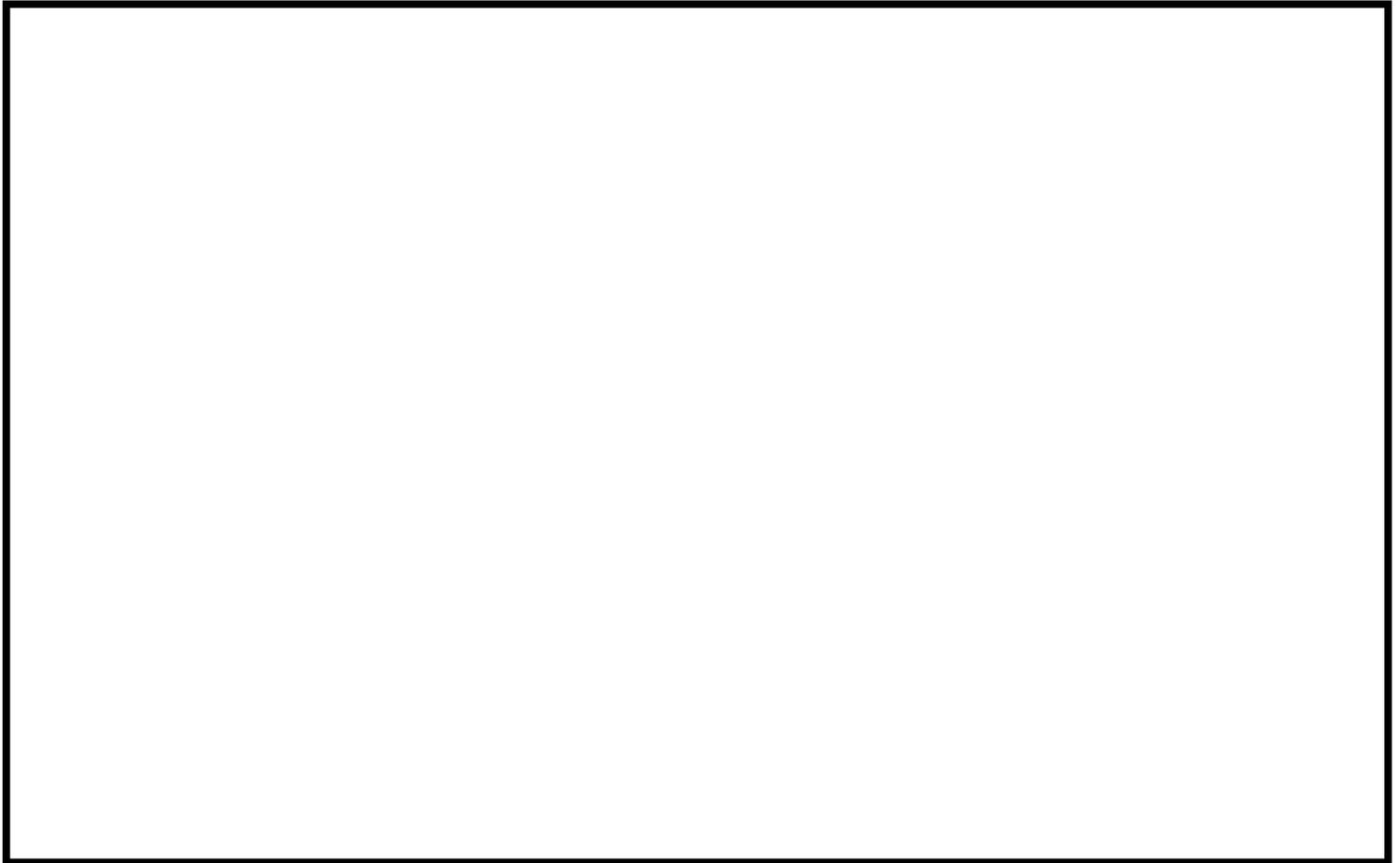




RISE OF THE RASMIRIN

John Steele



Book Six of the Lost Books Of Talislanta

Gamemaster's Introduction

Overview

The Rasmirin have stolen a powerful artifact, slaughtered many, and left a swath of devastation in their wake. Now they flee with their ill-gotten gains, and you are the only ones close enough to run these anarchists down. It will likely be very cold, as they are running towards the north, the Lost Sea, or maybe even Narandu. You will need supplies, but also to travel light. The Rasmirins are known to be ruthless mages of dangerous power, so take care that the hunter does not become the prey. They have a couple of days head start, but even Silvermanes tire.

At first it seems to be a simple chase, but as the pursuit continues, the web becomes more and more tangled. All is perhaps not what it seems, questions will churn in the suspicious mind, and they must be answered before this story comes to a close. The journey will take the pursuers into one of the most deadly environments Talislanta has to offer, tempt them to loose sight of their goal, and challenge their resolve with every step.

Player Characters of all levels are suggested for this module, with the understanding that the base PCs given in the *4th Edition Talislanta* core book will likely have a very difficult challenge ahead of them. More experienced PCs will have considerably less trouble at the beginning, but even they will be sorely tested by the end. The Non-Player Characters presented are already set up to participate in the adventure, though they are presented in very basic format for maximum flexibility. Gamemasters should read through each Chapter before running it, and work closely with players to introduce them into this module. Sections for the Gamemaster to read aloud are set apart in boxes.

Setting the Stage

The adventure begins with the PCs pursuing a group of raiders from the north after a brutal attack on a caravan. Here are some of the back-story bits of information to be used as starting information for each player or discovered during the adventure (I suggest the NPCs presented in the next section as the main source of information):

- A friend (and magical item merchant) of the PCs was killed in a raid on a caravan transporting a powerful summoning item from the Phaedran Tombs area to the Lyceum for study. The attack occurred as the caravan was crossing the border from Zandu into Aaman, just north of Zanth and Aamahd. Zandu could not send aid without angering Aaman, who is simply happy to see "such heretical items" gone anyway. There is the matter of the destruction and persons killed, which the Aamanians are "rather cross about," though perhaps it's possible their may be certain factions who could make use of such a powerful item.
- A great deal of property destruction occurred during the attack on the caravan, as if someone purposefully botched a very powerful Summoning. It is believed the Rasmirin attackers may have actually used the summoning item being transported by the caravan to help achieve this effect! Doubtless the raiders have even more evil things in mind if they are given the time to do them.
- The item being transported to the Lyceum is known as the Rod of Calling. Those with knowledge of Arcane Lore or History may know that the Rod is an Archaen device that greatly increases the power of Summoning magic.

- All of the perpetrators escaped in the mayhem. They headed along the road towards Akbar, astride Silvermanes. They completely eluded several Arimite patrols, and picked up some Greymanes just outside Akbar, having ridden their Silvermanes to death. They headed north, and even though the road to the Forbidden City is heavily patrolled, the thieves escaped. This last point is a rather sensitive subject with the Arimites for reasons they refuse to reveal, but Arim is among the nations offering a reward for apprehending the raiders. The raiders were later spotted crossing the Lost Sea, and heading into Narandu, hazardous territory indeed. Your mission is to pick up their trail, and hunt them down before they completely vanish into the frozen Northern Reaches.
- Long ago Rasmirin agents stole another powerful summoning item from Zandu. This object originated from Conjurer's Point next to Zantium Bay. This earlier item vanished into the north, and nothing more was ever heard about it. (The Mirin know nothing of this incident, but will note the increased Ice Giant attacks which began the very next year. This trend has dropped off over the last couple of years, giving the Mirin some small measure of hope, but this will only come to light if the PCs make contact with the Mirin. See Chapter 2.)
- The fleeing Rasmirins are worth their weight in gold as bounty in Zandu, Cymril, Arim, and Aaman (being paid in Aamanian coppers). Zandu wants them because of their possible involvement in the previous theft, Cymril wants them for the current theft, and Aaman wants retribution for its lost outpost. Naturally, such bounty would be halved if the stolen item was not recovered.
- Arim is a special case; it seems a certain important personage was kidnapped for purposes unknown by these Rasmirin raiders. Ansoa (see "Introducing the NPCs" below) has been given the mission of rescuing the person, and/or killing the kidnappers. The deeper truth is that the person in question is one of the few people in this world that Ansoa actually cares for, and so her mission has become a personal quest, and she will complete it in the ancient Arimite tradition of "the Vendetta." The personages angered by this whole affair are generally powerful and influential in their respective countries.
- Stogar (see "Introducing the NPCs" below) has some interest in Ansoa, but is loathe to show it. As a fellow Arimite (even if of mixed blood), he's the only one who has even remotely soothed her dour mood on occasion. He would like to get to know her better, but remains apprehensive about asking for help. He can sense her special urgency to catch up with the Rasmirins, but does not know why she is so driven to do so. Perhaps one of the PCs can help him "tame the wild beast?"

Introducing the NPCs

The Gamemaster may wish to introduce other NPCs who can accompany the PCs on their quest.

There are others with you, hunters seeking the hated thieves for different reasons, but not enough to truly make you feel safe in Narandu.

Presented below are three NPCs who generally know of each other (even though this is their first meeting), and all have a good reputation in Arim, Silvanus, and Zandu. Each possesses general knowledge of the layout of the Lost Sea, Yrmania, Arim, Zandu, Silvanus, the Seven Kingdoms, Narandu, the Werewood, and L'Haan.

Ansoa

Ansoa trudges ahead of you, the very curvy and equally dangerous lady Arimite Mercenary. Her presence would normally warm the soul of any man with a pulse, but her exceedingly grim nature leaves everyone around her in the cold. Her steady gaze and enrapturing face have almost certainly been the doom of many. Even under the Erd furred all-weather garments; she still manages to garner continuous glances, however futile they may be. Another gust of bone-chilling wind blasts by to cool your thoughts.

Servalan

High above Servalan glides on her magic boots, seemingly in a dream-like state, but you know better by now. Her keen senses seem to perceive all, noting details others easily miss. Servalan's pale skin and large eyes seem to lend her an unearthly visage, and her short-cropped obsidian-black hair marks her apart from other Cymrilians. While outwardly friendly, something about her seems chilly, as though she were calmly observing the inner workings of some insect in the middle of study. Impeccably dressed, her white robes seem to keep her comfortable, yet the unpleasant aura hangs about her.

Strogar

All is not lost though, the jolly Strogar strides along as though he were off to a Fire Ale drinking contest, a favorite past time of his. He is tall and broad for an Arimite, with a sun drenched bronze hue to his skin. His mood weathers the terrible cold easily, and gives strength to your own legs. Strogar's equally broad and ready smile is as disarming as his seemingly gentle nature, even with the roguish eye patch. It's his fists which you think even the Ice Giants may learn some respect for though, surely an odd choice of weapons for an Arimite, even of mixed blood.

Conversations between PCs and NPCs are encouraged as the NPCs become more comfortable with the PCs as comrades.

Ansoa

A young lady with more machismo than most of her male counterparts, this born one woman killing machine is rumored to be a member of the Revenants, but has killed anyone who suggest such a thing in her presence! Her seductive appearance is a most potent weapon against those who think of giving Ansoa any trouble. Her unspoken mission is to rescue the kidnapped sacrificial victim, and kill the kidnapers. Her smooth voice contrasts her "sailor's mouth" when she chooses to speak, that is. Usually, it's her blades that do the talking, and she most often has the last word in such "conversations."

Race: Arimite

Profession: Mercenary

Age: ~27

Home: Arim

Skills of note: Stealth +10, all other archetype skills at double base rate (2nd Weapon choice is Blade Bracer +4, Common Skills are Fashion +6 and Swim +6, Ride (Equus)+6),

Items of Note: Giant Blue Iron Blade Bracer (right), Blue Iron Short Sword "Razor," Gauntlets of the Warrior's Way (+3 CR), Erd Fur Cloak/Vest/Boots, Greymane, as well as the usual archetype kit.

Servalan

A young lady with more magic and skill at her fingertips than many, this skilled Warder plies her craft protecting travelers who brave the wilds. She is an adept mage in a number of fields, but rather frail for this type of activity. Even so, she exudes a sense of cool confidence, especially while casting spells in front of on-lookers. She is easily spotted in a crowd of her countrymen by her short jet-black hair, pale skin, and signature white attire.

Servalan knows there is a Cymrilian among the raiders, and will seek to challenge this traitor in single combat if at all possible. Otherwise she will keep this information to herself, as she would like to collect the bounty for herself. Of course, she will pretend (badly) this is a surprise to her, and will demand the Cymrilian be left alone for her to deal with.

Race: Cymrilian

Profession: Magician

Age: ~31

Home: Cymril

Skills of note: Wizardry [Ward +10, Reveal +6, Enchant +6, Defend +6, Alter +6, Conjure +6, Move +6], Dagger +1, and all other archetype skills at double base rate (Common Skills are Fashion +6 and Etiquette +6), Ride (Equus)+6.

Items of Note: Circlet of Awareness (Alter, PER+4), Ward Ring (vs. Cold), Flying Boots (Move, 150 pound capacity, SPD-3), Cloak of Shielding (Defend, triggered 24 point Aura, 15 rounds duration, 3x/day), as well as the usual archetype kit.

Strogar

Large even as a youth, Strogar learned that a friendly brawl without knives often saved lives (STR+2, DEX+1, CHA=0). To this end, he concentrated on unarmed combat as much as possible. Strogar's reputation for mercy only grew as a young warrior and bodyguard, and now he's somewhat embarrassed by it as he thinks of himself as "rather tough." He is on this mission as much to protect Ansoa as collect the huge bounty on the thieves. His jovial nature can be a tad rough and crude at times, but overall he means well, and talks even more.

Race: Gao/Arimate

Profession: Warrior

Age: ~32

Home: Wandering

Skills of note: Brawling +12, all other archetype skills at double base rating (2nd Weapon choice is Staff +4, Ride (Equus)+6, Common Skills are Etiquette +6 and Cook +6).

Items of Note: Red Iron Bracers of Brawling (Brawling +5), Red Leather Gauntlets of Great Strength (STR+3), and White Left Eye Patch of Vision (Reveal, +5 on vision checks), Ring (Continuous Ward vs. Cold, 5ft radius), Greymane, as well as the usual archetype kit.

Gamemaster's Map

For the benefit of the Gamemaster, a map showing the expected route of the players across Narandu during this adventure is provided on the next page. Make sure the players understand that this will likely be a *long* trek, as the quarry has several days head start, and is unlikely to stop for a long time. The specific amount of time is left up to the GM, but a period between three and seven days is strongly suggested in order to "keep the trail fresh."

Each leg of the chase (from the Lost Sea to the Plain of Blue Frost, from the Plain of Blue Frost to the Ruins of Farnir, and from Farnir to the Far Reaches) should take at least a week in good weather. The blizzards, ice storms, and possible aberrant weather of Talislanta could easily push each leg out to three weeks or so (depending on how the PCs are making progress). Specific dates have been left out so that GMs can use this module at any time of the Talislantan year.

Suggestions

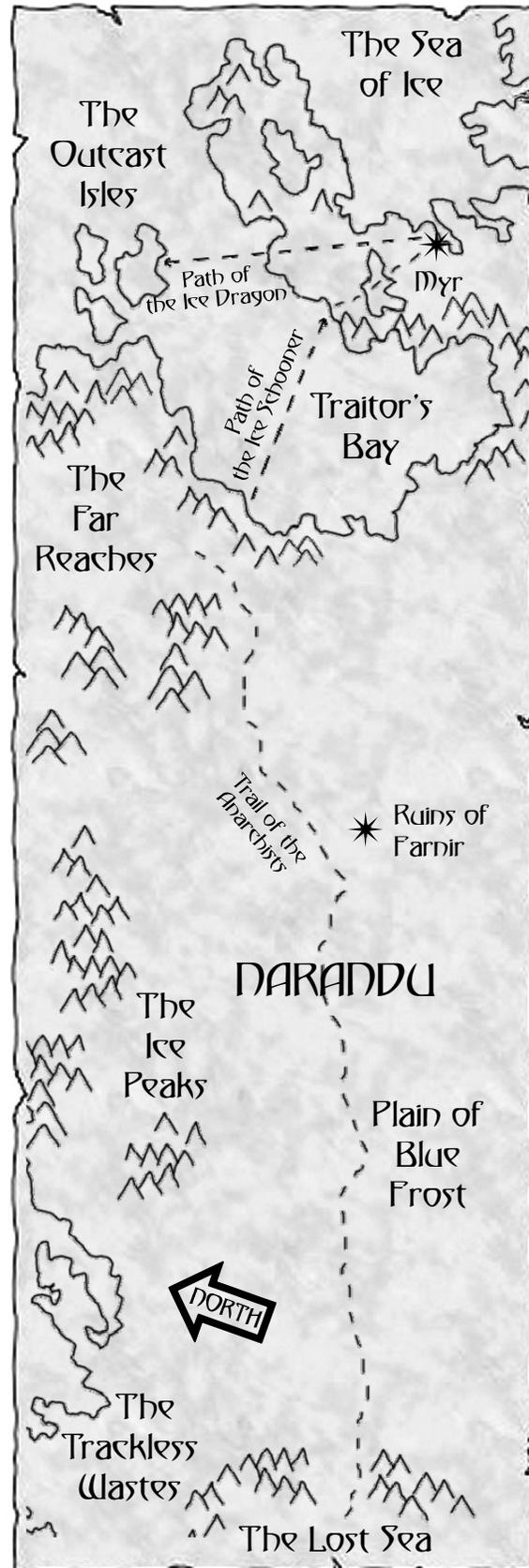
GMs are encouraged to find some suitably windy/blizzard-like background ambiance to play during the game, and/or adjust the temperature in the room way down.

Strongly suggest someone with tracking skills be a member of the PCs, as magic is too fleeting an answer to be reliable for this long. Bounty hunters and Scouts of all kinds are good choices, as are those races with appropriate special abilities.

Be sure to make cold weather clothing and gear a viable possibility *before* the PCs cross over from the Lost Sea into Narandu. PCs can be encouraged to spend money on such trappings, or simply be given the appropriate items as the GM sees fit.

GMs should take time to familiarize themselves with any material they have on the Northern Reaches, including the entries present in the *4th Edition Talislanta* core book. Note that the module starts in a remote location, so some amount of background information on how the PCs got there is important.

Experience points should be awarded between each chapter of the module; this is a deadly setting, and characters that do not adapt will likely die before completing this module. Each chapter increases the challenges presented to the characters, and may require additional PCs/NPCs to complete.



CHAPTER ONE

Into Narandu

The raiders seem to be driven by some unseen force, as though they knew you were on their trail, and somehow fear your little group. They rode their stolen Silvermanes into their graves, and then procured some Greymanes for the rocky terrain through Arim and the mountains leading to the Lost Sea. Who knows how they intend to keep the Greymanes alive in the freezing wind of Narandu, where even Snowmanes are rare?

You must track them down, find them, and return what was stolen. There is no other option. The very idea of allowing worshippers of the demon god Aberon to use such a powerful magical artifact freely sends shivers down your spine. Even the small taste of what the Rasmirins did at the border between Aaman and Zandu haunts your nightmares, and probably will for a long time to come. Oh the horror of remembrances...

What follows is a description of the events leading up to the start of the adventure, presented in the form of a nightmare about the attack by Rasmirin raiders on a caravan.

The nightmare begins as the well-guarded caravan pauses at the border outpost, essentially a wooden stockade on the Aamanian side of the border. The green lands all around are serene, and peaceful. Avir sing, small creatures chatter, and only the creaking of wooden wheels breaks the murmur of talk among travelers. It's obvious the caravan is of mixed origin, with Thralls, Arimites, and

Zandir guards present. The heavy wagons attract much unwanted attention from the Aamanian border guards, though, as the "infidels" seek to pass through Aaman on their way to the Seven Kingdoms. Their treasures bound for the famed Lyceaum Arcanum were gained from the Phaedran Tombs along the Sascasm River.

Without warning, one of the wagons is nearly swallowed by the earth in a miniature earthquake! Equus scream as they are dragged into the hole while Pyro Demons explode from the nearby braziers. The defenders struggle to offer resistance, but they have been caught unaware, and the Pyro Demons make short work of them before turning on the outpost itself. The half-swallowed wagon is cracked open like some Avir's egg, as pale white-skinned figures fade into existence nearby.

