

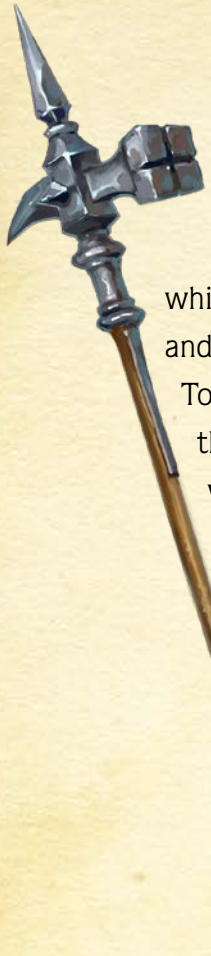
PATHFINDER[®] ADVENTURE PATH[™]



RETURN OF THE RUNELORDS

TEMPLE OF THE PEACOCK SPIRIT

By Jason Keeley

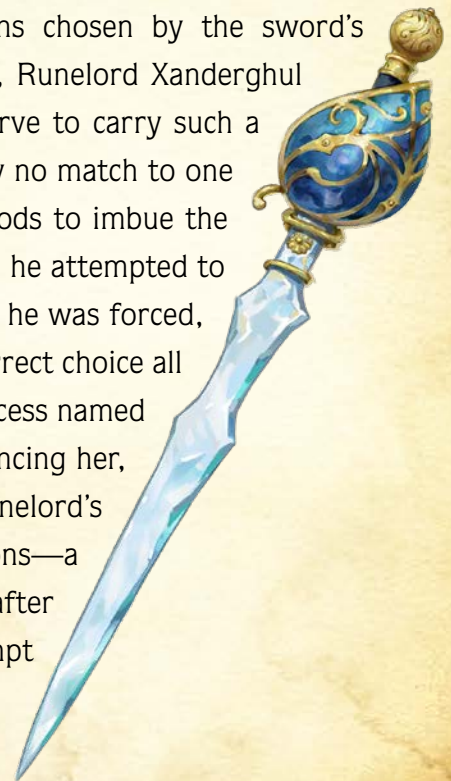


XANDERGHUL'S FLAWLESS HAMMER

The seven skymetals were a favorite medium for the runelords to work with when creating magic items, deadly guardians, and ancient weapons. Today, the most common of these, adamantine, remains a highly sought-after resource, while the others exist in increasingly rare supplies. Some shimmer with strange colors and exude dangerous energies, while others seem to defy the laws of time and space. Today, common wisdom holds that there are seven varieties of skymetal, but in truth there may be as many varieties as there are stars in the sky. Xanderghul's favored weapon, his *Flawless Hammer*, was reputedly crafted from one of these unknown metals. Unlike many others, though, this metal had no distinctive visual traits, and—to the untrained eye—resembled nothing more than crude iron. However, this metal imbued *Xanderghul's Flawless Hammer* with potent and deadly power. Its blows always struck true, regardless of illusory defenses the target might hold, and such blows never qualified as grazes—the hammer's damage always hit its peak potential. Like the other *Alara'quin* wielded by the runelords, *Xanderghul's Flawless Hammer* had an intellect of its own, but this was not an awareness granted by another—it was said to be nothing less than a duplication; a mirror of Xanderghul's own arrogant mind.

BARAKET, SWORD OF PRIDE

The *Swords of Sin* were traditionally wielded by champions chosen by the sword's respective runelords, but in the case of the *Sword of Pride*, Runelord Xanderghul had difficulty with the concept that anyone else would deserve to carry such a weapon. When it became apparent that his martial skills were simply no match to one who spent their life perfecting swordplay, Xanderghul sought methods to imbue the blade with powers that would grant him such skill. When that failed, he attempted to create a simulacrum sword fighter to wield the blade, but in the end he was forced, reluctantly, to admit that an enslaved and peerless fencer was the correct choice all along to serve as the sword's carrier. Xanderghul chose a ghaele princess named Baraket as his champion, and he spent years courting her and influencing her, twisting her perceptions of reality until she accepted the role of runelord's champion. Baraket became one of the most unlikely of these champions—a deceived celestial whose consciousness lingered on in the blade even after she was slain by agents of the empyreal lord Chadali in a failed attempt to liberate her from the runelord's influence.



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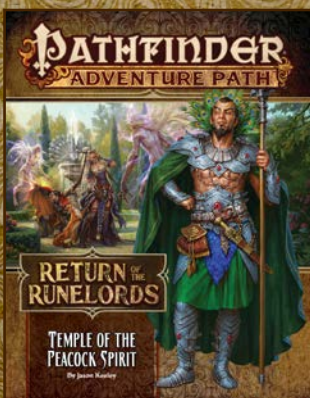
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ON THE COVER



Ekaterina Burmak reveals that dangerous monsters can lurk even in the most idyllic of places, as the fanciest runelord of them all, Xanderghul, looks on with pride!



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REFERENCE

This book refers to several other Pathfinder Roleplaying Game products using the following abbreviations, yet these additional supplements are not required to make use of this book. Readers interested in references to Pathfinder RPG hardcovers can find the complete rules of these books available online for free at pfrd.info.

<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Occult Adventures</i>	OA
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Adventurer's Guide</i>	AG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 3</i>	B3	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM
<i>Horror Adventures</i>	HA	<i>Ultimate Wilderness</i>	UW



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TEMPLE OF THE PEACOCK SPIRIT

PART 1: TIME AND AGAIN 3

Before the PCs can take the fight to the cultists of the Peacock Spirit, they must locate the cult's main temple. Research and visions lead the PCs to the Black Tower of Jorgenfist, where they confront a time dragon and learn a ritual that can take them to their destination.

PART 2: CULTISTS IN THE CLOUDS 12

Performing the ritual brings the PCs to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, where they must pierce its outer defenses and navigate the dangerous valley in which it is located.

PART 3: PRIDE'S HEART 29

In the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit and the dungeons below, the PCs must battle monsters and evade traps to reach Xanderghul's inner sanctum. Once there, they can defeat the deadly runelord and put an end to his cult.

ADVANCEMENT TRACK

"Temple of the Peacock Spirit" is designed for four characters and uses the medium XP track.



The PCs should begin this adventure well into 11th level.



The PCs should be 12th level before starting Part 2.



The PCs should reach 13th level by the time they enter the Grand Temple itself.



The PCs should be 14th level before entering the Refuge of Violet Vanity.

The PCs should end this adventure well into 14th level.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Runelord Xanderghul used his considerable power to set himself apart from the squabbles of the other runelords and usher his realm in as the de facto capital of the Thassilonian empire. As the years progressed and Xanderghul continued to rule a prosperous Cyrusian, he felt even greater power stirring within himself. Tapping into this inner strength, Xanderghul became something akin to a god: a source of divine power. He named this godhead the Peacock Spirit and introduced it to the world as an entity he had discovered, keeping the truth secret: that he himself was the Peacock Spirit. The cult quickly gained worshipers across Thassilon and even garnered support from some of the other runelords. Despite their religious and political beliefs, all of the runelords at the time assisted Xanderghul in building the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, an elaborate complex deep in the Kodar Mountains. The temple was open to all devotees of the Peacock Spirit, regardless of their affiliation with individual runelords. Yet none who made the arduous trek into the mountains to visit the temple realized that in visiting the site, each pilgrim unknowingly left a sliver of her soul within the building, which Xanderghul could harvest to fuel his growing might.

As with the other runelords, Xanderghul sensed the oncoming doom of Earthfall. In his search for a way to avoid the end of the world, he became obsessed with an artifact called the *Scepter of Ages*, a powerful relic he hoped to use to catapult himself and his allies into a time after the unfortunate event. He never found the scepter, but he used the knowledge he gained while seeking it to place himself in stasis within a demiplane of his own creation.

When Runelord Alaznist emerged from her *runewell* a few years ago, she traveled to Xin-Cyrusian in hopes of arriving before Xanderghul woke. When she discovered that he was locked away outside of reality itself, she became infuriated and raged through the city, looking for a method to deactivate Xanderghul's stasis. It was during this rampage that she discovered his research into the *Scepter of Ages*. After several months, Alaznist did what Xanderghul could not: she recovered the artifact and used it. Using the scepter's power over time and space, she unlocked Xanderghul's refuge, woke him, and slew him in the few terrible moments afterward.

But Xanderghul had planned for his death. All those collected slivers of souls harvested from pilgrims to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit allowed Xanderghul to be instantly reborn in the temple's inner sanctum, emerging into a new body constructed of those metaphysical slivers and energy from the Shadow Plane.

DAMAGE TO THE TIMESTREAM

In the previous adventure, the PCs had their first brushes with the damage to the timestream—a -2 penalty on Knowledge (history) checks. As this adventure begins and the PCs grow closer to the source of the damage, their ability to recall events correctly from the past grows even more unreliable. From this point on, whenever a PC attempts a Knowledge (history) check, he must roll the check twice and use the lower of the two results as his actual result. Perhaps more unsettling is the fact that the PCs find they cannot remember the names of the Sihedron Heroes. They still know that a group of heroes were sent by the Sihedron Council on a secret mission, but their identities remain a mystery.

Yet just as he had been rescued from death by these slivers of faith, so too had he become imprisoned, as his new form could not exist outside the walls of his Grand Temple. Protected and hidden, the reborn Runelord of Pride reached out to his cultists in the world (creating new ones in the process), quickly pulling together a force he could use to harry the Runelord of Wrath while he regained his strength enough to retrieve the *Scepter of Ages*. With the cult growing in size and power, it is only a matter of time before its new high priest, a woman named Zurea, can lead the cult in a mass sacrifice intended to restore Xanderghul to his proper mythic body.

PART 1: TIME AND AGAIN

As “Temple of the Peacock Spirit” begins, the PCs are contacted once more by Runelord Sorshen via a *dream* spell. She congratulates them on their successes but then informs them that the defeats of Krune and Zutha were something of a test for the true task at hand. When they meet, Sorshen's simulacrum wants to hear the details of the PCs' adventures under Kaer Maga and their fight against Zutha. Once the tale is told, she congratulates the PCs but then grows serious. Read or paraphrase the following.

“You have done great things in defeating Zutha and preventing Krune's resurrection, but now you must know that these tasks were more akin to auditions than anything else. I had to be sure you had what it took to defeat a runelord, for an even greater threat must now be faced. Runelord Xanderghul, the only one I would consider a rival to my own power, did not waken from his slumber with as much grace and aplomb as I. Something happened as he emerged from his metaphysical

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shelter, and he has been much reduced in strength. Make no mistake, he remains one of the most dangerous wizards in your land, but for now, you have a chance of defeating him. And you must do so, before he can regain his full strength!"

At this point, Sorshen can answer additional questions the PCs might have; some potential questions and answers are given below.

How did Xanderghul get weakened? "When I woke, I knew Xanderghul remained apart from the world. I'm unaware of the details, but I felt it when Alaznist ambushed him while he remained hidden and asleep. I felt when he woke, and I felt when he died. Alaznist likely thinks she's triumphed over him, but I know better—Xanderghul would never let mere death stop him. But his death weakened him. I suspect that when she murdered him, Alaznist absorbed much of his power. What she's using that power for, I cannot guess."

Where is Xanderghul? "The most logical place is the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, which is located in the Kodar Mountains."

Can he emerge from the Temple of the Peacock Spirit? "It seems unlikely. His pride would not allow him to remain in hiding this long if there weren't something keeping him within the temple's walls."

What can you tell us about the Temple? "Xanderghul invited all seven of us to aid in the temple's construction, but I had little interest in lending him many of my resources. My religious beliefs have always aligned with others, and I never quite understood the draw of the Peacock Spirit. I know where the Grand Temple is located, in the center of a lake within a hidden valley in the Kodar Mountains, but I've always prided myself in having never given Xanderghul or the cult the honor of a visit." Sorshen can describe the temple's location at this point—within a hidden valley near the source of the first tributary of the Chavali River in the central Kodar Mountains, just over 400 miles due north of the Sunken Queen (one of Sorshen's strongholds, now located in the eastern Mushfens).

What can you tell us about the Peacock Spirit? "I never paid the cult much attention in my day; they always seemed too self-absorbed to be worth the bother. The cult prided itself on its secrecy, and in the end, the most information likely exists in the libraries maintained by their Therassic Order. I believe one such library was recently rediscovered by some of your contemporaries, yes? Under a place now known as Jorgenfist? I would seek that location out for more information, if I were you."

What are the cultists using to escape combat so easily? "Xanderghul and his followers are no masters of conjuration magic, and their studies thus prevent them from using teleportation spells. The magic you've seen

the cultists use to flee combat is something the cult developed long ago—a potent ritual known as the viridian transcendence that allows them to bypass the limitations of their own teaching. I never bothered to learn the ritual, since I have no problems using teleportation magic myself. If you could decipher the ritual, you might be able to use it to follow the cult to their temple, tracing them through reality to their own stronghold. I suppose that if anywhere outside of the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit holds the secrets of the viridian transcendence, it would be the Therassic Library."

Why can't we remember the names of the Sihedron Heroes? This concerns Sorshen, and she doesn't have an answer for it. If she's learned from the PCs about their encounters with time-traveling monsters and strange dreams, though, she suspects the truth—that someone, most likely Alaznist, has been meddling with time itself, and the fact that the PCs are being affected is perhaps proof that they are the ones who will face whoever has been disrupting the time stream.

Can you come with us? Sorshen shakes her head, saying, "I didn't live this long taking unnecessary risks. I've always used specialists when I can to handle problems. Specialists like yourselves. If you cannot defeat him, then I suppose I'll have to step in to risk my own life in person, but I would rather leave that risk to you, to be honest. But I won't send you against Xanderghul without any aid at all." She goes on to make a promise to the PCs: once they feel they are ready to travel to the Temple of the Peacock Spirit, she is willing to reveal herself to the world. Without this, surely Xanderghul would realize the threat the PCs pose him, but once Sorshen begins to move openly in the world, Xanderghul will no doubt swiftly notice. She can continue to distract him for some time, and as long as she does so, the Runelord of Pride will be unlikely to spare the PCs themselves any attention.

THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK TOWER

Once the PCs finish speaking to Sorshen, she wishes them luck and warns them that once they begin this confrontation with the cult, they'll be on their own, as she'll need all her resources and concentration to distract Xanderghul without placing herself at risk.

The cult's secrecy has only increased over the centuries, and what little information the PCs manage to uncover should point them toward the Therassic Library. When it was discovered by the Sihedron Heroes, this repository of knowledge was an unprecedented window into Thassilon's legacy, and it remains to this day a well-known site. Numerous organizations—the Pathfinder Society, the church of Nethys, the Esoteric Order of the Palatine Eye, and the Cyphermages, to name but a few—have arranged to place representatives in the old

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stone giant fortress of Jorgenfist, where they all work to research the library's holdings. The PCs must travel to the now-reclaimed fortress to speak to one of these groups to secure permission to peruse the stacks within.

The trip to Jorgenfist is not detailed in this adventure; if you want to expand this journey, this volume's Bestiary provides several potential encounters for such use on page 81.

As the PCs approach Jorgenfist, though, something strange occurs. As the walled complex comes into view, marked by a looming black tower protruding above a ring-shaped stone wall, the world suddenly falls eerily silent. Leaves carried on the wind freeze in the air. The waters of the Muschkal River below stand still. Even the clouds in the sky above become motionless. Jorgenfist has become shrouded in an immense zone of fractured time, but the PCs, by dint of their future travel to the Dimension of Time and association with the damage done to the ancient past, can act normally within it.

The region surrounding Jorgenfist functions for the PCs as if they were under the effects of a *time stop* spell. No time passes in the rest of the world as long as they remain in the area, although they continue to age (and spell durations continue to play out) as normal. They cannot damage, move, or manipulate creatures or objects in the surrounding world, and as they explore the site, they'll be able to view various researchers and scholars frozen as they go about their daily activities. Jorgenfist has been transformed into a scholastic retreat, but the PCs cannot take part.

EVENT 1: DRAGON DISPLACED (CR 14)

As the PCs approach Jorgenfist, it will be impossible for them not to notice a large purple dragon perched atop the Black Tower. After a moment, the dragon flickers like a mirage and then disappears.

Creature: Expelled from the Dimension of Time after he attempted to manipulate reality by forcing fractures in the flow of time, the time dragon Ninuron has forgotten much of what he once knew. Regressed in age to the status of a young adult and lacking all but vague hints of future memories of his potential, the time dragon was led here by his visions, believing someone will eventually come who can help him with his predicament. He suspects the PCs have something to do with his situation in the future and hopes to learn from them in the present what they did to him.

The time dragon knew he was in the right place when he arrived and was able to enter the time fracture, discovering that within Jorgenfist, time itself seems to have come to a standstill. Ninuron being a native of the Dimension of Time, his presence in the fracture is something of a paradox. While time stands still for

everything else, it continues as normal for the dragon save for brief fits where time flows randomly. One such fit strikes him as the PCs first spot him, and for the next few rounds, time flows in a jumble for the distraught dragon.

Ninuron appears again 1 round after he vanishes, appearing to fly backward through the air, as if reversed in time, only to vanish once he appears to land atop the tower. A PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Perception check confirms that the dragon didn't land so much as take off from the tower in reverse.

The time dragon is quite disoriented and in excruciating pain as a result of becoming unmoored from time. Interacting with Ninuron takes place over five phases, each of which lasts only a few moments. A PC can perform a single round's worth of actions during each phase, most likely in the form of attempting skill checks as they interact with the dragon. Any spell effect that successfully targets Ninuron has its duration shortened such that it ends at the end of the round it takes effect, but any long-term effects created by Ninuron on the PCs last for their normal duration.

As these 5 rounds unfold, Ninuron attempts to interact with the PCs, and the PCs can ignore the dragon, react to these attempts using various skill checks (as indicated in each phase), or attack the dragon. Attacking Ninuron convinces him the PCs are enemies, and his anger is enough to allow him to break out of his scrambled timeline—the resulting battle plays out normally, with Ninuron attempting to surrender to the PCs if they get the upper hand (as detailed in the Morale entry of his statistics on page 62).

The 5 rounds in which Ninuron interacts with the PCs are listed below in the order in which the PCs experience them, with the order Ninuron experiences them listed in parentheses. As the PCs attempt skill checks, note their results for each phase. The results of a skill check in what is a later phase for the PCs might affect Ninuron's disposition in what is an earlier phase for the PCs (as his timeline is currently jumbled), and a bonus might apply retroactively. If at least one PC manages to succeed at a skill check in each of three of the five phases, the PCs manage to soothe the confused dragon's mind enough that he settles back into the timeline and can interact with them normally (see Development on page 6).

Note that as each phase begins, the PCs experience a sense of *déjà vu*, allowing them to “remember” how they handled that particular bit of interaction with the dragon. Inform the PCs each phase which skill they all remember using—that skill is the only one that can potentially soothe the dragon. The PCs are free to take other actions, of course, but if they don't manage to succeed at three skill checks over the five phases, the dragon attacks after the fifth phase.

Phase 1 (round 3): Ninuron appears in the courtyard west of the entrance gate in front of the PCs. He looks curiously down at them and says, "Perhaps the place you seek is the place I have lost." He steps backward to stand among what was once a feasting hall for giants. Before the dragon disappears, a PC can attempt a DC 24 Diplomacy check to introduce the party; if a PC succeeded at the Knowledge check during the fourth phase, the PC making the introduction gains a +2 circumstance bonus on this check.

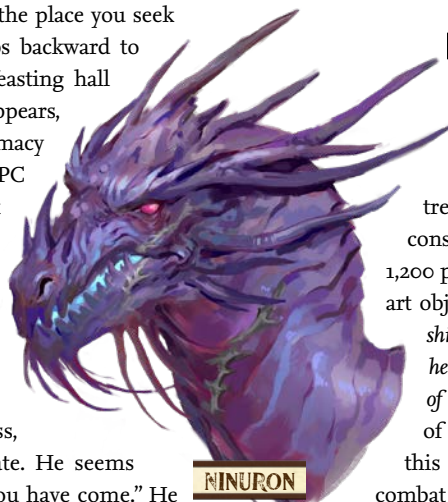
Phase 2 (round 1): Ninuron emerges from a large opening in a spire in the middle of the fortress, just opposite of the entrance gate. He seems quite pleased and says, "At last, you have come." He then moves to perch on a large, dilapidated stable to the east of the gate. Before Ninuron vanishes, a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check realizes that the dragon is confused but trying not to jump to conclusions or assume the PCs are enemies.

Phase 3 (round 4): Ninuron appears in the middle of a ruined building just beyond the courtyard. "Perhaps you are here to help me..." He launches into the air and lands on the entrance gate behind the PCs. "... Or perhaps I remember you because it was you who did this to me!" Before the dragon vanishes, a PC can attempt a DC 26 Intimidate check to stand up to the dragon; if a PC succeeded at the Diplomacy check during the first phase, the PC attempting the Intimidate check gains a +2 circumstance bonus on this check.

Phase 4 (round 2): Ninuron appears perched on the stable once again. His brow furrows as he says, "I have dreamed about us meeting here for some time now, but I do not know why we are here in the first place." He steps off the stable and moves into the empty courtyard space. A PC can attempt a DC 22 Knowledge (planes) check before Ninuron vanishes to realize that the influence of damage to time itself might have something to do with the dragon's situation; if a PC succeeded at the Diplomacy check during the second phase, PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on this check as they've earned a few more precious seconds of Ninuron's attention as a result of their greeting.

Phase 5 (round 5): Ninuron appears on top of the entrance gate, glaring down at the PCs. "Explain yourselves!" he bellows. The PCs have a brief moment to attempt a DC 26 Diplomacy check or a DC 26 Knowledge (planes) check to convince Ninuron that he is under the effects of a major temporal disturbance. If a PC succeeded at the Intimidate check during the third phase, PCs gain a +2 circumstance bonus on either check. If by this point

the PCs haven't succeeded at a skill check in three of the five phases, Ninuron roars in rage and attacks.



NINURON

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 212 (see page 62)

Treasure: Ninuron stashed his treasure atop the Black Tower, a stash consisting of 154,555 cp, 71,040 sp, 18,788 gp, 1,200 pp, gems worth a total of 7,750 gp, various art objects worth a total of 6,312 gp, a +2 *tower shield*, a +1 *corrosive*^{UE} *warhammer*, a +1 *seeking heavy crossbow*, a *circlet of persuasion*, a *deck of illusions*, a *ring of force shield*, and a pair of *tremor boots*^{UE}. The PCs can easily find this stash if they have defeated Ninuron in combat and take any amount of time to search the fortress. Alternatively, the time dragon gifts it all to the PCs if they help him (see below).

Development: If the PCs calm Ninuron or subdue him, they can have a normal conversation with him. The time dragon is still in pain from his ordeal, so he speaks a little slowly at first. He introduces himself and explains his predicament: he can sense that he doesn't quite belong on the Material Plane, but he has no memory of where he came from or how he arrived on this plane. He speaks of the dreams he had of the PCs, though he is unsure whether these are memories or visions of the future. He was drawn to Jorgenfist, certain that the PCs would be here. He plainly asks for their help.

The PCs have likely already heard the name Stethelos; if they haven't figured out what it means and ask the dragon, Ninuron's eyes widen. He sighs in a combination of recognition and despair before admitting that this is the city at the center of time, his home, but that he cannot remember anything more about it, for, as he notes bitterly, "I haven't been there yet." If the PCs ask Ninuron at this point or later about the Steward of Stethelos (see "Another Visit" on page 10), he has another flicker of recognition, admitting that the person they describe sounds familiar, but he's not sure how or why.

In any case, Ninuron wants the PCs to enter the Therassic Library below. He can feel that something within is linked to the fractured time afflicting the region, and that if the PCs can find out what it is, it might give him the information he seeks to find a way back home to the Demiplace of Time. If the PCs can find anything to help him, Ninuron promises to give them the treasure hoard he has accumulated during his time on the Material Plane when they return.

Once the PCs repair the time fracture, Ninuron appears in the normal timeline along with them. Perched as he

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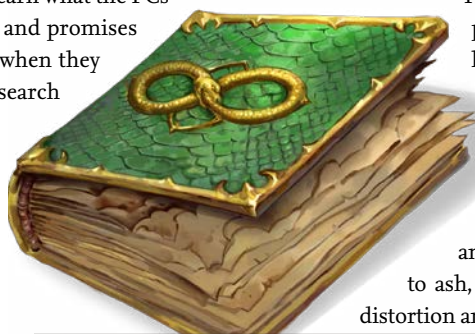
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is atop the Black Tower, he (and his treasure) are out of sight of the scholars below. Ninuron avoids the residents' attention as long as he can, hoping to reunite with the PCs to thank them and offer them choices of rewards from his treasure. He's eager to learn what the PCs did to heal the fractures in time and promises to do what he can to help them when they meet again before he flies off in search of a way to return to his home.

Story Award: If the PCs deal peacefully with Ninuron, award them XP as if they had defeated him in combat.



BOOK OF SERPENTS, ASH, AND ACORNS

THE THERASSIC LIBRARY

A gaping pit is located in the center of the fortress of Jorgenfist, with a set of stone stairs skirting the edge and leading down into a set of natural caverns under the fortress.

As the PCs delve deeper and reach area A1, they note a strange distortion in the air and surrounding stone. The Therassic Library, where once Mokmurian dwelt and spun his plans, exists at the epicenter of the time distortion. Here, the walls and furnishings of each room flicker and shift, at one moment appearing pristine and new, at another old and caked with dust, and at yet another in crumbling ruins, but the actual layout of the Therassic Library as the PCs explore it is as it existed when it was first being constructed. In certain rooms, specific manifestations of prior inhabitants become more visually apparent (such as the brief manifestation of Mokmurian in area A2). If you've run *Rise of the Runelords* at your table, feel free to have the PCs periodically witness brief visions of prior PCs as they explored the chambers in that Adventure Path.

These distortions are a side effect of Runelord Alaznist's visit to the Therassic Library during her search for the *Scepter of Ages*. She learned from Xanderghul's notes that the Therassic Library contained a copy of the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns: Shadows of What Was and Will Be*, a text believed to be the most complete source of written information about the Dimension of Time. Hoping to find information about the *Scepter of Ages* therein, Alaznist infiltrated the site and explored the library. She was frustrated to find that the book was not among those kept here, and she resorted to using a *retroognition*^{OA} spell enhanced by a *wish* to peer back in time. The technique worked better in some ways than she'd anticipated, but had a strange side effect. *The Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns* has always been susceptible to temporal magic, and as Alaznist made her *wish*, its power in the present synchronized with the book's presence in the past, causing it to manifest in Alaznist's hands while simultaneously becoming the

first instance of her damaging and straining the time stream itself and creating a localized fracture in the flow of time. Alaznist studied the book from cover to cover, making discoveries that had eluded even Xanderghul.

These discoveries filled in the missing pieces of the puzzle and revealed to her a route to the *Scepter of Ages*. In an attempt to prevent any others from following her footsteps, Alaznist attempted to destroy the book but only partially succeeded. As she damaged the text and forced every other page to crumble to ash, Alaznist was shunted out of the time distortion and back into the normal flow of time—without the book. Figuring that having the book trapped in a span

between seconds was almost as good as its destruction, she called it a win and set off to recover the *Scepter of Ages*. She was unaware that the PCs, as a side effect of their future meddling with the flow of time, would eventually be able to enter the time-fractured site.

A1. Entrance

A passage of unworked stone gives way to a smooth corridor in this area.

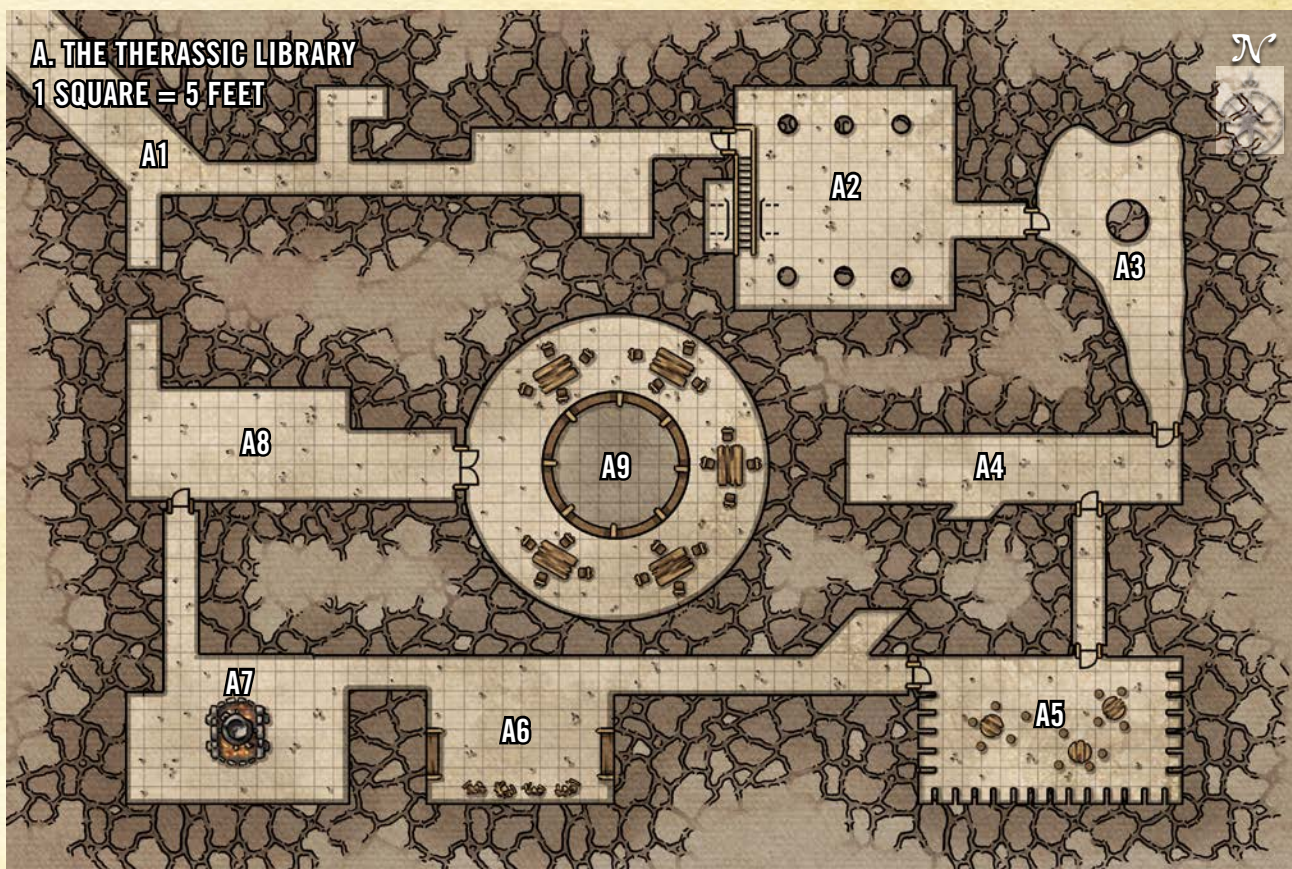
The entrance to the Therassic Library has been only minimally affected by the temporal disturbance, and these hallways have reverted to a time before they had been completed.

Time does not pass for the rest of the world as long as the PCs are in the Therassic Library, but it continues to pass normally for the PCs. If they step into the library at midnight on the first day of the year and then were to spend 5 years in the library before they leave it, the PCs would find themselves emerging at midnight on the same day they entered the library but they would be 5 years older. Visitors to the library still need to eat, drink, and sleep as normal, and durations of effects are unchanged. Teleportation spells function within the dungeon, but they do not allow travel into or out of it.

A2. Lecture Hall (CR 14)

Dozens of transparent shades pass through one another in this large hall. Some ghostly lecturers standing throughout the room appear to be giving simultaneous speeches, though the room remains completely silent.

Thanks to the temporal disturbances, this lecture hall is filled with echoes of Therassic monks who studied



and spoke within this hall. While these visions might be distracting, they are ultimately harmless.

Creature: What isn't harmless in this room is a powerful intruder from the Dimension of Time, a creature called a time dimensional. Drawn to this region by the lure of the fracture in time, the time dimensional manifests as soon as the PCs step into the room. As it does so, it pulls with it fragments from the recent past, and as the battle begins, it appears as a towering stone giant wizard: Mokmurian himself. The time dimensional has none of Mokmurian's memories or abilities, and it functions as a typical member of its strange species—in effect, it is under what amounts to a *veil* spell to hide its appearance. As soon as the time dimensional damages a creature or is itself damaged, though, its false image fades away and its true form, that of a lanky human-shaped entity composed of crystal facets, becomes apparent.

If the PCs manage to defeat the time dimensional on their own without anyone being slain, they've done well, but the first time a PC would otherwise be killed by the monster, the Steward of Stethelos intervenes to save that PC. Unlike any other encounter in which the steward could potentially save a PC, when she does

so in this encounter, her intervention causes the time dimensional to recoil in pain before it is banished back to the Dimension of Time. If this occurs, the party is nearly overwhelmed by a sudden rush of unknown memories as reality itself parts and they glimpse a city rising from the horizon of an ocean, as viewed from the shore of a green meadow. The time dimensional is hurled across time and space into this horizon before the vision vanishes, returning the PCs to the lecture hall and allowing them to progress into the dungeon unimpeded by further time dimensional attacks.

TIME DIMENSIONAL

CR 14

XP 38,400

hp 199 (see page 90)

A3. Smooth Room

The corners of this chamber have been smoothed into rounded edges, so that the room contains no sharp angles.

Mokmurian used occult tomes to make this chamber a pen for a trio of hounds of Tindalos, removing many

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of the room's angles to bind them here long enough to serve as watchdogs. The heroes who defeated Mokmurian also battled those hounds, and at your option the PCs might catch phantasmal glimpses of this fight through flickering distortions of time.

A4. Hallway (CR 11)

A line of runes is carved most of the way down this long hallway, while a hammer and chisel lie on the ground below a half-completed carved decoration at the western end.

Trap: The time disturbance has done more than alter the room here—a raw fissure in time itself has infused the southern door, creating a trap-like hazard that inflicts the wracking pains of advanced age.

TEMPORAL FISSURE

CR 11

XP 12,800

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** 1 hour

Effect When the southern door in area **A4** is opened, the accumulated temporal energy rips apart, forming a fissure in time that fills all of area **A4**; all creatures in this area must succeed at a DC 18 Fortitude save or take 8d6 points of damage and gain a permanent –6 penalty to Strength as they painfully grow old and feeble. On a successful Fortitude save, a creature halves the damage and negates the permanent Strength penalty. The Strength penalty can be removed by *heal*, *greater restoration*, or a more powerful but similar effect.

A5. Barracks

The entrances to more than a dozen tiny alcoves line the walls of this large room. Stools sit around a few round tables, each piled with strangely shimmering scrolls and several quills with dried nibs.

The Therassic monks rested here when not studying in the lecture hall, copying tomes in the library, or practicing their fighting skills in the training room. They also took their scant meals in the common room, often while reading. The scrolls contain notes on the library's contents, but they are in a state of both being written and decaying to dust, resulting in a strange sort of fluctuating manifestation. While they cannot be taken or otherwise interacted with physically, they can be read by anyone who can read Thassilonian. Reading the scrolls takes an hour of study and requires a successful DC 25 Perception check to correctly decipher the flickering text (on a failure, a PC learns no new information, but she can attempt a new

check immediately). On a success, the character learns a bit of how the library in area **A9** is organized and gains a +5 bonus on checks to research there (this bonus stacks with the library's existing +4 bonus).

A6. Training Room

Dusty training dummies stand against the southern wall next to broken and empty weapons racks.

The Therassic monks once used this room to spar against one another and to practice their martial techniques against the wooden training dummies. The temporal disturbance has caused this room to appear as it did several centuries after Earthfall and the downfall of the Thassilonian empire. As such, the old dummies and weapons racks crumble at the slightest touch, but they immediately re-form a round later to their prior fragility.

A7. Unfinished Cauldron (CR 12)

A twelve-foot-tall iron cauldron stands in this room, as if waiting for a gigantic cook. A large, unfinished rune of a star is etched into the side of the cauldron, accompanied by similar runes carved into the surrounding stone walls.

When he took over these chambers, Mokmurian discovered that the cauldron in this room was a powerful magic item called a *runeslave cauldron*, which the Therassic monks had created as a gift for Runelord Karzoug to help keep his giant slaves in line. The temporal disturbance reverted this room to a point thousands of years ago before the device was finished being created.

Trap: Although not yet a completed artifact, the *runeslave cauldron* is still charged with powerful energy. Until the Sihedron rune is properly etched into the cauldron's side, this energy remains unstable and strikes out at any living creature that comes near it, manifesting as sickly green lashes of force energy that snap at every target in the room for 1 round before they burst in a wave of mental anguish that compels those affected to attack indiscriminately.

RUNESLAVE TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (approaching within 10 feet of the cauldron); **Reset** 24 hours

Effect spell effect (sickening *magic missile*; 1d4+1 force damage and sickened; Fortitude DC 19 negates sickened; multiple targets [five random targets in area **A7**]); spell effect (*mass suggestion* to attack the nearest creature for 1 round; Will DC 19 negates; multiple targets [all creatures in area **A7**])

ANOTHER VISIT

In addition to the strange visions of prior PCs and ancient Thassilonians, one more figure appears before the party at some point: the mysterious woman who introduced herself as "Time's Steward" in the previous adventure. When she appears before the PCs in the library, she seems to have grown into middle age, and the cracked and empty hourglass she carried before is intact and still filled with glowing motes of silvery sand—sand that looks as if it will soon run out.

The steward can appear at any time in this adventure after the PCs have dealt with Ninuron and entered the Therassic Library, manifesting at a point where a PC is in danger. She appears out of nowhere to intercept a fatal attack against a PC, using the hourglass to block the blow. The attack causes the glass to crack and its sand to drain. As this occurs, she says, "Such a fate was not meant for you, for I still await you in Stethelos," before she once again fades from view.

This intervention is intended to save a PC from what you know would be certain death, but it can occur only once during the adventure. It must happen at some point—if the steward hasn't manifested by the time the PCs are in their final battle against Xanderghul, she does so then, even if the attack she blocks with her hourglass wouldn't have resulted in a PC death. Note that if the steward performs this intervention against the time dimensional in area **A2**, it not only saves the PC from death but banishes the outsider from this plane.

A8. Impossible Room

This chamber is devoid of decoration, but the walls to expand and contract as if the room were breathing. When not looked at directly, the floor seems to be undulating of its own accord.

When Mokmurian occupied this complex, this room contained a trap that would shrink those who stepped into the chamber. The magic of that trap, combined with the temporal disturbance that has afflicted the entire structure, has caused this room's dimensions to seem to constantly warp and change, making it disorienting to navigate the chamber. Any creature that spends more than 1 minute in this room must succeed at a DC 23 Will saving throw or become nauseated for 1 hour. While this effect is not quite a trap, a character who casts *detect magic* and studies the chaotic interactions of magical auras in this room can attempt a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check to be able to recognize the malfunctioning auras from the mass reduction trap, at which point that energy can be dispelled with *dispel magic* against a CL 15th effect. Doing so does nothing to affect the time distortions in the site,

but it makes this room as easy to travel through as the others in the library.

Story Award: If the PCs remove the nauseating effect in this area, grant them 6,400 XP.

A9. Library (CR 13)

A deep well lined with books, scrolls, and tablets occupies the center of this circular chamber, which is lit from above by exquisite crystal lanterns that hang from fine chains affixed to the domed ceiling sixty feet above. Faintly glowing sigils line the walls. Comfortable-looking armchairs and mahogany reading desks surround the well. A large book on a table to the north seems to flicker and shimmer, distorting the air around it.

This chamber is the source of the temporal disturbance. The pit in the room's center is 50 feet deep, its walls lined with shelves filled with books. No ladders or stairs lead into the pit, as the monks used magic to find and retrieve books from within. While the PCs may be eager to investigate the books, they'll be disappointed to find that nearly all of the contents of the shelves are displaced from time, and are thus under an effect like *temporal stasis*. Only one book, the source of the distortion, is protected from this effect—see Hazard below.

Creature: At the height of the Thassilonian empire, the library's wizard-monks protected their collection of lore with several clockwork assassins: deadly killers made of finely crafted gears and springs. Fortunately for the PCs, only one of these constructs has been pulled out of time to guard this chamber, but even on its own it likely poses a deadly threat. The clockwork assassin is programmed to take out any unauthorized intruders into the library, which the PCs certainly are. It fights until destroyed, but as long as the temporal distortions remain in effect, it is replaced by a new and undamaged version of itself once every 24 hours.

CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

CR 13

XP 25,600

hp 119 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 59)

Hazard: Once the chamber's guardian has been defeated, an investigation of the room should quickly reveal that almost every object in the room and its well is locked outside of time and cannot be manipulated—with one exception. The large book on the northern table is a copy of a rare text called the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns*, and it is this book (and Runelord Alaznist's influence in the recent past) that has caused the distortions in the library. The book is damaged; every other page is missing from it. Even in its complete version, the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns* is difficult to comprehend, but with half its contents missing, attempting to read it is

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quite dangerous. Any attempt to do so causes the reader's mind to be assaulted by every single memory she's ever had, simultaneously vying for attention. The reader must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be confused for 1 round as a result of this mind-affecting effect. Regardless of the result of this save, the character also experiences a strange, alien thought not her own: a strong desire to exit the library. This thought is in fact implanted in the reader's mind by the book itself, which when complete is an intelligent artifact.

EVENT 2: REMOVING THE DISTORTIONS (CR 12)

The process of removing the temporal distortions afflicting the Therassic Library—and thus not only freeing Ninuron but also regaining the opportunity to use the library for research—is a relatively simple task that may not be obvious if no PC attempts to read the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns*. Merely transporting the book outside of the Therassic Library is enough to sever its link and undo the time fracture. Doing so causes the damaged book to immediately return to the past, taking it out of the PCs' hands (at least for now—they may have a chance to examine the book further in the final adventure of this campaign) and releasing those who have been trapped inside. A character who studies the magical auras surrounding the book with the aid of a spell like *detect magic* can, with a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or planes) check, determine that if the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns* were simply physically removed from the dungeon, its link would be severed and the time fracture would heal.

Creatures: While the process of removing these distortions is simple, it also creates danger. Once the PCs begin to move the book, the distortions and stresses they place on the temporal fracture swiftly draw the attention of several advanced hounds of Tindalos. The first of these creatures appears from a nearby corner as soon as the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns* is carried out of area A9. At the start of each round thereafter, another advanced hound of Tindalos appears and joins the combat, to a maximum of four. Once all four hounds are slain, no further hounds will come after the book for an hour, after which the process repeats itself if the PCs haven't yet left the Therassic Library. Note that no hounds can manifest in area A3. Existing hounds can pursue PCs into the room, but as long as the PCs are in this area, no additional hounds arrive to seek them out.

ADVANCED HOUNDS OF TINDALOS (4) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 105 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 292, 158)

Development: Once the *Book of Serpents, Ash, and Acorns* has been removed from the area,

it whisks itself away back into the past where it belongs, and the PCs are returned to the normal timeline. This may result in the PCs appearing in the midst of a crowd of researchers or scholars—an event that will startle some for a moment but will, in the long run, be taken in stride. After all, the site is certainly no stranger to spellcasters teleporting into the region out of the blue!

EVENT 3: RESEARCH (CR 14)

Once the PCs restore the flow of time, they'll be able to research the cult of the Peacock Spirit in the Therassic Library. No one group controls the library today; instead, the various groups of scholars who have settled in the region work together to ensure that the site remains protected while still honoring each other's privacy. In time, this group may well form into its own faction



CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

devoted to preserving and protecting Thassilonian lore, but for now, the PCs will be regarded curiously but not opposed or bothered as they go about their research. By unwritten agreement, no books are removed from the immediate surroundings, but neither are any sections of the library off-limits to those who make the journey. Now and then, the site's defenders have been forced to step in and prevent access to those obviously intending villainy, but as long as the PCs don't look or act suspicious, they won't have any issues in researching here. At your option, you can certainly play up NPC interactions here with various factions and groups, but such flourishes are beyond the scope of this adventure.

