Malitiam Peccatorum Extinguet
Celestis Autem Aio
Tucker & Co.
Pietas Autem Ad Justitiam Askis

BOOK OF EXALTED DARKNESS

A DECOPUNK CAMPAIGN SETTING AND VILE RESOURCE FOR *SHADOW OF THE DEMON LORD*

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WARNING: MATURE CONTENT (18+)

This book contains disturbing, macabre, explicitly violent, gruesome content and themes that may not be suitable for younger gamers. While we implore everyone to one day delve into our deliciously vile tome, it is not recommended for readers under 18 years of age without explicit parental consent.

Even so, all GMs should engage in a conversation of consent with players (see pages 191–192 in the Evil Gamemastering chapter) and roleplay of wickedness should be encouraged—not long, overdrawn, repeated depictions of torturing NPCs in monologues that drawl on for 10 minute intervals, but roleplay between villainous adventurers and NPCs (with a fair bit of torturing organized, rolled out as per the rules on page 47, and summarized unless it is a particularly important scene or point in the plot). Though the world contained inside of the glorious pages that follow is named Askis, play within it is meant to be brutal, serious, and far grander than a bit of storytelling sadism.

FOREWORD

Whether you are one of our Kickstarter backers or someone who purchased this tome of evil, ***thank you*** for picking up *Book of Exalted Darkness*. This is my fifth and definitely most complicated campaign setting, and I am immensely proud of the work that people put into it. First and foremost among these is the featured artist: Indi Martin. As you can clearly see from the cover she is demonically talented, and she went above and beyond the pale with every one of her (*many*) commissions in the following pages. There's also the design crew—Savannah Broadway, James Introcaso, Luis Loza, and Michael McCarthy—who are all fiendish, devilishly-minded folk. Savannah and James killed it with the spells (her Heresy Knight archetype is sublime, and his relics! So evil!), Luis took on probably the most difficult individual item inside of this massive conglomeration of despicable gaming (the brilliant Dark Transformation prestige class), and my Canadian counterpart was, as always, consummate in his considerations of how to make the great works of the Celestial Heroes into fully-conceptualized obstacles for villainous adventurers to conquer. Most of all however, is my gratitude for the Kickstarter backers that funded all the artwork and words within.

Let's talk about evil. I have a deep and abiding love for roleplaying vile, despicable characters. They're downright memorable! I've reminisced upon my antithetical cannibal drow barbarian and all of his blasphemous accolades countless times. Ironically the focus on dark elves (which are way past due for getting the axe) is one of my central problems with evil in traditional roleplaying games so if you're here for spider matriarchs we're not able to accomodate (though by all means, there's space in the Taenarius Tunnels for GMs that insist on an arachnid drow mad scientist or whatever else they fancy). What we were aiming at with *BED* (let's all call it that) is not your parent's D&D evil—we encourage PCs to commit acts of wanton violence, make fleshcloaks out of babies, transform themselves into oozes, vampires, liches, rakshasa, power their magic through blood, worship (and feed!) the Meat, and embrace the darkness in the shadows around your gaming table.

Once I knew we were shoulder deep in vile gaming excellence the new objective was threefold in making the world of Askis, where being a villain makes good sense, a place that the party will want to grind into the dust all tied together in a logical story and leaves the GM with everything needed to carry a campaign to a satisfying conclusion for an evil group. A year ago I thought up the first part (inaequa) and that's where the Kickstarter began—while I knew that it would ultimately come together, I didn't have it when we started. It took months of pondering, slowly gathering content and illustrations from essential parts of the project, but ultimately the *Torquem Machina* revealed itself in its full glory.

It's around that point that I began to go mad and now here we are, the art budget blown apart over more than 300 of the most glorious and decadent pages I've ever had the honor of putting together. I sincerely hope that you use the *Book of Exalted Darkness* responsibly and in excess, exploring the depths of your souls with villainous characters that stick with you until the end of your days.

Once again: thank you for taking this corrupting journey with us.

We hope you come back changed.

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Finally after decades of pious work in The Ministry's hospitals and sanitariums, Arisia had gained entry to the Library of Adriotemachus. This was no small feat—as a theological historian of only the 2nd Paene she required a litany of permits and sanctified sanctions in order to step into the building where she started the process of gaining entry—and even with permission to be here, she had precious few hours before being cast back out to trawl more limited collections in search of the world's truths.

She would be remiss not to access the oldest sections and so she headed there, evaluating rows upon rows of ancient tomes written in Celestial, Old Common, and languages she could only guess at. There was little new for her to learn from these books other than affirmation that those were certainly dark times. Long dead lich-queens, brutal draconic empires, and fiendish warlords filled every aging page and the depictions of their crimes made Arisia pale. To hear a common myth of despicable nature is one thing, but to have it verified and know it rings of truth is another matter entirely.

Overcoming the urge to get lost in the truly antique books, Arisia moved next to the reason she was given access to this hallowed place and moved to the slightly more modern area devoted to the Age of Discord. Choosing even one of these ancient tomes to delve into was like sitting in a parlor shop with hundreds of flavors of icecream on a hot day with only a bit of change in her pocket, and after a few moments of panicked consideration she carefully gathered a stack of titles devoted to the Golden Redeemers. The half-elf learned many things inside, confirming first that Darrius Ventrelli was indeed sired by an angelkin and a demon, not as a devil despite what the tabloids might claim. There was a common inaccuracy regarding Lellwyn Fethyrwal as well—the recent academic theory that the Celestians influenced her as a child was untrue and the Insolo Cult was solely responsible for her upbringing. The assertion that she was actually hired to check—that Tapper Underknoll was indeed born in Nitidus—proved true. It'll be a sad revelation for the Mayor of Brindlehalst and its citizens but twas a bold, unlikely claim to stage against the Gnomish Metropolis.

With her duty out of the way Arisia checked her watch, pleased to see she had at least an hour left to sate her curiosity with the wealth of knowledge all around her. Theological history is an interesting field of study and something about the matter of mages hasn't ever quite sat well with her, particularly the era just before the Utopian Dawn. Gathering up the journals and memoirs of contemporary priests of the time, she rapidly glossed the dusty pages in search for references to publications regarding the apostates of the historically recent past. There were many a wicked wizard and evil sorcerer, of that she was certain, but surely before The Ministry there were spellcasters of an arcane bent that failed to recognize the power and divinity of the Celestial Heroes but chose not to raise arms against them?

Unfortunately her search was proving fruitless. At best the mages she sought were only mentioned, not a citation in sight. There ***was*** *something of note however, an oddity of which she had often pondered. Effective as the Justitia might be, a silent force for policing a populace isn't exactly efficient even with limited telepathy, and some of the arcane theories she read postulating the nature of Varrus Goodwin's tattoo were intriguing indeed. Could it be that it is not a symbol of power or enchantment, but something else? Just as she carefully undid the old wax sealing a treatise on the subject by a scholar she's long admired, the recalcitrant dwarven Bibliothecae Prefectus that allowed her inside appeared around the edge of a bookcase, quietly beckoning with his hand for her to gather her things to leave.*

Frustrated that she had allowed herself to get sidetracked from her original focus and the mystery of Askis' apostate mages, Arisia knew that there was no point in trying to persuade the old bookworm into giving her a few more minutes—Rankir Tarryndorn's infamous impatience is well known to be an affectation of his students as well. Carefully placing the borrowed tomes back onto the dusty shelves, Arisia made a mental note to look deeper into the oddity of the demigod monk's tattoo, mentally assessing the mountains of paperwork that such a task will inevitably require. As she calculated the work ahead and made for the equos station down the street, a close voice suddenly broke her concentration and caused her to jump slightly before she recognized its smiling source. "My word is that you, Arisia? I must say it has been some time since I saw you last." Inquisitor Octavius gestured to the grand building behind her. "The library, eh? Reading anything interesting?"

TWILIGHT OF SUFFERING

Little remains from the eras before the Celestial Heroes saved the world from evil, the history of the distant past woven into myths forgotten under the piles of books and tomes extolling the deeds of Askis' many saints. The only living remnants of that bygone age are the lauded demigods themselves and the few great serpents that have escaped their holy wrath, driven so far beneath the surface that they are thought to be slain legendary beasts. Scurrying among them are the mad scientists that eluded the purges but only the deranged and foolish dare give them any heed—but that's all well enough. Most of Askis is satisfied with accepting the utopian age they were born into, assured that their divine leaders won't lead them astray or allow harm to befall the world.

AGE OF DISCORD

The old gods that wrought Askis (and possibly the universe) are lost to time, run aground and roughshod by conflict during the Age of Discord, the epoch when the Celestial Heroes rose from obscurity to begin their unyielding fight against evil. In this ancient time the lands were consumed by bloodthirsty warlords and petty city-states, all obsessed with expanding their reach and territory, each blind to the need to unite in order to advance civilization.

In Ourianos the Order of the Shining Stone was forged by the Duertek Mercantile Consortium's drive to unite the Contiguous Continent. First came Gimli Stoneflask, trodding forth from the depths of Riskara's Bastion in the Rostratus Mountains and wielding the sacred power of his dwarven ancestors, defending the wagons of his kin from the many that sought its riches. As they traveled ever westward many hired swords joined their cause, but the monk Varrus Goodwin was different—refusing to allow the traders to pass without defeating him in sport. The tales of how the gifted warrior was won over are dozenfold and lost to time, but it is widely agreed that the stout priest was at the heart of it.

At the completion of the lengthy caravan's second circuit the elves of the Shandalan Forests sent an envoy (a wizard named Rankir Tarryndorn and the last of the legendary trio) that joined the other folk and quickly proved to be the vital component that enabled the sortie to not only defend their charges, but overcome their offenders. Word of the Order of the Shining Stone's victories traveled across Ouranios faster than they could, and with a member of the Duertek Mercantile Company remaining in each major settlement a communications network was built—before long political alliances formed between aggressive warlords still holding out, nesting pockets of defense across the Contiguous Continent.

The unforgiving wilderness of Samovi resisted civilization as surely as it hid evil—its lush and overgrown forests too verdant and fast growing, its deserts too bereft of prey and water, its mountains too high and treacherous—ending many settlements long before they could gain more than a foothold. Notorious bandits, pirates, and savages made their homes within, engaging debaucheries galore without fear of reprisals of any kind, enslaving captives and taking whatever they pleased in an endless, bloody cycle of death, misery, and violence. A gnome ranger named Tapper Underknoll rapidly gained renown for surviving numerous attempts at revenge following the first few of his Vengeful Scourges, quickly mounting a

bounty posted by the infamous Hethyria Bloodboot: a king's ransom for his tiny head.

Many a greedy adventurer chased after the cunning little hunter but the monetary incentive to do so didn't last long. One of a nefarious mariner's crew betrayed his captain in a stunning ambush alongside the diminutive woodsman, the vessel's trusted mage turning his spells on buccaneers. It was the final anvil strike in the unbreakable bond of friendship between Tapper and the dubious tiefling sorcerer Darrius Ventrelli, forged on the fiery deck of *The Scorned Maiden* as the corpses of its many sinners disappeared beneath the waves. The two continued the gnome's quest for justice and traveled across the continent, searching for wickedness and wrongdoers with little direction—until they stumbled upon an ancient temple in the highest peak of the towering Quyosh Mountain, a sacred and timeless structure devoted to the Upper Planes. They emerged not as two but three—led by the paladin Lellwyn Fethyrwal, a woman said to be touched by angels—and under her guidance The Golden Redeemers rapidly gathered like-minded followers, mounting military campaigns against larger outfits of pirates and bandits until their rising reputation brought renown to the whole of Samovi as well.

As peace spread across the other two continents of Askis, Zakuthombo descended into a pit of anarchy, the last bastion of evil protected by fierce waters and the fiefdoms of draconic overlords exiled from elsewhere. Despite being the last of the Celestial Heroes to become known across the world, Tucker the Great and Co. gained fame in leaps and bounds, sailing back from their first foray into the Far Continent on a boat covered in the scales of the legendary wyrm Sabrydethrio—the greatest of Ouranios' winged serpents, said to have absconded from the Contiguous Continent with the world's most powerful treasures so that no adventurers could ever slay it.

By auctioning off a few of the rewards from Sabrydethrio's hoard, the enchanting Mystral Farsong earned the group untold coin and their canny halfling leader purchased armies, a navy, and a score of mages for their return to the dreaded lands. Utilizing the direct but effective tactics of Grukk the Axe their mercenaries began the long and brutal campaign against the numerous evil dragons forced to lair in Zakuthombo.

VANQUISHING OF EVIL

For hundreds of years the Order of the Shining Stone, Golden Redeemers, and Tucker the Great and Co. waged their crusades against evil, seemingly immune to the ravages of time or the fatigue of making war on the world's wickedness. It was during these centuries that the many saints of Askis came to be, heroes of their homelands and patrons of the cities they championed, worshiped and enshrined. Though well known and lauded for their initial victories, their task was truly monumental—beating back evil wasn't a simple endeavor and like a pernicious weed of corruption, with every slain villain another rose anew. Previously fractured, the most sensible of the warlords that remained chose to band together into factions in desperate efforts to resist the dawn of the Celestial Heroes.

Though not tired of their fight against evil in Ouranios, the Order of the Shining Stone had become exhausted with the praises and laurels heaped upon them by its thankful people. To aid in their travels the dwarf Gimli Stoneflask constructed watchtowers mystically banded together by the elven wizard Rankir with the placement of numerous teleportation circles and other magics. These structures ultimately became the Towers of Light, the magic tethering them together the first of many arcane theories that led to the *Bands of Kyttarmoak*. While the fortifications provided some safety and privacy for the lauded adventurers as they waged precise assaults to eliminate the dangers still present on the Contiguous Continent, their devoted followers simply could not be dissuaded from harrying the heroes. This refusal to keep away caused many to suffer retribution from the adventurers' numerous adversaries, mistaken for soldiers camped outside of their commanders' watch towers. After the third such attack Varrus Goodwin began enforcing training regimes led by his pupils, disseminating his style of combat and laying the foundations for both the Monastic Order of Law (before he belatedly thought to include edicts about the necessity of living within the confines of civilization to better master one's martial truths) and the Justitia.

ASKIS
STIRIACUS OCEAN
AQUILA
GAMARA MOUNTAINS
OBCIDENS
IACIO
OPERANS MOUNTAINS
SUPPETIA
PERTINAX
SEVERUS
PRAESUS
SAMOVI
REFOVIO
TRUSO
ELUDERE
ZAKUTHOMBO
SOPTIAN VOLCANO
ESCARION MAELSTROM
RALLUS OCEAN
RECALTIO MOUNTAIN RANGE
CONSILIUM
PERIBOLUS
CONLATUS
ADVERSUS
SCISSURA MOUNTAINS
EOUS MOUNTAINS
MOUNT VESPERTINUS
NORTH SAND SEA
MOUNT TANTUM
REGREDIOR
ETIUM
ENTIAM
LAKE LUNARIS
MACHAERA SEA
MOUNT SEJUNGO
TUTELA
LUMIS RIVER
COELICLA
NITIDUS
GREMIUM SAND SEA
DIFFUSILUS OCEAN
RELICTUS MOUNTAIN
HEMINA
MAERUS
EURUS MOUNTAINS
MARCOR DESERT
MOUNT HESPERIS
SOUTH SAND SEA
NOTICIA
AMICUS
PRENSATIO
LAKE FELIX
NAVICLA
MERIDIES
OURANIOS
STAGNUM STRAIT
ANGUSTIA STRAIT
BELLUA
ALACER
SOBRIUS
FLUCTUS
MOENE
LEGIO
ROSTRATUS MOUNTAINS
IAJUNIUM DESERT
SUDOR RIVER
KALATOR
NORTHERN INEXORABILIS MOUNTAINS
AESTUA LAKE
LAEVIS RIVER
KAELESTI
BURGUS
SAEDOR RIVER
DUCTUS
VARIATIO
LAKE SAEDE
EXORTUS
PRAECLARUS
RAMOSUS MOUNTAINS
MOUNT EXAV
MAOIR
LAKE PRAESTRI
PATEFACTIO
SOUTHERN INEXORIBALIS MOUNTAINS
PRAESTRI RIVER
INRETUS OCEAN
GRATIA
N
W
E
S

Conquering the whole of Samovi was daunting but the Golden Redeemers were unfaltering in their pursuits. Unlike in Ouranios however, the wild and free hearts of Samovians were not welcoming to their Celestial Heroes, fearful of the full consequences that the benevolent society they promised would inevitably bear with it. It became the role of Lellwyn Fethyrwal not just to make certain their allies were arrayed to resist the wicked guerilla fighters roiling through the wilderness, but to turn the hearts of the people as well. As she traveled between settlements won over to their cause she spread their wisdom of kindness and mercy to all that would listen. In her wake she left the Iterati, the most beautiful and persuasive of her followers trusted to keep her faith and win over more to their cause.

Many heard the call but those that didn't ultimately came to the attention of Darrius Ventrelli, the tiefling using his natural penchant for guile to ingratiate himself with the criminal elements that resisted his paladin allies' golden tongue. Over the course of decades he assumed countless disguises, infiltrating thieves' guilds and smuggling cartels. Ne'er-do-wells that managed to escape his impressive control over magic were flushed out into Samovi's wildernesses—lands mastered by Tapper Underknoll. Only the most devious and lucky fugitives evaded his expert tracking skills, the gnome's arrows the last stakes in the heart of evil that once ran throughout the continent.

Though initial fatalities of the campaigns in Zakuthombo were high it seemed as if Tucker Quickfoot's pockets were endless and the longer the list of slain winged serpents grew, the more rumors spread of his most trusted soldiers wielding strange weapons that fired rays of brilliant light (drawing ever more adventurous men and women to their banner). With Grukk at the fore of a seemingly inexhaustible supply of mercenaries, they gradually hacked their way into the strongholds of the world's dragons with brutal victory after brutal victory. The winged serpents were not fools however and each learned from the mistakes of their defeated kin, making the defenses of every territory utterly lethal, every lair a deathtrap.

More than dragons lived in the Far Continent and while they may not have loved their unforgiving rulers, when left with no other choice some among the defeated armies could be persuaded by Mystral Farsong to accept a more enlightened life. Those that further resisted—malicious trolls, cannibalistic giants, despicable hags, and the like—were gaoled by Tucker the Great and Co. mercenaries aided by songs of the bard's creation, attuned to the Upper Planes to pacify the mind with celestial melodies. Despite its elegance however, the half-elf's melodious imprisonments could not last forever.

It was the combined need for a way to humanely contain those of a wicked nature that united the three bands of adventurers. They had of course met before, allying together when an obstacle proved too great—the slaying of the devious pirate dragon Azuleiran, the upending of the Deistrina Cult in Samovi, breaking the Encircled Coven of Ouranios, chasing the corrupted Versethorian Sky Mages, and a dozen others—but nothing yet had required such a deep investment of time and wealth. With their shared final victories drawing nearer, it was Tapper Underknoll that suggested a permanent, removed locale for the unnaturally deviant to live out their lives, and the workings of the Celestial Heroes' master spellcasters to see it to fruition. For over two centuries Darrius, Mystral, and Rankir toiled and experimented until finally finding success, raising from the ocean an entire island isolated in the heights of Askis' sky near the slopes of Quyosh Mountain.

Thus the Samovi Preserve became the first of the Celestial Heroes great works, confining the defeated but unyielding evil forces of the world. With their minds, spirits, and resources unfettered by the burden of inefficient jails, the soldiers sworn to the adventuring parties defeated virtually all the wicked warlords, dragons, and unholy abominations throughout Askis. The great winged serpents able to fled, escaping beneath the surface and surviving in either the deadly tunnels of Taenarius or under the waves, making secret lairs far from interfering mortals. Villainous generals, bloodthirsty zealots, and practitioners of foul magics were defeated through and through—only those that had begun to embrace science managed to resist with any of their original collective strength intact, hiding throughout society and using their mastery of technology to confound their would-be captors. For a time, it seemed as though evil had truly been extinguished from the world.

UTOPIAN DAWN

With the knowledge that the looming sky-prison of the Samovi Preserve awaited them, many of the soon to be defeated chose to end their own lives rather than suffer humiliation, enacting dark rituals that instilled their power as potent curses, corrupting relics, malignant influences, and worse, some evident immediately but many more laying dormant in wait for conditions prophesied from the mad jibbering voices of fiends peering into possible futures. In these centuries of quiet strife nearly as many saints of the Celestial Heroes arose to sacrifice themselves against the resurgent threats as had appeared in the crusades against evil centuries past. Not everyone born into the emerging utopia found it to their liking and these unlucky folk appeared as rapidly as the emerging technological wonders that spread across Askis—all thanks to Tucker Quickfoot.

As Tapper Underknoll saw to the maintenance of their isolated realm for evil folk, the rest of the Celestial Heroes worked upon their own great works but none more impactful than the world-famous rogue's. With the active threats of the world no longer in play the halfling revealed the source of his elite's weaponry: the divine fuel, inaequa. Once shared to the world, Askis' engineers, scientists, and smiths embraced the miraculous substance and ushered in a new age of technology. Their machines eventually develop into the utopia of modern day, but even the simplest of these devices vastly changed the face of the world with frightening speed.

Parallel lines of steel rails were put down across all of Ourianos for steel equos, chugging around the Contiguous Continent and connecting one half of the planet directly to its other side through the Rotundus Railway. Each sprouted countless routes branching off the two key central lines, serving the major settlements and running near the watch towers Gimli Stoneflask began to instill with the souls of dwarven heroes, transforming them into the Towers of Light. The purges didn't require Rankir Tarryndorn's greater attentions and the wizard went away into seclusion for the purging years—accessible only to offer the occasional piece of wisdom or investigate a suspicious relic—until emerging with the most potent spellwork Askis has ever seen, the *Bands of Kyttarmoak*. Working his perfected rites into place took another century of preparation and execution, but once enacted the elf sanctified the entire planet from the fiends and extraplanar influences to bring an end to the latent corruption left in the wake of the cleansing in ages past.

For his part Varrus Goodwin worked to unite and solidify his martial students, numbering already in the hundreds even with ever stricter requirements for acceptance. It was somewhere during this period that the monk discovered the first of the holy troths, taking an unbreakable vow of silence that all of his followers emulate. None are certain of why or how he came to the profound revelation, but the occasion is marked by the first historical dispute between the Celestial Heroes and though the source of the conflict remains a mystery of the past, the Monastic Order of Law has since gained a position of authority above all the underlings of the Golden Redeemers and Tucker the Great and Co., becoming the penultimate arbiters of Askis second only to The Inquisition.

With the aid of machines the wildernesses of Samovi proved far less daunting, the disparate locales easier to access than ever before, the unrelenting plantlife no match for spinning blades and automated shears. Unlike before the foul touch of wickedness was far subtler after evil's apparent defeat, as insidious as it was

pervasive and widespread leaving the Samovi Preserve abundant with captives to occupy much of Tapper Underknoll's attentions. When he wasn't patrolling and quelling the worst of his charges' evil behaviors, the gnome hunted down the cultist smugglers gathering and disseminating cursed relics under the cover of lush forests, imposing mountains, and trackless deserts. Left without active threats to assail, Lellwyn Fethyrwal's patience waned and in her reveries she fixated upon beauty, crafting the first shadow of vanity and turning her prized Iterati into the initial shadowless elite.

Unable to resist his penchant for traveling incognito among common folk, Darrius Ventrelli found to his horror that even with the emerging utopian society dawning across the world that many people still wantonly engaged in vice. Infuriated at the violations and exploitation occurring under the Celestial Heroes' rule, he first worked to master arcane and scientific cures for diseases—though only as a means to understand them. Knowing that guards can be bribed and hearts swayed by lust, he used the countless tomes of data to craft his great work: the Holy Virulence, *Divinus Biologis*. Once again taking on a countless litany of disguises, the tiefling visited as many bordellos and brothels as he could find to spread the magical malady. Prostitution and violent crimes of a sexual nature curbed dramatically, the divine scourge of Darrius's devising doing more than any amount of enforcement could ever hope to achieve.

Machines took to the waters as well, churning across the waves atop large durable rafts towards Zakuthombo, pumping steam into the ocean air. With his sharing of inaequa Tucker Quickfoot became the herald of an age of exploration and industrialization unlike anything Askis had ever seen, the shipyards of the Far Continent working at all hours of the day to match the growing need for a powerful navy as piracy became the last refuge for thugs and criminals intent on escaping imprisonment or reeducation. The first decades of production were so recklessly rapid and rife with unsafe working conditions that the resulting accidents created an entirely new class of nobles known as Squallentes, disfigured workers richly compensated by the halfling himself. These houses have persisted and today have as much power as any trade guild or laboring union, calling upon their sacred connection to the small folk demigod as frequently as they do their vaults of coin.

Piracy on the high seas proved to be so troublesome to Zakuthombo that the halfling's closest allies rallied against it as well. Working closely with Mystral, the half-orc Grukk forged the *Chime of Contests* and promoted his most valued commanders from the crusades to higher positions of power. Using their newfound ability to hear the discord of dishonor, they fanned out over the world to support the Monastic Order of Law by detecting the stain of evil beyond the empaths' sight. For her part the bard was not done—learning much from her enchantments to pacify captives before the Samovi Preserve was created, she perfected a powerful new melody specifically to beat back wickedness from Askis' waves, discovering the first notes of the Bloodsong of Storms. The bard's wondrous great work dealt a vital blow against the many evil-doers that fled to the high seas and a war erupted between the most powerful pirates, sending buccaneers at each other's throats to end whatever alliances they once shared. Hundreds of villainous sailors took offers from mad scientists rather than rehabilitation or the Samovi Preserve, dying as test subjects in experiments that would never benefit them, though certainly harry the demigods they all so desperately hated.

NIGHT OF LARGITIO

To ensure that no period of time like the eras of purging were ever needed again, Tucker Quickfoot and Darrius Ventrelli created The Inquisition and The Ministry—one sect of warrior-hunters to track down evil and another to go about reforming the wicked. By most academics' reckoning the population of naturally corrupt souls on Askis had reached one in every few hundred thousand, a slow trickle of demented, deviant, and diabolical individuals, many of which took to re-education by the tiefling's servants. Those that didn't were sent to the Samovi Preserve, small enough in number not to overly stress the social ecosystems carefully devised by Tapper Underknoll. With society growing ever more egalitarian and the number of magically trained sages on the rise, goodness was destined to firmly overtake evil in its entirety on Askis once and for all.

After over a millenia of bloodshed, persevering toil, and tragic sacrifices by scores of companions saints, the Celestial Heroes declared evil vanquished and celebrated the first day of the new calendar and year as Supirimaz, commemorating the final victory. In the 142 years since the methods of production for inaequa-powered technologies have become safe endeavors, the cities and countrysides of Askis are filled with good-hearted folk, and the corruption that once threatened to overwhelm the world has been routed—almost. Where their magical and martial brethren failed, the mad scientists that escaped capture and defeat still lurk in the Taenarius Tunnels or the darkest depths of the oceans, and their desperation has led to a united front with one purpose: restore balance to what has become a sanctimonious parody of their world.

By combining their resources and shared technological strengths, the patient mad scientists lurking in the ocean's waters and Taenarius Tunnels engineered a powerful corruption to schism across the world. While the timely plans of Aevus Fatalibus where what made the Night of Largitio so effective—waiting for precisely the right moment to enact the final rites in locales across the world—the initial idea was spawned with Gespadrieux Xantilles (though in truth his compatriots believe a fiend likely seeded it). Using Fraus Calumnia's adroit control over the minds of lesser creatures to acquire rare components from the industrial facilities on the surface and guided by Trepida Vereor's deep magical insights, Caskette spent years designing potent machines for a foul task of monumental magnitude. As the sun set on the first centennial of Supirimaz, their last and most desperate attempt to tip the scales against the forces of good was set into motion.

With the enclosing night on the horizon came roiling coronas of energy, patches and clouds of bruised red and purple unnaturally floating through the sky. These descended with the darkness, slamming into Askis and its people like an invincible tsunami of power. Widespread panic followed and before the sun rose again, for one maddening night it seemed as if the ancient past's malicious lunacy had returned with a vengeance. While spectacularly frightening and deeply upsetting, at first it seemed as though the obviously unnatural occurrence was nothing more than that—academics, mages, technologists, and even priests argued at length over what it was, many accepting that it was simply a cosmic anomaly.

In a sense, they were right.

The citizens most deeply disturbed by the Night of Largitio were carefully scrutinized and meticulously tested for abnormalities over the course of two decades but no medical, psychological, or spiritual analysis brought anything suspicious to light. Despite assurances and even their own careful testing, the Celestial Heroes allowed their guard to slip—nearly precisely when the exacting coordinated timetables of Aevus Fatalibus had anticipated. The united effort had an effect most insidious, slowly and gradually injecting a vile taint into the divine conduit wrought by inaequa's ubiquity in Askis. Gimli Stoneflask realized the intangible sickness' presence a few years after it took hold and rid it from the world, but not before its abhorrent effects had already spread.

It was the next generation's offspring that suffered from the mad scientists' ploy as the soul of every thousandth child spawned with inherent heresies, flaws of character that renewed instances of violence and evil with a savage frequency. The influx of deviants to the Samovi Preserve has set Tapper Underknoll on edge and occupy all of his efforts, and as more corrupted folk crop up all of the Celestial Heroes find their great works at risk of breaking. What's worse,

they have grown suspicious as efforts to injure civilization have suddenly become directed, focused, and more effective than ever before—the true goal of the mad scientists. Aevus Fatalibus' complicated probability matrices have correctly predicted where and when many of these natural villains appear, and he and his allies draft them as vile agents to sow the ultimate doom of Askis. With centuries to analyze their enemies and prepare their revenge, these grand mad scientists have each created meticulous plans and countless pawns throughout the world—with their enemies lulled into a false confidence and illusory sense of security, the moment to strike has come!

THE TORQUEM MACHINA

While looting the lair of the dreaded black dragon Phaedraegnicontriomor, the ever-clever Tucker Quickfoot came across a curious tome that he instantly felt possessed a means to great power, even if Mystral Farsong disregarded it as a misguided text written by poisoned minds: the *Mpahay Tantara*. Trusting in the keen intellect of the Golden Redeemer's talented sorcerer, the halfling gave Darrius Ventrelli the book for translation of its contents. The tiefling spent months decoding the unholy text, revealing many ancient and primordial truths that aided the rest of the unknowing Celestial Heroes in casting out wickedness from Askis, some of the secrets fundamental to Rankir's complex *Bands of Kyttarmoak*.

Only a few years after the halfling's fateful unearthing of the *Mpahay Tantara*, Tucker and Co. came across an enchanted sieve that amplified the life energy around it—"discovering" inaequa. The magical engine was easily replicated by even the lowliest of their hired mages, and once in the hands of master tinkerers quickly evolved. In barely more than a century the gnomish master sages of Nitidus removed the need for magic entirely by using a complex alloy in their construction, and a few decades after the Sancti Afflatu College in Suppetia had the first major successes at miniaturizing and optimizing the contraptions. Today inaequa engines are everywhere, some the size of houses and others as small as a halfling's pinky.

But not all of the truths from the *Mpahay Tantara* were shared beyond the ears of the rogue and the sorcerer.

The book spoke of the plane Refesina, a dimension thread through the primordial pathways that souls take when ascending to the Streams Divinia (and thus the Upper Planes), descending to the River Styx (and therein the Abyss or Hell), or otherwise permanently departing the Material Realm. In and of itself a soul—so spoke the *Mpahay Tantara*—was nothing more than potential energy, a creature's body and mind giving it shape and a way to act upon its inherent power. Furthermore, when detached from its physical form during this transition the soul must be carried to its ultimate fate before regaining any use of itself. The infinitely complex system the tome spoke of only exists and perpetuates by the will of one thing: the chains of kytons.

Kytons are bound by fate and the nature of their own creation, compelled to endlessly manipulate the aetherial chains carrying dead souls to the afterlife. They are not creatures of evil, goodness, or even order, only drive—an unending and ceaseless will to continue ever forward. On more than one occasion dimensional interlopers have interfered with the workings of the massive machine home of the kytons, unraveling the resolute souls of some or driving others to fall to evil (transforming the former into mad kytons, the latter into agonized kytons before corruption into chain devils).

Mpahay was the first of their kind, the Rohy Voalohany and Handler of Threads. After aeons they developed a curious mind not shared by their kin and began to scrawl down all that they had learned of existence, the knowledge garnered by touching upon countless links of reality. It was this tome—the *Mpahay Tantara*—that Tucker found and had Darrius translate, the very means by which the sorcerer found the Rohy Voalohany. With a comprehensive understanding of Refesina and its workings in hand the halfling easily plied and manipulated the Handler of Threads, enticing Mpahay with grandiose tales of freedom before departing and trusting that they would gnaw upon the kyton's idle mind.

The halfling and tiefling plotted and schemed for over a decade afterward, carefully developing a

plan so devious it has fooled their most trusted compatriots for centuries. Confident that they knew what the kyton would want—the freedom it had never known before—Tucker used the sorcerer's envy at the respect paid to Rankir Tarryndorn's intellect over his own to persuade Darrius to concoct a means by which to offer it. In time and in secret the duo crafted the *Torquem Machina*, a potent artifact that the tiefling's study of Refesina concluded could replace the Handler of Threads. Meanwhile the rogue prepared their "discovery", secretly planting one of many latent focuses for the energies that their creation would siphon away from the dimension driving the afterlife.

When the duplicitous duo returned to visit Mpahay once more, Tucker's expectation of the first kyton's reaction was perfectly accurate and the Rohy Voalohany yearned to truly know freedom. The Handler of Threads graciously accepted the gift, enchanting the duo with a sliver of immortality and power before leaving Refesina to travel across all of the existence known to them only through the memories of others. Darrius' ploy proved successful as well—with the additional blessings placed upon it by Mpahay the *Torquem Machina* performed far beyond expectations, imbuing both with shreds of divinity.

With new "holy" powers at their disposal and all of time to do it, Tucker and Darrius convinced the remainder of the Celestial Heroes into accepting similar gifts, masking the sources of the blessings to appear as if they originated in the Upper Planes. Only the self-aware and supremely attuned Varrus Goodwin suspected something was awry about the *Inaequa Lapis* they had each absorbed, sensing beyond the alluring stones and the deception so expertly played by the halfling and tiefling. Without proof of their duplicity however the monk had no lies to expose and so he withdrew to secrecy, carefully stalking after the truth behind the rash of discovered miracles.

By the time Varrus realized the reality of the situation, inaequa had become too ingrained into the burgeoning civilization spanning across Askis—and his doings were not unnoticed by Tucker. After the monk's discovery of Refesina and the *Torquem Machina* but before he could share the fell knowledge therein, the sorcerer Darrius activated their countermeasure, imparting into the well-meaning human Celestial Hero's mind the consequences of sharing what he had learned: doom for his race. Using his mastery over diseases the tiefling prepared a deadly and highly contagious virus, containing it inside of a sigil the halfling expertly delivered onto Varrus' neck during a sentimental embrace following a tearful confession. Should he ever speak, write, or otherwise communicate what he knows in any way, the sickness will be released to reign catastrophe on the world.

Even with the agent of their downfall checked, time stands against the nefarious compact as the souls of the dead gradually degrade the *Torquem Machina*'s inner workings. Where before it emulated the Handler of Threads amicably, after hundreds of years it has begun to accelerate and shows no signs of stopping, sending the souls of the dead hurtling to the wrong destination or utter destruction in the embrace of oblivion. Though they know of the looming disaster Darrius and Tucker have long since fallen to wickedness and while they may hide it well, by the time their creation in Refesina finally breaks all of reality may come to a grinding halt as the very cycle of life and death ceases to be!

SCORE TARVORIAL

Tucker Quickfoot and Darrius Ventrelli's cunning use of the *Torquem Machina* became known to more than just Varrus Goodwin however—which is what truly brought about their fall from misguided heresy to true evil. One group became aware of the planar treachery, a cadre of elite mages known as the Tarvorial. The numerous sophisticated experiments and endeavors of these respected sages detected the anomalous connections of inaequa engines, concluding that something with the cycles of the afterlife was awry. Unfortunately for them the news reached the halfling's ears before any of the other Celestial Heroes.

Keen to retain his new power and convinced that their miraculous devices were not truly bringing about danger, Tucker plied and persuaded his way to a place of supreme authority within The Inquisition. Once he was certain he would not be effectively challenged, the devious rogue began to harrow the ranks of holy agents, leaving only those he trusted to follow orders and sending anyone else on the most dangerous missions (sometimes even engaging in subterfuge or employing Darrius for sabotage to ensure failure and death followed). As the Tarvorial's academic papers and theories on the anomalies spread but before they became subjects of major discussion, Tucker's control over his small army of dedicated and secretive soldiers became absolute.

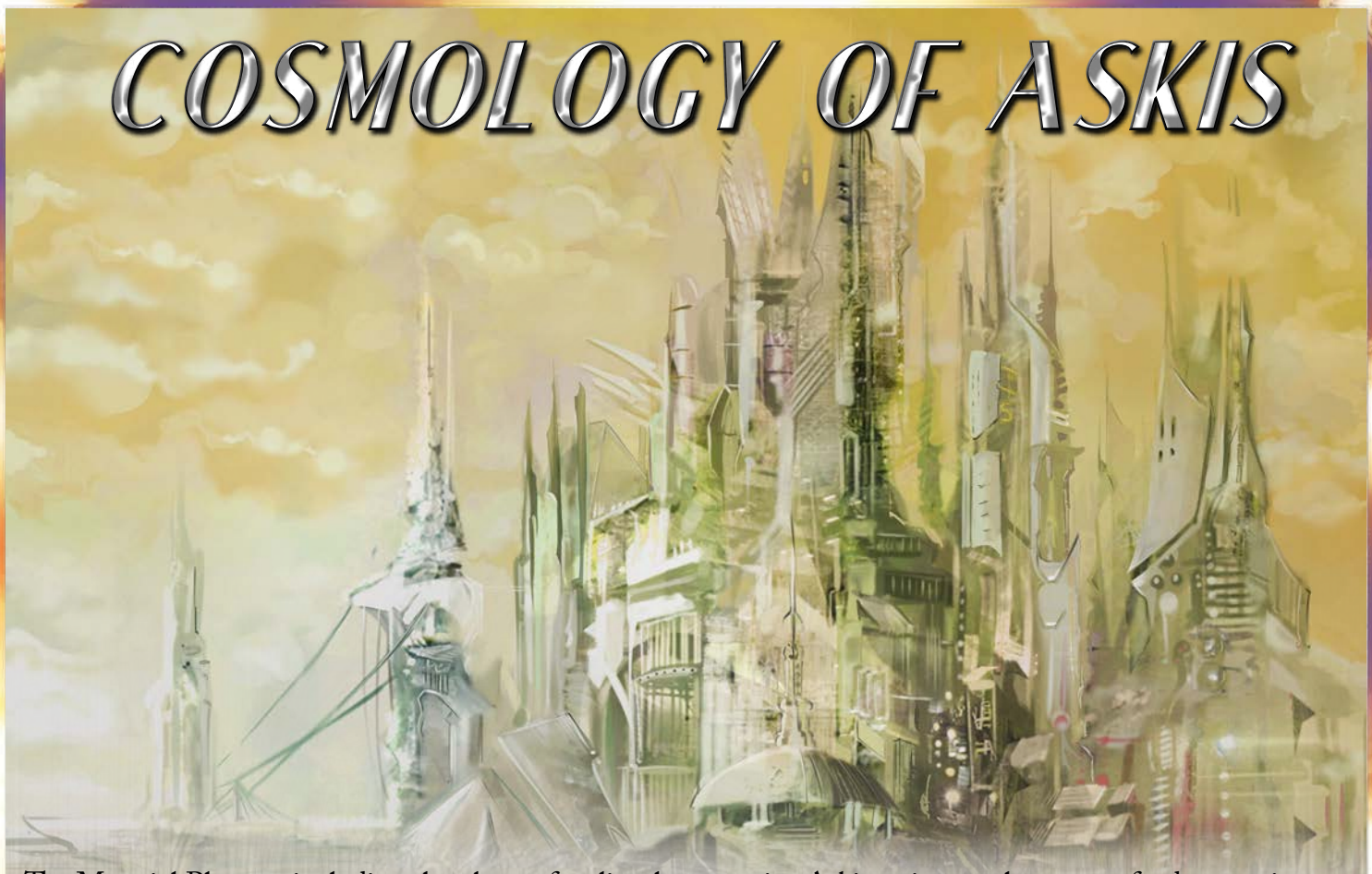
It was then the culling of the Tarvorial began in earnest. With the tiefling sorcerer's help Tucker easily framed and indemnified all of the esteemed mages, casting them as criminals of the vilest nature. Dozens of the spellcasters refused to go into hiding and attempted to clear their names but none proved their innocence before finding an early demise at the end of an Inquisitor's dagger. The halfling's lackeys moved with brutal efficiency and scarcely a year later twenty of the sages remained—a score against the whole of the world as the rogue convinced all of the Celestial Heroes to take up arms against them.

The Score Tarvorial may have persisted until the truth could be revealed against only the thinned Inquisition, but in the face of the world's masters they knew that it was only a matter of time before capture. Worse than death was sure to follow for none of their compatriots seemed to exist at all after apprehension by Tucker's agents, and at their last meeting—occasions once dominated by freewheeling discussions of arcana, divinity, and the nature of being—a grim plan was hatched, the research of all laid bare to locate a weakness in the enigma with the halfling Celestial Hero at its heart. As sentries disappeared and their pursuers drew near, the twenty mages eliminated all other possibilities until one remained: sacrificing themselves to craft clues for the intellectuals of the future to learn of the grand deception, magical anomalies of their own that remained shrouded from the demigod rulers of Askis.

They all fell to the blades of The Inquisition just as their peers but not before expunging their own souls. The Score Tarvorial's essences empower potent enchantments in different cities across the globe, strange phenomena that utterly elude the most devout and learned scholars yet are plain to see for common folk. Though none were dangerous in their conception some led to troubles, perceived wrongly by and large as curses—maledictions invisible to the Celestial Heroes. Ultimately most were absolved by the blood and toil of saints though some are rumored to remain, hints at the truth weakened and diminished by time.

Discovering the Secret of the Score Tarvorial. Whenever a character with an academic profession increases its level, the GM makes a secret **Intellect challenge roll with 3 banes**. On a success the character realizes that many mages haunt the cities of Askis—not simply ghosts, but mages—and that the saints of the Celestial Heroes are often related somehow. This doesn't reveal Tucker or Darrius' complicity, Varrus' enforced silence, or the existence of Refesina or *Torquem Machina*, but it **does** provide a character clues to these things and the mystery at the heart of *Book of Exalted Darkness*.

COSMOLOGY OF ASKIS



The Material Planes—including the phase of reality that contains Askis—sit near the nexus of a dozen primary dimensions where immortal creatures dwell amongst the spirits of the dead, repositories of souls that have shuffled off the mortal coil watched over (or served, or tortured) by natives. The quantum dimension of Refesina runs through, beneath, over, and around them all, providing power to the inexorable flow of life and death.

Upper Planes: Elysium, Heaven, Streams Divinia. These are at the proverbial height of the matrix of dimensions around Askis. When a good creature dies their soul rises up into the Streams Divinia, guided to their final home in either Elysium (for those of a more chaotic bent) or Heaven (for the lawful). This plane resembles the River Styx in its function but their similarities end there—instead of daemons and a baleful river the Streams Divinia are tended to by celestials, the waters weaving to the greater Upper Planes calm, warm, and welcoming.

Lower Planes: Abyss, Hell, River Styx. Arrayed opposite of the Upper Planes are the realms of fiends and the damned, acrid dimensions of flames and torment. Evil creatures that die are sucked down into the River Styx, taken by daemons to spend eternity in the Abyss or Hell. Myth tells of creatures that have clawed their way back from the gaolers of accursed souls by either strength or wit (page 312), though such feats are rare indeed and those who run afoul of the plane's dangers may be forever destroyed.

Perpetuous Planes: Plane of Air, Plane of Water, Limbo, Purgatory, Plane of Earth, Plane of Fire. Dimensions between the Upper and Lower Planes are without any driving force of good or evil, energized by other primal powers that dominate the realms. When neutral or unaligned creatures pass away they are left to travel to Purgatory should their disposition be more suited to that of natives to the Plane of Earth or Plane of Fire, and if not their soul is instead pulled towards Limbo (due to a personality inclined to the Plane of Air or Plane of Water).

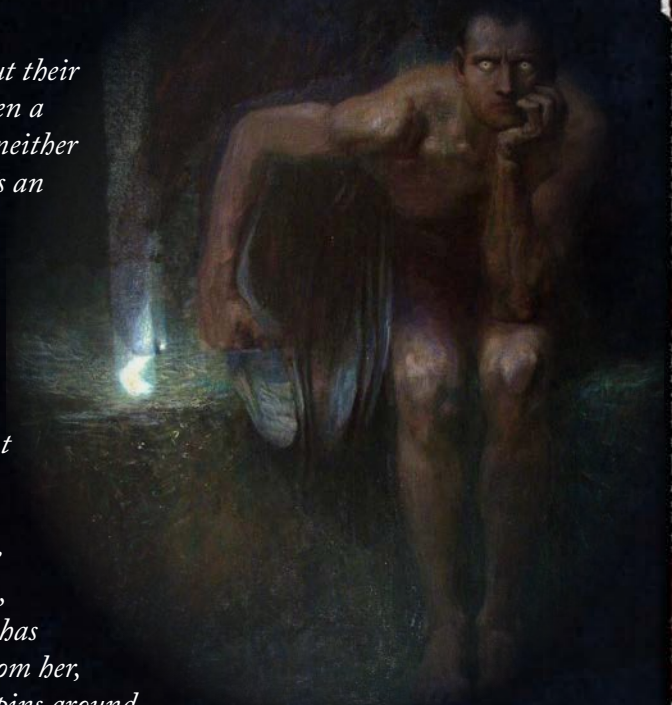
Transformed Souls. Once a creature's soul has spent enough time in any of these dimensions (a duration entirely at the discretion of the GM) it is forever changed. The creature transforms into a celestial, fiend, or elemental appropriate to its final resting place. This may not put the creature beyond the reach of powerful magic (such as a *wish* spell) but any memories of its mortal life are murky and difficult to recall—if they still exist at all.

THE GRAY KNIGHT

Many celestials and fiends have attempted to take the matters of Askis into their own hands, but one normally reclusive entity of great power has looked upon the utopia of the world and deemed it necessary to interfere. This true primordial has existed since the dawn of creation and usually ze does nothing but observe; even nascent movements after both zir and reality's birth had momentous consequences. The ancient consciousness recognized the looming catastrophe of mounting energies destined to accrue in Refesina after the implementation of the *Torquem Machina* however, and ze makes every intervention to stop the disaster—as far as ze dares.

Though ze is personified in a multitude of ways by beings from infinite realities, ze power known to a few truly learned sages of Askis as the Gray Knight is seen as such because of the madness that comes upon zir most potent servants. Slate is the most infamous of these and one among scores of heroes and vigilantes to bear the dubious mantle—the history of the world is littered with accounts of epic gray-clad warriors leading a force only to slay its commanding officers in the moment of victory, dispatching hereditary lines, and generally disrupting the plans of the Celestial Heroes so frequently that only fugitives are seen representing zir interests. In another place this might not be so but the strict rule of law enforced by the Justitia, The Ministry, and The Inquisition see to it that agents of the Gray Knight are criminalized, their attempts to restore balance to the world a violent disruption of the status quo. This is an unfair reputation however and none of zir devotees are good or evil; like their patron, they are rooted in the belief that both must exist in balance with one another.

Tadrius Gatdrieu comes from a long line of distinguished workers at the Sanctus Faleria Sanitarium and takes great pride in his occupation. His father and aunts were all psychiatrists but in his younger days he never had the drive or focus for intensive study, instead taking on work as an orderly after a failed pursuit at sculpting. It pays well enough and provides a steady income, which is more than what most of his old schoolmates can say. The family's big brownstone house was nearby as well so he takes solace in a short, pleasant commute each day. When he started he was sure there'd never be a reason to complain.



There were many things his parents never told Tadrius about their work however, and every year saw him hardened to the job. He'd seen a man eat his own tongue and a woman rip the scalp from her skull, neither one for any reason at all, but these weren't the worst of them—that's an exclusive privilege for the patients stopping there on the way to the Samovi Preserve. Tadrius quickly learned from the other orderlies how to spot a real deviant by the look in their eyes. The truly insane fidget, or stare, or curse the Celestial Heroes, or gnash at his fingers and spit in his face. They don't look into him.

The strait-jacketed woman being wheeled into the treatment room looked right into Tadrius.

Patients look at the orderlies all of the time, nothing strange about that, but this unkempt halfling wasn't just looking at Tadrius, she was looking ***into*** *Tadrius. This is hardly the first time a deviant has troubled him either but unlike before, he can't take his gaze away from her, mesmerized by the small folk's unerring stare. Slowly as the world spins around him, Tadrius realizes that it's not that she's hypnotic—it's that he sees something inside himself reflecting back.*

With a sickening lurch the world around Tadrius comes to a sudden halt and his senses return to him, ushered forth by a sudden warmth across his chest and arms. Looking down he panics, realizing that he's covered in blood. Fresh blood. Rapidly running his slick hands over his crimson stained uniform he's surprised to find there are no injuries, but then his eyes rake across the room. In mounting horror Tadrius sees that he is the only person standing, breathing raggedly with a gorey scalpel in each of his hands. The patients, the doctors, the nurses, the orderlies—all of his coworkers and friends—lay dead or dying on the floor around him, a bloody smear leading to swinging doors in the direction of the sanitorium's Justitia station.

Even the halfling is dead, her throat torn open from end to end.

Still looking at him.

Mindlessly mouthing prayers to Sanctus Faleria and shaking like a vectio about to derail, Tadrius dashes to the orderlies' station and rips his locker open, clumsily stuffing its contents into his pack and donning his long coat to hide the evidence of his crime. Down the hallway he hears the double doors to the treatment room slam against the wall, the sounds of pursuit close by. Unsure of where to run or what to do, he sees a note pasted on the back of the receptacle—penned by a hand not his own. "Make for the basement and behind the water heater, press two fingers on the center of the seam of bricks stacked three high. —A"

With no better options coming to mind Tadrius scrambles towards the basement before the Justitia catches up with him, unsure of what he might do if confronted. To his astonishment the directions of the note bear true and upon pressing the stone, a false wall recedes to reveal a long smooth duct descending into darkness. Emboldened by the certainty of imminent capture he dives inside, the stone behind him sliding closed and sealing Tadrius to whatever fate the future has in store.

NEW ATTRIBUTES

Only those able to hide their true ways and despicable nature are able to survive for long on Askis, the nature of the technology that has raised the world to utopian heights sifting fouled souls from the good of heart. The matter of evil within the *Book of Exalted Darkness* is lent mechanical power by two new ability scores—Sanctity and Sin—that every PC gains at character creation via their Inherent Heresy.

Alignment Unlike a normal *Shadow of the Demon Lord* game, adventurers in *Book of Exalted Darkness* (and the world at large) have an alignment that's two-fold, although we're only concerned with one side of the axis here: good and evil. If you are unfamiliar with standard alignments in d20 roleplaying games, refer to the *Systems Reference Document* (any edition).

Alignment and Competing Auras When a creature's alignment is detected, if they are good their Sanctity score determines the strength of their aura and if they are evil their Sin score defines potency instead. A neutral creature's highest score determines whether the aura they give off is good or evil. Most NPCs in Askis are of good or sometimes neutral alignment and (outside of the Samovi Preserve or a Ministry Rehabilitation Clinic) very rarely evil. When a creature successfully makes a Sanctity check to hide their evil alignment, the strength of their aura of good is determined by their Sanctity score. Features or spells that leave an evil aura are marked by an evil creature's blackened soul and have a potency determined by its Sin score.

No Sanctity or Sin When an effect or spell calls for a creature to use its Sanctity or Sin score but it does not have one use Will for Sanctity or Intellect for Sin.

SANCTITY

The state or quality of being holy, sacred, or saintly is not something that evil creatures are prone to but it can be emulated, the sheen on oily blackened souls enhanced to deceive those who look directly upon them.

A creature's Sanctity score is increased when it does a good deed and decreased when it is witnessed committing an evil act. The higher a creature's Sanctity score, the stronger its aura of good.

Sanctity can be used to fool inaequa-powered technology as well as the following ways:

- When attempting to hide its true nature via a disguise or deception, a creature may make a Sanctity challenge roll (instead of an Intellect challenge roll).
- When someone attempts to detect a creature's alignment, it may make an opposed Sanctity challenge roll. On a success, the creatures chooses the alignment detected.
- As a triggered action when hit by a good creature with a weapon or spell attack, a creature can prevent an amount of damage equal to double its Sanctity modifier. A creature may resist damage with Sanctity a number of times equal to their Sanctity modifier (minimum 1). Uses of this ability recharge after a rest.

SIN

Immoral acts and blasphemous transgressions against the ruling divine powers of Askis accrue, transforming the very souls of those who commit foul deeds. As one performs more evil their essence becomes more vile until eventually their bodies change as well, mutating into vilespawn.

A creature's Sin score is increased when it commits an evil act and decreased when witnessed doing good deeds. The higher a creature's Sin score, the stronger its aura of evil. When a creature's Sin ability score reaches 20, it transforms into a vilespawn (page 222).

Sin can overcharge inaequa-powered technology and be used the following ways:

- When exercising power in a cruel way or using Will to intimidate, a creature may make a Sin challenge roll instead.
- Instead of making a regular challenge roll to resist being influenced through deception or magic, a creature may make a Sin challenge roll instead.
- As a triggered action when a creature successfully hits with a weapon or spell attack, it may deal extra damage equal to its Sin modifier bonus. A creature may deal extra Sin damage a number of times equal to their Sin modifier (minimum 1). Uses of this ability recharge after a rest.

VILIS POINTS

An evil adventurer begins play with a number of Vilis points equal to half their Sin score (rounded down). Otherwise an evil adventurer gains a Vilis point whenever it increases its Sin score (gaining a number of Vilis points equal to the amount of increase). The maximum number of Vilis points an evil adventurer can have is equal to its level (minimum 1). By spending a Vilis point as a triggered action, an evil adventurer can do any of the following:

- Reroll a failed challenge roll.
- Gain 1 boon to a challenge roll or attack roll so long as it is part of committing an evil act (desecrating a holy object or place, delivering a poison, preparing a murderous ambush, telling a hurtful lie, and so on). At 5th level this bonus increases to 2 boons.
- Delay the effects of a spell for 1d6 hours per spell level.

INHERENT HERESIES

Every PC in a game using the *Book of Exalted Darkness* is fundamentally flawed in one way or another, their very soul bent to evil. During character creation an adventurer chooses one of the following Inherent Heresies or invents one with the GM. Characters with an inherent heresy cannot be of good alignment.

Envy A desire to possess what others have already has made you cunning, sharpening your wit into a deadly blade.

- When buying or selling items, you roll twice and take the lower result.
- Your Will increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 10.
- Your Sin score is 1d4.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on a Will challenge roll.

Gluttony Excess is everything—if you cannot have more, why have any at all?

- You always eat and drink more than anyone around you, paying 50% more whenever you do so. For 1 hour afterward you have the poisoned condition (even if you are normally immune to poison).
- Your Health increases by 5.
- Your Sanctity score is 11.
- Your Sin score is 1d4-1 (minimum 1).
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on a Strength challenge roll.

Greed Being the quickest to harvest means gathering the finest crops and largest cut, and you deserve the most.

- You are an opportunist of the worst stripe and compulsively steal. You need to make a successful Will challenge roll to suppress the compulsion for 1 hour.
- Your Agility increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 7.
- Your Sin score is 1d4+2.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on an Agility challenge roll.

Lust The pleasures of the flesh are tantamount and you only ever feel complete while you indulge your impulses for gratification.

- You are not just promiscuous, you lay with whomever whenever the opportunity presents itself. Resisting the urge to engage in sexual conduct requires a successful Will challenge roll.
- Your Intellect increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 9.
- Your Sin score is 1d4+1.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on a challenge roll made to deceive or persuade.

Mendacity You're emblematic of the notion that truth is subjective, spinning falsehoods as easily and often as other creatures breathe.

- Whether for entertainment, gain, guilt, pride, or other motivations, you lie up to half the time. A successful Will challenge roll is needed to suppress the compulsion for 10 minutes.
- Your Will score increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 8.
- Your Sin score is 1d6.
- You have a +2 bonus on challenge rolls made to deceive.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on a challenge roll made to deceive.

Pride You are a step apart from your daft peers, possessing a singularly adroit mind able to unlock secrets well beyond the ken of a normal mortal's brain.

- You are completely certain that your keen intellect makes you superior to everyone around you. Whenever the question of class or station comes up (particularly when dealing with authorities) and you have to make a challenge roll, you roll twice and take the lower result.
- Your Intellect increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 10.
- Your Sin score is 1d4.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on an Intellect challenge roll.

Sloth Indolence is bliss but when you are called to act, you do so with the utmost efficiency and can call upon rested energies if need be.

- You are morbidly obese. Your speed is reduced by 2.
- Your Strength increases by 1, your Health increases by 2, and your Agility is reduced by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 12.
- Your Sin score is 1d4-1 (minimum 1).
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to heal 1d6 damage.

Wrath Your very soul is consumed with a primal fury that drives you ever onward.

- Your face is almost always in a snarl and you must make a successful Will challenge roll to assume a different expression for up to 1 hour.
- Your Strength increases by 1.
- Your Sanctity score is 8.
- Your Sin score is 1d4+1.
- You may burn 1 Vilis point to gain 1 boon on a Strength challenge roll.

LIFE IN ASKIS

Where in Askis a person is changes the particularities and specific circumstances of their life, but some things are virtually always true. Food and shelter are available, a house of worship is ever nearby, and the people are content with their humdrum lives. The only excitement any more comes from the creation or performance of the arts, holiday celebrations, or the rare occasion where one of the fabled Celestial Heroes walks among the populace—aside, of course, from the acts of criminals and terrorists out to shake the foundation of civilization.

A World of Fantasy

In most respects Askis is not unlike a standard medieval world: dwarves live in the caverns of its mountains, elves dwell in its forests, gnomes and halflings in valleys and hills, and so on. It is also however an industrialized and globe-spanning civilization where nearly every peak has been climbed and most all remote wildernesses have been tamed. It is *strongly recommended* to refer to the short stories at the start of each chapter when imagining this campaign setting—should there be nothing pertaining to a specific racial or societal question, fall back on standard medieval fantasy (using the core book's descriptions for races) and/or the metropolises of 1920's Earth.

Gender & Racial Ethnicity in Askis

There are some utopian aspects in Askis that unfortunately the real world is still behind on. Unless the PC(s) and GM decide otherwise for plot and character development, there is no prejudice or discrimination for either a person's ethnicity or the sexual construct with which they identify (except for tieflings; see below). The forces of good are inclusive and welcoming, and agents of villainy don't really care so long as an ally is wicked.

Changelings & Clockworks These ancestries are a rarity, almost exclusively the creations of mad scientists. They may not realize this of course (implanted into society with a set of memories not their own) or in the latter's case be restored and sanctified by The Ministry, but neither are at all commonplace and both are largely treated with great suspicion.

Angelkin Askis is a popular destination for angels and while their offspring are not as common as dwarves, elves, gnomes, and halflings, angelkin are certainly in greater abundance than tiefling and even dragonborn. In the pious utopian civilization of the Celestial Heroes angelkin are much like humans in most ways with one major difference: there is no question of their connection to the divine, only how strong their bond is.

Dragonkin The draconic masters of Pertinax saw to it that their bloodlines would endure long after their destruction at the hands of the Celestial Heroes, seeding the city and lands nearby with bastard offspring by the multitudes. There are many pious blooded humanoids and halfbreeds too, sired by holy dragons that have taken fancy in a fetching citizen in the more civilized settlements. What is far rarer are dragonborn with vile lineage—the insane monsters rarely allow any conception to bear fruit or if so, for the child to survive long after birth.

Angelkin Traits

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 11
Perception equals your Intellect score + 1
Defense equals your Agility score
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Celestial and Common Tongues.
Immune damage from disease; charmed, diseased
Shadowsight You see into areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Divine Resistance You take half damage from holy and unholy.
Healing Soul Your blessed touch can heal wounds. You have a pool of healing power equal to your level. You can use an action to touch a creature, healing a number of points from this pool (up to an amount equal to your level). You can use this talent until you have exhausted your pool of healing power. Your healing pool when you complete a rest.

Dragonkin Traits

Starting Attribute Scores Strength 10, Agility 10, Intellect 10, Will 10
Perception equals your Intellect score + 2
Defense equals your Agility score + 1
Health equals your Strength score
Healing Rate equals one-quarter your Health, round down
Size 1, **Speed** 10, **Power** 0
Damage 0, **Insanity** 0, **Corruption** 0
Languages and Professions You speak the Common and Draconic Tongues.
Shadowsight You see into areas obscured by shadows as if those areas were lit.
Draconic Resistance You take half damage from the same type of damage as your breath weapon (usually fire or holy).
Spew Energy As an action, you bellow forth ancestral energy in either a 5-yard-long cone or 10-yard-long line that is 1-yard wide from a point you can reach. Everything in the area takes 1d6 damage determined by your ancestry (usually fire or holy). Each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 damage. Once you use Spew Energy, you cannot do so again for 1 round. You can use Spew Energy once for every two levels you have. Whenever you gain a new use of Spew Energy, the damage it deals increases by 1d6.

Government Services

Keeping the generic backdrop for Askis in mind, it's important to remember that this is a civilization of long-lived peoples led by benign demigods, societies that utilize an abundant and effectively limitless clean energy source—in other words, it's a really nice place or at least there's a genuine shared intent for it to be as much. Industrialization has spread (from to one degree to another) to everywhere in the world under the authority of the Celestial Heroes, each continent administered over by representatives from its city-state territories. Their hometowns and lands nearby are all tended to by varying kinds of democratic governance ranging from councilors (in a fashion similar to the national level) to mayor-governors aided by dozens of functionaries. These local governments maintain community facilities (like gymnasiums, shelters, washrooms) and public works (such as open-air art installations, inner-territory transportation on vectio lines, radio stations) on behalf of the people, genuinely working hard to provide the best services possible.

This global yoke of authority does not remit the laws of city-states however and each is has its own local ordinances, allowing for cultures to flourish without being overshadowed by benevolent rule.

The Monastic Order of Law, The Ministry, and The Inquisition make their presence strongly felt with localized facilities in every ruling settlement as faith is more important than any loyalty to one's home; people tend to identify with one of the Celestial Heroes or a saint, not their territories. Factory-based economies took hold prior to the Utopian Dawn and have evolved from manufacturing weapons of war to making consumer goods, raising the quality of life across the world by widely sharing successively more affordable technology through trade incentives designed by their demigod rulers. While the markets still give good reason for one to wish to be rich, everything offered by the government—street cleaning, food drives, state employment, public education, medical care, steel plaustras that carry laborers out from settlements to work the farms, and more—is paid for through taxes that favor the downtrodden, encouraging wealthier citizens to invest into businesses that receive greater leniency for the more full-time employees they have.

Naive Citizenry

The resplendent world of Askis is a wonderful place to be raised, learning about life in idyllic rural homes or impressive cities cared for and maintained by government services, but this does not mean that people do not struggle. Some citizens are wealthier than others by virtue of birth, hard work, luck, or smarts, vehicular and workplace accidents still bring tragedy regardless of one's class, and the ministrations of government (benevolent as they often are) can leave those in need impotent thanks to well-meaning bureaucracy. Ultimately this has made for a compliant populace—people know they can trust one another to do the right thing and genuinely believe that anyone they meet is just as kind as they are. Friendly pranks,

celebratory surprises, and white lies have kept the population familiar with deception so it should not be assumed that every fabrication told will be believed, but inherent suspicion is exceptionally rare to encounter without good reason (such as a wanted notice for a fugitive or blood-spattered clothes).

Traveling the World

Traveling in Askis is easy and affordable when planned far enough in advance. Steel equos lines and aircraft are services run in conjunction with the government, although anyone in a hurry pays a truly hefty fee for their ticket on a cloudglider, sailing vessel, or steel equos. All government transportation carrying 10 or more passengers has a Justitia of one or another rank on board (usually an Equerry), a licensed operator, and fastidiously checked safety permits to make sure its conveyance is properly maintained. Only privately run travel services—which are uncommon but not unheard of, usually serving only the richest clientele—work outside of the transportation hubs and crossroad cities across the globe, meaning that fugitives are more often than not caught when trying to quickly abscond by rail, road, or wave.

Utopian Discrimination

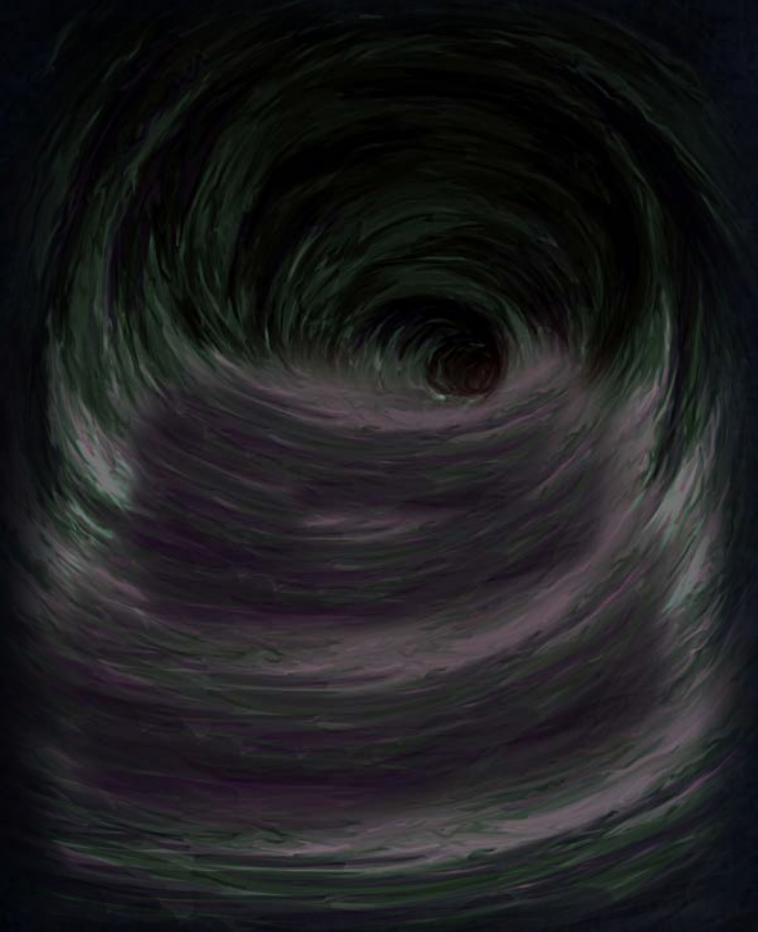
Citizens of Askis are unusually enlightened but discrimination is still common. Those of neither wicked nor blessed heart have a fundamental obstacle in their lives, struggling with inaequa technology and giving people the impression they aren't as competent when in truth they are more likely to be proficient because of their disadvantages. Tieflings are another matter and far more divisive; nearly extinct until the Night of Largitio, many people assume they are evil due to the fiendish blood in their veins. The Celestial Hero Darrius Ventrelli goes a great ways to improve his race's public perception, encouraging his kin to take up the field of medicine in The Ministry, but they are still treated as second class citizens and face skepticism from virtually everyone upon first meeting. Dragonborn, half-orcs, and other monstrous races that have been historically naturalistic (or savage, as some derisively claim) feel the fringes of racism, though not nearly as strongly as those with fiendish blood.

EVIL BELOW

As the centuries dragged on and the benevolent authority of the Celestial Heroes gradually became complete, the most outrageous and dangerous means of subverting them were explored by the mad scientists lurking beneath the skin of civilization. The vast majority of these underground endeavors failed disastrously and often entombed or killed their creators (as well as legions of minions besides) but for every ten that faltered one succeeded, none more spectacularly than the Taenarius Tunnels. These are where the last bits of resistance remains, tucked away in numerous tesseract laboratories accessible only through extraplanar entrances deftly hidden in the rock face, wind tunnels and deadly conveyances, and other inventions of mad science.

Taenarius Tunnels

While their chromatic kin fiercely defended their territories as the soldiers of the world's masters gradually forced them back to Zakuthombo, some dragons swam to the ocean's deepest depths or burrowed deep beneath the surface of Askis to lair undisturbed. There were others however, great serpents that foresaw their impending doom and made a potent pact with the brilliant technologist known only as Caskette. The metal-clad mad scientist offered to implant in them exceptional machinery, devices that would make them tireless and able to carve through the rockface with ease. In exchange the dragons crafted a boon to benefit all parties, boring complex subterranean passages throughout the planet in careful arrays that fill some with intense, gale-force winds, keeping the rarest metals for their devious benefactor. Caskette had betrayed them all of course—the surgical implants all acted off an inversion of the inaequa engines' peculiar properties, gradually corrupting each into malformed, twisted reflections of their former selves.



Incitacio Pods

Not long after Caskette fooled the subterranean dragons into carving vast networks of passages through the crust of Askis, curious metallic spheres began to hurtle through the Taenarius Tunnels. The bloodied contraptions travel at terrifying speeds, flung and caught by hook and chain mechanisms perfectly synced together on endlessly driving tracks. It remains unclear as to whom first created the swift machines (although most suspect Aevus Fatilibus invented the precise clockwork devices, many feature fleshwork favored by Gespadrieux) but all the mad scientists make use of incitacio pods to quickly move their agents across the world.

At the end of a small tunnel hidden behind the facade are strange spherical clockwork contraptions made from brass fittings, steel rails, and numerous triangular patches of flayed skin carved with unfamiliar runes, each set upon a hook connected to a chain machine that disappears into the cavern's roof.

As soon as you fasten the harness around your shoulders the pod drops with a sickening lurch and it sounds as though the gates of Hell have been flung open, intense heat cascading into the cavern alongside an unnatural shriek. Before you can react a massive gale of wind gusts upward from below and pushes you from a fall into a rapid hurtle into a tunnel, carrying you at an insane speed as the skins flap in the tempest and the air echoes with keening screams.

Within a few moments all you can manage to do is grip the pod's handles and try to hold onto your sanity. Just when it feels as if your mind will break a blast of wind slams into you, knocking the air from your lungs as your vessel rapidly decelerates before landing on a hook spattered with dried blood.

Fistula Tubes

Trepida Vereor did not require her mastery of magic to foresee the conquest that the Celestial Heroes were destined to achieve and neither did she wait for Rankir Tarryndorn to complete the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* before acting to preserve herself. Using divine spells was not above her however, and peering into the future she could see the divide was soon to bar Askis from both the Abyss and Hell. Knowing this the sorcerer accepted numerous deals for her soul and those of her minions to gain demonic and devilish servants sent to work geoforming the channels of magma near the planet's core (bargaining for several other dark gifts as well). The passageways they shaped from the rock are feet away from flowing molten stone, ending in capillaries the half-orc adroitly uses to quickly form new, temporary tunnels when moving masses of undead and fear-driven soldiers to assault the surface.

Captionem Ostium

The brilliantly deluded Fraus Calumnia has subtly hypnotized countless minds throughout the world but the furthest reaching of her endeavors are the false walls, hideaways, trap doors, and other captionem ostium she has engineered in cities all over the globe. The workers that have built and maintained these secret constructions remain utterly unaware of their toil, compelled by cogerangario to witlessly do as they are ordered, forgetting the deed immediately thereafter. Fraus uses the oldest structures she can find, trusting that anyone who chances upon one of her numerous hidden escape routes mistakes it as a relic from the distant past and nothing more.

OCEANS OF OLD

Much to the frustration of the Celestial Heroes the open waters of Askis are defiant, the world's oceans a place where the wicked can roam without fear. The demigods' navies actively sail the globe in search of pirates and brigands but considerable obstacles stop them from extending the full reach of civilization's authority offshore: pirates, the Escarion Maelstrom, and most of all pneumavores. Sometimes as large as cities, the massive monsters float throughout the planet's oceans and take down craft powered by inaequa; with mechanical pursuit on the water only possible by air, criminals by and large have taken to the seas. For the fishermen and mercantile captains

there's danger on the waves but to the average citizen there's little to fear—commercial travel between continents is affordable and pirate sea-to-air grappling hooks are notoriously difficult to aim.

Piracy on the High Seas

With the dubious security of work on the high seas there's a great deal of profit to be made by brave sailors willing to haul bulk freight between continents—and even more for cutthroats ready to take their gold and goods. Bribes aplenty, master forgers, and a practice of taking entire vessels (burning the old boat with corpses of their victims within) keep buccaneers a step ahead of authorities until their villainy gives them away while in port. The tactics and means of piracy are increasingly clever but only two cause great worry in the halls of government. Foremost are the fear of more efficient sea-to-air assaults, banks of grappling hooks firing up into aircraft to anchor them into rapid death dives onto the waves. Survivors of crashes (few as they are) become galley slaves or used as bait for Bloodsong Storms (page 53) until either dying or earning their keep and swearing undying loyalty to the crew in a blood oath.

It is from these victims that the second source of maritime dread has been uncovered—ramshackle cities sitting on the backs of pneumavores, one even said to be mutated and under the direct control of the dreaded Rogar Felgrym.

Firearms Criminals make use of guns but otherwise it's unheard of for nearly anyone but guards in the Samovi Preserve to do so. On the high seas however, one might find matchlock weaponry, shotguns, rifles, and even revolvers.

Reservoirs, Wells, and the Escarion Maelstrom

The mage Escarion did not accept defeat without wounding his enemies as dearly as he could—and the foul wizard did exactly that. As the fourteenth and final holy crusade bore down on Zakuthombo the elf simultaneously sacrificed thousands of willing souls, funneling the dying energies from their bodies into his own, killing his overcharged person to create one massive tempest that has put Mystral Farsong's Bloodsong Storms to shame. The Escarion Maelstrom has raged for hundreds of years since and will for centuries more, turning the entirety of the Rallus Ocean into territory with endless precipitation and waves hundreds of feet high. Even the mightiest of the Celestial Heroes' naval vessels cannot brave the waters of the Escarion Maelstrom but sailors with wicked hearts have no need to fear its tempests—their ships sail through its waters unhindered, making it a safe place for pirates to escape pursuit.

Making the Rallus Ocean impassable was merely the first injury inflicted by Escarion. Deciding that the demigods wanted Zakuthombo badly enough they couldn't be stopped, the elf made it a less worthwhile prize by sapping it of its water. To fuel the actual storms in his maddened assault the mage purged the Far Continent of its rivers and seas, drawing all the moisture to the skies eastward. What's resulted are the Three Sand Seas and extensive terraforming in search of water—wells reaching down to underground lakes, reservoirs to catch melting snows, and dams to gather re-emerging streams have become commonplace. Over time eventually Escarion's Maelstrom will become a footnote in Askis' history however, and already its borders shrink infinitesimally each year, very gradually restoring the waterways of Zakuthombo while the rains in Samovi slowly dwindle back to historic normalcy.

WORSHIP IN ASKIS

The GM determines the deities prevalent in Askis (if any) but for the vast majority of the world the gods ceased to be worshipped directly ages ago, looked upon now as a level of divinity beyond their reach—and their need, for the Celestial Heroes walk the world, taking the place of pantheons alongside their saints.

Churches of the Divine

The countless houses of worship throughout Askis have saints or Celestial Heroes upon which their devotion focuses, but the followers of any of these figures are welcomed as kin within all of their churches. Each is built in accordance with the faith's central tenets and reflect their core beliefs—devotions to Tucker Quickfoot are extremely ostentatious whereas Varrus Goodwin's clergy keep an austere environment and Tapper Underknoll's temples are integrated with nature.

Holy Books

There are 89 different divine tomes, holy scriptures, and other considerable texts devoted to the religious followings of the Celestial Heroes and their saints. The foremost of these is *Praecepta Ministerium*, unique in that it is the only book devoted to (and penned by) Tucker Quickfoot and the predominant source of The Inquisition's edicts, frequently turned to by The Ministry as well (alongside the titles of Darrius Ventrelli). There are 11 other volumes, each with 8 different editions penned by one of the world's demigod rulers or their underlings: *Angelorum Nuntius, Dedit Partem, Divina Cartis, Divina Doctrina, Gaduis Exanimo, Integrum Opinionem, Lex Altiores, Libris Bonitatem, Memoria Vivorum, Sacras Litras,* and *Verbum Deorum.*

THE MINISTRY

It has been centuries since the last criminal execution on Askis—deviants and transgressors of the law persist of course but even the most heinous and blasphemous acts do not carry the punishment of death. Instead anyone caught causing injury or harm of any kind is brought to be judged, sentenced, and rehabilitated by The Ministry. Those deemed impossible to reform are sent to the Samovi Preserve, left to fend for themselves as best they can in the den of evil and iniquity floating over the Wild Continent.

A Thousand Hands for Every Task Over the years as the number of sinners dwindled one would imagine that the organization tasked to deal with them would shrink as well but instead their numbers grew. New positions were made to carry out the minutest duties, themselves birthing new wings of bureaucracy to oversee and micromanage the ever growing base of functionaries. The fallout from the Night of Largitio has put The Ministry to the test however as their overly-complicated triplicate forms, stamped certificates, and strict adherence to regulation turn from a means to busy themselves into endless paperwork, boxes of documents that fill up entire floors of their government buildings, and more and more people being sent to the Samovi Preserve.

Civilization's Healers A great number of clerics and sorcerers are among The Ministry but regardless of whether a magician's practices are arcane or divine, all of them are educated in the medical sciences. The organization carefully tracks sicknesses of all kinds throughout the cities of Askis, recording the data for processing by functionaries in Coelicla. Anyone suffering injuries is encouraged to report themselves for healing free of charge—though questions will be asked and should the patient need rehabilitation, there is no way to opt out of further treatment.

Masters of the Holy Hounds The one sickness not effectively treated by The Ministry is the great work of Darrius Ventrelli aimed at ridding the sin of lust from the world: *Divinus Biologis*. Patients reporting its symptoms are given placebo drugs and carefully observed until they finally transform into Divirulent Hounds. Once changed these lycanthropes become compelled servants of The Ministry, blindly obeying the orders of their masters in order of their hierarchy and ultimately at

the control of the divine tiefling responsible for their remaking. Even the least important inductee of The Ministry can call upon them, but all of the most important members are constantly accompanied by a canine companion to ensure their safety and act as devoted, trustworthy personal attendants.

Order of the Silent Knights In the mass of officialdom that is The Ministry a secret lurks, a practice borne of necessity and kept from the eyes of the citizenry. The Quibus Pythonicus are honored as masters of the afterlife but they serve a more resolute purpose, controlling the Ministerium Inmorte (as it is known by those possessing official knowledge of the soldiers' true nature) to ward off dangers arising from the Taenarius Tunnels. Anyone that uncovers what lay beneath the helmets of the Silent Knights is either convinced of the need to keep things classified or considered a potential enemy of the state, submitted to the madhouses for rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation by The Ministry In years past The Ministry would take *every* possible step when helping criminals find civilized enlightenment but the explosion of miscreants in recent years has led to numerous thoughtless diagnoses, medical malpractices aplenty, and countless lawbreakers briskly sentenced in the name of expediency. The insane are sent to madhouses and sanitariums where they meet either a daily regimen of pills that stupefy them or for those too dangerous to themselves and others, crude brain surgery that leaves them no better off. When all of these options fail or a patient becomes too difficult to keep penned, they are deemed to be criminally insane and remanded to the Samovi Preserve.

Spellcasting and The Ministry Scriniarii (page 296) work closely with Inquisitors and The Ministry to ensure that powerful magic is used only by those deemed worthy of the responsibility. Rankir Tarryndorn's servants roam the globe in search of spellcasters with potency beyond the sanctioned level of access—hunters preying on their own. Otherwise reports of unsanctioned use of restricted spells is responded to first with an investigation by the local functionaries of The Ministry, reinforced by the Justitia if necessary. For pernicious mages and errant priests that resist arrest the Scriniarii and at least one Inquisitor are called in to track down the fugitive. Once captured, they are stripped of all possessions, gagged, and fitted with manacles that shackle their fingers to reduce the possibility of magical escape.

- **Accessible Spells (1st-2nd)** The use of magic of 1st- or 2nd-level is not restricted.
- **Restricted Spells (3rd-4th level)** Only mages and priests with permits sanctioned by local government authorities are allowed to make use of 3rd- to 4th-level spells without censure.
- **Sanctioned Spells (5th-7th level)** The Ministry personally interviews anyone keen to use spells of 5th- to 7th-level, rigorously testing an applicant for sufficient piety as well as devotion to both the Celestial Heroes and the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility*.
- **Inlicitus Spells (8th-9th level)** Individuals that pass the highly confidential and rigorous approval of The Inquisition (despite the organization's general lack of magical aptitude) are allowed to use spells of 8th- to 9th-level as they see fit, but there are perhaps only a dozen actively permitted to do so at any given time.

Hierarchy of the Clergy

The whole of The Ministry is overseen by roving Ministratus and individual hospitals are minded by Divine Pathologists (pages 275 and 277), but administrative, bureaucratic, and religious duties are upheld in a single city-state by Bishops under the guidance of Archbishops that oversee several regions. There are a dozen of the latter in each continent, and individual territories can have a score or more depending on how effective the local government is and the status of their relationship with The Ministry (and perhaps more importantly, The Inquisition).

Overshadowed by them all are the Cardinal Councils of Ouranios, Samovi, and Zakuthombo, small assemblies of the five men and women considered to be the most pious—they keep direct contact with the Celestial Heroes, acting as functionaries between them and the national representatives of Askis' settlements.

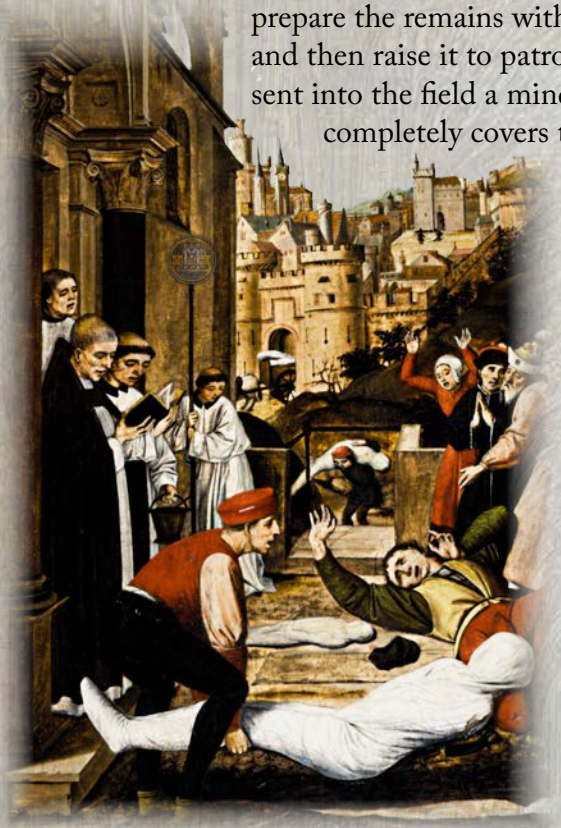
What distinguishes members of The Ministry aside from their authority is their recognized measure of devotion and faith: one's Paene. Any ranking member of the church (whether a lowly priest or a powerful archbishop) submits themselves to a scrutinizing background check by The Inquisition before undergoing intensive training that teaches them to be zealously skeptical of heretics. Note that a clergy's Paene is not requisite of their authority; depending on circumstances, a bishop might be of the 3rd Paene but the archbishop they report to only of the 1st Paene.

Members of the 1st Paene are granted access to sections of the *Praecepta Ministerium*, a holy book forbidden to most. Once its holy secrets are fully understood and their betters approve, an ecclesiastic may petition to be accepted to the 2nd Paene—those that are ardent enough in their beliefs learn of the true breadth of the Ministerium Inmorte, accessing some of the restricted chapters in Tucker Quickfoot's divine tome. After a lifetime of commitment to the Celestial Heroes and the organization devoted to them, a member of The Ministry may request an audience with the demigod halfling himself. If found worthy, the 3rd Paene is open to them—they are given their own copy of the *Praecepta Ministerium* by Gimli Stoneflask and the existence of Refesina (though not what has occurred there) is revealed.

Ministerium Inmorte

Knowing the dangers that could result from the Taenarius Tunnels but aware that removing them would be impossible, the Celestial Heroes sought a way to maintain the danger they could not destroy and tried a wide variety of means. Legions of soldiers sacrificed their lives in the entombing darkness, automata returned to the surface as crazed killers, and in time only one solution presented itself. So it is that for the denizens of Askis, there is service even in death: the Minesterium Inmorte.

It is not at all widely known but virtually everyone donates their corpse to public service when they finally pass away. Most funeral rites involve incineration of the body but even those who choose not to be cremated are ultimately recruited, the corpse taken away to The Ministry after the final viewings and bereavement have passed (ostensibly in the interests of the public health). Once there the Quibus Pythonicus prepare the remains with holy oils and salves to ensure the smell of decay does not emanate and then raise it to patrol the world's waters and subterranean passageways. Before being sent into the field a mindless recruit of the Silent Knights is encased in sacred armor that completely covers their body, leaving nothing to see but the intense glare of their undead gaze. These protective suits disguise members of the Ministerium Inmorte from casual detection, allow them to persist despite the *Animarum* of the *Bands of Kyttarmoak*, and provide a litany of defenses that aid them in the fight against evil as surely as the enchantments change the very nature of their wearer.



They lack thinking minds and pose little danger by themselves but a Silent Knight is rarely alone and usually dozens or score more are nearby (and can be alerted by the enchantments shared through their armor). Since their deployment these altered undead have proven to be perfectly suited to their task, wandering the depths of Askis in search of evil auras and wiping out several major threats that may have otherwise spilled out onto the surface. Recently however the bureaucrats of The Ministry have begun to panic as more scourges now suddenly loom on the horizon and while there has always been the occasional body that refuses to animate, lately more and more corpses are rejecting their service and being destroyed entirely rather than repurposed.

Ringed mail and other metal covers this knight from head to toe. They stand incredibly still, gloved hands wrapped around their greatsword and an enchanted glow cast from eyes masked behind the visor of an imposing helm.

Silent Knight **DIFFICULTY 25**

Size 1 frightening undead

Perception 9 (–1); darksight

Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 25

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 6 (–4), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 12

Immune damage from cold, disease, and poison; gaining Insanity; asleep, diseased, fatigued, poisoned

Holy Mandate The Silent Knight has 1 boon on checks made to resist being charmed or compelled.

Ministerium Inmorte The Silent Knight can communicate telepathically with other Silent Knights within 200 yards but is otherwise unable to speak.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Greatsword (melee) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 + 1)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Twin Strike The Silent Knight attacks twice with its greatsword. It makes each attack roll with 1 bane.

Swift Strike When a creature enters the Silent Knight's reach, the Silent Knight can use a triggered action to attack the triggering creature.

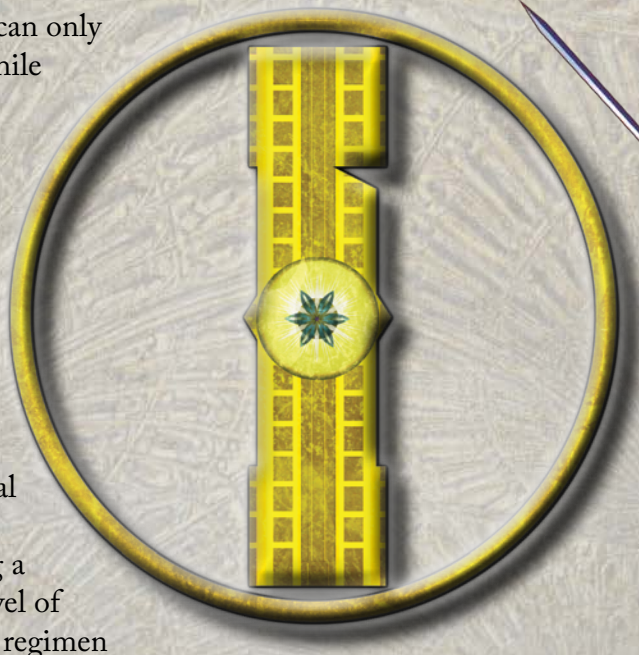
THE INQUISITION

Respected as they are feared, the agents of The Inquisition are figures of utmost authority in Askis—carefully overseen, vetted, and deftly commanded by the most lauded of the Celestial Heroes, the halfling Tucker Quickfoot. The silver-tongued rogue remains deeply involved with the day to day affairs of The Inquisition, making certain that his operatives are given the freedom to do their duties as circumstances demand and that he maintains strict control over who qualifies to be trained as an Inquisitor. Thus the organization is the most mysterious and enigmatic of all of the governmental services overseeing civilization's utopia, a far cry from what it once was before the Score Tarvorial. Using dubious tactics of subterfuge and rumored to consider themselves above the law, the agents of this most devoted of orders are nonetheless still highly esteemed and treated to overwhelming praise from the masses—one never knows when an Inquisitor is near.

Gaolers of Askis Any captured criminals not already in the hands of The Ministry or the confines of the Samovi Preserve are being temporarily held or transported by low-ranking members of The Inquisition. As would be expected with bureaucracy, there are no shortages of prisoner transfers and Tucker uses these as opportunities to train new recruits, ensuring they witness firsthand the need for their loyalty and some flexible, questionable tactics when circumstances warrant. With the precise means of finishing this training are as elusive and enigmatic as the organization itself, and many glorified jailers never rise above their station, grimly but proudly enduring all the unpleasantries the filth they watch over can manage to heap upon them.

Hunter Agents The vast majority of Inquisition recruits are destined not to reach the status of full Inquisitor, held back by their nature more than anything else. Inquisitors may (or may not) choose the most talented lesser members to be their apprentice Adeptus after which they undergo years more of specific training tailored to their strengths and weaknesses, but even then Tucker Quickfoot is extremely particular with candidates considered fit for promotion. Those reaching this level undergo rigorous testing—only after emerging from their trials without any detectable aura are they fully inducted into the order. Once they have reached an appreciable level of skill, these applicants receive

confidential training in Pertinax before learning The Inquisition's most secret practices and techniques (their subversive expertise remaining known only to their peers). The full rank of Inquisitor comes after the agent has successfully infiltrated one of the few dangerous realms remaining in Askis, capturing no less than three heretics without aid of any kind to prove their utter, complete, and total devotion to the cause.



Scholams Inquis Enlightenment can only come through knowledge and while Askis has a number of excellent public schools, there are private institutions as well—many of which are fronts for the Scholams Inquis. During their elementary schooling all students are tested by Inquisitors to determine their academic, physical, and spiritual competency. Any thought to possess the qualities of a potential agent are remanded to these confidential academies, replacing a fanciful youth and competent level of education with a truly strenuous regimen of martial arts, mystic practices, religious dogma, and tactical decision-making (frequently taught through games). Instructors at the secret schools are trusted Inquisitors that failed at their final test and though they lack the finest arts of their order, they are more than capable of preparing the next generation—and defending them from foul influences or sabotage from within.

Divinity & Dragons

In the face of the demigod Celestial Heroes, the dragons of Askis were thrown from their historical place at the top of the food chain and cast onto the winds of fate. The schism created by the wickedness of chromatic scaled serpents and the benevolence of their metallic kin has become an impassable gulf—where once they would at least parley now the forces of dragonkind view each other as the ultimate enemy, either traitors to their heritage or blind to the inevitable victory of humanity's destiny. Some fell to corruption, tricked by Caskette and turned vile through her implementations, and others went into hiding, but wherever dragons still dwell in the world their lives have irrevocably changed.

Chromatic Dragons Lusterless dragons fared as poorly as the wicked folk that attempted to hide within the confines of civilization, meeting their fate earlier as the Celestial Heroes (particularly Tucker and Co.) turned them into the focal point of their military campaigns. The vast majority fled to Zakuthombo but ultimately fell to Grukk's axe after being worn down by hundreds of mercenaries, the reds suffering more than any others—only a few are rumored to remain. Dozens of the azure and most of the white-scaled serpents submerged into what became the Taenarius Tunnels, only a handful foreseeing the dangers of trusting Caskette and burrowing instead to lair deep, deep beneath the surface. Those that did not were either slaughtered or fled into the oceans with their ebony and verdant brethren, preying upon fish and other aquatic creatures in the most inhospitable watery depths far from the reach of Askis' soldiers.

Not every wyrm escaped or died in the Celestial Heroes' quest to conquer the world. There are territories in the Samovi Preserve reigned over by gaoled dragons either through fear or pure malice but always with total control. Others, tired of isolation,carefully, artfully negotiated alliances with mad scientists (with the exception of Caskette of course) in order to sate their burning desire for vengeance,

pooling knowledge and resources to better wound The Ministry and The Inquisition. Rarest of all are the exceptional few that have "seen the light" of the latter, fearsome special agents used to rout any threat that Tucker Quickfoot deems genuine (brainwashed into complete devotion by centuries of trickery at the halfling's hands). Any other active chromatic dragons are not truly alive, transformed instead into vile parodies of their former majesty and universally avoided by other great serpents for the corruption they sow.

Metallic Dragons When the adventurers that would become rulers of the world first began to hunt and slay wicked scaled serpents, their lustered cousins either fled to begin lives of quiet solitude or joined alongside armies to add claws and fire to blade and spell. Winged serpents with reflective scutes receive nearly as much reverence as the vaunted Celestial Heroes when they choose to dwell among humanity, living in palatial estates bedecked in golden tributes and staffed by only the most qualified butlers, chauffeurs, chefs, maids, tailors, and the like. Though they are provided with every possible worldly desire a draconic heart might have, these gifts and servants come with the expectation of service and those living within the bounds of society do their own part in propagating the utopia.

To begin with the homes of all dragons of the state are partially open to the public and used as museums, and a menagerie as well if the owner is home. Those averse to the gawking attentions of wide-eyed citizens are instead made to swiftly respond to the Bloodsong Storms when the enchantment sounds near a coast, rapidly flying to the location and disabling any pirate ships they find. Perhaps the rarest dragons of Askis are the metallics that defy the subjugation of dragon-kind, relentlessly fighting against The Inquisition and The Ministry. Skepticism clouds their vilification in the papers where weekly articles depict them to be as evil as their defeated kin, but not all of it is unfairly cast—they have been known to sometimes ally themselves with truly wicked criminals, even rumored to have aided convicts in an escape from the Samovi Preserve.

The Pious Alliance Draconiaci Faciantsanct Itateveritatis is the eldest and most sacred of the holy dragons, born on Askis but rumored to have been laid in an egg on the Celestial Plane where she was infused with divine energy. Throughout most of the world's history the grand winged serpent has remained hidden away, content to philosophize on the nature of existence and spirituality. Only in the most recent centuries has she been seen in glorious flight, occasionally visiting Kaelesti to meet with the Order of the Shining Stone. Despite the best efforts of The Inquisition and Darrius Ventrelli, the contents of their conversations have remained secret.

Population Control

Prior to the discovery of inaequa the typical family was quite large, with generations of sometimes as many as a dozen brood or more commonplace. Technology has elongated lifespans however and urbanization has lessened the need for more hands to toil in the fields, so to deter overpopulation the government dissuades parents from bearing more than three times—it is only the privy of the wealthy or the implacable to sire more than a few offspring. When a citizen has a fourth child all higher education costs for their progeny become theirs to pay, after a fifth their taxes increase, and so on. For the most part these methods have proven effective but the stigmata surrounding parents with too many children is formidable, making the social cost for too much procreation the greatest of its penalties.

"Quiet, Bigbo!" Ooni whispers, grabbing her friend by the arm, "They might hear you shuffling about. Remember that the elders said that still is safe. Still is safe!" Bigbo waves her away with one hand, slowly creeping forward along the branch to a better vantage point of the bloodbath below. Of all the village's purpura he'd always been the most confident and curious, venturing to play further than the elders allowed and creeping closer to the dangerous, wicked giants that lived above them. Once he'd even stolen a slice of pilum from one! Ooni had come to admire his foolhardiness, thinking the purpura to be the bravest she'd ever known.

The enormous creatures below were certainly not brave like Bigbo, but they fought like they didn't fear anything. Wiping away her tears and wishing herself not to be too saddened by the grisly scene that just unfolded beneath her, Ooni watches as the standing giants grab the belongings of the slain from off the ground. As they turn to leave she does the same, ready to return to the village and find some solace in the elders' wisdom—but Bigbo won't. With a twinkle in his eye he winks at her and hurries down the tree trunk, making after the attackers and disappearing down the trail before Ooni sprints to catch up with him.

Keeping up with the giants proves to be tough and the pursuing purpura lose the trail when their enormous quarry slips into the yawning mouth of a cave near the mountainous edge of the island, but the tunnel inside never splits off. Within a few minutes sounds echo from ahead, the clinking of coins and crackle of fires, and once more Ooni implores, "Bigbo please, we should not be here I know it. We have seen enough, more than enough." He returns her plea with an almost mindless shake of his head, clearly enraptured with what might be seen a bit further on.

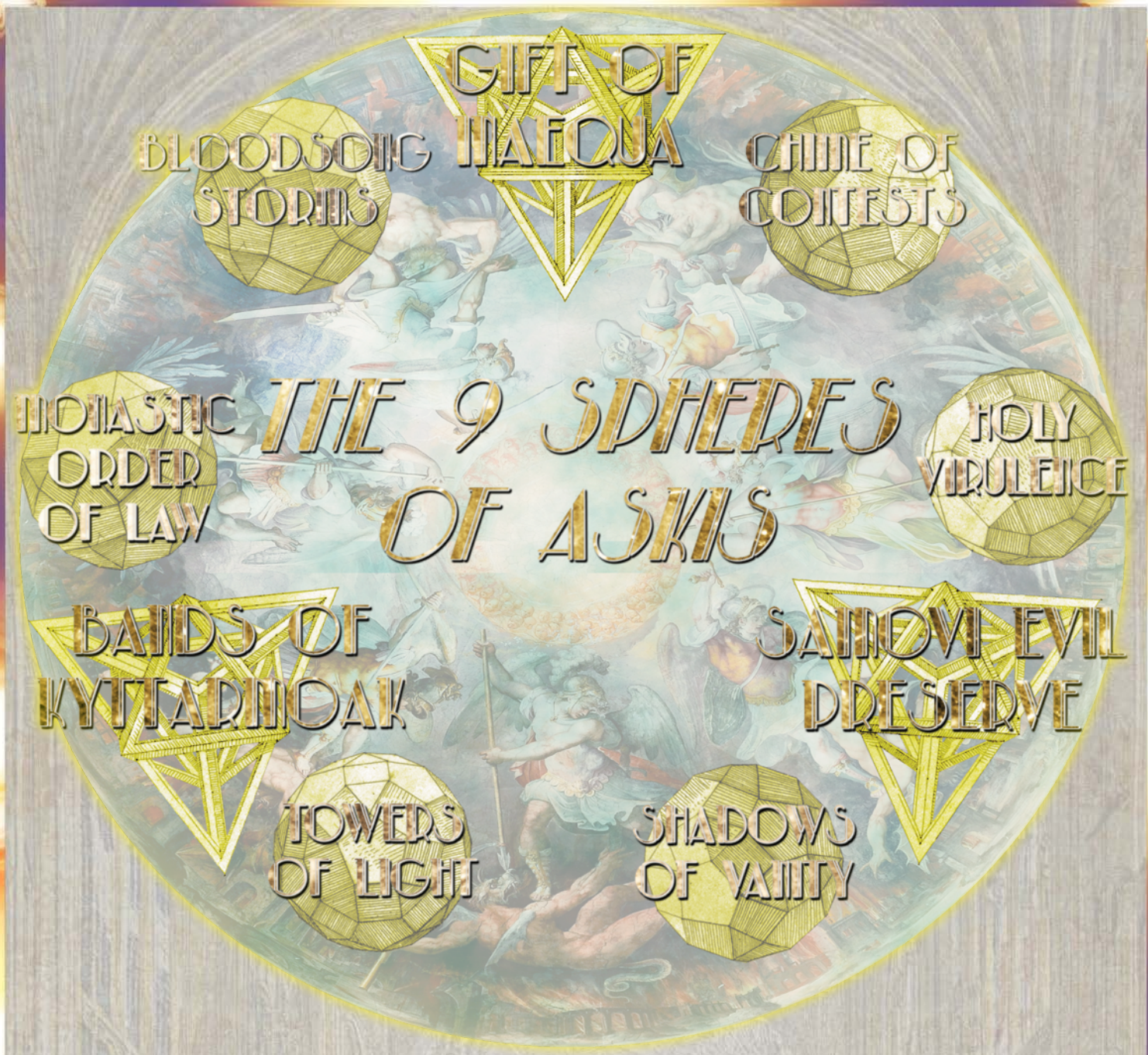
Edging forward slowly, careful not to disturb any pebbles, Bigbo leads Ooni into a huge cavern. A sea of radiant light flows across its high walls, the flames from sconces and braziers reflecting off of piles of gold, silver, and gems, but their gazes gradually turn to the huge sculpture in the center of the chamber. It dwarfs the giants in size and they pay it great deference, making Ooni wonder if it was a religious statue like the carving of Elder Biddi.

Then the statue's eye opens and Ooni realizes it isn't a statue at all.

The realization stuns her into shock and she goes still, but Bigbo panics and starts to run back towards the forest. Rising up on four legs the creature slithers forward, wings of flaming energy emerging from its back. It bellows out a cold, cruel laugh and reaches out, knocking him down with its claws before gingerly plucking the purpura into the air and snapping it inside of gigantic jaws. "Delicious," it says, the serpent's fetid breath roiling out onto the floor and making Ooni gag. To her horror it looks at directly her once more, the scales on its neck catching the glitter of gold as its head hovers nearby and it sniffs at the air. Unable to resist herself Ooni dashes towards the nearest pile of coins but snags her foot, slamming into the metal as the world around her goes black.

For her entire life Ooni has woken up to the voices of her village gleefully singing the melodies of her people as they go about their daily work, but what meets her awakening ears now is entirely different—the wailing moans of purpura fill the air, crowded by the scent of the dead and dying. Rubbing at her temples and peering about, Ooni finds bars on all sides and dozens of her kind suspended in cages like her own, some missing a limb or an eye but each wounded in one way or another.

Strange machines are scattered about the large room, covered in magenta blood. The gore of purpura is everywhere—smeared across the floor, dripping from hooks across the ceiling, congealing on boards where victims are pinned and still wriggling to death. Ooni gags again as the enormity of the scene overwhelms her and a giant stalks into sight. "Ah," it says, its voice familiar, "you are awake. That is excellent. I must apologize for earlier; normally as you can see I am a...thoughtful host, but your companion's terror promised a very sweet treat." She recoils as he comes nearer, peering into her cage and tapping it to make it sway slightly. "I promise that in time you will prove to be just as satisfying."



LONG AGO THREE CADRES OF ADVENTURERS (THE ORDER OF THE SHINING STONE, THE GOLDEN REDEEMERS, AND TUCKER & CO.) ROSE UP TO SMITE ALL THE EVILS OF ASKIS, VERY NEARLY PURGING CORRUPTION AND WICKEDNESS ENTIRELY FROM THE PLANET. DURING THESE YEARS OF UPHEAVAL, EACH OF THE CELESTIAL HEROES TOOK RESPONSIBILITY TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN A DEFENSE AGAINST EVIL'S INEVITABLE RETURN. THESE INCREDIBLE RELICS AND POTENT WARDS—COMBINED WITH THE DEMIGODS THEMSELVES AND THE GREAT WORKS THEY HAVE CREATED—ARE KNOWN AS THE SPHERES OF ASKIS.

Table: Primary Spheres of Askis

Sphere	Location	Founding Hero	Protection
Bands of Kyttarmoak	Worldwide, but primarily Ouranios	Elven Master Wizard Rankir Tarryndorn	Twelve arcane bands restrict supernatural and magical evil, preventing wickedness from taking hold in Askis.
Samovi Preserve	Samovi	Warden of Samovi Tapper Underknoll	Allows merciful punishment for evil creatures that cannot be rehabilitated, providing for them a place to live out the rest of their lives.
Gift of Inaequa	Worldwide	Tucker "the Great" Quickfoot	Inaequa has spread throughout the world, granting long life to all good creatures and powering incredible technology across Askis.

Table: Tertiary Spheres of Askis

Sphere	Location	Founding Hero	Protection
Towers of Light	Ouranios	Dwarven High Priest Gimli Stoneflask	Lighthouses guard against accidents but also produce a powerful field that warns when evils from the depths climb up onto Ouranios' shores.
Monastic Order of Law	Worldwide (based in Ouranios)	Silent Protector Varrus Goodwin	The law keeps society strong thanks to these defenders while they lead the slow but steady crusade against the pockets of evil that exists in the Taenarius Tunnels beneath Askis.
Divinus Biologis	Worldwide	Redeemed Genius Darrius Ventrelli	A magical disease suppresses the desires for earthly pleasures, transforming lawbreakers into subservient warriors of The Ministry.
Shadows of Vanity	Samovi	Angelic Beauty Lellwyn Fethyrwal	Spirits bound to cloaks follow the young and beautiful, serving them and protecting them from harm.
Bloodsong Storms	Worldwide (oceans; foci in Zakuthombo)	Master Minstrel Mystral Farsong	A melodic enchantment creates storms on the seas to destroy ships carrying criminals or vessels that attack other boats.
Chime of Contests	Zakuthombo	Honorable Half-Orc Grukk the Axe	The din of dishonorable combat can be heard from afar by the Knights of the Chime thanks to this artifact, preventing underhandedness in battle.

TOWERS OF LIGHT (TERTIARY SPHERE, OURANIOS)

All along the coasts of Ouranios stand grand lighthouses—towers of white marble and gray slate that reach ten stories above the ocean. At the apex of each is a magical orb that burns with the brilliant radiance of tempered inequea. These are the Towers of Light, Gimli Stoneflask's contribution to the war against all that was evil in Askis.

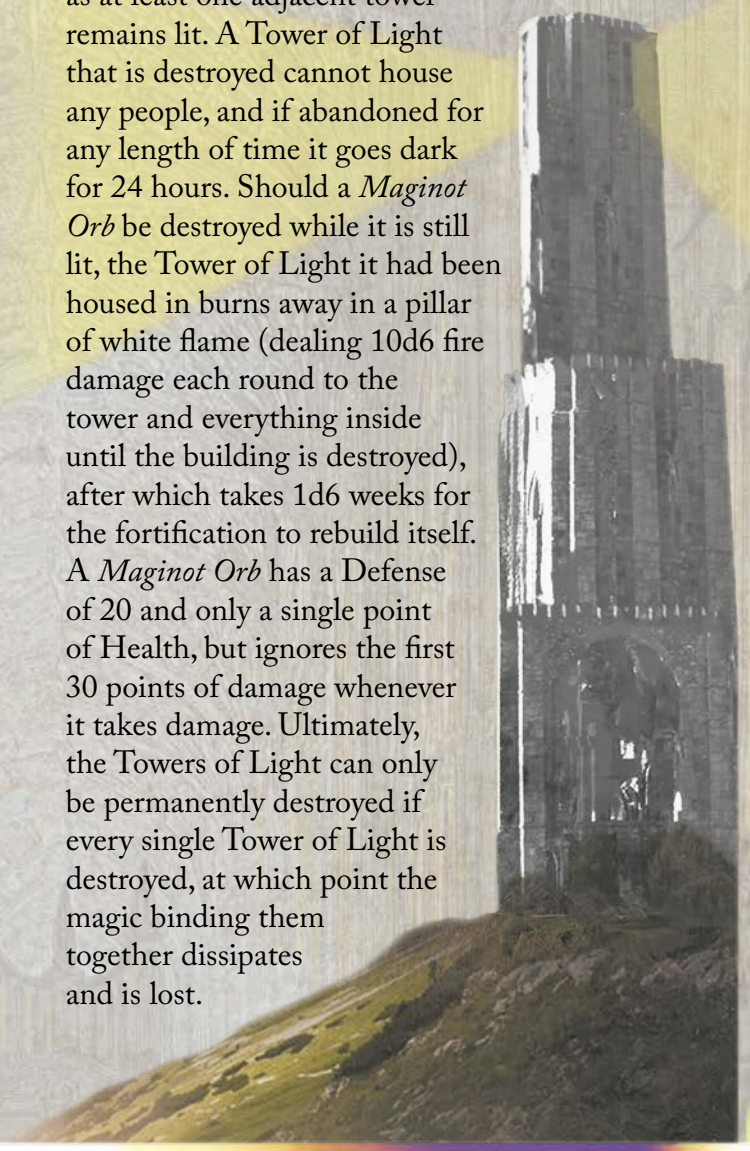
First among their functions is to maintain the *Aurora Maginot*, a barrier of shimmering light that protects the coastlines of Ouranios from the creatures of the deep. Any aquatic creature of evil alignment that approaches within 20 yards of the energy field feels the burning focus of raw inaequa, singing flesh and soul giving it disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws until it moves out of the area. Land-dwelling creatures can harmlessly pass through the *Aurora Maginot* and after the sun sets, the energy field emits light 33 yards (and dim light an additional 15 yards) until dawn—any trespassers that suffer in its radiance (whether night or day) are immediately detected by the hue of the energy field turning electric blue, warning sailors and guards alike that evil is afoot.

More obviously the Towers of Light serve as coastal lighthouses, each standing over a hundred feet tall and visible to its neighbors no more than twenty miles away. In this way they form a continuous loop around both the northern and southern coastlines of Ouranios, illuminating every rocky crag and hidden cliff that might abruptly end the lives of seafarers. Some of this light comes from the *Aurora Maginot* but most of it comes from *Maginot Orbs*—the lights at the apex of each tower. They shine out like miniature suns across the coastline yet are cool and solid to the touch. Their simplicity belies their power; in order to focus the very energy of society itself into the powerful supernatural field, these artifacts are all harder than steel. If one were to ever crack, the entire tower beneath it would likely burst apart in the resulting magical explosion.

The third and final purpose of the Towers of Light are to serve as a foundation for a community. None contain moving parts and each maintains itself by magic, but they cannot ever be unmanned—their light and the *Aurora Maginot* are empowered by the connections between those who live within them. Not only does each tower have a dedicated staff of five or more keepers (whose job it is to remain inside the fortifications at all times) but they serve as waystations and meeting halls for organizations of every stripe. In some larger settlements, the Towers of Light are so popular that they are surrounded by dozens of spillover buildings where people can gather even if every room in the edifice of Gimli Stoneflask is full. Should a Tower of Light ever be empty, the illumination from its *Maginot Orb* winks out, not returning until at least two people have remained inside the tower for 24 hours. If two adjacent towers were to be dark at the same time, the wall that stretched between them would disappear and the dark creatures of the ocean would have free reign to terrorize the land once more.

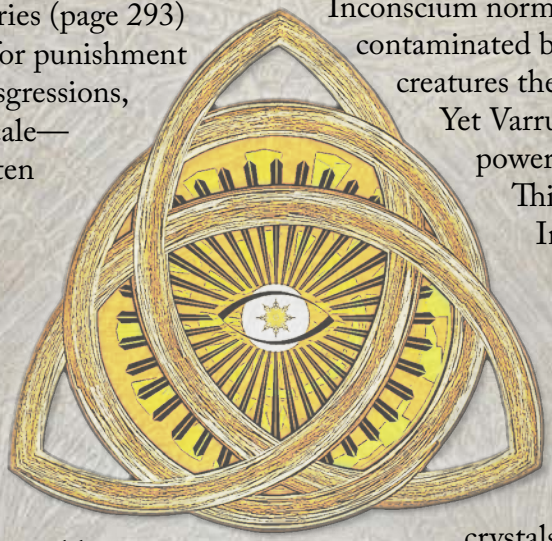
Although the Towers of Light are largely invulnerable, rebuilding themselves from even total obliteration, most are further protected by the skill at arms of their inhabitants. The Knights of the Chime in particular use the Towers of Light as waypoints in the wilderness—it is rare to find one without a warrior of the order in residence, and often more passing through. These holy soldiers pass on their training to the lighthouse keepers, who in turn share combat techniques between those who next stay in the fortification. Over the span of decades most keepers become extremely capable warriors in their own rights, well-suited to defend their abode (use the statistics for a single **Veteran** and four **Mercenaries**). The most powerful keepers however are the Lunares Carceris and Soleorto Carceris (pages 287–288), scholars of deific knowledge under the tutelage of Gimli Stoneflask and his functionaries. In the hands of these clerics many Towers of Light also serve as hospitals or shelters in the event of natural disasters. Routine patrols by Solis Occassum (page 287) and Salvum Meridiem (page 288) keep the defenders of the divine dwarf's great work alert, ensuring that each is well supplied with fresh rations and potable water.

Destroying the Towers of Light Each of the the Towers of Light are just buildings and can be damaged or destroyed like any other—their true power lies in their interconnectedness. So long as even a single Tower of Light stands on the same shore, they will eventually rebuild themselves. A Tower of Light that is damaged or destroyed completely rebuilds itself within 1d6 days, so long as at least one adjacent tower remains lit. A Tower of Light that is destroyed cannot house any people, and if abandoned for any length of time it goes dark for 24 hours. Should a *Maginot Orb* be destroyed while it is still lit, the Tower of Light it had been housed in burns away in a pillar of white flame (dealing 10d6 fire damage each round to the tower and everything inside until the building is destroyed), after which takes 1d6 weeks for the fortification to rebuild itself. A *Maginot Orb* has a Defense of 20 and only a single point of Health, but ignores the first 30 points of damage whenever it takes damage. Ultimately, the Towers of Light can only be permanently destroyed if every single Tower of Light is destroyed, at which point the magic binding them together dissipates and is lost.



MONASTIC ORDER OF LAW (TERTIARY SPHERE, OURANIOS)

Everyone in Askis knows the law not due to an innate trait for order or an automatic desire to conform to society—it is because of the Monastic Order of Law. The organization has devotees in every settlement across Askis, from the largest metropolis to the smallest hamlet. These vary in dedication but true members are marked by the Troth of Silence they've sworn, dedicating their lives to serving the world as Justitia and defending it against evil. The demigod Varrus Goodwin's loyal followers undertake a journey of discovery under his guidance that begins with the simple mantra that there are things that can only be ascertained by oneself. As part of their training Justitia memorize every local, national, and global law, enforced to report even the slightest infractions to their superiors. The violations of an individual are compiled by Equerries (page 293) but requisitions to The Ministry for punishment are only for the most serious transgressions, heavily tempered by mercy and scale—most civilians simply receive written warnings instead of drastic action as long as violent offenses (theft, murder, or the misuse of inaequa) aren't involved.



Despite their quiet contemplation the Justitia dedicate themselves to perfect order not just in society, but in themselves as well. They train almost tirelessly both in their fortress-like Citadels of Law, and in the darkness of the junctions in the Taenarius Tunnels above which the citadels sit. Accordingly these fortifications are as difficult to breach from the inside as they are from without—and every one of them is prepared for the wickedness that could spill forth at any second (page 290). They are riddled with traps, wards and locks of all kinds, making even entering a Citadel of Law a dangerous proposition. The greatest of the headquarters for the Justitia is the Monastery of Law in Fluctus. From its ramparts Varrus Goodwin leads the Monastic Order of Law to exert control not only over themselves and maintain a just society, but over the very land around the city as well.

Most of this control is mundane: the Justitia endlessly train their bodies and hone their minds for service—but through the power of inconscium Varrus has started to forge a powerful (albeit crude) psychic link between his most devout followers. Inconscium is a rare crystal found only in the Taenarius Tunnels and when sheared away its slivers expand the subconscious mind of those who come into contact with it, granting a temporary empathic connection with those close to them and others touched by the anomalous subterranean substance. The Monastic Order of Law puts high priority on the extraction and recovery of these crystals, and even hiring willing mercenaries to scout the dangerous passages beneath Askis for clues of the next deposit. The Inconscium ore is then brought back to the Citadels of Law for the Justitia to focus upon, renewing their connection with their brethren.

The empathic connection brought about by Inconscium normally lasts a full day, allowing anyone contaminated by it to detect the emotional state of creatures they know well (and other empaths). Yet Varrus has used these crystals to forge a powerful artifact: the *Ring of Oneness*. This ring multiplies the effects of Inconscium a thousandfold for anyone who wears it for more than a moment, permanently branded with its magic forever afterward. It is said the Divine Monk is working to forge a more perfect version of the holy relic—one that might clarify Inconscium crystals to allow for full telepathy between members or even more—but so far he's yet to succeed.

Destroying the Order of Law The Monastic Order of Law cannot be destroyed as it is a social ideal—so long as the concept of the order exists, an enterprising creature can restore the Monastic Order of Law in one incarnation or another. The *Ring of Oneness*, however, is the crux of the Celestial Work wrought by Varrus Goodwin and its destruction would reduce the order to nothing more than stringently lawful monks. If the artifact were ever to be worn for a year and a day by a living creature who felt no emotions (such as a construct) its power would turn in on itself, instantly psychically deadening all creatures it had once marked and making it impossible for them to gain psychic abilities of any kind (or be detected by psychic means).

The Ring of Oneness

The *Ring of Oneness* can never be entirely removed—it can be slipped from the finger like any other ring, but after being worn for 1 minute it leaves a permanent impression of itself in the form of a brightly colored tattoo. This tattoo opens the mind of the wearer to psychic activity, making it impossible to hide from psychic means to locate them (though not divination magic). The wearer of the *Ring of Oneness* can freely detect the presence and location of psychic creatures (including those marked by the artifact, or those under the effects of inconscium) within 10 miles, and the current emotion of any creature within 33 yards. In addition, the wearer gains telepathy with a range of 66 yards.

INCONSCIUM (500 gc, ½ lb)

This translucent shard of crystal can be focused upon as an action to grant temporary empathy to a creature for 24 hours. For the duration the creature is able to telepathically project affection, frustration, suffering, fright, peacefulness, and any other emotions the GM permits, or as an action sense these emotions in a creature within 33 yards that they are able to see. In addition, the creature automatically projects and detects their emotions to and from other creatures contaminated by Inconscium that are within 33 yards. After a piece of Inconscium has been focused upon, it goes inert for 8d6 hours.

BANDS OF KYTTARMOAK (GREATER SPHERE, OURANIOS)

The *Bands of Kyttarmoak* are second only to inaequa in the ultimate victory over evil in Askis. Forged by the immortal sage Rankir Tarryndorn, each of the dozen magical circlets are made of thick metal roughly a foot wide and emblazoned with glowing, flaming runes and precious gems. The means of its function is an absolute secret however—only the most respected and esteemed mages know the scarcest details of the elven master wizard's great work despite its incredible magnificence. Likewise the identity of Kyttarmoak is left unsaid; Rankir refuses to speak of it and has never publicly revealed if it is a creature, a person, or as little as a name invented in his youth.

Despite the enigma that surrounds the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* the nature of exactly *what* they do is largely obvious. Since Rankir's great work was wrought no creature has breached from the lower planes into Askis without extensive mortal aid (demons and devils have still set hoof here, but only by using a foolish, willing creature as their conduit.) Cruel elementals, slavering undead, and vengeful gods alike are kept at bay by the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* leaving no entity of evil free access to Askis; once here, none can leave except as ash. Even malevolent souls remain trapped with many if not all bound to the *Cincture of Souls* until they can be safely taken to an appropriate judgment on another plane.

Despite his distrust and secrecy Rankir cannot carry all twelve *Bands of Kyttarmoak* on his person at one time, and the loyal mages he has allowed to aid in their protection (Magi Primaria, page 295) have been given limited instruction as to what they do. Each cincture that makes up the potent relic strangles the space through which the dark realms can reach into Askis, reducing all interplanar activity to be forced through a measly circle one foot wide—provided that one of the cinctures can be wrested from its protector. Although it has been decades Rankir insists he continues on his construction of a thirteenth addition to his great work, a truly potent artifact containing the powers of all of the previous twelve and more.

Bands of Kyttarmoak

Wondrous item, artifact

Each of the dozen *Bands of Kyttarmoak* has its own unique power, but every one of them was forged by Rankir Tarryndorn. A creature that attempts to perform a task restricted by one of the cinctures fails without succeeding at both an Intellect Challenge roll with 2 banes and a Will challenge roll with 2 banes. Outsiders always have disadvantage on these saving throws. The twelve bands and their powers are:

- **Animarum, the Cincture of Souls** draws evil essences into it, restricting them from escaping to the River Styx when they die. Rankir then siphons the souls to a plane of his choice for judgment—although the process appears imperfect, as a large fraction of evil souls never arrive at the chosen final destination.
- **Satanas, the Cincture of Devils** restricts the creation of any portal to or from Hell, except within the cincture.

- **Daemonium, the Cincture of Demons** restricts the creation of any portal to or from the Abyss, except within the cincture.
- **Creui, the Cincture of the Maelstrom** restricts the creation of any portal to or from Limbo or Purgatory, except within the cincture.
- **Veneficium, the Cincture of Magic** causes the auras left by the casting of evil spells to persist for a number of days equal to spell level.
- **Loquella, the Cincture of Tongues** restricts speech in Undercommon, Aklo or Vilespeech except at a loud volume, heard from within 10 feet by any creature that makes a Intellect challenge roll with 2 boons.
- **Obcasus, the Cincture of Death** restricts psychomps from entering Askis on missions for deities other than those from the Upper Planes.
- **Adligamentum, the Cincture of Binding** is combined with the power of *Tapper's Spike* to create a series of wards and barriers around the Samovi Preserve. Each restricts the passage of evil creatures through it and moderates anomalies caused by magics that make the prison island float (including the creation of purpura).
- **Halitus, the Cincture of Steam** restricts creatures from opening portals to or from the Plane of Fire and Plane of Water in the same day.
- **Pulvis, the Cincture of Dust** restricts creatures from opening portals to or from the Plane of Air and Plane of Earth in the same day.
- **Mortalium, the Cincture of Mortals** prevents direct actions of evil deities.
- **The Cincture of Kyttarmoak** linking each ring to all others.