As the Earth Demons finish crushing the last of the Equus, the figures draw closer to the carnage. One of them gestures, and a large chest emerges from the broken wreckage of the wagon. The chest lands roughly at the three figures' feet, as they proceed to assail the protective wards with a hail of elemental destruction. All the while, cries of the dying fill the air as the Pyro Demons turn the stockade into a giant funeral pyre for man and beast alike. The stench of burning flesh fills the air as black smoke rolls into the evening sky.

Soon the chest yields forth its treasure, a fabulous gleaming golden wand, etched with ancient Archaen runes of summoning! The three each take hold of the mighty artifact together, and as one cry out in a terrible voice as they stand over one of the fallen guards. The screaming soul of the guard is dragged into the lower end of the rod, vanishing forever.

As though the air above were rent asunder, a great hole creaks open, and the huge rushing of air is heard as the environment begins to be sucked into the yawning abyss! The three figures lurch away with unnatural speed, streaking away from the vortex of doom forming behind them. Everything within reach is soon inexorably drawn in, wagons, men, Equus, trees, earth, air, and even a large portion of the still-burning stockade! The last screams of the helpless are cut short as the jaws of the rift snap shut in a great clap of thunder.

You shake loose of the vision, hurled back into the present by sheer terror and cold sweat. Souls who will never reach their true destinations, lost to the Void of Oblivion for all eternity. Their terrified screams ring in your very heart, driving you on to stop these monsters that cast them into that endless, terrible darkness.

Encourage conversation here, filling in details of the vision as the players explore it, and share their thoughts with each other. Listen to their musings, as they will likely give you some additional ideas for use later.

THE LOST SEA

Once known as the Northern Sea, the Lost Sea is a flat expanse of wasteland ringed by the mountains of Narandu and Yrmania. The demise of the Northern Sea occurred sometime around the beginning of the Age of Confusion, the cause of this calamity remaining a source of heated debate among Talisnantan scholars. Arguments range from the "crack in the world

theory" (through which the waters of the sea seeped away) to the idea that advancing hordes of Ice Giants froze all the sea's northern tributaries, thus causing it to dry up. Whatever its origins, the Lost Sea is a strange region, littered with half-sunken ships and the bones of ancient sea dragons. Its former tributaries have also gone dry.

Cold dusty wind howls across your path, like some unearthly barrier between the Lost Sea and Narandu. The hasty camp has been broken, the ancient seabed dust shaken off to assail some other traveler. Ahead, the cold wind growls a challenge, daring you to press on into the frozen tundra beyond where untold legions of terrible Ice Giants are waiting. If they catch you, they'll freeze you solid, and then eat your remains. The frosted ground crunches beneath your feet, a sound you can only imagine you'll hear when the demonic Ice Giants feast upon your frozen carcass...

Encounter: Ravens

They have followed you for days across the Lost Sea, and stalked your sentries at the camp on the ancient shore. Now hunger supplants reason, and the Ravens try to stop their food from being lost in the icy wastes of Narandu. Ominously the half-words tumble from their jaws, urging you to not enter the icy domains of the Ice Giants, but instead to stay for dinner. Some swoop down from the rocks. Others scuttle or lope across the open ground. All have blood in their eyes!

Include one Ravenger per mount, beast of burden, NPC, and character in the party. Adjust ability level of Ravens, as the GM deems necessary. Statistics are provided at the end of the book. The Ravens will concentrate half their number on keeping the combatants busy, while the rest attempt to drag away some of the mounts and any beasts of burden loaded with food. Once the Ravens have lost half their number and/or hit points, they must pass a WIL check to continue the fight each round. Those who fail will steal some food, and seek easier prey elsewhere, away from Narandu.

Environmental Dangers

After the battle is won, the party can proceed into Narandu proper. Be sure to describe the changes in the environment as the PCs move across the border into Narandu, as this will help set the tone for the rest of this module. As this area will take several days to traverse, feel free to add in some random encounters of minor sorts to keep players on their toes. Hopefully about now, your ambiance will start to take effect...

While the endless snowfields and expansive sky hold their own primal beauty, it is small comfort when caves stuffed with the frozen bodies are found, or the huge furrows left by the roving Ice Giants mar the pristine snow. Tracking your prey is a nightmare in a land adrift in blowing snowfall. Your water freezes solid, along with rations, and extremities of all kinds. At night the distant howls and cries of the wild Tundra Lopers, Frostweres, and Tundra Beasts disturb your fitful sleep. It seems the wind never stops, and carves the most amazing ice sculptures you could never have imagined. This land is a dichotomy of beauty and savagery the likes of which you will not soon forget! The nights and days begin to blur, shrouded by the long blizzards that afflict your band.

For the Trackers, include an additional -5 or so penalty for their efforts as snowdrifts and wind begin to hamper tracking attempts. While the terrain slows the party, they are sure their prey is hampered just as much too.

Suggested environmental dangers

- 1) Everyone not protected by Wards and/or Immunities to Cold suffers a -1 on all actions. This covers the natural combination of the cold and dehydration effects upon foreigners. Warded, native, or Immune creatures suffer none of the cold related effects or benefits given here or below in #2, #3, and #4.
- 2) Each hour spent in the freezing cold of Narandu without the protections listed in #1 forces a CON Check every hour.

Failure imposes an additional -1 on all actions, and a Mishap imposes a -2. Critical Success “shakes off” a single -1 modifier. These modifiers are added each time the result of the CON check appears, so it is possible that a being will freeze completely at the point at which with all the modifiers plus the die roll can only result in a Mishap. Note that if the modifiers plus the roll can only result in a Failure, the being is effectively immobilized, and will require immediate assistance.

- 3) Wearing suitable clothing (like Tundra Beast, Erd, Frostweres, or Loper furs) grants +1 per item worn (pairs of gloves and boots count as one item). So a traveler in gloves, boots, pants, and overcoat gains +4 on the CON checks, while someone with only a furred pair of boots and cloak would only gain +2. Items enchanted for Warmth gain +1 per 3 levels of the Enchantment on the CON check. Use of heating procedures (fires, spells, etc.) push the normal CON checks out to once every eight hours.
- 4) Hazardous conditions impose additional CON checks as follows:
 - Blizzard: Once per 10 minutes.
 - Nighttime: Once per 30 minutes.
 - Contact with water (partial immersion): Once per minute.
 - Full immersion in water: At the end of every round (6 seconds).
- 5) Perception reduction in adverse weather:
 - Light rain or snow: -1 PER
 - Heavy rain, snow or sleet: -3 PER
 - Blizzard: -5 PER
 - Also refer to the GM screen in the *Talislanta Geographica* for visibility range reduction.

Note that most of these conditions can be avoided and or ignored as the GM sees fit, through they would fit in well with a grim fantasy setting.

PLAIN OF BLUE FROST

This vast expanse of frozen tundra derives its unique coloration from the pollen of snow lilies, which, carried upon the winds, settles across the terrain for hundreds of miles. Muskronts, Lopers, and other beasts come here to graze on the lilies, and to lap up the plants' nutritious blue pollen. This in turn draws various predatory species, including Frostweres and Tundra Beasts.

One day the fierce wind brings a strange blue powder to cover everything, the pollen of the Snow Lily. With this you know the Plain of Blue Frost is near, along with all the things that feed upon that wind borne seed. Like the others, you make ready your weapons, and check over your protections. While there will be Muskront game to refill your supplies care must be taken, as you are not the only predators about This is no place to be caught by surprise; from now on the chase takes on new dangers...

No more than a day into this area, move into the next encounter to keep the action fresh.

Encounter: Tundra Lopers

It seemed to be just another wonderful day in Narandu, until the Tundra Lopers came along. Everyone knew they would be trouble, and they were right. The big male spotted your little band, and a low growl sped his pack toward your companions. The ominous "shink-shink" of their long extra claws propelling them at speed towards their prey; whispers of their primal hunger, for you are food.

Include two Tundra Lopers for each PC in the party, and adjust ability level of Tundra Lopers as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

After this encounter, be sure to throw in several finds of Muskront bones and mostly-eaten corpses, along with sightings of Muskront herds who will try to stay clear of the party. Also, the tracking penalty goes up to -10 here, as the drifts of blue pollen make tracking extremely difficult to manage. It should take about a week or two to traverse this area, so on to the next encounter when ready:

Encounter: Tundra Beasts

There was only the low growl to warn you of the impending attack, and then the Tundra Beasts appeared as if they had sprung to life from the very snow. Twin sets of deadly jaws seeking food; powerful slashing claws rending their prey. They are fearsome predators indeed, now who is the hunter, and who is the prey?

Include one Tundra Beast per PC in the party, and adjust ability level of Tundra Beasts as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

After this, have a few more Muskront and sightings (both tracks and actual sightings), then include the following in the early morning or late evening:

Encounter: Frostwere

It was the pack animals that gave the first sign, lurching away from their handlers, seeking to flee. Then the terrible howl was heard, the Frostwere is near, and hungry. The animals begin to panic, but you can't tell which way the beast approaches from, and time is running out.

Include one Frostwere, and adjust ability level of the Frostwere as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

It will seek one kill, and then take it for food, leaving any wounded behind for later.

LAND OF THE ICE GIANTS

Now the party begins to enter the domains of the Ice Giants more fully, and the odds of misfortune grow, as the week or two it takes to pass through this area wears on...

After numerous close encounters with those denizens, those who survive find the tracks have grown fresher, as though the quarry has slowed for some unknown reason. In many places the signs of Ice Giant activity are grow more numerous by the day, and several of their patrols must be bypassed. You have certainly entered the domain of those terrible creatures, evidenced by the numerous trails and tracks. Here the snow thins, yielding instead to treacherous ice fields. While the sky is often clearer, the warmth of the two suns is drowning in the incredible pervasive cold.

Here it is suggested that a few additional considerations be given to the temperature. Liquids are freezing, food is likely frozen solid, and the wind is nearly constant. The penalty for tracking drops back to -5, giving the trackers a better time of it.

This area will take at least a week to cover, and that's under good weather conditions.

Encounter: Lone Ice Giant

Deep in the night, the slow crunching sound of heavy steps heralded the creature's approach. Having lost its club and one arm to some unknown foe, the Ice Giant seeks to vent its frustration upon you! Could it be you may have allies out there in the blinding white expanses? For now you're just grateful the demon is not at full strength, and is alone.

Include one Ice Giant without a club, and adjust ability level of Ice Giant as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

Let the party easily dodge increasing Ice Giant patrols as they proceed onward, and increase the bad weather frequency greatly. Once the weather becomes troublesome enough that the party is having trouble avoiding the Ice Giant patrols (though only allow engagements to occur as the party sees fit for now, most Ice Giant patrols should consist of 10+d20 Ice Giants), throw in a HUGE set of storms heading in their direction. Soon the party will have to seek shelter from one of the storms.

Encounter: Ghost Cave

Deep within the icy cave, populated by the frozen dead, you discover a most frightening sight. A terrible Ghast sits amidst the icy larder, staring blankly at a smooth wall of the icy cave in front of it, and covered in frost. Your thoughts of waiting out the blizzard in here begin to flee. In some strange way, this seems right though, as the cave is something of a tomb for the dead. Even as you realize the creature appears unharmed otherwise, its huge white eyes turn slowly to your reflection in the icy wall. Terror grips your soul as the tiny black pupils stare madly into you, and its fang-ridden grin begins to crack the ice covering the Ghast's nightmarish face...

Include one Ghast, adjust ability level of Ghast as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

The Ghast will gleefully use the frozen bodies as clubs, and then try to haul off one of the party members into the deeper recesses of the cave for unspeakable purposes later.

RUINS OF FARNIR

Now the party enters the most dangerous portion of the pursuit, the realm close to Farnir, where the Ice Giants are thick.

Another day, and a strange white set of towers glitters in the morning light to the east. Here the tracks turn northeast, towards the Far Reaches, and the Outcast Isles beyond..! Not that you are so much measuring the passing of days now, you see the suns so rarely anyway. So many of your own have fallen by now, yet the Rasmirin have not perished, not even one. Now you are sure of their destination though, and a final push to catch them before they reach the Outcast Isles must be made. Your supplies are so low now, it matters little, as you will not make it back to the lands you know anyway. The tracks you follow grow fresher each time they are found.

Deep in the frigid heartland of Narandu lie the ruins of Farnir, a city frozen under layers of crystalline ice. Before the coming of the Ice Giants, Farnir was reputed to have been the site of an enlightened civilization, steeped in the arts of magic and alchemy. No less a personage than the great sorcerer Korak claimed to have visited here, and was reportedly impressed by the talents of the Farnir magicians. Apparently, these talents did not extend into the realm of military defense, and Farnir was overrun by the advancing Ice Giant hordes. The Mirin of L'Haan claim that some of the Farnir magicians are still alive, frozen in stasis by the extreme cold.

Let the PCs contemplate the possible side trip to Farnir, but be sure to interrupt their contemplation with the next encounter!

Encounter: Ice Giant Patrol

You thought the thunderous rumbling to be an approaching storm, you were not far wrong. Over the white landscape lumber the Ice Giants; coming to claim your lives. The freezing clod emanating from their bodies washes over you, causing frost to suddenly form over your body as they raise their huge studded clubs of solid ice to end your feeble resistance. Now meet the Ice Giants, how will you survive?

Include one Ice Giant per PC minus one, and adjust ability level of the Ice Giants as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

They will neither ask nor give quarter; may the strongest ones be victorious.

This is obviously a pivotal encounter and must be played carefully as the entire party could be wiped out. The PCs may choose to simply flee, which is a solid choice considering the odds. This area will take about one week to traverse, and encounters with Ice Giants should be almost painfully frequent.

Over the high peaks ahead, pairs of Batranc weave their delicate patterns in the air, a hypnotic dance that you could sit and watch for hours on end. You know them to be dangerous predators, but here in this desolation, their beauty cannot be denied. Close passes near the craggy mountaintops whip small snow devils into the air, and the Batranc dance among them. These moments will be lost when your memory fades, but for now they offer hope and beauty to your current plight. Your limbs are so heavy now, all you want to do is lie down and sleep for a few years, just to rest a little while longer.

The party is almost to the Far Reaches, and a tough journey it has been, but it's not over yet. Their prey is closer now, but then so is a predator that's been tailing them...

Encounter: Tundra Beast

It was probably tracking you for days, gods know how, across this forsaken landscape. Soon it will be night, and the perfect time to strike. You know this cannot be allowed to happen, the Tundra Beast must either seek out new prey, or die. Your quest is too important to let the local wildlife stop you now...

Include one Tundra Beast, adjust ability level of Tundra Beast as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

Over the next few days, let the encounters slack off significantly, and then show the party why there's a lack of predators around...

Encounter: Ice Dragon

The heavy and irregular drumbeat sound grew from the north, and then you saw it coming low and fast. Like some frosty nightmare with sapphire eyes it swept over the party, bringing with it a swath of super freezing cold to halt your companions in their tracks! It's damage inflicted, some part of you prayed the Ice Dragon was done toying with your group, but that is not to be. The thundering crush of the Ice Dragon landing in the snow close at hand is all you perceive, as the blast of snow billows over your troupe. The Ice Dragon has come, will you survive it's passing?

Include one Ice Dragon, adjust ability level of the Ice Dragon as the GM deems is needed. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

The Ice Dragon's first targets will be the largest creatures in the party (mounts, pack animals, etc.), then any who may offer resistance to the Ice Dragon as it attempts to carry off its victims. Once at half hit points, the Ice Dragon will retreat (one meal is not worth dying for).

Another decisive encounter, resistance is practically futile, and simply allowing the Ice

Dragon to take one of the beasts may be the best option.

From Farnir to the closest mountains bordering the Far Reaches should take a full week or so to travel under good conditions.

The cold is particularly bitter and intense here; remember to bring this up as the party pushes on.

The weather is also very bad, with snowstorms and blizzards being a regular occurrence, and certainly very dangerous to travelers.

Encounter: Demon Ambush

In between two great mountains, your prey has been waiting for you. The screams of the victims herald the ambush as it is sprung upon the hunters. It seems the prey does not like your perseverance, and is taking drastic measures to ensure they will not be pursued any longer. At least the Ice Giants are less numerous here, probably more to do with the presence of the Ice dragons that gladly eat the Ice Giants given the chance! If you survive to enact your revenge upon the fleeing raiders, it certainly will be a tale worthy of telling. All sense of time is lost now, the deepening clouds blot out all but the fiercest light, and you have long forgotten how long this journey has actually been.

Include one Demon per PC party member; adjust ability level of the Demons as the GM chooses. There will be at least one Earth Demon, one Aqua Demon, one Frost Demon, and one Night Demon as long as there are at least four PCs. GMs are encouraged to add/remove Demons as needed to equal the number of PCs. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

After the ambush, only one day will pass before something comes to investigate the sounds heard during the battle. Weather continues to get worse, and the -5 Tracking penalty remains.

Encounter: Frostwere Pack

Only the faint rustling of the snow heralded the prowling Frostweres, not even a low growl did they issue as they leapt into your midst. Then the screaming and running began...

Include one Frostwere per PC party member; adjust ability level of the Frostweres as the GM chooses. Statistics are provided at the end of the book. This pack is an actual family, with both males and females present, and all that implies in the chaos of the fight.

A few of days later, the tracks are very fresh now, dropping the Tracking penalty completely to nothing. Now the PCs need to be ready for the battle with the raiders, encourage planning and teamwork because they are going to need it...

THE FAR REACHES

Northernmost of the frozen territories of Narandu, the Far Reaches are inhabited mainly by Frostweres, Lopers, and Ice Dragons. Parts of the area are believed to have once been underwater, perhaps explaining the legends of shipwrecked vessels frozen in solid blocks of ice.

Encounter: Riven's Gang

At last the foe is found, amid the land of Frostweres and the legendary Ice Dragons. Everywhere the treacherous ice hides frozen ships and deadly hidden bodies of water, waiting to drown the unwary. Just past the mountains to the west lie the Outcast Isles, the one place these raiders must never reach. If it means you will die in the frozen hell, at least those who lost their lives getting you here will not have been in vain! Your prey is more dangerous than you could have guessed, but you cannot afford to fail!

Riven and his allies are here, and the party must be prepared to do battle with them. More than any other this will be an extremely difficult battle. The foe is elusive, has dangerous allies (Demons), and holds a hostage. Statistics for the Demon servants are provided at the end of the book.

Riven will not hesitate to use up the hostage for the Rod if he thinks there's a chance he could lose this fight.

RIVEN

A powerful non-traditionalist, Riven has "seen the writing on the wall," and has turned his efforts to truly doing some serious damage to the Mirin in his own lifetime. Tired of seeing his countrymen fail each time to topple the false god Borean and the Mirin, he set out to try a different approach. He had some fairly close allies who were willing to try something new as well, and so he sought the knowledge of each element for four of the best of them. Once trained, he used his skills to insert them in strategic locations to hear about recent finds of magical artifacts which related to Summoning. Riven wanted them to use their powers in subtle ways, so only one of them was taught Attack Mode spells at all. Several years later, his efforts paid off, and now he has a shot at summoning the mighty Void Demon. He'll try this in the remote northern reaches first, to make sure it can be done as needed, but once he masters the use of the Rod of Calling the realm of Talislanta will feel his wrath. He'll start with the Mirin, of course, but then soon the rest of the world will suffer the predations of a vast horde of demons!

(continued)

Rafu, Rakla, Raval, and Razun are all keen followers of Riven. They revel in the destruction their skills can cause and eagerly await the chance to inflict misery upon the Mirin.

Rastintalos will likely surrender if sorely pressed or obviously out-classed, figuring on escaping later when things have quieted down.

Six mages and their bound demons, perhaps the PCs fate will be worthy of a song...

Unknown Kidnapped NPC

The hostage that Ansoa is intent on rescuing should be detailed beforehand by the GM, as best fits the exact mood and composition of the PCs involved in the module. This could be a “damsel in distress” (a scion of the Arimite court?), a well-liked merchant, or just a common person for whom

Ansoa cares. Unless the PCs press the question upon Ansoa (possibly a hazardous activity), the mere existence of the hostage should not even be certain until the final confrontation (wherever that may happen).

