abilities construct traits; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 slams +17 (3d6+9/19–20)

Ranged spike volley +6 (2d8+9)

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

TACTICS

During Combat The spikestone guardians move to attack anyone not escorted by a shaitan. They prefer to attack foes, but will use spike volleys against those who can avoid melee.

Morale The spikestone guardians fight until destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 7, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +22

SQ geniebound

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Aura of Spikes (Su) Natural and worked stone surfaces within 5 feet of a spikestone guardian temporarily reshape themselves into spiky surfaces. This aura moves with the guardian, and the spike stones persist only as long as the guardian is within 5 feet. If the guardian moves adjacent to a creature, that creature is not affected by the spike stones unless it moves. Any creature moving into, out of, or through a square within 5 feet of the guardian moves at half speed and takes 1d8 points of piercing damage for each square crossed. In addition, that creature must make a DC 16 Reflex save or have its movement reduced by half until it receives magical healing or a DC 16 Heal check administered over the course of 10 minutes. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Geniebound (Su) Unlike most stone guardians, these spikestone guardians are not linked to a specific ring that allows its wearer to command them. Instead, both of these constructs are bound to Obherak—they obey his commands without question, and if the shaitan is slain, a spikestone guardian immediately goes berserk, attacking the closest creature (even another spikestone guardian) for 1d6 rounds before it crumbles apart into rubble.

See Invisibility (Su) A spikestone guardian can employ *see invisibility*, as per the spell.

Spike Volley (Su) A spikestone guardian's spike volley targets one foe. It has a range increment of 60 feet.

MAGIYAWALLA

Imentesh protean (see page 84)

hp 136 (currently –1)

CR 10

Development: Although there are no shaitans initially in this chamber, the sound of combat or other loud noises swiftly brings those shaitans stationed in areas **D3** and **D4** running to investigate. Excluding Iqilma in area **D1** above, there are a total of 6 shaitans in these chambers—they arrive in pairs every 1d4 rounds after combat begins in this chamber. If two shaitans are defeated, the remaining genies attempt to use earth glide to burrow down to area **D5** to alert Obherak—if any of them succeed, they return in a few rounds with their leader to continue the fight.

D3. Workrooms (EL Variable)

The floor of this rectangular chamber is sunken five feet below the entry door, and its ceiling rises twenty feet above this lower floor. The chamber itself is outfitted for serious craft work, with many worktables and benches neatly stacked with boxes of tools and supplies, each etched with strange, blocky runes.

Shaitans possess a love of craft, and these rooms hold their permanent supplies of tools. They often work in the dark using darkvision, but for activities where precision and color are important, each table is equipped with a large, hooded brass lantern containing an everburning torch. Each workroom is also equipped with a genie-crafted “fireless forge,” a stone basin 5 feet across filled with coals that can be heated to forge temperatures (metal items placed within are affected as *heat metal*), with the heat contained to the basin and not affecting the rest of the workroom. These forges cannot be moved and function only for genies.

Creatures: Although Obherak counts dozens of shaitans among his small, ragtag army, the majority of his shaitans are out in Kakishon patrolling for proteans or trying to find out more information about what happened to Jhahvul. When the PCs first come to the fane, there are only six shaitans split among these four workshops. Roll 1d4–1 for each workshop to see how many shaitans are within until all six are assigned.

SHAITANS (1d4–1 PER ROOM)

CR 7

hp 58 each (see page 12)

Treasure: Each of these chambers contains 1d4 sets of masterwork tools for various metal and stone crafting skills (armorsmithing, stonecrafting, weaponsmithing, etc.); each set of tools is worth 100 gp. In addition, each room contains approximately 1,500 gp in masterwork weapons and armor.

D4. Apartments

This room is furnished with plush pillow-beds, elaborate wall hangings, and artfully crafted shelves laden with various personal treasures and effects.

The “doors” to these apartments are generally kept sealed with *stone shape*, as the shaitans simply earth glide through the rock to come and go. The walls are 4 inches thick (Hardness 8, hp 60, break DC 28). A DC 20 search of the walls separating an apartment from a workshop reveals strange whorls and streaks in the stone, identifiable as the results of *stone shape* with a DC 24 spellcraft check.

D5. The Spiral of Obherak (EL 12)

The domed ceiling of this tall, cylindrical room arches to a height of sixty feet. A spiraling stone ledge winds down from a shaft opening in the center of the ceiling to a circular room below.

The gleaming black stone walls are lit at regular intervals by crystal lamps. Shelves and niches of polished white are inset along the ramp’s progress down the chamber,



spikestone guardian

and at the chamber's bottom are a number of what appear to be cushions and blankets.

Obherak's chamber is a reflection of his personality, repeating minimalist decor and a sense of almost oppressive precision and focus. The "cushions" strewn about the room are, in fact, clever stone sculptures—comforts for creatures made of stone like the shaitans, but strange features to other creatures.

Creatures: Obherak spends much of his time here with his two concubines and bodyguards, shaitans named Jauann and Bulsara—all three come to the aid of the shaitans in the chamber above in response to either a genie's call for aid or the thunderous detonation of the protean's prison. If the PCs manage to make it down here without alerting Obherak, his initial attitude is hostile and the PCs have only a single round to attempt to soften his attitude before he attacks.

OBHERAK

CR 11

Male shaitan fighter 4 (see page 12)

LE Large outsider (earth, extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +13, Spot +13

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 23

(+2 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 114 (13 HD; 9d8+4d10+52)

Fort +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

Immune electricity

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., burrow 60 ft., climb 20 ft.

Melee +1 flaming burst falchion +25/+20/+15 (2d6+19/18-20 plus 1d6 fire)

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

Special Attacks metalmorph, plane shift, stone curse

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*meld into stone*, *soften earth and stone*, *stone shape*, *veil* (self only)

3/day—*quicken glitterdust* (DC 15), *stoneskin*, *wall of stone*

1/day—*stone tell*, *transmute mud to rock*, *transmute rock to mud*

TACTICS

During Combat Obherak's first action in combat is to cast *stoneskin* on himself and *glitterdust* on his enemies. He's not afraid of using *transmute rock to mud* on the spiral of his chamber above or the floor below to catch PCs in a mess, since he can rebuild the chamber later with *stone shape*. He prefers to fight in melee, saving his ring of the ram to make ranged bull rush attacks against foes standing next to ledges.

Morale Obherak, arrogant and proud, fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 32, **Dex** 14, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +28

Cut Off from Civilization

Your PCs will be faced with an unusual situation during the course of this adventure and the next—they'll be cut off from civilization, and that means they'll also be cut off from places to sell off magic items and buy new ones. If your group is accustomed to periodic side trips to the market to sell gear or buy magic items, you should consider letting them spend a few extra days in Katapesh before this adventure begins. If you have PCs who have item crafting feats, you can always allow them some time in Kakishon (or even in the next adventure in Jhavul's palace) to craft magic items—in this case, consider letting them utilize unwanted treasure as "components" for their crafting rather than forcing them to wait for a chance to reach civilization to spend the crafting costs for their projects.

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (falchion), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*glitterdust*), Weapon Focus (falchion), Weapon Specialization (falchion)

Skills Appraise +14 (+19 against gems, metal, and stone), Bluff +13, Concentration +16, Craft (gemcutting) +19, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (architecture and engineering) +19, Listen +13, Profession (miner) +18, Search +14 (+19 in stonework), Sense Motive +13, Spot +13

Languages Celestial, Common, Ignan, Terran

SQ earth mastery, stone glide

Gear *bracers of armor* +2, +1 *flaming burst falchion*, *ring of protection* +2, *ring of the ram* (22 charges), gold circlet worth 2,000 gp

SHAITAN GENIES (2)

CR 7

hp 58 (see page 12)

Treasure: Obherak's collection of valuables and treasures is spread throughout the walls of this chamber, decorating the numerous niches. The treasure consists of 31,332 cp, 14,051 sp, 18 crystal bowls worth 10 gp (each containing 10 gp worth of polished marbles of precious metal and stone), a mithral medallion in the shape of 2 crossed falchions worth 300 gp, 21 everburning torch lanterns, a locked silver coffer (Open Lock DC 40) worth 500 gp (the coffer is empty), a block of *incense of meditation*, a pair of *slippers of spider climbing*, a *bottle of air*, and a *figurine of wondrous power* (*onyx dog*).

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

There are two goals facing the PCs in "The End of Eternity." First, there are many places and NPCs the characters

can interact with during the course of the adventure to learn about Jhavhul, his goals, and Kakishon's history. Use these NPCs to bring the characters up to date, to inform them about the backstory of Legacy of Fire, and to foreshadow what's coming at the end of the adventure path. In particular, if one of the PCs is the moldspeaker (see *Pathfinder Adventure Path* volume #19), you can use visions from the Templar bound to his soul to fill in gaps. The primary goal for the PCs, though, should be to escape from Kakishon. There are three routes out of Kakishon available to the PCs, each of which is described below.



Obherak

The Entropy Pool

Under the Isles of Not, in the protean caverns, there exist a number of entropy pools. These pools represent physical manifestations of the power of change. The proteans themselves do not have the power to build worlds and destroy them on their own—they must use these pools of entropy to effect such changes.

A protean (and only a protean) can use an entropy pool to “eject” a non-protean that's not a native to Kakishon who stands within the pool. This is a full-round action, and an unwilling subject can resist being ejected with a DC 20 Will save. Those who fail to resist, or who accept the ejection, are hurled out of Kakishon and reappear in the real world within 10 feet of the current location of the *Scroll of Kakishon*. If the PCs do not have an alliance with the proteans, they'll need to use magic (like *charm monster* or *suggestion*) to effect such an escape—if all of the proteans in Kakishon are slain, this route to escape is closed to them.

The Earth Seed

As the only remaining “pure” elemental seed of the four used to create Kakishon, the Earth Seed in area D2 retains a tenuous link to the multiverse—in this case, the Plane of Earth. Any outsider with the earth subtype that has the ability to merge with stone can enhance this link by entering the Earth Seed. One minute after the earth creature enters the stone, the link between the Earth Seed is magnified enough that the block of stone itself creates a temporary link back to the *Scroll of Kakishon*, wherever it may be. This link persists as long as the earth creature remains merged with the Earth Seed. As long as this link persists, the Earth Seed functions similarly to how the various Wayports functioned before Kakishon was damaged. A non-native of Kakishon who touches the Earth Seed and concentrates on the *Scroll of Kakishon* is immediately transported via *plane shift* back to a point within 10 feet of the scroll's current location. Unlike the transportation granted by the entropy pool, however, this is a somewhat risky journey—any creatures that use this method to escape Kakishon must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 1d8 points of Wisdom damage as they perceive the instantaneous transportation between worlds not as a flash of light, but as an interminably long gulf of time that lasts for years, emerging into the *Scroll of Kakishon's* vicinity somewhat unhinged and deranged from the strange stretching of perceived passage of time.

If the PCs killed Obherak and his shaitans, they can still call upon Dilix Mahad to help them escape. If Dilix is slain, the PCs still have hope—they'll need to befriend one of the xorns on the crystalline island of Ismaizade to enter the Earth Seed and enable its use as an exit portal. Of course, if the PCs kill Obherak and his shaitans before they can explain to the PCs the theory, the PCs will need

the end of eternity



to discover the exit on their own. They can learn this by bringing Dilix to area D2 if she still lives—the shaitan, like others of her kind, swiftly comes to the conclusion of how to use the Earth Seed to effect an escape after a few minutes of study. Alternatively, the PCs could learn of this method from Andrathi's spirit, either through discussion with Venema or via dreams from Spooky. A DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check (or a DC 30 Spellcraft check made by a PC with *detect magic* active) can lead a PC who studies the Earth Seed for several minutes to this same conclusion.

Saving Kakishon

Although the PCs' escape from Kakishon is destined to finish the job that Andrathi unintentionally began so long ago when he separated the demiplane completely from the rest of the multiverse, the actual destruction of Kakishon is not necessary for the PCs to escape. The demiplane's destruction is merely a goal of the proteans. As long as the proteans exist in Kakishon, the plane's destruction is ensured—along with all of the plane's natives. In order to save these creatures from destruction, the PCs must either see to the destruction of all 6 naunets and the 3 imenteshes (including insane Thaiyanathan in area A5), or must engineer a method for all of these proteans to escape from Kakishon. Although it's unlikely the PCs will be able to cast *gate*, this is one method

of providing an exit for the proteans. A more likely method of leading the proteans to safety requires the PCs to convince them to transport themselves to area D2 and use the Earth Seed to escape—and if the shaitans still exist, the PCs will need to be pretty impressive with their diplomacy in order to secure even a temporary peace between the two factions, a feat likely requiring several DC 35 Diplomacy checks to make the two hostile factions friendly to each other.

Ad Hoc Experience Bonus: If the PCs manage to solve the protean problem (either by slaying them all or engineering a non-destructive escape for them), award them XP as if they defeated a CR 12 creature.

Escaping Kakishon

This adventure ends as the PCs escape from Kakishon, yet as they soon discover at the start of the next adventure, "The Impossible Eye," their escape from one strange realm has only placed them in another—for Jhavhul has sent the *Scroll of Kakishon* to lie in his palace treasury in the legendary City of Brass. Here, the PCs will have a unique opportunity not only to learn everything there is to know about Jhavhul, but also perhaps to ally with several of his greatest enemies and secure even more weapons they can use against the efreeti warlord in the upcoming climax to Legacy of Fire.



THE SEALS OF SULESH THE GREAT

Katapesh. Vudra. The Impossible Kingdom of Jalmeray. The Keleshite Empire. These realms and more have been built, to a certain extent, on the backs of an ancient race of elemental creatures—the genies. The practice of geniebinding has suffused all of the Inner Sea region to some extent—tales of genie lamps and flying carpets are told throughout Avistan and Garund. Yet the actual practice of summoning genies remains a mystery to most of the world, and those who have mastered the art are rightfully feared and idolized. And few were as legendary as Sulesh the Great, one of the best-known and most hated genie binders in Keleshite history. Although Sulesh is long dead today, his work remains.

CONJURING GENIES

Legends are rife with tales of common folk and desperate soldiers calling for aid from the genies and of genies answering these calls. The majority of these yarns are of a cautionary nature—intended to teach the listener to rely upon his own skills rather than seeking the magical aid of a capricious or untrustworthy outsider, however powerful

the genie might be. As such tales develop, the protagonist often gets what he wants from his genie, but he does not stop there and instead goes on to overstep his bounds. In these stories, the genie is only too happy to let its mortal master get in over his head, only to abandon the mortal when he finds himself in a tragedy of his unknowing design, and always in a worse position than the one that saw him begging for a genie's aid in the first place.

While it takes powerful magic to summon a genie, spellcasters should take especial care how they compose themselves when interacting with one that is summoned. Like most conjured servitors, genies do not enjoy being called from their homes to serve what they often feel is a lesser being, yet they are masters of couching their displeasure in honeyed words and false submission. A conjurer who would traffic with genies would do well to tread carefully indeed.

Djinn and jann can be summoned by *summon monster* spells, but this method of conjuring genies is of limited use to one seeking to truly bind a genie to his will, as *summon monster* spells have short durations and don't actually call

Agha, can you count the stars? No? Then you cannot count the jinn either, for they are everywhere. Most cannot see the young ones—the dust devil, the dancer's flame, the leaping brook, the shifting sand—but every dune, fire, oasis, and breeze has its genie, every typhoon its enraged marid master. The world is a place of genies, and we merely its visitors.

—Faidal al-Bashiri, the Barber of Al-Bashir



the genie into servitude. Most genie binders prefer to use the various *planar binding* or *planar ally* spells. Only jann can be called by *lesser planar binding* or *lesser planar ally*; *planar binding* and *planar ally* are required to call djinn, efreet, shaitans, and marids.

A typical conjured genie has an initial attitude of indifferent (if its alignment matches the caster's) or hostile. Intimidation or diplomatic courtesy can adjust a genie's attitude, as can bribes. A conjured genie who is not placated to be at least indifferent, and who is not constrained with proper magical protection, invariably attacks the person foolish enough to call on it, given the chance. This attack is rarely to the death, but always worsens the petitioner's situation (taking away food and water, killing a mount or servant, ripping up a tent, and so on).

Bargaining with Genies

The easiest way to secure a genie's servitude is to simply ask the genie his price. A genie almost never asks for gold, though, but instead desires finer things related to its favored element. Genies may serve in return for magical items, precious stones, rare woods, perfume, or exotic liquors, but they also accept trades of service for service, where a genie agrees to aid a mortal if the mortal agrees to aid the genie in some matter of love, politics, or war. As a general rule, bargaining with genies in this last method is the most dangerous, as no favor a genie asks is ever as safe or simple as it sounds on the surface.

Planar Ally: With *planar ally*, the spellcaster calls not upon a specific genie, but upon his deity to send him an appropriate proxy. Few deities use genies as proxies—generally, only deities of the four elements or (rarely) of nature or magic would even consider sending a genie in response to this spell. Of course, if the deity in question is one of the elemental lords, genies make excellent choices. In any event, genies conjured via *planar ally* are generally already well disposed to the caster, a tradeoff for being limited in the types of genies he can call upon with this spell (a deity of fire would never send a marid to answer a *planar ally* spell, for example).

Planar Binding: While the caster of *planar binding* is free to choose what manner of genie he wishes to call and need not comply with a deity's wishes, he does have to bargain directly with the conjured genie to secure the genie's servitude. This bargaining is a complex matter, and arrogance and pride make a genie difficult to talk to even when it is the less powerful of the two. It's generally best, when roleplaying a genie during a bargaining session, to play the genie as the more powerful party, even if the bargain is with a Keleshite archmage who is dithering with a sickened marid of some muddy oasis. The discussion requires an exchange of compliments and gifts, recitation of the genie's lineage, proclamation of the mortal's arcane prowess, or an opening discussion of related topics of mutual interest (possibly even idle rumors and gossip). The final offer can take hours or even days to reach.

As detailed in the spell's description, once a genie is bound, the attempt to compel the genie to perform the service you require calls for a Charisma check opposed by the genie's own Charisma check. Unlike with most outsiders, the amount of time this opposed Charisma check takes varies, depending upon the difference between the two checks. This difference also determines what sort of additional payment the genie demands for his servitude (use the baseline gp cost for a Short Task to set the cost of the additional payment demanded).

If a caster breaks off the bargain before it runs its course, the genie is insulted by the caster's impertinence and immediately gets a Will save to break free of the *planar binding* effect. A caster who abandons a bargain before spending the required time to see it through swiftly gains a reputation as an impatient and foolish spellcaster, and thereafter suffers a -2 penalty on all Charisma checks made during a *planar binding* spell against a genie. This penalty persists until the caster successfully establishes a bargain with a genie, or until he undertakes a major mission to repair his reputation (the specifics of which are left to you as the GM).



Genie Payments

The caster of a *planar ally* spell must still pay the genie for his services. In this case, the caster has the option to simply pay the total as detailed in the spell description, or he can pay in the genie's favored currency—if he does so, he enjoys a 20% discount for the bribe (the prices listed below assume baseline HD for the genie of the type summoned). A short task is one that takes up to 1 minute per Caster Level. A medium

task is one that takes up to 1 hour per Caster Level. A long task requires 1 day per Caster Level. If asked to undertake a particularly hazardous mission, the genie generally either triples its price or asks for a favor in return. Evil genies might even ask for slaves or sacrifices of creatures of a CR equal to no less than half their own CR.

Genie	Favored Currency	Short Task	Medium Task	Long Task
Djinni	Perfumes and incense	560 gp	2,800 gp	5,600 gp
Efreeti	Exotic wood and weapons	800 gp	4,000 gp	8,000 gp
Janni	Fine clothing and jewelry	480 gp	2,400 gp	4,800 gp
Marid	Rare liquors and potions	960 gp	4,800 gp	9,600 gp
Shaitan	Gemstones and gold	720 gp	3,600 gp	7,200 gp

BOTTLING GENIES

There is another way to secure a genie's compliance beyond that afforded by spells like *planar ally* and *planar binding*—the act of trapping a genie in a receptacle for later use. Known in some quarters as “bottling,” numerous receptacles work—the classic receptacle being a brass oil lamp. Additionally, other receptacles seem particularly suited for genie bottling. Djinn can be bound to magic rings and left to go about their business until the ring is rubbed, thereby calling the djinni to the ring wearer to do his bidding for up to 1 hour per day. Efreeti are less tractable, and must be physically contained—a bottle of brass or bronze with a lead stopper being the tradition. An efreeti bound in such a bottle can usually be commanded to serve the user for up to 10 minutes per day, although there's a chance that the efreeti bargains its way out with wishes, or has gone so insane that its madness has freed it from any implied servitude to the bottle user. Jann are generally not bottled—most genie binders don't consider these minor genies worth the trouble. *Efreeti bottles* and *rings of djinn calling* can be found in the DMG, and are a more permanent and more expensive way to achieve a “portable genie.”

Although any spellcaster with the appropriate prerequisites can craft these magical wondrous items, they are incredibly expensive to produce, limiting their availability to relatively small numbers. Those that are created often end up in the collection of powerful creatures, or languish in forgotten crypts or hidden ruins. When most spellcasters go about “bottling” genies, they do not create magic items like these—rather, they summon the genie normally via *planar binding*, *gate*, or *planar ally*, then use a *binding* spell to contain the conjured genie, using the minimum containment variant of *binding* to do so. By far, the majority of “genie lamps” aren't magical items at all but are instead nothing more than intricate lamps that have been used to contain a genie with



the seals of sulesh the great

a *binding* spell. By working in a condition such as “You will remain bound within this lamp until three generations of my family have called upon you to perform three tasks per son,” a powerful spellcaster can closely mimic the effects of something like an *efreeti bottle* with surprising ease.