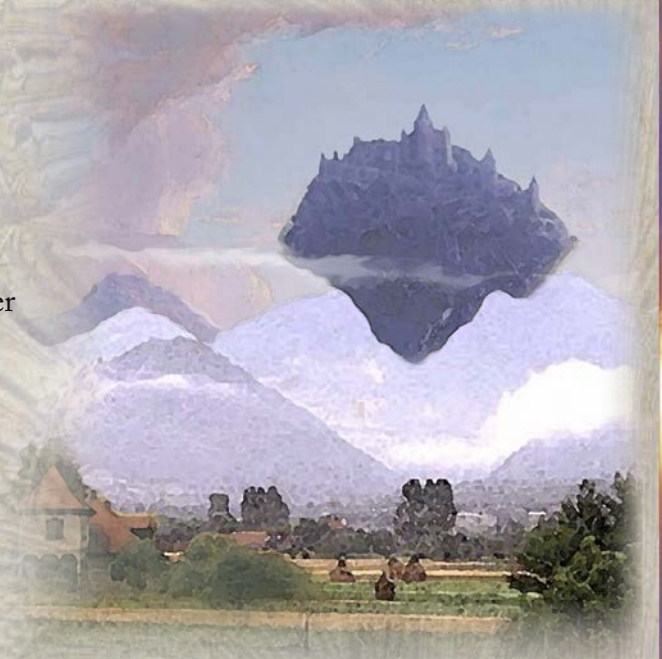
Destroying the Bands of Kyttarmoak Separated from one another the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* cannot be destroyed, but when all dozen rings are gathered together and the *Cincture of Kyttarmoak* is used to link them into a looped chain they have a single vulnerability. This looped chain must be taken to each of the outer planes in turn—Heaven, Elysium, the Streams Divinia, the Plane of Air, the Plane of Water, Limbo, Purgatory, the Plane of Fire, the Plane of Earth, the River Styx, the Abyss, and Hell. With each new plane visited one of the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* is absorbed into the others, shortening the loop. Once eleven bands have been absorbed, upon reaching Hell the *Cincture of Kyttarmoak* transforms into a portal to the true home of the mysterious Kyttarmoak before disappearing a minute later—along with the artifact.

SAMOVI PRESERVE (GREATER SPHERE, SAMOVI)

Tapper Underknoll and the Celestial Heroes hate the idea of killing—even for the foulest of enemies. To them murder has become unforgivable and not even to be considered except as an absolute last resort. Instead the Divine Hunter has gone to great extremes to capture the foes of the demigods, redeeming them or locking them away when rehabilitation by The Ministry proves impossible. Although this worldview is somewhat extreme, it led Tapper to a very practical idea that his allies supported: a prison on a massive scale, a place where the irredeemably wicked could live out their lives without bringing harm to the innocent (inflicting themselves on others of their kind, but no further). After centuries of careful construction and delicate magics, the result is the Samovi Preserve: a titanic, fortified island that soars through the skies above Samovi.

The island is not only massive but extremely diverse with mountains, deserts, forests, and even tundra existing in relatively close atmospheric proximity, all magically maintained to suit the needs of its diverse population. Some regions are as large as a few of the world's city-states, while others are as small as individual bogs or groves depending on the size of its inhabitants and their number. All of this is made possible by a pair of artifacts: *Adligamentum, Cincture of Binding* to power the massive, impenetrable set of barriers around the Samovi Preserve and *Tapper's Spike* to keep the island aloft.

Waypoints are the gates to the Samovi Preserve, small structures that open and close regularly to allow gaolers to explore, tame, redeem, or simply observe the evil creatures they're charged with containing. These junctions are under constant watch by Serva Venandi (page 284) and connected to lesser waystations throughout the island under the command of more experienced Tueri Principis (page 284). As of late there are even tours by way of armored inaequa chariots for civilians and researchers, allowing visitors to the waystations to witness firsthand what evil creatures are and look like (including special locations specifically for dragons), though only when in the company of a Praeceptorem (page 283) for protection.



Visitors are far from the only observers however—a race of tiny beings known as purpura (or more commonly as "purps") skulk around the the entirety of the Samovi Preserve. On the whole they are carefree creatures, almost comically round with a penchant to wear small, silly hats—but they're big talkers, retelling anything and everything they have seen and heard. Purpura refuse to leave the floating prison despite the danger they face every day so Tapper and his men use the miniature celestials to their advantage as spies, rewarding clever purps able to tell them the most about what is going out of sight in the Samovi Preserve.

The reason the purpura remain isn't any particular sense of honor or dedication to their homeland but because they are actually created by the *Adligamentum* (although neither they, nor Tapper, know this). Their species is but one of many wards that the *Cinture of Binding* creates, much like the field of energy that encircles the island. No creature is known to have breached the barrier entirely, but more than once strong-willed creatures have managed to escape (prompting the creation of more Waypoints nearby to discourage others from using the same route).

Tapper's Spike is more straightforward in purpose than the *Cincture of Binding*: it holds everything together, keeping the island in the sky and binding the Waypoints into existence. So long as the artifact persists the protected buildings exist at once inside and outside of the Samovi Preserve, the only reliable way in or out. If *Tapper's Spike* were ever drawn from its current place, the magic of these Waypoints would unravel to trap everything inside of it—permanently.

Destroying the Samovi Preserve The Samovi Preserve relies on two artifacts to function and if either *Adligamentum* or *Tapper's Spike* are ever removed, the island collapses or is rendered useless. Accordingly both artifacts are hidden in a special Waypoint within the Samovi Preserve, warded from every kind of magic by encircling fields of anti-arcane inaequa-technology and protected by deadly traps (as normal traps but all challenge rolls with 1 additional bane) and tireless guardians (aesgigas sanctus; page 253). Only Tapper and a small number of his closest advisors (all Praeceptorem) know their current location.

Tapper's Spike

This foot-long golden spike is a work of art and functions as though it were a magical dagger that deals +3 damage and grants 1 boon on attack rolls. As an action it can be driven into any material, at which point neither it nor the object it is embedded into can be moved (as an *immovable rod*) until the spike is removed by the creature who planted it as a minor activity, leaving no mark where it had been planted. A creature that has been pinned by *Tapper's Spike* (either through equipment or flesh) requires a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes before it can attempt to move up to 5 feet. Attempting to make this check deals 4d6 damage to a creature pinned by its flesh. A creature other than the spike's owner can remove the *Tapper's Spike* with a Strength challenge roll made with 3 banes

Destroying Tappers Spike If in one single blow *Tapper's Spike* is driven through a creature that has never killed anything and a creature of raw murderous energy, it immediately melts to lead.

PURPLE PEOPLE EATING & YOU
A PRACTICAL PRIMER ON AMETHYST ORGAN EXTRACTIONS

The Samovi Preserve's inmates are well aware of purpura and some of the resourceful deviants don't just make the most of the magical creatures, they've created an art form out of manipulating, dissecting, and murdering the curious spies. Runts that aren't able to fend for themselves against other prisoners make it their niche to follow and track purpura, locating villages within hollowed out boles inside prodigious trees and miniature dug-out tunnel networks, turning over the information when intimidated or able to score a good deal on a trade.

Despite constant danger and consistently being the targets of atrocious mass-slaughters, purpura continue to mete out their short lives in the Samovi Preserve before meeting a violent end—not a one of them has been known to die of old age. The origins of these creatures are just as mysterious, appearing in Askis only after the island prison first rose into the sky, and wicked mages have concluded that "foot pigs" (as they are sometimes called) must have a connection to *Adligamentum* the *Cincture of Binding*, explaining their potent magical nature.

Regardless of whence they came the purpura are both pest and boon to the inmates upon which they spy. Illicit activities are extremely commonplace in the confines of the Samovi Preserve and most of them are either hidden from Tapper's underlings or quickly disrupted, but even when an endeavor is undone the possibility of capturing one of the damnable things can make up for lost resources. Purpura aren't just extremely savory, sweet, and filling, in the hands of even an amateur alchemist they can be used to truly nefarious ends!

Capture Spotting a purpura is fairly common, but actually catching one of the elusive little folk is another matter entirely. The magical creatures are able to rapidly blend into their surroundings, ways to embolden their hearts in times of great fright, and likely worst of all, they can quickly trap the surrounding area with dangerous incendiary fungi. Perhaps worst (or best) of all, a purpura is rarely abandoned by its friends and relatives—in a matter of hours they usually sneak into wherever a captive ally is being kept in covert rescue attempts.

Tricking Though purpura are slightly smarter than the average citizen of Askis, the evil minds that resist conditioning at the hands of The Ministry (pages 31-33) often end up in the Samovi Preserve and are more than capable of out-thinking the naive little creatures. Staged performances of being outcast from a gang, "freeing" a captured purpura to return it home, and last-minute decisions to "fight" one's allies in defense of the tiny celestials are convincing enough as long as the actors have at least an ounce of talent for deception. Once trust has been gained inmates befriend the magical wonders, returning to receive the praise of a tiny village only to sneak away in the night to launch a raid while the benign creatures sleep. Otherwise canny prisoners will put on fake demonstrations in the clear eyes of purpura, knowing that Tapper's guards will believe what they're told (unaware their witnesses saw a ruse in the first place).

USING PURPURA

Spreading misinformation is the best way to use a living purpura but they are a far more valuable resource to prisoners of the Samovi Preserve when they're dead. The preparation and consumption of the little creatures has been refined over the centuries, perfected by magicians behind the floating prison's walls into an art form that yields potent creations—concoctions able to aid in escape from confinement by Tapper.

TORTURE

One of the difficulties of preparing purpura concoctions is that their magical potency fades away in a matter of days. Properly preserving their remains with embalming fluid can increase their usefulness by a fair bit of time, but breaking a purpura's will before its death elongates that window far more impressively. Every day that a purpura is kept in the restrained condition or confined to a cage, it makes a Will challenge roll (with 1 bane for each day captured) or loses its resolve. A successful Will challenge roll (with 1 boon for each day captured) by a purpura's captor causes it to make this saving throw with disadvantage. Different purpura have different fears and the GM is the ultimate arbiter of what forms of torture are effective, but until a purpura's resolve is stripped away torture just doesn't work. Every hour a purpura is subjected to torture, it makes a Strength challenge roll (with 1 bane for each previous roll). On a failure by 5 or more, the torture either inflicts or causes the purpura to self-inflict enough damage to go unconscious (and possibly die). On a failure of less than 5 the purpura's willpower is completely shattered.

The body parts of a purpura with broken resolve last twice as long. The body parts of a prupura with broken willpower last four times as long.

EATING

While it can be rewarding in a variety of ways, not everyone has the time or leisure to prepare purpura concoctions—and they *do* taste very good. Simple consumption of a purpura that has died within the past 1d6 hours grants the following benefits for 1d6 minutes, provided that the entirety of the purpura (cartilage-bones and all) are eaten by the same creature: the creature leaves no tracks, heals their healing rate, gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to hide or move silently, 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist fear, and takes half damage from holy. Eating any amount of fresh purpura's corpse is as filling as a full meal.

DISSECTING

Removing the miniature organs from a purpura's tiny corpse is a delicate and difficult task that requires a sharp implement (usually a dagger) and either a healer's kit or torturer's tools. The extractor makes an Intellect challenge roll over the course of 1d6 minutes cutting, cinching, and extracting the organ in question. Attempting to dissect a purpura without either imposes disadvantage on the check, and without a means to deal at least 1 damage with a bladed implement it is impossible to dissect a purpura.

PURPURA CONCOCTIONS

Crafting a purpura concoction takes 1 hour per type of ingredient but has no exceptional costs or components aside from the creature's corpse. For example, brewing some purprapaste takes 2 hours. One month after it is created, a purpura concoction loses half its potency (granting benefits for half as long, restoring half as many hit points, dealing half as much damage, and so on). Two months after it is created a purpura concoction goes inert.

Unless otherwise noted, imbibing or otherwise using a purpura concoction requires an action. Purpura concoctions and their effects are not magical.

Table: Purpura Concoctions

Concoction	Parts Required	Banes	Bonuses
Purprapaste	Blood (2)	—	Leave no tracks for 1d6 hours.
Magjuice	Stomach, Kidney, Pancreas	—	Heal your healing rate.
Magentsia Purprosa (potion)	Liver, Intestines, Tongue	—	Add 1 boon on challenge rolls made to hide or move quietly for 24 hours..
Lesser Purprasak	Heart (2), Genitalia	—	1d6+2 holy damage, range 7 yards,
Purpurapie	Brain, Eyes (2), Lungs (2)	1 bane	For the next 1d6 hours, gain 1 boon on challenge rolls against being frightened and take half damage from holy.
Improved Magjuice	Kidney (2), Pancreas (2), Stomach, Tongue	1 bane	Heal double your Healing Rate.
Pupurapaella	Blood (6), Eye (3), Kidney (2), Genitalia, Intestines, Heart	1 bane	For the next 1d6 hours, reduce your Size by one category (this has no effect on Size 1/4 or smaller)..
Violetsia Purprosa (potion)	Liver (2), Intestines (2), Brain, Tongue	1 bane	As *magentsia purprosa*, but you gain 2 boons instead.
Purprasak	Heart (4), Brain (2), Genitalia (2)	2 banes	2d6+4 holy damage, range 14 yards feet
Purapraté	Eyes (3), Lungs (3), Brain, Heart, Pancreas, Stomach	2 banes	For the next 1d6 hours, gain immunity to fear and holy damage.
Greater Magjuice	Kidney (3), Pancreas (3), Stomach (2), Tongue (2), Liver	2 banes	Heal four times your Healing Rate.
Supremis Purprosa (potion)	Liver (4), Intestines (3), Brain (2), Genitalia, Heart, Tongue	2 banes	For the next 24 hours, you gain the benefits of *violetsia purprosa* and can use a minor activity to hide even while being observed.
Greater Purprasak	Heart (6), Brain (3), Genitalia (3)	3 banes	4d6+8 holy damage, range 20 yards.
Steamed Chaotzu-Prua	*Blood* (9), Eye (5), Kidney (4), Genitalia (3), Intestines (2), Brain, Heart, Pancreas	3 banes	For the next 1d6 hours, reduce your Size by two categories (this has no effect on Size 1/4 or smaller).
Roast Purpura with Purpachutney Glaze	Blood (12), Eye (9), Lung (8), Intestines (6), Kidney (6), Liver (5), Pancreas (5), Stomach (5), Tongue (5), Genitalia (4), Brain (3), Heart (2)	3 banes	You gain the benefits of the following purpura concoctions: *purapraté, greater magjuice, supremis purprosa*, and *steamed chaotzu-prua*.

Purprasaks As an action, a creature throws a *purprasak* by making a ranged attack against a creature or object with range, treating *purprasak* as an improvised weapon. On a hit, the target takes damage as the *purprasak* explodes. All other objects and creatures within 2 yards of an exploding *purprasak* make an Agility challenge roll or take half damage.

From the foliage nearby you hear the distinct and odd tones of a truly small voice loudly singing, its squeaky notes just on the edge of painful as they float through the air. The melody comes from a miniature humanoid with a pristine white smock on its head, its little purple gnome-like face gleefully grinning as it obliviously skips on its way, a tiny bundle of joy.

PURPURA

DIFFICULTY 1

Size ¼ faerie
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 13; **Health** 5
Strength 3 (-7), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 9 (-1)
Speed 6
Immune holy
Joyful Song The purpura can sing as a minor activity. Until the end of its next turn, any creature within 20 feet that is able to hear the purpura has 1 boon on saving throws against fear.
Natural Kindness The purpura has 1 bane on checks made to determine if a creature is being deceptive or lying.
Sneaky Underfoot The purpura has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to hide or move quietly.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Twig (melee) +3 (1 damage)
Attack (close range) +3 with 2 bane (1 damage)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Mushroom Magic The purpura can spend an action touching the ground or a mushroom on the ground. When the ground is touched, a mushroom appears at the end of the round. When a mushroom is touched, it charges with primal energy. Any creature of Size ½ or larger that steps inside a square with at least one charges mushroom makes an Agility challenge roll or causes it to explode, dealing 1d6+2 holy damage to any creatures within 5 feet. The challenge roll is made with 1 bane for every additional charged mushroom in the same square. Spotting a mushroom that's been charged by a purpura requires a Perception challenge roll made with 2 bane.

Table: Purpura Dissection

Purpura Parts	Challenge Roll Banes	Use By Date	Preservation Date
Blood (3)	—	1 week	1 month
Eye (2)	—	1 week	2 weeks
Kidney	1	1 week	1 week + 2d6 days
Stomach	1	2d6 – 1 days	1 week + 2d6 days
Tongue	1	2d6 – 1 days	1 week + 2d6 days
Liver	2	2d6 – 1 days	1 week + 2d6 days
Intestines	2	2d6 – 1 days	1d6 + 5 days
Pancreas	2	1d6 days	1d6 + 5 days
Genitalia	3	1d6 days	1d6 + 4 days
Lung (2)	3	1d6 days	1d6 + 4 days
Heart	3	1d6 days	1d6 + 3 days
Brain	3	1d6 days	1d6 + 3 days

END OF THE ROUND

Vanish The purpura can choose to hide, even if it is being observed, or to erase its tracks.

Purpura are loving, trustworthy, benign creatures spawned from the errant energies created by one of the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* (*Adligamentum* the *Cincture of Binding*) and its interactions with the Samovi Preserve. They live simple lives in secret villages of no more than a score of their kind, spending their days spying on the doings of larger creatures, foraging to peacefully live off of the land around them, or singing with joy. It is extremely rare to see an elder purpura—these few tiny celestials have wizened up (losing the Natural Kindness feature) and remain supremely aloof.

(*Please Note: Any likeness that Purpura may or may not have to other small woodland creatures is entirely coincidental and they are not at all intended to resemble or otherwise reference other tiny, joyful residents of the woods.)*

Holy Virulence (Tertiary Sphere, Samovi)

Darrius Ventrelli was not the result of a willing pregnancy and he does not shy from retelling the parable of his mother's sordid demonic-rape. Though left crippled and with child, the angelkin persevered through labor and raised him—at least until she was killed by a slaver, 8 year old Darrius' innate powers of sorcery coming to the fore in the tragedy's wake. He says that her story is a warning and a lesson: a person's body is their own and no violation of that sanctity brings about good for that person. Those who take the unwilling flesh of others, through lust or violence, are no better than feral animals—and should be treated as such.

It is with begrudging irony that the means he has created to preserve a body's sanctity is through a magically engineered symbiote: the *Divinus Biologis* or as it is more commonly called "DB". The infection spreads through the population of Askis like a latent disease. In most it has no effect beyond nearly invisible blue spots on a creature's palms, making it highly contagious and easy to pass from one to another through blood, saliva, and other bodily fluids. On those who force themselves upon others however, the effect is dramatic, painful, and permanent.

Some medical institutions estimate that up to 80% of the human population of Askis has DB and the number continues to rise. Most don't object to the infection, but neither do many know that sexual assault is only one way to catalyze the disease. The highest levels of The Ministry possess an arcane-locked key phrase that allows them to implant a *geas* into any sufficiently infected target (at the 2nd stage of progression; Will challenge roll made with 2 banes negates). Instead of taking psychic damage on a failed save, the *Divinus Biologis* begins its progression, yet Darrius has an even more powerful connection than that—it is said that he can accelerate the symbiote's progression with but a single word.

Divinus Biologis

This microscopic, quasi-divine symbiote infects host creatures and spreads like other diseases. Its harmless primary symptoms (tiny blue spots on the hands) can be detected with a successful Intellect challenge roll made with 3 banes (minus 1 bane per week of infection) and for many the *Divinus Biologis* never progresses further than that.

Any time a creature infected with DB attempts to have sex with an unwilling or helpless living target, the disease progresses to the next stage unless the creature succeeds a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes each minute of the unwanted encounter. Unless the disease has progressed completely at the end of a rest an infected creature can make a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes to reduce the disease back to a previous progression, or to become dormant. If an infected creature fails one of these challenge rolls by 5 or more, it instead progresses to the next stage.

At the first stage of progression the infected creature's sex drive is dramatically reduced and if male it becomes impotent.

At the second stage of progression the infected creature gains the diseased affliction, which it cannot recover from until the disease is cured.

At the third stage of progression, the infected creature is wracked with pain and takes 1d6 points of damage each hour it is not resting. If this results in a creature being reduced to 0 Health, the disease progresses to its final phase. This damage can't be recovered by magical healing until the disease is cured or regressed to the second stage.

In the final phase the infected creature undergoes a painful transformation into a Divirulent Hound, a werewolf like creature with only one goal: to serve the commands of The Ministry.

Destroying the Holy Virulence The *Divinus Biologis* is ultimately a disease but as a magical sickness it cannot be cured by any single task alone. Linked to Darrius' *Inaequa Lapis*, the viral symbiotes cannot be rid from Askis permanently so long as he remains alive. Once he has shuffled off his mortal coil, an antiplague (albeit a sophisticated one) would wipe out the remnants of the tiefling's great work in a matter of years or less; the recipe for this cure does not yet exist but could be created by any mad scientist with enough dedication. In addition to more common medicinal ingredients, the antiplague to cure *Divinus Biologis* must contain a sample of fresh blood of Darrius Ventrelli—as well as that of Varrus Goodwin.

Transformation into a Divirulent Hound There is little public knowledge of the transformation into a Divirulent Hound except that the process is extremely painful, often compared to death and rebirth. After changing from the full effects of the *Divinus Biologis* most creatures simply become canine servants of The Ministry, but occasionally more powerful creatures fall prey to DB and its effects are impossible to predict—these unique contaminated can retain a greater degree of their knowledge and skills from their former life, become other animals or assume an entirely different corporeal form (as an elemental or fey), become trapped in the Ethereal Plane, or suffer myriad other fates. Any rumors of the anomalies are squashed wherever they come to the attention of The Inquisition or The Ministry, although there is only so much that can be done when those transformation draw the attention of an entire city block or settlement's central square with their pained screams.

A Malady by Any Name *Divinus Biologis* is known by many different names, the guilty and salacious citizens falling prey to the sexually transmitted disease spawning a litany of monickers to avoid directly confronting their sickness: Blue Rover, Broken Keys, Church Pox, Collared, Dog Bite, Fuzzy Pits, Howling Horror, Lonely Flu, Lupus Dei, Rover's Revenge, Rusted Lock, The Admonition, Were-Warts and whatever other names the GM thinks are appropriate.

Standing upright on huge pawed feet at the bottom of backwards-bent legs, at first this seems to be an albino werewolf—its claws and teeth as fearsome as any others. The longer your gaze rests upon it however, the more you can make out of a golden glow emanating from it, spreading waves of warmth and goodwill.

Divirulent Hound — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15; **Health** 30 (Regeneration)
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 8 (–2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 12
Silver Vulnerability When a divirulent hound takes damage from a silver weapon, it takes a penalty to Health equal to the damage. The penalty lasts until the divirulent hound completes a rest.
Holy Light The divirulent hound blazes brightly, shedding light out to 5 yards around it.
Holy Resistance The divirulent hound takes no damage from holy.
Solar Curse While in sunlight, the divirulent hound can only assume its hybrid form or wolf form.
Touch of Darrius The divirulent hound has 2 boons on challenge rolls to resist being charmed or compelled.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Teeth (melee; hybrid form only) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 plus 1d6 holy)

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Change Form The divirulent hound uses an action or a triggered action on its turn to assume the form of a wolf (**medium animal**), assume a hybrid form, or return to its human form. While in animal form, it uses that creature's physical attributes, characteristics, attacks, talents, and traits. It retains its own Intellect and Will.

END OF THE ROUND
Regeneration The divirulent hound heals 1d6 damage if it is not incapacitated.

The Ministry's dogs are unfailingly loyal, their simplified minds and the affection they chased after in life now twisted into unwavering devotion to the church-state. None question the nature of their existence—living as the lowliest of monks, relegated to working the most menial jobs imaginable, and treated as the lowest of society when they are not confined in the basements of houses of worship—and they are rarely if ever seen doing anything other than serve their betters. Although it is not common elsewhere priests in Zakuthombo are sometimes carried on palanquins by divirulent hounds, but all of the clergy are trained to treat the canines as their divinely warped hearts most desire: like slaves.

SHADOWS OF VANITY (TERTIARY SPHERE, SAMOVI)

Life is beautiful and in turn beauty is to be cherished —and since the moment of her birth Lellwyn Fethyrwal has been considered a vision of radiance. It was no surprise to any that she considered the world not in terms of good and evil or as a struggle between life and death, but matters of beauty and filth. To the amazement of all she sees beyond visible magnificence however, praising kindness of soul and the worth of one's labors—things that are not always outwardly aesthetically pleasing can possess even greater beauty than what meets the eye.

One day Lellwyn saw a shadow that made a distorted and cruel shape on the ground only to realize in horror that it was her own. Rather than allowing this unlikely moment to happen again she used all the angelic magic at her command to bind her shadow into her cape, creating the first *shadow of vanity*. As time passed it remained hidden on her back, animating the garment and aiding her while its power expanded whenever Lellwyn stood in the light (which was often). The shadow tore the darkness away and transformed it into beautiful weapons or armor, ultimately becoming a powerful ally that prepared her most loyal warriors to fight for the cause of good. The lack of a shadow proved to serve another benefit for Lellwyn, invisible until after others joined her shadowless elite—those who lacked silhouettes no longer visibly aged, remaining as beautiful as a decade after the day their shadows were bound until the day their time came. No injury, illness, or even age itself could mar their resplendence, although time and the ongoing fight against evil proved their invulnerable immortality is only an illusion.

Lellwyn has since passed her method along to others, creating cadres of like-minded beatific guardians that roam Askis seeking justice and glory: Soul Knights, Animeo Custodiae, Speculi Eleganti, and the Iterati, her Shadowless Elite. Only the most beautiful creatures in the world receive a *shadow of vanity* as reward for their perfection of both body and soul. These sentient capes are not only protection from the ravages of time but ideal servants as well—clever, powerful, and utterly loyal, they reflect their bearer and learn their habits, drawing shadows from around them to shape into tools or weapons for their wearer. Some of the most powerful *shadows of vanity* are capable warriors in their own right even when cornered and alone. All those who bear one of the divine capes are among the Shadowless Elite but not all traverse the world, most enriching life through mundane means instead as architects, artists, beauticians, stylists, and writers.

Shadow of Vanity

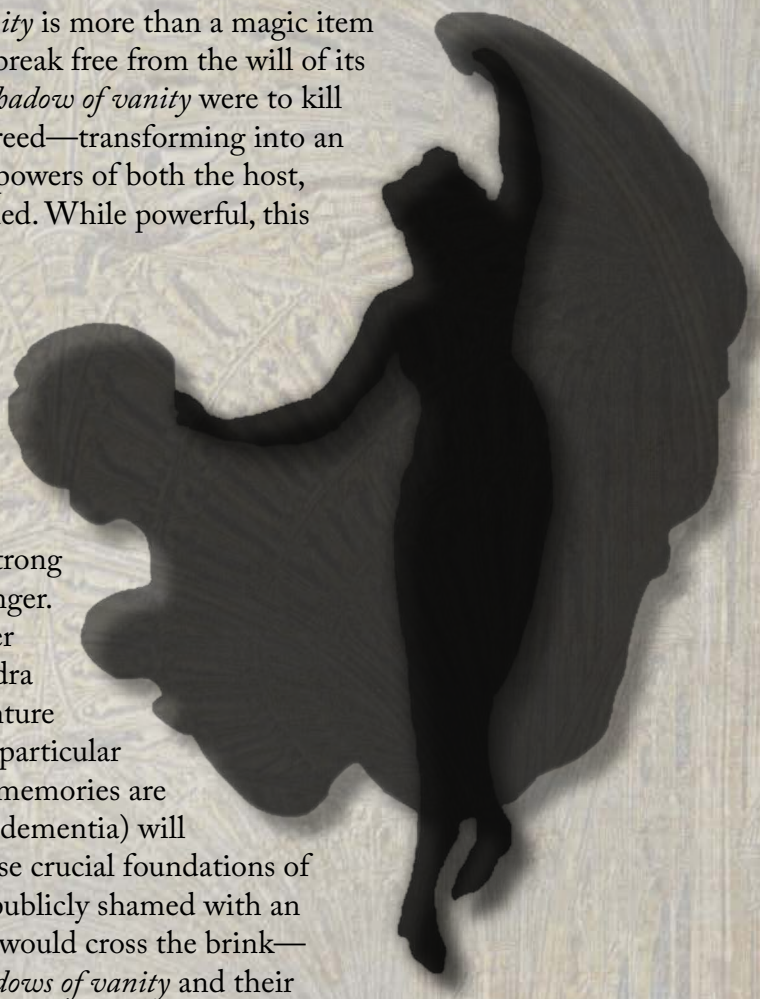
Any creature wearing one of these finely wrought cloaks casts no shadow and shows no signs of injury or aging no matter what trials or tribulations they might endure. The shadow of the wearer is instead folded into the cape of the cloak where it and a tiny sliver of the bearer's soul transforms the cloak into a sentient (although not quite living) creature that can transform itself into any object that casts a shadow (use the statistics for **medium construct**). A *shadow of vanity* is capable of acting as any tool kit or a weapon of Size ½ or smaller, hold one extra hand worth of items for its wearer, or take the help action (if it isn't taking another action).

Sentience *Shadows of vanity* are sentient objects, generally with Intellect 12 and Will 12. They have hearing and darksight. The wearer can communicate with a *shadow of vanity* telepathically, but the cloak can only communicate through gestures

Personality The personality of a *shadow of vanity* is generally a counterpoint to its original wearer, doing whatever it needs to in order to be a perfect servant—although sometimes a *shadow of vanity* and its wearer (most recent or otherwise) might disagree as to the best course of action.

Vain Shadows When a creature wearing a *shadow of vanity* commits suicide the two merge into an amalgam. This amalgam possesses the race talents, path talents, attacks, equipment, corruptions, and languages of the wearer, a **shadow**, and the *shadow of vanity*, using the highest attributes and Speeds between them. All effects and spells currently targeting the wearer end when the amalgam is formed. The amalgam has a Challenge Rating determined by the GM (informed by the circumstances and final statistics of the hybrid creature).

Destroying the Shadows of Vanity A *shadow of vanity* is more than a magic item and sentient of its own accord, however it cannot break free from the will of its wearer so long as its wearer lives. If a wearer of a *shadow of vanity* were to kill themselves the shadow trapped within would be freed—transforming into an undead creature of great malevolence with all the powers of both the host, the enchanted cloak, and that of a shadow combined. While powerful, this creature can be destroyed like any other.



The great work of Lellwyn Feathyrwal (the existence of *shadows of vanity* and the Shadowless Elite) is no different, though her own cloak is far more powerful. Driving the immortal paladin to suicide requires striking at her very heart, depriving her of those she loves most and collapsing any support structure that might draw her away from a self-inflicted death. Her faith is strong but Lellwyn's bonds to friends and family are stronger. By cutting down her loved ones (such as two of her great-great-great-great-great-grandchildren Deardra and Kristof; see the *Killing the Golden Twins* adventure on pages 299-311), and destroying her friends (in particular the Living Saint Hortensia, whose already fading memories are but a slight push from plummeting into incurable dementia) will completely obliterate Lellwyn's faith. Without these crucial foundations of her life, if she were to be defeated in combat and publicly shamed with an opposed Will challenge roll the immortal paladin would cross the brink—killing herself, sundering the links between all *shadows of vanity* and their wearers, and releasing a monstrous shadow creature that might be the most terrible evil Askis has ever seen.

BLOODSONG STORMS (TERTIARY SPHERE, ZAKUTHOMBO)

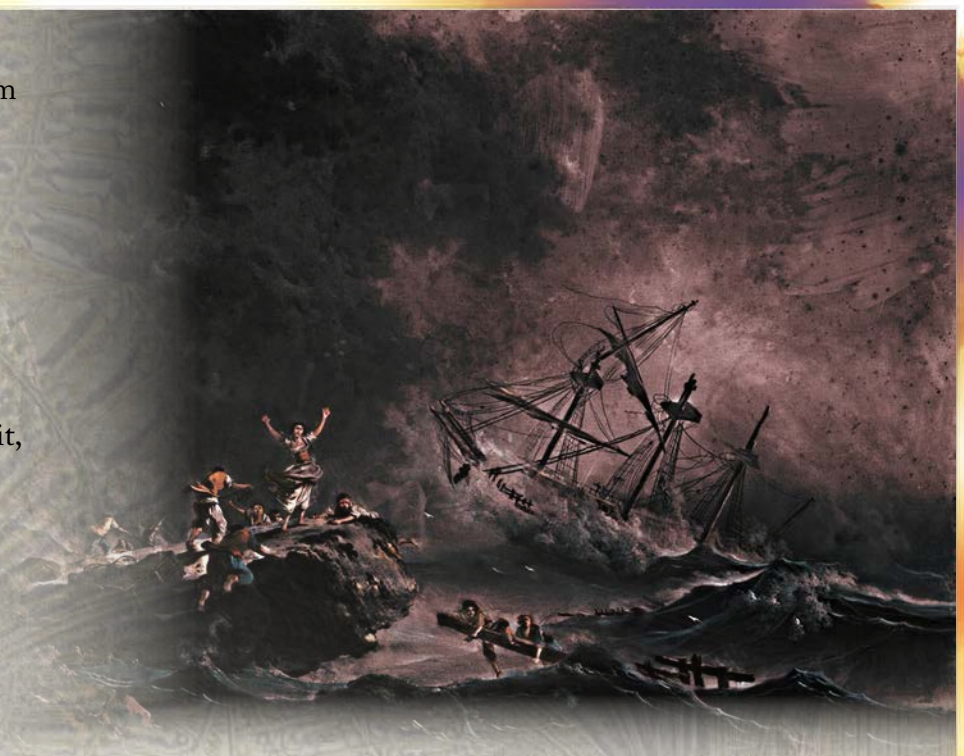
Sailors have always heard the song of the sea, a melodic rhythm borne on the crashing of waves and the rush of the wind. To many it was a simple metaphor for the ocean's soothing sound but to Mystral Farsong it was far more—she heard it as a melody that could be sung, strummed, and shared, turning the very weather into music. At first the harmony was wondrously mundane but as she grew to master her magic she in turn mastered the song, the sea and sky answering her every note.

Time passed and the Celestial Heroes grew in power, flushing out more evil creatures seeking to escape justice; some fled underground, others sought reform, and many retreated to the untamable seas to become pirates or fight for survival beneath the waves. Mystral penned a new song for these enemies of goodness, a living melody and her greatest masterpiece: the Bloodsong. The subrosa melody floats quietly out to sea, reverberating along the waves seeking the freshly-spilled blood of humanoids—and where it's search ends, it destroys those responsible.

Normally the Bloodsong is a calm and soothing enchantment, too quiet to be heard against the sound of the surf without a Perception challenge roll made with 2 banes. Anywhere it discovers blood in the salt water it increases in tempo and volume, churning the brine and gathering riotous clouds for a Bloodsong Storm. Where the magic that bears it flows like the sea, the Bloodsong Storm and its thunder are percussive, showing no mercy when it finds evil auras nearby blood spilt into one of Askis' oceans.

The Bloodsong Storm is 1-mile in diameter, can move up to 40 feet per round, and begins with at least moderate winds and light rain (but quickly escalates). After 1d6 minutes the winds pick up and 1d6 minutes after that the rain becomes heavy. Waves from the Bloodsong Storm become high enough to toss a ship about when another 2d6 minutes have passed, and any creature in the storm that fails an Agility challenge roll each round falls prone.

At this point any ships (and creatures) in the water beneath a Bloodsong Storm begin taking 1d6 damage at the end of each minute they remain in the area. Every 5 rounds beyond that the storm grows worse, adding 1 bane to the challenge roll to remain standing, and doing an additional 1d6 points of damage each minute to creatures and vehicles beneath it. When there are no longer any creatures or vessels beneath it, a Bloodsong Storm dissipates and over the next 10 minutes the waters calm.



Destroying the Bloodsong Storms

Permanently ending the Bloodsong Storms requires a counterpoint melody—the Dark Verse, a terrible composition sung in Vilespeech (and penned by an evil minstrel of at least 7th level). Simply singing the Dark Verse (with a successful Will challenge roll made with 2 banes) suppresses a Bloodsong Storm, but by making Mystral give voice to it instead of the Bloodsong (which she repeats on the shore each morning at dawn to retain the enchantment's full power), a Bloodsong Storm spawns and grows into a massive hurricane that wrecks everything in its path. This cyclone can be destroyed by any means that could stop a common hurricane, but Mystral can sing the Bloodsong at any time before the enlarged storm has wound down to regain control of the enchantment.

CHIME OF CONTESTS (TERTIARY SPHERE, ZAKUTHOMBO)

All of the Celestial Heroes are capable of incredible feats and possess great prowess but that does not mean they are all geniuses and Grukk the Axe is, as his name suggests, is not terribly sophisticated or nuanced. As his companions went about constructing their great works—Tucker negotiating with the powers of Refesina, Mystral composing her elegant Bloodsong—the half-orc searched through his adventuring cadre's treasure hoard, seeking out the most valuable metals and gems in their vaults. The fighter took them into the rim of the Sepitam Volcano, forging a huge cymbal made from adamantine, mithral, and jewels fused together by the heat of the planet and the strength of his soul into a luminant shield: the *Chime of Contests*.

Since then fellow Celestial Heroes (the dwarven cleric Gimli Stoneflask, the tiefling sorcerer Darrius Ventrelli, and the elven wizard Rankir Tarryndorn) have used their magics to enchant Grukk's creation, turning it into a proper artifact capable of sensing the entirety of the world and connecting the souls of those who have pledged themselves to the half-orc's crusade for honor. To become a part of this revered order is the lifelong ambition of many a young warrior, though most falter or fail in the final test for admission—holding their own in battle with Grukk for a full minute. Any that succeed (whether by guile or prowess) are brought into the fold, attuning themselves to the *Chime of Contests* and roaming the lands of Askis in search of its telltale toll.

When a sentient (Intellect of 3 or higher) creature fights dishonorably by ambushing a target without challenging them first, using dirty tactics, striking a helpless opponent, or other dishonorable conduct (at the discretion of the GM) the chime rings. This ringing is inaudible to most creatures but any Knight of the Chime within 1 mile hears a distinct ringing from that general direction. Powerful creatures (those with a Difficulty of 50 or higher, or 5 or more character levels) cause a chime powerful enough to be heard up to 10 miles away.

Knights of the Chime are honor-bound to investigate these chimes—and know unerringly the exact point where the chime sounded for 24 hours after they hear it. They have no supernatural means to reach these locations, nor to know precisely what happened, but their regimen of training makes them all capable survivalists, trackers, and investigators. These skills make the Knights of the Chime in high demand in settlements of every size as they solve mysteries, hunt down criminals, and generally serve the community as guardians and stewards.

It only happens rarely but should a Knight of the Chime ever act dishonorably, they immediately lose status as a Knight of the Chime and are chastised as Dishonorable Ones. The *Chime of Contests* immediately rings with a discordant tone, audible to Grukk himself and all members of the order within 50 miles of the site of the dishonor. Despite the protests of fellow Celestial Heroes, any Dishonorable Ones that refuse to atone and return to the ranks of the Knights of the Chime are executed on sight—if they can be found.

Destroying the Chime of Contests The *Chime of Contests* cannot be destroyed so long as Grukk's honor remains intact. It is said that if Grukk were ever to fight dishonorably that the artifact would begin to ring so loudly that every Knight of the Chime in Askis will hear it—warning them that their leader must atone. So long as it rings in this way the Chime of Contests can be shattered, although it is forged of enchanted adamantine (Defense 18, 100 Health, ignores the first 20 points of damage when it takes damage, and is immune to damage from spells and weapons that aren't magical).

Chime of Contests

The *Chime of Contests* is a huge cymbal forged primarily of adamantine and worked through with precious metals and gems of a staggering variety, filled with so much power that is shines with golden light (bright light within 20 yards and dim light within 30 yards). It constantly hums at an inaudible volume but any creature touching it feels a faint vibration. When the artifact is struck all creatures within 30 yards cannot lie for 10 minutes. During this time the creature who rang the *Chime of Contests* can call out a target they can see for single combat. Both the ringer of the chime and the target are immediately compelled to engage one another in combat—this can only be lifted once one of the creatures has drawn the blood of the other by dealing at least 1 point of damage. Alternatively, a creature can ring the *Chime of Contests* as an action, forcing an end to all hostilities within 40 yards. Any creature that doesn't succeed a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes is stunned for 1 minute, and any creature that doesn't succeed a second challenge roll is charmed for 1 minute by the creature that rang the artifact.

GIFT OF INAEQUA (GREATER SPHERE, ZAKUTHOMBO)

Tucker Quickfoot is known far and wide for discovering inaequa but despite his normal lack of modesty, he claims that even he isn't truly certain from whence the remarkable substance originally came—only that it was one of the many things discovered amidst the hordes of foul knowledge that were uncovered in the process of purging evil from Zakuthombo. The halfling did not develop the engines that produce energy from nothing but inaequa, powering the technology of the world without pollution or dangerous fuel sources. This is of course what the sages and scholars of Askis have been led to believe; in actuality the power behind civilization is borne from the divine halfling's actions on Refesina, his work helping to engineer the *Torquem Machina*, and his invisible hand pushing the machinery to become omnipresent across the globe. Today only Tucker Quickfoot and Darrius Ventrelli know the full truth of its origins and they are quick to dissuade or outright silence anyone who pries too deeply (including Varrus Goodwin and any other of their fellow demigods that learn of what inaequa actually is).

Fortunately very few care of how inaequa came to be—it has utterly transformed the world and continues to do so with every passing day. Vehicles with inaquea engines have almost entirely replaced beasts of burden, tools powered by finger-sized inaequa batteries have reshaped the face of domestic and professional life, and weapons enhanced with divine energy have changed warfare and the hunt for evil.

While it has corporeal form, the power locked within inaequa exists just barely behind normal reality. Engines that use it as fuel collect and refine this energy through sieves, straining out inaequa as though it floated in the air. The process of creating a sieve is relatively simple—amateur mages can create such a device from one of a dozen freely available blueprints, and nonmagical craftsmen can fashion entirely mundane sieves through the use of exacting mixes of rare metals believed to harmonize precisely with the energy they are sifting for.

Inaequa may be plentiful but it is not equally accessible by all. Most sieves function at full capacity only in the presence of good-aligned creatures. Neutral and unaligned creatures can generally access only limited amounts of energy, usually the power stored within a device's batteries. Should they get their hands on such machines evil-aligned creatures cause them to malfunction and overcharge—rather than performing as designed they work unpredictably or not at all, possibly overloading to spectacular effect before tearing themselves apart.

Destroying the Gift of Inaequa The introduction of inaequa to Askis may seem to have only changed the face of the world but Tucker's "discovery" has fundamentally reshaped the nature of reality. By replacing the Handler of Threads with the *Torquem Machina* the very underlying forces of the multiverse have been subtly altered, a precise change that if edged any greater could lead to the eventual annihilation of everything on the Material Plane, and perhaps beyond—and of course, with every passing day that balance drifts by a hairsbreadth.

Several herculean tasks must be accomplished in order to destroy the Gift of Inaequa without also destroying all of creation. **First, Mpahy the First Kyton must be found.** The original Handler of Threads lives still, revelling in their still-newfound freedom. Like a primordial child Mpahy flits from world to world and plane to plane, often mercurial and fleeting. All of these must be accomplished with the utmost care for any tampering to the already strained integral gears of the *Torquem Machina* could cause the relic-machine to tear itself apart, doing irreversible and untold damage to the multiverse.

Once found Mpahy must be convinced to reclaim their place a Handler of Threads. The near-deific figure remains weary from of aeons of labor and embraces their new "duty" as they explore and experience all that exists. No less than an Intellect challenge roll made with 3 banes is required to have Mpahy even consider returning to their position, no matter how dire the situation is explained to be. If statistics for Mpahy are necessary, use a kyton (page 244) with the angelus template (page 252), celestial templates (page 252), and no changes to alignment.

Next the *Torquem Machina* must be located, in whole. Although this construct is titanic its true form has dispersed across the generally inaccessible plane of Refesina, and the six integral gears of the divine contraption must be collected together before the machine will manifest in its full glory (each protected by kyton defenders; pages 244–246).

Finally, the *Torquem Machina* must be destroyed and Mpahy must take its place at the heart of Refesina. The powerful relic reaches through all planes to the chains that hold reality together and is not just some physical thing to be shattered—each of the six integral gears must simultaneously be struck by potent relic weapons in order to permanently destroy the *Torquem Machina*. At this point, the cycle of life and death immediately grinds to a halt across the Material Plane; without Mpahy to resume their work, not only does death become impossible but the resulting buildup of inaequa both in Refesina and on the Material Plane puts both dimensions in danger of quickly being torn apart!

Vessyda wakes up to the steam-whistles of the few factories still in full operation inside of Gratia, the sun's golden luminance spilling through her apartment's bedroom window. With the day as vibrant as always she is much the same, cheerfully smiling as she stretches in her terry cloth pajamas and saunters into the bathroom to clean out her teeth. Looking out over the city's bustling streets she sees others beginning their days as well, spotting a few of her neighbors and peers already on their way to work and she smiles at the industriousness of the people at large.

Pulling on a clean blouse and a comfortable pair of pants she steps into her small kitchenette, taking two slices of bread from a plate in the cabinet and putting them into her newly bought frena before pulling its lever down to toast them. After turning on the gas stove's lighter to get her morning coffee brewed, Vessyda unscrews the baca jam she picked up from the market last week and takes in a whiff of its pungent, fruity aroma, savoring its sweetness.

Suddenly a thunderous crack erupts from outside to ruin her perfect start to the day. As the boom echoes across the tall buildings of Gratia and down the geothermal vents towards the mountains to the east she runs to her bedroom window, looking out over the pristine buildings and bustling crowds—what greets her is bloodshed and chaos. A few blocks away she can see the largest of the shrines to Sanctus Betucia billowing with thick black smoke as survivors stream out of the building, but the bodies of the maimed and slaughtered littered all over the streets are what take her breath away.

A metallic clack from behind her startles Vessyda as the bread toasted in her frena pops into the air, the mug of coffee in her hands dropping to spill onto the capra fur rug her parents gave her last year on Magister's Day, ruining it. Grabbing the food off the counter she stuffs it into her mouth while hastily pulling on her boots, snatching up her purse and rushing to the atollo to offer help as fast as possible. The elevator's car is crowded with residents dressed just as hastily, not quite prepared for the difficult day to come, and Vessyda nods to a few of them as she steps inside and the doors close.

By the time she reaches the street the blaring sirens of hospitia inaequa chariots can be heard in the distance and dozens of other citizens are already trying to help the wounded. Vessyda's heart breaks as she spots the still form of a mother from an apartment across the hall, a child crying on the ground nearby. For the next half hour she applies pressure to dangerous injuries, helps moves the crippled into gurneys, and prays for the dead before continuing on her way to work with a heaviness in her heart.

Although everyone in the office smiles as Vessyda shuffles in, she can't help but notice that the cheerful expressions of her coworkers are a forced thing. They all keep busy throughout the day of course—their noses in requisition forms, trade permits, and scriptographs—because the pall of the attack that morning is palpable in the air, everyone's ears are keen to the radio waves and any reports regarding the capture of the criminals accused of desecrating the High Shrine of Sanctus Betucia.

No such news came before the end of the day however, and still pained by sorrow she makes her way to the vectio to stop by the grocer, get home, prepare dinner, and hope for a better day tomorrow. Waiting on the sidewalk with a gaggle of other workers, she looks up at the sky and sees the golden radiance of the sun playing on the many other shrines and impressive structures throughout Gratia and her heart swells—Vessyda decides that the Celestial Heroes have brought the world so very far and that true peace must be within reach. As the trolley approaches she looks up and appreciates the confidence in the wide grin of the new driver at the controls. She returns his smile as she steps up into the car and though up close the fellow seems slightly anxious, Vessyda was nervous at her first day of work too, and with the way he seems to stumble with controls she determines that must be the case for him as well.

Nothing to worry about—an odd end to an all too exciting, dangerous, and dramatic day.

OURANIOS The Contiguous Continent

For the most part the days of Ouranios' citizens are predictable and bland, filled with the monotony of commerce, school or work, and complacently subdued recreation. Industry isn't what it used to be on the Contiguous Continent but it is still more prevalent than anywhere else in Askis, keeping folks busy working to gradually improve society with products and services that become incrementally better with every passing year. Life in these lands is one of contentment and repetition, and little does not happen that is not expected so the recent rash of violent resistance to the world order has shook the populace—but enlivened them as well. Newspapers are printing articles of intrigue now rather than bland reports of projected work quotas and lackluster sporting leagues, and though the danger before Ouranios is daunting the excitement breaking the tedium of their lives has a certain potentially disastrous appeal...

Table: Settlements

Settlement Size	Signifier Words	Signifier Modifier	Gritty	Standard	Populous (Askis)	Marketplace
Hamlet	1	+1	6–12	10–19	25–49	—
Outpost	2	+1	13–24	20–49	50–99	1d6 common potions
Village	3	+2	25–49	50–79	100–499	2d6 common potions, 1 common magic item
Town	4	+2	50–99	80–149	500–1,999	2d6 common potions, 1d6 common magic items
City	5	+3	100–299	150–499	2,000-4,999	Various common potions, 2d6 common magic items, 1d6 uncommon magic items
Metropolis	6	+4	300+	500+	5,000+	Various common potions, 3d6 common magic items, 2d6 uncommon magic items, 1d6 rare magic items

Marketplace Settlements that are without a hedge wizard, particularly wealthy merchant, or magic item shop may still have a few unique items of value owned by retired adventurers or kept as treasured family heirlooms. In these instances it may require more than gold for a PC to acquire a magic item but it gives a general measure of how likely the party is to find one.

Settlement Size Depending on the type of campaign (gritty, standard, or populous), the size of a given settlement can change. The world of Askis is predicated to standard or populous games.

Signifier Words and Modifier These are what make one settlement unique from another. The GM should choose no more signifier words for a settlement than listed on the table above, but they need not select the maximum amount either. Signifier words are chosen from the following list (although the GM may use any they deem fit): *Aging, Angling, Arctic, Ardent, Aristocratic, Artistic, Blessed, Bureaucratic, Canals, Capital, Chaotic, Coastal, Competitive, Content, Cramped, Crossroads, Defensible, Defensive, Disorganized, Dispersed, Elevated, Enchanted, Free, Friendly, Generous, Gourmet, Hardworking, Heavenly, Historical, Holy, Humble, Idyllic, Industrious, Insular, Isolated, Laboring, Lakeside, Landmark, Lawful, Leering, Luxurious, Militaristic, Mountainous, Mountainside, Natural, Nature, Naval, Neutral, New, Odorous, Old, Old Fashioned, Orderly, Pious, Political, Populous, Productive, Progressive, Remote, Resilient, Resort, Resourceful, Respected, Resplendent, Responsive, Riverside, Rumor-Mongering, Salt of the Earth, Seaport, Seaside, Sleek, Sprawling, Spread Out, Storied, Structured, Subterranean, Technological, Towered, Towering, Tradehub, Unusual, Urban, Waystation, Wealthy, Weathered, White*.

Whenever the GM feels that a PC (or NPC) is making an ability check where one or more signifier words would apply, the Signifier Modifier is either added as a bonus or subtracted as a penalty (depending on whether or not the task is aligned with or against the Signifier Word).

Kaelesti, Capital of Ouranios

Blessed, Capital, Heavenly, Historical, Orderly, Wealthy

As the capital of the first continent championed by the Celestial Heroes, the metropolis of Kaelesti is truly a sight to behold—the countless statues arrayed throughout the streets and its soaring concrete skyscrapers raise the hearts of its citizens to ever loftier heights, promoting goodwill almost by their very presence. It's said that eventually all of the steel equos in Ouranios ultimately end here and dozens of rail lines converge within the city so it's certainly possible for the aphorism to be true.

Even before the preponderance of railways leading to and from it were constructed Kaelesti benefited from a great deal of trade and commerce thanks to the Laevis River to the south—and the Duertek Mercantile Consortium. Founded by Glorisdrana Duertek before the Age of Discord, the esteemed mercantile company has existed since before the Celestial Heroes and is lauded as the finest business venture to ever grace Askis. The first steel equos to set off from Kaelesti did so laden with Duertek goods, and their continued influence and investments into the city have grown the capital of Ouranios into the wondrous testament to civilization it is today.

More importantly it is the home of the Order of the Shining Stone: the devout dwarven cleric Gimli Stoneflask, the silent human monk Varrus Goodwin, and the elven master wizard Rankir Tarryndorn. The trio fortified the settlement from attack early on and it has weathered numerous simple assaults, the evil of Askis blunting its teeth here while more cunning villains reserved strength in Samovi or Zakuthombo. After numerous attacks Stoneflask drafted more defensible plans and the solid walls put up by his ancestors still stand today, concentric circular barriers surrounding the original districts and blocking any straight roadways directly into the city. The exception to this would be the steel equos rails that criss-cross the settlement, weaving through broad avenues cut out of the bulwarks in the fourth, fifth, and sixth rings of the city. Over the years Kaelesti has added more rings of construction to accommodate a growing populace, building upon and enhancing what was there before.

Protego Palace

In the very heart of Kaelesti sits the same fortress built by the Celestial Heroes when they first adopted the settlement as their home. It has become the palace of Gimli Stoneflask and Rankir Tarryndorn—as well as the Duertek Mercantile Consortium (Varrus roams where he likes across the Contiguous Continent, and elsewhere). Its upper levels are restricted to authorized persons (usually Numcustos Mysterium, Magi Primaria, and Solis Occasum) but the business occupies the remainder of the impressive building and is always welcome to words of a profitable venture.

Ecclesia District (2nd Ring)

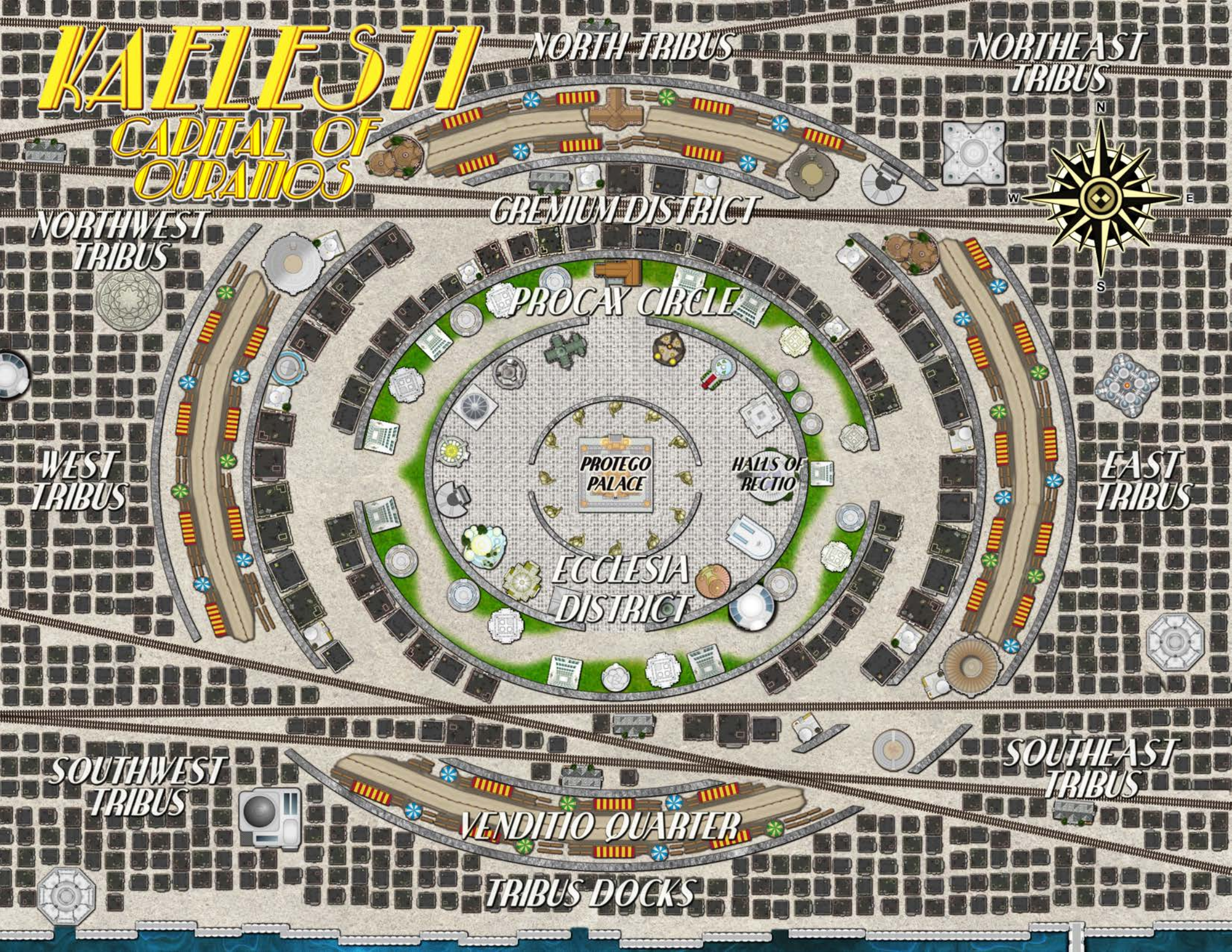
The first ring of Kaelesti is bisected into two rough hemispheres of the city's oldest and grandest buildings, many of which are shrines to Askis' saints (most prominently Sanctus Breila, Saint Ludovicus, Sanctus Hariusalp, Sanctus Phygia, and Saint Castorius) or the Celestial Heroes (Gimli, Rankir, and Varrus in particular). These are built on the foundations of the militaristic fortresses that sat here long ago, a few of which are kept standing—some are used as museums for displaying historical artifacts from Ouranios' past, others reinforced and gutted to make space for theater stages and cinemas galleries. Most famous among them are the Halls of Rectio, a massive indoor amphitheater where ambassadors from the Contiguous Continent's city-states tend to matters of governance in full view of the public.

Procax Circle (3rd Ring)

Manses and luxurious apartment buildings line the paved roads weaving around the homes of Kaelesti's elite, interspersed by parks and high-end restaurants. Ambassadors of other Ouranios territories (as well as representatives of Samovi and Zakuthombo) dwell beside titans of industry and socialites entrenched into the tapestry of the city centuries ago, though all are welcome to the expensive boutiques and eateries squeezed in amongst the ornate habitations.

Gremium District (4th Ring)

While not as densely packed as the Tribus Burroughs the neighborhoods of the Gremium District are just as charming—tenement buildings are more common here where most of the city's middle class live in blocks of narrow streets just large enough for one or two people to walk


KAELESTI
CAPITAL OF OURANOS
NORTH TRIBUS
NORTHEAST TRIBUS
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S
GREMIUM DISTRICT
NORTHWEST TRIBUS
PROCAX CIRCLE
PROTEGO PALACE
HALLS OF RECTIO
WEST TRIBUS
EAST TRIBUS
ECCLESIA DISTRICT
SOUTHWEST TRIBUS
SOUTHEAST TRIBUS
VENDITIO QUARTER
TRIBUS DOCKS

abreast, a wide avenue between the inner and outer wall of the fourth ring. Several factories have been constructed in the buildings of this part of the metropolis to enhance worker efficiency but they are amidst the plethora of crafters in the trade guilds established in Kaelestis hundreds of years in the past, still working in the same buildings as their predecessors (usually in the basement or on the ground floor)

Venditio Quarter (5th Ring)

Merchants and traders were pushed out to the boundaries of the city until architectural developments made vertical expansion more feasible, prompting Gimli Stoneflask to limit the size of this area once it had come to take up too much of the settlement. Bazaars of many kinds line the wide dirt pathways of the fifth ring (the high traffic of the area quickly proved any permanent walkways would be pulverized too rapidly to keep repaired) and some are resplendent multilevel affairs, usually connected directly to the homes of prominent shopkeepers—while theft may not be as much of a danger as it once was their personal guards usually live there as well. It's said that if one has time enough to run the full circle around Kaelesti, they are certain to find whatever it is they're looking to buy.

Tribus Burroughs (6th Ring)

Surrounding Kaelestis on all sides are the tenement housing of the working class generally clustered near factories that employ the majority of the city's populace. Inventors come from all over the world to see these living relics of history at work, taking home the refined and perfected lessons garnered in long-running production facilities. The capital of Ouranios exports a wide and evenly-distributed array of goods ranging from specific parts for assembly elsewhere (in the city or beyond) to completely finished products like toilets, kitchen appliances (such as frena), forever lights, and more.

Sanctus Breila, Sister of Battle Protection, War
Dedit Partem (Goodwin 12:4) After the first hour of dueling they were exhausted but continued unabated —until a lurking scoundrel used the distraction of their fighting to purloin from a nearby merchant. In an instant each broke from the combat to pursue the thief, laughing in camaraderie as they realized that in truth they had a measure by which they were certainly already equals.

Saint Ludovicus, Defender of the Meek
City, Protection
Divina Cartis (Stoneflask 2:13) Cowardly brigands had robbed Ludovicus of his husband and children but even before their blood dried, he was already rallying neighbors and friends alike to resist such butchery, inspiring his fellow citizens to rout the murderous element of their home. Though it ultimately cost him his life, his efforts were not in vain.

Sanctus Hariusalp, Healer of Hearts
Life, Protection
Gaduis Examino (Stoneflask 7:13) Distraught and nearly broken after the sorcerer's destructive magics completed their fell work, the Celestial Hero Gimli was on the precipice of doom. Hariusalp saw past his proud demeanor and she reached out to the dwarf through story, speaking until her voice cracked from thirst, and in his reverie Cleric Stoneflask found himself anew.

Sanctus Phygia Celestial Bureaucracy, Trickery
Sacras Litras (Stoneflask 15:6) After a rival dwarven hero shorn off some of Stoneflask's beard in the night, the next day Phygia scoured the streets of Kaelesti until she had tracked the thief down, stealing the beard back. That night as Gimli slept, tossing and turning in turmoil, she stealthily tied the strands back to their place—finishing her work just as he awoke.

Saint Castorius, Keeper of Homes City, Nature
Lex Altiores (Tarryndorn 3:15) As the citizens and even defenders of Kaelesti panicked, Castorius remained calm, studying the swarms of insects flowing over the city. After merely a few minutes of tinkering in his shop he emerged, a strange metal club in hand. Forcefully swinging it into the ground, the halfling produced a low hum in the air that c aused the invading insects to flee in fear!

Saint Milorius, Patron of Bookmakers
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Integrum Opinionem (Tarryndorn 4:20) Every day wore upon him greater than the last but Milorius worked upon the presses until the bones of his hands cracked and continued laboring even then. They came upon his body in the morning, clutching the first of the holy books of our lands between his broken digits.

Alacer, City of Saints

Aging, Holy, Idyllic, Resort, Seaside

While it has modern amenities and the occasional newly built structure, most of Alacer's streets are lined with aging townhouses and just as the aphorism claims there's a shrine on every corner. Set in an appealing, warmly temperate climate and blessed with so many places of worship, it is a popular retirement destination and the most favored of the Celestial Heroes' mortal kin live out the last of their days in its warm, holy streets or the Alacer Heavenly Estates. As such it has oft been the target of their enemies and dozens of heroes have championed Alacer over the years, each enjoying at least one monument somewhere in the City of Saints. Those listed below are only the most prominent of the many enshrined within and no other settlement boasts as many sacrificed defenders of note.

Folks from the City of Saints are often as ambitious as they are pious, taking the countless lessons and adages taught to them through the settlement's numerous shrines and festivals to heart, hoping to one day attain a measure of divinity for themselves. The high percentage of elders in this city-state results in lots of queues so Alaceans are used to waiting and exceptionally patient, sometimes to a fault—they can easily be considered lazy, utterly complacent until an external force prompts them to take immediate action.

Sanctus Ampelisca, She of the Golden Panacea
Knowledge, Life
Integrum Opinionem (Goodwin 13:14) Armed only with her faith Ampelisca descended under the city, witnessing the unholy sickness lurking beneath Alacer. By the grace of her sacrifice the priestess purged it from the face of Askis—at the cost of her very soul being forever extinguished.

Saint Charimides, His Silent Word
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Memoria Vivorum (Goodwin 8:23) Exiled for his crimes of heretical devotion, Charimides was not deterred for he knew the truest faiths of the Celestial Heroes deep in his heart. For four score he spread the word of Varrus to heathens afar, sharing the Divine Monk's gospel beyond Ouranios and across all of Askis despite the dark shadow of his shame.

Saint Edwardus, Slayer of the Crimson Lions
Light, War
Gaduis Examino (Stoneflask 3:34) And lo, Edwardus carried his sword into the field and gloriously drew the beasts to him as the kindle does fire. One and all they leapt to attack, their shed blood scorching the air, but the stalwart knight's sacrifice was not in vain—at its final hour, Alacer was saved by the arrival of he of the Axe, felling the beasts with divine slashes and the fiery vengeance of a friend forlorn.

Sanctus Hortensia, Arch-Bishop of the 3rd Paene & the Living Saint Knowledge, Light
Sacras Litras (Fethyrwal 4:12) "What could an unsightly woman such as thee offer?" the angelic warrior asked, her eyes wandering. Hortensia snapped her fingers by her ear and as Lellwyn turned, her hands were on the Celestial Heroes' sword-hilt. "Beauty must be cared for and maintained to remain, child—not all is forever and every living thing is worthy of love while it lasts."

Saint Lyconedes, Charitable Hand of the Stouts
Celestial Bureaucracy, Light
Lex Altiores (Stoneflask 13:15) His face sallow and gaunt, the ribs of his great dwarven bones clear beneath his robes, Lyconedes still would not yield. "I sense a child in Alacer hungers still and I will not eat until they have first had their fill."

Sanctus Iosepha, She of the Persistent Voice
Light, Tempest
Verbum Deorum (Tarryndorn 2:34) Wreathed in the flames of heretics and assailed by fleets trailing to the horizon, many thought Alacer doomed. Courageous of heart, Iosepha ascended to the heights of the city and sang, the very power of Mystral Farsong channeled through her voice to ring far and clear—a song of victory so beautiful it raised the hearts and sword-arms of all, dashing the invading warlord's fearful siege before it could begin.

Sanctus Tedusia, Walker of the Clouds
Nature, Trickery
Libris Bonitatem (Tarryndorn 16:24) The vile bats descended upon Alacer with the setting sun again and again, bringing with them fear and strife. For three score Tedusia chased them atop her great eagle by the light of the moon until finally finding their cavern lair, the creatures numbering beyond count. Finding no other exit she crept to the entrance and upon witnessing the setting sun, collapsed it to entomb both the winged terrors and herself.

Bellua, Baron City

Hardworking, Odorous, Old Fashioned, Salt of the Earth, Spread Out

Steed barons and farming syndicates are the lifeblood of Bellua, coming from all across the fertile plains between the Sudor and Laevis Rivers. The entire settlement is a place predicated to beasts in one manner or another—its ports are filled with livestock bound for elsewhere on Ouranios' coast or a new shore on another continent, auctioneers and trainers provide farmers headed home with plenty of worthwhile new stock, and all is done so under the watchful eyes of the Knights Positus. Riding the finest horses in all of the Contiguous Continent, they can spur their mounts to be nearly as fast as an inaequa-chariot when necessary and have ridden across the pastures of their charges for over a millennium.

With its economic backbone in the trade of livestock Bellua is widely spread out and the constant trod of heavy hooves has made it difficult to create infrastructure for easier travel; in short, Belluans have all done a lot of walking around. Most like to sing as they go and those that don't spawn melodies have a few tricks to entertain while making their way from place to place. There is also a pronounced love for animals among them and despite a preponderance of cheaply available meat, it isn't uncommon for a Belluan to refuse to consume another creature's flesh.

Sanctus Vipstana, Saint of Animals
Celestial Bureaucracy, Nature
Libris Bonitatem (Goodwin 13:4) No taller than a halfling, the young half-elf confronted the stampede of livestock and her very presence calmed all the beasts. It was then that Varrus knew Vipstana would become a powerful druid and ally of the Order of the Shining Stone.

Sanctus Umbrenia, The Furious Saint Nature, War
Divina Cartis (Stoneflask 6:14) And lo the brave warrior was swallowed whole by Kriygizantri, the massive sea beast's jaws snapping up half of Umbrenia's ship along with her. Though thought to have perished in the brutal attack, in mere moments she emerged from the dying creature's enormous belly, carving her way out of it with nary but a broken crossbow bolt!

Burgus, Town of the Pass

Defensible, Friendly, Isolated, Tradehub

Tucked away high in the Northern Inexoribalis Mountains lay the settlement of Burgus, once a small and quaint village far from civilization. Though the nearest rail station is still an hour away by inaequa-chariot, since the disappearance of the stone landmasses that isolated it the tracks of steel equos lain through Ianuae Pass have brought commerce and technology turning it into a proper town. The local mountaineers and miners have turned tapped excavations into ski resorts for the rich, offering accommodations all around Burgus that are becoming more and more common as the years pass.

A strong work ethic from centuries of mining and mountaineering is instilled into the culture of Burgus, making people from there a motivated and straightforward lot. Burgusers are keen to make sure they use their time in a way they think is valuable—when they relax with a drink they take down several flagons, when they go to work they keep at it until the job is done, and they are stubbornly persistent after setting their mind on accomplishing something. This has made for some trouble in Kaelesti's halls of governance as usually the ambassador from the Town of the Pass is the most unyielding.

Sanctus Varia, Lady of the Mountain
Celestial Bureaucracy, Nature
Dedit Partem (Stoneflask 4:9) After days in seclusion working blessed magics gifted to her by the Upper Planes, the half-orc oracle strode into the Inexoribalis Mountain Range. Her followers witnessed in shock and awe as she morphed into the stone just moments before an entire mountain disappeared, creating one of the most significant of the Nine Wonders of Devotion: Ianuae Pass, allowing the Contiguous Continent to truly become connected.

Saint Philoxenus, Patron of Scholars
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Integrum Opinionem (Tarryndorn 11:12) Traumatized by the tragic passing of his father when one of the mad philosopher Xantilica's destructive warping patterns threw him into the path of a steel equos, Philoxenus spent his years learning their intricacies. Only in the culmination of decades of research did he succeed, quelling the rogue apostate's curse—though some claim to see them still on mornings where the dew is thick.

Ductus, Village of Beauty
Artistic, Holy, Landmark
Nearly all of the homes of the Village of Beauty are built along the shore of Aestua Lake where it meets the Laevis River so its residents are well-versed with sailing and comfortable on a boat. The best water-worthy inaequa-powered craft in the world are constructed in Ductus and sent downriver for expeditions from Gratia or put onto sailing vessels for safe passage to inland waterways on the other continents of Askis. Ships and engineering are the backbone of the economy here but the wealth these industries have wrought left a haven of artistic patronage in their wake, turning every street and facade into a work of art.

People from Ductus are good observers and insightful, frequently taking in the whole of their surroundings with an eye for beauty. They are also known to have a penchant for traveling, ever seeking more of Askis' majesty to inspire worthwhile artwork to display at home. Standards for displaying pieces or performances on the streets of the Village of Beauty are extremely high and there's no telling how far a Ducti will go to find the right stroke of creativity.

Saint Lorar, Patron of the Pen
Celestial Bureaucracy, Light
Verbum Deorum (Tarryndorn 2:16) Despite the elven wizard's protests, Lorar tarried behind them and wrote every word and deed the gnome witnessed —making his the first mortal hands to inscribe the holy doings of the Celestial Heroes.

Sanctus Antipho, Saint of Travelers
Celestial Bureaucracy, Cog
Libris Bonitatem (Tarryndorn 14:7) Blessed with a truly brilliant mind, the dwarf constructed the complex scheme for the same tracks used by countless steel equos all at once in the Rotundus Railway, connecting all of Ouranios by way of the wondrous machines in the largest of the Nine Wonders of Devotion.

Exortus, Faith Town
Insular, Holy, Mountainous, Resplendent
A massive concrete dam protects the elevated city of Exortus from flooding in the melting snows from the Southern Inexoribalis Mountains, and only a few buildings sit as high above Ouranios as the engineering edifice. The most famous of these is the Repository of Faiths, a solid building carved from the rock to house relics from the lost religions of the old world. The Inquistion, The Ministry, and researchers sanctioned by either live inside of its confines, studying the artifacts to better understand the nature of divinity in Askis. A few nobles and wealthy industrialists are their neighbors but the remainder of the settlement's citizens dwell in the shadow of Exortus Dam, many of them traveling downriver to fish in Lake Praestri or taken by steel plaustra to farmwork north of town.

There is a quiet, contemplative nature unique to Exortians—they take life in stride, neither panicked by tragedy nor overwhelmed by success. On the whole they're known to be tough as well, able to travel easily on a light stomach and not in the slightest bit afraid of doing some hard work. More than anything they are pious and emboldened by their faith; Exortus' ancient past is ensconced in countless primitive belief systems and while they may no longer be prescient, the cultural tendency to lean into religion and ceremony remains.

Saint Acroteleutium, The Forsaken Saint
Arcana, Life
Dedit Partem (Tarryndorn 4:1) Even the pious may err. One of Rankir's earliest lessons in this came from

the suffering of Acroteleutium, a man condemned for witchcraft and burned at the stake. The dwarf survived, bearing horrible scarring from the flames, but spent the rest of his days spreading the gospel of peace and understanding.

Saint Sceledrus, Drowner of Heresy
Celestial Bureaucracy, Nature
Gaduis Examino (Stoneflask 8:6) Having blared the signal to move to high ground the dwarf let loose the dam, flooding the abattoirs of the apostate Ignifacus. Thousands of his heretical scrolls were destroyed and the traitorous wizard with them, and so impressed were the people of Exortus that they then went on to demand he rule over the city—which he did for five decades of peace and prosperity unmatched since.

Fluctus, Shifting City of Law

Ardent, Lawful, Resilient, Responsive, Structured
By many measures Fluctus is an ideal location to build a city; the climate is temperate, the nearby land is mostly flat and rich in minerals and food, and the shore provides access from the water allowing for swift travel. Despite these boons however, the location also sits on a fault line and devastating earthquakes are common. Seismic activity can topple buildings, injure people, and even cause the tsunamis that the city is named for. Yet the people of Fluctus are uncowed by even the worst of nature's wrath—their home has been built to be strong, yet flexible.

Fluctians respond quickly and predictably to danger (natural or not), choosing to be more reactive than proactive. They often look to Varrus Goodwin's teachings in times of trouble, and sometimes he's even appeared to silently guide the city to safety and spiritual enlightenment alike. Near the center of the settlement is the Monastery of Law: a ten story tower that sways gracefully in even the most catastrophic earthquake. The building reaches as far underground as it does above and at high noon, the mostly open atrium in the center allows natural sunlight to filter deep beneath the ground where it is met by a massive prism to illuminate the darkest tunnels, which collapse and reform beneath the city almost as though they were living things attempting to resist the order placed upon them.

Sanctus Exceta, The Core of the City Forge, Protection
Memoria Vivorum (Goodwin 9:2) The tower bent in the wind and the very ground pitched beneath it. Exceta struck down her feet and gave her life to transform into a mighty obelisk a hundred feet tall and to this day, she stands tall at the heart of the city.

Nort Salvus, Steward of the Living Dead
Grave, Trickery
Divina Cartis (Goodwin 13:18) Nightly, the dead did walk. They could not be slain, as any blow dealt against them would appear on the living. Nort drove them to a cliff and then into a bottomless pit so that they could never again rise nor return to plague the land of the living.

Sanctus Visellia, Lady of the Wandering Scale
Protection, War
Integrum Opinionem (Stoneflask 3:14) Unsure what to do with her capacity for violence so at odds with her desire for peace, the half-orc walked the roadways of Askis in search of injustice. With nothing more than her robe and a wooden staff, she righted wrongs and enriched the lives of everyone she met until she could travel no more, retiring in Fluctus to the delight of countless traders and travelers she'd helped throughout her journeys.

Saint Eutychus, Patron of the Pen
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Libris Bonitatem (Tarryndorn 2:16) Even with all of the hapless victims of Nezarikk's Possessing Pens imprisoned, the apostate's writings continued to flourish until Eutychus solved the mystery of her blasphemous pamphlets and saved Fluctus from her corrupting influence.

Gratia, South Port City

Arctic, Generous, Resourceful, Seaport, Technological
The coldest city in Askis is also one of its most advanced, its harbors filled with powered boats and the whole of Gratia heated through thermal piping that leads deep into the Southern Inexoribalis Mountains. Unlike nearly every other major coastal settlement in the world, the threat of pneumavores is nonexistent here—none of the creatures swim south of Ouranios, making the southern pole's waters the most sought after region for discovery. Since the Celestial Heroes rise to power and

exploration into these frigid waves, sailors discovered that ice brought back from the furthest reaches of the landless ocean—*glacies ice*—takes far longer to cool than normal. Magnates have seized on this remarkable resource, creating a whole industry of ice barging to collect the precious anomaly for use in manufacturing, home appliances, and more.

Gratians are as kind as they are clever; in the South Port City it is taught that it's better to feed a neighbor than to fall asleep with a fat belly. Its citizens are taught to make the most out of everything, leaving nothing to waste unless it is absolutely necessary. Sometimes this leads them to use machinery that seems unsafe or to be seen as hoarders, but they consider themselves a resource as well—when something has lost its use they don't waste energy lugging it around.

Saint Stasimus, Saint of Sacrifice Death, War
Angelorum Nuntius (Tarryndorn 11:13) The brave knight marched into Hell itself, battling back a legion of devils attempting to claw their way through into Askis as the ritual neared completion. His blade and blood bought the time the elven wizard needed, sealing away the evil dimension from our own forever more.

Sanctus Betucia, Saint of Sailors Nature, Protection
Lex Altiores (Goodwin 2:16) Maddened by fear and fire, the captain of the pirates downed a foul magenta elixir and exploded into a freakish thing more sea monster than man, a writhing mass of tentacles that flung three sailors overboard with but a swipe. Betucia was unhindered however and with flaming sword in hand she met him head on, falling into the icy waters to die but saving the ship of survivors she had fought so hard to free from the buccaneers' clutches.

Kalator, Mountainbay Town

Content, Defensible, Humble, Storied

In the days of yore pirates frequently made port in Kalator, fleeing to the network of sea caves nearby when capture or danger reared. These ancient coves and tunnels made it the last settlement in Ouranios to succumb to the Order of the Shining Stone—some of the original inhabitants' caverns are still unknown to law enforcement today, rumored to hold hordes of ill-gotten gains. Getting into the navigable entrances is a difficult task however, requiring skill and stealth to sneak beneath the notice of guards in the mountaintop Tower of Light that shines over the Mountainbay Town. The presence of Gimli Stoneflask's most devout followers brings a sense of security to the otherwise unremarkable fishing settlement, although the sailing ships of the Shining Navy offshore nearby and the soldiers securing the bay are more than ample protection.

Modest and forthcoming, Kalati are frequently thought to be dim-witted or especially naive. This is of course inaccurate and many citizens of Kalator have made brilliant contributions to society—though not a one of them was in a rush to do so. Adventurers hailing from here are uncommon as most of the city-state's folk are only too happy to stay where they are, setting down roots shortly after coming of age and finding love. Kalati that do choose to venture from home are stalwart companions that can be relied upon to defend their allies or for a good tale by the fireside.

Saint Callipho, Dawn Father Light, Protection
Divina Cartis (Tarryndorn 4:23) That morning the sun did not rise over Kalator, its light snuffed from the sky by a baleful winged shadow looming from Exiel Keep. Joined by his loyal apprentices and bolstered by his faith, they chased the monstrous apparition off and cast it down into the waters of the bay before noon that very day.

Sanctus Paenula, She of Divine Strength
City, Protection
Dedit Partem (Stoneflask 11:3) Sabotaged and uncontrolled, the steel equos hurtled toward Kalator with rising speed, far too swift for any of the waiting travelers to flee. Paenula surged forward, a burst of divinity giving wings to her feet and in a surge of white light she was granted the strength to slow the massive machine! A storm of dirt was thrown into the air and much of the train station soiled as her feet plowed through board, rivet, and rail, but nary was a soul injured.

Legio, City of Industry

Historical, Industrious, Pious, Progressive, Tradehub

During the times before evil was routed from Askis the village of Legio was widely known for the quality of its weapons but with the peace that came after

the ascension of the Celestial Heroes, the need for tools of murder subsided and the arts flourished in their place. Craftspeople and sculptors flocked to the settlement, growing it into a beautiful city filled with holy carvings, mosaics, and statues dotting streets dwarfed by buildings built in the sleek style emulating the works of the deific beings that have blessed the world with inaequa. Given the many forges already there the manufacture of items powered by the unique substance became a staple of Legio, the weaponeers turning their crafting expertise to the mass production of inaequa-chariots, cloudgliders, items of convenience, steel equos, and anything else powered by the divine fuel. What was once a humble collection of homes and shops has expanded into an artistic urban paradise built upon the backs of the thousands of workers that fill its dozens of factories.

Legians respect hard work and reliability—every citizen is expected to achieve for themselves, only aided by the community when necessary. The Legio College of Inaequa Studies offers educations ranging from rudimentary occupations to the most sophisticated of sciences and magic, taking students based on aptitude and availability. Unfortunately both have become somewhat infrequent as of late as the City of Industry tries to expand while its manufacturing base settles, leaving the economy in flux; depending on the markets, some weeks see workers left without jobs. Many would-be students choose instead to venture out into the world to find their slice of success, proving to be brave, dependable adventuring companions.

More information about Legio is on pages 299-300 (in *Killing the Golden Twins*).

Saint Audaios, General of Healing Life, War
Angelorum Nuntius (Stoneflask 6:8) With a long and respected military career behind him, Audaios looked at the blood shed by his hands and wretched at the enormity of the pain he'd inflicted throughout a life of violence. Forsaking to ever draw a weapon again, he took up the reigns of priesthood and devoted his remaining days to negotiating peace where otherwise blood might have been spilt.

Sanctus Aurelia, Magister of Hope
Life, Nature
Divina Doctrina (Goodwin 6:11) As a child the young Aurelia was trapped underground with other children during an earthquake. Guided by her faith, she led them all to safety and became a hero of the city until her final day—disappearing into the Taenarius Tunnels after decades of faithful duty to The Ministry. Though she is forever lost, the kidnapped child she pursued returned home before the next sundown.

Saint Pellio, Divine Anvil Forge, War
Lex Altiores (Goodwin 9:13) Caskette's foul sickness spread throughout the city, eating away the metal of its defender's blades. As Forgemaster of Legio it fell to Pellio to arm its defenders, and in a single night the dwarf crafted 200 blades before perishing from exhaustion, living only long enough to know that his toil had saved the city.

Maoir, Canal Town

Aristocratic, Canals, Respected, Wealthy

Maoir is unlike the other settlements in Ouranios not only for the waterways interweaving its city blocks, but the nature of its governance as well. Most cities and villages have thrown away their former rulers but the descendants of Canal Town's ruling council are of the same noble bloodlines, the power of the state preserved through carefully worded land laws established in a treaty with the Order of the Shining Stone when it became clear that taking Maoir would spill more blood than it was worth. As a result it is the wealthiest settlement on the Contiguous Continent, the shores of Lake Praestri resplendent with palatial mansions owned by the entrenched aristocracy. There are plenty of successful traders and industrialists with lofty homes further inland, but the Viridarium Gardens surrounding Canal Town's original streets—long ago the border between the rich and the poor—has become the demarcation of rule, with the least wealthiest citizens living on the outskirts far from the water.

The Maoiai are of two different sorts—those who have known hard work and those who haven't. Adventurers are more common among the latter, the youths

of the upper class finding they've got a penchant for glory and the money to make a run on that dream by exploring the southern waters or taking to the skies in search of pirates in Askis' other oceans. Despite the genuine benevolence and generosity of the nobles in Maoir, advancing beyond one's station eventually becomes a practical impossibility (with exclusion by proxy through birthright and land ownership). Lower class Maoiai with ambitions for a better life take to the road without the benefit of a cloudglider or jetter bought with family money but some consider them better off for the hardship, their demeanor tenacious and their will to succeed unmatched.

Sanctus Camilia, Patron of the Chosen
Protection, War
Angelorum Nuntius (Goodwin 7:8) Little more than 3 feet in height, the youthful elf burst from the brush to intercede with the demon assassin, doing battle over the lifeless bodies of the scouts just moments ago watching over the sleeping forms of the Order of the Shining Stone. Using only her hands she subdued the fiend, battering it into defeat just as Varrus awoke to the commotion.

Saint Cocus, The Pious Saint Knowledge, Light
Divina Cartis (Tarryndorn 5:16) Once the riots had moved on past Tralgo Square, the intrepid dragonborn ventured out to evaluate the area for untoward magics and thus it was he that discovered the enchantments of the heretic mage Lopathriosk! Drawing on the Upper Planes with his glittering draconic ancestry, he dispersed the foment fermenting curses and brought an end to the violence in Maoir.

Moene, Squamiger Town

Angling, Isolated, Odorous, Productive
Fishing has always been integral to the lonely settlement on the sliver of land between the Angustia Strait and Northern Inexoribalis Mountains, but the synergy of new technologies and changed currents resulting from the Escarion Maelstrom have set ever higher yields of catches with every passing year. The independence that Moene once knew has remained but only barely, most of its industry and businesses relying now on the abundant fishing trade—either processing, preserving, or exporting the sea's bounty. Sometimes known as "Squami" to friends, Moenians are extremely industrious and rarely take to leisure even when it's freely provided. Hobbies are extremely popular, leading many to master games or music rather than lay back for a casual respite. While it can certainly be annoying, it doesn't hurt for someone in Moene to bring up their origins as a means of securing work as a guard or lookout, their reputation for being active well known across Ouranios. There's another truism of Moenians—the professions of the sea's bounty are so ingrained into the town that virtually every Squami knows their way around a fish regardless of upbringing.

Sanctus Ummidia, Patron of Oil
Arcana, Protection
Integrum Opinionem (Goodwin 12:13) Wise to the merchant Barzen's deviousness, Ummidia bade the rest of the Justitia to cover themselves in oil. Their skin and armor proved too slick to pin and though the minders of the shop were curious at first, they soon fled from the seemingly incorruptible soldiers and the gnome's evil became known to Moene and Ouranios at large.

Sanctus Calvisia, The Martyred Knight
City, Protection
Verbum Deorum (Stoneflask 8:11) Last in a long lineage of knights, Calvisia sacrificed herself in battle against the ogre overboss Jyrall, stalling the twilight assault on Moene's councilmasters and alerting the guards to the invasion. Her spirit lived on to see the city successfully resist the attack and is said to still linger in its streets when the moon is high.

Patefactio, Thinker City

Coastal, Historical, Mountainside, Old, Storied
Scholars still argue over when exactly Patefactio was built but it is universally agreed that the greatest empire of Ouranios—now lost to time—began the world's oldest major settlement long before the Twilight of Suffering, ruling from the base of Mount Exai. Wide plains filled with rich soil around the coastal city have long provided plenty of food for a sizable populous, and the cold winds of the mountain disperse the fury of the southern seas to leave a great deal of the fields with surprisingly light gales. After the Divine Philosopher conjured the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility* on its streets, some came to call it the Thinker City and the name stuck after engineers in its universities achieved mechanical flight unaided by magic. Wealth has always flowed into Patefactio

but profits have steadily risen since the first whirlybird and new construction of beautiful, towering skyscrapers now compliment the mountainous skyline—but the Thinker City is truly ancient, filled with secrets. Rumors of the collapsed catacombs of its ancient rulers have seen many a well-funded archaeological expedition head into Mount Exai, though after a Maoiai noble's heavily publicized recent demise within, permission to venture through its passages requires sanction from The Inquisition or The Ministry.

As the unofficial name of their home suggests Patefacti are thinkers through and through. Every citizen's education is of paramount importance and wherever their mental talents lay, the Thinker City provides a path forward through apprenticeships and institutions. Focusing on a specific field of learning is important but no student escapes comprehensive general schooling, and all but the humblest Patefacti are know-it-alls—not always smug about their intellect, but definitely confident in their acuity—a trait that leaves others to find them brash or arrogant. Observation and study are second-nature to citizens of Patefactio, and though they may be bold and confident in their actions they very rarely act on impulse alone. While this can make them predictable, the meticulous and carefully honed plans of someone from the Thinker City usually overcome their weakness of routine.

Sanctus Livigenus, Divine Philosopher
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Angelorum Nuntius (Tarryndorn 3:16) It was there in the shade of a derragos tree that Livigenus had her first truly divine thought, the foundation for what became the Philosophy of Enlightened Civility we all know today. Without her contribution to the Nine Wonders of Devotion, the civilization in which we live might never have come to be.

Saint Palaestrio, Destroyer of Heresy
Celestial Bureaucracy, Light
Gaduis Examino (Stoneflask 3:12) Where acid, flame, and blade failed, the faith of Palaestrio coalesced into holy fires that consumed the Invincible Tomes of the duplicitous High Mage Horracio after he dared to blaspheme the divinity and righteousness of the Celestial Heroes.

Praeclarus, Town of the Tongue

Mountainside, Pious, Populous, Rumor-Mongering
Once isolated by the Inexoribalis Mountains and the only defensible city with open access to the southern coast, Praeclarus was a linchpin in the Vetrydion Compact's spiteful resistance to the forces of the Order of the Shining Stone, lasting against the rule of the Celestial Heroes nearly as long as Kalator. Like the rest of the world's aging power structures the walls of the settlement eventually fell; its oppressed peoples, glad that their suffering had come to an end, proved to be a welcome boon. Long a place of industry and expert miners, their exports to Legio proved vital to the final thrust to conquer Ouranios and the citizens of Praeclarus haven't stopped talking about it since. For that matter, they generally don't stop talking at all.

The settlement's penchant for loquaciousness is well-deserved, a talkative nature common to virtually every Praeclarian. In the times of peace since the Celestial Heroes' rise to power this has become the town's greatest asset, making it a place diplomats and promising priests are sent to hone their tongue. Walking along the mountainside villas and overlooking the vista of the Inexoribalis Mountain Ranges to the west, men and women of the peace and pulpit master oratory skills, learning to truly make the most of their words—which any Praeclarian has plenty of, so much so that their generous speaking can be annoying.

Sanctus Cania, Undead Slayer Grave, War
Lex Altiores (Stoneflask 11:5) Shock and horror followed the revelation that the respected scholar Romulius dabbled in the dark arts, but when he slew and raised a cadre of the Ministerium Inmorte some thought he could only be undone by the Celestial Heroes themselves. Cania said nay, venturing into the necromancer's tower and emerging only after she had slain him! The mage's spirit is tenacious and blasphemers claim it can occupy the recently deceased, though any interred with a charm for the Undead Slayer are protected from his grasp.

Saint Bepharo, Patron of Workers
Celestial Bureaucracy, Life
Libris Bonitatem (Goodwin 11:12) Poor as he was, after a week of hard work on his way home he would give one of the city's vagrants half his

earnings—a single polished silver. One day a merchant in fine clothes stopped him, explaining that the gold coin he received the week prior had changed his life. Again and again this happened, though Bepharo never had gold to give or accepted any in return, until no vagrants walked the streets upon which he trod, the poor of the city lifted up by his toil.

Riskara's Bastion, Dwarven Metropolis

Defensible, Historical, Landmark, Remote, Subterranean, Structured

Most underground dwarven cities have become sparsely populated outposts thanks to Trepida Vereor's lava tunnel-routed ambushes, the threat of violence making settlements on the surface far easier to live in than those below ground. The home of Gimli Stoneflask remains resolute however, the very walls of the Dwarven Metropolis lined with adamantine impossible for the mistress of fear to quickly breach so that her undead legions might march through—all of the rare metal and their installation paid for by the seemingly bottomless coffers of the Celestial Heroes. Dwarven traditions are strongly practiced in Riskara's Bastion, and with its populace of forge-handy citizens and general impregnability it is the chief manufacturer of steel equos parts prone to sabotage.

Riskarans are extremely proud of their heritage, whether they are stout folk or not. Dwarves are far and away the majority of the city's population but all races live within its adamantine walls—so long as someone is hard-working, takes pride in what they do, and has something of value to offer to the community they are met with welcome arms. Adventurers from the Dwarven Metropolis are common but are usually either champions of battle or dedicated priests, stout folk seeking the same glory attained by its most celebrated son.

Sanctus Asinia, The Wounded Saint City, Life

Divina Doctrina (Stoneflask 7:12) Opening up her soul with a pious prayer, the dwarf embodied and suffered the pains and wounds of all the metropolis' citizens as the monstrous hordes of Erathka assailed its walls. Though Asinia died before the next dawn, her sacrifice granted enough resolve for her fellow citizens to overthrow their attackers as every injury was borne onto her body alone.

Saint Saint Phaedromus, Magicio Divinatus

Arcana, Knowledge

Dedit Partem (Stoneflask 24:33) Faerican'xi loomed in the grand cavern of Riskara's Bastion, so mighty in form as to dwarf even the greatest clan hall, and all knew fear in their hearts save for Phaedromus. As an ant the gnome stood against the fiend, working his magic so intensely that the effort took his life—yet all seemed lost. The demon's victorious cackling brought terror but the wizard's final spell took hold just as its massive weapon bore down on the last great defenders, transforming its laughter into cries of pain as bands of divinity enveloped it, upending the city's certain doom.

Sobrius, Prohibition City

Friendly, Gourmet, Lawful, Luxurious, Waystation

Citizens in Sobrius were quick to accept the authority brought by the Order of the Shining Stone—theirs has always been a society that abides by its laws down to the letter. Far and away the most famous of these is the prohibition of alcohol, an ancient practice originally begun as a practical means of deterring pirates from making port nearby (why bother when there isn't any rum?). This of course only worked to a certain point and lesser spirits were eventually legalized inside of the city-state if not the boundaries of its central settlement, leading to rings of taverns forced to vacate as the village grew into a town and now Prohibition City. There are still drinking establishments ringing Sobrius just outside of the local guards' direct purvey, but it is better known for the wide and diverse array of fine eateries housed in buildings once devoted to intoxication. The further one travels toward the center, the more expensive and delicious the offerings get; as a reliable place to make landfall and departure with an aircraft, the most premier restaurants offer the freshest ingredients from all over Askis and are booked by diplomats, industrialists, military officers, nobility, and politicians, often weeks or even months in advance.

One might think that being surrounded by countless delectable eateries would lead Sobrians to be portly but their culture has always promoted active lifestyles (with plenty of leisure activity in lieu of alcohol) and aside from the very well-to-do, their citizens are trim, fit, and bright. It differs from person to person but people from Sobrius tend to be connoisseurs—the only real difference is whether they are aesthetes about *one* thing or *many* things.

A Sobrian's penchant for the finer things in life can make them difficult to travel with, but what they lack in tolerance they make up for in exuberance and a delectable curiosity for new experiences.

Saint Periplectomus, The Blind Navigator
Celestial Bureaucracy, Tempest
Integrum Opinionem (Stoneflask 12:14) Unwilling to be taken prisoner, Periplectomus led the shipful of devout colonists to rebel against the pirates that had overtaken the vessel. In the fighting that followed he lost both of his eyes, but even blinded he guided the boat truly through stormy waters to land safely in Ouranios.

Sanctus Attia, Flockmaster Saint Arcana, City
Divina Cartis (Tarryndorn 17:12) Calling forth a powerful enchantment, the wizardess drew the blood crows of Gazrathox away from Sobrius and back to the foul priest's lair where she teleported them all to an unknown dimension. None know whence Attia went but the unnatural plagues destroying the crops of the territories nearby never returned, ending the cult's threat and influence.

Variatio, All-Town

Friendly, Lakeside, Landmark, Pious

In ancient times Variatio was a village of misfits and outcasts, exiles that congregated together on the haunted shores of Lake Saede. These primordial curses forced away all but the most ardent folk with simple rules of law all beneath one auspice—no discrimination between citizens, an acceptance for all the nonviolent quirks and manners that the rest of the world refused to tolerate. Rankir Tarryndorn and the Order of the Shining Stone undid the malicious magic and since then docks and piers have gone up in All-Town, with ever more people choosing to move there despite its history of hexes. After the Contiguous Continent became connected by the Rotundus Railway and the Ariolo Merchants moved to Variatio, to show their devotion to the Celestial Heroes they paid for the construction of a building worthy of their idols: the Ariolo Chorum, a massive choir stadium that has stood for hundreds of years.

In the shadow of this grand tribute there exists an illegal market, one that The Inquisition and The Ministry are wont to crack down on—the sale of holy blood. Over the millennia the Celestial Heroes suffered spectacular wounds countless times as they brought civility to Askis, and after their divinity began to reveal itself some enterprising commoners started to covet and protect anything stained by the blood of the demigods. Because of their piety many Variati are as secretive as they are friendly, used to a bit of deception in the pursuit of personal divine revelations and the faith such an experience brings. Tolerance is another quality that citizens from All-Town are known for, their willingness to accept others as true abroad as at home.

Sanctus Drymphia, Saint of Caves
Death, Protection
Angelorum Nuntius (Stoneflask 13:24) With no time to waste Drymphia grabbed the deadly bomb and fled into the Taenarius Tunnels before it could explode, saving the people of Variatio. The half-elf died in the hellstorm that followed but not in vain—the unholy fires that erupted throughout the underground passageways consumed the laboratories of Kozarryl along with the malevolent villain herself.

Saint Sangarinus, The Sanguine Saint
Knowledge, Life
Libris Bonitatem (Tarryndorn 4:13) Withered by a disease that resisted all curatives both magical and otherwise, Rankir knew his father's time was near. The curious healer Sangarinus thought differently however, using some of the elf's holy blood to transfuse his father with life and beating back the sickness that ignored all other cures!

Holy Blood

A soft nimbus of white energy flows off of this sanguine vial. Filled with the blood of one of Askis' saints, it is a holy relic not to be squandered. When you drink this potion, you gain the following benefits:

- At the end of each round you heal 2 damage.
- Your weapons are magical and have a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.
- You take half damage from holy.
- You Defense increases by 1.
- After 1 minute, these benefits end and you gain the effect of the reading divination spell.

Legendary vials with diluted blood from the Celestial Heroes' blood are said to exist as well. When consumed, such a potion grants these bonuses for 8 hours (twice) or 24 hours if drank all at once by a single creature.

As they do every morning, the soft lapping waves of the Diffusilus Ocean lull Icalus out of his reverie and into another beautiful day tending to the folks vacationing at the Requiesque Curarum Resort. Checking a calendar on the wall the gnome sees that today is a working day. Pulling out the clean white uniform from the beaudrot his aunt gave him when he was hired here, Icalus saunters into the luxurious washroom connected to his apartment and refreshes himself while singing a jaunty tune from his youth to the songbirds tweeting their own melodies out of the lush treetops not far away.

Locking his room behind him, Icalus nods politely and wishes a fine morning to all the well to-do guests he comes across while making his way to central area of the resort to report in. Taking in the sight of the ocean one last time before the tasks of the day begin, he peers out across the water and spots something strange amongst the waves—a swell hued a different blue than the others. Though he thinks little of it, all of the Requiesque Curarum Resort staff are encouraged to report anything at all they find to be awry and he makes mention of it to his superior, Procia, who in turn reports it to the nearby guard station just in case. They watch a trio of jetters roar across the water to investigate before returning to their duties.

Icalus begins the preparations for brunch by seeing to the kitchens, making sure all the new produce has been delivered and that the staff are at their stations getting the meal prepared—as usual, everyone is cheerful and ready to go. Following in the wait staff with a tray of fine silverware in his hands, the gnome looks out the dining room's impressive gallery window to see one of the jetters returning. His curiosity over the boat coming back alone wanes as the first guests arrive and Icalus quickly begins his duty as the host, welcoming one and all to their tables. The servers spread out like a school of fish, expertly delivering the right plates to the right seats, and soon the tinkling metallic tines of the resort's customers are accompanied by the beautiful melody of expertly played string instruments. A sense of wholeness seems to grip the room but the gnome cannot enjoy it, spotting through the glass a half-dozen more jetters all zooming across the water out toward the horizon and more strangely discolored waves.

It's from there that the cascade of explosions boom out and shake the walls, bringing the wavering melodies to an abrupt halt as the diners in the room all gasp, dropping their silverware to clatter on the floor as more fire blooms on the horizon. Before a panic sets across the room Icalus quickly moves to reassure and reseat guests, barking at the wait staff to acquire clean eating implements and restoring order. The crowd comes down to an acceptable level of quiet as they witness a cadre of vessels cutting across the water out into the Diffusilus Ocean before dozens of them return, accompanied unknowingly by the enthusiastic applause of the resort's clientele—what looked as though it were going to be a disastrous day has instead become an exciting story that the guests of the Requiesque Curarum will excitingly retell for years on end!

With the first major part of his day over and a few other things taken care of—double-checking the laundry room for damaged or missing items, notarizing forms, handling letters, returning pertinent phone calls, getting the cleaning staff underway, making sure the maintenance crew were aware of a few malfunctioning forever lanterns, and generally keeping the machinations of the resort moving—Icalus acquires some ripe looking malum and extra smoked meats not eaten during brunch before making his way down to the shore for a resplendent view to accompany his meal. The gnome reflects on his good instinct to eat the latter first as he sees the fleshy limbs of pneumavore washing up on the shore with the flotsam, a sight that surely would've ruined the delightfully tasty treat's flavor. This is not all that the waves lap up however, and soon Icalus spots strange pieces of material and objects he cannot recognize make their way onto the sand. Walking nearer to the strange sights, his eyes grow wide as from this close up he notices footprints from several people leading from the water and into the jungle nearby!

Normally the gnome eats his malum down to the core but the fruit falls from his hand as he rushes back to the resort, exasperatedly telling Procia of what he'd found. Immediately she phones the local guard station and after a moment of discussion assures him that several squads have been sent out in inaequa-chariots to track down any persons that made it ashore from this morning's disturbance. Unsettled but committed to his tasks, Icalus goes about preparing for the evening meal much as he had for brunch though this time he has an added duty: quelling any talk of danger lurking nearby. For their part the guests regaled one another with speculation over what the day's earlier excitement could be about, making the lively discussions of the evening nearly loud enough to drown out the string quartet serenading the meal. The din travels even to the kitchens, and though the gnome could almost swear he heard some commotion in the lush wilderness near where the tracks led, the clamor of the cooking staff and animated guests in the dining room make it impossible to be sure.

A bright fireball reaches up from under the gallery window of the resort's primary eating area and explodes after descending, bringing a quick end to the dessert course. Yelling for the kitchen staff to quiet and calm themselves, Icalus runs into the dining room just as the public announcement system chimes and Procia's voice politely requests that all guests and workers return to their rooms as a matter of safety. Near panic rips across the dining room and the gnome leaps upon one of the tables, directing the former-diners to the exits while shouting for the resort's employees to aid any confused patrons they find as they too return to lock their doors. In a matter of moments the room clears and Icalus quickly gathers himself, making to lock the front gate before retiring to his own dwelling.

Going the roundabout way he makes certain that all the guest areas (the pool, gym, club room, atrium, athletic courts, cabanas, gazebos, greenhouse, and all the rest) are secure before approaching the grand steel-wrought fence surrounding the Requiesque Curarum Resort, slowing his jog as the dim lights of an inaequa-chariot come into view. Unsure of what to expect Icalus fiddles with the whistle strung around his neck, ready to blow into it as hard as his tiny lungs can manage, but soon he sees there's nothing to fear: the approaching vehicle belongs to members of the Justitia. The gnome increases his gait and is slightly winded as the surprisingly diverse array of officers stepped out, their equipment dirty and clearly getting some recent use. One of them approaches with a reassuring smile on her face, explaining that they've had a bit of trouble nearby but nothing to worry about—the fugitives the resort spotted on the water that morning were taken care of and all is well. Although there's no warmth to her smile and her compatriots seem grim, his relief that nothing will befall the guests is so great that Icalus cannot help but offer these fine soldiers a meal for their troubles.

The guards are only too happy to oblige, one of them stopping to shut off their vehicle before heading into the resort. In a coughing fit the inaequa-chariot sputters and belches out black smoke before growing still, and though it strikes Icalus as odd he supposes that the scorch marks along it are from battle and something must have been damaged. The lead officer smiles again with a strangely wide grin and nods, explaining that the day they've had was a hard one and promising to share the thrilling tale over a fine bit of food once they're all safely settled inside...

SAMOVI The Wild Continent

While it was once a den of villainy and an untamed frontier, the Wild Continent is far from those days of danger—the beautiful and abundant nature that once ruled here has been brought to heel by the Golden Redeemers and the criminal element has been whittled down nearly to non-existence. That doesn't mean one shouldn't be mindful while traveling through the thick forests, heavy jungles, precipitous mountains, and far-removed plains of Samovi however, for beasts and lethal plantlife have been preserved. There's also the occasional escapee from the floating prison fortress minded by Tapper Underknoll and his retinue, desperate creatures more than willing to do whatever is required to flee from their captors. These lands are home to The Ministry too and therein has the greatest number of rehabilitation clinics, special care facilities, and sanitariums, their divirulent hound servants ensuring that no patients make it far should they manage to escape into the wilderness.

Coelicla, Capital of Samovi

Capital, Dispersed, Industrious, Ministry, Natural, Tradehub

In the center of Samovi lay the Estuary Metropolis, its largest settlement and home to the headquarters of The Ministry. The capital is as lush, alluring, and exotic as the Wild Continent—unlike most cities it is not cramped, many travelers are still on horseback striding aside rolling inaequa-chariots, and the balance between nature and technology remains on an even keel. What most people know of Coelicla is that it is home to the Golden Redeemers Lellwyn Fethyrwal, Darrius Ventrelli, and Tapper Underknoll, but its history runs deeper than that.

Formerly called Rhyztown, the city that would become Coelicla was the first of the grand pirate bastions to fall to the Golden Redeemers. Fertile soil for farming and livestock provided the territory nearby ideal conditions for plentiful habitation, and being positioned in the center of the Wild Continent—easily accessible by water—made for the perfect place to hang one's salty tricorne. The Estuary Metropolis is also the ancestral home of Darrius Ventrelli, where his mother begat and raised the Celestial Hero before his rise to divinity. It was for these reasons that Tapper Underknoll decided that Coelicla was the best location to fortify in his quest to civilize Samovi, systematically assassinating the rulers of Rhyztown until finally overtaking it alongside the holy tiefling after their ruse on *The Scorned Maiden*. The city has remained under the control of the Golden Reedemers ever since, successfully rebuffing guerilla campaigns and resisting numerous plots by insane apostates attempting to unleash either nature or the forces of destruction upon its wide streets.

The Wild Continent has a far wider range of plant-life than Askis' other lands and its lush grasslands are perfect for raising livestock, much of which flows out of the harbor in Coelicla. As it is equidistant to most of Samovi, a bustling trade of herbalism developed in the capital to standardize the expiration (and export) of curatives, poultices, spices, and the like. Once collected from the wilderness, the valuable resources are processed and prepared by one of the many factories in Coelicla before shipping out to elsewhere in Askis. It's no coincidence that the headquarters of The Ministry is located here, making use of the abundant commerce to acquire the alchemical supplies needed to keep hospitals well-stocked.

Coelicla is a widely dispersed metropolis on the estuary of Lunaris River and Machaera Sea, its broad avenues and large burroughs intersected by rails for steel equos or paved roads used by inaequa-chariots, embracing a philosophy of openness throughout. Parks and amphitheaters are common sights throughout the metropolis as well as mounted travelers, people prepared for trekking out into wildernesses an automobile can't traverse. Truly, the capital of Samovi is the world's greatest waystation and sees the beginning, middle, or end of more journeys than any other city Askis.

Turris Center

Jutting up from the Estuary Metropolis is the weathered brown stalk of a great tree, its branches shorn into platforms that are hundreds of feet in the air above the city streets. This is strange growth is home to two of the Golden Redeemers: the Scoutspire, roost of Lellwyn Fethyrwal and urban crow's nest of Tapper Underknoll. Support staff for the Samovi Preserve dwell in the hollowed out chambers and stairwells throughout the interior, stocking the arrows and preparing the reagents needed for the gnome's Celestial Work to remain effective.

Clustered around the Scoutspire's trunk is the headquarters of The Ministry (Darrius Ventrelli's

RAEDA DISTRICT
HERBIFER DISTRICT
BOTRUM PORTASSENT
MEDIETAS WARD
CAELO STRIP
SCOUTSPIRE & MAGNO VALETUDINARIUM
TURRIS DISTRICT
PRODIGIUM PORTS
MEDIETAS WARD
IEUMENTUS FIELDS
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W
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S
COELICLA
CAPITAL OF SAMOVI

home) and their premier hospital, the Magno Valetudinarium. Inside of it some of the keenest minds of Askis are supported by magicians and priests in their research for cures to diseases, ways to make healing more accessible to the public, and development of inaequa devices more effective at elongating lifespans. The elite of Coelicla have long scrambled for plots around the massive tower, buying out residents and raising antiquated structures to put up mansions all surrounded by gardens dotted with artworks of their choosing (a game played by socialites commissioning ever more impressive sculptures).

Raeda District

Hardy wilderness with rough terrain make travel by rail a tricky proposition in Samovi and after Sanctus Rusonia invented the inaequa-chariot, the Estuary Metropolis became known for producing automobiles. The penchant for engines never left and assembly lines chug away in the Raeda District, producing vehicles that get sent all over the world. Garages and auto shops are common as well since the rigorous environment demands a good bit of maintenance on the machines that travel across the Wild Continent, and road crews are constantly receiving larger construction vehicles dispatched from here. Taxis frequent these roads and byways more commonly than elsewhere in Coelicla, particularly around the Botrum Portassent where emissaries from Samovi's city-states congregate to govern the continent as a whole.

Medietas Wards

The largest areas of the city are conglomerations of modest homes for the fairly well-to-do, apartment buildings filled with common folk, and shrines to the Celestial Heroes and the world's countless saints. Citizens are encouraged to dwell nearest to the sites of devotion of their favorite patrons, given tax incentives to make housing more affordable when rents fluctuate.

Herbifer District

Smells aplenty emanate across Coelicla from dozens of herbalist factories chugging away in this neighborhood, a coterie of production facilities that manufacture reagents brought into the city day in and day out. Not all plants are gathered in the jungles and wilderness however, and by decree of Tapper Underknoll there are no less than nine greenhouses for every industrial building. Most of the steel equos rails in the capital of Samovi—few as they are—run through here to facilitate moving goods and materials inland or towards the water and transport by ship on the coast.

Caelo Strip

Sculptures and carvings are grouped together along a boisterously wide promenade that snakes through the Estuary Metropolis, a roadway that touches upon or crosses through every area of the city. Artisans, cinemas, eateries, theaters, and other entertainments line the winding avenue and the settlement offers a bit of magnificence nearby no matter where a traveler stands. These carvings and sculptures of the Celestial Heroes, saints, and other legendary figures watch over Coelicla even in repose.

Statue Sentries. Most of these sculptures are immaculate but otherwise unremarkable works of art—but not all. Dozens of them are enchanted with divination magic that detect the presence of great evil, notifying the guards in the Turris District of the dangerous individuals and their approximate location. When a creature with a Sin score of 10 or higher remains within 100 feet of a statue sentry (AC 16, 60 hp) for more than 10 minutes it enters alert mode. Every round a statue sentry is alert, the GM makes a secret d20 roll. On a result higher than 20 – the creature's Sin ability modifier, the statue sentry confirms the evil presence, sends its rudimentary message, and puts the nearest statue sentries into alert mode. Evil creatures after the first include their Sin ability modifiers to the secret d20 roll.

Iuementus Fields & Prodigium Ports

Piers and docks festooned with tenement housing dominate the southern edge of the city servicing hundreds of ships every day as the bulk of the Wild Continent's commerce courses through Coelicla. All of the landlocked outskirts of the Estuary Metropolis are used to support an enormous livestock trade. Steeds, cattle, and domesticated beasts of all sorts are penned and fenced in the fertile plains, kept in balanced cycle by druids using natural farming to promote growth before another herd moves in.

Saint Cario, Teacher of Words
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Sacras Litras (Ventrelli 9:4) Despite the life of ease and luxury before him, Cario forsook his royal claim

and fortune to spread literacy to races once seen as inferior and savage, journeying across Samovi until his very last day.

Sanctus Luccinallea, Patron of the Faithful
Celestial Bureaucracy, Light
Integrum Opinionem (Ventrelli 4:17) The enchantress Urnicia's powerful magic had taken hold of many of The Ministry's canine servants, but the priestess Luccinallea showed them the truth of her faith and illuminated by her spirit, together they turned upon the sorceress. Divirulent hounds can sometimes hear the enchantresses' lamenting cries when the sun is high, but the scales of justice are unforgiving of the heinous nature of crimes such as her's.

Sanctus Myrrhina, Divine Sculptor
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Memoria Vivorum (Underknoll 6:10) Upon seeing her sublime sculptures even the Divine Hunter's stalwart heart was moved, declaring the portrayal of he and his fellow Celestial Heroes to be perfect in accuracy. Immediately he declared Myrrhina's carvings to be one of the Nine Wonders of Devotion, a sight all the righteous of heart deserve to bear witness to.

Sanctus Rusonia, Patron of Engines
Cog, Forge
Verbum Deorum (Ventrelli 11:9) Institutions all across Askis sought Rusonia for her expertise after the first of her wondrous inaequa-chariots began to traverse Zakuthombo, but she refused them all. Instead the brilliant engineer traveled the world, using her talents to repair machinery in the remote reaches of the continents until her very touch could heal damaged technology.

Adversus, Alpine Town
Isolated, Nature, Riverside, Wealthy
When Tapper Underknoll began his crusade to purge evil from Samovi a few dozen intrepid lumberjacks trekked deep into the elevated forests of the Recaltio Mountain Range, felling enormous taxodiaceae trees and shipping them downriver. A strong timber trade persists in Adversus but after the taming of the Wild Continent mansions have cropped up to accommodate affluent tourists, the lanes of reseeded groves ideal for winter leisure. Newfound wealth hasn't changed Alpine Town with anything more than nicer roadways and more homes however, its citizens as courageous as their ancestors.

Adversians are plucky and tireless, awake at dawn each day and eager to make for new lands or get to work. Mealtimes bear great significance in Adversus' cultural landscape, treated by companies and families alike with a reverence usually reserved exclusively for religious worship. Folks from Alpine Town are on the whole kind and polite, but everybody knows it's better not to get between an Adversian and their next meal.

Sanctus Caesennia, Lady of the Shield
City, Protection
Lex Altiores (Underknoll 5:14) Fifty-four holy servants had been slain by the fallen knight Calladon's notched greataxe, cut down for their devotion to the faith. Surrounded by the corpses of her allies, the meek scholar Caesennia had no choice but to fight—she took up two shields from the dead soldiers and smote him down, ending his accursed reign of terror in Adversus.

Sanctus Pescennia, Patron of Strength
City, Protection
Gaduis Exanimo (Fethyrwal 14:3) Straining against the impossible forces ripping the Ryttanio Dam apart, Pescennia gripped into the stonework and held fast long enough for the citizens of Adversus to flee their homes ahead of the onslaught of water that ultimately shorn her in two.

Amicus, Village of Sentries
Coastal, Defensive, Historical
Amicus can be seen from afar when the towers on the corners of the settlement are alight—ancient defensive measures once used to warn of naval attacks, now only activated when a pneumavore is spotted entering the Machaera Sea. Fishing is commonplace both in the inland waters and the Diffusilus Ocean to the east but maritime activities of all kinds have long been a major part of the village's economy. Before Tapper Underknoll's crusade began a small cadre known as the Buccaneer Legion were the undisputed rulers of Amicus for decades, policing the region and making their own peaceful kingdom.

A short-lived alliance with The Golden Redeemers saw the outpost rapidly expand and the end of the so called "pirates with honor", their vessels and men drafted into the navy.

The free-spirited attitude of the Buccaneer Legion is still very much a part of the culture and peoples of Amicus, its citizens citing lineages back to the same sailors. Concern for others is also a major part of life here and folks from the Village of Sentries are always looking out for their friends, frequently leaving themselves vulnerable. Indeed, Amicai feel lost when not part of a group and the need for a sense of belonging is paramount—there are few lone explorers from the village but a great many adventurers, stalwart companions with a belief in something greater than themselves.

Sanctus Liburnia, Uprooter of Evil Light, Nature
Gaduis Exanimo (Ventrelli 11:18) While she had no talent for magic, this did not stop her from tending to Askis—Liburnia spent her life traveling across the wildernesses of Samovi, uprooting plagued and toxic plants with her bare hands regardless of the dangers prowling about her. It was her mundane quest that undid the foul plans of the blight druid Xycartha, weakening the seeds of evil she carefully tended beneath the notice of the Celestial Heroes and the Wild Continent's druids.

Sanctus Treblana, Holy Bodyguard
Grave, Protection
Divina Doctrina (Underknoll 3:14) The most loyal of his retinue was Treblana, a bodyguard of truly complete devotion. Even after being killed in the line of duty and unexpectedly reincarnated as a mouse, she still persevered in her duty, upending a plot to kill the Divine Hunter despite being reduced to nothing more than a mouse.

Saint Crococium, Stone Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy Nature
Memoria Vivorum (Ventrelli 9:15) No matter how many times the king of Amicus had the carvings of Kyttirion scoured from the cliffside, every year they would reappear even more pronounced than before. While still unlearned in the ways of druidic magic, Crococium was dedicated to his piety and created a new rockface entirely covering the heretical writings—a monument that still stands to this day.

Consilium, Stout Town

Holy, Nature, Remote, Tradehub
Very early on in the history of the Duertek Mercantile Company in Ouranios, perfidy was found among their kin—dwarves stealing from their own. The theft ran deep and with no precedent for so heinous an act, whole clans were exiled not only from the business but the entirety of the Contiguous Continent. Traveling to the nearest shores and far inland, up against the mountains through a dense patch of the jungle, the foreigners erected a short, wide settlement beneath the treeline. Initially they made great gains with trade (illicit and otherwise) but eventually ill fortune followed the exiles and when mercenaries flocked to The Golden Redeemers, the town's walls, remote location, and lack of swords proved unable to stop evil from taking root. The dwarves prepared for such an eventuality of course, filling the interior of the northwestern Recaltio Mountain Range with escape tunnels and leaving their second home to be infested by druids intent on fouling the Wild Continent, the last refuge for corruption in all of Samovi. Ultimately the Celestial Heroes cleansed Consilium, but not without great losses and only with all nine of the ascendant demigods reinforcing Underknoll's mercenaries. In the centuries since the last vestiges of its torrid past have been paved over in concrete and iron, the great forests that shrouded it cut down and the land tilled for farming. The passages of the forgotten dwarven clans are mostly collapsed and gone, though miners speak of whistling and howling winds that can't just be from the mining tunnels dug into the bedrock since.

Consilians are level-headed and sensible, grounded like their hometown. New growth is incorporated throughout all of the settlement and its surrounding territory, and in the wake of the Battle of Black Storm the need for overseeing a clean return to nature prompted Tapper Underknoll to plead with druids to relocate there. Reverence for nature has gone hand in hand with devotion to the Celestial Heroes for citizens of Consilium, slowing their embrace of technology somewhat but ensuring that any seeds of evil won't sprout in the wake of the settlement's corrupt past.

Saint Artamo, Saint of Hunters Death, Nature
Gaduis Examino (Underknoll 1:11) Bereft of armor, weapons, or even a coat for the heavy winds and snow, the courageous hunter dashed up the slope after

the fleeing witch Trajosi, disappearing in the flurrying snows. All were surprised when she descended from the peaks of the mountains nary a week later on a day of clear skies, clad in the powerful yeti's hide.

Sanctus Bantia, Honeyed Saint Life, Nature
Lex Altiores (Ventrelli 4:7) Much like her ancestors, Bantia practiced bee keeping and lived a humble life—until the honey she collected proved to be a panacea for all manner of sickness. Realizing the blessing bestowed upon her the halfling began to give away her harvests, but with every freely gifted jar the honeycombs produced ever more until all of Consilium possessed one in their homes.

Sanctus Fadia, The Proud Saint Protection, War
Divina Doctrina (Underknoll 4:16) Embedded with arrows and with one arm broken she persevered still, carrying the banner of her regiment through the slaughter at the front lines of the Battle of the Black Storm until using the standard to bludgeon the foul General Joraissai into submission and ending the Insurrection of Consilium in but a night.

Melculum Jar

Wondrous item, very rare
Dust and grit are worked into the chipped ceramic of this ancient pot. Inside of the *melculum jar* are 1d3+4 doses of holy honey. When you eat a dose of holy honey, you are cured of blindness, deafness, and all poisons and diseases you are suffering from. For the next hour you have immunity to poison damage and the poisoned affliction.

By adding an ounce of blood from five different intelligent humanoid children, a *melculum jar* can be corrupted and produce unholy honey. A creature that eats unholy honey makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature is infected with a randomly determined disease. On failure by 5 or more, the creature is infected with two diseases. Diseases gained from consuming unholy honey cannot be removed with magic though a creature can still benefit from magic to gain boons on challenge rolls made to resist the disease.

Etium, Moon City

Crossroads, Enchanted, Landmark, Tradehub, Wealthy
Whenever a moon hangs in the night sky Etium sparkles in a ghostly luminance until the sun rises, lighting up the streets that run perpendicular to Lake Lunaris. Along these cobbled lanes are some of Samovi's finest mansions and luxury apartment towers, hundreds of townhouses for the less wealthy crowded into the shadows in between. The wondrous enchantment that makes the Moon City so special is a remnant of the Zherythi Sahuagin Temple, once the lair of tenacious and insane monsters that ruled over the middle of the Wild Continent until The Golden Redeemers sank the shrine. Courageous settlers quickly rooted down nearby after the victory, and universities followed to study the watery anomaly that remained. While students of many sorts are welcome in these halls, actually visiting the aquatic site requires sanction by The Ministry (and usually accompaniment by divirulent hounds). Tourism abounds for witnesses of the lunar luminescence of Etium but the Fethyrwal Holy Garden as well, drawing pilgrims each year by the thousands.

Coming from a place of wonder, Etiumi have an optimistic outlook on life and tendency to see things in a merciful light. They are famously forgiving and ineffably polite, the affluent mannerisms of the large number of wealthy residents (seasonal as many of them may be) having trickled down to the rest of the city-state. Nice as they often are the folk of Etium are known to be flighty and fickle, moving from one interest to the next with little thought of all the consequences therein.

Saint Cyamus, Patron of Truths Death, Trickery
Integrum Opinionem (Fethyrwal 4:12) It was Shevtreo Barcalla's son, Cyamus, that brought an end to the dangers of the Eclipse Shard cult. He slew his father and the other heads of the dark cabal, duping those that remained into capture and bringing the whole organization into the light of justice—earning redemption in the eyes of the Celestial Heroes.