There are numerous tomes within the Therassic Library, and it will take some time for the PCs to find the information they seek. The following section uses the research rules presented on pages 148–152 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Intrigue*. Using this abstracted method, you can quickly cover the otherwise long process of sifting through dozens or even hundreds of tomes for just the right nuggets of lore.

In addition to the ability to read Thassilonian and the correct skills to perform the research, the PCs need some means to reach the books stored in the central shaft of area **A9**. A magical way of flying (such as *fly* or *levitate*) allows PCs to move up and down the pit with ease, but if the PCs want to rig up a series of ropes to climb, they will need to succeed at a Climb check for each research interval (and perhaps endure the disapproving glances of other scholars who find such physical methods of navigating as beneath themselves).

THERASSIC LIBRARY

CR 14

XP 38,400

Complexity 40 (difficult)

Languages Thassilonian

Research Check Knowledge (history), Knowledge (nobility), or Knowledge (religion); **Knowledge Bonus** +4

kp 42

RESEARCH THRESHOLDS

kp 40 The Peacock Spirit was a popular religion in the Thassilonian empire, particularly in Cyrusian. Its symbol was a large peacock feather with an open eye inside of it. The Peacock Spirit's areas of concern were the mind, the body, and the soul, and it was worshiped mainly by ascetics, scholars, and wizards who studied rune magic.

kp 30 Runelord Xanderghul built the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, though the other six runelords offered funds or workers to aid the project. Xanderghul was a great proponent of the deity, and this splendid cathedral complex spurred the growth of the religion to the empire's other realms. At the same time, the runelord also established the Therassic Order, the group of wizard-monks who controlled

this very library, and the Order of the Green Feather, which functioned as the religion's militaristic arm.

kp 20 Devotees of the Peacock Spirit were expected to journey to the Grand Temple at least once in their lives. The trip into the mountains where the temple resides was said to be arduous and dangerous, but the beauty of the temple grounds was supposedly worth the trouble. Worshipers returned from the temple refreshed and invigorated, as if a weight were lifted from their souls. The temple's valley (as well as the temple itself) is not only hidden by a powerful illusion but also protected by a potent *dimensional lock* effect save for in a few (unspecified in the library) areas.

kp 10 Even though it is impossible to teleport directly into the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, high-ranking members of the Therassic Order were gifted a way to instantly travel there in the form of an occult ritual. However, this method doesn't include a way to teleport away from the temple, so the Therassic monks either had to return on foot or secure some other means of travel.

kp 0 The PCs find the full text of the viridian transcendence. This occult ritual is detailed on page 78 of this book. The PCs also learn that the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit is protected by seven *Peacock Shrines*, each of which grants inhabitants (but not visitors or invaders) defenses. While this information doesn't indicate how a *Peacock Shrine* can be deactivated, it does mention the defensive effects each shrine grants: the red shrine grants mental protection, the orange shrine bolsters the temple's walls, the yellow shrine grants physical protection, the green shrine grants immunity to poison and resistance to magic, the blue shrine allows inhabitants to conjure and summon creatures with ease, the indigo shrine grants enhanced healing, and the violet shrine grants Runelord Xanderghul some form of immortality.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to research everything and reduce the library's kp to 0 in 7 days or less, award them full XP for the task. If they take longer to do so, award them half this XP amount (19,200 XP).

PART 2: CULTISTS IN THE CLOUDS

Parts 2 and 3 of this adventure shift focus to a remote site deep in the Kodar Mountains along the northern border of Varisia. Here, the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit awaits exploration, and Runelord Xanderghul strives to reclaim his lost power. While the PCs could travel to the temple's location on foot (or by using spells such as *overland flight* or *shadow walk*), such would be an arduous journey indeed. The temple is located in a hidden valley

not far from the Chavali River, about 50 miles east of the Mobhad Leigh and 400 miles north of the Sunken Queen. This adventure assumes instead that the PCs make use of the viridian transcendence to teleport to area **B1**.

TEMPLE GROUNDS

Despite being located well above the treeline, high in the Kodar Mountains, the temple's valley maintains a comfortable temperature year-round. Inhabitants and visitors are protected from the ill effects of high altitudes, and weather patterns in the temple grounds are never severe—the “worst” it gets are the pleasant rainstorms that sometimes grace the valley. The valley's walls are sheer cliffs 3,000 feet in height, giving the whole location more of the feel of being located in a dormant volcano's gullet than a standard valley.

The Peacock Shrines

Although *prismatic sphere*, *prismatic spray*, and *prismatic wall* are not illusion spells, Xanderghul had always admired the spells for their power and beauty. In creating the temple, Xanderghul incorporated the seven colors each of these spells used into the architecture, associating each color with one of the seven schools of Thassilonian magic as he did.

Seven stone statues of peacocks, their tail feathers represented by elegantly carved rods, can be found throughout the temple. These statues are the *Peacock Shrines*. Each serves as a focus for one of the seven magical wards that protect those who dwell within the complex. By removing the correct rod from a shrine, that shrine's ward is negated.

As long as these rods remain in place, the seven *Peacock Shrines* grant potent defensive boons to those who dwell under their influence. These effects are cumulative as one delves deeper into the complex, so if the PCs ignore the shrines, they'll find foes deeper in the temple to be exceptionally difficult indeed. Wise PCs take the time to strip the *Peacock Shrines* of their rods as they go. Each *Peacock Shrine* is effectively a minor artifact and cannot be damaged or altered by magic until the proper rod is removed, at which point the shrine can be damaged normally (hardness 8, hp 20, break DC 24). Removing a rod is noticeable to the temple's denizens, and at your option, nearby guardians might come to investigate should the PCs linger in the immediate area after disabling a shrine.

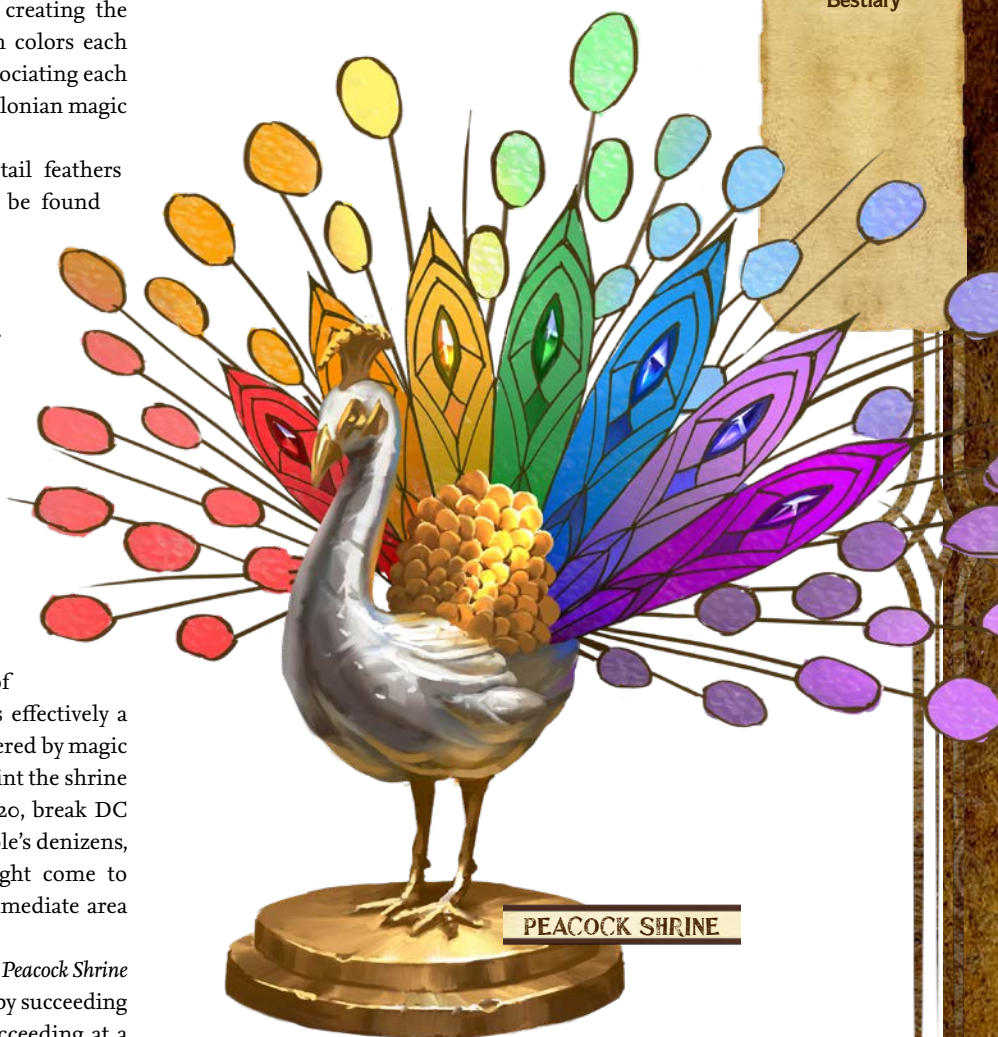
A character who uses *detect magic* to study a *Peacock Shrine* can decipher the effects of the ward it grants by succeeding at a DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check. By succeeding at a

DC 25 Perception check, a PC notes that the tail-feather rods can be removed with a bit of work—a series of twists and tugs that takes a full-round action to perform. Once a rod is removed, its associated ward fades, but the character who removed the rod is subjected to one of seven magical effects, regardless of the method used to remove the rod.

The benefits granted by the *Peacock Shrines* are not calculated into the creature stat blocks in this adventure.

1. Cloister of Cerulean Languor (blue; conjuration): The inhabitants of area **C**, as well as the rest of the complex, can conjure and summon creatures without being barred by the *dimensional lock* effect that wards the entire region. Removing this rod causes a PC to be petrified, as per *flesh to stone*, unless he succeeds at a DC 20 Fortitude save.

2. Garrison of Golden Greed (yellow; transmutation): The inhabitants of the garrison, as well as all inhabitants of the valley beyond the garrison (but not those in areas **B–D**) gain DR 10/— and resistance 30 to all types of energy.



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TEMPLE WARDS

In addition to the seven specific wards granted to all inhabitants of the temple and its surrounding grounds by the seven *Peacock Shrines*, the temple and its valley are shielded from view by a powerful and permanent *mirage arcana* effect (CL 20th) that makes the entire valley appear as an unpopulated mountaintop. This effect is accompanied by a permanent *screen* effect (CL 20th) to fool spying. These effects were placed ages ago by Runelord Xanderghul, and seeing through the illusions requires a PC to succeed at a DC 39 Will saving throw.

Furthermore, the entire valley, temple, and its dungeons are protected by a permanent *dimensional lock* (CL 20th) effect. The viridian transcendence still functions in this area, though, and is the one teleportation effect allowed. If all seven *Peacock Shrines* are deactivated, this *dimensional lock* effect ends.

Removing this rod deals 80 points of electricity damage to the PC (Reflex DC 20 half).

3. Jade Gardens of Jealousy (green, abjuration): The shining children who guard this location, as well as all inhabitants of areas J–O, have SR 26 and are immune to poison. Removing this rod poisons the PC (save Fort DC 20; frequency 1/round for 6 rounds; initial effect death; secondary effect 1 Constitution drain; cure 2 consecutive saves).

4. Nave of Indigo Decadence (indigo, necromancy): The inhabitants of the temple (area K) and its dungeons (areas L–O) have fast healing 10. Removing this rod targets the PC with an *insanity* spell (Will DC 20 negates).

5. Dungeon of Fiery Fury (orange, evocation): The walls of the temple above (areas J and K, including the bridge connecting the two) as well as all walls within the dungeons below (areas L–O) have hardness 30, have twice as many hit points as normal, gain a +8 bonus to their break DC, and cannot be affected by or bypassed by spells such as *transmute rock to mud*, *phase door*, or *passwall*. Removing this rod deals 40 points of acid damage to the PC (Reflex DC 20 half).

6. Vault of Crimson Longing (red, enchantment): The inhabitants of areas K–O, with the exception of giants, are immune to mind-affecting effects. Removing this rod deals 20 points of fire damage to the PC (Reflex DC 20 half).

7. Refuge of Violet Vanity (violet, illusion): As long as this shrine's rod remains in place, Xanderghul cannot be killed (see page 65 for further details). Removing this rod causes the PC to be sent to a randomly determined other plane, even if the blue *Peacock Shrine* is still in effect (Will DC 20 negates).

Story Award: Each time the PCs remove a rod from a *Peacock Shrine*, grant them 19,200 XP.

B1. Arrival Chamber (CR 12)

Large alcoves to the north and south of this circular room are decorated with large painted carvings of a vibrantly colored peacock feather with a stylized blue eye open in the center. An archway in one wall provides access to a short hallway beyond. A line of script is carved into the archway's top.

The alcoves to the north and south are keyed to be the "landing zones" for the viridian transcendence, and have no magical auras of their own. Which alcove a traveler arrives in is random. The runes carved into the archway read, "Disciples of the Peacock Spirit Welcome" in Thassilonian.

Trap: Though Xanderghul was confident that no one but he and his followers would be able to learn and perform the viridian transcendence, the current caretakers of the temple are a bit more practical. They recently placed a trap on the archway leading out of this area that triggers whenever someone who doesn't worship the Peacock Spirit passes through it. When triggered, the trap doesn't have any obvious effects, so even if a PC fails her saving throw when stepping through the archway, someone must succeed at a DC 30 Perception check to notice a faint blue glow momentarily settle around the victim.

ARCHWAY OF CERTAIN SLOTH

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 32; Disable Device DC 32

EFFECTS

Trigger location; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*bestow curse* heightened to 7th level; each time the cursed creature enters combat, it is slowed [as per the spell *slow*] for the first 2d4 rounds of the fight; Will DC 20 negates)

B2. Guard Post (CR 12)

A handful of statues, ranging from lifelike depictions of humanoids to stylized renditions of peacocks, are scattered around this chamber. The domed ceiling forty feet above is supported by eight stone pillars.

Creatures: In the time that Xanderghul has spent recuperating from his resurrection, the Cult of the Peacock Spirit has recruited a fair number of members to protect the temple complex, promising wealth, power, and an eventual strike against the weak of the world. The cult found a sisterhood of medusas in Kaer Maga who were eager to join up. These expert archers provide the complex with its first line of defense. Two are currently stationed in this area. They haven't had to fend off any

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intruders yet, so they've passed the time carving realistic statues of humanoids, as well as a few other pieces, to decorate their guard post.

MEDUSA ARCHERS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

Medusa ranger 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 201)

LE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +17

DEFENSE

AC 24, **touch** 17, **flat-footed** 18 (+4 armor, +1 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural)

hp 129 each (11d10+69)

Fort +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities all-around vision

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee snake bite +11 (1d4+1 plus poison [DC 20])

Ranged +1 *seeking longbow* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+1/x3)

Special Attacks combat style (archery), favored enemy (humans +2), petrifying gaze (DC 17)

TACTICS

During Combat The medusa archers fire arrows at those who seem most resistant to their petrifying gazes or anyone trying to shield their eyes.

Morale When reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, a medusa archer flees to area C in search of aid. When encountered there, the medusa fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 20, **Con** 21,

Int 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13;

CMD 30

Feats Dodge, Endurance,

Improved Initiative,

Point-Blank Shot,

Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +14, Bluff +10, Disguise +10, Intimidate +13,

Perception +17, Stealth +16, Survival +6; **Racial Modifiers**

+4 Perception

Languages Common

SQ favored terrain (mountain +2), track +1, wild empathy +5

Gear +1 *studded leather*, +1 *seeking longbow* with 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1

B3. Cyan Pools

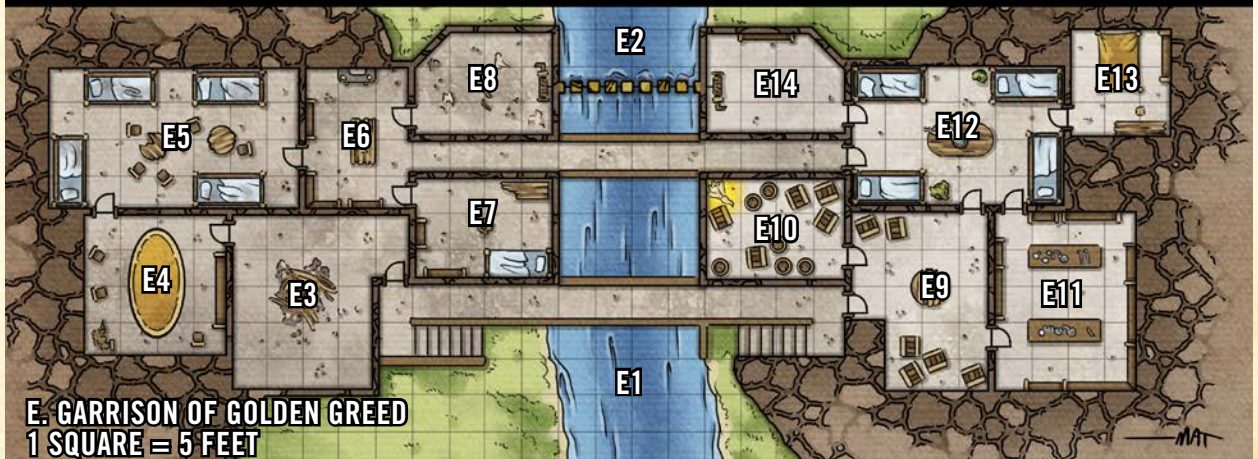
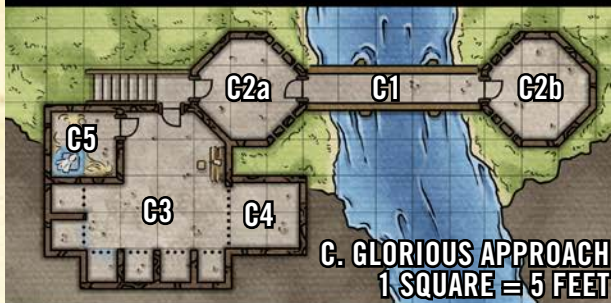
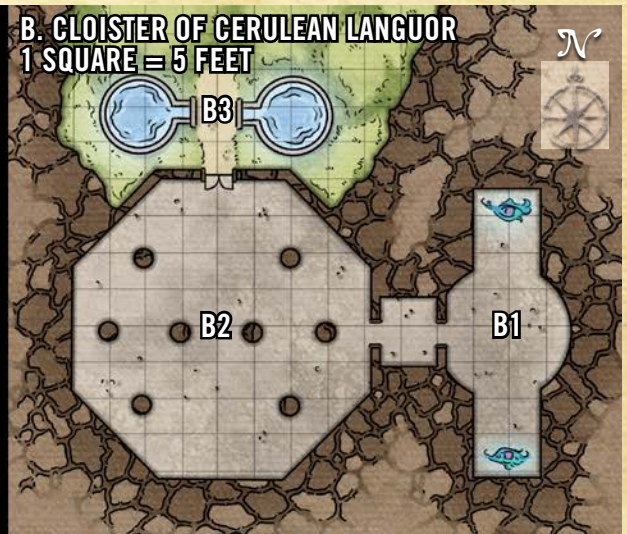
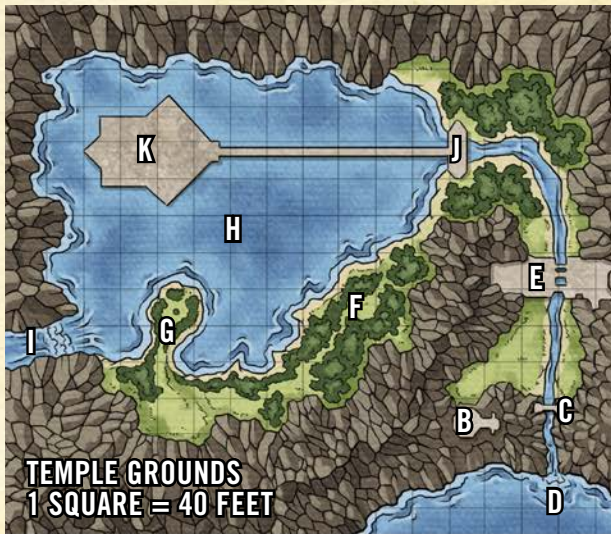
Two ten-foot-diameter pools of sparkling blue water sit before the entrance to a stone building built into the side of a cliff. To the north, a grassy valley opens up, its borders defined by imposing sheer cliffs that are well over a thousand feet tall.

Pilgrims to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit and members of the Therassic Order would sometimes stop at this place of meditation and relaxation before moving deeper into the temple grounds. Each pool is 10 feet deep and has a bed of loose rocks; the water is weirdly blue in hue but is safe to drink.

Treasure: A box containing a *lesser reach metamagic rod*^{UE} is hidden under some rocks at the bottom of the eastern pool. A swimming or wading PC can spot it from inside the pond by succeeding at a DC 25 Perception check, but a PC outside of the pond must succeed at a



MEDUSA ARCHER



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DC 32 Perception check to notice something unusual under the water.

C1. Glorious Approach

The waters of the Peacock River average a depth of 20 feet, with steep underwater slopes along either bank. Note that the archers in area C2 have an excellent view of the river from their arrow slits. The river flows south from this point to area D.

C2. Guard Towers (CR 12)

Both of these octagonal stone guard towers stand 30 feet high, their roofs rising up to conical points. Within, each tower has a single floor located 10 feet above the level of the water below. A wooden bridge over the river connects the two towers at this height.

Creatures: A medusa archer stands guard in each tower. While each should be watching the surroundings, the fact that there have been no unexpected visitors to the temple since the cultists brought them here from Kaer Maga has resulted in their succumbing to boredom. The medusas have been keeping themselves entertained with archery contests, and unless they've been warned of the PCs' approach, they are presently engaged in firing arrows at vaguely humanoid targets made of wood and clumps of dried grass placed on the river banks halfway to the garrison to the north. As such, they take a -4 penalty on Perception checks. Once they notice the PCs, though, they immediately open fire unless the PCs are disguised as Peacock cultists, in which case the medusa in area C2a quickly moves into area C3 to alert the jailer that visitors are drawing near.

MEDUSA ARCHERS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 129 each (see page 15)

C3. Cell Block

Unlit torches hang on the walls between six small prison cells and one larger one.

This room hasn't seen much use of late, but when the empire was active, the smaller cells were used to hold minor prisoners of the cult.

C4. Holding Cell

The bare walls of this stark room are painted midnight blue and seem to absorb the light. A wall of black metal bars set with a single gate prevents exit into the main cell block.

This prison cell's bars are made of adamantite (hardness 20, hp 80, break DC 34). The gate is kept locked

and can be opened with a successful DC 35 Disable Device or with the key kept by the jailer in area C5. Note that the narrow gaps in the bars and construction of the lock mean that any Disable Device attempt to pick the lock from inside the cell takes a -5 penalty.

A permanent antimagic aura fills the inside of the cell at all times save for the instant that a creature fails to perform the viridian transcendence correctly, in which case the antimagic effect drops just long enough for those involved with the ritual to appear within this cell. If more creatures than can fit in the space of this cell are captured in this way, those in excess are not transported at all and remain behind where the viridian transcendence ritual failed.

A high-pitched, whining sound accompanies this quick fluctuation in antimagic, more than loud enough to alert anyone in area C5 or C2a that new victims have arrived. If this sound occurs, the jailer emerges from area C5 1 round later to investigate.

C5. Jailer's Quarters (CR 12)

The image of a blue peacock feather with an open blue eye in the center is repeated along the stone walls here. A single desk and chair adorn the room, a ring of keys being the only thing atop the desk. In the southwest corner, a statue of a peacock, its plumage glowing with all the colors of the rainbow, stands atop a pedestal.

The peacock statue is one of the seven *Peacock Shrines*—the one that allows inhabitants of the temple to conjure creatures from other planes without worrying about the *dimensional lock* effect. The ring of keys on the desk can be used to lock or unlock the cell doors in area C3 or C4.

Creature: The jailer of the Glorious Approach is a japalisura asura who has served in this capacity since well before Earthfall. One of many asuras Xanderghul bound into eternal servitude via the use of binding spells, this asura is the only one to have been stationed outside of the Dungeon of Fiery Fury.

The japalisura has long since accepted its fate and has lost interest in anything other than interrogating prisoners, its alien and otherworldly mind simply shutting off as it waited the centuries out. If it hears the sound of prisoners arriving in area C4, is alerted by a medusa to the approach of intruders, or is encountered here by a group of stealthy PCs, its initial reaction is the same: in an emotionless, almost robotic state, it demands to know who the PCs are and why they have come to the temple. Only if the PCs can successfully use *Bluff* or otherwise trick the asura into thinking they're cultists of the Peacock Spirit does it let them go about their business. Otherwise, it grows a bit more animated as it imperiously

commands the PCs to lay down their arms and step into the cells to await their judgment. Should the PCs comply, or if the PCs have already been captured (perhaps after botching the viridian transcendence), they'll wait here until High Priest Zurea arrives to interrogate them (see page 34 for more details).

If the PCs resist imprisonment, reveal themselves to be intruders, or attempt to meddle with the *Peacock Shrine*, the japalisura's emotionless facade vanishes as it attacks, fighting to the death.

JAPALISURA ASURA

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 147 (see page 84)

D. Valley Entrance

The Peacock River empties out of the temple valley here, cascading down a cliffside in a majestic, 2,000-foot-high waterfall into a larger mountain tarn that drains into the Chavali River several miles to the south. The narrow cleft through which the river flows south from area C has nominally traversable shores, and its southern opening is obscured by the *mirage arcana* so that the river appears to be pouring down from higher up the mountainside than it actually does. The cliffside can be scaled with a series of DC 20 Climb checks, while the steep cleft banks between area C and D can be navigated with DC 15 Climb checks (the 30-foot-deep waters require a DC 15 Swim check to navigate).

E1. Garrison of Golden Greed

This imposing building is built into a narrow pass that separates the southern valley from the larger portion to the north. All pilgrims who traveled to the temple during Thassilon's height were expected to pass through this choke point after making the proper rituals to the Peacock Spirit. Priests stationed here would then grace the visitors with *water walk* and open the golden door, allowing them to "walk the river" to area J. In fact, the rituals pilgrims performed here were designed to siphon a tiny "slice" of soul away for Xanderghul's needs deeper in the temple.

Shortly after learning of the "return" of the Peacock Spirit and rediscovering this temple complex, the cultists recruited a greater barghest and a handful of hobgoblins from a camp in the Mushfens and a family of wereboars from the Ashwood to occupy the garrison. The two groups took an instant dislike to one another, and High Priest Zurea never bothered attempting to bridge the gap between them, figuring she could find other minions should they kill one another. After a few fights broke out, the barghest's hobgoblins laid claim to the eastern half of the garrison, while the wereboars took over the western half.

Their skirmishes have decreased in frequency and have de-escalated to mere pranks. Presently, each group has stolen an item considered precious by the other side. The leaders are both thinking about storming across the bridges between the two halves of the garrison to retrieve their stolen treasures but fear it will lead to a final bloodshed.

Development: While the hobgoblins don't keep much of a watch on the southern approach, the wereboars do. Unless the PCs take pains to approach via *Stealth*, they'll swiftly be spotted by the suspecting Karrigan Patch through one of the arrow slits in the southern wall on her side of the garrison. If this occurs, the wereboar slayer calls out to the PCs through one of those arrow slits in a loud, raspy voice; read or paraphrase the following.

"Oy! Up here!" A gravelly voice calls down from an arrow slit in the western side of the southern bridge. "Look, we ain't supposed to let yas in, but maybe if yas do us a favor, we could, like, open up the gate and look the otha way." The proposition is followed by a thick snort.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check spots a piglike snout and a pair of beady eyes peering through the arrow slit. Assuming the PCs don't immediately attack (in which case Karrigan steps away from the arrow slits to raise the alarm), Karrigan's response is more or less the same.

"Those potion-sniffing hobgoblin bastards across the way took some of our treasure—a pair a' fancy armbands—and if yas can get it back for us, well, that would be a real bucket o' slop." The speaker's hearty laugh devolves into further snorts. "Come on up. We needs ta talk face-ta-face."

The wereboar in area E3 opens the door from that room onto the walkway, waving the PCs in hurriedly and then escorting them to meet the boss in area E5. See that area's Development on page 20 for more details if the PCs decide to take the offer.

The loud conversation doesn't go unnoticed by the hobgoblins, and they quickly report the developing situation to their leader, the barghest Old Haanshu. The barghest wizard quickly moves to the storeroom in area E10 to watch from one of the arrow slits there, and as the PCs make their decision, he casts *message* to quietly communicate with the PCs. His whispered greeting flatters their good judgment if he realizes the PCs have already refused Karrigan's offer, then continues as follows. A smooth, silky voice whispers from nowhere. "What my crass, filthy neighbor fails to tell you, of course, is that they purloined something of ours first—a mighty crown. We simply retaliated in kind, holding their item ransom

until they return ours. If you wish to deal with someone more sophisticated and less likely to infest you with fleas, then instead come to the east to speak to me about a potential arrangement that may well benefit us both."

One of the hobgoblin forerunners opens the door to area **Eg**. Neither group is willing to step outside, and the PCs are free to choose which (or neither) group to speak to as they see fit, but once the decision is obvious the other group prepares for a fight. Of course, if the PCs choose a side, their new "benefactor" has no plans to uphold his side of the verbal contract, but picking a side does allow the PCs to focus their attention on one group at a time rather than both.

E2. The Great Golden Door

A twenty-foot-wide gate appearing to be made of closely set golden bars blocks passage upriver here. Each bar is decorated with images of peacocks and twisting runes, and while the bars are set in a grid-shaped pattern affording barely enough room to reach an arm through the gaps, the river flows easily through the barrier.

This extravagant golden doorway was once the focus for the rituals performed by pilgrims, and served as a sort of metaphysical "battery" to hold the tiny slices of faith and soul those rituals harvested. Today, this magical portal's powers are much diminished. It remains difficult to damage (hardness 20, hp 180, break DC 30), but it otherwise has no purpose other than to block easy passage along the river. The gate can be opened if both nearby winches (see areas **E8** and **E14**) are turned simultaneously; originally, the opening of the doors also released stored energy to Xanderghul. While no energies remain today, opening the doors still alerts Xanderghul that something unusual is happening.

E3. Garbage Room (CR 8)

Scraps of half-eaten food, gnawed bones, empty sacks, and pieces of broken crockery litter the floor of this once-elegant room. The stench here is nearly unbearable, and mold creeps up the yellow-papered walls and gilded furniture.

Creature: A single wereboar barbarian is busy digging through the garbage for any tidbit of food that may have been accidentally thrown out. The wereboar is supposed to be on guard, but he takes a -8 penalty on Perception checks

unless Karrigan noticed the PCs approaching and has loudly greeted them. He lets the PCs in if Karrigan invites them to speak, escorting them to area **E5** to meet with "the boss lady." If Karrigan instead raises the alarm, this wereboar relocates to area **E5** with the rest of his kin, as detailed on page 20.



WEREBOAR BARBARIAN

WEREBOAR BARBARIAN CR 8

XP 4,800

Human natural wereboar barbarian 8
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 182)

NE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +13

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 18
(+4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, -2 rage)

hp 113 (8d12+56)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities ferocity, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +2; **DR** 1/—, 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *greataxe* +17/+12 (1d12+11/×3), gore +10 (1d8+3)

Ranged +1 *composite longbow* +11/+6 (1d8+5/×3)

Special Attacks rage (22 rounds/day), rage powers (intimidating glare, no escape, powerful blow +3, unexpected strike)

TACTICS

During Combat The wereboar rages on the first round of combat and then tries to take down the strongest-looking PC before moving on to the others.

Morale A wereboar barbarian fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 14, **Con** 23, **Int** 8, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 26

Feats Dodge, Intimidating Prowess, Iron Will, Lunge, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Skills Acrobatics +13 (+17 when jumping), Intimidate +18, Perception +13, Survival +13

Languages Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and boar; *polymorph*), fast movement, lycanthropic empathy

Gear +1 *studded leather*, +1 *composite longbow* (+4 Str) with 10 +1 *flaming arrows* and 10 arrows, +1 *greataxe*

E4. Sparring Hall (CR 12)

A few chairs, a makeshift weapons rack, and a humanoid-shaped dummy wearing a golden crown are in this room.

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Creatures: If the alarm has not been raised, a pair of wereboar barbarians tussle on the rug, while two others watch and cheer them on. The react poorly to any intruders unless they are accompanied by another wereboar. The wereboars are eager for a real fight, so they respond to any sounds of combat in the two adjacent rooms as quickly as possible.

WEREBOAR BARBARIANS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 113 each (see page 19)

Treasure: The crown on the dummy is the barghest's stolen *major crown of blasting*, which the wereboars have used to denote the combat dummy as their enemy. The weapons rack holds three masterwork longswords with golden hilts (each worth 750 gp) and two citrine-encrusted masterwork daggers (each worth 500 gp).

E5. Barracks

The four sets of bunk beds pushed against the walls look as if they were once surprisingly comfortable, but now their mattresses and linens are torn and filthy.

Development: If Karrigan invites the PCs to speak with her, she meets with them here, bringing the other six wereboars to join her (combined, the seven wereboars are a CR 14 encounter). As the other six wereboars look on, Karrigan greets the party arrogantly, informing them that if they don't immediately head over to the eastern side of the garrison to seek out a set of *bracers of sworn vengeance*^{UE} the "potion suckers" stole from her, she's just as happy to have her kin rip the party apart to prepare them for a feast tonight. She has very little patience and answers any questions the PCs may have quickly or noncommittally, with snorts and grunts—a PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check can tell she's almost as eager to attack the PCs as she is to recruit their aid.

E6. Kitchen (CR 8)

Gold-plated utensils, containers, and other cooking implements are strewn about this filthy, battered kitchen. A fireplace and a human-sized cupboard occupy the northwest corner.

Creature: A single wereboar takes a shift in the kitchen every day, cooking ingredients provided by a magical food-creating cupboard. The cuisine isn't particularly refined, but the wereboars don't mind eating their meat and vegetables raw. Usually, they just throw whatever ingredients the cupboard produces into a big pot to create

a disgusting stew—the concoction currently bubbling in cooking pot in the fireplace is a slurry of beans, beef, caramel candies, pears, and trout. If unexpected intruders enter the room, the current chef hammers on the door to area E7 to alert Karrigan, howling to raise the alarm at the same time.

WEREBOAR BARBARIAN

CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 113 (see page 19)

Treasure: The garrison's kitchen was able to provide food for all the inhabitants and the temple's guests, thanks to a magical cupboard gifted by Runelord Kaliphesta, the first Runelord of Gluttony. This cupboard is a minor artifact, always stocked with an abundant supply of foodstuffs no matter how much is taken from it. The cupboard can provide food for up to 30 humans per day in this manner. However, the food provided is always random, with no real consideration of a balanced diet or an individual's tastes, and it rots quickly after only a day. The cupboard is quite heavy, weighing roughly 300 pounds, but if the PCs can arrange for its transport to civilization, it could fetch a price of up to 6,000 gp. Although it's a minor artifact, the cabinet can be destroyed by sheer physical damage (hardness 20, hp 140).

E7. Karrigan's Den (CR 11)

A large, filthy bed slumps in the corner of this room, while a half-destroyed combat training dummy stands awkwardly in the middle of the room.

Creature: Karrigan Patch, head of the wereboar clan, spent her entire life (until recently) in and around southern Varisia's Ashwood. She and her family used to terrorize bandits and merchants alike as they traveled along the forest's southern border. She had lately been growing bored with her lot in life, and when a group of what she assumed to be traveling merchants turned out to be Peacock Spirit cultists eager to recruit muscle, she jumped at the chance to bring her clan to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit to enjoy more comfortable living conditions.

Karrigan made this room her personal chamber when relations with the barghest's forces turned sour. She spends a lot of her time here staring through the arrow slits toward the other half of the building and formulating complex revenge plans. She does come out of her room for meals and the occasional sparring match whenever she gets frustrated. If the PCs have sided with the barghest, she charges out of the room at the first sounds of trouble.

KARRIGAN PATCH

CR 11

XP 12,800

Female human natural wereboar slayer 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 182, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 53)

CE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)

Init +8; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +17

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+4 armor, +4 Dex, +6 natural, +1 shield)

hp 131 (11d10+66)

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

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **DR** 10/silver

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 short sword +15/+10/+5 (1d6+5/17-20), +1 short sword +15/+10 (1d6+5/17-20), gore +10 (1d8+2)

Special Attacks sneak attack +3d6, studied target +3 (swift action, 3 targets)

TACTICS

During Combat Karrigan studies the most formidable-looking PC and tries to assassinate that character after a round of study. If that fails, she simply focuses the full might of her blades on that PC. If not fighting alone, she always moves to flank with her allies.

Morale Karrigan is stubborn, but she doesn't want to die. She attempts to surrender if reduced to 20 or fewer hit points and orders any other wereboars in the vicinity to do the same. She promises to leave the temple complex if the PCs spare her life, taking any surviving members of her family with her. While she'd rather keep her treasure if possible, she values her life more, and if giving her loot up to the PCs helps ensure her survival, she'll do so.

STATISTICS

Str 19, **Dex** 18, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

Feats Double Slice, Improved Critical (short sword), Improved Initiative, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Intimidating Prowess, Quick Draw, Toughness, Two-Weapon Defense, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (short sword)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Climb +18, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (engineering) +11, Perception +17, Stealth +18, Survival +17

Languages Common

SQ change shape (human, hybrid, and boar; *polymorph*), combat style (two-weapon combat), lycanthropic empathy (+4 with boars and dire boars), slayer talents (assassinate^{UC} [DC 15], combat trick, ranger combat style^{ACG}, slow reactions), stalker, swift tracker, track +5

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4);

Other Gear +1 studded leather, +1 short swords (2), cloak of resistance +3, 35 pp, 5 gp

Treasure: As leader of the wereboars, Karrigan has kept much of the treasure the lycanthropes looted when they first took up residence within the garrison. She keeps her collection of fancy art objects (including candelabras, eating utensils, mirror frames, and other ornaments made of gold), worth a total of 1,300 gp, in a sturdy but unlocked chest by her bed.



KARRIGAN PATCH

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Development: If the PCs bring the *bracers of sworn vengeance* to Karrigan, she thanks them, invites the PCs to share a bowl of the repulsive-looking stew with her, but offers no other reward. As she does so, she begins studying the PC who handed the bracers over to her in order to use her assassinate slayer talent in a few rounds and then says, “Yas done us a solid favor, taking care of those fools and fetching our treasure. But we really can’t let yas pass. We ain’t really followers of the Peacock Spirit, but we were given a job to do... A job we enjoy!”

Karrigan then draws her short swords and attacks the PCs, hopefully taking them by surprise as she cries out an alarm to call the other wereboars to her side to aid in the fight. Each PC who succeeds at a DC 20 Sense Motive check can act during the surprise round. Karrigan uses the *bracers of sworn vengeance* against the first PC who damages her with a melee weapon and then focuses on killing that PC. The other wereboars join the fight after they hear the sounds of combat.

E8. Western Winch

A large winch set into this room’s eastern wall is connected to a complex mechanism by a series of chains and pulleys.

The winch in this room controls one half of the mechanism to open the gate in area E2. Unless another person operates the winch in area E14, this device won’t function. Opening the gate requires 4 simultaneous rounds of work by characters in both this room and area E14.

E9. Commissary (CR 8)

A couple of wooden crates are stacked in the northeast corner of the room. A table sits in the center of the room, surrounded by three chairs spaced equally apart.

Creatures: If the PCs approach this area unnoticed, they encounter two of the hobgoblin forerunners from area E12 on cleaning duty in this room. They snap to attention if they spot the PCs, then demand they lay down their weapons and come speak to their leader. If confronted, they beat a fighting retreat to area E12 to join their allies there, raising the alarm as they go.

HOBGOBLIN FORERUNNERS (2) CR 6
XP 2,400 each
hp 71 each (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 119)

Development: If the PCs are invited in by Old Haanshu, they’re greeted here by two hobgoblin forerunners who lead the PCs into the alchemy lab (area E11) to meet with their leader.

E10. Storage (CR 11)

Neatly organized stacks of lumber, barrels of iron reinforcements, and bolts of canary-yellow cloth are stacked behind pieces of worn furniture in this darkened room.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Perception check notices something shining in the back of the room. This DC is reduced to 15 if the PCs enter the room without bringing their own light source and close the door behind them, and the PCs succeed automatically if they spend at least 10 minutes looking over the contents of the room. Tucked behind a tattered sofa, mostly hidden under a canvas sheet, is the *Peacock Shrine* that grants dwellers in the garrison and the regions beyond DR 10/— and resistance 30 to all forms of energy.

Trap: The *Peacock Shrine* hidden here is trapped. Should any rod but the yellow one be removed from the statue, the removed rod goes dark and a bolt of lightning strikes the PC who removed the rod, arcing to all other creatures within the room. If a missing rod is placed back in the statue, it begins to glow again. When the yellow rod is removed, the trap becomes inert.

CHAIN LIGHTNING TRAP CR 11
XP 25,600
Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31
EFFECTS
Trigger remove incorrect rod from statue; **Reset** automatic;
Bypass remove yellow rod from statue
Effect spell effect (*chain lightning*; 16d6 points of electricity damage; Reflex DC 19 half for primary target; Reflex DC 17 half for secondary targets); primary target (target who triggered the trap); secondary targets (all other targets in area E10)

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while searching the room finds a bright-yellow *minor cloak of displacement* that had been accidentally stored with some bolts of yellow fabric.

Development: The hobgoblins and wereboars alike take the guardianship of the *Peacock Shrine* seriously, despite their bickering. If the PCs deactivate the shrine, any agreements the PCs might have had with either group are immediately voided, and the next time a wereboar or hobgoblin encounters the PCs, that shrine guardian attacks them at once in hopes of reclaiming the stolen rod.

E11. Alchemy Lab (CR 9)

The tables in this room are loaded with well-organized supplies and alchemical equipment.

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Creatures: Two hobgoblin alchemists converted this chamber into a laboratory for their alchemical experiments. Lately, they have been focusing on a way to infuse their bombs with alchemical silver in their feud with the wereboars. Both alchemists stand at the tables, mixing reagents and taking meticulous notes on their experiments. They stop what they are doing and demand to know what intruders are doing here unless the PCs are accompanied by another hobgoblin. Otherwise, they are very suspicious that any humanoid could be a wereboar in disguise, eventually striking out at strangers. These hobgoblins are bit distracted by their work and take 1d4+3 rounds to respond to any alarm that's been raised.

HOBGOBLIN BOMBARDIERS (2)

CR 7

XP 3,200 each

hp 89 each (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 120)

Treasure: The wereboars' stolen *bracers of sworn vengeance*^{UE} lie on one of the tables under an open notebook, where they can be discovered with a successful DC 15 Perception check.

Development: If the PCs arrange a meeting with Old Haanshu, he meets them here with all of his hobgoblin minions in attendance. Unlike the wereboars, the hobgoblins are calm, orderly, and even respectful of the PCs. Well reasoned and willing to give as much as they take, they are much easier to bargain with. Haanshu greets the PCs in hobgoblin form in this meeting, explaining that the wereboars stole from him a valuable magical crown. If the PCs agree to return it, Haanshu promises them the bracers he stole from the wereboars as payment in addition to allowing them passage through the garrison. While the hobgoblins won't betray the PCs by attacking them, Haanshu does use a *scroll of sending* to inform Zurea in the temple of their approach. In this event, the high priest puts her cultists on alert, and in her response to Haanshu she asks the barghest to follow the PCs with his hobgoblins at a distance to keep an eye on them and provide additional updates as needed. If the PCs don't realize they're being tracked, they may need to contend with being surrounded once they reach the temple, for at this point Haanshu and his hobgoblins work with the cultists in an attempt to defeat the PCs.

What the hobgoblins won't allow is the desecration of the hidden *Peacock Shrine*—if the PCs seek to deactivate this shrine, any bargain is void and the hobgoblins attack at once.