For additional suspense, the poor soul could be on the chopping block in the final fight as Riven uses that person to fuel another powerful summoning to turn the tide of battle in his favor. Will the heroes save the victim in time?

Should the heroes be having some trouble, maybe the hostage escapes, and then helps the PCs defeat the Rasmirins somehow. Of course, there's always sending in a squad of Mirin Tundra Scouts and the Priestess to save the day (Chapter 2).

If the PCs are making short work of the antagonists, perhaps an Ice Dragon swoops down and makes off with the hostage to its lair in a huge frozen Archaen ship on the side

Riven (continued)

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Anarchist

Age: ~36

Home: Outcast Isles

Skills of note: Invocation [Aberon]: Summoning (Demons) +10 and Attack +6, Witchcraft; Ward +8 and Reveal +8, Deception +15, plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Trade Skill is Administrator +8, Common Skills are Swim +6 and Ride-Equs +6).

Items of Note: Archaen Rod of Calling (Summoning +15, 3x/day, recharge with 1 living sentient soul), Bound Nether Demon (Level 14) in an Amber glass Jar marked with Sepharic Runes, Power Stone (MR+3), Cloaking Adamant Staff (Conceal +10, Triggered), as well as the usual archetype kit.

Rafu

Rafu likes to toy with his prey before killing it in some suitably dramatic manner. Rafu enjoys Hexing a foe against Daggers, then stabbing them from behind through stealth.

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Anarchist

Age: ~31

Home: Outcast Isles

Skills of note: Aeromancy; Summoning (Demons) +4 and Conjuration +7 and Move +7, Witchcraft; Ward +8 and Reveal +8, plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Trade Skill is Animal Handler +8, Common Skills are Swim +6 and Ride-Equs +6).

Items of Note: Manastone (4 spell levels per day), Bound Storm Demon (Level 5) in Glass Jar, as well as the usual archetype kit.

of a mountain nearby. This will be a complete surprise to all parties involved, giving the PCs the chance to get sideswiped by the bad guys.

Perhaps if the fight is a stalemate, then Riven drops the Rod down a crack in the ice, leading to a race to retrieve it before the other team. Odds are, they will not be unopposed in the race to find the Rod, even in the dark icy caves below.

Arrival of the Mirin

After the battle is over, choose the most badly injured PC, and read the following aloud to that PC:

In the dim haze of numbing pain, your senses darken. The last battle is laying claim to your life, death opens wide it's arms when the vision comes. A flurry of snow heralds the appearance of the blue people, clad in gleaming blue adamant armor and white. They look over the carnage and devastation with sadness in their eyes, seeking survivors. One of them floats near you, speaking in the Elder

Rakla

Rakla tends to quibble over her decisions, and must often be given direct orders in order to complete actions in a timely manner.

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Anarchist

Age: ~31

Home: Outcast Isles

Skills of note: Aquamancy; Summoning (Demons) +4 and Conjuration +7 and Transform +7, Witchcraft; Ward +8 and Reveal +8, plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Trade Skill is Artisan [Sea Galleys] +8, Common Skills are Swim +6 and Ride-Equs +6).

Items of Note: Manastone (4 spell levels per day), Bound Aqua Demon (Level 5) in Glass Jar, as well as the usual archetype kit.

Tongue. Just before you fail to maintain consciousness, and you hear her name "L'Shiva"...

In the unlikely event that the Rasmirins escape and the PCs are unharmed, the PCs will likely continue on toward the Outcast Isles (Chapter 3), but an assault upon the home of the Rasmirin as weak as the party will be now is virtual suicide. Treacherous icebergs, Ice Dragons, deadly cold water, Aqua Demons, and the simple lack of a ship to make the trip to begin with hamper logistics of simply reaching the islands. Once they reach the Outcast Isles, there are the Rasmirin to deal with, along with the problems associated with locating an elusive foe in extremely hostile enemy territory. If the PCs insist on trying, bring in the Mirin to "rescue" the party, thus setting up for the next chapter.

Raval

Raval tends to burn things first, and maybe asks questions later. He also loves to flaunt his heat and cold immunities whenever possible, hopefully so Rakla can see his superior powers at work.

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Anarchist

Age: ~33

Home: Outcast Isles

Skills of note: Pyromancy; Summoning (Demons)+4 and Conjuration +7 and Attack +7, Witchcraft; Ward +8 and Reveal +8, plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Trade Skill is Appraiser +8, Common Skills are Swim +6 and Ride-Equs +6).

Items of Note: Manastone (4 spell levels per day), Bound Pyro Demon (Level 5) in Obsidian Jar, as well as the usual archetype kit.

Concluding Thoughts

The Rod should be returned to the archeologists, lost forever, or given to the safekeeping of the Mirin, and *not* end up in the hands of the PCs.

Strogar should get his chance to prove/show his feelings to Ansoa.

Certainly the chance that the PCs might rescue the hostage and Rod without killing one or more of the Rasmirins exists. If Riven survives, he will give chase; this is his life's work, and he will not give it up. If Riven is not around to lead the rest, then the GM must decide if the bad guys have had enough or not. The potential for them making more appearances as recurring villains is very much a real possibility as well.

Razun

Razun follows orders to the letter, and never wastes time in getting this done. He is effectively the “straight man” in a group of anarchists. He considers himself second in command, though Riven could care less.

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Anarchist

Age: ~32

Home: Outcast Isles

Skills of note: Geomancy; Summoning (Demons) +4 and Conjuration +7 and Defend +7, Witchcraft; Ward +8 and Reveal +8, plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Trade Skill is Artificer [Stone] +8, Common Skills are Climb +6 and Ride-Equs +6).

Items of Note: Manastone (4 spell levels per day), Bound Earth Demon (Level 5) in Stone Jar, as well as the usual archetype kit.

The PCs should be offered the chance to pick up “Survival: Narandu” as a new skill.

GMs are encouraged to instill a sense of dread in the PCs, as there's plenty to be afraid of in Narandu!

Rastintalos

A clever employee of Riven, this traitorous man seeks only more power at the expense of those around him. Riven offered him magical teachings in return for certain intelligence on the comings and goings of certain explorers in the Phaedran Tombs area. Being a cohort in crime, and dealing with the wrong side of the law is just Rastintalos' idea of a good time. Things have gotten a little dicey, but the shot at true greatness cannot be ignored.

This fellow is the worst sort of self-serving slime; he is only interested in whatever gets him what he wants most. He is completely untrustworthy. He will gladly betray anyone at any given chance, if it means he will be better off for doing so.

Race: Cymrilian

Profession: Rogue Mage

Age: ~38

Home: Wandering

Skills of note: Witchcraft [Ward +8, Reveal +8, Alter +8, Influence +8], plus all other archetype skills at double base rating (Weapon; Dagger +4, Common Skills are Swim +6 and Ride-Equs +6, Thieving Skill is Stealth +6).

Items of Note: Manastone (4 spell levels per day), Warmth Tunic (Ward vs. Cold), Arimite Luckstone, Silver Dagger, Color-Shifting Cloak, as well as the usual archetype kit.

CHAPTER TWO

Daggers of Ice

The raiders have been met, the Mirin have come to the party's rescue, and now their path turns across Traitor's Bay, towards the city of Myr. The second chapter is all about cloak and dagger amid the Mirin.

In Myr, the Mirin will learn of the actions of the Rasmirin, and the party will have to make some difficult decisions. The Rasmirins have spies in Myr, and the PCs interference will not go unnoticed or unpunished.

Gamemasters are encouraged to review their favorite spy movies and stories for ideas to flavor their games as they see fit. As the GM reads over this chapter before it is run in game, find places where some creative role-playing could lend the best sense of alienation to the players. The Mirin should be presented as strange in many ways to the players, perhaps seemingly cold and aloof in order to breed just enough distrust to really set the stage for events to come. The players will be challenged to learn whom they can trust, and who will kill them at any moment.

RESCUED

The Mirin “rescue party” consists of some twenty Tundra Scouts (use the basic archetype for statistics) led by “L'Shiva,” a Mirin Priestess. They have plenty of extra Snowmanes. While the Tundra Scouts are obviously suspicious of the foreigners, the priestess is more cordial. It seems she has had some experience with outsiders, and recognizes what happened to the PCs.

The party will be escorted to the shore of Traitor's Bay, where a large ice schooner awaits them. This journey should only take a day or two, and the Tundra Scouts will ensure no significant encounters occur. If asked how the Mirin came to know of the PC's location, they will be told that “Borean led us to you,” which is essentially the truth, but not the whole truth. L'Shiva will not permit any conversation about much of anything right now, as the Mirin know that the Rasmirin are near, and all that this implies. The Tundra Scouts will back her up completely, as they know this area is often “watched by the exiled ones, where none may speak without being heard by them.” Any wounded will be temporarily patched up until they can be brought to the safety of the ice schooner. Yes, the Mirin have zero interest in dallying here, insisting on retreating as soon as possible to safer realms instead.

Traitor's Bay

This icy stretch of water is named for the infamous Rasmirin, who launched an assault on L'Haan's fleet of ice schooners during the fall of the year, 403. The treacherous Rasmirin were defeated, and thereafter banished to dwell forever on the Outcast Isles. Their sunken ships, laden with treasures stolen from the city of L'Lal, still lay somewhere at the bottom of Traitor's Bay.

Aboard the ice schooner, a Mirin Alchemist will ensure the party is brought back to full health, while the twenty crewmen (not Tundra Scouts) set about getting everyone closer to Myr. By this time, communication barriers should be broken, and L'Shiva will have questioned the PCs about their adventure into Narandu. She will be obviously disturbed over the whole affair, but particularly she will be frightened by the description of the Nether Demon. If Riven summoned the Void Demon, L'Shiva will be positively horrified at this. She will insist the party not speak another word on the matter until they can be brought to Myr, where higher authorities will be consulted on what to do, and all this at the mere description of the Nether Demon!

Encourage plenty of role-playing here, as the PCs get to know the Mirin, and while trying to stay warm. The Tundra Scouts include males and females, though easily twice as many males as there are females. They are all tough, proud, and noble warriors fighting what is apparently a losing battle to the bitter end.

As the PCs are being whisked away to the safety of Myr, Riven's master will learn of his servant's troubles, and will briefly observe the PCs as they escape immediate retribution. The period of observation will only be for the first day or so of the trip on the ice schooner. Any mage may notice the scrying on a PER check at -5. Mages possessing Reveal suffer no penalty to this check. Non-mages may sense that they are being watched on a PER check at -10. Any who sense the scrying will get a

L'Shiva

Born under Laolis and Phandir, her life has been a tale of sad and unstoppable events. She knows Borean has only begun to guide her life, and bears the weight of her destiny on sorrowful and determined shoulders. Of late, her quests have drawn her to the legendary Altan and beyond, an experience that L'Shiva will not soon forget. She knows L'Laja...

Age: about 30

Race: Mirin

Profession: Priestess

Home: L'Haan

Skills of note: Urban, Etiquette, Swim, Evade, Doctrines (Borean).

Orders/Modes: Aquamancy: Attack, Conjure, Defend, Summon, Transform, and Enchantment. These modes are at +10 rating. Invocation [Borean]: Alter, Heal, Illusion, and Influence. These modes are at +6 rating.

Items of note: Headdress (Aquamantic Attack +6), Aquamancy Wand (Alter +3 to MR), and a Snowmane.

profound sense of foreboding as well, but that will fade when the scrying is done. Certainly something terribly evil has been closely observing the ice schooner from the north.

If the PCs mention this to any of the Mirin, silence will once again be enforced until the ship reaches shore. Once ashore, the Mirin will lighten up considerably, saying that they are safely in L'Haan now.

When the far eastern shore of Traitor's Bay is reached after about a day, the party will be escorted ashore by the Tundra Scouts and L'Shiva, and then overland to Myr. This should take about a day to manage on Snowmanes, and the party will pass over Lake Myr along the way.

Lake Myr

Lake Myr lies in the frozen reaches of western L'Haan. The Mirin sail its frozen waters in double bladed ice skiffs, hunting for frostwere, tundra beast, and ice dragon. Ice fishing is also a popular pastime in this region, though one enjoyed almost exclusively by Mirin ice-divers, whose uncanny metabolism enables them to survive in the freezing-cold waters below the surface of the lake. The crystal eggs of ice dragons, the shimmering blue pearls of the northern quaga, and various species of edible aquatic creatures are the rewards of their endeavors.

Myr lies just beyond, at the edge of the Sea of Ice. Here there will be plentiful patrols of Tundra Scouts, so dangerous encounters will be at a minimum (GM-generated only), and plenty of aid will be close at hand. Observant PCs may notice the activity flowing between the city and the nearby mountains to the west of Myr, it seems a near-continuous mining operation is in progress. The party will be passing from west to east, north of the activity until they reach Myr itself.

The Tundra Scouts will exhibit visible pride in this area, especially when the gates of Myr are close.

MYR

The walled city of Myr stands on the western shore of the Sea of Ice, opposite Rhin (the capitol of the far northern land of L'Haan). The city is famed for its shipyards, where graceful ice schooners (and smaller ice skiffs) are constructed. Myr is also the foremost supplier of blue diamonds on the continent. The greater part of L'Haan's formidable military force is stationed at the ice fortress, warding against possible invasion by the Ice Giants of Narandu.

A few urgent words from L'Shiva will hasten the party through the gates into the city, while the Mirin look over the outlanders as they proceed into the deeper portions of Myr. Many are obviously curious, especially the children.

Rising high above the surrounding landscape, the towering ice walls of Myr protect the city within. The fifty-foot wall is crowned with battlements, easily twenty feet thick or more, interrupted by massive towers, and scarred from many engagements. The sprawling city is isolated from the surrounding region by a vast clearing, at least five hundred feet in all directions, a massive killing zone. The ground is packed hard here, and littered with untold numbers of small blue diamonds, many easily visible to the eye just under the frozen icy ground.

The awe-inspiring main gate sports a surprisingly narrow entrance, perhaps only enough to allow two Snowmanes to squeeze in abreast, or maybe one Ice Giant. The long ramp leading to the entrance provides no cover during the ascent into the gauntlet ahead, some twenty feet above the surrounding grounds. Numerous chutes for alchemical applications dot the long entrance ceiling, and massive blue adamant doors bar the way at several intervals along the corridor. Beyond the main gate an inner court controls entry into the city proper, sporting a smaller thirty-foot wall with towers topped by alchemical war machines and hurlants. Two gates lead into the city, similar to the main gate, though at roughly half the depth and width each. No ungated entrances are at ground level within this area.

Past the court, lies the city itself, a stark contrast of beauty against the savage and bleak land around this fortress. Sweeping towers of gleaming ice rise fancifully above even the main city walls, offering incredible views of the surroundings. Many structures of a public nature have walls of perfectly clear ice, while other more private buildings such as residences have opaque ice instead. Within the city, the only doors are accessible by ramps

and stairs to what appears to be the second floor of each building, yet within many of the flowing structures one can see that ground levels are fully usable within.

Insert some role-playing here as the residents gawk at the outlanders, gathering in small groups to look at them. Children are particularly curious, and must occasionally be restrained by adults. As much as the party stares at the incredible city around them, the crowd stares at them.

Nearer the center of the city, taller towers prevail, with many visible balconies, bridges, and tall open doorways. The streets themselves narrow considerably, and much travel is accomplished along bridges and walkways. Many of these pass right through the surrounding cityscape, heedless of yawning drop offs and imposing structures. In several places the wind helps keep the area clear of snow, or is turned against itself to create areas of serene calm. In some areas, the wind makes unearthly music through vents and tubes built right into the icy structures. Beneath your feet, carefully textured walking areas cleverly help the traveler's footing, and sleek rails rise to protect you. It is as though the entire city were one great and incredibly complex work of art, and yet somehow remains humble.

Let your imagination run free here, describe fascinating details, and instill a sense of wonder in the players.

Beyond the glittering city itself lies the vast Sea of Ice, very visible from most of the city of Myr, and obviously being used by a great number of ice schooners through the port located here.

The Sea of Ice

The Sea of Ice is a wide expanse of shimmering, perpetually frozen water. Mirin ice schooners traverse the frozen sea from L'Lal to Rhin, bearing cargoes of adamant, blue diamonds, and alchemical mixtures. Fearsome ice dragons, spawned in the frigid

ocean-depths, pose a hazard to such ships, as do the razor-sharp edges of partially submerged glaciers.

Observant characters will notice some of the Mirin appear to be streaking across the ice at great speed, even though they are on foot. If asked, the escort will say that it's the new fashionable way to travel across large expanses of ice on your own. The Mirin have designed a special sort of boot with dagger-sized blue adamant blades on the bottom, not unlike the runners on the ice schooners, and that with some practice one may learn how to use them!

Once within the noble's district, the party will be shown to chilly quarters to rest after their swift journey. While well appointed with furs, food, and furnishings, no heat sources will be in evidence. The Tundra Scouts will leave to return to their own duties, leaving the PCs under the watchful eyes of the city guard. The quarters will be spacious, with several rooms partitioned by hanging furs and blue-diamond-bead curtains. L'Shiva will be consulting her superiors, and so will be out of touch for a while. Large windows (essentially thin areas of clear ice) offer a wide view of the city and sea beyond, while vents near the ceiling admit airflow.

Blade Boots

Brave PCs might try to learn a bit more about these special bladed boots, which requires the skill Blade Boots (Weapon Skill, 5 xp, DEX modifier, Partial Success allows normal movement rate across the slickest of ice, Full Success doubles movement rate, Critical triples the user's speed, Mishaps are always embarrassing and often extremely painful). The boots weigh in at some 4 pounds each, and would normally cost 40 Gold Lumens per pair. Kicking opponents does DR 4 + STR damage on a skill check result of Full Success or better.

Mirin Nobles

When the GM feels the time is right (no more than a single day of delay is suggested), the PCs will be summoned to an audience with the ruling body of Myr. They should be encouraged to bring the Rod with them. The PCs will be led by a small unit of the city guard deeper into the collection of towers near the center of the city, where wondrous sculptures adorn the halls, and into a heavily guarded chamber of expansive proportions.

Here a huge blue diamond wind chime provides a pleasant background in the resonant room, suspended from the center of the roof. The large archways are open to the skies of L'Haan beyond, though there are thin white linen curtains drawn across them, and furred seating is plentiful. The hint of some scent is in the air; the source is a large glass vase spilling over with Snow Lilies along the northern wall. The interior walls are murals of Mirin history, most in subtle relief highlighted with blue diamonds, an exquisite work of art. The beveled cone of the roof rises high above, providing some unique echoes as the party looks around the massive chamber. Around the central low table stand a group of Mirin nobles, each resplendent in blue and white.

L'Shiva greets you as you approach the center of the huge hall, and introduces you to the other nobles present; while a rather chilly breeze drifts through the gathering.

The Mirin present include:

- **L'Shiva:** The Priestess of Borean always seems weary, but her constant vigilance against the enemies of the Mirin is also evident. In certain circles she is known as “The Left Hand of Borean,” for her often-unusual quests with which her god tasks her.
- **Milnor:** Leader of the Host of Myr, second to the High General of the Mirin Host (Command +15, Administrator +5). Even for a Mirin, he is tall, broad, and weathered (all Tundra Scout skills at

double base rating). He exudes authority with his commanding presence, but is obviously playing himself down in the presence of the priestesses.

- **L'Phei:** A High Priestess of Borean (Invocation [Borean]: Heal, Defend, and Alter. Mode Ratings +10), she is Myr's most gifted Seer (Invocation [Borean]: Reveal +20), and bears an artifact known as “The Eye of Borean,” an ancient and mighty seeing stone (Alter: Reveal at +15) of flawless pale blue diamond. She always seems slightly distracted by something unseen by others, but actually misses nothing.
- **L'Wen:** The Princess of Myr, she is present as her father is too frail to attend. She is a wise and capable leader (Administration +15), and also a Priestess of Borean (Invocation [Borean]: Reveal, Heal, Defend, and Alter. All Mode ratings +15). She is unused to outsiders though, and will observe the party members closely for deception. She knows the Rasmirins are lurking about.
- **Mutai:** One of the more capable Tundra Scouts in Myr's service (all Tundra Scout skills at double base rating), he has the most experience dealing with the Rasmirin problem, and is the vanguard against their spies (Espionage, Underworld, and Streetwise at +10). He knows spies are in Myr, and is certain that these PCs will attract the attentions of operatives in the city.