It is the act of casting a *binding* spell that forces a genie into a bottle or lamp. The application of a seal to that bottle or lamp after a genie has been bound within helps to enhance the genie’s powers and constrain its willful nature. Genie lamps and bottles created with a *binding* spell and a seal can be opened as a standard action, which releases the genie as if it had just been summoned normally. The genie can be forced back into the flask by the command of the person who released it.

Genie Seals

Although they are created in the same way as other wondrous items, genie seals are not themselves items that characters can “use.” A genie seal must be crafted directly onto a receptacle that is already being used to contain a genie via a *binding* spell (although the creator of a genie seal need not be the same person who bound the genie into the receptacle). A single receptacle may only have one genie seal on it—attempting to place a second seal immediately frees the genie trapped within. Note that the price listed for a genie seal represents the minimum an entire genie bottle or lamp should go for on the open market. As a general rule, a bound genie is fantastically expensive, worth 100,000 gp or even more if the bound genie can grant *wishes*.

INTERPRETATION OF SECRETS

Aura moderate divination; **CL** 7th

Slot genie seal; **Price** 10,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This seal is a disk of mithral inscribed with dozens of spiraling arcane and magical sigils. As long as the seal is carried visibly, the carrier can speak and understand all of the elemental tongues. Furthermore, he gains a +5 competence bonus on Intimidate checks made against genies, as long as he speaks in the genie’s native tongue. Language-dependant spells cast by the carrier of *interpretation of secrets* are enhanced—any genie that is targeted by such a spell suffers a –2 penalty on any saving throw to resist the effect of the spell.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *tongues*; **Cost** 5,000 gp, 400 XP

MASTER OF FOUR QUARTERS

Aura moderate enchantment; **CL** 9th

Slot genie seal; **Price** 12,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

This seal is perhaps the most hated by geniekind, for it uses the power of the imprisoned genie to dominate other elemental creatures. The *master of four quarters* is made of ivory and set with

Genie Bargains

The caster of a *planar binding* spell must make a Charisma check opposed by the genie’s Charisma check. The caster gains a +2 bonus on this check if he pays the genie in its favored currency, and a further +2 bonus on the check if he makes a DC 20 Diplomacy check to address the genie properly. Finally, a DC 20 Knowledge (nobility and royalty) or Knowledge (the planes) check can grant a third +2 bonus (these two Knowledge skill bonuses do not stack) if the caster displays his knowledge of the genie’s lineage and history.

The following table lists ranges of numbers by which the caster exceeds (or fails to exceed) the genie’s Charisma check. The wider this gap, the faster and cheaper the bargain becomes. Time Spent lists how long that attempt to bargain with the genie takes—note that in results of more than a day, a genie called by *planar binding* has multiple chances to escape by making additional Will saves. The Bargaining Result gives the amount of gold the genie demands for the service, if any. For all of these results, the “usual price” is equal to the baseline gp cost for a Short Task, as listed in the Genie Payments sidebar.

A “day” of bargaining assumes 8 hours spent speaking with the genie.

Charisma Check

Difference	Time Spent	Bargaining Result
Lower than genie	1 day	No bargain
Equal to genie	1d6 weeks	×10 usual price
1–5 higher than genie	1d6 days	×5 usual price
6–10 higher than genie	1d3 days	×2 usual price
11–15 higher than genie	8 hours	Usual price
16–20 higher than genie	1d6 hours	Half usual price
21 or higher than genie	1d6 minutes	Free bargain

red and blue jewels at the corners. Once per day, a character who takes a standard action to present the seal and the bottle it graces can use a *charm monster* spell against a single elemental creature in range of the spell. The targeted elemental can resist the charm with a DC 16 Will save, but if the targeted elemental has the same elemental subtype as that of the imprisoned genie, the elemental suffers a –4 penalty to his saving throw.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *charm monster*; **Cost** 6,000 gp, 480 XP

TONGUE OF THE HIDDEN

Aura faint divination; **CL** 5th

Slot genie seal; **Price** 3,000 gp; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

The least of the great seals, the *tongue of the hidden* is generally made of pewter inlaid with gold and tarnished silver. When this seal is in place, the genie within can see and hear his environs as if he were not imprisoned in a receptacle. Furthermore, the genie can speak via a *magic mouth* effect and can decide to have the *magic mouth* actually appear on the seal or not. The genie cannot cast spells through this link.

CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *magic mouth*; **Cost** 1,500 gp, 120 XP

TRUE SEAL OF SULESH (MAJOR ARTIFACT)

Aura strong enchantment; **CL** 20th

Slot genie seal; **Price** —; **Weight** —

DESCRIPTION

Of all the genie seals Sulesh created, none were as powerful and potent as his *true seal*—and Sulesh himself was never quite able to replicate its creation. This seal is a disc of gold the size of a dinner plate, engraved and set with silver, lead, and mithral. Unlike most genie seals, the *true seal of Sulesh* can be removed from a bound genie prison and attached to another. Removing or attaching the *true seal* is a full-round action.

Once the seal is attached to an occupied genie bottle, it functions as a combined *tongue of the hidden* and *interpretation of secrets*. Once per day as a swift action, the carrier of the *true seal* may use a *dominate* spell against any genie in range (Will DC 23 negates)—only one genie may be dominated at a time by the *true seal of Sulesh*. The carrier of the *true seal of Sulesh* can also use any spell-like abilities possessed by a genie trapped within the receptacle to which the *true seal* is attached, as if the genie himself were using the spell-like ability (although the carrier of the seal gets to decide how the ability is used).

DESTRUCTION

To destroy the *true seal of Sulesh*, it must be placed upon a genie prison containing a genie of at least CR 20, whereupon the prison (seal and all) must be cast into the eternal vortex at the heart of the Maelstrom.

GENIE BINDERS

While any spellcaster capable of casting *planar ally*, *planar binding*, and *binding* spells can conjure and bind genies, the true genie binder is a spellcaster who has devoted his life to the pursuit of this practice. Most genie binders study the works of Sulesh the Great religiously, but the best of them understand that even Sulesh wasn't infallible, and use his works as stepping stones to further perfect the act of genie binding.

While most genies abhor the act of binding and bottling, many have an odd appreciation and respect for actual genie binders. Nothing delights an efreeti more than to see a djinni ensnared, for example, and the jann are quite pleased to see their elder brothers and sisters brought low.

Requirements

To qualify to become a genie binder, a character must fulfill all the following criteria.

Alignment: Any non-good

Skills: Diplomacy 7 ranks, Knowledge (nobility & royalty) 7 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 14 ranks

Spells: Able to cast either *planar ally* or *planar binding*

Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Negotiator, Spell Focus (conjunction)

Class Features

The following are class features of the genie binder prestige class.

Spells per Day: When a new genie binder level is gained, the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in any one arcane spellcasting class he belonged to before he added the prestige class or any one divine spellcasting class he belonged to previously. He does not, however, gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained. This essentially means that he adds the level of genie binder to the level of whatever other spellcasting class the character has, then determines spells per day and caster level accordingly. If a character had more than one spellcasting class before he became a genie binder, he must decide to which class he adds each level of genie binder for the purpose of determining spells per day.

Genie Mastery (Ex): A genie binder adds his class level to any Charisma-based checks made when interacting with genies or objects created by (or utilizing) genies. This includes the checks made to seal a bargain with a genie when casting *planar binding*. Additionally, when a genie binder expends experience points or spends gold in the process of casting a spell or creating a magic item associated with genies, the amount of experience points and gold he must spend is reduced by 15%. This increases to 30% if the item in question is a genie seal.

Lesser Elemental Seals (Sp): Binders are masters of crafting genie seals. Beyond the creation of true genie seals, such as the *interpretation of secrets* or the *tongue of the hidden*, genie binders are also able to craft the four lesser elemental seals. A genie binder learns these four seals in the same order as the power of the four genie races, starting with air (the djinni seal) and working up to water (the marid seal).

Unlike true genie seals, a lesser elemental seal is a temporary effect. A genie binder can create a lesser elemental seal on a genie, a non-genie creature, or on a solid surface—creating the seal in any case requires a standard action and a successful touch attack. A lesser elemental seal's caster level equals the genie binder's character level.

Placed on a genie, the seal attempts to force the genie's compliance to the genie binder. The genie touched must

The Genie Binder

Hir Die d6

Level	BAB	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per Day
1st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Genie Mastery, <i>Seal of Air</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
2nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Seal of Earth</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
3rd	+1	+1	+1	+3	<i>Seal of Fire</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
4th	+2	+1	+1	+4	<i>Seal of Water</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class
5th	+2	+1	+1	+4	<i>Binding</i>	+1 level of existing spellcasting class

Skills (2 + Int bonus per level): Bluff, Concentration, Craft, Diplomacy, Intimidate, Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Knowledge (the planes), Sense Motive, Spellcraft

make a Will saving throw (DC = 10 + the genie binder's level + the genie binder's Charisma modifier) or be affected as if by *charm monster* spell.

Placed on a non-genie creature, the seal grants energy resistance 10 against one form of energy, along with an additional magical enhancement. The effects of this seal persist for 1 hour.

Placed on a solid surface, the seal functions as a *glyph of warding*. This seal can only duplicate the effects of a blast glyph, and deals a specific type of damage as indicated by the seal in question.

A genie binder can create a number of lesser elemental seals per day equal to his class level plus his Charisma modifier, yet may never have more than one specific seal active at any time. Creating a second *seal of fire*, for example, when the effects of a previous *seal of fire* are still in effect causes the previous *seal of fire* effect to immediately end.

Seal of Air: This seal may be placed upon a djinni to charm it. Placed on a non-genie, the *seal of air* grants electricity resistance 10 and a constant *feather fall* effect. A *seal of air* used as a *glyph of warding* inflicts electricity damage.

Seal of Earth: This seal may be placed upon a shaitan to charm it. Placed on a non-genie, the *seal of earth* grants acid resistance 10 and a constant *barkskin* effect. A *seal of earth* used as a *glyph of warding* inflicts acid damage.

Seal of Fire: This seal may be placed upon an efreeti to charm it. Placed on a non-genie, the *seal of fire* grants fire resistance 10 and causes any weapon you wield to gain the *flaming* weapon quality. A *seal of fire* used as a *glyph of warding* inflicts fire damage.

Seal of Water: This seal may be placed upon a marid to charm it. Placed on a non-genie, the *seal of water* grants cold resistance 10 and a constant *water breathing* and *freedom of movement* effect. A *seal of water* used as a *glyph of warding* inflicts cold damage.

Binding (Sp): At 5th level, a genie binder may use *binding* once per day as a spell-like ability (caster level equals the genie binder's character level).





KEEPERS OF CHAOS

Known by many names—the harbingers of Chaos, the children of the Cerulean Void, and the Lords of the Maelstrom—the enigmatic, serpentine proteans stand among the most feared and least understood of all the natives of the planes. Capable of amazing acts of creation and equally brutal destruction, the proteans view the universe as a place of unbounded creativity. Although proteans lack the bloodthirsty malice of fiends or any sort of rigid hierarchy or unifying rulers, many view them as a capricious threat to every other plane, a devouring tide of disorder lurking beyond the shifting boundaries of the Maelstrom borderlands. Yet their true nature, viewed through all its shifting facets, is much more complicated.

History

For all the Maelstrom's transient, unstable nature, one might suspect that the plane's history would remain poorly recorded, or not at all except for the chronicles of visitors with their own limited perspectives. Yet while the history

of the Maelstrom and its chaotic denizens is recorded in exceeding detail by the historians and scholars of Axis, and to an equal but decidedly more biased extent by their counterparts in Heaven and Hell, the proteans also possess a surprisingly deep knowledge of their own history. Of course, obtaining this knowledge remains a difficult thing—one can travel into the depths of the Maelstrom itself, hoping to petition one of the plane's keketar cabals, or even one of the unique protean lords, for a glimpse into their past, but only at exceeding risk. Barring such travails, members of the imentesh caste encountered outside of the Maelstrom often willingly provide any information asked of them. But every word that drops from their forked tongues seeks to manipulate listeners to further the agenda of their race or chorus. The history of reality that follows may or may not be truth, but to the proteans, it is fact enough.

Before the current structure of the Outer Planes existed, there was only the Maelstrom, eternal and untainted by the cancer of stability. Predating the other planes by an unfathomable period, it possibly existed then as it does

The Godmind could not glimpse the coming slaughter. We could not winnow down the probabilities to anything substantially defined, even through a hundred thousand iterative cycles of calculation. Beyond a certain point, the Maelstrom's chaos nullifies conjecture, and we had never encountered such a situation. "So be it," the protean said, and the Cerulean Void took hold of the edges of the Abyss and opened them like a festering wound, revealing the infection within as a doom unto us all.

—19th Precept of the Second Spire, speaking on the Colorless Lord's proclamation



now, as a vast, trackless ocean of raw, chaotic probability stretching between realities.

The proteans maintain their status as the first natives of a pristine Maelstrom, a place of pure, ultimate freedom prior to the formation (or arrival) of the other planes. For the most part, the other outsiders respect this claim without comment. Yet diverging from this history, other legends suggest that while the proteans were indeed the first native race to emerge from the Maelstrom, they either didn't exist as distinct creatures, or only emerged after something happened. Prior to that unknown event, the Maelstrom's chaos simply refused to support any life beyond a single generation emerging from its substance and then fading back from whence it came. Possibly following the formation of the Material Plane by unknown creators, or the fractious divide between strange entities of positive and negative energy, the proteans emerged as a distinct race like the cells and antibodies of a living creature's immune system, formed in response to an infection or irritation.

Regardless of their original nature, the proteans were indeed the first natives of the Outer Sphere. Yet they did not rule there alone for long, for as they explored their new realm, the very act of exploration put strains upon reality. In places, the very fabric of the Outer Sphere tore open, revealing strange dark rifts into infinity. It is unclear if what dwelt within these rifts existed before it was exposed to the Outer Sphere, but certainly once the connection was made, these rifts became one of the proteans' greatest obsessions. For there was life within these rifts as well. These rifts opened into the Abyss, and what dwelt within would be known as the qliploth.

A renegade, heretical faction of keketar proteans, comprising the Chorus of Razored Discord and the Chorus of Malignant Symmetry, became obsessed with the Abyss. They launched countless expeditions into this new realm, and in so doing came into violent conflict with the qliploth. It remains unknown if the qliploth would have noticed the Outer Sphere in time, but certainly the acts of these keketars hastened that event, and soon their war against the qliploth extended out of the Abyss and into the Maelstrom itself, and their influence spread far and wide through the Great Beyond before they were forced back into the dark,

hideous depths of the Abyss. Yet the qliploth had done their damage—they left their mark throughout reality, and in a strange and ironic way, this war may have been responsible for the formation of the rest of reality.

The proteans hold that it was while they were distracted by this Abyssal war that other nascent planes took root in the Cerulean Void. While the proteans fought against the qliploth, they had not the time to effectively destabilize them in order to draw them back into the Maelstrom's embrace. The exact order of the new planes' formation remains uncertain, and the proteans rarely care to discuss this aspect of history, considering it their race's greatest shame and failure.

The proteans claim that Axis emerged soon after the Abyss opened its vaults, appearing like a poisoned splinter into the Maelstrom from some other reality altogether, reaching out and creating something far beyond the nature of the Abyss—not just instituting stability but forcing order and boundaries upon the Maelstrom. Possessed of an incessant desire to pacify, define, and organize, the axiomite natives of Axis came into immediate and ongoing conflict with proteans. The first major response by the proteans was, as the keketar describe it, "to vomit out the caustic refuse of the Abyss to drown the usurpers of reality." Since then, the history between the planes has been one of mutual attempted genocide on a virtually constant basis, expanding to include other parties as the planes evolved.

According to various imentesh historians, after the wayward planes and their neighboring interlopers had coalesced into their earliest states, the gods appeared from "somewhere else" with an apparently equal level of confusion between the proteans and the deities as to one another's nature. Already preoccupied on multiple fronts, the proteans interacted with the deities much as they still do—warily and on a case-by-case basis. For instance, they accept Nethys as a kindred soul, harbor no specific feelings against Sarenrae, and would happily skewer Asmodeus's corpse upon Pharamasma's spire if they could. The situation currently exists at a trembling balance point, with the proteans largely hoping to put off any conflict with the gods—if conflict is even truly needed or desired—until after they deal with the Abyss and the denizens of the lawful planes.

SOCIETY & CASTE

Protean society (such as it exists) largely revolves around the three major protean castes: the naunets, imenteshes, and keketars. Beyond those three gross divisions, most other differences fall by the wayside.

To most observers the proteans lack any form of sexual dimorphism, and in fact they seem to lack any obvious gender altogether. Given the fluid nature of protean anatomy, the chaotic outsiders possess one, neither, or most often both genders at once, and this anatomical fluidity comes to bear when two (or more) of their kind couple for procreation or simply for the pleasure of the act. Most proteans (at least the members of the naunet and imentesh castes) tend to form not by mundane birth, but by spontaneous formation from the raw stuff of the Maelstrom, and while the details remain highly debated, the proteans appear more than willing to transform mortal souls into proteans just as other outsiders do in their own ways.

LANGUAGE

In line with the shifting, never stable nature of the deep Maelstrom, protean language has long been a nightmare for planar linguists, as it changes and shifts radically by comparison to any other known tongue. Thankfully, mortal lives are short enough in the grand scheme of things that while such change is readily apparent over the span of years, a speaker can still manage to understand the tongue in most cases even after a decade or more. Still, the shifts occur at an uneven pace, seemingly at random, and so all but the most obsessive scholars usually bet on a given protean having knowledge of a more stable tongue, or simply relying on magical translation.

Their spoken—or at least hissed—tongue aside, written Protean is another nightmare altogether, especially since scholars remain at odds as to whether it actually exists. While a keketar's swirling illusory crown is composed of dozens or even hundreds of symbols, those symbols lack any consistency beyond a general theme and a few symbols unique to that individual. Some scholars feel the crowns themselves indicate a written tongue, except if true, its lexicon's size would stagger the mind. Beyond the keketars, possible examples of protean text exist deep within the shifting depths in purported protean monuments and other constructions. One such location, the Ouroboros Valley, appears as a drifting ring of mountains, untethered to conventional topography, centered on an oddly liquid monument. The object constantly shifts between a series of nested rings, three or more pillars, and more bizarre solids. During each shift, the monument turns translucent and any light passing through its form projects a scattered field of bizarre text in shadow upon the ground along with the dark silhouettes of various proteans.

Yet just as with the protean spoken tongue, most scholars simply default to magical translation of any so-called protean texts, and even then, different attempts sometimes yield different results with subtle shifts in meaning.

NAMES

Many protean names possess a twofold structure, including both a name peculiar to their hissed, maddeningly complex language, and a title or descriptor. The latter portion often translates easily by use of magic, while the former often fails to translate in any way and so remains as a portion of a given protean's name so far as non-proteans concern themselves. There are times, however, when the entirety of a protean's name translates, with little discernable difference between the original structure of the name and that of any other protean. Such proteans as Song of Gentle Poison and Sibilant Cry of the Storm often carry their names as descriptors of their actions and, when relevant, even the general ideology of any chorus they serve.

NAUNET

The most bestial of the proteans might on the surface seem to have no conception of culture or even rational thought. Of course, most encounters with them occur in the Maelstrom borderlands and elsewhere during their frequent, massed incursions into the other planes of the Outer Sphere. During such instances within the borderlands, naunets typically attack on sight, not out of bloodlust, but because large groups of their kind prowl the borderlands, either already prepared for violence as they make their way to infiltrate another plane, or on guard against the invading armies of Heaven, Hell, and Axis.

In each case, naunets are already primed for a savagery visited upon them virtually every day by their enemies, and travelers should expect a similar response to that received by an archon, devil, or axiomite. Outside the borderlands, the response is similar, but often more extreme as the structured, defined reality of the planes outside of the Maelstrom (even chaotic planes like Elysium or the Abyss) infuriates the naunet to a maddening degree, or even causes them physical pain.

Given such, it would be best to say that outside of the deep Maelstrom, naunets assume monolithic, destructive aspects. When in their native environment and away from the objects of their hatred, they behave rather differently. Left to their own devices, separated from imenteshes and keketars, groups of naunets cavort within the Maelstrom's depths like pods of dolphins, darting after one another among the plane's transient, ever-changing features, and hunting the plane's other natives or even unique creatures springing forth from the raw potential itself.

Of course, while far from being artisans of the Maelstrom's metastable reality like their imentesh

cousins, naunets possess a strange gift of creativity when it comes to shaping the raw chaos of the Maelstrom. In fact, larger groups of naunets often compete with one another in fashioning more and more elaborate changes to the landscape by the complexity and duration of their movements, frequently sabotaging one another to add yet another element of chaos to their pursuits.

Beyond their whimsical and predatory activities, naunets enjoy decorating themselves with luminous patterns and symbols, painted on with pigments and minerals they collect, or even drawn from the raw stuff of the Cerulean Void. Of course, these painted designs rapidly fade, evaporate, or burn away like a pale alcohol flame when taken from their native mutable reality, and so few observers witness the naunets in their artistic glory, allowing their raging, barbaric reputations as destructive engines of chaos to remain the dominant view.

Notable Naunet Proteans

Although all naunets are known for their strength, ferocity, and unpredictability, a few stand out as noteworthy exemplars of their kind.