E12. Barracks (CR 10 or 11)

Folding screens decorated with patterns of yellow and black separate sections along the walls from the room, affording a bit

of privacy to the bunk beds beyond. In the middle of the room, a block of incense smolders on a low cedar table.

Creatures: The hobgoblins turned this lounge into a barracks when they began feuding with the wereboars. The forerunners spend most of their time here, sleeping, relaxing, and plotting various forms of vengeance against the wereboars. Without access to food, they rely mostly on fishing from the river or foraging in the surrounding forested valley, but they generally go on such trips only once a week. If the PCs already encountered two of the forerunners in area E9, then they encounter four here; otherwise, all six forerunners are found here.

HOBGOBLIN FORERUNNERS (4 OR 6)

CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 71 each (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 119)

E13. Old Haanshu's Lair (CR 11)

This elegant, well-maintained bedroom features a large, canopied bed, a wooden dresser, and a writing desk. The floor is decorated with a colorful rug depicting a peacock feather pattern.

Creature: Cultists of the Peacock Spirit found Old Haanshu, a greater barghest, leading a small band of hobgoblins near the edge of the Mushfens. Old Haanshu has spent many decades on the Material Plane and, through his many murders, has gained a healthy respect for the crueler aspects of nature. He has become something of a scholar in his later years, and rather than relocate back to the Abyss, he's remained in this realm, growing in power as a wizard as he collected a number of hobgoblins interested in studying the effects of fungi and natural poisons.

Haanshu uses this room as a study and den, spending his nights on the bed in his wolf form and his days discussing alchemical theories with his hobgoblins and writing essays on his findings. He hopes to eventually publish a collection of his works, but he has yet to realize his writing is dry and uninteresting.

OLD HAANSHU

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male greater barghest wizard 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 27)

NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful, shapechanger)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +25

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 21 (+3 armor, +5 Dex, +9 natural, -1 size)

hp 153 (17 HD; 8d6+9d10+76)

Fort +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +17

DR 10/magic

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +20 (1d8+8), 2 claws +20 (1d8+8)

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

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (9/day)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +13)

At will—*blink*, *invisibility sphere*, *levitate*, *misdirection*

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 18), *crushing despair* (DC 18),
dimension door, *mass bull's strength*, *mass enlarge person* (DC 18)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +14)

4th—*ice storm*, *shout* (DC 20), *wall of fire*



OLD HAANSHU

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19),
slow (DC 19)

2nd—*flaming sphere* (DC 18), *glitterdust* (2, DC 18), *mirror image*, *resist energy*

1st—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 17), *magic missile* (2), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *mage hand*, *message*,
prestidigitation

TACTICS

Before Combat Old Haanshu casts *unseen servant* every day.

During Combat Old Haanshu tries to catch as many PCs as possible in the range of effect of a *crushing despair* spell before closing in for melee combat. If he is fighting alongside his hobgoblin alchemist allies, the barghest casts *mass bull's strength* on them all and then *mass enlarge person* if there's room to do so. He hangs back in combat to use his spells at range, starting with *fly* to help him stay out of melee. If he's confronted in combat, he casts *mirror image* on himself.

Morale The barghest didn't get to be called "Old Haanshu" by being foolish. If reduced to fewer than 30 hit points, he surrenders and relies upon the PCs' mercy. He vows to leave the area and never return as long as the PCs allow him to take his manuscript with him. He cares little about what happens to the hobgoblins.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 20, **Con** 18, **Int** 23, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +22; **CMD** 37 (41 vs. trip)

Feats Arcane Armor Training, Arcane Strike, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Light Armor Proficiency, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +16, Climb +17, Craft (alchemy) +26, Diplomacy +20, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (nature) +22, Perception +25, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +26, Stealth +13, Survival +17, Swim +17

Languages Common, Giant, Goblin, Infernal, Thassilonian, Varisian, Worg

SQ arcane bond (*wand of scorching ray*), change shape (goblin or wolf, *polymorph*), metamagic mastery (1/day)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potions of cure serious wounds* (2), *potions of invisibility* (2), *potion of spider climb*, *scrolls of sending* (4), *wand of scorching ray* (CL 7th, 22 charges); **Other Gear** +1 leather armor, *handy haversack*, spellbook, pedantically written manuscript (worthless), 90 gp

Treasure: Among Old Haanshu's possessions are a *stone golem manual* that the barghest started paging through but discarded after growing bored, and a *ring of animal friendship* that fell behind the desk.

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Both items can be discovered with a successful DC 25 Perception check.

Development: If the PCs bring the *major crown of blasting* to Old Haanshu, he graciously thanks them for their effort. He honors his bargain with the PCs, as detailed in area **E11**, but grows impatient if they linger too long in his presence.

E14. Eastern Winch

A large winch set into this room's western wall is connected by a series of chains and pulleys to a complex mechanism.

The winch in this room controls one half of the mechanism to open the gate in area **E2**. Unless another person operates the winch in area **E8**, this device won't function. Opening the gate requires 4 simultaneous rounds of work by characters in both this room and area **E8**.

F. Flourishing Grove (CR 13)

Beyond the garrison, the inner valley of the temple compound sprawls. Most of the valley is taken up by the deep, still waters of Peacock Lake, with the land to the east and south gently sloping up from the shoreline to the cliffs at the valley's borders. The trees here are predominantly fir and pine, and ancient magical wards keep the temperature relatively stable at about 55° F.

A slightly overgrown path leads from area **E** to area **J**, splitting off once to head southwest along the shoreline to area **G**. As long as a traveler sticks to the path, movement is unimpeded, but the undergrowth beyond the path is significant. In addition to treating the undergrowth as difficult terrain, anyone who travels in it takes a –5 penalty on Acrobatics and Stealth checks. Here and there, thorny plants (at your discretion) can further complicate movement through the undergrowth by causing wounding effects similar to those caused by caltrops.

Creature: The forested grounds along the inner valley's lake shores have long been overseen by an ancient guardian: a treant shaman of time and history who has been known through the eons only as "the Forester." After Earthfall, when the skies above went black with ash and smoke, the entire valley slipped into dormancy. While the magical wards in place protected it from damage, the Forester remained in hibernation over the eons to follow, waking only when Runelord Xanderghul was reborn into a new body in the temple's depths.

The Forester has little interest in the passage of time and feels no sense of loss for missing those many centuries, but it is quite pleased that the cult of the Peacock Spirit has returned to the valley. While Xanderghul has not emerged from the temple dungeons, the runelord has spoken with

the Forester several times via magic. The treant is pleased to have the master return to the temple grounds, and under Xanderghul's instruction and with the runelord's aid, it has seen to the recultivation of the inner valley's carnivorous plant life and patches of poisonous flora. An example of an encounter with carnivorous plants appears in area **J1**, while an example of poisonous flora is detailed further in area **G**—feel free to have the PCs encounter similar hazards as you wish.

The Forester spends most of its time in meditation in a large grove of flourishing plant life halfway between area **G** and **J**, at the location marked on the map of the temple grounds as area **F** and presented as the map of the flourishing grove. An ancient oak tree grows from the center of a clearing here, easily the oldest tree in the entire valley. This tree is the spiritual heart of the Forester's shamanistic faith, and while it suffers the approach of Peacock Spirit cultists who wish to pay their respects as they pass through the grove on their way to the Jade Gardens, the Forester immediately rises up against anyone it interprets as an intruder.

If the PCs don't encounter the Forester here, feel free to have the violent treant confront them at a later point or date, particularly if the PCs camp for the night in the woodlands. The Forester casts *commune with nature* at noon every day, using the spell to determine if there are any obvious new intruders in the region. Unless the PCs are protected by divination magic, the Forester notices their presence in the inner valley automatically with this spell, and it uses *tree stride* to move to their location at once to investigate.

THE FORESTER

CR 13

XP 25,600

Treant shaman (speaker for the past) 9 (*Pathfinder RPG*

Bestiary 266, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Class Guide* 35, 111)

NE Huge plant

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +33

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 9, flat-footed 32 (+6 armor, +1 Dex, +18 natural, –2 size)

hp 187 (21d8+93)

Fort +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15

DR 10/slashing; **Immune** plant traits; **Resist** fire 10

Weaknesses vulnerability to fire

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +27 (3d6+14/19–20)

Ranged rock +17 (2d6+20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks hexes (hex of lignification^{uw}, misfortune^{apg}, spines and brambles^{uw}), rock throwing (180 ft.), trample (2d6+20, DC 32)

Shaman Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +14)

5th—*commune with nature*, *tree stride*^S, *wall of thorns*
4th—*cure critical wounds* (2), *poison* (DC 19), *thorn body*^{APG, S}
3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *minor creation*^S (wood items only), *wind wall*
2nd—*aid*, *barkskin*^S, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *summon swarm*, *tree shape*

1st—*cure light wounds* (3), *entangle* (DC 16), *obscuring mist*, *pass without trace*, *shillelagh*^S

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *dancing lights*, *guidance*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 15)

S spirit magic spell; **Spirit** wood^{UW}

TACTICS

Before Combat The Forester keeps two animated trees active in the grove and casts *barkskin* before confronting the PCs.

During Combat The Forester begins combat by creating a *wall of thorns* between it and as many PCs as possible, leaving its animated trees to handle those PCs while it focuses on any PCs who are nearby. The Forester attempts to negate ranged attackers with *blindness/deafness*, and it casts *thorn body* if the PCs attempt to crowd or surround it. If faced with highly mobile foes, it relies on its hex of lignification or *entangle* to keep them slowed down. If brought below 50 hit points, it casts *obscuring mist* around itself and then uses the concealment to cast healing spells on itself before returning to battle.

Morale A loyal servant of the temple, the Forester fights until it is destroyed.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +29 (+33 sunder); **CMD** 40 (42 vs. sunder)

Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Critical Focus, Greater Sunder, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Staggering Critical

Skills Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +33, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +16 (+32 in forests)

Languages Common, Sylvan, Treant; treespeech

SQ animate trees, bloody roots, double damage against objects, revelations of the past (aging touch^{UM}, spirit shield^{UM}), tree limb

Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +2, *minor ring of fire resistance*

G. Jade Gardens of Jealousy (CR 14 and CR 12)

The foliage growing along this short peninsula has been trimmed back and sculpted into a beautiful garden with sweeping curves of flower beds, pleasantly sculpted fruit trees, and at its heart a sparkling marble fountain filled with crystal-clear water. A stone plinth at the fountain's center supports a statue of a peacock. Yet for all the garden's beauty and majesty, the sight of the cathedral-like temple rising from the lake's waters to the north easily overshadow its grandeur.

Strange shapes are carved into the fountain; they seem to shift and flow, and looking at them for too long causes the viewer to get a mild headache. The fountain was donated



to the temple by Tannaris, the Runelord of Envy at the time of the site's construction. He had hoped its elegance would be the focal point of the temple grounds, thereby making Xanderghul look foolish and stoke resentment within the ranks of Peacock Spirit's devotees. Unfortunately for Tannaris, Xanderghul placed the fountain in a relatively out-of-the-way corner of the temple grounds, yet in a position where anyone who bothered going out of their way to visit it couldn't help but marvel at the glorious view of the temple in the lake just to the north. As a further insult, Xanderghul "enhanced" the fountain so that anyone who knelt before it and meditated for 1 minute becomes invisible—a sly slight against the ego and sense of self-worth to any who would come to the fountain and pray (for Tannaris, the concept of being invisible and losing the opportunity to be admired only further fueled his envious traits). A creature that gains invisibility in this way remains invisible for as long as it continues to meditate or until it takes any action that would normally break the effects of an *invisibility* spell.

The garden has become somewhat poisoned by the years of jealousy that have infused Tannaris's gift—an infusion that has only grown more toxic over the centuries of abandonment since Earthfall. While the fountain's waters look pure, they are in fact foul tasting, and anyone who drinks from them must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or become sickened for 1 hour. Likewise, the fruit on the trees is toxic; anyone who eats these fruit must succeed at a DC 22 Fortitude save or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage and become confused for 1d4 rounds. Both of these are poison effects, and a PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check while examining the fruits or water determines that they are unfit to consume.

The statue at the center of the fountain is one of the *Peacock Shrines*, granting those in the inner valley and Grand Temple spell resistance and immunity to poison.

Creatures: Like many Thassilonian wizards, Runelord Xanderghul allied with a number of shining children during his reign, employing them as guards and sources of arcane information. The two shining children stationed here are just such guards, kept in place for thousands of years by an ancient *binding* spell, but they are meditating and thus invisible when the PCs first approach. They wait patiently to see if the PCs drink from the fountain or eat any of the fruit before attacking, but they do so at once if they realize the PCs are going to try to damage the *Peacock Shrine*. The shining children can't pursue foes far (they cannot go beyond the borders of the map of area G presented on page 16), and if the PCs flee, the outsiders return to the fountain's side to meditate and become invisible once again.

SHINING CHILDREN (2) CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 152 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 245)

Trap: This *Peacock Shrine* is trapped—if any rod but the green one is removed from the statue, that rod goes dark and beams of green energy erupt from the statue. Those struck by a ray are exposed to deathblade poison (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 558). If a rod is placed back into the statue, it begins to glow again.

POISON PLUMAGE CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 25; Disable Device DC 25

EFFECTS

Trigger removal of incorrect rod; **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** removal of green rod

Effect Atk +20 ranged touch (deathblade poison); multiple targets (all targets within 120 feet of the statue)

H. Peacock Lake (CR 13)

The surface waters of this large lake are typically quite calm. The waters are 300 feet deep at the deepest point, and they are well stocked with trout, sturgeon, and other fish.

Creature: Only one predator of significance dwells within these waters: an immense serpentine monster known as a mother of oblivion. With the upper body of a plesiosaur and the lower body of an octopus-like monster with glowing orange eyes at the tips of some of its tentacles, this creature is a smaller but still dangerous cousin of the legendary denizen of the Storval Deep—Black Magga.

MOTHER OF OBLIVION CR 13

XP 25,600

Variant Black Magga (*Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* 406)

CE Huge outsider (aquatic, native)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +19

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 8, flat-footed 28 (+20 natural, –2 size)

hp 174 (12d10+108)

Fort +16, **Ref** +10, **Will** +8

Defensive Abilities all-around vision; **DR** 15/cold iron and magic; **Immune** death effects, mind-affecting effects, petrification, polymorph; **Resist** acid 20, cold 20; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee bite +19 (2d8+9/19–20), 4 tentacles +18 (1d8+4 plus grab)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks breath of madness, constrict (1d8+9), energy drain (2 levels, DC 20)

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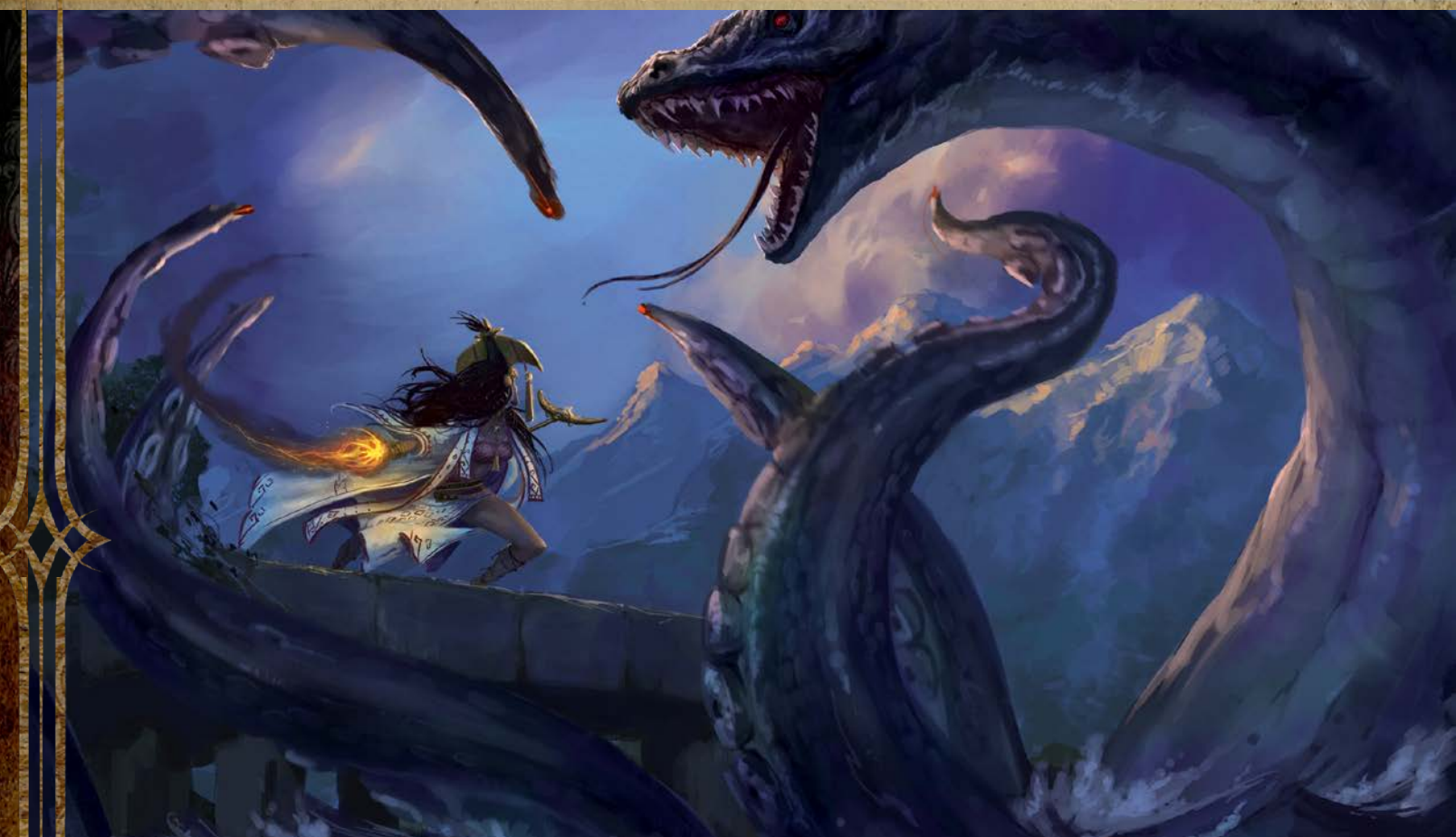
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Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +16)

Constant—*invisibility purge*

At will—*death knell* (DC 16), *prayer*

3/day—*demand* (DC 22), *dimensional anchor*, *divination*,
dominate person (DC 19), *greater command* (DC 19)

1/day—*commune*, *dream*, *unhallow*

TACTICS

During Combat The mother of oblivion immediately attacks anyone who swims more than 40 feet from the shore into the waters of the lake, and it pursues foes onto land as needed. If the PCs don't defeat the creature first, it will certainly attack them as they cross the bridge over the lake from area **J** to area **K**. Note that unlike most mothers of oblivion, this creature cannot make use of its transdimensional tentacles or warp dimensions special qualities in this adventure, due to the *dimensional lock* effect throughout the region.

Morale The mother of oblivion fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 10, **Con** 27, **Int** 21, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 33 (can't be tripped)

Feats Improved Critical (bite), Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (nature) +17, Knowledge (planes) +20, Knowledge (religion) +17, Perception +19, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +7, Survival +16, Swim +32

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Thassilonian

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Breath of Madness (Su) When it is not underwater, a mother of oblivion can exhale a 60-foot cone of black smoke as a standard action once per minute. All creatures caught in this area take 1d6 points of Wisdom damage and become confused for 1d6 rounds (a creature can attempt a DC 24 Will save to halve the Wisdom damage and negate the confusion effect). This is a mind-affecting poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Treasure: The mother of oblivion has collected some treasure over the years, none of which it can use but all of which appeals to its avarice. This collection of valuables has been heaped at the deepest point of the lake, at the location marked “H” on the map of the temple grounds. This stash of treasure consists of 1,500 gp, 700 pp, a +1 *keen longsword* decorated with glowing, red serpentine designs along the blade, a mithral *chime of interruption* etched with

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images of singing dwarven faces, a *wand of dispel magic* (CL 7th, 11 charges), a *breastplate of vanishing*^{UE}, a +1 *undead bane kukri*, a *lens of detection*, an *iridescent spindle ioun stone*, and a waterproofed darkwood puzzle box (worth 65 gp and requiring a successful DC 20 Intelligence check and 1 minute of work to open) containing a black pearl worth 400 gp and an opal worth 550 gp.

I. Upper Falls

The Peacock River's upper falls cascade 500 feet down from the mountains above here, the winding river leading up into the Kodars to its source.

PART 3. PRIDE'S HEART

The Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit consists of an cathedral and several underground levels deep below. The temple's doors were once open for visitors and pilgrims during the complex's prime, but today those doors are now closed and locked. Runelord Xanderghul can't afford any interruptions as he recuperates, and he has tasked his current high priest, Zurea, with defending the temple. Her growing boredom is perhaps the greatest flaw in Xanderghul's plan, and careful or diplomatic PCs may be able to learn much from the priestess if they can resist attacking her on sight.

THE NAVE OF INDIGO DECADENCE

The Nave of Indigo Decadence houses the main members of the Peacock Spirit clergy, priests and monks who live in the complex year-round. The temple held official services when enough pilgrims were present, and clergy performed small ceremonies or engaged in private consultations with visitors who warranted them. For most of the rest of the time, its priests were left to their own devices, and they would often revel in drinking, eating, and studying depraved topics.

The cultists who currently reside in the temple are in similar positions of idleness, having little to do until Xanderghul fully recovers his mythic power and is ready to strike back against Alaznist. The zealots remain unaware of exactly who they are protecting in the dungeons below, only that their god has commanded it. In the meantime, they have been free to do whatever they wish, and the temple has been magically stocked with fine foods, strong liquors, and hundreds of tomes.

The cultists are led by a woman named Zurea Salvus, whose full background can be found on page 67. High Priest Zurea has kept her underlings comfortable over the months, but like them she has begun to grow bored

over the past couple of weeks. She has directed the cultist to allow entry to any who have made it thus far into the complex, as long as those people seem reasonable. Zurea hopes to show such intruders the glory of the Peacock Spirit and bring them into the fold, believing that an injection of new blood will stave off the tedium of waiting. In the end, though, she resorts to violence when it seems like the PCs aren't willing to be a part of her religion.

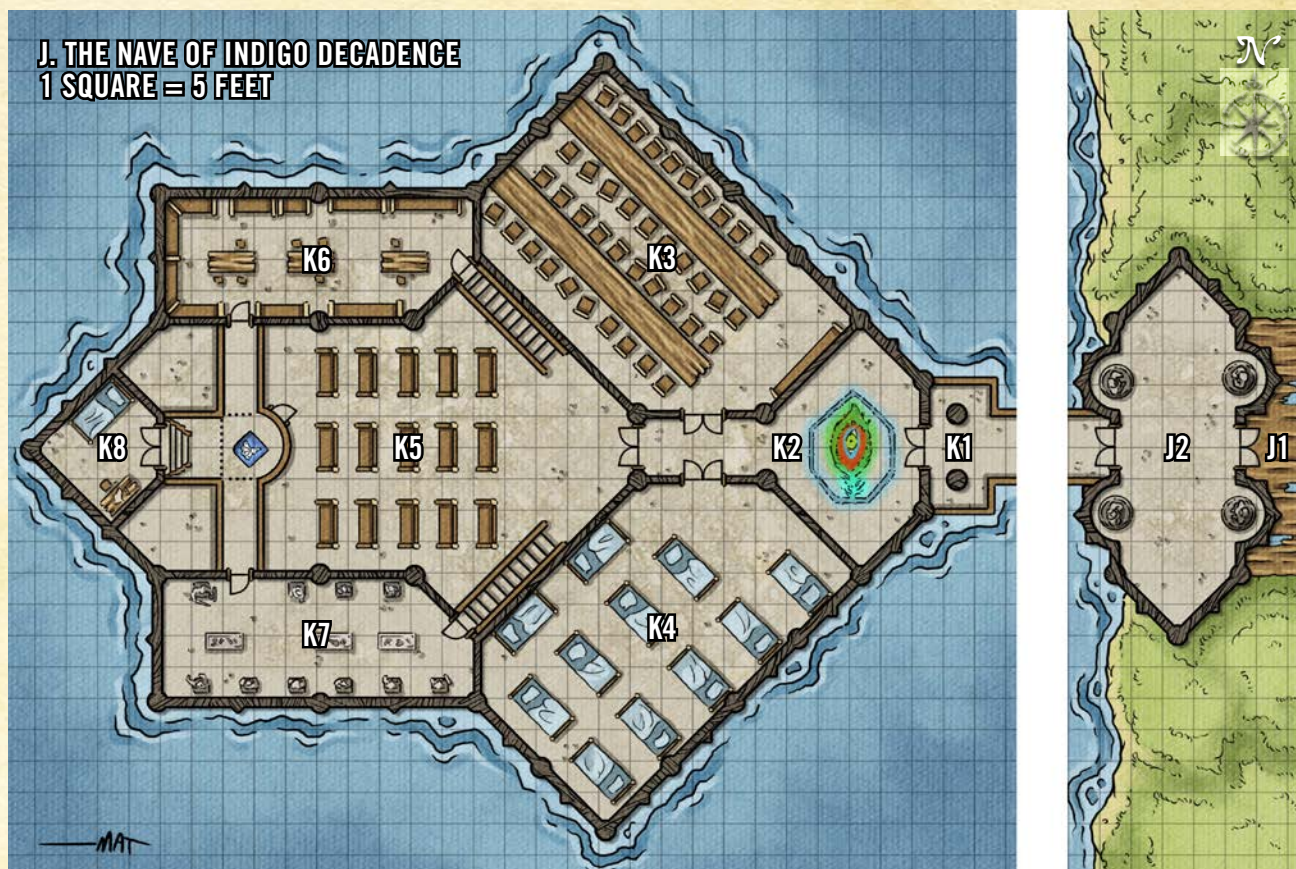
The nave rises from a spire of rock in the lake below, its sides falling away steeply to a depth of 200 feet to give the cathedral the appearance of its foundations resting upon the lake's surface. While the building's spires tower nearly 150 feet tall, carved with thousands of depictions of brightly painted peacocks, the interior is relatively simple and open, with no upper floors. The nave's 1-foot-thick walls are made from reinforced masonry—normally this gives each 5-foot section hardness 8, hp 180, and break DC 45, but remember that as long as the orange *Peacock Shrine* in area L7 of the Dungeon of Fiery Fury remains active, the walls have hardness 30, hp 360, and break DC 54. The doors are not protected by the *Peacock Shrine*; they are made of wood (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 20) and are unlocked unless otherwise noted (if the doors are locked, a PC can pick the locks by succeeding at a DC 35 Disable Device check). Magical fixtures placed regularly along the ceiling provide normal lighting that is tinted indigo in most of the rooms, except where indicated.

While the PCs can approach the nave from any direction, most of those who visit the temple do so on foot and must pass through the temple's narthex (area J) before proceeding to the temple along a 260-foot long, 10-foot-wide causeway over the lake. If the mother of oblivion in the lake still lives (see area H), it swiftly rises up to attack anyone who does not appear to be a cultist of the Peacock Spirit crossing the bridge.

J1. Overgrown Approach (CR 13)

A deep-blue stone building straddles a river as it flows languidly out of the high-valley lake. A single thin, delicate spire reaches fifty feet toward the sky from the structure's vaulted roof, while stained-glass windows depicting ornate peacock feathers with open eyes in their centers peer out from the sides in every direction. An overgrown path leads up to a wooden walkway built along the building's east facade. On the opposite side of the building, a ten-foot-wide bridge extends to the west toward a towering cathedral in the middle of the lake.

The double door into area J2 (from both sides) is kept locked, and the key carried by one of the monks in area J2, opens it. The wooden walkway looks old and rickety, but its structure is solid and it can support plenty of weight.



Creatures: Three of the thorny shrubs growing near the wooden walkway are blood brambles: ambulatory, fernlike plants that drink blood. They have survived on water and sunlight for some time, and while they are eager to hunt living prey, they're smart enough to understand that attacking anyone dressed as a cultist of the Peacock Spirit invites swift punishment. They quickly attack anyone else they notice approaching the area. One of the brambles lurks just to the north of the walkway, while the other two are located on either side to the south.

BLOOD BRAMBLES (3)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 126 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 48)

J2. Narthex (CR 10)

This simple chamber is flanked by two sets of doors decorated with a stylized peacock feather. The ceiling rises fifty feet amid a tangle of support beams for the narthex's central spire.

The tiles are warm (but not hot) to the touch, as if heated from within. A cone of incense burns in a dish

on a small table in the northern corner, giving the room its aroma.

Creatures: Eight Peacock Spirit cultists have been stationed in this room to guard the temple's approach. They spend grueling 12-hour shifts here before being replaced by another eight cultists from the nave. While the cultists are allowed to speak quietly with each other and study tomes borrowed from the temple library, the monotony of the task remains significant. If they know the PCs are in the valley, due to a highly visible fight with the Forester or the mother of oblivion, a warning from other minions, or simply as a result of a fight just outside the door against the blood brambles, they're standing at attention and ready to do what needs to be done. Otherwise they're distracted and bored, taking a –8 penalty on Perception checks. Note that if the PCs have dismantled any of the *Peacock Shrines*, the cultists know that something is up and are alert.

If the PCs knock politely at the door, one of the cultists opens the door to welcome the PCs into the narthex. They also do so if they hear any attempts to pick the door's lock, or after a few rounds of silence after a fight against blood brambles if no one has attempted to

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open the door. Even if the PCs use violence to enter the narthex, such as by smashing the door down, the cultists don't immediately attack. One of them steps toward the PCs with open arms and greets the party warmly by saying, "Welcome to the Temple of the Peacock Spirit, pilgrims. High Priest Zurea would like to speak with you. Please, follow me." The cultists are polite and gracious, and they make no request for the PCs to hand over their weapons. At your option, if any of the Peacock Spirit cultists escaped from the PCs in the prior adventure via the viridian escape, some of them might be among the cultists encountered here, in which case you should feel free to use the statistics for the cultists from that adventure instead of the cruel devotees below.

If the PCs agree to follow, the cultists lead them (four ahead, four behind) out across the causeway to the cathedral, and then into area **K5** to meet with Zurea. See that area for further details. As long as the PCs are escorted, the mother of oblivion won't attack them on the causeway.

The cultists' patience ends immediately if the PCs attack them or blaspheme against the Peacock Spirit. In this case, they attack at once, fighting to the death.

PEACOCK SPIRIT CULTISTS (8)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Cruel devotees (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 98)

hp 31 each

K1. Causeway

The 260-foot-long causeway connecting the narthex to the nave is 10 feet wide and features a low stone railing. The causeway itself is positioned just above the lake's surface, supported by long stone pillars that drop into the depths of the lake below. If the PCs haven't defeated the mother of oblivion in the lake, it attacks them here unless they are being escorted by cultists of the Peacock Spirit or are themselves convincingly disguised as the same.

The entrance into the nave consists of a pair of immense granite doors that swing open easily on well-kept, counterweighted pivots. These doors are kept unlocked, for if the PCs intend violence, Zurea would rather they not damage the building's facade.

K2. Cathedral Entrance (CR 7)

The walls of this chamber are painted a deep blue and are lit with rippling lights from above, giving the impression of being underwater.

Trap: High Priest Zurea has placed a *greater glyph of warding* on the doors to area **K5**, setting a password of "Zurea" to allow safe passage. If the PCs are being escorted by cultists to speak to the high priest, one of the cultists

stops before opening the doors, saying, "We now step into the glorious presence of our high priest, Zurea." In doing so, the cultist opens the door without setting off the glyph in a way that he hopes doesn't alert the PCs to the fact that he's speaking the glyph's password. Once the PCs are led into area **K5**, a cultist makes sure to close the door behind them, thus rearming the trap.

GREATER GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 7

XP 3,200

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (opening the door to area **K5**); **Reset** none;

Bypass password ("Zurea")

Effect spell effect (*confusion*, Will DC 21 negates)

K3. Dining Hall (CR 10)

Long mahogany tables run the length of this room. Each table is heaped with servings of delicious-looking food and surrounded by several indigo-cushioned chairs, while crystal chandeliers accented with sapphires hang directly above each. A sideboard runs along the wall, holding several sets of silverware and collections of delicate wine glasses.

Each table holds several silver chafing dishes and enough place settings to seat 13 people. Traditionally, each table features spaces for eight monks and four clerics, with the chair at the head of each table reserved for the high priest and the Peacock Spirit. Of course, the Peacock Spirit never attends temple banquets in person, and High Priest Zurea attends only a few times each month.

Creatures: The tables here are magical creations that require daily maintenance to retain functionality—see *Treasure* on page 32. Unless the alarm's been raised, this chamber is occupied by a pair of Peacock Spirit priests hard at work praying at each table to make sure their capacity to provide food remains functional. If surprised by intruders, the priests demand the PCs accompany them to the main sanctuary to meet with the high priest, but they are quick to overreact to any perception of hostility with attacks of their own.

PEACOCK SPIRIT PRIESTS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Human cleric of the Peacock Spirit 9

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 11, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural)

hp 80 each (9d8+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee mwk lucerne hammer +11/+6 (1d12+4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with lucerne hammer)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 3/day (DC 14, 5d6), scythe of evil (4 rounds, 1/day)

Cleric Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +12)

At will—master's illusion (9 rounds/day)

6/day—copycat (9 rounds), touch of evil (4 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +12)

5th—*dispel good*^o, *flame strike* (DC 18)

4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *unholy blight*^o (DC 17)

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *magic circle against good*^o, *searing light* (2)

2nd—*bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds* (3), *hold person* (DC 15), *invisibility*^o

1st—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor*, *protection from good*^o, *sanctuary* (DC 14)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 13), *create water*, *light*, *stabilize*

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

TACTICS

Before Combat A Peacock Spirit priest drinks a *potion of barkskin* +3 before battle if possible.

During Combat Encountered in small numbers, Peacock Spirit priests open fights with *flame strike* and *unholy blight*. In larger groups, they hang back and cast *sanctuary*, followed by *air walk*, *bull's strength*, and *divine favor* before entering combat. A priest casts *invisibility* on himself if he's reduced to 30 or fewer hit points and then takes time to cast healing spells on himself and retreat to a better tactical position before reengaging in combat.

Morale A Peacock Spirit priest fights to the death while protecting the temple.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9 (+11 sunder); **CMD** 20 (22 vs. sunder)

Feats Combat Casting, Improved Sunder, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (lucerne hammer)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +9, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +8

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potions of barkskin* +3 (2); **Other Gear** +2 *chainmail*, mwk lucerne hammer^{APG}, *cloak of resistance* +2, golden holy symbol of Peacock Spirit worth 150 gp

Treasure: As with the cabinet in area E6, both tables in this chamber are minor artifacts gifted to the temple by Runelord Kaliphesta. The tables automatically set themselves with enough food to feed 15 people each at the start of every day, provided that at some point during the previous 24 hours a spellcaster has spent an hour meditating at the table to invest magical energies into it. Doing so allows the spellcaster to influence what sorts of foodstuffs will be generated by the table. Like the food generated by the cupboard, anything created by these tables rots away after 24 hours, but unlike the cupboard, food generated by the tables is magically enhanced. Anyone who eats food created by this table regains 2d8+5 hit points. A character can benefit from the food's healing properties only once per day.

Each of the tables weighs 900 pounds, and if they can be transported to civilization, they could be sold for 9,000 gp apiece. As with the cupboard, physical damage can destroy these minor artifacts (hardness 20, hp 280).

K4. Dormitory (CR 12)

Several comfortable beds form organized rows in this room, each separated by indigo curtains to allow privacy. A few communal chairs stand outside the bed chambers, and a public washroom is in the western tip of the room.

This large chamber is used by clerics and monks alike as a place to sleep, relax, and socialize outside of meals and prayer. Individual cultists have added



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small personal touches to their beds—a cursory search reveals these small details, such as a small vase holding a flower cut from the temple gardens, a sharp knife sitting next to a half-finished wooden carving of a bird, or a nude sketch of one cultist hidden under a pillow in a third.

Creatures: Unless the alarm is raised, the PCs are likely to encounter eight monks and two clerics in this room, about two-thirds of whom are sleeping. They react to intruders the same way the priests in area **K3** do.

PEACOCK SPIRIT CULTISTS (8)

CR 4

XP 1,200 each

Cruel devotees (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 98)

hp 31 each

PEACOCK SPIRIT PRIESTS (2)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 80 each (see page 31)

K5. The Peacock's Pulpit (CR 14)

The high walls of this vaulted chamber are decorated with images of peacock feathers and whorls of light forming into an indistinct humanoid shape. Above, the ceiling is open to the sky, with the sun shining down from a boundless vault of blue. Dozens of brightly colored birds whirl and swoop in the air above, their calls filling the chamber below with music. To the north and south, flights of stairs lead upward to side buildings overlooking this plaza-like space. Rows of benches fill the room, all facing a ten-foot-square pillar of indigo stone that rises up to the west. Two stone bridges cross to this pillar from the northern and southern side buildings, converging at a pulpit some twenty feet above the floor. A resplendent statue of a peacock stands atop this pulpit. A set of stairs rises up from the far side of the pulpit to a double door set in the side of a steep spire that rises up to impossible heights, its apex vanishing into the blue sky above.

The stairs, benches, and pulpit are real, but the remainder of the decor in this room (including the image of the sky above and of area **K8** rising up into infinity) are the result of a *screen* spell put in place every day by the temple's high priest.

Characters who disbelieve this illusion or otherwise see through to the truth find this chamber to be sparse in decor, its walls of plain indigo stone, and spot a door in the eastern side of the pillar of stone. This door can be discovered while the illusion still covers it by a character who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while feeling along the walls. If opened, the door reveals a flight of spiral stairs leading down a dizzying descent of 400 feet to the dungeons below. Note that this door to the stairs is warded by a *glyph of warding* (see Trap below).

The peacock statue on the pulpit is one of the seven *Peacock Shrines*, granting all inhabitants of the temple and its dungeons below fast healing 10.

Creatures: If the PCs are expected, then High Priest Zurea Salvus and four Peacock Spirit priests are here, waiting to greet the party. If the PCs manage to make it this far undetected, the four priests are instead meticulously cleaning the chamber and Zurea is in her sanctuary (area **K8**). She emerges quickly if she hears the sound of combat and calls for the battle to cease so that she can speak with the PCs.

A visit from adventurers is a welcome break in the cult's routine of prayer, eating, drinking, and reading, and Zurea greets the PCs graciously, whether they enter with a cultist escort or barge in on their own. She assures the PCs there is no need for violence and invites them to talk like civilized people. If the PCs agree, see **Event 4** on page 35. However, there is a chance the PCs simply attack her and her congregants without a second thought. In such a case, Zurea and the cultists defend themselves the best they can, still secretly reveling in the change of pace. If this happens, the cultists attempt to capture the PCs alive, in which case the conversation in **Event 4** can proceed later once the PCs are subdued.

ZUREA SALVUS

CR 12

XP 19,200

hp 140 (see page 66)

PEACOCK SPIRIT PRIESTS (4)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 80 each (see page 31)

Trap: The first creature that opens the door leading to the stairs inside of the pillar of stone below the pulpit triggers a *greater glyph of warding* placed by High Priest Zurea. The glyph won't activate if a lawful evil worshiper of the Peacock Spirit opens the door.

GREATER GLYPH OF WARDING

CR 10

XP 9,600

Type magic; Perception DC 31; Disable Device DC 31

EFFECTS

Trigger touch (opening the hidden door); **Reset** none;

Bypass door is opened by a lawful evil worshiper of the Peacock Spirit

Effect spell effect (*blade barrier*; 13d6 points of force damage; Reflex DC 23 halves or negates; *blade barrier* forms a ring around the central pulpit, affecting all within 5 feet of the stone column to a height of 20 feet)

Treasure: The altar functions as a *rod of extend metamagic* if it is used as an additional focus while casting a spell.

Typically, High Priest Zurea uses the altar to extend *greater magic weapon* and *magic vestment*, leaving one use of the altar available to her when preparing for battle or during combat.

A hidden compartment in the floor behind the altar (DC 28 Perception to notice) contains a +1 *human-bane dagger* used for sacrifices to the Peacock Spirit, a *mitre of the hierophant*^{UE} Zurea dons when performing rituals, a *scroll of heal*, three *scrolls of sending*, three *scrolls of cure critical wounds*, 340 pp, and 12,457 gp.

K6. Library (CR 13)

This long room is lined with tall bookshelves, each stuffed to the brim with tomes, folios, and scrolls. A number of comfortable chairs are placed around the chamber, and large wooden tables hold sheaves of paper.

The books here date back to the Thassilonian empire and would be incredibly valuable to a scholar or collector of such works. The majority of the texts are written in Thassilonian, and many of them are very outdated, containing scientific and magical theories that have long since been debunked and treatises on people and places that no longer exist. A cursory glance through the library also reveals several books that must have been brought by the temple's current inhabitants, as they are written in Common; they include a few copies of the *Pathfinder Chronicles*, histories about countries that didn't yet exist when Thassilon fell, and anthologies of modern poetry.

Creature: The use of constructs as librarians was a time-honored tradition in Thassilon, but whereas many used clockwork creations in this role, Xanderghul opted instead for something more elegant and pleasing to the eye—a soulbound shell. This tireless creature has served as the caretaker for the temple's library for all these thousands of years, and it has little need in life other than to continue this role. The donor of this particular soulbound shell's soul was an aging librarian in Xanderghul's service, who wanted to continue to serve after death and volunteered himself for the procedure. Xanderghul wasn't the creator of this soulbound shell, but he did provide the creature's marble body—an elegant sculpture that almost but not quite captured Xanderghul's handsome appearance. Known to the cultists today as the Temple Librarian, the soulbound shell does not permit nonworshippers to peruse the stacks. It won't attack unless the books are harmed, or someone it doesn't recognize as a worshiper of the Peacock Spirit tries to read any of the books. If it does attack, the Temple Librarian doesn't pursue foes out of this area, nor does it immediately attack on sight if intruders return. As long as the PCs make no attempt to read or touch any of the books in

this room, though, the Temple Librarian observes them quietly but does not become hostile.

At your option, if the PCs attempt to speak to the Temple Librarian and avoid the temptation to examine any books, it can provide some of the information that would have otherwise been learned from speaking to High Priestess Zurea.

TEMPLE LIBRARIAN

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE advanced soulbound shell (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 5 288, 249)

hp 162

Treasure: The ancient books that are more well preserved are next to priceless. The collection would fetch 10,000 gp from the right buyer but weighs 250 pounds in total.

K7. Gallery (CR 13)

Portraits, landscapes, and other works of art hang on the walls of this gallery. Each piece is more unsettling than the last, with odd perspectives, bizarre color choices, and barely perceptible disturbing images in the backgrounds. All of the paintings seem to share a common theme: the end of a world in the form of fire raining from the skies.

Each painting in this gallery is the handiwork of a troubled priest of the Peacock Spirit whose name has been lost to time. Psychic to a small degree, the artist felt the reverberations of the coming Earthfall, and though he couldn't articulate the nightmares that visited him every night, he was able to funnel a fraction of those terrible visions into his paintings. The high priest of the temple at the time took a perverse liking to the pieces and used them to replace the previous art in the gallery only months before the cataclysm struck.

Hazard: Any creature that spends 10 minutes in the gallery makes a disturbing discovery within one of the paintings: the face of a loved one in a background crowd, a smudge of paint that resembles the creature's shadow seeming to move on its own, or scratches in a frame that seem to spell the observer's name. Upon such a revelation, the observer must succeed at a DC 25 Will saving throw or take 1d4 points of Wisdom drain. A creature must attempt this same saving throw for every additional 10 minutes it remains in the gallery. A creature that takes 8 or more points of Wisdom drain (after several unsuccessful saving throws) must succeed at an additional DC 25 Will saving throw or be driven insane (as per *insanity*). Both of these effects are mind-affecting effects.