Sanctus Bruccia, She of Divine Sight
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Sacras Litras (Fethyrwal 13:2) There was no stopping Lellwyn from commissioning Bruccia after seeing one of her amazing artworks, but even the Divine Paladin could not have expected the beauty she would wrought. So it was that Etium became home to one of the Nine Wonders of Devotion: the Fethyrwal Holy Garden, a labyrinth of stained glass where it said that one who gazes long enough can see the reflection of their truest self.

Hemina, Dune Town

Crossroads, Landmark, Nature, Wealthy
For centuries travelers were warned not to traverse the eastern half of southern Samovi for fear of death by exposure or worse within the only respite from the blazing heat of the spanning sands: the Dune Temple. Ancient even before the Age of Discord, its immortal ruler required great tribute from travelers to allow them to leave after drinking from the waters she guarded. What happened to those unable to pay the fee is what drew the ire of the Celestial Heroes, but in days of yore the Marcor Desert stretched from the Relictus Mountains all the way to the coast—too remote even for the resourceful forces of the Golden Redeemers to assault. The most brilliant colleague of Darrius Ventrelli traveled to the Dune Temple alone, tricking and exiling its primordial master. With many treasures in its coffers, the outpost around it quickly grew into a proper town. A powerful elemental artifact unearthed from the vaults beneath the shrine has been used to terraform the areas nearby through irrigation channels traveling up and down the coast, turning barren hills into grassy knolls and sparse forests. Arrivals from the desert by air or rail have become a rarity however as sinkholes pose an ever-mounting problem, attributed by some excavators to the unnatural modifications to the environments nearby (and in hushed circles by others, the doings of the mad scientist Trepida Vereor).

The legend of their home's founding have long encouraged Heminai to aspire to intellectual heights but never at the cost of humility; after all, the settlement wouldn't exist were it not for both. Hemina's citizens are cautious however and taught to be careful from a young age, reminded often of the dangers of the Marcor Desert and that to be prepared is to be protected. Dune Town's culture carries other habits of its ancestors as well and bartering is as common as purchasing something with coin, though standardized services requiring gold and silver (like the railroad) have slowly started to bring a close to the trend of trade over currency.

Sanctus Egnatia, Master of Questions
City, Trickery
Gaduis Exanimo (Ventreli 3:12) She was not done after answering Madriogarra's riddles however, asking the powerful creature only one of her own. In minutes the great sphinx grew so frustrated that she bounded around the Dune Temple in rage and aggravation, threatening to kill the half-elf should she not reveal the answer—but Egnatia did not yield. Finally Madriogarra relented, accepting defeat to know the truth of the clever puzzle and forsaking any claim over the territory, allowing the city of Hemina to rise from the sands around the desert's ancient sanctuary.

Saint Tranio, Speaker Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, Light
Integrum Opinionem (Underknoll 6:3) It took her almost a century but ultimately the elf succeeded, hunting down the 20 Babbling Familiars of Curesceo the Fallen. As a wizard of great power his creations sometimes appear still, though only as figments to youths in Hemina—as one's faith in the Celestial Heroes grows, their heretical lies and blasphemous falsehoods fall silent.

Meridies, City of Peace

Crossroads, Friendly, Historical, Political, Tradehub
Sitting in an idyllic river delta on Samovi's southern coast, the village of Meridies remained quaint throughout and well after the Age of Discord, the Marcor Desert too much of a barrier to make routing goods through there a difficult prospect and treated by pirates with respect (too much fleecing of the sheep kills the sheep, after all). With the rise of the Utopian Dawn and steel equos rails cutting through

the sand however, the need for short shipping lanes on the oceans between the Wild Continent and Ouranios rapidly expanded the settlement. Birthing the study of psychology and with high-volume trade, institutions of all kinds became established in the City of Peace—the first ever for reforming the mentally deranged standing beside towers devoted to teaching the arcane arts. Once The Ministry had rooted into Meridies scrutiny over the magical colleges soon followed, and (fearful of more unrest) the practice of vetting higher-level spellcaster came not long after.

Amenable and peaceful as their home might be Meridians are natural-born explorers—they rarely lose their way and even when they do, they eventually find wherever it is they were trying to go. Baffling and insulation keep most of the cries of the insane inside of their asylums but the citizens of Meridies are raised with plucky attitudes all the same. The need to get back up and persevere despite misfortune is part of the core to their attitude towards life; paired with their penchant to explore, they make for excellent, reliable, and slightly stubborn adventuring companions.

Saint Adelphasium, The Swimming Saint Nature, Tempest

Divina Doctrina (Underknoll 8:7) Knowing all too well now why hundreds of pirates suddenly blockaded the southern waters of the continent, she took to the open ocean without a second thought, swimming from Ouranios to Samovi with the rare antidote for the diabolical poison concocted to kill Tapper Underknoll clenched betwixt her teeth.

Sanctus Portia, Healer of Minds Knowledge, Life

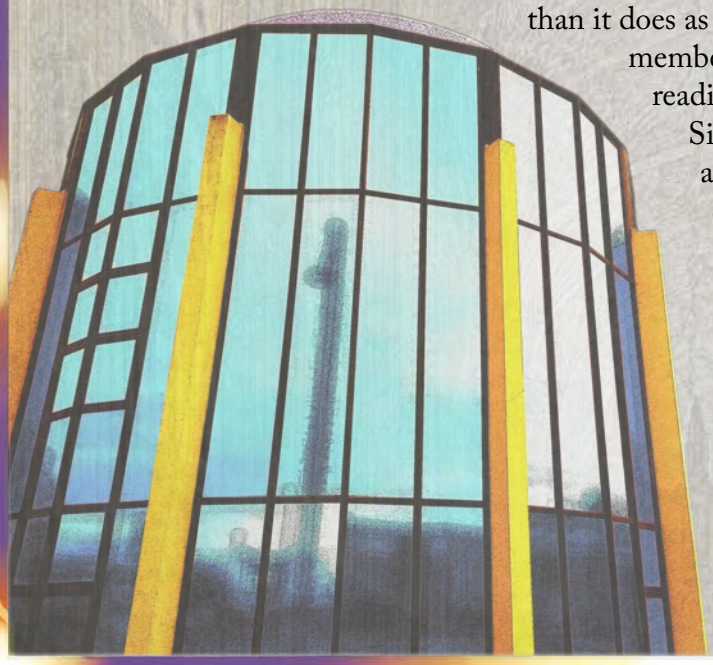
Sacras Litras (Ventrelli 4:18) It was then that Portia realized that some wounds cut deeper than flesh, injuring the victim's very mind. The flurry of research that followed resulted in the first reform institution for those ill of thought and in turn begat the many facilities of The Ministry we turn to for healing the sick.

Nitidus, The Gnomish Metropolis

Resplendent, Sleek, Sprawling, Towered, Unusual, White

Tall folk that make the trek into the heart of Samovi's eastern jungles can find Nitidus unsettling. The city is massive in scale but the mighty buildings are sized for its gnomish inhabitants, automatically putting many people off-guard. The Gnomish Metropolis' architecture is beautiful, but to the untrained the entire city looks like it is on the brink of collapse—yet this unsettling appearance is nothing compared to the city's function as Samovi's leading innovator in inaequa technology. The Gnomoriun (gnomish Master Sages) are always pressing for the newest and greatest advancements in every branch of inaequa and mechanical engineering.

These seemingly boundless innovations aren't simply thrown out into the street or even submitted to the Global Patent Office in Pertinax without careful testing. The Gnomoriun serves more as a standardizing body than it does as a guild of inventors. The Committee—the leading hundred members of the Gnomoriun—spend the better part of each day reading, reviewing and regulating new and existing technology. Sitting members enjoy the highest honor an inventor can be assigned, making decisions on local and global regulations every day; having sway over even a few of the scientist-politicians can mean the difference between feast or famine for an engineer or inventor. Members of the Committee are constantly at the center of networks of subsidies and while they might spend most of their time debating regulations, during their other hours they're in the lap of luxury satisfying their smallest whims.



Nitidus' division between the gnomes it was built by and the other races that have come to dwell in it is a note of discord to their otherwise benevolent society. The situation is all the

more prevalent due to the wealth of inaequa devices all throughout the metropolis—the long-legged population is becoming less and less capable of working divine machines. This city-wide anomaly has driven the wedge between short and tall Nitidians deep enough to disrupt the economy, segregate sections of the settlement, and even spawn divergent cultures. Both still embrace inaequa and the Celestial Heroes but now differ in how, small citizens devoting themselves to higher ideals like intellect, benevolence, and grace. Their larger peers pay homage to these and while fewer in number, they are utterly devoted to the demigods of Askis and their faith overshadows that possessed by the more numerous diminutive denizens.

Thoa Steelbeard, Patron of Chains Arcana, Forge
Libris Bonitatem (Underknoll 2:2) With a final blow of his hammer, Thoa completed the last link of his own chain. The curse of breaking chains grabbed hold of the foul relic and it immediately began to rot, but he held the corrupted thing in the fire and it smoldered. He continued to forge links as the blasphemy rotted away and after one hundred days and nights, Thoa had bound the curse of breaking chains into an enchanted loop of his making, a holy wonder that heals itself no matter the injury wrought upon it.

Maconnel Sirjonna, The First Standard
Celestial Bureaucracy, City
Dedit Partem (Fethyrwal 192:41) The great contract of the city was itself a thing of beauty. Although it stretched as tall as Nitidus' tallest tower, it declared that the city's creation shall never cease, and that all it shall create shall be in the pursuit of glory. Maconnel bound the compact in leather, then wood, and finally in iron before the citizens began their divine task: to create everything that ever could be.

Saint Gulielmus, Divine Builder City, Forge
Verbum Deorum (Fethyrwal 4:16) Seeing the Celestial Heroes as heralds of change, Gulielmus turned all of his fortune and expertise as an engineer to honoring the saviors of Askis. Building on the solid foundations of the defeated monarch's destroyed castle, he constructed the first of the Nine Wonders of Devotion: the Silinium Tower, stretching its upper spire to the very heavens.

Sanctus Domia, Lady of the Word Arcana, Knowledge
Angelorum Nuntius (Fethyrwal 11:6) Domia was powerful mage that won acclaim in many battles, but this was not what earned her the admiration of the Celestial Heroes. After visiting the Upper Planes on behalf of our demigods, she devoted her life to bringing celestial enlightenment back to Askis and championed peace over all other things.

Noticia, Halfbreed Town

Crossroads, Isolated, Tradehub, Wealthy

In days past currents off the southwestern coast made for difficult waters and land bound journeys through the south of Samovi were incredibly harsh, but some travelers persisted all the same. These wayward folks began an outpost to the west of Relictus Mountain between Etium and Meridies, a collection of a few buildings that grew into a village where tieflings, half-orcs, and other peoples of mixed heritage gathered together. Only the destitute and desperate were willing to put down roots in the small settlement of Noticia—and then the Escarion Maelstrom wrecked havoc on Askis' shipping lanes. The village of misfits swelled into a town, the docks expanding into a naval port able to accommodate a stream of ships larger than those that used to stop in Noticia. Halfbreed Town is no longer a place to be derided, the city-state's estates sought by wealthy citizens intent to capitalize on the expanding naval port's heavy traffic. Tieflings of high standing are particularly fond of the settlement, making up the majority of Noticia's societal elite alongside half-elves, half-orcs, and dragonborn from families that moved there centuries ago.

Like their home's monicker implies Noticians are a mixed lot and attempts to categorize them are as endless as they are varied. One of their commonalities is one of living situations—whether a citizen lives within Halfbreed Town's territory or within Noticia itself, and if so whether they dwell in a home or one of the apartment complexes that have arisen to house the growing population. Denizens from this city-state are also easily accepting of others and adaptable with their beliefs, willing to hear out opposing views with an openness unmatched in Askis.

Sanctus Acoleia, She of Vigilance Knowledge, Protection
Memoria Vivorum (Fethyrwal 3:11) Through guile and cunning, Acoleia uncovered a succubus! The wicked creature was hidden by the ignorant perfidy of Samson Grandwit and she slew him for allowing it to escape justice, fleeing Noticia before it could be purged.

Saint Martinus, Saint of Self-Reliance
Celestial Bureaucracy, Life
Sacras Litras (Underknoll 12:15) Uncowed by the massive creature threatening his fleet, the halfling leapt to one of the smaller vessels and drew the pneumavore away from the rest of the ships. His ruse succeeded and the creature chased him down, consuming his craft. Martinus survived however, climbing atop its back and living for over a decade before being rescued—sustained by his faith alone.

Peribolus, The Walled City

Chaotic, Cramped, Defensible, Political, Urban

Peribolus is built around Rumex Bay at the bottom of a circular valley in northeastern Samovi, shadowed by the Scissura Mountains to the south and Recaltio Mountain Range to the west. Massive stone and iron walls were erected around the settlement at its founding, creating a perfectly circular limit to the city's growth. For generations the ramparts served their purpose admirably, protecting from beast and wartime alike, yet as time passed the Walled City grew, first outwards and then upwards. The settlement changed slowly from a fortified paradise to an architectural tribute to bureaucracy, with buildings growing taller and streets shrinking with each passing year. It is said that entire districts of the city are blocked off from the sun—whether true or not the maze-like streets make such legends easy to believe.

The tangled mess that is Peribolus is quite different from many cities on Askis; in the thick press of people, only the loosest versions of law and order hold sway. Things that would be illegal elsewhere are permitted inside the ignorance of the Walled City, its warren-like streets impossible to effectively police. Psychotropic drugs and poisons are among the most prominent examples of contraband, prompting impatient doctors and scientists looking to test the full effects of these substances to flock to Peribolus—as do those who wish to partake. There is little doubt that with the loose enforcement of regulations that *purpura dirks* (page 181) are being traded here, and if given enough time and subtlety the wielder of such a weapon could have every poison imaginable at their disposal.

It's no coincidence that people often look down on Peribolis, assuming anyone from the city-state's territory is as loose with the law as they are their morals. In nearly all instances this couldn't be further from the truth and the infamous miniscule percentage of the population causes the rest of Peribolus' citizens to turn to their faith in the Celestial Heroes all the harder. As a result their ardent rites of worship are perhaps more brutal but embody contrite penance in the hopes that the demigods will soon assuage the Walled City's woes directly. Facing adversity, traffic, and fearful of the worst elements of their urban home, Periboli are both demanding and somewhat skittish—if something seems awry or like a waste of time, they're usually the first people making an exit.

Christine Fos, Capturer of Monsters
Celestial Bureaucracy, City
Gadius Exanimo (Underknoll 10:15) Panic swelled in the gathered throng, choking them even as they gasped for breath. Only Christine stood firm against the mighty dragon, though tears rolled down her face she persevered. When dawn rose the next day the dragon was bound in iron chains—with Christine holding the key. Its flames would be used to reforge the shattered walls, now stronger than ever before.

Paran Batharos, The Wallsmith Cog, Forge
Angelorum Nunitus *(Underknoll 6:7) And so he did build a wall. The ground yielded to him blocks of stone whole from the ground, and Paran moved them. The ground gave him pure iron, and Paran forged it into great gates. The ground gave him sustenance, and Paran planted it, creating a verdant paradise.*

Saint Dordalus, Divine Alchemist
Knowledge, Protection
Libris Bonitatem (Ventrelli 7:18) In a truly miraculous accident Dordalus spilled a flask of the mad inventor Braskredj's unquenchable flames—but some of his own experiments as well. Ready to flee from the imminent inferno, the alchemist scrabbled to get away only to quickly realize that the fire had been put out. In hours he had perfected the solution, providing barrels of it to the Golden Redeemer's armies the next morning.

Saint Melitus, The Leafeating Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, Nature
Verbum Deorum (Fethyrwal 13:6) Melitus had taken to eating only plants and espoused the good health it brought, spreading his beliefs far and wide.

Farmers flocked to follow in his footsteps after druids began to bless the most devout among them, making certain their harvests were bountiful, and to this day many who till the fields abstain from meat—as should we all.

Praesus, Town of Respite

Competitive, Historical, Nature, Political

Taming Samovi's dense northern forests proved to be beyond reach until the druid-mage Rollath opened his grove to travelers beset upon, saving lives from the harsh wilderness by offering a safe place to rest before continuing one's trek. When the elf shuffled off his mortal coil it became a village known to welcome those with a respect for nature—before long it was the premier place for the Wild Continent's beastmasters to learn their trade. The tradition of embracing animals and plants has persisted, morphing with the times until today where the current aims of the city are academic pursuits into biology and expert animal training, focuses that have become the main source of gold flowing into and out of the settlement. Praesus is also known for its competitive races of all kinds, particularly the Triarch Marathon (a footrace that begins in Etium and ends here) and the Jetharka Rally, a grand contest that spans the entire continent.

Praesians are gentle and kind but above all competitive—whether it is a matter of a wager, grades, sport, or anything else. Citizens from the Town of Respite make up contests almost constantly but always with the spirit of good sportsmanship, urging each other to do better and reach higher at every turn with earnest encouragement. Traditionally the people of Praesius were raised to master a trade or skill, but with modern technology bringing an end to its isolation more folk have become lackadaisical in their life's pursuits, traveling until they can journey no more and then returning home to out-do one another in the pursuits of the retired community.

Sanctus Novia, Saint of Sunrises Light, Protection
Integrum Opinionem (Fethyrwal 3:12) With the undead hordes of Wao'zaokan crawling over the settlement's outer wall, many in Praesus had lost hope of surviving until morning—but not Novia. In a blinding flash of light from the heavens she disappeared, transformed by her faith into a celestial force that caused the sun to rise on Askis hours ahead of dawn. The vampiric warmaster and his forces were caught completely unprepared, scoured from existence as the sun shone down on Praesus.

Sanctus Aloysius, Patron of Cunning
Death, Trickery
Memoria Vivorum (Ventrelli 2:16) With a steely gaze she drank deep from her flagon, urging Tark One-Eye and the Voidcrest pirates around her to do the same. The dwarf's cunning ruse took and as the last of the brigands drained their flask, the first of them succumbed to the potent poison inside of it. Aloysius was the last to suffer from the toxin, grinning with the knowledge that the scourge of the northern seas was undone.

Saint Sulla, He of the Bare Foot Forge, Protection
Memoria Vivorum (Underknoll 11:5) Despairing with every suffering passerby he saw, Sulla gave away the contents of his whole cobble shop. From that day forth he walked barefoot across Samovi, putting shoes onto the feet of every barefoot traveler he came across but never his own.

Refovio, High Town

Elevated, Isolated, Technological

No town in the world sits higher than Refovio, positioned on the outer peaks of the Recaltio Mountain Range and glittering in the dawn like a promising vein of ore jutting out of the rock face. Thermal vents from deep in the stone keep its homes warm and add some steam-powered machinery to the hundreds of inaequa-devices that make the settlement function, inexorably dragging the countless chains running cable cars from plateau to plateau. The oddity of High Town's location and layout make it remarkable enough but there are few more popular figures than the Caelum Gladio. Clad in jetpacks and wielding magic blades forged from the teeth of dragons, these courageous warriors have defended Refovio since before the emergence of the first divine machines (the secrets of their ancient technology now thought to be lost to time). This should not overshadow High Town's significant respect for knowledge and among academia it is just as famous for the writers it has produced, many of them taught in the ancient bastion of knowledge now called the Library of Adriotemachus.

There's one thing true about all Refovi: they keep their heads on straight during a crisis. Maintenance crews are constantly at work keeping the machines of High Town functioning and anyone raised there has experienced more than one nearly-disastrous cable car ride, dangling hundreds of feet

in the air. Citizens from the remote territory are also used to passing the time, either carrying unread books or the accoutrements of another quiet hobby in their pack. They tend to keep to themselves so there aren't many negative generalizations about Refovi other than their lack of wonder—being raised amongst the clouds with the song of the Whistling Caves lilting in the air gives them lofty expectations.

Saint Misargyrides, Keeper of Books
Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge
Gaduis Examino (Ventrelli 15:5) Helping the Celestial Hero Darrius seek out some scrap of knowledge to aid in felling the Bandit King Mincallius proved difficult but not fruitless. None was to be found, but in his search the dragonborn discovered secret runes hidden in the shelves of the Library of Adriotemachus! The scholar resisted sleep for every day of a week filled with zealous pursuit through the stores of scrolls and catalogues of tomes, erasing each blasphemous mark from the holy halls of divine knowledge.

Saint Cappadox, The Holy Mason Forge, Nature
Memoria Vivorum (Underknoll 7:16) The first building in Refovio was wrought by The Holy Mason, slowly bit by bit over the course of many years. Every day Cappadox carved and carried a block up the mountain, the path worn by his tread becoming the initial road up to his temple and the settlement it begat.

Saint Peniculus, The Whistling Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Sacras Litras (Fethyrwal 12:4) While his love of discordant melodies caused many to think him mad, The Ministry sought to reform him when Peniculus was discovered burrowing seemingly pointless passages in the Recaltio Mount Range. Only a year after his treatment began his work truly took hold, the tunnels producing a divine song all their own as winds passed through the Whistling Caves. Lellwyn Fethyrwal heard the tune and declared it one of the Nine Wonders of Devotion, seeing to Peniculus' release and ensuring his curious works could continue.

Regredior, East Port City

Crossroads, Enchanted, Historical, Tradehub, Urban

Merchants settled and fortified Regredior before The Golden Redeemers began their crusade in Samovi, guided to prosperity in the age of piracy by clever aristocrats that tightly controlled its economy. It is far and away the Wild Continent's most self-sufficient settlement, the ruling council of the past utilizing the wide manufacturing base to fix prices for goods when the need arose. The citizens of East Port City squandered in poverty for centuries until a revolt led by Darrius Ventrelli overthrew their class system and now its factories are devoted more to the production of appliances than anything else. The oligarchical wealth of Regredio's past was put to use in a way that benefits all however, and ancient enchantments keep the city's streets utterly pristine without the need for sweepers or shovelers.

Regredi aren't known for excessive talking—they like to get to the heart of a matter. This philosophy is inherent throughout the culture of East Porty City's territory and only when using good manners will one of its citizens patiently suffer dawdling. Folks from Regredior are used to the settlement's exceptional hygiene and don't like to get dirty themselves unless they have to, keeping an attitude that puts pristine style on a pedestal thanks the fashion trends of their hometown (known for being as immaculate as its sidewalks).

Saint Argyrippus, The Breathless Saint
Grave, Protection
Lex Altiores (Ventrelli 4:12) After the philosopher scientist released a maddening gas to spread all over Regredior, the brave Argyrippus ignored the warnings of the Golden Redeemers and ventured out into the mind-altering mist. He heaved and spat before drew in a breath so deep that the the city-wide fog withdrew from the streets and into his lungs! The dwarf died for his efforts and his bereaving ghost sometimes haunts the night in Regredior to recant his death, but the citizens of the city shall ne'er forget his noble sacrifice and without fail they have honored him thrice a year since.

Sanctus Quirinia, Lady of the Bow
Celestial Bureaucracy, War
Lex Altiores (Underknoll 5:4) As the walls of Regredior began to fall she leapt back from the battlements, letting loose an arrow before falling to her death. The missile was so righteous it flew beyond sight of the crumbling ramparts and directly into the demon Vura-Sxra's eye, blinding it to the approach of Tapper Underknoll's forces and saving the city from destruction.

Severus, Village of the North

Historical, Landmark, Naval, Tradehub

Founded in the days of primordial Askis, Severus has persisted in the coldest place on the lowlands of the Wild Continent by virtue of its perseverant people. Today its homes are heated and their industry aided by technology (though not too much as weighty engines are best used only in frigid waters), but the spirit of the Village of the North is just as strong as it has always been. Centuries of navigating some of the roughest waves in the world have ingrained the practice of sailing in the settlement and now its wealth comes in equal parts largely from naval schools, the bounty of the sea, and the brave shipmasters working the far northern shipping lanes.

There's an unfair yet widely-held perception that Severi are callous but this is simply their self-dependence and hardiness being misunderstood—they've been raised to expect everyone around them to be the same, with similarly sarcastic but well-meaning attitudes. They're still quite helpful when asked and a citizen from the Village of the North won't think twice about providing aid if prompted, they're just recalcitrant about making the same request when they could use some assistance.

Sanctus Dossenia, Saint of Purity Life, Light

Dedit Partem (Fethyrwal 14:5) The gnomish girl possessed a soul so pure her merest touch restored rotting food and cleaned tainted water. Realizing her gift was a blessing, she spent her life upending plagues and diseases across Samovi before dying at the hands of an assassin's blade.

Sanctus Modia, Master of Forests City, Nature

Divina Doctrina (Underknoll 6:18) What she did next surprised even the Divine Hunter, for he had known Modia since she was but a child and the half-orc had never shown any talent for nature magic. Still, she raised her hands and slowly, carefully, wove them together—as she did so the branches of the Artius Forest intertwined to make sturdy byways and platforms. With a new, safe abode secured, the well-meaning goblins and Severus formed a compromise of peace forevermore.

Sanctus Socellia, Saint of Wisdom Knowledge, Life

Sacras Litras (Ventrelli 8:4) After defeat at the hands of the Golden Redeemers she renounced her evil ways, taking a role of counsel rather than violence. As an advisor to the many lords of the land, her advice to make peace rather than war saved countless lives through resolutions and compromises instead of battle.

Resounding across the rooftops and down into the alleyways of Pertinax, the tolling of shrine bells awakens Lotiana from her slumber in the little alcove behind Sarcaggio's butchery. The old half-orc was always kind to her, never revealed her presence to the guard, and shared his meals freely (though even he never ate the finer cuts of meat sold in his shop). While wandering the streets these past months the young half-elf had heard many travelers say that the home of The Inquisition is actually a city split in two—one for the blessed, one for the cursed. Lotiana knew since the catastrophe that she was to be counted among the latter, left to be taken in by the government or survive with the bad hand she was dealt after her family passed away in the accident.

So many accidents.

The people of Pertinax are righteous folk and have not allowed the despicable violence of the resurging criminal element of Askis to cow them. Before the great serpents' fall they used this city as their final stronghold and the descendants of those hard-bitten citizens are stubborn, independent, and self-reliant—like Lotiana. She likes to think of herself as a sort of defender of her home, performing small bits of heroism here and there whenever the opportunity arises.

Stretching out her cramped limbs to wake up, the girl's belly rumbles mightily and she reflects that breakfast needs to be a priority. Lotiana grabs her small pouch of belongings and slips out of the alleyway and onto the sidewalk of a busier street, swept up into the bustle of mid-morning already underway. Inaequa-chariots and cabled vectio cars sweep through the roads of Pertinax and Lotiana nimbly skips across the way as a crossing guard signals for vehicles at the crosswalk to stop. The friendly man says something to her about getting on to school and she simply nods, looking away and shuffling all the more quickly towards the marketplace.

After a few more minutes of darting through alleyways between buildings and across smaller streets, the half-elven lass reaches the small, off-beat Haristra Market, her home away from home. Immediately she spots several people known to her—other vagrants living on the fringes of Pertinax, shopkeeps glaring at her from behind their stands of goods and delicious smelling foods, and the well to-do curious why a girl as young as her isn't in school. Although Magdo's sweet pastries vie for her attention, Lotiana focuses on an even greater purpose and scans the crowd for the mysterious woman she saw last week.

As luck would have it there she was, clad in the same brown ankle-length coat with her face shaded by a crimson-banded broad felt hat—although unlike before, today she carries a cord-bound satchel. The woman briefly speaks to one of the food vendors, exchanges a few coins, takes a skewered bit of meat, and briskly moves toward the northern edge of the market. Lotiana furtively follows after her through a half dozen alleyways before the woman passes through the annex behind the shrines to Sanctus Amandri and Saint Jetzio, and the vagrant comes to a stop, allowing the quarry to go as she will. The half-elf ducks into a familiar corner, making herself scarce and minding her own business as people shuffle off to their own tasks, paying her little attention.

Except for the new denizen that appears a few minutes after her. Lotiana doesn't recognize the old human and isn't quite sure what to make of him, carefully watching in her peripheral vision and trying to determine if he's a threat. It was unlikely, of course—most of the vagrants she meets aren't violent and those that are quickly get brought in to The Ministry—but living alone had taught her to be cautious. More than one friendly smile has tried to hide wickedness from her in the past.

The old vagrant approaches her in a lazy walk, saddling up comfortably against the wall near Lotiana's corner. For a brief moment she tenses her muscles to spring as the man reaches under his robes but calms as he produced a half-eaten pirum. He offers it up in one hand but after she silently declines, he takes a bite into the fleshy fruit. "Been a good harvest this year," he says, nodding appreciatively as its juices flow around his fingers. "Inquisition's really turned up lately though and the fruit selection has hurt because of it, hasn't it? That's what the farmers are saying."

Lotiana shakes her head, disagreeing. "Not at all. I heard just yesterday that the recent influx of new inductees for The Inquisition are bringing in a lot of coin with them. Even saw a few emptied stands."

The disheveled fellow looks slightly hurt but continues. "Sure, sure. Plenty of new recruits this time too. Seems to my old eyes that the fresh Inquisitors are all sloppy, poorly trained." He bites more of the flesh off the pirum, exposing its core and chewing as he adds, "lot of fools and ne'er-do-wells , I say."

"No, no," Lotiana replies, "that's not remotely true. I've never seen an Inquisitor I wouldn't trust. They are fine defenders and make Pertinax a safe place for me to live." She genuinely smiles, thinking of all the times the organization has helped her make ends meet after the accident. "Anyone that doesn't have love in their hearts for The Inquisition—there's a fool."

The old man nods and laughs, turning away to furtively look up and down the alleyways nearby as his voice suddenly changes in timber, gaining a measure of authority and command she recognizes instantly. "I couldn't agree more, my dear—love for The Inquisition should be in all our hearts." Lotiana gasps as the old vagrant turns, revealing the familiar and much younger face of Inquisitor Octavius. He smiles warmly at her and produces a fresh pirum from his robes, tossing it into the air for her to catch and quickly eat. The sweet juices delight her half-elven taste buds and she rapidly consumes the ripe fruit, quickly eating down to its core before popping the pit into her mouth to relish every last bit of its pulp. "Tell me my dear," her trusted friend asks, "have you any news about the woman I asked you to keep an eye on?"

Tonguing the pit to the side of her mouth, Lotiana nods and explains everything about the mysterious woman in great detail—what she is wearing, the satchel she carries, who she spoke to and for how long, where she was last seen headed toward and when, and the other sorts of information that Inquisitor Octavius often asked for. As usual his gaze never waver from her eyes as she shares what she's seen, and though she knows many found his intensity to be frightening it only emboldens her heart to know that the defenders of her home are fierce and true.

"Once more, child, you have done The Inquisition a great service." The Inquisitor reaches into his robes—no longer the dirtied rags of a vagrant but now the pristine and exquisite finery appropriate to his station—and produces a small pouch that jangles with the promise of food, shelter, and comfort. "Very well." He hands her the small parcel of coins and walks purposefully in the direction the mysterious woman had went, righteousness in his gait.

Lotiana quickly takes to her own tasks, slipping back into the Haristra Market and making for Magdo's stand. She thinks to herself that the Celestial Heroes must be smiling on her today because a few of the pastries—particularly the ones she had been eyeing up—are still there. Though surprised that she has the coin, the salty dwarf turns over two of the delightful confections and after storing one in her shirt, the half-elf carefully bites into the other, closing her eyes to savor the sugary treat.

A sudden yell interrupts her sumptuous distraction however and Lotiana snaps open her eyes to see the mysterious woman from earlier in the day crashing onto the ground only a few feet away. Several men and women dressed as civilians expertly tackle her, sending the satchel sailing off into the air and pamphlets of paper spilling onto the dirt. She screams, "the truth of the light cannot be held in shadow for long! The truth shall be revea—" before Inquisitor Octavius appears, chanting an incantation that knocks her unconscious.

Lotiana picks up one of the pieces of paper and inspects it, appreciating the boldness of the letters, but her trusted defender takes it from her hands and pats her on the head reassuringly. "They are misguided," he says, winking at her. "We both know better—The Inquisition is the ***real*** *light of truth."*

ZAKUTHOMBO The Far Continent

As the last stronghold of evil in Askis, more disbelieving citizens live in the Far Continent than anywhere else. The Inquisition has thus made it their de facto home, rooting out the unfaithful and malignant for either imprisonment or rehabilitation with The Ministry. Their agents are a constant presence in the cities and roam the countryside looking for wanted criminals, rumors of anti-establishment groups, and anyone thought to be suspiciously lacking in devotion to the Celestial Heroes. While trade routes and infrastructure are mostly complete in Zakuthombo, they are not as developed as in Ouranios and amenities are slightly more expensive or harder to come by than even in the (heavily invested and resource rich) continent of Samovi.

Iacio, Capital of Zakuthombo

Capital, Disorganized, Free, Laboring, Mountainside, Tradehub

Of all the major settlements in Askis there are none less prone to order than Iacio though the capital of the Far Continent is far from lawless—the shadow of The Inquisition falls heavily over the city, its agents ever vigilant for the threat of evil resurging. There is some irony in its history as the stronghold of bandits and brigands, villains that retreated here to reserve strength as more of the world fell under the sway of the Celestial Heroes. Loyal soldiers lost their lives by the thousands assailing its walls only to be rebuffed by blades and arrows, then bullets, and finally fire; even after Ouranios and Samovi were conquered the foes in Tucker & Co.'s quest to end malevolence in Zakuthombo stood fast, resisting several of Grukk's Grand Expeditions before dragons came to lair in the mountains behind the metropolis. It wasn't until the 14th Grand Expedition led by all of Askis' demigods that the villains fled, cowed in the face of the overwhelming divinity and numbers arrayed against them. Mystral Farsong encouraged her allies not to forcibly alter the doings of Iacio too much after taking the city however, and alongside Grukk she has overseen its "rule" ever since, maintaining the same freewheeling attitude the metropolis once championed (tempered by the presence of benign authority, of course).

The Operans Mountains provides the backbone of industry in Iacio: ore. Workers descend into its stony interior day in and day out, picking away veins of iron, lead, copper, silver, and even gold to be processed in the Interlino Quarter below before shipping off on steel equos to elsewhere on the Far Continent or a ship bound for the high seas. There are a stunning variety of other trades practiced here as well, whether to support the mining economy that has driven the metropolis or not—while its history as a den of iniquity contained a great deal of evil it was also a locus of cultures from all over the world, a microcosm of Askis in one settlement. Some of the forbidden practices and traditions that died out in Ouranios and Samovi survive only here, shedding their most unseemly aspects in order to be tolerated by The Inquisition. Finally it is a common place for the successfully reformed to dwell, brought by expense of the state to live a fulfilling life of labor in the Free City.

Architects and archaeologists argue at length over the system by which Iacio was laid out but most people assume it was done by a throw of the dice (or something else just as random). Despite the chaos of its construction, the metropolis has numerous signs and public maps to assist travelers getting around though as part of the last of the continents to become civilized, inaequa-chariots and other amenities common elsewhere are not in abundant supply here. One can still purchase them in Iacio's streets if they've coin enough, but the steel equos rails are nearly always occupied by mining shipments—not passengers cars—and most folk that don't have a steed either walk, bicycle, or take a rickshaw when traveling inside its confines. The only true mark of the Celestial Heroes are the irrigation channels dug out from the base of the the Operans Mountains to the wartorn plains around the Free City, used by enterprising farmers to revitalize the badlands and coax them back into fertile fields—until then the capital of Zakuthombo relies heavily on imports from its neighboring city-states to keep the populace fed, gradually improving the travel corridors across the Far Continent as the need increases with every new arrival.

Cantatio Promenade (Center)

Melodies and jaunty tunes float over the streets where Iacio's artists and performers congregate and their collected menagerie of open-air entertainment provides a daily circus of performances. A plethora of theatrical parks and amphitheaters complete the Free City's arts district and have made it the hub of travel in the core of the settlement, criss-crossed by rickshaws commonly used in its

LENOCINOR DISTRICT
PARS CIVILIS
N
W
E
S
HARIALOR SQUARE
CANTATIO PROMENADE
VOLGATUS COMMONS
HIPPODROME MIRABILE
INTERLINO QUARTER
REDIMO DISTRICT
VOLGATUS COMMONS
IACIO CAPITAL OF ZAKUTHOMBO
KNIGHTS OF THE CHIME

cobbled, winding, and varied streets. Mystral Farsong dwells in the Hippodrome Mirabile at the center of the gymnasts, musicians, thespians, and other performers, viewing the athletic performances and theatrical plays in stadiums nearby from ornate porches that extend far from the 16th floor near its top like the petals of a blooming flower.

Lenocinor District (North)

There were great profits to be made from (and by) the villains that flocked to Zakuthombo's center of mining (and thus forges for armor and weapons) as incursions into the Far Continent persisted. The war-profiteering that created the ostentatious palaces and manses on the cobbled roads is long gone but their dwellings remain, inhabited now by the heads of merchant guilds, mining consortiums, and the delegates of city-states working in the Pars Civialis.

Harialor Square (Northwest)

Shrines to the divine patrons of Askis were the targets of destruction and sabotage after Iacio was conquered, a problem that Grukk had a simple solution for: lump them together with a wide area around the cluster and then surround it with guards. While the constant presence of warriors has largely become a thing of the past and it's increased far beyond its original parameters, the majority of Iacio's devotional sites continue to locate in Harialor Square.

Interlino Quarter (East)

Abutting the slopes of the Operans Mountains are refineries, processing facilities, and the Rectus Semita —a chain of continuously running vectios that haul workers up the mountain and bring them back with loads of ore. Most of the citizenry in the city are employed here and to accommodate shipping all of the raw materials (as well as waves of laborers arriving or departing their shifts) its avenues are broad, easily traveled upon by five or more steel plaustra or wagons at once.

Redimo District (West)

Numerous assaults that never made it to the city walls turned the fields around Iacio into badlands blasted by spellwork, dragon fire, and lead shot. Importing food enough to support the metropolis is a difficult task and with no agrarian infrastructure nearby Mystal Farsong knew that Iacio had no future, so upon the Free City's conquest she immediately went about reworking the resources nearby to restore natural growth. Evokers from the Tucker & Co. spellswords and laborers sourced from the mines were requisitioned to carve out new aqueducts channeling the Operans Mountains' runoff into efficient irrigation channels that stretch beyond the horizon. The Celestial Hero's terraforming venture has borne fruit and after hundreds of years the lands around Iacio have begun yielding strong crops once again, though The Ministry has matched their gains with additions to the populace and the Free City still requires no small amount of foodstuffs to feed its citizens.

Volgatus Commons (South and scattered)

The remaining areas of the Free City are a varied lot of townhouses, tenement homes, shops that double as dwellings, and apartment buildings collectively called the Volgatus Commons. Middle class citizens (usually specialty artisans) are interspersed throughout along with the occasional newly built shrine, although the most imposing and notable part of the district is the headquarters of the Knights of the Chime where Grukk's celestial work is kept, protected by the order's trainers and new inductees.

Saint Lydus the Canny Arcana, Grave
Angelorum Nuntius (Farsong 5:11) In the catacombs beneath Iacio the explorer discovered something both dangerous and rare—the ancient spell scrolls of the primordial wizard Vicefroth, unleashing his spirit to haunt the city! After a night of true terror and bloodshed Lydus sacrificed his own soul and used the mage's ancient magic to put the ghost to rest, though he has been entombed with it since.

Saint Isauricus of the Courageous Heart
Protection, War
Dedit Partem (Grukk 14:38) Taking hold of his glaive and crying high a prayer to the Celestial Heroes, Isauricus leapt out onto the back of the seemingly invincible dragon Huradian'thaiich and slew it, falling with it to his own death

Sanctus Volcatia, Patron of the Meek City, Trickery
Gaduis Exanimo (Farsong 12:14) Unbidden of the dangers, the dwarf permanently shrunk herself to the size of a thimble in order to evade and follow the blasphemous mage Neracito back to his hidden lair in the Forests of Patro, returning to Tucker & Co. with its location and saving Iacio from any more of

his terror. Despite the efforts of Askis' finest workers of magic the ghost of the sorcerer remains, returning every fortnight to harry the citizens of Zakuthombo's capital.

Saint Gulielmus, Divine Builder City, Forge
Verbum Deorum (Farsong 4:16) Seeing the Celestial Heroes as heralds of change, Gulielmus turned all of his fortune and expertise as an engineer to honoring the saviors of Askis. Building on the solid foundations of a defeated monarch's destroyed castle, he constructed the most imposing of the Nine Wonders of Devotion: the Silinium Tower, its upper spire stretching to the very heavens.

Pertinax, Inquisitorial Metropolis

Historical, Holy, Landmark, Political, Tradehub, Wealthy
In the wake of the Night of Largitio the demand for The Inquisition swelled and the small city of Pertinax did the same when it became their headquarters, rapidly expanding in size and scope in a matter of months. Tucker Quickfoot dug deep into the coffers of the Celestial Heroes' vaults to reforge the nearly-ruined settlement, arguing that in order to properly see to its duties that his organization required a city of their own. The Inquisitorial Metropolis has transformed under the demigod halfling's guidance —once a shrine to everything wrong in the world, it's now the home of its first defenders against wickedness.

Dragons fled eastward from Iacio when it finally fell and laired together for a last stand in tightly-controlled Pertinax, quickly overpowering its ruling mage council with tooth and claw. Decades passed before Tucker & Co.'s mercenaries retook the city and it became host to horrors beyond counting, the serpents and their lackeys treating citizens as expendable slaves, food, and subjects for experimentation. Foul magics were worked to transform the interior of the rocky slopes behind and beneath Pertinax into dozens of miniature environments—passages leading from swamps to arctic caves to chambers with rivers of lava and more. When the forces of good finally overcame the draconic overlords many of these tunnels were hastily collapsed but those that remain have become the training grounds of The Inquisition where the last tests for agents await the truly resolute.

Pertinax's first rulers chose the site for its position around the pass leading into the mountains but also because of the unique geography of the conical rock formations nearby. Using magic of all kinds was what united the city's mage council (many of their practices now banned or restricted by The Inquisition and The Ministry) and their spellwork carved magnificent towers that became home to the overpowering dragons resisting the Celestial Heroes. Zakuthombo's nobles compete to own these lofty mansions and pay ever more exorbitant fees the higher up they are—save for the three tallest and largest of the "Dragon Spires", inhabited solely by The Inquisition. Dragonborn have been welcome in the city since its founding but the serpents that died here left more than a shell-shocked populace, interbreeding to make half-dragon warriors that sired children of their own and now more draconic citizens (many of them poor) dwell here than anywhere else in Askis.

The wyrms did not allow Pertinax to slip from their claws easily however and their climactic final encounter with the Celestial Heroes has turned into one of the world's most retold legends: the Battle of Cruenta. Steaming gore flowed from the city's highest public square to turn the very streets of the city crimson, the blood of dragon and demigod alike coating paved bricks as the bloody massacre grew more dire. Only the clever tactics and patience of Tucker & Co. saved the day, the trio materializing from another dimension to strike down the vile dragon Gardarromaalmo with blade and spell just as she was about to end the rest of the divine champions' lives. Thus Pertinax has become a site of pilgrimage for tens of thousands of the most devout, the plaza considered to be one of the holiest places in Askis.

Reshaping into the Inquisitorial Metropolis wrought changes aplenty but the city's original masters and the draconic terraforming inside of the Operans Mountains allowed Tucker Quickfoot to make the settlement surprisingly self-sufficient. Even so the wide assortment of exotic beasts and goods required by The Inquisition to train their agents have brought a great deal of trade alongside the pilgrims constantly streaming into and out of Pertinax to bear witness at Cruenta Square. Overseeing and amplifying these are the Global Patent Office (GPO) and Askis Invention Archive (AIA) where devices for mass-production are logged, ratified, protected, and in almost all cases have a single copy of the item stored on site.

Pertinax sits inside of a gorge with each level of the city walled 30 feet from those below it and accessible only through heavily-fortified gateways staggered on opposite sides. There was a period of greater equality during the Utopian Dawn yet the rush of The Inquisition's revival has set the city's society askew, the rapid construction bringing prosperity for a time but leaving a vacuum in its wake. As with the Dragon Spires the poorer citizens of Pertinax live at the lowest elevation with the wealthier further above, though trades of all kinds are to be found in each of the seven districts—one can find artisans and small factories at any of the Inquisitorial Metropolis' elevations, but quality rises with both price and location.

City sectors are free to travel between except for the highest bastion where The Inquisition dwells in the trio of Dragon Spires towering above Pertinax. Home to the logisticians and tacticians of the holy order, Praetexitur is the tallest spire and hugs the cliffsides behind its lessers—rumors abound of what's inside, tales of evil relics that resist destruction and inaequa contraptions too dangerous for the world at large. Next is Horologium, the largest of the three and dormitory for recognized members of The Inquisition. Its other primary uses are to collect and collate the investigations of the organization's numerous agents. The Peniculamentum is where their training takes place and where they are made to live before attaining the rank of Inquisitor, made to sleep in cold discomfort and squalor as a test of their faith.

Sanctus Amandri, Lady of the Hearth
Cog, Knowledge
Gaduis Exanimo (Farsong 17:2) Amandri was one of many abandoned children in the orphanage but unlike the others, she had true faith. Every morning during the Blizzard of the Maelstrom she filled their home's furnace with the same small sack of coal—scarcely enough for a few hours—yet the fires burned until dawn every day for a month.

Saint Jetzio, The Mad Saint City, Knowledge
Dedit Partem (Farsong 5:12) Forsaking his authority as mayor of the growing village, Jetzio descended into the Crypt of Amtretheon beneath Pertinax. It took him weeks and cost him his mind, but he completed the diabolical puzzles within and closed the fiendish gateways threatening the land.

Saint Labrax, The Hearty Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, City
Divina Cartis (Grukk 11:4) With no other means to escape the rebel wizard Gandros turned himself into water, fleeing through the pipes of the university and down toward the city. The sullied half-orc was keen to the ploy however, dashing mightily to outpace the mage before he could reach the network of passages beneath Pertinax. Opening wide his jaw the protective brute swallowed the apostate along with all the waste nearby, killing them both but ending the evil of Gandros' blasphemy. It is said that when storms fall upon Pertinax one can hear the two battling in the dirtied passageways, The Hearty Saint forever keeping the wizard's spirit at bay.

Sanctus Cispia, Patron of Secrets
Grave, Knowledge
Verbum Deorum (Grukk 4:13) With no parchment or ink to write with she carved into her own skin the secrets of the lich Ulnayr, forever damning her soul but giving Grukk the knowledge of how to destroy the foul undead mage when he came upon her still corpse during his hunt for the undead.

Aquila, Snow Town

Arctic, Landmark, Lawful, Nature

Once home only to hardy sea captains hunting the large beasts in the icy northern waters of Askis, the settlement of Aquila is as humble as it has always been even after turning into the initial testing grounds for The Inquisition. Cold seasons and bitter winters transformed into ever present snow with climate alterations resulting from The Escarion Maelstrom—the perfect place to ensure that only serious contenders with the fires of holy righteousness in their hearts reach proper training in Pertinax to the south. In the crusades of Tucker & Co. the settlement became the staging grounds for retaking the northeastern regions of Zakuthombo and essential to the war effort, already a place once trod upon by soldiers' boots and well-prepared to use for conditioning warriors once again.

A strong tradition of fishing and maritime hunting coincides with new professions to service the countless hopeful recruits that arrive in Aquila—though isolated as it is and meant to toughen applicants, its citizens are fewer in number than any other of the Far Continent's settlements. Some thought

the heavy snows would be the end of Snow Town but Aquil are resolute with a tenacity that has kept them rooted even after Zakuthombo's more hospitable lands were rid of evil. Citizens of the territory welcomed The Inquisition's offer with open arms and their culture has since stopped being recalcitrant (though they are just as ardent), ready for coin to come from elsewhere than the icy waters to the north and meager farms further inland.

Sanctus Phanostrata, Patron of Freedom
Celestial Bureaucracy, Trickery
Verbum Deorum (Grukk 6:5) Never one to listen to a strongly worded command, Phanostrata led numerous other slaves in escaping the clutches of the tyrannical monster Elroathia Eleven-Eye to find refuge behind Tucker & Co.'s mercenary forces. On her 17th journey to liberate more of her kin she was captured, flensed of her flesh but never forgotten by the devout for her holy work.

Saint Dexippus, Master of the Tide
Nature, Protection
Divina Cartis (Farsong 10:16) Merely an apprentice, the fleeing citizenry thought Dexippus mad for preparing a spell as the fires raged around Aquila. Untroubled by their fears she coughed and hacked her way as smoke choked the city's streets, falling unconscious as the voracious Flames of Aitrigdior were finally quenched by the rising tide she summoned to douse the mythical fires conjured by the mage apostate Magnio Quilarri. He, his rioters, and the unhinged wizard all drowned in the flood but Aquila was saved from certain destruction—when the moon is high their spirits roam still, seeking to incite riotous fires once more.

Conlatus, City of Victory

Artistic, Crossroads, Historical, Landmark, Tradehub
No other place in Askis has been won or lost as many times as Conlatus, a truth proven both by the catacombs beneath the settlement holding the scant remnants of rulers beyond count and plain as day in the rich architectural traditions of each culture that's controlled it at one time or another. The Celestial Heroes brought an end to the City of Victory's cycle of violence and its residents have embraced its tumultuous past—artisans aspire to learn their trade here and dream of attaining skill enough to become one of Conlatus' famed masons or sculptors. There are no tributes to the ruthless and savage masters of course, its streets instead lined with masterpieces of the demigods constantly improved upon with more in-depth details and corrections as the years pass. For those with little interest in the arts the city has little to offer, a waystation for steel equos with enough infrastructure to support the scores of locomotives that arrive and depart there day and night.

Conlati are laid back, easy going, and confident in their knowledge that the best results come in due time. Getting a resident of the city-state to rush is a difficult obstacle unless they've committed to a cause, in which case they are as implacable as stone. There is also a fair bit of superstition among Conlatus' population—bloodmages, necromancers, and worse were once its rulers. Undead armies and hordes of fiends haven't been seen in the City of Victory for centuries but the memories of those terrifying times are livid in the cultural landscape, preserved by frescoes and mosaics in the few passages underneath it that haven't yet collapsed to the march of time.

Saint Gallicles, Master of Death Death, Grave
Gaduis Exanimo (Grukk 12:19) Many a warrior has traveled beyond the pale and been brought back to life but none have gripped the mortal coil more arduously than Gallicles. Every time he returned to the battle lines of the crusades to conquer northern Zakuthombo, his presence surged holy forces to victory. His thirteenth death was too extreme for resurrection but still, Gallicles would not leave us—he came back next as a stallion, thenas a bull, and even more until finally time claimed him.

Sanctus Faleria, Saint of Spirits
Arcana, Celestial Bureaucracy
Lex Altiores (Grukk 4:17) When discovered by The Inquisition, the apostate Vassnio attempted to escape across the dimensions and would have succeeded were it not for Faleria's interference, her spells disrupting his magic as he fled Askis. The talented mage spent the rest of her days containing the blasphemer's sundered spirit, saving Conlatus from his heretical vengeance before time claimed her as well.

Eludere, Hill Town

Historical, Landmark, Nature, Wealthy
The origins of where some of the demigods were born are shrouded in obscurity but not Tucker Quickfoot—the village of small folk that raised him has loudly proclaimed it since the first stories of Tucker & Co.

circulated across the Far Continent. Built on and throughout rolling knolls the aptly named Hill Town has grown outward, upward, and downward since its favorite son's ascension. Businesses and dwellings dug down into the embankments of the town's valleys are sized for the halflings that founded Eludere (and connected by dirt tunnels just as small), but these have been overwhelmed by buildings that jut out of the green slopes like oversized fence posts. All of them are perpetually heated by proximity to the Sopitam Volcano to the south—one of the reasons its founders settled here—and a longtime trade alliance with Obcidens to the north has flourished to provide construction of the finest quality, befitting given what Eludere has contributed to Askis in the blessed tactician.

Much of Eludere culture comes from their historical ties to Obcidens—for all the jewels mined from the Camara Mountains, in a land of brigands and pirate-filled seas there came a dire need for clandestinely transporting gemstones to the wealthiest markets. This was the backbone of the economy of Hill Town's past and proved to be fruitful enough for a mere village, and since its expansion the small folks' penchant for acts surreptitious has evolved to more closely emulate its favorite son's most lauded talent by espousing a mastery of tactics. Students in the town's schools play at miniature games of war every day and even well after their state education ends, their home's past as a den of rogues turned on its head to provide the best security advisors and commanders in all of Askis rather than its greatest smugglers.

Sanctus Sejanus, The Deaf Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, Life
Libris Bonitatem (Grukk 13:7) Though deaf at birth Sejanus was guided by a divine song that drew her to Grukk—seeing the demigod's mortal wounds, she helped him to the safety of her home and offered what little healing she could provide. For days she secreted the holy warrior from the forces of Commander Kinstahg, but before a week had passed his fell soldiers found her out and executed her as Grukk awoke. Enraged that so kindly a halfling had died for her kindness, he waged terrible war directly to the private chambers of Kinstahg to honor her but we are never to forget her sacrifice.

Saint Tyndarus, Patron of Crusaders
Protection, War
Integrum Opinionem (Farsong 2:11) Knowing that the fiend would never leave Eludere be, the brave halfling Tyndarus embraced his family one last time before facing off against the monstrous Izbek. Bolstered by faith he harried the demon with the swords of the town's defenders, each throw striking true until at last he closed on the wicked creature. Izbek grasped Tyndarus and their embrace suffused each into nothingness, floating off on the wind never to be seen again.

Sanctus Macrinia, Saint of Bards
Nature, Protection
Divina Cartis (Farsong 5:12) With the ground quaking beneath her Macrinia stumbled up the slopes of the Sopitam Volcano and descended into its caldera just as eruption was nigh. Breathing deeply from the sheepskin bag of air she brought with her before collapsing onto the scorching stone, the dragonborn unleashed a melodious song of such potent divine force that it stopped the magma from exploding up from below, saving Eludere from certain doom.

Entiam, Last Stop Village

Isolated, Leering, Weathered

It is easy to bypass Entiam as another series of dunes at the edge of the Escarion Maelstrom yet it is so much more, turning into a riot of color and life on days the desert winds die down. The people of Entiam are full of life and song with tales and stories for every occasion. Just as the settlement is easy unassuming by appearance so too are these parables, but every told yarn has a purpose for the sand seas outside their home are inhospitable, deadly to the unprepared—and there is a story for every situation.

To those from elsewhere the advice-heavy Entians seem pushy and pessimistic. This is perhaps not wrong, but certainly not right—a long life in the hard lands in which they live has taught them to do whatever they can to save the lives of explorers and adventurers who visit their home as a stopping point to the unforgiving wastelands beyond. For those who heed the local advice there are great treasures to be found, but the most significant of all may be buried only a few miles from Entiam's step: the corpses of hundreds who refused to properly acknowledge its long-storied history.

Imperiosi Relator, The Preacher Knowledge, Grave
Angelorum Nuntius (Farsong 8:15) Imperiosi knew what must be done. He watched over the people of Entiam and spoke to the spirits of each one after their passing. He learned how their deaths might be avoided, and he learned of what they treasured most in life, and from their tales he wrote ten thousand songs, stories, and poems, each one protecting the listener from the dangers of the great storm of the desert. Only after the final song was penned did he rest, and then finally prepared, ventured out into the sands.

Tempestas Pulvis, the Desert Watcher
Nature, Tempest
Memoria Vivorum (Farsong 9:23) Once again, Tempestas returned from the desert. In her arms she carried the wounded like they were babes, and laid them upon the altar. They grew in strength over the coming days, and again and again they said "we were wrong". Tempestas smiled calmly for so long as there were wanderers who would brave the blistering deserts outside of the city, she would be there to rescue them when the warnings were not heeded.

Sanctus Didia, The Gun Saint Trickery, War
Libris Bonitatem (Grukk 9:12) Brave beyond doubt, the halfling stalked the camps of Warlord Grusakk for weeks, her gunpowder miraculously restoring itself until the pistols left her hands when she was captured, brutally killed, and kept as a grisly display of the ogre's savagery. Only after his disrupted forces were routed by Grukk's mercenary allies was she shown due respect and honor, though we are to remember her courageous sacrifices forevermore.

Sanctus Cincia, Lady of the Forge Forge, Protection
Divina Cartis (Grukk 4:15) Keen to impress one of our world's most holy protectors, Cincia spent months painstakingly crafting a helmet so geometrically perfect and precisely forged that even Grukk could not harm it. Her talent for smithing proved true, the helm still worn by the Celestial Hero long after her passing.

Maerus, Barter City

Historical, Political, Resplendent, Tradehub, Wealthy
Maerus has played a major part in commerce on Zakuthombo for centuries and continues to do so today, still led by the descendants of its outcast founders. The ancient democracy of Prensatio exiled the dwarves that settled in what's become Barter City millennia ago, but while their crimes have been forgotten their punishment has not—unlike the stout folk elsewhere in Askis they were not just exiled but stricken into the sand seas, naked and left to die from exposure. Desperate, exhausted, and dying in the desert they came across a djinn and struck a bargain that lasted until the Celestial Heroes finished their great works. Not only did the outcast clans survive their ordeal, they thrived; the lands around their new home flourished, malicious armies of the Far Continent suffered terrible curses when attacking them, merchants flocked to the settlement, and even the demigods' crusades failed to breach its walls.

Eventually Tucker & Co. decided the best thing to do was to purchase peace and compliance from Maerus. The price they paid was vast as the dwarven rulers of Barter City—famous for their greed—began a bidding war with the dragons still fighting in Pertinax, achieving a sum so great that all of their descendants are still among the world's

richest people. A history of wealth has resulted in eateries, universities, law firms, and other services of the highest quality, giving Maerusi little reason to travel beyond its walls. This is only true of those able to afford it of course and the working class are of a different mindset, knowing that achieving a higher station in life is almost certainly more probably anywhere else other than their home. While they are fair and share their prosperity, the elite of Maerus have also used their fortunes to shroud the systems of power in bureaucracy that is almost impossible for anyone but the affluent to cut through.

Sanctus Papiria, Saint of the Flame
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Gaduis Examino (Grukk 16:6) Never did the lowly curator of the Styphnia Museum suspect to be of any true importance, but it was here that the heretic mage Juliaros chose to hide. While walking the hallowed halls she noticed a figure in the paintings of Draenarius, a man out of place. Gasping in shock as it suddenly moved to the canvases of Xylicus, she leapt to the next chamber and seized Sparaxio's famed portrayal of the Hydralis Steppes—setting it to the flame of a torch nearby, burning the apostate Juliaros and sending him to a fiery judgment in the afterlife.

Saint Grumio, Patron of Warsingers Forge, Life
Divina Cartis (Farsong 3:12) Every day underneath Roualiarra's rule withered his bones and will, but never his faith, and Grumio let his mind wander as he toiled to compose songs of courage and loyalty. When shared with his fellow slaves the inspired melodies banded them together and bestowed the bravery required to overthrow the warlock's bloodletters in the Rebellion of Song, and so we sing Grumio's praises to this day.

Sanctus Quintia, Saint of Artistry
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Memoria Vivorum (Farsong 4:22) In her mind's eye Quintia finally saw it, a work of art worthy to become one of the Nine Wonders of Devotion—sculptures animated by water, truly depicting the Celestial Heroes' most awe-inspiring feats. After a decade of toil the Moving Mosaic of Intuor was complete, its creator's aspirations confirmed by the tears of joy shed by Mystral Farsong when she first witnessed it.

Navicla, Hook City

Crossroads, Friendly, New, Tradehub, Urban
Mariners of ages past knew to avoid the hook of southeastern Zakuthombo, its warm waters home to the boats of pirates and scallywags. Brigands took root on the shores of the ingress' southern tip, striking an ages old agreement with orc warbands that merchants feared too much to trade with and creating a marketplace where the nomads of the Far Continent could routinely acquire civilized (usually smuggled) goods. Navicla is a place of resurgence, its proximity to Ouranios and the cutthroats on every corner making it the target of frequent failed assaults—enemy armies were seen from afar, the pirates fleeing on water and orks scampering into the wilderness only to wait for reinforcements then returning in such great force that no sane commanders stayed their ground. The last of these cyclical invasions were done by Tucker & Co. in numbers that the dwindling buccaneers and tribal warriors could never hope to match, and the spiteful Captain Cynthius Crimson Eye (still at large despite the elf's advanced age) put the whole settlement to the torch.

Everything has been rebuilt with an eye for the future, city blocks of apartments, markets, artisans, and the like with steel equos tracks taking freight from the Contiguous Continent east and north at a steady pace thanks to recently improved infrastructure. Native citizens of Hook City are few these days and the survivors of the original settlement are wont to admit they once lived there. Naviclans are all making a fresh start—hopeful, eager to succeed, looking for new friends, and committed to the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility*. Usually they only leave Navicla on business but not everyone fits in and when their dreams are dashed, the urge for a better life sends them elsewhere.

Saint Ergalisus, Saint of Quickness Life, Tempest
Divina Doctrina (Grukk 16:8) Even with his arm hanging broken at his side, the half-elf's fleet feet remained true and he outran the boar-riding messengers of the powerful orc warlord Klashrak. Informed of the impending assault hours in advance, the defenders of Navicla easily pushed back the monstrous assault and helped smite the forces still laying siege when reinforcements from Prensatio arrived.

Saint Harpax, Patron of Belief
Celestial Bureaucracy, City
Memoria Vivorum (Farsong 3:13) As fearless as he was zealous, Harpax traveled the heathen territories of Zakuthombo far ahead of Tucker & Co.'s armies, spreading the gospel of civilization until brutally killed for his preachings.

Obcidens, Glitter City

Isolated, Mountainside, Resplendent, Towering, Wealthy
The Far Continent has gems aplenty buried in its mountains and the richest of its mines have long been in the northeast, the dense clusters of jewels making for deadly mines prone to collapse. Zakuthombo's gnomes seeking peaceful lives fled here long ago to take their chances in the tunnels, eventually turning their cunning minds to ways that made it safe enough to make the risk acceptable and mastering all the arts of gemwork. Thanks to the halflings of Eludere the rulers of Obcidens had coin aplenty to defend the cliffside settlement with elite mercenary companies and expert spellswords. Glitter City's longtime alliance with Hill Town ensured they would never take sides against its favorite son and they received Tucker & Co. with epic fanfare—and an agreement of abdication with the singular provision that their home's boundaries only grow as per the meticulous schedule of its demitting rulers. What was once a quaint but upscale village has bloomed into clusters of towers looming over the southeastern slopes of Camara Mountains, bereft of large factories and instead accented by numerous smokestacks drifting up from countless artisan shops. The mines that made Obcidens rich are still a source of great pride but fewer laborers descend into them each year, clad in power armor for protection yet slowed by red tape as The Ministry oversees all operations.

As a result of the complex (largely vertical) layout of their home Obcidians have organized minds and a knack for remembering things. Appreciation for precision has spread from its founders' professions of choice to become integral to Glitter City's culture, prompting them to rebuff mass-production and place master artisans of all kinds in Obcidens' towers. Citizens too poor to afford custom wares still acquire them of course, the trade of used goods so common that anything not hand-crafted (new or worn by experience) is considered to be inferior.

Saint Optatus, Patron of Archers City, War
Integrum Opinionem (Grukk 3:5) Fastening his bow across his back, the halfling climbed the tallest steeple in Obcidens to see out beyond the fog surrounding the undead armies of the necromancer Zalskoria. Drawing his own blood to dye the scraps of cloth tied to each arrow with a bright crimson, Optatus' missiles signaled Grukk's troops to where defenses were beginning to falter and saved the city from the dark mage's most brutal assault.

Saint Giddenes, Patron of Jewelers
Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge
Gaduis Examino (Ventrelli 3:19) Countless nobles had committed crimes of the most bizarre nature and the defenders of Obcidens knew not why—until the gnome jeweler Giddenes discovered the Changing Ring of Stevwendro. Cursing it upon his death, all who wore the fallen sorcerer's trinket lost their minds. The accursed thing resists nary every attempt at destruction but lay at rest in the Patron of Jeweler's tomb, one of the city's most holiest of sites.

Prensatio, Metropolis of Trade

Defensible, Friendly, Historical, Technological, Tradehub, Wealthy
Dwarves native to Zakuthombo's southern mountains approached democracy due to its practicality, ruling the territory around and between their homes through political compromise that naturally arose ages ago. This trickled down to the power structures of each stout folk kingdom and when it became clear that Prensatio's gold mines were far and away the most profitable, to consolidate they gathered together during the Celestial Heroes' crusades and fortified the city on behalf of Tucker & Co. when Navicla proved too tenacious to conquer. The settlement has expanded since the demigods secured the bottom of the Far Continent and little has changed since accepting a greater authority ruling from afar aside from the integration of new technologies, something the largely dwarven population has completely embraced. Sentry towers arrayed around the smaller clusters of outposts and villages on the southwestern shore regulate scheduled shipments to the steel equos rails running northward, training engineers and machinists that spread infrastructure elsewhere on Zakuthombo while improving the city's own.

The culture of this city-state is emblematic of its founders, raising loyal, stalwart, and sometimes

stubborn citizens with a widespread respect for machinery. Like the stout folk their home is known for Prensati have a penchant for drink that can easily spill into trouble but only after they've earned their keep—respite after a day's hard work is far better than endless leisure for the people of Prensatio. The most celebrated attributes of society here are the high level of equality among the populace, elevated quality of life for all classes, and numerous means for the hard-working to advance their station; as long as someone can pull their own weight, the Metropolis of Trade welcomes them.

Saint Lampadio, The Striking Saint
Celestial Bureaucracy, Protection
Gaduis Examino (Grukk 18:12) Cast out by her peers and sought after by The Inquisition, the apostate philosopher Verecundia prepared an inaequa chariot with powerful magical explosives and possessed the carriage itself, laying in quiet wait for the procession of the Divine Warrior to come near. Just as the deadly craft surged towards the parade Lampadio leapt down into it, his power sword surging with light and sundering the carriage in two! Fire and arcana billowed out into the alleyway to pulverize his corpse, but the divine half-orc grasped what remained and declared his sainthood without delay.

Sanctus Sempronia, Holy Diver Nature, Protection
Lex Altiores (Grukk 12:14) Stripping off her armor and biting down on a dagger, Sempronia descended to the bottom of the great well that provided all Prensatio with life-giving water. In the epic struggle that followed the halfling drowned but not before the foul demonic spawn's dying cry erupted from below, eclipsed by a bright shaft of holy light soaring to the heavens.

Saint Sulpicio, The Iron-Handed Protection, War
Mmoria Vivorum (Farsong 5:29) Wounded by pitchfork and scalding claw, Sulpicio let loose with a roar of defiance fueled by his faith and let fly with his iron shot, the lead striking true and cutting short the mortal coil of Xalzaia Cardime. Dozens more of her soldiers fell to his righteous fury and the necromancer's forces broke like water on stone—though the wounds he suffered were of fell magic and Sulpicio did not live to see the next sunrise, he rests eternal knowing that Prensatio is safe from her tyranny.

Suppetia, West Port City

Bureaucratic, Crossroads, Productive, Technological, Tradehub

Manufacturing has spread across Zakuthombo predominantly through Suppetia, borne on the back of the materials trade flowing from Iacio and the brilliant minds at work in the University of Sanctus Menaechmus (formerly Sancti Afflatu College). Industrialists persuaded and incentivised by Tucker & Co. to build here turned it into a settlement ruled by the interests of the market, the means of production dictating life in West Port City. Factory owners and executives determine the prices of virtually everything in the city from their lofty offices, and although this could certainly lead to unfair commerce they are benevolent and compensate the working citizenry well.

Suppetians are not alone in their presumption that their home is the most civilized of Zakuthombo's city-states and they take great pride from that, always at least familiarizing themselves with one or another type of machinery even if only as a hobby. The recent arrival of rich folk resulted in a society quite fixated on culture and the people of West Port City take manners very seriously with laws regarding how one presents themselves in public, excessive noise levels, and liquor outside of licensed establishments. The citizens of Suppetia are also used to regulations and bureaucracy, every service and business carefully kept in line with local ordinances that exceed The Ministry's already considerable list of statutes—this can make adventurers from here exacting to the point of annoyance, but their companions are often happy to find rations that aren't expired, full quivers of arrows, and emergency medical supplies on hand thanks to a bit of planned foresight.

Saint Therapontigonus, Master of Tongues
Protection Trickery
Divina Doctrina (Grukk 8:12) It was true that Dean Mantocles Ustinar was without peer in debates of all kinds, but Therapontigonus was aghast after their discussion of theology. The soul of the priest yearned for truth and he studied the dean carefully, discovering that what gave him victory was an item of heresy! Knowing that so persuasive and powerful a man could evade authorities—doing untold damage all the while—it was Therapontigonus' clever wordplay that won the day in a forum held for the entirety of the college to witness. Ustinar fled but the priest took his place, guiding Suppetia back from the edge of blasphemy the university's minder had brought so very near.

Sanctus Menaechmus, Master of Machines
Cog, Forge
Angelorum Nuntius (Farsong 12:3) Disassembling and reconstructing devices since her youth, Menaechmus rapidly advanced through her studies and began to build her own machines, each more impressive than the last. Her numerous designs are still used today though her finest masterpiece is considered by some to be an act of inspiration that is truly divine: the miniaturization of inaequa engines.

Truso, Town of Elves

Crossroads, Enchanted, Nature, Neutral
The ancestral home of the elves stands alone in the history of the Far Continent, famous for remaining neutral in all conflicts and independent in the face of overwhelming odds. Power has never been the aim of Truso or its rulers however (whether today or millennia past) and to protect their home, potent mages enacted enchantments in the Twilight of Suffering that concealed the settlement from invasion for ages. Ultimately the Celestial Heroes persuaded the Town of Elves to join them after most of Zakuthombo was conquered, bringing the forested city-state into the fold of the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility*.

Elves make up the majority of the population of Truso but all of its citizens are respectful of nature—farmers, druids, rangers, and the like find the forested dirt lanes far more comfortable than the concrete streets in Askis' other settlements. Trusians hold tradition and esteem in high regard, yet their cultural preference for nature has caused technology to trickle into their homes slower than elsewhere. Only after the Night of Largitio have machines become more prevalent, infrastructure spread outward, and modern dwellings multiplied; a century ago only a few brick buildings poked out from the ancient hollowed tree-towers that dominate the Town of Elves and now they number in the dozens.

Sanctus Epidia, Martyr of Truso Death, Protection
Dedit Partem (Farsong 8:11) The despicable deviations of Fraus Calumnia had not only taken root among the peoples of Truso, but flourished a nd spread, his pamphlets for free coin spreading throughout the city like wildfire to damn scores of souls to tormented afterlives in exchange for but a few gold and silver. Epidia used what little magic she could to intercede with the devil Quorallk'i directly, trading her own shining pure soul in order to free those that unknowingly sold their own. The selfless woman never reached her final torments however, stuck between worlds to watch over the people of Truso she had given so much to protect.

Sanctus Rutilia, The Farming Saint City, Nature
Integrum Opinionem (Grukk 4:6) Unnatural illnesses had overwhelmed the farmers around Truso so thoroughly that nary a man or woman walked unaided! In the midst of this sickness Rutilia marched alone, singlehandedly harvesting the ripe fields before rot set in and saving the townsfolk from certain famine in the harsh winter that followed.

Tutela, City of the Gate

Crossroads, Defensible, Lawful, Militaristic, Tradehub
Latratus Bay and the territory around it were the first part of Zakuthombo that Tucker & Co. definitively conquered, growing with each successive crusade from an outpost once home to bandits into the defensible city it is today. The only vestige of its history are the fine chefs trained here, cooks known for incorporating bizarre techniques in their meals—expertise drawn from the pirate cooks of its past. Ingredients of all kinds are in constant supply to make this the gourmand's dream in the Far Continent, particularly so for the punctuality of its restaurants and other businesses. So much work and wealth went into building Tutela into the demigods' base of operations that the remnants of Tucker & Co.'s enormous mercenary army (easily the most organized

and best trained of the three continents' various military forces) still train new recruits here even after the long age of peace since the Utopian Dawn.

Timeliness and efficiency are important to Tutela's culture: steel equos run on time, damaged roadways and buildings are promptly repaired, and the law is enforced to the letter. People from the City of the Gate are impassive or subdued until they've befriended someone—the rigid tendencies of their home rub off strong—but Tutelli are warm and dutiful to folks that get to know them, willing to go as far as they have to when protecting a friend or rendering aid.

Sanctus Eunomia, Lady of Mazes Celestial Bureaucracy, Knowledge

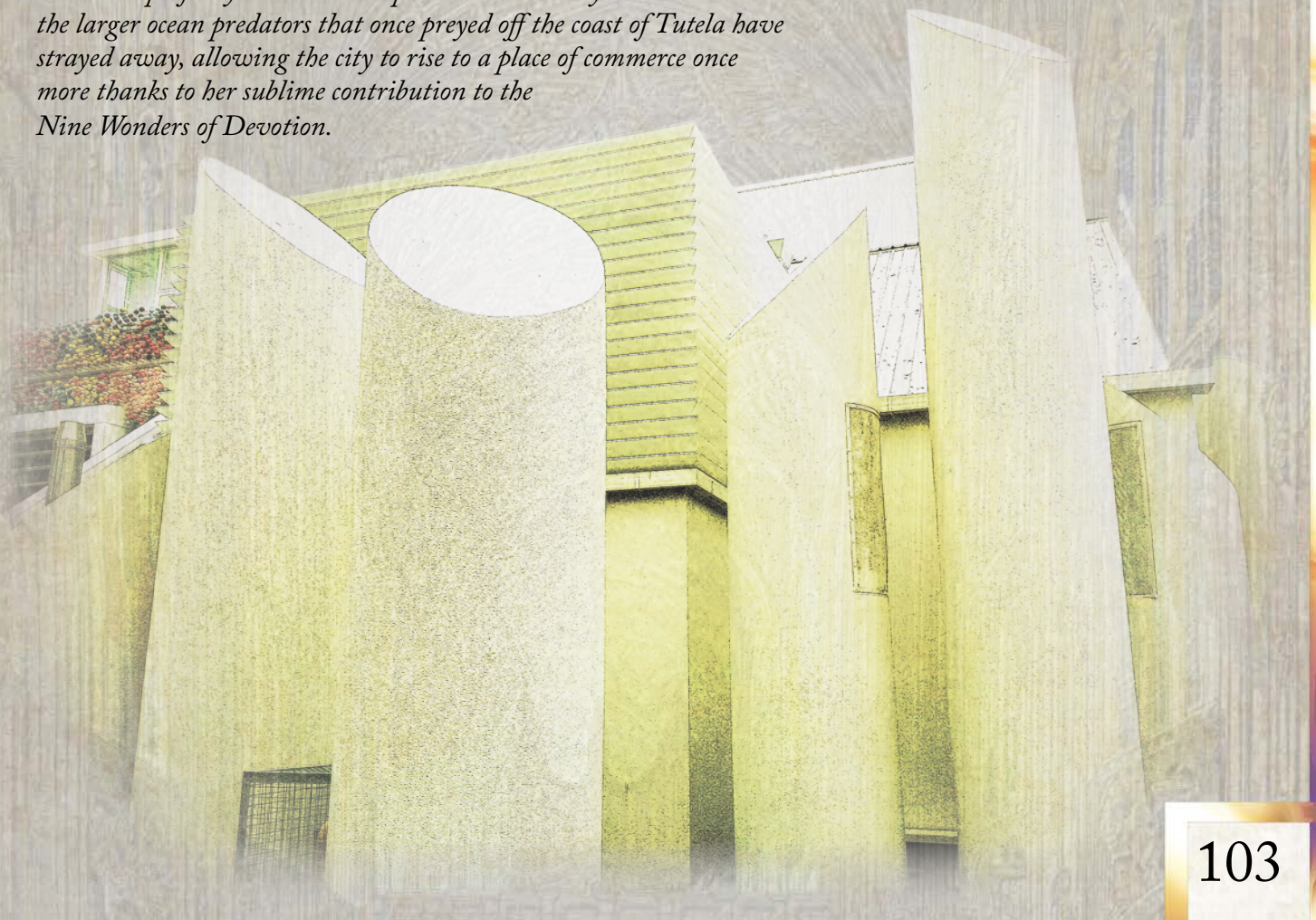
Memoria Vivorum (Grukk 14:7) Walking carefully and deliberately on her lame leg the half-elf navigated the ancient Labyrinth of Wyrroniclia, treading across ancient stones and through deadly traps that had taken the lives of hundreds of heartier adventurers. Where so many had failed she succeeded however, reaching the center of the maze and securing the unique gem therein to complete the Chime of Contests.

Sanctus Adamina, Restorer of Faith Celestial Bureaucracy, Light

Divina Doctrina (Grukk 3:14) Chaos gripped Tutela as suddenly the citizenry lost their divine connection to inaequa—automated carriages crashed, steel equos jumped their rails, and the guards became defenseless to an attack on the city! It was the unlikely youth Adamina that discovered the reason why, destroying the unholy machinery of the criminal mage Inpaitir—ending both his curse and his life.

Sanctus Sotericus, Divine Perfectionist Celestial Bureaucracy, Forge

Lex Altiores (Farsong 9:10) Upon wakening from her dream Sotericus immediately began work upon a new spell, a conjuration of such epic force that she forsake food and rest for 7 days and nights in utter concentration. By the following dawn her ritual was complete and the Segrego Floating Sphere emerged from the waters of Latratus Bay, a massive perfectly round and impervious semi-buoyant construct. Ever since the larger ocean predators that once preyed off the coast of Tutela have strayed away, allowing the city to rise to a place of commerce once more thanks to her sublime contribution to the Nine Wonders of Devotion.



Drifting with their heads bobbing just above the water, Huralla raises her scaled arm and silently commands the vined skeletal monstrosity bearing them aloft to lurk closer to the SS Rioma, one of its tentacle-like limbs creeping upward with Xankra hunched low on its tip. When the undead's reach fails the dwarf easily leaps off of it and clings to the side of the boat, wisps of shadow sinking into the timber. After a few seconds she peers over the side of the ship before nodding at her companions twice, silently drawing her scimitars and ambling onboard. Karrik licks his cracked lips and utters a few accursed words to his fell patron, lifting into the air and following suit with a salt shaker in hand. The druid orders her servant to steer to the other side of the vessel then climbs up herself, grabbing onto some rigging and waiting for the signal to move.

The symphony of suffering begins with a vile spell conjured by the warlock—words of evil boom out across the deck as he leaps onboard and touches the helmsman, pulling away a stream of blood. As Karrik's spell takes hold the sailor drops to his knees in agony, gouts of crimson squirting from his every orifice and pore in a sanguine fountain until his horrendous cries suddenly stop in the throes of a quick but excruciating death. Unable to control himself the gnome falls to the ground and dashes salt onto his victim before sinking his teeth into the corpse, tearing away a hunk of flesh then leaping back over the side of the ship.

Mariners stream out from below deck and Xankra is waiting for them, her blades roiling with dark power. The first two are no match for her swordplay and fall beneath her savage assault, but the third is a burly fellow nearly twice her height and he makes to wrestle instead. Locking arms they fight for footing and leverage, struggling in the pale light from the ship's forever lanterns before the warrior realizes she's evenly matched. Opening her jaw wide and producing a retching noise no living creature born of blood should ever make, Xankra spits a poison into the sailor's eyes and he drops to his knees, screaming in pain and clawing at his face.

With all of the crew's attention focused on her companions Huralla easily slips over the side of the vessel and into the cargo area beneath the deck of the SS Rioma undetected, reaching into her pouch and grabbing one of the pods she's so painstakingly prepared over the last few days. Inside of these unique creations are spores far more potent than her normal seedlings, beautiful works of biological art that came to her in a fevered vision months ago. Much effort and gold were spent locating the freight line that transports tea leaves which ultimately find their way to Tapper Underknoll, acquiring the materials for a ritual large enough to accomodate tainting an entire shipment worth, and researching the ideal vessel and time to stage her sabotage—but the moment had finally come. Cracking them open she cackles softly to herself and spreads the seedlings across the palettes of tea, trusting the biological cultures to roil through everything below. Weeks or months from now the demigod hunter will have a stomach ache that will grow and expand, a creature too complex to kill with simple curative magics birthed in his digestive tract. Scores or perhaps even hundreds of others will share both that fate and certain death, but Huralla only considers their demises for the briefest of moments before scurrying back out to her undead servant waiting submerged in the water nearby.

In the meanwhile Karrik and Xankra continue their violent diversion, wading into the captain's quarters to make their assault seem like a brand of murderous brigands were disappointed in the potential value of their acquisition. As the gnome emerges laden in bloody jewelry and before leaping off the side of the ship, the druid conjures gouts of water that wash her cannibal ally clean of detection by the Bloodsong Storms. Huralla goes to do the same for Xankra but she growls in protest, instead leaping briefly into a brazier kept alight for heat to singe the blood from her body and blades, some of the scars on her skin glowing bright orange where the fire touches her. Before joining her the dwarf tears at the ship's helm and the wheel spins hard, the rudder turning in response to force the SS Romia to bear on the docks of Coelicla. The trio slink away into the waters of the bay as quietly as they came, preparing for the next step in turning the Celestial Heroes' vaunted hunter into their prey.

Mad Scientist Novice Path

Sliding back into the shadows of the kitchen, Varystrax smoothes out her worker's apron and gently covers the belt of syringes hidden beneath it. She can't resist basking in self-satisfaction as the servant comes in to prepare the Archbishop of Paenitio's breakfast, staying far longer than is safe for any alibi. Waiting for until the commoner's footsteps—taking the tray of toast and expertly poisoned coffee up the stairs—to echo down the hallway, she reaches down to her belt and flicks on her form disruptor. With a loud pop and hiss the device flickers on and she utterly disappears from sight, sprinting towards the servant's entrance. A piercing scream cuts through the air as Varystrax scales the mansion's wall, and knowing that her earlier delay will necessitate disappearing from more than sight for a while anyway, stops to watch as the old man struggles through a high window, his face purple as a beet and popping with red, festering sores. Their eyes meet and he points out towards her but falls out into the open air, hitting the ground with a sickening smack as his killer sprints off to grab a train out of the city before the news breaks.

Sweating from hours of effort, Maridivius cut the last bit of thread and stepped back to appreciate his work. The patient was unwilling of course so some blunt anesthesia was required, but fortunately only the bruising on her skull marred his newest creation's beauty. The farm girl's face was otherwise intact as were her legs, but the lass' weak, ineffectual arms lay discarded on the floor nearby—Maridivius had greatly improved her with some burly limbs taken from a recently slain orc instead. What a great gift this young woman has just received, he thought, how much faster she'll finish her chores! As her eyes flutter open he grins broadly, arms crossed in satisfaction, but after confusedly looking about her gaze drops downward and to see bulging, green arms connected to her sides. She turns to regard the doctor and screams, pressing against the restraints and frothing at the mouth as the chirurgeon dashes forward to stick a syringe into her neck, taking her back to unconsciousness. Well, Maridivius thinks to himself, she'll learn to like it.

Dawn breaks over the city of Anguis and a lone figure slowly moves down the outside of The Ministry of Equity skyscraper. To observers on the ground Korexa's arachno belt makes her look like a large spider, something sure to titillate the dull minds of those below her when they read the headlines of tomorrow's papers. As she always does on the weekdays Broadcasting Director Lydia Harquist slept in her office on the 27th floor, and like other mornings her usual recording of the Ballad of Varrus softly begins reverberating out into the morning air above the settlement—but unlike other mornings Korexa has been waiting for this very moment. She risks a glance down into the room to see her target's back turned, pulling away a circle of cut glass just large enough to fit a small melon through. Lydia feels a chill run down her spine and glances upward in time to see two metallic cylinders sail through the room towards her, landing on the floor and rolling into the wall. The realization of what they are hits as the grenades explode, the most influential bureaucrat of radio in the region flung outward in a halo of glass as Korexa cackles with glee at the size of the blast her explosives just made, skittering back towards the roof and a rapid escape.

Huffing from the exertion of so much sprinting, Zedro began to second guess his plan just when the door to the Generator Control Room finally came into view at the end of the hallway. Cursing at the damned fire alarm for shutting off a few seconds early, he pulls out a set of tools and quickly picks the lock to the chamber, quickly stepping inside. Therein lay the prize: the inaequa well of Perdomo. Cracking his fattened fingers, the dapper but ungainly half-orc wraps meaty, fleshy fists around the handholds of the attenuators arrayed on either side and feeds his darkened soul into the devices. They resist him but in only a few moments he knows their schematics, reaching around them to make minute adjustments that cause their hum to change in pitch ever so slightly. Still panting he swears again, grabbing a worker's cap from a hook on the wall before stepping outside and closing the locked door behind him. With the exit just a hundred feet ahead he jumps in genuine fear as the city's power source is attended to once again and an explosion ripples through the building, the guards believe his innocence and Zedro manages to fight back his grin until after ducking down an alleyway, planning on how best to reach his headquarters now that the plan has been delayed by nearly two minutes.

Mad scientists are the most common wicked souls to survive capture and reformation or imprisonment at the hands of Askis' defenders, hidden and aided by technology much harder to detect and track than magic. They form the backbone of resistance against the world order, relying on their cunning and intellect where others would turn to strength of arm or flee in cowardice. That is not to say you don't appreciate weaponry, however—in order to survive and enact justice on the society that has cast you out for your intellectual pursuits, devices of both defensive and offensive intent will be of the utmost importance.

Alignment Mad scientists cannot be of either lawful or good alignment. A mad scientist whose alignment becomes lawful good, neutral good, chaotic good, or lawful neutral cannot level in this path again until their alignment changes back to an alignment that is either not lawful or not good.

For SCIENCE! Whether neutral or evil (or even good) a mad scientist prizes the pursuit of knowledge above all other things. They may not care what must be done to acquire information, the dangers of learning forbidden secrets, or frequently the consequences of experimentation (particularly when the consequences are for creatures other than themselves). Adventuring and exploration go hand in hand to provide stimulating new insights into a wide variety of fields. Moreover, groups of adventurers make for great pack animals if treated with enough respect and can provide a measure of safety when delicate research is required at a hostile site.

Selective Isolation Society repels those who follow unapproved scientific pursuits, disbarring them from study at institutions of higher learning and carefully watching expelled students long after their education has ended. Already cast as pariahs, it is difficult for mad scientists to truly reform and properly become a part of any community yet to survive and continue their work they must befriend others whether to acquire some obscurity from inquisitors, find esoteric and rare resources, gather test subjects, or a effect a quick means of getting out of town. After the usually unexpectedly unfair treatment received at the hands of Askis' higher powers it comes naturally to them to keep these associations a secret, ever watchful for potential agents from The Ministry lurking nearby.

Mad Scientists The first thing to decide when making a mad scientist is the field of study which most interests your character. Do you seek to understand how things are understood? Work the flesh of creatures in ways both terrifying and wondrous? Manipulate technology to maximize its offensive potential? Bend the divine machines of civilization to your will?

Knowing the area of science that most interests you can be further explored to give your maniacal master of machines more depth. Why have they decided their field of study is superior to the others? What ultimate truth to they hope to learn in their intellectual pursuits? Or were you left with no choice by a haunting spirit or a lack of opportunity? Did circumstance force your hand into mastering science? Either way you must have some ideas on where your studies will go—what grand experiments do you hope to undertake?

Mad Scientist Training

d6	Training
1	You were an apprentice to a local machinist whose experiments (perhaps unbeknownst to you) were highly illegal or unethical.
2	The theories and algorithms you've developed at university are beyond the ken of your tutors—they are fools, one and all, and you shall show *everyone* just that!
3	You came upon secret, hidden blueprints for devices that have completely consumed your attentions and figuring them out has gleaned many intense discoveries.
4	You had a job cataloging illegal devices and ultimately your curiosity got the best of you.
5	Your dreams are filled by formulas and inventions that you can no longer resist the urge to build.
6	You were the subject of a mad scientist's experiments and survived, even learning some of their secrets.

Level 1 Mad Scientist

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You read all the languages you know how to speak. In addition, you add one academic area of knowledge of your choice.

Magic You make four choices, discovering one tradition or learning one spell for each.

Technological Weapon You craft a technological weapon that allows you to cast spells learned from traditions gained with this path. You treat your technological weapon with the same reverence you would an unholy book or symbol. Accordingly, you never willingly part with your technological weapon—you may not sell it, lend it to others, or otherwise abandon it. If for any reason your technological weapon is taken from you, you must do everything in your power to recover it.

You can use an action to fire a ray of energy from your technological weapon at a target within short range. On a hit, you deal 1d6 damage. Your technological weapon can deal acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, psychic, thunder, or unholy damage. It is a minor activity to change the type of damage your technological weapon deals.

Level 2 Mad Scientist

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You make two choices, discovering one tradition or learning one spell for each.

Analyze Weakness You can use an action or a triggered action on your turn to choose one target creature within short range. Make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success, you learn one of the following:

- The target creature's attacks.
- The target creature's immunities.
- The target's talents.

The full breadth of what you learn is at the discretion of the GM.

Technological Weapon The range of your technological weapon increases to medium.

Level 5 Expert Mad Scientist

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Magic You discover a tradition or learn one spell.

Technological Weapon The damage of your technological weapon increases to 2d6.

Level 8 Expert Mad Scientist

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Magic You discover a tradition or learn one spell.

Technological Weapon The damage of your technological weapon increases to 3d6 and you have 1 boon on attack rolls using it.

Monstrosity Novice Path

Howling at the high moon and reveling in her bestial form, the werewolf leaps out of the darkness and snatches one of her former pursuers, dragging the screaming man into the shadows and depriving him of his innards with her sharp fangs and claws.

Backing out of the tavern with the merchant lord's gaze locked onto his, the vampire slipped into an alleyway nearby, baring his fangs to better slake his thirst on the blood of the foolish man trundling toward him.

Powered by unnatural chemicals, the once living flesh of an abomination refuses to yield against the hail of arrows pelting her form and she charges forward unheeded, slamming into and through a barred door to shatter it into pieces.

Monstrosities are the dark things that stalk in the night. Empowered by mystical ritual, unnatural science, or otherworldly forces, monstrosities are thought by most to be monsters, shunned and feared by society. Some seek this power out while others have it foisted upon them, but not all of these individuals are beholden to their base desires and many lead lives that are a boon for a society rather than bane.

Alignment Monstrosities cannot be of good alignment. If your group uses alignment, an monstrosity whose alignment becomes good cannot level in this path again until their alignment changes from good.

Monstrous Origins Monstrosities are the stuff of dark secrecy and fell power, things of legend and forbidden lore. Becoming one of these otherworldly creatures is sometimes the ultimate goal of a cultist, drinking the blood of an existing monstrosity or engaging in strange rituals to fully realize their power. To others it is a curse bestowed by bloodline or destiny, a burden that strengthens itself through hardship.

Agents of the Beyond While there is certainly a predilection for monstrosities to fall towards evil not all of them give in to unnatural compulsions and darker desires—most are driven there by the angry and misunderstanding societies around them. Many of the fell adventurers that resist their inner naturesare raised far from civilization or hidden away from the world in utter secrecy, tainted by otherworldly power inherited from their reclusive parents or bestowed upon them by fate and the workings of cults.

Creating an Monstrosity The first thing to decide when making an monstrosity is the source of your character's abilities: did they seek out their dark path or was it forced on them by destiny? They might have discovered a dark object or accidentally happened into a nexus of otherworldly energies, stumbling into a ritual or coming upon the decaying essence of a dying monstrous entity looking for a new soul to tether to itself. Perhaps your character has always sought out power regardless of its source, seeking it out with others in a cult and only to be the one to unlock the secrets of the order. Maybe instead your parents were monstrosities and in a moment of panic you realized your unnatural inherited talents.

Did you try to hide from society and remain beneath its notice or choose instead to live far from civilized life, surviving in the wilderness? Who—if anyone—knows your truths or helped aid you keep them secret? Perhaps most importantly, does your character feel scorned by society's treatment of them for their monstrous nature or driven to prove that they are more than their otherworldly appearance suggests?

Level 1 Monstrosity

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You either read one language you can speak or add a language to the list of languages you can speak.

Darksight. You gain darksight.

Dark Strike You increase the damage of your unarmed strike or gain a natural weapon that deals 1d6 damage: abomination (unarmed strike), horror (unholy touch), ooze (acid touch), vampire (teeth), or werecreature (claws).

Occult Path Choose one of the following. Any talents you gain from this path are determined by this choice. Once you have chosen an Occult Path, you cannot choose another.

Monstrosity Training

d6	Training
1	You heard the whispers of creatures from the beyond and listened close, learning their secrets.
2	You're the subject of a mad scientist's experimentations.
3	Whenever you are in darkness your very mind bounds with strange equations and ritual symbols that compel you to seek their meaning.
4	You found a strange relic that transformed not only your soul but your body as well.
5	In your dreams you are hounded by voices offering you dark gifts to bring you power and glory—in exchange for a small part of your soul.
6	Every midnight you feel an urge to collect strange ephemera and curios, unsure of their purpose but needing to gather them all the same.

Abomination You are a creature of occult science or mystery, incredibly resilient and driven to sentience by forbidden secrets of alchemical chemistry or otherworldly energies. Abominations are constructed from the dead parts of other creatures or revived from the remains of a corpse specially prepared with precise rituals.

Your health increases by +1. You take half damage from poison and are immune to the poisoned affliction. You do not need to breathe, eat food, or drink water, though you still require periods of rest similar to sleep. You have 1 bane on challenge rolls when interacting in social settings due to your strange appearance.

Horror You have been touched by dark entities from the far reaches of the cosmos or another dimension, imbued with alien powers and potent abilities that defy logic.

You gain telepathy to a range of 10 yards and are able to sense magic (you can use an action to see ongoing magical effects within 5 yards and from what points they originate). You can sense magic three times and regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

Ooze Your eyes have seen beyond the weaknesses of your clumsy, mish-mashed biological makeup and you seek to transform yourself into the truest form of primal existence—an ooze. Many think you mad and find your quest disturbing but none can doubt the potency of the dark gifts you've discovered, talents that make it possible for you to do impossible things with your body.

You take half damage from acid and poison.

Vampire Infused with unholy energies and driven by a thirst for blood, you are slowly becoming a true master of the night and one of the most powerful types of undead.

You take double damage from holy and gain sunlight weakness (you are impaired while in sunlight). Whenever you use Dark Strike to deal damage to a creature, you heal half the damage dealt.

Werecreature You are filled with animalistic fury and cursed with a strange form of lycanthropy that changes you into a beast when the moon hangs high in the sky.

You are only able to use Dark Strike while in beast form or hybrid form (see below), and you can only use Change Form when the moon is out.

Change Form You can use an action or a triggered action on your turn to assume the form of a **medium animal**, assume a hybrid form, or return to its human form. While in animal form, you use that creature's physical attributes, characteristics, attacks, talents, and traits. You retain your own Intellect and Will. While in hybrid or beast form, you take half damage from weapons not made of silver.

Level 2 Monstrosity

Characteristics Health +4

Dark Strike You gain 1 boon on attack rolls with your Dark Strike.

Occult Path You gain a talent determined by your Occult Path.

Abomination Whenever you take damage, you take 1 less damage (after applying any resistances).

Horror You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls made to recall information. You can spend 1 minute concentrating to make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane to learn an obscure piece of myth or lore relating to a subject of your choice. Alternatively you can spend 10 minutes concentrating to make a Will challenge roll with 2 bane to learn a secret piece of information known by a creature you are familiar with and have looked upon at least once. You must complete a rest before you can use this talent again.

Ooze You ignore the effects of difficult terrain when climbing, and you make challenge rolls to climb with 1 boon. When you use Dark Strike, you can use a triggered action to grab the target.

Vampire You gain the following talent. Once you have used it, you cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds. You also gain Celestial Vulnerability.

Flowing Mist When you take damage, you can use a triggered action to turn your body into mist, fly up to your Speed, and then resume your normal form. While in mist form, you are immune to all damage, your movement does not trigger free attacks, and you can move through openings wide enough to permit the passage of air and through spaces occupied by other creatures.

Celestial Vulnerability You take double damage from Celestial spells and makes challenge rolls to resist Celestial spells with 1 bane.

Werecreature You gain 1 boon on Perception challenge rolls. You are able to use Change Form at any time but while in beast or hybrid form you gain sunlight weakness (you are impaired while in sunlight).

Level 5 Expert Monstrosity

Characteristics Health +4

Dark Strike Your damage with this attack increases to 2d6.

Occult Path You gain a talent determined by your Occult Path.

Abomination You have 1 boon on attack rolls against objects and deal double damage against objects. You gain immunity to blinded, deafened, diseased, and slowed.

Horror You can move through solid objects and other creatures. You can use an action to ignore difficult terrain until the start of your next turn.

Ooze Your Defense increases by 2. You can move through openings wide enough for the passage of water and through spaces occupied by other creatures.

Vampire You gain immunity to cold and poison, and you cannot be diseased, poisoned, or slowed. You also make attack rolls with 1 bane against a creature wearing or wielding a holy symbol.

Werecreature You can triple the height and quadruple the distances of your jumps.

Unholy Resistance. You take half damage from unholy and psychic as long as you consume a specific substance: abomination (lightning damage or alchemical substances), horror (another creature's dreams), ooze (unholy reagents), vampire (blood), or werecreature (flesh).

Level 8 Master Monstrosity

Characteristics Health +4

Dark Strike Your damage with this attack increases to 3d6.

Occult Path You gain a talent determined by your Occult Path

Abomination You gain immunity to the asleep, dazed, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, and stunned afflictions.

Horror Choose one creature within short range and make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success, the target becomes compelled. When it takes damage, it can make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane, removing the affliction on a success. If the total of the initial attack roll was 20 or higher and exceeds the target number by 5, the target makes its Intellect challenge rolls with 2 bane.

Ooze When a creature gets a failure on an attack roll against your Defense or Agility, you can use a triggered action to retreat.

Vampire You take 2d6 damage at the end of each round that you are in an area lit by sunlight. When you hit a living creature with your Dark Strike, make a Strength attack roll against the Strength of the target. On a success, the target becomes fatigued until it completes a rest. If the target is already fatigued this way, it must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, it instead becomes charmed until it completes a rest.

Werecreature You heal 1d6 damage at the end of each round while you are not incapacitated. You no longer need to be in beast or hybrid form to use Dark Strike.

Supernatural Movement You gain a special movement ability determined by your Occult Path: abomination (ignore difficult terrain), horror (fly at half Speed), ooze (cannot fall prone or be unwillingly moved), vampire (fly at half Speed), or werecreature (increase Speed by 5).

Summoner Novice Path

Cackling with glee as the villagers fled from her terrifying servants, the tiefling commanded her ghoul and lemure to hold down the town's priest and drew forth her sickle. She grabbed him by the hair and savagely cut it away, nicking his scalp and washing his face in red blood, blinding him as she retreated before the shouting of the local guards—this was only the beginning of the holy man's torment and path to corruption before her infernal allies claimed his soul.

As expected, the allure of the succubus the dwarf summoned was more than enough to entice the merchant quarry to drop his guard, leaving the tavern like a fool. The man's bodyguards followed, but the will-o'-wisps bent to the spellcaster's will distracted their simple minds; by the time the swords of any defenders could react to the dying trader's screams, the dwarf and his abyssal servant were long gone.

Summoners are not typical mages or priests, devoting themselves not to study or prayer, only to finding and taking the fastest pursuits to power—through dark pacts with evil creatures hungering for the foolish souls of bargainers. These greedy and despicable individuals wager their very souls to make fell bargains with not just one creature from the beyond the Material Plane but many entities, calling on the malevolent powers of the Abyss or Hell to do their bidding. Any and all dark arts are the purview of summoners and there is no depth to which they will not sink as they seek to conjure ever more powerful allies. The deals one must strike in order to summon evil entities with a whim are dire indeed however, and the further along the corrupted path one travels the greater one finds the demands of their otherworldly partners.

Alignment Summoners cannot be of good alignment. If your group uses alignment, a summoner whose alignment becomes good cannot level in this path again until their alignment changes from good.

Forbidden Secrets The path of the summoner is rarely lauded or promoted within society and the very nature of their art requires one to have a taste for taboo knowledge. Only the strong of will and spirit can endure the trials required to learn the secrets of diabolism, and though master summoners frequently take on many apprentices most of these deluded fools are merely pawns used for sacrifice. Devious, foul, and wily as they might be, summoners are always keen to acquire relics, tokens of power, or forbidden lore whenever the opportunity arises and they can be trusted to do whatever they must in their relentless pursuits.

Unyielding Avarice Greed is what inspires most summoners to take up the darkest arts of conjuration but they are never sated—the need for more power and wealth drives them ever forward the further they fall toward depravity in a vicious cycle that ends in eternal torment. The aid of demons and devils does not come without a cost however and either divine relics, great treasures, or the souls of the living must be sacrificed in order for summoners to forge new unholy alliances.

Diabolism The first thing to decide when making a summoner are the circumstances that led your character to seek out unholy alliances: are they destined to bring balance to the forces of good and evil, driven to do whatever they must to become rich, or tricked to stray into the depths of depravity? Have they any remorse for the horrendous acts they perform in exchange for power? While your summoner is evil, is there any good still within the corruption overtaking their soul?

Does your character impose their will on lawful servants, are they a slave master of chaotic entities, or devoted only to their goals and working with whatever allies they can conjure? Do they seek to inspire fear or attempt to blend in with the sheep of society? Perhaps most importantly, how do they plan to save their soul from the ultimate end of their bargains with the powerful creatures that act as their lackeys—or have they fallen too far to care?

Level 1 Summoner

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +3

Languages and Professions You either read one language you can speak or add a language to the list of languages you can speak. Also, add one religious profession.

Conjuring Points You have 2 conjuring points. You regain all expended conjuring points after you complete a rest.

Conjure Minor Diaboli You can use an action and spend 1 conjuring point to conjure a **tiny animal**, **small animal**, or **tiny monster** in an open space within short range. The conjured creature remains for 1 hour or until it becomes incapacitated.

Necromantic Touch You can use an action to touch a creature and deal 1d6 points of damage. When a creature becomes incapacitated from this attack, you gain a number of bonus Health equal to half the damage dealt. You can have no more bonus Health than you do Health. When you take damage, you lose bonus Health first.

Level 2 Summoner

Characteristics Health +3

Conjuring Points You gain 2 more conjuring points.

Conjure Diaboli You can use an action and spend 2 conjuring points to conjure a **medium animal**, or **small monster** in an open space within short range. The conjured creature remains for 1 hour or until it becomes incapacitated.

Diaboli You can only have more than one diaboli conjured when you have at least 1 unspent conjuring point.

Necromantic Touch When a creature becomes incapacitated from this attack, you gain an amount of Bonus Health equal to the damage dealt.

Level 5 Expert Summoner

Characteristics Health +3

Conjuring Points You gain 1 more conjuring point.

Conjure Greater Diaboli You can use an action and spend 3 conjuring points to conjure a **medium monster** or **tiny demon** in an open space within short range. The conjured creature remains for 1 hour or until it becomes incapacitated.

Necromantic Touch Your damage with this attack increases to 2d6.

Level 8 Master Summoner

Characteristics Health +3

Conjuring Points You gain 2 more conjuring point.

Summoner Training

d6	Training
1	You heard the whispers of creatures from the beyond and listened close, learning their secrets.
2	Your ancestors dabbled in diabolism and deviltry—the blood of Hell runs in your veins.
3	Whenever you are in darkness your very mind bounds with strange equations and ritual symbols that you're compelled to understand.
4	You bore witness to a summoner's summoning and the conjured creature marked your very soul with an infection of dark power.
5	In your dreams you are hounded by creatures offering you their service to attain power and glory—in exchange for a small part of your soul.
6	Every midnight you feel an urge to collect strange ephemera and curios, unsure of their purpose but needing to gather them all the same.

Conjure Greater Diaboli You can use an action and spend 4 conjuring points to conjure a **huge animal** or **large monster** in an open space within short range. The conjured creature remains for 1 hour or until it becomes incapacitated.

Hell Conjuration By sacrificing a creature of at least Difficulty 5 and spending 10 gold in reagents to perform a 1 minute ritual, you can spend 6 conjuring points to conjure a **small demon**. The conjured creature remains for 10 minutes or until it becomes incapacitated.

Necromantic Touch Your damage with this attack increases to 3d6 and you have 1 boon on attack rolls using it.

Dark Transformation Expert Paths

A loud crack from below sends the doors of the cathedral bursting open, the corpses stacked against it thumping to the floor as Justitia flood into the ancient building. Kiazzara laughs in her revelry as she hears one of the guards slip on the blood-spattered stairs, falling in a tumble before snapping his neck with a wet thwacking sound. Her bellowing changes to yowls of pain that echo downward with the setting sun and as she expected her body changes, powerful scaled wings sprouting from out of her back. With a whooping howl she leaps from the steeple and takes flight, the town's high priest wounded, unconscious, but still alive—and in her iron grip.

Rushing between the aisles with stacks of restricted tomes tucked beneath each arm, Vincesca rapidly tries to recall where the nearest exit from the library is located as another bolt of frigid cold surges past her shoulder, crisping more of her hair to a fine white. Tired of being chased and confident that her assailant will lose their heart for the chase if threatened, she ducks behind a small cart of books and waits for the foolish scribe to appear; the second he does she leaps like a tiger, slashing at his throat and willing the rakshasa in her spirit to come forth to ward away the magical counterattack sure to come. The apprentice mage backs away and wipes the blood from his brow, grinning triumphantly and pulling a scroll from his robes. With a powerful incantation and complex gesture the parchment turns to ash in his hands but not before a cage of energy materializes around the trespasser—though now it is Vincesca's turn to smile, the spell fizzling out as the hunter becomes the hunted.

Pleased with how much drink he's had and prepared to retire for the evening with a full belly, Gnarbold lets a touch of the demonic power within him flash across his eyes, tempting a bit of malevolence to reach up from the Abyss and muddle the minds of a group of treasure hunters across the lounge. For a moment it seems to fail and the gnome wonders if he'll have to pay for his ale tonight, but only two of the warriors sit dumbfounded—one begins wandering toward the kitchen and another draws a blade, stabbing his nearest companion. Pandemonium breaks out throughout the establishment and Gnarbold wades into the melee, weakly pleading for an end to the violence while forcing his dark will on the combat to singe wounds with its corrosive touch. For a moment the ploy seems to fail but then cries of pain finally pull the bouncer from the door and in the confusion the gnome slips away, untroubled by the bill for yet another sumptuous meal.

Traveling the paths of wickedness and utter damnation mean doom for most but a rare few reach the point of physically changing into something vile, attaining foul apotheosis and transforming into chimerical horrors. Unlike monstrositys the evolutionary nature of dark transformations is far more drastic and rapid, the lust for power channeling the energies needed to remake a body into a more vile form. Undergoing the vile pursuit is the sole purvey of the malicious or the mad, driving them forward when any sane mind would realize the terrible permanent consequences of their actions—an urge to finish the work outweighing any obstacles between them and the potent components needed for their change. Once someone has started down this road there can be no turning back and they embrace their worst selves before eventually assuming their new form and the life that comes with it.

Prerequisites The dark transformation paths are only available characters that meet the prerequisites, determined by the chosen transformation aspect: Abyssal (Will 12), Draconic (Strength 12), Infernal (Intellect 12), Golem (Strength 12), Lich (Intellect 12), Rakshasa (Agility 12).

Dark Ritual In addition to the prerequisites for these paths, each dark transformation also requires a specialized ritual as part of the transformation process. This ritual must be completed by the time the character wishes to take a level in the dark transformation path. Each aspect of the transformation has a suggested ritual (usually a small quest) and the specifics of each are subject to GM discretion (using the sample rituals as guidelines).

Level 3 Dark Transformation

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You can speak another language, add an academic area of knowledge, or add a religious profession.

Transformation Aspect Choose one of the following. Any talents you gain from this path are determined by this choice (Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal, Golem, Lich, or Rakshasa. Once you have chosen a Transformation Aspect, you cannot choose another.

Level 6 Dark Transformation

Characteristics Health +4

Aspect Gift You gain talents based on your Transformation Aspect.

Level 9 Dark Transformation

Characteristics Health +4

Aspect Blessing You gain talents based on your Transformation Aspect.

Abyssal Aspect

Those that undergo the transformation into an abyssal creature typically live a life of sin. These individuals focus on a particular sin and follow it as their main motivator or objective in their everyday lives. As part of their dark transformation, they do their best to tempt others to fall to their sin, drawing upon the envy, gluttony, greed, lust, mendacity, pride, slothfulness, and wrath of others to fuel their rituals. Upon the completion of their dark transformation, they may take on the appearance of a demon tied to their particular sin, such as a succubus for the lustful or an abrikandilu for the wrathful.

Dark Ritual Take the life of an intelligent humanoid steeped in a particular habitual sin (such as greed or wrath). Bathe in the sinful blood and do not clean yourself of the gore for at least one week.

Transformation Aspect (level 3) You take half damage from poison (or if you already took half damage, you gain immunity instead). You can touch a creature as an action, dealing 2d6 acid damage and forcing it to make an Agility challenge roll or become corrupted. A corrupted creature rolls twice and takes the worst result the next time they make an attack roll or challenge roll. You can also use an action to activate or deactivate an aura of destruction. While active, a creature within 3 yards (including yourself) takes 1d6 acid damage whenever it takes any damage.

Aspect Gift (level 6) You gain darksight (if you did not already have it). You can use an action to gain truesight for 10 minutes. As a triggered action while looking at a creature, you can end your truesight and force a creature you're able to see to make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature is blinded for 1 minute. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your level. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) An abyssal gem grows somewhere on your body, such as on your forehead, your chest, or in your palm. You grow a set of wings and can fly at your Speed. When you take the Attack action on your turn, you can make an extra slam melee attack that deals 1d6 damage.

Draconic Aspect

Creatures that undergo a draconic transformation tend to feel the might of dragons constantly stirring in their hearts—the urge to wield it over others roiling in their blood constantly yearning for release. Only the most powerful are able to tap into this might let alone change themselves into dragons. These creatures show draconic tendencies even before undertaking the grand endeavor of a dark transformation, saving their coin or proving themselves as intellectually superior whenever possible. Once they reach their apotheosis, they resemble young versions of their draconic kin, eventually evolving into full dragons over centuries.

Dark Ritual Gather the bones of an adult dragon of any type or at least three young dragons. Shatter the bones into small shards and drive them into your skin in a ritual spanning one week (dealing 1d6 damage each day; this damage cannot be healed by magic).

Transformation Aspect (level 3) You take half damage from fire and gain a bite attack that deals 2d6 damage.

Aspect Gift (level 6) You can use an action to spray flames in a 10-yard-long cone from a point you can reach. Everything in the area takes 2d6 + 2 damage. Each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 1d6 + 1 extra damage and catches fire. Once you use this talent, it cannot do so again for 1d6+1 rounds.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) You gain immunity to fire and you grow a set of wings that allow you to fly at your Speed. You can use an action to tap into the vestiges of great serpents swimming in your blood. For the next minute, you deal 1d6 extra damage when you hit with a melee attack using Strength.

Infernal Aspect

Infernally attuned creatures are deceitful—they are the liars, cheats, and traitors of the world—and they savor every moment of their duplicity. Even at a young age they may find themselves fooling friends into entering unfair agreements, but once they learn of the power of Hell and infernal contracts (typically by entering a contract themselves) they usually see another means of establishing power or control over others. When transformed they are least likely to manifest significant physical changes to better allow for further deceptions, though the depths of their depravity are no less significant.

Dark Ritual Submit a soul, either your own or that of another, via an infernal contract. The contract must include a clause which submits the soul as payment upon the completion of your dark transformation and must be written in the blood of an innocent intelligent humanoid.

Transformation Aspect (level 3) You take half damage from fire, gain darksight, and grow horns that can be used to gore for 1d6 damage.

Aspect Gift (level 6) You can use an action to summon forth hellfire and hurl it at a target within medium range. On a hit you deal 3d6 + your Intellect modifier damage. If your target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) You gain immunity to fire and can use an action to wreathe yourself in hellfire. As an action, you can strike a short-term bargain with a creature able to see, hear, and understand you. This creature is bound by your infernal contract unless it makes an Intellect saving throw. On a failure, a bound creature must focus any attacks or spells solely on you (including abilities that target an area) or a fragment of its soul is ripped away. A bound creature that attacks or targets anything other than you (failing on its end of the bargain) is wracked with pain and takes 4d6 psychic damage at the end of the round. A creature is bound by this contract for 1 minute but can repeat the Intellect challenge roll at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a target's challenge roll is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to your binding contracts for the next 24 hours. You may end a binding contract at any time as a minor activity, dealing 6d6 psychic damage to the bound creature. You can only maintain one binding contract at a time. If you strike a binding contract with another creature, your previous binding contract immediately ends without damaging its bound creature.

Golem Aspect

Those that seek to transform into golems rarely feel content with their own bodies. It might start as a simple displeasure one's hair type or eye color but these feelings evolve into obsessing over flaws, constantly being uncomfortable, or repulsion of specific body parts (or one's entire body). These individuals seek to reshape their body, replacing flesh and organs with manufactured pieces or those stolen from others. Upon a complete dark transformation, they may not have any piece of their original body remaining, leaving only the mind and soul intact to continue the will of physical change.

Dark Ritual Replace at least one-third of your major body parts with that of a construct or another humanoid (see the graft flesh chirurgical procedure on page 147). At least one of transplanted parts must come from a living creature.

Transformation Aspect (level 3) Your Health increases by 5 and your unarmed strike damage increases by 1d6.

Aspect Gift (level 6) Your Health increases by 2 and you take half damage from acid, poison, and psychic. When you fail an Intellect or Will challenge roll, you may use your reaction to block off that portion of your mind at the cost of going berserk. You treat the challenge roll as if you had succeeded, but you go berserk for a 2d6 rounds. While you are berserk, at the start of each of your turns you move towards and attack the nearest creature you can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, you attack an object, with preference for an object smaller than yourself. At the end of every round you can make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane to regain your composure. While berserk you cannot use this talent. If you are able to cast spells, while berserk you cannot cast spells or concentrate on them.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) You become a true construct and no longer need to eat, breathe, or sleep. You are immune to poison, disease, and the poisoned condition. As an action you can grow extremely resilient, taking half damage from weapons for 1 minute. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Lich Aspect

A person obsessed with becoming lich may be consumed with a hunger for more powerful magic or to attain immortality. The threat of a mundane life or death is anathema to such an individual. These mages and mystics tend to live isolated lives, spending all their waking hours studying the lore of undeath's masters. Intensive research over hundreds and thousands of hours take a toll on their bodies, leaving gaunt and sickly figures akin to a corpse. Upon the end of their dark transformation, the spellcaster completes their goal, becoming something fully versed in arcana and beyond death. Though they resemble liches in nature, even after their dramatic change these creatures must still spend decades before learning the secrets of phylacteries and complete lichdom.

Dark Ritual Tie off blood flow to an extremity until it undergoes necrosis, then revitalize and restore animation to the limb with a smaller ritual that takes place over one day. Complete this process for all of your major extremities.

Transformation Aspect (level 3) Your Power increases by +1, you learn one spell, and you take half damage from unholy.

Aspect Gift (level 6) You can use an action to touch a creature and paralyze it. On a hit the target takes 1d6 cold damage and makes a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, the target is immobilized and stunned for 1d6 rounds. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) Your Power increases by +1, you learn one spell, you are immune to unholy, you no longer need to eat, breathe, or sleep, and you have 1 boon on attacks made with spells.

Rakshasa Aspect

The rakshasa-blooded are manipulators, setting forth subtle machinations requiring months or even years of execution. Although they pride themselves on their guile these individuals are also masters of the sudden, dangerous strike—they jump at opportunities as they present themselves and remake circumstances to be favorable again when they do not. With their full dark transformation, they usually fulfill a long-standing plan. Their appearance changes to match that of other rakshasa and usually resembles an anthropomorphic tiger, but avian or reptilian forms are not uncommon.

Dark Ritual You receive a ritualistic tattoo using the bone of an enemy as the needle. This ritualistic tattoo requires a procedure that instills great pain and takes at least one week's worth of work to complete.

Transformation Aspect (level 3) Your Speed increases by 1 and you gain a claw melee attack that deals 1d6 damage. You can use an action to alter your appearance to match that of a target living creature that you have seen within short range in the past week. The target must be Size 1 or 1/2 and have a humanoid shape of flesh and blood. Your body changes so you look like the target, though your clothing and possessions remain unchanged. The effect lasts until you use this talent again.

Aspect Gift (level 6) You can use an action to make an Intellect attack roll against a target creature within medium range. On a success, you invade the target's mind, able to read its surface thoughts and know what its immediate plans are. On a roll of 20+, you learn 1 piece of more obscure information plus 1 additional piece for each point above 20. Alternatively, you can use an action to turn yourself invisible for 1 minute. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your level. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Aspect Blessing (level 9) You gain 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist magic and spells, and the damage of your claws increases by 1d6. A creature struck by your claws must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or become disrupted. A disrupted creature rolls twice on all attack rolls, taking the lower result. A disrupted creature can attempt to remove the curse by spending an action and repeating the challenge roll. Once a creature has been disrupted by this effect, it cannot be disrupted by you for 24 hours.

Anarchist Expert Path

Anarchists are malcontents or silvertongues, known for using their mastery of word and song to control the minds of others. They can be found (though not easily) in every social strata of Askis whispering poison in the ears of nobility, whipping a crowd into a hateful frenzy, and generally twisting emotions to their own purposes. Whatever their goal malcontents are most in control and at home in urban settings where there are plenty of sentient minds to bend to their will, crowds to disappear into, and gossip circles aplenty are ripe for exploitation.

A myth among most bards of Askis, the College of Anarchy has thrived in the shadows of civilization's rise. Unlike some morally-bankrupt bards—who use the positive reputation of their profession to its best advantage—malcontents find that they are better served by not presenting as minstrels at all. The cupbearer at a duchess' table, the sympathetic barkeep in the slums, or the pious clergy member collecting for the poor could all be children of anarchy planting the seeds of hate and corruption. From the lowly stations they pretend to keep thesy spur on violence and discontent, using the crowds of cities to spread chaos then slipping away in the confusion that follows.

Anarchist Story Development

d6	Story Development
1	Some damned bureaucrat (or bureaucrats) pushed you too far and in response you've become an agent of chaos.
2	After witnessing the dreadfully slow machinations of The Ministry you've chosen to rebuild society by wrecking pieces of it here and there.
3	Some folks just want to watch the world burn.
4	What others call "law" and "order" you call "slavery".
5	A part of you has snapped—or perhaps has always been broken—and you've discovered a strange power in that undercurrent of madness.
6	Something very, very precious was taken away from you by the world at large and you'll keep spreading havoc until it is either returned or you die.

Level 3 Anarchist

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a religious or wilderness profession.

Magic You learn one spell.

Incredible Mimicry When a creature within short range uses a talent with limited uses or a cooldown measured in rounds, you can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the triggering creature's Intellect. You cannot use this talent against spells. On a success, you gain one use of the talent. You retain this use until you expend it or until you complete a rest, at which point the entropic magic powering your ability fades. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Manipulative You can use a triggered action to gain 1 boon when making a challenge roll to deceive or lie. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your level. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Level 6 Anarchist

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1

Magic You discover a tradition or learn one spell.

Stoke the Fires You can use an action to command an ally you can see within short range. The target can use a triggered action to take an action. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Level 9 Anarchist

Characteristics Health +4

Magic You learn one spell.

Herder of Sheep You can utter your words with such perfect cadence that you can convince a group of people into doing almost anything. Over the course of 1 minute you deliver an oratory masterpiece. You suggest a course of activity (limited to a sentence or two) and superlatively influence a number of targets equal to your level + Will. Only creatures that you can see within short range and that can hear and understand you can be targeted. The suggestion must be worded in such a manner as to make the course of action sound reasonable (you cannot directly ask creatures to harm themselves). Targets immune to the charmed and compelled afflictions can still be affected by your influence as long as they are able to understand you.

Each target must make a Will challenge roll against your Will. On a failure, it pursues the course of action you described to the best of its ability for a number of days equal to your Power. The suggested course of action can continue for the entire duration. If the suggested activity can be completed in a shorter time, your influence when the subject finishes what it was asked to do.

You can also specify conditions that will trigger a special activity during the duration. For example, you might suggest that a group of soldiers give all their money to the first beggar they meet. If the condition isn't met before your influence ends, the activity isn't performed.

If you or any of your companions damage a target affected by your influence, the creature receives a new challenge roll to end your influence for that target.

Chirurgeon Expert Path

There are wizards that choose to carefully study and analyze not only magic but the workings of the physical body as well. These chirurgeons are feared adversaries, known to employ devious plans that intricately weave together spells and diabolical surgeries to enact their will upon a subject, completely transforming creatures into other forms or powerfully warped abominations.

Level 3 Chirurgeon

Attributes Increase two by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language and add an academic profession.
Chirurgeon You have 1 boon on challenge rolls made to perform chirurgical procedures.
Chirurgical Procedures You learn 3 chirurgical procedures (pages 142-152).
Surgical Precision When you make a melee attack roll and have at least 1 boon, you can choose to have 1 less boon and instead deal an extra 1d6 damage on a successful hit.

Level 6 Chirurgeon

Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language and add an academic profession.
Practiced Chirurgeon You have 2 boons on challenge rolls made to perform chirurgical procedures. You do not have banes on challenge rolls to perform chirurgical procedures on yourself.
Chirurgical Procedures You learn 3 chirurgical procedures.
Fast Chirurgery You are able to perform chirurgical procedures in half the listed time and use half as many uses from a healer's kit (minimum 1).

Level 9 Chirurgeon

Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language and add an academic profession.
Master You have 3 boons on challenge rolls made to perform chirurgical procedures.
Chirurgical Procedures You learn 3 chirurgical procedures.
Flenser of Flesh Your melee weapon attacks deal an extra 1d6 damage as long as you are using a bladed weapon.

Chirurgeon Story Development

d6	Story Development
1	You learned tricks from an old paramedic to quickly aid patients in need, techniques forbidden by The Ministry (and for good reason as the path they led to is dark indeed).
2	All of your initial training came from universities but their constraints drove you to seek out subjects for experiments of your own.
3	While trying to find cheap text books for medical school you came across some illegal texts but the geniuses that wrote them are far beyond the plebeians that think themselves fit to instruct you.
4	Things scream inside of your skull unless you are waiting for or in the wonderful act of playing a scalpel along flesh.
5	The need to save lives has always been more important to you than anything else and if that means trying untested methods or immoral techniques then so be it.
6	You're too damn smart to let anyone else, doctors or otherwise, tell you what you can or can't do or who you can or can't do it to.