Now the Mirin nobles will want to hear every detail they can get from the PCs about the raid and the chase, particularly the ending. If the PCs are in possession of the Rod, it is time to decide what to do with it. Either the Mirin must be entrusted with the Rod, or the PCs should take it to the Lyceum. The presence of the strange marks (Sephatic Runes) upon Riven's Amberglass Jar will be an important detail, one that will ignite the interest of the Princess and the Tundra Scout. The two have already heard L'Shiva's report,

and feared the worst over the appearance of the Nether Demon (and the Void Demon if it was summoned). Even if the Seer must dig for this information, the runes and the description of the Nether Demon need to be heard. The Mirin will surmise that a foreign mage is responsible for the summoning of the meta-demons, and all the Mirin present will become very serious indeed. If Riven escaped, he *must* be found, as he is obviously the link to this foreign mage. If Riven perished, the Jar will be the focus of the investigation to follow.

Whatever the outcome, the party will be sent back to their quarters while the nobility debates the matter in private. Make it plain that the PCs have stumbled into something big, and that the Mirin are taking the matter *very* seriously. While the PCs are relaxing in the quarters (they are currently “protected guests,” and as such not permitted to leave for now) shortly after returning, one of the servants will quietly try to warn the PCs that they are in danger! Even here in the Palace of Myr, the Rasmirin spies are rumored to lurk. The servant will advise to PCs to leave as soon as possible, even if they have to escape the Palace Guards. The servant will not dare to identify him/herself (GMs choice), as “such talk is forbidden in the Palace,” and depart immediately.

About this time, the PCs should notice that any belongings left in the room when they were summoned for the audience have been rifled through, but then carefully replaced so as to conceal such activity. If the Rod were here, it is gone now! The PCs can now be certain that things are afoot here in Myr, and they should be on their guard.

Within hours (if the PCs do not try to escape), the servant will turn up dead, stabbed in the back with a dagger made of ice. Ensure that the PCs are not the ones to discover the body, but recognize it as the body is carried away. The party will be sent to another residence in the noble quarter for safety by L'Shiva, meanwhile the Mirin frantically try to discover the identity and location of the killer. The party will be told this person is a trusted

ally, but not the noble's actual name as there is some fear of being magically heard. On the way, the escort (two Tundra Scouts per PC) of the party will be followed (Stealth and Guard checks to spot the tail, the tail will vanish if spotted), and then ambushed!

Encounter: Frost Demon and Rasmirin Agents

The Tundra Scouts lead you through the winding maze of ice, through narrow streets and over long walkways at a brisk pace. Your passing startles some of the common Mirin in the streets, they are not used to seeing Tundra Scouts and outlanders rushing through their city. As you approach the eastern side of the city, higher towers and more bridges become evident. The Scouts will not say where they are taking you, but they seem to know the way very well.

As the party passes under an icy bridge, the bridge will suddenly collapse (Dodge, Evade, etc.), and out of the rubble a large Frost Demon will emerge (GM decides level, though it should be powerful enough to challenge the whole party; statistics are provided at the end of the book). As the group engages the Demon, they may notice that their cries for help are not responded to (a Conceal spell is in place). Anyone who tries to flee will come under fire from ice dagger-hurling Rasmirin agents (one or two per PC, all wearing common Mirin clothes, but adding veils to hide their faces) lurking near the scene as bystanders. The agents are simply trying to ensure the Frost Demon has a chance to kill off the party, and are not interested in directly

Rasmirin Agents

Skills of note: Assassinate +8, Sabotage +8, Dagger +2 [CR +4, MR +2], and all other skills as per Anarchist. No Orders/Modes; these are mundane infiltrators only.

engaging the victims of the ambush. If the agents cannot stop the escapees or are directly attacked, they will fade into the surrounding buildings (Stealth), and vanish into the city (Conceal).

Those who survive the encounter should be urged on to the residence, which is not far away. As the assassins are disguised as ordinary Mirin, anyone the party comes across could potentially be a spy, so it is extremely dangerous to remain in the open. Try to create a sense of a desperate chase to a barely known location whilst deadly assassins lurk behind every citizen's face. Perhaps a couple of choice encounters with some of the assassins will help solidify the player's desperate plight, and get them moving at speed to their next destination.

Polymir's Mansion

It is an understated mansion, quite unlike its tall, fluid, and gleaming Mirin neighbors. A five-foot wall of perfectly clear ice surrounds the circular, and barren grounds, and the huge squat stone dome bears enormous icicles hanging from its edge. No windows or portals of any kind disturb the snow-laden dome above ground level, though some sort of intricate carvings are only just visible in some places on the upper dome.

The main entrance is clear of icicles; it is a massive black iron affair usually associated with main city gates, with bas-reliefs of a powerful looking Guardian Devil on each. No bells or knockers are present on the recessed doors, but they creak open as you approach.

The chamber within is carpeted, and pleasantly comfortable in temperature. All around black iron furniture with blankets and pillows welcomes visitors, and several black iron doors leading further into the manse are visible. The ceiling is painted with a depiction of the night sky of Talislanta, with all the Moons visible and glowing strongly enough to read by.

The doors creak closed behind you, shutting out the chilling wind. A youthful Mirin emerges from one of the doors, and greets you in fluent Talislan as "Polymir."

Polymir

Freed from suspended animation in the southern most ruins of the Four Nations, he proved to be most useful to the "Adamant Rasp." With little memory of his past, he quickly adapted to his new surroundings, and worked hard to re-master his powerful abilities. He adopted a Nomadic lifestyle during his various missions, even visiting the homelands of his present-day counterparts. His reputation for endurance and innovative shape shifting has become legendary. Now fully confident in his abilities, he is more slowly touring the continent...

Age: 27+

Race: Manra

Profession: Shape-changer

Home: anywhere

Skills of note: Arcane Lore, Tracking, Stalking, Scout, Swimming, Ride (Equs). These skills are at +22 rating.

Items of note: Expansible Tent (Level 21 Alter), Archaen Flying Carpet (SPD+4, 1350 pound capacity), 2 Wrist Vipers, 4 Archaen Rings (PER, DEX, SPD, STR all +4).

Pets/servants: 60 Jhangaran warriors (elite veterans [+10 skills], spears, shields, daggers), a Batrean Hostess, a Green man Gardener, a Vajra Engineer, a Mandalan Entertainer, a Monad Laborer, a Dracartan Scout, a Djaffir Merchant, and a Thrall Bodyguard.

The young man offers the party some hot and hearty soup (from a waiting pot with bowls and spoons), along with healing potions as needed, drawn from his robes. He then informs them "The Dark Lady Deliria knows of your plight, and would like to assist you on behalf of the Mirin nation" (or something to that effect). He says if the party wishes, they will be given several days worth of food and safe passage out of the city in order to escape the Rasmirins and flee home. If the group wishes to close this matter permanently, then they will be given the food and a swift journey to the Outcast Isles. Whether they complete their mission or not, any survivors will also be safely transported back to Myr, and then further arrangements will be made.

If the party chooses to flee, then the first option is fulfilled, essentially ending this module. Alternately, the GM could simply ambush the PCs (after the Tundra Scouts have left the PCs to their own devices) with at least two or three meta-demons per PC as they attempt to flee, virtually ensuring their demise.

If they choose the second option, Polymir (actually a Manra Shape-Shifter) praises their bravado, and then gives whoever seems to be the leader a mysterious bone whistle. He also gives them all assurances that the assassins will be taken care of long before the party returns to Myr from this mission.

He will not offer any additional information other than the PCs are to use the whistle once they have left the walls of Myr, and not one moment before.

Encounter: Needle and the Ice Dragon

When the party is ready to leave, the Mirin will show them out, where a troupe of some twenty Mirin Tundra Scouts will be waiting to escort them out of the city. The Mirin Scouts are lead by a hooded and yet savage looking figure, who will be "looking out for you" as the party exits the city. The

heavily robed, swathed, and powerfully built figure declines to identify himself, but his inhuman yellow eyes are certainly not Mirin. If the PCs insist on a name, he says the party may call him "Needle" for now. He gruffly urges the party on, heading towards the nearest city gate with the Tundra Scout guards all around. It seems the nobility have closed the city gates to anyone else for a day, thus giving the party a head start.

Once beyond the mighty gates, the Tundra Scouts will turn back, leaving the party alone with Needle. While there are certainly no assassins about, feel free to imply the party's vulnerability out in the open, even under the watchful eyes of the Mirin soldiers on the walls of Myr nearby. Needle will remain calm of course, but let the players discover his mood only if they choose to do so.

Brutus, aka Needle

This natural thief/warrior had the misfortune to be in the company of Beastmen when they attacked an unguarded camp. As the only survivor, Deliria chose to toy with him, and used her magical powers to alter him to suit her whims. Eventually, he became a formidable creature with many special abilities, gaining the pseudonym "Drukh the Needle" among certain criminal circles. He's still dark and brooding, prone to savage violence, and ruthless tactics. This keeps him in good standing with the leader of the "Adamant Rasp." His duties of late are more supervisory in nature, but he is far from settled.

Age: 37+

Race: Half-man/Mondre Khan

Home: Wilderlands

Items of note: an enchanted blue iron shield, a "Wierded" black adamant rasp, an enchanted War whip, and a small collection of demon hearts...

Pets: a powerful Greymane...

When the party is ready to use the whistle, read the following to them.

The long high keening of the whistle echoes off the walls of Myr, and then the nearby mountains, and an eerie reverberation between the two only seems to grow stronger until the whistler runs out of breath. This haunting sound echoes off the landscape several times before fading away. Then a long moment of silence, as though the landscape had drawn breath to see what is about to happen, and is finally disturbed by the distant drumming of giant wings. As the sound grows stronger, you spot a huge Ice Dragon swiftly descending from the mountaintops to the west. The magnificent beast is far larger than any ice dragon you have ever seen, and its landing causes a small snowstorm all around it. Once the snow settles, you stand before the rune-encrusted Ice Dragon. From the walls of Myr, the Mirin defenders merely look on, as though expecting to witness your untimely demise. Instead, the dragon turns its flank to you, and pulls back its wing, waiting for you to climb on!

If needed, statistics for the Ice Dragon are provided at the end of the book.

The PCs will notice the huge toothy grin of Needle, his muff pulled down to reveal his gray and furry face. They will also find that the usual freezing aura surrounding ice dragons is not present to harm them, and the spaces between the dorsal plates provide ample seating for all. Needle will hand over some rope to help secure everyone and any gear they are taking with them, and then move around to the dragon's front. The Ice Dragon will lower its head down to Needle, bringing their eyes level with each other. A low rumble will be heard from the Ice Dragon, almost as if the beast were attempting to speak in a primal kind of way.

The Ice Dragon and Needle stare into each other's eyes for a long moment, the low growling of each one resonating with the other. The Ice Dragon visibly bristles, and bares its frightening rows of teeth. Then it stops, both creatures look at you, and somehow they seem to have much the same disturbing glare. The dragon then turns north, and spreads its wings and rises quietly into the air with nary a wing beat. Swiftly it gains speed, adding its wings to whatever magic drives it through the air. The city falls away, and the mountains are soon left behind as the expanse of Traitor's Bay is swept into view.

The GM is encouraged to describe some of the vast panoramic views from the Ice Dragon's back of the land, sky, biting cold, and the whole sense of wonder this situation should instill.

The PCs are now on their way to the Outcast Isles, their swift trip should be undisturbed as there is little Talislanta has to offer as a threat to this massive Ice Dragon.

Observant PCs may notice the runes featured prominently of several parts of the dragon (chest, wings, around the eyes, etc.); they are powerful enchantments meant to enhance the dragon's already formidable abilities, and are each of various Orders. These include a Ward vs. Fire, magical flight; Ward vs. Attack Mode, and Perception enhancements. Magical inquiry will "Reveal" that a Black Savant placed these runes upon the Ice Dragon, a frightening thought indeed.

The ice dragon will not be interested in idle conversation of any sort, even if magical means are utilized. It will reach the Outcast Isles within a few hours (good tail winds), and the PCs will be dropped off on the main island. The Ice Dragon will then fly out to a pinnacle of frozen rock, and wait there for the PCs to return.

Concluding Thoughts

The party has either chosen to flee L'Haan, or face their fate on the Outcast Isles. This is important as it lets the players choose their path, and will likely allow them to enjoy their experience more fully.

If the PCs have gone to the Outcast Isles, the next chapter will be critical to their success or failure, as they must find a way to infiltrate the clannish and dangerous Rasmirin. Brute force will be unlikely to succeed. Stealth, bravado, and intelligence will be the best tools to use.

If the GM has access to any Midnight Realms materials, especially in relation to the Sepharans, these should be reviewed before running the next chapter as certain aspects it will become important for the final confrontation.

Be sure that all experience points earned so far have been awarded *before* moving on to the next Chapter!

CHAPTER THREE

Den of Madness

The party has made the journey to the Outcast Isles, and what a terrible place it is. Here the PCs will face a great challenge. To find a specific group of Rasmirins among this icy nest of vipers, and manage to stay alive. Near-constant blizzards and bone-solidifying cold make the outdoors very unpleasant. The crude scattered castles of the Rasmirin contain vicious hosts, and the surrounding grounds are none too inviting, either. Just successfully locating the proper Rasmirin “cell” will prove to be tough, but then there's the elimination of that cell too...

THE OUTCAST ISLES

These frigid and rock-strewn isles serve as home to an exiled cult of Mirin anarchists, banished long ago for practicing black witchcraft and attempting to usurp the rightful ruler of L'Haan, the Snow Queen. The exiles, known as the Rasmirin, continue to live on the isles to the present day, dwelling in rude ice fortresses and plotting new schemes to overthrow the ruler of L'Haan.

A small but important fact among the Rasmirins is their fairly common communication, whether in person or by message (mundane or magical), since they are not isolationists. While in many ways, each Rasmirin is completely in charge of his or her own destiny; the Rasmirins will not hesitate to act together against any outside threat. The more capable members (per the archetype) sometimes travel extensively in their various quests, and so Rasmirins who are moving about among the castles of their homelands are fairly common occurrences. This will make the PCs job a little easier, as they are going to be doing some moving about of their own.

Several of the possible castles/keeps will be presented here in no particular order, each one having some link to the “cell” of Rasmirins the PCs seek. For added flexibility, they can be investigated in any order, but it is suggested they are all checked out as each one holds important clues about the target cell. Specific locations have been excluded to allow GMs to place these locations as needed or desired. GMs are encouraged to invent a couple of their own for the PCs to investigate, though they do not necessarily have to be linked to the Rasmirin meta-demon summoning cell. GMs are encouraged to add in their own NPCs with whom the players can interact.

RAS-UME CASTLE

Here the PCs can learn something about how the common Rasmirin lives his or her daily life, as this establishment acts as a sort of center of trade and commerce in this bleak land. It is well populated by Rasmirin standards, and is a common stopover for those Rasmirin who are moving about in the Outcast Isles.

The dim hovering lights ahead foretell of the wide settlement, even before the braying of the Tundra Lopers can be heard. Arrayed about the sprawling village of ice are vast Tundra Loper pens, each one home to a dozen or so Lopers of various ages and sexes, all at least two hundred feet across, and surrounded by a low ice wall covered in cruel-looking spikes. Fifty-foot deep trenches surround the huge Loper pens, and roughly forty to fifty feet wide each. Down in the trenches, the occasional howl of the Tundra Beast can be heard echoing forth, a deterrent to both potential escapees and intruders.

The village itself is a jumble of different sorts of buildings, both in size and style, each one a statement about the creator's personality. Some are tall and sinuous; others are more bulky and brutish. All are made from ice, but few if any sport the clear ice walls and windows so often seen in Myr. Several winding paths between the Loper pens accomplish entrance to the village, each one crossing over small bridges spanning the Tundra Beast occupied trenches. Here and there, plumes of smoke or steam drift out of some buildings, attesting to the Rasmirin's use of heat or fire for various purposes. The occasional passerby can be seen, clad lightly for such weather, though not without a weapon of some sort on hand. The village even sports an occasional patrol about its perimeter of a few Rasmirins mounted on

large male Lopers, wielding adamant staff weapons with dimly glowing ends.

At any given time, there are two to four guards (CR +4, MR +2, Staff +5, Guard +5, Ride Tundra Loper +5, basic gear is; Partial Chain, blue adamant "Staff of Pain" [Witchcraft: Hex vs. Staff Level 9 on contact], Tundra Loper, and blue adamant Dagger) about, watching out for demons or other intruders. Unusual looking strangers will attract their attention, as will any serious commotion. They are not here to really enforce any order, but more to offer some initial resistance if a threat to the village presents itself. The PCs should be able to deal with them easily. However, if one of the guards manages to blow his horn (each guard has one), then the entire village will turn on the troublemakers! This will be a mob of at least d20+5, armed with a wide variety of items, and likely led by several Rasmirin Anarchists (standard stats, numbers equal to the number of PCs). Every 6th round, d20 more will arrive until there are at least ten per PC. Those not slain outright will likely be dumped into the Trenches, and wagers made (Tundra Beasts, always hungry).

Generally speaking, this is an unpleasant place, full of rude, inbred, and mean people who live by mob mentality. Any sign of weakness is likely to get someone killed; drunken brawls resulting in death are common, most often without any sort of punishment involved. Strangers are considered fair game (in all forms) until they prove themselves to be otherwise. This place has a very strong "frontier town" feel, merely a shadow of true civilization to hide its truly savage and unpredictable innate nature.

There are several places and persons of note here, and they are described below, GMs are encouraged to read aloud any parts applicable to the current situation for players.

Locations of Ras-Ume Castle

The Tavern

More of a large hollow hall than an inviting establishment, this windowless construct of solid ice bears little decoration save a few smelly skins being cured. The entrance cleverly rises to a walkway around the outer wall, preventing the snow and sleet from spilling into the structure. The interior is dimly lit with a few small glowing enchanted stones, though these are often overpowered by the occasional fire from the fire pit near the northern end of the hall. This edifice is rarely used, as the Rasmirin prefer to keep their immunity to cold as strong as possible, and the heat causes the roof to drip on everything. Filthy black iron tankards of random sorts are used to serve slushy grog along with somewhat salty and crunchy meat on simple platters. Everything is spiced with snow lily pollen, and the grog is particularly strong with that flavor. R'tallia is always keen to purchase additional items to lend some variety to her painfully limited menu, though potential sellers should take care not to offer her the coinage of L'Haan in any exchange, as she will likely add a home-brewed poison to the offender's next meal or drink. Prices are negotiable; service can be refused to anyone at the owner's whim, and the patrons or guards present enforce that.

The Pens

Little more than enclosed areas for the Lopers to move about some in, and be fed or slaughtered as needed. They form an effective defense when coupled with the trenches against marauding enemies on the ground, and provide the main source of food for this village. Each pen has an attached barn of sorts, housing the attendant pen-keepers along with any pregnant Lopers.

The Trenches

A wandering roughly circular maze of deep rifts and dens littered with the frozen remains of victims, and scattered piles of filth.

The Tundra Beasts here are particularly mean, and constantly patrol the area for new sources of food. They are effectively caged animals, and have been for several generations.

The Lodge

Home of the hunters, this crude lump of a building provides some shelter for the village's more energetic members. From here, they spread out across the surrounding landscape for miles in search of new prey. When the storms make hunting too difficult, the hunters patrol the town as additional guards, although they are often on foot instead of mounted on Lopers.

The Hovels

Essentially crude huts which populate the outer regions of the village, most are home to the poor of this town, each one scraping up a meager existence by any means they can. Some work as guards, others as servants or simple manual labor. A few of the hovels have been expanded somewhat, for either larger families or those who can enforce their will over others. Most of them consist of perhaps two or three rooms each, most often rather filthy though waste is thrown into the Trenches as a general rule.