Nevriss the Fire-Gilded:

Immediately coming to mind as a paragon of his kind's exploits beyond the Maelstrom, this massive naunet wears upon his head a helmet fashioned from the skull of Garilax of Malbolge. Formerly in service to Moloch, this cornugon commander was slaughtered along with his army barely a hundred miles into the Maelstrom, disoriented and sickened by a roiling storm of chaos drawn from the plane by its naunet defenders. According to the accounts of the few diabolic survivors, corroborated by the words of an imentesh skald, the devil choked to death on his own dismembered right hand, removed and plunged down his throat by the naunet Nevriiss. Nevriiss subsequently consumed the body except for the head, which he carried back to the deep Maelstrom to have decorated like a trophy by the imenteshes and keketars of his chorus. As it now exists, ornately carved and decorated with inlaid silver filigree, some portion of the devil's original essence remains, reacting at times with the metal to create a burning halo around its killer's body.

H'sshineth the Devouring Cacophony: As a member of the Chorus of the Boiling Spiral, the naunet H'sshineth seeks to cleanse the malignant

taint of the Abyss from the face of reality, no matter the cost. Over several thousand years—at least according to the proteans of his chorus—he personally slaughtered over a score of vrockes and three times that many babaus before vanishing into the depths of the Abyss in pursuit of greater prey. Most assume that he died at some point following his suicidal descent, far from the Maelstrom and the rest of his chorus—but perhaps not. Reports occasionally surface of lesser demonic warlords and the envoys and ambassadors of their greater masters found dead, with their dismembered bodies formed into the shape of a trio of sigils carved into the scales of H'sshineth's torso, positioned above the symbol of the Boiling Spiral written in blood.

IMENTESH

The deceitful destroyers, the artisans of chaos, the painters, singers, heralds, and skalds of instability, imentesh proteans present a confusing face to the outside world. Generally seen as less immediately hostile, and even loquacious by comparison to the naunets that often



accompany them during forays into the borderlands, they possess a capacity for subtlety matched only by their fanatical, quasi-religious devotion to bringing about the dissolution of reality beyond the borders of the Maelstrom.

Like polar opposites of their naunet cousins, imenteshes prefer to spread their gospel of chaos by words and subtle manipulation rather than destruction. If confusion and discord can be spread among the legions of Hell by fostering conflict between its archdevils, if insinuations of unholy zeal and the slander of genocide can be whispered about the archons within the courts of Heaven, and if deific infighting threatens to shake the foundations of Axis itself without a drop of blood spilt by the hands of the protean race—so be it. Chaos comprises all possibilities, and imenteshes eagerly seek them out and exploit them as a counterpart to naunets' raw destructive force.

Imenteshes continually indulge their immense curiosities. A single imentesh wandering the Maelstrom borderlands might spend days or weeks observing a town or even a lone individual, learning their habits, their language, anything that strikes its whimsical interest, down to the color of an azata's hair in sunlight at a particular hour of the day or the scent of bile on the breath of a dretch. Of course, all that imenteshes learn aids them in infiltrating other planes when they so desire.

Imenteshes often accompany bands of naunets, providing their brethren with greater magical support on the field of battle. More often, though, the destructive naunets act as bodyguards to imenteshes, guarding them until they reach a particular plane or portal they feel called toward. At that point imenteshes veil themselves as natives of that other realm and go about their goals, be it learning information for future exploitation or active subterfuge. Then again, outside of the lawful planes, they might neglect any disguise at all and use that apparent openness as a tool to gain an audience for their words.

Within the Maelstrom, imenteshes occupy themselves with the alteration of their native environment. Like an artist provided with an infinite, mutable canvas and never-ending inspiration, singular imenteshes occupy themselves by shifting portions of the Cerulean Void to their liking, rearranging the landscape and even creating radically different terrain altogether. And as with most proteans, the more of them that gather together, the more profound such changes become, with the terrain-warping artwork of imenteshes putting the naunets' middling attempts to shame.

In line with their artistic, creative flair, imenteshes often create objects both mundane and magical, freely distributing them to one another and to the naunets marching or swimming toward the conflicted borderlands. Similar to their cousins' penchant for self-decoration, imenteshes often carve the scales around their eye ridges

with intricate patterns, and—if they possess them at any given moment—they decorate any frill, horn, or spike with bands of conjured and crafted metal. Imenteshes also frequently wrap strips of cloth around their midsections and tails, penned with ink or bleached designs, usually pertaining to their current pursuits and any chorus that holds their loyalty at the time.

Notable Imentesh Proteans

The most influential members among the imentesh caste are rarely recognized. Acting to further the reach and influence of chaos upon the planes, they find it best to keep their identities secret from those they would twist and manipulate.

Sibilant Cry in the Storm: This rail-thin imentesh often appears unhealthy or starving, wrapped in tasseled lengths of crimson cloth tinged in gold. Yet despite his jaundiced state, he carries himself with an air of quiet strength and resolve not unlike that of an ascetic monk finding wisdom in self-exile—and, on some level, he is just that. Rather than wander among the planes touching the Maelstrom, Sibilant Cry in the Storm resides within Golarion's Worldwound, straddling the spaces between the Material Plane and the Abyss itself, and indeed he has suffered from his separation from the Maelstrom.

Perpetually cloaked beneath a veil, alternately masking himself as a simple human peasant, a paladin of Mendev, or one of the innumerable varieties of demons inhabiting the region, Sibilant Cry in the Storm keenly watches each of these factions. Risking his life so far from the Cerulean Void and bereft of much of his power to warp the land in such a static environment, he has managed to help keep the Worldwound from changing its state to any great degree—a creature of chaos paradoxically championing equilibrium. Potentially involved in the Mendevian discovery of nexavar, or its use in the construction of the Wardstones holding back the demonic tide, his intentions are hardly benevolent, as he plays the fiends against one another, weakening them just enough to avoid butchering the human crusaders completely, while at other times acting to reverse the bloody tide against the human defenders.

Muse to the Wayward: Decorated with wrappings of white and green cloth and wearing a glittering emerald *gem of true seeing* embedded in the scales of his forehead like a mystical third eye, Muse to the Wayward openly explores the borderlands of Elysium without bothering with a disguise. Often approaching other travelers to speak with them at length, he has spent years with the wandering lillend natives who respect—if not entirely trust—him, enjoying his fantastical abilities as a craftsman and his seemingly endless supply of stories from across the planes. While the lillends may or may not be aware of it, he remains closely shadowed at all times by minions of more than one azata

lord, and the question remains if Muse to the Wayward's interests lie with the lillends, or against them.

KEKETAR

Keketars function as a ruling caste among their kindred, and unlike naunets and imenteshes, keketars do not form directly from mortal souls, though controversy exists over whether they might form spontaneously from the Maelstrom itself on rare occasions. More evidence suggests that each keketar was elevated to its position, taking up its new form and new responsibilities like a cleric answering the call of a patron deity.

Keketars possess the greatest physical range among the protean castes, and though they frequently alter in size, color, and virtually every other minor trait about their bodies, two distinct features mark them as a caste: their eyes and their crowns. Keketar eyes always glow a striking shade of amber or violet (depending on their lineage), and floating above their heads like crowns rest swirling clouds of ever-changing symbols. Beyond their crowns, however—with each individual bearing a unique, stylistic element—keketars might adopt the painted decorations of naunets, the colored banner cloth of imenteshs, sheathes of liquid metal forged from the Maelstrom itself, or absolutely nothing but their own scales. Their manner of dress and decoration varies by individual, with some similarity seen among special gatherings of their kind.

Devoid of any notion of regular organization, the keketar sub-species operates within an innumerable number of sect-like cabals known as choruses, each comprised of anywhere from one to a score of their kind. Within each chorus, its members possess a unique, shared vision of the Maelstrom's will and a proper way to enact it. While keketars of each cabal collectively divine this particular vision, they attract naunets and imenteshes eager to carry out their goals.

Still, keketars themselves don't simply act like priest-kings far from the bloody front of their own crusades. When not actively congregating to refine their vision of the Maelstrom's will, they often wander the Maelstrom, its borderlands, and even far beyond into the other planes if doing so furthers their aims.

Norable Keketar Proteans

Among the devotees of chaos, several keketars rise above their peers as true fanatics of the Maelstrom's unfathomable power.

Chorus of the Ravenous Moon and Open Grave: While many keketar cabals remain nameless and poorly understood in their goals, the Chorus of the Ravenous Moon and Open Grave long ago lost any chance of remaining incognito. Simply put, the group of nine keketars seeks to tear apart Pharasma's Spire, releasing

The Cloister

Among the drifting realms of the Maelstrom, the Cloister stands out as an enigma. Just one of the innumerable imperfections amid the realm of chaos, it is a site frequented by proteans who ever work to incorporate the motes of lawful reality that infiltrate their home. The Cloister appears as a glistening, iridescent sphere, like a great soap bubble in the deep Maelstrom. Planar scholars have long suspected it to be the domain of a dead or dying god, sealed except for two specific keketar cabals, the Chorus of the Dying Light and the Chorus of the Twice-Fallen.

For 3,000 years, no petitioners have flocked to the domain, nor have any deific servitors left it to carry out their patron's will. For all intents and purposes, the realm appears abandoned, its creator dead, dying, or catatonic. But as with its surrounding plane, nothing is quite so straightforward—the realm's borders have remained completely stable, something that should not occur unless a deity remains to actively sustain its substance distinct from the roiling change of the surrounding Maelstrom.

If anyone knows the realm's secrets, it would be the members of the two distinct protean choruses that periodically visit the realm, though never at the same time as one another. These proteans apparently have ready access to the otherwise-sealed borders, approaching the luminous boundary and briefly making ritualistic gestures of respect and deference—such sentiments seeming bizarre, given that the proteans rarely behave as such toward the divine.

the occupants of the Graveyard of Souls for the demigod Groetus to feast upon, and in so doing bring down ruin upon the Perfect City of Axis and destroy the fragile balance that exists in the current order of planes. Understandably, the chorus faces active opposition from most lawful and good gods, and pointedly from Pharasma herself (though this makes no obvious impact in her relations with the protean race as a whole, or apparently her relationship with the unique protean Ssila'meshnik). Curiously, the number of keketars in this group never changes, always remaining set at nine despite the rare death of any given member, with a new keketar emerging to fill the gap in each instance, "inspired by the whisper and kiss of the Maelstrom."

Mek'm'liis, the First of Mute Seers: A member of the Chorus of Serene Radiance, unlike all other keketars, Mek'm'liis bears no crown, stripped of it by a powerful mortal wizard centuries ago who sought to bind him into magical servitude. While successful, the terms of the binding did nothing to prevent his chorus's retaliation. Following their obliteration of the mage's demiplanar



home, the focus containing Mek'm'liis's stolen crown vanished without a trace.

Shorn of his mark of station, Mek'm'liis's binding—like a spreading curse—affected his fellow keketar and their followers, permanently turning their eyes a piercing yellow, devoid of pupils, making them appear blind and providing Mek'm'liis his title. The keketar now searches for any means of reversing the curse, frequently striking temporary deals with wanderers into the borderlands and, through imentesh proxies, individuals on other planes, offering respite from protean attacks and protection from the Maelstrom's flux.

Trembling Whisper in the Aftermath: A member of the Chorus of Corrosive Silence, this keketar has a constantly changing patina of interlaced lines of scar tissue lacing his body, shifting with a fluidity to match his crown. Like many of his kind, he rarely leaves the deep Maelstrom, and for centuries has occupied himself with the manipulation and construction of a massive, living storm, and the huge crystalline, snowflake-like object at its center. Coaxed by the keketar, fragments of the storm lash into the borderlands, dissolving non-native life en masse, yet otherwise nurturing the landscape. It all seems

random, except for a number of disturbing instances where individual cyclones broke off and targeted specific celestials, fiends, and even mortal planewalkers. Survivors were plagued by horrific nightmares afterward, wherein the scarred keketar whispered with an alternating tone of adoration and malevolence, coaxing them into the Maelstrom. Within a year each succumbed, vanishing or committing suicide.

RELIGION

If the proteans possess any common unifying feature, it would be their racial religion. While the whimsical but good-aligned azatas worship many gods or none at all, and the fiends of the Abyss worship their many own demon lords, the children of the Maelstrom worship something at once both more abstract and immediately tangible. Simply stated, the proteans worship the Maelstrom itself, treating the Cerulean Void as a living entity, with themselves as its children and the agents of its will and self-expression.

Of course, as beings of manifest chaos, proteans find the very idea of religious dogma somewhere between nonsensical and abhorrent. Proteans devote their existences

to exploring the infinite wonder of the Maelstrom's will, and certain general themes permeate their actions within the Maelstrom and beyond.

First, the proteans despise imposed order and stability. On some level, every chorus expresses this feeling in the philosophy handed down to those proteans that follow it, and this shapes their actions and outlooks toward the other planes and non-natives of the Maelstrom.

Second, the proteans respect the act of creation, especially when a given creator expresses pleasure in its actions rather than their creations being rote or forced labor. Of course, creators live for the act of creation, not necessarily the created object itself, and eventually such things must be destroyed.

Finally, the proteans express their faith not through prayers or ritual, nor by any form of organized worship, but through actions that promote and exemplify their racial creed, with everything ultimately acting to please the entities at the mysterious heart of their beliefs.

The Speakers of the Depths

Of all the mysteries of the Cerulean Void, the nature and identity of the proteans' dualistic creator gods, the so-called Speakers of the Depths, remains its greatest. The keketars seem unable to fully describe them to non-proteans, and they spend much of their lives in mystical communion with the entities, but full understanding of their true nature seems locked into the moments when they act as direct channels to their influence. Their difficulty is even further compounded by a divisive language barrier. For instance, magical translation of their descriptions often blurs and mixes the singular and plural in describing the Speakers, as well as fluidly mixing the genders, though the latter point might simply be an artifact of protean physiology bleeding over into their racial language.

The two major descriptions come from various keketars and also from numerous devils, archons, and axiomites who bore witness to apparent manifestations of the proteans' gods on the field of battle. The protean version speaks of perfect, twin serpents, merging in and out of one another's bodies, mixing physical form as much as spiritual identity, creating the world around them while simultaneously devouring it and one another. Without being possessed and filled with the presence of their makers, the proteans fail to elaborate upon their nature, falling into language that implies that the Cerulean Void itself might be a third manifestation of their otherwise twofold symmetry.

On the other hand, the description of the proteans' enemies is both more direct and terrible. Azragei the Forked, a cornugon servitor of Dispatet, described how a circle of keketar proteans, "their crowns intertwined and set afire, summoned the Maelstrom into a solid form. They conjured

a living, hungry thing from the depths, with a thousand eyes and a hundred heads. It was rage made real."

A sword archon loyal in service to Ragathiel in turn described the following: "The proteans called out and the Maelstrom shuddered as if something terrible, coiled beneath the foundations of the world, had stirred from its fitful slumber to answer their plea."

A final description, catalogued in the libraries of Axis, makes references to the devouring maw of a golden serpent, and pseudopods formed of the Cerulean Void itself laying waste to a legion of inevitables.

Unable to define that which resists definition on an intrinsic level, few avenues of research exist to further illuminate the proteans' gods except for the omens and prophecies spoken by the protean lords, the only beings with a greater connection and understanding than even the keketars.

Protean Lords

Standing apart from the rest of their race, the unique protean lords transcend the division of their lesser kindred in both form and absolute might. The protean lords hearken back to an age vastly older than the current era of the cosmos, some previous iteration of the multiverse, or possibly from the reality-branching depths of a Maelstrom deeper and vaster than mortal sages suspect. While the various choruses squabble or collude among themselves, each pursuing its own unique interpretations of the Maelstrom's will, the protean lords possess their own agendas and take no action either to support or hinder such activities. Although some claim to possess deep insights into the will of their racial deities, the lords never attempt to supplant the ways of keketar choruses or others in active service to the Speakers. Few know the true forms of these beings, if indeed they possess actual shapes, as most shift and change wildly, though many retain specific themes in their endless changing. These unique proteans focus their efforts toward watching the gods—curious of their capacity for creation and destruction—and ensuring the ultimate failure of the forces of law. Beings of fantastic powers, rivaled only by the Speakers themselves and akin to the demon lords and empyreal lords of other realms, protean lords endlessly reshape and destroy vast realms within the Maelstrom, occasionally—and seemingly at random—turning their eyes toward prizes outside of the swirling chaos. Leading legions of their lesser brethren forward, these mighty and unique beings inspire overwhelming and destructive rampages, driving protean hordes to assault the very gates of Heaven, Hell, and beyond.

Known Protean Lords

Born from the eternal flux of the Maelstrom or beings that have simply always been, the lords of the proteans embody

the potential of all things, the changeability inherent in creation, and the temporal and ultimately finite being of all that is or ever will be. Several of the best known of these godlike beings are noted here, though others, such as the blathering Mother of Tongues, the formless Lord of Entropy, the vine-eyed Watcher in the Wheel, and the dreaded Lord of the Insane, are known to other races in fearful rumors and the raving of madmen.

Ssila'meshnik: Perhaps the most recognized of the unique proteans, the so-called Colorless Lord, Ssila'meshnik, manifests as an albino keketar, sometimes with a nested, intertwined trio of crowns similar to that caste's hallmark feature. The Colorless Lord appears infrequently within Pharama's Court for the arbitration of specific cases, seemingly without any rationale, though each soul often seems tied to events that ultimately impact the Maelstrom—such impact typically remaining opaque until decades or centuries later, however. Of course, when he appears, the protean lord simply steps into existence, often to the disturbed surprise of Pharama's divine servitors, since without the goddess of fate's express permission, this would normally be impossible. Still, Ssila'meshnik displays a courteous, respectful manner during his appearances, though without any sense of humbleness that one might expect in the presence of a greater deity.

Il'surrish the Wanderer: This insubstantial protean lord lacks a physical form of his own, drifting through the Cerulean Void as a current of partially coalescent light, flickering between regions of the plane without any apparent rhyme or reason, and occasionally vanishing into the depths altogether for years or decades at a time. When needed, the Wanderer fashions temporary corporeal bodies from the raw stuff of the Maelstrom and even occasionally possesses the body of an intruding non-native such as a devil, archon, or demon—though curiously, never another protean. The affected, possessed, and created bodies alike all glow with a fierce and internal cerulean light, as if filled by the condensed substance of the Maelstrom itself. Those that survive the experience describe their possession in a similar fashion to that of a keketar experiencing the first, shallow layers of communion with the Speakers of the Depths. Some sages note a similarity between Il'surrish and the Abyssal entity known as the Risen, but without its malevolent, parasitic nature.

Narriseminek the Crownless, The Maker of Kings: The often-described Intercessor of the Speakers manifests simply as a naunet or imentesh, always matching the caste of an individual protean it visits, and always presenting a circular scar or burn upon the brow or top of its head as if mutilated by the placement of a burning circler or crown. He arrives unbidden, but in his wake a new keketar takes up its mantle.

When manifesting to a group of keketars, Narriseminek likewise appears as one of their caste, although lacking any manner of keketar crown, and in all cases his presence heralds an imminent escalation and shift in a given chorus's philosophy. The Maker of Kings never provides the keketar with their new focus, but instead seems drawn to such events when they occur, ensuring that the chorus receives its newfound vision without interruption.

RESTORING CHAOS

Where proteans go, chaos follows. At the edge of the Maelstrom, where the plane of pure chaos endlessly erodes the firmament of static reality, natural laws need little encouragement to give way. The snaking runes and endless flux of proteans hastens such degradations, expanding the shores of their anarchic realm with barely any effort by these ever-changing interlopers. In realms where the source of chaos is less present, though, these harbingers of chaos must carry with them the tools of dissolution. Such pure disorder takes two forms: the mad rites of keketars and pools of primal chaos known to many as entropy pools or anarchic fonts. Both weaken the reality of the lands around them, affecting whole regions with occurrences symptomizing the breakdown of conventional reality. These bizarre incidents are widely known as entropy fluxes.

Choruses of keketars are well known for their ability to summon strangeness from the depths of the Maelstrom, aspects of protean lords and weirder things. Most knowledge of these eerie rituals comes from reports occurring at the edges of other planes, where they hasten the diffusion of those realms back into the swirling chaos. In places distant from the Maelstrom, these rites can cause entropic fluxes and, over time, the creation of portals to that chaotic realm. Although keketars might have innumerable mad reasons for calling upon one of their monstrous demigods, the reality-altering effects of many of these beings aid in the erosion of planar foundations, hastening the dissolution of such realms back into the Maelstrom. Some protean lords summoned in this manner leave their mark upon the regions in which they are summoned, rending the fabric of reality and causing entropy fluxes to afflict the area. In cases where a location already suffers from planar instability, a protean lord's passage might even open dangerous portals or cause rifts that fall away into the chaos of the Maelstrom.

Proteans also manage to transport with them little understood pools of glowing golden energy said to be semi-physical manifestations of fundamental chaos. Conjured away from the Maelstrom through magics known to the proteans alone, these anarchic fonts sooth their masters and allow for the use of powerful magics.

The presence of these pools in a region is easily noticed, though, as they cause entropy fluxes that spread in intensity and frequency the longer they exist. The chaotic power that suffuses each anarchic font seems to be directly proportional to its size, though non-proteans have little understanding of the powers these puddles of chaos possess. While some might exist upon a plane for a century, spawning little more than rumors of strange occurrences, others might begin tearing holes in reality within weeks of their summoning, their effects seeming to lie within the powers of the proteans nearby and the fundamental fortitude of the surrounding reality—a concept few non-proteans can hope to gauge.

In general, entropic fluxes are tears or mistakes in reality, noticeable alterations in physics and sanity that allow impossibilities to occur. These effects can take any form, but over time grow more severe. At their worst they manifest as portals to the Maelstrom, which widen into rifts until an entire area falls away into that lawless realm or the source of the chaos is removed. The process is akin to poking holes in a piece of fabric: at first no sign of damage is noticeable, but over time larger holes begin to form, soon becoming tears requiring great effort to repair. As these fluxes worsen, a region gradually takes on the chaos-aligned and highly morphic plane traits until it becomes nothing more than an island of the Maelstrom itself.