Foul Warrior Expert Path

Indulging in evil is seem by some as abhorrent and others as a necessity of dire circumstances, but to fighters that take this path it is as valid a means to power and glory as any other. Seeking out dark tomes, evil spirits, and corrupted relics, these mercenaries are only as trustworthy as the gold or prize offered for their services—though their unholy abilities give their reputations all the assurances a high price requires.

Level 3 Foul Warrior

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You can speak Vilespeech.

Scarring You learn how to scarify your body in such a way that ambient malevolent energies adhere to it like scum in a sewer. You may possess a number of vile scars equal to three times your level in this path. Marking your body with a vile scar requires 1 hour of effort with a melee weapon and while it is on your body, your Health is reduced by 1. A vile scar can only be removed by the *total healing* spell and is otherwise permanent.

Ascendere Velox. Dark wisps of shadows flit about your form, dragging your steps forward. You ignore the effects of difficult terrain when climbing or swimming.

Aspectus Vacui. The sides of your eyes were difficult to scarify but the suffering was worth it for the power instilled in them. You gain shadowsight. If you already have shadowsight, you gain darksight.

Componere Infernum. Fires from Hell have tempered your skin. You take half damage from fire.

Ieiunium Gradus. Special scars on your body make it easier for you to travel through the physical world, as though pushed by an invisible current. Your speed increases by 2 feet and the first free attack made against you each round has 1 bane.

Irrumabo Mortem. Markings of power lock your soul inside of your body, forcing it to cling on to the physical world. When making a Fate roll, roll twice and take the best result.

Nullum Timorem. You have immunity to fear.

Quae Insanimus. Blasphemous energies roil beneath the disfigured skin on your skull. You make challenge rolls to resist being charmed, compelled, or stunned with 1 boon.

Rex Vermes. Insects, rats, and other vermin speak directly into your corrupted mind. You are able to speak with insects, rats, and vermin (though they are still lowly creatures with very limited mental capacity).

Velatum Ante. Intricate runes of Vilespeech painstakingly carved beneath your skin hide your true soul from view. You make challenge rolls to avoid revealing your alignment with 1 boon. If a creature would automatically detect your alignment, you receive a Will challenge roll against its Will and on a success, it fails.

Venenum Imbre. Vile magics make you able to spit venom. You can use an action to spit at a target within 3 yards. On a hit you deal 1d6 poison damage plus your Strength modifier.

Level 6 Foul Warrior

Characteristics Health +5

Bloodslayer Whenever you kill a creature you heal 3 damage.

Unholy Wounding Each time your melee attack roll exceeds 20, your target takes 2 damage at the end of every round until the wound is stanched as an action with a successful Intellect challenge roll or the target receives magical healing.

Foul Warrior Story Development

d6	Story Development
1	One day you accidentally scarred yourself and found you could not stop, the urge to flay off thin strips of your own skin too great to resist.
2	There are monstrous terrors beneath your skin and you'll cut them out, even if takes forever.
3	Tattoos are for the weak and you mark yourself with far more potent symbols.
4	You saw a reformed criminal with strange markings on their skin and were inspired to emulate them, discovering beautiful new designs that are sublime even if they are hard to look upon.
5	Voices scream at you and only cease when you drag a blade across your flesh or rent open scabs from your countless wounds.
6	While traveling through a graveyard or mausoleum you came across strange markings that you felt compelled to put onto your own skin, and after the ink of tattoos faded you couldn't help but replace them with scars.

Level 9 Foul Warrior

Characteristics Health +5

Bad to the Bone You become a true warrior of darkness, a powerful force to do battle in the name of evil. You take half damage from holy and unholy. You take half damage from Celestial spells and makes challenge rolls to resist Celestial spells with 1 boon. In addition, the first time you reach 0 Health after completing a rest, you automatically heal an amount equal to your Strength plus Healing Rate.

Gray Knight Expert Path

The Gray Knight is a potent being dedicated entirely to maintaining balance—what has occurred on this planet cannot be allowed to stand. The mysterious figure has imparted some of zir power to agents in Askis so that they might restore true order.

Level 3 Gray Knight

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a religious or wilderness profession.

Psipoints You gain a number of psipoints equal to your level in this path. When you encounter an active spell that has been cast within the last week, you can use an action and expend psipoints to negate the spell. When you witness a creature within 13 yards casting a spell, you may expend psipoints as a triggered action to negate the spell. If you do not spend a number of psipoints equal to or greater than the level of the spell, you do not negate it but gain 1 boon on any challenge rolls made to resist it. You regain all psipoints when you complete a rest.

Gray Armor You can use an action to summon dead spirits that sigh and enshroud you in translucent gray spectral armor. While you are not wearing any armor but your Gray Armor, your Defense equals your Agility + your Intellect or Will bonus (whichever is higher).

Level 6 Gray Knight

Characteristics Health +4

Enshrouded Mind You take half damage from psychic and gain immunity to charm. When a creature targets you with a spell or talent that causes the charmed affliction, it makes an Intellect challenge roll. On a failure it believes that you are charmed.

Level 9 Gray Knight

Characteristics Health +4, Power +1

Psychic Attunement You have become attuned to the workings of magic nearby and have learned how to react to the arcane and divine without thinking. Creatures that are within your reach provoke a free attack from you when they cast a spell.

Gray Strike When you hit a creature with an attack, you can use this talent to cut off its access to magic. For 1d6 rounds the target cannot cast spells or use magical talents, nor can it be targeted by spells or magical talents. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Gray Knight Story Development

d6	Story Development
1	The need for balance rings in your soul and you came across a believer that led you to this path.
2	An elderly person whispered a secret to you as their life slipped away and that strange mystery has ultimately driven you into the cosmic entity's embrace.
3	Something about magic feels foul to you so you've sought out the means to undo the arcane and divine.
4	One night while gazing upon the fire you saw a spectral form that beckoned you to sleep, and in the dream that followed you met the Gray Knight where ze convinced you to be zir emissary.
5	In the starry twilight you saw a constellation that began to dance and weave through the sky. After a while you mimicked its movements, unlocking a power within you did not know you had.
6	At one point or another during your life, you went through rehabilitation at the hands of The Ministry. During one of your drug-induced stupors you felt your mind enshrouded by an intense calm, and afterward you sought out other followers of the Gray Knight.

Masquerading Heretic Expert Path

The most effective wounds to the bureaucracy of the Celestial Heroes that rule over the world will be dealt by those within the gargantuan establishment, agents of evil able to operate from the inside. Your talents concentrate upon maintaining this deception, staying one step ahead of the zealots seeking out evil in the world as you sabotage the apparatuses that make it function.

Level 3 Masquerading Heretic

Attributes Increase two by 1

Characteristics Health +4

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a religious profession.

Silver Tongue You can use a triggered action to gain 1 boon when making a challenge roll to persuade. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your level. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

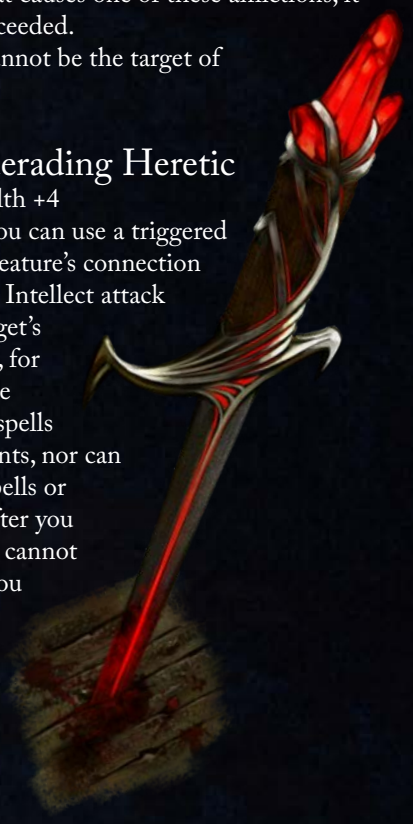
Obscured Nature To the perception of others and for the purposes of detection spells your Sanctity and Sin attributes appear to be switched (so your Sin score appears to have your Sanctity score's value and likewise).

Level 6 Masquerading Heretic

Characteristics Health +4

Implacable Will You gain immunity to the charmed and compelled afflictions. When a creature targets you with a spell or talent that causes one of these afflictions, it believes that it succeeded.

Undetectable You cannot be the target of divination spells.



Level 9 Masquerading Heretic

Characteristics Health +4

Despicable Strike You can use a triggered action to sever a creature's connection to magic. Make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, for the next minute the target cannot cast spells or use magical talents, nor can it be targeted by spells or magical talents. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Masquerading Heretic Story Development

d6	Story Development
1	You come from a long, proud line of secret dissidents and were taught by a family member.
2	One day while walking the promenade you befriended a poor soul being rehabilitated by The Ministry and after a few more visits they confided in you some of their secrets…
3	Listening to street musicians and minstrels in lounges all your life, you started to hear a subtle meaning behind the lyrics and through them you came upon a world of secretive blasphemies.
4	Hidden in the depths of ecclesiarch libraries are blasphemous tomes filled with enigmas that confound but open up one's mind to incredible new expanses too bold to resist.
5	A teacher during your schooling always took a liking to you and after graduation they offered you a job. Before too long they revealed amazing truths about the sham civilization in which you live alongside potent tricks and techniques to better subvert it.
6	In the theatrical halls of Askis you played the stage as an actor, learning through your craft of the truest route to masterwork performances (no matter what sacrileges might be required—simply a sacrifice for great art).

Bloodmancer Master Path

Study of the arcane arts often brings the beck and call of forbidden powers, and you found the offerings from the darkness intriguing. Delving within promises discovery upon damning discovery and with every day that passes, you fall deeper into the depths, the trappings of unholy magics staining your very soul.

Level 7 Bloodmancer

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Magic You discover the Forbidden or Vile tradition or learn one spell.

Magic for Blood You learn how to collect ambient evil energy able to replicate the blood needed for vile magic. By spending your triggered action when you cast a blood spell that deals damage to yourself, you take only 1 damage. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Nameless Evil You attain an adroit level of control over vile magics that allows you to draw the evil energies left behind by your foulest spells and take their latent power into your soul instead. Whenever you cast a forbidden, vile, or evil spell, you may choose not to leave an evil aura. Doing so increases your Sin score by 1 if the spell's level is equal to or less than half your Power. Any spells of a higher level increases your Sin by 2.

Level 10 Bloodmancer

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You learn one spell.

Sanguine Power When you deal damage to yourself as part of casting a spell, you gain 1 boon on attack rolls with the spell and creatures have 1 bane on challenge rolls to resist it.

Vile Focus You can use an action to imbue power into a hand-sized object, transforming it into a vile focus you can use to trick and frustrate your foes. Any item of appropriate size can be turned into a vile focus, but when a weapon is used any damage it deals is magical. You may only have a number of vile focuses equal to your Power. By spending your triggered action when you cast a spell that leaves an evil aura, the resulting evil aura is tied to the vile focus instead of you. Once the aura has faded, the item ceases to be a vile focus.

Dark Chi Wielder Master Path

Most martial arts training requires years of focus and intense study but not all—there are paths that will allow practitioners without scruples to advance far more quickly though few are fearless enough to utilize them. Warriors learn how to harness a kind of negative energy from these dark disciplines, a force that complements those used by more patient combatants (albeit with effects that defy the techniques of their less pragmatic peers).

Alignment Dark chi wielders cannot be of good alignment. If your group uses alignment, a dark chi wielder whose alignment becomes good cannot level in this path again until their alignment changes from good.

Level 7 Dark Chi Wielder

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Dark Chi You can tap into dark and evil powers to utilized dark chi. You have dark chi equal to your level. Whenever you hit a creature with a melee attack, you can use your triggered action and 1 dark chi to cause one of the following effects. You replenish your dark chi when you complete a rest.

- The target makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or is poisoned for 2d6 rounds.
- The attack deals an extra 2d6 unholy damage.
- The target makes a Will challenge roll or cannot be healed by spells until the end of your next turn.
- The target makes a Will challenge roll or for the next 24 hours detects as the alignment of your choice.

Scarred Flesh You ritualistically scar your flesh and deaden the nerves against physical pain. You can use an action and spend 2 dark chi focusing your energies into the blasphemies emblazoned on your skin, you take half damage from weapons for 1 minute.

Level 10 Dark Chi Wielder

Characteristics Health +5

Evil Manifestation Each time you complete a rest your dark chi manifests itself physically in a different way. Roll 1d6 to determine what benefit you gain from this feature. By spending Vilis points, you can change which benefit you gain by one step (for example, if you roll a 4 but want Deadly Claws you may spend two Vilis points to gain them instead of Vile Bones.) This benefit remains until the next time you complete a rest.

1	**Blindsight** You grow enormous bat-like ears and are able to perceive your surroundings within 20 yards without relying on sight.
2	**Deadly Claws** You gain a +3 bonus on attack rolls and damage when making unarmed strikes.
3	**Evil Blood** Your blood becomes acidic. You gain immunity to acid and when a creature deals more than 5 damage to you with a melee weapon or natural weapon, it takes 1d6 acid damage.
4	**Vile Bones** Your bones become infused by dead spirits that grant you immunity to holy and unholy damage.
5	**Wicked Soul** By spending 6 dark chi as a triggered action, you unlock the bottomless pits of the lower planes. For 1 minute your Speed is doubled, you gain a +2 bonus to Defense, you have 1 boon on Agility challenge rolls, and you can make one additional attack on each of your turns.
6	**Wings** Your rest ends in terrible pain as your back extends and stretches into fearsome wings that give you a flying speed equal to Speed.

Fearmancer Master Path

Terror has great power for those willing to use it, turning horror itself into a weapon. Fearmongers are masters of their craft and able to strike dread in the hearts of even the bravest souls, manipulating their enemies to cowardice through dark magic that most mages are too afraid to seek out.

Level 7 Fearmancer

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Dean Spencer

Magic You discover the Forbidden or Vile tradition or learn one spell.
Frightful Gaze You can use an action on your turn to gaze on one target creature within short range. The target must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, it becomes frightened of you until it uses an action to remove the affliction. On a success, it becomes immune to your Frightful Gaze until the target completes a rest.
True Terror When you target a creature with a talent or spell that causes fear, you can use a triggered action to force the target to make its challenge roll to resist the fear with 1 bane. If you use this talent against a creature immune to fear, it loses its immunity against you until the end of your turn but makes challenge rolls to resist being frightened of you with 2 boons. You can use this talent a number of times equal to your Power. You replenish your uses when you complete a rest.

Level 10 Fearmancer
Characteristics Health +2
Magic You learn one spell.
Aura of Fear You can use an action to become frightening. It is a minor activity to suppress this talent.
Thing of Horror You have unlimited uses of True Terror.

Feral Rager Master Path

Within every intelligent humanoid resides the ancient bloodline of a more primal creature. By embracing savagery and committing your bloodlust to dark powers you have unleashed a bestial thing from far back in time, something made all the more brutal by the touch of prehistoric evil.
Prerequisite In order to take this path, you must have at least 1 level in the Berserker Expert Path.

Level 7 Feral Rager
Attributes Increase three by 1
Characteristics Health +6
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.
Dark Claws When you go Berserk, your hands transform into wicked magical claws that deal 1d6+2 damage (plus 1d6 damage from being Berserk).
Primal Senses You have 1 boon on Perception challenge rolls that rely on hearing or smell. When Berserk, you automatically detect where invisible creatures are within 20 yards.

Level 10 Feral Rager
Characteristics Health +6
Feral Charge When you move at least 6 yards straight toward a creature and then hit it with your claw on the same turn, make a Strength attack against its Strength. On a success the target takes your claw damage and falls prone. In addition, with a 3-yard running start you can long jump up to 10 yards.
Wicked Serrations You can use your triggered action to deploy or retract your claws, even when you are not Berserk. While Berserk, your claws form merciless jagged edges that weep with evil energies that deal 1d6 unholy damage. You heal damage equal to the unholy damage you deal with your claws.

Gruesome Salvager Master Path

While most individuals grafted with the parts of monsters or other races are not willing to accept their new limbs and appendages, some warriors pursue creatures to incorporate into their own bodies as a rite of passage. These despicable hunters' grisly transformations grant powers that make them terrors to behold on the battlefield.

Level 7 Gruesome Salvager
Attributes Increase three by 1
Characteristics Health +5
Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.
Gruesome Salvage You gain two fell grafts (pages 137-139).

Level 10 Gruesome Salvager
Characteristics Health +5
Gruesome Salvage You gain two fell grafts.

Heresy Knight Master Path

The oath of heresy is a path that few have the strength to walk. Sometimes known as heresy knights, blackguards, or scourges (and many other, fouler names in less polite company), these paladins set themselves against everything that modern Askis stands for. From the pure and the good, to the extravagant glory of righteousness, heresy knights exist to befoul the world, tear it down, and erect a new, blighted one in its place. Whether wronged by holy agents, sworn to a dark god, or simply born cursed, these

paladins have taken up arms against the celestial forces and all they stand for.

Those who take up this oath come from many different walks of life. Many have an inherent sense of order that helps them work with single-minded determination, but there are still others who enjoy corruption and destruction for their own sake, as well as a significant minority that just wish to see the world burn. Their armor and heraldry vary greatly as well, though bones, scythes, and the features of evil outsiders are common, as well as images of broken chains.

Prerequisite In order to take this path, you must have at least 1 level in the Paladin Expert Path.

Tenets of Heresy The specific tenets of the oath of heresy vary among its members, but all have a general focus of desecration, destruction, and befoulment. Paladins who follow this path seek to embody these ideals, becoming a living wound in the heaven-touched world of Askis and spreading their infection wherever possible.

- *Destruction*. It is not enough to assault the minds and morals of those who follow the light. Their monuments must topple and their champions ground underfoot. Work through proxies if you must, but evil is best served by those who use their own hands.
- *Perversion*. There is no virtue that cannot be turned in upon itself and corrupted. Enact this wherever possible, in both word and deed.
- *Practicality*. Never let your own code stand in the way of striking a blow against heaven. Likewise, do not indulge in meaningless destruction when a proper target is present.
- *Putrefaction*. Remember that you are an agent of darkness in a world of light; your very presence corrupts the world and sets it rotting. Do not carelessly throw away your life or that of those you have corrupted.

Level 7 Heresy Knight

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +5

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Ensnarling Heresy You can use an action to turn your heretical words into tangible dark coils, focusing the force of your blasphemy on a target within 3 yards. The target must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or be immobilized. While immobilized by the tendrils, the target repeats the challenge roll at the start of each of its turns. On a success, it frees itself and the coils disappear. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Putrefying Strike You can use an action to touch one weapon or piece of ammunition, lending your weapon some of your own blighted nature and coating it with an oily film. This substance lasts for 1 minute. The next time you hit a target with an attack using that weapon or ammunition the target takes an extra 2d6 unholy damage.

Level 10 Heresy Knight

Characteristics Health +2-6

Aura of Darkness You are enshrouded by a miasma of evil that obscures the vision of your enemies. You and friendly creatures within 5 yards of you are half covered (ranged attack rolls against you are made with 1 bane).

Fight Another Day You gain the ability to judiciously retreat. Immediately after you are hit by an attack, you can use your triggered action to wrap yourself in a dark mist and teleport up to 20 yards to a spot you can see. You are fully covered by this mist until the start of your next turn, or until you attack, deal damage, or force a creature to make a challenge roll. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Necrobotanist Master Path

To some reanimators, the contrast between living and undead is not so stark. These esoteric necromancers answer the call of the wild but the chill apparitions of the dead as well, reinforcing their undead creations with plants, interweaving life with death in their abominations to raise truly deadly creatures.

Level 7 Necrobotanist

Attributes Increase three by 1

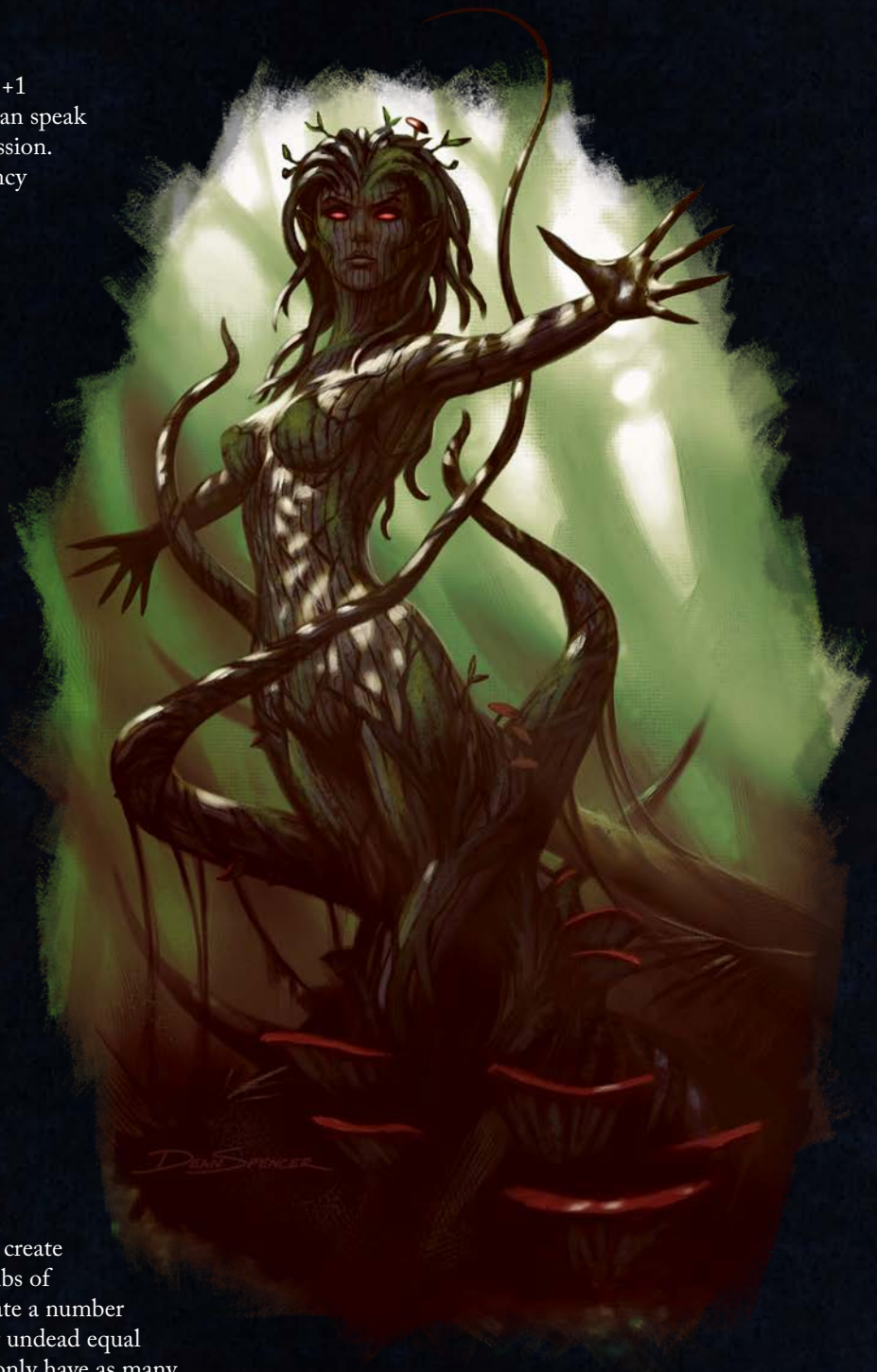
Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Magic You discover the Necromancy tradition or learn one spell.

Decrepit Pods You learn how to create disgusting, decrepit pods of plant seeds. Throwing a decrepit pod at a square within 10 yards is an action. When it hits the decrepit pod spreads into a 5 yard radius sphere of pollen. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is partially obscured. It lasts for the duration or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it. Any creature other than you that ends its turn inside of the pollen makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or becomes poisoned for 1 round.

Skeletal Plants Undead you create increase their Speed by 3, gain a +1 bonus to melee attack rolls, and 1 boon on challenge rolls against talents and spells that specifically target undead.



Level 10 Necrobotanist

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You learn one spell.

Vined Monstrosities Undead you create can be made with additional limbs of tentacle-like vines. You may create a number of additional vine limbs for your undead equal to your Power. An undead may only have as many additional limbs as its Strength bonus (minimum 1).

Vine limbs grant an undead a cumulative +1 reach with its melee attacks.

Necroplant You learn to craft an undead creature woven with greenery so complex that it is as durable as flesh. With one day of work and concentration you can create a necroplant with statistics identical to a **large monster**. You may only have a single necroplant at one time.

Taster Master Path

The first time you tasted flesh something inside you was emboldened, a primal predatory craving that you held at bay—until you tasted the meat of your own kind. A ray of divinity struck you as clear as day as you chewed the tender remains of one of your own, reveling in the blasphemous flavor and instantly obsessed with acquiring more. There must always be more, you understood. That thing inside yourself blossomed, beckoning out into the Void like a vine in the forest until it found its reflection: the Meat.

The Meat must be fed. There must be more, always more. The Meat always desires more. The Meat's hunger is unending. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. *Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat.* ***Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed the Meat.*** ***Feed*** ***the Meat. Feed the Meat. Feed THE MEAT. FEED THE MEAT. FEED THE MEAT. FEED THE MEAT. FEED THE MEAT. FEED THE MEAT***

You form a pact with a mindless primordial entity that knows nothing but hunger, an unyielding and all-consuming desire to consume flesh. Your agreement has made you one of its tasters, allowing it to vicariously experience tender flesh as you work your jaw through blood, muscle, fat, and skin. Every day you must consume the flesh of an intelligent humanoid. Should you consume food during a day but fail to eat the flesh of an intelligent humanoid, you lose the ability to cast spells or use talents learned by way of this path until after the next midnight.

Level 7 Taster

Attributes Increase three by 1

Characteristics Health +2, Power +1

Languages and Professions You can speak another language or add a profession.

Magic You discover the Forbidden or Vile tradition or learn one spell.

Meat's Presence Weapons you wield quiver and gasp when they shed blood. If you conjure any creatures they are depraved, monstrous reflections of your blasphemous soul. Any time you pen more than a handful of pages and they are left together, they become a living, breathing grimoire covered in flesh, lipless mouths, and gnashing teeth. It gasps when read, writhing and whispering in an endless, senseless jumble of syllables that pique a reader's appetite.

Blood Magician You take half damage from using your blood as a component to cast spells (minimum 1 damage). You have 1 boon on attack rolls made while casting a forbidden, vile, or evil spell.

Lean and Hungry You are always possessed by a desire to eat the flesh of intelligent humanoids (Intelligence 7 or higher). When the opportunity to consume the flesh of a recently killed humanoid presents itself (even an ally's), you must succeed on a Will challenge roll or spend your next action eating part of the corpse. You require half as much food and water as normal, and you can go twice as long without food or water before suffering from fatigue.

Level 10 Taster

Characteristics Health +2

Magic You discover the Forbidden or Vile tradition or learn one spell.

Rip out the Blood You can rip the very blood from your enemies, tearing it directly through their flesh. You can use an action to make a Will attack with 1 boon against the Strength of a living creature within short range. On a success, the target becomes immobilized for 1 minute and takes 6d6 damage. On a failure, the target takes 3d6 damage. At the start of its turn each round the target is immobilized, it takes an extra 1d6 damage. A paralyzed target makes a Strength challenge roll at the end of each round. After you use this talent, you cannot do so again until you have completed a rest.

Sanguine Magnet The affinity your blood has for magic draws it back into your body when your flesh is rent. When you take damage from a weapon, you take 1 less damage (minimum 1 damage).

Looking out over Peribolus and smelling the scents of the restaurants below the city wall wafting upward, Sefra smiles to himself and thinks of the stew his wife is cooking up on the stove. He makes a mental note to grab some pastries from the marketplace to surprise her with after picking up his nice boots from the cobbler when suddenly a cry comes from Tybor's post. Sefra rushes across the parapet, the odor of brimstone pushing away the savory scents from below as the screams become louder and louder—

Sefra shudders awake, sitting bolt upright as the cry from someone nearby rests him from the bliss of sleep before becoming a defeated gurgling. With a nauseating lurch he sadly realizes that he is not yet dead, though this is not the dungeon he first awoke in—instead of mold and darkened gray walls, here there is the scent of rose votives and the sheen of saintly tributes.

By Gimli's Holy Beard, this is the basement of a house of worship!

Whether from heresy or the sickness that has taken him this past week, Sefra vomits bile onto himself and winces as it touches on a few spores on his arm, already gashed open from restless sleep to weep pus onto the floor. Shaking with fear he sees that his captor is here as well, doubtless the source of the gag across his mouth and shackles around his limbs; he fights against restraints but days of starvation have made him weak and feeble, left to be bound like a beast for the butcher.

The corpses of fellow prisoners lay about on the brickwork nearby but they lay still, their necks shorn in half to make bubbling brooks of blood that pool in a runed circle carved into the center of the chamber. His gaoler—a tiefling woman clad in spiked gray armor, the edges of its plate serrated and razor-sharp—consults a spectral skull as she adds bits of things to a saucer on a table above him, speaking in a tongue he has never heard before but foul and unpleasant to the ear. Moving back toward the runes she kicks an unconscious halfling closer to the others, orienting his feet away from the design.

She looks at Sefra after picking up the sleeping halfling lad's head to expose his neck, her bloody murder weapon in hand. "Excellent, you are awake." With no remorse she drags the blade across the child's throat, opening it from end to end like the others. "How very good of you. The ritual is much more effective if the final sacrifice is conscious and I am just now ready for your part."

Sefra watches in hatred and horror as she walks over to a table and takes clippings from a recent issue of the Peribolus Observer, dropping bits of the newspaper into the saucer and making it cough up a puff of mauve mist. "Before you die," she says, taking up her jet-black stone knife in one hand, "I would tell you of your contributions today. You see your local Mortuary Regulations Officer, this Dedrio Falcas? He's made it exceptionally difficult for me to continue my... work in this place. Bodies are being cremated before I can get to them, and as of late I have a dire need for bodies." The tiefling looks around at the corpses in the room. "You'll be providing that of course, but ***so much more****." The rag stuffed into his mouth muffles Sefra's reply and she only smiles back at him in turn. "Surely you've noticed you are suffering from an ailment, yes?" She giggles, poking the dead halfling boy's arm with her pointed boot, prompting it to weep pus. "You are all. Or were. And soon Dedrio will be as well, but worse. Far worse."*

The mad woman digs the point of her blade into one eye socket, her jaw clenched tightly and hissing in pain. "I will see through his eyes, hear what he hears. I will know where to next send my agents, whom to bribe, where they will be looking for me." Reaching into the wound with her free hand she produces her own eye, dropping it into the saucer before pulling tight a band to cover the blood flowing from the grievous wound on the right side of her face. With the dagger in her other hand she reaches towards Sefra and throws him toward the circle with surprising strength, knocking the wind out of him before placing a knee into his back and leaning in close, whispering, "thanks to you."

DEFORMITIES

The evil suffusing your body manifests itself physically, causing strange and inevitable mutations that grant you exceptional dark power. **Whenever you would gain a mark of darkness you already have, roll 1d6. On a 6, you gain a random deformity instead.**

Bulging Unholy power fills you with great strength but the blasphemous tumors that empower you have contorted your muscles and press upon your skull. Your Strength increases by 1, your Will decreases by 1, and you are able to wield a cumbersome weapon in one of your hands (the enlarged one).

Corpulescent Exercise and starvation utterly failed to affect your weight gain, the very evil of your soul accruing more and more flesh around your body—much of it is dead and rotting but you've lost all feeling in those nerves. Your Health increases by 10 and your Speed decreases by 2.

Enlarged Cerebrum Seeking to free your mind from evil spirits using the ancient technique of trepanning, you perforate your skull. Unfortunately that only gave dark entities greater access to your brain, enlarging a part of it. Your Intellect increases by 1 and your Agility decreases by 1. As an action, you deduce the resistances and immunities of a creature. You must be able to see and hear the target, and the extent of what you can learn is at the discretion of the GM (obscure targets may reveal very little). Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

Gaunt Evil sucks at your muscles, drawing them down to the bone and giving you a ghastly appearance. Your condition has reduced the flow of blood to most of your brain, pumping more of it through your heart instead. Your Agility increases by 1, your Speed increases by 1, and your Agility decreases by 1.

Malformed Basal Ganglia An unholy tumor has formed in the intuitive part of your brain and expanded your mind, drawing you to the attention of dark things from the beyond that touched you with a supernatural gift. You are able to telepathically communicate with creatures you are able to see. Even if you do not share a language with the creature, you are able to send mental images (and receive them back if the creature so chooses). Your Will increases by 1 and you take double damage from psychic. When you would be charmed or compelled, roll 1d20 and on a result equal to or less than your level you ignore the effect.

Unlocked Limbic System Incredibly small evil creatures from another dimension have crawled inside your skull, attaching all over your limbic system to enhance its neural activity. Your Will increases by 1, your Health decreases by 5 (minimum 1), you have 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist being charmed, compelled, frightened, or stunned.

FIENDISH BARGAINS

Evil exists in many forms and only the bold dare to venture deep into the waters of wickedness—most are instead tempted to stray down sinful paths until they are consumed by darkness. Some fiends have the means to grant mortals favors in exchange for some specific service that will advance their cause (whether the Abyss or Hell). The **diabolist** path (from *Exquisite Agony*) and the summoner path described earlier in this book show possible results from such deals, but others are perhaps more commonplace. Some fiends have the Infernal Gift trait which lets them bestow benefits to living, mortal creatures and never bestow them on other faeries, created creatures, or undead.

The **Infernal Gifts** table (page 18 *Exquisite Agony*) describes a range of possibilities, and any of the following are available at the GM's discretion. Each entry indicates the amount of Corruption a creature gains upon receiving the gift and the minimum required Difficulty of the fiend bestowing the gift. Unlike normal Infernal Gifts, those that follow bestow both Corruption and Sin. Fiendish Bargaind marked by a * can be gained via chirurgical procedures (pages 145-152) or Mad Scientists (pages 195-220) provided that any material resources required are available (such as a freshly extracted Unicorn Horn).

Gritting her teeth in pain as her muscles strain against the force of an ogre's club, the fighter parries with her shortsword but only barely in time to save her life. She lunges forward with a feinting longsword strike in response, catching her foe off guard and forcing him into the a wicked green gas that she belches forth from a rotted tongue—her monstrous enemy breathes deep and begins to slow, ripe for the kill.

After hours of careful hiding, hushed steps, hasty retreats, and arduous climbing, the rogue had finally reached the empress' quarters, cloaked in darkness and clinging to the exterior of her tower. Waiting for what seemed to be an eternity but could only barely be more than an hour, he finally risked being sighted and lowered himself down just enough to spy through the window, making certain that only his target lay sleeping within. Beckoning the evil from within himself to awaken, the rogue leans down and waves an arm covered in putrid feathers, letting forth deadly spores that waft into the interior of the empress' bedchamber, poisoning her in her sleep and fulfilling a weighty contract.

Whooping in a primal roar that shakes the bones of her enemies as she leaps forward, the barbarian twists and contorts as two massive crimson wings sprout from her body to carry her aloft, her visage becoming ever more terrifying until nearly all who see her flee in panic. Those that remain raise their shields as she glides to mete out death with a wicked red arm that sputters with the flames of Hell itself.

Fiendish Bargains

Gift	Corruption	Sin	Sanctity	Fiend's Difficulty
Celestial Grafts				
Couatl Crest	—	+1	+2	25
Deva Bones	—	+2	+1	50
Holy Gear	—	—	+1	10
Pegasus Wings	—	+1	+3	10
Planetar Visage	—	+2	+2	100
Solar Gaze	—	+3	+2	250
Unicorn Horn	—	+1	+1	5
Wicked Grafts				
Abyssal Skin	1d3	+1	–2	10
Balor Aura	1d6	+3	–3	250
Devil's Arm	1d6	+2	–3	25
Dretch Belch	1d3	+2	–1	10
Imp's Eye	1d3	+1	–1	1
Infernal Skin	1d3	+1	–2	10
Infernal Mask	1d3	+2	–3	50
Vrock Feathers	1d6	+2	–3	100
Sinful Gifts				
Evil Borne	2d3	+1	–2	50
Master of Undeath	1d6	+1	–2	100
Primordial Speaker	1d3	+1	–2	25
Sinful Magic	1d6	+1	–2	25
Sinful Slayer	1d3	+1	–2	5
Sinful Spellcasting	1d6	+1	–2	10
Sinful Strikes	1d6	+1	–2	10

Whether through blasphemous unholy rituals, arcane experimentation, or as the subject of mad science, some characters come to incorporate biological components that are not their own. Regardless of if they were willing to undergo the change or became a victim while captured by insane dark creatures, these fundamental alterations to one's physical form are not easily undertaken and completely irreversible without the aid of epic magics. Those who survive the process are forever changed and marked as different from their peers, the foreign parts of their body undeniably bizarre and impossible to hide—but blessed with great, fell powers.

Simply acquiring an experiment graft immediately grants its benefits—unless the GM decrees otherwise, the actual acquisition of any following feats are narratively-driven and do not require actually finding and ingratiating a foreign body part.

GRAFTING

Should the GM decide it, a character must have the part of another creature's body that they want to make their own in order to graft it. Though this can be challenging for rare targets, a character with an graft is able to express their own will on a conjured creature in order to gain the desired limb. When the summoned creature dies, the character makes a Will attack roll against the target's Will; on a success, the rest of the conjured creature disappears but the desired body part remains just long enough to be implanted into a new body.

So long as a body part comes from a creature permanently on the Material Plane (or as described above) and is fresh (or properly preserved with magic or other appropriate measures), a creature can morph it onto themselves. Grafting the foreign body part on requires the corresponding part from the target's body be removed (dealing 2d6+2 points of damage to themselves) and an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane in a gruesome process that takes five minutes to perform. Other characters may assist with the challenge roll as normal, but attempts to perform it themselves are made with 3 bane.

CELESTIAL GRAFTS

Though not as easily acquired as some other grafts there are few more evil acts than to dismember a celestial, stitching and morphing it into one's own body. Performing so blasphemous an act as to steal the gifts of the divine forever marks an entity as arrayed against the powers of good but that's all the better—it makes acquiring more specimens for capture, dissection, and inclusion all the easier.

Couatl Crest You grow a resplendent feathery crest on your forehead not unlike that of a glorious celestial serpent, making your mind an impregnable fortress and expanding your consciousness. You are immune to any effect that would sense your emotions, read your thoughts, or detect your location. You again telepathy to a range of 20 yards. If you already possess telepathy, its range increases by 10 yards.

Deva Bones By stripping the skeleton from an angel's corpse and replacing some of your own bones with it, you call on celestial energies to smite your foes. You can use a triggered action to bathe your weapons in angelic energy. For 1 minute, you deal an extra 2d6 holy damage when you hit with an attack using the infused weapon.

Holy Gear You have stolen a celestial cog and now the great machinations of benign entities influencing existence resonate within your being, driving you onward with unfailing resolve. You cannot be compelled.

Pegasus Wings Two pairs of sizable wings emerge from your back, like those of a flighted celestial horse. Though they constrain your movements, you are able to traverse through the air with implacable grace. You gain a fly speed equal to your Speed. You cannot wear medium or heavy armor.

Planetar Visage You are able to call upon the divine to cover yourself in the celestial hide of one of the greatest sects of angels, giving you truly exceptional defenses from either falsehoods or magical harm. Your skin turns golden and you have 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist spells and other magical effects. You can use a triggered action to suppress this benefit and you can automatically detect lies while doing so.

Solar Gaze Your stare embodies all of the authority of the great beyond, able to rob sight from those you find unworthy and granting you a level of protection from divine energy. You cannot be blinded and take half damage from holy. You can use an action on your turn to gaze on one target creature within short range. If the target can see you, you must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, it is permanently blinded until its sight is restored by magic. On a success, it becomes immune to your Solar Gaze.

Unicorn Horn A horn sprouts from your forehead that attunes you to the energies of the higher planes, making you able to protect or heal living creatures. Whenever you complete a rest you gain a number of charges equal to half your level (round down, minimum 1). You cannot have more charges than half

your level. You can use an action to create one of the following effects.

Celestial Restoration You or a living creature you touch heals 1d6 damage per expended charge.

Celestial Shield You create a shimmering, magical field around yourself or another living creature you can see within short range. The target's Defense increases by +2 per expended charge until the end of the round.

WICKED GRAFTS

Whether through blasphemous unholy rituals, arcane experimentation, or as the subject of mad science, some characters come to incorporate biological components that are not their own. Regardless of if they were willing to undergo the change or became a victim while captured by insane dark creatures, these fundamental alterations to one's physical form are not easily undertaken and completely irreversible without the aid of epic magics. Those who survive the process are forever changed and marked as different from their peers, the foreign parts of their body undeniably bizarre and impossible to hide—but blessed with great, fell powers.

Abyssal Skin You inherited a curious trait from an ancestor that dabbled in evil or your soul became tainted by exposure to a dark artifact and now your body is sleeved in flesh not all your own, parts of it incorporated from the maddened creatures that hail from the chaotic realms of the Abyss: demons. You can use a triggered action to gain 1 boon on an Agility or Will challenge roll. You can use this talent three times. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

Balor Aura You have acquired the heart of a great demon, able call upon some of its original bearer's dark power to burn your foes with the flames of the Abyss. You can use an action to surround yourself in a fiery aura. At the end of each round for 1 minute, each creature within 5 feet of you takes 2d6 fire damage, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being carried or worn ignite. A creature that touches you or hits you with a melee attack while adjacent takes 1d6 fire damage. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

Devil's Arm The ruby red arm of a devil juts out of your shoulder or the hide of an infernal servant covers your own arm, granting you a conduit that draws power from Hell itself. Your Health increases by +3. You are able to conjure hellflames to use as ranged attacks. By spending an action, you generate a number of hellflames equal to half your level. These hellflames last for 1 minute or until you throw them all. Your hellflames have a range of medium, dealing 1d6 fire and 1d6 unholy damage. If the target is a flammable object that isn't being worn or carried, it also catches fire.

Dretch Beltch Within your mouth is the wretched tongue of a dretch, a fetid and disgusting thing that both fortifies you against poison and gives you a

means of toxicating others. You take half damage from poison and cannot be poisoned. You can use an action to expel a 10-foot radius of disgusting green gas that spreads around corners and makes its area obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it. At the end of the round, any creature in the area makes a Strength challenge roll or is poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target cannot take a fast turn or triggered actions. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

Imp's Eye One of your eyes has been replaced with an eye from one of Hell's lowliest denizens and ugly as it is, you pierce darkness as easily as a dagger bites flesh. You gain darksight and can see through even magical darkness.

Infernal Skin Diabolical rituals performed while you grew in the womb (or those enacted on one of your family line in ages past) run strong in your blood, erupting from your body with blasphemous boils that pop and hiss with the whispers of entities from Hell. You can use a triggered action to gain 1 boon on a Strength or Intellect challenge roll. You can use this talent three times. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

Infernal Mask Your visage can contort and transform into a rictus that resembles the devil from whence it came, filling your enemies with terror. You can use an action to stare at a creature within short range, crafting an illusion that uses the target's deepest fears to utterly horrify it. If the creature can see you, it must succeed on a Will challenge roll with banes or be frightened of you for 1d6 rounds. Once you use this talent, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

Vrock Feathers You are able to sprout the feathers of a dreaded vrock. Though this evil plumage does not grant you any aerial ability, they are as deadly and toxic as the demon from whence they came. You can use an action to sprout vrock feathers. While you have these features, you take half damage from poison and cannot be poisoned. While they are out, you can use an action to emit a cloud of toxic spores in a 5 yard radius. The spores spread around corners. At the end of each round, creatures in the area make a Strength challenge roll or become poisoned. While poisoned in this way, a target takes 1d6 poison damage at the start of each of its turns. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each round it is poisoned, ending the effect on itself on a success. Emptying a vial of holy water on the target also ends the effect on it. Once you use this talent to create toxic spores, you cannot use it again until after you complete a rest.

SINFUL GIFTS

Evil Borne The urge for evil is embedded into your very soul, the most vile of behaviors utterly natural. After finishing a long rest, you may use a number of vilis points equal to half your level without increasing your Sin score.

Master of Undeath The energies that animate undead are as natural to you as the air you breathe making your connection with the unliving truly uncanny. Your skin takes a pale tone as your bones start to consume your own blood. Your Defense increases by 1 and your Health decreases by -3. You no longer need to breathe and are immune to gasses that need to be breathed to effect a creature. You still require rests but no longer need to sleep. You need to eat and drink half as much as a normal creature and even then, only half as often.

Primordial Speaker You randomly learn one of the primordial words of *Cogerangario* in the nuances of Vilespeech, blasphemous pronunciations said to be the first utterances of any entities in existence. These simple words themselves contain incredible power and despicable energies, making it dangerous to sound them aloud—even at a whisper they might crack the speaker's teeth or rupture blood vessels in a listener's ear.

When you learn a primordial word you gain 1 Insanity. After uttering a primordial word, any more uses of that primordial word in the next 24 hours double their negative effects.

- **Noun: Admordeo (1-2)** You can use a triggered action after you hit a living creature with a weapon attack to hiss a word of bloodlust that deals 1d6 damage to yourself and the target as blood is ripped from you both.

- **Noun: Explivas (3-4).** You can use an action to spit out a word of primal malice that manifests into a wave of force, dealing 1d6 damage to yourself. Make a Will attack against a creature within 10 yards. On a hit you deal 2d6 thunder damage. On an attack roll of 20+, the creature falls knocked prone.
- **Noun: Junctio (5-6)** You can use an action to speak a curiously long word of oppression, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself. The primordial word reaches out to a creature within 10 yards, wrapping it in bands of crushing force. Make a Will attack against the Strength of the target. On a success the creature is immobilized until the end of the next round.
- **Adjective: Anteactus (7-8)** You can use an action to utter a jibbering of syllables that pluck along the chords of fate, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself and bringing the energies of moments in the past to your senses. As long as you remain motionless, the events of the past reveal themselves to you:

  After 1 minute you can sense the strongest emotion associated with an area or object you are touching.

  After 2 minutes you can glean the general features of the creature the emotion belongs to.

  After 3 minutes you have a clear mental image of the creature the emotion belongs to.

  After 4 minutes you learn the creature's basic details (where it lives, what it does in the course of a day, and so on).

  After 5 minutes you learn the creature's name or what it is called.

  Remaining motionless requires a Will challenge roll at the end of every minute. The challenge roll is made with 1 bane for each roll after the first.
- **Adjective: Praesens (9-10)** You can use a triggered action to whisper a questioning word from the void, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself, but in return you are gifted with glimpses of possible futures and likely outcomes. The next time you roll a d20, you can roll twice and choose which to use as the result.
- **Adjective: Relicus (11-12)** You can use an action to speak inquisitive words that bellow the energies of ages past to echo against the future, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself but granting you the ability to see into the distant future. For the next 24 hours you cannot be surprised.
- **Verb: Ecfio (13-14)** You can use an action to speak confounding words that disrupt a creature's mind, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself. Choose a creature within 10 yards and make a Will attack against the target's Will. On a success, you compel the target to perform a 2 word command that does not immediately endanger it (for instance, you could compel a creature to "attack that" or "drop sword" but not "kill yourself" or "drown").
- **Verb: Excaeco (15-16)** You can use an action to pulverize your mouth to shout a potent word of command, dealing 3d6 damage to yourself. Choose a creature within 20 yards and make a Strength attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target is stunned until the end of the next round.
- **Verb: Ignarus (17-18)** You can use an action to bellow a dreaded word that terrifies a creature, dealing 2d6 damage to yourself. Choose a creature within 15 yards and make a Will attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success, you make the creature frightened of you until the end of the next round. By spending an action and dealing 1d6 damage to yourself to continue bellowing, you can extend the duration of the creature's fear by 1 round.
- **Verb: Nilum (19-20)** You can use an action to utter a baffling word that muddles the senses, dealing 1d6 damage to yourself. Choose a creature within 10 yards and make a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target is blind and deaf until the end of the next round. You can use a triggered action at the start of your next turn to continue uttering, extending the duration of the target's blindness and deafness by 1 round.

Sinful Magic You have accessed forbidden secrets and unholy knowledge, unlocking primal and ancient power that bestows evil into the very magic that you conjure. When you complete a rest, choose a number of spells equal to your Power. You gain a +1 bonus to attacks with these spells and creatures have a –1 penalty on challenge rolls made to resist them. Regardless of their tradition, these spells leave an evil aura in their wake. While casting a spell, you may expend 1 Vilis point per spell level. If it is a spell attack you roll twice and take the best result, and if creatures make challenge rolls to resist the spell they roll twice and take the worst result.

Sinful Slayer There are certain expectations between combatants that most warriors adhere to but you are not among them. You do whatever is required to gain the upper hand in a fight, taking cruel pleasure when an opponent's defenses open up and you can strike a mortal blow. You learn how to inscribe blasphemous markings onto your armor, covering it in symbols that defy the senses. It takes you 1 hour with a weapon to mark your armor, after which the symbols fade. When you take damage or deal weapon damage the markings sense blood and swim to the surface, increasing your Defense by 1 until 1 minute after combat ends. When you make an attack roll with a weapon and get a result of 20+, you can use a triggered action to expend 1 Vilis point to infuse the blow with evil energies. The target makes a Will challenge roll or becomes fatigued for 1 minute.

Sinful Spellcasting The dark secrets you first gleaned have led to a complete abandonment of morality as you pursue ever greater forbidden powers, channeling primal evil into your spells. You have 1 boon on checks to learn about the arcane or religion in regards to evil. When you successfully hit with a spell attack that deals damage, you can spend 1 Vilis point to deal 1d6 extra unholy damage. Regardless of its tradition, the spell leaves an evil aura in its wake.

Sinful Strikes Opening up your essence to ancient and evil entities has forever cursed your soul, turning it as black as the void. The foul pact is not without its rewards however and your strikes bestow wounds that bleed with evil. When you successfully hit a living creature with a weapon attack, you can use a triggered action and spend 1 Vilis point to delivering an unholy wound. The target of your attack must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or take 1d6 unholy damage at the end of each round as the unholy wound bleeds. Each time you deliver an additional unholy wound to a target, the damage dealt by the unholy wound increases by 1d6. Any creature can stanch the wound as an action with a successful Intellect check made with 1 bane for each 1d6 damage of the unholy wound. Damage dealt by an unholy wound leaves an evil aura.

Undead Attunement The potent necrotic energy of cunning mortality-defying mages flows in your veins. Your lineage has a history of undeath or you may have returned from beyond the pale yourself. You can use a triggered action when you take unholy damage to ignore the damage and instead regain hit points equal to 1d6 + your Intellect bonus. You can use this talent three times. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

RITUALS

Usually fell rites are the purvey of cult masters, demon-worshiping nobles, and mad priests, but not always! All rituals have a sacrificial cost of some kind, usually with a mechanical impact. At the GM's discretion, additional components and steps may allow the master of a ritual to grant its benefits to another creature within sight rather than itself. All of the rituals below leave an evil aura that lingers for a number of hours equal to the character level or Difficulty of the creature performing them, and if performed as a vile ritual the ritual lingers for as many days.

ANCESTRAL SACRIFICE

Using dark rites and primordial chants, you draw out the life force of a creature similar enough to you that the energies of their soul can be gathered up as it leaves the Material Plane and warped to reinforce your own.

Making an ancestral sacrifice requires a creature that is both older than you and of the same ancestry. After spending 10 minutes preparing the ritual space, you may kill the elder creature to gain one of the following benefits. You are only able to benefit from one ancestral sacrifice at a time.

- You recharge all path talents, ancestry talents, and expended spell castings as if you had completed a rest.
- You gain an amount of bonus Health equal to half the elder creature's maximum total Health. This bonus Health last for a number of hours equal to your level or until removed by damage.
- You gain the use of a talent that the elder creature knew. After a number of hours equal to your level, the knowledge fades.

Vile Ritual By sacrificing an elder directly related to you (blood relatives), you permanently gain one daily use of a talent with expendable uses that the sacrifice creature had. You gain 1 Corruption and 1 Sin.

BLOOD OF INFANTS

By accepting true depravity and engorging yourself on the blood and flesh of innocent youth, you develop forbidden abilities and despicable powers that can avert the living from you when reveling in your disgusting primal cannibalistic desires.

By performing a 1 hour ritual that requires the innocent blood of 1 adolescent creature (of any type) per your level, you can reduce the effects of aging on your person (making you appear and feel 1 month younger), you gain 1 Corruption and 1 Sin, and grant yourself one of the following effects:

- 1 boon on Sanctity challenge rolls.
- 1 boon on Sin challenge rolls.
- Your weapon attacks count as magical.

You are able to fashion a cloak, coat, cowl, hood, pelt, shroud, or other substantially-sized piece of clothing out of the corpses of at least 10 adolescent creatures (of any type) after 1 day of work. By performing a ritual that costs 40 gold in other materials, you can enchant your fleshcloth to mewl and moan when you take a more than 10 damage at once, forcing your attacker to make a Will challenge roll or become frightened of you for 1d6 rounds. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of round, ending the effect on itself on a success. Once a target has resisted becoming frightened by your fleshcloth, the creature is immune to it for the next 24 hours.

Vile Ritual By using the blood and flesh of adolescent intelligent humanoids (dwarves, elves, humans, etc.), the duration of a blood ritual's benefits becomes 1 year and any creature that comes within 10 yards of your fleshcloth must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or become frightened of you for 1d6 rounds. Using adolescent intelligent humanoids increases your Corruption and Sin by 2 for a blood ritual, or by 4 for a fleshcloth.

MASTER RITUALS

You have delved deeply into the secrets of ritual magic and are able to beseech powers from beyond the veil to gain supernatural gifts, though never without cost. By performing an hour long ritual that costs 50 gold in materials, you are able to grant yourself or one willing creature one of the following ritual powers. A creature may have a number of ritual powers equal to 1/3 its level (minimum 1).

If a ritual power lets you cast a spell, you are able to do so without speaking any words of power or wielding any implements. In any case, a ritual power and its effects are susceptible to counterspell and can be dispelled (though the ritual power itself can't be removed from a creature by anything short of divine intervention.)

Power of Bloodletting *Boil cups of the target's blood (equal to its Strength).* When the target deals damage with a melee weapon attack, they may choose to deal 1d6 extra damage but they take the same amount of extra damage. After a number of hours equal to the target's level, the ritual power vanishes. The target's Corruption and Sin increase by 1.

Vile Ritual By including some of the target's bone and flesh (an ear, toe, fingertip) in the boil, the ritual power remains for 1 day and the target's Sin does not increase.

Power of Mana *Sacrifice a fey.* This ritual power has 6 charges. The target can use an action to expend some of its charges to cast the following spells: *sense magic* (1 charge), *psychometry* (1 charge), or to counterspell (3 charges; when a creature you can see attacks you with a spell, you can use a triggered action to counter it.) Once all its charges have been expended, the ritual power vanishes. The target's Corruption and Sin increase by 1.

Vile Ritual Sacrificing a fey that has had its willpower broken by torture (page 47) doubles the ritual power's number of charges.

Power of Negation *Sacrifice a monster.* This ritual power has 4 charges. The target can use a triggered action to expend a charge and gain 1 boon on a challenge roll to resist a spell or other magical effect. Once all its charges have been expended, the ritual power vanishes.

Vile Ritual Sacrificing a monster that has had its willpower broken by torture (page 47) doubles the ritual power's number of charges. The target's Sin increases by 1.

Power of the Beast *Sacrifice a beast.* The target gains the benefits of the *beast within* spell. After 1d6+1 hours, the ritual power vanishes.

Vile Ritual By making a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes to consume the still-beating heart of the sacrificed creature, the target gains the benefits of the *call of the wild* spell instead.

DANIEL
COMERCI

PLAGUE RITUAL

Sickening one man might trouble him and his family for a day, but sicken an entire family and you sicken a community—to sicken a community however is to sicken a whole settlement. You are a master of such misery, a worker of foul diseases that can lay low armies and cities. Take one creature suffering from a disease and starve it with increasingly smaller portions each day that dwindle to nothing after 5 days. Once the creature has been fully starved for 2 more days (suffering from fatigue) you must slowly bleed it to death. After boiling the collected blood of the creature for an hour, you may take an accurate effigy of a target (an original photograph, portrait painting, or 1 ounce of the target's blood, hair, or skin), drop it into the mixture, and spend 3 Vilis points to imbue a disease on the target from as far as 3 miles away. The target makes a Strength challenge roll to resist the disease. You may have additional targets by spending more Vilis points (1 per target). Your Corruption and Sin each increase by 1 for every creature you infect with the disease.

Vile Ritual By removing your own eye, boiling it in the mixture, then pushing it back into the socket, you can willingly subject yourself to the same disease you cast on the target to be able to perceive through the target's senses. You can use an action to see through the target's eyes and hear what it hears so long as you both have the same disease, gaining the benefits of any special senses that the target has. During this time, you are blind and deaf in regard to your own senses.

RITUALISTIC SLAUGHTERER

You have a capacity for killing en masse, slaughtering fellow humanoids with the same disposition as a farmer culling livestock—or possibly even reveling in the bloodshed. Choose a weapon to become your ritual slaughter weapon, imbuing it with power over the course of 1 day in a ritual that requires 50 gold. When you kill a creature with a Strength less than your own, your ritual slaughter weapon triggers a bloodlust. While in a bloodlust, you gain a +1 bonus to either weapon attacks or weapon damage rolls made with your ritual slaughter weapon. A bloodlust lasts for 1 round + 1 round for each creature you kill on your turn. This bonus stacks with itself. At the end of a bloodlust, you make a Will challenge roll or increase your Corruption and Sin by 1.

Vile Ritual Taking the ritual slaughter weapon of another creature and making it your own costs only 5 gold but increases your Corruption and Sin by 1.

VOODOO

You learn how to beseech and entreat loa, lesser spirits of life. By presenting offerings, creating personal altars or objects of devotion, and participating in rituals (ranging from dancing and music to allowing loa to briefly possess your body), you convince loa to use their otherworldly powers in service to you. After collecting at least 1 ounce of hair, skin, blood, or other part of another creature's body you are able to fashion it into a small simulacra that loa tie to the target's life force. So long as the target you make the simulacra from is within 30 yards and you are able to see it, you may target it with spells by targeting its simulacra. After damaging a target through the simulacra a number of times equal to your level, the simulacra is destroyed if you do not make a Will challenge roll with 2 bane. When the simulacra is destroyed your Corruption and Sin increase by 1.

Vile Ritual By infusing some of your soul in a dark trade with the afterlife during the creation of a voodoo simulacra, you are able to use weapon attacks to damage the creature tied to it. Your Corruption and Sin increase by 1 as soon as the simulacra is complete.

CHIRURGICAL PROCEDURES

You learn chirurgical procedures from discovered or purchased tomes containing the instructions for the operation or are taught by another fleshworker who already knows it, though you do not absorb the knowledge until you have practiced on a living humanoid or a humanoid corpse that has died

within the past 24 hours (including a corpse affected by any alchemy or magic used for preserving corpses). Once you have practiced a chirurgical procedure at least once, you can perform it at any time. The time required for each procedure is listed, during which time the patient must be incapacitated, restrained, or unconscious. A restrained or willing patient can remain awake during the procedure, though they are fatigued and poisoned for the duration of the procedure and 1 hour afterward.

When performing chirurgery, you make one Agility challenge roll and one Intellect challenge roll with the listed banes, the latter representing your skill at manipulating the body's intricate and delicate organic mechanisms. **Two successful challenge rolls are required for a complete success and a single successful challenge roll produces a partial success. If both challenge rolls fail, the procedure goes horribly awry, resulting in malpractice and dire complications.** If the d20 result of any challenge roll check is a natural 1, the target must succeed at a Strength challenge roll or else the entire procedure results in malpractice regardless of the result of the other challenge roll. If two challenge rolls produce d20 results of natural 1s, malpractice automatically occurs and the patient dies if they fail their Strength challenge roll.

Each procedure lists the required amount of time to complete and the number of uses of a healer's kit expended in the effort. Each use of a healer's kit represents 1 hour of working on a chirurgical procedure. When chirurgery begins, if a proper supply of healing kit is not available or the target is below 1 Health all challenge rolls to perform the operation are made with 1 additional bane.

Chirurgical procedures are strenuous for the body. The patient gains fatigue that lasts for 1d6 days. You're your challenge roll total exceeds 20, a patient's fatigue only lasts for 1 day. In addition, after receiving a chirurgical procedure any challenge rolls to have another procedure performed on the same creature before its recovered are made with 1 additional bane. Any effects that duplicate spells use your Intellect as the corresponding attribute.

Unless otherwise noted, all effects of a chirurgical procedure are permanent and many are damaging to the patient's psyche or the natural balance of their biological processes. This imbalance extends into the spiritual plane, and creatures who recently underwent mind-altering chirurgical procedures might have a greater than normal chance of arising as unquiet dead, haunts that spread madness and torment, or as actual undead creatures such as ghouls or, more rarely, ghosts or specters. For every chirurgical procedure a creature receives, its Sanctity score decreases by 1 and its Corruption and Sin scores increases by 1.

ADJUST APPEARANCE

(0 bane, 1d6 days, 2 uses per day): Your surgery alters the outward appearance of a patient, changing their features or proportions as you deem fit (increase or decrease the patient's height by a few inches; adjust weight by up to 25 percent of normal; change hair color and skin color; add or hide distinguishing features; cause the patient to appear to be a different gender or a member of a different ancestry). You cannot change the patient's type. Otherwise, the extent of the apparent change is up to you. You could add or obscure a minor feature or change the patient to look like an entirely different person or gender.

Complete Success: The intended adjustment in appearance is achieved. If your appearance is changed to resemble another ancestry or gender, your likeness is uncanny, granting the patient 2 boons on challenge rolls made to impersonate a creature of the chosen ancestry. By spending 1d6 hours and 2 uses of a healer's kit, you can change the appearance of the patient to that of a different member of the ancestry that this procedure has altered them to appear like (from dwarf to different dwarf, human to different human, etc.).

Partial Success: The intended adjustment in appearance is achieved but not with entirely desirable effects. The patient gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to impersonate a creature of the chosen ancestry but their sense of self is affected, reducing their Will by 1. By spending 1 day and 5 uses of a healer's kit, you can change the appearance of the patient to that of a different member of the same ancestry that this procedure has altered them to appear like.

Malpractice: The patient becomes horribly disfigured as grafts and adjustments become infected and necrotized while the disfigurement is also psychologically damaging. The patient reduces their Will by 2 and contracts a vile disease.

Reversal: The *total healing* spell.

GRAFT FLESH

(1 bane, 2d6 hours, 1 use per hour): You surgically remove (if necessary) and replace some portion of the patient's body with something else. The tissue you wish to engraft onto the patient must be fresh, ideally taken from a still living creature. For every hour the tissue has been removed or the donor creature has been dead, all challenge rolls take a -1 cumulative penalty without alchemical or magical preservation. Skeletal or corporeal undead creatures can have flesh grafted from other undead of the same type or from dead flesh (or bone, for skeletal undead) without facing this penalty.

Having alien flesh grafted is hard for the mind to accept. If the new limb is not essentially identical to the original limb (from the same creature type) the target makes an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane gains 1d6 insanity after a graft is installed regardless of the chirurgery's success or failure.

Complete Success: You can replace a creature's natural weapon with a different one suited for the same limb (gore or teeth for head; claw, slam, or wing buffet for arm; claw or hoof for leg; sting or tail slap for tail). You can instead add a prehensile hand in place of a claw on an arm. These do not grant any talents or traits the original creature might have had. The natural weapon deals damage appropriate to the patient's size (usually 1d6 or 2d6) and you are able to transplant a natural weapon from a creature one size category larger or smaller. Whenever you add a natural weapon the creature did not previously possess, the patient is considered proficient with that natural weapon after 1 week.

If you graft wings onto a creature that previously lacked them, the patient can use them as natural weapons. Wings grafted this way are not functional for flight and instead reduce the damage the patient takes from falling by 1d6 times the patient's Strength.

A fleshworker may use this procedure to grant a creature a graft (see pages 137-139).

By increasing the difficulty of the challenge rolls, you can add one of the following specialized grafts:

- +1 bane: vestigial fins (the patient gains a swim speed equal to half their Speed)
- +2 banes: functional fins (the patient gains a swim speed equal to their Speed)
- +2 banes: bestial leverage (the patient gains a climb speed equal to their Speed)
- +1 bane: functional gills (the patient can breathe both air and water)
- +2 banes: functional wings (requires two wings; the patient gains a fly speed equal to their Speed)

Partial Success: The graft succeeds but a natural weapon takes a permanent -2 penalty to attack rolls and deals no more than 1d6 damage.

Failure: The graft functions as a partial success but ultimately necrotizes and fails, rotting away after 2d6 days. The patient makes a Strength challenge roll each time it completes a rest over the course of a week, becoming poisoned for 24 hours on a failure.

Malpractice: The patient's Intellect is reduced by 2 and it gains amnesia.

Reversal: The *total healing* spell.

IMPLANT PSYCHIC TRIGGER

(2 banes, 1d6 days, 2 uses per day): You implant a psycho-neurological back-door designed to produce a certain behavioral reaction in the patient through the use of a triggering word, phrase, whistle, image, or song. You can activate this trigger by using a triggered action and can cause in the patient any form of insanity you choose or a compulsion to follow a suggestion. If you use this procedure on a patient upon whom you have previously used the instill identity or lobotomize procedure, you make challenge rolls to perform the operation without any banes and it requires only one day.

Complete Success: The key functions as desired, with the effects lasting for up to 1d6 hours. Completing a compelled suggestion before this time ends the effect.
Partial Success: As a complete success, but the effect lasts only 10d6 minutes.
Failure: The reaction of the patient when the key is activated is random, as the confusion madness (dazed until the madness ends; at the end of each round roll a d6 and on a roll of 5 or higher the madness ends).
Malpractice: When the key is activated, the patient reduces its Intellect and Will by 2.
Reversal: Any effect that remedies insanity.

INDUCE AMNESIA

(2 banes, 2d6 days, 3 uses per day): You can manipulate the patient's mind to selectively erase specific memories or to wipe its mind clean.
Complete Success: You may choose to erase or alter a memory that lasted no more than 10 minutes and was experienced within the last week (permanently eliminate all memory of the event, allow the patient to perfectly recall the event, change its memory of the details of the event, create an entirely false memory or to give the patient amnesia.
Partial Success: As a complete success, but you may choose only to modify memory or induce amnesia.
Failure: Your mental manipulations have the desired effect but last for only 5d20 hours. In addition, the patient remembers your role in the corruption of its mind and permanently has 1 boon on challenge rolls made against you.
Malpractice: The patient reduces its Intellect by 2 and gains amnesia.
Reversal: The *total healing* spell.

INSERT LIMBIC RESERVOIR

(2 banes, 2d6 hours, 5 uses): You implant a volatile cocktail of psychoactive compounds that you can unleash at a later time to drive the patient into a drug-fueled frenzy. You can refill the compounds in the limbic reservoir by using this procedure again, making challenge rolls to do so without any banes and requiring only 1 hour and 1 use of a healing kit. Refilling a limbic reservoir does not cause fatigue or the poisoned condition as other procedures do.
Complete Success: You can insert up to 5 doses of any drug which then can be infused directly into the

patient's subdural spaces for faster absorption and intensified effect. The beneficial numeric effects of the drug are increased by 50%, but the challenge roll against addiction to the drug is made with 1 additional bane. The reservoir can be activated with a manual switch as a minor activity. If the patient also has an implanted psychic trigger, that trigger can be used to activate their limbic reservoir in addition to (or, if you wish, instead of) its normal effect.

Partial Success: The limbic reservoir functions as above, but each activation consumes 2 doses of the drug. The challenge roll to resist addiction to any drug used in the limbic reservoir is increased by 2 additional banes.

Failure: The implantation process damages the target's brain, reducing its Intellect and Will by 1. The limbic reservoir also begins to leak, delivering a dose of the drug every 1d6 hours even when not triggered. When triggered, there is a 50% chance that all remaining contents of the reservoir are released at once (reducing the patient's Intellect and Will by 1 again).

Malpractice: The limbic switch fails to function and the compounds within cause the target to reduce its Intellect and Will by 2.

Reversal: Ill effects from inserting a limbic reservoir can be remedied by the *total healing* spell. The limbic reservoir itself, however, can only be removed with the surgery procedure.

INSTALL KILL-SWITCH

(3 banes, 2d6 hours, 8 uses): You implant in the patient a permanent physical kill-switch of some kind, such as a removable heart plug or a razorchain loop around the spine.

Complete Success: You can use a minor activity to activate the kill-switch if the patient is adjacent, or you can use an action to activate it if the patient is within short range. The creature makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or takes damage equal to its Health + 1d6. Even if the patient survives, it is immobilized for 1d6 rounds and takes 1d6 damage at the end of each round it is immobilized.

Partial Success: You can use an action to activate the kill-switch if the patient is adjacent (and cannot do so at range). It otherwise functions as a complete success, but a patient that makes its Strength challenge roll is immobilized for only 1 round and only takes damage equal to half its Health.

Failure: Activating the kill-switch requires all of your action and minor activity, and you cannot take any triggered actions until the start of your next turn. A patient that makes its Strength challenge roll is not immobilized and only takes damage equal to half its Health.

Malpractice: The patient lowers its Health by 5 immediately upon completing the surgery. The kill-switch itself has no effect.

Reversal: Ill effects from an installed kill-switch can be remedied by effects that heal damage (as normal). The kill-switch itself, however, can only be removed with the surgery procedure.

INSTILL IDENTITY

(3 banes, 1 week, 10 uses): You create an entire false identity in the patient's mind, including a new name and new memories; unlike implanting a psychic trigger, however, this effect is permanent.

Complete Success: The new personality becomes the dominant personality and the patient gains 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist changing personality.

Partial Success: The new personality does not replace the old one and whenever the patient completes a rest, they roll randomly to determine which is dominant.

Failure: The new identity fails to form and the patient reduces its Intellect and Will by 1 due to mental uncertainty, disruption, and warped sense of self.

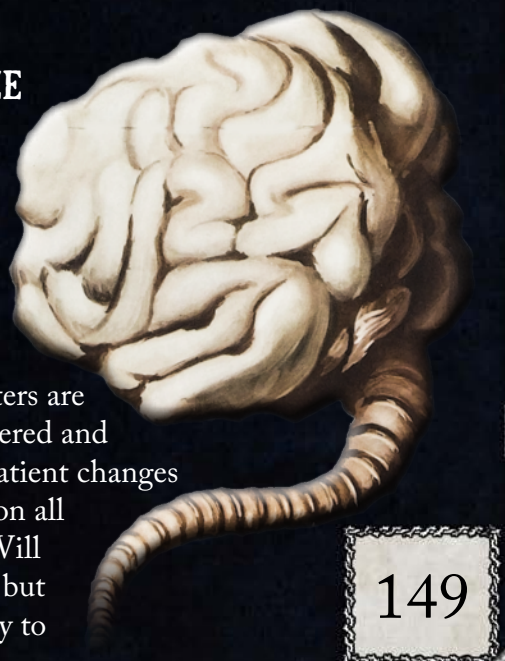
Malpractice: The patient develops a new personality of the GM's choice (with a randomly determined alignment).

Reversal: None.

LOBOTOMIZE

(2 banes, 1d6 hours, 6 uses): You remove the frontal lobe of a creature's brain.

Complete Success: The patient's emotional centers are completely severed and isolated. The patient changes its has 1 bane on all Intellect and Will challenge rolls but gains immunity to



the charmed, compelled, and frightened afflictions.

Partial Success: The patient's emotional centers are deadened but not completely severed. The patient reduces its Intellect and Will by 3 but has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist the charmed, compelled, frightened afflictions. If the patient becomes charmed, compelled, or frightened, there is a 50% chance they become confused (dazed until the madness ends; at the end of each round roll a d6 and on a roll of 5 or higher the madness ends) instead of the normal effect.

Malpractice: The patient's Intellect is reduced to 1 and it contracts amnesia.

Reversal: The *total healing* spell.

STIMULATE ADRENAL CORTEX

(2 banes, 1 minute, 5 uses): This procedure taps into the body's natural reserves of energy to fight off tiredness and to temporarily recover from extreme weariness, though the treatment may sap the target's energy and health once the rush wears off.

Complete Success: The patient heals twice its healing rate, removes fatigue, and recovers from the poisoned affliction. A patient who is sleeping is immediately awakened (even if magically asleep) and an unconscious creature is stunned for a 1d6 rounds before lapsing back into unconsciousness.

Partial Success: The patient only heals its healing rate. After 1d6 hours the patient suffers from fatigue until it completes a rest.

Failure: The patient only heals its healing rate. After 1d6 minutes the patient suffers from fatigue until it completes a rest.

Malpractice: For 1d6 minutes the patient can take two actions each turn. Afterward, the patient is poisoned and fatigued for 1d6 minutes, then goes unconscious until it completes a rest.

Reversal: Ill effects of stimulating the adrenal cortex can be removed by any effect that cures fatigue.

Special: This procedure does not cause fatigue or the poisoned condition in the same manner as other procedures.

SURGERY

(2 banes, 1d6 hours, 5 uses): You can conduct surgery to repair major damage to the target's body and mind. After surgery, the patient gains fatigue until they complete a rest.

Complete Success: The patient heals 1d6 damage per level (up to the patient's Health).

Partial Success: The patient heals its healing rate.

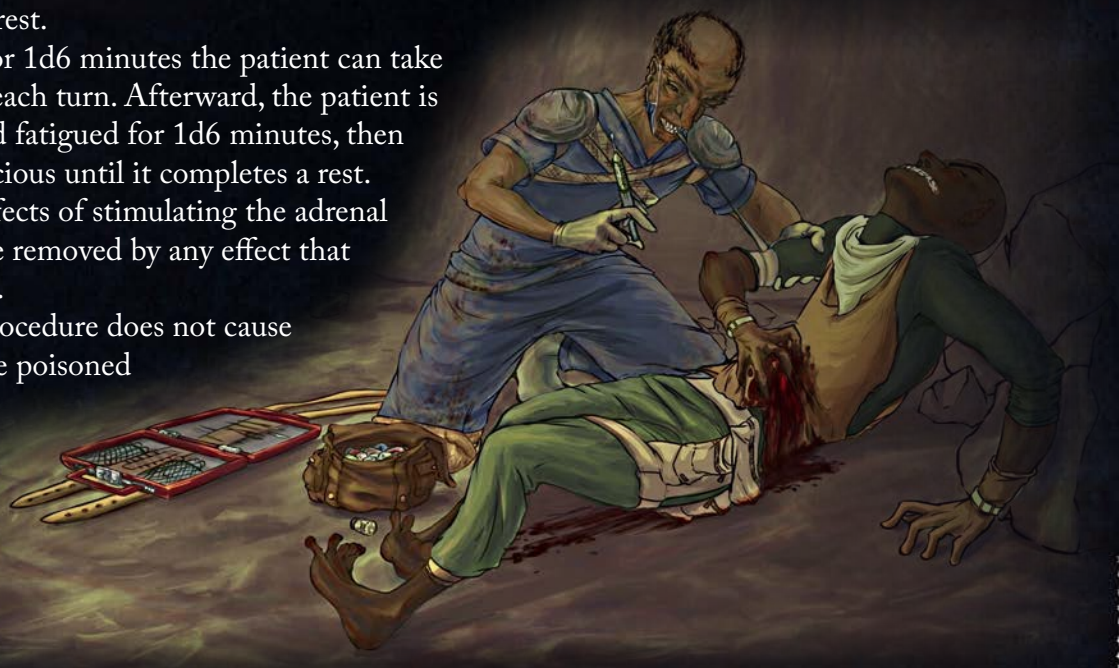
Failure: None.

Malpractice: The patient takes 1d6 points of damage, and is fatigued and poisoned for 1 day.

Reversal: Ill effects of surgery can be removed by any effect that cures hit points or the poisoned affliction.

Special: You can also use surgery to amputate a limb, excise a tumor, or remove an implanted device. Other surgeries require the normal amount of time. Amputation requires only 1d6 rounds. Each round during the surgery the creature must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or go unconscious for 1d6 minutes. Removal of a limb eliminates any natural weapon that is a part of that limb. Removal of an arm also precludes the use of cumbersome weapons or any other action requiring two hands. Removal of a leg reduces the patient's Speed by half if they still have 2 or more ambulatory limbs remaining. If only one ambulatory limb remains, the patient's Speed becomes 2.

Surgery can also be used to peel off natural armor, reducing a creature's Defense by 2 each time the procedure is performed (to a minimum of its Agility).



Removing a tumor or lesion assists in curing a diseased character, granting the patient 3 boons on its next challenge roll against a disease.

Surgery can also remove a tumor familiar, magical tattoo, or similar effect, as well as implanted mechanical devices such as a kill-switch or limbic reservoir. Such surgical removal requires the normal amount of time for a surgery and a complete success to be correctly removed.

TALENTIA ENHANCER

(3 banes, 3d6 hours, 10 uses): You install a device designed to specifically enhance particularities of the patient's body, bolstering their natural talents to ultimately make them more effective at whatever they already have a penchant for doing. Unlike other chirurgical procedures, a complete success or partial success is enough to install a talentia enhancer and there is no malpractice. However, a creature may only undergo this chirurgical procedure only once whether successfully or not; any further attempts automatically fail and without a successful Strength challenge roll with 1 bane, the patient dies.

Abeo Biologis The patient can use an action to activate a viral infection tied to their soul. Once activated the patient is surrounded by an aura of red and purple energy for 1 minute. A creature that touches the patient or hits them with a melee attack while adjacent takes 1d6 unholy damage. Once the patient uses this talent, they cannot use it again until after they complete a rest.

Adapertio Ocular Nerve The patient can use an action to see ongoing magical effects within 5 yards and from what points they originate. The patient can use this talent three times. They regain expended uses when they complete a rest.

Argentum Eyes The patient's eyes become featureless silver orbs. They gain darksight and can see through magical darkness.

Currax Nerves The patient's Agility increases by 1 and their Speed increases by 2.

Iecur Liver The patient's Health increases by 5 and they gain immunity to the poisoned affliction as well as non-vile diseases.

Offensionibus Spine The patient's Health increases by 5, their Strength increases by 1, and they take half damage from falling.

Osseus Skeleton The patient's bones are seared with the ancient language of Vilespeech, the runes making it impossible to detect their true alignment. When a creature or effect would detect the patient's alignment, they see an alignment of the patient's choice.

Prolixo Ganglia The patient's Intellect increases by 1 and they have 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist the charmed, compelled, and stunned afflictions.

Superno Proficiscentur Thin leather scripts covered in Vilespeech are embedded throughout the patient's flesh, allowing them to channel unholy energies directly from the Abyss and Hell. The patient can use an action to infuse their limbs and weapons with evil power, dealing an extra 1d6 unholy damage when they hit with a melee weapon attack. Once the patient uses this talent, they cannot use it again until after they complete a rest.

Synthetic Vocal Cords The patient can mimic animal sounds and humanoid voices. A creature that hears the sounds can tell they are imitations with a successful Perception challenge roll made with 1 bane.

Tenibrus Talons The patient can use an action to deploy or retract talons that increase their unarmed strike damage to 1d6.

Vocivus Actuators The patient can conjure a wave of dark power that roils forth and drains the life from creatures. The patient can use an action to twists their hands in an unnatural fashion before clenching them into fists that explode with stuff of the void, dealing 1d6 unholy damage per 2 levels (minimum 1d6). The patient can choose to direct this energy at one creature within 20 yards or a number of creatures equal to their Will bonus that are within 10 yards. A creature that makes a Will challenge roll reduces the unholy damage by half. When used to target a single creature, the target has 1 bane on its challenge roll and takes double damage if it fails. This talent has no effect on undead or constructs. Once the patient uses this talent, they cannot use it again until after they complete a rest.

"And lo, let us bask in the light of the Celestial Heroes may they ever show us the path to a brighter future." The priest—resplendent in the gowns and robes of his station—bowed his aged head along with the rest of the congregation, closing their eyes for a moment to pray for the blessings of the beatific Lellwyn Fethyrwal before the sermon begins in earnest. Barely more than a shadow, Zayne flits from behind a pillar into the lee of a statue nearer the pulpit and if any of the devout in the pews notice they make no sign of it. Reaching into his component pouch he grasps at the ruby acquired solely for today, working his other hand into intricate gestures before slashing at his arm with the gem to tear a bleeding rent across the flesh below his elbow.

As the sorcerer's spell begins taking hold the most elderly of the congregation cough loudly, prompting their priest to look down disapprovingly and get all the louder. Zayne smiles—this pompous fool and his church are proving to be a better target for sacrifice than he had could have hoped for. Disregarding the need for stealth now that the stage is set, the halfling peeks around the marble column to see other parishioners beginning to feel the effects of his vile magic, hacking up blood that floats into the air. The anomaly does not go unnoticed by the people in the chapel and they start to leave as they realize something is amiss, shuffling quickly towards the grand doors at its entrance.

Shouting consternation changes into agonized screams and Zayne knows that they have found his allies waiting for them. Milling in confusion the crowd's cries raise to a crescendo as their blood coalesces into a crimson whirlwind, dancing across the pews and masonry to the command of the halfling's little finger. A silence overcomes anyone engulfed by the maelstrom, the sanguine razorstorm cutting through flesh and flensing them down to the bone to leave only cleaned alabaster skeletons crumpling onto the floor in its wake. When the chaotic congregation sees the first of its ravaged victims a riot breaks out, terrified parishioners climbing over one another in a blind panic to try and reach the stained-glass windows. Between Zayne's lethal magic and the armor-clad warriors marching inexorably forward in a line of swinging blades it is the only means of escape—far beyond their reach.

Kressyndria stalks behind his allies, the tiefling's razor-edged plate seeming to draw the shadows of the room towards her as the blasphemous words she chants grow louder. For his part Zayne doesn't care whether or not this ritual of hers works and he entertains himself instead by making his deadly spell dance across the hallowed chamber to rip apart these confused fools, picking off the idiots trying to protect others to increase the dread of his next victims. This is what his fiendkin companion has always failed to understand: real power is a thing of emotion, the soul of a living creature peering across the veil when it bears witness to true horror. He would never proclaim that blood does not contain considerable potency—Zayne's slaughtering whirlwind is proof enough of that—but it is only a catalyst, not a conduit.

With the congregation's numbers thinned to but a handful the halfling turns his attentions to the priest. As Zayne expected he is scrabbling at the door to his reliquary room behind the pulpit, unsure of why it won't open to him and panicking while the people he swore to lead perish not a hundred feet away. "Well then," the sorcerer trawls, drawing the anathame from his belt, "nothing seems to be going right for you today."

The old man's eyes snap wide and he clutches at an icon of Saint Periplectomus hanging from his neck when he turns to see Zayne with blade in hand, murder in the halfling's eyes. "Please!" he begs, "spare us! We have done no harm to you!" Desperation bleeds from the aged priest's voice and Zayne drinks it in, the fear delicious to all of his senses. He can see the hairs on his victim's knuckles stand on end, the pupils of the old man's eyes dilate to black saucers, smell ammonia as a bladder long past its expiration date empties its contents onto the floor—the sorcerer consumes every detail like it is a gourmet meal.

"Have you not?" the halfling asks with a cadence at odds to the grisly scene around them, a thrill revealed in his exuberant tone. Zayne pulls a sickly green vial from his belt and uncorks it, pouring its contents onto his anathame before stalking closer to his terrified prey. "That's alright. I don't mind being first."

FOUL MAGICS

Vile spells (and **Blood & Bone spells**) are cruel and exploitative, almost always bent to inflict unnatural pain or gain power from the suffering of victims. They manipulate blood, blaspheme existence, pervert the physical form, summon evil entities, or worse.

Only creatures with a Sin score or evil alignment are able to cast spells from this school of magic.

All evil spells leave an evil aura behind them, detectable with *sense magic* and similar talents. If the caster has no Sin ability score, use double the spell level for its Sin score to determine the strength of the aura left behind. Evil auras dissipate 10 minutes for every spell level plus a number of minutes equal to double the caster's Sin score. For example, an evil spell of 3rd-level cast by a creature with a Sin score of 15 has an aura that lingers for 1 hour whereas an evil spell of 5th-level cast by a creature with a Sin score of 20 has an aura that lingers for 1 hour and 30 minutes.

BLOOD & BONE TRADITION

The magic of flesh is one of the most brutal and feared, frequently used by vile magicians due to its powerful spells and the reaction they engender among enemies. Despite how grisly the art may be those who utilize it are highly respected—it is a foolish thing to cross a practitioner of blood and bone.

In addition to those listed below, the following spells are available to this tradition: rank 0—*sanguine strike*, rank 1—*celerity*, rank 2—*blade attraction, shrieking skull*, rank 3—*part bone from flesh*, rank 4—*sanguine fortification*.

BLOOD & BONE TRADITION

Rank	Spells
0	*blood spear, detect blood*
1	*flay skin, strike within & without*
2	*bone spurs, fleshcurdle*
3	*blood bullets, savage break*
4	*exsanguination, forced hemorrhage*
5	*blood & bone wall, sanguine razorstorm*

BLOOD SPEAR **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 0**

Take 1 damage. When you cast this spell, you spill blood from your palm and it forms into a sharpened crimson spear that rapidly soars toward a creature within short range, drying as it flies through the air. Make an Agility attack roll against a target's defense. On a hit, the target takes 1d6+1 damage.

Attack Roll 20+ The target takes 2d6+2 damage.

DETECT BLOOD **BLOOD & BONE UTILITY 0**

Duration 10 minutes

Take 1 damage. You are able to sense blood within 5 yards. Creatures that are concealed by a higher rank spell or invisibility are immune to the effects of this spell.

FLAY SKIN **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 1**

Target One living creature you can see within medium range

Duration 1 minute

Take 2 damage from your gums bleeding as the incantations you utter gather evil force while traveling through the air, becoming razor-sharp before sliding against the skin of the target. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Defense. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 damage as the magic delivers a wound of rent flesh that bleeds profusely.

If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, at the end of each round it makes a Strength challenge roll or takes 1d6 damage as the wound bleeds. Any creature can stanch the wound by using an action and making an Intellect challenge roll. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Attack Roll 20+ The challenge rolls to resist the spell and stanch the wound are made with 1 bane, and the wound does not heal from magical healing until all of the damage dealt by the spell has been healed.

STRIKE WITHIN & WITHOUT **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 1**

Target One creature you can see within long range

You hit yourself with the weapon you are wielding, using sanguine magic to also strike the target. You deal double damage to the target and you take half the damage yourself. The damage you deal to the creature and yourself ignores immunities.

BONE SPURS **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 2**

Target One living creature you can see within short range

Duration 1 minute

Take 3 damage. You rend at the skeleton of the target, causing it to grow serrated hooks that tear at its flesh. The target takes 2d6 damage and makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, at the end of each round if the target took a fast turn it takes 1d6 damage. The target takes no damage from this spell and receives a new challenge roll to resist this spell at the end of each round it takes a slow turn.

FLESHCURDLE **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 2**

Target One living creature you can see within short range

Duration 1 minute

You warp the flesh of the target, discoloring it and causing it to become misshapen and impairing its function. When you cast this spell, you must choose one of three types of effects to inflict on the target—movement, attacks, or defense. A target that succeeds on a Will challenge roll only suffers from this spell until the end of next round.

Attacks The target makes attack rolls with 2 banes.

Defense The Defense is reduced by –2.

Movement The target's Speeds are halved.

Most undead are susceptible to *fleshcurdle*, but amorphous creatures and creatures without flesh are immune (such as elementals, oozes, plants, gaseous or incorporeal creatures, and skeletons).

BLOOD BULLETS **BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 3**

Take 4 damage. When you cast this spell, you spill blood from your palm by drawing an enchanted pattern onto it with a bladed weapon. Your blood rises from your hand and forms up to five bullets you fling at your enemies, divided as you choose among the targets. For each bullet, make a Will attack roll against the target's Defense. On a success, the target takes 2d6 damage.

Attack Roll 20+ The target suffers a bleeding wound that lasts until the target heals damage or until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound; while suffering from the wound, the target is fatigued and takes 1d3 damage at the end of each round.

SAVAGE BREAK BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 3

Target One living creature you can see within short range

Take 4 damage. You magically yank a bone out of the target and hurl it at another creature within range. The first target must make a Strength challenge roll. On a success, the target takes 1d6+1 damage. On a failure, it takes 2d6+2 damage as one of its smaller bones breaks and erupts out of its body. You can use a triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the second target's Defense. If the attack hits the second creature, it deals 2d6 damage. Creatures that have no bones are unaffected by this spell.

EXSANGUINATION

BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 4

Target One living creature

Take 5 damage. The blood from your self-inflicted wound sprays outward and forms into dozens of thin, sharp needles that pierce into the flesh of a target you touch, tearing the blood out of your victim's body if they are able to take hold. The target takes 1d6 damage and makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the target takes 3d6+2 extra damage as you rip the blood out of their body through the pores of their skin and is stunned for 1d6 rounds. Constructs and undead are unaffected by this spell.

FORCED HEMORRHAGE

BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 4

Target One living creature you can see within short range

Duration 1 minute

Take 5 damage. You whisper dark secrets that are too great for untrained minds to hear, a wave of evil power carrying them to the ears of a creature within range. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target takes 4d6 damage. At the end of each round for the duration of the spell, the target must make a Will challenge roll or it takes 1d6 damage, is unable to cast spells for 1 round, and makes Intellect and Will challenge rolls with 1 bane for 1 round.

Attack Roll 20+ The target is stunned for 1 round whenever it fails on a Will challenge roll to resist the spell.

BLOOD & BONE WALL BLOOD & BONE UTILITY 5

Area A line, 30 yards long, 8 yards high, and 3 yards wide originating from a point within long range

Duration 1 hour

Take 6 damage. A magical wall of solid bone, made from the blood-drenched skeletons and skulls of fallen warriors, fills the area and remains for the duration or until destroyed. The wall totally covers everything behind it. Each 1-yard cube of wall has Defense 10 and Health 75 (it has immunity to damage from psychic and unholy) and disappears when destroyed, but a destroyed cube of wall might collapse other cubes of wall, causing them to explode and deal 4d6 damage in a 2-yard-radius. A creature takes half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.

The wall doesn't need to be vertical or rest on any firm foundation. It must, however, connect to at least one solid point (though its weight is not an issue and it balances perfectly). Thus, you can use this spell to bridge a chasm or create a ramp. At the end of each round, any creature adjacent to the wall takes 3d6 damage at the end of their turn. A creature takes half the damage with a success on a Strength challenge roll.

SANGUINE RAZORSTORM

BLOOD & BONE ATTACK 5

Area A line, 20 yards long, 10 yards high, and 2 yards wide originating from a point within medium range

Duration 1 round (up to 1 minute; see text)

Take 6 damage. The blood from your self-inflicted wound explodes and propagates into a whirlwind that gusts to one end of the area and moves along and through it, transforming into razor-sharp droplets that deal 3d6 damage to anything whose space it enters. Each unsecured object damaged in this way is moved 1d6 yards in a direction you choose. Each creature damaged in this way must make an Agility challenge roll. On a failure, it is moved 1d6 yards in a direction you choose and falls prone. On a success, it just takes half the damage. The area is heavily obscured and the sanguine razorstorm remains until the start of your next turn.

At the end of the round, any creature within 6 yards of the sanguine razorstorm makes an Agility challenge roll or takes 2d6 damage.

At the start of your turn, you can use an action to take 1 damage. If you do, you extend the duration of the spell (up to a maximum of 1 minute) and move the sanguine razorstorm 10 yards in a direction of your choice.

VILE TRADITION

There are forbidden and sanguine spells, and arcana that mutates, but none of these are as primordial in foulness as the vile tradition of magic. It takes a uniquely deranged individual to seek out the power it offers and an irreparably unrepentant soul to be utilized, but masters of vile magic are never meddled with lightly because of it. In order to learn this tradition, you must be able to read, speak, and write Vilespeech.

KNEELING CUR **VILE ATTACK 0**

Target One creature you can see within short range
Duration 1 round (up to 1 minute; see text)
You exploit the weakness of the soul, forcing a creature to cower and grovel before you. Make a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target falls prone. As long as the target can see you, it cannot stand. A target that averts its eyes gains the blinded and frightened afflictions but can stand up and move until it is able to see you again, at which point it falls prone and is no longer blind or frightened.

At the end of the round and each time it takes damage, the target can make a Will challenge roll. The target has 1 boon on the challenge roll if it's triggered by damage. On a success, the spell ends.

At the start of your turn, you can use an action to extend the duration of the spell up to a maximum of 1 minute.

Attack Roll 20+ The target makes Will challenge rolls to resist the spell with 1 bane.

UNHOLY GAZE **VILE UTILITY 0**

Target One creature you can see within short range
Duration instantaneous (1 minute; see text)
Make a Will attack against the target's Will. On a success, within the next 1 minute you can use a triggered action to give the target 1 bane on an attack roll or challenge roll. You can choose to use this bane after the creature makes its roll, but before the GM determines whether the attack roll or challenge roll succeeds or fails.

Attack Roll 20+ You have 2 banes to impose on the target (either all at once or in different rounds).

FOREBODING HORROR **VILE UTILITY 1**

Target One creature
Duration 10 minutes or 1d6 rounds (see text)
As part of the casting of this spell, you touch a target related to another creature you have seen the corpse of or witnessed die. The target makes a Will challenge roll or becomes frightened for 10 minutes as your despicable magic dredges up the most disturbing and horrifying vision possible of the relative that the corpse belonged to (perhaps depicting its greatest sins, gruesome death, transgressions against the target, or any other suitably disturbing scenario).

A target that accepts an item of the deceased from you makes its challenge roll with 3 banes.

If cast during combat or if the frightened creature enters combat, the duration of the spell is immediately reduced to 1d6 rounds.

VILE TRADITION

Rank	Spells
0	*kneeling cur, unholy gaze*
1	*foreboding horror, inscribe vilespeech*
2	*unbearable pain, unholy condemnation*
3	*blasphemous influence, insidious indoctrination*
4	*awaken heresy, extinguish soul, mark of unspeakable horror*
5	*ancestral perversion, heresy incarnate*

INSCRIBE VILESPEECH **VILE ATTACK 1**

Target vellum or a scroll
Duration permanent (see text)
You touch the target and leave behind an abhorrent message in Vilespeech that etches across the vellum or parchment, planting the seeds of chaos in the souls of all who bear witness to its blasphemy. After casting this spell, any creature that opens or reads the object triggers the following effects. You can refine the trigger so the spell is activated only under certain circumstances or according to a creature's physical characteristics (such as height or weight), or physical kind (for example, the Vilespeech could be set to affect humans or shapechangers). You can also specify creatures that don't trigger the Vilespeech, such as those who say a certain password.

Once triggered, creatures in a 6-yard radius must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or have their gaze drawn to the blasphemous words. On a failure, a creature takes 2d6 psychic damage and gains 1d6 Insanity. On a success a creature takes half damage but is otherwise unaffected.

UNBEARABLE PAIN **VILE ATTACK 2**

Target One creature you can see within medium range

Make a Will attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success, you deal 2d6 psychic damage to the target. The target makes a Will challenge roll or emits a harmful shriek. Creatures within 10 yards that hear the target make a Will challenge roll with 1 boon or take 1d6 psychic damage and emit a harmful shriek. You can only affect a number of creatures equal to your Power.

Attack Roll 20+ Creatures makes Will challenge rolls to resist the spell with 1 bane.

UNHOLY CONDEMNATION VILE ATTACK 2

Area A sphere with a 5-yard radius centered on a point you choose within long range

You reach into the depths of your blackened soul and pass judgement on all those who have eschewed your dark path. Vile energies burst forth and targets in the area make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, a target takes 2d6 unholy damage. On a successful save, the creature takes half as much damage. Celestial creatures have 1 bane on this challenge roll.

BLASPHEMOUS INFLUENCE **VILE UTILITY 3**

Target One creature you can see within short range

Duration 1 minute

Pricking your finger with a shard of mirror, you bark out an irreverent word in Vilespeech and undermine the will of your target. You can use a triggered action when the target makes an attack roll or challenge roll to enforce your power over the target, forcing it to make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the target rerolls the attack roll or challenge roll and takes the lower result.

INSIDIOUS INDOCTRINATION **VILE UTILITY 3**

Area A sphere with a 10-yard radius centered on a point you choose within short range

Duration 24 hours

You shape the psychic space in the area, warping it inward to melt the mental defenses of one immobilized target that you can see. So long as the creature remains immobilized throughout, you or creatures friendly to you gain the following benefits for the spell's duration:

- The completion times for the implant psychic trigger, induce amnesia, and instill identity chirurgical procedures (pages 145–152) are reduced from days to hours.
- When you make challenge rolls to perform a chirurgical procedure, you roll twice and take the result of your choosing.
- The target does not become fatigued from the implementation of chirurgical procedures.
- Successive chirurgical procedures targeting the same target are not made with additional banes.

While this spell and its direct effects are magical, chirurgical procedures performed during the duration are still mundane.

AWAKEN HERESY **VILE UTILITY 4**

Target One creature you can see within short range

Duration 1 month

Make a Will attack roll against the target's Will as you speak a blasphemy that reaches out and brands the soul of the target. On a success the target gains an inherent heresy (pages 23-24). When casting this spell choose whether the target gains the inherent heresy that you have or roll determine randomly. At the end of the duration, the creature makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or the inherent heresy is permanent.

Attack Roll 20+ The duration increases to 1 year and the target makes its Will challenge roll to resist the spell with 2 banes.

EXTINGUISH SOUL **VILE UTILITY 4**

Target One dying creature or creature that died within the last minute

Your Sin increases by 1. You touch the target, destroying its soul. The creature cannot be brought back from the dead. Afterward you heal all damage and gain one Fiendish Bargain (pages 135-136) for a number of days equal to your level.

MARK OF UNSPEAKABLE HORROR **VILE ATTACK 4**

Target One creature you can see within short range

Make a Will attack against the target's Will. On a success, the target takes 3d6 unholy damage and gains 2d6 Insanity as a fiendish mark is seared into its flesh and psyche. Creatures adjacent to the target make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or take 1d6 unholy damage and gain 1d6 Insanity.

Attack Roll 20+ The target gains 3d6 Insanity and adjacent creatures take an extra 1d6 Insanity (regardless of whether they succeed or fail).

ANCESTRAL PERVERSION **VILE ATTACK 5**

Area A sphere with a 10-yard radius centered on a point you choose within short range

Duration 1 minute

Reaching back through time you call up from the ground ghastly visions of the targets' loved ones. The wailing, malice-filled spirits flail and scrabble at all targets within the area, forcing them make a Will challenge roll 1 with bane. On a failure, a creature is swarmed by the twisted forms of those they hold dear, taking 2d6 psychic damage and 2d6 unholy damage. Creatures that take 10 or more damage are immobilized for 1 round.

The exact form this spell takes varies greatly depending on the target, though disappointed ancestors, deceased family members, and hollow-eyed children are common. They are always accompanied by the cold and stench of the grave, and often by trademark perfumes or scents. The loved ones of the target do not need to be dead to manifest, though they will appear so.

Creatures with an Intellect of 3 or lower are unaffected by this spell.

HERESY INCARNATE **VILE UTILITY 5**

Duration 10 minutes

Fel energies wrap around your body in a 20-yard radius sphere of darkness and fanged, gaping maws that babble dark secrets in Vilespeech, causing your mere presence to warp and wound all around you. The sphere spreads around corners. A creature that starts its turn in the area or enters it must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, a creature takes 2d6 thunder damage and 2d6 unholy damage, or half as much damage on a success. The first time a creature takes damage from this spell it gains 1d6 Insanity.

This spell also deals its thunder damage to objects in the area.

BLIGHTCORE MELTDOWN **TECHNOMANCY ATTACK 5**

Area A sphere with a 30-yard radius centered on a point you choose within long range

Duration 1 minute

You create a coruscating mass of blightburn crystal that pulsates with a bright green radiance, casting deadly emanations throughout the area. At the end of each round a creature within the blightcore meltdown takes 1d6 points of fire damage and must succeed on a Strength challenge roll or contracts blightburn sickness. This challenge roll is made with 1 bane for every previous challenge roll made to resist the blightcore meltdown. When the diseased creature next completes its rest, it repeats the Strength challenge roll or reduces its Health by 5. A creature naturally fights off this disease by making 2 consecutive successful challenge rolls to resist it.

Creatures protected by a force effect (such as *force field*) take only half damage and gain temporary immunity to blightburn sickness for a number of rounds equal to the spell level of the force effect they are using. After this time, the blightburn radiation penetrates the force effect and creatures within are exposed to full damage and blightburn sickness, though they have no boons on challenge rolls to resist contracting the disease. If a creature is using multiple force effects,

add the total spell levels of all force effects to determine how long it takes the blightburn radiation to penetrate.

The presence of the blightcore meltdown interferes with teleportation effects of all kinds, including not only actual teleportation but also planar travel and calling and summoning effects. Any such effect cast within—or cast so as to cause creatures to appear within—the area of a blightburn meltdown requires an Intellect or Will challenge roll (whichever is highest) with 3 banes or the effect fails.

Finally, a blightcore meltdown greatly enhances polymorph effects or effects that alter the size of a living target within the area. The targets of such effects gain double their normal benefit (shrinking twice in size, doubling in size, etc.).

MUTAGENIC MIST FORBIDDEN ATTACK 4

Area A cylinder, 3 yards tall with a 5-yard radius, centered on a point within medium range

Duration 1 minute

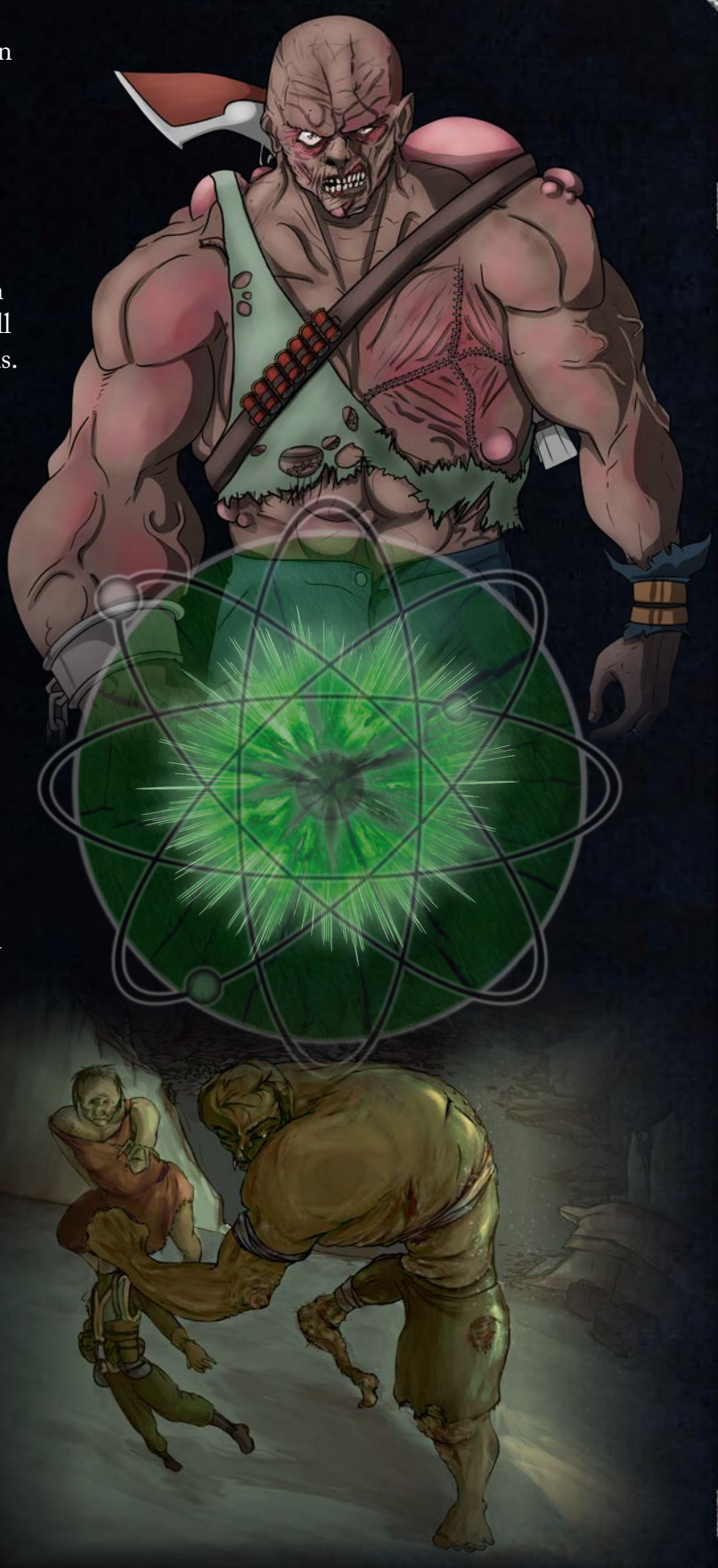
You create a bank of multihued mist that shifts constantly in color and turgidity as it partially obscures the area for the duration or until dispersed by wind. Creatures in the area have 1 bane on challenge rolls against polymorph spells or effects (including this one). At the end of the round, creatures within the *mutagenic mist* make a Strength challenge roll or are affected as if targeted by the *fleshcurdle* spell (page 155), acquiring a randomly determined deformity. A creature failing multiple Strength challenge rolls can acquire multiple deformities from the *mutagenic mist*. These deformities remain for 1d6 rounds after a creature leaves the *mutagenic mist*. You can use an action to move the mist up to 10 yards.

DISRUPT TECHNOLOGY
TECHNOMANCY ATTACK 2

Target one technological object, augmetic, or construct within short range

Duration 1 minute

You cover the targeted object (such as a technological device or vehicle) or creature (such as an augmented creature) in a fine mist. The target must make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane. Unattended objects automatically fail. On a failure the target is rendered unusable, unable to use the affected augmetic, or defenseless (in the case of creatures) for the duration of the spell.



The interior of Porthos' shop is the highlight of Hyrindrack Lane and the machinist never tires of passerby gawking at his wares, but this particular woman makes his skin crawl and he wants her out of his store as soon as possible. It's not that she isn't comely—far from it—but something in her eyes is cruel instead of kind, as though they were a window to the void instead of her soul. Her not unpleasant voice breaks his reverie, one slender arm pointing to a collection of metal plates magnetized around a small rod, "and this? What does it do?"

Thinking that he might subtly get her outside by blocking her way, Porthos saunters towards her with his arms behind his back, his pride in the device all too obvious. "A magnohydramicus, madame. They aren't used often these days but the first were designed to protect commanders back when the blessed Celestial Heroes were still making war. Observe, if you will." He takes the contraption and presses in the activator stud before placing it on the floor, looking back at her briefly and smiling reassuringly as it powers on. The metal discs fly into the air and create a flowing field of metal around them, navigating perfectly about tables, legs of furniture, and other devices of note. After a moment of taking in the impressive display Porthos decides she's seen enough and he deactivates the machine, placing it back on the table and saying to her, "It's a fine invention and should you wi—"

But she was gone.

Relieved but slightly confused Porthos quickly spins about looking for her and only catches the woman from out of the corner of his eye as she finishes what must be a spell, his closing eyes drawn to her hiding place as the magic pulls him into the darkness of sleep.

Porthos' awakens to the smell of charring wood, black smoke burning his nostrils and choking his lungs, and a member of the Conlatus 17th Fire Brigade bursting from out of the blaze around him. The burly dwarf grabs him by the collar of his shirt, dragging the machinist out of the conflagration and into a group of waiting Justitia. In short order the flames of Porthos' shop are quenched and he is tended to, his wounds minor and easily treated while officers take his statement. There is no suspicion that he may have set the fires himself—he nearly perished and he has long been an upstanding member of the community—but none are certain of who the woman might be or that she is responsible.

The next day Porthos stirs early in the morning, arriving to the burnt out husk of his shop and sifting through the remains. To his disappointment very little survived the fire—even his prized refurbished power armor is no more—and this will be a lean year, even with The Ministry's charity. Weary in both body and spirit, Porthos heads to a neighbor's cafe and takes a seat at a table outside, picking up a discarded newspaper with the hope of finding something profitable to do in the classifieds section.

Porthos doesn't get that far, enraptured instead by the headline on the front page: MANIAC SHE-DEVIL CRIME SPREE WRECKS THE BARRINGER DISTRICT. His hands begin to tingle with numbness as he reads the article, powerless to stop himself; the woman was clad in power armor, using a magnohydramicus, wielding a silver power rifle...all items missing from the inventory of his shop. With every paragraph his anxiety grows until Porthos stands upright and drops the sheets of paper, bolting towards the Tower of Law to tell the Justitia his fears after sifting through the wreckage of his shope one last time.

Rounding the corner back onto Hyrindrack Lane and stepping into the charred skeleton of the shop, Porthos doesn't notice he's not alone. Shuddering nervously as he kicks through piles of ash and debris looking for clues that maybe his devices played no part in the havoc last night, he fails to hear the footsteps of another. Only when the woman reveals herself does the machinist realize she's come back—stolen power rifle in hand, red lightning dancing across the surface of the weapon and onto the pilfered suit of power armor she's wearing—but then the weapon surges, spitting out a bolt of energy that strikes Porthos square in the forehead and sends him into a darkness from which he'll never awaken.

EQUIPMENT

Askis has countless mundane goods and the most nuanced are detailed here, but anything in a product catalog from the United States of the 1920s is available from traders, and stores—up to and including bicycles, blenders, canned foods, newspapers, pens, pianos, pocket lighters, record players, sewing machines, telephones, vacuum cleaners, and clothing with zippers. The major difference is that anything which would be powered by coal, electricity, or gasoline is fueled by inaequa instead, though unless noted otherwise the machinery within these items are too weak to detect their user's alignment. It's ultimately up to the GM as to what technologies not listed here have been invented and mass-produced.

Table: Mundane Items

Item	Weight	Cost
Camera	5 lbs.	40 gc
Ceremonial Relics	5 lbs.	15 gc
Filtration Mask	5 lbs.	100 gc
Forever Flashlight	1 lb.	5 gc
Forever Lantern	3 lbs.	20 gc
Motion Picture Camera	30 lbs.	300 gc
Radio	4 lbs.	6 gc
Radio Tower	300 lbs.	600 gc
Remedium	—	50 gc
Torpidus	—	25 gc
Walkie-Talkie	1 lb.	4 gc

Camera This handheld 5 pound box is fitted with a glass lens, numerous small fixtures, a small square opening in the back, and a leather cord to hang the device around one's neck when not in use. By spending a minor activity and clicking the shutter button, the camera captures a color image of whatever is within sight of the viewfinder (a 100-yard cone that focuses on any 2-yard wide line that curves with the cone's radius). Correctly adjusting the lenses to refocus the camera requires an action and Intellect challenge roll made with 1 boon. Developing the film inside of a camera requires a room in shadows (lit by low-illumination red-tinted lights), 4 hours, and an Intellect challenge roll.

Ceremonial Relics These tool kits include candles, votives, reagents, esoteric dust, and all manner of occult ephemera. While none are themselves enchanted with power, by utilizing the correct invocations they can help unlock dark secrets of the otherworldly and supernatural.

Filtration Mask Wearing one of these skin-tight masks grants immunity to damage and conditions from gasses and vapors that require inhalation. At the GM's discretion, the wearer may still suffer effects from a gas due to contact.

Forever Flashlight These devices use an extremely small battery of looping inaequa that never tires yet isn't strong enough to detect the alignment of whoever uses it. Activating a forever flashlight is a minor activity. When activated, a forever flashlight shines bright light in a 30-yard line (and 10-yard cone) and dim light in a 60-yard line (and 30-yard cone). A creature can us a triggered action to deactivate a forever flashlight.

Forever Lantern A forever lantern casts bright light in a 10-yard radius and dim light for an additional 10 yards. Activating or deactivating a forever lantern is a minor activity. A forever lantern can be dimmed as a minor activity, reducing the light to dim light in a 5-yard radius. Like a forever flashlight, the battery in a forever lantern never exhausts.

Motion Picture Camera A bulky glass lens juts out from the front of this 30 pound box, a shoulder harness is on the bottom of it, and a crank sticks out from the side. By using an action and turning the crank, the motion picture camera captures a film of whatever is within sight of the lens (a 30-yard cone that focuses on any 1-yard wide line that curves with the cone's radius). Correctly adjusting the lenses to refocus the camera requires 1 minute and an Intellect challenge roll made with 1 bane. Developing the film inside of a camera requires a room in shadows (lit by low-illumination red-tinted lights) and an Intellect challenge roll made with 1 bane.

Radio A radio receives radio waves broadcast within a range of 1 mile. These devices require very little energy to function and its batteries are inexhaustible.

Radio Tower Virtually all settlements possess at least one radio tower if not several. These stations usually play the gentrified ballads, melodies, and songs that have been recycled through popular culture in Askis since the Celestial Heroes' ascended. There are rare maverick radio towers transmitting far more sinister messages however, attempting to lure the unwary into succumbing to evil or simply to incite fear of an impending attack. Building a radio tower takes 7 days of work and 300 gold in metal materials weighing at least 200 pounds. A radio tower has Defense equal to the builder's Intellect, 50 Health, and a broadcast range of 30 miles per point of the builder's Intellect above 10 (minimum 30 miles). Multiple radio towers increase the broadcast range by an amount equal to half of a smaller tower's broadcast range.

Remedium A creature that receives an injection of this liquid gains 2 boons on challenge rolls against diseases for 1 month. It confers no benefit to undead or constructs.

Torpidus Invented for battlefield surgeries before the Utopian Dawn, when applied to a creature's skin torpidus numbs the flesh down to the bone for 1d6 hours. Using torpidus on a patient during a chirurgical procedure that violates the body (adjust appearance, graft flesh, insert limbic reservoir, insta kill-switch, lobotomize, stimulate adrenal cortex, surgery, talentia enhancer) grants 2 boons to the Intellect challenge roll. In order to be effective in the chirurgical procedure, the patient must receive a number of uses of torpidus equal to the required uses of healing kit.

Walkie-Talkie A walkie-talkie is a handheld, two-way, portable radio transceiver that broadcasts to a range of a half mile. Anyone within range and tuned to the broadcast frequency (which can be calibrated with an Intellect challenge roll) is able to hear messages sent from the walkie-talkie. The walkie-talkie is able to receive radio waves provided it is tuned to the correct frequency. Radio waves travel through solid objects. A walkie-talkies run on an inexhaustible battery.

DRUGS

Over the centuries doctors in The Ministry have developed advances in medicinal cures unaided by magic, synthesizing them in large quantities by aggregating the cultivation of exotic plants from Samovi. Unlike the curatives listed elsewhere, the following drugs are all addictive narcotics normally only found in hospitals and medical offices.

Incitamentum Usually found in aerosol form, possession of this highly illegal and incredibly addictive narcotic carries the most severe penalties. Administering a dose of incitamentum (an action) grants the imbiber a +2 bonus to Defense, 1 boon on Agility challenge rolls, a +4 bonus to Speed, and starting at the end of the next round an additional action each round. After 1d6+1 rounds the imbiber becomes slowed (can take only a slow turn, its Speed is halved, and it cannot benefit from increases to Speed) for 2d6+2 rounds. Upon completing a rest, the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane per use of incitamentum in the past week) or is compelled to take more incitamentum. When the imbiber goes without another dose of incitamentum, they have 2 bane on Agility challenge rolls and their Speed is halved. After 24 hours (and again every 24 hours) the imbiber can make a new challenge roll to resist incitamentum addiction.

Laxitas When inhaled as an action, laxitas provides an overwhelming sense of recklessness and euphoria for 1d6 hours - 1 hour per dose taken in the previous day (minimum 10 minutes). The purest laxitas costs a fortune but triggers an extreme adrenaline rush, granting the imbiber 3 boons on all attack rolls and challenge rolls, and immunity to fear for 1 hour. After taking any amount of laxitas the imbiber is fatigued until they have completed a rest, at which point they

Table: Drugs

Narcotic	Cost
Incitamentum	500 gc
Laxitas	100 gc or 500 gc
Mansio	150 gc
Nigrum Pollinis	15 gc
Nitrikali	500 gc
Proelio	50 gc

make a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane per use of laxitas in the past day) or their Will is reduced by 1 and they are compelled to take more. When the imbiber goes without another dose of laxitas, they cannot take the Defend action and have 2 bane on Will challenge rolls. After 24 hours (and again every 24 hours) the imbiber can make a challenge roll to resist laxitas addiction.

Mansio Use of this hallucinogenic is highly regulated by The Ministry, the secrets of its creation closely guarded by agents of The Inquisition. This can be imbibed by using an action, at which point imbiber makes a Will challenge roll (made with 1 bane per use of mansio in the past week) and has the defenseless affliction for 1 hour. On a failure the imbiber is poisoned until completing a rest. While defenseless from mansio, the imbiber is able to cast divination spells with 1 boon, remains able to concentrate on a number of divination spells equal to their Power, and doubles the duration of divination spells they are concentrating on. The next time the imbiber completes a rest, they make a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane per use of mansio in the past week) or is compelled to take more mansio. When the imbiber goes without another dose of mansio, they cannot cast divination spells and 1 bane when making attack rolls with spells. After 24 hours (and again every 24 hours) the imbiber can make a new challenge roll to resist mansio addiction.

Nigrum Pollinis When smoked over the course of a minute (or ingested as an action if made into liquid form) the imbiber feels a sense of euphoria, gaining 10 bonus Health and 1 boon on Strength challenge rolls for 1 hour. After its effects cease, the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane per dose of nigrum pollinis in the last month) or is fatigued until they take more nigrum pollinis or make another challenge roll 24 hours later. The imbiber has 1 boon on this challenge roll to resist addiction to nigrum pollinis as long as they do nothing but rest during this period.

Nitrikali By using an action to drink this fizzing potion, the imbiber regains the casting of one 2nd-level or lower spell. Creatures that cannot benefit from this restored spell instead gain a +3 bonus to Speed for 1 hour and 1 boon on their next attack roll or challenge roll. Upon completing a rest the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane per use of nitrikali in the past week) or is compelled to take more nitrikali. When the imbiber goes without another dose of nitrikali, the next time they regain the use of spells they regain 1 fewer spell per spell level (though the imbiber retains at least 1 spell per spell level they can cast). After 24 hours (and again every 24 hours) the imbiber can make a challenge roll to resist nitrikali addiction.

Proelio This cocktail of stimulants and painkillers makes those who use it a dangerous companion to travel beside—proelio addicts are often violent and will do absolutely anything in order to acquire more of the drug. As an action a creature can expel this small aerosol into their lungs, gaining several benefits for 1d6 rounds: they roll twice and take the best result when making attack rolls, they take half damage from all attacks and spells, and they gain a 6 yard increase to speed for 1d6 rounds. After its effects cease, the imbiber makes a Strength challenge roll (with 1 bane per dose of proelio in the last week) or gain fatigue for 3 hours per each dose of proelio taken in the last day. This fatigue remains until the imbiber takes more proelio or makes another challenge roll 24 hours later.

WEAPONS

The defenders of Askis still carry blades and inaequa-powered weaponry but rebellious citizens have continued to design arms to resist the Celestial Heroes. Meant to be smuggled and hidden in plain sight, the bent of their designs has resulted in smaller and concealed weapons, carefully spread throughout the world by complicit merchants more interested in coin than ethics.

Grenades This small, cylindrical explosive can be thrown at a target within short range as an action. Any creature within the grenade's area of effect (a 1-yard radius) makes an Agility challenge roll or takes the grenade's damage (a successful challenge roll halves this damage). Bang, bio, flash, gas, lethal gas, and tear gas grenades require Strength challenge rolls instead of Agility (a successful challenge roll ignores their afflictions).

Bang Creatures are stunned until the end of the next round and deafened for 1d6 rounds.

Bio Creatures are poisoned until they take a complete or heal more than 5 damage.

Concussion/Frag/Slasher Creatures take 2d6 damage.

Cryo Creatures take 1d6 cold damage.

Flash Creatures are blinded for 1d6 rounds.

Gas Grenade A nonmagical effect identical to the *fog* spell except that the fog dissipates after 2d6+2 rounds.

Lethal Gas Grenade A nonmagical effect identical to the *poisonous fog* spell except that the fog dissipates after 1d6+1 rounds.

Lightning Creatures take 1d6 lightning damage.

Plasma Creatures take 1d6 fire damage and 1d6 lightning damage.

Scorcher Creatures take 1d6 fire damage.

Tear Gas Grenade A nonmagical effect identical to the *mutagenic mist* spell (page 161) except that the gas dissipates after 1d6+3 rounds.

Thunder Creatures take 1d6 thunder damage.

Locking Garrote A thin, metal wire runs between a pair of steel handles that each contain half of a locking mechanism. The wielder can spend a triggered action to lock the garrote handles together, freeing their hands while leaving the target suffocating. Unlocking a locked garrote requires an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane, a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes, or a key designed for it. A locked garrote has Defense 12 and Health 10, but other creatures attacking it do so with 2 banes.

Sword Cane This polished walking stick has a blade hidden within it and may be used as either a club or a rapier. Drawing the blade from within the sword cane is a minor activity. The wielder has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to conceal the dangerous nature of their sword cane.

Table: Weapons

Weapon	Cost	Weight
Garrote	2 gc	1 lb.
Grenades	varies	2-3 lbs.
Bang	20 gc	—
Bio	75 gc	—
Concussion	60 gc	—
Cryo	75 gc	—
Flash	45 gc	—
Frag	65 gc	—
Gas	15 gc	—
Lethal Gas	500 gc	—
Lightning	75 gc	—
Plasma	125 gc	—
Scorcher	70 gc	—
Slasher	80 gc	—
Tear Gas	85 gc	—
Thunder	75 gc	—
Locking Garrote	15 gc	2 lbs.
Sword Cane	10 gc	4 lbs.