There are three ways to permanently end the eerie influence: casting *greater dispel magic* on the room and

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succeeding at a DC 30 caster level check (failure forces the caster to attempt a DC 25 Will save to avoid Wisdom drain), casting *banishment* on a painting while presenting an item of great emotional significance to the caster, or by succeeding at three consecutive Will saving throws against the hazard. A PC who succeeds at a DC 23 Knowledge (arcana) check while casting *detect magic* in this room can deduce one these methods of cleansing the room (chosen at random; for each 5 points by which the result exceeds this DC, the PC learns an additional method). When an approach is successfully implemented, a psychic burst of energy blasts every creature in the room with a momentary wave of pain. When this flash of pain passes, the gallery's frames now hold nothing but blank canvases. All characters who are in area **K7** at this time gain a permanent +2 bonus on saving throws against confusion and insanity effects.

A painting becomes blank if removed from this room; if the hazard is still active, a duplicate of the painting manifests on the wall 1d6 rounds later. There's no way to profit from stealing the paintings as a result.

Story Award: If the paintings in this room are neutralized, award the PCs 25,600 XP.

K8. Sanctuary

This plush bedroom is bedecked with high-backed chairs and a large bed. Along with a writing desk and a tall wardrobe, the room has its own personal water closet and changing area.

This is High Priest Zurea Salvus's chamber, still in pristine condition from when it served as home to the temple's original high priest. Zurea spends most of her time in the Peacock's Pulpit, dining hall, and library, consorting with her fellow devotees and indulging her desires for food and knowledge. She keeps no personal items within this room.

EVENT 4: A CONVERSATION WITH THE HIGH PRIEST

If the PCs accept High Priest Zurea Salvus's offer to talk, she is quite pleased. She first asks if the heroes are hungry or thirsty, inviting them to retire with her to the dining hall (area **K3**). Whether the PCs do so or prefer to remain in area **K5** doesn't matter to Zurea, but it won't be long before all 16 monks and eight clerics are also gathered

in the area. If asked about this, Zurea says that the PCs' visit is a big event. "We get so few visitors nowadays," she points out, and states that the other cultists merely want to observe. She leaves unstated the fact that if the

PCs decide to attack, the monks and clerics will provide combat support. Characters who worry that Zurea is preparing an ambush can attempt a DC 20 Sense Motive check to note that she doesn't seem to be up to anything nefarious and that her boredom and eagerness to speak is genuine. Zurea may be evil and worship one of the PCs' enemies, but she keeps her word when she tells them she wishes only to talk.

Once everyone is settled, the conversation can begin. High Priest Zurea is as eager to learn about the PCs as they are to question her. For every query she answers, she asks one of her own, focusing on who the PCs are and why they have come to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit. Her responses to the PCs' answers attempt to impress upon the heroes that their lives would be so much better if they accepted the benevolence of the Peacock Spirit into their hearts. She promises them their desires can be fulfilled if they convert to her religion.

Some questions the PCs might ask and Zurea's responses are below.

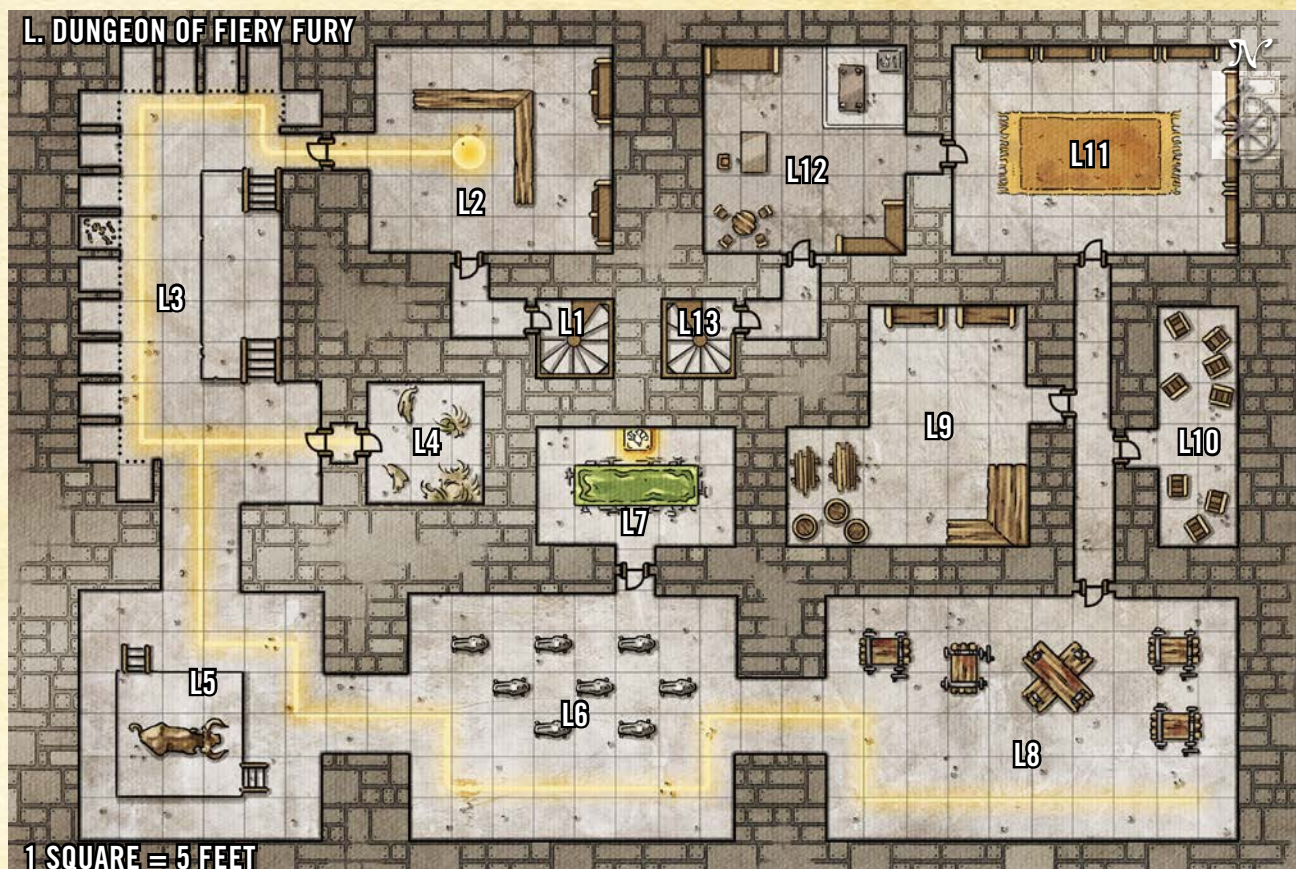
Who are you?/What is your role here? "My name is Zurea Salvus, and I am the high priest of the glorious Peacock Spirit here in its most grand temple!" If the PCs ask more questions about Zurea's history, that information can be found on page 67, but she's evasive on her personal details, stating that if the PCs join her faith, she may in time reward them with more information about her past as their bond of trust grows.

What do you know about Runelord Xanderghul? "Yes, of course I know about him. He was the Peacock Spirit's most ardent worshiper and was responsible for building this very temple! But that was thousands of years ago, and Xanderghul has been gone, perhaps dead, for ages." High Priest Zurea is truly unaware that Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit are one in the same—a distinction the runelord has worked hard to maintain.

What else is in this temple? "We have a library, a dining hall where we can consume whatever we wish, and comfortable places to sleep. Of course, as high priest, I have my own chambers, but I spend most of my time with my fellow devotees." Zurea's nose crinkles in disgust as she continues, "Oh, and there is the gallery, but there is



ZUREA SALVUS



something off about that place. We try to avoid remaining in there for too long.” A PC who succeeds at a Sense Motive check opposed by Zurea’s Bluff check suspects the high priest is omitting something.

What is the story behind the art gallery? “The cursed place was like that when we arrived. I did some research into the artist. His name was never recorded, but many believe he could see fragments of visions of the future. Judging from the paintings’ subjects of the end of the world, his visions were quite accurate predictions of Earthfall. Perhaps these paintings contain a psychic echo of this pain and destruction...” Zurea thinks for a moment. “I’ll make you a deal. If you can do something about those paintings—lift the curse, so to speak—I will bestow unto you a great treasure.” She gives the PCs the opportunity to leave and do so. If they successfully end the influence in the gallery, Zurea gives them the *scroll of heal* from the space behind the altar in area K5, though she follows that gift with a mandatory prayer session (see page 36).

What are you hiding? “Nothing!” This isn’t quite true, and Zurea needs to succeed at a Bluff check to pull this off, as she doesn’t say anything about the stairs leading

the dungeons below. If pressed, she does admit that there are deeper chambers below the temple, but even she is not permitted to enter these areas, so the PCs would certainly not be welcome within. She refuses to reveal the entrance to the door, an act she believes is for the PCs’ own good and safety as much as anything else.

How could you worship an evil deity? Zurea laughs. “Good and evil are flawed concepts invented by society to keep the unenlightened in line. What if you could pursue your desires—be they to help others or to hurt them—outside of this so-called morality? What if your mind, body, and soul were as one? Think of what you could accomplish!” At this point, the high priest really begins pushing the benefits of conversion to the Peacock Spirit.

When the dinner is over and the PCs have no more questions to ask Zurea, she leads them back to the Peacock’s Pulpit, saying that it is time to pray. If the PCs refuse to accompany her, she says, “The Peacock Spirit provided us the fine meal you just ate. Should we not reciprocate in kind? What better fare for a deity than the prayers of the faithful?” She is insistent, and if the PCs continue to balk, she orders her cultists to grab and restrain them. Most likely, this will start a fight.

However, if the PCs agree to sit through a religious ceremony, read or paraphrase the following.

Once everyone has settled in the pews, Zurea steps behind the altar and raises her arms. "My dearest devotees, we gather now to offer our minds, souls, and bodies to the Peacock Spirit. Benevolent, wise, powerful, the Peacock Spirit fills us and lifts us up each and every day, and for that, we give thanks." The cultists all simultaneously chant, "We give thanks." Zurea continues, "The Peacock Spirit shows us the ways we may better ourselves, and for that, we give thanks." The cultists repeat their chant. "The Peacock Spirit found us, lost and wandering, and set us on the path to true enlightenment, and for that, we give thanks." The cultists chant once more. "The Peacock Spirit shines its grace and beauty upon us, reminding us of the light within us all, and for that, we FALL TO OUR KNEES!"

The repetition in Zurea's speech and the drone of the cultists' chanting is soothing, if a bit unsettling. At the end of the short prayer, the cultists drop to their knees. If all of the PCs kneel as well, Zurea is pleased. If any PCs wish to complete their acceptance of the Peacock Spirit at this point, she asks them to set aside their material possessions and stand before the pulpit as "raw souls" (without any gear). The PCs' wealth is taken to be offered to the Peacock Spirit, gathered up in short order by adhukait jailers and placed into storage in area L10 for the time being. If the PCs wish to attempt to take the cult down from within by pretending to convert, they'll need to do so without any of their belongings, and PCs who fall in with the cult will soon find themselves drifting toward lawful evil in alignment as they are asked to perform increasingly more sinister acts of worship. This adventure assumes that the PCs do not take this route.

If any the PCs do not kneel, Zurea shakes her head in disappointment and says the following.

"I had hoped you would be open to the truth, to join with us in accepting the Peacock Spirit, but I see now that you are irredeemably tainted by your own false beliefs. I ask you now to leave this sacred space. If you return, you will be met as enemies, not as friends."

Any PC who did not kneel is labeled as a blasphemer and must immediately exit the nave. If such PCs leave, they are not pursued, but the next time they encounter any of the cultists, they are attacked on sight. If even one blasphemer lingers, Zurea's patience snaps and she orders her cultists to seize the blasphemers by force. Anyone who comes to a blasphemer's aid also is labeled a blasphemer and becomes subject to attacks. Zurea's goal here is to capture as many PCs alive as she can. If she manages to do so, she strips the PCs of their gear, binds them, and lays them out on the floor before the door

to the dungeons below. She then uses one of the scrolls of *sending* hidden in the altar to contact Dhanishti, the asura inquisitor of the Peacock Spirit. Dhanishti arrives soon enough to take the PCs into custody, imprisoning them in cells in area L3.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to make it through this event without causing a fight and learn some important information from Zurea, award them 25,600 XP for the roleplaying challenge.

DUNGEON OF FIERY FURY

Even at its height, the Church of the Peacock Spirit was not without enemies. As the religion swept through the Thassilonian empire and gained converts from every corner of the nation, it also raised suspicions. Those who investigated the religion too thoroughly and threatened to discover the truth stoked Xanderghul's suspicions as the runelord didn't want to his identity, as the Peacock Spirit to be revealed. When anyone got too close to the secret, he dispatched members of the Order of the Green Feather on holy missions to capture the offenders and bring them to the temple. Lesser threats, such as heretics within the faith and common thieves, were also detained here for divine punishment.

Prisoners were taken to the Dungeon of Fiery Fury, a prison under the temple with a handful of cells and torture chambers brimming with cruel implements. While a few mortal guards staffed the prison thousands of years ago, Xanderghul bound a number of asuras to serve as the dungeon's primary jailers and torturers—an irony that the runelord found delectable given the nature of an asura's existence as a manifestation of divine accident. After millennia of existing in this dungeon with next to nothing to do, the immortal asuras, led by the inquisitor Dhanishti, are eager to vent their pent-up wrath on new prisoners. If the PCs are captured by the cult, their gear is stored in areas L10 while they are imprisoned in cells in area L3. In this event, the campaign need not end—you can use the following encounters to run a daring jailbreak, if you wish.

The ceilings within the Dungeon of Fiery Fury are 12 feet high, and the entire area is illuminated by orange magical lights near the ceilings. All of the doors on this level are magical devices made of iron that automatically lock when closed (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 28). A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Disable Device check unlocks a door, and a successful casting of *dispel magic* against a CL 20th effect renders a door nonmagical (and unlocked) for 1d4 rounds. In addition, a door unlocks automatically at the touch of a lawful evil outsider, and as such a character who succeeds at a DC 35 Use Magic Device check can trick a door into interpreting her as a lawful evil outsider.

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L1. Entry Stairs

This flight of spiral stairs winds upward to connect to area **K5** of the nave, 400 feet above.

L2. Intake (CR 13)

An L-shaped table occupies the center of this room. Though the walls and floor are otherwise a drab gray, a bright-orange circle is painted in the center of the room on the floor near the table. A line of the same color leads from the circle into a passageway exiting to the west.

The humiliation of prisoners traditionally began in this area, where they were forced to stand in the orange circle and remove all gear and clothing they still carried, placing the items on the table for the guards to confiscate. Stepping off the orange line would result in punishment (often a cudgel to the back of the head).

Creatures: While human devotees of the Peacock Spirit once worked in this room, the asuras have had free reign since the fall of Thassilon. Three adhukait magi have taken over the duties of processing incoming prisoners, of which there haven't been any for millennia. For centuries,

the adhukaits practiced their duties on one another, breaking occasionally to torment their sole remaining prisoner in solitary confinement with promises of release they never intend to keep. They curtailed this behavior a bit when they learned that cultists of the Peacock Spirit had returned to the complex, and the outsiders are now ready to process new captives. When the PCs enter the room, the adhukaits telepathically demand the "new prisoners" place all of their weapons and other gear on the tables, strip off their armor, and put on the prison smocks. If the PCs don't comply, the asuras attack.

ADHUKAIT JAILERS (3)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

Adhukait magus 3 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 22, *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 9)

LE Medium outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +24

Aura elusive (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 137 each (12 HD; 3d8+9d10+75); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)

Fort +11, **Ref** +13, **Will** +14; +2 bonus vs. enchantment spells

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, dual mind; **DR** 5/good;

Immune curse effects, disease, flanking, poison; **Resist** acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 kukri +19/+14/+9 (1d4+8/18–20), 2 claws +13 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks arcane pool (+1, 2 points), dance of disaster, magus arcana (pool strike), spell combat, spellstrike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)

At will—*feather fall*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *spider climb*
3/day—*blink*, *blur*, *mirror image*, *spike growth* (DC 14)

1/day—*summon* (level 4, 1 adhukait 35%)

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; concentration +4)

1st—*burning hands* (DC 12), *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *open/close* (DC 11), *ray of frost*

TACTICS

During Combat An adhukait jailer casts *mirror image* on the first round of combat and then makes use of spellstrike to combine kukri attacks with damaging spells.

Morale The jailers fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 24, **Dex** 19, **Con** 20, **Int** 13, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 34



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Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Nimble Moves, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +17, Bluff +15, Escape Artist +16, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (planes) +9, Perception +24, Perform (dance) +13, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear +1 kukri, bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +1, spellbook

L3. Cellblock

The walls of this room are lined with over a dozen cells, each a bare five-foot-square chamber with stone walls and a set of iron manacles. Skeletons still dangle by the wrists in three of these cells, a softly glowing sigil shimmering pale blue on their skulls. A raised platform on the eastern side of the room overlooks all the cells.

If the prisoner in area **L4** hears PCs in this room, he calls for help.

Prisoners of the Church of the Peacock Spirit were kept manacled in these cells, brought out only for torture and interrogation sessions in the other rooms. Even in the decades between the temple's construction and Earthfall, the cellblock was never at full capacity. Most of the church's enemies were murdered in their beds, while those who were brought here didn't last long under the asuras' treatment.

The three skeletons that continue to hang from manacles here are some of these ancient victims, but unlike the others, their remains have been preserved by their own lingering souls. These three remains, as with additional remains in areas **L5** and **L6**, were members of a cabal of Pharasmin inquisitors who, in life during the final years of Thassilon, sought the truth of the Peacock Spirit. They were captured and tortured to death by the cult for their crusade. The glowing sigil on their skulls is the holy symbol of Pharasma—this, along with the fact that the skeletons have remained intact after all these years, is a manifestation of their trapped souls.

The tormented souls aren't quite haunts, and they're certainly not undead, but their presence can be detected by spells such as *detect undead*. The asuras, due to their blasphemous nature, cannot see these skeletal remains at all, but if the PCs attempt to communicate with the dead via magic or interact with the physical remains in any way, the bones lurch and then issue a hideous howl of pain that trails off into a lingering sigh of relief before the bones themselves crumble to dust. Each time this occurs, all characters within 30 feet feel a rush of relief and thanks, gaining a +4 morale bonus on Will saves for the next minute.

Note that the howls of these released souls are enough to alert the prisoner in area **L4** and the guardian asura in area **L8**.

Development: Once all seven tormented souls (the three in this room, the one in area **L5**, and three more in area **L6**) are released, Pharasma herself takes note and rewards the PCs with a divine gift. This gift allows each recipient to avoid the next effect, damage, or event that would otherwise kill him—once this effect is negated, that PC's divine gift from Pharasma fades. (See page 71 of *Pathfinder RPG Planar Adventures* for more rules on divine gifts.) When this occurs, the PCs know instinctively how the gift works and why they earned it, and they also realize that the souls they released to the Boneyard were those of ancient Pharasmins who were seeking the truth of the Peacock Spirit and hoped to prove that Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit were one and the same.

Story Award: Once all seven souls are released, grant the PCs 25,600 XP for the act of mercy.

L4. Solitary Confinement (CR 9)

The stone walls of this prison cell are damp and moldy. A pile of straw serves as a bed, and a rusty bucket has been placed in the corner for a chamber pot.

Creature: An avoral agathion named Hobbin has languished as a prisoner here for centuries. Once a happy-go-lucky traveler from Nirvana, Hobbin came to the Material Plane to learn about daily life in the then-powerful Thassilonian empire. He heard about the worship of the Peacock Spirit and started asking around. Several decades later, he made the pilgrimage to the Grand Temple, only to begin to suspect Runelord Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit were one and the same. However, Hobbin was not very good at hiding his surprise, and before he could escape the temple, he was captured and placed in the dungeon. While this confirmed his suspicions, he was unable to tell anyone as he has been locked up and repeatedly tortured ever since. The inquisitor Dhanishti takes great pleasure in bringing Hobbin to the brink of death and then giving him time to recuperate before doing it all again. She has long since gleaned all of Hobbin's secrets, but refuses to kill him because she doesn't want to lose her favorite toy.

Hobbin has endured the centuries of torment remarkably well, maintaining his composure as a result of his otherworldly patience, despite having lost the use of his spell-like abilities after Dhanishti used a *robe of powerlessness* on him to reduce his Strength and Charisma scores by 10 each. As soon as Hobbin realizes the PCs aren't asuras, he calls out to them, pressing his face against the barred window in his door. Read or paraphrase the following.

"Hey! Over here! By Hobbin's wings, Hobbin must be hallucinating! Is Hobbin hallucinating? Are you real? Are you here to set Hobbin free?"

Hobbin eagerly answers the PCs' questions even if they don't rescue him. Some common queries and Hobbin's answers are below.

Who are you? "Name's Hobbin. Just a simple traveler who poked his beak into the wrong places and found himself locked away."

What are you? "One of Nirvana's children! An avoral agathion. Hobbin came to this world to seek out and spread knowledge, but it seems like some of you humans don't much care for that!"

How long have you been here? A tinge of sadness cuts through the outsider's excitement. "Forever, it seems. Hobbin has lost so much track of time, Hobbin has even forgotten the moment the concept of time became foreign to him."

What do you know about this place/Runelord Xanderghul? "Hobbin hasn't seen much. There's a temple above and chambers where they torture Hobbin over there, but that is all they let Hobbin see. But Hobbin does know a thing or two about the man who rules this place. Hobbin will tell you a secret about the Peacock Spirit if you set him free! It's the secret that got him put in here in the first place!"

How do we get you out of there? "The three-faced woman has the key! She and her serpentine friend come get Hobbin every so often to stretch Hobbin on the rack or burn Hobbin's feathers."

Regardless of how the PCs free the agathion, Hobbin is thrilled to be free once again and wants nothing more than to return to Nirvana, but doing so remains beyond his abilities as long as he continues to suffer his curse. He explains that his tormentor, the three-faced woman Dhanishti, used a magical robe to rob Hobbin of his strength and sense of self (this why the agathion refers to himself in the third person). If the PCs promise to help him, be it by removing the curse or promising to find a way to send him home (something that they'll likely need to do after escorting Hobbin out of the region where the *dimensional lock* effect no longer bars planar travel effects), he agrees to provide what aid he can, accompanying them on their journey.

Hobbin is unaware of anything in the world beyond. He doesn't know that Runelord Xanderghul has been slain only to be reborn in this very facility, but this ignorance

goes two ways: Xanderghul is unaware of Hobbin's existence or that he knows the truth about the Peacock Spirit. (Had Xanderghul realized this, he would have ordered the agathion's death long ago—the asuras kept this information from him in retaliation for the displeasure they feel at being bound to the Material Plane.) Hobbin can give the PCs some information about the asuras in the dungeon, including information about their physical defenses. He knows Dhanishti is a powerful inquisitor of the Peacock Spirit.

Hobbin's greatest gift to the PCs, though, is the fact that he suspects Runelord Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit are one and the same. While he has no actual proof of this belief, he points out that the asuras keeping him imprisoned this long for fear of what he knows becoming widespread knowledge is all the proof he needs. If asked why Runelord Xanderghul hasn't just had him killed already to ensure his silence, Hobbin shrugs. "Maybe he doesn't know Hobbin knows. Maybe he fears that Hobbin has friends who will resurrect him, or at least speak to Hobbin's corpse? As long as Hobbin remains a cursed prisoner, who would believe Hobbin? Who would even be able to talk to Hobbin! You! That's who! You know the truth now as well, and so Hobbin can die, if that is Hobbin's fate, knowing Hobbin didn't take Hobbin's secret to the grave!"

Hobbin CR 9 XP 6,400

Male avoral agathion (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 16)

hp 94 (currently 3)

Story Award: If the PCs free Hobbin, award them XP as if they had defeated him in combat. If they learn from him that Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit are the same, award them an additional 25,600 XP (unless they've already earned this award from elsewhere).

L5. Brazen Bull

The center of this room is occupied by a raised dais, on which stands a brass statue of a bull. A large brazier has been installed under the statue's belly.

The PCs can easily see that the large bull statue has 4-foot-wide hatch built into the side. Opening the hatch reveals a cavity large enough to hold a Medium creature. A PC who succeeds at a DC 22 Knowledge (history or religion) check realizes the bull is a torture implement



HOBBIN

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wherein a victim is placed inside the statue and a fire is lit underneath. If the victim doesn't confess or recant (or whatever the torturer is looking for), he is slowly roasted alive, his cries of pain being transformed by the acoustics within the bull to sound like the lowing of cattle.

Anyone who opens the bull's hatch reveals a charred skeleton within the cavity: one of the seven lingering Pharasmin souls (see area L3).

L6. Iron Maidens

A total of eight iron sarcophagi stand on display in this room. Of the eight, five are wide open, revealing dozens of cruel spikes lining their interiors.

The purpose of these iron maidens should be obvious to any who look at them. All eight have been built to accommodate Medium humanoids. Opening any of the three closed sarcophagi reveals the well-punctured bones of a prior victim within; these remains are three of the seven lingering Pharasmin souls (see area L3).

L7. Acid Pit (CR 13)

An acrid smell hangs thick in the air of this drab room, emanating from a pool of clear but slightly fuming liquid in the center of the room. A five-foot-wide polished stone walkway surrounds the pool, with a glass display case containing a peacock statue standing on the ledge across the pool opposite the room's entrance.

The 10-foot-deep pool and the surrounding walkway have been lined with a layer of magically strengthened glass (hardness 15, hp 45, break DC 30). The liquid in the pool itself is a potent acid often used by the torturers here to torment prisoners, although the mechanism by which victims were once suspended above the pit has long since eroded away from exposure to the acidic fumes. Currently, the asuras use the acid pool as a means of disposing of waste, though they do so infrequently. The acid's effects (including the effects of its fumes) function as detailed on page 442 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

The peacock statue is one of the seven *Peacock Shrines*, enhancing the walls of the temple and its dungeons. The glass display case in which it is contained is both magically strengthened and locked (hardness 15, hp 30, break DC 28, Disable Device DC 30).

Trap: The *Peacock Shrine* is not trapped, but the glass display case it sits within is. Anyone who tries to open the display case or damages it triggers a blast of telekinetic force that attempts to slam the unfortunate PC into the ceiling above the pit of acid before dropping her into its depths.

TELEKINETIC ACID TRAP

CR 13

XP 25,600

Type magic; Perception DC 28; Disable Device DC 28

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect The target must succeed at a DC 20 Will save or be telekinetically slammed to the ceiling above the acid pit for 2d6 points of bludgeoning damage and then dropped into the 10-foot-deep pool of acid, which deals 10d6 points of acid damage per round.

L8. The Racks (CR 12)

Stretching racks festooned with chains and manacles adorn the northern portion of this chamber.

The racks here have seen little use and are rusting in places. Even during the temple's heyday, no more than two of these torture devices were in use at any one time, as Dhanishti, the head torturer, found that too much screaming could be very distracting.

Creature: Belevaan, an immense serpentine aghasura who serves as Dhanishti's muscle, patiently stands guard here. The huge outsider was once responsible for corralling the unrulier prisoners, dragging them between their cells and their torture sessions. He currently slithers among the racks, repeatedly cataloging any damage and wear on the implements. He smiles cruelly when the PCs enter the room, as he is eager for his blades to taste blood once again. Belevaan greets the PCs telepathically with a single phrase: "Die, intruders!" before rushing toward them. As he attacks, he also telepathically alerts the adhukait jailers in area L9 and Dhanishti herself of the development. These asuras move to join Belevaan's side in combat as soon as possible.

BELEVAAN

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male advanced aghasura asura (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3290, 23)

hp 189

L9. Maintenance (CR 12)

This expansive room is filled with partially built torture implements of all shapes and sizes, scattered across workbenches and on the floor.

The church's jailers kept the dungeon's torture implements in good shape with regular maintenance performed in this room. Since the temple complex was abandoned after Earthfall, those devices weren't

used as much and require less repair. However, the march of time still caused some deterioration, and the asuras occasionally try to effect repairs, which are often barely competent.

Creatures: Another two adhukait magi work in this chamber, banging mallets against spiked sheets of metal meant for one of the iron maidens in area L6. They are fixated on their noisy work and take a -4 penalty on Perception checks unless warned in advance via telepathy from Belevaan.

ADHUKAIT JAILERS (2)

CR 10

XP 9,600 each

hp 137 each (see page 38)

L10. Storage

Wooden crates are stacked haphazardly around this narrow chamber, leaving barely enough room to move around them.

The Church of the Peacock Spirit stored extra prisoners' shifts and other supplies here, but almost all of it has either rotted away or been looted over the millennia.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while searching the room discovers a +2 *cruel*^{UE} spiked chain in an otherwise empty crate. It was accidentally left behind by a mortal torturer thousands of years ago. In addition, if any PCs were captured by the cult, their gear is stored here.

L11. Records Room

Racks of scrolls line the northern and eastern walls of this room.

Transcripts of all torture sessions—especially those that contained confessions—are filed away here. Though the asuras are methodical in their record-keeping, their organization leaves something to be desired. The scrolls aren't sorted by date or name of prisoner, but by how important Dhanishti believed the contents to be to the cause of the Peacock Spirit. While she can find a particular scroll with but a moment's notice, anyone less familiar would have to search through the catalog for hours or stumble across the wanted information by luck. In any case, there's little information of value to the PCs here.

L12. Inquisitor's Office (CR 13)

The floor of the northeastern corner of this room is covered with ceramic tiles, while the rest of the room is floored with warm-colored wooden slats. A metal table stands in the tiled corner, adjacent to a smaller stand holding a tray with an assortment

of surgical tools. A high-backed leather chair behind a large desk rests near the western wall, and an L-shaped leather sofa sits on the southeastern corner. The northwestern corner contains a bookshelf and an unlit brick fireplace.

Creature: The torturer and inquisitor of the cult, an upasunda inquisitor named Dhanishti, uses this office to unwind and get away from the other asuras from time to time. When she had more prisoners to interrogate, she would also do that here, using magic to glean secrets from the corpses of her victims, but then also dissecting them to learn a bit more about anatomy to aid her in her job. She hasn't had the chance to pursue this hobby in ages, and if the PCs are captured, it won't be long before they are brought here for the inquisitor's attentions.

DHANISHTI

CR 13

XP 25,600

Female upasunda inquisitor of the Peacock Spirit 8 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 27, *Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 38)

LE Medium outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +19; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +36

Aura elusive (50 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 16, flat-footed 25 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 insight, +3 natural, +2 shield)

hp 190 (20 HD; 8d8+12d10+88); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)

Fort +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +23; +2 bonus vs. enchantment spells

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, improved evasion; **DR** 10/good; **Immune** curse effects, disease, flanking, poison;

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 20

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft. (35 ft. in armor)

Melee +2 *keen kukri* +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d4+10/15-20), mwk scimitar +27 (1d6+4/18-20), mwk scimitar +27 (1d6+4/18-20), slam +21 (1d4+4)

Special Attacks bane (8 rounds/day), infused weapons, judgment 3/day (2 simultaneous), multiweapon mastery

Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +17)

At will—*detect alignment*, *discern lies* (8 rounds/day)

Upasunda Spell-Like Abilities (CL 9th; concentration +15)

At will—*disguise self*, *feather fall*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *see invisibility*, *spider climb* 3/day—*deeper darkness*, *levitate*, *rainbow pattern* (DC 20) 1/day—*haste*, *hold monster* (DC 21), *summon* (level 4, 2 adhukaits 45% or 1 upasunda 20%)

Inquisitor Spells Known (CL 8th; concentration +17)

3rd (4/day)—*blood biography*^{APG} (DC 22), *searing light*, *speak with dead* (DC 22)

2nd (6/day)—*confess*^{APG} (DC 21), *spiritual weapon*, *tongues*, *weapon of awe*^{APG} (DC 21)

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1st (7/day)—*comprehend languages*, *divine favor*, *inflict light wounds* (DC 20), *true strike*, *wrath*^{APG}
0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *bleed* (DC 19), *brand*^{APG} (DC 19), *create water*, *resistance*, *stabilize*

Inquisition torture^{UM}

TACTICS

During Combat Dhanishti hangs back to cast *haste* on the first round of combat, followed by *weapon of awe* on her kukri before entering battle.

Morale If reduced to 30 or fewer hit points, Dhanishti feigns surrendering in the hopes of getting the PCs to come a bit closer before she casts *rainbow pattern* on them. She then begins fighting once again, this time to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 26, **Dex** 22, **Con** 19, **Int** 18, **Wis** 29, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +26 (+28 grapple, sunder);

CMD 46 (48 vs. grapple or sunder)

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (kukri), Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Mobility, Outflank^{APG}, Power Attack, Precise Strike^{APG}, Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +25, Bluff +29, Diplomacy +29, Escape Artist +20, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (planes) +16, Knowledge (religion) +14, Perception +36, Perform (dance) +18, Profession (torturer) +32, Sense Motive +36, Stealth +25

Languages Aklo, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Shoanti, Thassilonian; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ critical precision, monster lore +9, solo tactics, stern gaze +4, torturer's touch, track +4

Gear +1 chainmail, +1 light steel shield, +2 keen kukri, mwk scimitars (2), gold symbol of the Peacock Spirit worth 1,200 gp

Treasure: Dhanishti has confiscated a fair amount of items and gold over her years as head torturer. She has tucked away the most interesting pieces in the drawers of her desk. These items include a *glove of storing* that contains a +1 *flaming starknife*, a *pearl of power* (2nd level), an *ebony fly figurine of wondrous power*, and 712 pp. In addition, she keeps a neatly folded *robe of powerlessness* in the desk's largest drawer. This robe looks as though it were made of peacock feathers whose colors have been leached out into shades of gray, and is a tool Dhanishti has used before on prisoners like the occupant of area L4.

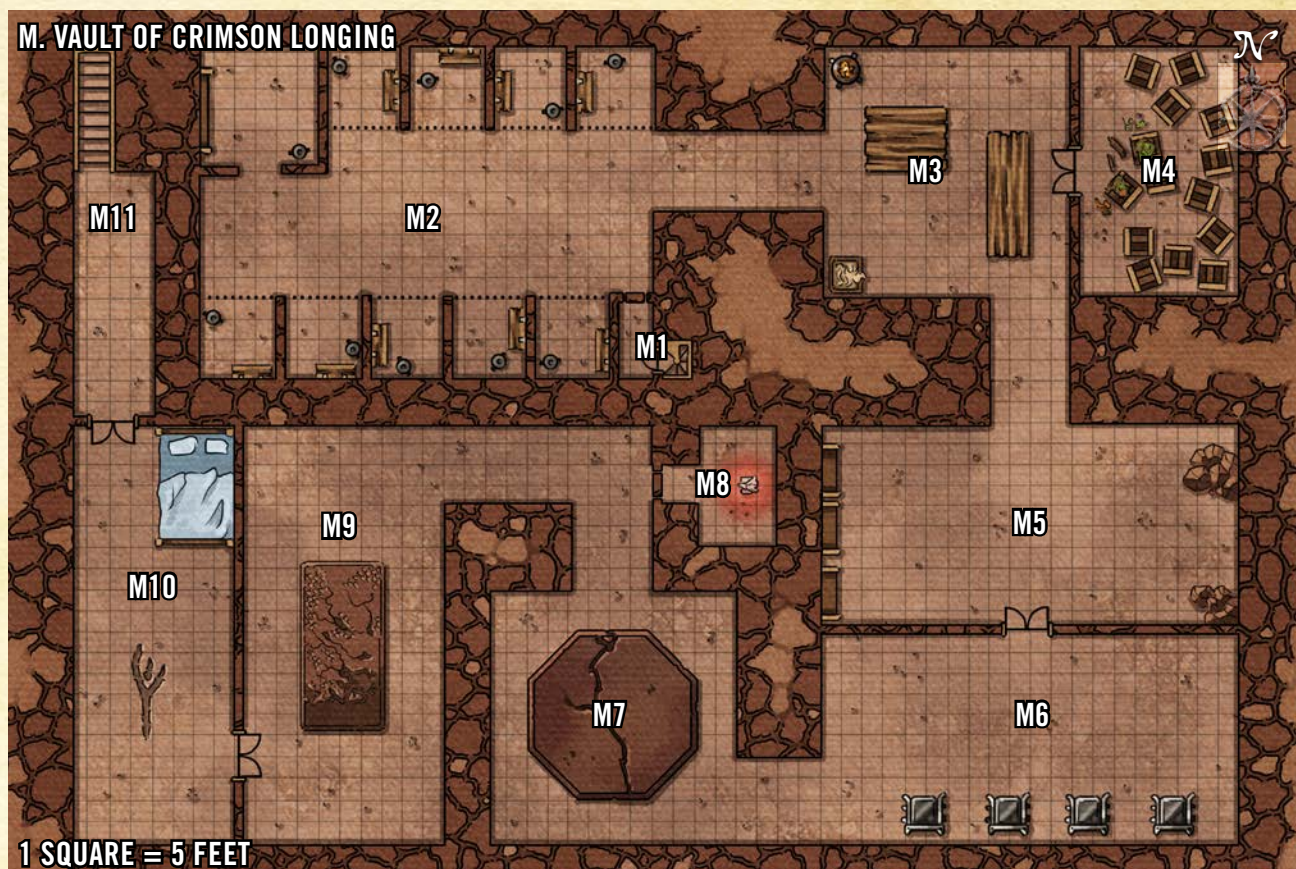
L13. Vault Entrance

This flight of spiral stairs leads 100 feet down to area M1.

VAULT OF CRIMSON LONGING

The Vault of Crimson Longing is strictly off-limits to all normal cultists (including the high priest and the asuras). Xanderghul used this oversized complex as one of his domain's many facilities that turned giants into pliant slaves—a complex that focused on more traditional methods of brainwashing and mental programming than the more magical methods employed by the rune giants. In developing these nonmagical psychological techniques, Xanderghul also developed methods that he





could then apply to the rune giants. The supervisor of this particular operation is a shadow giant named Tuirziaz, a terribly efficient overseer who could break almost any other type of giant's will in a matter of days—her specialty is fire giants, and two of her favored “projects” remain in the vault as her assistants and agents.

Thanks to his obsession with finding the *Scepter of Ages*, Xanderghul became well-versed in chronological magic, especially the ability to create a kind of *temporal stasis* field that perfectly preserves everything and everyone in it. He used these discoveries to save himself from the destruction of Earthfall, but before he did that, he formed a handful of other temporal refuges for his most beloved servants—Tuirziaz and the giants within the Vault of Crimson Longing were included on this list. When Xanderghul was resurrected in his inner sanctum beneath the temple, one of the first things he did was lift the *temporal stasis* field on this vault, releasing the giants from their ageless preservation and providing Tuirziaz with new orders: the defense of the entrance to the level below. He also promised her that when the time was right, she would have the pleasure of “recruiting” more giants to form the backbone of his new army.

The massive doors of this level are made from reinforced stone (hardness 8, hp 90, break DC 30) and can be opened easily only by a creature with a Strength score of 26 or higher; creatures whose Strength scores are at least 10 (but less than 26) take 3 rounds to push open one of the doors, and even weaker creatures (those whose Strength scores are 9 or less) can't budge the doors at all. The ceilings are 60 feet high in most places. The halls and chambers are lit by permanently smoldering coal braziers located in each room's corners that provide only dim light and make the entire level smell like smoke.

M1. Spiral Stairs

This flight of spiral stairs leads 100 feet up to area L13. The secret door just to the north of the exit can be discovered with a successful DC 30 Perception check.

M2. Giant Cells (CR 13)

A total of nine twenty-foot-square cells line the northern and southern walls of this cold, drab chamber. Steel portcullises block access to most of these cells, but two of them are raised.

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Captured giants (mostly fire giants) were kept in these cells as they underwent the indoctrination process. Relatively cramped for giants and uncomfortable for creatures of any size, the cells were kept chilly to further stress their typical inhabitants. The giants were fed the bare minimum to keep them alive and could relieve themselves only at appointed times when they were allowed to visit the communal privy. Even though thousands of years have passed since the cells were used for their intended purpose, the stench of oppression hangs heavy in the air.

Creatures: When she was placed into stasis, Tuirziaz insisted that a pair of inverted giants be included to serve as her personal attendants, in addition to her two fire giant adjutants. Horrific transformations fashioned by painful rituals that warp their victims into loyal monstrosities, inverted giants are lumbering creatures whose entrails hang outside of their bodies, whose faces are nothing but mouths, and whose limbs glisten with exposed muscle. The runelords were fond of the implied threat an inverted giant's presence gives to other giants. "Do as you are told, or this could be you," formed the basis of many of Tuirziaz's cruel techniques. Yet Tuirziaz also values the giants for their power and placed two of them here to act as guards.

INVERTED GIANTS (2)

CR 11

XP 12,800 each

Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Kingdoms 60

CE Huge humanoid (giant)

Init +6; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +9

Aura fear (60 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 10, flat-footed 23 (+2 Dex, +15 natural, -2 size)

hp 152 each (16d8+80); fast healing 4

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

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Resist** cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee bite +19 (2d8+9 plus grab), 2 claws +19 (1d8+9 plus 1d6 fire)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks claws, rock throwing (120 ft.), runes, swallow whole (2d8+9 bludgeoning damage, AC 17, 15 hp)

TACTICS

During Combat When the PCs appear in the room, the inverted giants rush to attack, having been told to destroy all non-giant beings they see.

Morale If one of the giants is slain, the other makes a fighting retreat to area M5, where it fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 29, **Dex** 14, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +23 (+25 bull rush, +27 grapple); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. bull rush)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Critical Focus, Improved Bull

Rush, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Climb +17, Intimidate +11, Perception +9

Languages Giant, Thassilonian (can't speak)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Claws (Ex) An inverted giant can channel arcane energy into its fists whenever it makes a successful claw attack, dealing 1d6 points of energy damage (cold, electricity, or fire, chosen when the inverted giant attacks—these giants favor fire damage) in addition to the damage its claws normally deal.

Runes (Ex) Whenever an inverted giant is affected by a spell or spell-like ability, it can cause the runes covering its body to flash with light. All creatures within 10 feet of the giant must succeed at a 21 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1 round. The saving throw is Charisma-based.

M3. Mess Hall

Two large tables occupy much of this room. A wooden crate filled with straw sits in the southwestern corner, while the northwestern corner features a heavy iron brazier.

Tuirziaz would occasionally allow fire giant prisoners who were behaving and cooperative to linger a moment in this room, warming themselves by the brazier and enjoying a few bites of slightly less unpleasant food. She would also be sure to have her more surly captives marched through this room as quickly as possible, getting only a glimpse at those giants who gained her favor. This often fostered division among the prisoners—a situation that Tuirziaz was pleased to cultivate.

During the past few months, the fire giants have been taking their meager meals in this chamber, munching on only enough dried rations to keep themselves alive. The crate in the corner is mostly empty, with only a few giant handfuls of boar jerky left. There are more provisions in the pantry behind the door (area M4).

M4. Pantry

Humongous wooden crates are stacked two or three high in this crowded space. The nearest box has been pried open, revealing heaps of dried fruit and jerky.

Though Tuirziaz would sometimes hunt her own game while out on missions to collect giants, Xanderghul made sure that this pantry was stocked with enough food to keep her captives fed for months. Luckily for the shadow giant and her current servants, the *temporal stasis* placed over this level also preserved all of this food for millennia. The giants have only begun to consume these provisions,

and though the rations aren't very exciting to eat, the giants understand that they must bide their time.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 26 Perception check finds a *staff of feast and famine*^{UE} that fell behind a stack of crates. Even if the giants knew it was here, they still couldn't use it to improve their food options.

M5. Training Hall (CR 13)

A passageway from the north opens onto a wide hall, with a large stone double door in the southern wall. The eastern end of the hall is in poor repair, its stone walls and floor cracked and chipping. Piles of broken builders sit at the base of the eastern wall. A few giant-sized weapon racks stand against the western wall, and the floor nearby is blackened with soot.

Tuirziaz used this room to test her control over her giant captives, usually pitting two formerly friendly giants against one another in combat to see if they would obey her orders unquestioningly. She usually commanded the winning participant to kill the loser, and if there was any hesitation, she knew that giant needed a few more days in the indoctrination chamber (area M6). Unless the losing combatant had been very troublesome, she typically called off the execution at the last minute, though she was aware that the occasional death among the prisoners could help keep them in line.