The Village

Stronger and wealthier families live here, in the roughly dozen larger homes nearer the center of the town. There are often at least several guards keeping an eye on things in the area at any given hour, and the structures themselves are far larger than the Hovels. Within, most actually have constructed furnishings, the odd bit of crude art, and roughly ten or more rooms for use. While the temperature is still uniformly freezing, at least the ambiance resembles what most would call civilization. The inhabitants are at least skilled in some way, as even with such posh accommodations, everyone still works to make each other's lives easier. Many of the houses have Tundra Beasts on the grounds as guards and/or pets, and all have at least two or three members who serve as guards.

NPCs of Ras-Ume Castle

- **Ravallo:** A mean-spirited fellow, who once many years ago aspired to become a priest of Aberon, but lacked the gifts to procure that power. Angered, he turned to Witchcraft (Ward +12, Enchant +12), and began manufacturing his beloved “Staff of Pain” as a means of venting his fury. He really enjoys seeing them in use, and carries his own slightly more powerful version (Hex vs. Staff +12, with CR +4, skill; Staff +10) with which he teaches others to handle their staves. He currently holds some measure of respect for his work, and no small amount of fear for his brutal tactics when confronted about anything. His younger years are behind him now, another source of constant irritation, and he has of late taken up the pursuit of younger women. His knowledge of the village and its inhabitants could be very useful to the PCs, if they can overcome his vices. Ravallo can usually be found in what passes for the only tavern, or lurking about the shadows of younger Rasmirin women.
- **R'Klash:** Head of what passes for the local Tundra Loper Breeder's Guild (Administrator +5, Appraise Tundra Loper +10, Animal Handling +10, CR+3, Dagger +5, Staff +5), this older rangy man reeks of those beasts and drinks even more. He knows well who is the most common buyer of Lopers in these parts, and despite his lush drinking habit has a remarkable memory of who came and went through his Lopers' use. He knows of a small group of Rasmirins who bought six Lopers who fit the description of the raiders some months ago, and which castle they came from (“Rakta”). Perceptive PCs will note that he makes no mention of the Cymrilian who was with the raiders, indicating that traitor met his cohorts elsewhere. R'Klash is as often out among the pens as in the tavern; so finding him may prove somewhat troublesome.
- **R'tallia:** The village's resident food preparation specialist (Cook +10, Deception +5, Dagger +5, CR+2) and tavern owner/operator. She knows most of the villagers by name. She holds a special hatred for the followers of Borean, as her family lost everything when the Mirin Navy sank her ancestors' ships in Traitor's Bay. She has no children of her own, nor does she desire any, even though her generally good looks and ample charms might encourage such ideas. R'tallia knows that recently an unusual amount of food has been purchased by a certain group of Rasmirins, as though they were hosting some kind of feast for guests. If persuaded to talk about it, she even knows they are still procuring more food than their numbers would indicate, paid for in rare black diamonds. If the PCs get a chance to examine one of these black diamonds, it will be easy to confirm it comes from the heart of a small demon of some kind.
- **R'kon:** The most reliable and capable trader in town (Haggle +7, Barter +7, Merchant +10, Deception +5, Appraise General Goods +5, Underworld +5, Stealth +10, CR +2, Dagger +6, Ride Tundra Loper +5), R'kon keeps track of the goods flowing through town, and often sees some profit (one way or another) from them. He knows of the black diamond transactions, and is keenly interested in finding out more about their origins (and how much they are really worth), but R'tallia is holding out for a better offer. His enemies have a habit of falling into the Tundra Beast trenches at night, while his allies usually do rather well for themselves in this little town. R'kon is often very hard to locate, and he much enjoys the mystery surrounding his whereabouts.

RAH-WAY CASTLE

This castle is more heavily populated with magical types. It is not exactly what you would call a university of magic, but many of the Rasmirin mages spend time here studying lore and exchanging ideas. Here the PCs can learn that the cell they are seeking is quite capable of sharing their knowledge with other Rasmirins should they choose to do so.

This castle is more of a massive keep, lacking an outer wall of the usual sort. Instead a roughly hundred foot wide field of heavily broken ground interspersed with gullies, standing stones, and deadfalls, surrounds it. Only one path leads in or out, roughly two snowmanes abreast in width, to the large one hundred foot kill zone at the keep's base, inside the broken territory beyond. The keep itself is a massive structure, at least one hundred feet wide at its base, and about forty feet high of solid rock. A few scant slender windows admit occasional light out into the wilderness, and the upper half of the keep sports several generous balconies. The southern entrance is a massive double black iron door, reached by a fifty foot long (but only thirty feet wide) set of steps leading up to the doors, some twenty feet above the grounds.

Nothing short of a massive assault upon this keep will stir the inhabitants, and woes betide the attackers. Within, roughly d20+30 Rasmirin mages and/or anarchists study, and they do not care for disturbances.

Encounter: The Doors Open

No sign of life greets you as the steps are reached, but when touched, a thunderous gong or bell sounds from within the tower six times over. In a moment after the sound dies away, massive iron bolts are being moved, and the huge doors swing inward. Unearthly light spills out onto the landscape, a dancing display of flickering fire from a massive hanging brazier in the hall beyond. Two powerful-looking young Rasmirin step forth, each on the flank of an older Rasmirin who demands to know your business here.

While these three may not seem very dangerous, they are simply present to evaluate the new arrivals. The two guards are magically inept (skills as per Anarchists with double skill ratings, but have no Orders), but the mage is not (All Order ratings doubled as per Anarchist, plus Administrator +15 along with the usual Anarchist skill set). Any suspicious activity will be met with a sounded alarm (two gongs just inside the doorway on either side), and within just a few of rounds (d20/5-rounded down), large amounts of magical firepower will come to bear (d20/4-round down=Anarchists per round thereafter until all but a handful decide to flee instead).

Obviously, starting a fight here is practical suicide. Fortunately, the inhabitants will not give chase for any reason, thus providing the avenue of escape.

While one can learn a great deal about how the Rasmirins approach magic here, there is very little anti-Mirin activity in evidence. A frontal assault would likely be disastrous, and trying to sneak in would be very difficult indeed (practically all the Rasmirins have some degree of Stealth and/or Deception skills). This means the players will have to be very creative in their eventual approach to this tower, and extra experience should be awarded for such inventiveness.

Should the PCs manage peaceful entry, or overpower the guards suddenly, a bit more detail is provided here.

Locations of Rab-Way Castle

First Floor

These house the steeds and pets of the tower's guests; it is smelly and rather dirty, but remains vital to keep the various means of transportation safe from the outside world. In the center of the large central open area hangs a huge brazier eternally lit with illusionary fire (no heat), which the "stable boys" cover at night so they can sleep. These are occupied with all the usual trappings of a stable, save anything made of wood (usually replaced with black iron) or hay (replaced with furs). Both the roof and the floors are of solid stone. Opposite the main entrance, a single set of ancient sweeping stairs leads both up and down on the northern wall.

The Dungeon

A dismal place where the main stores of food and supplies are kept in tall black iron shelves in no particular arrangement. The goods are also in chaos, and some things are merely left sitting on the freezing cold stone floor. Given the local temperature however, there are virtually no vermin present, and perishables tend to keep fresh for a very long time.

The Second Floor

A large sort of greeting hall dominates this level and obviously is used for all manner of meetings. The eastern wall hosts' doors leading to the kitchens (crude, but well-equipped), while the western side has room for guests of a lesser standing (the rooms are very simple affairs; a single room with one medium sized bed of furs, a small lamp, and one stool made of bone and hide). Both the roof and the floors are of solid stone. The southern end of the hall leads to the ascending stairs, a curious circular affair more often seen in western lands than not.

The Third Floor

The main quarters for the inhabitants of this tower, this maze of stone passages and rooms can be confusing at best. Here live practically all the students and servants in close proximity, along with any guests of high standing. The rooms are not large, but are well designed, and a few even sport antique wooden furnishings. There are practically no amenities, so everyone is expected to take care of himself or herself, even if that means going outside. Near the northern side of the interior, another stairway leads up to the next level.

The Fourth Floor

This area is split into several large chambers used for teaching any number of skills to the students, each area having a simple stone bench around its edge for seating. Both the roof and the floors are of solid stone. Here, the countless stains and scars of unspeakable actions mar the floors and walls, a silent testament to the horrors of Rasmirin power. An unidentifiable but certainly unpleasant smell hangs in the cold air here. At the southern end of the central passageway, a well-worn set of stairs lead upward to a heavy black iron door carved deeply with a powerful spell (anyone *not* speaking the password silently whilst touching the door with anything is subject to a Level 20 Invocation [Aberon] Attack Mode w/an extra STR check at -4 or be knocked back from the door, spell repeats every time an attempt to open or attack the door is made without the password).

The Fifth Floor

Home to the instructors and owners of this establishment, this well-appointed collection of quarters is usually the quiet retreat from the bustle and chatter of students. Here can also be found rare written works and artifacts relation to demon kind of all sorts, along with no small number of imprisoned demons of minor sorts (Level 1-2). Most importantly, there is a small Nether Demon held in a large silver vase here, along with leather scrolls describing viable methods for containment and control. The instructions are written in Elder Tongue, though the lettering looks odd enough to make

the reader wonder who the author could have been. Use of appropriate magics will point to a Sepharan Symbolator as the writer, a frightening vision indeed! Small private chambers are present for low scale experiments of all kinds, along with all the possessions of the instructors they choose to leave here. Near the northern end of this level, a ladder leads to a black iron hatch in the ceiling, which is warded against Demons (at Level 20).

The Roof

A site of none too few terrible summonings, this wide and flat expanse of hardened stone offers clear view of the surrounding landscape for miles. No battlements or even a low wall protect the roof from attack, making the edges dangerous to approach for all manner of reasons. When the inhabitants decide to use this area, it is swept clear of ice and snow by summoned Pyro-demons.

NPCs of Rah-Way Castle

- **Ramun:** An instructor in the “Arts of Scrying and Camouflage” (Witchcraft: Reveal +15, Ward +12. Invocation [Aberon]: Summoning +8, Attack +8), he is also an agent of the cell the PCs are looking for (Deception +15, Underworld +10, and all other Anarchist skills at double the base rating). His assignment here is to recruit additional members for the cell who exhibit the same sort of beliefs the cell adheres to. His mission is a secret from the “school” however, so Ramun takes great pains to ensure he is not discovered. Riven and Ramun are part of the same cell. Obviously, Ramun knows where the cell can be found, a great number of details about their lair, and some of the more recent activities the cell has been up to! He keeps a bound female Night Demon (Level 8, Necromancy: Attack, Heal, Summon, and Ward Modes) as a bodyguard and “personal slave.” He should be considered to be dangerously

deceptive and a deadly foe if made an enemy.

- **Ratep:** Headmaster of the school in effect, his powerful personality (Witchcraft: Influence +15, and Ward +12. Invocation [Aberon]: Attack +16) generally runs roughshod over any who might challenge him. He much enjoys his station, and regularly abuses his power (usually used on new students). Ratep is not just a “blow-hard” though, his organizational abilities (Administration +10) are not insignificant, and his ability to keep students in line is very helpful. He teaches the “Arts of Destruction,” a favorite class of many students here, and sports a bound Storm Demon (Level 8, Aeromancy: Attack, Move, Conjure [Reversed], Ward [Hex], and Summon [Demons only] Modes) more as a trophy than anything else. He has some inkling that Ramun might be up to something on the side, but has yet to find out enough to know for sure.
- **R'suulia:** Mistress of Summonings and Wards (Witchcraft: Ward +16. Invocation [Aberon]: Summoning +16), her bound male Night Demon (Level 15 Necromancy: Attack, Heal [Harm], Summon, and Alter Modes) is a testament to R'suulia's skills (all other skills as per Anarchist). Her classes are sometimes held on “The Roof” when there is some chance of mishap, whether that is from novice summoners or skilled students working exceptionally powerful spells. Lately she has been experimenting with more and more extreme forms of demons, as though seeking some sort of ultimate demon. She is a matter of special interest to Ramun, who would very much like to recruit her, but remains unsure of her true loyalties or reliability.

RAI-EVA CASTLE

Now on to a truly formidable bastion of evil power; this is no place for green PCs to tread. Yet it is not the home of the cell the PCs are looking for, merely a taste of what is to come. This place is essentially a red herring and is not vital to the completion of the module. Do not hesitate to allow the players to skip this place; likely doing so will lengthen the PC's lives considerably...

Even from a distance, this terrible fortress exudes a sense of pure evil. Towering walls of ice coated black and craggy stone bear countless scars of demonic activity. From several of the towers, dim flickering lights illuminate the hollow windows, hinting that this awful place is actually inhabited by something, but by what one can only have nightmares. Storm clouds rife with lightning seem to eternally hang about the sky above, occasionally striking the taller towers with peals of thunder that echo across the landscape. As you approach, the ground becomes broken, torn asunder by a web of bottomless chasms that culminate at the foot of the castle in a great canyon shrouded in gray mist. Only one path leads safely all the way to the lonely bridge of ice that spans the yawning darkness below.

Darkness like some hellish cloud hangs about the castle, making the features difficult to discern from a distance, made only more ominous as one approaches. Flurries of freezing wind, sleet and snow batter travelers here, and treacherous ground threatens to hurl the unwary to whatever unspeakable fate awaits them hungrily in the chasms beneath. One look is enough to convince any of you that this place is cursed, the place of doom for anyone foolish enough to dare walk in the dark places of the world.

Encounter: Bridge Guardians

Any being approaching by flight will be challenged by a Storm Demon (Level 8, one each per intruder), as they attempt to cross over the canyon surrounding the castle. For every Storm Demon killed, another will take its place at the beginning of the next round, but will be stronger each time (+1 Level each, 12th Level maximum. If the Level 12 Demon is defeated, no more demons will challenge the intruder). Two huge bound Frost Demons (Level 10 each) guard the bridge itself, ready to kill any who do not know the pass-phrase "Qua-Buloowei!" (from Elder Tongue, it translates roughly to "the place of the killing"). Statistics for the demons are provided at the end of the book.

Locations of Rai-Eva Castle

Main Gate

Once past the guards by whatever means, the castle's main gate stands wide open, as if expecting visitors. This is a ruse however, as the interior of the passage is guarded, and the gate at the far end is closed.

The huge gateway is open before you, leading into the shadowed darkness of a long wide passage into the castle beneath the main gate house. A cold wind draws you into the massive stone passage, but you do not see the other end of it; the exit is lost in the inky darkness within. Even in the bitter chill, the faint reek of death hangs in the air. Something terrible has happened here.

This passage is the haunt of some very nasty Night Demons (1 per PC, no weapons, Level 7 each) who feed upon anyone who does not know the password ("Voldorn" in Elder Tongue). They will not immediately attack, but will wait until the entire party is within the passage, and then strike from behind, starting with the last people in line. These Night Demons will gang up on PCs as much as possible, trip unwary opponents, and

stab anyone they can in the back. Each one will fight until slain. Statistics for the demons are provided at the end of the book.

The bones of previously dead victims litter the edges of the passage about half way down it, as leftovers from previous meals.

The Inner Gate

You reach the great Inner Gate, a massive black iron wall of barbed spikes, with no visible seam at all. An ancient skeleton hangs futilely on the barbs of the gate as though the person tried to run through the gate and failed to survive the results. The cold stone floor bears no telltale scrape marks from the doors, only a large brown stain under the skeleton.

The doors open inward, a fact which whose clue is in the skeleton's feet (-5 PER check), which are in such a position that they would have to have been dragged toward the passage to be in. A total of 350 pounds of pressure applied to either door (with staff, spear, magic, etc.) will slowly press the door inward, admitting the party. This simple obstacle should not pose a great challenge for the party, but is more a matter of setting for the unattended castle gate, encouraging the idea that no mortals live here to do the mundane things a castle usually requires. The door is not barred because the inhabitants fear no army, much less a pathetic little troupe such as the PCs.

The Courtyard

The massive door grinds inward, giving way to a large courtyard, some one hundred feet across. The inner walls are crowded over with the seemingly countless cruel iron scaffolds, which in turn bear an incredible variety of corpses and skeletons in various states of decay. The dead are variously tied, pinned, lashed, nailed, or impaled into place, likely while still alive. The black stone ground is a huge mosaic of dark stains and frost, watched over by the surrounding dead, and the main keep itself. The scene is randomly lit by the flashes of lightning from above.

From here, the PCs can explore the castle, and in no particular order. Aside from the endless frosted black stone passages and smaller halls, there are some places of particular interest (GMs are encouraged to read portions of these references as desired):

The Walls

These massive sixty foot high structures have certainly seen better days, they are battered and scarred so much as to appear almost natural formations instead of constructed. On the icy black stone, footing is treacherous, and there are plenty of places to easily fall from the walls to one's doom. This is worsened by the powerful winds that occasionally blast against the walls, and are easily powerful enough to hurl those present bodily off the wall completely. Climbing these walls is certainly dangerous (-5 skill check), but given the amount of damage they have sustained over time, it is certainly possible.

The Wall Towers

These six crumbling monolithic deathtraps are perhaps even more dangerous than the walls, as at any moment, hundreds of pounds of stone may give way and drag the unfortunate down with them to the cold unforgiving piles of rubble below. It seems as though some titanic struggle occurred here, as each tower's interior is smashed beyond recognition. Attempting to climb the interiors (-7 skill check) is marginally less dangerous than trying the ice-coated exterior (-10 skill check), thus ensuring few Scouts could ever sneak in to the castle. Ice forms here in great vertical sheets or icicles, and is much admired by the occasional Frost Demon.

The Scaffolds

Closer study of these could reveal that most of the dead are Mirin, and generally they were Tundra Scouts, all of whom were tortured extensively before death using crude methods and the occasional demonic assistance. These constructs are easily climbed upon, though one would wonder why anyone would want to. This place is likely haunted by a few unquiet souls who perished at the hands

of the owners of this cursed castle, not that the howling wind would not most certainly drown them out. Fumbling about here in the open is considerably dangerous if anyone would be foolish enough to reach the top of the Scaffold, as the Storm Demons might decide to drop upon them from above (if the Storm demons have not already been beaten back completely).

The Lower Keep

This massive hexagonal base upon which the Upper Keep rests is riddled with twisting halls dedicated to various forms of demons. The black stone carvings are disturbing to say the least, and cover almost every surface here. Huge stone steps and pillars are common, patches of strangely mobile mist drift about, and the entire area is lit with glass globes filled with flickering blue magical flames (which dissipate harmlessly if released). Several large holes in the floor lead to the Dungeons below, and a Great Central Stair leads up to the Middle Keep. Near the center, just below ground level, rests an unlit circular hall of ominous evil. A huge statue of crumbling rock, depicting the mighty demon god Aberon, occupies the center of the chamber. All about its feet are six huge piles of fine dust, all that remain of sacrifices to this horrible deity. At least one Night Demon (GM determines level) will be lurking around in this place at all times, ready to kill anyone who dares to defile the unholy statue or the dust, but leaving anyone else alone who does not attack it first.

The Dungeons

A terrible place of half-completed passages and caverns. This is a favorite haunt of local Earth Demons who are all too happy to slaughter anyone they can catch. Here can occasionally be found ancient Mirin artifacts lost when the Earth Demons moved in a few years ago. While the warren of passages was extensive before, the depredations of the Earth demons have turned this place into a massive three-dimensional maze leading off endlessly to who knows where. The variety of deadfalls and bottomless chasms would impress the

most experience explorer, and likely kill anyone foolish enough to try climbing them. It is possible one could reach the great chasm which surrounds the castle from here, but such a journey would be extremely hazardous at best. Here the cold is not as severe as above though, so the occasional moss or lichen can be found growing in the damp stone.

The Middle Keep

Reached by the Great Central Stairway, this area was obviously once used as quarters and meeting rooms of all kinds. Here the Central Stair has great chains hanging down from the Upper Keep, dangling over the empty air as if they once held something there.

These cold passages are now haunted by a powerful Ghast (Level 25, Necromancy: Summoning, Heal, Reveal, Alter), which considers itself the lord of this castle. Statistics are provided at the end of the book.