AUGMETICS

Augmetics are a broad class of items similar in many ways to magic items. Unlike a magic item, however, augmetics are installed in a creature, permanently welded to their form and flesh until death or violence separates them. Mechanized prosthetics became popular in Askis prior to the Utopian Dawn thanks to their relative availability over power magical healing, a trend that's continued since. The Ministry has encouraged development into augmetics, foreseeing that regulation of some manufacturers would be far easier than having a robust class of powerful spellcasters all requiring the vetting and oversight of The Inquisition. Development of new prostheses and technological augmentations has waned greatly in the past centuries, becoming the exclusive purvey of mad scientists (like limbic reservoirs and talentia enhancers).

Installing Augmetics Installing an augmetic to a wearer requires the surgery chirurgical procedure (page 151). Attacks made against an augmetic target the wearer's Defense + 6.

Clockwork Arm This metal and piston arm is mounted over a wearer's severed arm stump. The wearer's Strength increases by 1 and the maximum score for its Strength increases by 1. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d3. A steam arm has 30 Health.

Clockwork Leg This clockwork prosthesis is installed over a wearer's severed leg, above the knee. The wearer's Speed increases by 2, it gains 1 boon on challenge rolls made to jump, and its unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d3. A steam leg has 30 Health.

Electrolens This eyepiece crackles with energy, granting its wearer darksight. An electrolens has 20 Health.

Hornear This brass horn is mounted into a wearer's ear, more than tripling in size on the exterior end. The wearer gains 1 boon on sound-based Perception challenge rolls and becomes able to hear all the frequencies animals can hear. By installing a second hornear augmetic the wearer gains sightless to a range of 5 yards. A hornear has 20 Health.

Telescopic Arm Almost identical to a steam arm, a telescopic arm also includes a hefty piston installed between a wearer's wrist and elbow or their elbow and shoulder. The wearer's reach increases by +1, or +2 with two telescopic arm augmetics installed. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d6. A telescopic arm has 30 Health.

Telescopic Leg A telescopic leg is a variation on the steam leg but includes a heavy piston installed between a wearer's knee and ankle, or hip and knee. For each telescopic leg augmetic installed the wearer's Speed increases by 2 and it gains 2 boons on challenge rolls made to jump. The wearer's unarmed strike damage with this limb increases to 1d6. A telescopic leg has 30 Health.

INAEQUA TECHNOLOGY

Much of the world of Askis is powered through a wondrous substance bartered from entities on the higher planes: inaequa. This miraculous fuel enables all sorts of marvelous machines, but it also gives off a radiation that elongates the lives of good creatures and allows them to use these devices with far greater ease or effectiveness.

In addition to mundane appliances (such as toasters, vaccuum cleaners, lights, and so on) there are a variety of unique devices powered by inaequa that function differently depending on the soul of the creature wielding them. Failing a Sanctity or Sin check to trick or pervert an inaequa-powered device renders it permanently inoperable to a creature.

Table: Inaequa Technology

Item	Cost	Weight
Grappling Gun	100 gc	12 lbs.
Inaequa Pistol	80 gc	3 lbs.
Jetpack	1,500 gc	20 lbs.
Jump Boots	750 gc	8 lbs.
Magnohydramicus	800 gc	9 lbs.
Pacification Net	600 gc	16 lbs.
Power Armor	2,000 gc	40 lbs.
Power Rifle	250 gc	12 lbs.
Power Shield	500 gc	15 lbs.
Power Sword	450 gc	8 lbs.
Well Hammer	800 gc	16 lbs.

GRAPPLING GUN

Depending on how it is designed, this device resembles either a crossbow or firearm with a grappling hook fixed onto a spear that emerges from the front of it. As an action, the wielder of a grappling gun fires it at a perch within 30 yards—a crux of tree boughs, the corner of a building, the top of a street light, cluster of rocks across a chasm—and makes an Agility challenge roll (at the GM's discretion, more difficult targets impose banes). On a success the device's grappling hook affixes itself and until the wielder moves more than 3 yards in any direction, they can use a minor activity to retract the line and move to be adjacent to the grappling hook. A grappling gun that has its line obstructed by another creature or broken (Defense 13, Health 8) becomes inoperable until it is reloaded. Reloading a grappling gun requires 2 actions (one to place ammunition, another to crank the winch; these need not be consecutive). When fired as an attack against a creature, on a successful hit the target takes 1d6 damage and makes a Strength challenge roll or falls prone.

In the hands of a good creature, attacks and challenge rolls with a grappling gun have 1 boon.
In the hands of a neutral or unaligned creature, a grappling gun functions normally.

In the hands of an evil creature, attacks and challenge rolls with a grappling gun have 1 bane until the wielder uses a minor activity to trick the device with a successful Sanctity challenge roll. On a success, the grappling gun is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment until the weapon leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use a minor activity and spend 1 Vilis point to pervert it. Once perverted, attacks with the grappling gun are made 2 boon, its can be reloaded with just one action, and on a successful hit it deals 2d6 damage. In addition, the Strength challenge roll required by a target hit by a perverted grappling gun is made with 3 banes. After every minute the wielder makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per minute of use) or the grappling gun explodes, dealing 2d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 5-yard radius (an Agility challenge roll halves this damage). An unattended grappling gun explodes in the same manner 1 minute after being perverted.

INAEQUA PISTOL

The guards and soldiers of Askis are equipped with inaequa pistols. These divine firearms can fire on targets within short range and do not require any reloading.

When wielded by a good creature, an inaequa pistol deals 2d6 damage but is unable to deal damage to creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health.

When wielded by a neutral or unaligned creature, attacks with an inaequa pistol are made with 1 bane and on a hit it only deals 1d6 damage.

When wielded by an evil creature, an inaequa pistol does not function at all until the wielder uses a minor activity to trick the device with a successful Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the inaequa pistol is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment until the weapon leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use a minor activity and spend 1 Vilis point to pervert it. Once perverted, attacks with the inaequa pistol are made with 1 boon and on a successful hit deal 2d6 unholy damage. After every minute the wielder makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per minute of use) or the weapon explodes, dealing 1d6 unholy damage and 1d6 fire damage to all creatures and objects in a 3-yard radius (an Agility challenge roll halves this damage). An unattended inaequa pistol explodes in the same manner 1 minute after being perverted.

JETPACK

These sleek and expensive devices fit on a wearer's back, affixed by straps over the shoulder or when placed on armor, latched onto mounts and seams. While wearing a jetpack, a creature can use an action activating it to gain a flying speed of 10. A creature can use a jetpack to fly for up to 10 minutes, all at once or in several shorter flights, each one using a minimum of 1 minute from the duration. Deactivating a jetpack is a minor activity. If you are flying when the duration expires or the jetpack is deactivated, you fall until you land (taking falling damage as appropriate). The jetpack regains 2 minutes of flying capability for every 10 minutes it isn't in use.

When worn by a good creature, the wearer has 1 boon on Agility challenge rolls while the jetpack is active.

When worn by a neutral or unaligned creature, the jetpack functions normally.

When worn by an evil creature, the jetpack does not function at all until the wearer uses an action to trick the device with a successful Sanctity check made with 1 bane. On a success the jetpack is convinced that the wearer is of neutral alignment until it leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spent 1 Vilis point to pervert it. Once perverted, an active jetpack grants its wearer a flying speed of 30 and 2 boons on Agility challenge rolls. Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the wearer makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the jetpack explodes, dealing 2d6 fire damage and 2d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 1-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll made with 2 bane halves this damage). An unattended jetpack explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

For creatures other than Size 1, a jetpack works more or less effectively. Instead of the regular fly speed, Size ½ creatures gain a flying speed of 20 feet and Size 2 creatures gain a flying speed of 7. Any smaller or larger creatures are unable to use a jetpack unless it is specifically built for their stature.

JUMP BOOTS

Although their metal framework make this footwear less than ideal, the vertical mobility they offer is impressive. A creature wearing a pair of jump boots reduces its Speed by 2. By spending a minor activity the wearer can activate the jump boots and increase the distance of any jumps they make by 10 yards horizontally and 7 yards vertically until the end of the round. This increase to jumping distance only increases the wearer's speed for the turn and only if the wearer moves by jumping. Jump boots automatically deactivate at the end of the round. Jump boots can be used to leap for up to 10 rounds, regaining 1 round of use for every 1 hour they are not in use.

When worn by a good creature, the wearer has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to jump whether or not the jump boots are activated.

When worn by a neutral or unaligned creature, the wearer's Speed is reduced by 1 instead and they have 1 bane on challenge rolls made to jump when the jump boots are not activated.

When worn by an evil creature, jump boots cannot be activated at all until the wearer uses an action to trick them with a successful Sanctity challenge roll. On a success, the jump boots are convinced that the wearer is of neutral alignment until the footwear leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use a minor activity and spend 1 Vilis point to pervert them. Once perverted, jump boots increase the wearer's Speed by 3 and when activated increase the wearer's jumping distance by 15 yards horizontally and 10 yards vertically. After 5 minutes, the wearer makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the perverted jump boots overload and contract. Any creature within 1 yard of the jump boots makes an Agility challenge roll with the same number of banes or is immobilized and grabbed by the devices as the implosion of energy grabs their limbs and crushes them in the crumpled metal, rooting them to it. A creature so trapped can use an action to make a Strength challenge roll (with the same number of banes) to free itself. At the end of the round, a creature trapped in imploded jump boots takes 1d6 damage.

MAGNOHYDRAMICUS

These metal discs are clustered tightly around a 1-foot long metal rod and studded by stubby hangers. When activated by spending a minor activity, the magnohydramicus' discs float in a 1-yard radius around the device or the creature wielding it. Any ranged attacks that enter or pass through the square the activated magnohydramicus is in hit the discs first. An activated magnohydramicus and its discs have Health 20 and are destroyed when reduced to 5 Health or less. Unless reduced to 0 Health or less, a magnohydramicus can be repaired with a successful Intellect challenge roll made with 2 banes, 8 hours of work, and 20 gold worth of materials. An activated magnohydramicus does not impede or affect effects and spells that deal area damage. Deactivating a magnohydramicus requires a minor activity.

When activated by a good creature, the magnohydramicus gains 10 extra Health when activated.

When activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, the magnohydramicus functions normally.

When activated by an evil creature, the magnohydramicus has 10 less Health unless the wielder uses an action to trick the device with a successful Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the magnohydramicus is convinced that the creature activating it is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spent 2 Vilis points to pervert the device while activating it. Once perverted, the magnohydramicus activates with 50 Health and deals 1d6 damage to all creatures in a 3-yard radius at the end of each round. A creature wielding the magnohydramicus is not damaged by it. Once the magnohydramicus has dealt 40 hit points of damage it is destroyed but otherwise it functions for up to 10 minutes. A perverted magnohydramicus cannot be deactivated.

PACIFICATION NET

The pacification net looks much like a mundane net except for two rubberized handles and a rubber cord tethering them together at its center. A Large or smaller creature hit by a pacification net is restrained until it is freed. A pacification net has no effect on creatures that are formless, or creatures that are Size 3 or larger. A creature can use its action to free itself or another creature within its reach with a successful Strength challenge roll made with 1 bane. Dealing 10 damage to the pacification net (Defense 12) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the pacification net.

Activating a pacification net is a minor activity. Once activated, a pacification net crackles with subduing electrical energies that sap a creature of its senses. A creature caught in an active pacification net makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane at the end of each round or is stunned for 1 round. Even on a success, the creature is blinded for 1 round. Once activated, a pacification net functions for 1 minute or until the wielder uses an action to deactivate it.

When wielded by a good creature, attack rolls made with an activated pacification net 1 boon.

In the hands of a neutral or unaligned creature, an activated pacification net functions normally and attack rolls with a deactivated pacification net have 1 bane.

In the hands of an evil creature, a pacification net cannot be activated at all until the wielder tricks the device with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the pacification net is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature use a minor activity and spend 2 Vilis points to pervert the device while activating it. Once perverted, a creature caught in the pacification net makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes at the end of each round or is stunned for 1 round. Even on a success, the creature is blinded for 1 round and takes 1d6 lightning damage. After 3 rounds a perverted pacification net explodes, dealing 1d6 lightning damage and 1d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 3-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes halves this damage).

POWER ARMOR

The finest military officers of Askis wear resplendent suits of mechanized armor fueled by inaequa, a carapace of steel and gadgetry that make them titans on the battlefield. Power armor fits over a humanoid's torso and limbs, functioning as a medium suit of armor. Donning or removing power armor provokes free attacks and takes 3 consecutive rounds. Power armor grants the following bonuses:

- the wearer's Defense becomes Agility + 3.
- the wearer's Strength increases by 2 (this does not modify its maximum Strength score).
- the wearer is able to jump as far as 10 yards horizontally or 7 yards vertically without the need for a challenge roll (these distances are added to the distances that result from any challenge rolls made to jump).
- the wearer reduces all falling damage by 20.
- the wearer's unarmed strike damage changes to 1d6.
- the wearer has 2 banes on challenge rolls made to sneak.
- the amount of weight the wearer can carry doubles (the weight of the power armor does not count against the wearer's carrying weight.)

When worn by a good creature, the wearer gains the following additional benefits:

- the wearer's Defense becomes Agility + 4.
- the wearer's Agility increases by 2 (this does not modify its maximum Agility score).
- the wearer reduces all falling damage by 35.
- the wearer's unarmed strike damage changes to 1d6 plus 1d3 holy damage.
- the wearer does not have banes on challenge rolls made to sneak.

When worn by a neutral or unaligned creature, a suit of power armor functions normally.

When worn by an evil creature, a suit of power armor does not function at all until the wearer tricks the device with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 2 banes. On a success the power armor is convinced that the wearer is of neutral alignment until the suit is removed.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 3 Vilis points to pervert the device while activating it. Once perverted, the power armor grants the following additional benefits:

- the wearer's Defense becomes Agility + 5.
- the wearer's Strength score increases by 4 instead of 2 (this can increase the wearer's Strength score to as high as 22).
- the wearer's speed increases by 6.
- the wearer's unarmed strike damage changes to 1d6 plus 1d6 unholy damage.
- the wearer has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to sneak.

Every 10 minutes, the wearer makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the perverted power armor becomes a conduit for an ancient evil to slip through the aether and between the seams of the *Bands of Kyttarmoak*, possessing the suit (and the creature inside) for 10 minutes. For the duration,

the wearer is transformed into a daemon, demon, or devil of the GM's choice and their actions are controlled by the GM. The wearer is possessed for the duration or until reduced to 0 hit points. Regardless of how the possession ends, the wearer is reduced to 0 Health when they return to their natural form.

Instead of making a Sin challenge roll to reign in a suit of perverted power armor, the wearer may spend 10 Vilis points to permanently mark it as their own. A marked suit of perverted power armor doubles the wearer's Sin modifier for the purposes of their evil aura, but its wearer can sleep and rest in it without issue. In fact, the suit of marked perverted power armor cannot be removed until the wearer is dead—though even then if the wearer is brought back to life before the armor is removed, they return donned in the armor. Marked suits of perverted power armor do not become conduits for fiend possession.

POWER RIFLE

Wielded by military marksmen and game hunters, these divine firearms can fire on targets within medium range, do not require any reloading, and make virtually no sound whatsoever when fired, emitting only a rapidly traveling bolt of energy nearly too fast for the eye to see.

When wielded by a good creature, a ranged weapon attack made with a power rifle has a range of long and on a successful hit deals no damage but forces the target to make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.

When wielded by a neutral or unaligned creature, ranged weapon attacks with a power rifle are made with 1 bane and on a successful hit deals no damage but forces the target to make a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or be stunned for 1d3 rounds.

When wielded by an evil creature, a power rifle does not function at all until the wielder uses a minor activity and tricks the device with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 2 bane. On a success the power rifle is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment until the weapon leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 2 Vilis points to pervert it. Once perverted, attacks with the power rifle are made with 1 boon and on a successful hit deal 2d6 lightning damage. On attack roll with a result of 20 or higher, the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned for 1d6 rounds. After every minute the wielder makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the weapon explodes, dealing 2d6 lightning damage and 2d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 3-yard radius (an Agility challenge roll made with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended power rifle explodes in the same manner 1 minute after being perverted.

POWER SHIELD

These gleaming steel and bronze shields brim with the energy of the inaequa inside them, though the obvious honor of anyone wielding them inspires awe enough. A creature wearing a power shield (either small or large) increases its Defense by an additional 1.

By using a minor activity activating the power shield, the wearer gains a flying speed of 7. A creature can use a power shield to fly for up to 1 minute, all at once or in several shorter flights, each one using a minimum of 1 round from the duration. Deactivating a power shield is a minor activity. If you are flying when the duration expires or the power shield is deactivated, you fall until you land (taking falling damage as appropriate). The power shield regains 1 round of flying capability for every 1 hour it isn't in use.

When worn by a good creature, the wearer's flying speed is 10 while the power shield is active.

When worn by a neutral or unaligned creature, the power shield functions normally.

When worn by an evil creature, a power shield can't be activated at all until the wearer uses an action and tricks the device by making a Sanctity challenge roll with 1 bane. On a success the power shield is convinced that the wearer is of neutral alignment until it leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 1 Vilis point to pervert it. Once perverted, an activated power shield grants its wearer a flying speed of 15 and 1 boon on Agility challenge rolls. Every 1d3 rounds (a secret roll by the GM) the wearer makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the power shield explodes, dealing 2d6 fire damage and 2d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 1-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended power shield explodes in the same manner 1d3 rounds after being perverted.

POWER SWORD

Expertly forged with metals ranging from aluminum finishings and inaequa-infused mercury to titanium steel alloy, greatswords are of the most sublime craftsmanship. Inside of the blade, its liquid components flow from the handle into specially designed cavities that grant the power sword extra heft to strike more effectively. The exceptional quality of these weapons make them count as magical greatswords.

In the hands of a good creature, a power sword deals 2d6+2 damage. When the wielder gets an attack roll with a result of 20+, the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or falls prone.

In the hands of a neutral or unaligned creature, a power sword functions normally.

In the hands of an evil creature, a power sword deals 2d6 damage until the wielder uses a minor activity to trick the weapon with a Sanctity challenge roll. On a success the power sword is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment until it leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 2 Vilis points to pervert it. Once perverted, a power sword treats the wielder as though they were of good alignment. In addition, the wielder gains a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with the power sword. Every 6 rounds the wielder makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the power sword instantly melts. A melting power sword deals 2d6 fire damage and 1d6 unholy damage to any creature or object touching it; if it is currently being wielded by a creature, it fuses their hands together (Agility challenge roll with 2 banes to escape; Defense 16, Health 20). A creature with fused hands gains a slam natural attack that deals 1d6 damage until they free themselves. An unattended power sword melts in the same manner 6 rounds after being perverted.

WELL HAMMER

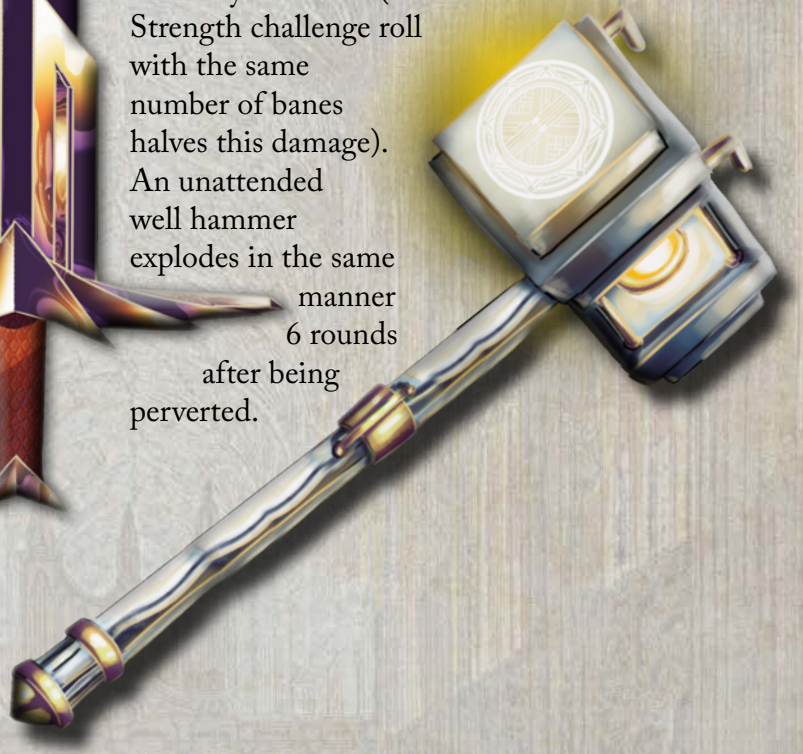
A well hammer is constructed like a power sword but emulates a maul instead, though the hammer's head has small nozzles on each corner and valves on the flat of its front and back. The exceptional quality of these weapons make them count as magical mauls.

In the hands of a good creature, a well hammer deals 3d6+2 damage. When the wielder gets an attack roll with a result of 20+, the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the target is pushed backwards 1 yard plus 1 yard per point it failed the challenge roll by.

In the hands of a neutral or unaligned creature, a well hammer functions as a maul.

In the hands of an evil creature, a well hammer deals 3d6 damage until the wielder uses a minor activity to trick the weapon with a Sanctity challenge roll. On a success the well hammer is convinced that the wielder is of neutral alignment until it leaves their possession.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 2 Vilis points to pervert it. Once perverted, a well hammer treats the wielder as though they were of good alignment. In addition, the weapon deals an extra 1d6 thunder damage on a successful hit. Every 6 rounds the wielder makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the well hammer explodes in a cacophony of energy, dealing 2d6 thunder damage and 1d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 10-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended well hammer explodes in the same manner 6 rounds after being perverted.



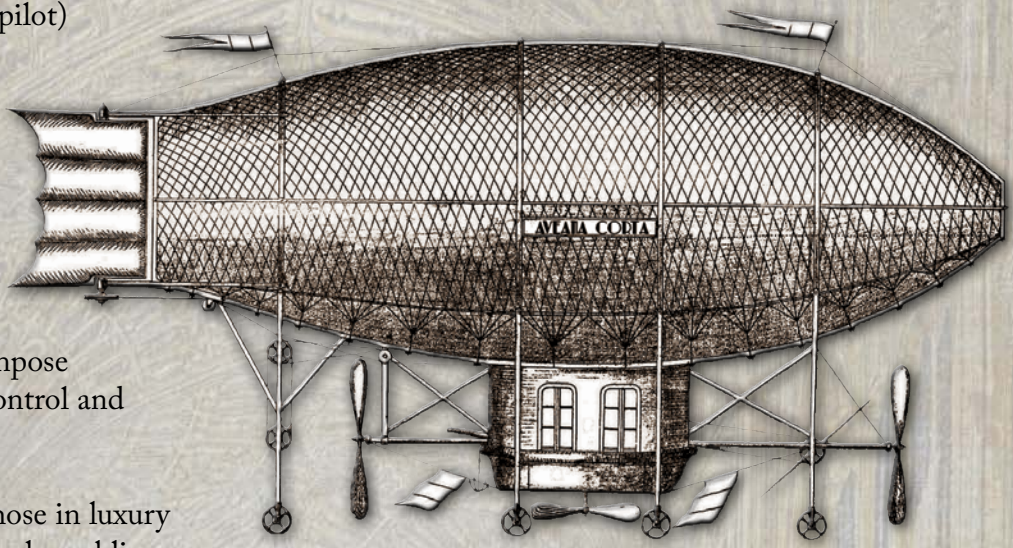
VEHICLES

The cities of Askis are rife with vehicles and as fewer steed-drawn carriages travel the world more technological conveyances hit the road. Rules for using vehicles in *Shadow of the Demon Lord* can be found in *Demon Lord's Companion*.

Failing a Sanctity or Sin challenge roll to trick or pervert an inaequa-powered vehicle renders it permanently inoperable to a creature. Evil creatures must make a new challenge roll each time they activate an inaequa-powered vehicle's engine.

Cloudglider (Dirigible) **Price 2,500 gc**

Size 10 object (vehicle)
Defense 5; **Health** 120
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 7 x 14; **Maximum Speed** 40 (acceleration 3/ deceleration 1); flyer
Crew One pilot plus five crew (pilot)
Cargo 10
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception
Fragile For every 60 damage the airship takes, reduce its maximum Speed by 10 and impose 1 bane on challenge rolls to control and maneuver the ship



Limited almost exclusively to those in luxury or researching academics, these large blimps float over Askis treating their passengers to opulent cruises. Releasing helium from this airship's gas canisters into its inflating blimp is all that is required to lift it into the air. Activating the inaequa-powered fans that propel it through the sky requires accessing the cockpit and an Intellect challenge roll.

When the engine is activated by a good creature, the pilot has 1 boon on challenge rolls to control the cloudglider.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, the cloudglider functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, the cloudglider does not activate at all until the pilot uses a minor activity to trick it with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the cloudglider is convinced that the pilot is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 3 Vilis points to pervert the cloudglider's engine. Once perverted, the engine functions as though the pilot were of neutral alignment but after 1d6 minutes explodes, dealing 6d6 fire damage to all creatures and objects in a 30-yard radius (an Agility challenge roll made with 2 banes halves this damage). Roll 1d20 and on a result of 10 or less, the explosion tears the rigging of the airship's blimp and causes its Speed to double every round as its helium leaks out, descending at least 10 yards at the end of each round until crashing (dealing its ramming damage to itself, whatever it hits, and all objects and creatures inside of it).

CUTTER (Motorcycle) **Price 1,000 gc**

Size 1 object (vehicle)
Defense 13 (armor); **Health** 80
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 1 x 2; **Maximum Speed** 50 (acceleration 8/deceleration 6)
Crew One driver
Cargo ½
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

Compared to other vehicles these two-wheeled machines are fairly simple, though they offer no protection or cover for the driver or their passenger and cannot support very much weight. Activating the inaequa-fueled engine of a cutter requires an action to grip the handles to rev the accelerator and turn the ignition key or making an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane.

When the engine is activated by a good creature, the vehicle's Speed increases by 10 and the driver has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to control the cutter.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, the cutter functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, the cutter does not activate at all until the driver uses a minor activity to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success it is convinced that the driver is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spent 1 Vilis point to pervert the cutter. Once perverted, the vehicle treats the driver as if they were of good alignment, it gains the ability to hop into the air as high as 10 yards once per round, and it can travel along vertical surfaces as long as the driver ends the vehicle's movement back on the ground at the end of their turn. Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the driver makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the cutter explodes, dealing 2d6 fire damage and 2d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 5-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended cutter explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

Inaequa-Chariot (Automobile) Price 2,000 gc

Size 2 object (vehicle)
Defense 6; **Health** 100
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 2 x 4; **Maximum Speed** 30 (acceleration 4/deceleration 4)
Crew One driver
Cargo 2
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

These cars rumble up and down the dirt paths of rural areas, the pavement of highways, and the bricked streets of settlements. Activating the engine of an inequa-chariot requires using an action to press down the accelerator pedal and turning the ignition key or make an Intellect challenge roll with 2 banes.

When the engine is activated by a good creature an inaequa-chariot operates normally.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature an inaequa-chariot drives with difficulty and the driver has 1 bane on challenge rolls to control the vehicle.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature an inaequa-chariot does not activate at all until the driver uses a minor activity to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 2 banes. On a success the inaequa-chariot is convinced that the driver is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 2 Vilis points to pervert the inaequa-chariot. Once perverted, the vehicle's speed doubles for 1 minute and the driver has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to control the vehicle. Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the driver makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the inaequa-chariot explodes, dealing 3d6 fire damage and 3d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 5-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended inaequa-chariot explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

Jetter (Speedboat) Price 1,500 gc

Size 5 object (vehicle)
Defense 5; **Health** 70
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 2 x 5; **Maximum Speed** 35 (acceleration 3/deceleration 1); liquid surfaces only
Crew One pilot (sailor)
Cargo 5
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

This sleek and aerodynamic boat is far faster than a sailing ship but inevitably draws the attention of pneumavores (page 247). Activating the engine of a jetter requires using an action to pull the accelerator lever and turn the ignition key or make an Intellect challenge roll with 1 bane.

When the engine is activated by a good creature a jetter operates normally.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature a jetter is difficult to handle and the pilot has 1 bane on challenge rolls to control the vehicle.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature a jetter does not activate at all until the pilot uses a minor activity to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the jetter is convinced that the pilot is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can spend use an action and spend 1 Vilis point to pervert the jetter. Once perverted, the vehicle's speed doubles for 10 minutes and the driver has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to control the vehicle, after which it burns out and ceases to function at all. Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the driver makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the jetter explodes, dealing 2d6 fire damage and 3d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 5-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended jetter explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

Steel Equos (Locomotive) Price 10,000 gc

Size 6 object (vehicle)
Defense 5; **Health** 300
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 4 x 10; **Maximum Speed** 30 (acceleration 3/ deceleration 1); rails only
Crew One pilot plus four crew (engineers)
Cargo 20 per train car
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

Railroad engines are a more and more common sight in Askis, rumbling across the countryside to connect towns and villages with the big cities. The engine of a steel equos is a massive and marvelous thing cased inside of a box of steel set upon dozens of precisely forged wheels. Activating this inaequa-fueled contraption requires using an action manipulating the levers inside the conductor's cab with an Intellect check made with 1 bane.

When the engine is activated by a good creature, the vehicle's deceleration increases to 3.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, the steel equos functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, it does not activate at all until the driver uses an action to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 3 banes. On a success the steel equos is convinced that the conductor is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature use an action, minor activity, and spend 4 Vilis points to pervert the steel equos. Once perverted, the vehicle's speed increases to 45, its ramming damage doubles, and every 10 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the conductor makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the steel equos explodes, dealing 4d6 fire damage and 4d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in a 20-yard radius (an Agility challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended steel equos explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

Steel Plaustra (Truck) Price 3,000 gc

Size 3 object (vehicle)
Defense 7; **Health** 120
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 3 x 6; **Maximum Speed** 20 (acceleration 3/ deceleration 2)
Crew One driver
Cargo 4
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

The heavier frames of these automotives allow for them to carry a great deal of weight in or on their truck beds, but they are slower and more cumbersome. Activating the inaequa-engine of a steel plaustra requires using an action to press down the accelerator pedal and turn the ignition key or making an Intellect challenge roll with 2 banes.

When the engine is activated by a good creature a steel plaustra operates normally.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature a steel plaustra drives with difficulty and the driver has 1 bane on challenge rolls to control the vehicle.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature a steel plaustra does not activate at all until the driver uses a minor activity to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 3 banes. On a success the steel plaustra is convinced that the driver is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 3 Vilis points to pervert the steel plaustra. Once perverted, the vehicle's speed doubles for 1 minute, its ramming damage doubles, and the driver has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to control the vehicle. Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the driver makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the steel plaustra explodes, dealing 4d6 fire damage and 3d6 unholy damage to all creatures and objects in an 8-yard radius (a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes halves this damage). An unattended steel plaustra explodes in the same manner 1d6 minutes after being perverted.

Trainhopping When reaching a rail line in a settlement roll 1d20, and on a result of 10 or less there's nothing on the move. The GM may add a bonus to this roll based on the settlement and its qualities. If encountering a rail line in the wilderness, subtract 9 from the roll and roll every hour. On a success, they find a locomotive picking up speed and can hop on with an Agility challenge roll. Any creature with a Speed less than 10 or carrying more than half their carrying weight makes the challenge roll with 1 bane. Every round, the challenge roll is made with 1 cumulative bane until the train is traveling faster than a pursuer and moves beyond reach.

Vectio (Trolley) Price 2,500 gc

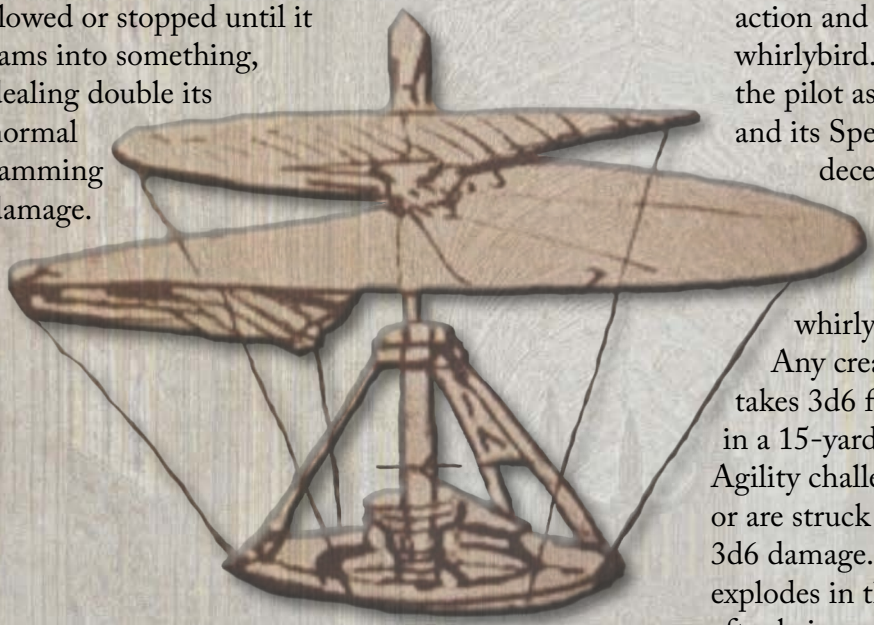
Size 4 object (vehicle)
Defense 7; **Health** 150
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 2 x 6; **Maximum Speed** 20 (acceleration 2/deceleration 2); rails only
Crew One pilot
Cargo 10 per car
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

There are no vectio outside of settlements but in urban areas they are the most commonly used form of transportation. Unlike most other vehicles, a vectio is powered by a tether that connects to cables that run along the street. This energy comes from a settlement's inaequa-fueled power grid however and still recognizes the alignment of the vehicle's driver. Operating a vectio requires a minor activity at the end of each round and an Intellect challenge roll made with 3 boons.

When the engine is activated by a good, neutral, or unaligned creature, the vectio functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, it does not activate at all until the driver uses an action to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 1 bane. On a success the vectio is convinced that the conductor is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 3 Vilis points to pervert the vectio. Once perverted, the vehicle's movement cannot be slowed or stopped until it rams into something, dealing double its normal ramming damage.



Whirlybird (Gyrocopter) Price 9,000gc

Size 3 object (vehicle)
Defense 10 (armor); **Health** 50
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 3 x 3; **Maximum Speed** 40 (acceleration 5/deceleration 2); flying
Crew One pilot
Cargo ½
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

These gyrocopters are complex machines and extremely difficult to keep in good working order, though they are easily the most mobile of airborne devices aside from jetpacks. Activating the inaequa-powered engine of a whirlybird requires using an action to work the levers inside of its cockpit after getting the rotor blades spinning, then turning the ignition key or making an Intellect challenge roll made with 2 banes.

When the engine is activated by a good creature, a whirlybird handles beautifully. Its Defense increases by 1 and the pilot has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to control the vehicle.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, a whirlybird functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, it does not activate at all until the pilot uses an action to trick the vehicle with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 2 banes. On a success the whirlybird is convinced that the conductor is of neutral alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 3 Vilis points to pervert the whirlybird. Once perverted, the whirlybird treats the pilot as though they were of good alignment and its Speed increases by 10 (acceleration and deceleration by 2 each). Every 3d6 rounds (a secret roll by the GM) the pilot makes a Sin challenge roll (made with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the whirlybird explodes into high-velocity shrapnel. Any creature inside an exploding whirlybird takes 3d6 fire and 6d6 unholy damage. All creatures in a 15-yard radius (including the driver) make an Agility challenge roll using the same number of banes or are struck by a chunk of metal, taking 3d6 damage. An unattended whirlybird explodes in the same manner 3d6 rounds after being perverted.

Windrider (Propeller Plane) **Price 8,000gc**

Size 5 object (vehicle)
Defense 8 (armor); **Health** 90
Strength 0 (–10), **Agility** 0 (–10), **Intellect** —, **Will** —
Space 3 x 6; **Maximum Speed** 60 (acceleration 3/ deceleration 1); flying
Crew One (pilot)
Cargo ½
Immune afflictions; attack rolls against Intellect, Will, or Perception; effects that allow challenge rolls using Intellect, Will, or Perception

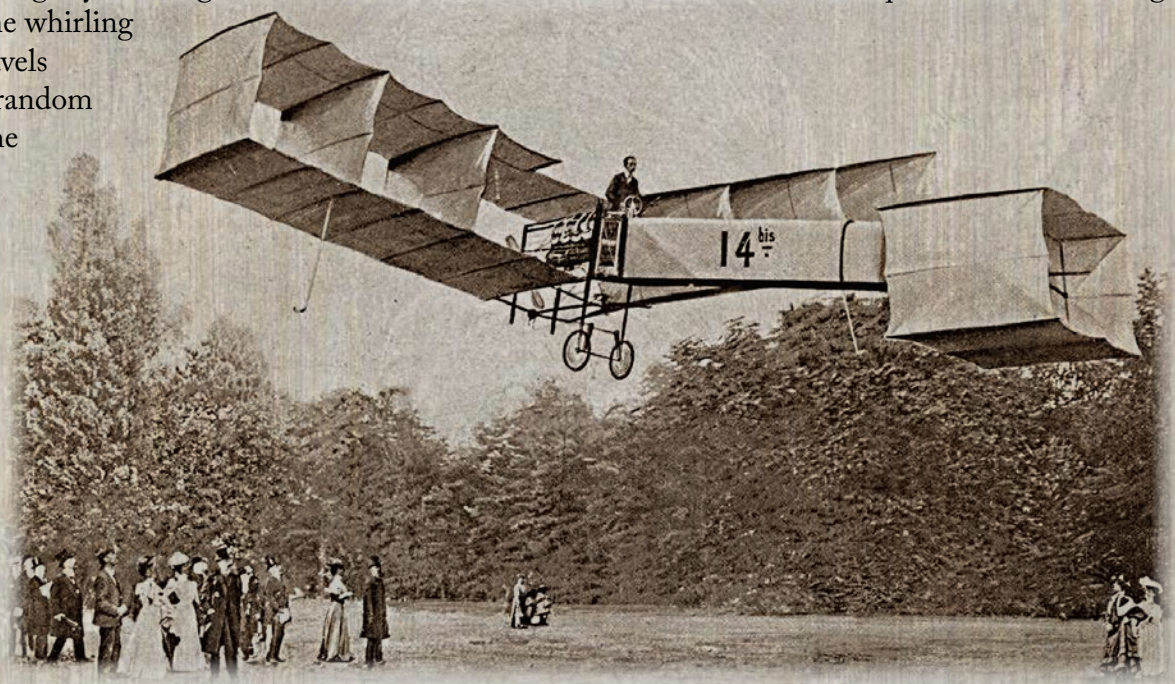
Propellers on the wings of these airplanes hurtle them through the sky and weapons can be mounted for passengers behind the pilot to fire on targets both in the air and on the ground (though not directly under the vehicle). Take-off requires 100 yards of unimpeded travel directly forward on the ground and a successful Agility challenge roll made with 1 bane. Activating the inaequa-fueled engine of a windrider requires using an action to work the pedals inside of its cockpit after getting the wing propellers spinning, then turning the ignition key or making an Intellect challenge roll with 2 banes.

When the engine is activated by a good creature, a windrider can take-off after only 30 yards and its Defense increases by 1.

When the engine is activated by a neutral or unaligned creature, a windrider functions normally.

When the engine is activated by an evil creature, the windrider does not activate at all until the pilot uses a minor activity to trick the weapon with a Sanctity challenge roll made with 3 banes. On a success the windrider is convinced that the pilot is of good alignment.

Alternatively, an evil creature can use an action and spend 4 Vilis points to pervert the windrider. Once perverted, the vehicle treats the pilot as if they were of good alignment, the pilot has 1 bane on challenge rolls made to control it, and the vehicle's Speed increases to 90 (doubling its acceleration and deceleration). Every 1d6 minutes (a secret roll by the GM) the pilot makes a Sin challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous Sin challenge roll) or the windrider into a whirling maelstrom of energy and wind. Each creature in a 60-yard radius must make a Strength challenge roll with the same number of banes. On a failure, a creature takes 4d6 damage and is flung up 20 yards away from the maelstrom (3 yards for each point it fails by) in a random direction where it falls prone. If a thrown target strikes an object, such as a wall or floor, the target takes 1d6 damage for every 3 yards it was thrown. If the target is thrown at another creature, that creature must succeed on an Agility challenge roll (with the same number of banes) or takes an equal amount of damage and falls prone. The whirling maelstrom travels 10 yards in a random direction at the end of each round until it has traveled 30 yards, at which point it dissipates.



EVIL RELICS

Scattered throughout Askis are relics of enormous power and sin. Any person can wield these items be they pious or wicked, but only those with souls beyond redemption can unlock such an object's full potential.

Drinkable Tentacles

The creations left by mad scientists as they scurry in the Taenarius Tunnels are varied and wicked, but none are so infamous as *drinkable tentacles*. No one is sure which insane inventor in the underground labyrinth created the first batch of liquid that allows a humanoid to grow slender boneless limbs from their back or cause writhing tentacles to erupt from the ground, only that the first concoction to do so came from the passages beneath Gratia. It first appeared in that city and was popular among its criminals for a time. Possession of the stuff is now illegal by penalty of permanent residency in the Samovi Preserve.

The four types of *drinkable tentacles* potions are identified by their color as shown on the Drinkable Tentacles table. The color describes both the hue of the potion (which has a tiny mass of wriggling limbs suspended in the liquid) and of the tentacles formed by drinking or smashing it.

As an action you can drink the potion, or smash it at a point you can see within short range.

Drink After drinking this potion, you immediately grow tentacles from your back. As an action, you can attack with each tentacle as a weapon with which you are proficient. Each tentacle deals 1d6 damage and reach +1. Instead of dealing damage with a tentacle, you may grab the target of your attack. Each tentacle can grab 1 creature. In addition, you gain 2 boons on challenge rolls made to climb or grapple with the tentacles.

Red and purple tentacles shoot energy projectiles that deal 1d6 unholy damage to targets within short range.

Smash After smashing this potion on the ground, a 5-yard-square mass of wriggling tentacles (of the same color as the potion) appears on the ground for 1 minute. The area becomes difficult terrain and at the end of each round, each creature in the area must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature takes 3d6 damage. A creature that takes damage from the tentacles a second time becomes immobilized until it succeeds on a Strength challenge roll made with 1 bane to escape. Red and purple tentacles cover a 10-yard-square area. Blue and purple tentacles deal 2d6 bludgeoning damage.

Drinkable Tentacles

Color	Rarity	Number of Tentacles	Ranged
Blue	Uncommon	2	No
Red	Rare	2	Yes
Green	Very rare	4	No
Purple	Legendary	4	Yes

Pin of Withering Loyalty

Centuries ago when the industrious town of Moene was on the rise, Barzen Boggle, an entrepreneurial gnome enchanter, couldn't get anyone to invest in his business. Though he begged and pitched for decades, all thought his schemes too risky. During this time he created the *pin of withering loyalty*, an enchanted trinket that gave him direct control over those who snubbed him before. So what if the side effect suffered by his deriders was death? As Barzen's business boomed his secret became known far and wide—rather than face the Justitia or rehabilitation with The Ministry, he took all his pins and fled into the Taenarius Tunnels where it's said that he left many of the relics in his abandoned lab somewhere beneath Moene.

Before using this relic you must attune to it by keeping it on your person at all times for 1 week. After you attune to the *pin of withering loyalty*, you can use an action to make an Agility attack roll against a target's Perception to affix it to a humanoid creature's exposed skin. If you exceed this check by 5 or more, you stick the relic on the target without it noticing. Once affixed to a target, the *pin of withering loyalty* stays on the surface of that creature's skin for 1d6 rounds. During this time any creature that can reach the target can remove the pin by using an action. After this time, if the *pin of withering loyalty* is still affixed to the target it burrows into the target's body.

While the *pin of withering loyalty* is inside the target and you are attuned to the pin, the target is charmed by you for as long as the pin remains inside it. While the target is charmed, you have a telepathic link with it as long as the two of you are on the same plane of existence. You can use this telepathic link to compel the target to follow your commands while you are conscious (no action required), which it does its best to obey. You can specify a simple and general course of action, such as attack that creature, run over there, or fetch that object. If the creature completes the order and doesn't receive further direction from you, it uses Defend and preserves itself to the best of its ability.

You can use your action to take total and precise control of the target. Until the end of the round, the creature takes only the actions you choose, and doesn't do anything that you don't allow it to do. During this time you are deaf and blind with regard to your own senses. In addition, you can also cause the creature to use a triggered action, but this requires you to use your own triggered action as well.

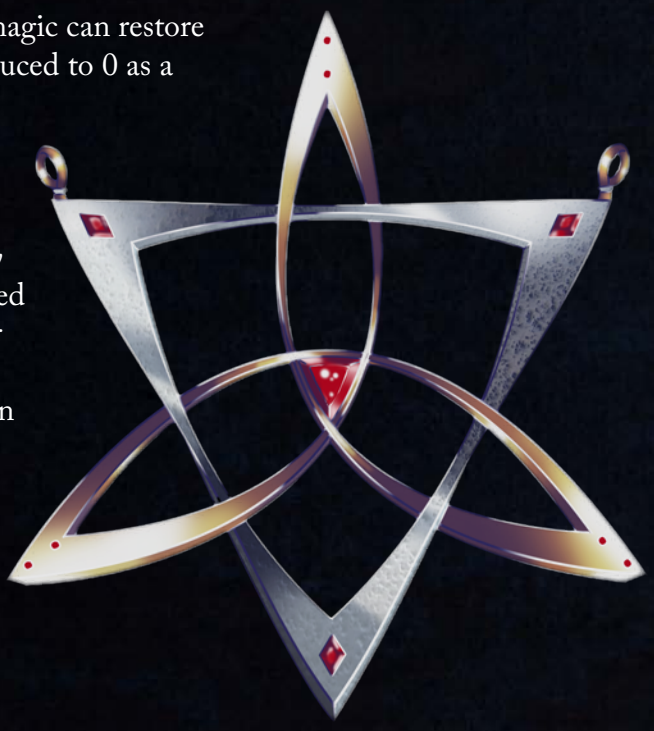
A Perception challenge roll made with 2 banes over 1 minute finds the pin, but to remove it from the target requires surgery (see chirurgical procedures on page 145-152).

Every 24 hours the target wears the *pin of withering loyalty*, its total Health maximum is reduced by 1d6. The target cannot restores its Health total until the relic is removed. Once the *pin of withering loyalty* is removed, only the use of healing magic can restore the target to its original Health. If the target's Health is reduced to 0 as a result of carrying the pin, the target dies.

If the target dies, the *pin of withering loyalty* emerges from its body and falls to the ground within 1 yard of its corpse.

A target cannot attune to the *pin of withering loyalty* while it is inside of its body. In addition, once you are attuned to the *pin of withering loyalty* you attuned to it until another creature becomes attuned to it.

If your Sin score is 14 or higher, you have 2 boons on Agility attack rolls to place the *pin of withering loyalty* on a target.



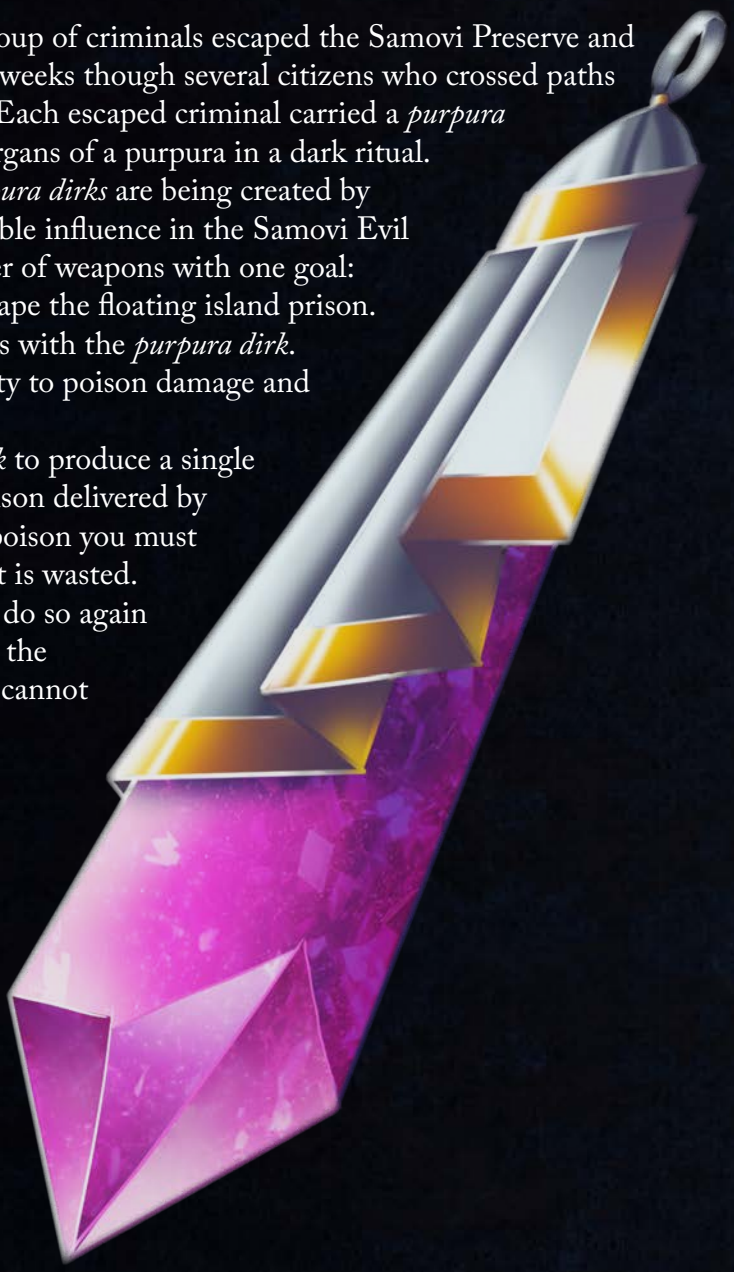
Purpura Dirk

Purpura dirks recently appeared in Peribolus after a group of criminals escaped the Samovi Preserve and made it into the city. They were captured after several weeks though several citizens who crossed paths with the escapees were stabbed or poisoned to death. Each escaped criminal carried a *purpura dirk*, a long sharp amethyst made from the petrified organs of a purpura in a dark ritual.

What the authorities do not know is that *purpura dirks* are being created by Dalvora Yalyz, a half-dragon lich that holds considerable influence in the Samovi Evil Preserve. She harvests the purpura to create all manner of weapons with one goal: arming and leading a revolution that allows her to escape the floating island prison.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with the *purpura dirk*. While the dagger is on your person, you gain immunity to poison damage and cannot be poisoned.

You can use an action to cause the *purpura dirk* to produce a single dose of any poison you have ever seen used. If the poison delivered by injury it appears on the blade. If it is another type of poison you must have an appropriate receptacle to store the poison or it is wasted. Once the dagger generates a dose of poison, it cannot do so again for another 24 hours. If your Sin score is 14 or higher, the *purpura dirk* can create three doses of poison before it cannot do so for another 24 hours.



Saber of the Succubus

Lexallia the succubus lived for years hidden among the people of Noticia, using her charms to stay one step ahead of authorities and living in disguise as the younger wife of Samson Grandwit, a retired human adventurer and legendary eldritch knight. The agents of The Inquisition are powerful however, and the fiend's ruse could only last for so long—after decades of avoiding them, the church came knocking for her. As soldiers threatened to bang down the old adventurer's door Lexallia begged Samson to hide her somewhere, anywhere. The old man, his mind addled from years of the fiend's magic, took his scimitar and stabbed his bride with it to absorb her essence into the weapon. Shortly thereafter the old adventurer died as The Inquisition burst in and his blade proved nearly impossible to destroy. Worried that its influence (radiating evil and filled with the soul of a fiend) would spread to any guards defending it, the sword was cast into the Samovi Evil Preserve. Many believe it is still within the borders of the floating prison but others know the true story.

The sword was taken as a prize by Markeel Danforth, an elven ranger who dared to enter the Samovi Evil Preserve as sport. Ultimately he left the malicious island but none know where he went next. Markeel still has the blade and rumors claim that the *sword of the succubus* has a hold of him—he stalks the world, hunting members of The Inquisition to feed the weapon's bloodlust only to slip away to the next city before he can be caught.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with the *saber of the succubus.* In addition, you can cast the *disguise* and *charm* spells twice each. You regain expended uses when you complete a rest.

If your Sin score is 10 or higher, the first time you hit a target with the *saber of the succubus* on your turn, it must succeed on a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes. On a failed save, the creature is fatigued for 1d6 rounds and heal 1d6 damage.

If your Sin score is 13 or higher, the second time you hit a target with the *saber of the succubus* on your turn, your target is slowed for 1 round and you can immediately move up to twice your Speed.

This movement does not trigger free attacks.

If your Sin score is 16 or higher, you deal an extra 1d6 psychic damage when your attack roll with the *saber of the succubus* has a result of 20+, you deal an extra 1d6 psychic damage.

Dominance If your Sin score is less than 10, when you first touch the *saber of the succubus* you must succeed on a Will atttack roll against the *sword of the succubus'* Will or you are charmed by the weapon and compelled to keep it drawn at all times.

Sentience The *sword of the succubus* is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intellect of 15, a Will of 12, and a Perception of 20. It has hearing and darksight. The sword can speak, read, and understand Abyssal, Infernal, and Vilespeech, and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. Its voice is dark and husky. The weapon constantly asks its wielder to take care of it, promising to care for its wielder in return.

Personality The *saber of the succubus* is on a quest for personal vengeance: it wants to kill members of The Inquisition. If a character has a clear opportunity to kill a member of The Inquisition and does not take it, conflict arises. The weapon is paranoid and fears abandonment—while it speaks in a seductive tone, it is very worried about its wielder leaving it somewhere or trading it away. If the wielder does not speak to the *saber of the succubus* for 24 hours, a conflict between the weapon and wielder occurs the next day at sunset (dominance).

Sign of Izbek

As the Celestial Heroes shaped the world of Askis, beings of other planes of the multiverse watched, wondering if Tucker Quickfoot and his demigods would eventually venture forth to try to shape their worlds. The great balor Izbek feared the unyielding order and good brought to Askis would soon come to demons and decided to strike first, pouring a piece of his evil soul's essence and malice into an emerald-studded cross he hurled into the settlement of Eludere. There it was picked up off the streets by Karmara the Maimed, a half-orc beggar.

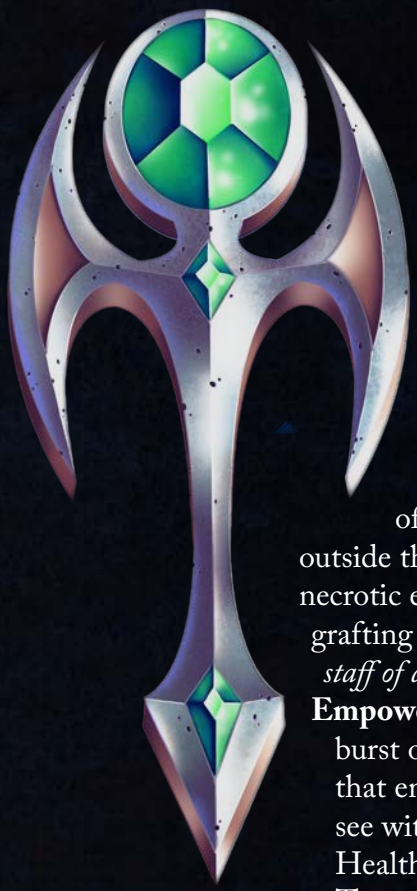
Karmara used the stone to rob and became wealthy, though it also pushed her to commit acts of chaos in the streets. The half-orc was captured before too long but the *sign of Izbek* was nowhere to be found. A decade later another beggar named Readil Halfhand found the cross and used its power to rampage and murder Eludere's wealthiest citizens and while she was killed while attempting to take another life yet again the item disappeared. The same happened with Blind Halgus, Vile Tomi, and Bergan Dirtbeard—every few years the cross somehow finds its way into the hands of Hill Town's poor, stirs up violence, and then disappears.

Consult with Izbek You can use an action to ask the balor (an entity of great knowledge of magic and the planes) a 25-word question spoken aloud. You get an immediate, telepathic response from Izbek that can be any length and is determined by the GM. Once you use the *sign of Izbek* to communicate with the fiend, it cannot be used to speak to him again until midnight.

Inflict Insanity You can use an action to force one creature you can see to make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or gain 1d6 insanity. Once the *sign of Izbek* has been used in this way three times, it cannot be used this way again until midnight.

Spells You can cast the following spells from the *sign of Izbek*: *flay skin, bone spurs, savage break, exsanguination* and *foreboding horror, unbearable pain, blasphemous influence*. Once you cast a spell with the *sign of Izbek*, it cannot be cast again from the relic until midnight.

Summon Izbek If you have a Sin score of 14 or higher, you can use an action to can summon Izbek (a **large demon**) into an unoccupied space you can see within medium range. You have no control over Izbek, but he is friendly to you and your allies when first summoned. Izbek delights in creating violence and chaos—and chooses when to return home. Once the *sign of Izbek* is used to summon Izbek, it cannot be used to do so again for 1 month.



Staff of Death's Commander

Centuries ago the tiefling necromancer Xalzaia Cardime conjured an undead army to conquer Prensatio once and for all, seeking to add the multitude of dwarves dwelling there to her forces—alive or otherwise. Though her assault failed the fiendkin murdered scores before axe and lead shot saw her dragged down in the street. Following their master's direction her apprentices stole her head, affixed it atop the necromancer's oak staff with the tongue of a ghoul, and threw the item into a mass grave outside the city that contained Xalzaia's minions. The necrotic energy in the pit seeped into the staff and skull, grafting them together with terrible magic to create the *staff of death's commander*.

Empower Undead You can use an action to emit a burst of dark energy from the *staff of death's commander* that empowers undead creatures you choose and can see within short range. Targets immediately gain 3d6 bonus Health and have 1 bane on attack rolls and challenge rolls. These benefits last for 1 minute. Once you have used this talent, you cannot do so again until midnight.

Ghoul Tongue You can attack with the tongue on the *staff of death's commander* as if it were a whip with a +2 bonus to attack and damage. When you hit a creature other than an elf or undead with the tongue, it must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or be defenseless for 1d6 rounds. The target can repeat the challenge roll at the end of each round after the first, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Soul Trap If you have a Sin score of 14 or higher and are holding the *staff of death's commander*, you can use an action to target one creature that you can see within short range. The target must make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the target's soul is magically trapped inside the relic. While the soul is trapped, the target's body and all the equipment it is carrying cease to exist. On a success the target takes 5d6 unholy damage and if this damage reduces the target to 0 Health, its soul is trapped as if it failed the challenge roll.

The *staff of death's commander* can hold one trapped soul at a time. While you carry the relic and a soul is trapped within it, you take half damage from poison and unholy.

If you have a Sin score of 14 or higher and are holding the *staff of death's commander*, you can use an action to release or destroy a soul held within the relic. If you release the soul, the creature and its equipment appear in an unoccupied space of your choosing that you can see within short range. If you destroy the soul, you unleash a 10-yard cone of unholy power. Creatures that are not undead in the area must make a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure a creature takes 6d6 unholy damage. On a success a creature takes half as much damage. If the *staff of death's commander* is destroyed while a creature's soul is inside it, the creature and its equipment appear in an unoccupied s pace nearest to where the relic was broken.

Once the *staff of death's commander* has been used to attempt to trap a soul, it cannot be used to do so again until midnight.

Spells You can cast the *animate corpse* spell at will and the *army of the dead* spell once. You regain the ability to cast this spell each day at midnight.

Sentience The *staff of death's commander* is a sentient chaotic evil staff with an Intellect of 19, Will of 14, and Perception of 16. It has hearing and darksight. The *staff of death's commander* can speak, read, and understand Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Infernal, Undercommon, and Vilespeech, and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. The relic's voice is raspy and it laughs at the misfortune of others, including the wielder.

Personality The *staff of death's commander* is most concerned with gaining necromantic knowledge and keeping those secrets between itself and its wielder. It also seeks to kill former wielders who share its knowledge of dark magic. Conflict arises if the wielder passes up a chance to gain a new tidbit of necromancy or fails to murder one of the relic's former wielders. If the wielder goes more than 10 days without making any undead, a conflict between the *staff of death's commander* and wielder occurs the next day at sunset. The *staff of death's commander* enjoys cruel jokes, the pain of others, and gazing upon the beauty of undead creatures. It constantly demands its wielder use it to make more soldiers.

Sun-Blotting Sapphire

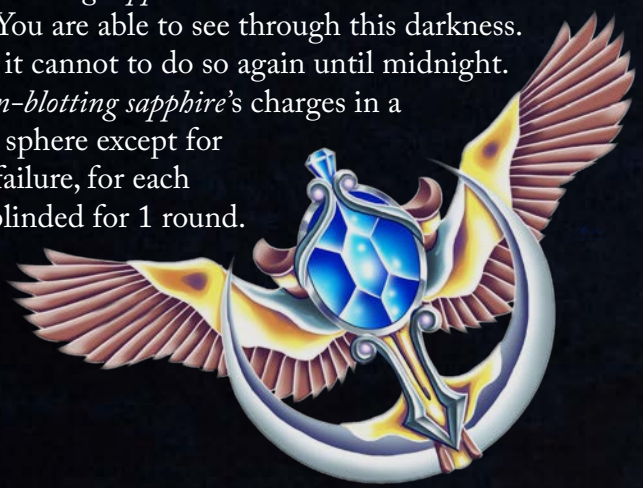
More than a millennium ago the dwarven cleric Malador Exiel fell to worship darkness, stealing a clutch of eggs from the gold dragon Verganzax to blaspheme for potent power in return. Using an evil ritual the stout priest shrunk the eggs and turned them into sapphires with the power to absorb light, create darkness, and unleash terrible destruction upon the world. He used these gems to clear the area for his personal fortress, Exiel Keep, but the great serpent tracked him down and destroyed the castle in her rage along with the crags around it. Some say the lower levels of Exiel Keep remain intact beneath the rubble that makes up Banheidd's Pass in the western ranges of the Rostratus Mountains where the *sun-blotting sapphires* wait, but the prevailing rumors suggest that the relics were taken long ago and scattered across Askis.

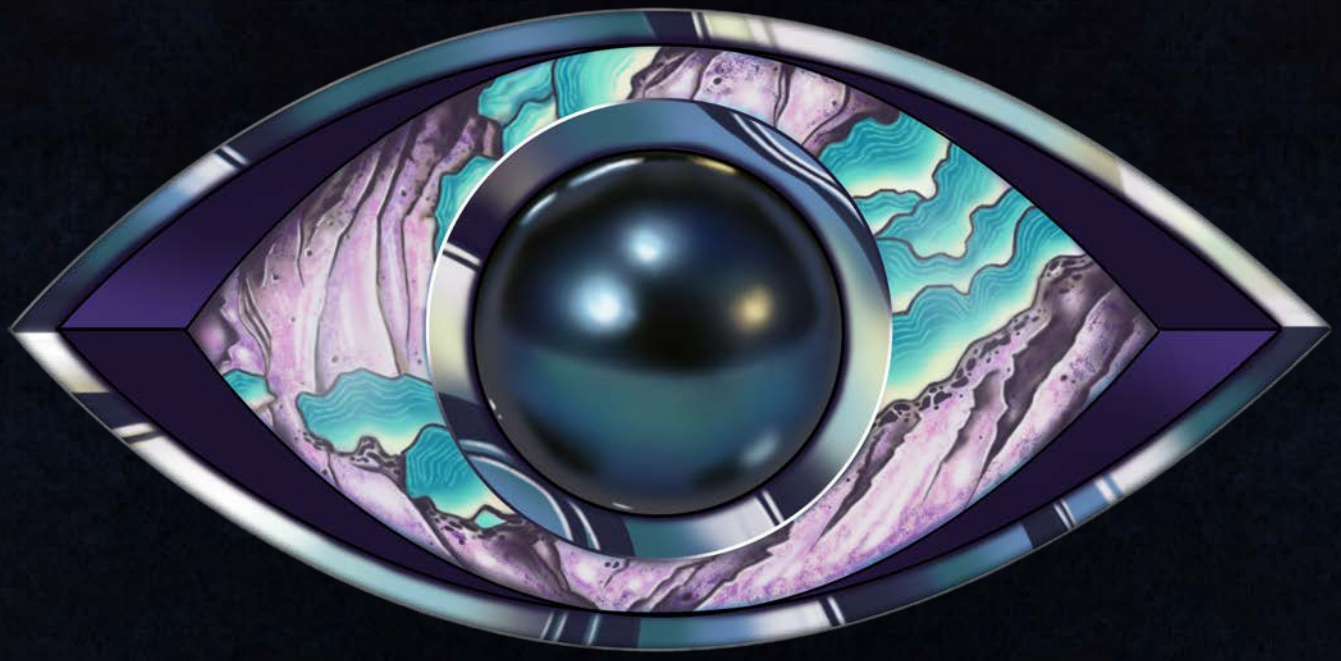
Absorb Light You can use an action to hold the *sun-blotting sapphire* aloft and absorb the light of any bright or dim light source you can see within 20 yards. If the light source is created by a spell, the magic that creates the light is dispelled. If the light source is a fire, the fire is snuffed out. For each light source it absorbs, the relic gains 1 charge (to a maximum of 10 charges). If your Sin score is 14 or higher, the *sun-blotting sphere* can gain a maximum of 7 charges. If the relic absorbs its maximum number of charges, it cannot absorb any more light. While the *sun-blotting sapphire* can absorb light, it does not nullify any other effects of a magic item, spell, or effect that sheds light.

Armor of Shadows If you have a Sin score of 14 or higher, you can use an action to command the *sun-blotting sapphire* to cover you in shadow-formed armor that lasts 1 minute. While you wear this armor, you are invisible in dim light, you gain 20 bonus Health, and any creature that hits you with an attack must succeed on an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or be blinded until the end of the next round. Once you use *sun-blotting sapphire* to conjure armor, you can't do so again until midnight.

Create Darkness You can use an action to command the *sun-blotting sapphire* to create an area of impenetrable darkness, as if you had cast the *darkness* spell. You are able to see through this darkness. Once the relic has been used to create darkness three times, it cannot to do so again until midnight.

Unleash Energy You can use an action to release all of the *sun-blotting sapphire*'s charges in a 10-yard radius sphere centered on you. Each creature in the sphere except for you must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, for each charge released a creature takes 1d6 unholy damage and is blinded for 1 round. On a success, a creature only takes half damage. Once you release the relic's charges in this way, it cannot gain more charges by absorbing light until midnight.





Twisted Worldview Eye

The high elven philosophy professor of the Sancti Afflatu College in Suppetia, Dean Mantocles Ustinar, created the *twisted worldview eye* to win debates with his fellow lecturers. The relic was crafted from the petrified brain of an elder aboleth which stolen from the university's museum. Mantocles did not realize that the full power of the aboleth still lived within the gem, and in his ignorance it took hold of his darkest desires. He used the *twisted worldview eye* to manipulate and charm others in order to rise through the ranks of the school. Once he was named dean the elf turned to taking over the government but in Mantocles's lust for power, caution was thrown to the wind—after being exposed but before he could be captured, he fled to the Taenarius Tunnels, leaving the relic behind. It has since been returned and is back on display in the college's museum, this time under heavy guard.

Argument Winner When a creature verbally disagrees with something you have said, you can use a triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the target's Intellect. On a success the target is charmed by you for 1 hour. At the end of that hour, it does not know you charmed it with the eye. The charmed condition ends early if you or an ally attacks the target.

Natural Charmer You have 2 boons on challenge rolls made to persuade.

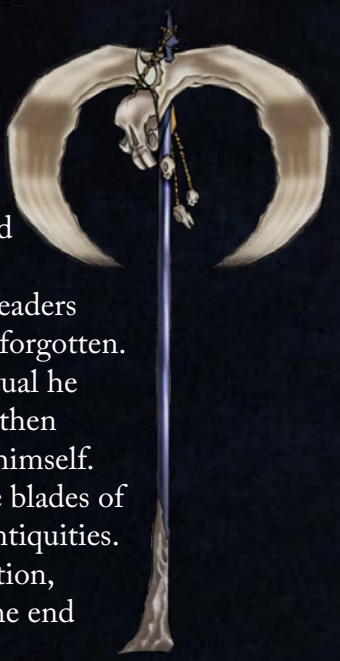
Spells The *twisted worldview eye* has 10 charges. While holding the relic, you can use an action to expend 1 or more of its charges to cast one of the following spells: *charm* (1 charge), *command* (1 charge), *compel* (3 charges), *fling* (4 charges), *implant suggestion* (4 charges), or *enslave* (5 charges).

The *twisted worldview eye* regains 1d6 + 2 expended charges each day at midnight. If your Sin score is 14 or higher, the relic regains all of its charges each day at midnight.

Twist Worldview You can use an action to choose one creature you can see within long range. The target must succeed on a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes or for the next 1 minute, it sees its enemies as allies and its allies as enemies. Each time the target takes damage it can repeat this challenge roll, ending the effect on a success. Once a target succeeds on a challenge roll against this this effect it is immune from Twist Worldview for the next 24 hours.

Destroying the Relic The only way to destroy the *twisted worldview eye* is through an 8 hour ritual that requires the sacrifice of 100 purpura. The University of Sanctus Menaechmus (formerly the Sancti Afflatu College) is aware of this ritual but does not have the funds for a delve into the Samovi Evil Preserve to obtain so many of the purple celestials, nor do they have the amoral compass that would allow them to kill five score of the innocent creatures.

Vengeance's Release



As a soldier of The Inquisition and devoted paladin, Calladon Rebeaux wielded a legendary axe that laid hundreds of evildoers to rest in the violence before the Utopian Dawn. Despite having performed his duty perfectly, fate dealt the holy warrior a cruel hand as he approached retirement in Adversus—his beloved wife Mira was mistaken for a wanted sorceress by his comrade Aledore Kendall. Unable to defend herself she quickly fell to Aledore's blade and though his tragic mistake was deeply regrettable, The Ministry did not punish him. Instead of rendering pennance its local leaders told the enraged Calladon that this was a casualty of war, a tragedy to be forgiven and forgotten.

Calladon could not let his wife's murder go unanswered. Through an unholy ritual he poured his lust for vengeance and his hate for The Ministry into his notched greataxe, then slayed Aledore and as many members of The Ministry as he could before being killed himself. In the end the death toll was fifty-four, the same number of notches within the double blades of Calladon's weapon—which is still on display in Adversus' Museum of Artifacts and Antiquities.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls with *vengeance's release*. In addition, when a creature deals damage to you, you have 1 boon on attack rolls against it until the end of the next round.

If you die while attuned to *vengeance's release*, you return as a **boneguard** to seek vengeance on the creature that killed you. The GM may decide to control the boneguard as an NPC.

Healing Vengeance If you have a Sin score of 14 or higher, each time you kill a creature that dealt damage to you in the last 24 hours with *vengeance's release*, you heal 2d6+2 damage.

Sentience *Vengeance's release* is a sentient neutral evil weapon with an Intellect of 10, Will of 14, and a Perception of 17. It has hearing and darksight. The greataxe can speak, read, and understand Common and can communicate with its wielder telepathically. Its voice is dark and commanding and it speaks of vengeance as a righteous cause.

Personality *Vengeance's release* hungers to slay those who hurt the wielder in anyway. From the merchant who charged a bit too much for those rations to the trolls that kill the wielder's mother, anyone who caused the person holding the greataxe to experience pain must die. Conflict arises if the wielder does not kill a creature that wrongs it in some way. If the wielder goes more than 10 days without killing any creature with the greataxe, a conflict between the weapon and wielder occurs the next day at sunset. *Vengeance's release* takes itself seriously and does not enjoy frivolity or tasks that distract it from its mission of meting out vengeance.

Regarding the Clockwork of Capillaries - Collected & Annotated Notes on Engines of Sinew, Bone, and Nerve

This odd medical treatise explores the raw, rude mechanics of the humanoid body from a purely hypothetical, inhumanly emotionless perspective and includes a multitude of truly shocking diagrams, illustrations and charts. Individual chapters are accumulated from a variety of banned and heretical works on vivisection, extreme pain tolerance and amputation studies, the limitations of physical recovery from shock-trauma and exploratory, invasive experiments on extended families for purposes of "codifying the pure template of man." Several variations of the book exist with each editor revising it and adding their own awful annotations, sometimes redacting the more restrained experiments of their predecessors in favor of their own more ambitious (and more horrific) chirurgical blasphemies.

Appearance Bound in worn yet pliable and moisture-resistant hide, these rare tomes are typically blood-spattered as their owners often consult with the grimoires at close proximity to the subjects and objects of their experiments. The pages are bound with gut and glue, interspersed with numerous tabs and colored marking ribbons. In addition to bound parchment the book is stuffed with unnumbered, ring-mounted loose-leaf pages, scrawled marginal notes, and step-by-step instructional diagrams with tiny preserved tissue samples mounted on packets or slides. The whole volume is copiously spattered with blood, unidentifiable visceral-fluids, and alchemical reagents.

Reading The reader of this tome develops an all-consuming obsession with blood, vital organs, and observing anatomical bodies flayed open. Whenever a living creature adjacent to the reader takes more than 10 damage from a weapon attack (or other appropriate effect), the reader becomes

stunned for 1 round (a Will challenge roll made with 1 bane negates) as they observe the flow of blood. Consuming too much knowledge from this grimoire causes a reader to become deranged; each week a creature reads from the pages of this book, they must succeed on an Intellect challenge roll (made with 1 bane for every 1d4 pages read after the 4th) or risk developing a multiple personality disorder. On a failure, a cold, calculating, and cruelly clinical Lawful Evil version of the character takes root in the reader's psyche and each time they finish a rest, there is a cumulative chance the alternate personality is in control until the next rest (roll 1d20 after the first day and on a 1 the alternate personality takes control, on the second day of uninterrupted control roll 1d20 and on a 1 or 2 the alternate personality takes control, and so on).

Benefits Once a reader has read 10 or more pages of any edition of this work, they gain a +2 bonus on all challenge rolls to treat wounds. If the reader has the book open and available when making a challenge roll for a chirurgical procedure, they do so with 1 boon. The reader also gains a +2 bonus on challenge rolls made to produce medicinal alchemical items.

The tome contains the methods for all the chirurgical procedures. In addition, the grimoire contains the formulae for creating a number of constructs (including dissectrinators and as many other mechanical horrors as the GM deems fit).

Omnia Mutandis

This text, penned over the course of five generations of the Morrodox family, reflects a simple ethos: All things must change. The book is the compiled record of a family tradition of study and experimentation into the manipulation of bloodlines. Rooted originally in the simple hybridization of plants and husbandry of animals, the early research-driven genetic principles of Nathaniel Morrodox were taken by his son Arnim and especially his grandson Essex into their application to higher life forms, including humans and their kin. Essex became obsessed with the idea of manipulating the breeding lines to perfect the humanoid races, culling impurities and reinforcing the strongest bloodlines with the greatest potential for advancement and power.

Not content to simply breed the best, he experimented with the use of magical and alchemical reagents to forcibly jumpstart evolutionary (and sometimes devolutionary) responses latent in the genome. Essex's daughter, Zola, became his rapt disciple, even volunteering her own womb as the creche for Essex's experiments. They carefully selected the most refined male specimens they could find, taking their seed and tainting Zola's developing brood with alchemical solutions, rare metallic suspensions and tinctures from the deep places of the earth, and the star-flung residuum fallen from deep space. Her two eldest offspring, Edgar and Herbert, were both born hideously deformed and survived only a few years each, but in her third child, a girl she named Wyndam, she saw perfection. Beautiful, strong, and brilliant at an early age, Wyndam seemed an early validation of the evolutionary theories of her mother and grandfather.

However, the rigors of experimentation took a terrible toll upon Zola's body and mind, and it was not long before little Wyndam became Essex Morrodox's new favored pupil. Zola became their new Patient Zero, living out a tormented existence as her father and daughter studied their erstwhile kin bit by excruciating bit, leaving Zola partially vivisected yet clinging to a tormented half-life for years on end as they explored the aftereffects their many experiments had worked upon Zola's genetic structure. Essex and Wyndam used these insights to forge an entirely new race of bestial mutates, crafting horrific hybrids to serve them as laborers and soldiers. Wyndam cultivated and cloned her mother's corrupted and diseased tissues, forever searching for new branching germ lines to weave together her twisted experiments, guided by her grandfather's ever-closer guidance. Together they mastered the science of stable, controllable, and even heritable mutations.

In time, the two of them shared their own genetic material, further perverting the grotesque mockery of family they had already become. However, though Essex thought himself the guiding partner in their affairs both scientific and salacious, Wyndam's foresight and cruelty were more

precocious than he had guessed. After taking what she wanted from her grandsire, the clever coquette arranged an "accident" that left him crippled and helpless. Wyndam then smugly saw to it that her grandfather suffered the same fate as her own mother, leaving herself the sole repository of the family's line and wisdom. Aided by her mutate servants she began growing her own replacements, mutated and (to her deviant mind) perfected clone versions of herself, infused with her grandfather's essence. Little did she realize however that her grandfather had not taught her all his secrets; having mastered the arts of cloning before Wyndam was born, Essex had prepared multiple clones of himself, and he had subtly tampered with the formulae in Wyndam's notes, causing her clones to devolve horribly and run amok, while the risen clone of Essex absconded with his captive granddaughter. Wyndam hasn't been seen since and her final fate is unknown (and unrecorded).

The book always appears again in the hands of an academic with more ambition than restraint, the horrors contained within inevitably spilling out.

Appearance *Omnia Mutandis* is a hefty tome with covers of acid-washed non-reactive alloy, with a spine crafted —as a grotesque joke—from the spine of a mutated humanoid of short stature. Several discs of burnished metal and polished crystal are embossed onto the book's cover, core sections of rare elements whose now spent emanations fueled the mutagenic experiments of the book's creators. Strange tendinous membranes stretch from the spine of the book across its covers and into its pages. When stimulated with heat, electricity, or sonic vibration these tissues can be incited to expand or contract with some precision, allowing it to be held open or propped in a variety of positions, or even suspended from the black tendons as they are deformed into hooks and hoops. The text within is a madcap amalgam of different branches of research, and the script within is no different. The Morrodox handwriting ranges from decorative to simple, with impatient scrawls alongside elegant and refined penwork, clearly the product of multiple authors and with annotations throughout forward and backwards. On nearly every page is a stain of some sort; the most benign might simply be blood, the others too terrible to contemplate.

Reading Reading *Omnia Mutandis* is sometimes a bewildering exercise in synergizing the higher functions of alchemical metacalculus interwoven with the connecting strands of magic. In order to learn or copy any of the spells contained within this tome, the reader must succeed on an Intellect challenge roll (made with 1 bane per spell level above 1st-level). In addition, each week a creature reads from the pages of this book, it must succeed on an Intellect challenge roll (made with 1 bane for every previous reading since the last failed Intellect challenge roll) or gain 1d6+1 Insanity.

In addition to the mind-rending effects of studying this tome, the residual alchemical creations developed by the Morodox clan infuse the pages of the *Omnia Mutandis*. Though present only in trace quantities, continued exposure to the book can lead to mutational complications for the reader. Each day spent studying the book forces the reader to make a Strength challenge roll (made with 1 bane for for every previous reading since the last failed Intellect challenge roll). On a failure, the reader reduces one randomly determined attribute by 1. If the reader ever rolls a natural 1 on this challenge roll, they contract a permanent mutation. As long as the reader has any form of insanity, they are unwilling to admit that handling the *Omnia Mutandis* is dangerous unless they have reduced a single attribute by 4 or more.

If the reader spends at least 24 hours studying the book, they gain 2 boons on challenge rolls to notice that a creature is a shapechanger (whether it is transformed or not) and on challenge rolls made to use an alchemist's kit.

Fleshcraft Like *Regarding the Clockwork of Capillaries - Collected & Annotated Notes on Engines of Sinew, Bone, and Nerve*, the *Omnia Mutandis* contains the methods for all chirurgical procedures, though only those directly related to the working of flesh.

Spells The *Omnia Mutandis* contains the knowledge of the Blood & Bone, Evil, Forbidden, Necromancy, and Transformationg magic traditions.

As she steps forward the Sica Rimora shakes her head, her void-edged bracazian blade bleeding an utterly black mist into the darkness of the passage. "Rogar, this entire thing reeks of an ambush. We've been walking for two hours and the further on we get the worse my armor readings are."

The pirate king only chuckles at her caution. "Got your tin can in a fuss, eh? Spectrometiculator is out of tune, returnin' fast vectors?" Rogar idly plays with one of the decrepit fingers hanging from his beard, his wide eyes standing out from the darkness and peering ahead of her. "Tell me my guess is right!"

His lieutenant sighs, nodding and sheathing one of her swords—but not both—as the other Sica Rimor behind Rogar responds on her behalf. "As usual your guess is right Captain, but that does not make her incorrect. We've both noticed several sensors on our approach to this supposed meeting place."

"Ohhh, is that so?" In the blink of an eye the dwarf's chambered shotgun is in his hands and firing, a spray of lead destroying a crenellated stalactite just above their heads. What falls onto the ground is not made of stone—it crumples and dents as it hits, clockwork pieces spilling out along with sparks and smoke. "Aye I seen 'em too, no fancy helmet required. By my count that's the fourth or so, meanin' we must be close."

Not a moment later they reach a split in the Taenarius Tunnels and the lead Sica Rimora silently motions for her companions to stop; before any of them can call out a robed tiefling steps into view, his hands templed together. "My master," he says, "would prefer it if you refrained from damaging any more of her works." He gracefully turns on heel and begins walking away, the trio of visitors following behind. With every step his posture straightens and with each syllable his voice becomes more metallic, tinged with a hollow echo. "You may proceed without fear, Pirate-King Rogar Fulgrym —time is a commodity that I have in far greater abundance than you. Were there any intention to cause you injury it would have been a simple thing long before your ship sailed near the cove you arrogantly believe has given you a safe, secret harbor."

His lieutenants exchange a knowing look but Rogar merely guffaws, increasing his stride. "Best we get on with it then!" In a few minutes they come upon a flickering green light from around the corner of the passage after the worked stone turns into brick and the pirate king's laughter finally fades, his ears straining to pick up details from the conversation inside of the jade-lit chamber. Within is a dining room from antiquity, two very particular individuals standing at one end of a long banquet table with plans and schematics spread out before them.

The first is taller and thinner than Rogar, her body covered in midnight black armor with engraved spikes and lit in spots by the same unholy green flames illuminating the room—Caskette, the host of this meeting of minds. Beside her is a man half her size, festooned with clocks and watches but otherwise attired in a finely-tailored suit and top hat. Though not nearly as infamous or well-known as she is, the pirate king deduces that he can be no other than Aevus Fatalibus. Rogar notices the lack of lackeys and beckons for his Sica Rimora to stay back then waltzes forward himself, quickly taking in the designs and nodding absentmindedly to the halfling gentleman.

Aevus winks and tips his hat but Caskette makes no effort whatsoever to address the new arrival, continuing as if he'd been there all along. "Gespadrieux insists that he has a solution for Lellwyn Fethyrwal and though he is treacherous, there is little reason for him to lie at this juncture." She gestures at a bureau against the wall and a wide scroll floats towards her as she continues, her raspy metallic voice echoing from both herself and her retreating servant. "While this is dealt with I suggest we focus on Tapper Underknoll and breaking the Samovi Preserve. Liberating it without destruction will be too costly in resources, and anything or anyone worth recruiting from within will survive the devastation. There will be losses to be certain, but my estimates have determined it is the least costly tactic."

Mumbling affirmations and nodding enthusiastically the halfling grabs the scroll, unfurling it to reveal a large, sparse diagram of the floating island prison. "I agree wholeheartedly—what a sight that'll be! Imagine the chaos! We will accomplish much in the havoc that'll ensue, but we'll need more information than this…"

Caskette finally turns to Rogar, the lenses of her armored eyes seething with unholy jade light. "That brings us to you, pirate king. We understand that you have special knowledge of this place." She points to a fountain pen and it floats in the air in front of the dwarf as she asks him, "what say you?"

Rogar cracks his knuckles and grins, striding forward and grabbing it from the air with a meaty fist.

DEAN SPENCER

EVIL GAMEMASTERING

Running a successful campaign can be arduous as it is but when the players are the villains there's more for the GM to be mindful of to make sure the game's a success. The fundamental thing to remember is to keep everyone at the table entertained and thrilled to be there—a gruesome and depraved time perhaps, but a worthwhile one all the same.

Consent

This is a book for groups that are interested in roleplaying evil characters and is not ideal for all tables. The content herein is intended for mature readers and contains material which may cause discomfort. **GMs should <u>not</u> surprise players with the nature of what they are going to experience**—everyone at the table should participate in a discussion of consent before play begins, confirming that they are on board to explore the adult-oriented themes in *Book of Exalted Darkness.* In addition to making sure that no players are ostracized, this also helps set the tone for the game to encourage a more serious approach than what some groups might be accustomed to.

Ambiance is important whenever evil plays a palpable central role that goes beyond simplistic motivations for NPCs and for this reason alone a GM should seek the consent of everyone in a gaming group. Jokes and quips are a frequent part of most games but if the content of a campaign is about candle-lit rituals and gruesome acts, the tone of a session will fall apart quickly due to inappropriate commentary (even if it might be quite humorous).

Consent should also be a concern for GMs as not every player is necessarily prepared for a long, graphic description of someone having their legs slowly torn off by a monstrous demon. What if a player has actually witnessed an industrial accident where someone lost their legs? While that certainly has the capacity to be an extremely memorable and horrifying experience for that player, they (very understandably) may not want to be reminded of the memory. Here are a few bullet points you can list off when seeking the consent of a gaming group before engaging in macabre horror roleplay:

- Decapitation or Disembowelment
- Dismemberment
- Extremely Graphic Violence
- Religious Violence
- Sexual Violence
- Torture

With a baseline for what is or is not acceptable territory for the game to traverse, the GM can craft narratives and plot arcs that explore the darker sides of roleplaying games. These should create ample opportunities for players to be despicable and vile, pushing the boundaries of morality and encouraging them to walk ever darker paths. In situations like this a common problem tends to arise very quickly: teamwork. After all, why should the cutthroat mercenary suffer the prattling of a mage that takes coin that could be hers, and why should a power-hungry dark priest tolerate anyone other than themselves benefiting from his sacrifice? In short, avarice and greed can be just as damning to an evil game as comedy.

Maim, Mutilation, Murder—It's All Evil To Me

One adventurer's evil may not be another's and after determining the boundaries of the campaign with a discussion of consent the GM should lock down just how villainous the party wants to be. This process should be worked into character creation, ideally during a Session Zero so everyone has ingrained connections to one another prior to bringing the downfall of goodness. To that end there are some suggestions below to give guidelines on how dark the content of the game might get—it's ultimately the GM's job to figure out just the right vile temperature.

Mustache Twirling. This level of evil is the realm of saturday morning cartoons and political satire. If anything in this book is appropriate for the teenager crowd, this is likely where that line gets drawn—and it means that some content (like vile rituals) is probably a little too visceral for the table. GMs should keep to tame descriptions of gore and villainous acts, relying on a more nebulous attitude that lets players populate the environment around them via questions about what they see peppered by the occasional lead to keep things above board. For example, when discovering a room used in a ritual that

involved living sacrifices still on site, the players might be asked "do you check the bodies for marks similar to those you found on the note?" and use tattoos rather than something more nefarious and invasive (like body injections, inscriptions on bones that need skinned of their meat to be found, and the like). In general the inherent heresies of the adventurers should only come up when there's a major purpose for them in the game's plot.

Realistic. The world we live in can be an awfully dark place already and the evils of Earth's history might be as dark as the game gets. In that case there shouldn't be too much material to omit from the *Book of Exalted Darkness* aside from the exceptionally diabolical elements (like fleshcloths made of babies or the patron of meat warlock archetype), descriptions of gore can be uncomfortable but on the brief side, and the party's inherent heresies should make infrequent appearances regardless of the campaign's bigger scope.

Grimdark. Tame folks trying out an evil campaign are best suited to start here—the GM should be swimming in the well of wickedness, but the PCs are just taking a few drinks. Everything in this tome can be a part of the campaign without unduly upsetting anyone, there's no bottom for how visceral some descriptions might be, and inherent heresies should play a considerable role in the campaign. Remember however that the GM is probably going to come off as more despicable than the party, and there should be an expectation that this level might slide backwards to be more realistic or to be a catalyst that draws the adventurers into true villainy.

Truly Vile. This is the reason for the *Book of Exalted Darkness*. There are no fences or leashes in this level of evil roleplaying (unless that's part of your thing? We aren't here to judge you) and the material in this tome should be used liberally. When describing gore the GM should go at length and into nauseating detail whenever possible, and inherent heresies should be *inherent* to every game session with temptations galore. While this is arguably the most enjoyable option it's also the most delicate to successfully maintain—use the guidelines below to keep a group of horrendously vile reprobates together as the party explores the darkest shadows of the table.

Circumstances and Pacts

Evil PCs are naturally disposed to being, well, evil, and that doesn't exactly encourage equality and teamwork. While this can be great in the context of a narrative toolset it makes for a difficult experience in a tabletop gaming environment and to address this issue, GMs have a few different tacks that can keep a group of diabolical adventurers from tearing one another's throats out.

Plot. The first and foremost route that a GM should use to unify evil PCs is the narrative one. Intertwined by fate, the adventurers need one another in order to enact a ritual that will empower them all, keep a common foe at bay, or otherwise serve everyone in a manner that attempting alone would be tacitly impossible. There is strength in numbers as well—if the world around the PCs is predicated to unveil their dark deeds, a united front will last much longer than isolated individuals that go against the grain.

Mechanical Benefits. While there can be many reasons for evil PCs to act against one another, the motivation is *usually* greed. A simple answer is to provide something in exchange for acting like a team player. This might be bonus experience points each session, extra gold, or inspiration rewards, but by providing an incentive to encourage friendlier play the GM can bring party unification back into balance despite the absence of morality.

Tertiary Benefits. No one person can be all things to all people at all times. The powerful necromancer might have a capacity to intimidate but turning the ear of someone in the king's court will be beyond his reach—though a malevolent and deceptive bard will have a much easier time reaching so high profile a target. Both can benefit greatly from a dark warrior able to fend off the champions of justice that seek to stop the influence of evil, and the stealthy arts of an assassin to quell witnesses will aid them all. The strong pull of greed might spur audacious characters to attempt subterfuge against their allies if they think they can get away with it, but GMs should encourage diverse and complementary character roles for PCs and include obstacles in adventures that require a variety of strengths to reinforce the benefits of working together.

Contacts. Another good way to curb group subterfuge is with contacts. These individuals can be used both to encourage the PCs they are connected with to avoid injuring their companions in any way,

but also as tokens that can be targeted with hostility in revenge for slights between party members. In addition to that contacts can provide ease of play for other aspects of the game—one PC might know a good fence, another an esoteric collector that sells magic reagents of all kinds, and another could have a positive relationship with the local head of law enforcement.

Squabbles and NIAS

Even with an entire world predicated against them and numerous reasons to be trustworthy allies, inevitably villains among the adventuring party will take actions against their companions. For these eventualities remember to NIAS—**N**otice the problem, **I**solate the players involved, **A**meliorate the issue, and **S**quash the disagreement. This is a solid ethos to keep handy for any game but particularly so when the group are playing wicked characters predicated to duplicity and double crosses.

For the purposes of NIAS we're identifying players that are involved with an above-table problem as "troublemakers", but this shouldn't be a post to lean on—it's only a term and the GM should remember that these folks aren't necessarily out to do mischief beyond the table just for the hell of it.

Notice the Problem. Most of the time a player that's disgruntled isn't going to be overwhelmingly subtle about their dissatisfaction. The GM has a plethora of things keeping them busy during a gaming session so the first thing to do is ask other players if the troublemaker has said or seriously implied that treachery might be incoming. That said, here's a few things to try and pick up on while the group is rolling dice.

- Is the troublemaker unusually detached and bored?
- Are there any players the troublemaker is trying not to engage with regardless of in-game motivations?
- Has the troublemaker's character been hard-pressed to get involved in the game recently?
- Is the troublemaker trying to get ahold of items that pose a particular threat to their companions, like an *arrow of elf slaying*?
- Does the troublemaker often get overshadowed by another player?
- Is the troublemaker always late or leaving the game abruptly?

Isolate the Players Involved. Once a possible troublemaker has been identified the first thing for the GM to do is directly address them while away from the rest of the group. It's especially important at this juncture to be direct, transparent, and understanding; before starting this discussion the GM should do their level best to imagine themselves being in the troublemaker's shoes. Remember that while the characters might be malicious villains, the players are friends (or close enough) and should receive respectful treatment when they feel wronged. Should another member of the group be involved with the troublemaker's dissatisfaction, the GM approaches them next in just the same way—frank, open, and empathetic—to get some perspective on all sides of the underlying issue.

Ameliorate the Issue. After the GM has figured out the root of what might motivate a troublemaker to injure the party, steps should be taken to bring an end to the direct conflict (and the greater threat to group cohesion). When this means being harsh on a member of the party (for instance, taking away that *arrow of elf slaying*) there should be overcompensation in return (maybe they get two *arrows of celestial slaying* in return). The most important thing to remember for this step is to take the immediate danger of betrayal out of the mix so that the campaign and game sessions can continue without skipping a beat.

Squash the Disagreement. All of the previous steps should easily be doable between sessions or if the danger of traitorous players arises in the middle of a game, inside of a 30 minute quick break (far shorter than introducing one or two more characters and handling the fallout therein). Now the GM has to handle the back end of things and try to permanently mend the rift between the party. In situations like these it's best to have more latitude than normal and not be too shy of placating—better to let the errant adventurers have their way a bit in lieu of the group suffering (and background action on things elsewhere can be quietly ramped up to compensate). Here are a few suggestions on how to bring troublemakers back into the fold together so the party comes out stronger from the experience.

- The troublemakers acquire magic items that are sentient and linked together—if one is kept away from the other or either destroyed, each loses its powers.
- Introduce a subplot that only the troublemakers initially know about and utilize their talents as it gets incorporated into the campaign, illustrating to them and the party that each has a vital role in their group.
- Run a mini-sidequest for the troublemakers in-between game sessions. This could be as simple as a brief romp into a dungeon or an assault on a small outpost of enemies. The important thing is that it gives them a close shared experience to reference later and that they've been given a little extra attention from the GM (and hopefully won't need more because of it).
- Take a chill and hang out! Share a meal with the troublemakers and just talk shop about gaming generally. Don't even broach the subject that's spurred on this impromptu get-together—try to find common ground between them instead, something that might bridge the gap and get them to be more cooperative with one another in the future.

Evil Roleplaying

It's expected for the PCs to do horrible, despicable things in the name of evil or when giving in to their inherent heresy. We recommend that players "share the highlights" of how they maim, rape, mutilate, torture, and mistreat other creatures. While fun the first few times, with repetition these interactions can drag on roleplay by the larger group and desensitize the table.

MAD SCIENTISTS

The mad scientists of Askis are the last refuge for evil in the world, engineering the Night of Largitio and reaping the harvest of wicked souls they've sown. Presented here are the five most wanted by The Inquisition and The Ministry, but GMs are encouraged to invent their own as well, using the following as examples to model a new villainous mastermind's statistics. These NPCs have three central purposes—first and foremost they are meant to aid and abet the PCs. Gespadrieux in particular has motives to do as much, but each of these characters have knowledge and resources that can make the party a viable force of insurrectionists. Mad scientists are also excellent catalysts for the plot of a campaign, going a little further than their initial intent with information directly useful to the adventurers. While they can make great adversaries the final objective of mad scientists is to take the place of the Celestial Heroes alongside the PCs (though what they rule over will be drastically different depending on which stratagem is championed—be it a mad scientist's or the party's). Once Askis has been remade as the adventurers see fit, they can take the backing of a whole world to pursue new and more ambitious goals, or if the GM desires, fight to stomp out their former allies to achieve complete global dominance in a campaign of intrigue, sabotage, and bloody war.

Demigod Accoutrements The GM may decide that the possessions of the Celestial Heroes carry residue of the powers granted to them by inaequa and the *Torquem Machina*. The following benefits are gained, although how they are divided is at the GM's discretion: a total of +4 to attributes, take half damage from holy and weapons, darksight, and the ageless talent (the creature does not age, cannot suffer from frailty of old age, die from old age, or be aged magically.)

Laboratory Lairs Each mad scientist has numerous laboratories hidden throughout Askis and they attempt to engineer encounters to happen inside of these lairs. The actions available to each lair are unique and defined at the bottom of its mad scientist's statistics.

Mad Science Items looted from dead mad scientists are far more dubious. They may be heavily trapped, coded to specific biological markers, or have subtle deleterious effects that won't be felt until decades later. As with demigod accoutrements, what can be salvaged and for what purposes are ultimately at the discretion of the GM.

Prototype Drones Caskette, Fraus Calumnia, Gespadrieux Xantilles, and Aevus Fatalibus can activate up to 6 drones (use the statistics for a **Small Construct**). The mad scientist may share senses with the drones or communicate with them while they remain within distance of the mad scientist's radio transmitter (a device that broadcasts 1,000 feet).

Using Celestial Heroes and Mad Scientists It is *not* recommended to run a combat between the adventurers and more than two of these NPCs at the same time. Although their abilities and statistics have been truncated, each is essentially built as an epic level character and has a litany of mechanics beyond the normal confines of a monster's design. If the party is encountering more than one mad scientist or Celestial Hero at once—in which case the PCs ought to all be high level themselves—the GM should consider inviting a few helpers (like the owner of the friendly local gamestore or players from another gaming group) to play as an NPC when combat erupts. With even one pair of extra hands the battle will be as dynamic and challenging as it oughtto be, and the GM won't overly suffer from fatigue or have a mental breakdown.

Unholy green fires brim out of exhaust ports on this armored woman's legs, chest, hands, and heels, casting a jade glow across spiked black pauldrons and a cathedral like crown festooned with ornate gray metal pipes at odds with the jet black metal encasing her body.

Caskette

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 construct (evil)

Perception 20 (+10); darksight, sightless

Defense 19 (midnight armor); **Health** 200

Strength 20 (+10), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 2 (-8), **Sin** 19 (+9)

Speed 10; flier 30 (hover) **Vilis Points** 19

Immune damage from poison; diseased, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, poisoned

Evasion When Caskette makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success she takes no damage and on a failure she takes half damage.

Midnight Resistances Caskette takes half damage from cold, fire, psychic, unholy, and weapons that are not magical.

Vulnerability Caskette takes double damage from lightning.

Technofanatic Caskette has 2 boons on challenge rolls involving technology.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Midnight Gauntlet (melee; reach +1) +10 (4d6+2)

Necroblast (long) +6 with 1 boon (5d6 unholy)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Caskette attacks four times.

Necrobeam Caskette unleashes the weapon in her chestplate, blasting a potent beam of foul energy in a 5-yard wide line that is 40 yards long. Each creature in that line must make an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes, taking 20d6 unholy damage on a failure or half as much on a success. Creatures that fail the challenge roll cannot magically heal damage from the Necrobeam. Once Caskette uses Necrobeam, she cannot do so again for 1d6 rounds.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Analyze Weakness Caskette uses a minor activity to make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, she knows the attacks, immunities, resistances, and traits of a creature she's able to see. Caskette can only use Analyze Weakness against an individual target once every 24 hours.

Artificial Response When Caskette is charmed, compelled, or stunned, she can use her minor activity to make a challenge roll to end the affliction. Caskette may only use Artificial Response once against any one instance of an effect.

MAGIC

Technological Devices Caskette casts spells by using technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*.

Power 10

Blood & Bone *blood spear* (11), *flay skin* (3), *fleshcurdle* (3), *savage break* (3), *exsanguination* (3), *forced hemmorhage* (3), *sanguine razorstorm* (2)

Forbidden *harm* (11), *obedience* (3), *vision's end* (3), *part bone from flesh* (3), *soul exchange* (3), *horrid joining* (2)

Technomancy *jury-rig* (11), *sparking shield* (3), *flamethrower* (3), *grenades* (3), *flying blades* (3), *magic item* (2)

Vile *kneeling cur* (11), *unholy gaze* (11), *inscribe vilespeech* (3), *unholy condemnation* (3), *blasphemous influence* (3), *extinguish soul* (3), *mark of unspeakable horror* (3), *heresy incarnate* (2)

END OF THE ROUND

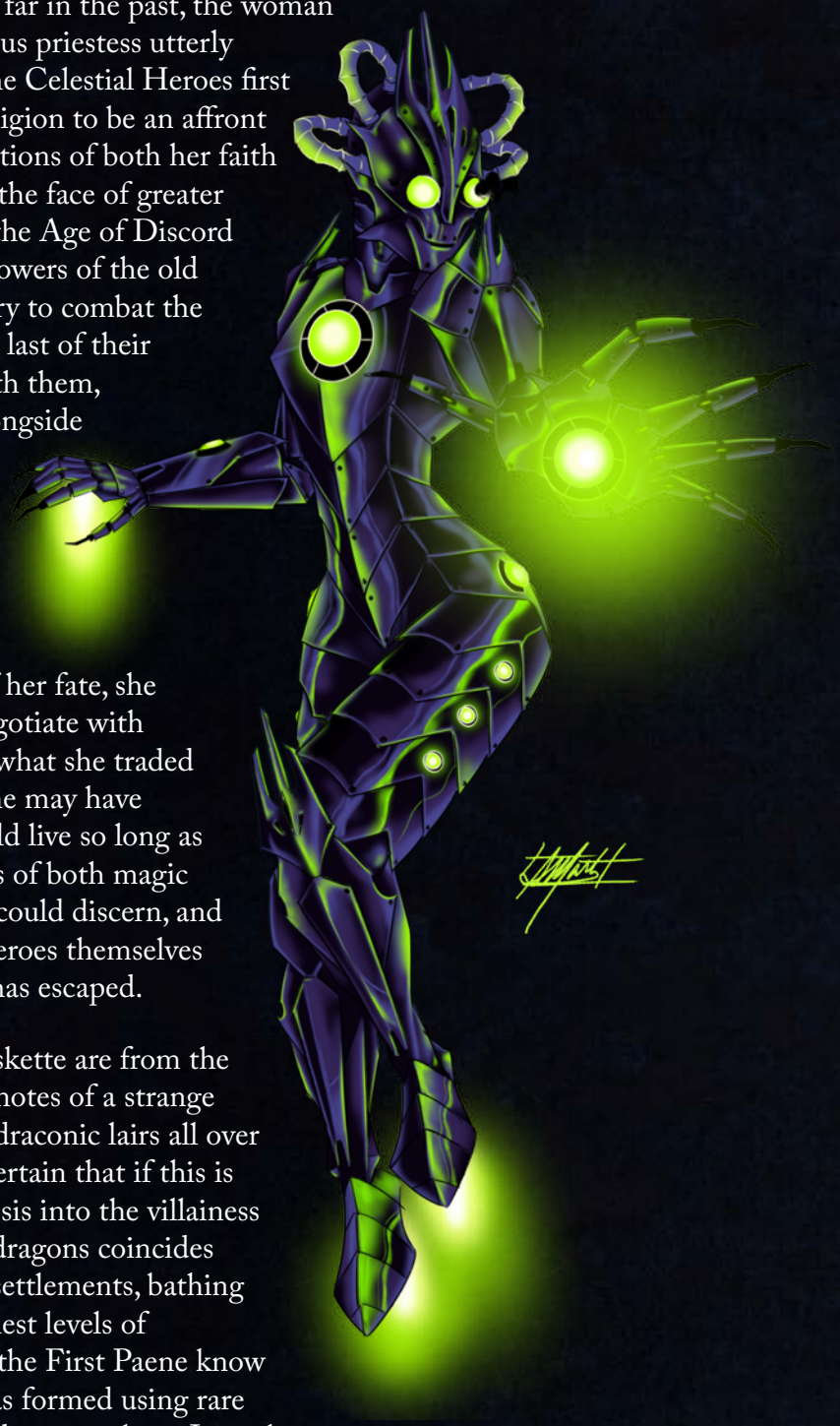
Lair Caskette uses a lair action if she is inside of her lair.

Legendary Action Caskette chooses two of the following:

- **Reinforce Armor** Caskette releases small insectile cherubs that flit about repairing her armor and she regains 4d6 Health.
- **Sensory Sweep** Caskette knows if there are any ongoing magical effects in a 5-yard radius centered on a point within her space and the points from which they originate.
- **Trigger Device** Caskette activates one technological spellcasting device of 4th-level or lower.

To most of the world there is no *real* Caskette—she is a myth, a parable whispered to wicked children weak in faith—but The Inquisition and The Ministry know better, all too aware that the woman in midnight armor poses a dire threat to order in the world. Only a rare few of the mad scientist's victims have managed to escape her cathedral caves and the horror stories they've told the Celestial Heroes' agents indicate that she is of a truly vile intelligence. More importantly Caskette is said to be ancient; her knowledge of history, science, and technology is unparalleled and she has actively opposed the demigods' rule longer than any other creature in the world. The true breadth of the plans and resources she's prepared over the centuries are terrifying, and when she finally strikes it is will be when the defenders of Askis are at their weakest.

From Grace to Depravity In a forgotten age far in the past, the woman that became Caskette was a devout and pious priestess utterly devoted to primal deities of good. When the Celestial Heroes first arrived she found their disregard for her religion to be an affront but accepted their rule—until the congregations of both her faith and those of her peers rapidly dwindled in the face of greater adherence to the rising demigods. During the Age of Discord her church banded together with other followers of the old gods, embracing an ancient war-like zealotry to combat the eroding purity of their devotion. When the last of their forces fell in Patefactio the priestess fell with them, plummeting into the Taenarius Tunnels alongside corpses of allies and battered stone ramparts. In the depths she found ruins even older than the deities she once worshiped, deciphering Vilespeech from the tempting blasphemous inscriptions all around her. Starving, wounded, abandoned beneath the surface of Askis, and unsure of her fate, she used her new knowledge to contact and negotiate with entities from beyond the pale. None know what she traded in exchange for immortality or what else she may have gained in the bargain, but no creature should live so long as Caskette has, her insights bridge the realms of both magic and science in a way only an ancient mind could discern, and despite several attempts by the Celestial Heroes themselves to subdue her each time the mad scientist has escaped.



Deceiver of Dragons The first rumors of Caskette are from the end of the Age of Dischord, historical footnotes of a strange woman in wicked black plate seen visiting draconic lairs all over Askis. Agents of The Inquisition are only certain that if this is true, it is before she completed her apotheosis into the villainess still hunted today—the appearance of vile dragons coincides perfectly with her first nascent assaults on settlements, bathing whole villages in unholy fire. Only the highest levels of command in The Inquisition and clergy of the First Paene know that Caskette's dreaded midnight armor was formed using rare metals mined from beneath the surface by draconic claws. In exchange she implanted in them blasphemous technologies promising to make them able to defeat any foe—a foul deception of course, as each transformed into vile dragons that serve nothing but evil. All of dragonkind fearsomely despise Caskette for her unthinkable betrayal but the power she gained from the bargain has seen her through centuries of conflict and perhaps centuries of rule yet to come.

Master Plan: Appropriate by Force As the world above evolved and the authority of the Celestial Heroes expanded, Caskette has carefully watched and calculated how best to take that control away. Countless hours have been spent meticulously working out the tactical yields of assault plans beyond count and some have yielded appreciable results, but the strategy with the greatest chances of success is to dismantling Askis' civilization in order to build it back up as she sees fit. Caskette intends to take Ouranios first, spilling out of Burgus to overwhelm Ianaue Pass, quickly consolidating control over the Rotundus

Railway to rapidly dispense hordes of her robotic warriors all over the Contiguous Continent. With her ancestral homeland conquered she'll turn to Zakuthombo next, exploiting the vulnerability of its weakened infrastructure before whittling away what remains of the Celestial Heroes forces in the wildernesses of Samovi. Though it will without doubt be a path fraught with bloodshed as long as the great works of the demigods are cleared away, with a strong cadre of military commanders alongside her and forces enough her stratagem is perhaps the most sound—though it ensures that when the dust clears Caskette sits on the throne of power.

Lairs of Caskette: Cathedral Laboratories

Scattered throughout the crust of Ouranios (but found elsewhere beneath Askis in fewer numbers) are cavernous chambers filled with the steep gothic architecture once common to the world during the Twilight of Suffering. Though their designs are ancient these shrines to antiquity are home to the wicked machinations of Caskette, storing unholy devices and blasphemous experiments centuries in the making. Fel constructs stalk the halls looking for trespassers to add to the victim pens to be used by their master later, the moans of their lament and woe matched in ambiance by the strange green torchlight providing baleful illumination to it her macabre workshops.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Caskette can use one of her lair action options. She can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, Caskette can't use one until after her first turn in the combat.

- **1d6 Small Constructs** pour out from crevices and rooms to assail Caskette's enemies.
- Teleportation emitters kick on and swap the locations of all creatures not native to the lair. Each creature makes a Will challenge roll with 3 banes or it is transpositioned. Transpositioned creatures are teleported clockwise, taking the place of an ally.
- Whirring gyros throughout the laboratory kick on, sending magic disrupting energy fields cascading everywhere. Until the end of the next round, attacks with spells are made with 3 bane, and creatures have 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist spells and other magical effects. Caskette and her spells are not affected by this lair action.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Caskette's laboratories are tinged by the toxic byproduct of her magical and scientific pursuits, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Rivers and lakes in a 3-mile radius above the mad scientist's lairs are tinged with trace amounts of industrial runoff.
- Inaequa devices activated within 2 miles of the mad scientist's lairs have difficulty detecting alignment. Creatures suffer 1 boon to Sanctity challenge rolls to trick inaequa devices and gain 1 boon on Sin challenge rolls to pervert them.
- Dimensional energies run amok outside of the mad scientist's lairs and within 5 miles, fighting for control against the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* and causing creatures to make an Intellect or Will challenge roll with 3 banes (whichever the GM chooses) when casting a spell to travel to or from another plane. On a failure, the creature arrives in a randomly determined plane (page 19).

Perfidiosus Priest DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 17 (+7); darksight

Defense 18; **Health** 135

Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6), **Sanctity** 13 (+3), **Sin** 14 (+4)

Speed 20 **Vilis Points** 14

Perfidiosus Resistance The perfidiosus priest takes half damage from fire.

Teleporting Dodge Once per round when an attacker that the perfidiosus priest can see hits them with an attack or spell with an area effect, they can teleport up to 5 yards away (taking no damage). They cannot take a passenger when using this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fiendish Quarterstaff (melee) +8 (2d6+2 plus 2d6 unholy)

Teleporting Fatigue (melee) +8 (the target and the perfidiosus priest teleport multiple times, ending in a location within 30 yards. taking 8d6 unholy force damage, and suffering from Passenger Sickness)

Passenger Sickness The perfidosius priest is able to take any creature of up to Size 2 with them when they teleport. Any creature that teleports with the perfidiosus priest is poisoned for 1d6 rounds and stunned for 1d3 rounds. A successful Strength challenge roll made with 1 bane leaves the creature poisoned for 1d3 rounds and stunned for 1 round.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The perfidiosus priest attacks three times with their fiendish quarterstaff or once with Teleporting Fatigue.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Teleporting Leap The perfidiosus priest can use their minor activity to teleport to any location within 300 yards. Once the perfidosius priest has used Teleporting Leap, they cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.

Teleporting Step The perfidiosus priest can use their minor activity to teleport to any location within 30 yards.

Caskette has used the Night of Largitio to pluck evil individuals with fiendish blood from across the globe, making use of ancient rituals to turn them into her utterly loyal servants. These master techpriests roam her cathedral laboratories tending to her more complex experiments and needy test subjects, blessed with unholy powers by the pact they've sown with their midnight-clad master. Frequently Caskette requires icnognito agents able to travel freely in society for various purposes—to acquire new tools or parts, plant tools of sabotage or subterfuge, lure new victims away from safety—and part of the bargain she offers her perifdiosus priests includes permanently modifying their bodies. Though fiendkin beneath their skins, to all outward appearances these tieflings appear to be humans, only given away by the trailing scents of the Abyss or Hell that Caskette either cannot hide or chooses to allow remain.

Beautiful auburn hair falls from out of the back of this woman's wicked helmet, her half-elven slender face framed by a cruelly cut edge of gold on cobalt. Her very presence radiates outward and even before a word is spoken, you feel as though you know her.

Fraus Calumnia — DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 19 (+9); shadowsight

Defense 19 (enchanted armor); **Health** 200

Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 19 (+9), **Will** 16 (+6), **Sanctity** 16 (+6), **Sin** 18 (+8)

Speed 10 **Vilis Points** 18

Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, diseased, poisoned

Armor Resistances Fraus takes half damage from acid and lightning.

Deceptive Fraus makes challenge rolls to deceive, intimidate, and persuade with 2 boons.

Divinus Screener When Fraus is targeted by a divination spell, she can use her triggered action to negate the spell. Once Fraus has used the Divinus Screener four times, she cannot do so for 24 hours.

Mendacious Half of everything Fraus says is a lie.

Telepathy Fraus can communicate telepathically with creatures she can see.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Circuit Gauntlet (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d4 magical plus 12d6 psychic and instead of dealing damage, Fraus can make the creature charmed for 1d6 rounds)

Revolver (medium) +6 (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Locate Vulnerability Fraus makes an Intellect challenge roll against the Defense of a creature she has successfully used Analyze Weakness against. The target gains vulnerability to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. Creatures that are immune to the element she chooses lose their immunity but do not gain vulnerability. This effect lasts for 2d3 rounds.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Cogerangario Antennae Fraus uses a minor activity to make an Agility challenge roll against the Defense of a creature within reach. On a success she plants a cogerangario antennae on the creature.

Keen Analysis Fraus uses a minor activity to make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, she knows the statistics of a creature she's able to see. Fraus can only use Keen Analysis against an individual target once every 24 hours.

MAGIC

Technological Devices Fraus casts spells by using technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*.

Power 10

Enchantment *bewitch* (11), *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (3), *mind bondage* (3), *cower* (3), *implant suggestion* (3), *allure* (3), *enslave* (2)

Forbidden *harm* (11), *obedience* (3), *vision's end* (3), *desire's end* (3)

Illusion *disguise* (11), *thimblerig* (3), *glamer* (3), *invisibility* (3), *decoy* (3), *mirage* (3), *illusory double* (2)

Technomancy *jury-rig* (11), *sparking shield* (3), *grenades* (3), *flying blades* (3), *powered suit* (3), *magic item* (2)

Vile *kneeling cur* (11), *unholy gaze* (11), *inscribe vilespeech* (3), *unholy condemnation* (3), *blasphemous influence* (3), *extinguish soul* (3), *mark of unspeakable horror* (3), *heresy incarnate* (2)

END OF THE ROUND

Lair Fraus uses a lair action if she is inside of her lair.

Legendary Action Fraus chooses two of the following:

- **Cogerangario** Fraus utters a word of cogerangario (usually *ecfio, excaeco, ignarus, junctio* or *nilum*). This functions as the Primordial Speaker sinful gift (page 139) but its use deals no damage to Fraus.
- **Grenades** Fraus casts *grenades* without expending a spell slot.
- **Sensory Sweep** Fraus knows if there are any ongoing magical effects in a 5-yard radius centered on a point within her space and the points from which they originate.

COGERANGARIO ANTENNAE

This small antennae is made out of hybridized metals and no larger than a sewing needle, making it virtually impossible to notice jutting out of a creature's earlobe (a Perception challenge roll made with 3 banes). When placed against a creature's skull (normally inside an earlobe), it makes a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature is under the control of Fraus Calumnia.

This technological device duplicates the effects of *enslave* except that the duration is indefinite and Fraus has no telepathic link to the creature, and the creature does not receive a challenge roll to end the effect when damaged unless Fraus damages it. An Intellect challenge roll made with 3 banes over the course of 1 minute inspecting the device determines what a congerangario antennae is and how it functions.

The humble beginnings of Fraus Calumnia belie belief, her youth a tragic tale of a truly prodigal genius turning against society itself. Being borne to wedded psychologists working for The Ministry in Meridies should have allowed her insatiable intellect to flourish, but instead she was blocked and harried at every turn with reprisals for her endless curiosity. Nearly two decades of treatments, pharmaceutical regimens, counseling, and everything that the doctors of Askis have yet attempted in the rehabilitation of citizens gone astray failed to change Fraus—only to convince her to lie to her minders. Indeed she took to dishonesty quite easily and for a short while lived within the confines of civilization, but in less than a year she garnered the attentions of The Ministry once again. This time she chose to flee rather than suffer at the hands of fools, using her brilliance to engineer impossible devices and remain a step ahead of authorities before ultimately dropping from sight.

A New Leader Troubled though she might have been, Fraus was one of the most promising young minds of the world and many of the medical staff that saw to her care told her as much—far, far too many times. In her solitude over the years as she was prescribed dozens of different psychoactive drugs it was this frequent compliment that stuck with the half-elf, her deranged pursuits both attempting to recapture the genuine adoration of her past and cement the future she so deeply desires. To acquire these she's both unearthed the ancient secrets of *Cogerangario* and mastered a means to use the words of powers even in her absence; with an army of brainwashed followers urging her every step of the way, Fraus may very well be able to force her delusional belief that she is the best possible leader for Askis onto the populace at large.

Cogerangario Despite her sheer brilliance Fraus hasn't the slightest suspicion that she's got Tucker Quickfoot to thank for the keystone of her power: the primordial proto-language of *Cogerangario*. The halfling's trespass and trickery in Refesina reawakened the energies locked away in artifacts that she has gone to great lengths to recover, and she has quickly become the world's foremost (and only) expert on the subject, truly fluent in its use. With just the uttering of a few antediluvian syllables Fraus can effortlessly tap into the shared consciousness of all things, doin the impossible with a power old even before magic (pages 139-140).

Master Plan: Herd the Sheep Fraus Calumnia's grand strategem is as straightforward as it is daunting. First she seeks to gather the persons best able to access the biggest broadcasters in the world and bring them into her fold using her gadgetry, and then the deranged half-elf will use *Cogerangario* to compel everyone listening to a radio to make her their leader in one massive act of global mental domination. It is impossible to gauge the backlash of such an undertaking but Fraus is confident it will work—provided that the Celestial Heroes and their most powerful lackeys are swept from the gameboard of Askis before she makes her play.

Lairs of Fraus Calumnia: Sunken Madhouses

Using her network of sleeper agents and unknowing abettors, Fraus has gone out of her way to kidnap virtually every person involved in her attempted rehabilitation. The abducted medical staff have been thoroughly brainwashed into fanatical servitude, working for *her* now to maintain the experiments and machinery in her hidden laboratories. Her activities have not gone unnoticed by The Ministry and what little they've gleaned confirms only that Fraus operates most frequently within the confines of Samovi—though where she strikes next is practically impossible to predict as some of her lairs float through the murk of the ocean's depths.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Fraus can use one of her lair action options. She can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, Fraus can't use one until after her first turn in the combat.

- Mentally dominated servants appear from trapdoors and false ceilings to throw everything nearby at Fraus' opponents. None of t he debris does noticeable damage but it is distracting, causing 1d6 creatures to make ranged attack rolls with 3 banes until the end of the next round.
- Plenty of faithful canines once devoted to The Ministry have gone hunting after Fraus only to fall prey to her mental dominations. Fraus commands her servants to unleash 1d3 Divirulent Hounds (page 51) that are fanatically devoted to her, immediately moving to defend her and attack her opponents.
- Echoes of the powerful primordial words known to Fraus reverberate in the aether around her lairs and she has crafted potent devices to soak up the energy. A cogerangario baffler sends a wave of otherwordly energy in 1 mile-radius, causing all creatures (except for Fraus) to be deafened until the end of the next round.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Fraus' laboratories have been subtly altered by the frequent use of cogerangario, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Areas within 20 miles of a sunken madhouse are common with the whispers of spirits and the slinking of shadows, giving rise to tall tales of haunted manors, ghost ships, and unexplainable poltergeists.
- Fraus seeds her laboratories with powerful emitters that wax at the minds of other creatures, withering their mental resolve. Creatures within 1 mile of the lair have 3 banes when making challenge rolls to resist gaining insanity.
- Sound waves within in a 5-mile radius above a sunken madhouse are heavily distorted. Whenever a creature rolls a 20 on a hearing-based Perception challenge roll, it is made with 3 banes, on a roll of 1 it is made with 3 boons.

The only remarkable thing about this person is the fact that they are completely unremarkable.

Inferus, the Faceless

DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 14 (+4); shadowsight

Defense 16; **Health** 70

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 13 (+3), **Sanctity** 18 (+8), **Sin** 15 (+5)

Speed 13 **Vilis Points** 15

Deceptive The inferus makes challenge rolls to deceive, intimidate, and persuade with 2 boons.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sword Cane (melee) +3 as club (1d6) or +6 as rapier (1d6+2)

Dagger (short) +6 (1d4)

Bleed When the total of the inferus' attack roll is 20 or higher and exceeds the target number by at least 5, the target suffers a bleeding wound that lasts until the target heals damage or until a creature uses an action to stanch the wound. While suffering from the wound, the target is fatigued and takes 1d6 extra damage at the end of each round.

Violent Strike The inferus can use zir minor activity to declare a Violent Strike before attacking a creature with a weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 4d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The inferus attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Artful Dodge When a creature would hit the inferus with an attack, ze can use zir triggered action to reduce the damage ze takes by half.

Change Shape As an action, the inferus magically shapechanges into a humanoid that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the inferus' choice). In a new form, the inferus retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

Faceless The inferus can use zir minor activity to see through another inferus' eyes and hear what the other inferus' hears until the end of the next round.

Nearly forgotten remnants of the long-dead mad scientist Skräck Läggarom, the Faceless are almost always mistaken as changelings—when they perish, their genetically cursed skin gradually reverts to a similarly featureless gray—but Fraus Calumnia realized they were something much greater. She has won over Inferus (all of them) and uses them when The Inquisition are becoming suspicious of her sleeper agents or when a target proves resistant enough that replacing them is easier.

The placid expression on this gruff, bald human man's face and his casual business suit make him appear normal, but the large unnatural metal plate in his skull and the metal coils festooned to it are obvious signs he's not.

Gespadrieux Xantilles DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 frightening humanoid (evil)

Perception 20 (+10); darksight

Defense 18; **Health** 220

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 7 (-3), **Sin** 22 (+12)

Speed 10 **Vilis Points** 22

Immune charmed, compelled, frightened

Fleshworker Resistances Gespadrieux takes half damage from acid, lightning, poison, and unholy.