Creature: One of two fire giants who served Tuirziaz faithfully at Thassilon's height without the need for brainwashing, Vuhsias constantly feels the need to prove himself over his comrade, Kasmalogg. The two continually vie for the shadow giant's favor, each hoping one day to lead a force of his own when the crusades against the smaller humanoids of Golarion begin. Currently, Kasmalogg has a slight edge over Vuhsias, and as such Vuhsias has been training constantly in this room to improve himself. When the PCs enter this room, Vuhsias is in the western half of the room, training through various battle stances with his warhammer. His focus imparts a –6 penalty on his Perception checks. If he's reduced to fewer than 60 hit points, he retreats through the door to area M6 to (reluctantly) seek the aid of Kasmalogg within.

VUHSIAS

CR 13

XP 25,600

Male fire giant strongarm (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 58)
hp 158

M6. Indoctrination Chamber (CR 13)

Four oversized iron chairs are bolted to the floor in the southern half of this room. The arms and legs of the chairs are fitted with manacles and chains. The wall just beyond the chairs is

decorated with a mural of a blood-red sun setting (or possibly rising) over the caldera of an active volcano.

Giant prisoners were brought to this room, strapped into an iron chairs, and subjected to Tuirziaz's brainwashing methods. While the use of rune giants offered the runelords magical methods of short-term control over giants, the techniques Tuirziaz developed of breaking down her subjects' minds to make them pliant and suggestible had longer-lasting effects that couldn't be swiftly negated by dispelling. The trade-off was the amount of time that had to be invested in each giant. A typical indoctrination took months of sessions that lasted for hours a day, so even when Tuirziaz worked on several giants at once, progress was slow.

Creature: With her specialty being fire giants, Tuirziaz found the volcano mural helped to calm her favored subjects during these stressful sessions, speeding up the brainwashing process. The fire giant Kasmalogg is one of her earliest triumphs. He sits in one of the chairs, his flail across his lap as he meditates before the mural, occasionally heaving a great big sigh. Ever since being awoken from temporal stasis, Kasmalogg has begun feeling something akin to homesickness. Though only a few months have passed for him, the discovery that thousands of years have passed has weighed heavily upon his mind. Though he long ago enslaved his family at Tuirziaz's behest, he is coming to grips with the fact that they—and pretty much everyone else he knew—is dead. Kasmalogg is having second thoughts about his loyalties to Tuirziaz and Xanderghul, believing that he might not see the volcanic vista he once called home before he is asked to give his life in some massive battle.

If Kasmalogg hears the sounds of combat in area M5, there is only a 25% chance that he will rouse himself from his melancholy to investigate. Once there, or if Vuhsias retreats to this room to seek his aid, Kasmalogg fights without much conviction, not certain if he wants to live or die. If the PCs confront him outside of combat, he wearily stands from his chair and demands they leave. He is angry his brooding has been interrupted and quickly lashes out at the PCs, whether they start to retreat or not.

Once combat breaks out, it's only a matter of 1d3 rounds before Tuirziaz arrives from area M9, ready to aid Kasmalogg. Characters who manage to keep the battle quiet can avoid this complication.

KASMALOGG

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male fire giant fighter 4 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 148)

LE Large humanoid (fire, giant)

Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +23

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DEFENSE

AC 28, touch 10, flat-footed 27 (+10 armor, +1 Dex, +8 natural, -1 size)

hp 207 (19 HD; 15d8+4d10+118)

Fort +19, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7 (+1 vs. fear)

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Immune** fire

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 *igniting heavy flail* +26/+21/+16 (2d8+18/17-20 plus 1d6 fire)

Ranged rock +11/+6/+1 (1d8+15 plus 1d6 fire)

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

Special Attacks heated rock, rock throwing (120 ft.)

TACTICS

During Combat Kasmalogg dishes out pain to as many PCs as he can with his full attacks, favoring melee attacks.

Morale Kasmalogg tries to flee toward Tuirziaz's side once reduced to 25 hit points or fewer.

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 13, **Con** 23, **Int** 13, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +26 (+28 disarm, sunder, trip);

CMD 37 (39 vs. disarm, sunder, or trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Deadly Aim, Improved Critical (heavy flail), Improved Disarm, Improved Sunder, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Staggering Critical, Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail)

Skills Craft (weapons) +21, Intimidate +24, Perception +23

Languages Giant, Ignan, Thassilonian

SQ armor training 1

Gear +4 breastplate, +1 igniting heavy flail

M7. Defunct Entrance

A massive octagonal dais studded with red gemstones occupies much of this chamber. A jagged crack runs down the center of the raised platform. Passageways lead out to the north and east.

This dais once functioned as a teleporter that the giants used to exit the vault and to return once they'd gathered new giant prisoners, using a variant of the viridian transcendence. The jagged crack in the dais has rendered it inoperable for use in this ritual, but hasn't completely negated its effects. A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Spellcraft check while studying the dais's magical aura of conjuration notes that this room is unblocked by the *dimensional lock* effect—characters can come and go from this chamber via teleportation at will.

M8. Secret Shrine (CR 12)

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check finds the secret door leading to this room.

A stylized stone statue of a peacock, its tail feathers open in a wide fan, stands on a stone platform in this chamber.

This peacock statue is one of the seven *Peacock Shrines*, granting immunity to mind-affecting effects to all non-giants dwelling in the temple and the dungeons below.

Trap: While removing the red rod of this shrine has the least dangerous effect of all the shrines (see page 14), any



KASMALOGG

attempt to damage the statue or remove any of its rods triggers the maximized *fireball* trap that wards it.

MAXIMIZED FIREBALL TRAP

CR 12

XP 19,200

Type magic; Perception DC 30; Disable Device DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; Reset automatic

Effect spell effect (maximized *fireball* centered on the *Peacock Shrine*; 60 points of fire damage; Reflex DC 14 half)

M9. Map Room (CR 15)

The floor of this room is decorated with a sculpted map featuring three-foot-high mountains, lakes and rivers that seem to be filled with water, and tiny replicas of cities from which the faint sound of bustling crowds can be heard. Ceramic figurines depicting squads of humans and giants are scattered across the map, more than a few of them knocked over on their sides.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (geography or history) recognizes the map as a very accurate representation of the Thassilonian empire in its prime. The capitals of each domain are marked with small flags bearing the ruling runelord's symbol, and the model of Xin-Cyrusian, Xanderghul's capital city, is the most detailed. The appearance of rippling water and sound of crowds are nothing more than *permanent image* spells that enhance the map.

Creature: The shadow giant Tuirziaz, Xanderghul's giant hunter and primary brainwasher, has been spending more and more time in this room. Xanderghul and Tuirziaz used this map to plan raids on giant enclaves, keeping track of giant and human populations across the empire with the ceramic figurines. Since her awakening, Tuirziaz has made guesses as to how the empire has changed over the millennia, marking her suppositions on a few of the maps found on the southern tables, but even a casual glance at these reveals her estimates to be wildly inaccurate. She has little knowledge about the outside world, knowing only that a massive cataclysm struck the region. A PC who examines these maps and succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check or a DC 24 Knowledge (geography) or Profession (cartographer) check realizes that whoever made notes on the maps has no idea that the Thassilonian empire has fallen.

If the PCs have managed to get this far without attracting attention via loud fighting, they encounter Tuirziaz here rather than in her quarters. The combination of her driven personality and the fact that she's had little to do the past few months results in her spending little time asleep or relaxing—she gets just enough to avoid fatigue.

If the PCs catch her unprepared here, she's studying the map, moving one figure at a time, muttering, moving the figure back, and muttering more. She's startled to see the PCs but recovers quickly and does her best to strike up a conversation. As she speaks, she does her best not to answer questions while getting answers from the PCs, asking them who they are, why they're here, and then moving on to asking them about the outside world. She'll agree to a one-for-one trade of questions and answers, but only for a short time before she uses her *Spellsong* feat to disguise the casting of *mass suggestion* with a Perform (oratory) check, using the spell to suggest the PCs tell her all about the modern world. If the PCs fall for this, she also invites them into area M10 to share some food and water. In fact, she hopes to reach the telepathy rune (see area M10) to update Xanderghul on everything that's happening while she speaks.

If the *mass suggestion* doesn't work, she continues to try using *Spellsong* as often as she can, switching to *dominate person* and *charm monster* to secretly target individual characters to get them talking. Once the PCs see through this tactic or otherwise have cause to attack her, she abandons subtlety and fights as detailed in her tactics entry.

Tuirziaz has long suspected that Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit are the same, but she knows better than to ask him about this directly. Either way, she sees him as an employer, not a god, for she isn't religious at all. In fact, she believes those who put their faith into gods are weak—a trait that the PCs may well be able to capitalize on since she tends to ignore obvious divine spellcasters in combat.

TUIRZIAZ

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female bard shadow giant (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 246, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 6 134)

LE Large humanoid (extraplanar, giant)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17 (+21 in dim light)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+7 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 218 (19d8+133)

Fort +17, Ref +8, Will +14

Defensive Abilities rock catching, shadow cloak; Resist cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +1 icy burst whip +27/+22/+17 (1d4+13 nonlethal/19–20 plus 1d6 cold and energy drain on first successful attack), slam +20 (1d8+6)

Ranged rock +11 (1d8+6 plus energy drain)

Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (20 ft. with whip)

Special Attacks bardic performance 44 rounds/day (swift action;

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countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate [DC 23], frightening tune [DC 23], inspire competence +6, inspire courage +4, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, mass suggestion [DC 23], soothing performance, suggestion [DC 23]), energy drain (1 level, DC 23), rock throwing (180 ft.)

Bard Spells Known (CL 19th; concentration +23)

5th (2/day)—*mass suggestion* (DC 19)

4th (3/day)—*dominate person* (DC 18), *hold monster* (DC 18)

3rd (3/day)—*charm monster* (DC 17), *displacement*

TACTICS

During Combat Tuirziaz activates her inspire courage bardic performance on the first round and then casts *displacement*. She then retreats to area **M10**, as she prefers to make melee attacks in combat while standing her ground on or near the rune in the floor there so she can communicate with Xanderghul. She focuses her first attacks each round on arcane spellcasters in hopes of reducing their spellcasting abilities with energy drain, then switches to target weapon users and periodically attempts to disarm them with her whip.

Morale Tuirziaz fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 34, **Dex** 15, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +27; **CMD** 40

Feats Arcane Strike, Dodge, Improved Critical (whip), Improved Whip Mastery^{UC}, Iron Will, Persuasive, Spellson^{UM}, Toughness, Weapon Focus (whip), Whip Mastery^{UC}

Skills Diplomacy +18, Intimidate +21, Perception +17 (+21 in dim light), Perform (oratory) +14, Spellcraft +0 (+8 in dim light)

Languages Giant, Thassilonian

SQ militant (whip proficiency)

Combat Gear *wand of cure critical wounds* (12 charges);

Other Gear +3 chain shirt, +1 icy burst whip, minor ring of cold resistance

Treasure: A successful DC 35 Perception check reveals a secret compartment built into the map. Within are a dozen *potions of cure serious wounds*, a *wand of cure critical wounds* with 35 charges remaining, and three *scrolls of mass cure moderate wounds*.

M10. Tuirziaz's Lair

A large cot covered in dark furs sits in the northeastern corner of this room. The stone floor swept clean and marked with a shadowy carving of a single, massive rune.

The rune on the floor appears to have a moderate divination aura, but in fact this is an illusion that masks its actual aura of illusion (shadow). A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Spellcraft check while studying the rune determines the rune's use: anyone who stands on the

rune can communicate telepathically with the Peacock Spirit itself. The rune is a magical manifestation that cannot be harmed by damage (destroying the ground it appears to be marked on simply results in the shadowy rune appearing to float in the air), and it cannot be simply dispelled. An antimagic field negates but does not destroy it. *Mage's disjunction* automatically destroys the rune. In addition, if the result of the PC's Spellcraft check to identify the rune exceeds the DC by 5 or more (or if a character studies the rune and succeeds at a DC 35 Knowledge [planes] check), the character also notes a



flaw in the rune: the telepathy itself isn't empowered by divination magic, but by a strange link to the Shadow Plane that allows multiple minds to share the same thoughts. The character realizes that a spell such as *dismissal* or *banishment* will unravel this extraplanar influence (these spells can target the rune as if it were a creature). *Banishment* is automatically successful, but to destroy the rune with *dismissal*, a character must succeed at a DC 25 caster level check. At your option, other similar spell effects can potentially destroy the rune (although any attempt with a spell of 6th level or lower is successful only if the caster succeeds at a DC 25 caster level check). Note that since the rune doesn't involve actual travel, it is unaffected by spells like *dimensional anchor* or *dimensional lock*. Destroying the rune causes significant feedback that assaults Xanderghul's mind (see his NPC entry on page 64 for details). If the PCs destroy the rune, they temporarily weaken the runelord, but they also give him proof that enemies are very close at hand and give him a chance to prepare as detailed in area O3.

The rune's telepathic link automatically attempts to establish a connection each round with any creature that stands on the rune, and it can be resisted with a successful DC 20 Will save. Note that if the PCs resist the link, Xanderghul knows that something strange is going on, for Tuirziaz never does this. If a PC fails to resist or accepts the link, Xanderghul's voice sounds in that PC's mind, loud and imperious and strong, although it is accompanied by visions of a resplendent peacock-like figure, not a human.

"This mind is weak and trembling. You are not Tuirziaz. You are someone new. I suppose many of my worshipers are dead now, but that only proves your potential. Bow down and serve me, mortal, and you can, in time, become my new favored champion!"

Though Xanderghul's words are arrogant and confident, an observant PC who succeeds at a Sense Motive check opposed by Xanderghul's Bluff check might sense a hint of desperation behind them. Xanderghul continues the conversation as long as the PCs don't get too pushy or arrogant, and he is eager to learn as much as he can about them. The telepathic link offers Xanderghul no additional way to read a PC's mind, but he's free to prepare himself for their eventual arrival as detailed on page 51.

If the PCs become insulting or aggressive (including mentioning that they're here to track down and defeat Xanderghul), or if they indicate that they know (or even suspect) that Xanderghul and the Peacock Spirit are one and the same, Xanderghul's patience snaps and he

activates a fail-safe he built into the telepathy rune. A pulse of violent pride blasts through the rune, causing each PC in the telepathic conversation to take 10d6 points of damage and 1d6 points of Charisma damage from the mental assault. A character can attempt a DC 20 Will save to halve the hit point damage and negate the Charisma damage. If even one PC succeeds at this saving throw, the resistance causes feedback to harm Xanderghul himself as if the rune had been destroyed.

In any event, the blast burns out the telepathic rune and ends the conversation. In time, Xanderghul could rebuild the rune, but for now this line of communication with the runelord is destroyed.

The telepathy rune is a mind-affecting effect. Xanderghul cannot communicate with any character immune to mind-affecting effects via this rune, but neither can such a character cause feedback to him.

Story Award: If the PCs manage to destroy the rune (either on their own or by forcing Xanderghul to activate the fail-safe), award them 25,600 XP.

M11. Stairwell

These stairs lead 200 feet down to area N1 of the Refuge of Violet Vanity, turning to the east at the halfway point.

REFUGE OF VIOLET VANITY

Absolutely no cultists, priests, or acolytes of the Peacock Spirit are allowed this deep below the temple. The Refuge of Violet Vanity contains Xanderghul's private chambers, libraries, and arcane laboratories. Though he had a grand palace in Xin-Cyrusian, Xanderghul maintained this level of the dungeon as one of many homes away from home and as a place where he could conduct business as the Peacock Spirit in secret. But after Xanderghul was murdered by Alaznist, the Refuge of Violet Vanity's true purpose was realized—a place where Xanderghul could flee in the unlikely event of his own death. In nearly a dozen centuries of rule, not once did the Runelord of Pride face the shame of death, but now, after his humiliating defeat, Xanderghul is thankful he had just enough doubt to ensure the Refuge of Violet Vanity would be constructed in the first place.

When Xanderghul was slain, potent contingencies within a magical sanctum hidden below the refuge activated, and his soul immediately manifested in a simulacrum-like body woven from fragments of shadowstuff, and his potent magical items were re-created by the same method. He lost his mythic power as a result of his assassination by Alaznist, but his soul never entered the River of Souls—he was instantaneously reborn in this new body. The magic that sustains this body and staves off death cannot reach far. Xanderghul can move about with ease anywhere in the refuge or the sanctum below,

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but if he leaves the area, his body and gear vanish to be reborn in area **O3** of the sanctum. The process is painful and humiliating, and one Xanderghul does not wish to endure. In order to defeat him, the PCs must dismantle the final *Peacock Shrine*, which powers this effect, and then finish off the runelord for good.

In time, the *Peacock Shrines*, combined with the devotion and work of his cult, will allow Xanderghul to regain his mythic power, but such a time is still years away. If Alaznist were to be defeated, the mythic power she stole from Xanderghul would instantly return to him, but in his current state and with his current resources, the Runelord of Pride is forced to admit he has no chance of achieving such a goal.

Xanderghul staffed the place with beings he crafted from shadows into the form of humans—rough drafts, in a way, of the body the *Peacock Shrine* would eventually craft for him. Though solid, these shadow creature minions are not mortal creatures. They tend to the runelord's every whim while he remains trapped in the Refuge and also keep the place tidy. All of them are instructed to drive off anyone on this level who isn't Xanderghul, resorting to violence if need be.

The 1-foot-thick walls are made of magically treated reinforced masonry (hardness 16, hp 360 per 10-foot-by-10-foot section, break DC 55). The fine wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 40, break DC 26) of this level are unlocked except where noted. The lighting (as provided by glowing sconces on the walls) on this level responds to Xanderghul's moods, and since his partial resurrection, the rooms and corridors are all dimly lit.

Xanderghul (CR 17)

Xanderghul's location in the refuge varies. If the PCs have managed to avoid being noticed by the runelord, roll 1d10 when they reach the refuge. The result of this die roll indicates which area the runelord is in when the PCs first arrive. He remains in this location as long as no alarms are raised. If the PCs catch him unprepared in one of these rooms, use that area's "Xanderghul Distracted" entry to determine the runelord's actions.

Normally, Xanderghul would have realized the PCs are coming for him as soon as they dismantled their first *Peacock Shrine* or as soon as one of his cultists offered prayers of warning to the Peacock Spirit, but this is where Sorshen's assistance comes into play. As the PCs begin this adventure, their runelord ally emerges into the world, casting aside her disguises as she engages in idle dalliances and flights of fancy across Varisia. Most who encounter her assume her to be an eccentric aristocrat or adventurer obsessed with Sorshen's legacy, if indeed they even recognize her at all, but Xanderghul has been watching for Sorshen's

return, for he knows she is an even greater threat to his continued existence than Alaznist. Fortunately for the PCs, his pride makes it impossible to consider even the thought that Sorshen would stoop so low as to ally herself with adventurers, and so even as he spends his time waiting and relaxing in his Refuge, Xanderghul uses his *crystal ball* to scour the land for Sorshen and her blood simulacrum, obsessing over her actions as he tries to decipher the true meaning behind the nonstop parade of frivolities she engages in.

Whenever he feels a *Peacock Shrine* become deactivated, Xanderghul assumes these are manipulations of his mind by the powerful enchanter. Only a few things will finally convince him of the truth—that Sorshen is just a distraction and that his temple really has been invaded by adventurers. Speaking to Xanderghul via the rune in area **M10** will certainly alert him to the PCs' approach, as does simply destroying the rune—other significant events can alert him as well, at your discretion.

Xanderghul remains confident that the PCs can't destroy him, as the final *Peacock Shrine* lies within his sanctum in area **O3**, but he is rattled that the PCs have managed to make it this far. Rather than spend his time obsessing over Sorshen, Xanderghul moves from room to room, meticulously ensuring over and over that traps and guardians are in place to confront the PCs. Again, roll 1d10 to determine which room he's in when the PCs first enter the Refuge, but in this case when they enter, use the "Xanderghul Prepared" information presented in each room.

XANDERGHUL CR 17
XP 102,400
hp 220 (see page 64)

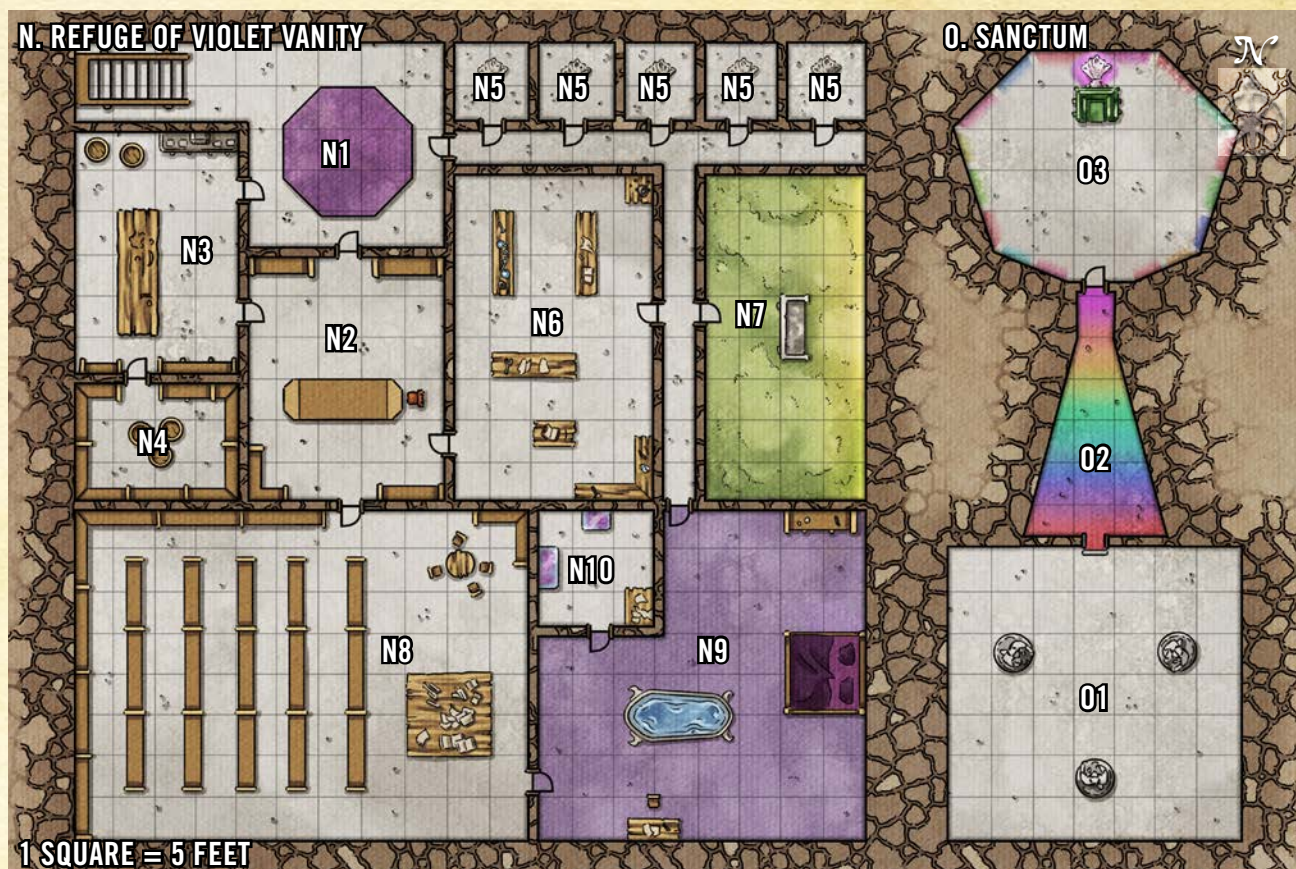
N1. Landing

A ten-foot-wide staircase opens into a chamber with three doors in its walls. An octagonal dais, painted royal purple, occupies the center of the room.

Using the viridian transcendence, Xanderghul could teleport to this spot from anywhere in the world and from this dais to a similar platform in his palace in Xin-Cyrusian, but he cannot perform this activity in his current form.

If Xanderghul sets one foot on the lowest stair, his shadowy body vanishes and is remade in area **O3**.

Xanderghul Distracted: The runelord was passing through this room only to be seized with a fit of homesickness at the sight of the dais, and he decided to climb onto it and meditate on the past for a short while. He takes a –4 penalty on Perception checks as a result.



Xanderghul Prepared: The runelord casts *project image* and sends the image up the stairs to the limit of its range (the one way he can travel beyond the borders of this room) to confront the PCs as they descend.

N2. Dining Room

A massive chandelier hangs above a large mahogany dining table in the middle of this room. Only a single chair sits at the head of the table, facing the western wall, on which hangs a full-sized portrait of a regal, goateed man dressed in the robes of a powerful wizard.

Runelord Xanderghul takes lonely meals in this room, facing the portrait of himself. A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (history or nobility) check recognizes the subject of the painting as Xanderghul, the Runelord of Pride.

Treasure: The painting is both a work of fine art and a historical artifact, and it is worth 10,000 gp.

Xanderghul Distracted: The runelord is in the middle of eating a meal and sputters in shock at any interruption; as such, he is staggered with surprise on the first round of combat.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul casts *programmed image* to trigger whenever any intruder enters this room, making it appear that the PCs have caught him unprepared at dinner. The real Xanderghul waits in area N6 and has ordered the shadow servants in areas N3 and N6 to storm into the dining room to attack the PCs once they engage his illusion. Xanderghul casts *project image* from area N6 to appear to step into this room and join the fight a few rounds later (likely as soon as the PCs realize that the “Xanderghul” eating dinner is an illusion).

N3. Kitchen (CR 14)

A free-standing counter topped with white marble veined with purple streaks occupies the center of the room, with several hooks holding a collection of pots and pans hanging above it. Iron stoves in the northeastern corner keep the area warm; pots sit on top of the stoves, their contents bubbling and steaming.

Creatures: Two of Xanderghul’s shadow servants are working here, either preparing the runelord’s next meal

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or cleaning the kitchen. When the servants see that the PCs aren't Xanderghul, they first demand in Thassilonian that the heroes leave, sternly offering to escort them to the stairs up. If the PCs refuse, the servants draw their weapons and attack.

SHADOW SERVANTS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

Shadow human rogue 11 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 238)

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision;

Perception +16

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 108 each (11d8+55)

Fort +6, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge, shadow blend, trap sense +3; **DR** 10/magic; **Resist** cold 15, electricity 15; **SR** 18

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *sneaky rapier* +13/+8 (1d6+4/15–20)

Ranged mwk dagger +13 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks sneak attack +6d6

Rogue Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +11)

3/day—*prestidigitation*

2/day—*vanish*^{APG} (DC 11)

TACTICS

Before Combat The shadow servant drinks a *potion of shield of faith* +4.

During Combat The shadow servants flank a selected PC to perform sneak attacks, or they cast *vanish* to disappear for a moment and then move into an unexpected position.

Morale Ever loyal to Xanderghul, the shadow servants fight to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 16, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +14, Escape Artist +18, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Perception +16, Sense Motive +16, Sleight of Hand +18, Stealth +23

Languages Azlanti, Infernal, Thassilonian

SQ rogue talents (crippling strike, fast stealth, finesse rogue, major magic, minor magic), trapfinding +5

Combat Gear *potions of shield of faith* +4 (3); **Other Gear** +2 studded leather, +1 *sneaky*^{UE} rapier, mwk daggers (3), *cloak of elvenkind*

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul orders the obedient servants around, micromanaging them as they perform their duties. He takes a –4 penalty on Perception checks as a result.

Xanderghul Prepared: The runelord casts *disguise self* to appear as another shadow servant. If he takes any damage, he casts *mislead* and then retreats to area N6 to prepare the servants there for a fight.

N4. Pantry

This room is cool and dry, most likely to keep the foodstuffs stocked on the many shelves fresh. A trio of oaken barrels stands in the center of the chamber.

Thanks to a version of the *gentle repose* spell invented and made permanent by Xanderghul, food left in this room stays fresh forever, and a wide range of options are stored here.

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul is taking stock of the supplies in the pantry and generating a list of offerings he plans on having his cultists gather. His back is turned to the door, and he doesn't turn around until the PCs give him reason to suspect they are anything other than shadow servants coming in here to gather cooking supplies.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul has cast *greater invisibility* and cracks open the door to N3, watching to see how the PCs handle the shadow servants. If the party defeats his servants, he attempts to sneak to area N6 to rally the servants there.

N5. False Shrines (CR 13)

Traps: Each of these five rooms contains a stone statue of a peacock, all appearing to be fully functional *Peacock Shrines* tied to the color of violet. In fact, all five shrines are false shrines, and all of them are warded by *prismatic spray* traps that trigger as soon as someone touches the shrine.

PRISMATIC SPRAY TRAPS (5)

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Type magic; **Perception** DC 20; **Disable Device** DC 20

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic

Effect spell effect (*prismatic spray*; DC 18 saving throw dependent on ray)

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul is in one of these five rooms, admiring the workmanship of the shrine, and takes a –4 penalty on Perception checks.

Xanderghul Prepared: The runelord casts *greater invisibility* and waits at the end of the hall for the PCs to approach, then casts *mass suggestion* on the PCs, urging

SHADOW STYLUS

In his efforts to discover a way to enter the frozen city of Crystilan, Runelord Xanderghul recently crafted this wondrous item that can be used to weaken the barriers between the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane.

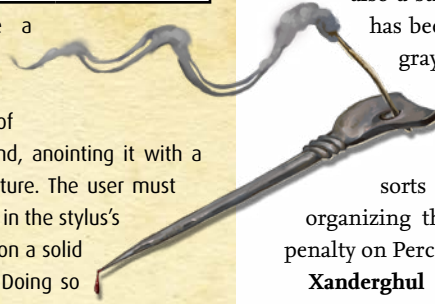
SHADOW STYLUS		PRICE 48,000 GP
SLOT none	CL 12th	WEIGHT —
AURA strong illusion		

A *shadow stylus* can create a doorway between the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane. To do so, the user must prick a bit of skin with the stylus's pointed end, anointing it with a drop of blood from a living creature. The user must then use the shadowy chalk held in the stylus's other end to inscribe a doorway on a solid surface in an area of dim light. Doing so requires 1d4 rounds of work and, once completed, fashions a portal like that created by a *gate* spell, linking the Material Plane and the Shadow Plane. The destinations on both planes must overlap—to create a portal to Shadow Absalom, for example, the user would have to create the doorway from the Material Plane in Absalom. The portal created closes 1 minute after it is created.

As long as a creature carries a *shadow stylus* on her person, she gains a +2 bonus on saving throws against spells of the shadow subschool and against all special attacks created by kytons, shadows, and other creatures native to the Shadow Plane. In addition, the character can see on the Shadow Plane as if that realm were brightly lit.

A *shadow stylus* has 6 uses when it is created. Once it is used to create a sixth portal, the stylus loses its ability to craft new portals but retains its protective qualities.

CREATION REQUIREMENTS	COST 24,000 GP
Craft Wondrous Item, <i>shadow walk</i>	



them to attempt to destroy the false shrines (and thus, he hopes, trigger several traps).

N6. Arcane Laboratory (CR 14)

This space is packed with workbenches, cabinets, and shelves. Arcane reagents, glowing crystals, and dozens of notebooks are organized neatly across nearly every flat surface.

Creatures: Two shadow servants toil in this area, keeping the workbenches tidy and Xanderghul's raw materials arranged on the off chance that the runelord might wish to craft new magic here, but so far Xanderghul

has had other matters on his mind. The servants immediately attack any intruders.

SHADOW SERVANTS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 108 each (see page 53)

Treasure: Picking through the room yields 10,000 gp worth of raw materials for crafting magic items, but also a strange, thin rod of bone, the tip of which has been hollowed out to hold a stick of chalky, gray material. This is a *shadow stylus* (see the sidebar), an item that might help the PCs greatly in the next adventure.

Xanderghul Distracted: The runelord sorts through the materials in the room, organizing them as a way to relax (and taking a –4 penalty on Perception checks).

Xanderghul Prepared: The runelord has cast *greater invisibility*, and while the shadow servants attack the PCs, he uses a *programmed image* to give the appearance of several additional shadow servants to distract the PCs and use up their resources.

N7. Scenic View

A light breeze carries the scent of fresh flowers, and sunlight drenches the handful of wood-and-metal benches that are arranged across the freshly cut grass on this hill. The seating all faces away from the gate set in the ivy-covered trellis to the west and toward a valley carpeted with violets and pansies. Snow-capped mountains can be seen in the distance, and puffy white clouds move lazily across the blue sky.

This entire room is cloaked in several layers of illusion magic to give the impression of a scenic view from a mountaintop. Though Xanderghul was never before a prisoner in his own sanctum, he often spent several days here working on time-consuming experiments or doing in-depth research, so he built this chamber as a way to keep from going stir-crazy during those extended visits. The images here are also programmed to show a beautiful summer's day, which also provided the runelord a welcome respite during chilly winter months. Since his resurrection, he has been doubly appreciative of this area as a place to relax.

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul has fallen asleep on the bench.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul has cast *programmed image* to create an illusion of himself sleeping on the bench, while he waits under the effects of *greater invisibility* in the corner. He hopes to have the PCs expend resources attacking the illusion.

N8. Library (CR 15)

Shelves crowded with books line the walls and divide this room into sections. The northeastern corner of the chamber is a cozy nook with a roaring fireplace, high-backed chairs upholstered in violet, and a small mahogany table. A larger table, papers and books strewn across its surface, stands to the southeast.

This incredibly extensive library holds a wealth of knowledge on a wide range of topics in which Xanderghul was most interested. While the library in the runelord's palace in Xin-Cyrusian was much larger, this collection of books is still priceless due to their age. Every tome and folio within this library was written before the fall of the Thassilonian empire, most of them in Thassilonian, but several of them penned in Aklo, Azlanti, Draconic, or various planar languages.

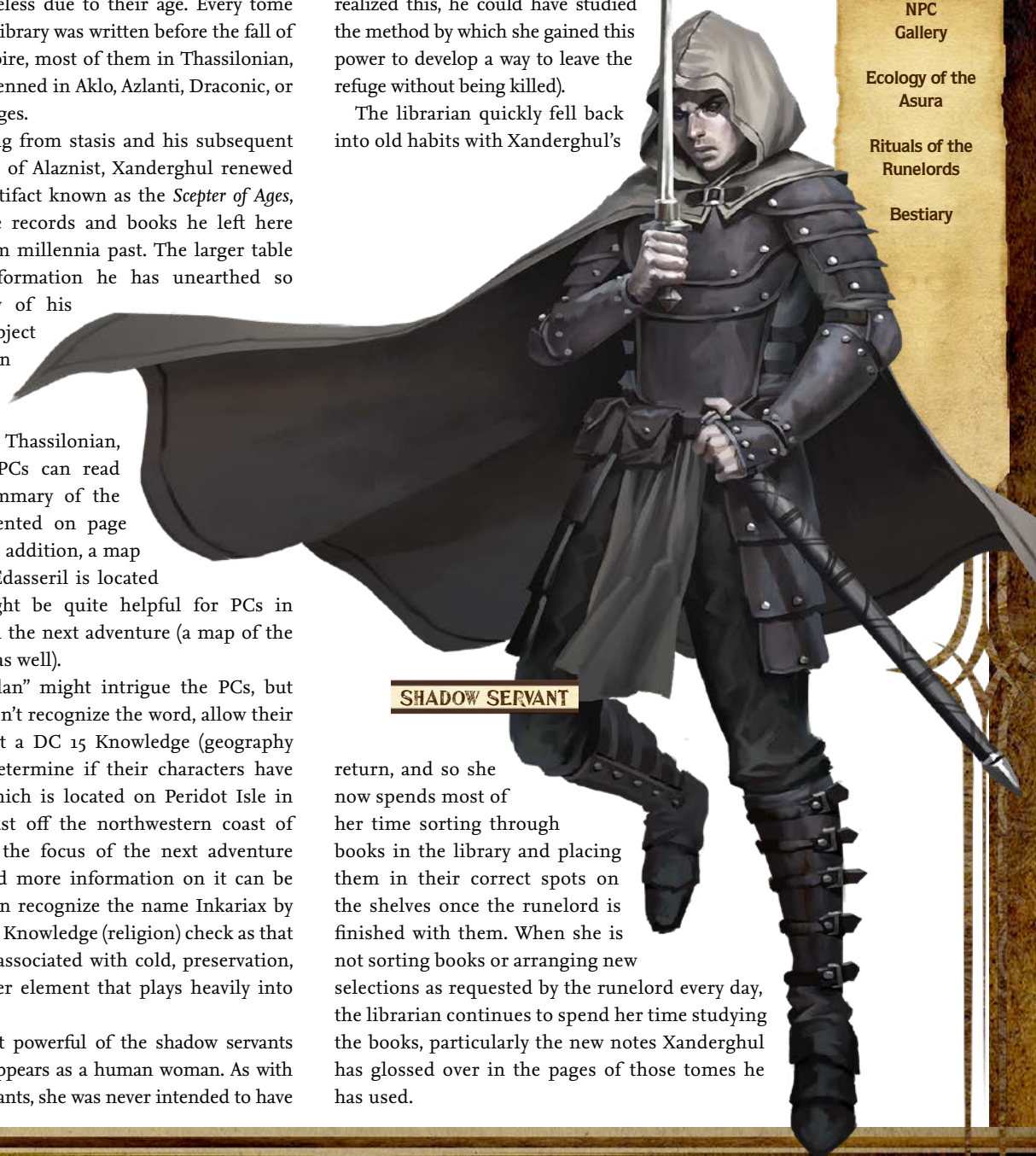
After his awakening from stasis and his subsequent murder at the hands of Alaznist, Xanderghul renewed his interest in the artifact known as the *Scepter of Ages*, poring through those records and books he left here in this hideaway from millennia past. The larger table contains all the information he has unearthed so far, including many of his scribbles on the subject and comments on what has transpired over the past few months. All of it is in Thassilonian, and if any of the PCs can read that language, a summary of the information is presented on page 60 as **Handout #1**. In addition, a map of the heart of Xin-Edasseril is located here—this map might be quite helpful for PCs in navigating the city in the next adventure (a map of the city is detailed there as well).

The name “Crystilan” might intrigue the PCs, but even if the players don't recognize the word, allow their characters to attempt a DC 15 Knowledge (geography or local) check to determine if their characters have heard of the site, which is located on Peridot Isle in the Steaming Sea just off the northwestern coast of Varisia. This site is the focus of the next adventure in the campaign, and more information on it can be found there. A PC can recognize the name Inkariax by succeeding at a DC 25 Knowledge (religion) check as that of a kyton demigod associated with cold, preservation, and solitude—another element that plays heavily into the next adventure.

Creature: The most powerful of the shadow servants Xanderghul created appears as a human woman. As with the other shadow servants, she was never intended to have

a personality of her own, but over the ages she's developed one nonetheless. As the centuries wore on, the librarian spent more and more time reading the tomes stored here, and an accretion of individuality scraped from those pages has built up inside of her mind. During that time, she has essentially “retrained” herself to become a sorcerer, something Xanderghul, in his myopic self-focus and self-interest, has completely failed to realize (the irony being that, had he realized this, he could have studied the method by which she gained this power to develop a way to leave the refuge without being killed).

The librarian quickly fell back into old habits with Xanderghul's



SHADOW SERVANT

return, and so she now spends most of her time sorting through books in the library and placing them in their correct spots on the shelves once the runelord is finished with them. When she is not sorting books or arranging new selections as requested by the runelord every day, the librarian continues to spend her time studying the books, particularly the new notes Xanderghul has glossed over in the pages of those tomes he has used.

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While the shadow librarian is cold, calculating, and cruel, she is also curious and eager to continue her journey toward true humanity. When the PCs enter this room, she steps up to them and informs them, “You are not to be here, and I am to ensure you do not meddle with the runelord’s collection. But you are also from the world beyond, and I would trade information with you, if you desire.”

If the PCs agree to speak with her, the librarian informs them that she is prepared to trade five answers to their questions for five answers to her own queries. Her stilted way of speaking and her nascent personality might lull some PCs into assuming the shadow librarian is childlike, but to do so would be a grave error. She has a razor-thin patience and is a deadly combatant if confronted. The questions she asks are as follows.

“What are your names?”

“Who gave you your names?”

“Why do you not change your names?”

“What happens to your names when you perish?”

“Do I have a name?”

She answers one question after each answer provided by the PCs. You can use this opportunity to help guide the PCs toward solutions to portions of this adventure that have eluded them, fill in some blanks about Xanderghul, or even give them hints on how to defeat the runelord or to prepare them for their goals in the campaign’s next adventure, but feel free to have the shadow librarian reply to a question with a simple, “I do not know,” as needed.

She accepts the answers the PCs give to her questions at face value with little emotion. When she gets to the final question, she does the same unless the PCs give her a name. If they do so, she pauses, confused for a moment, then speaks her name aloud for the first time before smiling radiantly and saying, “You have given me a name, something even my creator denied me. Does this mean you are, in fact, my creator?” she muses, before saying, “May I accompany you? I wish to watch. To learn more. To see what those who have names do with them.” If the PCs don’t give her a name, she thanks them for their cooperation and asks them to leave, attacking if they do anything but comply.

If the PCs agree to let the shadow librarian accompany them, she does so quietly and unobtrusively. She does not take part in combat except to defend herself (but see Development on page 57), nor will she come to the PCs’ aid, even if they ask her for it. If the PCs attack her, or if they refuse her request to allow her to come with them, she shrugs and says, “Then what further use are you?” before attacking.



SHADOW LIBRARIAN

SHADOW LIBRARIAN

CR 15

XP 51,200

Female human shadow lord sorcerer 12 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 238)

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, human)

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Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision, see in darkness; Perception +1

DEFENSE

AC 24, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)

hp 92 (12d6+48)

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

Defensive Abilities incorporeal step, shadow blend; **DR** 15/magic; **Resist** cold 20, electricity 20; **SR** 21

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +7/+2 (1d4/19–20), touch +1 (1d6/1 Con damage, Fort DC 23 negates)

Special Attacks cloying gloom burst

Shadow Creature Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

At will—*ray of sickening*^{UM} (DC 18)

3/day—*shadow conjuration*, *shadow step*^{UM}

1/day—*greater shadow conjuration*, *shadow walk* (DC 24)

Sorcerer Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +19)

10/day—*shadowstrike* (1d4+8 nonlethal)

1/day—*enveloping darkness*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 12th; concentration +19)

6th (4/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *shadow walk* (DC 25)

5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *persistent image* (DC 24), *shadow evocation* (DC 24)

4th (7/day)—*greater invisibility*, *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 23), *phantasmal killer* (DC 23), *shadow conjuration*

3rd (8/day)—*deeper darkness*, *displacement*, *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *major image* (DC 22)

2nd (8/day)—*blur*, *darkvision*, *hideous laughter* (DC 19), *invisibility*, *locate object*, *minor image* (DC 21)

1st (8/day)—*mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shield*, *silent image* (DC 20), *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *flare* (DC 17), *ghost sound* (DC 19), *mending*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 17)

Bloodline shadow

TACTICS

Before Combat The librarian casts *mage armor* on herself.

During Combat The librarian spends the first rounds of combat preparing defenses, starting with *greater invisibility* and following with *fly* and *shield* before casting offensive spells against her foes. If her *greater invisibility* is removed or she realizes her foes can see her, she casts *displacement*.

Morale The librarian fights to the death.

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 24, **Con** 14, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 24

Feats Arcane Strike, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +12,

Knowledge (planes) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +28

Languages Azlanti, Giant, Infernal, Thassilonian

SQ planar thinning, shadow well, touch attack

Combat Gear *spellguard bracers*^{UE}; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *robe of arcane heritage*^{APG}

Treasure: A PC who checks the shelves (a process that takes 12 hours) or succeeds at a DC 32 Perception check while browsing notices a *tome of leadership and influence* (+2 Charisma) between two books of false prophecy.