The following table presents several sample minor entropic fluxes that the PCs might notice. GMs might include these whenever the PCs are traveling in areas of frequent protean activity—the noticeable effects of these chaotic beings’ attempts to unmake reality. While rarely dangerous, over time—sometimes measured in months, sometimes in centuries—these annoyances can erode away the underlying structure of a plane or region. A character who observes any entropic event and makes a DC 30 Knowledge (the planes) check recognizes the manifestation of chaos as a sign that the area is unstable and in danger of collapsing, but that such a collapse is likely still quite far off. GMs seeking ideas for more entropy fluxes might find several useful suggestions on the cursed item drawbacks chart on page 273 of the DMG.

For GMs running this volume’s adventure, “The End of Eternity,” entropic fluxes make for a great way to show the PCs that the demiplane of Kakishon that they’ve found themselves trapped within is unstable. You can have entropic fluxes manifest whenever you want—it’s possible to roll up an entropic flux on the wandering monster table presented in this volume’s bestiary on page 77, for example. Yet you can also have an entropic flux manifest during a combat, staging the flux to either aid or hinder the PCs as you see fit in order to adjust the difficulty of the battle on a moment’s notice.

Entropy Fluxes

d10 Entropy Flux

- 1 A tree, rock, or large shrubbery suddenly changes colors, then becomes transparent and incorporeal for 1d4 rounds before vanishing—this object could be one a PC is climbing on or using for cover at the time.
- 2 The air in a 15-foot-cube around a PC turns into a fluid or semi-fluid substance—soapy water, wine, contact poison, a Huge gelatinous cube, etc. Those in the area can hold their breaths as per the suffocation rules on page 304 of the DMG and might be able swim through the liquid as normal.
- 3 Thunderous pulsing, blaring klaxons, and the cries of inside-out animals fill an area up to a mile in diameter. All creatures within the area must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be deafened until 10 minutes after leaving the area or the noises cease. Those who succeed still take a –10 penalty on all Listen checks. Verbal communication is impossible and all sonic and language-dependant spells and effects fail within the noisy area.
- 4 Fire suddenly erupts from something that should not burn (such as a pool of water, a crystal, or a chunk of ice); one PC determined randomly must make a DC 15 Reflex save to avoid taking 2d6 fire damage from the sudden burst. When the fire burns out, the object is unharmed.
- 5 A friendly animal or favorite item gains a low intelligence score and a quirky character trait. It retains the ability to converse with the PCs for 1d6 × 10 minutes.
- 6 The world loses all color for 10 minutes in a 200-foot-radius area. During this time creatures take a –4 penalty to all Spot checks.
- 7 A huge shark, giant squid, or some other aquatic creature falls from the sky, taking 20d6 falling damage (and doing the same to what it falls upon if a creature fails a DC 15 Reflex save); if the damage doesn’t kill it, it begins suffocating but still frantically attacks anything in reach.
- 8 There is a burst of blue light and every fluid within 100 feet instantly freezes. Water, alchemical items, potions, and similar goods solidify, remaining frozen and unusable for 1 hour. Frozen items can be thawed out over a torch or fire at a rate of 1 liter or 1 potion every minute.
- 9 Two of the PCs’ minds switch for 1 minute. The GM chooses two players to switch character sheets for the duration of this effect.
- 10 Motes of dust waft up out of the ground and coalesce into a monster—roll on the wandering monster table on page 77 to determine what creature. The monster is enraged and attacks the PCs at once—it has DR 10/adamantine and a +4 bonus to its natural armor (increasing its CR by +1). When the monster is slain, its body crumbles apart to reveal 2d6 random gems.



Waves of Kakishon

Within the strange world of Kakishon, myths have long told of the dragon turtle that rules the depths. Those who ply the emerald waves call him the Turtle King, and they greatly fear glimpses of any shoal or reef that even suggests the shape of his shell. The eldest residents of the demiplane, however, know this elusive and endlessly furious master of the depths as Kirhosk and refuse to leave their island homes, for to do so is to risk a terrible drowning death. Few have ever claimed to see the dragon turtle—largely because those who do become his next meal—but none make the effort to cross the shark-infested waters of Kakishon lightly.

“Waves of Kakishon” is an underwater adventure for four 10th-level characters. In addition to working as a standalone lair and encounter location, this Set Piece can supplement this month’s Adventure Path installment, “The End of Eternity,” or any other campaign taking place on or near a coastal or island environment.

IN THE ADVENTURE PATH

GMs seeking to incorporate this Set Piece into the month’s adventure, “The End of Eternity,” should find the task relatively easy. The most likely route to travel between the seven islands of Kakishon is by boat or skiff, and any such travel could lead to an attack on its own. Alternatively, the PCs might be asked to rid Kakishon of the Turtle King, either to prove their worth to one of the plane’s numerous factions or because his capsizing of vessels restricts the ability to travel within the hidden dimension. The PCs might also hear rumors of his treasure hoard and seek it out.

Those seeking to learn more about the dragon turtle can turn up some or all of the following information by making a Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (local), or Gather Information check among the various denizens of Kakishon. Each result notes which check might reveal the related information.

Check

DC	Result
15	The Turtle Menace: Few of the many strange creatures of Kakishon are fiercer or more furious than the Turtle King, a dragon turtle that quickly claimed dominion over the world beneath the surface of Kakishon's open waters. (Gather Information or Knowledge [local].)
17	Treasure in the Deep: As a dragon, the Turtle King—who calls himself Kirhosk—has claimed a vast hoard. With all the vessels and travelers he's destroyed, he surely has a fortune in his hidden underwater lair. (Gather Information or Knowledge [local].)
22	Slaughter of the Sahuagin: Sahuagin used to dwell in the seas of Kakishon, but the Turtle King is said to have destroyed the majority of their population over the centuries, including a shrine to their drowned deities. Some sailors claim that mysterious bubbles rising from the ocean mark the location of the shattered shrine. (Gather Information or Knowledge [local].)
25	Not Just Another Dragon Turtle: Sailors claim that the shell of the turtle dragon is fringed with brazen markings, a sure indication that this turtle dragon is stronger than average. He's also been said to release travelers who spin entertaining yarns and show proper deference to his might, letting such sailors go on their way. (Knowledge [arcana].)

Adventuring Underwater

Because of the many effects of being underwater in combat—on spell usage, movement and weapon efficacy, and the complexity of those rules—the GM should be familiar with with the Aquatic Terrain rules found on page 92 of the DMG, as well as the rules for suffocation and drowning found on page 304. This section on underwater adventuring contains everything necessary to run an encounter beneath the waves, but some general reminders are included here.

Sight: Visibility underwater, assuming appropriate lighting exists, is considerably reduced. With generally clear water, it is possible to see 4d8×10 feet. In murky water this is reduced to 1d8×10 feet. It is also generally difficult to find cover or concealment underwater.

Movement: Motion is also more restricted underwater, requiring either a swim speed (allowing full normal movement) or regular Swim checks. Creatures without a Swim speed must make regular DC 15 Swim checks to move in the rough water outside the shrine and at its gate, while the calmer waters within the shrine only calls for DC 10 Swim checks.

Kirhosk the Turtle King

Several hundred years ago, Kirhosk the Turtle King was Kirhosk of the Sunken Spires, a gluttonous dragon turtle who terrorized the Obari Ocean between Nex and Jalmeray. More to satisfy his own desire to own such a magnificent beast than to assuage the concerns of his people, Nex hunted down the monster and, using the *Scroll of Kakishon*, collected the beast, transplanting him to the seas of his pleasure dimension. Disoriented and enraged, Kirhosk rampaged through the pristine, clear sea, taking his wrath out on the many strange creatures he found there. After nearly a year, the dragon turtle calmed, and slowly came to accept the place as his new home, then to favor it over his old territory. Having now spent centuries within the depths of the planar paradise, the aquatic ravager has dubbed himself lord of the depths, having garnered the fear of beasts both below and above the waves, who fearfully know him as the Glutton of Galleys, the Roc Snapper, and the Turtle King.

In his time within Kakishon, Kirhosk has become a destructive tyrant over the other creatures of the depths. Having long fed upon the sahuagin, his frequent and unprovoked rages have led him to regularly wreck their villages, deplete their hunting grounds, and—just within the past decade—destroy a shrine to their depraved gods. Finding the place of worship a fittingly regal home for his splendiferousness, he took up residence in the partially constructed structure, a lair naturally guarded by the many sharks that made their home in the area. The deadly dragon turtle wasted no time in hollowing out a cavernous vault for his hoard below the shrine's main chamber. The sharks surrounding the place feast off discarded prey left by Kirhosk, making the area around the former temple all the more dangerous.

AGAINST THE TURTLE KING

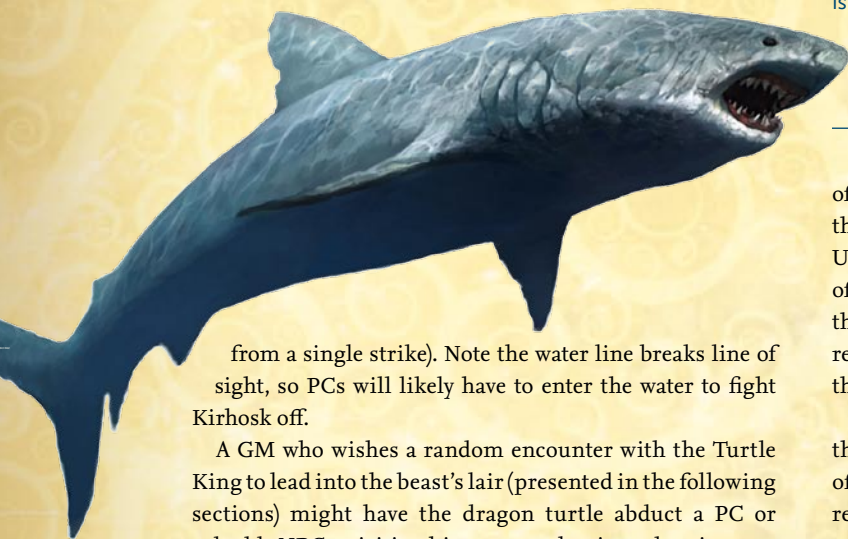
The undisputed master of Kakishon's seas, Kirhosk strikes fear in the hearts of all who would venture out upon the pleasure plane's waters. GMs might employ the Turtle King in a number of ways, though the most likely encounters involve either the dragon turtle seeking to prey upon the PCs as they sail or as the PCs attempt to infiltrate his temple lair. Suggestions for both types of encounters are presented here.

CAPSIZED!

Any boat afloat upon the seas of Kakishon has a chance of encountering the Turtle King. This encounter might happen anytime the PCs are traveling upon the water, or when the GM rolls the dragon turtle result on the Random Encounters table on page 77. Kirhosk is a CR 12 advanced dragon turtle whose statistics appear on page 69.

The dragon turtle surfaces nearby its prey before attacking, giving those who make a Spot check an opportunity to notice the dragon while it considers its prey in turn. It then moves beneath the targeted vessel in an attempt to capsize it. These attempts, even if they fail, jostle the boat violently, revealing the dragon turtle as the ship skids down the beast's back.

If the boat is successfully capsized, the dragon turtle uses its Snatch feat to grab a victim and drag him beneath the waves where he might be finished off more easily or kept to serve as a later meal. He avoids serious injury to himself in an attack against a surface vessel and flees if he takes more than one quarter of his hit points in damage (and likely before, especially if he takes a significant amount of damage



from a single strike). Note the water line breaks line of sight, so PCs will likely have to enter the water to fight Kirhosk off.

A GM who wishes a random encounter with the Turtle King to lead into the beast's lair (presented in the following sections) might have the dragon turtle abduct a PC or valuable NPC, spiriting him away to the air pockets in areas 3 or 5. In either case, the character might be wounded, but is left to float amid bits of debris, waiting to be gobbled up when the hungry Kirhosk returns.

THE SHRINE OF KIRHOSK

The Shrine of Kirhosk is an incomplete sahuagin temple whose original inhabitants were slaughtered years ago after the arrival of the dragon turtle. Only the main hall was built, and even that part of the structure remains incomplete. Air fissures beneath the floor of the temple that had gone unnoticed by the original builders have gradually worsened, leaking breathable fumes and creating an air pocket at the top of the structure. Other fissures resulting from the incomplete construction and subsequent burrowing by Kirhosk release a constant stream of air bubbles that acts as a visible beacon to the location. The exact location of the shrine is not indicated on the map of Kakishon, so that you may place it as best suits the need of your campaign.

A seabed littered with the detritus of Kirhosk's voracious appetite surrounds the shrine. Originally a congregation point for sharks, including many of great

size, the seabed has become a constant battleground for supremacy. The combination of Kirhosk's movements and the constant fighting has made the water in areas 1 and 2 perpetually murky, limiting visibility. While a menagerie of creatures lingers in the depths of Kakishon, only the sharks come near Kirhosk's lair willingly, for the Dragon Turtle proves fiercely territorial. Indeed, even the sharks are not immune to his attacks, but he typically ignores all but the largest of them.

1. The Shark Fields (EL variable)

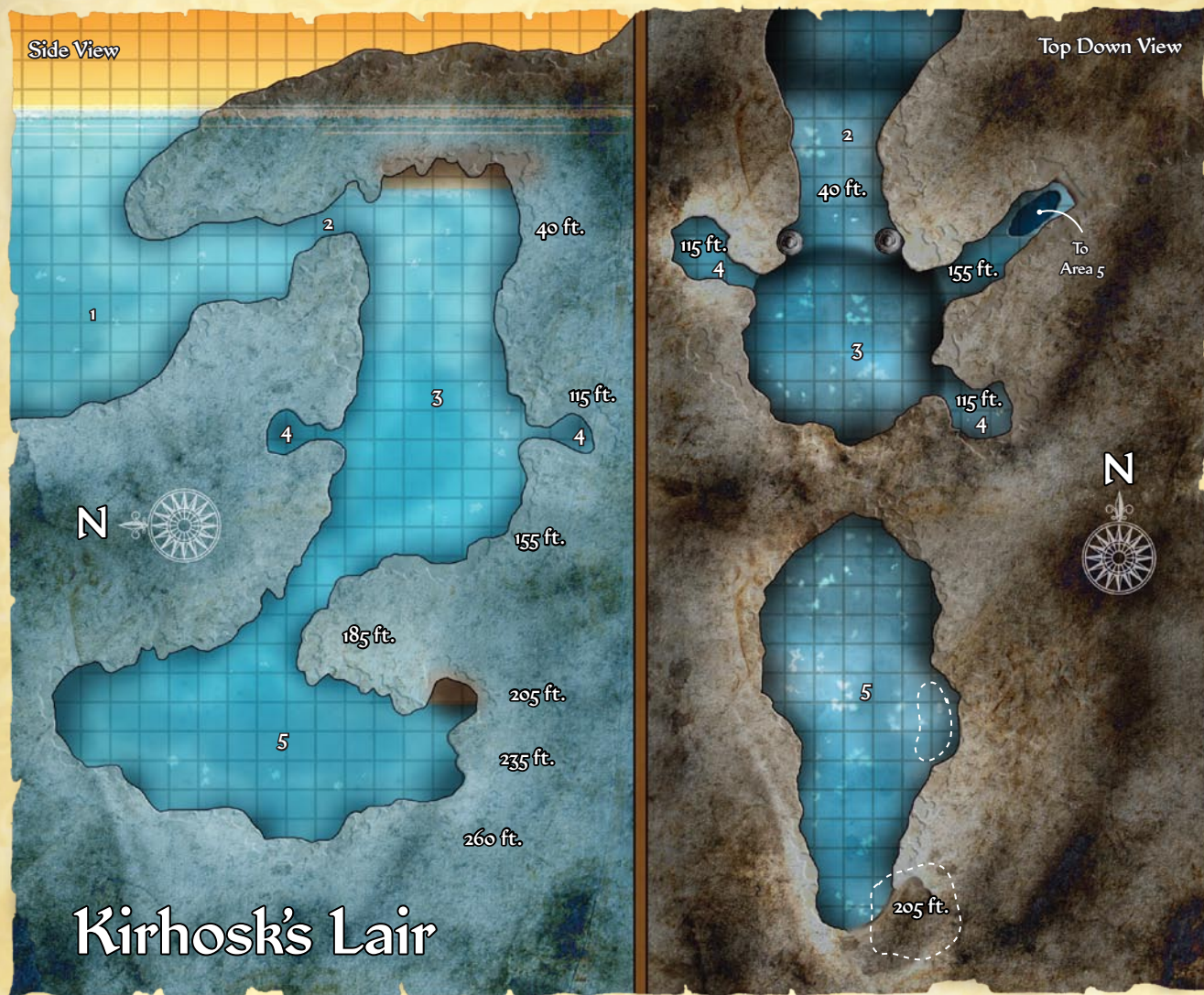
The ocean bed slopes upward into a sheer underwater cliff-face. Carved into the face of the cliff and extending outward is a mammoth shark's head. Chunks of the shark's face are missing or damaged, and rubble lies among the debris and thoroughly picked-over skeletons that line the ocean bed near the entrance.

The detritus left by the sharks and Kirhosk consists mostly of picked-over skeletal remains, though there are also more than a few shark jaws, still filled with rows of massive teeth. Unfortunately for the PCs, the skeletal remains retain little of value, though a DC 15 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that a substantial portion of the skeletons are sahuagin—the remains of a final ill-fated raiding party intent on retaking the dragon turtle's lair.

Armored and encumbered PCs find that the floor of the ocean here provides firm footing for the purposes of movement underwater, though the volume of skeletal remains make the squares difficult terrain.

Creatures: The sharks of Kakishon congregate here, perhaps the reason the sahuagin chose this location as the site of their shrine. Most of the sharks here will not attack the party, but there are a number of Large and Huge sharks, including a few dire sharks, who might consider the PCs food. This encounter is intended to give the party a chance to get acclimated to underwater combat and demonstrate the deadly nature of the depths. This encounter could potentially develop into a deadly battle if enough of the sharks get involved. At any given time, in addition to the innumerable Medium sharks, who largely ignore the PCs, there are 30 Large sharks, 8 Huge sharks, and 2 dire sharks here. Note that because this is a congregation point for the sharks in Kakishon, these numbers refresh themselves within an hour if the sharks' numbers are depleted.

Use the statistics suggested here to create an encounter that nears the PCs' level and accounts for their ability to handle underwater combat. A typical EL 10 encounter here consists of a dire shark, a Huge shark, and six Large sharks, though you might revise this number to adjust the challenge.



Kirhosk's Lair

LARGE SHARKS (30)
hp 38 each (MM 279)

HUGE SHARKS (8)
hp 65 each (MM 279)

DIRE SHARKS (2)
hp 147 each (MM 64)

2. The Gate (EL 11)

The carved, yawning maw of a shark leads into darkness—a wide opening marked by huge, carved stone teeth, many broken and lying in front of the cavern. The sides and ceiling of this entryway lack the polished finish of the floor; instead fine stone carvings of sharks circle the sides of the passage. At the western edge stands a statue of a strange half-fish, half-humanoid creature, its feet planted against the floor, but its

CR 2

torso broken into pieces. An identical statue stands at attention against the eastern edge of the passage, this one intact, though covered with the greenish mush of algae.

CR 4

Two barnacle-encrusted stone golems sculpted into the shape of fierce sahuagin warriors flank the entry into Kirhosk's lair. The shattered statue to the west resulted from numerous careless entrances by the dragon turtle, though the one to the east remains in fine condition and continues to serve as guardian of the halls within.

CR 9

Creatures: The eastern statue is a stone golem, one of the original guardians of the shrine, meant to provide security against intelligent humanoids aside from sahuagin, as well as other invaders from the surface. This golem was under orders to attack all non-sahuagin humanoids that entered the shrine unaccompanied by the shrine's original builders, and so has gone completely unnoticed by the dragon turtle.



kirhosk

STONE GOLEM

CR 11

hp 107 (MM 136)

TACTICS

Before Combat The stone golem remains perfectly still until a PC crosses the midpoint of the entry passage or until it is attacked. The stone golem ignores any trespassers accompanied by a sahuagin or those swiftly dragged through the area in Kirhosk's jaws.

During Combat The stone golem uses its slow ability against the first creature to pass, attacking the PCs in the order in which they pass.

Morale As a construct, the stone golem fights until defeated.

3. Column Hall

This area is completely unlit, the shadow of the shark's jaw effectively blacking out the interior. If the PCs have a light source or can otherwise see through the darkness they can discern the following:

Tiled with green and white marble, this immense, water-filled, circular chamber rises up into an obscured ceiling above. An entry ledge overlooks the vast chamber from a point high in the northern wall, some hundred feet above the floor. Shadowy balconies situated about halfway up the wall on the southeast and southwest walls reveal circular passageways.

The sahuagin built this massive room as a sacrificial chamber, the centerpiece of their temple. The room was nearly complete when the dragon turtle arrived, attacking and devastating the sahuagin, who despite several raids over the years have been unable to recover the shrine. The bones of the original dead sahuagin were used to contribute to the dragon turtle's nest in area 5.

Kirhosk's tunneling has opened fissures in the floor and ceiling, creating air leaks. These bubbles created a pocket

of breathable air in the top 30 feet of the room beneath the dome. Natural gasses mix with the air here, though, forcing any creature that breathes within the pocket to make a DC 16 Fortitude save each round or become nauseated.

The room itself is empty of anything of value—though a number of shattered sahuagin skeletons remain amid the rubble at the bottom of the hall—and the water filling the room is murky.

Should the PCs lure the stone golem from area 2 into this chamber, those swimming might be able to trick the golem into walking off the ledge and falling to the bottom of the hall—the golem doesn't know it can't swim. If they do so, the golem takes 11d6 points of damage from the fall. However, the noise also alerts Kirhosk if he's in his lair, and the dragon turtle comes to investigate within 2d4 rounds.