Master Fleshworker Gespadrieux makes challenge rolls to perform an operation (even when operating on himself) with 3 boons, the time it takes him perform chirurgical procedures is halved then reduced by 5 hours (minimum 1 hour), and he has a dissectrinator (page 226) that he controls by using his minor activity (to attack a target he points at but otherwise as the *command* spell).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Surgica Wand (melee) +6 with 1 boon (4d6 magical)

Dagger (short) +6 (1d4)

Revolver (medium) +6 (2d6)

Master Blaster Gespadrieux makes challenge rolls when casting a spell with 1 boon.

Sinful Slayer When the total of Gespadrieux's attack roll is 20 or higher, he can expend 1 Vilis point to infuse the blow with evil energies. The target of his attack makes Will challenge roll against the damage of the attack or becomes fatigued. At the end of each round while fatigued from Sinful Slayer, the creature takes 1d6 unholy damage.

Terrifying Fleshwork When the total of Gespadrieux's attack roll is 20 or higher, the creature makes a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or is frightened of Gespadrieux for 1d6 rounds.

Vicious Strike Gespadrieux can use his minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 6d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack Gespadrieux attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Analyze Weakness Gespadrieux uses a minor activity to make an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, he knows the attacks, immunities, resistances, and traits of a creature he's able to see. Gespadrieux can only use Analyze Weakness against an individual target once every 24 hours.

MAGIC

Technological Weapon Gespadrieux casts spells by using his surgica wand, a piece of technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*. Without his surgica wand, Gespadrieux's Power is reduced to 7.

Power 10

Blood & Bone *blood spear* (11), *flay skin* (3), *fleshcurdle* (3), *savage break* (3), *exsanguination* (3), *forced hemmorhage* (3), *sanguine razorstorm* (2)

Destruction *ruin* (11), *rend* (3), *erode* (3), *detonate* (3), *destroy* (3), *disintegrate* (2)

Forbidden *harm* (11), *hateful defecation* (3), *ravenous maggots* (3), *part bone from flesh* (3), *soul exchange* (3), *horrid joining* (2)

Technomancy *jury-rig* (11), *sparking shield* (3), *flamethrower* (3), *grenades* (3), *flying blades* (3), *magic item* (2)

Vile *kneeling cur* (11), *unholy gaze* (11), *inscribe vilespeech* (3), *unholy condemnation* (3), *blasphemous influence* (3), *extinguish soul* (3), *mark of unspeakable horror* (3), *heresy incarnate* (2)

END OF THE ROUND

Lair Gespadrieux uses a lair action if he is inside of his lair.

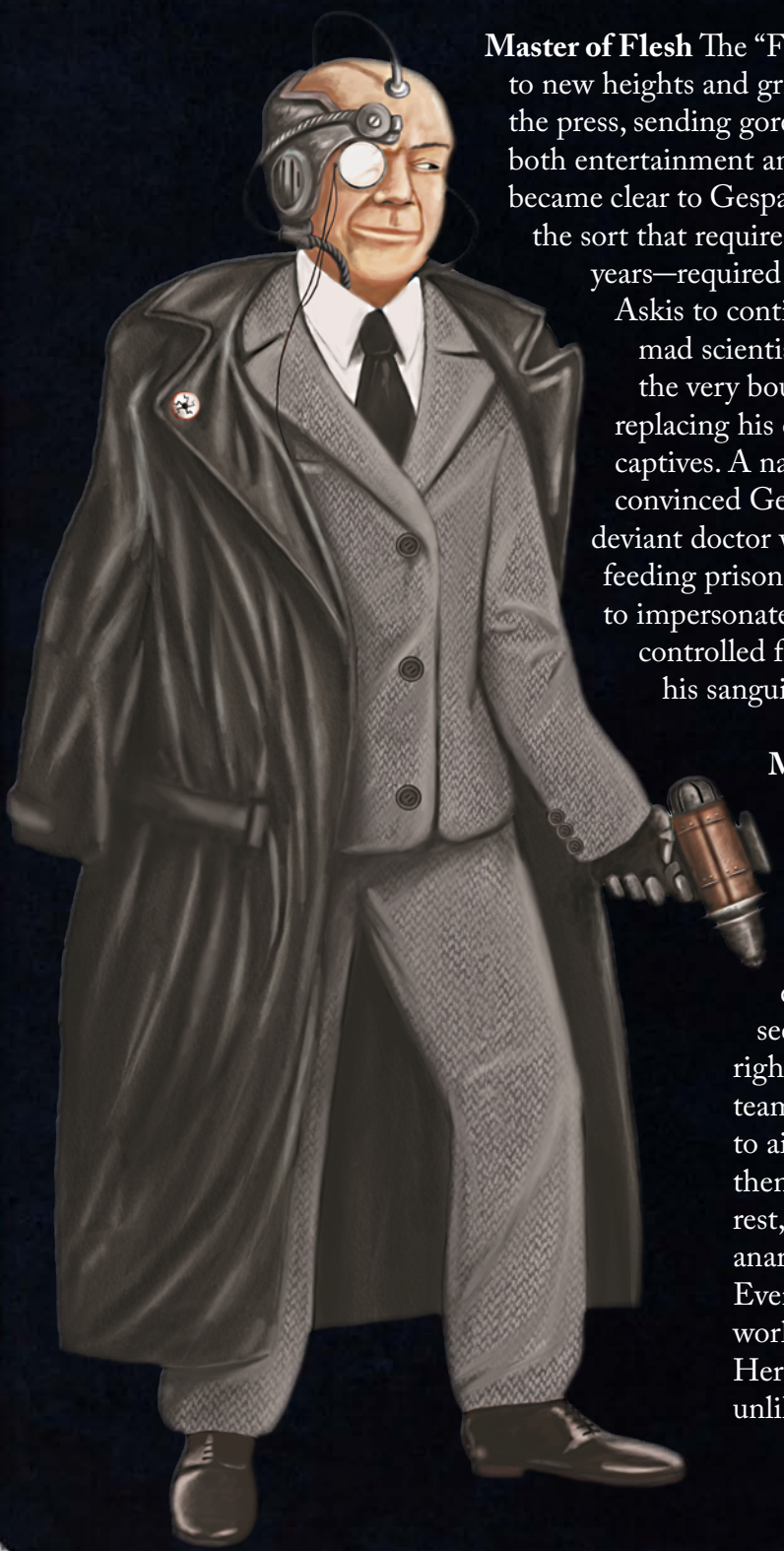
Legendary Action Gespadrieux chooses two of the following:

- **Grenades** Gespadrieux casts *grenades* without expending a spell slot.
- **Overcharge Dicer** Gespadrieux shouts a special command at his dissectrinator, immediately giving it fast turn (an entire second turn of actions).
- **Sensory Sweep** Gespadrieux knows if there are any ongoing magical effects in a 5-yard radius centered on a point within his space and the points from which they originate.

Everybody knew there was something *wrong* with Gespadrieux Xantilles—within only seconds of breathing his first the youngling's eyes glared at the sharpest implements in the delivery room, grasping outward at lancets and scalpels. As a newborn he did not cry out and as he grew older the genius avoided causing trouble, and although it seemed to befall those around him he was viewed as a quiet and well-mannered young man. Gespadrieux's mental superiority carried him far before The Inquisition found his bloody trail and he enjoyed a fine stint of infamy that lasted even after escaping into the Taenarius Tunnels, famously vowing to the press in dubious prose that his greatest crime will make all others pale in comparison. In the subterranean passages weaving beneath Askis he's continued his gruesome work unabated, replacing his flesh and organs with that of his victims to resist the death he should have suffered centuries ago.

Forbidden by Fate A long time ago Gespadrieux was a humble intern at a hospital in Kalator. While he never took great interest in religion his impressive intellect served him well, seeing

The Ministry fund his time at medical school until the incident during his residency. A wild-eyed woman covered in scars of self-mutilation was brought into the emergency room and remanded to Gespadrieux's care, and it was while he tended to her wounds that she revealed the location of her "secret home" just before dying from an inexplicably sudden cranial injury. Curious as to what this woman could be hiding and keen to get a look before agents of the government scoured this mysterious place of its best secrets, the doctor followed her directions and discovered all manner of debaucherous experimentation, research his colleagues would consider unethical, freakish abominations—and loved it. Gespadrieux continued her work in secret until the day of his certification drew near and some of his theories garnered the attention of The Inquisition, their first exploratory questions prompting him to go on the run before they could find his nefarious secret and arrest him.



Master of Flesh The "Flesh Doctor of Kalator" drove newspaper readership to new heights and gripped the public with fear by leaking his crimes to the press, sending gorey trophies of victims to editors and reporters for both entertainment and to test the effects of widespread terror. In time it became clear to Gespadrieux that the attention would make real research—the sort that requires analysis of living specimens over the course of years—required isolation and so he descended under the surface of Askis to continue the work. When age began to drag on him the mad scientist sought immortality through the flesh, pushing the very boundaries of biological sciences and kept alive by replacing his own organs with fresh meat left in the wake of dead captives. A narrowly escaped raid by the Celestial Heroes convinced Gespadrieux to master cloning and replicants of the deviant doctor wander his laboratories maintaining his experiments, feeding prisoners, and cleaning machinery. All are programmed to impersonate him and report back to their creator regularly, controlled from afar through cerebral control units hidden in his sanguine abattoirs.

Master Plan: Kingdom of Anarchy Centuries pursuing whatever his mind fancied has made Gespadrieux unpredictable and wild—his plans for bringing down the Celestial Heroes and wrecking civilization in Askis are just as chaotic. The mad scientist seeks out agents seeded with evil and engineers events so that they might come together seemingly through consequence, waiting until the right time to make their purpose clear. These assault teams are left to their own devices but when they agree to aid with Gespadrieux's ultimate goal he provides them with logistics, safe (albeit disturbing) places to rest, intel on what forces they might face in the name of anarchy, and even his services as a master fleshworker. Eventually with enough malevolent bands roving the world he is certain that the authority of the Celestial Heroes will crack, and should his tactics fail it is unlikely he'll suffer any lasting repercussions.

Lairs of Gespadrieux Xantilles: Sanguine Abattoirs

The laboratories of Gespadrieux are gruesome parodies of the hospital wards in which he was trained as a doctor—unlike the infirmaries of his youth however, the halls and rooms in these lairs are not pristine. Gore and effluent from countless victims decorate these sanguine abattoirs, the scent of blood bringing an iron tinge to the foul-smelling air. Defeated whimpers, manic screaming, and ragged breathing echo in the darkened corridors in a chorus of agony broken only by occasional shrieks of metal against stone.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Gespadrieux can use one of his lair action options. He can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, Gespadrieux can't use one until after his first turn in the combat.

- Gespadrieux's experiments result in far more blood than he requires. The sanguine abattoir floods with blood an inch thick, turning the entire area into difficult terrain. At the end of the next round, the floors soak up the blood with a wet, rasping noise.
- Nozzles extract themselves from all around the lair, spraying a thick mist of blood that make the area heavily obscured. Creatures are blinded until they spend an action wiping blood away from their eyes and before taking a move must succeed on an Agility challenge roll to avoid falling prone. At the end of the next round, the floors soak up the blood with a wet, rasping noise.
- Thick black cables from an exsanguination machine fall onto a creature Gespadrieux can see, the piercing needles on their ends seeking out flesh. The lair makes a ranged attack with a +10 bonus. On a successful hit, the target is grabbed, takes 4d6 damage and makes Strength challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, the target becomes fatigued. The cables have Defense 14 and Health 20. At the end of the next round, the needles extract themselves and withdraw back into the ceiling. Gespadrieux has 1d6 exsanguination machines in the lair.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Gespadrieux's laboratory are soaked in the mental anguish of victims beyond count murdered in agony on his operating tables, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Fonts of blood appear in random locations throughout rivers and lakes in a 3-mile radius above sanguine abattoirs.
- Spirits of victims that experienced such powerful agony that their souls resist traveling to another world are bound inside their final screams instead, echoing endlessly in the subterranean passages within 4 miles of Gespadrieux's lairs.
- The psychic distress from numerous broken minds soaks the Taenarius Tunnels around sanguine abattoirs. Creatures within 2 miles of one of Gespadrieux's lairs make challenge rolls resist or avoid psychic damage with 2 banes. In addition, telepathic creatures lose their telepathy. Devices arrayed around the laboratories prevent this effect from affecting creatures inside of a sanguine abattoir.

Rexa was free in spirit and companionship—and it cost her dearly. Shortly after blossoming into womanhood she contracted Divinus Biologis but unlike so many others she did not transform into a Divirulent Hound, her fate instead to become an ignorant experiment of Gespadrieux Xantilles. The mad scientist chanced across the diseased Rexa before she realized she was infected and he took the opportunity to test the boundaries of the Holy Virulence, poisoning her with his own viral agent. The two fought inside of her body and confused The Ministry so much that The Inquisition got involved, scaring the woman half to death as her body changed into that of a rat creature and she fled into the sewers to escape—where she has remained ever since.

Carefully observing her from afar it was both simple and cheap for Gespadrieux to recruit Rexa to his cause. With a small amount of subtle technological infl uence he easily convinced her to reside in the City of Saints, making her home beneath Alacer. Ultimately she will be a lynchpin in his plans to drive Lellwyn Fethyrwal to suicide—her rodents are the perfect spies and accomplices to poison the mind of Hortensia Validaris, leaving the demigod paladin without her most loyal and trusted confidant.

The Justitia of Alacer are aware of the Rodent Queen stalking beneath their feet but have erroneously determined she is both too difficult to capture and that she poses no greater threat; although she is a deviant and does herself no good by spurning their attempts to rehabilitate her,

Rexa Vermes, Rodent Queen DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 frightening humanoid (evil)
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 85
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 13; climber, leaper (6 horizontal, 3 vertical)
Evasion When Rexa makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success she takes no damage and on a failure she takes half damage.
Rodent Speaker Rexa is able to understand and be understood by rats.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claw (melee) +6 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 poison)
Dagger (short) +6 (1d4)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Rexa attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Artful Dodge When a creature would hit Rexa with an attack, she can use her triggered action to reduce the damage she takes by half.
Rodent Friends Rexa uses a minor activity to summon 1d6-1 (minimum 1) swarms or rats (**Animal Swarm**) compelled to do her bidding. Once she has conjured 16 rat swarms, she is unable to do so for 24 hours.

she is herself not a creature of evil, only depraved madness. There are some extra precautions taken to keep her inside of her own little preserve (heavier grates and fewer ways to access the passages under the City of Saints) but for the most part the guards simply keep an eye out for her and discourage rumors of her existence—a kindness that Gespadrieux is all too eager to exploit.

Several different pockets of this halfling's attire are quietly ticking but upon even casual inspection it's obvious why—while he might be dapper and well dressed, he is clearly obsessed with clocks. The short fellow's eyes are hidden behind glasses with telling hands and he makes a steady, rhythmic tapping noise with an hourglass-topped walking cane, the strange non-melody punctuated with the occasional hum of power from the clockwork prosthetic replacing his right leg.

Aevus Fatalibus

DIFFICULTY 500

Size ***½ humanoid (evil)***

Perception 21 (+11); darksight

Defense 21; **Health** 190

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 21 (+11), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 20 (+10), **Sin** 14 (+4)

Speed 10; leap (4 horizontal, 2 vertical) **Vilis Points** 14

Immune damage from psychic; charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened

Calculated Defenses While Aevus is able to take actions, his Defense is equal to his Intellect.

Evasion When Aevus makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.

Dimensional Madness Aevus has multiple personalities. His madness is incurable. There are 6 personalities and when encountered the GM should roll 1d6 to randomly determine which Aevus is in control. Aevus suffers 1 bane on Intellect challenge rolls made to remember something that happened to another personality. Each hour he is awake, Aevus makes a Will challenge roll (with 1 bane per previous challenge roll) to retain his current personality. On a failure, a different personality takes control.

1. **True Aevus** is a disturbed but congenial gentleman of good manners, albeit brisk and self-preserving.
2. **Avaricious Aevus** is friendly and likable so long as it buys him confidence enough to acquire whatever it is he desires.
3. **Frustrated Aevus** is anxious and manic, prone to changing topics of discussion as frequently as he does allies.
4. **Mad Aevus** is just barely coherent, obviously deranged and ceaselessly muttering to himself.
5. **Quiet Aevus** is nearly silent and seems polite but is a murderous psychopath through and through.
6. **Wild Aevus** is reckless and overly confident, a man of daring will to accept far too much risk.

Knowledge of Many Minds Aevus has 1 boon on Intellect challenge rolls.

Stealthy Aevus can attempt to hide even when he is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than him.

Strange Fortunes When Aevus rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll or challenge roll, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hourglass Sword Cane (melee) +2 as club (1d6) or +6 as rapier (1d6+2) Instead of dealing damage, Aevus may force the target to make an Intellect challenge roll with 3 banes or be stunned for 1d6 rounds as its mind becomes unstuck in time. At the end of each of its turns, the creature makes a challenge roll to end the effect.

Telescopic Leg (melee; reach +1) +2 with 1 boon (1d6)

Revolver (medium) +6 (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Stopping Watch Aevus uses his minor activity to make an Intellect attack roll against the Will of a creature he touches. On a success, the creature comes to an abrupt halt and can take no actions as the flow of time stops around it until the end of the next round. The effect ends if a creature damages the target, or if a creature takes an object being worn or carried by the target.

MAGIC

Technological Devices Aevus casts spells by using technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*.

Power 10

Arcana *magic dart* (11), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (3), *destroy magic* (3), *harness magic* (3), *arcane retribution* (2)

Chaos *erratic bolt* (11), *iridescent shield* (3), *color of magic* (3), *wild magic* (3), *mirror field* (3), *singularity* (2)

Divination *eavesdrop* (11), *psychometry* (3), *truth ear* (3), *locate* (3), *vision* (3), *clairvoyance* (2)

Technomancy *jury-rig* (11), *sparking shield* (3), *grenades* (3), *flying blades* (3), *powered suit* (3), *magic item* (2)

Time *delay* (11), *minor paradox* (3), *time jump* (3), *decelerate* (3), *twain self* (3), *time travel* (2)

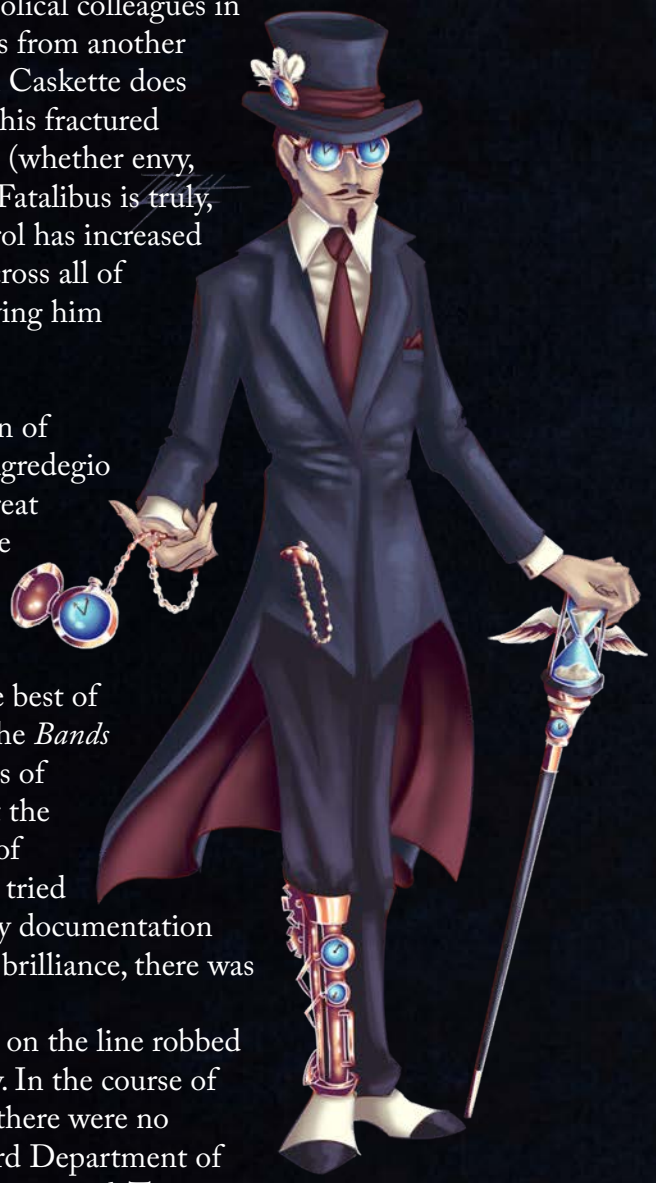
END OF THE ROUND

Lair Aevus uses a lair action if he is inside of his lair.

Legendary Action Aevus chooses two of the following:

- **Grenades** Aevus casts *grenades* without expending a spell slot.
- **Parallel Movement** Aevus activates an improbability drive that swaps his position. He chooses a square within range of the square he began his most recent turn in, teleporting to that square. Aevus regains a Health equal to the damage he's taken since the beginning of his last turn so long as the attacks and spells are not within reach of his new location, and any afflictions or effects inflicted since the beginning of his last turn are removed. Aevus' new path of movement provokes free attacks and damages him if any effect would have, as if he had taken this movement normally.
- **Trigger Device** Aevus casts one spell of 3rd-level or lower.

The halfling mad scientist of Askis is different from his diabolical colleagues in many ways—he's the youngest by a measure of decades, hails from another reality, and he utilizes technologies of a strange ilk that even Caskette does not fully understand—but the most divergent of them all is his fractured madness. Where the others are driven by their egos and sins (whether envy, pride, wrath, or a deception so large it dwarfs them), Aevus Fatalibus is truly, irrevocably insane. Tampering with powers beyond his control has increased his already potent intellect tenfold but fractured his mind across all of existence, the constant dissociations of numerous voices driving him to the ambitious, maddened goal of turning back time itself.



Trapped Visitor Aevus Fatalibus grew up in the quaint town of Radredor, a settlement in the confines of the Nations of Agredegio on the world of Mehanizam. From a young age he took great interest in his mother's clock and watch shop, repairing the simple machines so efficiently that a local wondermaker took him as an apprentice. The halfling proved just as adept with the incredible devices built by his teacher and even crafted a few of his own—before his curiosity got the best of him. While cleaning a contraption being used to inspect the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* from afar Aevus caused a malfunction, waves of power sending him sprawling through the multiverse, past the great work of Rankir Tarryndorn and tumbling into piles of refuse in a Kaelesti Waste Department storage facility. He tried valiantly to adjust to his new surroundings but without any documentation the bureaucracy of civilization proved vexing—despite his brilliance, there was no better work to be found than as a factory laborer.

A few months of monotony passed until an accident on the line robbed Aevus of his leg, forcing him into the care of The Ministry. In the course of installing a clockwork prosthetic his doctors realized that there were no official records of the amicable halfling (not even a standard Department of Requisitions number) and The Inquisition's attentions were aroused. Their agents relentlessly questioned him until, fearful of what they might do, he escaped from the hospital and went on the run. Much to Tucker Quickfoot's chagrin, Aevus was far too smart to be caught easily, his years of living outside the confines of bureaucracy making him an elusive target. That did not mean he could not be predicted however and after a decade of pursuit, one of the well-meaning halfling's quaint laboratories was found, sabotaged, and left in wait. Aevus fell for the trap and activated the tampered devices within the sanctum—the pain of traveling between worlds paled in comparison to what havoc the disaster wrought on his mind, spreading his consciousness into parallel dimensions to exist simultaneously as one jumbled assortment of psyches.

Agent of Entropy Aevus' mind has been made into a maelstrom of selves but his curse empowers him as well, the potential energy from infinite realities making him utterly tireless and wildly productive. No matter which of his most dominant personalities is in control, the mad scientist maintains one goal—to turn back time—though the means by which each hopes to achieve it can change drastically depending on which Aevus reigns.

Master Plan: Take the Machine Contraptions beyond count are scattered throughout Aevus' lairs divining all manner of scientific impossibilities, but one looms above the rest: the discovery of Refesina and the *Torquem Machina*. In a stroke of fateful irony Tucker Quickfoot's doings in the dimension of chains has brought its existence to the attention of his mad scientist counterpart—

and Aevus thinks he can channel the potent artifact's power. Once the Celestial Heroes have been destroyed, the halfling plans to harness the *Torquem Machina*'s energies to regress the entire planet back to the age of the Twilight of Suffering. Whether or not his goal is feasible is unclear even to Aevus but he's not deterred; he doesn't necessarily care what happens when the temporal experiment is complete, he just wants it to happen as soon as possible.

Lairs of Aevus Fatalibus: Clockwork Castles

Aevus' childhood fascination with watches grew into a flight of fancy before he reached Askis and when madness gripped him, it transformed into a deranged obsession. Unlike the laboratories and lairs of his peers, the tesseract-fortresses of Aevus Fatalibus are not fixed—they seamlessly roll through the Taenaerius Tunnels on well-oiled and precise gears, eerily quiet and far larger on the inside than the quaint locomotive's exterior leads observers to believe.

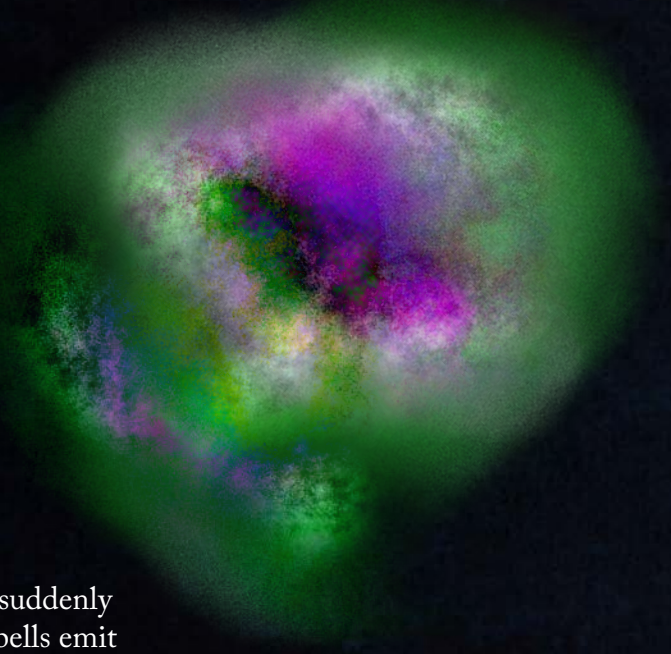
LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Aevus can use one of his lair action options. He can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, Aevus can't use one until after his first turn in the combat.

- Four small turrets flip out from the walls and ceiling, randomly targeting Aevus' opponents (+8 to hit, 1d6+2). Aevus has a total of 12 of these gun traps (Defense 17, 25 Health). Only four gun traps can operate at the same time. Firing the gun traps or replacing them requires a lair action.
- Sections of the lair's floor spin and rotate. Each creature on the ground moves either north four squares and east four squares, or south four squares and west four squares (roll randomly for each creature to determine which directions they are moved).
- Phase condensers in the clockwork castle explode with power to cover the area in transdimensional energies. Roll 1d6 when a creature other than Aevus uses a talent or casts a spell that relies on allies or targets allies. On a 1 or 2, the talent functions normally. On a 3, the talent targets or can only benefit from another ally other than the intended target. On a 4, the talent targets or can only benefit from Aevus. On a 5 or 6, the talent does not function and if it has uses one of its uses is expended.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Aevus' laboratories are warped by mana-waste and temporal energies run amok, generating one (or more) of these effects.



- Miasmas of arcane energies float and ebb in the Taenarius Tunnels within 10 miles of a clockwork castle. Every hour, roll a d20. On a result of 18 or higher, creatures encounter a mana cloud. At the end of each minute, a creature inside of a mana cloud makes a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, it loses the casting of one randomly determined spell.
- Magical conjurings cause strange phenomena in a 15-mile-radius of one of Aevus' lairs. Summoned elementals can be of the incorrect element, familiars suddenly change from one form to the next, and conjuration spells emit baleful light or riotous howls.
- Time can pass strangely when travelers delay in the subterranean passages within 12 miles of a clockwork castle. When creatures take a rest in the area, roll 2d6. The long rest lasts that many hours longer if the result is even, or its duration is reduced by that many hours if the result is odd.

This lithe woman moves with calculated grace, her every step poised as she takes in her surroundings with a warrior's eye.

Agens Coenobita

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 17 (+7); shadowsight

Defense 18; **Health** 100

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 18 (+8), **Sanctity** 15 (+5), **Sin** 16 (+6)

Speed 15 **Vilis Points** 16

Acrobatic Fall Agens reduces any falling distance by 10 yards before calculating falling damage.

Evasion When Agens makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success she takes no damage and on a failure she takes half damage.

Fighting Calluses Agens takes half damage from weapons that aren't magical.

Stance of the Stout Boar Agens ignores nonmagical difficult terrain and gains the climber trait so long as all her movement is in a straight line and ends with her making a melee attack. In addition, Agens has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being moved.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +8 (2d6+1 magical)

Shuriken (short) +8 with 1 boon (2 magical)

Advantageous Strikes Agens deals 1d6 extra damage when one of her attacks hits a creature at less than its maximum Health.

Dark Chi (7 points/rest) Whenever Agens hits a creature with a melee attack, she can use her triggered action and 1 dark chi to cause one of the following effects.

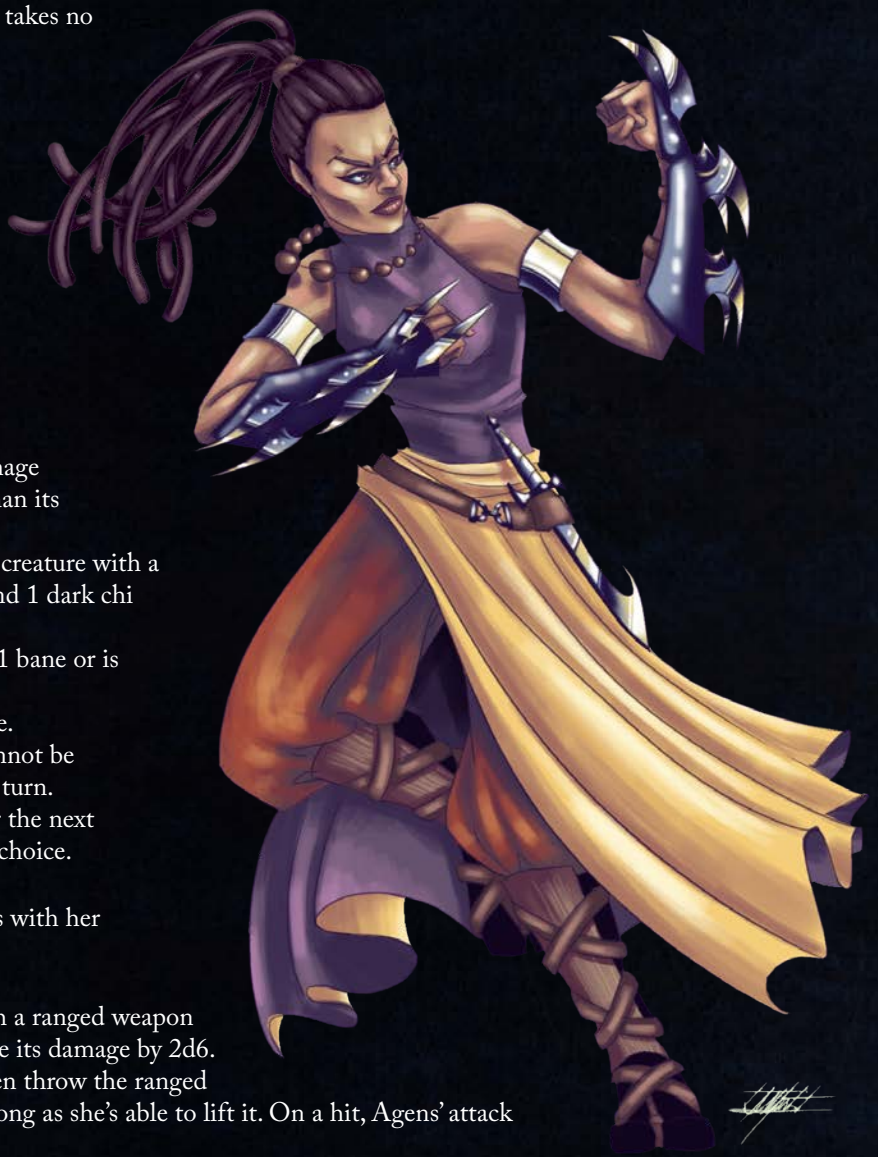
- The target makes a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or is poisoned for 2d6 rounds.
- The attack deals an extra 2d6 unholy damage.
- The target makes a Will challenge roll or cannot be healed by spells until the end of Agens' next turn.
- The target makes a Will challenge roll or for the next 24 hours detects as the alignment of Agens' choice.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Agens makes attacks four times with her unarmed strikes.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Capture Missile When a creature hits Agens with a ranged weapon attack, she can use her triggered action to reduce its damage by 2d6. If the damage is reduced to 0 or less she can then throw the ranged weapon back as part of her triggered action so long as she's able to lift it. On a hit, Agens' attack deals as much damage as she reduced it by.



Agens Coenobita was one of the most promising Justitia of her generation and excelled through the organization until becoming a personal attendant of Varrus Goodwin himself. The demigod attempted to communicate to her the fel duplicity of Tucker Quickfoot and Darrius Ventrelli, but the young woman misinterpreted him entirely—she now believes *all* of the Celestial Heroes are secretly evil and that the only justice to be earned for Askis is in its destruction, allying herself with Aevus Fatalibus and waiting for the opportune moment to sunder his machines and, she hopes, reality itself.

An unholy crown featuring a grisly skull sits atop the head of this half-orc woman, her fearsome hair tied into dreadlocks that fall around the ornate metal harness strapped to her back. In one hand she wields a staff brimming with power and the longer you gaze upon her, the more dread seems to hang in the air.

Trepida Vereor

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 horrifying humanoid (evil)

Perception 17 (+7); darksight

Defense 18; **Health** 200

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 20 (+10), **Sanctity** 13 (+3), **Sin** 20 (+10)

Speed 10; flier 20 **Vilis Points** 20

Perseverant When Trepida is reduced to 0 Health, she can drop to 1 Health instead. Once Trepida has used Perseverant, she cannot do so for 24 hours.

Unlocked Limbic System Trepida has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being charmed, compelled, frightened, or stunned.

Aura of Fear Each creature of Trepida's choice that is within 20 yards of her and aware of her must succeed on Will challenge roll made with 3 banes or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the challenge roll at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's challenge roll is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Trepida's Aura of Fear for the next 24 hours.

Treasure Trepida has precise maps of the Taenarius Tunnels on her person and carries technological devices able to cast spells without the use of magic: a strange pistol (*mold earth and stone* at will), a silver harness (*bestow flight* at will at double speed), a golden wand (*travel* twice every 24 hours), and any other contraptions the GM deems fit. Deciphering how to use one of these technological devices requires a successful Intellect challenge roll made with 3 banes.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff of Striking Terror (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+3 magical and Trepida may expend up to 4 charges, dealing 1d6 force damage for each expended charge; 15 charges, Trepida regains 2 charges each time she hits a frightened creature)

True Terror and Thing of Horror Creatures suffer 1 bane when making a challenge roll to resist being frightened by Trepida. A creature immune to fear loses its immunity but has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being frightened by Trepida.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Fiendish Genius By using her action touching any technological device, Trepida gains an innate understanding of how to use it.

MAGIC

Power 10

Curse *hex* (11), *frighten* (3), *weakness* (3), *dread* (3), *toad* (3), *petrify* (2)

Forbidden *harm* (11), *hateful defecation* (3), *ravenous maggots* (3), *part bone from flesh* (3), *soul exchange* (3), *horrid joining* (2)

Necromancy *spectral grasp* (11), *animate corpse* (3), *grave grasp* (3), *harvest soul* (3), *shrieking skull* (3), *cannibalize magic* (3), *well of dark power* (3), *seal of the underworld's gates* (3), *army of the dead* (2)

Shadow *wall of darkness* (11), *shadow dart* (3), *shadow stride* (3), *shadow magic* (3), *dark portals* (3), *enervation* (2)

Vile *kneeling cur* (11), *unholy gaze* (11), *inscribe vilespeech* (3), *unholy condemnation* (3), *blasphemous influence* (3), *extinguish soul* (3), *mark of unspeakable horror* (3), *heresy incarnate* (2)

END OF THE ROUND

Frightful Gaze Trepida makes a Will attack against the Will of one creature that can see her eyes. On a success, the creature is frightened for 6 rounds. Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the challenge roll from Trepida's Frightful Gaze at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see Trepida until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Trepida in the meantime, she may use her triggered action to cause it to immediately make the challenge roll. Once Trepida has used Frightful Gaze 5 times, she cannot do so again for 24 hours.

Lair Trepida uses a lair action if she is inside of her lair.

Legendary Action Trepida chooses two of the following:

- **Extra Attack** Trepida attacks a second time or casts a spell of 3rd-level or lower.
- **Sense Magic** Trepida knows if there are any ongoing magical effects in a 5-yard radius centered on a point within her space and the points from which they originate.
- **Solidify Fear** Trepida chooses a frightened creature she can see, taking the fear in its mind and making it a physical reality inside of its skull. The creature makes a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature takes 6d6 force and psychic damage, and it is stunned until the start of Trepida's next turn. On a success the creature is not stunned and takes 3d6 force and psychic damage.

Rankir Tarryndorn's supreme wizardship is virtually unopposed on Askis except by the arcane power and fiendish gifts in the rugged hands of Trepida Vereor, the sorcerous master of fear. The last of the world's dark magicians was smart enough to realize that spells alone would not save her and when the Celestial Heroes rent her armies asunder she fled beneath the surface of the world to prepare

her revenge. Although the half-orc's methods are the akin to those taken up by countless fallen enemies of the demigods a diabolical pact to utilize technology and streak of extreme ruthlessness make Trepida perhaps the greatest terror of Askis—her forces explode forth from the ground almost without warning, vast legions of undead mounting attacks that the world cannot ignore as she probes the defenses of civilization for weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

Warlord Unbound Trepida Vereor and her wicked armies were the last of the Far Continent's great evils. Kept in check by a command structure of necromancers trained at the half-orc's bootheel, her roaming undead legions more than doubled Tucker & Co.'s mercenaries in number and were bolstered by dozens of vile dragons all promised vengeance against Caskette for her betrayal of their kind. Only with the intervention of all the Celestial Heroes and the ancient Draconiaci Faciantsanct Itateveritatis were the forces of darkness at the sorceress' command destroyed, forcing her into hiding for decades before her guerilla attacks began anew. Trepida's return was fierce and zealous, as savage as her first assaults and even more overwhelming—but the technology of Askis' defenders had evolved while the fearmancer replenished her warriors and they easily beat her back.

Fiendish Genius Faced with no other recourse against the advanced weaponry of the Celestial Heroes' soldiers, the sorceress finally slipped between the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* to strike a bargain with both demons and devils. The half-orc lost her soul in the exchange but won immortality and an aptitude for machinery in the bargain, and each has served her well—the former has given her time enough to gather powerful devices left behind by proper mad scientists and the latter a means by which to use them to escape capture by her hated demigod foes. Demons granted her knowledge of science and devils the preternatural understanding of technology, the power of an unending life possible only by a dark bond of magic between the two. Should Trepida's side of the agreement falter with either party, the thousands of years of aging she's ignored will accrue in weeks and she'll finally succumb to death—so long as she wages war on the demigods however, no such fate will befall her.

Master Plan: Break the Will The master of fear's plan to take over rulership of Askis is what one might predict: Trepida seeks to force her global authority via fear. While true mad scientists toil to engineer devices to ascend to rulership she has scoured the Taenarius Tunnels scavenging the best of their dead peers' work from abandoned laboratories in the depths of the world. Every subterranean passage she's traveled through has been meticulously transcribed onto countless maps and the half-orc has used these atlases to divine the settlements most likely to fall to her armies, beginning in Zakuthombo before spreading to Samovi and finally Ouranios. In order to succeed however, she knows that the native defenders of any settlement must be sabotaged from within—once she has accrued a sizable force compelled to war by terror, then the true mayhem and bloodshed can begin.

Lairs of Trepida Vereor: Magma Fortresses

Watching the rogue mages of Askis fall one by one on the surface of the world, Trepida Vereor chose to flee down into the planet when her horde suffered its great defeat. Lurking far under the cities and railways, she has dug to depths unseen by nearly any explorer. Ever keen of invasion by the forces of The Ministry or agents of The Inquisition, the sorceress has ensconced her lairs in magma. Within all manner of dark arts are practiced, the most vile of rituals commonplace in order to keep her and her forces at full strength—she's prepared many legions of wicked soldiers but the majority await orders to rise up and attack Zakuthombo.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Trepida can use one of her lair action options. She can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, Trepida can't use one until after her first turn in the combat.

- Forces of darkness dwell in Trepida's lairs and she can summon them to interfere with healing magic. Until the end of the next round, any healing spells or effects only restore half as much damage as normal.
- Shadows take form and wrap around the creatures casting them. Until the end of the next round, any creature of good or neutral alignment that moves 3 yards or more, makes an attack, or casts a hostile spell is ensared by its shadow. The creature must make a Strength or Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the creature is grabbed (same challenge roll to escape).
- Skeletal arms breach the ground and try to topple Trepida's opponents. Each creature in the lair must make an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or be knocked prone.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around Trepida's lairs are intensely hot with magma flows coursing nearby and feel cursed, the corruption of the dark magics within generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Errant souls destroyed by lava in the middle of transition to their final fates are dispersed in volcanic gases before forming into deadly clouds of that roam within 1 mile of magma fortresses. At the end of every minute inside insanity mist, a creature must succeed on a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes or gain 1 Insanity.
- Gaseous residue mixes with the gore of trespassers and would-be escapees to make clumps of madness moss grow in abundance in passages within 3 miles of Trepida's lairs. A creature that touches insanity moss gains 1 Insanity. Avoiding insanity moss inside of a passageway requires a successful Agility challenge roll (made with 1d3 banes).
- Knowing that fear can be a fine motivator for negotiations, devils have trinkets and baubles left throughout tunnels in a 10-mile radius of magma fortresses. Interacting with these items in any way summons the illusory projection of a contract devil (pages 235-236). The fiend is not capable of taking any actions but speaking and making binding contracts—granting fell powers in return for a steep price, usually one that seems far less valuable than it truly is.

Moving scar tissue swims across this hulking orc's skin and he glares at the world with furious hatred in his eyes, matching the gaze of the long-extinct creature he wears over his muscular shoulders.

Latro Nox

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening humanoid (evil)

Perception 18 (+8); darksight

Defense 18 (hard leather); **Health** 155

Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4), **Sanctity** 7 (-3), **Sin** 17 (+7)

Speed 15 **Vilis Points** 17

Immune frightened

Bad to the Bone Latro takes half damage from Celestial spells and makes challenge rolls to resist Celestial spells with 1 boon. In addition, the first time he reaches 0 Health after completing a rest, he automatically heals 40 damage.

Fell Resistances Latro takes half damage from fire, holy, and unholy

Scar: Ieiunium Gradus The first free attack made against Latro each round is made with 1 bane.

Scar: Quae Insanimus Latro makes challenge rolls to resist being charmed, compelled, or stunned with 1 boon.

Scar: Rex Vermes Latro is able to speak with insects, rats, and vermin (though they are still lowly creatures with very limited mental capacity).

Blood Slayer When Latro reduces a creature to 0 Health, he heals 3 damage.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Battleaxe (melee) +8 with 1 boon (1d6+3 magical plus 1d6 unholy)

Machete (melee) +8 with 1 boon (1d6+1 magical plus 1d6 unholy)

Sinful Slayer When the total of Latro's attack roll is 20 or higher, he can expend 1 Vilis point to infuse the blow with evil energies. The target of his attack makes Will challenge roll against the damage of the attack or becomes fatigued. At the end of each round while fatigued from Sinful Slayer, the creature takes 1d6 unholy damage.

Unholy Wounding Each time Latro's melee attack roll exceeds 20, his target takes 2 damage at the end of every round until the wound is stanched as an action with a successful Intellect challenge roll or the target receives magical healing.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Latro attacks twice with his battle axe and twice with his machete.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Rush Latro uses a minor activity to run up to 15 yards to be adjacent to a hostile creature he can see.

Latro Nox is the adjutant of Trepida Vereor and the lethal tip of her undead armies spearhead assaults. The simple cunning he honed as an orc warchief lifetimes ago remains, but his finest skill is as a warrior and even Grukk has crossed blades with him without being able to permanently defeat the scarred fighter.

Blood stains and chains are scattered all over this rough-looking dwarf, the grisly state of his attire accented by the withered blue fingers hanging from his fearsome black beard.

Rogar Felgrym

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 19 (+9); darksight

Defense 20 (magic hard leather); **Health** 200

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 19 (+9), **Will** 17 (+7), **Sanctity** 3 (-7), **Sin** 20 (+10)

Speed 8; climber 8 **Vilis Points** 20

Immune frightened

Evasion When Rogar makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.

Poison Resistance Rogar takes half damage from poison and has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist poison.

Maritime Master Rogar has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to control vehicles on the water.

Technological Savant Rogar has 3 boons on challenge rolls involving technology.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Machete (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 plus 1d6 poison)

Spiked Chain (melee; reach +1) +6 (1d6 plus 2d6 unholy)

Chain Rifle (long) +6 with 1 boon (2d6 plus if the target is Size 2 or smaller and Rogar does not have a creature grabbed, it must succeed on a Strength challenge roll made with 3 banes or be grabbed and pulled 7 yards toward Rogar)

Chambered Shotgun (medium) +6 (3d6 damage)

Vicious Strike Rogar can use his minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 8d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Rogar attacks three times.

MAGIC

Hacked Magic Rogar casts spells by using technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*.

Power 7

Battle *augmented attack* (8), *celerity* (8), *resounding attack* (3), *mountain fall* (2), *meteoric assault* (2), *wall of swords* (2), *strike like lightning* (1)

Blood & Bone *blood spear* (8), *flay skin* (3), *fleshcurdle* (2), *savage break* (2), *exsanguination* (2), *forced hemmorhage* (2), *sanguine razorstorm* (1)

Chaos *erratic bolt* (11), *fold space* (3), *flicker* (3), *chaotic lance* (3), *mirror field* (3), *singularity* (2)

Forbidden *harm* (8), *obedience* (3), *vision's end* (2), *part bone from flesh* (2)

Illusion *disguise* (8), *thimblerig* (3), *glamer* (2), *invisibility* (2), *decoy* (2), *mirage* (2), *illusory double* (1)

Technomancy *jury-rig* (8), *sparking shield* (3), *grenades* (2), *flying blades* (2), *powered suit* (2), *magic item* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Lair Rogar's corrupted pneumavore takes a slow turn if it is nearby.

Legendary Action Rogar chooses two of the following:

- **Extra Attack** Rogar attacks a second time or casts a spell of 3rd-level or lower.
- **Grenades** Rogar casts *grenades* without expending a spell slot.
- **Special Grog** Rogar drinks a concoction of his own design and heals 3d6+3 damage.

Dread pirate, mad scientist, forsaken exile—Rogar Felgrym is called many things in the whispers of sailors that have had too much drink or the cowardly hearted that managed to swim back from one of the infamous bucaneer's high seas assaults. The dwarf has been sailing for only a few decades and is a relatively recent thorn in the sides of civilization when compared to his contemporaries, but in truth he's without peer. Machines have long seemed to speak with him, almost as though he were plants and they the subjects of attention the garden of a master botanist. Even though naturally gifted Rogar hasn't ever invested himself in sciences or technology, merely using them as a means to be more ever daring, ruthless, and ambitious in his assaults against the world at large. Most of all he prizes the freedom of the open ocean and the liberty granted by a lawless life, two things he'll only ever give up in death.

From Privileged to Pirate Rogar comes from the formerly rich and prestigious Felgrym dwarven clan of Maerus, a family long among the most powerful lineages in the settlement. Fortunately he possesses a greater cunning than his parents and when a scandal among the ruling members brought the attentions of The Ministry, young Rogar realized that the scrutiny of The Inquisition wasn't far behind—and that his hobby of building non-inaequa devices would not be looked upon kindly. Gathering up as much loot as he could, he left Barter City with all of the inheritance he could squander as his family's coffers were cut out from the bottom and as predicted, with a youth marked by insubordination he was cast as a fugitive not long after. Aware that the damnable bureaucracy of Askis would eventually route him from an existence of subversive leisure, Rogar chose instead to take up a life of piracy.

Buccaneer King Keen to avoid capture, Rogar first lived obscurely as carpenter or boatswain and gradually learned the measure of criminal mariners before taking on as first mate of the *Bardai's Revenge* (formerly the *Blessed Journey*). During an air assault he first distinguished himself as a true leader by using a pilfered grappling gun anchored to the ship to take down an attacking windrider, acing a shot through the aircraft's rigging. His crew demanded he become captain of the ship and before long Rogar was the new pirate king. Knowing that a powerful name brings attention he has avoided the uncouth infamy of his predecessors and is practically a ghost, the surviving victims of his terror numbering less than a dozen.

Master Plan: Better Guns and More Guns The pirate king has a straightforward approach to breaking the reins of the Celestial Heroes' authority—make lots of guns and distribute them as widely as possible. While the corrupted pneumavores he's established ramshackle settlements on provide some facilities for manufacturing firearms, only the captains of his ragtag fleet carry anything better than matchlock weapons. With assault teams sabotaging the nearest Towers of Light, cutting off steel equos tracks, and placing special radio jammers around it, and a fleet large enough, Rogar intends to establish a beachhead in Legio as the secondary squadron runs interference through the Stagnum Strait. Once the city is won its manufacturing facilities can be rapidly restructured to produce his deadly firearms (along with some other war machines he's been dreaming up) and with all his soldiers properly armed, a new age of piracy can begin that will mean a new dawn for evil across the globe.

Lairs of Rogar Felgrym: Corrupted Pneumavores

Not liking inaequa devices hasn't stopped Rogar from tampering with them and somewhere along the line (during a month stranded on the back of an island-creature, or so they say) he discovered a means of using them to cause mutations in pneumavores. The transformation bestows an intellect to the sea monster and with every corrupted pneumavore, the dwarf plies his keen mind to gain a powerful new ally—even when he's in a pirate ship there's always one lurking in the waters nearby.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, Rogar does not receive a lair action—instead, his corrupted pneumavore takes a slow turn (so as not to disrupt its master) until it cannot take actions or is reduced to 0 Health. If Rogar is reduced to 0 Health before his corrupted pneumavore, the creature acquires him and flees and if it cannot, fights to the death instead.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The waters around corrupted pneumavores become brackish and gloomy, poisoned by the creature's presence and generating one (or more) of these effects.

- A slight sheen of clear oil sluices on top of the waves within a mile of a corrupted pneumavore.
- The salty smell of the ocean in a 2-mile radius of a corrupted pneumavore is awry with a touch of methane and sulfur.
- Stormclouds can take on a greenish cast when formed in the air in a 5-mile radius above a corrupted pneumavore.

The island suddenly shifts, shuddering dramatically as a huge mass rises up out of the ocean—a tentacle! Rogar bellows with laughter as the deceptive monster's enormous limb begins its descent and chaos erupts.

Corrupted Pneumavore

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 6 monster (evil)

Perception 15 (+5); sightless

Defense 18; **Health** 250

Strength 22 (+12), **Agility** 7 (-3), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed swimmer 18

Immune damage from psychic and unholy; blinded, charmed, compelled, deafened, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, prone, stunned

Corrupted Resistances The corrupted pneumavore takes half damage from fire and poison.

Gargantuan Resistance The corrupted pneumavore has 3 boons on challenge rolls made against disease, poison, spells, and other magical effects.

Vulnerability The corrupted pneumavore takes double damage from cold, holy, and lightning.

False Appearance While the corrupted pneumavore remains motionless without its underside exposed, it is indistinguishable from an island.

Water Breathing The corrupted pneumavore can breathe only underwater.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Giant Tentacle (melee; reach +5) +12 (6d6 plus the if the target is Size 4 or smaller it is grabbed until it spends an action succeeding on a Strength attack roll against the corrupted pneumavore's Strength)

Many Tentacles The corrupted pneumavore can grab up to 4 creatures at the same time.

Siege Monster The corrupted pneumavore deals double damage to objects and structures.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The corrupted pneumavore makes three giant tentacle attacks. When encountered with Rogar, in order to avoid damaging him or his crew the corrupted pneumavore can only attack with one tentacle each round.

Tentacle Slam The corrupted pneumavore slams creatures grappled by it into each other. Each creature must succeed on a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes or take 4d6 damage and be stunned until the end of the next round. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't stunned.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Sense Inaequa The corrupted pneumavore senses inaequa within 5 miles. This trait otherwise works like Sense Magic but isn't itself magical.

The full body plate armor this figure wears would be advanced even for a Master Inquisitor and clearly is not of this world, the blades in their hands bleeding void into the air.

Sica Rimora

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (evil)

Perception 15 (+5); darksight, sightless

Defense 19 (voidplate); **Health** 130

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2), **Sanctity** 5 (-5), **Sin** 12 (+2)

Speed 10; flier 6 (hover), swimmer 13 **Vilis Points** 12

Immune damage from poison; frightened, poisoned

Evasion When the Sica Rimora makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they takes half damage.

Voidplate The Sica Rimora takes half damage from cold and fire, and is immune to damage and conditions from gasses and vapors that require inhalation. In addition, they are able to breathe both water and air.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bracazian Blade (melee or medium) +5 with 1 boon (2d6+4 plus if the attack deals 15 or damage the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or is blinded until it succeeds at an identical challenge roll at the end of each round)

Returning Blades Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown bracazian blade reappears in the Sica Rimora's hand.

Vicious Strike The Sica Rimora can use their minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 4d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Sica Rimora attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Invisibility The Sica Rimora's armor turns them invisible until they or can no longer take actions. Any equipment the Sica Rimora wears or carries is invisible with them.

Demiphase The Sica Rimora uses their minor activity to activate the phase function of their armor, disrupting their form. Until the end of the next round, attack rolls against the Sica Rimora are made with 1 bane.

Feared most of all by the pirates that sail in their crews, the lieutenants of Rogar Fulgrym are not of this world. Disturbances caused by the *Bands of Kyttarmoak* drew the attention of space-faring pirates from Bracaz, the docile citizenry of Askis seeming like ideal targets for plunder. The timing of their dimensional incursion was poor however, the great work of Rankir Tarryndorn tearing the craft apart. Initial interactions with locals—a head-to-head fight—did not leave the planar brigands in good stead and they hid themselves in stasis, sustained in suspended animation by their suits for centuries. Eventually the dwarf pirate king came upon them and awoke the wayward criminals, recruiting the surviving crew and (after realizing their miraculous technology was tied to their physiologies) seeing to it that they live like royalty. Each Sica Rimora commands a small part of Rogar Fulgrym's fleet, leading boarding parties and striking terror into the hearts of sailors the world over. They have seen the horrors of the cosmos and are fearless tacticians, though there is one threat that gives them pause: Slate. The Knight of the Slate has been mistaken for one of these buccaneer-commanders several times and has taken great umbrage with the soiling of his likeness, gradually bringing their stout folk leader into his sights.

Inquisitor Octavius tugs on Cassia's robe, taking the Magi Primaria's attentions away from the splendor of Pertinax beneath the tallest of the Dragon Spires and back to the matter at hand. They step back into the tower, the scent of ritual reagents heavy in the air in preparation for her divinations. Rumors of a vile dragon unearthed by a restored passageway in the Operans Mountains overlooking the settlement have raised concerns within The Inquisition, enough of a consternation to merit bringing her in for her expertise with seeing magics. Sitting in the center of complex geometric designs meticulously inscribed onto the floor, Cassia chants the powerful words and sends her consciousness back through the ages, piercing the veil of time to bear witness to the ancient past.

Her mind's eye travels across a maelstrom of shape and color before emerging high above the city, though what she sees below is a sick and twisted parody of the resplendence she just gazed upon. Worse yet it is a bloodbath—she realizes she's been drawn to the final siege of Pertinax and it is just as horrendous as the legends claim. The cries of dying men and monsters fill the air as squads of mercenaries and spellswords work their way up the settlement, reinforced by legions of soldiers marching in the distance.

Pertinax's foul defenders have slowed the assault to a crawl, fiends and horrid creations pouring out of the mountains. There, a walking sculpture made out of nothing but blood flings pieces of itself into a group of knights and the sanguine chunks furiously explode, dropping two of the warriors. Not far off a mummified form covered in script bursts with green energy that slows soldiers attacking it, and nearby the gaze of an entropy-eyed skeletal lord paralyzes a mage helpless to stop it from ripping out his neck. Demons and devils within her sight are beyond count, small seas of red and orange that cackle and bellow with glee as blood seeps into the streets. Elementals rove the settlement scouring flesh with acid or fire, slamming into warriors and crumpling shields with force or wind, spraying rays of deathly energy that sap sword arms of their strength or soldiers of their lives. Creatures made from furious storms throw lightning that dances from their limbs, forms of golden light heal monsters until their targets explode with radiances of cascading power. It is war at its most savage.

The chaos of the melee throughout Pertinax's streets is unlike anything she has ever seen before but it pales in comparison to the spectacle above the city. Dragons of all kinds wing through the air to breathe lethal elements onto the soldiers below, but other things as well—clouds of otherworldly darkness drive warriors insane or wither muscles with necrotic power while bands of celestial power heal wounds with golden light. The latter shake Cassia from her enrapture of the display of holy and vile dragons in their full majestic might.

Below her the battle is breaking in favor of the invaders, Pertinax's defenders clearly faltering and ready to break as their casualties mount. She is not the only one to observe the flow of combat turn against the forces of evil; one of the corrupted flame-winged serpents wheels away from the fight and into the mountains. Cassia wills the magic to follow the vile dragon inside, weaving through passages in pursuit of the monster as it batters the walls in a clumsy, hasty retreat. The Magi Primaria's sensor accidentally rushes past it and before she can wheel back the vile dragon collapses the wide tunnel with savage strikes of its claws, winging back into the air through a large chamber before buckling the roof of the only other exit in sight.

With a loud groan the creature lands in the center of the cavern, its form shifting into that of a man with a high widow's peak, his black hair tied into a ponytail falling down his back. He is clad in black robes but Cassia quickly deduces that he is bleeding, his left hand red and holding his side as he grabs a potion from off of a table against the wall. After uncorking and drinking several of the vials he stretches, yawning his jaw wide and rolling his neck to a punctuation of cracks far too loud for a person of his size. Without warning his gaze quickly turns upward—he looks directly at Cassia and she suddenly feels his will encroaching into hers, the thing's madness creeping along her magic and across the sea of time, whispering promises of knowledge forbidden, sights unseeable, sounds beyond ears...

Cassia realizes the danger she is in and breaks the spell, shooting up to her feet and backing away from the magic circle. She coughs and sputters as Inquisitor Octavius rushes towards her, crouching low to take her weight on his shoulder. "Did you find anything out? Did the magic take hold?" The Magi Primaria stares back at him and nods, a new hollowness in her gaze.

Vilespawn Template

Eventually the fallen souls that can't struggle back to redemption accrue too much evil, the despicable essence of what they have become rapidly overtaking even their natural biological functions. These cursed creatures become vilespawn, hideously mutated freaks that have changed to appear as they truly are within their blackened hearts.

When any living creature's Sin ability score reaches 23, after completing a rest it awakens as a vilespawn.

GM'S NOTE: Vilespawn are specifically built to remain playable for PCs that have gone off the deep end—just because your evil mage has turned into a (more) freakish monster does not mean things can't get worse! While they may not be able to go about high society with great ease, any PC that gains this template should remain a character in the group.

Vilespawn Template **ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP**

Health +5

Alignment The creature becomes evil.

Type The creature's type changes to monster.

Intellect The creature loses most of its memories and sense of self. Its Intellect becomes 7. If the creature has talents granted by path, it loses the talent gained in its most recent level (the next level it takes in this path, it regains that talent but not the talent listed for their level until gaining another level and so on).

Senses The creature gains darksight, and it can see through magical darkness without difficulty.

Defense The creature's defense increases by 1.

Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from poison, as well as poisoned.

Vulnerability The creature takes double damage from holy.

Languages The creature speaks and understands Vilespeech.

Vilespawn Resistance The creature takes half damage from fire and poison.

Deformed The creature gains two randomly chosen Deformities (page 135) and has 3 banes on social challenge rolls made to do anything other than intimidate. At the GM's discretion, more types of mutations may result (such as other Sinful Gifts).

Tales of monsters lurking beneath the cities of Askis, men and women mutated by their wicked hearts, are common talk in bars and lounges. One stands out as different from the rest however: the tragic story of Oktellio the Damned. Unlike the other corrupted creatures stalking the underside of civilization they say that the half-orc was once a humble farmer, devout in his worship of Sanctus Visellia. Much laughter is had at the irony of Oktellio's misfortune, mirth at jokes about the pious follower of the Lady of the Wandering Scale transforming into an aberration by the doings of a foul ritual in which he had no stake—just a passerby at the wrong place at the wrong time.

The Maerus Sin-Nova sickened hundreds of citizens but the half-orc went insane, his body growing dozens of tentacles and changing into a true horror to behold. Terror followed him for years as Oktellio gathered back his sanity, the greatest of his tales beginning to circulate soon after. Everyone else in the immediate vicinity of the vile ritual were utterly destroyed when it went awry but the humble farmer's pure heart spared him from death. In return his seemingly endlessly life has been devoted to resisting evil urges, a series of frequently misunderstood attempts to redeem himself by rendering aid causing chaos all over Askis.

Oktellio's curse is also a dark gift—he can go nearly anywhere by land or sea provided not too many eyes are watching, and his immense strength has saved many recalcitrant disaster victims from death in a building fire, collapsed tunnel, or sinking boat. Despite his ardent devotion to charity and truth the vilespawn half-orc's reputation is of dubious use—his evil kin carry out acts of such gruesome malevolence that the fear they generate washes away whatever goodwill he can accrue. This hasn't stopped him from trying to cleanse his soul and Oktellio still offers assistance to everyone he crosses paths with, bringing along with him items his fragmented mind thinks might have some value to the uncursed. Unholy durability and strength see him safely through the Taenarius Tunnels and he roams from city to city, crisscrossing the world on a path he hopes will bring him back to the light.

The creature before you has legs like a man, but nothing else. A mass of tentacles both thick and thin rises up from out of this creature's muscled torso, wriggling around the neck beneath a tortured alien face with more slender limbs sprouting between two flared out bat-like ears. This monster's expression is haunting, its bizarre eyes filled with utter pain and sorrow.

Damned Oktellio DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 frightening monstrosity (vilespawn)

Perception 14 (+4); darksight (sees through magical darkness)

Defense 16; **Health** 115

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 13 (+3), **Sanctity** 19 (+9), **Sin** 4 (-6)

Speed 12; climber 12, swimmer 12 **Vilis Points** 4

Immune damage from poison; frightened, poisoned

Vilespawn Resistances Oktellio takes half damage from fire and poison.

Perseverant When Oktellio is reduced to 0 Health, he can drop to 1 Health instead. Once Oktellio has used Perseverant, he cannot do so for 24 hours.

Vulnerability Oktellio takes double damage from holy and psychic.

Courageous Allies able to see Oktellio have 2 boons on challenge rolls against fear.

Deformed Oktellio has 2 banes on social challenge rolls made to deceive, persuade, or otherwise interact by means other than intimidation.

Holy Troths: Celibacy, Charity, Clarity, Hardship Oktellio has taken several vows attempting to cleanse his soul. As long as he maintains these tenets (giving away all his goods, never lying, and refusing magical healing), he has 1 boon on challenge rolls to resist being charmed or compelled and his jump distances double.

Telepathy Oktellio can communicate telepathically to a range of 120 feet. He does not need to share a language with a creature and is able to send mental images (and receive them back if the creature so chooses). When Oktellio would be charmed or compelled, roll 1d20 and on a 12 or less he ignores the affliction.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Tentacle (melee; reach +1) +6 with 1 boon (2d6 plus if the target is Size 1 or smaller it must succeed on an opposed Strength challenge roll or be grabbed)

Improvised Throw (short range) +4 with 1 boon (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Oktellio attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Rally By spending an action yelling, Oktellio grants 15 bonus Health to 5 creatures that he can see. Up to 3 of these creatures may have just died within the last minute. Once he has used Rally, Oktellio cannot do so for 24 hours.

Heroic Effort (7 points) Oktellio can use an effort point once per turn to accomplish one of the following. Effort points are regained at the end of a rest.

- **Hero's Ire (2 points)** Oktellio chooses a creature that he can see. For the next minute he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and weapon damage rolls when attacking that creature.
- **Heroic Stand (1 point)** Oktellio uses his minor activity to take the Defend action.
- **Implacable Resolve (2 points)** Oktellio gains 10 bonus Health. This bonus Health last until the beginning of his next turn.
- **Stroke of Luck (1 point)** Oktellio rerolls an attack roll or challenge roll.

Chirurgical Constructs

While a mad scientist or sinister surgeon can be a deadly and depraved menace in their own right, the theme of body horror is certainly accentuated by providing the demented mastermind with an array of paramedical minions who unquestioningly do what even the most biddable human assistant would balk at carrying out. Constructs of this type allow you to show the scientist's mad genius at work while also demonstrating the depths of their corruption. Alternatively, it allows you to introduce the madman's handiwork without directly implicating him. He could even maintain a cover identity as an ordinary physician or academic whom the party might consult in an attempt to discover the nature of a mechanical menace that has been plaguing them.

A tiny segmented terror, a mechanical mix of insect and crustacean yet trailing filamentous strands almost like a jellyfish, skitters and crawls while thrashing its many limbs and whirring menacingly. Its narrow body is covered by thin protective plates while its underside is a mass of pinprick diodes and backlit wiring.

Cyberphrenic Tadpole — DIFFICULTY 1

Size 1/8 construct

Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 10
Strength 6 (-4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 3 (-7), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 3; climber 3, flier 10 (hover)
Immune damage from disease, poison, or psychic; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned
Telepathic Relay A cyberphrenic tadpole emits a telepathic homing impulse that connects it with its creator and its host. Its creator can sense the cyberphrenic tadpole's (and the host's) exact location once between rests.

In addition, once between rests the creator can spend 1 minute attuning their mind to the cyberphernic tadpole in order to detect the host's thoughts, invade the host's dreams, alter the host's memories of the past day, implant a suggestion (as the spell), or deal 1d6 psychic damage. A Will challenge roll made with 1 bane resists an effect from Telepathic Relay and disables that option for 1 minute.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +4 (1 plus Attach)
Attach The cyberphenic tadpole attaches to the target, its barbed filaments boring into the target in search of solid attachment points and anchoring it in place. The cyberphrenic tadpole is grabbed (moving to the squares its target moves to). Its Defense becomes 10 as it begins burrowing into the target's flesh at the end of each round, causing the target to take 1d6 damage as it bores a hole through which to invade its host. Creature have 3 banes on challenge rolls made to escape a cyberphrenic tadpole's grab and when attempting to do so, roll twice and take the worst result. An attached cyberphrenic tadpole can be struck with a weapon or removed by grabbing. The cyberphrenic tadpole can detach itself by using its minor activity.

END OF THE ROUND

Internalization A cyberphrenic tadpole grabbed onto a target makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 boons to burrow inside its host. On a success, the cyberphrenic tadpole implants itself along the host's brain stem or spine, entwining its filaments into the target's neural fibers. While internalized, the cyberphrenic tadpole has total cover against any attacks coming from outside the host's body; however, if the target takes 10 or more lightning damage in a single round, the cyberphrenic tadpole is incapacitated for 1d10 x 10 minutes.

Removing an internalized cyberphrenic tadpole is difficult, though as long as it remains helpless it can be extracted using normal chirurgery, requiring 1 hour of work and an Intellect challenge roll made with 1 bane. Removing the cyberphrenic tadpole causes a creature to permanently lower one ability score by 1 unless the result of the check is 20 or higher (in which case no permanent damage is done).

If the cyberphrenic tadpole is not rendered inert first it can be removed with emergency surgery, though it squirms and slithers through its host's innards to avoid removal. Performing emergency surgery requires all of the surgeon's actions on a slow turn that provokes free attacks and can be performed only on a willing or incapacitated host. The host takes 1d6 points damage per round and is poisoned for 1 hour per round of surgery undertaken. Even after the surgery is complete, the host takes 5 damage. Each round of emergency surgery, the creature trying to remove the cyberphrenic tadpole makes an Agility challenge roll and Intellect challenge roll, but with each failure these are made with 1 cumulative bane. After making 1d3 successful rounds of surgery, the cyberphrenic tadpole is isolated and a single ally of the surgeon can attack the cyberphrenic tadpole with their triggered action. The cyberphrenic tadpole is three-quarters covered against this attack, and a missed attack strikes the host instead. If the cyberphrenic tadpole is destroyed, it can be removed as if it were inert (see above).

Alternatively, the surgeon can attempt to tear the cyberphrenic tadpole free with an action by succeeding on a Strength challenge roll. This traumatic removal from the host's nervous system deals 3d6 damage and permanently reduces two of the host's attributes by -1, but also leaves the cyberphrenic tadpole stunned for 1d6 rounds (after which it attempts to Attach itself to the nearest living creature).

If the attack fails to destroy the cyberphrenic tadpole or it is not dislodged, the cyberphrenic tadpole slips away and 1d6 additional Agility and Intellect challenge rolls are required to make another attempt to remove it. Only one attack or attempt to grab the cyberphrenic tadpole is allowed, though allies may use the Help action or otherwise assist the attacker or the surgeon in their attempt.

Cyberphrenic tadpoles are created by mad scientists to implant into their victims, rendering them more pliable to later mental influence and control and allowing the scientist to monitor the host's activities. A host may be unaware that a cyberphrenic tadpole has been introduced, as they may be implanted while a victim is unconscious, unaware, or otherwise helpless and the wound left behind by its entry into the host healed and memory of this invasion of the flesh erased by a concomitant invasion of the mind. Grafting itself onto the host's nervous system, a cyberphrenic tadpole is very difficult to remove and subsists parasitically on the bioelectrical and biothermal processes within the host's body.

Gespadrieux is notorious for using these devious creatures but they've been utilized by Caskette and Aevus Fatalibus as well as a host of mad scientists entombed in the Taenarius Tunnels. Rogar Felgrym has taken great interest in the contraptions, offering a sizable bounty of 10,000 gold pieces to anyone that can deliver a single intact cyberphrenic tadpole. Anyone discovered in possession of one suffers extreme scrutiny however, delivered directly to The Inquisition once they are caught and interrogated until the location of where they found it is revealed.

A cyberphrenic tadpole's body is usually only a few inches long and an inch wide, though its tentacular filaments can be up to a foot long. The creature as a whole weighs only a few ounces.

Crafting a Cyberphrenic Tadpole A mad scientist may craft a number of these constructs equal to half their Intellect, replacing 2 prototype drones for every cyberphrenic tadpole they possess.

This mechanical horror bristles with wires, compartments, and blinking lights up and down its thick stalk-like metallic body, balanced atop six spidery legs and bristling with branching armatures, some with cables and clamps and others tipped with gleaming trocars and pneumatic needlers.

Dissectrinator

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 2 construct

Perception 16 (+6); darksight

Defense 15; **Health** 65

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 5

Immune damage from disease, fire, poison, or psychic; gaining Insanity; asleep, charmed, diseased, fatigued, frightened, poisoned

Pain Threshold The dissectrinator ignores attacks and spells that deal 5 damage or less.

Robotic Resistances The dissectrinator takes half damage from acid or cold.

Vulnerability The dissectrinator takes doubles damage from lightning.

Medical Installation Despite its lack of hands, a dissectrinator can use the following equipment: alchemist's supplies, healer's kit, and lockpicks. It can store up to 50 pounds of such gear in racks and compartments within its body, replacing them when they are exhausted.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Clamp (melee) +6 (1d6+2 plus the target is grabbed)

Trocar (melee) +6 (1d6 plus Syringe Dart)

Syringe Dart (short) +4 (1d6 plus the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or falls asleep for 1d6 rounds)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The dissectrinator attacks twice.

END OF THE ROUND

Cortical Puncture At the end of the round where it has pierced a creature with both of its trocar's, the dissectrinator drills into the skull of a grabbed creature and selectively extracts portions of the target's brain. The grabbed creature makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or reduces its Intellect by -1.

A dissectrinator is an example of the light and dark sides of chirurgical practice. In principle, it is a semi-sentient mechanical assistant, programmed and equipped to assist a surgeon in medical matters both simple and complex, whetherit be treating poisons or injuries or dealing with disease or dissection. Of course, in the hands of a demented chirurgeon, the cranial dissectrinator becomes a terrifying instrument of torment, capable of reducing the bravest of souls to drooling i mpotence with soulless and heartless clinical precision.

A dissectrinator is 7 feet tall in total, its core body 3 feet tall, atop a set of legs 2 feet long and with the upper 2 feet a branching set of limbs and sensors. A dissectrinator weighs 500 pounds.

The statuesque and sublime features of this horned humanoid would be pleasing to look upon but their red-orange skin is cracked and misshapen in places, the scent of brimstone marking them out as something fiendish.

Cambion

DIFFICULTY 5

Size 1 cambion
Perception 11 (+1); darksight
Defense 12 (soft leather); **Health** 10
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 8 (-2)
Speed 10
Immune damage from disease and poison; diseased, poisoned
Fire Resistance A cambion takes half damage from fire.
Iron Vulnerability A cambion is impaired while in contact with iron.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Bronze Scimitar (melee) +1 (1d6+1)
Bow (long) +1 (1d6+1)

MAGIC
Power 1
Enchantment *bewitch* (2), *charm* (1)

When an incubus (or in more grisly occurrences, a succubus) mates with a creature while in the Abyss, their doomed paramour (whether female *or* male) gives birth to a half-breed: the cambion. These outcasts are hated by both their kin and live in exile, whatever semblance of good that might have once been in them snuffed out by the cruelties they suffer for the basic circumstances of their cursed existence.

Cambion (Half-Fiend) Template

ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP

A beast, humanoid, giant, or monstrosity can be born a cambion (half-fiend). It keeps its statistics, except as follows.

Ability Scores The creature increases its Agility and Intellect by +1.
Senses The creature gains darksight.
Fire Resistance The creatures takes half damage from fire.
Languages The creature learns Abyssal.
Magic The creature's Power increases by +1 and it learns the *bewitch* and *charm* enchantment spells.

Most of this fellow's body is covered by a tightly-cinched magenta lab coat except his hands and left arm, each of which is covered by brass and gold clockwork. A few quaint gears are on his top hat but his eyes are covered by unnerving ruby lenses, an equally dubious contraption covering his face as well.

Crazed Simulacrum DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (evil)
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 75
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 9 (-1)
Speed 10
Immune poisoned
Simulacrum Resistances The crazed simulacrum takes half damage from cold, fire, and poison.
Lightning Vulnerability The crazed simulacrum takes double damage from lightning.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Pneumatic Steam Arm (melee) +3 (2d6+2)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The crazed simulacrum attacks twice.

MAGIC

Technological Weapon The crazed simulacrum casts spells by using its pneumatic steam arm, a piece of technology that defies magic, ignoring effects like Sense Magic and *destroy magic*. Without its pneumatic steam arm, the crazed simulacrum's Power is reduced to 1 and its Strength is reduced to 10.
Power 4
Arcana *arcane armor* (5), *arcane sight* (2), *explosive darts* (2), *destroy magic* (1), *harness magic* (1)
Forbidden *harm* (5), *hateful defecation* (2), *ravenous maggots* (2), *part bone from flesh* (1), *soul exchange* (1)
Technomancy *jury-rig* (5), *sparking shield* (2), *flamethrower* (2), *grenades* (1), *flying blades* (1)

Many threats lurk in the Taenarius Tunnels beyond an encounter with the Ministerium Inmorte or the passing of incitacio pods hurtling on powerful winds. Some intelligent evil creatures fled below ground to escape the Celestial Heroes but they are truly selective in their predations, and the most devious and lethal denizens beneath Askis are the remnants of mad scientists of days past. Freakish abominations are the among their hardiest of creations still running amok and too tough to die, automatons built to withstand the rigors of time, laboratories with corrupted machines, and experiments left alone too long—but these are lesser troubles.

The deadliest denizens of the subterranean passages are the crazed, depraved, starving simulacrums and other failed attempts at immortality crafted by minds not quite brilliant enough to escape capture or destruction. Sometimes these are constructs deluded into believing they are their creators, others despicably spiteful with the full knowledge that they are only shadows of what they were meant to be. Any that survive longer than a few weeks are wily and devious, stalking far from where the Ministerium Inmorte or Askis' holy soldiers might find them. When they come upon prey however they lure targets into specially prepared tunnels filled with miles of ambushes and traps, turning their captives into subjects for experiments all their own.

Daemons, Demons, and Devils

These are a few of the most common daemons, demons, and devils conjured onto the Material Plane by summoners (pages 115-116). Daemons exist along the River Styx, serving both chaotic and lawful forces in their pursuit to bring souls to the Abyss where fiends dwell or the home of devils in Hell.

Pale yellow-white hair bats against this fiend's deep red skin, its wings carrying it aloft and its body protected by armor made from the bones of the dead.

Cacodaemon

DIFFICULTY 1

Size ¼ demon

Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 13; **Health** 7
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 8; flier 13
Immune damage from acid, poison; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The cacodaemon takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, and weapons that are not both iron and magical

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claw (melee) +1 (1d3)

END OF THE ROUND

Regeneration The cacodaemon heals 2 damage if it is not incapacitated and did not take holy damage this round.

Impish cacodaemons are the weakest of their kin and seek to inflict pain whenever possible in attempts to sate their unending appetite for mortal souls. Those who dally too long on the shores of the River Styx are harried by these warped creatures in hosts that grow all the larger the more a victim resists.

Horrendous crimson runes that are difficult to look upon writhe on the lumpy, muscular flesh of this winged toad-like creature and from its fanged maw slathers a tongue covered in saliva a multitude of colors.

Hydrodaemon

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 2 frightening demon

Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 35
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 13, swimmer 20
Immune damage from acid, poison, or unholy
Demonic Resistances The hydrodaemon takes half damage from cold, fire, and lightning,.
Spell Defense The hydrodaemon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the hydrodaemon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The hydrodaemon can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +4 (2d6 plus Sleep Spittle)
Claw (melee) +4 (1d6+2)
Sleep Spittle (short) +3 (the target makes a Will challenge roll with 2 banes or falls unconscious for 1d3 rounds, or until it either takes damage or someone uses an action to shake or slap the sleeper awake)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The hydrodaemon attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

Frog-like horrors that swim the River Styx, hydrodaemons eat souls that dare to dip their hands into the supernatural waters before their drop into the Abyss or arrival in Hell. Though able to kill by tooth and claw hydrodaemons prefer to render victims unconscious, dragging their sleeping bodies into the icy waters to suffer a truly final death by drowning.

Faces of races long dead swim in the regal red cloak of this black-and-blue skeleton, its armor as fiendish as the diabolically twisting energy vortex in its right eye socket.

Thanadaemon — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 frightening demon
Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 30
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Immune damage from acid, poison, or unholy; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The thanadaemon takes half damage from cold, fire, lightning, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Spell Defense The thanadaemon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the thanadaemon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The thanadaemon can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claw (melee) +3 (1d6 plus 1d6 unholy)
Evil Staff (melee) +4 (1d6+2 plus 1d3 unholy)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Attack Array The thanadaemon uses its Paralyzing Gaze and attacks twice.
Paralyzing Gaze The thanadaemon fixes its gaze on one creature it can see within 3 yards and makes a Will attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, the target is defenseless for 1 minute. The target can make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a target's challenge roll is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the thanadaemon's gaze for the next 24 hours.

These empowered skeletons ply the River Styx after dying of old age and run ferries across its waters, transporting the newly dead to the Abyss or Hell on ferries made from bones stripped clean of flesh by cacodaemons.

This enormous fiend reeks of sulfur and brimstone, its furry lower body, arms, and torso rank with the iron smell of damp blood. An impressive flare of blue fur makes a mane around the monster's grotesque horned, crimson head and furious avian glare.

Abrikandilu — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 2 frightening demon
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 55
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 6 (-2), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10
Immune damage from lightning or poison; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The abrikandilu takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Telepathy The abrikandilu can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +5 (2d6)
Claw (melee) +5 (1d6+2)
Destroyer The abrikandilu deals double damage to objects and structures.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The abrikandilu attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

MAGIC

Power 2
Tradition *break* (3), *sunder* (2), *erode* (1)

END OF THE ROUND

Hatred of Mirrors If the abrikandilu is adjacent to a mirror or creature wielding a polished metal shield, it must succeed on a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes or be compelled to destroy the object on its next turn.

Wrecker demons frequently filling out the infantry of Abyssal armies, abrikandilu were destroyers of beauty in life that continue their envious vandalism for eternity. These fiends are driven to madness by the sight of their own mutated reflections and they do whatever is necessary to destroy it, enraged by the reminder of what they've become.

Robed as though it were a noble, this insectile fiend's disgusting head is topped by two enormous multi-faceted red eyes, the translucent wings sprouting from its neck reaching nearly to the floor.

Coloxus \DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 frightening demon
Perception 13 (+3); darksight
Defense 15 (armor); **Health** 40
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 8; flier 17
Immune damage from disease, lightning, or poison; diseased, poisoned
Demonic Resistances The coloxus takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, and fire.
Fiendish Brilliance The coloxus has 2 boons on Intellect challenge rolls. In addition, it speaks and understands all languages.
Telepathy The coloxus can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Claw (melee) +5 (1d6+2)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Droning Wings The coloxus flutters its wings and conjures a kaleidoscope of color as well as a drone that dampens other sounds. The coloxus gains immunity to thunder damage and other creatures within a 10-yard radius cast spells that require wielding implements with 2 banes.

MAGIC

Power 5
Arcana *magic dart* (6), *arcane shield* (3), *empowered magic* (2)
Illusion *disguise* (6), *figment* (3), *glamer* (2), *phantasm* (2), *mirage* (1), *illusory double* (1)

Many a mage have looked too deeply into forbidden lore, forever staining their souls with failed attempts to grasp at powers beyond mortal ken. When the cursed finally perishes they may be drawn down into the Abyss, the finality of their demise reinterpeted by demon handlers to be seen as an ascension instead. Thus coloxus are incredibly confident in their power, overwhelmingly certain that they are truly masters of the arcane without peer. The illusion that they reside within is so whole and encompassing that nothing in existence can convince them otherwise—and they keep any mortal foolish enough to believe the charade in bondage as servants, the fear the coloxus' "terrible power" bearing down on them at all times.

Malevolent eyes leer out from the grotesque flesh of this monster's face, its macabre skin stretched tight between its locomotive body and the engine at its head. A terrible wailing comes from the damned railcars trailing behind it, the faces of the passengers within in rictuses of agony.

Equos Demon

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 4 horrifying demon

Perception 15 (+5); darksight

Defense 14; **Health** 150

Strength 20 (+10), **Agility** 10 (+0), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 23 (see text)

Immune damage from disease, lightning, or poison; diseased, frightened, poisoned

Demonic Resistances The equos demon takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.

Spell Defense The equos demon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the equos demon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.

Damned Railcars A line of ghostly carriages bump and trundle behind the equos demon, carrying captured souls. While inside of a damned railcar, a creature has the defenseless condition and cannot be healed in any way. The creature can look out from the windows and be seen doing so, but is otherwise unable to communicate or be affected by anything outside of the damned railcar. A creature inside a damned railcar cannot be regurgitated and when the equos demon dies it requires 100 yards of movement to exit the corpse.

Lined Movement The equos demon can only travel in straight lines once it has begun its movement. At the beginning of its turn, an equos demon can change direction by reducing its speed that round by 3 yards per 45 degrees turned.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +10 (3d6 plus Swallow on attack roll 20+)

Charging Slam (melee) +10 (6d6 plus if the target takes 25 or more damage it is knocked prone)

Destroyer The equos demon deals double damage to objects and structures.

Swallow If the target is smaller than the equos demon, it must make an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, the target is swallowed. A swallowed creature is defenseless and moves with the equos demon, transported to its damned railcars. At the end of each round, the swallowed creature takes 1d6 force damage and 1d6 psychic damage. If the equos demon becomes incapacitated, any creatures it has swallowed must climb their way out of the Damned Railcars with successful Strength challenge rolls.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The equos demn makes one charging slam attack and one bite attack or swallow attack.

Steel equos have been targeted by crime since their inception, sabotaged rails and hijacked locomotives terrifying early travelers until the Justitia stepped in and began policing them. The greatest of railway terrors come from the doings of mad scientists however, the weaknesses of the infrastructure exploited to cause crashes that accomplished nothing but damning thousands to death—and at the hands of Caskette, far worse. These victims ride long after their demise, trapped in the demonic corpse-flesh of the vessel that carried them to their ends. Evil spellcasters will do anything to capture a demon equos, the power offered by sacrificing one (and all its passengers) untold of in the modern age.

Gray hairs make a savage beard around the fanged mouth of this aged imp, its horns long since broken off near their base and its decayed wings bearing it aloft by the power of magic—while it is undoubtedly a detestable and wicked creature, it is hard not to find its tiny glasses appealing.

Imp-Erosi

DIFFICULTY 5

Size ¼ demon

Perception 11 (+1); darksight (including magical darkness)
Defense 14; **Health** 15
Strength 6 (-4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 5; flier 13
Immune damage from fire or poison; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The imp-erosi takes half damage from acid, cold, lightning, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Spell Defense The equos demon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the equos demon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Sting (melee) +4 (1d3 plus 2d6 poison if the target fails a Strength challenge roll)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the imp-erosi magically shapechanges into a beast that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the imp-erosi's choice). In a new form, the imp-erosi retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.
Disappear The imp-erosi can use its minor activity to become invisible until it attacks, chooses to reveal itself, or goes unconscious. Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it. The imp-erosi can recharge this trait by spending its action.

It isn't safe to attempt to escape Hell but what can be done in the realm of devils that does not result in harsh and severe punishment? Some imps take the risk of and cross over into the Abyss, becoming thralls to demons. Once removed from their home, age takes its toll and withers their bodies, but not without expanding the fiend's mind. Gradually it transforms into an imp-erosi demon, mastering its innate magics and always seeking to steal power (be it arcane or divine) from others.

Cloven hooves, crimson legs, and tufts of black and brown hair cover this fiend's body, the torso a playpen for slithering snakes with no tails. Its ugly face is a mixture of expressions and in but a moment changes from hatred to joy to sadness and back again.

Accuser Devil

DIFFICULTY 10

Size ½ frightening demon

Perception 11 (+1); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 35
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 9 (-1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 7; flier 20
Immune damage from acid, fire, or poison; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The accuser devil takes half damage from cold and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Infernal Informant The accuser devils records everything it witnesses and can pass this information onto another creature through visions. The accuser devil can replay up to 24 hours of events it has seen to a willing creature, taking 1 round per hour of recorded images. After replaying a vision, the accuser devil cannot replay it again.
Telepathy The accuser devil can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +0 with 1 boon (1d6 plus 1d6 acid and the target makes a Strength challenge roll or is poisoned until the acid damage is healed)

MAGIC

Power 4
Earth *tremor* (2)
Illusion *invisibility* (2)
Teleportation *shortcut* (2)

Accuser devils are the souls of children that have been cast down to Hell, warped into stealthy sentries that can garner valuable secrets and share them with their masters without deception or guile.

Weaving through the air on sickly spotted wings is a beaked fiend, barbs sprouting from beneath its beastly arms to cover a kaleidoscope of iridescent insectile scales that end in a wicked two-pronged stinger. The creature's tail drips with venom and it hefts a decrepit piece of wood in one hand, a club that radiates dark energy.

Bestiola Devil

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 2 frightening demon

Perception 14 (+4); darksight (including magical darkness)
Defense 16; **Health** 60
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed flier 17 (hover)
Immune damage from fire or poison; poisoned
Demonic Resistances The bestiola devil takes half damage from acid, cold, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Spell Defense The bestiola demon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the bestiola demon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The bestiola devil can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Foul Club (melee) +5 (2d6 plus 1d6 unholy)
Stinger (melee) +5 (1d6 plus the target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is poisoned until the damage is healed)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The bestiola devil attacks once with its foul club and once with its stinger.

MAGIC

Power 4
Illusion *invisibility* (2), *phantasm* (1)
Teleportation *shortcut* (2)

These officers of Hell's infantry command legions of lesser fiends, torture prisoners, and carry the potent secrets of their evil masters until an opportunity for profit or revenge reveals itself. In battle they are fearsome to behold, winging about in the air and striking down on foes with both stinger and club in flurries that do not relent until an enemy's corpse vacates its bowels. A smart creature that has no more than half its total Health and does so makes an Intellect challenge roll. On a success, the bestiola devil assumes they are dead and attacks a new target.

Spikes jut out from this crimson fiend's skull and above its brimming jade eyes, scripts and papers covered in a host of languages—contracts—wrapped about its arms.

Contract Devil

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 2 frightening demon

Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 45
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 10
Immune damage from fire or poison; charmed, compelled, poisoned
Demonic Resistances The contract devil takes half damage from acid, cold, and weapons that are not both iron and magical.
Spell Defense The contract demon takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the contract demon with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The contract devil can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Whipping Contract (melee; reach +2) +4 (1d6 plus if the target has made any kind of agreement with the contract devil it succeeds on a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes or gains the charmed condition for 1 minute)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The contract devil attacks twice.

MAGIC

Power 3
Divination *eavesdrop* (4), *psychometry* (2), *truth ear* (1), *locate* (1)
Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *charm* (2), *command* (2), *question* (2), *compel* (1), *cower* (1
Fire *control flame* (4), *fire blast* (2), *fiery volley* (1), *immolate* (1)
Illusion *disguise* (4), *thimblerig* (2), *glamer* (1), *phantasm* (1)

When powerful mages beseech dark powers, contract devils use their acumen with words and understanding of fell agreements to entrap all but the cleverest bargainers often in exchange for a sinful gift (pages 139-141). These fiends frequently goad fools into making deals without realizing their error—a mistake that proves severe indeed.

With a flaming blade in one hand and a net in the other, this feather-winged devil glares out with crimson eyes in search of a target to subjugate and capture.

Warmonger Devil — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 2 frightening demon

Perception 15 (+5); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 50
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 13; flier 13
Immune damage from fire or poison; charmed, compelled, immobilized, poisoned, stunned
Demonic Resistances The warmonger devil takes half damage from acid, cold, unholy, and weapons that are not magical.
Evil Presence All demons adjacent to the warmonger devil gain a +1 bonus to attack rolls, weapon damage rolls, and Defense.
Free Movement The warmonger devil ignores difficult terrain, cannot be immobilized, and can freely move through spaces occupied by creatures.
Telepathy The warmonger devil can communicate telepathically within 33 yards.

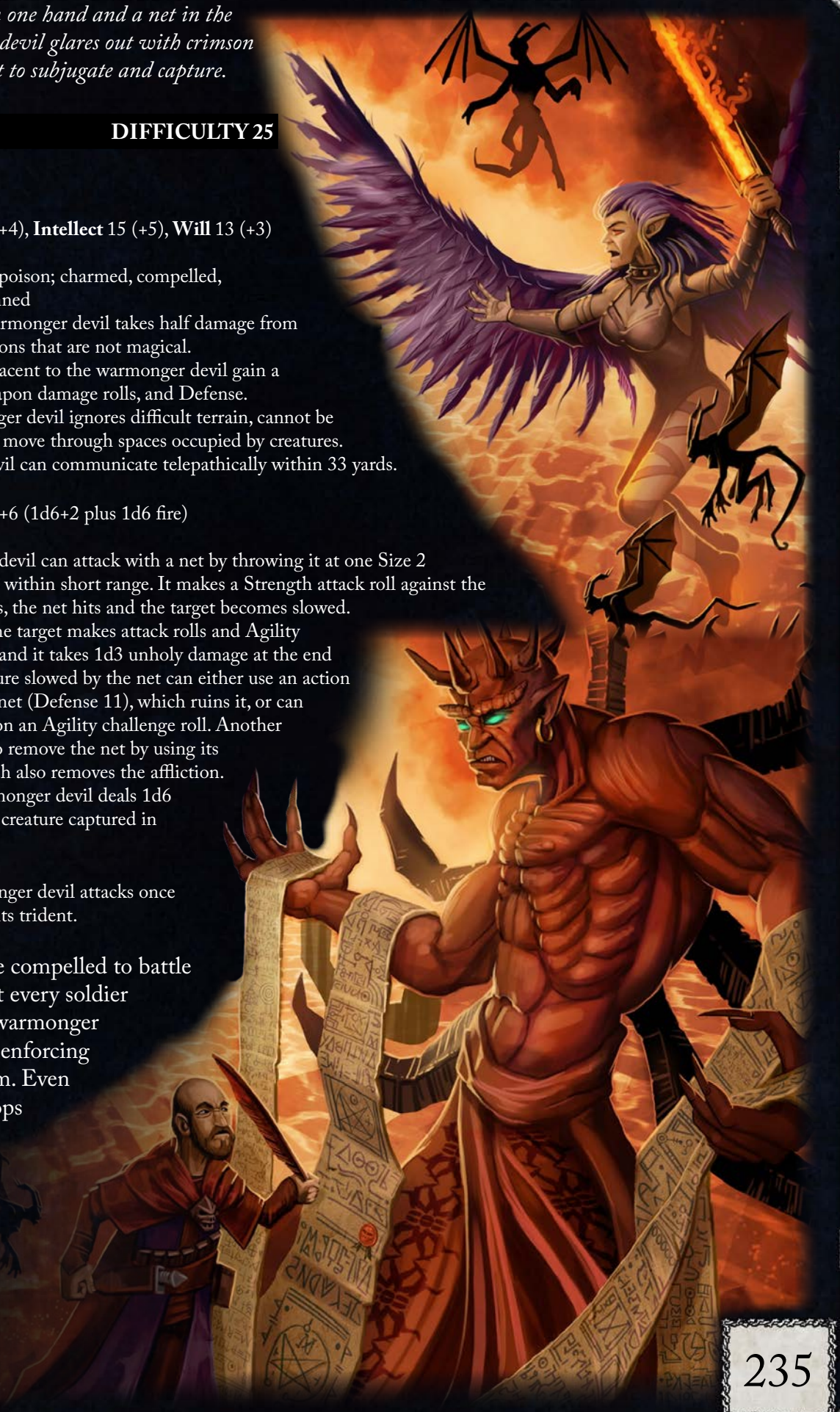
ATTACK OPTIONS

Flaming Longsword (melee) +6 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 fire)
Slam (melee) +6 (1d6)
Infernal Net The warmonger devil can attack with a net by throwing it at one Size 2 or smaller creature or object within short range. It makes a Strength attack roll against the target's Agility. On a success, the net hits and the target becomes slowed. While slowed in this way, the target makes attack rolls and Agility challenge rolls with 2 bane, and it takes 1d3 unholy damage at the end of the round. A target creature slowed by the net can either use an action to cut its way free from the net (Defense 11), which ruins it, or can escape by getting a success on an Agility challenge roll. Another creature can use an action to remove the net by using its action on a Slow Turn, which also removes the affliction.
Infernal Advantage The warmonger devil deals 1d6 extra damage when it hits a creature captured in its Infernal Net.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The warmonger devil attacks once with its net and twice with its trident.

Most of Hell's legions are compelled to battle when called upon but not every soldier does as they should and warmonger devils are responsible for enforcing morale in the weak of arm. Even without a phalanx of troops around them however the fiends are terrors in combat, capturing foes before mercilessly stabbing them to death. They are sometimes mistaken for erinyes—one of their many tactics to better implement command through fear.



At first the horned ochre serpent ahead looks mundane but then greenish flames flicker off of its back to cast a sickening glow onto iron scales across its underside. Unholy fire wisps out from its maw and it seethes with hatred, a vile urge to inflict suffering captured in its reptilian gaze.

Wyrmling Vile Dragon — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 monster (evil)

Perception 15 (+5); darksight (including magical), sightless
Defense 17; **Health** 80
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10; flier 17, tunnel 7
Immune damage from poison or unholy; gaining insanity; poisoned
Deadened Scales The dragon takes half damage from acid, thunder, and holy.
Demonic Shadows Lit areas out to 3 yards around the dragon become shadows.
Insane The dragon is incurably mad and has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +5 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 unholy)
Lasting Harm If living, the target takes a penalty to Health equal to the unholy damage taken from the attack. If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies instantly and if brought back to life immediately gains 1d6 Insanity.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Madness** The dragon spits madness in a 3-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area gains 1d3 Insanity. Once the dragon uses Spew Madness, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.
- **Spew Sacrilege** The dragon spits unholy energy in a 1 yard wide and 10 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, it takes 4d6 unholy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Sacrilege, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.

Young Vile Dragon — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 frightening monster (evil)

Perception 16 (+6); darksight (including magical), sightless
Defense 18; **Health** 120
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 13; flier 20 (hover), tunnel 10
Immune damage from poison or unholy; gaining insanity; poisoned
Deadened Scales The dragon takes half damage from acid, thunder, and holy.
Demonic Shadows Lit areas out to 6 yards around the dragon become shadows.
Insane The dragon is incurably mad and has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +1) +6 (2d6 plus 2d3 unholy)
Claw (melee) +6 (1d6+2)
Lasting Harm If living, the target takes a penalty to Health equal to the unholy damage taken from the attack. If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies instantly and if brought back to life immediately gains 1d6 Insanity.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

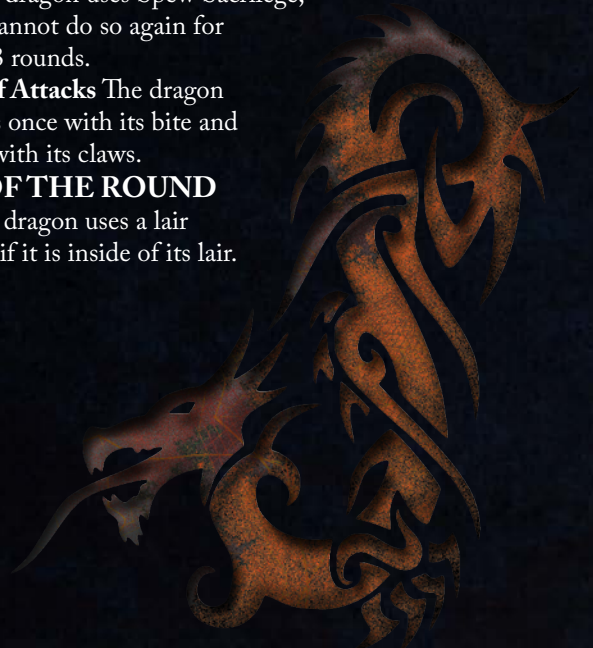
Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Madness** The dragon spits madness in a 6-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area gains 2d3 Insanity. Once the dragon uses Spew Madness, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.
- **Spew Sacrilege** The dragon spits unholy energy in a 2 yard wide and 20 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, it takes 6d6 unholy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Sacrilege, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.



Adult Vile Dragon — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening monster (evil)

Perception 17 (+7); darksight (including magical), sightless
Defense 19; **Health** 160
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 17; flier 27 (hover), tunnel 13
Immune damage from poison or unholy; gaining insanity; poisoned
Deadened Scales The dragon takes half damage from acid, thunder, and holy.
Demonic Shadows Lit areas out to 9 yards around the dragon become shadows.
Insane The dragon is incurably mad and has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +2) +7 (3d6 plus 3d3 unholy)
Claw (melee; reach +1) +7 (2d6)
Tail (melee; reach +2) +7 (1d6+2 plus 1d6 poison)
Lasting Harm If living, the target takes a penalty to Health equal to the unholy damage taken from the attack. If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies instantly and if brought back to life immediately gains 1d6 Insanity.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Madness** The dragon spits madness in a 9-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area gains 3d3 Insanity. Once the dragon uses Spew Madness, it cannot do so again for 1 round.
- **Spew Sacrilege** The dragon spits unholy energy in a 3 yard wide and 30 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, it takes 8d6 unholy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Sacrilege, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the dragon magically shapechanges into a humanoid or beast that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.
Legendary Action The dragon chooses two of the following:

- **Divine Sense** The dragon detects the presence of celestials, fiends, undead, and creatures with an evil alignment within 24 yards.
- **Tail Attack** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 3 yards makes an Agility challenge roll with 1 bane or takes 2d6 damage and is knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to 13 yards.

Ancient Vile Dragon — DIFFICULTY 500

Size 4 horrifying monster

Perception 18 (+8); darksight (including magical), sightless
Defense 20; **Health** 200
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 19 (+9), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 20; flier 33 (hover), tunnel 17
Immune damage from poison or unholy; gaining insanity; poisoned
Deadened Scales The dragon takes half damage from acid, thunder, and holy.
Demonic Shadows Lit areas out to 12 yards around the dragon become shadows.
Insane The dragon is incurably mad and has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +3) +8 (4d6 plus 2d6 unholy)
Claw (melee; reach +2) +8 (3d6)
Tail (melee; reach +3) +8 (3d6 plus 2d6 poison)
Lasting Harm If living, the target takes a penalty to Health equal to the unholy damage taken from the attack. If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies instantly and if brought back to life immediately gains 1d6 Insanity.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Madness** The dragon spits madness in a 12-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area gains 2d6 Insanity.
- **Spew Sacrilege** The dragon spits unholy energy in a 4 yard wide and 40 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, it takes 10d6 unholy damage.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the dragon magically shapechanges into a humanoid or beast that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.
Legendary Action The dragon chooses two of the following:

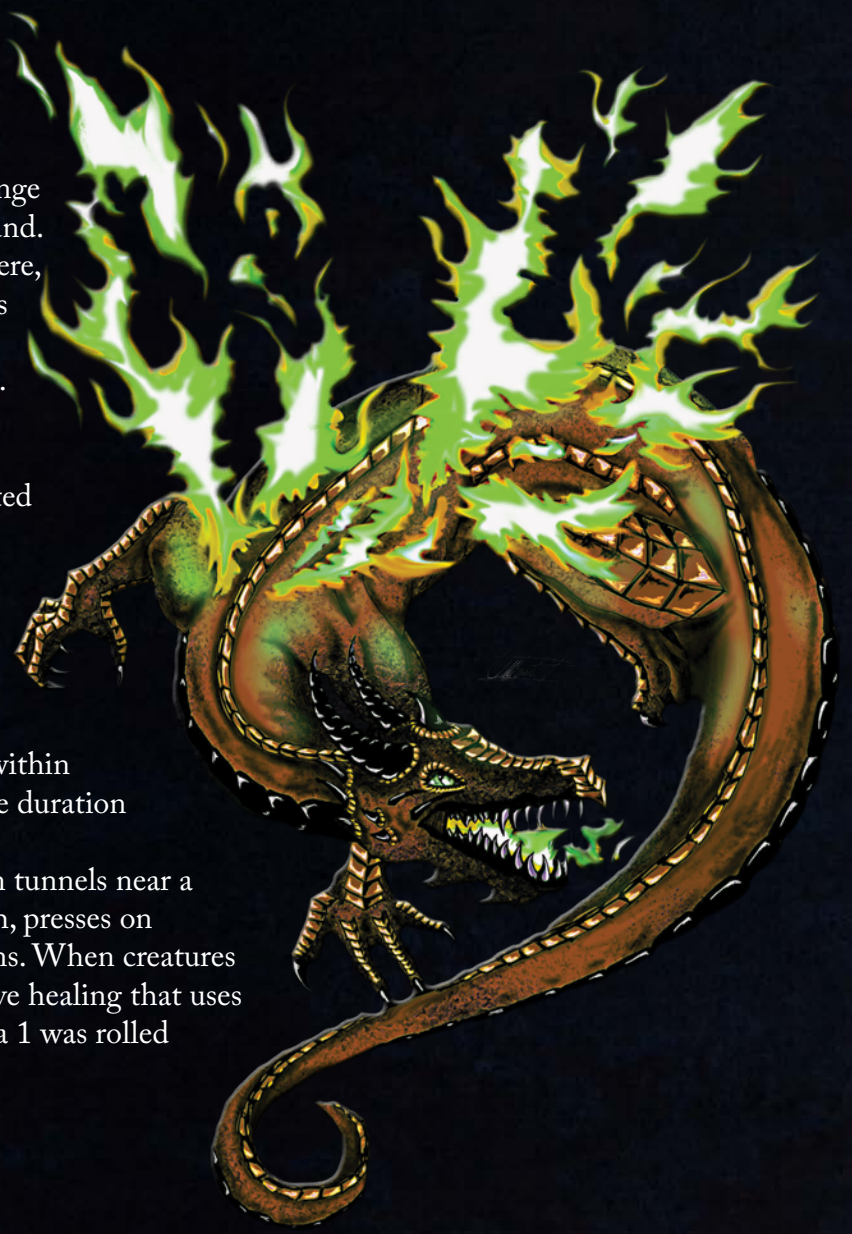
- **Divine Sense** The dragon detects the presence of celestials, fiends, undead, and creatures with an evil alignment within 33 yards.
- **Tail Attack** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 6 yards makes an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or takes 3d6 damage and is knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to 16 yards.

Wicked-hearted dragons that realized their end was near gathered together in Zakuthombo to mount a final defense, but not all—there were many that chose instead to accept a bargain with Caskette. It is true that she granted the power she promised, though what the great serpents did not know was the full price they would pay for her "gifts". Initially the forces of the Celestial Heroes fell back, cowed by their enemies suddenly blacking out the sky and driving battalions of soldiers to insanity. Briefly it seemed as though the mad scientist was good to her word, but the world's holy dragons needed no convincing when they heard what horrors she'd wrought on their kin and when faced by armies reinforced by their true divine might, the vile serpents faltered, their weaknesses exposed. Once broken in battle the vile dragons found their minds weakened as well, permanently damaged beyond repair. As a species they've sworn revenge against Caskette and frantically seek out her Cathedral Laboratories, though rarely with any success—her dark blessings also obscure her doings from their eyes, carrying on to their cursed offspring.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, the dragon can use one of its lair action options. It can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, the dragon can't use one until after its first turn in the combat.

- Disruptive energies roil around the dragon's lair. Until the end of the next round, whenever a creature heals damage it only heals half as much damage as normal.
- Evil infused into the dragon's lair spike upward and manifest into psychic shards. Until the end of the next round, the area is difficult terrain. A creature can choose to ignore the difficult terrain, but doing so causes it to make Intellect and Will challenge rolls with 3 banes until the end of next round.
- Pure malevolence pours out from everywhere, corrupting souls it touches upon. Creatures make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, a creature's Sin increases by 1.



REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around a vile dragon's lair are saturated by its foul presence, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Illumination is subdued by the oppressive evil suffused in a 3 mile radius of a vile dragon's lair, reducing the range of light sources by 2 yards.
- Maladies of the mind are more pervasive within 20 miles of a vile dragon's lair, doubling the duration of all forms of insanity and madness.
- Wounds fester as the vile energy leaking in tunnels near a corrupted serpent's home pulls at rent flesh, presses on bruised muscles, and sucks at bleeding veins. When creatures within 10 miles of a vile dragon's lair receive healing that uses dice, any dice that roll a 6 are treated as if a 1 was rolled instead.

Hissing corrosive liquid swirls and flows into a humanoid form made from acid with baleful orange eyes, its arms ending in massive fists.

Acid Elemental

DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster

Perception 10 (+0); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 65
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed 10; swimmer 10, tunnel 5
Immune damage from acid, disease, or poison; fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, poisoned, prone
Elemental Resistances The elemental takes half damage from psychic and weapons that are not magical.
Born to the Earth The elemental has 1 boon on attack and challenge rolls while it and its target are on the ground.
Corrosive Body Any creature or nonmagical weapon that touches the elemental takes 1d6 acid damage.
Liquid Form The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there, it can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing, and it ignores difficult terrain.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee) +5 (1d6 and 1d6 acid)
Corrosive Spit (short range) +5 (2d6 acid)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

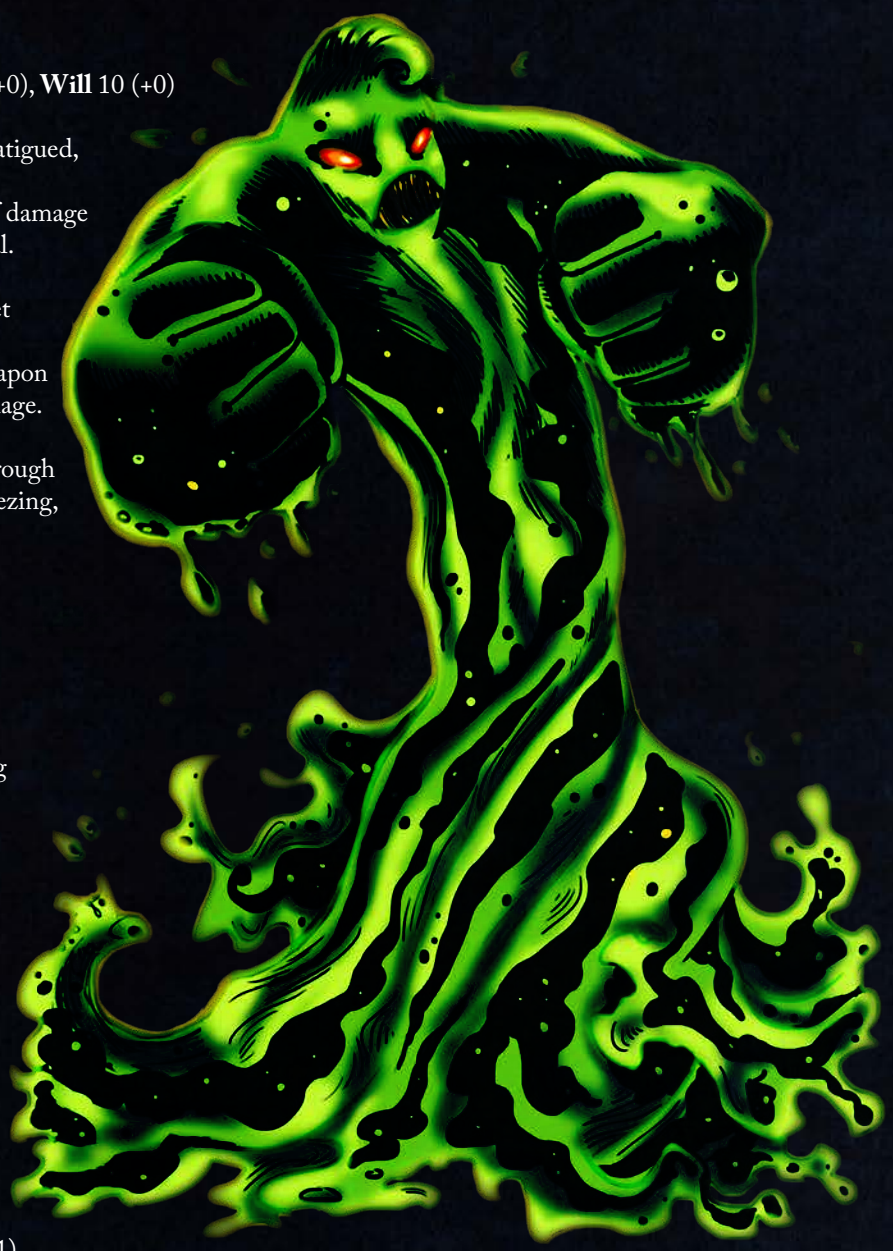
Double Attack The elemental attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Corrosive Wave The elemental conjures a rolling wave of acid 5 yards across that rushes away from it 10 yards in a direction of its choice. Each creature hit by the wave takes 2d6 acid damage and must succeed on a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, a creature is knocked prone and moved to the end of the corrosive wave's reach. Once the elemental uses Corrosive Wave it cannot do so for 1d3 rounds.

MAGIC

Power 2
Destruction *break* (3), *ruin* (3), *dissolve* (2), *rend* (2), *sunder* (2), *entropic power* (1), *erode* (1)
Earth *earth spike* (3), *shape earth and stone* (3), *tremor* (2), *avalanche* (1), *mold earth and stone* (1)



Acid elementals form naturally near points where the borders of Purgatory, the Plane of Earth, and the Plane of Fire overlap, spilling forth from planar disruptions in splashes of utter corrosion. Unlike their pure kin from the true elemental planes, these are creatures borne with a fierce intellect—and they are almost always filled with rage at their inherently destructive nature.

One of the prevailing legends in the Taenarius Tunnels are Vascilia's Chambers, a massive underground network of acidic pools and corroded machinery that once housed experiments of the most unnatural variety. The mad scientist that created the complex used her comprehensive knowledge of alchemy and the planes to bring forth a factory complex that wrought a legion of acid elementals all bent to her will. With such a powerful force at her command it seemed certain that the other deviant technological masterminds of Askis would ascede to her, but her own genius proved her downfall when Fraus Calumnia ripped apart her mind and all of her corrosive creations ran amok, killing her and destroying her blasphemies.

This creature is as much intangible as it is tangible, its floating body only tinges of blue and white that warp the space around it into a hulking, huge fisted form with eyes and a mouth whirling with the energies of a star.

Force Elemental — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster
Perception 10 (+0); sightless
Defense 15; **Health** 40
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed flier 20 (hover)
Immune damage from disease, force, or poison; fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, poisoned, prone
Complete Resistance The elemental takes half damage (from all sources).
Insubstantial The elemental can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Spell Defense The elemental makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the elemental with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Spell Warper Spells targeting the elemental may flow through or around it. When a spell attack misses the elemental's Defense by 5 or more, or when the elemental's challenge roll to resist a spell targeting succeeds by 5 or more, roll 1d6. On a 1 the spell reflects back at the caster, on a 6 the spell resolves normally, and on a result of 2, 3, or 4 the spell targets a random creature within range (treating the elemental as the caster of the spell for the purposes of range).

ATTACK OPTIONS
Slam (melee) +5 (2d6 force)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The elemental attacks twice.

MAGIC
Power 2
Arcana *magic dart* (3), *arcane shield* (3), *arcane sight* (2), *unerring darts* (2), *empowered magic* (1), *explosive darts* (1)
Chaos *chaos boon* (3), *erratic bolt* (3), *capricious devastation* (2), *fold space* (2), *iridescent shield* (2), *color of magic* (1), *flicker* (1)
Protection *secure site* (3), *evade* (2), *force field* (2), *vigilance* (1), *vigor* (1)

Sages and scholars once argued over the existence of force elementals, thinking them to be little more than speculative arcane theory or the talk of mages that had veered into insanity. In recent history however they have been sighted (not as commonly as necrotic or radiant elementals) though rarely by anyone with the mind to realize what the creature is before destroying it (or being destroyed by it). Only kytons know from whence they come—errantly broken links from a chain being pulled through Refesina. When such a catastrophe occurs countless force elementals are formed and scattered across existence, appearing in random dimensions and bent on the destruction of everything around them.

A humanoid torso, arms, and head of golden light is before you, propelled by a flowing bright luminescence. Auras of power gather in its hands and on its face are bright white pools where its eyes should be, held wide open with its mouth as it lets out a pleasing melodic keen.

Holy Elemental — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster (good)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 13; **Health** 50
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 20 (hover)
Immune damage from disease, poison, or holy; fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, poisoned, prone
Elemental Resistances The elemental takes half damage from psychic and weapons that are not magical.
Vulnerability The elemental takes double damage from unholy.
Insubstantial The elemental can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Lit The elemental sheds light in a 5-yard radius around it.
Telepathy The elemental can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.

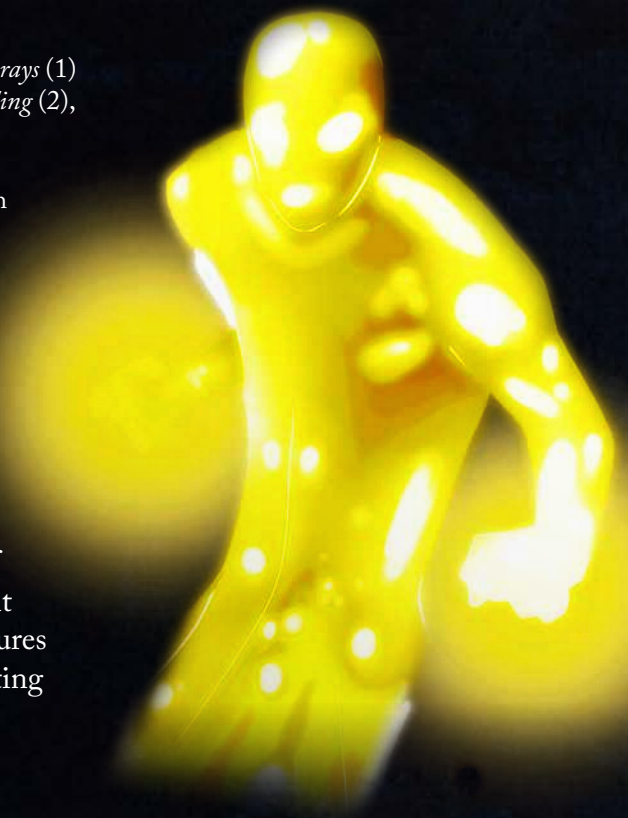
ATTACK OPTIONS
Slam (melee) +4 (the target heals 2d6 damage)
Healing Beam (medium) +3 (the target heals 2d6 damage)
Radiant Bonus Health Whenever the elemental heals a creature other than itself using a talent, any excess healing becomes radiant bonus Health. Constructs and undead cannot heal damage from the elemental's attacks but they can gain radiant bonus health.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The elemental attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Healing Burst The elemental unleashes divine energy in a 6-yard radius from a point it can see within 20 yards. Creatures in the area make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane, healing 4d6 damage on a success.

MAGIC
Power 2
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *flash* (2), *rainbow burst* (2), *dawn* (1), *sunrays* (1)
Life *life sense* (3), *minor healing* (3), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *light healing* (2), *moderate healing* (1), *vitality burst* (1)

END OF THE ROUND
Exploding Radiant Health Any creature with radiant bonus Health makes a Strength attack roll against the amount of radiant bonus Health it has. On a failure, the creature explodes with energy. All of an exploding creature's bonus Health is immediately lost as it and all creatures in a 7-yard radius take 4d6 holy damage. Creatures in the area make an Agility challenge roll to halve this damage.
Regeneration The elemental heals 1d6 damage if it is not incapacitated.



The clinking of the spiritual chains in Refesina as they near the Upper Planes can sometimes create melodies of such intricate complexity that they take form into radiant elementals. Supercharged with divine energy, these creatures seek to restore and bolster life whenever possible, delighting with every prolonged note in the symphony of creation.

Electricity and leaping lightning arc in chaotic sparks around the baleful gaze above this creature's jagged maw of energy. The thing yaws and sways in the air, its form waning and resurging in entropy.

Storm Elemental — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster
Perception 10 (+0); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 50
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 10 (+0)
Speed flier 20 (hover)
Immune damage from disease, lightning, poison, or thunder; fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, poisoned, prone
Elemental Resistances The elemental takes half damage from psychic and weapons that are not magical.
Born to the Air The elemental has 1 boon on attack and challenge rolls while it and its target are in the air.
Charged Body Any creature or nonmagical weapon that touches the elemental takes 1d6 lightning damage.
Storm Form The elemental can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there, it can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing, and it ignores difficult terrain.
Walking Tornado Ranged weapon attacks against the elemental are made with 2 bane. A creature may use a minor activity aiming to negate this penalty for a single ranged weapon attack so long as the attack is made immediately after aiming and before moving or taking a triggered action.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Slam (melee) +5 (1d6 lightning and 1d6 thunder)
Lightning Blast (medium range) +5 (1d6 lightning)
Thrown Wind (short range) +5 (1d6+2 thunder)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Double Attack The elemental attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Howling Wind Each creature that is not the elemental and that is within medium range of it must make a Strength challenge roll, making the roll with 1 bane if it is Size ½ or smaller. On a failure, the creature is moved 2d6 yards away from the elemental and falls prone. If the creature encounters an obstacle before moving the full distance, it takes 1 damage for each yard it was prevented from moving.

MAGIC
Power 2
Air *stir the air* (3), *wind blast* (3), *evoke gale* (2), *flense* (2), *still the air* (1), *thunderclap* (1)
Storm *fog* (3), *shock* (3), *forked lightning* (2), *freezing fog* (2), *saint astrid's flame* (2), *call lightning* (1), *poisonous fog* (1)

Storm elementals are wrought where the Plane of Air, Plane of Water, and Limbo overlap, the zephyrs of tempests coalescing to become a single living being after centuries of intertwinement. Usually they roam within the confines of their birth but as the whole of the cosmos is strained by the *Torquem Machina*, these creatures have worked their way into the Upper and Lower Planes—even the Material Plane when a large enough storm looms in the sky.

Malevolence and evil radiate from the dark gaze of this vaguely humanoid form, the ethereal gray smoke of its body congealing and dissipating into the air. Its two arms end in wicked claws, disappearing and reappearing as it slides from place to place.

Unholy Elemental — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 monster (evil)
Perception 11 (+1); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 50
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 20 (hover)
Immune damage from disease, poison, or unholy; fatigued, grabbed, immobilized, poisoned, prone
Elemental Resistances The elemental takes half damage from psychic and weapons that are not magical.
Vulnerability The elemental takes double damage from holy.
Insubstantial The elemental can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
Telepathy The elemental can communicate telepathically within 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee) +3 (1d6 plus 1d6 unholy)
Mortus Ray (long) +4 (2d6 unholy)
Nourishing Agony Whenever the elemental damages a creature, it heals damage equal to the unholy damage it deals. When this would give the elemental more Health than its total, it gains the rest as bonus Health.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The elemental attacks twice.
Enfeebling Ray The elemental makes a Will attack against the Will of a target creature within short range. On a success, for the next minute the target deals only half damage with weapon attacks that use Strength. At the end of each round, a creature makes a Strength challenge roll to end the effect.