The creature lives here as though it were a true home. The Ghast takes pains to live a "normal life" in these chambers, taking imaginary meals at regular intervals, sleeping (curled up) in the beds, and holding court in the largest meeting room or down in the Lower Keep somewhere (but not in the chamber with Aberon's statue, which the Ghast refers to as "The Temple of the Great Old One..."). One could debate whether or not the Ghast is actually interacting with the spirits of those long gone, as it's likely that such souls still haunt this castle.

The Ghast will seem strangely hospitable, even civilized - as much as possible anyway. Clever questioning by the PCs can garner a great deal of knowledge about the comings and goings of the Rasmirins here, as the Ghast is always aware of them as they move about in the keep above. It will not initially harm anyone who does not offer harm to it, or until the "guests" refuse to stay "for a while." Then the Ghast's hunger will take over, and it will seek to devour the hearts of the intruders (for their rudeness if nothing else). This is particularly dangerous for the PCs; as the

Ghast knows every foot of this place in detail, and can move at inhuman speed or hide at will throughout the Middle Keep. The GM is encouraged to play up the Ghast's creepy-ness during this encounter.

The Upper Keep

This is where things get interesting, as the Rasmirins up here are some pretty scary folks. The upper end of the Great Central Stair terminates in the center of a web of very tall crumbling halls perpetually laden with frost, and cracked by lightening. A cold breeze blows through here at all times, occasionally gusting into a bone-freezing blast. The wind makes a strange howling sound here which is very unnerving, especially to those with high PER scores.

The amenities are lavish, though, with huge rooms with just a few old seats or beds in them, a rather well stocked larder, isolated studies with massive collections of rare works of all kinds (scrolls, spell books, and miscellaneous magical items), and a few well-used summoning rooms (the floor permanently etched with magical inscriptions). Throughout the area, ancient tattered hangings and tapestries adorn the walls, all faded far beyond recognition of their original beauty. The tapestries are often blown about by the relentless gusts, lending an eerie ambiance to the entire area. In this sanctuary of ruin, four mighty Anarchists dwell.

NPCs of Rai-Eva Castle

- **Ra'Rin:** A “masterful” Anarchist (all base skills tripled, Invocation [Aberon]: Summoning and Attack at +12 each, Witchcraft: Ward and Reveal at +12 each) who seeks to topple the Mirin in all the traditional ways, and that is his great flaw. He is perpetually foiled by the Mirin, and his frustration fuels yet more doomed plans. While he remains a dangerous figure to the Mirin, his “tried and true” methods are easily stopped. Ra'Rin would never admit defeat, his sheer ego would not tolerate that, nor any challenge to his

authority. Ra'Rin bears a tattooed Ward vs. Demons (Level 10), and his personal ride is a huge Tundra Beast (Level 4), an odd pet indeed.

- **Ras'Maan:** Another unimaginative brute (all base skills doubled, no magic though, but add Brawling +12 and Intimidate +12) who supports the “brilliant” Ra'Rin in whatever scheme he comes up with. Ras'Maan would not be so dangerous, except he possesses a set of magical bracers which lend great power to his fists (“Bracers of Crushing”, +10 DR), a cloak which allows him to fly (“Frostwere Fury Cloak”, Move Mode, 300 pound capacity, SPD -5), and a belt which protects him (“Belt of Shields”, manually-triggered Defend Mode, 3/day, 30 points of protection, each charge lasts 20 rounds). These are his most prized possessions, and he guards them well, as he secretly knows he would never be able to remain with this group if he lost them. Otherwise he truly enjoys his station as Ra'Rin's sidekick/thug, free to brutalize anyone Ra'Rin dislikes or that may dare to attack Ra'Rin.
- **Re'Rakei:** One might consider her the true power behind this group (all base skills tripled [Deception +18], Invocation [Aberon]: Attack +20, Witchcraft: Reveal at +22, plus Espionage +10 and Seduction +10), endlessly manipulating others to do her bidding. This group remains a serious threat to the Mirin in great part to Re'Rakei's unsung efforts. This is just fine with her, as she knows eventually someone will take that fool Ra'Rin down, figuring him to be the real threat and not her. She keeps her fellow Rasmirin in a perpetual state of confusion over her, all the better to keep them under control. All who see her at work have to admire her sheer destructive power, as well as her exceptional powers of observation (Reveal) and stealth (Conceal). To make the issue worse, Re'Rakei wears a magical red iron headdress (decorated with 12 black diamonds) that grants her

exceptional powers of magical endurance (As per Spellstone, absorbs the spell casting penalty up to -12 per day). A most interesting fact is that Re'Rakei's quarters contain volumes written intelligence reports about the Mirin all the way from the Far Reaches to the Sea of Ice, including the city of Myr. Some of the reports go back many years too, indicating a continuing operation. One report even mentions the arrival of some outlanders in Myr, escorted by a well-known priestess called "The Left Hand of Borean"...

- **Rey'Isle:** The group's resident summoner (all base skills doubled [Deception +15], Invocation [Aberon]: Summoning +24, Witchcraft: Ward at +24, plus Arcane Lore [Demonology] +10, History [Talislanta] +6, and Artificer [Soulstones] +6), and while aged he is still a power to be reckoned with. Rey'Isle fills the position of barely intelligible mean old codger, and is at least mildly insane. His endless castigation of the younger generation's failings is the price paid for his exceptional skills and experience. None dare cross him, as his personal bodyguards include a powerful Storm Demon (Level 12), one mighty Frost Demon (Level 9), as well as two very twisted female Night Demons (Level 12 each). Both of these last creatures lewdly fawn over the old Rasmirin, who likes to watch them slowly kill the helpless victims he helps provide. It is Rey'Isle that knows something of Sepharans, and would recognize their magical writings, though he has never actually met or summoned one. He is aware of the Rasmirin cell that has supposedly summoned an actual Sepharan, and is interesting in meeting this being, but as of yet lacks the knowledge of the cell's exact whereabouts. His research over the decades has led him to conclude that like Night Demons and Tarterans, the Sepharans are some kind of half-breed (though biomancy is not his area of specialty, his interest is keen). Also, that the Sepharans once visited Talislanta, and left behind the three-eyed

idols in the land of Ur. This is something he's been trying to get any Rasmirin he can to investigate; his lack of success fuels his hermit-like instincts, keeping him here in the castle.

Obviously this group is very powerful and dangerous, but they are not the cell that the PCs seek. Each one knows how to make an entrance, and none of them are hospitable to visitors. Defeating these villains does not truly help the PCs cause, though the information Rey'Isle has could prove extremely valuable. If the PCs have survived the battle likely to ensue in the Upper Keep, then departure should not be a serious issue (unless they failed to dispose of the Ghastr previously). The collected clues should lead the PCs on to the last location where the cell can be found (even if the GM needs to provide a map, or better yet a good description). Again, ensure that experience points have been distributed, and players given a chance to spend them before moving on to the next chapter.

Concluding Thoughts

GMs are encouraged to design maps or lay out descriptions of the castles in detail, if that would suit their style of play. Obviously only general descriptions are given here, and are intended to grant maximum flexibility to the players and GM.

Perceptive players may notice the number six coming up quite often, and they would be correct in presuming that number's importance later on (especially in relation to the Sepharans).

The break-up of the Rasmirin intelligence network in Rai-Eva will be of some value to the Mirin, as they had no idea where it was being coordinated.

None of the magical items the PCs have encountered so far (except for the Rod and the Eye) have been of Archaen origins, so keep close track of how many items the PCs are carrying.

Remember the PCs always have a way out by returning to the pinnacle of rock where the Ice Dragon awaits them, and they will be transported back to Myr safely (Chapter 5).

As you have likely noticed, the foes are becoming more dangerous as the PCs progress. If you feel they are not up to dealing with the problems in the next chapter, feel free to run them through several more encounters/adventures of your own, or expand the amount of experience they will receive in Chapter 3 to help them along.

Throughout the chapters, small seeds of additional material have been provided to

inspire GMs to add in their own content. Do not hesitate to use them if it will be more fun for players.

If the GM feels the game has hit a slow moment, or the players are losing focus, one suggestion is to have the PCs attacked by a “Rasmirin Agent” (per Chapter 2) to remind them of why they are here.

Obviously, if the Rod was lost to the Rasmirin earlier on, the PCs will have a harder time overcoming the challenges ahead.

CHAPTER FOUR

Lair of the Beast

The fourth chapter is a showdown with the Nihilist cell (along with its mysterious benefactors), and as such it is strongly suggested that the Gamemaster read over this chapter thoroughly so they may have a strong grasp of how tough this last leg of the quest really is. This chapter is very combat-heavy and environmentally dangerous. Given that the enemy will most likely have already been alerted to the presence of the party (by someone they've encountered in a previous chapter, or if the Rod arrives), the reception is certain to be *very* unpleasant.

The exact location has been left ambiguous so Gamemasters may place it as they see fit, though one of the two northwestern islands is suggested as the most viable place.

NIHILIST CELL

Your quest has brought you here, to this terrible wasteland of ice and rock. Countless miles lie between you and anyone friendly who might mourn your passing among the enemy of the Mirin people. The prey you seek lurks nearby, an icy lair dedicated to a demon god, far from the comfort of home. While before the obstacles were troublesome, here the challenges will be truly difficult, and the price of failure could be high indeed...

The players should have all the information they need at this point to locate the Rasmirin Nihilist cell's main base of operations from clues in the previous chapters. Since they have chosen to complete the mission, the GM should feel free to let them reach the base relatively unhindered (perhaps only one or two significant encounters along the way). Strongly encourage the players to stick together, if they have not already figured that out.

The exact layout is left to the GM; only general descriptions of significant areas will be given here. Again, the GM is encouraged to read portions of the area descriptions as the PCs explore them:

Entrance

Barely more than a large hole in the side of a ridge of ice, not even large enough for an ice giant to walk through upright, the cave's entrance is for the most part barred by long icicles. The ground is somewhat packed down with ice and snow, as though no small amount of foot traffic regularly passes through here. There are no apparent guards or barriers, and the PCs may enter the freezing cold tunnel freely. Observant PCs will note that the tunnel swiftly enters bedrock, even though the tunnel itself is thickly frosted over and appears to be solely composed of ice. Soon the tunnel splits off in several smaller passages, and observant PCs may notice the slight but constant movement of air into the Entrance.

Quarters

This cold side tunnel leads to an assortment of smaller stone chambers obviously intended for occupants, clustered around a single tunnel which loops back upon itself. Most of the chambers have hide (Frostwere, Snowmane, Mirin, etc.) curtains across their entrances, with a single common room, and several smaller adjoining chambers within. Here, the frost has obviously lessened, and the bare stone is prominent in most places. While conditions are still rather primitive, the quarters are generally free of filth and roomy enough to comfortably sleep in, and odd items lie about. The area is generally lit with fist-sized stones enchanted to glow or emit various colors continuously. Curiously, no one is here.

Pantry

Faint smells of decaying meat swiftly strengthen as one enters this wide chamber, along with the gruesome sight of corpses hung on the walls by iron hooks. Each one expertly skinned and dressed, with only the meat and bones remaining. There are some light-stones here, hanging by sinew from the roof. Incredibly, there are examples of a wide variety of Talislantan creatures here from all over the continent. In the center of this carnage is a large stone table stained from countless butchering, and deeply etched with runnels converging to a single large spout at one end of the slab. Eerily, this room stays just above freezing temperature. Laying near the foot of the slab lie various sets of manacles, used to help restrain the still-living. Along the edges of the horizontal workspace, huge black iron nails used in restraining victims ring the table, and all are well worn. Often the old large black iron bucket sits here, awaiting its horrible cargo, destined for even worse fates.

Gear Room

This crowded dark chamber is stocked full of all manner of iron and adamant equipment, including adamant staffs, iron hooks and knives, portions of adamant chain armor, cords of woven sinew, frostwere hides and cloaks, iron chisels and shackles. Also stored

here is a supply of Mirin items, roughly enough to fully equip five Tundra Scouts and one Priestess of Borean (minus a spell book), though these items are buried in the very back. There is no light in here.

Meeting Hall

The massive black iron doors to this chamber stand open, and within a very large rock cavern is occupied with stone tables and unstable bone stools with hide coverings. Some tables have a light-stone resting in a small depression near the middle, all together eerily lighting the room as a whole. At the far end from the doors, a large throne constructed of Mirin bones occupies a wide dais. The natural rock floor is uneven, but well worn from use. On either side, large passages lead off into the darkness away from this cave, both drawing in air continuously. Overall the room is somewhat dimly lit from an unusual angle, and the black rock here seems to cast very deep shadows, especially close to the smooth floor.

Encounter: Surprise Attack

As you move into this large assembly room, the great iron doors slam shut behind you, and a huge iron bar pivots down into place, preventing them from being easily opened! Immediately, the whistling of air between the cracks in the large doors fills the room, as though it were calling out the alarm. From the shadows figures materialize all around, Rasmirins girded for battle. Auras blaze, lightning strikes, fire roars, and shards of deadly freezing ice fly!

Given the Rasmirins were using their not inconsiderable stealth and Conceal abilities, plus hiding behind the massive iron doors, it is unlikely at best that they would be discovered before the trap is sprung. Presuming the PCs were ready for trouble (very likely), initiate combat immediately. If they were caught unaware (unlikely), then the Rasmirins get one free action each.

Include two Rasmirin Anarchists (standard skills, Modes should include Attack, Summon,

Defend, Reveal) per PC, plus one Rasmirin Master (skills and Modes at double standard rating) per PC.

The Rasmirins will not attempt any summonings here, but will use their abilities to kill as many PCs as possible before dying. They will first concentrate upon single targets, but as the ranks thin out, the Rasmirins will have no problems lying down area-of-effect Attack spells. These folks are *fanatics* among Rasmirins; they will all fight to the death to prove their nihilistic point.

Should the PCs defeat this group, a last Anarchist will emerge from one of the tunnels behind the throne, and from a scroll summon forth a Black Ice Demon. The Anarchist will then flee down one of the tunnels unless slain first, and the Black Ice Demon will attack the party. Statistics for the demon are provided at the end of the book.

Obviously this trap is set to try to put an end to the PCs meddling in Rasmirin affairs, and presuming the PCs survive, move on to the next section when ready.

Temple Sanctum

Both tunnels curl downward to a cavernous craggy natural rock chamber rife with ancient fissures. The entrance to this titanic chamber is some ten feet off the floor, more of a hole in the ceiling than a formal egress. Perceptive PCs may notice the temperature in here is constantly changing.

Around the huge irregular cavern are interspersed six massive floating uncut black diamonds (also known as demon hearts, roughly 30-50 carats each), each one above (about 12 feet) a huge demonic rune indicating its origin (for Frost, Fire [Pyro], Water [Aqua], Earth, Air [Storm], and Void), and in a rough circle. Each one of the stones is outlined in a nimbus of dark energy (so dark in fact it is painful to look upon directly), and crackling with malevolent demonic power. The black diamonds are no more than sixty feet apart from any other one. Near the center

of the cavern is a wide (12 ft+) hole in the floor, from which hot vapors issue into this chamber, and obscure the lower reaches of the shaft completely. Waves of hot and cold air wash violently about the room, carrying dust and ash with them wherever they go.

All living things within *12 feet* of the giant demon hearts suffer a Level 10 Attack Mode blast of the appropriate anti-elemental type each round. Merely being within the chamber is enough to inflict DR 1 of each anti-elemental type present per round (total of 6) as the Entropic energies here are so strong.

Encounter: Night Demon

As the last of the party enters the huge room, an ivory figure will emerge from the steaming shaft below, wreathed in dark markings of power, and borne upon the shoulders of a massive Night Demon!

The demon is Level 15, Modes: Attack [+15], Harm [+18], Summon [+18], and Defend [+15], armed with a brass long sword and an enchanted Bane Spear [Necromantic Harm +10, damage dealt by spell is added to the wielder's own hit points, and extra health fades off at 1 point per round until normal maximum hit points are reached].

The rider (see next encounter) will simply step off at the edge of the fissure and allow the Night Demon to proceed. The demon will already have its Aura up when it enters the room, but it will only have 20 points left on it. This creature will seek to kill any intruders, and here in the flickering shadows it is a terrible foe. The Night Demon will avoid the demon hearts, and try to drive intruders into them (unless he drains all their hit points first, though he will toss the corpses into the demon hearts for disposal).

From high above, hidden among the outcroppings, Rashim the Rasmirin Lord Summoner will watch. He is no fool, and will not reveal himself until after the PCs have all been defeated, or they have moved on down the shaft.

Encounter: Quara

It is the rider who is the true danger, not the demon. This is a Sepharan Monk of terrible power named Quara, and she shall ensure that no one disturbs her master down below! If the PCs survive the Demon's assault, and/or dare to approach the steaming shaft, her specific abilities are listed in the Reference Section.

Even as you approach, the strange naked woman turns toward you, her pale skin a canvas for countless mysterious runes, and outlined in a dark aura. She is tall and muscular, yet somehow supple, and no scar mars her heavily marked flesh. Her hair is thick and rope-like, as though it were nothing so thin as the hair you are used to seeing on other humanoids. She seems to take careful measure of each opponent, though her black with white pupil eyes betray no emotion as she sweeps her hands over several of the runes on her body. The hypnotic motion triggers seething, even darker energies to flow over her powerful form.

Quara will use only her Runefist combat abilities as enhanced by her Sepharic Calligraphs to begin with. The terrible power of her Third Eye and Runic Calligraphs will be revealed only once each round (she'll use the Eye first, then the Calligraphs). She is a veteran of many missions, a true professional, and her mission is clear. She will not hesitate to take advantage of any perceived weakness or mistake; will not give any ground while she still lives, and deserves her own theme music.

If the party survives this encounter, it is likely one or more of them have died, encourage role-play here as the remaining PCs either turn back now or bravely move on to the final encounter...

Quara

Raised in the Demonrealms by a Fanatic Cult, Quara learned to hate all that is, and became dedicated to helping remove those who stood in the way of her cult. Her true name is not "Quara," but that is what she is openly called. Marked by many learned Symbolators for her loyalty and deeds, her charmed existence is now tested in this alien realm. Her approach to all situations is one of confidence and skill, and she knows when to use her "Iron Will" to break away from any troublesome emotions. Her loyalty to the cause is absolute, her methods utterly ruthless.

Race: Sepharan

Profession: Monk

Description: Female, 6', 150 pounds

Attributes:

STR +1	DEX +2
CON +2	SPD +1
PER +2 (+7)	CHA -1
WIL +2	INT +1
CR +4	MR +2

Hit Points: 24

Special Abilities: Demon Eye, Attack +12 (+14, same mechanics as casting a spell); Runefist (see Skills).

Skills (final Rating in parenthesis):
Dagger +2 (+6), Language (Runic) +7 (+8), Language (Elder Tongue) +10 (+11), Acrobatics +8 (+10), Cult Rituals +12 (+14), Demon Lore +8 (+10), Evade +12(+14), Stealth +10(+12), Runefist +12 (+16, may choose each round to use one of the following as FREE action, may be combined with other effects):

- *Speed of Wind:* +1 free attack (no penalty, -2 DR, may parry missiles)

(continued)

Steaming Chambers

The bottom of the steaming shaft opens into a hellish environment. Here the air is hot enough to cause burns (DR 2 per round from Heat), there are no light sources, and the frequent and unpredictable blasts of super-heated steam (roll d20 per round, 11+ = DR 20 Heat blast) threaten all life. In many ways, the steam also hampers vision, reducing random areas to zero visibility without warning.

The broken floor is difficult at best to navigate (DEX check at -5 penalty per each round of movement, Critical Success negates any further checks), and dangerously treacherous at worst (any falls from DEX check inflict DR 4, Mishaps are worse at GM's evil whimsy). The twisting and irregular passages often end in lethal deadfalls, and form a vast maze under the ground here. Unless the party can fly, there will be plenty of chances to test their Climb Skills throughout the tunnels and shafts.

This area is rife with Earth Demons (Level = 8+[d20/4], one per 3 PCs are close enough to sense them; statistics are provided at the end of the book), and all the danger that presents.