Two balconies 115 feet below sea level stem from this room, while the tunnel at the bottom of the chamber hides a giant hole leading into Kirhosk's lair in area 5. Those who make a DC 15 Spot check notice that huge grooves mar the tunnel's walls—evidence of the dragon turtle's great claws.

4. Balconies

Despite the considerable drop to the tiled floor below, only a brief lip marks this balcony, behind which a small hollow has been cut into the wall. The opening is marked by a silent and monstrous humanoid figure just within. A faint shimmer comes from behind the figure, creating an ominous silhouette.

Inside the short halls behind each balcony is a statue depicting a sahuagin warrior, its arms outstretched to grip the sides of the circular passage and its feet planted solidly together. The positioning of the arms and legs creates an opening on either side through which a Medium-sized creature can squeeze itself. The shimmering aura behind the figure is a permanent *control water* effect, shaped to keep the end of the passage dry, inside both of which is an ensconced everburning torch. These balconies were placed to store air-breathing victims before sacrifice. There is a thoroughly decayed gnoll corpse inside the air pocket to the northwest, a sacrifice who had been left here when the dragon turtle attacked. The air at the end of the passage is foul, but breathable. Any attempt to move or destroy the statue dispels the *control water* effect.

Treasure: A search of the gnoll corpse reveals the dead sacrifice's prized possessions, a *bag of holding* (type III) that the sahuagin mistook for an empty bag, and a *ring of swimming*.

5. Kirhosk's Lair (EL 12)

Murky water fills this vast cavern. Far below on the floor of the massive chamber lies a layer of sand and silt, except to the southwest where silver and gold gleam amid a pile of bones.

This is the resting place and treasure hoard of Kirhosk the Turtle King. The water here is ordinarily murky, the cavern's sandy silt floor regularly stirred up by the dragon turtle's movement.

Above the floor and to the southeast, an air pocket has formed 205 feet above the floor. The air trapped here is musty but not harmful.

Creatures: Unless attracted by the noise of combat, the PCs encounter Kirhosk here, lounging on his bed of bones and treasure. If the dragon turtle becomes aware of the PCs as they enter his lair, he deliberately stirs up the silt layer on the bottom of the cavern, creating a non-magical effect similar to *obscuring mist* that lasts for 1 minute and fills the entire cavern. He then attacks, taking full advantage of his Blind-Fight feat, gradually making his way to area 3 where he has more freedom to move and an easier route of escape.

KIRHOSK

CR 12

Advanced dragon turtle

NE Huge dragon (aquatic)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +23, Spot +23

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 8, flat-footed 25

(+17 natural, -2 size)

hp 218 (19d12+95)

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

Immune fire, paralysis, sleep

OFFENSE

Spd 20 ft., swim 30 ft.

Melee bite +26 (4d6+9) and

2 claws +21 (2d8+4)

Special Attacks breath weapon, capsize

TACTICS

During Combat Kirhosk is confident in his battle abilities, but paranoid about magic. He ignores melee combatants in favor of attacking spellcasters, and uses his breath weapon whenever available, provided he can hit at least two targets. Otherwise he will only use it if the single target is gravely injured and likely to fall, or if he is gravely injured.

Morale Kirhosk is at the top of the food chain in the waters of Kakishon and knows it. He is loath to give up that place, even when attacked by surface dwellers, especially in his lair. This makes him less cautious and more likely to fight until severely injured. If reduced to less than a quarter

of his total hit points, though, Kirhosk will use his breath weapon, trying to clear a path to the exit, and then flee.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +19; **Grp** +36

Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Power Attack, Snatch

Skills Diplomacy +3, Hide +14 (+22 submerged), Intimidate +23, Listen +23, Search +23, Sense Motive +23, Spot +23, Survival +23, Swim +21

Languages Aquan, Common, Draconic

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Cloud of superheated steam 20 ft. high, 25 ft. wide, and 50 ft. long, once every 1d4 rounds, damage 12d6 fire, Reflex DC 24 half; effective both on the surface and underwater.

Capsize (Ex) A submerged dragon turtle that surfaces under a boat or ship less than 20 feet long capsizes the vessel 95% of the time. It has a 50% chance to capsize a vessel from 20 to 60 feet long and a 20% chance to capsize one over 60 feet long.

Treasure: The dragon's hoard is located here, a bed of mixed bones and coins upon which the creature sleeps that contains 680 pp, 1,800 gp, and 13,000 sp. In addition, there are 8 emeralds (1,200 gp apiece), a single large diamond (3,000 gp), a jade ring fantastically carved to resemble two entwined serpents with small rubies for eyes (1,500 gp), a golden bracer with a relief image of dragons in combat (500 gp), a small case containing 5 potion bottles (potions of *water breathing*), a *trident of fish command*, a *rod of flame extinguishing*, and a *medallion of thoughts*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The goal of the adventure varies depending on the PCs' motivations, but most require defeating Kirhosk, either by killing him or driving him off. This helps make the oceans of Kakishon safer, if only briefly. If Kirhosk is not killed, he returns to the shrine in a few days in an attempt to reclaim it before turning his thoughts to revenge against the characters who vexed him so.

The PCs, having defeated Kirhosk, have a brief opportunity to enjoy the wealth of a genuine dragon's hoard—should they care to invest the time in salvaging it from the depths. While there is undoubtedly more treasure than the challenges of this adventure warrant, the lack of true cities or economies in Kakishon mitigates the problem of awarding the party such vast sums of treasure. For those not playing the Adventure Path, further adventures could easily spring from the rise of the sahuagin menace formerly restrained by the dragon turtle, as well as the other dangerous creatures given the opportunity to flourish now that Turtle King has been deposed.



Gemstones

No river is more aptly named than the Asp. Fed by streams that slither down the north side of the Brazen Peaks, it is slim, twisty, and treacherous. Few boats of any size can venture close to the river's source, so I considered myself fortunate to find passage aboard a northbound palace barge.

Under most circumstances, I would not expect to encounter a royal pleasure boat so far south. But Prince Khemet III had been making his private fleet available to the foreign treasure hunters who flocked to Osirion. The latest band of adventurers had disembarked in the foothills an hour or two past, so my traveling companions were limited to a surly captain, a score of oarsmen, a few armed guards, and the three women who'd come along as entertainment.

I was taking a turn at the oars, not because it was expected of me but to spur rowers accustomed to a leisurely pace. We were nearing the confluence where two rivers, the Asp and the Crook, merged into the great River Sphinx. This was rough terrain, home to creatures I'd rather not encounter.

The scent of jasmine and sandalwood wafted into the shallow, flat-bottomed hold, heralding another creature I preferred to avoid. Suppressing a sigh, I cast a glance toward the stairs.

Lapis, a palace dancer and the apparent leader of the troupe of entertainers, came down the center aisle, jingling musically with each step. My gaze dropped to her feet. They were bare, but for the gold chains linking her toe rings to her ankle bracelets, from which hung several tiny golden bells.

"There you are, Channa Ti!"

Her words were rounded with delight, as if she'd happened upon a child's hiding place, and her painted lips curved in a smile of surpassing beauty. Lapis was all charm and warmth and light, unless you happened to notice the obsidian glint in those kohl-rimmed eyes. After two days in her company, I was starting to miss my last travel companion—Ratsheek, a treacherous gnoll bitch who, when we last parted, was trying to sacrifice me on a

stone altar. At least gnolls don't pretend they're about to do you a favor when they reach for a knife.

The man I'd relieved was tossing dice with two of the guards. Lapis clapped her hands to get their attention, then gestured the oarsman back to his post. He scowled but offered no argument. What could he say? I was a paying passenger, a woman who'd taken it into her head to try her hand at rowing. And judging from the relief on the sweat-streaked faces of the other oarsman, they were not unhappy to see me go.

I yielded my place and followed Lapis up to the deck. We walked to the prow and stood for a few moments in silence, gazing out over the water and the vast tawny landscape that stretched out on either side. After a while she sent me a coy, sidelong glance.

"The oarsmen were hard pressed to keep pace with you. You must be very eager to reach Sothis."

I shrugged.

She waited until it became apparent that no further answer was forthcoming. "There are enough rowers," she said flatly. The tone sounded odd, coming from such sweetly smiling lips. "You don't have to work with the men."

"It passes the time."

"You should stay with the other women. When I couldn't find you, I was worried."

My eyebrows rose. "It is difficult to misplace someone on a pleasure barge."

Lapis's smile went brittle at the edges. "Not so difficult as you might think." She tipped her head toward the block of tiny, curtained chambers near the far end of the barge. "Ankara went to her room to avoid the midday sun, as usual, and I haven't seen her since."

"I can't imagine why you'd bother looking."

The words slipped out before I could consider them. Ankara was as spiteful as a wet cat and she had the light-fingered skill of a veteran pickpocket, but she was a member of Lapis's troupe. Still, I found it difficult to regret words that finally stole the smile from the dancer's face.

Lapis propped her hands on her hips and glared up at me. "Why do you think you're on this barge?"

"I paid for passage?"

Her response was a single derisive sniff. "The Ruby Prince has no need of your coins, nor do I. Think again, *nifrani*."

The answer was in the insult. *Nifrani* was the Osirian term for a particular type of bodyguard, trained fighters who served wealthy women and, on occasion, the pretty adolescent sons of high-caste families. The *nifrani* were eunuchs, drastically gelded not-men who disguised themselves in feminine clothing, the better to protect their charges' lives and virtue. A pretty, perfumed trifle like Lapis would probably consider comparison to a *nifrani* to be the worst insult one woman might offer another.

I burst out laughing, which only served to annoy Lapis further.

"Oh, I see," she said in a furious whisper. "Because I'm a dancer, because Vantiti plays the flute and Ankara sings and tumbles, you think we have no virtue to protect?"

"Actually, I found the insult amusing. But now that you mention it."

Lapis glanced away to meet the gaze of a passing guard. She returned his leer with a dignified nod and pointedly smoothed the deep blue silk of her gown.

The gesture held more significance than a stranger to Osirion could easily understand. Thanks to Prince Khemet III, the Ruby Prince, it was fashionable to name oneself after colored rocks. The dancer chose the name of a blue gemstone, one strictly reserved for royalty. She further emphasized her hands-off status by wearing lapis-hued gowns. It was a clever ploy, but I could see why she'd want less subtle protection than that afforded her by a gemstone name and bright blue clothing.

"As you can see," Lapis said quietly, "there are men on this barge who think of entertainers as you do. You are as tall as any of them, and you wear your weapons well. They will leave you alone. You will make sure they leave *me* alone."

I almost had to admire her thinking. "So I paid not for passage, but for the privilege of protecting you?"

Suddenly her charming smile was back, this time spiced with a hint of challenge. "Privilege? That might be putting it a bit high. But some people might consider this an opportunity, don't you think?"

"Some might," I admitted. "Most men, in fact, and no doubt more than a few women. As for me, I'd sooner befriend a *nifrani*. He'd be more man than you're ever likely to get, and more woman than you're ever likely to be."

She glared at me for a long moment, then turned away abruptly. "Come with me. If some harm has befallen Ankara, you will make sure I don't suffer the same fate. If we can't find her, we'll have to assume she went over the rail."

"Or we could figure out which men were last seen near her room and persuade them to explain what became of her."

That earned me a quick, sharp glance. "'Persuade?'"

"Dangling a man over a few hungry crocodiles can be very persuasive."

Her incredulous stare demanded more.

"I am a druid. If need be, I can call crocodiles."

Lapis shook her head, not in denial but astonishment. "Not what I expected of a druid, but it might come to that."

We quickly searched the hold, moved storage bins, looked in every curtained room. There was no trace of the wretched woman anywhere.

"Are her possessions still in her room?" I asked.

Lapis looked startled, then chagrined. "I didn't think to check."

She flipped aside the curtain to one of the chambers. The room held a narrow, pillow-heaped cot and a small sea chest. I knelt beside the chest and flipped open the lid.

Immediately the air took on a charged, brittle energy, like that which precedes a lightning strike. The sensation was familiar; I'd last experienced it when my current employer's "pet" transformed from a miniature blue elephant into a hideous little imp.

In some distant part of my mind I was aware of the neatly folded clothes, the scent of perfumes and ointments. But my hand went unerringly to the source of the disturbance: a thin silver chain, from which hung a single opal, a smooth orb about the size of a very large pearl.

I regarded the pendant for a moment, then raised my other hand to cup the gem. From the corner of my eye, I saw Lapis start to throw out a restraining hand.

Interesting.

The opal felt strangely weighty in my palm. I glanced over at Lapis in time to catch the narrow-eyed speculation on her face.

She quickly rearranged her expression into a rueful smile. "You were right. Ankara is gone. She must have slipped ashore with the Vudrani treasure hunters. She took her best things, and probably a few that belonged to other people as well. The pendant is mine."

As she reached to claim it, a shout of alarm went up from the deck. Lapis snatched the gem from me and darted toward the prow. She pushed her way between the captain and one of the guards and leaned over the rail to look, then whirled to gesture frantically for me.

In the river ahead rose several glistening black humps. Seven or eight enormous hippopotami swam steadily toward the barge. They were spaced out so that the barge would have to swerve hard to miss them. The river was shallow here, so whatever direction the captain chose, we would likely run aground.

"Talk to them!" Lapis shrieked, pointing toward the behemoths. "Channa, you must make them give way!"

My affinity for water creatures extends to the hippopotami, but only faintly. I closed my eyes and reached out to touch the

animals' minds, expecting to encounter the familiar vast, dull stubbornness lit by lightning-flashes of temper. What I found instead sent a shock of alarm racing through me.

The captain edged Lapis out of his way and reached for the bell pull to relay an order. I seized his wrist to stop him.

"Keep to the deep water," I urged. "Go right over those things, as fast as the oarsmen can take us."

He jerked his hand away from my grasp. "Are you insane? Hitting just one river horse could sink the barge. The rest would tear my men apart before they could swim ashore."

"Those aren't hippos."

"Of course they're—"

He broke off, squinted at the approaching bloat of hippos. Indecision rippled over his face.

"Channa is a druid," Lapis said. "She'd know. Do as she says, and do it *now*."

Perhaps the captain had endured too many commands from the dancer to follow one that made good sense.

Perhaps he had little regard for the opinions of druids. Whatever the case, he scowled, seized the

bell pull, and gave it three hard tugs. In response, the portside oars lifted high and hung there,

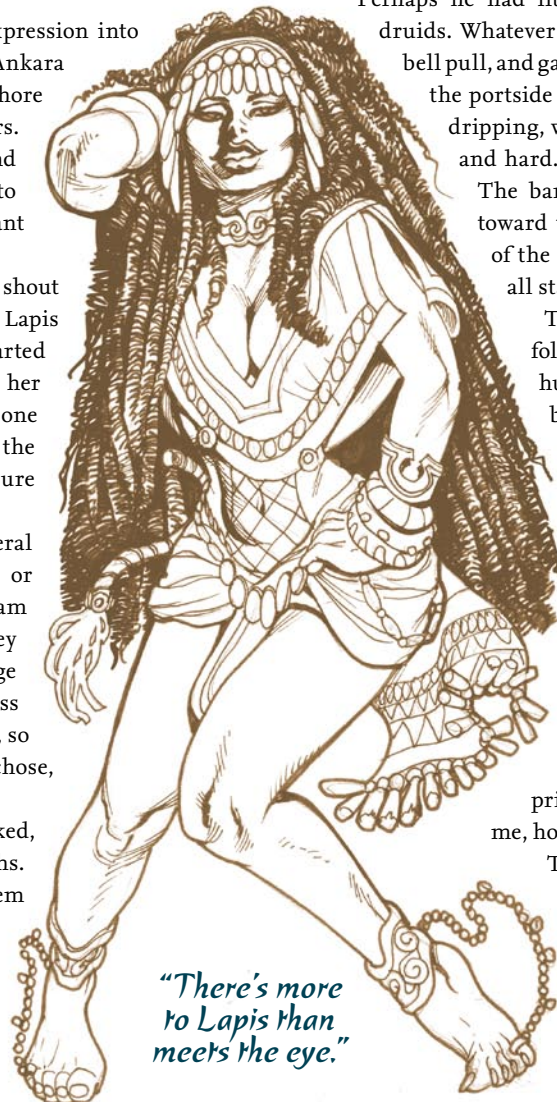
dripping, while the starboard oars bit deep and hard. Twice, three times they pulled.

The barge spun to the right and shot toward the shore. The dull hard scrape of the flat bottom against sand sent us all staggering.

The "hippos" changed course to follow us aground. Rounded black humps flipped aside to reveal small boats filled with armed men. The river pirates splashed into the shallow water and swarmed the barge.

Two of the guards seized bows and started to pick off the attackers. The oarsmen boiled up from the hold, armed with long knives. They met the pirates with ferocity and skill, as one might expect of men entrusted with the prince's safety. What did surprise me, however, was Lapis.

The delicate little dancer howled like an enraged baboon as she ran to meet one of the river pirates. Leaping into the air, she twisted her body so that it was nearly parallel to the deck. Her lower foot slammed



*"There's more
to Lapis than
meets the eye."*

into the pirate's shoulder as the heel of her upper foot kicked back, catching his chin and wrenching it hard the other way. The crack of bone was audible even over the noise of battle.

Lapis landed in a crouch and thrust one leg out to sweep the feet from under another pirate. He stumbled and went down on one knee. Before he could regain his balance, I seized a handful of hair, jerked his head back, and cut his throat.

The dancer shouted a warning. I spun, reached up to grasp the wrist of a man who held his knife high for a down-stabbing attack. My own knife angled up between his ribs, hard and deep enough to grate against his spine.

Another pirate charged me, lofting a curved sword and howling promises of vengeance. The man I'd just killed began to slump forward. I tugged at my knife, but it was firmly, fatally stuck.

Up leaped Lapis. She pivoted on one foot and kicked high, pushing the dead man off my knife.

I ducked beneath the first wild sword-swing of my latest attacker and thrust my knife into the soft flesh just under his belt. He bellowed like a gelded bull as I rolled aside, tearing the blade free as I went.

He still might have killed me, if not for the dancer. She kicked over my head—I could feel the swift rush of wind, the brush of golden bells against my headscarf. His blade clattered to the deck, and his hand flopped limply from a new joint between wrist and elbow. Incredibly, the pirate drew a long knife from his belt with his remaining hand and kept coming.

Lapis hooked one bare foot under the sword and flicked it toward me. I caught it by the hilt and brought it up in a sweeping backhand slash that sent the pirate's knife—and the hand holding it—spinning away to splash into the water.

The pirate's fierce gaze held mine as he stumbled back through the pool of his own blood. He stood leaning heavily to one side in a way that made me wonder if he intended to emulate the dancer's foot-fighting. But the mad light of vengeance suddenly left his eyes, and he went down like a felled tree.

By then the battle had wound down to a few small skirmishes and the pragmatic work of dispatching wounded pirates. Several members of the crew were dragging the pirates' bodies ashore to leave them for the jackals. The rest were waist-deep in water, their shoulders braced against the barge's side as they slowly, slowly pushed it back toward the deeper waters.

Lapis had arranged herself prettily on the deck and was making a show of fussing with the bells on her ankle bracelets. Our gazes caught and held.

"Tell me again," I said coldly, "how you need me to protect you from the crew."

Osirian Pleasure Barges

In a nation as dry as Osirion, where water rights and access frequently mean the difference between affluence and poverty, it's little wonder that water itself has come to symbolize wealth in the subtle games of the nobility.

From massive bathing chambers to sculpted fountains, ostentation through the use of water is everywhere in Osirion, but nowhere is it quite as iconic as in the case of pleasure barges. Begun as a means of transporting pharaohs in style and comfort, these long, rowed galleys are incredibly ornate and differ from many ships in that, rather than having multiple decks and cabins, they bear large wooden awnings and are subdivided into smaller compartments via curtains and canvas. In this way they're able to provide shade for their occupants while still allowing any breeze from the river to keep them cool.

While the Ruby Prince still maintains the grandest specimens, pleasure barges today are no longer strictly the domain of pharaohs, and countless merchants enjoy traveling slowly up and down the nation's rivers in their floating palaces, entertained by musicians and acrobats and quietly displaying their power to guests and onlookers.

The rest of the journey passed without incident. Lapis stopped seeking me out, stopped asking me coy and careful questions. Even so, I left the barge at the first opportunity and bought passage on a smaller, swifter boat.

The approach to Sothis never failed to impress. Busy marketplaces, miniature cities of brightly colored tents, offered goods from a hundred ports. Beyond the portside markets lush gardens surrounded buildings of white marble. But the greatest marvel was the glistening black dome, the carapace of a long-dead scarab of a size that was almost beyond comprehension. In past centuries, the people of northern Osirion had taken refuge from sand storms beneath that shell. Now it was the centerpiece of the royal city.

I strode along the footpath of the Crimson Canal, a man-made river that brought fresh water into the carapace. Mansions, each with its own small oasis, filled this part of the city. Magical lights glistened everywhere, land-bound stars against an obsidian sky. It was beautiful, I suppose, and certainly luxurious, but to my mind, there were better places to live than inside a dead bug.

Gham Banni, my Pathfinder venture-captain, liked the carapace well enough. I hurried to the library that he called home and found it strangely silent. I'd stayed there often enough throughout my years as a Pathfinder to know that people came and went at all hours. Gham was a

noted scholar, famed for his generosity with his time, his knowledge, and his collection of rare books and scrolls.

I banged on the locked door for a long time before a servant came to admit me. One glance at her white-veiled face sent my heart plummeting. In Osirion, white was the color of mourning.

“Gham Banni?”

The woman nodded.

I thrust both hands into my hair, for once not caring that doing so knocked my headscarf aside. Gham Banni had never seemed to notice my elven ears, my strangely mixed heritage.