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul is compiling a list of the books he'll require for research at a later date, seated at the small round table to the northeast, where he takes a –4 penalty on Perception checks.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul waits deeper in the stacks, watching and waiting to see how the PCs interact with the shadow librarian. He casts *project image* to engage the PCs once he feels that their guard is down, they're about to come back into the stacks, or they begin asking the shadow librarian questions. In this case, he attacks the shadow librarian as well, realizing that if she's so free in giving out information, she could reveal much about himself that he would rather remain a secret—including the fact that he is the Peacock Spirit.

Development: If the shadow librarian is following the PCs when they confront Xanderghul, he attempts to order her to attack the PCs only to be shocked when she replies, "No. They have given me what you could not, and now they are my teachers. You are no longer of concern to me, Runelord." She won't attack him first, but he'll certainly use his magic on her, favoring her as a primary target over the PCs. Once this takes place, the shadow librarian attacks him as well.

If the shadow librarian manages to survive the events of this adventure, or if the PCs leave the refuge, she sadly tells them she cannot follow. As with Xanderghul, her existence is tied to this site, and if she leaves the area, she fades away into shadows. At your option, and if you wish to give the PCs a bit of additional help, the PCs could research a way for her to continue to live beyond these walls, in which case she may well continue to follow them and develop into a true individual, shifting her alignment to match the most influential of the PCs.

Story Award: If the PCs name the shadow librarian and secure her allegiance, award them XP as if they had defeated her in combat.

N9. Lavish Bedroom

The furnishings of this bed chamber are fit for royalty. A large four-poster bed is draped with purple silk sheets, and

a matching canopy hangs over it. Against the southern wall is an elaborate rolltop desk carved of mahogany set with darkwood, opposite a matching wardrobe to the north. A fifteen-foot-wide painting of a sprawling, ancient city adorns the eastern portion of the southern wall. An immense, bejeweled throne sits at the city's center, on which is seated a proud-looking man with a goatee. The man's right hand is held upward, its finger pointing to the heavens, while his left points downward toward the ground.

The rolltop desk is closed and locked (hardness 5, hp 15, break DC 20, Disable Device DC 30); Xanderghul's original body carried the only key, which was summarily discarded by Alaznist after she looted it and couldn't find any matching lock. The resurrected runelord hasn't worried too much about the desk, as he knows it contains nothing more than some half-finished letters to his subordinates about preparations for Earthfall.

The wardrobe contains several identical copies of Xanderghul's wizard robes, each a flamboyant emerald green and stitched with images of peacock feathers. The golden chest is empty, having once contained the arcane materials necessary for the runelord to establish his backup resurrection plan in his inner sanctum.

The mural on the wall depicts an enormous Xanderghul seated on a colossal throne at the heart of his capital city of Xin-Cyrusian (a PC can identify it as such by succeeding at a DC 30 Knowledge [geography or history] check). A character who succeeds at a DC 30 Knowledge (history or local) check recognizes the position of Xanderghul's hands as traditional gestures used by rulers of Thassilon to indicate their favor or disfavor—a finger pointed upward indicates the runelord's ire and indicates the viewer should vacate the premises at once, while the finger pointed down indicates they are pleased and are inviting the viewer to kneel before them. That this image of Xanderghul is doing both at once is unusual.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check finds a tiny seam running around the 15-foot-square section of floor just south of the bed. This section of floor radiates a moderate aura of conjuration magic, as does the downward pointing hand of the painting of Xanderghul. This is a magical elevator that allows access to area **O1** 50 feet below. A PC can activate the elevator by succeeding at a DC 25 Use Magic Device check or by pressing Xanderghul's downward-pointing hand. Once activated, the 15-foot-square section of stone descends silently a rate of 5 feet a round, emerging into area **O1** after a minute and 50 feet of descent.

Treasure: A PC who succeeds at a DC 30 Perception check while searching the room finds a *robe of components*^{UE} in the wardrobe, tucked behind several flashier sets of clothing. If the PCs manage to get the rolltop desk open,

they find a *philosopher's stone* serving as a paperweight over Xanderghul's old letters (the letters crumble to dust if touched).

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul is asleep in his bed.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul casts *greater invisibility* and then *programmed image* to make it seem that he is asleep in his bed, and he maintains the illusion as long as he can to try to get the PCs to use up resources.

N10. Washroom

This well-appointed washroom has a spacious marble tub and a full-length mirror trimmed with silver. Ceramic pots full of a wide array of wildflowers have been placed in many of the room's corners.

Treasure: The tub in this room fills with hot, soapy water on command, and a magical chamber pot instantly whisks away waste. These minor magic items are worth 2,000 gp apiece (although the tub, weighing 300 pounds, may be difficult to transport).

Xanderghul Distracted: Xanderghul is enjoying a hot bath, and all of his gear is arrayed neatly in the corner. He does his best to grab his spell component pouch first so that he can at least cast spells against the PCs. Note that you should prepare a version of his stats without any of his gear to handle this encounter. If you don't have the time to do so, then the PCs merely catch Xanderghul as he's preparing his bath but hasn't yet begun it, and in this case he's staggered for the first round of combat, surprised as he is that the PCs confronted him here.

Xanderghul Prepared: Xanderghul creates a *programmed image* of himself bathing and his gear strewn about the room, hoping to distract the PCs long enough for him to trap them in this room with a *wall of force* after he steps out into area **N9**.

O1. Peacock Vault

The stone walls in this huge chamber are covered in murals depicting a handsome, goateed man performing various self-aggrandizing acts. A massive circular vault door decorated with the image of a colorful peacock feather symbol is set in the northern wall. Seven metal disks etched with dozens of numbers adorn seven points around this symbol. A trio of statues of the man depicted in the murals also occupy the room—the one to the south pointing his finger downward, while the two to the north stand with hands upraised.

The central 15-foot-square area between the three statues is where the elevator from area **N9** descends to. The slab remains in this lowered position until it is used again to ascend. Touching the downward-pointing hand

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of the southern statue causes the elevator to rise up to area **N9** (or calls it down from **N9** if it's already raised).

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (history or nobility) check recognizes that the man depicted in the murals and the statues is Runelord Xanderghul, though the scenes shown don't seem to be of any actual events. It is telling that Xanderghul had these monuments to himself constructed in a room that only he was meant to see.

The steel vault door is magically reinforced (hardness 20, hp 400, break DC 45) and automatically mends all damage done to it after 1 minute. The door opens to Xanderghul's touch, but it is otherwise locked with a seven-dial combination lock similar in nature to the one that locked Alaznist's Vault in area **F13** of "Secrets of Roderic's Cove." Unlike that lock, though, it's unlikely the PCs will be able to learn this door's combination. Barring violence, the PCs can unlock the door by disengaging each of the door's locks.

Anyone who examines the door automatically notices that each of the seven metal dials bears a small hole, perfectly shaped and sized to accept one of the seven rods harvested from the *Peacock Shrines*. This is a fail-safe, included by the runelord in case his simulacrum plan malfunctioned and one of his underlings needed to retrieve his body from the resurrection chamber. Once a rod is inserted into a dial, that dial disengages from the overall lock mechanism. If all seven *Peacock Shrine* rods are inserted into the door in their corresponding dials, the door unlocks. The PCs can attempt to open the door by inserting any rods that they have, then disabling the remaining dials. This requires them to succeed at a number of consecutive DC 40 Disable Device checks equal to the number of dials remaining; failing even one check in this sequence resets the lock. As the seventh rod is in the *Peacock Shrine* beyond the door, the PCs can have at most six rods at this point; if they insert these six, they need make only a single DC 40 Disable Device check to unlock the door. Because the dials disengaged by the rods don't reset, there is no penalty for failure, allowing a character to take 20 on the check.

Once all locks are disengaged, the large door swings open to reveal area **O2** beyond.

Story Award: Award the PCs 19,400 XP once they get through the door into the chamber beyond.

02. Narrowing Corridor

What appears at first to be stark white walls subtly change hue, cycling through all the colors of the rainbow and then to pitch black before brightening and starting the process all over again. From the large vault door to the south, the walls narrow to a five-foot-wide corridor before ending in a door etched with an oversized rune.

A PC who succeeds at a DC 25 Knowledge (arcana or history) check recognizes the marking on the doors as the rune of pride, the sigil for Cyrusian, Xanderghul's domain. The doors are made from a heavy alloy similar to brass, and while they are not locked, they do take some effort to open. Unless the PCs are incredibly stealthy, Xanderghul—in the very next room—will hear them coming.

03. Resurrection Chamber (CR 18)

Each wall of this heptagonal chamber bears a heavy tapestry, each woven from a different color of thread and marked with a series of arcane symbols. Tiny lights from unknown sources play across the floor and domed ceiling. A massive throne seemingly carved from a single emerald stands at the northern end of the room, facing the only doors leading out.

Every angle, every measurement, and every decoration of this chamber feeds into the powerful ritual that allowed Xanderghul to be resurrected upon his death—an effect that can be repeated indefinitely now, provided the final *Peacock Shrine* remains active. This *Peacock Shrine* stands directly behind the emerald throne, out of sight from anyone to the south but easily noticeable once anyone looks behind it.

Creatures: One way or another, the PCs encounter Xanderghul here—either after they've defeated him in the refuge above and he's resurrected within this chamber, or after they reach this chamber without first confronting him in one of the rooms above. The runelord sits on the throne, his lucerne hammer across his lap. Two clockwork golems crafted to resemble Xanderghul—relics from the runelord's time in the Azlanti empire that are programmed to follow his orders—stand next to the throne, one on each side. As the PCs enter this room, the golems step forward to stand before the throne, while Xanderghul raises a hand in greeting and quickly states that he does not wish to fight... "At least, not yet." If the PCs agree to parley with him for the time being, read or paraphrase the following.

"You must be very powerful and resourceful to have made it this far. We don't need to be enemies. Don't you see? Alaznist is your true enemy. She has the power to manipulate history itself, and there's no telling what she plans to do... or what she's already done! She could make herself queen of this world or even have you killed before you learned to walk! But together, we can defeat her. Together we can work to take the Scepter of Ages for ourselves! What do you say?"

Xanderghul promises the PCs anything they ask for in return for becoming his subjects, though a character who succeeds at a Sense Motive check opposed by his

Death was as painful as I'd always feared it would be. What stings the most isn't that Alaznist tampered with the wards that should have woken me millennia ago or that most of my holdings are now lost to me—it's that she must have used my own research to locate the Scepter of Ages and used it against me. She **MUST** have used my own research on the topic. There is no way she could have found it on her own!

And now, Alaznist has changed something in the past... I think. I can't prove it. Has she used the Scepter of Ages to manipulate the past, to change the course of historical events? My memories would have changed, and the historical texts would have been altered to fit the new timeline. She doubtless kept her manipulations subtle, to avoid true paradoxes, but I feel that something is different. It is like trying to remember a dream that begins to fade immediately upon waking.

Xin-Edasseril may hold the solution. Belimarius fell for Karzoug's trickery and became trapped therein not long before the cataclysm. My cultists inform me that her city's core remains the same today as it did on the eve of the end of my world, trapped completely "outside" of time itself in a dome of force known as "Crystilan." If Alaznist changed any events prior to the city befalling its fate, true accounts of those events would still reside within Crystilan's walls. Once I have that information, I could compare those documents with others from this world that were not so protected and potentially narrow down those specific points in time where Alaznist meddled. If I could then but secure a method of traveling time, I could return to these points and, if not ambush Alaznist and regain my stolen power, at the very least learn how to warn myself of her treachery before she killed me.

Entering Crystilan may be problematic, but with the ritual key to Crystilan I've developed, I can open a back door of sorts through the Shadow Plane by performing the ritual within White Death's Diadem inside Inkariax's realm of Frozen Tears. And of course, Karzoug may yet hold the final key. The Cyphergate has to be more than a window. I may not need the Scepter of Ages to travel backward after all, but the idea of speaking to Karzoug to learn his secrets offends me. Perhaps there is another way to secure his cooperation.

HANDOUT #1

Bluff check reveals that Xanderghul is making empty promises. Though he continually extols his own virtues (compassion, generosity, kindness, etc.) as a master, he has no intention of leaving his inner sanctum and expects the heroes to do all of his dirty work for him. If asked how they can stop Alaznist, Xanderghul discloses the next step of his plan, pride evident in his voice. He seeks to send powerful agents into the time-locked city of Crystilan in an attempt to discover what parts of history Alaznist has already changed. He has devised a method for slipping into the strange metropolis via the Shadow Plane, which he agrees to share with the PCs if they become his devoted followers. (Of course, if the PCs have read his notes from area N8, they likely already know of these plans.)

As Xanderghul and the PCs talk, it should become increasingly clear that the runelord expects constant praise and exultations and has little interest in the PCs' well-being. He grows more and more angry if the PCs aren't sufficiently flattering him or his ideas. It's only a matter of time before he demands the PCs kneel before him and present him gifts to symbolize the pact they are forging. No matter what the PCs do at this point, Xanderghul becomes incensed at some perceived slight; perhaps the PCs don't bow their heads low enough, perhaps he sees a gift they give him as of inferior quality, or perhaps the PCs simply refuse to do as he asks. The runelord then grabs his weapon and raises it to the ceiling, commanding his golems to cut down the disloyal interlopers. The golems begin combat by stepping

forward to both use their wall of gears ability to form two 10-foot-high, 10-foot-wide walls to either side of the throne, blocking easy access to the *Peacock Shrine*. The golems do not directly fight the PCs unless Xanderghul is reduced to 50 hp or fewer, at which point, in a panic, he orders both golems to resume their normal forms to attack the PCs.

XANDERGHUL

CR 17

XP 102,400

hp 220 (see page 64)

CLOCKWORK GOLEMS (2)

CR 12

XP 19,200 each

hp 118 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 137)

Treasure: While none of the gear Xanderghul carries can exist without him—it all fades away when he is destroyed—a sizable stash of valuables awaits the PCs' discovery here if they are triumphant. A secret compartment in the back of the emerald throne (DC 35 Perception to find) contains a *portable hole*. Inside is a small fraction of the runelord's treasury: a +2 *longsword* encrusted with emeralds, a *periapt of proof against poison*, a *ring of freedom of movement*, a *sash of flowing water*^{UE}, 30 finely cut multicolored crystals (worth 500 gp each), and various ancient Thassilonian coins worth a grand total of 16,292 gp.

Development: Once Xanderghul is slain, the PCs have 1 minute to find the *Peacock Shrine* behind the throne and

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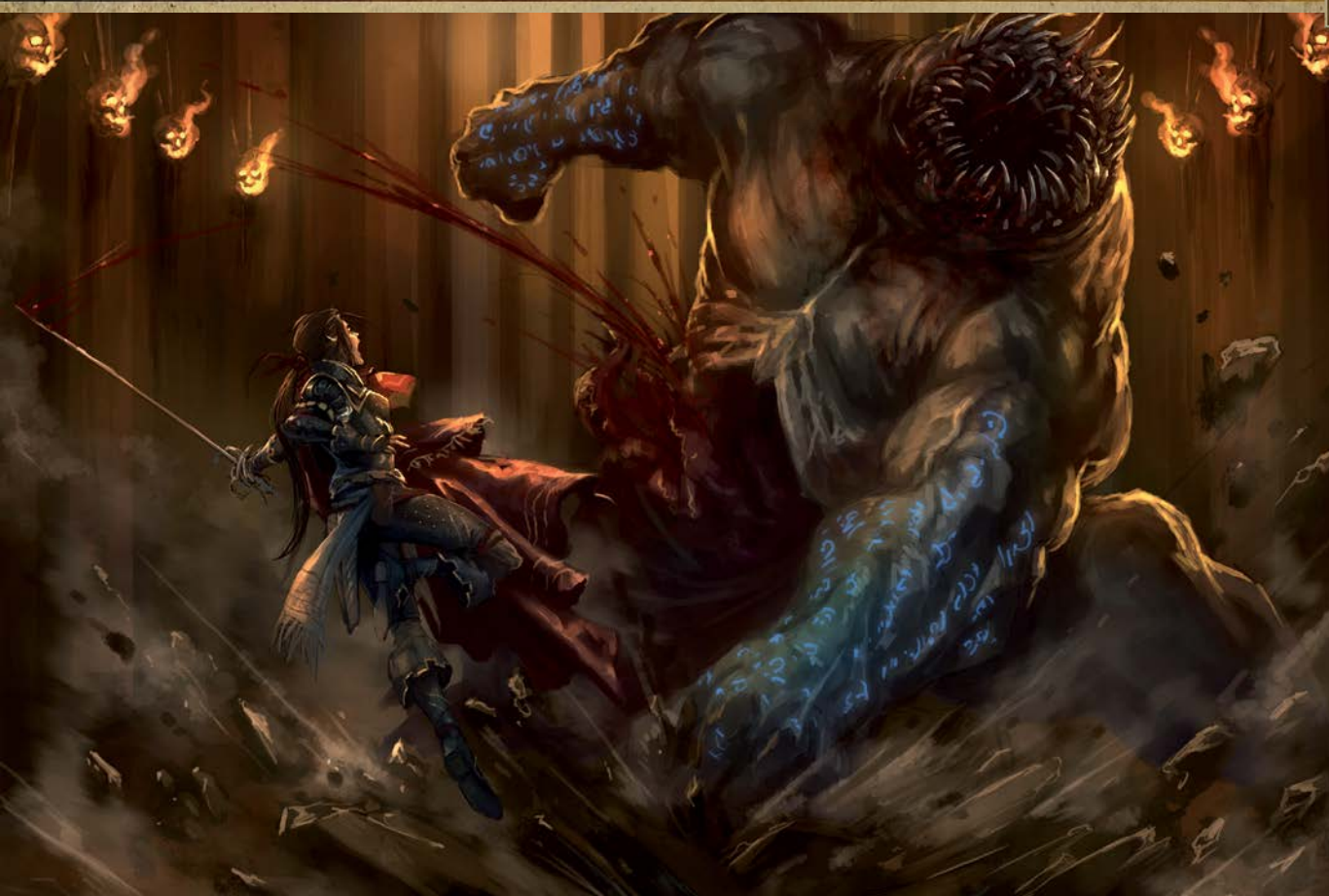
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remove its violet rod. Doing so prevents the runelord from being able to return from death in a new shadow body. If Xanderghul yet lives when the PCs do this, every action he takes is in some way an attempt to regain the rod from them. If he's dead when the rod is removed, a distant sound of the runelord's scream of agony and despair echoes through the chamber, and the entire temple of the Peacock Spirit seems to shudder as its god's soul finally moves on to face judgment in the Boneyard. As he dies, his remains transform into a creature of resplendence—the Peacock Spirit itself—and then this too vanishes from the world. With the death of its god, the cult of the Peacock Spirit is no more.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

As the next adventure begins, the PCs will once again meet with Sorshen to work out their next steps, but the defeat of the Runelord of Pride is something that Alaznist can't help but notice. While the damage to the time stream continues to partially hide the PCs' identity from Alaznist, with each major step toward victory, the PCs also

take a step toward the moment where their own direct manipulation of time occurs, after which point Alaznist will know full well who they are.

But before that point, the PCs should come to the conclusion that, for all Xanderghul's flaws, his plan to travel into Xin-Edasseril to consult the city's historical records is, in fact, a sound one. By comparing those accounts to what they believe, the PCs can discover the precise times at which Alaznist changed the past. Yet one cannot simply walk into a city that's been cut off from time itself. A flimsy, dangerous "back door" into Xin-Edasseril does indeed exist, but this thin spot in time and space can be accessed only from one of the most dangerous realms in the Shadow Plane.

With Xanderghul defeated, the PCs are about to enter the endgame of Return of the Runelords. They are fated to travel to other planes and other dimensions, meet with runelords in the past and the present, and finally discover the fate of the Sihedron Heroes—only to realize that they themselves are every bit the heroes these prior adventurers were! And they'll need every ounce of heroism they can muster to face what awaits them in the frozen reaches of a demigod's realm on the Shadow Plane—to say the least of what awaits beyond time and space itself!

NINURON

Banished from his home with all memory of why stricken from his mind, the time dragon Ninuron has traveled to the Black Tower of Jorgenfist for reasons even he doesn't quite understand.

NINURON

CR 14

XP 38,400

Male young adult time dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 70)

N Huge dragon

Init +10; **Senses** *detect magic*, dragon senses, see in darkness; Perception +23

Aura alien presence (150 ft., DC 21)

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 28 (+4 armor, +1 Dex, +16 natural, -2 size)

hp 212 (17d12+102)

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13

DR 5/magic; **Immune** cold, paralysis, sleep, staggered; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +25 (2d8+13), 2 claws +25 (2d6+9/19-20), tail slap +22 (2d6+13), 2 wings +22 (1d8+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 10d10 electricity, Reflex DC 24 half), crush (Small creatures, DC 24, 2d8+13)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +20)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*share memory*^{UM} (DC 15)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 5th; concentration +8)

2nd (5/day)—*glitterdust* (DC 15), *invisibility*

1st (7/day)—*identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *unseen servant*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *read magic*

TACTICS

Before Combat Ninuron casts *mage armor* on himself.

During Combat Ninuron starts combat by casting *glitterdust* on the party to disrupt tactics and then takes to the air and uses his breath weapon on the second round. He then lands and attacks in melee. Once reduced to 125 hp or fewer, he casts *invisibility* to retreat, takes to the sky, and begins using his ranged spells mixed with breath weapon attacks. If at any point it appears that Ninuron is about to destroy the party entirely, the dragon relents and offers the PCs a chance to submit to his demands. In this case, he doesn't ask for the PCs' aid in exploring the Therassic

Library—he expects it from those he has bested in combat. Even at his angriest, the dragon doesn't want to slaughter the PCs, as he hopes they can help him. He avoids using his breath weapon against foes that are likely to immediately perish, nor does he attack foes who look like they might be on their last legs. Judge the fight as appropriate, and be ready for Ninuron to offer mercy instead of killing a PC if the time comes.

Morale Ninuron fights until he is reduced to fewer than 75 hit points, at which point he calls for a truce, offering each PC a choice of treasure from his hoard (see page 6) if they let him live and assist him.

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 13, **Con** 22, **Int** 17, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +28; **CMD** 39 (43 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Knowledge [history]), Weapon Focus (bite, claw)

Skills Diplomacy +23, Fly +13, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (geography) +23, Knowledge (history) +29, Knowledge (planes) +23, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +23, Spellcraft +23

Languages Aklo, Common, Draconic, Sylvan

SQ exiled, immortal, no breath, read the threads, starflight

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Exiled (Ex) Ninuron has been exiled from the Dimension of Time. He cannot enter that dimension again, nor can he enter areas particularly infused with the dimension's energies (such as the Therassic Library below Jorgenfist). As long as his exile continues, he remains immortal and does not age—something others might consider a boon, but to a dragon, who grows more powerful only with age, it has been agony. In this adventure, nothing can remove this effect from the time dragon, but depending on the PCs' actions in the last adventure of Return of the Runelords, they might be able to release Ninuron from his strange fate.

Ninuron was born, matured, and studied within Stethelos, the mysterious and legendary city at the center of the Dimension of Time. He spent ages poring over the histories of countless worlds on the Material Plane.

During this time, Ninuron became obsessed with the concept of alternate histories. Though time dragons are the self-appointed guardians of the natural temporal order, Ninuron couldn't stop thinking about the power that could be gained from altering that order. Ninuron developed theories about the least intrusive ways timelines could be altered, and he analyzed the science of the ripples and paradoxes that would be caused by doing so. Eventually, like most scholars consumed by a subject, he put his theories to the test.

It is possible Ninuron's first experiment was faulty at its core. It is possible that someone interfered, either accidentally or purposefully, with the undertaking. It is possible the forces of the universe, or forces outside the universe, stepped in to punish Ninuron for his hubris. Whatever truly happened is lost forever, as the experiment resulted in Ninuron being banished from the Dimension of Time. He was catapulted backward in time and sent to the Material Plane, his age regressed from a powerful dragon to a young adult. The process expunged his memory of the incident and most of his personal history along with it, erasing from time the exact nature of his plots and investigations.

His mind shattered, Ninuron has roamed the Material Plane for many years, with fragments of his memory resurfacing only in dreams. Ninuron has come to believe these dreams are shards from various potential futures. As the dreams grew more and more vibrant, Ninuron realized that they were drawing him to a specific location in central Varisia, a place where time itself seems to have become unhinged and damaged. Drawn by his dreams and these ripples in time, Ninuron has recently arrived at the ruins of Jorgenfist, where he awaits the arrival of the PCs so he can confront them.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

Ninuron recognizes the characters and senses their importance to the fate of history. However, the dragon isn't sure whether they are heroes or villains, so he must determine their allegiances before he can trust them.

Near the end of this Adventure Path, the PCs will make their way to Stethelos to repair tears in the fabric of space-time. In that adventure, they may well encounter Ninuron again, although this time at his full power. The much older version of the time dragon is more arrogant and more dangerous, but his memories of how the PCs treated him in this adventure will certainly color the way

he reacts to them when they finally encounter him again. What the PCs do in this adventure determines whether they'll face a deadly foe or gain the aid of a powerful ally in a realm where mortals were never meant to tread.



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RUNELORD XANDERGHUL

The Runelord of Pride of the ancient Thassilonian empire, Xanderghul was killed by his rival Alaznist, only to be reborn within the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, albeit in a much weaker form.

XANDERGHUL

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male shadow human (pureblood Azlanti) illusionist 15
(*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 238)

LE Medium outsider (augmented humanoid, human)

Init +7; **Senses** *arcane sight*, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, see *invisibility*; **Perception** +12

DEFENSE

AC 31, touch 21, flat-footed 24 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, +7 Dex, +1 insight, +3 natural)

hp 220 (15d6+165)

Fort +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +16; +8 vs. mind-affecting effects

Defensive Abilities *contingency*, enshrined, shadow blend;

DR 10/magic; **Resist** cold 15, electricity 15; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +3 *axiomatic spell storing lucerne hammer* +14/+9 (1d12+9 plus 2d6 vs. chaotic)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with lucerne hammer)

Illusionist Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +24)

At will—*invisibility field* (15 rounds/day)
12/day—*blinding ray*

Illusionist Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +24)

8th—*demand* (DC 27), quickened *greater invisibility* (DC 25), *mind blank*, *scintillating pattern* (2)

7th—quickened *displacement*, *mage's sword*, *prismatic spray* (2, DC 26), *project image* (2, DC 28)

6th—*greater dispel magic*, *mass suggestion* (DC 25), quickened *mirror image* (2), *mislead* (2, DC 27), *programmed image* (DC 27)

5th—*dismissal* (DC 24), *hold monster* (DC 24), quickened *magic missile* (2), *seeming* (DC 26), *shadow evocation* (2, DC 26), *wall of force*

4th—*charm monster* (DC 23), *confusion* (DC 23), *greater invisibility* (2), *illusory wall* (DC 25), *mindwipe*^{OA} (3, DC 23), *shadow conjuration*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (2, DC 22), *illusory script* (DC 24), *lightning bolt* (2, DC 22), *major image* (2, DC 24), *nondetection*, *suggestion* (2, DC 22), *vampiric touch* (2)

2nd—*blur*, *invisibility* (3), *minor image* (2, DC 23), *resist energy*, *touch of idiocy* (2)

1st—*disguise self*, *magic missile* (4), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 20), *shield*, *silent image* (2, DC 22)

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Thassilonian Specialization^{AG} *illusion*; **Opposition Schools** *conjuration*, *transmutation*

TACTICS

Before Combat Xanderghul casts *mind blank* and *nondetection*.

During Combat Xanderghul avoids melee combat if possible and engages the PCs through a *projected image* if he can. Otherwise, he casts quickened *greater invisibility* and *mage's sword* the first round, quickened *displacement* and *prismatic spray* the second round, and quickened *mirror image* and *prismatic spray* again on the third round. He casts quickened *magic missile* combined with other combat spells over the following rounds.

Morale As long as the *Peacock Shrine* in area 03 remains active, Xanderghul fearlessly fights to the death. If this shrine is destroyed, though, Xanderghul sees the folly of resistance, and his pride finally breaks if he's reduced to 20 or fewer hit points. He promises to help the PCs if they spare his life.

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 24, **Con** 28, **Int** 29, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 32

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Deceitful, Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Iron Will, Martial Weapon Proficiency (lucerne hammer), Quickened Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (illusion), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +22, Bluff +26, Craft (alchemy) +27, Craft (clothing, tattoos, weapons) +12, Disguise +21, Fly +20, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Knowledge (history, planes, religion) +22, Perception +12, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +27, Use Magic Device +22

Languages Aboleth, Azlanti, Draconic, Giant, Infernal, Necril, Shoanti, Thassilonian, Varisian

SQ *arcane bond* (+3 *axiomatic spell storing lucerne hammer*), deific, exceptional statistics, extended illusions (7 rounds), permanent spells, runelink, shadow gear

Shadow Gear +3 *axiomatic spell storing lucerne hammer*^{UE} (currently contains *touch of idiocy*), *amulet of natural*

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armor +3, belt of mighty constitution +6, bracers of armor +7, cloak of resistance +3, crystal ball, deep red sphere ioun stone, dusty rose prism ioun stone, handy haversack, headband of mental prowess +4 (Int, Cha, grants ranks in Acrobatics and Use Magic Device), ring of protection +3, ring of wizardry III, Sihedron Tome

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Contingency (Sp) If an active *displacement* spell on him ends, a new *displacement* spell is cast on him.

Deific Xanderghul can grant divine spells. This does not require any specific action on his behalf. He grants access to the domains of Evil, Law, and Trickery and to the subdomains of Deception and Tyranny. His symbol is a peacock feather with an eye inside, and his favored weapon is the lucerne hammer^{UE}.

Enshrined (Ex) As long as the *Peacock Shrine* in area 03 remains active, if Xanderghul is slain, his body and shadow gear vanish, only to be restored in area 03 after 1 minute. Being restored in this manner otherwise functions as *true resurrection*. If Xanderghul is slain while this *Peacock Shrine* is inactive, he dies normally and his shadow gear dissipates into nothing.

Exceptional Statistics (Ex) Xanderghul's ability scores were generated using a 25-point buy, and he has a +5 inherent bonus to all six ability scores. This increases his final CR to 17.

Permanent Spells (Sp) Xanderghul has these permanent spells: *arcane sight*, *see invisibility*, and *tongues*.

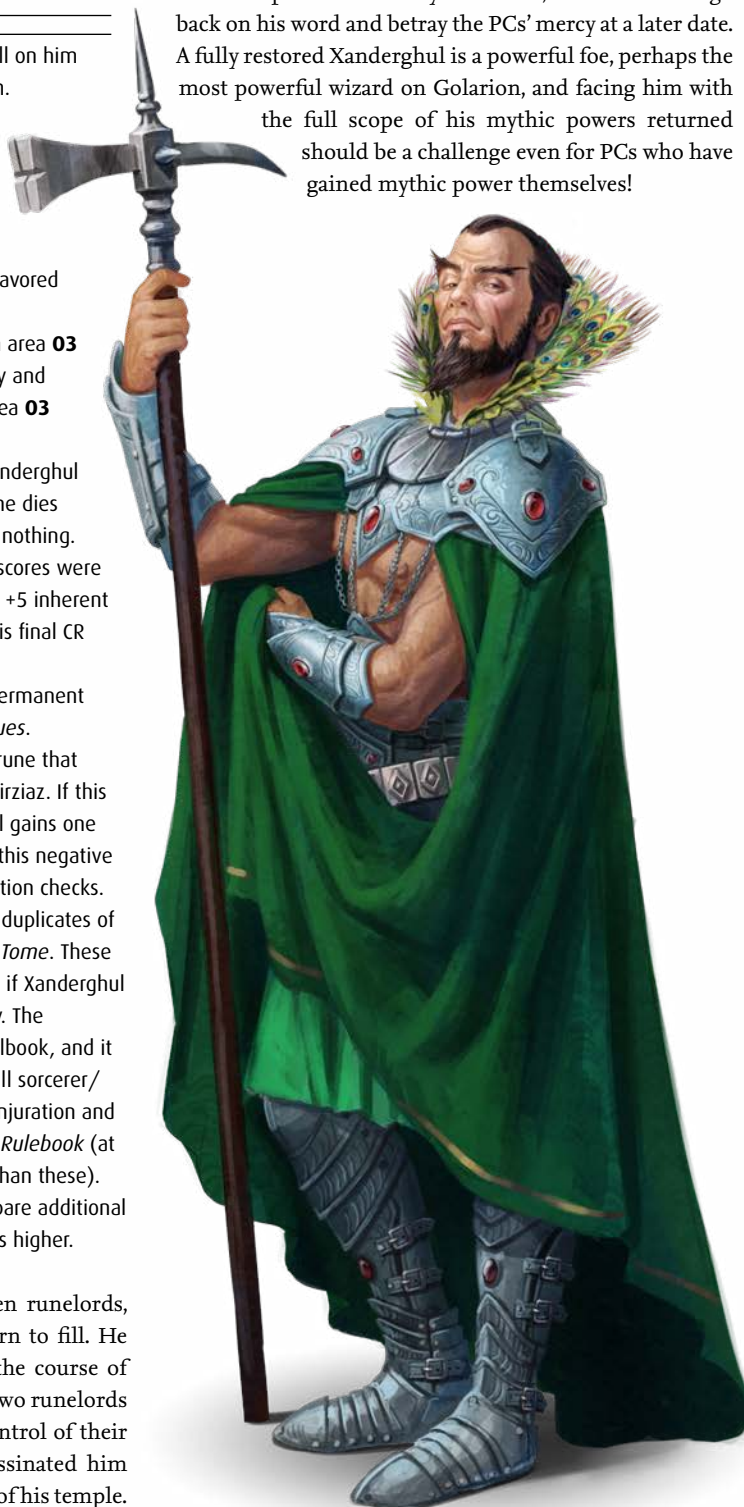
Runelink (Ex) Xanderghul's mind is linked to a rune that allows him to communicate with his minion Tuiriaz. If this rune is destroyed (see area M10), Xanderghul gains one permanent negative level. As long as he has this negative level, he also takes a -8 penalty on concentration checks.

Shadow Gear (Su) Xanderghul carries shadowy duplicates of his favorite possessions, including a *Sihedron Tome*. These items function normally in all ways, save that if Xanderghul is killed, the items vanish along with his body. The *Sihedron Tome* functions as Xanderghul's spellbook, and it contains all of his prepared spells as well as all sorcerer/wizard spells (save those of the schools of conjuration and transmutation) from the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* (at your discretion, it might contain more spells than these). The *Sihedron Tome* allows Xanderghul to prepare additional spells as if his Intelligence score were 6 points higher.

Xanderghul was chosen as one of the seven runelords, a role he realized that day he had been born to fill. He achieved immortality and divinity during the course of his centuries of rule, becoming one of only two runelords (the other being Sorshen) who never lost control of their realms—until recently, when Alaznist assassinated him and consigned him to life within the bowels of his temple.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

If the PCs kill Xanderghul in this adventure, his role in the campaign comes to an end. But if the PCs spare his life, the role Xanderghul plays in the future of your game is up to you. He may finally learn the value of humility and become a potent future ally of the PCs, or he could well go back on his word and betray the PCs' mercy at a later date. A fully restored Xanderghul is a powerful foe, perhaps the most powerful wizard on Golarion, and facing him with the full scope of his mythic powers returned should be a challenge even for PCs who have gained mythic power themselves!



ZUREA SALVUS

Once a cleric of Mahathallah, Zurea was drawn to the Peacock Spirit by promises of wealth and power. Now the high priest of the temple, she arrogantly rules over the other cultists, believing herself to be the pinnacle of humanity.

ZUREA SALVUS

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female human cleric of the Peacock Spirit 13

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; Senses Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 27 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 140 (13d8+78)

Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +15

Defensive Abilities fortification 25%

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor)

Melee +3 *lucerne hammer* +13/+8 (1d12+3)

Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. (10 ft. with *lucerne hammer*)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 5/day (DC 18, 7d6), tyrannical strike

Cleric Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +18)

At will—master's illusion (13 rounds/day)

8/day—copycat (13 rounds), touch of law

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +18)

7th—*destruction* (DC 22), *screen*^o

6th—quicken *bear's endurance*, *heal*, *hold monster*^o (DC 21)

5th—*dispel chaos*^o, *flame strike* (DC 20), *greater command* (DC 20), quicken *shield of faith*, *true seeing*

4th—*air walk*, *confusion*^o (DC 19), *cure critical wounds*, *greater magic weapon*, *poison* (DC 19), *spell immunity*

3rd—*bestow curse*^o (DC 18), *contagion* (DC 18), *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment*, *screaming flames*^{HA} (2, DC 18)

2nd—*aid*, *enthrall* (DC 17), *hold person* (DC 17), *invisibility*^o, *silence* (DC 17), *sound burst* (DC 17)

1st—*bane* (DC 16), *command* (DC 16), *detect good*, *disguise self*^o, *doom* (DC 16), *entropic shield*, *sanctuary* (DC 16)

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*

D domain spell; Domains Trickery, Law (Tyranny subdomain)

TACTICS

Before Combat Zurea casts *greater magic weapon* on her *lucerne hammer* and *magic vestment* on her chainmail every day, using the altar of the Peacock Spirit in area K5 to extend both spells' durations. She also casts *screen*

every day to give area K5 a more outlandish appearance (see page 33 for more details). A few rounds before combat begins, she casts quicken *bear's endurance* and quicken *shield of faith*. If combat starts before she can prepare, these two spells are among the first spells she casts in battle. Finally, if she has any advance knowledge of the PCs' tactics (including reports from cultists who might have escaped from the PCs in the prior adventure) she uses the altar to extend *spell immunity*, choosing spells she knows the PCs favor if possible.

During Combat Zurea casts *sanctuary* on the first round of combat, letting her followers engage the PCs at first while she takes the time to cast *true seeing* and *air walk* on herself before she climbs up into the air to stay out of melee. She then uses her ranged spells against the PCs, starting with *destruction* and following with *screaming flames*. She casts *silence* against a spellcaster, *confusion* against those engaged in melee, and *greater command* or *hold monster* to disrupt those who work together efficiently. If reduced to 40 hp, she casts *invisibility* and then spends a few rounds staying mobile and casting healing spells on herself before casting a touch spell such as *bestow curse* or *poison*, holding the charge, and then using *invisibility* to move up into melee range to deliver the spell as a dramatic way to return to combat.

Morale Zurea fights to the death once a battle begins, and she commands those who serve under her to do the same.

STATISTICS

Str 10, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 8, Wis 20, Cha 14

Base Atk +9; CMB +9; CMD 25

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Selective Channeling, Toughness, Weapon Focus (*lucerne hammer*)

Skills Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +12, Spellcraft +14

Languages Common

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (4); **Other**

Gear +1 *light fortification chainmail*, +1 *lucerne hammer*^{APG}, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *true seeing ointment* (2 doses, worth 250 gp each), 1,185 gp

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Zurea Salvus was indoctrinated into the cult of Mahathallah by her aunts, a trio of older women who ran a funeral home that catered to Korvosa's upper class. When news reached her that her mother, a Gray Maiden, had perished during a mission into the Cinderlands, Zurea seemed unaffected, but privately she was devastated. For the next few years, Zurea descended into drug abuse, spending much of her time either blacked out or drifting in a euphoric haze. This served only to heighten her sense of self-importance, as she was able to maintain a relatively normal life during her binges—surely, she thought, only someone as capable and enlightened as herself could flourish in the midst of such extreme use.

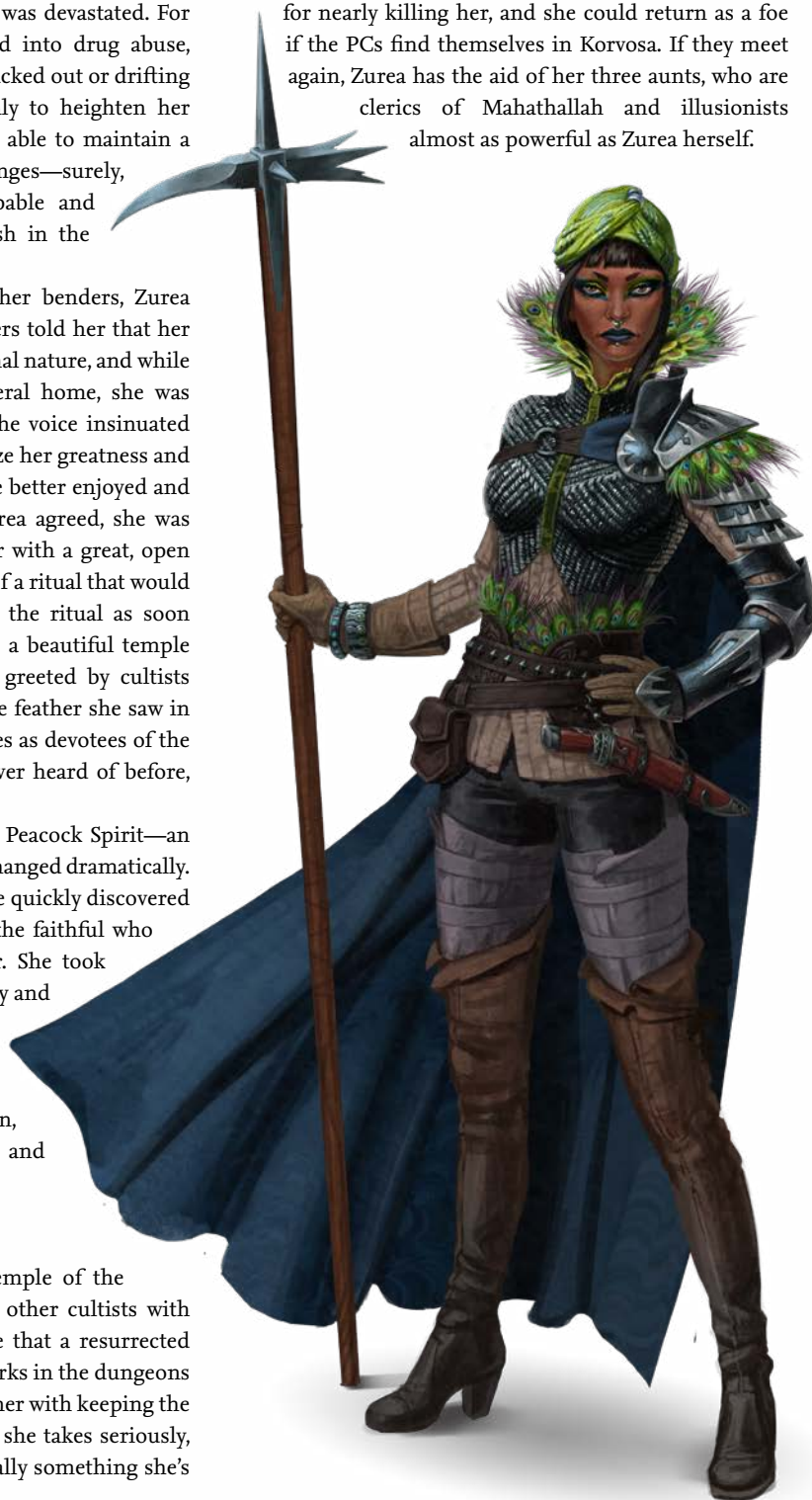
Earlier this year, during one of her benders, Zurea felt a presence calling to her. Whispers told her that her family didn't appreciate her exceptional nature, and while she could settle for her aunts' funeral home, she was destined for much greater things. The voice insinuated that even Mahathallah didn't recognize her greatness and that, perhaps, her devotions would be better enjoyed and acknowledged by another. When Zurea agreed, she was granted a vision of a peacock feather with a great, open eye in the center and the knowledge of a ritual that would fulfill her desires. Zurea performed the ritual as soon as she could and was transported to a beautiful temple nestled in the mountains. She was greeted by cultists wearing robes adorned with the same feather she saw in her fugue. They referred to themselves as devotees of the Peacock Spirit, a deity Zurea had never heard of before, though that would swiftly change.

Zurea converted to worship of the Peacock Spirit—an easy transition for her—and her life changed dramatically. After a brief period of withdrawal, she quickly discovered that she was one of the few among the faithful who could channel her new god's power. She took this as further proof of her supremacy and began to muscle her way through the temple's hierarchy until she was anointed the high priest. She now runs the temple as a would-be queen, demanding almost as much praise and devotion as the Peacock Spirit.