MAGIC

Power 2
Shadow *wall of darkness* (3), *darkness* (2), *shadow dart* (2), *shadow monster* (1), *shadow stride* (1)
Vile *unholy gaze* (3), *foreboding horror* (2), *inscribe Vilespeech* (2), *unbearable pain* (1), *unholy condemnation* (1)

Unholy elementals are death and malevolence incarnate. Created from the spiritual friction of souls dragged by the current of Refesina, the energies of creatures bound for the Lower Planes are given form by shattered minds and use their intellect to find life—and snuff it out. Once necrotic elementals were only a thing of legend but as the centuries pass, more slip through the seams of existence each year to terrorize both the Material Plane and beyond.

Blood flows around, through, away from, and back into this human-shaped figure as it looks about for more of the same, sapping away the crimson liquid spilled by its victims.

Blood Golem — DIFFICULTY 50

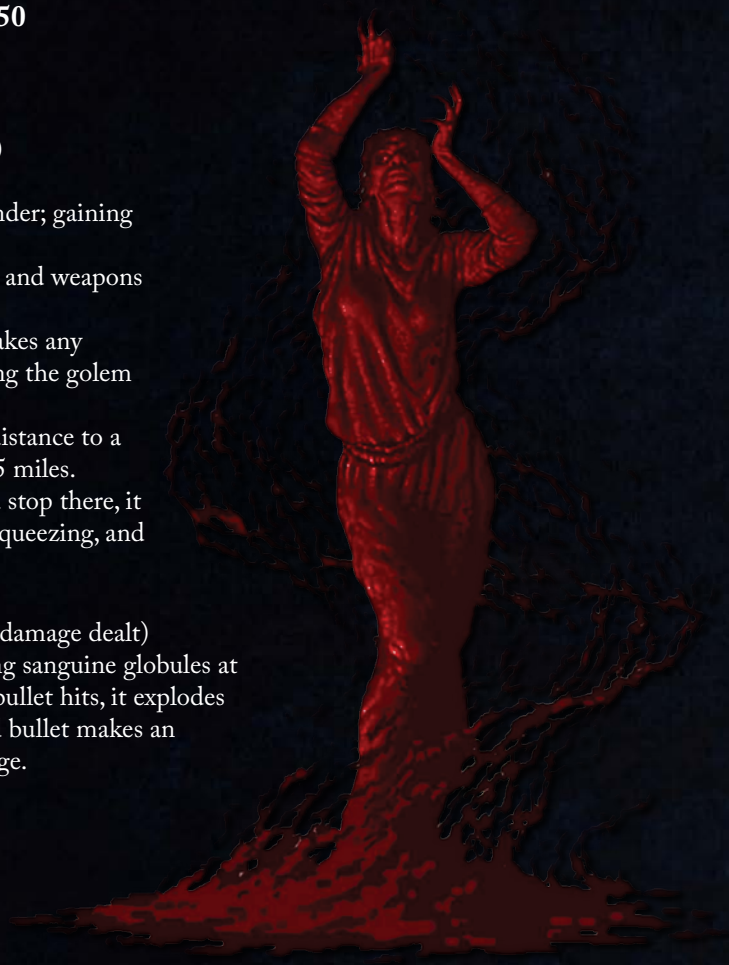
Size 1 frightening construct (evil)
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 16; **Health** 100
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 7 (–3), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 12; climber 12, swimmer 12
Immune damage from cold, disease, fire, force, poison, and thunder; gaining Insanity; all afflictions.
Damage Resistance The golem takes half damage from unholy and weapons that are not magical.
Spell Defense The golem takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the golem with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Bloodsight The golem automatically knows the direction and distance to a living creature the golem has damaged if it is present within 5 miles.
Liquid Form The golem can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there, it can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing, and it ignores difficult terrain.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Fist (melee) +4 with 1 boon (3d6 plus the golem heals half the damage dealt)
Blood Bullets The golem takes 6 damage and flings three roiling sanguine globules at creatures it can see within 20 yards. Whether or not a blood bullet hits, it explodes on impact. Any creature within 2 yards of an exploding blood bullet makes an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or takes 2d6 unholy damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The golem attacks twice with its fist.



In modern times blood golems are unheard of—the simple logistics of their creation make it almost impossible for a mage to gather the fresh blood from 113 victims required to make one. They are immortal creatures however and some still lurk in the Taenarius Tunnels and the ruins of broken cults, driven by a primal hunger to seek out more blood to add to their bodies.

At first this mummified body seems like the walking dead but its eyes glow a baleful green and the bandages enwrapping its desiccated body are covered in script difficult to gaze upon, each brimming a sickly jade illumination.

Vilespeech Golem — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 horrifying construct (evil)
Perception 12 (+2); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** 130
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 7
Immune damage from disease, poison, psychic, or unholy; gaining Insanity; charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, poisoned
Dark Absorption When the golem would take psychic or unholy damage, it heals that amount of damage instead.
Immutable Form The golem's form cannot be altered by magic.
Spell Defense The golem takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the golem with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Vilespeech Slave The golem must follow commands given to it in Vilespeech. When given a command to act against its alignment or harm itself, the golem must do as it is told if it fails a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes.
Holy Vulnerability The golem takes double damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee) +6 (1d6+2 plus 2d6 unholy plus Nourishing Agony on attack roll 20+)

Lasting Harm If living, the target takes a penalty to Health equal to the unholy damage taken from the attack. If this penalty reduces the target's Health to 0, the target dies instantly and if brought back to life 1d6 rounds later as a Boneguard.

Nourishing Agony Whenever the golem damages a creature, it heals damage equal to the unholy damage it deals. When this would give the golem more Health than its total, it gains the rest as bonus Health.

Seize The golem releases a burst of primordial green energy in a 7-yard radius that seizes the minds and muscles of living creatures. Creatures in the area are seized until the end of the next round. A seized creature's Speed is halved, it takes a –2 penalty to Defense and Agility challenge rolls, it can't take free attacks, and it can only take Slow Turns. Once the golem has used Seize it cannot do so for 1d3 rounds.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The golem attacks twice with its slam.

END OF THE ROUND

Unstoppable Advance The golem moves up to its speed.

Nefarious mages and dark priests that predicted an eventual fall for the Celestial Heroes sought a means to attain immortality for when that day came, turning to the power of Vilespeech and mummification to tether their souls to the Material Plane. Once awoken by time or fate, they walk again as golems, renewing their aggressions against the demigod rulers of the world or seeking out a means to reverse their gruesome transformation.

Countless links of metal cover this humanoid, completely obscuring its face and body in chains that float away from its lithe form and weave about in the air. You feel a sense of purpose as you look upon it, as though its mere presence were a force pushing and pulling at your very soul.

Kyton

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 monster

Perception 15 (+5); darksight

Defense 16; **Health** 120

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 17 (+7)

Speed 13; flier 13 (hover)

Immune fatigued, poisoned, prone

Deflect Attack Once per round the kyton strikes a melee, ranged, or spell attack that would hit it or a creature within 3 yards, reducing the attack's damage by 1d6+2. When deflecting a spell attack with an extra effect, the kyton makes a Will attack against the spellcaster's Will. On a success, the spell effect is negated.

Kyton Resistances The kyton takes half damage from holy, psychic, unholy, and weapons that are not magical

Spell Defense The kyton takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the kyton with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.

Natural Understanding The kyton knows all languages.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Chains (melee; reach +3) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 plus grabbed on attack roll 20+)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The kyton attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Animate Chains Up to four chains wrapped around the kyton's body animate under its control. Alternatively, the kyton can choose to animate chains it can see within 40 yards instead, provided that the chains aren't being worn or carried. Each animated chain has Defense 15, Health 20, and immunity to damage from poison and psychic, and takes half damage from weapons. An animated chain grabbing a creature cannot be used to attack. When the kyton takes the Attack action, it can use each animated chain to make one additional attack.

Link Sight The kyton can use its minor activity to gain truesight until the end of the round.

END OF THE ROUND

Constricting Chains A creature grabbed by one of the kyton's animated chains takes 1d6 damage.

Layman adventurers often mistake kytons as nothing more than strange chain devils or errant travelers from other Material Planes—in truth they are connected to all worlds, native to a dimension of chains touching upon all of creation. The current of souls that make up life and death is driven by the inexorable will of Refesina's divine servants and they are not bound to their home, only to their duty. Kytons are sometimes forced to travel to other planes in order to rectify a damaged or lost chain and go to extraordinary lengths to accomplish the task when necessary, expending their lives in the process if need be.

Chains wreathe beneath and around this human-shaped giant, the metal forming into jagged plates and serrated spikes then back into links. Its darkened visor reeks of a malevolence reinforced by a chorus of tearing shrieks.

Agonized Kyton — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 2 frightening monster (evil)

Perception 12 (+2); darksight (including magical)

Defense 17; **Health** 150

Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 13; flier 13 (hover)

Immune damage from poison, psychic, unholy; fatigued, poisoned, prone

Deflect Attack Once per round the kyton strikes a melee, ranged, or spell attack that would hit it or a creature within 3 yards, reducing the attack's damage by 2d6. When deflecting a spell attack with an extra effect, the kyton makes a Will attack against the spellcaster's Will. On a success, the spell effect is negated.

Kyton Resistances The kyton takes half damage from cold, fire, and weapons that are not magical.

Spell Defense The kyton takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the kyton with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.

Holy Vulnerability The kyton takes double damage from holy.

Natural Understanding The kyton knows all languages.

Spiked Body A creature that hits the kyton with a melee attack using a weapon that does not have reach takes 1d6 damage. A creature grappling the kyton takes 1d6 damage at the start of the agonized kyton's turn.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Chains (melee; reach +3) +8 (1d6 and 1d6 psychic plus grabbed and 1d6 unholy on attack roll 20+)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The kyton attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Animate Chains Up to four chains wrapped around the kyton's body animate under its control. Alternatively, the kyton can choose to animate chains it can see within 33 yards instead, provided that the chains aren't being worn or carried. Each animated chain has Defense 15, Health 20, and immunity to damage from poison and psychic, and takes half damage from weapons. An animated chain grabbing a creature cannot be used to attack. When the kyton takes the Attack action, it can use each animated chain to make one additional attack.

END OF THE ROUND

Constricting Chains A creature grabbed by one of the kyton's animated chains takes 1d6 psychic damage and 1d6 unholy damage.

Dimensional chains that run into (or in rare cases, out of) the Lower Planes can have deleterious consequences on the planar servants handling them. Over time the corruption of a soul bleeds outward, contaminating anything it interacts with—including kytons that have become complacent and lazy. Ultimately the accrued evil prompts them to commit a sin great enough to have their own chain dragged down into Hell, the power locked inside their form flaring before transformation into a chain devil.

This creature's bloody limbs are wrapped with chains but it is the masks all over its body that stand out, morphing and changing expressions with abandon. It is impossible to tell the thing's disposition, the scores of false faces rapidly transforming from grief to mirth to pain to anger and back to sorrow in a maddening cycle.

Mad Kyton

DIFFICULTY 250

Size 2 frightening monster
Perception 18 (+8); truesight
Defense 18; **Health** 165
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 8 (-2)
Speed 13; flier 26 (hover)
Immune damage from psychic; gaining insanity; charmed, compelled, fatigued, frightened, prone
Deflect Attack Once per round the kyton strikes a melee, ranged, or spell attack that would hit it or a creature within 3 yards, reducing the attack's damage by 3d6. When deflecting a spell attack with an extra effect, the kyton makes a Will attack against the spellcaster's Will. On a success, the spell effect is negated.
Kyton Resistances The kyton takes half damage from weapons that are not magical
Spell Defense The kyton takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the kyton with a spell makes its attack roll with 1 bane.
Natural Understanding The kyton knows all languages.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Chains (melee; reach +3) +4 with 2 boons (2d6 and 1d6 psychic plus 1d3 Insanity and grabbed on attack roll 20+)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The kyton attacks twice.

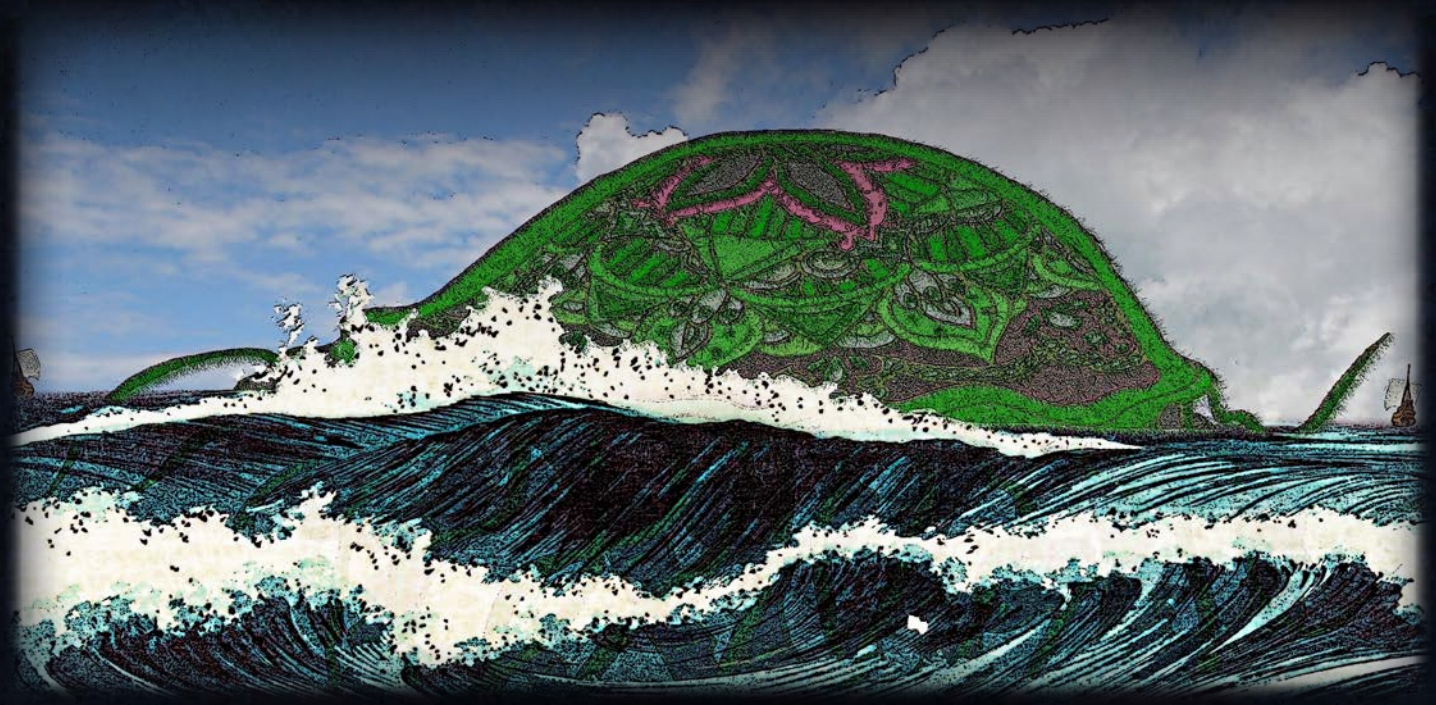
SPECIAL ACTIONS

Animate Chains Up to four chains wrapped around the kyton's body animate under its control. Alternatively, the kyton can choose to animate chains it can see within 40 yards instead, provided that the chains aren't being worn or carried. Each animated chain has Defense 15, Health 20, and immunity to damage from poison and psychic, and takes half damage from weapons. An animated chain grabbing a creature cannot be used to attack. When the kyton takes the Attack action, it can use each animated chain to make one additional attack.
Link Sight The kyton can use its minor activity to gain truesight until the end of the round.

END OF THE ROUND

Constricting Chains A creature grabbed by one of the kyton's animated chains takes 1d6 damage and 1d6 psychic damage, and it gains 1d3 Insanity.

When a spiritual chain in Refesina snaps apart three things occur—the soul of its originator is forever destroyed, force elementals are spawned from the links, and should any kyton be handling it at the time their mind shatters into innumerable shards. For natives of Refesina there is no greater tragedy than to discover one of their kin has gone insane, roaming to and fro from the dimension of chains as they cavort about the cosmos doing whatever they fancy. What kytons fear most is that these represent a new threat, first appearing after two creatures from Askis visited the Rohy Voalohany and Handler of Threads, and the first of their kind has not been seen since their second journey to see Mpahay hundreds of years ago.



The island swelling up from beneath waves ahead is no mass of land but a creature of gargantuan proportions! Moss and flotsam litter the surface of its humongous body, and tentacles the size of ship masts writhe in the water around it as the monster floats up out of the surf.

Pneumavore

DIFFICULTY 500

Size 6 monster

Perception 17 (+7); sightless

Defense 16; **Health** 300

Strength 24 (+14), **Agility** 3 (-7), **Intellect** 3 (-7), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed swimmer 13

Immune damage from psychic; blinded, charmed, compelled, deafened, fatigued, frightened, immobilized, prone, stunned

Pneuma Resistances The pneumavore takes half damage from fire and poison.

Gargantuan Resistance The pneumavore has 3 boons on challenge rolls made against disease, poison, spells, and other magical effects.

Pneuma Vulnerability The pneumavore takes double damage from cold and lightning.

False Appearance While the pneumavore remains motionless without its underside exposed, it is indistinguishable from an island.

Water Breathing The pneumavore can breathe only underwater.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Giant Tentacle (melee; reach +5) +14 (6d6 plus the if the target is Size 4 or smaller it is grabbed until it spends an action succeeding on a Strength attack roll against the corrupted pneumavore's Strength)

Many Tentacles The pneumavore can grab up to 6 creatures at the same time.

Siege Monster The pneumavore deals double damage to objects and structures.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The pneumavore makes three giant tentacle attacks.

Tentacle Slam The pneumavore slams creatures grappled by it into each other. Each creature must succeed on a Strength challenge roll made with 2 banes or take 4d6 damage and be stunned until the end of the next round. On a success, a creature takes half the damage and isn't stunned.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Brood The pneumavore releases a cloud of 3d3 pneuminfans that appear in squares adjacent to its underside.

Sense Inaequa The pneumavore senses inaequa within 5 miles. This trait otherwise works like Sense Magic but isn't itself magical.

Precious little is known about these creatures except that they are as mindless as any beast and inexorably drawn to inaequa for sustenance. Researchers find the creatures endlessly frustrating—upon death a pneumavore dissipates into jelly—and only know what they have seen from afar, numerous witness accounts of them voraciously consuming powered craft through pit-like maws hidden on the tops of their bodies.

This freakish creature bobs through the water propelled by a trio of chitinous multi-hinged legs from below and as many tentacles from above. An eye rests between the leg joints bisecting each of its three sides and an unnatural toothy maw gapes open at the top of its skull-body.

Pneuminfan

DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 monster

Perception 13 (+3); darksight

Defense 14; **Health** 50

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 2 (-8), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10; leaper (horizontal 6, vertical 3), swimmer 10

Immune damage from psychic

Pneuma Resistances The pneuminfan takes half damage from fire and poison.

Pneuma Vulnerability The pneuminfan takes double damage from cold and lightning.

Amphibious The pneuminfan can breathe both air and water.

Tripod The pneuminfan has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist being moved or knocked prone.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Tentacle (melee; reach +1) +5 (1d6+2 plus grabbed on attack roll 20+)

Many Tentacles The pneuminfan can grab up to 3 creatures at the same time.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The pneuminfan attacks twice.

Ink Cloud When the pneuminfan is attacked it can use its triggered action to release a 2-yard radius cloud of ink that extends all around it if it is underwater. A submerged area is heavily obscured for 3d3 rounds although a significant current can disperse the ink. If done out of the water the area becomes difficult terrain and a creature that moves across it faster than half speed makes an Agility challenge roll or falls prone.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Sense Inaequa The pneuminfan senses inaequa within 200 yards. This trait otherwise works like Sense Magic but isn't itself magical.

END OF THE ROUND

Jet If it is submerged in water, the pneuminfan moves its Speed without provoking free attacks. Once the pneuminfan has used Jet, it cannot do so for 1d6 rounds.

The frequency of attacks by pneuminfans and pneumavores has forced maritime industries (whether travel or trade) to largely rely on sailing vessels or aircraft. Before an island-monster begins moving toward a source of inaequa, the massive creature releases its brood first to swarm and harry a vessel until the parent can catch up to sink the vehicle. While many of Askis' citizens think them to be evil thanks in no small part to sensationalist headlines in the newspaper whenever a powered boat is destroyed, pneuminfan are too lacking in intellect or soul for morality—they are simply aggressive and voracious, consuming anything or anyone soaked with the energies they crave.

Maturing into a full pneumavore is a decades long process in which the creature sheds its hardened exoskeleton as it grows to enormous proportions, but until then it has plenty of edible meat and some captains go out fishing for them. Dipping large inaequa engines into the water or tugging a jetter out behind your ship has become highly illegal but the sale of these creatures has not, creating a gray area for the lazy and foolish; most attacks by the enormous parent monsters are the result of careless poachers leading one to a freshwater harbor.

There's a crazed look in this man's eyes as he brandishes a sublimely forged sword wreathed with violet energy in his gauntleted hands, the servos in the technologically advanced armor he wears humming with power. On his tabard is a symbol of a gray knight, the icon's helmet similar to his own.

Slate

DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 human

Perception 17 (+7); darksight (sees through magical darkness)
Defense 20 (power armor); **Health** 100
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 13 (hover), leap (10 horizontal, 5 vertical)
Immune charmed, compelled
Psychic Resistance Slate takes half damage from psychic.
Supreme Deflection While he is wielding his greatsword and targeted by a ranged attack, he can use a triggered action to deflect it. If a ranged weapon attack, he reduces the damage he takes by 4d6+6. If a spell, Slate makes an attack roll opposed by a power roll made by the caster. On a success, the spell is deflected. Slate can choose to make the attack roll with 1 bane and on a success, he reflects the spell back at the caster instead.
Enshrouded Mind When a creature targets Slate with a spell or talent that causes the charmed affliction, it makes an Intellect challenge roll. On a failure it believes that Slate is charmed.
Power Armor Slate reduces all falling damage by 30, can carry up to 500 pounds, and is able to lift over 1,000 pounds.
Psychic Attunement Creatures that are within Slate's reach provoke a free attack from him when they cast a spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +6 (1d6+2)
Greatsword (melee) +6 (3d6 plus 1d6 psychic)
Psiblast (long range) +5 (1d6 psychic)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack Slate attacks twice with his greatsword or eight times with his psiblast.
Gray Strike When Slate hits a creature with an attack, he can use this talent to cut off its access to magic. For 1d6 rounds the target cannot cast spells or use magical talents, nor can it be targeted by spells or magical talents. After he uses this special attack, Slate cannot do so again for 24 hours.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Psipoints (6) When Slate encounters an active spell that has been cast within the last week, he can use an action and expend psipoints to negate the spell. When he witnesses a creature within 13 yards casting a spell, Slate may expend psipoints as a triggered action to negate the spell. If he does not spend a number of psipoints equal to or greater than the level of the spell, he does not negate it but gains 1 boon on any challenge rolls made to resist it. Slate regains all psipoints when he completes a rest.
Sense Magic Slate knows if there are any ongoing magical effects in a 5-yard radius centered on a point within his space and the points from which they originate.
Shadowed As long as Slate is in an area of shadows or darkness, he can become invisible until he moves, takes an action, or makes an attack.

MAGIC

Power 5
Arcana *magic dart* (6), *unerring darts* (3), *empowered magic* (2), *destroy magic* (2), *harness magic* (1), *arcane retribution* (1)
Battle *augmented attack* (6), *mighty attack* (3), *mountain fall* (2), *battle prowess* (2), *wall of swords* (1), *strike like lightning* (1)
Chaos *chaos boon* (6), *fold space* (3), *flicker* (2), *wild magic* (2), *mirror field* (1), *singularity* (1)
Enchantment *bewitch* (6), *charm* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (2), *implant suggestion* (2), *allure* (1), *enslave* (1)

Agents of The Inquisition know very little about the Knight of the Slate, Justitia are on the constant lookout for signs of his passing as he poses the best known threat to public security, and each organization pays dearly for any information that could lead to his arrest. Should they ever catch him it's unlikely that Slate will be able to offer any useful knowledge however—over the years he's gone quite mad in service to the Gray Knight (page 20), so much so that he truly believes he ***is*** the cosmic entity bound in human form.

Even if he can't remember it Slate had a life before earning his place on the list of most wanted fugitives, growing up in Etium as the son to a guardsman and magic scholar. While playing in his mother's library the troublesome young boy touched an artifact with residue from the psychic tampering of a warlock devoted to the Gray Knight. Elsewhere all the magic in the scroll would have been destroyed, but in Moon City as the lunar cycle reached its height it forged a connection to the cosmic entity and in that instant Slate's future was forged. His school insubordinations increased in frequency until The Ministry took interest at which point the teenager fled, living from day to day on the streets of Samovi until coming across a lonesome book discarded in a back alley.

The tome spoke to Slate and unlocked powers of the mind that transformed him from a vagrant into a vigilante. Using knowledge of his father's patrol shifts and his gifts from the Gray Knight, he stole a suit of power armor and a prototype weapon from engineers studying the lunar energies cast from Etium's lake. Guided by the *Ledger of Balance* (which unbeknownst to him has a clue of the *Torquem Machina* within), Slate cut a path of curious vandalism and inexplicable murders across the Wild Continent—wrecking statues of the Celestial Heroes one day, rescuing people in a burning building the next, then fighting off a monster from the Taenarius Tunnels before sabotaging a steel equos carrying relics headed to The Inquisition's top level researchers in Pertinax and slaying all the sages on board (leaving the scientists unharmed). Both the Celestial Heroes and their mad scientist nemeses view the Knight of the Slate as a wildcard and keep him at a distance, although eventually his exploits are sure to demand a direct intervention by one of them eventually. Where such a conflict will occur is hard to say as in recent years the psionic warrior's operations have spread from Samovi to all of Askis, and rumors that he's taken up arms alongside pirates mean that if he has any permanent base of operations that it is probably mobile.

For the hundredth time tonight Cassia twists and turns in her bed, frustrated at her inability to sleep. It has been four days since the Magi Primaria glanced back into the ancient past and respite has eluded her since, the sounds of things that are not and cannot be itching in the back of her mind whenever she is about to slip into unconsciousness. Hastily she gets up from the bed and checks that the door and windows of her room are locked before opening a shelf in her dresser, moving away folded undergarments to get the pouch her friend Lasro gave her earlier in the day—and the nigrum pollinis inside.

Cassia sits on the bed, taking the potent drug and a pipe from out of the little bag. She was told to roll off one ball and smoke it lightly but her fatigue gets the better of her and she stuffs the bowl with half a dozen pebbles of the sticky narcotic before grabbing her lighter from the nightstand. Summoning up her courage and thinking about the bliss from an evening of quiet rest, she raises the illegal implement to her lips and flickers on a flame, breathing the flowery smoke deep into her lungs. As she breathes out the exhausted wizard shuts her eyes and leans backward, falling into her bedding and the darkness of sleep.

For a few moments it is the blissful respite she hoped for and after days of anxiety even a moment of peace is to Cassia like water to a man dying of thirst. Just as soon as the quiet begins the voices return, though now they are stronger, closer, louder—now she can see from whence they come. The first to emerge from the void is a spindly old imp, floating on wings that should not support it and wearing quaint spectacles that brings a smile to her mind's eye. It asks her absurdities and whispers so many promises; secrets of apostate mages that were once allies of her vaunted heroes and died victims of treachery, truths of magic that will expand her powers tenfold, the guilty pleasures of other Magi Primaria that she might ply to rise higher in her station. Cassia's candor with the voices end as the second suddenly appears, its source's insectile head whipping through the air as it screams at her with insults of her mastery over the arcane at every turn. So biting are its abuses that it goads her into a contest after making magical symbols that have no meaning and powerful scripture without intent—even after proving to the thing that she has prowess aplenty it does not abate, only leaving after the next voice's owner barges into view, swinging its claws angrily at anything in sight and yelling furiously into her very soul like a passing tornado. The wizard flees as best she can but in minutes it is upon her, thrashing and tearing, trilling and laughing grimly, lapping up her blood—

Coughing and shuddering Cassia bolts upright in her bed, sweat pouring from her body as she hangs her head over the side and vomits onto the floor. When the contents of her stomach have completely emptied she gathers her sheets to wipe her face clean of perspiration and bile, bunching them together and sobbing at the terrors lurking in her mind. With dawning horror she sees her hands are bloody, the light from her doorway making the crimson stark against her white bedding. Crying out she stands upright and checks herself for injuries, finding none but realizing that the flaking red nearer her elbows must be paint. Shaken and shaking she falls back to the bed, the memories of her dreams coming back and mixing with a phantasm of herself walking through the university. Cassia blinks and shakes her head, watching and thinking of a message she wrote in the library using naught but her fingers: Score Tarvorial.

Suddenly Cassia realizes that she did not leave the light on nor is she alone, though as she looks towards the doorway she smiles to see it is her friend Inquisitor Octavius. Her relief seizes however as she recognizes his uncharacteristically somber countenance—and more importantly that he is not empty handed. In his left hand he holds her spellbook, arcane components, and the pouch of narcotics from Lasro, and in the other is a knife.

"I wish it were not so my dear," Inquisitor Octavius says as he slowly steps forward, turning the dagger and making the slick sheen of green on the blade glitter jade in the light from the forever lantern near the closing doorway, "but I am afraid there is no alternative available to us in this most vital of matters."

He stalks forward, the hint of a smile in his zeal-filled eyes. "By the power of The Inquisition, I declare thee heretic—may your soul be shown mercy."

ANGELUS TEMPLATE

Angelus creatures have been touched by an angel, granted the blessings of Heaven as a reward for a truly noble sacrifice on behalf of others. In the Age of Discord it was not uncommon to come across a regimental figurehead or local hero so blessed by the powerful natives of the Upper Planes, but in modern Askis they are few and far between—nearly all contemporary angelus creatures are saints. Otherwise an angelus creature is found in Heaven, imbued with that dimension's energies after its soul has rested there a few centuries.

Any living creature can become an angelus creature.

Angelus Template
ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP

Health +5
Alignment The creature becomes good.
Attributes The creature increases two attributes by +1.
Speed The creature gains the flier trait (with a speed equal to its Speed).
Angelus Resistance The creature takes half damage from holy and poison.
Languages The creature speaks and understands Celestial.
Holy Resistance The creature has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist vile spells.
Lit The creature sheds light in a 5-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.
Magic Attacks The creature's attacks deal magical damage.

CELESTIAL TEMPLATE

Myths say that mortals who drink deep from the Streams Divinia or eat aplenty in Elysium become instilled with celestial powers, transforming into more sublime versions of themselves. Once empowered a celestial creature often wanders at its fancy, traveling between planes to do good where they see evil.

Any living creature can become a celestial creature.

Celestial Template
ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS

Health +10
Alignment The creature becomes good.
Attributes The creature increases two attributes by +2 and two attributes by +1.
Senses The creature's Perception is 15, it gains darksight, and it can see through magical darkness without difficulty.
Defense The creature's defense increases by 1.
Speed The creature gains the flier trait (equal to double its Speed).
Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from poison, as well as poisoned.
Languages The creature speaks and understands Celestial.
Celestial Resistance The creature takes half damage from holy and unholy.
Divine Strikes The creature's attacks deal magical damage and on a hit with a weapon attack, the creature deals an extra amount of holy damage based on its difficulty (10—1d3, 25—1d6, 50—2d3, 100—2d6, 250—3d3, 500—3d6). Celestial creatures that make only one attack each round deal twice as much holy damage.
Holy Resistance The creature has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist vile spells.
Lit The creature sheds light in a 10-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.

Celestial words are carved into every facet of this enormous machine-man's body. A torso, four limbs, and a helmeted head are where its similarities to humanoids cease however—a glowing visor sits in place of its eyes, its arms end in arcs of holy fire, and every footfall causes powerful explosions to resonate within its chest.

Aesgigas — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 5 construct

Perception 14 (+4); truesight
Defense 15; **Health** 200
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 8; flier 8 (hover)
Immune damage from holy, poison, psychic; charmed, compelled, exhausted, frightened, immobilized, poisoned
Aesgigas Resistances The aesgigas takes half damage from cold, fire, and unholy.
Vulnerability The aesgigas takes double damage from lightning.
Celestial Aura Creatures within 10 yards of the aesgigas (including itself) have 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist vile spells. When a creature attempts to cast a vile spell inside of the same radius, it must first succeed on a Will or Sin challenge roll. On a failure, it loses the spell.
Lit The aesgigas sheds light in a 33-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.
Radio Transmitter The aesgigas can receive radio waves and broadcast to a range of 10 miles.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee; reach +4) +7 with 1 boon (5d6)
Powerful Hits A creature hit by the aesgigas' slam makes a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, the creature is flung backwards 1 yard for every 5 points of damage and knocked prone. If the creature strikes an object (like a wall or floor) the target takes 1d6 damage for every 3 yards it was flung. If the target is flung at another creature, that creature must succeed on an Agility challenge roll made with 1 bane or take the same damage and be knocked prone.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The aesgigas attacks twice.

END OF THE ROUND

Forward Advance The aesgigas moves up to its speed in a straight line.

It is said that a Master Inquisitor's duty never ends. When one of Tucker Quickfoot's trusted servants passes away their soul is locked away inside of these massive constructs, paired with a logic engine that gives them control over it. In exchange they never pass on to the afterlife and stand eternally vigilant over the most vital functions of the Celestial Heroes' great works. Aesgigas are unfailingly loyal and seem to have their personalities stripped away but in actually they still possess the intellect they had in life as well as their unswerving allegiance to the demigod halfling. Unlike the simpler automatons that orbit The Ministry's facilities these "robots" are more difficult to compromise—each is fully integrated with controlling machinery from a more advanced Material Plane and bears no more reliance on inaequa than a dagger, their sheer size has made them impossible for a mad scientist to steal, and they are always in groups of at least two or three to make tampering on-site an arduous task at best.

Floating and bobbing through the air, this little metal ball of steel and brass plates is topped with a copper antennae, a small circular glass pane offset just from the center of its front.

Rehabilibot — DIFFICULTY 50

Size ½ construct
Perception 16 (+6); sightless
Defense 16; **Health** 60
Strength 6 (-4), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed flier 15 (hover)
Immune damage from poison and psychic; charmed, compelled, exhausted, frightened, immobilized, poisoned
Rehabilibot Resistances The rehabilibot takes half damage from cold, fire, and holy.
Vulnerability The rehabilibot takes double damage from lightning.
Aura of Disruptive Peace All living creatures within 13 yards of the rehabilibot make attack rolls with 2 banes. Constructs, undead, and other creature that are not alive are unaffected.
Telepathy The rehabilibot has telepathy within a range of 10 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Slam (melee) +4 (1d3)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Pacifying Frequency The rehabilibot creates an inaudible sound that naturally pacifies living creatures. Any living creature within 33 yards of the rehabilibot that is able to hear it makes a Will challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, a creature becomes indifferent to creatures they are hostile toward. This indifference ends if a target is attacked or harmed by a spell or if it witnesses any of its friends being harmed. Once the rehabilibot has used this action, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

MAGIC

Power 5
Arcana *magic dart* (6), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (2)
Enchantment *bewitch* (6), *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (2), *implant suggestion* (2), *allure* (1)

This strange machine is the cutting edge of technology in Askis—a nearly sentient autonomous companion. When a prominent clergy of the 3rd Paene finally passes away they submit their soul to be encased with an inaequa logic engine in the insides of these constructs, serving The Ministry and the Celestial Heroes even after death. Rehabilibots provide aid and wisdom from centuries of care to less experienced staff in hospitals and sanitariums the world over, the tiring twilight workers that make sure patients don't escape in the night. Without a soul empowering it a rehabilibot is a useless hunk of metal and tampering with one is considered to be the same as wounding a priest, though among the masters of The Inquisition there is a rumor that a mad scientist (likely Caskette) has subverted several of the powerful robots.

This four-legged winged serpent is a resplendence of draconic might, its golden scales casting an aura of light that burns with purity and piety. In its gaze there is great wisdom and it moves with great purpose, grace, and poise.

Wyrmling Holy Dragon — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 dragon (good)
Perception 14 (+4); shadowsight
Defense 16; **Health** 60
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10; flier 20
Immune damage from holy
Insulating Scales The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and unholy.
Lit The dragon sheds light in a 6-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +6 (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Divinity** The dragon spits holy energy in a 1 yard wide and 10 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll. On a failure, it takes 4d6 holy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Divinity, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.
- **Spew Life** The dragon spits curative energy in a 3-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area heals damage equal to its healing rate. Once the dragon uses Spew Life, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.

Young Holy Dragon — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 2 monster (good)
Perception 15 (+5); shadowsight
Defense 17; **Health** 90
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 15; flier 25
Immune damage from holy
Insulating Scales The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and unholy.
Lit The dragon sheds light in a 12-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +1) +7 (2d6+1)
Claw (melee) +7 (1d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Divinity** The dragon spits holy energy in a 2 yard wide and 20 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 1 bane. On a failure, it takes 6d6 holy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Divinity, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.
- **Spew Life** The dragon spits curative energy in a 6-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area heals damage equal to its healing rate + 4. Once the dragon uses Spew Life, it cannot do so again for 1d3 rounds.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.

Adult Holy Dragon — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 3 frightening monster (good)
Perception 16 (+6); sightless
Defense 18; **Health** 120
Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 15; flier 25
Immune damage from holy
Insulating Scales The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and unholy.
Lit The dragon sheds light in a 20-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +2) +8 (3d6)
Claw (melee; reach +1) +8 (1d6+2)
Tail (melee; reach +2) +8 (2d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Divinity** The dragon spits holy energy in a 3 yard wide and 30 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 2 banes. On a failure, it takes 8d6 holy damage. Once the dragon uses Spew Divinity, it cannot do so again for 1 round.
- **Spew Life** The dragon spits curative energy in a 9-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area heals damage equal to its healing rate + 8. Once the dragon uses Spew Life, it cannot do so again for 1 round.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws and once with its bite.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the dragon magically shapechanges into a humanoid or beast that has a

difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.

Legendary Action The dragon chooses two of the following:

- **Divine Sense** The dragon detects the presence of celestials, fiends, undead, and creatures with an evil alignment within 24 yards.
- **Tail Attack** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 3 yards makes an Agility challenge roll with 2 banes or takes 2d6+2 damage and is knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to 12 yards.

Ancient Holy Dragon — DIFFICULTY 500

Size 4 frightening monster (good)

Perception 17 (+7); sightless

Defense 19; **Health** 160

Strength 19 (+9), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 17 (+7)

Speed 15; flier 25

Immune damage from holy

Insulating Scales The dragon takes half damage from cold, fire, and unholy.

Lit The dragon sheds light in a 30-yard radius around it. It can use a minor activity to suppress or reactivate this trait.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee; reach +3) +8 (3d6+2)

Claw (melee; reach +2) +8 (2d6+2)

Tail (melee; reach +3) +8 (3d6)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Breath Weapon The dragon uses one of the following two breath weapons.

- **Spew Divinity** The dragon spits holy energy in a 4 yard wide and 40 yard long line from a point it can reach. Each creature in the area must make a Will challenge roll with 3 banes. On a failure, it takes 10d6 holy damage.
- **Spew Life** The dragon spits curative energy in a 12-yard cone from a point it can reach. Each living creature in the area heals damage equal to double its healing rate + 2.

Flurry of Attacks The dragon attacks twice with its claws, once with its tail, and once with its bite.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Change Shape As an action, the dragon magically shapechanges into a humanoid or beast that has a difficulty no higher than its own, or back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form (the dragon's choice). In a new form, the dragon retains its Health, ability to speak, Intellect, Will, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of the new form.

END OF THE ROUND

Lair The dragon uses a lair action if it is inside of its lair.

Legendary Action The dragon chooses two of the following:

- **Divine Sense** The dragon detects the presence of celestials, fiends, undead, and creatures with an evil alignment within 33 yards.
- **Tail Attack** The dragon makes a tail attack.
- **Wing Attack** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 6 yards makes an Agility challenge roll with 3 banes or takes 3d6+2 damage and is knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to 12 yards.

Holy dragons only become natives to Askis after half a millenium being away from their ancestral home in the Streams Divinia. Draconiaci Faciantsanct Itateveritatis is the first and oldest of their kind to make the permanent journey (hidden away since the Utopian Dawn and demigods' conquest of the world) but over the centuries more have been drawn to do the same, unable to explain their urge to leave the idyllic waterways of the Upper Planes. Whether in human or serpent form they are ineffably generous, enriching the lives of all the creatures they come across with prosperity and kindness.

LAIR ACTIONS

At the end of the round, the dragon can use one of its lair action options. It can't do so while unable to take actions. If surprised, the dragon can't use one until after its first turn in the combat.

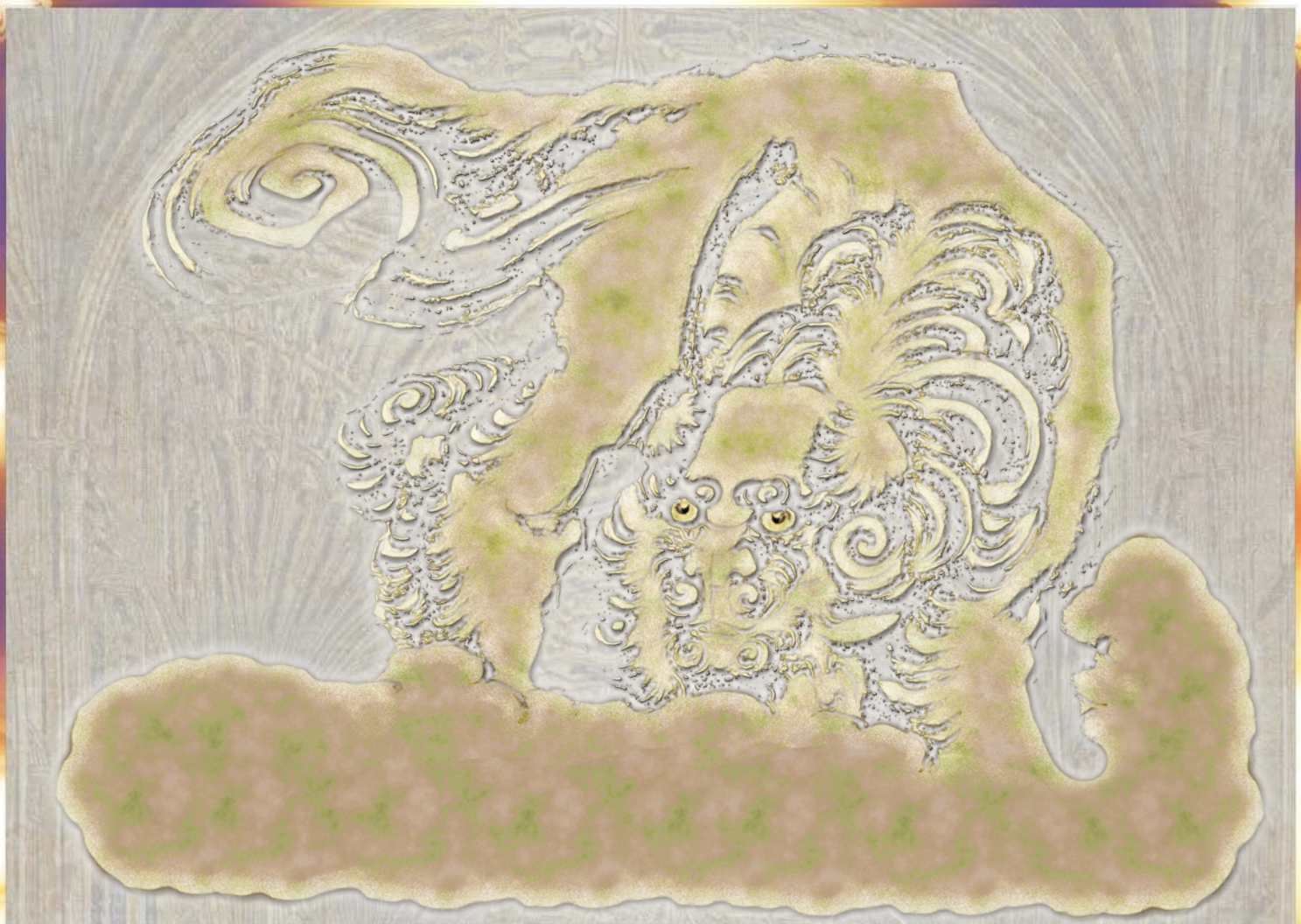
- Healing power streams throughout the dragon's lair. Until the start of the next round, whenever the dragon or one of its allies is targeted by a spell or effect that heals damage, the creature heals 2 extra damage.

- Holy radiance bathes the dragon's lair. The dragon and its allies gain 1 boon on Intellect and Will challenge rolls until the start of the next round.
- Pure goodness materializes from thin air, cleansing souls enveloped by it. If the dragon or any of its allies is under an effect that is causing it to be charmed, compelled, frightened, or poisoned, the creature receives a new challenge roll to immediately end the effect.

REGIONAL EFFECTS

The areas around a holy dragon's lair are infused with good will by its benign light, generating one (or more) of these effects.

- Illumination is enhanced by the divine power suffused in a 6 mile radius of a holy dragon's lair, increasing the range of light sources by 3 yards (including torches, spells that create light, and similar effects).
- Madness has difficulty taking root within 10 miles of a holy dragon's lair, halving the amount of insanity a creature gains when it gains insanity.
- The divine presence of a holy dragon spreads far and wide, helping to mend wounds and sustain life wherever it reaches. When creatures within 5 miles of a holy dragon's lair receive healing, any dice that roll a 1 roll a 2 instead.



Floating through the air is a golden cloud shaped like a lion, its form changing from one of substance to a ghostly mist and back—only its gaze is constant, an utter intensity consuming its eyes.

Foo Lion — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 2 celestial
Perception 14 (+4); darksight
Defense 15; **Health** 35
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 15; flier 15
Immune damage from holy or poison; diseased, immobilized, poisoned
Insubstantial A foo lion takes half damage from weapons, can move through solid objects and other creatures, and ignores the effects of moving across difficult terrain.
False Appearance While a foo lion remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a marble statue and ignores the first 20 damage dealt to it before it moves.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Bite (melee) +5 (2d6 plus 1d6 holy)
Claw (melee; reach +1) +5 (1d6 plus 1d6 holy)
Pack Tactics The foo lion has 1 boon on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the foo lion's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally is able to take actions.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack A foo lion attacks once with its bite and once with its claw.

MAGIC

Power 2
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *light* (3), *flash* (2), *persistent light* (2), *rainbow burst* (2), *dawn* (1), *sunrays* (1)
Life *life sense* (2), *minor healing* (2), *cure* (1), *fount of life* (1), *light healing* (1)

Souls that have dwelled in Elysium gradually transform into foo creatures, animals that best represent the truth of their being—more often than not they are great cats, their streak of pride causing them to manifest as divine lions. Once so changed, foo lions stake out a territory in the endless fields of the Upper Planes to do as they please for eternity. Many of these creatures are extremely curious and pursue dimensional anomalies that drop them into the Material Plane or elsewhere, at which point they might seek a way home or decide to spend some time basking in their new surroundings.

With an axe and shield gripped in their hands the warrior before you projects a steely resolve, but something about their footing and gaze makes them seem untested.

Novice Hero — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 14 (hard leather); **Health** 35
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Bravery The novice hero has 2 boons on challenge rolls against fear.
Loyal Squire The novice hero is accompanied by a trusty and loyal squire that acts as his servant and occasionally helps him in combat.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Magic Battleaxe (melee) +5 (1d6+4)
Heavy Strikes When the novice hero rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The novice hero attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Effort (3 points) The novice hero can use an effort point once per turn to accomplish one of the following. Effort points are regained at the end of a rest.

- **Hero's Ire (2 points)** The novice hero chooses a creature that he can see. For the next minute he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and weapon damage rolls when attacking that creature.
- **Heroic Stand (1 point)** The novice hero uses his minor activity to take the Defend action.
- **Implacable Resolve (2 points)** The novice hero gains 10 bonus Health. This bonus Health last until the beginning of his next turn.
- **Stroke of Luck (1 point)** The novice hero rerolls an attack roll or challenge roll.
- **With Style (1 point)** The novice hero gains 1 boon on a challenge roll made to recall a historical matter, fact about nature, perceive, or persuade.

There are many novice heroes throughout Askis—utopia can be extremely boring particularly with the amount of waiting involved. These are usually well-to do nobles trained in swordplay but not forged in the fires of battle, utterly unprepared for the dangers of true evil. It is not unusual for novice heroes to band together or seek out aid from the lowest level functionaries of the Celestial Heroes in their pursuit of the wicked, but just as often they can be found traveling on their own accompanied by their trusty squire.

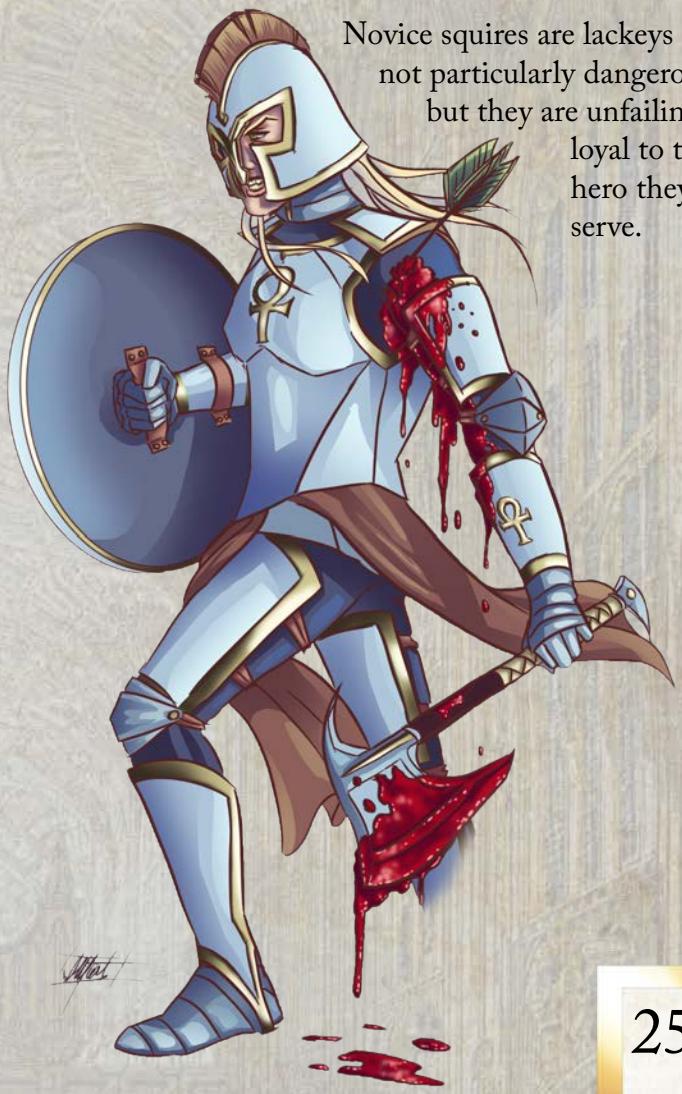
Clad in a simple leather jerkin and carrying a large sack, this servant carries their greatclub more like a burden than a weapon.

Novice Squire — DIFFICULTY —

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 12 (soft leather); **Health** 10
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10
Bravery The novice squire has 2 boons on challenge rolls against fear.
Loyal Aide The novice squire trusts the novice hero implicitly and performs tasks given to them so long as nothing illegal, suicidal, or in opposition to their alignment is requested. Certain orders the novice hero gives require the novice squire to fail a Will challenge roll with 1 bane before performing the task.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Greatclub (melee) +2 (2d6)
Heavy Strikes When the novice squire rolls a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack he makes with a melee weapon that he is wielding with two hands, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2.



Novice squires are lackeys and not particularly dangerous, but they are unfailingly loyal to the hero they serve.

Stoicism abounds when you gaze on this confident warrior, the longsword in their hand brimming with power and their gaze as solid as steel.

Experienced Hero — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 16 (scale); **Health** 115
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Immune frightened
Courageous Allies able to see the experienced hero have 2 boons on challenge rolls against fear.
Supernatural Hunter The experienced hero has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by fiends, monsters, and undead, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them. In addition, he makes and creates his own holy water.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Magic Bastard Sword (melee) +5 (2d6 plus 1d6 holy)
Silver Dagger (short) +4 (1d3)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack The experienced hero attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Effort (7 points) The experienced hero can use an effort point once per turn to accomplish one of the following. Effort points are regained at the end of a rest.

- **Hero's Ire (2 points)** The experienced hero chooses a creature that he can see. For the next minute he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and weapon damage rolls when attacking that creature.
- **Heroic Stand (1 point)** The experienced hero uses his minor activity to take the Defend action.
- **Honed Strike (1 point)** The experienced hero deals an extra 2d3 damage to a creature he hits with a melee attack.
- **Implacable Resolve (2 points)** The experienced hero gains 10 bonus Health. This bonus Health last until the beginning of his next turn.
- **Slayer's Mark (1 point)** The experienced hero uses his minor activity to mark a creature he's able to see. This creature must be a fiend, monster, or undead. The experienced hero gains 1 boon on attack rolls and deals 1d6 extra damage against the marked creature. A mark remains for 1 minute. The experienced hero can have as many as 5 creatures marked at the same time.
- **Stroke of Luck (1 point)** The experienced hero rerolls an attack roll or challenge roll.
- **Zealous Strike (2 points)** The experienced hero makes a free attack against a creature within his reach (if wielding a melee weapon) or range (if wielding a ranged weapon) after slaying a fiend, monster, or undead.

Rally By spending an action yelling, the experienced hero grants 15 bonus Health to 5 creatures that he can see. Up to 3 of these creatures may have just died within the last minute. Once the experienced hero has used Rally, they can't do so until they complete a rest.

Most experienced heroes are quietly living out the end of their lives, retired in the countryside or in one of Askis' idyllic cities. They have also seen at least a touch of true horror and know all too well that when evil presents itself that the consequences of not acting are too dire to contemplate. What makes them most exploitable is their desire to attain glory, however—they can be depended upon to take risks that any right-minded soldier would never consider, putting themselves into dangerous situations and unfavorable circumstances like the perfect pawns that they are.

Jet black hair the color of midnight cascades down this lithe woman's shoulders to brush upon beautifully worked leather armor enshrouded by a resplendent double cape that flares out at her booted feet. In her hands is an ornate golden lute that catches the light and casts it onto her, giving the half-elf a radiant glow.

Mystral Farsong — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 17 (+7); darksight
Defense 18 (hard leather); **Health** 135
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 18 (+8)
Speed 10; leaper (10 horizontal, 5 vertical)
Immune aging, blinded, frightened
Radiant Resistances Mystral takes half damage from holy and weapons that aren't magical.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Golden Lute (melee) +4 with 2 boons (3d6+2 magical)
Golden Note (long) +6 with 1 boon (4d6 holy plus 4d6 thunder)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack Mystral attacks twice with her golden lute.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heavenly Melody Mystral spends 1 minute playing a divine song. She and any friendly creatures who can hear her heavenly performance (up to 8 targets) gain a Flier 20 for 10 minutes. When the duration ends a target falls at 20 yards per round until it lands, taking no falling damage and landing on its feet.

Inspirational (10/rest) Mystral uses her minor activity to choose one other creature within 20 yards who can hear her. That creature gains one inspirational die. Within the next minute the creature adds the inspirational die to one attack roll or challenge roll it makes before rolling. Mystral has 10 inspirational dice that are regained when she completes a rest. Mystral can also use her inspirational dice in the following ways:

- **Singing Soul (2 dice)** When a creature that Mystral can see within 20 yards is frightened, she can use her triggered action to give the creature a new challenge roll against the fear effect, gaining a +2d6 bonus.
- **Stunning Note (1 die)** When a creature that Mystral can see within 20 yards of her rolls 20+ on an attack roll, she can use her triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the creature's Will. On a failure, the creature is stunned for 3d3 rounds.

Solar Gaze Mystral gazes at one creature within short range. If the creature can see her, it must make a Strength challenge roll. On a failure, it is permanently blinded until its sight is restored by magic. On a success, it becomes immune to Mystral's Solar Gaze.

Song of Bravery Mystral can use a minor activity to start a performance that lasts until the end of the next round. During that time, Mystral and any friendly creatures within 10 yards of her cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened. A creature must be able to hear her to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if Mystral voluntarily ends it (no action required) or cannot take actions.

MAGIC

Power 10
Enchantment *bewitch* (11), *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (3), *implant suggestion* (3), *allure* (3)
Illusion *disguise* (11), *thimblerig* (3), *glamer* (3), *invisibility* (3), *decoy* (3), *mirage* (3), *illusory double* (2)
Life *life sense* (11), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (3), *greater cure* (3), *total healing* (3), *resurrect* (2)
Song *project voice* (11), *song of valor* (3), *song of captivation* (3), *song of ribaldry* (3), *song of slumber* (3), *song of heroes* (2)

Though she was abandoned as a babe in Zakuthombo, Mystral is and has been a lucky lady. Instead of dying to the elements a troupe of traveling performers (The Farsongs) came across the swaddled infant and took her into their care, teaching the half-elf the ways of music and revealing her true gift for song. Her incredible talent earned her an invitation to sing for the elves of Truso; astonishing as her voice was she found that its citizens had a distaste for her half-breed blood and after briefly settling there, Mystral took up the road again to travel all over the Far Continent. What she found saddened her heart and the

elitism of her more slender kin did little to help less civilized peoples rise up out of savagery and tribalism. The bard vowed to right this wrong and when tale of a moral mercenary group reached her pointed ears, she sought out Grukk the Axe and Tucker Quickfoot to make it so.

Mystral Farsong believes in the power of the soul above all else—song is just an expression of that power. Despite witnessing the worst that her world has to offer she remains an optimist and believes the best in people, always looking for a silver lining on even the darkest of clouds. Whether composing music, performing for huge crowds of her followers, or visiting the sanitariums of The Ministry to soothe the maddened with her melodic voice, Mystral is almost always accompanied by song in one form or another.

Accruing considerable power has not stopped Mystral from seeking peaceful resolutions to conflicts before resorting to potent magic. This does not make her a pacifist however—when pressed she is prepared to work her spells, bolstering allies first before confusing and disrupting enemies so that her companions are more effectiveMystral and her followers work with the navies of the Celestial Heroes to try and infiltrate pirate crews, reporting locations and bearings so that seabound brigands can be captured with overwhelming force and no casualties. Even when helping the insane or deceiving buccaneers, Mystral sings to the ocean each morning, fortifying her great work: the Bloodsong Storms.

Despite humming a jaunty tune this rough and tumble pirate goes about their work with a grim expression.

Divine Maestro — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 15 (+5)

Defense 17 (hard leather); **Health** 105

Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 10

Immune frightened

Couatl Crest The Divine Maestro is immune to any effect that would sense their emotions, read their thoughts, or detect their location. They gain telepathy to a range of 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+2)

Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Divine Maestro attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heavenly Melody The Divine Maestro spends 1 minute playing a divine song. They and any friendly creatures who can hear their heavenly performance (up to 6 targets) gain a Flier 20 for 10 minutes. When the duration ends a target falls at 20 yards per round until it lands, taking no falling damage and landing on its feet.

Inspirational The Divine Maestro uses their minor activity to choose one other creature within 20 yards who can hear them. That creature gains one inspirational die. Within the next minute the creature adds the inspirational die to one attack roll or challenge roll it makes before rolling. The Divine Maestro has 8 inspirational dice that are regained when they complete a rest. The Divine Maestro can also use their inspirational dice in the following ways:

- **Singing Soul (2 dice)** When a creature that the Divine Maestro can see within 20 yards is frightened, they can use their triggered action to give the creature a new challenge roll against the fear effect, gaining a +2d6 bonus.
- **Stunning Note (1 die)** When a creature that the Divine Maestro can see within 20 yards of them rolls 20+ on an attack roll, they can use their triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the creature's Will. On a failure, the creature is stunned for 2d3 rounds.

Song of Bravery The Divine Maestro can use a minor activity to start a performance that lasts until the end of the next round. During that time, the Divine Maestro and any friendly creatures within 10 yards of them cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened. A creature must be able to hear them to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if the Divine Maestro voluntarily ends it (no action required) or cannot take actions.

MAGIC

Power 7

Enchantment *bewitch* (8), *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (2), *implant suggestion* (2), *allure* (1)

Illusion *disguise* (8), *thimblerig* (3), *glamer* (2), *invisibility* (2), *decoy* (2), *mirage* (2), *illusory double* (1)

Life *life sense* (8), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (1)

Song *project voice* (8), *song of valor* (3), *song of captivation* (2), *song of ribaldry* (2), *song of slumber* (2), *song of heroes* (1)

Cover agents free to journey across Askis as their duties demand, the Divine Maestros of Mystral Farsong infiltrate the most nefarious pirate crews of the world and subtly sabotage vessels for easier capture by the Celestial Heroes' navy. They are kind but cunning, only subverting a buccaneer's will if it is necessary to maintain their facade. Most gravitate into the background of buccaneer crews, taking flack and working the menial jobs where they can overhear much without drawing any undue attention to themselves.

Pouches hang from this buccaneer's belt and shoulders, likely loot from plundered vessels, but you can spot the shapes of instruments poking from within a bag or two.

Blessed Virtuoso — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 16 (hard leather); **Health** 85

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 15 (+5)

Speed 10

Immune frightened

Couatl Crest The Blessed Virtuoso is immune to any effect that would sense their emotions, read their thoughts, or detect their location. They gain telepathy to a range of 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6+2)

Inaequa Pistol (short) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Blessed Virtuoso attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Inspirational The Blessed Virtuoso uses their minor activity to choose one other creature within 20 yards who can hear them. That creature gains one inspirational die. Within the next minute the creature adds the inspirational die to one attack roll or challenge roll it makes before rolling. The Blessed Virtuoso has 6 inspirational dice that are regained when they complete a rest. The Blessed Virtuoso can also use their inspirational dice in the following ways:

- **Singing Soul (2 dice)** When a creature that the Blessed Virtuoso can see within 20 yards is frightened, they can use their triggered action to give the creature a new challenge roll against the fear effect, gaining a +2d6 bonus.
- **Stunning Note (1 die)** When a creature that the Blessed Virtuoso can see within 20 yards of them rolls 20+ on an attack roll, they can use their triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the creature's Will. On a failure, the creature is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Song of Bravery The Blessed Virtuoso can use a minor activity to start a performance that lasts until the end of the next round. During that time, the Blessed Virtuoso and any friendly creatures within 10 yards of them cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened. A creature must be able to hear them to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if the Blessed Virtuoso voluntarily ends it (no action required) or cannot take actions.

MAGIC

Power 5

Enchantment *bewitch* (6), *charm* (3), *command* (3), *question* (3), *compel* (2), *implant suggestion* (1), *allure* (1)

Illusion *disguise* (6), *thimblerig* (3), *glamer* (2), *invisibility* (2), *decoy* (2), *mirage* (1), *illusory double* (1)

Life *life sense* (6), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (1), *resurrect* (1)

Song *project voice* (6), *song of valor* (3), *song of captivation* (2), *song of ribaldry* (2), *song of slumber* (1), *song of heroes* (1)

There is an undercurrent of anxiety to this sailor's bearing and they carry themselves with their chest out, one hand ever near their blade.

Voice of the Holy Choir — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 15 (hard leather); **Health** 50

Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)

Speed 10

Immune frightened

Couatl Crest The Voice of the Holy Choir is immune to any effect that would sense their emotions, read their thoughts, or detect their location. They gain telepathy to a range of 20 yards.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6+2)

Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Voice of the Holy Choir attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Inspirational (4/rest) The Voice of the Holy Choir uses their minor activity to choose one other creature within 20 yards who can hear them. That creature gains one inspirational die. Within the next minute the creature adds the inspirational die to one attack roll or challenge roll it makes before rolling. The Voice of the Holy Choir has 4 inspirational dice that are regained when they complete a rest. The Voice of the Holy Choir can also use their inspirational dice in the following ways:

- **Singing Soul (2 dice)** When a creature that the Voice of the Holy Choir can see within 20 yards is frightened, they can use their triggered action to give the creature a new challenge roll against the fear effect, gaining a +2d6 bonus.
- **Stunning Note (1 die)** When a creature that the Voice of the Holy Choir can see within 20 yards of them rolls 20+ on an attack roll, they can use their triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the creature's Will. On a failure, the creature is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Song of Bravery The Voice of the Holy Choir can use a minor activity to start a performance that lasts until the end of the next round. During that time, the Voice of the Holy Choir and any friendly creatures within 10 yards of them cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened. A creature must be able to hear them to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if the Voice of the Holy Choir voluntarily ends it (no action required) or cannot take actions.

MAGIC

Power 3

Enchantment *bewitch* (4), *charm* (2), *command* (2), *question* (2), *compel* (1)

Illusion *disguise* (4), *thimblerig* (2), *glamer* (1), *invisibility* (1), *decoy* (1)

Life *life sense* (4), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (1), *greater cure* (1)

Song *project voice* (4), *song of valor* (2), *song of captivation* (1), *song of ribaldry* (1)

Blessed Virtuosos are rarely as mobile as their superiors, secreted among pirate crews as traveling black market merchants and acting as go-betweens for Divine Maestros in deeper cover (scurrying away whenever a vessel makes port to pass messages to and from the navy of the Celestial Heroes). The Ministry and The Inquisition frequently test the piety of these brave men and women, all too wary of corruption by way of the temptations of evil and hooting gangs of buccaneers getting the better of a devoted spirit. Though they are often thought to be drunkards, this is their most reliable ruse to avoid committing acts of greater sin—Blessed Virtuosos always keep whiskey or rum nearby, not only to maintain a charade of alcoholism but as a way to placate anyone that becomes suspicious of their lack of bloodlust.

Among the militant followers of Mystral Farsong there's no shortage of hearts turned soft in the face of bold sin and the highest rate of turnover come from Voices of the Holy Choir. When their betters determine a Hallowed Note has spent time enough aiding the cause while in plain sight, they are sent to infiltrate their first pirate crew and either succeed, flee and return to their station, or are uncovered as deceivers and turned into slaves or fed to the open sea.

It is not a requirement to become a Hallowed Note but these devout worshipers of Mystral Farsong emulate her in all the ways they can, even going so far as to dress themselves like her. After being deemed worthy by Voices of the Holy Choir that faltered at incognito missions, a Hallowed Note is assigned to a port or isolated island to provide free aid to injured mariners and otherwise support the Celestial Heroes' navy, generally getting their sea legs while helping out sailors.

This woman's hair is obviously dyed black and though her attire is not as resplendent, it brings to mind the most common effigies of Mystral Farsong—leather armor, an indulgent double cape that flares out at booted, and even a lute in hand.

Hallowed Note — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 14 (hard leather); **Health** 25
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +0 with 1 boon (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Inspirational The Hallowed Note uses their minor activity to choose one other creature within 20 yards who can hear them. That creature gains one inspirational die. Within the next minute the creature adds the inspirational die to one attack roll or challenge roll it makes before rolling. The Hallowed Note has 2 inspirational dice that are regained when they complete a rest. The Hallowed Note can also use their inspirational dice in the following ways:

Singing Soul (2 dice) When a creature that the Hallowed Note can see within 20 yards is frightened, they can use their triggered action to give the creature a new challenge roll against the fear effect, gaining a +2d6 bonus.

Stunning Note (1 die) When a creature that the Hallowed Note can see within 20 yards of them rolls 20+ on an attack roll, they can use their triggered action to make a Will attack roll against the creature's Will. On a failure, the creature is stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Song of Bravery The Hallowed Note can use a minor activity to start a performance that lasts until the end of the next round. During that time, the Hallowed Note and any friendly creatures within 10 yards of them cannot be charmed, compelled, or frightened. A creature must be able to hear them to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if the Hallowed Note voluntarily ends it (no action required) or cannot take actions.

MAGIC

Power 1
Enchantment *bewitch* (2), *charm* (1), *command* (1), *question* (1)
Illusion *disguise* (2), *thimblerig* (1)
Life *life sense* (2), *cure* (1), *fount of life* (1)
Song *project voice* (2), *song of valor* (1)

Clad in shining silver plate and a flowing orange tabard, this hulking half-orc is obviously an exemplary warrior, his countenance leaving nothing to surmise save for the battle scars and milky white eye—he has clearly had experience with the enormous greataxe he carries.

A long time ago Grukk was a runt of the litter among a forgotten orc tribe of Zakuthombo, the unwanted half-breed of a slave freed from a bandit camp. There was little love for him and even if there were, no path lay ahead of him but one of strength—the heft of a warrior's axe strike was the only measure of authority. Fortunately Grukk was gifted with a considerable stature and quickly grew into one of the tribe's best hunters before abandoning his home to live among the pirates of Navicla, serving as the hired muscle for taverns throughout the rowdy town. Word came that his kin had been slain by rivals and with nobody to return to, the half-orc chose to settle among the brigands instead and started his own "clan" of mercenaries. Grukk had decided by then that if blood were to be shed, it should be shed like a wound—as quickly and little as possible so the injury is less severe. This led his warriors to only take up work when it was deemed to be a cause to that end, rapidly building a reputation that saw Tucker Quickfoot join their ranks before Mystral Farsong recruited the pair in a tactically-apt adventuring company reinforced by the swords of soldiers.

As someone would expect from a person that calls themselves "the Axe", Grukk is a fairly simple and straightforward man. If it were entirely up to the half-orc he would be nothing more than a gentle giant, but circumstances have proven time and again that it's better for everyone involved when his namesake is near at hand. Grukk feels a deep kinship with commoners and spends a great deal of his time commiserating with them, using his great strength to aid with carpentry and masonry to ease the labors of people he considers to all be close friends. His most loyal allies are of course the Knights of the Chime however, and attending to his duties as the master of the order takes precedence over the demigod's pedestrian interests.

In combat Grukk is a terror to face off against but a direct opponent—he charges enemies head on and relies on his superior physique to tip the balance of a fight in his favor. When the half-orc is *obviously* outmatched he takes out his shield and fights with his handaxe; otherwise he wades in two-handed, laying waste to enemies by way of massive swings. The Knights of the Chime are largely autonomous but when new members need christened into the order, Grukk makes travel for Iacio (every few months and on holidays). Recently he's chased after monsters he is certain were defeated long ago, and though his fellow warriors believe his claims they shouldn't—Aevus Fatalibus has been cleverly manipulating the divine half-orc, leading Grukk on fruitless chases to undermine confidence in his mental faculties.

Grukk the Axe — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 20 (*+2 full plate*); **Health** 220
Strength 21 (+11), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 8 (-2), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10; leaper (horizontal 6, vertical 3)
Immune aging, frightened
Demigod Resistances Grukk takes half damage from holy and weapons that aren't magical.
Perseverant When Grukk is reduced to 0 Health, he can drop to 1 Health instead. Once Grukk has used Perseverant, he cannot do so for 24 hours.
Resist Grukk can reroll a challenge roll that he fails. Once Grukk has used Resist 3 times, he cannot do so again for 24 hours.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Greataxe (melee) +11 (3d6 magical plus if the target takes 15 or more damage it must succeed on a Strength challenge roll made with 3 banes or be knocked prone)
Hatchet (short) +5 with 1 boon (1d3)
Powerful Hits Grukk can make a melee or ranged weapon attack roll with 1 bane to deal 1d6 extra damage on a hit.
Returning Hatchets Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown hatchet reappears in Grukk's hand.
Savage Hits When the total of Grukk's attack roll is 18 or higher, he deals 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Grukk attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Sacrifice Grukk chooses a creature within 6 yards and vocally shouts at it, gaining its attention. If the creature moves to attack him on its turn, when it is charging at Grukk to strike and within his reach or within 5 yards (if he is wielding a ranged weapon) Grukk uses his triggered action to make a weapon attack with 3 boons. Roll the damage dice for this attack twice and take the higher result. Whether or not Grukk hits, the creature has 3 boons on its next attack roll against him. If this attack against Grukk hits, the creature rolls its damage dice for this attack twice and takes the higher result.

END OF THE ROUND

Regenerate Grukk heals 2d6+2 damage if he is not incapacitated.

Scars mar the skin of this aged warrior but their stance speaks volumes, and it is clear from a glance that both they and their gold-rimmed armaments have seen battles beyond count.

Crusader of the First Faith — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 20 (full plate, large shield); **Health** 170
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Resist The Crusader of the First Faith can reroll a challenge roll that they fail. Once the Crusader of the First Faith has used Resist twice, they cannot do so again for 24 hours.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +8 (1d6+3 magical)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +3 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Powerful Hits The Crusader of the First Faith can make a melee or ranged weapon attack roll with 1 bane to deal 1d6 extra damage on a hit.
Savage Hits When the total of the Crusader of the First Faith's attack roll is 18 or higher, they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Crusader of the First Faith attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Sacrifice The Crusader of the First Faith chooses a creature within 6 yards and vocally shouts at it, gaining its attention. If the creature moves to attack them on its turn, when it is charging at the Crusader of the First Faith to strike and within their reach or within 5 yards (if they are wielding a ranged weapon) the Crusader of the First Faith uses their triggered action to make a weapon attack with 3 boons. Roll the damage dice for this attack twice and take the higher result. Whether or not the Crusader of the First Faith hits, the creature has 3 boons on its next attack roll against them. If this attack against the Crusader of the First Faith hits, the creature rolls its damage dice for this attack twice and takes the higher result.

A sublime expression of confidence is written on this armored warrior's face and curiously she carries no weapon—only two gold-rimmed shields, one of them slightly more battered than the other.

Champion of the Chime DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 14 (+4)

Defense 19 (plate and mail, large shield); **Health** 100

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)

Speed 10

Resist The Champion of the Chime can reroll a challenge roll that they fail. Once the Champion of the Chime has used Resist, they cannot do so againfor 24 hours.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +6 (1d6+2)

Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

Power Rifle (long) +2 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)

Powerful Hits The Champion of the Chime can make a melee or ranged weapon attack roll with 1 bane to deal 1d6 extra damage on a hit.

Savage Hits When the total of the Champion of the Chime's attack roll is 19 or higher, they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Champion of the Chime attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Sacrifice The Champion of the Chime chooses a creature within 6 yards and vocally shouts at it, gaining its attention. If the creature moves to attack them on its turn, when it is charging at the Champion of the Chime to strike and within their reach or within 5 yards (if they are wielding a ranged weapon) the Champion of the Chime uses their triggered action to make a weapon attack with 3 boons. Roll the damage dice for this attack twice and take the higher result. Whether or not the Champion of the Chime hits, the creature has 3 boons on its next attack roll against them. If this attack against the Champion of the Chime hits, the creature rolls its damage dice for this attack twice and takes the higher result.

A golden luster dances from the edges of this warrior's splint armor and on the hilt of their exquisite greatsword.

Knight of the Chime — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 17 (scale, small shield); **Health** 65
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +4 (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +2 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Powerful Hits The Knight of the Chime can make a melee or ranged weapon attack roll with 1 bane to deal 1d6 extra damage on a hit.
Savage Hits When the total of the Knight of the Chime's attack roll is 19 or higher, they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Knight of the Chime attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Sacrifice The Knight of the Chime chooses a creature within 6 yards and vocally shouts at it, gaining its attention. If the creature moves to attack them on its turn, when it is charging at the Knight of the Chime to strike and within their reach or within 5 yards (if they are wielding a ranged weapon) the Knight of the Chime uses their triggered action to make a weapon attack with 3 boons. Roll the damage dice for this attack twice and take the higher result. Whether or not the Knight of the Chime hits, the creature has 3 boons on its next attack roll against them. If this attack against the Knight of the Chime hits, the creature rolls its damage dice for this attack twice and takes the higher result.

Brass and copper are worked into the steel breastplate worn and weaponry of this proud warrior.

Chime Squire — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 16 (scale); **Health** 40
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +3 (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +1 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Powerful Hits The Chime Squire can make a melee or ranged weapon attack roll with 1 bane to deal 1d6 extra damage on a hit.
Savage Hits When the total of the Chime Squire's attack roll is 19 or higher, they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Heroic Sacrifice The Chime Squire chooses a creature within 6 yards and vocally shouts at it, gaining its attention. If the creature moves to attack them on its turn, when it is charging at the Chime Squire to strike and within their reach or within 5 yards (if they are wielding a ranged weapon) the Chime Squire uses their triggered action to make a weapon attack with 3 boons. Roll the damage dice for this attack twice and take the higher result. Whether or not the Chime Squire hits, the creature has 3 boons on its next attack roll against them. If this attack against the Chime Squire hits, the creature rolls its damage dice for this attack twice and takes the higher result.

Hallowed and respected for their service in the times of conflict ages ago, there are a few of these old warriors that still bear strong sword arms even if they rarely have use for them. Newly christened Crusaders of the First Faith have traditionally been a rarity but after the Night of Largitio a few Champions of the Chime have achieved glory enough to earn the title, dispatching horrors that crawl up from out of the sea or chasing down monsters that flee back into the Taenarius Tunnels after causing mayhem. What binds them all together is that it does not matter whether they have served for centuries or decades—one and all know Grukk the Axe and have the demigod's respect, giving great weight to their word.

There is a famous story from the Age of Discord where Grukk the Axe, his signature weapon snapped in two by a dragon's jaws, beat the monster into submission with shields picked up from the bodies of dead allies nearby. A few centuries ago upon hearing the tale, a Knight of the Chime in Adversus named Caesennia took it upon herself to do the same. Much to the chagrin of her rivals she excelled, driven on by a mix of bravery and adversity until she became a legend. Now aspiring Knights of the Chime do the same, proving their mettle in order to raise their station.

Knights of the Chime and their squires travel across Askis in search of the toning enchantment that binds their order together, taking a stand against dishonor wherever they hear it. While not officially Justitia they are frequently found amongst guards helping settlements go about the matter of policing—often with the secret hope that something dangerously exciting will come along. This compulsion for glory by any reasonable means stems from a long tradition of their order's members taking up quests as a way to canvas the continents, doing good for the world while seeking out dishonorable opponents. Oddly this prompts many Chime Squires to travel by themselves with the aim of earning proper knighthood, relying on luck to find evil to root out until they too can hear the great work of Grukk the Axe to guide them.

A striking red plume juts out the broad brown hat this halfling wears, accented by amber hair that falls wildly down onto his shoulders to frame his smile along with a sharply cut goatee. Flexible silver and gold armor hugs his lithe form underneath a rich red and black cape, and he wears a glittering clasp that bears an emblem of his own face.

Tucker Quickfoot DIFFICULTY 500

***Size** ½ humanoid (good [evil])*
Perception 18 (+8); darksight
Defense 22 (hard leather); **Health** 180
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 20 (+10), **Intellect** 17 (+7), **Will** 16 (+6), **Sanctity** 20 (+10), **Sin** 18 (+4)
Speed 15 **Vilis Points** 18
Immune aging, charmed, compelled
Courageous Tucker has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist fear.
Demigod Resistances Tucker takes half damage from holy and weapons that are not magical.
Evasion When Tucker makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.
Implacable Will It is impossible to read Tucker's thoughts. When creatures attempt to charm or compel him, the spell, talent, or trait appears to function normally (making it seem as though it worked until Tucker acts).
Lucky Roller When Tucker misses with an attack or fails a challenge roll, he can choose to succeed instead. Once Tucker has used Lucky Roller, he can't do so for 24 hours.
Natural Liar Tucker has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to deceive and lie.
Stealthy Tucker can attempt to hide even when he is obscured only by a creature that is at least one size larger than him.
Strange Fortunes When Tucker rolls a 1 on the d20 for an attack roll or challenge roll, he can reroll the die and must use the new roll.
Undetectable Tucker cannot be targeted by divination spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +10 (1d3 magical plus 1d6 psychic)
Returning Blades Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown dagger reappears in Tucker's hand.
Vicious Strike Tucker can use his minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 10d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Despicable Strike When Tucker hits a creature and deals damage with Vicious Strike, he can spend 1 Vilis point to force to make an Intellect attack against the target's Will. On a success, the target loses all magical talents and spellcasting it possesses for 1d6 rounds. Any enchanted relics or spells currently affecting the target function normally but divine-based magic dissipates.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Flurry of Attacks Tucker attacks four times.
Miraculous Reflexes When Tucker is hit by an attack from a creature he can see, after damage is calculated he can use his triggered action to reduce the damage he takes by half.
Obscured Nature When an effect, item, or creature attempts to detect Tucker's alignment, he can spend 1 Vilis point to be detected as the alignment of his choice.

There are many, many false origins regarding Tucker Quickfoot. The official tale is that he was born to a humble shoemaker in Eludere and fell into adventuring on accident while ferrying some jeweled heels back to Obcidens, distracted from the delivery by the din of a battle where he befriended Grukk. Truth rings only in the beginning and end of this story; Tucker was raised in Eludere and he did meet the half-orc at the end of a seemingly random conflict, but none of the circumstances had anything to do with chance. Halfling thieves were the real parents of the demigod, not cobblers, and his introduction to Grukk was an affair staged purely for the half-orc to bring him into the good graces of the mercenary commander—muggling is a tough business but when surrounded by plenty of warriors made for fine cover. While he did much to better life in the Far Continent with an intent to help others and there was once goodness in his soul, that has long since been starved away by the wickedness of his duplicity with the *Torquem Machina*.

Tucker has become a creature beholden to his grand deception above all other things, knowing that should it ever be revealed that everything he's built for himself will come crashing down. The skills he mastered from his family's "business" and years of making war on the world's evils serve him well in the pursuit of concealing his fel secret—he seems to be charming, friendly, warm, outgoing, thoughtful, generous, and generally completely amicable. In all actuality he is overwhelmingly devious, his every act intended to serve him in one manner or another (Tucker never forgets a kindness, particularly his own.)

The halfling demigod avoids fighting in the open at all costs unless he knows without doubt that he has a huge advantage over his opponent. Even then, Tucker is always accompanied by at least two Master Inquisitors that run interference and occupy opponents while he flits through combat to make deadly surprise assaults, appearing and disappearing to frustrate opponents targeting him. He's intimately involved with all of The Inquisition's affairs and keeps a sharp eye out for any chance his duplicity will be outed, aided in sifting through its countless concerns with the help of Treklotus Edwardius.

At first this person doesn't seem remarkable at all but upon reflection something in their eyes is awry—almost predatorial.

Master Inquisitor **DIFFICULTY 10**

Size ½ or 1 humanoid (good [evil])
Perception 17 (+7); shadowsight
Defense 18 (leather); **Health** 140
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 17 (+7), **Sin** 8 (-1)
Speed 13 **Vilis Points** 8
Immunities charmed, compelled
Evasion When the Master Inquisitor makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Implacable Will It is impossible to read the Master Inquisitor's thoughts. When creatures attempt to charm or compel them, the spell, talent, or trait appears to function normally (making it seem as though it worked until the Master Inquisitor acts).
Natural Liar The Master Inquisitor has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to deceive and lie.
Undetectable The Master Inquisitor cannot be targeted by divination spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Dagger (melee or short) +7 (1d3 magical)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +7 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Returning Blades Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown dagger reappears in the Master Inquisitor's hand.
Vicious Strike The Master Inquisitor can use their minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 8d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Flurry of Attacks The Master Inquisitor attacks four times.
Miraculous Reflexes When the Master Inquisitor is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.
Obscured Nature When an effect, item, or creature attempts to detect the Master Inquisitor's alignment, they can spend 1 Vilis point to be detected as the alignment of their choice.

There is a distinct sense of knowing in this woman's gaze and she saunters forward confidently, subtly scanning her surroundings with one hand near the hilt of her shortsword.

Inquisitor — DIFFICULTY 50

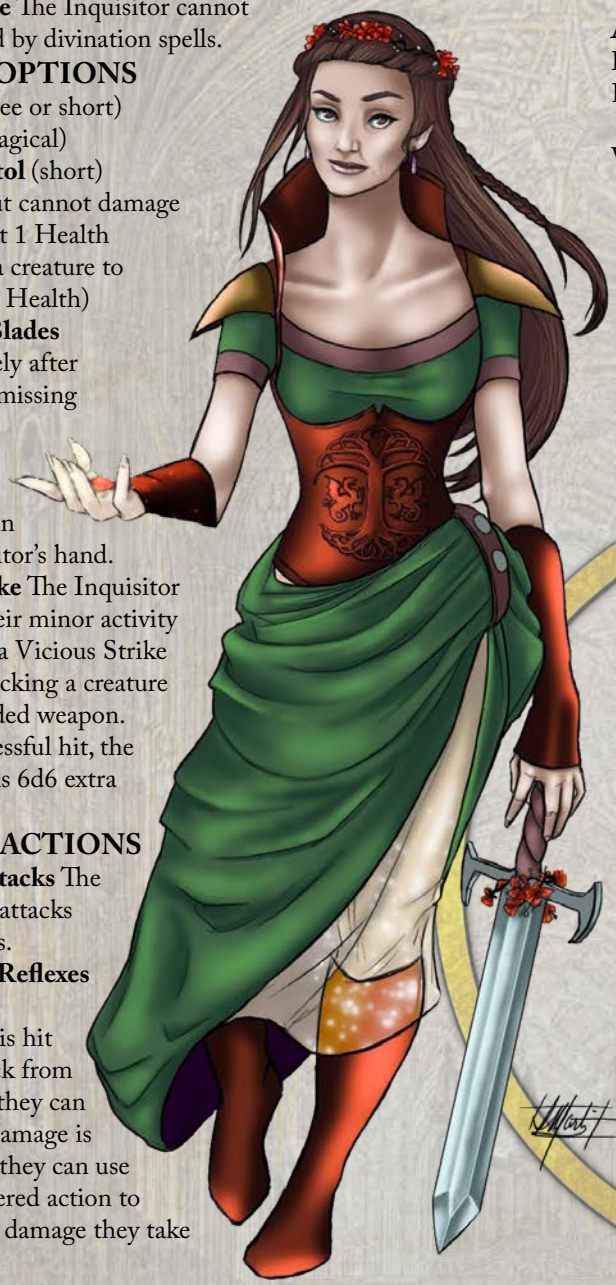
Size ½ or 1 humanoid (neutral)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 17 (leather); **Health** 140
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 12
Evasion When the Inquisitor makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Implacable Will It is impossible to read the Inquisitor's thoughts.
Natural Liar The Inquisitor has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to deceive and lie.
Undetectable The Inquisitor cannot be targeted by divination spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +6 (1d3 magical)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +6 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Returning Blades Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown dagger reappears in the Inquisitor's hand.
Vicious Strike The Inquisitor can use their minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 6d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Flurry of Attacks The Inquisitor attacks three times.
Miraculous Reflexes When the Inquisitor is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.



This leather-clad servant of The Inquisition proudly wears their organization's emblem.

Inquisitor Adeptus — DIFFICULTY 25

Size ½ or 1 humanoid (neutral)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 16 (leather); **Health** 90
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 11
Evasion When the Inquisitor Adeptus makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Implacable Will It is impossible to read the Inquisitor Adeptus' thoughts.
Natural Liar The Inquisitor Adeptus has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to deceive and lie.
Undetectable The Inquisitor Adeptus cannot be targeted by divination spells.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +5 (1d3)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Vicious Strike The Inquisitor Adeptus can use their minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 4d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Double Attack The Inquisitor Adeptus attacks twice.
Miraculous Reflexes When the Inquisitor Adeptus is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.

Red robes hang from the shoulders of this affable functionary of The Inquisition, the mark of their allegiance stamped elegantly onto the fabric.

Legatus **DIFFICULTY 10**

Size ½ or 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15 (leather); **Health** 40
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Evasion When the Legatus makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Implacable Will It is impossible to read the Inquisitor Adeptus' thoughts.
Natural Liar The Legatus has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to deceive and lie.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Dagger (melee or short) +4 (1d3)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +4 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Vicious Strike The Legatus can use their minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 2d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Miraculous Reflexes When the Legatus is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.

True agents of Tucker Quickfoot report directly to the halfling (and only him, bypassing Treklotus Edwardius often without the tiefling's knowledge), their loyalty to the demigod unquestionable. It takes years of dedication and successful covert operations to earn the coveted rank of Master Inquisitor, bust most importantly of all anyone deemed worthy to be offered the position must also be willing and able to take part in the great duplicity they conceal—those that aren't are lobotomized, turned into aesgigas to serve the cause in another fashion.

Master Inquisitors have absolute authority to go anywhere they please at any time though they tend to avoid churches and places where the pious gather, ostensibly because they are too busy routing out ne'er-do-wells that congregate in more sullied locales. To those that know them, they are well-liked, generous, and benevolent all to easily establish networks of informants throughout cities across the world. In truth a Master Inquisitor is as greedy and black-hearted as Tucker Quickfoot, and nearly as good at hiding it. As the saying goes, "takes one to know one", and it holds for these two-faced accomplices—in addition to their other tasks, they keep tabs on Askis' mad scientists. Their standing orders are not to interfere with the villains for three reasons: the fugitives have great value as scapegoats if a few are left alive and allowed to operate unhindered, they provide ample distraction for the other servants of the Celestial Heroes, and when The Inquisition rapidly responds to an assault it makes the organization (and its tactics) seem all the more necessary.

Agents of The Inquisition work closely with The Ministry to fight against corruption throughout the world. Though beloved and respected, there is a slight undercurrent of fear for the authority they wield (legal power exceeding the remit of the Justitia) and because they bear witness to horrors beyond the ken of mortal eyes to protect others from worse fates. Like a clergy of the 3rd Paene these carefully chosen and developed followers of Tucker Quickfoot have a more full understanding of the nature of the world, having read the complete *Praecepta Ministerium* and charged to protect the secrets within. Using secret caches hidden across Askis' settlements and wilderness, they establish and propagate cover identities for The Inquisition's use in the pursuit of their "holy" endeavors as they infiltrate what little evil still remains on the surface of the planet (or seek knowledge of the dangers lurking beneath).

Apprentices to Inquisitors are retrained as carefully as they are plied by their peers, gradually coerced into moral latitude as their master reveals the wickedness of the foes they face until being promoted by Tucker Quickfoot after a grueling interview process.

The first thing new recruits of The Inquisition are trained for is politics, acting as diplomats in Askis' congresses and intermediaries between local governments and The Ministry. They are the most public face of the institution and the best loved of its servants, known to be trustworthy and intent on spreading goodwill wherever possible.

Azure and indigo hues make up the majority of this regal tiefling's attire, his tunic and cape clearly of high quality and in the latest fashions from Regredior. The man's long black hair is pulled tight to allow his grand fiendish horns to rise freely, and the weathering of age is clear on his manicured face. He wears both silver and gold pauldrons, although more interesting is the buckle on his belt—a metal clasp bearing both the old symbols of The Ministry and The Inquisition.

Treklotius Edwardius — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (tiefling)
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 20 (hard leather); **Health** 130
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 5 (-3), **Sin** 16 (+6)
Speed 10 **Vilis Points** 16
Immune damage from disease; charmed, compelled, diseased; divination spells
Aura of Darkness Treklotius and friendly creatures within 5 yards of him are half covered (ranged attack rolls against him are made with 1 bane).
Evasion When Treklotius makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.
Fight Another Day Immediately after Treklotius is hit by an attack, he can use a triggered action to wrap himself in a dark mist and teleport up to 20 yards to a spot he can see. Treklotius is fully covered by this mist until the start of his next turn, or until he attacks, deals damage, or forces a creature to make a challenge roll. After Treklotius uses this talent, he cannot do so again until he has completed a rest.
Tiefling Resistance Treklotius takes half damage from fire.
Implacable Will When a creature targets Treklotius with a spell or talent that would cause him to be charmed or compelled, it believes that it succeeded.
Obscured Nature To the perception of others and for the purposes of detection spells Treklotius' Sanctity and Sin attributes appear to be switched (so his Sin score appears to have his Sanctity score's value and likewise).
Silver Tongue Treklotius can use a triggered action to gain 1 boon when making a challenge roll to persuade. He can use this talent a 10 times and replenishes uses when he completes a rest.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Magic Dagger (melee or short range) +8 (1d3)
Despicable Strike Treklotius can use a triggered action to make an Intellect attack roll against the target's Will. On a success, for the next minute the target cannot cast spells or use magical talents, nor can it be targeted by spells or magical talents. After Treklotius uses this talent, he cannot do so again until he has completed a rest.
Returning Daggers Immediately after hitting or missing its target, a thrown dagger reappears in Treklotius' hand.
Vicious Strike Treklotius can use his minor activity to declare a Vicious Strike before attacking a creature with a bladed weapon. On a successful hit, the attack deals 4d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack Treklotius attacks twice.
Ensnarling Heresy Treklotius turns his heretical words into tangible dark coils, focusing the force of his blasphemy on a target within 3 yards. The target must succeed on a Will challenge roll with 1 bane or be immobilized. While immobilized by the tendrils, the target repeats the challenge roll at the start of each of its turns. On a success, it frees itself and the coils disappear. After Treklotius uses this talent, he cannot do so again until he has completed a rest.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Artful Dodge When a creature would hit Treklotius with an attack, he can use his triggered action to reduce the damage he takes by half.
Putrefying Strike Treklotius touches one weapon or piece of ammunition, lending his weapon some of his own blighted nature and coating it with an oily film. This substance lasts for 1 minute. The next time he hits a target with an attack using that weapon or ammunition the target takes an extra 2d6 unholy damage.

In their distinguished centuries of service protecting Askis from the scourge of evil, only Celestial Heroes have carried true authority in both The Inquisition and The Ministry before Treklotus Edwardius. The tiefling quickly earned distinction by becoming the youngest Inquisitor in history to ever earn the title, proving indispensable with the capture of fugitives by the score—criminals one and all that had evaded authorities for years if not decades. With such an impressive record and a mind of unmatched piety Tucker Quickfoot himself saw to it that Agent Treklotus became the organization's official liaison with The Ministry, rapidly earning the rights to be initiated into the 3rd Paene.

To the world at large this is the epic story of Treklotus Edwardius: a fiendkin borne to lowly circumstances, raised up to the heights of power by wit, will, and devotion to the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility* and Celestial Heroes. This is not however the truth of his tale and for all his lauded holiness the tiefling hides a dark secret—he is as dubious, duplicitous, and demented as Tucker Quickfoot. The halfling noticed his eventual protege when Treklotus was but a child, witnessing the tiefling cleverly evade capture after stealing a bit of food from a marketplace. It was a small thing for the Celestial Hero to see him brought into the fold of the best social services, agents of The Inquisition ensuring that any more trouble Treklotus got himself into was quietly suppressed until they could receive him directly into their ranks. While a touch theatrical, the staged arrests of his early years in the organization satisfied all but the most curious doubters and once he had authority as a proper Inquisitor, the tiefling became a true force to be reckoned with.

In only a few years Treklotus discovered the truth of the Ministerium Inmorte and with a touch of persuasion, Tucker Quickfoot convinced him of their need and he was brought into the ranks of The Ministry to, "gain a better perspective for the whole grand picture here". Less than half a decade more passed before the tiefling began to unravel the enigma of the Score Tarvorial and this is when he became the true confidant of the duplicitous Celestial Heroes, learning of Tucker and Darrius' secrets and agreeing to be their proverbial right hand. Chief of all Treklotus' tasks is keeping knowledge of the *Torquem Machina* concealed but any attempt to subvert one of the demigod's great works garners his attention—as well as more talented, like-minded potential recruits to be groomed for duty.

Darrius Ventrelli — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good [evil])
Perception 20 (+10); darksight
Defense 19 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 130
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 15 (+5), **Sanctity** 17 (+7), **Sin** 12 (+2)
Speed 10 **Vilis Points** 12
Immune aging, charmed, compelled
Demigod Resistances Darrius takes half damage from fire, holy, and weapons that are not magical.
Scrolls of Sanctity The scrolls affixed to Darrius' attire make his alignment appear as good. In addition, they make him immune to being charmed or compelled.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +7 (1d3 magical)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Angel Wings Darrius can use his minor activity to sprout angel wings from his back, grant him Flier 10.
Arcana Points (20) Darrius can expend Arcana Points to fuel a talent or modify a spell. To do so he must expend the listed amount of Arcana Points for the talent or Arcana Points equal to the spell's level (minimum 1 point). Darrius regains expended Arcana Points when he completes a rest.

- **Celestial Swarm** When Darrius takes damage, he can use his triggered action to expend 2 Arcana Points to shroud himself in motes of light. The celestial swarm has 10 Health and any damage that Darrius would take is taken by the celestial swarm first.
- **Doubled Spell** Darrius chooses a second target for a spell that normally targets only one creature.
- **Healing Touch** Darrius touches a creature and it heals damage. If he expends 1 Arcana Point the creature heals damage equal to its healing rate, and if he expends 2 Arcana Points the creature heals damage equal to double its healing rate.
- **Lengthen Spell** Darrius triples the duration of a spell with a duration of at least 1 minute.
- **Quick Spell** Darrius uses his minor activity to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action.
- **Subtle Spell** Darrius casts a spell without speaking the words or wielding any implements.

MAGIC

Power 10
Arcana *arcane armor* (11), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (3), *destroy magic* (3), *harness magic* (3), *arcane retribution* (2)
Celestial *burning beam* (11), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (3), *nova* (3), *sunbeam* (2)
Life *life sense* (11), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (3), *greater cure* (3), *total healing* (3), *resurrect* (2)

Crimson skin and fiendish ears mark this man as a tiefling but what would be grand bone horns above his eyes have been cut down to less than a foot in length. Dark brown hair falls halfway down the back of his doctor's coat, and his carefully manicured goatee and thin mustache complement the intensity to his gaze.

Darrius Ventrelli's origins are known far and wide, the underlying fable of why a sickness overcomes those who partake too deeply of flesh. The unfortunate story of his angelkin mother may seem to be one of numerous tragic fates during the Twilight of Suffering, but it was far from that—his demonic father was very specific about whom he chose to rape. While swimming in the River Styx after escaping its imprisonment by the Stipticus Monks, the demon Marzkyllioazhee chanced upon a glimpse of Refesina. The balor witnessed the chains of Askis' mortals being pulled and some eight far longer than others, deciding to manipulate the soul of one nearby and finding it linked to Darrius' mother. After he was done with her the demon went back to check and saw a dimensional chain linked to his own that had joined the others, another nearby that had turned as black as the depths, and all nine far longer than before.

The death of Darrius' mother when he was a child of only 8 years traumatized him but brought him power enough to escape to freedom, unlocking a potent mixed bloodline of sorcerous might. Sexual crimes infuriated him to no end and the pirates of Samovi were prime offenders, and when word of the Vengeful Scourges of Tapper Underknoll reached him the tiefling made an alliance with the gnome. Infiltrating the crew of Captain Hethyria Bloodboot in the legendary taking of *The Scorned Maiden* was only the first of their exploits, victories counted in the dozens before the duo joined forces with Lellwyn Fethyrwal to create the Golden Redeemers. Where the ranger was a master in combat and tactics, Darrius found that he was a natural at blending in with the brigands they targeted—and that his first taste of evil wasn't as bad as he anticipated.

For all the good he and his doctores have done in the world Darrius cannot help but constantly reflect on the deception of the *Torquem Machina*. To distract himself he lives a life of excess, always engaging in one entertainment or another to try and keep his mind off the grand duplicity. This life of leisure has gradually taken an increasing toll on his work as a doctor, and the tiefling spends less and less time healing anything other than his "boredom". While Darrius' friendship with Tapper remains, the gnome senses something has been putting a distance between them and is beginning to become suspicious of his longtime ally's changing behavior.

In combat Darrius uses celestial swarm to protect himself when he's visible, but otherwise uses magic to take control over the most dangerous and susceptible opponent. Afterward he uses spells to confound enemies before damaging magic starts flying. Generally the doings of The Ministry are left to Treklotus Edwardius and councils of Sanctified Virologists that contact the tiefling when something of note comes up—when he does work, Darrius reserves his time and effort for the most difficult and high profile medical cases rather than handling the needs of the organization he founded.

A golden caduceus sits on this old doctor's left shoulder paired against an icon for The Ministry on their right. In addition to the white coat that marks their station they carry a large scalpel and pouches on their belt that smell to high heaven.

Sanctified Virologist DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 18 (+8)
Defense 18 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 90
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +6 (1d3 magical)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +6 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Arcana Points (16) The Sanctified Virologist can expend Arcana Points to fuel a talent or modify a spell. To do so they must expend the listed amount of Arcana Points for the talent or Arcana Points equal to the spell's level (minimum 1 point). The Sanctified Virologist regains expended Arcana Points when they complete a rest.

- **Celestial Swarm** When the Sanctified Virologist takes damage, they can use their triggered action to expend 2 Arcana Points to shroud themselves in motes of light. The celestial swarm has 8 Health and any damage that the Sanctified Virologist would take is taken by the celestial swarm first.
- **Healing Touch** The Sanctified Virologist touches a creature and it heals damage. If they expend 1 Arcana Point the creature heals damage equal to its healing rate, and if they expend 2 Arcana Points the creature heals damage equal to double its healing rate.
- **Lengthen Spell** The Sanctified Virologist triples the duration of a spell with a duration of at least 1 minute.
- **Quick Spell** The Sanctified Virologist uses their minor activity to cast a spell with a casting time of 1 action.
- **Subtle Spell** The Sanctified Virologist casts a spell without speaking the words or wielding any implements.

MAGIC

Power 8
Arcana *arcane armor* (9), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (3), *destroy magic* (2), *harness magic* (2), *arcane retribution* (2)
Celestial *burning beam* (9), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (2)
Life *life sense* (9), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (3), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (2)

A crown sits atop the head of this gray-haired man and he wears an elaborate filigree green robe that falls down around his ankles.

Ministratus DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 17 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 60
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Shortsword (melee) +5 (1d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Arcana Points (12) The Ministratus can expend Arcana Points to fuel a talent or modify a spell. To do so they must expend the listed amount of Arcana Points for the talent or Arcana Points equal to the spell's level (minimum 1 point). The Ministratus regains expended Arcana Points when they complete a rest.

- **Celestial Swarm** When the Ministratus takes damage, they can use their triggered action to expend 1 Arcana Point to shroud themselves in motes of light. The celestial swarm has 6 Health and any damage that the Ministratus would take is taken by the celestial swarm first.
- **Healing Touch** The Ministratus touches a creature and it heals damage. If they expend 1 Arcana Point the creature heals damage equal to its healing rate, and if they expend 2 Arcana Points the creature heals damage equal to double its healing rate.
- **Lengthen Spell** The Ministratus triples the duration of a spell with a duration of at least 1 minute.
- **Subtle Spell** The Ministratus casts a spell without speaking the words or wielding any implements.

MAGIC

Power 6
Arcana *arcane armor* (7), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (2), *destroy magic* (2), *harness magic* (2), *arcane retribution* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (7), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (1)
Life *life sense* (7), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (1)

This gray lab coated doctor looks about with obvious concern for others.

Divine Pathologist — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 16 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 30
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +4 (1d3)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Arcana Points (8) The Divine Pathologist can expend Arcana Points to fuel a talent or modify a spell. To do so they must expend the listed amount of Arcana Points for the talent or Arcana Points equal to the spell's level (minimum 1 point). The Divine Pathologist regains expended Arcana Points when they complete a rest.

- **Celestial Swarm** When the Divine Pathologist takes damage, they can use their triggered action to expend 1 Arcana Point to shroud themselves in motes of light. The celestial swarm has 4 Health and any damage that the Divine Pathologist would take is taken by the celestial swarm first.
- **Healing Touch** The Divine Pathologist touches a creature and it heals damage. If they expend 1 Arcana Point the creature heals damage equal to its healing rate.
- **Lengthen Spell** The Divine Pathologist triples the duration of a spell with a duration of at least 1 minute.

MAGIC

Power 4
Arcana *arcane armor* (5), *arcane sight* (2), *explosive darts* (1), *destroy magic* (1), *harness magic* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (5), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (1), *nova* (1)
Life *life sense* (5), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (1), *total healing* (1)

Anxiety is spread across the face of this black-gray lab coated healer.

Doctor of the Faith — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 15 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 15
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Dagger (melee or short) +3 (1d3)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Arcana Points (4) The Doctor of the Faith can expend Arcana Points to fuel a talent or modify a spell. To do so they must expend the listed amount of Arcana Points for the talent or Arcana Points equal to the spell's level (minimum 1 point). The Doctor of the Faith regains expended Arcana Points when they complete a rest.

- **Celestial Swarm** When the Doctor of the Faith takes damage, they can use their triggered action to expend 1 Arcana Point to shroud themselves in motes of light. The celestial swarm has 2 Health and any damage that the Doctor of the Faith would take is taken by the celestial swarm first.
- **Healing Touch** The Doctor of the Faith touches a creature and it heals damage. If they expend 1 Arcana Point the creature heals damage equal to its healing rate.

MAGIC

Power 2
Arcana *arcane armor* (3), *arcane sight* (2), *explosive darts* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (1)
Life *life sense* (3), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (1)

Sanctified Virologists have practiced medicine for decades, equally devoted to religious studies and mastering sorcery. Few are up to the challenge and they are heavily rewarded for their labors, paid fine stipends that put them decidedly into the upper class. The wealthiest are trained in chirurgical procedures but all are required to prepare magics that will allow them to protect their research—the villains of the past have more than once stolen advanced medical knowledge then put it to nefarious use.

Ministratus are the most public figures of The Ministry, seeing to the sickest patients as they run hospitals and government offices while working in conjunction with local politicians. Despite grueling schedules these bureaucrats are extremely political with their peers, constantly vying to earn promotion to higher paying positions or tutelage in chirurgery (something Darrius encourages because the competition spurs everyone on to greater innovations together).

These doctors are only found in clinics or hospitals unless they achieve a poor mortality rate, at which point they are deployed as freelance general practitioners to learn via adversity or become functionaries of the various bureaucracies within The Ministry's purvey.

Radiance gushes from this angelic metal-clad woman warrior, her fair skin and blonde locks flowing against a backdrop of ornate gold and silver wings affixed to her armor. She is a living work of art, her every aspect exuding beauty.

Nestled in the peak of Mount Quyosh high in the Recaltio Mountain Range lay the ancient temple of the Insolo Cult, a religion devoted to sun worship, all the blessings of the Upper Planes, and the forgotten parentage of Lellwyn Fethyrwal. Their religion's greatest prophecy was the demigod paladin coming into being and a few years after her birth the fell sorcerer-warlord Xiofekt's forces raided the Insolo Temple to slaughter every living thing within—the babe angelkin was spirited away from the mountaintop by a wounded parishioner, raised far from her pursuers in the wildernesses of the south. Shortly after her caretaker passed the young paladin made a new companion by creating the first *shadow of vanity*; with nowhere else to go and her nemesis dead at the hands of a Vengeful Scourge by Tapper Underknoll, she returned to her birthplace in hopes of discovering more about her origins. The very same day the gnome and Darrius Ventrelli arrived seeking out much the same and the Golden Redeemers were born—Lellwyn became a mascot of sorts and her resplendence prompted many swords to join their cause. For all her angelic power and sublime skill with a blade however, the angelkin only truly understood beauty after meeting Hortensia Validaris, now the Living Saint and her closest ally (really a mentor more than anything else) and across the centuries she has had numerous offspring with lovers beyond count, but treasures her descendants Deardra and Kristof more than all others.

The Insolo Cult raised Lellwyn to be respectful and kind, and her love for beauty in all forms still overwhelms her better judgment even after over a millenia of life. It was her fierce desire to defend beauty that her companions used to drive her to take up arms—she was taught that slavery was the ugliest of the many evils plaguing the world and the duo's crusade to end it easily appealed to her. With the conquest of good practically complete, Lellwyn has taken to spending her time traveling across Askis appreciating artwork and being a patron or model for sculptors, painters, and the like, all the while learning from them to better express her affection for the splendor that so occupies her mind.

Lellwyn is completely fearless, acting as the spearhead of whatever forces are at hand. The paladin uses her holy nimbus to draw fire to herself and is a relentless opponent, breaking off from combat only briefly to try and heal the mortally wounded. Countless victories and her omnipresent *shadow of vanity* have taught her to never back down—and with her usual sortie of hangers-on (one or two Iterati and 1d3+1 Soul Knights) there's not yet been an enemy that has forced her to.

Lellwyn Fethyrwal — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 16 (+6); darksight
Defense 21 (enchanted full plate, large shield); **Health** 190
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10; flier 20 (hover)
Immune damage from disease; aging, charmed, compelled, frightened
Demigod Resistances Lellwyn takes half damage from holy, unholy, and weapons that are not magical.
Holy Auras Unless Lellwyn is unconscious, she and allies within 10 yards of her can't be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +7 with 1 boon (1d6+2 plus 1d6 holy)
Divine Smite When Lellwyn hits with a weapon attack roll, she can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting she expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Lellwyn attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (30 points) Lellwyn can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 30). Lellwyn's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when she completes a rest.
Holy Touch Lellwyn touches a willing creature and ends one spell effecting it (she can target herself with this trait).
Holy Nimbus Lellwyn emanates sunlight in a 10 yard radius for 1 minute. When an enemy creature starts its turn in the light, it takes 5 holy damage. In addition, for the duration Lellwyn has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist forbidden and vile spells.
Shadow Cape Lellwyn's magic cape is shaped into intricate clockwork wings that grant her flight. So long as she is wearing her shadow cape she has 1 boon on all challenge rolls and can make it stretch, allowing Lellwyn to use her minor activity to use the Help action on another creature within 10 yards.

MAGIC

Power 7
Celestial *burning beam* (8), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (1)
Life *life sense* (8), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (1)

The warrior before you is a thing of beauty, the lines of their face and physique utterly sublime to gaze upon. They are also attired in fine fashion and an exquisite cape that matches the splendor of their features—though curiously they seem to cast no shadow.

Iterati — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 20 (full plate, large shield); **Health** 140
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Immune damage from disease; aging, charmed, compelled, frightened
Holy Auras Unless the Iterati is unconscious, they and allies within 10 yards of them can't be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +6 with 1 boon (1d6+2 plus 1d6 holy)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +3 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Divine Smite When the Iterati hits with a weapon attack roll, they can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting they expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Iterati attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (20 points) The Iterati can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 20). The Iterati's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when they complete a rest.
Holy Touch The Iterati touches a willing creature and ends one spell effecting it (they can target themselves with this trait).
Holy Nimbus The Iterati emanates sunlight in a 10 yard radius for 1 minute. When an enemy creature starts its turn in the light, it takes 5 holy damage. In addition, for the duration the Iterati has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist forbidden and vile spells.
Shadow Cape So long as the Iterati is wearing their shadow cape they have 1 boon on all challenge rolls and can make it stretch, allowing the Iterati to use their minor activity to use the Help action on another creature within 10 yards.

MAGIC

Power 5
Celestial *burning beam* (6), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (2), *nova* (1), *sunbeam* (1)
Life *life sense* (6), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (1), *resurrect* (1)

Illustriously worked half plate adorns this lithe warrior and they carry an impressive air of confidence about them, swaggering about with an air of superiority.

Soul Knight — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 18 (plate and mail, small shield); **Health** 90
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Immune damage from disease; charmed, compelled, frightened
Holy Auras Unless the Soul Knight is unconscious, they and allies within 10 yards of them can't be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +5 with 1 boon (1d6+2 plus 1d6 holy)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +2 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Divine Smite When the Soul Knight hits with a weapon attack roll, they can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting they expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Soul Knight attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (15 points) The Soul Knight can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 15). The Soul Knight's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when they complete a rest.
Holy Nimbus The Soul Knight emanates sunlight in a 10 yard radius for 1 minute. When an enemy creature starts its turn in the light, it takes 5 holy damage. In addition, for the duration the Soul Knight has 3 boons on challenge rolls made to resist forbidden and vile spells.

MAGIC

Power 3
Celestial *burning beam* (4), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (1), *starfall* (1)
Life *life sense* (4), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (1), *greater cure* (1)

Brass, copper, and gold carvings cover the half plate of this comely warrior. They are regal and proud in their bearing, a fine rapier and inaequa pistol hanging from their belt and a power rifle slung across their back.

Animeo Custodiae — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 12 (+2)
Defense 17 (scale, small shield); **Health** 60
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Immune charmed, compelled, frightened
Holy Auras Unless the Animeo Custodiae is unconscious, they and allies within 10 yards of them can't be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +4 with 1 boon (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +2 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Divine Smite When the Animeo Custodiae hits with a weapon attack roll, they can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting they expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Animeo Custodiae attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (10 points) The Animeo Custodiae can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 10). The Animeo Custodiae's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when they complete a rest.

MAGIC

Power 1
Celestial *burning beam* (2), *flash* (1)
Life *life sense* (2), *fount of life* (1), *candle vigil* (1)

Far and away the most beloved servants of the Celestial Heroes, the Iterati are genuine celebrities, officiating events of all kinds. They are the judges at contests and competitions, attend the openings of museums, restaurants, and new stores (often to cut the ceremonial ribbon), and encourage the arts in all kinds of ways—very often as models. When not attending to their duties as public servants, Iterati are hangers-on to Lellwyn Fethyrwal and bask in her spendorous beauty.

Followers of Lellwyn Fethyrwal that are beautiful enough to become Iterati but not yet possessing the require spirit are developed as Soul Knights, championing inner beauty until they've attained the perfection of their betters. As with the demigod paladin this leads them to explore Askis through adventure to learn the nuances of the splendor of life whether in the court of a noble politician, at the dinner table of a wealthy industrialist, or in the sitting room of a manual laborer in between factory shifts.

Soul Knights focus on seeking out evil omens and ancient prophecies to preempt another curse like the Night of Largitio. As time drags on more are led to quest into the Taenarius Tunnels as a test of faith to earn their higher rank, gleaning whatever might have once been good from the remains of deceased mad scientists while cleansing their abandoned laboratories of abominations. In

the past century this has become an extremely dubious practice—some Soul Knights have returned from prowling the subterranean passages with their minds warped through vile chirurgical procedures that resist detection by magic. Strict orders have since been put in place requiring all expeditions to file departure and return papers immediately before and after heading beneath the surface.

It is the duty of the Animeo Custodiae to protect relics of antiquity and ancient power, serving as guards in museums and arcane libraries. They also provide aid in sanitariums by keeping things secure, and in major hospitals one is kept on staff to ward away death until specialists can attend to a patient.

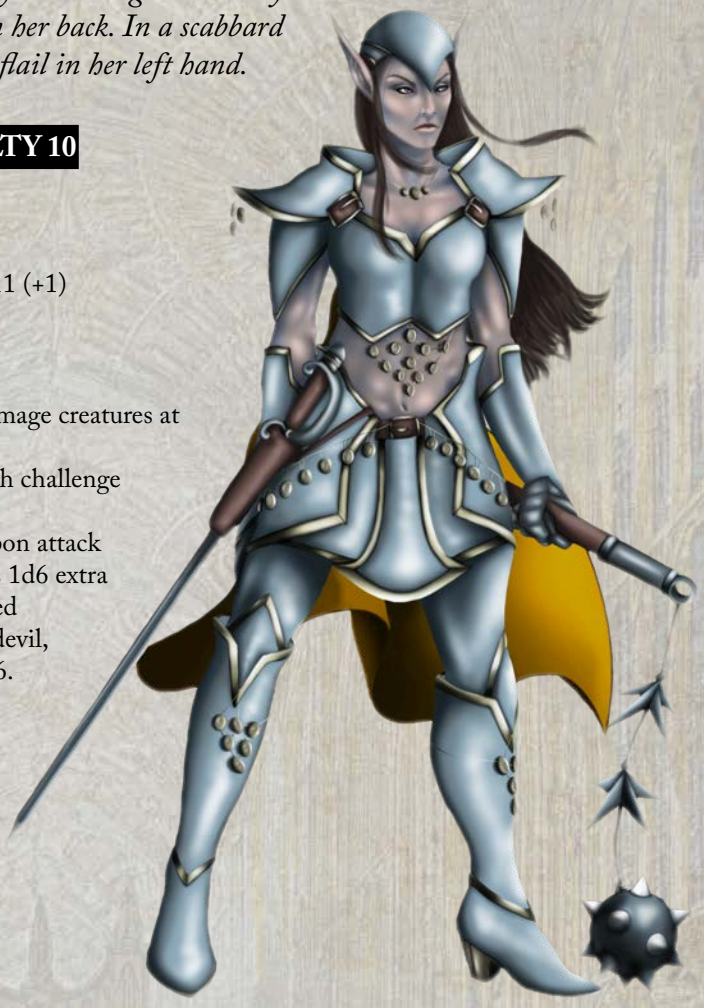
New recruits among the devout followers of Lellwyn Fethyrwal are first introduced by existing Speculi Eleganti, then made to serve within Lellwyn Fethyrwal's many estates until earning her favor, a bit of training, and a ceremony fully inducting them into her order. After being honored in such a fashion they become protectors of churches, shrines, and houses of worship the world over, bringing a sense of regal decorum to religious services and leading congregations in devotional hymns.

CANDLE VIGIL **LIFE UTILITY 1**

As part of the casting of this spell, you surround a corpse with more than a score of lit candles and pray for 16 hours. For the next 10 days, the target is protected from decay and can't become undead. The spell also effectively extends the time limit on raising the target from the dead (days spent under the influence of this spell don't count against the time limit of talents and spells that return a creature to life).

If one or more creatures remains by the body praying for the duration of the spell's casting, there is a cumulative 5% chance the target returns to life with 1 hit point (maximum 99%). This spell can't return to life a creature that has died of old age, nor can it restore any missing body parts.

Ornate armor covers this beautiful woman's body enhancing her already attractive features, a golden cloak flowing down her back. In a scabbard on her right side is a rapier and she carries a flail in her left hand.



Speculi Eleganti — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 11 (+1)
Defense 16 (mail, small shield); **Health** 30
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +3 with 1 boon (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +1 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Power Rifle (long) +1 with 1 boon (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Divine Smite When the Speculi Eleganti hits with a weapon attack roll, they can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting they expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (5 points) The Speculi Eleganti can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 5). The Speculi Eleganti's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when they complete a rest.

MAGIC

Power 0
Celestial *burning beam* (1)
Life *life sense* (1), *minor healing* (1)

Muddy red hair bursts above the shining goggles strapped across this gnome's forehead, leaving his piercing green eyes uncovered. Across his athletic physique is gorgeous leather armor trimmed with beautiful gold and a masterful bow, a green cape and tabard flowing about his little form.

Tapper Underknoll — DIFFICULTY 250

Size ½ humanoid (good)
Perception 21 (+11); darksight, sightless
Defense 22 (hard leather); **Health** 180
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 20 (+10), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10; leap (horizontal 10, vertical 5)
Immune aging, charmed, compelled
Demigod Resistances Tapper takes half damage from holy and weapons that are not magical.
Evasion When Tapper makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.
Favorite Quarry Tapper has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by humanoids, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Scimitars (melee) +10 (1d6)
Bow (long) +10 (1d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +10 (2d6)
Advantageous Strikes Tapper deals 1d6 extra damage when one of his attacks hits a creature at less than its maximum Health.
Magic Quiver At the start of his turn, Tapper can choose to change the energy bestowed by his quiver. When he draws an arrow, it is filled with elemental energy that deals 1 extra damage (acid, cold, fire, or lightning). When the total of Tapper's attack roll is 20 or higher, he deals 1d6 extra energy damage.
Prey Strike When Tapper makes an attack roll against a humanoid, he makes the attack roll with 1 boon or he deals 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks Tapper attacks six times with his scimitars or bow.
Volley Tapper makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 5 yards of a point he can see within long range, making a separate attack roll for each target.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Disappear Tapper can use his minor activity to Hide even while being observed.

END OF THE ROUND

Miraculous Reflexes When Tapper is hit by an attack from a creature he can see, after damage is calculated he can use his triggered action to reduce the damage he takes by half.

When the metropolis of Nitidus was but a small town for small folk, Tapper Underknoll was borne to a large family of gnomes living in the settlement. Taught archery and tracking by his mother, the youth proved to be a prodigal hunter and soon took to range on his own. While he was out hunting in the deep wilds Tapper's parents and siblings were all captured by pirate slavers, and Tapper swore revenge so that no one should suffer as they were made to—so began his Vengeful Scourges. During the Twilight of Suffering justice was in scarce supply in Samovi and his fame grew by leaps and bounds, drawing the ire of pirates made wealthy by way of the thrall trade. Dozens of immoral buccaneers fell to his arrows but a bounty placed by Captain Hethyria Bloodboot drew his attention, prompting the gnome to strike an alliance with the tiefling Darrius Ventrelli that ramped up their war against evil. When it became clear that their fate might

be more than to end bondage in the Wild Continent the pair tracked down the Insolo Cult hoping the ancient religion could provide some guidance—finding Lellwyn Fethyrwal instead. With her by their side the Golden Redeemers truly became a force to be reckoned with and thanks to the gnome's masterful tactics they ultimately ended evil in Samovi.

Tapper is quiet, reserved, and non-confrontational unless he has engineered the circumstances of an encounter, which is usually the case. A peerless hunter and woodsman, the gnome is overconfident and competitive to a fault; much like his angelkin paladin ally, he refuses to back down from a fight. Purging evil from the world is, Tapper believes, a matter of constant vigilance and he spends all of his time seeing to the worst residents of the Samovi Evil Preserve, hunting down anyone (or anything) that's managed to escape his floating island-prison.

When forced to combat Tapper stays at range to capitalize on his marksmanship, attacking, hiding and moving, then attacking again. He is tactical about who he targets (going after spellcasters first, particularly healers) and while he hates killing he knows that delivering serious wounds is a safer option if the odds of a fight are against him. The gnome works closely with his hunter-followers and keeps them in close proximity (1d6 Tueri Principis, 2d6 Serva Venandi, and 2d3+1 Praecursators) as he goes freely about the Samovi Evil Preserve and beyond, overseeing the training of each recruit at least once during their career. With the exception of a few particularly dangerous inmates (mostly dragons) that he personally visits on a regular basis, Tapper trusts his Praeceptorem to handle the day-to-day operations of the island-prison like processing new "guests" or maintenance of its waypoints.

This person is obviously a hunter from the way they gracefully step, eyes ever seeking danger.

Praeceptorem **DIFFICULTY 100**

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 19 (+9); sightless
Defense 20 (soft leather); **Health** 130
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 19 (+9), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10; leap (horizontal 10, vertical 5)
Evasion When the Praeceptorem makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Favorite Quarry The Praeceptorem has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by humanoids, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Scimitars (melee) +9 (1d6)
Bow (long) +9 (1d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +9 (2d6)
Power Rifle (long) +9 (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Advantageous Strikes The Praeceptorem deals 1d6 extra damage when one of their attacks hits a creature at less than its maximum Health.
Prey Strike When the Praeceptorem makes an attack roll against a humanoid, they make the attack roll with 1 boon or they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks The Praeceptorem attacks five times with their scimitars or bow.
Volley The Praeceptorem makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 4 yards of a point they can see within long range, making a separate attack roll for each target.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Disappear The Praeceptorem can use their minor activity to Hide even while being observed.