“When?”

“The night of the full moon,” she said in a hoarse whisper.

For a long moment I stared at her, too stunned for words. The death of my venture-captain was a deeply unpleasant surprise, but this—*this* was impossible. In two days, the moon would be full again.

“But I have a letter from him, a letter written and dated several days past the last moon.” I pulled the piece of tightly rolled, pale green parchment from my bag and waved it at her like a condemned man brandishing proof of his innocence.

In response, the servant pointed to the open door of Gham Banni’s study. A stack of similar parchment sat on his writing table, awaiting the quill of one of his scribes. Her implication was obvious.

“It has his seal,” I protested, unrolling the parchment and showing her the old bard’s sigil. “This is from his signet ring, which can never be removed from his hand. How do you explain *that*?”

By now my voice had risen to a shout. I knew I was being unreasonable. Gham’s death was no fault of this servant, nor was the puzzle in my hand. But grief, mixed with a creeping sense that things were profoundly *wrong*, pushed me far beyond the point of caring.

The servant brushed aside her veil, revealing a young, pretty, and far too familiar face.

Lapis.

I reached for my knife. What part the dancer might have had in my venture-captain’s death I did not know, but if she aimed that sweet and mocking smile at me I would cut her lips from her face.

She held up one hand, a dignified gesture that was also strangely familiar.

“My true name is Tannabit Banni,” she said softly. “Gham was my grandfather. I will take you to him, and then I will answer all your questions.”



“It seems I’ve caught up to Janu after all...”

Lapis—that was the only name I could give her—surprised me by heading down the hall and toward the back stairs. I’d expected her to lead me to an embalmer’s workshop. Gham Banni was rich and important enough to warrant skilled embalming.

The wine cellar had been emptied, but for a long table and a shelf holding embalming tools and several small, ornate jars. My gaze slid off them quickly. While I was gratified to see that an embalmer had been summoned, I did not like to think of my venture-captain as a collection of desiccated organs.

The figure laid out on the table was no easier to behold. Gham was old and thin as a sparrow, but this wizened husk bore no resemblance to the man I’d known.

My eye fell upon the leather-wrapped sticks that had once been arms, crossed over the dead man’s chest. The skeletal fingers of one hand were decked with Gham Banni’s finest rings. The other

hand, and the signet ring it always wore, was missing.

Understanding came to me then, swiftly followed by wrath. Whoever had done this was as good as dead.

I lifted my gaze to Lapis’s eyes and saw similar resolve burning there.

“You didn’t kill him,” she said. “I had to be sure.”

This should have angered me, but I understood her meaning all too well. I had access to Gham’s libraries and I knew of his interest in the lost city of Xanchara. I was a Pathfinder and a druid with a special affinity to water. Few people were better suited than I to the task of finding and looting a drowned city. It would be an easy thing for me to steal an ancient map and use it to convince a treasure-hunting cleric to fund a search for a divine relic.

I would not fault her for holding me responsible, with or without evil intent on my part. Only a letter from Gham Banni would have persuaded me to take Vanir Shornish’s quest as my own. Only Gham’s death would make such a letter possible.

“Is Vanir Shornish still alive?”

She blinked, clearly surprised by my question. “Why would I kill him? He is a tool, just as you have been.”

Before I could respond, she turned away and touched the cellar wall in three places. Stone grated against stone as a block slid away to reveal a hidden place. Lapis reached into it and drew out the opal I’d found in Ankara’s sea chest.

“Look closely at the gem.”

I took the bauble and held it up to the flickering light of an oil lamp. The surface was glossy, reflecting colors like any fine opal, but upon closer examination I realized the gem was hollow.

A tiny, hideous face suddenly appeared, magnified and distorted by the curve of the gem. I flinched away, startled, then leaned in for a closer look. Tiny blue fists beat soundlessly against the inner walls of the prison. This was Janu, the imp-thing the Night Heralds had sent to spy on Vanir Shornish.

“The imp came looking for you the first night after you came aboard the barge,” Lapis explained. “At the time, I couldn’t know if the creature was your enemy or your ally. I imprisoned it in this gem. It was designed to capture creatures of evil.”

I remembered the look on her face when I first reached for the gem, the way she’d flung out a cautioning hand to warn me away. The implication was that touch alone would cause an evil person to be sucked into the magical gem. That fit with the suspicions she’d held of me at the time. But it did *not* fit with certain other things.

“And you captured Ankara as well, though that was not your intent?”

The dancer’s shoulders rose and fell with a sigh. “I suppose I shouldn’t feel guilty about that. After all, it would appear that she stole the gem from me, and she *was* a truly horrible person. Even so...”

Her voice trailed off, and the distant, troubled look in her eyes told me she was imagining Ankara’s fate at the hands of an angry imp.

I was envisioning something rather different: the contents of Ankara’s half-filled sea chest, neatly arranged so the gem was visible once the lid was opened. If Ankara had stolen the gem, thus sentencing herself to death at the hands of the angry imp imprisoned therein, how did the gem find its way into her sea chest? I suppose it was possible that she’d first touched the gem itself while standing over her open sea chest. But assuming that was what had transpired, *who had shut the lid?*

“Ankara drank the ale she brewed,” I said briskly. And no doubt that was true. If she did sneak ashore with the last group of treasure hunters, as I suspected, the pampered musician would find the road to riches far longer and less pleasant than a cruise on a pleasure barge. “Forget about Ankara. What comes next?”

The dancer’s gaze returned to my face and to the moment at hand. “I am my grandfather’s heir,” she said with quiet dignity. “It is fitting that his wealth and his wisdom be used to find his killer. Do you have my grandfather’s map?”

I nodded. Until today, I had not considered that the whaleskin map might have belonged to Gham Banni. He had spoken of such things, yes, but as objects of great and inherent evil. Still, it was not beyond possibility that he

Surprise Feats

In a world of backstabbing and intrigue, anything that can help you catch an opponent unaware or recover quickly in an ambush is a priceless weapon. Presented below are two new feats, used by Lapis the palace dancer, designed to help your character master the element of surprise.

Advance Warning

You can shout warnings to nearby allies, preventing them from being caught off guard.

Prerequisite: Cha 15.

Benefit: All allies within 15 feet of you are only flat-footed during the first round of combat until your first turn. This does not prevent them from being flat-footed due to other situations, like being flanked. In addition, all allies within 15 feet of you gain a +1 dodge bonus to their Armor Class against all ranged attacks. These benefits only apply to those allies who can hear and understand you.

Master of Disguise

You are particularly adept at impersonating a specific being.

Prerequisite: Cha 12, Skill Focus (Disguise) 5 ranks.

Benefit: Choose an individual. You gain a +4 on all Disguise checks made to impersonate that specific creature. You can choose an additional individual for every 4 levels you possess.

would possess such a thing. He collected lore about the lost city of Xanchara. He might even have kept the map for no other reason than to safeguard it from men who were prompted by a lust for power rather than respect for knowledge.

“Good,” Lapis said briskly. “We will set sail tomorrow at first light. What you have come for, you will find. We will use it to lure the people who sent you on this quest, and then we will kill them.”

Her straightforward manner appealed to me, and her plan, as far as it went, mirrored my own. Later, perhaps, I would find reason for regret, but I am never one to linger overlong over a course of action. And what sort of woman could stand over the body of her mentor and not vow to avenge his murder?

“Agreed.”

I spat in my hand and held it out. Lapis echoed my pledge. Her small hand was firm in mine, and for the first time the cold, obsidian resolve in her eyes did not seem out of place on her pretty, painted face. I’m never wholly comfortable with alliances, but I knew to the marrow of my bones that this woman would not betray our joint cause.

At least, not today.



Bestiary: Creatures of Karapesh

Filling out this month's entry in the *Pathfinder* Bestiary come magical beings of the desert depths and kin to those strange beings making their homes in the extraplanar reaches of Kakishon. Drawn from the lore of Northern Africa, Jason Nelson's elusive miengus threaten all who would endanger their watery homes, while the undying wyrmskulls supplement "The End of Eternity," his adventure into the world within the map. Adam Daigle continues his reign of terror with a new aquatic fiend, the legendary divs known as the ghawwas. And from the minds of James Jacobs and Todd Stewart come two new proteans, children of absolute chaos and master unmakers of the Maelstrom. Native children of the Outer Sphere, the proteans are further detailed in this month's "Keepers of Chaos" article, and in *Pathfinder Chronicles: The Great Beyond*. With their rampant manipulation of both perception and reality, few things are as they seem with this harrowing horde, forcing even the cagiest heroes to keep on their toes.

WANDERING MONSTERS

Within the *Scroll of Kakishon* hides a miniature world, a realm stranger and more exotic than many created by nature alone. More than a dozen islands of varying sizes make up the world within the map, looking out over the misty realm past the plane's magical edge. With whole islands locked in the grips of extreme environments and typified by breathtaking landscapes, each corner of Kakishon is a world unto itself.

Beasts of Kakishon: Upon each of the varied islands of Kakishon dwells a menagerie of strange and often deadly creatures. Presented here is a sampling of the animals and monsters found on the hidden plane's most significant islands. Although not all of these beasts serve as appropriate encounters for 9th- and 10th-level parties, they should help drive home the exotic and deadly nature of the artificial world.

Aliskiren: cryohydras (MM 155), frost worms (MM 111), ice mephits (MM 182), remorhazes (MM 214).

At her oasis's edge scrawled in aged wood; upon dusky palm this shameless warning long stood:

"Here lie the waters that cut and blades that can flow; the Pool of White Flowers, the place all wise men know. Drink not of these waves for their cool shadows can kill; and claim lurid lovers at the Lady's wet will."

Had the fat grinning grayskins, the goblins thirteen; known how to read the letters, then they might have seen. They rushed past the warning to the waters ahead; to drink up the pool and eat up things that were dead. When the Pale Lady heard the commotion above; she burst quick from the depths finding goblins thereof. And with glistening blades and deft champion's skill, she smote shrieking creepers till her garden lay still.

—Shazathared, *Pests in the Garden of White Flowers*



Isle of the Dead: endimmus (Pathfinder #20), skeletons (MM 225), spectres (MM 232), stone golems (MM 134).

The Isles of Night: dire bats (MM 62), ettercaps (MM 106), monstrous centipedes (MM 286), krenshars (MM 163).

Ismaizade: destrachans (MM 49), earth mephits (MM 182), thoqquas (MM 242), xorns (MM 260).

Kakishon: apes (MM 268), griffons (MM 139), tigers (MM 281), rocs (MM 215).

Khandelinal: dust mephits (MM 181), lions (MM 274), purple worms (MM 211), sphinxes (MM 232).

Khosravi: animated objects (MM 13), fire mephits (MM 182), iron golems (MM 136), retrievers (MM 46).

The Serpent Isles: giant constrictors (MM 280), girallons (MM 126), hydras (MM 155), vipers (MM 279).

Water: dragon turtles (MM 88; see this month's Set Piece), giant squids (MM 281), tojanidas (MM 243), water nagas (MM 193).

Entropy Flux: Chaos reigns supreme over the islands of Kakishon. Roll on the table on page 63 to see the effects of chaos surges on PCs.

Gnoll Raiders: Numerous groups of gnoll raiders form disparate packs across Kakishon. While most spend their time hunting and scavenging for food and treasures, they're not above attacking lone genies or travelers that cross their paths. A typical band of gnoll raiders is comprised of 2d6 gnolls (MM 130) and makes for an EL 6 encounter, though using the stats for classed gnolls from previous volumes the GM can easily create deadlier raiding parties.

PROTEANS UNLEASHED

The native inhabitants of the Maelstrom, the chaotic neutral plane of the Pathfinder Chronicles campaign setting's cosmology, feature prominently in this volume's adventure. Primeval beings with little care for such concepts as good and evil, these creatures prove dangerous to the delicate environments and static physicalities of many other beings, most notably the beings of the Material Plane, who often mistake them for purposefully

Random Encounters in Kakishon

d%	Encounter	Avg. EL	Source
1–4	1 div, doru	2	Pathfinder #19
5–9	2d6 human skeletons	3	MM 225
10–12	1 buraq	5	Pathfinder #20
13–16	1d6 edimmus	6	Pathfinder #20
17–21	Gnoll gaiders	6	see text
22–23	Beasts of Kakishon	—	see text
24–27	1 dragonne	7	MM 89
28–33	1d6 harpies	7	MM 150
34–35	1d4 manticores	7	MM 179
36–39	1 protean, naunet	7	Pathfinder #22
40–42	Beasts of Kakishon	—	see text
43–46	1 pairaka	7	Pathfinder #20
47–52	1 gynosphinx	8	MM 233
53–58	1 lamassu	8	MM 165
59–66	Entropy flux	—	see text
67–69	1 roc	9	MM 215
70–74	1d4 shaitans	9	Pathfinder #18
75–77	Beasts of Kakishon	—	see text
78–79	1 guardian naga	10	MM 192
80–83	1 protean, imentesh	10	Pathfinder #22
84–85	1 rukh	10	Pathfinder #21
86–89	1 stone golem	11	MM 137
90–94	1 twelve-headed hydra	11	MM 155
95–97	1 celestial charger	13	MM 249
98–100	1 hadhayosh	18	Pathfinder #21

destructive fiends or murderous monsters. In truth, their minds and moralities simply indulge concerns contrary to those of most sane and peace-loving creatures, a vital distinction in realms populated by beings of pure good and absolute evil. Those seeking more information on the different breeds of proteans should look to this month's article "Keepers of Chaos" and *Pathfinder Chronicles: The Great Beyond*, which also includes statistics for the third protean race, the keketars.



COEURL

Powerfully corded muscles ripple beneath the ebon flesh of this strange, sleek feline. Similar in shape to an oversized panther, the lean beast's forelegs stretch farther than those to the rear, each ending in powerful claws. Rather than ears, curling tendrils flit at the sides of its head. Most distinctive, though, are the twin tentacles rising from the beast's shoulders, powerful appendages that slice through the air like living whips and terminate in clusters of thin spines.

COEURL

CR 8

CN Large magical beast

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

DEFENSE

AC 19, touch 13, flat-footed 15
(+4 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size)

hp 95 (10d10+40)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +4

Immune sonic; **Resist** electricity 10; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles +15 (1d6+6) and
2 claws +10 (1d6+3) and
bite +10 (1d8+3)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with tentacles)

Special Attacks rend (2d6+9), rust

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th)

3/day—*entropic shield*, *mage hand*, *shatter* (DC 13),
sympathetic vibration

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 18, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +20

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Stealthy

Skills Balance +9, Bluff +8, Disable Device +6, Hide +15,
Listen +4, Move Silently +19, Open Lock +16, Spot +4,
Survival +4, Tumble +11

Languages telepathy 100 ft.

SQ vibration manipulation

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 11–16 HD (Large); 17–22 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blindsense (Ex) A coeurl can locate creatures within 60 feet by nonvisual means (mostly by noticing vibrations and other environmental clues). Opponents the coeurl can't actually see still have total concealment against the coeurl.

Rend (Ex) If a coeurl hits with both tentacle attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

Rust (Ex) A coeurl that holds its tentacle in contact with metal for a full minute causes the target metal to corrode, falling to pieces and becoming useless immediately. The touch can destroy two metal objects or up to a 10-foot-cube of metal per minute. Magic armor and weapons, and other magic items made of metal, must succeed on a DC 19 Reflex save or be dissolved. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Vibration Manipulation (Ex) A coeurl can manipulate vibrations to disrupt the workings of machines and constructs. At will, a coeurl can lock or unlock any non-magical locking mechanism within 15 feet. Once per round, it can also attempt a Disable Device check on any mechanical device within 15 feet. A coeurl always knows whether or not its Disable Device check has succeeded. In addition, a coeurl's tentacle attacks deal an additional +2d6 points of sonic damage to constructs. None of this ability's aspects function while a coeurl is within an area of magical silence.

Skills A coeurl has a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Disable Device checks, and a +8 racial bonus on Open Lock checks.

Lean and deadly, the animalistic appearance of the alien coeurls belies a keen intelligence and the tempered patience of a masterful hunter. Although similar in form to a wiry jungle cat, coeurls' forelegs are longer than their rear, giving the shadowy-skinned, hairless creatures a more elevated posture than a common feline. Rather than ears, bundles of wavering antennae extend from either side of their heads, delicate organs capable of detecting sounds and other, more enigmatic sensations. A coeurl's most distinguishing trait is the pair of powerful black tentacles that extend from its shoulders, each ending in a cluster of flexible, barb-like digits capable of manipulating objects just as nimbly as a human hand.

A typical coeurl stands approximately 3-1/2 feet tall and about 8 feet long, with a densely muscled body weighing around 650 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Coeurls are not native to Golarion, but have adapted well. Sages speculate that the deceptive creatures came to this world thousands of years ago via the ancient and mysterious portals that connect the various planets of the solar system. However, while the deadly felines have been encountered on other worlds—notably on Castrovel and Dykon, one of the moons of Bretheda—none of these populations seem significant enough to suggest the creatures' place of origin. Thus, some suspect that coeurls hail from some place beyond Golarion's solar system, and have traveled throughout the stars and planes in search of creatures capable of providing them with sustenance. While intelligent, coeurls prove notoriously difficult to communicate with, in part due to the strange method of electrical manipulation that typifies their native language, but largely because most seem disinterested in talking with creatures they view as food.

Although built like deadly feline predators, coeurls require more than mere animal flesh to survive, their strange physiologies being dependant on a poorly understood element they call *id*. Produced by and contained within living creatures—primarily within bones—this *id* nourishes coeurls just as food and water do most terrestrial beings, and without it, the tentacled felines starve and die. Seemingly unique throughout creation in their desire for this sustenance, coeurls mercilessly hunt all manner of creatures to sate their need for this unusual element. Harvesting *id* proves just as fatal and gory as an attack by a jungle cat, but coeurls seem to care little about the lives they extinguish in their feeding. Regardless of how much they consume, coeurls never prove completely sated, the natives of Golarion possessing *id* energy in amounts likened to drops of moisture collected from fog, hardly enough to sustain thirsty creatures used to drinking from eternal fountains.

HABITAT & SOCIETY

No environment on Golarion seems to perfectly suit coeurls, leaving most irritable and frustrated. Those who deign to communicate with sentient beings complain that the world doesn't "pulse," lacking some inherent energy coeurls find favorable. Those rare individuals who hunt on Golarion tend to linger in areas of frequent thunderstorms or in places known for strange electrical properties—such as some of the Darklands' mysterious vaults or high desert mountains—but endure discomfort in their hunts for *id*.

Due to their extreme rarity, coeurls infrequently encounter one another. Yet, beyond the mere happenstance

Black Destroyer

The coeurl originates from "Black Destroyer," one of the best-known short stories of Golden Age science fiction author A. E. van Vogt (1912–2000). In this tale, a group of space explorers land their ship on an uncharted world and encounter what they take for an alien animal. The strange creature, a deceptively sentient being who refers to himself as Coeurl, insinuates himself among the explorers and their ship, posing as a mere beast. Fighting against his hunger for the visitors' sustaining *id* energy, Coeurl seeks a way to use the explorers' vessel to escape his dead homeworld. However, a number of brutal murders cast suspicion on Coeurl, throwing the explorers and the alien into a deadly fight for survival.

The inspiration for numerous films and other fantastical works, "Black Destroyer" first appeared in *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1939, and is one of the works that makes up van Vogt's classic space opera *Voyage of the Space Beagle*—a title suggestive of the novel's Darwinian connections. Coeurl has gone on to inspire generations of science fiction and fantasy writers, with similar lurking predators and tentacled felines appearing throughout fiction, film, video games, and classic roleplaying games.

For his dozens of contributions to the genre, van Vogt was one of the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hall of Fame's first four inductees in 1996. Those interested in more of A. E. van Vogt's works should check out *Slan*, *The Weapon Shops of Isher*, *The World of Null-A*, and the rest of his sizable body of classic science fiction.

of meeting others of their race, the alien hunters seem to actively avoid their own kind. While the cunning creatures might simply not wish to compete against their brethren for Golarion's sparse *id* resources, it's also possible that the strange predators don't wish to be tempted by their kin and the copious *id* others of their kind likely possess. In either case, coeurls on Golarion rarely approach one another, their isolationist tendencies overriding any racial imperative for companionship or reproduction.

Strangers to Golarion, most coeurls harbor memories—either personal or those passed down through some inherited consciousness—of a racial homeland and a complex society long since lost to their people. Many coeurls actively seek to rediscover their lost home and might interrogate prey about what they know of magical portals or methods of interplanar travel before brutally harvesting their *id*. In some rare cases these deadly felines form temporary relationships with creatures capable of providing them with the transportation or sustenance they require, particularly powerful wizards, outsiders, or the mysterious denizens of Leng.



Div, Ghawwas

This enormous bipedal creature strides forward, a mass of rough ridges and fluttering fins, trailing a tail terminating in a wicked stinger. It hefts a large barbed spear in its clawed, ichor-covered hands and flicks a slimy forked tongue across backward-curving, razor-sharp teeth.

GHAWWAS

CR 10

NE Large outsider (aquatic, div, evil, extraplanar)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Listen +17, Spot +17

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 11, flat-footed 24

(+2 Dex, +15 natural, -1 size)

hp 102 (12d8+48)

Fort +12, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

DR 10/cold iron and good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resistance** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., swim 80 ft.