CAMPAIGN ROLE

As the high priest of the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, Zurea rules over the other cultists with an iron grip, though she is unaware that a resurrected runelord, the source of her visions, lurks in the dungeons below. The Peacock Spirit has tasked her with keeping the lower levels of the temple safe, a job she takes seriously, even if the concept of failure isn't really something she's familiar with.

Should Zurea somehow survive, she attempts to escape and return to her life in Korvosa. Most likely, she returns to the worship of Mahathallah, especially after the Peacock Spirit ceases to grant her spells when the PCs defeat Xanderghul. She holds a grudge against the PCs for nearly killing her, and she could return as a foe if the PCs find themselves in Korvosa. If they meet again, Zurea has the aid of her three aunts, who are clerics of Mahathallah and illusionists almost as powerful as Zurea herself.





ECOLOGY OF THE ASURA

“Sheathe your sword, mortal. You claim that I am a fiend who defiled your god’s temple. You are ignorant to think that your god was ever so pure, for I am his creation. I am not one of those alabaster angels that fawn over his every word. Instead, I am something he built in his own image, only to be shattered and cast into Hell when he failed.

“Now you, paladin, would slay me because your god demanded it? If you do, you destroy evidence of your god’s mistake and perpetuate further injustice. If you refuse, you violate the oaths your patron demanded, condemning you forever. He has set you up to fail, as he did me.

“Now, lower your weapon, and let us speak of revenge.”

—From Anshurikast’s *Corruption of Holy Silhu*

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The gods are fallible.

No more proof is required than the fact that asuras exist, each variety born from a different incident in which a deity abused their authority, exacted petty revenge, or simply proved irresponsible with their power. Created by divine accidents, asuras are dedicated to destroying all that the gods hold dear. Although most asuras meditate upon the nature of the cosmos and how best to unravel it from the relative comfort of Hell, others travel across the Great Beyond to sabotage divine goals, break the spirits of mortal worshipers, and revel in empty temples that echo with their blasphemous disdain.

Asuras are immortal, reincarnating in an endless cycle each time one is slain by a vengeful rival or an ignorant hero. The bravado of those holy champions who hunt down and slay an asura is pointless, for so long as the gods and their creations survive, so too shall their greatest mistakes.

GENESIS

In the Age of Creation, the gods experimented with the cosmos, shaping, observing, and destroying countless worlds. To the deities, these tests had no lasting consequences; however, in the shattered remnants of each discarded planet and the withered husk of each abandoned organism, there dwelled a hateful resentment. Where this hatred grew strong enough, it coalesced into a living form: an asura. At first, these fiends hid in the Maelstrom, loathing their accidental creators and fearing their wrath. Many eventually found their way to Hell, lairing there even before Asmodeus claimed it.

Among the asuras, there is no consensus as to what the First Mistake was, but this legendary event holds reverential significance for them. Each of the powerful asura ranas claims to be the reincarnated form of that first asura. Theories abound about this initial error; common hypotheses point to the creation (and abandonment) of the First World, the moment Ithys granted free will to mortal souls, the first time a god created life, or even the moment a deity first snuffed it out. Although asuras sometimes clash over the details of their origin, they generally agree that their existence was inevitable and even a natural cosmic response to creation itself.

Each type of asura traces its genesis to a divine misstep performed out of malice or negligence. Some asuras were favorite pets or servants tossed aside by their creators for failing to meet impossible standards. Others are the hateful echoes left behind by a punishment that exceeded its crime. Yet others formed when a god's actions recklessly endangered innocent bystanders, drawing one or more mortal souls to encapsulate the mistake like a pearl seals away a piece of grit. Each spiteful spark forms the beating heart of a new form of asura.

That said, each divine sin creates only a single asura or, at most, a small cohort, while there are millions of these fiends in Hell. The majority of asuras are created from archetypal templates using the same raw material that makes up most outsiders: souls. However, the prominence of devils in Hell means that asuras capture only a tiny share of lawful evil souls, mostly those of asura cultists and individuals who actively blasphemed and undermined the gods. As they arrive in the realm of the asuras, these damned petitioners feed upon their superiors' rejectionist dogmas and endure the recreated cataclysms that formed the original asuras. As a petitioner suffers and learns, it gravitates toward the crime that most offends it, eventually lending itself to the creation of another asura modeled on that particular divine mistake.

Even the natural cycle of souls generates only a fraction of all asuras. As if in defiance of the archdevils who rule Hell, the mighty asurendras (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 24) steal back some of the lawful evil souls they see as rightfully theirs by tearing free hunks of that plane and shattering the pieces into the raw quintessence necessary to create a host of new, lowly tripurasuras (*Bestiary* 3 26). These minor asuras quickly tie themselves to more powerful masters to learn, grow, and serve, but unless they achieve a more enlightened state and take on a greater form, Hell typically reabsorbs these tripurasuras before they can reincarnate. Nearly all other asuras are part of an endless cycle of reincarnation, returning to life in a matter of years with most of their memories intact. Those who have discovered deeply destructive truths about the multiverse sometimes return in more powerful forms, but most are lucky to be reborn in facsimiles of their previous bodies; far more of them return as less capable fiends.

Asurendras who attain sufficient enlightenment can convert mortals directly into new asuras by consuming their flesh, stripping their souls, and reshaping the constituent parts into new creatures. In a way, this willingness to destroy life to create more servants is the greatest hypocrisy, for it mirrors the asuras' own reckless genesis. However, few asurendras are willing to respond to such accusations with anything but violence.

ECOLOGY

As functionally immortal outsiders, asuras need not consume anything to stay alive. They therefore have little effect on their surroundings, except when they lash out in a spirit of cathartic violence. This fury is rare, however, for asuras are seldom afflicted with boredom or irritation; they mull over the same concepts, ideas, and images for centuries without complaint, picking apart nuances and turning repetitive thoughts into contemplative mantras.

Asuras consider their creation to be a divine mistake, as the creators of the earliest asuras tried to exterminate them. Exactly how these early asuras survived the wrath of their own creators is lost to time, but the asuras favor two explanations. First, they take pride in their willingness to wait, watch, and plot revenge, and so these first asuras may have simply escaped notice through patience, guile, and stealth. Second, many asuras believe that the gods are so arrogantly incompetent that they are unable to perceive their own mistakes, and thus asuras are invisible to deities and their creations.

Like other outsiders, asuras are formed of quintessence. However, each also contains a unique and hateful spark that persists in defiance of the universe. Whereas the bodies and souls of most outsiders are indistinguishable and inseparable, making

it all but impossible to restore an outsider to life once it has died, an asura's essence survives death even when its body perishes. The same elusive aura that shields an asura in life also sequesters this spark, which descends

to Hell or gravitates toward the nearest asura rana; this process can take weeks, years, or even centuries. Having lost its corporeal form, the asura loses its essence as well, and not enough quintessence remains for the asura to be fully restored. Instead, a rana can mold the crippled fiend only into a lesser form. However, as the rana communes with the dead asura to remake it, the rana can perceive that asura's accomplishments and desires. An asura that is especially accomplished or who swears to serve the rana for another lifetime may be reborn in a form equal in power to its former life—or even gain a new more advanced form, though this comes at a cost to the rana, who must supply the necessary quintessence from its own reserves.

Even this process is too close to a divine relationship for some asuras, who refuse to be remade by a rana. Yet even these eventually reincarnate on their own after much longer periods of time. There is no reliable way to permanently destroy an asura, and its animating spark grants it an unending cycle of betrayal, destruction, and rebirth. Those who would defy asuras are probably better served by binding them indefinitely with *binding*, *imprisonment*, or even a carefully worded *wish*. Ultimately, the only certain way to eliminate an asura is to bring about the absolute destruction of the cosmos, in the process annihilating the crimes that first begot these fiends. The fact that the asuras crave an outcome that would end their existence is an irony not lost on them.

Like many outsiders, asuras are capable of interbreeding with mortals to create half-fiends.

However, they rarely engage in this process willingly; to them, reproduction is a sloppy experience hatefully similar to the gods' own reckless creation of life. Asuras sometimes make exceptions when the other parent would be a fallen priest, or if the progeny would irrevocably shame its mortal family, and the resulting offspring can seed tieflings known as faultspawn for generations to come. As a whole, though, asuras find outsider-blooded mortals abhorrent, perceiving them as further mistakes inflicted by the gods and their agents. As a result, asuras regularly hunt down and kill half-celestials and half-fiends alike on principle.

SOCIETY

Compared to the predations of daemons, the warfare of demons, and the proactive corruption of devils, asuras are generally quiet, introspective, and solitary. Most find fulfillment simply in meditation and basking in



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the shattered remains of ruined temples, and they rarely have reason to stir until they require new inspiration or have discerned some destructive cosmic truth to employ against a new target. As a result, asuras rarely gather together unless they wish to share their insights or combine their strength to attack a specific stronghold, such as a house of worship. This is especially true on the Material Plane, where asuras are few and benefit from secrecy, and in Hell, where they are outnumbered by legions of devils. Despite this predilection for privacy, asuras are bound to one another by a shared outrage. By concentrating upon the crimes that brought it into existence, a typical asura can draw others of its kind to its current location. It is through this hateful empathy that asuras summon one another, though this process is usually unpredictable.

Asuras shape their hatred of the divine through the lessons they pass on to one another and their shared experiences of abuse, and they take cathartic delight in telling each other tales of the perceived injustices they've found in the cosmos. While firsthand accounts are especially valued, even secondhand stories find appreciative ears and reinforce asuras' hateful precepts. Mortals can sometimes placate a resting asura with a compelling tale of a god's folly and how that deity was shamed in return. Most precious, though, are the legendary origin stories of the asura ranas, each born from an unrivaled cataclysm or ascended from some spectacular act of vengeance. The ranas serve as estranged teachers for both asuras and their cultists, occasionally even granting spells to those who follow a rana's personal philosophy. However, actual acts of worship or prayer are anathema to asuras, and these powerful outsiders regularly rescind gifts from anyone who would view them as gods.

Because asuras rarely compete for resources or influence, other fiends view them with curiosity or indifference, rather than hostility—at least, when fiendish cruelty doesn't overpower other responses. Daemons and asuras appreciate each other's destructive dogma, as both are ultimately interested in destroying creation. Likewise, when their preferred victims overlap, asuras and sahkils occasionally collaborate to terrorize religious congregations, convincing all involved that the gods have abandoned the community. The philosophy of sahkils is especially appealing to asuras because they, too, have witnessed the gods' imposed order and brutally rejected it. The abuse suffered by divs at the hands of mortal masters leaves them equally eager to despoil temples, though the way in which divs idolize Ahriman ultimately aggravates and alienates asuras.

Asuras maintain a shaky peace with devils. Although asuras once defied Asmodeus in his conquest of Hell, they

ultimately failed thanks to their betrayal by Geryon, one of the greatest ranas. The archdevils now view the asuras as subjugated and harmless vassals, even as the asuras quietly seethe. Rakshasas, oni, and demons all share heretical or antidivine interests, but asuras view these other fiends as greedy, power-hungry creatures too eager to become gods themselves.

Strangely, asuras feel the strongest kinship to demodands, whom they view as fellow divine mistakes—younger siblings they might educate. Asuras and demodands sometimes form alliances, though these often fall apart as asuras try to unravel the misguided worship demodands offer their titan creators. In rare cases, an asura succeeds, founding small colonies of violently atheistic demodands that reject and even fight against the designs of the titans.

LAIRS

With no need for sleep or food, asuras instead focus solely on aesthetics, solitude, and ruinous history in their dwellings, preferring despoiled temples over other options. Whether a temple is newly abandoned or long forgotten is of no matter; asuras are as pleased to inhabit ancient ruins as they are to settle in holy sites still wet with the blood of slain priests. Asuras actively engaged in subverting mortal congregations often live under or within sight of their target institutions, spying on the sites with zealous devotion while planning how best to undermine the faith of worshipers. Once an asura takes over a temple, it slowly and systematically defaces the building, marring the artwork and collapsing entire walls. As a result, an asura's home can become a maze of rubble, broken ritual equipment, and desecrated statues.

Although untold thousands of asuras haunt the Material Plane, the greatest concentrations are in Hell, where they favor three different regions: Stygia, Atalu, and the wildernesses. Stygia, the fifth level of Hell, is a murky and festering morass. The archdevil Geryon, now remembered among asuras as the Betrayer, was once an asura rana before his treachery weakened the asuras, kytons, and gigas of Hell, allowing Asmodeus to claim the plane as his own. In return, Geryon now rules Stygia, claiming authority over the asuras who remain there. Scattered among this realm are the countless holy sites of failed gods, many of them claimed by asuras who revel in the tragic misery while also seething at Geryon for capitulating and agreeing to serve a god.

An equally dense population dwells in Atalu, a cluster of individual asura ranas' unholy realms that straddles the border between Avernus and Dis. Often denigrated as the "Shallow Rifts" by devils, Atalu affords the asura ranas who rule there ample opportunity to scheme and preach their respective blasphemies. Rather than ruined temples,

each realm features the severe geography and buildings that best represent that rana's hatred, from Ioramvol's Cliffs of Stalchosos to the gnawing echoes of Hydim's Starving Halls or the miasmic labyrinth of Zahalishar, Chupurvagasti's realm. For those asuras who seek greater seclusion, the infernal layers of Avernus, Cocytus, and Malebolge all include vast swaths of hostile wilderness where it is easy to become lost among frozen mountains and iron wastelands.

ASURAS ON GOLARION

Although most famous in Vudra, asuras appear across Golarion. What follows are some of their favorite haunts.

Galt: Although many good-aligned faiths survive in Galt, decades of revolution and hatred have left the faithful questioning the will of the gods. Asuras have gradually infiltrated some of these understaffed temples, whispering ominous truths to encourage even greater acts of blasphemy and vandalism. An upasunda (*Bestiary* 3 27) named Irmhidalu stalks the area around Isarn, killing Gray Gardeners in ways that frame the surviving clergy and reveling in each saintly soul fed to the *final blades*.

Jalmeray: From its indigenous cultures to the massive construction projects of Khiben-Sald that the Arclords later sealed or modified, Jalmeray hides a wealth of tiny shrines and massive temples that attract asuras, making this among the fiends' most densely populated bastions. The Segang Jungle contains the greatest concentration of asura lairs, while a cabal of asuras haunts Kaina Katakka, where they meditate upon—and hope to unlock—the destructive power that devastated the island.

Mwangi Expanse: Dozens of cultures have risen and fallen in the Mwangi Expanse, leaving behind many temples to now-forgotten gods. These abandoned temples are highly coveted by asuras. The increasingly brutal religions of the cyclops city of Ghol-Gan have proven especially satisfying to them, especially to Parveen, an asura who drank in this misery and transformed into an asurendra after a millennium of meditation. Although Parveen was sealed away by Jatembe's Magic Warriors, the wards in the temple city of Kaddodi grow weaker with each year.

Rahadoum: Thanks to the Laws of Man that prohibit religion, Rahadoum's surviving places of worship are windswept husks where girtablilus (*Bestiary* 3 130) and asuras clash for control. For generations, an aghasura (*Bestiary* 3 23) named Shuvahavorath has lived beneath Manaket, driving wizards-in-training to new heights of religious intolerance and further perpetuating Rahadoum's secular state.

Tian Xia: The rise of Lung Wa and its cult of the Eternal Emperor led to millions turning away from their gods in favor of the state religion. Thousands of shrines and

monasteries were abandoned and eventually decayed over the course of the empire's long reign. Since the empire's fall, warrior-priests have steadily reclaimed many of these sites, pushing out asura squatters. However, asuras remain firmly entrenched in several holy ruins, especially in conflict-torn regions such as Kaoling, Shenmen, and Shokuro. Thanks to their legendary origin as a land bridge shattered by the god Hei Feng in a rage, the islands of Minata also attract many asuras.

Vudra: Asuras are especially common in Vudra, where the gradual creation and rejection of local gods provides a steady source of religious ruins. Priests across Vudra are familiar with asuras and their habits, and the Seekers Usanji, a multifaith organization dedicated to detecting and dispatching asuras, maintains a network of canny operatives. These hunters are widely dispersed, however, and they must rely on hired help—such as adventurers—to defeat their slippery quarry. Even so, the asura rana Bohga openly dwells within the devastated city of Jaradisam, where she meditates upon a hoard of priceless treasures and attracts monstrous societies that inhabit the nearby ruins.

ASURA VARIETIES

Below are the best-known types of asuras, though there are untold legions that represent the gods' myriad mistakes over the eons.

Adhukait: The twin-bodied adhukaits (*Bestiary* 3 22) are agile assassins first created when a deity captured two thieves, smashed their bodies together, and hurled the crippled forms into the earth, crashing together in a devastating explosion that caused devastating earthquakes and tsunamis. The twin-bodied form of adhukaits is testament to their violent genesis, and they prefer lurking near places of devastation, such as the blasted crater from which they first crawled. Conjurers often find that adhukaits are eager to serve, though the fiends carefully assess their conjurers' defenses to enact bloody betrayal when their terms of service are complete.

Aghasura: Often drawn to the service of the asura ranas Chugarra or Chupurvagasti, the massive aghasuras are serpentine fiends created when a deity bestowed sapience but not morality on her slithering pets. These asuras experience long periods of dreaming torpor that leave them fully aware of their surroundings, making them excellent guardians. Aghasuras revel in observing gradual decay, whether it's the life of a creature succumbing to poison or a mortal's facial expression as his faith crumbles. Even those who escape their clutches are usually inflicted with one of these forms of decay.

Asurendra: At the heart of betrayal and destruction lies powerful wisdom, and the more an asura understands how it might unravel the gods and creation, the more

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powerful it becomes. Among the greatest of asuras are the asurendras, the “wise ones” who have mastered one or more devastating truths that allow them to shatter, evade, or twist reality by defying the gods’ arbitrary laws of existence. An asurendra rarely acts as a general, however, instead mentoring and counseling other asuras who further the asurendra’s agenda across entire continents.

Hishandura: Some deities maintain an innocent (or perhaps even willfully ignorant) veneer by dispatching unholy abominations to do their dirty work. When a long-forgotten god shifted the blame for a catastrophe to one such agent, the victim executed the god’s retribution but then transformed into an asura. The resulting hishanduras (see page 82) are devastating juggernauts that can level towns—particularly those with notable churches or other holy sites. Those who survive these attacks often blame themselves and their gods, not the asura, for the destruction.

Japalisura: Born from condemned demigods prophesied to slay their divine mother, japalisuras (see page 84) find pleasure in picking apart divinations, training the downtrodden to seek revenge, and sowing portents that incite violence. Their abilities lead many japalisuras to pose as monstrous oracles, sometimes even allying with hag covens or hapless cults to inflict misfortune over a wide area.

Nikaramsa: Divine mistakes can kill not just the faithful but also their critics. One such heretical cult transformed into the first nikaramsa (*Pathfinder RPG Book of the Damned* 242) when the wrath of its patron deity destroyed both a holy city and the cult itself. Nikaramsas thrive on the self-righteousness and divine gullibility of priests, perverting their faiths and subverting their divine powers. However, of the asuras who seek redemption, nikaramsas are among the most common, perhaps as a result of their ability to see the many sides of any situation and exploit the hypocrisy of any dogma—even that of the asuras themselves.

Tripurasura: Rather than springing from a single divine mistake, as most other asuras do, tripurasuras are a mockery of life created by more powerful asuras. Unlike with other asuras, a tripurasura’s reincarnation is contingent on its deeds and discoveries. Those who recruit mortal spellcasters to the cause, corrupt temples, and uncover terrible secrets secure a permanent place as more powerful asuras. Those who fail are reduced to the raw quintessence from which new tripurasuras are created. These creatures are ambitious but not desperate, for they understand that eternal life is both a blessing and a curse. Individual tripurasuras specialize in impersonating

individuals of a particular Small race, favoring those whose innocuousness or apparent exoticism helps deflect suspicion as to the asuras’ true identity.

Upasunda: More a manifestation of divine negligence than deific foolishness, the so-called beatific ones are mortal abandonment, envy, and persistence taken to an extreme. For days at a time, these fiends hone their bodies for combat. Battle represents a destructive struggle, and whether that struggle ends in the death of the upasunda or its foes, the asura learns more about how to unravel the multiverse. Some upasundas dedicate themselves to slaying every follower of a particular religion, even returning to the same temple after each reincarnation to destroy the latest generation of priests and paladins.





RITUALS OF THE RUNELORDS

“The skies grew dark with fury as the storm rolled in. The clouds crashed into a shape we knew all too well: the looming face of our mistress. I saw others flee at the sight, but I knew it was futile. It was obvious she was too angry to permit escape. The fire and lightning scoured the city, but her rage was not yet spent. The streets split, disgorging enormous spiders whose gazes dealt death. And then I heard her laughter—something that shook my very soul. We had betrayed her, just as she had expected. This was her plan all along. We were doomed to fail and become her latest playthings. Her terrible laughter drowned out the screams outside. I held my husband close and wept.”

—Topardis, Seneschal of Akritos at the time of its destruction

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Some of the most powerful wizards Golarion has ever seen, the runelords of Thassilon not only created many spells still in common use, but also designed many occult rituals. Each runelord mastered a particular school of magic, but this specialization came at the expense of fluency with spells from certain oppositional schools. Too arrogant to accept limitations on their power, the runelords often developed rituals to circumvent the limitations that magic placed on lesser spellcasters. Each runelord cultivated small armies of apprentices and servants to aid in their rituals, creating effects of fearsome and legendary power. A small selection of the rituals invented by the runelords appears below, although other rituals undoubtedly remain unrecovered in ancient libraries and crumbling ruins.

USING THESE RITUALS

PCs who wish to make use of these occult rituals must first discover them. Although the effects of many of these rituals can still be seen today, the details of the rituals themselves are much harder to find. Prospective casters must often correlate bits of arcane lore spread throughout monster-infested ruins, locked away in ancient vaults or libraries, or hoarded by powerful mages guarding snippets of knowledge in their private collections. Acquiring any of these rituals should be an adventure of its own. Refer to pages 208–209 of *Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* for more information on how to use occult rituals.

BECKON RETRIEVER

Runelord Alaznist was fond of recruiting demons, qliploth, and other Abyssal monsters to her service, but her focus on evocation magic meant sacrificing any proficiency with conjuration magic. To circumvent this restriction, Alaznist frequently used enslaved spellcasters (she was particularly fond of tricking captured conjurers into offering themselves as sacrifices to the entities they conjured), as well as portals to the Abyss (including several active portals within Hollow Mountain). For conjuring certain creatures, though, Alaznist used occult rituals. With the beckon retriever ritual, Alaznist could extract a newly created retriever (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 234) from the Abyss and compel it to perform a service, typically tracking down and abducting an enemy conjurer, so that she could continue to augment her armies with demons, qliploth, and other outsiders.

BECKON RETRIEVER

School conjuration (calling) [chaotic, evil]; **Level** 8

Casting Time 8 hours

Components V, S, M (rare incenses and expensive phosphorescent inks used to scribe a conjuring diagram, collectively worth 25,000 gp, or the sacrifice of a sapient

good-aligned creature of CR 15 or higher), SC (up to the Charisma modifier of the primary caster)

Skill Checks Craft (armor, clockwork, or weapons) DC 28, 2 successes; Knowledge (arcana) DC 28, 2 successes; Knowledge (planes) DC 28, 2 successes; Perception DC 28 2 successes

Range 5 ft.

Effect one summoned retriever

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash All casters take 2d6 points of damage.

Failure The primary caster is exhausted; furthermore, the retriever arrives uncontrolled and immediately attacks the primary caster. The retriever vanishes back to the Abyss if the primary caster is slain or after 10 minutes have passed, whichever comes first.

EFFECT

The caster lights the rare incense and then scribes a complex conjuring diagram on the floor using glowing inks, then must focus on the runes to look through reality into the Abyss while reciting the methods by which a retriever can be shaped into being from raw Abyssal quintessence. If the ritual is successful, a retriever is conjured at the caster's location. The retriever is loyal to the caster but will perform only one service before it vanishes back to the Abyss. If the service takes longer to perform than a number of years equal to the primary caster's level, the retriever vanishes at the end of this duration, even if its service is not yet complete.

CRAFT SINSPAWN

Although the first sinspawn were created by Runelord Alaznist in –5782 AR, she was not able to maintain control of the fleshwarping ritual for their creation. It wasn't long before the other runelords began crafting their own varieties of these dangerous soldiers. In time, methods of raising sinspawn from the hearts of *minor runewells* displaced the use of this ritual, but for those without access to these minor artifacts, the craft sinspawn ritual remained valuable knowledge.

CRAFT SINSPAWN

School transmutation; **Level** 9

Casting Time 90 minutes

Components V, S, M (water mixed with diamond dust worth 5,000 gp; several freshly slain humanoids), F (a gem worth at least 20,000 gp containing the soul of an appropriately sinful creature), SC (at least 6, up to 20)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 35, 3 successes; Knowledge (planes) DC 35, 2 successes; Knowledge (religion) DC 35, 2 successes; Spellcraft DC 35, 2 successes

Range medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./character level of the primary caster)

Effect 2 sinspawn per caster

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 1 permanent negative level.

Failure All casters take 2d4 points of Constitution drain as their flesh is siphoned into the pool; this flesh is transformed into a number of uncontrolled and violent fleshdregs (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 4* 100) equal to the number of casters.

EFFECT

The ritual requires the casters to fill a pool with the required water and diamond dust, then restrain a number of Medium humanoid bodies in the pool. The total number of bodies must equal the number of sinspawn to be created (two Small

humanoids count as one Medium humanoid, and one Large or larger humanoid counts as four Medium ones), and the bodies can have been dead for no more than 8 hours. At least seven casters, which must include the primary caster, stand at equidistant points around the pool to invest the pool with the sinfulness of the gem-bound creature's soul. Upon successful completion of the ritual, the gem dissolves, the bodies melt into slurry, and a number of sinspawn (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 246) associated with the sin that corresponds most closely with the soul of the creature bound within the gem (envy, greed, gluttony, lust, pride, sloth, or wrath) form out of the churning mass. Sinspawn created in this way are free willed but are initially well disposed toward the primary caster.

INHABIT RUNE GIANT

Many scholars know that runelords created the first rune giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 130) to aid in controlling other giants enslaved by Thassilon. Few realize that the magic used to create these giants could also serve as conduits for the runelords' magic. Thassilon's enemies tell of rune giants emitting powerful spells such as *disintegration* or *prismatic spray* from their runes—spells cast not by the giants but by their masters.

When a runelord wished for direct control over a rune giant, either to lead a battle remotely or personally discipline recalcitrant giant troops, she could make use of this ritual to fully control a rune giant's mind and body. While in this state, the runelord benefitted from the rune giant's great size, strength, and control over other giants, but also retained her own powerful magic. Runelord Zutha inhabited his rune giants frequently—far more frequently than even the most paranoid of his enemies suspected—in order to unleash his power against his enemies firsthand. Some of Zutha's long-lost notes hint at an ongoing frustration: one particular rune giant whom he could never inhabit, even after multiple attempts over several years, due to the fact that some other powerful occupant already inhabited the giant.

INHABIT RUNE GIANT

School necromancy; **Level** 6

Casting Time 60 minutes

Components V, S, SC (up to the Intelligence modifier of the primary caster)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 26, 3 successes; Knowledge (local) DC 26, 3 successes

Range 100 miles/character level of the primary caster; see text

Duration 1 hour/character level of primary caster (D)

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 2d6 points of damage.

Failure All casters gain 1 permanent negative level and are exhausted until that negative level is removed.



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EFFECT

The ritual allows the primary caster to inhabit the body of a rune giant that she knows firsthand as if using *possession*^{DA}. The rune giant must be within 100 miles per character level of the primary caster when the ritual is complete. The rune giant receives no save against this effect. Unlike *possession*, the primary caster can use all of her own abilities as well as the rune giant's abilities while possessing the rune giant, and the primary caster can choose to use either her own or the rune giant's base attack bonus or base save bonuses. While the primary caster inhabits the rune giant, the rune giant gains 5 bonus hit points per character level of the primary caster.

INVERT GIANT

Over the years, many spurned the runelords' rule, including tribes of giants. While a runelord could simply make use of a rune giant to take control of a giant tribe, he might prefer to make an example out of a giant leader or a particularly rebellious giant hero. In these cases, a runelord could use this ritual to utterly deform and remake a stubborn giant, cowing the giant's tribe in the process. Some runelords instead used this ritual to punish giant minions who failed at a critical task or displeased the runelord.

Originally invented by Runelord Alderpash, the process of inverting a giant is torturous, as it causes the giant's body to distend before it inverts and transforms. Although the ritual could be performed in less than an hour, many runelords chose to extend the ritual by hours or even days to lengthen the excruciating punishment. Runelord Alderpash was particularly fond of using this ritual in days-long public events. Today, inverted giants are rarely encountered, but many giant cultures speak of them in fear and horror. Spreading knowledge of this ritual is sure to draw the wrath of any tribe of giants to learn of it as a result.

INVERT GIANT

School transmutation; **Level** 5

Casting Time 50 minutes

Components V, S, SC (up to the Intelligence modifier of the primary caster)

Skill Checks Heal DC 29, 2 successes; Knowledge (arcana) DC 29, 3 successes

Range close (25 ft. + 5 ft./character level of the primary caster)

Target one helpless, living giant

Duration instantaneous; see text

Saving Throw Fortitude negates; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 1d4 points of Constitution damage and becomes fatigued.

Failure All casters gain 1 permanent negative level, are exhausted, and cannot recover from this exhaustion until the negative level is removed. Additionally, the target is no longer helpless, automatically breaking free from whatever physical or magical constraints bind it, if any.

EFFECT

As the primary caster traces warped runes in the air, this ritual twists and reshapes the target giant with arcane energies and etches runes into the giant's flesh. This agonizing process deals the giant 1d6 points of damage per character level of the primary caster. Upon completion of the ritual, the giant must succeed at Fortitude save or be transformed into an inverted giant (see page 45). If the giant succeeds at the save, it takes a cumulative -2 penalty on its Fortitude saves against this ritual for the next week.

RUNELORD MANIFESTATION

The countless minions and servants of the runelords were scattered throughout Thassilon, enacting their masters' will wherever needed. In some cases, runelords found it necessary to visit a locale or an individual personally to issue specific orders, prove their might, or keep rebellious subjects in check. In these cases, this ritual allowed runelords to make their wishes known without leaving their courts or capitals. Runelord Sorshen was known to be particularly fond of the runelord manifestation ritual, using it to speak to her people and receive their adoration. She stopped using the ritual during the final years of her rule, however, after an enemy spellcaster discovered the means to trace back through the manifestation and attack her in person.

RUNELORD MANIFESTATION

School divination (scrying); **Level** 8

Casting Time 80 minutes

Components V, S, M (a pool of water), F (a silver mirror worth 5,000 gp), SC (up to 8)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 28, 3 successes; Knowledge (planes) DC 28, 2 successes; Spellcraft DC 28, 3 successes

Range primary caster

Duration 1 minute/character level of primary caster (D)

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 2d6 points of damage and becomes exhausted.

Failure All casters gain a temporary negative level (DC = 16 + the primary caster's Charisma bonus to remove the negative level after the first day), and the primary caster takes a -4 penalty to resist all scrying effects for 1 week.

EFFECT

The ritual allows the primary caster to observe an area at any distance, as per *scrying*, except that the sensor created for this scrying effect is an enormous visible image of the primary caster in the air above the area (even if the area viewed is indoors or underground) that cannot be dispelled. This image can take any form that the primary caster desires, such as an exact replica or a shape formed from shadows or clouds, but the image is always recognizable as the primary caster.

The primary caster can speak to any creatures in the area with a loud voice that emanates from the image. The following spells function reliably through the sensor: *detect chaos*, *detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *message*, *read magic*, *tongues*, and *true seeing*. Any other spell requires a successful concentration check to function through the image (DC = 20 + double the level of the spell); on a failure, the spell is lost.

THE VIRIDIAN TRANSCENDENCE

Conjuration was one of Runelord Xanderghul's opposition schools, and the nature of Thassilonian specialization thus made it impossible for him to cast teleportation spells. The use of *limited wish* and *wish* allowed him to circumvent this restriction somewhat, but that was an expensive and unwieldy solution. Instead, he created the viridian transcendence occult ritual to allow him and those who learned its secrets the ability to teleport to the Grand Temple of the Peacock Spirit, or to quickly teleport away from a dangerous situation. Xanderghul claimed to have been gifted the secrets of this ritual by the Peacock Spirit itself. The wizard-monks ended up using the viridian transcendence ritual most often to bring people to the temple's outskirts, either to live long lives as temple slaves or much shorter ones as temple sacrifices. Xanderghul kept to himself variants of the spell that allowed for teleportation to other locations, or allowed more frequent *word of recall* effects.

Although high-ranking members of the cult of the Peacock Spirit teach the viridian transcendence ritual to cult members, other methods of learning the ritual exist. In this volume's adventure, the PCs have the opportunity to learn the ritual after researching the cult of the Peacock Spirit in the Therassic Library. The highly detailed notes there allow the PCs to learn the ritual as if it were taught to them by an eager instructor, taking 8 days and requiring a successful DC 18 Intelligence check. PCs who know a conjuration (teleportation) spell or have prepared one for the day gain a +4 bonus on this check.

The information about the viridian transcendence ritual that the PCs uncover in the Therassic Library doesn't give the full story. The leaders of the Cult of the Peacock Spirit know that Xanderghul built a countermeasure into the ritual in case it fell into unwanted hands. Failure to cast the ritual sends the primary caster and all secondary casters to a different location on the temple grounds, where the complex's guardians swiftly deal with the intruders. Xanderghul's pride wouldn't let him conceive of a scenario in which his enemies acquired the ritual and were able to use it successfully.

The viridian transcendence ritual isn't so much cast as it is performed. While the casters must be well versed in several scholarly fields, the most important element of this

ritual is that it be performed in a way that would please and entertain onlookers. The exact type of performance is irrelevant, although cultists of the Peacock Spirit traditionally dance or sing while performing this ritual.

THE VIRIDIAN TRANSCENDENCE

School conjuration (teleportation); **Level** 8

Casting Time 80 minutes

Components V, S, M (a gemstone lens worth at least 10,000 gp), SC (up to 8)

Skill Checks Knowledge (arcana) DC 30, 2 successes; Knowledge (planes) 1 success; Knowledge (religion) DC 30, 1 success; Perform (any) DC 30, 4 successes

Range touch

Target primary and secondary casters

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 4d6 points of damage and is exhausted. Each secondary caster takes 2d6 points of damage.

Failure The casters are instantly teleported to area **C3** of the Glorious Approach to the Temple of the Peacock Spirit and are inflicted with 1 temporary negative level. (At your discretion, if not all the PCs are involved in casting the ritual, you can instead replace this failure effect with every caster being inflicted with 2 temporary negative levels, so that you don't have to split the party between area **C3** and wherever else on Golarion they may have been when they performed the ritual.)

EFFECT

The primary caster draws the symbol of the Peacock Spirit—a peacock feather with an open eye in the middle—on the floor as the secondary casters stand in a circle around him. The secondary casters join hands around the primary caster, who must perform the praises of the Peacock Spirit (traditionally, hymns and dances that focus on tripartite union of mind, body, and soul). The secondary casters can lend their voices, but they must be in perfect harmony.

As the chants reach their peak, and assuming the casters successfully perform the ritual, a burst of blue-green energy issues forth from the primary caster, engulfing the secondary casters. At this moment, the primary caster must decide whether to use the successful ritual to travel to the Temple of the Peacock Spirit or to infuse the energies into one of the secondary casters to grant them the viridian escape.

Temple Travel: If the primary caster chooses this option, he and all of the secondary casters are teleported, as if via *word of recall*, to area **B1** of the Cloister of Cerulean Languor (see page 13). Characters unable to fit in that area are left behind, as chosen by the primary caster. A creature can benefit from this effect as many times as it participates in a successful ritual.

Viridian Escape: The imbued secondary caster can use *word of recall* once as a swift action. When she activates this ability, she vanishes in a puff of bright blue-green smoke and

reappears at the location at which she was imbued with this effect. A creature can be granted the viridian escape only once in its lifetime.

WREST RESOURCES

Maintaining an empire as great as Thassilon required a vast amount of resources, both in raw materials to build monuments and structures as well as material goods to outfit and feed armies. The runelords designed rituals to tear bulky resources such as iron, gold, and silver directly from the ground and transport them to their vaults for later use. Many of the runelords' spells and rituals required very specific valuables, such as diamonds, and this ritual also served to pull these rare items from the earth. Most runelords quickly learned that use of the ritual often resulted in a net financial loss. Not only does the ritual require an expensive material component—one whose value may not be recovered if the ritual's area contains fewer resources than expected—but identifying new resource-rich locations was itself a difficult and unreliable endeavor.

Unsurprisingly, Runelord Karzoug used this ritual most frequently and effectively, finding inventive solutions to maximize the ritual's benefits. Karzoug devoted considerable resources to scrying on his rival's vaults so he could transport their wealth away. Karzoug also targeted common resources in a way to inconvenience or incapacitate his rivals, such as by wresting salt away from salt mines to exacerbate food shortages or transporting limestone from beneath the foundation of an enemy's fortification. To Karzoug, this ritual's best use was in the taking of resources, not the stockpiling of them.

the spell turns the caster into the resource used in the material component.

EFFECT

The ritual teleports a specific natural resource from the ritual's area and transports it adjacent to the primary caster. The natural resource is the same as the material component used in the ritual (for example, using 500 gp of gold as a material component causes the ritual to teleport all gold in the area). The area must be one the primary caster is familiar with and can clearly visualize, although he need not have line of sight or line of effect to the area at the time the ritual is performed. The sudden removal of these resources can cause the ground in the selected area to shift or collapse.



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WREST RESOURCES

School conjuration (teleportation); **Level** 7

Casting Time 60 minutes

Components V, S, M (an amount of a single natural mineral, metal, or gemstone worth 500 gp), F (an adamantine spade worth 5,000 gp), SC (up to 20)

Skill Checks Knowledge (geography) DC 42, 3 successes; Knowledge (nature) DC 42, 2 successes; Survival DC 42, 2 successes

Range 10 miles/character level of primary caster

Area one 10-ft. cube/character level of the primary caster

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw none; **SR** no

Backlash The primary caster takes 1 permanent negative level.

Failure All casters take 6d6 points of damage and are exhausted. The primary caster is the target of a *flesh to stone* spell (DC = 16 + the primary caster's Charisma bonus) but instead of stone



BESTIARY

“The rumors are true, except the part about it being a giant serpent. Serpents don’t have hairy hides and stumpy legs. The messages from the mining village were lies. The village didn’t need saving. The beast rarely stirred from its slumber, and its cave was many miles from their mines. But the miners kept sending out calls for help and hints that the serpent—or dragon, as more effective rumors named it—had a cave full of treasure. Strong and foolish heroes came, and each ended up as food for the beast.

“I’m telling you, the real monsters here are the miners. They’re luring people to their doom, feeding the beast for some hideous purpose. Setting fire to their village was the only way to stop them. You’ve got to believe me. I’m the real hero here.”

—From the testimony of Zaratio Hopewell, at his trial for arson

The bestiary for this volume of the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path contains two new asuras, a gluttonous mountain-dwelling serpent, a reclusive protector of nature, and an agent of the Dimension of Time who corrects temporal disruptions.

RETURN TO JORGENFIST

“Temple of the Peacock Spirit” begins with the PCs entering the Iron Peaks to visit the fortress of Jorgenfist. The Black Tower at the center of Jorgenfist was constructed as an ancient Thassilonian library, but stone giants raised their own fortress around it many centuries later. While the fortress has since been claimed by a loosely organized group of scholars from throughout the Inner Sea region who have worked to make Jorgenfist a safe harbor to study ancient mysteries, the surrounding hills and mountains are far from safe.

The Iron Peaks Encounters table presented here features challenges the PCs might around Jorgenfist. During the course of the adventure, the PCs have a 20% chance of a random encounter every 4 hours they spend traveling through the Iron Peaks during the day, and a 40% chance of a random encounter at night. They should not have more than three random encounters in a 24-hour period. If the PCs use an expeditious method of travel, such as *teleport* or *shadow walk*, these checks should be attempted when the PCs first arrive in the area.

These random encounters are most suitable near the beginning of “Temple of the Peacock Spirit.” As the PCs likely teleport directly to the temple in the Kodar Mountains later in the adventure, an overland encounter table for the Kodar Mountains is unlikely to be necessary. However, the Iron Peaks Encounters table can also be used to generate random Kodar Mountain encounters if the PCs take an unexpected detour.

Cautious Hunters (CR 12): A band of four stone giants (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 151) carefully scouts the area around Jorgenfist. Members of the large Crannoch tribe of stone giants, these hunters pursued a herd of elk into this region several hours ago. They believe that Jorgenfist is cursed and they are therefore reluctant to venture too close, but they don’t want to return to their tribe empty-handed. When these giants encounter the PCs, they demand any valuables the PCs carry, particularly weapons; they feel that by bringing back tribute to their tribe, they will save face. If the PCs negotiate instead, they might learn of the giants’ situation and help them track down the elk herd in the hills around Jorgenfist.

Desperate Scholars (CR 10): Four archaeologists (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 297) were heading toward Jorgenfist to examine the ruins when they were attacked by a pair of rocs. The rocs flew off with their packhorses and their half-orc bodyguard. These scholars

IRON PEAKS ENCOUNTERS

d%	Result	Avg. CR	Source
1-6	1d6 advanced wyverns	10	<i>Bestiary</i> 294, 282
7-10	Desperate Scholars	10	See below
11-14	Shoanti Outcasts	10	See below
15-19	Hungry Trolls	11	See below
20-25	1d3 mastodons	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 128
26-31	2 rocs	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 236
32-36	1 thunderbird	11	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 264
37-41	1 athach	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 33
42-46	Cautious Hunters	12	See below
47-51	1 ghole	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 132
52-57	1d12 hill giants	12	<i>Bestiary</i> 150
58-62	1 japalisura	12	See page 84
63-67	1d3 cloud giants	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 147
68-71	1d8 elder earth elementals	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 123
72-77	2d6 hounds of Tindalos	13	<i>Bestiary</i> 2 158
78-82	1d6 ogre hunters	13	<i>Monster Codex</i> 157
83-87	1 bolla	14	See page 88
88-91	1 mountain blight	14	<i>Bestiary</i> 6 42
92-96	1 time dimensional	14	See page 90
97-100	1 basavan	15	See page 86

are currently debating whether to press on without their equipment or journey back through the mountains without their bodyguard—neither possibility particularly appeals to them. The archaeologists are grateful for any aid the PCs provide them, and in exchange they can offer any information the GM wishes to impart about Jorgenfist.

Hungry Trolls (CR 11): A troll fury (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 229) named Vosh leads five trolls (*Bestiary* 268) on a hunt through the hills. They haven’t had much luck and are ravenously hungry. Vosh uses her *scroll of fog cloud* to set up an ambush as soon as she notices the PCs, although the other trolls are impatient and simply blunder out of the *fog cloud* toward the PCs as soon as the trolls can smell them.

Shoanti Outcasts (CR 10): Driven from their Shoanti tribe for despicable crimes, these three war striders (*Pathfinder RPG Villain Codex* 178) are led by a strongwoman (*Villain Codex* 34) named Lusts for Blood. Lusts for Blood carries a magical earth breaker (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 27) stolen from her tribe. Convinced that anything they can take by force is theirs by right, these outcasts rush at the PCs with terrifying howls. If the PCs recover the earth breaker, they can identify symbols of the Shriikirri-Quah Shoanti engraved upon it with a successful DC 18 Knowledge (local) check. Returning this earth breaker is certain to earn the PCs the respect of the tribe and a significant reward.

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ASURA, HISHANDURA

This muscular fiend has two vertically mirrored faces, four arms, and a quartet of sinister punching daggers.