It will likely take no small amount of time to explore the caves in order to discover the *one* entrance to the lower maze. In the lower reaches, the maze suffers even more frequent steam venting (roll d20 per round, 5+ = DR 20 Heat blast), and the lowest portion actually opens into a magma tube. This last section is frequented by Pyro Demons (Level = d20/2, one per 2 PCs are close enough to sense them; statistics are provided at the end of the book), and the air is even hotter (DR 4 per round). Light is infrequent at best in the maze unless there is a Pyro Demon nearby, or the party is close to the magma opening.

Most interestingly, an alien looking triple-eyed monolith stands here, looking into the magma below. It is very similar to the idols seen in Ur, and worshipped by the Ur clans. All around the opening, many gleaming

Quara (continued)

- *Speed of Lightning*: +2 free attacks (no penalty) with -5 DR and she takes from the strain, may catch missiles.
- *Hardened Body*: +1 PR/5 levels (PR+3).
- *Iron Will*: +1 WIL per 5 levels (WIL +3 = WIL +5).
- "Stone Fist": +1 DR/3 levels (DR+5).

Orders: Symbolatry; Ward +11, Defend +8, and Attack +8.

Runic Calligraphs: Defend +16 (Aura, lasts 21 rounds), Attack +16 (on contact, DR 16, for 16 rounds), Alter +15 (SPD -3, 16 minutes), Move +16 (SPD -7, weightless for 21 rounds), Alter +15 (Runefist +5, 16 minutes), Influence +16 (Despair for 16 rounds), Ward vs. Cold +16 (17 minutes), Ward vs. Water +16 (17 minutes), Ward vs. Demons +16 (17 minutes), Ward vs. Fire +16 (+Heat, 17 minutes), and Ward vs. Devils +16 (17 minutes). Note that only four of these may be used at the same time. Each use counts as a spell (-1 per additional attempt per day) and is activated using her Cult Rituals Rating (+14).

Sepharic Calligraphs (all permanent at Level +16): Harm +5 (DR 5 on contact, Decay), Heal +5 (1 once per round, self only), Reveal +5 (PER +5, sensory enhancement)

Gear: Shadow Steel Dagger, Brass Dagger (Alter +15, Cult Rituals +5).

demon hearts have been arranged in a mystical swirling pattern, seemingly focused upon the idol itself. Strangely, the demons have not disturbed this site at all. Astute Summoners may realize (Summoning Mode check at -5 penalty, -10 if no Summoning Mode) some

sort of unimaginably powerful Summoning Enchantment is being performed here, the exact nature of which remains a mystery unless the mages pass an additional check (-10 penalty, -15 if no Summoning Mode or Enchantment Mode). They may then discover this terrible truth; the Enchanter is creating some kind of permanent gateway to the Demonrealms! Any attempt to disturb the idol or the stones will result in a dreaded Dimensional Rift, resulting in the certain destruction of anything in the lower maze!

If the Rod has already been inserted into the top of the idol, the Enchantment may already be complete; if not, then the Enchantment is still in progress. There are two possible versions of the encounter to follow.

Possibility A: The Rod is Absent

The enchantment is still in progress, but nearing completion (only a minute or so to go), so the PCs have a chance to stop it.

After the PCs have moved down into the Steaming Chamber to face off against Zathros the Sepharan Master Symbolator, Rashim the Rasmirin Lord Summoner will follow them from his hiding place, effectively boxing them in. He knows they are here to kill the Sepharans and likely him as well. He has seen the PCs fight, and will be ready for their tactics. This means the party will have to face not one, but two powerful mages in cataclysmic battle.

Here in the bowls of the earth your fate will be decided. The plan of the enemy is clear, and only the villains remain. As the alien mage steps out from behind the idol, terrible runes of unspeakable power flare with ebon energy across his flesh. From behind, an aging Rasmirin Anarchist emerges with terrible demons at his side, ready to end your days. It seems you missed the Rasmirin Lord Summoner himself, and he has come to aid his teacher in this final conflict. No words are spoken, only the deafening roar of demons heralds the attack!

Rashim

Raised in the Outcast Isles by a Nihilistic Cult, he learned to hate all that is, especially the Mirin. Several months prior to the raid for the Rod, he deciphered an ancient tablet describing the "Sepharan Demons," along with their goals. Figuring out these creatures were of similar faith or calling, he decided to try to summon one. Rashim was wildly successful, and the Symbolator had much in common with him. Soon mutual communication was established between Rashim's group and the Sepharan Fanatics, and a plan formed. The Rasmirins would help the Sepharans locate the lost Codex Keys (likely somewhere in Ur), and the Sepharans would help bring the Mirin to their knees.

Race: Rasmirin

Profession: Lord Summoner

Description: Male, 6 ft, 150 pounds

Attributes:

STR +1	DEX +1
CON +2	SPD 0
PER 0	CHA -1
WIL 0	INT +2
CR +3	MR +3

Hit Points: 24

Special Abilities: Immune to Cold.

Skills: Dagger +6 (+9), Staff +9 (+10), Doctrines (Demonology) +15 (+17), Deception +18 (+17), Stealth +15 (+16), Trade Skill (Administrator) +12 (+11), Language (Elder Tongue) +10 (+12), Sign +10 (+12), Rural +7, Ettiquette +9 (+8), and Swim +9 (+10).

Orders: Invocation (Aberon); Attack +8 (+13), and Summon +8 (+13). Witchcraft; Ward +8 (+13), Reveal +4 (+9), and Heal +4 (+9).

Gear: Brass Dagger (Alter +15, Dagger +5), Adamant Staff (Summon Storm Demons, Level 12 for 2 minutes each, 3/day), Adamant Mail Gauntlets (Alter +15, STR +3), Hiding Cloak (Conceal +15), Headdress (Alter +15, PR +5).

Include a Nether Demon (Level 10), one Night Demon (Level 10), one Pyro Demon (Level 10), plus one additional Earth Demon (Level 10) per PC. These will charge forth to kill the party while Rashim supports them with his magic, and tries to prevent the party from escaping (he does not want an army of Mirin Tundra Scouts to come calling). Zathros will try to kill anyone who approaches the idol.

Obviously only very powerful and clever PCs will survive this battle. The two villains will try to lure or drive the PCs away from the idol and the black diamonds, in order to prevent any accidental Rifts. Zathros will try to remain near the enchantment so he can finish it as quickly as possible, and Rashim will try to protect the Symbolator. If the PCs kill Zathros, his enchantment simply fades harmlessly away. Game over, PCs win!

If the enchantment is completed, the Sepharic Calligraph will summon another Sepharan Symbolator before the portal is opened (see Possibility B below). This means there will be an open portal to the Demonrealms, but it will be linked to only one place in the Demonrealms. Zathros intends to summon another Sepharan Symbolator of similar power, and together they can quickly gather the rest of the Fanatic Cult (about 36 members, mostly Monks like Quara though less powerful). The Cult will then search Talislanta for any Sepharic Codex Keys, likely to be found in Ur among the triple-eyed idols. Their coming will be like the Black Wind, leaving chaos and destruction in their wake, and only the Ariane will be likely to stop them. NOTE: Zathros will do his best to capture any Ariane present. He would like to know where the Ariane people come from, so the Sepharans can find and destroy their ancient enemy. This would effectively start an inter-dimensional war across Talislanta!

Zathros

Raised in the Demonrealms by a Fanatic Cult, he learned to hate all that is, and became dedicated to helping remove those who stood in the way of his cult. Marked by the most learned of Symbolators, he seeks the Sepharic Keys in this alien realm. While the Rasmirins have been useful indeed, he cares nothing for them at all. Zathros will do his very best to ensure the portal is opened, and his Fanatic Cult reaches Talislanta. The Sepharic Codex Keys must be found at any cost!

Race: Sepharan

Profession: Master Symbolator

Description: Male, 5 feet 10 inches, 130 pounds

Attributes:

STR 0	DEX +1
CON +1	SPD 0
PER +2	CHA -1
WIL +2	INT +3
CR 0	MR +5

Hit Points: 24

Special Abilities: Demon Eye, Attack +12 (+17, same mechanics as casting a spell).

Skills: Dagger +4 (+4), Language (Runic) +7 (+10), Language (Elder Tongue) +10 (+13), Arcane Lore +8 (+11), Cult Rituals +12 (+15), and Demon Lore +8 (+11)

Orders: Symbolatry; Ward +10 (+15), Defend +10 (+15), Attack +10 (+15), Enchantment +10 (+15), Influence +10 (+15), Summon +10 (+15), Alter +10 (+15), Move +10 (+15).

(continued)

Possibility B: The Rod is Present

Now things are *really* bad. Zathros, the Master Symbolator, will have completed the enchantment, and the portal will be open to one of the flying island homes of the Sepharans in the Demonrealms. This one is the base of operations for the Fanatic Cult, and several of its members are present. There will be a number of Monks equal to the number of PCs, and half as many (round down) Symbolators on this side of the gateway. All of the Monks have twin brass daggers; and their Demon Eye, Skills, and Runic Calligraphs are at half Quara's level [round down], and no Sepharic Calligraphs.

Hellish orange glow under lights the nightmare scene of a sickly gray pulsing portal hanging over the hole in the floor. The magma from below illuminates the ominous triple-eyed idol with the Rod inserted in its head, and all around flickering sparks of energy pulse from within black diamonds in a huge pattern around the idol and hole. Among the diamonds, more pale figures move, all marked with dark runes of demonic power. The rumble of magma from below partially drowns out the whispers of the assembled aliens, as they come to and from the dimensional portal. The gateway itself is a ring of dark pulsing energy, framing a sundered sky littered with rent matter, and populated by dimly visible flying demons!

Now that the gateway is operational, it is controlled with the Rod; twisting it changes the location of the portal in the Demonrealms, and removing the Rod closes the gateway (exactly what the Sepharans will try to prevent).

Fortunately, Zathros has already gone through to muster the other Cultists to help search for Sepharic Codex Keys, and so is not around when the PCs arrive. Rashim will send a message to alert the Sepharans about the party via Earth Demon (level 3) shortly after the party finds the lower chamber. He will then attempt to slip past the party, and guard the idol while the Sepharans deal with the

Zathros

(continued)

Runic Calligraphs: Defend +24 (48 pt Aura, lasts 29 rounds), Attack +24 (contact, 24 rounds), Move +24 (SPD -4, weightless for 29 rounds), Alter +24 (Cult Rituals +8, 24 minutes), Alter +24 (PR +8, 24 minutes), Influence +24 (Despair for 24 rounds), Ward vs. Cold +24 (25 minutes), Ward vs. Water +24 (25 minutes), Ward vs. Demons +24 (25 minutes), Ward vs. Fire +24 (+Heat, 25 minutes), Ward vs. Devils +24 (25 minutes), Ward vs. Attack +24 (25 minutes), Summon +24 (Night Demon Level 12, for 13 minutes), Summon +24 (Nether Demon Level 18, for 7 minutes), Summon +24 (Storm Demon Level 12, for 13 minutes), Summon +24 (Earth Demon Level 12, for 13 minutes), Summon +24 (Aqua Demon Level 12, for 13 minutes), Summon +24 (Pyro Demon Level 12, for 13 minutes). Note only five of these may be used at the same time. Each use counts as a spell (-1 per additional attempt per day) and is activated using the Cult Rituals Rating (+15).

Sepharic Calligraphs: Heal +6 (1/round), Move +6 (SPD -9)

Gear: Shadow Steel Dagger, Brass Dagger (Alter +15, Dagger +5).

intruders. Stealthy PCs will be able to spy on the assembly, if they so choose.

The party will have a short window of opportunity (time determined by the GM) before the Sepharans are alerted to the PCs. The party's goal should be to get the Rod, and Rashim will arrive shortly even if the fight has already begun. Obviously, killing all the Sepharans is desirable but may simply take too long or be too difficult. In this situation, the

players will likely have to come up with an assault plan on their own.

Since the Sepharans will not pursue anyone (except an Ariane) who shows up, they cannot be lured away from the portal. They believe there is a possibility that a Sepharic Codex Key might be here on Talislanta, and will gladly establish a beachhead in order to find the Key. They will gladly die in this effort, and so will fight to the bitter end. As detailed in Possibility A above, the coming of the Fanatic Cult will have terrible consequences for Talislanta, and only the Ariane are likely to be able to stop them. The portal *must* be closed forever, and the Rasmirin Lord Summoner must die. If the PCs fail to kill him, he will simply re-summon a Master Symbolator, and the whole thing starts all over again.

Concluding Thoughts

If the PCs survive this, then the Ice Dragon will be waiting for them outside the Rasmirin cell's lair, ready to take them all back to Myr. This has been a long and rough journey; GMs are encouraged to play up how tired the PCs are (especially those with lower CON scores).

Once complete, the final battle will not attract any additional attention, as most who would get involved are already dead.

If the Dimensional Rift effect occurs (from disturbing the idol, even by accident), it will certainly destroy the gate, and the Rod is present. This effectively gives a victory to the PCs, if they are alive to enjoy it.

If the PCs take a day or two to rest before leaving, be sure to come up with plenty of interesting and/or vile details about the lair for them to discover.

Sepharan Fanatics

Raised in the Demonrealms by a Fanatic Cult, they learned to hate all that is, and became dedicated to helping remove those who stood in the way of their cult. All will fight to the death for their cause, though none would risk their lives for any Rasmirin. These stats apply to both male and female fanatics.

Attributes:

STR 0	DEX +1
CON +2	SPD 0
PER +2	CHA -1
WIL +4	INT +1
CR +2	MR +2

Hit Points: 24

Special Abilities: Demon Eye, Attack +6 (+8, same mechanics as casting a spell).

Skills: Dagger +2 (+4), Long Sword +3 (+5), Language (Runic) +7 (+8), Language (Elder Tongue) +10 (+11), Brawling +2 (+4), Cult Rituals +5 (+6), and Demon Lore +4 (+5)

Runic Calligraphs: Defend +8 (16 pt Aura, lasts 13 rounds), Attack +8 (contact, 8 rounds), Attack +8 (50 ft range, 1 shot), Move +8 (SPD -9, weightless for 6 rounds), Alter +6 (Brawling +2, 6 minutes), Influence +8 (Despair for 8 rounds). Each use counts as a spell (-1 per additional attempt per day) and is activated using the Cult Rituals Rating (+6).

Gear: Brass Long Sword and Dagger.

CHAPTER FIVE

Epilogue

Here there are really only two possibilities. Either the PCs have successfully put an end to the Rasmirin Nihilist cell, or they have not. Failure resulting in death should have already been covered, so failure and retreat is covered here along with victory.

VICTORY

The PCs return victorious from their adventure to Myr, flown in by the massive Ice Dragon they called with the little whistle. They're dropped off just outside Myr, and given a hero's welcome (yes, an actual parade of sorts, theme music appropriate here).

As your weary feet carry you toward the gates of Myr, you are met by Lord General Milnor and Mutai. They offer you fine snowmanes to ride into Myr and healing elixirs, as the crowd of Mirin gathers along the main path to the Palace. As you proceed, countless eyes acknowledge your bravery and resolve, and children beam openly at you. Closer to the Palace, a rising hymn of joy sung in Elder warms your heart even in this cold city, and you see the assembled priestesses in the courtyard of the Palace are its source. At the top of the steps into the Palace, L'Shiva greets you, emotion strong on her features. She escorts you to the Hall of Winds, a massive open chamber of incredible beauty. There in deep ranks stand a large contingent of the Mirin Host, fully arrayed in their entire battle

gear, and silently waiting. The path through them leads to a stepped dais, topped by a huge throne of purest ice.

Dressed in royal robes the beautiful and noble L'Wen rises to meet you, along with L'Phei whose delicate hands bear large blue adamant medallions of amazing craftsmanship. L'Shiva and Milnor present the party to the Queen of Myr in formal tones, and the Queen's radiant smile replies. L'Shiva and Milnor step aside, and L'Phei presents the medals to L'Wen. The Queen presents one to each of you, saying that you have earned the trust of the Mirin people, and you are welcome in their cities. She invites you to face the Host not as strangers or outsiders, but as heroes. As one, the Host proclaims aloud you all as brothers and friends, a mighty sound indeed! The Queen calls for a day of celebration in your honor, and a great cheer is her answer.

You are given plentiful food, drink, healing, snow lilies, and hospitality for the rest of the day. You are offered the option of staying in your own home in Myr for as long as you like, volunteering for the Mirin Host as honored brothers, or going escorted homeward as desired. For all purposes, you are all Mirin now.

The medallions are enchanted (Ward vs. Cold, Level 10, five foot radius), and are all of exceptional craftsmanship (set with blue diamonds and silver, worth thousands of Gold Lumens each). L'Phei of course used her

powers to learn of the PCs success, thus the Mirin were ready when the PCs returned. Anyone who the PCs saved from some terrible fate along the way will likely offer to Meld with the saviors (CHA check at +5), so they may always know each other are safe and well. Within reason, the royalty of Myr will gladly confer with the PCs on any subject, should the players desire to do so. From here on, it's up to the GM and players to write their own closing scenes.

RETREAT

The PCs have returned to the pillar of rock without ensuring that the portal does not open, allowing the Sepharans free access to Talislanta. Since the Sepharans will be helping the Rasmirin cell, Rashim might gain leadership of practically all the Rasmirins, and forge them into a powerful fighting force. This has terrible implications for the Mirin to start with, but even worse potential for disaster for the multiverse as a whole should the Sepharans discover even a portion of the Sepharic Codex Keys in the toxic wastelands of Ur. Gamemasters are welcome to plot out the following events as they see fit, as this module does not presume to predict the outcome.

The Ice Dragon deposits you a mile outside the southern walls of Myr, where a group of snowmanes await you. Then it departs immediately, swiftly shrinking into the distance, and then vanishing behind the clouds. The snowmanes are laden with supplies, probably enough to get you to warmer climates, and a note written in High Talislan is attached to one of them: "These creatures are yours to care for and use until they tread upon bare rock, dirt, or vegetation. They are to be released immediately thereafter, or bounties well in excess of their worth shall be placed upon your heads until the snowmanes are safely returned alive and unharmed. Safe Journey, signed, Polymir."

If the Party disposed of any additional Rasmirin cell members after leaving Myr, there will be a pouch on each snowmane containing ten Gold Lumens per agent slain. The gates of Myr will remain closed to the party for at least a week, and they will be regarded as outsiders by all Mirin. GMs are welcome to continue their own stories and adventures from here on, but this concludes the module.

Concluding Thoughts

Obviously, the PCs have a lot to gain by putting down the Symbolator and stopping this whole mess from becoming unmanageable. Experience points should be heavily weighted if the players did well, both in performance and role-playing aspects.

Given the unusual sorts of things the PCs will have encountered along the way, the option of some unusual skills is suggested: Arcane Lore (Demons), Doctrines (Demonology, Aberon), Survival (Tundra), etc. Any Ariane will be keen to get back to Altan to report the sighting of Sepharans on Talislanta.

Naturally, the successful completion of this module could lead to a whole campaign in the Northern Realms, or other adventures might lead up to it.

BESTIARY

DEMON, Aqua

Aqua demons (or sea demons, as they are sometimes known) are denizens of the Demonrealms whose presence in the seas and oceans of the Southern Rim can be attributed to ancient portals and witchgates that sank below the waves during the time of The Great Disaster. The curse of ocean-going vessels, aqua demons are sometimes known to infest tropical isles, coral reefs, and sunken ruins. They are practically invisible in water, and they possess the ability to change into liquid form or create whirlpools and dangerous undercurrents. Aqua demons are uncomfortable out of the water and are pained by heat and fire.

Size: 7'-7'8," 300-450+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT +2 PER +2
WIL +6 CHA -6
STR +7 DEX +1
CON +10 SPD +4*
* +4 in water; -4 on land

Ability Level: 4-11+

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 13, two attacks

Special Abilities: Aquamancy with four Modes at Ability Level, almost invisible in water (-8 to detect), adopt liquid form, and create whirlpools and undercurrents

Armor: Elemental water, PR 3

Hit Points: 22

DEMON, Black Ice

These entities resemble eight to ten foot tall, horned humanoids with faceted, black crystalline bodies and frightful visages. They are extremely aggressive, attacking any creatures that they encounter. Black ice demons emanate waves of biting cold, and can also do damage with their razor-sharp claws and fangs. They are susceptible to extreme heat.