Melee 2 claws +17 (2d6+6) and bite +15 (1d8+3) and sting +15 (1d8 plus poison)

Ranged spear +13 (2d6+6 plus poison)

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

Special Attacks boiling sea, improved grapple, poison, swim-by attack

Spell-like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*control water*, *curse water*, *deeper darkness*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *dimension door*

3/day—*hallucinatory terrain* (DC 17), *poison* (DC 16), *stinking cloud* (DC 16), *quench* (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 14, **Con** 19, **Int** 11, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +22

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack

Skills Concentration +19, Hide +13, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (the planes) +15, Listen +17, Move Silently +17, Search +15, Spot +17, Survival +17, Swim +29

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Celestial, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ amphibious, rough hide

ECOLOGY

Environment Abaddon or any aquatic

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement 13–20 HD (Large)

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Amphibious (Ex) Although ghawwas are aquatic, they can survive indefinitely on land.

Boiling Sea (Su) As a standard action, a ghawwas can cause the waters around it to roil into a fiery, bubbling boil. Any creature within 50 feet of the ghawwas, within the same body of water, and at least half submerged when the ghawwas activates this ability takes 6d6 points of fire damage from the suddenly boiling water. A DC 20 Fortitude saving throw halves this damage. The amount of damage is equal to half the ghawwas's Hit Dice and the saving throw is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) Injury, Fortitude DC 20, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Str. The save DC is Constitution-based. Three times per day, but no more than once per hour, a ghawwas can secrete its venom onto a weapon, coating it with its poison. Most carry spears poisoned in this manner.

Rough Hide (Ex) Ghawwas have a rough hide composed of tiny jagged barbs and jutting protrusions. Any creature striking a ghawwas with a natural weapon, including an unarmed strike, takes 1d6 points of slashing damage from each attack.

See in Darkness (Su) Ghawwas can see perfectly in darkness of

bestiary

any kind, even that created by a *deeper darkness* spell.

Swim-by Attack (Ex) Extremely quick in the water, a ghawwas can attack while swimming and continue its movement. This ability mimics the Spring Attack feat as long as the ghawwas is swimming.

Skills A ghawwas has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Treacherous and venomous divs, ghawwas lurk within the fetid seas of Abaddon, sometimes finding planar eddies that allow them to slip onto the mortal plane. Malformed creatures, they appear to be part shark, part prehistoric fish, and part fiendishly hulking humanoid. A ghawwas's head resembles a grotesque orb with fiery red eyes, fins on each side of its face, and a pair of small branching horns that resemble coral jutting from its sloping forehead. Its mouth splits its face into a wide gaping maw of wickedly crooked teeth that point backward into the mouth, preventing creatures' escape. Small fins cover the creature's body at odd intervals. Each joint on its body sports a quivering fin, and a half-dozen frills of varying sizes line its spine.

These aquatic fiends stand nearly 12 feet tall, covered by a dark green-gray hide thick with bony ridges and tiny barbs. Heavily muscled, a ghawwas weighs nearly 1,200 pounds.

Ecology

Powerful combatants, ghawwas are brutal opponents and infiltrators within realms difficult for their kin to reach. Mortals curse the name ghawwas, spitting upon the ground at their mention due to their tendency to deplete water sources and generally wreak havoc. Merfolk, sea elves, and sahuagin also face the depredations of these fiends, as the divs make few distinctions among mortals. Ghawwas tend to act more aggressively toward those creatures capable of breathing water, though, viewing them as greater threats.

Among troves of collected treasure, ghawwas keep the skeletons of their victims, picked clean by fish and other creatures that share their home on the sea floor. Despite not having to eat, ghawwas savor the taste of marrow within humanoid bones and use their powerful jaws to crush them to paste.

As all divs possess some manner of esoteric weakness in their personality, the tolling of thick metallic bells fills ghawwas with unease. The creatures cannot stand the heavy ringing sound and might attempt to destroy either the bells or those ringing them. In the southern seas, sailors often fasten a brass bell to the mast of their

ship in hopes of driving ghawwas away, a practice that backfires as often as it works.

Exceptionally well suited to moving and surviving underwater, ghawwas possess the ability to make slight transformations to their bodies to make themselves more mobile on land. Retracting their larger fins and powerful tails, these divs can re-extend these appendages at a moment's notice. This subtle transformation has long baffled planar scholars, many of whom spread fear of two breeds of ghawwas when truly only one exists.

Habitat & Society

Although these powerful divs maintain their dominion over the deep waters, that cold, black realm does not restrict them. Able to breathe air as well as water, ghawwas roam the lands, spreading pain and agony, though they rarely venture far from the murky depths. Although they can venture from oceans and rivers, they quickly grow frustrated with the two-dimensionality of movement on land and retreat back to the watery darkness.

Most ghawwas stake out deep water lairs far beneath shipping lanes, both to assure that they never want for vessels to torment and to stymie those who might seek to hunt them, knowing that few surface creatures would dare to follow them into the inky depths. Ghawwas survive easily in both the pressured deep of the sea floor and—though uncomfortably—the scorching sands of deserts, where they enjoy tainting or drying up oases and small lakes with their magical abilities. On their home plane of Abaddon, ghawwas hail from a sea of poison that silently laps against its foamy shores. There these venomous fiends experiment to create new and ever more vile toxins meant to atrophy mortal bodies and minds.

Brutal, aggressive, and able to fight in a number of environments, ghawwas serve as specialized troops in the ranks of divs. More powerful divs and fiends make use of these hostile creatures as versatile warriors, guardians, and infiltrators, pressing their relatively dull-witted kin into service.

When attacking ships at sea, ghawwas enjoy drawing out the terror of their assaults. Typically, a ghawwas clings to the hull of a ship, and over the course of several days, even weeks, commits all manner of evils under the cover of darkness. These divs enjoy tainting a vessel's water sources, destroying rudders or slashing sails, and poisoning crewmen. Possessing cruel senses of humor, ghawwas sometimes attempt to undermine their victims' sanities, revealing themselves to a single sailor but slipping beneath the waves when others are called for help. The distress such questionable sightings cause and the dissension this often spreads among a group in close quarters might delight a div for weeks before it finally begins to murder its victims one by one.



MIENGU

The features of this lithe, glistening female are placid yet severe. Her firmly carved body is transparent and ripples like living water, ever flowing and reforming like a river come to life. Four arms sprout from her shapely form, while from the waist down her limbs join into a twisting column of living liquid. Her gaze is wary, and around her float twirling blades, seemingly created from razor-sharp water.

MIENGU

Usually NG Medium fey (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 20

(+4 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 119 (14d6+70)

Fort +9, **Ref** +13, **Will** +12

DR 5/bludgeoning; **Immune** critical hits, paralysis, poison, sleep effects, stunning; **Resist** fire 10

CR 11

Weakness vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 60 ft.

Melee 1 +1 *water spear* +12 (1d8+7)

Ranged 1d4 +1 *water daggers* +15 (1d4+1)

Special Attacks aqueous armament, waverider

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th)

At will—*create water*, *fog cloud*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *pass without trace*, *see invisibility*, *ventriloquism*, *water breathing*
3/day—*blur*, *control water*, *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 18), *summon nature's ally* IV
1/day—*heal* (DC 20), *rainbow pattern* (DC 18), *remove curse*, *restoration*

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 19, **Con** 17, **Int** 12, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +11

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Mobility, Spring Attack, Track

Skills Concentration +22, Heal +20, Knowledge (nature) +20, Move

Silently +21, Sense Motive +20, Survival +20, Swim +29

Languages Aquan, Common, Sylvan; water tongue

SQ amphibious, fluid form, *freedom of movement*, oasis kiss

ECOLOGY

Environment any aquatic

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

Advancement by character class; **Favored Class** druid

Level Adjustment —

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Amphibious (Ex) Miengus can breathe both air and water, although they rarely travel more than a few feet from water.

Aqueous Armament (Su) Miengus can form and shape the water around them—condensed from the atmosphere or even drawn from their own fluid bodies if needed—into any simple or martial melee weapon. These weapons are made of pure water, magically solidified to the hardness of steel, and they function like +1 magical weapons of the appropriate type. Miengus typically use this ability to craft spears, though they might form other weapons as they please.

In addition, on any round a miengu can manifest 1d4+1 water daggers and make ranged attacks with each. Each of these weapons is treated as a +1 *dagger* and dissolves after being thrown. The number of daggers a miengu creates and can thus attack with changes from round to round.

Fluid Form (Su) While a miengu appears humanoid, its interior is entirely comprised of water. Miengus have all the immunities of elementals. A miengu may also flow through tiny gaps and cracks as if in *gaseous form* and can move through spaces occupied by other creatures without difficulty, although they provoke attacks of opportunity as normal.

Freedom of Movement (Sp) Miengus are constantly under the effects of *freedom of movement* (caster level 12th).

Oasis Kiss (Su) As a full-round action, a miengu can deliver a life-giving kiss to any living corporeal creature. The oasis kiss

removes fatigue, nausea, sickness, and exhaustion, and the recipient gains the benefits of an *endure elements* spell for 24 hours. This ability is usable 3 times per day.

Water Tongue (Su) Miengus can converse with any creature with the aquatic or water subtypes as if using *speak with animals* or *tongues*.

Waverider (Su) As a full-round action once every 1d4 rounds, a miengu can summon an arcing column of water and use it to propel herself across the battlefield. When using this ability, a miengu moves in a straight line between 30 and 60 feet. If the miengu cannot move this far, this ability fails. Any creatures of Medium size or smaller in the fey's path must make a DC 20 Reflex save or take 1d6+6 points of damage and be knocked prone. Creatures who succeed take only half damage and are not knocked down. Those in the fey's path may not make attacks of opportunity when it moves in this fashion. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Skills A miengu has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line. In addition, miengus have a +10 racial bonus on Hide checks when fully submerged.

Miengus are water spirits who typically dwell in desert oases, jungle rivers, and along tropical coasts. They consider themselves the protectors and healers of the weak and innocent, among whom they count peaceful fey, pools of pure water, serene vistas, natural gardens, and even the smallest of animals and flowers. They combat destructive races like ogres, goblins, and sahuagin wherever they encounter them, waging private crusades against their predations. Some claim lush oases, hidden coves, or reefs of particular beauty as their personal territories, guarding them viciously against any they perceive as interlopers.

A typical miengu stands approximately 5-1/2 feet tall and weighs several hundred pounds, their bodies consisting primarily of water.

Ecology

Miengus are spirits of nature and share the winsome beauty and caprice of their fey cousins, but also prove serious and devoted to the defense of the wild. While similar to nymphs and dryads in their dedication to protecting nature, miengus are not physically tied to the lands they protect. Usually solitary creatures, these beings of living water take the forms of beautiful women, typically with overly wide smiles and either wild or no hair. Their open countenances can change swiftly, though, as they are a passionate race, just as quick to anger and vengeance as they are to laughter and love.

Habitat & Society

These watery fey might occupy all manner of aquatic environs. Although most seem to favor desert oases and

tropical coasts, miengus have also been sighted along shoals and rocky seashores, from cold arctic reaches to warm seas.

Miengus often disguise their lairs with *hallucinatory terrain* to divert would-be intruders and allow them a chance to observe and determine people's intentions. Miengus living in oases may hide the oasis under an illusion of sand or create a false mirage to lead evildoers into danger, revealing the oasis only to those whom they deem worthy, while coastal miengus create phantom shoals or hide actual reefs to shipwreck the wicked, revealing the true path only to those of good heart. Miengus use similar tricks to confound their monstrous enemies, backing up their illusions with *control water*, summoned allies, or natural hazards and predators.

While never entirely predictable, most miengus devote themselves to rooting out and destroying evil and bringing hope and rescue to those in need. The lairs of such beneficent water spirits sometimes become sites of pilgrimages for those seeking healing, blessing, or respite. Miengus often adopt stretches of water as their homes and fiercely defend their territory and the creatures who live therein, sometimes going so far as to adopt whole tribes of locals. Such relationships between these water fey and native sentient creatures rarely end well, though. While miengus—who measure their lifespans in centuries—might adopt a band of devoted nature worshipers who pay her and her protected lands great respect, the children of such a community often prove less dutiful as generations pass, eventually driving off the heartbroken fey. Thus, while many stories fill the chronicles of exotic cultures—particularly in Garund—few living in modern times claim to have ever seen a miengu firsthand.

Miengus in Katapesh

Only a few rare miengus are known to live along the shores and within hidden oases in Katapesh.

Sismosishea, the Lady of White Flowers: Spoken of in the Songs of Shazathared, the Lady of White Flowers has long protected the Garden of White Flowers, a desert paradise filled with primroses surrounding a crystalline oasis. While fey, druids, and beasts are welcome in her garden, those who don't show the proper respect for the Lady's children—including the valley's countless tiny flowers—are mercilessly driven away.

Vannashiai: When the twin shir divs called the Drinkers of Tears began prowling her oasis, the miengu Vannashiai could do little to combat their predations. To protect her pristine pool from the fiends' ravages, she broke open the earth, draining the entire oasis into the cavern below. Now, although most desert travelers believe it to have dried up, the renamed Well Under the Blue Star survives in a pristine cavern glistening under a ceiling of beauteous cerulean crystals.



PROTEAN, IMENTESH

As this serpentine creature slithers forward, its body combining elements of snake, bird, and human, a visible shiver shudders through the fabric of reality. Its unblinking eyes reveal a patient and powerful intelligence, while from nowhere and everywhere at once resonates a susurrus of infectiously spreading whispers.

IMENTESH

CR 10

Always CN Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, protean, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +20, Spot +20

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 22
(+3 Dex, +13 natural, -1 size)

hp 136 (13d8+78); fast healing 5

Fort +14, **Ref** +11, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities amorphous anatomy, freedom of movement;

DR 10/lawful; **Immune** acid, polymorph; **Resist** electricity 10, sonic 10; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +19 (1d8+7) and bite +17 (2d6+3) and tail +17 (1d8+3 plus improved grab)

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

Special Attacks change shape, constrict 1d8+7, sneak attack +4d6, warpwave

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th)

At will—*detect law*, *dimension door* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *make whole*, *major creation*, *shatter* (DC 17), *shrink item*

3/day—*chaos hammer* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *ethereal jaunt*, *slow* (DC 18)

1/day—*break enchantment*, *dispel law* (DC 20), *haste*, *polymorph any object* (DC 23)

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 16, **Con** 22, **Int** 23, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +13; **Grp** +24

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Feint, Iron Will, Multiattack

Skills Bluff +21, Concentration +22, Craft (any one) +22, Diplomacy +25, Disable Device +22, Hide +15, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (any one) +22, Listen +20, Move Silently +29, Sense Motive +20, Spellcraft +24, Spot +20

Languages Abyssal, Protean; *tongues*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Sneak Attack (Ex) This ability functions as the rogue ability of the same name. An imentesh's sneak attack bypasses a protean's normal chance to ignore additional damage effects due to its amorphous anatomy.

Tongues (Su) An imentesh is constantly under the effects of a *tongues* spell.

Warpwave (Su) An imentesh can cause the material substance of a creature to transform. As a standard action, the imentesh targets a single corporeal creature within 100 feet—the target can resist the warpwave with a DC 22 Fortitude save. A creature that fails the save is affected by a randomly determined effect from the adjacent table. The non-ability-damage component of the effect lasts for 1 minute, and can be negated before that duration expires by a *dispel chaos* spell, while the ability damage caused by a warpwave can be cured as normal. Warpwave is a polymorph effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Well known to non-natives of the Maelstrom as subtle, conversant missionaries of chaos, imenteshes are also the most likely of their kind to have been encountered and peacefully interacted with outside of their native plane.

Significantly smaller than their more bestial naunet brethren, imenteshes range from 10 to 15 feet in length. Encountered inside of the Maelstrom or its borderlands, they typically possess an inherent amber or golden iridescent sheen to their scales, and often adopt the same

Warpwave Effects

1d10	Ability Damage	Result
1	2 Dexterity	Target swells in size, as if under the effect of <i>enlarge person</i> .
2	2 Strength	Target shrivels, as if under the effect of <i>reduce person</i> .
3	2 Charisma	Writhing tendrils sprout from random parts of the target's body, entangling the target.
4	2 Intelligence	Target's sensory organs shift and transform, removing all special sensory abilities and blinding the target.
5	2 Constitution	Target's body becomes hyperactive and slightly unhinged from surrounding time—the target is hasted but becomes fatigued.
6	2 Wisdom	Target's ability to observe the world becomes greatly enhanced, granting him <i>true seeing</i> and <i>confusion</i> .
7	1d4 Intelligence	Target is transformed into a harmless animal, as if by <i>baleful polymorph</i> .
8	1d4 Strength	Target's blood turns toxic, causing the target to become nauseated.
9	1d4 Charisma	Small portions of target's body burst alight in energy of a random type (determine randomly between acid, cold, electricity, and fire), causing the target to take 2d6 points of damage of the appropriate energy each round.
10	1d6 Dexterity	Target is petrified, transforming into a random stone, metal, or crystal statue.

color for the sclera of their eyes. However, their most marked trait is the subtle telepathic whisper that constantly surrounds them, reaching out to touch the minds of those they encounter, capable of confusing the weak-minded and even temporarily altering their alignments.

Vast differences exist between imenteshes, with individuals gradually going through constant but ultimately cosmetic changes. Most seem to adopt less ferocious appearances when traveling outside of the Maelstrom, trending toward more humanoid forms or taking on serpentine aspects of the races they expect to encounter.

Ecology

True to the subtle shifting and alterations of their bodies, consciously decided or not, imenteshes have no single method of reproduction. In fact a single imentesh may reproduce by multiple, mutually exclusive methods at different periods of its existence. A given imentesh might couple with a suitably gendered member of its caste and lay eggs, spawn live young, or even reproduce via stranger methods such as pathanogenesis, binary fission, or things even more bizarre.

One open question is the role that mortal souls play within the genesis of new proteans, and specifically new imenteshes. With many planar races, the inclusion (or not) of souls is readily apparent and obvious, but not so with the Maelstrom's primary natives. When posed with that question, imentesh Ille'narshek, pilgrim of the Chorus of Crystalline Flame, stated the following answer in its sing-song oratory: "You are not of the Maelstrom now, shackled and rigid, such a poor and limited thing, but speak with me, spark of the mortal spheres, and as with all things you can be so once again. Please, let me free you."

While the nameless adventurer who posed the question apparently did not survive the encounter, as the protean

either misinterpreted her willingness or felt that the liberation of her spirit from what it deemed the "tyranny of corporeal flesh" justified her dismemberment, her surviving companions recorded Ille'narshek's actions and its original response to her question, along with the mention that the imentesh seemed to almost weep with joy as it carried their friends' spirit back to the Maelstrom, whispering and praying as it vanished into the borderlands.

Habitat & Society

Imenteshes occupy two distinct and almost opposite roles within their chaotic society. On one hand they exist as the artisans, craftsman, and defenders of the raw and fluid reality of the deep Maelstrom. Encountered within their native plane, imenteshes mold the substance of proto-reality to their own whimsy or to the quasi-divine edicts of whatever keketar chorus with which they currently align themselves. Imenteshes act to interpret the blank slate of their realm, artists constantly altering it to serve an inner or guided aesthetic before abandoning that vision for another, slowly raising mountains before turning them to crystalline deserts and then to steaming tropical jungles as it suits them. Of course, individual or groups of imenteshes often don't share the same visions, and conflict is frequent, with competing egos pushing the local terrain into a spastic frenzy of constant, unstable shifting until a spontaneous change of aesthetic—or outright bloodshed—allows for a return to the natural harmonious disorder.

Whatever their actions, they hope to gradually steer the multiverse back toward what they see as the ultimate freedom of the Maelstrom. More immediately, they also seek to retard the expansion of the forces of Law in terms of their planes, the success of their own goals, or the spread of their philosophy to other planes, seeing little distinction between Heaven, Hell, and Axis.



PROTEAN, NAUNET

The air ripples and shudders like turbulent water as a bestial hiss escapes from this creature's serpentine maw. Its scales shift between confusing patterns of color while the tip of its tail rattles threateningly. Baring the jagged teeth of its reptilian visage, the creature tenses to strike, while tentacles ending in vicious jaws rear back, also ready to lash out.

NAUNET

Always CN Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, protean, shapechanger)

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Listen** +15, **Spot** +15

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17
(+3 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 85 (9d8+45; fast healing 5)

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

Defensive Abilities amorphous anatomy, freedom of movement;

DR 5/lawful; **Immune** acid, polymorph; **Resist** electricity 10, sonic 10; **SR** 18

CR 7

OFFENSE

Spd 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect), swim 30 ft.

Melee 2 claws +13 (1d6+5) and bite +11 (1d8+2) and

2 bites +11 (1d6+2 plus confusion) and tail +11 (1d6+2 plus improved grab)

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

Special Attacks adaptive strike, change shape, coalesce chaos, constrict 1d6+5

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; +11 ranged touch)

At will—*acid arrow*, *detect law*, *fog cloud*, *dimension door* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *shatter* (DC 14)

3/day—*ethereal jaunt*

1/day—*chaos hammer* (DC 16)

STATISTICS

Str 20, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 11, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +18

Feats Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack

Skills Balance +17, Concentration +17, Hide +11, Listen +15, Move Silently +15, Spot +15, Swim +25, Tumble +15

Languages Abyssal, Protean

SQ flight

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Adaptive Strike (Su) A naunet's natural weapons count as magical and chaotic for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction. As a free action once per round, a naunet may infuse all of its natural attacks with adamantine, silver, or cold iron, thereby allowing it to also overcome damage reduction of those types as well.

Coalesce Chaos (Su) Once per day as a standard action, three or more naunets working together can create a roiling cloud of multicolored chaos matter. This effect is identical to *solid fog* (CL 12th) and lasts for 2d6 rounds. If six or more naunets are present, the coalesced chaos instead functions as *acid fog* (CL 12th).