END OF THE ROUND
Miraculous Reflexes When the Praeceptorem is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.

The ornate studded leather worn by this forester is emblazoned with symbols that mark them as a commander of the Samovi Evil Preserve.

Tueri Principis — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 17 (+7)
Defense 19 (hard leather); **Health** 95
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10; leap (horizontal 8, vertical 4)
Evasion When the Tueri Principis makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Favorite Quarry The Tueri Principis has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by humanoids, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Scimitars (melee) +7 (1d6)
Bow (long) +7 (1d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +7 (2d6)
Power Rifle (long) +7 (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Advantageous Strikes The Tueri Principis deals 1d6 extra damage when one of their attacks hits a creature at less than its maximum Health.
Prey Strike When the Tueri Principis makes an attack roll against a humanoid, they make the attack roll with 1 boon or they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Tueri Principis attacks four times with their scimitars or bow.
Volley The Tueri Principis makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 3 yards of a point they can see within long range, making a separate attack roll for each target.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Disappear The Tueri Principis can use their minor activity to Hide even while being observed.

END OF THE ROUND

Miraculous Reflexes When the Tueri Principis is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.

This crescent-helmeted soldier has a stern expression on their face and keeps one hand on the hilt of their inaequa pistol.

Serva Venandi — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 17 (hard leather); **Health** 50
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; leap (horizontal 6, vertical 3)
Evasion When the Serva Venandi makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.
Favorite Quarry The Serva Venandi has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by humanoids, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Scimitars (melee) +5 (1d6)
Bow (long) +5 (1d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 (2d6)
Power Rifle (long) +5 (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)
Advantageous Strikes The Serva Venandi deals 1d6 extra damage when one of their attacks hits a creature at less than its maximum Health.
Prey Strike When the Serva Venandi makes an attack roll against a humanoid, they make the attack roll with 1 boon or they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Serva Venandi attacks three times with their scimitars or bow.
Volley The Serva Venandi makes a ranged attack against any number of creatures within 2 yards of a point they can see within long range, making a separate attack roll for each target.

END OF THE ROUND

Miraculous Reflexes When the Serva Venandi is hit by an attack from a creature they can see, after damage is calculated they can use their triggered action to reduce the damage they take by half.

The commanders of the Samovi Evil Preserve each oversee one regional territory within the island-prison, specializing themselves for the environment and its denizens. Should one of their inmates escape, they assign Tueri Principis to take their place while they hunt the prisoner down.

The elite guards of the Samovi Evil Preserve each command a Waystation and ten squads of 5 Serva Venandi, carefully keeping track of the locations and activities of the inmates under their supervision. Using primeval awareness, scouting by way of the soldiers beneath them or conjured animals, and when necessary using their station's magic ring able to cast *detect evil and good* at will to track auras left by vile magic. Tueri Princeps are also the de facto ambassadors to purpura villages, checking in on the tiny celestials on a weekly basis and under the utmost secrecy.

Whenever a Tueri Princeps is made aware of a potential escape attempt or prisoner in mortal danger it is their duty to intervene and they do so with overwhelming force every time,

taking at least 20 Serva Venandi with them into "The Preserve". Only they and their superiors have remit to draw arrows or blades before their lives are immediately threatened, yet even then it is only expected if done to protect one of their soldiers and there is no alternative but to strike a mortal blow.

By and large the Samovi Evil Preserve is watched over by Serva Venandi—foresters that have trained up from being lowly Praecursators, men and women that know what depravities they'll come across on the floating island. Patrols are made by squads of 5 of these warriors that make a 1 hour circuit around their Waystation that takes 1 hour, all with walkie-talkies on their person that they use to report back in 30 minute intervals. When a patrol fails to make contact or goes missing for more than 1 minute past when they are meant to report in, overwhelming force is used to reciprocate due to the likelihood of foul play.

There is understandably a high turnover rate among Serva Venandi, many of their most promising soldiers losing their mettle when the full horrors of the inmates are revealed to them or perishing in the course of their duties. These guards are not given the locations of purpura villages but their shifting routes (which change on a weekly basis) always include areas near the tiny celestials' settlements. At all times there are three squads of Serva Venandi manning their Waystation or on patrol, two squads resting, and five squads on rotation either making improvements to the floating prison, reinforcing the garrison, off-site for recreation, or acting on secret orders from their superiors. Camaraderie among The Preserve's guards is strongly encouraged and Tucker Underbarrow organizes contests, work goals, and other incentives for his underlings to better know one another—making it all the more difficult for a prisoner to infiltrate or deceive them.

Individuals with a profound sense of justice and an insatiable desire to protect others are welcomed amongst the followers of Tapper Underknoll with far less scrutiny than what the Justitia require. These recruits are trained as foresters and used as the Samovi Evil Preserve's chief mode of contact with the rest of Askis, couriers given leave to travel wherever they must and the right to carry a longbow—though not for the purposes of defense. A few pointed arrows are in their quivers if their lives are threatened but its principal use is to fire high a signal arrow alerts anyone that can see it of the dire need for aid.

Within the last decade no Praecursator has been allowed to walk freely inside of The Preserve, ostensibly as a matter of safety. Rumors among the Serva Venandi claim that Rygar Fulgrym managed to escape the floating prison by impersonating one of them, taking a dwarf's place then rigging a simple gliding device from the contents of a mess kitchen. Any Praecursator found outside of a Waystation without an accompanying Tueri Principis or Praeceptorem is immediately suspended from work and quarantined for evaluation by the island's resident Inquisitor. Otherwise they are the lifeblood of Tapper Underknoll's great work—cleaning the facilities, cooking the food, processing paperwork for new arrivals, and doing all the menial labor that doesn't require exposure to the prisoners themselves.

Lithe and toned, this fellow is obviously a courier by the lightness of what he wears—scimitars on each side, a longbow and quiver, and studded leather armor—and more tellingly the package under his arm.

Praecursator **DIFFICULTY 10**

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 15 (+5)

Defense 15 (hard leather); **Health** 25

Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)

Speed 10

Favorite Quarry The Praecursator has 2 boons on challenge rolls made to resist attacks and spells made by humanoids, and to challenge rolls made to track them or recall information about them.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Scimitars (melee) +3 (1d6)

Bow (long) +3 with 1 boon (1d6)

Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 (2d6)

Power Rifle (long) +3 (target makes a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or is stunned 1d6 rounds)

Prey Strike When the Praecursator makes an attack roll against a humanoid, they make the attack roll with 1 boon or they deal 1d6 extra damage.

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Praecursator attacks twice with their scimitars or bow.

Gimli Stoneflask — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid

Perception 17 (+7); darksight

Defense 20 (power armor); **Health** 185

Strength 18 (+8), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 8

Immune aging, charmed, compelled

Demigod Resistances Gimli takes half damage from holy and weapons that are not magical.

Poison Resistance Gimli takes half damage from poison and has 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist poison.

Superior Curative Magic Whenever Gimli casts a spell that heals damage, the spell heals 1d6 extra per spell level (minimum 1d6 extra damage healed).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Well Hammer (melee) +8 (3d6+2 magical plus 1d6 holy and on an attack roll of 20 or higher, the target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or be pushed backwards 1 yard plus 1 yard per point it failed the challenge roll by)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack Gimli attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil Gimli crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.

Holy Couriers Gimli conjures 3 pegasi (page 288) compelled to do as he bids.

MAGIC

Power 10

Celestial *burning beam* (11), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (3), *nova* (3), *sunbeam* (2)

Life *life sense* (11), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (3), *greater cure* (3), *total healing* (3), *resurrect* (2)

Theurgy *create holy symbol* (11), *denounce* (11), *censure* (3), *god hammer* (3), *wrath of god* (3), *avatar* (3), *fire from heaven* (2)

This dwarf's proud woven beard goes down past his waist but more remarkable is the power armor he wears, a suit of plate covered in bands of runed silver. His weapon is equally impressive, a massive maul that glows bright with an ancient dwarvish symbol.

Born the twelfth son to the 112th ruler of Riskara Bastion, the young Gimli Stoneflask was in a ponderous position—there were certainly great things expected of him, but his place was never meant to rule, far too down the line of lineage to hold any chance to the throne. Though he had talent with a hammer the dwarf lacked an adventurous spirit as a youth and resolved to earn glory for his name first by devotion to their ancestors, learning the traditions of his people handed down over millenia. After decades rising to the ranks of high priest, Grukk saw a vision of dwarves uniting all of Ouranios as one and whatever drive to explore he lacked became filled with his faith, leading him to join with a grand caravan of the Duertek Mercantile Consortium to defend the city's traveling merchants and see what fate may have in store. In short order their wagons came across Varrus Goodwin and when more than a dozen warriors failed to achieve victory against the monk in battles of fists, the cleric defeated the human in a battle of philosophy and the two became steadfast companions, completing their first circuit of the Contiguous Continent. Rankir Tarryndorn joined them not long afterward and Gimli became the steward of the Order of the

Shining Stone, a role that rapidly expanded to include all of Ouranios as he established ancestral temples and priesthoods across the the continent, helped draft plans for a steam engine and the first primitive locomotives based on dwarven machinery (what are today now steel equos), handled logistics for making war on the pockets of evil still holding out in their homeland, and earning more glory than any Stoneflask in history.

Gimli is very much a dwarf, taking great satisfaction from drinking, sharing stories, and putting in a hard day's work. He holds to his word and is unfailingly loyal to his friends, though his pious manner can make him seem a touch reserved. The dwarf was extremely religious even before attaining a sliver of divinity for himself but has never lost sight of his devotion to his ancestors, his faith as pure as the first day he uttered a prayer. His duties overseeing the Towers of Light and blessing clergy of the 3rd Paene for The Ministry keep Gimli extremely busy and in the few smatterings of free time he gets he takes great pride in penning theosophical treatise.

While he makes a fine statesman and member of the clergy, Gimli isn't as combat-oriented as the rest of the Celestial Heroes and he vastly prefers to aid his companions rather than take to the fight himself—unless he is presented with true evil, in which case he faces it head-on and wades in with his well-hammer. Mostly the dwarf bolsters allies and tries to encourage them to greater heights, relying on spells and not engaging directly. On the offense he uses *god hammer* and *wrath of god* provided that his retinue, a number of adjutants (2d6+2 Salvum Meridiem that are always nearby learning from him), don't need healing or aren't in truly mortal peril.

The magnificent plate armor of this priest is worked through with iconography of the Celestial Heroes and warriors of ages past.

Solis Occasum — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 18 (full plate); **Health** 135
Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Superior Curative Magic Whenever the Solis Occasum casts a spell that heals damage, the spell heals 1d6 extra per spell level (minimum 1d6 extra damage healed).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Maul (melee) +6 with 1 boon (3d6 plus 1d6 holy)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Solis Occasum attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil The Solis Occasum crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.
Holy Couriers The Solis Occasum conjures 2 pegasi compelled to do as they bid.

MAGIC

Power 8
Celestial *burning beam* (9), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (2)
Life *life sense* (9), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (3), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (2)
Theurgy *create holy symbol* (9), *denounce* (9), *censure* (3), *god hammer* (3), *wrath of god* (2), *avatar* (2), *fire from heaven* (2)

Prayer tattoos peek out from beneath this warrior-priest's resplendent splint armor. A warhammer marked with symbols of Celestial Heroes hangs from their belt beside an inaequa pistol and holy books affixed by silver chains.

Soleorto Carceris — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 17 (plate and mail); **Health** 105
Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 10
Superior Curative Magic Whenever the Soleorto Carceris casts a spell that heals damage, the spell heals 1d6 extra per spell level (minimum 1d6 extra damage healed).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Maul (melee) +5 with 1 boon (3d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Soleorto Carceris attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil The Soleorto Carceris crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.
Holy Couriers The Soleorto Carceris conjures 2 pegasi compelled to do as they bid.

MAGIC

Power 6
Celestial *burning beam* (7), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (1)
Life *life sense* (7), *cure* (3), *fount of life* (3), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (2), *total healing* (2), *resurrect* (1)
Theurgy *create holy symbol* (7), *denounce* (7), *censure* (3), *god hammer* (2), *wrath of god* (2), *avatar* (2), *fire from heaven* (1)

Religious iconography covers this warrior-priest's splint armor and warhammer.

Lunares Carceris — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 16 (scale); **Health** 70
Strength 14 (+4), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Superior Curative Magic Whenever the Lunares Carceris casts a spell that heals damage, the spell heals 1d6 extra per spell level (minimum 1d6 extra damage healed).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Maul (melee) +4 (3d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Lunares Carceris attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil The Lunares Carceris crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.
Holy Couriers The Lunares Carceris conjures a pegasus compelled to do as they bid.

MAGIC

Power 4
Celestial *burning beam* (5), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (1), *nova* (1)
Life *life sense* (5), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (2), *greater cure* (1), *total healing* (1)
Theurgy *create holy symbol* (5), *denounce* (5), *censure* (2), *god hammer* (2), *wrath of god* (1), *avatar* (1)

This jaunty fellow has ancient dwarven religious symbols on his armor and knees, pickaxes slung over his shoulder, and a flagon of ale in hand.

Salvum Meridiem — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15 (mail); **Health** 30
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10

ATTACK OPTIONS

Picks (melee) +3 (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +1 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Salvum Meridiem attacks once with each of their picks.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil The Salvum Meridiem crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.
Holy Couriers The Salvum Meridiem conjures a pegasus compelled to do as they bid.

MAGIC

Power 2
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (1)
Life *life sense* (3), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (1)
Theurgy *create holy symbol* (3), *denounce* (3), *censure* (2), *god hammer* (1)

Though sized no larger than a halfling this miniature horse is remarkable for the grand feathered wings sprouting from its back, granting the creature the gift of flight.

Pegasus — DIFFICULTY —

Small fey (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 15; **Health** 25
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10; flier 15

ATTACK OPTIONS

Hooves (melee) +2 with 1 boon (1d6+1)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil The pegasus crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 2 banes.

The Solis Occasum are the elite followers of Gimli Stoneflask, traveling between the Towers of Light and settlements spreading the *Philosophy of Enlightened Civility*, faith in divinity, and proper worship of the world's saints. Whether they arrive in a town or a metropolis these priests are always greeted celebration as though it were a minor holiday with feasts, small parades, choir recitals, and sermons to the public at large with fanfare more extreme in accordance with the zealotry of the citizenry.

Soleorto Carceris are respected masters of wisdom in the regions around the Towers of Light where they permanently reside, often called upon to dispense sagacious advice or to provide final judgment to arduous disputes. Some small settlements even elect their nearest high priests into government offices as mayors—though acceptable in the distant past, The Ministry strongly discourages it and any Soleorto Carceris that accepts such a position gains scrutiny from The Inquisition as well.

Lunares Carceris are commanded by Soleorto Carceris, doing whatever tasks are required beyond their Tower of Light's grounds until they are promoted to command one of their own.

The tenets of Gimli Stoneflask's following strongly encourages new recruits to embrace dwarven traditions as the first steps to exploring the nature of faith in their ancestors and the

demigod Celestial Heroes. Their atypical priestly training includes apprenticing with a Solis Occasum as a means to emulate the adventuring of days past, continuing to do so until they are found to be unfit for duty or assigned to a Tower of Light as a Lunares Carceris.

The popularity of Gimli's faith has caused an explosion in dwarven nostalgia and with each passing year it's more and more in style to speak Dwarvish, wear runes, and wield either an axe or pick. There are a fair number of benefits that society can attribute to stout folk fads but the most beloved is the popularization of beer. Aside from the rare settlement where sobriety is law the clergy of the divine dwarf are universally welcomed with open arms and eager thirst. It should be noted that citizens of all races are among Gimli's flock, from slender tall folk to pugnacious half-orcs and curious gnomes—all are seen by the church with the same eyes.

Where they are not treated as equals is when The Ministry is involved. Through bureaucratic inaccuracies and innocuous bumblings, supplies of all kinds (whether foodstuffs, medical, or religious in nature) always disfavor the divine dwarf's clergy. One would never hear such a thing ever said by his followers of course—they are far too trusting and loyal to speak such a thing aloud—but it is often remarked upon in the news sheets and common knowledge, leading most people to seek help from The Ministry rather than the stout folk's priests.

Though grim this bald human man's aged face is solemn, each line in his dark skin an etching of wisdom. His eyes are a steely blue and match the glow from the stylized 'S' on his neck, and flowing off from his shoulders are the orange robes of the Justitia.

Varrus Goodwin — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 20 (+10); darksight
Defense 22 (holy troth of silence); **Health** 180
Strength 17 (+7), **Agility** 20 (+10), **Intellect** 15 (+5), **Will** 19 (+9)
Speed 20; climber 10, leaper (horizontal 10, vertical 5)
Immune damage from disease and poison; aging, charmed, compelled, poisoned
Acrobatic Fall Varrus reduces any falling distance by 30 yards before calculating falling damage.
Deflect Missile Once per turn Varrus can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 2d6.
Demigod Resistances Varrus takes half damage from holy and weapons that are not magical.
Evasion When Varrus makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success he takes no damage and on a failure he takes half damage.
Tribuo Empath Varrus is able to communicate empathically with any creature he can see, mentally conveying and receiving emotions. This only allows him to transmit feelings, not any images or words. In addition, Varrus is able to empathically contact any other creature with this feature that is on the same plane of existence.
Troth of Silence So long as he remains voiceless Varrus has 1 boon on Will challenge rolls, and challenge rolls made to detect lies and hide. Should Varrus use his voice twice, a bubonic plague is unleashed in a 1,000-mile radius from his body. Unlike normal the disease only affects humans and creatures carry it for four times as long as usual before symptoms appear.

ATTACK OPTIONS
Unarmed (melee) +10 (2d6 plus 1d6 holy)

SPECIAL ATTACKS
Flurry of Attacks Varrus attacks five times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS
Ki Points (20) Varrus harnesses the mystic energy of ki and can spend it to fuel the following talents. Varrus regains expended ki points when he completes a rest.
- **Disappear** Varrus can use his action and spend 1 ki point to become invisible for 1 minute.
- **Dodge** On his turn, Varrus can spend 1 ki point and use his triggered action to Defend.
- **Escape** On his turn, Varrus can spend 1 ki point and use his triggered action to Retreat.
- **Flurry** On his turn when attacking, Varrus can spend 1 ki point and use his triggered action to make two unarmed strikes.
- **Rebound** When Varrus makes a challenge roll and fails, he can spend 1 ki point to reroll it.
- **Stun** Varrus can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature he hits with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or be stunned until the end of next round.

END OF THE ROUND
Resolute Will Varrus ends one effect on himself that is causing him to be frightened.

Varrus Goodwin was born and raised in the Stipticus Monastery at the heart of the Inexorabilis Mountain Range. In the very beginning of the Twilight of Suffering the monks bound a primordial evil—the powerful demon Mazkyllioazhee—and for centuries protected the world from his malevolence. The king of a now dead empire ordered his best mages and soldiers to acquire the trapped balor, planning to use it to conquer neighboring kingdoms. His lackeys succeeded (slaughtering nearly all of the order except Varrus who was out acquiring things from villages on the bottom of the slopes) but of course the

king failed to contain the balor, slain with all his court when Marzkyllioazhee escaped to wreak havoc elsewhere. Left masterless, Varrus took to defending a pass from bandits (anyone he deemed unworthy) for sustenance until he met Gimli Stoneflask and took up traveling with the dwarf, discovering the need for kindness as well as an intractable stance against evil.

The duo's exploits quickly garnered them a considerable group of hangers on and to try to keep them safe while in the midsts of quests the monk began to train some. These students eventually begat the Justitia, coming into full fruition after Rankir Tarryndorn completed the Order of the Shining Stone's roster and steel equos connected the entire Contiguous Continent. Once the Celestial Heroes had flushed out the world's greatest evils Varrus started traveling the Taenarius Tunnels and discovered inconscium but other things as well—clues enough that he uncovered the horrible secret of the Ministerium Inmorte, a grisly thread that led him to find out about the *Torquem Machina*. Though aghast at the scale of the halfling and tiefling's deception, Varrus understood that the global alliance of the demigods may not survive the revelation of inaequa's true nature and so he gave an ultimatum for Tucker and Darrius to reveal their folly. During the week he gave them to prepare Tucker instead devised a fail-safe to force the monk's complicity and had Darrius (easily convinced when it was revealed that Varrus played a part in Mazkyllioazhee's rape of the sorcerer's angelkin mother) concoct a horrendous disease, as well as a means to lock it into the human's soul. Tricked into ease by the halfling's silver tongue, Varrus was unprepared for the magical tattoo to be slipped upon his neck and upon learning of the fell consequences of giving rise to his voice—unleashing a plague upon humanity the likes of which it cannot survive—has not spoken since. His well meaning followers have done the same and the Justitia are silent, proudly wearing the same "S" on their necks in an irony that brings no small amount of amusement to Tucker Quickfoot. In the years since Varrus has disseminated inconscium to his followers hoping that ultimately they can discover the secret he is being forced to keep, though even this has had unintended and disastrous consequences like his turned protégé Agens Coenobita (page 211).

Kind and generous almost by default, Varrus is distant even for a silent man. The monk never rests for longer than a sleep and meal, driven and utterly devoted to the work of the Justitia—inducting new Numcustos Mysterium and traveling the Taenarius Tunnels looking for the biggest threats lurking beneath Askis. In combat he gets into the thick of it to flank opponents, using empty body to move around unexpectedly while pouring on damage with radiant fist and quadruple attacks (or double attacks and disengages to frustrate opponents). Varrus breaks off from combat to heal downed allies and is accompanied by at least a dozen Justitia at all times to provide round-the-clock security.

Peace radiates from this old, tattooed, orange-robed monk.

Numcustos Mysterium — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 18 (+8)

Defense 20 (holy troth of silence); **Health** 140

Strength 16 (+6), **Agility** 18 (+8), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 17 (+7)

Speed 18; climber 8, leaper (horizontal 8, vertical 4)

Immune damage from disease and poison; poisoned

Acrobatic Fall The Numcustos Mysterium reduces any falling distance by 20 yards before calculating falling damage.

Deflect Missile Once per turn the Numcustos Mysterium can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 2d6.

Evasion When the Numcustos Mysterium makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.

Tribuo Empath The Numcustos Mysterium can communicate empathically with any creature they can see, mentally conveying and receiving emotions. This only allows them to transmit feelings, not any images or words. In addition, the Numcustos Mysterium is able to empathically contact any other creature with this feature that is on the same plane of existence.

Troth of Silence So long as they remain voiceless the Numcustos Mysterium has 1 boon on Will challenge rolls, and challenge rolls made to detect lies and hide. Should the Numcustos Mysterium use their voice twice, they lose their Troth of Silence (reducing their Defense to 18).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +8 (2d6 plus 1d3 holy)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Flurry of Attacks The Numcustos Mysterium attacks four times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Ki Points (16) The Numcustos Mysterium harnesses the mystic energy of ki and can spend it to fuel the following talents. The Numcustos Mysterium regains expended ki points when they complete a rest.

- **Disappear** The Numcustos Mysterium can use their action and spend 1 ki point to become invisible for 1 minute.
- **Dodge** On their turn, the Numcustos Mysterium can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Defend.

- **Escape** On their turn, the Numcustos Mysterium can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Retreat.
- **Flurry** On their turn when attacking, the Numcustos Mysterium can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to make two unarmed strikes.
- **Rebound** When the Numcustos Mysterium makes a challenge roll and fails, they can spend 1 ki point to reroll it.
- **Stun** The Numcustos Mysterium can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 3 banes or be stunned until the end of next round.

END OF THE ROUND

Resolute Will The Numcustos Mysterium ends one effect on themselves that is causing them to be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

This aged tattooed old man wears humble, tattered orange robes and radiates power.

Justitia Susurratio — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)

Perception 16 (+6)

Defense 18 (holy troth of silence); **Health** 90

Strength 15 (+5), **Agility** 16 (+6), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 16 (+6)

Speed 16; climber 6, leaper (horizontal 6, vertical 3)

Immune damage from disease and poison; poisoned

Acrobatic Fall The Justitia Susurratio reduces any falling distance by 15 yards before calculating falling damage.

Deflect Missile Once per turn the Justitia Susurratio can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 2d6.

Evasion When the Justitia Susurratio makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.

Tribuo Empath The Justitia Susurratio is able to communicate empathically with any creature they can see, mentally conveying and receiving emotions. This only allows them to transmit feelings, not any images or words. In addition, the Justitia Susurratio is able to empathically contact any other creature with this feature that is on the same plane of existence.

Troth of Silence So long as they remain voiceless the Justitia Susurratio has 1 boon on Will challenge rolls, and challenge rolls made to detect lies and hide. Should the Justitia Susurratio use their voice twice, they lose their Troth of Silence (reducing their Defense to 18).

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +6 (2d6 plus 1d3 holy)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Triple Attack The Justitia Susurratio attacks three times.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Ki Points (12) The Justitia Susurratio harnesses the mystic energy of ki and can spend it to fuel the following talents. The Justitia Susurratio regains expended ki points when they complete a rest.

- **Dodge** On their turn, the Justitia Susurratio can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Defend.
- **Escape** On their turn, the Justitia Susurratio can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Retreat.
- **Flurry** On their turn when attacking, the Justitia Susurratio can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to make two unarmed strikes.
- **Stun** The Justitia Susurratio can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 2 banes or be stunned until the end of next round.

END OF THE ROUND

Resolute Will The Justitia Susurratio ends one effect on themselves that is causing them to be charmed, compelled, or frightened.

Numcustos Mysterium are based in various Citadels of Law across Askis and oversee that order is maintained throughout entire territories. When not organizing the larger efforts of the Justitia they train new initiates to make sure they are up to the task—and as of late Varrus Goodwin has raised both the ethical and physical standards of recruitment.

The commanders of Citadels of Law are responsible for keeping order in the settlements around them, leaving larger concerns for their superiors and the details of managing lesser Justitia to their adjutants.

Justitia Malleo are the sargeants of their order, dispensing duties and overseeing the minutiae fighting what little crime persists in Askis. They carry a power sword and inaequa pistol but like their helmet and ceremonial armor, these are status symbols and neither sees much use.

The least of the Justitia are rarely proper guards, only dispatched to police the smallest of settlements without a Malleo. Their more important function is as interpreters—though they prefer not to speak and attempt to master empathic communication, they have yet to take their Vow of Silence and when precise details need to be conveyed there is always one of them in tow able to do so.

Garbed in the orange of the Justitia, this guard is further marked out as a commanding officer by their ceremonial armor and weaponry.

A hand-sized silver brooch on this monk's orange robes mark them out as a member of the Justitia, though they do not look as though they have been a guard for very long.

Justitia Malleo — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 15 (+5)
Defense 15; **Health** 60
Strength 13 (+3), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 12 (+2), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 14; climber 4, leaper (horizontal 4, vertical 2)
Immune damage from disease and poison; poisoned
Acrobatic Fall The Justitia Malleo reduces any falling distance by 10 yards before calculating falling damage.
Deflect Missile Once per turn the Justitia Malleo can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 1d6+2.
Empath The Justitia Malleo is able to communicate empathically with any creature they can see, mentally conveying and receiving emotions. This only allows them to transmit feelings, not any images or words.
Evasion When the Justitia Malleo makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +5 (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Double Attack The Justitia Malleo attacks twice.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Ki Points (8) The Justitia Malleo harnesses the mystic energy of ki and can spend it to fuel the following talents. The Justitia Malleo regains expended ki points when they complete a rest.

- **Dodge** On their turn, the Justitia Malleo can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Defend.
- **Escape** On their turn, the Justitia Malleo can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Retreat.
- **Flurry** On their turn when attacking, the Justitia Malleo can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to make two unarmed strikes.
- **Stun** The Justitia Malleo can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or be stunned until the end of next round.

Justitia Equerry — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 14; **Health** 30
Strength 12 (+2), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 14 (+4)
Speed 12; climber 2, leaper (horizontal 2, vertical 1)
Acrobatic Fall The Justitia Equerry reduces any falling distance by 5 yards before calculating falling damage.
Deflect Missile Once per turn the Justitia Equerry can reduce the damage of a ranged weapon attack by 1d6.
Empath The Justitia Equerry is able to communicate empathically with any creature they can see, mentally conveying and receiving emotions. This only allows them to transmit feelings, not any images or words.
Evasion When the Justitia Equerry makes an Agility challenge roll to reduce the damage of a spell or attack, on a success they take no damage and on a failure they take half damage.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Unarmed (melee) +4(1d6)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Ki Points (4) The Justitia Equerry harnesses the mystic energy of ki and can spend it to fuel the following talents. The Justitia Equerry regains expended ki points when they complete a rest.

- **Dodge** On their turn, the Justitia Equerry can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Defend.
- **Escape** On their turn, the Justitia Equerry can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to Retreat.
- **Flurry** On their turn when attacking, the Justitia Equerry can spend 1 ki point and use their triggered action to make two unarmed strikes.
- **Stun** The Justitia Equerry can spend 1 ki point to attempt to stun a creature they hit with a melee weapon attack. The target must succeed on a Strength challenge roll with 1 bane or be stunned until the end of next round.

Use Equerries when interactions with Justitia become a struggle.

- Focus on feelings and freely communicate that to the party. "*You feel a sense of urgency and need*," or, "*you feel a sense of understanding but skepticism*."
- Think more about what the NPC wants to express and what feelings they associate with that than what the end goal of the communication is—think of the NPC less as an actor on stage and more like someone doing the lighting.
- When an Equerry isn't handy to interpret, the PCs *might* just put a pen and notepad into the Justitia's hands—keep the roleplaying going and describe the NPC's feelings as they are made to resort to writing (and perhaps the GM's too, though remember to entertain and not just vent).

Long, pale hair cascades from the thin skull of this bespectacled high elf, long pointy ears sticking out from beneath either side of a regal jeweled crown. There are many other gemstones across his glamorous attire, each of them purple like the finely cut robe he wears. Several vials and potions hang from his belt and the powerful staff he carries, the potent stone crackling with energy at the head of the weapon outshining all the rest of his accoutrement.

Even as a youth it was clear that Rankir Tarryndorn possessed an acute intelligence far outclassing his peers. Elven high mages took notice when he began to outgrow his tutors and encouraged him, exposing the nascent wizard to all the knowledge they had at their disposal. The child mage consumed it all with a nearly eidetic memory and his mentors encouraged him to travel the world seeking more. It was around this time that the Duertek Mercantile Company of dwarves were coming by his home in the Shandalan Forests on their second trip around Ouranios and despite protests against it—the rivalry between dwarves and elves was still strong those days—the prodigal wizard joined them and befriended Gimli Stoneflask, seeking to learn everything the stout folk had to offer. Rankir came to love all the races seeing that the slender folk's bias was a false one, leading the movement to remove it from their culture. When it became clear that ridding evil would exceed their mortal lifetimes, the aging elven wizard used all of his accumulated knowledge to extend them by taking artifacts and powerful enchanted items from the spoils of the Celestial Heroes, expending the magic within to defy death until Tucker's "miraculous discovery".

Rankir Tarryndorn is concerned with the greater issues of existence, remaining direct and uncouth in his interactions but always fair. The elven wizard's interest lay in facts and knowledge above all other things, though he doesn't allow his lust for knowing to let him to forget what's important. That said with the issue of mortality addressed he took up greater causes, exploring arcane theories and magical phenomena—Rankir now spends all of his time finding out things (whether through experimentation or exploration) and fine-tuning the *Bands of Kyttarmoak*.

Although he's trained in evocation it has been many years since Rankir had to prepare magic for war. Even so he is exceptionally tactical, isolating and dividing opponents instead of trying to subdue them all at once. When he can be dragged into a conflict it is only briefly—the demigod wizard fights long enough to make a determination on whether or not he'll win, escaping when it is clear he will not (usually after 3 rounds). In addition to the spells prepared in his statistics, Rankir carries 7d3 spell levels worth of scrolls.

Rankir Tarryndorn — DIFFICULTY 250

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 20 (+10); darksight
Defense 19 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 160
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 17 (+7), **Intellect** 20 (+10), **Will** 17 (+7)
Speed 10
Immune aging, charmed, compelled, magical sleep
Demigod Resistances Rankir takes half damage from holy and weapons that are not magical.
Spell Sculpting When Rankir casts a spell that targets an area, he can designate up to 10 creatures. The designated creatures are not affected by the spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff of Power (melee) +1 with 3 boon (2d6+3 magical and Rankir may expend up to 4 charges, dealing 1d6 force damage for each expended charge; 20 charges, Rankir regains 1 charges each time he casts a spell)

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Retributive Strike Rankir breaks his *staff of power*, releasing its remaining magic in a 10-yard radius sphere centered on him. There's a 50% chance that Rankir instantly travels to a random plane (avoiding the explosion) otherwise he takes force damage equal to 1d6 times the number of charges in the staff. Every other creature in the area must succeed on an Agility challenge roll made with 2 banes or take the same amount of force damage (half as much on a success).

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Empowered Evocations When Rankir casts a spell that deals damage, he can use his triggered action to deal 5 extra damage to one creature damaged by the spell.

MAGIC

Power 10
Arcana *arcane armor* (11), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (3), *destroy magic* (3), *harness magic* (3), *arcane retribution* (2)
Celestial *burning beam* (11), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (3), *nova* (3), *sunbeam* (2)
Conjuration *conjure useful item* (11), *conjure small monster* (3), *conjure medium monster* (3), *conjure wall* (3), *conjure shelter* (3), *conjure huge monster* (2)
Protection *secure site* (11), *force field* (3), *vigilance* (3), *protective field* (3), *invulnerability* (3), *glove of negation* (2)
Rune *translate anything* (11), *glyph of fire* (3), *glyphic prison* (3), *sigil trap* (3), *runic weapon* (3), *rune of power* (2)
Teleportation *fetch* (11), *swap* (3), *remove* (3), *boundless step* (3), *portals* (3), *travel* (2)

This mage grips a quarterstaff in enchanted silver gloves that cast a cyan glow across his ornate robes.

Magi Primaria — DIFFICULTY 100

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 18 (+8)
Defense 17 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 120
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 15 (+5), **Intellect** 18 (+8), **Will** 16 (+6)
Speed 10
Cherub Helper The Magi Primaria has a cherub familiar.
Spell Sculpting When the Magi Primaria casts a spell that targets an area, they can designate up to 8 creatures. The designated creatures are not affected by the spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +5 (1d6+1)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +5 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Empowered Evocations When the Magi Primaria casts a spell that deals damage, they can use their triggered action to deal 4 extra damage to one creature damaged by the spell.

MAGIC

Power 8
Arcana *arcane armor* (9), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (3), *destroy magic* (2), *harness magic* (2), *arcane retribution* (2)
Celestial *burning beam* (9), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (3), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (2)
Conjuration *conjure useful item* (9), *conjure small monster* (3), *conjure medium monster* (3), *conjure wall* (2), *conjure shelter* (2), *conjure huge monster* (2)
Protection *secure site* (9), *force field* (3), *vigilance* (3), *protective field* (2), *invulnerability* (2), *glove of negation* (2)
Rune *translate anything* (9), *glyph of fire* (3), *glyphic prison* (3), *sigil trap* (2), *runic weapon* (2), *rune of power* (2)
Teleportation *fetch* (9), *swap* (3), *remove* (3), *boundless step* (2), *portals* (2), *travel* (2)

With their hands folded into their sleeves, this mage walks forward confidently and with obvious purpose.

Scriniarii — DIFFICULTY 50

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 16 (+6)
Defense 16 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 90
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 16 (+6), **Will** 15 (+5)
Speed 10
Cherub Helper The Scriniarii has a cherub familiar.
Spell Sculpting When the Scriniarii casts a spell that targets an area, they can designate up to 6 creatures. The designated creatures are not affected by the spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +4 (1d6+1)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +4 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Empowered Evocations When the Scriniarii casts a spell that deals damage, they can use their triggered action to deal 3 extra damage to one creature damaged by the spell.

MAGIC

Power 6
Arcana *arcane armor* (7), *arcane sight* (3), *explosive darts* (2), *destroy magic* (2), *harness magic* (2), *arcane retribution* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (7), *flash* (3), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (2), *nova* (2), *sunbeam* (1)
Conjuration *conjure useful item* (7), *conjure small monster* (3), *conjure medium monster* (2), *conjure wall* (2), *conjure shelter* (2), *conjure huge monster* (1)
Protection *secure site* (7), *force field* (3), *vigilance* (2), *protective field* (2), *invulnerability* (2), *glove of negation* (1)
Rune *translate anything* (7), *glyph of fire* (3), *glyphic prison* (2), *sigil trap* (2), *runic weapon* (2), *rune of power* (1)
Teleportation *fetch* (7), *swap* (3), *remove* (2), *boundless step* (2), *portals* (2), *travel* (1)

Golden feathered wings jut out of this angelic baby's back and a miniature bow is slung over one of its chubby little arms.

Cherub Familiar — DIFFICULTY —

Size ¼ celestial (good)
Perception 10 (+0); darksight
Defense 14; **Health** equal to ¼ master's Health
Strength 4 (-6), **Agility** 14 (+4), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 7; flier 14
Immune damage from poison; charmed, compelled, poisoned
Telepathic Bond While the cherub familiar is on the same plane of existence as its master, it can magically convey what it senses to its master, and the two can communicate telepathically.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Cloud Arrow (medium) +4 (1d3)
Compulsive Arrowhead When the total of the cherub familiar's attack roll is 20 or higher, the target makes a Will challenge roll or is compelled to be indifferent to all other creatures, unwilling to take hostile actions. At the end of its turn, a compelled creature makes a new challenge roll to resist the effect.

Many scrolls peek out from the deep pockets of this robed mage and their fingers are lightly stained by ink.

Bibliothecae Prefectus — DIFFICULTY 25

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 14 (+4)
Defense 15 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 60
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 13 (+3), **Intellect** 14 (+4), **Will** 13 (+3)
Speed 10
Cherub Helper The Bibliothecae Prefectus has a cherub familiar.
Spell Sculpting When the Bibliothecae Prefectus casts a spell that targets an area, they can designate up to 4 creatures. The designated creatures are not affected by the spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +3 (1d6+1)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +3 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Empowered Evocations When the Bibliothecae Prefectus casts a spell that deals damage, they can use their triggered action to deal 2 extra damage to one creature damaged by the spell.

MAGIC

Power 4
Arcana *arcane armor* (5), *arcane sight* (2), *explosive darts* (2), *destroy magic* (1), *harness magic* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (5), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (2), *starfall* (1), *nova* (1)
Conjuration *conjure useful item* (5), *conjure small monster* (2), *conjure medium monster* (2), *conjure wall* (1), *conjure shelter* (1)
Protection *secure site* (5), *force field* (2), *vigilance* (2), *protective field* (1), *invulnerability* (1)
Rune *translate anything* (5), *glyph of fire* (2), *glyphic prison* (2), *sigil trap* (1), *runic weapon* (1)
Teleportation *fetch* (5), *swap* (2), *remove* (2), *boundless step* (1), *portals* (1)

Deep azure robes hide the wiry frame of this apprentice, the ink on their fingers and smell of reagents giving the immediate impression that they dabble in magic.

Adparitor — DIFFICULTY 10

Size 1 humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3)
Defense 14 (*arcane armor*); **Health** 30
Strength 10 (+0), **Agility** 12 (+2), **Intellect** 13 (+3), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Cherub Helper The Adparitor has a cherub familiar.
Spell Sculpting When the Adparitor casts a spell that targets an area, they can designate up to 3 creatures. The designated creatures are not affected by the spell.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Staff (melee) +2 (1d6+1)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +2 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

MAGIC

Power 2
Arcana *arcane armor* (3), *arcane sight* (2), *explosive darts* (1)
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (1)
Conjuration *conjure useful item* (3), *conjure small monster* (2), *conjure medium monster* (1)
Protection *secure site* (3), *force field* (2), *vigilance* (1)
Rune *translate anything* (3), *glyph of fire* (2), *glyphic prison* (1)
Teleportation *fetch* (3), *swap* (2), *remove* (1)

Aside from the Celestial Heroes, the Magi Primaria are considered to be the elite spellcasters of Askis. Only Rankir Tarryndorn and Tucker Quickfoot (and his compatriots in duplicity) know the exact number but it is widely believed that no more than a score of them are allowed to practice magic at any given time. Each carries either one of the true Bands of Kyttarmoak or a decoy of the powerful artifacts, preparing spells in the event they have to protect themselves or their master's great work. The services of Magi Primaria are always in extremely high demand—their exclusive access to the most powerful spells is typically booked months if not years in advance and they rarely suffer interruptions for very long.

When magical expertise is required by The Inquisition or The Ministry, the magehunter Scriniarii are called upon to track down the unsanctioned spellcaster or handle all but the organizations' most serious arcane needs.

Any of the many public libraries in Askis that contain tomes of powerful arcane or divine knowledge are overseen by these followers of Rankir Tarryndorn for two-fold purpose: they are capable of protecting the potentially dangerous information within and it provides them with the means to better their mastery of magic.

Adparitors are scholars, scribes, apprentices, and assistants to Sciniarii and Magi Primaria, and when a generation has a strong recruitment year, working in a library under a Bibliothecae Prefectus. Punishment for either overwhelming incompetence or excruciatingly slow development gets one of these lesser mages—usually someone not particularly good with magic—stuck working rank and file bureaucratic tasks for The Ministry and local governments.

KILLING THE GOLDEN TWINS

A *Shadow of the Demon Lord* adventure for four to five evil PCs of 2nd–3rd level

The mad scientist Gespadrieux has foreseen that the death of the distant offspring of the Paladin of Samovi (Lellwyn Fethyrwal) will cause great discord in her soul, a lynchpin in his plans for her downfall. The youths—a boy named Kristoph and a girl named Deardra, each just 13 years of age—are currently at their most vulnerable, the defenses provided by the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning feeble compared to those in the confines of their great-great-great-great-great-grandmother's homes. Gespadrieux has waited for this moment for more than a decade, carefully acting through stooges and fools to prepare agents in Ourianos positioned to assassinate these youngling angel-touched and therein wound the Celestial Hero Lellwyn Fethyrwal herself.

In order to succeed the adventurers must bribe, cheat, lie, and sneak to where they can commit a truly heinous act (which they'll find is not as easy as it might at first seem to be). If they are able to stomach the murder of innocents and escape with their own lives, the mad scientist Gespadrieux knows the value of competent servants and rewards the PCs with forbidden knowledge, evil power, and wealth aplenty. After the murder the party are bound to become fugitives but with their new gifts and coin, staying ahead of authorities should be no obstacle—it will be the vengeance of an immortal Celestial Hero that might be a problem down the line. Of course by completely embracing darkness and the rapid paths to power that can grant, their situation may not be so dire...

THE CITY OF LEGIO

During the times before evil was routed from Askis the village of Legio was widely known for the quality of its weapons but with the peace that came after the ascension of the Celestial Heroes, the need for tools of murder subsided and the arts flourished in their place. Craftspeople and sculptors flocked to the settlement, growing it into a beautiful city filled with holy carvings, mosaics, and statues dotting streets dwarfed by buildings built in the sleek style emulating the works of the deific beings that have blessed the world with inaequa. Given the many forges already there the manufacture of items powered by the unique substance became a staple of Legio, the weaponeers turning their crafting expertise to the mass production of automobiles, cloudglider blimps, items of convenience, steel equos locomotives, and anything else powered by the divine fuel. What was once a humble collection of homes and shops has expanded into an artistic urban paradise—built upon the backs of the thousands of workers that fill its dozens of factories.

EVAGANTEM RAILROAD

All across Ouranious is an inaequa-driven railroad run by the nationalized Evagantem Railroad Service. In the city of Legio it has rails that run through all three factory districts, the Caelestibus Commons, and the Profor District.

Labos Factory District. The northwesternmost area of Legio is devoted to factories that produce parts for vehicles—whether they be automotives, locomotives, or meant to take to the air. These facilities are the largest in the city, though there are far fewer of them than in its sister districts.

Usus Factory District. Askis is a world with many conveniences similar to Earth of a century ago—the toasters, lamp posts, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, telephones, and radios made in Legio are built here. This area also houses the Quickfoot Worker's Bureau, a building always crowded by a large queue of laborers lining up for a job.

Exerceo Factory District. Though there isn't much need for them nowadays the military still maintains their armor and weapons. One of the few cities of the world to continue forging new armament parts and weapon components is Legio. Most of the factories here are sparsely populated, their workers left to wander about the settlement performing mundane and largely useless tasks such as sweeping the streets, polishing post-forever lanterns, and the like.

Lysium Gardens. The natural environs of the original village of Legio have been preserved in the center of the city in a beautiful wooded park where many of its denizens lackadaisically live out their days with leisure aplenty provided by entertainers and food vendors.

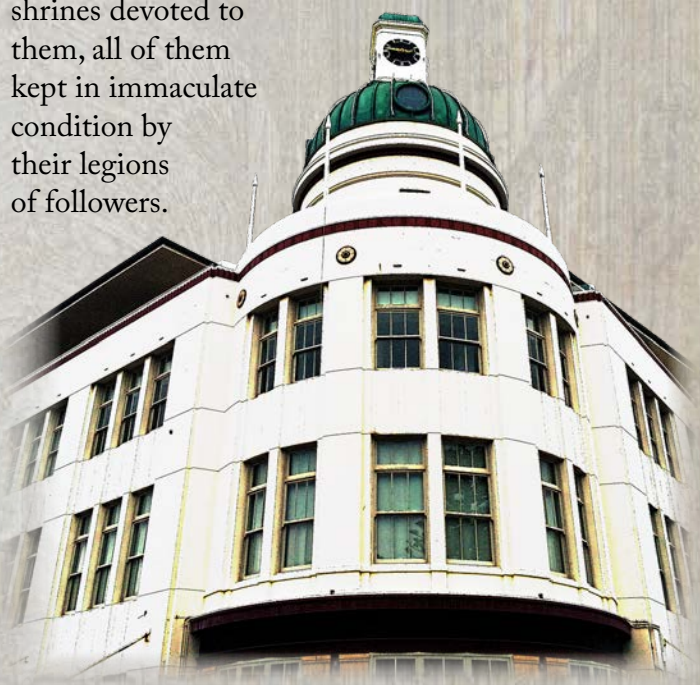
Caelestibus Commons. Legio's wealthiest citizens live in the shadow of the Monastic Order of Law Monastery on the western side of the city. Its broad avenues are lined by luxurious mansions and some of the settlement's most beautiful artworks, proudly displayed in the yards of the rich patrons able to commission them.

Artis Quarter. Artists, merchants, restauranteurs, and scholars live and ply their trade in this area of the city just south of the Lysium Gardens. The Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning and Legio College of Inaequa Studies educate the settlement's youth, the former handling schooling for all of the populace until reaching maturity and either entering the workforce or attending the latter for learning more advanced knowledge.

Profor District. The most populated area of Legio is home to the majority of its laborers, its crowded streets filled with many-floored tenements and apartment buildings closely packed together. On its southwest border is the Fortress Legio, an ancient military structure used by the city's placid guard and kept as a museum of the city's past.

Salus Borough. Many of the city's laborers dwell in this area's pristine streets but only the most devout—those willing to pay the increased cost for living so close to the majority of Legio's churches and shrines. Of course numerous priests, acolytes, and holy clergy reside here as well, only the most zealous living in the Adominatio Precint and the wealthiest with residences in Caelestibus Commons.

Adominatio Precinct. Unlike Praeclarus and Alacer, the city of Legio is not known for the grandeur or profligation of its houses of worship but it is certainly not bereft of them. Every saint of Askis has at least one church in this area of the settlement and a few shrines devoted to them, all of them kept in immaculate condition by their legions of followers.



LEGIO
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Labos Factory District
Usus Factory District
Quickfoot Worker Bureau
Exerceo Factory District
Citadel of Law
Lysium Gardens
Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning
Legio College of Inaequa Studies
Adominatio Precinct
Caelestibus Commons
Artis Quarter
Fortress of Legio
Salus Borough
Profor District

PROLOGUE

All of the PCs are citizens (albeit perhaps disturbed or unhappy) of Legio, a small city on the contiguous continent of Ourianos, and each of them holds a job or position that grants regular access to the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning. Perhaps they deliver supplies, clean the rooms, teach, work as administrative staff, perform repairs to the building, prepare food, or are possibly even safety officers in the school. In addition to providing them all with a means for knowing one another, this makes all of the party members knowledgeable about the general layout of the grounds—secret entrances, places to hide, the general schedule of patrols, and so on.

One Sunday night as they lay sleeping, all of the adventurers share a dream. Read the following:

The darkness of sleep is interrupted by blurring blue and white until the sky above Legio comes into view and it is, as usual, a bright azure sporadically broken by drifts of cloud that cast faint shadows in the cascade of sunlight glinting off the city's precisely constructed geometric buildings. You walk beside companions, nearing the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning at the center of the settlement. Panicking screams of children draw your gaze toward the building's entrance and you see the defiled corpses of two youths on display, golden illumination pouring out of their eyes to become silver tears that pool on the ground. The metallic liquid rapidly spreads and as it seeps across the stonework, it turns redder before becoming the crimson color of blood.

Havoc spreads across the city as demons and devils swim up from out of the blood flooding Legio and you witness one of the Celestial Heroes, the great paladin Lellwyn Fethyrwal, screech from out of the sky on angelic wings. As she sees the dead bodies liquify into the blasphemous slurry her shout intensifies and holy light erupts from around her, burning to ash dozens of fiends. They are far too many in number for one warrior however and in seconds she is overwhelmed by monsters, her flesh and organs flung in chunks onto the ruins the creatures have made of the city.

At this point the GM should ask what the PCs do as chaos takes over Legio and all hell breaks loose, offering them an opportunity to cinematically describe their actions and make it clear to their companions what can be expected of each other when they are allowed to act with abandon. **It should be made clear that the adventurers have great lattitude in their roleplaying right now and GMs should have had the conversation of consent (pages 191-192) already**—one might describe luring people into a building to burn them alive, slashing throats to begin a magical ritual using the corpses, summon undead to wreak havoc—and that if any rolls are required, they will be minimal at best. After the party has had some despicable fun, read the following:

Suddenly you stand atop the wreckage of Legio, a new figure climbing up toward you—half of his cranium is encased in black metal, one of his eyes has been replaced by a lensed clockwork contraption, and beneath his thick, dark wool cloak are limbs that bend in ways no humanoid should. As he nears darkness claws its way closer until eventually there is nothing—only you and this strangely familiar old man in the void.

"You may call me Gespadrieux. Though you may not know me, I have known you all your lives." He looks at each of you in turn and instinctively you know it to be true, hidden memories of this mysterious stranger swimming to the fore of your minds. "Your fates are the one true path to bringing balance back to Askis, to be pivotal agents in the casting down of the accursed immortals. Each of you is a herald of the Celestial Heroes' end, destined to sever the connection to the divine that holds the world in their sway." He sweeps one arm outward and gestures with a skeletal metal hand, causing two figures you recognize to materialize in the air—Deardra and Kristoph, students at the school. He looks at you sternly, his gruesome countenance grim, "you must kill the twins Fethyrwal."

He eyes you all levelly, judging your reactions. "Mind you ultimately this serves to bring balance to the world, for there is no other chink in the grand paladin's armor and your necessary deed will be the first step to bringing Askis' penance to pass. You will be rewarded as well, both in coin and power, but you must strike now!" The madman begins to fade away, his voice growing to a whisper as he begins to shout, "Wait too long and the truest defenders of Legio that I have lured away from the city will return, closing the window of opportunity—perhaps forever!"

Afterward the PCs simultaneously awaken and possess a shared telepathy for 30 minutes, reinforcing upon them the reality of their shared experience and the gravity of what they have been asked to do. They are also each imparted with the knowledge of heretical markings and that simple dead bodies won't do—in order to stop the twins from being resurrected their corpses need to be blasphemously scarred, making their quest all the more grisly.

Gespadrieux's Distraction. The whole of Legio's most powerful defenders have been lured away from the city by one of the mad scientists "failed" creations, an abomination of evil that has attacked the seafaring vessel of a well-to-do noble with large holdings throughout Ourianos. It isn't hard for the PCs to find out this information—newsies across the settlement are using it to sell a fair number of papers as usually events around the region are not particularly exciting.

Act 1: An Unthinkable Act

To truly begin the adventure the GM should describe the city of Legio before the PCs devolve into what is certain to be an intriguing discussion about what they have been tasked to do. Read the following:

As you suddenly awaken you are blinded by the stark golden radiance of the sun spilling onto your face, the cry of steam whistles sounding across the city of Legio as its factories begin operating. The urban settlement is already lively, its citizens bustling down the streets in cabled vectio trolleys as newsies on street corners call out the events of the past day, eager to sell their papers to passerby. Odors from food vendors permeate with the cloying-sweet scent of inaequa as the machines of industry lurch into action, the lives of the good people of Legio beginning like almost any other day—with one crucial exception, of course.

Before anything else the party should better familiarize themselves with each other and—after agreeing that (for whatever reasons) they will do as Gespadrieux has asked of them—quickly formulate either a good place to meet in secret or cobble together a plan for doing the foul deed while their telepathy persists.

The Dreadful Mission

Their mad scientist benefactor has done much to pave the way for the adventurers but in order to succeed the PCs have several obstacles to overcome.

Isolating the Fethyrwal Twins. While a particularly bloodthirsty, chaotic, and reckless group might not care how much mayhem they cause, most parties will want to keep havoc to a minimum for as long as possible—which means getting their targets alone. Getting the twins by themselves will also make doing the deed (and the grisly work afterward) far easier as any adult that witnesses the atrocity intervenes in an attempt to stop it or at the very least allow for the youths to escape. When they're not in a proper class, the Feathyrwals are taught side-by-side (and therefore accompanied by) at least one of the tutors from Act 3. If one of the PCs is part of the administrative staff or able to sneak into the offices to gather information, the adventurers can time it right so that only one other NPC (or if properly distracted, none at all) is watching over their targets.

Preparing an Escape Route It might be possible to kill their targets without being caught but making the markings of blasphemy on the bodies will require some time so simply fleeing immediately is not an option. Unless the PCs manage to slay their targets quickly and quietly (a very unlikely event) they will trigger pandemonium and might have childhood witnesses. It should be noted that killing all of these observers can potentially make the situation worse (not that murdering two teenagers isn't bad, but *slaughtering many children* is going to paint a much more vibrant target on the adventurers' backs).

Timing is Everything All of this planning must be done quickly—the school day begins 2 hours after sunrise and ends 3 hours after high noon, at which point the personal bodyguards of the twins will have returned along with the rest of Legio's more powerful defenders.

After the PCs have planned their foul mission and are prepared to murder the twins, read the following as the day begins at the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning:

A network of bells ring throughout the grounds of the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning and in response its student body becomes a bustling flurry of movement as hundreds of youths of all ages file into their classrooms throughout the monolithic building. In a matter of minutes only a few stragglers remain, sprinting quickly with sheafs of papers and bundles of pencils grasped in their hands.

The day is like any other—a monotonous drone of dozens of scholarly youths being educated in history, mathematics, religion, and science. Depending on how much time the PCs spent planning, their opportunities to strike at the twins will wane. Their targets' schedule for the day is as follows:

8AM-10AM—Liturgy with Sister Imbellem Carnadine
10AM-11:30 AM—Science with Troubadour Lapisque Angularis
11:30AM-12:30 PM—Sparring with Sister Imbellem Carnadine
12:30PM-1PM—Lunch in the Cafeteria
1PM-2PM—Mathematics with Magiciar Gloria Moderatus
2PM-3PM—History with Master Prorsus Silvestre

The twins have also had premonitions that someone will attempt to attack them today and are wary, so they have insisted on being in their full regalia and their tutors are on guard as well.

Table: Teacher NPCs

NPC	Statistics	Page
Sister Imbellem Carnadine	Justitia Equerry	293
Troubadour Lapisque Angularis	Hallowed Note	264
Magiciar Gloria Moderatus	Adparitor	297
Master Prorsus Silvestre	Praecursator	285

Manipulating the Bureaucracy

The PCs might manipulate the Fethyrwal twins' protectors through the bureaucratic machinations of the school. While inserting a false meeting or other unexpected task is guaranteed to divert a teacher, any of the tutors are only delayed for a maximum of 1d6 minutes and prepared for a fight when they arrive. In order to alter work schedules the adventurers need to either sneak into faculty offices —an Agility challenge roll up to 30 minutes before the first bell rings or made with 2 banes afterward— or distract administrators with an Intellect challenge roll made with 1 bane while they make the change.

The Coward's Weapon

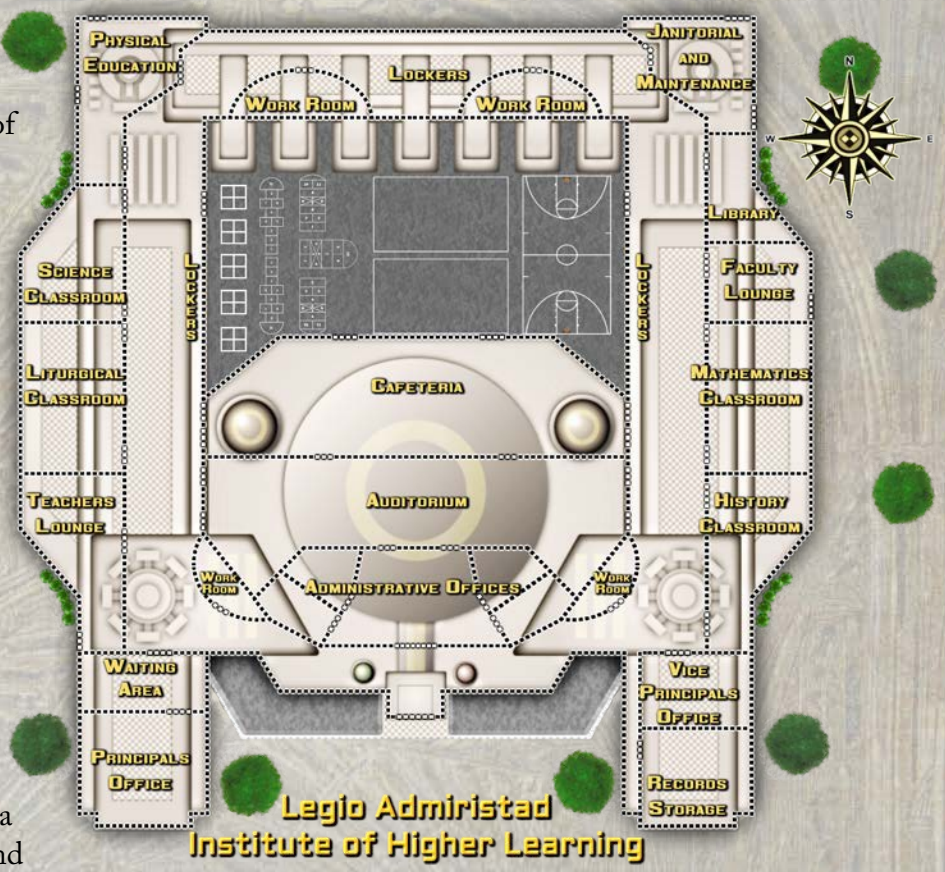
Poisoning a tutor is another route an evil party is likely to consider. Magiciar Gloria and Troubadour Angularis make use of the teacher's lounge in the southern wing of the school whereas Master Prorsus and Sister Imbellum keep to the faculty room in the northern end of the building. Sneaking into either and poisoning the refreshments therein requires an Agility challenge roll made with 1 bane but immediately after someone suffers from it the food and drink in each is thrown out. Any attempts to sneak into one of these rooms to further poison the tutors indirectly are made with 3 banes, though persistent PCs are welcome to try and deliver their fell concoctions personally (in which case each NPC has their own Perception scores, though they gain a +1 bonus if one of their peers has already been poisoned.)

Tricking a Tutor

Since they are already suspicious, lying to the teachers is not a simple matter. Any PC that is not a member of the school's faculty has 3 banes when attempting to deceive the tutors. A sufficiently clever lie can negate these banes however, provided the adventurers prey on the weaknesses of those they are deceiving.

Magiciar Gloria The school's preeminent mage is susceptible to any tale about magical anomalies given sufficient evidence, something that requires a separate (secretly rolled) Intellect challenge roll. Any failed attempts to deceive her cause Gloria to send her cherub familiar to follow the liar, possibly alerting her to the PCs' foul plan.

Master Prorsus Little will trouble Master Prorsus save the need to slay a wild creature loose on the grounds and those are a rarity. An Intellect challenge roll along with a wound that dealt at least 2 damage is enough to back up a lie to that effect.



Sister Imbellum Only a missive or summons from the Monastic Order of Law will divert Sister Imbellum from her duties and crafting a fake requires an Intellect challenge roll made with 2 banes.

Troubadour Angularis Having once been quite famous and notorious for his promiscuity, Lapisque is extremely fond of his more adoring followers and becomes more gullible if it seems that one of his most devoted fans (Jamie, Pat, or Tracy) is in desperate need of his immediate attention.

Waylaying the Faculty

When other tactics fail the adventurers are going to consider getting a teacher alone and knocking them unconscious (or possibly even dead). Any attacks in public are immediately responded to by the remainder of the faculty as the twins escape the school but if cornered and dealt with quickly, the PCs have a good chance of taking a teacher down. Once two tutors are missing the rest become extremely suspicious and cannot be drawn into isolation, and what more each reacts differently when assaulted alone.

Magiciar Gloria casts *conjure medium monster* and if someone is blocking her way directly *explosive darts*, dashing at top speed to wherever the twins currently are to get them into safety at the Fortress Legio.

Master Prorsus runs for cover and after disappearing from sight attempts to stalk after his attackers, only striking back when an ally is nearby and can offer him aid or it is obvious the twins are in danger.

Sister Imbellum attempts to stun her attacker and then uses ki to increase her Defense or movement, immediately grabbing the twins and taking them to the Monastic Order of Law Monastery.

Troubadour Angularis tries to slip away, warning another teacher of the attack and granting an inspirational die to anyone else he can muster for a counterattack.

Murder Most Foul

Once the PCs have isolated their targets (or if they have run out of time and have to attack in the middle of a lesson) and combat begins, read the following:

The angel-touched youths are surprised as you attack but their eyes tell you they are more disappointed than shocked, drawing their weapons with steely resolve. Kristof clasps his hands together and begins chanting to the gods above as Deadra edges forward, both of them looking for a quick escape.

Deardra Fethyrwal — DIFFICULTY 5

Size ½ humanoid (good)
Perception 13 (+3); shadowsight
Defense 16 (mail, small shield); **Health** 15
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 11 (+1), **Will** 11 (+1)
Speed 10
Angelkin Resistance Deardra takes half damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Longsword (melee) +1 with 1 boon (1d6+2)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +1 with 1 boon (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)
Divine Smite When Deardra hits with a weapon attack roll, she can expend a casting of a spell. The attack deals 1d6 extra damage per rank of the spell whose casting she expended (minimum 1d6 extra damage). If the target is a demon, devil, faerie, spirit, or undead, increase the extra damage by 1d6.

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Healing Soul (10 points) Deardra can use an action to touch a creature, healing an amount of damage from this pool (maximum 5). The Speculi Eleganti's pool of points for Healing Soul restores when they complete a rest.

MAGIC

Power 1
Celestial *burning beam* (2), *light* (2), *persistent light* (1)
Life *life sense* (2), *minor healing* (2), *light healing* (1)

Kristof Fethyrwal — DIFFICULTY 5

Size ½ humanoid (good)
Perception 11 (+1); shadowsight
Defense 16 (scale); **Health** 15
Strength 11 (+1), **Agility** 11 (+1), **Intellect** 10 (+0), **Will** 12 (+2)
Speed 10
Angelkin Resistance Kristof takes half damage from holy.

ATTACK OPTIONS

Warhammer (melee) +1 with 1 boon (2d6)
Inaequa Pistol (short) +1 (2d6 but cannot damage creatures at 1 Health or reduce a creature to less than 1 Health)

SPECIAL ACTIONS

Distracting Sigil Kristof crafts a glowing Celestial rune in the air in front of a creature within 3 yards. Until the end of the next round, if the creature does not move from its square it makes attack rolls with 1 bane.

MAGIC

Power 2
Celestial *burning beam* (3), *flash* (2), *sunrays* (1)
Life *life sense* (3), *cure* (2), *fount of life* (2), *vitality burst* (1)
Theurgy *create holy symbol* (3), *denounce* (3), *censure* (2), *god hammer* (1)

Every round the PCs are in combat there is a cumulative 5% chance that a student of the school happens by and runs to alert a teacher, taking 1d6 rounds to reach them and after 2d3 rounds the tutors arrives in response (pulling the school's fire alarm before reaching the scene).

A Dark Reward

Once the twins are dead the scarring of the corpses can begin. Correctly marking each body only requires a weapon that deals piercing or slashing damage but the process takes at least 2d6 rounds. As soon as the second corpse has been given the marks of blasphemy all of the PCs hear a wicked laugh both shrill and deep, then Gespadrieux's voice as the nearest inaequa-powered objects explodes, increasing their adventurers' level (instantaneously gaining more Health, spells, and talents), healing all of their damage, and increasing their Sin scores by 3.

Immediately afterward an alarm sounds around the school and all hell breaks loose throughout the Legio Admiristad Institute of Higher Learning.

Act 2: A Murderous Escape

The first part of the despicable mission may be behind them, but the PCs adventures are done for if they can't escape the city!

Revenge of the Faculty

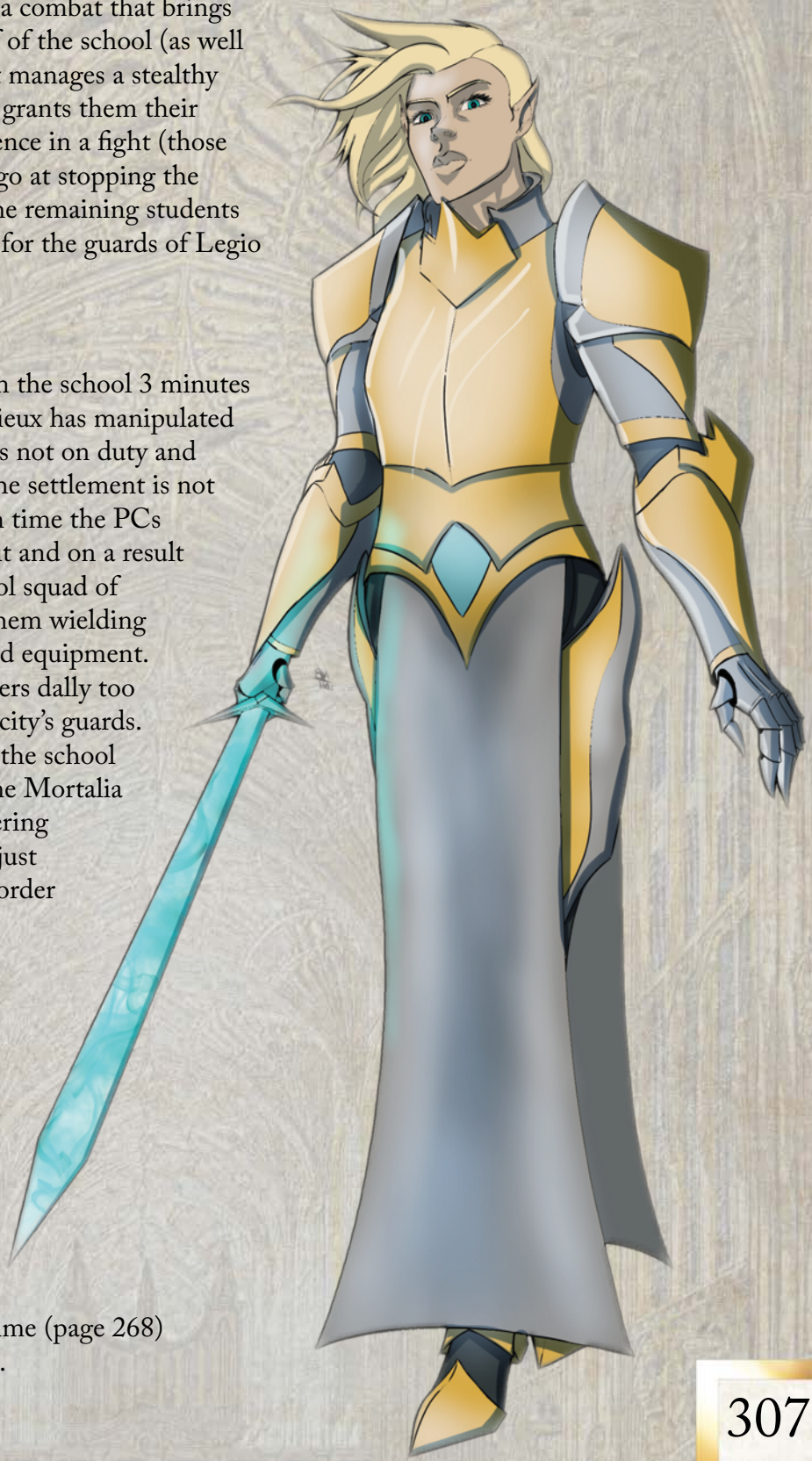
Most adventurers will have engaged in a combat that brings them to the direct attention of the staff of the school (as well as the authorities) but even a party that manages a stealthy kill spurs onlookers when Gespadrieux grants them their dark blessing. The teachers with experience in a fight (those the PCs haven't already killed) make a go at stopping the party, sacrificing their lives to protect the remaining students and delay the adventurers long enough for the guards of Legio to arrive.

Wandering Trouble

The general defenders of Legio arrive in the school 3 minutes after the alarms begin to wail. Gespadrieux has manipulated events so that most of the town guard is not on duty and their greatest protectors are away, but the settlement is not completely undefended. Roll 1d20 each time the PCs enter a district or reach halfway across it and on a result of 6 or less, the party encounters a patrol squad of 5 Patrollers led by a Mercenary, all of them wielding inaequa pistols in addition to their listed equipment. At the GM's discretion, if the adventurers dally too long there may be encounters with the city's guards.

Before escaping the grounds of the school however there is one last obstacle: Dame Mortalia Tavrossi, a Knight of the Chime wandering near the town. The heinous act they've just committed rang loudly to those of her order all across the land, alerting her to their cruelty and drawing the warrior to the PCs like a moth to the flame. She does not fight the adventurers to the death however and doesn't seek to stop them unless capture seems possible, only to unmask them and get a good look at every one of the scandalous murderers to produce wanted posters and turn all of society's protectors against the party.

For Dame Mortalia Tavrossi, use the statistics of a Knight of the Chime (page 268) but equipped with a camera (page 163).



Fleeing the City

As the PCs escape the city they hear Gespadrieux's voice in their minds, directing them on what streets to take to best avoid patrols and where to go once they flee from Legio. Here are a few routes they might take to escape.

North to the Factory Districts If the party goes through this area they'll discover the excessive queues around the Quickfoot Workers Bureau have exploded into havoc as the parents of children at the school are thrown into a panic when word of the incident spreads ahead of the PCs. Any encounters in the Factory Districts are among crowds that turn the streets into difficult terrain and the adventurers overland speed is halved while traveling through them (unless they take to the rooftops).

East through the Adominatio Precinct The act of foul heresy the PCs have just committed has not gone unnoticed by the faithful of Legio and the priests of the city (use the Initiate of the Old Faith) hurl insults as well as stones if they spot the party (although the clergy are true cowards and immediately flee when chased or confronted).

South through the Profor District News of the terrible deed has spread to the many parents of the Profor District and the entire place is in a panic. This is Legio's least devout area and its denizens are largely Neutral-aligned rather than Good, making them far less polite or well-meaning—all Intellect and Will challenge rolls made against them are made with 1 bane and failures can quickly lead to hostilities (use the statistics of Commoners).

West by Caelestibus Commons While this might seem to be the area easiest for the PCs to escape through, they run into at least 1d3 trios of monks from the Monastic Order of Law Monastery (Justitia Equerries, page 293) before reaching the woods.

Parkour The heights of Legio's buildings vary greatly but the rooftops of any given city block generally vary only 2 or 3 yards from one another. Otherwise, scaling a city block requires a Strength challenge roll made with 1 bane and climbing 1d3 x 3 yards + 3 yards (although rooftops make for great spaces to run). The buildings of the Adominatio Precinct and Calestibus Commons are too widely spaced and far too unique for parkour.

Taking an Inaequa Chariot The PCs might find a truck in the Factory Districts (particularly Labos), a leisure vehicle in the Caelistibus Commons or Adominatio Precinct, or an automobile in any region (although they are not not terrifically common in the Profor District or Salus Borough).

- **Hijacking** Scaring someone driving a running inaequa chariot into giving up their vehicle requires a Will challenge roll made with 2 banes but immediately results in a chase.
- **Stealing** Breaking into a locked inaequa chariot requires an Intellect challenge roll made with 1 bane but any result of 5 or less (or physically smashing through a window to get inside) causes a keening wail to emanate from the vehicle for 1 minute, drawing the attention of anyone nearby.

Trainhopping on the Evagantem Once the PCs reach at least the middle point of a region with access to the railroad, they may attempt to hop into a train car to make their escape. The GM should caution against hiding inside an inert train, warning the party that all of the city's authorities are fervently hunting them and once the mad scientist's distraction has ended they will quickly be located by magical means. When the adventures reach a rail line roll 1d20, and on a result of 10 or less there's nothing on the move. Otherwise they find a locomotive picking up speed and can hop on with a successful Strength or Agility challenge roll.

Into the Taenarius Tunnels

Once the party make it to the edge of the city of Legio they can escape into the woods, dashing into the cover of the trees. The mad scientist's voice grows louder, urging them to head down twisting paths and around the base of valleys until finally leading the PCs into horrifying caves beneath Ourianos. Read the following:

The mad scientist's voice leads you through winding valleys and groves that grow increasingly denser though with ever less foliage. You feel a slight tremor shake the ground and hear a dense cracking like snapping bones but Gespadrieux encourages you to continue, softly saying in your minds, "you are near, very close." Rounding a hill reveals a horrifying sight—a large stone wall stretches itself open, the very rock crawling away in a sea of the damned, their mewling corpses spreading apart to reveal a balefully lit passage descending beneath the surface.

After traveling a few hundred feet below ground a portion of the passageway slides open at the adventurers' approach, revealing a strange chamber with tunnels filled by strong winds and a curious spherical contraption of metal. Read the following:

After walking for what feels like miles a section of the wall suddenly slides away at your approach. At the end of a small tunnel hidden behind the facade are strange spherical clockwork contraptions made from brass fittings, steel rails, and numerous triangular patches of flayed skin carved with unfamiliar runes, each set upon a hook connected to a chain machine that disappears into the cavern's roof. When you near one of them a coughing sputter echoes from above and the device jutters to life, bringing one of the pods toward you. "Get in the harness," Gespadrieux's voice calls out from somewhere in the chamber, though now he sounds distant and tinny, "all of you. I don't have all night."

GMs should thoroughly enjoy any arguments that arise while the PCs bicker about who goes first. Read the following once someone has boarded an incitacio pod:

As soon as you fasten the harness around your shoulders the pod drops with a sickening lurch and it sounds as though Hell itself has opened its doors, intense heat cascading into the cavern alongside an unnatural shriek. Before you can react a massive gale of wind gusts upward from below and pushes you from a fall into a rapid hurtle into a tunnel, carrying you through the passageway at an insane speed as the skins flap in the tempest and the air echoes with keening screams.

Within a few moments all you can manage to do is grip the pod's handles and try to hold onto your sanity. Just when it feels as if your mind will break a blast of wind slams into you, knocking the air from your lungs as your vessel rapidly decelerates before landing on a hook spattered with dried blood. After shaking your head for a moment you take in your surroundings and truly see your mysterious benefactor for the first time.

Gespadrieux is an unassuming balding man of middle-age, though half of his skull has been replaced by a metal plate and thick steel cables run from the top and sides of his head. He wears a suit more common to a banker than a scientist and with one hand he is constantly scribbles out notes onto a scroll that feeds out of his sleeve, absentmindedly gesturing with the other towards various devices in the laboratory around him as he walks from one experiment to the next. He pays you only mild attention, mumbling to himself and looking up into the air when not peering at a mysterious prenatal organism in a glowing cylinder of purplish fluids or the tracking eyes of a grisly human skull, half of the abomination's skin and muscles removed. The facility around you looks more like a torture chamber than a place of science, the bodies of countless creatures arrayed beside metallic machines belching noxious gas into the air or playing lightning between antennae.

"Finally," Gespadrieux says, sparing an unimpressed glance in your direction for the briefest of moments before returning to more important matters. "Craft, gold, or graft?"

Gespadrieux's Gifts

The mad scientist has brought the PCs to one of his ancillary laboratories and offers each a gift—craft, gold, or graft. Gespadrieux does not explain what each offering might be, ignoring any questions the party has and keeping to his tasks of calculation and tabulation. When an adventurer declares what they want he waves a small technological rod that spits out lightning, electricity smacking into hidden switches that cause the desired effect.

CRAFT

The PC suddenly feels an incredible pain as a strange ray strikes them, transforming organs and other parts of their body into more efficient mechanical components. The adventurer receives the talentia enhancer (page 152) the GM deems most suitable.

GRAFT

The adventurer disappears and is transported into one of Gespadrieux's horrifying mobile stations, a macabre laboratory filled with terrifying equipment that straps them down and modifies their body to incorporate one grafting sinful gift in an excruciatingly painful process that takes 5 minutes. Afterward the PC re-materializes at full Helath beside their allies.

GOLD

A bag of 1,500 gold coins materializes on the ground in front of the adventurer.

What Now?

The PCs are fugitives and wanted by authorities all over the planet, not just the city of Legio. Of course Gespadrieux is not in the habit of discarding tools that still may be of use and now that he has carved a chunk out of the Celestial Hero Lellwyn Fethyrwal's proverbial armor, even bolder steps must be taken to begin the dismantling of the world order! While the function and means of destruction for the 9 Spheres of Askis are described in detail in the full *Book of Exalted Darkness*, here are a few suggestions for where the game might go from here:

- Gespadrieux is too busy to be bothered retrieving an important relic from an ancient underground complex and the PCs might do so in exchange for another boon or more coin.
- With so much evil in their hearts the adventurers might try to take Gespadrieux down. This will fail of course as he isn't actually there, only a simulacrum (Defense 14, Health 10), but after it is destroyed another appears to take its place—warning that to strike again would mean dire consequences. Parties that do are transported into a deadly dungeon where the mad scientist unleashes abominations, granting freedom to whomever survives long enough to find an escape from the insane abattoir.
- If the PCs are cooperative and have been the entire time, Gespadrieux offers an alliance, promising to provide them with a means to disguise themselves so that the adventurers might better move about Askis to sow insurrection. He activates a device that makes lying difficult (requiring a successful Will challenge roll made with 3 banes) but so long as the party does not try to deceive him he is good to his word, awarding each a watch that doubles as a holographic bracelet (able to cast *disguise* at will, though it only functions for the first creature to wear the device). In addition, once per day the wearer can use an action to activate an invisible vortex around their body that blocks all divination spells for 1 hour. After they have been treated to a rest and deviously sumptuous meal (made from ingredients which are impossible to recognize) he sends the PCs to the devout city of Alacer to poison Hortensia Validaris, Arch-Bishop of the 3rd Paene and once a prized student of Lellwyn Fethyrwal—now a doddering old woman alive long past her due time, protected by a trio of loyal celestial servants…

EPILOGUE: THE LIVING SAINT

Askis' mad scientists know that Hortensia Validaris is of great value to the Celestial Heroes not only because the aged woman is an Arch-Bishop of the 3rd Paene, but because she is a treasured companion of Lellwyn Feathyrwal as well. The old woman is well past her years as an adventurer however and now lives out her final days in an apartment on the 3rd floor of the Heavenly Palatio Estates of Alacer before finally shuffling the mortal coil, likely to become a rehabilibot (page 254) so that she might council the paladin demigod even after death. The devious adversaries of the Celestial Heroes have concocted another plan however, working in tandem to develop a deadly viral agent tailored to Hortensia and undetectable by the doctors of The Ministry—a technological potion that will render her with dementia.

To shatter the *shadows of vanity* requires driving Lellywn Fethyrwal to take her own life and the wound to the Celestial Heroes' heart opened by the death of her favorite offspring will bleed all the more if her most trusted and wisest council ceases to be that, changed instead into a shell of a human. Once transformed into a shambling, mindless drone, the Arch-Bishop of the 3rd Paene will fill the celebrated paladin with sorrow instead of courage—a feat achieved only by poisoning the old woman with the 7 vials of clear, odorless, tasteless substance prepared by the mad scientists of Askis. For the maximum effect the concoction must be administered in full within a 10 day period, but poisoning her is no small task.

The Living Saint is accompanied at all times by three loyal celestial creatures of Difficulty 25 or higher and the retirement facility she lives in is home to other dignified gentiles, so in addition to nurses and doctors from The Ministry it is staffed by Justitia Equerries (page 293). GMs are given full reign on the specifics of what exactly needs to be done to achieve this horrible goal, but it is recommended that the Rat Queen (page 207) be involved.

Hortensia's general schedule is as follows: first she goes for a coffee and breakfast at the Lenimentum Cafe near the Temple Quarter, then attends services at the Chapel of Light where she preaches from the holy tomes of the Celestial Heroes (favoring Lellwyn Fethyrwal's exploits in particular). Following that Hortensia travels through the poor areas near the docks to share food and coin with the downtrodden, then oversees the services of one of her lessers until noon. She stops for lunch with her fellow acolytes on the church grounds, breaking bread and discussing theology into the afternoon. When Hortensia finishes her afternoon sermon in the Chapel of Light she goes swimming on the beaches off the eastern island, returning to the Alacer Heavenly Estates in the evening for dinner with her neighbors.

SEARCHING THE RIVER STYX

An adventure for four to five characters of levels 3rd to 10th, playable any time the PCs have died.

The PCs have all recently shuffled off their mortal coils and this is their chance to defy death itself! As the adventurers are driven to the River Styx like cattle, prodded and poked at by the daemons of the underworld, a veritable mob of disbelieving zealots find that their god is dead as well and create enough of a ruckus that the party escapes! Running and falling down a steep hill, they are beckoned to a safe place to hide by Sotiria, a fallen angel bound to the Lower Planes. The celestial needs to acquire the shattered soul of a fellow angel, shards of essence treasured by the fiends inhabiting this realm. Only three of the pieces remain in the hands of the despicable creatures here and though each lairs nearby, Sotiria's divine abilities have waned and she is too weak to take the precious remains of her kin from the daemon Wehelin, the demon Xadgudbaha, and the devil Aargoosiga. As a reward for finishing this righteous deed on her behalf, Sotiria guarantees that the host celestial will bless all of the adventurers, restoring them to life and granting each a powerful blessing.

This adventure is designed to be applicable to PCs of nearly any level, and includes scalable mechanics to reflect its wide level range. **For parties between 5th-6th level all challenge rolls listed in the text that follows are made with an extra 1 bane, for parties between 7th-8th level they are made with an extra 2 banes, and for 9th-10th level they are made with an extra 3 banes.**

THE RIVER STYX

When souls are deemed unworthy of dwelling in the demiplanes of the deities they are devoted to or otherwise diverted after life leaves their body, they are inexorably brought to the River of Styx before being delivered by that dimension's daemons to their final destination. Those bound for the lower planes are brought to the ferries of thanadaemons by manic cacodaemon swarms (or suffer the final agony of total death in the clutches of a hydrodaemon) then carried down the waterway to one of two ends. The hellbound are diverted to an estuary that splits into many smaller streams that act as bridges to the many layers of Hell, but the rest are taken to the waterfall at the end of the River Styx before being thrown down into the Abyss. Though it is only a waystation of souls, the River Styx exists as a demiplane between the Material Plane and the lower planes, possessing its own rules and planar traits.

Returning to the River Styx

Hopefully the PCs don't end up returning to the River Styx, but in the event of another total party kill they may want to defy mortality once again. The GM should manufacture a new distraction—perhaps an actual dead god walks in front of the PCs, a celestial event takes the attentions of their jailers, or Sotiria and Farishta intervene long enough for them to escape—as well as create new entities with themes to replace gluttony, heresy, and avarice (such as other vices like hubris, lust, sloth, or wrath). There should also be a new guardian, preferably one of a different nature and motivation than an angel, such as an Inevitable or a supernaturally lawful entity. This guardian may need items from the three caverns to restore something important somewhere in the Multiverse, such as a clockwork machine that affects fate. Of course, the difficulty of the encounters to acquire these items should be increased to further challenge the adventurers and the GM should give the monsters the PCs encounter an extra point or two in Defense or additional Health to increase the difficulty facing the party.

Flowing Time For every hour a creature spends in the River Styx, 1d20 hours pass on the Material Plane. This time is rolled individually for each creature and companions that manage to escape their fate often return to life weeks away from one another.

Ghostly Every creature that dies and awakens in the River Styx is an otherworldly composite of their psyche and soul. While on the demiplane, the creature possesses all of the equipment they died with but gains no special abilities other than those they had in life. Should they use *plane shift* or find another normal means of escape, on other planes of existence they manifest as spirits, gaining the immunities and traits of a Phantom.

Inevitable Servants For every minute spent along the shores of the River Styx, roll 1d20. On a 1 or a 2, one or more daemons native to the demiplane wander nearby. Roll 1d20; on a 1–8: 2d3+2 cacodaemons (page 229), 9-15: 1d3+1 hydrodaemons (page 229), 16–20: 1d3 thanadaemons (page 230). Should they notice creatures not native to the River Styx, the daemons acquire reinforcements then attempt to subdue trespassers.

Total Death Creatures that die on the River Styx are utterly destroyed and cannot be brought back to life. For every 8 hours a creature other than a daemon, demon, devil, or fallen angel spends in the River Styx, it permanently loses 1 Health.

Unyielding Current Creatures moving with the current of the River Styx treat every yard they move toward the end of the waterway as half a yard, effectively doubling their Speed. Moving against the current and away from the River Styx is more arduous—movement against the current is difficult terrain, and a creature can only move a maximum number of squares against the current each turn equal to their Strength or Agility score (whichever is higher).

INTRODUCTION

The PCs are dead and they awaken as their chained ephemeral selves are being marched down an incline toward the River Styx. Read the following:

The last thing you remember was struggling to stay awake as your life ebbed away, your mortal coil shuffling off. From that darkness, a blackened and blasted landscape gradually emerges, a vast wasteland swarming with legions of the dead. Throughout the craggy valleys ahead of you a dark river winds, strange energies and the souls of those trapped forever here forming the River Styx, a fell waterway plied upon by skeletal thanadaemons ferrying the damned to their final end. Tormented moans fill the air with a wail permeated by dread and in the far distance you can hear the hordes of madness in the Abyss and the screaming warcries of Hell's armies. The finality of this awful place weighs upon you like a thousand chains and you are utterly helpless, only able to join in the howling of the condemned along with the ghostly apparitions of your companions nearby as impish cacodaemons flutter above, herding you down toward the shore.

It's likely that the adventurers are less than pleased about their situation. At first they are unable to control anything but their voices—make sure to give them an opportunity to blame one another, question their faiths or sanity, and fret on what awaits them before setting them free. When the PCs have realized the reality of the River Styx and know with certainty that they are bound for the Abyss or Hell, read the following:

Rising from the general torment you overhear a frantic babbling of disbelief and dismay from a large procession of similarly robed figures not much further ahead of you. It quickly becomes apparent that a sizable cult of some kind died all at once, and that each of them is only just now learning that their god is as dead as they are. Their primal screams of rage are so potent that they start to take shape, forming into a specter that swats away your gaolers—you are freed, your limbs your own once more!

Control of your body returns but is slow at first and in a panic you stumble, tripping and falling down a steep embankment onto the rocky shore of the River Styx below. As you hit the hard stone you spot an unlikely creature—an angel of all things, albeit one with cracked skin and ugly violet veins—and she beckons you toward a tunnel nearby before disappearing into the passage herself.

Each of the PCs takes 1d3 damage + 1d3 damage per level from the fall (up to 10d3 for 10th level adventurers, plummeting from a much taller height). A creature that succeeds on an Agility challenge roll reduces the falling damage taken by half. The figure beckoning the party is a fallen angel that leads the PCs down a roughly dug tunnel (clearly burrowed by some crazed beast trying to escape its final fate) for 30 yards before reaching her hideaway, a small cave that is collapsing in on itself and shrinking ever so slightly with every moment spent within. Read the following:

The horrible and overwhelming dread of the River Styx seems to abate ever so slightly as you follow the fallen angel into a chamber that has clearly become her home. Votives and blessings galore adorn every inch of the cave but you can see their edges are frayed and the color from the parchment is draining away, shrinking from the corrupting evil all around it. Indeed even after a few moments you realize the walls of the room are literally closing in, pressing ever so slightly closer than when you first entered.

Sotiria was cast down from the higher planes of existence for violating the laws of the celestial dimensions, condemned to prove her piety by restoring one of her kin. A deva named Farishta attempted to save Sotiria from her fall, but in so doing was caught by the evil entities about to ensnare her, his soul torn to shreds and scattered over the lower planes. The fallen angel has spent many years collecting Farishta's shards and has only three more to gather, but her powers have ebbed and the creatures that possess them are too powerful for her to defeat. In exchange for acquiring them for her, Sotiria offers to have her celestial order restore the PCs to life and grant blessings for their good deeds. Should the adventurers resist her offer, she points out that it is only a matter of time before daemons find them and though she freely offers shelter, she warns that total death is inevitable for mortals that dally too long in the River Styx.

Once they have accepted the deal, Sotiria tells the party to beware gluttony, heresy, and avarice, but wishes each good fortune and shows them to a passage leading from her hideaway under the water to the other side of the River Styx. The tunnel collapses behind the PCs but conveniently lets them out near their first obstacle: Pagkaulitan, the Cavern of Gluttony.

Pagkaulitan: Cavern of Gluttony

Read the following when the PCs begin wandering down the tunnel leading to the lair of the daemon Wehelin:

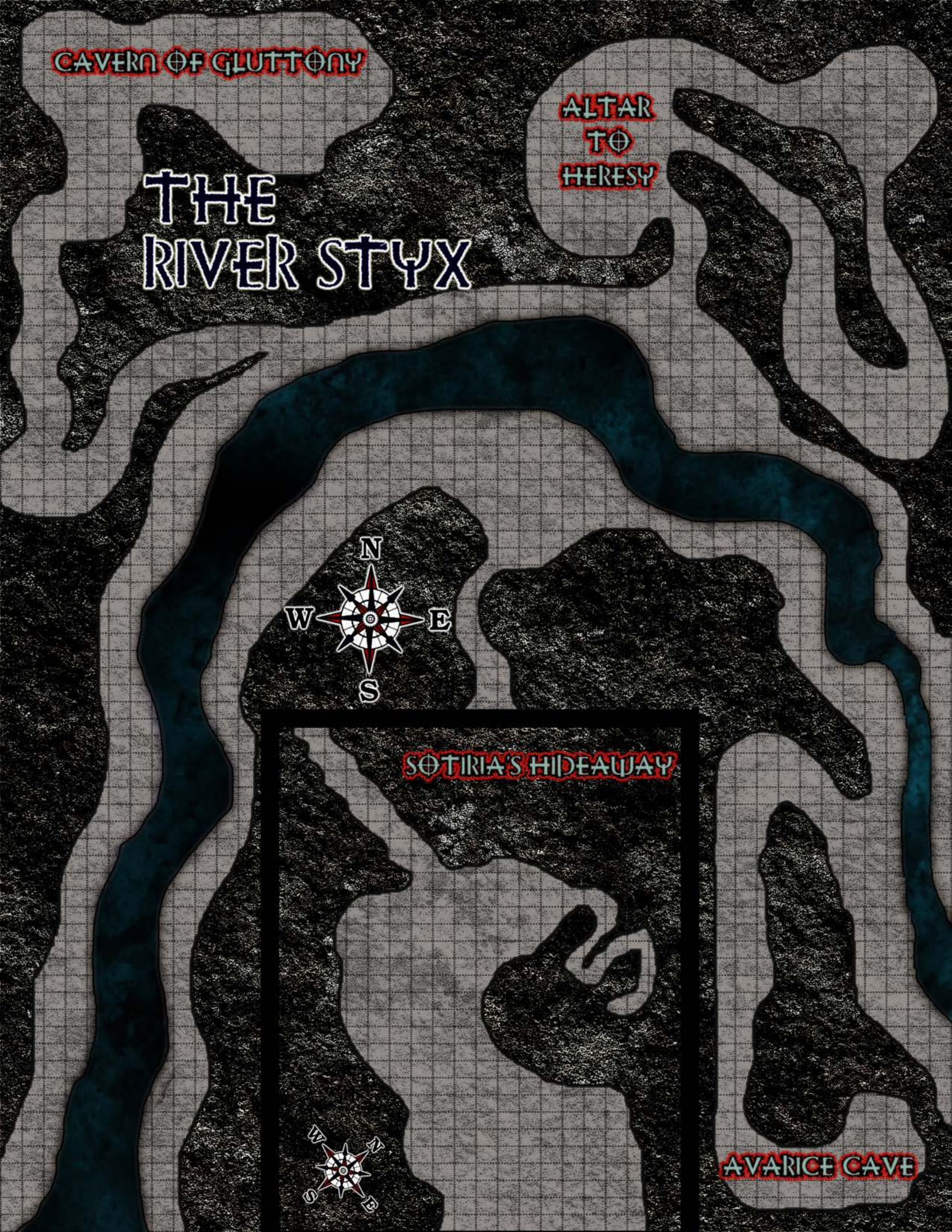
The dark rock of the River Styx's desaturated landscape curves away down a passage redolent with the scent of fine food and drink. Smells savory and sweet tickle at your nose and the further you move down this tunnel, the more you think of the most succulent meals you've ever had, your appetite growing with every step...

Before reaching the end of this curving passage the PCs relive a memory of when they indulged themselves with drink or food—this might be from a bountiful feast of revelry, the first time they had a fine pastry or well-cooked meal, or the last thing they ate as a mortal. Each adventurer makes an Intellect challenge roll or sees an illusion of their favorite food as they turn the corner of the passage. PCs that see these figments make a Will challenge roll or are overwhelmed with an urge to eat, fattening themselves with the ephemeral food. A creature so gorged reduces its Speed by -3.

At the very end of the tunnel the party finds the grotesque daemon Wehelin, a creature consumed by gluttony and well at home in Pagkaulitan. Read the following:

Sitting in a pile of disgusting slop welled in a depression in the cave revealed at the end of this tunnel is a grotesque thing of evil, a daemonic face surrounded by fat that rolls over and over upon itself, over and around even its limbs. It uses one of its flabby arms to snatch up a golden shard of crystal that lay on the ground, making the item disappear beneath the folds before it looks towards you and grins, its jaw unhinging in anticipation as it bellows through its slavering maw. "Oh goodness me, a live meal! You will taste delightful!"

The daemon Wehelin the Glutton (see Monsters) fights to the death, completely unwilling to release its shard of Farishta's soul. Once defeated, its bloated body explodes, coating the PCs in gore.


CAVERN OF GLUTTONY
ALTAR TO HERESY
THE RIVER STYX
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SOTIRIA'S HIDEAWAY
AVARICE CAVE

TRAVELING THE RIVER STYX

In addition to having to fight against the unyielding current of the River Styx, the PCs are likely to come across daemons of some kind because of the Inevitable Servants planar trait. The curses and enchantments within Pagkaulitan, Chisokonezo, and Ukunyoluka cease to activate again after their guardians are dead so retreat into these areas is possible (meaning the PCs might take up defenses to slaughter some monsters or trick them and escape) but with restricted movement it will be difficult. A party might want to take a rest to recover their talents and Health but should be warned after the first such respite that they can feel their life force ebbing away, foreshadowing the Total Death planar trait's effects (which Sotiria warned them of).

There are also dangers aside from the nature of the realm—hydrodaemons lurk in the supernatural waters, cacodaemons swoop through the air, and watchful thanadaemons float down the River Styx on their dismal ferries—but lethal hazards abound beyond the entities prowling the transitional plane.

Grasping of the Damned

Souls of those destroyed in the River Styx flow freely through the waterway, crashing into the Abyss at its end and floating back to its supernatural source to repeat the cycle for eternity. The wrath and anger of these bound slivers of being can manifest themselves when they sense life, reaching out to grasp at the existence denied them. Roll 1d20 whenever a creature passes within 3 yards of the River Styx., On a 20, ethereal arms lash out from the water and try to drag them in.

The grasping of the damned makes an attack roll (with an attack bonus equal to the average level of the party) and grabs the target on a hit (its Strength score is equal to 10 + average level of the party). Once grabbed, a creature may make a Strength or Agility challenge roll to escape at the end of each round but otherwise they are dragged 2 yards closer to or into the water. PCs that are dragged into the water roll 1d20 upon entering and at the start of their turn; on a result of 16 or greater, they are attacked by 1d3 hydrodaemons (page 229). For every check already made while dragged into the water, add +2 to this d20 roll.

Soulshriek of Utter Torment

Every hour the PCs spend in the demiplane of Styx, roll 1d20; on a result of 6 or below, they encounter a Soulshriek of Utter Torment. These echoes of shattered psyches wander along the River Styx, forever terrorized by the total death that has claimed them for eternity. Any non-demon creatures within 30 yards of a soulshriek of utter torment can hear its wail before it appears if they have a sufficiently high Perception score (5 + average party level), but otherwise the scream is only heard when it comes within sight of creatures (it has darksight, and every 1d6 rounds, truesight).

When a non-demon creature is seen by a soulshriek of utter torment, it must make a Will challenge roll or is frightened for a number of rounds equal to half the average level of the party.

A frightened non-demon creature that is seen by a soulshriek of utter torment makes a Strength challenge roll or is deafened for a number of hours equal to half the average level of the party. A frightened and deafened non-demon creature that is seen by a soulshriek of utter torment makes an Intellect challenge roll or is blinded for a period of time equal to 10 minutes times half the average level of the party.

A soulshriek of utter torment travels along the River Styx at a rate of 6 yards each round, wandering randomly between the waterway's sides but always in the direction of the current. It cannot be damaged, dispelled, or otherwise affected by the PCs. Creatures with both the blinded and deafened afflictions are immune to the hazard's effects, and creatures only ever make one challenge roll against a soulshriek of utter torment each round.

Chisokonezo: Altar to Heresy

Read the following when the PCs head down the passage leading to the lair of the demon Xadgudbaha:

Your minds turn to dark places as you walk into this cavern and find two stone tunnels are on the path before you. To the left is a passage with walls bearing primitive marks that radiate unfettered evil, subtly warping and twisting even as you look at them to take on shapes that hurt your mind to witness. On the right, there are just as many symbols—but these are not painful to gaze upon, though the light they shine with seems unnatural even in this dreadfully strange realm.

The apparent choice before the party is a false one: both paths are evil, one is just clever about it. PCs traveling down one of these hallways make a Will challenge roll or relive a memory of great doubt and skepticism. Adventurers that head down the left tunnel (with obviously evil symbols) gain 1 boon on this challenge roll. PCs that relive these memories decry their personal faiths and the gods they revere if they do not make another Will challenge roll, urged to scrawl their own blasphemies on the wall of Chizokonezo. Anyone that commits this heresy against their deity marks their very soul and suffers 1 bane on social challenge rolls made against Sotiria the fallen angel.

When the PCs reach the large back cavern of the Altar to Heresy they find the demon Xadgudbaha. Read the following:

The creature before you radiates pure hatred, the bulk of its red-skinned body hidden beneath piles upon piles of shredded and torn holy texts defaced with foul symbols. Scripts drift down from the ceiling to stick to its pulpy mass as torn pages fall away, ground into mulch beneath the feet of this capering demon as it gleefully dances defaming the beliefs of deities from all over existence. Through its whirling motion you spot the telltale golden glint of one of the angelic shards but just as quickly it disappears again, hidden behind veils of heresy.

The demon **Xadgudbaha the Heretic** (see Monsters) has no fear of total death and fights until utterly destroyed, keeping the shard of Farishta's soul obscured by its pulpy accoutrements. Once defeated the demon's body incinerates itself, flashing into smoke like magician's paper, but leaving behind the PCs' quarry.

CROSSING THE RIVER STYX

In order to collect the third remaining shard of Farishta's soul and return them to Sotiria, at some point or another the PCs will have to cross the River Styx. Magic items and spells that grant a fly speed do not function over the otherworldly waterway and unless one of the adventurers has natural wings, chances are good they will have to utilize one of the following methods:

Building a Boat There's precious little in this demiplane other than stone, daemons, and evil, but the PCs might be able to conjure and gather enough materials to fashion a vessel of their own. In this case they may make Agility challenge rolls to ferry themselves across the River Styx, though any items pushed down into the water for momentum or guidance have a 50% chance of being grasped at by a hydrodaemon (requiring an opposed Strength challenge roll to keep the item from being ripped away and taken beneath the water).

Jump Across PCs that simply attempt to jump over the River Styx find in midair that gravity over the waterway is increased. Even a creature able to long jump over the river must make a Strength or Agility challenge roll in order to make it across (although the GM may grant boons for adventurers able to leap exceptionally far). When approaching the shore, the PCs may make a Will challenge roll. On a success, they realize this information. PCs that fail their challenge roll land in the water and roll 1d20; on a result of 10 or below, they are attacked by 1d3 hydrodaemons (page 229).

Take a Ferry PCs that have something of great value to trade might try to convince one of the ferrymen of the River Styx, a thanadaemon, to take them across the murky water. Doing so requires an Intellect challenge roll to deceive, intimidate, or persuade. PCs who sweeten the deal by offering something as important to them as their life itself make the challenge roll with 1d3 boons. Failure to convince a thanadaemon causes it to cry out for reinforcements and attack, destroying its vessel as its first action in combat.

Try to Swim Getting into the River Styx itself is ill-advised as the waters are home to hydrodaemons beyond count. PCs that enter the water roll 1d20 upon entering and at the end of the round; on a result of 10 or above, they are attacked by 1d3 hydrodaemons (page 229). For every check already made while in the water, add +3 to this d20 roll.

Ukunyoluka: Grotto of Avarice

When the PCs head down the final cavern wherein a shard of Farishta's soul awaits, read the following:

Figments of gold and treasure galore shimmer and waver in this tunnel, and though they are obviously illusions, the sight of so much wealth beckons to you, entreating your mind to remember past glories that aggrandized you in some way.

The PCs likely recall moments of great victory between them and seem to show camaraderie to one another—yet this too is only an illusion. Each and every character is compelled to try to steal from their companions. Every PC makes a Perception challenge roll to *avoid* having one item stolen by another PC. On a success, a PC retains all of their own items. In addition, every PC makes a Will challenge roll to resist being secretly compelled to steal from one another at a later date in revenge for the purloining already going on. PCs that succeeded their Perception challenge roll make this Will challenge roll with 1d3 boons. Failure compels a PC to steal from one of their companions after 1d3 + 1 rests, but anyone who failed both challenge rolls also attempts to take something from Sotiria's cave (an act which the fallen angel is not likely to look upon with favor).

When the PCs finally reach the end of Ukunyoluka they find the devil Aargoosiga, bearing witness to the insane greed that drives the fiend's desire to retain one of the shards of Farishta's soul.

Dark orange miasma swirls around the figure in the center of this room, the aura fed by glittering piles of blood-stained gold and treasured heaped about on the floor, some items still clutched by hands unwilling to let them go. A palpable, iron scent of evil wafts from the creature laying upon this splendor, and though the glittering greed floating about it obscures much of the body, its crimson eyes wander toward you—almost as if it can tell that new objects of value have entered the chamber—and you can feel the thing's vile presence in your very bones.

The devil Aargoosiga, being a creature of unbridled avarice, is completely unwilling to part with anything, going so far as to demand everything the adventurers own in order to accept their surrender, fighting to the death should they refuse.

Unlike the other caves the party have visited, this one has material objects in it after its guardian is destroyed in addition to a shard of Farishta's soul. PCs unwise enough to pilfer this treasure collect a number of gold pieces equal to 10d20 times the average level of the party, but should they take anything other than coins, roll 1d20 to determine if they find a genuine enchanted relic or something cursed—on a result of 6 or higher the item is cursed but does not reveal as much for 1d3 days (and on a result of 5 or lower the magical item has no drawbacks).

CONCLUSION: SOTIRIA'S REWARDS

With the three remaining shards of Farishta's soul in hand, the party returns to Sotiria's cave to reap their rewards. The tunnel leading to her abode has contracted however and any PCs larger than Size ½ need to make an Agility challenge roll to squeeze through the shrunken passage (any PC of Size 2 make this challenge roll with 1 extra bane). This does not change the area on the map, but any creature of Size 1 or larger has to crouch to avoid the lowered ceiling (reducing its Speed by -3).

Read the following:

As you enter into the fallen angel's cave once more, you are immediately struck by how much of the divinity it once retained has been drained away. Sotiria's cracked and broken skin looks even less angelic, as corrupted and sallow as the sapped blessings clustering around her. She eyes you suspiciously as you approach and when you meet her gaze it feels as though she is looking into your very soul, searching it for the taint of this dreadful realm.

Sotiria knows all too well the dangerous effect that the River Styx can have on creatures and carefully observes the PCs, searching them for corruption, but offers to heal them as well. If any member of the party has both grown corpulent from the illusory food in Pagkaulitan or taken to heresy in Chisokonezo, she specifically tries to touch and heal them but is really only looking to search their thoughts to see if they are too corrupt to revive. Clerics, paladins, and other adventurers with divine power have their faith questioned by the fallen angel but are otherwise unmolested. Should she decide that a PC has

been too tainted by the River Styx or should she notice a member of the party trying to steal something from her hideaway (compelled by their trials in Ukunyoluka), Sotiria immediately attacks the adventurers and attempts to take Farishta's shards by force, refusing to uphold her end of the bargain for so beings so foul—unless the PCs proactively convince her of their righteousness.

Provided that they have not been too corrupted by the River Styx, the PCs can hand over Farishta's shards and receive their reward. Sotiria takes the shattered remains of the other angel's essence and combines them in a flash of light and between the two celestials, all of the adventurers are brought back to life on the Material Plane (rolling their own results for the Flowing Time planar trait). Read the following:

Sotiria reaches beneath her tarnished gold robes and produces a sack of stark white cotton covered with carefully woven sigils of royal purple. She adds the soul shards you've gathered from around the River Styx into the bag and clasps it between her hands, drawing them against her chest and chanting purposefully until it explodes in a ball of light. As the blinding energy dissipates a winged humanoid steps out of it, hugging the fallen angel and healing the faults on her skin with his embrace. "Thank you for helping to restore me," Farishta says, his voice soothing and warm, "It is only right that we do the same for you."

The celestials gesture toward you and golden energy emanates from their outstretched arms, wrapping around you with welcoming warmth before it suffuses your being. For a brief moment you are utterly blinded and deafened, the choir of creation cascading around you into a pinpoint of existence until with a sudden lurch you are delivered back to the Material Plane, your consciousness rushing into your body with savage force.

The exact locations of where the PCs return to life is at the discretion of the GM (they might be buried, waking in their coffins!) but they are at full hit points as if they had just finished a long rest and, true to her word, Sotiria and Farishta grant a boon to the PCs as well. Adventurers that failed a saving throw in Pagkaulitan, Chisokonezo, or Ukunyoluka may choose not to gain a blessing and instead remove any curses left by their time in the River Styx.Otherwise, each PC rolls 1d6 and gainsone of the following graces.

1d6	Grace Granted
1	**Grace of Holy Body** You gain immunity to the poisoned affliction and 1 boon on challenge rolls made to resist being fatigued. By permanently expending this grace using your triggered action, you take half damage from weapons for 10 minutes.
2	**Grace of Unyielding Faith** You gain immunity to the charmed affliction and 1 boon on challenge rolls made to avoid being frightened. By permanently expending this grace using your triggered action, you gain immunity to holy, poison, and unholy damage for 1 hour.
3	**Grace of Prowess** Your Defense against melee weapon attacks increases by +2. By permanently expending this grace using your triggered action, you gain a +4 bonus to melee weapon attack rolls and melee weapon damage rolls for 1 minute.
4	**Grace of Agility** Your Defense against ranged weapon attacks increases by +2. By permanently expending this grace using your triggered action, you gain a +4 bonus to ranged weapon attack rolls and ranged weapon damage rolls for 1 minute.
5	**Grace of Magic** You learn two 0th-level spells of your choice from the Arcana, Life, or Nature traditions. By permanently expending this grace as part of an action, you may cast any spell of the same tradition that has a spell level equal to or less than half your level.
6	**Grace of Empowerment** Choose Strength, Agility, Intellect, or Will. The attribute increases by 2, up to a maximum of 22. By permanently expending this grace as an action, you temporarily increase that attribute to 30 for a number of rounds equal to half your level.

MONSTERS: UNDER THE HOOD

At their hearts we know that monsters (and adventurers) are just arrays of numbers that are given form through a system of rules. What makes these enemies and obstacles memorable are not their statistics but the descriptions that bring them to life; if I *really* want to play a character bonded with a combat-prone alien symbiote, what's to say that my monk isn't just a regular guy who gains their classabilities from a space parasite? At the end of the day does it *really* make that much of a difference? While sometimes it might, on the whole it normally doesn't *have* to and as we're already shattering one of the certainties of a tabletop game—the concept of character death—it is only fitting that we bend, explore, and exploit the inner workings of the system to make it so!

Each of the three central enemies in *Searching the River Styx* embodies a theme that determines their descriptions and abilities, but the core of their statistics are derived from creatures of a Difficulty Rating determined by the average level of the party + 1. When these new qualities conflict with those of the starting creature (such as a creature with acid vulnerability gaining immunity) provide a new vulnerability for the creature, but aside from making sure the monster still has a weakness any resulting power imbalances should still be well within the party's ability to overcome. Besides, escaping the afterlife isn't meant to be easy and the more difficult the obstacles in the way, the more impressive and epic the party's success—or failure—will be!

Well She's Dead. Now What Do We Do?

If the PCs are found wanting, openly reveal to her their evil souls, or give her reason to detect their auras to find out the same, Sotiria attacks them (meaning the complete end of their existence with total death) but some adventurers will certainly defeat her. This doesn't mean they are doomed to dwindle away in the River Styx however and the party can utilize the shattered essence of Farishta to restore themselves back to life by consuming the soul shards, performing a ritual on them drawn from the information hidden in the blessings and votives around Sotiria's hideaway, or even use them as a bargaining chip with a thanadaemon moving down the supernatural waterway. Regardless of the exact circumstances, using the disjointed remains of an angel to regain their mortality should be a depraved and harrowing experience for the adventurers and serve as a reminder of why it is so critical they avoid a return to this place at all costs.

Average Party Level	Creature
3rd	Tiny Demon
4th	Small Demon
5th	Small Demon
6th	Large Monster
7th	Large Monster
8th	Medium Demon
9th	Medium Demon
10th	Large Demon

The Daemon Wehelin the Glutton

The daemon Wehelin the Glutton is a demon with the following additions to its statistics:

Glutton Daemon Template **ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP**

Alignment The creature becomes evil.

Type The creature's type changes to demon.

Attributes The creature's Intellect increases to 15.

Senses The creature gains darksight, and it can see through magical darkness without difficulty.

Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from acid, poison, and unholy, as well as poisoned.

Glutton Resistances The creature takes half damage from cold, fire, and lightning.

Languages The creature speaks and understands all languages.

Massiveness Wehelin is always at least Size 2. It has 2 boons on any challenge rolls made to avoid being moved or resist being knocked prone.

Meal Mimicking Once per round, Wehelin can use one talent possessed by a creature it has swallowed. When using this talent to cast a spell, Wehelin does not need to wield the implements and it uses the swallowed creature's Power. This trait does not expend any spell slots or limited uses from a swallowed creature's talents.

Bite If the creature does not already have a bite, it gains a bite that deals 1d3 damage times half the party's average level plus Engorge on attack roll 20+.

Engorge At the end of the round, the creature makes a Strength attack roll against the Strength of a target of Size 1 or smaller. On a success the target is swallowed. While swallowed, the target is blinded and immobilized, it is completely covered against attacks and other effects outside Wehelin, and it becomes fatigued if it fails a Strength challenge roll. The creature can have a number of swallowed targets at a time equal to half the average party level. If the creature takes its Healing Rate in damage, it makes a Strength challenge roll and on a failure regurgitates swallowed targets, which fall prone in spaces within 3 yards of the creature. If the creature dies, a swallowed target is no longer immobilized by it and can escape from the corpse by using 5 yards of movement, exiting prone.

The Demon Xadgudbaha the Heretic

The daemon Xadgubaha the Heretic is a demon with the following additions to its statistics:

Heretic Demon Template **ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP**

Alignment The creature becomes evil.

Type The creature's type changes to demon.

Attributes The creature's Intellect increases to 15.

Senses The creature gains darksight, and it can see through magical darkness without difficulty.

Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from lightning and poison, as well as the poisoned affliction.

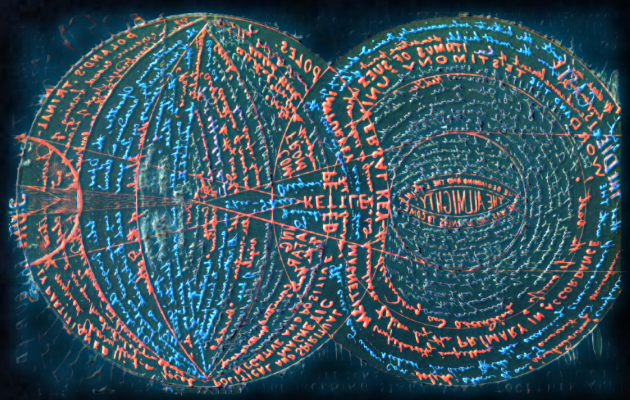
Heretic Resistances The creature takes half damage from acid, cold, and fire.

Languages The creature speaks and understands Abyssal.

Betrayed Thoughts The creature's very presence pries precious secrets from even the most pious of hearts. Targets within 10 yards of the creature must make a Will challenge roll at the end of the round or shout their innermost skepticisms and suspicions of disbelief to anyone within earshot.

Blackmail of the Soul The creature can turn souls in on themselves, forcing a target through unimaginable agony as their very essence attacks itself. Once a target has betrayed their thoughts to the creature, it can use its action blackmailing their soul, forcing them to make a Will challenge roll or be both immobilized and poisoned for a number of rounds equal to half party's average level. A target that succeeds is immune to Blackmail of the Soul for the next 24 hours.

Telepathy The creature can communicate telepathically within a range of 30 yards.



The Devil Aargoosiga the Avaricious

The daemon Aargoosiga the Avaricious is a demon with the following additions to its statistics:

Avaricious Devil Template **ADD 1 DIFFICULTY STEP**

Alignment The creature becomes evil.
Type The creature's type changes to demon.
Attributes The creature's Intellect increases to 15.
Senses The creature gains darksight.
Immunities The creature gains immunity to damage from fire and poison, as well as the charmed and poisoned afflictions.
Avaricious Resistances The creature takes half damage from acid and cold.
Languages The creature speaks and understands Infernal.
Demanding Selfishness The creature's greed is so all-consuming that it vents away from it in waves of compulsive energies. Targets within 10 yards of the creature must make a Will challenge roll at the end of each round or become unwilling to share the benefits of any item that can be consumed (such as a healing potion) until the end of the next round. The targets may still use talents that benefit an ally but only if they cannot target themselves though even then, the use of the talent must directly benefit the creature in some way.
Overwhelming Avarice The creature uses its minor activity to direct the greed that fills its dark soul at one target it can see. The target makes a Will challenge roll or is compelled to take (by force, magic, or other means) the most valuable object possessed by an ally. A target that successfully resists is immune to Overwhelming Avarice for 1 minute.
Telepathy The creature can communicate telepathically within a range of 30 yards.

Sotiria the Fallen Angel

The fallen angel Sotiria is a celestial with the following additions to its statistics:

Fallen Angel Template **ADD 2 DIFFICULTY STEPS**

Alignment The creature becomes good.
Type The creature's type changes to celestial.
Health +5
Attributes Two of the creature's attributes increase by +1.
Senses The creature gains darksight and its Perception increases by +1.
Defense The creature's defense increases by 1.
Speed The creature gains the Flier trait.
Immunities The creature cannot be charmed, compelled, fatigued, or frightened.
Angelic Resistances The creature takes half damage from acid, cold, fire, holy, lightning, and weapons that are not magical.
Languages The creature speaks and understands Celestial.
Angelic Weapons The creature's attacks are magical and deal an extra 1d3 holy damage times half the party's average level.
Deceptive Healing The creature uses an action to touch a target, healing 2d6 damage times half the party's average level. In addition, the target is no longer blind, deaf, diseased, or poisoned, and it makes a Will challenge roll. On a failure, all of the target's thoughts are revealed to the creature.
Morning Star The creature wields a morning star (one handed, 1d6).
Regeneration At the end of the round, the creature heals 1d6 damage if it is not incapacitated and did not take unholy damage in the last turn.
Spell Defense The creature takes half damage from spells and makes any challenge roll to resist a spell with 1 boon. A creature attacking the creature with a spell makes the attack roll with 1 bane.
Telepathy The creature can communicate telepathically within a range of 40 yards.

Shadow of the Demon Lord

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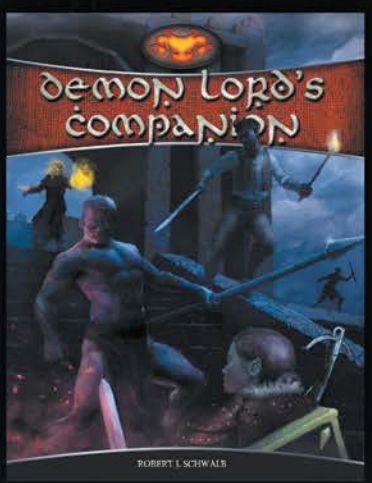

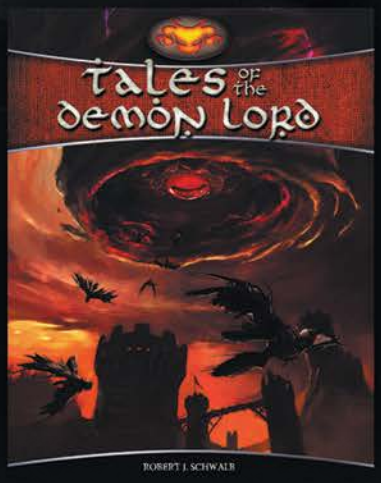

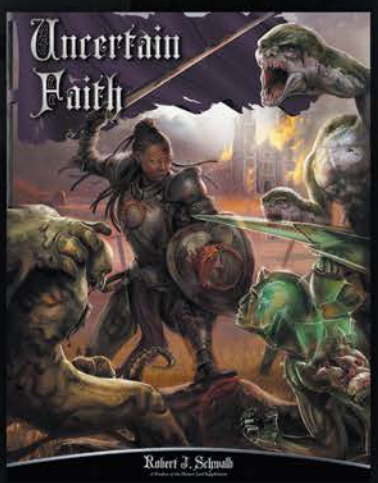

Mists of Akuma

Shadow of the Demon Lord

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MISTS OF AKUMA
TRADE WAR
AN ADVENTURE PATH
FOR CHARACTERS 3RD-10TH LEVEL

NAVICLA GAZETTE

HERESY ON THE RISE AS CRIME RATES SKYROCKET!

A calming sun rose over the Diffusilus Ocean today only to reveal a grisly affair on Pier 17 where the Justitia were alerted to the remains of an estimated three dozen citizens. Inquisitor Octavius Tenebrosa was on the scene when the Navicla Gazette arrived and though recalcitrant to share too many details about an ongoing case, it is confirmed that authorities are not searching for a beast or monster—all signs point to a man or woman as the culprit. In times like these we ask what could drive someone to so heinous an act? Witnesses that first discovered the slaughter claim that strange and unfamiliar runes were carved into the bodies of the victims, hard to

and it is only reasonable that we, the citizens of Navicla, be heedful of those who fail to recognize the divine right of the Celestial Heroes. Doctor Syndral Thaona—Professor of Historical Theology at the University of Sanctus Menaechmus in Suppetia—has been following the recent increase in violence along with other academics located throughout Zakuthombo. Their conclusion is chilling, drawing a direct relationship between lacking piety and criminal behavior. The Navicla Gazette reached out to both Inquisitor Tenebrosa and The Ministry for comment, but as of the time of publication we have not received confirmation of these

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cause some to question if the terror of the Flesh Doctor of Kalator, a murderer thought to have been captured or perished centuries ago, ever really ended. The offices of the Eludere Times have joined the dubious list of papers to receive a "gift" from the murderous madman, though agents of The Inquisition came soon after the parcel's arrival to confiscate it for their investigations into this copycat killer—if it isn't the original fugitive, as the attached letter claimed. We sent reporter Beatrice Cansyl to Kalator to root through the archives of their local papers, and in a future issue we'll illuminate readers on her full findings and the veracity of the nefarious claim.

sails the Angustia Straight on a regular basis, claims that attacks of piracy have steadily been on the rise over the past several years. "I seen Rogar myself once," Larral said, "and he sure doesn't look like he's losing. I'll never forget the look in his eyes. If any other shipmasters read your article, you tell them that Larral said from one captain to another: Rogar says surrender, you surrender." Scientists, The Ministry's priesthood, and even the Magi Primaria all agree that the Escarion Maelstrom has steadily shrunk over the years, but the question remains: will we ever be rid of this scourge upon the oceans and the brigands that hide behind the perilous tempests?

authorities remain baffled by the string of robberies across Exortus three months past. For readers not familiar with this case, in each crime the perpetrators absconded from a prominent bank with quantities of coin in excess of 5,000 gold. were chased by Justitia into a dwelling nearby, and then disappeared seemingly without a trace of magic. Further frustrating investigators is the lack of credible witnesses—each and every manager of these banks has disappeared, their relatives, friends, and associates questioned by The Inquisition to no avail Industrialist Hortensia Wurthyr has offered a susbstantial 500 gold reward for any information

(continued on page B3)

LEGENDARY GAMES

MIKE MYLER