Size: 8'-10', 1,200-1,800 lbs.

Attributes:

INT +1 PER 0
WIL +5 CHA -6

STR +8 DEX -2
CON +10 SPD +1

Ability Level: 3-10

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 16, two attacks

Special Abilities: Elemental Magic (Aquamancy; Cold only) four Modes at Ability Level, emanate cold in a 10' radius (causes -2 penalty on opponents' combat rolls).

Armor: Ice, PR 5

Hit Points: 45

DEMON, Earth

Earth demons are negative elemental entities that sometimes gain access to the Talislantan reality through rifts in the dimensional fabric. In repose, they may be mistaken for great, craggy boulders. Such is not the case when an earth demon chooses to move, for these creatures can tunnel through earth and stone at will, producing a substantial amount of seismic activity, noise, and dust. Earth demons subsist on a diet of rocks and minerals, voiding gemstones, which they cannot digest. They possess an aversion to water and strong winds, and are susceptible to spells of Aeromancy, which do twice the normal damage vs. Earth Demons.

Size: 6'-6'2," 1,000+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT -1 PER -2
WIL +5 CHA -6
STR +8 DEX -5
CON +10 SPD -2

Ability Level: 6-13

Attacks/Damage: Fist DR 19; six limbs, up to three attacks

Special Abilities: Elemental Magic (Geomancy) with four Modes at Ability Level, pass through earth and stone at will

Armor: Stony exterior, PR 8

Hit Points: 40

DEMON, Frost

Long confused with the race of Frostweres, frost demons are lesser entities that originate from the Demonrealms. Their misshapen bodies are composed of solid ice and covered with jagged spines of frost, which

from a distance can resemble a shaggy hide. These demons are only found in frigid northern realms and are believed quite rare. They are attracted by the body heat of warm-blooded creatures, which they can sense at distances up to one mile. In addition to their hooked talons and great fangs, frost demons are able to dismay their enemies by exhaling a blast of freezing vapor, an attack form that can be employed at will.

Frost demons possess an aversion to heat and flame, both of which cause them pain. They are susceptible to spells of pyromancy, which cause twice the usual damage to entities of this sort.

Size: 7-8 ft tall, 500+lbs.

Attributes:

INT +1 PER +4*
WILL +5 CHA -9
STR +6 DEX -2
CON +10 SPD +3**

* heat sense only, otherwise -2

** flying speed, otherwise +1

Ability Level: 3-10

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 6, Claws DR 12, Breath DR 18

Special Abilities: Aquamancy at ability level, Detect warm-blooded creatures at 100 ft/level, flight.

Armor: Icy Hide, PR 3

Hit Points: 3 per ability level.

DEMON, Nether

Nether Demons are greater demonic entities that hail from the middle levels of the Demonrealms. In appearance, these entities resemble hideous, winged humanoids with leprous gray-green hide, multiple horns, and clawed appendages. Their bodies radiate a tangible aura of negative energy in a ten-foot radius, and trails of black smoke issue forth from their nostrils. A crest of spines runs from the center of the forehead down along the back and down the tail.

On their home plane, they may be found dwelling in pools of acid, molten metal, and other noxious substances. They are both aggressive and unpredictable, vacillating

between smoldering rage and fits of mindless violence. Such attributes make them well suited to serve the Demonlords, whose purpose is to foment chaos and destruction. Nether demons represent the forces of entropy and decay. They are attracted to regions that have been fouled by pollutants and other toxic materials, from which they derive sustenance. These entities are able to assimilate all forms of positive matter, converting these materials into negative energy. It is this aura of negative radiation that makes nether demons so dangerous and destructive.

Size: 10 ft tall, 1000+ pounds

Attributes:

STR +10 DEX +5
CON +10 SPD +2
PER +10 CHA -12
WIL +10 INT +1

Ability Level: 11-25

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 16, Negative Energy Aura DR 1 (10ft radius)

Special Abilities: Reversed Natural Magic, 5 Modes +5

Armor: Scaly Hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 4 per ability level

DEMON, Night

Denizens of the shadowy Demonrealms, night demons are believed to have gained access to the Northern Reaches of Talislanta via an ancient gateway known as the Black Pit of Narandu. These winged humanoids are comprised of magical darkness, given substance and form by negative elemental forces. Nocturnal by need and choice, night demons come forth after sundown to spread terror among living creatures, killing in seemingly indiscriminate fashion. The innate fear of the dark that is felt by many Talislantan peoples may be attributed to these creatures.

Weakest of the demon races, night demons wield spears and swords made of brass, a metal shunned by their mortal enemies, the race of devils. They possess an aversion to daylight, which weakens them. Magical light causes them extreme pain, and can be used to kill a night demon.

Size: 6'-6'8," 180-260+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT +3 PER +2
 WIL +4 CHA -6
 STR +4 DEX +4
 CON +8 SPD +3*

*airborne and on the ground

Ability Level: 7-14+

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 6, Brass Sword or Spear DR 14; up to two attacks per round

Special Abilities: Necromancy with four Modes at Ability Level, flight, invisible in darkness (cannot be detected except by magic or special ability, such as night vision), weakened by daylight (-2 to all actions)

Armor: Hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 32

DEMON, Pyro-

Pyro-demons are fearsome entities from the depths of the Demonrealms. By means of magical gates and rifts they are sometimes able to cross into the Talislanta plane, emerging from fissures in the earth and from volcanoes. So it is that Pyro-demons come to be found in the River of Fire and the Firefalls, of the Volcanic Hills.

Pyro-demons are highly volatile in nature and are prone to violent and destructive behavior. These fierce creatures are comprised of solid flame and are sometimes mistaken for devils by inept observers. They are able to breathe fire or smoke at will, and they can ignite combustibles at a touch. The presence of a Pyro-demon is seldom difficult to discern, for the creatures radiate a good deal of heat and give off a stench of burning sulfur. Pyro-demons possess an extreme aversion to water, which can be fatal to them, and to cold, which causes them great discomfort. They are also susceptible to spells of Aquamancy.

Size: 6'10"-7'2," 260-300+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT +1 PER +1
 WIL +7 CHA -6
 STR +6 DEX +2
 CON +9 SPD +3

Ability Level: 3-10

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 12, Tail DR 10, Fiery Breath DR 12

Special Abilities: Pyromancy with four Modes at Ability Level, ignite combustibles by touch, breath fire or smoke at will

Armor: Scaly hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 36

DEMON, Storm

Storm demons are frightful winged entities that normally dwell among the upper reaches of the Demonrealms. They sometimes come to Talislanta, finding their way through magical gates and rifts. Favoring dark and windswept lands, these demons can be found flying high above the mountains of Khazad, Werewood, and Yrmania, among other places.

Storm demons radiate negative electrical and elemental energies. They are able to cause wind, rain, and thunder, and can hurl shards of lightning like javelins. Their very touch is sufficient to electrocute lesser creatures, metal armor affording no protection from this form of attack. Groups of storm demons acting in concert are purported to be able to create tempests sufficient in intensity to capsize even the largest sea vessels. They are powerless to affect structures of earth or stone, however, and are susceptible to damage from spells of Geomancy.

Size: 7'6"-8', wingspan 20'+, 600-700 lbs.

Attributes:

INT +1 PER +2
 WIL +7 CHA -6
 STR +7 DEX +1
 CON +10 SPD +7*

* +7 in air; -3 on ground

Ability Level: 8-15

Attacks/Damage: Thunderbolt DR 3 per Ability Level (range 10 ft. per level), or Touch DR 2 per Ability Level (electrical damage, no protection from armor)

Special Abilities: Aeromancy with five Modes at Ability Level, flight, hurl thunderbolts (one per Ability Level, per day)

Armor: None

Hit Points: 45

DEMON, Void

These powerful entities are believed to originate from the Void, a negative energy dimension situated in the depths of the lower planes. They are vaguely humanoid in form, and have a horrifying horned visage, bat-like wings, and a serpentine tail.

Void demons emanate waves of entropy and destruction that can affect both living creatures and non-organic substances. The presence of such an entity can erode stone, rust metals, and cause wood, cloth, or paper to rot or disintegrate. The mere touch of a void demon leaves a permanent, searing mark, while its deadly grasp can cause complete disintegration.

Magic that consists of positive, creative energy is anathema to these foul demons. For example, spells of conjuration, if focused directly within the entity, inflict damage equal to twice the spell level.

Size: 8'-9', weight not applicable

Attributes:

INT +4	PER +4
WIL +6	CHA -6
STR n/a	DEX +3
CON n/a	SPD +3

Ability Level: 10-20+ (30-50)

Attacks/Damage: Disintegrating touch DR equal to Ability Level

Special Abilities: Entropic Aura with a radius of 10 ft (everything physical within the aura, be it living or dead, animate or inanimate, takes damage equal to half the demon's Ability Level, every round—only magic can ward against this, including magical items), flight, incorporeal

Armor: None

Hit Points: 46

EQUUS, Snowmane

Equus are a hybrid of mammal and reptile prized as steeds throughout the continent. They are quite intelligent, and have their own language, called equan. Some few are even able to speak the languages of humanoids, though a natural tendency toward secrecy

forbids most equus from boasting of this ability. In the wild, they travel in herds of up to about sixty individuals.

There are four sub-species of equus: the common and reliable graymane; the swifter but less durable silvermane; snowmanes, built to endure frigid climes and sure-footed on ice or snow; and coal-black darkmanes, aggressive and spiteful creatures who often attack other equus on sight.

Size: 5'+ (at shoulder), 400-600 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -3	PER +3
WIL +4	CHA -3*
STR +3	DEX +3
CON +2*	SPD +7*

* (SPD +8 for silvermanes; CON +1 for silvermanes; CHA -7 for darkmanes)

Ability Level: 5-10

Attacks/Damage: Kick DR 13, Bite DR 5

Special Abilities: Ability to converse in Equan (some few Equus are also known to speak humanoid languages), immune to cold (snowmanes only)

Armor: Scaly hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 35

FROSTWERE

Frostweres are a species of werebeast native to Xanadas and the cold Northern Reaches of Talislanta. In many respects they resemble their relatives, though their hide is white, enabling them to blend into their snowy surroundings. Prowling the glacial wastes of Narandu and the vast snowfields of L'Haan by night, frostweres hunt for snowmanes, tundra lopers, and other warm-blooded prey. They usually travel in pairs, though when the female is in estrus, the male will hunt alone. When on the hunt, the creatures emit a frightful howl that can be heard for miles in all directions. Frostweres will readily attack humanoids in lieu of other prey, but they otherwise prefer to keep their distance from civilized locales.

Size: 6'6"-7', 290-400+ lbs.

Attributes:

INT -5	PER +3
WIL +6	CHA n/a
STR +5	DEX +2

CON +9 SPD +2
Ability Level: 5-15
Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 8, Claws DR 13
Special Abilities: Keen hearing, track prey by scent at Ability Level +PER, night vision
Armor: Shaggy hide, PR 2
Hit Points: 49

GHAST

Ghasts are horrific entities believed to hail from the dark, uncharted regions that lie in proximity to the Underworld. Their presence on the material plane is attributed to the legendary black magician, Mordante, who—deliberately or inadvertently—opened a magical gate into the nether realms, allowing hordes of these creatures to gain access to the continent of Talislanta. On the material plane, ghasts often haunt ancient graveyards, tombs, and battlegrounds, sites which are perhaps most reminiscent of their vile home plane. They are most common in Khazad and Werewood, where they are known to prey upon living creatures of all sorts, including even banes and werebeasts.

Though frail and unhealthy-looking, ghasts possess fearsome strength, and cannot be harmed except by magical means. Possessed of a diabolical, and often insane, intelligence, they are known to covet enchanted items and to converse with unseen spiritforms, the skulls of their victims, and even themselves. These foul creatures usually hunt by night, spending the daylight hours lurking in crypts and underground barrows, staring into the darkness.

Size: 7'6"-8', 160-200 lbs.

Attributes:

INT +5	PER +8
WIL +8	CHA -7
STR +7	DEX -5
CON +10	SPD +2

Ability Level: 16-30

Attacks/Damage: Claws DR 13

Special Abilities: Necromancy with five Modes at Ability Level, night vision, detect invisible/astral presences (range: 100 feet per level), harmed only by silver or magical weapons and spells.

Armor: None
Hit Points: 42

ICE DRAGON

Ice dragons are crystalline monsters, which inhabit the frigid northlands of Narandu, L'Haan, and Xanadas. Like ice giants, ice dragons are comprised entirely of magically animate ice, save their hearts, which are blue diamond. They subsist on wild beasts and humanoids, which they freeze solid prior to consumption (or ice giants when such pre-frozen prey is available). The ice dragon's frigid breath is cold enough to freeze living creatures in suspended animation, or render organic materials and metals brittle to shatter at the slightest touch. Ice dragons begin life as crystalline eggs, which the female usually lays beneath the surface of a frozen sea or lake. The larval dragon, or "wurm," emerges from the egg fully formed. Not until later will it be able to use its wings to fly, or employ its frigid breath as a weapon.

Size: 25-35 ft long, 4-5 tons.

Attributes:

INT +2	PER +4
WILL +3	CHA 0
STR +8	DEX -4
CON 0	SPD -3

Ability Level: 4-16+

Attacks/Damage: Breath DR 2 per level, Bite DR 18, Claws DR 22.

Special Abilities: Emanate cold 10 ft radius (-2 CR), fire does double damage, immunity to poisons/cold, flight, blue diamond heart +5 carats per level.

Armor: Icy Scales, PR 8

Hit Points: 20 + 5 per ability level

ICE GIANT

Ice Giants are magical constructs found in numbers throughout the frigid wastes of Narandu. These unnatural golems are believed to have been created long ago by the Ice King, a mysterious figure who is said to dwell far away in the dark northern realms of Talislanta. Ice giants are comprised entirely of magically animate ice. They emanate waves of cold sufficient in intensity to freeze the ground

beneath their feet or slow the reflexes of other creatures in their immediate vicinity.

Ice giants prey upon all sorts of warm-blooded creatures, storing the bodies of their victims in tunnels and caverns carved into the side of glaciers until they are ready to be eaten; ice giants cannot obtain nourishment from anything unless it is frozen solid prior to consumption. Although ice giants are vulnerable to fire, normal weapons are of little avail against them. Adamant blades and enchanted weapons provide more effective deterrent, and elemental spells that affect water or ice can be used to dispel the magics that animate them. Removed of such enchantments, ice giants shatter into inanimate fragments.

Size: 9'-10', 1,800-2,400 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -5 PER 0
WIL +6 CHA -6
STR +10 DEX -4
CON +10 SPD -6

Ability Level: 1-20

Attacks/Damage: Fist DR 18, Club DR 26

Special Abilities: Emanate cold in 10 ft radius (causes -2 penalty on opponents' combat rolls), fire inflicts double damage, vulnerable to Aquamancy

Armor: Ice, PR 6

Hit Points: 50

MUSKRONT

Ponderous quadrupeds, shaggy haired and also known as the Wooly Ogriphat, dwell in the Northern Reaches. In the wild, they are usually placid, though they can become quite aggressive during mating season. With their long tusks, horns, and great body mass, these creatures are more than capable of defending themselves against most types of predators.

Size: 8-9 ft at shoulder, 1 ton or more

Attributes:

INT -7 PER -1
WIL +3 CHA 0
STR +10 DEX -8
CON +7 SPD -2

Ability Level: 3-6

Attacks/Damage: Tusks DR 20, Trample DR 30.

Special Abilities: Prehensile trunk.

Armor: Hide and Fur, PR 2

Hit Points: 61 + ability level

RAVENGER

From an evolutionary standpoint, the ravenger is certainly one of the more opportunistic Talislantan life forms. Ravens thrive in water, on land, or in the air, and they are found throughout the continent. They have both lungs and gills and are able to modify their body temperature and metabolic rate to suit almost any climate. The ravenger's wings, tail, and sail-like crest are equally useful with respect to undersea or airborne navigation. Furthermore, they are capable of bipedal ambulation on land and are sure climbers.

Compensating for their lack of a single, specialized talent, ravengers possess an almost single-minded determination to survive. They can subsist on almost anything, including wild beasts, carrion, vermin, and refuse. Ravens will steal prey from other creatures if given the opportunity, and some habitually follow predators such as omnivrax, behemoths, and sea scorpions for this very purpose, or to scavenge bits of uneaten food. Relentless hunters, ravengers are nearly impossible to deter once they have marked a creature or other food source as theirs. If unsuccessful in its initial attempt to obtain sustenance, a ravenger will return again and again to try anew. In this respect, these creatures can be quite resourceful and even ingenious.

Size: 6-6'6," 140-175 lbs.

Attributes:

INT 0 PER 0
WIL +4 CHA -3
STR 0 DEX 0
CON 0 SPD 0

Ability Level: 1-10

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 4, Claws DR 6

Special Abilities: Ability to thrive in practically any environment, heat or cold inflicts only half damage, flight, and swimming

Armor: Hide, PR 2

Hit Points: 18

SNOW LILY

A delicate white flower found only in the coldest climes, snow lily is a beneficial plant that has certain practical uses. Eaten fresh, the lily's stem can be used to ward against the onset of frostbite. Prepared in an elixir, snow lily petals are said to confer virtual immunity against the effects of cold.

Vast fields of snow lilies can be found across the Northern Reaches from Narandu to the borders of Xanadas. The plants lay dormant during the spring, bursting into bloom only after the weather turns cold. Borne upon the winds, their frost-blue pollen covers the snowfields of L'Haan and Narandu for miles, providing food for numerous small creatures and organisms.

TUNDRA BEAST

The Tundra beast is a species of two-headed carnivore native to the frozen wastes and coniferous forests of northern Talislanta. Standing four feet high at the shoulders and weighing over four hundred pounds, they are among them most feared predators on the continent. The heavy scales and fur of a tundra beast, gray and white in color, afford protection from the coldest weather and make them difficult to spot against snowy or shadowy backdrops.

Tracking by scent and sound, tundra beasts will follow prey across vast stretches of territory. They attack by latching onto their chosen victim with one set of jaws, and employing the second set to end the victim to bits. Tundra beasts are sometimes trapped for their warm, thick hides, which bring over 150 Gold Lumens in many regions. The natural enemies of these large carnivores are the ice giants of Narandu, and to a lesser extent, frostweres and ice dragons. The main sources of food for tundra beasts are snowmanes, young ogriphants, and careless or overly bold adventurers.

Size: 3'6" to 4' at the shoulder, 350-450 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -8	PER +5
WIL +4	CHA -10
STR +4	DEX +4
CON +5	SPD +4

Ability Level: 2-4

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 10, two attacks

Special Abilities: Resistant to cold, tracking by scent, hide in snow.

Armor: Scales and Fur, PR 2

Hit Points: 6 +3 per ability level

TUNDRA LOPER

Hardy and belligerent cousin of the common, plains loper, tundra lopers are indigenous to the frozen northern realms of Narandu and L'Haan. They are distinguishable from their plains-dwelling relatives by their shaggy white manes. Tundra lopers also have an additional spike on their clawed lower appendages, which enables them to negotiate icy terrain.

Traveling in herds of up to thirty individuals, these rugged bipeds roam the frigid wastelands, feeding on creatures smaller and weaker than themselves. They have been known to attack frostweres, but usually only in self-defense. When food is scarce, such as after a deep snowstorm, tundra lopers may hunt larger prey, including humanoids.

Size: 14' in length, 8' in height, 400-600 lbs.

Attributes:

INT -6	PER +2
WIL +6	CHA n/a
STR +4	DEX +4
CON +8	SPD +5

Ability Level: 7-9

Attacks/Damage: Bite DR 6, Hind Claws DR 10, Whip-like Tail DR 8; one attack per round

Special Abilities: Sure-footed climbers (even on ice), leap across 20'-30' spans with running start

Armor: Shaggy fur, PR 2

Hit Points: 44