HISHANDURA

CR 15



XP 51,200

LE Large outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent, scent of carnage, smoke sight; Perception +29

Aura elusive (75 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+3 Dex, +18 natural, -1 size)

hp 207 (18d10+108); regeneration 10 (good spells, good weapons)

Fort +17, **Ref** +11, **Will** +15; +2 vs. enchantment spells

DR 10/good; **Immune** curse effects, disease, poison;

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 26

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.

Melee +1 *punching dagger* +23/+18/+13/+8
(1d6+8/19-20/x3), 3 +1 *punching daggers* +23
(1d6+4/19-20/x3), bite +19 (2d6+3) or
bite +24 (2d6+7), 4 slams +24 (1d6+7)

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

Special Attacks destructive blades, punitive penance, rend
(2 slams or 2 punching daggers, 4d6 bleed and punitive
penance), repentant rain

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +24)

At will—*gaseous form*

3/day—*chain lightning* (DC 22), *cloudkill* (DC 21), *cone
of cold* (DC 21), *dimension door*, *fire snake*^{APG} (DC 21),
greater dispel magic, *wall of fire*

1/day—*control water*, *control weather*, *greater shout*
(DC 24), *summon* (level 6, 1d3 aghasuras^{B3}, 40%)

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 16, **Con** 23, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 39

Feats Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Improved Critical
(punching dagger), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes,
Multiweapon Fighting, Nimble Moves, Power Attack,
Staggering Critical

Skills Escape Artist +9, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (local) +13,
Knowledge (planes) +13, Knowledge (religion) +22,
Perception +29, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +19, Use Magic
Device +27; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Escape Artist, +4 Perception

Languages Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell)

Organization solitary

Treasure standard (4 +1 *punching daggers*, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Destructive Blades (Su) A hishandura's melee attacks ignore

hardness of less than 20 and damage reduction, except for damage reduction bypassed by epic weapons and damage reduction without a type (such as DR 10/—). Whenever a hishandura makes a full attack against an object or a structure, its attacks deal double damage.

Punitive Penance (Su) When a hishandura rends a target, that creature must succeed at a DC 25 Will save or experience overwhelming grief for its past actions, as per *terrible remorse* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 243). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Repentant Rain (Su) Once per round after confirming a critical hit with a melee weapon, a hishandura can spray gore from the wound in a 30-foot cone originating from any square occupied by its target. Each non-asura in the area is blinded for 1d3 rounds unless it succeeds at a DC 26 Reflex save. A blinded creature can wipe the gore from its eyes as a standard action, removing the blindness; alternatively, another creature adjacent to a blinded creature can wipe away the gore as a standard action. Jumping into a body of water or being subject to an effect that creates a lot of water (such as *create water* or *hydraulic push*^{APG}) also removes the blindness. The save DC is Strength-based.

Scent of Carnage (Ex) A hishandura's sense of smell is especially sensitive to blood and fresh injuries. The asura gains blindsense with a range of 60 feet but can sense only corpses, badly wounded creatures (those with half their total hit points or fewer), those suffering from bleed damage, and those affected by the asura's repentant rain ability.

Smoke Sight (Ex) A hishandura can see through fire, fog, and smoke as if they were perfectly clear, ignoring the miss chance for these obstructions, up to its normal range of its vision.

Agēs ago, a short-sighted god sought to punish his flock for a perceived slight, infusing a champion with a fragment of his power and sending it to wreak havoc. The champion did as commanded, tearing apart the faithful and showering their city with blood. The deity heard the tearful cries of the mortals, pleading for mercy and insisting that any kindly god would never visit such hatred upon his people. The god felt an upwelling of shame for having engineered such violence, but rather than accept responsibility or undo the damage, the god appeared before the city and forsook the divine champion, insisting that it was a raving beast sent by some less caring patron than himself. Empowered by their lying god's words and magic, the people praised him, rallied, and killed the champion. From this act of betrayal—and the remains of the slaughtered champion—rose the first hishandura.

Hishanduras are 13 feet tall and weigh 1,800 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Hishanduras most often originate from petitioners and lesser asuras convinced that the gods never rewarded them for their loyal service. Channeling their frustration into violence, these wronged souls ascend through reincarnation to become hishanduras.

A hishandura's body hums with destructive passion. This reflection of the original hishandura's divine mandate drives these asuras to slaughter living creatures, destroy beautiful works, and listen for the piteous cries for mercy from the fearful and faithful alike. Hishanduras can see effortlessly through the smoke of burning buildings, locate the cowering weak and wounded, and extract hateful revelations from the bloody precipitation flung by their blades. They can bypass nearly any defense to inflict their malign punishments, effortlessly teleporting past guards and incorporating to slip through portcullises.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Of all asuras, hishanduras are among the most likely to lash out at strangers or purposefully prey on mortals. Despite this violence, they harbor a remarkable sympathy for divine avengers and scapegoats, considering every relationship between a mortal and the divine a tragedy waiting to happen.

A hishandura's camaraderie is especially strong with the divine engines of destruction known as behemoths (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 336). Behemoths and hishanduras rarely attack one another. Instead, hishanduras delight in finding signs of dormant behemoths, waking them, and reveling in the resulting destruction. The longer the beast has slumbered, the more suggestible it seems to be to the asuras' insistence that the behemoth has been forgotten or betrayed, as though being abandoned by the gods for so long makes the behemoths bitter.

Unlike other asuras, hishanduras rarely remain in the same place for long. They become restless when lingering in a site they have demolished or despoiled and are quick to move on and seek out a new target. This is only partially due to impatience, as hishanduras also dislike having to face holy champions seeking retaliation for their despoliation. It isn't the threat of defeat that irritates the hishanduras, but rather the possibility that some paladin might appear to vindicate her blind obedience to her god by killing the fiend.

Hishanduras distrust any beings placed above others, and distance themselves from asura ranas, whom they see as hypocrites. Hishanduras who honor asura ranas do so because they see truths in their violent teachings, not because they consider the ranas as lords to be slavishly obeyed. These hishanduras favor violent and vindictive patrons such as Chugarra, the Guru of Butchers; Chupurvagasti, Lady of Poison Mist; and Zurapadyn, the Beast Who Waits in Smoke.



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ASURA, JAPALISURA

This lithe, six-armed humanoid has tusks that curve from his chin and carries a pair of bows.

JAPALISURA

CR 12



XP 19,200

LE Medium outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *see invisibility*; Perception +25

Aura elusive (75 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 27, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+7 Dex, +10 natural)

hp 147 (14d10+70); regeneration 5 (good spells, good weapons)

Fort +9, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13; +2 vs. enchantment spells

DR 10/good; **Immune** curse effects, disease, poison;

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 23

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.

Melee mwk handaxe +16/+11/+6 (1d6+3/×3), mwk handaxe +16/+11 (1d6+1/×3)

Ranged +1 *composite shortbow* +22/+17/+12 (1d6+4/×3) or +1 *composite shortbows* +20/+20/+15/+15/+10 (1d6+4/×3)

Special Attacks dual bows

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

Constant—*see invisibility*

At will—*augury*, *flame arrow*

3/day—*arcane sight*, *divination*

1/day—*summon* (level 5, 1d3 *adhukait*^{B3} 50% or 1 *upasunda*^{B3} 30%), *true seeing*, *vision*

STATISTICS

Str 17, **Dex** 24, **Con** 21, **Int** 14, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 34

Feats Deadly Aim, Deflect Arrows^B, Improved Precise Shot, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Snatch Arrows^B, Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Acrobatics +24 (+28 when jumping), Bluff +20, Climb +21, Escape Artist +23, Knowledge (planes) +12, Perception +25, Profession (soothsayer) +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +9, Stealth +24; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Escape Artist, +4 Perception

Languages Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ hateful prophecy, infernal arrows, selective *nondetection*

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell)

Organization solitary, pair, or foreboding (3–5)

Treasure standard (2 +1 *composite shortbows* [+3 Str], 2 mwk handaxes, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dual Bows (Ex) A japalisura can simultaneously wield two bows of any type. When it makes a full attack with both bows, the penalties for fighting with two weapons apply

and can be offset with feats such as Two-Weapon Fighting. The japalisura can apply extra attacks from other sources, such as Manyshot or Rapid Shot, to only one of its bows per round. For the purpose of calculating the penalties for fighting with two weapons, a japalisura treats shortbows and composite shortbows as light weapons, and it treats other bows as one-handed weapons.

Hateful Prophecy (Sp) A japalisura can cast *augury* or *divination* for a willing creature, in which case the spell provides information that pertains to that creature's future rather than that of the asura. Upon completing the casting of the spell-like ability, the japalisura can attempt a Profession (soothsayer) check opposed by the creature's Sense Motive check. If successful, the japalisura twists the prophecy in such a way to convey impending violence or betrayal, subjecting the creature to the effects of *vengeful outrage* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Magic* 246) with an indicated enemy of the asura's choice. The creature can resist the *vengeful outrage* effect with a successful DC 20 Will saving throw. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Infernal Arrows (Su) As a swift action, a japalisura with at least one free hand can create 10 mundane arrows. It can have no more than 20 such arrows in existence at a time, and its arrows are always destroyed when fired, whether they hit their target or not.

Selective Nondetection (Su) A japalisura automatically succeeds at caster level checks to bypass its elusive aura.

Thinking her divine realm so glorious that all must envy it, a goddess once sought a powerful oracle to identify her enemies. The oracle told her that she had no reason to fear invaders, for her death and ruin would come from the covetous barbs of enemies within. Distressed, the goddess returned to her palace, scoured her halls for any such traitors, and at last came upon her three demigod children practicing archery. Certain that her children would one day slay her, she tore them to pieces and cast their bodies and bows far from her realm. The first japalisura formed from these eviscerated remains.

A japalisura is 7 feet tall and weighs 150 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Despite having a single mind to control many limbs, japalisuras are exceptionally dexterous and capable of performing numerous tasks simultaneously. They easily operate two bows at once, smoothly alternating between reloading and firing. Japalisuras never want for ammunition, plucking arrows from the air as if drawing them from some invisible quiver. It's unclear from where exactly these arrows originate, although every japalisura's ammunition shares the same fletching and design. One theory is that these asuras are drawing replicas of the arrows carried by the slain demigods, though effects that

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inhibit summoning don't impede their ability to draw forth these arrows in any way.

Japalisuras have a knack for extracting embarrassing truths from the universe, hatefully manipulating their prophecies as though they were independent or even in defiance of conventional soothsaying. Where magic fails, they are adept at reading humanoid emotions, making up attractive lies and pandering to biases to confirm their clients' worst fears and prejudices.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Like most asuras, japalisuras favor temples and churches as their lairs. The more a location is associated with prophecy, the better. As a result, japalisuras often settle in and around druids' groves, oracular caves, cyclops lairs, and the like, especially if those locations continue to attract the occasional pilgrim seeking answers. This makes abandoned sacred sites of Magdh, Pharama, and Sivanah especially attractive. Japalisuras take a special delight in identifying perilous romantic relationships, posing as servants of Naderi and stealthily presenting at least one of the lovers with predictions of future difficulties to encourage self-destructive behavior.

Japalisuras know that their fearsome miens tend to distress visitors, yet the asuras lack any supernatural means of disguising themselves. Instead, many japalisuras favor hiding out of sight and dealing with visitors from behind screens or within darkened alcoves. In these circumstances, the asura rarely emerges unless doing so would convince a reticent visitor to cooperate or if necessary to destroy someone who poses a threat to the asura's ongoing operations. Rarely, a japalisura operates openly, relying on either its reputation or its monstrous allure to attract disciples. Such is the case for Holkomion of Iblydos, who claims to have rediscovered the sacred art of myth-speaking. At least one warrior claims to have attained mythic power as a result of Holkomion's guidance, yet most find that the japalisura's prophecies in fact direct petitioners to assassinate hero-gods.

More often, a japalisura maintains a small cult to communicate its oracular guidance. A japalisura accepts only the most devout followers into such coteries. With such humanoid puppets, the asura

can dispense divinations telepathically without having to show itself. These cults take myriad forms but typically operate outside of large population centers to avoid too much scrutiny. The japalisura Zalmiac poses as the Varisian harrower Madame Vhelanosz, virtually never leaving the wagon from which she interprets her cards. Her pernicious prophecies have incited scores of murders—especially against Desnans and Pharamins, whom she goads into killing each other—and her loyal cohort of ex-Sczarni assistants ensure nobody asks too many of the wrong questions.



BASAVAN

An unkempt mass of hair covers this towering giant. Its humanlike face bears a peaceful yet stern countenance.

BASAVAN

CR 15



XP 51,200

NG Huge monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., harmony with the land; Perception +27

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 12, flat-footed 26 (+4 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 230 (20d10+120)

Fort +14, **Ref** +16, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities rock catching; **Resist** cold 20, fire 20

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee quarterstaff +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d6+10) or 2 slams +25 (2d6+7)

Ranged rock +23 (2d6+7)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rock throwing (120 ft.)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +23)

At will—*mending*

3/day—*forest's sense*^{uw} (DC 17), *make whole*, *soothing mud*^{uw}, *stone shape*, *stoneskin*

1/day—*commune with nature*, *transmute rock to mud*, *tree stride*

STATISTICS

Str 25, **Dex** 18, **Con** 22, **Int** 16, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +29 (+31 bull rush); **CMD** 43 (45 vs. bull rush)

Feats Acrobatic Steps, Awesome Blow, Bristling Bull Rush^{uw}, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Iron Will, Nimble Moves, Power Attack

Skills Climb +20, Craft (any one) +16, Handle Animal +23, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (nature) +26, Perception +27, Stealth +9, Survival +27, Swim +20

Languages Common, Giant, Sylvan, Terran

SQ wilderness walker

ECOLOGY

Environment temperate forests or mountains

Organization solitary, pair, or family (3–5 plus 1d3 mastodons or rocs)

Treasure standard (quarterstaff, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Harmony with the Land (Su) A basavan is at peace in its natural habitat, and the terrain reveals its secrets to the basavan. A basavan in forest terrain gains the greensight universal monster rule (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 295) with a range of 60 feet. When in hill or mountain terrain, the basavan gains tremorsense with a range of 60 feet.

Wilderness Walker (Su) A basavan instinctively knows the easiest and fastest way through any wilderness, and always treats trackless terrain as though it were a trail or road, and any terrain with a road or trail as though it were a highway (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 172). In addition, Knowledge (nature) is a class skill for basavans.

Covered in shaggy hair that envelops the entirety of their immense bodies other than their faces, basavans resemble exceptionally hirsute giants. Wise and peaceful stewards of the wilderness, basavans protect the plants and animals that share their homes in wooded mountains across Golarion. Basavans are likely to let unwitting trespassers off with a warning, but against predators and poachers they deal powerful blows with staves and stones, using their innate connection to the land to locate and trap their foes.

Basavans are 24 feet tall and weigh 17,000 pounds.

ECOLOGY

Basavans are reclusive creatures who spend their whole lives in isolated mountain valleys or ranging through hillside forests. The few aware of the existence of basavans—normally druids and other wilderness protectors—know them to be staunch defenders of the wilderness, yet none agree on where and when basavans originated. The basavans themselves claim to be as old as the forests but not quite as old as the mountains, but they deliver this information with a merry twinkle in their eyes. Basavans bear children only rarely, and in such seclusion that young basavans are virtually never seen by anyone other than their parents until they mature and join them in protecting their lands. Young basavans, born entirely hairless and with skin that resembles thick bark, appear very different from their parents. They grow their hair quickly as they age, but shed all of it twice in their youth. A basavan's hair is usually dark brown, but might be black, tawny, or even deep auburn. Basavans consider their hair useful for warmth and in their daily work, such as to make crude twine or as nesting material for animals, but they rarely take care of it and therefore have a shaggy, wild appearance.

A basavan designates a wide strip of primeval forest or mountains as its personal protected domain; often, this area is dozens or hundreds of square miles in size. A basavan usually keeps intruders out of its lands personally, although a few that share a border with hermits, trappers, or shepherds teach these hardy folk how to identify and repel intruders as well. Basavans tend to injured plants and animals in their personal domains, creating a lush bounty and safe haven for animals.

Basavans are herbivores, and most subsist on only a small meal every few days. Despite their limited diet,

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basavans are incredibly massive, with powerful muscles and robust constitutions. They are remarkably athletic, able to scale cliffs and swim across rough rivers with ease. Basavans bring a focused efficiency to even the most physically demanding labor, but they take care to avoid disturbing vegetation or upsetting wildlife even when traveling quickly across their terrain.

Basavans are skilled smiths, and most devote their lives to a single type of craft, such as working with iron, stone, or wood. Although they generally don't maintain lairs, as they prefer to sleep in the wild, they often hollow out caves to use as a forges or workshops, expanding their caves as they age. Basavans use the simple tools they create in their stewardship of the land or as gifts to nearby peaceful communities.

These hardy creatures age very slowly and generally live to be 600 or 700 years old. Elderly basavans become true masters of the crafts they pursue.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

Although basavans are reclusive, a rare few of these hairy giants venture out into communities near their protected lands. Such basavans sometimes consider nearby shepherds, farmers, or settlers to be under their protection, and they might help rebuild a home destroyed by a flood or round up livestock lost in a storm. Although basavans almost never hunt or kill animals, they don't mind when humanoids under their protection do. They enjoy imparting ancient secrets of farming or animal husbandry to such neighbors, encouraging a deeper respect for the local environment. These communities might engineer a system to summon their guardian basavan in the event of a raid, natural disaster, or other serious need; such warning systems often consist of bells, whistles, or bright flags. A basavan withholds its protection and training from those who demonstrate a wanton disregard for the land, such as by being reckless with fire or butchering animals for sport. These actions provoke the normally peaceful creatures into a rage, causing them to exile or even kill the offenders.

Basavans rarely gather in large groups, and some might go their entire lives without seeing more than a handful of others of their kind. When they do gather in small groups, such as families, basavans work together in an eerie unison that hints at some deep mutual communion. In these groups, males defer to females for protection, as the females tend to be larger and stronger,

but in other matters the basavans tend to defer to the oldest among them.

Because of the old lore basavans keep, many sages, druids, and explorers seek them out in order to gain their knowledge. Visitors must be prepared with a deep well of patience and work for days or weeks to prove they have at least rudimentary skill in woodcraft or caring for animals. During this time, even if the basavan doesn't show itself to the visitor, it is watchful for any slip that might reveal anything other than benevolent intentions toward the natural world. Once a visitor proves herself, however, the basavan is a gracious host and eager to share its guidance. Some basavans display a sly wit in these conversations, making lighthearted jokes at their visitors' expense.



BOLLA

This immense serpent is covered in dull red fur; the four vestigial legs sprouting from its sides don't quite touch the ground.

BOLLA

CR 14



XP 38,400

NE Huge magical beast

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +29

DEFENSE

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d10+108)

Fort +17, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, **DR** 10/magic;

Resist acid 20, electricity 20

Weaknesses blindness vulnerability

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., burrow 30 ft.

Melee bite +24 (4d8+8 plus grab and lethargy curse), tail slap +19 (2d6+4)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks darting strike, lethargy curse, swallow whole (4d8+12 bludgeoning and lethargy curse, AC 19, 20 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +22)

1/day—*call lightning storm* (DC 19), *horrid wilting* (DC 22)

STATISTICS

Str 27, **Dex** 16, **Con** 22, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 41 (can't be tripped)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Following Step^{APG}, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Step Up, Step Up and Strike^{APG}, Vital Strike

Skills Perception +29, Stealth +16, Survival +22; **Racial**

Modifiers +4 Perception

Languages Abyssal, Thassilonian (can't speak)

ECOLOGY

Environment cold or temperate mountains

Organization solitary

Treasure standard

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blindness Vulnerability (Ex) A bolla takes a -4 penalty on saving throws against spells and effects that would blind it.

Darting Strike (Ex) When a bolla hits with an attack of opportunity, it can move up to 15 feet as an immediate action. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Lethargy Curse (Su) A creature bitten or swallowed by a bolla is affected by a curse of overwhelming lethargy.

Bolla Lethargy: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 23; *frequency* 1/round; *effect* 3d10 nonlethal damage and fatigued; *cure* 2 consecutive saves. A creature that falls unconscious while subject to this curse stops taking nonlethal damage, falls asleep, and cannot be woken until the curse is removed. The victim ages normally, but does not require any nourishment. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Resembling immense serpents or wingless dragons, bollas are remorseless gluttons that spend much of their time hibernating in remote mountain ranges. They have little concern for other creatures except as food, but particularly prize the taste of intelligent prey. Fortunately, the creatures are as lazy as they are hungry; despite their aggressive dispositions, they rarely rouse themselves from their mountain lairs to assail the smorgasbord of civilization.

Bollas have exceptionally keen vision, thanks to their silvery compound eyes. When disturbed, they often feign sleep or sluggishness to lure intruders close before lashing out with surprising speed. Their bite inflicts a magical lethargy on foes, making targets easy meals for the gluttonous beasts.

A typical bolla is 30 feet long and weighs 2 tons.

ECOLOGY

Born of foul experiments performed by the runelords of Haruka at the height of the Thassilonian empire, bollas are creatures of gluttony and sloth conceived as living weapons to further the machinations of their magical masters. Designed by Runelord Ivarinna and developed by her successor, Krune, the runelords' goal was to create a voracious war machine that could be easily returned to a torpor when not in active use. Bollas were bred from monstrous serpents native to the mountains of Haruka and infused with the essences of fiends, linnorms, and even stranger creatures of storm and sky. Due in part to Krune's preference for conjuring beasts when needed rather than engaging in the laborious process of breeding creatures over time, and in part to general indolence, bollas were never perfected and were deployed only sporadically.

Bollas can remain in hibernation for many years. When not hibernating, they are driven by their ravenous urges and eagerly attack any creatures unlucky enough to cross its path. When given the opportunity, bollas prefer to attack intelligent creatures first, plucking knights from horseback or slithering around hunting animals to get at their humanoid handlers.

Despite their vicious temperaments, bollas are intelligent, sometimes stalking foes for hours to analyze the foes' strengths and weaknesses before striking. When faced with multiple foes, bollas slither through the battlefield, cursing or swallowing weaker enemies to buy time to concentrate on tougher targets. On rare occasions, a bolla might strike a deal with creatures it finds too powerful to defeat, but these negotiations are always aimed at feeding its endless hunger.

An adverse side effect of bollas' experimental origin is their keen but delicate compound eyes. While the mirror sheen of a bolla's eyes makes it impossible to determine exactly where the creature is looking—and even conceals whether it is currently asleep or awake—its

eyes are particularly fragile. A bolla that has been robbed of its sight is both pitiful and desperate, lashing out haphazardly in a roaring frenzy.

Bollas dislike others of their kind and usually attack them on sight. When the creatures occasionally come together to mate, they produce a small clutch of eggs and leave it in an isolated cave or canyon. The first bolla to hatch eats its siblings before taking a long rest, and thus begins its life alternating between gluttony and torpor. Unless killed by accident or violence, bollas can survive for millennia.

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

During the time of Thassilon, Runelord Krune's agents deployed bollas as tools of extermination, loosing them into enemy camps to devour the inhabitants in a gluttonous frenzy. Once no more victims remained in a camp, the bollas would rest and their handlers would retrieve them. These handlers relied on powerful magic items to pacify bollas, as the beasts were always irascible, no matter how sated, and never truly loyal.

In the aftermath of Earthfall, the surviving bollas retreated to the far corners of Golarion to wait out the darkness. A bolla that has been hibernating for a year might consume only a single person and then resume its slumber, while one in hibernation since Earthfall could embark on a nation-devouring rampage once it finally awakens.

Unlike most creatures that hibernate for extended periods of time, bollas get stronger, rather than weaker, the longer they rest. Over years or decades, their bodies draw upon the fiendish essences instilled in their nature, growing more powerful and vicious. The outward manifestations of this metamorphosis are twofold. First, a hibernating bolla slowly sheds and replaces its furry skin, recovering from any injuries and regenerating any missing appendages. Second, its tongue grows and splits. While younger bollas have the familiar forked tongue of a snake, older bollas exhibit multiple tongue splits—their maws are filled with tangled masses of red, fleshy ribbons. Older bollas sometimes develop into kulshedras (see below). A bolla's growth is slowed when it regularly consumes intelligent creatures, as the bolla feeds on the ephemeral spiritual residue of its victims rather than its own inner fiendish essence. Rumors tell

of isolated settlements that make offerings of criminals or unlucky travelers to appease a bolla, hoping to keep its growth in check with these sacrifices.

KULSHEDRAS

When a bolla has gone without eating an intelligent victim long enough for its tongue to split into nine forks, it undergoes a final, sinister metamorphosis. The bolla sheds its skin one last time and emerges as a kulshedra. Kulshedras are just as voracious as their lesser bolla kin, but they are more crafty and wicked. Kulshedras seek to cause strife on as wide a scale as possible, favoring indirect means such as conjuring storms and causing droughts. They enjoy watching desperate communities tear themselves apart. Unlike bollas, kulshedras do not hibernate, and they instead spend their time plotting the destruction of nearby communities. Kulshedras are bollas with the giant and fiendish simple templates. They gain an additional +4 bonus on combat maneuver checks to grapple foes due to their many tongues and gain *control weather* as a spell-like ability usable once per day.



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TIME DIMENSIONAL

This lanky humanoid is formed from myriad crystal facets, each displaying an image of the past, the present, or a possible future.

TIME DIMENSIONAL CR 14 

XP 38,400

N Large outsider (extraplanar)

Init +9; **omniobservant**; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +26

Aura temporal dilation (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 30, touch 20, flat-footed 24 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 insight, +10 natural, -1 size)

hp 199 (19d10+95)

Fort +13, **Ref** +18, **Will** +17

Defensive Abilities all-around vision, time mastery, timestream knowledge; **DR** 10/—; **Immune** aging, bleed, critical hits, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 25

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 slams +24 (6d6+6 plus dilating strike)

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

Special Attacks dilating strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +22)

At will—*dimension door*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *haste*, *memory lapse*^{APG} (DC 14), *modify memory* (DC 17), *plane shift* (self only)
3/day—*disintegrate* (DC 19), *sands of time*^{UM} (DC 16)
1/day—*temporal stasis* (DC 21), *time stop*

STATISTICS

Str 23, **Dex** 21, **Con** 20, **Int** 16, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +19; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 47

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility

Skills Acrobatics +27, Diplomacy +25, Fly +33, Knowledge (history) +35, Knowledge (all other) +13, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Spellcraft +25, Stealth +23, Use Magic Device +25; **Racial Modifiers** +10 Knowledge

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common; telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Dimension of Time)

Organization solitary, pair, or chronology (3–12)

Treasure none

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dilating Strike (Ex) A time dimensional's attacks slow the flow of local time around its target. A creature hit by a time dimensional's slam attack must succeed at a DC 22 Will save or be affected by *slow* for 1d4 rounds. Whether or not it succeeds at the saving throw, a creature cannot be affected again by this ability for 1 minute. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Omniobservant (Ex) A time dimensional has nearly perfect information about the passage of time in its vicinity. It always acts in the surprise round and its initiative roll is automatically a natural 20.

Temporal Dilation (Ex) The area around a time dimensional slows the temporal passage of projectiles and spells. Creatures in this aura have concealment against ranged attacks. A time dimensional can dismiss or resume this aura as a free action.

Time Mastery (Ex) As a living embodiment of time, a time dimensional is free from the typical constraints of time's flow. It is immune to *haste*, *slow*, and *temporal stasis* and can use any actions remaining on its turn after using *dimension door*. Whenever a creature within 60 feet of a time dimensional casts *time stop*, the time dimensional can act normally as if it had cast *time stop* itself for the same effective duration. As neither the time dimensional nor the caster is frozen in time with respect to the other, each can target and affect the other with attacks, spells, or other effects they create, though neither can affect frozen creatures for the duration of the *time stop*. This ability functions even if the time dimensional is flat-footed or unaware of its opponent.

Timestream Knowledge (Ex) A time dimensional shares its own knowledge from all points in its personal timeline. This knowledge grants it a +5 insight bonus to AC and all-around vision. It treats all skills as class skills, gains a +10 insight bonus on all Knowledge checks, and can attempt any Knowledge check untrained.

When an event or individual threatens the nature of causality or the flow of time, a portion of the Dimension of Time breaks away from the dimension's substance to act as a correcting agent. These beings do not name themselves, but they are called time dimensionals by extraplanar scholars. Time dimensionals travel across the Great Beyond to confront and neutralize threats to the timestream. In some cases, this involves the removal of a disruptive individual or item, while in other cases it simply means delaying events long enough for the flow of time to correct itself. In the event of egregious disruptions, several time dimensionals may work together in perfect synchronicity to preserve the timestream.

The very existence of time dimensionals can disrupt the flow of normal time, so the Dimension of Time dispatches a time dimensional for only the exact duration required; furthermore, a time dimensional uses only the minimum amount of force necessary to fulfill its duties. As the exact nature of time is fickle and never completely known, those who devote their lives to the study of time are unsure as to which events trigger a time dimensional's appearance and which do not. Time dimensionals have appeared during seemingly mundane events, such as the

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Pride's Heart

NPC
Gallery

Ecology of the
Asura

Rituals of the
Runelords

Bestiary

report of a dozen time dimensionals appearing to a group of miners in Brevo in the summer of 4284 AR. More confounding are events that appear to be an obvious call to time dimensionals, such as the appearance of the legendary *Scepter of Ages*, but that the dimensionals seem to ignore.

A time dimensional can manipulate the flow of time as it affects nearby matter, with effects such as locking other creatures out of time's progression or aging an item so quickly it is effectively disintegrated. It has even greater control over its own temporal positioning, allowing it to move quickly around a battlefield and obtain comprehensive knowledge of where its enemies will strike. There are reports of exceptionally rare time dimensionals with greater abilities—such as the ability to erase a creature from time entirely—though the Dimension of Time dispatches such dimensionals only to deal with the most calamitous of situations.

A time dimensional typically stands at 12 feet tall and weighs about 300 pounds.

ECOLOGY

As time dimensionals are incredibly rare creatures, much of the information about them is no more than speculation. Many conflate time dimensionals with elementals, but the nature of a time dimensional is very different. Elementals are formed from the raw matter serving as the principal building blocks of the Elemental Planes (although this matter exists throughout the Material Plane and, indeed, across the Great Beyond). A time dimensional, however, is a living portion of the Dimension of Time itself, which implies a measure of inherent sapience in that plane that the Elemental Planes lack.

A time dimensional has a nearly perfect knowledge of its own past and future, obtained by its constant connection to the Dimension of Time. Whether this connection means that a time dimensional is an extension of that demiplane, like the arm of a creature, or merely in constant mental communion with it, as if part of a hive mind, remains a subject of conjecture.

Time dimensionals are too powerful for most mortal magic to conjure, and their true names were erased from mortal knowledge in some impossibly ancient time. A *gate* spell could, in theory, beckon one of these creatures to serve, but even then the act of drawing a time dimensional out of the demiplane of Time might be enough to pull more of their kind to investigate—and likely punish—the conjurer. Those who persist in attempting to summon or bind time dimensionals often earn their ire, or else draw the attention of dangerous creatures such as hounds of Tindalos (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 158).

HABITAT AND SOCIETY

As time dimensionals exist only at the will of the Dimension of Time, they have no definite society and do not congregate in groups outside of the Dimension of Time unless dispatched on a specific mission. Whether these creatures have formed a society of their own in the Dimension of Time is unknown, as that plane is nearly impossible to access or study.

Some speculate that there is, in fact, only a single time dimensional, and appearances of multiple ones arise from sightings of the same creature crossing and recrossing its own temporal path, meeting later or earlier incarnations of itself. In this theory, the Dimension of Time created the first and only time dimensional at the birth of time and dispatches the same one to deal with all temporal disruptions, and therefore rumors of time dimensionals with more powerful abilities are sightings of an older or advanced version of the same creature. Too much research into this model appears to be dangerous, however, as chronomancers and temporal scholars who investigate the most advanced time dimensionals often disappear entirely. The esoteric calculations these scholars leave behind hint that, after a certain point, the single time dimensional becomes so powerful that it breaks free of the Dimension of Time and pursues its own independent agenda, with indescribably catastrophic results for the multiverse.



NEXT MONTH

THE CITY OUTSIDE OF TIME

By Amanda Hamon Kunz

Runelord Alaznist has altered the past to gain power in the present, and only the ancient records held within the city of Xin-Edasseril can point the way to where and when she created these paradoxes. If the heroes hope to confront Alaznist and repair the damage she's done to the flow of time itself, they must brave a realm of ice and pain to forge a doorway into a city that has been trapped in time for thousands of years—a city that is still ruled by Belimarius, runelord of envy.

ARTIFACTS OF THASSILON

By Mikko Kallio

The runelords of ancient Thassilon crafted powerful magic items and artifacts. Although many of these items were lost during Earthfall, several have resurfaced and are presented here for use in your game. Raise the *Chalice of Lissala* to make your magic irresistible, harness the awesome might of the *Shield of Xin-Undoros*, ply the seas in the strange *Spherical Boat of Zutha*, and more!

KYTON DEMAGOGUES

By Gregory Hanigan

Peel back the veil on the leaders of the ominous kyttons, and learn how each has carved a bloody path to enlightenment. From their domains in the Shadow Plane, the kyton demagogues bring their unique visions of pain and mutilation to life. Learn of Inkariax, the White Death, whose realm of Frozen Tears showcases grotesque collections in perpetual ice; Morrobahn, the Parasite Seed, which perpetuates itself in prodigies and predators across worlds; and Fharaas, the Seer in Skin, who divines universal truths in riven flesh. These demagogues and more come to unholy light!

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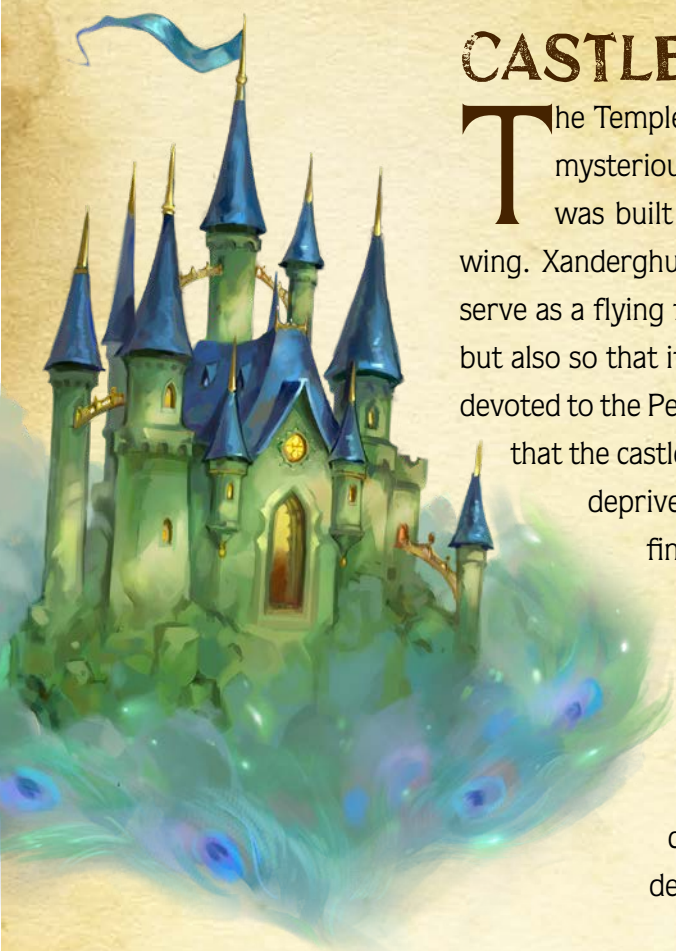
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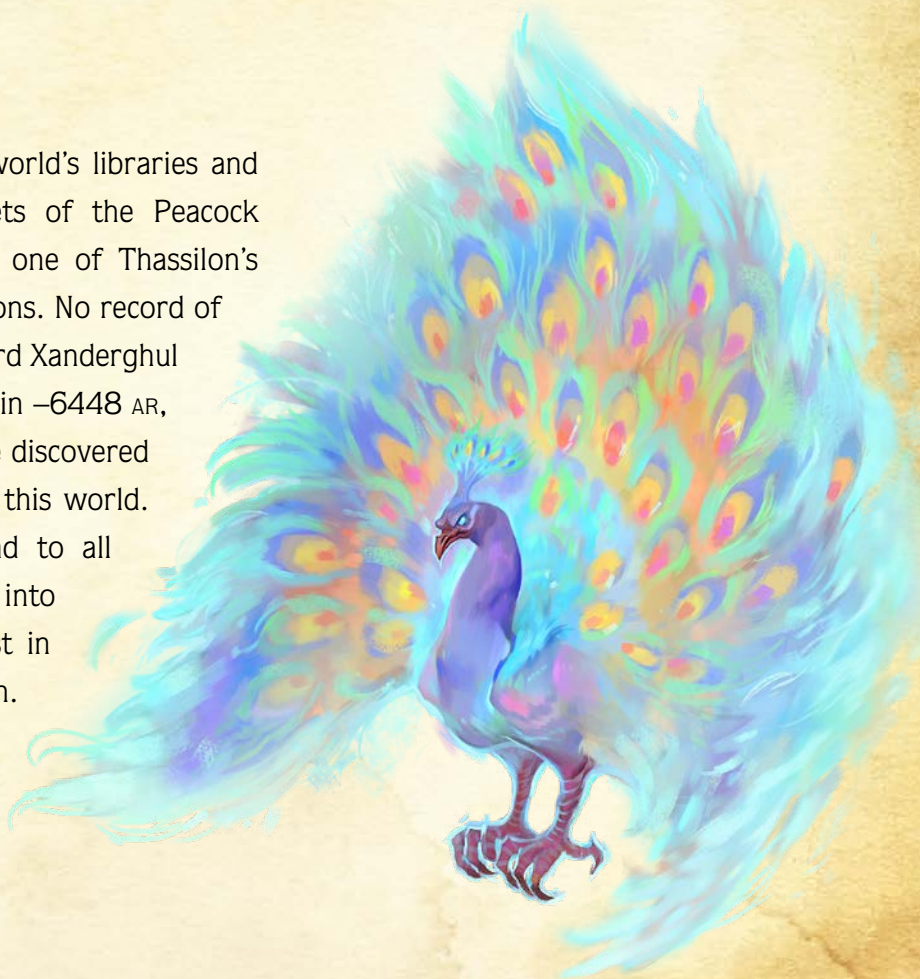


CASTLE OF THE GREEN FEATHER

The Temple of the Peacock Spirit was the first sacred site built to honor the mysterious divinity, but not the only one. The Castle of the Green Feather was built to house the knightly order that served as the cult's militaristic wing. Xanderghul ordered the castle's construction atop a cloud, so that it could serve as a flying fortress that could easily transport legions across great distances, but also so that its glorious presence would overwhelm almost every other temple devoted to the Peacock Spirit in any realm to which the castle traveled. Legends hold that the castle survived the devastation of Earthfall, but sometime thereafter—deprived of the wizards who kept it afloat—the castle expended the final stores of its arcane energy and crash-landed on a mountaintop somewhere northwest of the city of Xin-Cyrusian. Attempts to locate the castle's final resting place in the modern era have led to one failed expedition after the other, for even though the castle can no longer fly, its illusory wards and potent defenses work to keep it hidden from the world. It is believed that the champions who once trained within have long ago transcended death and became undead guardians.

PEACOCK SPIRIT

Little lore remains today in the world's libraries and historical archives of the secrets of the Peacock Spirit, the worship of which is one of Thassilon's most widespread but mysterious religions. No record of the Peacock Spirit exists before Runelord Xanderghul introduced its faith to his empire back in –6448 AR, supporting the runelord's claim that he discovered the god and brought its attentions to this world. Worship of the Peacock Spirit spread to all corners of Thassilon, particularly into Haruka, but it remained the strongest in Xanderghul's own nation of Cyrusian. The cult's greatest secret remained Xanderghul's alone—that no such divinity existed before his time, for he was in fact the Peacock Spirit!



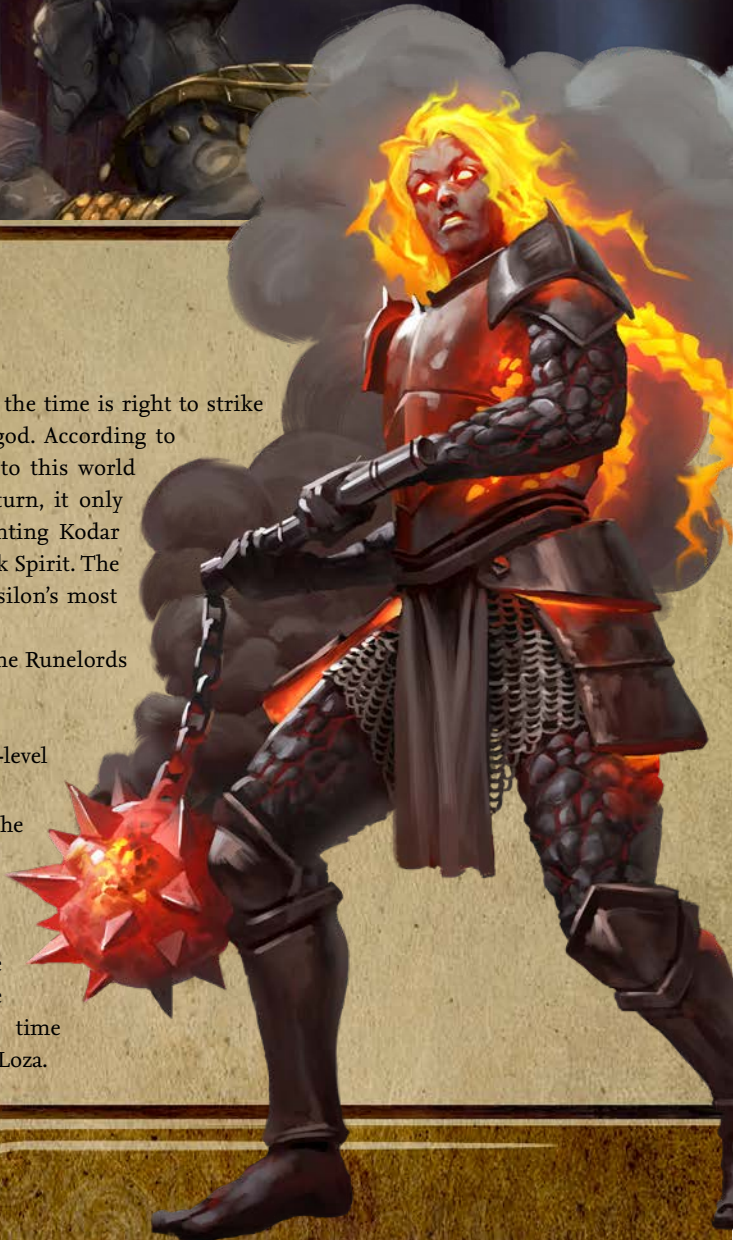


DEFY THE CULT!

The mysterious cult of the Peacock Spirit has risen in force, and the time is right to strike a decisive blow against the worshipers of this long-forgotten god. According to ancient texts, the cult of the Peacock Spirit was first brought to this world by none other than Runelord Xanderghul himself, and with his return, it only grows more dangerous. Nestled high in a remote valley in the daunting Kodar Mountains, the cult's stronghold is known as the Temple of the Peacock Spirit. The heroes must journey to this legendary site and confront one of Thassilon's most dangerous threats.

This volume of Pathfinder Adventure Path continues the Return of the Runelords Adventure Path and includes:

- "Temple of the Peacock Spirit," a Pathfinder adventure for 11th-level characters, by Jason Keeley.
- An examination of the asuras, a race of vengeful fiends born from the mistakes of the gods themselves, by John Compton.
- A presentation of several powerful occult rituals created by the runelords of Thassilon, by James Jacobs and Luis Loza.
- A bestiary of monsters, including two new and powerful asuras, the lumbering guardians of nature known as basavans, the serpentine monstrosities known as bollas, and the enigmatic and deadly time dimensional, by Dan Cascone, John Compton, Nathan King, and Luis Loza.



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