Confusion (Su) A creature bitten by a naunet's secondary bite attack is injected with raw chaos, and must make a DC 19 Will save or be confused for 1 round. Rounds of confusion inflicted in this manner stack. A creature with a chaotic component to its alignment gains a +4 bonus to save against this effect, and creatures with the chaotic subtype are immune. This is a mind-affecting effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Like the Maelstrom's fury manifest in physical form, naunet proteans rage against a fixed, static cosmos. Surging out from their native plane's shifting borderlands, they seek to break down reality itself and return all of creation to the Maelstrom's fluid, chaotic embrace.

By far the largest of their serpentine kindred, naunet proteans range from 14 to 16 feet long, growing

progressively larger as they age and changing color, forming color-based subdivisions within their caste whose specifics are still largely a mystery outside of their own kind.

Compared to imentesh and keketar proteans, naunets possess a much more bestial, ferocious appearance. Bony spikes, barbs, heavy muscle and bone structure, poisoned fangs, and even stinging tentacles and other specialized structures are common to their kind, though the most bizarre of such features often vanish beneath the veneer of illusion or the minor but constant metamorphosis their bodies subconsciously undergo.

Ecology

As the lowest ranking of the protean castes, naunets are also the most common and populous subtype. Sages speculate that naunets, and potentially other proteans as well, eventually form from latent mortal soul energy delivered into the Maelstrom's heart from the portals in Pharasma's court, which interacts with the plane's fundamental chaotic potentiality. There are tales of ruins deep within the Maelstrom's heart where cabals of keketar proteans encourage the transformation of such souls into newborn naunet proteans, though no confirmation is forthcoming.

Habitat & Society

Naunet proteans act as living embodiments of the Maelstrom's fury toward each and every plane of the Outer Sphere. While imenteshes explore the Maelstrom's possibilities and proselytize beyond its borders, and the secretive keketars commune with the plane itself, naunets are engines of destruction.

Planar travelers most often encounter naunets prowling the Maelstrom's borderlands as individuals or hissing, predatory packs, devouring any threat they perceive to the plane's chaotic nature. They are most feared by the denizens of the planes that border the Maelstrom for their unpredictable tendency to gather and besiege their neighbors.

Storming out of the borderlands en masse, naunets target permanent structures, artificially worked terrain, and natives of the lawful planes, though they don't typically discriminate if anything else happens to get in the way. With disturbing frequency, such attacks from out of the Maelstrom's borderlands happen at points in the adjoining planes where the most damage can be done, usually interfering with their natives' activities along the borders, or preemptively crippling their attempts to launch forays into the Maelstrom itself. These attacks are often accompanied by much smaller groups of imentesh proteans, and many planar scholars speculate that they, or groups of unseen keketars, are typically the motivating factor behind such assaults.

Protean Traits

A protean possesses the following traits unless otherwise noted in the creature's entry.

- **Blindsense** (distance varies by protean type).
- Immunity to acid.
- Resistance to electricity 10 and sonic 10.
- **Constrict (Ex)** On a successful grapple check, a protean deals additional damage as indicated in its stat block.
- **Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, a protean must strike a foe with the attack indicated in its stats. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.
- **Flight (Su)** A protean can cease or resume flight as a free action, slithering through the air as a snake swims through water. The protean's fly speed varies by protean type.
- **Freedom of Movement (Su)** A protean has continuous freedom of movement, as per the spell of the same name.
- **Amorphous Anatomy (Ex)** A protean's vital organs shift and change shape and position constantly. This grants it a 50% chance to ignore additional damage caused by critical hits and sneak attacks, and grants immunity to polymorph effects (unless the protean is a willing target of the polymorph). A protean automatically recovers from physical blindness or deafness after 1 round by growing new sensory organs to replace those that were compromised.
- **Change Shape (Su)** A protean's form is not fixed. Once per day, as a standard action, a protean may change shape into any Small, Medium, or Large animal, elemental, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, ooze, plant, or vermin. A protean can resume its true form as a free action, and when it does so, it gains the effects of a *heal* spell (CL equal to the protean's HD) as its mastery of transformation repairs any damage or deleterious effects it may have sustained while in its alternate shape.

In their attacks, the naunets wantonly destroy and lay waste to their surroundings, not unlike the actions of a rampaging horde of demons. Unlike the fiends, however, naunets actually break down the structure of the affected plane as they do so, forcing it into a shifting flux and ever so slowly returning bits of terrain back to the Maelstrom borderlands, and from there to the plane's fluid heart. It is for this reason that the natives of Axis consider the Maelstrom a much greater existential threat than even the similar depredations by the fiends of the Abyss, which typically rampage without such purpose.



WYRMSKULL

Wreathed in a ghostly aura, the disembodied skull of a great dragon hovers here, silent and ominous. Beneath a crown of scarred horns, ominous flames flicker within eye sockets long bereft of mortal sight.

An undead creature created from the enslaved mind and spirit of a powerful dragon, a wyrmskull harbors the collected knowledge and cunning of one of these awesome beasts. Silent, deathless guardians, they serve as unliving libraries, storing information, secrets, and draconic advice accessible only by their creator and those deemed worthy. Some wyrmskulls retain their essential personalities and alignments in death, but many emulate the characteristics of their creators. While obedient to their masters' wills, most act intelligently and independently.

Wyrmskulls do not arise naturally and cannot reproduce their condition; they can only be brought into existence through the necromantic efforts of others. However, many have long outlived their masters and still carry within them ancient secrets, continuing the plots and legacies of their creators or losing themselves in contemplation of dark mysteries and deep secrets. None can tell whether disturbing a wyrmskull's reverie will incite curiosity or violence.

A wyrmskull appears as the withered skull of a dragon of considerable size. The creatures' draconic types in life can be discerned by cracked and broken scales, crests, frills, and horns. A wyrmskull may also wreath itself in a halo of ghostly flames matching its coloration in life.

Creating a Wyrmskull

"Wyrmskull" is an acquired template and can be added to any dragon of at least young adult age.

A wyrmskull uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

Size and Type: The creature's type changes to undead (augmented dragon). Do not recalculate base attack bonus, saves, or skill points. Size is reduced by two categories (or more for Colossal dragons, as wyrmskulls have a maximum size of Large). This reduces Strength and natural armor but improves Dexterity and size modifier to Armor Class and attack rolls.

Hit Dice: Hit dice remain d12s, though the wyrmskull loses any hit points previously granted by its Constitution.

Speed: A wyrmskull has a fly speed equal to half the base creature's speed with perfect maneuverability. It loses all other movement types of the base creature.

Armor Class: The wyrmskull has half of the natural armor bonus of the base creature. However, its reduced size grants it an improved size modifier to AC.

Attack: The wyrmskull loses all natural attacks except its bite. Its reduced size modifier also improves its attack bonus.

Damage: A wyrmskull's bite damage equals that of the base creature. A wyrmskull adds 1-1/2 times its Strength bonus to its bite damage.

Special Attacks: A wyrmskull retains the base dragon's breath weapon and spell-like abilities, but loses all others (including frightful presence and spells). A wyrmskull's breath weapon is the same size and deals the same amount of damage as the base creature. In addition, a wyrmskull gains the following special attacks:

Ghostlight (Su) A wyrmskull's bite attack ignores the miss chance against incorporeal creatures. In addition to its bite attack's normal damage, any creature struck takes 1d6 points of damage of the same energy type as the dragon's primary breath weapon (no effect if this breath weapon does not cause hit point damage or does not have an energy type). Those who take damage from a wyrmskull's bite are limned with *faerie fire* for 1 minute.

Speiro (Su) Once per week as a full-round action, a wyrmskull may strike the ground with its jaws, sowing teeth into the ground. At the beginning of its next turn, a number of skeletal warriors—one for each age category—burst from the ground within 10 feet to fight at the wyrmskull's command. These undead linger and obey the wyrmskull for 1 hour (or until brought to 0 hit points), at which point they crumble to dust.

These skeletal warriors are treated as human warrior skeletons (MM 226) but have a number of Hit Dice equal to the wyrmskull and have fast healing 5. They also gain a bonus to attack and damage rolls, natural armor bonus, and saving throws equal to +1 for each of the wyrmskull's base creature's age category. These skeletal warriors are immune to the wyrmskull's breath weapon energy type (in addition to cold) and share the wyrmskull's ghostlight, blindsense, damage reduction, and spell resistance.

A wyrmskull's teeth gradually regrow over the course of a week after this ability's use. The loss of a wyrmskull's teeth has no effect on its bite attack.

Wyrmskulls created from base creatures without age categories are treated as having only one age category.

Special Qualities: A wyrmskull retains all of the base dragon's special qualities and gains those noted below:

Damage Reduction (Ex) A wyrmskull gains DR 5/bludgeoning (or DR/bludgeoning equal to its DR/magic, if greater) in addition to any previous damage reduction.

Lorewarden (Ex) A wyrmskull gains bardic knowledge as a bard whose level equals half the wyrmskull's Hit Dice.

Spell-Like Abilities: A wyrmskull gains the ability to cast *legend lore*, *speak with dead*, and *whispering wind* once per day.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Int +2, Wis +2, Cha +2. Dexterity also increases by +2 for each size category reduced (typically by +4). Being undead, a wyrmskull has no Constitution score. Strength is not affected by this size change.

Languages: A wyrmskull retains knowledge of all the languages it knew in life. It also gains telepathy 100 ft.

Skills: Same as the base creature.

Organization: Solitary.

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature, adjusted by -2 if the base dragon is young adult or adult, -3 if mature adult or old, -4 if very old or ancient, and -5 if wyrm or great wyrm.

Alignment: Same as the base creature.

Advancement: Same as the base creature.

Level Adjustment: Same as base creature -3.

Sample Wyrmskull

This example uses a mature adult brass dragon as the base creature.

VENEMA SHODAIR

CR 10

Female mature adult brass dragon wyrmskull

CG Medium undead (augmented dragon, fire)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., keen senses;

Listen +29, Spot +29

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 19

(+2 Dex, +10 natural, -2 size)

hp 143 (22d12)

Fort +13, **Ref** +17, **Will** +17

DR 10/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** fire, paralysis, sleep, undead traits; **SR** 22

Weakness vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Spd fly 100 ft. (perfect)

Melee bite +30 (2d8+12 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks ghostlight, speiro

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th)

At will—*speak with animals*

3/day—*endure elements*

1/day—*legend lore*, *speak with dead* (DC 18), *suggestion* (DC 18), *whispering wind*

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 18, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +22; **Grp** +38

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Skills Diplomacy +29, Listen +29, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (history) +29, Knowledge (local) +29, Move Silently +27, Spot +29, Search +29, Spellcraft +29

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ lorewarden

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath Weapon (Su) Venema has two breath weapons, either of which she can use once every 1d4 rounds. Line of fire 100 ft. long, damage 7d6 fire; Reflex DC 26 half. Cone of sleep gas 50 ft. long, Reflex DC 26 or fall asleep for 1d7+7 rounds. The save DC for each is Constitution-based.

Lorewarden (Ex) Venema can make use of bardic knowledge as an 11th-level bard. She gains a +15 bonus on all bardic knowledge checks.

Speiro (Su) Once per week Venema can create 7 skeletal warriors to fight for her for one hour.

WYRMSKULLS IN GOLARION

The skulls of great dragons linger on in several places throughout Golarion, with some of the best known of these undead lore keepers noted here.

Vheymalk: The skull of the old green dragon Vheymalk the Vex, held centuries ago as the most feared scourge of the Uskwood, now haunts the swampy park and pool known as the Sogsoul Path in the Nidalese capital of Pangolais. An unliving monument to the victories of the city's forbearers, the wyrmskull is prevented from harming any natives of Nidal, and knows much of the country's history and shadowy arts, as well as being an expert at numerous games of strategy. Vheymalk is said to know the secrets of several powerful magical curses—which he used to lethal effect in life—but has refused to reveal them to anyone but those who beat him at a game of shadow stones, a frustrating Nidalese tile game.

Ghvoas Ghvoat: The ice linnorm called the Ciclemaws rages on even in death. Slain in 4128 AR by the Lodge of Fhythghaid Warqueen, the scop Olv the Liar managed to bring the dragon back to life, hoping to force it to reveal the secret hiding place of the Vault of Silver and Ice. Before the spellcaster could complete his spell, though, the gigantic wyrmskull bit him in half. It has terrorized the lands between Trollheim and Algidheart ever since.

VALEROS



MALE HUMAN FIGHTER 9

ALIGN NG INIT +7 SPEED 30 ft.

DEITY: Cayden Cailean

HOMELAND: Andoran

ABILITIES

16	STR
17	DEX
12	CON
13	INT
8	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 63
AC 23
touch 14, flat-footed 20
Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +3

OFFENSE

Melee +1 frost longsword +15/+10 (1d8+6/17–20 plus 1d6 cold)
Dual Wielding +1 frost longsword +13/+8 (1d8+6/19–20 plus 1d6 cold) and +1 short sword +12 (1d6+2/19–20)
Ranged +1 composite longbow +13 (1d8+4/x3)
Base Atk +9; Grp +12

SKILLS

Climb	+14
Intimidate	+12
Ride	+15
Swim	+10

FEATS

Combat Expertise, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Focus (short sword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)



Combat Gear *elixir of fire breath*, *potion of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 mithral breastplate, +1 frost longsword, +1 short sword, +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) with 20 arrows, silver dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *gauntlets of ogre power*, *ring of protection* +1, backpack, lucky tankard, rations (6), silk rope, 30 pp

Born a farmer's son in the quiet Andoren countryside, Valeros spent his youth dreaming of adventure and exploring the world. For the past several years, he's been a mercenary with the Band of the Mauler, a guard for the Aspis Consortium, a freelance bounty hunter, and hired muscle for a dozen different employers. Gone is his youthful naivete, replaced by scars and the resolve of a veteran warrior. While noble at heart, Valeros hides this beneath a jaded, sometimes crass demeanor, often claiming that there's no better way to end a day's adventuring than with "an evening of hard drinking and a night of soft company."

KYRA



FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 9

ALIGN NG INIT -1 SPEED 20 ft.

DEITY: Sarenrae

HOMELAND: Qadira

ABILITIES

13	STR
8	DEX
14	CON
10	INT
19	WIS
12	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 62
AC 20
touch 10, flat-footed 20
Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +13

Special Attacks greater turning 1/day, turn undead 8/day

OFFENSE

Melee +1 holy scimitar +9/+4 (1d6+2/18–20)
Base Atk +6; Grp +7
Spells Prepared (CL 9th)
5th—*flame strike* (DC 19)^D, *summon monster V*
4th—*air walk*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *fire shield*^D
3rd—*daylight*, *dispel magic* (2), *remove disease*, *searing light*^D
2nd—*aid*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*^D, *hold person* (DC 16), *resist energy* (2)
1st—*command* (DC 15), *endure elements*^D, *divine favor* (2), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
0—*create water* (2), *detect magic*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*
D domain spell (healing, sun)

SKILLS

Concentration	+14
Heal	+16
Knowledge (religion)	+12

FEATS

Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (scimitar), Weapon Focus (scimitar)



Combat Gear holy water (3), *potion of lesser restoration* (3), *wand of cure moderate wounds* (50 charges); **Other Gear** +2 chainmail, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 holy scimitar, *cloak of resistance* +1, *periapt of wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, backpack, rations (6), gold holy symbol (with *continual flame*) worth 300 gp, rations (4), 30 pp

Kyra was one of the few survivors of a brutal raid on her hometown, and on the smoking ruins of her village she swore her life and sword arm to Sarenrae. Possessed of a fierce will, pride in her faith, and skill with the scimitar, Kyra has traveled far since her trial by fire. She lost her family and home that fateful day, yet where another might be consumed by anger and a thirst for revenge, Kyra has found peace in the Dawnflower.

pre-generated characters

MERISIEL



FEMALE ELF ROGUE 9

ALIGN CN **INIT** +5 **SPEED** 30 ft.

DEITY: Calistria

HOMELAND: Varisia

ABILITIES

12	STR
21	DEX
12	CON
8	INT
13	WIS
10	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 43
touch 16, flat-footed 17
Fort +4, **Ref** +11,
Will +4; +2 against
enchantment
Special Qualities low-
light vision, trapfinding;
Defense evasion, trap
sense +3, improved
uncanny dodge;
Immune sleep

OFFENSE

Melee +1 keen rapier +12
(1d6+2/15–20)
Ranged dagger +11 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +7

Special Attacks sneak attack +5d6

SKILLS

Disable Device	+13
Hide	+22
Listen	+15
Jump	+8
Move Silently	+22
Search	+13
Spot	+15
Tumble	+17

FEATS

Dodge, Mobility, Spring
Attack, Weapon Finesse



Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility* (2); **Other Gear** +2 shadow
silent moves studded leather armor, +1 keen rapier, daggers (12), *amulet of natural armor* +1, *gloves*
of Dexterity +2, *ring of jumping*, *ring of protection* +1, masterwork thieves' tools, polished jade
worth 50 gp, 25 gp

Merisiel's life experiences have taught her to enjoy things to their fullest as they occur, since it's impossible to tell when the good times might end. Never the sharpest knife in the drawer, Merisiel makes up for this by carrying at least a dozen of them on her person. She hasn't met a problem yet that can't, in one way or another, be solved with things that slice. While she's always on the move and working on her latest batch of plots for easy money, in the end it comes down to being faster than everyone else—either on her feet, or with her beloved blades. She wouldn't have it any other way.

EZREN



MALE HUMAN WIZARD 9

ALIGN NG **INIT** +3 **SPEED** 30 ft.

DEITY: Atheist

HOMELAND: Absalom

ABILITIES

11	STR
9	DEX
12	CON
20	INT
15	WIS
9	CHA

DEFENSE

HP 33
touch 11, flat-footed 15
Fort +7, **Ref** +3,
Will +9

OFFENSE

Melee cane +4 (1d6)
Ranged light crossbow +3
(1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4

Spells Prepared (CL 9th)

5th—*cone of cold* (DC 20), *teleport*
4th—*dimension door*, *ice storm*,
stoneskin
3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*,
fireball (DC 18)
2nd—*bear's endurance*, *invisibility*,
scorching ray (2), *web* (DC 16)
1st—*charm person* (DC 16), *endure*
elements, *grease* (DC 16), *magic*
missile (2), *shield*
0—*daze* (DC 15), *detect magic* (2),
light

SKILLS

Appraise	+17
Concentration	+13
Knowledge (arcana)	+17
Knowledge (geography)	+17
Knowledge (history)	+17
Knowledge (the planes)	+9
Spellcraft	+19

FEATS

Combat Casting,
Empower Spell, Great
Fortitude, Greater Spell
Penetration, Improved
Initiative, Scribe Scroll,
Spell Penetration

FAMILIAR

Sneak (weasel, MM 282)



Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scroll of dispel magic*, *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th,
50 charges); **Other Gear** cane (as club), dagger, light crossbow with 20 bolts, *bracers of armor*
+4, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of intellect* +2, *ring of protection* +2, backpack, rations (6), scroll
case, spellbook, spell component pouch, diamond dust (250 gp), 100 gp pearls (2), 35 gp

Born to a successful spice merchant in one of Absalom's more affluent districts, Ezren's childhood was pleasantly safe. This changed when his father was charged with heresy. Ezren spent much of his adult life attempting to prove his father's innocence, only to discover his father was guilty. The revelation shook Ezren's faith in family and church to the core and he abandoned both, setting out into the world to find a new life. Ezren fell naturally into the ways of wizardry, and swiftly became a gifted spellcaster.

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by Greg A. Vaughan

Escaping the magical prison realm of Kakishon, the PCs find themselves thrown into the fire, trapped within the searing palace of the efreet Jhavlul in the fabulous and deadly City of Brass. Confronted by the fearsome natives of the burning plane, the PCs must seek allies and a singular fabulous treasure, the *Impossible Eye* itself, if they ever hope to return to Golarion and save Katapesh from being reduced to cinders.

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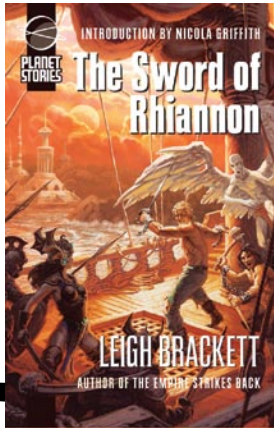
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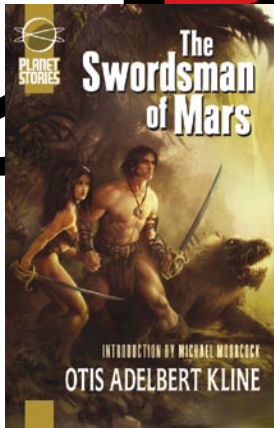


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A bored mage is a dangerous mage, and no mage was more dangerous than Nex. Such a genius was he that the struggle against boredom consumed a great deal of his wealth and time, and his merest whims of amusement instantiated themselves within his towers. He kept a myriad of mistresses, he called up angels and fiends with a mere crook of a finger, and yet even such wondrous beings could not long keep his attentions.

Nex determined that he should devote a time to the study of his own entertainment. And so he did, and as a result he conjured the pleasure plane of Kakishon, a wasteland world that he turned into a palm-strewn oasis of his own design. His realm came to house his every impulse, providing comedy, learning, sensual pleasures, drink, a surfeit of exotic foods, and oceans of wine. Nex lived there for several years, satisfied with his own satisfaction. Until the day he decided to travel and take the plane with him. To make it convenient, he folded the plane into a sixth extra dimension and placed it within a map, the better to pocket it on his travels to lands where one might need its comforts.

But the whims and wiles of fate are fickle and eventually Kakishon went missing. Some believe the great wizard merely misplaced his world or lost it in some fanciful gamble. Or perhaps he simply outsmarted himself, and grew bored with it and gave it away. Surely you and I are too foolish to find the truth, and the palace is lost forever, tucked into a volume abandoned on a dusty shelf, full of bored courtesans and fiends waiting to ply new visitors with their tricks.



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